

Classical Mythology 2200 Lecture 2 Notes

Tuesday September 9th, 2014

Myth:

-From the Greek *mythos*, *myth* refers to a spoken word, saying or utterance (i.e. predating the oldest Indo-European text coming from Homer). It is an orally-transmitted narrative (coming from the Latin "trado" meaning transmit) that changes over space and time, with the original author being largely unknown. Myth is a way to understand or make sense of unnatural phenomena with mythological narratives, which get shared because they have cultural significance. However, as narratives change, logical inconsistencies present themselves in mythology as a result. Myths try to reconcile irreconcilable mysteries that have incredible importance (e.g. love, death, history, war, etc.). Myths reinforce and reflect cultural values, desires and fears. Stories support and validate the social structure of the author's culture; it is not just propaganda, but also helps you to think about how reality works.

Divine Myth:

-*Divine myth* (e.g. Hesiod's *Theogony*) tends to explain or reflect the natural universe and its phenomena such as earthquakes, rainbows, weather, tidal waves, vegetation, etc. Divine myths also reflect patriarchal aristocratic social structure with major characters usually being anthropomorphic (human-shaped) gods. For example, Zeus is often called the father of gods and men and looks just like a bearded Greek man having human characteristics such as jealousy.

Legend:

-*Legends/saga* (e.g. The Trojan War) tend to explain or reflect historical phenomena (as opposed to natural phenomena) such as the foundation of cities, archaeological ruins, hereditary kingships, wars, etc. Gods are often involved in legends, but major characters are humans who are superior in some way to most others (i.e. tend to be elites). Legends sometimes have relationship to actual history, but is not necessarily factual.

Folktale:

-*Folktales* (e.g. Odysseus binding the Cyclops) tend to reflect a fantasy of power structures inverted (e.g. slaying a monster, moving from poverty to wealth, overthrowing a tyrant, etc.). This is because the Greeks value cunning intelligence, which is usually needed to invert power or authority. Major characters in folktales are ordinary mortals, with trickster figures often playing roles (e.g. Hermes is a trickster god in divine folktales). Folktales are often comic or have a happy ending, where the person in power usually being mocked. Not too many gods are involved in folktales and this type of myth reflects how during the Archaic period, there was a growing social nobility from the lower classes.

Fable:

-*Fables* (e.g. "The Fox and the Grapes") tend to be didactic (teach a lesson) about everyday moral behavior, with the major characters often being animals.

Types Of Evidence For Myths:

-Lots of texts from the Ancient World acts as evidence for myths particularly in the form of papyrus scroll fragments (but also as stone or wood carvings) with continuous lines of capital letters. For papyrus texts (e.g. poems by Sappho), most of the fragments come from Egypt where the dry climate preserved them in garbage dumps, making them incredibly fragile.

-Vase paintings from the Ancient World act as evidence for myths since the Greeks loved to record stories (e.g. Heracles bringing Cerberus from the Underworld) on vase paintings from the Archaic to the Hellenistic periods. This also include painting (e.g. Dionysus on his ship) on a *crater*, which is a Greek word for a wine mixing bowl.

-Shards from excavations at archaeological sites (e.g. on Crete) also serve as evidence for myths. For example, the Lion's Gate at Mycenae (a site named many times during the Trojan War) was the home of Menelaus and was a fortress that was built as a defense

from neighbouring civilizations. Lions were icons of the royal family of Mycenae. Apollo's Temple at Delphi was the most sacred site for the Ancient Greeks where it was the seat of the Oracle of Delphi.

-Sculptures from the Ancient World acts as evidence for myths such as the Ludovici throne which depicts Aphrodite being born from a shell of Ouranos' genital remains. In the sculpture from the Hellenistic period, Hermes is protecting his little brother Dionysus from Hera who is persecuting him. Notes that myth is very flexible and fluid because there are many contradictions that occur over time.

-Wall paintings, frescoes and mosaics of the Ancient World act as evidence for myths such as the "Villa of Venus" from Pompeii (beautifully preserved sample from Vesuvius' eruption), depicting Venus' birth from the sea with cupids and dolphins as the goddess of love. Mosaics from Rome (e.g. "Theseus and the Minotaur") are particularly well-preserved.

-Funerary objects and coins from the Ancient World act as evidence for myths. The aptly-named Mycenaean "Mask of Agamemnon" was likely not the mask of Agamemnon, but introduced perspective on the Greek afterlife, which sought to preserve features of very important people from that period. Etruscan mirrors are another form of funerary object with satyrs chasing young women on the back. *Drachmae* (Ancient Greek coins) reflected the identity of city-state's god or goddess. For example, Athena's owl, an olive tree, Athena's face, and her name's first three letters ($\alpha\theta\eta$) are depicted on 1 drachma.

Classical Mythology 2200 Lecture 3 Notes

Thursday September 11th, 2014

The Minoan Civilization (3000-1400 BCE):

-Founded by a non-Indo-European (non-Greek) people and based on the island of Crete, the *Minoan Civilization* was named after the legendary King Minos and had open palace complexes (e.g. Palace at Knossos) without fortification (due to its naval domination). This culture not only contained sophisticated arts and engineering, but also female figurines, bull imagery and double-axes. Although the Minoan snake goddess has unclear significance, it was thought to be an offering that was used as a protective device (note how it portrays a divine/human tamer of nature). Frescoes in the Palace at Knossos depict ritual bull jumping that may have occurred with the Minoans. The Horns of Consecration probably served as an altar for sacrifice. The *labrys* (where our word labyrinth comes from) was probably used for sacrifice.

The Mycenaean Civilization (1650-1150 BCE):

-This Indo-European (Greek-speaking) culture was based at Mycenae, which at the time dominated most of the Greek peninsula, Asia Minor and most islands. The fortified palaces seen on hilltops at Mycenae characterizes a war-torn civilization and many heroes of stories and myth are associated with Mycenaean cities (e.g. Argos, Troy and Mycenae all belong to the Mycenaean period). Mycenaean people had an aristocratic social hierarchy and absorbed some elements of Minoan culture. Linear B was the writing system to emerge from the Mycenaean civilization as evidenced by clay tablets. However, these tablets were not intended for long pieces of writing (i.e. narrative accounts of myths), but mostly for administrative uses. The reason for decline of the Mycenaean civilization as being due to war or natural catastrophe is unclear.

The Dark Ages (1100-800 BCE):

-This period in Ancient Greek history was characterized by a decline in population (on mainland Greek city-states) and an absence of literacy (no means to record stories meant myth transmission was likely oral). The low degree of craftsmanship (poor quality of artefacts) found from this period seems to indicate an economic decline. Waves of emigration from mainland Greece to Asia Minor appears to be likely, however scarcity of evidence makes this information about this period very difficult to ascertain.

The Archaic Period (800-480 BCE):

-This period saw a rise in trade and travel (rejuvenation of mainland Greek city-states) as well as an increase in literacy from the adoption of the Phoenician alphabet (to write down stories). Some poems were transmitted for a long time, but others by Homer, Hesiod and in lyric poetry, were original. Due to contact with the Near East, a growing interest in science (as a way of questioning the nature of

the universe) developed, which had a huge influence on mythology (that is based mainly on conjecture). The growth of Greek city-states also turns up in this period, which includes the first Olympic (panhellenic) games in 776 BC with athletic and cultural (song, dance) competitions. People would come from all over Hellas to promote their Greek identity. The transition to democracy as a political system in Athens in 510 BC suggested that status was no longer based on inherited wealth, but on that obtained from engaging in commercial pursuits. The Persian wars occurred during this period as well (with the Persians eventually being driven back) and “kouros” (young man in Greek) sculptures with Egyptian aesthetics seem to suggest Egyptian contact.

The Classical Period (480-323 BCE):

-This period included the investing of silver in the strong Athenian navy so it could offer protection to the other Greek city-states in return for their wealth (contributing to the rise of Athenian dominance in the Greek confederacy, an Athenian empire based on naval strength). Pericles is credited with encouraging the Athenians to enter into a cultural growth program that patronized the arts and sciences in education (seen as part of the flowering of art, drama, architecture, education, etc.). Athens was extremely interested in political ideologies (evolving democracy) and some of the great tragedy playwrights and philosophers (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Plato, etc) were from this period. The Peloponnesian Wars (431-404 BC) resulted in the defeat of Athens by Spartan forces, putting and to Athenian political and military dominance. The death of Alexander the Great marked and end to the Classical Period.

-The *Theater at Epidaurus* contains excellent acoustics wherever you sit and included the orchestra section (the dancing place of the theatre) and a natural setting for the backdrop of the performance. Theatre and the Athenian stage in general were important because so much evidence for the myths comes from plays performed on stage. The *Parthenon*, constructed on acropolis (“high city”) at Athens, was a temple sacred to Athena that meant “place of the virgin.” *Metopes* were blocks used to adorn the face of the Parthenon with images sculpted on them representative of Athenian values and culture (e.g. the young warrior hero entering into a fight with a god who is half-horse and half-human).

The Hellenistic Period (323-146 BCE):

-During this period the generals of Alexander the Great rule vast areas around the Mediterranean, Near East, and Egypt. This cosmopolitan culture, included important centers of learning (e.g. Athens, Alexandria) such as the huge library of Alexandria, which contained records of almost all literature written at that point. Unfortunately a fire destroyed much of the literature. Aristotle's works flourished in the Hellenistic Period, which ended as Rome included the Mediterranean as part of its empire in 146 BC.

Classical Mythology 2200 Lecture 4 Notes

Tuesday September 16th, 2014

Hesiod & The *Theogony*:

-A farmer and a poet from Boeotia (within Greece on the Aegean) who calls himself Hesiod wrote in the Archaic period (like Homer). His two most famous works are *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. The *Theogony* (same etymological root as genesis), coming from the Greek words “Theo-“ and “-gone” (meaning “birth of the gods”) was an elaborate hymn to Zeus that covered the origins of the universe as well as the birth of the gods. The word cosmogony is the birth of the cosmos or world-order (our word cosmetics derives from this to put things in order, to make beautiful). The story is part of an oral epic tradition (just like the *Illiad*, *Works & Days*, the *Odyssey*, and the Homeric Hymns) likely influenced by the Near East Enuma Elish (Epic of Creation). The divine dynastic succession depicted in *Theogony* shows the power struggles between the gods until Zeus becomes the eternal authority. Some details are different, but the overall structure of the divine dynastic succession is similar.

The Ancient Greek Idea Of The Universe:

-In a sketch of how the Greeks conceived of the cosmos, the surface of the Earth is a flat disc, while the bulk of heaven is a dome-like structure overhead. The gods are on Mt. Olympus on the top or in Ouranos (the sky's personification). There is a stream of water or Ocean that signifies the boundary of the world and below this lies a bowl-shaped underworld known as Hades. Even below Hades lies Tartarus, the deepest and darkest part of the Earth where the Titans are imprisoned.

Features Of Greek Oral Epic Tradition:

-Note that this story was not invented by Hesiod, but merely transcribed by him. In the Greek oral epic tradition, the bard would accompany himself with a lyre and would sing the stories by using a number of devices to help him remember the song (due to its length). However, each time the bard would orate the story, it would be slightly different, making the tradition largely improvisatory. The meter of the epic oral tradition is *dactylic hexameter* where there are 6 beats in a line and each beat roughly conforms to a dactyl). Dactyl is the Greek word for finger and describes a long, short, short rhythm used as a poetic and musical device. Virgil wrote in dactylic to emulate the Greek epic poets. *Repetition* is used by the poets as a mnemonic device. *Formulae* involve a whole line or series of lines that may be repeated, while *epithets* are descriptive phrases that get attached to the same person (e.g. Grey-eyed Athena). In *ring-composition*, the poet starts off on a tangent to tell a separate narrative and then returns to the same line repeating it. *Catalogues* are long lists of characters (accumulation of information) used as either a stalling device or virtuosic recall of knowledge. Invocation of the Muses or other gods occurs when the bard calls upon the Muses to help him sing his song (the Muses are super important for the origin of poetry).

The Muses & Mount Helikon:

-*The Muses* get their authority from parents the parents: Memory/Mnemosyne (a Titan) and Zeus (an Olympian). Since Zeus sleeps with Mnemosyne for 9 nights, he produces 9 Muses. The poem begins with an invocation to the Muses who live on Mount Helikon (gods in power live in high places). The Muses are divine patrons of poetry, dance, and other arts (led by Apollo) to entertain the gods. In the poem, the Muses give Hesiod a wreath and a staff, which signify that Hesiod has been chosen by divine goddesses to tell the story of the gods themselves. The triple invocation of the Muses in *Theogony* indicates lots of emphasis to this.

The Beginning (First Generation Of Gods):

-First, there was only Chaos or the opposite of cosmos (emptiness, a chasm, etc.). Then Gaia (the Earth is a female goddess whose body is the world) spontaneously forms along with Tartarus and Eros (Desire; loveliest of the gods). Gaia's first child, Ouranos (Sky/Heaven) is produced asexually (as are Mountains and Sea), originally being flat on top of her without any sexual love. Gaia and Ouranos then mate to produce the 12 Titans, 3 Cyclopes and 3 Hundred-Handed Ones, but Ouranos prevents their children from actually being born (keeping them away from the light). Gaia then intelligently creates the flint sickle used to reap the grain of agriculture.

The Titans (Second Generation Of Gods):

-In Gaia's plan, she has her youngest son Kronos of the 12 Titans castrate and thus, overthrow his father Ouranos. When he tosses his father's genitals into the sea, the drops of blood create the race of terrible goddesses called the Furies (as well as Giants) and the foaming created by them gives rise to Aphrodite. Aphrodite's name comes from Aphros, which means foam, but she is also called Kithiras or the Cyprian due to her association with Cyprus. The fact that the goddess of love was born out of an act of violence from the male is very telling. In other words, she was born from her father's phallus, and not sexually conceived the natural way. Thus, she represents the epitome of female beauty even though she was made from a man's body. After his castration, now Gaia's former consort Ouranos becomes the dome of heaven.

The Olympians (Third Generation Of Gods):

-Kronos and his sister Rheia (new incarnation of the Earth goddess Gaia) mate to produce 6 Olympians: Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon, and Zeus. However, a prophecy foretells that one of Kronos' children will overthrow him, so Kronos attempts to swallow all of his children as they are born. This incites yet again another conflict between female and male over the children's bodies. But the woman has cunning intelligence to overthrow the overbearing male. Rheia secretly gives birth to Zeus (the youngest of the Olympians) in a cave on Crete (where there is vast earth to receive him). Rheia then gives Kronos a stone in swaddling clothes, allowing her husband to swallow it thinking it was her last child. Zeus grows up and overthrows his father, tricking him into vomiting up his siblings by offering up an emetic in disguise. Thus, Hestia is born last of her siblings as they are regurgitated by Kronos. The omphalos (navel) stone is taken by Zeus and in commemoration is placed at Pytho (Delphi), the centre of the world.

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Zeus Establishes His Rule:

-By freeing the Cyclopes and Hundred-Handed Ones who were imprisoned by Ouranos, Zeus uses these children of Gaia as allies (the Cyclopes make his thunderbolts for him). Following this, Zeus punishes Prometheus, leading to the eventual glorification of Heracles. In a battle between the Titans and the Olympian known as the Titanomachy that lasted 10 years, Zeus wins and demonstrates his ability to overcome his enemies permanently. Even though he has the Titans imprisoned in Tartarus, the elemental forces of nature that they represent are still active. The ancient Greeks believed that life was precious and thus, the underworld of Hades was nothing to look forward to. The river Styx flows through the underworld and gives gods special powers. In fact the gods used its water to declare an oath. If a god were to break their oath, their punishment involves sleeping a full year without breath (an evil coma or temporary death-like state), followed by nine years of exile. This shows that though they are immortal, even the gods are governed by certain behaviours expected of them (as the king of immortals and "Father of Gods and Men", Zeus is responsible for roles and privileges). We see this with the immortal Titans as they cannot be killed, so they are imprisoned instead as punishment. During the Typhonomachy, Zeus uses his thunderbolt to battle with Typhoeus, the grotesque son of Aphrodite (having 100 heads and originating unintelligible sounds that signify chaos).

Overview Of The Dynastic Succession:

-The 1st generation consisted of Ouranos (Sky) and Gaia (Earth), which gave birth to the 2nd generation: Kronos, Rheia and other Titans, along with the 100-handed ones and the Cyclopes. Kronos and Rheia produced the 3rd generation, which included Zeus, Hera and other 1st generation Olympians. Zeus and Hera produced the 4th generation known as the children of Zeus (2nd generation Olympians).

The Divine Wives & Children Of Zeus:

-The divine wives of Zeus included: Metis (who is swallowed by Zeus so he can create Athena from his head), Themis (who births the Seasons, Justice, and the Fates), Eurynome (who births the Graces), Demeter (who births Persephone), Mnemosyne (who births the Muses), Leto (who births Apollo and Artemis), Hera (who births Ares, Hebe, and Eileithyia; she produces Hephaistos asexually), Maia (who births Hermes), and Semele (a mortal who births Dionysus). Metis is the personification of cunning intelligence, so in swallowing her when she was pregnant with a girl, Zeus is successful in preventing a successor that would overthrow him. This girl that Zeus gives birth to (after marrying Hera), was his equal in wisdom and strength, but alas she was still only a girl. Persephone was stolen by Hades to the underworld, where she later became his wife. Dionysus is still immortal because he was born once more from Zeus after he was born from Semele, giving him divinity.

The Birth Of Athena:

-Athena has to be a virgin goddess because if she gave birth to a son, he would be a threat to Zeus. Thus, as long as she remains a virgin goddess, she is Zeus' ally. Hera is furious that Zeus gave birth to Athena asexually without her. Originally, Hera gave birth to Hephaistos asexually and the result was in this 2nd generation Olympian being physically deformed. He is the Greek equivalent of the Roman Vulcan and works at the forge with a blackened face to craft things. He also is the one who split open Zeus' head to give rise to Athena.

The Young Olympians (Fourth Generation Of Gods):

-The children of Zeus are members of the Olympian gods and include: Athena, Persephone, Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Hephaistos, Hermes, and Dionysus. Zeus also fathers Heracles by impregnating Alcmena (Queen of Thebes) as an eagle. This is one of the only times that a non-divine character is mentioned in the *Theogony*. Members of the Olympian gods Heracles goes on to win immortality and marries Hebe (her name means youthful). Notice how in vase paintings Heracles holds Hebe by the wrist at their wedding, suggesting a gesture of taking possession of her.

Classical Mythology 2200 Lecture 6 Notes

Tuesday September 23rd, 2014

History Of Prometheus & Zeus In The *Theogony*:

-In the *Theogony*, Iapetus (a Titan) and Clymene (a Titan's daughter) have four sons (all of whom offend Zeus and are punished by him): Atlas, Menoetios, Prometheus, and Epimetheus. Atlas for example, holds up the great burden of the world on his shoulders at the orders of Zeus and Prometheus has an eagle peck out his liver each day, growing back by night so that the eagle can eat it again as a punishment.

-Prometheus' name means 'forethought' (from the Greek "pro-" meaning "fore" and "-metis" meaning "thought"), while Epimetheus's name means 'afterthought' (from the Greek "epi-" meaning "after" and "-metis" meaning "thought"). During a feast including gods and men to divide up their sacrifice at Mekone, Prometheus has the role of distributing portions of the meat. He has an idea to trick Zeus and favour the humans by disguising portions of the meat and inviting Zeus to choose between them. Since the fatty and fleshy parts of the meat is the most highly prized, Prometheus wraps up the ox in its stomach to make the meat look unappetizing to Zeus and puts the bones wrapped up in shining fat to make them look very tasty. Even though Zeus supposedly sees through Prometheus' trick, when he chooses the poorer quality plate (gleaming fat with bone inside), he still gets furious. This can seem quite a contradiction because if Zeus knew what was going on, why did he choose the plate with disguised bones as the portion for the gods? One possibility is that there is always a story of how Prometheus tricks Zeus, but since the *Theogony* is a hymn to Zeus, he needs Zeus to be all-knowing.

Greek Sacrificial Practise:

-The Greeks made sacrifices to the gods on Olympus in return for a divine favour and the etiological explanation (origin story that explains a behaviour, practise of man, or something in nature) for slaughtering of animals is quite interesting. The first sacrificial animal was slain and cut up into small pieces (at an altar) by a priest, whereby its bones were wrapped in fat and burned at an altar so the smoke could rise up to the heavens (for the gods). The rest of the animal's meat was cooked on spits and divided among the people present. Thus, the first sacrificial feast that took place at Mekone showed the slaughtering of animals as a communal gift belonging to the gods and men (a way for humans and gods to share the same sacrifice) and helped to maintain relations between gods and men.

Hierarchy:

-A natural hierarchy was first established at Mekone during the sacrificial feast, whereby the gods were at the top, humans in the middle, and animals at the bottom. The gods, who only consume nectar and ambrosia, receive the smoke of humans sacrificing the cooked meat of animals (that they will consume), which are sacrificial victims since they consume raw food. It is the sacrificial feast ritual that reinforces this hierarchy.

Alienation Of Gods & Punishment Of Humans:

-The feast at Mekone is one of several stories about the final occasion of commensality (to share a table as a community-forming activity) between gods and mortal men. Since Zeus would not give the mortals fire, and make them unable to cook their meat, this meant that humans were on the same level as animals (i.e. if you don't have fire, you lose your humanity). Prometheus benefited humanity by stealing fire as a burning coal in a fennel stalk. Due to Zeus' outrage against noticing fire in the hands of the human race, he punished Man as well as Prometheus. Accordingly, Zeus has Prometheus bound and tortured, while executing a totally different punishment for human disobedience: women.

Pandora's Creation:

-Zeus directs the creation of the first woman, which is named Pandora (coming from the Greek "pan-", meaning "all-endowed" and "dora", meaning "gift") since every Olympian god played a part in her adornment to mortal men. Though her name was not specifically stated by Hesiod in the *Theogony*, it is assumed that prior to her creation, only male humans existed in the world. Hephaistos was responsible for modelling her out of clay, Earth and water in order to make a ceramic that looks like a shy virgin bride. Athena then adorned her with all kinds of accessories such as a crown covered with monsters on it (symbolizing her deadly beauty). Both gods and

men were stunned by the sheer deception of this woman as from her sprung the deadly race known as women. The presence of Eros in this origin story indicates the importance of sexual desire since Pandora is made to look really desirable even she is internally, a problem. The Greeks believed that women were consumers of the labour of men as they generally stayed home and reaped the benefits of the wealth accumulated by men. Though Zeus meant for women to be a curse because it is impossible to have children that will continue one's legacy without marrying a woman.

Classical Mythology 2200 Lecture 7 Notes

Thursday September 18th, 2014

Hesiod's *Works & Days*:

-This pessimistic poem by Hesiod about the decline of the human race was addressed to his brother Perses after they underwent a dispute over the division of their father's property. In attempt to make peace with his brother, Hesiod gives two different accounts for humanity's decline: the story of Prometheus and Pandora and the five Ages of humankind. He discusses how in each successive Age (from Golden to Iron), the state of Mankind progressively gets worse and worse.

Eris As Strife:

-Here, Hesiod describes two kinds of Strife (anthropomorphized as the goddess Eris): Good Strife that promotes competition and rivalry (increasing wealth) and bad Strife that causes wars, quarrels and lawsuits (consuming wealth). So, Hesiod encourages Perses to leave the bad form of Strife behind and turn to the good Strife, such as the good conflict (Strife) seen at the Olympic Games. This is because unless you are really wealthy, there is no excuse to be wasting time arguing in conflicts at the market for example, a place where lawsuits and disputes would be solved. And the reason humanity is destined for eternal productivity is all because Zeus hid how to make a living after Prometheus tried to help the human race.

Why Humans Must Work:

-Ever since Prometheus, the son of the Titan Iapetus, stole fire for humans, Zeus punished the mortals with the evils present in a woman that they must love and embrace. Some sense that this woman Pandora was not quite like a human being at all, resembling more of a sentient artificial intelligence. On the orders of Zeus, Hephaistos modelled Pandora from clay and the quicksilver son of Zeus, Hermes, gave her a "bitchy mind and a cheating heart." She eventually becomes the bride of Prometheus' brother Epimetheus and carries her iconic jar. This clay pithos (Greek ceramic jar that were often very big) has a lot in common with Pandora as when she opens her lid, all the evil comes out, serving as a metaphor for the race of women.

Pandora's Adornment & Marriage To Epimetheus:

-From this we see Pandora as a little bit of a Trojan horse as well as her depiction on vase painting as a motionless puppet. As Epimetheus receives Pandora from Hermes (pictured with his Caduceus of intertwined serpents), Pandora holds the veil above her face to reveal her beauty during the *Anakalypteria* ceremony during their wedding. Thus, the introduction of evil to the world is figured as a wedding.

A Rich Story:

-We see from Hesiod's *Work & Days* a very rich story that includes: the reason behind the first sacrifice alienating gods and humans (via Prometheus' trick at Mekone), the hierarchy of being (gods, mortals, and animals), origin of fire (important in sacrifice, cooking meat and a metaphor for technology), the first woman (i.e. Pandora), introduction of evil, and the need to work for a living.

The Golden Age & The Silver Age:

-The history of the human race featured in *Works & Days* describes five Ages that are mostly named after precious metals, which consecutively decrease in value (symbolizing the pessimistic view of human evolution). The Golden Age was the Age of Kronos (Saturn) where the first race of articulate mortal folk were created by immortals on Olympus. This period of no work, grief, or old age as well as easy death (absent of suffering) contradicts *Theogony's* perspective of the Titans which reigned over a land of peace and

prosperity that brought forth food spontaneously. In death, mortals turned into holy spirits that roamed the land, dispensing justice. The next Silver Age involved a 100-year infancy that offspring shared with their mother, where they were fed and taken care of, but didn't live very long in an adulthood that was painful (people hurt each other) as well as witless. The lack of sacrifice or service to the gods by these relatively godless people resulted in Zeus destroying all these mortals.

The Bronze Age & The Age Of Heroes:

-Not to be confused with the historical period, this mythical Bronze Age period was associated with a monstrous, heavy, war-loving race of ugly mortals in human form that ate no food and were quite strong and very wild. They made everything from bronze and were also a subterranean culture as well. In the end, Zeus did not kill them off (as they accomplished that themselves) and were largely forgotten. This mortal race also existed before Hesiod's Age, where those that died in battles were commemorated in myths afterwards. This Age spawned many known myths of heroes (Theban civil wars, story of Oedipus and Trojan wars), that went on to enjoy the Afterlife in the Isles of the Blest that contained three harvest seasons a year. Historically however, heroes would still go to Hades upon their deaths.

The Iron Age:

-Associated with the 5th generation of mortals, these were Hesiod's contemporaries that were full of troubles and who Zeus will eventually destroy because of their behavior. This destruction is predicted to occur when: the children are born grey-haired, fathers, hosts and brothers fight with sons, guests and brothers respectively, children dishonour their parents, injustice is present, war is occurring (people sacking each other's cities), oathbreakers, violence and envy are common, and the departure of Shame and Nemesis (deities that cause humans to behave well) from Earth (meaning nothing is left to keep humanity in line). Nemesis means repayment and represents a kind of positive/negative karmic force of nature whose absences encourages debt infidelity and praise for the wrongdoer.

Comparing Hesiod's *Theogony* With *Works & Days*:

-In *Theogony*, the origin of divine myth was explored through the evolution of improving the world-under that culminated in establishing Zeus as universal ruler. In *Works & Days*, the origin of human history was explored through the deterioration of human life, which was aided by the introduction of technology by the "fire-bringer" (i.e. when humans started to use things like weapons to kill each other off).

Deucalion & Pyrrha:

-Told by the Roman Ovid, from his epic poem *Metamorphoses* during the 1st Century AD, the marriage of Pandora and Epimetheus produces a daughter called Pyrrha who married Prometheus' son Deucalion and stayed faithful. Because of the virtue of this couple, Deucalion and Pyrrha become the sole survivors of a flood sent by Zeus (Jove). By the time the flood waters recede, they are really old and can't have children anymore. Thus, they consult the oracle of Themis on instructions as to what they should do. In order to repopulate the Earth, they are told to walk on the land and throw the bones their mothers over their shoulders. As this is not a very respectful way of treating the dead, Pyrrha refuses, but Deucalion (being a trickster god like his father) interprets this direction by throwing stones (bones of Mother Gaia) over his shoulders (it is uncertain as to who Deucalion's biological mother is). This resulted in the asexual reproduction of humans rising from the Earth in a process known as autochphany (to be born from the Earth itself). Autochphanous birth or lineage means one has a special right to live on Earth. For example, the Athenians were descended from a ruler that was brought about through an autochphanous birth via Hephaistos' failed attempt to inseminate Athena (from his ejaculate interacting with the ground).

Classical Mythology 2200 Lecture 8 Notes

Tuesday September 30th, 2014

A Theory On The Origin Of Greek Tragedy:

-Note that it is unsure if the play *Prometheus At Athens* was actually written by Aeschylus (who wrote *Prometheus Bound*). The earliest Greek tragedies are dated to around 470 BC. Although no one is quite sure as to what led to this art form, it is speculated that

tragedies derived from the ritual worship of Dionysus, where chorus sang lyric songs that included mythic storytelling and dancing. The choral leaders would often play a dramatic role, which led to the eventual enactment of the story by performers. As the emphasis shifted gradually from the chorus to the acted episodes, the chorus played a smaller role in the development of Greek tragedies (of which maybe only 10% have survived to this day). This brand new art genre emerged from a time when only choruses or bards were singing songs and demonstrated that performers could take on the persona of stories, while actors take on roles.

City Of Dionysia (From Ca. 533 BCE):

-Every spring, an annual Athenian festival (sponsored by the city-state of Athens) was held as a public event for all of Attica, whereby public businesses would be shut down (even prisoners were let out of prison due to the importance of this event). The purpose of this event was to draw attention to the reciprocal relationship of the state of Athens to its Greek citizens and promote good behavior. Ceremonies included the religious procession and sacrifices to Dionysus as well as the display of tribute to Athens in gratitude for Hellenes' protection with its naval strength (which pushed back the Persians). This helped to remind the other city-states that Athens was in charge. In one such ceremony, a presentation of hoplite armour to orphaned sons (of fathers that were lost in wars) occurs during the festival. Other benefactors are recognized for their services to the state and rewarded with a crown. This Athenian festival was to set the religious and political context for each play that was performed there.

Performances & Performers & The City Of Dionysia:

-Plays were performed in large, open theatres like at Epidaurus (not in Athens) where the orchestra would be the place where the chorus sang and danced (excellent acoustics) and the surrounding hillside would serve as the backdrop for the stage. The chorus on stage sang and danced in response to actors and often served to model the audience's reaction. In a 1930 performance of *Prometheus Bound*, you can see the daughters of Ocean raising their arms to Prometheus who is chained to a hilltop with a mountain landscape behind him. Dithyrambs were songs of praise for Dionysus with a narrative component and involved chorus of about 50 men and boys (100 people) by each of the ten tribes (neighbourhoods) of Athens. This was a huge civic involvement for a play since 5th Century Athens only contained about 30,000 people in total. During the festival at the City of Dionysia, one set of three (tetralogy) tragedy plays and one Satyr play (comic relief) would be performed on each of the three days. Only about 3-5 comedies by different playwrights would be selected from a pool of submissions, revealing a highly-competitive atmosphere involving prizes awarded to the best plays. Aristophanes was a very successful comedy playwright that often broke the 4th wall and even parodied or attacked members of the audience as a way of critiquing political decision-makers in this state-sponsored event. Athenian citizens (even amateurs) wrote, produced, acted and even performed chorus of plays. Only men could perform on the stage and there was a requirement for the wealthiest people in the city (chosen by the chief Archon) to finance the plays performed as well as training of the performers. The choregos means literally the leader of the chorus in Greek, however it refers to the plays' producer.

Tragedy & The Surviving Greek Plays:

-Tragedies were based on the traditional stories from myths (which the audience would immediately recognize) and involved everyone's participation in a whole series of events characterized by spoken episodes, solo songs and choral interludes. A chorus of 12-15 members would do the characters' actions in song and dance, accompanied by instrumental music such as the aulos (reed pipes). Thus, Greek tragedy is more like an opera than a play, where even masks were worn to convey the words spoken expressively. Some of the Greek plays that have survived in their entirety to this day come from the playwrights: Aeschylus (who wrote *Oresteia*, *Persians* and *Seven Against Thebes* from 524-456 BC), Sophocles (who wrote *Oedipus Rex*, *Antigone* and *Ajax* from 496-406 BC) and Euripides (who wrote *Medea*, *Bacchae*, *Trojan Women*, and *Cyclops* from 480-406 BC). Euripides made lots of new modern innovations in Greek drama and his *Cyclops* is the only surviving Satyr play.

The Characters & Setting Of Prometheus Bound:

-*Prometheus Bound* was written around the 5th Century BC (between 475 and 430 BC) and it was attributed to Aeschylus, though this is uncertain. It is thought to be part of a connected trilogy with a possible third play called *Prometheus The Firebearer* following *Prometheus Unbound* ("Firebearer was the cult title for Prometheus as he was worshipped at Athens). The Dramatis Personae consisted of: a chorus of Daughters of Ocean (Oceanids), their father Ocean, Power and Force (personified gods

representing group strength as servants of Zeus), Hephaestus (god of fire and metalwork/forging), Prometheus, Hermes (son of Zeus often associated with the invention of fire), and Io (only mortal character on stage whose mother is mortal and father divine). Note the lack of Pandora, excess of divine characters and Io's transformation into a cow (absent in Hesiod's version of Prometheus) in this story. The setting is often described as remote, uninhabited (sun burns all day and frost freezes everything at night), exposed, rugged, and taking place upon a cliff-top in Scythia (as far as you can go in human lands until you reach the end of the world).

The First Scene Of Prometheus Bound:

-In the first scene, Power and Force (ugly, yet strong) urge Hephaestus to bind Prometheus to a cliff-face (driving a stake through his chest) with unbreakable chains. The Olympian Hephaestus (god of technological fire) is reluctant to chain the Titan Prometheus, hating the fact that he has the skills necessary to do this task. This punishment is towards a former ally of the Olympians (that ensured their victory in the Titanomachy) who stole the fire and championed the survival of the human race. Zeus never appears onstage, but his presence is strongly felt as a new and harsh world-ruler (threatened by those that oppose him). Note how the sacrificial feast at Mekone is not even mentioned. In other artistic renditions of this scene, Hermes is in the background persuading Hephaistos to carry out the punishment stating that it was Prometheus that stole his fire.

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Thursday October 2nd, 2014

The Main Conflict Of Prometheus Bound:

-The conflict surrounds Zeus wanting to annihilate the human race and Prometheus preventing humanity's destruction by stealing fire (all technological sciences) for mortals, as he has cunning intelligence and special knowledge at his disposal. Zeus lacks this piece of knowledge (he is omnipotent, but NOT omniscient) and uses brute force to bind and torture Prometheus, who despite his godhood, suffers terribly. The play essentially represents the clash between brains and brawn.

Enter The Chorus:

-The beautiful virgin chorus of Oceanids (young, tender, innocent, and anxious) are sympathetic to Prometheus (who is on displayed as a constant spectacle to the audience) and they try to give him advice by saying he should appease Zeus. In response, Prometheus mentions he has a secret that Zeus will need that will bring about his downfall. He recounts the Titanomachy (deception vs. force) and predicts a reconciliation between him and Zeus in the future.

The Titan Ocean:

-Ocean, as the Titan father of the chorus, is also sympathetic to Prometheus and tells him to yield and adapt given his predicament (similar to the Oceanids' advice). Prometheus mentions the similar fates of Atlas (carries the world on his shoulders) and Typhoeus/Typhon (buried under the Volcano Mt. Etna) as victims of Zeus' wrath, and warns Ocean to stay out of trouble. It is often quite common for the tragic hero to be consoled and advised by friends.

How Prometheus Helped The Mortals:

-Prior to Prometheus' intervention (into an optimistic vision of progress), humans were helpless, foolish, blind, and lived in caves. It was Prometheus from which all the artistic skills men possess derived. Prometheus taught them (through fire) astronomy, arithmetic, alphabetic writing, animal husbandry, how to build homes, chariots, ships, medical arts, prophecy, mining, etc. Alphabetic writing is described as memory (Mnemosyne) and by giving humans alphabetic writing, Prometheus allowed people to have memory under their control. Prometheus' suffering is seen as part of his fate, demonstrating that one cannot control one's own destiny.

The History Of Io:

-Io was a virgin priestess, daughter of Inachus (the first king of Argos, after which a river is named), who is brother to the chorus (the Oceanids are Io's aunts). She is not immortal as her mother was not divine and thus, is subject to death. Io's dreams instruct her to go out into a meadow, so that Zeus can mate with her, since the Sky Father desires this. Her father Inachus consults the oracles and

sends Io out to avoid the destruction of his household. Zeus, hiding from Hera under a cloud, then approaches Io in the meadow to secretly impregnate yet another mortal woman (driving his wife Hera mad with jealousy). Note that Prometheus is married to one of the Oceanid sisters (Pronoia).

Hera's Treachery & Hermes Argeiphontes:

-When Zeus sees the suspicious Hera coming, he changes Io into a cow (which symbolizes her as a sacrificial cow treasured by the gods as a daughter of the royal household is treasured). Hera (also referred to as the cow-eyed Egyptian goddess Isis) persuades Zeus to offer the cow to her as a present, secretly knowing it is Io. She then chooses the monster Argus (whose whole body is covered with eyes) to watch over the cow form of Io. Zeus however sends his son Hermes to slay Argus and free Io. Thus, Hermes received the title of Hermes Argeiphontes (Hermes the Argos-slayer) as he subdued the monster with a charming melody he sang with his lyre (that he invented), closing all of Argos' eyes.

Io's Entrance & Prophecy Of Prometheus:

-In an extraordinarily long scene, Io enters in her cow form confused and inquisitive. She is agony from a stinging fly that Hera dispatched to drive her insane wherever she goes (by the time she reaches Prometheus, she is at her wit's end). Prometheus foretells her future as traversing through mountains, fighting monsters, etc. He also maps out the journey Io (originally a princess of Argos) will take where she continues to Egypt, the site where Zeus impregnates her through merely touching her (immaculate conception). Their son Epaphos (meaning Touch), is the founder of a long line of kings (himself a king of Egypt), including Herakles, who will liberate Prometheus in the far future. During the fourth generation of this line, Io's descendants return to Hellenes. Prometheus also mentions that Zeus could fall if he makes a certain marriage. In the end Io gets to avoid the terrible mating scene with Zeus, but still receives the glory of birthing Zeus' son.

Prometheus' Secret:

-In this play, Zeus is powerful, but not omniscient, and he is also subject to Destiny like everyone else. He desires to know the secret knowledge (held by Prometheus) that could bring about his doom. This knowledge basically describes that whoever sleeps with the beautiful Nereid (sea nymph) Thetis will have a son mightier than himself. Seeing three generations of such downfall, Zeus avoids sleeping with Thetis. Thus, Thetis gives birth to Achilles (greatest hero of Trojan War) who is mightier than his father the Greek hero Peleus.

Io's Role In *Prometheus Bound*:

-Both Prometheus and Io suffer in horrific ways. She also takes the form of a sacrificial animal like the cow. Io is mainly accredited with mothering the line that will give birth to heroes like Herakles, and in turn benefit the human race. Despite this, she is still seen as a victim of Zeus' lust (and accordingly Hera's jealousy) as her innocent nature (only after long suffering) eventually reconciles her with Zeus (restoration of her human form). She is curious for being a female mortal in constant motion, inevitably winning kleos (glory, fame). Unlike Prometheus, she is quite ignorant and of course, not divine. Her story is responsible for connecting the mythos of Egypt with Greece.

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Tuesday October 7th, 2014

The Danaids:

-The future of Io's dynasty gives her hope (as Prometheus is supposed to do) and is consolation for all the suffering she endured. Epaphus founds a royal dynasty in Egypt and later two brothers Danaus and Aegyptus in the fifth generation after Epaphus. Danaus has 50 daughters (named the Danaids) and Aegyptus (Egypt is named after him) has 50 sons. Those 50 sons of Aegyptus want to marry the Danaus' 50 daughters, who do not oblige. Thus, the 50 Danaids flee with their father to Argos (where Io was originally born), pursued by the 50 sons of Aegyptus. When they come to Argos, they perform a ritual supplication and seek refuge from the gods (Aeschylus made a play about rape regarding this tale). The kings of Argos agree to protect the women, and the pursuing sons of Aegyptus threaten to do battle with the Argives and destroy their city. Danaus commands his daughters to go through with the marriage,

where on their wedding night, each of them will kill their husband as part of their father's vengeful wishes. One of the Danaids, Hypermestra, however refrains from killing her husband (named Lynceus) because he would not touch her without her consent. Hypermestra and Lynceus (both descended from Zeus and Io) form a new dynasty in Argos. The rest of the Danaids undergo a punishment in the Underworld where they must fill leaky pots with water (an task that can never be accomplished). The story of the Danaids is mentioned only briefly in *Prometheus Bound*, despite it being a very important myth. 13 generations after Io, Hercules is fathered by Zeus and is the one that eventually liberates Prometheus by killing the Caucasian Eagle.

No Pandora:

-No reference to Pandora is made in *Prometheus Bound*, an integral character in Hesiod's version of the myth. Both Io and Thetis find their way in this new version of the story, which is absent in Hesiod's account since Thetis can give birth to Zeus' downfall. The marriage motif is still important as a way for powerful male figures to enter into the power struggle with each other. Pandora marks the introduction of women to the human race according to Hesiod.

Hermes:

-A trickster son of Zeus, Hermes is the messenger god that slew Argos Panoptes, the 100-eyed guardian of Io. Where Prometheus is defiant of Zeus, Hermes acts completely in his father's interests by demanding that Prometheus reveal his secret. Hermes acts as an ambassador between gods and humans and being quite sympathetic to Prometheus' pleas, he advises the chorus (serving as a model for the audience's reactions in solidarity with Prometheus) to stand aside. Hermes even threatens Prometheus to further suffering with a possible firestorm, encasement in rock, an eagle to peck at his liver.

Reconstructing The Promethean Trilogy:

-Based on evidence it is possible that *Prometheus Bound* is the first story in a trilogy including *Prometheus Unbound* and *Prometheus The Firebearer*, respectively. In *Prometheus Unbound*, many generations pass and Herakles sets Prometheus free (by shooting the Caucasian Eagle) so that Prometheus may share his knowledge with Zeus (leading to the gods marrying Thetis off to the mortal Peleus in order to give birth to the hero Achilles). In *Prometheus The Firebearer*, the alliance of strength with knowledge (making for a more secure Olympian rule) gives Prometheus special honours whereby he is celebrated in Athens as a cultural hero. It is also interesting to note that Io traverses the known world in a clockwise manner, while her descendant Heracles (geographically completes the circle) journeys in a counterclockwise fashion the other way.

The Colossal head of Zeus:

-Represented as a fully-bearded, mature male, Zeus is the head of the Olympian family and responsible for anything originating from the sky (similar to the many great sky gods of different myths). He is the equivalent of the Roman Jove/Iupater, the name literally meaning "sky father." Zeus' thunderbolt weapons are crafted by the Cyclopes (overseen by Hephaistos) and birds flying in the sky were often seen as messengers from Olympus (his animal form is often as a soaring eagle). Dodona was a very important cult site for Zeus worshippers and is mentioned in *Prometheus Bound*.

Father Of Gods & Men

-Zeus is known for his authority over almost everything, yet he still subject to destiny and fate. However, the very few challenges to his rule that do occur are never successful (an exception may be the power struggle ending in a compromise with Prometheus). As a divine champion of "dike" (justice), Zeus smites those who misbehave and as protector of "xenia" (hospitality) he expects guests and hosts alike to be courteous above all (for the Greeks, part of xenia is what guests bring to their hosts). Zeus is also the protector of suppliants (people performing ritual supplication and gestures like the Danaids) and presides over such proper performance of suppliants. -This thunder god is not only prolific, but extremely familiar with his supreme fertility, for every time Zeus has sex, someone is born.

Tell Me About Your Sex Life, Zeus:

-In one of his first sexual exploits, Zeus impregnates Europa after letting her ride him across the Aegean (in the form of a gorgeous, white, Phoenician bull) on the island of Crete. Europa's descendants become the kings of Crete and her name is used later for the continent inhabited by the white-skinned tribes. Upon her father hearing an oracle say that she would birth a son that would kill her father, Danae is isolated from society. In any case, Zeus takes the shape of a golden shower of rain and impregnates Danae who births the great Perseus. While Queen Alkmene's husband is at war, Zeus sleeps with her in the form of her husband, after which the child Herakles and his half-brother Iphicles are born. In the form of a swan, Zeus also impregnates Leda, the Queen of Sparta, and she gives birth to Helen, Klytemnestra and the Gemini twins Castor and Pollux. Zeus even manages to seduce the young Trojan Ganymede (much to Hera's dismay) as an eagle and he takes the young boy to be a wine bearer for his dinners on Olympus. All of Zeus' mortal children come from royal aristocratic families and never fathers sons and daughters with slaves, shepherds or commoners.

Hera:

-As the wife, consort and sister (yikes) of Zeus, Hera's marriage is unlike any other of the gods. Her Roman equivalent is Juno, the most prestigious of goddesses, but subject to husbandry. Hera is often in bitchy mood due to Zeus' endless bachelor lifestyle. The

major role this divine mother plays is in her persecution of her husband's love objects or offspring. She and Zeus don't have too many children and for good reason (i.e. the deformed and lame asexual birth of Hephaistos). Hera appears to spoil the integrity of Zeus' offspring since their child Ares (the most bloodthirsty and hated of the gods) was born.

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Poseidon, God Of The Sea:

-Known by the Romans as Neptune, Poseidon was married to Amphitrite (goddess of the sea) and caused earthquakes, tidal waves, and floods. Called the Earth-shaker, Poseidon's weapon is the trident and he is often associated with horses and bulls. He has fathered monsters such as Polyphemus (mothered by Thoosa as one of the Cyclopes described in the *Odyssey*) and Pegasus (mothered by Medusa as a white, winged stallion) and serves as a foil (antithesis) for Athena, who is a tamer of such natural phenomena. Nike (the winged goddess of victory) often thinks of Poseidon as an enemy of hers that like a temperamental attention-seeker, always attempts to undermine her sister Athena's fame and accomplishments. Despite this, Nike makes offerings to appease Poseidon as a sort of allegory in order that the Greek navy has a decisive victory in the Battle of Salamis against the Persians.

Aphrodite As The Goddess Of Sexual Desire:

-Known as the Roman Venus, Aphrodite originated from the castrated genitals of Ouranos (Sky) in Hesiod's *Theogony*. According to Homer, she is a daughter of Zeus (an Olympian) and Dione (a Titan) and represents sexual attraction, pleasure and loveliness, in addition to spontaneous deceit and violence. Her titles consist of the "golden", "laughter-loving", and "Cyprian" Aphrodite as she is honoured in the poems of Sappho (a woman herself) during the 7th Century BC. Symbolized by the beautiful dove, it is no surprise that Aphrodite is unfaithful to her seemingly unattractive husband Hephaistos, only to have an affair with the bad boy Ares. Aphrodite was particularly intimate with Anchises (cousin of King Priam of Troy) and together helped him father their son Aeneas, who is glorified for his founding of Rome. As the patron goddess of Rome, Venus, Aphrodite is sometimes the mother of Eros (not according to Hesiod).

Ares As The God Of War & Bloodlust:

-As the Roman war-god Mars, Ares is hated by all gods and men alike and is one of the only Olympian children fathered by both Zeus and Hera. His affair with Aphrodite resulted in the immortal offspring Harmonia and her twin brothers Phobos (Fear) and Deimos (Panic) that often accompanied him into battle. Although he embodied the physical valor necessary for success in war, Ares was a dangerous force, "overwhelming, insatiable in battle, destructive, and man-slaughtering." Where Athena (a goddess of military strategy) represented the winning side of the triumphant Greeks, Ares (representing violence and blood-lust) sponsored the losing side during the Trojan War, leading to universal hatred of him as a war-god. In the *Illiad*, Zeus tells Ares that he is the god most hateful to him. Often exposed to ridicule regarding his affair with Aphrodite, Ares is shamed when Hephaestus discovers Aphrodite's promiscuity through Helios (the all-seeing Sun) and planned a trap during one of their trysts. While Aphrodite and Ares lay together in bed, Hephaestus ensnared them in an unbreakable chain-link net so small as to be invisible and dragged them to Mount Olympus to expose them in front of the other gods for retribution. Ares was much more revered by the Romans as Mars for his role as a guardian deity that protected the Republic.

Hestia:

-Hestia (Titan daughter of Cronus and Rhea) is a virgin goddess of the hearth, ancient Greek architecture, and the right ordering of domesticity, the family, and the state. In *Theogony* she is known as the first and last born after Zeus overthrows Cronus, though few myths feature her as a character as she stays at home and tends the hearth fire. Her Roman equivalent, Vesta, is contrastly a highly honoured and powerful state goddess. Hestia received the first offering at every sacrifice in the household. In the public domain, the hearth of the prytaneum functioned as her official sanctuary. With the establishment of a new colony, flame from Hestia's public hearth in the mother city would be carried to the new settlement.

Demeter (Ceres) & Persephone (Proserpina):

-Zeus and Demeter (goddess of the grain and agricultural harvest) are the parents of Persephone/Kore (goddess of vegetation). Demeter's symbol is sheaves of wheat, the torch, bread, and the poppy as she and Persephone form a mother/daughter dyad.

Hades (Dis Pater/Pluto):

-Holds the position as the god of the dead and riches as well as King of the Underworld. He is often depicted as a mature, bearded male like Zeus and Poseidon that inhabits the dark, shadowy and mournful Underworld (also named after him). He is the first-born son of Rhea and Cronus and along with his brothers Zeus and Poseidon helped to overthrow their father so that they may take ownership of the Underworld, sea and sky.

Katabasis:

-This is a Greek term describing one's descent into the Underworld. If one were to resurface after katabasis, this though to be a heroic achievement (e.g. Herakles descends at least 3 times into Hades). However in the case of Persephone's female katabasis, it is much to her detriment as it keeps her separated from her mother Demeter during the winter months.

Eggue (Betrothal) In Ancient Greek Marriage:

-In Ancient Greek marriage, matrimony can be summarized in two stages: the exogamous action that takes a girl to be wed away from her childhood home and the virilocal action that leads a bride to live in her new husband's home. The first step in marriage between ancient Greeks is the actual betrothal or eggue, which is arranged between the father of the parthenos (unmarried girl, maiden, virgin) and her future husband in order to forge a lasting bond between households.

Ekdosis In Ancient Greek Marriage:

-After eggue is ekdosis, or the ritual "giving away of the bride." For this, the nymphe (bride) is washed, dressed, and adorned by the female members of her household. Feasting and a torch-lit procession the follow that leads the pair on a horse-drawn chariot to the husband's home (oikos).

Ancient Greek Bridal Procession:

-The procession itself began with the painful ritual departure, a drama of the pain the bride felt leaving her family. The groom grabbed her wrist while the bride's father delivered her to her husband's control, saying "in front of witnesses I give this girl to you for the production of legitimate children." After this, the bride was treated as a symbolic captive, and to her the procession reflected a crisis that needed to be endured and overcome, as it was her final transition from childhood to marriage. She was accompanied by her husband and his friend in a cart. The bride's mother would be the one to carry the torches in a protective role, which when combined with musical accompaniment, helped ward off evil spirits that might harm the bride during the procession.

Classical Mythology 2200 Lecture 12 Notes**Tuesday October 14th, 2014****Gamos In Ancient Greek Marriage:**

-Gamos is the wedding or marriage festival, including a banquet for those in matrimony as well as the subsequent consummation. Rituals associated with this event were specifically designed for the gyne (wife, woman, or mother of the son) to alleviate the anxiety associated with such an important transition.

Funerary Ritual & Procession:

-In this death rite for a family member's passing, the deceased's corpse is washed, dressed, and adorned by female members of household. After the wake (period of visitation in the family's house), the corpse is carried through a torch-lit procession by horse-drawn cart from their home to the burial ground (very similar to the bride going through a torch-lit procession drawn by chariot horses to her new home). Offerings are also made to the gods of the Underworld in order to ease the transition to their new home in Hades. The people mourn with hands raised and often sing a lament to ease their suffering during the funeral procession.

Homeric Hymn To Demeter:

-It is important to note that this Homeric hymn was not written by Homer, but was part of a series of hymns to the gods in the epic style of Homer written by an anonymous author. In the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, Persephone's unusual female experience of marriage is described, whereby the etiology of the 3-season cycle (not four) is explained. The power of female fertility is represented in spring (when Earth comes to life again), summer (when Earth is fruitful and harvested) and winter (when nothing may grow). The hymn also covers Demeter's foundation of the religious cult known as the Eleusinian Mysteries.

The Eleusinian Mysteries:

-The Eleusinian Mysteries were an important religious cult celebrated annually that honoured Demeter and Persephone. Its rituals were based in Eleusis (roughly 20 km from Athens) and involved a religious procession from Athens, moments of extreme obscenity, and all-night feasting. Before one was exposed to the secret rituals taking place, they first had to undergo an initiations that included purification, fasting and other ordeals. It was always a great privilege to be initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries as some had a promise of a better afterlife (mystery religions invited people to be initiated and offered a more blessed afterlife in return for their loyalty). The mystery hall in which these rituals took place was called the Telesterion. The secret rituals performed here involved darkness, noises, movements, and confusion before a dazzling light was revealed. This story is reflected in the narrative of many experiences of these initiation rituals.

Eleusis In The Homeric Hymn To Demeter:

-King Keleos and Queen Metaneira of Eleusis produced four daughters and one infant son, Demophoön, who is very precious to the royal household. Disguised as an old woman, Demeter becomes Demophoön's nurse with the intention of making him immortal. So she feeds the baby from her own breasts, giving him nectar and ambrosia, but his actual mother Metaneira becomes concerned that the baby is growing so fast and so beautifully that she decides to spy on the old nurse. However, by doing so, she effectively ruins the secret rite (speaking to the adamant secrecy of such rituals) and Demeter (in a dazzling blaze of light) reveals her true goddess form, instructing the Eleusinians to conduct Mysteries in her honour hence forth.

Hades & Persephone:

-Persephone is often pictured as holding out her arms in terror and resistance since Zeus gave her to his brother Hades without the consent of her mother Demeter, and as such, Persephone becomes a body that bridges the Underworld and the heavens. It all transpired when the young maiden Persephone was in a meadow picking flowers and Gaia suddenly grew a snare for Persephone, whereby Hades ascends from a rift on his chariot to take her into the Underworld. Demeter is offered food and drink in grievance for her daughter where in the household sits a stool for her covered with fleece (appears to be a reflection of the actual cult rituals, such as when Herakles is sitting on a fleece as an initiate himself). Iambic meter is a rhythmic device often used for obscene, joking poetry (i.e. telling dirty jokes to the goddess to make her laugh). Note that a son of Demeter (being a descendant of Cronus) could be very dangerous to Zeus's reign. So Zeus sends his minor messenger Iris (the rainbow) to Demeter, stating that she needs to make the crops grow again. In fact, all the gods eventually come down and appeal to her, but fail in persuading her until she gets her daughter back. In many ways, the seed that grows out of Earth is represented by the metaphor of Persephone returning to the surface world from Hades. It is eventually Hermes that descends into the Underworld to arrange for Persephone's safe return.

The Bride Of Death:

-In the Underworld, Hermes finds Hades reclining on a bed with his shy spouse Persephone, a reluctant bride that only wants her mother. At first, Hades appears to sympathize with her, but later gives a honey-sweet pomegranate seed for her to eat. He does this stealthily of course since sharing food with someone is a way of consummating a marriage, meaning Persephone's ingestion of the seed requires her to stay at her husband's side in the Underworld for some time. Demeter senses a trick upon Persephone when they are reunited, and so for two-thirds of the year, the young goddess spends her time with her mother, but during winter (one-third of the year when seeds do not grow), Persephone assumes her role as the Bride of Death and Queen of the Underworld. Thus Persephone is a mythical example of female experience in both marriage and death since the myth reflects structural parallels between funeral and

wedding rituals (both rites of passage marking a major transition). Her change of status to Hades' wife is beneficial, but occurs through experiencing the loss of her mother, home and girlhood.

A Comparison Of Female Heroines In Greek Myth:

-Though Pandora stands as a negative model for women in Greek Myth, Persephone and Io contrast sharply, sharing many similarities (despite the former being a goddess and the latter being mortal). Both Persephone and Io are virgin girls that have reached the age to wed, they are depicted in a non-domestic liminal space (e.g. meadow) and undergo a radical transformation (e.g. cow). They are also both unwilling and unknowing, suffering greatly, however they do benefit humanity and enjoy great honour as a result.

Classical Mythology 2200 Lecture 14 Notes

Tuesday October 21st, 2014

Apollo's Heroic Biography:

-In the life of Apollo, we see the pattern often exemplified by the divine hero, where he is threatened at birth, travels far and wide, and slays a dragon. Four days after his birth, Apollo killed the subterranean dragon Python, which lived in Delphi beside the Castalian Spring (which emitted vapors that caused the oracle at Delphi to give her prophecies). Hera sent the serpent to hunt Apollo's mother Leto to her death across the world. To protect his mother, Apollo begged Hephaistos for a bow and arrows. After receiving them, Apollo cornered Python in the sacred cave at Delphi. Apollo killed Python but had to be punished for it, since Python was a child of Gaia. Hera then sent the giant Tityos to rape Leto. This time Apollo was aided by his sister Artemis in protecting their mother. During the battle Zeus finally relented his aid and hurled Tityos down to Tartarus. When Zeus struck down Apollo's son Asclepius with a lightning bolt for resurrecting Hippolytus (Apollo's beloved) from the dead (transgressing Themis by stealing Hades's subjects), Apollo in revenge killed the Cyclopes (they fashioned the bolt for Zeus). Apollo would have been banished to Tartarus forever for this defiance of Zeus, but was instead sentenced to one year of hard labor, due to the intercession of his mother, Leto. During this time he served as a shepherd for King Admetus of Pherae in Thessaly. Admetus treated Apollo well, and, in return, the god conferred great benefits on Admetus. Apollo helped Admetus win Alcestis, the daughter of King Pelias and later convinced the Fates to let Admetus live past his time, if another took his place. But when it came time for Admetus to die, his parents, whom he had assumed would gladly die for him, refused to cooperate. Instead, Alcestis took his place, but Herakles managed to "persuade" Thanatos, the god of death, to return her to the world of the living. In the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, the god appeared as a huge dolphin and carried Cretan priests to Delphi (explains the name of the place), where they evidently transferred their religious practices (establishing his cult centre).

Artemis (Diana):

-As a perpetual virgin, Apollo's twin sister Artemis prefers the wilderness to live as a hunter (masculine pursuit), accompanied by her band of virgin followers. A follower of Artemis, Callisto, was impregnated by Zeus (disguised as Artemis), subsequently changed into a bear by jealous Hera, and gave birth to Arcas (who was rescued by Hermes to become the new king of Arcadia and its greatest hunter). Not knowing his mother was the bear approaching him in the woods, Arcas shot her with an arrow. Zeus feeling pity, made the two into constellations (in a process known as castration) called Ursa Major (big bear) and Ursa Minor (little bear).

The Death Of Actaeon (Aktaion):& The Mistress Of Animals:

-Actaeon was a hunter, Theban hero and son of Autonoe and Aristeus that accidentally saw the virgin Artemis bathing. In this tale of pathos, the hunter becomes the hunted as Artemis transforms him into a stag and Actaeon's own hunting dogs tear him apart (sparagmos) in a wolf-like frenzy. Artemis is seen as the protector of animals as she is the one who tames them from her temple at Ephesus. Artemis is also seen as a mother goddess depicted with snake-like spirals, winged arms, and swastikas (all symbols of the mother goddess) with the bull's head and the two lion-like creatures on either side of her.

Artemis & Girls:

-In Greek culture, young girls were associated with wildness and were only "tamed" by marriage. As young girls approached the age of

marriage, they dedicated their toys to Artemis, danced for her, and wove wreaths for her. In fact, it was Artemis who presided over the rites of passage of young girls into adolescence. This involved brauronia (rituals including bear-dances).

Queen Niobe & The Slaughter Of The Niobids:

-Niobe was a human queen with 14 children that boasted quite fervently of her superiority to the Titan Leto, who only produced 2 children. This story of human hubris divine in the Iliad provoked the vengeance of Leto's children Apollo and Artemis who felt they needed to defend their mother's honour by slaying all of Niobe's offspring (Niobids). This shows Niobe to be an icon of grief and lament and teaches the lesson that mortals should never compare themselves to the gods.

Classical Mythology 2200 Lecture 15 Notes

Thursday October 23rd, 2014

Her Father's Daughter (Athena As The Citadel Goddess):

-Born from Zeus' head, and a perpetual virgin, Athena, like Artemis, has no divided loyalties. She is usually shown armed, as a defender of civilization not unlike Herakles, Perseus and Odysseus (in contrast to Ares, the destroyer of civilizations). In contrast with Poseidon, who represents the difficult, unpredictable forces of nature, she is a champion of culture and a clever inventor of ways to tame natural phenomena, particularly those made by Poseidon (e.g. bridle, ships, weaving, olive harvest, etc.). She is a protector of cultural heroes like Herakles, Perseus and Odysseus and is almost always at their side.

Goddess In The City:

-As the patron goddess of the city Athens, her temple (the Parthenon) enjoys a place of prominence and honour on the Acropolis. She presides over trials in the court of law and other civic institutions of the urban sphere like politics (much unlike her wild sister Artemis). The autochthonous birth of Erichonius (the first king of Athens), occurred as result of Hephaistos' clumsy advances on Athena, when his ejaculate soaked Athena's wool cloth on the ground ("erich" meaning "wool" and "thonius" meaning "earth-born"). This is an important mythological narrative since it established a claim to that land of Athens, so Athena can be thought of as the mother of Erichonius. Athena, in general, is very militaristic and is very often presented in statues as inseparable from her helmet, armor and spear.

Hephaistos (Vulcan) As The Lamé Smith:

-As the asexually-conceived offspring of Hera (as she was offended by Zeus' birth to Athena), Hephaistos was either born lame (as seen in the *Theogony* and Hymn to Apollo) or he was injured by Zeus or Hera. Though not as handsome as Ares, Hephaistos was a greatly honoured among the Greeks as a god of the forge, technological fire and metalwork. His injuries occur as the result of Hera (or Zeus) throwing him into the ocean (near the island of volcanic island of Lemnos) due to his mother's disappointment in his disfigurement. Luckily, Thetis takes care of him and in time he becomes a prime Olympian that utilizes volcanoes as his forge and fire for the marvelous craftsmanship he produces. His prestige earns him the position of overseeing the Cyclopes' production of Zeus' powerful thunderbolts, though at the same time, he is not taken very seriously and often regarded as a comic figure among the Olympians. Paradoxically, Hephaistos marries the way-out-of-his-league Aphrodite, yet his good, modest nature acts to mediate conflicts between his mother and father. After Hera disposed of him, he originally refused to offer his skills to the Olympians, but Dionysus soon offers Hephaistos a cup of wine (which he cannot resist) and leads the lame god (riding in on his donkey) to Olympus.

Hephaistos' Wheelchair & Hephaisteion:

-Hephaistos was known to have built beautiful, moving statues for his Olympian family (like robot butlers) and his handiwork is credited with forging the miraculous and legendary shield of Achilles. Carrying his double-edged hammer, Hephaistos is pictured usually seated in his winged wheelchair that enables him to travel as fast as any other god. Close to the Parthenon is a temple to Hephaistos known as Hephaisteion. Though Prometheus is credited with bringing fire to mankind, it was Hephaistos who generally was most skilled with utilizing it since it was Prometheus that "stole" it from him. Technology as it was associated with the gods was generally a good thing,

but it definitely carried a shadow side. Hermes is the other fire god that is known for actually inventing fire/technology, being like Prometheus, largely a trickster god (a huge value is placed on his intelligence, but also the degree of his deceit).

Hermes (Mercury) As The Divine Trickster:

-As the son of Zeus and Maia (a Pleiadian daughter of Atlas that lives in an obscure cave far from Olympus), Hermes is the messenger of the Olympian gods that crosses numerous boundaries. The patron of messengers, travelers, orators, and merchants, Hermes is often depicted with wings, a traveler's hat and his medicinal, mystical staff called the Caduceus, with intertwining twin serpents (gifted to him by Apollo). Though Apollo is associated with medicine, the Caduceus is carried by his younger brother Hermes. He is trickster god that is resourceful as an inventor, yet convincing liar and thief that eventually ascends the social hierarchy of the gods from his humble beginnings to become the psychopomp (conductor of the dead souls to the Underworld). His tale and achievements therein (e.g. slaying Argos) have a folktale quality (despite his divine nature), fulfilling his duty as the sacred herald.

Hermes & Sarpedon:

-In a scene from the *Illiad*, the hero Sarpedon has fallen in battle and his father Zeus mourns for him, wishing for him to come back to life. However, since no one is able to turn the power of the fates, Zeus sends Sleep and Death to take away Sarpedon to the Underworld with Hermes leading him as psychopomp.

The Homeric Hymn To Hermes:

-The Homeric Hymn to Hermes is about the young god's establishment as an important Olympian. This story of transgression ultimately has a happy ending and is a pastoral hymn as it is set in the rural countryside (idealized agricultural landscape). Zeus visits a humble town to mate with Maia, where even though they produce Hermes sexually, their deceitful relationship is like the reason for the trickster god's nature. As an immortal infant, Hermes feels he is destined to make manifest glorious deeds among mortals. So he invents the lyre and steals the cows of Apollo (as trickster gods usually wrestle cattle). In crossing the boundary of his birth home immediately, he crafts a lyre from a tortoise shell and starts singing about his divine mother and father, essentially making a hymn to himself. As Hermes is always yearning for new things (quite an enterprising deity), he puts down the lyre in his cradle and suddenly craves the taste of flesh, despite gods only being allowed to eat nectar and ambrosia, and receive smoke from sacrifice. This identity crisis he has with his divinity compels Hermes to travel to the cattle of the gods, which is the property of Apollo (who is in charge of all their wealth). Hermes steals all their cattle and makes them walk backwards to covers their tracks, wearing special sandals to hide his infant feet. Wanting to make fire, Hermes produces a spark by rubbing together laurel branches and thus gave man fire and kindling (a resourceful trickster figure like he must be associated with fire in some way). Acting as a priest, he then butchers all the cattle for sacrifice, and roasts the fat-rich flesh on wooden spits, dividing them into 12 portions for the 12 Olympians. He struggles to resist the temptation of eating meat he finds the smell tantalizing. His mom warns of the consequences of his actions, while Hermes responds with his desire to be a prince of robbers and break into Apollo's vault at Pytho. Apollo later threatens Hermes to Tartarus since he is a big liar, so takes him to Zeus' court as the prosecutor. Zeus finds the whole situation utterly hilarious and the brothers are reconciled once Hermes exchanges his lyre for Apollo's cattle. Hermes is ordained psychopomp and in return for making Apollo a panflute, is gifted with the ability to read the signs of bee migration and movement.

Classical Mythology 2200 Lecture 16 Notes

Tuesday October 28th, 2014

The Amphipolis Tomb:

-The Amphipolis tombe was found in Northern Greece, near Thessaloniki (Salonika) and is dated to be from the Hellenistic period (330-300 BCE). Currently being excavated by a team of archaeologists, it was likely made for a very important person, perhaps close to Alexander the Great. In recent days/weeks, a beautifully-preserved mosaic has been uncovered. This mosaic depicts Persephone (reaching out for help) on horseback in the arms of Hades with Hermes on the left leading the horses.

The House Of Cadmus:

-Dionysus is shown as the dissolver of boundaries (both of physical and personal identity), as opposed to Hermes who is a crosser (and thus maintainer) of boundaries. The House of Cadmus is the family tree for Dionysus. Cadmus was the founding ruler of the city of Thebes, a very important city in Greek myth and tragedy). Harmonia, the love child of Aphrodite's and Ares' affair marries the wealthy merchant Cadmus who hails from Phoenicia to do trading as an aristocrat in Greece. He was told to found a city where he came across a cow lying down, but upon passing such a location, happens to stumble upon a dragon guarding the place (which he later slays). He takes the teeth of the slain dragon and sows them in the ground as if they were seeds, resulting in an army of men to be grown known as the spartoi (meaning "sown men"). This is an autochthonous origin story that justifies the authority of the ruling families in Thebes. Cadmus and Harmonia have 4 daughters: Ino (who marries Athamas, one of the spartoi, to give birth to Learchus and Melicertes), Agave (who marries Echion, one of the spartoi, to give birth to Pentheus), Autonoe (who marries Aristeus, one of the spartoi, to give birth to Actaeon), and Semele (who has a relationship with Zeus to birth Dionysus). Excluding Semele, bad things happen to all of Cadmus' grandsons: Athamas goes mad and kills Learchus (thinking he was a fawn) and drives Melicertes into the sea, while Actaeon (upon seeing Artemis bathing naked and transformation into a stag) and Pentheus (after mistaken for a boar by bacchanalia participants) were torn alive (died by sparagmos).

Dionysus (Bacchus, Liber):

-In *Theogony*, Zeus mingled with Cadmus' daughter Semele of Thebes, a mortal who is impregnated with the mortal Dionysus. Hera's displeasure at this leads to her scheming under the guise of an old crone that befriends and mentors Semele. In this form, Hera convinces Semele to prove Zeus was her true lover the next time she mates with him. So Semele asks Zeus to come to her in his true divine form, resulting in the god's reluctant transformation into a thunderbolt and incinerating Semele on the spot. Hermes however removes the baby (not yet adult) Dionysus from her uterus sews him onto Zeus' thigh. This is why Dionysus is called twice-born and how he comes to represent the less rational aspects of life in his godhood status (since he came from the lower part of Zeus' body). In Rome, he is called Bacchus or Liber, as he pertains to liberation and freedom from social constructs.

Hera's Persecution Of Dionysus:

-While he was a vulnerable growing infant, Dionysus was hidden from the scheming Hera on Mt. Nysa and raised by nymphs (who transform him into a goat for his protection). His older brother Hermes then gave the adolescent Dionysus over to his uncle Athamas and aunt Ino, who raised him as a girl. Unfortunately, Hera drove Athamas to insanity as he killed his elder son Learchus and drove Ino and Melicertes into the sea. Exile, Madness, shape-shifting, and gender-shifting are important themes in Dionysus upbringing.

The Foreign God:

-Although born in Thebes on the Greek mainland, Dionysus is called the foreign god because he grows to manhood in foreign lands to the east (in exile). He too, was driven mad by Hera, but he is healed by his initiation into the rites of Cybele, the Phrygian mother-goddess (a very extensive mystery religion exists in her honour). As a result of his initiation into the great mother goddess' mystery rites, Dionysus gets obtains some of her influences such as adopting the pipes and tambourines as ceremonial instruments (with which followers of this Eastern mother goddess play music) as well as wearing Eastern robes as opposed to the Hellenic tunic. The rustic, dance-like percussion and pipe music that accompanies Dionysus is very distinct from the plucked lyre music of Apollo. Dionysus' Thyrsus is his magical staff adorned with a grand pinecone (a symbol of fertility in the vegetal world). The thiasos are the followers of Dionysus (lively, ecstatic people of song and dance that accompany him in ritual) and are completely released from the norms of society. The women are called maenads or bacchantes, while the male followers are satyrs (creatures that are part animal and part human with pointed ears and grapes hanging from their brows). These followers are primarily interested in care of physical appetites and are often pictured with snakes, spotted leopards, cats, etc. Thus, Dionysus is about communal participation in the worship and concerned with happy miracles. Where Artemis is the goddess of animals and Demeter is the goddess of agricultural crops, Dionysus is the god of things that grow in wilderness (often riding a panther).

The Maenads Of The Thyrsus-Bearer:

-Dionysus is ritualistically pictured bearing an ivy crown, holding his Thyrsus amongst grapes, while the tailed satyrs play the allos

(pipes). With his exotic, effeminate, foreign outfit, Dionysus exemplifies “the other” and resisting his positive force can result in terrible consequences. Maenads in myth would offer Dionysus a sparagmos of a live hare as a sacrifice, while in reality conventional sacrifices were actually carried out. Maenads in the presence of Dionysus completely abandon the conventional roles and customs of Athenian women as they have their heads thrown back in sacred ecstasy (proper posture for Athenian women was modest and focused on the ground) and sport leopard skins and snakes on their person (Dionysus represents the dissolution of conventional roles).

Return To Greece:

-As Dionysus returned to Greece, travelling through various city-states to establish cult sites and recognition as an Olympian son of Zeus, he was often met with resistance from royal families that were threatened by what he represented and discouraged his worship. When Dionysus was persecuted by Lycurgus he took refuge in the sea with the Nereid Thetis, while the maenads (bacchantes) and satyrs that attended him were taken prisoners. Later the maenads were released and Dionysus drove Lycurgus mad, so that he struck his own son dead with an axe, imagining that he was lopping a branch of a vine, and before he recovered his mind, he had cut off his son's extremities. Daughters of royal households were often punished because of their refusal to cast Dionysus aside. Minyads were the daughters of King Minyas, who resisted worship of the newly arrived god. The Minyads thus, stayed inside the palace and worked their looms. Suddenly, ivy and tendrils entwined the looms, serpents filled the wool-baskets, and wine and milk dripped from the roof. One sister was chosen by lot to make a sacrifice to the angry god. With her sisters' help, she tore her son to pieces, and they rushed out to the mountainside to join the other maenads and were transformed into owls or bats. Dionysus seems to represent a more democratic, egalitarian social structure where everyone becomes one with the god and his community (strongly opposed to hierarchical monarchy). Those who resist Dionysus typically go mad, become dismembered, or kill their own children. Dionysus marries happily to the Cretan princess Ariadne (weaver of dreams).

Delphi:

-In contrasting Dionysus and Apollo, we see that both are necessary deities and important to human psychology. For most of the year, Apollo's seat is at Delphi, but for the three winter months, Delphi is the residence and place of worship for Dionysus. Apollo's rational control and harmony is in sharp contrast to the balancing force of Dionysus' extremes in mental and emotional state accompanied by percussion.

Dissolution Of Boundaries:

-Some of the boundaries and distinctions that are called into question or dissolved by Dionysus include: gender (male/female), race (god/human/animal), social status (slave/free man), topological or psychological existence (inside/outside), nationality (Greek/foreigner), and spiritual state (life/death). Dionysus accomplishes this through madness, wine intoxication, ecstasy and communion (ecstatic ritual that involves everyone in the community, not just individuals). In this way, Dionysus provide people with the power to be free from cares or worries (hakuna matata). He is not surprisingly the patron of the city Dionysia, in which people play different parts and normal identities are taken down.

Fertility & Rebirth:

-Dionysus as a god of fertility is largely associated with wild plants and vines (e.g. ivy, grape, evergreen), which is quite different to Demeter who concerns herself with managed crops and agriculture of civilization. Apart from being represent by wild animals such as cats and snakes, Dionysus symbolizes rebirth (being reborn himself) with vital juices (within organisms; natural fertile liquids that provide and sustain life) such as sap, blood, wine, and semen.

Orphic Tradition:

-In the Orphic Tradition's variation of the myth, Dionysus is the son of Zeus and Persephone, thereby uniting sky and underworld and thus fating him to govern the universe. But Zeus' Titan enemies tear Dionysus to pieces (sparagmos) and eat him raw (omophagia). Luckily, Athena (loyal to Zeus) saves his heart, which Zeus swallows before impregnating Semele. Dionysus is later twice-born (first divine, then mortal in this version) and Zeus incinerates the Titans. From the ashes of the Titans, Zeus creates humanity and so, humans contain a divine element (have the divine within them).

Dionysiac Sacrificial Ritual In Myth:

-Dionysus' worship involves a lot of ecstatic mountain dancing where women and satyrs in the wilderness alike are outside the city ("ecstasos" literally means to stand outside of something). Also associated with his rituals are the sparagmos of sacrificial offerings and subsequent ingestion of them raw, which helps confer communion with Dionysus and become a part of nature itself (gaining supernatural strength). By defying the conventional sacrificial ritual with slain, cooked offerings, Dionysus defines his own separate culture.

Phallophoria:

-This ritual procession in honour of the god Dionysus involves a parade with floats where men are presented with the opportunity to ride the large phallus. It is a wonderful historic procession complete ivy streamers and phallophoric songs. The song of the phallus bearers is preserved in Athenaeus has the lyrics: "Stand back, make plenty of room for the god! For the god, erect and at bursting-point, wishes to pass through your midst." This allows for Dionysus to symbolically penetrate the entire city's culture with his image.

The Homeric Hymn To Dionysus:

-Alluding to Dionysus' attractiveness, the Homeric hymn recounts how, while disguised as a mortal sitting beside the seashore, a few sailors spotted Dionysus and believed he was a prince. They attempted to kidnap him and sail him far away to sell for him ransom or into slavery. They tried to bind him with ropes, but no type of rope could hold him. Dionysus then shape-shifted into a fierce lion and unleashed a bear on board, killing those he came into contact with. Those who jumped off the ship were mercifully turned into dolphins. The only survivor was the helmsman, Acoetes, who recognized the god and tried to stop his sailors from the start. This hymn describes very well how Dionysus is associated with bond dissolution and madness, where denial of his ways brings about punishment and honouring his divinity brings reward.