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Jahrhunderts. She states that she is “not a Susan anymore”[104] and this already hints at her transformation. London: Longman, 1997, 129. Adam, who works as a part-time museum guard, approaches to ask her to step back: Adam: … you stepped over the line. Mayer, Mathias and Gerhard Neumann. [140] See Shaw’s and Russell’s dramas. Reichert, Klaus. [75] Miles, 343. [97] Martin, 229. Central elements of Ovid’s tale, however, have been preserved in The Shape of Things. Vom Künstler und Erzieher zum pathologischen Fall. First, its Galatea figure is male – therefore not female repression is in the focus of the play but repression and dependence in more general, that is social terms. [19] Dörrie, 24. is in love with Sarah, the daughter of his landlady. [5] See Heinrich Dörrie. From the beginning, Rita is taking her transformation into her own hands: she decides to leave the working-class tristesse behind and acquire an education, therefore she enrolls in the Open University programme. [84] Durbach, 536. Caxton, William. [96] See Weiser, 193-94. [151] Michèle Roberts, “Angela Carter: Glam rock feminist”. During the presentation of her thesis project in the ninth scene, she admits that “with the right coaxing of [her] material – yes, ‘coaxing’ often of a sexual nature […] – [she] could hone the inside of [her] sculpture as well as the outside”.[171] Indeed, she did not only reform his appearance but also his tastes and habits; for example, she “coaxed him into eating his first vegetarian meal”[172]. “Shaw’s Life. The first three lines of the poem introduce the relationship of Pygmalion and his “bride”: “Cold, I was, like snow, like ivory. Consequently, H.’s pygmalionic love for her cannot find fulfilment – Sarah already leads a life independent from his influence. He is compared to a child and like a child “he always used to kiss his doll goodnight”.[129] This goodnight kiss, however, will be his death. That’s the point. [147] Joseph Bristow and Trev Lynn Broughton, eds. Frankfurt a. [150] Gamble, 4. In Shaw’s play, the positive view of Caxton or Rousseau on the humanistic educator Pygmalion turns into a rather negative one. [100] Russell, 36. Mayer and Neumann 497-516. The transforming power, however, is not ascribed to the goddess Venus here, but to “a mysterious loophole in [the world’s] metaphysics”.[132] The awakened marionette gains life by sucking her master’s “breath from his lungs” and sinking “her teeth into his throat”, thus draining him like a vampire.[133] Finally, the monster-woman sets fire to her dead master’s booth and escapes from the fairground “towards the town, making her way like a homeing pigeon, out of logical necessity, to the single brothel it contained”.[134] In the end, Lady Purple has emancipated herself from the dominion of her master. [25] See Annegret Dinter. Gilbert’s portrayal of Galatea is, according to him, “the chauvinist definition of ideal womanhood, [the woman being] a piece of property without a sense of self, on her knees before a sovereign master”.[63] As typical for 19th century adaptations of the myth, Gilbert presents Galatea as the devoted and grateful creature of her master Pygmalion. [28] John Gower. William Morris’s poem “Pygmalion and the Image” (1868/70) appears in this light. [122] Carter, 2001, 28. He begins to shape Eliza’s speech and manners until she passes as a duchess. Poetry in Translation. Martin, Dieter. [133] Carter, 2001, 36. The Infernal Desires of Angela Carter. Not female behaviour in particular is attacked but the general human wish to change people for the better, whatever better might be. Most male twentieth-century writers retelling the Pygmalion story were occupied with Pygmalion’s artistic crisis.[70] My concern, however, is the feminist revisioning of the myth. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009, 293-310. “Pygmalion and the Image”. Instead, he starts to carve a statue from ivory “and gave it perfect shape, more beautiful than ever woman born”[11], thus creating the image of an ideal woman to his taste. The moral of this version of the myth is a rejection of the sin of sloth (“For Slowthe bringth in alle wo”[29]). Still, in Angela Carter’s case the label ‘feminist’ is a controversial one. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2008, 13: “Die Forschung ist sich darin einig, dass es sich bei Ovids Version […] um […] die erste literarische Variante handelt.” [4] Miles, 332. Voigts-Virchow, Eckart. [174] LaBute, 9. The puppet master is not able to maintain his control over Lady Purple but is killed by his own desires, by his own perverted fantasies. [104] Russell, 21. [93] Shaw, 348. According to them, Pygmalion’s behaviour, that is loving a lifeless work of art, is both irrational and sinful.[26] After a thousand years of silence about Pygmalion, the tale was revived in the late Middle Ages as a result of the renaissance of Ovid’s work in the 13th century.[27] In his Confessio Amantis (1390/93), John Gower uses Pygmalion as a positive example of a lover who does not give up and dares to speak of his love. He is oblivious to the women peering through his doorway, along with his previous statues that remind us of the Three Graces. [106] Russell, 67. He stays a misogynist and instead of declaring his love to his Galatea, he expresses his contempt by calling her “draggletailed guttersnipe”[81], “baggage”[82] etc. In comparison, LaBute’s drama seems to be the odd one out. See Weiser, and Dörrie, 59-60. The grief about her unjustified depiction as an adulterous woman seems to cause her death. Zürich: Artemis, ²1964, 685-9. She feels like “a halfcaste”[106] when she discovers that she neither fits into the working class environment any longer nor seems to belong to Frank’s world. It is the story of a woman, of an author known to be feminist. [173] See Gall, 296. Therefore, some of the best-known and most original feminist versions have been chosen to highlight the myth’s development. Frankenstein was the doctor”[182] but nevertheless this comparison is very apt: like Frankenstein, Evelyn forms a human being but abandons him after the creation process is finished. Indeed, it could be seen as the first feminist version of the myth. It leads to Pygmalion’s becoming a misogynist; his embittered lamentations about women’s infidelity form the central part of the text.[36] The rest of the story follows the model set by Ovid: Pygmalion creates a female statue, falls in love with it and is – after Venus’s divine intervention – finally able to make her his wife.[37] Two decades later, in 1598, John Marston tells the tale of “The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion’s Image” with a much more ironic tone and full of erotic hints. c. Frank, the unsuccessful poet, is the one who tries to fill this white page and succeeds, but only to a certain degree. Aurnhammer and Martin, 184-89. The statue had represented a “tabula rasa”[68] for the male act of creation from antiquity to the Victorian age: it could be filled with man’s wishes and fantasies. Nevertheless, he is the one who makes her appear as the Oriental Venus who is more seductive than any “woman born”[126], thus resembling Pygmalion as the originator of the statue’s/ puppet’s beauty. Mayer and Neumann 11-62. Role-reversal: Neil LaBute’s Drama The Shape of Things (2001) V Conclusion Bibliography: I Introduction The myth of Pygmalion as told by Ovid in his Metamorphoses contains, according to Geoffrey Miles, “one of the most potent male fantasies” – that is the creation “of a perfectly beautiful woman designed to the lover’s specifications and utterly devoted to her creator”.[1] The fact that Pygmalion’s literally man-made lover comes to life at the end of the story probably was the reason for artists’ fascination with the myth. LaBute instead shows – like most authors since the 20th century – special interest in the perspective of the object of the transformation. She has become a self-confident woman with her own mind who is “quite distinct form the shapes into which her Pygmalion has moulded her”.[84] Pygmalion-Higgins’s creation is not perfected because of his talent, but because of Eliza’s very own effort, thus leading to the positive ending of the play.[85] Durbach points out that Eliza has the “divine prerogative”[86] that belonged to Venus in Ovid’s tale. “Female metamorphoses: Carol Ann Duffy’s Ovid”. In Russell’s version, Pygmalion’s troubles seem to stem from his doubts about his writing career. Burne-Jones, Edward. A Romance. /I thought, He will not touch me, / but he did”.[154] The lyrical I of the poem, Galatea, is “cold” – that is the first the reader gets to know about her. Roberts, Michèle. 310-12: “He […] caresses it, believes the firm new flesh beneath his fingers yields, and fears the limbs may darken with a bruise”. In his commentary on Pygmalion, he compares Ovid’s sculptor to a nobleman who “might have a maid or servant in his house” whom he “clothed, nourished and taught”.[31] After the transformation of the servant girl into a lady, “he loved her so much that it pleased him to espouse her and take her to his wife”. Exhortation to the Greeks. [99] Russell, 36. [43] See Aurnhammer and Martin, 254; Martin 2004, 225. Angela Carter declares in her introduction to the story collection Wayward Girls and Wicked Women that “women writers are kind to women”.[141] She claims that fictional women like Lady Purple “would seem much, much worse if men had invented them”. A first taste of her creative power is given in the museum scene. By looking at his female statue, called Galathée or Galatea, he tries to find inspiration. Introduction. But I never thought of us making anything of one another; and you never think of anything else. Suddenly she grows “warm, like candle wax”, becomes “soft” and “pliable”. The English Pygmalion reception differs from the French and German ones, which developed similarly. She has become the artist and creator herself, shaping a man at will. This text is lost now but was mentioned by early Christian authors like Clement of Alexandria.[7] In the Metamorphoses, the tale of Pygmalion and his statue is anticipated by the story of the Propoetides. [192] See Joshua, 135: “The Pygmalion story prior to the 1880s predominantly represents Galatea in two ways: she is either accepting […] her lot as a wife[…] or she is a disapointment to Pygmalion, who views her with disgust.” Examples therefore are the animated statues in Franz von Suppé’s operetta The Beautiful Galatea (1865) or in W.S. Gilbert’s Pygmalion and Galatea who both disturb the harmonious order of Pygmalion’s marital or artistic life. Antike Mythen und ihre Rezeption. Leipzig: Reclam, 2003, 15. Obviously, Pygmalion’s misogyny is only directed against vicious women but not against women in general since he madly falls in love with the ivory woman created by himself. Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 1997. After their first encounter in the museum, he falls in love with Evelyn and obviously is anxious to please her. 1598. Harlow: Longman, 2000. For Dörrie, the statue comes alive because of Pygmalion’s love for his creation; the power of his sentiment substitutes divine intervention. [47] Weiser is less focussed on Pygmalion’s love for his work than on his role as an artist. [54] In English literature, the motif of the educator, who turns a simple girl into a lady, can be found in chapter 87 of Tobias Smollett’s The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle (1751), that bears strong resemblance to G.B. Shaw’s play Pygmalion; see Miles, 343 and 374-78. The only way to express herself is through her sexuality. If she had not been sexually attractive to Adam, her plan would not have worked. When she confronts him with the question what should become of her, he just replies “What does it matter what becomes of you?”[78]. She becomes conscious of her existence. [155] See II, footnote 12. Tools and instruments, including the almost translucent soft brush, are scattered beneath the statue’s feet. “Introduction”. Herbert Grabes and Klaus Schwank. [47] Dörrie, 56. He prefers the natural, original Rita. [27] See Dörrie, 32 and Dieter Martin. Pygmalion’s passionate love for the statue, his restless “viewing, touching, kissing”[38] result in its coming alive. The male character, Adam, becomes her “base material” and turns into her “creation”.[165] This role-reversal is LaBute’s most crucial change of the Pygmalion myth. For Shaw, the traditional gender roles and ideas of marriage were highly questionable. Only by killing her Pygmalion, she can free herself from his influence. As Joshua points out, Shaw’s play owes more to W. Further, his touch is painful: “He let his fingers sink into my flesh,/ he squeezed, he pressed./ […] His nails were claws”. Hardy’s protagonist Jocelyn Pierston is a sculptor who represents a modern Pygmalion.[62] For him, no real woman is “ideal”, only in art can he form a woman according to his aesthetic and erotic imaginations. Snyder, Susan and Curren-Aquino Deborah. Yet instead he realizes that this perfected work of art triggers his vanity and admiration for himself, the creator of this beautiful piece.[46] With the statue’s animation, however, his desperation comes to an end; she even starts to talk after having stepped down from her pedestal. The Independent. [15] Ovid, Miles, 347, l. Yet like in Ovid’s tale, the sculptor cannot let it be – he touches her. [39] Marston, Aurnhammer and Martin, 37. Nevertheless she revolts against Pygmalion’s totalitarianism. A critical anthology. “[T]emptatum mollescit ebur positoque rigore subsidit digitis ceditque, ut Hymettia sole cera remollescit tractataque pollice multas flectitur in faceies ipsoquue fit utilis usu.”[16] – “beneath his touch the flesh grew soft, its ivory hardness vanishing, and yielded to his hands, as in the sun wax of Hymettus softens and is shaped by practised fingers into many forms, and usefulness acquires by being used.”[17] Ovid’s comparison of the softness of the ivory girl’s body to formable bees wax speaks for itself. The main characters with the symbolical names Adam and Evelyn meet in a museum in front of a statue with its genitals covered by a leaf cluster due to “complaints from local townspeople”.[161] Evelyn, an art student, wants to spray “a big dick on it”[162] and therefore has stepped over the velvet rope that functions as a barrier. Frane, Susanne. At least from Adam’s point of view, Evelyn’s shaping of a human sculpture is not a harmless but a rather violent act of creation.[170] Apart from violence, sexuality is another means of power that Evelyn employs during the creation process. All in all, LaBute’s The Shape of Things provides a fresh view on an often reworked myth. While Ovid’s statue seems not to move because of her modesty[155], Duffy’s Galatea does not move because of her reluctance. She does not present her Pygmalion figure as a self-absorbed intellectual or artist who is unable to bond with other people and neglects the (emotional) needs of his Galatea. He once “sold a few books, all out of print now”, he is not “a famous poet” as Rita guesses.[101] In fact, his art is not only unsuccessful (at least in the terms of the publishing market) but also cost him his marriage. Morris, William. Rezeptionsgeschichte einer Ovid-Fabel. [137] Wisker, 130. Leipzig: Reclam, 2003, 24. Like Ovid’s Pygmalion she is an agent of beauty: she makes Adam (more) attractive by shaping him. [175] LaBute, 9. [14] See Ovid. The goddess has taught her the words necessary for her first conversation with Pygmalion (“Say all these words that I will teach to thee”) and has told her that she “still wilt wiser grow”.[57] This implies that the awakened statue needs instruction and a guiding hand – Venus has given her into Pygmalion’s care “as his love and wife”[58] and now he takes on the role of the educator. In the darkness of his booth, the marionette seems harmless to him while the reader might already suspect that her apparent “air of arrogance” and “long fingernails” are forebodings of evil.[130] The Professor’s kiss is “humble” and “desperate”[131] like Pygmalion’s caresses. Posthumanistische Antikerezeption in der englischsprachigen Lyrik der Gegenwart. The term ‘creator’ does not necessarily mean ‘artist’ in this context since in many 19th century versions of the myth, Pygmalion is not an artist any more. Antike Mythen – Mythos Antike. Now, divine intervention is not needed any more, only the divine spark within Galatea brings her to life. The “use of horror”, the transformation of the doll into a vampire-like monster, is Carter’s tool of “social and sexual critique”.[144] Her story portrays “male fantasy, power and lust” and patriarchal wishes for “woman as a controllable automaton”.[145] Probably, “The Loves of Lady Purple” would not have been written by a male author – at least not in the same way. Until the early 20th century, the various Pygmalion adaptations had presented a clearly patriarchal viewpoint. Ovid’s tale underwent a “feminist revisioning” which paid attention to Galatea’s perspective and sometimes even identified the Pygmalion figure as a pathological case who uses art to satisfy his male fantasies.[69] George Bernard Shaw’s play Pygmalion from 1912 was the first of these feminist retellings of the myth, therefore it will be discussed in this chapter along with Willy Russell’s Educating Rita, a modernised version of Shaw’s play. Her reluctance towards her creator is emphasised by her hoping that he “will not touch” her. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2008. As a result, he falls hopelessly in love with it. Of course, he is neither as misogynistic nor as uncaring as Shaw’s Pygmalion. Zürich: Artemis, ²1964, 685. Philip, however, is aware of the negative impact of Adam’s transformation. Kline. For Pierston, the ideal woman or wife must be controllable and shapeable. Still, there are various parallels to be found. While the latter are defined by their petrification, Pygmalion’s innocent creation leaves its lifeless, so to speak petrified, existence behind by becoming animated.[23] Read in the patriarchal context of antiquity, this virtuous statue-woman, created by a man and turned into flesh by a goddess who both reject the behaviour of the Propoetides, appears to be not only the ideal wife for the king of Cypris but for all men alike. [31] William Caxton. < . In the play, education is presented “both as liberating and confining” and as a process in which “something is irretrievably lost”.[107] In order to fit into the more educated middle class, Rita acquires a new language. Against the Pagans. Venus’s intervention is not needed here, only the artist’s sentiment for his work caused the transformation from marble to flesh. In two ways, she owes her very existence to Venus and Pygmalion: on the one hand, only through them – the artist, who actually made her with the help of his creativity and craftsmanship, and the goddess, who turned marble to human flesh – could she come into material existence in the first place. Sally Peters finds parallels between Eliza Doolittle and Shaw’s mother and sister, who both led very unconventional lives, rebelling “against their gender defined roles”.[91] According to Peters, in Pygmalion “Shaw explores the intersection of male artistic creation and female self-creation”.[92] Eliza creates herself by making her own decisions just as Shaw’s mother did, who left her husband and moved to London in order to lead a self-determined life. Russell here substitutes Ovid’s motif of the petrified Propoetides by a petrified, that is an underdeveloped and even ended, relationship that led to Frank’s difficulties both with women and with himself. See also Martin 2004, 225. From the beginning, he expresses his doubts about the good of education and only starts to teach her reluctantly.[111] He likes Rita’s naivety and ignorance which provide her with a kind of innocence. Pygmalion and Galatea presents an account of the development of the Pygmalion story from its origins in early Greek myth until the twentieth century. With monochromatic tones and rather rigid forms, at the time the artist was still in the process of developing his style and emulated his mentor and friend Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Frank, however, is not happy about Rita’s transformation. Andrecht, Bernard Shaw. His original reinterpretation of the tale laid the foundation for more diverse and especially woman-centred versions. While the Asiatic Professor is not her creator – the story mentions that she “must have been the masterpiece of a long-dead, anonymous artisan”[125] – only his hands awaken her life and spirit. Wayward Girls and Wicked Women. In this sense, Dorothee Gall points out the latent potential for violence that is already contained in the Ovidian myth but becomes more obvious if the reader holds LaBute’s version in mind. This shows the work he has put into perfecting it. This new reading of the myth “as a fable about social class” was a decisive step towards the Pygmalion versions of the 19th and especially 20th century where Pygmalion appeared again as an educator.[32] After Gower and Caxton’s positive views on the myth, “there is a striking change of tone” in Renaissance adaptations.[33] In English Renaissance literature, the story of Pygmalion and his statue is a popular subject[34] but, in the tradition of the early Christian writers, Pygmalion is again regarded as an idolater, the “keywords [being] ‘dotage’ and ‘idolatry’”. / that’s why i tried it … Adam: why? In Shavian terms it is Eliza’s inner “life force” that transforms her into an individual that is independent from her creator Higgins.[87] This is the most crucial change of Shaw’s version of the myth in Durbach’s view: The essential Galatea, the living soul who asserts her independence of sculptural form, is that most creative and innovative contribution to the myth in modern dress – a reinterpretation of Ovid, and a rejection of W.S. Gilbert’s Victorian tableau of the dependent creature whose integrity is subservient to her creator’s.[88] Shaw’s play departs from the Victorian Pygmalion. He is most willing to change, Evelyn does not have to force him to. Because of her shameless, destructive lifestyle she eventually becomes “nothing but wood and hair. This might be seen as her first step towards individuality. In “Pygmalion’s Bride”, the character of the statue’s metamorphosis is an entirely different one compared to Ovid’s tale. The Cambridge Companion to George Bernard Shaw. Peters, Sally. Miles 353-58. [24] See Kai Merten, Antike Mythen – Mythos Antike. Ed. Christopher D. Texte von Ovid bis John Updike. Pygmalion is here in his studio, with a look of deep thought etched on his face. All in all, after Rousseau, Galatea is not a silent object any more. Carter, Angela. Miles, 346. [55] Joshua, 116. The Propoetides are female inhabitants of the island of Cypris who do not worship Venus and consequently are punished by the goddess: they become the first women “to prostitute their bodies’ charms”.[8] Due to their shameful business, they finally lose their humanity and turn into stone. Another noteworthy interpretation of the myth was offered by William Caxton, the first English printer and publisher. Although he becomes more confident and “a more desirable person”[168] through his metamorphosis, he is devastated after having found out about Evelyn’s deception. See Essaka Joshua. Pygmalion Outwitted: Carol Ann Duffy’s Poem “Pygmalion’s Bride” (1999) In Carol Ann Duffy’s ironic version of the Pygmalion myth, Galatea is not just a creation of male fantasy like Lady Purple but appears as a confident individual. Brussels: Editions de l’Université de Bruxelles, 1985, 303. LaBute, Neil. In 1490, Caxton wrote a prose paraphrase of Ovid’s Metamorphoses which he commentated for his readers. The Professor is in love with Lady Purple. Galatea’s unexpected “expression of an adult, sexual passion”[158] disturbs him. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 3-24. Loading PreviewSorry, preview is currently unavailable. Only when they turn back into stone, harmony is restored. His wife left him after fifteen years in which his “output as a poet had dealt exclusively with the period in which [they] – discovered each other”.[102] His desperate efforts to describe this period artistically seem to have ruined his marriage. The Victorian Reception of Pygmalion 3. Furthermore, she has turned from an object into a subject of passion; the victim of his bruising touches has turned into a lover who (seemingly) enjoys them. He even wants to convince Eliza of the advantages of bachelorhood: in Higgins imagination, she, he himself “and Pickering will be three old bachelors together instead of only two men and a silly girl”.[80] Yet Shaw’s Galatea has her own mind and does not fulfil her Pygmalion’s wish but marries another man, Freddy Eynsford Hill, instead. Pygmalion as Pervert: Angela Carter’s Short Story “The Loves of Lady 3. Burne-Jones made two series of oil painting illustrating the story. [101] Russell, 36. In fact, he desires that his statue herself would become his wife but does not dare to utter this wish. Bernard Shaw. Cambridge: University Press, 2007. Wisker, Gina. Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 1997, 15: “Dieser Geschichte der Propoetiden […] antwortet nun Ovids Pygmalion-Erzählung mit dem [] Gegenmodell der Animation des Unbelebten”. Metamorphosen. Here, it is not a mere transition from lifelessness to life. [113] See Russell, Act 2, Scene 1. They feature a much brighter palette. Aurnhammer and Martin 182- 93. As a consequence of his speaking up, Pygmalion eventually “hadde al that he wolde abbede”[28] – his wish is granted and the statue comes to life. Introduction; Beginnings to the nineteenth century; ‘Don’t look at J.J. Rousseau’: Pygmalion and the Romantics; Adam’s dream: Post-Romantic renarrations; The Pre-Raphaelite Pygmalion and mid-victorian hellenism; Nineteenth-Century Pygmalion plays: the context of Shaw’s Pygmalion; The twentieth century: towards a conclusion; Appendix 1 The Pygmalion story in dictionaries and handbooks of classical literature; Appendix 2 Bibliography of Pygmalion references. With her old name also her old identity vanishes.[105] Further steps towards a new life are the separation from her husband, her moving into a shared flat with another young woman, finding friends among university students and attending summer university in London. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2009, 255-267. Her Pygmalion speaks to Galatea “blunt endearments, what he’d do and how./ His words were terrible”. Other than his predecessors, he is not a misogynist; he likes women – but he admits: “it’s myself I’m not too fond of”[100]. Pygmalion is able to take advantage of the statue-girl who cannot defend herself. In the end, Adam really feels like a monster, his allusion to Kafka’s Metamorphosis, the “little Gregor Samsa thing”[183], makes this very obvious. Eliza’s reply implies two alternatives to Higgins’s view on marriage. He does not like her new way of talking, he tells her to “stop it” and “just be [her]self.”[110] Other than Higgins, he is not interested in ‘making something’ out of the working class girl. More precisely, how did feminist versions of the tale alter its content and the relationship of its protagonists? Reception of Pygmalion Until the 19th Century: From Idolater to Artistic Genius 2. Although her Galatea ‘relents’ finally because of Pygmalion’s ‘blandishment’, she really only feigns it. London: Virago, 2001, 27. As Dörrie points out, Pygmalion represents the girl’s fate.[19] He must seem like a god to her: becoming alive she does not only see the sky, realm of the gods, but also her creator, who therefore takes on the role of a god. But even this perfumed version gives the inconspicuous hope of an artist that their creation might spring to life one day. The former sinful idolater was transformed into a creative, sometimes even godlike genius.[49] 2. John Marston’s statement in his Pygmalion poem that “women will relent / When as they finde such moving blandishment” is satirized in Duffy’s version. Regarding her attitude as well as her metamorphosis, the statue is clearly presented as a counter-model to the Propoetides. [189] Voigts-Virchow, 262. She is amazed by the beauty she has discovered. Gamble, Sarah. As H. Afterwards she is “not fit to sell anything else”[89] than herself: like most women of her time she needs to find a husband to support her. Büchern. Writing from the Front Line. Shaw, George Bernard. In a way, she is only a means to confront both her audience within the play and LaBute’s real audience with the trouble resulting from the dependence on certain codes of beauty and perfection. Woman, instead, now plays the active part. In this sense, Heinrich Dörrie explains that Ovid tells a story beyond Greek mythology.[5] On the one hand, the origin of the tale can be seen in the sacral background of the mother-goddess of Cypris that later was equalled with the Greek Aphrodite or the Roman Venus.[6] On the other hand, a report by the early Hellenic author Philostephanos about Pygmalion’s love for an ivory statue of Aphrodite probably was a source for Ovid. For what she considers to be art – spraying a penis on a male statue that had been censored by conservative “local townspeople” – she deliberately crosses a border, that is the velvet rope. He, however, fears the emancipation of his ‘creation’; he wants to control her and not lose her to another man.[115] Apparently, in the 20th century, Pygmalion still is the possessive creator, but Galatea now has become much stronger and more independent than ever before. ‘Choosing tough words’. [181] LaBute, 81. She seems like a superior but lifeless being, a beautiful body inspiring her creator.[60] According to Frane, male artists of the Victorian Era tried to defend their domain against female artists by fixing women as muses or even as creations of their masters.[61] At the example of Thomas Hardy’s novel The Well-Beloved (1897) she analyses the quest of Victorian men for an ideal woman. 1868/70. Not the emancipated woman Evelyn is criticised but her actions in the name of art and aestheticism. [141] Carter 1986, ix. [67] Joshua, 155. Therefore it is unsurprising that Pygmalion’s worship of a statue is considered negatively. Zu Shakespeares Arbeit am Pygmalion-Mythos”. Compared to Ovid’s Pygmalion, Higgins only resembles his mythical role-model in his convinced bachelorhood and misogyny. [85] See Weiser, 191-92; Frane, 290. Evelyn’s creative powers are closely connected with her sexual powers, that is her ability to seduce Adam. [111] See Russell, 37. In Act IV, when Higgins has won his bet, she begins to rage against him and his cruel selfishness. London: Routledge, 1999. M.: Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1998, 43-44. 1480. Venus, however, grants him his ardent wish and turns the statue into a living girl. He does not leave Galatea alone but stays with her, talking to her constantly and trying to awaken her. [177] See Eckart Voigts-Virchow. Unlike Higgins or Ovid’s Pygmalion, the latter, Frank, is not a bachelor, yet has “split up”[98] with his wife and now lives with his former student Julia whom he likes “enormously”[99] but does not seem to love. Therefore, Shaw lets Eliza marry Freddy, who neither wants to change her nor would be able to. I only want to be natural.[93] Higgins is again presented as the ignorant Pygmalion who defines relationships between men and women by man’s ability to shape woman, to “make something” of her. [130] Carter, 2001, 35. This process anticipates Galatea’s emancipation in the literature of the 20th century. [118] Carter, 2001, 32. While the old Pygmalion’s wishes are satisfied with the animation of the statue, Frank finally splits up with his wife. The second part of Eliza’s metamorphosis, however, is more crucial – her inner change. “Pygmalion’s Friend and his Image”. The tale is moralised once more and is used as an expression of misogyny and satire.[35] In “Pygmalion’s Friend and his Image” (1576) by George Pettie Pygmalion is a knight who devotedly serves the wife of a friend, Penthea, but is disappointed by the change of the lady’s affection. [121] Sarah Gamble. Joseph Bristow and Trev Lynn Broughton. Heidelberg: Winter, 1979; Miles, 337. Moreover, he does not think of marrying his Galatea. [78] Shaw, 332. If you continue browsing the site, you agree to the use of cookies on this website. First, it will be necessary to have a closer look at Ovid’s original myth which was the source for all future Pygmalion versions.[2] Further, the reception of the myth from antiquity until the end of the 19th century should be considered as it explains the development and the shifting interpretation of the protagonists and their roles. Interpretationshilfe Englisch. Her emancipation seems threatening to him as this means that she has acquired her own will and makes her own decisions. Therefore, Frank is a modern version of Higgins. Metamorphoses. Hommages à Jean Dierickx. Frauen aus Männerhand. [117] Carter, 2001, 32. It shows Evelyn’s curiosity about the effects of stepping over the line and her unscrupulousness. Secondly, Adam is clearly inferior to the female Pygmalion, and is far from revolting against Evelyn. Wood. She gives up her working class slang as “there is not a lot of point in discussing beautiful literature with an ugly voice”.[108] Further, Rita returns “in new, second-hand clothes”[109] to Frank’s office after summer school. Ein Impuls Ovids und seine Wirkungen bis in die Gegenwart. 334. An Anthology of Stories. [73] For Weiser and Dörrie, Shaw’s play stands in a line with the interpretations of Pygmalion as educator, starting with Karl Immermann’s narration Der neue Pygmalion (1830).[73] Immermann followed Rousseau’s paedagogic enthusiasm; his “new” Pygmalion is not merly interested in the physical beauty of his Galatea but wants to form a human being that is worthy to become his wife in the end. Simultaneously with Pygmalion’s downfall the Galatea figure has emancipated herself from her voiceless, objectified status. Ein Lexikon. Mythos Pygmalion. With the blessings of the goddess Aphrodite, they live happily ever after. Similarly to the Ovidian statue, she is a desirable body without spirit or intelligence. Higgins is a Pygmalion who is more proud than ever of having created the ‘perfect woman’ and Eliza has developed too much self-confidence and independency to submit to the superiority he wants to impose on her. He has to realize that Evelyn never loved him but regarded him as art “material” and her only interest was to shape “the human flesh and the human will”.[169] Now at the latest it becomes obvious that the distribution of power in their relationship was totally unbalanced: by deceiving Adam, Evelyn held all the power in her hands. Gall, Dorothee. They either became the devoted wives of their Pygmalions, or the story provided an open, yet ‘happy’ ending[140]. Since the beginning of the 20th century, however, a new line of interpretation has become apparent. Later in the play, she will cross a moral border by transforming Adam as her “human sculpture”[164]. Her innocence is implied by Ovid’s description of the statue looking as if she “wished to move – but modesty forbade”[12]. Hermann Breitenbach. Brussels: Editions de l’Université de Bruxelles, 1985, 303-17. [79] See Weiser, 190. London: Faber and Faber, 2001. For Durbach, this is a typical example of the “Victorian domestic paragon”. Carter’s Galatea, however, differs blatantly from her sisters: she is not innocent but profligate and she is not devoted but destructive. The coldness and petrification of her feelings are reflected by her “stone-cool lips”, “marbled eyes”, “stone-deaf” ears, her heart is like “ice” or “glass”. Miles 385-90. The Representation of Galatea When the interest in Pygmalion’s statue grew during the 19th century, she eventually developed personality (at least in a limited form). Her transformation is not a reward for Pygmalion, but a means to get rid of him. [89] Shaw, 333. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1974. [125] Carter, 2001, 26. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, 47-8. It is a modernised version of Shaw’s play[97] in which the flowergirl has turned into a hairdresser and the phonetician into a professor of literature. Evelyn-Pygmalion is an artist – or rather an art student working on her thesis project. A.S. Kline. The ‘statue’ Rita comes alive through her very own efforts, quite as Shaw’s Eliza does. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, 113. Here, she utters a quite modern view on male-female relationships and rejects the patriarchal ideals of Victorianism. The biblical symbolism of the first scene has already evoked the motifs of seduction and creation.[173] Here, LaBute has Adam meet his Eve in front of a statue that is “supposed to be ‘god’ […] ‘the creator’”.[174] Adam knows that Eve(lyn)’s transgression of the velvet rope is wrong, but like his biblical namesake he is ‘seduced’ and gives in to her persuasion; only thus she is able to pursue her plan of painting a penis on the censored statue. “Pygmalion”. Looking at the Ovidian tale after having read LaBute’s play makes apparent that the original, male Pygmalion has acted in a similar selfish, totalitarian way like Evelyn. [107] Gilbert Debusscher. Although much of her work is concerned about feminist topics, her “relationship with [feminism] was an extremely ambivalent one”.[146] For example, her refusal “to read [the Marquis de] Sade’s work as purely misogynistic” seemed highly provocative to feminists condemning pornography as an act of violence against women.[147] Carter’s particular feminism mirrored the division in the feminist movement of the 1980s about the issue of pornography.[148] Her eroticist, sometimes pornographical writing even led to her being labelled as “high priestess of post-graduate porn”.[149] Nevertheless, in her work Carter “constantly [tested] the boundaries of any received belief system”.[150] She “was critical of conventional femininity, which she saw as a blend of masquerade and of ‘male impersonation’”.[151] Consequently, she explored the relations between the sexes and “how women have a conflicted relationship with their production as ‘feminine’ subjects”.[152] Lady Purple is such a ‘feminine subject’, yet her special femininity arises out of a man’s mind; it is a male conception. Aurnhammer, Achim and Dieter Martin, eds. On the other hand, when Rita, that is “Mrs S. In her regard, the crucial change in comparison to Ovid’s sculptor is the new relationship between artist and work of art: Rousseau allows the artist to express himself in his work. [29] Gower, Aurnhammer and Martin, 26. Duffy portrays him not only as a desperate lover who admires or caresses his beloved, but outfits him with sadistic strains. [74] See III, footnote 54. This, of course, is a novelty in the Pygmalion reception – no former Galatea has thought of taking revenge. [60] See Edward Burne-Jones. Munby about a domestic servant who is married by her master but nevertheless “is devoid of ambition to rise up the social ranks” (Joshua, 118). Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1974, 11: „Pygmalion steht in keiner Verbindung zu anderen Gestalten des Mythos, die [...] durch eine gleichfalls mythische Genealogie miteinander verbunden sind; [Pygmalions] Name [ist] den mythographischen Handbüchern der Antike durchaus fremd.“ [6] Dörrie, 12. [168] LaBute, 128. [38] John Marston. Thanks to it, we will be able to sustain and grow the Magazine. Aurnhammer and Martin, 94: “Ich werde nicht müde, mein Werk zu bewundern; [...] mich selbst bete ich an in dem, was ich geschaffen”. The Winter’s Tale. Yet she begins to emancipate herself from her voiceless status as an artwork without character towards a more individual, conscious self. [108] Russell, 83. The meaning of the name is “she who is white like milk.” Countless are the nights and days he spends staring at her. Pygmalion’s perspective is essential, the silent ivory-girl is only portrayed as the prize for his piety. Leipzig: Reclam, ²2004, 224. Self-confidently, she confronts her Pygmalion, the phonetician Professor Higgins, with his tyranny and selfishness in the end of the play instead of marrying him. Therefore, I shall neglect the artist-concerned texts and instead analyse the gender concerned re-workings by Angela Carter, Carol Ann Duffy and Neil LaBute. Her metamorphosis has been triggered by her master’s desire and she awakens through his kiss, like in Ovid’s tale. Under the instruction of her ‘creator’, she develops to his ideal future wife. Yet at the end of the play, Hermione reappears: like a statue she stands on a pedestal, but then "comes alive" and steps down in order to be reunited with her husband. Despite her emancipation, however, Galatea still is a victim of Pygmalion’s intentions. [17] Ovid, Miles, 347, ll. [129] Carter, 2001, 35. After he has changed his looks and lost weight, Adam begins to feel more confident; he even has had his nose corrected in order to adapt to common beauty standards. The Victorian Reception of Pygmalion In the Pygmalion adaptations until the early 19th century, the focus had always been on the lover and creator Pygmalion. 251: „si non obstet reverentia, velle moveri“. Antike als Inszenierung. Achim Aurnhammer and Dieter Martin, eds. Thus, Rita becomes more and more independent; she finds out who she is and emancipates. LaBute’s play departs from the former interpretations of the myth by laying bare its quintessence: the problematic nature of (gendered) objectification and its results. Purple” (1974) In a rather dark and disturbing sense, Galatea’s emancipation is also featured in Angela Carter’s short story “The Loves of Lady Purple”, although nothing in this narration reminds of Ovid’s myth at the first look. According to Kai Merten, it has become a myth at the core of western, male representation.[24] But also the relation between nature and art or especially art and artist were of interest for authors throughout the centuries. [87] See Ernst H. Galatea is tired of his talking, she “[drowns] him out” but only to “[hear] him shout”. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery. On the contrary, her actions are products of his and of his (male) audience’s imagination. She is cold “like ivory”, like the material she was made of, but she is also cold regarding her relationship to Pygmalion. The Professor seems to have forgotten about his dark fantasies: now, Lady Purple is not the evil, seductive whore any more but he regards her “tenderly”, admiring her like a beautiful toy. [62] Frane shows various parallels of Pierston with Ovid’s Pygmalion. Following her suggestions, he starts to exercise, to cut his hair, to wear contact lenses etc. Thus, she appears as the ideal Victorian woman: she is the creation of her husband, depending on him both materially and ideally. [123] Carter, 2001, 26. [126] Carter, 2001, 27. October 2010. [76] See Dörrie, 60. Now, Rita is not as dependent on him as in the beginning, but she has turned into an equal who can talk about literature in the same way as he does[113] and has found new friends her age. He has rather become a creator in a moral or educational sense.[54] In fact, “Galatea is in need of education in all of the Victorian plays” as Joshua points out[55] ; one could add: not only in the plays but also in the Pygmalion poems and novels of the Victorian Age. The

“Pygmalions Bride”. [148] See Bristow and Broughton, 4. Man and woman have changed their roles regarding the (pygmalionic) creation process: now woman is involved in creation, man instead has been excluded.[190] Of course, Evelyn’s actions are morally highly questionable. [13] Ovid, Miles, 346, ll. Her innocence and her total lack of knowledge of worldly affairs – she is like a new-born child – make her helpless. [184] LaBute, 93. A Feminist in Spite of Himself”. “‘Small Female Skull’: patriarchy and philosophy in the poetry of Carol Ann Duffy”. Becker, Becky. She stays a lifeless statue – but obsessed Pygmalion does not give up. [30] Miles, 334. [128] Carter, 2001, 27. The marionette herself shows qualities similar to Pygmalion’s statue: she is a product of male desire. DailyArt Magazine needs your support. By literally pulling her strings, the Professor brings Lady Purple to life. [11] Ovid, Miles, 346, ll. Miles 352-353. Innes. Therefore, Duffy’s Galatea might be an actual woman who is molested by an annoying suitor. It focuses on the use of the story in nineteenth-century British literature, exploring gender issues, the nature of artistic creativity and the morality of Greek art. The re-narrations were not only influenced by the Ovidian source but also by other Pygmalion versions. [34] See Dinter, 53. “The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion’s Image”. She depends on Pygmalion as her creator and educator. He confronts him with “the ‘metamorphosis’ thing”, claiming he was “like Frankenstein”.[181] Of course, Adam has to explain to him that he actually means “Frankenstein’s monster. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009, 293-310, 302. 300-1. LaBute’s play gets a feminist gloss by the shift of the gender roles which offers a new perspective on the Pygmalion myth. In Carter’s story, Pygmalion is disguised as the Asiatic Professor, a puppet master, and his Galatea is a marionette called Lady Purple. Jenny admires Evelyn’s efforts about Adam and thinks of “those tests” in women magazines like Cosmopolitan “asking what you’d like to change about your guy”; then she admits: “Almost everybody I’ve gone out with, if you could just alter one thing […] then they’d be perfect.”[184] She seems almost envious of Evelyn’s talent to change Adam and thus making an ‘ideal’ man of him. Epos in 15. Gower, John. [188] See Voigts-Virchow, 265. Suddenly, his Galatea is not any longer the child-woman he wanted to see in her. Classical Mythology in English Literature. [98] Willy Russell. Liza: Perhaps I could make something of him. Instead, he intends to remain a bachelor. Marston, John. Pygmalion: Die Geschichte des Mythos in der abendländischen Kultur. By changing the name Susan to Rita, Russell’s heroine decides to leave her working class life but also the expectations of her class behind. Of course, her emancipation from her former life comes with some side effects. Early Christian writers like Clement of Alexandria (2nd century AD) or Arnobius of Sicca (4th century AD) used the tale to warn the heathens of worshipping statues and images of gods. With her sexuality Evelyn got power over Adam; by seducing him she became able to influence him and create his new self. “Neil LaButes gesellschaftskritische Pygmalion-Inversion: The Shape of Things (2001)”. [178] See Voigts-Virchow, 264-65. Ovid’s version is commonly seen as its first literary adaptation[3], the myth might even “be essentially his invention”[4]. [105] The name Susan might refer to the poem “Susan” (1893) by A. [48] See Claudia Weiser. Gilbert Debusscher and J.P. van Noppen. [172] LaBute, 121. [144] Wisker, 129. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2004, 271. New York: Norton, ²2002, 296. [119] Carter, 2001, 33. After each performance, her master, the Asiatic Professor, passes her off as “the petrification of a universal whore”[120], suggesting to the audience that the original Lady Purple has been “transformed into the very marionette who nightly re-enacts the story which is, in fact, her own”.[121] Unlike Pygmalion, the Asiatic Professor does not feel threatened or appalled by Lady Purple’s allegedly “unappeasable”[122] sexual appetite and promiscuity. Bristow, Joseph and Trev Lynn Broughton, eds. In this regard, Pygmalion unites the role of the creator, father and husband in himself. And while the animated statue often appeared as a frivolous being[192], Pygmalion was left unscathed. Mayer and Neumann 665-719. Obviously, the female figure in LaBute’s play is not an object of art any more. This part of the myth might be regarded as key to later interpretations of the tale, both patriarchal ones in which man forms woman to his taste and feminist variants which strongly disapprove of the forming of the female body and mind like wax. [53] Miles, 343. See Frane, 240-41. Like in Shaw’s play, the working class girl’s metamorphosis is expressed by the change of her clothes and speech. Miles, Geoffrey, ed. The history of a narrative in English literature. 1 Novembre 2000. In this regard, he resembles Pygmalion’s lifeless statue that does not possess any self-awareness during the process of her creation. It is her speech that Higgins becomes interested in, that is from a phonetic perspective. [81] Shaw, 303. [23] See Gerhard Neumann. [116] Angela Carter. Of course, Lady Purple is not presented as a “perfectly normal” character.[142] There is nothing about her that would cause the reader’s sympathy but this is essentially because she is only a puppet. Like them, the first prostitutes, Lady Purple is hardened by her shameful business – only instead of turning to stone, she turns into a wooden marionette. Yet other than the Galatea figures of Shaw or Russell, her emancipation is interwoven with destruction and death. Although Galatea obviously does not want to give in, she finally rethinks her cool reluctance. While for Evelyn-Pygmalion Adam’s transformation is just an interesting art project of which she is “very proud”[167], for Adam himself it is a life-changing experience. The Professor differs from Pygmalion as he has not ‘created’ the female puppet in the literal sense. “Pygmalion: A Lyrical Scene.” 1762. Miles 348-9. The increasing tendency of Renaissance and Baroque literature to eroticise the myth and emphasize its aesthetic potential led to its introduction as theatrical and musical material.[43] Since 1640, a countless number of Pygmalion plays, operas or ballets were performed on European stages.[44] Following this fashion and at the same time countering it, Jean-Jacques Rousseau created his melodramatic scene Pygmalion (1762). According to Klaus Reichert, Shakespeare uses the myth of the animated statue to show the dangers of making up an image and taking it for real. Instead, he has turned into a selfish, ruthless or perverted figure that is even exposed to ridicule. In his piece, the statue had finally received a name, Galathée or Galatea respectively, which she has usually kept ever since.[65] Now, the animated statue was at least identified by a name. Thus his Pygmalion story is a “moral fable for lovers about the need of perseverance”[30]. Zu Shakespeare’s Arbeit am Pygmalion-Mythos”. Der Pygmalion-Stoff in der europäischen Literatur. Neil LaBute. Even after her animation, the statue’s face shows a vacant expression and her white body is in contrast with the room and Pygmalion. Ovid explains Pygmalion’s decision to stay a bachelor by the negative example of the Propoetides: Quas quia Pygmalion aevum per crimen agentis viderat, offensus vitiis, quae plurima menti femineae natura dedit, sine coniuge caelebs vivebat.[9] – Pygmalion had seen these women spend their days in wickedness, and horrified at all the countless vices nature gives to womankind lived celibate.[10] As no real woman is entirely flawless, Pygmalion denies himself the company of women. Morris retells Ovid’s story but with an important alteration: the animated statue begins to talk to her creator. / umm, you stepped over … Evelyn: i know. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, 99-120. Due to the intervention of the goddess Venus, this statue comes to life and Pygmalion makes her his wife. In his student Rita, however, he finds a woman whom he really can ‘discover’ as her metamorphosis happens before his eyes and is, partly, a result of his efforts with her. Horner, Avril. Upon returning home Pygmalion notices a flush on the cheeks of the sculpture. [57] Morris, Aurnhammer and Martin, 192. With these presents he tries to win her; he believes that she can be seduced with toys – “polished pebbles,/ little bells” – like a child. In the following, I will describe the development of the myth’s interpretation and significance since antiquity. All the characters in The Shape of Things are governed by concepts of perfection. Within his novel, Smollett tells a comical episode of a young nobleman, Peregrine, educating a beggar girl and introducing her to the London society as a lady.[74] Geoffrey Miles mentions that Shaw knew Smollett’s story and “admitted that [it] might have unconsciously stuck in his mind from reading it as a boy”.[75] Shaw may not have been the first to convert Pygmalion into an educator, he still was the first to approach the Pygmalion-as-educator version critically and even from a feminist perspective. Other than in earlier Pygmalion versions written by male authors, Galatea is presented as “knowing” in Duffy’s poem: she does not have to be filled with knowledge by Pygmalion but is even more clever than him. His horrifying death is his “own silly fault” and the marionette cannot be found guilty because “she isn’t real”[139]. All in all, LaBute’s Pygmalion tale puts the metamorphosis of the created object in a rather negative light. [16] Ovid, Breitenbach, 688. In the following verses, Pygmalion’s courtship and efforts concerning his beloved statue are described: he touches the work of art as if it were a girl of flesh and blood and even fears to bruise it[13] ; he flatters the ivory girl with compliments and presents, adorns her body with valuable clothes and jewellery. See Klaus Reichert, “Die Wirklichkeit des Eingebildeten oder Kunst und Trick. Unlike the Victorian Pygmalions, he does not want to spoil this innocence by educating and shaping Rita but would rather “take [her] by the hand and run out of this room [i.e. his office] forever”.[112] When Rita finally has changed into a more self-confident, emancipated woman, Frank reacts reluctantly. SlideShare uses cookies to improve functionality and performance, and to provide you with relevant advertising. London: Virago, 2001, 23-38. In this Pygmalion version, the granting of the wish is not a reward but a punishment. Wainwright, Jeffrey. If society did not have certain ideals concerning perfection, he would never have had a reason to feel uncomfortable and thus to change. ‘Choosing tough words”. 248-9: “formamque dedit, qua femina nasci nulla potest”. From a gender-oriented perspective, the turning point in the reception of the Pygmalion myth was George Bernard Shaw’s play . See also Ovid, Breitenbach, 684, ll. [163] LaBute, 1. London: Longman, 1997, 116-131. Frank is not a ‘god-like’ artist-Pygmalion in Rousseau’s sense who takes over the role of Venus; he only is the trigger for the transformation process. According to Gall, LaBute’s play emphasises common prejudices about women’s roles in relationships, that is the effort to ‘educate’ and change their partners. Clement of Alexandria. [102] Russell, 35. Leipzig: Reclam, ²2004, 224-9. Hazlitt, William. S. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, 47-55. Further, Evelyn falls in love with her creation – at least it seems so until the ninth scene when both the audience and Adam get to know that she only pretended affection in order to shape her “base material”. Gilbert’s Pygmalion and Galatea than to the Ovidian myth. “Der Pygmalion-Mythos im Musiktheater. [124] GinaWisker. Pygmalion “cannot cope with the fleshy, sexual reality”[159], therefore he turns his back on her. Instead of teaching the newborn woman individuality and giving her a free will, she immediately confronts her with the only purpose of her existence: being Pygmalion’s lover and wife. Instead, he has Eliza express the possibility of marrying Freddy. [33] Miles, 334. Essaka Joshua writes that “the Pygmalion story is not static; it is an evolving tale with a rich history.”[193] Indeed, not only Pygmalion’s statue is transformed, but the very tale itself is an object of continuing and original metamorphosis. Miles, 353. Role-reversal: Neil LaBute’s Drama The Shape of Things (2001) In the 21st century, the pygmalionic artist-object relationship reaches a further level in Neil LaBute’s 2001 drama The Shape of Things. Being unable to grow out of the beginning phase of their relationship, both artistically and emotionally, Frank probably did not develop in the same way as his wife did during these fifteen years. [72] Joshua, 133. From now until the early 19th century, authors focussed on the relation artist – work of art. Autoren – Entwicklungen – Interpretationen. LaBute’s play starts with the literal crossing of a line. Reception of Pygmalion Until the 19th Century: From Idolater to Artistic Genius The early reception of the myth happened within a Christian context. In the foreground of these adaptations stands the lover Pygmalion, and many poets compared their own efforts about their mistresses to his efforts about the statue.[42] The popularity of the myth resulted in its reception in art forms other than literature and painting. [22] Ovid, Miles, 348. 3. He even tries to reshape one of his muses, Ann, the daughter of his first love, according to the model of her mother. Miles 349-50. To stop Pygmalion’s molestation she “changed tack”. Consequently, she grants the artists his wish. [159] Wainwright, 51. [157] See II, footnote 13. miss? See our Privacy Policy and User Agreement for details. [58] Morris, Aurnhammer and Martin, 192. Names, setting, plot seemingly are all Carter’s invention. “Angela Carter: Glam rock feminist”. [95] Shaw, 349. Rita’s real name, Susan White, might be a telling name. Otherwise she could not survive in the world that she has just entered like a new-born child and which is totally unfamiliar to her. Durbach, Errol. Rousseau’s melodramatic version of Ovid’s myth had not only changed the perception of the sculptor Pygmalion, but it had also added to the new perception of the statue. [21] See Frane, 19. Aurnhammer and Martin 34-7. [120] Carter, 2001, 28. These Pre-Raphaelite pictures, too, emphasise woman’s status as an object of art, a muse for the male artist. [176] LaBute, 7. Shaw attacks the views of his contemporaries on the role of woman in society. Pygmalion and Galatea III: The Godhead Fires Story of Pygmalion and Galatea: Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Pygmalion and Galatea III: The Godhead Fires, oil on canvas, 1875-1878, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham, England, UK. [49] See Miles, 338-39. [7] See Dörrie, 24 and Miles, 348-9. [180] LaBute, 121. [59] Errol Durbach, “Pygmalion: Myth and Anti-Myth in Ibsen and Shaw”. What all Pygmalion re-narrations have in common is their thematic diversity. Obviously, Pygmalion gets on her nerves but he ignores her reluctance; he does not grasp the fact that she is not interested in him. Yet the marionette suddenly awakes as a living woman. But one of the most favored versions was portrayed by the Pre-Raphaelite artist Sir Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) in his series of four panels shown below. Higgins does not care about his creature. In the adaptations of the 20th and 21st century, the roles of Pygmalion and Galatea are transformed: Pygmalion, the former hero or creative genius, has lost his ‘godlike’ status. [42] See Miles, 336. She has not necessarily gained real independence or equality (at least not yet). His efforts to ban the ‘discovery’ of his wife on paper mirror Ovid’s Pygmalion discovering the body of his ivory statue. Both Adam and his friend Philip compare his transformation to other infamous stories of transformation. In the meantime, the city is celebrating a festival in the name of the goddess Aphrodite. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 8. The reception of the myth from antiquity until the early 19th century is rather diverse and the focus of the adaptations changed with every epoch. Eine stoffgeschichtliche Untersuchung. Ever since antiquity, patriarchal literature produced countless re-narrations of the story about Pygmalion’s love for his statue, and most of them were especially intrigued with the erotic potential of Ovid’s tale. is not able to shape her, it is impossible for her to become his wife.[52] Hazlitt’s story implies that a happy ending of a Pygmalion story lies within the fact that the object of Pygmalion’s love – that is, the statue or rather the young girl – exists in a state of innocence and ignorance. Yet this leads to the question how the awakening of feminist thought since the early 20th century influenced the myth’s reception. Ovid. 1878. Every night, she enacts his fantasies in the puppet play “The Notorious Amours of Lady Purple, the Shameless Oriental Venus”[116], in which she represents an “image of irresistible evil”[117], an “outrageous nymphomaniac”[118] prostitute murdering her lovers. Metamorphosen des Mythos”. [109] Russell, 73. 2010. Now, in the sensitive eighteenth century, Pygmalion’s characterisation as a lover changes towards his perception as a sensitive artist. Aurnhammer and Martin, 184-85 and 188-89. Pygmalion is not the persevering Ovidian lover any more, but almost resembles an obsessed stalker. [169] LaBute, 119. He has become an object himself, a work of art that is defenceless against all kinds of changes. [35] Miles, 334-35. [131] Carter, 2001, 36. Weiser, Claudia. George Bernard Shaw’s Plays: Mrs Warren’s Profession, Pygmalion, Man and Superman, Major Barbara: Contexts and Criticism. In his epilogue, Shaw makes clear that “Galatea never does quite like Pygmalion: his relation to her is too godlike to be altogether agreeable”.[94] Mutual love between the two seems impossible as their relationship would always be coined by Galatea’s dependence on her “godlike” creator Pygmalion. [193] Joshua, ix. In the end, his transformation does not seem like an act of liberation to him any more. New York: Norton, ²2002, 528. [69] Frane, 17. She [becomes] a marionette herself, […] the dead yet moving image of the shameless Oriental Venus”. [119] This story within the story clearly reminds of Ovid’s Propoetides. Brandl-Risi, Bettina. On the other hand, she depends on their knowledge and on their willingness to teach her. However, Gall overlooks that, despite Evelyn’s negative role, the emphasis of the play lies on the criticism of social and medial functionings. She explains to him the miracle of her animation by repeating the words the goddess Venus taught her. Neumann, Gerhard. The second series, shown here, however, were made between 1875-1878. White”[103], first enters Frank’s office, she resembles a white page in a book that can be filled with words and meaning. [83] See Weiser, 192. 25 June 2006. Trans. [186] LaBute, 121. LaBute reveals society’s dependence on certain concepts of beauty as they are, for instance, offered by the media. 4. [187] See Becker, 111-2. Mayer and Neumann, 498. “Revenge of the living doll: Angela Carter’s horror writing”. Lady Purple is both a liveless and a voiceless piece of carved wood that only comes to life through her master. She lacks a proper mind and will; therefore she appears somewhat spiritless in both literary and artistic portraits. Aurnhammer and Martin 92- 99. Man, who was the active, creative part in former Pygmalion versions, is reduced to a passive, defenseless object of creation. Pygmalion and Galatea. Pygmalion’s obsession seems almost pathological. Yet if Evelyn’s objectification of Adam is to be condemned, then Galatea’s objectification by Pygmalion should be condemned, too. This question forms the basis of this study which will examine, by means of several Pygmalion versions of the 20th and 21st centuries, the myth’s development from a patriarchal towards a feminist tale. You can download the paper by clicking the button above. Their love blossoms and they exchange wedding vows. [156] Avril Horner, “‘Small Female Skull’: patriarchy and philosophy in the poetry of Carol Ann Duffy”. Thank you for your help! SlideShare uses cookies to improve functionality and performance, and to provide you with relevant advertising. The latter especially focussed “on the expanding role of Pygmalion as educator” of his Galatea.[72] The first English work interpreting Pygmalion as educator is William Caxton’s text of 1480 in which Pygmalion educates a servant girl.[73] It anticipated Shaw’s retelling of the myth as did Tobias Smollett’s novel The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle of 1751. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2004. He receives admiration and even immortality in exchange, as he lives on in his creation.[48] Undoubtedly, Rousseau’s Pygmalion marked a turning point in the myth’s reception. As a member of the socialist Fabian Society he struggled not only against social inequality but also against inequality between the sexes. [164] La Bute, 118. He, too, does not care about the feelings of his sculpture, but is eager for her metamorphosis. [190] Frane 19. Pygmalion. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997, 105. Galatea sets out to describe his efforts about her: how he kisses her, talks to her relentlessly, brings her presents etc. She needs his ‘life-force’ in the Shavian sense[135] in order to come alive. [12] Ovid, Miles, 346, l. Venus, despite her sex, embodies patriarchal ideals: she animated the statue in favour of the man Pygmalion; she wants to please him and reward his piety with a good wife. [132] Carter, 2001, 36. 1576. Educating Rita. The poem mockingly states: “Tut, women will relent / When as they finde such moving blandishment.”[39] Here, Marston obviously mocks and rejects the Petrarchan poetry of his contemporaries, which portrays cool and chaste women who do not relent to any “moving blandishment”.[40] While Shakespeare merely used the motif of the animated statue for The Winter’s Tale but put it into the context of his own distinct story[41], most authors of his time and later epochs, rewrote Ovid’s version by sticking closely to the given story line. Das neuere amerikanische Drama. Angela Carter. Shakespeare, William. [3] See Susanne Frane. During the whole play, he never really cares about the content of her words. Critical View on the Educator Pygmalion 1.1 George Bernard Shaw’s Drama Pygmalion (1912) George Bernard Shaw counteracted all former receptions of the myth, especially those of the Victorian Age, in his play Pygmalion. With regard to the Pygmalion tale, the question remains if The Shape of Things is an emancipated or rather a misogynistic version of the myth. The Representation of Galatea IV Retelling Pygmalion: New, Feminist Conceptions in the 20th and 21st Centuries 1. On the other hand, she admits that she is not really interested in such a role-reversal although it does not seem impossible to her. Yet also ‘god’ has lost his (creative) power here. London: Virago, 1986, ix – xii. Aurnhammer and Martin 24-27. Pygmalion: Die Geschichte des Mythos in der abendländischen Kultur. Eliza’s change from independence to dependency is depicted as problematic. New Selected Poems 1984-2004. Therefore, he slowly realizes that his prayer was heard. Both the Ovidian Pygmalion story and “The Loves of Lady Purple” could be summed up as the tales of a male fantasy becoming a real woman. One day, Pygmalion completes his creation of the woman of his dreams.

Ruby Sparks is a 2012 American romantic comedy-drama film directed by Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris, and written by Zoe Kazan.It stars Paul Dano as an anxious novelist whose fictional character, Ruby Sparks, played by Kazan, comes to life, and his struggles to reconcile his idealized vision of her with her increasing independence. The score was composed by Nick Urata of the … Pygmalion is a play by George Bernard Shaw, named after the Greek mythological figure.It premiered at the Hofburg Theatre in Vienna on 16 October 1913 and was first presented in German on stage to the public in 1913. Its English-language premiere took place at Her Majesty's Theatre in the West End in April 1914 and starred Herbert Beerbohm Tree as phonetics … Galatea is a super short retelling featuring the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea. Brief myth summary: Pygmalion was a sculptor who avoided and scorned all women based on his revulsion towards the local prostitutes. As such, he invested himself completely into creating the perfect woman out of ivory.

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