The *Odyssey* is filled to the brim with vivid details and epic depictions of the Trojan war and the years following it. However, none match the imagery or detail of the stories told by Odysseus himself. There are several reasons that Homer depicts Odysseus in this light and makes the depictions of his adventures so grand. One of those reasons is to solidify the fact Odysseus was a larger than life hero, and because he wanted his story to be entertaining and live on throughout the ages. Throughout the entirety of *Odyssey*, Homer uses Odysseus to garner fame for Odysseus through his personal accounts of his epic homecoming adventures.

When Odysseus is eating and drinking with the Phaiacians in book 8 there are several times that Homer depicts him in a sad light. Homer speaks about how Odysseus keeps hiding his face and weeping. “So too Odysseus, pitiful in his grief. He managed to conceal his tears from everyone except Alcinous, who sat at his elbow and could not help but hear his heavy sighs.” (*Odyssey* 8.575-579). During this passage, Homer seems to be stressing the fact that Odysseus was caught by the Phaiacians looking weak and fragile during Demodocus’ songs. Immediately following this, Odysseus begins telling the Phaiacians his exploits on the journey home from Troy including pillaging and killing the men of Cicones In Ismaros and sharing their women. Since the Phaiacians just witnessed Odysseus crying it is believed he feels the need to bolster his story to show how tough and manly he is.

Now that Odysseus has cleared his name of weak connotations, it is on to his main goal to continue to keep bolstering his Kleos. There is a specific line in the beginning of book 9 that reads “I am Odysseus, great Laertes’ son, known for my cunning throughout the world, and my fame reaches even to heaven” (*Odyssey* 9.22-24). In this passage, it is clear that Odysseus views himself as larger than life and potentially god like, and he wants everyone to know it. This serves two purposes; the first being that Homer is relaying to the audience how Odysseus is to be viewed. Secondly, it reinforces the importance of Kleos in the way of Greek lifestyle overall.

Storytelling is what makes the *Odyssey* such a timeless piece of literature, from the way that each character has their own unique way of retelling stories makes the text extremely immersive. Odysseus’ accounts are an extremely entertaining point of view because of the fame he is trying to garner. It is fantastically interesting the ways in which Odysseus tries to ensure that his legacy of strength and leadership will live on forever; from covering up his moments of emotions and continually boasting his fame and cunning victories. Overall, Odysseus does his to obtain his image from beginning to end during the *Odyssey*.

This paper is outstanding. Student C has a strong thesis, stated clearly (“Throughout the entirety of *Odyssey*, Homer uses Odysseus to garner fame for Odysseus through his personal accounts of his epic homecoming adventures.”). He then shows nuanced development of this theme by arguing that Odysseus began with a weak reputation and worked to overcome it.
The evidence the student adduces to support this example is strong as well; Student C has not chosen the most popular and hackneyed quotations from the work, but has found lesser-known bits, which shows careful reading and close attention to the text. Quotations are cited properly.
This is a Mixing Bowl (calyx krater) depicting the killing of Agamemnon. This piece was done by a Dokimasia Painter in the 460 B.C. era. The painter uses Ceramic and Red Figure as the medium and style. This piece currently resides at the Greek Classical Gallery (Gallery 215C), catalogued under Highlights: Classical Art (MFA), p. 066.

This piece named “Clytemnestra” by designer Madame Eta Hentz, is a silk night dress made in the fall/winter of 1943–44. The dress is currently on display at the Brooklyn Museum Costume Collection at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and is cataloged under accession number 2009.300.6553a, b.
This painting is titled “Clytemnestre hésitant avant de frapper Agamemnon endormi”, which is Clytemnestra hesitates before killing the sleeping Agamemnon, when translated to English. This is an oil on canvas painting done by Pierre-Narcisse Grerin in 1817. This piece currently is being shown at the Louvre Museum in Paris, France. It resides in the Department of Paintings, Denon, first floor, room 75, and its access number is Inv. 5185.

Clytemnestra is a strong and independent female character in Greek Mythology. She was the unfaithful and devious wife of Agamemnon, King of Argos during the era of the Trojan War. Agamemnon was a brother to Menelaus, the King of Sparta. Agamemnon begins when Menelaus’ wife Helen was taken to Troy by Paris, the son of the King and Queen of Troy. Agamemnon and Menelaus embark on a morally questionable journey to return Helen to Sparta. While they are sailing to Troy, Agamemnon is told by the prophet Calchas that the Goddess Artemis is demanding the sacrifice of Agamemnon’s only daughter Iphigenia if he wishes to continue on to return Helen. Agamemnon decides to appease the goddess and sacrifices his daughter so he and his brother can continue on to Troy. After the Trojans are defeated and Agamemnon and the Greeks pillage and defile Troy, they begin their trip to their respective home lands. Upon Agamemnon’s return to Argos, Clytemnestra seems to be thrilled by his homecoming. Clytemnestra was in fact happy about her husband’s return, but for an extremely different reason than Agamemnon had in mind. For the 10 years Agamemnon was absent Clytemnestra had ample time for her daughter’s sacrifice to fester and rot her mind. This ultimately led to the murder of Agamemnon by his wife Clytemnestra. Depicted in the first and third works of art we see that Clytemnestra did not act alone. She had a secret lover that she plotted with. This man was Aegisthus, who also has deep rooted ties to Agamemnon through the strife between their fathers. Although all three
of the pieces of artwork are from different eras in time they all depict Clytemnestra in a very similar light. All three pieces of work shows the dark and rebellious side of Clytemnestra. In the first piece, the Mixing bowl, the artist shows the physical act of the murder. The killing is carried out by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus (Clytemnestra’s secret confidant). Agamemnon is depicted in a very vulnerable state, naked in his washroom covered in a net, or robes. Although Clytemnestra is behind Aegisthus, she is still participating with her axe raised ready to finish off Agamemnon. The third piece of work contrasts well with the first because it is showing the final moments before the murder. This piece especially reinforces the premeditation of the murder, and that Clytemnestra is fully in the driver’s seat so to speak. Just like in the Mixing bowl Agamemnon is depicted completely vulnerable in the painting, sprawled asleep on his bed. This also implies that Agamemnon had no idea of that evils that Clytemnestra was plotting against him. It is interesting that the painter chose to depict the moments right before the murder rather than the physical act itself. It forces viewers to imagine that she had a final chance to put down the weapon and walk away but chose not to. Although the last piece does not show a visual representation of the murder or act itself, the designer is drawing a connection between the color, pattern, and the overall cut/shape of the garment to the nature of Clytemnestra. By using predominately black as the color choice for the dress it presents a foreboding connotation and connection to the dark and vile act that Clytemnestra carries out against her husband. The gold trim could also represent the fact that she was royalty, being the Queen of Argos. The gold trim and pattern of the gold could also inform the viewer that Clytemnestra should be viewed as a very elaborate character. Together, all three pieces of art work well to build a tangible and visual representation of how the artists feel we as viewers should imagine Clytemnestra.
Analytical Assignment #4 Part 3

The Greek tragedy Medea has been analyzed by many for years to determine if Euripides was trying to convey a feminist or misogynistic agenda. The scholar Douglas Cairns stated “Euripides’ Medea does not subvert Athenian male stereotypes. It revels in them.” In other words, Cairns is saying that the play Medea does not undermine the power and authority of male Athenian stereotypes, but takes great pleasure or delight in them. I agree with this statement by Cairns. There is no denying that Medea is an incredibly strong and independent female character. She can even be viewed in comparison to a modern day feminist, because she is willing to break the social norms and stand up for the rights she has as a human being.

Although Medea’s views are that of feminism, the overall tone that Euripides is conveying in the tragedy is one of misogyny. This is made brutally apparent when the playwright sneaks in the idea that men would possibly be better off without women. He does this through Jason’s line, “The whole female race should not exist. It’s nothing but a nuisance.” (Medea, lines 594-595). This could actually be the viewpoint of Euripides rather than Jason’s because mythology up to this point has taught the Greeks that women are deceitful, spiteful and that they cannot be fully trusted.

Another point that Euripides makes is that there is no limit to the extent a woman will go to achieve revenge. There are two key places in the text that prove this point. The first is when Medea is talking to herself about how exactly she will get revenge on Jason. She first thinks about setting the bridal house on fire, but then fears she will be caught before she can carry out the murder. Then she proceeds to state “I’ll take the sword and kill them, even if it means my death. I have the utmost nerve.” (Medea, lines 401-402) These lines show us that her rage runs so thick that nothing can stop her from the act she is about to commit, even the prospect of her own death. In other words, she is willing to die for the cause, but instead of dying heroically committing a noble act for the greater good, it is one of spite and hatred.

The second place in the text where Medea is blinded by her scorn for Jason is when she decides that the only way she can truly hurt Jason is by killing her own children. This can be seen as the ultimate sacrifice by Medea, even more so than her willingness to die herself for the revenge. When Medea exclaims “I cannot look at them. Grief overwhelms me. I know that I am working up my nerve for overwhelming evil, yet my spirit is stronger than my minds deliberations: this is the source of mortals’ deepest grief.” (Medea, lines 1100-1104) This statement shows that Medea not only knows that what she is contemplating is evil and wrong, but that it will overwhelm her with grief for the rest of her life. Yet she cannot see past the resentment she has for Jason and will commit an ultimate sin to receive satisfaction. With all these ties to how dreadful a powerful woman can act, it’s as if Euripides is sending a pseudo warning that “Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned”.

This is an Athenian vase made in the Medium Black-Figure. The Shape Name is Amphora Neck, and was created between 475-525 BCE. Depicted is Aeneas, with a Boeotian shield, carrying Anchises between two women. This piece is currently located at London, market, Vase Number, 351135. The reference number is, Beazley 152.

This is a Roman coin minted in Africa, dating between 46 and 47 BCE. It depicts Aeneas, carrying palladium in his right hand and Anchises on left shoulder with a
border of dots. The denomination was the Denarius, and weighed 3.82g. The coin is currently in the ANS collection numbered 1948.19.232.
This is a sculpture by Gian Lorenzo Bernini completed in 1619. It is made of marble and depicts Aeneas fleeing from Troy with Anchises on his shoulder with his son Ascanius following close behind. The statue currently resides at the Galleria Borghese, Rome, catalogue number 8.
The three images of ancient artwork depict Aeneas, a Trojan hero, fleeing from the burning city after the sac of Troy. In each of these three pieces Aeneas is carrying his father Anchises. Anchises cannot walk because he was struck by a thunderbolt previously. In all three images Aeneas is walking forward toward what can be seen his new home, or Rome. Although all of the images depict the same event in time, the way each artist portrays the event speaks to how different each person views this crucial turning point in Aeneas and Rome’s future.

If we first look at the vase, we see that Aeneas is still wearing his full Trojan soldiers uniform, complete with his shield and helmet. He is depicted as very strong and powerful, barely struggling under the weight of his seemingly tiny father. Anchises is depicted as smaller than Aeneas in this piece to show that Aeneas is mighty and can literally put his family on his back and carry them to safety. The depiction of Aeneas still wearing his armor is also symbolic, even though he is leaving his homeland in a time of war he is not a coward. He is still leaving with his pride as a Trojan warrior. We cannot see his facial expression, the purpose could be that he has no expression in this interpretation, he is hyper focused on the task at hand.
When we look at the coin we see a slightly different interpretation. Aeneas is still carrying his father, but in this piece Aeneas is the one carrying the household Gods as opposed to Anchises carrying them. This could be symbolic of Aeneas being fully in control of the situation and showing that he is capable of not only managing to carry his father but the gods as well. Aeneas carrying the household gods himself could also show a great respect and loyalty to them. On the coin it is very clear Aeneas is moving out at a considerable pace due to his long gate and body language being slightly leaned forward like he is running or jogging. This could be telling us that once again Aeneas is focused on fulfilling his destiny of founding Rome.

On the final piece (my personal favorite) we once again see Aeneas carrying his father. Although this time Aeneas’ son is also depicted following close behind. If we focus on the facial expression of Aeneas for the first time we see the look of conflict or turmoil. This is because Aeneas feels torn about not only leaving his home and city but also turning his back to the rest of the Trojan army and community. In this piece the father is also depicted more to scale as a fully grown adult. This shows us once again but with even more emphasis how strong and powerful Aeneas is. The father also seems to be really showing off the household gods, almost as if he is showing the actual gods “look we haven’t forgotten about you… don’t forget about us”.

Though all three of these ancient works are from vastly different time periods, ranging from 500BCE all the way to 1619 AD, they are very similar in composition and interpretation. This shows us that Aeneas was not viewed as a coward for fleeing troy but a Hero. Even the Athenian vase depicts him as a powerful warrior showing us that the Greeks, who defeated the Trojans, see Aeneas in a positive light. The artists chose to highlight different aspects of the story but the bottom line remains the same, this was one of the most critical points in Aeneas’ adult life and in Rome’s conception.
Ovid’s Metamorphoses is full of stories with deep intellectual meaning. The story of Pygmalion from book ten is no exception. Although it is one of the shorter stories, only containing about 65 lines of text, Ovid is able to provoke thought on some underlying sociological ideas. As the years have gone by, many writers and artists have interpreted this story. Some choose to put a modern day spin on it, but the same root issues that Ovid hints at are still clearly visible in the new works.

The French artist Jean-Léon Gérôme has retold the Pygmalion story through his artwork in various mediums. Gérôme has portrayed this story in both oil on canvas works and through a statue carved of white marble. One of Gérôme’s oil on canvas works from 1890 that currently resides at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, NY with the catalogue number 27.200, serves as a great point of comparison between modern day and ancient interpretations of the Pygmalion story.

Both Ovid and Gérôme’s representations of Pygmalion are incredibly detailed and meaningful. A common theme that both the story and the painting touch on is present absence. The idea of present absence is when a person or thing is present in the physical sense, but absent spirit, identity, or ability to communicate. Present absence can also be seen as the inverse were the subject is not physically there but still impacts the outcome of events or influences the other characters.

In the painting we can see from the facial expression of the two masks on the right side of the image that they are looking on in horror. Just like the statue is unable to stop the rape herself, neither can the masks due to their inanimate being. We also see the statue to the right of the couple, what looks to be a mother holding her child close and shielding them from vile act being performed in the center. She has a hand to her face covering her mouth truly conveying the disgustingness of the act unfolding. Both of
these portray the present absence idea. The objects are there, present in the room. But they are also absent because they do not have the ability to stop anything from happening.

This draws us to look at the statue that Pygmalion has sculpted. It is physically there in the room with him but absent because it is not a living thing. Once it is turned into a human by Venus, the question becomes whether or not she has any freewill or ability to think. If she does not, she could still be viewed as being absent in mind and spirit. Ultimately, that would make her no better than when she was a statue, other than the fact it allows for procreation. Ovid makes it very clear that once she is transformed into a human, that she is still only the shell of a woman. He makes no mention of her saying a word or even having a thought. She was present, but absent of identity.

Both of the works also could look at Pygmalion as being a character that portrays present absence as well. He is present in the world of thought and reason physically, but his mind is far from it. A person has to be dethatched, or absent from reality to fall in love with an inanimate object the way he did. “He often touches the statue to find out whether it is ivory or flesh, and is unwilling to admit that it is ivory. He kisses it and thinks his kisses are returned.” (Book 10, 278-281). These lines by Ovid confirm that Pygmalion was so disconnected from his physical existence, he allowed his mind to create this fantasy. The oil painting confirms this through the addition of cupid, to show how insane and madly in love he had become.

The only character in the Pygmalion story that can be described by present absence but in the opposite sense is Venus. Venus was never there in the physical sense like all the other characters, but she played a very important role in the outcome of the story. This would mean that she was present in the spiritual or divine consciousness. Sadly, for the statue, she was only present for Pygmalion. She transformed the statue into a real woman then curated the rape of her. When Ovid writes in book 10 line 228 “The goddess attended the marriage she’d made” he means that she watched the consummation happen, not the wedding ceremony itself. Once again this theme is made clear in the painting by the
physical absence of Venus all together, but the transformation of the statue puts her spiritually in the room.

Present absence is a very effective tool that authors and artists can use to show the power of a character, or the lack thereof. Both Ovid and Gérôme do a great job of showing how all the power lies with Pygmalion and Venus. The statue could be seen as being controlled physically by Pygmalion, because he is the one creating the way she looks. Conversely, the statue is controlled mentally and emotionally by Venus, because she is the one that granted life and made the statue subordinate to Pygmalion.
“Pygmalion and Galatea”

Oil on Canvas by Jean-Léon Gérôme

Current on display at Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, NY

Accession Number: 27.200

This essay is outstanding in every way. There is a clear thesis (both the painting and the text explore present absence), a nuanced definition of the terms (the third paragraph), a varied exploration of the two works (Student C explores two aspects of present absence for each work), and an intro and conclusion. This is a rich argument, well organized and developed.

Student C has also deployed strong evidence in the service of his theme. The onlookers in the painting are particularly strong evidence that those figures are presently absent – “there and not there” – in that they are unable to act or react. He misses one key piece of evidence in the painting that would support his theme (Cupid aiming at the central figures, which would show Venus’ presence there as in Ovid’s narrative). The evidence from the text is equally strong, especially Student C’s use of the “absent” details such as the newly-minted girl’s voice or thoughts.