

**Ruptured Wisdom: The Unification of Violence and Knowledge in  
Cornelis van Haarlem's *Two Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon***



**Cornelis van Haarlem, *Two Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon*, 1588**

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## **Ruptured Wisdom: The Unification of Violence and Knowledge in Cornelis van Haarlem's *Two Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon***

*Striding into the wood, he encountered a welter of corpses,  
above them the huge-backed monster gloating in grisly triumph,  
tongue bedabbled with blood as he lapped at their pitiful wounds.*

*-Ovid, Metamorphoses, III: 55-57*

### **Introduction**

The visual impact of the painting *Two Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon* (figs.1&2), is simultaneously disturbing and alluring. Languidly biting into a face, the dragon stares out of the canvas fixing the viewer in its gaze, as its unfortunate victim fails to push it away, hand resting on its neck, raised arm slackened into a gentle curve, the parody of an embrace as his fight seeps away with his life. A second victim lies on top of the first, this time fixed in place by claws dug deeply into the thigh and torso causing the skin to corrugate, subcutaneous tissue exposed as blood begins to trickle down pale flesh. Situated at right angles to each other, there is no opportunity for these bodies to be fused into a single cohesive entity despite one ending where the other begins. In the foreground, a severed head leads the eye to this disjuncture, the disorder of the bodies' fragmentation further emphasised by the incongruity of its position between a foot and a claw-like hand, and its exposed trachea another visceral reminder of the vulnerability of the human body. The dragon, having created this destruction, perversely also links these figures, the huge arc of its neck joining tooth and claw to unite human to human and human to animal; a neat geometric composition of Platonic perfection that belies the disorder of the scene (fig.3). Physically dominating the canvas, one jagged dragon's wing stretches almost to the

top left corner obscuring the sky whilst a serpentine tail curls around a furry hind leg that gives way to a taloned claw at the bottom right of the painting. Both the ears and the eyes with which it fixes us have a curiously bovine quality; a hint of the familiar in an otherwise alien landscape.

Scholars have variously interpreted the dragon, depicted here in a scene taken from Ovid's account of Cadmus in his *Metamorphoses*,<sup>1</sup> as a violent aggressor or representative of wisdom, thus setting up an apparent opposition.<sup>2</sup> Through a detailed visual analysis of the painting in conjunction with the historical and political milieu of Haarlem in 1588, and the creative framework of its production, this dissertation will contend that to conceive of the dragon as wise is not in fact antithetical to its destructive presence, but part of a wider cycle of violence and creation that speaks both to the contemporary situation in Haarlem and Ovid's text. Raising timeless issues that surround the chaos of destruction, loss of agency and identity, and the difficult process of change, it is a painting that deals with transformation on multiple levels, and operates through dualisms as an aesthetic formal strategy. Beginning with an overview and description of the Cadmus story, I will compare it to other illustrations of the myth, leading to an analysis of the collaborative environment in which it was produced and the working methods and influences, in particular that of Neo-Platonism, that fed into its style and design. The historical background and literary and philosophical discourses that permeate the work will be addressed and used as a platform to introduce a theoretical discussion of identity; Caroline Walker

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<sup>1</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. by David Raeburn (London: Penguin Classics, 2004), III:1-130.

<sup>2</sup> See: David Kunzle, *From Criminal to Courtier: The Soldier in Netherlandish Art 1550-1672* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), p.197, and Julie McGee, *Cornelis Corneliszoon van Haarlem (1562-1638): Patrons, Friends and Dutch Humanists* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1991), pp.92-93.

Bynum's exploration of the nature and nuances of the meaning of 'change';<sup>3</sup> and Jean-Luc Nancy's study of violence.<sup>4</sup> As each of these themes is imbricated in the overall composition and pictorial choices made by Cornelis in the initial conception of the painting, it is to this work, rather than the engraving, that I will refer unless otherwise stated. Ultimately, I will demonstrate that *Two Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon* is a transformative painting, and that it is the violent rupture of transformation, and the momentary suspension of its opposing forces that create a gap in which hope can flourish.

Cornelis Cornelisz. van Haarlem's huge canvas, *Two Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon*, (hereafter referred to as *Cadmus*), standing at almost 1.5 meters high by 2 meters wide, was painted in Haarlem in 1588 and engraved in the same year by Hendrick Goltzius (fig.4) as part of a collaborative project designed to promote their talents. The work was paid for, and probably commissioned by, a wealthy art collector and dealer from Amsterdam, Jacob Rauwaert, who was instrumental in furthering their careers at this juncture.<sup>5</sup> Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was widely circulated in this period, and the story of Cadmus became popular in Haarlem because it was consonant with the town's recent history.<sup>6</sup> Having suffered a siege and

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<sup>3</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, 'Change in the Middle Ages', *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone Books, 2001), pp.15-36.

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, 'Image and Violence', *The Ground of the Image*, trans. by Jeff Fort (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), pp.15-26.

<sup>5</sup> Pieter J. J. van Thiel, *Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem, 1562–1638: A Monograph and Catalogue Raisonné*, trans. by Diane L. Webb (Doornspijk: Davaco, 1999), p.29. Other publications that have been invaluable sources of background material include: Marjolein Leesberg and Huigen Leeftang, (eds) *The New Hollstein Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts 1450-1700 – Hendrick Goltzius* (Ouderkerk aan den IJssel: Sound & Vision, 2012); and Lawrence Nichols, *The Paintings of Hendrick Goltzius, 1558-1617: A Monograph and Catalogue Raisonné* (Doornspijk: Davaco, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Eric Jan Sluijter, 'Metamorphoses' in Prints by Hendrick Goltzius and his Circle', *Seductress of Sight: Studies in Dutch Art of the Golden Age* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2000), pp.23-69 (p.23).

massacre at the hands of the Spanish, the town was occupied until 1577, just over a decade before the work was produced. A fire added to its devastation and so, in 1588, Haarlem was in the process of being rebuilt.<sup>7</sup> David Kunzle draws on the parallels between the situation in Haarlem and the founding of Thebes in his book *From Criminal to Courtier*, interpreting the dragon as the Spanish aggressor destroying the lives of innocent victims,<sup>8</sup> a position also held by the art historian Walter Strauss.<sup>9</sup> Contemporary commentaries of the story of Cadmus circulating in Haarlem at the time, however, cast the dragon as symbolic of wisdom, an interpretation favoured by Julie McGee.<sup>10</sup> These differing readings of the work along with the formal strategies employed by Cornelis, feed into the metanarrative against which the painting was produced and upon which I have drawn to form my own interpretation.

### **The Cadmus myth**

The story of Cadmus opens the third book of Ovid's epic poem *Metamorphoses*, and concerns the founding of the ancient city of Thebes. Cadmus is told by the Oracle to follow an ox and found a city where it finally settles to graze. Once the ox sinks to the ground, he sends his followers to collect water from a nearby well for a sacrifice, unaware that the well is guarded by a dragon or serpent, interchangeable terms in Ovid's text, that is sacred to Mars. The followers are killed, which is the scene Cornelis has depicted in the foreground, and upon this discovery, Cadmus exacts his revenge by slaying the dragon, hinted at in the painting through a distant vignette that depicts the fight between them. Having slain the dragon, Cadmus hears a voice

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<sup>7</sup> Elisabeth de Bièvre, 'Violence and Virtue: History and Art in the City of Haarlem', *Art History*, Vol.11, No.3, 1988, pp.303-334 (pp.312-313).

<sup>8</sup> Kunzle, p.197.

<sup>9</sup> McGee, p.93.

<sup>10</sup> McGee, pp.92-93.

forewarning him that he too will become a serpent, followed by the goddess Athena telling him to sow the dragon's teeth into the earth. Although neither are specifically depicted in *Cadmus*, both are alluded to. To reference Roland Barthes, the painting's 'punctum' is the formidable row of teeth that obscure a face, the locus of a person's identity, indicating instead the axis on which the myth pivots, as, once sown, the teeth transform into warriors who fight each other until five remain to become co-founders of the city.<sup>11</sup> The tail that curls in towards the dragon's mouth, the redness of its tip echoed in the exposed, bloodied gums, subtly references Cadmus's eventual metamorphosis into a serpent as foretold in Ovid's narrative. We learn in the next book that despite being a successful ruler, Cadmus is tormented by the misfortunes of his children and grandchildren which prompts him to wonder aloud to his wife, Harmonia, whether the dragon he slayed was sacred, and request his own transformation into a serpent if this was the case. Having uttered these words, his metamorphosis begins, followed by that of Harmonia, and they live out the rest of their days in the woods as serpents.<sup>12</sup>

### **Other visual representations of the Cadmus myth**

Visual representations of this story were not unprecedented in the form of woodcuts and engravings, which were used to illustrate the poem that had become hugely popular in the Netherlands in the sixteenth century alongside commentaries and translations. The first illustrated Dutch translation of *Metamorphoses* was published in 1566, with reprints continuing into the seventeenth century, and contained 178

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<sup>11</sup> Barthes conceives of the punctum as the single aspect of an image (usually in reference to photography) that arrests the viewers' attention to draw them in, see: Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), pp.26-27.

<sup>12</sup> Ovid, IV:571-603.

exact copies of woodcuts by the German draughtsman, Virgil Solis, including three that represented the Cadmus myth.<sup>13</sup> Although McGee states that ‘there is a consensus that the illustrated versions were not at all influential for painting’, I disagree.<sup>14</sup> Two of the Solis woodcuts had significant impact on Cornelis’s painting, as I will demonstrate through a detailed comparison which will expose where Cornelis’s concerns lay, both in terms of stylistic trends, and a change of emphasis which is apparent despite the inherent differences between a stand-alone image on canvas and illustrations to accompany text. I shall also draw comparisons from the designs for engravings of the myth completed by Goltzius in 1590, and briefly discuss two later paintings, one of which takes inspiration from Cornelis’s work, and the other, a large canvas that was thought to have been by Goltzius but has subsequently been reattributed to Reinhold Timm.<sup>15</sup>

The Solis woodcuts represent the followers of Cadmus being devoured by the dragon (fig.5) and Cadmus slaying the dragon (fig.6). At a basic level, the overall composition of Cornelis’s work corresponds to the first woodcut in which Cadmus’s followers are being devoured; the central action is foregrounded with a secondary scene in the background, which in the woodcut depicts the image of two escapees fleeing, replaced in Cornelis’s work by Cadmus killing the dragon. Compared to the fleeing men, Cadmus and the dragon are far more distant, and although this could be a device to alert the viewer to the temporal aspect of sequential narrative, other

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<sup>13</sup> Sluijter, p.25.

<sup>14</sup> McGee, p.65.

<sup>15</sup> For the attribution see: Charlotte Christensen and Lawrence Nichols, “‘Cadmus, His Companions, and the Dragon’: A Newly-discovered Painting by Hendrick Goltzius”, *Hoogsteder-Naumann Mercury*, Vol.3 (1986), pp.3-19. This is refuted on the basis that the canvas is of Danish manufacture in: Lawrence Nichols, *The Paintings of Hendrick Goltzius, 1558-1617: A Monograph and Catalogue Raisonné* (Doornspijk: Davaco, 2013), p.29.

indications suggest that Cornelis is also denying the viewer an assertive reassurance of Cadmus's revenge, a suggestion that becomes apparent in the second woodcut.



Figure 5. Virgil Solis, *Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon*, 1563 (referenced as first woodcut)

Remaining with the first woodcut, however, evidence of the dragon's ferocity appears in the form of his previous victims. On the right of the image, across the water, there appears to be a pile of bodies that, on closer inspection, is revealed to be just two, discarded side by side and head to toe so that arms and legs are difficult to decipher, and a bent knee is just as easily read as an elbow. In the foreground on the left, a skull and ribcage lie near two more bodies, one apparently decapitated but both still clothed, which complete the devastation that the dragon, busily swallowing yet another victim, has wrought. There are motifs dotted throughout that Cornelis has borrowed – the bones, the indistinctness of body parts, even the ambiguity of life and death, for just as a corpse could not sustain an up-bent knee, nor would the sinew on the prominently displayed severed head in the painting remain taut.<sup>16</sup> There is even an echo of the woodcut in the cyclical composition of the dragon devouring the followers; in Solis's work the dragon has one hapless victim in its jaws, arm extended

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<sup>16</sup> I thank Dr Sarah Talbot for this observation.



in a balletic backbend that merges with the arc of the serpent's tail as he, or she, elegantly slides down its throat.<sup>17</sup> To briefly compare the first woodcut to Goltzius's *Followers being Attacked by a Dragon* (fig.7), there are no scattered bodies, making his depiction strangely benign whereas Cornelis depicted it so viscerally. Here, only the side of one of the victims is taken in the serpent's mouth, and the followers are not only intact and mostly clothed, but on their feet defending themselves.

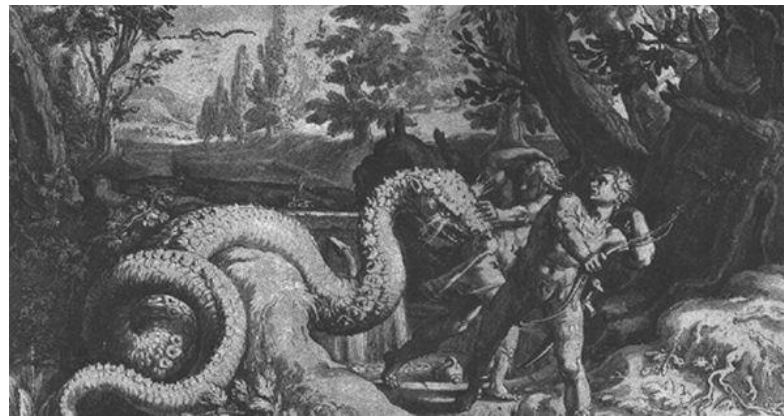


Figure 7. Hendrick Goltzius, *Followers of Cadmus Attacked by a Dragon*, 1590

A comparison of Solis's second woodcut with Cornelis's painted version, reveals a considerable difference in the way the protagonist is portrayed. In the painting, his mastery over the dragon is less assured; although speared through the mouth, the dragon has not yet been pinned to a tree, and rears up to suggest that the fight may not be over (fig.8). The general sense of movement created by Cadmus's flowing robes and the dragon's precarious stance in the painting is dynamic, capturing the battle at its apex, whereas the scene in the woodcut is static and conclusive. Here, the dragon's tail is curled around the tree it has been speared to, mouth open to expel its final fiery breath, illustrated by the flicker of a tongue, far removed from the

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<sup>17</sup> It is difficult to ignore the possibility that this figure has breasts, although the reason may be due to a misreading of the woodcut by Salomon from which it was copied. See fig.12 in the illustrations for a comparison.

fearsome three-forked tongue of Ovid's narrative.<sup>18</sup> Cadmus, too, appears calm as he slays the monster that has killed his followers; the concentration on his face, suggested by his furrowed brow, is mitigated by the shadow of a smile to hint almost at complacency.



Figure 6. Virgil Solis, *Cadmus Slaying the Dragon*, 1563 (referenced as second woodcut)



Figure 8. Detail of Cadmus slaying the dragon from: Cornelis van Haarlem, *Two Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon*, 1588

Goltzius's design of the same scene, *Cadmus Slaying the Dragon* (fig.9) is more aligned with Solis's woodcut as a composed looking Cadmus pins the dragon to a tree. Notably, in both these depictions, he is wearing the lion's skin that Ovid tells us

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<sup>18</sup> Ovid, III:33.

he donned to ‘shield his body’,<sup>19</sup> thus drawing a parallel with Hercules who also protected himself with a lion’s pelt.<sup>20</sup> In the painting this is absent, a significance that will be explored later, and Cadmus holds his spear up to his face, obscuring his expression and identity, drawing a line straight to the dragon’s mouth, thus curiously creating a link, foreshadowing the narrative, rather than a distance. Goltzius, however, depicted the dragon as a serpent, omitting the legs and wings from the woodcut, and in complete contrast to the hybrid Cornelis created.



Figure 9. Hendrick Goltzius, *Cadmus Slaying the Dragon*, 1590

Distilling these comparisons, it is clear that Cornelis was the only artist to inject a real element of ambiguity into the work. Although each work has its share of corpses and body parts, Cornelis’s Cadmus, away in the distance, devoid of the lion’s skin, and with his face obscured, lacks the poise of his counterparts which, added to the complex hybridity of the dragon and disavowal of a cohesive victim, give prominent concern to the theme of identity. The powerful effect of these elements as an ensemble is seen when one or two are omitted as in van der Werff’s ‘copy’(fig.10)

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<sup>19</sup> Ovid, III:52-53.

<sup>20</sup> Ovid, notes, p.641.

which replaces the severed head with a rock and depicts Cadmus riding a horse in the background. The result is to simultaneously tone down the horror whilst allowing the viewer to find greater respite in the background vignette which, suffused with a golden light, draws the eye and adds an ethereal quality, more pronounced as the medium is oil on copper.



Figure 10. Adrien van der Werff, *Two Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon*, late seventeenth century

The Timm painting (fig.11), formerly attributed to Goltzius, on the other hand, conflates the followers being devoured with Cadmus killing the dragon, and is less threatening because the figure of Cadmus is so dominant and in control.



Figure 11. Reinhold Timm(/), *Cadmus Slays the Dragon*, between 1611-15(?),

The overall result is that there is a feeling of menace to the *Cadmus* that doesn't manifest in the other works. This has less to do with the medium or size of the respective works, although both play a role, and everything to do with the all-encompassing dominance of the dragon over vulnerable naked flesh in Cornelis's composition. In these other works, we obtain reassurance from the dominance of Cadmus, allow our eyes to skip over the conflation of bodies that blend in with the landscape in the woodcut, or find solace in a distant but luminous horizon as in the van der Werff. The painting, however, confronts us with twisted limbs and confusion, the one point of escape relegated to a patch of pale blue sky far in the background; but we are forced to pick our way past tortured bodies and a dragon to get there.

### **The Haarlem Academy**

The reason that Cornelis so clearly prioritised the nude, can be explained to a degree by the circumstance and context of the painting's production. In 1583, the painter, poet, theorist and intellectual Karel van Mander moved to Haarlem. Van Mander's most ambitious oeuvre, *Het Schilder-boeck*,<sup>21</sup> was modelled on Vasari's *Vite*,<sup>22</sup> and included commentaries and biographical information on Northern artists, as well as a section called the *Wtlegghingh*, a commentary on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.<sup>23</sup> *Het*

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<sup>21</sup> Karel van Mander and Hessel Miedema, *The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German painters, from the First Edition of the Schilde-boeck (1603-1604), Preceded by The Lineage, Circumstances and Place of Birth, Life and Works of Karel van Mander, Painter and Poet and likewise his Death and Burial, from the Second Edition of the Schilde-boeck (1616-1618)*, ed. and trans. Hessel Miedema, VI Vols. (Doornspijk: Davaco, 1994-8).

<sup>22</sup> Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, first published 1550.

<sup>23</sup> Karel van Mander, *Wtlegghingh op den Metamorphosis* (Haarlem: Paschier van Wesbusch, 1604).



*Schilder-boeck*, henceforth translated and abbreviated to *Lives*, was first published in 1604, and after van Mander's death in 1606 a second edition was published, between 1616 and 1618, to include his biography. It is in this anonymously written work that the single mention of an academy is made:

‘Shortly thereafter he [van Mander] became acquainted with Goltzius and Cornelis, and the three of them together established and maintained an Academy in order to do studies after life.’<sup>24</sup>

Scholarly debate surrounding the nature of this ‘academy’ has been ongoing for at least a century, but most scholars agree that if there were an academy, it was a loose collaboration that benefitted each of its members rather than an organised institution for advanced professional training.<sup>25</sup> Older than Cornelis and Goltzius, van Mander had already travelled to Italy, and had first-hand experience of the classical sculptures that fascinated and inspired sixteenth century artists, as well as access to the work of the much admired Italian masters such as Michelangelo (1475 – 1564), Raphael (1483-1520) and Titian (1488/90 – 1576). Each of these artists is referenced in volume III of his *Lives* which is dedicated to Italian artists but also juxtaposes their work against legitimate alternatives, opening up theoretical debate to include the Netherlandish canon.<sup>26</sup> Aesthetic stimuli were almost certainly accompanied by

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<sup>24</sup> van Mander, *Lives*, I:27, “En quam korts daer nae aen kennisse van Goltzius, en Mr. Kornelis, hielden en maeckten onder naer dryen een Academie, om nae ’t leven te stedeeren”, S2ra38-42. Translated by Aaron Hyman.

<sup>25</sup> See McGee, p.75-76.

<sup>26</sup> Walter Melion, *Shaping the Netherlandish canon: Karel van Mander's Schilder-boeck* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p.95.

theoretical discourse which included the Neo-Platonist views that van Mander was to return to and elaborate on for the rest of his life.<sup>27</sup>

Italy was the crucible for the study of Plato's works and many of the theories espoused by prominent philosophers such as Nicholas Cusanus and Marsilio Ficino were derived from this school of thought. Ficino, who ran the Neo-Platonist academy in Florence, and was the single most influential propagator of its principles, taught that the human soul was at the centre of the universe but promoted a syncretic form of belief.<sup>28</sup> Although the fusion of diverse religious beliefs may have been an attractive concept, the politico-religious climate of Haarlem at the time inhibited the discussion of theological allegiance in a Christian context, and as a result, even van Mander's own religious affiliations are oblique in *Lives* although he was widely held to be a Mennonite.<sup>29</sup> In his preface to the *Wtlegghingh* he precludes Christian interpretation of any kind on the basis that Ovid was writing before the birth of Christ, and therefore within the paradigm of this dissertation, it is appropriate to detach any discussion of *Cadmus* from religious connotations.<sup>30</sup> Returning to Neo-Platonism, as part of his philosophical discourse, Cusanus placed the role of mathematical sciences at the apex of knowledge in recognition of his belief that it was mathematics alone that provided certainty and hence was the pathway to truth.<sup>31</sup> This found its way into Cornelis's

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<sup>27</sup> See: Marijke Spies, A. van Strien, *Rhetoric, Rhetoricians, and Poets: Studies in Renaissance Poetry and Poetics* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999), pp.71-71 for a discussion on van Mander's Neo-Platonist views and their influence in Haarlem and further afield, inspired by Italian mythographer, Natalis Comes, the French translator of Ovid, Barthlémy Aneau and La Pléiade, a group of French poets who espoused Neo-Platonism. Van Mander's biographer corroborates the strong influence of La Pléiade – see van Mander, *Lives*, II:83.

<sup>28</sup> Hooker, <https://hermetic.com/texts/neoplatonism>.

<sup>29</sup> van Mander, *Lives*, II:21.

<sup>30</sup> McGee, p.63

<sup>31</sup> Richard Hooker, 'Renaissance Neo-Platonism', *Hermetic Library*: <https://hermetic.com/texts/neoplatonism>.

work, and the artist's affinity with geometrical rationality, which is often juxtaposed with the portrayal of irrational violence, will be discussed later in the dissertation. The use of mathematics can certainly be attributed, at least in part, to the theories van Mander would have been exposed to, and embraced, during his travels.

Michelangelo, who became Cornelis's 'ultimate hero', seems to have been influential in both this theoretical aspect and through his works of art.<sup>32</sup> Having spent his formative years as a member of Ficino's Neo-Platonist academy,<sup>33</sup> he also once remarked that 'one must have compasses in the eyes', betraying his reverence for mathematics.<sup>34</sup> Van Mander cannot have avoided his work during his time in Rome, he knew, for example, the Sala Regia next to the Sistine Chapel very well, but an earlier work is referenced in *Cadmus*.<sup>35</sup> Prior to returning to Rome, the Italian master had worked on the Medici Chapel in Florence, including a statue of *Giorno* (fig.13), one of four references to the passing of a day that sit on the Medici tombs. From inventory records, it is clear that Cornelis owned a model of *Giorno* and it can therefore be surmised with some certainty that the motif of the victim leaning on his arm behind his back was borrowed from Michelangelo's statue which reclines in the same pose.<sup>36</sup>

Van Mander's contribution to the triumvirate was, therefore, twofold. Firstly, his interest in theory was a probable conduit to contemporary philosophical discourse

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<sup>32</sup> van Thiel, p.96.

<sup>33</sup> Iván Estéban Castañeda., *The Figura Serpentinata: Michelangelo, Florentine Neoplatonism, and the Academia Sacra Medicea*, (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Virginia, 2000), p.iii.

<sup>34</sup> William Wallace, 'Papal Architect, Rome, 1546-1549', *Michelangelo: The Artist, the Man and his Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.222-247 (p.231).

<sup>35</sup> van Mander, *Lives*, II:52-53.

<sup>36</sup> van Thiel, p.77.



in artistic hubs such as Paris, Florence, Rome and Venice, and it enabled him to promote their achievements through his academic approach to their work. Secondly, he was able to expose Cornelis and Goltzius to exemplary classical and contemporary works through sketches and verbal accounts. For their parts, Cornelis and Goltzius were respectively the most respected painter and engraver in Haarlem, but also contributed to the collaboration in other ways. Goltzius's prodigious talent as a draughtsman as well as engraver meant that, by 1588, his fame had spread to Europe by which time he had also opened his own printing press, breaking the Antwerp monopoly and helping to promote Haarlem as a centre for the arts.<sup>37</sup> Cornelis, on the other hand, benefitted the most artistically, developing from a competent artist in the Netherlandish tradition into a prominent representative of the most current artistic notions in Italy and Europe.<sup>38</sup> His contribution, as a native to Haarlem, was the ability to integrate the other two into society; these introductions were particularly useful to van Mander whose reception had been lukewarm when he arrived in 1583.<sup>39</sup>

In every analysis, the professional union of these three men in the mid-1580s was a period of sustained effort that resulted in an intellectual and artistic level of achievement that was unparalleled in the Netherlands at the time. Their working methods, however, weren't new; with van Mander's guidance, the other members of the so-called Haarlem Academy strived to emulate the achievements of the Italian artists that were so highly revered, and to ensure that their work was stylistically up to date. That meant two things: firstly, to learn to paint in the modern Italian manner, and secondly, to master the nude.

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<sup>37</sup> Leesberg and Leeftang, p.34.

<sup>38</sup> van Thiel, p.29.

<sup>39</sup> van Mander, *Lives*, II:65-66.

### **Dutch mannerism and working ‘from life’**

‘Carel showed them the Italian manner, which can be seen in the Ovid of Goltzius.’<sup>40</sup>

It is Goltzius who is credited with working in the ‘Italian manner’ by van Mander’s unknown biographer, but Cornelis also embraced the style that became retrospectively known as ‘Dutch mannerism’. The term is exceedingly nebulous; as Anne Lowenthal points out, ‘mannerism’ could refer to a time period, or even something as vague as a sensibility within a work, but its definition as a stylistic trend that occurred in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in European art is most appropriate here.<sup>41</sup> Introduced to the members of the so-called Haarlem Academy by both van Mander and Bartholomeus Spranger who had associated with van Mander in Italy and was to become a strong influence on Goltzius’s work, an appropriation of the sometimes elegant but always rather overblown style that was at its apex in Central Italy in the late-sixteenth century is evident in Cornelis’s *Cadmus*.<sup>42</sup> The proximity of the bodies to the picture plane (the toes on the bent leg almost contravene its parameters), their contorted poses, and the exaggerated musculature of the victims are all key aspects of the style, however, for all this artifice, the bodies in the painting are convincing. This can be attributed partly to the fact that a primary concern was to maintain a truth to nature which introduces the ill-defined expression ‘working from life’, and partly to the subject and requirements of the painting.

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<sup>40</sup> van Mander, *Lives*, I:27, “Karel wees haer de Italiaensche maniere / ghelijck ’t aen den Ovidius van Goltzius we te sien en te mercken is”, S2ra42-45. Translated by Aaron Hyman.

<sup>41</sup> Anne Lowenthal, *Joachim Wtewael and Dutch Mannerism* (Doornspijk, Davaco Publications, 1986), pp.16-17.

<sup>42</sup> Lowenthal, p.17.

Much has been made of the phrase '*om nae 't leven studeeren*', for which a literal translation would be 'studying from life' but has commonly been interpreted as 'drawing after the nude model'.<sup>43</sup> Pieter van Thiel devotes a section of his monograph on Cornelis to the issue, and whilst he acknowledges that nude models were uncommon but not unknown in the milieu in which Goltzius and Cornelis worked, he discredits their role in *Cadmus* through an analysis of some of the phrases that van Mander uses in *Lives* that reveal their working methods.<sup>44</sup> Emphasising the artistic struggle, he describes how Goltzius strives after beauty in nature and imitates the best masters, and how Cornelis draws diligently from life, choosing the best sculptures and working hard to obtain good judgement.<sup>45</sup> He thereby highlights a process that involves both imitation and judgement but also refers to 'masters' and 'sculpture' suggesting works that are already extant. Van Thiel's contention, therefore, is that they were studying plaster casts, prints and drawings made in Rome and reproductive prints of classical works made in the early sixteenth century based on antiquity.<sup>46</sup> Working to 'Zeuxian' principles, they copied, combined and even recalled images from earlier studies to press into service where appropriate, meaning that, essentially, a single image was formed from the fragments of others.<sup>47</sup> In this spirit, inspiration for Cornelis's painting was derived from a number of sources. It is known that he owned a sketch book once belonging to his idol and artistic predecessor in Haarlem, Maarten van Heemskerck, from which he copied some of the passages that appear in *Cadmus*.

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<sup>43</sup> van Mander, *Lives*, II:71.

<sup>44</sup> van Thiel, p.72.

<sup>45</sup> See: van Mander, *Lives*, I:394, I:429.

<sup>46</sup> van Thiel, p.70.

<sup>47</sup> Zeuxis was a 5th century BC artist who is said to have assembled a painting of Helen of Troy, the 'most beautiful woman in the world', from the most attractive parts of five of the most beautiful maidens in his city. See: Alison Syme, 'Too Beautiful to Picture: Zeuxis, Myth, and Mimesis' *CAA.Reviews* (New York: College Art Association, 2010), p.1.

The effect of claws tearing into skin, for example, originate from a sketch of a statue, *Lion Attacking a Horse* (fig.14) and the muscular back is a copy of Heemskerck's sketch of the *Belvedere Torso* (fig.15), both seen in Rome.<sup>48</sup> The combination of the *Belvedere Torso* with the arm from Michelangelo's *Giorno*, already discussed, as a model for one of the figures in *Cadmus*, however, meant that adjustments had to be made to the musculature in the shoulders in order to reflect the altered posture. The way the shoulder muscles are realised depending on whether the arm is raised or supporting the torso – the former bulges whilst there is an indentation in the latter – indicates where the emphasis lay in the portrayal of bodies in *Cadmus*. As van Thiel asserts, Cornelis's motivation was not to create the most beautiful of the beautiful as Zeuxis did, but to demonstrate prowess in painting the nude through focusing on the differing appearance of individual body parts depending on the position they're in and the function they're performing.<sup>49</sup>

The naturalistic, if exaggerated, appearance of the nude in Cornelis's painting is compromised by the engraving which is less convincing, and indicates the influence of 'knollenstil', a term derived from the knotty or bulbous way in which muscles were depicted. The style was favoured by Heemskerck as demonstrated in his sketch of the *Belvedere Torso* which Cornelis used as a model. Working directly from the painting, rather than Heemskerck's sketch, Goltzius was nevertheless also clearly experimenting with its effects;<sup>50</sup> his talent meant that he was able to replicate another artist's style in an original work, therefore the overblown musculature in *Cadmus* was intentional.<sup>51</sup> The bulging muscles led early scholars to debate, and eventually reject,

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<sup>48</sup> van Thiel, pp.76-77.

<sup>49</sup> van Thiel, p.76.

<sup>50</sup> van Thiel, p.77.

<sup>51</sup> Goltzius had the talent to pass off original works as those by Dutch masters. See van Mander, *Lives*, I:397.

any advanced degree of anatomical accuracy in *Cadmus*, but despite falling short of attaining absolute precision in his representation of the body, Cornelis's ambition is evident.<sup>52</sup> The combination of the aspiration to elevate his work to the standard of the Italian masters he wished to emulate, especially that of Michelangelo, in conjunction with an equal desire to demonstrate a knowledge of the latest stylistic trends, in this instance mannerism, led to the depiction of bodies seen in *Cadmus*. Michelangelo's work was often dynamic but didn't exceed to exaggeration, that trend came later in Italian art and hence corresponds more to the 1580's and the time of the so-called Haarlem Academy. Cornelis's *Cadmus* is therefore an ingenious vehicle for both; the extremity of the twisted poses here doesn't result in the contrived artificiality of the mannerist style because the violence of the scene and the destruction of the bodies demand it. Mannerism is utilised in the service of naturalism thus uniting two stylistically antithetical modes of practice, and over-coding the irrationality of the former with the rationality of the latter. This newly found artistic dexterity and aspiration to succeed, encouraged by van Mander and disseminated by Goltzius in the form of prints, was supported and advanced by the art collector and dealer, Jacob Rauwaert.

### **Patronage by Jacob Rauwaert**

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<sup>52</sup> van Thiel, p.86.

Rauwaert has been cited as the fourth member of the Haarlem Academy as his patronage although undocumented, was likely to have helped fund the collaboration.<sup>53</sup> An inscription on Goltzius's engraving of *Cadmus* is dedicated to him and reads: 'Cornelis Cornelisz. the Painter as inventor and Hendrick Goltzius as engraver have dedicated these first fruits of their art out of friendship to Mr. Jacob Rauwaert, the exceptional nursling of Painting and admirer of graphic arts.'<sup>54</sup> Rauwaert displayed the *Cadmus* painting in his home; given the tone of the inscription and the fact that Haarlem was still in the throes of being rebuilt which precluded money for artistic projects, it is appropriate to assume that he not only bought the painting once it was completed, but actually commissioned it. Further evidence of the close relationship between Rauwaert and Cornelis is the documented gift of a string of pearls that the collector gave to the artist, once *Cadmus* was complete, perhaps as a bonus or a token of thanks, in excess of payment which had already been received.<sup>55</sup> It was, however, perhaps in anticipation of the calibre of audience the painting might attract, the reputations that it could raise or seal and the potential future commissions that it could bring that encouraged Cornelis to put so much flesh on display to promote his newly attained virtuosity in painting the human figure. 1588 was the beginning of a period of enormous production in the academic vein and Rauwaert was willing and able to promote it. The Cadmus myth, however, is not the most obvious choice to display virtuosity in painting the flesh, despite Cornelis's clever manipulation of naturalism and the mannerist style; the attraction to this story is more likely to be linked to the historical, political and social circumstances under which it was produced.

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<sup>53</sup> Aaron Hyman, 'Brushes, Burins, and Flesh: The Graphic Art of Karel van Mander's Haarlem Academy' *Representations*, Vol.134, No.1 (2016), pp.1-28 (p.7).

<sup>54</sup> Hyman, p.15.

<sup>55</sup> van Thiel, p.30.

## Haarlem in 1588

In 1588 Haarlem was a town recovering from more than a decade of social and political turmoil which destroyed a third of the buildings and devastated the community.<sup>56</sup> The iconoclastic riots of 1566 and the subsequent war of independence with Spain that was to rumble on until well into the seventeenth century when the Dutch Republic was finally recognised, had little impact on Haarlem until the Spanish laid siege to the town in 1572. Unprepared for the bravery and tenacity of the Haarlemers, the siege lasted a horrific seven months until the Spanish eventually attacked from the water using vessels that were almost exclusively built and crewed in Amsterdam, and imposed a crushing defeat on the city.<sup>57</sup> To compound this defeat, and despite an agreement to the contrary, they then murdered the garrison of troops that had fought for Haarlem, as well as a number of leading magistrates.<sup>58</sup> Both the brutality of the Spanish<sup>59</sup> and the ‘disloyal image’ of the Amsterdammers lingered on in the psyche of the Haarlemers for some time, and has had an impact on the way some art historians have read *Cadmus*, as well as introducing a theoretical argument as to why the subject was chosen in the first place.<sup>60</sup> Julie McGee notes, citing Otto Hirschmann and Eric Sluijter, that the story of Cadmus was rare outside late sixteenth-century Haarlem;<sup>61</sup> as Walker Bynum contends, texts are sought out and studied because something in them seems relevant, and there are certainly parallels that extend beyond the basic idea of the equation of the foundation of Thebes to the

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<sup>56</sup> de Bièvre, p.313.

<sup>57</sup> de Bièvre, p.304.

<sup>58</sup> McGee, p.37.

<sup>59</sup> McGee, p.37.

<sup>60</sup> Marjolein 'T Hart, ‘Cities and Statemaking in the Dutch Republic, 1580-1680’ *Theory and Society*, Vol. 18, No. 5 (1989) pp.663-687 (p.668).

<sup>61</sup> McGee, p.89.

re-construction of Haarlem.<sup>62</sup> The violence of the era is undoubtedly captured; David Kunzle has observed that the scene that Cornelis has created is like that of a battlefield, and the war-like language of an inscription beneath the engraving endorses this interpretation.<sup>63</sup> It reads: 'The ominous snake tears to pieces the allied forces of the son of Agenor. Cadmus, the avenger, is present and demands retribution from the enemy'.<sup>64</sup> Notably the face of Goltzius's dragon is more aggressive in line with the text. The flared nostrils and exaggerated brow are further accentuated by more pronounced whiskers in comparison to the dragon in the painting, whilst the facial muscles are contracted into a snarl which adds a level of noise to the engraving that is absent in Cornelis's work. The inference that the dragon is symbolic of the Spanish King is unambiguous in this context, but there are other subtler connections between the Cadmus myth and the milieu in which the painting and engraving were created. Descended from the dragon's teeth, the Sown-Men (Sparti) commit fratricide prior to the final five becoming the co-founders of Thebes which could have been seen as an equivalence to the Amsterdammers supporting the Spanish against Haarlem. This tacit acknowledgement of the betrayal of close neighbours, Amsterdam and Haarlem are geographically less than 20 kilometres apart, highlights that communities are bound together by something other than physical proximity. Elisabeth de Bièvre remarks on Haarlem's community spirit, commenting that a strong sense of social responsibility was created because people were 'related to or at least acquainted with everybody around them, watching and being watched in a closely knit society'; this was hugely compromised after the disastrous events of the 1570s.<sup>65</sup> In the years after the siege,

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<sup>62</sup> Walker Bynum, p.26.

<sup>63</sup> Kunzle, p.197.

<sup>64</sup> McGee, p.93.

<sup>65</sup> de Bièvre, p.313.



Haarlem was occupied by the Spanish until 1577, and the fire of 1576 meant that not only was the population further diminished, but that more people were required to rebuild as well as regenerate the town. Haarlem was therefore compelled to attract immigration, which seriously diluted the sense of civic duty that had effectively regulated behaviour, and led to strategies for creating a new solidarity.<sup>66</sup> Many monuments and paintings from the era reflect this concern, but the *Cadmus* painting captures something else. The occupation combined with a substantially more diverse population meant that the identity of the Haarlemers was seriously at stake, and I will argue that much of Cornelis's composition is underpinned by this issue, illustrating the depth of the struggle to reassert and maintain this crucial element of the collective Haarlem psyche.

#### ***D' Wtlegghingh: commentaries on the Cadmus myth***

The disasters of the previous decade were acknowledged in another way in 1580s Haarlem. The Haarlem motto, *Vicit Vim Virtus* (Virtue has Conquered Violence) was revived and frequently appeared on items such as banners,<sup>67</sup> whilst also influencing the tone and content of many of the texts written in that period.<sup>68</sup> Van Mander's commentary on the Cadmus myth in *Wtlegghingh* reflects this moral code and almost certainly had an impact on the way both Goltzius and Cornelis identified with the Cadmus myth, especially as he was known to have insisted that artists understood the material they depicted.<sup>69</sup> McGee states that the *Wtlegghingh* is often considered a

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<sup>66</sup> de Bièvre, p.313.

<sup>67</sup> de Bièvre, p.305.

<sup>68</sup> de Bièvre, p.312.

<sup>69</sup> McGee, p.60.

possible source for interpretation of the painting, and if it was, the dragon could be perceived in a very different light.<sup>70</sup>

Beginning with an account of Ovid's tale, van Mander moves on to expound a historical interpretation that the dragon was actually a 'terrible robber' who had earned the moniker 'Dragon' because of the number of passers-by that had been attacked.<sup>71</sup> He then provides a detailed moral analysis in which, briefly, Cadmus is praised for following the ox because this was at the behest of the gods, but castigated and accused of hubris for killing the dragon as, in this instance, the dragon is symbolic of wisdom. The killing of the followers is interpreted as wisdom triumphing over youthful foolishness, and he concludes that the stubbornness of youth is the enemy of wisdom, and without the benefit of wisdom society is liable to fail.<sup>72</sup> This diagnosis circles back to an underlying reference to the disasters of war, many of which could be prevented through wise thought and deed, a theory van Mander often returned to, and which was made popular through the Haarlem motto, *Vicit Vim Virtus*. 'Wisdom' in van Mander's painting, however, eclipses everything else with its violent brutality.

The dichotomy inherent in the opposing iconographical interpretations, which position the dragon on one hand as an aggressor and on the other as 'wisdom', is the point of departure for the remainder of my dissertation. Whilst both are grounded in solid academic research, I would like to suggest that they do not fully address the formal characteristics of the painting in which the juxtaposition of numerous oppositions perpetuate this duality but, paradoxically, also serve as a means for their

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<sup>70</sup> McGee, p.90.

<sup>71</sup> McGee, p.90.

<sup>72</sup> McGee, p.91, and Caroline Sas, UCL, who kindly went through the Cadmus section of the *Wtlegghingh* with me.

reconciliation. Ostensibly a vehicle to promote the achievements of the academy; their virtuosity in painting the nude; knowledge of classical antiquity; and the mannerist style, the painting transcends these considerations to resonate more fully within the context of far more fundamental concerns. Anxiety over loss of identity or agency, fear of death or the corruption of the body, and a resistance to change all inhere within the work; however, there is also, crucially, a strong argument to be made that the motif returns time and again to the search for knowledge and truth, ultimately combined as wisdom; a glimmer of hope in an otherwise dystopian landscape.

### **Identity and Metamorphosis**

The dragon's eyes are arresting. They meet the viewer's gaze with a sense of challenge, simultaneously compelling us to linger whilst issuing a warning that to dwell too long would be to court danger. We are potentially the next victim, fixed in the dragon's sightline which draws level with our own to suggest that rather than standing above him, we are also at least partially on the ground, perhaps crawling away backwards unable to tear our own eyes from the threat of death. Or perhaps, as Kunzle suggests, the viewer is placed in the role of Cadmus coming across the scene, armed and ready to fight, avenger facing aggressor.<sup>73</sup> What we are not is a passive observer; there is nothing between us and that big toe to remove us from the action. The shock and immediacy of this encounter invites a measure of the peculiar potency that is experienced at the moment two people come face to face. The philosopher Levinas contends that to be 'face to face' with someone is, in the first instance, to be aware of their 'living presence'.<sup>74</sup> A presence can never be fully captured

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<sup>73</sup> Kunzle, p.197.

<sup>74</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An essay on Exteriority*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979), p.66.

conceptually or otherwise, and is therefore unboundaried, negating the possibility of becoming a finite entity over which power and control can be exercised.<sup>75</sup> The dragon's potency, in this estimation, is an unknown quantity and its possibilities are endless; its agency only partially revealed in the confusion of bodies and body parts beneath it. However, in a painting that is focused almost exclusively on bodies, they are the only eyes accessible to the viewer and as such, an animal to human encounter is the single source of any kind of reciprocal exchange.<sup>76</sup>

The question of identity, what it means and how it is manifested permeates Cornelis's painting. Within Ovid's narrative, there are two central metamorphoses, that of Cadmus and Harmonia who take on the appearance of serpents, and the transformation of the dragon's teeth into warriors. On a visual level, bodies are difficult to parse, faces are hidden and heads decapitated, making the identification of an individual at best problematic, and at worst impossible, whilst on yet another register, it is the *essence* of the dragon that is invoked; whether its gaze is interpreted as wise or destructive may be a consequence of exposure to one or the other of the painting's popular interpretations, but an alignment to one would necessarily exclude the other, therefore positioning the inner qualities of the dragon as central to the reading.

In her introduction to *Metamorphosis and Identity*, Walker Bynum identifies two essential categories within the concept of change: evolution and replacement.<sup>77</sup> Evolution usually assumes a kind of unfolding of an essence and could be associated, for example, with the development of a character. Replacement change, such as

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<sup>75</sup> Levinas, p.194.

<sup>76</sup> There is a very faint face in the corner of the painting that will be addressed later.

<sup>77</sup> Walker Bynum, p.20.

metamorphosis, on the other hand, has more dramatic connotations, including the implication that something has to disappear before another thing can appear in its place. In some respects, this is true as it would be impossible to deduce metamorphosis through formal analysis; however, to constitute *change* rather than simply the replacement of one entity for another, there must be a continuum between the two.<sup>78</sup> Thus, metamorphosis has a narrative structure and constitutes a process as opposed to comprising only the beginning and end products; yet something of the original must always endure. The Sown-Men maintain the dragon's ferocity in fighting to the death, but they also contain an element of wisdom as they cease their destruction of each other when five remain. Quite apart from the initial act of creation when they grow from the ground, there is, therefore, within the metamorphosis, an indicator that the dragon could be considered a catalyst for intellectual growth as well as a source of conflict.

The process of Cadmus and Harmonia's metamorphosis is captured in another woodcut by Virgil Solis (fig.16), but the transformation from human to serpent is, along with all Ovidian metamorphoses, an alteration of outer appearance only. Their fate is to retain their original consciousness, unable to articulate their thoughts to others, yet still as cognisant as before of the world around them. Transposed onto the situation in Haarlem, it could speak to the anxieties of a culture being rendered mute by the imposition of occupation and repression; whilst, however, this is not the scene depicted and nor is it representative of a town that is striving to transcend its recent past, the spectre of Cadmus's destiny nonetheless haunts the painting just as a sense of the horror of war must have clung to the Haarlem psyche.

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<sup>78</sup> Walker Bynum, p.20.

In this light, it is hardly surprising that Walker Bynum identifies a resistance to replacement change.<sup>79</sup> She contends that in order to circumnavigate the unpalatable and frightening consequences of metamorphosis, which by its very nature will always be radical, or even to avoid direct confrontation with lesser transformations such as the permanence of a major change of life path, the concept of the hybrid was called into play.<sup>80</sup> Hybridity could acknowledge that replacement change existed, whilst allowing for the retention of the original entity. For example, in the same Solis image of Cadmus and Harmonia transforming into serpents, Harmonia could be read as half woman, half snake, as such maintaining species distinction but with a visual recognition of alterity. A hybrid therefore brings separate, often opposing, entities into contact with each other, forcing them into dialogue. This is certainly the case with the dragon in *Cadmus*, but Cornelis adds a layer of complexity to this image by fusing dragon and victim together by the mouth, thereby evoking an image of predator and prey.

As Joyce Salisbury notes, predator versus prey is the earliest interaction between man and animal, and in *Cadmus* the way the dragon is positioned elicits a hunting scene, recalling *Lion Attacking a Horse*, the sculpture that influenced the way Cornelis depicted the effect of claws on flesh.<sup>81</sup> In ‘The Banquet, the Body and the Underworld’, Bakhtin makes the connection between eating and the cycle of fertility, birth and growth, in which man introduces the world into his body and makes it part of himself in order to survive: ‘The body transgresses here its own limits: it swallows,

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<sup>79</sup> Walker Bynum pp.27-28.

<sup>80</sup> Walker Bynum pp.28-29.

<sup>81</sup> Joyce Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), p.34.

devours, rends the world apart, is enriched and grows at the world's expense.'<sup>82</sup> 'Man' is replaced by the dragon in *Cadmus*, but the idea of bodily transgression in which one animal is incorporated into another precipitating one's demise to the other's advantage, speaks not only of another form of transformation that perpetuates the life-cycle, but also to the contravention of the boundaries that delimit the body from the rest of the world. Through the evocation of man as the dragon's prey, Cornelis has shown its dominance on one hand and violated boundaries between man and animal on the other. In Ovid's narrative, the dragon is a conduit for metamorphosis but its most obvious characteristic from a visual perspective is its construction from the component parts of other animal species, or its hybridity.

As Walker Bynum observes 'the hybrid expresses a world of natures...encountered through paradox; it resists change.'<sup>83</sup> To return to the historical context, in this analysis the dragon embodies the difficult adjustments the Haarlemers were forced to make to accommodate their shifting cultural landscape. However, in a wider approach to cultural hybridity, Haj Yazdiha explores its reciprocal nature, citing Homi Bhabha's concept of a 'Third Space of Enunciation' in which new cultural systems can be conceived and developed.<sup>84</sup> Whilst ostensibly anachronistic to this period as Yazdiha is writing within the paradigm of twentieth century geopolitics, the phenomenon in which layers of hybridity have created labile and fluid societies, that are at their core a rejection of boundaries, is not new, and applies equally to the regeneration of Haarlem through the immigrant community, and the founding of

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<sup>82</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, 'The Banquet, the Body and the Underworld' *The Bakhtin reader: selected writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, and Voloshinov*, ed. by Pam Morris (London: Arnold, 1994), pp.226-245 (p.228).

<sup>83</sup> Walker Bynum, pp.29-30.

<sup>84</sup> Haj Yazdiha, 'Conceptualizing Hybridity: Deconstructing Boundaries through the Hybrid', *Formations*, Vol.1, No.1 (2010), pp.31-38 (pp.31-32).

Thebes. Through this prism, the dragon can be encountered as a site of communication and learning; Goltzius and van Mander were relative newcomers to Haarlem. However, this view also evokes a sense of temporality, a passing of time that allows for integration, which is the crucial difference between the approach to hybridity taken by Walker Bynum and that of Yazdiha. For Walker Bynum, hybridity is a visual construct and therefore resolutely in the present, a site of conflict that in this instance, is almost overbearing in its immediacy.<sup>85</sup> The temporal aspect that this disavows, however, draws a parallel to the extremity of spatial distance between the scene in the foreground and Cadmus slaying the dragon, revealed through a comparison to the woodcuts; although violence dominates the painting through the actions of the dragon, there is a hint that in the future, this violence can be transcended.

### **The Violence of Fragmentation**

Walker Bynum's theory of the hybrid is a strategy by which to mediate against the greater fear of metamorphosis, though it still betrays a preoccupation with the need for distinct ontological categories. As Salisbury writes, '(H)umans are uncomfortable with ambiguity.'<sup>86</sup> To counter that anxiety which, in the context of Cornelis's painting, is likely to be strongly affiliated with the threat of an irreversible breakdown of an established way of life – a metamorphosis of sorts – it is easy to imagine an increased need for the reassurance of a stable identity. As Jeffrey Cohen notes, exclusion and demonization are 'catalysts to self-delimitation', and I would contend that the situation in Haarlem was comparable.<sup>87</sup> Stability, however, is denied even as a

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<sup>85</sup> Walker Bynum, p.30.

<sup>86</sup> Salisbury, p.121.

<sup>87</sup> Jeffrey J. Cohen, 'Introduction: *In Medias Res*', *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp.1-10 (p.6).



portrayal of loss and death, which Hans Belting has identified as the ‘primal meaning’ of an image. According to him, to represent death is an articulation of absence, but his argument is problematized here because there is no single trace of identity significant enough to affect us in this way. Instead we are compelled to attempt to piece together its fragments.<sup>88</sup>

From left to right in the foreground of Cornelis’s painting is an animal skull, a thigh bone, a calf leading to a healthy-looking foot, a severed head, and a claw-like hand attached to a muscular forearm. Animal is combined with human, and living with dead, added to which the hand of the torso on the right is an area of ambiguity; it resembles a claw, calling to mind a human/animal hybrid, but the tone of flesh moving up the wrist has a distinctly grey hue suggesting, especially in contrast to the pinker tones of the other body, that the process of decay has begun prematurely. The puckering and redness of the skin in this instance may, in fact, be a biographical reference to Goltzius who fell into a fire at the age of two and burnt his right hand so badly that it was welded together for the rest of his life.<sup>89</sup> The interesting point, however, is that this rather singular hand has found its way onto an arm copied from *Giorno* which in turn connects to a muscular back replicating the *Belvedere Torso*. As discussed, the selection of fragments to create a new entity was accepted artistic practice, but the implications bear further consideration as to isolate a specific area always implies a breaking down of the body, suggestive of dismemberment and mutilation.<sup>90</sup> The identities of various statues, people and animals may have already been torn apart to produce an entirely new entity, with a new identity and agency.

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<sup>88</sup> Valentin Groebner, *Defaced: The Visual Culture of Violence in the Late Middle Ages*, trans. by Pamela Selwyn (New York: Zone Books, 2004), p.12.

<sup>89</sup> van Mander, *Lives*, I:386.

<sup>90</sup> van Thiel, p.84.

The severed head in the foreground is particularly intriguing in this aspect. As Regina Janes points out, a head without a body is a disruption of the entire system of human interaction and communication. From reading the face of the other, we define ourselves; denied this mirror, the process of social identification breaks down.<sup>91</sup> In part, this is why the solitary gaze of the dragon is disturbing, the reflection of self under its scrutiny is challenging because we are asked whether we have the courage, like Cadmus, to confront menace, or whether we cower away from threat. To return to the head, however, without a body and therefore denied its agency, it is a signifier without a signified, meaning that in the absence of the discursive system in which it usually operates, not only is the identity of its would be interlocuter called into question – another point of anxiety for the Haarlemers – but the rupture invites alternative signification.<sup>92</sup> The severed head has been established as iconic of death, but in this instance with no match to a body – it is too grey to belong to the body with the concealed upper half, which is not in a state of decay – it's signification is even more fluid and ambiguous.<sup>93</sup> Certainly, it invites association with the carnage of a battlefield in which signified and signifiers also fall apart, but the way it is presented reveals a dichotomy.<sup>94</sup> The depiction of the trachea is visceral yet almost clinically anatomical thus identifying the head as something that has been torn from a human body; however, the taut sinew and furrowed brow which denotes an active muscle contraction, paradoxically animate the head to the point that it becomes impossible for it to be human, introducing a possible reading of the head as a broken piece of

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<sup>91</sup> Regina Janes, 'Introduction to a Beheading', *Losing our Heads: Beheadings in Literature and Culture* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2005), pp.10-41 (p.12).

<sup>92</sup> Janes, p.12.

<sup>93</sup> Janes, p.12.

<sup>94</sup> Groebner, p.143.

statuary. The paucity of blood seeping into the earth enhances this ontological ambiguity, allowing for yet another potential reading; that the head is an allusion to Medusa whose bodiless journey over the Libyan desert with Perseus appears in the following section of *Metamorphoses*.<sup>95</sup> Associated with serpents and the goddess Athena who placed the head on her shield, Medusa is simultaneously apotropaic and destructive, thus embodying yet another dualism in the work.

The idea that an individual body part had an agency of its own was gaining currency in the late sixteenth century.<sup>96</sup> The study of specific limbs as works of art in their own right was increasingly popular, as exemplified by Goltzius's signed drawing of his right hand (fig.17). In *Cadmus*, however, with the exception of a possible but subtle reference to Medusa, there is no sense that any of these body parts should be read as a synecdoche for the whole and as such any unity of the human body is frustrated; even the semi-cohesion of the fusing together of parts to form a human/animal hybrid is denied. The violence inherent in this rending apart of the body to such an extreme that it appears irreparable suggests that the essence of an individual is replaced by, and can now only exist in, its having been assaulted or violated; it is the image of violence that remains.

In his essay entitled 'Image and Violence', Nancy separates what he calls the 'truth of violence' from the 'violence of truth'. The former is a possibly calculated but ultimately profoundly stupid use of excess of force, whilst the latter is a rupture that is required to create a vacuum for truth to fill.<sup>97</sup> They share the characteristic, however,

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<sup>95</sup> Ovid, IV:616-620.

<sup>96</sup> David Hillman and Carla Mazzio, (eds.) 'Introduction: Individual Parts', *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* [Online] (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2013), pp.xi-xxix (pp.xii-xiii).

<sup>97</sup> Nancy, pp.16-18.

of requiring a resultant image; it is always the *effect* of violence, be it in the form of physical wounds or a demonstrably altered opinion of something, that is the sum of its aspiration.<sup>98</sup> The simple iconographic reading, backed up by Goltzius's inscription, is that this is an instance of 'sanctioned' battlefield violence for which accountability can be denied on the basis that the perpetrator was merely following orders. It is, perhaps, a 'violence of truth' on a meta level but arguably tends towards the 'truth of violence' in its baser context, somehow mitigated because both agent and victim of specific acts of war are faceless, enabling a certain distancing of the sense of the individual to dull the horror. The individual could even stand for the whole in this instance to become a metaphor for the destruction of the town of Haarlem, or of course, the battle between the Sown-Men.

On the other hand, reading the dragon as wisdom, the annihilation of the cohesive body becomes deeply personal. Here, the 'violence of truth' is identified as the metaphorical path to wisdom, an inevitably profoundly painful process through which the greatest psychological development can occur. Metaphorically, therefore, the assemblage of body parts represents the first stages of a period of personal growth in which everything that has gone before is laid bare to be questioned before the equally difficult process of change can occur. There are two interesting observations here. Firstly, this interpretation opens up the possibility that the inner psyche could converge with the wider narrative in other areas of the work, and secondly, that the body parts are not in fact scattered haphazardly but meticulously laid out to form a grid which introduces perspective to the front of the painting. The thigh bone, for example, runs parallel to the thigh of the body on the left but crosses the lower part of

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<sup>98</sup> Nancy, p.20.

the leg at a 90-degree angle. The chaos and trauma of transformation is therefore overlaid and made easier to comprehend by compositional rationality.

### **The Dragon as Wisdom**

Just as the body parts in the foreground are methodically arranged to provide perspective, there is a compositional harmony of the dragon and two bodies that dominate the canvas. The triumvirate of figures form a triangle, with elbows and knees at the corner and the dragon's neck at the apex. There is also a circle inherent in the composition that follows the sweep of the neck and finds its upward thrust in the severed head which directs the eye back towards the gleam of the dragon's chest. The triangle fits neatly into the circle with the dragon's claw at the centre (fig.18). This Neo-Platonist use of geometry strikes a contrast to the violence of the scene, once again overlaying confusion with rationality and binding the three together as though they were a single entity.

The mathematical precision that was held to be the pathway to truth in Neo-Platonist theory can be juxtaposed against the vagaries of human creativity such as Cornelis's depiction of the dragon as a fantasy hybrid. If understood as a product of the imagination, there is an alternative reading of the dragon attacking the followers of Cadmus. Rather than an external force bearing down on its victims, it becomes an image of the subconscious mind emerging from a corporeal mouth – an ultimate manifestation of the inner psyche. The next paragraph will address this interpretation and show how the unification of the three figures, achieved through geometry, operates through a reading of Plato's Charioteer, an allegory of human nature, leading to a definition of the dragon as wisdom.

In *Phaedrus*, Plato employs a rich metaphor for the journey of the soul towards absolute knowledge which resides at the edge of heaven. Dividing the nature of the soul into three parts, he likens it to a charioteer steering two winged horses, one black and representing human appetite and desire, and the other white, a representation of spiritedness. The black horse gravitates towards the earth, whilst the white horse pulls upwards to heaven. As the force of reason between the two, the dragon-charioteer must harness the separate natures of each to guide them towards the correct path of knowledge.<sup>99</sup> Visually, the dragon can be perceived as the driver of a chariot, its mouth and claws gripping onto flesh in an attempt to manipulate the bodies beneath him, his own wing reaching to the sky whilst he attends to matters on the ground below. Physical force will not work in this instance, it is only through the intellectual application of wisdom that the charioteer can achieve the harmony required to steer the horses to the edge of heaven and absolute knowledge. The important implication here is that the possibility exists that the mortal soul can rise to this level and obtain the wisdom of the gods.

The search for absolute knowledge and truth is intrinsic to the Platonic concepts of wisdom and courage and provide a connection between Ovid's description of Cadmus as 'courageous', and van Mander's moral exposition of the dragon as representative of wisdom.<sup>100</sup> The concept of courage recurs frequently in Plato's dialogues but fluctuates between two meanings, evading a conclusive definition.<sup>101</sup> One meaning directly connects courage with wisdom, and the other

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<sup>99</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. by C. J. Rowe, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Warminster: Aris & Philips, 1999), 246a,1-247e,8.

<sup>100</sup> Ovid, III:54.

<sup>101</sup> Paul Carelli, 'The Courage of Conviction: Andreia as Precondition for Philosophic Examination in Plato's Protagoras and Republic', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, Vol.23, No.3 (2015), pp.438-458 (p.439).

resides in the nature of the individual, often manifesting itself in carrying out a courageous act in the face of danger.<sup>102</sup> The depiction of Cadmus's courage invites the viewer to consider how they would fare against a dragon that has subdued two extremely muscular physiques, once again employing a stylistic trend in the service of the narrative, whilst also suggesting that he himself must be armed with something other than mere human strength to accomplish its defeat. Notably he doesn't wear the lion skin, thereby eschewing its protective properties and demonstrating that he is acting purely through his own agency. As Paul Carelli has shown, this dispositional courage is a prerequisite for wisdom-courage, and the factor linking the two is quality of opinion. In Socratic thought,<sup>103</sup> to be wise is to hold the correct opinions; however, certain of these can only be acquired through wisdom and hence the courage of nature or disposition would have to be mobilised in order for the requisite wisdom to be attained.<sup>104</sup> The courage that Cadmus is armed with when he attacks the dragon is, therefore, a precondition for the acquisition of intellectual knowledge that leads to courage based on a scrupulous consideration and understanding of right and wrong. But relegated to the vignette in the distance, the image suggests that he has a long journey to reach this goal.

Unlike Cadmus, the dragon is not affected by mortal concerns; sacred to Mars, it is merely a vehicle for the god of war, a vassal that may be utilised in his service and at his will. It creates fear and destruction, but as well as extinguishing life, it sacrificed its own for its teeth from which the Sparti are born. I would contend that the

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<sup>102</sup> See Carelli, pp.439-440 for an expanded discussion on courage in Plato's dialogues.

<sup>103</sup> See Carelli, p.440: Plato uses the figure of his teacher Socrates to pursue philosophical argument, hence the latter's name is often used in discussion of Plato's dialogues. The attribution of opinions to Socrates or Plato has, however, been the subject of debate.

<sup>104</sup> Carelli, p.440.

cycle of life and death is also elegantly alluded to by Cornelis in his depiction of the dragon's talons digging into flesh, an image which draws attention to its indeterminate sex and the possibility of asexual reproduction.<sup>105</sup> Where it grips the torso, its claws appear to be pressed to its chest in such a way as to resemble teats, an allusion to childbearing and nourishment. Moving down the body to the thigh, there is the suggestion of a penis in the way the talon protrudes from the claw. In Goltzius's engraving, the notion of procreation is more pronounced as the blood spurting from the wounds could be read as ejaculate. In this never-ending cycle of life and death, Ovid's alternative word for 'dragon' is more fitting. The serpent has long been linked to wholeness and eternity, its etiological roots finding their origin in the legend of Gilgamesh who remained mortal when a serpent ate the plant of immortality in his place.<sup>106</sup> An image of the ouroboros (fig.19), the snake biting its own tail, is recalled in the circular composition of dragon and bodies, reinforced through the dragon biting the victim's face. The ouroboros is a symbol of eternal renewal as it continually devours itself and is then reborn, a concept that endures in the act of the snake shedding its skin. Thus, the circle is imbricated on multiple levels in the painting. It unifies bodies to pave the way to an interpretation of the dragon as the charioteer striving to lift the soul heavenwards to obtain the ultimate form of intellectual wisdom, but it also draws attention to the infinite cycle of repetition and renewal that permeates the work.

Cadmus's final deed in Ovid's poem is to call for his own metamorphosis if he had incurred 'the wrath of the gods' by killing a sacred serpent. That this transpired

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<sup>105</sup> I am using the term 'asexual reproduction' in its biological sense.

<sup>106</sup> Michael Sexson, 'The Wounder Heals: A Meditation on the Serpent as a Mythic Symbol of Health', *Literature and Medicine*, Vol. 1 (1982), pp.107-116 (p.108).



revealed the sacred nature of the dragon, a fundamental truth that had been hidden from him until that moment. The conclusion to the Cadmus story therefore aligns the attainment of wisdom with the figure of the serpent, but it notably positions knowledge as a transformative event through a literal manifestation which leads Cadmus to an irreversible shift of consciousness. Essentially a pawn between Athena and Mars, he is granted a respite between slaying the dragon and his metamorphosis that allows him to evolve as a human, as well as to fulfil his destiny to found a city as the Oracle decreed. He ruled Thebes, married Harmonia, and had children and grandchildren before abandoning the city because of the bad luck he had suffered within its walls.<sup>107</sup> His achievements and ordeals speak to the natural, albeit exaggerated, course of human endeavour that he had to navigate in order to advance spiritually, ultimately learning the truth spurred on by his innate character, thus progressing from the dispositional courage he demonstrated by fighting the dragon to the wisdom he gains by means of his metamorphosis. Paradoxically, although Cadmus is able to fully comprehend his fate, he no longer has the agency to act on it. Transformed into a serpent, he returns the story is to its origins, but one journey ends as another begins, for although his transformation is permanent, as a serpent he must live a life of perpetual renewal, a reminder that change is a continual process.

### **A Glimmer of Hope**

The dualities on which the painting is constructed extend to its chronological opacity. The futuristic scene of Cadmus slaying the dragon in order to found a city, is a utopian moment; it speaks to the founding of a new world on the wreckage of violence, or a violence of truth. But the significance of this act is compositionally tied

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<sup>107</sup> Ovid, IV:564-567.

to a barely perceptible and mysterious face gazing out of the canvas in the top right-hand corner (fig.20). The portrait and its purpose have never been identified, (it also appears in the engraving). Seemingly disconnected from the rest of the work, it gazes away from the action of the painting into another realm. To meet its gaze requires the viewer to move several feet to the right of the painting, placing her at the farthest distance from the 'future', which recedes further from this perspective, with the monumental spectacle of the dragon and bodies in between. It seems that wherever we are, a painful confrontation cannot be avoided, and although logically temporal, the foreground scene of the present far exceeds its role as part of a sequential narrative. Rationally, flesh will be torn, the victim's hand will drop, his head released only as a prelude to another gruesome bite. Yet, precisely because Cornelis has captured an instantaneous moment so forcefully, it arrests the viewer and suspends time making that single moment endure.<sup>108</sup> The dynamic stasis between these moments, one that compels us to linger and other that will eventually propel the action onwards, is the suspension that enables Cornelis to convey so much within the work, simultaneously granting the viewer space to meditate on the outcomes and avoid repeating mistakes. To dwell on the horror is perhaps a reflection of the psychological trauma that van Mander implies, in *Lives*, had not been overcome by Cornelis when he painted *Cadmus*; the first section of his commentary, reserved for the most pressing aspects of the subject's life, is dedicated to his childhood experiences of the siege, fire and occupation.<sup>109</sup> However, whether or not this is the case, it forces us to confront that

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<sup>108</sup> Louis Marin, 'The Medusa Head as Historical Painting', *To Destroy Painting*, trans. by Mette Hjort, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp.136-144 (pp.140-141).

<sup>109</sup> Kunzle, pp.210-211.

which we generally prefer to avoid, but it is only by facing our fears that we are able to truly embrace the future.

## **Conclusion**

Walker Bynum's concept of a hybrid can be superficially used to conceive of *Cadmus* as a whole. It is an image in which multiple forces come into contact, all connected to the dragon either literally as a visual representation, or perceptually as a result of the actions it depicts. It is no coincidence that the javelin wielded by Cadmus draws a line of connection between him and the dragon; after all, it simply adumbrates the narrative and is the only certainty in a sea of ambiguity. The image of the painting as a hybrid begins to dissolve under scrutiny, however, as boundaries are crossed and the only identities available to us – those of Cadmus and the dragon – are called into question. From the fundamental issue of life and death, often made ambiguous, to the artistic choice to employ the oppositional styles of mannerism and naturalism, the work confuses and plays with what are usually defined limits. Bodily transgression in the allusion to ingestion, in turn elucidates the dual possibilities of the dragon eating or emerging from another body, and the concepts of 'into' and 'out of' lead us to the transformation of Cadmus into a serpent, a reversal of the serpent shedding its skin. Questioning all ontological categories, it forces us to examine the essential category of humanity, therefore indirectly addressing the atrocities that Haarlem and Cornelis had faced in the recent past, a reminder that the destructive forces within society also reside in each of us.

There is, however, a pervasive rationality that cuts through the ambiguity and confusion. The formal geometry of Neo-Platonist theory anchors the work and soothes the eye, inviting it to linger, and thus enabling another possibility to emerge.

Personified by the severed head, which subtly quotes the simultaneously destructive and protective power of Medusa, that which seems antithetical finds a resolution. Held in a temporal equilibrium, the warring factions of the psyche that Plato so eloquently allegorised in the image of the charioteer, have the opportunity to unify and rise, with guidance, towards the virtue of wisdom, inviting the possibility of hope to emerge, bloodied but intact, through the violence. Thus, this painting which modern scholars have previously conceived of as either a comment on the brutality of the war with Spain, or the triumph of wisdom, can be interpreted as an allegory of wisdom in which violence and knowledge are not antithetical but part of an ongoing, cyclical, process through which mankind can flourish if lessons are observed. In Ovid's narrative, the greatest paradox is that Cadmus's metamorphosis into a serpent left him too wise to be able to act on his wisdom. The suspension of time in Cornelis's painting heeds this warning, allowing space for reflection.

The multitude of transformations encompassed in the painting culminated in its medial transformation into an engraving for prints, enabling it to transcend the limits of its original audience. Like Cadmus who develops wisdom through courage and perseverance, Cornelis's ambition elevated Ovid's narrative. Through the spectre of death, a perpetually compelling subject in which we all have a vested interest, he produced an enormously powerful canvas that was designed to captivate and stimulate members of Rauwaert's elite society. Pouring all the pain and fear of the past decades into his oeuvre, in the final analysis, it amounts to one thing: hope.

Word Count: 13,999

## Illustrations:



Figure 1. Cornelis van Haarlem, *Two Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon*, 1588, oil on canvas stuck on oak, 148.5 x 195.5 cm, National Gallery, London



Figure 2. Photograph of painting to show scale: Cornelis van Haarlem, *Two Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon*, 1588, oil on canvas stuck on oak, 148.5 x 195.5 cm, National Gallery, London. Photographed by the author.





Figure 3. Image to show compositional circle: Cornelis van Haarlem, *Two Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon*, 1588, oil on canvas stuck on oak, 148.5 x 195.5 cm, National Gallery, London. Digital over-lay of graphics by the author.



Figure 4. Hendrik Goltzius, *Two Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon*, 1588, engraving print on paper, 25.3 x 32.2 cm, British Museum, London





Figure 5. Virgil Solis *Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon*, 1563, from J. Spreng *Metamorphoses Illustratae*. <http://ovid.lib.virginia.edu/spreng/OVIM105.html> [accessed 4 September 2017]



Figure 6. Virgil Solis *Cadmus Slaying the Dragon* 1563 from J. Spreng *Metamorphoses Illustratae*. <http://ovid.lib.virginia.edu/spreng/OVIM107.html> [accessed 4 September 2017]



Figure 7. Hendrick Goltzius *Followers of Cadmus Attacked by a Dragon* 1590, engraving print on paper, 17.5 x 25.3 cm, British Museum, London



Figure 8. Detail of Cornelis van Haarlem *Two Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon* 1588, oil on canvas stuck on oak, 148.5 x 195.5 cm, National Gallery, London





Figure 9. Hendrick Goltzius *Cadmus Slaying the Dragon* 1590, engraving print on paper, 17.6 x 25.6 cm, British Museum, London. Photographed by the author.



Figure 10. Adrien van der Werff, *Two Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon*, late seventeenth century, oil on copper, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna





Figure 11. Reinhold Timm(?), *Cadmus Slays the Dragon*, between 1611-15(?), oil on canvas, 189 x 248 cm, Koldinghus Museum, Denmark



Figure 12. Bernard Salomon *Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon*, 1557 from Jan de Tourne, *La Metamorphose d'Ovide figurée*, [http://ovid.lib.virginia.edu/vasal1557/0054\\_c5r.html](http://ovid.lib.virginia.edu/vasal1557/0054_c5r.html) [accessed 4 September 2017]

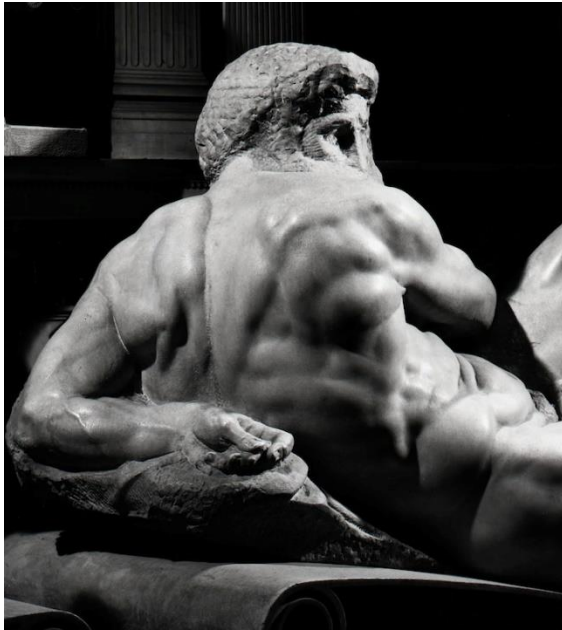


Figure 13. Michelangelo *Giorno*, 1531, marble, Medici Tombs, Florence  
<https://michelangelobuonarrotietornato.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/3-giuliano.jpg>  
[accessed 4 September 2017]



Figure 14. Hellenistic statue, *Lion Attacking a Horse*, Capitoline Museum, Rome,  
<http://ancientimes.blogspot.co.uk/2013/02/getty-to-extend-lion-attacking-horse.html>  
[accessed 4 September 2017]





Figure 15. Maarten van Heemskerck, *Belvedere Torso* from Roman sketchbook I 1532-1536, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin. Photo credit: Scala, Florence/bpk, Bildagentur fuer Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte, Berlin

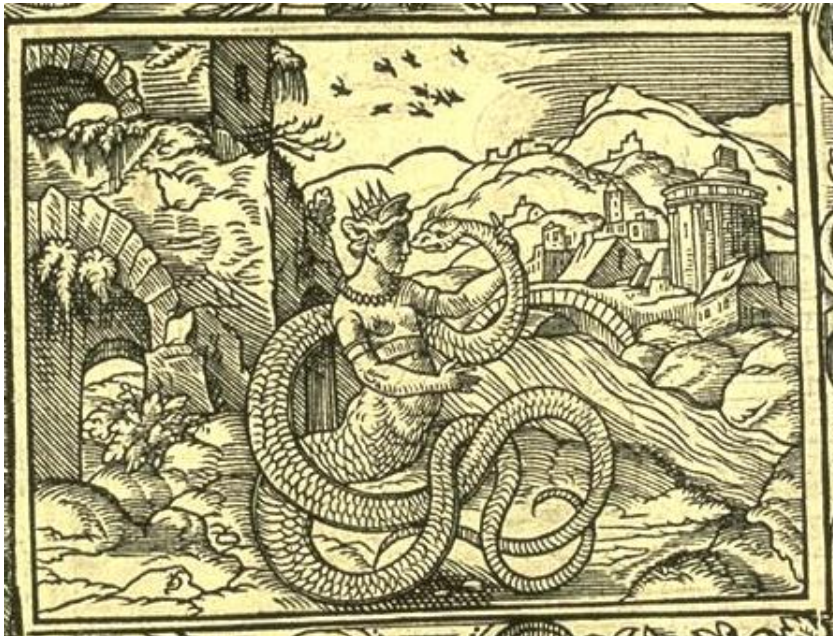


Figure 16. Virgil Solis, *The Metamorphosis of Harmonia and Cadmus into Serpents*, 1563 from J. Spreng *Metamorphoses Illustratae*.  
<http://ovid.lib.virginia.edu/spreng/OVIM140.html> [accessed 4 September 2017]

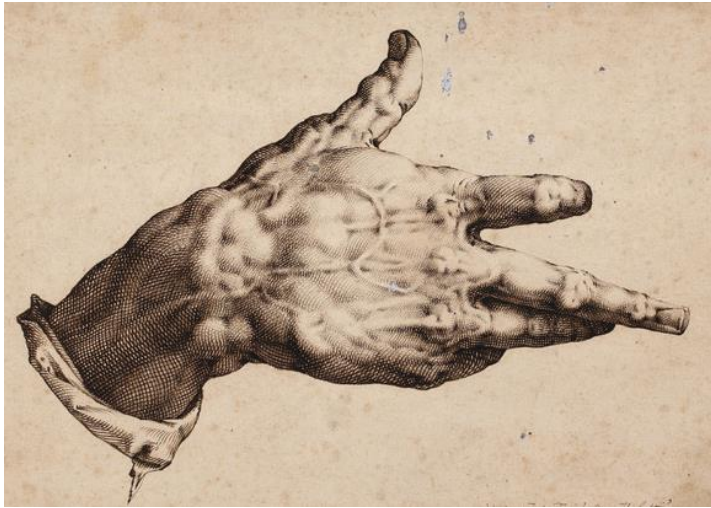


Figure 17. Hendrick Goltzius, *The artist's right hand*, 1588 pen and ink on paper, 24.5 x 34 cms, Private Collection. Photo credit: Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images



Figure 18. Image to show use of geometry in: Cornelis van Haarlem, *Two Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon*, 1588, oil on canvas stuck on oak, 148.5 x 195.5 cm, National Gallery, London. Digital over-lay of graphics by the author.



Figure 19. Symbol of Ouroboros

<http://www.pngall.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Ouroboros-Transparent.png>

[accessed 4 September 2017]



Figure 20. Enhancement of face in top right corner: Cornelis van Haarlem, *Two Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon*, 1588, oil on canvas stuck on oak, 148.5 x 195.5 cm, National Gallery, London. Photograph and enhancement by the author.

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