MASTERARBEIT

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„Persephone and Hades Revisited: Modern Retellings of the Myth in Young Adult Literature"

verfasst von

Olivia Zajkas, BA

angestrebter akademischer Grad

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"The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any."

— Alice Walker

"If you're gonna throw your life away, he'd better have a motorcycle."

— Lorelai Gilmore

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1. Introduction

Classical mythology has always had a great influence on Western literature and culture. Greek myths have been the source material for many writers (e.g. *The Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri, *Venus and Adonis* by William Shakespeare). Similarly, they were also the subject of numerous Hollywood blockbusters (e.g. *Troy*, *Prometheus*, *The Matrix trilogy*).

In more recent years, this influence was also increasingly noticeable in Children's and Young Adult Literature. With the emergence of the *Percy Jackson* series by Rick Riordan (2005), this literary field has become popular to explore (e.g. *Star-Crossed* trilogy by Josephine Angelini, *Covenant* series by J.L. Armentrout). Interestingly, it can be noticed that one myth out of the large corpus of Greek mythological texts has been especially popular, namely the Persephone and Hades myth. In the last five years, for instance, a number of novels have been published which focus on that particular myth (e.g. *Falling Under* by Gwen Hayes, *Everneath* by Brodi Ashton, *Persephone* by Kaitlin Bevis).

However, the academic discussion of Young Adult Literature, and mythological books specifically, has been somewhat neglected. Although scholars like Alice Trupe (2006), Patty Campbell (2010), or Roberta Trites (2000) provided a stable basis, compared to critical discourse on adult literature, there is still more ground to cover. This is also reflected in the ever-changing landscape of themes addressed in the novels, from supernatural creatures to dystopian worlds.

"What's a Young Adult?" Cart (2001: 95) asks, and the answer is not that simple. As a literary field that has no clear boundaries, neither to children's nor to adult literature, even the seemingly simple classification of what constitutes a Young Adult (reader/protagonist) is in reality difficult to provide. The interests of many parties come into play here, such as publishers, authors, or readers. Research has not only been conducted to analyze themes, issues, and specific novels, but also to understand how YAL (Young Adult Literature) can be incorporated into classroom discussions (e.g. Sprague and Keeling 2007, Cart 2010). The world of Young Adult Literature is expanding, even finding new audiences by gaining adult readers. This, in turn, demands an expansion of critical discourse, and changing the notion that YA fiction is merely a stepchild of Children's Literature.

To facilitate to the closing of this research gap, this thesis intends to evaluate how a corpus of texts which can be regarded as the oldest examples of literature we know, is incorporated into a literary field that is merely a few decades old. The analysis focuses on intertextual relations between the original Greek myth and its modern retellings. Here, to get a better overview, two forms of the retellings are differentiated: the one that is closer to the original i.e. features the actual gods of the myth, and between a retelling that is more modern. The novel that will be analyzed for the first category is *The Goddess Test* by Aimee Carter. In the second part the analysis will focus on *Abandon* by Meg Cabot. Both novels were released in 2011 and are the first books in their respective trilogies.

The thesis will mainly focus on answering the following questions: What changes were made to the original myth in the retellings regarding key aspects of the plot, such as the abduction of Persephone, and key roles, i.e. the representation of the deities in the retellings? In addition, are there any clues in the retellings that reveal their link to the Persephone myth or Greek mythology in general? What role does Persephone or her reincarnation play during the abduction? In other words, how willing is she to comply with Hades' wish to make her the Queen of the Underworld, both in the original and the retellings? Finally, do the characters behave according to certain gender roles or stereotypes?

The first section will survey research on the concept of intertextuality, from its origins to more recent developments such as the integration into the scholarly discussion of Children's and Young Adult Literature. This section will be followed by an examination of the scope of Young Adult Literature, focusing on fantasy fiction, and mythology. In the final part of the literature review, concepts of gender theory, such as representation of women in the aforementioned genre, and the issue of agency will be summarized. What follows is a brief summary of the Persephone myth, describing the plot and key figures, and further considering interpretations of it. Moreover, the previously mentioned concepts of gender theory will be given a closer look in connection to the myth.

The investigation of the primary literature is divided into two sections. First the retelling that is closer to the original, *The Goddess Test*, will be considered. Here, the key aspects of the myth, which are, inter alia, the course

of Persephone's abduction, Demeter's grief and retribution, and her stay in Eleusis disguised as a mortal, Zeus' interference, the reunion of mother and daughter, consumption of food (i.e. the pomegranate seeds), the 'rape' of Persephone (essentially her transformation from a 'Kore'), and the terms surrounding her stay in the Underworld, will be compared and contrasted to the original myth. This will be followed by an examination of the key figures, and their representation in the novel. And finally, further intertextual aspects, such as the expansion of the cosmology, and the function of paratext will be reviewed. The final part will specifically focus on concepts of gender theory, such as agency, the representation of gender systems, and gender stereotypical portrayal of the protagonists. Second, the more modern retelling, *Abandon*, will be examined in a similar way. The key aspects and roles are also important here, but a special focus will be placed on the extension of the mythology through the author. Finally, issues of gender theory will be analyzed.

In brief, this thesis should provide new insights into a theme that is not only popular in literature, but is also a famous motive in the arts. The Rape (or abduction) of Persephone is, for example, portrayed in paintings, e.g. by Luca Giordano (Ratto di Proserpina), depicted on sculptures, e.g. by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (The Rape of Persephone), or even influenced pieces of classical music, e.g. Stravinsky's "Perséphone". It is further interesting to discover how a theme as ancient as this is combined with a literary field as new as YAL, and where problems of this combination might arise. In addition, these insights can possibly reveal why the story of Persephone and Demeter is still relevant to teenagers from the 21st century, and in what way they can identify with these female characters.

2. Literature review

The following literature review focuses on defining the aforementioned theoretical concepts, such as intertextuality, the field of Young Adult Literature, fantasy fiction and mythology in connection with gender theory (e.g. the role and representation of women), and, finally, providing an overview of the most vital definitions of agency, again placing a focus on agency exhibited by women.

2.1 Intertextuality

Defining the concept of intertextuality is not a simple task. Since the first use of the term in the 1960s numerous scholars, e.g. Barthes, Genette, Rifatterre, underwent this task and the outcome varied from scholar to scholar.

Some approaches, for example, focus on the author's role, while others try to define intertextuality by dividing it into subcategories. Intertextuality in the 21st century, especially in regard to the "World Wide Web", is a topic widely discussed among researchers.

Therefore, three introductory publications that mainly focus on presenting a broad range of theories and debates concerning this topic were used to compile this chapter. One of these introductory works is Graham Allen's *Intertextuality* (2011). Also Worton and Still's (1995) compilation of theories and practices on intertextuality served vital to understanding this concept in detail. A contrasting view of the theory is presented by Mary Orr (2003), which will be discussed in detail at the end of this chapter.

The analysis focuses first on the origins of intertextuality, the establishment of the term through Bakthin's work, and additionally where Allen and Worton/Still see the beginning of the concept. Second, two vital approaches will be discussed in detail, namely those of the French scholars Gerard Genette and Michael Riffaterre. Third, the opposing views of Mary Orr on the focus placed on canonized theories of English and French scholars will be examined, and, finally, in regard to Orr's arguments, some significant notions of Broich and Pfister's (1985) work on intertextuality will complete this analysis.

2.1.1. Origins

At the outset Allen argues that one of the many understandings of intertextuality suggests that texts are not individual pieces of work but are rather interconnected. Thus, one text alone lacks independent meaning. Since literary texts are based on a system of codes and traditions, when reading them, and in the following process interpreting them, the reader tries to connect the underlying systems of several texts, therefore mentally creating relations and moving between them. As Allen notes "[t]he text becomes the intertext" (Allen 2011: 1).

Interestingly, he points out that a discussion of intertextuality should begin with a closer examination of Ferdinand de Saussure's work in linguistics. As previously mentioned, texts are connected through various systems such as signs or traditions, hence "[n]o sign has a meaning of its own. Signs exist within a system and produce meaning through their similarity to and difference from other signs" (ibid 10).

From Allen's point of view, Saussure's study, which focuses on "systematic features of language" (ibid 2) and how meanings and texts are connected, therefore provides a useful basis for further research. Furthermore, Saussure views the linguistic sign as differential in nature, meaning that the combination of words into sentences requires utilization of the syntagmatic axis of language (position of words), while the paradigmatic axis of language (possibility of substitution) includes the process of choosing words from an existing set of further alternatives. This process is necessary to produce any form of language (parole). As a result, meaning becomes relational (ibid 9).

In addition to the "differential and non-referential" (ibid 11) characteristic of signs, they can also be seen as being at the center of a large number of available connections. As Allen argues, this is also true of the literary sign. Allen continues by pointing out, that authors of literary works "do not just select words from a language system, they select plots, […] aspects of character, […] ways of narrating, […] from previous literary texts and from the literary tradition" (ibid 11).

The main problem Allen observes in terms of defining intertextuality is that it is not an unambiguous term; therefore it can be used in various ways that create various interpretations when used by different theorists or critics. Thus, the concept of intertextuality is utilized, for example, both by structuralist and poststructuralist theorists and critics but in contrasting ways. As a solution Allen proposes that one has to go back to the origins of that concept and examine its history in order to understand how the term relates to today's culture Naturally the outcome is manifold as there is no universal culture and not an exclusive definition of intertextuality (ibid 2).

Worton and Still (1995) move their starting point of discussion even further back in time, examining the view of Classical Greek theorists (e.g. Plato, Aristotle, Socrates) on concepts related to intertextuality, while focusing on the theory of imitation (cf. pp 2-7). In brief, they argue that the theory of intertextuality accentuates the notion that a text cannot operate as an independent, i.e. "closed system" (ibid 1). They give two reasons for this: first a writer, before creating content, is first and foremost a reader of a text, as a consequence, the piece of literature they create features references to other literary compositions and is consequently influenced by them. These influences are most prominently ones taken from certain socio-political contexts, such as

certain ways of speaking (e.g. among teenagers, between people from the 'upper class') that are quoted in a dialog (ibid 1).

And second, a text can only be accessed by reading it. Thus by doing so the reader either does not detect the references or allusions made to another work, therefore this stays dormant in the reader's mind. Or the reader notices connections that were unknown to the author, which can support new ways of interpretation (ibid 1-2). Worton and Still further believe that both ways of reading are "emotionally and politically charged" (ibid 2).

In the late 1960s M.M. Bakthin's approaches in the field of literary theory and criticism were unknown to many, as they had not been published at that point in time. In several of her essays (i.e. "The Bounded Text" (1966), "Word, Dialogue, and Novel" (1966) in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art 1980*) Julia Kristeva discusses the work of Bakthin, and by that not only introduces him to a broader field of scholars, but also formulates the term intertextuality for the first time (Allen 2011: 14ff). It is important to point out that when Kristeva first mentioned the term 'intertexuality' the world of modern literary and cultural theory was in a period of transition. The views of structuralist literary critics, who believed in "methodological stability", "objectivity" and "scientific rigour" (ibid 3) dramatically changed to that of the poststructuralists, who placed an emphasis on the uncertain nature of language, its lack of representation of a stable meaning, and its subjective character (ibid 3). In addition, the socio-political context of that period also played an important role as it was a time of uprisings and revolutions, in both France, where the majority of the poststructuralist theorists, such as Lacan, Derrida, Barthes, and Foucault, resided, and in Russia, Bakthin's home (ibid 14ff).

It was in that tumultuous period that Bakthin's work was discovered and published. Allen suggests that Bakthin should be considered a "major theorist of intertextuality" (ibid 16) rather than someone from whose oeuvre other theorists (mainly Kristeva) extracted ideas on intertextuality.

Furthermore, in Allen's view, Bakhtin's approaches to intertextuality are best examined in his work of the 1920s, especially his collaborations with Pavel Nikolaevich Medvedev and Valentin Nikolaevich Voloshinov. Bakthin and Voloshinov's theories strongly rely on Saussurean linguistics (ibid 16). Allen summarizes Bakhtin and Voloshinov's argumentations on Saussure by pointing out that when language is studied in its social context, it mirrors the interests of

groups, (social-) classes and organizations that are behind it. Therefore, language cannot be neutral. Moreover, he continues by suggesting that the meaning behind it might be unique but "[it] still derive[s] from already established patterns of meaning recognizable by the addressee and adapted by the addresser" (ibid 18). The patterns mentioned here are those that echo the shifting social values and positions of society. Hence, for Allen the crux of this view on language is that language reacts to already established notions of meaning and evaluation, thus to already made utterances. However, language still manages to encourage further reactions (ibid 18).

In this regard, a crucial concept of Bakthin's needs to be pointed out, namely that of 'dialogism'. In the sense that no word is neutral, utterances are all dialogic, i.e. the meaning of one utterance depends on what has already been expressed before. As a result, these utterances never occur in isolation but are addressed to another possible speaker/addressee (ibid 218).

Similarly, 'heteroglossia', 'double-voiced discourse', and 'polyphony' are all concepts that deal with the dialogical character of language. For example, polyphony, a combination of different voices and elements, is a concept that was used by Bakthin when examining Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novels, as they are of polyphonic nature. In a polyphonic novel, characters have their own worldview, own interpretations of things, their own way of expressing themselves, rather than an authorial narrator displaying the characters relations or dialogs, so that the characters stand for themselves. They are all "possessed of their own discursive consciousnesses" (ibid 23). All discourses in polyphonic novels are reactions to previous discourses, and in a general sense, evaluations of the world. As Allen points out, for Bakthin the author in such novels does not hold the same authorial power as in other works, here he simply stands behind the novel (ibid 22 ff). In addition, discourses in polyphonic novels are never ordered in hierarchies, so that there is no order in which one discourse would be viewed as 'truer' than the other (ibid 24).

For Bakthin only novels constitute true forms of dialogic literature, as unlike in poetic forms such as lyric and epic, there is no authoritative voice applied upon the world. However, Allen notes that this point is conflicting. He demonstrates this by analyzing a poem by Robert Burn 'A Red, Red Rose' that displays 'double-voiced discourse' (cf. Allen 2011: 25ff).

On the whole, Allen suggests that one of the central points of Bakthin's theory is that the previously mentioned dialogic characteristic of language is a threat to any totalitarian or hierarchical image of society and life. This view of society, Allen emphasizes, is one of the crucial elements that is embodied in the term intertextuality that Kristeva coined (ibid 28ff).

2.1.2. Approaches

The following discussion focuses on the main contributions of French scholars Gerard Genette and Michael Riffaterre to the concept of intertextuality. For Genette, the study of semiology and structuralism is the examination of cultural sign-systems, in other words, how signs and texts operate in those systems, and how they are created by codes, systems, rituals, and cultural practices. Genette's structuralist approach toward intertextuality focuses on examining objects, whether they are literary texts or art works, in relation to each other and to the system, but not as individual pieces (Allen 93). In this regard, Genette's comments on Claude Lévi-Strauss's concept of the 'bricoleur', i.e. "someone who works with his hands", (cf. *The Savage Mind* 1966: 16) should be examined carefully, as they provide a useful basis for understanding Genette's views on intertextuality. Thus, Genette argues that the bricoleur is essentially someone who "creates a structure out of a previous structure by rearranging elements which are already arranged within the objects of his or her study" (Allen 93). However, the newly created framework is not exactly the same as the original by Claude Lévi-Strauss, but "it functions as a description and explanation of the original structure by its very act of rearrangement" (ibid 93). In brief, the bricoleur-critic takes, for example, a piece of literature and reorganizes it into concepts used in literary criticism, such as themes, motifs, quotations, etc. (ibid 93). For Genette literary works are part of an "enclosed system" (ibid 93), and are not inimitable, or separate entities. The connections between the literary work and the system are not apparent at first but are made visible by a literary critic's work in rearranging its structure (ibid 93). While poststructuralists claim that it is not possible to reorganize parts of a text in order to present its entire relevant connections, structuralists argue that literary criticism is capable of finding and discussing and consequently "stabili[zing] a text's significance" (ibid 94), although this "significance" might be (intertextually) connected to that of other texts. In brief, "structuralist poetics" is interested in redistributing the focus from an individual work to the system from which it was

established. Thus these systems become part of the structuralist poetics study (ibid 94).

Another important factor for the discussion of intertextuality in this thesis is Genette's concept of 'transtextuality' and its five different types. This concept is the object of study in Genette's second publication *Palimpsests* (1982). With his self-coined term 'transtextuality', Genette wanted to distance his method of describing intertextuality from the previous poststructuralist ideas. His aim was to find methods to understand and interpret texts in a systematic way. Therefore, he created five different categories in order to thoroughly explain his concept (ibid 98). The first category is the 'architexts', which are "basic, unchanging (or at least slowly evolving) building blocks which underpin the entire literary system" (ibid 96). These building blocks are what Genette discussed in his previous work *The Architext* (1979), namely genre, modes, and discourse, in other words, formal categories which are used when examining literature (cf. Allen 2011: 95ff). More precisely the 'architextual character' of a text is defined by "generic, modal, thematic and figurative expectations about texts [...]" (ibid 100). Hence, architextuality focuses on what readers expect from a text, and eventually how that text is received. In fact, texts can either reveal or hide their architextual relations. For example, as Allen argues, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (1603), clearly shows its link to the genre of tragedy. In brief, as Allen suggests, readers will expect certain narrative styles, themes, etc. from certain genres (ibid 99). Consequently, as Worton and Stil (1995: 22) point out, Genette argues that poetics should focus on architexts rather than on individual texts, because essentially they establish the characteristics of the individual texts.

Another manifestation of transtextuality that Genette distinguishes is titled 'intertextuality'. This concept does not refer to the notions of intertextuality utilized by poststructuralist scholars; rather, it focuses on a "pragmatic and determinable intertextual relationship between specific elements of individual texts" (Allen 98). This type of transtextuality, for example, is concerned with the use of quotations and in this regard the matter of plagiarism, and not with "the semiotic processes of cultural and textual signification" (ibid 98). As Allen (ibid 99) observes, a clear division of two different view-points can be noticed here: on one hand, there is the poststructuralists' idea of examining a text and its relation to the system of culture, and on the other hand there is the

structuralists' understanding of a text only in regard to a closed system, i.e. the field of literature.

The third type that is part of transtextuality is termed 'metatextuality'. When one text functions as a comment or annotation in relation to another text, this can be regarded as a meta-textual reference. However, this concept, as Allen argues, is relatively underdeveloped (ibid 99).

Another type of Genette's transtextuality, which, in connection with the primary texts, will also be discussed in detail in the subsequent chapters, is 'paratextuality'. Allen indicates that this is a concept that was important to Genette, and is also significant in the general context of intertextuality. A 'paratext' includes parts of a text that are situated on, as Allen calls it, the "threshold" of it. These should "help to direct and control the reception of a text by its readers" (ibid 100). The paratext is further distinguished into two parts, namely the 'peritext' and the 'epitext'. The first, the peritext, includes, for example, title, prefaces, notes, and chapter titles. The second one, epitext, includes everything that is outside of a text, such as reviews by critics, discussions of the text by the author, interviews, etc. (ibid 100).

As Allen observes, for Genette the paratext operates on different levels to support the reader in understanding the text and its existence, by asking questions such as: When was the text published? Who was the author? What was the purpose of publication? Paratextual elements can also support the reader in recognizing a text's purpose, for example, of how it should or should not be read (ibid 101). Paratext is also helpful when considering different or new editions of publications, for instance, to understand, whether changes that were made to the original title, chapter titles, or design have an influence on the reception by the audience (cf. Allen 2011: 101ff).

The reception of a text can be also strongly influenced by peritextual elements like dedications, inscriptions, prefaces or epigraphs. Genette further distinguishes paratexts into ones that are produced by the author ('autographic'), and others that are written by an editor or publisher, not the author himself ('allographic'). Prefaces, no matter if they are autographic or allographic, should function as encouragements for the reader to read a specific text, and in the same time advise them in what manner the text should be read (ibid 103). Allen also points out that modern editions or revisions of texts most often include a variety of peritextual elements, such as notes and prefaces that

were epitexts for the original editions (ibid 103). For example, reviews by critics of the first book of a trilogy are used as peritexts at the beginning of the second book. This (structuralist) notion of authorial power and intention differs from the poststructuralists' standpoint of rejecting the author. In addition, Allen notes that Genette's focus on the author's intention is, as previously pointed out, not only a different view to that of postructuralists, but also that of the structuralist notion of granting priority to a system (langue) over the individual work (parole) (ibid 103ff).

The last type in Genette's paradigm of transtextuality is termed 'hypertextuality' which is the focal point of his *Palimpsests*. This type focuses on the relationship between two texts – a hypertext and a hypotext. Here, however, the hypertext does not function as a commentary. The hypotext (or also referred to as inter-text) is a text that is identified as the primary source material for another text, or what Genette calls the hypertext. As Allen, for example, suggests, Homer's *Odyssey* functions as a hypotext for James Joyce's Ulysees (hypertext). In fact, as Allen points out, Genette focuses on forms of hypertextuality where the intertextual relation is made intentionally (ibid 104). Allen further suggest that while architextuality is concerned more with "the imitation of generic models rather than specific hypotexts" (ibid 105), hypertextuality concentrates on forms of literature like parody, pastiche, caricature (intentional hypertextuality), etc. (ibid 104-5).

Nevertheless, whether the reader understands a (hyper)text as a parody or merely as a pastiche is directly connected to their knowledge of the hypotext (ibid 105). As Allen indicates, the main focus of Genette's study lies on various hypertextual processes in regard to specific hypotexts. These processes include, for example, self-expurgation (e.g. changes made to Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* cf. Allen 105), excision and reduction (e.g. removing sexually explicit content), and amplifications (e.g. extending/expanding hypotexts). The last process might also involve 'transmotivization', in other words, changing the motivation of a character (or the lack of it) from how it manifested in the hypotext to something different in the hypertext (ibid 107).

As previously mentioned, Genette focuses on hypertextual relations that are explicit, because, as Allen suggests, it is harder to examine texts that do not reveal their hypotexts, or in some cases even relate to hypotexts that are not available anymore and are not relevant to modern readers. It is important to

point out that in the case of a non-relevant or missing hypotext, the hypertext turns into an autonomous text. Essentially "all texts are potentially hypertextual, […] sometimes the existence of a hypotext is too uncertain to be the basis for a hypertextual reading" (ibid 108). Allen observes several problems with Genette's idea of texts functioning autonomously and as hypotexts at the same time, such as, issues that are concerned with the authorial intention behind the text, and the role of the reader in establishing these intentions, etc. (cf. Allen 2011: 109).

In his discussion of Genette's concept of hypertextuality Allen also refers to Laurent Jenny, a theorist who suggests that there are two different kinds of texts in regard to intertexuality, namely works that make their intertextual relations explicit (e.g. parodies, montages, plagiarism), and others where these relations are not the focal point, but are merely implied (ibid 109). Contrary to what Genette believes, and suggests in *Palimpsests*, Allen argues that it is problematic to say "that the reader has a choice between reading a text for itself or in terms of its intertextual relations […]" (ibid 110) because "intertextual relations" cannot be divided from a certain "textual structure" (ibid 110).

Another approach that Allen defines as structuralist originates in the theories of Michael Riffaterre, which are said to be "grounded on the belief in a stable and accurate account of textual meaning and intertextual relations […]" (ibid 111). Allen indicates that the focal point in Riffaterre's work is his view of texts as not being referential (mimetic), but rather creating meaning through their semiotic frameworks that combine words, themes, sentences, etc. This "anti-referential approach" (ibid 112) employs a reading strategy that operates on two alternating levels, namely a 'mimetic level' and following that a 'retroactive reading'. On the mimetic level the reader attempts to connect textual signs (for example words, sentences, i.e. the title of a book) to concepts outside of the text ("external referents") in a linear way. In the next step, the retroactive reading, the reader attempts to examine the text more closely, focusing on "underlying semiotic units and structures which produce the text's non-referential significance" (ibid 112), this time advancing in a non-linear style. If on the first level a conflict exists in connecting a textual sign to an "external referent", but this conflict is corrected in the second step by identifying the hidden sign structure of the text, the reader essentially recognizes the text's "ungrammaticalities" (ibid 112ff).

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In brief, the first level is the mimetic level that, as previously mentioned, Rifatterre argues cannot be used interpreting intertextual aspects of literary texts, however on the second level (retroactive reading) is where Riffaterre believes the interpretation of texts takes effect, which is the semiotic level. On the semiotic level, a connection occurs between different ambiguous images and phrases. However, as Allen points out, Riffaterre prefers to use the term "syllepsis" rather than ambiguity, which involves words that have different meanings in different contexts, essentially words that change their meaning into the contrary (ibid 114). Syllepsis should notify the reader that there is a "foreign body" (Worton and Still 1995: 26) hidden inside the text they are reading that contains the "trace of an intertext" (ibid 26).

Riffaterre defines intertext as "one or more texts which the reader must know in order to understand a work of literature in terms of its overall significance" (Riffaterre in Worton and Still 1995: 56). Riffaterre also argues that there is a potential for a literary reading of a text, however, in order for that to occur, the reader has to acknowledge the fact that the text expresses a form of "(generalized) presupposition" (ibid 27) of an intertext. Consequently, according to Worton and Still, Riffaterre's definition of intertextuality is that of a rivalry between text and intertext (ibid 27).

Riffaterre also suggests that readers notice that this dependence of text-intertext exists more through a connection of content and form than on a referential plane. This is what Riffaterre views as the "compulsory reader response", which as he argues is not possible to be accounted for through linguistic structures. In addition, Riffaterre views it as crucial to differentiate between two forms of recognizing an intertext: first being familiar with both the content and the form of the intertext, and second only realizing that there might be an intertext available. Riffaterre points out that the second case is enough to lead the reader in the right direction when it comes to discovering the relevant intertext. This is what he also refers to as "minimal reader response" (Worton and Still 1995: 56ff).

As stated by Riffaterre, the difference between an intertext and intertextuality itself is that the second term refers to a "web of functions that constitutes and regulates the relationship between text and intertext" (Worton and Still 1995: 57). As previously mentioned, these 'functions' can be either implicit to the reader, e.g. content and form of the text, or only be reminders to

the reader that there might be an intertext available, therefore the response they have to a text is also connected to an intertext (ibid 57). However, according to Riffaterre, a text which has successfully been connected to an intertext, has the power to restrict certain reader responses. This leaves only limited room for interpretation, hence the text is able to preserve its main characteristics over time (ibid 57).

As a result, a reading strategy is employed, where the reader tries to uncover gaps in the text, and fill them with knowledge of the intertext, especially when it comes to grammatical errors, when the text seems illogical for the reader, etc. But as Riffaterre points out, this strategy will not likely lead to beneficial answers, as it makes the identification of an intertext even harder (i.e. the intertext may have changed in form over time). Therefore, there is only a limited number of signs, i.e. indices, (cf. Worton and Still 1995: 57) that can successfully lead the reader to a relevant intertext (ibid 57ff). For a better understanding of a text it is also possible to identify it in connection to a theme (e.g. fantasy) rather than a concrete intertext (ibid 61). Consequently, the intertext should provide the reader with the possibility of a second reading (ibid 62).

To sum up, it can be argued that Riffaterre's analysis of the reader response to (inter-)texts is, for a use in this thesis, too detailed, as it focuses on the 'ungrammaticalities' of a text on a very formal level, examining words, phrases, sentence structures, etc. In addition, it focuses more on finding relevant intertexts through various reading strategies, which is not a central point here, since the relevant intertexts are already known to the author. However, certain parts of his research are still valuable to use in the successive analysis of intertextual aspects in the chosen YA novels. For example, Riffaterre poses a vital question in his essay in regard to the reader's response to a text, namely, whether this concept still functions even if the reader fails to recognize the relevant intertexts (ibid 73). This question might present itself useful when it comes to analyzing the primary literature.

In regard to general characteristics of intertexts, Riffaterre emphasizes that it should not be believed that intertexts are just variants of themes and motifs, merely because readers, by organizing them into these categories, try to counterbalance the loss of an intertext. Although themes and intertexts show similarities in content and form, in regard to the reader's perception, and the

effect intertexts and themes have on the reader, a profound contradiction can be observed (ibid 74). Furthermore, the effect a theme has on the reader might be separate from the reader's ability to recognize that theme. For example, the characteristic features of a theme (e.g. narrative structure, stylistic features) can still have an impact on the reader even though he or she does not believe other versions exist (ibid 75). However, for intertextuality to "occur", an interaction between two texts has to take place independently of them also existing as themes (ibid 75).

In conclusion, Riffaterre points out that intertexts cannot exist without the reader consciously knowing about them. This knowledge, and awareness of the intertexts "rests either on the transparency of the syllepsis or on the momentary opaqueness of a substitution" (Worton and Still 1995: 75).

2.1.3. Outside the 'canon'

In opposition to what has been examined so far, Mary Orr's understanding of intertextuality should present the topic as something more diverse than previously shown. Orr states that her publication "seeks first and foremost to question afresh the 'canon' of French theorists of intertextuality" (Orr 2003: 7), how and why these theorists became attached to this theory. In addition, she wants to include alternative theories, and viewpoints to those that have been agreed on as canonical (ibid 6ff).

Orr argues that one of the major benefits of these canonized theories is their accessibility, and their inclusion into the bibliographies of various guides on intertextuality (e.g. Allen 2011, Worton and Still 1995). In addition, it is also crucial, whether texts by theorists are translated into English or not. For example, the essays of Broich and Pfister (1985) on intertextuality have not been translated from German into English or French, therefore are only rarely quoted in bibliographies.

She continues her in-depth discussion of theorists that are not included in the "agreed canon", such as Renate Lachmann (1982), or other German researchers who contributed to the topic like their French (e.g. Genette) or Russian (e.g. Bakhtin) colleagues. In fact, Orr argues that "[o]nly critics with wider linguistic access can therefore tell whether the provenance of ideas is really as new as is claimed" (Orr 2003: 10). Similarly, one should be open to new approaches, practices, and viewpoints (ibid 10).

Orr's reference to Broich and Pfister's (1985) work on intertextuality serves as a starting point to examine a significant aspect of their work. The first chapter of their publication "Konzepte der Intertextualität" focuses, similar to Allen and Worton and Still, not only on tracing back to the origins of the term intertextuality but also on addressing the different viewpoints of structuralist and poststructuralist theory, some of which were presented above. Pfister argues that they try to bring these two together by establishing a "Vermittlungsmodell" that defines intertextual references according to "Graden der Intensität des intertextuellen Bezugs" (ibid 25). For this, a model is proposed that consists of six different criteria, organized according to qualitative and quantitative characteristics (ibid 25).

In brief, the first criteria they suggest is "Referentialität" which encompasses the notion that intertextual intensity increases when texts directly use specific characteristics of the pretext, and not only refer to it. The second criteria, namely "Kommunikativität" scales intertextual references according to the degree to which these references are known to the author on one hand, and the recipient on the other hand. For example, the strongest intertextual connection occurs when the author is fully aware of it, and knows that the pretext is also familiar to the reader, and deliberately places references to it in his work. "Autoreflexivität", which constitutes the third criteria, supports the idea that the intensity of the references increases when the author not only deliberately places intertextual marks in his work, but also discusses them, and turns them into a topic inside the novel. The fourth principle, "Strukturalität", is concerned with the syntagmatic incorporation of the pretext in the text. For example, a text that takes over the structure of the pretext shows the strongest intertextual connections. "Selektivität", the fifth principle, investigates how precise the intertextual references are, whether they constitute only an allusion to the pretext, or are quoted verbatim. The last criteria in Pfister and Broich's model is that of "Dialogizität", which is based on Bakhtin's ideas of that concept. Here, references that allow a significant semantic and ideological discourse between pretext and text show a stronger intertextual connection than the ones that fail in this regard (ibid 26-29).

Their aim is not to find a model that 'measures' how intertextual a text is, but rather to differentiate between forms of intertextuality on a typological and heuristic level (ibid 30). In connection to the analysis of the primary literature,

Broich and Pfister's concept becomes useful in terms of comparing the intertextual strategies (e.g. paratextual elements) the authors of both retellings employed, and to consider, whether one is more successful than the other, and how this success is achieved.

2.1.4. Intertextuality in Children's and Young Adult Literature

Although in a more limited form, the concept of intertextuality is also viewed and discussed in regard to Children's Literature. The arguments presented here can similarly be converted to examinations of Young Adult Literature. It can be argued that this genre is ideal for further examination, since many stories for children and teenagers are based on fairy tales, legends, or mythology. In *Retelling stories, framing culture: traditional story and metanarratives in children's literature* (1998) John Stephens reviews how intertextuality is employed, in what ways retold stories are connected to their 'originals', and why this concept appeals to authors of that genre. Stephens uses various different pre-texts (similar to intertexts), such as biblical stories, classical mythology, Arthurian legends, and stories of Robin Hood, as a basis for his research. In the chapter on classical mythology Stephens's focus mainly lies on analyzing retellings of two Greek myths, namely the Icarus, and the Pandora myth.

In general, Stephens (1998: 3) argues that retold stories serve significant functions in our culture. That is, retold stories "serve to initiate children into aspects of social heritage" (ibid 3); apart from that, they address fundamental values of a culture. As Stephens points out, retold stories can potentially be influenced by any other text or story. At the same time there is a possibility that this influence is extended to a certain number of "metanarratives" (ibid 3). Metanarratives are "implicit and usually invisible ideologies, systems, and assumptions which operate globally in a society to order knowledge and experience" (ibid 3). In addition, the function of retold stories is one "of maintaining conformity to socially determined and approved patterns of behavior" (ibid 3). Similarly to Genette's definitions of a hypotext (intertext), Stephens refers to texts that function as a kind of source for a retelling as "pre-texts". However, in many cases it is difficult to locate the exact source (pre-text) of a retelling. Nevertheless, when a retold story has a definite pre-text, the retellings of it are mainly cultural reproductions. At other times, a retelling is rather considered to be a "re-version", i.e. "a narrative which has taken apart its

pre-texts and reassembled them as a version which is a new textual and ideological configuration" (ibid 4). Re-versions are primarily mockings of existing texts, or occur when it is difficult to determine an exact "first telling".

As an example of a re-version Stephens suggests the fairy tale "Cinderella". He argues, that although there is a pre-text to that fairy tale (Charles Perrault 1697), many retellings rather revert to more "intermediate forms" (ibid 4), such as the Disney films, in this process creating a "retelling of a retelling" (ibid 4). Although an explanation for what "intermediate forms" are, is missing from Stephens argument, it could be deduced that they refer to retellings emerging after the "first telling" that are part of the "network of story versions" (ibid 4).

The main areas of Children's Literature in which retellings can be found are, for example, religious/biblical stories, myths, medieval stories, folktales, and fairy tales. Stephens (1998: 6) points out, that these pre-texts already feature fixed cultural ideas and values, and are influenced by a metanarrative, i.e. "a global or totalizing cultural narrative schema which orders and explains knowledge and experience" (ibid 6) of some form. These metanarratives add a certain structure to the stories, and also form the way in which these are interpreted (ibid 6).

Similarly, Stephens notes that retellings of traditional stories for children are part of "interlocked sets" of metanarratives, and therefore do not operate in a haphazard way. He refers to these 'sets', which consist of stories that, for instance, employ distinct narrative structures, combine notions of cultural heritage with 'truth', and convey "significant and universal human experiences" (ibid 7), as "Western metaethic" (i.e. established in cultures that are European-based). Therefore, a metaethic is not a universal concept but is largely culture specific (ibid 7). Stephens argues that the concept of Western metaethic is most prominent in relation to canonization, especially in Children's Literature. What is part of a canon of Children's Literature and what is not is a highly debated topic, and as Stephens suggests, based on prevalent ideologies. However, reversions, by justifying and at the same time questioning "classic" pretexts, can uncover the underlying metanarratives and ideologies of a classic text (i.e. part of a canon). Nevertheless, it is always possible to resist these ideologies, for example by introducing a new metanarrative (ibid 8ff).

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In addition, Stephens also argues that in a pre-text there is repeatedly some form of "historically inscribed ideological" (ibid 9) importance incorporated. This ideological importance, however, is not always corrected by the pre-text. In any case, the pre-text should operate more as a platform where various textual and metanarratival processes are given the chance to cooperate, with the outcome of either going against these ideologies or reproducing them. It is important to note that Stephens believes that "any particular retelling becomes, at least potentially, a new negotiation between the already given and the new" (Stephens 1998: 9). In addition, when a new metanarrative is completely opposite (e.g. in structure, ideology, etc.) to the old metanarrative of a pre-text, a cultural crisis might occur. This clash of old and new metanarratives is mainly visible in stories of classical mythology, because here the 'old' metanarratives are still the most prominent and persistent ones. In this case, classical mythology most often features metanarratives that are shaped by, for example, masculinist, misogynistic, and violent ideologies (ibid 9).

In his concluding remarks, Stephens argues that retold stories evidently show the text's position towards concepts such as power, gender, class, and hierarchy (ibid 21). Therefore, it is important to carefully analyze retold stories, because, on one hand, replications of old texts can further confirm and repeat notions of, for instance, sexist metanarratives, but on the other hand also have the power to uncover hidden and untold aspects of a story. These changes can, for example, be made through focalization strategies, or more general, by strategies that create awareness amongst readers to consider not only the way they read a text but also the way they "read the world" (ibid 22).

These ideas of a prevalent metanarrative will be discussed in regard to the primary literature, focusing on the representation of specific views of gender concepts (e.g. roles, stereotypes), and, in general reveal, whether the texts uncover and actively go against them or merely recycle them in their plot.

2.1.5. What is a retelling?

To accurately understand the connection between the primary literature investigated in this thesis and its source material, one must first define the term 'retelling' and how it applies to the novels.

The previous chapter introduced the term and its use in Stephens' publication *Retelling stories, framing culture: traditional story and metanarratives in children's literature* (1998). Even though 'retelling' is

employed various times throughout the analysis, and is indeed part of the title, a definite explanation of what constitutes a retelling is missing.

Essentially, what can be deduced from Stephens' investigation, and is apparent at the end of the aforementioned chapter, is that a retelling incorporates something new into an already existing story. This notion is also present in definitions of that concept found in various dictionary entries. For example, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a retelling is "a new version of a story" ("retelling" *Merriam-Webster.com*). Similarly the Oxford Dictionary regards it as "[t]ell[ing] (a story) again or differently" ("retell" *Oxford Dictionaries Online*).

For this thesis, a retelling is considered to be a story that is based on a source text, in this case on the Homeric Hymn, which is extended and modified, for example in terms of plot and characters. Essentially, retelling is the act of presenting a story that has previously been told (in a "first telling") in a new way.

2.1.6. Conclusion

As has been shown, a wide range of theories on intertextuality exists, ranging from more 'canonized' publications (e.g. Allen 2011, Worton and Still 1995) to slightly abstract views (e.g. Orr 2003). Consequently, it is impossible to give a precise definition of the term. What should be emphasized here is that through intertextuality texts are not viewed as individual pieces of, for example, literature, but as connected in an overarching system; whether we use Riffaterre's terminology (text-intertext), or Genette's (hyper- and hypotext) is not that significant. As Orr proposes, "[w]hat is vital in our twenty-first-century global textual economy is that culture is not reduced to the same, but allowed to celebrate its organic plethora" (Orr 2003: 181).

The discussion of the primary literature in regard to concepts of intertextuality will mainly consider Genette's theory of 'transtextuality', focusing on paratextuality, rather than on the aforementioned theories of Riffaterre, as Genette's views can be considered more prevalent, and as shown, predate those of Riffaterre. The theory presented here is in general vital to formulating questions and encouraging discussions in an area of literature that, in this regard, has so far been neglected.

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2.2. Young Adult Literature

The following survey briefly highlights the importance of a study primarily focused on YAL, its development as a literary field, and ponders the difficult question of classification. Apart from that, the genre of fantasy, and the field of mythology, which are both used to categorize the primary literature, will be further investigated.

2.2.1 The need for discussion

Young Adult literature has been in constant change since its golden age in the 1960s. Authors have discovered new themes and ways of telling their stories, thus creating new trends that generate not only a lot of new young readers, but also adults who enjoy reading books of that field (cf. Trupe 2006, Campbell 2010, Cart 2010). The expansion of this genre is visible in the sudden incline of debut authors, new forms of narrative techniques, or more creative ways of presenting the text to the reader (Wadham 2013: 21). Indeed, some of the themes that were explored in YA fiction helped fuel its success in the literary world. For example, J.K Rowling's *Harry Potter* (1997) series was not only read by the intended audience (age group), but was also popular among adult readers. Similarly, the *Twilight* saga by Stephenie Mayer (2005) helped in establishing certain themes and elements from adult literature, such as star-crossed love, love triangles, or increase the popularity of supernatural creatures like vampires, and werewolves. Although it was not well received among critics, sales figures show that it was part of the books that made the overall success of adolescent literature possible in recent years (cf. Mail Online, Liz Thomas 2012).

Another dominant trend in YA literature is dystopian fiction, and one of the most successful representatives of that subgenre is *The Hunger Games* (2008) series by Suzanne Collins, which gives the reader a bleak outlook on a post-apocalyptic world, where once a year 24 children are locked in an arena and fight to death, as a punishment for the thirteen districts that started a revolution against the government. Soon enough, other dystopias followed, for instance *The Maze Runner* (2009) by James Dashner or *Divergent* (2011) by Veronica Roth. Most of these books were also adapted into movies, which further facilitated to the success and popularity of Young Adult Literature.

The purpose of this brief overview is to demonstrate that the versatile and quickly adapting nature, but also the popularity of this type of literature even

outside its intended audience, merits a similarly versatile discussion of it in the academic field. However, not only the popularity of this literary field contributes to this need for scholarly discussion, but also the notion that in a sense these novels can be responsible for shaping the future generation of readers.

2.2.2. Origins and history

The success of Young Adult Literature began in the 1960s with the publication of *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton (1967). Before that, books with similar themes that were targeted at teenagers were subsumed under the genre of "realistic fiction for teens". Some scholars (cf. Cart 2010: 11, Trites 2000: 157), however, argue that the first young adult novel was already published in 1942, namely *Seventeenth Summer* by Maureen Daly. The emergence of YA literature in the 1960s was due to the fact that genre fiction became popular in the 1940s and 1950s, therefore authors, who wanted to write books for teenagers, started engaging in topics that were also relevant to the lives of teenagers. The following two centuries focused first on the problem novel (i.e. the discussion of a problem central to teenager's life, e.g. drug abuse), and then returned to genre fiction. In the 1990s authors focused on publishing books for the younger demographic, which resulted in the breakthrough of middle grade fiction (Cart 2001: 96).

2.2.3. The problem of classification

Classifying what counts as a young adult novel proves to be a challenge. A phenomenon that contributed to the need to even classify the fiction is the emergence of middle school/grade literature. As Cart (2010) points out, the establishment of the middle school system in the US demanded a "new kind of literature expressly for them, one that publishers continued to call young adult but that targeted this new, younger age range" (Cart 2010: 52). As a result, the age range of the protagonists in YA fiction decreased from sixteen/seventeen to fourteen, or even younger. Interestingly, the expansion of chain bookstores like Barnes & Noble in the late 1980s into "superstores" still neglected to give young adult novels their own separate section, and instead merged them with the children's book section. This further facilitated the decreasing age range, and the formation of middle school/grade literature (Cart 2010: 52).

As Campbell stresses, giving concrete definitions of age groups and what should be considered YA fiction, or what falls into the category of middle grade,

is highly problematic. The need to even find classifications, as Campbell argues, results in the desire to lose the stigmata that YAL is too immature (2010: 67f). Campbell establishes certain criteria that show a difference between young adult and middle grade literature. For example, some themes are more important in middle grade fiction, like the creation and mechanics of friendship, while for young adults issues such as sex and intimate relationships, violence and profanity are fore grounded. Moreover, there is also a difference in the use of language and the structure of the plot, which are, compared to YAL, much simpler. Nevertheless, as Campbell emphasizes, there are always exceptions to these rules. He comes to the conclusion that even though middle school and YA fiction are not the same, the first is still struggling to find its own identity, to break out of the shadow of YAL and establish a separate canon (ibid 71--72).

Another problem that arises is also the question of who establishes these classifications, as the motives of classifying novels as YAL differ from that of, for instance, publishers to readers or authors. In the case of Harry Potter, for example, the publisher could argue that marketing the book to a more mature audience will bring higher profits, hence regarding them as part of Young Adult Literature, while the reader might say that, at least for the first book in the series, the protagonists are too young to fall into the YA category, therefore the novel should be considered as middle grade fiction.

2.2.4. Development as an academic field

As the beginning of this chapter presented, Young Adult Literature is in most cases not examined critically as a separate subgenre of Children's Literature, but rather as part of the whole. The number of publications that concentrates on topics solely found in YA is meager, compared to critical theory that focuses on Children's Literature in general.

In her article, *Young Adult Literature Evades the Theorists* Caroline Hunt (1996) argues that Young Adult Literature per se lacks profound literary criticism. Many scholars focus their attention on children's books from the lower end of the age range. For example, as Caroline Hunt points out, in *Criticism, Theory and Children's Literature* (1991) Peter Hunt defines the child (in Children's Literature) as "preadolescent being", exemplifying his arguments with excerpts from books dedicated to younger children (not yet teens) (Caroline Hunt 1996: 4).

Furthermore, Caroline Hunt argues that since the field of young adult (literature) is relatively new, it takes a while for criticism to notice it, and react to it accordingly by featuring it in their publications. In her survey of critical publications on Children's Literature between 1980 and 1995, Hunt found that the topic of Young Adult Literature as a separate entity was not discussed by any notable theorists of that field (Caroline Hunt 1996: 5). However, Hunt's article was published in the late 1990s, and since then changes can be noticed in that field. For example, in *Contemporary Adolescent Literature and Culture: The Emergent* Adult (2012) Hilton and Nikolajeva collected essays that solely focus on critical discussions of Young Adult Literature, including, for instance, popular titles like Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* series in their discussion. Further, there is also a multiplicity (e.g. Click 2010) of critical books and articles on popular YA titles such as the *Twilight* saga, the *Harry Potter* series, or the *Hunger Games* series. This apparent lack of critical discussion, that was previously mentioned, might also be due to the fact that

> a literary subgenre that has existed for twenty-five to fifty years will accrue less commentary than an older one; typically, too, critics begin by considering a subgenre within its class and only gradually detach it for separate examination. (Caroline Hunt: 1996: 5)

The process of integrating YAL into literary criticism at large is still ongoing. The research conducted in the 1990s serves as a vital basis for further extensions, and for surveys that solely focus on YA fiction without regarding it as Children's Literature's stepchild. The aforementioned theories, from Nikolajeva to Campbell, are the first steps to forming an understanding of YAL that is more suitable to the literature produced in the 2000s.

2.2.5. Fantasy fiction

The primary literature can be mainly assigned to the genre of fantasy, and as a subgenre also to paranormal romance In this regard, it is feasible to briefly consider the beginnings of this genre, and acknowledge some definitions of it provided by scholars. In addition, the subgenre of paranormal romance will also be discussed. This survey will focus on fantasy fiction for children and young adults and will leave adult fantasy literature aside.

Fantasy literature for children and young adults is proving to become one of the most popular genres of this literary field. Some of these titles include dystopias, such as, Marie Lu's *Legend*, fiction that concentrates on magical elements, like Sarah J. Maas *Throne of Glass*, and Laini Taylor's *Daughter of*

Smoke and Bone. But there is also the ongoing popularity of YA novels focusing on supernatural creatures (e.g. werewolves, vampires), like *The House of Night* series by P.C and Kristin Cast, and as this thesis demonstrates a fondness for mythological stories (e.g. *Starcrossed* by Jennifer L. Armentrout). Before fantasy authors focused on catering to a more adolescent audience, Young Adults turned to popular Children's Fantasy writers such as Lewis Carroll. This increase in popularity was even more explicit at the beginning of the 21st century, which saw a focus on fantasy stories that feature teenage heroes. The world building in fantasy novels for Young Adults is more complex, and the language that is employed can be seen as more somber. In general, the purpose of fantasy literature is to create awareness in young readers that the world is more intricate than it seems, and should teach them to view situations from somewhat uncommon perspectives (O'Keefe 2005: 232f).

As Nikolajeva (2012: 60) argues, the task of children's fantasy is to offer ethical support to adolescent readers. Moreover, this genre targets an audience that struggles to keep reality and imagination separate, as a result making it easier for them to accept magical worlds without dismissing their existence, and demonstrating that the eternal fight between good and evil is not as alarming as it would be, when set in the 'real world'. Consequently, fantasy is employed as a narrative device (i.e. "a metaphor for reality"), and, similar to the aim of fairy tales, supports the socialization process of children (Nikolajeva 2012: 60ff).

Both novels analyzed in this thesis, belong to the fantasy subgenre of paranormal romance. These stories put their main focus on the erotic (or romance) elements of the plot. Kaveney (2012) suggests that paranormal romance is to some extent 'revisionist fantasy', as it tries to humanize the supernatural world and creatures (e.g. 'domesticated' vampires in Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* 1976). Additionally, paranormal romance often has a female protagonist at its center (ibid 215). Interestingly, Kaveney points out that these stories are set in worlds where no secret is made of the existence of the supernatural (e.g. The Southern Vampire Mysteries by Charlaine Harris) (Kaveney 220ff). However, this is not entirely the case in either *Abandon* or *The Goddess Test*. The existence of supernatural creatures, in this case Greek deities, is only apparent to some characters in the novels, like Richard Smith in *Abandon*.

Paranormal romance is defined on Goodreads, an interactive platform for readers similar in style to Facebook, as a subgenre of the romance novel that, on one hand, can focuses more on the romance element, but, on the other hand, can also emphasize fantastic elements. The romance in this subgenre occurs, as the term suggests, between paranormal creatures (e.g. vampires, shapeshifters, and fairies) and humans (*Paranormal Romance* Goodreads 2015).

In brief, the genre of fantasy offers young adults a possibility of dealing with issues, like first love, death, and coming of age from a different point of departure. Although these stories deal, for instance, with supernatural creatures, the struggles these teenagers face are similar to those in the 'real world'.

2.2.6. Greek mythology in adolescent literature

The popularity of Greek mythology in Children's Literature became apparent in recent years, especially in the last two decades. Titles, such as Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* (2005) series successfully introduced the topic to a younger audience. Riordan's stories present mythology to, as it can very well be argued, an audience that is comparatively unfamiliar with it. Many of the Olympian gods are featured in the novel. The main character Percy (or Perseus), a demigod, is constantly fighting off other mythological creatures on his heroic adventures. It can be argued that these books appeal to children, whether or not they are familiar with the original mythology. However, young readers who are interested in the Percy Jackson series, but are uneducated in terms of Greek mythology, have a chance to improve their knowledge directly on the author's homepage. The website gives readers the chance to explore the original myths, learn more about the Underworld or other places featured in the stories, in an interactive and fun way.

However, *Percy Jackson* might be considered as only the beginning of this 'trend'. In 2011, for example, the first books of four noteworthy young adult series were published that focus on Greek mythology in general, or pick one myth as their central theme, namely *Starcrossed* by Josephine Angelini, which is a modern retelling of the Trojan War, focusing on the star-crossed love between Helen Hamilton (i.e. Helen of Troy) and Lucas Delos; *Half-Blood* by Jennifer L. Armentrout explores a society that is guarded by Sentinels (i.e. Half-Bloods), the offspring of Hematoi (i.e. demigods) and mortals, focusing on the

struggles of Alexandria who is training to become such a guard, as the other only option Half-Bloods have is to become servants. Another popular novel that deals with mythology is *Sweet Venom* by Tera Lynn Childs, where teenage girls, more specifically descendants of Medusa, form an alliance to fight against monsters on a daily basis.

The use of Greek mythology in Children's and Young Adult Literature is not a widely discussed topic among researchers, but has been featured in John Stephens's previously mentioned publication *Retelling stories, framing culture: traditional story and metanarratives in children's literature* (1998), in which he devotes an entire chapter on classical mythology, presenting examples from different myths. Although Stephens discusses Children's Literature, the arguments he proposes can also be applied to Young Adult Literature, as it gives a general overview of the prevalence of mythology in today's literature.

Stephens argues that writers who retell stories of classical mythology most often conform with the metanarratives that can be found in the pre-texts, therefore defending the ideas that "classical myths (among other functions) embody "timeless and universal" significances and are an indispensable part of Western cultural heritage, that they are metaphorical expressions of spiritual insights, and that they address archetypal aspects of the human psyche" (Stephens 1998: 10).

One of the chapters in Stephens' (ibid 61ff) publication focuses on the use of classical mythology in Children's Literature. In the beginning of the chapter Stephens refers to what Robert Graves previously suggested in his book *The Greek Myths* (the republished version from 2011 will be used here) that in the educational system of the 20th and 21st century, Greek mythology is not as prominent as it used to be, and that it is not anymore common for "educated people" (ibid 61) to be familiar with any references to stories of classical mythology. Graves' publication will also be part of a further more in-depth discussion in one of the following chapters of this thesis.

Following Graves' argument, Stephens points out that in this case it would not be a surprise if classical mythology in Children's Literature vanished completely. However, this was not the case because more and more retellings from that 'genre' are still published (as previously shown) (ibid 62).

Interestingly, Stephens poses the question of why this genre is still so popular. The main reason for this popularity, Stephens points out, is that,

mainly, readers of that age group are drawn to stories that are unique. More specifically, there are certain literary and social functions that mythological stories complete. As Stephens argues, "a myth functions as a story with tangible links to a larger system or pattern of narratives", and is therefore part of a "relational network", hence "its meaning is determined by its relationship to a presumed whole" (ibid 62). Furthermore, children are provided with "privileged patterns of thinking, believing, and behaving […]" (ibid 62). These patterns help them understand the relationship between "the self" and the world around them.

There are five characteristics that prove the suitability of myths for retellings: First, myths are concerned with the story and its significance. They are also structured in certain patterns. This makes it relatively easy for the readers to recognize that several individual stories, which might be completely different from each other, still belong to the same "category" of mythological retellings, because in general myths follow "archetypal situations and characterizations" (ibid 62) that make them easy to point out.

The second significance that is characteristic of myths is that they are viewed as belonging to "our" cultural heritage. This is as, Stephens' points out, a rather problematic point. Although our understanding of culture has evolved, myths are still strongly influenced, for example, by imperialist, masculinist, and misogynistic worldviews (ibid 63f). Third, myths articulate certain "spiritual insights in oblique narrative form" because of their connection to religious desires. Fourth, they extract psychic truths because they express in a written form the desires that are developed in the human unconscious. And lastly, myths have the power to merge different types of cultures, therefore providing a platform for intercultural communication. A problem that Stephens observes here is that although more recently published anthologies of myths incorporate stories of various world cultures, they are still Eurocentric in character, focusing, for example, on Greek mythology. This, as he points out, might be because the target audience is mainly European (ibid 64).

As Stephens observes, paratextual references, such as introductions or afterwords, are strong indicators of the significance of a myth. Although, in this regard, Stephens refers to paratextual elements of anthologies, this is something that will be discussed in more detail in connection with the primary literature examined in this thesis.

2.3. Mythology, fantasy, and gender

The following chapter will focus on the representation of gender in the previously discussed genre of fantasy, and also in classical mythology as literary field. Apart from that it will also depict the importance of it in Young Adult Literature. However, first an overview of some fundamental concepts of gender, which are employed in the analysis of the primary literature, will be given. In this regard, the term agency and its connection to gender theory will be discussed.

At the outset of this brief glossary the question of 'What is gender?' might be asked. To answer this question one might turn to a reference book such as Maggie Humm's *The Dictionary of Feminist Theory* (1989). Although this dictionary was published in the late 1980s, the definitions for the terms used in this thesis are still valid. Here, gender is defined as "a culturally-shaped group of attributes and behaviours given to the female or to the male." (ibid 84). The term gender emerged during the so-called "Second Wave Feminism" to establish a distinction to the concept of sex (i.e. "biology of a person" (ibid 201)). As Simone DeBeauvoir famously pointed out, "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (cf. *The Second Sex* 1949). DeBeauvoir was also the first to articulate the woman as "other" (i.e. not a man). This notion is important when discussing gender roles, and certain characteristics assigned to be feminine, and masculine, as they are part of this concept of 'Otherness' (Humm 1989: 84ff). Other social categories such as race and class, which influence the social reality of a person, can also be connected to gender issues (see intersectionality). Further definitions of the term see it, for example, as a performance (cf. Judith Butler *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* 2011). In brief, it can be argued that gender is a social construction, as it is not something natural, but it is created and performed, as a result it is always changing and evolving.

From this, gender roles have developed, which are "socially assigned roles" that encompass, for example, traits, attitudes, and appearance within a culture regarded to be either feminine or masculine. These "characteristics" are of course highly stereotypical (i.e. gender stereotypes) ("gender roles" *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* 2011).

As is evident in Broverman et al's study (1972) on sex role stereotyping, men are assigned traits that are competence oriented and more desirable, as opposed to the traits assigned to women which create a "warmth-expressive

cluster" (Humm 1989: 218). According to the *Dictionary of Sociology* ("femininity" 2009), for example, characteristics of femininity are "passivity, dependence, and weakness", although these might vary depending on the cultural system. Furthermore, these gender stereotypes can also be regarded as binary oppositions, such as "active/passive, mind/body, reason/emotion, objective/subjective, public/private, culture/nature" (found in traditional Western cultures) (*A Dictionary of Media and Communication* 2011 "gender stereotypes").These stereotypes are formed at a very early stage of human development (e.g. boys are put into blue romper suits, while girls are assigned pink ones).

Moreover, they are further reinforced by mass media's juxtaposing portrayal of men and women. However, in more recent years these stereotypical representations of gender have changed, as in many areas, such as academics or in career terms, a person's performance is not any longer measured solely on the basis of their gender (cf. *Gender Kompetenz Zentrum*). Whether these gender roles, more specifically these stereotypical illustrations of men and women, are further reinforced or rebutted will be one of the topics discussed in regard to the primary literature.

All the mentioned concepts are part of feminist theory. It should be briefly noted that feminist theory also engages in the discussion of literature (cf. Eagleton 2011), analyzing concepts of gender in terms of literary production. For example, understanding the relationship between gender and genre, formulating a female writing tradition, or considering specific aspects of reading 'women's literature' (women as readers).

2.3.1. Women in fantasy literature

Although the representation of women in fantasy literature is a controversial and much debated topic (cf. Rosenberg 2011), its discussion in the academic field has been somewhat neglected, which is also evident in the age of the publications that do approach this issue (cf. Attebery 1987 and 2002, Sargent 1975, Weedman 1985).

It can be argued that women in fantasy literature are often presented as passive bystanders, letting the hero follow his quest to fight evil, and on many occasions be rescued by him. Some examples of sexist portrayal of female characters can be found in the *Wheel of Time* series by Robert Jordan, where women and their magic are essentially regarded as weaker than men, and their

behavior is, at its core, stereotypical; *The Broken Empire* trilogy by Mark Lawrence, which, similar to the *Gor* series by John Norman, rarely features any female characters. More recently, George R. R. Martin's notably successful *A Song of Ice and Fire* series and its adaptation for TV ("Game of Thrones") has been criticized not only for representing violence against women, but also for its misogynistic view on the whole. (cf. Frankel 2014) In addition, two examples from YAL should be pointed out here, namely Bella, the female protagonist in the *Twilight* saga, and Katy from Jennifer L. Armentrout's *Obsidian* series. Both women, for instance, rely on the help of their male counterparts to achieve anything in the course of the novels, and are portrayed as physically weaker.

Fortunately this portrayal of the passive female has changed at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century, to some extent due to the rise of female fantasy authors, such as Ursula Le Guin, Anne McCaffrey, or Marion Zimmer Bradley (Sprague and Keeling 2007: 113).

Nevertheless, a strong patriarchal hierarchy and general oppression of women (female characters) is a common trademark of fantasy literature. Most often this limitation of freedom is not even challenged (Clute 1997: 393). Although, in comparison, science fiction features much more distinct forms of gender bias, the likelihood to challenge these notions, and consequently "envisioning new ways of living" (ibid 393) is greater, since fantasy is more concerned with systems, and paradigms of the past. Authors who wanted to break out of this habit attended to topics that credit women with more power, such as ways of living in matriarchal cultures, especially in Celtic fantasy. Female heroes were rarely found in fantasy literature (e.g. no female characters in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*), but the ones that do exist were most often amazons. These female warriors, however, were considered to further establish stereotypes. In a historic sense, the Amazons lived in a society of other women, where being powerful was the norm. Yet, many modern versions of these women placed them in a patriarchal society, in which strong and powerful women are outside of that norm (ibid 394).

One of the themes of fantasy that grants (almost) equal rights to men and women is magic. Modern fantasy features a greater amount of stories with a female magic user as main protagonist (e.g. in YAL *The Throne of Glass* series by Sarah J. Maas). Nevertheless, the magic women use is rather different from that of men's. 'Female magic' is used for the greater good and in support of the

(male) hero. This prompts another popular theme of fantasy, which follows a young woman discovering a hidden talent, and consequently using that talent to aid another young man on his heroic quest, since she is not able to use her power to support herself (Clute 394). In this regard, an interesting example should be pointed out. Some authors of fantasy literature distribute the power equally among their protagonists. For example, in an interview J.K. Rowling, author of the *Harry Potter* series, points out that physical strength is taken out of the contest in her books. Every magic user receives a wand to wield their magic, which is the same for men and for women. Hence, equality is created and the strength of the magic that is performed is not connected to the gender of the user (*The Women of Harry Potter* 00:10-00:24).

The developments in this genre are clearly noticeable. Ursula K. Le Guin, author of the *Earthsea* saga which was criticized for its gender bias content, revised her work in an attempt to free her heroine from the constraints the patriarchal society put on her, consequently granting her a distinct voice (Clute 394).

Regarding the representation of these issues in Young Adult Literature, it is important to note that one of the central aims of YA fantasy literature is to show that ordinary teenagers can become heroes and gain the power to defeat even the most frightful opponents, and as Pierce (1993: 53) suggests, empower them. This notion is especially important when female heroines are placed in focal positions, since "[f]antasy novels can reveal to girls the possibilities of speaking out, leading, and overcoming obstacles – even those that seem insurmountable" (Sprague and Keeling 2007: 114).

2.3.2. Women in classical mythology

An interesting point made by Stephens is that retellings of myths function as part of "cultural conservation [that] is central to the production of children as subjects which are both unified and possess social integrity" (Stephens 68). Consequently, they aim to appeal to a metaethic that opposes notions of (post)modernism, materialism, and cultural relativism. According to Stephens, classical mythology is characterized as being essentially masculinist and antifeminist (ibid 78). This argument will be central to the discussion of the primary literature, especially in regard to gender roles. In addition, the protagonists represented in classical myths are a product of "high" culture and

essentially gendered male. Stephens also refers to this as "endemic misogyny of classical myths" (ibid 78).

In his concluding remarks on classical mythology in Children's Literature, Stephens suggests that there is an ongoing debate among scholars in consequence of the diverse functions of myths and interpretation of their meanings. Consequently, as he notes, "the urge to maintain traditional knowledge and sense of the past […] conflicts with the desire to reconstruct cultural formations, especially with regard to gender" (ibid 88). The number of feminist writers who use classical mythology in their retellings is still very limited. Furthermore, classical mythology maintains a "privileged position" in modern literature. For example, similarities between classical mythology and biblical literature show that both use discourse that is hieratic, and both use a similar metaethic. In addition, both suggest that events told in their stories are connected to "mysterious forces", and that humans should aspire to be good and beautiful as these attributes are considered "natural objects" in mythology (ibid 89).

The prevalent gender system found in the mythological texts will be the next focal point in this chapter. The discussion will also use the Persephone myth as an example, and considers how the system is manifested there.

In brief, gender systems are "nexus[es] of ideas, images, and practices, functioning at a given time and place in the 'real world'" (Doherty 2003: 37). Generally, they mature over time, with some changes being more dramatic and apparent than others. However, the replication of these systems and passing them down through generations is crucial for their preservation. Thus, stories such as the one about Demeter and Persephone do not lose their appeal to audiences centuries after their first introduction. In addition, people might not be aware of these systems, since they are naturalized, and wholly integrated into society and the everyday life. Based on this, it can be argued that even though these myths depict societies that are centuries old, many of the problematic representations of gender issues (roles, division, inequality, etc.) are equally of concern today, and are still represented and manifested in, for example literature, as the analysis of the primary literature will show.

The Greek society in the 'archaic period' (600BC), the time in which the Homeric Hymn was written, saw women inferior to men, making them reliant on men both legally, even in terms of legal transactions, and more importantly

economically. Furthermore, concepts, such as dowry and marriage of young women to men significantly senior their age (e.g. age difference between Persephone and Hades), were the norm in that society. Interestingly, a bride's agreement to the marriage was not needed, making mutual consent unnecessary (ibid 25).

As Doherty (24) notes, the hierarchy among deities is similarly constructed as the "gender hierarchy", which some women, such as Demeter, were able to escape. Furthermore, even the work was gender specific: While women were responsible for assignments inside the house, like cooking, or taking care of the home and children, men were in charge of everything outside the home, for instance political agendas, or military operations. Gender segregation is also a topic explored in the Homeric Hymn. For example, Demeter, during her stay in Eleusis, interacts exclusively with the female members of the family (with the exception of Demophon who is a child). This separation becomes obvious when Zeus' actions are examined. To deliver his messages to Hades he sends Hermes. However when contacting Demeter he first authorizes Iris, and later on Rhea with the task (ibid 26).

Although the gender system presented in the Hymn, to a great extent, appears foreign to the Western (i.e. Western Europe, and North America) understanding, some traces of it can still be found in many societies of the 21st century. On one hand, women are, legally and in most Western countries, no longer financially dependent on men, are allowed to hold a governmental position, can choose to get married or not, and are not discriminated against when they choose to live a childless life (NB: although there are many circumstances discrimination occurs). Especially in terms of relationships and marriage, women have more freedom, compared to the ancient Greek society. As Doherty points out (30), most marriages or long term commitments are based on friendship, and the understanding of a mutual wish among the partners. This might be a reason why most modern adaptations of the Hymn present Persephone and Hades as equal partners, with a mutual goal, and feelings. On the other hand, as is presented in the Hymn, women are still considered to hold less power and authority than men, hence Demeter's and Persephone's actions manifested themselves in a form of opposition that was rather passive (i.e. Demeter withholding the crops). Similarly, the goddesses/women were solely responsible for taking care of children, and the

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household, which is still valid to a significant extent in today's gender system(s), although these notions are under a change (ibid 31).

Interesting to point out is Doherty's argument that in the Homeric Hymn Demeter is given "the strongest role in the story's outcome [consequently making] her anger as important as her grief" (ibid 32). This would imply that her passive resistance was indeed effective and contributed to a beneficial outcome for her.

2.4. (Female) Agency

One of the focal points that will be examined in the primary literature is the concept of agency, especially 'female agency', and the behavior of the female protagonists, i.e. how active/passive they perform in certain situations.

The principal understanding of agency can be traced back to notions that juxtapose it to the ideas of structure. It is most often seen as an equivalent to 'action'. Agency "emphasiz[es] implicitly the undetermined nature of human action, as opposed to the alleged determinism of structural theories." (*Dictionary of Sociology* 2012)

However, more recent studies on the subject challenge these notions and view agency detached from this juxtaposition (cf. Bourdieu 1977). Social sciences, for example, recognize the origins of agency in the legal and financial division between agent and principal. Here, the agent is free to carry out certain tasks in the name of the principal (*Dictionary of Social Sciences* 2002).

In brief, agency can be regarded as "the capacity for autonomous social action" (ibid 2002). To be specific, it describes an 'actor's' ability to move about and behave freely without being tied to any social structures. Social sciences considers agency in terms of how the autonomy of 'actors' might cause problems. The actor is, in this regard, put into central focus. This viewpoint emphasizes the importance of "human intentions, the nature and social construction of free will, moral choice, and political capacity" (ibid 2002) to the concept of agency. Another crucial characteristic of social sciences view is the significance placed on outside recognition, in other words, whether actors are able to perform in ways that are acknowledged and responded to, and not just their bare ability to act (ibid 2002).

Chris Baker (2008) argues that agency encompasses acts that create a "pragmatic difference", therefore "agency means the enactment of X rather than Y as a course of action" (ibid 182). However, because agency is culturally

bound, some actors have more freedom and possibilities than others. Nevertheless, no matter how limited, actions still have to be taken (or not) (182f). As previously mentioned, a focus will be put on the female characters and the examination of their behavior. Agency is also a prominent issue discussed in gender studies/feminist theory (e.g. McNay 2000, Madhok 2013, Meyers 2002).

3. The Persephone myth

The previous summary of theoretical aspects that need to be considered in this thesis is now followed by an overview of the Persephone myth, which will be used in the intertextual analysis of the primary literature. First, the sources of the Persephone myth will be explored. Following this, a brief summary of the plot will be presented, which is followed by detailed descriptions of the main characters involved in the story. Next, a topic that is of great concern in this thesis, namely the representations of gender, to be specific of certain gender systems, will be touched upon. The discussion is concluded with a survey of some retellings of the myth through different genres (e.g. encyclopedias, dictionaries, guidebooks).

3.1. Sources

This subchapter will briefly discuss the various sources of the myth in general, and subsequently focus on the origins of the Persephone myth in Greek and Latin classical literature.

Hitherto it has been pointed out that Greek mythology as a theme still enjoys great popularity in the literature of the 21st century. When tracing back to the source material, one can observe that the numerous variations of mythological texts differ greatly from each other. This might depend on the individual author's style of writing, or to what extent the source material is altered and adapted. Also, different time periods place different emphasis on the themes of these myths, for instance, allegorical readings of the myth were popular in the Middle Ages (Miles 1999: 9ff). Subsequently, the myths we encounter today most likely have different layers of meaning, creating, a "palimpsest – a document that has been repeatedly written over, so that traces of earlier texts can be faintly read beneath the surface text" (ibid 4).

With regards to the definitive source of these myths, they are considered unavailable as the myths originated in oral accounts of the stories passed on

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from generation to generation. There are however some assumptions on the origins. For example, researchers argue that the myths constituted pre-scientific ways of describing the world; that they were used to aid political campaigns, or to teach moral stories, or might even be understood as historical facts rearranged to fictional accounts of gods and monsters (ibid 5).

The earliest sources of literature that incorporate mythology are the two epic poems the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* by Homer. As Miles notes, the real identity of the author, whether it was one person or an amalgamation of many, is much discussed among scholars. However, what seems to be clear is that these two poems represent the groundwork of Greek literature. Another important author/figure that shaped Greek literature is Hesiod who with his invention of the *Theogony* dealt with the creation of the world, incorporating early Greek myths and depicting the battles between the Gods, e.g. the war of the Titans, and the creation of the Olympians. In addition, it gives detailed accounts of the individual gods and goddesses, functioning as a form of encyclopedia (ibid 6).

Following these epic poems is the 'lyric age', which used the song as primary literary genre. Important pieces of literature in this period are the Homeric Hymns, which unlike their name suggests, do not derive from the previously mentioned author. The Homeric Hymns are also the source material used in the analysis part of this paper, especially the hymn devoted to Demeter. The uniqueness of these hymns is visible in the fact that they are addressed to individual gods and goddesses, most often depicting stories from their lives in great detail. As Miles points out, while some deities are devoted more time and space in the hymns, such as Demeter, Apollo, Hermes, Aphrodite, and Dionysus, others are neglected (cf. Hades) (ibid 7).

It should be briefly mentioned that mythology also became a central theme in Latin literature. The two most influential Roman authors worth pointing out are the poets Virgil and Ovid. *The Aeneid* which tells the story of how Trojan prince Aeneas fled after Troy was conquered, for example, is regarded as Virgil's chef d'oeuvre. Miles argues (ibid 8) that with the Aeneid Virgil tried to establish a Latin mythological tradition and weaken the hegemony of Homer as epic writer. As for Ovid, his style greatly differs from Virgil's, as he composed more "light-hearted, cynicalove poems" (ibid 9). His most influential work is the *Metarmophoses*, which, for example, presents various myths beginning with the

formation of the world and ending with the "deification of Julius Caesar" (ibid 9). The myths are placed together to create "one continuous song" (ibid 9), which is one of the reasons this piece of literature is regarded as extraordinary. Underlying these myths is the common theme of metamorphosis. Undoubtedly, Greek mythology played a central role in the tradition of English literature, as is presented by Miles, who traces the use of it from the middle ages to the twentieth century (cf. ibid 9-19).

3.2. The story: plot and key figures

In brief, the myth, according to the Homeric Hymn, can be summed up as follows: While Persephone, accompanied by her mother Demeter and other goddesses, is gathering flowers on a meadow, the earth splits open and Hades appears on his chariot and takes her away. Demeter, who at first is oblivious to her daughter's disappearance, wanders the earth for nine days, grieving for her lost child. Hecate takes her to Helios who informs Demeter about Persephone's vanishing, disclosing that Hades took her. The grief-stricken mother refrains from going back to Olympus and decides to stay in the town of Eleusis, more specifically at Celeus' house, disguised as a human. In order to help his wife Metaneira, Celeus offers Demeter to raise his son Demophon. Demeter's failed attempts to turn Demophon into an immortal child eventually force her to reveal her true nature and leave Celeus' home. However, her anger has still not vanished, thus she holds back the crops from earth, ultimately causing Zeus to interfere in that matter. Zeus sends Hermes to the Underworld, to persuade Hades to let Persephone reunite with her mother. The permanent reunion, however, can only happen on the condition that she did not drink or eat anything while in the realm of the dead. Hades agrees and sends Persephone with Hermes to meet her mother. Their reunion is only clouded by the fact that Persephone did indeed consume pomegranate seeds while she was with Hades. This binds her to the Underworld for one third of the year.

For the analysis and comparison of source material and modern retellings in this paper the Greek version, i.e. the Homeric Hymn *2* (to Demeter), with a translation by Evelyn-White (1914) will be favored. However, if necessary other translations or accounts of the myth will be consulted.

3.3. Roles of the god(esse)s

After the previously depicted events, Persephone came to be known as the Queen of the Underworld, also keeping her title as goddess of spring. Both,

Persephone and her mother Demeter, are at the center of the Eleusinian mysteries (cf. Grimal 1996: 131, Bell 1991: 156), with annual festivities held in their names. Persephone also had the byname Cora or Kore ('maiden'), which she lost after her marriage to Hades. The significance of this loss is discussed in more detail in, for example, Lincoln 1979, or Larrington 1997. Interestingly the name Persephone translates to 'to cause death' or 'to bring death', and it was first mentioned in Hesiod's *Theogony* (913). She is often depicted as a cruel and deceitful goddess (cf. Grimal 1996: 177, Homer *Odyssey* 4.493, *Iliad* 9.334). Her jealousy of Hades' affairs, for example, prompted her to turn his lover Mintha into a mint plant (cf. Bell 1991: 359). This stands in stark contrast to her flattering depiction as a "bloom-like girl" in the Homeric Hymn.

Persephone is not only Zeus and Demeter's daughter, but as incest is not uncommon among the deities, later on also becomes one of Zeus' wives. Moreover, Hades is not only her husband, but also her uncle. During her time as Queen of the Underworld she crosses paths with many other deities and captives of Hades (e.g. Orpheus). In literature she is most often only depicted at the side of Hades as his Queen (cf. "Persephone" *Theoi*; Miles 1999: 29).

Hades, the king of the Underworld, is known by many names, which as Miles (1999: 29) notes are all euphemisms: Hades/Aidoneus which translates to 'The Unseen One', or Pluto/Dis which describes him as 'The Rich One'. The realm where he resides, the Underworld, is sometimes also referred to as Hades, which might cause some confusion. Out of fear, he is rarely referred to by his real name, Hades, but rather by the aforementioned euphemisms, or titles such as 'Host of Many', 'he who has many names', and 'ruler over the departed'. He is illustrated as a dark-haired and grimly looking god, in stark opposition to his 'bloom-like' wife Persephone. Not only is he feared among the gods, but also among the mortals. In fact he "is most hated by mortals of all gods" (Homer, *Iliad* 9.158, "Hades" *Theoi*). Additionally, he is characterized as jealous, especially over his own rights, and most often oblivious to what happens on earth (Graves 2011: 121ff). Hesiod refers to him as "[...] pitiless in heart, who dwells under the earth." (*Theogony* 453ff, trans. Evelyn-White). The mythological texts that solely focus on Hades are limited. The most important ones are the stories surrounding the war with the Titans, the distribution of the realms, and the abduction of Persephone. There is, however, a Hymn devoted to him by Orpheus (cf. *Orphic Hymn 18 to Plouton*).

The Underworld, on the other hand, is adequately described in numerous myths, as it is the destination of various heroes, e.g. Hercules, Orpheus, and Theseus. The first description of the Underworld, which derives from Homer, sees it as a place that could be reached by ship (e.g. Odysseus travels there) in the west where the ghosts of the departed spend their time, roaming around the fields that are covered in asphodel, the only plant that grows there. In later descriptions the geography of the Underworld changes dramatically. It is not a place that could be reached by ship anymore, but rather is moved underneath the earth. Nevertheless, there are still ways to enter the Underworld as a living, for example through caverns (e.g. Orpheus and Eurydike) ("The Realm of Haides 1" *Theoi*, Evslin 19, Graves 120ff).

The Underword is separated from the living world by five rivers: the Acheron ('river of pain'), Cocytus ('river of tears/lamentation'), Phlegthon ('river of fire'), Lethe ('river of oblivion'), and the Styx ('river of hate') To travel to the Underworld, the departed have to wait at the shore of the river Styx that divides the land of the living and the dead, and embark a ferry guided by Charon (the ferryman). Only souls that pay the fare, an Obolus (i.e. small coin), are allowed to enter. The entrance to the Underworld is also guarded by the three-headed hell-hound Cerberus (Miles 30, "The Realm of Haides 1" *Theoi*).

The three judges of the Underworld, Minos, Rhadmanthys, and Aaecus decide over the fate of the new souls, in general sending them to the Asphodel Fields. However, if one is judged to have pleased the gods in a special way, they are sent to the Elysian Fields. Some of the heroes that are sent to the Elysian Fields include Orpheus and Eurydike, and Trojan War heroes, such as Akhilleus, Helene, and Menelaus. On the other hand, souls that are judged to be evil are sent to Tartarus (or Tartaros). Tartarus is also the prison of the Titans, and is not part of the Underworld ruled by Hades, but is even further underneath the earth, sometimes referred to as the "cosmic pit" (Hesiod *Theogony* 715ff). The task of the Erinyes (Furies) or children of the night (cf. Ovid *Metamorphoses*, 4.459), is to punish crimes by casting curses, and generally invoking wrath. In addition, they are also responsible for the punishment of those kept in the Tartarus prison (cf. Graves 2011: 122). Similar to Hades, they are not referred to by their real names but rather by euphemisms such as Eumenides, which means "The Kindly Ones" (Evslin 20, Miles 30, "The Realm of Haides 1" *Theoi* , Graves 122).

In the Underworld, Persephone and Hades reside in a palace that is depicted as a dark and shadowy place covered in mist, with a black fence engulfing the estate. Inside, wide and extensive halls stretch across the 'fortress' (cf. Hesiod *Theogony* 767). The months Persephone spends in the Underworld vary from source to source, sometimes three months; at other times four months (cf. Homeric Hymn 445).

In conclusion, the following quote from Ovid sums up the general atmosphere of the Underworld, and might facilitate imagining parts of the setting in the primary literature.

> The Stygian city and the cruel court of swarthy Dis [Haides]. Countless broad entrances that city has and portals everywhere open ... There the Umbrae (Shades) wander without flesh or blood or bones; some gather in the central square; some throng the courts of Tyrannus Imus (Hell's King) [Haides]." (Ovid *Metamorphoses* 4.437 in "Hades" *Theoi* (parts left out))

The roles and (re)actions of Persephone's parents in/to her abduction are highly contrasting. Demeter grieves for her daughter and tries every possibility to bring her back, for example, angering Zeus by leaving Olympus and withholding the crops, while Zeus does not consider his daughter's abduction as a tragedy, as he himself has a chief position in its arrangement. As Lincoln notes, Zeus' actions cannot be clearly interpreted (1979: 226f). While some scholars argue that there is a feud between him and Demeter, others suggest that Zeus should not be labeled as the sole villain. His right to interfere in Persephone's life is as valid as Demeter's right. As a consequence, it can be argued that, similar to Demeter, he attempts to act in his daughter's favor. These opposing views can be explained by the Greeks' understanding of the term parent. Mothers were regarded as biological parents only, while fathers were seen as the "social parent". As a social parent, the fathers were also allowed to arrange marriages. In Lincoln's understanding, Zeus believes Hades' actions are protective, and considers them appropriate as he "undertakes the dangerous task of transforming Kore from a child to a woman" (ibid 227).

However, as Larrington suggests, Zeus is willingly handing over his daughter, to become the 'Bride of Death', mainly to please his brother. Furthermore, this transfer symbolically unites Heaven (Zeus), Earth (Demeter), and the Underworld (Hades) (1997: 116).

3.5. Interpretations of the classical text

Greek mythology has been a topic of interest for many centuries, and especially the myth surrounding Persephone's abduction has piqued the literary world's curiosity. Some of the interpretations or retellings can be found as entries in encyclopedias, some in dictionaries, and some even in guidebooks to Greek mythology. In all of these entries, the central story is the same: Persephone is abducted by Hades, prompting her mother Demeter to go to great lengths to rescue her. However, the manner in which it is told, the question of guilt, the establishment of victims and villains, and the description of the characters involved, is different. For example, in *The Dictionary of Classical mythology* (Grimal 1996) the myth is retold twice in greater detail (in Demeter's entry it is only alluded to): Once as an entry for Hades, and once for Persephone. In the first entry, Hades is described as a "pitiless master" while Persephone is referred to as "no less cruel" than her husband (ibid 177). The story of the abduction begins with Hades falling in love with Persephone. But while her mother refuses to let her live in the Underworld with Hades, Zeus is very outspoken about his support for Persephone. Nevertheless, Hades is not allowed to marry Persephone, which prompts him to abduct her. This entry states that Zeus' involvement in the event is not too clear, although he is labeled as a "clandestine accomplice" to Hades. Interestingly, in this interpretation Hades gives Persephone the pomegranate seeds that bind her to him (ibid 177). In the second entry Persephone, "the goddess of the Underworld and wife of Hades" as she is identified here, has "broken her fast […] and had inadvertently (or because she is tempted by Hades), eaten a pomegranate seed" (ibid 359). So these two entries retell the same story, but without perhaps fully realizing it, the first one solely credits Hades with binding Persephone to the Underworld, while in the second story an unknowing, and perhaps naive Persephone is to blame (ibid 359).

The entry on Persephone in the dictionary of *Women of Classical Mythology* (Bell 1996:357-59) is, as expected, more extensive than Grimal's descriptions. It offers details on her heritage, on the different nations that worship her, and also on her abduction and marriage to the Lord of the Underworld. The story that is told here is more elaborate and dramatic. Hades is described as "the gloomy heir of the infernal kingdom" who was lonely and therefore on the search for a 'companion'. Moreover, the Underworld is referred

to as the "melancholy subterranean world", and Demeter's search for her daughter is a "long, heartbreaking, and footsore wandering" on earth.

Other than the rather emotional choice of vocabulary, the story remains true to its source material, with the extension of giving a glimpse into Persephone and Hades' marriage, which is described as rather "tranquil". This tranquility provides Hades with an excuse to be unfaithful to his wife, as he simply wants to break out of his "dreary surroundings" (ibid 359). It also justifies Persephone's betrayal with Adonis. Interestingly, the sexual aspect of their relationship is also mentioned here. Persephone is "[just] a mere girl when snatched up by Hades" (ibid 359), who as the entry continues "gratefully took her virginity […]." But because Hades is not able to father children, Zeus gladly takes his place, without Persephone's consent as "there was no way of avoiding the will of Zeus" (ibid 359).

In Robert Graves' *The Greek Myths: The Complete and Definitive Edition* (republished in 2011) the entries are arranged according to the gods they are assigned to. Graves' collection is rather extensive with references to many original sources and suitable as a guidebook for anyone new to that subject matter.

The Persephone myth is recounted in the chapter on Demeter (ibid 89-96), and as expected, the latter is put into a focal position. The story portrays Demeter's agony as she is wandering the earth, her encounters with Poseidon, and also her stay at Eleusis with King Celeus and his wife. Furthermore, it also details the negotiations surrounding Persephone's 'return', specifically how Zeus tries to appease Demeter by sending her gifts, and ultimately Rhea as a messenger. Zeus' actions are also pictured here. For instance the messages he sends to Hades through the messenger Hermes, and to Demeter, to whom he, in this retelling, declares "'You may have your daughter again, on the single condition that she has not yet tasted the food of the dead'" (Graves 2011: 91).

Something that is interesting to point out is that this story mentions Persephone screaming "A rape! A rape!" (ibid 90) when she is seized. This is not mentioned in the other retellings or interpretations. Other than that, the story follows the events depicted in the Homeric Hymn, with some additional details on Demeter's role.

The general structure of Bernard Evslin's *Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Mythology* is similar to Graves, as chapters are dedicated to

individual gods and goddesses (and also certain monsters). However, there are four significant distinctions made in this guidebook, namely that between myths on gods (e.g. Zeus, Demeter), nature myths (e.g. Pandora), myths on demigods (e.g. Perseus), and fables (e.g. Midas). It should be noted here that although Evslin regards King Midas' story as a fable, it is in general regarded as a myth and can be found, for instance, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In general, Aesop's fables are considered as Greek representatives of that genre. The most noticeable difference to the previously mentioned retellings is that there are no original sources cited in Evslin's publication. For readers who are not well versed in Greek mythology it is difficult to distinguish between the author's own interpretation and the classical story. Nonetheless, this can still serve as an introduction to that topic as it vividly depicts the adventures of the gods.

The Persephone myth is, once again, retold in the chapter on Demeter (Evslin 2005: pp 22-29). The descriptions of the goddesses are vivid, and the language is more poetic than, for example, in the dictionary entries. Here, Persephone's outer appearance is also considered. She is pictured as a girl "raised among flowers", even bearing similarities to a flower: "her body was as pliant as a stem, her skin soft as petals and she had pansy eyes" (ibid 23). The relationship between Demeter and Persephone is portrayed as very loving in nature (ibid 22).

In general, it can be argued that the story follows Ovid's version of the myth (*Metamorphoses* 341) closer than that of the Homeric Hymn, as the exchange between Zeus and Demeter, on whether Hades is a "good match" for Persephone, can be found in Ovid. However, some parts of the story here are most likely freely imagined by the author. For instance, Demeter receives information on Persephone's whereabouts from birds instead of Hecate. Immediately after her questioning the birds, she turned a little boy who laughed at her for crying, into a lizard. Since this did neither happen in Ovid's nor in the Homeric Hymn's version it might be a reference to a story in which Demeter turns Ascalaphus into a lizard, after finding out he told Hades about Persephone's consumption of the pomegranate seed. Also interesting is the author's direct reference to the "Law of Abode". It is the law that states that anybody who consumes food in the Underworld will be bound to it forever. In Ovid, the law is referred to as the "binding law". In the Homeric Hymn this law is not directly mentioned, and also the previously discussed retellings do not

assign it a name. Another part of this retelling that might be more freely interpreted by the author is the depiction of Persephone's stay in the Underworld, and her feelings towards Hades. Evslin (26ff) notes that although Hades abducts Persephone in a rather brutal way, he becomes kinder and gentler towards her. Moreover, to appease her, he gifts her with jewels, dresses, and even a black pearl crown. Nevertheless her mood towards him does not change (initially), since "she made herself very difficult to please" (ibid 26). However, her feelings towards him are secretly evolving, as she begins to develop a fondness for him and her life in the Underworld (ibid 27). Of course, as Evslin points out, Hades' physical features are not missed by Persephone who "admired the lofty set of his black-robed figure, the majestic shoulders, the great impatient hands, and his gloomy black eyes" (ibid 27). Evslin also depicts Persephone's social activities while she is in the land of the dead. For instance, on occasion she wanders the Elysian Fields, dances around, and visits the tormented souls of Sisyphus, and Tantalus (ibid 28).

In this retelling, Persephone consciously eats the pomegranate seeds out of sheer hunger, and desperation. The rest of the story, to a great deal, follows Ovid's version; mentioning the reconciliation of Demeter and her daughter, and Zeus' verdict, which states that Persephone has to spend six months of the year with Hades.

These interpretations show that due to the extensive volume of Greek mythological texts, and the manifold ways the topic is treated in (English) literature, many authors are given the opportunity to change the source material to their liking. Therefore, descriptions for example of Hades that picture him as "fiercely possessive" might not be found in the 'original' stories.

4. Retellings

The following main analysis of this thesis will incorporate the previously discussed concepts, and find answers to the initially established research questions. The first part is concerned with the retelling that is closer to the original, namely *The Goddess Test*. The latter part discusses, in a similar manner, the version that can be considered more modern, that is *Abandon*.

4.1. Not a girl, not yet a goddess: The Goddess Test

The subsequent part of the thesis focuses on an in-depth analysis of the novel *The Goddess Test* by Aimee Carter (2011). The analysis attempts to

answer the research questions presented in the introduction, thus concentrating on the intertextual aspects of the story, with a closer look on paratextual features, and the significance of gender systems (as part of metanarratives).

The Goddess Test is the first book in a trilogy, published in 2011 by Harlequin Teen, an imprint of Harlequin which is "one of the world's leading publishers of books for women" (About Harlequin). The novel belongs to the genre of fantasy literature, and considering it is distributed by a publishing house specialized on romance novels, it can be further classified as a paranormal/supernatural romance novel.

Essentially, it is a retelling of the Persephone myth that is closer to the original than, for example, *Abandon*, as the characters presented in this book are the deities from mythology. During most of the action, however, they are disguised as humans, some residing in the small town of Eden, the 'birthplace' of Kate's mother Diana, and others taking up residence at Eden manor. Moreover, the story is presented from Kate's point of view (i.e. a first person narrator: I-as-protagonist).

Before delving into the analysis, it is important to underline the fact that in *The Goddess Test* mythology is considered as actual history. Hence, the events depicted in the myths, are believed to be true by the characters, and, de facto, occurred at some point in time (Carter 110). Consequently, in the world of the novel, the abduction of Persephone did happen before. Although a 'real' Persephone exists inside this story, Kate and her involvement with Henry will still be considered as a reincarnation, and possible retelling of the previous events. Since both stories occur in the same 'universe', this further lends the opportunity to compare these two female characters to each other.

The analysis considers, primarily, the version of the myth depicted in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter (*The Homeric Hymns and Homerica)*, and then also compares and contrasts these aspects to the canon of Greek myths (e.g. Ovid's version).

4.1.1. Intertextual aspects

Although *The Goddess Test* is a retelling that is closer to the original myth, as it features the actual deities, the plot, especially some of the key aspects, are altered to some extent. As the analysis will show, similarities to the Homeric Hymn can be found in the novel. While some passages might show

clear links to the source material, others are changed, possibly, to fit the storyline, or due to the author's wishes.

Even though the deities from the myth are used as characters here, some of their traits, or even relations to each other, which were established in the mythological canon, are modified, providing a possibility to view familiar characters from a different perspective.

4.1.1.1. Key aspects

As at the outset of this thesis presented, the intertextual references will be analyzed focusing on some key aspects from the Persephone myth that are found in most of its interpretations. These are: the Abduction of the goddess, Demeter's grief and retribution, Zeus' interference, the reunion of mother and daughter, the consumption of food in the Underworld, the 'Rape of Persephone', and finally the division of time between earth and the Underworld and its significance explaining the seasonal cycle.

Abduction

Unlike the Homeric Hymn, which immediately delves into Persephone's abduction, *The Goddess Test* begins with a prologue that is set roughly twenty years prior to the main events. Here, Diana tries to find a possibility to save Henry from fading into oblivion, subsequently forfeiting his position as Lord of the Underworld. The premise of the novel is to find a wife (i.e. a girl/woman who successfully passes the seven tests) for Henry; otherwise he will have to relinquish his throne to a successor. Essentially, as shown in the following quote, Diana agrees to bear a child, for this purpose (alone). "'You would do that to a child? Bring her into this world just to force her into *this*?' […] 'If it means saving you, then yes'" (Carter 9).

The abduction as is depicted in the Hymn does not occur in the same manner in *GT*, as Kate is not forcefully taken away in a golden chariot. However, certain events lure her into Henry's realm, and ultimately bind her to him. As her mother's dying wish is to move back, and consequently die in the place she was born, Kate and Diana find themselves in Eden, a small town in Michigan. At her new school, Eden High, she meets, among others, Ava, one of the more popular girls. Although, at first, they are not fond of each other (Carter 25ff), Kate agrees, after a lot of convincing, to accompany Ava to the yearly school bonfire. As it later turns out, this was just a ruse to bring Kate to Eden Manor, where Ava plans to abandon her, by jumping into the river and

swimming back to the other side (chapter 3). However, Ava hits her head on one of the rocks, and dies on the scene. In order to save Ava from death, Kate promises Henry, who immediately appears at the scene of the accident, anything he wants (45). At first, the terms of the deal she (involuntarily) agrees to are vague, as Henry's only request is for Kate to read the myth of Persephone so she will be able to understand what the consequences might be (ibid 65).

However, Kate ignores the deal, as a consequence, Ava dies again. The terms are renegotiated later by Kate, who demands that Ava should be brought back to life. Although Henry cannot save Ava's life again, he offers Kate the possibility of prolonging her mother's life until the end of her six months stay (ibid 82).This grants Kate sufficient time to say her final goodbyes to her mother. The inclusion of her mother in the bargain finally pushes Kate to accept it.

On one hand, it can be argued that Kate, unlike Persephone, willingly agrees to spend half a year in the Underworld, and is not abducted or violently forced. It is her decision, first, to try to bring Ava back to life and, second, to hold on to her mother for some time longer. Kate could easily decline Henry's offer, which would mean that Ava pays the consequence for her actions, and her mother who is terminally ill, will stay in a coma and eventually die.

On the other hand, Kate's feelings of guilt for not saving Ava, and for letting her mother outside after which she falls into a coma (61) ultimately strengthen her decision to go with Henry. Although Kate is 'voluntarily' surrendering her freedom, and is seeking Henry out to negotiate her own terms, it is possible to argue that she is never in control of the situation. Kate's 'abduction' possibly started when her mother promised to sacrifice her child, ultimately sealing the baby's future. Although, Diana underlines that Kate always had a choice, and a say in her future, this is not entirely true, as will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4.1.2.1.

The difference between Persephone's abduction in the Hymn and Kate's in *GT* is mainly that the latter is not one distinct event, but a series of promises, and bargains that essentially lead to the same goal, namely Kate/Persephone becoming Henry's/ Hades' wife. In principle, Kate faces the consequence of the deal.

Demeter's grief and retribution

A key aspect that is altered to a sizable extent is Demeter's reaction to Persephone's kidnapping, i.e. her sorrowful wandering on earth, consequently her passive resistance to Zeus and the other Olympians, by withholding the crops (Hymn 45ff; 90ff; 120ff).

Unlike Demeter, who is caught off guard by her daughter's abduction and reacts strongly to it, Diana is not surprised when she learns about Kate's agreement to stay with Henry, as it is she who initiated this course of action (Carter 87ff). Since there is no distinct abduction, there is also no need for Diana to grieve for her daughter.

Instead of roaming the earth, as depicted in the Hymn, Diana is present in Kate's dreams during her daughter's stay at the manor. Thereby, mother and daughter are not entirely separated, not even physically as they can touch each other, even drink and eat together. Even Diana's appearance before her illness is restored (87-89). In the Hymn, the physical separation of mother and daughter is an essential factor contributing to Demeter's resistance to Zeus' and Hades' plan. Only the physical reunion, the assurance that her daughter is well, makes Demeter compliant. Although Diana has no reason for this passive resistance to reclaim her daughter, it can be argued that her illness is a way of withholding her human life in order to complete her arrangement with Henry, and to some extent force Kate to agree. Therefore, the leverage is not held against Zeus, by withholding the crops, but against Kate.

In regard to Demeter's disguise as a mortal in Eleusis, some similarities between the Hymn and *GT* can be pointed out. For example, in both versions Demeter (Diana) lives among humans for a period of time, disguised as a mortal. While Demeter in the Hymn adopts the mortal cover, calling herself Doso, to flee the Olympians, Demeter in *GT* discards her immortality to raise her daughter among mortals, and renames herself Diana.

In both cases mortality is only adopted for a relatively short period of time, after which the women are returned to their immortal forms. Moreover, by shedding their covers, their goddess-like outer appearances are also returned. For instance, the transformation of Demeter in the Hymn is pictured as follows:

> [T]he goddess changed her stature and looks, thrusting old age away from her: beauty spread around about her and a lovely fragrance was wafted from her sweet-smelling robes, and from the divine body of the

goddess a light shone afar, while golden tresses spread down over her shoulders […]. (Homeric Hymn 275-280)

By comparison, the following scene depicts Kate's first glimpse of her mother in her immortal form, at the council's verdict announcement (chapter 19):

My mother looked exactly as she had in my dreams. Healthy and whole, as if she'd never been sick a day in her life. But there was something about her, some indeterminable quality that made her seem as if she were glowing from the inside, like light straining to be released. (Carter 276)

This comparison shows considerable similarities between the transformations of both women.

Zeus' interference

Zeus' role in the Persephone myth, specifically in the abduction, and in the negotiation of terms of his daughter's stay in Erebus, is more evident in the Hymn and the Greek and Latin canon in general, than it is in *GT*. In the Hymn, for example, Zeus' role is that of a matchmaker, as he allows Hades to kidnap his daughter and essentially arranges the marriage between them. Besides, as depicted in Ovid (Metamorphoses 5.487-532), he considers his brother a worthy match, trying to convince Demeter to regard this in a similar fashion. Not only does Zeus arrange this union, he also establishes the terms of his daughter's stay in the Underworld (Hymn 444f). In *GT*, however, Walter's (Zeus') role is not that clearly defined. He first appears as Henry's valet, accompanying him on the night of the equinox. Walter is the one who explains the terms of the deal Kate made with Henry as the following quote exemplifies.

Walter was the one who spoke. In exchange for the life of your friend, you have agreed to spend the autumn and winter at Eden Manor. Every autumn and winter, if things go as planned. (Carter 65)

Although it can be argued that in both versions Walter/Zeus is the head of the Olympians, and his role as the ultimate authority is the same, his involvement in Kate's bargain with Henry is not clear. This is mainly because his relation to Kate is not clearly stated in the first book. At a later point in the series, the reader, and Kate, is made aware that Walter is indeed Kate's father. Therefore, without knowing about their relation, the reader might not be able to recognize a reason for Walter to interfere in Kate's life, i.e. the deal she makes with Henry.

In brief, Zeus' interference in *GT* is minimal compared to the Greek version. Some similarities do exist, as he is the one to relay the terms and conditions (see Carter 65, Hymn 444) of the contract. One main point that grants Walter the same amount of authority to decide over Kate's fate as in the Hymn is his position on the council. As a member of the council he ultimately has the power to deem Kate either worthy or unworthy of immortality, in both cases determining the course of her future. This is especially evident since he is granted the last vote in the decision (Carter 278). Moreover, unlike the other council members, Walter does not nod to show his agreement, but already proclaims the verdict. In the end, Walter settles the union between Kate and Henry by officiating their wedding (284).

Mother-daughter reunion

The reunion of Demeter and Persephone is a pivotal moment in the myth, as it fulfills both the wishes of parent and child to see each other again, and at the same time allows them to say good bye to each other in an appropriate manner.

In the Hymn*,* since none of Zeus' pleas to Demeter to rejoin the Olympians are successful, his last resort is to arrange a meeting between mother and daughter, by sending Hermes to the Underworld, to convince Hades to allow it. Persephone is brought to the temple where her mother resides, and as the following quote illustrates, their reunion is a joyous one.

> And when Demeter saw [Hermes and Persephone], she rushed forth as does a Maenad down some thick-wooded mountain, while Persephone on the other side […] leaped down to run to her, and falling upon her neck, embraced her. (Homeric Hymn 2, 385-390)

This reunion as such is not a singular event in *The Goddess Test,* but is divided into two incidents.

The first reunion occurs immediately after Kate arrives at Eden manor and Henry promises to prolong her mother's life. This is achieved through nightly dream visits by Diana. She and her daughter encounter each other in dreams that "feel real", at their favorite places in New York.

> My mother, looking as healthy as she had ten years ago […] walked up the gentle slope […]. (Carter 87) […]

> She sat next to me and kissed my check. I was still for a moment […] but when it finally sank in that she was here […] I threw my arms around her, hugging her tightly and inhaling her familiar scent. […] She was no longer frail, and she wrapped her arms around me with equal strength. (Carter 87)

The second reunion takes place during the council vote, after Diana's supposed death she presents herself to Kate as a goddess for the first time. In both cases mother and daughter are joyous to see each other again, as they believed their previous separations were ultimate.

In *GT* the first reunion is initiated by Henry, as he is the one that allows for and arranges these meetings between mother and daughter in Kate's dreams. In the Hymn, Zeus has the central role in arranging the reunion between mother and daughter, as he is the one to convince Hades to agree, and Demeter to appear

Consumption of food

The consumption of food, especially of the pomegranate seeds, is an essential part of the Persephone myth. As mentioned in the previous chapter, due to the "Law of Abode" (or "binding law"), consuming food in the Underworld will consequently bind the person to the realm for eternity. In both versions, Latin and Greek, Zeus/Jupiter declares that Persephone is only free to leave the realm of the dead, if she adheres to that rule. The main difference is that while the Homeric Hymn does not specifically mention her eating pomegranate seeds, and Persephone just confesses to her mother that she was unfaithful to the law (HH 2: 405), in Ovid, the Muse (Calliope) recounts how Persephone, while wandering around the garden, picks a pomegranate from a tree and eats seven of its seeds (Ovid 533-571). Moreover, in this rendition, Ascalaphus witnesses her eating the seeds and informs Hades about it.

In *GT* certain incidents demonstrate that the "Law of Abode" has either lost its validity, or is not as binding as it is in the myth. In general, the law is not specifically mentioned by any of the characters. In the beginning, Kate is even encouraged to eat, for example, when Sofia brings her a tray of food (86), or when Calliope and Ella take her to the breakfast room (95). However, Calliope mentions that for people staying at Eden manor eating is not necessary, and over time most of the residents will lose their appetite.

On one hand, the consumption of food lost its primary significance, namely binding Persephone to the Underworld, on the other hand, it is still an important issue in the novel. This is, for example, illustrated by the fact that Kate has a food tester. This is necessary, as somebody from the manor wants to kill Kate. Hence, food is used as a weapon against the contestants.

Although in the beginning of the novel Kate is free to choose, whether to eat or not, this changes when Henry finds out, and informs her about one of the seven tests she has to pass. The only requirement to pass this test is for Kate to stop eating. Henry even demands that of her as he points out that "if [she] [doesn't] stop eating before the council makes their judgment, [she] will fail" (Carter 220). After Kate demands an explanation for this, Henry argues that it is to test gluttony "[a]nd to see how well [she] adapt[s] […]" (Carter 220).

To sum up, Kate's motives for not eating food are entirely different than Persephone's. Persephone refuses to eat because she grieves for her mother, and ultimately because she wants to leave the Underworld. Kate on the other hand, decides to fully commit to the cause, i.e. saving Henry from fading, therefore declines food, and passes the test for gluttony.

Symbolic meaning of the pomegranate

In *GT*, the final step in completing the arrangement with Henry is for Kate to eat six pomegranate seeds. However, this consumption occurs as part of a ceremony, more specifically a ball held in Kate's name, to welcome her to Eden manor, and to give her the opportunity to declare her willingness to stay, in an official setting. Even though, as previously argued, food has no power to bind someone to the Underworld, by accepting the fruit, Kate in turn accepts the terms of the bargain.

The importance of that fruit in connection with Persephone's story is illustrated by the fact that it is sometimes referred to as the fruit of death, and the only fruit that cannot be corrupted by worms. Besides, symbolic meanings of the pomegranate, to some extent, originate in that myth. It signifies, for example, both death and fertility (De Vries 1976: 371), which is also a combination of what Persephone stands for as the Goddess of Spring and Queen of the Underworld. Interestingly, the pomegranate can also represent notions of immortality (cf. Garai 1973: 123; Birth of Attis – Pausanias *Guide to Greece*).

Therefore, it is possible to argue that the ceremonial consumption of the pomegranate not only serves as a conclusion to the agreement between Kate and Henry, but it is also the first step in accepting immortality, which is gifted when she successfully passes the tests.

On the whole, the main difference between the mythological texts and *GT,* regarding this topic, is that the latter places no further importance (other

than symbolical) on the pomegranate fruit (seeds) itself. Unlike in Persephone's case, the pomegranate alone does not play a deciding factor in Kate's future.

Rape of Persephone

Persephone's abduction is on occasion also referred to as "Rape of Persephone" (cf. Lincoln 1979, Dobson 1992). Considering the etymological origins of the word 'rape' it is clear that the understanding of the word now differs, to some extent, to its original meaning. The word rape can be traced back to the Latin *rapere*, which means 'seize', or 'take by force', and was used in that sense since the late 14th century. The Latin word was only rarely used to denote 'sexual violence', most often the word *stuprare* ('to defile') was utilized instead ("rape", "rape (v)"). As a result, regarding the many translations from both Greek and Latin, it is difficult to explicitly determine, whether the term *rape* indicates abduction or sexual violation, or in some cases both. Considering the translations of the original text mainly used in this analysis, it can be argued that the term refers to the former, namely abduction. For example, the first line in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter (*The Homeric Hymns and Homerica* translation by Hugh G. Evelyn-White) states that Persephone is "rapt away" by Hades. This definition of the word is reinforced by the following line which says that "[h]e caught her up reluctant on his golden car and bare her away lamenting" (19-20). Additionally, it is mentioned many times that she was "violently seized", and after their joyful reunion Demeter demands to know how Hades "rapt [her daughter] away to the realm of darkness and gloom […]" (HH 403ff).

In Ovid Persephone's abduction is referred to as rape, both in the Latin versions and in some English translations. The word *rapta* is for example used to refer to a woman that has been seduced (Ovid 520, Latin translation Hugo Magnus 1892). Moreover, the nymph Cyane is "mourning the rape of the goddess" (translation by AS Kline 2000; also in Dryden et al 1717).

However, a closer reading of the texts, disregarding the fact that the word rape is used to denote abduction, it is still possible to argue that Persephone has indeed been raped, i.e. sexually violated, by Hades. This is, for example, suggested by Lincoln (1979) who argues that certain passages of the myth can lead to that conclusion. The most obvious is found in Claudian's *De Raptu Proserpinae* (1969). Lincoln refers to the Claudian translation by J.B. Hall (1969 in Lincoln 225) that describes Persephone's/Proserpina's complaints as following:

> O fortunate are those girls whom other ravishers
> Have borne off! At least they have delight in the usual daylight.
> But along with my virginity, the sky is taken from me;
> My purity is snatched away with the light, and I must depart from earth
> As I am led captive into slavery for the Stygian tyrant. (Claudian 1969: 2.260-64 trans. J.B. Hall in Lincoln 1979)

As Lincoln suggests, and as it is pointed out clearly in the Claudian version, Persephone mourns not only the loss of her life with her mother above ground, but also her virginity. She is not a maiden anymore, reflected in the name-change from Kore to Persephone (Prosperina) (Lincoln 1979: 228).

Similarly, but not as clearly described, in the Homeric Hymn the first time the reader encounters Persephone in the Underworld she is with Hades , and the situation is depicted as follows:

> She was sitting in bed with Hades, her bedmate.
> Much against her will, and yearning for her mother.
> (Homeric Hymn to Demeter 343ff, trans. Richardson 1974)

However, it should be pointed out that the Richardson translation is more explicit than for example Evelyn-White's, who refers to the same scene, i.e. the sexual violation, more reluctantly.

> And he found the lord Hades in his house seated upon a couch, and his shy mate with him, much reluctant, because she yearned for her mother. (Homeric Hymn to Demeter, trans. Evelyn-White 344ff)

In brief, the manner in which scholars (and translators) refer to the Persephone myth, namely, as the *Rape of Persephone,* is somewhat contradictory*.* On one hand, it implies the goddess being violently taken against her will, i.e. rapt or borne away. On the other hand, it also involves the loss of her virginity that is similarly taken away by force, resulting in her transformation from a maiden (Kore) to a woman (Persephone). Interestingly, Lincoln (ibid 228) points out that this 'initiation rite' is a concept found in many other mythological stories, for example that of Boreas and Oreithya. This example is particularly compelling, since another Persephone retelling employs parts of that story in its own plot (cf. *Persephone* by Kaitlin Bevis 2012)

Returning to *The Goddess Test*, it should be pointed out that the concept of rape cannot be found in the plot, no matter in which of the previously mentioned understandings. Kate is neither forcefully taken away, nor sexually violated. However, the transformation from a maiden to a woman does occur, although not (entirely) against her will. To be precise, the issue of virginity, and consequently the loss of it, is something that is prominently featured in Kate's

thoughts. When she initially discovers that in order to fulfill her end of the bargain she has to marry Henry, she clarifies that sleeping with him is not part of it (66). Furthermore, after the pomegranate ceremony, when Henry explains to her that the council decided they have to spend more time together, which also includes the nighttime, she once again asks for reassurance that sex is not part of the deal, or will it ever be (ibid 128).

Nevertheless, Kate eventually loses her virginity, willingly (ibid 223-226). Although this may be true, it should also be considered that (involuntarily) drinking the aphrodisiac beforehand probably made them more susceptible, and ultimately magnified their feelings for each other. Thus, even though a mutual willingness to be close to each other existed prior, without the aphrodisiac the extent of it might have been smaller. By including the aphrodisiac, the notion is transferred that not everything happens purely in consent. Besides, it is a useful tool for the author not only to create an even closer link to the original story, as once again, it blurs the line between willingness and unwillingness, but also still preserve the image of a chaste female protagonist, who under normal circumstance would not sacrifice her virginity (see also chapter 4.1.2.1.).

Thus, the main similarity between the myth and *GT*, regarding the *Rape of Persephone*, that remains is Persephone's/Kate's transformation from a Kore to a woman, ultimately losing her virginity at the hands of Hades/Henry.

Division of time between Underworld and Earth – seasonal cycle

The last pivotal plot point that is compared and contrasted to *The Goddess Test*, is the division of time between the Underworld and Earth, and consequently the establishment of the seasonal cycle. In the Greek society, the Persephone myth was used to explain the concept of the seasonal cycle. That is, the time she spends in the Underworld is the time when nature 'dies', as Persephone the goddess of fertility is not present to replenish the earth with life. Her stay with Hades lasts from fall to spring. When flowers start to bloom again, that is the time she emerges from the land of the dead to spend time with her mother. This is how the Greeks understood the change of the seasons. There are, however, some variations in the mythological stories. For example, in Ovid, Zeus divides the time equally, so Persephone spends six months in the Underworld, and six months with her mother (5.533-571). In the Homeric Hymn, her time in the Underworld is shorter, equaling only one third of the year. In both

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versions, however, it is not specifically mentioned what period of the year this applies to.

In *The Goddess Test*, however, Walter specifically states that Kate has to spend (every) autumn and winter at Eden manor (Carter 65), starting with the autumn equinox, which equals the division of time referred to in Ovid (six months each). This specific mention of months, i.e. seasons, shows that the author evidently strays from the source material, and makes use of the interpretations that understand the myth as a basis for the seasonal cycle (e.g. Evslin 2005). Although Kate is not the Goddess of fertility, and the real goddess (Persephone) is permanently dead, it is not clear why nature presumably dies during her absence. A possible explanation for the specific mention of the months might be, that Henry views this as a tradition that his wife is by his side during the winter months.

Another important aspect, in this regard, is the ending of the myth. In Ovid (533-571) we encounter a happy Persephone.

> The aspect of her face and mind alters in a moment. Now the goddess's looks are glad that even Dis could see where sad, a moment ago. Just as the sun, hidden, before, by clouds of rain, wins through and leaves the clouds. (Ovid 533-571)

She is joyful to be finally reunited with her mother, and to be able to spend equal time with both her husband and her parent. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the myth concludes in a somewhat happy ending.

In contrast, Kate, even though she is offered complete freedom by Henry to leave Eden manor, refuses to stay away from him, and only after a considerable amount of persuasion from her mother, is willing to leave for the summer months. Unlike Persephone, who is happy with the arrangements, Kate is devastated.

In brief, while the division of time is the only way for Persephone to regain parts of her old life, for Kate, it seems, it is only a burden, as going back to her old life, even for a brief period of time, is not possible, as it does not exist (in that form) anymore.

4.1.1.2. Key figures

In general, it should be noted that throughout the novel only two gods are clearly identified by Kate, namely Hades and Demeter. Although the author provides a 'Guide of Gods' which provides the Greek names for the characters

in the novel, some hints in the story allow the reader to connect them to their mythological counterparts without referring to the guide.

The Council vs Theoi Olympioi

At the outset, it should be pointed out that the author made a few adjustments to some of the basic principles that govern Greek mythology. Besides establishing the notion that deities can indeed fade into oblivion (i.e. cease to exist), one of the most notable changes in the novel, is that the goddesses and gods are not related to each other. A reason for this could be that now the incest factor, which plays an important role in mythology, is eliminated. This is crucial, considering the book is written for an audience in the 21st century, where incest is (in most countries) illegal. However, the close familial relationships are important in the mythological canon. For example, it is a significant factor that Persephone is married to her uncle Hades, and not to a 'stranger'. Because he is her uncle, consequently a family member, he is considered a good fit by Zeus. This change is significant, as it makes, for example, Kate and Henry strangers to each other. The deities' relationship is explained by Ella as follows:

> They're Henry's family. His brothers and sister and nieces and nephews, though he and his brothers and sisters aren't actually related by blood. More like they adopted each other since they share the same creator and are the original six gods, but it's what they call themselves. (Carter 114)

Moreover, Henry points out the following to Kate:

> We call ourselves brothers and sisters, but in truth we are not. We have simply been together for so long that the words to describe the bond we have do not exist. Family is the only comparison we can draw, though it is a weak one. […] We all have the same creator, but we are not strictly related. (Carter 213)

Also, the number of the Olympians is increased in *GT,* from twelve to fourteen members. In general, the *Theoi Olympioi* consists of Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Demeter, Ares, Aphrodite, Hermes, Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Hephaestus, and Dionysus (cf. "The Twelve Olympians" *Theoi*). In the novel, Hades and Hestia are also considered Olympians. As Irene notes, "most people typically think there were only twelve […] [b]ut if [one] look[s] carefully throughout history, there are fourteen" (Carter 137).

Principally, the main gods that oversee various aspects of human life are the twelve previously mentioned ones. However, sometimes Hestia is also included among them. Hades, on the other hand, since he does not administer

the living, is not considered a 'real' Olympian, although often described as one; he rather functions as an associate. The *Theoi Olympioi* "demanded worship from all their subjects", consequently "[t]hose who failed to honor any one of the Twelve with due sacrifice and libation were duly punished" ("Pantheon" *Theoi*).

This version of the *Theoi Olympioi* also functions as the council that decides on Kate's possible immortality. Interestingly, the disagreement whether Hades is part of the Olympians, or not, is addressed by Henry. Kate assumes that he is also part of the council, and hence has the power to change the verdict. But Henry points out that he is only partially a member, as he "spend[s] most of the time separate from them. When they desire [his] input, or when it is a decision that directly affects [his] duties, [he] join[s] them" (Carter 212). However, as Henry emphasizes, "their decisions deal with the world of the living" (Carter 212), which is not part of his realm. Additionally, Henry's powers of granting immortality were revoked by the council, due to his bad judgments regarding Persephone (ibid 212).

At the top of the council is Walter who, as his counterpart in the myths, is the greatest of the Olympians and ruler over heavens. He is also portrayed as giving orders and ensuring that certain rules are followed (ibid 272). One of the similarities between the Zeus depicted in the novel, and the one from the mythological canon, regarding his position, is his power to grant immortality. Walter is the last one to vote on Kate's future, and also the one to proclaim the final verdict, placing the decision in his hands. Although his role in the novel is, compared to other characters, marginal, he is still regarded as the person in charge, and feared by the others, especially Kate who describes his look as intimidating to the point that she is scared for her life (ibid 273). Other than his interference at the end of the novel, and his brief appearance at Kate's house, Walter is not mentioned throughout the rest. Also his relationship to Kate, and respectively to Persephone, is not addressed here.

Another general change made to the *Theoi Olympioi* in the novel, is the alteration of their names. As Diana explains, the Olympians chose new names that reflect the time and place they live in. They are most often known by their Greek names, but not even those are their real ones since the gods "were created before names" (Carter 282). This change of names makes it easier for the author to hide the gods and their connections to each other, in plain sight. The focus shifts from the stories that the readers might have previously

encountered, to a fresh new version. In addition, as Henry argues, their new names also reflect the new surroundings they are encountered in. For instance, most of the names are ones that are known to the readers, and can be commonly found among people in English speaking countries, which is where the story is set. It connects these ancient characters from an era long past, to the world of young adults in the 21st century. The significance of that change in regard to some characters will be discussed further along this chapter.

Even though their names changed, the core characteristics of the gods and goddesses mostly stay the same, consequently making it possible to identify them without their Greek aliases, as the following discussion shows.

Diana (Demeter)

The relationship between Diana and Henry is much closer than that of their mythological counterparts, Demeter and Hades. Although Demeter and Hades are brother and sister, outside of the Persephone myth they do not share any notable connections. Moreover, unlike Zeus, Demeter does not encourage the union between her daughter and Hades, and does not see him as a perfect match for Persephone (cf. Metamorphoses 5.487-532).

This drastically changes in *GT*, already emphasizing the strong connection between Diana and Henry in the first sentence of the novel: "Diana stood in the doorway, his best friend, his confidante, his family in every way except by blood […]" (Carter 7).
Their powerful bond is further affirmed, as Diana is willing to sacrifice her daughter, in order to save Henry from fading into non-existence.

This is especially difficult to understand, considering the fact that in the novel many of the previous events depicted in the myth, e.g. Persephone's abduction, have occurred. Therefore, the author fails to clarify why these two characters suddenly become this close to each other, since obviously something must have happened to reconcile these two. It can only be assumed that Diana tries to correct the mistakes she made with Persephone, as she confesses this to Henry (ibid 10f). Besides, it might be possible that Diana and Henry bonded over the years, since they shared the person closest to them (daughter/wife).

The motives behind Diana's actions are not clear enough. The only thing that Diana reassures the reader of is the knowledge that the mistakes from the past should not be repeated, and that she will do anything to save Henry's life.

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However, by interfering in the future of her daughter Kate, creating an outcome she most likely not envisioned for herself, Diana repeats the same mistakes she and Zeus previously made with Persephone.

In regard to altering the Greek names, it should be pointed out that the change from Demeter to Diana is not completely feasible; in so far that Diana is the Roman name of the goddess Artemis (who in *GT* is identified as Ella). The only explanation the author offers for this is depicted in the following exchange between Kate and her mother:

> "What kind of name is Diana for a goddess, anyway?" […] "Ella was rather put out I took her Roman name, but she did not want it, and I've always been quite fond of it." (Carter 282)

On the whole, the character of the Demeter we encounter in the Homeric Hymn is considerably different than that of Diana in *The Goddess Test*. It shifted from having her daughter's best interest in mind, to aiding Henry, the captor of her first daughter.

Henry

The Lord of the Underworld we encounter in *GT* differs in many ways from the one in the Homeric Hymn, or the Greek canon in general.

Most changes can be attributed to the notion that this is a novel for an adolescent audience. Therefore the age gap between Kate and Henry, considering his immortal status, is significantly decreased.

Unlike Hades, Henry is not depicted as the cruel ruler of the dead, who does not hesitate to punish mortals, or even kidnap women. Henry is pictured as a "young and gorgeous" (ibid 64) god. His loneliness and the lack of expectations of a happy future characterize him as rather pessimistic (ibid 130). Similar to Hades from mythology, Henry's occupation as Lord of the Underworld entails certain duties, such as "overseeing decisions and making sure everything runs smoothly" (ibid 132). This is the only information Henry offers on his work, and the rest remains a mystery to the reader. Throughout the novel, Kate discovers that Henry can heal people (ibid 160f), that he is the only one who can find dead souls in the Underworld (195), and as Kate points out becomes a "cold shell" (ibid 197) when he fulfills his duties.

As previously pointed out, Henry is part of the council (i.e. the Olympians), which is the most obvious change to his role from the Greek myths to *GT*. However, his function as a council member is not entirely clear, since his rights to grant immortality were revoked, therefore, he is not able to decide on

Kate's possible immortality. In general, the lack of information on Henry reflects the neglect of Hades in mythology. Also, changing his name from Hades to Henry to adapt to his more modern surroundings still creates a certain recognition value as both names start with the letter "H".

Henry's relationship with Kate should also be briefly considered here. The situation we encounter in *The Goddess Test* is, at its core, similar to the one Hades and Persephone are confronted with in the Homeric Hymn: she is the victim, and he is her captor. In both scenarios, disregarding the nature of their abductions, the women are forced to stay in unfamiliar surroundings, kept away from their families, and faced with the fact that they have to spend the rest of their existence with their kidnapper. The mythological texts are ambiguous about the development of love, or any form of affection, between Persephone and Hades, unlike, for example, Evslin's interpretation, as previously pointed out, which clearly sees an emotional bond forming between the deities (2005: 27). This notion is, in a sense, transferred to the story in *GT*. Although the prospect of living with a stranger (and possibly marrying him) is at first appalling to Kate, she quickly adapts to her new surroundings. With the motivation she receives from her mother, Ava, and even the council, her opinion of Henry slowly starts to change. However, their relationship is primarily based on Kate placing Henry's needs before her own, and her not deeming herself worthy enough to be with Henry. She constantly claims that Henry is too good looking for her and she cannot keep up with that. Her shattered self-confidence is clearly demonstrated after she and Henry drink the aphrodisiac, and have sex for the first time. Kate believes that Henry's reaction, his apologies, and his immediate disappearance, resulted in him regretting the night before. Consequently, she blames herself for this, staying in bed all day and crying, and contemplating whether her declaration of love was too rushed (ibid 229). Even more disturbing is her statement that "it wasn't like [she] expected him to love [her] […]" (ibid 229). Nevertheless, this is exactly what her mother, and in parts Henry, expect from her: that she will learn to love him over time. In more drastic terms this could also be viewed as a form of Stockholm-Syndrome, since Kate truly sees herself as a prisoner (ibid 86), and ultimately Henry as her captor.

Apart from that, their relationship is further based on the notion that Kate is a gift to Henry (191), which is not opposed by Kate who similarly feels as the chosen one (147). This creates the idea that Kate is simply Henry's possession,

and not a human being, but a possibility for him to prolong his existence. Certain notions of their relationship especially those of power relations, agency, and arranged marriage, are further discussed in more detail in chapter 4.1.2.

Nevertheless, keeping these arguments in mind, the possibility that over the course of the novel, and the time they spend together, Henry develops genuine feelings for Kate, or vice versa, is still valid. Their interactions towards the end of *GT*, for instance when they bid goodbye to each other (chapter 21), show that they are not only connected through their deal, but also share a connection on an emotional level. The ambiguity of Persephone and Hades' relationship displayed in mythology allows for various interpretations of it, some emphasizing a romantic connection, while others disregard this possibility. *The Goddess Test*, similar to Evslin's rendition, fills the gaps encountered in the Homeric Hymn with these ideas of mutual affection.

James the successor

One of the characters from the Persephone myth that received a considerable promotion is James (Hermes). In the Hymn, for example, Hermes only functions as a messenger travelling to the Underworld to relay his news from Zeus, possibly contributing to the reunion between Persephone and Demeter. In fact, Hermes is one of the only gods who can travel to the Underworld and leave it again, thus he connects the world of the living with the world of the dead. In this role he also accompanies the souls of the dead on their journey down to Hades. Moreover, he also delivers dreams that Zeus sends to the humans (Leadbetter 2006).

To some extent, the roles James encompasses in *GT* are similar to the ones Hermes is identified with in mythology. For example, his close encounters with the dead souls, and in general with death are depicted in the novel through the compassion he shows towards Diana when she is in the coma. He promises Kate to care for her, while she is gone. It could be argued that, in a way, James offers Kate to accompany her mother on her journey to the Underworld, by staying at her side. Also Hermes' task to bring dreams to the mortals is shown through his ability to invade Kate's dreams (173).

Nevertheless, his character is significantly upgraded in this retelling, as he becomes the successor to the throne of the Underworld, replacing Henry if he fails to find a wife in the given amount of time. Apart from that, his special

status among the gods, as the only one who knows the realm of the dead as well as Henry, is also highlighted in the novel, making him the ideal candidate.

James is one of the four deities, besides Ava, Dylan, and Diana, who Kate encounters outside of the manor, namely at Eden High School. He is introduced as a fellow student and quickly becomes friends with Kate. When he learns of Henry's identity, and his demands for saving Ava's life, namely to read the Persephone myth, James, together with Ava, offers his help with this task. Together they decipher the myth and its possible meaning for Kate's future. In that process two sides are formed: on one side Ava tries to argue that Hades' only reason to abduct Persephone, was his loneliness. The unwillingness of Persephone is also questionable. Thus one should not immediately conclude that he is the villain. James, one the other side, without apparent reason, argues against Hades, saying that he was a kidnapper, and most likely will do the same to Kate. In hindsight, the motives for James opposition are clear, as he is the possible successor to Henry's throne. The dispute between James and Ava also reflects the ongoing argument among scholars and readers, on the interpretation of the myth, specifically Hades' motives, whether he acted out of love as alluded to in Ovid, or simply to procure a wife.

The close relationship between James and Kate that develops, especially in the first few chapters of the novel, is unlike the connection Hermes and Persephone share in the Hymn (or in Ovid). In the myth, he is simply reuniting Persephone with her mother by taking her from the Underworld back to earth. Other than that there is no interaction between these two characters.

Interestingly, James' role as Hades' herald is also maintained in *GT*. For instance, he is the one to bring Kate to Eden Manor, one of the gates to the Underworld, when she decides to confront Henry for the first time (chapter 6). James is also the one to pick her up after her time at the manor ended, and bring her back to the 'mortal' world (288). Thus, he functions as a link between the land of the living and the land of the dead, which is further emphasized by his presence at Eden High School. To be specific, James, similar to Ava, acts as an anchor, tying Kate to her previous (mortal) life.

To some extent, he is also the one symbolically reuniting mother and daughter in the novel, by bringing Kate to the manor. However, their first 'physical' reunion is initiated by Henry, by allowing Diana and Kate to meet in her dreams.

Ava – companion to the future Queen

Ava is another goddess that Kate meets outside of the manor. Although it is not apparent in the beginning, they both become close friends towards the end of the novel. Later when Kate settles in with Henry, the two girls are reunited once again, as she is a dead soul who is allowed to stay at Eden manor as long as Kate wants (104). This is the explanation offered to Kate.

Ava can be regarded as an amalgamation of Aphrodite and Hecate. On one hand, her behavior, her physical attraction, and her abilities of seduction, closely resemble that of Aphrodite. On the other hand, her link to Kate, and in the beginning to James, hints at her role as companion to the Queen of the Underworld (Hecate).

In brief, Hecate, after assisting with the reunion of Demeter and Persephone, is chosen by the former to keep her daughter company while spending time with Hades (Hymn 440). She is part of the *Theoi Khthonioi* – the gods of the underworld - and some myths suggest that Hecate was the consort of Hermes, who through his work as a messenger is also regarded as a Chtonian God (cf. "Hekate" *Theoi*). Furthermore, not only Hecate and Hermes are considered consorts, but also Aphrodite has a brief love affair with Hermes.

Even though there is no physical or romantic connection between Ava and James in the novel, they can still be considered as Kate's closest friends, and though their methods differ, they both tend to Kate's well-being.

A possible explanation for choosing Aphrodite as a replacement for Hecate might also be her place in the council, i.e. the *Theoi Olympioi*. Moreover, the choice is controversial in so far, as the relationship between Aphrodite and Persephone in the Greek canon is problematic, to say the least (e.g. their dispute over Adonis).

However, Ava also shows clear signs of character traits associated with Aphrodite. As goddess of love and seduction, she is known to be involved in many tragic love affairs (e.g. Trojan War, Adonis). This is also displayed in *GT*, as Ava is often shown engaging in affairs with the male residents of Eden manor (e.g. Theo, Xander).

Calliope - Hera

Another goddess whose name change is rather revealing is Calliope, or Hera. Originally Hera is known as Zeus' wife, and the daughter of Rhea and Cronus. Her marriage, however, is not mentioned in the novel, nor is it alluded

to that she and Zeus had/have an intimate connection. Also, since the deities in *GT* share no familial connection, none of Zeus and Hera's children (Ares/Dylan, Hephaestus/Nicholas – actually born fatherless) are identified as such. Hera is known to be jealous of her husband, especially due to his many affairs and escapades (e.g. Aphrodite, Calliope, Elektra). Their marriage, it seems, is based rather on betrayal, oppression, and hurt, than on love and devotion. None of these features are represented in *GT*. What is left of their relationship is Hera's jealousy, but not of Zeus and his consorts, but of Henry. Throughout mythology there is no story that alludes to a romantic relationship between Hera and Hades, not even hints at hidden feelings. Therefore, similar to the relationship between Diana and Henry, Hera's attitude undergoes an arguably distinct change, in order for her to exhibit such harsh jealousy against the female candidates, i.e. possible queens. It might be the case that Hera is not so much jealous of the women, but of the position at Henry's side, as the Queen of the Underworld. After all, Hera is only left with a position on the council, and her role as queen of the Olympians was most likely revoked.

Hera is also known to punish Zeus' mistresses (and their children), most often with "implacable fury" (Lindemans 2001), for example punishing Heracles with the two serpents, or driving Dionysus' parents insane. This is also exemplified in the novel. Calliope's jealousy pushes her to take on extreme measures regarding the punishment of Henry's future wives: she murdered all of the eleven girls prior to Kate. Even though it proves difficult to kill Kate, due to the heavy protection she is placed under, Calliope still finds opportunities to interfere in Kate and Henry's relationship. Her first attempt is to sabotage one of the tests, namely that for Lust. Ultimately, she tries to kill Kate by drowning her in the river, the same way Ava died in the first place. Surprisingly nobody realizes it was Calliope who murdered the girls, until late in the storyline.

In the case of Calliope, the name change is pivotal because it connects Hera, who is otherwise not involved in it, with the myth of Persephone. For example, in Ovid's version the myth is retold/sung by the muse Calliope. Moreover, Calliope is also the judge, appointed by Zeus, who settles the matter between Persephone and Aphrodite in their fight over Adonis (cf. Pseudo-Hyginus, Astronomica 2. 7). Similar to Ava's case, the author found a way to incorporate Hera into the main events of the Persephone myth, simply by changing her name, therefore establishing a form of relevance.

A question that remains unanswered is why the connection between Zeus and Hera is disregarded in this novel, especially since the other deities must know of her feuds with Zeus.

In any case, the jealousy and the cruel manners of punishment are both character traits that are manifested in Calliope, i.e. the 'new' Hera.

Other deities

Some hints throughout the novel, regarding various, arguably minor, characters in *The Goddess Test,* allow the reader to connect them to their alter egos in the mythology. For example, Irene, who in her mortal disguise posed as the receptionist of Eden High School, is known as Athena, who is, inter alia, the goddess of wisdom, the arts, and justice (cf. Tuccinardi 1999, "Athena" *Theoi*). Irene's fondness of knowledge and wisdom, for instance, is illustrated through her role as Kate's tutor (109, 137). Philip's connection to Poseidon, who is not only the ruler of the sea, but also god of horses, is exemplified in the novel through his similar passion for horses (138).

4.1.1.3. Further intertextual references

Besides the hitherto discussed intertextual references, mainly to works of the Greek mythological canon, other references, not necessarily to the Greek cosmology, can be detected. These are, for example, mystical numbers represented in *GT*, the Seven Deadly Sins are used as testing methods, and different manifestations of paradise are mentioned by Henry (84).

Mystical numbers

The number twelve has always played a crucial part in Greek mythology, considering, for example, The Twelve Olympians and twelve Titans, or the Twelve Labors of Heracles. It also stands for perfection and completion, i.e. 3 (number of deities) multiplied by 4 (number of man), harmony, power, and justice (e.g. the engraving of the Roman law in twelve tablets) (De Vries 1976: 478). In *GT,* Kate is the twelfth girl who tries to pass the seven tests, and she is also the last option Henry has before his time runs out. Since the number has a particular connection to Greek mythology, it can be argued that it is not carelessly referred to. Kate's duty as the twelfth girl is to complete the cycle (i.e. the seven tests). Moreover, the characteristics regarding the number, mentioned earlier, can be seen as crucial in connection with the duties of a deity. To be specific, Kate should bring harmony, and act with justice and temperance, judging the dead souls that come to the Underworld.

The Seven Deadly Sins

Although the Seven Deadly Sins are taken from a different cosmology, namely of Christianity, they still hold a crucial position in the novel. In general, the Seven Deadly Sins (i.e. cardinal sins), were first specified by Pope Gregory I., and later edited by Thomas Aquinas, comprising of the following: vainglory or pride, greed or covetousness, lust or inordinate or illicit sexual desire, envy, gluttony, wrath or anger, and sloth. At a later point, Dante Alighieri, through the use of the sins in his *Divine Comedy,* wholly implemented the cardinal sins into the Roman Catholic tradition. The reason they are referred to as deadly is not because committing them will end in death, but because they foster further unethical behavior (cf. "The Divine Comedy" *Encyclopedia Britannica*).

The Seven Deadly Sins are the subjects of the seven tests Kate has to pass. For example, to pass her test on Sloth, Kate has to study Greek mythology and pass a written exam. It is however unclear why the author chose a concept from a different cosmology as a basis for the tests. Interestingly, the Greek gods are known to violate some of the cardinal sins. Zeus, for instance, is a prime example of a lustful and angry deity. Interestingly, even the characters in the novel clearly violate the virtues, as Calliope, for example, clearly shows signs of envy, greed, and wrath. Consequently, it is not feasible why someone is granted immortality on this basis, since at first the deities should abide by those rules, but later, as depicted in many Greek myths, break them.

The clearest sign that this testing method is problematic is the fact that even though Kate fails one of the tests, that for Lust, she is still granted immortality, making the whole testing process irrelevant. Hence, if one of the previous girls had survived Calliope's attacks, she would not even need to pass all of them.

4.1.1.4. Paratext

A final concept concerning intertextuality that should be discussed is the content and function of the paratextual elements in the novel. The focus will be placed on peritextual elements, such as title, front and back cover text, and the "Guide of Gods" inside the book. The question, whether the reader can still comprehend the story without these references, will also be addressed.

In brief, the title of the novel already establishes the notion that the storyline focuses on some form of deities. This is further strengthened and

extended through the blurb by Cassandra Clare, an established YA author, which reads as follows: "A fresh take on the Greek myths adds sparkle to this romantic fable".

This creates a clear link to the pretexts by specifically mentioning the Greek myths. This method of using reviews by critics (or authors) that constituted epitexts for the first edition, as a peritextual feature for the subsequent publication, is an idea previously discussed in the theory chapter.

Furthermore, the summary of the story on the back of the cover also mentions Hades and his role as a god of the Underworld.

As previously argued, paratextual features should facilitate to the reader's recognition of a text's purpose, essentially offer ideas on how to read it. Considering this in connection with *The Goddess Test,* one of its purposes might be that it functions simply as a retelling of a myth, or a continuation of a mythological story. Nevertheless, it provides the reader with a basic notion what to expect from the novel.

Finally, the "Guide of Gods" published at the end of the novel, most likely an autographic element, presents an overview of the fourteen deities and their new names featured in the novel. This helps readers who could not connect each god or goddess to their 'alter ego' solely through the information provided in the story. Besides, it provides the reader with another place to look for references to the pretext.

4.1.2. Analysis based on concepts of Gender theory

Apart from the hitherto discussed intertextual links between the Persephone myth and *The Goddess Test,* it is also crucial to consider certain aspects of gender theory presented in the literature review. This chapter is divided into three main points of interest. First, the issue of agency will be examined, focusing on the main female character. Second, the previously touched upon topic of metanarratives will be brought into connection with the primary literature, and the extent of its integration into the novel will be considered. Third, the analysis will show, whether gender roles or stereotypical behavior of certain protagonists can be found in the narrative.

4.1.2.1. Agency

In a first step, the agency displayed through the main protagonist Kate will be regarded in detail. More specifically, her freedom of choice concerning her actions, her passivity in certain situations, and her willingness to accept the

deal with Henry, are of special interest. In a second step, Kate's behavior will be compared to Persephone's demonstration of agency in the myth.

Freedom of choice and willingness

There is one general consensus among scholarly conducted analyses of the Persephone myth, namely that the goddess is unwillingly taken to the Underworld (cf. Doherty 2003, Dobson 1992). This is depicted, for example, in the Homeric Hymn (30), or in Ovid. Persephone is not able to make an active choice, and is confined to the realm of the dead without her consent. Moreover, her unwillingness is expressed many times in the Homeric Hymn, not only by others (e.g. Demeter, Helios,) but also by Persephone herself (e.g. Hymn 430). The following discussion will consider whether Kate is facing a similar situation, especially regarding the freedom and nature of her choices, and ultimately her willingness to leave her old life behind and stay at Eden manor. In the last step, both Persephone's and Kate's situations will be compared and contrasted to each other, taking into consideration the story of Persephone retold by characters in the novel.

First, Kate's range of freedom, her active participation and choice regarding the deal and her stay with Henry should be considered. Essentially, Kate's fate is already sealed before the main action of the novel even begins. This occurs in the prologue, where Diana promises Henry to save him no matter the cost, resulting in the sacrifice of her unborn child, ultimately paving the child's future. In any case, Diana's actions in the prologue establish the notion that Kate is merely a means to an end, guaranteeing Henry's survival. Although at the end of the novel, Diana assures Kate that she always had a choice (281), was always in control of her life, and could always choose against saving her mother (or Ava) by dismissing Henry's offer, this is highly questionable. Diana also argues that it was not possible for her to inform her daughter about Henry's fate, and the role she plays in it because this would have given her an unfair advantage. Accordingly, she decides to spin a web of lies to keep her on track. The most crucial part in Diana's deception is her adoption of a mortal body, which consequently makes her weak and vulnerable. This vulnerability becomes an advantage in Diana's plan, when she is diagnosed with cancer. Even though Diana assures Kate she did not know she would become sick, it is the perfect outcome of her plan, ultimately providing enough emotional leverage against Kate. The question also remains what other form of leverage Diana

would have had, if her illness was merely an accident and not intended. Diana does not disclose on other possibilities.

Kate only regards her mother as a mortal woman facing death. Under these false pretenses she is offered a deal, impossible to dismiss. Essentially, her mother's illness isolates Kate in a way that deprives her of social contact outside her home. Kate is never able to form lasting friendships because she feels obliged to tend to her mother (ch. 1/2).

Therefore, when she arrives at Eden, and begins forming friendships, first with James, and later on with Ava, she is presented with a freedom she apparently did not have before. As her mother in the end points out, Kate had a choice between a life with or without her. However, it is important to note that Eden is a fictional town that ceases to exist without Kate's presence there. All of the residents are deities, who under regular circumstances reside at Eden manor. Hence, it is also part of the deception, and not a place Kate could choose to start her real life in.

From the moment her mother decided her future, Kate is pushed in that direction, not only by the lies she tells her, but also by the constant manipulation she is placed under through her new friends. While Ava tries to urge her to accept the deal, James is doing everything in his power preventing it. Ava's arguments are supported by the fact that Kate feels guilty and responsible for the accident that ultimately lead to Ava's death. In the end she accepts the deal to save her friend. James, as the successor to the throne, tries to prevent Kate from accepting, ultimately furthering his own agenda. Kate is once again primarily making decisions based on others' welfare.

Besides, Kate quickly realizes that her own choices will only lead to destruction. This is exemplified by Ava's 'second' death that happens because Kate chooses to dismiss Henry's offer.

Obviously, Kate's choice to save her friend is not a real one, and although it might be argued that these are the actions of a true heroine, by putting the lives of others before her own, they should not be wholly regarded as such. Her choice to save Ava is merely part of another lie to ensure Kate does what the others, especially her mother and Henry, have intended for her to do. As Ava is immortal and cannot die wholly, only her mortal shell can fade, thus there is never a need to save her.

Ultimately, all these factors are incorporated into Kate's consideration and her final acceptance of the agreement. When she arrives at Eden manor Kate is ready to hand her life over, as the following passage demonstrates.

> But now I had a chance to trade what was left of my shell of a life for someone who would make the most of it. Ava's life had barely begun. All the best parts of mine were already behind. (Carter 75)

She believes that the life of her friend Ava is worth more than her own. As the excerpt shows, she considers a life without her mother to be equally worthless.

> My mother wanted me to go out and find happiness, but I couldn't, not without her. At least this way what was left of me wouldn't go to waste. (75)

She sacrifices what is left of her, so that someone else can enjoy their happy ending. Under 'normal' circumstances Kate's actions, as pointed out previously in regard to Ava, could be considered heroic. However, as her reasoning clearly demonstrates, she is not fully aware of the truth, lacing her actions with a suicidal undertone.

In brief, Diana's manipulation, and encouragement of Kate starts the day before she falls into a coma, when she asks Kate to promise her to "[f]ind someone who'll be good to [her] and never let him go [...]" (Carter 58). This continues through their nightly dream visits, where Diana inquires about Kate's time at the manor and especially about her relationship with Henry. For example, when Kate asks her mother how she managed to appear in her dream ("Did Henry bring you here?"), her mother simply answers "He's lovely, isn't he?" (Carter 88). More encouragement comes when Diana realizes Kate develops feelings towards Henry: "I'm glad you like him. He could be good for you, and you shouldn't be alone" (Carter 135).

The promise Kate makes to her mother regarding her happiness, and the general thought of honoring her, is probably what pushes her to make many of her decisions, such as going to Eden manor, or completing the tests. The moment she accepts Henry's deal she essentially gives up her freedom. Not only in the sense that she cannot leave the premises, but also, for example, regarding her restricted choice of wardrobe (92), what kind of food she eats, and whether she is even allowed to eat (e.g. Calliope is her food tester 95). In addition, as one of the criteria to pass the tests, she is forced by the council to spend time with Henry (128).

In some rare moments, however, Kate shows that she is not entirely satisfied with the situation, and tries to regain control over her life. For example, before accepting Henry's agreement, she makes it clear to James and Ava that she will not leave her life for him (53). Moreover, after the ball she clarifies that eating the pomegranate seeds does not mean that Henry receives control over her. She also demands full disclosure from Henry, once she becomes his wife, otherwise she will not pass the tests (165).

Besides, she refuses to accept the fact that Henry has already given up any hope of finding a wife, as this would mean that not only will he die, but also Kate's time with her mother would be cut short, which is not something she allows Henry to take away from her (172). When Henry cancels the Christmas dinner and orders Kate to stay in her room, she has her own demands, and is only willing to follow the orders if these are met (183). The only time Kate is actively allowed to decide over a situation is when she bans Ava from her life, forbids her to have any romantic relationships in the manor, and does not allow contact between her an Ella, which Henry acknowledges as punishment for Xander's death (202ff).

When Kate is finally overcome with the urge to resist Henry's will and forcefully goes against it, she is barely able to articulate her thoughts. Finally, she realizes that any threats she would make are empty. An example for this in the novel occurs when Kate feels helpless because Henry is avoiding her after the confrontation between her and James in Persephone's bedroom: "[…] either he shaped up or I would walk. Problem was, it was an empty threat and he would know it" (171).

She believes that every ounce of power is taken from her, and that she is not taken as a serious threat to anyone. But the most problematic aspect is that she herself believes this, and is afraid of the possible consequences that could occur if Henry takes her up on her declaration (170). Henry's reassurances, for example by pointing out to Kate that "[t]his is your choice. If at any time I ask too much of you, then you may leave" (129), can only be considered as half true. The moment Kate leaves she will lose her friends, and her only remaining family. The leverage Henry and Diana hold over her is hence very powerful.

Considering her freedom of choice it can be concluded that the choices Kate makes are already made for her, in a sense that she is pushed to do certain things, blackmailed, and put under pressure. She is kept in a prison

constructed of lies and oppression from everyone around her. In that case her reasons to go against her 'captors' are not outbalancing the need to be compliant because she cannot see clearly.

Ultimately, the question of agency is difficult to answer by only considering the freedom of choice Kate is left with, as the previous discussion shows. In that case, Chris Baker's (2008) understanding of agency should be taken into account here. This views the concept as "the enactment of X rather than Y as a course of action" (ibid 182). Considering this, a few examples of Kate's choices and actions should be regarded in more detail.

For instance, while Kate realizes that Henry is manipulating her and blames him for this, she still finds no possibility to go against his will. All the resistance occurs in her thoughts but is not transferred to her actions. In fact, she does the opposite, namely agreeing with Henry on his views (ibid 73-74). Also, instead of investigating the incident between Theo, Xander, and Ava, and listening to her friends reasoning, she immediately decides to ban Ava from her life (ibid ch. 14). She makes a similar mistake by trusting Calliope, which consequently resulted in Kate's death. These examples show that rather than listening to her own instincts, forming female bonds (with Ava, Ella, etc.), or refusing to function as a puppet she opts for the opposite, hence anytime Kate decides to "enact X rather than Y" it benefits her oppressors.

The question whether Kate is the one to make decisions regarding her own life, is problematic. On one hand, she reassures bystanders many times that it is her choice to take the tests and to become Henry's wife (e.g. 160), on the other hand it is debatable how much the emotional leverage, such as Diana's life, Henry's existence, and Ava's accident, interferes with that. It should also be mentioned that Kate has the power to decide, but when she does it is never to further her own agenda, or listen to her own needs.

Would the real Persephone please stand up?

As previously mentioned, Persephone (in the Hymn) is taken against her will by Hades, screaming and protesting in the process (e.g. Hymn 30, 74, 344, 430). It is neither her decision to become Hades' wife, nor hers to stay in the Underworld for a longer period of time. This is also demonstrated in Ovid's version, and in many other interpretations of the myth discussed in the previous chapters (e.g. Graves 2011, Evslin 2005, Grimal 1996). Persephone's story retold in *GT*, mainly by Henry, and in parts also by James, is in principle similar

to the myth. The version of the myth that James retells Kate in the cafeteria, before she makes her decision, closely resembles the Homeric Hymn, only adding the origin of the seasons to it (Carter 52). The first time Henry mentions Persephone, and her role in his life, occurs shortly after Kate arrives at Eden manor (ibid 97). At that point Kate is still in denial, not only about the fact that she is surrounded by Greek deities, but also about the knowledge that the myths she previously believed are only fiction, turn out to be grounded in reality. In the *GT* version, Persephone fell in love with a mortal, the second book confirms that the mortal is Adonis, and after his death made the decision to join him. Furthermore, Henry points out that "[…] [Persephone] chose to die rather than to stay with [him] […] she simply loved [Adonis] more" (ibid 99). Interestingly, Persephone's lack of choice is further emphasized by Henry who points out that she never had the possibility to oppose the decisions made in her name, and releasing her, i.e. letting her die, was his ultimate gift (ibid 100). This view is problematic, as it presents Henry as a kind of savior, since he ended her suffering by releasing her. However, his need for a consort, and her parents wish were ultimately what drove Persephone to this decision.

Consequently, as a last resort to break out of her prisonlike life, Persephone decided on her own, and realized that only death will set her free. Therefore, it can be argued that the Persephone from the novel is more active towards catering to her own needs, than the one from the canon of mythology, and consequently more than Kate because 'novel Persephone' sacrificed her own life to be free and happy. This is something Kate never dares to do, as her sacrifices are mainly made to please others (e.g. Ava, her mother, Henry). Essentially, the main premise of Henry's search for a future wife is that she should willingly agree to spend time with him and rule by his side, in order to avoid repeating what happened with Persephone. As illustrated, Kate's willingness is not as clear cut as it seems. Although there is no physical struggle, unlike in the Homeric Hymn, Kate acknowledges the fact that she is not completely willingly going with Henry (chapter 6).

In any case, both women are forced into situations they did not choose, and are left to find a way to cope with them. While Kate opts to stay as compliant as she can, *GT* Persephone realizes that this is not the life she wants to continue living.

4.1.2.2. Of metanarratives and gods

This subchapter focuses on analyzing the gender systems of the Greek society, and, whether these are present in *GT*. It also incorporates a discussion of power relations, and arranged marriages. Additionally, stereotypical behavior of the protagonists according to their gender will be of interest here.

Gender systems and patriarchal hierarchy

As previously pointed out, the Homeric Hymn to Demeter is based on a society (Greece 5 BC) that is comprised of a fundamentally patriarchal structure (e.g. Doherty 2003: 10). Dobson (1992) notes that it is, essentially, a story of patriarchal domination.

> There is no question that the Hymn offers evidence for a violent patriarchal takeover which has reverberations on relationships between women. (Dobson 1992: 49)

These patriarchal structures are, for example, manifested in the way the male gods behave towards the female goddesses. The ruler over Olympus and the head of the *Theoi Olympioi* is Zeus, who, as previous discussions illustrated, is highly demanding and relentless towards women. The Hymn clearly shows that demands from male deities have to be fulfilled. For example, the sole desire that something, more precisely someone, is missing from his life, is reason enough for Hades to act upon this feeling, and take what he needs. Neither Demeter nor Persephone is asked for her opinion. Not surprisingly, the other gods are not opposing Hades' methods, and he is supported by his brother Zeus, and even Helios. Additionally, as Dobson further argues, women are placed in "a position of yielding and being dominated" (Dobson 1992: 49). Although women are given the chance to protest the decisions made in their names, demonstrated by Demeter withholding the crops and refusing to return to Olympus, in the end they accept their fate which is chosen and decided upon by men (cf. Doherty 2003: ch. 1). The question, whether this metanarrative of a patriarchal society is continued in *The Goddess Test*, is the main topic of this chapter. First the role of women, and consequently that of men in regard to power and authority should be considered, and the characters in charge should be identified. In this process the hierarchy and structure of the novel will be compared to that of the Hymn, highlighting possible shifts in power from one group to the other. The issue of arranged marriages, especially in regard to female power and resistance, concludes this discussion.

Distribution of power among the protagonists: who is in charge?

The portrayal of female characters compared to their male counterparts, regarding the position of authority they hold, and the overall power they are granted, is significantly different. To be specific, the majority of female deities' (including Kate's) main storylines in the novel are oriented towards catering to the men. For example, even though, as will be demonstrated in more detail, Diana can be regarded as a strong and authoritative figure, her primary agenda is to assist Henry in his quest. Moreover, Calliope and Ella, for instance, are handmaidens appointed by Henry, essentially to attend to his needs, in this case to look after Kate. In addition, the goddesses are placed in positions that emphasize their lack of power. For example, Irene (Athena), who is originally not only associated with wisdom and knowledge, but also with war and justice (Tuccinardi 1999), is reduced to being Kate's tutor, and her influence is even more diminished by giving her the mortal disguise of a school secretary. Also Sofia's main duty is to nurse others (e.g. Diana in the mortal world). Ava, for example, has no distinct role in the novel, except being Kate's companion. It is further defining that most of the emphasis regarding Ava's character is placed on her love life. The only effective power women are granted is a place on the council, which gives them enough responsibilities to decide over Kate's possible immortality.

One thing that becomes clear is that the characters in charge, the ones that yield the most authority, are men. First, Walter, who is the head of the council and the one, whose opinion, ultimately, decides the fate of the other protagonists. Second, Henry, who is at the center of the story, and as the Ruler of the Underworld, has the power to command anyone living in his home (Eden manor). Third, James, who as the successor to the throne, holds equal authority, since he is deemed worthy of Henry's position. This shows that three of the most powerful and authoritative roles in the novel are assigned to men.

Nevertheless, there is one incident where, to some extent, power and authority shifts from a god in the mythological texts to a goddess in *GT*, namely from Zeus to Diana. In the Persephone myth Zeus gives Hades the permission to take his daughter away, and is ultimately responsible for arranging their marriage. In *The Goddess Test*, however, this power is granted to Diana, who takes on the role of matchmaker. Essentially, it is through her persuasion that Henry is even considering the option of accepting Kate as his possible consort.

The Persephone myth essentially centers on the two female goddesses Demeter and Persephone, their struggle to reunite with each other, Demeter's grief that manifests in this process, and chiefly the passive resistance of women, used as a tool to go against the gods wishes. The story in *The Goddess Test* is, at its core, about saving a god from extinction, mainly through the female goddesses assistance that results in sacrificing not only their lives, e.g. Diana dying in her mortal form, Kate giving up her own life, but, to some degree, also their own happiness. This constitutes a shift from a female centered plot, that is used as a basis to celebrate the goddesses (e.g. Eleusian mysteries), to a focus on 'male agendas'.

"I now pronounce you husband and (unwilling) wife..."

As discussed in chapter 2.3.2., one characteristic of the gender system prevailing in the Greek society depicted in the Homeric Hymn, is the arrangement of marriage of the daughters (cf. Doherty 2003: 24ff).

It was already hinted at that Kate's choice in her future, especially her husband, is at best very limited. Here Diana functions as a matchmaker, and the situation is similar to Persephone's marriage, which is primarily arranged by her father. Although marriage is initially not part of the deal Kate and Henry agree on (Cabot 66), it is the final outcome of their relationship. Diana initiated their relationship by bringing Kate back to Eden, thus putting her directly into Henry's way. Besides, her positive opinion on the development of their relationship is mentioned on many occasions in the novel (e.g. 88, 135).

Not only the aspect of an arranged relationship should be considered, but also the fact that Kate's role as Queen of the Underworld can only be fulfilled if she is married. On one hand, it is feasible for the author to add this point, as it connects Kate's and Persephone's stories even more. On the other hand, there is no rule that states they have to be married in order for Kate to pass the tests and fulfill her role. Since the issue of teenage marriage, which this should be classified as, is a prominent topic in recent young adult fiction (cf. *Twilight*), it can be argued that *The Goddess Test* is only furthering similar notions on women constituting functioning members of society only if they are married. On the whole, this should be regarded as highly problematic because one of the main characteristics of the patriarchal metanarrative from the Persephone myth is taken up, and in a similar way used in a retelling from the 21st century, in a society that arguably combats these archaic images of women (and marriage).

4.1.2.3. Gender roles and stereotypical representations

Some of the prevailing gender stereotypes found in *The Goddess Test* are the opposing views on strength regarding women and men. While women are portrayed as physically weak and unable to fend for themselves, men are viewed as the opposite. This also establishes the notion that women need to be placed under the protection of men.

An interesting argument according to Doherty is that the synchronic view of gender systems also brings internal contradictions to light, such as "men are portrayed as the protectors of women, yet they capture the wives and daughters of other men as slaves or concubines" (Doherty 2003: 35), specifically in regard to the Homeric Hymns. This notion is also conveyed to some extent in *GT*, as for example Henry feels obliged to protect Kate from anyone trying to hurt her, but at the same time, he initially is the reason Kate feels like a prisoner (ibid 86).

Outside of Eden manor, however, women are not always in need of male protection, more accurately someone to provide financial income, as Kate and her mother prove.

> "He's never been in the picture. I don't know where he is, and I don't care. We've always done fine without him." (ibid 238) […] My mother and I were a team. We didn't need anyone else. (ibid 239)

The previous quotes show that Diana and her daughter could fend for themselves, and were not in need of any male assistance.

The division of work in Eden manor is also highly suggestive of prevalent stereotypes. For instance, while men, e.g. Henry, Theo, are tasked with strategic work, women are confined to work that revolves around the household and kitchen, like Ella and Calliope who are housemaids.

In addition, men are primarily presented as the ones making decisions, like Henry and Walter, who are both rulers kingdoms, and not only decide on who is worthy of immortality (Walter), but also decide over the fate of deceased souls (Henry). The female characters who are allowed to make decisions are either assigned to do so by men, or their decisions are benefiting the male deities. Kate, for example, is given the opportunity to decide over Ava's punishment, and Diana decides on Kate's future in Henry's favor.

A problematic portrayal regarding female stereotypes is the juxtaposition of sexually open vs. chaste, clearly exemplified through Ava and Kate. Here the problem arises when the first is bullied and punished for her openness. This punishment occurs various times throughout the novel, mainly by Ella, who

constantly comments on Ava's relationships, and ultimately by Kate, who banishes Ava from her life predominantly because of her openness, as the following quote shows.

> Frankly, if all you're going to do is waste your time sleeping with every guy in the manor and acting like the world revolves around you, then […] [y]ou're useless here. (Cabot 201)

Ava is not only requested to stay away from Kate but also to leave "any other man in this place" alone (ibid 202). Consequently, the notion is established that being sexually active as a woman is something to be ashamed of, as Kate clearly feels that way (ibid 202).

4.2. "Check yourself before you wreck yourself": Abandon by Meg Cabot

The analysis of *Abandon* by Meg Cabot (2011) is similarly structured as the discussion of *The Goddess Test*. The main focus of this section is to investigate and answer the research questions regarding the intertextual character of the novel, also focusing on concepts of gender theory. *Abandon* is, as the aforementioned novel, the first book in a trilogy, published in 2011.

The novel belongs to the genre of fantasy literature and can also be considered as paranormal/supernatural romance. This retelling of the Persephone myth is a more modern version, and is only loosely based on the plot of the myth. Therefore, the key aspects and key roles discussed in connection with *The Goddess Test* are expected to vary to a considerable extent in this novel. The story is told from Pierce's point of view, hence making it a first person narrative (I-as-protagonist).

In general, the story is compared to the canon of Greek mythology, not only the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, since the plot is only loosely based on the aforementioned.

4.2.1. Intertextual aspects

Since *Abandon* is a more modern reiteration of the Persephone and Hades myth, and unlike *The Goddess Test* does not feature the actual gods and goddesses from mythology, a direct resemblance of neither Ovid's nor the Homeric Hymn's version can be noticed. Even though the storyline, at first, is different from that of the myth, there are still significant examples/references that provide links to the intertext(s).

For example, the author's choice of Dante's *Inferno* as epigraph, which itself is based on Ovid's writings (see chapter 4.2.1.5.) provides a link to the

Roman interpretations. Moreover, some of the character names used in the novel are taken from the Latin versions of the myth, such as the name of John's horse – Alastor. None of the Greek stories name the four horses Hades rides, while abducting Persephone. On the other hand, some more obvious connections to the Greek tales are the choice of names for the main characters. In the Homeric Hymn the key figures are Demeter, Persephone, Hades, and Zeus. In *Abandon*, even though the names of the main characters are altered, they still show an important parallel, namely their first letters. While Persephone, Demeter, and Zeus are transformed into Pierce, Deborah, and Zack, Hades is changed to John Hayden, which shows a resemblance between his last name and the original.

In general, the main correlation between the mythological texts and the novel is the premise of it: a girl is taken to the Underworld against her will, primarily referring to Pierce's second visit. In the course of this analysis, this main parallel and other possible links between the text and the Persephone myth will be discussed. Also understanding possible differences between a retelling in a more modern setting, and a story like *The Goddess Test* which is closer to the original, should provide vital information towards answering the initially posed research questions. The possibility of Dante's *Inferno* functioning as an intertext is also of interest here.

4.2.1.1. References to the original Persephone myth in Abandon

Similar to *The Goddess Test*, the characters in this novel are aware of the mythology surrounding Persephone's abduction. Hence, it is also referenced on several occasions throughout the story, of which two can be regarded as the most vital for this analysis. The first occurs immediately at the beginning of the novel, in chapter one. The events of Persephone's abduction unfold, but are presented to the reader through the eyes of the victim, in this case Pierce.

Interestingly, Pierce refers to this myth as an 'origin myth' (i.e. creation myth). However, this information is not correct, since creation myths describe how earth was created, how the gods came to be, and how Prometheus created men (also known as Theogony). The Persephone myth is considered a "myth of seasonal renewal" (cf. "Greek Mythology" *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "Persephone" *Theoi*). Pierce claims that, unlike Persephone's story, hers is real, and, as she adds, in many ways more problematic (chapter 1).

Another mention of the Persephone myth occurs during the conversation between Pierce and Richard Smith.

> Personally, I've never been a fan of the Hades/Persephone myth. So much drama, with him kidnapping the poor girl in that distasteful manner and forcing her to live with him down in the Underworld against her will, and then Persephone's mother having to intervene […]. (Cabot 204)

It appears as if the cemetery sexton pities the goddess ('poor girl'), and emphasizes the fact that the girl was taken against her will (e.g. 'distasteful manner', 'forcing'). In addition, also Pierce appears to view the situation similarly, as she refers to her as the "reluctant bride of Hades" (ibid 205).

Both accounts of the story can be regarded as truthful to their original(s), since in both, Ovid and the Hymn, the general premise of Persephone's abduction, i.e. the references given in *Abandon*, is the same. However, it is not clear whether Pierce regards the events surrounding Persephone's abduction as something real or simply just a fantasy tale. At the beginning of the novel, she clearly states that what happened to her stands in contrast to the spring goddess's experiences: no tale but reality. However, in the course of the book she realizes that supernatural creatures do exist in 'her world', and that she, similar to Persephone, has indeed been to the Underworld. Along the same line, the Furies, comparable to the beasts living with Hades, are also proof that what she read in her schoolbooks on mythology can also become real.

4.2.1.2. Cabot's mythology

The mythological world encountered in *Abandon* is extended and altered by the author in various ways. While some characters witnessed a transmotivization (e.g. the Furies), at other parts, basic principles, such as that there is one ruler over the Underworld, are eliminated resulting, for example, in the rejuvenation of the characters (especially John). Apart from that the author also incorporated historical events into the storyline, as a result connecting a fictional story with real incidents.

The death deity of Isla Huesos

Even though the first book in this trilogy provides the reader with merely a basic outline of its mythology, therefore, rather functioning as a set up for the events of the following installments, the uniqueness of it deserves a detailed discussion.

In general, as cemetery sexton Smith illustrates, in this mythology more than one Underworld exists, distributed all over the world, and governed by

different death deities. However, these death deities are not gods, but mortals who died and were assigned this position (NB: the criteria for assignment is not disclosed in this book but will be addressed in later installments), e.g. John who became ruler of 'an' Underworld after his death on sea (ibid 220). Moreover, they are destined to fulfill their duties for the rest of their existence (ibid 224). As Smith points out, John did not replace Hades after he 'retired' because their Underworlds are not the same. Although it is not fully clarified, supernatural abilities (e.g. shadow travel, strength) also part of being a death deity. Overall, in *Abandon*, the number of death deities is bound to the number of Underworlds that exist. Since every culture and religion has its own beliefs of an 'afterlife', the death deities merely function as "escort[s] [to] the newly deceased" (ibid 199). In this sense, the entrances to the Underworld act as processing plants to sort through souls and send them to their final resting places. The reason why John can be encountered on regular occasions on Isla Huesos (besides being shipwrecked there) is that the cemetery of the island is directly placed over the Underworld he is responsible for, and functions as an entrance to it (ibid 221).

Smith argues that since the "days of Homer" the population on earth expanded to an extent that one Underworld is simply not sufficient enough (220). For this reason, additional resting places needed to be established, each consequently requiring a ruler. In this sense the power is divided among the numerous death deities, and is not central to Hades anymore. Whether Hades still exists or not is not addressed here. Also, the understanding that these death deities are mortals and not gods is contrary to the Greek view of the world, since the three major realms (Heaven, Earth, and Sea) were divided among divine figures. This contradiction continues, as the title 'death deity' suggests with the specific word 'deity' that these rulers are in some form divine, i.e. gods.

'John's' Underworld also differs slightly from what the reader knows of Hades' Underworld. For example, instead of having to cross a river (Styx) to arrive at their final resting place, the newly deceased wait on the shore of a lake to board the ferry. In addition, there are two different lines the souls are assigned to, only varying in the nature of their destination (good vs. bad/ Elysian fields vs. Tartarus). The souls are assigned by men dressed in black, resembling nightclub bouncers (40/41). What happens to souls that do not board the ferry is further unclear (e.g. Pierce missing the boat). The main

difference to the depiction in mythology, is first the assignment of the souls by entities not directly presented to the reader, since the 'bouncers' only assign the souls relying on information they receive through a tablet. In mythology, this is carried out by the three judges of the Underworld (Minos, Rhadmanthys, and Aaecus). The notion is created that only two possible destinations for the dead exist. In Hades' Underworld the judgment of souls is more individual, and many of the souls are simply sent to the fields of asphodel (only the outstanding ones go to the Elysian Fields). There is also no mention of a hellhound (Cerberus) guarding the entrance or a reference to Charon the ferryman and the required Obolos.

The Furies

The Erinyes (Furies), or children of the night (cf. Ovid *Metamorphoses* 4.459), are, as discussed in more detail in chapter 3.3., similar to the three judges, servants of Persephone and Hades and punish crimes against the natural order by casting curses, and generally invoking wrath. In addition, they are also responsible for the punishment of those held in the Tartarus prison. In Dante's *Divine Comedy* the Furies symbolize "remorse of a guilty conscience" (Ruud 2008: 45).

The mythology in *Abandon*, however, presents the Furies in a different light. Here they are depicted as the souls of the dead who feel mistreated by John because they are not appointed their rightful resting places. As a consequence, these souls come back to haunt him. More specifically, their sole desire is to eliminate his happiness by taking his (chosen) consort's life. Moreover, they have the ability to possess any human, as long as they exhibit "a weak enough character" (Cabot 205).

Most of the information Pierce receives on the Furies is from Richard Smith during their appointment at his office. Interestingly, Smith mentions a dispute among scholars on the origins and 'duties' of the Furies (204). However, it is not specified what conflict he refers to, and most of the research examined for this thesis considers the Erinyes as aforementioned avengers of crimes against the natural order.

In addition to terrorizing John, the Furies in *Abandon*, similar to their original tasks, punish anyone who breaks the rules in 'John's world' (246). Although what these rules consist of is never fully disclosed, what can be

regarded as certain is that these Furies also punish the death deity himself because he let one soul, i.e. Pierce's, escape.

After her escape from the Underworld, Pierce encounters a number of Furies herself, as she points out to John (248). These are, for example, the jeweler who is fascinated by her necklace, or her own grandmother, who wants nothing more than see John's happiness destroyed. Besides, the Furies also mistake other girls for Pierce who eventually die because of this. For instance, Hannah who is not directly killed by Mr. Mueller (possessed by a Fury), but nevertheless dies because they are after Pierce. In addition, Jade is killed in the cemetery by Furies who mistake her for Pierce (282).

Pierce receives a necklace that detects any 'bad' souls close to her ("the Persephone diamond" 204), as protection from these creatures. At first, Pierce has difficulties understanding the mechanics of the necklace, but after a while she realizes that anytime a Fury is close, the stone turns purple. Because Furies cannot be killed, the only place that is apparently safe for Pierce is the Underworld, as it is John's territory where they have no power over him (288).

The Erinyes are usually depicted as horrific creatures, deformed/deviant, not only on the inside, but also in their outer appearance. In *Abandon*, their wickedness is only apparent through their behavior, and likewise their ability to possess the weak.

The Hope Diamond

As the previous illustration showed, the necklace given to Pierce plays an important role throughout the novel. It not only exhibits supernatural powers, but it is also something Pierce is emotionally attached to since the day she received it as a gift from John. Its origin and history is revealed to Pierce by the cemetery sexton, who explains to her that the stone is called the 'Persephone diamond'. Smith further notes that it was mined by Hades, and should be given exclusively to the consorts of death deities for protection. Anyone who is not given this necklace solely for that purpose will have to face certain consequences (210). In this regard he mentions Marie Antoinette who received the necklace from Louis the Sixteenth, who was supposedly a Fury, and because of that came into possession of it (204/205). After the French Revolution, the diamond disappeared, and as Smith points out reappeared on the cargo list of a ship that was wrecked during the hurricane in 1846 off the island of Isla Huesos. Hence, it was believed that the diamond sunk to the ground together with the other

remains of the ship (206/207). Moreover, the diamond as Smith reveals to Pierce has been "reset since Marie Antoinette's time" (ibid 208), so that it is encompasses by five prongs. These prongs, as Smith believes, represent the five rivers of the Underworld (Styx, Acheron, Lethe, Phlegethon, Cocytus).

As Smith recalls, the diamond is considered to be cursed. This is also true for the original diamond that it is based on, namely the Hope Diamond. In general, most of the information on the 'Persephone diamond' is also true for its original (e.g. Marie Antoinette receiving it as a gift). However, the origin of the curse that is mentioned, i.e. consequences for unrightfully possessing it, is strongly debatable considering the real history of the Hope Diamond. Throughout the years, there has been speculation on the 'mysterious' deaths of its owners, nevertheless many of these were simply fabricated or exaggerated for marketing purposes, and were essentially created to keep the mystery surrounding the jewel alive (c.f. "The Hope Diamond" *Encyclopedia Smithsonian, and Britannica*). That is why the 'controversy' around the nature of the diamond lends itself perfectly to the story in *Abandon*, as the author had the freedom to extend 'historical' facts, and illustrate the consequences of the curse in order to fit the mythology.

4.2.1.3. Key aspects

As mentioned at the outset of this analysis (4.2.2.), the similarities between *Abandon* and the Persephone myth are not as substantial as in the case of *GT*. Consequently, many of the key aspects that constitute the myth examined in regard to Carter's novel, are absent in Cabot's. The following chapter tries to find existing correlations and exemplifies them with passages from and references to the storyline.

First, since Pierce's initial visit to the Underworld is due to her own death, there is no chance for her mother, or other relatives to grieve. Her visit is limited to a few minutes, which is the time it takes to reanimate her after she drowns in the pool. The second time, she is taken to the Underworld by John, concluding the events of the first book. As a result, the reader is not informed whether Pierce's mother notices her absence, and reacts in any way to it. A reunion between mother and daughter, however, does take place, namely after Pierce is brought back to life. The first person she sees is her mother (ibid 70). Furthermore, Deborah displays a similar form of eagerness in saving her daughter as Demeter does. Even though their approaches differ, the outcome

shows a clear resemblance. Deborah is the one to find Pierce at the bottom of the pool, she is also the one to start reanimation, and ultimately tries everything to save her daughter's life.

One of the key points from Ovid, namely Demeter and Zeus arguing over Persephone's best interests, can be found in a slightly altered form in *Abandon* as well. After Pierce's NDE, her parents' relationship falls apart, as they blame each other for the accident. Moreover, also their views on Pierce's wellbeing after her accident differ, whether it is better for her to go to a boarding school in Switzerland or move to Isla Huesos.

The consumption of food in the Underworld and its consequence, i.e. the Law of Abode, is not directly referred to, but due to the actions of the characters it is possible to merit it similar importance as in the myth. Several times during their conversation in John's room, he offers Pierce something to eat. Even though she is hungry and would accept the offer, she remembers her father's warnings about not accepting food from strangers (ibid 55). She cannot even drink the tea he offers her (ibid 67). Her father's warning shows similarities to Zeus' plea for caution and the possible consequences offending the 'rule' might entail. The question remains, whether the same law exists in John's Underworld, but he simply avoids telling Pierce about it, hence his repeated offers. Although Pierce manages to leave the Underworld, it can be argued that she is in a way still bound to it, not only through John but also due to the attacks from the Furies.

The main aspect of the Persephone myth that occurs in every retelling and version of it is her abduction by Hades. As shown in the analysis of *The Goddess Test*, the abduction can come in various different forms and does not necessarily need a literal interpretation. Nevertheless, in *Abandon* the reader does encounter a form of literal understanding of the term. The first time Pierce finds herself in the Underworld she is partly responsible for it, as she arrives there as a newly deceased soul. The second time, however, she is taken there against her will by John as the quote below clearly demonstrates (ibid 284).

> When realization of what he was about to do dawned, I lunged. When he caught me, I kicked him. I prised at his rock-hard grip and pleaded with him. I struggled to escape. (284)

But her refusal is not sufficient enough, as John is simply stronger and manages to take her with him. These signs of struggle, especially the physical aspect, resemble the manner in which Persephone is taken away (e.g. taken up

violently into Hades chariot, tearing her dress in the process cf. Ovid 5.332-384, Homeric Hymn 15-25). Furthermore, it is unclear, whether it has been John's plan from the beginning to find a possibility to bring Pierce back to the Underworld, similar to Hades' actions, or if he acted in the spur of the moment (cf. Cabot 288).

Finally, the division of time spent in the Underworld and on earth is insofar not relevant in *Abandon*, as the novel ends with Pierce's abduction, thus leaving it open whether she manages to escape a second time and go back to her mother, and if so, for how long she can or will stay.

4.2.1.4. Key roles

Finding connections between the key roles taken up in the myth and the novel proves to be as difficult as finding points of correlation in the plot, due to the storyline in *Abandon* being only loosely based on the Homeric Hymn (or Ovid). Nevertheless, as previously established, it is possible to link the main characters in *Abandon* to their counterparts in mythology based on their names. Thus, the questions that need to be asked are: How else can the main protagonists be linked to the Greek deities? And is there any resemblance in the behavior they exhibit? In addition, it is also important to investigate the relationships among the characters, especially the familial relations (Pierce and her parents/grandmother). For the other characters (e.g. Kayla, Seth, Farah) it proves to be difficult to find mythological equivalents, as the reader is on one hand, given only a limited amount of information on them, which proves to be too superficial, on the other hand the characters that are described in more detail do not correspond to any of the protagonists in the myth (e.g. Richard Smith, Uncle Chris, Mr. Mueller). Therefore, this analysis focuses on the main protagonists Pierce, John, Deborah, and even though he never actively enters the storyline, Pierce's father Zack.

The main similarity between Pierce and Persephone is that both women are stripped of their power to decide on their future, especially in regard to romantic relationships. Both women are used as means to ensure the happiness of others, more specifically family members. Ultimately Persephone is married to Hades, not only so her father can be pleased about a reestablished and strengthened union within the family, but also to fulfill the wish of Hades, and facilitate to his happiness. As for Pierce, she is used as a

device in her grandmother's revenge agenda, and should consequently ensure the latter's happy ending.

The most significant difference between them can be detected in their employment of agency (cf.4.2.2.1). Other than that, since there is only a limited amount of information, e.g. no external characterization, given, it is difficult to compare these two.

As for John, his physical description, which is far more extensive than that of Pierce possibly due to the nature of the narrative structure, resembles in many ways that of Hades. Most often John is described as someone who invokes fear in others (e.g. dark clothing 18/108, dangerous eyes 90). Moreover, his physical power is also emphasized (e.g. 93, hands of a killer/fighter 90/94). In general, his attitude resembles that of a person who has not the best interests of others in mind (e.g. his scrupulous behavior towards the jeweler/Mr. Mueller). His duties as a death deity allow him to travel from the Underworld to earth, but instead of using a staff like Hades, John controls it, presumably, through his mind.

Deborah's connection to the Greek goddess Demeter is also only exhibited in a limited manner. It can be argued that the connection between these two women is established through their mutual love of nature. As a goddess of agriculture, it is Demeter's duty to keep the earth fertile and living. Similarly, Deborah, who is a very environmental friendly person, feels it is her responsibility to repair the damage produced through the oil spill. Besides, the reason she wants to move back to Isla Huesos is to save the spoonbills (birds) from extinction (e.g. 144). Demeter and Deborah are not only connected through their love of nature, but also through their exhibition of motherly care, tending to their daughters' needs as best as they can (e.g. Deborah enabling her daughter a new start at a new school). Finally, Zack Oliviera, Pierce's father, even though absent through the main events of the novel, is described by Pierce in a way that could link him to Zeus. For example, as a CEO of a gas company he can be regarded as a powerful person, in charge of his own employees, and at the top of the hierarchy. Furthermore, Zack is also regarded as the family provider, enabling the lifestyle Pierce is used to. His ruthlessness is exemplified by his failure to acknowledge the severe magnitude of the oil spill his company was responsible for. Many times Zack assumes that due to his status and wealth people will treat him more kindly, hence why he utters

phrases like "Don't you know who I am?" (Cabot 67). In addition, Zack is also responsible for making decisions for others. For example, the only choice he allows his daughter is either going to a boarding school in Switzerland, or living with her mother in a gated community. In brief, both men are authoritative figures who indulge in their wealth and status.

Considering the familial bonds, it should be noted that Pierce and her father do not have a close relationship. This is most significantly demonstrated through his absence during the main (present) events of the novel. Since the divorce of her parents, Pierce lives with her mother. The amount of contact she has with her father is limited, mainly, to occasional phone calls, or bi-weekly lunch meetings. In fact, the times they do have contact it appears as if Zack is trying to make decisions for his daughter instead of listening to her needs (e.g. sending a plane when the hurricane arrives 248). Since the relationship among the deities in many aspects (e.g. 'incest', jealousy, etc) differs extensively from the relationships and the societal order found in *Abandon*, it proves difficult to compare them. Nevertheless, Persephone and her father are in a similar way distant to each other as Pierce and Zack are (disregarding the incest factor, i.e. Zeus taking advantage of Persephone). On the emotional level, both women exhibit a closer relationship to their mothers. Moreover, in both cases the mothers are the only constant authoritative figures present in their lives.

In contrast, the connection between Pierce and her grandmother is highly problematic. As it is revealed in the latter part of the novel, her grandmother is possessed by a Fury (289). However, it is unclear when the possession first began. Pierce most likely never knew her real grandmother, since by the time Pierce was born her grandmother was already plotting against John. Consequently, their relationship is based on manipulation and deception, as her grandmother tries everything in her power to bring Pierce and John together. Besides, Pierce is unsuspecting of her grandmother because she only knows her as an old lady with a fondness for knitting. It is not possible to find any similar relationships between Persephone and the Furies. Unlike in mythology, where the Furies assist Hades and Persephone in the Underworld, in *Abandon* their motives are changed. Their devotion shifted from being allies, to becoming enemies.

4.2.1.5. "All hope *abandon*, ye who enter in!" – Dante's *Divine Comedy*

This part of the analysis will focus on the discussion of Dante's *Inferno* used as an epigraph in *Abandon*. However, at this point only the content and its connection to the novel will be of interest. The function of it as a paratextual feature is the topic of discussion in chapter 4.2.1.6.

Dante Alighieri was an Italian poet most famously known for his epic poem *La divina commedia* (The Divine Comedy), which he wrote during his exile from Florence (1308-21). The Comedy is divided into three main sections (cantiche) – *Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradiso* – each then divided into 33 cantos. The poem depicts the journey of the main protagonist Dante who, after being exiled from Florence, finds himself in a dark forest where he meets the Roman poet Virgil. From then on, Virgil acts as his guide, taking him from the gates of Hell, to the center of the earth (*Inferno*), ascending to the top of the Purgatory (*Purgatorio*) summit. He has to manage the last part of his journey, namely the ascension to Heaven (*Paradiso*), without Virgil, but not alone, as his former love Beatrice takes up the role of his guide. Dante reaches his ultimate goal, when he stands in the presence of God for a brief amount of time (cf. Jacoff 1993, DigitalDante Columbia, Ruud 2008, "Dante" *Encyclopedia Britannica*). It is also important to point out that Dante was strongly influenced by the work of Ovid, and parts of the Comedy show clear intertextual links and references to his *Metamorphoses* (cf. Clay 2014).

For the analysis of intertextual connections between *Abandon* and Dante's work it is only necessary to consider the first of the three parts of the Comedy, namely *Inferno*. Moreover, the quotes at the beginning of the individual chapters in *Abandon* are taken from the 33 cantos of *Inferno*, primarily focusing on the cantos one to five. The translation used in *Abandon* is that of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1886). In general, Dante and Virgil's journey through hell takes them through nine different circles, each representing different types of sinners (e.g. Canto V = second circle = Carnal sinners). Following is a detailed discussion of quotes taken from *Inferno* that show significance when brought in connection with the individual chapters they precede, or with the overall plot. The information provided by the Digital Dante project was used to understand the context of the quotes.

The quote from the first chapter is taken from canto I, when Dante first encounters the shade of the poet Virgil. The specific lines refer to one of the

three beasts that come rushing toward Dante, namely the she-wolf ("her"). Virgil reassures Dante that the creature will be hunted down by a greyhound ("he") that brings her back to hell from which she escaped. In connection to *Abandon*, the quote might sum up the general premise of the book: John trying everything in his power to bring Pierce back to the Underworld. This resembles the way the greyhound is hunting down the she-wolf, and also relates to Hades' pursuit of Persephone, and ultimately her abduction. This is further strengthened by the references to the Persephone myth made by Pierce in that chapter.

In the second chapter, the quote that precedes the storyline can be found in canto III, when Virgil and Dante arrive at the gates of hell, ready to embark on their journey. In connection to the plot in *Abandon*, it perfectly sets the time frame. The story begins in autumn (early September) on Isla Huesos (South Florida), when the "main" events unfold. Interestingly, autumn also marks the beginning of Persephone's stay with Hades.

The heading of the third chapter depicts lines from canto I. When Dante first discovers Virgil, he asks him to be merciful because he is not sure who he is dealing with, whether whom he sees is a "shade" or a "real man". In *Abandon* the reader is not only presented with a flashback to the first meeting between Pierce and John at the cemetery when she was seven, but also with their first meeting after Pierce moved to Isla Huesos. Dante's pleas to the shade to be merciful and to have pity resemble Pierce's feelings towards John. She is scared of him and finds it hard to believe that he is more like a "shade" than a "real men", something supernatural that should not exist in her world.

The encounter between Pierce and John in the cemetery is continued in the following chapter (4), which is preceded with lines from canto I. The lines refer to Dante's encounter with a lion that is rushing towards him in the dark forest. The tension between Pierce and John is also clearly noticeable in this chapter. It can be argued that John acts similar to the lion that is referred to in *Inferno*. His "ravenous hunger" is manifested by his aggressive behavior towards Pierce, and his disposal of the necklace. Moreover, several times throughout the book Pierce comments on John's similarities to a wild thing (an animal).

The quote at the beginning of the fifth chapter (canto I) refers to the "lofty throne" of God, and Dante's desire to be in his presence. This chapter relates Pierce's first arrival in the Underworld, at the shore of Acheron, and her

experiences waiting for the ferry. "He governs everywhere, and there he reigns;" while true for God's actions is also true for what death deities do. When John realizes that the girl who he is talking to at the shore is Pierce he takes her to his palace (cf. City of Dis – canto VIII and IX). The line, "O happy he whom thereto he elects" might convey the fact that not many people (i.e. women) are invited to John's personal chambers, and certainly even fewer are given the necklace, i.e. chosen to be the death deities consort.

Another quote from canto I is placed at the outset of chapter six. These lines show Dante asking for Virgil's protection from the she-wolf, and the poet suggesting to take a different route than planned because it is impossible to escape the beast. In *Abandon* this possibly refers to Pierce's escape from the Underworld. Even though, at first, it seems impossible, she finds a way to take "another road" and flee from her captor. Dante's despair, as he weeps at the hopeless situation he is confronted with, is resembled in Pierce's struggles to accept the fact that by missing the boat to her final destination she has to stay with John for the rest of her existence.

In chapter seven, Pierce acts upon her decision to escape by taking the staircase to freedom, i.e. coming back to life. The stanza from canto I perfectly summarizes the events, as Pierce's soul is "fleeing onward" because it was not able to go to its final destination (embark the ferry), hence being revived on earth. Indeed, before her, no other soul managed to escape, which, as revealed later, resulted in consequences for the death deity who allowed this to happen. Back in the main storyline, Pierce is also confronted with the outcome of her actions, namely John's anger.

The lines preceding chapter eight are from the second stanza (terza rima) of canto I, which depict Dante contemplating his journey in life so far, and him arriving in a dark forest after deterring from the right path. Pierce's situation resembles that of Dante in the way that she contemplates her own life and journey so far, why she is the only one apologizing to John for the previous events, and most importantly, how it is possible that it lead to this disastrous outcome even though she only had good intentions (Cabot 89ff).

The first stanza of Inferno is quoted at the beginning of chapter nine. Here Dante embarks on his journey .Although Pierce is only seventeen, she too has a difficult time coping with her life, especially after her accident. Since her NDE, Pierce has been struggling to stay on the right path. She has been

diagnosed with ADHD, and is facing the consequences of her escape. The aim of moving to Isla Huesos was to provide her with a fresh start, but contrary to that she finds herself returning to the dark savage forest, surrounded by death. This theme of "abandoning the true way" is continued in chapter ten, highlighted by Pierce's reference to the incident at the Westport Academy for Girls which ultimately led to her expulsion from school.

Following this is a stanza from canto IV which is set in the first circle of hell, namely limbo, referring to how Dante is awakened by thunder after fainting from an earthquake, and his arrival in limbo. Similar to Dante's 'awakening', Pierce breaks free of her "lethargy" and passivity after Hannah's suicide. This is further strengthened by her plan to 'engage' during the school day, for example by walking down the hallway without her headphones in (119). She also decides to find incriminating evidence against Mr. Mueller that shows he was indeed responsible for her friend's death.

The tumult that is mentioned in the stanza from canto III - "Made up a tumult that goes whirling on" - (chapter sixteen) could refer to the incident at the Westport Academy for Girls, which resulted in harsh consequences for Pierce, and made her daily life even more difficult. She was bullied, called names, and had to visit psychiatrists, and is even now, at her new school, haunted by the events. Also, the hurricane that is approaching Isla Huesos shows its first signs of arrival (187), and her disruption of the 'system' (no mixing between A- and D-Wingers) becomes effective, as Seth and his friends talk about the possibility of secretly assembling the coffin at Pierce's house. The signs of the approaching hurricane are becoming even clearer in the proceeding chapter (seventeen). The "infernal hurricane" mentioned in Dante as he stands in front of the judge Minos might also act as a foreshadowing device of future events in the storyline, hinting at the culmination of the storm that ultimately occurs during the confrontation between Pierce and her grandmother.

The souls Virgil tells Dante about, in canto III (chapter eighteen), are the ones waiting at the shore of Acheron. These are also the souls that have to pass through the Isla Huesos cemetery, one of the entrances to the Underworld, to arrive at the lake. In that chapter, Pierce is visiting the cemetery to talk to Richard Smith. This is also when Smith informs her about the origin of her necklace, the story of Persephone and Hades, and the motives of the Furies.

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Interestingly, their conversation deepens in chapter nineteen, as Smith confesses he knows John and has met him several times. The lines from canto II preceding the events resemble Richard Smith's pleas towards Pierce regarding John's character. He points out that she should consider everything John had to go through (saving her), and the "death that combats him" as a death deity (ibid 214, 227). Smith defends John, trying to find justifications for his actions, by arguing that he is merely a "moody" and "tormented young man" (224), and his occupation does not make him a murderer. For that reason Pierce should show some mercy.

In the second circle of hell, where Dante and Virgil arrive in canto V, Dante recites the names of the souls he encounters there, and feels sorry for them because they were punished for simply being in love, although Dante disregards the fact that these souls are those of carnal sinners. In a sense, Pierce and John are also punished for 'being in love', as due to his affection, Pierce becomes the main target of the Furies. In the manner of the "turtle doves called onward with desire", they both cannot stay away from each other, proven by their encounter in the garden of Pierce's house.

Virgil's reference to the "fear" of the souls waiting at Acheron which is "turned into desire" (canto III; chapter twenty-one) can also be observed in Pierce and John's behavior towards each other. Pierce realizes, as they come closer to each other during their conversation in the garden, she is not afraid of him anymore, and reassures him that the truth about his origin (and work of line) do not scare her anymore.

When Dante and Virgil first arrive at the gates of hell in canto III, a sign is posted at the entrance. The first stanza,

> Through me the way is to the city woe [sic!];
> Through me the way is to eternal dole;
> Through me the way among the people lost.

is quoted at the beginning of chapter twenty-three. Even though the 'me' stands for the gates of hell, it is possible that these lines also convey Pierce's feelings of guilt. Many people that surrounded her are dead, and she blames herself for that. Especially the death of Jade that occurred in the previous chapter intensifies her guilt, as she believes John should have been at the cemetery to keep Jade safe, instead of spending time with her.

The last chapter of *Abandon* (24) again cites lines from canto III, and is a continuation of the sign posted at the gates.

> Before me there were no created things,
> Only eternal [sic!], and I eternal last.
> All hope abandon, ye who enter in!

The last line is particularly interesting as it directly refers to one of the themes of the novel, namely "abandonment" (cf. Author's note 295ff). Everyone who enters hell must first abandon all cowardice and hope before they can begin their journey. Along the same line, Pierce should abandon her hope, possibly of coming back, too, before she enters the Underworld. However, as shown in chapter seven when she managed to escape her captor, she still has hope that even though this time the exit is closed, she can still find a way out to go back to her world and warn her mother. As Dante and Virgil stand in front of the gates of hell, Pierce too is at the threshold between life and death, earth and Underworld, her reality and John's.

In general, it can be argued that the quotes from *Inferno* function as foreshadowing the events not only from that specific chapter but sometimes also the storyline in general. Thus the question arises why the author chose Dante's *Inferno* as part of a possible intertext.

On one hand, *Inferno* serves as a somewhat accurate description of the Underworld and is more detailed than those of other poets or novelists Similar to *Abandon* the mythological source for the *Divine Comedy* is (the canon of) Greco-roman mythology, especially Ovid's version in his *Metamorphoses*. On the other hand, like Dante, Pierce also finds herself on a journey: From the moment she met John at the cemetery when she was seven, she encountered, like Dante, many different 'damned souls', such as carnal sinners like Mr. Mueller, or the Furies. However, unlike Dante, she has no guide, except perhaps John or more likely Richard Smith who is, similar to Virgil, familiar with death deities, the Underworld and its mythology. Yet, Pierce's journey takes her not to heaven, but to the opposite, the Underworld from which it seems she cannot escape.

Cabot points out that many of the characters were abandoned themselves (297), and "[s]ome may have even abandoned all hope" (Cabot 297), like the souls entering the gates of hell. For example, John was not only abandoned on sea by his crew, and did not receive a proper burial; he also

arguably abandoned hope of finding his happiness when he took his place as a death deity. Similarly, Pierce felt abandoned at the bottom of the pool, since there was nobody to help her. After the accident, i.e. having been to the Underworld, she, too, abandoned all hope of finding a happy ending. Consequently, she accepts the fact that something is wrong with her, and allows others to treat her as a problem kid.

4.2.1.6. Paratext

The analysis in this final chapter on *Abandon* focuses on investigating the paratextual features of the novel. As previously established (cf. Allen 100) a paratext can facilitate to the understanding and reception of the text through the reader by connecting, for example, to a larger corpus of similar work. It is primarily concerned with demonstrating whether these connect the novel to mythology, and if so, in what manner, and to what myth (text) specifically. Moreover, the question will be asked, to what extent these are apparent to the (uneducated) reader, and, whether fully comprehending the plot is only possible through the identification of these links. Also crucial is to question the function of some of these elements.

To answer these questions and understand the use of paratextual features in the novel, both subcategories of Genette's concept of paratext, namely peritext and epitext will be used as a basis for the investigation. To be specific, the analysis focuses on examining the use of peritextual elements, such as, the epigraph and the author's note. Epitextual features, like author interviews, are only considered to a limited extent.

The epigraph is placed preceding every chapter of the novel, and features lines from Dante Alighieri's *Inferno*. The content and connection of the quotes to the storyline were discussed in the previous chapter. However, the function of it as a paratextual feature should be briefly considered here. In general, it acts as a means to foreshadow the events not only of that specific chapter, but of the storyline on the whole. Moreover, it establishes a connection between *Abandon* and a larger body of work, seemingly placing similar importance on Pierce's journey as on Virgil's. Also, the epigraph offers the reader a place to search for further clues on the events of *Abandon,* essentially by pointing out a possible intertext. This is crucial, considering the fact that Dante's work is by far the most detailed exploration of the Underworld, thus it could contribute to the readers' imagination of the setting in *Abandon*.

In the author's note, placed at the end of the novel (295-297), Cabot not only explains historic events featured in the plot, such as the hurricane, or the missing hope diamond, but states clearly that the Persephone myth strongly influenced the story in *Abandon*. In addition, the scientific aspects of death, like the NDE Pierce suffers, are also provided with an explanation. The reasons for giving out this detailed information at the end of the book, and not allowing the reader to draw their own conclusions, or investigate on their own are numerous. For example, its function could be educational, providing the intended audience with necessary information to 'take home'.

Also, mentioning Edith Hamilton's mythology simplifies the reader's search for an intertext. Cabot's question, whether Hades' and John's Underworld is the same place, establishes another link between these two seemingly different worlds, and also functions as a teaser for the following novel. Cabot also provides an explanation for the title of the book: it is an allusion to Dante's *Inferno*, and the inscription at the gates of hell. On the whole, by arguing that "[a]lthough *Abandon* is fiction [but] many aspects of the story are rooted in fact" (295) Cabot gives the mythological aspects of the story a more genuine foundation.

An epitextual feature that should be briefly examined is 'discussions of the text by the author', more specifically Meg Cabot's references in interviews regarding *Abandon*. The following excerpts, first from an interview with CNN, second from a list of "Frequently Asked Questions" from Cabot's homepage, give insight into how the author connected her novel with the Persephone myth, and what influence the latter had on developing the character of Pierce and her relationship with John. In the interview with CNN, Cabot is asked on her inspiration for the story, and answers with the following:

> Persephone, the goddess of spring, *was kept from Olympus by her mother*, Demeter, because Demeter was very worried that the gods of Olympus would do something terrible to her. What happens to almost every female character in every myth is they all end up getting turned into trees or animals. *Of course, the god of the underworld, Hades, snatches Persephone and takes her down to the underworld because he also didn't fit in and wasn't allowed on Olympus either*.
>
> I think what I really took away from that story was *here was a girl, like me, who didn't fit in. Then she found her place and purpose*, which was to be the queen of the underworld, except she's also the goddess of springtime, so it's got this really hopeful note to it. (Strickland 2011) [emphasis added]

In the FAQs Cabot further points out that

> there's something so compelling about a guy who falls so desperately in love with a girl that he's willing to allow the earth to be destroyed rather than give her up, because he's doomed forever to rule over the dark Underworld, and he can't stand to be without her. (Cabot Home page)

It is clear that Cabot's summary of the Persephone myth, particularly that of the relationship between Persephone and Hades and their status as 'outcasts', does not relate to the various accounts of the story previously discussed. Although it is true that numerous female characters are turned into animals or plants (e.g. Ovid *Metamorphoses*), this is also valid for their male counterparts. It would be more important to point to the number of goddesses raped by gods in animal form, or the issue of goddesses voluntarily turning themselves into animals for protection. Besides, Hades is not banned from Olympus, he is simply assigned the kingdom of the Underworld, and his main residence is there. This is in parts true for Persephone as well. Before she became the Queen of the Underworld she lived with her mother on earth, and after her abduction Demeter and her daughter decided to stay absent from Olympus, as a punishment for Zeus (which they quickly revoked) (cf. Homeric Hymn 90ff). Therefore, Hades' motivation to kidnap someone because he believes she is similarly 'abandoned', as Cabot states, is invalid. The hopeful note that the author further points out is also something from her own imagination. The only hope Persephone and Demeter find in the end is their reunion that occurs once a year, otherwise they try to cope with the arrangements (Homeric Hymn 485ff). The excerpt from the FAQs is also highly indicative of Cabot's concept of love. As the myth demonstrates, Hades has the desire to take a wife, and does everything to fulfill that. Although Ovid's version sees them falling in love due to Cupid's intervention, it is still no justification for kidnapping. That toxic idea of 'taking what should be rightfully mine' is also mirrored in Cabot's view of 'falling desperately in love', neither caring about the disastrous outcome, nor the other person's feelings.

Along the same lines, Cabot's considerably different understanding of the myth is further emphasized by the following quote:

> I think it was the idea that there is someone out there–maybe even living beneath your feet–who adores you just as you are and wants to take you away from the crummy place where you live (and away from your boring school and the bullies who torture you every day). The fact that the guy lives in the Underworld and has the power to smite those bullies is a total bonus. *I also liked the fact that love is a very complex emotion in the*

myth of Persephone. It's overwhelming and scary, but sweet and true at the same time. (Cabot Home page) [emphasis added]

Cabot's ideas of the nature of feelings between Persephone and Hades are also primarily her own, and cannot be found in mythology. As pointed out on numerous occasions in this thesis, the relationship between the rulers of the Underworld is not described in such a detail that it is possible to come to these conclusions. Also considering that Cabot favors Edith Hamilton's version of the myth (Cabot Home page, *Abandon* "Author's note") the understanding she has of the story shows no resemblance to it. On the nature of Pierce and John's relationship Cabot further points out that

> *Abandon* is about the kind of love where you can't stand to live apart from someone and you'd do anything for that person. That kind of love and longing is often dark and scary, like in the myth of Persephone. (Cabot Home page)

Cabot's statements show that in order to get a firm grasp of the source material, it is important to directly survey the source, and not merely rely on information provided through interviews. In brief, the arguments that can be understood as problematic are Cabot's justification for Persephone's kidnapping, and the juxtaposition of being left out of Olympus with being an outsider (problem kid) at high school.

As a concluding point on paratextuality, the question should be addressed, whether the story can be 'accurately comprehended' without any of these references, in other words only through the text proper. In the case of *Abandon,* it can be argued that the allusions made in the story, e.g. Richard Smith's explanation of the Furies, or Pierce's visit to the Underworld, are enough for the reader to know where to find the necessary information. Moreover, the first chapter already provides a brief summary of the myth. Thus the paratextual features, such as the epigraph, are only suggestions for how the knowledge on the topic could be expanded. The peritextual elements function as a form of failsafe mechanism. If the reader fails to notice the hints inside the story, both the epigraph and the author's note will most likely provide the reader with sufficient information and references to establish the connection.

4.2.2. Analysis based on concepts of Gender theory

One of the central research questions is concerned with how certain aspects of gender theory are incorporated in the primary literature. For this reason, the following chapter will present findings regarding the issue of

agency, representation of metanarratives, more specifically the distribution of power among the protagonists, the possible occurrence of gender roles, and, whether the concept of the arranged marriage prevalent in the ancient Greek societal system, can be found in *Abandon*.

4.2.2.1. (Female) Agency

The first person narrative situation, similar to *The Goddess Test*, allows the reader to understand the decisions the main character makes, and how these affect her. To be specific, it also presents the thought process behind these decisions (or actions taken), which is particularly crucial when understanding a characters motives.

This chapter analyzes the concept of agency with three different foci. The first part is concerned with not only the general manifestation of agency through Pierce, i.e. is she able to make her own choices, can she act freely and has the possibility to control her own life, but also the nature behind the decisions she makes and, ultimately, her actions. Are they for her own good or is she forced to do so by others? It is also important to consider how her own guilt plays into this, to be precise, whether it forces her to make certain decisions, and if so could these still be regarded as her own (acted out of free will). The second focal point is concerned with Pierce's willingness to leave with John, thus go to the Underworld. This is further explored and contrasted to Persephone's situation in the final point.

Regarding the ability to make her own decisions, have control over her own life, and consequently the extent of restrictions she is under, it should be pointed out that all of the events in the novel, except her first meeting with John as a child, occur following the NDE. The NDE largely facilitated to Pierce's isolation and her gradual withdrawal from social interactions. On the whole, it can be said that Pierce's actions occur in a set framework that is established by others, such as her parents, doctors, or the school. For example, after her accident she is classified as a 'problem kid', having to attend therapy sessions. Furthermore, following the incident with Mr. Mueller it is recommended that she attends a school that facilitates to her 'special needs'. This also comes with restrictions, such as withdrawal of her driver's license, and, through the New Pathways program, being placed under constant supervision. This supervision is also taking away the freedom other high school students her age have. For example, she is not allowed to have a cell phone during the school hours, and

cannot leave the school premises during the lunch break without a driver's license.

In many ways others make choices and decisions for her that alter the general course of her life. An example for this is her grandmother. She first determined the general course of Pierce's life by arranging and fostering the contact between her granddaughter and John. Also, by denying knowledge of John she chooses to let Pierce doubt herself and her actions, whether they were real or just fabrications of her fantasy as the doctors say.

However, many of her decisions are also influenced by external factors, such as guilt or pressure. For example, during their conversation at the cemetery Richard Smith provides Pierce with suggestions on how she should proceed with John and their 'relationship'. Over the course of the conversation it becomes clear that Smith views Pierce as the source of John's rude behavior ("nightmare") in the years since her accident (227). Since he identifies her as the problem, Smith suggests that Pierce should be nicer to John the next time they meet, which is exactly what she does. During their previous encounters she is very reluctant to come close to him, or even ask him questions. However, after Smith's comments, Pierce exhibits a completely different behavior. She actively engages him, takes his hand, and decides to have a serious conversation with him (242f).

In addition, her decisions are also strongly affected by her own feelings of guilt, and the need to protect and please others. This occurs in some cases on a small scale, for instance by accepting Uncle Chris' offer to give her driving lessons, even though it is not something she desires, so that his guilt of not being able to experience this with his own son is reduced (194). In other instances, her guilt and the need she feels to protect others drive Pierce to extreme measures, such as with Mr. Mueller. Even though many of these are her own decisions, their nature is highly different from the ones made without any influence but her own desires which will be discussed further down.

Although Pierce's life is defined by boundaries, she is still allowed to have some amount of freedom. For example, she is given the opportunity to socialize with other students after school (e.g. Island Queen 177), her mother approves of the coffin building at their garage, and they have an agreement that Pierce can have some time alone when situations feel too overwhelming for her (e.g. welcome party 13ff). However, the supervision by her mother is

questionable, as she is oblivious to Pierce's struggles after the accident, and even worse, to the scheming of her own mother.

To understand Pierce's exhibition of agency, it is also crucial to investigate significant incidents that show both extremes: active vs. passive behavior. Her attitudinal change is triggered by two different events. First, Hannah's death acts as a form of 'wakeup call' for Pierce, after which she decides to break out of her role as a victim, and her glass coffin prison, and actively change something (chapter 11). Second, this 'epiphany' occurs again when she is confronted with a chance to truly start a new chapter in her life by associating with a different group of people, trying to 'engage' more, as a consequence leaving Westport Academy and her inattentiveness behind (160). In fact, she promises herself to "stay engaged" during the school year so that no other girl will have to face the same fate as Hannah. One of the advantages she has at IHHS, compared to her previous school, is that she is no longer "invisible" (106).

Moreover, Pierce believes that in order to accomplish something it is not necessary to wait for a 'prince' to do so, but rather take matters into her own hands (112). Whether this is really the case is debatable and one of the questions addressed at the end of this chapter.

One of the most significant decisions Pierce makes, in the course of the novel, which also exemplifies her active side, is to escape from John's palace. She is ultimately faced with the decision she struggles with during the entire novel, namely to please someone else or to facilitate to her own happiness. As she explains in her own words, "when presented with an opportunity not to be dead anymore, I took it" which is what "[a]nyone else would have done [...]" (88). Interestingly, this is the only substantial occasion when the desire to please her own needs exceeds those of someone else.

Similarly, the incident with Mr. Mueller shows that even though the nature of her action is based on guilt and the notion of avenging her friend (and keeping others safe), it is still one of her strongest moments. Pierce takes action instead of waiting for others to do so, although her motif and execution are debatable. Afterwards, during the conversation with her father, she points out that "for the first time in a long time […] [she] felt good" (175). She finally manages to break free from some of her constraints, although her actions are followed by severe consequences (176), and feels positive about her decision.

It is also interesting to consider the juxtaposition of 'taking action' (being active) and 'punishment as a consequence'. In both instances where Pierce demonstrates the extent of her engagement, she is met with dire consequences. First, her escape from the Underworld is followed by the wrath of the Furies, resulting in the need for John to follow and protect her. Second, when the situation with Mr. Mueller becomes uncontrollable, it is John who rescues her by severely injuring the teacher. This results in Pierce not only being sent to a program for troubled kids, but also the ostracism by her peers, and ultimately receiving blame for John's actions. John, in turn, plays the role of the hero. Consequently the notion is established that staying in her glass coffin means safety, protection, and obliviousness to what is going on around her because others will engage instead of her.

In contrast to this are multitudinous situations that exemplify Pierce's passivity, i.e. her choice not to take action. Unlike her previously discussed behavior, passivity is not followed by any notable punishment; as the events still unfold without Pierce's assistance as the examples below demonstrate. The majority of these occur in the presence of John. For example, instead of asking him her own questions, she keeps silent not to upset him 'even more' (88). And when she has the opportunity to ask them she is met with either silence or is being ignored (e.g. 288). Also, most of the information on John's occupation, the Underworld, or the Furies is not discovered by Pierce herself, but rather the information is given to her without her actively questioning it. Subsequently, she rather believes her family (and the doctors) that what she experienced in the Underworld should be classified as 'lucid dreaming', than listening to her own intuition; until Richard Smith tells her the truth. There is no effort made on her side to actively seek out information, or validate what she has been told. Interestingly, without the sexton finding the necklace in the cemetery and him deciding to confront Pierce about it, she most certainly would have been kept in the blind about the Furies and most likely ended up as the victim of her grandmother.

Besides, it is sometimes also in the interest of others that she is kept silent/passive. The main justification John offers for bringing Pierce back to the Underworld, is to keep her safe from the Furies. However, at the same time he keeps her away from her family and friends which she is willing to protect with her own life. John takes away that power, and turns her into his submissive

puppet by once again creating new boundaries in her life. This time the boundaries are physical, providing her with no other choice than to live with them and, as it is John's wish, one day to accept them. In the end, John fulfills his own wish of having a companion at his side. In addition, when Pierce is ready to walk away from him after their conversation at the pool, he stops her by taking her hand and kissing her, hence undermining her decision to leave. In fact, he tries to quiet her with his kisses and is only reluctant to let her speak or explain herself (251-253). Another act to keep Pierce quiet and 'willing' is gifting her with the necklace, as the following quote shows: "[…] of course I nodded in response to his question as to whether or not I liked it. I'd been struck speechless with desire" (59).

There are further situations when John actively decides in Pierce's interest, such as taking her to his palace. Although John argues that Pierce made her choice to go with him, instead of waiting for the ferry, he knew the consequences of this 'decision', unlike Pierce who had no idea that missing one boat means being stranded in limbo at the shore of the lake. By leaving out this information, John seals her fate to his advantage. Also gifting her with the necklace, as previously mentioned, makes her a target of the Furies, which John as a death deity most likely knows prior to that. Thus he creates a bond between them, since in the eyes of the Furies Pierce is John's consort, without her knowledge. John also makes the decision to take away that protection, by throwing the necklace through the Isla Hueso's cemetery. It is his decision to leave her unprotected because he ultimately believes that their bond is not as strong as anticipated. Finally, the most ultimate decision John is making in Pierce's name, is 'kidnapping' her a second time.

The willingness of Pierce to go to the Underworld with John and stay there is also a pivotal topic of discussion. Initially Pierce had no choice because she arrives there as a dead soul traveling to her final destination. Then, she is brought to the palace because of an alleged choice she made. As previously discussed, it was no real choice as she was oblivious to the consequences. Therefore, she is not willingly there. This is further demonstrated by her active refusal to stay (i.e. escape) once John tells her that she is dead and cannot go back home. The second time, she is kidnapped by John. During the confrontation with her grandmother, John suddenly appears, taking Pierce away, and leaving her no choice to disagree with his plan to protect her. She is

taken against her will, the scene, due to her physical struggle, slightly resembling that of Persephone's abduction.

Comparing Pierce's situation to Persephone's it is clear that both women are burdened with a future that is not chosen by them. They are taken without mutual consent (unwillingly) to ease the loneliness of their respective partners. The main difference between them is while Persephone relies on her mother's power to rescue her, Pierce is trying to find a solution on her own (see chapter seven). On the whole both Pierce and Persephone's actions are restricted. While the first principally suffers from boundaries set up by people caring for her, the latter is physically kept away from her family. Both women are victims of manipulation (Pierce – missing boat; Persephone – eating pomegranate).

On the whole, as Baker argues, a pivotal characteristic of agency is "the enactment of X rather than Y as a course of action" (182). In that case, taking Pierce's behavior into account, it is possible to conclude that even though a few distinct events show that she can be active, it is her passivity that is emphasized through this understanding of agency. On many occasions she chooses to stay silent, be compliant, and let things happen to her instead of making them happen. Although she argues that, unlike Snow White, she will not wait to be saved by the Prince, it is exactly what she does because every action she takes ultimately ends with John saving her.

4.2.2.2. 'Who's the boss?' – Not so *Abandon*(ed) metanarratives

Similar to the examination of these issues presented in *The Goddess Test*, this chapter is devoted to an in-depth discussion of concepts of gender theory, such as gender systems, power relations, arranged marriages, and gender roles and stereotypes.

Gender system

The patriarchal character of the Greek society, and manifestation of it in the mythology, has already been investigated in previous chapters of this thesis. As a further step, a closer look should be given to possible occurrences of this metanarrative in *Abandon*.

In *Abandon*, the main character lives in a smaller community in the south of the United States, presumably in the 21st century (no actual date is mentioned in the novel). To analyze the gender system at hand, it will be compared to following points mentioned by Doherty (2003: chapter 1) in regard to the Homeric Hymn: gender division (including division of labor/work), freedom

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in choosing a partner/relationship (e.g. arranged marriages), and power relations (possible shifts of power). These points will be extended by an in-depth look at possible stereotypical representations of women and men, and occurrences of specific gender roles (similar to gender division). Finally, the relationship between Pierce and John will be placed in a focal position and the previously mentioned issues (power relations, gender roles, possible stereotypical behavior) will be investigated.

The division of gender in terms of labor is more evident in the Hymn than it is in *Abandon*. For example, there are specific tasks that are solely assigned to a character (god/goddess) based on their gender (e.g. women as caregivers, men as political/military leaders). This can, to some extent, also be found in the novel. To be specific, some women are portrayed as caregivers, managing the household, doing most of the work at home, and taking care of children. Pierce's mother, for example, is a divorced woman, spending her time at home taking care of Pierce without the help of a man. Even though she is working at Isla Huesos Marine Institute researching the spoonbill population in the area, as Pierce points out, it is more a hobby than actual work that provides income to support the family financially. Deborah's work involves, to a certain amount, a similar kind of care giving, ensuring the safety of the nature and animals around the island, resembling her duties at home.

On the other hand, Pierce's father is presented as a 'hard-working' man, and the CEO of a large corporation. His work is situated in the financial sector, and he is a public figure even known to Pierce's new friends on Isla Huesos through his many televised speeches. Moreover, he is providing the income for his family but is not the (emotional) caregiver.

Arranged marriage

The theme that pervades in both texts analyzed so far is the lack of freedom the main female characters have in choosing their partners (i.e. husbands) (cf. Doherty 2003: 24-25).

In *Abandon*, the relationship between Pierce and John can, primarily, be regarded as an arranged one. Although it is not Zeus (or in this case Pierce's father) who arranges the 'marriage' between Pierce and John, there is a key character that takes over that role, namely Pierce's grandmother. As she admits to Pierce, it is her plan all along to arouse John's interest in her daughter Deborah. However, after she realizes that John is more interested in her

granddaughter, she changes her plans and does everything in her power to bring these two together. It is not directly a request from John, contrary to Hades who seeks help from his brother, but when he shows interest in Pierce, the grandmother sees an opportunity to interfere. The forcefulness of the situation is most explicitly felt by Pierce who sees John as her captor, hence her reaction to escape (Cabot 69). Besides, the grandmother uses John's loneliness and constant longing for a partner to her advantage.

Comparing Pierce's situation to Persephone's it can be argued that these women are both part of unions that are arranged in order for the families, or the family member who acts as coordinator, to derive a benefit from it. They can be considered as 'means to an end', and should enable the happiness of others.

Distribution of power among the protagonists: who is in charge?

The distribution of power among the protagonists in *Abandon* shows, accordingly with the theme of patriarchal hierarchy, that most of the male characters are presented as powerful authoritative figures, while women are not considered as their equals.

On various occasions, the characters display their power through various status symbols, such as cars, boats, and expensive clothes. This power is principally exhibited by the male characters, to be specific the fathers of the high school students. These men are at the top of their respective businesses, which range from military and real estate business to global gas companies. Apart from that, the men are also considered the decision makers. For instance, Seth Rector acts as a leader of his group, deciding on the proceedings regarding the coffin building. Also, all of the other authority figures in the novel are men, such as Tim who is the director of the New Pathways program, Chief Alvarez who is the leader of the police force in Isla Huesos, and even the cemetery sexton who also holds certain authority is male. In contrast to this, the women hold considerably less authoritative positions. For instance, Jade is 'only' a counselor at New Pathways and is limited in her jurisdiction. Similarly, Deborah, even though it is her decision to divorce her husband and move to her hometown, still has to comply regarding decisions connected to her daughter because her former husband still makes many of the decisions influencing their lives.

Also returning to the incident between Hannah and Mr. Mueller, it is also possible to argue that the power and authority of men is sometimes abused.

The teacher, for example, clearly holds more authority than his student. It is not surprising then that he is not punished for his actions, although as an authority figure he should have known about the consequences.

However, one of the women who clearly display authority and power is Pierce's grandmother. She is the mastermind behind the plan to bring Pierce and John together, and manages to manipulate her into thinking that the accident is her own fault. This change in character is caused primarily due to her being possessed by a Fury. Therefore, it is unclear which character traits are her own and which not.

Finally, the slight shift in power, granting women more authority, as witnessed in *The Goddess Test*, cannot be found in *Abandon*. In brief, the reader encounters a similar distribution of male dominance in *Abandon* as found in the myth. The characters in charge, on top of the hierarchy, are men. Unlike the goddesses who could demonstrate their resistance, for instance by withholding the crops, the women in *Abandon* lack these possibilities.

4.2.2.3. Gender roles and stereotypical representations

A characteristic of metanarratives, especially in Greek mythology, as previously pointed out, is the stereotypical portrayal of women and men according to certain gender roles. In *Abandon* some of these roles are used to categorize the protagonists. For instance, the notion is established that men should be physically strong, while women are weak and more concerned about their outward appearance. This results in a possible juxtaposition of 'strong' (=masculinity) vs. 'weak' (=femininity). These are best exemplified in the exchange between Pierce and the 'A-Wingers' at the Island Queen (chapter 16). The 'A-Wingers' are the popular students at the high school, unlike the 'D-Wingers' which are the 'problem kids' enrolled in the New Pathways program (e.g. Kayla, Alex, Pierce). Similar to many other stereotypical portrayals of popular high school students, they are divided into football players, boys considered to be physically strong and active, and cheerleaders (or dance team members), girls who are most often known and appreciated for their beauty. This contrasted depiction (muscle vs. beauty) is continued throughout the chapter. For example, Seth's male friends known as 'Rector Wreckers' are shown bumping chests, drinking the girls milkshakes, burping, and overall displaying rather rude behavior. Contrary to that, the girls are disgusted by their behavior. As Pierce notices, the burping "caus[es] all the girls to squeal" (178),

and roll their eyes. They are more concerned with their calorie intake (178) and lack of beauty sleep (180) than the preparations for coffin night. Interestingly, the only significant attribute that helps Pierce distinguish Farah from the other girls is her long straight hair. Other than that there is no attribute that differentiates her from the others. In addition, Pierce's observations at the school assembly are also furthering these contrasting portrayals. The boys are described as "tattooed guys in headscarves fist-bumping and high-fiving one another, and some […] greeting one another a bit more aggressively than that." (106), while the girls "with long white-tipped nails" (110) are greeting each other in a calmer fashion.

It is also interesting to consider the consequences if someone does not conform these roles, such as in the case of Kayla or Alex. They are both 'D-Wingers' and not considered popular at school. However, it is possible that their unpopularity roots in the way they behave contrary to their 'supposed' gender roles. Alex, for example, does not exhibit any aggressive or more forceful behavior that the 'Rector Wreckers', for instance, show. He is quiet and not pictured as a socially active student. Unlike the other boys he is not part of any athletic team. As Pierce mentions, they are the only two family members who visited this high school and have no trophies or medals on display in 'A-Wing'.

Also, girls that go against these stereotypes like Jade who has a quote tattooed on her arm, which is something reserved for the boys (cf. "tattooed guys" 106), end up with the unpopular students, in this case as one of the guidance counselors at New Pathways. Hence, it is possible to argue that 'non-femininity' (i.e. masculinity) is associated with problematic behavior.

The stereotype that girls are less intellectual than boys is most evidently shown in the treatment of Pierce by boys/men. By taking away the belief that their arguments value the same as those of men, women are further oppressed and stripped of their possible power. The cemetery sexton, for instance, remarks, several times, on Pierce's inability to understand the issues he is talking about, asking her rhetorical questions because he doubts her intelligence (205, 209)

This in turn makes Pierce doubt herself, exemplified in the proceeding quote: "I should have known. It had been right there in front of me all along" 209). Ultimately, she accepts her status as 'stupid girl' as the following excerpt shows: "He sighed as if wondering how he'd been cursed with such an inept

pupil […]" (221). Even though the conclusions Richard Smith draws are not as clear as he assumes them to be, Pierce tries to find justifications for why she has not noticed them earlier. When she realizes that her information and knowledge on the topic is more extensive than the cemetery sexton's, she chooses to keep quiet about it (216), which also ties in with her passive character.

Also worth remarking on is the opposed treatment of Hannah and Mr. Mueller after the incident at the Westport Academy (166). While the student body collectively calls Hannah a "slut, liar [and] skank" (166) when news of their affair and her suicide break, Mr. Mueller is regarded as the true victim in this scenario, and even receives his own "Mueller shout out" (ibid 166). This refers to the stigmata that women who enjoy intimate relations with more than just one person are labeled as "sluts", while men who engage in the same are viewed as womanizers.

This investigation shows that similar to the mythological texts, the society depicted in the novel also relies on gender roles and stereotypes for classification. Although not as distinctly manifested, the characters are assigned certain ways of behavior according to their gender. The characters that break out of this cycle are marginalized by the others and regarded as unpopular. Besides, in *Abandon* women are still regarded as the 'weak gender', assigning them less powerful and authoritative functions.

4.2.2.4. Relationship between Pierce and John

The analysis of Pierce and John's relationship should first shed light on whether their behavior can be classified as stereotypical and following certain gender roles, then consider the nature of their relationship, and finally how power is distributed between them. The relationship between Pierce and John encompasses all of the previously mentioned attributes to an extent that they could be considered as 'walking stereotypes'. They are portrayed as the epitome of strong male hero and damsel in distress, as a result building a stark contrast in stereotypical behavior between men and women. John can be considered as the 'alpha male', a character that is "defined by stoicism, a quick temper, and a touch of rebelliousness. He usually tries to do the right thing, but often employs violence to overcome challenges and solve problems" (Smith 2011: ch 1). This is clearly demonstrated through the physical power he uses against, for example, Mr. Mueller almost killing him in the process, or the clerk

at the jewelry store. Pierce and John's relationship can be regarded as that of victim and hero (savior). Even though Pierce does not want to see herself as a victim anymore, and refuses to let herself be saved by someone else, the opposite happens. She is often the victim, either of assault (e.g. Furies: grandmother, jeweler, Mr. Mueller) or verbal abuse (e.g. students offending her at Westport, Richard Smith and grandmother questioning her intelligence). In the majority of cases, John suddenly appears to save her (the damsel in distress). Pierce's is aware of that: "The problem was, as John had pointed out […], trouble seemed to follow me no matter where I went" (151).

The constant need for her protection is essentially what keeps them together. While Pierce is the weaker link in this union, John is characterized as the powerful, tormented fighter (e.g. 90-97, 215, 252). Consequently, in part contributing to the understanding of women as weak and ultimately in need of protection, while men are the strong guardians.

Their relationship is also based on Pierce's inability to stay away from hurt things, clearly demonstrated by her concern for animals (e.g. ch. 20). In a sense, John is also wounded, especially by Pierce's rejection. Although the reader is given little information on John's past, the abandonment by his crew members and him being bound to the Underworld as death deity, away from his family, most likely left some emotional scars as well. These wounds need to be tended to and healed which is left for Pierce to do. There is also the juxtaposition of 'delicate girl' and 'wild boy'. While Pierce is portrayed as a fragile human, needing constant protection, e.g. through the necklace, or John, John is a wild supernatural being. On numerous occasions in the book, Pierce mentions John's wild side, and compares him to a wild animal that needs to be tamed (e.g. 82, 219, 289). Thus she feels obliged to take over this task.

Sometimes, one touch of her is sufficient enough to soften his temper, as exemplified by the following quote: "As soon as I touched him, I saw some of the wildness leave his expression. His gaze softened, and he seemed to catch his breath" (173).

Now, her mission to tame his wildness can be regarded as successful, as the following quote shows.

> He buried his head in the place where my neck met my shoulder, clinging to me as a tightly as if he were out there in the waves again, abandoned to the storm, and I was one solid thing he'd found to hold on to. Instead of my finding comfort in him, he was looking for it in me, I realized. (283)

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Nevertheless, he might not be as wild, compared to the way he behaved at the beginning of their relationship, but still displays reckless behavior by kidnapping Pierce a second time.

Their relationship is also strongly based on fear and paranoia, triggered by the constant possibility that the other could suddenly (dis)appear. Of course one has to bear in mind that the reader has no insight into John's mind, but Pierce's thoughts make it clear that she is afraid of him. For example, after her bike ride home from the cemetery, she frantically locks all of the doors, sets the alarm (91), and contemplates that "[she] was never going back outside again. Not so long as *he* was out there" (ibid 92). However, her fear is not strong enough to banish thoughts of him from her mind. She constantly replays earlier conversations with him, or waits for him to call her (e.g. 98f, 108f, 128).

It is also interesting to consider the fact that their conversations primarily center on the same arguments: Pierce's escape from the Underworld, John arguing that Pierce should leave him alone, or him explaining to her that she needs to keep out of danger. Prior to their talk at the pool in chapter 21, there is never any indication of affection, or interest in the other on an intimate level through their behavior or the content of their conversations. Under these circumstances their intimacy at the end appears sudden and rushed.

Considering the distribution of power between Pierce and John, as in various cases demonstrated, John as the alpha male, is in charge of dealing with difficult situations, such as the Fury attacks. John is also the one to give out orders, for instance, telling Pierce to never come back to the cemetery (ch. 8). It can also be argued that John is showing signs of a controlling character by following Pierce to her house or in general keeping a close eye on her (e.g. 38, 79, 97), subsequently making her his sole focus, and in turn facilitating to Pierce's somewhat social isolation. Another example for this is that in both cases when he takes Pierce to his palace he dresses her to his liking (e.g.53, 285). It is also John who ultimately decides over the course and nature of their relationship as he is the one to seek out Pierce, to start conversations or end them as he wishes, and decides when to take the next step.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to consider the intertextual relations between the Persephone myth and retellings of it in Young Adult Literature. The analysis of the two novels demonstrated that both stories show significant connections to the aforementioned source material. It is vital to acknowledge that classical literature still has an influence on (Western) literature produced in the 21st century. As Doherty points out, "myths never existed in monolithic versions" (2003: 10), thus each author who dealt with the stories contributed their own ideas, style, and focus to it. This is arguably also the case with the primary literature here.

The main research questions focused on how the source material was incorporated, consequently how it was altered in the process. First, it should be pointed out that the more modern retelling of the Persephone myth differs in many ways from the version more closely resembling it. As the analysis has shown, many of the key aspects from the myth are either not featured in *Abandon,* or are only represented to a limited degree. This is also true for the key figures, who are not the actual deities found in the myth. In this regard, it is important to acknowledge that the author extended the mythology by adding her own ideas, such as the death deities, or transforming previously established figures like the Furies.

Considering Broich and Pfisters' (1985) model for measuring the intensity of intertextual links, Carter's novel clearly shows the strongest. The novel not only uses the characters from mythology as main protagonists, but also directly refers to the myth by having characters (i.e. Henry and James) emphasize that the story of Persephone's abduction differs considerably from what is known throughout the canon. Nevertheless, strong links to the myth are also created in *Abandon*. These are, for example, the references made to Dante's *Inferno* through the epigraphs, or the depiction of the discussion of the myth between Richard Smith and Pierce, or her direct comparison to Persephone in the first chapter. Still, by placing the main storyline in the same universe as the myth, Carter's links should still be regarded as stronger.

Although many of the key aspects of the myth can be found in *The Goddess Test*, they are considerably altered, or their significance is weakened.

Similar to *Abandon*, the author altered the mythology according to her own ideas. The Olympians received two new members, and the basic principle that deities are immortal is shattered, as they can now fade into oblivion. The testing method used in the novel is based on the Seven Deadly Sins which is a concept taken from Christian cosmology, and further shows how the author extended the mythology. Also interesting to note is the elimination of the familial bond between the deities. Here they are not considered relatives. This, in the process, also removes the factor of incest. Furthermore, the relationships between some of the deities, as for example Diana and Henry who are highly fond of each other, constitute a considerable change considering their original feelings towards each other. Others such as Calliope or Ava, who are not part of the original Persephone myth, are incorporated into the story, on one hand, through simple name changes as in the case of the first; on the other hand, through combining their character with someone from the myth as in the case of the latter.

Concerning the marriage between Persephone and Hades in their 'reincarnated' forms (i.e. Kate and Henry, Pierce and John), the analysis proved that in both relationships the women, even though they were forced into them, still developed intimate feelings for their partners. This could suggest that the authors based some aspects of their stories on interpretations of the myth where this is incorporated (e.g. Evslin 2005).

Both authors use paratextual elements to create further connections. While in *Abandon* the epigraph points to Dante's *Inferno* as a possible intertext, in *The Goddess Test* a possible link is not only established through the title and the blurb on the front cover, but also through the summary on the back.

As the analysis shows, the authors not only integrated elements of the myth that focus on its content, but also certain aspects of the gender system from the ancient Greek society. According to Doherty (2003: 10) the mutual combination of "familiarity" and "strangeness" allows a myth to either continue traditional values, or combat them. Both Cabot and Carter chose to adhere to some of the values, especially in regard to the lack of agency exhibited through the female characters, their lack of power and authority compared to their male counterparts, and also by portraying gender stereotypes found in similar form in the source material.

Essentially, both societies, the community of Isla Huesos and Eden, reflect the patriarchal hierarchy found in the Greek mythology, which sees men at the top (e.g. Walter, Henry; Zack Oliviera, John) and women in the position of "yielding and being dominated" (Dobson 1992: 49). Not surprisingly women who break out of this opposition, like Diana or Pierce's grandmother, are portrayed as villainous or antagonistic characters, generally opposing the main female protagonist's interests.

The main similarity between the three female characters (Kate, Pierce, and Persephone) is their entrapment in a prison like setting. This is either manifested through physical entrapment, as is the case for Persephone, or through forms of manipulation and oppression, as the other women find themselves in. They are restricted in the most basic form. Since she was a baby, Kate is kept in a prison of lies, as her mother's only wish is to save Henry. She is manipulated to believe that she is free to choose her future. Similarly, Pierce is primarily a pawn in the game between the Furies and Henry. Her judgments are clouded, as she is meant to believe that something is wrong with her (e.g. ADHD).

One of the questions posed at the outset of this thesis, was how these female characters, and also the Persephone myth in general, are still relatable to teenage audiences in the 21st century. To answer this, it must be acknowledged that, at its heart, the Persephone myth is the story of a young woman forced to grow up too quickly and take on enormous responsibilities as the Queen of an entire kingdom - and this without her initial consent. Although this story dates back thousands of years, the essence of it is something teenagers today can still relate to, as they are faced with questions on how to plan their future at an early age. They are placed under considerable pressure in terms of education and making responsible choices. These choices are also important regarding first love and first sexual experiences. In addition, the relationship to their parents is also often a central topic. The majority of these issues are taken up in fiction, and the growing need for teenagers to read about them is also reflected in the rise of YAL.

The fantasy fiction for young adults published in recent years often focuses on paranormal romances. The success of the *Twilight* saga (2005), brought about an interest in stories that involve (chiefly) female humans and supernatural men, in this case vampires. This trend continued with stories

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focusing on, for example, human – werewolf (e.g. *Shiver* by Maggie Stiefvater 2009), or human – seraphim romances (e.g. *Hush Hush* by Becca Fitzpatrick 2009). Mythology quickly became another topic of interest here, as it also features supernatural creatures and in parts depicts human – deity relationships.

This could be regarded as a positive development, as authors reuse ancient source material to create something new that allows adolescents to encounter mythology in a different light, outside of the source texts, or dictionary entries, that is more likely suitable for them. However, problems arise when the previously mentioned metanarratives are recycled and not changed to a significant degree. Whether this occurs because the intertext is a particularly useful source for this, or, whether authors deliberately decide to incorporate these notions into their stories is not clear enough. Of course, also the genre of fantasy attracts these views and is only slowly moving towards producing fiction that portrays strong female characters without any added gender stereotypes.

The continuing popularity of paranormal romance stories could also be used, for example, to combat these metanarratives and possibly present myths, in this case the Persephone myth, from a different angle, in the process highlighting other characters, considering Hades' actions more closely, or concentrating on Demeter's struggles.

The research conducted here most certainly profits from an extension of the academic discussion of Greek mythology in Young Adult literature, especially by considering other myths used for retellings. Also, other novels that base their plot on the Persephone myth might be explored to understand whether the use of these metanarratives is indeed common. On the whole, this area deserves attention from scholars not only due to its recent popularity, but also due to the, in some parts, problematic messages it sends. This can in turn lead to awareness among writers and readers, and a possible dismissal of these patriarchal notions in YA mythological fiction.

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Appendix

Homeric Hymn to Demeter

[1] I begin to sing of rich-haired Demeter, awful goddess —of her and her trim-ankled daughter whom Aidoneus rapt away, given to him by all-seeing Zeus the loud-thunderer.

Apart from Demeter, lady of the golden sword and glorious fruits, [5] she was playing with the deep-bosomed daughters of Oceanus and gathering flowers over a soft meadow, roses and crocuses and beautiful violets, irises also and hyacinths and the narcissus, which Earth made to grow at the will of Zeus and to please the Host of Many, to be a snare for the bloom-like girl — [10] a marvellous, radiant flower. It was a thing of awe whether for deathless gods or mortal men to see: from its root grew a hundred blooms and it smelled most sweetly, so that all wide heaven above and the whole earth and the sea's salt swell laughed for joy. [15] And the girl was amazed and reached out with both hands to take the lovely toy; but the wide-pathed earth yawned there in the plain of Nysa, and the lord, Host of Many, with his immortal horses sprang out upon her —the Son of Cronos, He who has many names.1

He caught her up reluctant on his golden car and bare her away [20] lamenting. Then she cried out shrilly with her voice, calling upon her father, the Son of Cronos, who is most high and excellent. But no one, either of the deathless gods or of mortal men, heard her voice, nor yet the olive-trees bearing rich fruit: [25] only tender-hearted Hecate, bright-coiffed, the daughter of Persaeus, heard the girl from her cave, and the lord Helios, Hyperion's bright son, as she cried to her father, the Son of Cronos. But he was sitting aloof, apart from the gods, in his temple where many pray, and receiving sweet offerings from mortal men. So he, that son of Cronos, of many names, who is Ruler of Many and Host of Many, [30] was bearing her away by leave of Zeus on his immortal chariot —his own brother's child and all unwilling.

And so long as she, the goddess, yet beheld earth and starry heaven and the strong-flowing sea where fishes shoal, [35] and the rays of the sun, and still hoped to see her dear mother and the tribes of the eternal gods, so long hope calmed her great heart for all her trouble ... and the heights of the mountains and the depths of the sea rang with her immortal voice: and her queenly mother heard her.

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[40] Bitter pain seized her heart, and she rent the covering upon her divine hair with her dear hands: her dark cloak she cast down from both her shoulders and sped, like a wild-bird, over the firm land and yielding sea, seeking her child. [45] But no one would tell her the truth, neither god nor mortal man; and of the birds of omen none came with true news for her. Then for nine days queenly Deo wandered over the earth with flaming torches in her hands, so grieved that she never tasted ambrosia and the sweet draught of nectar, [50] nor sprinkled her body with water. But when the tenth enlightening dawn had come, Hecate, with a torch in her hands, met her, and spoke to her and told her news:

"Queenly Demeter, bringer of seasons and giver of good gifts, [55] what god of heaven or what mortal man has rapt away Persephone and pierced with sorrow your dear heart? For I heard her voice, yet saw not with my eyes who it was. But I tell you truly and shortly all I know."

So, then, said Hecate. [60] And the daughter of rich-haired Rhea answered her not, but sped swiftly with her, holding flaming torches in her hands. So they came to Helios, who is watchman of both gods and men, and stood in front of his horses: and the bright goddess enquired of him: "Helios, do you at least regard me, goddess as I am, [65] if ever by word or deed of mine I have cheered your heart and spirit. Through the fruitless air I heard the thrilling cry of my daughter whom I bare, sweet scion of my body and lovely in form, as of one seized violently; though with my eyes I saw nothing. But you —for with your beams you look down [70] from the bright upper air over all the earth and sea —tell me truly of my dear child, if you have seen her anywhere, what god or mortal man has violently seized her against her will and mine, and so made off."

So said she. And the Son of Hyperion answered her: [75] "Queen Demeter, daughter of rich-haired Rhea, I will tell you the truth; for I greatly reverence and pity you in your grief for your trim-ankled daughter. None other of the deathless gods is to blame, but only cloud-gathering Zeus who gave her to Hades, her father's brother, to be called his buxom wife. [80] And Hades seized her and took her loudly crying in his chariot down to his realm of mist and gloom. Yet, goddess, cease your loud lament and keep not vain anger unrelentingly: Aidoneus, the Ruler of Many, is no unfitting husband among the deathless gods for your child, [85] being your own brother and born of the same

stock: also, for honor, he has that third share which he received when division was made at the first, and is appointed lord of those among whom he dwells."

So he spake, and called to his horses: and at his chiding they quickly whirled the swift chariot along, like long-winged birds.

[90] But grief yet more terrible and savage came into the heart of Demeter, and thereafter she was so angered with the dark-clouded Son of Cronos that she avoided the gathering of the gods and high Olympus, and went to the towns and rich fields of men, disfiguring her form a long while. And no one of men [95] or deep-bosomed women knew her when they saw her, until she came to the house of wise Celeus who then was lord of fragrant Eleusis. Vexed in her dear heart, she sat near the wayside by the Maiden Well, from which the women of the place were used to draw water, [100] in a shady place over which grew an olive shrub. And she was like an ancient woman who is cut off from childbearing and the gifts of garland-loving Aphrodite, like the nurses of kings' children who deal justice, or like the house-keepers in their echoing halls. [105] There the daughters of Celeus, son of Eleusis, saw her, as they were coming for easy-drawn water, to carry it in pitchers of bronze to their dear father's house: four were they and like goddesses in the flower of their girlhood, Callidice and Cleisidice and lovely Demo [110] and Callithoe+ who was the eldest of them all. They knew her not, —for the gods are not easily discerned by mortals —, but standing near by her spoke winged words:

"Old mother, whence and who are you of folk born long ago? Why are you gone away from the city and do not draw near the houses? [115] For there in the shady halls are women of just such age as you, and others younger; and they would welcome you both by word and by deed."

Thus they said. And she, that queen among goddesses answered them saying: "Hail, dear children, whosoever you are of woman-kind. [120] I will tell you my story; for it is not unseemly that I should tell you truly what you ask. Doso is my name, for my stately mother gave it me. And now I am come from Crete over the sea's wide back, —not willingly; but against my liking, by force of strength, [125] pirates brought me thence. Afterwards they put in with their swift craft to Thoricus, and there the women landed on the shore in full throng and the men likewise, and they began to make ready a meal by the stern-cables of the ship. But my heart craved not pleasant food, [130] and I fled secretly across the dark country and escaped my masters, that they should not take me

unpurchased across the sea, there to win a price for me. And so I wandered and am come here: and I know not at all what land this is or what people are in it. [135] But may all those who dwell on Olympus give you husbands and birth of children as parents desire, so you take pity on me, maidens, [137a] and show me this clearly that I may learn, dear children, to the house of what man and woman I may go, [140] to work for them cheerfully at such tasks as belong to a woman of my age. Well could I nurse a new born child, holding him in my arms, or keep house, or spread my masters' bed in a recess of the well-built chamber, or teach the women their work.”

[145] So said the goddess. And straightway the unwed maiden Callidice, goodliest in form of the daughters of Celeus, answered her and said:

“Mother, what the gods send us, we mortals bear perforce, although we suffer; for they are much stronger than we. But now I will teach you clearly, [150] telling you the names of men who have great power and honor here and are chief among the people, guarding our city's coif of towers by their wisdom and true judgements: there is wise Triptolemus and Dioclus and Polyxeinus and blameless Eumolpus [155] and Dolichus and our own brave father. All these have wives who manage in the house, and no one of them, so soon as she had seen you, would dishonor you and turn you from the house, but they will welcome you; for indeed you are godlike. [160] But if you will, stay here; and we will go to our father's house and tell Metaneira, our deep-bosomed mother, all this matter fully, that she may bid you rather come to our home than search after the houses of others. She has an only son, [165] late-born, who is being nursed in our well-built house, a child of many prayers and welcome: if you could bring him up until he reached the full measure of youth, any one of womankind who should see you would straightway envy you, such gifts would our mother give for his upbringing.”

So she spake: and the goddess bowed her head in assent. And they filled their shining vessels [170] with water and carried them off rejoicing. Quickly they came to their father's great house and straightway told their mother according as they had heard and seen. Then she bade them go with all speed and invite the stranger to come for a measureless hire. As hinds or heifers in spring time, [175] when sated with pasture, bound about a meadow, so they, holding up the folds of their lovely garments, darted down the hollow path, and their hair like a crocus flower streamed about their shoulders. And they found

the good goddess near the wayside where they had left her before, [180] and led her to the house of their dear father. And she walked behind, distressed in her dear heart, with her head veiled and wearing a dark cloak which waved about the slender feet of the goddess.

Soon they came to the house of heaven-nurtured Celeus [185] and went through the portico to where their queenly mother sat by a pillar of the close-fitted roof, holding her son, a tender scion, in her bosom. And the girls ran to her. But the goddess walked to the threshold: and her head reached the roof and she filled the doorway with a heavenly radiance. [190] Then awe and reverence and pale fear took hold of Metaneira, and she rose up from her couch before Demeter, and bade her be seated. But Demeter, bringer of seasons and giver of perfect gifts, would not sit upon the bright couch, but stayed silent with lovely eyes cast down [195] until careful Iambe placed a jointed seat for her and threw over it a silvery fleece. Then she sat down and held her veil in her hands before her face. A long time she sat upon the stool2without speaking because of her sorrow, and greeted no one by word or by sign, but rested, [200] never smiling, and tasting neither food nor drink, because she pined with longing for her deep-bosomed daughter, until careful Iambe —who pleased her moods in aftertime also —moved the holy lady with many a quip and jest to smile and laugh and cheer her heart. [205] Then Metaneira filled a cup with sweet wine and offered it to her; but she refused it, for she said it was not lawful for her to drink red wine, but bade them mix meal and water with soft mint and give her to drink. [210] And Metaneira mixed the draught and gave it to the goddess as she bade. So the great queen Deo received it to observe the sacrament.

And of them all, well-girded Metaneira first began to speak: "Hail, lady! For I think you are not meanly but nobly born; truly dignity and [215] grace are conspicuous upon your eyes as in the eyes of kings that deal justice. Yet we mortals bear perforce what the gods send us, though we be grieved; for a yoke is set upon our necks. But now, since you are come here, you shall have what I can bestow: and nurse me this child whom the gods gave me in my old age and beyond my hope, [220] a son much prayed for. If you should bring him up until he reach the full measure of youth, any one of woman-kind that sees you will straightway envy you, so great reward would I give for his upbringing."

Then rich-haired Demeter answered her: [225] "And to you, also, lady, all hail, and may the gods give you good! Gladly will I take the boy to my breast, as

you bid me, and will nurse him. Never, I ween, through any heedlessness of his nurse shall witchcraft hurt him nor yet the Undercutter:4 for I know a charm far stronger than the Woodcutter, [230] and I know an excellent safeguard against woeful witchcraft."

When she had so spoken, she took the child in her fragrant bosom with her divine hands: and his mother was glad in her heart. So the goddess nursed in the palace Demophoon, wise Celeus' goodly son whom well-girded Metaneira bare. [235] And the child grew like some immortal being, not fed with food nor nourished at the breast: for by day [236a] rich-crowned Demeter would anoint him with ambrosia as if he were the offspring of a god and breathe sweetly upon him as she held him in her bosom. But at night she would hide him like a brand in the heart of the fire, [240] unknown to his dear parents. And it wrought great wonder in these that he grew beyond his age; for he was like the gods face to face. And she would have made him deathless and unageing, had not well-girded Metaneira in her heedlessness kept watch by night from her sweet-smelling chamber and [245] spied. But she wailed and smote her two hips, because she feared for her son and was greatly distraught in her heart; so she lamented and uttered winged words:

"Demophoon, my son, the strange woman buries you deep in fire and works grief and bitter sorrow for me."

[250] Thus she spoke, mourning. And the bright goddess, lovely-crowned Demeter, heard her, and was wroth with her. So with her divine hands she snatched from the fire the dear son whom Metaneira had born unhoped-for in the palace, and cast him from her to the ground; for she was terribly angry in her heart. [255] Forthwith she said to well-girded Metaneira:

"Witless are you mortals and dull to foresee your lot, whether of good or evil, that comes upon you. For now in your heedlessness you have wrought folly past healing; for —be witness the oath of the gods, the relentless water of Styx — [260] I would have made your dear son deathless and unaging all his days and would have bestowed on him everlasting honor, but now he can in no way escape death and the fates. Yet shall unfailing honor always rest upon him, because he lay upon my knees and slept in my arms. [265] But, as the years move round and when he is in his prime, the sons of the Eleusinians shall ever wage war and dread strife with one another continually. Lo! I am that Demeter who has share of honor and is the greatest help and cause of joy to the undying

gods and mortal men. [270] But now, let all the people build me a great temple and an altar below it and beneath the city and its sheer wall upon a rising hillock above Callichorus. And I myself will teach my rites, that hereafter you may reverently perform them and so win the favour of my heart."

[275] When she had so said, the goddess changed her stature and her looks, thrusting old age away from her: beauty spread round about her and a lovely fragrance was wafted from her sweet-smelling robes, and from the divine body of the goddess a light shone afar, while golden tresses spread down over her shoulders, [280] so that the strong house was filled with brightness as with lightning. And so she went out from the palace.

And straightway Metaneira's knees were loosed and she remained speechless for a long while and did not remember to take up her late-born son from the ground. But his sisters heard his pitiful wailing and sprang down from their well-spread beds: [285] one of them took up the child in her arms and laid him in her bosom, while another revived the fire, and a third rushed with soft feet to bring their mother from her fragrant chamber. And they gathered about the struggling child and washed him, [290] embracing him lovingly; but he was not comforted, because nurses and handmaids much less skilful were holding him now.

All night long they sought to appease the glorious goddess, quaking with fear. But, as soon as dawn began to show, they told powerful Celeus all things without fail, [295] as the lovely-crowned goddess Demeter charged them. So Celeus called the countless people to an assembly and bade them make a goodly temple for rich-haired Demeter and an altar upon the rising hillock. And they obeyed him right speedily and harkened to his voice, [300] doing as he commanded. As for the child, he grew like an immortal being.

Now when they had finished building and had drawn back from their toil, they went every man to his house. But golden-haired Demeter sat there apart from all the blessed gods and stayed, wasting with yearning for her deep-bosomed daughter. [305] Then she caused a most dreadful and cruel year for mankind over the all-nourishing earth: the ground would not make the seed sprout, for rich-crowned Demeter kept it hid. In the fields the oxen drew many a curved plough in vain, and much white barley was cast upon the land without avail. [310] So she would have destroyed the whole race of man with cruel famine and have robbed them who dwell on Olympus of their glorious right of

gifts and sacrifices, had not Zeus perceived and marked this in his heart. First he sent golden-winged Iris to call [315] rich-haired Demeter, lovely in form. So he commanded. And she obeyed the dark-clouded Son of Cronos, and sped with swift feet across the space between. She came to the stronghold of fragrant Eleusis, and there finding dark-cloaked Demeter in her temple, [320] spake to her and uttered winged words:

"Demeter, father Zeus, whose wisdom is everlasting, calls you to come join the tribes of the eternal gods: come therefore, and let not the message I bring from Zeus pass unobeyed."

Thus said Iris imploring her. But Demeter's heart was not moved. [325] Then again the father sent forth all the blessed and eternal gods besides: and they came, one after the other, and kept calling her and offering many very beautiful gifts and whatever rights she might be pleased to choose among the deathless gods. Yet no one was able to persuade her mind and will, [330] so wroth was she in her heart; but she stubbornly rejected all their words: for she vowed that she would never set foot on fragrant Olympus nor let fruit spring out of the ground, until she beheld with her eyes her own fair-faced daughter.

Now when all-seeing Zeus the loud-thunderer heard this, [335] he sent the Slayer of Argus whose wand is of gold to Erebus, so that having won over Hades with soft words, he might lead forth chaste Persephone to the light from the misty gloom to join the gods, and that her mother might see her with her eyes and cease from her anger. [340] And Hermes obeyed, and leaving the house of Olympus, straightway sprang down with speed to the hidden places of the earth. And he found the lord Hades in his house seated upon a couch, and his shy mate with him, much reluctant, because she yearned for her mother. But she was afar off, [345] brooding on her fell design because of the deeds of the blessed gods. And the strong Slayer of Argus drew near and said:

"Dark-haired Hades, ruler over the departed, father Zeus bids me bring noble Persephone forth from Erebus unto the gods, [350] that her mother may see her with her eyes and cease from her dread anger with the immortals; for now she plans an awful deed, to destroy the weakly tribes of earth-born men by keeping seed hidden beneath the earth, and so she makes an end of the honors of the undying gods. For she keeps fearful anger and does not consort with the gods, [355] but sits aloof in her fragrant temple, dwelling in the rocky hold of Eleusis."

So he said. And Aidoneus, ruler over the dead, smiled grimly and obeyed the behest of Zeus the king. For he straightway urged wise Persephone, saying:

[360] "Go now, Persephone, to your dark-robed mother, go, and feel kindly in your heart towards me: be not so exceedingly cast down; for I shall be no unfitting husband for you among the deathless gods, that am own brother to father Zeus. And while you are here, [365] you shall rule all that lives and moves and shall have the greatest rights among the deathless gods: those who defraud you and do not appease your power with offerings, reverently performing rites and paying fit gifts, shall be punished for evermore."

[370] When he said this, wise Persephone was filled with joy and hastily sprang up for gladness. But he on his part secretly gave her sweet pomegranate seed to eat, taking care for himself that she might not remain continually with grave, dark-robed Demeter. Then Aidoneus the Ruler of Many openly got ready his deathless [375] horses beneath the golden chariot. And she mounted on the chariot, and the strong Slayer of Argus took reins and whip in his dear hands and drove forth from the hall, the horses speeding readily. [380] Swiftly they traversed their long course, and neither the sea nor river-waters nor grassy glens nor mountain-peaks checked the career of the immortal horses, but they clave the deep air above them as they went. And Hermes brought them to the place where rich-crowned Demeter was staying and checked them [385] before her fragrant temple.

And when Demeter saw them, she rushed forth as does a Maenad down some thick-wooded mountain, while Persephone on the other side, when she saw her mother's sweet eyes, left the chariot and horses, and leaped down to run to her, and falling upon her neck, embraced her. [390] But while Demeter was still holding her dear child in her arms, her heart suddenly misgave her for some snare, so that she feared greatly and ceased fondling her daughter and asked of her at once: "My child, tell me, surely you have not tasted any food while you were below? Speak out and hide nothing, but let us both know. [395] For if you have not, you shall come back from loathly Hades and live with me and your father, the dark-clouded Son of Cronos and be honored by all the deathless gods; but if you have tasted food, you must go back again beneath the secret places of the earth, there to dwell a third part of the seasons every year: [400] yet for the two parts you shall be with me and the other deathless gods. But when the earth shall bloom with the fragrant flowers of spring in every

kind, then from the realm of darkness and gloom thou shalt come up once more to be a wonder for gods and mortal men. [403a] And now tell me how he rapt you away to the realm of darkness and gloom, and by what trick did the strong Host of Many beguile you?"

[405] Then beautiful Persephone answered her thus: "Mother, I will tell you all without error. When luck-bringing Hermes came, swift messenger from my father the Son of Cronos and the other Sons of Heaven, bidding me come back from Erebus that you might see me with your eyes [410] and so cease from your anger and fearful wrath against the gods, I sprang up at once for joy; but he secretly put in my mouth sweet food, a pomegranate seed, and forced me to taste against my will. Also I will tell how he rapt me away by the deep plan [415] of my father the Son of Cronos and carried me off beneath the depths of the earth, and will relate the whole matter as you ask. All we were playing in a lovely meadow, Leucippe5 and Phaeno and Electra and Ianthe, Melita also and Iache with Rhodea and Callirhoe [420] and Melobosis and Tyche and Ocyrhoe, fair as a flower, Chryseis, Ianeira, Acaste and Admete and Rhodope and Pluto and charming Calypso; Styx too was there and Urania and lovely Galaxaura with Pallas who rouses battles and Artemis delighting in arrows: [425] we were playing and gathering sweet flowers in our hands, soft crocuses mingled with irises and hyacinths, and rose-blooms and lilies, marvellous to see, and the narcissus which the wide earth caused to grow yellow as a crocus. That I plucked in my joy; but the earth [430] parted beneath, and there the strong lord, the Host of Many, sprang forth and in his golden chariot he bore me away, all unwilling, beneath the earth: then I cried with a shrill cry. All this is true, sore though it grieves me to tell the tale."

So did they then, with hearts at one, [435] greatly cheer each the other's soul and spirit with many an embrace: their hearts had relief from their griefs while each took and gave back joyousness.

Then bright-coiffed Hecate came near to them, and often did she embrace the daughter of holy Demeter: [440] and from that time the lady Hecate was minister and companion to Persephone.

And all-seeing Zeus sent a messenger to them, rich-haired Rhea, to bring dark-cloaked Demeter to join the families of the gods: and he promised to give her what rights she should choose among the deathless gods [445] and agreed that her daughter should go down for the third part of the circling year to

darkness and gloom, but for the two parts should live with her mother and the other deathless gods. Thus he commanded. And the goddess did not disobey the message of Zeus; swiftly she rushed down from the peaks of Olympus [450] and came to the plain of Rharus, rich, fertile corn-land once, but then in nowise fruitful, for it lay idle and utterly leafless, because the white grain was hidden by design of trim-ankled Demeter. But afterwards, [455] as spring-time waxed, it was soon to be waving with long ears of corn, and its rich furrows to be loaded with grain upon the ground, while others would already be bound in sheaves. There first she landed from the fruitless upper air: and glad were the goddesses to see each other and cheered in heart. Then bright-coiffed Rhea said to Demeter:

[460] "Come, my daughter; for far-seeing Zeus the loud-thunderer calls you to join the families of the gods, and has promised to give you what rights you please among the deathless gods, and has agreed that for a third part of the circling year your daughter shall go down to darkness and gloom, [465] but for the two parts shall be with you and the other deathless gods: so has he declared it shall be and has bowed his head in token. But come, my child, obey, and be not too angry unrelentingly with the dark-clouded Son of Cronos; but rather increase forthwith for men the fruit that gives them life."

[470] So spake Rhea. And rich-crowned Demeter did not refuse but straightway made fruit to spring up from the rich lands, so that the whole wide earth was laden with leaves and flowers. Then she went, and to the kings who deal justice, Triptolemus and Diocles, the horse-driver, [475] and to doughty Eumolpus and Celeus, leader of the people, she showed the conduct of her rites and taught them all her mysteries, to Triptolemus and Polyxeinus and Diocles also, —awful mysteries which no one may in any way transgress or pry into or utter, for deep awe of the gods checks the voice. [480] Happy is he among men upon earth who has seen these mysteries; but he who is uninitiate and who has no part in them, never has lot of like good things once he is dead, down in the darkness and gloom.

But when the bright goddess had taught them all, they went to Olympus to the gathering of the other gods. [485] And there they dwell beside Zeus who delights in thunder, awful and reverend goddesses. Right blessed is he among men on earth whom they freely love: soon they do send Plutus as guest to his great house, Plutus who gives wealth to mortal men.

[490] And now, queen of the land of sweet Eleusis and sea-girt Paros and rockyAntron, lady, giver of good gifts, bringer of seasons, queen Deo, be gracious, you and your daughter all beauteous Persephone, and for my song grant me heart-cheering substance. [495] And now I will remember you and another song also.

Anonymous. *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica.* Trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White. London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1914.

Abstract

This thesis examines how Greek mythology, a topic that has already enjoyed popularity in Western literature for a long time, is incorporated into literature for young adults, specifically focusing on two novels that retell the Persephone myth: *Abandon* by Meg Cabot and *The Goddess Test* by Aimee Carter. In this regard the concept of intertextuality is traced back to its origins in Bakthin's theories, and to the ideas of French scholars Gerard Genette and Michael Riffaterre. The use of mythological intertexts in Young Adult Literature (YAL) is also of interest here. These theories are further extended with an examination of certain concepts of gender theory, such as, agency, power relations, and gender systems, as these are notions important to the discussion of patriarchal metanarratives found in the source material. Although Greek mythology has been a topic explored by various scholars, not only in connection to literary studies, but also in regard to modern art or history, academic reviews of it as theme in YAL have so far been limited. One reason for this is that YAL, as a specific literary field, is merely a few decades old, thus, compared to other areas, relatively new.

The discussion of the primary literature takes these considerations into account, and is mainly concerned with the intertextual relations between the Persephone myth and its modern retellings. In general both novels incorporate aspects of the myth in their plots, and the authors use certain techniques, such as paratextual references, to achieve an even closer connection to the mythology. However, the degree, to which characters or events from the myth are adopted, varies to a considerable amount. This is also true for the extent to which the aforementioned metanarratives are represented in the retellings. The research shows that authors of Young Adult literature also take inspiration from ancient material such as the Greek myths, as these are, to a certain degree, also concerned with issues important to adolescent readers, like coming of age, first love, or parent-child relationship. The thesis highlights these possible points of overlap, and indicates possible points of departure for future research.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Masterarbeit untersucht ein in der westlichen Literatur schon länger sehr beliebtes Thema, die griechische Mythologie. Die Untersuchung fokussiert sich speziell auf zwei Romane, die Nacherzählungen des „Persephone"-Mythos sind: Meg Cabots „Abandon" und Aimee Carters „The Goddess Test". In diesem Zusammenhang wird die Theorie der Intertextualität bis hin zu ihren Ursprüngen in Bakthins Konzepten und den Ideen der französischen Wissenschaftler Gerard Genette und Michael Riffaterre zurückverfolgt. Ein Schwerpunkt wird außerdem auch auf die Nutzung von mythologischen Intertexten in der Jugendliteratur gesetzt. Die eben genannten Thesen werden durch das Explorieren einiger Konzepte der „Gender-Theorie" (u.a. Agency, Gender-Systeme sowie insbesondere patriarchalischen Machtbeziehungen) erweitert.

Obwohl die griechische Mythologie in den Bereichen der Literatur, Kunst und Geschichte als gut erforscht gilt, wurde deren Verwirklichung in (moderner) Jugendliteratur bis dato vernachlässigt. Die Gründe sind unter anderem in der erst jungen Entstehungsgeschichte zu finden.

Die Erörterung der Primärliteratur berücksichtigt diese Ideen und konzentriert sich speziell auf die Untersuchung der intertextuellen Verbindungen zwischen dem Mythos der „Persephone" und dessen Nacherzählungen. Im Allgemeinen bauen beide Romane Teile des Mythos in ihre Handlung ein und die Autoren verwenden spezifische Methoden (u.a. paratextuelle Bezüge), um eine noch stärkere Verbindung zur Mythologie zu schaffen. Die Unterschiede werden in der Verwurzelung der Charaktere und deren Handlungen in der Adaption sowie in der bereits erwähnten Metanarrative aus den Intertexten mehr als deutlich.

Diese Arbeit soll aufzeigen, dass sich bei Autoren der (modernen) Jugendliteratur an vielen Orten Inspirationen aus antiken mythischen Materialien finden lassen, da grundsätzliche Themen wie Eltern-Kind-Beziehungen, erste Liebe und Erwachsen werden scheinbar zeitlos sind. Durch die verbindenden Ergebnisse dieser beiden Positionen lassen sich mögliche Ausgangspunkte für zukünftige wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen darstellen.

Curriculum Vitae

Persönliche Daten:

Name: Olivia Zajkas

Schul- und Hochschulbildung:

10/2012 -   Masterstudium Anglophone Literatures and
                               Cultures, Universität Wien
                               Studienschwerpunkte:
                               > Amerikanische Literatur
                               > Jugendliteratur

03/2013 -   Bachelorstudium Hungarologie, Universität Wien
                               Studienschwerpunkt:
                               > Literatur

02/2009 – 09/2012   Bachelorstudium English and American Studies,
                               Universität Wien
                               Studienschwerpunkt:
                               > Literatur

2003 – 2008   Höhere Lehranstalt für Tourismus und
                               wirtschaftliche Berufe – Wien
                               > Schwerpunkt: International Relations (bilingual)
                               > Abschluss: Matura mit gutem Erfolg

Akademische Auszeichnungen

01/2014   Leistungsstipendium, Universität Wien

Auslandsaufenthalte

09/2013 – 02/2014   Auslandsstudium im Rahmen des ERASMUS-
                               Programms in Prag, Tschechische Republik an der
                               Univerzita Karlova v Praze, Pädagogische Fakultät