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A BAKHTINIAN ANALYSIS OF MADELINE MILLER'S *CIRCE* AND JENNIFER SAINT'S *ARIADNE*: HETEROGLOSSIA, POLYPHONY AND DIALOGISM IN THE NOVELS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to explore two contemporary novels, *Circe* by Madeline Miller and *Ariadne* by Jennifer Saint, through the perspective of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia, polyphony, and dialogism. Therefore, the method of analysis embodies a close study of Miller's *Circe* and Saint's *Ariadne* with a detailed examination of Bakhtin's ideas. The theoretical framework presented in the first chapter draws from Bakhtin's *Discourse in the Novel* and incorporates the perspectives of revisionist authors and literary critics. The concept of heteroglossia is examined in relation to revisionist mythmaking theory, and Bakhtin's *Epic and Novel* provides additional insights. Subsequent chapters analyze *Circe* and *Ariadne*, which offer alternative perspectives on the mythical characters, highlighting their agency and experiences. The structure of these rewritings is examined, emphasizing the utilization of multiple narrative voices and the deconstruction and reconstruction of the original myth. The thesis seeks to illuminate the dynamic interactions between tradition and modernity, showcasing how these contemporary novels generate new utterances and reshape established narratives. Through this analysis, the study provides a deeper understanding of the role of heteroglossia and polyphony in revisionist mythmaking and its significance in contemporary literature.

Key Words: mythology, epic, novel, contemporary fiction, revisionist mythmaking, rewriting, deconstruction, heteroglossia, polyphony, dialogism

ÖZET

Bu tez, Madeline Miller'ın *Circe* ve Jennifer Saint'in *Ariadne* adlı iki çağdaş romanını Mikhail Bakhtin'in heteroglossia (çok anlamlılık), polifoni (çok seslilik)ve diyalojizm kuramları çerçevesinde incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. *Circe* ve *Ariadne* romanları detaylı bir şekilde incelenerek, Bakhtin'in fikirlerine ve revizyonist mitleştirme geleneğine değinilmektedir. İlk bölümde sunulan teorik çerçeve, Bakhtin'in *Romanda Söylem* adlı makalesinden yararlanmakta ve çeşitli feminist edebiyat eleştirmenlerinin bakış açılarını içermektedir. Heteroglossia kavramı, revizyonist mitleştirme kuramıyla ilişkilendirilerek incelenmekte ve Bakhtin'in *Epik ve Roman* adlı eseri ek bir bakış açısı sunmaktadır. Tezin sonraki bölümleri, Circe ve Ariadne'yi analiz etmekte ve mitolojik karakterlerin alternatif perspektiflerini vurgulayarak onların erkek egemen kültür içindeki güçlü varoluşlarına ve deneyimlerine odaklanmaktadır. Yeniden yazım yaklaşımıyla yazılmış bu iki çağdaş romanın yapısı incelenerek, birden fazla anlatıcı sesinin kullanımı ve orijinal mitin yapı söküme tabi tutuluşu ve yeniden yapılandırılması vurgulanmaktadır. Tez, geleneksel ve çağdaş yazım arasındaki dinamik etkileşimleri aydınlatmayı amaçlamakta, çağdaş romanların nasıl yeni ifadeler ürettiğini ve epik anlatıları yeniden şekillendirdiğini göstermektedir. Bu analiz aracılığıyla tez, heteroglossia, çok seslilik ve diyaloji kuramlarını gözden geçirerek, mitleştirme geleneğini ve bu geleneğin çağdaş edebiyattaki önemine daha derin bir anlayış kazandırmayı hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: çağdaş yazın, epik, roman, mitoloji, revizyonist mitleştirme, yapı söküm, yeniden yazım, heteroglossia, çok seslilik, diyaloji
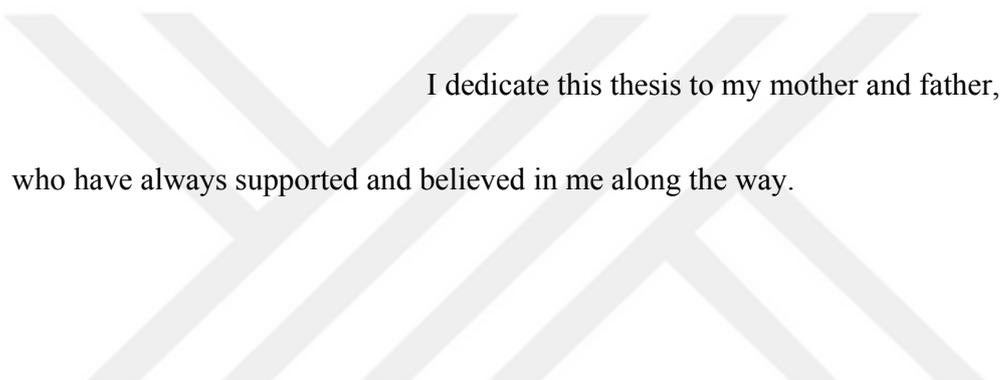
I dedicate this thesis to my mother and father,

who have always supported and believed in me along the way.

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To my parents, who always believe in me by heart. Thank you for your support and endless encouragement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to analyze two contemporary novels based on the mythical stories of both *Circe* and *Ariadne* from the lens of Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia. The act of retelling myths and ancient stories in contemporary literature has gained increasing attention in recent years, particularly in the feminist rewritings of traditional narratives. This increased focus on retelling myths and ancient stories from feminist perspectives may be derived from a desire to challenge and adapt the narratives inherited from earlier generations. Authors attempt to develop more inclusive and socially relevant narratives that resonate with readers today by engaging with myths by means of contemporary lenses. Madeline Miller's *Circe* and Jennifer Saint's *Ariadne* are two examples of such retellings that have garnered critical acclaim. This thesis aims to examine how the authors utilize the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin, specifically his concepts of heteroglossia, polyphony, and dialogism, to create a dialogue between the original myth and the contemporary cultural context in their retellings. By conducting a comparative examination of the two novels, this thesis aims to understand how the authors use language and narrative techniques to challenge and subvert dominant narratives, and to generate new meanings through the coexistence of multiple voices and perspectives. Ultimately, the goal of this research is to contribute to the ongoing scholarly discourse on the role of retellings in shaping cultural memory and literary canons, particularly in relation to feminist perspectives on traditional narratives.

Bakhtin's ideas about the coexistence of various voices, perspectives, and languages within a single text are particularly relevant to the study of revisionist mythmaking, as they provide a framework for analyzing how different discourses and cultural traditions

intersect and interact with each other. Revisionist mythmaking alludes to the action of going back and retelling the ancient, conventional mythical tales in a new, modern setting. In this way, modern writers have given the old myths new interpretations, utterances, and viewpoints; especially, from a Bakhtinian perspective, and this renewal is made possible by the fact that these new rewritings frequently take the form of novels. The revisionist mythmaking framework was suggested and developed by Alicia Ostriker, who mentions the importance of female writer debunking, revising, and rewriting male-centered myths in her study, *Stealing the Language: The Emergence of Women's Poetry in America* (1986). By rewriting and recreating myths and fairy tales from a female perspective, revisionist mythmaking tries to challenge and disprove the gender stereotypes present in them. Miller revisits the legend of Circe in her novel *Circe*, a well-known sorceress from Greek mythology who is said to have used sorcery to transform seafarers into pigs. Saint's Ariadne can also be regarded as an example of revisionist mythmaking, as it challenges the traditional narrative surrounding the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. Ultimately, Saint's Ariadne and Miller's Circe challenge and subvert dominant narratives, creating a new myth that highlights the power of women in shaping their own destinies. Both Saint and Miller introduce significant alterations to the nature of the conventional portrayal of Circe and Ariadne as submissive females. They provide the long-muted Circe and Ariadne a voice, allowing them to tell their own tales and reflect on their own experiences.

The thesis will investigate *Circe* and *Ariadne* using Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia and its interaction with polyphony and dialogism. The theoretical underpinnings of this thesis will be presented in the first chapter, focusing primarily on

Bakhtin's *Discourse in the Novel* and the perspectives of various revisionist authors and literary critics. In Bakhtin's (1981) *Discourse in the Novel*, a novel is defined as "multiform in style and variform in speech and voice, and it includes several heterogeneous stylistic unities, which are based on different linguistic levels and subject to different stylistic controls" (p. 340). Together with the Bakhtinian standpoint mentioned above, Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia will also be examined in conjunction with revisionist mythmaking theory. The theoretical chapter will also explore Bakhtin's *Epic and Novel*.

The two contemporary novels listed above, each of which aims to recreate Circe and Ariadne myths from a different perspective and therefore reveal the other side of the medallion of the classic tales, are examined in the following chapters of this thesis. To highlight the interactions between the traditional and the contemporary texts, this thesis will examine the structure of the two rewritings using various narrative voices, and it will analyze how they deconstruct and recreate myth by coming up with new utterances.

The thesis' objective is to investigate how the heteroglossic and dialogic forms work in a revisionist manner by remythologizing the original mythological stories. In these novels, heteroglossia allows for the display of different perspectives, beliefs, and a new focus on the numerous voices and stories of distinct characters, which contribute to the novels' plots. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to show how various voices reveal fragmented visions that make up the novel's storyline, which is made up of a variety of voices and individual viewpoints.

Consequently, revisionist rewriting not only establishes a connection between historical and contemporary societal ideals but also reveals multiple viewpoints on the

narrative. The act of retelling the old tale through numerous voices, multi-perspectivity, and plurality of utterances can be tied to the idea of heteroglossia in this manner, with a focus on the modern novels mentioned above.

The second chapter focuses on Miller's *Circe* and the third chapter focuses on Saint's *Ariadne* through the theory of heteroglossia and emphasizes their transformation into contemporary fiction. By eliminating the myths that are centered on men and inserting the viewpoints of female characters, Miller reconstructs the narrative from a feminist standpoint in her novel. The thesis will look at Circe's character and her development into an autonomous figure as she masters expressing herself. She has no voice and no agency when the narrative starts, but by the end, she has full autonomy and a voice of her own. The most powerful instrument Circe has for asserting her developing independence is her voice; when she learns to speak out for herself, she declares her independence from her family and narrates her own mythology.

As Kristeva states in *Desire in Language,* "the self is someone who can use the pronoun ''I to denote themselves and their actions"(1980, p. 87). In Miller's *Circe*, the entire story is narrated using this pronoun. Circe as the narrator metaphorically uses her own voice to narrate the story. She also uses her voice to cast spells on and transform men into pigs that allow Circe to overcome the gods' oppression. Throughout the novel, Circe has the power to exist as an individual with agency, not just as a negligible character in Homer's *Odyssey*. In the *Odyssey*, Homer arguably tells the story from a patriarchal perspective, in which female voices are largely absent. Contemporary novels such as *Circe* and *Ariadne* attempt to approach a new perspective by granting a voice of their own to the female characters to emphasize female subjectivity. For this reason, these

contemporary novels deconstruct the traditional narration of the original myths and re-create them from a female perspective, which prompts the revelation of new meanings in the story. In relation to the change of narrative structure and the existence of women's voices in Miller's *Circe* and Saint's *Ariadne*, the function of heteroglossia will be discussed in tandem with the writings of feminist critics such as Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Simon de Beauvoir. In this regard, the issue of women being seen as a commodity in a patriarchal society is examined through the lenses of feminist critics in order to investigate the dominance of males over women and the disparity between women in the context of the narratives of Circe and Ariadne. In this way, more broadly, the existence of a narrative female voice in the framework of Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia is going to be analyzed in both novels. By incorporating feminist critiques within the framework of heteroglossia, this thesis aims to reveal unexplored dimensions or provide new insights into the novels' contribution to broader discussions in the area of feminist theory, and in literary criticism more generally.

CHAPTER I

HETEROGLOSSIA, POLYPHONY, DIALOGISM

Revisionist mythmaking is a process of struggle, introducing opposing viewpoints, inserting differing voices, challenging the principles of the epic heroes, attempting to overthrow them, and elevating the seemingly villainous characters to the position of heroes. The retelling of myths is a phenomenon that has been observed throughout history and is often characterized by the existence of multiple versions of the same myth. This is partly due to the fact that myths have been transmitted orally from generation to generation, which has resulted in variations and adaptations to suit the particular context and cultural milieu in which they are being told. Additionally, each generation has retold the myths in a way that reflects their own cultural values and beliefs, thus creating new versions that reflect the concerns and aspirations of the society in which they exist. This process of retelling and adaptation has played a significant role in the evolution of myths and in ensuring their continuing relevance in the contemporary world.

Alicia Ostriker's essay, *The Thieves of Language: Women Poets and Revisionist Mythmaking*, provides a compelling example of how revisionist mythmaking can challenge and subvert traditional narratives. In her essay, Ostriker argues that women poets have the power to revise and reimagine myths to reflect their own experiences and perspectives, thus creating new myths that challenge patriarchal structures and stereotypes.

One of the key tenets of retelling myths that Ostriker highlights is the importance of reclaiming the female voice. Ostriker notes that "traditional myths often marginalize or

erase female characters, relegating them into passive or secondary roles so women are recognized as "the silent" or "the invisible" (1982, p. 69). By revising these myths, women poets can give voice to these characters and foreground their experiences, thus creating new narratives that center on women's agency and empowerment.

Another tenet of revisionist mythmaking is the use of intertextuality and appropriation. Ostriker notes that women poets often draw on existing myths and narratives, subverting them to challenge dominant ideologies and discourses. By appropriating and reinterpreting these myths, women poets can create new narratives that challenge traditional power structures and offer alternative visions of the world. Ostriker argues that revisionist mythmaking is inherently political, as it involves challenging dominant discourses and power structures. By creating new myths that center on marginalized voices and experiences, women poets can challenge patriarchal structures and offer new visions of society that are more inclusive and just. According to Ostriker (1982), the introduction of female knowledge and experiences fundamentally transforms traditional narratives, rendering them incapable of serving as the underpinnings of male collective fantasies (p. 73). Ostriker's essay illustrates how revisionist mythmaking involves reclaiming the female voice, using intertextuality and appropriation, and challenging dominant discourses and power structures. By revising traditional myths, women writers can create new narratives that challenge patriarchal structures and offer alternative visions of the world.

This method of retelling the story gives voice to the silent characters and echoes the silenced voices of the outcasts and minorities. Such descriptions permit a number of

voices that almost never qualify in the original epic's narration. In this sense, Alicia Ostriker (1982) in her article *The Thieves of Language* defines the method of rewriting as

> When a poet incorporates a figure or story that has already been embraced and given meaning by a culture, they are utilizing myth. In doing so, there is an inherent possibility that the poet's use will be revisionist, meaning that they will appropriate the figure or tale for their own modified purposes. This process can be likened to filling an old vessel with new wine, initially quenching the poet's creative thirst but also leading to the potential for cultural change. (p. 72).

In order to articulate their own experiences and challenge the dominance of male language, Ostriker believes that female authors must possess their own power and authority over language. Rich (1982) argues that the language we utilize, both in spoken and written form, has historically reflected male privilege, functioning as what she terms an "oppressor's language." However, this language proves insufficient in capturing or articulating women's experiences. Rich further suggests that this language, akin to a "Law of the Father," relegates women to being "invisible women in the asylum corridor" or "silent women" devoid of authoritative means of expression. Therefore, it becomes essential for women to possess the ability to "seize speech" and mold it to accurately convey their intentions (p. 69).

Retelling epics demands both a political and cultural evaluation. The retelling's noteworthy aspects include giving voices to the silent characters and echoing the repressed voices of the marginalized and peripheral characters. The variety of voices in the novels brings to mind Bakhtin's theories of heteroglossia, polyphony, and dialogism where Bakhtin asserts that each viewpoint is valid. While reading the epic characters'

retelling, the reader notices that the men and women who were silent in the original text have now found their voices.

There are notable works that have applied Bakhtin's theories to revisionist mythmaking. One such work is *Dialogism and Revisionary Mythmaking in the Poetry of Adrienne Rich* by Kristin Prevallet. In this essay, Prevallet examines how Adrienne Rich's poetry uses dialogism to create revisionary myths that challenge dominant patriarchal narratives. "As a revisionary mythmaker, Rich brings together the voices of the silenced and the oppressed, creating a dialogic space in which these voices can be heard and recognized. Through the use of dialogism, Rich's poetry reveals the ways in which dominant patriarchal narratives have silenced and oppressed certain groups, while at the same time creating new mythic narratives that challenge these dominant discourses" (1997, p. 54). Prevallet argues that Rich's poetry creates a space for multiple voices and perspectives, which allows for the creation of new narratives that challenge traditional power structures. Another example is *Revisionary Mythmaking: The Poetics of Gloria Anzaldúa* by Karen Karlyn. In this essay, Karlyn examines how Gloria Anzaldúa's writing uses revisionary mythmaking to create new narratives that challenge dominant discourses and power structures. "Anzaldúa's mythic writing is a conscious effort to construct and embody new narratives of identity, power, and resistance that challenge and subvert dominant discourses. Through her revisionary mythmaking, Anzaldúa creates a space in which marginalized voices and identities can be heard and valued, and in which the oppressive structures of the dominant culture can be critiqued and dismantled" (2001, p. 283). Karlyn argues that Anzaldúa's use of hybridity, intertextuality, and storytelling creates a space for alternative visions of the world that are more inclusive and just. Both

of these works draw on Bakhtin's concepts of dialogism and polyphony to analyze how revisionist mythmaking can challenge dominant narratives and create new spaces for alternative voices and perspectives. Heteroglossia, Polyphony and dialogism are proposed as tools for analyzing epic retellings in this thesis because they allow for a nuanced understanding of the ways where diverse voices and perspectives are brought together in a single narrative. These concepts, which were developed by Mikhail Bakhtin, emphasize the importance of diversity and multiplicity in language and discourse.

In the context of epic retellings, polyphony is associated with the presence of multiple voices within the narrative. This can include the voices of different characters, narrators, or even different versions of the same story. Heteroglossia, on the other hand, is associated with the presence of multiple languages and dialects within a single discourse. This can include different registers of language, as well as the utilization of diverse languages altogether. Together, heteroglossia and polyphony offer a powerful tool for analyzing epic retellings because they grant a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which these narratives bring together multiple voices and perspectives. Therefore, this thesis proposes using heteroglossia, polyphony and dialogism as a tool for the analysis of epic retellings.

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin is a Russian philosopher and literary theorist who was born in 1895.Todorov (1984) highlights the notable contributions of Mikhail Bakhtin on two fronts, expressing minimal reservations. Firstly, he recognizes Bakhtin as the preeminent Soviet scholar in the field of human sciences. Secondly, Todorov regards him as the paramount literary theorist of the twentieth century (p. ix). Even though Bakhtin began writing in the 1920s, the West was unaware of him until the 1970s. One of the key

figures in the introduction of Bakhtin's works to the West was the Russian philosopher and cultural theorist, Julia Kristeva. Kristeva was a student of Bakhtin's and played a major role in translating and disseminating his work in Europe and North America. She also incorporated Bakhtin's ideas into her own work, which helped to popularize his ideas and bring them to a wider audience. In Kristeva's introduction to her work *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art,* she states that "Bakhtin was one of the few Russian thinkers who had a profound knowledge of contemporary Western philosophy, semiotics and aesthetics. He was a remarkable thinker who explored many fields, including literature, linguistics, philosophy, history, and anthropology, and his works can be seen as a kind of ongoing dialogue with many of the major figures in these fields" (1980, p. ix). The Western literary world has gained fresh perspectives thanks to the publication of his works in the field of humanities.

Bakhtin's writings cover a wide range of subjects, including novel theory, sociolinguistics and the philosophy of language. Bakhtin places a special emphasis on the examination of ideas like heteroglossia, polyphony, and dialogism in order to reveal the various components functioning in the novel genre. According to Bakhtin (1981), the novel encompasses an artistic framework comprising languages, or more precisely, a collection of language images. This implies that the novel not only integrates diverse languages but also assimilates images from various genres, thereby acquiring a multifaceted stylistic and linguistic nature (p. 416). Bakhtin further characterizes the novel as being "multiform in style and variform in speech and voice" (p. 261). Therefore, a deeper examination of these concepts is required to understand novels in the Bakhtinian perspective.

Heteroglossia is a term related to the plurality of language, which Bakhtin brings to the novel genre, literally means various languages. According to Bakhtin (1981), heteroglossia is defined as "the internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups" (p. 262). The heteroglot environment in which a person utilizes language is made up of all these different languages inside a single national tongue. In fact, the individual is encompassed by heteroglossia. Not all of the words in their language completely belong to that language. In accordance with Bakhtin's explanation, the word within language possesses a dual nature—it is partially derived from someone else. It attains the status of being "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with their own intention and unique accent, effectively appropriating the word and adapting it to align with their intended meaning and expressive purpose (p. 293).

As a result of the individual's usage of various languages in various contexts, he contributes to an ever-growing heteroglossia and becomes conscious of it. According to Holquist (2002), heteroglossia represents a particular worldview that perceives the world as comprised of a roiling mass of languages, each possessing its distinct formal characteristics or markers (p. 67). The diversity of language is the primary argument Bakhtin makes against Saussurean linguistics and Formalist literary methods. Bakhtin (1981) asserts that language, similar to the vivid and ever-changing environment that encompasses the consciousness of a literary artist, lacks unity and coherence (p. 288). However, this doesn't mean that language lacks a unifying element. In fact, according to Bakhtin, "centripetal forces" and "centrifugal forces" are always at work in every given

utterance (p. 217). As noted by Bell and Gardiner, "centripetal forces push towards unity, agreement and monologue, while the centrifugal forces seek multiplicity, disagreement and heteroglossia" (1998, p. 16). Bakhtin (1981) views unitary language as the theoretical manifestation of historical processes related to linguistic standardization and centralization. It represents the centripetal forces that work towards unifying language (p. 270). According to Bakhtin (1981), unitary language is not an inherent entity but is continually asserted, constantly opposed by the realities of heteroglossia throughout its linguistic existence. However, it also exerts a tangible influence in the form of counteracting heteroglossia, setting certain boundaries, ensuring a maximum level of mutual comprehension, and crystallizing into a tangible, albeit relative, unity. This unity manifests as the prevalent conversational and literary language known as "correct language" (p. 270). Since heteroglossia can be a barrier to effective communication among language speakers, unitary language seeks to reduce its variation. But only a small portion of what it does is this. An ideological purpose is likewise served by unitary language, according to Bakhtin. It is a part of "the processes of sociopolitical and cultural centralization" (p. 271)

As noted by Clark and Holquist, "the novel is the great instrument for exploiting and simultaneously strengthening heteroglossia" (1984, p. 291).In *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin (1981) contends that the presence of heteroglossia, inherent in every language throughout its historical existence, serves as an essential requirement for the novel as a genre. The novel, in order to encompass its myriad themes and the entirety of the depicted world of objects and ideas, effectively utilizes the diverse array of speech types derived from social diversity (p. 262).

In this sense, Mary Louise Pratt (1992) argues that a novel that embraces heteroglossia in its discourse is referred to as a "heteroglot novel", whereas a work that attempts to obliterate or use heteroglossia only incidentally is referred to as a "monoglot novel"(p. 42). According to Bakhtin (1981), in his book *The Dialogic Imagination*, he suggests that while the novel acknowledges the presence of heteroglossia as a contextual backdrop, it tends to largely exclude or hierarchically structure it within its own stylistic organization (p. 23).

Bakhtin uses the term "heteroglossia" to describe the coexistence of multiple linguistic and cultural traditions within a single society or text. In this quote, Bakhtin is suggesting that certain works of literature, despite being aware of the existence of heteroglossia, reject it from their own stylistic arrangement and attempt to order it hierarchically. Bakhtin argues that this kind of rejection of heteroglossia can limit the potential of language and literature to represent the full complexity of social experience.

According to Bakhtin, the evolution of heteroglot novels determines the primary stylistic traits of novelistic discourse. Brandist (2002) argues that within heteroglot novels, literary language is stratified. This means that literary language is merely one particular layer within the broader spectrum of language. Furthermore, even within literary language, there exists stratification based on factors such as genre, historical period, and other relevant considerations (p. 115). Bakhtin (1981) observes that in a particular genre, certain linguistic features adopt a distinct quality, intertwining with specific perspectives, approaches, modes of thought, nuances, and accents that are characteristic of that genre (p. 289).In the novel genre, the presence of heteroglossia and its double-voicedness is a crucial element. Bell and Gardiner (1981) argue that

heteroglossia embodies the inherent dual nature or "double-voicedness" of human experience. Once integrated into the novel, heteroglossia transforms into "another's speech in another's language," representing a plurality of voices and perspectives (p. 324). It turns into a represented speech that expresses the author's goals, though these intentions are too varied degrees reflected in the characters' represented speech. According to Bakhtin (1981), the double-voiced discourse in the novel serves two distinct speakers simultaneously, embodying the intentions of both the speaking character and the underlying aim of the author. Within this discourse, two voices, two meanings, and two expressions coexist, reflecting the multifaceted nature of the narrative (p. 325). In his essay *Discourse in the Novel*, Bakhtin discusses Charles Dickens' use of heteroglossia: "In the works of Dickens, heteroglossia is primarily represented by the fact that he presents his heroes speaking different languages: one speaks the language of the law, another the language of commerce, a third the language of learning, and so forth. It is precisely in the dialogic interaction of these different languages that the heroes of Dickens reveal their natures" (1981, p. 262). Bakhtin argues that it is through the interactions between these different languages that the characters in Dickens' novels reveal their true natures. In Bakhtin's examination of double-voicedness of heteroglossia within the novel, he includes a few examples from Charles Dickens and gives this brief passage from *Little Dorrit:* "O, what a wonderful man this Merdle, what a great man, what a master man, how blessedly and enviably endowed—in one word, what a rich man! (qtd. in Bakhtin 304; emphasis Bakhtin's)

Bakhtin emphasizes the way "the chorus" represents Mr. Merdle's common viewpoint; however, there are not any dialectal markers showing that these glorifications

are the viewpoint of someone other than the narrator. The chorus reflects another's hidden speech, listing adoring words like "wonderful,""great,""master," and "endowed." The narrator then reveals the author's point of view by reinforcing Mr. Merdle's adoration with the sole word "rich." This authorial unmasking demonstrates how "rich" has become synonymous with the glorifying words, and this reinforming of the chorus's viewpoint exposes the irony and hypocrisy of the common view itself. (1981, p. 304).

Bakhtin (1981) asserts that to the novelist, both the object being depicted and language itself are unveiled within their historical dimension, as they undergo a process of social and heteroglot evolution. From the novelist's perspective, there exists no external world beyond their socio-heteroglot perception, and language is inseparable from the diverse and stratified intentions that stratify that world (p. 330). As a result, the novelist's role is to portray and coordinate heteroglossia in the novel. Because it can contain a diverse range of elements, novels are an ideal genre for achieving this goal.

In his essay *Discourse in the Novel*.Bakhtin states that. "In various types of novels, these compositional approaches to heteroglossia display characters who are themselves heterogeneous and who are characterized by a deep interior stratification, so that there is room in them for two or more voices to speak" (271). Bakhtin clarifies how heteroglossiais used in the novel form to create characters who are complex and multifaceted, with multiple voices or perspectives present within them. These characters reflect the diversity of human experience and the various social, cultural, and historical forces that shape our identities and perspectives. The use of heteroglossia in the novel form allows for a more nuanced and complex representation of the human experience. Heteroglossia joins the stratified common language, which serves as the comic novel's

main language source. Bakhtin (1981) explains that transitions from common language to the satirical imitation of specific genres or other languages, as well as shifts to the direct authorial voice, can occur either gradually or, conversely, in a sudden and abrupt manner (p. 302). Bakhtin discusses the ways in which different languages and styles can be incorporated into a text, and how the transitions between them can be smooth or abrupt. He suggests that in a heteroglot text, the author can use a variety of voices and styles to create a diverse and dynamic composition.

Bakhtin also discusses the use of parody and humor in language as a way of challenging dominant discourses and creating alternative perspectives. Bakhtin's concept of the comic novel is a genre that emphasizes the material bodily aspect of life and challenges the seriousness and monologic nature of official discourse. In the comic novel, language is not limited to a monolithic voice or perspective but rather is open to multiple and conflicting voices.

The comic novel often features characters who are on the fringes of society, such as the poor, the outcast, and the marginalized, and it portrays their struggles in a humorous, satirical way that exposes the hypocrisy and absurdity of the dominant culture. Bakhtin argues that the comic novel is a powerful weapon for social criticism, as it allows for a critical and subversive perspective on society and its norms. Some examples of comic novels that fit Bakhtin's definition include *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift, *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes, and *Tristram Shandy* by Laurence Sterne. These works all feature characters who are outside of the mainstream of society, and they use humor and satire to critique the social norms and values of their time.

The language system of the comic novel is dominated by "various forms and degrees of parodic stylization of incorporated languages" (1981, p. 312). Additionally, the incorporation and structuring of heteroglossia in the comic style mainly involve literary parody. Literary parody, to use Bakhtin's terminology, is the parody of other novel types. Bakhtin (1981) argues that the parodying of prevailing novel types plays a vital role in the evolution of the novel as a genre. He goes so far as to suggest that the most significant novelistic models and types emerged precisely through the process of parodically dismantling and deconstructing preceding novelistic worlds (p. 309). An author's novel transforms into an object and enters the novel of another author with a fresh goal in the literary parody of the novel kinds. As a result, the parodying novel's entire novelistic discourse comprises two main voices because two intentions, one from the novel which is parodied and the other from the parodying work, mix to variable degrees.

Heteroglossia enters the novel through the narrators since they have a multitude of narrative languages including slang, literary, social, professional, and everyday, dialects. Bakhtin (1981) states that the speech of these narrators in the novel is consistently characterized as "another's speech," meaning it differs from the real or potential direct discourse of the author, and it is expressed in a language distinct from the author's own (p. 313).Another story, which is the author's story, comes to life as the narrator is telling the first. In line with this understanding, Bakhtin (1981) suggests that the reader experiences a heightened awareness of two distinct levels within the narrative. Firstly, there is the level of the narrator, encompassing a belief system with its own set of objects, meanings, and emotional expressions. Secondly, there is the level of the author, who

communicates (albeit indirectly) through the story and by means of the story itself (p. 314). Additionally, the narrator's story may employ a language different from the author's standard literary language. In this sense, the language of the narrator also establishes a second level of language. The author's language inherently establishes a dialogic interaction with the narrator's language since it is reflected through it. Bakhtin (1981) explains that the interplay and dialogic tension between two languages and two belief systems within a novel allow the intentions of the author to manifest in a manner that enables readers to keenly perceive their presence throughout the work (p. 314).

The characters' languages are another way to include and organize heteroglossia in a novel, and it is applicable to all novel types. Every character in the novel represents a different ideological perspective and language. In this approach, the novel itself is transformed into a hybrid structure where several languages coexist, complement one another, and are dialogically related. As a result, the author creates an artistic hybridity.

Thus, with the author's orchestration, every language that forms heteroglossia, which can be generic, individual, social, professional, and period-bound, is interwoven into the novel .According to Bakhtin (1981), when heteroglossia is introduced into the novel, it undergoes a process of artistic transformation (p. 262). The social and historical voices that inhabit language, encompassing all its words and forms, and contributing to its unique and concrete conceptualizations, are organized within the novel into a structured stylistic system (p.300). In this sense, how well the novelist handles heteroglossia stylistically determines how stylistically successful the novel is.

Bakhtin established the ideas that would underpin much of his work in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. The core of this research is the term "polyphony", which refers

to several voices. According to Bakhtin, Dostoevsky's writing consists of several distinct voices that are not combined to form a single viewpoint and are independent of the author's voice. Each of these voices has a distinct viewpoint, a distinct level of validity, and a unique narrative weight within the novel. The concept of polyphony refers to the way in which Bakhtin celebrates the novel's numerous elements, how they interact dialogically, and the variety of unique voices that belong to the author, narrators, and characters. Actually, "polyphony" is a term used in music, and as McCallum (1999) explains, the term "polyphonic" refers to a composition in music that comprises multiple voices or parts that are juxtaposed and harmonized with one another (p. 28). The basic meaning of the phrase is maintained by Bakhtin's translation of the musical idea into the literary realm. Accordingly, in this context, a polyphonic novel is described as "one in which several different voices or points of view interact on more or less equal terms" (Baldick,1990,p. 173).

Understanding polyphony and the polyphonic novel requires first separating it from other Bakhtinian concepts, then deciphering how he uses the term "author," and, lastly, examining the key elements of the polyphonic novel. In the Bakhtinian point of view, polyphony "refers precisely to the construction of the voices of characters and narrator in the novel, as its etymology— the Greek for 'many voices' suggests" (Vice, 1997, p.112). The plurality of voices present in the polyphonic novel produces its polyphonic structure rather than the presence of several languages (heteroglossia). Moreover, dialogized heteroglossia describes how many heteroglossic languages interact with one another within the context of the entire novel. In this sense, dialogism refers to the interactions between many novel aspects and is not just confined to heteroglossia.

As the narrator's and the characters' voices interact in dialog, it can take on characteristics of both the characters and the languages that make up the heteroglot world of the novel, just as it can take on characteristics of the polyphonic novel. Since the "voice" is a main concept in Bakhtin's theory of polyphony, it is crucial to comprehend what it represents in the novel. The polyphonic novel combines a multitude of different, independent voices to create a cohesive whole. Each voice in the novel, regardless of who is represented, is a distinct, autonomous voice with its own perspective and consciousness. The characters in a polyphonic novel are not portrayed by an omniscient narrator as objects but rather as subjects who are on an equal level with the narrator. Therefore, polyphony liberates character voices by isolating them from the narrator's voice. According to Bakhtin (1984), in the polyphonic novel, the character is portrayed as possessing ideological authority and independence. The character is viewed as the creator of a comprehensive and meaningful ideological conception, rather than being merely an object within the narrative (p. 5).

According to Bakhtin's polyphony concept, in a monologic novel, the author's voice dominates the discourse, and the characters are subject to the author's worldview and values. In a monologic novel, there is no dialogic interaction between different voices, and the author's voice is the only one that is heard. On the contrary, the polyphonic novel has several levels. In this way, the many fields of vision serve to reflect the various realms in which the characters live. Bakhtin (1984) highlights that in a polyphonic novel, it is not the physical elements themselves, but rather the consciousnesses of these distinct worlds and their individual perspectives that converge to form a higher unity. This unity can be understood as a polyphonic unity of a second

order, where multiple voices and perspectives harmonize within the novel (p. 16). In addition to having multiple voices and levels, the polyphonic novel has dialogism. It is "dialogic through and through," to use Bakhtin's phrase. Characters' voices are used in dialogic interactions in the polyphonic novel, but unlike dramatic dialogues, they are not required to respond directly in the dialogue because "dialogic relationships are a much broader phenomenon than mere rejoinders in a dialogue, laid out compositionally in the text" (p. 40). According to Bakhtin (1984), the structure of the novel is intentionally designed to create an inherent dialogic opposition. Every element within the novel is shaped in such a way that nonparticipation or detachment from the ongoing dialogue is impossible. The narrative is constructed from a perspective that actively participates and engages in the ongoing dialogues presented in the novel (p. 18).Dialogism embraces the mutiplicity of voices and perspectives. It is also known as "double-voicedness" or "multi-voicedness".

The dialogical word is in close interaction with another's word, speaking to a listener and expecting for a response. Its combative nature stems from the fact that it is intended to elicit a reaction. It fails to become a "whole" and avoids clear expression or closure. It is an awareness that continuously exists at the edges of other consciousnesses.

All languages interact with one another, in the framework of dialogism they become a whole which Bakhtin describes as "deliberately intensifies difference between them, gives them embodied representation and dialogically opposes them to one another in unresolvable dialogues" (1981, p. 291). This allows them to convey several meanings that can be contrasted and opposed to one another. Bakhtin (1981) emphasizes that a living word does not establish a singular relationship with its object. Instead, there exists

an elastic environment of other, unfamiliar words that pertain to the same object, forming a dynamic interplay between the word, the object, and the speaking subject (p. 276).So, it is possible to assert that dialogized heteroglossia uncovers multiple worldviews, values, and meanings as well as conflicts connected with different social and historical contexts. Dialogism indicates the verbal exchange of ideas between one context and another so that: "The word is born in dialogue as a living rejoinder within it; the word is shaped in dialogic interaction with an alien word that is already in the object. A word forms a concept of its object in a dialogic way" (p. 279) As a result, it sets the stage for the expectation that the speaker and listener's complex interconnections inevitably bring about. In contrast to the listener's background, the speaker strives to establish his territory, and the listener runs into an unfamiliar world that he attempts to foresee. As a result, because "it is the natural orientation of any living discourse," (p. 279) it incites a conversation that is unavoidable in the dialogic orientation of discourse. In this way, "the subjective belief system of the listener and the reader" (p. 283) is represented as an "organic part of a heteroglot unity" in the dialogic relationship (p. 284).

The fact that heteroglossia has at least two voices is a significant component as it supports the dialogic orientation of the novel genre. Heteroglossia itself, according to Bell and Gardiner, "reflects the fundamental other-languagedness" or "double-voicedness" of human experience (1998, p. 197). This double voicedness representation conveys the author's objective as well as the characters' speech at the same time. Bakhtin (1981) explains that double-voicedness within discourse simultaneously serves two speakers, each with their own distinct intentions. It expresses both the immediate

intention of the speaking character and the indirect intention of the author. In this type of discourse, two voices, two meanings, and two expressions coexist (p. 324).

These voices are therefore internally dialogized. In this sense, the author's stylistic ability is crucial to how heteroglossia is composed in novelistic discourse. In this way, the heteroglossia in the novel is reflected in his artistic work through dialogism and double-voicedness. The novelistic discourse would relapse to monologism if speech variation were removed. Thus, in order to achieve Bakhtin's (1981) claim that "both object and language are revealed to the novelist in their historical dimension, in the process of social and heteroglot becoming,"(p. 330)the author's artistic abilities and the heteroglot nature of language are intertwined to serve a stylistic discourse. For the novelist, according to Bakhtin, there is no external world beyond their socio-heteroglot perception. Additionally, there is no language that exists outside the heteroglot intentions that shape and divide that world (p. 330).

Another crucial point that needs to be highlighted while discussing how to integrate and organize heteroglossia in the novel genre is the narrator's uniquely styled speech, which includes that of character narrators. By functioning as the reporter of a character's speech, the author thereby integrates himself into the narrative. Hence, in a sense, the author synchronizes with the character; in this way, the author may be viewed as a "veiled" author, who can only be tentatively detected and identified in the narrative. Nevertheless, it is also believed that the author and the characters are distinct, despite the possibility that the narrator and a particular character are equivalent in the narrative. Character narrators in the novel can be viewed as embodiments of the transitory nature of language. Bakhtin (1981) suggests that the language employed by characters in the novel,

including their manner of speaking, possesses a sense of autonomy both verbally and semantically. Each character's speech represents a distinct belief system, as it is the speech of someone else expressed in a language that belongs to another (p. 315).

On this foundation, the languages of the characters inspire the hybrid construction of novelistic discourse since the speech of the characters allows for interaction with other adjacent speech. Bakhtin (1981) states that the speech of narrators in the novel is consistently characterized as belonging to another person (in relation to the actual or potential direct discourse of the author) and is expressed in a language distinct from the narrator's own. This distinct language can be seen as a specific version of the literary language, which clashes with the language employed by the narrator (p. 313).Due to their heterogeneous speech patterns, these narrators use a variety of particular narrative languages that can be classified based on dialects, whether social or professional. According to Bakhtin (1981), the reader discerns two distinct levels within the story. Firstly, there is the level of the narrator, which encompasses a belief system replete with the narrator's own objects, meanings, and emotional expressions. Secondly, there is the level of the author, who communicates through the story and by means of the story itself (pp. 313-314).Finally, the idea of incorporating other genres into the novel's body is enhanced by Bakhtin by highlighting the various aspects of heteroglossia. Bakhtin (1981) observes that the novel engages in parodying other genres, revealing the conventional nature of their forms and language. It critiques and incorporates various genres into its own unique structure, modifying and emphasizing them in distinct ways (p. 5). It is crucial to emphasize Bakhtin's idea of how genres can be included in a novel within the framework of heteroglossia:

According to Bakhtin (1981), the novel has the ability to incorporate diverse genres, encompassing both artistic genres such as inserted short stories, lyrical songs, poems, and dramatic scenes, as well as non-artistic everyday genres, rhetorical genres, scholarly genres, religious genres, and more. Essentially, any genre can be integrated into the construction of a novel. These incorporated genres typically retain their own structural integrity, independence, linguistic characteristics, and stylistic peculiarities within the novel (pp. 320-321).

It could be claimed that the novel involves heteroglossia because it contains numerous narratives, combines different forms, and has relationships between speeches. By avoiding any sort of limitations within the novel, heteroglossia keeps its open-endedness. Going further, the idea of the image of language must be regarded as an essential indicator of the novel in order to support Bakhtin's claim. "The primary stylistic project of the novel as a genre is to create images of languages," he clarifies. (p. 366). According to Bakhtin, in order to create his own point of view, the author "elevates the social heteroglossia surrounding objects into an image with finished contours, an image completely shot through with dialogized overtones." (p. 278). Thus, dialogical interaction serves as a representation of the languages within the novel.

The images of languages are able to enter various social, historical, and cultural realms because of their capacity to promote dialogic orientation. In novelistic images of languages, all these various external characteristics are depicted in their interactional state. Bakhtin divides these representations of language into three fundamental categories in this context: "hybridizations, the dialogized interrelation of languages, and pure dialogues." These three categories of devices, however, are actually combined; they can "

only theoretically be separated in this fashion since in reality they are always inextricably woven together into the unitary artistic fabric of the image," (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 358).

Bakhtin (1981) highlights hybridization as one of the most significant processes in the evolution of languages. Hybridization refers to the blending of two distinct social languages within a single utterance. It represents an encounter, taking place within the context of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses that may be separated by time periods, social differentiation, or other factors (p. 358). Bakhtin notes the two linguistic consciousnesses which an intentional hybrid presents; one is represented and the other does the representing. In actuality, if the represented language does not reflect its intended use, it is merely a sample of the other person's language and not an image of a language. Therefore, a deliberate and conscious hybrid is a "mixture of two individualized language consciousnesses" rather than merely a combination of two impersonal language consciousnesses. (p.359).

Additionally, pure dialogues have the ability to create images of languages. Languages are exposed to one another when they are brought together through hybridization, resulting in an infinite dialogic exchange and linguistic contrast. Bakhtin (1981) asserts that dialogues within novels are imbued with an abundance of dialogic confrontations. These confrontations are characterized by their inability to reach a resolution and instead serve as localized instances that illustrate the ongoing, profound dialogue of languages. The dialogues within novels are influenced by the socio-ideological development of languages and society as a whole (p. 365). As a result, the methods used to create images of languages in novels are considered artistic hybrid languages and consciousnesses as a primary stylistic project of the novel.

The novelist uses his artistic linguistic style to create this artistic consistency through the merging of these distanced languages so that they illuminate one another. Bakhtin (1981) suggests that every genuine stylization involves the artistic portrayal of another person's linguistic style, serving as an artistic depiction of their language. It entails the presence of two distinct linguistic consciousnesses: one belonging to the stylizer, who represents the stylization, and the other belonging to the entity being represented and stylized (p. 362).Finally, owing to the previously mentioned aspects and approaches, the novel can be regarded as a hybrid structure of various languages that are dialogically related to one another. In doing so, the novelist "welcomes the heteroglossia and language diversity of the literary and extraliterary language into his own work, not only weakening them but even intensifying them." (p. 298).

This suggests that the novel is an open-ended construction due to the interaction of the various languages and consciousnesses. All of these components are related to the author's artistic approach at the same time. Bakhtin (1981) asserts that while there is an authorial emphasis evident in the orchestrating and distanced elements of language, ultimately these elements are shaped by the author's artistic intention and fall under their artistic responsibility. However, these elements do not belong to the author's language in the same sense and do not operate on the same level (p. 415).It can be said that novelistic discourse in this context illuminates another person's language by achieving various semantic objectives through various speech types. Bakhtin (1984) explains that the author has the ability to utilize someone else's discourse and incorporate it into their own work, imbuing it with a new semantic intention while retaining its original intention. This discourse, with its dual semantic intentions, is perceived as belonging to someone else

within the narrative, giving rise to the presence of two distinct voices within a single discourse (p. 189). Bakhtin believed that any utterance or speech act is influenced by many different factors, including the speaker's social context, the audience, the genre of the speech act, and the speaker's intention. Therefore, even a seemingly straightforward discourse can contain multiple voices, each with its own meaning and intention. Bakhtin emphasized the importance of considering the various voices and perspectives present in any discourse in order to fully understand its meaning and implications.

Additionally, it might be possible to suggest that the discourses the author uses have already been employed for someone else's purpose; however, the author provides it with an entirely new semantic purpose in order to express his artistic image. In the essay *Word, Dialogue and Novel*, which focuses on Bakhtin's main ideas, Julia Kristeva, whose concept of intertextuality has rootes in Bakhtin's theories, claims that "any text is constructed of a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (1986, p. 37). The statement made by Kristeva could be related to Bakhtin's assertion that "the word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention" (p. 293).

In light of the concepts previously covered above, the author's semantic intention thus highlights new and contemporary viewpoints that give the novel a heterodiegetic narrative style. As a result, it might not be suitable to look specifically for a particular aspect, worldview, or speech type in the novel because, by nature of its multi-voiced structure, it contains a diversity of these elements.

In this regard, the concepts of heteroglossia and polyphony can be applied to revisionist mythmaking. Heteroglossia can be traced in revisionist mythmaking through the incorporation of multiple voices and perspectives. In these retellings, different voices and perspectives may be interwoven to create a more complex and multifaceted narrative. Polyphony can also be seen in revisionist mythmaking through the use of multiple voices. Instead of relying on a single authoritative voice or discourse, revisionist mythmaking incorporates a range of voices and discourses, including those of marginalized or underrepresented groups. The concepts of heteroglossia and polyphony can be valuable tools for analyzing and understanding revisionist mythmaking, as they help to illuminate the complex interplay of voices, perspectives, and discourses that shape these alternative narratives. Revisionist female writers such as Madeline Miller and Jennifer Saint succeed in changing preconceived notions of gender relations by using male-centered canonical texts which stereotype and mute women, in inventive and innovative ways.

On this basis, it can be presumed that the motivations behind rewriting the past in contemporary fiction are to expose the traditional work to the present and prevent it from being concluded. Thus, the deconstruction of the past offers fresh viewpoints that might uncover a problem that is still unresolved. In this respect, the two modern novels discussed in this thesis celebrate the characteristics of novelization, such as the multiplicity of voices and diversity of utterances. Therefore the aim of this thesis is to investigate these rewritings of the myths of Circe and Ariadne by highlighting the contradictions, multiple viewpoints, and heterogeneous beliefs in a reading that will be examined and supported in the light of Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia.

CHAPTER 2

CIRCE

As has already been noted, the present thesis focuses on the rewritings of mythical stories, which use intertextuality to recreate myths through the experiences of women. Catherine MacMillan in *The Witch(ES) of Aiaia: Gender, Immortality and the Chronotope in Madeline Miller's Circe (2020)* states that "Regarding the broader historical context of the novel, Circe can arguably be understood as part of a postmodern attempt to revitalize the epic tradition through novelization and parody. Such revisionist mythmaking frequently focuses on female characters, who were arguably often sidelined or stereotyped in the original epics" (p. 37). Through this approach, Miller reinvigorates and recontextualizes the mythological material, crafting a narrative that resonates with contemporary readers while staying true to the essence of the original myths. Revisionist mythmaking reinterprets female characters who were largely passive in the myths and transforms them into active subjects by deconstructing their prescribed roles and casting light on their hidden characteristics. Thus, women can decentralize the unity of meaning in the patriarchal phrase regimen by finding an area of sanctuary where they can repair and modify the old narratives. Myths, which are consideredto represent the daily lives and duties of ancient women, can play a significant role in this regard.

In this context, it is first significant to discuss the various definitions of myth. In the *Cambridge English Dictionaries*, myth is described as: "a traditional story from ancient times, especially one that was told to explain natural events or to describe the

early history of a people", while Joseph Campbell notes that, "Myths are stories that express meaning, morality, or motivation" (Shermer 34). Similarly, Mircea Eliade argues that myths are "stories about divine or supernatural beings, often arranged in a coherent system" (8). These stories are passed down through history and serve to explain the worldview of a people. As Roland Barthes notes, "Myth is neither a lie nor a confession: it is an inflection" (143). This inflection involves the transformation of a historical event into a cultural event that serves to express the values and beliefs of a society. The strength of myth lies in its power to express profound truths through symbolic language, as Joseph Campbell observes: "Myth is much more important and true than history. History is just journalism and you know how reliable that is" (Shermer 34). In this way, myths function as a vital component of cultural identity, serving to connect individuals to their past and each other through shared stories and values.

Archetypes are fundamental, universal patterns or themes that are present in the collective human experience across cultures and time. They represent recurring symbols, images, and ideas that emerge from the depths of the human psyche. The concept of archetypes was first introduced by Swiss psychologist Carl Jung, who believed that these archetypal patterns are inherited and reside within the collective unconscious. Archetypes can be thought of as prototypes or primordial templates that shape our thoughts, behaviors, and perceptions. They are often associated with specific roles, such as the Hero, the Wise Old Man, the Trickster, the Mother, or the Shadow. These archetypal figures and themes appear in mythology, folklore, literature, and art, reflecting deep-seated aspects of human nature and the universal challenges and conflicts we face. According to Jung, "Archetypes are the living system of reactions and aptitudes that

determine the individual's life in invisible ways."(1968, p. 3).Carl Jung posits in this context that myth is a technique of communicating those stories and characters that have been inscribed in humans since prehistory and hence signify universal problems. The archetypes found in the collective unconscious are thought to have a profound impact on our individual lives, influencing dreams, aspirations, relationships, and personal development. They are believed to provide a framework for understanding and relating to the world, allowing individuals to connect with the broader human experience and tap into a deeper well of meaning and purpose. "The collective unconscious... appears to consist of mythological motifs or primordial images, for which reason the myths of all nations are its real exponents. In fact, the whole of mythology could be taken as a sort of projection of the collective unconscious." (Jung, 1968, p. 43). Thus, from a psychological standpoint, dreams and myths are inextricably linked. Notably, Otto Rank's view that "[...] in some sense myths are the dream-thinking of people" is one of the oldest mythological ideas (Kirk, 1970, p. 273).

Karen Armstrong, a more contemporary thinker, also argues that myths represent humanity's psychology and that they are a way for people to cope with the numerous catastrophes that befall them; she also argues for the flexibility of myths and their ability to adapt to different eras and circumstances. According to Armstrong (2006), the ancient stories of gods or heroes venturing into the underworld, navigating labyrinths, and battling monsters served as a means to illuminate the enigmatic workings of the human psyche. These narratives provided individuals with guidance on how to confront their own internal struggles. As Freud and Jung embarked on their exploration of the modern quest for self-discovery, they naturally turned to classical mythology as a framework for

understanding their insights, offering new interpretations of the ancient myths. It is important to note that myths do not have a singular, fixed version. As the circumstances evolve, storytelling must be adapted to reveal timeless truths (p. 11).

Viewing myths through contemporary eyes allows us to discover more than one layer of significance in these stories. To fully understand the significance of the revisionist approach and the necessity for it among contemporary writers, it should be stated that revisionist mythmaking allows for the reinterpretation and deconstruction of myths in accordance with current social and popular aesthetic values. Revisionist writers might mythify traditional narratives in this way to respond to the requirements of their time in a fresh way. In his renowned work Mythologies, Roland Barthes (1957) suggests that one way to counteract the power of myth is to mythologize it in return and create an artificial myth, which he calls mythology. Barthes proposes that if myth robs the language of something, why not rob the myth? The key is to utilize it as the starting point for a new semiotic chain, considering its meaning as the initial element of a second myth. By engaging in this process, Barthes suggests a subversion of the mythological structure and a reappropriation of its significance (p. 134).In this context, the term "mythifying" can arguably be used interchangeably with "revisionist mythmaking." The revival of these myths serves as a re-evaluation of social conventions. In this way, an artist in touch with the past might adapt classic myth into a contemporary context. In this sense, by revisiting the past, new perspectives and ideologies can be conveyed, while the artistic influence underlines the relationship between contemporary and earlier writers. In *Fairy Tales, Myth, and Psychoanalytic Theory*, Schanoes (2014) argues that when traditional stories are invoked, embodied, and preserved in revisions, they serve the purpose of

reminding readers of the perspectives of the past. Simultaneously, these revisions introduce changes to the tales, highlighting the distinct perspectives of the present. Through this interplay between preservation and alteration, revision acts as a bridge between the past and the present, allowing readers to engage with the evolving cultural and social contexts (p. 69).

Furthermore, Margaret Atwood states in her book *Negotiating with the Dead*: *A Writer on Writing* that authors "must descend to where the stories are kept," but she urges them not to "be captured and held immobile by the past." And everyone must commit acts of larceny or else of reclamation" (2002, p. 160). As a result, she proposes that writers go back in time to find the desired material: "the dead have some very precious and desirable things under their control, down there in their perilous realm, and among these are some things you yourself may want or need" (2002, p. 167).

To contribute to the production and reflection of new viewpoints, revisionist mythmaking embraces both the present and the past. As a result, throughout revisionist practice, conflicts and instabilities associated with contemporary perspectives emerge. Going back in time to create current meaning can be seen as either larceny or a revelation of a past that is waiting to be discovered. Thus, contemporary writers are bound to adapt to the previous context while writing a new text. Rewriting the old stories brings forth multiple voices and illuminates their dusty surface, allowing multi-perspectivity and reshaping the hierarchical or authoritarian narration of the original epic. In this context, it is suggested that Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia can be conveniently applied to this approach.

Taking these definitions of myth and explanations of the revisionist mythmaking approach in general into consideration, this chapter attempts to analyze Madeline Miller's *Circe* through the lens of Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia, focusing on the revision of meaning and style in the transformation of the classical myth into the contemporary fiction. The theoretical framework of this chapter is primarily supported by Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia with the contribution of polyphony in his essay *Discourse in the Novel*. As stated in Chapter 1, heteroglossia and polyphony are in close relation. In this sense, the novel's usage of numerous voices is examined through the lens of revisionist mythmaking; the chapter then seeks to investigate how these voices produce fresh viewpoints while transforming the structure of the original mythical texts into the contemporary novel.

As has already been indicated, Madeline Miller's *Circe* is a modern retelling of the myth of Circe from Homer's Odyssey. As a retelling, Miller's novel engages with the original myth while also offering new interpretations and perspectives. One of the main ways that Miller achieves this is through the use of language and narrative voice. She employs Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia to create a multiplicity of perspectives and voices, allowing for a multiplicity of meanings and interpretations. Through the use of language and narrative structure, Miller challenges and subverts dominant narratives, presenting a nuanced and complex portrayal of Circe. Miller in her retelling portrays Circe as not simply a sorceress or a villain, but a complex and multifaceted character with her motivations, desires, and struggles. By giving voice to Circe, the novel explores themes of power, gender, and identity, and offers a feminist reinterpretation of the original myth.

Madeline Miller wrote Circe to suggest a new interpretation and perspective on the myth of Circe and to challenge patriarchal attitudes toward women's power. She clarifies her aim in one of her interviews as: "I wanted to take a story that was often told in a particular way — where Circe was a villainess who needed to be defeated — and give it another telling. I wanted to find out what might happen if you put a different emphasis on it, and allowed her to become a protagonist in her own right." (Miller 1) Miller's retelling of the myth of Circe in her novel has garnered significant attention and sparked discussions among literary critics. Many critics have praised Miller's interventions and changes, noting how they contribute to a nuanced and empathetic portrayal of Circe. One aspect that critics have highlighted is Miller's humanization of Circe. Ron Charles from *The Washington Post* has lauded Miller's ability to transform Circe from a one-dimensional, malevolent sorceress into a complex and relatable character. Miller's exploration of Circe's emotions, desires, and struggles offers readers a deeper understanding of her motivations and actions. Charles stated that "While working within the constraints of the "The Odyssey" and other ancient myths, Miller finds plenty of room to weave her own surprising story of a passionate young woman banished to lavish solitude" (Charles, 2018). Another noteworthy element in Miller's retelling is the expansion in the narrative of Circe. This expansion beyond her brief appearance in the Odyssey allows Miller to delve into Circe's personal history, origins, and relationships with other mythological figures. Aida Edemariam from *The Guardian*, has applauded Miller's skill in weaving together these elements to create a rich and immersive story and added "Miller has taken the familiar materials of character, and wrought some satisfying turns of her own."(Edemariam, 2018)

Miller's retelling of the myth of Circe offers several interventions and changes compared to the original text from Homer's Odyssey. Firstly, Miller expands on Circe's character and back story, providing a more detailed and nuanced portrayal of the sorceress. In the original myth, Circe is portrayed primarily as a villain who turns men into pigs, but in Miller's retelling, she is given a more complex personality and motivations. Miller uses Circe's own voice to reveal her struggles, desires, and vulnerabilities, making her a more sympathetic and relatable character. On this basis her novel can be understood in terms of revisionist myth-making as Morgan Thomas in "*I Will Not Be Silenced": Voice and Autonomy in Madeline Miller's Circe* (2021) says: "When Circe finally achieves autonomy, she uses her voice to become the person she *wants* to be. Meta-textually, the novel serves as a bold reclamation of Circe's character. For millennia she existed as a secondary character in *The Odyssey*. Miller's novel allows Circe to tell her own story from her own perspective, providing sympathetic reasons for Circe's most infamous transformations. With this novel, Circe is allowed to exist as a person in and of herself, not just as a character in Odysseus' story" (p. 24).

Additionally, Stine-Mari Hovind in *A Contemporary Version of Homer's The Odyssey and the Role of the Witch in Modern Feminism (2022) says* "Homer's portrayal of Circe is superficial, as the story is told from the perspective of Odysseus. Her actions are never questioned or explained, and she reveals little about herself according to his descriptions" (p. 70). In this context, Miller's retelling offers a feminist perspective on the original myth, challenging and subverting patriarchal attitudes towards women's power and agency. As Rizwana Sarwar and Saadia Fatima mentioned in their study *Madeline Miller's Circe: A Feminist Stylistic Approach (2022),* "Gender stereotypes established by

Greek mythology require that women must be submissive and marginalized. Moreover, this representation of women's stereotypical characterization is done through predisposed language which is informed by male-ruling sexist ideology." They conclude that Miller challenges the male-centred narrative of Greek mythology to create a new point of view in order to present Circe's character as a strong an powerful woman and also to change Circe's negative character to a positive one. Moreover, they point out that Miller gives the authority of narrator-focalizer to Circe" (p. 354).

Furthermore, with regard to the language used in the epic form, Bakhtin asserts, "the speaker is, in essence, solely the author alone, and discourse is a single, unitary authorial discourse."(1981, p. 334). In this context, Ostriker observes that women in mythology are shown in two ways: as "angels" or as "monsters." As a result, mythology might be described as a hostile ideological field for both female representation and female writers. Ostriker adds:

At first thought, mythology seems an inhospitable terrain for a woman writer. There we find the conquering gods and heroes, the deities of poor thought and spirituality so superior to Mother Nature; there we find the sexually wicked Venus, Circe, Pandora, Helen, Medea, Eve, and the virtuously passive Iphigenia, Alcestis, Mary, Cinderella. It is thanks to the myth we believe that women must be either angels or monsters (p. 71).

Ostriker reflects a common critique of mythology, highlighting its portrayal of women in traditional roles and limited archetypes. The writer suggests that mythology can be seen as an unwelcoming domain for women writers due to its focus on conquering male gods and heroes, and the presence of female figures who are often depicted in negative or passive roles. The mention of "sexually wicked" figures like Circe, Medea,

Pandora, Helen and Venus along with the "virtuously passive" characters such as Cinderella, Mary, Iphigenia and Alcestis underscores the narrow range of female representations within mythology. This limited portrayal can reinforce societal expectations and stereotypes about women, perpetuating the belief that they must conform to either angelic or monstrous archetypes.

In this sense, Abby Swartzentruber shares a similar idea with Ostriker in her research paper *A Choice to Make: The Portrayal of Female Characters' Agency and Emotion in Madeline Miller's Circe and Anaïs Mitchell's Hadestown* (2023) in which she suggests, the retellings of myths often reshape the portrayal of women, particularly in terms of their emotional complexity. Traditionally, mythological women were depicted in two main ways when it came to expressing emotions: they were either overly emotional and prone to hysteria, or they embodied stereotypically masculine traits of seeking revenge. The former is illustrated by nymphs who would disappear permanently into nature when overwhelmed by intense emotions. The latter is exemplified by Athena and other similar characters who would react vindictively and physically aggressive. In mythology, there is rarely any portrayal of a balanced middle ground between these two extremes (p. 6). While mythology can present challenges for women writers due to its historically limited representation of female characters, it also offers opportunities for reinterpretation and exploration. The reimagining of myths can contribute to a more inclusive and diverse literary landscape. As Maria Tatar, a professor at Harvard University says in *The Heroine with 1001 Faces*, "Suddenly we are given a new perspective, and we discover that stories operate with kaleidoscopic dynamism, changing

dramatically when given one small twist. What we will see...is that when women begin to write, the story changes" (p. xvii).

In the context of these critiques, Circe originally represents the traditional portrayal of women in mythology as seductresses or temptresses. Her characterization aligns with the idea that women are often depicted in myth as figures who use their sexuality to manipulate or harm men. This archetype reinforces the notion that women's power lies primarily in their sexual allure rather than in their agency or intellect. Miller presents a different perspective on Circe, focusing on her experiences, inner life, and agency rather than reducing her to a one-dimensional seductress. Miller's portrayal of Circe emphasizes her strength, resilience, and capacity for personal growth.

In the original myth, Circe is ultimately defeated by men, but in Miller's retelling, she is able to claim power and agency for herself, challenging patriarchal structures and norms. This feminist intervention is also reflected in the portrayal of other female characters, such as Penelope and Medea, who are given more agency and importance in Miller's use of language and narrative structure also serves as an intervention compared to the original text. She utilizes Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia to create a multiplicity of voices and perspectives, allowing for a more complex and nuanced portrayal of the story. As Bakhtin indicates, *heteroglossia* is "another's speech in another's language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way" (Bakhtin 1981: 324). Thus, Miller's intervention challenges the dominant narrative of the original myth, offering new interpretations and meanings to the ancient story.

Miller's second intervention is stylistic. Miller employs a more modern and accessible writing style that is easier for contemporary readers to engage with. Miller's

use of first-person narrative allows experiencing the story from Circe's point of view, giving readers insight into her thoughts, feelings, and motives. In *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays, Epic and Novel*, Bakhtin states that the novel is "the only developing genre and it reflects more deeply, more essentially, more sensitively and rapidly, reality itself in the process of its unfolding (p. 86).

According to Bakhtin, the novel and the epic represent two different modes of literary discourse. Bakhtin argues that the epic is characterized by its grand, heroic narrative that presents a unified and centralized perspective. It typically portrays a mythical or historical past, often centered around legendary figures and their exploits. The epic serves to reinforce established cultural values, traditions, and social hierarchies. It presents a stable and closed worldview, where the heroes and their actions are elevated and celebrated. Unlike the epic genre, the novel, which is regarded as a flexible and developing genre (p.7), aspires to be dynamic and hence avoids fixed generic traits. However, Bakhtin explains one of the novel's important aspects, "its stylistic three-dimensionality, which is related to the novel's "multi-languaged consciousness" (p. 11).

In this context, in her novel Miller embraces a multiplicity of perspectives, retelling the ancient Greek mythological figure of the same name. She is a sorceress who is known primarily for appearing in Homer's epic poem, The Odyssey.

In later classical literature, such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the character of Circe continues to be portrayed with her distinct traits and role in mythology. In *Metamorphoses*, Circe is portrayed as a powerful sorceress with the gift to transform humans into animals. Circe plays a significant role in several mythological narratives, including her encounters with Odysseus and his crew. Ovid expands on her character by

delving into her relationships with other mythical figures, such as the god Hermes and her romantic involvement with the mortal Picus. Circe's portrayal in Ovid's work often emphasizes her seductive nature and her skill in magic. She is known for her ability to enchant and manipulate others, luring them into her domain. Ovid presents her as a complex figure who holds both divine and mortal qualities, exploring themes of desire, transformation, and the limits of human agency. Aside from her portrayal in Homer's *Odyssey*, the character of Circe has appeared in various other classical texts and depictions throughout history. Some notable examples include Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica* and Hesiod's *Theogony*. *Argonautica* is an epic poem in which Circe plays a role as one of the characters encountered by Jason and the Argonauts on their Golden Fleece quest. She provides them with advice and assistance. In Hesiod's *Theogony* which is also an ancient Greek poem, Circe is mentioned as the daughter of the sun god whose name is Helios and Perse the ocean nymph. She is described as a witch who possesses knowledge of magic and potions. And lastly, Circe is portrayed in Virgil's *Aeneid* where she is briefly mentioned in Book 7 of the epic poem as one of the sorceresses encountered by Aeneas and his men during their travels. Availing herself of these texts,as a contemporary novelist, Miller gives voice to the character, who has often been marginalized in mythological literature, and creates a feminist reinterpretation of the original text.

In light of the heteroglossia concept, different narratives demonstrate how each voice displays fragmented visions that reflect the speakers' diverse horizons, resulting in a variety of voices and personal perspectives implanted in both content and narrative. In this context, Bakhtin suggests *character zones*, (1981, p.316) which are generated by

heteroglossia. Character zones are created through the incorporation of fragmented character speech, hidden transmissions of others' words, scattered phrases and sayings from different sources, and the intrusion of expressive indicators from other voices into the author's speech. These character zones serve as the domain where a character's voice asserts itself, sometimes overlapping with or encroaching upon the author's voice (p. 316).

Therefore, Bakhtin highlights the concept of character zones and how they are formed through the use of different language fragments and expressions. Notably, the character zone is the space in which the voice of a character can interact with the voice of the author, revealing the diversity of perspectives and language in a work of literature. This concept can be applied to the novel, where the character zone of Circe is formed through her use of language and expressions that are distinct from those of the male gods in the story. Circe's voice and perspective are shaped by her experiences and the limitations placed on her as being a woman in the ancient Greek world. The use of different narrative styles and registers, as well as the incorporation of mythological elements, adds complexity to the character zone of Circe and allows her voice to interact with the voice of the author in a meaningful way. By using Bakhtin's character zones, it can be better understood how different voices and perspectives are created in literature and how they can interact with each other to create a more dynamic and nuanced narrative.

The character of Circe is shown to have a distinctive voice and perspective that sets her apart from the other gods and goddesses in the story. One example of this can be seen in the way that Circe describes her interactions with mortals. Unlike the other gods

who see humans as mere playthings, Circe shows compassion and empathy towards them, which is reflected in her use of language. For example, when she first encounters the mortal shipwrecked sailor, she describes him as "a miserable, desperate thing, wavering at the edge of the sea" (Miller, p. 32). Miller presents Circe as a goddess who possesses human-like qualities and vulnerabilities, setting her apart from the other gods. Circe is described as not being as conventionally beautiful as her divine counterparts, and her voice is depicted as weaker compared to the booming voices of the gods. These characteristics contribute to Circe's ability to connect with and understand mortals. Her perceived imperfections and relatable qualities make her more approachable and less intimidating to humans. Circe's voice, which is not overpowering, allows her to engage in conversations and interactions without overwhelming or frightening those she encounters. By humanizing Circe to a certain extent, Miller explores the complexities of identity, beauty, and the limitations of power, creating a nuanced portrayal of this mythological figure.

Another example of Circe's distinct language and perspective can be seen in the way she talks about her own power. Unlike the male gods who use their power to dominate and control others, Circe's power is rooted in her own sense of self and agency. When she is captured on the island of Aiaia, she says, "I was alive in a way that I had not been before" (Miller, p. 72), This line signifies a transformative moment for her character, highlighting her newfound sense of freedom and empowerment. Circe's exile to the island of Aiaia becomes a catalyst for her self-discovery and the realization of her true potential. Through her solitude and the honing of her magical abilities, Circe finds a sense of liberation and personal agency that she had not experienced before. Her power is

not derived from controlling or dominating others, as the male gods often do, but rather from a deep understanding of herself and the strength that comes from embracing her own identity. Circe's language reflects her newfound vitality and the awakening of her inner self. The phrase "alive in a way that I had not been before" encapsulates the profound transformation she undergoes, both in terms of her personal growth and her realization of the power she possesses. Through Circe's distinct language and perspective, Miller provides readers with a compelling portrayal of a powerful female character who challenges traditional notions of power and asserts her agency in a world dominated by gods and patriarchy.

These examples demonstrate how Circe's character zone is formed through her unique use of language and expressions, which reveal her distinct voice and perspective. By contrasting her language with that of the male gods, Miller is able to highlight the diversity of voices and perspectives within the story and explore important themes related to power, gender, and agency.

Circe portrays different voices, each with its own perspective and language. Circe encounters various mythological characters, such as Daedalus, Hermes, and Odysseus, who have their own unique voices and stories to tell. For instance, Circe's own voice in the novel, which is presented in the first-person narrative, reflects her perspective as an outcast goddess and her struggles to find her own identity and voice in a world dominated by male gods. Meanwhile, the voices of the other characters, such as Hermes and Odysseus, are presented in the third-person narrative and reflect their own perspectives and attitudes towards Circe and the world around them.

The novel celebrates heteroglossia by allowing various voices to coexist and interact through using both first-person and third-person narratives. Each character's story adds to the text's rich tapestry of perspectives, languages, and beliefs, resulting in a diverse and dynamic literary world. This combination of many voices and perspectives adds depth and complexity to the narration, coinciding with the concept of heteroglossia.

Circe is a heroine whose story explores themes of power, gender and identity, contributing significantly to contemporary feminist writing. The novel's intertextuality and inversion of established gender roles and power structures reflect the author's strong engagement with the classical heritage while also allowing for the inclusion of women's voices in mythological narratives.

In Bakhtin's essay *The Dialogic Imagination,* he states that "Each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the ties of superposed contexts and superposed languages, that is, it is shot through with the accents of social stratification. There are no neutral words or expressions; each word has its own connotation, which is always social, and each word imposes its own evaluation on the entire utterance. There are not, and cannot be, pure and simple 'elements' of language or speech, for even the most elementary units are filled with social evaluation"(p. 276). Bakhtin emphasizes the idea that language and speech forms are not fixed, monolithic entities, but rather are constantly evolving and interacting within the complex social contexts in which they are used. Within a single text, there may be many different languages and speech forms coexisting and interacting with one another, each with its own connotations and social evaluations. This dynamic interplay of languages and speech forms is referred to as heteroglossia by Bakhtin, and it is a key feature of his

theory of language and literature. Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia, which emphasizes the coexistence and interaction of different languages and speech forms within a single text, is particularly relevant to *Circe* by Madeline Miller. Throughout the novel, Miller incorporates words and phrases from various languages and cultures to reflect the diversity of the ancient world and to add depth and richness to the text. This heteroglossic approach highlights the multiplicity of voices and perspectives that exist within the narrative, allowing for a more complex and nuanced understanding of the characters and their experiences. Bakhtin (1981) identifies heteroglossia in his work T*he Dialogic Imagination,* as "the internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups" (p. 262).This perspective aligns with Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia, which emphasizes the presence of multiple voices, languages, and discourses within a text. In the context of *Circe,* it can be explored how the language used by different characters reflects their social positions, cultural backgrounds, and the power dynamics at play within the narrative. Miller incorporates words and phrases from various languages throughout the novel, such as ancient Greek, Latin, and even some modern words. For instance, the term "pharmaka" serves as an example of heteroglossia. The word itself is Greek and refers to drugs or potions, which are an essential aspect of Circe's power as a witch. However, the term is used by various characters in the novel, each with their own perspective and interpretation. For instance, when Circe first learns about "pharmaka" from her grandmother, she describes it as a "sacred gift" (p. 38) and an art that requires mastery. The term is also used by Hermes, who refers to the "pharmaka" as a "trick" (p. 85). Circe says "Pharmakis, Aeëtes named me, witch, but all my strength

was in those flowers, oceans away. If anyone came, I would only be able to scream, and a thousand nymphs before me knew what good that did" (p.110). Through its usage by different characters, the term "pharmaka" or "Pharmakis" represents the coexistence and interaction of different languages and speech forms within a single text, highlighting heteroglossic nature of the novel. From a Bakhtinian perspective, the term "pharmaka" can be seen as a linguistic and narrative device that embodies heteroglossia. Heteroglossia, as defined by Bakhtin, is the coexistence of various voices, languages, and discourses in a text. The "pharmaka" in "Circe" may be seen as a manifestation of different voices and perspectives. To explore the connection further, one could interpret the use of "pharmaka" in the novel might symbolically represent different voices or perspectives coming together through its transformative effects.

In his essay *Plato's Pharmacy*, Derrida explores the concept of writing and the metaphysical hierarchy within speech and writing in Plato's dialogue "Phaedrus." Derrida deconstructs the notion that speech is superior to writing and challenges the traditional binary opposition between the two. For example, the following excerpt from Derriada's work *Positions* demonstrates how Derrida insists on communicating something while simultaneously rejecting the validity or appropriateness of the notions he puts up, implying that he fully comprehends them:

> The pharmakon is neither remedy nor poison, neither good nor evil, neither the inside nor the outside, neither speech nor writing; the supplement is neither a plus nor a minus, neither an outside nor the complement of an inside, neither accident nor essence, etc.; the hymen is neither confusion nor distinction, neither identity nor difference, neither consummation nor virginity, neither the veil nor unveiled,

neither inside nor the outside, etc.; the gram is neither a signifier nor a signified,

neither a sign nor a thing, neither presence nor an absence, neither a position nor a

negation, etc. (Derrida, 1981, pp.42-43)

Miller's use of multiple languages in *Circe* echoes Derrida's deconstructive

approach by destabilizing fixed meanings. The inclusion of different languages highlights

the fluidity and hybridity of language itself, blurring the boundaries between linguistic

categories. By incorporating words from ancient Greek, and Latin, Miller disrupts the

dominance of a single linguistic tradition and opens up a space for linguistic plurality and

exchange. This aligns with Derrida's exploration of the "pharmakon" in *Plato's

Pharmacy,* where he examines the ambivalent nature of writing as both poison and cure,

as a supplement that simultaneously enhances and undermines speech. The term

"pharmaka" in "Circe" resonates with Derrida's discussion of the "pharmakon" in "Plato's

Pharmacy." Just as the "pharmakon" is a complex concept that embodies both positive

and negative aspects, the use of "pharmaka" in Miller's novel signifies the transformative

and potentially ambiguous nature of potions and magical substances in Circe's world.

Overall, the alignment between Madeline Miller's incorporation of multiple

languages and Derrida's essay *Plato's Pharmacy* lies in their shared exploration of

linguistic plurality, the deconstruction of fixed meanings, and the questioning of

hierarchical structures in language and representation.

In the eighth chapter, Circe mentions a flower that she uses in her potions as "The

flower had no name that I knew, so I called it "moly", root, from the antique language of

the gods" (Miller, p. 135). She continues, "Oh, Father, did you know the gift you gave

me? For that flower, so delicate it could dissolve beneath your stepping foot, carried

within it the unyielding power of "apotrope", the turning aside of evil. Curse-breaker. "
Moly is aGreek word that is defined as a magical plant with white flowers mentioned
inHomer's *Odyssey* book 10. The Greek word "apotrope" means a kind of magic that
wards off evil or harmful influences. It is believed to deflect misfortune or avert the evil
eye. These terms, such as "moly" and "pharmaka," may indeed be familiar to readers who
are well-versed in Greek mythology and fantasy literature. However, for readers who are
not familiar with these genres or traditions, these terms may appear unfamiliar. These
terms are not necessarily obscure or technical in the context of Greek mythology and
fantasy literature, but they may be unfamiliar to readers who are not familiar with these
genres or traditions. These Greek terms reflect the presence of different linguistic and
discursive elements. This reflects the multicultural nature of the ancient world and adds
to the linguistic diversity of the novel. These terms carry specific connotations, cultural
associations, and narrative significance that strengthen the overall heteroglossic nature of
the text.

Bakhtin argues that the use of different languages and speech forms, including
dialects, sociolects, jargons, and styles, creates a rich and multi-layered linguistic
environment in which different consciousnesses and perspectives can coexist and interact.
This is a key aspect of heteroglossia, which emphasizes the diversity and complexity of
language use in literature and culture. As Bakhtin states " The novel can be defined as a
diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity
of individual voices, artistically organized" (1981, p.262). Overall, Miller's incorporation
of diverse languages and speech forms in *Circe* exemplifies Bakhtin's concept of

heteroglossia by creating a rich and multi-layered linguistic environment that fosters the coexistence and interaction of different consciousnesses and perspectives.

In the traditional story, Circe is often portrayed as a one-dimensional villain, a witch who turns men into pigs. But in *Circe*, Miller gives her protagonist a complex inner life and a powerful voice. Throughout the novel, Circe challenges the male dominance that exists in the world of the gods and mortals. She defies her father Helios by refusing to marry a mortal man and instead choosing to become a witch. She also stands up to the male gods who attempt to control her and her powers. For example, when Circe is exiled to the Aiaia island, she reflects on the injustices she has suffered at the hands of the gods: "All my life had been murk and depths, but I was not a part of that dark water. I was a creature within it" (Miller, p. 34).

Madeline Miller gives voice to women who were silenced or marginalized in the ancient myths. In *The Odyssey*, Penelope is depicted as a passive wife who waits patiently for her husband Odysseus to come back from his long journey. But in *Circe*, Penelope is given a more active role and a voice of her own. When she visits Circe's island, she confides in Circe about the difficulties she faces as a woman in a patriarchal society: "I am alone, Circe. So alone. Even in my own house, I am alone. They do not listen to me. They do not care what I say" (Miller, p. 272). Penelope reveals her personal desires beyond her role as a dutiful wife. She confides in Circe about her yearning for adventure and experiences beyond her domestic realm. This showcases her longing for personal fulfillment and challenges the notion that women are solely defined by their roles within the household.

Another female character who is given a voice is Medea. In the original myth of Jason and the Argonauts, Medea is portrayed as a witch who helps Jason on his quest, but ultimately betrays him. In *Circe*, Miller gives Medea a more nuanced portrayal and explores the complexities of her character. When Medea visits Circe on Aiaia, she shares her own experiences of being silenced and marginalized as a woman: "What else was there for me, Circe? I was a woman in a world that hated me. I had no home, no family, no power" (Miller, p. 269). These examples highlight how Miller gives voice to female characters that were outcasted in the original myths and portrays them as complex, multidimensional figures with their own struggles and desires. These narrative features make heteroglossia an essential component of Miller's revisionist mythmaking technique. Furthermore, because of the author's artistic originality, heteroglossia acts as an intensifying component in the deconstructive process of revisionist rewriting. According to Bakhtin (1981), the novelist working in prose embraces the heteroglossia and language diversity of both literary and non-literary language in their work. Rather than weakening these elements, the novelist intensifies them. The stratification of language, with its diverse speech and language variations, becomes the foundation for constructing the novelist's style. This process allows the novelist to maintain the unity of their creative personality and the coherence of their own unique style (p. 298).Along with her artistic style, Miller makes the characters speak from their own viewpoints in the novel to emphasize the credibility of the characters' accounts of the events. Thus, Miller's contemporary novel includes a multitude of individual voices that are artistically organized in line with Bakhtin's definition: "The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized" (1981, p.

262). As a revisionist mythmaker, Miller not only reconstructs the original myth, but she also revisits it by binding the unknown or unanswered parts together to suit contemporary readers' perceptions. As a result of Miller's revisionist approach, all of the characters are transformed into fluid story-telling figures. In consequence, it might be claimed that Miller inserts heteroglossia into her novel through speaking subjects in the deconstructive process, resulting in a multiplicity of social speech. Bakhtin (1981) states that a fundamental point of view on the world in a novel must be rooted in concrete social embodiment, rather than existing as an abstract and purely semantic position. This perspective should be inseparably connected with its own language. The construction of a novel does not rely solely on abstract differences in meaning or narrative conflicts, but rather on the tangible diversity of social speech (p. 412).

Thus, Miller expands on the original text by deconstructing patriarchal monologic patterns and context. Miller gives voice to the women trapped inside the story, allowing them to express their feelings. In this approach, she frees these female voices from the conventional structure of the traditional story, renewing it. Thus, Miller's revisionist approach adds nuances to the main theme of the ancient story, offering additional interpretations. According to Schanoes (2014), the significance of revision lies in its capacity to unveil previously overlooked or dismissed meanings or readings of a story, particularly from the perspective of a previously silenced reader. Revision has the power to preserve and fully develop these neglected interpretations through its revelatory and transformative nature. It encompasses the past, present, and future as concurrent experiences, where the differences of the past are experienced alongside the preservation

or revelation of present meanings. By doing so, revision opens the door to future alterations and evolutions of the story (p. 64).

Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia aligns with the idea of incorporating various myths and stories in a narrative. Madeline Miller incorporates various myths and stories from Greek mythology which contributes to the heteroglossic nature of the narrative. One notable example is the inclusion of the story of Icarus and Daedalus, which adds depth and complexity to the overall tapestry of voices and perspectives in the novel. The story of Icarus and Daedalus serves as a parallel narrative that intertwines with Circe's own journey. Daedalus, a skilled craftsman, is known for his invention of intricate mazes and his role in the myth of the Minotaur. His story, along with that of his son Icarus, provides another layer of perspective and adds to the rich tapestry of voices in the novel.

By incorporating the story of Icarus and Daedalus, Miller expands the range of perspectives and experiences represented in the narrative. The inclusion of this myth allows for a broader exploration of themes such as hubris, invention, parental love, and the consequences of defying divine boundaries. It adds to the heteroglossic nature of the novel by bringing in additional voices and stories that reflect the complexities and diversity of the ancient Greek world.

Overall, the interweaving of different myths and stories, such as the story of Icarus and Daedalus, Miller contributes to the heteroglossic nature of the narrative, presenting a multi-layered exploration of Greek mythology and the various voices and perspectives within it.

Bakhtin emphasizes that the novel is a genre that embraces diverse voices and incorporates multiple narrative perspectives. He states, "The novel organizes great masses

of life experience, all the fullness and complexity of social speech... the novel orchestrates all the voices of the era" (Bakhtin, 1981, 262). This claims that the novel is a form that encompasses and integrates various narratives, allowing for a multiplicity of voices and perspectives to coexist.

In addition to linguistic heterogeneity, the multiplicity of voices, and coexisting perspectives, Miller's *Circe* is also an example of Bakhtin's concept of polyphony, which highlights the presence of numerous voices and perspectives within a text. Furthermore, for Bakhtin, multiple-voicedness, which is defined as "the plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses," is a significant component of the polyphonic novel (1984, p.6) Circe subverts traditional gender roles and power structures, giving previously suppressed and silences female characters a voice and deconstructing ancient mythology's dominant narratives. Miller delivers a polyphonic exploration of themes such as agency, power, and identity through Circe's own story and her interactions with other characters.

When a novel incorporates varied styles and registers, it aligns with Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia and polyphony. By employing different linguistic forms, the novel presents a diverse range of voices and discourses that represent its characters' social and cultural backgrounds. Each character's language use reflects their unique position in society, their worldview, and their social class. This multiplicity of voices creates a dialogic space within the novel, where different perspectives engage in a dynamic interplay. According to Bakhtin (1981), the distinctive feature of the novel as a genre lies in its ability to combine various subordinated, yet relatively independent, elements, including different languages and styles, into a cohesive whole. The style of a novel is not

confined to a single style but rather emerges from the combination of multiple styles within the work. Similarly, the language of a novel encompasses the system of languages employed within it. This fusion of diverse linguistic and stylistic elements contributes to the unique character of the novel as a genre (p. 262). Bakhtin suggests that the novel's distinctiveness lies in its ability to bring together subordinate elements, such as different styles, voices, and language varieties. These elements are independent to some degree but are unified within the novel. Bakhtin asserts that the style of a novel emerges from the interplay and combination of its diverse styles, voices, and languages.

Furthermore, Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia emphasizes that no single voice or discourse is privileged or dominant over others. Each linguistic style and register has its own validity and significance, contributing to the richness and complexity of the narrative. This idea aligns with the notion of varied styles and registers in a novel, where formal, elevated language and colloquial, slang expressions are given equal importance in portraying the diverse voices and experiences of the characters. In Madeline Miller's novel *Circe*, the use of slang expressions is primarily demonstrated through the dialogue and internal monologue of the characters. Miller incorporates slang to bring a contemporary and relatable tone to the narrative, juxtaposing classical mythology with modern language. When Circe is angry with her sister, she says, "My bitch sister is exiled for what she did to you," I said, "but she deserved worse. What vengeance do you desire? Tell me. Pasiphaë and I will do it." (Miller, p. 154) Another use of slang can be seen when Circe is in terror she says, "Prometheus had told me, yet I had not understood. What a fool I had been. What a stupid fool. In a panic, I ran back to my grandmother." (Miller, p.61)

The use of slang suggests that the characters engage in informal and colloquial conversations, using language that reflects a more casual and modern style. This can include the use of idiomatic expressions, contractions, and informal vocabulary. The dialogue feels natural and conversational, mirroring the way people speak in contemporary settings. Miller allows readers to get inside the minds of the characters, providing insight into their thoughts and emotions. During these introspective moments, characters may use slang or informal language in their inner monologues, reflecting their personal voices and contemporary sensibilities.

When Circe speaks with mortals she uses more elevated language. For example, when she encounters a fisherman she says "Hail, mortal".He fumbled his nets but did not drop them. "Proceed," I said. How stiff I was, dressed in my divine dignity that I did not even know I wore. And he was stiffer still. He trembled when my sleeve brushed his. His eyes darted whenever I addressed him." "Rise," I told him." (Miller, p. 53) By blending classical mythology with contemporary language, Miller brings the characters and their experiences to life, allowing readers to connect with them. The use of slang expressions helps to create a sense of linguistic variety and richness within the novel, which goes hand in hand with polyphony and heteroglossia. The novel features a diverse cast of characters, including gods, nymphs, mortals, and other mythological beings. Each character has their own unique voice, background, and experiences, adding to the polyphony of the novel.

To sum up, Miller's Circe aligns with the notion of varied styles and registers by utilizing both formal, elevated language and colloquial, slang expressions. This approach effectively portrays the diverse voices and experiences of the characters, creating a multi-

dimensional and engaging narrative. The use of varied styles and registers in the novel reflects Bakhtin's theory of polyphony and heteroglossia. It captures the multi-voiced nature of language, representing the diverse social backgrounds and perspectives of the characters. This approach creates a more authentic narrative, where different linguistic forms interact and contribute to the richness of the text.

The language of the novel encompasses a system of various languages or linguistic forms that contribute to its overall character and meaning. This highlights Bakhtin's stress on the novel as a polyphonic genre that incorporates multiple voices, styles, and languages. It underscores the idea that the novel's style and language are derived from the interaction and integration of these diverse elements, resulting in a complex and multi-layered literary form.

Additionally, Bakhtin's concept of dialogism is prominent in *Circe*, as the novel has multiple dialogues and interactions between characters. By referencing and reinterpreting classical tales and literary works, these interactions not only expose the characters' inner thoughts and motivations, but also create a feeling of intertextuality. *Circe* incorporates intertextual references to Greek mythology and literature, creating a dialogue between Miller's narrative and the existing literary tradition. The interplay between the original myths and Miller's reinterpretation provides opportunities for dialogue, reinterpretation, and exploration of themes and ideas within the context of the novel. Miller's use of intertextuality and layered storytelling creates a palimpsest-like effect in Circe, as different narratives and histories are interwoven to create a complex world. One example of intertextuality in *Circe* can be found in the character of Prometheus, who appears in the novel as a prisoner on Aiaia island. Prometheus is a

figure from Greek mythology who was punished by Zeus for giving fire to humanity. In *Circe*, however, Miller gives Prometheus a different backstory and personality, which builds on his original mythological character but also adds new layers to it. Another example of intertextuality in the novel is the character of Odysseus, who appears in both *The Odyssey* and *Circe.* In *Circe*, Miller retells Odysseus' story and his men visiting Aiaia island and being transformed into pigs by Circe. In addition to the *Odyssey*, Madeline Miller incorporates various other myths and mythological figures into the novel. For example, The Titanomachy which is the epic battle between the Titans and the Olympians, that results in the overthrow of the Titans by Zeus and the establishment of the Olympian gods. Additionally, the famed inventor Daedalus and his son Icarus who flew very close to the sun with wings made of feathers and wax. Circe encounters Daedalus and offers him advice. The Minotaur is also portrayed as the half-human, half-bull creature imprisoned in the labyrinth of King Minos in Crete. Circe encounters the Minotaur and interacts with him on her journey. Medea who aids Jason and the Argonauts in their Golden Fleece quest encounters Circe and forms a connection with her, as they both possess magical abilities. These are just a few examples of the various myths and mythological figures that Madeline Miller incorporates into her novel. However, in Miller's version, Circe has a much more prominent role and agency than in the original myth, which transforms the story and adds new layers of meaning to it.

In conclusion, Bakhtin's dialogism is used in the novel to engage with and subvert traditional myths and stories from Greek mythology. By reimagining these stories from a feminist and subversive perspective, the novel creates a dialogue between the original texts and its own interpretation of them. The novel's dialogic structure enables the reader

to engage with the novel, understanding and interpreting the multiple voices and perspectives provided. Miller's *Circe* demonstrates Bakhtin's principles of heteroglossia, polyphony, and dialogism, emphasizing the importance of linguistic diversity, the multiplicity of voices, and interaction in building a complex and multifaceted narrative.

CHAPTER 3

ARIADNE

This chapter focuses on Jennifer Saint's debut novel, *Ariadne*, which was released in 2021 and is interwoven with a revisionist mythmaking perspective and Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia. Myths, as previously discussed in the first chapter, are a mirror of historical sense and cultural context; nonetheless, they are not unchangeable Even in ancient times, myths and legends were not fixed or singular narratives but were subject to variations and adaptations across different cultures and time periods. Myths came in a variety of versions. For example, in Hesiod and in most other versions, Theseus leaves Ariadne sleeping on the island of Naxos, but in Catullus 64, Ariadne's abandonment by Theseus is not the result of his own choice. Instead, the god Dionysus, who later becomes Ariadne's husband, orchestrates the abandonment as part of a larger plan. As Gaisser suggests, "Theseus may have given up Ariadne on Bacchus' orders" (2009, p .21). It's worth noting that the Theseus and the Minotaur myth has been repeated and reinterpreted by a number of ancient authors, and the particular features and modifications might vary. These distinctions contribute to the myth's heteroglossia and dialogism, highlighting the many perspectives and storytelling traditions of ancient Greek literature. The ancient myths continue to be subject to further reinterpretation and reimagining. Each era and culture brings its own perspectives, ideologies, and imaginative faculties to the myths, resulting in new adaptations and interpretations. The act of reaching back and transforming old myths with new interpretations is known as revisionist mythmaking. Thanks to such revisions of myths, new interpretations and ideologies appear which leads to a re-evaluation and recreation of the ancient myths. Thus, Bakhtin's concept of

heteroglossia can be aligned with revisionist mythmaking as he describes heteroglossia as being, "primary and that fully reveals an intentionality, a mythological, religious, socio-political, literary system of its own, along with all the other cultural- ideological systems that belong to it" (1981, p. 368). For this reason, this third chapter focuses on Ariadne by Jennifer Saint, which is analyzed through Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia.

Jennifer Saint's *Ariadne* can be regarded as an example of revisionist mythmaking, as it challenges the traditional narrative surrounding the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. In the original myth, Ariadne is depicted as a victim, who is abandoned by Theseus after he defeats the Minotaur. In Ovid's metamorphoses Ariadne is depicted as a passive woman figure who is stolen from her father and then thrown away on an island in these lines: "When, through the help of the virgin princess, Ariadne, by rewinding the thread, Theseus, son of Aegeus, won his way back to the elusive threshold, that no one had previously regained, he immediately set sail for Dia, stealing the daughter of Minos away with him, then cruelly abandoned his companion on that shore, deserted and weeping bitterly. (The Metamorphoses Book VIII, lines 177-179). Thus, abandoned by Theseus and possessing no control or voice, she is reduced to being a mere object or a discarded companion. Saint's retelling, however, places Ariadne at the center of the narrative, allowing her to reclaim her agency and rewrite her own story.

Myths, as has been discussed above, are not static or unchangeable, so they are often subject to reinterpretation and revision over time, reflecting the historical sense and cultural context of different eras. Thus, Jennifer Saint's novel, *Ariadne*can be seen as an example of this revisionist mythmaking perspective. In an interview where Saint discusses her motivations for writing the novel, she says "A lot of versions of mythology

contradict each other, and sometimes it is easy to pick because there are versions where Ariadne dies really early on in Naxos, so I departed from some of the better-known versions. The themes that stood out to me in these women's stories were women being overlooked, women suffering the consequences of men's behaviour, and women's lives being less significant than men's reputations and glory. So, when I was choosing what version of the myth I was going to go with or even to take a complete detour, it was important what fit the story that I wanted to tell" (Macquire, 2021).

Thus, the "Theseus and Ariadne story is a myth for Euripides and Catullus, and has survived for many later writers and artists to mold to their needs" (Webster, p. 22). In this context, Jennifer Saint reimagines and molds the myth of Ariadne, and gives a fresh perspective, offering a revisionist take on the myth by exploring the experiences of the female characters and their untold stories.

The novel begins with Ariadne, King Minos of Crete's daughter, who gets entangled in a web of power, love, and betrayal. As a young girl, Ariadne sees the arrival of Theseus, an Athenian prince sent to Crete as an offering to the horrifying Minotaur. Ariadne is immediately attracted to Theseus and helps him navigate the treacherous labyrinth and defeat the monstrous beast. In doing so, she opposes her father and helps Theseus in his escape from Crete. Ariadne's joy, however, is short-lived, as Theseus leaves her on the island of Naxos, leaving her heartbroken and betrayed. Ariadne encounters Dionysus, the god of wine, in Naxos, who offers her solace and companionship. They develop a strong bond, and Ariadne is divided between her allegiance to her family and her yearning for freedom. Meanwhile, Ariadne's sister Phaedra is married to Theseus in a loveless marriage. Phaedra's life takes a terrible turn as

she becomes involved in a web of lies, secrets, and, finally, her own demise, consumed by her unrequited love for him.

The voices of Ariadne and Phaedra intertwine throughout the story, providing insights into their thoughts, desires, and struggles within a patriarchal society. They navigate their roles as daughters, sisters, and women in a world where the men around them define their worth. Their stories question the typical depiction of women in mythology and provide a new viewpoint on their experiences, desires, and self-discovery journeys. In the end, *Ariadne* creates a vivid and captivating portrayal of these two powerful and multifaceted women, diving into their inner worlds and investigating unseen aspects of their life.

As previously mentioned, the novel focuses on Ariadne's motivations, experiences, and inner world, highlighting issues that were frequently disregarded in the myth's original version. This strategy is in line with Bakhtin's idea of heteroglossia, which places emphasis on the coexistence of various voices and perspectives in a text. Ariadne is given her own voice and agency by Saint through the use of heteroglossia, which broadens the scope of the story. The novel provides a more detailed portrayal of her relationship with Theseus by examining the complexities of their romantic involvement. By adopting a revisionist mythmaking viewpoint and making use of heteroglossia, Ariadne questions the stereotypes that have long been associated with her. It highlights how flexible and open to interpretation myths can be, enabling a deeper investigation of characters and their motivations within their historical and cultural contexts.

Thus, it can be argued that Jennifer Saint reimagines the ancient Greek myth of Ariadne and Theseus through a feminist lens, highlighting the silenced voices of women in Greek mythology. Drawing upon a range of sources including the original myth, historical accounts, and literary retellings, By giving voice to Ariadne and the other women in the story, *Ariadne* challenges the traditional patriarchal narratives. In this retelling, Ariadne is portrayed as a strong and independent woman who refuses to be defined by the men in her life. She questions the gender roles and expectations imposed on her by society, and takes control of her own destiny. For instance, when she speaks with Theseus, she responds, "I would not let a man who knew the value of nothing make me doubt the value of myself" (Saint, 2021, p.345). This rejection of women's conventional role as passive objects of male desire exemplifies feminist empowerment. Ariadne is also portrayed as a healer and protector of women, developing a close bond with her half-sister Phaedra and standing up for her when she is mistreated. Another component of the novel's feminist themes is the emphasis on sisterhood and solidarity among women. As a whole, Saint's Ariadne provides a feminist viewpoint on a well-known myth, challenging the ancient world's gender norms and power dynamics.

While the original myth centered on the male hero Theseus and his victory over the Minotaur, Saint's retelling turns the spotlight to Ariadne, who is frequently overlooked in the original story. Ariadne appears as a powerful woman and a character with a voice in Saint's version. For example, when her father orders her to marry the cruel and domineering Cinyras, Ariadne refuses to be a pawn and asserts her own desires as: "But I don't want to marry him" (Saint, p. 70).

Furthermore, Saint's retelling challenges the patriarchal norms of the original myth by presenting a world in which women have their own will and are not merely passive objects. In the original myth, Ariadne is depicted as little more than a tool to help Theseus defeat the Minotaur, but in Saint's novel, she is a fully depicted character with her own motivations and desires. For example, when she falls in love with Theseus, it is not because he is a hero, but because of his vulnerability and humanity: "I don't know what I felt when my eyes met Theseus. He stood tall and jutted his jaw forward. He held my gaze with a cool impudence, as though I were not a princess and he was not a sacrificial offering"(Saint, p. 93).

As previously mentioned in the original myth, Ariadne is portrayed as a passive, obedient daughter who is manipulated by her father and abandoned by Theseus on Naxos. The focus of the myth is on Theseus and his heroic quest to defeat the Minotaur, with little attention paid to Ariadne's perspective. In contrast, Saint places Ariadne at the center of the narrative and gives her autonomy. Ariadne is portrayed as a multi-dimensional character who rejects society's gender norms and confronts the patriarchy that oppresses her. She is shown to be intellectual, resourceful, and compassionate, and actively participates in shaping her own destiny. For example, when Theseus arrives on Crete, Ariadne is the one who comes up with the plan to defeat the Minotaur, and she helps Theseus escape the island by betraying her father. Later in the novel, she rejects Theseus's patriarchal expectations of her and chooses to pursue her own path, despite the consequences. Ariadne talks about the potential consequences she could have faced if she obeyed the patriarchal expectations as follows: "It could have undone me. I could have shrivelled and died on this very beach. I could have wept a lonely ocean before the crows

came for my eyes, and my blinded spirit could have howled for eternity in the bleak marshes at the banks of the Styx" (Saint, p. 349).

As the key difference between Saint's *Ariadne* and the original myth is the way in which the novel challenges traditional gender roles by her refusal to accept her father's demands, her rejection of Theseus's advances, and her decision to leave her royal status behind to live a life on her own terms, several feminist critics' work will be referenced to at this stage in order to analyze and question masculine subjectivity in literature, social life, and language. Furthermore, the revisionist mythmaking approach will be evaluated within the context of deconstructing old patterns of gender relations and portrayals. In this sense, Alicia Ostriker outlines her rewriting process in her essay *The Thieves of Language* as follows:

> Whenever a poet employs a figure or story previously accepted and defined by a culture, the poet is using myth, and the potential is always present that the use will be revisionist: that is, the figure or tale will be appropriated for altered ends, the old vessel filled with new wine, initially satisfying the thirst of the individual poet but ultimately making cultural change possible (1982, p. 72).

Ostriker believes that women authors need their own power and authority over language in order to express themselves and challenge the tyranny of masculine language and in *The Thieves of Language*: *Women poets and revisionist mythmaking,* she states that "With women poets we look at or into, but not up at, sacred things; we unlearn submission" (p. 87). Adrienne Rich, who is also an influential feminist poet and scholar, also describes language as inadequate to fully describe or express women's experiences. She refers to it as a "Law of the Father,"(1982, p. 69), a language that can transform the

daughter into the invisible woman in the dominant masculine discourse as she describes it as being" the invisible woman in the asylum corridor" or being" the silent woman" (1982, p.69). The concept of the "Law of the Father" highlights the systemic and institutionalized nature of patriarchal power, which operates through language and discourse. It serves as a mechanism of control, reinforcing gender inequalities and perpetuating the subordination of women.

Rich's reference to the "Law of the Father" regarding language might represent an allusion to Lacan's concept of the "Name of the Father." According to Lacan's (1959) theory, the "the metaphor of the Name-of-the-Father" signifies the symbolic order and authority that shapes the language and norms of society.(p. 465) It is linked to the paternal function as well as the imposition of societal laws. Rich could, therefore, be drawing on Lacanian notions to illustrate how patriarchal systems create language, limiting and constraining women's experiences and utterances. It implies that to develop their own voices and break free from repressive hierarchies, women must challenge these established linguistic frameworks.

Their voices and desires are frequently rejected and they struggle to establish their agency and define themselves outside of the dominant masculine discourse. It is a language that silences women and restricts their freedom to express themselves. Rich contends that patriarchal norms have altered language and privileged male perspectives, marginalizing and restricting women's voices. She claims that linguistic limitations make it difficult for women to completely express themselves and be understood. Rich advocates for the necessity to reinvent and modify language in order to overcome this restriction. She highlights the significance of women's language in giving voice to their

experiences and effectively conveying their meanings. Women can break away from the limits imposed by dominant discourse by reclaiming and changing language and asserting their own narratives and identities.

By exploring Ariadne's perspective and inner world, *Ariadne* embodies the notion of women's language as advocated by Rich. It seeks to create a linguistic space that authentically represents women's experiences, challenges patriarchal norms, and encourages a more inclusive understanding of their identities and narratives.

Thus, through the lens of Ostriker and Adrienne Rich's critiques, we can see how *Ariadne* aligns with the need for a transformative language that enables women to articulate their experiences and confront the limitations imposed by the dominant discourse. It exemplifies the power of revisionist mythmaking in reshaping and reclaiming the narratives of women in mythology. Through Ariadne's language, Saint manifests feminist ideas notably, such as, "Men who thought the world belonged to them, who imagined I was just another trophy that they could win." Or " It was the women, always the women, be they helpless serving girls or princesses, who paid the price "(Saint, p. 179). The language that Saint used in the novel can be seen as a portrayal of patriarchal influence. As Bakhtin asserts "Characteristic of the novel as a genre is not the image of a man in his own right, but precisely the image of a language (1981, p.336). Furthermore, the narrator plays a significant role of voicing the ideology that the novel wants to defend; in Saint's novel, Ariadne is the main narrator who represents the feminist ideology of the novel. According to Bakhtin (1981), the characters in a novel, as speaking individuals, are inherently ideological, and their words carry ideological meaning. The language employed by each character in a novel reflects a specific

perspective or worldview that seeks social significance. In this sense, discourse in the novel serves as a representation of ideologemes, or ideological units. It is through the portrayal of these ideologemes that novels avoid descending into mere frivolous linguistic experimentation and instead retain their purpose and meaningful engagement with society (p. 333).

Furthermore, when the language that is used in the ancient mythical works is considered, as Bakhtin asserts "the speaker is, in essence, solely the author alone, and discourse is a single, unitary authorial discourse." (1981, p. 334). In later literary depictions of women, patterns of depictions can be observed which is in accordance with Bakhtin's idea of a single, unitary authorial discourse. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's significant work *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* is one prominent investigation of this. Gilbert and Gubar analyze how women writers were frequently excluded and suppressed within the dominant male-authored literary tradition in their examination of Victorian literature. They assert that, "A life of feminine submission, of 'contemplative purity,' is a life of silence, a life that has no pen and no story, while a life of female rebellion, of 'significant action,' is a life that must be silenced, a life whose monstrous pen tells a terrible story." (p. 36) They contend that female characters, particularly those labeled "madwomen," were portrayed as fragmented, voiceless beings, mirroring the limits imposed on women in patriarchal societies.

Gilbert, Gubar, and Ostriker are all concerned with examining how women are portrayed in literature. They all criticize how limited and frequently oppressive representations of female characters are shown in traditional narratives. In this regard,

Ostriker claims that female mythological characters are presented in two opposing ways, either as "monsters" or "angels". Ostriker has produced a more detailed article on this concept and its application. In *The Thieves of Language:* Revisionist Mythmaking and Women Poets, as the title suggests, Ostriker is interested in the way women are regarded as 'thieves' because of their attempts to 'steal' language (p. 69). Ostriker describes how women have always had to express themselves in terms designed by males, and she uses this as inspiration to investigate how women authors are now able to create a place in which they may properly reflect female characters. In the context of *Ariadne,* this perspective resonates as the novel reimagines the mythological figure of Ariadne and gives her a voice and power beyond her traditional portrayal as a passive or supporting character. The discoveries of Ostriker are significant as she is one of the first researchers to highlight how mythmaking has historically been a man's domain. Ostriker stated that, "At first thought, mythology seems an inhospitable terrain for a woman writer. There we find the conquering gods and heroes, the deities of pure thought and spirituality so superior to Mother Nature. It is thanks to mythmaking that we believe that woman must be either "angel" or "monster"." (p. 71)

In this sense, Jennifer Saint shares a similar idea with Ostriker in her interview in which she says epic is a hostile field for women, " I think that when we're told mythical stories as children, they focus on the heroes, gods and monsters and they are tales of battles and quests and exciting adventures. But as we grow up, we become interested in reexamining and revisiting the myths to find the stories hidden underneath. By putting the focus on the women, we begin peeling back the layers to discover how much deeper and richer these stories really are. It's so important that girls and women see themselves in the

center of foundational legends and that we hear female voices and perspectives and in the wake of movements like MeToo, there is certainly a greater appetite for that which is very welcome! ”(Reading Greece: Jennifer Saint on Bringing Greek Female Mythological Figures on the Literary Spotlight, 2023)

As a result, mythology usually portrays women as sexually wicked or virtuously passive, establishing a binary framework that limits their complexity. These limited representations of women in mythology reinforce the idea that women must fit into the classification of either monsters or angels, which contributes to society's expectations and perceptions. The varied experiences, desires, and complexities of women are oversimplified and undermined by this binary construct.

Saint's *Ariadne* challenges traditional archetypes and presents its female characters as multi-dimensional individuals with their own desires, struggles, and journeys, addressing these limitations of mythology from a revisionist and reimagined perspective as it delves into their inner lives. Saint aims to broaden the narrative options for women in mythology through Ariadne, going beyond the monster versus angel binary. The novel aims to provide a more inclusive and nuanced representation of women's experiences by giving voice to Ariadne and other female characters, breaking free from the restraints imposed by conventional mythical narratives.

In her book *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir was arguably the first to identify this "myth of woman”. Men's representation of women is criticized by De Beauvoir as being founded on a myth, or rather, a series of myths, so that women are not depicted or thought of as individuals, but as members of a group, a group that is, in fact, insufficient: no woman perfectly matches the myths proposed by men (1949, p. 1265). In

line with De Beauvoir's assertion that no woman perfectly matches the myths proposed by men, *Ariadne* challenges these myths by showcasing a realistic portrayal of a female character, as Ariadne's story reflects her personal struggles, growth, and aspirations, highlighting the diversity and individuality of women's experiences.

Along with revisionist mythmaking, as a contemporary retelling of the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur, Saint's *Ariadne* can be presented from a Bakhtinian perspective as a prominent example of a heteroglot novel. According to Bakhtin (1981), heteroglossia becomes incorporated into the novel through the presence of speaking characters who embody its diverse linguistic forms. Alternatively, it serves as the dialogic backdrop that shapes the distinct resonance of novelistic discourse (p. 332). Bakhtin emphasizes that the essential characteristic of a novel, which distinguishes it and gives it its stylistic uniqueness, lies in the presence of the speaking person and their discourse (p. 332). Thus, the narrative technique which Saint uses can be perceived as an "ideological penetration" into the novel.

In this sense, the penetration of Saint's feelings and personal incidents into the new context might be seen as the outcome of the heteroglossia process. Saint engages with the traditional mythological narrative and recontextualizes it through her female voice and interpretation. By infusing her personal insights, emotions, and perspectives into the story, she adds new layers of meaning and complexity to the myth of Ariadne. In the novel, Ariadne mentions how women are seen by patriarchy and says "I had hit upon a truth of womanhood: however blameless a life we led, the passions and the greed of men could bring us to ruin, and there was nothing we could do" (Saint, p. 37). Simlarly she states that "I had been a fool to trust in a hero: a man who could only love the mighty

echo of his own name throughout the centuries"(Saint, p. 349). Saint explicitly confronts the feminist viewpoint as a process of adaptation by emphasizing such depictions of women under male hegemony in ancient culture. Here, Bakhtin asserts:

> Behind the narrator, a second voice can be heard; the one who tells us how the narrator tells stories, and also tells us about the narrator himself. We acutely sense two levels at each moment in the story; one, the level of the narrator, a belief system filled with his objects, meanings, and emotional expressions, and the other, the level of the author, who speaks by means of this story and through this story. The narrator himself, with his own discourse, enters into this authorial belief system along with what is actually being told. While we puzzle out the story itself and the figure of the narrator as he is revealed in the process of telling his tale. If one fails to sense this second level, the intentions and accents of the author himself, then one has failed to understand the work (1981, p.314).

As Bakhtin suggested, double-voicedness expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author(1981, p. 324). In this sense, a narrative has multiple layers of storytelling; underneath the narrator's story, there is an additional layer that reveals the intentions of the author. At the most basic level, the story is told by the narrator, who displays her worldview and belief system. This level embodies the perspective of the narrator and the way she builds the narrative. At the secondary level, the author is encountered, who uses the narrative as a means of communication. The narrative reflects the author's perspective and convictions, which have an impact on its overall message,

themes, and organizational principles. The author's perspective and the narrator's discourse interact intricately, resulting in a complicated interplay between the two levels.

By applying the double-voicedness concept to *Ariadne*, it can be noted that the characters, such as Ariadne and Phaedra, speak with their own intentions and perspectives, representing their personal experiences, desires, and struggles. At the same time, the author, Jennifer Saint, infuses the narrative with her own refracted intention, shaping the story and themes according to her artistic vision and the broader cultural context in which the novel is situated. The interplay between the characters' voices and the author's refracted voice creates a multi-dimensional exploration of themes, relationships, and the female experience. It provides a space for dialogue, contestation, and the expression of diverse viewpoints within the narrative, enhancing the complexity and depth of the storytelling.

As Shelby Judge claims in her essay *Review of Saint, Jennifer. Ariadne. London: Wildfire, 2021* in *The Classicist,* "Ariadne shares the narrative with her sister, Phaedra" (p. 82) For example Theseus is depicted by both Ariadne and Pheadra. Ariadne reflects on her own internal struggle and conflicting emotions about Theseus as "Answers fought in my throat, forming a hard ball that blocked any words from emerging. Was it just his handsome face that prompted me to act? Would I have let the hostages go to their fate without protest if none amongst them had sea-green eyes and silken hair that I longed to touch?" (p. 102) Later on, Theseus is portrayed through Phaedra's perspective and from her voice which expresses her intense emotions and resentment towards Theseus as "I hated him for leaving my sister, for leaving me, for his lies, for all of it. [...] To think I

had ever hung upon his words or gazed at his green eyes and thought him handsome or exciting or noble"(p. 288)

This blending of voices and perspectives, including those of the characters and the author herself, creates diverse experiences and multiple viewpoints within the narrative. This double-voicedness is another important aspect of heteroglossia. The process of heteroglossia allows for the exploration of different voices and subjectivities, enabling a deeper understanding of the characters and their motivations. It provides a space for the expression of emotions, challenges established narratives, and offers alternative perspectives on the mythological figure of Ariadne. The author deconstructs the old discourse and creates new conceived meanings. According to Bakhtin, monoglossic dominance does not last forever since alternative voices can break down the prevailing discourse through the process of heteroglossia. When heteroglossia enters the novel, Bakhtin (1981) explains that it undergoes an artistic transformation. The social and historical voices that inhabit language, encompassing all its words and forms and contributing to its specific and tangible conceptualizations, are arranged within the novel's structured stylistic system. This system serves to express the author's socio-ideological position, differentiated amidst the heteroglossia prevalent in their historical era (p. 300).

Ariadne exemplifies the deconstruction of the old discourse and generates new meanings, aligning with Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia. With heteroglossia, the novel undergoes an artistic reworking and the various historical voices present in language, encompassing all its forms and words, are organized and structured within the novel's stylistic system. This structured system allows the author to express their differentiated

socio-ideological position amidst the heteroglossia of their era. In the case of *Ariadne*, Saint employs heteroglossia to challenge the dominant discourse surrounding the myth of Ariadne. Saint provides alternate voices and perspectives that deconstruct the prevailing discourse by giving Ariadne and Phaedra a voice and examining their experiences, ideas, and motives. By doing so, she transforms the characters and their narratives by reinterpreting the myth and offering fresh interpretations.

In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir emphasizes patriarchy's rule over women and the imbalance between men and women by positing masculine dominion in the male-female relationship. Beauvoir examines facts and myths about women through the lenses of philosophy, literature, history, and biology in order to highlight the issues that women face. She begins with the question "What is a woman?" (1949, p.23) and describes women's condition, which is that they are dominated by men's sovereignty. Beauvoir indicates that men are self-conscious subjects who regard themselves as essential and women as inessential; women are thus viewed as "the other." In that section, Beauvoir not only criticizes men who see women as "the other," but she also criticizes women who conform to this portrayal, relying on men without having a claim for themselves as subjects; "The man who sets the woman up as an Other will thus find in her a deep complicity." As a result, a woman makes no claim for herself as subject because she lacks the concrete means because she perceives the necessary link connecting her to man without positing its reciprocity, and because she often derives satisfaction from her role as Other" (p. 30).

Being "the other" as a woman is depicted in Saint's novel through the portrayal of Ariadne and her sister Phaedra. For example, when Ariadne was talking to Daedalus

about her father she says "I felt like an annoying child, a daughter who would never command a fleet of ships or conquer a kingdom and so was of little use or interest to Minos"(Saint, p.27). This quote reflects Ariadne's perception of herself as "the other" within her own family and society. In this passage, Ariadne expresses her feelings of inadequacy and insignificance in the eyes of her father, King Minos. She recognizes that her value and worth are diminished because she does not possess the qualities traditionally associated with power and influence in a patriarchal society. Ariadne's statement highlights her awareness of being relegated to a secondary role, one that is deemed less important and valuable compared to her male counterparts. She recognizes that she is not seen as a potential leader or conqueror, roles typically associated with men, and as a result, she is considered of little use or interest to her father.

By acknowledging her limitations and the societal expectations placed upon her, Ariadne embodies the position of "the other." She recognizes her marginalized status within her own family and the broader context of a male-dominated world. Ariadne's self-perception as "a daughter who will never command a fleet of ships or conquer a kingdom" (Saint, p. 27) reinforces the notion that she is excluded from the traditional sources of power and agency. Thus, Ariadne's identity and actions are frequently defined in reference to the males in her life, highlighting the imbalance of power and the social expectation that women should play the roles that men give them.

Ariadne's agency and options tend to be restricted by the patriarchal society presented in the novel, which is similar to Beauvoir's claim. She is bound by the expectations and limitations that are placed on her as she is a woman, and the actions and desires of the male characters in her life have an impact on her choices. The gender

inequality and the limitations placed upon women, can be observed by examining Ariadne's character in Jennifer Saint's novel through the lens of Beauvoir's ideas.

In the original myth, as has already been suggested, Ariadne is often portrayed as a pawn in the hands of male figures such as her father, King Minos, and Theseus. Her role is often reduced to that of a helper or a prize to be won, emphasizing her objectification within the narrative. She is seen as a commodity by the men, who claim her as a gift. She is seen as sex an object, and she is thus not an independent subject in the patriarchal society

In this regard, Luce Irigaray's article *Women on the Market* (1977) examines the commodity issue in order to investigate the male dominance of women. To paraphrase LuceIrigaray, the idea is that women are not born as commodities, but rather become them. Irigaray analyzes women's role as a commodity in the capitalist system using Marx's and anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss' studies of the commodity. Drawing on Irigaray's analysis, we can view Ariadne's transformation into a commodity within the context of gender dynamics and power structures.

According to Irigaray, women are served as exchangeable commodities in a patriarchal society, and she highlights that "The society we know, our own culture, is based upon the exchange of women" (p.170). Likewise in the novel, Ariadne is offered to be exchanged for the desire of men and asks in a horrified manner "The King of Athens?', 'You want me to marry Aegeus?' He shook his head, rapidly. He laughed, then collected himself, "remembering that he spoke of selling me "(Saint, p.238). Ariadne expresses horror at the suggestion of marrying Aegeus, the King of Athens. The mention

of Aegeus, who is associated with power and authority, indicates that her potential marriage would involve her being wedded to a prominent figure, further emphasizing her commodification. Another example is Ariadne's depiction of her parents' marriage; "Pasiphae was beautiful and her divine heritage had made her a magnificent prize to Minos in marriage" (Saint, p.25). This portrayal can also be related to Luce Irigaray's concept of women as commodities within a patriarchal system. In the quote, Pasiphae is presented as a "magnificent prize," suggesting that she is seen as a valuable object to be acquired and possessed by Minos. The language used to describe Pasiphae emphasizes her external beauty and her status as a desirable object for Minos. This aligns with Irigaray's critique of women being reduced to their physical attributes and being treated as objects of desire within a patriarchal framework.

Furthermore, the mention of Pasiphae's divine heritage adds another layer to the concept of commodification. It suggests that her value as a "prize" is not solely based on her individual qualities but also on her association with a higher, divine status. Similarly Rubin in *The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex. Toward an Anthropology of Women* states that "Women are given in marriage, taken in battle, exchanged for favors, sent as tribute, traded, bought, and sold (p.175). This highlights the tendency within patriarchal systems to objectify and commodify women based on their perceived social or cultural significance.

By relating Pasiphae's portrayal as a prized possession to Irigaray's concept of women as commodities, we can see how the novel *Ariadne* explores the objectification and devaluation of women within a patriarchal context. It prompts us to critically explore

the ways in which women's worth and value are often reduced to external qualities and their ability to fulfill the desires and expectations of men.

In this context, this is reminiscent of Irigaray's question; Why are men not objects of exchange among women? It is because women's bodies-through their use, consumption, and circulation-provide for making social life and culture possible, although they remain an unknown "infrastructure" of the elaboration of that social life and culture (p.171).

Ariadne's journey from a young woman with agency and desires to a passive object manipulated by others can be seen as an example of how women are often socialized and conditioned to fit into specific roles and expectations. By exploring the themes of commodification and objectification in the story of Ariadne, we can shed light on the broader societal dynamics that contribute to the oppression of women. This lens allows critically examining the power imbalances and the ways in which women's agency and autonomy are constrained and commodified within patriarchal systems.

As Mary O'Connor points out, Bakhtin is an important source for feminist criticism because he analyzes the historical and social aspects of language and "allows for an active response on the part of the subject to these various discourses" (1991, p. 201). Bakhtin's central concepts, such as "heteroglossia,""polyphony," and "dialogism" capture the various levels of languages and voices that harmonize and conflict with each other. As a result, these concepts can be employed for calling attention to female characters who disrupted the masculine voices in the texts through their narration.

In this context, after briefly addressing theories of rewriting and feminist theory, Bakhtin's conception of heteroglossia and polyphony will be applied to Saint's novel to

analyze dialogism between the novel's two main female voices, Ariadne and Phaedra. Heteroglossic features can be seen through the use of different voices and perspectives throughout the novel. The story is told from the alternating viewpoints of Ariadne and her sister Phaedra, giving readers insight into both characters' thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Additionally, the author incorporates the voices of other female characters, such as the nymphs and goddesses, who offer their own unique perspectives on the events of the story. Moreover, the novel also includes the voices of various other characters, such as Theseus, Dionysus, and Minos, who provide further perspectives and insights into the world of the novel by reconstructing the original myth from a multifocal perspective.

In this sense, each character's speech is distinctive and reveals their own experiences. Saint employs a multi-voiced approach and a variety of speech that constitutes heteroglossia in the narrative. As previously mentioned in the introduction, Bakhtin states in *The Dialogic Imagination*: "Authorial speech, narrator speeches, inserted genres, character speech are merely those fundamental compositional unities with the help of which heteroglossia can enter the novel; each of them permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and inter-relationships" (1981, p. 263).

In this regard, each of the narrators is an essential component of the narrative's compositional unity, which defines the novel's structure. Furthermore, various character narratives allow for direct access to their personal memories and experiences. Saint represents multiple characters' thoughts with different backgrounds and experiences by giving them each a voice, allowing readers access to their worlds, through transforming a

myth into the contemporary novel genre. As Bakhtin (1981) suggests, the novel encompasses and harmonizes all its themes, presenting the complete world of objects and ideas through the utilization of diverse speech types. These speech types, referred to as "raznorecie," allow for the inclusion of multiple social voices and enable a wide range of connections and interrelationships among them, often characterized by elements of dialogue (p. 263). The diversity of voices and variety of speeches in Saint's contemporary novel, which deconstructs the original myth's traditional monological structure, also allows for the uncovering of untold aspects of the story.

Ariadne's being narrated in multiple voices can be associated with Bakhtin's concept of polyphony which is "characterized by the multiplicity of voices present in it, none of which are subjected to the authoritarian control of the writer himself" (Jefferson and Robey,1982,p.163). The polyphonic novel, according to Graham Allen, "fights against any view of the world which would valorize one 'official' point-of-view, one ideological position, and thus one discourse, above all others" and highlights "no objective narratorial voice to guide us through the vast array of voices, interpretations, world-views, opinions, and responses" (2000, p. 24). Thus, with multiple and interrelated narratives, it might be claimed that this novel portrays the features of heteroglossia. In this way, it arguably fills an absence or a blank in the original text. Saint chooses several characters and lets them tell the story. In this way, she substitutes the original myth with external narrators. As the readers hear the story from the characters themselves they are provided with a sense of intimacy that the original text cannot provide. As a result, it may not be appropriate to seek a single point of view or speech type in this story; its multi-voiced structure includes diversity.

The novel is narrated from the first-person perspective of both Ariadne and her sister Phaedra, providing two distinct viewpoints on the events of the story. Ariadne and Phaedra have contrasting perspectives, experiences, and choices. Ariadne represents rebellion, independence, and a yearning for freedom from the oppressive expectations imposed upon women. She embodies strength, resilience, and a willingness to challenge societal norms as she says "I would be Medusa, if it came to it, I resolved. If the gods held me accountable one day for the sins of someone else, if they came for me to punish a man's actions, I would not hide away like Pasiphae. I would wear that coronet of snakes and the world would shrink from me instead" (Saint,p.41). Ariadne's voice is characterized by defiance and a desire to forge her own path, as demonstrated by her determination to help Theseus and her refusal to accept a fate dictated by others. On the other hand, Phaedra embodies a more complex and conflicted voice. She grapples with societal pressures and the weight of her family's legacy. In the novel when Dionysus tells what happened to Phaedra he says " Minos arranged a husband for Phaedra – a great prince of a mighty city – and she boarded a ship the very next day." And Ariadne responded, "I could not deny it: a luxurious palace in a foreign city would appeal to my sister far more than a life of exile and solitude"(Saint, p. 281). This dialogue between Dionysus and Ariadne reflects the contrasting personalities and values of the two sisters. Ariadne, who seeks freedom and independence, is willing to sacrifice material wealth and societal status for the sake of personal fulfillment and authenticity. In contrast, Phaedra is depicted as someone who prioritizes external validation and societal norms. She is more inclined towards a life of comfort and acceptance within the confines of traditional expectations. Phaedra reflects a struggle between conformity and a yearning for personal

fulfillment. She embodies adherence to societal expectations. She is torn between her loyalty to her family, her desire for love and acceptance, and her own sense of self.

Ariadne is a heteroglot novel, therefore; it has the capacity to include a polyphonic and dialogic structure. From a Bakhtinian point of view, Ariadne can be seen as a celebration of heteroglossia, with its polyphonic and dialogic structure. The novel has diversity in speech and languages, multiplicity in voices, and hybridization in structure as Bakhtin (1981) elucidates that the novelistic hybrid represents a carefully structured framework that facilitates the interaction of different languages. Its purpose is to shed light on one language through the use of another, creating a dynamic and vivid portrayal of diverse linguistic forms within the narrative (p. 361).

Another example of heteroglossia in the novel can be seen through the incorporation of various Greek myths and legends into the narrative. Saint weaves in elements of different myths and legends, such as the story of the Minotaur, the Labors of Theseus, and the tale of Daedalus and Icarus. This creates a complex web of intertextuality and heteroglossia, as these different myths and stories are woven together to create a new, cohesive narrative. As Zengin asserts in *An Introduction ToIntextuality as a Literary Theory: Definitions, Axioms and the Originators,*"As an instance it can be said that the poststructuralist theories of Bakhtin led to the conception of text in the theory of intertextuality. Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and heteroglossia lies at the core of Julia Kristeva's theory of intertextuality"(Zengin, p.310). Kristevadefines intertextuality, in her essay *Word, Dialogue and Novel*, as "a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another"(Kristeva, 1986, p. 37). She examines the idea that texts are always conversing with one another, and contends that

every text contains echoes, references, and fragments that combine to produce a complicated web of intertextual relationships. Readers are encouraged to interact with the larger cultural and literary background by way of these intertextual connections, which provide layers of meaning.

The inclusion of various mythical elements in *Ariadne* can be analyzed using Kristeva's idea of intertextuality. A dynamic connection between the text and its literary origins is made possible by the interweaving of myths from many sources. By generating associations, ideas, and symbolic resonances that are embedded in the collective cultural consciousness, these intertextual references help to improve the narrative. Thus, Kristeva's idea of intertextuality provides a useful lens for understanding the rich network of intertextual relationships present in *Ariadne*, emphasizing the novel's involvement with the larger literary tradition and contribution to the ongoing dialogue between texts.

By referencing the original myths in her narrative, Saint adds an additional layer of heteroglossia to her novel, as readers need to navigate between the different versions of the story. By embracing heteroglossia in this way, *Ariadne* becomes a mosaic of voices, where the ancient myths merge with Saint's own storytelling,

Bakhtin (1981) argues that language is never unitary. The dynamics of social life and historical development generate a multitude of distinct and concrete worlds within what may appear as a unified national language. These diverse worlds encompass specific verbal-ideological systems and social belief systems, each characterized by its own semantic and axiological content, as well as unique linguistic elements with varying sounds (p. 288).As a result, he might be regarded as a resource for the study of feminine language in women's writing. Bakhtin, in this sense, offers an alternative way of

analyzing the social nature of language. As he states, "They [these groups] are capable of attracting its [a national language's] words and forms into their orbit by means of their own characteristic intentions and accents, and in so doing to a certain extent alienating these words and forms from other tendencies, parties, artistic works and person" (p. 290). A feminist critic, Diane Price Herndl, says in *Feminism, Bakhtin, and the Dialogic* (1991) that:

> Bakhtin's theory of dialogism can be seen quite parallel to what feminist critics describe as the "feminine language of women's writing. For this reason the relationship between the dialogic and that non-patriarchal, feminine logic that some feminist theorists find in women's novels need to be examined, as does the relation between 'novelistic discourse' and 'feminine language'. A dialogue between Bakhtin and feminist critics may help to illuminate the relationship between dialogic and feminine logic (, p.7)

In this respect, the concept of heteroglossia should be revisited in order to appreciate the relationship between the two theoretical approaches: "Bakhtin's theory is adaptable into feminist criticism because he analyzes the diverse social and historical features and manifestations of language and allows for an active response on the part of the subject to these various discourses," writes Mary O'Connor in *Feminism, Bakhtin, and the Dialogic* (p. 201).

Furthermore, in *Dialogic Imagination,* Bakhtin asserts that the novel includes a lot of dimensions and ideologies due to the interaction of different voices and "its actively polyglot structure. The narrative is deaf to the monologic structure in this polyglot

universe. Different strata of languages and voices of characters and narrators illuminate or conflict with one another, revealing heteroglossia. The novel's multilingual consciousness is always open, and new creative literary consciousness always exists in the novel"(p. 12).

In her famous essay *The Laugh of the Medusa*, Cixous expands the concept of *écriture féminine*, which can be roughly translated as "feminine writing." Cixous emphasizes the feminine body and female sexuality in this essay because the body has been the primary object of discussion. As a result, she encourages women to write about themselves through their bodily experiences in order to overcome the phallocentric mechanism of language. She claims that:

> Woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies- for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Women must put themselves into the text- as into the world and into the history- by their own movement. Women must write through their bodies, they must invent the impregnable language that will wreck partitions, classes, and rhetorics, regulations, and codes, they must submerge, cut through, get beyond the ultimate reverse discourse, including the one that laughs at the very idea of pronouncing the word "silence"... In one another we will never be lacking" (Cixous, 1976, p. 875).

In Saint's novel, as has been discussed above, it can be observed that there is a commitment to giving voice to women who have been silenced or overlooked in traditional myths. The novel embodies the idea of women "writing through their bodies"

by delving into the emotional and physical experiences of its female characters. By reimagining these myths, the novel challenges the existing narratives, deconstructing traditional roles and reclaiming the stories from a feminist perspective.

Furthermore, the idea of "wrecking partitions, classes, and rhetorics, regulations and codes" resonates with the way that Saint challenges societal norms and expectations through Ariadne's narratives. By doing so, she confronts and dismantles the established hierarchies and conventions that have limited women's agency and representation in classical literature.

In this sense, Cixous' emphasis on women's writing might be specifically pursued as a contribution to building a female subjectivity. As previously stated, Cixous believes that "women must write themselves: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal." Woman must put herself into the text, as well as the world and into history, by her own movement" (1976, p. 875).

The issue of whether a woman can play an active role, to become a subject, appears to be linked to her use of language or the language imposed on her by patriarchal culture. In this respect, this dilemma can be aligned with Bakhtin's concepts of monologism and dialogism.

Monologism, as stated by Bakhtin in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, "is not open to diverse consciousnesses; thus, it constitutes a monologically understood, objectified world, a world corresponding to a single and unified authorial consciousness"(1984, p. 9). Monologic consciousness is characterized by a single authorial worldview and cannot be integrated into a multi-perspective context, in the

unity of a monologically perceived and understood world; "there is no presumption of a plurality of equally-valid consciousnesses, each with its own world"(p. 7). As a result, Bakhtin concentrates on dialogism, which represents the interaction of many consciousnesses. As he suggests, "Dialogism continues towards an answer. The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word: it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answers direction" (1981, p .280). Furthermore, he clarifies the meaning of dialogism as, "another's speech in another's language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way" (1981, p. 324). Additionally, it is presumable that "only through dialogism can we assert that it is on the boundary between the two discourses- in the illumination of their conflict- that we can find a way to use both " (Bauer and McKinstry, 1991, p. 18).

As a result, dialogism can be taken as a potential to represent the different subjects' attempts to challenge authority by subverting the language that is used, "The masculine writer just by working in a feminine-dialogic genre, would be subverting the masculine-monologic language of oppositions. The feminine writer, by writing in a masculine-monologic language, would be subverting the feminine-dialogic genre. The result of all this subversion would be, ultimately, to laugh in the face of the hierarchy's authority" (1991, p. 18). This can bring the idea of mimesis into mind, by which Luce Irigaray refers to women challenging and subverting patriarchal power by adopting or mimicking masculine language and discourse. Irigaray contends that women have historically been sidelined or stifled in terms of their voices and experiences, as well as their exclusion from the creation of hegemonic discourses. Women can access the

symbolic order and subvert its monolithic, oppressive nature by imitating masculine discourse and language.

"Irigaray's intervention into philosophical texts is concerned with retracing the masculine imaginary to demonstrate how women have been reduced to silence, muteness, or mimicry. At the same time, she attempts to rediscover a possible space for the feminine" (Fotaki et al., 2014; Irigaray, 1985). In her re-writing of the cave myth in Plato's Hystera of Speculum, Irigaray (1985) emphasizes the texts' silenced nature as:

> While carrying their burdens, some of them, as you would expect, are talking, others silent." As you would expect. Really and truly? Yes, you would expect it, given the systems of duplication, the rules of duplicity, that organize the cave. For if everyone talked, and talked at once, the background noise would make it difficult or even impossible for the doubling process known as an echo to occur. The reflection of sound would be spoiled if different speakers uttered different things at the same time. Sounds would thereby become ill-defined, fuzzy, inchoate, indistinct, and devoid of figures that can be reflected and reproduced. If everyone spoke and spoke at once, the silence of the others would no longer form the background necessary to highlight or outline the words of some, or of one. Silence or blanks function here in two ways to allow replication. Of likeness(p.256).

Through mimesis, women may provide different perspectives and ways of expression by exposing the defects and biases of dominant discourses. Women can reclaim their voices and identities, question conventional gender roles, and help to dismantle patriarchal power systems by reworking the masculine language. Both mimesis

and dialogism recognize language's potential for transformation. Individuals, particularly marginalized voices, can subvert and restructure dominant discourses by using language in a dialogic and mimetic way, challenging established power structures and promoting social change. Both ideas emphasize how individuals may reconfigure language and discourse to subvert conventions, challenge authority, and allow marginalized voices to be heard

In this sense, dialogism can be seen as a means for challenging authority and challenging established language norms. According to Bakhtin, when authors engage in dialogic genres that differ from their own gender or dominant discourse, they disrupt the traditional power structures and hierarchies embedded in language.

In this regard, "feminist dialogics" allows for the disruption and criticism of repressive patriarchal ideologies based on the nature of language. In F*eminism, Bakhtin, and the Dialogic*, Patricia Yaeger summarizes the aim of feminist dialogics by stating that it "re-invigorates our quarrels with patriarchy,""re-illuminates our debates with one another," and frequently has the attention of a "diverse feminist speech-world" (1991, p. 244). The concept of "feminist dialogics" is in line with the disruption and critique of patriarchal ideologies by using dialogue and multiple voices. By engaging in feminist dialogics, feminists seek to reinvigorate their challenges to patriarchy, re-illuminate debates within the feminist community, and attract the attention of diverse feminist speech communities. In the context of *Ariadne*, the novel can be seen as a manifestation of feminist dialogics. It challenges patriarchal ideologies by giving voice to female characters and presenting their perspectives and challenges within a male-dominated

society. Through the use of multiple voices and perspectives, the novel creates a space for readers to engage with the issues of gender, power, and oppression.

Here, it can be suggested that *Ariadne* is one of the examples of a "diverse feminist speech-world" and heteroglossic narration. As has been previously mentioned the novel has two different female narrative voices, each of which relates the events from their own perspectives. Thus, *Ariadne*, can be seen as a subversion of traditional male-dominated narratives and language. By giving voice to female characters, exploring their perspectives, and incorporating elements of femininity and feminine experiences, the novel challenges the monologic language that often marginalizes or silences women.

In the novel Ariadne reflects on her changing perspective and growing awareness of the struggles of women that are often overlooked by the heroic narratives dominated by men. She alludes to the pain and unspoken stories that exist within the lives of women by saying, "No longer was my world one of the brave heroes; I was learning all too swiftly the women's pain that throbbed unspoken through the tales of their feats" (Saint, p. 38). Furthermore, Phaedra says "Why did I, Phaedra of Knossos and Athens, put my faith in a man? When I should have seen that what I truly wanted was simply to run away"(Saint, p. 502)and "It had chafed against my nature all of my life to wait passively for things to happen. But that day, I didn't know what else to do. I went to the cove, searched for any hidden message, any clue or sign from Ariadne or Theseus" (p. 227).These excerpts reflect Phaedra's active and determined nature. It shows her rejection of passively waiting for things to happen and her willingness to take action and search for answers. These portrayals of Ariadne and Phaedra as active protagonists who seek power

aligns with the broader theme of challenging traditional gender roles and the monologic language that marginalizes and silences women.

Through dialogism, *Ariadne* creates a space for alternative voices and discourses to exist, undermining the authority of the dominant language. This subversion is not limited to the characters within the story but extends to the act of writing itself. By weaving mythic elements into the narrative, Saint engages in a dialogic exchange with the traditional sources of these myths. She reinterprets and recontextualizes them, giving them new life and resonance within the framework of the novel. This interplay between different voices and perspectives generates dialogism, as the author's voice enters into conversation with the voices of the mythic characters and the broader cultural and literary tradition.

Moreover, the characters themselves embody a range of voices and perspectives. Ariadne and Phaedra, for example, represent contrasting experiences and viewpoints within the patriarchal society they inhabit. Through their dialogues and internal monologues, the novel explores the power dynamics inherent in their relationships. In this way, Ariadne exemplifies the heteroglossic nature of language and discourse, as it incorporates diverse voices, mythic narratives, and intertextual references. Through the interaction of these multiple voices, the novel generates dialogism.

Furthermore, as Bakhtin embraces diversity and heterogeneity in his works, Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist highlight that "Dialogism celebrates alterity" (1994, p. 124). Likewise, the novel involves a perspective of linguistic plurality in opposition to a single, monologic unitary language, "the novel is the expression of a Galilean perception of language, one that denies the absolutism of a single and unitary language"

(p. 367). Thus, language and discourse are fundamentally heteroglot and multi-layered in Bakhtin's theory. As a result, it may be suggested that diversity generates meaning, and the interaction of multiple voices generates dialogism. By employing a dialogic approach, the novel challenges the notion of a singular authoritative voice and opens up possibilities for multiple interpretations and perspectives.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has both examined the novels *Ariadne* by Jennifer Saint and *Circe* by Madeline Miller from a Bakhtinian perspective, and within the framework of revisionist mythmaking, which is the act of reinterpreting ancient myths in a way that challenges established power structures. This thesis hopefully reveals how the authors diverge from the traditional narratives by providing the reader with marginalized voices or viewpoints through the lens of revisionist mythmaking. Bakhtinian concepts highlight the value of dialogue, the coexistence of voices and discourses, so examining both of the novels through these perspectives could entail analyzing how the novels depict the presence of multiple voices. Moreover, a Bakhtinian framework has the potential to shed light on the diverse nature of the novels, as well as their relations with various discourses and ideologies. As a result, it can be concluded that Bakhtin's concepts provide illuminating insights into Miller's and Saint's novels.

As this thesis has presumably made clear, the rewriting process raises up-to-date issues and re-examines cultures and traditions. Therefore, by revisiting past times from a contemporary perspective, classical myths and traditional narratives can be challenged and reworked in rewritings. Through revision, new and liberated meanings and interpretations emerge, allowing for a more dynamic engagement with these classic stories. Schanoes (2014) explains that through the act of invoking, embodying, and preserving traditional stories while introducing alterations to those narratives, revision serves a twofold purpose. On one hand, it serves as a reminder to the reader of the perspectives held in the past. On the other hand, it signifies the distinct viewpoint of the present, highlighting the evolving interpretations and understandings of the tales.

Through this process of revision, the past is acknowledged, and the present is asserted (p. 69).Therefore, it can be claimed that revisionist myth making approaches the original text through a variety of perspectives and voices, which encourages the use of alternate languages and diverse voices capable of deconstructing and reconstructing ancient myths from a fresh and contemporary perspective. Rewriting myths also makes it possible to deconstruct the patriarchal context of the original myth from a feminist standpoint. As Rich states in *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence:*

> Re-vision– the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction – is for woman more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival. Until we understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves. And this drive to self-knowledge, for women, is more than a search for identity: it is part of our refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society" (1979, p. 35).

The conventional patriarchal mindset of the past is reexamined and reshaped through the perspective of female perception, primarily achieved through the reinterpretation of myths. This process serves as a way to challenge and rectify gender stereotypes that are ingrained in traditional myths (Ostriker, 1982, p. 73). Bakhtinian concepts such as heteroglossia, polyphony, and dialogism provide a transformative perspective on rewriting myths. Revised myths challenge the dominance of a single discourse and provide a space for exploring multiple linguistic and cultural expressions by incorporating diverse voices, alternate languages, and numerous points of view. The inclusion of various, independent voices inside the reworked stories results in a

polyphony that represents the diversity of human experiences while challenging the original myths' monolithic form. Furthermore, revisionist mythmaking is dialogic in its nature, engaging in a discourse with both the source texts and the modern cultural milieu, reinterpreting old mythic narratives, and subverting gender stereotypes.

A multivocal and transformative engagement with myths is fostered by the revisionist mythmaking approach, which is based on Bakhtinian concepts, and promotes the emergence of new interpretations and viewpoints. In this way, as has been pointed out throughout this thesis, the revisionist mythmaking approach can be linked to the Bakhtinianperspective and his crucial concepts such as heteroglossia, polyphony, and dialogism. In this sense, by embracing these concepts, the revision process leads to new possibilities for interpretation, dialogue, and the exploration of diverse perspectives within the narratives being revised.

On this basis, revisionist mythmaking becomes apparent in the novels *Ariadne* by Jennifer Saint and *Circe* by Madeline Miller. The authors both take classic myths and reinterpret them through the eyes of female protagonists. By focusing the narratives on female characters and undermining the conventionally male-focused perspectives, both novels engage in the restructuring of classical myths. The authors challenge and disrupt traditional narratives by giving voice to these female characters, allowing for a revisionist exploration of the agency and experiences of women within these mythical contexts. This revisionist strategy coincides with Bakhtinian ideas like heteroglossia polyphony and dialogism since it adds alternate voices and perspectives that show a diversity of human experiences and raise issues with the original myths' monolithic nature.

In this context, each contemporary novel has a unique perspective, and every character adds to the multivocality that the original myth lacked. In view of Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia, Ariadne's two distinct narrators each offer an entirely new approach to telling the story, contradicting the oppressive and authoritative narration of the traditional epic.

Along with unveiling the unknown and refuting the epic narrator's claim to be the only authority, the process of rewriting makes the epic more approachable. Thus, *Ariadne* and *Circe* give a voice to the silent and speechless figures from the original stories. Both of the novels embody a multiplicity of perspectives in opposition to the authoritarian voice of the epic. In this way, the several interwoven voices in these novels demonstrate a variety of styles and contexts.

This use of multiple perspectives and voices contributes to the novel's heteroglossic nature, as it provides a range of perspectives on the themes and ideas that the novel explores. Moreover, both *Circe* and *Ariadne* feature a diverse range of genres and forms, including epic poetry and tragedy, which further contributes to its heteroglossic nature.

Miller's Circe is a portrayal of a woman who is neglected in the oppressive patriarchal atmosphere of the original myth. Miller challenges the silence of the women characters in traditional narratives by giving voice to Circe in her contemporary novel. In this way, Circe serves as both the subject and narrator, presenting a completely new perspective on the traditional story. Retelling the past from a female perspective brings attention to the issue of patriarchal dominance. As a result, the novel's heteroglot structure enables an exclusive perspective and approach. In this sense, it can be claimed

that the individual presents an alternate language with new intentions and meanings, which embodies heteroglossia consciousness.

In chapter III, the concept of heteroglossiais supported by a feminist approach. The words of Circe, which have a direct connection to the feminist context, are thus investigated as a component of heteroglot unity. In Miller's *Circe*, this heteroglot quality, which is typical of the act of retelling generally, is provided by the female voice and its interaction with the original text.

The myth of Theseus and the Minotaur is told in Jennifer Saint's *Ariadne* from the perspectives of two women: Ariadne and Phaedra. The usage of these two different female voices arguably corresponds to Bakhtin's ideas on dialogism and polyphony. Thus, Saint's adaptation can be interpreted as presenting diverse types of speech that interact with dialogic relation. Moreover, the novel's dialogized structure also draws the spotlight on two frequently conflicting points of view, two distinct ideologies, and discourses, while A new plotline is therefore constructed by these two dual narrative perspectives.

Both of the novels attempt to communicate with a variety of voices and perspectives through revisionist mythmaking, which can be understood through Bakhtin's concepts of heteroglossia, polyphony, and dialogism. Therefore, analyzing these novels as examples of heteroglossic novels makes sense of how they handle the traditional epic's monolithic narrative style and reconstruct the old stories with fresh perspectives.

To conclude, the analysis of *Circe and Ariadne* through the concepts of heteroglossia and polyphony has revealed that both of the novels are dialogic novels with their heteroglot nature and polyphonic structure. The results of the novels' analysis

demonstrate that Bakhtin's theories offer significant insight into *Circe* and *Ariadne*. Bakhtin's theories work hand in hand in practice with novels that emphasize dialogic relationships in terms of structure, language use and thematic issues. Thus, the Bakhtinian approach to revisionist novels proposed in this thesis may serve as a model for future research on epic story novelizations, as well as maybe for adaptation studies in general.

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