

Appendix 2: A Short Presentation of the Paper *New Clothes, Old Habits. Recreating Persephone's, Hades' and Demeter's Figures in Meg Cabot's Abandon Trilogy*

The paper entitled *New Clothes, Old Habits. Recreating Persephone's, Hades' and Demeter's Figures in Meg Cabot's Abandon Trilogy* is built on the idea of seeing 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 as returning personality traits, which 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 what they consider low cultural world and popular fictional works are 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.