

https://dspace.org/

An Ecofeminist Reading of Hadestown: The Myth, The Muscial

Vos, Abigail

2023-03

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/42398

Vos, Abigail . (2023). An Ecofeminist Reading of Hadestown: The Myth, The Muscial. [Masters dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg]. WIReDSpace. https://hdl.handle.net/10539/42398

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

AN ECOFEMINIST READING OF *HADESTOWN: THE MYTH, THE MUSICAL*

FROM GREEK MYTH TO ENVIRONMENTALIST FABLE

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities in fulfilment of the degree Master of Arts by Research

by

Abigail Vos

1612999

under the supervision of

Dr Donato Somma

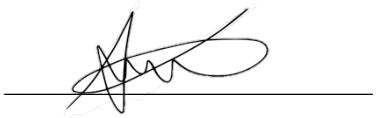
Wits School of Arts – University of the Witwatersrand

Johannesburg, South Africa

March 2023

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music at the University of the Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.



Abigail Vos

Abstract

Hadestown: The Myth, the Musical has merged two ancient love stories and has presented these stories within a world riddled with environmental damage. The four main characters (Orpheus, Eurydice, Persephone, and Hades) are influenced by the environment in various ways. Persephone acts as the goddess of the natural world and therefore is nature's ambassador. Hades, the king of the Underworld, has become an industrial mogul and has inadvertently damaged the earth with his industrial kingdom. As a result, Eurydice is left to suffer these consequences and faces poverty and hunger because of the environmental imbalance that engulfs her. Orpheus, in response, attempts to write a song that will bring balance to the world once more. Our characters are situated within an environmentalist fable; therefore, the musical's narrative centres around how these characters interact with the environment. The music of Hadestown has been carefully selected in an eclectic way. Jazz, folk, musical theatre, and opera have all had various influences on the musical world of the show. This influence is not simply limited to the score, but the histories of these genres bleed into the work. Folk and jazz both carry profound messages of struggle and protest with them, and therefore the use of these genres aids in the environmentalist activism presented in the musical. These genres and their social and geographical histories are layered into Hadestown. The musical allows for deep character analysis and textual analysis through the writing of Anaïs Mitchell. In this research, I will present an analysis of the lyrics of Hadestown to present the embedded themes of environmentalism, anti-capitalism, and anti-industrialism. My analysis will present how the pained Earth and Her inhabitants reflect the pain endured by the Global South, specifically by women. Impoverished women in third-world countries face most environmental consequences accompanying the Global North's incessant need for more. This effect is portrayed in the lives of Eurydice and Persephone. An ecofeminist framework will be applied to the work as Persephone exhibits inherent ecofeminist traits. Hadestown presents its audience with a mirror of the world they live in and ask its audience what it will do about it.

Acknowledgements

I want to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Donato Somma. Thank you for believing in this piece of work and in me, especially when I was ready to give this up. You have been a phenomenal advisor and counsellor, and I am incredibly grateful for all you have done for me and this work.

Thank you to my family, who have all seen the ups and downs of the process that has built this project. Thank you for all your love, support, constant understanding, and grace. Thank you to Jacob for your incessant belief in me. I love you all.

I am further indebted to Anaïs Mitchell and the beautiful work of art she has created in Hadestown: The Myth, The Musical. Thank you to all who have aided in the maturing of the work and all who will continue to breathe life into it.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the eco-feminists who have seen the hurt of the Earth mirrored in their own lives and the lives all women share. Thank you for your heart.

Table of Contents

Declaration II

Abstract III

Acknowledgements IV

Table Of Contents V

List Of Figures VI

Introduction 1

Chapter 1 13

Chapter 2 33

Chapter 3 58

Chapter 4 83

Conclusion 111

Bibliography 117

Appendix A: Song List 124

Appendix B: Ethics Clearance 125

List of Figures

Figure 1: List of characters in Hadestown as well as the actors that played them in the 2019 production. 12

Figure 2. First version of Orpheus' motif as it appears in Road to Hell (author's transcription) 43

Figure 3. Developed version of Orpheus' motif as it appears in Wedding Song (author's transcription). 43

Figure 4. Opening trombone riff in Road to Hell (author's transcription). 49

Figure 5. The Fates singing in Any Way the Wind Blows (author's transcription). 61

Introduction

Hadestown: The Myth, the Musical (2019), by Anaïs Mitchell, has taken two ancient Greek myths and has transformed them into a means of considering environmentalist and feminist issues. The myth of Hades and Persephone has historically been undivided from environmental themes, where their relationship is the very explanation for the seasonal nature of Earth that has been handed down in Western literature via Greek mythology.[1]However, the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice has not historically been founded on their inherent connection to the natural. Instead, their connection is borrowed, as their paths meet with that of the divine couple. *Hadestown*, however, has rooted both couples in the natural and has not only made an environmentalist fable of these Greek myths but has synthesised this fable with contemporary themes of anti-capitalism, anti-industrialism, and ecofeminism.

Ecofeminism is a branch of intersectional feminist activism that concerns itself with how the discrimination and inequality that women face, is and has always been, linked to the view that humanity has had towards the Earth, the environment, and nature. Patriarchal power systems dominate this view and, therefore, cannot simply condemn men's domination over women as an isolated system (Salleh, 2014: xi). In criticising this hierarchy, we must ultimately see, criticise, and overcome the hierarchy that mankind—rather than 'humankind'—has over nature.

The work presented within ecofeminism shows us that climate change's effect on the world can be universally experienced but is not one that is felt in equal measure by all; rather, women and children are unjustly affected (Thompson, 2016:2-3). The word 'ecofeminism' may be relatively new, but the soul of its practices and theories has been present historically as women have strived to protect their families, communities, and livelihoods. The essence of

[1] The choice here to capitalise "Earth" and to personify Her as such is based on the somewhat binary theory that ecofeminism presents. The battle faced is between patriarchal industrialism and feminist environmentalism. Thus, the divinity and femininity of the Earth are highlighted within the context of Greek mythology and ecofeminism. Within Greek mythology, Gaia is Mother Earth, the origin of all life on Earth. As ecofeminism fights to bring women into the planning and fight for environmental balance, there is a return to these first mythologies and thoughts. Personifying Earth reminds us that we are not separate from Her but dependent on Her. This connection is a theme that is present in various ecofeminist writers' work. It is worth noting, however, that this capitalisation should be separated from the personification of Earth as a character within the musical. This practice is a theoretical and analytical tool, not one that is present in *Hadestown*.

these practices is what becomes visible in *Hadestown*, specifically within the characters of Persephone and Eurydice (Salleh, 2014: ix).

It is worth noting that, historically, there has been a dichotomy presented in science that women are inherently connected to the natural world and men to the cultural or created world (Ortner, 1972: 10-11). Due to this misogynistic assumption, women have been removed from conversations concerning that which is not to do with the natural. Women have been assumed to be incapable of partaking in the rational. Carolyn Merchant writes in her essay in *Reweaving the Earth* that "both women and nature are exploited by men as part of the progressive liberation of humans from the constraints imposed by nature. The consequence is the alienation of women and men from each other and both from nature" (1990: 103). This binary has harmed women and nature, and this research departs from this paradigm. This binary will be explored, and how *Hadestown* deconstructs or affirms this binary will also be explored through an ecofeminist lens.

The relationship between Hades and Persephone exemplifies the intersection between patriarchal oppression and environmental degradation. This intersection is seen in the inner workings of their marriage. However, it is furthermore explicated in the effects Hades' industrialised Underworld—Hadestown—has on Persephone, Eurydice, and Orpheus, the relationship of the young lovers, the seasonal world "*up above*" (Act I, scene i, 2020: 49), and those unfortunate enough to be trapped in the never-ending workload down below. How Hades' dominion of industrial power has affected all the above-mentioned areas acts as a mirror for how the capitalist-led industrialisation of our Earth has affected Her, as presented in *Hadestown*.

I will be critically examining the lyrical text of *Hadestown: The Myth, The Musical* to present both the piece's apparent meanings and entrenched environmental nuances. Anaïs Mitchell's writing has allowed for such an in-depth analysis, as she has produced this work as though a poetic narrative. I will be specifically focusing on the current (2016-present) production and will be referencing Mitchell's *Working on a Song: The Lyrics of Hadestown* in the lyrical and narrative analysis to follow. I aim to analyse the text in a manner inspired by Catherine Clément and her work in *opera, or the Undoing of Women.* Katherine Bergeron (1990) notes that by celebrating the prosaic, by insisting on words over music ('I am going to commit the sacrilege of [...] reading the libretti' [p. 12]), Clément intends to expose the truth of her

operatic woman (:94). Therefore, I intend to do the same as I expose the truth of the women in this piece and the themes they hold within their narratives.

I will be analysing the feminist and environmentalist themes and characters within the musical by using the lyrically focused nature of Mitchell's writing. She has written this work as an intersection between poetic narrative and music, but the music has bent to the will of her words, not the other way around. Clément writes specifically of how the enchanting music of the opera is what has hidden the reality of women's undoing as their fates are always bound by death. Opera has built its success on the back of always-dying women. It has gotten away with this inherent feature as it has shrouded the incessant murder, suicide, death, and destitution with its beautiful melodies.

> The music makes one forget the plot, but the plot sets traps for the imaginary. The plot works quietly, plainly, visible to all but outside the code of the pleasures of opera. It is totally dull, always setting in play vague philosophical premises, ordinary banalities, life-love-death; it is all familiar and forgettable. But beyond the romantic ideology, lines are being woven, tying up the characters and leading them to death for transgression-for transgressions of familial rules, political rules, the things at stake in sexual and authoritarian power. That is what it is all about (Clément, 1989: 10).

In Clément's writing, and put in her title, she points to the perpetual undoing of women. Although Clément's work focuses on opera, its application to musical theatre is easily translatable. Opera has gotten away with its undoing in overshadowing it with music, directing the audience's focus upon the beauty that opera hopes to present. This same undoing—the consistent killing of women—can be read into Eurydice's death and nature's death.

Ecofeminist theorists have voiced their concern over how the male-dominated, patriarchal sciences have removed the inherent womanhood in nature, undoing nature's femininity and refusing to be dependent on Mother Nature (Shiva & Mies, 2014: 20). Therefore, just as Clément aims to subvert the undoing of women in her work, *Hadestown* has attempted to do the same through an ecofeminist lens. *Hadestown* presents us with an undone world, one that has unravelled in its functions and orders. A world where the woman in poverty must carry the burden of the consequences created by the man in charge. A world where "*the few… tell the many what to do*" (Act II, scene vii, 2020: 177). A world where the environment affects all but is most affected by one. A world where the labour of the masses fills the pocket of the

magnate. A world much like the industrial and capitalistic one we find ourselves in today. My overt focus on the lyrics of the musical is aimed at unearthing that which Mitchell herself has written into this piece; namely, the honesty of the undone world we face today, shrouded in the beauty of "*an old song*" (Act I, scene i, 2020: 10).

Methodology

This research examines the lyrical text of *Hadestown* using a feminist-rooted critical discourse analysis method. The central focus of critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the analysis of patterns that occur within language use as to reveal the ideologies rooted within them (Griffin, 2011: 98). In an interview with Broadway.com, Rachel Chavkin—director of *Hadestown*—stated that Anaïs Mitchel made it very clear that the musical was more a piece of poetry than anything else. This is evident in how the musical is structured as it makes use of the "essentialised amount of language for the densest amount of meaning" (2019). The narrative nature of the musical's continuous lyrical structure has encouraged me to make use of discourse analysis and language analysis to uncover the ideologies that the piece is rooted in. I will be analysing the language use within the musical by doing a close reading of the musical's songbook*, Working on a Song*: *The Lyrics of Hadestown*. Therefore, I will be making use of research methods that are typically used within literary studies and applying them to the study of the musical.

The methodology employed in this thesis stems from the qualitative approach to the material (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: 54). I will be focusing on the case study of the musical *Hadestown* and will be applying literary research methods to the case study. Since my research centres on gender representation on stage, I will be applying feminist methodological approaches to conduct my research. "Feminist knowledge is grounded in experiences of gendered social life" (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002: 3) and at the heart of feminist research is the driving force of challenging conventional ways of doing research, therefore, feminist methodologies are inherently post conventional and unorthodox (Lykke, 2011: 1).[2]

[2] I will subsequently revisit and expand on Nina Lykke's work on feminist methodologies (2011), as well as Caroline Ramazanoglu and Janet Holland's work (2002).

Throughout history, there has been a dualism within research practices, where one side has been privileged, and the other has been devalued. The male perspective of 'reason' has always been favoured and encouraged, and the female perspective of 'emotion' has been deemed unreliable and of lesser value. Hélène Cixous observes of ‘male writing’:

> Nearly the entire history of writing is confounded with the history of reason, of which it is at once the effect, the support, and one of the privileged alibis. It has been one with the phallocentric tradition. It is indeed that same self-admiring, self-stimulating, self-congratulatory phallocentrism (1976: 879).

Within research, men have had an 'absent presence' in the sense that the subject of social theory is not gendered but is implicitly male. The male perspective has, in other words, been established as the default (Barnett, 2017). Therefore, the criteria on which I will be basing my methodological approach include aspects such as plausibility (how persuasive a set of findings are to a given community of readers), reflexivity (how much awareness of the particularities of the research process and its impacts on the findings are articulated by the author) and comprehensiveness (how extensive and exhaustive was the research conducted) (Griffin, 2011: 97). Due to these criteria, my methodological approach will be rooted in discursive as well as thematic analysis, but through the lens of ecofeminism. To do this, I am to lean heavily on the work of Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies and various other ecofeminist theorists. While undertaking critical discourse analysis, I will be pointing toward ecofeminist themes.

When one then attempts to produce research within a methodological framework that doesn’t centre the male perspective, it becomes clear that within feminist methodologies various perspectives are presented (Barnett, 2017). However, there are unifying features within these different perspectives, and the main one is that feminist research aims to change society, not simply understand it (Barnett, 2017). The research is a means to an end. In my research I will base my research on modes of intersectional feminist research—specifically focussing on the intersectionality between environmentalism and feminism. Since I will be openly politically committed when it comes to this research, just as *Hadestown* is an environmentalist piece, general criticism of feminist methodology and feminist research could be applied to my research. These criticisms claim that since the researcher is openly politically rooted in the research, they are incapable of producing “valid and authoritative knowledge” (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002: 3). This criticism is rooted in patriarchal modes of research that propose that the only valid forms of research are those that imitate or follow the norms of scientific

research. These norms perpetuate and disguise the myth of superiority of men over women (Barnett, 2017).

Therefore, the criteria I will be basing my methodological approach on are things such as plausibility, reflexivity, and comprehensiveness. Plausibility refers to how persuasive a set of findings are to a given community of readers. Reflexivity centres on how much awareness of the particularities of the research process, and its impacts on the findings are articulated by the author. Finally, comprehensiveness discusses how extensive and exhaustive the research conducted was (Griffin, 2011: 97). Because of these criteria, my methodological approach will be one rooted in discursive analysis as well as thematic analysis, but through the lens of ecofeminism. It will be politically motivated as I embark on an ecofeminist reading of *Hadestown.* My intent will be to research and write within the ecofeminist tradition as well as establishing the importance of what ecofeminism aims to do.

I will analyse the lyrics in Anaïs Mitchell's *Working on a Song: The Lyrics of Hadestown* (2020). My analysis will extract the various layers Mitchell has encoded within *Hadestown.* Whether she has encoded these meanings by ways of forethought and intention or whether these meanings have been superimposed upon this musical as time has passed, these layers will be discussed. The specific thematic depth that this piece holds within itself involves environmentalism. I analyse the text—as well as aspects of the music, set, costuming, etc.—in such a way as to unearth the environmentalist roots within *Hadestown.* Drawing on analysis methods from Clément, I aim to highlight the lyrics and text above all else. I believe that her methods concerning operatic libretti are heavily applicable in the analysis of *Hadestown*, because the musical uses the Orpheus myth. The use of this myth establishes *Hadestown's* connection to opera in one of opera's most innate features, the death of our heroine, Eurydice.

> In opera, the forgetting of words, the forgetting of women, have the same deep roots. Reading the texts, more than in listening at the mercy of an adored voice, I found to my fear and horror, words that killed, words that told every time of women's undoing. (Clément, 1989: 22)

In focusing on the lyrics, I want to bring women to the forefront of the analysis. These words hold the truth and the theories that deepen the feminist theories and thoughts that saturate *Hadestown*. The piece's music is worth exploring but, in my work, I aim to unearth the feminist theories and thoughts rooted in the text. Since my research centres on gender

representation on stage, I will be applying feminist methodological approaches to conduct this research. Caroline Ramazanoglu and Janet Holland note in this regard that "Feminist knowledge is grounded in experiences of gendered social life" (2002: 3), and at the heart of feminist research is the driving force of challenging conventional ways of doing research, where feminist methodologies are inherently post-conventional and unorthodox (Lykke, 2011: 1).

The general musical language of *Hadestown* will ultimately be discussed in connection to the political history tied to the genres present in the musical. Genres such as jazz and folk, which both have deep politically entrenched histories, are the main genres used within the musical. Therefore, a discussion of these genres and their histories are prevalent. I will explore the connection that folk music and environmentalism have to one another in relation to activism. The show is musically rooted in a mix of American idioms, such as bluegrass, blues, big band jazz, and folk music, and uses the space of Broadway to exhibit its themes. The use of these different genres, viz., jazz, folk, and musical theatre, further adds to the layering of the musical's themes. Jazz is a genre birthed out of pain within African American history, while folk music is rooted in ecocriticism, and the American class struggle. Both of these genres have been known to have political motives and messages, whether they have been overtly or covertly expressed.

The show itself has undergone many evolutions, various cast and crew members, differing costuming and musical numbers, but the main themes of the musical, those of environmentalism, have remained since 2006. The focus of this thesis will be on the present production of *Hadestown* which premiered on Broadway in 2016, and how this present production acts in illustrating specific thematic concepts, such as environmentalism, industrialism, the cause-and-effect relationship between capitalism and climate change, as well as themes of race and gender—specifically as these intersect with environmentalism. I will use the musical's Broadway Cast Recording (2019) and Mitchell's book to discuss the work.

The specific relationship that modern capitalism has with the Earth will be explored as it is presented in the relationship Hadestown—and therefore, Hades—has with the Earth and its inhabitants. This major arc of environmentalist messaging is enhanced by how it intersects with feminism. Women and nature are inseparable within the story of *Hadestown*. Therefore,

I will be analysing the musical through an ecofeminist lens. Discussing climate change and its causes leads us to discuss capitalism, industrialism, and patriarchy. The environmentalist narrative that underlies the musical intersects further with more prominent themes of oppression and struggle. Class struggle, the civil rights movement, folk-led activism, all these and more sub-themes will be discussed as they exist within the piece and further aid in substantiating the environmentalist plea of *Hadestown*.

Hadestown: The Myth, The Musical has garnered incredible success publicly, as well as in the eyes of the critics. Its success has, unfortunately, yet to be met with the academic interest it deserves, despite presenting themes concurrent with the time it was developed. However, what is so profoundly intriguing about this musical is how it has only become more relevant as time has passed. In the last decade, climate change has become a significant talking point among world leaders, making *Hadestown* even more current than it was at its start. At the point of the musical's inception in 2006, Mitchell could not have foreseen that this piece would become an unintentional commentary on the Trump Administration and radical right-wing conspiracy theories. She has made it clear that many of the meanings that now accompany *Hadestown* were never intentionally written into the piece but remain valid. I will explore both of these areas; the meanings that have been intentionally encoded into the musical and the meanings that have grown to latch themselves onto this piece as time has passed.

Literature Review

The development of the musical—from inception in 2006 to Tony awards in 2019—will be explored by making use of interviews that Anaïs Mitchel, Rachel Chavkin as well as the cast and band have done. When discussing *Hadestown*, discussing the myths from which the musical draw inspiration from is essential. When it comes to music, literature, theatre and film, the story of Orpheus and Eurydice is one of the most popular classical myths to be used, reused and repurposed (Lee, 1961:309). Owen Lee discusses the immortalisation of the myth through the various works of art. He specifically discusses classic plays, and this concept is then extended in the life of *Hadestown*.

Within the realms of environmentalist studies and environmental humanities I will be making reference to works such as Rob Nixon's *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011), as well as Natalie Cecire's article titled: 'Environmental Innocence and Slow

Violence' (2015). These works will aid me in contextualising *Hadestown* within the discourse surrounding environmental catastrophe and neglect as a result of capitalist driven industrialism. Nixon and Cecire's work discuss tangible cataclysms and their effects on existing communities. Within *Hadestown*, the 'tangible cataclysm' becomes the ruined marriage of the gods. This has inevitable led to negative repercussions felt by the existing communities of mortal workers in *Hadestown*. The eventual cause-and-effect of these cataclysms and their inevitable consequences are never immediately observed. As time passes, the malignancy that is embedded within these disasters slowly come to light, until it is impossible to ignore. Yet, as the negative effects come to the forefront, the initial cause of the faced consequences seem out of reach. This is the case with what has happened in *Hadestown*, the effects are felt by all, yet the cause is rarely investigated. This application will be extended to the fictional world of *Hadestown*, showing how the musical is a mirror to the societal and environmental issues we face as humanity.

Environmental issues are feminist issues. This is the stance of ecofeminism, and this is what is illustrated throughout the relationships in *Hadestown*. Jamie Thompson explains in her article, 'Ecofeminism: The Path Towards Healing the Earth' that any structure in which one group dominates another, such as the patriarchy, is inherently connected to the "formation of humankind's domination of nature" (2017: 1). I would argue that the use of "humankind" is passive and just removes responsibility and accountability from the gender that is truly at fault—men. Therefore, mankind has dominated nature just as much as mankind has dominated anything that does not fit in to the paradigm of the masculine—the feminine and the queer. Thompson's writing explores the ways in which the oppression of the Earth has led to the oppression of women. This work, alongside a core text for me research, *Ecofeminism* (Shive & Mies, 2014), will aid me in analysing the characters of *Hadestown* through and ecofeminist perspective.

When looking specifically at the study of genre and how it affects the analysis of the musical, various works within the fields of jazz, folk, musical theatre, and opera will be used. These genres have been specifically chosen as they play a role in either the formation or eventual presentation of the musical. The musical was first classified as a 'folk opera' when it premiered. Mitchell's folk elements are evident within the work's musical life. This is seen in the original work, and in the present work. The use of folk music in the musical is multifaceted. It is the base musical language of the piece but is further layered with the deep

history that accompanies the genre. Folk music has walked with themes of struggle, inequality, and environmentalism since its elusive inception. As *Hadestown* makes use of folk music as well as folk idioms—such as Orpheus being portrayed as a hero folk singer—it automatically revives the inherent themes that have been embedded within the genre. Therefore, the struggles of the working class, the impoverished, and the environment are echoed not only by the words sung to the tune of a folk song, but by the history that folk holds. When discussing folk music, Mark Slobin's book, *Folk Music: A Very Short Introduction* (2010), discusses the history and traditions of folk music. This will aid me in contextualizing *Hadestown*'s music within the folk tradition. Furthermore, Ronald Serge Denisoff (1969) and Ronald D Cohen (2016) both published work that provide political analysis within the history of folk music. Both these works will add to my analysis of the efficacy of the use of folk music within the political piece that is *Hadestown.*

Within *Hadestown*, another prominent genre is jazz. Big band jazz is at the core of this musical, and as a result, it has centred the musical in a specific space and time. Mitchell was very intentional about drawing inspiration from New Orleans' big band jazz scene, specifically during the prohibition era. Therefore, the music is written in a similar style, but furthermore, the costuming and set design place the piece within a space reminiscent of prohibition era New Orleans. Jazz, much like folk music, has a history that is saturated with struggle. *The Creation of Jazz: Music, Race, and Culture in Urban America* (Peretti, 1994) presents an overview of the history of jazz., and this work, as well as the work of others, help me in contextualizing *Hadestown* within the themes of struggle that accompany jazz.

Since *Hadestown* has garnered its success from the Broadway stage, discussing both the structures and history of The Great White Way in relation to the themes pf the musical is integral. *The Secret Life of the American Musical: How Broadway Shows are Built,* will be used to assess the unconventional ways in which *Hadestown* has unintentionally, over the 15 years of its development, fallen into the mould of what makes a modern musical (Viertel, 2016). Viertel discusses the 'life' of a Broadway musical as though it is a living organism. IN this way, *Hadestown* has been breathing and growing and expanding since its inception, but as it has moved towards the Broadway stage, it has slotted into the conventional structures found within most Broadway musicals. Furthermore, I will look at the history of Broadway and how it has been walking the line between political and social passivity and activism. The

respective works of both James Fisher (2011), and Charlotte Greenspan (2012) will be used to discuss Broadway's political and social histories.

Catherine Clément's work in *Opera, or the Undoing of Women* will aid me in analyzing the representation of heroines on the operatic stage (1986: 83). Clément writes about how opera has undone heroines, and in the age-old story of Orpheus and Eurydice, our heroine's fate mimics those of our operatic leading ladies. Throughout the history of opera, a plethora of final scenes have been characterized by the death of the female lead. Within the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, this same pattern emerges as Eurydice is sentenced to oblivion in the underworld by the end of the piece. However, not only this, but Persephone is also undone through a slow violence (Nixon, 2011). Persephone is not murdered nor is she driven to suicide, instead she is consigned to a loveless marriage that ends up killing her natural realm and driving her to substance abuse. Both our heroines are undone. The use of these very two myths tie *Hadestown* to the world of opera as these myths were the core of one of the longest surviving operas to date. Therefore, as Clément's work focusses on the operatic world, her theories and stances on this continual 'undoing' of women can easily be translated into the world of musical theatre.

Chapter Outline

My first chapter will introduce *Hadestown: The Myth, The Musical*. It presents a history of the work, as well as a summary. The major themes of environmentalism, anti-industrialism, and ecofeminism are introduced, and the musical's ever-growing relevance is discussed. The second chapter focuses heavily on genre and how the use of various genres (specifically folk, jazz, and musical theatre) aids in presenting an activist undertone for the musical. These genres' histories have been entrenched in resistance; therefore, their uses will aid in crafting an argument for the activism of *Hadestown*.

Further historical influences (the Great Depression, Prohibition, the Dust Bowl, New Orleans, etc.) are discussed and analysed. Chapter Three concerns the relationship that the four main characters (Persephone, Hades, Orpheus, and Eurydice) have with the environment, and how these relationships are representative of the relationship humanity has with the Earth. The final chapter considers the character of Persephone, and how she is an exemplar for the study of ecofeminism. The conclusion presents the reader with a summary of the lyrical analysis of *Hadestown* as it intersects with themes of environmentalism, ecofeminism, anti-capitalism,

and anti-industrialism. The various directions of analysis that this thesis will pursue will be concluded and resolved.

List of Characters

Persephone	Amber Grey
Hades	Patrick Page
Eurydice	Eva Noblezada
Orpheus	Reeve Carney
Hermes	Andreé De Shields
The Fates	Jewelle Blackman Yvette Gonzalez-Nacer Kay Trinidad

Figure 1: List of characters in *Hadestown* as well as the actors that played them in the 2019 production.

CHAPTER 1

An Introduction to Hadestown: The Myth, The Musical

In 2006, Anaïs Mitchell had an interaction with her creative muse, and some lyrics came to her as she was driving. She was playing around with a melody, and the first iterations of what would eventually become *Hadestown* came to her: "Wait for me, I'm coming. With my garters and pearls, with what melody did you barter me from the wicked underworld" (Mitchell, 2020: 129). Mitchell wrote these lyrics about her love life, and the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, which she had known and loved since childhood. These lyrics never made it into the show now known as *Hadestown: The Myth, The Musical* (2016) but this was the birth of a project that became much more than a few idle lyrics. Instead, from these lyrics, Mitchell started to develop a musical narrative revolving around the classical myth of Orpheus and Eurydice written in her folk style. She initially developed it as a community theatre piece; thus, *Hadestown: A Folk Opera* was born.

This early rendition premiered in Barre, Vermont in 2006, whereafter Mitchell developed it into a concept album, which was released in 2010. For the concept album, *Hadestown* (2010), the part of Orpheus is played by Justin Vernon, also known as Bon Iver, Persephone by Ani DiFranco, Hades by Greg Brown, The Fates by The Haden Triplets, Hermes by Ben Knox Miller, and Mitchell herself plays Eurydice. The concept album also features orchestral arrangements by Michael Chorney, who would continue to work with Mitchell when the project went on to be developed further. In 2012, Mitchell sought out Rachel Chavkin after being in the audience for *Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812*, which Chavkin had directed, marking the start of their collaboration and the reworking process of the musical. As the project evolved from concept album to musical, Mitchell wrote fifteen extra songs for the show to bridge the plot gaps that the concept album did not cover. Dialogue was also added in certain places, but ultimately the musical ended up being one long song. *Hadestown: The Myth, The Musical* premiered at the New York Theatre Workshop for an initial run from 3 May 2016 through 3 July 2016, but was later extended due to popular demand through 31 July, 2016.

The original cast consists of various workshop cast members that remained on: the role of Orpheus was played by Reeve Carney; Eurydice by Eva Noblezada; Persephone by Amber Gray; Hades by Patrick Page; and Hermes by Andreé De Shields.

Hadestown is a processing of environmentalist issues—specifically the climate crisis created by industrial and capitalist structures. By its very nature, industrialism has been established upon the humanistic belief that we are rightfully owed all we see, and further, that we possess the capacity to "engineer the Earth" (Campbell, 2020:237). Industrialism over the centuries has culminated in what Craig Campbell calls "the curse of the Anthropocene: mass extinction, rising sea levels, melting glaciers, toxic environments" (2020: 237). As industrialism has become the marker by which nations and societies have proven their strength and progress, the world has done well to ignore or obscure the ultimate redistributed ecological debt. The price of human-centred expansion upon the Earth has been the Earth herself. As we have hoped to develop ourselves upon our planet, our planet is what has been lost. Industrialism—and its co-conspirator capitalism—have had the largest impact on the drastic increase in climate change (2020:238). The consistent longing for commodities has resulted in hidden labour and the true production cost being obscured. The Anthropocene we find ourselves in, an age ruled by humanistic intention and behaviour, comes at the expense of our world. Campbell writes, "Amid the gifts of enlightenment and technology are the countergifts of hunger, sickness, and war" (2020:239). These countergifts, as well as the supposed gifts, are both represented in the musical of *Hadestown* through the imagery and storytelling of two ancient Greek myths. The gifts of technology and expansion are personified in Hades, whereas the countergifts are shown in the experiences Persephone, Eurydice, Orpheus, and those under Hades' rule.

Two of the main characters in *Hadestown* are representative of these opposing forces. Hades—the King of the Underworld—is a plutocrat and a force of industrial capitalism. His kingdom is made up of oil drums, fluorescent lights, and mineworkers. He exploits marginalised workers for their labour since their mere existence in the Underworld has signed their souls to Hades. The lot that has befallen them is an unchangeable one. The people working for Hades end up forgetting their names and histories, and ultimately, their entire identity becomes wrapped up in simply being a member of Hades' workforce. In contrast, Hades' wife—Persephone—is the goddess of nature and the seasons. Their marriage is an illustration of the relationship between capitalist industrialism, and climate change. Their

relationship is determined by a contract that specifies that Persephone is to live six months of the year in the Underworld with Hades, and six months of the year on Earth.[3]

The other two main characters, Eurydice and Orpheus, represent the experiences of those affected by the tumultuous relationship of the gods. In the influence the gods' relationship has over the mortals on Earth, we see a likeness to the overbearing influence the Global North has on the Global South, specifically in terms of environmental dependence. In the current discourse surrounding climate change, it is evident that the countries that are most affected by climate change are those same countries that have contributed the least towards it, and further have very little influence when it comes to climate politics. This is due to the skewed power dynamics between the Global North and the Global South (Guerrero, 2018: 31). Countries in the Global South consist of populations riddled by poverty and economic injustice. They do not have the means to expand drastically as the Global North has done. The Global North has grown exponentially in its technological advancements and industrial strength; however, as their growth has increased, so has their direct influence on climate change. However, those suffering the significant effects of climate change—floods, mudslides, harsh weather, change in certain animals' migration patterns—are those living in the Global South. Within the story of *Hadestown,* those affected most by the climate change brought on by the gods, are not the gods. The mortals, specifically Eurydice, experience climate change in a vastly different manner than the gods do. The mortals suffer not only environmental damage but also the resultant poverty that it brings, thanks to the industrialisation personified by the "*almighty Mister Hades*" (Act I, scene i: 2020, 12).

The Myth

Anaïs Mitchell has saturated the musical with the above-mentioned themes but has drawn inspiration from classic myths. *Hadestown* follows two love stories: that of Hades and Persephone, two gods, and that of Orpheus and Eurydice, two humans. The love stories of these two couples have been intertwined since their classic versions. These tales have been retold once more in *Hadestown* and although they do take their inspiration from the original myths, they have found new life in Mitchell's writing.

[3] The intricacies surrounding Persephone and Hades' relationship will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four, as this relates to ecofeminism.

The myth of Hades and Persephone, as well as that of Orpheus and Eurydice, has been used by innumerable writers to inspire their work. However, one of these myth's more developed versions appears in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (approximately 8 CE). Other early versions include Virgil's *Georgics*, Plato's *Symposium*, and *The Homeric Hymns*.[4] In the comparative discussion of the myth in its original form and its presentation in *Hadestown* (2019), I will be making reference to Ovid's telling of the original myths.

We find Ovid's rendition of the myths in Book V and Book X of *Metamorphoses.* Book V recounts the story of Hades and Persephone, titled, "The Rape of Proserpine" (Ovid, 1986: 149). The myth starts by praising the goddess Demeter,[5] the mother of Persephone. The story continues to explain how the isle of Sicily has been built on the body of the giant, Typhon, and how, often, Typhon strains and attempts to stand, resulting in terrifying earthquakes and disasters. Hades, fearing the rise of Typhon, leaves the Underworld to inspect the foundations of the isle. As Hades concludes his inspection, Aphrodite, the goddess of love, implored Eros, her son, to shoot one of his arrows into the heart of Hades, in hopes of extending her empire into the Underworld through the power of love being able to reside there, as well as in the other two realms (heaven and sea). Aphrodite tells Eros to make Persephone the target of Hades' affection, and he does so. While this happens, Persephone is playing in a glade, picking flowers. After Hades is shot with Eros' best arrow, the text presents us with both Hades and Persephone's reactions.

> *Dis* [Hades] *saw her, loved her, carried her away—*
> *Love leapt in such a hurry! Terrified,*
> *In tears, the goddess called her mother, called*
> *Her comrades too, but oftenest her mother;*
> *And, as she'd torn the shoulder of her dress,*
> *The folds slipped down and out the flowers fell,*
> *And she, in innocent simplicity,*
> *Grieved in her girlish heart for their loss too* (Ovid, 1986: 151).

Hades then carries Persephone to the Underworld with him. On the way into the Underworld, Hades passes by "a bay confined by narrow points of land […] and there lived Cyane, the most renowned of all the nymphs of Sicily" (Ovid, 1986: 152). She rises out of her waters urging Hades to stop, urging him that Persephone cannot be taken this way. She calls out to

[4]I will be referencing A.D. Melville's 1986 translation of *Metamorphoses* by Ovid
[5] Ovid's *Metamorphoses* makes use of Roman names, as well as other variations for these characters. I will use the Greek names in keeping with the Musical version.

Hades, saying, "She ought to be wooed, not whirled away" (Ovid, 1986: 152). She continues to plead with him by telling her own story of how she had been "wooed and won" by her husband, not "frightened and forced" like Persephone (Ovid, 1986: 152). Despite Cyane's attempts, Hades continues on his course to Hell, and Cyane, heartbroken by the rape of Persephone, dissolves into the pool she came from.
Meanwhile, Demeter has been searching for her child, and in her search, she comes to the pool of Cyane, where Persephone's sash is floating in the waters. Demeter realises that her daughter had been abducted. She did not know where her daughter was, and so, as the goddess of agriculture, she wreaked havoc on the crops, soil, and weather in Sicily, until someone could tell her where her daughter was (Ovid, 1986: 154). The water nymph Arethusa finally pleads for the land's sake and tells Demeter that Hades is the one to blame. Demeter then stands before Zeus, pleading for Persephone's safe return. Zeus agrees that Persephone can return to Earth only if she has not eaten anything in Hell (Ovid, 1986: 155). However, Persephone had eaten seven pomegranate seeds and could not return to Earth permanently. So Zeus divided the year into two so that Persephone could live for half of the year on Earth with her mother and the other half in Hell with her husband (Ovid, 1986: 157).

The tale of the abduction and rape of Persephone is one that served as an analogy for the cycle of the seasons. In Persephone's absence, Demeter would strip the Earth of its growth and fertility, but when Persephone was able to return to her mother, the Earth would be bountiful and warm. Therefore, the six months of Persephone's absence were the months of autumn and winter, and the remaining time of the year, when Persephone was able to be with her mother, would be spring and summer (Abolghasem & Mahdyeh, 2009: 25). The narrative of this myth has been suffused with environmental themes since its inception. The cycle of the seasons and the Earth's ability to bloom and bear fruit; these concepts were bound to the tale of Persephone and Hades. However, as much as this tale is portrayed as the dawn of the love of these gods, an inherent tension between Persephone and Hades is simultaneously presented. Their relationship exists in contrast, a tension between Earth and the Underworld, between natural cycles, and that which interrupts them. This tension translates to the inherent tension between capitalist industrialism and our Earth.

The story of Orpheus and Eurydice is found in Book X of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and begins by describing the sadness of Orpheus, as his new bride, Eurydice, had just died as a result of a snake bite. In Orpheus' grief, he travels down to Hades to beg for the safe return of his wife

(Ovid, 1986: 268). He stands before Persephone and Hades and pleads his case by playing his lyre. Orpheus appeals to the rulers of the Underworld by presenting Eurydice's youth, saying her "budding years" had been stolen from her. He continues by singing of Persephone and Hades' story and promises that when the time is right, Eurydice and himself will both return to Hades when they die, and if the rulers of Hell will not return Eurydice to him, he will choose to stay in Hades, saying, "may two deaths give you cheer" (Ovid, 1986: 269). Ovid's poem illustrates how, as Orpheus sang, creation mourned with him; from the decaying spirits in Hades to Sisyphus, who is said to have "sat rapt upon his stone" (Ovid, 1986:269). And so, Orpheus' song moved Hades and Persephone, so they did not deny his request. They brought Eurydice forward, and she was permitted to leave with Orpheus on the condition that Orpheus would walk ahead of her and not turn back till they had exited Hades. Just as they are about to reach the world's light, fear takes hold of Orpheus, and he cannot stop himself from looking back. Eurydice's soul is pulled back down to Hades as she dies a second time, and Orpheus is left grasping at nothingness (Ovid, 1986: 269). Orpheus is left to mourn and never recovers from the heartbreak of losing his beloved again. In Book XI of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, we are presented with the story of the death of Orpheus. He had mourned Eurydice all his life, and never returned the advances of the many women that pursued him. Ultimately, he was murdered by the Maenads, and Ovid's version tells of how his spirit descended to Hades, where he once more found his love in the Elysian fields. Other iterations of the myth tell of his body being torn to pieces and his head and lyre being floated down the river Lesvos, where the muses ultimately received them, and there Orpheus received a proper burial.

> *The ghost of Orpheus passed to the Underworld,*
> *And all the places that he'd seen before*
> *He recognised again and, searching through*
> *The Elysian fields, he found Eurydice*
> *And took her in his arms with leaping heart.*
> *There hand in hand they stroll, the two together;*
> *Sometimes he follows as she walks in front,*
> *Sometimes he goes ahead and gazes back—*
> *No danger now—at his Eurydice* (Ovid, 1986: 295).

These myths have become the centre of Anaïs Mitchell's *Hadestown*, and in Mitchell's retelling of the myth, she chooses to retell these age-old myths with reworked themes. The abduction and rape, Demeter's anger, the deal struck with Zeus; none of these make their way into the story of *Hadestown*, but rather, Mitchell chooses to focus the narrative in such a way

as to highlight themes of environmental decay as a result of industrialism, highlighting the already existent tensions among the characters. The same characters are used and the same tragic endings in the lives of the mortals are seen. Our famous hero turns around, and Eurydice is lost again, undone by her lover. Yet, this narrative seems to be that which clads the themes Mitchell presents, environmentalism, anti-capitalism, and ecofeminism.

These things have been intentionally stressed as a means to tell the story Mitchell wants to tell, which is one where the love of two gods determines the Earth's environmental health. She tells a story where the stale love of these gods influences the strength with which the seasons change. And so, within the musical, their story becomes one of attraction and love. The character of Orpheus sings of the story of Hades and Persephone in 'Epic I' (Act I, scene v, 2020: 49):

> *King of shadows*
> *King of shades*
> *Hades was King of the Underworld*
> *But he fell in love with a beautiful lady*
> *Who walked up above in her Mother's greenfield*
> *He fell in love with Persephone*
> *Who was gathering flowers in the light of the sun*
> *And he took her home to become his queen*
> *Where the sun never shone*
> *On anyone*
>
> *The lady loved him and the kingdom they shared*
> *But without her above, not one flower would grow*
> *So, King Hades agreed that for half of each year*
> *She would stay with him there in his world down below*
> *But the other half, she could walk in the sun*
> *And the sun, in turn, burned twice as bright*
> *Which is where the seasons come from*
> *And with them, the cycle*
> *Of the seed and the sickle*
> *And the lives of the people*
> *And the birds in their flight*

The retelling of the myth within this song presents the audience with the characters of Hades and Persephone and the history of their love story. Hades has always been tied to power and rule; he is established as the King of the shadowy Underworld, but his love of Persephone is believed to be the catalyst in many ways to the story being told. Ceres is briefly mentioned as

Persephone's mother, and the stark contrast between the two lovers is immediately established. Hades is King of the Underworld as Persephone walks up above, and the distinction between above and below remains throughout the musical. Furthermore, Hades is shrouded in shadow and shade, as Persephone is "gathering flowers in the light of the sun". Above and below, darkness and light, shadow and sun, their contrasts lay the foundation of their relationship.

Persephone's presence in the Underworld led to the environmental decay of the Earth above, and Hades ultimately agreed to allow Persephone to roam the Earth for half of each year. Even in this arrangement, Hades is seen as the dominant figure, deciding the fate of Persephone and the fate of the Earth. And thus, the relationship between these two gods has become the world's way of making sense of the cycle of the seasons. The months in which Persephone roams the Earth are the months characterised by warmth, greenery and growth, the months of summer and spring. In contrast, the months of winter and fall indicate Persephone's absence on Earth, as though the Earth mourns for her loss in its chill. This cycle affects not only the weather conditions of the Earth, but very clearly the harvest and the living creatures that depend on it. Therefore, the state of the gods' love affects the whole Earth.

Mitchell has redesigned these ancient myths as a means to process environmentalist and anti-capitalist issues, and we see this in how these myths have been reworked. By looking at the plot and character design of *Hadestown* through the text of the musical, I will explore how Mitchell has effectively used the myths of these two pairs to present the audience with the reality of climate change brought on by industrial practices (Broadway.com, 2019).

The Musical

What follows is a summary of *Hadestown* that leads into various branches of analysis. However, many areas of analysis will be developed further in the coming chapters. The story of *Hadestown* starts as follows. Before the commencement of the opening song, *Road to Hell* (Act I, scene i), Hermes (played by André DeShields) starts by asking the company, "*Alright?*" (in Ebonics as "aight"). They then respond with "*Alright!*" The same question is posed to the audience with the same response expected. Hermes then presents the question one last time to the trombonist, who does not respond verbally but starts the show with the musical riff of the opening song.

The use of informal contractions such as “aight”, “gonna”, “tryna”, “singin", etc. appear regularly throughout the musical. As a sub-theme, it enforces the overtly contemporary treatment of the myth. This is clearly not a classical retelling of the myth. The use of the contemporary informal contraction, "aight", as the inaugural moment of the performance immediately invites the audience to partake in a particular reading of the musical. The use of informal contractions further points towards the process of signifyin(g)/signifyin' (Gates, 1987). This term derives from the English "signifying" but is rooted and defined within African American discourse. Historically, black Americans have been forced to endure and navigate an environment of racial hostility and oppression, and the signifyin(g) has offered an opportunity of resistance and honesty (Florini, 2014: 226). Signifyin(g) is black double-voiced communication encoded with layers of meanings integral to black people's culture. Without the cultural knowledge that comes with being entrenched in the lives of Black Americans, the meanings tied to signifyin' become vague. Historically, signifyin’ has allowed black communities in the United States to create spaces for social commentaries and critique (Florini, 2014: 227). Therefore, using these informal contractions roots us in some layer of African American signifyin'. The fact that Andreé De Shields speaks these words, an African American actor, further establishes this.[6] Therefore, the musical's opening establishes an informal air about it, making sure that, from the start, people understand this is not your typical Broadway musical. Secondly, the use of Ebonics roots the audience in the African American sociological act of signifyin' and presents the audience with room for social commentary and critique. Thirdly, this moment breaks the fourth wall immediately and incorporates the audience into the performance, not only presenting the musical as a living organism that breathes in rhythm, but simultaneously inviting the audience to breathe with it. This first word might seem arbitrary, but it has sent out an open invitation to those hearing it to step into the world of *Hadestown* as it presents its social commentaries and critiques on the world from which the audience is travelling. This first moment establishes the tone of the musical as it transitions into the opening song. This tone is one saturated with both struggle and protest. The opening song has already brought together issues of social justice and protest through the use of African American idiom. Injustice becomes an initial reality as the musical opens.

[6] Andreé De Shields played Hermes from *Hadestown’s* opening night until May 2022. He was then succeeded by Lillias White (an African American woman). However, Hermes is played by Levi Kreis (a white American man) in the North American tour of *Hadestown*.

‘Road to Hell’(Act I, scene i) acts to introduce the main characters, the world we find ourselves in, as well as the story that will be told. We are first introduced to the “*railroad line*” “*on the road to hell*” (Act I, scene i, 2020: 10). This song introduces the characters in the musical, the ensemble, the band, as well as the Earth, which is presented as the one-way “*road to hell*". The song's title is a theme that continually repeats throughout the show. Hermes starts most of his narrative pieces with "*On the road to Hell there was…*", permanently anchoring the milieu of the narrative in and around "*the road to Hell*”. We are therefore presented with two spaces in which the narrative functions, “*the road to Hell*" or the destination of this road, Hell itself. One is either on the way to Hell or already in it, therefore Earth is not a separate entity, but rather, a space characterised by how it is not like Hadestown, but rather a means to get to Hadestown. This thread throughout the show already establishes the superiority of Hadestown itself, as it directly influences Earth. The eventuality of one's arrival in Hell or Hadestown ("*ain’t no difference anymore*" (Act I, scene viii: 2020, 78)) is emphasised by the establishment of Earth as simply the route one follows to one's "*final destination*” (Act I, scene i, 2020: 13). There is the assumption that, since it is a road, there are comings and goings, but this road is, in essence, one-way. In ‘Way Down Hadestown’ (Act I, scene viii), Hermes clearly states, *“…those who go, they don’t come back*" (Act I, scene viii: 2020, 79). Persephone is the only character permitted to return to Earth, but she, even as the goddess of nature, is stuck in a cycle that always has her returning to Hadestown.

This eventuality of Hadestown as the “*end of the line*” (Act I, scene viii: 2020, 78) is layered with the association of Hadestown as the representation of the industrial. One could interpret the existence of “*the road*” as a signifier of human-centred expansion and growth, showing the development of humans over time, however, the “*road*" is the most prominent representative of Hades' industrial rule and expansion. It is not a road or a railroad that benefits those around it, it is not a means of travel or exploration for those on Earth, it is simply a means of transporting souls to—and not from—Hadestown. The train, therefore, becomes the canonical psychopomp. The train replaces Charon, the mythical ferryman, as the guide that transports souls into the afterlife. From the start of the musical, we see the mythical elements are reshaped, replaced, or repurposed to anchor *Hadestown* as an industrial society. Charon, the ferryman, would guide souls into Hades across the River Styx. This image is completely deconstructed and instead, we see a train, an image of humanity's industrialism,

taking Charon's place. The story that *Hadestown* is telling is therefore not simply the story of the myth but is layered with modernisms that aid in presenting its environmentalist themes.

We see that the road to Hell is not something that has benefited those on Earth; it is still something on which they are all dependent. Hermes' opening song centres everyone in relation to their existence on the road to Hell. This shows us that the Earth is already bound for industrial decay, a one-way road that continually cycles back to the industrial. Therefore, from the beginning of the musical, the audience is presented with the immediate distinction between Earth and Hadestown, they are made aware of the superiority of Hadestown, and where Earth stands in this hierarchy. This presents us with a parallel of the industrial world's influences on Earth, pointing to issues such as pollution, global warming, climate change, lack of biodiversity, mass species extinction, etc.

In this song, and throughout the musical, Hermes acts as the narrator, while simultaneously being an active character. In the opening song he introduces the audience to the "*old song*" they will be singing and the world they find themselves in, "*a world of gods… and man*" (Act I, scene i, 2020: 10). Even in this statement, another distinction is made between gods and men. Musically and stylistically, Hermes says "*and man*" as an afterthought, intimating that the world within which this story is taking place is one ruled by the gods, to which the mortals in it remain subject. This is not far removed from classic Greek mythology because there has always been a class distinction and hierarchical nature to the relationship between gods and men (Allan, 2006: 8). In *Hadestown*, Mitchell uses this understanding in Greek mythology to highlight her themes. Therefore, hierarchically, we have been presented with the categorisation of Hadestown and Earth, as well as the gods and mortals. As the musical progresses, we slowly begin to see how this hierarchy has affected all within the world of *Hadestown*. The powers that be, so to speak, affect the people within this world as it directly affects the environment.

In this song, we are introduced to the main characters, the Fates, three deities influencing mortals' destinies; Hermes—the messenger god as well as our omniscient active narrator; Hades, the King of the Underworld; Persephone, the goddess of vegetation as well as the wife of Hades; Orpheus, our naïve hero, musician, and poet; and Eurydice, a poor, hungry mortal girl. We are also briefly introduced to the workers and the band. Hermes sings of how they

will all be singing a song for the audience, but explicitly makes it clear, from the beginning, that it is not one with a 'happily ever after'.

> Hermes: *See, someone's got to tell the tale*
> *Whether or not it ends up well*
> *Maybe it will turn out this time*
> *On the road to Hell, on the railroad line*
> *It's a sad song.*
> Company: *It's a sad song!*
> Hermes: *It's a sad tale: it's a tragedy*
> *It's a sad song.*
> Company: *It's a sad song!*
> Hermes: *We're gonna sing it anyway* (Act I, scene i, 2020: 13).

The story we are introduced to is the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. Their love story, and how it unfolds, is what the audience expects to see. And so, they do. The audience sees this age-old story retold and repackaged to aid in presenting environmentalist and anti-capitalist themes, and Hermes, from the start, makes it clear that it is an "*old*", "*sad*" tale. "*A tale of a love from long ago*" (Act I, scene i, 2020: 15). And so, even though the musical starts with an upbeat chorus number filled with joyous dancing and big-band jazz, it is still trying to warn us that this tale will end in the same way the tale has permanently ended. Orpheus will turn around, and Eurydice will be lost forever.

As the opening number concludes, the environmental state of the Earth is presented as dire, and Eurydice's guarded nature is shown to the audience as a result of the life she has been forced to endure. She specifically sings of her frustration at the disappearance of moderate weather circumstances, she explains how the seasons of spring and fall do not exist anymore ('Any Way the Wind Blows'. Act I, scene ii). She then becomes the object of desire for our young hero, Orpheus, and he approaches her, asking her to "*come home with [him]*" (Act I, scene iii, 2020: 31). She is pulled in by his god-like musical ability that allows him to move nature. He tells her of a song he is writing that would "*bring the world back into tune*" (Act I, scene iii, 2020: 33), and because of this hope and promise, Eurydice falls in love with Orpheus. As Orpheus sings his song for his new lover, a flower blooms in his hands, pulling Eurydice out of her hardened shell. Hermes reminds Orpheus that the melody of his song is the lost love song of Hades and Persephone, and so he sings his first version of his world-altering song, 'Epic I' (Act I, scene v). In this song it is hinted at that the love of the gods and the environmental balance of the world are connected.

Persephone returns to Earth, bringing "*wine enough to share*" (Act I, scene vi, 2020: 61) but no spring. She brings numbing agents but no balance. The audience is then further presented with the roots of the environmental state of the Earth as they see Persephone's alcoholism and her indifference towards the extreme state of the seasons. As per their agreement, Hades returns to Earth to retrieve his wife, bringing her back to Hades with him for the next six months, as Hermes, The Fates, Persephone, and the workers sing of what Hadestown is like. The audience catches a glimpse of the rules of the mythical world. A ticket is required for entrance to Hadestown; once you go you do not come back, it's a graveyard, a foundry, a mine, and a factory, and it is enclosed by a wall that prompts curiosity of what life would be like on the other side ('Way Down Hadestown'. Act I, scene viii). In response to Persephone's departure from Earth, Orpheus isolates himself to finish his song, and Eurydice is left to doubt Orpheus's reliability within the harsh circumstances in which she finds herself.

'A Gathering Storm' (Act I, scene ix) confirms summer's end, as Hermes explains, "*With Persephone gone, the cold came on*" (Act I, scene ix, 2020: 89), and as the cold of the winter sets in, Orpheus responds with discontent rooted in the inherent 'wrongness' of the state of the world. He exclaims that Hades came too soon to retrieve his bride, and that the rhythms of the seasons are out of sync. Eurydice responds by saying that this is simply how it will be until "*someone brings the world back into tune*" (Act I, scene iii, 2020: 33). At this, Orpheus disappears as he continues to work on his song, but as he focuses on his noble craft—meant to bring the world back to balance—Eurydice calls out for her lover, and he does not respond. Eurydice is calling out and saying that they need firewood and food, pulled back to what has always had control over her, her basic and most fundamental needs. Too enamoured by the pull of his work, he does not hear Eurydice's call for him. Orpheus' character is shown in this, that first and foremost above all, he is a musician, an artist, and a creator. His first love has always been and will always be his craft. The pull of his craft and his creative process is ultimately his obsession, one borne of nobility as it is this that is the hope of the wellness of the Earth, but one resulting in the loss of the one whom he has hoped to create for, Eurydice. Ultimately, we see both characters being drawn back to their most fundamental characteristics and motives, and one cannot blame either of them for simply being who they are. One cannot blame Eurydice for her needs, nor can one blame Orpheus for his.

The title 'A Gathering Storm' (Act I, scene ix) is layered with intertextuality. Firstly, and most overtly, it speaks of the environmental issues faced by those in the world of *Hadestown*. A winter storm is gathering as the wind grows colder and the nights grow longer after Persephone's departure. This term, namely 'the storm', is linked to QAnon, and far-right conspiracy theories. This group of conspiracy theorists was composed of a majority of far-right Trump supporters, who believed that Donald Trump would be the leader to take down a "cabal" of Satan-worshipping cannibals who run an international child trafficking ring. The belief was that this cabal was made up of primarily people who sat on the far left of American politics (Priniski, McClay and Holyoak, 2021: 1). QAnon and Trump supporters would consistently refer to "The Storm" as the day that the underbelly of the shadow government would be exposed. They would expect mass public arrests and justice to be enacted. This hopeful site was coined "The Storm" or QStorm (Papasavva and Mariconti, 2023: 5). In reality, "The Storm" is something that Trump supporters and QAnon members hoped for, and in the world of *Hadestown,* links are made between the Trump administration and Hades. Although these links were never intentionally written (as the musical was written pre-Trump Administration), the connection remains. Hades and his Wall is something that will be discussed in-depth later on. However, this connection, along with Hades' followers resembling the nature of QAnon and devout Trump supporters, ties this gathering storm to the political storm in the US. The gathering storm in *Hadestown* ultimately leads to Hades' acquisition of Eurydice. In this storm, Eurydice loses sight of Orpheus and his promises, ultimately leading to her choice to go down to Hadestown. Hades benefits from the storm that he has created, by being the industrial cause behind the climate change within the musical.

This unforeseen QAnon reference aids in *Hadestown's* continued relevance. The concept of "The Storm" or "A Gathering Storm" has come to be layered with meaning previously not found within the writing of this song, yet now, the reality of these meanings situates *Hadestown* in the present. As always, art has a life outside of itself and the artist's intentions, and *Hadestown* is an exemplar of the afterlife of a piece. *Hadestown* was developed upon themes of environmentalism—specifically climate change and global warming. However, as the environmental crisis has increased, and as political figures have come to play a role in the environmental crisis, the work has gained relevance. The desperate situation of *Hadestown* is becoming the reality—or instead has been the reality—that humanity is facing. The original themes of climate change, industrialist issues, global warming, and anti-capitalism are all layered with a further ecofeminist reading of the work, where the work of ecofeminists has

tied these themes together. The correlation between women facing unjust environmental degradation and patriarchal capitalism is one that ecofeminist theory exposes (Shiva, 2014: 26). Therefore, as time has passed, more moments, in reality, have shown the truth of ecofeminist theory, and the musical has gained more relevance.

Orpheus sings a more developed version of his song, 'Epic II' (Act I, scene x), telling us of Hades' pull towards Persephone, and the world that he has built to please her. Hades is established, even more than he already has been, as King.

> Orpheus: *King of silver, King of gold*
> *And everything glittering under the ground*
> *Hades is King of oil and coal*
> *And the riches that flow where those rivers are found* (2020: 96)

Hades is not simply King of his domain but over natural elements that give monetary and financial value. This is layered with the meanings of Hades' Roman name. "Pluto" literally translates to "the wealthy one" (Cooney, 2020: 1). Pluto is considered the wealthiest god, due to the riches of the Earth. He is, therefore, King over the non-renewable resources that Earth carries within her, viz. silver, gold, gems, oil, coal. The gifts of the Earth have become commodities owned by the King of the Underworld. Hades is not simply the ruler of the Underworld, in the traditional sense, and he does not simply own the souls that have descended to Hadestown, but he has become the ruler of the hidden treasures under the Earth. This reminds us of mankind, how he has viewed the Earth as something to be conquered, and how those in power have the oil and the gold. The power the Earth holds is something that mankind has never learnt to share, but something we have always hoped to control. And so, Hades' power is shown to be enacted in Underworld and the world above. He is not simply the King of the Underworld anymore but holds the elements of power within his grasp. As Orpheus continues to describe Hades, we gather more about his kingdom.

> Orpheus: *King of mortar, King of bricks*
> *The River Styx is a river of stones*
> *And Hades lays them high and thick*
> *With a million hands that are not his own*
> *With a million hands he builds a wall*
> *Around all of the riches he digs from the earth* (Act I, scene x, 2020: 96)

The image of Hades within Greek mythology is not synonymous with the image of Hell we are presented with in a Judaeo-Christian worldview. Hades is where all souls go to exist as a

shade of themselves in death. As they are guided across the River Styx by Charon the ferryman, they come to Hades, where they are to endure eternity as a shadow of themselves. However, in *Hadestown*, the character of Hades has modernised the Underworld. It is no more the typical image of souls doomed to an eternity of morbid faux existence, rather, it is a space of eternal labour. The classic image of the River Styx is transformed into a river of stone, a wall. The natural is replaced by the industrial. It becomes the object of the workers' labour, and it is unceasingly being built upon by the hands of those in Hadestown. Hades has become King of the Underworld and the souls that inhabit it, King of the natural resources Earth has within her, and King of a relentless expansion that he has forced upon the population of Hadestown.

As Persephone makes her way down to Hadestown, the audience is pulled along and finally steps into the world they've only heard about. What they are finally presented with is an industrial acropolis, one that Persephone hates and one the Hades built as a means to show his misguided love to her. Persephone clarifies that Hadestown, and its prosperity is gained at the expense of the Earth's well-being. Persephone angrily states that "*it ain't right, and it ain't natural*" (Act I, scene xi, 2020: 100). In response to Persephone's disdain for his creation, Hades pursues a younger, more desperate object to present his "love" to instead of rethinking the gifts he has attempted to present to his wife, gifts that have not been for her benefit or enjoyment but for his. In 'Hey, Little Songbird' (Act I, scene xii), Hades presents Eurydice with the chance to be in Hadestown with food and shelter. With the prompting of The Fates, Eurydice allows her physical needs to decide for her, singing of how her heart aches to stay, but her "*flesh will have its way*" (Act I, scene xiv, 2020: 120). Orpheus then, being too late to hear his lover's cries, returns on the scene and is made aware by Hermes that Eurydice has gone down to Hadestown. Since he doesn't have a ticket, he sets out to follow her and has to take "*the long way round*" (Act I, scene xvi, 2020: 126). He walks to Hadestown, singing for Eurydice to wait for him, and when he finally reaches The River Styx, Hermes describes it as "*high and wide, with cinder bricks and razor wire*" (Act I, scene xvi, 2020: 126). As he stands before The Wall, he sings his song, his famous Orphic motif, and The Wall responds by echoing his song, yielding to him, and allowing him to enter Hadestown ('Wait For Me'. Act I, scene xvi). As Orpheus makes his way into Hadestown, Eurydice is pulled into the workforce of Hadestown by joining the moment where Hades addresses his workers in 'Why We Build the Wall' (Act I, scene xvii). We see workers' state of being, as they almost mindlessly and routinely respond to Hades' prompts that are meant

to remind them of their purpose in Hadestown, that is, to build the wall. The end of the first act concludes with Hades inviting Eurydice into his office to sign some papers so that they can confirm their deal, where Persephone ends the Act with the line "*Does anybody want a drink?*" (Act I, scene xvii, 2020: 137) And so, by the end of the first act, Eurydice is signing her soul away to Hades, Persephone is left alone to fall into her alcoholism, Orpheus is entering Hadestown, and the audience now awaits the lovers' reunion.

The second act starts with 'Our Lady of the Underground' (Act II, scene i), a number led by Persephone where she can sell fragments of the Earth to the "poor unfortunate souls" underground. She sells sunshine, rain, wind, and glimpses of the sky. In her speak-easy, she is able to be the queen she is meant to be, ruling over the Underworld in her husband's absence. Eurydice is then placed "*on the line*" (Act II, scene ii, 2020: 148), realising quickly that the life she just signed her soul away for is a never-ending labour. The Fates step in here again, turning very quickly on Eurydice, as they present her with the reality of what will happen to her in Hadestown; she will work, and slowly she will forget who she is ('Way Down Hadestown Reprise'. Act II, scene ii). Eurydice responds to the reality of her already forgetting her name by singing a solo song, 'Flowers' (Act II, scene iii). She sings of the vague memories she still has; fields of flowers, the sun, someone she turned to, but ultimately turned away from, and she sings to the vague memory of Orpheus she has, calling for him, once more, to come find her. Just then, Orpheus arrives on the scene, and tells Eurydice, once more, to "*come home with [him]*" (Act II, scene iv, 2020: 162). Our lovers are reunited, but the joy of this moment is brief, because Eurydice quickly makes it clear that leaving might not be as easy an option as Orpheus is hoping for it to be. Hades sees this young man and quickly notices that this man is not one of the souls he owns and berates him with questions on what he is doing in Hadestown. In this moment, Hades spares no thought for Orpheus as he indulgently makes it clear that Eurydice is not free to leave because she belongs to Hades ('Papers Intro' & 'Papers'. Act II, scene v).

The Fates sing to Orpheus, saying that this reality is not one that can be changed, but that he is better off giving up, and in response, Orpheus laments this in questioning. He sings, to himself, saying that if what the Fates are saying is true, he will leave. However, as with Orpheus our musical hero, his song was heard by Persephone, the workers, and the walls of Hadestown. They sing with him and question with him, and the ultimate object of questioning becomes the authority of Hades ('If It's True'. Act II, scene vii). Having heard the boy's song,

Persephone comes to Hades and pleads his case, asking her husband to let Eurydice go. Hades, as always, cannot be motivated and moved purely by Persephone's plea of the young couple's love for one another. Instead, Hades is concerned with how this will affect his leadership, his kingdom, and his reign. The immortal gods' relationship is exposed as Persephone compares the love Orpheus has for Eurydice to the love Hades once had for Persephone ('How Long'. Act II, scene viii). Hades then takes this private exchange public, as he responds to Orpheus, commending his bravery, but accrediting it to his possible stupidity. Hades acknowledges the song Orpheus sang but is not swayed. Instead, he gives Orpheus one more chance, one more song to convince him, to make him laugh or weep, to make him feel young again. And throughout this, rebellion brewing among the workers of Hadestown encourages Orpheus and Eurydice ('Chant Reprise'. Act II, scene ix). Orpheus then sings his song for Hades, and in this climactic moment, Orpheus sings of Hades and Persephone, their love, and their story. As Orpheus' melodic motif reappears, Hades immediately recognises it, and as Orpheus continues to sing, the company, Persephone and ultimately Hades himself sings along as the song ends ('Epic III'. Act II, scene x). After Orpheus has sung his song, he keeps playing his lyre (guitar), and Persephone and Hades join hands and dance. His song brought the world back into tune, reigniting the gods' love for one another ('Epic III Instrumental'. Act II, scene xi). The intense power of music is shown in this climactic moment, this theme has transcended all Orphic retellings, and once more, exists within this retelling in *Hadestown*.[7]

Continuing with the synopsis, Eurydice and Orpheus then come to one another and talk about leaving, following the road that Orpheus now knows. They believe Hades will let them go and the workers will follow in their footsteps. They believe that everything has and will change because of Orpheus' song. And so, they promise each other what they can, and Orpheus asks Hades if they can leave ('Promises'. Act II, scene xii). Hades responds, saying "*I don't know*" ('Word to the Wise', Act II, scene xiii). The Fates quickly step in, reminding Hades of the power he has that he might potentially lose if he allows this young boy to leave. Hades deliberates with himself in 'Hiss Kiss, The Riot' (Act II, scene xiv), and comes up with the agreement that we find in the myth, that they can leave upon certain conditions, conditions meant to test the heart of this man ('His Kiss, The Riot'. Act II, scene xiv). The

[7] In the following chapter, the power of Orpheus' music and his role as ourro heroic folk activist, with guitar in hand, will be discussed.

conditions are that Orpheus has to walk ahead of Eurydice and Orpheus is not to turn to see if she is following, lest she be sent back to Hadestown. In hopes of passing this trial, they walk, with the voices of the workers singing along with them, willing them to succeed in hopes that they too, may one day do the same ('Wait for Me Reprise'. Act II, scene xvi). As they walk, the Fates do what they do best, watering the seeds of doubt already within people. They sing to Orpheus of how he is not worthy of leading the way, convincing him that Eurydice and the workers would not follow someone like him. Eurydice and the workers sing back against the Fates, singing how they are right there, but Orpheus cannot hear them and as 'Doubt Comes In' (Act II, scene xvii), Orpheus turns around. Eurydice is once more lost to the Underworld, and Orpheus is heartbroken.

And with that, this sad tale reaches its famed ending, and Hermes reminds the audience once more that this song, this tale, is an old one, and one that they will sing again, whether or not it ends well. Eurydice is back in Hadestown, hungry, cold, and calloused again. Persephone returns to Earth by train, and spring finally accompanies her. Hermes also clarifies that they will sing this song again, even though they know how it will end ('Road to Hell Reprise'. Act II, scene xviii). The final scene in the musical sees Persephone singing, centre stage, with a cup in hand, raising a toast to Orpheus and all those who simply try ('We Raise Our Cups'. Act II, scene xix).

Conclusion

These two ancient love stories have been reshaped through the ages, and here, Mitchell has presented her reshaping. Since 2006, *Hadestown* has gone through various changes in cast, lyrics, staging, etc., but that which has always remained central within this piece is the environmentalist themes that root it. Since 2006, this piece has become more relevant, as the world has caught up with its environmental activism. The musical possesses a didactic element, aiming to speak of the catastrophic result of our dependence on industrialism and gluttonous consumption. However, the didactic element is also just simply that, an element of the piece. *Hadestown* is still, at first glance, the telling of two love stories, yet its intertextualities and layered meanings make it seem as though the telling of these love stories are simply a means to an end. *Hadestown* is not simply attempting to tell the same old story with a fresh new take, rather, it possesses deep thematic material that has gained more relevance as time has passed.

Hadestown displays the realities of the capitalist and industrial world in which the audience lives. The reality we face is that our industrial focused societies have led to the continuing decline of our Earth's health. This decline is seen in issues such as climate change, poverty, issues of food security, lack of biodiversity, mass species extinction, war, exploitative labour practices etc. These are the consequences that the supposed gift of expansion and development have given us, and these same consequences are seen in *Hadestown* (Campbell, 2020:239). Hades has chosen the same path that our current first-world leaders have, the path of more, of possession, of never-ending economic growth, at the expense of never-ending human suffering (Emmett & Nye, 2017: 1-2). He has chosen the path that takes all it can from the Earth as though humanity is entitled to her secrets. Hades has built his empire in the shadows of his Underworld and has, in turn, brought imbalance to the world above. His industrial expansion has permanently altered the cycle of the seasons, as he has continually chosen that which is further and further from his wife's heart. He has chosen his own needs above his wife's and in turn, has chosen industrial rule over the balance of the Earth. Earth and Hadestown, Persephone and Hades, light and darkness, environmental health and decay; these are the tensions that *Hadestown* presents, as it retells these old stories, and these are the tensions I will exhume and analyse.

CHAPTER 2

Folk, Jazz, and Musical Theatre: Genres and environmentalism

> Where social conflict has existed alongside humankind, music has been close behind to sound out hardships as a sort of archival outlet for feelings of dissatisfaction, outrage, and hope for improvement, whatever the troubles may be (Gervin, 2017: 27).

The story of the two myths that intersect in *Hadestown* possesses an intrinsic connection to music before these myths were ever used in this musical. These connections are founded in the classical myths themselves. The character of Orpheus is fundamentally tied to the creation and act of music. Orpheus is characterised in mythology by his music and his lyre, and ultimately in the myth, it is the playing of his lyre that softens the hearts of Persephone and Hades. Therefore, the playing of his lyre grants him the hope of saving Eurydice. His music has been a communication tool that has influenced the gods, and thus, Orpheus has come to represent the intersection between music and the divine (Partridge, 2013, 1). For this very reason, this myth has, time and time again, been the inspiration for many musical projects—operas, ballets, individual songs and albums, musicals, films etc. In the history of these art forms, Orpheus and Eurydice consistently find their story told and retold (Lee, 1961:309). The earliest operas from which we have surviving music were written about Orpheus and Eurydice (Jacopo Peri's *Euridice* and Giulio Caccini's opera by the same name). When looking at the case of opera, Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* (1607) is a retelling of the myth that is of notable importance since *L'Orfeo* is considered one of the longest surviving operas,[8] and makes use of the Orphic narrative. This opera not only retells the myth, but heavily emphasises the almost divine and magical power that music holds by using the Orphic myth.

Furthermore, the Orphic myth is closely tied to the fundamental building blocks of opera in more ways than one. The power and beauty of music presented through the story of Orpheus and Eurydice in an opera house makes sense. However, in addition to the innate musical tie the myth has to opera, the myth closely follows one of the basic structural plot points commonly used in operas: the tragedy of the almost expected demise of our operatic heroine. Operatic women do not live happily ever after and rarely escape with their lives. Yet, this is the exact reason we go to see opera. "We know tragedy is just around the corner, since that is what we came for-that is opera" (Clément, 1989: 86). As heroines rarely live to see the

[8] The opera in its entirety is still performed and is therefore classified as one of the longest suriviving operas.

conclusion of their operas, so it is with Eurydice. She will die again, night after night, at the hands of the fearful doubt that festered in Orpheus. Although the Orpheus myth inherently connects *Hadestown* to operatic history, it lives within a musical world of folk, jazz, and musical theatre. As these stories are now repackaged using new musical languages, the discussion of the musical genres is, therefore, integral to the discussion of *Hadestown.*

Folk music, musical theatre and jazz have all had differing focuses and impacts when it comes to their participation in social justice issues and movements throughout the decades. When listening to the music of *Hadestown,* the intersection between these genres and their advocacy and involvement in various political and social issues are all illustrated. The musical uses folk and jazz, as well as the structure and environment of the Broadway musical, while presenting themes of environmentalism, feminism, anti-capitalism, and anti-industrialism. Throughout this chapter, I will illustrate how the musical genres used within *Hadestown* have historically championed these various political and social issues. The use of these genres, which are historically saturated with activism and social change, aids in the musical's messaging of environmental issues. The music of *Hadestown,* as well as its temporal setting and staging is heavily influenced by North America during the prohibition era and Great Depression (1924-1940) and the continued unfolding of these genre's historical impacts on social and political activism spheres. These genres—folk, jazz, and musical theatre—each have a rich history, but this study focuses on the life of these genres from 1924 through 1940 and the 1960s in North America. The reason for this is the prohibition era's direct influence on the musical's creative direction (Broadway.com, 2020). I examine the 60s, as this era of musical activism has become intrinsically tied to many of these genres.

Folk

The defining of the term “folk music” is something that has become the focused work of many scholars and has fallen into many broad and many specific definitions. Certain characteristics have been assumed to accompany folk music, where the boundaries of what is and is not folk music have blurred. On the one hand, Denisoff defined a genuine folksinger as any performer “playing a guitar and singing certain types of material, be it country-Western, folk in origin, or political in nature” (1969: 52). Mark Slobin attempted to define the practice of folk in response to the West’s obsession with categorising, identifying, and analysing the music of the countryside:

> In the United States, “folk music” combines a sense of old songs and tunes with an imaginary “simpler” lifestyle, featuring the mountaineers of Appalachia and the African American blues singers, all playing acoustic instruments—guitar, fiddle, banjo—with a hint of social significance (2010: 1).

However, according to Slobin’s definition, he continues to explain that folk music will continually be reshaped and revived by each generation. "Folk music is not a set of songs and tunes; it is more of a working practice" (Slobin, 2010: 3). Something that is, however, extremely clear when looking at the history of folk music, is that it has always been the lamenting voice echoing the woes of the working class (Denisoff, 1969: 430).

This golden thread of the history of folk music is something that has directly been woven into the music, lyrics, and plot of *Hadestown*. The world of *Hadestown* is characterised by class distinction, an issue close to the life of folk music. There are the gods and those who are not gods, and throughout the stories of classical Greek mythology, the gods are those in power, all ruling over different domains of human life. They rule over the destinies of mortals, nature, weather, justice, and death. Those who are divine—whether deemed an Olympic god or not, are to be worshipped and revered, and those who do not fall under the category of divinity fall victim to the harshest realities of the environment and poverty. Mortals have had kindnesses and generosities extended to them from the gods, but the gods' power allows them to decide whether or not they see it fit to extend such kindnesses. This is where we see a clear class distinction. The gods have complete influence over the mortals. Yet, the mortals have little to no influence over the gods, and when they succeed in their hopes of swaying them, the effects are only seen in the lives of humans.

In *Hadestown*, we see a clear distinction in class, but it is characterised specifically using modern-day labour class distinctions. The mortals are presented as the working class, and the plight of the working class is essentially the driving force behind the movement of the musical. As a result of the relationship between two specific gods (Persephone and Hades), the humans in the story suffer, they make their hardships known, and Orpheus decides to write his song that will "*bring the world back in to tune*” (‘Come Home with Me’. Act I, scene iii, 2020: 33). This shows how the storyline of this musical is in part driven forward by a revolting working class. Furthermore, Hadestown itself is an environment wrought with the power dynamic of industrial labourers and their authoritarian employer. The workers of Hadestown could benefit from unionisation, but the cost of employment in Hadestown is

one's very soul. *Hadestown* constitutes a form of hell due to industrial power and development built on the backs of those forced to labour in exchange for necessities. The discussion of labour law, class distinction, and the resulting activism thereof has saturated the history and development of folk music. Therefore, the use of folk music in the musical is layered with the historical implications of the activism that has followed it.

When looking at the history of folk music and activism, it is important to start by looking at the involvement of folk music during the Great Depression (1929-1940). Although this period has influenced various genres and communities, the importance of its discussion presently is furthered by the influence the Great Depression has had on the visual world of *Hadestown*. The costuming and set are heavily influenced by the Prohibition and rooted in a space reminiscent of New Orleans. Furthermore, the characterisation of Persephone as the runner of a speakeasy is directly tied to this era of financial strain, met with secretive revelry. The Great Depression and prohibition played integral parts in developing *Hadestown*'s visual world and characterisations. Mitchell and Chavkin have both commented on how these were specifically the inspirations for the version of the musical presented on Broadway (Broadway.com, 2019).

> And so, Louisiana became a frequent touchstone for us in multiple ways… Preservation Hall is a big source of research for us because we talked about… where do you want to hear the story? So, Rachel Hauck, our set designer, and I have talked a lot about Louisiana, both the music aspect of it and of course New Orleans, but also the drilling and oil industries that are all through that state…. (Rachel Chavkin in interview with Broadway.com, 2019)

In United States history, as well as in the history of the general global population, the years of the Great Depression were defined by severe economic and environmental hardship. October 29, 1929, better known as Black Tuesday, was the day the stock market crashed, and this ultimately led to a troublesome and grim decade for the majority of Americans (Cohen, 2016: 87). Folk music played a crucial role in the tension that started to arise between capitalist structures and the rising grassroots proletarian movements (Cohen, 2016: 6). The use of strike songs and how these folk-inspired strike songs were used by labour unions illustrates how folk music played a crucial role. Folk music was integral to the labour struggles that accompanied the Great Depression, specifically in the world of mine workers. During the Great Depression, those working in mines were quickly overcome by poverty, disease, and

famine. In response, folk anthologies were compiled with protest, strike, and worker songs to regain a focus on unionisation (Cohen, 2016: 24).

These foundations of the folk music genre are seen throughout the design of *Hadestown*. Just as the Great Depression moved America into harsh circumstances financially, and ultimately environmentally, so it is within the world of *Hadestown*. The mortals who live in this world are sunken in poverty, all at the whim of King Hades and his train as it either brings or retrieves Persephone, along with the hope of spring and summer. The language of folk music is inherent in response to these circumstances. Orpheus, the character of our hero, writes his song in response to the circumstances that surround and affect him and those that make up the world of *Hadestown.* He writes and hopes to bring balance. In this, we see how certain characters act as the voices for certain ideals and themes. Hades speaks for his industry, Persephone for nature, and our young lovers, Orpheus, and Eurydice, speak for the mortals, just as folk artists spoke for the folk.

Mitchell's writing of Hades' character was intentionally designed to be one representative of capitalist industrialism. She painted the character of the villain in this light to highlight the musical's overall environmentalist themes, denouncing capitalist industrialism. Hadestown is presented as an amalgamation of every manmade industrial practice. A mine, a mint, a foundry, a factory of automobiles and assembly lines, a producer of fossil fuels and oil, a place of neon light and power grids, and ultimately a place where exploited labourers work themselves into early graves. The mortals that exist as Underworld workers are clearly portrayed as miners. The workers in Hadestown are dressed in dirty overalls and shirts made of wrapped bandages. They wear boots and goggles, and the song 'Chant' (Act I, scene xi) presents us with the workers' instruments of labour—pick-axes.

> Workers & Fates: *Oh, keep your head, keep your head low (kkh!)*
> *Oh, you gotta keep your head low (kkh!)*
> *If you wanna keep your head (huh! kkh!)*
> *Oh, you gotta keep your head low* (2020: 100)

The workers use onomatopoeia to assimilate the sounds of pick-axes in their working environment. Their drastic class distinction is further made evident as their survival is directly correlated to their submission to the higher class, the class of the gods. The workers' chant is one motivated by survival, explaining that their work and obedience are coupled to

their life, to the keeping of their heads. They sing of keeping their heads low, of staying dutiful and meek towards the powers that be, lest they lose their heads. In order to survive in Hadestown, obedience and compliance are necessary. Their self-directed instructions are punctuated by the sounds of their "*pick-axe [s] ringing*" ('Way Down Hadestown (Reprise)'. Act II, scene ii, 2020:149). It is never explicitly said what they are mining for, but that is beside the point, the existence and presence of the mortal miners further establish Hadestown as the all-encompassing industrial world. The mine that is Hadestown is not necessarily one motivated by mining one specific material, but rather the concept of the mine is what is being expressed. Everything that is industrial is representative of the nature of Hadestown. The workers mine whatever there is to mine and assemble whatever there is to assemble in the factory. They follow any instruction from the industrial king and do so repeatedly, submitting themselves to his rule. This imagery refers to the roots of folk music and its activism against unjust labour and exploited workers. The presence of the mine workers aids in illustrating that Hades and his dominion represent industrial rule, whereas a diegetic response to this industrial kingdom further aids in illustrating the broader world of the musical.

In the song 'Chant' (Act I, scene xi), the audience is presented with a first-hand experience of Hadestown that has only been alluded to and spoken about until now. We see the workers mining in submissive oblivion, we see Persephone and Hades reuniting in love-lacking tension, and up above, we see Eurydice calling out for Orpheus, who is lost in his song writing. Orpheus, moved by injustice, focuses his song on Persephone and Hades, an extension of his song in 'Epic I' (Act I, scene v). He sings of how they are disconnected from their original song and lost.

> Orpheus: *King Hades is deafened*
> *By a river of stone…*
> *And Lady Persephone's blinded*
> *By a river of wine*
> *Living in an oblivion* ('Chant'. Act I, scene xi, 2020: 102-103)

Orpheus reaches the climax of his songwriting process and explains that he has unearthed the root of the issues faced on Earth: "*the gods have forgotten the song of their love*" (Act I, scene xi, 2020: 103). During this scene, as Orpheus is writing, we see him pictured with a 1955 Gibson ES 140, a 3/4 scale hollow-body electric guitar with a single pickup. It reads as a modified acoustic guitar and becomes Orpheus' lyre, his artistic tool. This image of

Orpheus presents us with another connection to the history of folk music, as the poor, young, guitar-playing protest musician has walked with folk music since its birth.

Folk music has traditionally been accompanied by unamplified instruments like the guitar and the banjo. As the genre has developed through the decades, more instruments would be brought into the creative process (Eyerman & Barretta, 1996, 501). The characterisation of Orpheus as the guitar-playing hero, singing of the themes that have saturated the lives of the people around him, places him directly in connection with traditional folk imagery. However, what further substantiates Orpheus' role as a folk singer is his choice to use his voice and writings to represent those not in power. He sings on behalf of those facing the harsh realities of climate change, and when he makes his way down to Hadestown, he uses his voice to sing for those labouring for Hades. He becomes the voice of the working class, the voice of protest, the voice of hope, and so folk music becomes the language of the exploited labourers of Hadestown.

We see the struggle between the industrial world of Hadestown and the rural world of the Earth above and the workers below. Similarly, contentions arose between North America's rural and industrial spaces during the late 1920s and early 1930s. These issues were the necessities that led to the consolidation of the left-wing and the traditional folk idiom (Denisoff, 1969: 56). Folk music became protest music, and these songs also generally pointed towards those benefitting off the harsh working environments of the mine workers. Folk music became the larger voice of those whose voices had been stripped and remained a genre birthed out of poverty and hardship. However, generally, music had been viewed as a classist tool utilised by the bourgeoisie, that is, as something separated from poverty. Therefore the use of folk songs, such as the soundtrack of the working class, became ideologically focused (Denisoff, 1969: 429). The Communist Party also made use of folk songs and compositions as a means to further the class rebellion (Cohen, 2016: 32). This strategy was one devised very specifically for the proletarian renaissance as a means to innovate and discover campaigns that would present the rural folk with solutions inspired by the works of prominent communist leaders such as Marx, Lenin, Thomas etc. (Denisoff, 1969: 56). Folk music and working-class protest have walked together for decades upon decades, and we see this continue in the world of *Hadestown*.

Woody Guthrie, one of the leading voices in folk music during the Dust Bowl era, echoed this notion by noting in the 1960s that “most people don’t seem to realize [sic] that there are still thousands on thousands of folk that go more by singing than do by reading” (Denisoff, 1969: 430). It is, however, important to note that just as much as Guthrie and the folk scene during the Great Depression were mainly focused on class struggles, Guthrie continued to be directly tied to left-wing politics in a way that was more focused on issues concerning the environment. The effects of the economic disaster of the Great Depression were magnified due to further environmental disasters that spread throughout the country. They devastated the rural heartland of America (Cohen, 2016: 87). These environmental disasters were categorised by severe droughts that would come and go throughout the Great Plains (located west of the Mississippi River and east of the Rocky Mountains). These droughts would be interspersed with small bouts of rain throughout the 1920s; the rains stopped in 1932 and would continue to be halted for the remainder of the decade. Soon after the rain stopped, the dust storms started. The winds would carry the arid soil throughout the plains (the dust bowl was mainly concentrated in the Oklahoma panhandle and the surrounding areas of southwestern Kansas, South-eastern Colorado, West Texas, and North-eastern New Mexico). Guthrie was known as the Dust Bowl balladeer, and as someone who had grown up and seen the effects of the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression first-hand, he continued to be someone to sing of the environmental plight of his nation (Cohen, 2016: 88).

As much as the Great Depression affected the folk music scene, it directly influenced the creative direction of *Hadestown* as well. Mitchell stated in an interview for *Rolling Stone* magazine that she reworked the milieu of *Hadestown* (which at that stage was an ever-developing conceptual piece constructed around mythological characters that she had read about) to be set within the era of the Great Depression. This allowed her to expand the musical world within which she was writing while simultaneously being able to explore political and cultural issues like the Dust Bowl storms of the era. Mitchell called the Dust Bowl "a vintage version of what we're seeing now with climate change" (Mitchell in an interview with David Browne, 2019). Returning to the song, 'Chant' (Act I, scene xi) discussed above, what is further shown in this scene is not only the true experiences of the working class in Hadestown but also the environmental reaction to Hades' industrialist creations. The disapproval for these creations and industrial practices is very clearly shown by Persephone, as she explicitly tells Hades, "*It ain't right and it ain't natural*" (2020: 100). Persephone becomes the musical's environmental representative—her specific

characterisations will be further discussed in Chapter Four. As nature's ambassador, Persephone has openly and frankly made her disapproval known to Hades. As the physical manifestation of nature, she illustrates that nature and the natural world are benevolent, whereas the manmade, industrial world is malevolent. She sets up a binary in which the musical functions. She also directly links Hades' industrial practices to the natural world's decay, enforcing his industrialism's negative impacts. Not only is his manmade empire something that greatly displeases the woman he has hoped to impress, but it has resulted in the atrophy of the natural world to which she is bound. His misguided creations, born of supposed love, have become a force against the Earth. This industrialism is reiterated throughout the musical, utilizing the explanations surrounding Hadestown, the set and how the workers are presented as miners. In Orpheus' song writing, he also makes it explicit that these issues of natural disasters and Hades' industrial world are connected.

> Orpheus: *And that is the reason we are on this road*
> *And the seasons are wrong*
> *And the wind is so strong*
> *That's why times are so hard*
> *It's because of the gods*
> *The gods have forgotten the song of their love* (Act I, scene xi, 2020: 103)

As the musical progresses, Orpheus' image of a folk singer in protest gains more depth. Here, he not only sings of the plights of those around him but of the cause of these problems. He points out that the existence of "*the road*" is something unnatural that came about as a result of a malevolent force. He points to the corrosion of environmental balance as seen through the seasons being "*wrong*" and the wind being "*strong*". He points to the harsh realities that those around him are facing, the "*hard times*", and as his verse climaxes, he finally points to the reason behind these issues. He points to the gods, those in power, and those unaffected. In this one verse, Orpheus sings of the majority of the themes within the musical. He sings of the industrialism represented by "*the road*", the climate change shown through the seasons, and the classism manifesting in the unjust exploitation of the working class by those in power. From early on in the musical's plot, Orpheus ties himself to a cause, resulting in his image as a folk singer.

In Ronald D. Cohen's book, he summarises the ever-growing life of the American folksong:

> The American folksong, like the American people, in the meanwhile, continues, showing the often beautiful visage of a vigorous creature born of the free interplay

> and interchange of groups and influences drawn from many parts, and this, to those with an eye for it, the image of the American idea (2016: 120).

As the decades continue, one sees the redesign and revival of folk music through the ages, specifically during the 1960s. According to Jerome L Rodnitzky, the 1960s are best defined by the historical movement accompanying the time, not necessarily the year markers. So, historically the '1960s' describes the era between 1963 and 1973. Rodnitzky describes this period in time as having "started slow and ended slow [while] topical music kept the beat" (1999: 105). During the 1960s, folk music was directly tied to social change, as it had been during the Great Depression.

Similarly, as during the early 20th century, the definition of folk music is something that those within the practice of folk music do not seem to be overly concerned about. Only those stepping in from an academic or observant role attempt to define it. During the revival, Pete Seeger, one of the most noteworthy folk artists, stated, "If folks sing them, they're folksongs." (Rodnitzky, 1999: 105). However, the folk music revival of the 1960s differed from the activism during the Great Depression because instead of the working class being the prominent members of social change, the youth entered activism. The new generation held loyalty to neither "flag, country or doctrine, but only to music" (Kofsky, 256: 1969).

The youth-led folk revival of the 1960s is layered into the character of Orpheus. He has no allegiance to anything other than his music and what his music could produce. From the start of the musical, his character as a musician is established, but this expands as the musical develops. When Orpheus is introduced, Hermes does so with personal affection, presenting our young hero as naïve and under Hermes' wing.

> Hermes: *On the road to Hell there was a railroad line*
> *And a poor boy workin' on a song*
> Orpheus: *La la la la la la…*
> Hermes: *His mama was a friend of mine*
> *And this boy was a muse's son*
> *On the railroad line on the road to Hell*
> *You might say the boy was "touched"*
> Orpheus: *La la la la la la…*
> *Cos he was touched by the gods themselves!*
> *Give it up for Orpheus!* ('Road to Hell'. Act I, scene i, 2020: 14)

Orpheus's character is immediately established as the lovable, naïve, well-intentioned hero, but moreover, his musical style and voice are introduced to the audience. The vocalised melodic line that Orpheus sings in this song repeats throughout the musical and becomes the very song that Orpheus aims to complete. It is easily recognisable throughout the entire production as Orpheus' melodic line, not simply as a result of the melody but how Orpheus sings it. Orpheus, our hero, sings most of his musical work throughout the musical in his falsetto. This melody of vocalisations (*la la la*) that Orpheus sings repeats throughout the musical and establishes a clear Orpheus motif. Throughout the musical, this motif develops, and its ultimate recognisable version is the one that is first sung in 'Wedding Song' (Act I, scene iv).

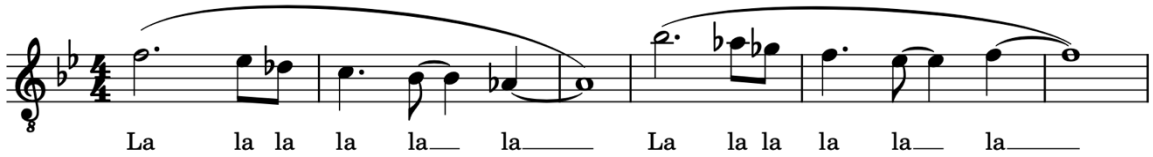


Figure 2. First version of Orpheus' motif as it appears in *Road to Hell* (author's transcription)

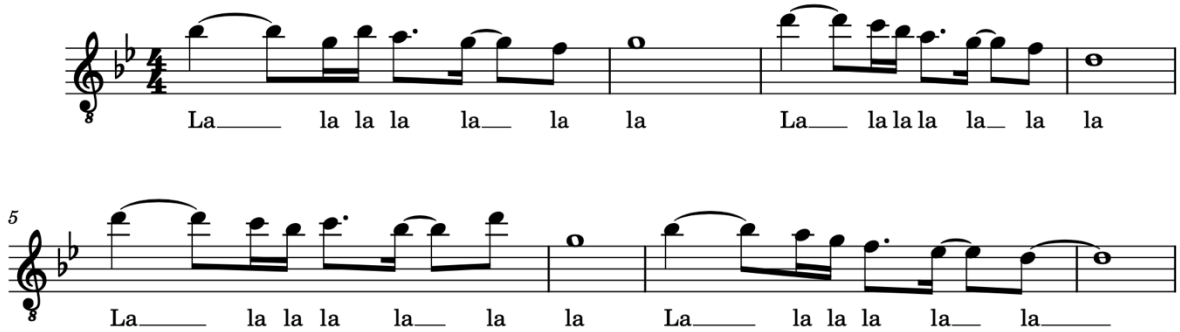


Figure 3. Developed version of Orpheus' motif as it appears in *Wedding Song* (author's transcription).

Musically, this adds to the softer characterisation of Orpheus as our hero. As much as Orpheus is our folk singer, there is an intersection between various genres and their signifiers. The consistent use of his higher register presents us with a boyish hero. Within classic myth, Orpheus is rarely presented as a conventional hero. He is not a warrior but is always, first and foremost, a musician. In reference to the earliest stories told of Orpheus, Jason D'Aoust writes that "he acts more like a priest than a warrior", interceding and pleading instead of battling and conquering (2013: 2). The origins of the word "falsetto" refers back to the Italian word for "false", referencing as a false register above the natural one (Koelz, 2013: 229). This register of voice is one that has not conventionally been associated with modern-day heroes.

However, within the world of opera in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the higher male register was chosen for the sound of heroes. Within the seventeenth century, opera and other public spectacles served as spaces wherein struggles for power could be demonstrated (McClary, 1989: 203). This has, to a certain extent, been seen in the construction of gender within opera. Somewhat predictably, the representations of 'feminine' and 'masculine' on stage have surfaced covert social definitions (McClary, 1989: 205). Here, in *Hadestown*, we return to seventeenth-century operatic heroes as Orpheus, our assumed hero, sings most of his songs in his falsetto. Specifically, the singing the song that "*will bring the world back into tune*" (Act I, scene iii, 2020: 33) is a melody sung exclusively in his falsetto. Our hero is somewhat reimagined through this vocal styling. The choice to write Orpheus' character—the musician who is supposed to make both gods and mortals weep—as such is one that, I believe, encodes our hero with what is assumed to be a 'feminine' voice. This feminine motif, Orpheus' famed song, ultimately brings the divine lovers back together.

Therefore, Orpheus is at this stage in the plot, layered with characteristics that align him with folk idioms and operatic conventions. He is presented as our heroic folk singer, echoing the lament of the working class and the environment with his guitar in hand. Additionally, he is a hero that does not sing as Woody Guthrie or Pete Seeger does, in their gruff speaking voices; rather, he is written in contrast to these singers as he sings in in falsetto. He aims to save the Earth and Eurydice through his falsetto melody, blending two images of conventional heroes we have seen on stage. The folk singer's power and the falsetto's beauty have come together to bring life to this Orpheus and his transcendent musical ability.

As he meets Eurydice, she falls for him because of the power that his music holds—the power to "*bring the world back into tune*". As their relationship grows, it becomes evident that ultimately Orpheus will choose his music over his lover. In 'Chant' (Act I, scene xi), Eurydice cries out for Orpheus, but he is too enamoured by his creative process to hear her. He is focused on his song and his song alone. Only when Eurydice is lost to the Underworld is Orpheus' attention brought back to the reality he faces. He then journeys to the Underworld in hopes of rescuing his bride, and as he does so, his "ticket" is in his song. He sings his motif, and in response, the Wall surrounding Hadestown opens for him, allowing him entry. We then see Orpheus stand before the masses of labourers trapped in Hadestown, and his song becomes the spark that could light the flame of rebellion in Hadestown. As he pleads to have Eurydice return to the mortal world with him, that which convinces, first Persephone,

and ultimately Hades, is Orpheus' song. His song is what convinces the gods of their long-forgotten love, and his song is what simultaneously threatens Hades and his power.

The moment in the musical where Orpheus has just arrived in Hadestown shows him to be a folk hero. As he is reunited with Eurydice, they sing together, and he talks of bringing her home with him, and as the truth slowly comes into focus, Orpheus realises that Eurydice signed a deal. She signed her life away, and she signed it over to Hades. The Fates sing in Orpheus' mind and confirm his doubts that nothing can be done to rectify this situation. He then does what he does as the son of a muse; namely, he sings of his disillusionment and defeat. 'If It's True' (Act II, scene vii) is a song where Orpheus' voice is accompanied mainly by acoustic guitar and reverberated piano, much like a modern folk style. He questions the validity of the Fates' statement, saying that if it is true that nothing can be done, then he will leave, but Hermes steps in to narrate this moment.

Hermes: *And the boy turned to go.*
Workers: *Huh!*
Hermes: *Cos he thought no one could hear.*
Workers: *Huh!*
Hermes: *But everyone knows*
That walls have ears (2020: 173)

The workers' voices punctuate Hermes' observations, and they then start to sing along with Orpheus in these interspersed lines of questioning and agreement. They put their pick-axes down, stop working, and listen to the questioning of Orpheus of what is true and what is not. The song grows from a personal lament for Orpheus to a political rally, where the workers start to question their own stance and beliefs. Orpheus then sings his first verse again, but instead of focusing on being hurt by Eurydice and whether her situation is intractable, he transitions to questioning the powers that be.

Orpheus*: If it's true what they say*
I'll be on my way
But who are they to say
What the truth is anyway? (2020: 175)

In the typical "us vs. them" narrative, Orpheus leads the protest against those that have enforced realities upon the workers. Orpheus rallies the workers to listen, stand, and believe in and with him.

Orpheus: *I believe we're stronger than they know*

I believe that we are many
I believe that they are few.
Workers: *We're standin', standin', standin'*
Orpheus: *And it isn't for the few to tell the many what to do.*
Workers: *We understand him* (2020: 176)

In this moment, Orpheus' music has once again moved that which is beyond him. Here he has moved the souls of those trapped in the endless cycle of "*punching in, and punching in*," and never "*punching out*" ('Way Down Hadestown (Reprise)'. Act II, scene ii). Orpheus' music, which has previously been employed to alter the way the Earth grows flowers, or to influence the walls of Hadestown itself, has now become that which has awakened the workers of Hadestown to the reality of the power they possess. Orpheus is leading a rebellion in the Underworld, and he is doing so armed with his voice, his guitar, and his song. Orpheus, here in this scene, becomes the full image of a folksinger. He is standing, as one man before many, using his song to enact change, revolt, and protest.

While most genres of music have had activist threads are woven into them (genres such as jazz and rock), during the 1960s, folk began to be understood as a space to voice the working-class struggle. As rock-and-roll progressed into a more experimental direction and jazz became more musically complex, folk music remained filled with integrity and meaning (Rodnitzky, 1999: 105). Because of this, one could easily track the history of America's activism through the narrative of folk music of artists such as Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, Peter, Paul and Mary, etc. (Rodnitzky, 1999:110). During the 1960s, folk artists and their music were rooted in various activist movements, such as the labour movement forwarded by the working class and communism (as it had been during the Great Depression), but the genre expanded to include topics such as the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, Native American rights, ecological causes, and ultimately, second-wave feminism (Rodnitzky, 1999: 110). During this time, a new generation of folk musicians emerged. They were resolved to connect their music to the struggles of the social justice era (Dreier and Flacks, 2014: 100). When specifically looking at how folk musicians stood at the forefront of environmentalist movements, Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie are key figures. Both Seeger and the group, Peter, Paul and Mary covered Guthrie's *This Land is your Land*, and although Guthrie's song highlights the natural beauty of the United States, the real message behind the song was that "America belonged to the little people and not just to corporations and politicians" (Rodnitzky, 1999: 115). Seeger then wrote an entire album, *God Bless the Grass* (1966), as a

work devoted to ecological issues such as the pollution of the Hudson River, and the collapsing of ecosystems due to unnatural chemicals.

When looking at the folk revival's impact on *Hadestown*, one can easily see this in Anaïs Mitchell's musical and physical upbringing. Mitchell's father was a teacher, novelist, environmentalist, and home builder, who raised her on Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, and Joni Mitchell records. Mitchell grew up surrounded by folk music, and when her musical career started, she easily settled into the folk genre (Browne, 2019). When Mitchell discusses her inspiration behind *Hadestown*, she directly references the Dust Bowl era, the thirties, and the Great Depression (Browne, 2019). In the musical itself, issues such as environmentalism, capitalism, unjust labour—specifically in the context of mining—are all discussed and brought to life through the musical language of folk and 1930s New Orleans inspired jazz within the Great Depression and Prohibition Era America.

African American Spirituals

Before I get to the use of jazz within the musical, the references to African American spirituals and the Biblical references that tie to them are worth discussing. In 'Way Down Hadestown', many lyrical intertextualities are woven into the imagery.

> Persephone: *Winter's nigh and summer's o'er*
> *Hear that high, lonesome sound*
> *Of my husband coming for*
> *To bring me home to Hadestown* (Act I, scene viii, 2020: 79)

These lyrics pull one back to the culture of African American Spirituals. The lyrics, "…*coming forth to bring me home*…" are reminiscent of the lyrics of *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,* "*coming forth to carry me home*". The musical world of African American spirituals is one tied to the history of slavery within America, therefore, these musical references subtly connect the world of *Hadestown*, to that of the slave trade, either implying that Persephone feels enslaved, or Hadestown itself is what enslaves. Traditionally, African American Spirituals have been perceived as religious folksongs and regularly draw from the Hebrew Bible for inspiration (Ramey: 2002, 347). Furthermore, in the same song, Persephone refers to the alcohol she would smuggle to Hadestown as "*the fruit of the vine*" (Act I, scene viii, 2020: 79), a Biblical phrase that Jesus uses when referring to the wine they drank at the Last Supper (Matt. 26:29[NIV]). These biblical references also do not remain bound to the New

Testament. When Hades is described as a ruthless leader, the famous Levitical teachings on justice are referenced.

> Hermes: *Mr Hades is a mean old boss.*
> Persephone: *With a silver whistle and a golden scale.*
> Company: *An eye for an eye!*
> Hermes: *And he weighs the cost.*
> Company: *A lie for a lie!*
> Hermes: *And your soul for sale* (Act I, scene viii, 2020: 80-81)

"*An eye for an eye*" is a direct quote from Leviticus 24:20 (NIV). This section of lyrics aptly describes Hades, but as 'Way Down Hadestown' is peppered with Biblical references, it evokes the African American spiritual. Themes of redemption and punishment further layer the use of these lyrics and root them in African American traditions. Jazz as a genre is one that *Hadestown* draws upon, but just as jazz is an African American born genre, so the Spirituals have laid the foundations for its development. Both genres were born out of black Americans' struggle, and both have been referenced in this musical to translate further layers of struggle.

Jazz

The jazz genre has historically been saturated with protest, struggle, and activism. The socio-political history of jazz is something that lies beyond the scope of this project, but the discussion will turn to focus on 1930s New Orleans jazz. New Orleans has been heralded as the "cradle of jazz" (Peretti, 1994: 22). Since the 1920s, the music of New Orleans has been known as jazz (Peretti, 1994: 22). New Orleans' distinctive jazz sound originated as a result of the rich band history in the area. French military bands and the availability of Confederate band instruments after the civil war all add to this. Black brass bands flourished as early as the 1870s, and what ultimately characterised New Orleans' sound was a departure from strict march-like rhythmic structures. Who pioneered the syncopation and swing that now characterises the New Orleans jazz scene cannot be said, but its "undulating slow drag and up-tempo strut … became basic forms of the New Orleans jazz style" (Peretti, 1994: 26).

When looking at the music of *Hadestown*, the musical's inception is one steeped in folk, but it has taken great inspiration from big band New Orleans jazz. The band is composed of strings and brass and is staged in a diegetic manner to act part of the cast and crew, and the music moves from syncopated rhythms to blues to the "up tempo strut" one would recognise as big

band. This big band sound is established from the beginning of the musical in the opening song, 'Road to Hell' (Act I, scene i). The first musical instance of the show is the trombonists' repetitive riff.

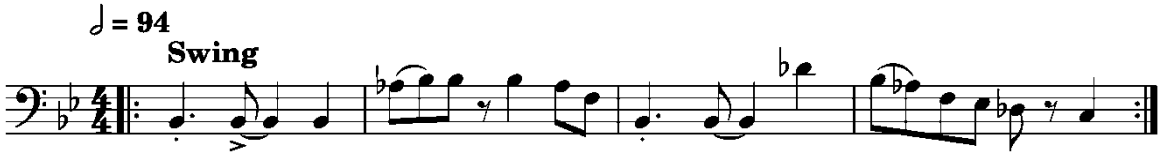


Figure 4. Opening trombone riff in *Road to Hell* (author's transcription).

This riff repeats throughout the majority of the song. It establishes the general musical language of the show, one characterised by brass instruments, swing, syncopated rhythms, and a blend of jazz, folk and various other genres. The music of the introductory song is fairly upbeat and ends triumphantly—usually with the audience in a frenzy of applause—which contrasts the story that has just been introduced, "*a sad song*". The introductory song also does well to establish the broader musical language of the musical as one rooted in big-band jazz. The songs directly following this one expand the musical language to that of folk music. Therefore, from the initial moments of the musical, we see these genres being used and expanded upon.

It is important to note that the progression and development of jazz in New Orleans is not something that came without pain, nor is the story presented in *Hadestown*. Black musicians were confined by the violent landscape of an overpopulated and impoverished city, however, just as with the music that came before it—plantation music and African American spirituals—urban black instrumental music began to develop within this environment of violence and hostility (Peretti, 1994: 26). Jazz continued to breathe life into New Orleans, and historically, jazz has been "a visible signifier of the possibilities of multiracial democracy… and for black achievement and distinction" (Porter, 2009: 595). New Orleans has not only been viewed as the "cradle of jazz", but also as the " 'cradle' of a music that was uniquely 'American' " (Porter, 2009: 596). The reason for this was its "hybrid composition" as well as the heroism that has characterised musicians such as Buddy Bolden, Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet etc. These musicians continued to create and perform despite the oppressive structures of white supremacy with which they were faced. A myriad of these narratives of heroism began in New Orleans in the face of oppression. As time has

progressed, and as New Orleans has become a space known for its hardship, music continues to be ingrained in the city's identity. More recently, after Hurricane Katrina left New Orleans devastated, the city's people expected the art and artists of the city to lead the rebuilding of the city (Porter, 2009: 595). It is, however, important to note that, although music can succeed in representing the ebbs and flows of the relationship between humanity and the environment, music alone cannot remedy all that has been damaged (Gervin, 2017: 30). New Orleans, and specifically the New Orleans jazz scene, has pioneered social justice activity. Jazz has continued to play this role throughout the civil rights movement. The lifeblood of jazz has flowed through the historical social movement that integrated music into its activism in a way like no other political crusade has (Dreier and Flacks, 2014: 100).

New Orleans and the effects of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 bled into the inception of *Hadestown*, and further natural disasters directly affected specific writing processes for Mitchell. In an interview with Broadway.com, Mitchell and Chavkin speak to the themes of environmentalism in *Hadestown* and how New Orleans has become an inspiration and space of inspiration for the musical because of Katrina and the subsequent environmental damage there. Mitchell said she felt that "all of [the] themes can be found in that part of the country", referring to the city. One sees New Orleans' influence in the big band jazz, set design, and costuming. The specific influence is, however, a New Orleans of the prohibition era. Mitchell stated in an interview with Broadway.com that New Orleans became a major inspirational space for the musical in terms of its music, as well as its environmentally entrenched history.

> Big part of the storytelling is this decaying marriage between Hades, the king of Industry, and his wife Persephone, the queen of nature and the seasons, and there are a lot of themes of sort of climate change based on industrial practices. And New Orleans has all of that as well because of Katrina and the subsequent hurricanes that have happened there. It feels like all of our themes can be found in that part of the country (Anaïs Mitchell in interview with Broadway.com, 2019).

Issues of climate change, industrialism, and capitalist-led oppression have always been at the forefront of *Hadestown's* inception. Furthermore, we see various influences of the Great Depression within *Hadestown*. The costuming and set design add to the setting, but moreover, the genre of music and specific songs have squarely placed *Hadestown* within this era. The language of the musical is a hybrid of folk, jazz, and swing, using brass bands and steel string guitars. Moreover, the specific song, 'Our Lady of the Underground' (Act II, scene i) presents the audience with a mythologised version of a speakeasy during Prohibition.

Nationwide Prohibition in the United States lasted from 1920-1933. Under the terms of the Eighteenth Amendment, the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcohol was illegal. The widely supported temperance movement brought about the passing of this bill, however, countless American citizens were more than willing to go around the law to get their hands on alcohol. Therefore, this period saw a rise in bootlegging and the presence of speakeasies (underground taverns).

The etymology of the word “speakeasy” cannot be traced with certainty, however, it is believed that it was necessary to speak softly, since they were partaking in illegal activities (Peretti, 1994: 96). Mitchell takes great inspiration from this era in the character of Persephone. The second act starts with Persephone's big number, 'Our Lady of the Underground’(Act II, scene i), where she encourages the workers of Hadestown to step into *her* office while Hades is busy. Her 'office', however, is her hole-in-the-wall speakeasy, where she sells things from the world above, things that one cannot find in Hadestown and she does so as a means to either help heal those in Hadestown, or purely selfishly. I think both these interpretations hold weight and will be discussed in depth as I look at the character of Persephone in Chapter Four. In Persephone's speakeasy, she sells hope, along with natural elements, something those in Hadestown have had no access to since their descent.

> Persephone: *I can give you what it is you crave*
> *A little something from the good old days*
> *Hey, I got the wind right here in a jar*
> *I got the rain on tap at the bar*
> *I got sunshine up on a shelf* (Act II, scene i, 2020: 143).

Persephone sells what is outlawed, that which is not of Hadestown, that which hails from the natural world, and she does so in the style of a woman who fronts a jazz band. Persephone sings her song that is written in such a way that encourages audience participation. She uses this song as a means to undermine Hades's power over the workers, and instead gives the workers a voice and space of their own. She uses this "diva number" to root the song in the rebellious nature accompanying the protest music within the jazz tradition. She openly and frankly sings of her disgust towards Hadestown: she openly undermines "the boss", and encourages those she influences over to focus on the flaws in Hades' system rather than the submission that they are usually encouraged to work within. In this number, she also introduces each band member by name and instrument, allowing time for the audience to

applaud and for the instrumentalist to solo. This practice is one specific to the jazz world, one where the lead singer would introduce the members, and this tradition roots this number, as well as the musical as a whole, in some form of the jazz tradition. This song, as well as the introductory song and the general use of big-band, shows the musical's connection to the jazz genre.

Broadway

The history of musical theatre and its interactions with activism reveals many similarities between musical theatre and the abovementioned genres. Issues of class, race, and gender have heavily influenced the realm of musical theatre. However, environmentalism has not been one when it comes to the movements that have inspired musical theatre.

The entire history of musical theatre is beyond the scope of discussion for this project. However, I will be focusing on specific eras in musical theatre. During the golden age of musical theatre (the 1940s and 1950s), a standard of procedure emerged when it came to the architecture of a musical (Viertel, 2016: 6). Musicals—specifically Broadway musicals—were to be fuelled by the naïve optimism of the post-Depression era. The majority of the musicals being produced and performed on Broadway were romances, repeating the same love stories in different costumes and settings to keep audiences hopeful and entertained, knowing that they would leave a show with a satisfying ending. "For decades the principal responsibility of the Broadway musical was to be an effective aphrodisiac" (Viertel, 2016: 8). Musicals like *Oklahoma!* worked within this framework but fleshed out the intricacies of the musical's narrative so that it became a demonstrative template. It taught writers how to introduce their heroes and heroines, how to design opening numbers, and how to present the audiences with the desires and passions of the characters in these romances as the emotions would wax and wane until the show would come to its final gratifying ending (Viertel, 2016: 10). During the Golden Age, Broadway had become comfortable with its generally reliable collection of romance-led blueprints and started to integrate their narratives with issues of sex, love, politics, and place:

> It questioned American attitudes while promoting American values, and it gave us a soundtrack suitable for courtship and moral authority in equal measure. It preaches tolerance, promoted dizzy passion, endorsed personal responsibility, and ultimately told us that, although we might have been carefully taught to hate and fear, we still have the capacity to overcome, to love and embrace (Viertel, 2016: 10-11).

In contrast to Clément's exposition of opera's undoing of women, Broadway did not originally follow in the same vein. Death, in general, was a topic that was avoided in the early days of Broadway; yet, when death made its way to the Broadway stage, men were the ones to befall this tragedy (Greenspan, 2012: 156). During the 1940s and 50s, the leading ladies were not killed but rather left to mourn the loss of their male counterparts. However, as the 1960s came around, these blueprints could not help but be reshaped as society's issues permeated the Broadway world. The grim realities of the pain that accompanied the civil rights movement, JFK's assassination, the overt failures of the Vietnam war, all these and more caused Americans to abandon the idealistic naivety that they had been fed through Broadway's golden age. The "harmonious can-do nation" of America disintegrated, and Broadway had to adapt (Viertel, 2016:11).

> Someone once said there are only two worthy subjects for a drama: love and death. The Broadway musical celebrated love from its earliest days. Death, as part of the narrative or even as the central subject, arrived decades later to produce, by the end of the twentieth century, musicals showing a darker but also a richer and more sophisticated view of life (Greenspan, 2012: 159).

The Civil Rights movement sparked a wave of activism and protest from various marginalised groups such as Native Americans, women, and the LGBTQ+ community. In many cases, these marginalised groups used theatre to claim their voice in a society that had silenced them (Fisher, 2011: 14-16). The theatre has become a place where marginalised voices are heard and have been a refuge for these marginalised voices. One would assume that Broadway would encapsulate this space, but Broadway is an industrial complex. Broadway—or the Great White Way—is a multi-million-dollar, capitalist industry where heteronormativity and conservative ideals are still upheld (Vanderhoof, 2012:69). Yes, there have been major exceptions and breakthroughs when it comes to the intersection between the influential presence of Broadway and the representation of marginalised voices within this space—such as *Rent (*1996)*, Hair* (1967)*, The Color Purple* (2005) and *Hamilton* (2015)—but these instances are exactly that, exceptions to the rule. Even in these instances, environmentalism has never been the source material of a successful Broadway musical until *Hadestown*. Therefore, the intersection of folk, jazz, and musical theatre makes for an interesting combination of genres whose histories are saturated with activism and a genre whose history is perhaps only speckled with it.

The success of *Hadestown* on Broadway also needs to be viewed through the lens of art within capitalism. *Hadestown* is an anti-capitalist piece of work that has garnered success within the industrial and capitalist structure of Broadway. The Broadway theatre is among the most significant arts and entertainment industries worldwide and is considered a "truly American art form". And just as the productions on Broadway encapsulate the entertainment needs of the American audience member, it also sits comfortably within the capitalist structures of the American economy (Simonoff & Ma, 2003: 135). The Broadway industry grosses hundreds of millions of dollars yearly in ticket sales, as well as millions of dollars in ancillary revenue, such as the sale of souvenirs, cast albums, etc. Hundreds of millions of dollars in tourism revenue are generated by Broadway. On a broad level, the advancement of capitalism, from its 'humble' beginnings in 15th-century Europe to its continued globalisation in the late 20th century, is not something that left music unscathed. Clear patterns of change and influence are seen in the history of music and capitalism (Morcom, 2015: 276). Anna Morcom references Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* and explains how music had undergone this great transformation due to 20th-century capitalism.

> Rather than being ‘embedded’ or ‘absorbed’ in practices such as religion, ritual, kinship, agrarian production, and in social life in general, by the 21st century, vast amounts of music making are directly involved with commercial interests and, at some level, a profit motive or wage labour (Polanyi in Morcom, 2015: 276)

Morcom expands on this to explain how musical projects' state and corporate funding is indirectly linked to the "surplus of capitalist enterprise" (Morcom, 2015: 276). When looking at popular independent music artists, instead of being adversarial to the big corporations that control the music industry, they have been shown to serve the interests of these corporations by agreeing to partake in advertising and sponsorship (Morcom, 2015: 276).

When considering the industry of Broadway, the same thinking can be applied to how it has been affected by the development of capitalism. Broadway has never had the semblance of an independent artist, it has always been a business, and thus, it has always benefited from the capitalist structures surrounding it. Therefore, the success of *Hadestown*, an anti-capitalist work within a capitalist system, is either very smart or simply defeats its purpose. *Hadestown* is a work rooted in environmentalist and anti-capitalist activism. It uses the good ole Broadway blueprint of love, but the musical is essentially coding issues of ecological decay due to capitalist consumption. Mitchell herself comments on how, over the years of its development, *Hadestown* was slowly transforming into a musical that could easily fall into

the typical structure of a Broadway musical. She references Jack Viertel's book and explains how the opening number for the musical, 'Road to Hell' (Act I, scene i), now resembles a full chorus number after many rewrites, starting with the words "Once upon a time" (2020: 9). Eurydice's song, 'Any Way the Wind Blows'(Act I, scene ii) has grown to become the typical "I Want" song that defines our heroine, and 'Come Home with Me' (Act I, scene iii) possesses all the making of a meet-cute—the comical and endearing moment the lovers meet, and creep their ways into the audience's hearts. These structural moments fit right into the blueprint of a modern-day Broadway musical; one that is built and designed in such a way as to garner success, both in terms of audience and critical acclaim. As it has done so, it has inadvertently succeeded within the boundaries of a capitalist industry while commenting on how the capitalist industry has affected the climate.

Capitalism and climate change go hand-in-hand. The free-market system of capitalism was designed as a structure for "efficiently allocating scarce resources, encouraging human ingenuity, and improving the quality of life for those willing and able to participate (Park, 2015: 189). This economic model has greatly enabled humanity to convert natural resources into monetisable commodities. An incredible amount of wealth and prosperity has been generated as a result of this, however, with this insurmountable ascension in the conversion of natural resources, the exhaustion of said resources lies close on the horizon (Park, 2015: 189). Capitalism maintains that, where one commercially viable resource is depleted, the system will engineer a suitable alternative, claiming that capitalism is an infinitely sustainable system with the goal of generating continuous wealth and social prosperity (Park, 2015: 189). This might be true, but this goal fails to recognise that economic wealth and social prosperity do not exist without the opposite, viz., ecological and economic servitude. Capitalism calls these the "unforeseeable" and "undesirable" consequences of its system (Park, 2015: 189). The overconsumption encouraged by capitalism is the direct influence of the pollution that is plaguing the Earth. Theorists such as Stacey Alaimo (2009) and Greta Gaard (2015) have tied overconsumption to issues of hypermasculinity.

> I argue that climate change and first world overconsumption are produced by masculinist ideology, and will not be solved by masculinist techno-science approaches. (Gaard, 2015: 22)

The connection between masculinist ideologies and the overconsumption that has led to environmental degradation bleeds into ecofeminist study, and we see this intersection in the

character of Hades (to be discussed in Chapters Three and Four). Our society's excessive atmospheric pollution—resulting from our excessive demand for production—has led to global climate change and environmental degradation (Park, 2015: 189).

> Any viable solution to climate change will therefore require a global agreement to drastically inhibit the extraction, production, and consumption of natural resources. Yet, the capitalist system as it currently stands is neither designed for nor capable of consciously inhibiting its own propensity for unsustainable growth. The basic assumptions under which neoliberal capitalism operates renders it incapable of correcting climate change (Park, 2015: 189)

Capitalism, and its direct influence on the environment, is, in essence, what *Hadestown* sings about. It sings this song in the language of folk, jazz, and myths, but it sings this song in front of a high-paying audience, whose money feeds directly back into the Broadway capitalist system. However, even though the musical represents these themes of environmentalism and anti-capitalism, it still has found a snug home on the capitalist-driven Broadway stage. The question then becomes whether the success of *Hadestown*—regardless of the system it finds success in—is positive since it brings environmental causes to the forefront of those it sings to. Success and acclaim are only found within the systems our society functions in, and there is no ethical consumption under capitalism. This system has bled into our society in such a way that in order to succeed, one has to play along. Therefore, even though *Hadestown*, as a production, benefits from the capitalist system that is Broadway, it still infiltrates and exposes the broader issues of the greed of a few has led to the struggle of many.

Conclusion

Hadestown has allied itself with opera, jazz, folk, and Broadway. All of these genres—except opera—have resistance written into their narratives, and the use of these genres and their structures allow the piece to be rooted in activism. It has taken a favourite operatic narrative—the Orpheus myth—and has built a hero reminiscent of those found in early operatic tradition. Orpheus further exemplifies what it is to be a folk singer. He is the "lamenting voice echoing the woes of the working class" (Denisoff, 1969: 430). He sings of class struggle, unjust labour, and environmental struggle. He does not fear Hades but rather bares his faults to the ears who would hear, and ultimately, Orpheus revolts with nothing but his song and a guitar.

Mitchell has layered this piece with various pieces of history. The eras of the Great Depression and Prohibition, as well as the space of New Orleans, have influenced the set design, milieu, and unmistakable character of Persephone. She is a jazz-singing bootlegger, the Underworld's only tie to nature. The intertextualities that Mitchell uses are bound to certain times and eras. However, the use of these intertextualities in this modern piece has aided in presenting a timeless issue. Environmental issues are not bound by time, although they have differing resonances at different moments. These layered references—Greek mythology, the prohibition era, liberation theologies, eras of activism through genre, and Judeo-Christian tradition, specifically in African American culture—have allowed this piece to traverse time and become situated in the present. Although environmentalism as a public form of activism has only developed in the last century, issues concerning how humanity has treated the Earth are traced back throughout time and culture.

Mitchell's intentional combination of these eras and spaces has only aided in broadening the themes of environmental activism. New Orleans has become a hub of environmental turmoil and discourse; the Great Depression and Prohibition created the speakeasy; without the Dust Bowl, we would have no Dust Bowl Balladeer. Mitchell has integrated these histories to emphasise Orpheus' characterisation as a folk hero and Persephone's characterisation as the mind behind a hell's speakeasy. Above all, these histories have come together in a way that has developed the Earth as a central force within the piece; this will be further developed in the next chapter.

The use of these various genres (folk, jazz, musical theatre, and opera), along with their structures and histories, has further allowed this piece to present its themes. The combination of specific factors that accompany these genres has been carefully selected to emphasise themes of environmental activism. The archetype of a folk singer is borrowed from folk music to develop Orpheus. This highlights his activism and those he fights for, those trapped in the Underworld. The history of struggle that accompanies jazz and the connection New Orleans has to the genre is used to highlight the struggles faced in the piece; struggles of class and ecological damage. Opera's undoing of women is used, and Broadway's structures and platforms are used. These all come together to allow *Hadestown* to present its themes of activism.

CHAPTER 3

Environment as force in *Hadestown*

The myths of Orpheus and Eurydice, and Hades and Persephone have been told time and time again. Their stories have become the framework for many authors to process various themes, and Mitchell has reworked these myths to be able to process environmental themes. The myths themselves are already saturated with environmental threads, which have been pulled at and magnified by Mitchell's retelling. This chapter will specifically explore how *Hadestown* has become a work rooted in environmentalism.

The inception of the show's musical life was birthed from Mitchell's personal experiences concerning climate change, and those that deny it. Mitchell explains in *Working on a Song* that she wrote the music and first few lines of the song, 'Way Down Hadestown' (Act I, scene vii), long before the show was an idea. She explains that, after a culmination of things—travelling to the impoverished Mexican border town of Juárez, the so-called War on Terror, and interactions with "climate change-denying oil lobbyists"—she developed an early version of the song (Mitchell, 2020: 83). The original lyrics to the first version of this song were as follows:

> *Follow that dollar for a long way down*
> *Far away from the poorhouse door*
> *Either get to hell or a border town*
> *Ain't no difference anymore…*
> *Suckin' on the gristle and chewin' on the bone*
> *Thinkin' about missiles and the old Dow Jones*
> *All alone on your chromium throne*
> *And lonely, lonely, lonely* (Mitchell, 2020: 83).

Even though this iteration of the song was not written with *Hadestown* in mind, it accurately encapsulates a large portion of the themes the musical discusses. Specifically, severe poverty issues result from power gained through industrialism and capitalism. As she started earnestly working on the musical from 2006 onwards, these themes solidified in her writing of the characters and songs. Certain scenes and songs amplify the environmental message throughout the musical, and I will focus on those within this chapter.

In the opening song, ‘Road to Hell’ (Act I, scene i), Hermes introduces The Fates, Persephone, Hades, himself, the chorus, Orpheus, and Eurydice. The first characters to be introduced are The Fates, followed by Persephone:

> Hermes: *And on the road to Hell there was a railroad line*
> *And a lady steppin' off a train*
> *With a suitcase full of summertime*
> *Persephone, by name!* (2020: 11)

Our first introduction to Persephone as a character in the musical directly intertwines who she is with what she brings, which is summertime. Her role as the harbinger of spring and summer is immediately established, as well as the fact that she does not stay in one place but is one of the few characters that get on and off the train. Her entire identity is rooted in the ability she has to change the climate, and her ties to nature are further highlighted by her costuming. Persephone wears a bright green dress with flowers in her hair as she steps off this train. Hades' introduction immediately contrasts her brightness and connection to the sun and summertime.

> Hermes: *If you ride that train to the end of the line*
> *Where the sun don't shine and it's always shady*
> *It's there you'll find the king of the mine*
> *Almighty Mister Hades!* (2020:12)

Hades' power and title are instantly established. He is "*king*”, he is “*almighty*", and he is the only god who gets introduced with a title before his name, being called "*Mister Hades*" (ibid.). He is set apart and set above, and his domain is shown to be the dark recesses of what awaits at the end of the railroad line, later shown to be Hadestown. His and Persephone's contrasts start to be illustrated very early on. Persephone brings summer, but Hades is a ruler of a domain "*where the sun don’t shine and it’s always shady*” (ibid.). In Hades’ introduction, we also begin to see glimpses of the industrial world that is Hadestown as he is described to be the “*king of the mine*” (ibid.).[9]

After the introduction of the characters in the story, we start seeing the experiences of the characters, in a song that Mitchell describes as, “apocalyptic impressionist poetry” (Mitchell, 2020: 17). In the song ‘Any Way the Wind Blows’ (Act I, scene ii), Eurydice, along with the Fates, sing of the conditions of the world in which they live. Specifically, this refers to the

[9] The holistic image of the industrial underworld is shown in the song “Chant”. This was discussed in the previous chapter and will continue to be a major reference point in my analysis.

poverty and struggle that Eurydice has endured due to the climate conditions on Earth. Very early on, we see that the climate of the world in *Hadestown* is integral to the storyline.

> Eurydice: *Weather ain't the way it was before*
> *Ain't no spring or fall at all anymore*
> *It's either blazing hot or freezing cold*
> *Any way the wind blows* (2020: 21)

We are presented with the extremes of the weather, which have become uncomfortable in their drastic cold and heat. We see that those who live on Earth are at the mercy of the climate and are subject to the changes of the wind. This is not a novel concept, but something rather integral to humanity. We are all dependent on weather, but within *Hadestown,* the weather is not something isolated but fundamentally tied to the gods, just as in Greek mythology. However, in Hadestown, the weather is specifically tied to the goddess Persephone. Therefore, those in the world are consistently influenced by Persephone, and her ability to bring the seasons. However, something has been amiss for quite some time now, when Eurydice explains that spring and fall are not realities she gets to experience anymore. Persephone's presence only brings blazing hot summers, and her absence launches the world into freezing winters. *This* becomes the motivating factor of our heroine, Eurydice, her dissatisfaction with the world's weather and climate, and implicitly, the gods.

When discussing this in terms of modern environmentalism, the reality we face is mirrored in *Hadestown*. The climate is not something that can be discussed in isolation. However, it is directly influenced by the powers that be, which in the case of the modern world are those industrialising the planet, and by default, those finding themselves in the Global North.[10] The capitalist corporations in power have affected the world and those occupying it, specifically those in living poverty, predominantly those in the Global South. This is something that *Hadestown* illustrates within the character of Eurydice. Although those in poverty contribute the least to greenhouse gasses, the impacts of climate change affect them the most (Reid & Swiderska, 2008: 2). Nations that have gone after industrial expansion and development are those that are responsible for the majority of the greenhouse gasses that have led us to where we currently are in terms of the climate, yet they have not faced the consequences. Those in poverty are disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and this is seen not only in individual cases, but when looking at the nations' statistics. The nations characterised

[10] The Global North is primarily responsible for most greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, at an estimated 92% (Bandera, 2022: 1).

by extreme poverty are the very same nations most likely to suffer the consequences of climate change (Hertel & Rosch, 2010: 255). The fate of the poor is interwoven with the state of the climate, as the majority of their livelihood is rooted in agricultural practices (Hertel & Rosch, 2010: 256). Eurydice's lament in "Any Way the Wind Blows" shows us how her survival and fate cannot be separated from the environment so volatile.

Musically, this song presents the audience with an immediate contrast to the first song they heard. 'Any Way the Wind Blows' (Act I, scene ii) is drastically slower in tempo and feel and uses a musical language characterised by drawling vocalisations, folk guitar, violin, and a cello. The sharpness of the up-tempo strut and heavy rhythm section in 'Road to Hell' (Act I, scene i) is replaced by a flowing and melancholy arrangement that illustrates Eurydice's hopelessness at the state of the Earth. We therefore see a large contrast between the perspective that Hermes, a god, presents to the audience, and what Eurydice presents. The experiences of those in power will always be positively affected by their industrial gain and growth. However, the experiences of those in poverty will take second place in the industry's growth. Eurydice's experience is representative of those in poverty, those who suffer at the hands of major corporations and companies that work at the expense of the environment. The Fates accompany her in her storytelling through legato sighs, imitating the changing of the wind as their three-part harmony ebbs and flows between Eurydice's lament.

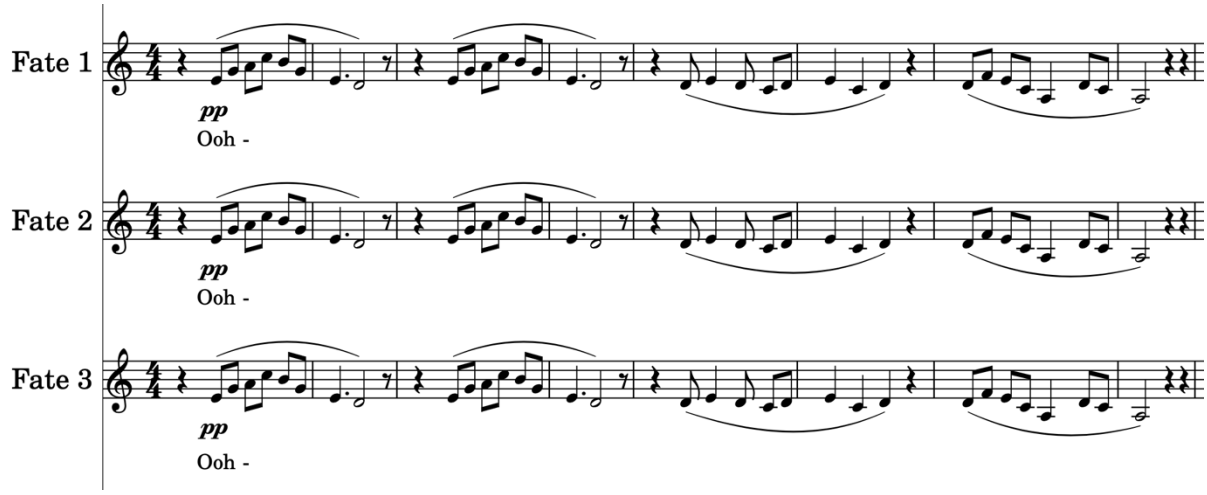


Figure 5. The Fates singing in *Any Way the Wind Blows* (author's transcription).

'Any Way the Wind Blows' (Act I, scene ii) presents the audience with the Earth's climate conditions and how it has affected Eurydice. However, more importantly, it shows early in

the musical that the climate is crucial to the show itself. The climate becomes its character in how it is threaded throughout the show. Comparatively to the original myth, the influence of the climate now extends not only to the lives of Persephone and Hades, but to the other characters as well. In the original myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, the state of the environment had no role to play in their story—although it did have a large role to play in the rhythms of Persephone and Hades' relationship. In *Hadestown*, the climate influences all, even love. As Orpheus and Eurydice meet in 'Come Home with Me' (Act I, scene ii), Orpheus claims to be writing a song that has the power to bring spring back.

> Orpheus & Chorus: *I'm working on a song*
> *It isn't finished yet*
> *But when it's done, and when I sing it*
> *Spring will come again* (2020: 33)

This idealistic promise draws Eurydice to Orpheus, his promise to heal the world that has hurt her. The state of the climate becomes the founding reason for Eurydice to fall in love with Orpheus and the promise to restore the balance of the seasons pulls her in and convinces her to allow Orpheus' pursuit of her. Therefore, the seasons ultimately determine the state of Orpheus and Eurydice's relationship, further illustrated in 'Wedding Song' (Act I, scene iv). Orpheus' half-written song has the power to grow a blooming flower, which is when Eurydice decides to pursue Orpheus.

The potential healing of the current off-kilter state of the Earth is what seals Eurydice's love and loyalty towards Orpheus. The climate becomes the foundation of their marriage, parallel, in a way, to the marriage of Persephone and Hades. The beginning of Eurydice and Orpheus' relationship is based on the hopeful promise of correcting the Earth's climate. In contrast, the eventuality of Persephone and Hades' relationship was dictated by the altered state of the Earth's climate. The two couples have always had some level of intersection in the original myths as the loss of Eurydice moves Orpheus to travel to the Underworld and plead with both Hades and Persephone for his lover back. Yet, in *Hadestown*, Mitchell extends this interrelation, to be one rooted in the state of the environment.

In 'Epic I' (Act I, scene v) Orpheus is questioned about the inspiration behind his melody. Hermes reminds him that the melody he uses for his song is from the story of Hades and Persephone that Hermes had told Orpheus as a young boy. Orpheus continues to recount the story and the melody, presenting the audience with how the world had come to be where it is

now. We see the direct influence Persephone and Hades' relationship has on the Earth's current condition, as well as on the commencement of Eurydice and Orpheus' relationship. Persephone and Hades' love is canonically described as the force that "*made the world go round*" (2020: 48).

This song becomes the official retelling of the age-old myth of Persephone and Hades, telling how Hades saw Persephone in a field, fell in love with her, and took her home to be his queen. This narrative is saturated with environmental language, specifically referencing the sun. As a source of life and light, the sun becomes the signifying element of Persephone and Hades' relationship. Hades sees her in the light of the sun and takes her to a space "*where the sun never shone on anyone*" (Act I, scene v, 2020: 49). In this retelling the contrast between their two realms is highlighted, as a realm of sun and a realm lacking sun. This is further substantiated when Hades is initially described by Orpheus as the "*King of Shadows*" within this song. The story continues and talks of Persephone's response, how she loved Hades and "*the kingdom they shared"* (ibid.). She wanted to be with Hades and be in Hadestown with him. However, as the story goes, the Earth suffered as a result. Without Persephone's presence, the Earth would not function as it should. Orpheus tells of how without her above, not one flower would grow. Therefore, they come to the moment where it is decided that Persephone would spend half her year below and the other half she would "*walk in the sun*". As a result of her re-emergence on Earth, the sun "*burned twice as bright*", and therefore the seasons started their cycle.

> Orpheus: *Which is where the seasons come from*
> *And with them the cycle*
> *Of the seed and the sickle*
> *The lives of the people*
> *And the birds and their flight* (2020: 49)

The cycle of their relationship is analogous to the cycle of the seasons, and the seasons very clearly affect and involve nature and all its parts. Plant life, people and animals all depend on the seasons running their course. Therefore, the importance of the balance of Persephone and Hades' relationship becomes evident. These two gods and their love have brought about the standard of balance that the Earth has come to know. In reality, the existence of the cycle of the seasons is what has allowed consistent understanding and reliability to agricultural societies. The reliability of the climate falling into the patterns it has historically shown itself to fall into is a large part of what has allowed humanity to survive amidst the changes of the

seasons. The sowing and reaping of crops and their harvests, the hunting and foraging for food and wood; these acts have been adjusted as the seasons change and humanity has always relied on this, the cycle of the seasons. The understanding of the seasons ensures survival for both humans and animals. Animals change their hunting patterns and energy consumption based on the seasons, as the seasons change, so do their migratory and mating patterns. Every living breathing thing is dependent on the seasons running their course. And so, within the world of *Hadestown*, every living breathing thing depends on the relationship between Persephone and Hades. Where their passion and love for one another were permitted to flourish without concern for the Earth, the Earth would suffer. The song ends with Hermes saying that this story is something of the past.

> Hermes: *But that was long ago*
> *Before we were on this road* (2020: 50)

The passing of time has enacted change within the environmental state of the world of *Hadestown.* Environmental discourse is deeply saturated with negotiations of time, settling in the limbo space of "too much time to comprehend, too little time in which to act" (Cecire, 2015: 165). This issue of time concerning environmental change is presented within the world of *Hadestown,* in terms of how Hermes speaks of the current state of the world in relation to the past. The present contains the "*road*", whereas the past does not. Time having passed has caused the environment to change, and the existence of the road to Hell is a large signifier of this change. We have already been presented with the reality of what the Earth currently faces due to time passing in 'Any Way the Wind Blows' (Act I. scene ii). As Eurydice says, "*The weather ain't the way it was before*" (Act I, scene ii, 2020: 21), once again we are presented with the past comprehension of environmental balance existing at one point in time, however, the present experience is not one of environmental balance. Large changes have ensued, the largest effect being the state of the climate, and the existence of "*the road to hell*" (Act I, scene i, 2020: 10). The balance that Persephone and Hades' seasonal agreement reached has not lasted, rather, it has been tainted. The balance is clearly damaged, and the Earth again suffers because of it. Hermes, in these lyrics, point to the root of the problem, as he says that the idyllic image that Orpheus paints in his song is something that was true "*before we were on this road*" (Act I, scene v, 2020: 50). Thus, the road to hell lies at the root of the imbalance currently seen in the climate of the world in *Hadestown*.

The establishment of the road that represents the industrial rule of Hades shows us the root of the issues currently faced on the road, and the very meaning of the road itself. This industrial and capitalist road is one that Hades has gone down, and is one that he has pulled the entirety of the world on with him. Therefore, we are presented with two very different pictures of the same world, just at different times. One is an era of balance and love, the other is a world riddled by climate change, poverty, industrialism, and apathy. The prior was led by both Persephone and Hades' love for the Earth, and the latter was led by Hades, the King of the Underworld, seeking his empire. Therefore, the environmental imbalance is not simply a result of the passionate love of the gods, but rather, as a result of what the road to hell represents, in terms of Hades' industrial and capital rule.

However, at this stage, the audience has not been presented with what the infamous Hadestown is actually like, rather, in 'Livin' it Up on Top' (Act I, scene vi), we are presented with the lives of those on Earth. Persephone—the only soul permitted to leave Hadestown—is welcomed back on Earth, and her current state of mind and character is presented. Her role as the goddess who changes seasons is also further established. And more so, she also acknowledges the climate change in the musical. She refers to herself as "*an outdoor girl*" and as she continues to introduce herself, the company affirms that now that she is back on Earth, they are all "*livin' it up on top*" (2020: 57). However, Hermes is the one to point out that she did not come in the ways she used and in the ways she should. She came with blazing summer, instead of spring and Hermes reminds her of this, saying "*she forgot a little thing called 'spring'*" (2020:57). However, Persephone does not concede, rather, defends herself.

Persephone: *Now some might say*
The weather ain't the way it used to be
But lemme tell you something my mama said to me
You take what you can get
And you make the most of it
So right now we're livin it
Workers: *How are we livin' it?*
Livin' it, livin' it up (Act I, scene vi, 2020: 58)

She acknowledges the current climate change, while simultaneously skirting blame from herself. She references nameless voices that talk of the climate change and urges those affected to be grateful for what they have. She attempts to subdue complaints and instead focuses on the current moment of celebration. She abdicates responsibility, not mentioning how she is the one who is responsible for the weather changes, but rather speaking of it as a

separate entity, removing the focus from herself. She is in this state and portrayed as drunk on stage as she sings these words. She has brought wine instead of spring, and here we see what the road to Hell has also done to her.

Instead of a young and in love Persephone—as the Persephone Orpheus sang of in 'Epic I'—we see a drunk Persephone, complaining about her lover and how she is able to make flowers bloom in spite of him. Her heart towards Hades and Hadestown is not what it was in 'Epic I' (Act I, scene v). There, Orpheus sang of how "*the lady loved him and the kingdom they shared*" (2020: 49). However, in this song she sings of how she's doing the best she can, how the Underworld is death and hell to her, as well and above all this, she has fallen heavily into alcoholism, and encourages those around her to settle for this drunken version of her gifts. The Earth has changed and here we see how the road to hell has dragged Persephone along with it, down a path of ruin and imbalance.

After Persephone's arrival on Earth, Eurydice decides to stay around Orpheus and the world blooms as summer arrives. In 'Livin' it Up on Top' (Act I, scene vi), a more fleshed out and current version of Persephone's character is introduced as well as Orpheus' fame as a poet. Hermes asks Orpheus to bless a round of drinks, and Orpheus dedicates his toast to Persephone. Choosing not to talk of the truth and how her drunkenness has cost the Earth entire seasons, rather, he thanks her.

> Hermes: *Let the poet bless this round.*
> Orpheus: *To the patroness of all of this: Persephone!*
> *Who has finally returned to us*
> *With wine enough to share*
> *Asking nothing in return*
> *'Cept that we should live and learn*
> *To live as brothers in this life*
> *And to trust she will provide*
> *And if no one takes too much*
> *There will always be enough*
> *She will always fill our cups*
> Persephone: *I will!*
> Orpheus: *And we will always raise 'em up*
> *To the world we dream about*
> *And the one we live in now…* (2020: 61)

Persephone's long-awaited return is welcomed graciously by Orpheus. He thanks her for what she has brought with her upon her return, which one would assume would be spring or summer, but instead, she is thanked for bringing "*wine enough to share*" (ibid.). For what she has brought, the Earth is expected to be grateful and content, and we see in Orpheus' toast that the people on this road have become accustomed to this, and have settled for this lesser version of the seasons, and the only person to be outspoken with the truth is Hermes, a god, someone who is able to see the whole picture of the past and the present. She promises to always fill the people's cups instead of promising to bring spring, and the people are expected to always raise them in thanks to her. The degree of the normalisation of environmental decay is seen in the stagnation of alarm.

Furthermore, even as Persephone presents her false gifts to those around her, Orpheus reminds them to still not take too much. People have settled for distraction and self-medication, instead of actual health, and the goddess who supposedly has the power to bring balance to the Earth encourages those around her to settle for what she can offer, which is not spring and balance, but alcohol. The song is musically and lyrically one of joy, showing that this is truly the only reality that the humans on Earth have known. They rejoice with Persephone's return, not because it brings what it should, but because it brings the only joy they have now come to know, alcohol. Mitchell wrote 'Livin' it Up on Top' in response to criticism she received as the musical was being written, explaining that our young lovers had nothing appealing to return to at the end of their story, Earth had been painted as an apocalyptic space of poverty and hardship (Mitchell, 2020: 63). Therefore, the song presents the audience with the resilient joy that still permeates those who live on the proverbial road to Hell. The song allows for a dance break and a joyful presentation of the mortals amidst their reliance upon Persephone, blinded by their dependence on their only joy, the alcohol Persephone brings.

In the next song, 'All I've Ever Known' (Act I, scene vii), the story continues and Hermes recentres the audience on the story of Orpheus and Eurydice.

Hermes: *Orpheus was a poor boy*
But he had a gift to give
He could make you see how the world could be
In spite of the way that it is
And Eurydice was a young girl
But she'd seen how the world was

When she fell
She fell in spite of herself
In love with Orpheus (2020: 69)

Once again, Orpheus' naivety and optimism are highlighted, and Eurydice's uncharacteristic pursuit of Orpheus is shown. We are also reminded that the current state of the world is one that has hardened Eurydice and one that has produced unbridled optimism within Orpheus. In this duet between Orpheus and Eurydice, Eurydice can express her fears and hesitation based on her current reality, but she also is willing to express her desire for Orpheus and the joy he gives her. Eurydice makes it clear that she has always been lonely, but now she wants to choose to be with Orpheus, but she does so by asking Orpheus to make promises that he can't necessarily keep.

Eurydice: *Say that you'll hold me forever*
Say that the wind won't change on us
Say that we'll stay with each other
And it will always be like this
Orpheus: *I'm gonna hold you forever*
The wind will never change on us
Long as we stay with each other
Then it will always be like this (2020: 73)

This love song is saturated with environmentalist language, establishing their relationship as one rooted in the state of the environment, similar to Persephone and Hades. She asks Orpheus to make promises concerning the weather and the wind. She is asking for relational safety and protection by asking for environmental safety and protection. Their relationship, just as the relationship of the gods, is one surrounded by and rooted in the climate. Eurydice relates the consistency and longevity of their relationship to the consistency of the weather and finally entrusts herself to someone with the hopes that he will be able to fulfil the need she has had for protection and safety. Musically, this song is the first time that the lovers truly sing in harmony together. Prior to this, in 'Wedding Song' (Act I, scene iv), they had been singing at each other as banter. Now, the two have joined together musically and physically as this song includes a choreographed love-making scene during the musical interlude. This song becomes the extension of Eurydice's character, but moreover, it becomes the establishment of the two lovers and their relationship. They are the young, the poor, the influenced lovers, and we see the contrast between them and the relationship between Persephone and Hades. Therefore, a major way in which Mitchell has reshaped the original myths to better represent the environmental fable that is *Hadestown* is by recentering the

main characters and their relationships on the state of the climate. Both our couples are in relationships with one another due to the climate. Either because of the potential destruction or health of the climate, or the drastic condition in which the climate has placed the characters. Furthermore, not only are their relationships deeply rooted in the environment, but the way that their characters are represented are all tied to the environmental motif.[11]

As the exposition of the musical comes to a close, we now transition into 'Way Down Hadestown' (Act I, scene viii), where Hermes informs the audience as well as Persephone about the arrival of the train, Persephone, however, reluctantly gets onto this train. We already see that the supposed love of Persephone and Hades is not what it seems.

> Hermes: *On the road to hell there was a railroad track*
> Persephone: *Oh, come on*
> Hermes: *There was a train comin' up from way down below*
> Persephone: *That was not six months*
> Fates: *Better go get your suitcase packed, guess it's time to go* (2020:77)

Persephone's response to her expectant reuniting with her husband does not match the love story Orpheus sang of in 'Epic I' (Act I, scene v). She immediately complains, almost as a child would, about her perception of her time away from her husband. Instead of longing to be reunited with her lover, she complains that she has not spent enough time away from him. We begin seeing the presentation of the decay of their marriage and as such, start seeing the roots of what the Earth experiences.

As Persephone prepares to go down to Hadestown, the audience is let into glimpses of what the underworld is like, and Hermes feeds the audience's curiosity.

> Hermes: *She's gonna ride that train 'til the end of the line*
> *'Cause the King of the Mine is coming to call*
> *Did you ever wonder what it's like on the underside?*
> Company: *Way down under.*
> Hermes: *On the yonder side?*
> Company: *Way down yonder.*
> Hermes: *On the other side of his wall* ('Way Down Hadestown'. Act I, scene viii, 2020: 77)

[11] The theory of ecofeminism has a significant role in the analysis of these characters, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Hermes sings of Persephone, and how she will end up riding the train to the end of the line, she would be the first of the characters that have been presented to do so. She does so at the beck and call of Hades, the "*King of the Mine*" (Act I, scene i, 2020: 12). Once again, Hades' reimagined underworld is presented as being that of an industrial kingdom. Instead of perpetuating traditional images of hell, we are here presented with an expansion of this industrial underworld as it is shown to be a mine. This is also the first mention of "the wall", an important image of Hades' power and kingdom.[12] The song continues to explain what Hadestown is like through a number making use of New Orleans big band jazz styles, a surprisingly upbeat song for summer's funeral.

> Hermes: *Follow that dollar for a long way down*
> *Far away from the poorhouse door*
> *You either get to hell or to Hadestown*
> *Ain't no difference anymore!*
> *Way down Hadestown*
> *Way down under the ground* ('Way Down Hadestown'. Act I, scene viii, 2020: 78)

The first line of this verse immediately placed Hadestown in a position of financial well-being. What one follows when going down to Hadestown is not necessarily the train or even the infamous "road to hell", it is the "*dollar*". That is to say, money enables one to access Hadestown, something we have not seen much of on Earth. Thus far, the Earth is a space of bartering and poverty. Eurydice walks around asking if anyone has a match and Persephone brings wine instead of summertime. In 'Wedding Song' (Act I, scene iv) Eurydice explicitly questions Orpheus about where they would be able to gather the financial means to have a wedding, "*times being what they are, hard and gettin' harder all the time*" (2020: 40). Who would pay for the wedding bed, the reception table, and the rings? In response, Orpheus continues to establish the poverty and simplicity in which the Earth has come to live. He sings of how his song will convince the birds to make an eider-down bed, the tree to gift their fruits for their banquet table, and the riverbanks to pledge their gold. And so, where the Earth is shown to be a space where one has to beg and barter for what one needs, Hadestown is established as being "*far away from the poorhouse door*" (Act I, scene viii, 2020: 78).

[12] The concept of "the wall" is something that will be heavily explored later on, by the musical itself, the author, as well as my analysis.

Hadestown is already being presented as a financially wealthy space, unlike the Earth we've seen thus far, and as Eurydice's experience has acted as an image for what most mortals have experienced, so Hadestown is representative of whatever is furthest from poverty, furthest from the "*poorhouse door*" (Act I, scene viii, 2020:78). Eurydice has been hardened by the weather conditions she sings of in 'Any Way the Wind Blows' (Act I, scene ii). Furthermore, the text shows that people desire to go down to Hadestown.

Hermes: *Hound dog howl and the whistle blow*
Train come a-rollin, clickety-clack
Everybody tryin' to get a ticket to go
But those who go they don't come back
They goin'
Hermes & Company: *Way down*
Hadestown
Way down under the ground ('Way Down Hadestown', Act I, scene viii, 2020: 79)

According to Hermes, "everybody" wants to go down to the financial well, but those who end up living the dream they think awaits them in Hadestown, do not come back. The road to hell is a one-way road. This song also establishes Hades' industrial power, explaining that Hadestown has become a mint and hub of financial power and production.

Fates: *Every little penny in the wishing well*
Every little nickel on the drum.
Workers: *On the drum!*
Fates: *All them shiny little heads and tails*
Where do you think they come from?
They come from.
Workers: *Way down*
Hadestown
Way down under the ground. (2020: 81)

It becomes clear that Hadestown is the source of monetary wealth in all realms, on Earth and below, explaining that the production of the money itself takes place in Hadestown. Hermes continues to explain the experience of those in Hadestown:

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 (2020:80)

Lyrically, this verse ties the original ideas of the Underworld together with Mitchell's version. It is still a graveyard, it is still where the dead go, yet, what makes it a graveyard is not simply that the souls of those who have died have ended up in Hadestown, rather, the labour is what kills. People are in want, not simply for life, but for the necessities. They are hungry and overworked for no wage. This is what makes Hadestown a graveyard, the death and denial of humanity.

We see more of this graveyard as those trapped in Hadestown sing in 'Chant' (Act I, scene xi). They sing to themselves to keep their heads low if they want to keep their heads. They fear their environment in Hadestown, and as they sing this to themselves, up above, Orpheus is still trying to finish his song, while Eurydice is growing troubled due to Orpheus' absence.

> Eurydice: *Looking high and looking low*
> *For the food and firewood I know*
> *We need to find and I am*
> *Keeping one eye on the sky and*
> *Tryin' to trust that the song he's working on is gonna*
> *Shelter us*
> *From the wind, the wind, the wind* (2020: 104).

Eurydice is, once again, heavily influenced and impacted by the environmental situation in which she finds herself. She is consumed—as most are—with the basic necessities of life. Poverty has narrowed her desires to that which simply aids in her survival. She seeks food and firewood, a thread pulled throughout the musical. Eurydice, from her introduction on stage, is seeking heat and warmth. She asks, time and time again, for a match, and here is seeking firewood, in 'All I've Ever Known' (Act I, scene ii) she sings specifically of how her relationship with Orpheus has brought sunlight and warmth into her life, something that she had lived without for so long that she didn't even realise something was amiss. In this song, this thread continues as Eurydice is concerned with matters of the flesh, whereas Orpheus is concerned with matters of the spirit, as he is feeding his creativity. Eurydice is seeking food and firewood and is staying alert and attentive to the weather conditions around her. Eurydice is "*tryin*" to trust in Orpheus' ability to provide shelter, not only for the two of them, but for the whole world as is the promise of his completed song.

As the song continues, Eurydice is losing hope that Orpheus will be able to "*shelter*" and "*harbour*" her ('Chant'. Act I, scene xi, 2020: 105). She cries out, but he does not respond, and the storm that is coming is one for which she is not prepared. While Eurydice is

experiencing this tumultuous time at the hand of the climate, the root of this storm becomes apparent to Orpheus. Orpheus becomes ever more frustrated with the reality of the world and the fact that this could all be blamed on Hades and Persephone.

> Orpheus: *King Hades is deafened by a river of stone*
> *And Lady Persephone's blinded by a river of wine*
> *Living in an oblivion* (2020: 102)

Quickly after Orpheus' understanding of the gods' individual states of being, he comes to the realisation that their chosen roads of separation have affected everyone around them. Hades has chosen his "*river of stone*" (Act I, scene xi, 2020: 102). This refers to the wall built around Hadestown, in turn, to Hades' industrial empire. On the other hand, Persephone has chosen alcoholism as her antidote to Hades' industrialism, and she chose oblivion and ignorance, instead of the balance of her realm of nature.

> Orpheus: *His black gold flows*
> *In the world down below*
> *And her dark clouds roll*
> *In the one up above* (2020: 103)

This verse shows us Orpheus connecting the dots between whom Hades has become, how Persephone has reacted, and how this has led to the climate change struggle faced on Earth. Hades' mine—his industrial empire—has expanded, and in turn, Persephone's clouds have become dark in the world up above. Orpheus clarifies that the world below has directly affected the one above. Orpheus concludes his process with the song's climax, pointing directly at the root of all this.

> Orpheus: *And that is the reason we're on this road*
> *And the seasons are wrong*
> *And the wind is so strong*
> *That's why times are so hard*
> *It's because of the gods*
> *The gods have forgotten the song of their love!* (2020: 103)

And so, canonically, the origin of the environmental hardship and subsequent poverty faced on Earth is the love of the gods, or rather, the lack of love between the gods. As the song jumps back to Persephone and Hades in the underworld, we see this explicitly, we see how our divine lovers' reunion is hardly one that pulls at the heartstrings. Their meeting is one saturated with distaste and misunderstanding, specifically aimed at Hades. Hades has presented Persephone with industrial gifts, such as a furnace, a foundry, a factory, a power

grid, things of his subterranean empire. In turn, Persephone responds with honesty that she dislikes all of it. His intentions have not taken Persephone's identity and need into account, and as a result, all he has done has not increased her love for him but rather done the opposite.

> Persephone: *Every year, it's getting worse*
> *Hadestown, hell on earth!*
> *Did you think I'd be impressed*
> *With this neon necropolis?*
> *Lover, what have you become?*
> *Coal cars and oil drums*
> *Warehouse walls and factory floors*
> *I don't know you anymore*
> *And in the meantime, up above*
> *The harvest dies and people starve*
> *Oceans rise and overflow*
> *It ain't right and it ain't natural* (Act I, scene xi, 2020: 105).[13]

This is also one of the moments where we explicitly see the environmentalist themes within the musical, through the force that is Persephone. As the main representation of nature and balance, she has clearly displayed her disgust at Hades and his empire. She explicitly ties the expansion of Hades' kingdom to the decay of the Earth above, showing that her alcoholic oblivion has not exempted her from understanding the reality of the situation. She is presented with a version of her lover, who she claims not to know anymore. He has intertwined his identity with that which he can industrially produce, and as a result, the world above suffers. The use of the repeated phrase, "*it ain't right and it ain't natural*" (2020: 105) directly weaves the issues of morality and environmental concern together. Persephone points out the specifics of the natural disasters, while tying them to what Hades has become, and how his passions have shifted towards the industrial. Hades' industrialised empire is what Persephone sees, what she does not know, or is familiar with, and what she directly ties to the environmental catastrophe that she has experienced. This interaction is poignant, as it is the first moment we see the gods address the issues facing the mortal world.

Up until this point, we have heard tales and descriptions of what Hadestown is like from Hermes, and we have seen that it is built as a representation of the industrial, but here, in 'Way Down Hadestown (Reprise)' (Act II, scene ii), we see what one's soul experiences in

[13] This section of text will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

the Underworld. After Persephone's unconcealed disgust at Hades' presented gifts, Hades chooses to seduce Eurydice with the things of his world, and she rides the train down to Hadestown. This presents us with the reimagining of what Hell is in this environmental fable.

Hermes: *Now in Hadestown there were a lot of souls.*
Workers: *Oh, keep your head, keep your head.*
Hermes: *Working on the wall with all their might.*
Workers: *Huh! Kkh! Oh, you gotta keep your head.*
Hermes: *You see, they kept their heads down low.*
Workers: *Huh! Kkh! If you wanna keep your head.*
Hermes: *You couldn't quite see their faces right…*
But you could hear them singing:
Workers: *Oh, keep your head, keep your head.*
Hermes: *Swinging their hammers in the cold, hard ground*
You can hear the sound of the pickaxe ringin'.
Workers: *Huh! Kkh! If you wanna keep your head.*
Hermes: *And they called it.*
Hermes & Workers: *"Freedom."* (2020: 148)

Hermes, once again, acts as our main storyteller explaining what the reality of Hadestown is like. Many souls are working on a wall, The Wall. We understand that this manual labour, the swinging of the pickaxes into the ground, has become their identity and sole purpose, where they live to work and work to live. And, in all of this, Hermes reminds the audience of what Hades has chillingly taught his children, namely that this is freedom, that 'this work makes them free'. The so-called freedom the workers had been sold was indeed just Hades' control over their lives, bodies, souls, and memories. As Eurydice joins the line, she introduces herself.

Eurydice (to Workers): *I'm Eurydice.*
(to Fates): *Doesn't anybody hear me?*
Fates: *They can hear*
But they don't care
No one has a name down here
Mister Hades set you free
To work yourself into the ground
Free to spend eternity
In the factory
And the warehouse
Where the whistles scream
And the foremen shout
And you're punchin' in
And punchin' in

And can't punch out
And you're way down Hadestown
Way down Hadestown
Way down Hadestown
Way down under the ground (Act II, scene ii, 2020:150)

The reality of Hadestown is quickly presented to Eurydice as the Fates explain that she has sold herself to lose herself. She has gained the freedom to work and work alone, and in this the inherent industrial nature of Hadestown is revealed once more. Hadestown feeds on the souls that inhabit it, using them as the means to fuel the endless cycle of destruction and production. Here, Hadestown is also frankly presented as the space in which unjust labour is both created and cultivated. It is the factory and the warehouse in which workers are forced to "*work [themselves] into the ground*", except they have already worked themselves into the ground, they have already died, and are already six feet under in the physical sense, meaning that their eternity is now something signed over to the laws of Hadestown, and they will never be able to "*punch out*". Mitchell paints this post-apocalyptic hellscape with more reality threaded into it than fiction. Impoverished individuals are forced by circumstance to work in harsh circumstances for minimal compensation. The mind is drawn for example to the scandals surrounding the Amazon warehouses and how workers are placed in inhumane circumstances in order to satisfy the ever-growing and unrealistic standard of production needs created by Jeff Bezos and his company.

> While Amazon has developed impressive systems to make sure its customers' orders are shipped efficiently and quickly, the company has failed to show the same level of commitment to protecting the safety and well-being of its workers (Doug Parker in OSHA National News Release, 2023.)

Amazon has faced backlash for the company's employment regulations and has been fined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for various violated legislations (Silberling, 2023: 1). Companies such as Amazon have become such a significant part of daily life in western societies, that it almost seems impossible to survive without them. They have monopolised the market in such a way that they have engendered societal dependency. Just as Hadestown has become that which the world in the story revolves around, its railroad and work are what pushes the story forward, becoming what is to be perceived as a necessary evil. Companies that have been exposed for their harsh labour practices have continued to garner popularity in the western world. This is specifically seen in the rapid rise in Amazon's popularity throughout the years (Curry, 2023: 1). Hadestown is a parallel to companies such

as these, in that its means of production and generating wealth is something that comes at the expense of its labourers, and just like these companies, Hadestown shows how the reality of these circumstances does not necessarily guarantee accountability. This is the simple truth of Hadestown, namely that your livelihood and life are interchangeable.

Hadestown has built itself up in such a way that those above have become dependent on it, and so Hades has become the mastermind of this pipeline that has led those to him. Hadestown gets built up by the souls that work and die there.

> The Fates: *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* (Act II, scene ii, 2020: 152)

Hadestown and its ideology continues to survive through the exploitation of the damned souls that make up its population. Hades has created an industrial empire that has so damaged the world and environment that those dependent on the environment have no choice but to turn to what Hadestown can offer. And so, Hades' labour wheel keeps turning as he keeps damaging Earth. As the song continues, The Fates explain to a questioning Eurydice how those who work in Hadestown pay the price of losing their memories in exchange for work, and they use the image of how she sold her soul down the river of oblivion.

> The Fates: *Down in the river of oblivion*
> *You kissed your little life goodbye* (Act II, scene ii, 2020: 150)

Mitchell references the mythology here and makes use of the imagery of the River Lethe, a river in the underworld known as "the river of oblivion" (Melville, 1986: 1626). Mitchell talks of this inspiration herself.

> Returning to mythology, I found that what has always frightened me most about the underworld was the idea of "forgetting." The dead are made to drink of the waters of the River Lethe, which causes them to forget their former lives. This is the *river of oblivion*… (Mitchell, 2020:157).

Eurydice's memories and therefore her identity is lost in the river of oblivion and is ultimately replaced with her new identity as a worker in the assembly line. The Fates sing how Hades has given her "*everlasting overtime*" (Act II, scene ii, 2020: 150). She loses herself to gain work, and what she gains is an identity shaped by eternal labour.

> The Fates: *Your place on the assembly line*

Replaces all your memories (Act II, scene ii, 2020: 150-151)

In Eurydice's solo piece, 'Flowers' (Act II, scene iii), she sings of what she still does remember, and in this we are represented with various references to the original myth. She starts the song singing of how all she wanted was to fall asleep, to rest, and she talks of how things have changed and grown darker than she had expected.

> Eurydice: *Dreams are sweet until they're not*
> *Men are kind, until they aren't*
> *Flowers bloom until they rot*
> *And fall apart* (2020: 159).

The reality of the dream she has created for herself has become the nightmare of Hadestown, and she continues to call out to anyone who might hear; asking if anybody is listening. She talks of the vague images that are still swirling in her mind. She talks of sunlight and fields of flowers, and she talks of someone she remembers, referring to Orpheus. This imagery is directly correlated to the original story of the myth. Originally, Eurydice was walking in a field of flowers when a snake bit her and she died, which sealed her fate in Hades. As discussed above, the environment plays a very active role in Eurydice's life, whether physically or emotionally, as this connects to her relationship with Orpheus. Here we see this again, namely how her character and thoughts have become inseparable from Earth. She remembers flowers specifically, but does not remember her lover fully. She remembers shadows of Orpheus, singing of how she remembers "*someone*", but nature is what is truly seared into her mind and soul.

As her memories and identity succumb to Hadestown, that which remains within her is nature. This, for the first time, connects Persephone and Eurydice. Persephone, as the goddess of nature and the seasons within the story, is one directly tied to the flowers that come with spring.[14] The song ends with Eurydice calling to the figure she remembers, asking them to come to find her lying in the bed she had made. This reminds us of how all she had wanted was rest, and she had found it in the Underworld in her very own death. However, as her life leaves her, she longs for what she had above, knowing that it was not stability, but choosing flowers and the vague memory of her lover. Musically, this song simply presents us with a slow lamenting solo, one where Eurydice is free to be vulnerable in her musicality. Her voice

[14] From an environmental perspective, the representation of nature through the women will further be discussed in Chapter Four, when discussing the ecofeminist perspective of these characters.

breaks, moves between registers, and cries out as she moves between the emotions of longing and forgetting.

After Orpheus' arrival in the Underworld, Hades allows Orpheus to plead his case through song. At this, Orpheus starts his final Epic, 'Epic III' (Act II, scene x). We come to believe that this is the final version of his song, the one that can "*bring the world back into tune*" (Act I, scene iii, 2020: 33). And so, Orpheus begins to sing the tale of Persephone and Hades himself. He sings of their meeting and love, and as Orpheus sings his famous falsetto melodic line, Hades, flooded with nostalgia and a time long past, questions where he got that melody. Orpheus' Epic paints the picture of Persephone and Hades and their young love, specifically Hades's love for Persephone. However, Orpheus' pointed words at the King finally softens Hades' heart enough to sing along. He sings of how Hades has built all he has in order to protect his own, but in the process, he has lost what has been most dear to him. He has lost the "*treasure in his chest*" (Act II, scene x, 2020: 199). The song closes with Persephone and Hades singing along with Orpheus' motif, and directly after follows 'Epic III Instrumental' (Act II, scene xi), the turning moment for the love of the gods and the hopeful moment that would lead to the renewal of the Earth.

> Hermes: *Orpheus was a poor boy*
> *But he had a gift to give*
> *This poor boy brought the world*
> *Back into tune, is what he did*
> *And Hades and Persephone*
> *They took each other's hands*
> *And, brother, you know what they did?*
> *They danced…* (2020: 209)

This moment therefore shows the layers of influence that Persephone and Hades' relationship have over the world and those in it. From the early moments of the musical, the state of the Earth and these two gods' love for one another are obviously connected, and here we see this even more so. Orpheus set out to write a song that would "*bring the world back into tune*" (Act I, scene iii, 2020: 33). He set out to sing a song so powerful that it could reinstate spring and autumn and bring balance to the seasons. This is where the desire sprang from and ultimately culminates in the reigniting of the spark between these two gods. This is the manifestation of how Mitchell has redeveloped this classic myth to be intrinsically tied to environmentalism. The love story of the gods is the story of the Earth and its health.

The song following this is 'Promises', which acts as a reprise to 'Wedding Song' (Act I, scene iv) and 'All I've Ever Known' (Act I, scene ii). Orpheus, sobered by his journey, sings to Eurydice revoking the promises he once made. He honestly states that he has no ring, no banquet table, and no eider-down wedding bed, all of these being things he once promised his song could bring when the lovers sang in 'Wedding Song' (Act I, scene iv). However, Orpheus now realises he is still a simple poor boy. He continues to sing of how he is unable to promise "*fair sky above*" and "*kind roads below*" but he promises to walk beside Eurydice, his love, "*any way the wind blows*" (Act II, scene xii, 2020: 214). Eurydice responds to Orpheus' maturity in candour by saying that she does not need any of these things, all she needs is for him to walk beside her. Here in the scene, we could read this moment by understanding that the relationship between the two lovers has grown to exist outside of the climate and its state, or rather, is one that is hoping to live in a state of balance as a result of Orpheus' song. Either way, we do see Orpheus' growth in understanding what he can and cannot provide. The song beautifully ends with the lovers finally being able to exchange "*I do's",* and in their hopeful reuniting, Orpheus approaches Hades and asks, "*Can we go?*" ('Word to the Wise'. Act II, scene xiii, 2020: 220).

Hades decide that he cannot simply let the young lovers go for fear of looking like a spineless king. He also cannot force Orpheus to stay for he will become a martyr, and so Hades comes up with his condition. He allows Orpheus and Eurydice to leave under the typical mythological circumstances—in single file, and Orpheus is not to turn around until they exit. As they embark on their journey, Persephone, in shock, says to Hades that he let them go. Hades responds by saying, "*I let them try*" and Persephone, hopeful, asks if they will try again. Hades brushes her off, almost despondent and says, "*It's time for spring. We'll try again next fall*" ('Wait for Me (Reprise)'. Act II, scene xvi, 2020: 230). Hades uses the cyclical nature of their relationship as an excuse not to fix what has been broken. He uses the environment as an excuse. Their relationship—as the canonical force that makes the world go round—is something that Persephone has presented to Hades as something to "*try again*". Persephone hoped that, just as the young Orpheus would do anything to be reunited with his lover, perhaps the old lovers could rekindle the love they had at one time.

The story then follows the path it always has and always will. Orpheus, against the better hope of all involved, ends up turning around. And so, our young lovers are once again

separated. Hermes steps in again as narrator, reminding the audience that they were told about the sadness of the tale and the fact that they will sing it again even so, and our story ends with Persephone. In 'We Raise Our Cups' (Act II, scene xix), Persephone encourages the cast, crew, and audience to raise a cup to Orpheus, to those who try. And so, our environmental fable weaved with the thread of love stories comes to an end.

In the relationship between Persephone and Hades and Orpheus and Eurydice, we see the relationship the patriarchal capitalist systems have had with women and nature. Both of these men have presented their lovers with solutions to external or internal problems. Hades presented Persephone with a gift basket filled with industrial creations, and Orpheus romantically promised to save the world through song. In these promises and solutions, the men do not consider the women and what they actually need and want. Persephone explicitly tells Hades that she hates what he has created, and his creation is exactly what is causing the problems. Yet, Hades does not change, rather he seeks another object to prey upon. His creations were thus made for him, to console his own conscience. From the beginning, Eurydice makes it clear that she needs physical and financial stability. She needs food, clothes and fire, and Orpheus in his idealism does not hear her. He rather chooses his art, and as a result, his lover dies. The men in *Hadestown* have done exactly what patriarchal systems of industrialism and capitalism have done. They look at the problems presented to them—in this case, problems of global warming, climate change and environmental decay—and develop supposed solutions that exclude the voices of those that are most affected. Indigenous women and women in poverty are most affected by climate change, yet the Global North has taken charge of rectifying the problems they themselves caused. The voices of environmentalists in the Global South are not those that we hear when it comes to the future of our planet, yet those are the exact voices we *need* to hear (Strazzante, Rycken, and Winkler, 2021: 1). *Hadestown* plainly shows this. Hades needs to listen to Persephone, and Orpheus needs to listen to Eurydice, yet the fundamentals of patriarchal dominance even saturated the world of the myth.

Conclusion

These famed Greek myths have found new life, as Anaïs Mitchell has reanimated them with the lifeblood of environmentalism. Our four main characters have been joined on stage by the climate, acting as an instigator, motivator, and major presence throughout the musical. Ultimately, the relationship these four main characters (Persephone, Eurydice, Hades, and

Orpheus) have with the climate and the environment mirrors humanity's relationship with the Earth. The climate is interwoven into the relationship of Orpheus and Eurydice and their individual characters. Eurydice's every step and decision is motivated by the environmental struggle she has endured. Her choice to step into a relationship with Orpheus and her choice to go down to Hadestown are both motivated by the poverty she has been plunged into due to climate change. Orpheus only becomes the hero since he aims to write a song that will "*bring the world back into tune*." Orpheus' motivation as hero is to rectify what is wrong, and that which is wrong is the environment.

The thread of environmentalism that already exists within the relationship of Persephone and Hades is given more weight. Hermes scrutinises Persephone's power over the seasons as he criticises her loss of control. Persephone is painted both as a perpetrator and a victim, and her character will be further explored in the following chapter. She acknowledges climate change and the scrutinisation she receives but points towards Hades and his kingdom. The Underworld is reimagined as a hub of industrialism that has led to that which "*ain't right*" and "*ain't natural*". Therefore, my interpretation is that, within *Hadestown*, Hell has become an Amazon warehouse, exploiting those below and the River Styx is not a river at all, but rather a wall signifying Hades' power. Hades himself has become a Bezos-Trump hybrid. Those in poverty are shown to be disproportionately affected by environmental decay, just as is seen in reality. The entire narrative centres on "*The Road to Hell*", which is once again an obvious signifier of Hadestown's expansion and industrialism.

The critique of ecofeminist theory is that it essentialises women and asserts the binary of thinking of women as nature and men as reason. *Hadestown* does play into this binary as seen in the characters of Persephone and Hades, but the relationship between Orpheus and Eurydice is flipped. Orpheus is the romantic hero, singing on behalf of nature and hoping for its safety. Eurydice, on the other hand, is driven by the physical. Yet, in this simultaneous affirmation and subversion of this binary, *Hadestown* has presented the reality the world faces. The root of all issues faced in the musical is pointed out to be the state the Earth is in as a result of Hades. Orpheus points this out and so does Persephone. Ultimately, what we are presented with on stage has become less myth and more a depiction of the relationship 'mankind' has with the Earth. The specifically gendered nature of this relationship will be explored in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4
An ecofeminist reading

Persephone and Hades

The characters of Persephone and Hades have been carefully crafted within the narrative of *Hadestown*. They are rooted in contrasting ideologies and act as archetypes of these ideologies. Persephone is characterised as the goddess of nature. In the original mythology, she is a minor deity, acting as the underworld queen and the goddess of seasons and vegetation. She holds these roles in *Hadestown*, but since no other gods or goddesses within the realm of the natural world are mentioned, she becomes the deity that embodies nature and all its parts. Her main influences still lie with her original role, that of seasonal change and vegetation.

> Persephone: *Who makes the summer sun shine bright?*
> *That's right, Persephone!*
> *Who makes the fruit of the vine get ripe?*
> Company: *Persephone!*
> Persephone: *That's me!*
> *Who makes the flowers bloom again*
> *In spite of her man?*
> Company: *You do!*
> Persephone: *Who's doing the best she can?*
> *Persephone, that's who* ('Livin' It Up on Top'. Act I, scene vi, 2020: 58)

Here in 'Livin' It Up on Top' (Act I, scene vi), Persephone's role and realm of power is shown to be that of seasonal change and vegetation, but she sings of the sun, flowers, the vine and continues in this number, and others, to sing of the weather, the moon, the wind, etc. When she sings of these things, they are always referenced as though she has power over them, as though they would fall under her domain. Therefore, within the context of *Hadestown*, Persephone not only plays the role of the goddess of the seasons and vegetation, but she embodies the all-encompassing essence of the natural world. She is presented and is read as the goddess of nature. Therefore, Persephone becomes nature's representative, the exemplar, spokesperson and personification of the natural world, nature's processes, and Earth herself. She is a character rooted in environmentalist and feminist ideologies. She is the goddess of nature and the bringer of the seasons, she, in essence, holds the balance of the Earth's environment within her power. She is the divine woman rooted in the Earth, becoming the perfect subject for ecofeminist study.

On the other hand, Hades is a character rooted in all things manmade, created, produced, and industrial. His created Kingdom, thirst for development, financial growth, and dominion all add to the basis of his character. In all of this, he is a character known by his control. His control in terms of his kingdom, death, his wife, and thus the Earth. Within the mythology he is the King of the Underworld, ruler of the dead, and characterised as the creator and dispenser of wealth. This characterization continues in *Hadestown,* but his character is essentialised to his wealth and power. He becomes a representative of capitalist wealth production and industrialism. He has come to rule over his dominion of the dead through assembly lines and unjust labour. He has generated his wealth on the backs of those forced to be in his realm, and his industrial efforts have led to environmental decay due to how it has affected Persephone and the Earth. Persephone herself points to this in 'Chant' (Act I, scene xi):

Persephone: *Every year, it's getting worse*
Hadestown, hell on earth!
Did you think I'd be impressed
With this neon necropolis?
Lover, what have you become?
Coal cars and oil drums
Warehouse walls and factory floors
I don't know you anymore
And in the meantime up above
The harvest dies and people starve
Oceans rise and overflow
It ain't right and it ain't natural (2020: 105)

Hades' industrial empire has directly affected the Earth, paralleling today's reality as industrial production and high consumption patterns—specifically by the 'West'—have put heavy strain on the Earth and Her boundaries. As Hades' wealth and dominion grow, those left to survive outside the paradigm of Hades' rule are left to suffer as the Earth does.

The relationship between Persephone and Hades has become a parallel for the contest witnessed today between "the rights of Mother Earth and the rights of corporations and militarized [sic] states using obsolete worldviews and paradigms to accelerate the war against the planet and people" (Shiva, 2014: xii). The rhythm of their marriage is the very thing that has enabled the Earth to function within the cycle of the seasons. Persephone's presence or absence is the very thing that causes the Earth to grow or decay, to live or rest, and therefore, the existence of their relationship is the entire reason the seasons came into existence.

Orpheus sings of the love that was so immensely passionate and powerful that it had a lasting effect on the Earth's natural cycle of life, death, and rebirth. The very existence of the seasons is a result of this agreement made between Persephone and Hades for the greater good. This decision was made to avoid the ultimate decay of the Earth above; thus, their seasonal relationship was not made with themselves at the forefront of their minds, but rather with the Earth and Her needs in mind. Their relationship exists as it does because they chose the Earth. Their eternal rhythm—six months above, six months below—was born of the understanding that the Earth must continue to survive. Therefore they compromised, and are now apart for half the year, placing the Earth's needs above their desires for one another.

This original intention and passion have now, however, been replaced by obligation, reluctance, and control. We see a completely different picture than that which Orpheus painted in his epic. Instead, in 'Livin' it Up on Top' (Act I, scene vii), Persephone passive-aggressively refers to her husband as being the antagonist to her role as the bringer of seasons, asking the company around her, "*Who make the flowers bloom again, in spite of her man?",* and they all respond, "*You do!"* (2020: 58). This is one of the early signs that the relationship between Persephone and Hades is not what it used to be. In 'Way Down Hadestown' (Act I, scene viii), it becomes even more clear that their relationship has grown stale, and has lost its original spark, as Persephone dreads her reuniting with her lover. As Hermes sings of what Hadestown is like, Persephone sings of the reality that she will soon be returning to Hadestown.

> Persephone: *Winter's nigh and summer's o'er*
> *Hear that high, lonesome sound*
> *Of my husband coming for*
> *To bring me home to Hadestown* (2020: 79).

Firstly, their seasonal arrangement is reiterated, as Persephone signals summer's departure and winter's arrival. She is referring to the "*high, lonesome sound*" of the lone train whistle signalling the arrival of the one train going to and from Hadestown. But to Persephone, the sound of the train whistle does not simply signal the train's arrival; it is lonesome because it is the signal of her return to her now loveless marriage. She makes this very clear as she sings not of the sound of the train being lonesome, but how the lonesome sound is one directly tied to her husband's arrival. I would assume that once upon a time, the train whistle would bring joy to Persephone's heart as she would be presented with her reuniting with her lover, yet the more I think about it, the more I realise that the train whistle would never have been a

positive sound to Persephone. The very existence of the train and its railroad is a signifier of Hades' choice of industrial development, rather than environmental balance. Therefore, we can see the very existence of the train as a turning point in Persephone and Hades' relationship. As Persephone's thoughts continue to be expressed throughout the song, it becomes clear that Hadestown has become a place she cannot endure without medicating herself. She expresses her boredom and need for medication, alcohol, and escapism.

> Persephone: *Down there it's a bunch of stiffs!*
> *Brother, I'll be bored to death*
> *Gonna have to import some stuff*
> *Just to entertain myself*
> *Gimme morphine in a tin!*
> *Gimme a crate of the fruit of the vine*
> *Takes a lot of medicine*
> *To make it through the wintertime* (Act I, scene viii, 2020: 79).

Here, Persephone does not hide her disdain for Hadestown, she explicitly and unambiguously tells those around her and the audience that it has driven her to alcohol and drug dependence. Her entertainment and joy come from things imported, things not of Hadestown, but things she needs to supply. Among these things are "*morphine in a tin*" and "*a crate of the fruit of the vine*" ('Way Down Hadestown'. Act II, scene viii, 2020: 79). Mitchell writes in *Working of a Song,* that the 'morphine line' was inspired by a song, *Miner's Lullaby* (2020: 85). A story told by Utah Phillips accompanies this song. The story explains how American coal miners would secretly bring a tin of morphine into the mines with them in case there would be a cave-in, or flood or disaster, to be able to choose a painless and peaceful death, or they could take the matter of their death into their own hands. This mentality is transposed into the character of Persephone, as her only form of escape in the mine that is Hadestown becomes what she can bring with her. Her addition of "*crate of the fruit of the vine*" continues to demonstrate her reliance on alcohol.

In addition to establishing the industrial wealth of Hadestown as well as Persephone's perspective on Hadestown, the song continues to display more of Hades' character.

> Hermes: *Mr. Hades is a mean old boss*
> Persephone: *With a silver whistle and a golden scale*
> Company: *An eye for an eye!*
> Hermes: *And he weighs the cost*
> Company: *A lie for a lie!*
> Hermes: *And your soul for sale*

Company: *Sold!*
Persephone: *To the king on the chromium throne*
Company: *Thrown!*
Persephone: *To the bottom of a sing-sing cell*
Hermes: *Where the little wheel squeals and the big wheel groans*
Persephone: *And you better forget about your wishing well*
Company: *Way down Hadestown*
Way down under the ground (‘Way Down Hadestown’. Act I, scene viii, 2020: 80-81)

Hades is secured as king and owner of all in Hadestown, including the souls of those doomed to call Hadestown their home. He is further shown to be judge, jury, and executioner of all who reside in his dominion. Hadestown is equated to a "sing-sing cell", a reference to the Sing-Sing prison in New York, where the advent of use of the electric chair is noted. This image substantiates the role of finality that Hadestown plays in the lives of mortals, and further illustrates the confines in which Persephone exists when she is there. As the Sing-Sing prisoned pioneered the industrial execution, so Hadestown has developed into a space of industrial death, with Hades as the warden. Perspehone, as well as the souls in hell, are imprisoned and doomed to death and torture. This death and torture, however, is not one of traditional Greek mythology or the Judeo-Christian presentations of hell, rather, it is one characterised by industrialism. The electric, the mine, the mint, the factory, this is the death and torture of Hadestown. As the song continues, Hades' arrival is met with an ominous atmosphere as he steps off the train, Persephone's first words in response to her husband's arrival are, "*You’re early!*", said with resentment through gritted teeth. Hades responds with a patronising, “*I missed you*” (‘Way Down Hadestown, Act I, scene viii, 2020: 82).

We see more of Persephone's hatred of Hadestown in 'Chant' (Act I, scene xi). She sings of its exponential and continual decline. She directly points to how it has drastically damaged the Earth due to its over-industrialisation (these lyrics are quoted earlier in this chapter). Their relationship was originally Earth-centred and considerate of Earth's needs, but it has become routine. It becomes clear that the Earth has not continued to benefit from the gods' seasonal relationship. They are still, very clearly, working within their six-month agreement, but the Earth has declined environmentally. This shows that even though their half-year agreement is still intact, it is not all that can affect the Earth's climate. It becomes clear that within the story of Hadestown, the six-month contract is not all there is to keeping balance on the Earth.

Orpheus realises that the love of the gods brings this balance to fulfilment, not simply obeying their age-old contract. In 'Chant' (Act I, scene xi) Orpheus sings, "*The gods have forgotten the song of their love*" (2020: 103), and musically this is the climax, as well as the culmination of all the insights we have received in the song. When Orpheus sings this line, he shifts away from the previously used falsetto, stating it powerfully in his chest voice, simultaneously the music breaks completely, allowing a space where only Orpheus' line is heard. This becomes the obvious motivating factor for the musical's narrative movement as it is the root of the environmental issues that the world in *Hadestown* faces. The issues of poverty, hunger, and climate change are all rooted, narratively, in the lack of the two gods' love for one another. However, at the level of analysis, the real dilemma is the industrialism of Hadestown. Within the musical, the only reason we get for the emotional distance between Persephone and Hades is what Persephone sings in 'Chant' (Act I, scene xi) (the lyrics are referenced earlier in this chapter). Persephone's words, "*Lover what have you become, coal cars and oil drums, warehouse walls and factory floors, I don't know you anymore*" (2020: 105) are the biggest insights we have into the reasoning behind why they have lost their love. Hades has pursued industrial gain and economic wealth; in developing this empire, he has lost his lover. His chosen path of industrialism and capitalism is something that is in direct opposition to who his wife is, and what she is rooted in, namely, the Earth. His economic development has damaged his wife's realm of control, and ultimately her. She sings of this and directly aims her disdain and hurt toward Hades, proclaiming with indignation, "*it ain't right, and it ain't natural*" (2020: 105).

Hades' response to Persephone's disgust is that his corporate creations have been made to present them to Persephone as a token of Hades' love. One might see this as Hades having good intentions, but failing in his execution. However, this reading would simply aid in patriarchal standards, where men have been simplified to only be able to provide physical safety and satisfaction and present what they can to their partners in hopes of approval. The industrialism that Hades has decided to prioritise over his love for his wife and initial respect for the Earth, the respect that was seen in how he chose her well-being over his relationship with Persephone. Now, in being presented with the present iteration of the couple, we see tension in how the two have chosen divergent paths. In this tension between Persephone and Hades, between the natural and the corporate, the Earthly and the industrial, we see the roots of ecofeminist theory as it surfaces the tension between two opposing worldviews, one rooted

in capitalist patriarchy focused on individual gain, and one rooted in environmental balance, sustainability, and the respect for Mother Earth. The theories presented in Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies' book, *Ecofeminism* (2014) will discuss and draw out this tension. I will do so by deeply analysing the relationship between Persephone and Hades, and how their current relationship highlights this tension between worldviews. I will discuss this in specific relation to certain musical numbers in the show and will be heavily focusing on the lyrical content of the songs and their musical stylings. The songs I will focus on in this chapter are songs that specifically characterise the two gods, Persephone and Hades, as well as the songs that characterise their relationship. Furthermore, I will expand on how these characters end up interacting with those around them as a result of the state of their current relationship.

The Ecofeminism of Persephone and Hades

One cannot discuss theories that intersect with women without discussing violence against women. This presentation of power over women is as old as patriarchy itself. Where men have been in power, women have been victims of violence. Worldviews perpetuating the continual domination of men over women have been intrinsically tied to traditional patriarchy as it structures society to be comfortable with the perpetual denial of women's full humanity, autonomy, and right to equality. However, traditional patriarchy has evolved and hybridised itself as it has joined forces with capitalist systems—developed by and for the patriarchy—and just as the patriarchy has evolved to maintain power, so have its forms of violence (Shiva, 2014: xiv). Just as in the classic myth, the violence Persephone endures is brutal and physical, where, as she is raped, so has traditional patriarchy perpetuated physical violence in its power systems. However, in the modern retelling of *Hadestown*, Persephone is not physically and individually violated; instead, she experiences a slow violence of industrialism and environmental decay that has resulted in her ultimate alcoholism and drug dependency (Nixon, 2011). The marriage between the patriarchy and capitalist development has allowed patriarchal systems of violence to expand its reach and grow in its longevity. The violence against women is now not only restricted to physical violence, but is extended into their climate, their hunger, their livelihood, and their dependence, as seen in Persephone. These are all manifestations of acts of dominance. Just as rape is not about sex but dominance, this slow violence is rooted in the same fight for dominance. Men have fought to dominate women, science has fought to dominate nature, and this intersection is where we see ecofeminism fighting back.

As patriarchy has raised up capitalism under its agenda, it has pulled reductionist and mechanistic science into its ranks as well (Shiva, 2014: xviii). It has done so with ease as modern science, with its claim to universal, value-free objectivity and logic, has done well to benefit the Western male and his patriarchal societal projections. This has historically necessitated the systemic subjugation of women and nature, as well as the 'other' (Shiva, 2014: 26). Modern science stands against humanity's dependence on Earth, and therefore does all it can to destroy what may enhance man's dependence on nature or create that which allows man to live within his right to be free of such a dependency. These systems and paradigms designed by the West are rooted in the idea that freedom comes when dependence is overcome and transcended, when nature is made submissive to man's will and desires (Shiva, 2014: 20). As patriarchal science and technological advances have been developed and established, this has served patriarchal capitalism, commodifying natural resources and processes, essentialising nature to her rawest form and deconstructing her cycles to be forced into linear flows, forcing her to be as the patriarchal paradigms wish her to be. "The disruption of natural growth cycles becomes the source of capital growth" (Shiva, 2014: 33).

This is the current state of *Hadestown*. The cycles of the seasons have been disrupted as Hades' industrial world has developed, only benefiting him, and instead of restoring the cycles of the Earth, Hades has been able to create his own cycle, one where he is able to benefit from the harsh realities that those on Earth are facing as a result of the climate change caused by his empire. He is able to poach Eurydice from the Earth and bring her into his assembly line, and the only reason she is willing to go is because of the lack of stability and survivability that she faces on Earth. Hades, therefore, benefits from that which has brought his wife suffering. Rather than returning to a certain level of dependability on his wife and nature, Hades turns to someone else he can dominate rather than depend on. His idea of freedom reflects the West's idea of freedom, growing from the desire to "subdue the [E]arth" (Gen 1:28 [NIV]). Hades' created and industrial world, which Persephone explicitly despises, is exactly what has allowed him to take Eurydice from her world into his. As he developed his industrial world, the climate situation on Earth worsens, and as the climate worsens, Eurydice has become more desperate. Hades, refusing dependence on the natural, has trapped the Earth and her inhabitants in a cycle of dependence on his industrial kingdom.

The scientific revolution was said to have unveiled knowledge and remove the boundaries of ignorance, but it has become increasingly obvious that instead, what has been preserved and

developed is a paradigm of thinking and knowledge that views "nature and women only as a resource, and nature's limits as constraints" (Shiva, 2014: 33). This has led to a new ignorance that has become the new source of the planet's decay, an ignorance of what freedom and dependence really are, and ignorance of what humanity truly needs, and an ignorance of this paradigm's very own unsustainability. This ignorance is exactly what is exposed in Hades in 'Chant' (Act I, scene xi). As the audience is presented with Persephone and Hades' reuniting moment in Hadestown, we do not see the two gods lovingly embracing, but rather, we see Persephone's dissatisfaction, her frustration, and utter hatred for what Hades has developed and constructed in her absence. As he presents his creations to Persephone, she questions all that he has created. Hades' response is one of defensiveness, stating that he has done all of this for her. He had created a foundry that is fed with the "*fossils of the dead*" (Act I, scene xi, 2020: 100) to keep her warm, he had created a power grid to provide light, and Persephone responds to his defence by saying, "*Did you think I'd be impressed, with this neon acropolis?*" (Act I, scene xi, 2020: 105). Hades is shown to have built and developed an industrial landscape that directly contradicts the natural order of the seasons. The underworld had become a bleak duplicate of natural summer, developed as a result of harsh labour and fossil fuels. The entire structure and advancement of Hadestown is one developed by means of environmental decay and industrial strength. Interestingly, Hades sees the world he has built as something he can present to Persephone as gifts and shows of his love, but moreover, Hades built these as glimpses of the lover he longs for. The pseudo-summer reminds him of the heat his lover would know and bring on Earth, and he somehow hopes that what he has created would keep her. He attempts to recreate the "*arms of the sun*" ('Epic II'. Act I, scene x, 2020: 96) in his realm of the dead, aiming to subdue his pangs of jealousy.

Therefore, it becomes clear that our industrial ruler did not expand his empire to fulfil his wife's supposed needs, rather, he built all that he has presented here as a means to hopefully subdue his wife, just as he has subdued the Earth. He has counterfeited her realm as a means to selfishly, own her. His ignorance of his wife's needs and wants will continue to damage the Earth as the climate is affected. As Mies argues, "Only if Nature is again recognised as a living being with whom we must co-operate in a *loving* manner, and not regard as a source of raw material to be exploited for commodity production, can we hope to end the war against Nature and against ourselves" (2014:144). Hades has stepped into war with his wife as he stepped into war with nature. In the words of Orpheus; "*the gods have forgotten the song of*

their love" ('Chant'. Act I, scene xi, 2020: 103). Later on in the musical, in 'Chant Reprise' (Act II, scene ix), Hermes tells of how the walls had heard what the young boy had sung in his protest song, and as a result, those who make up and make the wall, have started to question what is and isn't true. Hades then sings to Orpheus, both commending and berating him for his courage and stupidity. As he does so, he sings of where he sees similarities between himself and Orpheus. Hades explains how he also used to be young, singing a song of love, yet he was embittered and now has turned to reliability and consistency instead of love, where he has found this reliability and consistency is what he has created and what he can control.

Hades: *Young man, I was young once too*
Sang a song of love like you
Son, I too, was left behind
Turned on one too many times
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! (2020: 190).

Hades has built up security and identity in what he has created, he has built himself into the industrial world that surrounds him. In this, Hades has isolated the rule of the Underworld to himself alone, not including the supposed Queen of the Underworld in his new vision for his kingdom, and ultimately, the Earth. Hades has clearly chosen the industrial over all else, including his wife. Furthermore, he instructs Orpheus on ways to "*hold a woman*" (‘Chant Reprise’. Act II, scene ix, 2020: 188)—using misogynistic ideals of objectification and ownership. He sings of the chains of gold, silver, and diamonds that help to keep a woman's loyalty. He instructs Orpheus in this way. However, he has been exposed to how his relationship advice is rooted in his own selfishness and not in the reality of his relationship. Persephone has made it clear that she is displeased by all he creates and presents to her, yet he refuses to accept that.

However, instead of changing his systems and paradigm of thinking, instead of listening to his wife, he chooses to go elsewhere, to present his gifts to someone who will understand and appreciate the gilded cage he can present to them. 'Hey, Little Songbird' (Act I, scene xii) presents the audience with this reality and this conversation between Hades and his new chosen prey, someone who would appreciate and respond to his advances. He approaches Eurydice, tempts her with the things his industrial world has taken from her, and entices her with the same things Orpheus promised but never delivered: food, shelter, and safety. He manipulates her by pointing out the ways in which her poor young lover would fail her when it came to matters physical such as food, warmth, money. He invites her to "*fly south for the winter*" (2020: 113), where she would have the opportunity not to fret over these things. This song signifies a twisted pipeline of Hades' own creation. Hades' dissatisfaction at Persephone's disgust directly results from his industrial kingdom, which he has decided to build. In response to his wife's disapproval, he then turns to find a "*pretty and young*" (2020: 112) girl who would appreciate what he has built. However, the only reason Eurydice would consider selling her soul for a ticket to Hadestown is because her circumstances on Earth have become unbearable, and the root of the Earth's environmental issue is Hades' industrial scheming. Hades seems to be the cause of all the problems yet the benefactor of all the side-effects.

Hades' initial strategy is one of intimidation. He immediately contrasts Orpheus, while also mirroring him. Orpheus is presented as naïve, and Hades as confidently manipulative, yet both use their first moments with Eurydice to take something. Orpheus asks Eurydice to come home with him, Hades asks Eurydice for a song. Both then continue in their songs, to talk of who they are and what they can offer. In 'Come Home with Me' (Act I, scene iii) Orpheus offers the power of his song, and in 'Hey, Little Songbird' (Act I, scene xii) Hades offers the power and influence of who he is, what he has created, and what he can offer. The difference becomes that Hades presents Eurydice with the possibility of her needs being met presently, whereas Orpheus' solution is long term, and time is not something Eurydice has in ample supply.

Hades: *Hey, little songbird, give me a song*
I'm a busy man and I can't stay long
I've got clients to call, I've got orders to fill
I've got walls to build, I've got riots to quell,

And they're giving me hell back in Hades.
Hey, little songbird, cat got your tongue?
Always a pity for one so pretty and young
When poverty comes to clip your wings
And knock the wind right out of your lungs
Hey, nobody sings on empty (2020: 112)

Hades intentionally pulls Eurydice's focus to how his life abounds and hers is abased. He talks of his work and his responsibility, and the immediate connotation is made between labour and livelihood. He then continues to remind Eurydice of what she needs no reminder of, namely her poverty.

Eurydice: *Strange is the call of this strange man*
I wanna fly down and feed at his hand
I wanna nice soft place to land
I wanna lie down forever (2020: 112)

The war she has waged within herself her entire life is one that has come again, she is someone who has always been motivated by survival. She has had to fight for her life, and now she is presented with an opportunity to "*lie down forever*" (2020: 112), an opportunity to give up the fight, but the cost is her love. Eurydice's desires and motivation is something that we are reminded of here. Her strong desire for the simplicity of basic needs is what the audience was presented with in 'Any Way the Wind Blows' (Act I, scene ii), and this is what ultimately moved her to give Orpheus a chance. However, here in this song, we are reminded that, even though her love for Orpheus is something that has grown and become vital to her, her core desires are still the same. Lyrics from 'Any Way the Wind Blows' (Act I, scene ii) ring in the minds of the audience:

Eurydice: *And sometimes you think*
You would do anything
Just to fill your belly full of food
Find a bed that you could fall into
Where the weather wouldn't follow you (2020: 22)

And so, here in this moment of the narrative, Eurydice is presented with the same thought she herself had, that she would do anything to fill her needs, and she is then presented with the choice, "*if [she's] willing to choose*" ('Hey, Little Songbird'. Act I, scene xii, 2020: 112). Hades reminds her that she's "*got nothing to lose*" (2020: 113). Eurydice then starts to doubt her relationship with Orpheus in his absence, and Hades does not miss the chance to take advantage of that.

Eurydice: *Suddenly nothing is as it was*
Where are you now, Orpheus?
Wasn't it gonna be the two of us?
Weren't we birds of a feather?
Hades: *Hey, little songbird, let me guess*
He's some kind of poet and he's penniless
Give him your hand, he'll give you his hand-to-mouth
He'll write you a poem when the power is out
Hey, why not fly south for the winter? (2020: 113)

Eurydice continues to call out for Orpheus, as she had done in the previous song, but now, Hades' words provoke a more profound sense of doubt for Eurydice. Hades reminds Eurydice of Orpheus' inability to provide the things she truly desires.

Hades: *Hey, little songbird, look all around you*
See how the vipers and vultures surround you
And they'll take you down, they'll pick you clean
If you stick around such a desperate scene
See, people get mean when the chips are down… (2020: 113)

Hades further reminds Eurydice of her situation, her surroundings, and he makes it clear that the dangerous desperation with which she has approached her situation in the past, is warranted. The reference to vultures and vipers follows the original myth, where Eurydice was bitten by a snake, and her death is what sent her to Hades. In Mitchell's iteration, the viper is not literal but one of circumstance and choice. Eurydice's dire situation bought on by scarcity is what presents her with the choice to go to Hadestown.

Musically, this song reverts to Mitchell's simplistic folk roots, making use of steel string guitar and conversational lyrical lines. We are also able to gain more of Hades' characterisation through his voice in this piece. Hades sings in a deep bass register, one that is riddled with vocal fry and reverberation. Hades exists in a sub-terranean space vocally and physically. The piece acts as a dialogue between Eurydice and Hades, where both parties are driven to this point by their dissatisfaction in their current relationships. Hades' created gifts have been rejected and scorned by Persephone, and Orpheus has, unbeknownst to him, chosen his craft over his lover. Hades is looking for someone who will be grateful for the industry he can provide them, and Eurydice wants to be taken care of. Persephone's love for the Earth and Orpheus' love for his art ultimately outweighed both of their love for their partners, but when understanding Orpheus' motivation behind his art, we see that both

Orpheus and Persephone have chosen the Earth above their lovers, as Orpheus' song is one developed out of the hope that the Earth will be healed through it. Orpheus is enamoured by his work, because he believes it will rectify the harm done to the Earth, Persephone stands in opposition to how Hades has caused the Earth to die with his industry. Therefore, we see that to Orpheus and Persephone, when presented with the choice between the well-being of the Earth or the individual, the Earth outweighs the individual.

And so, towards to the end of 'Hey, Little Songbird' (Act I, scene xii), Eurydice's doubts are swirling in her mind, and as the next song approaches, The Fates do what they do best, which is to make one doubt even more. The intro to the following song, 'When the Chips are Down' (Act I, scene xiii) brings to mind images reminiscent of the original myth.

> Hermes: *Songbird versus rattlesnake*
> *Eurydice was a hungry young girl.*
> Eurydice: *What is it?*
> Hades: *Your ticket.*
> Hermes: *And Hades gave her a choice to make*
> *A ticket to the underworld* (2020: 116).

Here, it becomes clear that there is a definite contrast and battle present between songbird (Eurydice) and rattlesnake. The rattlesnake, however, could be interpreted as either Hades himself, but not simply in a one-dimensional manner, where he is the opposing character. The snake is what ultimately causes Eurydice to end up in the underworld and the fact that she is presented with a choice in Mitchell's retelling of a myth, rather than simply being bitten by a snake, is what adds dimension to this. We are then prompted to wonder the cause of Eurydice's mortal death. It is in fact Hades himself; not because he gave her the ticket, but rather, he created the situation in which she is forced to make these decisions, or rather, she is presented with a pseudo-choice. Hades' industry and his creation have led to the harsh decay of the Earth, and because of this, because Eurydice is starving in the world above, she considers this choice. Hades essentially created a world in which Eurydice has no choice but to live in his. He benefits from the destruction he has created, and the ultimate decay of the Earth and Eurydice's environment is no match for this little songbird.

Hades has emerged as the saviour, saving Eurydice from the harsh realities she faces. Her problems of poverty and hunger seem to be solved within Hades. However, Hades' industrialism, his selfish colonialism of the Earth and her resources, has forced Eurydice to

even consider selling her soul for the simple necessities of life. Hades has colonised the Earth and nature in such a way that he has sought the raw materials in hopes of building what he desires. Initially drawn by nature herself, by Persephone, he has now reverted to purely seeing nature as raw material to be shaped. However, in a section titled *White Man's Dilemma: His Search for What He has Destroyed*, Mies talks of the coloniser—traditionally being the white male—longing for what is wild; having a nostalgia for nature that has not yet been dissected by man's productions (Mies, 2014: 139). We see this desire in Hades as he seeks Eurydice, his "*Little songbird*" (Act I, scene xii, 2020: 112), as he calls her. Hades desires to subdue the Earth, yet as he has done so, he still desires the untouched and raw elements that the Earth can offer. He desires the natural world that is untouched by his industrialism and an untouched woman he can dominate. He finds this in Eurydice. She has not seen the realities of his industrial underworld and he approaches her by addressing in the diminutive, calling her a "*little songbird*" (Act I, scene xii, 2020: 112).

This song presents us with our first look into the psyche of Hades. His prioritisation of the industrial over the environment is one seen in his choice of Eurydice over Persephone. He would rather choose that which enables him to remain in his position of power, than that which allows him to keep his empire, which would benefit both his relationship with his wife, and the environment. When Orpheus receives the news that he has lost Eurydice to the underworld, he is shocked. He was unaware in his creative state of all that had happened to Eurydice, his creative works had taken precedent of Eurydice's physical needs, and in this we see the physical needs Eurydice desires fulfilled by Hades. Just as Persephone has verbalised to Hades that that which he has presented her is not what she desires, similarly, Eurydice has, from the beginning, made it clear what she has need and desire for. Both men have failed to meet the needs of their lovers, and instead have chosen other lovers. Hades has chosen a younger woman, and Orpheus his song. Hades' choice, however, was motivated out of selfishness, out of a need to hold onto his power. Furthermore, in 'Way Down Hadestown Reprise' (Act I, scene ii), the reality of the deal signed between Hades and Eurydice comes to light.

> The Fates: *You kissed your little life goodbye*
> *And Hades laid his hands on ya*
> *And gave ya everlasting life*
> *And everlasting overtime*
> *In the mine*
> *In the mill*

In the machinery
Your place on the assembly line
Replaces all your memories (2020: 150)

Eurydice's deal was not simply one involving papers, but one involving her body. Hades had laid his hands on her in exchange for her life in Hadestown. She has been dominated by Hades, just as he has dominated Persephone. Hades embodies these patriarchal systems of dominance and control, and throughout the musical, we see Hades' innate aversion to relinquishing control. He exerts his control over the vulnerable, as the coloniser does, and does so in a manner that allows him to benefit from this. We see this as his control over Persephone allows him to build his kingdom, and we further see this in 'Why We Build the Wall' (Act I, scene xvii), where Hades directly addresses his workforce. This presents us with a fairly dystopian *1984*-esque atmosphere of coercion, brainwashing and control. Hades addresses his workforce with a call and response song that builds itself in a cyclical fashion.

Hades: *Why do we build the wall*
My children, my children?
Why do we build the wall?
Workers: *Why do we build the wall?*
We build the wall to keep us free
That's why we build the wall
We build the wall to keep us free (2020:134).

One sees the Orwellian nature of Hades' interaction with those he rules over. In *1984* (Orwell, 1949), the Party uses their slogans as a means to control the masses, with the slogan "War Is Peace, Freedom Is Slavery, and Ignorance Is Strength", used time and time again to reiterate the power and authority of the Party. Similarly, Hades poses questions to his workforce, implying that their work is ultimately for their well-being, but as the song continues; this song expresses the desire for control. Hades poses the following question to his workers:

Hades: *How does the wall keep us free?*
My children, my children?
How does the wall keep us free?
Workers: *How does the wall keep us free?*
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 (2020:134)

Hades continues to add on questions, asking who the enemy is, and expecting the workers to respond in chorus that "*the enemy is poverty*" (2020: 134). He then continues to prompt the workers in saying that the enemy wants what they have, that they are privileged. Finally, Hades asks his "*children*" what the enemy wants that they have, and the chorus' response brings us back to the beginning.

Workers: *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 (2020: 135).

And in this final question, Eurydice joins in, slowly establishing herself as a part of the workforce. The song ends with the workers repeating their mantra of sorts, along with Eurydice and Hades.

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
We build the wall to keep us free (2020: 136)

This song is one that Mitchell herself says she wrote very quickly "almost before [she] understood what it meant" in 2006. She recounts how the song's meaning has continued to change over the years and makes it clear that as a song written with questions at its core, she would do best to leave the ultimate conversation surrounding the meaning of the song to the audience, "It is, after all, a series of questions, and my guess is that the conversation it provokes is worth more than any statement I could make" (Mitchell, 2020: 137). As with art, the ultimate life of the art after its release to the world is something that cannot and should not be controlled or bordered by the artists' original intent, and thus, this song has truly taken on a life of its own with the rise of the Trump Administration. The focus of this song is Hades' wall and the building of the wall, this, in modern interpretation, immediately causes audiences to think of Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign and how it was intrinsically tied to his push to "Build the Wall". Trump's campaign was one rooted in building a physical wall between the southern border of the United States and the northern border of Mexico, as a means to limit illegal immigration. This campaign was one that highly polarised the United States and was one that heavily influenced Trumps' popularity during

his primaries. “The Wall” was something that became synonymous with Trump’s campaign. As *Hadestown* was developed, it was assumed that ‘Why We Build the Wall’ (Act I, scene xvii) was written as a direct influence of Trump’s administration, however, Mitchell continually reiterates that she wrote it in 2006, before Trump’s campaign. However, she does not fight against the perception that her writing is anti-Trump, leaving interpretations and meaning-making to the audience to fold back into the work (Mitchell, 2020: 137). This once again exemplifies how the afterlife of the musical has not rendered the piece obsolete and outdated, rather, the piece as prefigured pertinent political moments and themes.

The language of ‘Why We Build the Wall’ (Act I, scene xvii) is saturated with anti-poverty and pro-capitalist themes, something that Hades himself embodies. Within the mythological canon the Wall does not exist. Mitchell has reimagined the River Styx to be “*a river of stones*” (‘Epic II’. Act I, scene x). Therefore, the boundary between the underworld and everything else is no longer the famous image of the river and a ferryman, but rather it is the Wall. Interestingly enough, the word “styx” means to hate or abhor in Greek, therefore, the River Styx—or rather the goddess at the source of the river’s power—was the personification of contempt (Carpenter and Gula, 1977: 76-77). This personified hatred is made tangible as Hades reiterates the reason the Wall exists. The Wall is a way to keep poverty out, and wealth in. It is an inherently hateful construction as it shows its bigotry towards poverty.

The language of ‘Why We Build the Wall’ (Act I, scene xvii) is something that is carefully crafted as Hades’ autocratic and authoritarian leadership is established in the song, as well as his manipulation and means of maintaining control over his workers. Mitchell explains that which influenced the specific use of “my children” in *Working on a Song.*

> In college, I studied abroad in Cairo, Egypt. My Arabic Lit professor was an older woman with dark eyeliner who took it upon herself to introduce leftist, bohemian values to a generation of distracted young Egyptians. She barely concealed her disdain for then-president Hosni Mubarak and expressed nostalgia for the 1960s and the populist president Gamal Abdel Nasser in particular. "What did Nasser call the citizens?" she asked the students, who remained silent, some gazing into mobile phones. "'Brothers and sisters'!" she said. "And what does Mubarak call us? 'My children' (Mitchell, 2020: 137).

In the previous iterations of the musical, Persephone would sing along with Hades when questioning the workers, she used to sing the line “*What do we have that they should want?*

We have a wall to work upon" (Act I, scene xvii, 2020: 136), however in the Broadway version that premiered in 2016, Persephone is separated from the power that Hades exerts on his workers in this song. She is clearly *not* the co-ruler of the underworld, instead she is someone ruled.

'Why We Build the Wall' (Act I, scene xvii) signals the end of the first act, and the second act starts with Persephone's main piece, 'Our Lady of the Underground' (Act II, scene i), where she encourages the workers of Hadestown to step into *her* office while Hades is busy. Her "*office*", however, is her hole-in-the-wall speakeasy. We see through this song that this is the space where Persephone actually steps into her role as Queen of the underworld, but not in a ruling capacity, but rather she steps into a role of healing through her empathy and connection to nature.

In her one space of authority, she provides what only she can, and that which her husband has tainted, which is facets of the natural world above. As the song starts, her first lines allude to the fact that the existence of her speak-easy and the selling of these natural elements is something she is doing selfishly.

> Persephone: *Step into my office…!*
> *I don't know about you boys…*
> *But if you're like me, then hanging around*
> *This old manhole is bringing you down*
> *Six feet under, getting under your skin*
> *Cabin fever, is a-setting in*
> *You're stir crazy! Stuck in a rut!*
> *You could use a little pick-me-up*
> *I can give you what it is you crave*
> *A little something from the good old days* (Act II, scene i, 2020: 143)

Once again, Persephone blatantly and openly sings of her disgust towards Hadestown. She sings of being trapped and minimises Hadestown to simply that which encloses, and not only does she sing this to herself or to her husband, but she directs this towards the workers of Hadestown. In this moment we see Persephone step into herself. She is the most comfortable she has been in Hadestown up until this point, and previously, the only space where she was this comfortable was during 'Livin' it up on Top' (Act I, scene vi) when she was under the influence of alcohol. However, it becomes clear here that she is still under the influence and is now encouraging those around her to partake.

Persephone: *You want stars? I got a skyful*
Put a quarter in the slot, you'll get an eyeful
You want the moon? I got her too
She's right her waiting, in my pay-per-view
Oh, how long's it been?
A little moonshine ain't no sin
Tell my husband to take his time!
What the boss don't know
The boss won't mind (2020: 144)

As she does this, as she presents those around her with what she can provide, she explicitly opposes Hades. She points the workers to things outside of Hadestown as a means to keep their morale up, but moreover, she is highlighting the potential weaknesses in Hades' empire, and she does so confidently behind his back.

Persephone: *Wipe away your tears, brother*
Brother, I know how you feel.
I can see you're blinded by the sadness of it all
But look a little closer and
Everything will be revealed
Look a little closer and
There's a crack in the wall! (2020: 144)

The language Persephone uses here directly contrasts with the language Hades uses in 'Why We Build the Wall' (Act I, scene xvii). Persephone calls those around her brother. She has placed herself among the ranks of the supposed family of Hadestown. She has not taken the place of authority, as we would assume, calling the workers "my children", as Hades does. She further associates herself with those burdened by the death that Hadestown brings. She sings of how she knows how they feel. However, this is where Persephone is separated slightly from those around her. She takes on the responsibility of pointing to that which could bring hope and joy. She has essentially taken on the motherly responsibility of consoling the teary-eyed miners in Hadestown. When considering the history of women in the bootlegging industry, we see that during the time of prohibition, female bootleggers were primarily mothers.

> Most were widowed, divorced, or separated from their husbands, who were usually stevedores, laborers, or grocers. Female bootleggers were almost always mothers, who were often burdened with numerous children (Sanchez, 2000: 406).

Persephone has been driven to partake in the same industry as her husband's. Hades has become the king of the riches of the Earth, yet Persephone, here, takes back ownership of the natural realm. She sells natural resources. A duality is therefore presented in Persephone's speak-easy. She is simultaneously undermining Hades' power and authority, yet playing the same game he has taught her. We see that how she partakes is not motivated by selfishness. She does not need to sell things for money, nor does she gain anything out of this speak-easy that her husband has not already offered her. She does this for the sake of freedom, that is, her own, but also for the souls of the underworld. She offers the natural resources she has control over to those who need it. On the other hand, Hades has gained power and has done everything he can to maintain it, not distribute it. Persephone steps into the role of mother, queen of the underworld, and a type of Robin Hood.

However, the means by which she does this is not only through her illegal imports—wind, rain, moon, sun—but by further pointing to "*the crack in the wall*" ('Our Lady of the Underground'. Act II, scene i, 2020: 144). This line, "*there's a crack in the wall*", is the climax of Persephone's number, and if it hadn't been clear up until this point, it becomes evident that Persephone and Hades are not united in the way in which Hadestown is run. She explicitly points the workers to that which could cause them doubt. She points to the weakness in the system that Hades has used to keep his workers under control. The physical power of the boundaries of The Wall and the philosophical boundaries of entrapment represented by The Wall both start deteriorating as Persephone points out the flaw in the system. *A Crack in the Wall* used to be the working title for the musical, and the power of exposed flaws in authoritarian systems is something that comes to further fruition as the musical develops. In Orpheus' song 'If It's True' (Act II, scene vii), we see this come to play. The small seeds of doubt that have been planted in the minds of the workers grows to a full-sized rebellion as Orpheus leads the way.

Throughout the musical, no mortal calls Persephone by her name. She is referred to by titles and is only called by name by those who are gods themselves, or Orpheus, who "*was touched by the gods*" ('Road to Hell'. Act I, scene i, 2020: 12). We see this explicitly in 'Our Lady of the Underground' (Act II, scene i). Persephone would continually ask those around her what her name is, and they never respond with her name. She is called "*Our lady of the underground*", "*Our Lady of ways, our Lady of means*", "*Our Lady of the upside down*", and she would finish her chorus sections by simply taking the matter into her own hands, singing

"*I'll tell you my name, Persephone*" ('Our lady of the Underground'. Act II, scene i, 2020: 143).

The use of the term "*Our Lady*" immediately invokes religious connotations. Historically, "*Our Lady*" refers to the Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ. In the Catholic, Orthodox and some Protestant faiths, Marian prayer uses one's innate human connection to Mary, as she was fully human, as a means to connect with Christ. Therefore, Mary acts as an intercessor in prayer. Here we see the same term used for Persephone. Persephone offers intercession, not with Christ or a specific male deity, but rather with Earth. Persephone as "Our Lady" stands between the divine and the natural, as she embodies both, and presents those before her with either. The term Madonna—directly meaning my lady—is a term used to refer to Mary, the mother of Christ. Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum has written extensively on the history and representation of black madonnas in her book *Black Madonnas: Feminism, Religion & Politics in Italy* (2000), and there she defines black madonnas as: "a metaphor for a memory of the time when the Earth was believed to be the body of a woman and all creatures were equal…" (Birnbaum, 2000: 4). This ties heavily into the world of Greek mythology and the myth of Gaia, as the goddess from which all life flowed.

> Black madonnas, like the primordial woman divinity, are believed to nurture all life, all the different peoples of the earth and all the seasons of life: birth, maturity, death, and regeneration (Birnbaum, 2000: 4).

In this sense, Persephone clearly acts as a black madonna in the world of *Hadestown*. She, canonically, is the bringer of all life within the musical as she controls the seasonal life of Earth. She acts as nurturing mother figure to those on Earth and below it. She holds the cycle of the seasons of Earth within her, and in turn on the seasons of the lives of people as they are dependent on the Earth's seasons.

> A black madonna was no sorrowful Mother of God, but rather a subterranean deity, black with the shadows of the bowels of the earth, a peasant Persephone, or lower world goddess of the harvest… Neither good nor bad. This black madonna is like the earth, it can do everything, destroy and make blossom… She withers the harvests and lets them die but also nourishes and protects, and it is necessary to adore her (Birnbaum, 2000: 18).

Persephone is explicitly referenced as an image of a black madonna in this excerpt and in the world of *Hadestown* she exemplifies these concepts. She is someone who lives within the subterranean bowels of the Underworld and, within myth and the musical, is the Queen of the

world below, at least for half the year. She is neither good nor bad, within both myth and musical. Her morality is continuously in question in the musical as she, above, presents those around her with alcohol as a means to subdue. However, down below, she presents the things of the Earth as a means to heal. In all of this, as she gives and takes away (much like the God of the Bible), it is necessary for the mortals to adore her. They praise her in 'Livin' It Up on Top' (Act I, scene vi) for the wine she is able to gift them, knowing that instead she should have brought spring, but adoration flows, nonetheless. They adore her in the underworld in 'Our Lady of the Underground' (Act II, scene i), praising her for being their Lady of ways and means, tears flowing from the eyes of the workers who are lucky enough to be subjected to her kindnesses.

What is furthermore inherently tied to the idea of the black madonna is Carnevale. The essence of the original Carnevale has travelled to various spaces worldwide, and one particular space in which *Hadestown* has found inspiration is the how this has translated to New Orleans. Traditionally, carnival ends on Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, and is the first day of Lent. *Martedì grasso* is the Italian for Shrove Tuesday and *mardi gras* is the French, however, this translates to "Fat Tuesday". Presently, *mardi gras* is a version of carnival explicitly tied to New Orleans, which ties *Hadestown* into carnival as well. Persephone's presence is where mortals can find solace from the world in which they find themselves. In 'Livin' it Up on Top' (Act I, scene vi), those around her find joy and solace in the alcohol she provides, and in 'Our Lady of the Underground' (Act II, scene i), those in Hadestown do the same. Persephone, as the black madonna in *Hadestown*, becomes carnival, on Earth and below. The workers down below revel in the things of old, the workers remove themselves from the current beliefs that they have been subjected to and throw themselves into their ancient rights, the rights of Earth, and they do so by intercession of Persephone, their 'madonna'.

Later on in the musical, Persephone steps into her intercessory role as their 'madonna' in an active way. In 'How Long?' (Act II, scene viii), Persephone defends Orpheus to Hades, pleading with her husband to let him go with Eurydice. The song becomes a moment where Persephone and Hades are very obviously on opposing sides in this fight. Persephone is fighting for the young lovers and Hades is fighting for himself. Persephone addresses Hades directly in this song, not just condemning his created works but directing the questioning towards him.

Persephone: *What are you afraid of?*
Hades: *What?*
Persephone: *He's just a boy in love.*
Hades: *Have a drink, why don't you.*
Persephone: *No*
I've had enough (2020: 181)

As Hades is faced by his wife and her words, he does not choose to take responsibility, but rather attempts to dismiss her by encouraging her alcoholism. He knows her alcohol dependence has allowed him to be independent from her and the Earth's needs. He refused to accept responsibility when she confronted him in 'Chant' (Act I, scene xi), and here, he again refuses to be perceived as weak.

Hades has already been presented as a mirror of Donald Trump, and this moment furthers this parallel. In December of 2019, Greta Thunberg—Swedish environmental activist and then 16-year-old—was announced to be TIME Magazine's person of the year. In response to this, Donald Trump—then president of the United States—insulted her on Twitter.

> So ridiculous. Greta must work on her Anger Management problem, then go to a good old fashioned movie with a friend! Chill Greta, Chill! (@realDonaldTrump; Donald Trump, 12 December 2019).

Trump has not had a good track record regarding his action concerning environmentalism. Here, instead of commending a young girl for her environmentalism, he berates her and proposes that she distract herself, much like Hades does with Persephone. What is worth noting is that both Trump and Hades do not present hatred towards the environment or the women they influence, rather they communicate a tone of apathy. Donald Trump has had many articles written about his sexism, and in one authored by Jay Willis for *GQ*, it becomes clear that Trump's use of this casual misogyny has been something he has successfully weaponised. Hades' casual dismissal and intentional ignorance of Persephone has also been weaponised and used to his advantage. Persephone, however, has had enough and makes that clear. She chooses sobriety, and in her enlightened state, she confronts her husband.

Persephone speaks of how the Earth will die, but ultimately that it will have to come back to life, "…*the sun must go on rising*" ('How Long?'. Act II, scene viii, 2020: 182). Persephone, being intrinsically tied to the cycles of the seasons, reminds Hades that even he falls prey to

this cycle. Here we see the two opposing forces that are the gods face each other in ideology as well as word. They stand against each other as Persephone speaks of young love and Hades of individual and self-focused gain. Hades sings out of fear of losing his kingdom and Persephone sings in defence of Orpheus' focus on his lover. The only part of the song they sing together and therefore the only moment they can be said to agree is when singing of the devastation of the world.

> Hades & Persephone: *And how does the sun even fit in the sky?*
> *It just burns like a fire in the pit of the sky.*
> *And the earth is a bird on a spit in the sky?*
> *How long, how long, how long?* (2020: 183)

Just as carnival's meaning sits in the rite of death and regeneration, so Persephone allows those around her to experience death and regeneration as she speaks of these cycles. Persephone becomes the boundary and the intermediary between the living and the dead, just as Carnevale exists in a space where the boundary between the dead and living are blurred (Birnbaum, 2000: 80-81). This is what Persephone's presence does, and this is what her speak-easy may represent. The boundary between the living world and the world of the dead is one that is moved and broken. Firstly, as Persephone has smuggled the things of the living world into the Underworld, but secondly, and overtly, as Persephone points to the "*crack in the wall*" ('Our Lady of the Underground'. Act II, scene i, 2020: 143). She points to a weakness in the boundary that Hades has so attempted to set up between the living world diseased by poverty, and the world of the dead, where he reigns. Black madonnas have historically been tied to Carnevale, a space where peasants are able to revert back to their ancient customs and do away with societal norms of the day; "at carnival we are all equal" (Birnbaum, 2000: 82). Equality is something that Persephone presents in her little kingdom as she calls those around her "*brothers*" ('Our Lady of the Underground'. Act II, scene i, 2020: 144). Additionally, "carnival consciousness always preceded great change" (Bakhtin in Birnbaum, 2000: 79). 'Our Lady of the Underground' (Act II, scene i), Persephone's carnival number, is the signifier of the commencement of the second act, and the change that ensues as a result of the second act as Orpheus leads the revolt out of Hades.

The last interaction we see between Persephone and Hades does not bode well for their relationship, nor the state of the Earth. Persephone, moved by the young lovers and their will to try, presents Hades with an opportunity for renewal and second chances, and he turns her

down. He uses the seasons as an excuse saying, "*it's time for spring*" ('Wait For Me Reprise'. Act II, scene xvi, 2020: 229), brushing off his wife's presented opportunity to bring balance to them as well as the Earth. The end shows us that this old song and sad song is one that replays time and time again, not simply in terms of Orpheus and Eurydice, but in terms of the environmental decay. Persephone asking, "*are we gonna try again?*" (2020: 229), shows us that there is hope for change, yet the simplicity of remaining the same will forever hold the world of *Hadestown* in the cycle of environmental damage at the hand of industrial capitalism. Hades' aversion to change and growth—except financial and industrial growth—is what has kept the world in the state in which it finds itself. Persephone remains dulled, and the environment continues to falter in its balance, the poor continue to suffer at the hands of Hades' empire, and the story of this will cycle through, just as the relationship of Persephone and Hades will.

Conclusion

We find Persephone in the intersection between the divine and the natural. Her character is one that almost seems as though it was made for ecofeminist study. Within classical myth, she is inherently tied to the seasons, but within Hadestown her realm of power extends to all things natural. She becomes the embodiment of nature, and therefore nature's representative. However, she is sick. She is an alcoholic, and as she is enduring a gradual poisoning, she is losing control over the rhythms of the seasons.

In addition to this, the portrayal of her husband, Hades, within this piece aids in the ecofeminist analysis of her character, and therefore of the piece. Hades, rather than having the single title of *King of the Underworld*, is now an industrial mogul. What has been emphasised in the writing of *Hadestown* is how Hades has become his Roman inspired self—a plutocrat. His capitalist driven empire stands against Persephone in all ways, and as we see the power dynamic between them, we see the implied grip the Global North has on the environment. The tension in their relationship exemplifies what Shiva has identified as the tension between "the rights of Mother Earth and the rights of corporations and militarized [sic] states" (2014: xii). This is further aided in the layers of patriarchal capitalism found within Hades. Where men have been in power, women have been victims of violence, and this is seen in the realities of both Persephone and Eurydice. Persephone suffers the slow violence of a loveless marriage, alcoholism, and environmental decay. Eurydice suffers an

extreme circumstantial violence brought on by this environmental decay and is further subjected to sexual violation as a means to survive.

The love of the gods used to "*make the world go round*" ('Epic I'. Act I, scene v, 2020: 48), yet now, the world is trapped in a cycle of blazing summers and frigid winters. Their seasonal contract is not all there is to environmental balance—as the original myth states. Instead, the state of their love for one another seeps into the life of the Earth. The question then becomes, 'What happened?' What happened between our eternal lovers' relationship? How did their love decay? They "*have forgotten the song of their love*" ('Chant'. Act I, scene xi, 2020: 103) as Hades has forgotten his first priority. He has chosen to place the growth and expansion of his industrial kingdom above his wife. Hades chose the process of creation which is merely manmade, one that stands against his wife's creation. He chose eternal and unceasing industrial and economic expansion. As a result, Hades' empire grew on the foundation of hatred, poverty, and love of money. He chose this, even when faced with the reality of what it has done to his wife and in turn done to the Earth. This relationship mirrors the relationship between patriarchal capitalism and our Earth. Those in power continue to gain power as those in want stay in want. In response to being forgotten, Persephone also forgot, and chooses to stay in this oblivion. She is somewhat complicit. She chose numbing and alcoholism over facing Hades, and as a result of this, the Earth suffers. However, in this state of inebriation, she still chose to care for those who have been hurt by the same man who hurts her. She intercedes for the lost souls in Hadestown and becomes their 'madonna'. She brings the natural world to the subterranean one. Further, we see the character of Persephone ultimately choose sobriety and confrontation. She stands with the young lovers, she hears their plea, and she defends Orpheus.

As Orpheus writes his song in an attempt to remind the gods of their love, he hopes to bring balance to the Earth. Much like Mies, Orpheus is motivated by reuniting the original intent of our mythical lovers. Mies writes, "Only if Nature is again recognized [sic] as a living being with whom we must co-operate in a *loving* manner, and not regard as a source of raw material to be exploited for commodity production, can we hope to end the war against Nature and against ourselves" (2014:144).

The final frame of the play presents the story again, the sad song that will be sung again, and after 'Road to Hell Reprise' (Act II, scene xviii) is sung, and the curtain call has concluded,

we are presented with 'We Raise Our Cups' (Act II, scene xix). Persephone leads this toast to Orpheus, and to those who try. She is joined in her toast by Eurydice and the entire company echoing their refrain. We end with a hopeful image, encouraging "*Orpheus, and all of us*" (2020: 254) to try, to not simply accept the reality we find ourselves in. The toast then is lifted to the audience, assimilating a call to action by Persephone, the Earth's spokesperson, and here, the didactic element of *Hadestown* is realised. The last image we are presented with is the cast and crew of *Hadestown* imploring the audience to place a high premium on trying, and with this, we hope to see Persephone try again, just as the Earth will try again.

Conclusion

Hadestown: The Myth, The Musical has made an environmentalist fable of these famed Greek myths. The stories of Orpheus and Eurydice, and Hades and Persephone, have been resurrected once more to process themes of environmentalism, anti-capitalism, anti-industrialism, and ecofeminism. These themes are exemplified in the reimagining of these characters. Persephone and Hades directly contrast one another as one represents the natural world, and the other the industrial. This is shown in how Hades has been characterised as an industrial mogul focused on Hadestown's consistent expansion. He is the king of the underworld but also king of the riches that are buried in the subterranean world. He rules over the economically valuable resources that the Earth holds, and this characterisation of Hades is seen in Orpheus' second epic ('Epic II'. Act I, scene x). He sings of Hades: "*King of silver, King of gold/And everything glittering under the ground/Hades is king of oil and coal/And the riches that flow where those rivers are found*" (2020: 96). On the other hand, Persephone is presented as the goddess of nature, holding control over the seasons, vegetation, the climate, and natural elements such as the stars, the moon, the wind, etc. ('Our Lady of the Underground. Act II, scene i). In my reading, I have established and proven that their marriage illustrates the relationship between capitalist industrialism and climate change. The overindustrialisation of our Earth, at the hands of patriarchal-led industrial societies, has led us to a space where the Earth Herself is sickened. This relationship is exemplified in the industrially motivated Hades, and the environmentally rooted Persephone. Within Chapters One and Three, I have shown how Persephone's pain, her alcoholism and lack of control over her realm of the natural, is a direct result of Hades' industrial rule. This is made clear to audience in Orpheus' words in 'Chant' (Act I, scene xi), where he sings of the gods having forgotten the sound of their love as "*King Hades is deafened, by a river of stone*" (:102). His "*river of stone*", his priority of the industrial over his wife, has led to Persephone being "*blinded by a river of wine, living in an oblivion"* (Act I, scene xi: 103). This cause-and-effect relationship between Hades and Persephone is further extended to the Earth in *Hadestown*. The Earth is established as "*the road to hell''* ('Road to Hell'. Act I, scene i), and ultimately as the inevitable way to the industrial. The Earth has become something Hades controls, and just as Hades has chosen the industrial path, the Earth is now doomed to the same fate. As shown in my first Chapter, the opening song, 'Road to Hell' (Act I, scene i), establishes this setting. As Hermes continues to start various songs with the line "*on the road to hell, there was…"*, this inevitable industrial milieu is established. The correlation between

an industrial-led society and an unhealthy Earth is further exemplified in the musical as Eurydice sings of the imbalance of the seasons and the harsh reality she has been forced to face. She sings of this in 'Any Way the Wind Blows' (Act I, scene ii), the song that directly follows 'Road to Hell'. Hades harbours the desire to eternally expand his subterranean kingdom through industrialist capitalism. This desire has led to the environmental destruction of the world above and the covert destruction of Persephone herself. Within this, the musical presents its audience with an allegory of the world they face, a world in the midst of the catastrophic results of humanity's gluttonous consumption rate spurred on by industrialism. My findings in my first Chapter show how the specific lyrics referenced have aided in creating this thematic understanding, showing how the Earth has suffered at the hands of men and their industry.

The Earth has become precisely what mankind has made her. The Earth in *Hadestown* is riddled with hunger, poverty, climate change, rising sea levels, and harsh temperatures. Unhealth and ruin are what She has been characterised by, and as we look upon this fictional Earth, we realise there is more truth to Her character than we would like to admit. Just as the Earth we call home, She has been chewed up and spat out by the men who have hoped to boast of their conquests. Her gifts have been stripped from Her in man's hopes of developing man and his industrial rule. Man has defiled Her, yet She is blamed for giving what can only be seen as the consequences of the crimes against her. This image of Earth is further exemplified and made personal in the characters of Persephone. She has lost her ability to balance the seasons due to her husband's industrial and exploitative rule, yet she is blamed. In her character, we see the result of patriarchal oppression and how it has, with the help of its close friend capitalism, brought destruction to her and her inherent identity as Earth's representative. Through the love story of an alcoholic goddess and her self-preserving husband, a personified mirror of the Earth and her inhabitants has come to life. Persephone is the Earth, which has been defiled, harmed, and exploited. Yet, she is also its people, simply aiming to get by. Hades is power; he is the industrial, the manmade. Their divine tension has exemplified the reality we all live in now.

These myths' connections to music, just as their connections to nature, are intrinsic. In Chapter Two of my work, I exemplify how these specific genres have deepened my analysis of *Hadestown*. Orpheus is the famed hero-musician; his music sways the hearts of the rulers of the underworld, and the tale of these gods and mortals has been told repeatedly within the

operatic narrative. It is a tale used to tell the story of music's power. Now, however, instead of focussing on the power of music, I have shown how the musical language of the piece further highlights the didactic nature of the piece. The folk music in *Hadestown* ties the musical to the struggles of class. Folk has historically responded to the cries of the working class with songs of protest. It did so during the Great Depression as it sang songs on behalf of the miners and labourers. It has sung on behalf of the Earth during the Dust Bowl and continued to sing out on behalf of the working class during the 1960s. My reading of Orpheus shows how he, with his guitar in hand, has become *Hadestown*'s very own balladeer, singing on behalf of a ruined Earth and Her inhabitants, writing a song that would *"bring the world back into tune"* ('Come Home with Me'. Act I, scene iii). He further exemplifies the makings of a folk singer as he stands in front of Hades in 'If It's True' (Act II, scene vii), leading the labourers of Hadestown in their revolt. As the language of folk music has always been used to voice the concerns of the working class, African American spirituals and jazz music have been utilised to sing the plights of black people in America.

I have demonstrated, in Chapter Two, how, as these genres have been used in *Hadestown*, these genres' histories accompany their use, highlighting the themes of struggle and protest. What has furthermore elevated the thematic depth of the musical is Mitchell and Chavkin's intentional use of New Orleans as the space within which the story of *Hadestown* will be read. They have both stated that New Orleans has been a great inspiration in terms of the use of jazz and the prohibition era as a source of inspiration concerning costuming and set design. However, after Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans has become a source of inspiration and a centre of environmental struggle. This amalgamation of themes, histories and genres has allowed Mitchell to present the musical as a relevant piece. As Mitchell and Chavkin have developed this politically and historically layered musical for the Broadway stage, the piece still reads as a love story. Hermes states within the opening song that the piece is a "*tale of a love from long ago"*, and then follows the patterns of a Broadway romance. However, within using these typical patterns, the musical has succeeded in critiquing a capitalist-led society whilst gaining acclaim within the multi-million-dollar industry that Broadway is.

The musical's allegorical depth is wider than the characters of Persephone and Hades. In Chapter 3, I have shown how, in the character of Eurydice and her experiences at the hands of the gods, we see a parallel between the Global South's experience at the hand of the Global North's over industrialisation. The distinction between the Global North and South in terms

of environmental impact is shown in the data provided in Chapter Three. The Global North produces most of the waste and pollutants that come with industrialism, yet those impoverished in the Global South face the harsher consequences of environmental damage. Eurydice exemplifies the reality of the Global South, whereas Hadestown, specifically Hades, exemplifies the reality of the Global North.

Furthermore, we see the environment has become a force within the piece. The environment, or the dire climate, has become Orpheus' core motivation and muse behind his songwriting. In 'Come Home with Me' (Act I, scene iii), Orpheus sings of how he will write a song that will "b*ring the world back into tune*" and "*fix what's wrong*" (2020: 33). Not only is Orpheus' motivation the climate, but his relationship with Eurydice exists purely because Orpheus promises the healing of nature. Their relationship is built on the natural being consistent. In 'All I've Ever Known' (Act I, scene vii), the vows they make are all rooted in the climate and the consistency of the environment. Eurydice asks Orpheus to promise "*fair skies above*" and that "*the wing won't change on [them]*". Therefore, I have concluded and shown that the state of the climate is correlated to the continuation of not only the relationship of Hades and Persephone, but also that of Orpheus and Eurydice. As the state of the environment becomes a role-player in the lives of Orpheus and Eurydice, that which has led to environmental imbalance becomes clear, namely, Hades' industrialism. Hadestown has been established as a place of monetary wealth. A place where the eternal workers labour in the mine, the mint, the factory, and the warehouse that is Hadestown ('Way Down Hadestown'. Act I, scene viii & 'Way Down Hadestown (Reprise). Act II, scene ii). Hadestown's power over the natural is further exemplified in how Orpheus sings of the classic image of the River Styx. It is no longer a natural structure but a "*river of stone*" ('Epic II'. Act I, scene x). The natural has been replaced by the industrial. The life of those in Hadestown is characterised by forced labour directly correlated to one's survival. The lyrics "*keep your head low, if you wanna keep your head*" in 'Chant' show how the miners in Hadestown work to live and live to work (Act I, scene xi). These findings above have all been substantiated and extrapolated within my third chapter, showing how these Greek myths can, and should, be read as an environmentalist fable.

Within Chapter Four, we continue to see the ripple effect of Hades' over-industrialisation as the Earth and Her inhabitants suffer since this Chapter discusses explicitly the correlation between capitalist and patriarchal-led industrialist societies and violence against women.

Persephone is affected by Hades' industrialism as she turns to alcoholism and substance abuse. She further harbours deep disdain for her husband and has lost control of her realm. In 'Livin' It Up on Top' (Act I, scene vi), Orpheus sings of Persephone bringing wine to share, Hermes tells of how "*she forgot a little thing called spring",* and Persephone herself says that she's "*doing the best she can […] in spite of her man"*. In Persephone, we see a perfect candidate for ecofeminist study as she embodies the intersection between women and divinity. She is shown to be the goddess of natural elements in 'Livin it Up on Top' (Act I, scene vi), singing of how she is the one "*who makes the summer sun shine* bright". However, she is trapped in the cycle of her seasonal relationship with Hades, and the death the environment faces through Hades' industrialism is coded into her character. She suffers a slow violence of alcoholism and substance abuse (Nixon, 2011). She sings of how she needs "*morphine in a tin"* and "*a crate of the fruit of the vine"* to survive her time in Hadestown ('Way Down Hadestown'. Act I, scene viii, 2020: 79). Persephone and Hades' relationship, therefore, becomes a mirror of the relationship between the patriarchal and capitalist led industrial society we face, and the Earth. The further pain that the industrial society of Hadestown has caused women is seen in Eurydice. Her death comes at the hands of man, at the hands of Hades and his industrial rule. In 'Hey, Little Songbird' and 'Way Down Hadestown (Reprise)', we see how Eurydice is forced to make the pseudo-decision to go down to Hadestown. As she chooses death through Hades, her body is violated. Hades lay his hands on her as her indenture contract is secured. Just as women in operatic tradition, she has been undone by men. Firstly, by Hades, and finally by her lover. Not only is her ultimate death a presentation of the harm she experiences but the circumstances surrounding her existence are saturated with degradation and harm. Poverty has almost consumed her, and it becomes clear that at the root of her poverty lies the environmental state of the Earth, which has been bruised and beaten by Hades' industrial scheming. Persephone and Eurydice hurt because of how Hades has damaged the Earth, and in this relationship, we see our realities. The Earth has been perpetually damaged due to the gluttonous overconsumption that has been borne of patriarchal and capitalist-led industrialism. In the hopes of subduing the Earth and possessing her resources, man has lost precisely what he has hoped to gain, the Earth herself.

The reality of the fictional world of *Hadestown* shows how the patriarchal rule of women has always been accompanied by inherent violence against women. Hades' power as king and boss is essentialised in the presentation of his Wall. This industrial image that has replaced

the River Styx is a direct show of power and manipulation. Hades is tied to Trump as his hate flourished in his industrial kingdom, which manifests in the Wall. 'Why We Build the Wall' exemplifies Hades grasping at his industrial power through manipulation and the control he can exercise over those in Hadestown. In response to Hades' show of power in this song, the next moment is the first moment we are shown the power of Persephone. In her speakeasy, she cares for the members of Hadestown and offers them the natural elements she has in her possession, the moon, the stars, the sky, and the rain. This song and Persephone's power are discussed at length in Chapter Four. However, the crucial moment in this song is where she points to the flaws in Hades' system, blatantly undermining him ('Our Lady of the Underground', Act II, scene i).

The final interaction between Persephone and Hades shows the audience the inevitability of the industrial rule established in Hadestown. Persephone poses a question to Hades, asking if they will "*try again*". Hades dismisses her. He chooses not to change, once more choosing the industrial over his wife and over the natural, knowing the cycle of the season will fall into his industrial cycle once more ('Wait for Me (Reprise)'. Act II, scene xvi). She hopes to fight for balance again, but she is still under the control of the system he created.

The eventuality of the Earth's destruction at the hands of patriarchal and capitalist-led industrial societies is one that *Hadestown* has exemplified through the "old song" it sings. As *Hadestown* has, unintentionally, become more relevant as time has passed, it is a work which provides scope for further research. This musical has brought a branch of activism into the Broadway world previously not seen there. It has spoken for climate change and against capitalist industrialism, and it has done so by pulling at the heartstrings of its audience through a love story of the ages.

I sincerely hope that environmental activism becomes so saturated in our media that we can look back at *Hadestown* and see it as only one of the many works that have spoken on behalf of a silenced Earth.

Bibliography

Abolghasem, E., and S.N. Mahdyeh. 2009. 'The Myth of Demeter-Persephone', *Journal of Religious Studies,* (2)4, 25-45.

Alaimo, Stacy. 2009. 'Insurgent Vulnerability and the Carbon Footprint of Gender', *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning,* 3, 22-35.

Allan, W. 2006. 'Divine Justice and Cosmic Order in early Greek Epic', *The Journal of Hellenistic Studies*, 126, 1-35.

Bandera, Gerardo. 2022. 'How Climate Colonialism Affects the Global South', *Fair Planet*, 28 September. https://www.fairplanet.org/story/how-climate-colonialism-affects-the-global-south/, accessed 4 March 2023.

Barnett, Adrienne. 2017. 'Feminist Research Methodologies'. https://youtu.be/y1Yj3sN8dPw, accessed 3 August 2021.

Bergeron, Katherine. Review of *Opera, or the Undoing of Women* by Catherine Clément, Betsy Wing, *Cambridge Opera Journal* 2, no. 1 (March 1990): 93-98.

Birnbaum, Lucia Chiavola. 2000. *Black Madonnas: Feminism religion & politics in Italy.* Lincoln: toExcel.

Broadway.com. 2019. 'BUILDING BROADWAY: HADESTOWN Book & Songwriter Anaïs Mitchell and Director Rachel Chavkin'. https://youtu.be/xclbKf6qIrI, accessed 15 January 2023.

Browne, David. 2019. 'The Hell With Broadway: The Story of Anais Mitchell's *Hadestown*'. https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/broadway-hadestown-best-musical-tony-anais-mitchell-842447/, accessed 21 September 2022.

Campbell, Craig. 2020. ‘Industrialism’. In *Anthropocene Unseen: A Lexicon*, eds. Cymene Howe and Anand Pandian, 236-241. Punctum Books.

Carpenter, T.H., and R.J. Gula. 1977. *Mythology: Greek and Roman.* New York: Longman Publisher.

Cecire, N. 2015. ‘Environmental Innocence and Slow Violence’, *WSQ: Women’s Studies Quarterly,* 43(1/2), 164-180.

Cixous, H. 1976. ‘The Laugh of Medusa’, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 1(4), 875-893.

Clément, Catherine. 1988. *Opera, or the Undoing of Women.* Translated by Betsy Wing. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Cohen, Ronald D. 2016. *Depression Folk: Grassroots Music and Left-Wing Politics in 1930s America.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Cooney, James. 2020. ‘Pluto: God of the Underworld, Death, and Riches’, https://www.cooneyclassics.org/blog/pluto-god-of-the-underworld-death-and-riches, accessed 28 February 2023.

Curry, David. 2023. ‘Amazon Statistics (2023)’, *Business of Apps,* 17 May. https://www.businessofapps.com/data/amazon-statistics/, accessed 18 June 2023.

D'Aoust, Jason R. 2013. ‘The Orpheus Figure: The Voice in Writing, Music and Media’. The University of Western Ontario: PhD thesis.

Denisoff, R.S. 1969. ‘Folk Music and the American Left: A Generational-Ideological Comparison’, *The British Journal of Sociology,* 20(4), 427-442.

Dreier, P., and D. Flacks. 2014. ‘Roots of Rebellion: Music and Movements: The Tradition Continues’, *New Labor Forum*, 23(2), 99-102.

Emmett, R.S., and D.E. Nye. 2017. *The Environmental Humanities: A Critical Introduction.* Boston: The MIT Press.

Eyerman, S. and S. Baretta. 1996. 'From the 30s to the 60s: The Folk Music Revival in the United States', *Theory and Society,* 25(4), 501-543.

Fisher, James. 2011. 'Introduction'. *In Historical Dictionary of Contemporary American Theater: 1930-2010*, ed. John Woronoff, 1-16. Plymouth: Scarecrow Press.

Florini, S. 2014. 'Tweets, Tweeps, and Signifyin': Communication and Cultural Performance on "Black Twitter"', *Television & New Media*, *15*(3), 223–237.

Gaard, Greta. 2015. 'Ecofeminism and Climate Change'. *Women's Studies International Forum,* 49, 20-33.

Gates, Henry Louis. Jr., 1988. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Gervin, Kelly. 2017. 'Music and Environmentalism in Twenty-First Century American Popular Culture'. Graduate College of Bowling Green State University: MMus thesis.

Greenspan, Charlotte. 2012. 'Death Comes to the Broadway Musical', *Daedalus*, 141(1), 154-159.

Griffin, Gabrielle. 2011. 'Writing About Research Methods in the Arts and Humanities'. In *Theories and Methodologies in Postgraduate Feminist Research: Researching Differently,* ed. Rosemarie Buikema, et al., 91-104. New York: Routeledge.

Guerrero, Dorothy Grace. 2018. 'The Limits of Capitalist Solutions to the Climate Crisis'. In *The Climate Crisis: South African and Global Democratic Eco-Socialist Alternatives Book*, ed. Vishwas Satgar, 29-46. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Hertel, T.W. and S.D. Rosch. 2010. 'Climate Change, Agriculture, and Poverty', *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy,* 32(3), 255-285.

Koelz, H. 2013. 'Falsetto', *The Antioch Review*, 71(2), 223-232.

Kofsky, F. 1969. Frank Zappa interview in J. Eisen (Ed.), *The Age of Rock,* New York: Random House. 256.

Lee, M.O. 1961. ‘Orpheus and Eurydice: Some Modern Versions’, *The Classical Journal,* 56(7), 307-313.

Lykke, Nina. 2011. ‘The Discipline Which Is Not One: Feminist Studies as a Postdiscipline’. In *Theories and Methodologies in Postgraduate Feminist Research: Researching Differently,* ed. Rosemarie Buikema, et al., 137-150. New York: Routeledge.

McClary, S. 1989. ‘Constructions of Gender in Monteverdi’s Dramatic Music’, *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 1(3), 203-223.

Melville, A. D. 1986. ‘Glossary and Index of Names’. In *Metamorphoses*, 1612-1646. Oxford: Oxford University press.

Merchant, Carolyn. 1990. ‘Ecofeminism and Feminist Theory’. In *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*, ed Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein, 100-105. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Mitchell, Anaïs. 2020. *Working on a Song: The Lyrics of Hadestown.* Penguin.

Morcom, A. 2015. ‘Locating music in capitalism: a view from exile Tibet’, *Popular Music*, 34(2), 274-295.

Nixon, Rob. 2011. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Ortner, S.B. 1972. ‘Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?’, *Feminine Studies*, 1(2), 5-31.

Ovid. *Metamorphoses.* Translated by A.D Melville. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Papasavva, A., and E. Mariconti. 2023. ‘Waiting for Q: An Exploration of QAnon Users’ Migration to Poal in the Wake of Voat’s Demise’, arXiv:2302.01397 [cs.SI].

Park, J.T. 2015. ‘Climate Change and Capitalism’, *Consilience*, 2015(14), 189-206.

Partridge, Cristopher. 2013. ‘Introduction’. In *The Lyre of Orpheus: Popular Music, the Sacred, and the Profane*, 1-10. New York: Oxford University Press.

Peretti, Burton W. 1994. *The Creation of Jazz: Music, Race, and Culture in Urban America.* Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

Porter, E. 2009. 'Jazz and Revival', *American Quarterly*, 61(3), 593-613.

Priniski, J., McClay, M., & Holyoak, K. 2021. 'Rise of QAnon: A Mental Model of Good and Evil Stews in an Echochamber. In *Proceedings of the 43rd Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society*, 43.

Ramazanoglu, C., and J. Holland. 2002. *Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices.* London, SAGE Publications.

Ramey, L. 2002. 'The Theology of the Lyric Tradition in African American Spirituals', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 70(2), 347-363.

Reid, H., and K. Swiderska. 2008. 'Biodiversity, Climate Change and Poverty: Exploring the Links', in *An IIED Briefing.*

Rodnitzky, J.L. 1999. 'The Sixties Between the Microgrooves: Using Folk and Protest Music to Understand American History, 1963-1973', *Popular Music and Society*, 23(4), 105-122.

Salleh, Ariel. 2014. 'Forweword'. In *Ecofeminism*. London: Zed Books Ltd.

Sanchez, T.M. 2000. 'The Feminine Side of Bootlegging', *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association*, 41(4), 403-433.

Silberling, Amanda. 2023. 'Amazon fined by regulators for unsafe warehouse work conditions', *TechCrunch*, 19 January, https://techcrunch.com/2023/01/18/amazon-fined-by-regulators-for-unsafe-warehouse-work-conditions/, accessed 13 March 2023.

Shiva, V., and M. Mies. 2014. *Ecofeminism*. Cape Town: London, Zed Books Ltd.

Simonoff, J.S., and L. Ma. 2003. 'An Empirical Study of Factors Relating to the Success of Broadway Shows', *The Journal of Business*, 76(1), 135-150.

Slobin, Mark. 2010. *Folk Music: A Very Short Introduction.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Strazzante, E., S. Rycken, and V. Winkler. 2022. 'Global North and Global South: How Climate Change Uncovers Global Inequalities'. *Generation Climate Europe*, 10 May. https://gceurope.org/global-north-and-global-south-how-climate-change-uncovers-global-inequalities/, accessed 3 March 2023.

Thompson, Jamie. 2016. 'Ecofeminism: The Path Towards Healing the Earth', *Dailogue & Nexus*, 4, 1-7.

U.S. Department of Labor. *Federal safety inspections at three Amazon warehouse facilities find company exposed workers to ergonomic, struck-by hazards: Multi-state investigation is largest enforcement effort on ergonomics.* Prepared by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Washington, DC: osha.gov, 2023.

Vanderhoof, B. 2012. 'From Politics to "Popular": Commercialization of Broadway Musicals and How It Affects the Public Sphere', *McNair Scholars Journal*, 16(1), 64-71.

Viertel, Jack. 2016. *The Secret Life of the American Musical: How Broadway Shows Are Built.* New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

Willis, Jay. 2017. 'Donald Trump Spent This Week Reminding Everyone That He's a Casual, Unrepentant Bigot: Having a sexist in the White House matters', *GQ,* 29 June. https://www.gq.com/story/donald-trump-sexism-reminder, accessed 3 March 2023.

Reference List

Anaïs Mitchell. 2010. *Hadestown.* Wilderland Records.

Anaïs Mitchell. 2019. *Hadestown (Original Broadway Cast Recording)*. Sing It Again.

Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical, by Galt MacDermot, directed by Miloš Forman, The Public Theatre, New York, October 17, 1967.

Hamilton: An American Musical, by Lin-Manuel Miranda, directed by Thomas Kail, The Public Theatre, New York, February 17, 2015.

L'Orfeo, by Claudio Monteverdi and Alessandro Striggio, Palazzo Ducale di Mantova, Mantua, February 24, 1607.

Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812, by Dave Malloy, directed by Rachel Chavkin, Ars Nova, New York, October 16, 2012.

Oklahoma!, by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, St. James Theatre, New York, March 31, 1943.

Orwell, George. 1949. *1984.* London: Secker & Warburg.

Pete Seeger. 1966. *God Bless the Grass.* Columbia Records CL 2432/CS 9232.

Plato, *Symposium* (385–370 BC).

Rent, by Jonathan Larson, directed by Chris Columbus, New York Theatre Workshop, New York, January 25, 1996.

The Color Purple, by Brenda Russel et al., directed by Gary Griffen, The Broadway Theatre, New York, December 1, 2005.

Virgil, *Georgics* (29 B.C.E).

Wallace Willis. Post 1865. 'Swing low Sweet chariot'. African American Spiritual.

Woody Guthrie. 1945. 'This Land is Your Land'.

Appendix A: Song List

Song List

(Mitchell, 2020: ii-iii)

ACT ONE

i. Road to Hell
ii. Any Way the Wind Blows
iii. Come Home with Me
iv. Wedding Song
v. Epic I
vi. Livin' it Up on Top
vii. All I've Ever Known
viii. Way Down Hadestown
ix. A Gathering Storm
x. Epic II
xi. Chant
xii. Hey, Little Songbird
xiii. When the Chips are Down
xiv. Gone, I'm Gone
xv. Wait for Me Intro
xvi. Wait for Me
xvii. Why We Build the Wall

ACT TWO

i. Our Lady of the Underground
ii. Way Down Hadestown Reprise
iii. Flowers
iv. Come Home with Me Reprise
v. Papers Intro & Papers
vi. Nothing Changes
vii. If It's True
viii. How Long?
ix. Chant Reprise
x. Epic III
xi. Epic III Instrumental
xii. Promises
xiii. Word to the Wise
xiv. His Kiss, the Riot
xv. Wait for Me Reprise Intro
xvi. Wait for Me Reprise
xvii. Doubt Comes In
xviii. Road to Hell Reprise
xix. We Raise Our Cups

Appendix B: Ethics Certificate

Ethics Clearance.

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

Registration number: REC-101114-044

29 October 2021

Re: Ms. Abigail Vos (1612999)

Waiver letter number: HRECNMW21/11/03

To whom it may concern,

Ms. Vos is currently a registered Masters student at the School of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. This letter is to confirm that, at the time of writing, Ms. Vos does not need ethical clearance for her Masters study entitled *'Hadestown: An Ecofeminist Reading'*. This decision has been reached based upon a description of the project supplied by Ms. Vos to the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), which has been evaluated by the Chairs and Deputy Chairs. If, however, Ms. Vos changes the methods of data collection and analysis for this study, this decision may no longer be valid. If such changes take place, this should be communicated to the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical) as soon as possible. This waiver letter is valid until 28 October 2024.

Please feel free to contact me should you require any further information.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,
S Schoeman

Shaun Schoeman (Administrative Officer)
Solomon Mahlangu House, 10th Floor, Room 10004, Jorissen Street, Braamfontein, Johannesburg
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050
T + 27(0)11 717 1408 | **E** Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za | hrec-medical.researchoffice@wits.ac.za
www.wits.ac.za/research/about-our-research/ethics-and-research-integrity/