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Woven Fates and Fractured Myths: Deconstructing the Hero's Journey in Ariadne

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Abstract

This research examines Jennifer Saint's *Ariadne* through the lens of the *monomyth*. Exploring the hero's journey and the archetypes that surround it, the study focuses on Araidne's development from a naive, marginalized individual to an independent, powerful one. The qualitative analysis delves into how self-discovery, autonomy, and reconciliation are reflected in her journey by examining significant phases of the Hero's Journey: the separation, initiation, and return. Ariadne's journey to independence came at a great cost. She was torn between her duty to her family and her kingdom, and the longing to live life on her own terms. In the end, the need to be true to herself was so strong that she made the painful choice to walk away from her father's plans and the only home she'd ever known. Ultimately, Ariadne's journey is not just a physical one but also internal, where she reconciles her identity as a mortal and the wife of God Dionysus, granting her divine recognition, leading to self-acceptance. Her transformation to a constellation after her death grants her the power of a Goddess whom the women call for guidance during suffering and childbirth. Ariadne challenges the traditional portrayal of women in Greek mythologies as ones who only follow the laws created by men and their commands, by overcoming the challenges in her way to become strong, even after being abandoned.

Keywords: Monomyth and Archetypes, Ariadne, Crete, Hero, Empowerment, Gods and Goddesses.

Introduction

Utilizing Campbell's theory *of monomyth*, the journey of the protagonist *Ariadne* can be analyzed to explore her growth and emotional development after her betrayal by Crete and her father, and how she finds her home with Dionysus (Christ, n.d.). It revolves around her self-discovery and empowerment. British author Jennifer Saint is well-known for her feminist adaptations of Greek myths that highlight the viewpoints of women who are frequently marginalized in traditional tales (Calame, 2007). Saint, who was born and reared in Leeds, England, became passionate about mythology at a young age. She shared her passion for literature and creative writing while teaching English for thirteen years after pursuing Classical Studies at King's College London. Her debut book, Ariadne (2021), a finalist for the Goodreads Choice Awards for Fantasy in 2021, was shortlisted for the Waterstones Book of the Year (Saint, 2021). Following Ariadne, Saint wrote Elektra (2022), Argonaut in Atlanta (2023), and Hera (2024), all of which were praised

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for giving classic tales new life and a unique viewpoint. Her writing has received recognition for bringing Greek mythology to the attention and interest of modern readers, especially by emphasizing the perspectives and experiences of women in these classic stories (University of South Dakota, 2025). *Ariadne* (2021) is the reimagined story of the protagonist Ariadne, a Cretan princess who helped Theseus, Prince of Athens, defeat the Minotaur. In the original myth, Ariadne gives Theseus a thread to help him navigate the Labyrinth, which helps him to defeat her half-brother, the Minotaur (Bright, 2022). However, on the island of Naxos, he abandons Ariadne and makes her sister Phaedra his wife. Saint's adaptation explores Ariadne's feelings, drives, and hardships, showing her as a woman negotiating love, treachery, and self-identity in addition to being a hero's aide. In order to provide a parallel narrative that examines the roles and restrictions placed on women in a patriarchal society, the story also follows her sister Phaedra.

Shifting from the conventional mythological interpretations, Saint humanizes Ariadne and gives her a nuanced, in-depth agency and emotional life. Ariadne is presented as a figure who seeks personal growth, freedom, and self-knowledge, who grapples with her relationships, self-identity, and capability. She transforms from an ingenuous and naive girl to a self-aware and potent woman. Saint's portrayal refrains from painting her as a villain, instead presenting her as a tragic character, whose decline is not due to innate villainy, but rather the emotional and societal pressures she encounters. Ariadne is portrayed as a woman striving to survive and establish her identity in a harsh environment. She is described not as an antagonist but as an individual who has her own goals, challenges, and evolution. It challenges the typical depictions of women in Greek mythology and stories as being manipulative or enchantresses, giving them a more powerful face.

Ariadne's journey revolves around the significance of space, both physical and psychological, in forming her identity and metamorphosis. Saint employs setting changes and geographic shifts as symbolic devices to illustrate Ariadne's internal development throughout the book. Her identity is primarily defined by her relationships with powerful men, Minos, the Minotaur, and later Theseus (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018). Her birthplace, Crete, represents entrapment within familial and patriarchal expectations. She seems abandoned when she leaves for the remote island of Naxos, but over time, it turns into a place of self-discovery. Naxos's isolation serves as a catalyst for introspection, personal development, and independence rather than a source of helplessness. The hero must go through hardships away from the familiar world during the "initiation" stage of Campbell's monomyth, which corresponds with this change. These struggles are existential and emotional for Ariadne. The island's stillness and silence mirror her inner landscape, which includes grief, disillusionment, and betrayal, but ultimately enables her to create a self that goes beyond mythic expectations (Ellington, 2018). By redefining the concept of the heroic threshold through the use of liminal, feminine-coded space, it is demonstrated that transformation need not always involve an outside adventure but rather the bravery to face and reshape one's inner world in the midst of solitude and silence.

Theoretical Framework

Monomyth, as termed by Campbell in his book 'The Hero with a Thousand Faces', speaks to the profound, universal psychological experiences of all people and cuts across cultural divides. Most myths, legends, and stories around the world are based on a universal narrative structure called monomyth. The universal human experience of personal development and self-discovery is reflected in this monomyth.

"A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man." (Campbell, 2008, p. 30)

It begins with the hero's advent on the journey, concluding with their return. The hero changes personally during the journey, gains important life lessons, and frequently becomes whole or enlightened. The notion that the hero's journey is both an internal and an external quest is fundamental to Campbell's model. The hero experiences a process of personal development and self-discovery as they go through hardships, face their fears, and come across supernatural or symbolic obstacles. There are three basic stages that are divided into substages, which focus on the journey of the hero.

"The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation — initiation — return, which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth." (Campbell, 2008, p.45)

The hero is called to leave their everyday life and set out on a journey in the first stage, **Separation**, beginning with **Call to Adventure;** also called *"the self's awakening"* (Underhill, 1919, ch. II). Because the hero may be reluctant to confront the unknown or leave their comfort zone, this call is frequently met with a **refusal** due to fear or self-doubt. But in the end, the hero is coerced or convinced to take on the task, receiving assistance from a **supernatural aid**, who appears as a mentor or guiding force. After **crossing the threshold,** the hero enters a world full of adventure, frequently portrayed as a transitional area between the known and the unknown. The hero experiences hardships and meets a range of people, such as **mentors, adversaries, and allies**. Through the **Belly of the Whale**, the hero grows personally as a result of these difficulties and frequently faces a crisis that compels them to face their worst fears or limitations.

The protagonist of the hero's journey goes through life-changing events that result in personal development and self-discovery during the second stage, **Initiation**. A number of difficulties along the **Road of Trials** help the growth in strength and knowledge. Through a strong feminine force, a profound experience known as the **Meeting with the Goddess** offers direction and emotional insight. The **woman as temptress** tests the ability of the hero to concentrate by introducing distraction or

temptation. The protagonist of the **Atonement with the Father** faces their history and sometimes makes amends with their father's influences. **Apotheosis**, a state of enlightenment and inner metamorphosis, results from this. **The Ultimate Boon** that represents the accomplishment of the hero's journey and personal development is finally attained by the hero.

The transformed hero must return to the everyday world during the final **Return** stage of the journey. This can occasionally start with a **Refusal of Return**, in which the protagonist is reluctant to leave the world or the enlightened state they have discovered. This could result in a **Magic Flight,** which is a risky or audacious escape that is frequently necessary to return home with the ultimate boon. The hero may require assistance from others in **Rescue from Without** in order to make a successful return because the road back can be just as difficult as the one ahead. The hero returns to their original world after traversing the **Return Threshold,** transformed and armed with advanced knowledge. The hero in **Master of Two Worlds** attains equilibrium between their spiritual and material selves, or between their past and present selves. Lastly, **Freedom to Live** symbolizes the hero's liberation from guilt, fear, or restriction, enabling them to live completely and unrestrictedly in the present.

Within the monomyth is another aspect, which is the **archetypes**. Carl Jung's work, which proposed that archetypes are ingrained in humanity's collective unconscious, was a major influence on Campbell. Archetypes enhance character development, clarify the psychological dynamics at work, and enhance the narrative structure when paired with the monomyth's stages (Jung, 2011).

Research Statement

The research aims to investigate and analyze the journey of Ariadne, which reflects her self-discovery and emotional growth, as well as how her interactions with different Kings, Gods, mortals, and monsters help her create an identity for herself. It also delves into the different archetypes that aid or hinder Ariadne throughout her journey. Another motive for carrying out this study is that no prior work has been conducted regarding her journey as a hero. The purpose of this study is to inspect how Saint's *Ariadne* challenges the traditional depiction of Greek women and how different circumstances have helped her evolve.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- To analyze Ariadne's interactions with her surroundings and characters, leading to their emotional and psychological growth
- To explore the events, challenges, and trials faced by Ariadne as per the different stages of Campbell's *Monomyth* (1949)

Research Questions

- How does Saint depict Ariadne's interactions with the Gods, Goddesses, and mortals, along with her surroundings that help her evolve emotionally and psychologically?
- How do the events, trials, and challenges that Ariadne faces align with Campbell's *Monomyth* (1949), aiding in her growth?

Research Hypothesis

The study hypothesizes that by incorporating feminine agency, emotional complexity, and internal transformation into the monomythic structure, Jennifer Saint's Ariadne reconfigures the conventional hero's journey. Campbell's hero's journey usually revolves around a male protagonist going through external hardships, but Ariadne tells a story where the heroine's growth is revealed via moral conflict, self-discovery, and autonomy. Ariadne rewrites the core stages of the Hero's Journey in a feminist way by rejecting patriarchal expectations, embracing personal choice, and experiencing emotional trials. Her eventual divine recognition and symbolic transformation into a guiding constellation challenge the passive roles that women are assigned in Greek mythology and offer a powerful alternative to traditional heroic archetypes (Albert, 2021).

Research Gap

Till now, the previous researchers have been unable to study the emotional and psychological growth of Ariadne; hence, this research examines her evolution from being a mere princess to a well-known goddess in Jennifer Saint's *Ariadne.* It also explores her interactions with other characters as well as the contribution of archetypal aspects in her journey through the lens of Campbell's *Monomyth* (1949).

Significance of the Study

This research explores the relationship of Araidne with the other characters: gods, Kings, mortals, monsters, as well as the different circumstances surrounding her, which lead to her self-growth and strength. It also analyzes how different archetypes aid or hinders her path. The study helps to clarify the stages of Hero's journey, highlighting the inner struggles faced by Ariadne before and after she is abandoned on Naxos. It provides a framework for future researchers to examine the emotional and mental development of a hero and how it shapes their lives.

Limitations of the Study

The research is limited to the analysis of Saint's *Ariadne,* focusing on the emotional, psychological, and physical growth of the protagonist, Ariadne, as well as how her

interactions with her surroundings and other characters helped her evolve using Campbell's model of *Monomyth* (1949).

Review of the Literature

Joseph Campbell introduces the concept of the *monomyth* in "The Hero with a Thousand Faces" (1949). He uses this term to refer to the common structure present in many myths, legends, and stories around the world. From ancient myths to contemporary stories, Campbell contends that all heroic narratives adhere to a common structure that captures essential realities about the human condition. Starting with the hero's Call to Adventure and concluding with their Return, this typical pattern, the "hero's journey", consists of a sequence of stages that takes place in a specific order. The hero changes personally during the journey, gains important life lessons, and frequently becomes whole or enlightened. Campbell contends that myths serve as symbolic depictions of this internal metamorphosis because of their storylines and archetypal characters. The archetypes, recurring symbols, or characters that appear in these tales are central to Campbell's theory of the monomyth. He makes extensive use of Carl Jung's theories regarding the collective unconscious, arguing that these archetypes are ingrained in the human psyche and manifest in mythic narratives from many cultural traditions. The Hero, the Mentor, and others are some of the main archetypes in the journey (Jung, 2011).

The epic tale of Odysseus, The Odyssey, closely resembles Campbell's "Hero's Journey" in both its physical and emotional aspects. Spiegel (1998), in his article, explores how Odysseus's mental and physical journeys are connected by the Hero Journey, which acts as a framework for both. Every physical challenge that Odysseus faces can be seen as a metaphor for a psychological challenge that he must overcome. By overcoming these challenges, Odysseus grows up and gains a more thorough understanding of who he is and where he fits in the world. After overcoming his own psychological limitations, Odysseus returns home a better person and uses his newly acquired self-awareness to become a better father, husband, son, and king. Separation or departure; initiation's struggles and triumphs; and return and reconnect with society are the three phases that make up the "Hero's journey". Before moving on to the next step, each one must be finished successfully. With the knowledge acquired from arduous trials, the hero returns home after completing their journey. He can then use that knowledge to become a great person on a personal and societal level. Leighton's (2014) study investigates how Rick Riordan both follows and deviates from Campbell's structure in his Percy Jackson and the Olympians series. Through gendered viewpoints and feminist criticisms of Campbell's framework, Riordan challenges conventional ideas of heroism by reimagining classical Greek myths for a contemporary adolescent audience. A more inclusive and adaptable version of the hero's journey is provided by Riordan's depiction of a variety of characters and their experiences, which increases the model's applicability to readers in the modern era.

Riordan addresses the need for a more inclusive narrative that speaks to a wider range of adolescent experiences by modernizing the hero's journey through a nuanced adaptation of Greek mythology (Mugijatna, Habsari & Putri, 2014). The growing trend of feminist adaptations of Greek myths by modern women writers is examined in Judge's (2022) study. She examines works by authors like Margaret Atwood, Pat Barker, and Madeline Miller using feminist literary criticism and classical reception theory, concentrating on characters like Penelope, Briseis, and Antigone. According to the study, these writers reflect important feminist issues like representation, identity, and consent while also reclaiming underrepresented female voices and challenging patriarchal interpretations. The Judge comes to the conclusion that these adaptations create an interdisciplinary, politically active literary tradition that transforms both modern feminist literature and the Classics (Judge, 2021).

According to Rani et al. (2024), despite feminist authors' efforts to portray them, women's identities are frequently left ambiguous in literature. This is mostly because women's psychological and emotional complexity is not well understood. Their study looks at short stories by Zaib-un-Nisa Hamidullah and Ismat Chughtai to demonstrate how the freedom of expression of women in a male-dominated society is restricted by their social roles and inner fears. The study investigates how patriarchal power structures and South Asian cultural norms impact women's sense of self using feminist theories developed by Chandra Talpade Mohanty, thoroughly examining the psychological challenges faced by women. The results support more general feminist discussions of gender, identity, and empowerment.

MacBean (2024), in her article, examines how the ancient Greek myth of Ariadne emphasizes process over destination, reflecting the importance of movement and selfhood through the lens of Martha Graham and Jeanine Durning's dance pieces, which both exemplify the idea of dancing as a space of continuous transformation that reflects Ariadne's myth (Lucas, 2014). The study illustrates how image and symbol in dance can bring unconscious material to the surface, providing insight into psychological concepts such as individuation and the anima/animus, using Carl Jung's (2021) depth psychology as a framework. Munthe (2024), in their study, examines gender norms and disparities in Jennifer Saint's feminist adaptation of Greek mythology, Ariadne, by analyzing how patriarchal structures and societal expectations impact the lives of female characters using Mansour Fakih's Gender Inequality Theory and Deaux and Lewis' Gender Roles Theory. It emphasizes the four facets of gender roles: personality, speech, occupation, and physical characteristics, as well as the five types of inequality: violence, stereotypes, marginalization, subordination, and additional burdens. The study shows how gender norms limit women's autonomy and how the characters' defiance of these norms challenges patriarchal power, coming to the conclusion that Ariadne demonstrates how literature can address current gender issues by reinterpreting mythological stories through a feminist lens.

Feminist literary criticism frequently challenges patriarchal representations of women, which has an impact on gender dynamics in the real world. Despite being primarily sociological, Akram et.al (2025) in their study use a phenomenological approach to examine harassment to highlight the ongoing marginalization of women in Pakistan. The significance of literary works that reclaim female voices is highlighted by their findings. Given this, Jennifer Saint's Ariadne stands out as a potent retelling of myth, giving its heroine agency and nuanced emotions. These retellings support a larger cultural movement in literature and society toward more powerful portrayals of women.

Research Methodology

The research is grounded in a qualitative method, analyzing the emotional as well as psychological growth of a hero in Jennifer Saint's *Ariadne.* Carl Jung's analytical psychology, which emphasizes recurrent archetypes and the collective unconscious, is used in the study. It demonstrates how characters and stories represent common anxieties, desires, and psychological changes by viewing literature as a mirror of the human psyche.

Discussion

The novel *Ariadne* follows the story of the Cretan Princess, Ariadne, daughter of King Minos and Queen Pasiphae, a nymph. Ancient Greek culture depicted women as deceitful, faithless, and manipulative, often blamed for a man's downfall, as they were portrayed as corrupting influences. Ariadne can be seen as someone who has been marginalized by not only the Gods but also humanity (mortals). Her subjugation is portrayed under the control of King Minos and his court, where women were treated as objects for breeding or selling as treaties. *"No one could fight my father. He was protected by his armies, by his power, by his immovable self-belief, and the monster raging beneath his palace. Brute force and strength would be useless against the superior might of his guards"* (Saint, 2021, p. 60).

Tracing Ariadne's Arc- Heroine's Monomyth

A Crete-born Princess, Ariadne is depicted as someone naive and gullible, replicating the aspects of a sheltered or caged woman who had not seen the outside world, thus unaware of the cruelties in the world and the lies of men. *"I knew little of what lay beyond our palace walls"* (Saint, 2021, p. 20). In the novel, she embodies the **hero** archetype, which refers to the protagonist of the monomyth who sets out on a path of self-realization, metamorphosis, and triumph over obstacles. The journey of Ariadne began from her home in Crete after she decided to aid Theseus in the Labyrinth to vanquish her monstrous brother, the Minotaur.

The narrative not only follows the physical journey of Ariadne but also her personal development, mental and emotional. She is not portrayed as a typical hero who goes on a voyage to prove herself to those who neglected her; rather, she is a hero who goes on a transformation journey in which she changes her identity from being just a princess with no powers or the daughter of King Minos to being the Earth Goddess of fertility, labyrinth, and harvest. Naxos, the island she was abandoned on by Theseus, is where her transfiguration begins.

As the oldest, Ariadne was in line for a marriage alliance as per their tradition and was promised by her father to the King of Cyprus, Cinyras. The age of the groom did not matter as was the concern of Ariadna's younger sister, Phaedra; *"I hope it's not someone old"* (Saint, 2021, p. 37). What both sisters longed for was freedom and to live in a place where there were no restrictions, limitations, or cages they could be forced into.

Upon her first meeting with Cinyras, he touches her face, making her uncomfortable despite her father's presence, who only smiles approvingly at her obedience. Her body is commodified by her father for political gain, and her silent resistance to an unwanted touch from a stranger represents her coerced submission. The weight of patriarchal authority and royal duty crushes her resistance, leaving her speechless and immobile. Though she beseeches Minos to reconsider, he only silences her. *"'Father, I beg of you—' I began. His words cut me off, along with the dismissive slice of his hand through the air. 'Cinyras is a useful ally. The marriage will be of benefit to all of Crete"* (Saint, 2021, p. 45).

Summon To Quest; Choice Between Love and Loyalty

After the dismissal by King Minos, she and Phaedra begin to prepare for "*Funeral games in honour of Androgeos"* (Saint, 2021, p. 49). Andorgeos was the eldest son of King Minos and Pasiphae, who was killed on a venture in Athens. Minos, to avenge his son, attacked the Athenians, and the peace terms which the King of Athens agreed to were the sacrifice of 14 youths; seven boys and seven girls each year. The youths were thrown into the Labyrinth, the creation of Daedalus, located under the palace, where the Minotaur resided for it to eat. *"The Minotaur pacing his sunless prison, alone for all the days of every year except tomorrow"* (Saint, 2021, p. 50).

Both the Labyrinth and Minotaur represent the **threshold guardians** as they act as a barrier between Ariadne's old and new life. Although Ariadne had avoided the previous two sacrifices, hiding in her room before the arrival of the Athenian ships this time, she saw the young children stepping out of the ship, cuffed with thick chains and forced to walk by the Cretan warriors. Among them, she placed her eyes on Theseus, the Prince of Athens, who had volunteered to accompany the rest of the children as a sacrifice, thinking of it as his duty to his people. At the commencement of the celebration, which occurred the night before the games, she again saw the

children, fearful and shaking, and among them stood Theseus, strong and tall. Thus, Ariadne made up her mind to help the Athenians escape from their doom, having had enough of the terror and sacrifices caused by the monster.

She seeks the help of Daedalus, who himself felt guilty of his involvement with the creation of the Minotaur. He personifies **the mentor** and thus acts as the aid who helps Ariadne in her mission. Upon seeing her determination, he agrees, *"I will help you, Ariadne,'* (Saint, 2021, p. 62), giving her the key to the prison cell in which Theseus was placed and a red thread, though he does warn her of the consequences of the betrayal. Despite being hesitant, initially, she holds herself strong and meets with the prince, accepting the call to the quest. He tells her of his story, which further grabs Ariadne's attention and her attraction. Although hidden from sight, Pasiphae surprises them by coming forward from the shadows with Theseus' weapon, the club, telling them of how she had been around since the beginning of their conversation. They discuss the plan for ending the minotaur and escape, directing Pasiphae to be present at the East of Crete's harbor. Ariadne hands him the red thread, instructing him to tie himself firmly, and they share moments of intimacy which further strengthen her resolve to help the Athenians. The following day, she progresses with the plan but still feels terror of being caught by Minos and fearful of the consequences she would have to face, remembering her father's punishment of Scylla, King Nisus's daughter, for betraying her own father (Williams, 2021). Amongst all the Cretans, Ariadne was the only one who had been taught by Daedalus how to open the door to the labyrinth, *"A labyrinth to which only I (Ariadne) held the key"* (Saint, 2021, p. 18). Taking advantage of her knowledge, she placed the club inside and locked the Labys again. Theseus kills the Minotaur and, along with the other thirteen Athenians, along with Ariadne, they escape to the awaiting ships on the West of the harbour.

Embracing The Unknown; Abandoning the Home

Ariadne searched for Pasiphae but was unaware of Theseus' trick of having sent her in the opposite direction. She refuses to leave without her sister, but he promises her to come for Pasiphae the next night. Thus, she crosses the Threshold; departure from the known world into the unknown, abandoning her home, family, and traditions. They travel to the Island of Naxos, where they find a small cottage and spend a night together. Before she awoke, Theseus and his men abandoned her, sailing away towards Athens. *"I saw with disbelieving eyes a great ship sailing steadily along its course. The billowing black sails told me without question that it was Theseus"* (Saint, 2021, p. 109). Theseus, who at the beginning represented **the herald,** became **the trickster,** deserting Ariadne in a place she knew nothing about, with only supplies adequate for six days at most, spreading the news of her being killed by a snake as a punishment from Goddess Artemis for being a traitor. The Island thus mirrors as **a herald**, aiding in the transformation of Ariadne. As the traitorous

daughter, she could not go back to Crete, and she had no means of survival on Naxos since all her life had been within the walls of the Palace (Theoi Project. (n.d.).

Trials of Passion; Blooming through Hardship

Her delusions of romantic love and loyalty are dashed the moment Theseus abandons her, which also serves as a turning point in her development from a gullible princess to a self-reliant woman. She had betrayed her family for the man who had left her stranded alone, which awakens her initial realization of male treachery, and the idealized deception of the "hero" comes from his betrayal. *"I had given Theseus the clue to the Labyrinth: fourteen lives of Athens and the death of my own brother. In exchange, he granted me perhaps a week to live in exile, imprisoned on a desolate island"* (Saint, 2021, p. 112). She is forced to face loneliness, hopelessness, and the results of her decisions because she is alone on the island. However, this also signals the start of a rebirth on an emotional as well as spiritual level, and her suffering turns into the furnace that forges her independence.

In Greek Mythology, Naxos is famously known as the Island of Dionysus, the God of fantasy, vegetation, wine, pleasure, and festivity. Sensing its god's arrival, the island begins to grow grapes, and water flows from Dionysus's statue in the courtyard (Konstantinidis, 2024). Feeling happy, Ariadne offers a sacrifice of wine, and a while later, instead of water, wine flows (Henrichs, 2015). The advent of Dionysus acts as a divine solution to her anguish at this point of extreme despair; her metamorphosis starts. He transforms the cottage into a palace and provides her with more food and company (Atsma, 2017).

Ethereal Affection and Emotional Convolution

Despite that he left the next morning, Dionysus offers Ariadne to stay in Naxos and act as a caretaker or his priestess, which she readily agrees to. He promises to be back after a few days; however, due to the trust issues created by Theseus, Ariadne does not fully trust him, expecting him to abandon her as well, but still waits for him. Upon his return, Dionysus and Ariadne spend a lot of time together, opening up and telling each other their life stories, eventually turning their friendship into more. They soon get married to the Dionysus' followers, the Maenads, as their guests, and throughout their years together, Ariadne gives birth to five sons.

"I will love you when you are shrivelled and ancient...I cannot bear to see you married to an undeserving man or to watch your life fade away to nothing, leaving no children behind.. We might only have a mortal lifetime, but it will belong to us and no one else" (Saint, 2021, pp. 205-6)

Ariadne fights against her emotions and what she feels for Dionysus, especially after her first betrayal. The first impression of the relationship between Theseus and

Ariadne is one of dreaminess and transcendence. Her love for Theseus is based on a combination of romantic hope and mythic adoration, but turns out to be fleeting, like mist vanishing with Theseus' betrayal. Conversely, Dionysus, who embodies the **lover** archetype, gives Ariadne recognition rather than rescue, viewing her as a strong individual deserving of respect and friendship rather than as a broken woman in need of pity. His tender yet divine love gives Ariadne agency, healing, and eventually the ability to become a goddess by embracing emotion, disorder, and feminine strength.

Finding Strength in Reflection

The voice of a woman who has historically been marginalized in myth is reclaimed by Ariadne's viewpoint. Ariadne transcends the roles that men and gods have given her by engaging in introspection, and she starts to define herself according to her own standards. She gains inner strength from this reflection as she gains insight from the injustices she encounters and observes. Through her ability to take a step back and reflect on her life, especially the cruelty of her father, Minos, and the betrayal by Theseus, Ariadne gains greater knowledge of the world she lives in as well as the limited power that women have within it. *"However blameless a life we led, the passions and the greed of men could bring us to ruin, and there was nothing we could do"* (Saint, 2021, p. 25) Her ability to handle other people's suffering is another example of this strength, especially her compassion for women who suffer because of men's deeds or desires, such as Medusa, Scylla, and Pasiphae, shows how introspection can lead to resistance and unity.

She finds strength through the help of women surrounding her, the Maenads, during childbirth. *"Every woman alive knew that the journey through birth was a voyage between life and death, for her and the infant alike"* (Saint, 2021, p. 208). Initially paralyzed by fear, Ariadne struggles against the pain, but her maenad midwives support her in letting go of it with empathy and insight. She is assisted in moving from fear to acceptance through the use of breath, touch, and a soothing presence. She thinks of the women around the world, feeling as if they were encouraging her on her journey. For Ariadne, this support is a turning point. She goes from being unprepared and exposed to discovering her inner strength.

Confronting Shadows: Power, Patriarchy, and Men

Figures such as King Minos, whose brutal domination molds Ariadne's world, are examples of patriarchy. He controls the Minotaur and Crete through terror and myth-making, and he uses his daughters as political pawns. Theseus and other conventional male "heroes" are questioned in the book. Although hailed as a hero in classical mythology, Saint's retelling reveals Theseus as machiavellian, duplicitous, and opportunistic, particularly in his betrayal of Ariadne. Political marriages, patriarchal expectations, and myths that minimize female suffering and exalt masculine violence

are just a few of the male-created structures that these women must negotiate and endure (Aguilar, 2017).

Ariadne betrays her father to protect herself and Pasiphae from his terror, and acts; however, it backfires as Theseus also turns out to be traitorous. At the beginning, even her husband, Dionysus, appears unique, gentle, inquisitive, and divine (Britannica, 2018). However, he ultimately belongs to the same patriarchal system as well. Ariadne learns that even gods are capable of treachery when he makes choices without consulting her or sacrificing others, especially his brother and his people, for his own glory, as they had refused to heed his call. *"I had borne his sons, given him years of my life. I deserved an explanation when he brought war down upon my head, and he knew it" (*Saint, 2021, p. 322). Though she had dedicated her life to him, Dionysus had angered his brother, Perseus, and the goddess his people served, Hera, which ultimately led to the end of Ariadne as a mortal. She had escaped the shadows of her Monstrous father, the betrayal of her first love, yet her demise was due to the ego and pride of her beloved husband (Otto, 1965).

Lasting Power: Becoming More than Her

Ariadne goes from being a traitorous daughter and abandoned lover to being a representation of feminine fortitude and change. Her ability to endure, to see suffering without losing her soul, and eventually to claim authorship of her own story is what gives her "lasting power" rather than physical strength or divine favour. Ariadne regains her story by surviving abandonment and creating a new life that is not shaped by the men who exploited her after being initially tricked by Theseus and removed from the myth that centered on his bravery. Her death does not symbolize the end; rather, it is the beginning of her journey as the Goddess residing in the sky as a constellation, Corona Borealis. She hears of the women calling upon her during their childbirth; *"I hear their prayers: the women of Naxos, of Crete, of Athens and Argos and every far-flung corner of the world. They call to me when the throes are upon them"* (Saint, 2021, p. 328). From her celestial position, Ariadne listens to prayers and provides guidance. She turns into a source of support for laboring women, highlighting her function as a guardian and mentor during times of extreme adversity (Papaioannou & Lykesas, 2012).

Conclusion

The study explores Ariadne's interactions with the other characters as well as the impact of her surroundings and situations that aid in her growth to becoming a powerful individual, with Jennifer Saint's *Ariadne* as its premise. Campbell's *monomyth* is used to examine and analyze the hero's journey from beginning to the end. Her journey begins with the call to adventure when she decides to help Theseus defeat the Minotaur. Throughout this time, she gets the aid of Daedalus as a mentor

who gives her the red thread and a key. She betrays her family and escapes with Theseus, crossing the threshold, though he abandons her in Naxos, where she encounters various trials that help in her emotional and spiritual growth. The arrival of Dionysus, whom she falls in love with and marries, transforms Ariadne from a desolate mortal into his divine spouse, later turning her into a Goddess. With a heroine who defies patriarchal norms and forges her own way in a world populated by men and gods, Ariadne's journey reclaims the story for women. By choosing love, defiance, and ultimately self-determination, Ariadne exemplifies the complexity of agency through her hardships, betrayals, and final metamorphoses. The cost of heroism for women is poignantly explored in her story, which also serves as a reminder that myths can provide new perspectives on age-old issues of freedom, identity, and power when they are remade (Allison, 2024). Future studies should continue to concentrate on mythological retellings that emphasize female voices and experiences, especially those that present women as multifaceted, emotionally strong, and independent people. Tales such as *Ariadne* provide important inspiration for reimagining traditional narratives to address modern issues of empowerment, identity, and choice. In literary and scholarly contexts, these stories can be promoted to emphasize the value of alternative representations that go beyond traditional depictions of women as inferior or subservient characters.

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