

Old Clothes, New Habits
Recreating Persephone's, Hades' and Demeter's Figures in Meg
Cabot's *Abandon* Trilogy

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Abstract. Mythology is still an integral part of our lives. Creators, such as painters, film and cartoon directors, video game makers, architects, sculptors or – in our case most importantly – writers like turning back to the antique culture from time to time and, taking a part of it with them as their main inspiration, recreate it according to their own imagination. With this line of actions, the ancient world still lives among us in a new, always modernized but still familiar form.

In the present paper, I would like to demonstrate this symbiosis of the ancient mythical and nowadays popular fantasy world. Greek mythology being my base, I have picked the characters of Persephone, Hades and Demeter, and – treating them as archetypes – my main attempt is to see the depth of these figures reborn in the 21st century, outlining all the new and old, remaining characteristics which have made them survive even from a distance of thousands of years.

Making use of Jungian archetypes and the feminist views upon Homer's epic poem I shall prove that even popular fiction can create a complex fictional reality. Cabot's talent shines through her style of talking to the younger generation in their language while talking about "adult-like" things, she still manages to build up a friendship of sympathy, be a mentor, a teacher, an idol and a confidant. Her literature shows that less complicated can still be well-constructed and smartly formed. *Abandon* is a good example of using the knowledge we have got in everyday life. Canonic and popular literature are two parallel worlds, one leaning on the other, with an imminent intertextuality always existing, which I hope I will succeed to hint at and which I can develop further in an upcoming paper.

Keywords: mythology, adolescent literature, popular fiction, archetypes

1. Introduction

1.1. A First Encounter with the Myth

We have all heard about the myth of Persephone (*Lat.* Proserpina), Hades (*Lat.* Pluto) and Demeter (*Lat.* Ceres), the story about a kidnapped daughter, a loveless marriage, a devious ruse and a grieving mother determined to get her child back, even if her actions (or – more specifically – the lack of her actions) could cause starvation, death and, in the long term, the end of humanity and of the world as known in its previous forms. The myth – in its oral form – goes a long way back in time. It is highly believed by scholars to have survived “from at least 2000 BC and has informed art and storytelling in literature, poetry, dance, and theatre throughout the centuries.” (qtd. in Horbury 2015, 13) The story revolves around the kidnapping – or sometimes even mentioned as the abduction or rape – of Persephone, Zeus’ – the ruler of Olympus –, and Demeter’s – the goddess of harvest – daughter. First mentioned as a maiden named ‘Korê’, their daughter is picking flowers with a group of young girls when Hades appears from nowhere with his black horses, grabs her, puts her on his carriage taking the girl with him into the Underworld. Having gotten Zeus’s permission earlier, Hades then makes the girl his wife and the Queen of his kingdom of dead souls. Finding out about her beloved child’s disappearance, Demeter, her mind clouded by mourning and grief, decides to give up on her duty and refuses the crops to grow, leaving barren lands behind her. Twelve months pass in this way; humanity is starving, with no crops there are no offerings made to the Gods. Zeus, feeling that he must make Demeter return to her job, asks Hades to let Persephone come back to the surface. The Underworld ruler agrees. However, he first gives Persephone a pomegranate seed (in some versions she eats a full pomegranate), this way she is obliged to spend one third of every year with him, but in the remaining time she can stay with her mother. This way the crisis is solved, Persephone joins Demeter, together they become the ‘twin goddesses’ bringing spring back to Earth. (qtd. in Horbury 2015, 2)

The myth originally had a strong agricultural meaning, firstly functioning as an explanation regarding crops and the changing of seasons. Ancient people, not knowing anything about the Earth moving around the Sun, made this story up to describe the inexplicable phenomenon of a rich period being followed by the ‘death’ of nature. However, later the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, its first written version widened the list of the possible interpretations.

The Homeric hymns functioned as sung prayers “composed to honour and praise deities and apparently served as preludes (prooimia) to the recitation of other epic poetry.” (Foley 1999, 28) It is also believed that these kinds of poems were read out loud during some feasts, seasonally recurring festivals or even poetic contests. Trying to catch the attention of and to get the favour of the gods and goddesses, the poems always started and ended by praising them, a few lines glorifying their virtues, will and power, justifying their actions, mentioning their past grace and showing the love of the community for and faith in them. They contained an enumeration of epithets similar to that of the epics, sometimes built like a frame around a longer or shorter relator part written in a typical Homeric style, in dactylic hexameter. (Foley 1999, 28-29)

The author of the *Hymn to Demeter* is unknown. Even the period in which it was composed is unsure, although scholars talk about a date approximately somewhere between 650-550 B.C. It is one of the longer poems (having over 490 lines) that survived under the name of the great Homer, with multiple characters, a strong narrative line, dialogues, a broadly identified timeframe, taking place both in the divine and mortal world. Thus, it did not only serve as a prayer, but also as a kind of retelling – or we can call it even a reproduction – of one of the most known mythical stories. (Foley 1999, 30) The first two lines – as I have already mentioned – start with the direct addressing of “the fair-tressed awesome” goddess Demeter, mentioning her “slim-ankled” daughter, Korê/Persephone too. (trans. by Foley 1999, 18) Now, for the ending, the rest of the poem pretty much follows the original myth: Persephone gets kidnapped without any help (lines 3-32), Demeter finds out about it and falls into sadness (33-50), Hekate’s visit (51-61), Helios’ visit, Demeter learns the truth (62-88), she leaves Olympus and goes to the humans in the form of an old woman called Doso. We also learn about the story King Keleos and Queen Metaneira’s burned son, Demophon, who had to die in the fire before Demeter could make him immortal as his mother opened the door before it was due time – (89-315). Zeus asks for the goddess but she remains unmoved (316-333), Zeus’ second attempt succeeds, he sends Hermes to Hades (334-358), Hades lets Persephone go but tricks her with the food of the Underworld (359-374). Hermes brings Persephone to the surface, she reunites with her mother (375-392). This is followed by Persephone’s story and the consequences of the pomegranate seed (393-469) and the return of spring (470-489). In lines 490-495 the author calls Demeter’s name again, as he summarizes all his words above, praises her and her daughter for the last time finally ending the poem with an open closure, he says goodbye to the goddesses but also mentions the possibility of another hymn: “And I shall remember you and a new song as well.” (Foley 1999, 27-495)

1.2. The Changing Phenomenon of the Possible Interpretations

The myth of Persephone suggests two possible interpretations right from the beginning, that of the maiden and that of the queen of the Underworld. Throughout the different literary eras, these two sides of the goddess either coexisted or dominated one another in the literary works. In Homer's *Iliad* (IX, 457, 569) and in the *Odyssey* (X, 491-534) she is Hades' dreaded wife, known first, due to Orpheus' song pleading to free his wife Eurydice. The image of the goddess as she appears in Homer's works can be found later on in Vergil's and Ovid's, but also in Goethe's texts. (Lutz 2009, 202) Virgil's *Georgica* emphasizes not only the agricultural function of the myth but also the respect of the goddess of plough to stimulate the cultivation, also, seeing it on a higher level, her myth resembles the traces of creating culture. Ovid's text resembles that of Virgil's, also underlining the cultural meaning of the myth. (Moog-Grünewald 2008, 563-566)

Claudian of the late ancient period continued Ovid's interpretation in his hexametric epic poem. His text remained unfinished, yet it also showed the episode in the Underworld of Pluto and Proserpina getting married and looking forward to having a child. He adds a more positive image to the original story. By presenting Pluto and his wife as a happy couple Pluto's image changed from the cold-blooded kidnapper to a loving husband. (Lutz 2009, 203)

In the Middle Ages Proserpina's myth based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was mainly interpreted from the perspective of a Christian moralizing allegory having rather negative connotations. Proserpina became the symbol of the human soul lost because of the vanity of the world. As a lost soul, Pluto, here Satan, abducted her and took her down to Hell,.

Petrus Berchorius' interpretation from around 1342 resembles the above-mentioned direction. Proserpina picking flowers stands for the human soul that is preoccupied with earthly, fading things. Thus, Pluto/Satan kidnaps the lost soul on a carriage drawn by the four sins and takes it down to Hell. Ceres/Demeter then symbolizes the Church that always seeks to protect and save human beings. However, this Christian moralization fades in the literature of the Renaissance period. For example, in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1380/1400) Proserpina appears in a new light once again. His way of depicting her is rooted in Claudian's text. Pluto and Proserpina symbolize man and woman in general, the differences between the two genders: Pluto embodies all men who have been betrayed, while Proserpina speaks on behalf of all women, and asks for equal rights. (Lutz 2009, 204) In Boccaccio's *Amorosa visione* (1342/43)

the couple of Pluto and Proserpina is celebrated next to the great lovers of all times. (Lutz 2009, 205)

In the late 18th century in the works of Goethe and Schiller we have the figure of the suffering Persephone in the foreground again. Goethe in his drama *Proserpina* (1774) lets the heroine talk in a lengthy monologue about how she suffers from being bound to the Underworld. Schiller in his ode entitled “The Ideal and Life” hints at the fact that the heroine’s eating pomegranate seeds equals the first sin of Christians and thus binds her to the Underworld, that is to flesh and earthly things forever. (Lutz 2009, 206)

According to Schelling’s philosophy, the myth of Persephone can be compared to the birth of consciousness. As at Goethe and Schiller, he too focuses on the pomegranate seeds and their possible connection to the Christian apple, as well as the eroticism behind this act. To Nietzsche, Persephone embodies both sides, the seeable and the unseeable too. The Underworld becomes the realm of everything that there is behind all phenomena, the essence of things. (Lutz 2009, 206)

William Carlos Williams published a text entitled *Kora in Hell: Improvisations* (1920) in which he explicitly hinted at the myth of Persephone. In the middle of a life crisis, the author identified himself with the heroine who was kidnapped and had to live in hell. In *I Wanted to Write a Poem* (1958), the autobiography of his works, Williams explained how he was familiar with the myth of Persephone from early on and had always felt like being spring himself, trapped on the way to the Underworld, yet not staying there for long. (Lutz 2009, 208)

Christa Wolf *In the Flesh* (2002) lets the old myth unfold in a contemporary environment. The heroine, Kora Bachmann is an anesthesiologist, who leads the patient, the storyteller, suffering from a deadly disease into the operation room. The question Kora asks herself is where the consciousness of the person she had led into narcotic sleep would go. Thus, in Wolf’s story Persephone becomes a mediator between life and afterlife, resembling Hermes’ figure. At the end of the story, when the patient is no longer in danger of dying, she recognizes in Kora the messenger who catches the souls that are not dead yet on their way to the Underworld and brings them back to the realm of life. (Lutz 2009, 209-210)

Thus, with time passing, Homer’s poem and its subject have attracted the interest of a wide range of writers, modern Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysts, as well as structuralists, or have led to the sociological analysis of the myth, including feminist criticism etc. Being one of the good examples of how a myth can be an endless source to generation after generation, everyone being able to understand and interpret it according to their own beliefs, taking parts out of and adding new ones to it in order to fit it in the new times. (Foley 1999, 13, 84)

As far as the present paper is concerned, the aim is to observe what part this story plays in the everyday life of the so-called problematic group of teenagers. Knowing that teenage readers quite often choose easier, ‘best-seller’ books, also called popular fiction to read, I would like to try and go deeper into the world of this still mysterious territory, in order to understand the power these books hold as they can capture the attention of fast-developing minds. I want to discover the importance of well constructed, logically based and written stories even if we talk about the totality of lower valued writings. My attempt is to underline the need for popular fiction in our century as well. The book series that I have chosen is a great point to start this discussion about the complexity of building an imaginary world that can educate and relax the readers at the same time. Meg Cabot’s *Abandon* trilogy is not only a distant cousin of ancient Greek literature, giving us a good, easy time of enjoyable reading, but also deals with psychological and existential questions that are characteristic of the school educational system and that are worthy talking about again and again.

2. Popular Fiction

Popular fiction is often understood as the opposite of highly valued, canonical literature. I reckon the biggest problem is the extent to which one would like to compare popular fiction and its authors to the big names of world literature. They cannot be compared; they cannot be analyzed in the same way as they are intended for separate purposes, offering different aesthetical experiences.

Ken Gelder sees literature as “the kind of writing produced by, for example, Jane Austin, George Elliot, Henry James, William Faulkner, [...] Saul Bellow, D. H. Lawrence, Flannery, O’Connor, Vladimir Nabokov, Martin Amis, [...] Toni Morrison, Michael Ondaatje, Salman Rushdie, Jonathan Franzen, Arundhati Roy, Don DeLillo, Tobias Wolff and so on.” (2004, 11) He points out that high literature is basically a collection of canonical names and their texts, even though he mentions that some of their works can be viewed as part of popular literature as well (and gives examples like Amin’s *Night Train* or some of Austen’s novels). However, he states that writers like the ones listed above write with the tendency to emulate - as he calls it after Bordieu (1993) – low-literature and low-culture. (2004, 11) Gelder then brings up a Spike Jonze movie, *Adaption* (2002) to demonstrate the two forms of high- and popular literature: The actor Nicolas Cage plays the part of two screenwriters called Charlie Kaufman and his twin brother Donald. They are each other’s perfect opposites: Charlie’s life is just like his writings: difficult, complex, it is hard for him to take another step on the imaginary stairs of

life, while Donald lives in an easy-going way every day, trying to enjoy and entertain himself every minute. When Charlie is asked to adapt the urbane New Yorker journalist, Susan Orlean's non-fiction book, *The Orchid Thief*, an account of a particularly obsessive orchid dealer and a meditation on the flowers themselves, he starts struggling, sitting over a blank white paper with absolutely no useful thoughts in his head that could make him create a piece of art enough to be staged. He cannot find the inspiration. Why? Because he wants something labyrinthine, something hard to understand, something that makes the brain suffer before seeing the whole picture. Donald, on the other hand, after attending some seminars on scriptwriting, easily finishes the work in an extremely short time and sells it to Charlie's company. The big difference between them and their work is how they think about the story. Charlie's desire is to create something very personal and detailed, a chain of unexpected situations next to each other, trying to completely isolate himself from the exterior world – and he loses. Donald at the same time personifies what average readers want: an easily understandable plot with a bit of drama, love, dynamism and good commercial. He knowing who to write for makes him succeed with the script. (Gelder 2004, 12)

However, I cannot completely agree with the idea of treating popular fiction as only a production of modern entertainment industry or authors as workers there for the money. Even if entertainment and being 'best-sellers' are two of the necessary parts of popular fiction novels, their influence in our world is much more complex than many say it is. As I see it, popular fiction and high literature are not each other's opposites, they rather exist in parallel.

To understand the true value of popular fiction we have to understand why we need it. Now, considering the fact that I am about to present a book series written especially for teenagers, I have to underline the importance of observing and respecting the taste of youth nowadays. The period called puberty between the ages of 12-13 and 15-16 is one of the most influential ones in becoming a reader as these years bring serious changes in the psychological development of adolescents. Their appetite in books compared to that in the past has changed as well: they start to see books as valuable if those have a startling and dynamic plot and talk about shocking psychological problems; the heroes are well-formed, the expressions are easily understandable and clear, the ending is surprising and contains a lot of sharp contrasts. The representative genres of popular fiction (adventure books, fantasies, horror, crime novels, sci-fi) are in accordance with the psychological needs of puberty because the process of reading does not ask for intellectual work, concentration or patience, the characters clearly personify those personality traits which young people can easily identify with. "It would be practical to mix classical and modern canonical literature and these kinds of books that can spontaneously

make reading lovable and literature a memorable experience for the students.” (Manxhuka 2016, 68)¹

Being open-minded and adding texts to the classes that are not part of high-literature but are requested or suggested by students is a visible and positive gesture from the institution towards kids of accepting their culture. This way classes can be more interactive based on sharing personal feelings, opinions and thoughts. Catching young readers’ attention is a hard task, especially nowadays, when we live almost every day in an online world, this way modernizing the system and adding new elements could widen their interests. (Manxhuka 2016, 68)

Barthes calls texts like these ‘readerly texts’, explaining the expression as the totality of writings that does not need a high intellectual work to understand them, books like the ones by Laura Leiner or even Rowling’s *Harry Potter*. Books that you read when you want to relax or just for fun. They are much simpler than the ‘writingly’ ones as what you see is what you probably get. (Barthes 2002) The main function of popular fiction is to make reading popular (or popular again, if we realize that researches show how reading books is sadly a slowly dying activity in the 21st century, being replaced by social media, movies, series and visual novels). It simply tries to make books valuable again, to make more and more people go to bookstores and buy at least a new one. Popular fiction was born to entertain the average readers whether they are children, teenagers or adults.

Even though it is far from being accepted by the academic field and many people still think of it as valueless, the phenomenon of popular fiction is beginning to be more and more present in the different studies. (Pawling 1984) Accepting that it is an integral part of our lives, my idea is to see how it can be used for a good educational purpose. As I shall present it on the next pages, deeply analysing popular fiction works will show their connection to the canonical past and bring out interesting characteristics of how they can be viewed as the relatives of the ‘big ones’ of the world literature.

3. Adolescents and Mythology

Adolescence is called a critical period in people’s lives, generally accepted as “the years between the onset of puberty and the establishment of social independence.” (qtd. in Curtis 2015, 1). However, its multiple, changing character and complexity makes it quite difficult to

¹ Translated by the author of this paper.

give it a unified definition. According to Moje et al., teenagers are people aged between 10 and 12. (2008, 110) Alexa Curtis on the other hand widens this period, saying that teenage years overlap the phase starting from age 9, ending somewhere at 18, but also “may incorporate a span of 9 to 26 years (APA, 2002).” (2015, 1). Sharlene Gale Swartz and Lauren Wild give a third definition, putting adolescence between the ages of 11 and 21, mentioning three different stages called early adolescence (11/12-14), mid-adolescence (15-17) and late adolescence (18-21). (2012, 203) Looking at these three approaches it is clearly visible how hard it is to establish the parameters: “A number of educators consider adolescent literacy to begin at the fourth-grade level, when text demands shift from a predominance of narrative, or story-based texts to increasing encounters with expository or informational texts.” (Moje et al. 2008, 110)

Adolescent literature – in opposition to children’s literature – is able to highlight serious themes visibly, such as life and death, the human psyche, the labyrinth of rationality and emotions, family against individuality, the gender question, the journey of self-finding, sexuality etc. Thus, adolescent literature, even though it is much softer than adult literature, which is often allowed to use a rough, uncensored language, gives authors a good opportunity to hide such important, deep and even psychological or philosophical thoughts behind a style that is able to capture the attention of the younger generation.

Myths, stories about the unknown and unpredictable phenomena of human life are capable of acting as materials to work with for writers, to deal with the problems of the youth, to personify their inner thoughts and give them the motivation they need to solve those mysteries. Teenagers are in a position when the world around them seems almost incomprehensible, facing their own psychological and social issues, having to fight with their changing self but also with the outer reality, learning this completely new face of life they have not met before.

Fairy tales have been with us since our early childhood:

They typically feature wizards and witches and at times, human heroes in magical pursuits. They contain lessons about the past and the present. They include comparison and metaphor, and are usually much more specific. They set no demands and are usually reassuring and hopeful. They are shaped by whomever the storyteller happens to be at the time, and only take their final form when they are written down. (qtd. in Anastasopoulos et al. 2010, 119)

Myths are similar to fairy tales in the way they paint their environment, containing morals and edifications for us to live by. Even if the characters are supernatural or divine beings,

they have the same characteristics and problems as mortals do. Greek gods, even if they live on the Olympus and have the strength and right to rule over the world, all of them have the personality traits (let us just take jealousy, mendacity, vengefulness, vanity, mischief, insatiable physical attraction etc.) that make them look profane, dishonourable, vulgar, childish or sometimes really hilarious:

Greek mythology is particularly anthropomorphic in its structure. The gods express the best and worst in humans, often simultaneously. While qualities are idealised, the individual still retains everyday passions and virtues. Greek mythology is also ripe with stories dealing with issues of adolescence. (Anastasopolous et al. 2010, 121)

This way they resemble humans in more than one way and hold a perfectly distorting mirror in front of them. Thus, the powerful beauty of the fantastic world represented by myths is that they have the ability to show the hidden, maybe undiscovered part of the human mind, this way guiding teenagers to choose a positive path.

Authors of adolescent literature have a high responsibility for shaping this generation of still inexperienced people. In order to be successful in their quest, they also need to understand the psychology of teenagers, otherwise they cannot give them the right clues necessary for their development. According to Anastasopoulos, Soumaki and Anagnostopoulos, during his/her development

[...] the adolescent is called upon to negotiate a multitude of issues. In the beginning, these are the revival of primal needs and conflicts, the dissolution of the Oedipus complex and the dependence–independence phase including a resort to phantasies of omnipotence. Later comes distancing from parents, the search for a steady sexual partner, the clarification of his identity, the development of personal goals and achievements. (Anastasopoulus et al. 2010, 120-121)

They also state the fact that an adolescent is in the need of a hero who can play the role of the idolized model to learn from, with whom to identify during this period of both physical and mental transformations, but also in the need to live their own fantasies along with all-goods, all-bads and in-betweens as well. (2010, 121)

The young heroes in the myths are usually described as handsome, brave and strong people, representatives of the good, going on an adventure to complete the trials and achieve their goals by winning against the constraining factors. Myths depict mostly the ideal

characteristics of a young person, mentioning also the sinful and destructive forces they need to compete against. They either have the power to become bigger than the bad they are facing and win the battle or miss it and lose. Heracles had the ability to complete the trials and get his reward. Phaeton wanted to much more than he could have and had to die because of it. Both ways, myths – alike fables – contain general truths still valid in our modern lives that can be retold over and over again to every person, no matter if he/she is younger or older.

4. Old Gods in New Clothes

“An archetype is a resonant figure of mythic importance, whether a personality, place, or situation, found in diverse cultures and different historical periods.” (Mikics 2004, 24) Stemming from the old Greek language, the word ‘archetype’ means a collective image, situation or figure that originates in the ancient times. According to Jung, an archetype is a schematic image, a recurring motif that can be found in the history of different nations, making communication possible. Thus, because archetypes have universal meanings, they help us understand the message of another culture. (Robertson 1992)

There are many archetypes we already know from our childhood, such as the garden (often described as the Paradise), the three universes, the forbidden fruit, the water, the hero, the hero’s aide-de-camp, the villain, the femme fatale, the “fairy grandmother” etc. (Robertson 1992) They return and meet us from time to time in a new body but with the same (or similar) characteristics. Our job is to recognize them and analyze them regarding the situation and the environment they live in. In the next three subchapters I will mention some of Jung’s archetypes and compare them to the three chosen characters from Cabot’s trilogy to see how they can be analyzed accordingly, how their behavior in the story is fitted with teenager readers especially.

4.1. Persephone: A Mother’s Daughter or an Individual Heroine?

Korê is well known by many as representing the ‘maiden’ archetype. The innocent, pure, young virgin girl, far from maturity, usually surrounded by danger (most of the times is abducted and captured) has to go through a series of hard tasks brought by life that break her previous self and she sometimes dies just to achieve adulthood. Jung defined the ‘maiden’ archetype as “the supraordinate personality or self.” (qtd. in Eynon et al. 2019, 7) In general, the maiden or Korê personifies the undeveloped part of a person, the untouched feminine side of the personality. Jung sees in the character of the maiden two possibilities: either she reaches

maturity on her own or she is forced to do so by external factors. If the maiden refuses to obtain maturity by herself and is too attached to her innocence, life pushes her towards changing by putting her into dangerous situations. Being helpless, incapable of protecting herself in the cruel, painful and even bloody situations, Korê falls victim and loses her child self in the battle. According to Jung's words, maidens "are always doomed to die, because their exclusive domination of the feminine psyche hinders the individuation process, that is, the maturation of personality." (qtd. in Eynon et al. 2019, 7)

Korê's name is told to have been changed to Persephone after she arrives to the Underworld with her husband, Hades, a symbolic description of the one-sided, arranged (and even forced) marriage between the two gods. Now, as we can already know from our previous experiences – and as it is also underlined in many mythological works – sexual intercourse is necessary in a marriage in order for it to be completed and accepted. What does that mean? Persephone is recreated by Hades as a whole new person, strong enough to rule the kingdom of the dead along with her partner. The maiden in her died due to the marriage, or rather got killed if we actually think about the fact that the whole process happened without her consent. The critical moment of Hades putting his hands on the young girl is usually called the 'abduction' or even the 'rape' of the goddess, suggesting the untold part hidden between the lines. There is an interesting phenomenon, the way painters like to illustrate the young divinity and the meaning that I believe lies behind it. Frederic Leighton's *The Return of Persephone* (1891) captures the moment of Hermes and Persephone leaving the Underworld, while Demeter is waiting for them with her arms open right in front of the mouth of Hades' kingdom. Persephone being in the centre, the daughter almost has a horrified look, eyes wide open, no pupil, a lacerated expression on her face, pale white figure, almost as a ghost in the arms of the other god, trying to reach her mother. Her appearance can remind the viewer of the suffering souls deep down in Hades' "Hell", a place too dark and horrifying for such a petite woman who is used to light, warm sunshine and colourful nature. Hermes holding her, Persephone looks like someone close to death, a symbolic illustration of Korê's disappearance and Persephone's birth. After her journey under the ground, she cannot be the same person anymore.

Rossetti's *Proserpine* (1874) depicts her as a dark haired, olive skinned woman in a deep blue dress, holding the fatal fruit in one hand showing the seeds, with the other hand holding her knuckle in a mostly dark room, just a little bit of light cuts through the curtain of shadow under her head. She is deep in thoughts, almost as if she is thinking about her life or the future that the "forbidden, sinful" fruit holds. Comparing it to Leighton's piece of art, the first thing to observe is the strong contrast between the colours these painters used: Leighton's

bright yellows and pinks against Rossetti's blues and blacks. I like to think that all of this have a deep meaning, drawing a line between the girl on the surface and under the ground. The Goddess of the Spring next to the Queen of the Underworld. The daughter and the wife. Just like the way nature changes its look when winter comes, I prefer to believe that Korê/Persephone behaves the same, like the two sides of a coin, being one, yet different. Living in the same body, she changes her personality according to the situation. Although the maiden is killed, as I have already stated, the goddess' daughter, the "twin" remains alive. Persephone is what I would like to call Korê's persona, a role she plays to be able to rule and serve and satisfy her cold-hearted husband. However, in some cases she lets her heart melt and shows her kind side (for example, in the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice).

Jean Shinoda-Bolen calls Persephone a vulnerable goddess. Her vulnerability mainly resides in the fact that she is deeply attached to her partner, almost as a codependent person. As I have already mentioned, the child goddess is incapable of doing anything on her own, she is waiting for an exterior change. First leaning on her mother, then on her husband, her identity is based on her relationship. Also, Bolen sees her as a victim of her own weak personality and of the violence her husband represents. What makes her a passive character is that she cannot win against her weak self and needs to be controlled by others and that causes her the most pain. (2008, 135-136)

Pierce Oliviera, the female protagonist of *Abandon* is more than just a maiden or a child. She is more than just the queen Persephone, even if she appears as her reflection living in a modern world. The original girl is more of a passive character, suffering because of the situations, but she cannot fight them. It is as if she accepted her fate or was waiting for a savior, similarly to the princesses in the fairy tales we heard about in our childhood. Not surprisingly, princesses also appear as maidens in their worlds. Until the very end when she tells the story from her point of view, getting into a real interaction with Demeter, the girl is only a character without an active role, her forced relationship is the starting point of the situations. However, she does not add anything to them to change them so that she can become a winner. Even when Hades asks her to eat from the pomegranate, she follows the orders like a servant, being a submissive person, incapable of any kind of dominance, missing any kind of personal ideas, thoughts or emotions. Demeter is the one who is truly in control, the one who is able to manipulate her environment for her own good. Persephone is something we call a mother's daughter, still a child – even if she is an adult by now – who depends too much on her superiors, she is afraid to take any steps on her own.

However, in Cabot's *Abandon* Pierce breaks the mask of the helpless girl, slowly becoming something that we call a heroine. She dies. She falls into the pool, goes through physical death caused by hypothermia and drowning and arrives into the Underworld to wait for the final judgment. According to Kathryn Jones, death is like a journey, especially the way it is painted in literature. (2008, 11) Not only Korê, but also Odysseus, Aeneas and Orpheus experience this world after death. However, in their case it is not a true death, it is more of a visit that kills a part of their previous selves and changes them the moment they leave. Some of them gain, while others lose something thereby. Either way, their "resurrection" changes them forever. No one can face Death and walk away as if nothing had happened.

The moment Pierce enters this reign, she is only a lost child, fifteen years old, weak, confused and scared. She had to face mortality before (her grandfather's funeral, the dead bird, her friend's suicide), but she refuses to accept it, is in a denial and still, she tries to fight her own destiny. From the very first steps, Pierce becomes stronger than Korê as she cannot surrender. Pierce personifies the part in a teenager who fights his/her own limits, tries to widen his/her world of possibilities, and pushes himself/herself further and further. She is rebellious, a person who wants control over everything but cannot have it and that makes her angry. Someone who does not want to accept the world as it is because it does not equal the one she wishes for.

Even if the person in front of her is of a higher rank and is much stronger, the teenager Pierce cannot accept his authority and talks back. Not recognizing the danger she can bring to herself, she orders him to do as she pleases, even more, she tries to make the other person feel guilty because of having captured her: "*You have to, because you messed up, making me miss my boat. So do it. Now, John.*" (Cabot 2011, 114) It is obvious that she is not ready to give up on her individuality for someone else; in fact, she is ready to pick a fight she can lose rather than losing her own self without trying.

Hades did not abduct her in this case. She is kidnapped too, yes, but not taken from one world to another. John (the reproduction of the deadly king) takes her to his castle and offers her the possibility of living there forever, meaning she might be dead in the mortal world, but her soul will be immortal down there. A fifteen-year-old must choose between her death and a man she does not even know or trust. Even worse, later she finds out that there is no final station as John had taken that possibility away from her the minute he had put her down in the castle. John tells her that living with him was something she wanted when she decided to step out from the queue of dead souls: "*The boat is gone,*" he said. "*I asked if you wanted to go someplace else, and you said yes, please. And now the boat is gone. You chose me over the boat, and now*

this is where you're going to have to stay." (Cabot 2011, 113) Pierce is shocked by the fact that she was tricked into something she did not choose willingly and says it out loud: *"Are you telling me that I have to stay here with you forever because you made me miss the boat?"* (Cabot 2011, 113) For a short period, Pierce and Korê share the same fate: living without their will as prisoners under the dominancy of a male character. Yet, the fact that the man decided over her, without actually listening to her brings out her strong femininity. At first she acts like a child and even calls for her mother: *"I have to let my mom know I'm all right."* (Cabot 2011, 111) However, when she sees that her words will not change John's mind, Pierce decides to grow older than the child in her and stands up for herself. While Korê accepts her death to create Persephone, Pierce chooses to be her own "God" and "resurrects" herself. As a third possibility, she is able to leave the role of the mother's daughter behind, awakening her individuality, she chooses to risk and attack the person who stole her decisiveness and broke her trust. Her hidden aggression and the wish to break the walls that lock her into the prison of incapability help her awaken the main heroine within her own life. This growth in consciousness – as Jung calls it – is "a heroic effort by the individual, straining against the yoke of what everyone else assumes that they already know. Any growth in mass consciousness comes about through the effort of many such individuals." (Robertson 1992, 45)

Death is a picky theme to work with, although it is indispensable to learn about it from young ages as a natural part of a human being's life. Death is everywhere, it circulates around us and every time we get a peep of it, we learn a little more about our unconscious self. Losing a tooth, breaking an arm, finishing a book, ending kindergarten, then school, moving to another town, losing a friend, a relative, a pet etc., growing up is never easy. We have to say goodbye to someone or something from time to time. The fear of the unknown, of change, the fear of loss, the stages of grief and acceptance, drowning in the lake of our confusing emotions, learning how to let go or even learning about the power within us that we have never met before makes us stand up in our darkest moments, with everything that is buried in us, not used in our everyday lives, and which comes out from its hiding place when the 'normal' is gone. Times like this, when our safe room is burned to the ground, we learn how to restart. The metaphorical – or real – death teaches us to learn until the moment we ourselves become lessons for the next generations. Death is also the symbol of separation: the individual realises the fragility of life and starts focusing on herself/himself. (James 2008, 13-15)

As already stated, Pierce is the central character of the trilogy, the heroic protagonist. Following Jung's theory, Joseph Campbell unfolded the 'hero' archetype, writing down all the typical characteristics that make him/her recognizable. According to Campbell, the hero starts

his/her journey because of an accidental situation that changes the hero's life and makes him/her move towards the unknown. Sometimes these accidental situations happen because of a mistake of the unconscious or because of a call that invites the hero to enter the path. The hero accepts the invitation and leaves his/her home to discover the mysterious. (Campbell 2008)

Even though Campbell imagined the hero to be a male character, I believe the mentioned characteristics can be easily found in a female person as well. However, Pierce's status is not easy to define. Her journey starts as a seven-year-old kid when she unintentionally kills a bird in the cemetery and meets John, a tall young man dressed up in black with a dark but friendly aura around him who seeing the child's tears brings the bird back to life. Her grandmother's words ("*You will like him.*") suggest the fact that she cannot escape the hero's future. Afterwards Pierce is invited to finish her journey multiple times, she dies because of her cursed scarf, enters the Underworld and meets John again, escapes but cannot leave him behind; she unwillingly gets herself into trouble three times, almost loses the "battles" that make John appear again; she moves to another town but cannot escape from the memories of the past and often dreams about them (the importance of dreams – as Robertson (1992) says relying on Jung – is that they hold our inner wishes we cannot recognize); it looks like she is always searching for John, even without any intention. It is clear that their future has been tied together from the very first moment and the more Pierce tries to ignore it, the more she connects to him. After surviving her grandmother's attack who tries to kill her, Pierce has to enter the Underworld again. John takes her there for the second time and the heroine's war against the forces of the bad begins – just like in the myths or fairy tales, with a series of trials to prove their inner and physical strength, with supernatural creatures helping them.

The hero always has a nemesis (or more), a bad character who tries everything to stop or destroy him/her. (Campbell 2008) There are many examples we already know even from the simplest stories: witches, dragons, bad spirits, ghosts, the evil relatives (like the stepmother or stepsisters), the jealous mates, the friend who betrays the protagonist, the bullying, the rival etc. What affects Pierce the most is that her own nemesis is her grandmother, or at least has the face of her grandmother, as the things are not as clear as they seem to be. The pure evils in the book are the Furies (or Erinyes), the disgruntled souls familiar from Greek mythology, whose goal is to kill John and get the "throne" of the Underworld. Possessing weak human beings, they rebel against the law of death. Finding out about Pierce's existence, seeing her as John's only weakness, they decide to make her disappear and use her family to do so. Pierce's death is not only an accident. It is an attempted murder to hurt the cold king too. What makes Pierce stronger and gives her the strength of Persephone is the fact that her enemies are of a higher rank, her

being mortal, them belonging to the infinite, and being seemingly undestroyable (at least until the very end).

4.2. Demeter's Figure and the Archetypes of the Great and Bad Mothers

It is obvious that the main character in the myth is Demeter. She is the one who moves the chess figures, causing negative and positive side effects. Demeter is the typical mother who is ready to give up everything for her child to save her from the forces of the evil. With her figure in the center, being the main female character, Persephone needs to live in the shadows.

In the book series, the roles change. Not only does she lose the part of the great female character, but Pierce's mother also loses her title as a mother. She is not able to protect her child or even understand her. She herself rebels against her husband (as Demeter against Zeus) but in her fight with her partner, she lets Pierce out of her sight and forgets about her. Without her mother, the child is vulnerable and alone, an ideal state for the evils to attack her. Ultimately, she lets her child die and loses her authority as a parent figure completely.

Deb Oliviera is a passive character. Her silence lets her daughter grow and develop under the stage light, but also shows how a great character can be turned into an unintentionally useless one. The tragic feeling of her failure as a protector makes her escape into the nature and – unlike Demeter – isolate herself from everything that can harm her more. However, she also drags Pierce with herself and that is what pushes her into the arms of her kidnapper again. Trying to find a new life, moving to a new place, working from day to night, wanting to make everything perfect again, Deb lets her daughter down again and again. Her loneliness makes Pierce run into the arms of the person she fears most. Yet, she needs her mother to be a bad parent so she can learn how to fight her battles alone and become more than Persephone.

Pierce is the one who turns into the great mother of the story. She is her own Demeter. When the helpless child dies in her, after she returns to the Underworld for the second time and faces her enemies, Pierce becomes the dangerous female tiger who kills for her kids. Her motherly instincts stem mostly from the fact that she had missed them in her life and thus, she gives her affection to the people she thinks need it the way she had. To the people of the Underworld, she becomes the shoulder they can cry on, the advisor they need, the warrior who fights for them. Not only the lover but also John's backup, she teaches him how to be alive and emotional again. Conducting her "household", taking care of her family members, Pierce learns how to be an adult woman and walks her own way to make sure her beloved ones are safe. Her caring mother side shows its best when she becomes bigger than the queen she is and starts

caring about the souls living down there. Feeling that she owns them something, she treats them as a priority, saying that as a ruler, she is responsible of her dependants whether they are bad or good ones. John often mentions this caring side of her, being one of the things that have made him fell in love with her in the first place. When John characterizes her during their second interaction in the Underworld, he tells her: *“And I’ve been doing this for quite some time. Everyone else always says, ‘I’m wet. I’m cold.’ No one’s ever inquired after my health. Not you, though. You care. Not just about birds and horses but about people.”* (Cabot 2011, 102) John admires Pierce’s selflessness, how she is able to put others’ conditions and needs above herself. Her pure innocence, kindness, her generosity and goodwill make him characterize her the following way:

You’re still asking for favours for others. The last time I met you, you wanted me to bring a bird back to life. Then your grandfather. And out there just now, you kept talking about everybody else. They’re wet and they’re cold. They deserve to be treated better. That’s what you said. Was I all right? That’s what you wanted to know when my horse nearly trampled you. Was I all right. Do you know how many times someone’s asked me that question since I came here? (Cabot 2011, 102)

On the other hand, there is the opposite of Pierce – after Neumann (2015) – the evil parent figure. If Pierce is the great mother and Deb had possessed the potential to be good but ended up being the failure of a mother, then we should call Pierce’s grandmother the bad mother. Neumann uses an even stronger attribute, talking about the Terrible Mother. (2015, 4) Giving some basic examples, a terrible mother is often illustrated as a stepmother, a witch, a siren, a temptress, a seductress, a femme fatale, a killer, like Cinderella’s stepmother, the Evil Queen, Ursula, Medeia, Carmen etc. They can be easily recognized because of the way they treat others. They are simply the complete opposite of what a mother figure should be like. What makes a difference between a bad and a terrible mother is the possibility of changing. While a bad mother can regret her actions and can be forgiven if she repented, a terrible mother is pure evil in her bones and incapable of spiritual cleansing.

Thus, this trilogy also shows the battle between the two sides of a mother figure. Pierce against her grandmother, the Great Mother against the Terrible Mother, the great good against the satanic evil. To remake the harmony, one of them needs to die.

4.3. Hades: From a Hostage Keeper to a True Partner

The ruler of the Underworld is a cold, mysterious, dangerous character, usually associated with death, sickness, aggression, torture and suffering. Living in his obscure kingdom, isolated from the other divinities, surrounded by his horrifying creatures, his job is to decide over the future of the dead souls, Hades is hard to be seen as a positive character. Ancient people were afraid of him, thus they did not celebrate him. Even in the movies, he is often shown as the rival, the introvert, the one who personifies envy, the jealous brother who wants to get rid of the other gods, similar to Loki. However, Bolen believes that he is not an all-bad character, more of a misunderstood loner, hard to meet because it is difficult to enter his home. Nevertheless, the person who is brave enough to do it anyway, will see the real richness of Hades (the place) hidden behind the scary fog.

Hades is the reign of the individual and collective unconscious too. As Bolen says, he is there in every repressed memory, in those feelings and dreams that are too hurtful to think of, in the shameful wishes we lock into our hearts because we are afraid of sharing them with the world. Hades also holds those desires and possibilities we have never experienced. Hades is the kingdom of everything belonging to the past and of the possible future. "It is the realm that the Roman poet Terence must have known in order to say, »Nothing human is foreign to me«"² (Bolen 1989, 141)

His relationship with Persephone is a complicated one, as it is hard to tell whether there are true feelings involved or not. Some versions of the myth mention that Hades found the young girl beautiful and wanted to marry her based on her look; others skip this part and start the whole narration with him capturing her and taking her innocence to form her into a good wife. The hymn describes Persephone's abduction as something Zeus knew about and let it happen, however, in some other sources Hades does it without his brother's direct permission, only because he wants to do so, because he is rebellious enough to break the rules. His brutality and stubbornness are the sign of being a king, thus he is the dominant partner in this relationship. However, sometimes even he shows positive characteristics when he finally eases and lets Persephone influence her. Empathy is one of the feelings that can be said to represent his good ones (as in the example mentioned above).

Cabot's choice to recreate Hades as a traumatic young adult boy is probably the effect of wanting a character in which teenagers – and mostly girls – can find the reflections of their

² In fact this is something that Chermes, one of the protagonists in Terence's play says: „...humani nil a me alienum puto. (*Heauton Timorumenos* I. 77), and which has later become a famous proverb.

own sexual fantasies. John Hayden is the typical prototype of what adolescents dream about: tall, dark, enigmatic, cold, yet hot, hard to figure out his true self, secretly an emotional person who wants nothing but someone next to him, silent, protective and is deeply in love with the main character. He is the confusing, good-looking ‘bad boy’ type with a past moving to tears and with scars in his soul, who 12-16 year-olds wish for and fall in love with within a second. Creating him has been a brave yet smart move to capture readers’ attention and get their sympathy easily.

Studies have shown that adolescents’ sexual awakening starts around the ages of 13-14 and reaches its highest point at around the age of 17-18. We can talk about little, hidden touches, holding hands, hugs, kissing each other or even the pleasure of physical contact, teenagers start to understand themselves as biological creatures with needs and instincts they cannot always control, they start to notice the opposite sex (in most cases) more and more and feel the desire of being in a close relationship. (Boislard et al. 2006) Jones agrees that sexuality, just like death or gender, is one of the subjects that adolescent literature should talk about (2008). As said, sexuality is a natural part of a human being’s life. Feeling attached to someone (whether we talk about positive or negative attachment), letting your desires be fulfilled or ignoring them, romantic failures are part of entering adulthood. That is why I strongly believe that there is no adolescent literature without touching on these topics. The characters – being mostly teenagers themselves – grow up in front of our eyes, going through the phases that average people do, are the perfect implementations of bringing an old reality into a new, exciting environment.

I cannot say that John is the perfect male character or love interest. Like Hades, he has his own defects and mistakes; however, these are not as prominent as his ‘father’s’. His aggressiveness is one of the personality traits he inherited and which he uses to make himself an ‘alpha male’. His brutal, killer side comes out in situations when he needs to protect his mate or show his dominance as an immortal being. Thus, he often demonstrates his supernatural strength when he needs to save Pierce (her being the stubborn girl she is) or when he needs to be the king of the dead. When his beloved person puts herself in danger by trying to uncover the secret affair between her teacher and her friend – an affair that caused her friend’s death – and is almost sexually assaulted, John turns into a raging bull and almost kills the aggressor with a few punches. Later he repeats his actions with a jeweller who tries to threaten Pierce and only her voice can make him stop from killing someone. Feeling that he can lose his lover, John often turns into an aggressive maniac. Even with the Furies, he is not afraid of hurting himself or others to act as Pierce’s shield.

His aggressive personality makes Pierce often compare him to a storm. Throughout the story it is explained that John's mood can easily influence the weather and it is what helps Pierce notice whether he is close to her or his emotions. His anger is told to be like a sudden storm, appearing from nothing, destroying the nature around. She describes his eyes gray as the clouds before rain, a changeable kind of gray that turns lighter or darker depending on his feelings at the moment. Positivity makes his eyes silver and warm, showing everything about his soul. Yet, when he gets sad or angry, the silver in his iris disappears and Pierce thinks his stare to be "*dull, blank as twin bullet holes. You could almost say they were...well, dead eyes.*" (Cabot 2011, 46)

In other situations, he is more of an average person, more human-like and acts similarly to a teenage boy who has got old too soon. The idea of the Persona returns as I believe that John bears this duality in his soul the way Korê/Persephone does. Hades is John's persona. When things are harder than expected, he uses this mask to become stronger, for example, he becomes an armor to save his beloved ones. At other times, he lets his guard down and is truly himself: a lover, a friend and eventually, a father.

A scene that demonstrates this duality in him is the one when he meets Pierce for the second time in his kingdom. The confused and frightened girl notices him in the crowd and sees him as a possible savior, the knight who can help her escape from this deterrent place. John does not recognize her and, being Hades, brusque, rude, there is no way to get to him, he only sees her as an astute but pesky "prisoner", showing that he is superior to her: "*Don't bother looking up at me like that. [...] It won't work. I've been doing this for a long time. I know all the tricks. And batting those big brown eyes at me won't do a thing, I guarantee.*" (Cabot 2011, 86) Hades makes no difference between his subjects and treats them in the same emotionless way. What he wants, what he decides is the ultimate law down there: "*It's too late,*" he said woodenly, looking straight ahead. "*And I've heard all the excuses I can take today. Once my decision is made, it's final. I don't make exception...not even for girls who look like you.*" (2011, 87) However, the moment the truth about Pierce's identity is revealed, Hades disappears and John, the lover takes his place: "*His entire demeanor changed. The hardened glint disappeared from those gray eyes. Suddenly, they were as gentle as they'd seemed the first time I met him. 'That was you?' Even his voice had changed. It sounded almost human.*" (2011, 89) His love for Pierce is what kills the negative person in him and brings back his human side.

However, after Pierce's rejection, Hades returns. He cannot accept the fact that the girl wants to leave him and rather chooses the unknown (symbolized by the boat) than to stay in his castle. It shows how little he knows about emotions and how he tries to ignore the girl's

reactions. He seems almost an egoist, he puts his own desires before that of Pierce's and cannot accept the fact that they are not equal. Pierce still hopes that John will let her return to her family, as she does not see him as a bad person nor as a hostage keeper. Her hope and positivity even in this taut situation show her naïve childlike side. She tells John: "*Because I didn't get on the boat that means I haven't passed on to my final destination, right? And you can make dead people come back alive. You did it with the bird. So you're going to do it with me. You're just going to make me alive again.*" (Cabot 2011, 114) The stubborn ruler's behavior makes it impossible to communicate with each other properly as John refuses to understand Pierce. He cannot take 'no' for an answer. Pierce rebels against him and orders him to make things right: "*You have to, because you messed up, making me miss my boat. So do it. Now, John.*" (Cabot 2011, 114) This is the point when he gives up on his human side again and lets the king take his place. He does not want Pierce to leave, so he will not let her do so. First he lies, telling her he cannot help, and when Pierce understands his egoistic desires, he admits the truth: "*Can't?*" *My voice caught on a sob. "Or won't?" He looked away. "Won't," he said.*" (2011, 114) His plan was to rescue her by trying to take away her own decisiveness but at the end that is what pushes her to reach her individual maturity, and she escapes, even if she needs to let the child behind.

Even if the lines above prove that he cannot be the hero of the story as he makes many mistakes, following him through the three books shows how John proves over and over again that he can be more than just a hostage keeper and grows into a true partner of Persephone. This is what makes their love story understandable and acceptable.

Their story needs to grow into an acceptable relationship because in the first book, Pierce feels a strange connection towards someone who tricked her and kidnapped her before, someone who was ready to kill for her and scared her many times. Confused and alone after their past interactions, her thoughts about John in her condition are distressing and it is rightful to think that those are only the impacts of the Stockholm syndrome. John makes it impossible to forget him. He stalks her and follows her, threatens her a few times, yet cannot leave her alone. Now knowing that his cold side is more of his persona than his real face, it can be understood as a defense mechanism but also as a punishment for trying to leave him behind. He gives Pierce a necklace, which symbolizes their unity. Thus, Pierce cannot forget about him and she unintentionally visits him again and again just to remember the pain they caused to each other. It is also rightful to think that their relationship is toxic and built on a rumbling base. Until the moment John is able to accept and control his negative persona, he cannot be more

than a bad influence on the heroine. After he realizes that he needs to connect John to Hades and unites with his darker self, he gets the possibility of evolving and is happy in the end.

What makes John be more than Hades, is the fact that he can change. He is not a static character; his nature can be influenced by others. When he decides to sacrifice himself, his metaphorical death makes it possible to let his past mistakes go and brings the best out of him. The ruler and the lover die and he returns as a consolidated partner, ready to give all of himself to his family.

5. Conclusions

To sum up I see popular fiction as a great method of mixing our heritage from the past cultures with the modernity/postmodernity of the 21st century and show the outcome to the average readers. Cabot's teenage trilogy was a good starting point to work on presenting why popular fiction can be treated similarly – not the same way though – as canonic literature. One of my intentions was to show a possible method of analysing a non-canonical work on a higher level, using means that are more professional.

Archetypes – as Bolen determines relying on Jung – have always been among us and live within us no matter the time or situation. Their heritage is that of a long-lost world that we carry within ourselves each day. Archetypes determine our behaviour and the way we see and understand our own being and the world around us. These archetypes are often mentioned as universal and returning personality traits and with a little work can be recognized in someone. (Bolen 2008, 10-12)

Dealing with archetypes, the ancient images coming from the magical, mysterious world of Greek culture, mythology and religion and trying to find them in an average, everyday environment made my work even more exciting. Choosing texts that belong to popular fiction instead of a highly valued literary text was based on reasoning and curiosity to see if archetypes are really part of our basic lives. I believe I managed to prove that in fact they consider the low-cultural world and popular fictional works as worthwhile challenges, which again proves that even the least respected and noticed literary layers contain value that we need to observe. The most interesting part of my analysis was discovering the complex triangle between the author, adolescent literature and teenage readers. Books written especially for the youth under 21 have the responsibility of not only entertaining the readers but also of influencing their vision upon the world, themselves and other people. In this way, adolescent literature plays an important

part in teenage psychology and is a good method of providing them with the necessary information to shape them in a positive way.

In my paper I gave two examples, one mentioning the theme of death and its possible metaphors in young adult literature, the other one being sexuality as a repetitive subject. Death is one of the themes that teenagers have to handle when growing up and developing, it is part of a self-search process. Even though human beings are described to be fragile mortals, imagining life after death, similarly to the biblical one, suggests the absolute infinity of the soul. Having both a religious and philosophical meaning, penance and the purification of the soul are mentioned in the books along with the message of living a life without regret or sinning. The idea of going to “Heaven” or “Hell” is associated with the thought of every action having its consequences. Pierce’s falling in love with John is not only a love story between two young people but can be understood as accepting the fact that we are not immortal, everything changes, everyone dies. The protagonist’s battle with her enemies shows how adulthood is full of unpleasing situations and fights; yet, she still accepts her fate and grabs her “sword” to protect her world. Pierce wakes up from her dream of an ideal reality and meets the negative side of life, just as average teenagers and young adults do. Instead of rejecting the change life brought her, she decides to shape this new world and adapt herself to it. Putting away her ego, she learns how to become part of society, trying out new roles (girlfriend, wife and leader). What I believe is the most sympathetic in Pierce is the fact that she can be the role model of feminine individuality.

Maturity is another important theme I discussed in my paper. The maiden and the child archetypes show how one’s personality must go through a few trials of both the exterior and interior worlds. To fight the necessary battles, Pierce cannot remain her child self. Talking about these battles as the ordeals of adulthood, Pierce’s character represents the inner strain of a young person losing her comfort of being a child and of not finding her place in a new, unknown environment. Her story shows the process of growing up: separating from her previous self, she finds herself a new position, instead of being the one who needs help she becomes the one to help.

Sexuality on the other hand is also part of a teenager’s life. Feelings and physical contacts are not only social relations, but also influence one’s self. The more the adolescent learns about her own sexuality and sexual needs, the more s/he develops. Adolescent literature – and myths too – can help to diminish teenagers’ sexual frustrations. I strongly reckon that physicality should not be considered a taboo, not even at young ages. It should be treated as a normal reaction of a maturing body. Young adult texts can serve as educational commentaries

regarding the relationship between two people, love/hate, as much as the explanations of a sexual act. Comparing Cabot's version to the original myth also underlines the idea (the need) of consent and equality in a healthy and constructive relationship. The way I highlighted it before, John and Pierce cannot think of absolute commitment as long as one of them tries to be above the other one in the relationship. Only after John lets his dominant male pride go and Pierce accepts her role as female partner can they talk about seriousness and mention children, parenthood and marriage as the unity between the two of them.

Cabot's trilogy is worthy of our attention as it brought a completely new interpretation of the ancient myth. The author used both the Jungian archetypes and the feminist views upon Homer's epic poem and proved that even popular fiction can create a complex fictional reality. Cabot's talent shines through her style of talking to the younger generation in their language while talking about "adult-like" things, she still manages to build up a friendship of sympathy, be a mentor, a teacher, an idol and a confidant. Her literature shows that less complicated can still be well-constructed and smartly formed. *Abandon* is a good example of using the knowledge we have got in everyday life. Canonic and popular literature are two parallel worlds, one leaning on the other, with an imminent intertextuality always existing, which I think I succeeded to hint at and which I can develop in an upcoming paper.

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