

Intertextuality and Gender in the Poetry of Louise Glück

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Abstract

The study uses Kristeva's famous term "intertextuality" in order to support feminists' aim of subverting male discourse. Glück's personas struggle for the sake of having a voice; for example, Glück revives Abishag and Persephone the Wanderer and gives them voice so that they metamorphose into speaking subjects rather than merely silent objects. Glück's feminine personas survive because they have their own voices instead of being driven by male characters. Glück's personas strive to avoid the masculine view of the female body as a body rather than a soul. They are challenged by a "meatman" who "whines for fresh woman flesh or blood". Kristeva's work in the fields of feminism has done much to examine the gendered nature of the subject, and my application of her theory of the intertextuality demonstrates the sheer range of possibilities for the textual construction of subjectivity. The research utilizes intertextuality as resistance space of feminism.

Keywords: Abishag; Feminism; Gender; intertextuality; Louise Glück

Introduction

The term "intertextuality" has its origins in the work of Julia Kristeva, and, in particular, her essays entitled "Word, Dialogue and Novel" which defines intertextuality as "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (Kristeva, 1980, p.37). As a result, intertextuality is introduced into the poem at the textual rather than systemic level. Following this textual level, Judith Still and Michael Worton (1990) define intertextuality as "everything, explicit or latent, that links one text to the other" (p. 22).

In Kristeva's terminology, intertextuality copes with the history of the text and its semantic connections to other texts of diverse genres. Traditional critical theory approaches cannot account for history because it disrupts the constancy of the thetic, which is when a subject first becomes a unique and autonomous identity in the symbolic order. Oliver remarks that "movement between signifying systems, the activity of intertextuality, requires continuous rearticulations of the thetic" (Oliver 1993, 93). Kristeva suggests that the subject-object interaction becomes unstable in such a situation. For Kristeva "The signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems (an inter-textuality), one then understands that its 'place' of enunciation and its denoted 'object' are never single, complete, and identical to themselves, but always plural, shattered, capable of being tabulated" (Kristeva, 1984, p. 60).

Thus, through intertextuality, the poem takes the reader away from the current text and to the other ones, but it eventually returns the reader to the original text. This return does not only improve textual interpretations by making fresh information, visuals, symbols, and

allusions available, but it also provides a better grasp of the text's underlying workings (structure, plot, etc.). Intertexts may demonstrate how texts work and aid in the development of a reader's abilities.

Graham Allen (2011) asserts that "intertextuality encompasses that aspect of literary and other kinds of texts which struggles against and subverts reason, the belief in the unity of meaning or of the human subject, and which is therefore subversive to all ideas of the logical and the unquestionable" (p. 45). The unity myth and the desire for coherence are shattered by intertextuality; the text as a whole is incomplete, and intertexts are never entirely exhausted. One of the benefits of reading is coming to grips with the text's otherness and the inexhaustibility of intertexts. However, in order to do so, the self must develop an openness to the other, a topic that has interested philosophers and cultural theorists alike for a long time. In a similar manner, can have a double effect. Glück's poem appears to dismantle the unity myth, by carrying together varied elements.

Literature Review

Due to her distinctive voice, Glück's poetry is plainly attractive to a huge number of researchers. Her poetry is interpreted from different sides. "If to Speak Meant to Repeat Myself: Repetition in the Later Poetry of Louise Glück", a master thesis by Amy E. Schroeder from Baylor University (2013), discusses repetition and change in *The Wild Iris*, *Averno*, and *A Village Life*. Schroeder argues that Glück's concerns with repetition and reinvention have always been about the gap between the temporal and the eternal time.

"At the Heart of Legend: Feminist Revisionist Mythology in Twentieth-Century Poetry" by Madison Rozells from Bates College (2020) illustrates women who are oppressed through the use of myth. The Thesis concentrates on the retelling of the *Odyssey* epic, centered on Odysseus and Penelope's marriage, with a more current story of modern marriage and its troubles.

"The Anorexic Aesthetic: An Analysis of the Poetics of Glück, Dickinson and Bidart" by Alexandra Haley Rigl (2014) explores the use of anorexia in the poetry of Louise Glück. The research "Inside the fat woman, trying to get out": Louise Glück's Lyric Poetry and the Aesthetics of Anorexia (2017) by Harini Vembar discusses lyric poems of anorexic aesthetics.

"To Love Silence and Darkness: Uneasy Transcendence in Louise Glück's Poems" by Piotr Zazula (2012) explores Glück's view of God in Christian and Jewish traditions. It discusses religious imagery in *The Wild Iris* and *A Village Life*. The research examines Louise Glück's metaphor of spiritual progress by examining the poet's spiritual stance's inconsistency. Through a selective focus on certain of the religious elements in her poems, the study draws comparisons between Christian and Jewish denominations. The innovation of this research occurs in its wide application of Kristeva's concept of intertextuality in examining Glück poems, namely, "Phenomenal Survival of Death in Nantucket", "Abishag", "Gretel in Darkness", "Pomegranate" and "Joan of Arc". One of the key features of this research is to elucidate a feminist argument in relation to Kristeva, illuminating the concept of intertextuality as a "resistance" to phallogentrism. In the end, a feminist reading of Kristeva's intertextuality opens up feminist spaces and new ways of making meaning. Kristeva's theory is a prevailing tool of interpretation, as revealed by its application in the poems of Louise Glück.

The study's major emphasis illustrates how Glück's poems defies traditional norms and standards and how Kristeva's ideas are applied to them. It shows Glück's effort to dismantle

the hierarchical system and to elevate women to the subject position. In Glück's poems, the woman's voice is enhanced, which indicates a subversion of masculine syntax. The speaking subject must first get access to the creative ability to generate meaning, which is a behaviour full of importance and significance. The aim is to achieve active participation in the discourses that control, define, and characterize life.

Glück's chosen poems are engaged in ongoing battles in their psychological contexts. Personas, in diverse situations, endure certain practices that who display the thoughts they are thinking. Their responses to cerebral tensions can be reasonable if analysed with concern to Kristeva's intertextual theory. The study's involvement with knowledge is to propose that the minds of the Glückian heroines in these poems become fields for the dissonant poles of intertextuality.

The research argues that there is such a thing as a feminine space, which is encountered as a resistant force against patriarchy. Kristeva subsequently provides a solid feminist definition as she, broadly speaking, formulates a close alliance of intertextuality. According to Kristeva, intertextuality does not conceal a female presence behind phallic discourse, but names it as a pivotal space in resistant female formation. In brief, the study shows the feminist assumption that Glück's personas are forced by interior and exterior elements to withdraw from the patriarchal and move towards feminists' active role of participation in society.

Analysis

Louise Elizabeth Glück is an American poet who was born in New York in 1943. Glück is the daughter of Daniel Glück, a businessperson, and Beatrice Glück, a homemaker. She experienced two failed marriages. After Divorcing Charles Hertz, she married John Dranow in 1977 and got divorced as well. Glück has one child, Noah Benjamin. Her father, a businessman who aspired to be a writer, was the only son of a Hungarian immigrant. Her mother promoted creativity and became her major reader throughout her adolescence. She joined Sarah Lawrence College in 1962 and Columbia University from 1963-1966 (Cucinella, 2002). Glück is an adjunct professor at Yale University and she resides in Cambridge, Massachusetts (Louise Glück, 2018). Glück's essay collection *Proofs and Theories: Essays on Poetry* (1994) provides a chronological development of her life. She elucidates that "before I was three, I was well grounded in the Greek myths, and the figures of those stories became fundamental referents... these were wholly invented, like the adventures of a pair of bugs, and sometimes they were revised history" (Glück, 1994, p. 5). Glück adapts Greek myth through Kristeva's notion of "intertextuality" so that she puts her feminine experience into alignment with the demands of feminists' assumption of subverting masculine discourse. Mythology is a distinctive feature of Glück poetry. She induces her readers to become captivated with the mythological personas she has fashioned, and demolished. She does so with thrilling diffidence, as a hovering figure, a "voice without a body", as she says in "Circe's Grief" (Morris, 2006, p. 45). Glück intertextualizes, reacts to, and combines numerous old stories by poets such as Virgil, Hesiod, Homer, Ovid, and Averno indicating a mimetic structure in her poems. Glück ties her voice to Demeter and Persephone's epic anguish and travels through eras and refers to women's experiences through the poem "Persephone the Wanderer".

Glück artistically involves Kristeva's term "intertextuality" in her poetry. In her essay "Fear of Happiness" Glück affirms that "the same story can be used to make different points, though we may continue to befriend the same sorts of attractive strangers" (Glück, 1994, p. 152). In the essay "The Best American Poetry" Glück affirms that the poet is "speaking not

from the past but in the present. And it still happens because poems manifest the old drive with new emphasis” (Glück, 1994, p.91). Glück adapts myth in order to articulate her feminine experience. According to Glück, these myths ought to be heard from a female speaker. In doing so, she unleashes her own experience. Glück’s personal myth “did not define the past; it replaced the past, which was transformed into a magnet for longing” in order to escape “from incarceration, confinement, and danger” (Glück, 2017, p.8).

Glück engages to Greek mythology, history, and English literature from an early age. She appreciates her parents’ guidance, who indulge her with myth which provided a solid foundation for her poetic vocation. In the essay “On Realism” (2004) she notes that “my earliest reading was Greek mythology” (Glück, 1994, p. 53). Glück’s poetry has exuberant references to Greek, Roman, and Christian myth. For example, she gives women active roles as in Abishag, Gretel, and Persephone the Wanderer.

Glück mainly concentrates on the use of poetic personas. She integrates classical myth, desire, and autobiography. The majority of her poetry deals with ancient mythology and classical ideas. Through personal myth, Glück “made up a self” and “the self is not built from the inside... but rather postulated or improvised, moving backward and forward at the same time—this self is curiously unstable and insecure” (Glück, 2017, p. 10). Through myth, Glück represents contemporary American family members’ concern over splitting apart from a family, which seems painful and heartache (Morris, 2012). Glück’s poetry portrays a blood-tied relationship between a daughter and her parents with ambivalent representations towards the cycle of family ties. She for instance, lives in the spectra of her dead father.

Discussion

The poem “Phenomenal Survival of Death in Nantucket” deals with the Hungarian princess and Christian saint. The saint Elizabeth is a version of Louise Glück, since the one married early in her life. Whereas Glück got divorced and the saint got widowed. Glück retells the story, from different viewpoint:

I am Saint Elizabeth.

¹In my basket are knives”.

Awake I see Nantucket, the familiar earth.

III

Saint Elizabeth carried

Only foodstuffs or some flowers for charity, (ll.9,10, 11, 27-28)

Saint Elizabeth offers a challenge to patriarchal society. She appreciates the “knives” replacing the image of the “flower”, the traditional emblem of feminine sexuality with power. The poem through tone and mood creates an intertextual framework that directs the understanding of the whole poem. It directly rouses into the reader’s mind associated with the well-established traditional world of the heroic journey into the other world. This journey often involves meeting with the dead is loaded with profound symbolic patterns to be used by Glück. Glück’s focus on the “saint Elizabeth” in particular initiates a parallel between the traditional persona of /Saint Elizabeth carried /Only foodstuffs or some flowers for charity/, and the new /Saint Elizabeth who carries knives in her basket. In my basket are knives/ (ll. 27-30). Since saint Elizabeth is in a state of depression and is being tormented through the traditional view

¹ Saint Elizabeth who lived for twenty-four years (1207- 1231) is the princess of Hungary who married at the age of fourteen and was widowed at twenty and became a symbol of Christian charity (Wolf, 2010).

that associated saint Elizabeth with “flowers” and now she is an independent woman that she can protect herself.

Kristeva’s term of intertextuality is fully applicable to this poem. The poem can be described as the transposition of one or more systems of symbols into another, escorted by a new enunciation and explicit position. The poem is a form of transformation of cyphers that forces the message receiver out of their coziness region and forces them to the expedition for a system of significance that would efficiently decipher the message received. The term “intertextuality” has its origins in the work of Julia Kristeva, and, in particular, her essays entitled “Word, Dialogue and Novel” which defines intertextuality as “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (Kristeva, 1980, p.37). As a result, intertextuality is introduced into the poem at the textual rather than systemic level. Following this textual level, Judith Still and Michael Worton (1990) define intertextuality as “everything, explicit or latent, that links one text to the other” (p. 22).

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“Abishag” is a minor figure in King David’s account of the royal fight amongst his male offspring. Glück, on the other hand, offers a compelling argument for Abishag’s recognition for reasons other than nursing King David in his old age or for her participation in battles between members of a royal dynasty seeking to legitimize their political lineage via the possession of her body. Abishag, if she is recalled in traditional commentary, remains a body devoid of subjectivity. She is a beautiful lady who became the subject of fights between powerful men (Collins, 2018). Abishag plays a role in account of David’s tumultuous

relationship with his sons Solomon, Absalom, and Adonijah to be Kings. She appears in the biblical account “The Revolt of Adonijah” in which two sons confederate against David in order to grant the kingdom for Solomon, whose mother was Bathsheba (Birnbaum, 1979).

Abishag’s beauty plays a political role in Adonijah’s second bid at kingship. Nathan (a prophet) and Bathsheba (Solomon’s mother) warn the elderly King David about Adonijah’s intended coup, prompting David to relinquish his reign to Solomon. Following David’s death, Adonijah makes a second attempt to establish himself as a king. Adonijah approaches Bathsheba, pleading with Solomon to allow him the opportunity to marry Abishag (Wiersbe, 2004). Solomon declines the marriage proposal, thinking it is politically motivated since only the king’s successor is permitted to sleep with the king’s concubine. Solomon eventually decides to immediately execute one of his two surviving brothers, fearful that Adonijah has revived his effort to seize the kingdom by marrying Abishag (Collins, 2018).

By contrast, in Glück’s version, Abishag the quiet lovely creature becomes the spoken subject of a first-person narrative poem that also depicts events before her concubine ship with David. Telushkin believes that Abishag’s relevance in the dispute among the Kings stems from the metaphorical connection that we sometimes draw today between the political significance of territory and a female body susceptible to national state control and identity. Sexual privilege is seen to be a politically important accomplishment, the king’s unique prerogative. Following David’s death, one of the key indicators of Solomon’s succession is that he becomes the only male entitled to have access to her body, transforming intercourse with her into a site of political control and a symbol of monarchic authority (Telushkin, 2002). Glück (2017) in *American Originality: Essays on Poetry* asserts that her personal myth “did not define the past; it replaced the past, which was transformed into a magnet for longing” in order to escape “from incarceration, confinement, and danger” (p.8).

Abishag’s conversion into a male desire object—without the sensational and expressive traits associated with the desired subject (eyes, ears, mouth)—has impacted the recall of her looks. In contrast to Abishag’s incapacity to recall her facial characteristics, Glück creatively recreates Abishag’s voice and vision in the poem. The figure of “nothing” becomes a source of revolutionary power in the retroactive language of the lyric, an assertion of dignity in inconspicuousness that Abishag’s father, David, Solomon, or Adonijah cannot hold. Abishag asserts that her featureless visage represented not her lack of individuality, but the blindness of David’s kinsmen, who obliterated her as a feeling person with her own agency and creative skill. Glück reclaims the confidence of a visionary speaker by describing the features of Abishag’s looks that the men “did not say” she possesses:

She has the look of one who seeks
Some greater and destroying passion. (ll. 23-24)

Unlike the powerless condition her father placed her in Part one. Her dream depicts her father, dressed in a priest’s robe, allowing her some control over her destiny by “telling me to choose /among my suitors”. Patriarchal control is still obvious, since the father provides her just a restricted range of options “among my suitors” despite the fact that she retains the ability to select. Rather than hearing the conditions of ownership reflected by her first name’s “three sounds” she wants to be called in the language of love.

In Part two, Glück restores to Abishag the autonomy her father had denied her. She does this by transforming a faceless slave, given away as an inanimate item, into a feeling subject capable of expressing desire via imagination and memory, and who fantasizes about

being called the love of a single suitor. The last sentence further jars the speaker's memory of her infancy in Canaan by recasting her idea of marrying for love:

I tell you if it is my own will
binding me I cannot be saved.
And yet in the dream, in the half-light
of the stone house, they looked
so much alike. Sometimes I think
the voices were themselves
identical, and that I raised my hand
to choose among them
chiefly in weariness. I hear my father saying
Choose, choose. But they were not alike
and to select death, O yes I can
believe that of my body. (ll. 39-49)

The last stanza is enigmatic due to multifarious interpretations. What becomes evident is that Abishag's dream of selecting suitors is inadequate to establish her subjectivity. Abishag's difficulty remains that her desire to choose a partner is thwarted by the obligation to choose from among the suitors. Abishag feels her decision is meaningless since she has absorbed her father's intentions. The freedom to select a lover based on mutual awareness of the other's humanity disintegrates in the face of an infinite line of sameness mandated by the father's limitation of possible options. "The 'trick' whereby we are made to feel "that we are choosing when we have no choice". Elizabeth Dodd (1992) explicates that "the poetry of Louise Glück is poised between two vexing poles: the desire of women poets to efface the self to gain entry into literary establishments that privilege men, and the desire for an expressivist rhetoric that will not be dismissed because it is coded female" (p. 391).

Abishag overturns the dream in the last three lines. However, Glück emphasizes the issue of interpellation once again, as a fiction of disparity that just conceals paternal control in order to call the game. Abishag claims that "they were not alike" yet whatever distinctions exist between the suitors are irrelevant in her estimation. Any choice she makes inside the authority of her father's realm is unacceptable, a sham of independence, in the dream that represents the creative spirit. Suicide, or the choice of erasure from the larger society in which Abishag believes she has been erased, becomes Abishag's alternative to picking a suitor in this ersatz setting: "and to select death, O yes, I can / believe that of my body". The poem concludes in the dramatic tones of suicidal despair, but by seeing suicide as a kind of opposition to a lack of freedom, Abishag claims control over the fate of her soul, or linguistic self, since only "my body" would perish.

Abishag thinks that the speaker's voice exists independently of the speaker's body. She envisions herself withdrawing from a social realm in which her subjectivity has already been obliterated. Although suicide is a prohibited act in Jewish law because of the belief that it destroys a whole universe, it becomes Abishag's protest against a society that has provided her with no significant space to express her wants and pursue her goals. The kind of history alluded to by intertextuality cannot be described using traditional critical theory approaches because it disturbs the stability of the *thetic*. The moment when the subject becomes a separate and unique identity in the symbolic world. Oliver indicates that "movement between signifying systems, the activity of intertextuality, requires continuous rearticulations of the *thetic*" (Oliver, 1993, p. 93).

This process is referred to by Kristeva as intertextuality, and it deals with the text's history as well as its semantic relationships with other texts of other genres. Because it disrupts the text's stability, the sort of history alluded to by intertextuality cannot be described by standard critical theory approaches. The moment in the symbolic realm when the subject assumes a separate and autonomous identity. "Abishag" echoes "Dedication to Hunger", in which the speaker recalls that at the age of fifteen, she believed that in order to maintain her autonomy as an autonomous being, she needed to exist outside "the interfering flesh" through a "sacrifice /until the limbs were free /of blossom and subterfuge". "Abishag" too, sees the condition of "nothingness" or disappearance as the sole means to convey a protest against the father's authority over her body, which he wields via his capacity to name her and define her destiny. "Abishag" talks similarly of the subjugation of the daughter under patriarchy. When King David was dying and in need of a woman, she says:

...my father turned to me saying
How much have I ever asked of you
to which I answered
Nothing
as I remembered. . . (ll. 7-11)

"Abishag", like "Gretel", has a recurring dream in which her involvement with the patriarchy seals her destiny. While Gretel is dealing with a real event, Abishag is dealing with a scenario she can just imagine. She has a dream in which her father presents her with a choice of suitors "choose, choose. But they were not alike /and to select death, O yes I can /believe that of my body". As the dying king's wife, she mourns "Not one among the kinsmen touched me, /not one among the slaves. /No one will touch me now". Abishag works outside of the patrilinear framework, disrupting patriarchy, and the text emphasizes the dominance of mother and daughter over father and son.

Joan of Arc has a particularly significant role in Glück's growing understanding of femininity. She was dubbed the "Maid of Orleans", metaphorically equating her to the Virgin Mother, to whom the French people at the time. Joan claimed to have heard voices that she ascribed to the saints Catherine, Margaret, and Michael, the archangel. Joan in Glück's version acknowledges not the authority of the guards or the Church, but that of her own "voices". It is they who inform her that she "must be transformed to fire, for God's purpose", an image reminiscent of the "witch" in "Gretel in Darkness".

According to Article III of the Articles of Accusation against Joan of Arc. The people of France considered her not only among the saints, the "greatest of all after the holy virgin" (Murray, 1970, p. 177). Throughout the volume, the bodies of women are closely associated with fire. In this context, we are reminded of the newly popular rumor that Joan of Arc was tried as a "witch" when, she was an Old Religion priest. At least in the popular imagination, Joan of Arc's story has become a legend of a woman executed for refusing to respond to patriarchal authority, and the use of the French here connects the historical figure to the collection's images of darkness, night, and the moon linked with women's power.

"Gretel in Darkness" could be viewed from third wave feminism since the speaker denies the universality and values singularity of women. These lines /This is the world we wanted. /All who would have seen us dead/ are dead/ (ll. 1-2) underestimate binary division between male and female. The speaker asks for equality between human beings in general. The female speaker expresses her indignation toward the witch. The poetess's attitude in this poem

differs from the second wave of feminism which demands rights for women in general. This wave adhered women to the same pattern of behaviours.

I hear the witch's cry
break in the moonlight through a sheet
of sugar: God rewards.
Her tongue shrivels into gas ... (ll. 3-6)

Gretel, Abishag, and Joan of Arc are all female characters that tormented at the hands of patriarchal religion due to their enormous inner strength and personal authority. What started as a mythic tone and a quest for parallel narratives in the aftermath of the borderline experience becomes an entrenched myth in *The House on Marshland*. It is a mythopoesis created straight out of the physical and psychological experience of pregnancy in *Firstborn*. Given the poet's following career's emphasis on myth, it's unsurprising that Glück's "entered her majority as a poet" is credited to *The House on Marshland*, in which she first engages in heretical mythmaking. From Kristeva's lens of the third generation, the poem "Appearances" is fully applicable:

My mother tried to love us equally, dressed us in the same dresses; she wanted us perceived as sisters. That's what she wanted from the portraits: you need to see them hanging together, facing one another— separated, they don't make the same statement. You wouldn't know what the eyes were fixed on; (ll. 10-16)

These lines celebrate women's individuality and distinctiveness so that "they don't make the same statement". The speaker avoids reducing them to a generic category of 'women' comparable to 'the proletariat' or to 'men'. The difference between the two sisters is of complexion, hair color, and personality. Kristeva summarizes: "I think the time has come when we must no longer speak of all women. One of the gravest dangers that now presents itself in feminism is the impulse to practice feminism in a herd. There have to be 1 and S" (Kristeva, 1980, p. 74).

In the book *American originality and through the essay "On Realism"* (2004) Glück asserts that "my earliest reading was Greek mythology" (p. 53). Glück is clung to Greek mythology with a contemporary flavor. In the Essay "Education of Poets" (1994) she affirms that "before I was three, I was well grounded in the Greek myths, and the figures of those stories, together with certain images from the illustrations, became fundamental referents. My father told stories" (p. 5). Glück's re-envisions of the myth in the poem "Persephone the Wanderer". Persephone offers a challenge to patriarchal interpretations of Greek mythology. Demeter who is the goddess of the corn or the harvest has an only daughter. Persephone is the maiden of the spring. Demeter loses Persephone and in her terrible grief she withholds her gifts from the earth. The green and flowering land were icebound and dead because Persephone had vanished. The lord of the dark underworld carried her off down to the underworld (Hamilton, 1969).

Zeus sends Hermes to retrieve the maid who willingly returned to earth with him and "her husband prayed to her as she left him to have kind thoughts of him and made her eat a pomegranate seed, knowing if she did so she must return to him" (Hamilton, 1969, p. 52). From then on, she should return to the underworld for four months every year. In later mythology, she is referred to as Persephone, the Queen of the underworld and wife of Hades (Spretnak, 1989). This Persephone's journey from the earth which is run by the mother could be viewed as a metaphor for semiotic overwhelmed by symbolic since hell is run by Hermes. The

transformation between earth and hell equals Kristeva's notion of the subject to be on trial or in process. From a feminist perspective, semiotic, which represents the mother's role in the subject's development is equal to the symbolic order. As a result, the semiotic hovers around and does not leave the subject.

In "Pomegranate" Glück adopts her first persona derived from classical mythology. Because "one of the major purposes of the mother-daughter Goddess religion was to instruct girls about their fertility and the unfolding patterns of women's lives" (Keller, 1990, p. 43). The Eleusinian mysteries have captured the imagination of feminists and become one of the Pre-Christian images of women most often referred to and embraced as models for feminist (Spretnak, 1989). From its start, "Pomegranate" demonstrates the intricacy of Glück's mythopoesis. The maiden is a heroine in this poem, the god of the underworld a wooing lover, and the earth mother a vindictive deity. While "Pomegranate" is a "feminist revision" in that it provides a voice to the hitherto silent maiden, it also depicts a traditionally benevolent earth mother as vindictive and severe. The maid herself is the speaker here, describing events that occurred in the underworld. When she talks, she speaks gently and succinctly, with a tone of calm confidence. She, too, has come from "the edge" in order to share her tale.

First he gave me
his heart. It was
red fruit containing
many seeds. (ll. 1-4)

Thus, in Glück's version, he led her to the underworld as a result of his love for her, courting her from the beginning; the color and pith of the fruit that is his heart demonstrate that his offer is exuberant and attractive. "I preferred /to starve, bearing /out my training" meaning that her position as the perpetual maiden of the spring is one of self-honor. The reader, on the other hand, is aware of the story's conclusion: she swallows the fruit. Glück's version transforms the pomegranate into a literal representation of Hades' heart. According to folklore, she descends to the underworld once a year to eat its fruit. If the pomegranate represents "his heart" Glück's statement that Persephone decided to eat it implies that she embraced Hades' love. In redefinition of the pomegranate's symbolic significance. Glück bestows to Persephone an agency that rejected her in the traditional mythology. "What had she done /with color and odor?" the daughter wonders. (ll. 13-14)

Her tone shows that she is unaware that Demeter is causing human suffering in order to "save" her. Persephone does not seem to be in need of preservation; we are never given the impression that she is being imprisoned against her will. Indeed, he informs her. "You are your own /woman, finally" (28-9). Rather than that, we conclude that she departs against her choice in order to appease a tyrant mother and restore the earth.

Hades asks her to "examine"
this grief your mother
parades over our heads
remembering
that she is one to whom
these depths were not offered. (ll. 29-34)

According to myth, she will swallow the pomegranate and reincarnate as Persephone, the Queen of Hades. Yet, at the poem's outset, she decided to starve, just as Abishag chose "death" and Gretel chose devotion to her brother. When Hades urges her to contemplate her

choice at the conclusion of the poem, he is chewing a pomegranate and maybe giving it to her as he talks. Persephone decides to swallow the pomegranate, to accept the love of her wooer, and in doing so crosses her mother, embracing the dimensions toward which her mother does not have access. The “unsaid” emphasizes a vital factor of Glück’s mythopoesis. The reader must bring her own understanding of myth to the poem in order to make sense of Glück’s myth poems, highlighting the reader’s subjectivity’s process/trial in connecting with a text.

Archetypally. “Pomegranate” depicts the “Maid” transition, depicting the moment when the “eternal maiden of the spring” has become the Queen of Hades of the underworld’s recurrence. The moment of “Pomegranate” is similar to the moment of “Abishag” in which the speaker chooses “death” and to the time Gretel must repeatedly revisit in her waking nightmare when she slaughtered her link to a feminine power inheritance in the witch. It is a decision between the “mother” (or, in Abishag’s situation, feminine desire) and the “lover” (or, in Gretel’s case, the brother) for all three. Persephone selects what the others are unable of doing. As it seems, the really revealing choice of “Pomegranate” is not to return to the living realm, but to rebel against that destiny by eating the fruit of Hades, so ensuring that she must be let return to the underworld and govern as its queen.

Glück’s *Averno* recalls the myth of Persephone, a woman who is remarkable as an “expert” in dying due to her numerous movements between life and death. Death and rebirth are central to her experience. Additionally, the poetess examines death, or the death drive, as a natural aspect of existence. Persephone entertains herself, according to legend, by collecting daisies, daffodils and lilies in the lovely Neapolitan meadows of Henna, a region of endless spring. Glück asserts that “I had of writing real poetry depended on my living through common experiences. What had to be cultivated, beyond a necessary neutrality, was the willingness to be identified with other, not with the single other, the elector but with a human community”.

Female personas represent the daughter in the poem “Fugue” and the mother in “Persephone the Wanderer”. Adolescent young girl struggles with the concept of maternity and the female body. The young woman initiates a narcissism and passivity of her own body as it becomes the space in which a child grows up. A young woman’s journey of self-discovery is shown in these poems, which show her struggle to reconcile her body and mind in order to reach a deeper sense of her individuality.

Conclusion

Throughout this study, the works of Louise Glück have been analysed in terms of Julia Kristeva’s theory of intertextuality. The main argument has been presented is intertextual manifestations can be found in Glück’s works. When it comes to comprehending the importance of the instability of the subject in connection to the intertextuality, a Kristevian point of view is necessary for this study. The spaces the study has identified in the chosen poems illustrate the manifold options for the expression of “the singularity and multiplicity” of the individual suggested by Kristeva in “Women’s Time”. The poems “Phenomenal Survival of Death in Nantucket”, “Abishag”, “Gretel in Darkness”, “Pomegranate” and “Joan of Arc” are seen from feminism perspectives. The myths: Persephone, Abishag, and Gretel and Hansel are discussed from intertextual aspects. This research shows Glück’s effort to dismantle the hierarchical system and elevate women to the subject position. In Glück’s poems, the woman’s voice is enhanced, which indicates a subversion of masculine syntax. The speaking subject must first get access to the creative ability to generate meaning, which is a behaviour full of importance and significance. The aim is to achieve active participation in the discourses

that control, define, and characterize life. The intertextuality is the potential factor for influencing the world as well as (re) creating it. It argues that there is such a thing as a feminine space, which we encounter as a resistant force against patriarchy. By interpreting Kristeva's real contribution to feminism and showing that her "challenge to the closure of meaning" can be read as a resistance to the master discourses held in place by an established language structure.

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