"WE'RE GONNA SING IT ANYWAY": TRAGEDY AND LOVE IN ADAPTATIONS OF ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

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A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green
State University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

May 2025

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ABSTRACT

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In this thesis, I work to determine why people from a variety of cultures across thousands of years have retold the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. I analyze how three central components of the myth interact within four adaptations. Engaging with both New Historicism and adaptation theory, I explore the interactions between music, magic, and power, the roles and agencies of women, and the impact of the ending on audiences and interpretations of the story in each text. When analyzing Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (8 CE), I argue that Orpheus uses his musical magic to challenge Hades's power, that Eurydice's actions within the limitations of the text demonstrate her agency, and that the audience is actually not left with a tragedy by the end. When exploring *Sir Orfeo* (circa 1250-1350), I claim that Orfeo and the Fairy King engage in a political conflict, that Heurodis is a symbol within that conflict with limited agency, and that the poem depicts a romance and a tragedy. When examining Christoph Willibald Gluck's and Ranieri de' Calzabigi's *Orfeo Ed Euridice* (1762), I contend that Orfeo's musical magic is restricted by Amor's godly power, that Euridice has gained and lost agency in her songs, and that the opera's conclusion contains the happiest ending. When evaluating Anaïs Mitchell's *Hadestown* (2019), I conclude that Orpheus uses both his musical magic and the power of the collective to try changing the world, that Eurydice and the other women display a range of agency, and that the ending encourages the audience to work together and improve our world. Ultimately, I show how the four texts respond to each other across time and determine why people have continued to retell the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice.

Keywords: Orpheus, Eurydice, tragedy, death, love, romance, Ovid, Metamorphoses, Sir Orfeo, Gluck, Calzabigi, Orfeo ed Euridice, Mitchell, Hadestown, stories, mythology, adaptation, adaptation theory, New Historicism

For everyone who encouraged my love of mythology and listened to my stories.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanking everyone who helped me complete both this thesis and my entire experience at college is a daunting task, and I doubt that I will even remember everyone, but I am happy to give it a shot. I want to start with a colossal thank you to my family. To my Mom and Dad, I would not have managed any of this without you and your support and help, which were given even when I was surely driving you crazy. To Jacob and Joseph, you were my earliest audience, and knowing that you have been behind me this whole time has been amazing. To my Grandma, thank you for listening to me gab at you; I treasure your willingness to pay attention even when I sound nonsensical. To Uncle David, Collin, and Kyle, your collective encouragement, delivered in your particular ways, has been very appreciated. Finally, to Kyber, thank you for being such a good puppy and for all of the snuggles (though they were often distracting). I love all of you so much!

Next, my teachers have helped me in a variety of ways throughout this arduous and awarding affair. From my high school teachers to my undergrad and my current professors, thank you. Thank you to all of my professors from the past four semesters. You helped me learn, you provided support through the stress, and I am happy to have met and worked with all of you. My desire for an attempt at brevity means that I cannot thank you all, but please know that you are appreciated and that the skills you helped me build were used. Thank you, Dr. Labbie, for helping me get started on this thesis; even though we did not continue working together, your initial guidance pointed me in several interesting directions that can now be seen in the final product. And a big thank you to my committee, Dr. Stephannie Gearhart and Dr. Amorak Huey, for your guidance, feedback, and interest in this project. It very much would not have gotten done without you.

Finally, my friends have been an ongoing and absolutely necessary part of completing this thesis. You have all helped me through coworking, letting me talk about my thoughts, and beyond. To those in Snake Fight Club—Sarah U., Sam, Ayşenur, and T.J., to name a few—especially, thank you!

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INTRODUCTION

The classic myth of Orpheus and Eurydice can be summarized most succinctly as follows: soon after the wedding between Orpheus (a renowned musician) and Eurydice (a nymph), Eurydice dies. Her husband is devastated by her loss and descends into the Underworld, the place where dead souls go to rest, to retrieve her. Orpheus meets Hades and Persephone, Hades's wife and the goddess of spring. The musician then sings his plea to the gods for Eurydice to live again, and they are so moved by Orpheus's music that they permit her return. However, as he leads Eurydice out of the land of the dead, Orpheus may not turn around to look at her. Unfortunately, moments before they leave the Underworld, he does, and Eurydice dies again.[1]

In 2024, Netflix released *Kaos*, a show that simultaneously retells and remixes several Greek myths, and the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice is one of the most central myths in the story. Even more recently, in March of 2025, Disney released *O'Dessa*, a post-apocalyptic gender-swapped retelling of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth. Modern interest in the myth can also be found in fandoms, especially in the hundreds of fanfictions that have been written about the characters. Fandoms are collections of people who form a community around being a fan of someone or something. Popular fandoms often center themselves around certain celebrities, television shows, books, and/or movies. In their current iterations, fandoms are primarily found online; however, these communities can also be found and formed in in-person gatherings like

[1] John Heath's "The Failure of Orpheus" refutes the claim of some scholars that, in some ancient Greek variations of the myth, Orpheus succeeded in bringing his wife back to life. He justifies his assertion through an examination of the relevant literature and artifacts. His article demonstrates that scholarly conversations around the ending of this myth—which is the motivation behind this thesis—occur even outside of a literary analysis perspective. However, I will not further focus on whether or not an "original happy reunification ending" occurred in the mythology because I do not want to risk implying that a non-reunited ending is a faithful retelling and thus create a hierarchy where the "original" is the most valuable version of the myth.

conventions. Fanfictions are works written by fans who are inspired by various other creations or people. They can be found in online forums, archives, and websites—such as Wattpad, FanFiction.net, or Archive of Our Own—or in independently published works—such as fanzines. In Archive of Our Own (AO3) alone, hundreds of works have been written about Orpheus and Eurydice.[2] Such popularity begs the following question: why is the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice so appealing right now? This inquiry is mildly misleading because the story has been continuously retold for thousands of years. Therefore, a better question is, why have people continued to retell the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice over time?

Furthermore, the story of the doomed husband and wife differs from many other Greek myths that have held the attention of Western audiences over the millennia since their inception. For example, retellings of Hercules's story tend to focus on his great feats of strength and divine lineage, and typically omit his gruesome end. Adaptations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* regale the audience with great battles, clever plans, and the dangers of upsetting the gods, with the inherent tragedy deriving from the deaths of powerful men. The grand adventures of Jason and the Argonauts seeking the golden fleece are retold; however, Jason's pride and subsequent downfall are omitted unless the story centers around Medea, his wife. As seen in these examples, modern

[2] For more specific numbers, as of the morning of October 11th, 2024, AO3—archiveofourown.org—had the following quantity: of the 1,438 works in the *Hadestown* fandom, 693 had character tags for both Orpheus and Eurydice, with the most recent being published on October 4th, 2024; I found six *Orfeo ed Euridice* works, with the most recent being published on September 26th, 2024; I found five *Sir Orfeo* works, with the most recent being published on September 6th, 2024; of the eighty-two works for *Metamorphoses*, five of them were tagged with both Orpheus and Eurydice, with the most recent being published on February 15th, 2023; of the forty-one *Kaos* works, three works were tagged with both Orpheus and Eurydice; of the 10,921 works in the Ancient Greek Religion & Lore fandom, 160 were tagged with both Orpheus and Eurydice, with the most recent being published on October 10th, 2024; finally, I found 950 works (of any fandom, including the ones already listed) tagged with both Orpheus and Eurydice as characters, with the most recent being published on October 10th, 2024. Because authors are in charge of how they tag and otherwise label their work, these numbers are not necessarily reflective of every fanfiction where both Orpheus and Eurydice appear. For example, not every author tags every character. Additionally, because fanfictions are not restricted to only one fandom, the listed groups are not mutually exclusive. However, even with the inaccuracies found within the tagging system, the numbers show that Orpheus and Eurydice still hold popular and recent attention in this online space. Furthermore, the provided numbers are restricted to one site, and are therefore not indicative of the entirety of the couple's popularity.

depictions of Greek mythological figures focus on stereotypical heroes—even if the definition of a hero has changed—or on the gods and goddesses who were worshiped, alongside all of the complicated emotions they evoke. Orpheus does not have the immense strength of Hercules or the famed intelligence of Odysseus; instead, his music is so beautiful that it can do the impossible. Furthermore, though Hades and Persephone were feared and respected for their rule over the dead, they also do not share quite the same dramatics of Zeus, Poseidon, Hera, Ares, or Aphrodite, for example. The main exceptions to the lessened dramatics of the primary chthonic gods are the events that led to and immediately resulted from their marriage; however, because Hades's kidnapping of Persephone was sanctioned by Zeus, the dramatics of that situation are largely the king of the gods' fault. Additionally, the many deaths that followed the kidnapping were the result of Demeter's grief. Therefore, I do not believe that Hades or Persephone should be largely blamed for that particular chaos. Additionally, though the dread sovereigns are featured, the story typically belongs to Orpheus and Eurydice. Overall, the mortals and gods of this story differ from the grand, public, and primarily masculine figures and stories that populate many modern retellings of myths by instead centering the domestic, private, artistic, and somewhat feminine. Given that this tale differs so greatly from many of the other popular Greek myths, why has the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice likely undergone hundreds of retellings over the millennia?

The answers to my questions lay in how the many different versions of the myth—which were and have been fairly popular since their respective inceptions[3]—are influenced by and

[3] Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is its author's "most famous work" (Struck); *Sir Orfeo* was found in "a tremendously important anthology" ("Sir Orfeo: Introduction"); "the most famous of all Orpheus operas is Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*" (Thomason); and *Hadestown* won eight Tony Awards between 2019-2022, has had 1,652 performances as of October 13, 2024, and has made a total gross of $198,058,902.01 as of October 13, 2024 ("Hadestown (Broadway, Walter Kerr Theatre, 2019)").

respond to their respective cultures, which continue to influence and communicate with each other as part of an ongoing Western tradition. In other words, a multitude of adaptations represent the multiplicities behind why this myth matters across time and space. To appreciate the connections between texts and their historical contexts, this thesis uses a New Historicism approach. In "Resonance and Wonder," Stephen Greenblatt provides a definition for this theory that influences a major part of how I approach my thesis. Greenblatt begins his essay with an example of a cultural artifact that leads him to the suggestion "that cultural artifacts do not stay still, that they exist in time, and that they are bound up with personal and institutional conflicts, negotiations, and appropriations" (2030). New Historicists expand that idea to apply to all of culture. The adaptations that I analyze were created in a specific time, place, and culture, which influenced all of the choices behind these creations. Additionally, these works are not merely reflections of what created them, they also respond to their respective cultures and times, meaning that some of these adaptations reveal the multiplicity within their respective cultures. Ultimately, the variations in the endings of each retelling tell us that these cultures came to different, if related, conclusions about what the story means to them. In this thesis, I discover what those conclusions are and how they relate to each other across four texts, which will start to help my readers better understand the cultures that created them.

Adaptation theory is the second central theory to my thesis, and it helps me analyze my central texts as adaptations with different mediums. In *A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon discusses audiences, the importance of adaptations and analyzing adaptations as adaptations (i.e., not treating a work as an individual thing but as something that references and then echoes previous adaptations, that repeats with variation rather than replication), and the impact of different modes/mediums on adaptations. Throughout this thesis, I explore how the different

modes/mediums influence the story's conclusions and how the audience might be impacted. For example, I consider the difference between when Ovid describes Orpheus's voice versus when the audience hears it.

Many other scholarly discussions of the various versions of the myth either focus on one specific telling[4] or examine a few versions written in the same time period.[5] When multiple versions garner the attention of academics, they often focus on one aspect of the story. In "Orpheus and Eurydice: Some Modern Versions," M. Owen Lee analyzes and compares several modern versions of the myth in 1961. In that article, Lee explains why his exploration of the myth matters by arguing that, as the story evolved, "it came to grips with three subjects: the mystery of life and death and rebirth; the all-compelling power of poetry and song; the tragic destruction of love and beauty when human emotion is not properly controlled" (308). Overall, I find myself agreeing with that part of Lee's assessment, and this thesis complicates those subjects. In what follows, I take my analysis a step further than other scholars' approaches by analyzing how multiple themes interconnect over centuries of adaptations. Specifically, in this thesis, I analyzed three categories in each retelling: (1) the interactions between music, magic, and power; (2) the roles and agency of women; and (3) the impact of the ending on audiences and the interpretations of the story.

Since each text responds to, echoes, and reflects the others, the general structures of my chapters are consistent. In order to establish the setting of the adaptations, each chapter starts with an exploration of how the retelling's culture understood music and magic. Magic is when something breaks the normal, expected rules for our world. For the purposes of this thesis, magic

[4] As seen in "Sir Orfeo and English Identity" by Dominique Battles and "'Why We Build the Wall': Hegemony, Memory and Current Events in Hadestown" by Valerie Lynn Schrader.
[5] As seen in "Orpheus and Eurydice: Some Modern Versions" by M. Owen Lee and "Adaptation of the Orpheus Myth in Five Operas" by Dafydd Wood.

can be divine, demonic, natural, or innate, and this definition is rooted in how is portrayed in fantasy/fictional settings and in my research. Music is defined as the combination of vocalizations and/or instrumentals to create sound for some purpose. In the "broadest possible sense," music is "both learned speculation and everyday performance" (Haines 149). In this project, the chapters start with an analysis of its story's magic and music because both are viewed and defined differently across time. Furthermore, each retelling centers Orpheus and his journey; since he is a magical and musical character, his conflicts center those core qualities. Therefore, by understanding the magic and music of a retelling, we start to understand the world being presented and Orpheus's characterization.

Then, I continue the chapters by determining how the forces of music, magic, and power interact within each text. Power shall be defined here as having control over someone and/or something. Within these adaptations, Hades and Orpheus create and/or maintain their power through music and/or magic. The typical layout of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is that Orpheus wields a musical magic that contests with Hades's magical power, so what happens to how audiences understand the story when retellings provide different angles for how music, magic, and power are presented? What is the impact of changing the magic and the people who wield it on the story? Ultimately, the purpose of analyzing how these terms intersect is to show how each retelling organizes the power dynamics between Hades and Orpheus, from Hades being the most powerful (and arguably the most magical) to Orpheus using his musical magic to shift the scale and get the chance to rescue Eurydice. In doing so, I establish Orpheus's role in the story and how the audience can connect with him.

Next, I analyze the women and their agencies in each retelling, with a main focus on Eurydice and her role. In addition to being the subject of a rescue, Eurydice is an important

character within all the versions of the story, though the depiction of her agency varies. Therefore, just as I explore Orpheus's role, I must also analyze how Eurydice and other women function within each retelling. Do the female characters have their own wants and desires, or do they primarily center around Orpheus or their husbands, and how does that impact the story? How might the audience be impacted by the different depictions of Eurydice and how she could be compared to other women? Essentially, examining the roles and agencies of the women (primarily Eurydice) in each retelling reveals both the main purpose behind Orpheus's conflict—whether that be external (i.e., between Orpheus and Hades, who may represent death itself) and/or internal—and the central concern of the story: whether Eurydice returns to life. By analyzing Eurydice's role and agency in the story, I illustrate how the audience can care about her.

Finally, I conclude each chapter with an exploration of how each adaptation ends. Despite my earlier summary of the myth, not all retellings conclude with the separation of Eurydice and Orpheus. The retellings that I have chosen for this thesis represent a wide emotional range in how the story can end, where even a reunion does not guarantee a happily ever after. What is the potential impact on the audience or an interpretation of a retelling when a tragedy is not tragic? What do we learn from Orpheus, Eurydice, and their ending (be that ending tragic, hopeful, uncertain, or something else entirely)? After exploring the roles of Orpheus and Eurydice—both individually and as a pair—within the retellings, I uncover the ways they impact their own ending. Furthermore, I start to reveal how different cultures and authors create different interpretations of the myth. Overall, my analysis of each retelling's ending and how an audience might interpret it—will answer why humanity keeps returning to this particular couple across time.

Given the time restrictions I had to write this thesis, the scope has been limited to four retellings: Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the Middle English lay *Sir Orfeo*, Christoph Willibald Gluck's and Ranieri de' Calzabigi's *Orfeo Ed Euridice*, and Anaïs Mitchell's *Hadestown*. Furthermore, though some elements of these versions' histories are described, close readings of the texts and exploring potential audience takeaways are emphasized over a more detailed account that would further connect Antiquity, the Middle Ages, 1700s Italy, and our contemporary moment to their respective texts. For a future version of this project, I would aim to incorporate more historical content, which would strengthen my use of a New Historicism approach. In that vein, I would also integrate more of Hutcheon's theoretical framework and employ other theories. For example, Joshua Meyrowitz's work with medium theory in *No Sense of Place*, the music theory found in *Music Theory for Musical Theatre* by John Bell and Steven R. Chicurel and *Studying Musical Theatre: Theory and Practice* by Millie Taylor and Dominic Symonds, and Michel Foucault's writing on power in The *History of Sexuality* could all contain useful ideas for any future projects on the Orpheus and Eurydice myth and its many retellings. Regardless, the chapters that follow analyze four versions of the myth—*Metamorphoses*, *Sir Orfeo*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, and *Hadestown*—and are organized in chronological order.

The Orpheus and Eurydice myth is commonly described as a tragedy where Orpheus turning around leads to pure misery. In the epic poem, Ovid writes a tale of love where human flaws lead to tragedy but not total ruination. Through musical magic and his own connection to divinity, Orpheus is able to change the minds of Hades and Prosérpina. The divine monarchy of the Underworld grants him the chance to retrieve Eurydice, though he only gets one opportunity to do so. Eurydice is a largely unimportant character within the poem who can easily be interpreted as inactive and largely unimportant; however, the love she and Orpheus share is

sincere. Furthermore, she is still able to express herself and make decisions within the limited space that the text grants her. Then, instead of the myth ending with their eternal separation, Orpheus joins Eurydice in death. Therefore, by the end of Orpheus and Eurydice's story, though the couple endures great hardships, Orpheus's musical magic is never completely silenced (even when he is killed), Eurydice's forgiveness and love persist, and the welcoming arms of the Underworld reunite the pair in death. In this way, Ovid tragically separates the lovers, and then allows them to romantically reunite for all eternity, which gives the audience several layers of catharsis and forgives Orpheus's human flaws. Because Ovid eventually reunites the couple, the audience is left with a tale that is misleadingly a tragedy.

In *Sir Orfeo*, the unnamed poet writes a tale that is only nominally a romance as they seemingly try to pull away from Ovid's tragedy and the depicted human flaws. Instead of centering around love, Orfeo's journey is a political conflict between his own mortal kingdom and the Fairy King's magical domain. Through that conflict, Orfeo rises from a theoretically powerless position to trick the Fae with his musical talent. And so, because *Sir Orfeo* is not about the tragic love story of myth, the couple can both reunite and aim for happiness in life. Meanwhile, Heurodis exists throughout the lay primarily as a symbol of the kingdom with little to no agency. Any harm inflicted upon the queen, physical or mental, is ultimately an attack on Orfeo and his position as king. Therefore, even though she leaves the Otherworld by the end of the story, her inability to fully recover is a sign that Orfeo's music and love could not overcome the might of the Fae King. Thus, the story has not escaped the tragic undertones that disturb the happily ever after, resulting in a kingdom that may fall immediately without a successor. By the end of the story, Orfeo's power is undermined, Heurodis is physically present but forever

changed, and their love is not enough to heal the scars left by their experiences. Altogether, the audience is simultaneously left with a victorious romance and a disheartening tragedy.

In *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Gluck-Calzabigi simultaneously maintain the lay's attempt at a happily ever after ending and Ovid's human tragedy. The primary difference is that the audience's potential anxieties now originate from the gods' involvement—especially the ultimately victorious power of Love—and the ending. Instead of Orfeo leading the action, Amor actively provides a heavy guiding hand for the musician. While Orfeo still sings his way through the Underworld, his voice is more controlled than ever before with the two conditions that Amor dictates for Euridice's rescue: Orfeo cannot turn and he cannot tell Euridice why he will not look at her. These conditions reveal that the gods' supposed kindness towards Orfeo is quite arbitrary. Meanwhile, Euridice's absolute and reasonable refusal to let her husband ignore her upon their reunion is weaponized against Orfeo with the second condition. Her pleas and his undying love for Euridice make him impulsively turn to her, which kills her again. And then, Amor reveals that they have actually passed the test and brings Euridice back to life. Therefore, though Orfeo attempts to disrupt the balance of power through his magical voice, the gods retain their ultimate control over his and Euridice's lives. Furthermore, though Euridice has more audible agency in the plot than her previous iterations, she is also obedient to the gods. As a result, some audiences respond to the final jubilant song and dance with dissatisfaction. On the surface, Gluck-Calzabigi reward the couple's flaws by having Love save the day. Ultimately, though, the audience is left with an Orfeo and Euridice who are the playthings of the gods *and* who are together to forever love each other. Therefore, the audience is left with the happiest ending in this thesis, even when said ending is still challenged by performances and/or analyses.

In *Hadestown*, Mitchell combines and builds upon the themes of the previous retellings. First, the musical embraces Ovid's approach to tragedy caused by human flaws such as fear and doubt. Paralleling the lay's Orfeo, Hades's love for power is ruinous to his romantic relationship. Finally, the gods play a greater role like in Gluck-Calzabigi's opera, and Orpheus gets multiple opportunities to save Eurydice through cyclical storytelling. Simultaneously, the story demonstrates that love is enough to initiate change in a broken world, but not enough to fully enact that change. Only the support and actions of many people can fix the world. In the opening number, Hermes presents a familiar world in desperate need of help. For example, Hades's role as a hegemon paints him as both a sympathetic character and an unchecked, damaging force. Orpheus and Eurydice also love each other and try to improve the world. During the show, Orpheus uses his magical song and the support of the Chorus/Workers to reintroduce love into Hades's heart, while Hades slows that progress. Meanwhile, the women of the musical—the Fates, Persephone, and Eurydice—are all heavily involved in the plot and making largely sympathetic decisions. By the end of the musical, the two pairs of lovers—Hades and Persephone and Orpheus and Eurydice—have undergone significant changes that allow them to approach a better life and world. Unfortunately, human flaws (especially doubt) prevent them from reaching a happily ever after through their actions alone. However, Mitchell also does not leave her audience with such a bitter pill to swallow. Instead, the musical ends with a call for hope and the message that we are not stuck with this tragedy, but only if we keep trying to change it. In other words, *Hadestown* ultimately does not encourage the audience to rely on an eventual kindness. Instead, the story begins again, and the show promises to continue trying and hoping and encourages the audience to work together until this ever-cycling, hopeful tragedy changes.

Ultimately, this thesis explores the fact that love will always matter. Humans will always love, have always loved, and—regardless of how loved we are—will always die. Similarly, humans will always find ways to work through such an important emotion, regardless of whether that love leads to a happily ever after, a tragedy, or something murkily in-between. In fact, knowing how to respond to love without a Disneyesque fairytale ending may be one of the most important lessons to learn. Altogether, as Diane Ackerman writes in *A Natural History of Love*, "People everywhere and everywhen understand the phenomenon of love, just as they understand the appeal of music, finding it deeply meaningful even if they cannot explain exactly what that meaning is, or why they respond viscerally to one composer and not another" (xx). At the same time, talking about love directly can be difficult and borderline painful. So, stories can be used to examine the complex, frightening, and awe-inspiring qualities of love. And one such story, having been told for thousands of years, is the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Love has remained at the heart of the myth, regardless of how often the specifics have changed. Yet, those altered specifics also inform the audience of the time and place that created these adaptations. In other words, even if love is a universal, human experience, the context that shapes how we understand ourselves and each other is not. Therefore, people have changed the ways that they approach and express love over time, and this thesis provides an insight to those worldviews.

Furthermore, like love, death is another difficult concept that people have been working through for many millennia. In fact, as the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice demonstrates, love and death are hopelessly intertwined; love will always matter, and death will always come for us. As seen in these retellings, stories are another way to tackle thoughts on death and grief. For example, some of these adaptations offer comfort, while others try to bury the fear of death in a happy reunion. By looking at multiple versions of Orpheus and Eurydice, readers will be able to

see how at least four different texts (and the people who created them) grapple with the tragedy of losing a loved one. Then, other conflicts and points of interest emerge: *Metamorphoses* bemoans and embraces the inevitability of death; *Sir Orfeo* contends with Orfeo being a knight and a king against powers greater than himself; *Orfeo ed Euridice* struggles with what it must mean to love; and *Hadestown* argues for the continued importance of retelling stories, even the sad ones with a known ending, which also serves as justification for the show's own existence as a musical performed multiple times a week. By examining the ever-evolving myth of Orpheus and Eurydice through these adaptations, this thesis also provides an understanding of how different people cope with the fear of death and its inevitability.

CHAPTER I. OVID'S *METAMORPHOSES*: MISLEADINGLY A TRAGEDY

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* presents its readers with a flawed Orpheus whose love does not conquer all. At the same time, the love he shares with Eurydice does not lead to his absolute and eternal ruination. Orpheus sings until he dies—which in his case is the way to truly live, even without Eurydice—and can even sing after his beheading! And then, after all of his heartache and struggles, he can reunite with Eurydice in the Underworld. Ultimately, Ovid tells a story where human flaws are not punished but rewarded instead.

Metamorphoses is a narrative poem that Ovid wrote in 8 CE, during the time of the Roman Empire. According to Frederick W. Sternfeld in "Orpheus, Ovid and Opera," the entire text consists of 250 plots, though Orpheus's presence evidently holds high importance within the narrative:

> Ovid himself, it would seem, suggests that the tale of Orpheus, as told by him, is out of the ordinary by its sheer size: it sprawls over two books of the *Metamorphoses*, from Book X, line 1, to Book XI, line 84, occupying a total of 823 lines. In a way this count is deceptive, for Ovid, with his consummate narrative skill, uses two devices to maintain both continuity and suspense, namely propagation and interruption. (180-181)

In other words, within the poem's fifteen books, Orpheus stands out because of the length of his time on the page. However, his presence is slightly exaggerated because other tales—such as those of Cyparissus, Hyacinthus, Myrrha, Adonis, Atlanta—are sewn into his narrative. Though what Ovid sews is a "quilt…so complex that it is hard to separate its component parts," my analysis of Orpheus and Eurydice largely omits these other stories (Sternfeld 181). Instead, I am primarily focusing on Book 10's "Orpheus and Eurydice" and Book 11's "The Death of Orpheus."

Within Book 10, the story of Orpheus and Eurydice follows the plot that I outlined in the Introduction; however, that section does not mark the end of their story. Ovid goes on to tell the audience of Orpheus's songs and eventual death, meaning that Eurydice's second death is not the last time Ovid places the couple together. Ovid's work is key because *Metamorphoses* is an original/foundational source to which the other retellings I analyze here—*Sir Orfeo*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, and *Hadestown*—are responding and by which they are inspired. Perhaps, as Sternfeld suggests, the poem has inspired so many adaptations because, "at the danger of being simplistic, one might single out three qualities of the *Metamorphoses*: narrative skill, sensuous eroticism and prominence of the miraculous element" (176). As I explore Ovid's work, these qualities have doubtlessly influenced my reading. In this chapter, I analyze the relationship between magic, music, and power as wielded by Hades and Orpheus; the limited agency and character of Eurydice and how she compares to the poem's other women; and the resulting tragedy in Book 10 that is complicated by Book 11.

Magic of the Greeks and Romans

While not the main focus of *Magic in the Middle Ages*, Richard Kieckhefer outlines the magic of classical antiquity (due to its later impact on medieval magic), explaining that the word "magic" is derived from the arts of Zoroastrian priests of Persia who were called magi. Magi "practiced astrology, they claimed to cure people by using elaborate but bogus ceremonies, and in general they pursued knowledge of the occult" (10). By as late as the fifth century B.C., the Greeks were aware of magi. However, the Greek and Roman understanding of what the magi were doing was limited, resulting in some of the distrust aimed at them: "the magi were foreigners with exotic skills that aroused apprehension, the term 'magic' was a deeply emotional one, rich with dark connotations. Magic was something sinister, something threatening"

(Kieckhefer 10). Practicing magic, for magi or native Greeks and Romans, was generally feared for these reasons. Additionally, prior to the fourth century, "[t]he laws of the Roman Republic had threatened severe punishment, possibly even death, for those who used magic … to summon the deceased" (Kieckhefer 41). Therefore, we can see that magic was a suspicious practice that was mildly tolerated at best until it was used to harm or kill others. However, we must also keep in mind that legends and myths follow different rules from the regular populous. Furthermore, death and the gods who rule over the dead were frightening, so Orpheus's ability to combat death—regardless of his efficacy—likely played a role in the cultural acceptance of his magic.

During the time when Ovid wrote *Metamorphoses*, magic, religion, and music were intertwined, which influenced how they were understood both separately and together. Drawing a definitive line between magic and religion is nearly impossible, further complicating our attempts to define magic both in general and during the Roman Empire. During that time, people used amulets, spells, magical papyri, etc., to appeal to any available power, though these powers were often attributed to their gods (Kieckhefer 21). Furthermore, what would be the variation between an answered prayer to the gods or the heavens and a magical spell? According to Plotinus in *The Enneads* (written sometime between 253 and 270 AD), "The prayer is answered by the mere fact that one part and the other part are wrought to one tone, like a musical string which, plucked at one end, vibrates at the other also" (qtd. on Kieckhefer 27). This connection between music and religion is noteworthy because it thereby connects music to magic in this discussion. After all, since both a prayer and a spell could produce an effect almost immediately and the origin of that affect may be attributed to the gods regardless of method, the two come across as nearly identical. Therefore, distinguishing religion and magic is impractical. In

analyzing Ovid's epic poem, which contains the gods as active characters, that problem is even more visible. Therefore, I do not purposefully separate them throughout this thesis.

Myth, Music, and Magic in Antiquity

Combined, the forces of music, magic, and mythology played an interconnected and pervasive role during Antiquity, and Orpheus naturally draws these forces together in the stories about him. In ancient cultures, myths were used to explain natural phenomena ("myth proper"), provide an early understanding of history ("legend"), and entertain through fantastical narration ("folklore"), though it should be noted that there is not a solid distinction between these three categories (Lee 307). Over time, the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice specifically has satisfied all three of these uses to varying degrees. Specifically, the story "meant at least three things to the ancient world: it symbolized the eternal struggle of elementary forces; it recounted the legendary power of a great civilizer; it told a tragic love story" (Lee 307). Due to Orpheus's consistent connection to music, his musical power is closely tied to those elements, too. In fact, in its initial appearance in Greek culture, "music is thought in it to affect all aspects of human experience at once" and can be thought of as omnipotent according to Vladimir Marchenkov in *The Orpheus Myth and the Powers of Music* (2, 27). Therefore, the Orpheus myth depicts "universal powers of music that are depicted in the various episodes and forms of the Orpheus myth are the expression of the belief in the unity of the micro- and macrocosm: both are permeated by the same harmony. Their unity serves as the basis of musical magic" (Marchenkov 27). Because Orpheus's music had the ability to overcome death (regardless of his actual success rate), the idea that Orphic music could escape time—i.e., "the current and rhythm of *life*"—grew in popularity (Marchenkov 27). Therefore, the importance of Orpheus's music and its magical qualities within his story are logical.

Additionally, as time marched on, Orpheus's musical magic and associated power only continued to grow. Moving closer to Ovid's time, Plato similarly believed in the ways that song connected to most other aspects of life (Marchenkov xvii). Additionally, even though Plato separated "the intelligible aspect of music from its audible manifestation," he still insisted "on their unity. Intelligible music rules in the cosmos and shares with audible music the power over the human psyche. Audible music in turn permeates all stages and all levels of human existence" (Marchenkov 41). At the same time, however, music was not wholly revered; Plato "would have banished certain modes of music as too powerful, too dangerous for the well-being of the state" (Kerman 251). As I stated earlier, given this cultural understanding of music and its importance, the fact that Ovid makes it so central to Orpheus's identity and journey is natural.

Orpheus, who starts appearing in surviving works in the sixth century BC, was an important figure to the Greeks (Marchenkov 2). The Greeks "imagined and understood" Orpheus as "a magical musician, pillar of the Greek civilization (culture hero), founder of mysteries, and author of mythological poetry marked by an emergent tendency toward metaphysical speculation. His music had power over nature, human beings, and even the gods" (Marchenkov 3). As a result, music was understood as a universal power. Orpheus's image was also one that changed significantly over time from shaman to leading a mystery cult to "a character in the artistic renditions of the myth," with that evolution only ever adding to—instead of replacing the old parts of—his character and resulting in a constantly reworked figure (Marchenkov xvi). This quality of Orpheus's—that no part of him has ever been truly lost for long—is why my analysis covers three other versions of his story that, as will be shown, sound so different musically, plot-wise, and in terms of characterization. Within that difference, I wish to extract a thematic thread that has not received as much attention: the magical power struggle between Hades and Orpheus.

Orpheus's Musical Magic and Power in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

As seen above, the people of Antiquity believed in the combined universal power of music and magic, a belief that manifests in the Orpheus myth. More precisely, Orpheus's musical magic grants him power over Hades, the god of the Underworld, and resists death itself, meaning Orpheus repeatedly bends nature to his will. Within the epic poem, Orpheus is a "Thracian bard" and the son of the muse of epic poetry, Callíope ("Book 10" lines 11, 148). "The Thracians were known throughout Greece as masterful musicians, and Orpheus was regarded as the most gifted of the Thracians. When he played the lyre and sang, he became psychokinetic, and nothing could resist him, not people, not animals or plants, not inanimate objects" (Ackerman 24). His musical prowess is unsurprisingly brought up several times, both within and outside Book 10 (where "Orpheus and Eurydice" resides). For example, in "Orpheus' Song: Introduction," Ovid writes that the bard, while under some shady trees that he attracted, sits "amidst a crowded assembly of birds and of beasts. / When he'd tested his strings with the touch of his thumb to his own satisfaction, / and judged that the notes at their different pitches were turned to produce / harmonious cords, he burst into song" ("Book 10" lines 145-148). Orpheus's music has the ability to calm and attract the animals around him, a trait that comes up more than once in various retellings, including *Sir Orfeo*; in fact, "The magical effects of Orpheus's music on the natural world are among the most frequently evoked motifs of the myth. … Orpheus surrounded by spellbound plants and animals is easily the most popular scene in visual representations of the singer throughout Antiquity and beyond" (Marchenkov 4). In later versions of the story, Orpheus's powers allow for many allegories and comparisons to be drawn, which I detail more in future chapters.[6] It should also be noted that his musical capabilities are

[6] More on the allegorical connections between Orpheus and "faculties of man," Apollo, Dionysus, Osiris, and Christ can be found in Sternfeld's "Orpheus, Ovid and Opera" (178-186).

not completely effortless; Ovid takes the time to include Orpheus getting ready for his performance by warming up his instrument. Orpheus's attention to detail as he warms up gives the impression that the bard is not only talented, but that he also finds his music to be very personal and tied to his identity. Later, in Book 11, this talent appears again: "With songs such as these the Thracian minstrel bewitched the forests, / entranced the beasts and compelled the rocks to follow behind him" (lines 1-2). In addition to beasts, he is able to compel inanimate life. When the bacchanals (followers of Dionysus) attack Orpheus because of his rejection of them his music initially stops the flying weapons (such as their spears and rocks) in their tracks ("Book 11" lines 6-13). A rock, after landing at his feet instead of hitting him, is even personified as begging him for forgiveness for its attempt to hurt Orpheus. As the previous mythology and these scenes would suggest, Orpheus's music is supernatural, a necessary quality given that he will have to use it to appeal to Hades.

Hades (like all of the roles except Orpheus in this story) does not receive much characterization. Therefore, Ovid's description of the Underworld can be used to shine a light on how Hades is perceived: "Making his way through the shadowy tribes and the ghosts of the buried, / [Orpheus] came to Prosérpina, throned beside the Lord of the Shadows / who rules that dismal domain" ("Book 10" lines 14-16). The ancient Greeks and Romans feared Hades so much that they did not dare to speak his name, lest the god himself should arrive and take them to the Underworld. He, and sometimes Persephone/Prosérpina, were consequently often referred to by kinder names, as seen in these lines. Prosérpina and Hades were both feared by mortals for their rule over the Underworld; however, of the two, the queen was the less frightening, as evidenced in the text by the fact that she is named while Hades is only referred to by his title. Additionally, the Underworld was understood to be a dark and gloomy place (except for those in Elysium or

the Isle of the Blessed). As the ruler of this land, Hades clearly has immense magic and power, which Orpheus recognizes: "plucking the strings of his lyre, / [Orpheus] began: 'You powers divine of the subterranean kingdom, / where all of mortal creation must one day sink to our doom, / if you will give me permission to tell you the truth unvarnished / by shifty pretences" ("Book 10" lines 16-20). As he begins his persuasive song and makes his plea for Hades's and Prosérpina's mercy, Orpheus makes sure to defer to their power/station; however, his ability to even make that plea shows that he holds some power.

With Orpheus's foot in the door, he can now somewhat overcome Hades's authority with his own musical prowess. Orpheus implores Hades and Prosérpina to let Eurydice return to him—bringing up the love they must have for each other to help make his case—and says that if fate forbids them from showing mercy to her, then he will stay and die, too. "As Orpheus pleaded his cause, enhancing his words with his music, / he moved the bloodless spirits to tears. … / … / … The king and queen / of the world below forbore to refuse such a moving appeal, / and they summoned Eurydice" ("Book 10" lines 40-41, 46-48). As in all four retellings, Orpheus's music is what moves the magical and powerful figures who hold Eurydice into returning her. According to Kieckhefer, it is hard "to distinguish the magical from the religious in verbal formulas" (69). He then describes three basic types of verbal formulas, including prayers and blessings. "In short, prayers and blessings can be integrated with magic, but they are not inherently magical" (Kieckhefer 70). Though Kieckhefer is describing magic in the Middle Ages, I do see similarities to what is happening in this scene. In other words, in this case of Orpheus pleading with and praying to a god to return his wife, I do think Orpheus is using magic. Marchenkov notes that "Ovid's Orpheus is more of a rhetorician [than Virgil's]; he bemoans his loss but also argues his case before the gods. The effect of his music, however, is similar:

Persephone and her consort cannot refuse the poet's plea" (8). In Ovid's version, Orpheus doesn't only move Hades and Prosérpina, his song also affects Tántalus, Ixíon, the vultures eating Títyo's liver, the Dánaids, Sísyphus, and the Furies (who apparently wept for the first time in their existence, which is quite impressive) ("Book 10" lines 41-46). The cruel, the scheming, the destructive, and the vengeful are all impacted by Orpheus's plight. Therefore, I am unsurprised that the two gods who are not known for being any of those things[7] are similarly moved.

In addition to the power of his voice, I propose that Orpheus was able to face the gods and make his case for a couple of other reasons. First, Orpheus is a demigod, which affords him more power than a mere mortal, as most mortals without divine blood who face the gods are more likely to be struck down for their hubris than rewarded.[8] I am not trying to say that Orpheus has hubris when he sings to Hades and Prosérpina; instead, I am remarking that many mortals who oppose nature—like death—and/or the gods do have that quality. According to Marchenkov, "[t]hat Orpheus's music was so omnipotent was assured, first of all, by his divine lineage" (Marchenkov 9). While a divine lineage does not guarantee that the gods will be kind (as seen by Achilles), it does afford some leeway. Second, Orpheus's status is elevated by the favor he holds from both Apollo and Dionysus/Bacchus, two other gods, as seen in "Book 11." In "The Death of Orpheus," Orpheus is described as "the great musician who served Apollo" ("Book 11" line 8). Later, in "The Punishment of the Maenads," Bacchus "was angry at losing the priest of his mysteries / and would not allow the crime of his murder to go unpunished"

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[7] Popular culture often equates Hades to Satan and—in the examples where she appears—depicts Persephone as his unhappy wife. Disney's *The Goddess of Spring* and 20th Century Fox's *Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* (notably not the book) are examples of that phenomenon. However, the evidence in the mythology for such portrayals ranges from limited to nonexistent.

[8] Examples of mortal Greeks with hubris as their fatal flaw include Odysseus (who, while not killed, spends ten additional years at sea for angering Poseidon), Arachne (who is turned into the first spider for angering Athena), and Niobe (who turns into a rock after her children are killed for angering Leto, Apollo, and Artemis).

("Book 11" lines 67-68). Bacchus's punishment is to transform the murderous women who killed Orpheus into trees ("Book 11" lines 69-84). These two scenes show that Orpheus had gained the favor and attention of the two gods; based on the context provided above, that favor is the result of Orpheus's musical power. Furthermore, while Orpheus was not saved by them, both Apollo and Dionysus were impacted by his loss. In this way, Orpheus had elevated his status above being a mere mortal.[9] Therefore, "For the time being, the upshot of the observations made so far is that Orpheus symbolized the sway of music over all strata of ancient cosmic hierarchy: natural, human, and divine" (Marchenkov 10). In Ovid, Orpheus's music controls and moves the animate creatures and inanimate features of nature, the human souls of the dead, and many of the gods.

Finally, as proof of his success, the gods give Orpheus an ultimatum after his plea: he "was told he could lead her away, on one condition: / to walk in front and never look back until he had left / the Vale of Avérnus, or else the concession would count for nothing" ("Book 10" lines 50-52). In other words, Orpheus is given the chance to rescue his wife from the Underworld, which is not something that most mortals were permitted to do. Unfortunately, as outlined in my introductory summary, the concession counts for nothing after Orpheus looks back.

Even with his musical power and an ability to change the minds of gods in order to defy death itself, Orpheus ultimately fails his original objective, demonstrating the limitations of his magic. After Eurydice is taken for the second time, "Orpheus wanted to cross the Styx for a second time, / but his pleas were in vain and the ferryman pushed him away from the bank. / So he sat there in rags for a week, without eating a morsel of food; / his anguish, his grief and his tears were all that kept him alive" ("Book 10" lines 72-75). For all of his musical power,

[9] For more on this triangle, read Marchenkov's *The Orpheus Myth and the Powers of Music* (9).

Orpheus could only gain entry into the Underworld once. Charon would not be swayed a second time, which illustrates how, even if Orpheus has ways to gain power, he does not have the same amount of power as the gods. Orpheus is not a psychopomp and he may not traverse between realms as he wishes. His power was only so strong, and his will was not enough. Thus, Eurydice is lost. However, for as long as he has a song, Orpheus is not completely powerless in his life.

Women in Antiquity and *Metamorphoses*

The theme of women within the story is less represented than Orpheus's musical magical power. In fact, Eurydice is hardly a character at all, which is likely related to the misogyny of Ovid's culture, meaning Orpheus's love and experiences are entirely more important than Eurydice's within the narrative. In fifth century B.C. Athens, which is admittedly a few hundred years before Ovid's lifetime but bears many similarities to the experience of women in ancient Rome:

> Women were not allowed to be citizens. Politics might be too invigorating for them; it was common knowledge that women were by nature irrational, hysterical, gluttonous, given to drunkenness, and sex-obsessed. They were not thought to be rational or strong-willed enough for so vital a responsibility as self-government. Or for spirited conversation. (Ackerman 18)

In other words, women were seen as naturally wild and uncivilized, not fit for actively living in public life. Put simply, "Men stood for reason and culture; women for the wild forces of nature men were to tame" (Ackerman 19).[10] An example of women within Ovid's Orpheus and

[10] Though not the case in *Metamorphoses*, Eurydice's death is sometimes attributed to her being a woman—for example, her death has been blamed on her perceived fickleness, inconstance, and lack of emotional control—in the many retellings of the Orpheus myth. More on that history can be found in Sternfeld's "Orpheus, Ovid and Opera" (187).

Eurydice storyline who completely embody such a view are the bacchanals, followers of Dionysus who are also known as the Maenads and the wild Cićonian women.

The Maenads' attack on Orpheus is a demonstration of the misogynist stereotype of women as untamed and wild, as revealed in their actions and in the sound of the scene. The Maenads attack and kill the musician due to Orpheus's rejection of women and his alternate romantic pursuit of young men after Eurydice's death. Though the magical power of Orpheus's voice is initially able to stop the spears and rocks they throw at him from causing any harm, "cacophony / won. The hideous screech of the Phrygian pipe with its curved bell, / the banging of drums, the clapping of hands and the bacchanals' shrieking / drowned the sound of the lyre, and the voice of the bard could no longer / be heard" ("Book 11" lines 15-19). As also seen when he could not return to the Underworld a second time, Orpheus's power is shown to have limitations. If they were not loudly and disharmoniously attacking him all together, then Orpheus would likely have survived the encounter with the magic of his lyre. However, since they did, he is drowned out by their efforts and they are finally able to hurt him. Within the soundscape of the scene, Ovid is describing "the symbolic contrast between the lyre of Apollo and the wind instruments and drums of Dionysus… Only when the clangour of winds (*tibia, cornu*) and percussion (*tympana*) drowns out the lyre (*cithara*) does cruelty prevail" (Sternfeld 188-189). Once Orpheus is silenced, the women first kill the surrounding animals, then move on to murder Orpheus. "He spoke, but now for the first time / spoke to no purpose; his voice had lost all power to move" ("Book 11" lines 39-40). The women, in their cruelty, have removed part of his identity with their voices. Music is immensely personal, especially for Orpheus. And, just before his death, he cannot sing, and he cannot play. His audience is killed, he is silenced, and then Orpheus is murdered.

In contrast, Eurydice almost captures the then-contemporary image of the perfect wife: a woman with a tamed nature who is ready to procreate. Instead of Eurydice being a character, "Orpheus dominates the action, and Eurydice is passively obedient to the decisions made concerning her, shadowing her husband in silence as they make their way out of Hades. … [I]n Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, she remains virtually silent (Maxwell 364). In addition to her quiet obedience, Eurydice is not given any character before her death; after marrying Orpheus, she is described as taking a walk in the grass before dying of a snakebite, and then Ovid turns his attention to Orpheus's katabasis.[11]

However, though she is given little space to do so, Eurydice is able to express herself after her death, which suggests she is not a purely blank canvas. Though she says nearly nothing at all, she still reacts to Orpheus's choice: "as she died for the second time, she never complained / that her husband had failed her – what could she complain of, except that he'd loved her? / She only uttered her last 'farewell', so faintly he hardly / could hear it" ("Book 10" lines 58-63). Eurydice speaks. And, since these are the only lines that speak to her personality and thoughts, they should not be dismissed, though that is an easy impulse to indulge. And the first aspect of her character revealed was not a guarantee: Eurydice loved her husband. From the historical perspective, though emotional connection was not the point of marriage, love was not unthinkable between couples. For the Greeks, "The idea of Love played an important role in their lives, and troubled them enough that they needed two full-time gods [Aphrodite and Eros] to beseech or blame. … Love was a feeling so automatic and powerful that it had to have some otherworldly origin" (Ackerman 24). In her death, we see that Eurydice must long for Orpheus because she reaches out even as she is drawn back into the Underworld. At the same time, she

[11] As we will see in future chapters, the only other adaptation to make a similar choice is Gluck's opera, which opens with Euridice's funeral, so the storytelling is backed into a corner on that front.

also seems to know her husband well enough to not be upset with him for failing to heed the gods' warning. From this line, alongside Orpheus's repeated grief at losing and his desperation to see her, we can surmise that they loved each other dearly.

The second aspect of Eurydice's character that is revealed when Orpheus turns is her purported passivity, which in today's age need not purely be read as misogynistic. After all, the choice to love and forgive Orpheus is one that Eurydice *actively* makes and continues to make throughout the text. That decision should not be dismissed just because she is not fighting to undo death itself, a fight that demigods like Orpheus—who have a bloodline she cannot claim—repeatedly lose. Therefore, Eurydice's love and agency, though they receive very little time in the narrative, demonstrate that the women of the text are not merely wild animals or passive baby factories.[12] Furthermore, despite her limited representation, Eurydice's role leaves an opening—i.e., hints at a deeper characterization—for future stories to build upon, as will be seen in future adaptations.

The Ending of *Metamorphoses*

Traditionally, the classic myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is described as a tragedy because of Eurydice's sudden death and the lack of a living reunification between the lovers. For those who summarize Ovid or Virgil, the story typically ends with Orpheus remaining in the living world and Eurydice being forcibly removed from his side. When looking at Orpheus's initial victory over Hades, medieval commentators and Renaissance humanists "tended to view it as reason gaining the upper hand over passion. Thus, when Orpheus breaks the proscription and

[12] Also worth a quick mention are the Furies (three terrifying goddesses of vengeance and justice who make a brief appearance where they cry for the first time ever on lines 45-46 of Book 10) and Persephone (who Orpheus entreats alongside Hades for Eurydice's return). Though their roles in the poem are also limited, these women were feared and respected at the time, and their presence further exemplifies that the depiction of women within the poem should not be forced into a purely misogynistic binary.

looks back he turns to passion, to Hell, and loses, firstly, Eurydice and consequently his own life" (Sternfeld 183). In other words, the common emotionally negative reaction to Orpheus losing his wife can come from the story (i.e., an emotional connection to the characters) or from some theoretical or philosophical angle. And if Ovid ended Orpheus and Eurydice's story on the eighty-fifth line of the tenth book—where Orpheus is given his chance and blows it—or even at the moment of Orpheus's death, then I would be inclined to agree that the tale is wholly tragic.

However, Ovid does not end the tale in either spot. In "The Death of Orpheus," after Orpheus's rather brutal murder, two important things happen that lessen the tragedy. First, Orpheus's death does not mark his permanent silence. "Orpheus' limbs lay scattered around; but his lyre and his head / were thrown in the river Hebrus. Afloat mid-stream – oh wonder! – / the instrument uttered a plaintive moan, the lifeless tongue / emitted a feeble dirge and the banks re-echoed in sorrow" ("Book 11" lines 50-53). In the lines that follow, once again, Orpheus's music—in this case, the memory of it and the knowledge of its loss—is shown to move both the animate and inanimate. Ultimately, the bacchanals were able to temporarily overpower and kill him, but Orpheus sings on and the musical power within his lyre cannot be permanently silenced.

The second weakening of the tragedy is that the musician is safely reunited with his wife in the Underworld:

> Orpheus's shade passed under the earth. He recognized all
> the places he'd seen before. As he searched the Elýsian Fields,
> he found the wife he had lost and held her close in his arms.
> At last the lovers could stroll together, side by side –
> or she went ahead and he followed; then Orpheus ventured in front
> and knew he could now look back on his own Eurýdice safely. ("Book 11" lines 61-66)

In death, Orpheus and Eurydice are walking around together, hand in hand or in whatever way they fancy, within the Underworld. I find this scene immensely heartwarming firstly because, once they are both staying in the Underworld, Orpheus and Eurydice do not have to worry about walking beside each other or letting one lead the other. In other words, they do not need to undergo a trial to be together. Additionally, Orpheus is no longer being punished for turning around. After his failed trial to get her back and his horrifying death, the audience can be relieved to see the pair reunited. In the end, Ovid included a satisfying conclusion for the couple that acknowledges they can be together, for the pair is reunited in death in the Underworld.

The reunion of Orpheus and Eurydice is also a relief because it presents a resolution to a central conflict within the myth, a resolution that goes beyond Orpheus's personal grief. As I have outlined within this chapter, one of the story's key conflicts is between the Fantastical (i.e., the gods and the Underworld) and the Human. By ending with the couple's reunion in a Fantastical Otherworld that exists purely because of Human Mortality, the conflict is resolved with a peaceful coexistence. Even though Orpheus failed a magical and fantastical chance to defy death itself, the audience is assured that his failure is okay because he can still reunite with Eurydice. The magic of a world beyond death (i.e., the Underworld) allows them to stay together even when Orpheus's music could not, and their mortality itself allows their reunion. If Ovid had never returned to the couple within *Metamorphoses* after Eurydice's second death, then the resolution to the conflict would have been that Humans will always be defeated by both themselves—since Orpheus made the choice to turn around—and the Fantastic, which is a much bleaker ending.

Overall, the depictions of Orpheus in his struggle with Hades and of Eurydice in comparison with the other women within the poem influence how the audience perceives the

story. If the couple is received poorly, then their love will be underwhelming. For example, despite Orpheus's ability to sway the denizens and rulers of the Underworld, he can only do so once. In Eurydice's case, she can easily be interpreted as passive and completely unnoteworthy. At the same time, Orpheus's musical magic is never permanently defeated or silenced, Eurydice's choice to forgive Orpheus for his flaws is admirable, and the love that they hold for each other continues to shine through the darkness of the Underworld. In this way, Ovid wrote a tragedy that separated the lovers, and then soothes the audience with a romance that brings them together for all eternity. Therefore, because Ovid does allow the couple to reunite eventually, reading the entire story as a tragedy—as is the traditional understanding that leads to a depressing view of humanity where loving too much only leads to pure ruination—is more than a little misleading.

CHAPTER II. *SIR ORFEO*: A VICTORIOUS ROMANCE AND DISHEARTENING TRAGEDY

Ovid's version of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth, though it involves death and grief, allows for the forgiveness and understanding of human flaws. *Sir Orfeo* then takes that story and changes it to be no longer about the same human flaws depicted in *Metamorphoses*. The lay takes a tale of love for another person and reframes it as a love for music and/or power. In fact, Orfeo rescues his wife with trickery, cleverness, and talent; he becomes a hero like Odysseus. Additionally, to a certain extent, the Eurydice character is only an object of love as a symbol for the kingdom. And so, this retelling does not have to be a tragedy. However, tragedy still lies at the roots of the story, creating an uneasiness, a flaw in the happily ever after with a kingdom that may be doomed to ruin the moment Orfeo and his queen are gone and without an heir.

Sir Orfeo is a Breton lay from medieval Europe—specifically, the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century—and was written in Middle English by an unknown poet. According to Marchenkov in *The Orpheus Myth and the Powers of Music*, the lay is based on an older Breton *lai* from the "mid- to late twelfth century" that has not survived to the present day (46). The retelling was "derived most likely from such sources as Virgil, Ovid, and Boethius," and changes the characters names from Orpheus to Orfeo, Eurydice to Heurodis, and Hades to the Fae King (Marchenkov 46). While the lay does follow the broad strokes of the Orpheus and Eurydice story, a major divergence occurs in the ending, where the couple is reunited and Orfeo's throne is restored. Because of its inspirations and cultural context, the poem has many elements from Antiquity, medieval chivalry, and Celtic mythology. In this chapter, I will analyze the relationship between magic, music, and power as wielded by the Fae King and Orfeo; the

relative lack of agency and character of Heurodis; and the resulting ambiguously happy ending of the story.

Magic and Music of the Middle Ages

Magic, which is viewed and defined differently across time, is most simply understood as happening when something breaks the normal, expected rules for our world. It can be divine, demonic, natural, or innate. In *Magic in the Middle Ages*, Kieckhefer sets out to describe the ways magic was practiced and largely understood by the people of medieval Europe. Broadly speaking, "magic is a crossing-point where religion converges with science, popular beliefs intersect with those of the educated class, and the conventions of fiction meet with the realities of daily life;" additionally, Kieckhefer acknowledges that magic is an intersection or convergence of humor and seriousness (1-2).[13] Similar to the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, magic is also influenced by a variety of cultures blending together until the origins of certain threads cannot be distinguished (Kieckhefer 2). In other words, magic was a complicated issue of blending beliefs. Relevant to *Sir Orfeo*, classical magic and Irish culture influenced medieval magic and how magic was understood in courtly culture.

Medieval magic was affected by other cultures, which then influenced how *Sir Orfeo* was likely read at the time. "[T]he writings of Greeks, Egyptians, and Romans *about* magic… had a

[13] As a result, Kieckhefer uses the term "magic" for both natural magic (a "branch of science" that deals with the "hidden powers" of nature) and demonic magic (which is "not distinct from religion, but rather a perversion of religion" that asked for help from demons instead of God) (9). Therefore, whether or not an action is magical depends on "the type of power it invokes: if it relies on divine action or the manifest powers of nature it is not magical, while if it uses demonic aid or occult powers in nature it is magical" (Kieckhefer 14). The problem with this generalized understanding is that, as I have already pointed out, trying to articulate a definition of magic is still nearly impossible. As an added factor, this definition asks the audience to consider whether or not magic can be separated from science and religion, and if that even matters when medieval Europeans would not have cared to make such distinctions. In fact, during the Middle Ages, the power of magic "was almost universally taken for granted" (Kieckhefer 176). Kieckhefer's response to these difficulties is to turn "the theologically and philosophically sophisticated elite" (despite the inherent flaws to doing so, such as their separation from everyday people of the time) (9). In this thesis, I ask the readers to keep these issues in mind, but to also know that I will not be providing any definitive answers to them.

profound influence in medieval culture," such as helping "to form medieval notions of what was possible and impossible in the physical world" (Kieckhefer 21). In other words, magic in the literature from Antiquity influenced medieval peoples' understanding of magic and their reality, even when stories were not always taken as fact. Current knowledge of "pre-Christian magic of northern Europe" also comes to modern knowledge through the veil of the conversion; therefore, any information we can glean from historical sources is a combination of "actual magical practice with fanciful embellishments" (Kieckhefer 43). For the purposes of understanding pre-Christian magic and *Sir Orfeo*, that obscuring of fact and fiction is important because the concept of fairies/the Fae—the main antagonists of the lay—are not Greek or Roman (i.e., southern Europe) in origin; instead, they hail from Irish and Celtic culture, i.e., northern Europe.

The influence of Irish culture on medieval magic—and especially *Sir Orfeo*—is most clearly seen with fairies, which were typically magical beings who may bestow magical objects, favor, or destruction upon other characters. According to Tara Williams in "Fairy Magic, Wonder, and Morality in Sir Orfeo," fairies "are neither entirely human nor entirely other, literally and figuratively moving between worlds" (552). Their ability to travel between worlds clarifies why the poet might have chosen to use fairies, since different worlds—the Upperworld and the Underworld—were a feature of the original myth. As for their character, within Celtic mythology and Irish literature, "fairies have both good and evil sides, and while they can represent primal paganism they can also be said to hold the Christian faith" (Kieckhefer 54). The fluid morality of the Fae and the Christian tendency to identify "the traditional gods as demons"—resulting in "all magic that called on the services of these gods, explicitly or implicitly, [being] demonic magic"—also provide a possible explanation for why Hades is no longer a character in *Sir Orfeo* (Kieckhefer 45). If the poet wants the story to be fanciful or

ambiguous to any degree, then they cannot include demonic former gods. Regardless of their morality, fairies "were usually attractive and often threatening" (Williams 538). The varying whims yet appealing appearance of the fairies make them an appropriate replacement for the potentially blasphemous pagan gods of the original myth. However, *Sir Orfeo* also does not want to completely give up its classical allusions. Orfeo's royal lineage is described thusly: "His fader was comen of King Pluto, / And his moder of King Juno, / That sum time were as godes yhold / For aventours that thai dede and told" ("Sir Orfeo" lines 43-46). Pluto was the Roman equivalent to Hades and Juno was the equivalent to Hera, which may also be meant to signal a relation to Zeus. The lay has depowered Pluto and Juno—as seen by the poet writing that they "were" considered gods, which implies that that is no longer the case—likely because of the Christian God's insistence on being the only god. Even so, this provides Orfeo with a magical, in addition to royal, background. Furthermore, said magical background is further steeped in royalty, as Hades (i.e., Pluto) was the Lord of the Underworld and Hera (i.e., Juno, though Juno is cast as a king in the poem) was the Queen of the Gods.

How fairies should be understood in any given text is not immediately clear because the morality of the Fae in every piece of literature varies. Some scholars take the Fae's variability even further. According to Williams, "James Wade treats not only fairies as a group but also each specific depiction of them as notably distinct. His *Fairies in Medieval Romance* focuses on what he terms 'internal folklore'—the idea 'that in each romance containing the ambiguous supernatural there is a unique imagining of fairies and of the Otherworld at large'" (539). In other words, as with the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, each depiction of the Fae is an adaptation and reimagining of what came before any particular story. In *Sir Orfeo*, the fairies are both evil for their abduction of Heurodis and moral for upholding their vows. Finally, fairy

magic—the most obvious and simultaneously unseen magic in *Sir Orfeo*—functions entirely differently from human magic. "Magic practiced by humans may be powerful or not, evil or not, but—even when it involves commanding a magical agent rather than practicing enchantment directly—it remains connected to the human at some level. Fairy magic is completely other" (Williams 539).

In addition to general cultural influence, the ways medieval courts used fairies and magic also influences the perceptions of magic in the Middle Ages. Similar to the general understanding of magic, the people of medieval courtly culture could also be frightened of the "sinister and destructive" nature of some types of magic; in fact, "there is ample evidence that kings and courtiers feared sorcery at least as much as commoners did. In their imaginative literature, however, they were willing to accord it a different status and to consider without horror the symbolic uses of magical motifs" (Kieckhefer 95). In other words, magic in medieval literature should not be immediately understood as evil or wrong. Perhaps to avoid the implicit fear around magic, "[t]he magicians depicted in the romances are almost always secondary figures, foils for the heroes" (Kieckhefer 111).[14] Even though Orfeo would likely not be considered a traditional magician, he is a primary magical figure through his music.[15]

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[14] For example, Merlin in Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* and the lady in Marie de France's *Lanval*.

[15] Given the context of the original myth, the question of if Orpheus/Orfeo could be considered a traditional necromancer can be raised, which I argue is not the case. First, Kieckhefer's description of necromancers indicates that they are commonly men who have a degree of education and some connection to somewhat religious figures: "diocesan priests, men and boys in minor orders, monks, and friars" (155). While Orfeo must have some education as the king, the lay does not portray any connection between him and other religious figures. Second, necromancy originally referred to "conjuring the spirits of the dead," not bringing them back to life (Kieckhefer 152). As with all other forms of magic, the medieval explanation of necromancy was determined by sources from Graeco-Roman tradition and the Bible: "they assumed that the dead could not in fact be brought to life but that demons took on the appearance of deceased persons and pretended to be those persons. By extension, then, the conjuring of demons came to be known as necromancy" (Kieckhefer 152). Believing that the dead could not be truly brought back to life could be part of the reason why the structure of the myth was changed in the lay. After all, even though fairies may or may not be demonic in nature, specifically seeking to bring back the dead was associated with demons. If Orfeo was dealing with demons, he would be evil by extension, which would contrast with the poet's attempts to portray him as a good (if flawed) man and king. Therefore, Orfeo's role as a magician is definitely not also as a necromancer.

In the Middle Ages, "[m]usic retains the powers that it had in late Antiquity but in medieval polyphony it also transforms itself into the sonic expression of the Trinitarian view of the world" (Marchenkov xvii). In other words, music had similar powers to what is found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (i.e., the ability to influence man, beast, and magical forces), with the addition of an influence from the Holy Trinity of Christianity. However, given that *Sir Orfeo* is not a particularly religious poem, the impact of Christianity is not particularly important here.[16]

Magic, Music, and Power in *Sir Orfeo*

Taking inspiration from past adaptations of Orpheus, Orfeo is a talented and powerful musician. The poem itself also supports Orfeo's musical endeavors; personally, I am struck by the bouncy and flowing sound created by the rhymes and rhythms within the text:

> Orfeo mest of ani thing
>
> Lovede the gle of harping.
>
> ……
>
> In al the warld was no man bore
>
> That ones Orfeo sat before –
>
> And he might of his harping here –
>
> Bot he schuld thenche that he were
>
> In on of the jois of Paradis,
>
> Swiche melody in his harping is. ("Sir Orfeo" lines 25-38)

[16] Research on the interaction of music and magic during the Middle Ages is incredibly limited according to John Haines in "Why Music and Magic in the Middle Ages?" In his article, Haines investigates possible reasons for that scholarly neglect and explores possible future areas of research (149). Despite these limitations, Haines notes that the "relationship between music and magic was not new; it had been present long before the medieval period and would endure well after it" (171). The longstanding relationship between music and magic should not be surprising to readers of this thesis because Orpheus has been around for thousands of years.

Orfeo's love of music is honorable because of his self-taught skill with the harp. Orfeo has earned his skills, which are the best in the land—for what is being an autodidact if not someone who put in effort for their craft? Furthermore, not only is Orfeo talented, but his music is heavenly. According to the editors of the lay, "The harp was considered the most aristocratic and heavenly of instruments" (Laskaya and Salisbury, note for line 26). Thus, the instrument Orfeo taught himself to play is a symbol of his royalty and a symbol of divinity, something that his lineage lacks when compared to Orpheus'. As for a similarity to Orpheus, Orfeo is the best musician in the entire world, which at least hints (for the moment) at a possible magical quality behind it. Furthermore, "The term *gle*, repeatedly used in the poem, refers… to the minstrel's art of entertainment and revelry—at once an activity and emotional state" (Marchenkov 47).[17] In other words, Orfeo's magical music has the ability to affect the emotions of others, which will be seen when he eventually confronts the Fairy King.

Even though the lay places great importance on Orfeo's music, it is significant that Orfeo is a king (i.e., another form of power), since the Orpheus of the other retellings starts at a lower station. Therefore, Orfeo has greater earthly power than the other versions of Orpheus from the beginning of his story, which changes the comparisons of power between him and the king who has Eurydice/Heurodis. Orfeo is described as a great lord, brave, hardy, generous, and courtly ("Sir Orfeo" lines 39-42). Compared to his musical ability, though, his royal status is only mentioned after his ability to play, which demonstrates that his music is more important than the fact that he is a king: "in contrast to classical Orpheus, his lineage emphasizes knightly virtues rather than musical skill. His father descends from King Pluto and mother from 'King Juno.' Both these ancestors, … used to be considered deities for their illustrious deeds" (Marchenkov

[17] The editors translate *gle* as "glee or music" (Laskaya and Salisbury).

46-47). While Marchenkov does not believe in the magical nature of Orfeo's heritage as I do, he does use Orfeo's family to help explain why Orfeo is "a model knight" (46). Yet, when he loses his wife, he willingly gives up his kingdom and throne by giving control to his high steward and sending himself into exile. Thereby, Orfeo loses his earthly power.

However, after Heurodis's abduction and during his ten-year-long exile, Orfeo does not lose his musical power. Despite leaving many objects behind, Orfeo makes sure to bring his harp ("Sir Orfeo" lines 229-232). In the midst of his exile from traditional authority, he clings to his music, the magical power that will allow him to overcome beast—and, eventually, Fae—and a popular trait carried over from previous iterations of Orpheus. In the forest, Orfeo plays his harp and:

> Into alle the wode the soun gan schille,
> That alle the wilde bestes that ther beth
> For joie abouten him thai teth,
> And alle the foules that ther were
> Come and sete on ich a brere
> To here his harping a-fine. ("Sir Orfeo" lines 272-277)

Orfeo's music has a magical ability to attract and calm animals. The wildlife does not wish to harm him; instead, they want to listen to his harping in the same way that the animals of *Metamorphoses* longed to listen to Orpheus's lyre. When he stops, they leave, which indicates that their attraction to him isn't some innate quality of Orfeo himself. The animals normally would consider eating or attacking him; however, because of his beautiful playing, they choose to leave him completely when he finishes.

Though Orfeo has continuous magical musical power, his earthly might is no match for the Fairy King's magic. In "Sir Orfeo and English Identity," Dominique Battles proposes that the poem casts the "conflict between Orfeo and the Fairy King in cultural terms that suggest an awareness of racial difference between Anglo-Saxon and Norman long after the Conquest" (Battles 179-180). Battles' analysis of the battle tactics and royal domains of the two kings is useful because it helps explain the power dynamics between them.

Orfeo's battle tactics, one sign of his kingly power, can first be seen following the Fairy King's threats to take the queen. After the Fae appears in Heurodis' dreams and orders her to return to lie beneath the "ympe-tre" the following day so that he may abduct her, Orfeo gathers his armies. He takes his one thousand well-armed, strong, and fierce men to the tree, then "Thai made scheltrom in ich a side / And sayd thai wold there abide / And dye ther everichon, / Er the quen schuld fram hem gon" ("Sir Orfeo" lines 187-190).[18] Orfeo's army, though not magical in any way, represents his power as a king. Additionally, "King Orfeo never attempts single combat on behalf of his lady, as one would expect of medieval romance in general, and of this episode in particular. His single military strategy involves group combat, on foot, where he forms part of the group" (Battles 185). To Battles, this signals the Anglo-Saxon identity of Orfeo and one of the ways it opposes the fairies' Norman identity. To me, Orfeo's approach to the battle also signals his bravery and willingness to fight alongside his men, solidifying the sense of community that he loses after Heurodis is taken.

At this point in the poem, Orfeo's power is inadequate against the Fairy King's magical abduction: "Ac yete amiddes hem ful right / The quen was oway y-twight, / With fairi forth y-nome. / Men wist never wher sche was bicome" ("Sir Orfeo" lines 191-194). The Fairy King

[18] More on the importance of the *scheltrom* formation, which ties into Orfeo's Anglo-Saxon identity competing with the battle strategy of the Norman-coded fairies, can be found in Battles's "Sir Orfeo and English Identity (182-186).

invades, does not even bother with Orfeo's defensive strategy, and takes Heurodis without any challenge or armed conflict. This moment marks when Orfeo loses power to the Fairy King and, in fact, demonstrates how inadequate his earthly, nonmagical efforts are against this figure from another world. According to Kieckhefer, "Often, … magic is less important in itself than as a symbol or indicator of some psychological state. … In the more subtle and skillfully crafted romances the focus is usually on inward states of mind and soul, which may be just as mysterious as any magic, and the magical motifs function as ploys for developing the inner lives of the characters" (108-109). In response to his defeat, Orfeo sends himself into exile and officially loses his earthly power. Because of his grief, Orfeo even rejects the power that failed him (i.e., being a king)) and clings to the musical power that he could still control, which signals his defeated psychological state) and leads to his musical, magical sway over animals.[19] Any belief that the two kings, by nature of their royalty, could be on any sort of even footing is thusly removed. Therefore, in order for Orfeo to successfully defeat the fairy, he must use his musical magic.

Meanwhile, the Fairy King's magic and power extends beyond his abduction capabilities. A royal's palace and land display elements of their leadership and character, and the Fairy King's territory is quite revealing. First, the fairy country is described as wonderful and beautiful ("Sir Orfeo" lines 351-358). Second, compared to Orfeo's palace, the poem indicates that the Fairy King's dwelling is superior. According to Battles, Orfeo's palace "conforms to a pre-Conquest lordly dwelling" and "indicates his desire for acceptance rather than blunt

[19] More on comparing Orfeo's mental state in the woods versus the Fae's can be found in Battles's "Sir Orfeo and English Identity." For the purposes of the explaining the balance of power between the two men, I believe that their immensely different experiences in the forest also demonstrates that the Fairy King is able to enjoy his wooded adventures while Orfeo suffers in almost complete exile and loneliness—two states that visualize the difference in their emotional and physical statuses.

overlordship" (190), while the Fairy King's castle resembles a "royal hunting castle" that is "a private fortified residence, the architecture so favored by the Norman aristocracy" (191-192). In the lay, the narrator decrees, "Bi al thing him think that it is / The proude court of Paradis" ("Sir Orfeo" lines 375-376). The word "Paradis" is only included twice in *Sir Orfeo*, once in relation to Orfeo's music and here in relation to the Fairy King's heavenly castle. According to the editor's notes:

> The *paradis* of the Otherworld holds beauty and sorrow, just as Orfeo's songs can, but the *paradis* of sound, Orfeo's music, is powerful enough to restore the dead to life and to break the boundaries between the two realms, whereas the beauty of the fairy castle is static and its visual beauty does not restore the dead. (Laskaya and Salisbury, note for line 376)

The poet's limited use of "Paradis" demands that the objects in question—Orfeo's musical power and the Fairy King's lordly castle in a magical land—be compared.[20] The significant differences between the two dwellings (despite both men being kings) reveal that the Fairy King symbolically has greater physical power, which stands out even more when Orfeo sees this display in the moments where he has deprived himself of his kingdom and community for ten years in exile.

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[20] Additionally, this is a moment where we could call into question how Orfeo and the Fairy King's realm differ from the other versions of Orpheus and the Underworld. Orfeo's magical music is very similar to the other representations of Orpheus (even as the characterizations of the four men differ). Meanwhile, in the case of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the Underworld is gloomy and dark and quiet; specifically, as Orpheus tries to lead Eurydice out of the Underworld, the path is also described as "dark and shrouded in thick black mist" ("Book 10" line 54). In the case of the Baroque Theater filming of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, the Underworld is dark and filled with fire and ominous demonic figures (excluding the wonderful Elysium). In the case of Mitchell's *Hadestown*, the Underworld is walled in, hot, bright, and filled with working miners. The Fairy King's land stands out when contrasted with these other Otherworlds (excluding Elysium, again), as it appears pleasant; however, its beauty could either symbolize a trap, or it could hint that the fairy kingdom is possibly more hopeful than the other lands of the dead. After all, out of the four Otherworlds—though they all took Eurydice/Euridice/Heurodis—only the beautiful ones truly gave her up again (at least, on the surface).

The Fairy King's frightful power, especially over people, continues within his castle. I believe that the otherness of the fairies' magic in *Sir Orfeo* is what allows the Otherworld in which they reside to feel as unnerving as Ovid's Underworld. Instead of darkness and the souls of the damned, the unknown permeates the lay, so much so that only the effects of the fairies' magic are ominously depicted. In order for Orfeo to retrieve his wife from the Fae, he enters the enchanting palace disguised as an unassuming minstrel. Soon after doing so, Orfeo finds a collection of human suffering, the gallery:

> Sum stode withouten hade,
> And sum non armes nade,
> And sum thurth the bodi hadde wounde,
> And sum lay wode, y-bounde,
> And sum armed on hors sete,
> And sum astrangled as thai ete;
> And sum were in water adreynt,
> And sum with fire al forschreynt.
> ……
> Eche was thus in this warld y-nome,
> With fairi thider y-come. ("Sir Orfeo" lines 387-404)

Overall, the gallery of the fairies' human victims is disconnected from the established reality of the lay. The all-encompassing outer beauty of the fairy Otherworld is contrasted by what we see within the fairies' castle; however, that does not mean that the gallery is only ugly or frightening. It is still pretty, but with a much more unsettling under- and overtone. According to Williams, "While some critics have seen [the gallery] as a version of either the Celtic otherworld or a

classical underworld, others have argued for the significance of its resistance to a single interpretation" (541). I agree with Williams that the gallery can be understood from multiple perspectives, especially when we understand that the myth of Orpheus is one that is constantly evolving and being added to. For example, one interpretation is that the people within the catalogue "resemble victims of violent coercion and war" (Battles 194). If we understand the conflict between Orfeo and the Fairy King as a political one, then Orfeo is being shown the outcomes of resisting the Fairy King's decrees. At the same time, the poem resists a literal interpretation. The gallery's description almost reads like a fairytale or nursery rhyme that the listener does not realize is horrifying until they actually pay attention to the words or lyrics; it is very repetitive, rhythmic, and almost like a song, a feature that almost hints at the fairy's magic having a hidden musical quality. Unlike Orfeo's life bringing melodies, this fairy song—and the unseen magic holding it together—appears to be stuck in suffering while not fully acknowledging pain. Within the gallery, because the fairies' magic is unexplained and only the effects of it are shown, the fear of the unknown takes hold of the audience. The fairies could theoretically be capable of anything, which makes Orfeo's caution and hidden identity a necessity.

Furthermore, the logic behind the fairies' decisions goes largely undetermined. Why the victims were chosen and when they were collected remain ambiguous. Ultimately, "[t]he gallery … hints that the Fairy King keeps his word" because individuals with torn off limbs—matching the original warning that the Fairy King gave Heurodis ("Sir Orfeo" lines 165-174)—are described alongside people who are entirely in one piece (Williams 546). But those hints are only implied and are not a guarantee of any human morality. Therefore, while the scene demonstrates the Fairy King's unknowably immense magic and unnervingly ambiguous motivations, it also

reveals how Orfeo could overcome him.[21] Orfeo's music has a magical power that the Fairy King's magic does not. Therefore, in having unique magic through his music, Orfeo is able to overcome the Fairy King.

In order to retrieve his wife and challenge the Fae, Orfeo must use his music. After making his way through the Otherworld palace and the gallery, Orfeo performs for his host:

> And blisseful notes he ther gan,
> That al that in the palays were
> Com to him forto here,
> And liggeth adoun to his fete –
> Hem thenketh his melody so swete. ("Sir Orfeo" lines 438-442)

In the moments leading up to his performance, Orfeo is theoretically powerless. Even though he was a king, his royal status has been useless against the fairies thus far. And, even if his role as a king could have any influence on the fairies, Orfeo gave up his crown ten years prior. Furthermore, Orfeo has just walked through the fairy Otherworld, the Fairy King's castle, and the gallery—all of which demonstrate the Fairy King's royal might and magical prowess. Therefore, the immediate impact of Orfeo's music is pivotal. As with the animals, the fairies, including the Fairy King and his queen, are very pleased by his sweet melody; Orfeo's music is shown to sway all around him. Thus, Orfeo has gained power in the fairy court.

By changing his position in relation to the Fairy King, he can work on saving his wife. Orfeo's newfound status is demonstrated immediately after he finishes playing, whereafter the Fairy King makes Orfeo an offer he cannot refuse: a wish for whatever Orfeo wants that will be granted. Orfeo asks for Heurodis, and the King objects:

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[21] More on the gallery can be found in Battles's "Sir Orfeo and English Identity," Griggs's "The Orchard and the 'Ympe Tre'," and Williams's "Fairy Magic, Wonder, and Morality in Sir Orfeo."

‘Nay!’ quath the king, ‘that nought nere!

A sori couple of you it were,

For thou art lene, rowe and blac,

And sche is lovesum, withouten lac;

A lothlich thing it were, forthi,

To sen hir in thi compayni’ (“Sir Orfeo” lines 457-462)

In this moment, Orfeo has trapped the Fairy King; by playing so beautifully, Orfeo has received a promise from the Fairy King of a great reward. Only after receiving that promise does Orfeo reveal his true aim: retrieving Heurodis. Given that the fairy king seemed seconds away from throwing him out before Orfeo offered to play, Orfeo’s strategy proved wise. Furthermore, Orfeo has tricked[22] the Fairy King into revealing—or at least confirming, if the gallery is understood to be beautiful—more information about himself: that he values aesthetics. Perhaps the Fairy King’s reasoning—that Orfeo and Heurodis do not make an aesthetically pleasing couple—is why he took Heurodis in the first place; however, that argument is not completely sound, as Orfeo’s appearance is described as getting worse during his exile in the woods. Regardless, my ability to even consider this uncertainty further reveals that the Fairy King has unveiled too much to remain a complete enigma. Given that the mysterious nature of the fairies previously added to their unnerving image (and thereby their power), this information decreases the Fairy King’s intimidating aura.

With Orfeo gaining more control over the situation and the Fairy King losing his control, Orfeo is able to stand his ground. When Orfeo rebukes the Fairy King for lying and tells him to

[22] With the understanding that “the gallery reveals aspects of the fairies’ moral code to Orfeo, who then exploits that knowledge in his negotiations with the king,” his success in retrieving Heurodis also exemplifies Orfeo’s cunning (Williams 552). Regardless, music has overcome the Fae. More information on Orpheus being a trickster can also be found in Marchenkov’s *The Orpheus Myth and the Powers of Music*.

keep his word, the king relents: "The king seyd, 'Sethen it is so, / Take hir bi the hond and go; / Of hir ichil thatow be blithe'" ("Sir Orfeo" lines 469-476). Orfeo also makes sure to thank the Fairy King, possibly either because he did not want to risk insulting the king—and thereafter receiving overwhelming retaliation—or because expressing his gratitude is the chivalric thing to do. Before they can face any opposition and with the Fairy King's blessing, the couple hastily flee the fairies' Otherworld, which is the final proof that Orfeo's musical magic has overpowered the other powerful king of the tale in order to physically recover his wife.

Women and Love in the Middle Ages and in *Sir Orfeo*

In *Sir Orfeo*, Heurodis is initially a character introduced with some agency. When the Fairy King approaches her in her sleep and demands that she return the next day or face the consequences, she agrees. Though she momentarily loses herself to madness upon waking, she explains what happened to her husband and returns to the ympe-tree the next day with Orfeo's armies guarding her ("Sir Orfeo" lines 77-186).[23] However, not only is the scene of her kidnapping largely centered around Orfeo; she never gets the opportunity to speak again within the lay.

Heurodis' lack of agency and speech for the majority of *Sir Orfeo* is notable because it is not (1) a holdover from past versions of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth, nor (2) indicative of all

[23] Heurodis's abduction by the Fairy King bears some resemblance to the abduction of Persephone. Commonly, the story of the abduction begins with Persephone, goddess of spring, spending time among the flowers with some of her friends before she is taken by Hades. Especially since the lay is inspired by a myth where Hades and his queen are so significant, the parallel feels notable. Heurodis's dreams, which she describes to Orfeo are also a continuation of this parallel: "And as son as he to me cam, / Wold ich, nold ich, he me nam, / And made me with him ride / Opon a palfray bi his side; / And brought me to his palays" ("Sir Orfeo" lines 153-157). As with Persephone, the king does not ask for Heurodis's opinion, and just takes her. However, unlike Persephone, Heurodis does not seem willing to fight back against him or his people, for she does not dare to oppose him ("Sir Orfeo" lines 139-140). Art of Persephone's abduction typically (but not always) shows her resisting Hades's hold on her and trying to get away; however, Heurodis, from her account, willingly rides with the Fairy King seemingly because she realizes that her input does not matter to him.

women in medieval literature. Heurodis's reaction to seeing Orfeo for the first time since her abduction is limited:

> Yern he biheld hir, and sche him eke,
>
> Ac noither to other a word no speke;
>
> For messais that sche on him seighe,
>
> That had ben so riche and so heighe,
>
> The teres fel out of her eighe. ("Sir Orfeo" lines 322-324)

They both express sadness upon seeing each other again—and Heurodis is whisked away before anything can happen—but what I find significant is that Orfeo's emotions are still being prioritized. Orfeo is eager to see her and has missed her greatly, while the poem describes how Heurodis's sadness is centered around the ways he has fallen from grace. At the same time, the steward's actions at the end also reveal the great love shared between Orfeo and Heurodis. When Orfeo speaks to the steward in disguise, he asks the man for help and the steward responds, 'Com with me, come; / Of that ichave, thou schalt have some. / Everich gode harpour is welcom me to / For mi lordes love, Sir Orfeo'" ("Sir Orfeo" lines 515-518). In this interaction, the steward is expressing his care for Orfeo by extending courtesy to other harpers. He goes on to recognize Orfeo's harp and mourns his king's supposed death. To the steward, Orfeo's music is his most recognizable and important quality, even when the king is standing right in front of him. However, when Heurodis sees her husband in the woods, outside of his kingly attire and without his harp, she still recognizes him. By knowing Orfeo when his most loyal servant would not, Heurodis demonstrates her greater love. However, that does not negate her silence. Meanwhile, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, though she is given little space, Eurydice is able to express herself after her death. When Orpheus turns around, she reacts and quietly tells her husband goodbye

("Book 10" lines 58-63). Unlike Heurodis, Eurydice speaks. Furthermore, Eurydice is not abandoned when Orpheus eventually returns to her in death; instead, the two are described as walking around together in the Underworld ("Book 11" lines 61-66). In the lay, after Orfeo retrieves Heurodis, he leaves her at a beggar's house to retrieve his crown and kingdom from the steward. Therefore, Heurodis' lack of speech and even presence towards the end of the lay is not the result of maintaining Ovid's characterization, which reveals that *Sir Orfeo* is conveying a different message than *Metamorphoses*.

Second, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and Marie de France's *Lanval* and *Bisclavret* demonstrate that women in medieval literature could have personality and agency, even when the story was not centered around them. Marie de France likely wrote *Lanval* and *Bisclavret* in the late twelfth century, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* was written in the late fourteenth century. Therefore, these three poems frame *Sir Orfeo*, meaning that women having personality and agency in Medieval Literature both was not invented after nor was unseen before the lay's creation. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the lady seduces Gawain and tests his integrity and reputation; even though she was given the task by her husband (who gives the credit for the plot to Morgan le Fay, another woman whose decisions impact the plot), the lady has agency in how she goes about it. In *Lanval*, the magical lady instructs Lanval (her lover) to never reveal their romantic affair or else; when he does, she follows through on her threat and hides away from him. However, when Lanval's life is on the line in royal court, she reappears and saves his life. Finally, *Bisclavret* presents an example of a woman, who like Heurodis is magicless, having agency over the story. When Bisclavret's wife finds out that her husband is a werewolf, she steals his clothes and traps him in that form, which then allows her to remarry. Though the story does not condone her actions, she is able to actively influence the plot. Therefore, Heurodis' lack

of agency or speech is not purely because *Sir Orfeo* was written in the Middle Ages. Furthermore, a portrayal of mutual love would not have been out of the question within the story from a cultural perspective. According to Diane Ackerman in *A Natural History of Love*, while the evolution of courtly love could result in dangerous desires like the yearning for death (especially when separated from a partner), "courtly love … encouraged mutual affection, and urged lovers to feel tenderness and respect for each other" (60). Ergo, Orfeo's lack of care towards his wife is jarring from a modern *and* medieval perspective.

As the lay portrays it, the kidnapping of Heurodis is ultimately not about her. While her abduction could represent a sexual attack in another story, "[t]he fairy king never rapes Heurodis, nor does he make her his queen or have her bare a fairy child. Rather than fertility, Heurodis' encounter under the 'ympe-tre' is sterile" (Griggs 104). The fairy king's attack never directly harms her; her body is frozen in time and she appears unharmed on the surface. If any damage is done to her—such as sterilization, which could be the case because Orfeo and Heurodis never have any children—that damage is only remarkably significant in the world of the lay because of its impact on the kingdom. Furthermore, "Heurodis' bodily integrity has been violated, not due to attack or rape by the fairy king, but due to her own response to the trauma of being taken by the fairies. … The integrity of her body in turn reflects back upon Orfeo" (Griggs 107). In other words, even Heurodis' trauma is ultimately not about her, but about her husband.

Therefore, her abduction is primarily a personal and political crime against Orfeo. Because the Fairy King did not kidnap her upon their first meeting, "[t]he intervening time turns what would have been a private act (i.e. an abduction/rape) into a public and political act … Orfeo's failure the next day to protect the queen becomes, therefore, not simply a personal loss but a military defeat of sorts" (Battles 179). The queen's "abduction [is] a direct challenge to

Orfeo's kingship" (Griggs 100). The Fairy King being able to take Heurodis is a sign of Orfeo's weakness against an attacking force and of Orfeo's failure to meet the Fae's challenge. As a result, when Orfeo then gives up his throne, the loss of Heurodis becomes a symbolic loss of the kingdom. Though Orfeo mourns the loss of his wife and proclaims that he will never love another woman, the metaphorical connection between Heurodis and the kingdom is solidified because Orfeo bestows his kingdom upon the steward and exiles himself to the woods immediately afterwards ("Sir Orfeo" lines 209-214). Again, the loss of Orfeo's kingdom receives more space in the poem than the loss of his queen. By the end of the lay, when Orfeo is able to reunite with his wife, he leaves her alone with a stranger soon after. After ten years of separation, being together with her is not his goal.

Because Heurodis is never the same after she returns, Orfeo's love and music, i.e., his magic, "finally fail to counteract the effects of the fairy magic. The poem does not celebrate the depth of marital love or the triumph of human artistry; it warns of the danger of magic and its revelatory potential" (Williams 559). During their years apart, Orfeo physically aged but Heurodis did not, which further separates her from her husband. The queen will also never be the same mentally, so the fairies have left their permanent mark on her body and her mind. Therefore, the true happy ending of the poem is Orfeo reclaiming his crown, and his reunification with his wife is boiled down to a symbolic victory. However, even that can be called into question. In "The Orchard and the 'Ympe Tre," Eleanor Griggs writes, "Orfeo's lack of an heir at the end of the poem troubles the happy ending because the line of succession has been irreparably harmed by the fairy king's intercession" (110). Consequently, even Orfeo's victory, the regaining his kingdom, could be construed as a loss.

The Ending of *Sir Orfeo*

For all of the scholars who proclaim that *Sir Orfeo* is has a happy fairy tale ending, I argue that the uncertainties within the text and the anxieties they produce (within the text and in the audience) call such a reading into question. At best, the ending is ambiguously happy.

On the subject of the tale's happiness, I want to return to an earlier line, where the Fairy King tells Orfeo to "Take hir bi the hond and go; / Of hir ichil thatow be blithe." ("Sir Orfeo" lines 470-471). These lines are essential to explaining why this poem is a romance instead of a tragedy, at least on the surface. By "romance," I mean both the traditional meaning of the word alongside its modern meaning: from one perspective, after a period of wandering, the main couple comes together, and their marriage is no longer in question; from the other, a romantic pairing is built up throughout the story and is together in the end. Not only does the king grant them permission to leave together—with wishes that they will be happy, no less—but he also lets them walk side by side. In Ovid's tale, during the trip from the Underworld, Orpheus is overcome with worry about his wife falling behind and was compelled by love to turn and check on her. Here, Orfeo has no need to worry; not only is he beside his wife, they are holding hands. She is safely with him and the Fairy King could not be tricking Orfeo about her physical presence. In this moment, where other versions of Orpheus have to rely on other factors (including the unknown and the word of a much more powerful god), Orfeo is given a blessing and constant reassurance. The couple also does not linger in the Otherworld, and their journey home is swift. Therefore, Orfeo and Heurodis get their happily ever after; or, at the very least, Orfeo manages to reclaim his kingdom.

However, *Sir Orfeo*, unlike *Metamorphoses* and other adaptations, portrays a love story where the loving couple is not truly at its center. Ovid's Orpheus and Eurydice love and are

completely drawn to each other, and their rejoining in the Underworld after his death brings both of them joy. Meanwhile, the true draw of the lay is the political drama, the question of whether Orfeo will regain his kingdom. His wife is reduced to a symbol, and their reunification is undercut by Orfeo leaving her behind in order to reclaim his crown from the steward. The happiness and success of the poem comes from the steward rightfully wanting Orfeo to return; Heurodis' safety is merely a necessary part of that goal.

Overall, both Orfeo's musical battle against the Fairy King's power and Heurodis' ongoing trauma and lack of importance after her rescue influence how audiences perceive the ending of the story. Because the battle of the two kings is more significant than the connection between the two lovers, the poem is ultimately not really about Orfeo and Heurodis. Because *Sir Orfeo* is not about the tragic love story of myth, the couple can reunite and seemingly be happy. However, the struggle between Orfeo and the Fairy King has permanently impacted Orfeo's kingdom, Orfeo, and Heurodis. In the end, the audience can celebrate a happy reunion, but it must contend with lingering, unresolved anxieties, making the poem simultaneously a victorious romance and disheartening tragedy.

CHAPTER III. GLUCK'S *ORFEO ED EURIDICE*: THE HAPPIEST ENDING?

Sir Orfeo reframes the tragedy of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth to center on a kingdom instead of a couple, leading to a romance unable to resolve its anxieties. Christoph Willibald Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* keeps a happily ever after ending, as seen in *Sir Orfeo*, and also returns to the human tragedy introduced in Ovid's work. So now the uneasiness that the audience may feel comes from a different direction: the gods and the ending. The main divine presence, Amor (also known as Cupid), plays a more active role than Ovid's Hades or the Fairy King. Furthermore, Amor has added a new condition to Orfeo's trial, revealing the arbitrariness of the gods in a more noticeable fashion than in previous versions. The story's ending also keeps the tragedy but still rewards the lovers. It may appear that this tale now portrays a reward of human flaws; love—both Orfeo's devotion to Euridice and the god who is love personified—actually saves the day and the story delivers a happily ever after.[24] However, some audiences are wary of Orfeo's second chance and find the ending unsatisfying.

Gluck first wrote *Orfeo ed Euridice*, an Italian opera, in 1762, with Ranieri de' Calzabigi as the librettist. The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice was perfect for opera because the story is about music, the story is theatrical, and love stories have always been at the heart of the medium, "and it is the tales of passionate *amours* that the librettists have culled from Ovid, who provides them so abundantly if not exclusively" (Sternfeld 176). Therefore, in addition to its place in the evolution of opera, *Orfeo ed Eurydice* is also part of the ever-changing Orpheus tradition. Though Murray Krieger offhandedly comments that Gluck-Calzabigi were "inspired more by Monteverdi and his successors than by Vergil and Ovid," the influence of the literary history on the opera should not be understated (295n1). In fact, Alfred Loewenberg argues that Calzabigi's

[24] When referring to the characters of this opera, I will be using Orfeo for Orpheus and Euridice for Eurydice. The only deviations from that model occur when quotes refer to the couple by their translated names.

libretto was modeled more on Ovid's lines than Virgil's, meaning that Gluck-Calzabigi were not only looking to past operas for inspiration (322).[25]

Within the context of the adaptations of the Orpheus myth and its role in opera, the story is both simplified and direct—in fact, "[t]he story of the opera is told with a directness that was revolutionary" (Thomason)—and contains some impactful changes. Furthermore, according to Jeffrey L. Buller in "Looking Backwards," "[e]verything about this work…is pared to the most essential details. … Its mood is consistently tragic. As early as the opening chorus, the audience hears a lamentation for Eurydice. Orpheus's first words are a cry of woe" (Buller 77). The protagonist opens with such woe because Gluck-Calzabigi's story begins with Orfeo at Euridice's funeral. After the other mourners leave him, Gluck-Calzabigi introduce the first major change to the plot: Amor descends from the heavens and gives Orfeo the opportunity and the *two* conditions to retrieve Euridice from the Underworld. From there, the overview of the plot is largely unchanged until Euridice's second death: instead of the lovers remaining apart, Amor returns and brings the couple together. That marked difference from previous adaptations demonstrates the increase in the gods' influence and indicates a change in culture, which will be explored further in this chapter.

In the hundreds of years since *Orfeo ed Euridice* was first performed, it has been adapted into many languages and has undergone many story changes. In terms of said revisions, the scholarship about this opera discusses Gluck's French rewrite of the opera—*Orphée*, first published in 1774—the most. In addition to various translations over the course of its performance history, *Orfeo ed Euridice* has also been lengthened and shortened, characters have

[25] More on the operatic influences can be found in "Looking Backwards" by Buller, "Orpheus and the Neoclassic Vision of Opera" by Joseph Kerman, "Orpheus, Ovid and Opera" by Sternfeld, and "Adaptation of the Orpheus Myth in Five Operas" Wood. *Orfeo ed Euridice* has also itself been a large influence on opera; more on that can be found in "Gluck's Orfeo on the Stage" by Loewenberg.

been added and subtracted, the role of Orfeo has been performed by "male sopranos, tenors, and baritones, and by female sopranos, mezzo-sopranos, and contraltos.[26] … The music has been altered, transposed, curtailed, elaborated, rescored; there have been numerous additions from other sources—Gluck's and, more often, somebody else's" (Loewenberg 338).[27] These differences can have a major impact on the ways that the opera is interpreted by audiences and scholars. For example, "The difference in effect of [the big C major accompanied recitative in Act 2] sung at the top of a tenor's range (particularly a French tenor) rather than in the lower half of an alto castrato's (or a contralto's) has considerable influence on the characterization of Orpheus" (Howard 892). According to Howard, the characterization of Orfeo ranges from him being semi-divine without a distinctive character to being more human through his tenor voice (892-893).[28]

Regardless, as a result of the opera's multidimensional history and the popularity of the Italian and French versions of Gluck's work, "Many performances of *Orfeo* (or *Orphée*) are a combination of Gluck's two versions—depending on what the conductor and/or the singer portraying Orfeo feel is appropriate" (Thomason). Patricia Howard goes a step further in their

[26] The Vienna version of the opera involved a castrato playing the role of Orfeo (Howard 892). The first performance was "at the Burgtheater, Vienna, on the 5th of October, 1762. The male contralto Gaetano Guadagni, a native of Lodi, sang the part of Orpheus. Marianna Bianchi and Lucia Clavarau took the two soprano parts of Eurydice and Amor" (Loewenberg 320). As a contesting point, in "Orpheus's Civilizing Song," Peritz claims that Guadagni had an alto range (132n7). Ultimately, the naming conventions for ranges and voice types can vary. The common understanding now is that sopranos sing a higher range of notes than a contralto ("Voice Types"). The performers are worth noting here because "[t]he public also has always wanted star singers to project the leading roles" (Sternfeld 193).

[27] More information about *Orphée* and other translations and/or revised versions of Gluck's opera can be found in "Looking Backwards" by Buller, "Orfeo and Orphée" by Howard, "Orpheus 'Mit Glück'" by Krieger, "Gluck's Orfeo on the Stage" by Loewenberg, "Robert Browning and Frederic Leighton" by Maxwell, "Orpheus's Civilizing Song" by Jessica Gabriel Peritz, "Living, Loving and Dying in Song" by Susan Rutherford, "Orpheus, Ovid and Opera" by Sternfeld, "Gluck's *Orfeo Ed Euridice*" by Paul Thomason, "Classic Staging" by Flora Willson, "Adaptation of the Orpheus Myth in Five Operas" by Wood.

[28] More about the music as written (notes/keys, chords, instruments, etc.) can be found in "Orfeo and Orphée" by Howard, "Living, Loving and Dying in Song Gluck" by Rutherford, and "Gluck's *Orfeo Ed Euridice*" by Thomason.

discussion of *Orfeo* performances after 1774: "I have not found any later performing editions (as opposed to reissues for scholars, in collected editions) which give the Italian version of the opera, untampered with. … Most attempt to combine the two" (895). That is not to say that every performance of the opera is a wholly unique entity from the others; according to Krieger, "what holds true for all versions is the significance of dramatically new operatic forms and the manipulation of the rich potentialities of the Orpheus story which had already attained operatic distinction" from previous composers and librettists (296). With such a lengthy and complex history in mind, all of that is to say that I will both be writing about an adaptation of the Orpheus myth that builds upon a history of adaptations and be analyzing an adaptation of the adaptation.

Specifically, as I explore this text, I will reflect both on an English translation of the libretto and on the opera as a sung performance in Italian (a language that I do not know nor speak).[29] Said performance is the 2013 film adaptation of *Orfeo ed Euridice*, which was recorded at the Baroque Theatre of Český Krumlov Castle ("Latest Events"; Gonzalez). In approaching the opera through these two mediums, I recognize that both the translation and the specific performance are, in their own way, adaptations that influence my reading of the opera as a whole. With all of that in mind, this chapter will continue with my analysis of the relationship between magic, music, and power as wielded by Amor and Orfeo; then of the agency and character of Eurydice and how she compares to Amor; and finally of the successful and "joyous" reunion of the couple.

[29] Though both the English translation and film claim to be based on the original 1762 version of *Orfeo ed Euridice*, I hope that my above description about the history of Gluck's opera provides the necessary context that that claim may be in some doubt. I will be using the translations provided by *Opera Arias* ("Orfeo Ed Euridice Libretto English Translation") and Edward Jones's program for the Harvard University Choir. To my knowledge, the two translations are identical.

Magic and Music in 1700s Europe

Thus far, magic has received an abundance of historical context in this thesis. However, this chapter will mark a decrease in that focus (in favor of music) because my research indicates that the understanding of magic continues following the trend that we have seen thus far. In other words, magic continues to be seen in the expected ways with an increasing influence from Christianity. For one thing, in 1760s Italy, the "Neapolitan public [was] then in the midst of a Greek-tinged antiquarian fervour" (Peritz 132). Therefore, an understanding of magic from Antiquity has almost certainly influenced this culture. Furthermore, the "neo-Orphic or neo-Platonic movement that began with Ficino in Florence inspired authors to view Orpheus as a symbol for Christ or the Christian life" (Buller 78). In other words, a Catholic movement from the 1400s connected Orpheus and Christianity, meaning that that understanding of magic has also influenced the ways that people of 1700s Europe interpret magic.

In 1700s-1800s Italy, people saw "music as possessing a mysterious, almost supernatural power" (Buller 58). And that power could be seen in Italian opera, which was a predominant cultural product. In general, Italy was concerned about their "continued domination by foreign powers, as well as the diminishing authority abroad of Italian cultural products in the realms of poetry and philosophy" (Peritz 130-131). Therefore, because of its prominence and relevance, opera was centralized within those tensions. The solution, prompted by the ideals of Enlightenment combining with Hellenistic neoclassicism, was that "reformist singers and literati looked to rebrand Italy's most famous cultural export as an agent of moral edification" (Peritz 131). To do so, voice was interpreted in two ways: the lyric mode and the epic mode. "The lyric mode portrayed voice as the audible expression of an individual feeling subject with claims to political agency, whereas the epic mode required that voice be reined in, sundered from

individualised expression, and turned towards a civilising purpose – no longer a tyrant, but a public servant" (Peritz 131-132). In both modes, voice becomes a way to express power, either politically or philosophically. And, through opera, the character of Orpheus became the perfect character to exemplify these goals.

During the Italian Enlightenment, the main draw of Orpheus was his role as a singer, which provided him with moral and political authority. "In an aesthetic treatise on immediacy and emotion in the arts, the literary critic and poet Saverio Bettinelli located Orpheus's civilizing power in song and, by extension, in voice: 'Orpheus [became] father and lord of the peoples domesticated by his song, and [founded] … the empire of humanity and civil life" (Peritz 137). Orpheus's civilizing control over nature, seen as a positive moral and political outcome, is obtainable through connecting music and emotions. According to Gluck and Millico, *Orfeo ed Euridice* establishes that connection. In "1777 Gluck wrote 'I have persuaded myself that song, when it thoroughly takes the colour of the feeling it is to express, should be as various and as many-sided as feeling itself'" (Rutherford 134n6).[30] Vito Guiseppe Millico, a castrato who played the role of Gluck's Orfeo in 1769, also believed in the power of connecting singing to feelings. "His connection between voice and interiority even had subtle political undertones, in that it democratised the notion of natural vocal aptitude. … Millico's anyone-can-learn-to-sing ideology fits in with broader shifts in thinking about who was entitled to a voice and, consequently, to subjectivity and agency" (Peritz 136). Altogether, Orpheus's (and Orfeo's) voice was conceptualized as form of political, social, and musical agency that could be used for the betterment or detriment of others, since it could be used for connection (to emotions or other

[30] As a more specific example: "Che faro senza Euridice"—the aria where Orfeo is thinking of suicide—"is an aria in which the composer acknowledges that meaning is constructed almost entirely by the singer's capacity to imbue the music with a lacerating emotional intensity" (Rutherford 133).

people) or trickery (in the form of flattery or self-aggrandizement). And with that agency, Orfeo must sing to entreat the gods and Underworld for Euridice.

Power, Magic, and Music in *Orfeo ed Euridice*

The conflict between Orfeo and the gods in Gluck's opera is entirely different than what has come before. In Ovid's poem, Orpheus must convince the denizens of the Underworld to let him stand before the rulers of the dead, whom he cajoles into returning Eurydice to him. In *Sir Orfeo*, Orfeo simultaneously persuades and tricks a magical Other king into relinquishing Heurodis. In *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Orfeo is granted permission by a force of nature—the embodiment of love, Amor—to undertake his journey for Euridice:

> Love will assist you!
> Orpheus, Jove has taken pity
> on your grief.
> ……
> if with your singing you can placate the Furies,
> the monsters, and pitiless death,
> you can take back your beloved Eurydice
> with you into the light of day (1.2).

Amor and Jove (i.e., Zeus, the king of the heavens and gods) represent a very different kind of power from previous adaptations. Hades does not kill people and he is in charge of the bureaucracy and management of the Underworld; the Fae King, though very powerful, is a king. Amor (i.e., Eros or Cupid) is love. She is the reason that Orfeo loves his wife and, ultimately, Orfeo has no quarrel with her because Amor did not take Euridice away. Orfeo does not need to sing to Amor in order for Euridice to be released from an enemy's clutches. In other words,

Orfeo need not compete against a king in the opera. Sure, he must take on the masses of the dead, both frightful Furies and delighted couples of Elysium, but they hardly stand in his way for long. Furthermore, though Amor speaks of Jove taking pity on the brokenhearted Orfeo, the king of the gods is never spoken of again nor does he make an appearance. Within the opera, Amor is the primary godly power, not Jove. Therefore, instead of a conflict against a singular, ultimate power—for Amor's statements and actions prove her to be on Orfeo's side—Orfeo's conflict is with himself and Euridice.

This, though, is a slightly misleading view on the matter, especially in regard to whether or not Amor is on Orfeo's side. Instead of the traditional rule (with which Orpheus is typically charged during his quest), Amor gives Orfeo the following two conditions before his journey to the Underworld begins:

> Forbidden is the sight of Eurydice
> until you are beyond the caves of the Styx!
> And of this great prohibition you must not tell her!
> Otherwise, you lose her again, and for ever;
> and you will live unhappy,
> a prey to your fierce desire! (1.2)

Instead of Orpheus using his voice to uplift his own power, Amor is controlling him. In this scene, Amor has approached a grief-ridden man and has proclaimed that she has the solution to all of his problems, but only if he restricts the voice that apparently moved the gods to such generosity.

Amor's actions here have two directly obvious interpretations. On the one hand, the gods are petty for qualifying their gift even after being moved by Orpheus. "Lest their act of divine

grace in his behalf be too persuasive of his more-than-mortal powers, the gods impose the arbitrary — indeed bizarre — condition to remind him of who he is, and isn't" (Krieger 297). In other words, the god's decree is a demonstration of their power that also reasserts Orpheus's place beneath them in the magical hierarchy. Technically, a similar argument could be made for Ovid's Orpheus; however, their dominating decree is made more egregious by having two conditions instead of one.

On the other hand, the gods may be ensuring that Orfeo truly loves his wife (a test made more necessary according to the staging of the Baroque Theater staging, which I will discuss later). In other words, the gods may be testing that Orfeo loves Euridice instead of wanting to only possess her. Either way, though Orfeo can now rescue Euridice, he cannot look at her nor tell her why he cannot look, which guarantees that both Euridice and Orfeo will suffer on the journey out. After Amor leaves, Orfeo sings, "And after all my torments, / in that moment, / torn by emotions, / I must not look at her, / not clasp her to my bosom! / Unhappy wife! / What will she say? / What will she think? // I foresee her impatience: / I understand my anguish" (1.2). Orfeo is fully aware of both his and her eventual reactions to their reunion if he listens to the rules: grief and anger. Therefore, Orfeo will have to fight with Euridice instead of the gods as a primary source of external conflict in this opera, while his internal conflict remains with his desire to turn around and see her.

The conflicting interpretations of who has power (alongside the ways they use it) are complicated by reading the text or watching the 2013 film adaptation. When looking at the text alone, Amor only influences the beginning and ending of the narrative, leaving Orfeo to sing his way through the Underworld. Through the quantity of his actions and the influence of his musical magic on the Underworld's Chorus in the first scene of the second act, Orfeo has control

and power over his situation. Orfeo's music, his lamentations within the opera, can change the laws of the universe itself and move the gods to sympathy. Furthermore, Orfeo's lineage also increases his power, as has been the case in past adaptations. Because the contemporary audience of the opera could be assumed to know some of the mythology surrounding the characters, they likely knew that he typically descends from Apollo and/or Calliope.

However, his power is also questioned. Though he has a divine lineage, Orfeo cannot have divine privilege because he is mortal and because he loves Euridice. Furthermore, in the Baroque Theater, the camera repeatedly pans to Amor, who hovers over the couple and seems amused even as they are distressed; to them, she may be out of sight but is hardly out of mind. Because she is constantly around, the audience may be in inclined to think that, as the embodiment of love, Amor could be influencing Orfeo's decisions and actions, taking away his agency and power. In this story, the gods are in charge because "The game is theirs, and must be played by their rules. In their offer to Orpheus of a resurrected and returned Eurydice, they are bestowing an arbitrary privilege, so that he (and we) cannot haggle at their imposing conditions no less arbitrary, even if these conditions end by undoing that gift" (Krieger 299). The game of the universe is rigged in the gods' favor, and they restrict how Orfeo can attempt to adjust his own circumstances. Additionally, Amor was the one who gave Orfeo the quest; unlike in previous adaptations, he did not have to seek out the gods or Euridice in order to get her back. And how could he possibly argue with Amor or try to negotiate the conditions by which he must abide when, moments before her arrival, he had been distraught with grief over Euridice's first death? The conditions promise that, though he may be close to her in the Underworld, he must remain deprived of her visage and must regulate his own voice. The power of Orfeo's musical

magic is nearly pointless when the gods restrict its use. Therefore, even with the conflict of differing readings, Amor consistently displays more power than Orfeo.

Another way to make this argument comes from Krieger's assumptions about how the audience should react to the gods' rules. According to Krieger, the audience "strangely accept[s] the conditions imposed and do[es] not question the gods' right to impose them — and to enforce them. … For lowly mortals, mere slaves to the gods, to be granted such grace, the relaxing of the iron law of mortality, should lead to blind obedience so that the fruits of grace may be enjoyed" (297). In this view, the gods have a power that even the audience automatically sees as reasonable. By not arguing with the gods, Orfeo actually does not have any power over them. His victory is lessoned because even the action of returning Euridice to life both times seems to be going to their divine plan. Therefore, the opera is different from the other retellings because they have a trade or reward for Orpheus's musical and magical power; here, Amor is constantly exerting power and maintaining control.

The ending of the opera, which will be discussed in more detail later, only reasserts the ways that the gods rule over men. Orfeo ultimately does turn around, breaking one of the rules set forth by Amor. However, "it never seems to occur to him to stretch the less immediately absolute injunction about telling her of the arrangement by giving her … the slightest hint or warning that might shut her up" (Krieger 297). In other words, Orfeo goes against only one of Amor's conditions; he does turn but he does not warn Eurydice. He does not test the limits of the gods' rules or try to cleverly subvert them (as Sir Orfeo might), and instead impulsively turns to see Euridice. Then, after he turns around, Amor returns to reassert divine power over the situation by saying that Orfeo can still have Euridice again.

Women in *Orfeo ed Euridice*

The women of *Orfeo ed Euridice*, for all of their similarities, are strikingly different from what we have seen in the last two chapters. In the previous adaptations of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth, Eurydice's character is primarily understood through inference; that limitation alongside the roles played by women in those cultures mean that reading those versions of Eurydice sympathetically could be difficult. According to Frederick Sternfeld, who compares several operatic adaptations of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth, "As to misogyny, it is common to the versions of 1607 and 1609, and was avoided by Peri and Gluck only by deliberate omission" (Sternfeld 196). In *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Euridice's character comes from two places: Orfeo's perception of her and her actual presence during their ascension from the Underworld. Gluck-Calzabigi first introduce Eurydice through Orfeo's first time on stage. As her corpse is surrounded by mourners, Orfeo enters and approaches her. "Sporadically, he utters three slow cries of the one word '*Euridice'*; he seems unaware of the mourners' presence, but it is the heavy, formed, ritual pattern of their dirge that sets off his uncontrolled and lacerating emotion" (Kerman 259). And that, until the end of the second act, is Euridice's main function in the opera: she is a body and a name for Orfeo to sing. In the Baroque Theater, Euridice's statuesque and veiled body occasionally stands on stage as a symbol towards which Orfeo reaches. "Seen this way, love is an expression of one's need to possess, to possess as one's own, finally to possess as one possesses oneself" (Krieger 303). However, "At stake are her reality as a sovereign self and his role as a poet" (Krieger 305). In other words, Orfeo's possessiveness towards his beloved threatens his role as a poet and her personhood.

But we must actually see Euridice's personhood in order to determine her agency and whether Orfeo threatens it. Out of all the adaptations of Orpheus and Eurydice thus far, Gluck's

Euridice speaks (in this case, sings) the most. Ovid's Eurydice was unable to converse with her husband during their ascent, and otherwise spoke very little; Heurodis, though she is given more leeway to speak and does so more than Eurydice, also has a limited speaking role. In the opera, Euridice's verses are just as essential to her characterization as her silence. Krieger describes her contributions during the couple's ascent out of the Underworld as an "abuse of language" (297). Howard asserts that "Orpheus's wife has no specific character in the opera, and it is a distortion of Calzabigi's simple, concentrated drama, to give her the lyrical interlude … of *Orphée*" (893). I believe that both of these interpretations are a disservice to Euridice's character. When Euridice realizes that Orfeo is both with her in the Underworld and still alive, she says, "What do I hear? Can it be true? / Merciful gods, / what joy this is! / In my love's arms, / in the sweet nets / of Love and Hymen, / I will live life anew!" (3.1). Despite the wonderful peace of Elysium, the realm within the Underworld which grants a blessed and happy afterlife, she is excited to be able to live with her husband again. In fact, she is so happy that she becomes upset and suspicious when Orfeo seemingly does not share her joy: "Yet a soft pledge of my tender love / in the first moment that you find me again, / that I see you again, / annoys you, Orpheus!" (3.1). His coldness towards her (i.e., the fact that he will not look at nor hold her upon their reunion) makes her worry that his devotion is not sincere, perhaps he no longer finds her beautiful or he has done something unforgivable. And, as her sorrow grows, so does her anger. When she cannot gently encourage Orfeo to express his love for her beyond desperately hasty reassurances, she actively reaches for him, grabbing his arms and pleading with him. Euridice will not take Orfeo's dismissal of her without a fight to properly talk about it, and her ability to do so demonstrates her agency.

Because Orfeo is bound by the gods to not look at Euridice and not explain himself for that choice, the audience's reaction to her desperation can easily become frustration. As mentioned earlier, Orfeo's main external conflict is with Euridice, which he anticipates upon correctly predicting Euridice's response to his refusal to look at her.

EURYDICE: One single look!

ORPHEUS: To look at you would be disastrous.

EURYDICE: Ah, faithless one!

And this is your welcome!

You deny me a glance

when I should expect

from a true lover

and tender husband

embraces and kisses.

ORPHEUS: (Cruel torture!)

Do come, and be silent! (3.1)

Euridice is angry at Orfeo for ignoring her and will not silently obey him. Orfeo cannot stand denying her and expected that she would be upset, but also cannot disobey the gods. I argue that his knowledge of her displays his love for her—he loves her enough to know how she will react—and affirms that she has a character (before the audience sees her in action). Therefore, Euridice's reaction is not inherently because of her death or some emotional interference from the gods. Because of that, Euridice's anger towards Orfeo could be taken one of two ways. On the one hand, the audience could be frustrated with her because she is fighting with Orfeo—the

main hero[31] whose success the audience should want—and is working against her own best interest. In fighting with her husband, Euridice can also be paralleled with the Bible's Eve. "[I]n Gluck's version it is, originally, Eurydice's fault for having imposed her will upon [Orfeo] in an act that mimics Eve's persuasion of Adam to break a divine compact" (Krieger 297). In other words, Krieger connects Eurydice with Eve because both women are responsible for convincing their husbands to go against the word of a god. Therefore, if an audience is inclined to blame Eve for the fall of man (i.e., the introduction of sin into humanity), then they may also become frustrated with Euridice and blame her when Orfeo turns around.

However, I also want to push back on that interpretation because Euridice is also a very sympathetic character. After all, she is ignorant. Because of the gods' conditions for Orfeo, Euridice is completely unaware of the reasons why he will not look at her. In the absence of an explanation, she is forced to draw her own conclusions. Therefore, any parallel between blaming Euridice and Eve is flawed because Eve had been told not to eat the apple. Furthermore, "As with their forebears Adam and Eve, the disobedience of Orpheus and Eurydice seems the less blameworthy because the rules laid down by the gods seem so arbitrary" and because Euridice's demands are so reasonable (Krieger 297). Even if audiences still connect Eve and Euridice, we must also acknowledge that God's order to not eat the apple and Amor's commands for Orpheus are arbitrary. Sin is only connected to apples because God said so; Euridice will only die a second time if Orpheus turns or warns her because Amor said so. An intrinsic connection between these concepts and objects is not present. Additionally, in the case of Euridice's pleas for her husband, she is not asking for the impossible to her knowledge. She is begging Orfeo to show that he still cares for her and, when he refuses, she worries that there will not be a point to

[31] In the 2013 film, Orfeo's heroic nature is symbolized in his costuming through the laurel wreath he wore up until he entered the Underworld.

returning to a life of suffering after experiencing Elysium. From the moment she died, Euridice was in a happy and peaceful garden in the Underworld where nothing goes wrong, so why should she want to return to a world where suffering is practically guaranteed if her husband no longer loves her?

The audience's potential sympathy for Euridice is extended in the 2013 performance when Orfeo is shown to be the one who killed her. To be clear, Orfeo killing Euridice (accidentally or not) is not present in the libretto and, based on my research, is unique to this film. In the first scene in the second act (where Orfeo is convincing the denizens of the Underworld to let him through), he is shown a vision of the past. In the vision, Orfeo accidentally kills Eurydice as they fight over his lyre (Gonzalez 26:30-27:25). Even though he still feels incredibly sad about her death, his involvement likely negatively impacts how the audience sees their relationship; it certainly impacted mine by making me doubt the unproblematic and lovely joy that I saw in the libretto, which I read before I watched this recording. The fact that they were fighting over the lyre calls into question how important Euridice was to Orfeo when compared to his music. Her rising anger and suspicion towards Orfeo during the ascent are also even more justified because he was the one responsible for her death. She likely knows it was an accident (or does not care), since she does not react angrily when he first arrives. However, his refusal to look at her and try to hurry their journey home (while hastily saying he loves her, too), certainly made her confusion and anger towards him worse. Altogether, this staging decision likely increases the audience's support of Euridice's reactions.

Overall, whether or not the two main women of the show, Euridice and Amor, have a significant amount of agency is complicated. Both are influential to the plot and make choices

that change the outcome of the narrative. However, both lack power in ways that may suggest a lack of agency. Amor is sent by Jove, so what decisions are truly hers? After all, though Jove is only mentioned once in the libretto, he initiated the whole quest by sending Amor. At the same time, I think Amor being the embodiment of love—something that even Zeus/Jove occasionally feared in the mythology—means that she has power here, especially over this couple and their continued happiness. Additionally, Amor credits herself with reuniting the couple in the end. In Euridice's case, she is operating from a completely reactionary perspective within the opera, indicating a lack of agency on her part, but Orfeo repeatedly operates from the same perspective. Therefore, if Euridice and Orfeo both lack agency, that lack is not centered around femininity. Furthermore, unlike previous versions of Eurydice, Euridice repeatedly and loudly proclaims her thoughts and emotions, and having the agency to speak and make people listen is not insignificant.

The Ending of *Orfeo ed Euridice*

At the end of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, the couple are joyously reunited and dance together in Amor's temple. Gluck's opera seems to decree that to love someone means that you will turn around for them, and then rewards Orfeo for his devoted love for Euridice. By the end of the show, his suffering is hastily rewarded—or, at least, forgiven—with their reunion and true love conquers all. Put another way, "Gluck's Orfeo sang his way out of grief" (Rutherford 136). According to Catherine Maxwell, the second reunion changes "the story from a tragedy into a fable of hope and reunion" (369). And when I first read the ending, I was surprised by the complete reversal of the traditional tragedy, and I enjoyed it because, instead of Orfeo being forced to miss Euridice until they were both dead, the pair was rewarded for their shared love. Because of that ending, the test Amor presents Orfeo is not cruel and becomes passable.

According to the historical context (of both operas and interpretations of the Orpheus plot) and Gluck himself, the opera had to have a *lieto fine.* "In Baroque opera, librettists usually reworked the legend of Orpheus so as to give it a happy ending, a '*lieto fine*'" (Buller 58). Firstly, the audience expected a happy ending. The opera was "a courtly entertainment written for the emperor's name-day, and thus connected with the centuries-old tradition of royal, ducal and aristocratic pastimes" (Sternfeld 174). Therefore, to fit the atmosphere of the celebration, the opera could not present a tragedy nor oppose traditional expectations. And, in the history of Orpheus and opera, Gluck was not the origin of the happy reunification of the lovers in that medium, so audiences already anticipated a high likelihood that a tragedy was hardly forthcoming. In fact, by having Euridice die a second time and then have the lovers reunite, "the two main requirements for a successful opera were fulfilled: expression of the affections in memorable music, and a finale which satisfied the expectations and emotional requirements of the audience" (Sternfeld 194). Secondly, an established allegorical connection (both in philosophy and in other operas like Claudio Monteverdi's *La favola d'Orfeo*) between the lives of Orpheus and Jesus Christ meant that Orpheus's tale had to end on a high note. "Comparisons between Orpheus and Jesus had been common ever since the Renaissance. … [Marsilio] Ficino saw Orpheus, not as a tragic lover, but as a prophet who provided insight into a higher truth. … They believed that the legend of Orpheus contained the same eternal truths that were later taught by Christianity" (Buller 70). Ficino, who lived from 1433-1499 and was an Italian scholar and Catholic priest, was very influential in the early Italian Renaissance, so these connections likely played a role in the creation of *Orfeo ed Euridice*, even if this opera does not go out of its way to metaphorically connect Orfeo and Christ. Therefore, audience expectations and the tradition of opera influenced the *lieto fine* of Gluck-Calzabigi's opera.

However, in our modern day, not everyone is content with that ending. Scholars—Krieger being the most vocal—have pronounced their dissatisfaction with Orfeo's second chance and Euridice's third revival. Krieger argues that Gluck's "opera, in imitation of the myth, has the rocking, back-and-forth movement between deprivation and recovery, but here we end with a permanent restoration. It is, I think, a singularly unsatisfying, even irritating, alteration" (295). In other words, unlike my experience of being surprised yet delighted by the different ending, Krieger believes that the lack of a tragedy undermines Gluck-Calzabigi's story. Gluck himself also apparently had complicated feelings about the ending: "Gluck lamented the inevitable—at the time—happy ending by writing, 'To adapt the fable to the usage of our theaters, I was forced to alter the climax')" (Thomason). On one hand, the composer's reluctance to change the ending may have resulted in components of the opera making some audiences experience dissatisfaction. On the other hand, his lamentation may be emblematic of some innate feature of the story, a tragic element that he felt at the time and that some modern audiences feel now. For another example, the 2013 film recording of the opera does not end so joyously: as Euridice dances in the temple, Orfeo watches from afar. Amor reaches to him, but Orfeo does not see her. Instead of being with his wife, surrounded by love in Amor's Temple, he walks away, sad and alone. To be blunt: what gives?

Though the *Orfeo ed Euridice* film is a contemporary interpretation of the myth and opera, its ending—with the couple's willing separation (at least, in Orfeo's case)—suggests that tragedy must always lie at the core of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth, which my previous chapters both support and resist. If tragedy is the central point, the necessary ending, then Krieger's motivating assumption—that the main themes of the story are deprivation and absence—is a logical one. "The illusionary uncertainty of abstraction, of image, of veiled

transparency, emphasized the centrality in the Orpheus story of the frustrating persistence of deprivation and absence – Orpheus' deprivation and Eurydice's absence" (Krieger 296). And, by Gluck-Calzabigi forcibly interjecting and reuniting the lovers, the drama of the story—and the gods' fatal judgement upon their love" (Krieger 298)—has been undermined (Krieger 299). And yet, the text of the opera suggests something different.

According to the libretto, the main theme of *Orfeo ed Euridice* is faithful and beautiful love. After Orfeo turns and Euridice dies again, he threatens to kill himself (in the film, he ties a noose and puts it around his neck). Then, Amor interjects and stops him:

ORPHEUS: Why have you come
in this bitter moment?
What do you want with me?
AMOR: To make you happy!
Orpheus, you have suffered enough for my glory;
I give you back your beloved Eurydice.
I seek so greater proof of your fidelity. (3.2)

All along, the suffering that Orfeo and Euridice endured was for the sake of love. By turning around, Orfeo proved that he loved Euridice so much that even the gods could not stop him from trying to comfort her. And his following decision to take his own life proved to Amor both that he could not live with Euridice and that he could seek no other love. Amor is the ultimate decider that the lovers can reunite, and that is only possible because Orfeo and Euridice love each other so much. And Amor acknowledges the pain of her test at the end of the show: "The cruelty / of a tyrant / causes now despair, / now distress. // But the lover / forgets his pains / in the sweet moment / of mercy" (3.3). Though the gods are cruel, mercy and love are enough to overcome

the tragedy that ends the traditional ending of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth. And the final lines of the opera, sung by the Chorus, emphasize that lesson: “Let Amor triumph, / and all the world / serve the empire / of beauty!” (3.3). In this opera, despite what the 2013 film and Krieger would have you believe, love finally conquers all.

Overall, the fact that Orfeo’s conflicts start and end with Amor’s capricious decisions and Euridice’s largely reactionary role influence how the audience perceives the story. Despite Orfeo’s attempts to gain power in the opera through his magical voice, the gods retain their ultimate control over his decisions until his undying love for Euridice prompts him to turn. And though Euridice’s increased agency in the plot comes through her own ability to speak, she also plays to the tune Amor has written. Combining all of that with the fact that the opera plays out the tragedy of Euridice’s second death, of course some audiences may respond to the joyous song and lively dance of the ending with suspicion. However, despite that questioning, the opera does end with several shepherds and shepherdesses, Amor, Orfeo, and Euridice all celebrating Euridice’s return in a temple dedicated to Love. The couple are reunited, love rules over everyone, and we are left with our happiest ending (unless we only watch the Baroque Theater performance).

CHAPTER IV. MITCHELL'S *HADESTOWN*: AN EVER-CYCLING, HOPEFUL TRAGEDY

From *Metamorphoses* to *Sir Orfeo* to *Orfeo ed Euridice*, the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice has wrestled with different ways to depict humanity and love. Anaïs Mitchell's *Hadestown* is a culmination and evolution of all that has come before. Related to Ovid's work, the story is about the love of gods and men where very human flaws such as doubt and fear result in tragedy. Then, paralleling the titular character in *Sir Orfeo*, Hades has a love for power that is destroying his relationship with Persephone. Finally, in a similar way to Gluck's opera, the gods play a greater role in influencing the plot—though they now mirror Orpheus and Eurydice instead of embodying their love itself—and the story presents a new way for Orpheus to get multiple chances to save his wife. Combined, the story is a tragedy that ultimately encourages the audience to hope and work for a better future instead of relying on divine interventions, mercy, or the eventual promise of something after death. And maybe, just maybe, it will turn out next time.

Mitchell, "a singer-songwriter and guitarist from Vermont, is known for her genre-bending, narrative-driven folk-jazz blend" (Wilson 188). From her background, she and her team created a musical where the "Costuming, acting styles, choreography, social and political themes, and the mix of jazz, rock, gospel, and folk music index the Great Depression as well as the 21st century" (Wilson 189).[32] According to Nia Wilson in "Hadestown: Nontraditional Casting, Race, and Capitalism," "[t]he production brings to life factory labor and a New Orleans

[32] One aspect of the musical that I will not be discussing in this chapter is the casting decisions surrounding race. Given that *Hadestown* uses an American aesthetic and that America has a history of racism and white supremacy, race is absolutely a viable topic of this chapter and my argument. However, that is not a subject that I have the space to devote an adequate amount of time to; therefore, more on that topic can be found in "The Director's Process" by Richard Schechner (88) and in "Hadestown: Nontraditional Casting, Race, and Capitalism" by Wilson.

traditional music venue, like Preservation Hall,[33] as it builds on the album's themes of climate change, labor exploitation, and sexual manipulation" (188). In the musical, Orpheus is a poor and naïve musician who meets and falls in love with Eurydice, an impoverished young girl who turns to Hades for work after the dangerous climate crisis takes everything from her. In other words, unlike in the previous adaptations, Eurydice chooses to leave Orpheus for Hadestown, which turns out to be a mindless industrial nightmare. Meanwhile, the mortal lovers' lives are paralleled with the struggling marriage between Hades and Persephone. Over the course of the show, Orpheus is radicalized, Eurydice is almost saved, and the audience is left with the promise that the story will be repeated. Overall, the musical's setting and themes both center around the mixture of the past with the present.

As was the case for *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Mitchell's *Hadestown* has seen multiple variations over the years. Unlike *Orfeo ed Euridice*, these variations have all occurred with Mitchell writing the lyrics. Versions of the songs were performed in Vermont and Massachusetts in 2006. A concept album of the same name was later released in 2010 (Wilson 188, Schechner 79). Mitchell later became involved with Rachel Chavkin to rework the album into a musical. (Wilson 188). Chavkin has directed many versions of *Hadestown*: one "in 2016 at the New York Theatre Workshop," one "in 2017 at Edmonton's Citadel Theatre," one "in 2018 at the National Theatre in London," and the Broadway production that started in April 2019 with an "opening at the Walter Kerr Theatre" (Schechner 79).

My own experience with *Hadestown* has been more multitudinous than what I underwent with *Metamorphoses*, *Sir Orfeo*, and *Orfeo ed Euridice*. That variation and my various reactions

[33] "Preservation Hall — without that name — began as a venue for traditional black acoustic jazz in the 1950s in New Orleans's French Quarter. In the early 1960s, the venue was named Preservation Hall. Almost every night, racially and culturally integrated musicians and audiences shared a rich mix of [A]frican [A]merican, [C]aribbean, and [E]uropean sounds" (Schechner 85n8).

have shaped my interpretations, and each version of this adaptation has granted me different insights. Though my first exposure to Mitchell's work was through a series of songs from the off-Broadway live recording of the musical, my analysis in this chapter stems from the official Broadway cast recording and a performance from the National Tour of *Hadestown* at the Fisher Theater, which I saw with my younger brother, Jacob. Though I have listened to the soundtrack many times, Jacob knew almost nothing going into the show, and I want to point out some of his significant reactions because the back and forth that I had with him was thought-provoking. At the end of Act 1, he turned to me and proclaimed that Orpheus would not be able to rescue Eurydice. When I asked him why, he said, "How does music beat poverty?" I shrugged and we waited for intermission to end. After all was sung and done, he told me that he was very impressed and annoyed. Again, I asked him why he was annoyed, and he said that they lied to us. When I denied his claim, he said, "Yes they did. They filled us with hope." As Jacob and I drove away from the Fisher Theater, we listened to the soundtrack and talked through our thoughts and reactions. As we listened to "Road to Hell," Jacob suddenly exclaimed, "I was fooled by the jazz! The swing had me swinging, but it wasn't that kind of swing!"

Over the course of these three reactions, Jacob perfectly hit the main points I was drawn to in *Hadestown* as an adaptation of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth, though his perspective is a little different from my own. To get into why that is the case and to further my case for why the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is an important love story in our modern day, in this chapter, I will analyze the relationship between magic, music, and power as wielded by the gods and the mortals; the agency and character of Eurydice and how she compares to the Fates and Persephone; and the resulting tragedy that still remains hopeful.

Magic and Music of the Twenty-First Century

The magic of older cultures, as we have seen in previous chapters, continues to influence the perception of magic in our modern society. As was the case in the last chapter, due to the detailed analysis and descriptions of the magic of older cultures provided in the other chapters, I will not belabor the discussion of it in our modern society beyond adding one observation. Throughout my life, I have seen magic, and that magic entirely centers around belief. I have been in awe of the world and people around me many times; those magical experiences often have a practical and/or scientific explanation, regardless of my knowledge on said explanation. But the existence of an explanation does not negate my belief in the magic of the moment. Therefore, our working definition of modern magic is that it is the cause and effect of anything that people react to as something abnormal, with at least one person often believing in the magic of the moment.

Similarly, the influence of music on our modern culture bears many similarities to the past; our modern music is intimately connected to emotions and the political. According to Marchenkov:

> Today it is presumed almost a priori, for example, that music's effects are confined to human psychology—at the broadest, to man as a political animal. Unlike earlier eras, we tend to think of the cosmic or mystical dimensions of music only in terms of quaint poetic license. Modernity has taken reality away from the beautifully ordered universe and from the touch of ineffable transcendence, and passed it to the human subject and society. (xi)

Our previous adaptations were created at a time when music was inherently associated with magic, whether that be through some sort of otherworldly or ultimately human force. Today, we know that music has power, but any cosmic or mystical influence has been superseded by an

innately human ability. Even so, in order for the human-powered music to have any influence, it must have an audience.

In a musical, modern music's connection to the political is exemplified in the audience's role. Throughout her book on the creation of *Hadestown*, Mitchell writes about how the focus on audience engagement impacted the show's writing and staging choices. Short examples of Mitchell's attention on the audience include "a theater audience demands actions from a song. It wants a song to have results, revelations, or both" (*Working on a Song* 25), and "the element of change and surprise kept the audience engaged" (*Working on a Song* 47). However, the engagement from the audience serves more than just the singular purpose of watching the show. For example, "The audience's relationship to the presentational storytelling of Hermes and company mirrors Hades's relationship to Orpheus's song, inviting the spectators to consider their own access to economic and social power" (Wilson 192). In this musical, the purpose of the music is not only entertainment; through the emotional and political connections that the music fosters, the audience is encouraged to think of their own lives, stories, and places in the world.

Power through Music and Magic in *Hadestown* – "How does music beat poverty?"

Within *Hadestown*, characters can have power due to one of two means—divinity or narrative—and a collective of people determines who actually has control over said people. As past adaptations have demonstrated, the gods are an often-unquestioned authority in the story, and their directives determine the outcomes of mortal lives. The gods of Mitchell's musical partially retain that quality; for example, Persephone's presence determines the weather that inarguably impacts the lives of those aboveground; more specifically, the dangerous weather is caused by the gods fighting, and the uncertainty and danger that the climate crisis causes for mortals like Eurydice exacerbates the problems they already have with poverty and hunger.

Additionally, as was the case in *Metamorphoses* and *Sir Orfeo*, Orpheus having a connection to divinity extends some of their power into him, which I will further analyze in this musical later. However, the gods of *Hadestown*, especially Hades, do not have unquestioned authority because they mirror the mortal world, especially the structures created by the (magical) hegemonic bourgeoisie and the (largely mortal) proletariat. In "The Formation of the Intellectuals," Antonio Gramsci wrote that hegemony is what "the dominant group exercises throughout society" (934). Put another way, bourgeoisie is "the class of modern Capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labour" (Marx and Engels 661n4) and "Hegemony, a term coined by Antonio Gramsci, is a dominant group's maintenance of power over a subordinated or oppressed group. … A hegemon cannot exist without an oppressed group to lead, govern or dominate" (Schrader 7). And, in this musical, the oppressed group—i.e., the proletariat, "the class of modern wage-labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour-power in order to live" (Marx and Engels 661n4)—is the mortals. "*Hadestown* is set in an underground industrial plant powered by indentured laborers, presided over by neoliberal capitalist Hades. … Indeed, Hades's factory town draws upon earlier epochs while resonating with the contemporary conflation of corporate and state power" (Wilson 189). When the mortals and the audience abide by the decrees of the divine, then the gods are the authority within the story.

On the other hand, *Hadestown* also demonstrates that storytellers, those who control the narrative, also have power over collections of people. Hermes (as the narrator),[34] the Fates, and Orpheus all interpret the story through their music, and those interpretations create space to question the unquestioned authorities. The characters' outfits also exemplify these connections;

[34] More on Hermes's role can be found in Wilson's "Hadestown: Nontraditional Casting, Race, and Capitalism" (190-191) and Mitchell's *Working on a Song*.

according to Chavkin when describing the colors of the clothes, “The gods as royalty in silver and black and green. Then as André De Shields came into the role of Hermes, we harmonized him with the Fates in a kind of silvery etherealness. And the workers became the earthen counterpart to this” (Schechner 82-3). As opposed to the divine power, when the mortals and audience listen to the storytellers, they can get the power to work towards change. Another aspect of this narrative power is the connection to emotions. Instead of a hegemon leading an oppressed group, a storyteller draws on the emotions of the characters and audience to bring people together. In moments of heightened emotions, be they negative or positive, people are united through collective effervescence. In “The Elementary Beliefs,” Emile Durkheim writes that collective effervescence occurs when “The effervescence … becomes so intense that it leads to outlandish behavior; the passions unleashed are so torrential that nothing can hold them” (218). In other words, collective effervescence is a group of people experiencing a wave of bubbling emotion that overflows and binds them together for a time. The storytellers of *Hadestown* use intense emotion alongside loud and often-energetic music to unite the people within the theater. Then, through their combined efforts, mortals can attempt to create change in the power structures presented at the start of the musical.

The initial power structure of *Hadestown* is different from every other adaptation thus far because the show presents its audience with a significantly broader cast, which allows for a wrestling between the power of the gods and the power of the collective. The first new important player is Hermes, the messenger of the gods, “a conductor of souls, the conductor of our story” (*Working on a Song* 19). And his role as a conductor is quite literal. In “Way Down Hadestown,” Hermes sings, “All aboard! / A one, a two, a one, two, three, four!” (*Working on a Song* 82). In that moment, he is both the conductor of the train to Hadestown and the music. Hermes also

starts the show by warming up the Company and then the audience, encouraging both parties to loudly echo his call of "Alright" (*Working on a Song* 9).[35] From a music and story perspective, Hermes is the opening guide, the narrator of the show who interacts frequently between the audience and the other characters. By interacting with the audience, he brings us into the cast; though we may not sing with them, we have joined them.

As the narrator, Hermes's descriptions indicate important details—for example, repeated phrases tend to signal core character traits or points of interest—and his introductions of the Company alert the audience to the most powerful characters, some of whose roles are challenged throughout the story. After welcoming the audience into the musical's world, Hermes carries on in "Road to Hell" by describing the setting (specifically, that the road to Hadestown/Hell is taken by train) and introducing us to the main themes and cast of the production. Setting aside the themes for a moment, Hermes's introduction of the cast of gods goes in the following order: "three old women all dressed the same" who "was always singing in the back of your mind," the Fates; a lady "with a suitcase full of summertime," Persephone; "the king of the mine," "Almighty" Hades; and "a man with feathers on his feet" "Who can help you to your final destination," Hermes (*Working on a Song* 11-13; "*Hadestown* Script" 3-5). Within this text and the mythology Mitchell bases it on, the Fates' power is so absolute that any king of the gods cannot defy them. The attention of the Fates in the musical is extremely dangerous because they typically amplify negative thoughts and impulses. Persephone being next hints at her control over both the mortal realm, Hadestown, and Hades himself (to an extent that will be explored

[35] For this chapter, I have primarily consulted two scripts of this show, the "*Hadestown* Script" transcribed by C.E. Martinez, which also provides various stage directions, and the lyrics found in Mitchell's *Working on a Song*. While the two texts primarily agree with each other, some variation does occur. For example, Mitchell's book says that Hermes' opening line is *Alright?* and Martinez's script says *A'ight?* In this case, the difference appears to stem from transcribing André De Shields's performance, where he tends to use more African American Vernacular English.

later). Hades, as the king of Hadestown and sole owner of wealth is also a force with which the mortals must reckon. From a visual perspective, Hades invokes the imagery of mob bosses, robber barons and tycoons, and royalty, while the mortals' outfits are typically more earthen. "Hades' appearance is reminiscent of film depictions of 1920s mob bosses: he wears a pinstripe suit, vest and sunglasses" (Schrader 14). Finally, Hermes puts himself last, making him the weakest god at the opening of the show. Simply put, the power of the gods at the start of the show is tied to Hadestown: the Fates put mortals there, Persephone's visits determine the seasons and she's the queen, and Hades is the king, while Hermes is the messenger, the almost incidental traveler between worlds.

Since the character controlling the collective is the one with the most power, controlling the audience, especially our laughter, is one way that the gods maintain their power. The gods talk to the audience more than the other characters in the show. And even though the mortal characters also elicit laughter from the audience, they are not speaking to the audience when they do (unlike the gods). As mentioned earlier, Hermes is the one to bring the audience into the world; additionally, as the narrator, he often turns to the crowd to let everyone know the goings-on and creates a sense of familiarity by referring to the audience as *brother*.

Similarly, though they do not aim to trigger laughter, the Fates will also turn to the audience and speak to us, though they are not trying to bring the audience to their level. In "Gone, I'm Gone," they sing, "You can have your principles / When you've got a bellyful / But hunger has a way with you / There's no telling what you're gonna do / When the chips are down / Now that the chips are down / What you gonna do when the chips are down?" (*Working on a Song* 120). Even as the Fates ask the audience if we would have made a different decision from

Eurydice (these lines occur after she chooses to go to Hadestown), they strongly suggest that we would not, demonstrating their rule over the entire production.

In the second act of the show, Persephone reinforces the audience's position within the show by speaking to us in "Our Lady of the Underground" as if we are attending her "underworld speakeasy, a club she ran behind her husband's back" (*Working on a Song* 145), which turns us into the denizens of the Underground and also puts herself on our level by referring to us as *Brother*, like Hermes (*Working on a Song* 142). When Persephone says the last line of the first act—"Anybody want a drink?" (*Working on a Song* 136)—the audience laughs. Hades is also met with laughter in "Epic III" when he makes the joke, "Oh, it's about me…" (*Working on a Song* 198). According to Mitchell, before Patrick Page ad-libbed the line, she had "intended for Hades to laugh in Orpheus's face, prompting Hermes's *Go on…* Now there was no need, because the audience did the laughing for him" (*Working on a Song* 206). In that moment, the audience is turned against Orpheus by Hades. Combined, these moments reveal that those who control the collective are in charge, and, since the audience is the largest collective, controlling the audience is what the gods primarily aim to accomplish.

While the gods primarily manifest their power by controlling and/or aligning themselves with a group of people, the mortals mostly find power within themselves by creating a powerful collective. From the beginning, the gods have an established power dynamic that the mortals then have to navigate and/or deal with. After he is done with the gods, Hermes introduces the mortals, starting with the Chorus and the Band, two groups of performers who have power through their numbers. "In ancient Greek theatre, the Chorus sang spoke, and danced in unison. Often representing the voice of the citizens, the Chorus commented on the actions of characters and served as an emotional conduit for the audience. Here, the members of the Chorus play the

roles of the WORKERS" ("*Hadestown* Script" 2). In *Hadestown*, the Chorus/Workers are an on-stage extension of the audience. While the audience is not necessarily meant to share the opinions or roles of the Chorus/Workers, the show occasionally does align their position with a projected interpretation of the audience. Hermes continues by introducing Orpheus, then Eurydice. Later, the power of the collective is something that Orpheus uses to help him try to get Eurydice back from Hades, so it makes sense that the Chorus is deemed the most important within the mortal cast. Orpheus being next makes sense because of his magical music, which gives him influence with his storytelling. And Eurydice, a character who feels powerless throughout most of the musical (especially in the beginning) being introduced last speaks to her position in the ensemble.

While the leading mortals do not often garner the audience's favor through laughter like the gods, Orpheus and Eurydice still gain power through an emotional connection to the audience. Specifically, Mitchell intends to make the audience sympathetic towards both Orpheus and Eurydice. The repeated motifs that define Orpheus—"a poor boy working on a song" (*Working on a Song* 14)—and Eurydice—"a young girl looking for something to eat" (*Working on a Song* 15)—call attention to the couple's youth and poverty, which begins the process of getting the audience to empathize with them from the beginning of the story. Then, Hermes goes into more detail about what makes each of them tick. In the case of Orpheus, he "was the son of a muse / And you know how those muses are / Sometimes they abandon you / And this poor boy, he wore his heart / Out on his sleeve / You might say he was naive / To the ways of the world" (*Working on a Song* 23-24). Orpheus is separated from his mother because she chose to leave, yet that does not make him resentful. Hermes has sheltered the boy and Orpheus has blossomed into a caring young man who is perhaps too trusting for his own good. For Eurydice, Hermes

tells us that she was "A runaway from everywhere she'd ever been / She was no stranger to the world / She was no stranger to the wind / … / Wherever this young girl went / The Fates were close behind" (*Working on a Song* 21-22). Eurydice has been exposed to the harshness of the world, the Fates hounding her at every turn. Even so, her experiences have not made her hateful; instead, she is a practical young woman who does what she can to survive. The costuming also creates connections between the mortals, the gods, and the audience's world beyond the musical. According to Chavkin, "By the time we got to Broadway, the workers are in rustbelt colors and shapes. … We put Reeve [Orpheus] in the Hermes/workers pallet, a light rust-colored shirt and wearing Hermes's old gray pants. And stumbling into all this is Eva [Eurydice] in her black slip, tying her to Hades" (Schechner 83). The costuming reasserts Eurydice's and Orpheus's poverty and is a visual indicator of the similarities between Hermes's and Orpheus's ideologies and between Hades's and Eurydice's ideologies. Altogether, both Orpheus and Eurydice have struggled and learned their own perceptions of the world: she is realistic while he is hopeful. From that point onward, the audience can commiserate with and feel compassion toward the young, soon-to-be couple.

But sympathy alone is not enough to counter divine power; as we have seen multiple times in the other adaptations, Orpheus's magic and power comes from his music, i.e., his voice and his arch-top electric guitar. In *Hadestown*, some of that power comes from being the son of a muse, as he was in *Metamorphoses* (*Working on a Song* 14). Additionally, Orpheus has befriended at least one god (though, unlike in Ovid, he's allied with Hermes instead of Apollo or Dionysus/Bacchus). According to Hermes, "You might say the boy was touched… / … / Cause he was touched by the gods themselves!" ("*Hadestown* Script" 7). Being *touched by the gods* also provides justification for his power that a modern audience (who may or may not get the

reference to the muses) would understand. As always when it comes to Orpheus, he cannot be described without his singing being incredibly important. Orpheus clearly thinks very musically; he does not speak to Eurydice in his introduction, despite the fact that she does not sing in return. He also immediately equates her name to "a melody," which he means to be a compliment ("*Hadestown* Script" 13).

Orpheus's actual musical magic grants him power because he uses it to tap into the emotional storyline of the musical, starting with Eurydice. At the beginning of the musical, Eurydice is suspicious that Orpheus can provide for her. During "Wedding Song," Orpheus promises that his music will provide everything the pair needs for their wedding and life (such as wedding bands, food, spring, etc.). Then, at her prompting, Orpheus sings the love melody, which is a wordless tune composed of repeating "la" over and over, for Eurydice. As he does, a red flower blooms, providing definitive proof that Orpheus's music is magical and convincing Eurydice of his sincerity. "It felt right for Orpheus, with his faith in the impossible, to wax poetic about the power of song. It also felt right for practical-minded Eurydice to counter his faith with realism. … It was a test Orpheus could win right before our eyes, which made it a turning point for both Eurydice and the audience" (*Working on a Song* 45-46). Orpheus promises Eurydice, who has had a very difficult life, that he will make all of her woes disappear with his song. In just a few lines, Orpheus has changed her mind and his proposal is accepted. Through his song and a quick musical miracle, he has swayed Eurydice from being completely against the idea of marrying a stranger to being completely on board.

Unlike past versions of Orpheus, this musician's musical power is not solely for himself and Eurydice; his primary goal is to use his song to fix the upperworld's climate crisis. The very first piece of music that the audience hears from Orpheus is the song that he will use to try and

change the world, i.e., the love melody. When he meets Eurydice for the first time, he explains why he is working so hard to write his song:

> ORPHEUS: That's what I'm workin' on.
>
> ORPHEUS & CHORUS: *A song to fix what's wrong*
>
> *Take what's broken, make it whole*
>
> *A song so beautiful*
>
> *It brings the world back into tune*
>
> *Back into time*
>
> *And all the flowers will bloom—* " ("*Hadestown* Script" 14)

Orpheus's declaration is also tied to the most important visuals of the show: the return of spring and flowers. He is a hopeful young man who sees the ways that the world can be better, regardless of the current moment. He will improve the world through the magic of the love melody, which Hermes tells him is actually the old, forgotten love song of Hades and Persephone.[36] Therefore, Orpheus's song is shown to be a divine. Furthermore, as Orpheus sings this song, the world repeatedly slows and almost completely stops around him, which connects him to previous adaptations of the character. According to Marchenkov, "the moments of arrested time that Orpheus's playing and singing bring about are breakthroughs into the ideal state of the world. Music enunciates what the world ought to be and thereby reveals how far its current state falls short of perfection" (27). As time bends to Orpheus's will, the love melody highlights the imperfection and the potential of the world around him. The world may currently be broken and out of tune, but Orpheus's music has the potential to bring balance back into the

[36] His goal also connects him back to the origins of the Orpheus mythos. When discussing the original myth, Marchenkov comments that "Just as it affirmed the unity of man and nature, the myth also pointed to music's role in assuring cohesion within human community" (Marchenkov 6). As stated above, nature and community will be brought together and healed with Orpheus's music.

world.[37] Additionally, Orpheus, through singing this powerful song that the gods have forgotten, is using a divine power that the gods do not currently have. As Mitchell puts it, the love melody is "this haunting, wordless *la la* refrain that switches from minor to major and back again. … [T]he refrain was…a gift for Orpheus to deliver back into the underworld. … [I]t went a long way toward answering the question 'What's so special about Orpheus?' in a sung-through musical" (*Working on a Song* 54).

But why has the love song been forgotten? Because Hades has rejected the power of the narrative in exchange for the power of divinity. And he has done so because of his fear. In "Epic II," Orpheus realizes that "for half of each year, with Persephone gone / [Hades'] loneliness moves in him, crude and black / He thinks of his wife in the arms of the sun / And jealousy fuels him / And feeds him, and fills him / With doubt that she'll ever come / Dread that she'll never come / Doubt that his lover will ever come back" (*Working on a Song* 96). As Orpheus reveals here (and as the audience is shown when Hades takes a more active role in the plot), Hades is afraid of losing Persephone to the aboveground world, the world in which she was born and to which she obviously longs to return. In his fear of rejection, Hades has walled himself in physically and emotionally; he has tried to stop feeling pain by forcing productivity. And, in his pursuit to avoid pain and fear and doubt, he has forgotten what he was even trying to protect and

[37] Throughout the musical, Orpheus also gets caught up in the song; the world may stop for him, but that does not mean it stops for everyone. In "Road to Hell," Orpheus is "lost in his own world, touched by the gods as Hermes puts it; singing his 'Epic' melody. Hermes has to introduce him twice, because he doesn't hear the audience's applause the first time. That little gesture alone seemed to endear him to the audience more quickly" (*Working on a Song* 20). Later, during "A Gathering Storm," Orpheus sings the love melody as the Fates and a storm torment Eurydice. While discussing the writing process for the song, Mitchell writes, "when I began reframing Orpheus as naive, otherworldly, *touched by the gods*—it seemed suddenly natural that instead of ignoring Eurydice, Orpheus doesn't even hear her. He's in his own world; he can't really help it" (*Working on a Song* 95). The staging at the Fisher Theater reinforced this idea when, during this song, Orpheus is placed on the right side of the stage near the rest of the band, separate from the other characters.

hold on to in the first place: his love for Persephone and her love for him.[38] From this point, he follows an emotional trajectory that Yoda warns about in *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace*: "Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering." I am specifically quoting the Jedi Master here because my analysis of Hades follows his train of logic. First, Hades is afraid, and he is so afraid that he spirals and eventually everyone suffers. From his fear, he gets desperate until he is angry. In "Chant," he tells Persephone to "Think of [his changes to Hadestown] as my desire for you / … / Think of it as my despair for you" (*Working on a Song* 100, 102). Hades, to the best of his ability, desperately tries to force Hadestown to be like or even better than the world above and he fails. Put another way, Mitchell describes "as ineffable truth about Hades" as "compulsive capitalism, the unslakable thirst for more. Hades's separation from Persephone—the woman he loves but can never fully possess—leaves a hole in his heart. He tries to fill that hole with material wealth and industry, but this is impossible" (*Working on a Song* 99). As Persephone responds negatively to his efforts to make Hadestown more appealing to her, Hades's anger grows. He is mad that Persephone wants to return to the world above (as seen in the song "How Long?") and he is angry at that world for taking Persephone away. Throughout the musical, he uses his anger to hide that fear. For example, in the staging I saw at the Fisher Theater, when Orpheus starts to play the love melody in "Epic III," Hades furiously lunges from his chair across the stage to stop him, demanding, "Where'd you get that melody?"

[38] Beyond being supported by the story and the lyrics, my analysis is also supported by the Hades actor in the National Tour. As an example of my argument, he said in an interview, "Hades, every six months, has to deal with the love of his life wanting to leave him for six months and it's heartbreaking. It's awful. And that's why Hadestown. It's all about, like, 'look what I did. I made it brighter down here, I made it warmer down here for you. Why am I not enough? You always wanna leave and go back up there. Why are you not happy down here?' Hades is cold, but he's doing *everything* he can to possibly impress and keep Persephone there, which scares her 'cause then she sees everything and all the workers and all that stuff. … You could just play Hades as, like, the evil bad guy, but, like, his whole character is based off Persephone" (Colón). I saw Nickolaus Colón perform at the Fisher Theater, and it was his performance that helped me see the evolution of Hades's emotional turmoil in the show.

(*Working on a Song* 198). Orpheus is only spared from another beating because Persephone stands in his way.

And so, as his anger rots, Hades hates the world that takes his lover away; in fact, he makes his hatred so big that it cannot be contained within himself, so he festers that hatred within his Workers during "Why We Build the Wall." By spreading his hatred through the Workers of Hadestown, Hades generates more power for himself, demonstrating that he also has access to musical magic. The call and response within "Why We Build the Wall"—where the company responding does include Persephone; for all she is upset with him, he is still her king—shows Hades's power and control. Within the company, only Hermes does not join Hades's song, which hints that his role as the narrator does help remove him from Hades's influence and foreshadows that Orpheus will need to tap into a narrative song to change the king's heart. Even so, Hades's musical control builds until the crowd is entirely in sync with its king:

> COMPANY: What do we have that they should want?
>
> We have a wall to work upon
>
> We have work and they have none
>
> HADES: And our work is never done
>
> My children, my children
>
> And the war is never won
>
> HADES & COMPANY: The enemy is poverty
>
> And the wall keeps out the enemy
>
> And we build the wall to keep us free
>
> That's why we build the wall
>
> We build the wall to keep us free (*Working on a Song* 135-136)

The way Hades uses music is a dark inversion of Orpheus's music: the collective is controlled by Hades, and he conducts with no space for the Workers to play in the meter while he encourages their mindless obedience. When Hades refers to the Workers (and, in a way, the audience, since he is largely facing us during this song with his microphone) as children, he places himself above them both physically and with his language.[39] Hades also is incredibly passionate during this song; the Company can sound a bit lively at points, but Hades is almost angry in his conviction as he charismatically leads the group. "As he sings, Hades power postures: he stands center stage at a microphone, his chest thrust, arms at his sides, hands slightly clenched, feet hip distance apart. Directly facing the audience, Hades is an archetypal figure of (white) patriarchal power" (Wilson 190). Altogether, this scene is a demonstration of how Hades maintains power through bourgeoisie hegemony.[40]

Because Hades has emotionally closed himself off from Persephone and his Workers, only allowing them to feel his hatred instead of acknowledging their emotions, he also uses his divine power as *king of the mine* to maintain control. In the mythology, Hades was the god of wealth/money/jewels because those items came from underground, which was his domain. In the musical, "Hades' domain is that of industry: his railroad takes people to the underworld; once there, they become his slaves. … The workers wear overalls and mining headgear" (Schrader 15). In other words, Hades creates an oppressed underclass and then exploits them in order to gain wealth and power. The characters' backgrounds also reveal the emphasis on money in this show. The living world being poor is juxtaposed by the wealth of Hadestown. The people of

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[39] More on how the familial language connects to hegemony can be found in Schrader's "'Why We Build the Wall': Hegemony, Memory and Current Events in Hadestown" (17-18).

[40] More on the staging of his scene, Hades's role as a hegemon, and how "Why We Build the Wall" connects to the current political climate can be found in "Hadestown: Nontraditional Casting, Race, and Capitalism" by Wilson and "'Why We Build the Wall': Hegemony, Memory and Current Events in Hadestown" by Schrader.

Hadestown are not wealthy, though; only Hades is rich. Despite that, people desperately want to go to Hadestown because they believe (as Eurydice does) that they will find prosperity there. However, according to Hermes, "*Everybody hungry* / *Everybody tired* / *Everybody slaves by the sweat of his brow* / *The wage is nothing and the work is hard* / *It's a graveyard in Hadestown*" ("*Hadestown* Script" 32). Hadestown is almost worse than the living world. At least in the land above, there is a sense of community. Hades is the owner of a mine growing rich off of the underpaid and overworked labor of his workers.

Returning to Hades's emotional journey, from the hatred he feels and spreads, suffering proliferates and is the reason that Orpheus must overcome Hades. In "Way Down Hadestown Reprise," Hades suffers because he distances himself from Persephone even as he drags her back to Hadestown. Persephone suffers because she cannot stand to be in Hadestown and can only get by with alcohol and drugs. The Fates inform us, "A lot of souls have gotta die / To keep the rust belt rolling / A lot of spirits gotta break / To make the underworld go round" (*Working on a Song* 152). In other words, the Workers must multiply (which is part of the reason Hades brings Eurydice into the fold), and then suffer as they lose their identities and work forevermore. And the world above also suffers as the seasons are thrown out of balance, leaving people who are poor and hungry in their wake. As Hermes says in "Chant," "But she had not seen nothing / … / Like the mighty storm she got caught in / … / Only took a minute / … / But the wrath of the gods was in it" (*Working on a Song* 105). The wrath of the gods, even more than Persephone's absence, is the cause of the terrible storm.

Because Hades has emotionally closed himself off from other characters, his power can only be countered by reducing his control over the collective and reintroducing love into his heart. Therefore, Orpheus must first gain power from the Workers, of which the audience knows

he is capable due to his earlier collaborations with the chorus. In "Come Home With Me," Orpheus gains more power and impact from the Chorus joining him as he earnestly sings his introduction to Eurydice. In "Come Home with Me," Orpheus begins by asking her to come home with him; then, with the Chorus, he tells her that he is "*The man who's gonna marry you / I'm Orpheus*" ("*Hadestown* Script" 13). According to Mitchell, the Chorus supporting some of Orpheus's lines served two purposes. First, the "choral quality could come and go quite naturally and set certain lines apart from others, lift them into a celestial place—very Orphic" (*Working on a Song* 38). In other words, the emphasis that a group of singers place on certain lines gives those lines a divine quality. Second, "This idea was one we'd toyed with for a long time: that the source of Orpheus's power is his audience, his communion with others. He sings, and the world sings back" (*Working on a Song* 74). Therefore, Orpheus's power is not just his divine birthright, but in the support that he gets alongside his storytelling. When Orpheus leads the narrative with his song and the collective supports him, Orpheus has power.

In his journey to retrieve Eurydice and restore harmony to the world, Orpheus first undermines Hades's power by getting into Hadestown without a ticket with his collective and narrative-driven song. As he sings "Wait For Me," the company sings the lines with him:

ORPHEUS: I'm coming, wait for me

COMPANY: Wait

ORPHEUS & COMPANY: I hear the walls repeating

COMPANY: Wait

ORPHEUS & COMPANY: The falling of my feet and

It sounds like drumming

COMPANY: Wait

ORPHEUS & COMPANY: I hear the rocks and stones

COMPANY: Wait

ORPHEUS and COMPANY: Echoing my song

ORPHEUS: I'm coming (*Working on a Song* 128-129)

As he continues to repeat the love melody with the company's assistance, his song opens the crack in the wall. In the production I watched, the background walls of the stage shook and fell, allowing Orpheus (and the audience) to enter Hadestown. Orpheus's song and its echo thusly gain a magical quality that gives Orpheus the power to undermine Hades's wall. Additionally, this song allows the "audience to applaud for their hero," which helps "their ability to fall in love with him" (*Working on a Song* 132). In a later song, "Come Home with Me Reprise," Orpheus describes the journey as "*I sang a song* / *So beautiful* / *Stones wept and they let me in* / *And I can sing us home again*" ("*Hadestown* Script" 69). Even Orpheus recognizes his own magical power.

Orpheus's infiltration is initially met with Hades's anger and hatred, but Orpheus responds by tuning the Workers to his song instead of Hades's. After knocking Orpheus down several emotional pegs, Hades directs the Workers to beat Orpheus for trespassing and doesn't even stick around to watch. In response to Hades's anger, the beating, and the new knowledge that Eurydice chose to leave him, Orpheus's naivety has been challenged and he has been changed, as shown in "If It's True". He acknowledges that if nothing ever changes, then he will leave. However, the Workers hear him and begin to question their existence under Hades's rule. They echo Orpheus's lyrics, meaning that Orpheus's music is overcoming Hades's hold over the Workers. They stop working and start standing up and looking each other in the eye. Change is unfolding because Orpheus questions the powers in place. In "Chant Reprise," Orpheus sings, "I believe we're stronger than they know / I believe that we are many / I believe that they are few /

… / And it isn't for the few to tell the many what is true" (*Working on a Song* 176). Orpheus has learned in the power of the collective, he gifts the Workers class consciousness. Overall, The song tells "the broader story of the Worker's awakening and Orpheus's emergence as an unwitting political leader" (*Working on a Song* 180). "The arrival of Orpheus in the underworld in Act 2 provides hope – not only for Eurydice but also for the workers. … The workers begin to reclaim some agency, as well as hope that Orpheus might show them a way out of the underworld" (Schrader 22). Orpheus's music rallies the workers who have been denied their individuality, who have worked without end for who knows how long. He calls out the unfairness of the foreman, their king, owner, and boss, and asks them to stand with him. He has once again moved the unmovable and has turned the tide of public opinion against Hades. "Orpheus channels the voices of the masses. The magic of Orpheus's singing is dramatized through the Workers' vocals, which echo and expand upon Orpheus's delicate falsetto melodies and lush harmonies" (Wilson 191). He calls for the strength of the collective, saying that they will always be stronger together than they were alone, and they rally together with him. Now, they can work together to make something better (change their fate and *the way it is*) by raising their voices and heads. At the very least, using the collective, they can try to change.

Meanwhile, Hades still attempts to maintain his power through his wealth and divine might, dismissing Orpheus's emotional pleas. He hears Orpheus's belief in love and change and, in "Chant Reprise," Hades rejects love and reaffirms his dedication to his hegemonic power:

Now I sing a different song

One I can depend upon

A simple tune, a steady beat

The music of machinery

You hear that heavy metal sound?

The symphony of Hadestown

And in this symphony of mine

Of power cords and power lines

Young man, you can strum your lyre

I have strung the world in wire

Young man, you can sing your ditty

I CONDUCT THE ELECTRIC CITY! ("*Hadestown* Script" 83)

His electric song (i.e., his divine power) has overwhelmed his love (i.e., his original narrative/emotional power), and this song should not be underestimated. After Hades sings the last line, the lights flicker and completely shut down for a moment. Throughout the musical's stay in Hadestown, the chanting of the workers has served as a steady beat, stuck in their simple and mandated tune (i.e., Hades's current narrative power). Hades tries desperately to hide his own concerns about Orpheus by completely underplaying the young man's capabilities and overemphasizing his own. He thinks his larger and more structured symphony will be able to outperform Orpheus. He becomes so confident, in fact, that he challenges Orpheus, saying that he will give the boy one chance to change his mind. If Orpheus fails, Hades will kill him.

And finally, Orpheus is properly given the chance to push the power of the narrative over the divine. In "Epic III", Orpheus uses the love song and what he has learned throughout his journey to soften Hades's heart:

Afraid to look up, and afraid to let go

So he keeps his head low, he keeps his back bending

He's grown so afraid that he'll lose what he owns

But what he doesn't know is that what he's defending

Is already gone

……

Where is the man with his arms outstretched?

To the woman he loves

With nothing to lose

Singing la la la la la la la ("*Hadestown* Script" 86)

The love melody and the Epic it resides within, the song that Orpheus has worked on throughout the musical, is finally completed. And Hades joins him in the song. This is the only retelling where we hear how Orpheus's music moves the king. In *Orfeo ed Eurydice*, Gluck-Calzabigi are not explicitly clear about what specific music moves Zeus and Amor into letting Orfeo retrieve Euridice. In *Sir Orfeo*, the poet could get away with just telling the audience that Orpheus's music was powerful. In *Metamorphoses*, Ovid recounted the lyrics, but couldn't include the music itself for obvious reasons. Here, the audience must be convinced that the music they're hearing is good enough to move this angry and dangerous king. To do so, Mitchell introduced the melody during the beginning of the show, and repeatedly emphasizes its importance with the other powerful characters around Orpheus (such as Hermes). Beyond just the melody (which I personally think is beautiful), Orpheus moves the king with the tale of his own love life with Persephone. Then, he shows great empathy for the king who just threatened his life by showing that he understands the god's fears. He implores the god to once again feel the love he once felt for his wife. As a result of their music, another red flower blooms in Hades's hand, which he gives to Persephone. "Orpheus had really done what he set out to do" (*Working on a Song* 211).

Hades is moved and the gods dance, and to fully get into the reasons why, we must talk about the women of the show.

Women in *Hadestown*

Ultimately, the women of *Hadestown* can and do have comparable levels of agency to the men. They are so interconnected to the plot that, unlike in my previous chapters, integrating some of their choices and actions within the previous section was unavoidable. The goddesses even get to participate in the struggle between the powers of the divine and the narrative. The character growth that both Persephone and Eurydice undergo demonstrates their agency and importance to the story and further connects the audience to the hope and tragedy of the musical's ending. Overall, the women are able to make choices and the story does not condemn them when those choices are unwise; additionally, even in this double love story where the relationships are arguably the most important, not every decision the women make revolve around the men.

As mentioned earlier, the Fates are the most powerful characters in the cast; Hermes introduced them first and they also use the power of the collective within themselves (because there are three of them). The Fates also have a connection to music because each one has their own instrument: accordion, violin, and tambourine. While they sing, they also build on each other; often one or two Fates will start singing and then the other(s) will join, meaning they connect to their own, self-contained collective.[41] They are powerful, they are magical, and they are musical. None of the other characters truly resist their influence for the entire show; however, they typically influence by magnifying the negative thoughts already in a character's own mind,

[41] The lyrics found in "*Hadestown* Script" exemplify this better than *Working on a Song*, which treats the Fates as one entity.

as seen with Eurydice, Hades, and Orpheus.[42] As Hermes puts it in another line that the show repeats, the Fates are "Always singing in the back of your mind…" (*Working on a Song* 22). Therefore, while they do not make anyone do anything, the Fates are integral to the plot and forces of nature in their own right.

The other primary goddess, Persephone, is also important to the musical because of her power and choices, giving her a range of moments where she has varying degrees of agency. Persephone's power, i.e., her connection to the weather and spring, was already discussed above. And through that connection, we can see that "Persephone's struggles in the underworld reflect the earth's struggles against industry and the human-made pollution it has caused" (Schrader 16). At the beginning of the musical, Persephone is doing her best to live and help people while she can. In the aboveground world, she sings, "Who is doing the best she can? / Persephone, that's who / Now some may say the weather ain't the way it used to be / But let me tell you something that my mama said to me: / You take what you can get / And you make the most of it" (*Working on a Song* 58). Persephone is not a perfect woman; she is an alcoholic and is dismissive of the troubles in the living- and Underworld, likely because she cannot change Hades's actions and the suffering they cause. In "Way Down Hadestown," when Persephone learns that she has to return to her husband, she sings the line "*Give me morphine in a tin*. … Apparently, at some point in American history, coal miners had a (secret) practice of bringing a tin of morphine with them down the shaft, in case of a cave-in or a flood—to numb their pain and panic, or to take the end of their lives into their own hands" (*Working on a Song* 85-86). In addition to her alcoholism, the line and its meaning reveal that Persephone feels trapped in a situation that only brings her misery at the beginning of the musical. However, the musical also acknowledges that

[42] The Fates specifically target Orpheus three times by exaggerating and echoing his inner doubt in "Wait For Me," "Nothing Changes," and "Wait for Me Reprise." Their efforts then come to a head in "Doubt Comes In."

"Persephone herself bears some responsibility for the deterioration of her marriage and the world. Hades's compulsion is the engine of the problem, but Persephone's not a blameless victim. She's in denial, drowning her cares from one scene to the next in her beloved 'fruit of the vine'" (*Working on a Song* 185). Persephone's avoidance of the issues between herself and Hades have only encouraged the problems they face and cause.

At the same time, Persephone also has admirable strength. In the opening of the second act, she parallels Hermes's series of introductions from the top of the show. Persephone introduces the audience to all of the performers (since Hermes just gestured to them earlier): "Ladies and gentlemen, (Trombonist) on the trombone!" and so on for the cellist, violinist, drummer, bassist, guitarist, pianist (*Working on a Song* 144). By resembling Hermes's introductions, Persephone is embodying the narrative power that he wields. Additionally, according to Mitchell, introducing the band members by name also "enhanced" the "casual, clubby feeling" of "Our Lady of the Underground" (*Working on a Song* 147). By creating that atmosphere and individualizing the performers by crediting them, Persephone has further endeared the audience to her, even as she goes along with Hades's command in public. Her strength is also seen in the many ways that she does stand up to Hades; for example, speaking out against Hades's increased industrialization of Hadestown in "Chant," running a speakeasy behind his back in "Our Lady of the Underground," and standing between him and Orpheus in "Papers Intro & Papers." As also seen in these examples, she grows throughout the narrative by moving from privately arguing with Hades to publicly standing against him when he has gone too far for her liking. Though she is not the most powerful character within Hadestown, she acts when she can by communicating with Hades.

Like Persephone, Eurydice also has to make difficult choices, and musical works to ensure that the audience is understanding and sympathetic to her even when she does not choose Orpheus. At the beginning of the musical, Eurydice is strong and practical-minded. According to Chavkin, "Eurydice, like Hades, sees the world through the lens of doubt, and concerns about financial security, and housing, and food security" (Schechner 81-82). Her characterization is exemplified through Hermes' repeated description of her as *a hungry young girl* and "Eurydice's lines *Anybody got a match?* and *Give me that* … [which] have become essential to her character" (*Working on a Song* 27). She is willing to ask and fight for her needs, as also seen in "Wedding Song." Therefore, when she eventually reaches her breaking point—courtesy of the Fates,[43] Hades's manipulation,[44] and Orpheus's seeming abandonment[45]—she chooses to leave Orpheus for Hadestown. In "Gone, I'm Gone," Eurydice sings, "Orpheus, my heart is yours / Always was, and will be / It's my gut I can't ignore / Orpheus, I'm hungry / Oh, my heart it aches to stay / But the flesh will have its way / Oh, the way is dark and long / I'm already gone…I'm gone" (*Working on a Song* 120). During the previous song, she held the flower that Orpheus created when he proposed to her and her ticket (two coins) from Hades. Here, she drops the flower and gives Hermes her ticket, then leaves the stage. "We'd now framed her as a tough, smart character making a clear-eyed choice. She'd come for a job, and she'd gotten that job. She'd willingly sold

[43] In "Chant," the Fates steal Eurydice's coat and all of her belongings in the "'Coat Ballet'—a sequence in which the Fates embody the elements" (*Working on a Song* 108). Eurydice also has "some verbal lines (*Give that back! / It's everything we have*…) to hurl at the Fates during the Coat Ballet. Rachel was in support of any language that might provide *access*…to Eurydice during her moment of crisis, and it had the added benefit of painting a less victim-y portrait" (*Working on a Song* 111). Additionally, the Fates tend to echo Eurydice's instinct to prioritize her own needs over anything else.

[44] In "Hey, Little Songbird," Hades capitalizes on her exhaustion, fear, and hunger. She still loves and thinks of Orpheus, but she is starving and alone. This song is as close as this retelling gets to Christian allegory, with Hades being a Satan-like figure tempting an Eve-like Eurydice to fall. In her book, Mitchell wrote about her thoughts on the connections between Eve and Persephone, too, though she chose not to pursue more overt Christian imagery in the final draft (*Working on a Song* 202-203).

[45] During the storm, Orpheus is writing his Epic, lost in his own world, and does not hear Eurydice calling for him.

her body and / or soul in exchange for the security she craved, and now it was hers" (*Working on a Song* 157). However, Eurydice did not count on the price that Hades would demand from her: eternal work and no memories or selfhood. And her terrible circumstances combined with Hades's manipulations are what engender the audience's sympathies. Therefore, her change into a more hopeful character once Orpheus comes to rescue her is even more endearing.

The main motivator behind the character growth of both Persephone and Eurydice is the love that Orpheus and Eurydice share, which is a love that is symbolized through birds,[46] flowers, and harmony and that reminds Persephone of the love she once shared with Hades. In "All I've Ever Known" (and when they reunite later), the love between Orpheus and Eurydice is hopeful and represents life, safety, and happiness for the couple. In her book, Mitchell writes about the motif of the cosmic love that Orpheus and Eurydice share; for example, when she discusses "the cosmic 'naming' of the lovers, which is a motif in the show" (*Working on a Song* 34) and in the notes on "All I've Ever Known," when she writes, "Orpheus's inversion of the chorus: *All I know's you're someone I have always known / And I don't even know you*. Cosmic love!" (*Working on a Song* 74). Their love is nearly written in the stars themselves; like Orpheus's song, it has a divine and magical power to it. And Orpheus's song, again, is the embodiment of Persephone and Hades's original love for each other, which is why singing it allows flowers to bloom. Therefore, flowers represent love and bringing the world back into tune with spring. And we are meant to see the red flower as important. Other than Persephone's green dress, it is the only pop of bright color on stage, and the flower's first blooming is the initial example of Orpheus's music being magical. In the show, love is harmony and rhythm, and love

[46] Both Orpheus and Eurydice are compared to birds, bringing to mind the idea of having the freedom to go wherever you like and a comparison to lovebirds. Furthermore, some birds are known for migrating to escape bad weather, which further connects Orpheus and Eurydice to the climate crisis within the show.

allows for a healthy cycle of the world. When the love song between Hades and Persephone is lost, the world falls into chaos.

Until Hades is moved in "Epic III," the relationship between Persephone and Hades is a dark inversion of the love exemplified by Orpheus and Eurydice. Instead of birds and freedom, Hades sees love as a *gilded cage*,[47] a trap that he can convince women to walk into with money. However, when manipulating Eurydice in "Hey, Little Songbird," he calls her his canary; if she becomes his canary in a coalmine, then her safety only exists for as long as the mine is safe. The cage Hades offers is not actually the protection he promises and believes in. The struggles that the godly couple face come to a head in "How Long?" Persephone has been moved by Orpheus's song, as demonstrated by her first refusal to drink in the entire show. She tells her husband, "He loves that girl, Hades / … / He has the kind of love for her / That you and I once had / … / …she means everything to him" (*Working on a Song* 181). She wants him to remember their love. However, Hades has other concerns: "Show them the crack and they'll tear down the wall / Lend them an ear and the kingdom will fall / The kingdom will fall for a song (*Working on a Song* 182). Hades fears that the boy's songs will result in his own demise and the demise of his kingdom. Since he built the wall out of loneliness because he feared his wife would leave him, to Hades, without Persephone's love, his kingdom is all that he has. Therefore, even if it was originally for her, Hades's kingdom is now more important than Persephone. But, at the core of it all, *love* is still the way to change the world, and the ending shows that, on its own, love is *almost* enough.

[47] In "Chant," he sings, "If you don't even want my love / I'll give it to someone who does / Someone grateful for her fate / Someone who appreciates / The comforts of a gilded cage / And doesn't try to fly away / The moment Mother Nature calls / Someone who could love these walls / That hold her close and keep her safe" (*Working on a Song* 106). He also describes how jewelry can be used as chains and shackles in "Chant Reprise."

The Ending of *Hadestown* – "They filled us with hope"

At the end of "Epic III," Orpheus has reintroduced the love melody to the rulers of Hadestown, allowing the characters and audience hope for a brighter future. Hades and Persephone sing the love melody together at last, and a flower blooms in Hades's hand. In this moment, we see the contrast at the heart of Hades's character—"king and man, heavy and light, hard and soft" (*Working on a Song* 201)—and know that "wordless choral singing" is a "moment of psychedelic auditory flashback for Hades" (*Working on a Song* 205). Hades and Persephone carefully start dancing with each other; the king is hesitant at first, but they gently get back into rhythm with each other as they dance. Orpheus has successfully sung *the world back into tune*. Meanwhile, the journey has also changed the mortal lovers. Eurydice eagerly and hopefully tells Orpheus that Hades will have to let them go and that, together, she and Orpheus can show the Workers the way out of Hadestown. Though Orpheus is more hesitant than he was at the beginning of the musical, he still loves Eurydice. In "Promises," the couple sing together: "I don't know where this road will end / But I'll walk it with you hand in hand / I can't promise you fair sky above / Can't promise you kind road below / But I'll walk beside you, love / Any way the wind blows" (*Working on a Song* 214). Their promises to each other are now more realistic than their wedding vows, and the path to a kind and better future crystalizes before us and them.

However, love alone cannot create change in *Hadestown*. Hades, after listening to the Fates encourage his most selfish thoughts that prioritize his kingdom over his love, recognizes that his "children" now desire freedom more than anything else he can offer. He troubled because he knows a riot will break out if he refuses to let Orpheus and Eurydice leave. For all of the growth he just went through, Hades has not been entirely changed by Orpheus's music. So, he decides to make their exit conditional by giving Hermes the following instructions: Orpheus is

to walk in front and not look at Eurydice as she walks behind him. He goes on to sing, “She’s out of sight! / And he’s out of his mind / Every coward seems courageous / In the safety of a crowd / Bravery can be contagious / When the band is playing loud / Nothing makes a man so bold / As a woman's smile and a hand to hold / But all alone his blood runs thin / And doubt comes” (*Working on a Song* 223-224). Hades is still very aware of the power that music and the collective possess. Therefore, he takes away the crowd and the love that Orpheus has used to power him through his journey thus far, leaving him to have to trust himself and the word of the god. Together, the lovers will have to prove that they trust each other and themselves before the gods and mortals.

The journey out of Hadestown reveals that, though Hades has not guaranteed a happy ending, the story still has a possibility of turning out this time. In “Wait for Me Reprise,” Hades and Persephone have one more conversation:

Persephone: Hades, you let them go.

……

Hades: I let them try.

Persephone: And how ‘bout you and I?

……

Are we gonna try again?

……

Hades: It’s time for spring.

We’ll try again next fall.

Persephone: Wait for me?

Hades: I will. (“*Hadestown* Script” 95-96).

Though he has placed a condition on the couple and has not renounced his hegemonic ways, Hades at least considers returning balance to the world. For the first time in the show, he willingly lets Persephone go and she promises to return. The gods have a chance of working together and restoring their relationship. Furthermore, Eurydice has now gained the confidence granted by Orpheus's song backed by a crowd. She sings Orpheus's lines from "Wait for Me" and, in so doing, she feels the power in the music of her drumming feet, she knows she is not alone, and she hears the echo. The "*Show the way* verse and refrain for the Workers…track[s] the significance of the walk, not just for our young lovers, but for the world at large. It had the side effect of really putting the pressure on poor Orpheus" (*Working on a Song* 234). Change is in the air; Eurydice and the Workers now have musical magic and the power to make a new fate for themselves. Unfortunately, Orpheus's outlook on the world is dramatically different from his views at the beginning of the musical, too.

Orpheus's growing doubt ultimately quashes the budding hope for a different ending, sending shockwaves through the audience. In "Doubt Comes In," Orpheus tries to sing the love melody to counter the Fates' echoing lyrics, as he has done before; however, he is now succumbing to the fear and doubt that overcame Hades and Eurydice. He struggles because "I used to see the way the world could be / … / But now the way it is is all I see" (*Working on a Song* 238-239). He cannot hear Eurydice, who sings her ongoing support. He cannot hear how Eurydice and the Workers are with him, right behind him, there for him. They walk up the steps towards the light of the aboveground world and nearly out. At the Fisher Theater, the crowd gasps with Eurydice when Orpheus turns, steps away from making it out. The music and the lyrics did not warn us since his movement interrupted Eurydice's verse. He lunges for her after saying her name, but she is pulled away and lifted. "[T]he lovers cosmically 'name' each

other…one last time" (*Working on a Song* 242). Orpheus freezes on stage and the Workers carry her away. After we left the theater, Jacob's immediate reaction was to feel a sense of betrayal because of the story's hopefulness, but I did not feel the same way, which prompted me to analyze why our reactions differed. Even before I memorized the show, I remembered Hermes's warning, swinging as it was: "It's a sad song / … / It's a sad tale; it's a tragedy / … / We're gonna sing it anyway" (*Working on a Song* 13). Beyond knowing the myth, Hermes's warned us that the story would follow the sad trajectory of the original myth. *Hadestown* is not a tragedy that is necessarily trying to surprise you with the ending, since the tragedy has already been forewarned. Therefore, I never experienced a sense of betrayal, though I still felt the gut punch (and a bit of surprise) when Orpheus turned and people in the audience gasped. But that moment, like in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, is not the ending. Miraculously, the story repeats, also as Hermes promised it would.

The story, motifs, and lines of *Hadestown* are an ever-cycling loop. The love melody is a song that was sung before Orpheus rediscovered it. Throughout the show, Orpheus repeatedly retells the love story between Hades and Persephone, as that story is integral to writing his Epic. Furthermore, Hermes announces that this story—i.e., the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice—has been told over and over again. Returning to lines from "Road to Hell" in "Road to Hell Reprise," Hermes sings, "*The song was written long ago* / And that is how it goes. / *It's a sad song* / *It's a sad tale* / It's a tragedy. / *It's a sad song* / But we sing it anyway. / 'Cause here's the thing, / To know how it ends, / And still begin to sing it again, / As if it might turn out this time, / I learned that from a friend of mine" ("*Hadestown* Script" 102). The story is resilient in its determination to keep trying. Not only does he accurately tell the audience that the story will be a tragic one from the very beginning, but, as the musical is ending, the characters repeat the staging from the

beginning of the play. During the penultimate song, the stage is reset from the top. The staging and the lyrics are repeating with more melancholy than before. Eurydice's *Anybody got a match?* line returns, for example. "It was breathtakingly right. There was a joyful defiance in the act of 'beginning again' that seemed to sum up the spirit of our story" (*Working on a Song* 252). Through the sadness of it all, a gentle hope echoes throughout the Fisher Theater. Hermes's voice cradles us. They sing gently, as if to return to the boisterousness of the beginning would shatter the moment like glass hitting concrete. Then hope swells as the lovers look to each other. The story has left its mark, for Eurydice holds the flower and smiles at Orpheus. When Orpheus and Eurydice look at each other, they share a familiarity and gentleness that was absent over two hours prior. The story has changed, at least slightly, after all. And we hear an old, sad love song that these characters will keep singing again and again. And though the music does not quite return to the same swing from the opening, joy and hope fight through the sadness of it all. "We must keep telling the tale and we must keep remembering, judging and thinking critically. In this way, we are all Orpheus, seeking to make a difference; Eurydice is our world, self-sufficient but in desperate need of care. We need to finish the song and continue telling the tale" (Schrader 24-25). The collective memory of the story's sorrow gives us the hope that the world does not always have to exemplify that tragedy. They will continue to sing their song, love will continue to bloom, and the audience cheers. Cheering and screaming and clapping and music fill the theater as the cast take their bow. The ending *is* a beginning.

Even so, if the musical ended at "Road to Hell Reprise," the audience would be left with a chilling grief to war with the budding hope. Therefore, the show truly ends with Persephone and Eurydice singing "We Raise Our Cups," while Orpheus plays his guitar. In the end, he is the only one in the Company who does not sing, though he continues to softly play. This song is the

audience's "final moment together, with the Company, to fully process the end of the show" (*Working on a Song* 254). The sadness remains, and so does the hope. As the cast *raise their cups* in the Fisher Theater, so does the audience (at least, those who had a drink to raise). When Persephone gestures to someone in the front row, they reach down and grab their water bottle to join in, seemingly just remembering that they have it and receiving a smile in return. The Company bows, and the band plays us out (especially the excellent trombone player!), creating joy and dancing and excitement, true collective effervescence. According to Mitchell, "We raise our cups to Orpheus not because he succeeds, but because he tries. We understand implicitly that there's value in his trying and even in his failure" (*Working on a Song* 255). Chavkin builds on that idea when she says, "We find joy in the face of, in spite of, the sad ending. We gather around the campfire to hear a sad story and through that community, that shared cup raising, we find healing" (Schechner 92). The power of storytelling, not divine hegemony, unites the audience at the musical's conclusion. Music, as an aid to that storytelling, unites us in a wild burst of energy and sound. And the musical tells its audience that, through our connection to each other, if we work together, we have the ability to *fix what's broken, make it whole*. "By telling and retelling an endless cycle, *Hadestown* wants to persuade audiences that storytelling in itself can give us the strength to overcome differences, love each other, and fight for a better future. That even when we fail, we can, we must, start over" (Wilson 191-192). Even though Orpheus and Eurydice did not make it this time, maybe they will in the future, so we could see what could be *in spite of the way that it is*. Even if *nothing changes*, we will never know if we do not try *again and again and again*. Even if *it's a tragedy*, *we're gonna sing it anyway*.

And, rare though it may be, the hopefulness in the story that maybe, this one time, the ending will turn out differently is a hope that the cast fulfills during the last performance of

Reeve Carney, the actor who originated the role of Orpheus, in his original run. As Carney prepares to leave the stage for the final time, two of Hermes' actors, André De Shields[48] and Lillias White (the current actor at the time), send him off (Gans). Shields says, "There's only one thing left to do," and White finishes, "Go on, baby, take her home with you!" (Stasak, 21:36-21:43). After a bit more fanfare and to the cheers of the audience, Carney and Eva Noblezada (the actress playing Eurydice) kiss and leave the stage together, hand in hand. However, even as Shields calls out to him— "Don't look back!" —Reeve cannot help but turn around one final time to bow (Stasak, 22:05-11:45). In doing so, Reeve demonstrates in real time that to love something is to look back at it.

Overall, the complex web of power, where Orpheus and Hades fight and lurk at the center, and the complex and comprehensible characterizations of Eurydice and Persephone influence how the audience perceives the ending of the story. At the start of the show, Hermes introduces the audience to a world in desperate need of help, a world not unlike our own. The hegemons in charge have the ability to change, at least a little, but will choose their own power when left unchecked. And even though Hades's reasons are sympathetic and his relationship with Persephone is strained, he still hurts the people around him. So, we watch a story of Orpheus and Eurydice as they love each other and try to make the world a better place. And though their love is not enough to keep them together this time nor permanently fix the world, the audience is shown a path to something better. The story begins again, and we will continue trying and working together until this ever-cycling, hopeful tragedy becomes a happily ever after.

[48] The originating Broadway actor who had already completed his original run of the role. He and the rest of the original cast are currently back for another round in a West End production to make a professional recording of *Hadestown*.

CONCLUSION

Though this thesis has covered a lot of ground, I freely acknowledge the many unanswered questions and potential expansions that lay in its wake. For example, how would other retellings of the myth (such as Claudio Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, Sarah Rule's *Eurydice*, Harry Munday's *Kaos*, or Geremy Jasper's *O'Dessa*) complicate my analysis? I have stayed within the Western tradition in my thesis, so what different conclusions could be drawn outside of the West? How do multiple versions from one time complicate my current analysis? How would focusing on one medium or several others (such as paintings) influence my interpretations? Furthermore, how does fanfiction factor into current interpretations of Orpheus and Eurydice? What parts of the story, especially in different retellings, do fans gravitate toward in their works and what does that suggest about that particular audience?

Since classical antiquity, many Greek myths have been told and adapted for a variety of contemporary moments. In the introduction to this project, I described how the Orpheus and Eurydice story differs from those found in other popular myths (such as the ones centering Hercules and Odysseus) and I asked why this couple's story continues to be retold today. Throughout this thesis, I explored examples of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice from the past thousands of years and revealed that the passage of time has certainly left its mark. Even so, the tale's themes—especially those surrounding the love and death at the heart of the myth—remain strong and only grow in the retellings.

Within the works of Ovid, a Middle Ages poet, Gluck, and Mitchell, the threat of excessive power—especially centralized to one being—is realized. Power can make gods and men fear for or be distracted from their loved ones. Power can create doubt in oneself and everyone for which they care. Even a seemingly well-intentioned gift from the powerful can

contain a poisonous corruption, regardless of whether the powerful intend for that to be the case. The only way to defeat individualized power is with an ongoing effort from a collective, and so power divides and conquers, *that's the style*. In each of these retellings, Orpheus uses a supernatural ability to get an opportunity to undo the actions of a being with consistently greater power. And in his solo quest, regardless of the ultimate ending of the story, he fails to some degree.

These same works also have varying portrayals of women. The older adaptations have a less impactful Eurydice-equivalent within the story. However, that does not mean that these women did not matter or had no characterization at all. As time went on, the seeds sown by Ovid's Eurydice and *Sir Orfeo*'s Heurodis bloomed into a Euridice and Eurydice who can act and speak more. That increase in agency by the women is a demonstration of growing cultural beliefs that women should play larger roles in their stories. Regardless, even when the cultures surrounding these adaptations may have cared less about women and their agency, the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice required Eurydice to play a part in the story.

In the end, the audience can only care about the ending, about the tragedy or lack thereof, if they care about Orpheus and Eurydice. That fact leads me to one final question about the myth: why does Orpheus turn around? The answer, of course, depends on the retelling and also develops as (and depends on) "an accumulation of past sentiments [and] as a response to modern life" (Ackerman xxii). In *Metamorphoses*, Ovid writes, "Not far to go now; the exit to earth and the light was ahead! / But Orpheus was frightened his love was falling behind; he was desperate / to see her. He turned, and at once she sank back into the dark" ("Book 10" lines 55-57). In other words, he was worried about her and wanted to make sure that she was safe. In *Sir Orfeo*, Orfeo is never presented with a need to turn around: "His wiif he tok bi the hond, / And dede him

swithe out of that lond" ("Sir Orfeo" lines 473-474). Orfeo leaves the Otherworld holding Heurodis's hand; his conflict with the Fairy King is over and their happily ever after has begun (at least, on the surface). In *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Euridice begs her husband to turn around and expresses her extreme anguish that he will not, weakening his resolve until he sings, "What torment! / Oh how my heart is torn! / I can resist no more … / I rant … I tremble … I rave / *(Impulsively he turns and looks at her.)* / Ah! My treasure!" (3.1). After listening to her pain and resisting the temptation to turn several times, he impulsively gives in. He loves her so much that he must heed her. Finally, in *Hadestown*, *doubt comes in* when Orpheus attempts to lead Eurydice away. As the Fates sing and encourage his uncertainty, Orpheus sings, "Who am I to think that she would follow me / Into the cold and dark again? / … / Who am I to think that he wouldn't deceive me / Just to make me leave alone? / … / I used to see the way the world could be / … But now the way it is is all I see, and / Where is she? / Where is she now?" (*Working on a Song* 237-239). Even as Eurydice sings her love and support, he cannot hear her. Orpheus is alone with his doubts and questions after the story has steadily worn him down, and his concerns are existential and inescapable. And suddenly, without any warning from his thoughts or the music, he turns.

Some audiences are quick to react negatively to Orpheus looking at Eurydice. Beyond the scholarly research utilized throughout this thesis, some of which exemplify that negative reaction, I also looked through how people reacted to the myth and its adaptations in online discourses. In a Reddit post for r/hadestown, at least one user is quick to point out the inherent illogicalness of Orpheus's decision to turn around: "I mean yeah, I get that Orpheus has trust issues. But if I were in his position where I can't trust anyone, I'll take the option where I KNOW I have a chance of getting what I want. And if he doesn't, he still has a chance of getting

Eurydice back" (shihtzustan33).[49] This post was not buried amongst a sea of other replies, but was towards the top, meaning it has received some positive reception from other users. Furthermore, the post is an example of a larger trend in amongst those who discuss Orpheus and Eurydice: many people have claimed that they would not turn around and have justified it through many degrees of logic. However, approaching any retelling of the myth from such a perspective is a disservice to it and the work it is doing, which is the other side of how people discuss the myth online. In fact, another user from Tumblr wrote an analysis rebutting the trend seen in shihtzustan33's reply, and their post has been so popular that screenshots of it have actually spread widely outside of the site:

> 'if i was orpheus i would simply not turn around' yes you would. if you were orpheus and you loved eurydice, you would. to love someone is to turn around. to love someone is to look at them. whichever version of the myth — he hears her stumble, he can't hear her at all, he thinks he's been tricked — he turns around because he loves her. that's why it's a tragedy. because he loves her enough to save her. because he loves her so much he *can't* save her. because he will always, always turn around. 'if i was orpheus i would simply—' you wouldn't be orpheus. you wouldn't be brave enough to walk into the underworld and save the person you love. be serious (aaronstveit)

And that is the core of it all. Myths hold up a mirror to humanity and, though some people do not like the reflection they see, that does not make the mirror less real. The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is about humanity and emotion. "The combined themes of music, love, and *theosis* are

[49] In "Orpheus 'Mit Glück,'" Krieger provides another, similar perspective in response to *Orfeo ed Euridice*: "Orpheus proves himself only a mortal (whatever his divine lineage), a man who cannot withstand the perilous insistences of his ignorant beloved. And if we feel — a bit angrily — that the gods must have known that he would have to succumb, then this too is a confirmation of their divinity and his mortality, a mortality which — whatever his divine gifts — he failed (and had to fail) to overcome" (Krieger 299).

the unifying factors in [the story's] proliferation" (Marchenkov xxii). Orpheus is not a perfect being of logic with a pure faith that the rules will always be followed. Instead, Orpheus loves his wife so much that he is willing to defy the laws of nature: death, the gods, and everything that decrees the couple's eternal separation. And then, when his song, the magic that has granted him the power to defy the universe itself, grants him the opportunity to be with Eurydice—a wife who may be loving or stubborn, "perfect" in her silence or "imperfect" in her action, but whose love for her husband typically rings true—again, his love inevitably steps in and he squanders his chance. And, regardless of what happens afterward, I find his resulting despair moving and tragic. Orpheus, Eurydice, and their love are so undeniably human and emotional that the cynical reaction—an instinct to mock the lovers for their weakness—is almost understandable. Acknowledging true feelings that can result in personal pain requires certain emotional maturity and a connection to the story is not something that which everyone may be capable.

However, when push comes to shove, such conflicting reactions are why analyzing these stories matters. Storytelling helps people understand life and each other. Throughout my life, I have struggled with understanding the world around me, and the variety of narratives and testimonies in stories have provided me with a guide through my confusion. With the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, I see a story that forces its audience to consider the ways they choose to think about the people they love, death, the power structures around them, and the emotionally motivated choices we all make. Because of that, even if *it's a tragedy*, I am sure that we will sing this song *again and again and again*. *We're gonna sing it, anyway!*

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APPENDIX A. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

aaronstveit. "'If I Was Orpheus I Would Simply Not Turn Around' Yes You Would." *Tumblr*, 16 Jan. 2024, www.tumblr.com/aaronstveit/739712555853987840/if-i-was-orpheus-i-would-simply-not-turn-around?source=share.

In this Tumblr post, aaronstveit is participating in the ongoing contemporary conversations surrounding the Orpheus and Eurydice myth. In their post, they are not describing or discussing a specific adaptation; instead, they are referring to the collective of centuries of retellings. Specifically, they are responding to the trend of people claiming that they would not turn around like Orpheus by saying that to love Eurydice is simultaneously to make it to the Underworld and to fail to reunite with her in life. I believe that their response is important to look at when considering the "So what?" question at the heart of my thesis (i.e., when considering why this myth should be retold and analyzed).

Ackerman, Diane. *A Natural History of Love*. New York: Random House, 1994. Print.

Ackerman's book explores the history of love across time and determines the different parts of how humans have understood it. Ackerman also ties in the roles of women and family to her analysis of love across time. Altogether, the historical context and Ackerman's work on explaining love will help me discuss Eurydice's role and agency in each retelling, the relationship between her and Orpheus in each retelling, and why the love in the story is integral to the myth's longevity.

Ancient Literature Dude. "Sir Orfeo, read in Middle English (complete poem)." *YouTube*, YouTube, 3 Aug. 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zx4ByQpIMBE

Ancient Literature Dude's video is a recording of them reading *Sir Orfeo* in the original Middle English, as the title suggests. Because one of the elements that I examine in each adaptation is modality, I may expand on how listening to the poem impacts the audience, such as the general bouncy and flowing sound and the nursery rhyme nature of the gallery scene. By analyzing how the Middle English sounds, I can bring in the lai's musical qualities—which are relevant to Orfeo and my argument—to my thesis.

Battles, Dominique. "Sir Orfeo and English Identity." *Studies in Philology*, vol. 107, no. 2, 2010, pp. 179–211. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25681415. Accessed 3 Nov. 2023.

Battles' article provides cultural context for the conflict between Orfeo and the Fae King. Specifically, Battles proposes that the conflict between the Fairy King and Orfeo is a representation of the one between Anglo-Saxons and the Normans after the Conquest. I believe this reading will be helpful for my thesis in its discussion of the power dynamics between the two kings (and how those dynamics relate to the culture that produced the poem) and in its analysis of the purpose of Heurodis to the story, where she is a physical representation of the contest between the two cultures. In both respects, I do not disagree with the article, but I think that I can further complicate Battles' argument.

Buller, Jeffrey L. "Looking Backwards: Baroque Opera and the Ending of the Orpheus Myth." *International Journal of the Classical Tradition: The Official Journal of the International Society for the Classical Tradition*, vol. 1, no. 3, Jan. 1995, pp. 57–79. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ram&AN=A138881&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

Buller's article analyzes the evolution of the Orpheus myth over the course of five operas and dramas with a focus on the various reasons for why the endings changed (which was

often for a cultural reason). In terms of Gluck's opera, Buller provides a perspective on Orfeo, Euridice, and the ending that I intend to expand on in my thesis. I largely agree with Buller's interpretations, but I think that more can be said about Orfeo's relationship and power struggle with the gods, Euridice's "test," and how those things make the audience feel in regard to the ending.

Colón, Nickolaus, and Showcenter Complex. "Interview with Nickolaus Colón (Hades)." *TikTok*, 5 Nov. 2024, https://www.tiktok.com/@showcentercomplex/video/7433846694938299654?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc&web_id=7461149394206639646. Accessed 22 Feb. 2025.

Nickolaus Colón is the actor playing Hades during the National Tour of *Hadestown*, and he is the actor whom I saw play Hades at the Fisher Theater. Based on the video description, this short interview was intended to help sell more tickets for the show. I will likely use the interview for Colón's comments on Hades because I believe that his insight into the character's motivations (specifically, how they all relate back to Persephone) will help me analyze him.

De France, Marie. "Bisclavret (The Werewolf)." Translated by Claire M. Waters, *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature: Concise Edition*, edited by Joseph Black et al., Third ed., A, Broadview Press, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, 2019, pp. 180–187.

De France's *Bisclavret* provides an example of how women can be portrayed in a text from the Middle Ages (since the original was likely written in the late twelfth century), and I want to compare that portrayal with Heurodis in *Sir Orfeo*. Specifically, Bisclavret's wife is an example of a non-magical woman having the agency to trap her

husband in his werewolf form (even though she is punished for her actions), meaning that women having personality and agency in Medieval Literature existed before *Sir Orfeo*.

---. "Lanval." Translated by Claire M. Waters, *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature: Concise Edition*, edited by Joseph Black et al., Third ed., A, Broadview Press, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, 2019, pp. 180–187.

De France's *Lanval* provides another example of how women can be portrayed in a text from the Middle Ages (since the original was likely written in the late twelfth century), and I want to compare that portrayal with Heurodis in *Sir Orfeo*. Specifically, the lady is an example of a magical woman having the agency to command (and the ability to initially follow through on her threats when he disobeys her) and later save the knight Lanval, meaning that women having personality and agency in Medieval Literature existed before *Sir Orfeo*. I could also mention the queen's role, because her actions also impact the plot, but I do not want an analysis of Marie de France's works to completely overshadow my analysis of *Sir Orfeo*.

Durkheim, Emile. "The Elementary Beliefs." *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, translated by Karen E. Fields, The Free Press, 1995, pp. 216–228.

In this section of the book, Durkheim defines collective effervescence, which is a term that I can use to help describe the experience of watching *Hadestown* in the Fisher Theater. Additionally, the term will help me analyze the power of a group of people within the musical.

Didier, Anzieu. *The Skin-Ego: A New Translation by Naomi Segal*. Routledge, 2016. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=1215669&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

In chapter 4, Didier writes about the myth of Marsyas, how myth generally encodes internal and external reality, and how music is involved in that process. In chapter 11, Didier writes about the space of sound (in the psychoanalytic development of babies and in some literature examples). These chapters could be used to discuss music and its percussive power, or it could be used in an analysis about the purpose of myth (in the context of my thesis, I would consider talking about myth generally before narrowing in on Orpheus and Eurydice, specifically). However, I am not currently sure how to use it in the current context of my work and I do not plan to use it.

Gans, Andrew. "Watch Reeve Carney Take Final Bow in Broadway's *Hadestown*." *Playbill*, Playbill, 20 Nov. 2023, playbill.com/article/watch-reeve-carney-take-final-bow-in-broadways-hadestown#:~:text=It%20has%20been%20an%20honor,and%20Phillip%20Boykin%20as%20Hades.

This source has information about Reeve Carney's last performance as Orpheus in *Hadestown*, including the location, the date, the other people there for the occasion (including other performers and the director), and photos from the final bow. Therefore, this source will be helpful as a way to verify certain facts about the musical and those who have performed in it.

Gonzalez, Logan Lopez. "Gluck - Orfeo Ed Euridice (Vienna Version, 1762)." *YouTube*, YouTube, 14 Oct. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUpZ1Npj23M.

Since I go into greater detail on what draws me to this retelling in my later annotation on the English translation of the lyrics ("Orfeo Ed Euridice Libretto English Translation"), I want to use this annotation to partially detail how this recording influences my reading. First, it allows me to actually listen to the music and analyze an interpretation of this

story on stage, which is the intended medium of an opera. Second, this performance provides certain perspectives on the story that the lyrics alone do not portray, such as the suggestion in the staging that, before the start of the opera, Orfeo accidentally killed Eurydice in a fight over his lyre. Though this performance is in itself an adaptation (which may mean that some of my observations about the staging get moved to a footnote), it will further enrich my understanding of Gluck's opera.

Gramsci, Antonio. "The Formation of the Intellectuals." *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, edited by Vincent B. Leitch et al., Third ed., W. W. Norton & Company, 2018, pp. 929- 935.

In "The Formation of the Intellectuals," Gramsci defines the concept of hegemony, which is the powerful/dominant group in society. Gramsci then goes on to explain how and why the hegemony maintains their control and domination over oppressed and subjugated groups, alongside an explanation of the resulting impact on those who are not in the hegemony. I will be using this framework as part of my analysis of the (often magical) power that the gods and the Fae have over the mortals in the retellings of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth.

Greenblatt, Stephen. "Resonance and Wonder." *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, edited by Vincent B. Leitch et al., Third ed., W. W. Norton & Company, 2018, pp. 2029-2040.

In "Resonance and Wonder," Greenblatt provides a definition for New Historicism that influences a major part of how I am approaching my thesis. The adaptations that I am analyzing were created in a specific time and culture, which influenced all of the choices behind these creations. Additionally, these works are not merely reflections of what

created them, they also respond to their respective cultures and times. As I use this framework, I will also have to keep in mind that whatever I discover about the past can only be a small piece of it, often mediated through several factors, instead of a perfectly accurate recreation.

Griggs, Eleanor. "The Orchard and the 'Ympe Tre': Gardening, Mastery, and Ecology in Sir Orfeo." *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval & Renaissance Studies*, vol. 50, no. 1, Jan. 2019, pp. 97–118. *EBSCOhost*, https://doi-org.ezproxy.bgsu.edu/10.1353/cjm.2019.0003.

In this article, Griggs is analyzing the role of *Sir Orfeo*'s *ympe tre* with the aim of connecting the lay back to a 13th/14th century agricultural perspective. Specifically, Griggs uses concepts such as grafting and infertility to connect back to Heurodis and her relationships with the Fairy King and Orfeo. I believe this reading may be helpful for my thesis in its discussion of the power dynamics between the two kings, though it will be mostly helpful in its analysis of Heurodis's role and purpose within the story, since she is most connected to the plant imagery. In both respects, I do not disagree with the article, but I think that I can further complicate Griggs's argument.

Hadestown. By Anaïs Mitchell, directed by Keenan Tyler Oliphant, performances by Randy Cain, Ricky Cardenas, Michelle E. Carter, Nickolaus Colón, Megan Colton, Katelyn Crall, Jaylon C. Crump, Namisa Mdlalose Bizana, Bryan Munar, Miracle Myles, Miriam Navarrete, Kaitlyn O'Leary, Mikaela Rada, Joe Rumi, Julia Schick, and Alli Sutton, 2 Feb. 2025, Fisher Theater, Michigan.

On February 2nd, 2025, my brother, Jacob, and I went to see a production of the National Tour of *Hadestown* at the Fisher Theater. This performance gave me further insight into staging, acting, and music choices that can be made when putting on the show (which

cannot be understood through listening to the Broadway recording alone). Additionally, I got to hear the reactions of the general audience reactions and Jacob, as well as take stock in my own responses to the performance. Therefore, seeing Hadestown in person has given me a better understanding for my analysis of the musical, while also providing me with different ideas that could not be acquired through listening alone.

"Hadestown (Broadway, Walter Kerr Theatre, 2019)." *Playbill*, Playbill, 2024, playbill.com/production/hadestownwalter-kerr-theatre-2018-2019.

This source is a compilation of Playbill's information on *Hadestown*, including the cast (past and current), the number of performances, the number of awards it won and for which it was nominated, and the amount of money that the show has made. Therefore, this source will be helpful as a way to verify certain facts about the musical and as a way to justify the show's popularity.

Hadestown (Original Broadway Cast Recording). Performances by André De Shields, Reeve Carney, Amber Gray, Eva Noblezada, and Patrick Page, Sing It Again Records, 2019.

The original Broadway cast recording of the musical will be one of my main points of reference for the sound and experience of the musical. Audio recordings of the show were also my first exposure to it, which has certainly influenced my interpretations of the music and overall storytelling. Overall, listening to this soundtrack will be part of my process for writing the chapter.

Haines, John. "Why Music and Magic in the Middle Ages?" *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2010, pp. 149–72. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct =true&db=mzh&AN=2011015265&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

Haines' article argues that magic is inherent to the music of the Middle Ages. Furthermore, he found that music is pervasive within the magical arts of the time. In other words, music and magic were intrinsically linked at the time, a fact that Haines also sees as true for the times before and after the Middle Ages. As part of my argument centers around the overlap between music, magic, and power in all of my retellings, I think that Haines' work could be used to support my aim as I actively apply some of this article's ideas to my thesis. Additionally, Haines provides a definition of both magic and music, which will be helpful as I construct my definitions.

Heath, John. "The Failure of Orpheus." *Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974-)*, vol. 124, 1994, pp. 163–96. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/284290. Accessed 29 May 2024.

Heath's main point is to refute the claim of some scholars that, in some ancient Greek variations of the myth, Orpheus succeeded in bringing his wife back to life through an analysis of the relevant literature and artifacts. Overall, this article may be useful from the perspective of justifying the interest in the end of this particular myth outside of a literary analysis perspective. However, I do not currently see this paper being useful beyond a mention in a footnote (possibly in the introduction) because I do not want to risk making the implication that a non-reunited ending is a faithful retelling and thus create a hierarchy where the "original" is the most valuable version of the myth.

Howard, Patricia. "Orfeo and Orphée." *The Musical Times*, vol. 108, no. 1496, 1967, pp. 892–95. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/953060. Accessed 29 May 2024.

Gluck's opera has been adapted into many different languages, though it originated in Italian. Howard's article is about the influence of the French version of the opera on how

the show is performed. Howard also questions whether or not the French influence on performances in Italian has been a good thing for the opera as a whole. This article outlines some changes between the Italian and the French versions that help me better understand parts of the original Italian, which is receiving more of my focus. Furthermore, this article can help me articulate evidence that finding a "true" version of this show is rather impossible; in other words, I can only write about adaptations of an adaptation of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth.

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Adaptation*. First ed., Routledge, 2006.

In addition to New Historicism, Adaptation Theory—which is the main point of Hutcheon's book—is the second central theory to my thesis. The concepts that interest me about adaptation theory include how Hutcheon discusses audiences (such as a knowing vs. unknowing audience), her justification for the importance of adaptations alongside analyzing adaptations as adaptations (i.e., not treating a work as an individual thing but as something that references and echoes previous adaptations, that repeats with variation rather than replication), and the discussion of the impact of different modes/mediums on adaptations. Overall, this text will provide an important framework that I will use to help with my analysis and to help tie all of my analyses of the four works together.

Jones, Edward E. "*Orfeo Ed Euridice* Program." Harvard University Choir, 29 Oct. 2014.

This program is for a performance of Gluck's opera from the Harvard University Choir. It contains both the Italian and English libretto for the show and may be what I use to cite the English translation instead of the *Opera Arias* website cited below (which is the location where I first found the translation). The program includes the names of all the

performers for the 2014 concert, as well as a message from the music director, Edward Jones, that may be useful for their insight into the opera.

Kerman, Joseph. "Orpheus and the Neoclassic Vision of Opera." *The Hudson Review*, vol. 9, no. 2, 1956, pp. 250–67. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/3847367. Accessed 29 May 2024.

Kerman's article is predominantly more about the music of Monteverdi's and Gluck's operas and how music/opera was perceived when those works were created and performed. While I will likely not go fully into detail on the music of Gluck's opera—meaning most of Kerman's analysis of the music may be relegated to a footnote or other passing mention—Kerman does provide some responses to Orfeo, Euridice, and the ending (especially their apparent dissatisfaction with the outcome) to which I can respond in my chapter.

Kieckhefer, Richard. *Magic in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge [England: Cambridge University Press, 1989. Print.

Kieckhefer provides some necessary cultural context about how magic was understood in Antiquity and the Middle Ages (especially within Courtly Culture). He also provides a definition of magic that I agree with and plan to complicate, which is helpful because magic is generally difficult to define. The cultural information that I see as useful will help me in my analysis of the interaction between magic, power, and music in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and in *Sir Orfeo*. Therefore, I will be adding my own analysis of how power and music mix to Kieckhefer's discussion of magic.

Krieger, Murray. "Orpheus 'Mit Glück': The Deceiving Gratifications of Presence." *Theatre Journal*, vol. 35, no. 3, Oct. 1983, pp. 295–305. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/3207213. Accessed 29 Aug. 2024.

Krieger's article stems from their experience watching a 1982 production of Gluck's opera in Innsbruck, Austria, and is an analysis of the show's themes of deprivation, absence, and restoration. Krieger argues that the ending of the opera does a disservice to the story and actually still produces a sadness in the audience (though not in the same way that a tragedy does). Their arguments especially bring to mind questions of Orpheus's power, the power of the gods, and Eurydice's personhood. I will be using this source for all three sections of my Gluck chapter because, while I do not agree with everything Krieger writes about the original myth nor Gluck's adaptation, I think that they provide some interesting and relevant points to which I can respond.

"Latest Events ... Orfeo Ed Euridice." *BVA International - ORFEO ED EURIDICE*, BVA International, www.bva.cz/en/music/latest-events/48-orfeo-ed-euridice/. Accessed 4 Mar. 2025.

This site provides more background information on the filmed version of Gluck's opera that I will be analyzing in this thesis. According to the site, the film was recorded at the Baroque Theatre of Český Krumlov Castle in 2013. Furthermore, Bejun Mehta was both the actor playing Orfeo and the film's artistic advisor. Since the recording that I found is not necessarily an official one, it is important to know the origin of the film.

Lee, M. Owen. "Orpheus and Eurydice: Some Modern Versions." *The Classical Journal*, vol. 56, no. 7, 1961, pp. 307–13. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3294869. Accessed 3 Nov. 2023.

Lee's article is an attempt to answer why the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice has been so popular, followed by an exploration of the validity of modern Orpheus-figures—namely, Cocteau's Orphée (both the play and film), Anouilh's play *Eurydice*, Tennessee

Williams' *Orpheus Descending*, the film *Orpheu Negro (Black Orpheus)*—in light of that explanation. Simply put, Lee believes that the myths popularity lies in how (1) it explores life, death, and rebirth, (2) it portrays the power of music and poetry, and (3) it demonstrates the tragedy that results from someone not controlling their emotions. While I do not intend to look at the same texts, I agree with part of Lee's thinking as to why this myth has been retold so many times; however, I do not think that Lee spent enough time on that part of their article, and I think that their point can be further complicated by my analysis of the retellings that I have selected.

Loewenberg, Alfred. "Gluck's Orfeo on the Stage: With Some Notes on Other Orpheus Operas." *The Musical Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 3, July 1940, pp. 311–39. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ram&AN=A837268&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

Loewenberg's article is a survey that outlines the evolution of opera and its relationship to Orpheus. Specifically, they discuss the history of operas and Orpheus in general, Italian operas with Orpheus, and the performances (including various translations) or Gluck's opera and its history. This source will be helpful for the historical context that it provides for operas and Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*.

"L'Orfeo Libretto English Translation." *Opera Arias*, www.opera-arias.com/monteverdi/l%27-orfeo/libretto/english/. Accessed 16 Sept. 2024.

The purpose of this site is that it provides a translation of Monteverdi's opera. While I was intrigued by Music and Hope being actual characters, the potential lesson of the opera (specifically, that people should not give into despair, especially when it threatens to overpower them), and its place in the timeline as occurring before Gluck's opera, I

have decided not to write about this version of the myth. The opera has many similarities to Ovid's version, with the main differences being the increase in Christian overtones and the "happy" ending being that Orpheus ascends to the heavens. Therefore, the ending might be worth noting in a footnote, but I don't think that it needs additional focus because I am already discussing Ovid.

Malory, Thomas. *Le Morte D'Arthur*. Edited by Janet Cowen, vol. 1, Penguin Classics, 2004.

Malory's work provides some points of comparison for examples of magic users and King Arthur during a text from the Middle Ages (since the original was published in 1485). I may briefly compare Merlin and the way his magic is portrayed to the Fae in *Sir Orfeo*. Similarly, I may note a connection between Orfeo and King Arthur. If I recall correctly, many kings in medieval literature were meant to be Arthur (even if they aren't named). Therefore, I may explore the possible relevance of Arthur, even though Orfeo is an adaptation of Orpheus.

Marchenkov, Vladimir L. *The Orpheus Myth and the Powers of Music*. Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2009. Print.

The parts of Marchenkov's book that I am interested in are about the interest in the Orpheus myth over time stemming from and likewise influencing varying beliefs about the different powers of music. Specifically, Marchenkov talks about the Orpheus myth before Plato, Plato's Orpheus, and the Orpheus of the Middle Ages. I am using this book primarily for the historical context it provides on how music was understood during these different points in time, which will then influence how I discuss the interaction between music, magic, and power. Marchenkov's use of the word power is more synonymous

with the way I use magic, so I will be primarily adding a discussion of power dynamics and my analysis of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to Marchenkov's ideas.

Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. "The Communist Manifesto." *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, edited by Vincent B. Leitch et al., Third ed., W. W. Norton & Company, 2018, pp. 661- 664.

Primarily, I will be using Marx's and Engels's work for the definitions of the proletariat and bourgeoise. Within my *Hadestown* chapter, I will be exploring the power structures exerted by the gods, especially Hades, and the structures defined by a Marxist approach will help me with that explanation.

Maxwell, Catherine. "Robert Browning and Frederic Leighton: `Che Faro Senza Euridice?'." *Review of English Studies*, vol. 44, no. 175, Aug. 1993, p. 362. *EBSCOhost*, https://doi-org.ezproxy.bgsu.edu/10.1093/res/XLIV.175.362.

Maxwell's article is primarily about Robert Browning and Frederic Leighton, who produced art together, with a focus on how Gluck's work (including but not limited to *Orfeo ed Euridice*) inspired them. While I will be mostly omitting their work on Browning and Leighton, Maxwell's is still relevant to my thesis. Specifically, this article will be helpful because it provides some information on Virgil and Ovid. Additionally, and more importantly, Maxwell wrote some interpretations of and history on Gluck's opera that will assist in my analysis.

Mitchell, Anaïs, "*Hadestown* Script." Developed with and originally directed by Rachel Chavkin, Transcribed by C. E. Martinez, 2023.

This script provides lyrics and stage directions that I will be using in my analysis of Mitchell's *Hadestown*. First, I am interested in this musical because, not only does

Orpheus's music hold power over nature, the gods, and time itself, but his musical power is especially interesting to compare to the music of all the other characters. Second, Eurydice undeniably makes a choice to go to the Underworld/Hadestown, which—in addition to the impact of the other women, such as the Fates and Persephone—is something I want to explore. Third, the ending is both tragic and cyclical, suggesting a hopefulness that maybe, just one time, the ending will turn out differently. Overall, I think that this musical clearly proposes an answer to why this story is retold so often, is inherently about repetition, and was the inspiration for me wanting to expand on that idea and see how it might apply to the other versions.

Mitchell, Anaïs, Michael Chorney, Todd Sickafoose, and Liam Robinson. *Hadestown*. 2021. Musical score.

This book is another source of the lyrics for *Hadestown*, which will help verify my other sources. Additionally, if I want to talk about specific moments musically (in terms of any particular notes, phrasing, etc.), I will be able to use this source for that purpose.

Mitchell, Anaïs. *Working on a Song: The Lyrics of Hadestown*. Plume, an Imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, 2020.

Mitchell's book will be useful for a couple of reasons. For one, the book is yet another source of lyrics for the show. Furthermore, Mitchell details the evolution of the show across its many variations. While those differences are not the focus of this paper, the various changes give an insight to the themes within and process of creating the musical. Finally, Mitchell gives anecdotes from the actors and describes certain elements of the costuming and staging that are not clear from listening to the soundtrack alone (and that I

may have missed when I watched the show). Altogether, her book will help me with the *Hadestown* chapter.

Munday, Harry, et al. *Kaos*, created by Charlie Covell, Netflix, 2024. Netflix.

Kaos is a Netflix show that adapts a wide variety of Greek myths in a somewhat contemporary setting. One of the myths that the show integrates into the layered plot is the tragedy of Orpheus and Eurydice. I was intrigued by the depiction of Orpheus as a flawed husband and famous musician in a more contemporary setting. Furthermore, Eurydice's role (as a wife preparing to leave her husband right before she dies) is remarkably different from the other adaptations within this thesis. However, the couple's role as part of a complex whole combined with my greater interest in other retellings convinced me to table any discussion on this version for this thesis.

"Orfeo Ed Euridice." *Harvard Memorial Church*, The President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2025, memorialchurch.harvard.edu/orfeo-ed-euridice.

This website is the origin of the Harvard program that I have cited above. Furthermore, it includes three videos of the 2014 fall concert. While I will likely not be using the Harvard performances in my analysis because they are putting on a concert instead of staging Gluck's opera, I still wanted to include this citation as a means of relocating the program as needed.

"Orfeo Ed Euridice Libretto English Translation." *Opera Arias*, www.opera-arias.com/gluck/orfeo-ed-euridice/libretto/english/. Accessed 29 Aug. 2024.

I am using this source as an English translation of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*. First, I want to write about this opera because, based on its medium, music obviously plays a major role here, which will influence how I discuss the intersection between music,

magic, and power. Furthermore, I want to explore the difference in godly power; primarily found when Zeus and Amor grant Orpheus his love. Second, in my analysis of the women, I want to explore the fact that Orfeo predicted Euridice's anger at being ignored and cannot stand denying her. Therefore, is her reaction a sign of how well they know and love each other, or does it portray a certain shallowness to their relationship? Third, as I explore the ending, this opera seems to decree that to love someone means that you will turn around for them, and then rewards Orfeo for his devoted love for Eurydice (in other words, his suffering is rewarded with their happy reunion). How does that reflect and respond to the opera's cultural moment? How does this change impact audience interpretation of the story? Combining this translation with a recording of the opera will be how I intend to analyze this work and begin to answer my questions.

Ovid. "Book 10." *Metamorphoses: A New Verse Translation*, translated by David Raeburn, Penguin Books, 2004, pp. 380–419.

I am including Ovid's version for its approach to my main themes of interest and its place as an original/foundational source by which other retellings are inspired. In regard to the theme of the interaction between music, power, and magic, "Orpheus and Eurydice" is about a demigod using music that results in him having power over a god. Additionally, "Orpheus's Song: Introduction" provides more evidence of Orpheus's musical power. The theme of women within the story is less represented; however, Eurydice does play a role where her limited presence leaves an opening for future stories to build upon. Finally, the story seems to have a sad/tragic ending as it appears in Book 10, but the couple's reunion in Book 11 complicates that and is what I'm especially interested in for this version.

Ovid. "Book 11." *Metamorphoses: A New Verse Translation*, translated by David Raeburn, Penguin Books, 2004, pp. 420–461.

"The Death of Orpheus" builds on what caught my attention in Book 10. The story continues to provide examples of Orpheus's musical magic, such as stopping flying rocks and spears with only his voice. It also ends with the proclamation that, after his death, Orpheus could finally safely look at his wife, and that they could walk together, side by side or either one leading the other. The note that they could walk side by side drew my attention to how the two lovers leave the Underworld in other versions and how that could influence the ending. Additionally, because Ovid does allow the couple to reunite eventually, I think that reading the entire story as a tragedy—as is the traditional understanding—is slightly misleading.

Passion Baroque. "Claudio Monteverdi - L'Orfeo (Full Opera / N.Harnoncourt 1978)." *YouTube*, YouTube, 9 Nov. 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3MsbVlVvHs.

This source is a recording of a performance of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* from 1978. Because I am not planning on writing about this opera (a decision primarily based on the fact that I do not think the ending and themes are distinct enough from other versions of the story that I am already focusing on), I do not anticipate referencing or otherwise using this source in my thesis.

Percy Jackson & The Olympians: The Lightning Thief. Directed by Chris Columbus, 20th Century Fox, 2010. Disney+.

Modern audiences get their interpretations of Greek gods and stories through a variety of different sources. I will be using the first *Percy Jackson* film for its depiction of Hades and Persephone. More specifically, I am using the movie as an example of the

contemporary perception within media of Hades as a Satanic figure alongside how miserable Persephone is as Hades's wife. Considering the mythological Hades and Persephone (who are important to the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice) were not depicted in such a way, I believe that the misconception should at least be briefly addressed.

Peritz, Jessica Gabriel. "Orpheus's Civilizing Song, or, the Politics of Voice in Late Enlightenment Italy." *Cambridge Opera Journal*, vol. 31, no. 2–3, July 2019, pp. 129–52. *EBSCOhost*, https://doi-org.ezproxy.bgsu.edu/10.1017/S0954586719000168.

Peritz's article is about the political implications, influence, and effect of music (especially opera and singing) in late eighteenth-century Italy. Though she does not discuss Euridice or the ending of Gluck's opera, Peritz's article will be useful for her insights into the connections between power and music both within Gluck's show and in the wider historical context. Her work will provide some insight into how audiences understood the power of music, which will also be helpful.

Red. "Trope Talk: Personifying Death." *YouTube*, YouTube, 20 Oct. 2023, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zx4ByQpIMBE.

In this video, Red talks about different examples of personifying death, including generalizing the themes and purposes of those examples into different groups. I find this source helpful for her suggestion as to why people continue telling stories that intimately involve death, of which the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is an example. I am primarily including this source because it inspired how I am approaching the "So What?" of this project.

Riordan, Rick. *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief*. Disney/Hyperion, 2005.

Though Hades has often been equated to Satan and his marriage with Persephone has not always been depicted as positive, not all texts follow that tradition. Despite the film adaptation's portrayal, Riordan's depiction of the couple throughout the *Percy Jackson* series is one such example of deviation. While this book is not significant to my overall argument or analysis of Orpheus and Eurydice, it and the following Riordanverse books have been a major factor in shaping my love of and approach to mythology, so it feels like a worthy, if incredibly brief, reference.

Rule, Sarah. "Eurydice." 19 Oct. 2004.

Sarah Rule's adaptation of the myth is interesting. In relation to music/power/magic, it makes me question, what does age mean in this play? Some examples as to how age is played with include the following: the stones could be played by children, the Child potentially turns into the man, and Orpheus (who is concerned with music most of all) and Eurydice (who has a strong attachment to her father) are on the younger side. In relation to the women of the play, Eurydice is the main character whose life seemingly revolves around books and the men in her life. In relation to the ending, out of everything I have encountered thus far, this version has the most tragic and bleak ending with Eurydice because it ends with her, her father, and Orpheus all being dead and having all forgotten each other. However, I believe that writing about this play would be better suited for a future project.

Rutherford, Susan. "Living, Loving and Dying in Song Gluck, 'Che Farò Senza Euridice' (Orfeo), 'Orfeo Ed Euridice', Act III." *Cambridge Opera Journal*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2016, pp. 133–36. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/26291171. Accessed 29 May 2024.

Rutherford's article details opera's relationship with voicing loss through examining the 'Che faro senza Euridice' aria, which occurs after Euridice dies the second time and Orfeo sings about his suicidal thoughts. As an aspect of their analysis, Rutherford details the growth found in Kathleen Ferrier's many concert performances of the aria. And though I will not be continuing Rutherford's focus on Ferrier, this article will be helpful because of its analysis on the power/meaning of song.

Schechner, Richard. "The Director's Process: An Interview with Rachel Chavkin." *TDR: The Drama Review (Cambridge University Press)*, vol. 65, no. 1, Spring 2021, pp. 79– 94. *EBSCOhost*, https://doi-org.ezproxy.bgsu.edu/10.1017/S1054204320000106.

In this work, Schechner is interviewing Chavkin, the director of the Broadway *Hadestown* production. I am using this source as a primary source that describes the costuming, staging, and Chavkin's thoughts behind some of the choices made in the show. Chavkin also puts forth some of her own ideas about the Orpheus myth, and I disagree with some of those opinions. For example, Chavkin proposes that the original myth had no politics, which I believe is a misleading statement at best. Overall, I will be using this source to get context for the musical to which I will then respond.

Schrader, Valerie Lynn. "'Why We Build the Wall': Hegemony, Memory and Current Events in Hadestown." *Studies in Musical Theatre*, vol. 16, no. 2, July 2022, pp. 117–31. *EBSCOhost*, https://doi-org.ezproxy.bgsu.edu/10.1386/smt_00093_1.

Schrader's article focusses on the themes of climate change and industry within *Hadestown*. While I will not be addressing the first topic, I am very interested in Schrader's analysis of the industry theme, especially with the description of Hades's power as a hegemon over the Workers and how said power parallels Trump's rhetoric

about migrants and walls in contemporary America. First, this article inspired me to question how I could apply Gramsci's theory to the other retellings. Second, though I agree with Schrader's analysis, I think that the article does not acknowledge the impact of the music as music nor the influence of Hades's godly magic, which I will include in my thesis.

shihtzustan33, and calebdemm. "Not Saying It Wasn't Orpheus' Fault for Looking Back, but How Was He Supposed to Trust Hades? I Know I Wouldn't. And How Was He Supposed to Trust Eurydice after She Had Already Left Him Once?" *r/Hadestown on Reddit*, Reddit, Inc., 2020, www.reddit.com/r/hadestown/comments/km9cw8/not_saying_it_wasnt_orpheus_fault_for_looking/.

I wanted to take another sample of an internet conversation surrounding the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice to serve as a sample of contemporary audience reactions to said story. This specific thread is directly responding to *Hadestown*. The poster shihtzustan33, who is responding to the questions calebdemm asks in the title, speaks to one type of reaction from audiences to Orpheus: to question his choices and claim that they would not turn around. I believe that that response is important to look at when considering the "So what?" question (i.e., when considering why this myth should be and is retold and analyzed).

"Sir Gawain and the Green Knight." Translated by James Winny, *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature: Concise Edition*, edited by Joseph Black et al., Third ed., A, Broadview Press, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, 2019, pp. 226–291.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight provides another example of how women can be portrayed in a text from the Middle Ages (since the original was written in the late

fourteenth century), and I want to compare that portrayal with Heurodis in *Sir Orfeo*. Specifically, the lady is an example of a non-magical woman having the agency to command/play a game with the knight Gawain and, if that interpretation is questioned, the looming presence of Morgan le Fay represents a magical woman influencing the plot. Therefore, women having personality and agency in Medieval Literature existed after *Sir Orfeo*. Therefore, this poem and Marie de France's poems frame *Sir Orfeo* in time, meaning that women having personality and agency in Medieval Literature both was not invented after nor was unseen before the lay's creation.

"Sir Orfeo." Edited by Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury, *Sir Orfeo | Robbins Library Digital Projects*, University of Rochester, 1995, d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-sir-orfeo.

First, I am interested in the lay *Sir Orfeo* because the poem is about a king (Orfeo) who faces off against a magical Fae king, where music plays a major role in his (potential) success, yes is simultaneously less important to him than his role as a king. Second, Heurodis (Orfeo's wife) raises many questions for me; for example, does she have agency in the story, and does Orfeo really get her back in the end? Third, because of the vagueness surrounding Heurodis, is the ending (i.e., their reunion) truly happy? Or is her involvement irrelevant because Orfeo gets his kingdom back? That then raises the question of how connected music, Heurodis, and the crown are to Orfeo, and which concept is what he sees as the most important.

"Sir Orfeo: Introduction." Edited by Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury, *TEAMS Middle English Texts Series*, Robbins Library Digital Projects, 1995, d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-sir-orfeo-introduction.

This article was written by the same editors of the version of *Sir Orfeo* that I am using in my thesis. They analyze the work how *Sir Orfeo* aligns with other Breton lays and the music at the center. While it may become more helpful as I continue with my thesis, I am primarily using this article for the cultural context it provides and for its suggestion that the lay was popular during the Middle Ages, which is important to my justification for focusing on the versions of the myth that I have chosen.

Star Wars: The Phantom Menace (Episode 1). Directed by George Lucas, 20th Century Fox, 1999. Disney+.

When my brother and I were driving away from the live performance of *Hadestown* at the Fisher Theater, I had a moment where I realized that Hades's fear was the driving force behind many of the subsequent problems in the story. After I had that realization, I remembered a quote from Yoda that originated in this film: "Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering." I believe that this quote provides a simple description of the show's main problem (originating from Hades's and Persephone's relationship). The *Star Wars* films have been very formative in my life, so I think that this connection is very important. To paraphrase my Dad, everything I have learned, I can connect to *Star Wars*.

Stasak, Ashley. "Reeve Carney Final Hadestown Curtain Call and Speeches." *YouTube*, YouTube, 19 Nov. 2023, www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9Khu8zAS2s.

Stasak's video is a recording of, as the title suggests, Reeve Carney's final curtain call and the speeches that he and his fellow performers gave afterwards. Carney originated the role of Orpheus in *Hadestown*, so I am interested in what he has to say about this version of Orpheus. Additionally, Carney's final goodbye is the one performance of the musical

where (technically speaking) Orpheus finally leaves with Eurydice, which has influenced how some people (including myself) think about and approach the show.

Sternfeld, Frederick W. "Orpheus, Ovid and Opera." *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, vol. 113, no. 2, 1988, pp. 172–202. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/766358. Accessed 5 May 2024.

Sternfeld's article covers the influence of literature (with a big focus on Ovid), opera (including Monteverdi's work), and audience expectations on Gluck's opera. For the various versions of the myth that Sternfeld discusses, they focus on the following themes/ideas: Christianity, allegory, storytelling, femininity and misogyny, homoeroticism, and the ending. Therefore, Sternfeld's article is helpful for their context and analysis of Ovid and Gluck.

The Goddess of Spring. Directed by Wilfred Jackson, Walt Disney Animation Studios, 1934. Disney+.

The Goddess of Spring, a Disney Silly Symphony short film, serves as another example of a somewhat contemporary depiction of Hades and Persephone. As mentioned in the annotation for the first *Percy Jackson* film, modern audiences often misunderstand the relationship between Hades and Persephone. This short depicts Hades as Satan, complete with pure red clothing, pointy ears, and devil horns. Within the film, the beautiful and innocent Persephone is kidnapped by him and is incredibly sad about it. Again, because the mythological Hades and Persephone are important to the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice and were not depicted that way in their myths, I believe that the misconception should at least be briefly addressed.

Thomason, Paul. “Gluck’s *Orfeo Ed Euridice*.” *Orfeo Ed Euridice | Metropolitan Opera*, Metropolitan Opera, 2024, www.metopera.org/user-information/nightly-met-opera-streams/week-34/program-notes/orfeo-ed-euridice/?INSTITUTION_LOGOUT=true.

Thomason’s article is about the popularity of Gluck’s *Orfeo Ed Euridice*, some of the history of the opera (including its multiple versions and some of its performance history), and a brief discussion on some of what distinguishes the show from other operas. I will be using this source for its historical facts and as evidence for *Orfeo Ed Euridice*’s popularity (which is important to my justification for including it in my thesis).

“Voice Types.” *Operavision*, Operavision, 2025, operavision.eu/feature/voice-types.

This site provides some insight into the definitions of soprano, contralto, tenor, and countertenor voices. Specifically, the site compares how the terms are used and attempts to differentiate them. Though it is not a large focus of my thesis, understanding the various definitions is helpful for when other articles address the vocal range of the actors for *Orfeo ed Euridice* and *Hadestown*, especially those who play Orfeo/Orpheus.

Williams, Tara. “Fairy Magic, Wonder, and Morality in Sir Orfeo.” *Philological Quarterly*, vol. 91, no. 4, Fall 2012, pp. 537–68. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lkh&AN=93287155&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

Williams’ article uses wonder theory to analyze music, kingship, gender, and morals in *Sir Orfeo*, and compares the lay to other texts from the Middle Ages. I am primarily working with and responding to Williams’ discussion of the fairy magic within the poem. This article will be helpful in how it provides some cultural context, such as the focus on themes of chivalry, alongside the analysis. Williams also proposes that Orfeo’s supposed

victory in retrieving Heurodis was actually a failure, which calls into question their happy reunion and which I find compelling. In my thesis, I will discuss the varied readings of the ending and provide my nuanced interpretation.

Willson, Flora. “Classic Staging: Pauline Viardot and the 1859 Orphée Revival.” *Cambridge Opera Journal*, vol. 22, no. 3, Nov. 2010, pp. 301–26. *EBSCOhost*, https://doi-org.ezproxy.bgsu.edu/10.1017/S0954586711000267.

Willson’s article is about the 1859 French revival of Gluck’s opera and the associated historical French context with a focus on Pauline Viardot’s performance as Orpheus. I may find this article useful for its discussion of imagery and analysis of the past and present (i.e., Orpheus’s story being told over time). However, Willson goes over topics that are largely outside of the scope and focus of my thesis.

Wilson, Nia. “Hadestown: Nontraditional Casting, Race, and Capitalism.” *TDR*, vol. 65, no. 1 [T249], 2021, pp. 188–92. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=202121727062&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

Wilson’s article examines the impact of casting choices on the messages and themes that *Hadestown* portrays. While I largely agree with and intend to build on Wilson’s analysis of the musical’s themes, I want to complicate Wilson’s conclusion that the musical’s flexible approach to casting—i.e., that all ethnicities could play any role and that the genders of certain characters are changeable—is a failure. I believe that different casting allows for different interpretations (which I believe is a natural part of analyzing theater), and that the flexible casting can actually benefit some parts of the narrative. However, the aspect of flexible casting will likely not play a major role in my analysis of *Hadestown*.

Wood, Dafydd. “Adaptation of the Orpheus Myth in Five Operas.” *McNeese Review*, vol. 46, Apr. 2008, pp. 1–25. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=39250861&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

Wood’s article analyzes the changes between five opera adaptations of the Orpheus myth within their context, though other articles do emphasize said context more. In terms of my chapter about Gluck’s opera, I find this article most helpful with its evaluation of the ending, but Wood also provides useful insight into Orfeo, Euridice, and power. Wood also gives a reason for why the Orpheus and Eurydice story gets retold so often, which is one of the main questions behind my thesis.