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Retelling as a Form of Adaptation in Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*

Bachelor Thesis

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Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracoval samostatně a uvedl úplný seznam citované a použité literatury.

V Olomouci, dne

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1. Introduction

Credited as "one of the top ten living post-modern writers by the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*,"[1] Neil Gaiman has long been regarded, along the likes of Terry Pratchett or Margaret Atwood, as one of the most versatile authors of the late 20th, and the early 21st Century. As Gaiman's body of work spans across a variety of different genres, from fantasy (*Stardust*, 1999), to sci-fi (*American Gods*, 2001), horror, and children's literature (*Coraline*, 2002; *The Graveyard Book*, 2008), so does it span across a variety of different media, including film (Gaiman's translation of *Princess Mononoke*, 1997), television (*Neverwhere*, 1996), theatre (*The Tragical Comedy or Comical Tragedy of Mr. Punch*, 1994), and comics (*Sandman*, 1989 _ 1996).

Nonetheless, while Gaiman's long and substantial career has certainly brought the author many eager acolytes, not to mention a wide range of awards (including several Eisner Awards, the British Fantasy Award, and the British Science Fiction Award, to list a few), the impact of Gaiman's work on pop-culture as such is more than evident, and, thus, should not be overlooked: in fact, Gaiman's major strength as an author is the ability to approach literature, whether it be fiction, poetry, or drama of the old (William Shakespeare's conception of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was utilized by Gaiman and made into the plot of the 19th issue of *Sandman*, 1990), and, in that, the ability to re-package it to better suit the contemporary reader.

Hence, a hypothesis could be drawn that it is the use of, and reliance on pastiche, and intertextuality,[2] which supports Gaiman's being categorized as an author of the post-modern. Much of Gaiman's work, in fact, employs techniques widely associated with, and looked upon as techniques commonly utilized in post-modern literature, such as—in the case of the above mentioned—pastiche (in *American Gods*, Gaiman is seen combining the motifs of various prior works into a singular work of his own), irony and intertextuality, and it is the use of such techniques that further supports Gaiman's categorization as a post-modern author.

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[1] Hank Wagner, Christopher Golder, and Stephen Bissette, *Prince of Stories: The Many Worlds of Neil Gaiman* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008), 1.

[2] Intertextuality, being a post-modern technique, could be defined as the interconnectedness of at least two literary works. When talking about intertextuality, one is talking about the notion of an older work being mentioned, used, referenced, or alluded to in a more recent work. Pastiche, on the other hand, could be defined as of the subsidiary techniques of the intertext. Pastiche is a technique representing the idea, that no original work can ever be created any longer. Instead, the originality must be found in a prior work, and achieved by different permutation of it.

Intertextuality, for one, is where Gaiman appears to have found his niche, as it is not only the aforementioned *Sandman*, however, much of the author's output in the past couple of decades, which continuously draws on earlier material, as is the case with, though not exclusively, *American Gods*, *Anansi Boys*, and the fairly recent, *Norse Mythology* (2017). The thread of motif connecting these particular works is their basis in myth, or, more specifically, in religious myth; in such sense, one could talk of adaptation, a kind of "repetition with variation,"[3] in which Gaiman adjusts and transposes a prior text in order to create a work that is both "original and derivative,"[4] infusing a recognisable story, or a familiar character, with an original plot, or a distinctive characterisation, respectively.

In fact, Gaiman's work can often be found referencing, or reworking stories such as, for example, those of the Old Norse, or the Ancient Greek Pantheon, which are driven, in consequence, by their respective protagonists (whether it be Odin, or Thor, Hades, or Orpheus). Each of these, the stories and the characters, could be considered as fairly easy to be recognised, especially by the wider public, as they are featured prominently in a wide range of contemporary media. Still, it is not merely the reference to previously written stories that solidifies Gaiman as a post-modern author, but their function in a larger narrative structure, i.e. the original story, written by Gaiman, using these stories either as an inspiration, a point of reference, or the subject of mockery (as is the case with, for example, Gaiman's depiction of Thor, God of Thunder, in both *Sandman* and *Norse Mythology*).

Nevertheless, while the main theme of *American Gods* could be described as both the origin and the integration of various deities into mundane reality, represented by the novel's protagonist, and that of *Anansi Boys*, then, as the same theme, although in reverse (that is, the theme of both the introduction and the integration of a "real-life" protagonist into a world inhabited by deities), *Norse Mythology*, in essence, sheds much of the inventiveness of both *American Gods* and *Anansi Boys*, presenting, in turn, a retelling of the Old Norse myths, thus also retaining the theme of the original.

Yet, it cannot be said that Gaiman's *Norse Mythology* simply recycles the original text of Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda* (c. 1220), on which it is based; Gaiman, although not straying away from *The Prose Edda*'s narrative in terms of story and plot, envisions the characters in these stories with a new set of characteristics,

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3 Linda Hutcheon, *Theory of Adaptation* (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), 4.
4 Hutcheon, *Adaptation*, 5.

which succeed in making them a lot more relatable, at least in contrast to their 13th Century counterparts. It could be stated, that Gaiman's *Norse Mythology* is a sort of a compilation, a work in which the author selects both the stories and the elements from the source which are, to Gaiman, the most representative of the Norse mythology in itself, and thus creates a work which is, in reality, a collection of several separate parts.

Another one of Gaiman's changes to *The Prose Edda* is the author's use of language, which proves itself quite different from the original text. It is a feature of Gaiman's text best observed in the author's use of dialogue, which is not only comical, however, reads very much unlike a piece of prose written in the 13th Century, i.e. is most contemporary in way of execution. In an interview for Channel 4, a British broadcasting network, in 2017, Gaiman explained his intention with the language used in writing of the work, stating,

> I […] [took] what happened in the tales that we have and […] [amplified] it, giving it colour, giving it dialect […] It's got to have been funny, so [I wrote] it in a way that's funny […] because that's how they have to have been told.[5]

Linda Hutcheon's *Theory of Adaptation*, in essence, describes adaptation as an original, be it a derivative work, adjusting a prior work to the requirement and the desire of the author of the adaptation. Despite being a derivative work, an adaptation tries to stay close to the source. In other words, Hutcheon describes adaptation as "a derivation that is not derivative—a work that is second without being secondary."[6] As such, one could apply the definition to Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*, since it has been shown above that Gaiman's retelling of the Norse myths subscribes to this definition, if only partially, in the way in which the author alters certain characteristics of the characters in the source narrative, and adds original dialogue.

At the same time, Hutcheon's *Theory of Adaptation* (2006) is a work that discusses, first and foremost, the adaptation of literature into film, theatre, and other forms of media. Despite the fact, *Theory of Adaptation* does, at times, describe both the act of adapting and adaptation itself in terms general enough for one to apply them to the adaptation of a primary literary work into another, secondary work of literature.

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[5] Channel 4 News. "Neil Gaiman Interview, 2017: Norse Gods, Donald Trump and learning from mythology." YouTube Video, 21:55. Posted February 18th, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zHCpEnCy8I.
[6] Hutcheon, *Adaptation*, 9.

However, in order to arrive at a more complete definition of adaptation, I shall also rely on Julie Sander's work, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (2016).

A question could, therefore, be raised, as to whether a retelling of a prior work can also be considered as a form of adaptation, as, in the case of *Norse Mythology*, it does present the audience with certain material added, in spite of the fact that it does not depart substantially from the source material.

In my thesis, I intend to, with reference to Julie Sanders' *Adaptation and Appropriation*, and, to a lesser degree, Linda Hutcheon's *Theory of Adaptation*, inquire into whether Neil Gaiman's retelling of the Norse myths in *Norse Mythology* could be considered as a form of adaptation, while also relying heavily on Joseph Campbell's *The Masks of God: Primitive Mythologies* (1960), paying attention to the actualization of Snorri Sturluson's *Prose Edda*, the source text of Gaiman's retelling.

In order to do this, I shall, at first, explore, what it is that constitute a myth; subsequently, I shall attempt to determine whether or not did the mythical quality of the source text translate fully into Gaiman's own narrative. I believe, that the mythical quality of Snorri Sturluson's *Prose Edda*, is visible in Gaiman's text, while also being expanded on by the author's involvement with the source text, i.e. Gaiman's retelling of the Norse myth in *Norse Mythology* is, in fact, a form resulting from the process of adapting, as Gaiman is prone to change many a feature of the original, while also adding information.

Later in the text, I also intend to explore, to a larger detail, Julie Sanders' work on adaptation, as well as the author's work on appropriation; to draw on *Adaptation and Appropriation*, in order to present a theory of retelling, which would, much alike appropriation, constitute an adaptive work. In the end, I shall attempt to determine whether or not such theory could successfully be integrated into the theory of adaptation, by applying Sander's and Hutcheon's research of adaptation to Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*, as well as to Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*, translated into English by Rasmus B. Anderson. Additionally, I shall also work with several excerpts from the work of Carl Gustav Jung, whose work is referenced in the work of Campbell.

2. An Introduction to Myth

As noted above, the purpose of this thesis is to establish, whether or not Neil Gaiman's retelling of the Norse myth in *Norse Mythology* could be thought of as an adaptation, or, rather, a form of the process of adapting, i.e. a retelling. In order to do this, in order to formulate an argument for the basis of a retelling in the process of adapting, I shall, at first, look at what is being retold, and whether or not does the retelling do justice to the source narrative, which is Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*. As *The Prose Edda* is a work recounting the Norse myth in itself, one must concern themselves with myth, in order to be able to discuss what features there are in myth to adapt, or, to adjust, as well as what features must remain unchanged. In such sense, I shall approach several a distinct work, which employ themselves with myth, e.g. Claude Lévi-Strauss' *Myth and Meaning* (1977), William Bascom's article published in *The Journal of American Folklore*, entitled *The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives* (1966), along with Joseph Campbell's *The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology*.

It must be noted, that the approach of each Claude Lévi-Strauss and Joseph Campbell to the topic of myth is different, with Lévi-Strauss' work focusing rather on the notion of a "mytheme," a unit, or more, from which the myth is composed. Campbell's approach of myth is, in contrast to Lévi-Strauss, based on the linearity of myth, and on the Jungian notion of the archetype. It must also be said, that I am aware of this distinction between the work of Joseph Campbell and Claude Lévi-Strauss, thus I only intend to work with the material in which both Campbell and Lévi-Strauss' approach is paralleled.

In *Myth and Meaning*, a set of lectures originally presented on the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), programme *Ideas* in 1977, the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss contemplates the purpose of a myth, developed by "pre-scientific cultures,"[7] as being the vessel through which the "savage mind" (as any potential representative of a "pre-scientific culture" is referred to by Strauss), gains "the illusion that [it] can understand the universe and that [it] *does* understand the universe."[8]

According to Lévi-Strauss, a "pre-scientific culture" is one not yet capable of scientific thought, one that is yet to invent writing, and one the thought of which is

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[7] The term "pre-scientific culture" will be used further in this chapter, in order to denote the above discussed.
[8] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning* (London: Routledge, 2010), 17.

"determined by the basic needs of life […], by the bare necessities of living […], by emotion and mystic representations,"[9] or, simply put, by a dire want of survival, and by the desire to understand the environment in which it resides. Such a culture does not attempt to explain universal phenomena (i.e. the moon cycles, thunder, or the changes in atmospheric pressure), piece-by-piece, through empirical evidence, but as a whole, explaining said phenomena through imagination and mysticism, and as directly related to, and influenced by people's lives.

Hence, while Lévi-Strauss' proposition, as put in *Myth and Meaning*, does, in fact, bring one closer to establishing the purpose myth, it is a property of many a distinct mythology to be inquiring of various universal phenomena, their origin, the pattern in which they function, let alone their effect on humanity; such a proposition is, therefore, insufficient in providing a cohesive definition of myth. On the other hand, Lévi-Strauss's proposition does bring forth several points, from which one can further develop an idea of what a feature could be considered as being inherent to myth. Firstly, one is struck by the quality of myth to try and explain the world in a simple, non-complex manner. Secondly, there is the notion of myth being a narrative, which a "pre-scientific culture" developed, in order to explain the world surrounding it.

In accordance with Lévi-Strauss' work, one could set the origin of myth in time *well* before the invention of writing, which would imply, that the way in which the earliest myths must have been told was orally, i.e. through speech, and that they must have been treated as a kind of a dogma, intended to inform, to indoctrinate, to educate. This notion could further be supported by William Bascom's article in *The Journal of American Folklore*, entitled *The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives*,[10] which not only describes myth as "[a] prose narrative which, in the society in which they are told, are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened […]," but provides a closer look at the different qualities displayed in myth, in legend, and in folklore, all to be discussed later in the chapter.

It is, nevertheless, a matter of much curiosity for many a similar trope to be displayed in myths presumably unrelated to, and originated by cultures independent from one-another.

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[9] Lévi-Strauss, *Myth*, 15.
[10] William Bascom, "The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives," *The Journal of American Folklore* 78, no. 307 (1965): 3-20.

Having often been isolated from each-other, or hostile upon meeting, it is unlikely for a "pre-scientific culture" to have traded such stories with one-another. Furthermore, without the presence of written sources, it would be impossible for the myths to have been copied upon conquest, or contact. One could, therefore, hypothesize, that the thematic and the narrative structure of myth, as such, is not wholly exclusive to each respective culture, but is, rather, a sum-total of many an element which appear in all of mythology as a sort of an invariable.

Such a hypothesis could further be supported by a section of Joseph Campbell's *The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology*. While Campbell's approach on the topic is, as mentioned above, different from that of Lévi-Strauss, the author does comment directly on the universal nature of the mythical properties—thematic, or otherwise—being used in various mythological narratives. In *The Masks of God*, Campbell argues that there is, indeed, a universal quality to the thematic, and the structural approach of each mythology in existence. Although their methodology in working with myth is rather distinct from one-another, Lévi-Strauss' is an excellent basis on which to build the following segment; as mentioned in the text above, there exist several parallels between Campbell and Lévi-Strauss' work. One such parallel is Campbell and Lévi-Strauss belief in the temporal setting of myth's origin, i.e. a time preceding the invention of writing. One could, thus, make use of Lévi-Strauss' argumentation, while drawing on Campbell's work, later in the text. Campbell's methodology, drawing a connection between the origin of myth and the belief in God, i.e. a certain divinity, is, thus, of use in discussing the topic of Norse myth (which is built largely on the notion of the divine), being adapted. That being said, it is possible for one to address the thematic content of mythology, on which Campbell remarks,

> […] themes [such] as the fire-theft, deluge, land of the dead, virgin birth, and resurrected hero have a worldwide distribution […] appearing everywhere in new combinations while remaining […] few and always the same.[11]

In fact, whether it be the Norse, Greek, or Judeo-Christian mythology, it is often that one may come across the theme of rebirth, or that of a particular location, inhabited by the divine. The notion of the divine is, in fact, closely connected to the desire of a "pre-

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[11] Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology* (London: Martin Secker & Warburg, 160), 3.

scientific culture" to explain universal phenomena (such as the rain, a fire, etc.), with the latter being commonly attributed to a super-natural being's involvement with reality, often represented by a concrete object being put in relation to the phenomenon addressed by the myth. Thus, should a lightning strike, it might potentially be aligned not only with the sound of thunder, nevertheless, with an angry divinity, punishing the people for their insufficiency, or disobedience. Furthermore, such a theme as the theme of rebirth is often displayed in myth in general, and could be said (along with many other a theme), to function as a common denominator connecting the myths of different cultures, or, simply put, a thematic feature necessary for any given narrative to be considered a myth.

2.1. On the Origin of Myth

Campbell argues, that it was due to religious festivities that myth had originated;[12] through the experience of a religious ritual, both the experiencer and the "actor"—the one who carried out the ritual, by way of dance, wearing a mask, or a costume representing the divine, i.e. *a symbol*—would be able to view the ritual both as real (that is, as an act, carried out by a man in a costume), and as separate from the real world, as a "make-believe" situation. In a "make-believe" setting, it would be possible for the "actor" to become the represented divinity, and for the experiencer to view them as such; such an experience would, in turn, constitute a religious experience.

A ritual as such would be crucial in creating an archetypal image, i.e. an image, which would account for, and include, each the "actor," the divine, the symbol, and the phenomenon represented (i.e. a man, the God of Thunder, a hammer, and the thunder itself), while, on the other hand, could be used time and time again, withstanding the weight of time. Such an image would display these features as a single unit, i.e. as inseparable from one-another. According to Campbell's work, it is precisely, though not exclusively, on the basis of archetypal imagery that myth operates. Developed by a "pre-scientific culture" before the invention of writing, the archetypal image would likely be shaped, throughout the millennia, either by the environment that the culture inhabited (to whom the image would be an inherent one), or, rather, by the culture itself, i.e. by way of adding culturally specific information to an originally semi-universal narrative.

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[12] Campbell, *Masks of God*, 21.

Thus, as one may observe among many a different culture, the considerable variety in the inventory of myth—specific to each culture in itself—could only be a result of a cultural shaping of a narrative, originally semi-universal, rather than the primordial influence imposed on the said culture by their environment, the location of their settlement, or by the phenomena to surround them.

On the other hand, the similarities connecting a myth of one culture's to that of another's, could, in fact, be believed to arise from the reaction to, and the attempt of representing the environment. Though not yet formed into an archetypal image of a deity (or, a demon), thus not shaped by time and tradition. As an example, let us take a look at two distinct European mythologies, the Norse and the Greek, each developed in environments reasonably different from each-other. In such manner, the point of the previous paragraph might just prove more accessible.

In both the Norse and the Greek mythology, the reader is faced with a polytheist, rather than a monotheist pantheon, as is the case with the Judeo-Christian mythology. It is, thus, understandable for both the Norse and the Greek pantheon to display a set of structural phenomena which are similar (or, equal), to one-another. Still, it is the case of most of the polytheist pantheons, to employ similar narrative techniques. Nevertheless, while often equal in way of narrative, of structure, or of their common, thematic content, many a polytheist religion, such as the Norse and the Greek, differentiate in the manner in which the theme is approached, represented, or in the treatment of the theme's complexity, etc., despite the fact that the theme remains unaltered. The myth of creation, being present in both the Norse and the Greek mythology, is a fine example of such differentiation, while also being an example of the similarity of the Norse, and the Greek mythology.

The Norse and the Greek mythology, while juxtaposed against one-another, display the creation of the world via an emergence of a divinity into nothingness, or, rather, a shapeless void, devoid of any natural phenomena, such as the wind, the rain, etc. In Nose mythology, such a creature was Ymer, the being who came into existence in the void of Ginnungagap, the abyss in between the Norse realm of ice and of mist, Niflheim, and the realm of fire, Muspelheim. Once the ice of Niflheim met with the heat of Muspelheim, once the melted ice "quickened into life and took the likeness of a man,"[13] Ymer came into existence.

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[13] Snorri Sturluson, *The Younger Edda: Also Called Snorre's Edda, Or The Prose Edda*, trans. Rasmus B. Anderson (Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Company, 1901), 58.

In Greek mythology, according to the telling of Hesiod, the origin of the life began with the emergence of Gaia, or, "Earth," into a void, similar to that of the Norse myth, promptly named "Chaos." The existence of Gaia then brought about the birth of Ouranos, Uranus, or, "Heaven," the son of Gaia. Both of these figures, in essence, function as anthropomorphic representations of the phenomena with which they are associated. It could also be said, then, that it is due to a distinction such as the approach to the myth of creation, that the cultural distinction between the Norse, and the Greek culture is most apparent.

It could also be assumed, based on the above mentioned, that the Norse culture was, originally, a patriarchal one: according to the Norse, the first being in existence would be the giant, Ymer. Able to spawn offspring by himself (e.g. the Frost Giants), on one occasion, by simply rubbing one foot against another, Ymer would be believed to have resided at the top of the social hierarchy since the world's origin, until the mantle was taken over by Odin, Bor's son (in a way similar to the rivalry among Cronos and Zeus). Such a mantle may have belonged to Ymer due to his emergence as the first being in existence, in order to mythicize the heir's responsibility to take over the family, once the patriarch passes away, becoming the "head of the family." In such sense, Ymer, emergent of the void, would rule over the entire universe of the Norse myth, consisting, at the time, of only Ginnungagap, the void, of Niflheim, the realm of ice, and of Muspelheim, the realm of fire. According to the Norse myth, Bor, Odin's father, came into existence as the offspring of Bure, emerging from stone after the emergence of Ymer, as a consequence of Audhumbla's (the cow on whose milk Ymer would sustain), licking a salt-stone, covered with rime, until "there came out of them in the evening a man's hair, [then] a man's head, [until] the whole man was there,"[14] i.e. Bure, Bor's father.

In contrast, the society of the Ancient Greece, originally a matriarchy, believed life to have originated from a female figure, Gaia, whom the Greek society deemed "the great all-nourishing mother,"[15] and who, similarly to Ymer, sat, at least according to the telling of Hesiod, at the top of the social hierarchy, being deemed one of the most important divinities of the early Greek myth.[16] Gaia became the primordial mother

[14] Sturluson, *Prose Edda*, 59-60.
[15] E. M. Berens, *Myths and Legends of Ancient Greece and Rome* (New York: Maynard, Merrill, & Co., 1894), 11.
[16] Despite the fact that, at one point, Gaia was in a union with Uranus, a union which spawned the Titans and the Giants, mankind was believed to have originated from Gaia alone, without any male intervention.

figure, the one through whom life was believed to have originated, and by whom it would be sustained. In many later interpretations, however, the myth would be promptly adjusted, in order to fit a society slowly becoming a patriarchy, with entire sections of the Greek mythos, in general, having been altered.

Still, while the similarities are, indeed, many, there can be found various other distinctions between the myths of the Norse, and the Greek, in way of culture. The Norse mythos, for instance, describes the origin of men as an action of three divine beings, (the Sons of Bor), who, after coming across a pair of trees, chose to endow these with spirit, reason, and with form. Thus, mankind came into being. The Greek mythology, nevertheless, recounts a story in which the "Primordial Man […] sprang directly from Earth,"[17] without any explicit mention of the process, or, of the method used by which it was possible.[18]

Hence, it could be said that, in respect to what has been discussed in this chapter, one could surmise the information mentioned into a decent, although simple, definition of a myth. First, there is the notion that myth is a tale, a prose narrative, at first passed down orally, and understood as a factual interpretation of the event, the phenomenon, or the deed it describes, or represents. Each culture possesses an inventory of such myths, which are exclusive, at least somewhat, to each culture.

Second, there is the notion of myth being the vessel through which a "pre-scientific culture" is able to gain an understanding of the world surrounding it. Such understanding is, nevertheless, imperfect, for it is based on a make-believe representation, not on an empirical evidence. One could, therefore, say, that myth is a theory which does not require to be proven scientifically, as it substitutes for empirical, scientific evidence with belief, and with mysticism.

Third, there is the notion, that in order be repeatable, let alone useful, the myth is endowed with a set of features, some of which function as an invariable in each myth around the world, whereas other function simply as cultural differentiations, added to the universal "myth formula." While the notion of a God of Thunder, or a God of War,

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[17] Carl Kerényi and Norman Cameron, *The Gods of the Greeks* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1951), 209.
[18] There is a reason for Hesiod's being mentioned in the discourse above, for, as opposed to Norse mythology, (from which most of the tales were lost due to their oral tradition, thus forcing Snorri Sturluson into creating, from those left, a cohesive narrative), the Greek mythology is a lot less cohesive when it comes to the description of the Myth of Creation, the Origin of Men, etc. Due, partially, to the fact that there exist many a different interpretation of such a theme as 'Creation,' the Greek mythology is difficult to analyse, as there often appear different, as well as mutually contrastive versions of almost every myth. The telling of Hesiod is based, in large, on the telling of the Proto-Greeks, and portrays a reality, which is closer to the primordial oral tradition, than are the more recent versions.

may be used across many a different mythology as a thematic invariable, it is due to the execution of, and the approach to such a theme as the God of War, that one is able to spot the cultural difference among various mythologies. It is also due to the mentioned set of features, that one can talk of myth as being different from legend, or folktale.

Going back to William Bascom's article in *The Journal of American Folklore*, it could be said, that the main distinction between a myth, a legend, and a folktale, arises either from their fictional, or factual nature, the time and the place in which they are set, or by the protagonist, their background, and origin. While both a myth and a legend are "regarded as true by the narrator and his audience,"[19] a folktale shall always be viewed as fiction.

In addition, a myth must always be regarded as dogmatic, and so must be legend. The only genre to be understood as a work of fiction is the aforementioned folktale. Hence, it is only folktale which can "be set in any time and any place," and be "almost timeless and placeless."[20] Yet another distinction between a folktale, a myth, or a legend, is the fact that folktale "usually recount[s] the adventures of animal or human characters,"[21] and so does legend. In myth, the usual protagonist is not a human being, but rather an array of deities, heroes, or fantastical beasts, most of whom are endowed with human attributes.

With respect to the time in which these are set, myth is, as discussed above, often set in time before either the creation of the world, or the formation of an early human society, and lends itself to explaining such topics. Legend, on the other hand, is concerned with "a period considered less remote, when the world was much as it is today."[22] In such respect, legend is very much a conduit between myth and folktale, as it is restricted in setting, with the time and place in which legend is set being defined by the setting of the culture of which the legend is representative. It is set in recent past, and could include a narrative of a heroic deed, or of a hidden treasure.

In conclusion, it is to be understood that, just like a legend or a folktale, a myth is a literary genre, rather than a literary style. It is composed of a set of features which must be attended to, and involved in the text for a prose narrative (although, even a poem could be considered a myth, in a specific case, e.g. *The Odyssey*, c. 750 BC, or,

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[19] Bascom, *Forms of Folklore*, 5.
[20] Bascom, *Forms of Folklore*, 4.
[21] Bascom, *Forms of Folklore*, 4.
[22] Bascom, *Forms of Folklore*, 4.

The Poetic Edda, written in the late 13ᵗʰ Century), to constitute a myth. Some of these are, for example, the aforementioned setting, in which both the time that the myth is set in, and the place at which the myth is said to place, are often portrayed to be either a distant time period, or a far-away place. While a legend is a mystical counter-part to history, a myth is, rather, a mystical stand-in for physical, or scientific, knowledge, though neither a myth, nor a legend, are accurate from an empirical point of view.

3. Adaptation as a Literary Process, Adaptation as a Literary Form

In this chapter, I would like to present and to explore a theory of adaptation, based heavily on Julie Sander's *Adaptation and Appropriation*, one based also on Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation*, though partially. I shall attempt to distinguish between a pair of distinct variations of an adaptation, i.e. between adaptation as a literary process (which may be used as the umbrella term for each an adaptation, an appropriation, a retelling, etc.), and an adaptation as a literary form, or, a result of the process of adapting.

Linda Hutcheon, the author of *A Theory of Adaptation*, offers a description of adaptation as a literary form, as being "a 'derivative work'—that is, one based on one or more pre-existing works, but 'recast, transformed.'"[23] Such a definition—while being taken as alluding to a point larger than the one being addressed—may lead one to think of both the author of an adaptation's intention with the source text, and the audience's reception of the adaptation, as based on a desire to reimagine, or to reinterpret the source narrative, or, in the case of the audience, to indulge in a narrative *already* distinct from the original. As such, one might even think of the source narrative (on which the adaptation is based), as being less desirable in the eyes of the audience, whose interest in the source narrative is based purely on world in which it is set, the overlapping theme of the narrative, or a character apparent in the source text, whose journey the audience wishes to be reimagined, with the original's execution of the said features being no longer desirable by the contemporary audience.

In addition, Hutcheon's view of adaptation as a literary form (which the above cited clearly is, as it does not address the process of adapting, only the result of the said process, the adaptation alone), is also endowed with the notion that adaptation, especially an adaptation of a literary work into a film, a video game, or other, distinct

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[23] Hutcheon, *Adaptation*, 7-8.

media, *must* be accompanied by a change of genre, that is, a change the original narrative's genre into a more distinct, and a more "appropriate" one, based on the need and the want of the adaptation's author (which is, of course, perfectly understandable, as the change of a written narrative into a video game, which is an interactive medium, must involve a change of genre, in order to enhance the possible usage of the source material). Nevertheless, it may prove hard to distinguish as to what aspect of the source's genre is allowed to be altered, as opposed to what aspect is a necessary, a crucial one, and which must, therefore, remain unaltered, in order for the act of adapting to be considered successful.

In *A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon discusses this particular dilemma, and writes,

> Most theories of adaptation assume […], that the story is the common denominator, the core of what is being transposed across different media and genres […]. In adapting, the story-argument goes, "equivalences" are sought in different sign systems for the various elements of the story: [the] themes, events, world, characters, [etc.][24]

What Hutcheon is pointing out, is the fact that there is a wide range of different options, for the author of an adaptation, to consider while augmenting the original work in order to create a narrative both distinct from, and related to the source. According to Hutcheon, each change made to a particular character, or a reimagining of a familiar world in which the source narrative is set, can be understood as a property inherent to the process of adapting, be in only applicable to certain properties of the source narrative, such as to a character, or the setting, presented in the original narrative. However, there is a point on which Hutcheon should be disagreed with, i.e. the role of theme in any given narrative. It must be said, that a theme is a major element in the construction a successful adaptation, let alone a successful narrative, and must not be changed, or altered; a theme, be it a major or a minor one, is a core feature of any given narrative.

Altering the theme, i.e. the central idea to run through a narrative, would entirely change the purpose of the adapting work. The way, on the other hand, in which the theme is being approached by each particular work, or, an author of adaptation, may

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[24] Hutcheon, *Adaptation*, 10.

change, as long as it does not distort the original idea of the original text. Still, for a text to constitute adaptation as a literary form, the amount of change made to the original narrative must, in itself, be equivalent to the amount of the original text which is to remain unchanged. Should the amount of change be larger, the adapting text could be seen as approaching an appropriation; should the amount of change be lesser, should the original narrative prevail over the adapting one, one might get closer to a retelling.

Nevertheless, a question could be raised as to whether or not to accept a derivative work, which does not alter as many features of the original text as might be expected of a work of adaptation, *as* "a work of adaptation;" or, simply put, whether or not does a work, exhibiting only a small amount of change to the original still constitute an adaptation, or a form entirely different, i.e. appropriation, or retelling?

In order to find out, one must consult Julie Sanders' seminal work, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, in which Sanders can be viewed as re-establishing Linda Hutcheon's view on the role which a change of genre (between the adapted, and the adapting text), is to play in the very process of adapting, by describing adaptation as "a highly specific process involving the transition from one genre to another."[25] Nevertheless, Sanders can also be seen as elaborating further on the audience's knowledge of the source narrative, while in the act of consuming the adaptation, by stating:

> Indeed […], it is the very endurance and survival of the source text […], that enables the ongoing process of juxtaposed readings […], and the ongoing experiences of pleasure for the reader or spectator in tracing the intertextual relationships.[26]

The notion of an intertextual relationship between the adapting, and the adapted text,[27] shall be of much importance further in the chapter, while looking at what constitutes a retelling, as opposed to appropriation. In order to move on, one must, first and foremost, return to the already discussed, and form a proper, consistent, and cohesive definition of an adaptation.

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[25] Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation (The New Critical Idiom)* (London, New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 24, Kindle.
[26] Sanders, *Adaptation*, 33.
[27] In this case, the term 'adapted text' is meant to represent the original narrative, which, to an author of the adaptation, is a source to be modified, to be changed by way of equivalence. An 'adapting text,' then, is the result of the process of adapting, i.e. the text which is considered to be updated, re-imagined version of the original.

The process of adapting could be defined as an intertextual process, during which the adapted text is reimagined on the level of the character's behaviour, motivation, and personality, of temporal and spatial setting, along with the approach to, and the handling of the source narrative's theme. Considering the process of adapting to be an intertextual process is quite appropriate, for the relationship between the adapted text, and the adapting one, is often visible, and clearly defined, i.e. as Ian McEwan's *Atonement* (2001) is a pastiche of Jane Austen's work, discussing many similar themes, and succeeding in re-establishing their relevance, despite the fact that the setting is changed. The relation between the two shall, nevertheless, always function on the basis of equivalence, between the adapted narrative, and the adaptation. Although not related as much to literature as it is to film, a fine example of such equivalence—or, proximity—as written in Sander's *Adaptation and Appropriation*, is the intertextual relation between William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (c. 1597), and Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (1996).

As Sanders is able to point out, Baz Luhrmann's adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* "update[s] Shakespeare's […] tragedy to a contemporary North American setting […]," while, "retain[ing] the […] sense of urban gang feuding […], according it a troublingly immediate and topical resonance."[28] In such case, one is able to spot such an equivalence, as the one discussed above, in which the change of the source narrative's setting is prone on changing the narrative's context. Thus, the weapon of choice is changed from a sword into a revolver, and the Venetian city of Verona is transformed into Verona Beach. By using the label of "troublingly immediate and topical resonance,"[29] Sanders is also hinting at the point of the change of setting being responsible for the change of context. In stating that it is by the way of adding "a topical resonance"[30] to the source narrative, Sanders could be thought of as pointing out the possibility that, both topicality and immediacy, are not pronounced enough in Shakespeare's original text.

Still, while the example above is, indeed, addressing an adaptation of a literary work into a work of film, it does point out the quintessential property of an adaptation to change a particular element, or several, of the source text, which is noticeable in every form of adaptation, whether it be an adaptation of a literary work into the

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[28] Sanders, *Adaptation*, 25.
[29] Sanders, *Adaptation*, 24-25.
[30] Sanders, *Adaptation*, 24-25.

aforementioned film, theatre, musical, digital media, or, simply, into another work of literature. In such sense, the main purpose of an adaptation could be described as "responding directly to the work […]"[31] being adapted. Nevertheless, some of what can be thought of as constituting a work of adaptation is also apparent in a work of appropriation. How is it, then, than one should distinguish the two, and treat both adaptation and appropriation as separate for one-another, while also paying attention to the similarity between the two?

3.1. Appropriation as a Form of Adaptation

According to Sanders, an appropriation is "a more sustained, imaginative […] reworking of the source text,"[32] rather than an adaptation, which is held close to the source text, displaying only a slight amount of change to the source narrative, in contrast to an appropriation. In straying away from the source, an appropriation is prone to change many a crucial point of the source narrative, doing so by use of similar techniques as a work of adaptation, while pushing the alteration much further. Thus, it could be proposed, that an appropriation if a form of adaptation, although a fairly radical one.

Still, if one is to use "adaptation" as the umbrella term for each form resulting from the process of adapting, one could argue that retelling should also be understood as a form of adaptation, despite the fact that, in contrast to appropriation, it does not change nearly as much about the source narrative as the former. Nevertheless, in order to talk of retelling as a form of adaptation, one must, at first, come to a conclusion as to what constitutes an appropriation (aside from being a form of the process of adapting, taking the intertextual relationship between one text and another as crucial as a work of adaptation), while also paying attention to the way it should be defined.

Sanders' example of appropriation, modelled on Thomas Keneally's work, *The Playmaker* (1987), is of much importance in breaking down appropriation as a process by itself. George Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer* (1706), is used as the source, i.e. as the text being appropriated, of Keneally's, while reworked into a tale of a convict's life in an Australian Prison. Being a convoluted text, involving an abundance of morally-questionable behaviour, carried out by the British, *The Recruiting Officer* is being

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[31] Sanders, *Adaptation*, 27.
[32] Sanders, *Adaptation*, 37.

borrowed from by Keneally, in order to suit the author's own narrative, regardless of completely changing, or, omitting, many an important element of the source (in contrast to an adaptation, which expands on the source narrative in order to modernize it, to make it more familiar). Still, while *The Playmaker* is resonant with Farquhar's exploration of the ridiculous, the illogical, and the depraved behaviour of several a British Officer, stationed in Shrewsbury, Keneally's work is not as concerned with the protagonist's relation to a wealthy maiden, as it is with the exploration of the life of a convict in 1789's Sidney Penal Colony, and with the ill-treatment of Australia's indigenous people.

Nevertheless, while *The Playmaker* does borrow considerably from Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer*, the first, major change made to the original is, once more, the aforementioned change of spatial and temporal setting. Farquhar's play's being set in the 18th Century England is appropriated by Keneally to suit the 18th Century Australia, in order to change the context of the source text. Mostly, the ridiculous, depraved behaviour of the British Officer is pushed to the background, as Keneally's intention is to exchange Farquhar's original, comedic conflict, with the troubled existence of the disinclined, and the dispossessed, i.e. the convicted. In such sense, the change of setting is inherently responsible for the change of genre, which, in the case of the above mentioned, is changed from being a comedy, into a tragedy.

Farquhar's comedy is changed from a stand-alone text, into a text within a text. As for the comedic aspect of *The Recruiting Officer*, it is being held in the back-ground of Keneally's own, tragic representation of the life in the Penal Colony. Farquhar cross-dressing character of Silvia is played, as much as re-placed, by Mary Brenham, a convict with whom Keneally's Lieutenant Clarke, *The Playmaker*'s protagonist, is infatuated. What differentiates Keneally's work from that of Baz Luhrmann's adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* (while, also, differentiating adaptation from appropriation), is the fact that Keneally does *not* attempt and re-polish Farquhar's play, as much as only taking the premise, the central idea of the work, subsequently building an original narrative around it, while devoiding it substantially of the source narrative's .

Such a notion does not only establish the form of appropriation as taking the transformation of the source material much further than the form of adaptation, it is also a fine example of the process of adapting being related to appropriation, as a literary form, on the level of technique, i.e. the way in which the derivative narrative is able to

use the source, through changing the setting, the motivation of many a character, the way in which the story is told, either being linear, or non-linear, etc. Still, both adaptation and appropriation, each as a literary form, work with the source in order to make it more palatable for the contemporary audience, even to the point of changing the source narrative.

Nevertheless, while the form of adaptation is attempting to stay relatively near to the source, an appropriation often does the opposite, to the point of straying away from the source as much as possible, while *also* attempting to preserve the connection between the source, and the derivative narrative. To put it bluntly, the literary form of appropriation may be viewed as approaching the source narrative merely as a source of inspiration, while leaving out the "excessive" material. Still, it is rather unclear as to which aspect of the source narrative should *not* be tinkered with, i.e. which part of the source should not be changed, let alone left out, as opposed to which part is left for the taking, that is, which aspect of the original is allowed to be changed. It may be plausible to think of the core or any narrative as being the set of properties inherent to storytelling, e.g. the theme of a story, or the plot. As discussed already with theme in the text above, along with story and plot, these allow for a certain adjustment to be made, as long as the adjustment does not distort the core proposition, the core idea behind the structure of the story or of the plot as such.

Hence, an appropriative work could be described in a sense of being a sub-type of adaptation: using the source text in order to derive an original narrative from it, a work of appropriation is often reliant on the exact techniques while approaching the source text, much as a work of adaptation, i.e. a change of a character's motivation, a change of setting, of pace. Nevertheless, an appropriation is different from an adaptation on the level to which the source text is being changed. While, in adapting, an attempt to stay true to the original text is clearly visible, appropriation is often prone to devoid itself of such an attempt. Appropriation does invoke the source text, while also attempting to formulate a narrative different from the source, such as Thomas Keneally's rewriting of George Farquhar's of *The Recruiting Officer* in *The Playmaker*.

In such sense, one could categorize appropriation as an extreme type of adaptation, as a type of adaptation in which there is an attempt to shed the 'confinement' posed on it by the source, only retaining the primary influence, made by the original on the author.

3.2. Retelling as a Form of Adaptation

Having discussed the nature of both adaptation and appropriation, I believe it is possible for one to advance further, into what I consider to be the third major sub-type, or a form, resultant of the process of adapting, i.e. retelling. In the final section of this chapter, I shall attempt to present a theory of retelling, as being a form resulting of the process of adaptation. In that, I shall also try to make the case for retelling as being the polar opposite of appropriation, rather than a process subordinate to, or reliant on it. Having based the theory of retelling on the already discussed theory of adaptation, with the addition of the theory of appropriation, I shall attempt to reach a conclusion as to whether or not could Neil Gaiman's retelling of the Norse myth in *Norse Mythology* be considered as a work of adaptation in the thesis' final chapter.

In order to do so, one must, at first, establish a consensus as to what constitutes a retelling in the context of an adaptation. As defined in the *Cambridge English Dictionary*, to retell is "to tell someone about something again," or, as the second definition is to suggest, "to tell someone a [story] that someone has told you, or to repeat a [story] you have already told before."[33] It could, thus, be surmised, that there is at least a pair of distinct versions of retelling, i.e. retelling with the basis in paraphrasing (in which a familiar story is also being retold, although without the intention to repair the many a possible error in the original tale), and retelling as a form of adaptation, or, retelling as a literary form.

Retelling, as a literary form, is quite distinct from retelling based on paraphrasing, which is often the retelling of a familiar, well known narrative in casual setting.[34] Such a version of retelling is, unfortunately, often incomplete, being often quite removed from the tale's original form, causing the thematic resonance of the source narrative to be lost on the audience, or the impact of the tale to be under-whelming, or even lost, since the source narrative may often be misinterpreted (which could lead to the change of many a core feature, apparent in the original). However, it must be noted, that retelling as a form of adaptation does, also, involve an amount of change made to the source narrative, nevertheless, a change more focused, or, rather, intended.

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[33] Cambridge Dictionary Online, s.v. "retell," accessed April 8th, 2019, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/retell

[34] Or, a retelling a particular story, only known to the narrator, in a manner different from the manner in which the story was told to the narrator in the first place.

Although it may often not be the case, retelling should be thought of as mainly a literary form, rather than as a cheap, care-less way to indulge the audience in the retelling narrative's author's favourite text. Being a result of the act of adapting, a retelling narrative could be understood as approaching the original text in order to change, or to alter it, while staying as close to the source narrative as possible. Furthermore, in a way similar to an adaptation or an appropriation, retelling should pay close attention to the core features of the source, which *must* remain unchanged, e.g. the theme, the plot, the story. In such sense, the notion of alteration, inherent to the process of adapting, is rather subtle in retelling, while compared to an adaptation, as a literary form. If compared to the form of appropriation, a retelling narrative does never stray away from the source narrative. In fact, the truth is quite the opposite, with the retelling narrative being often kept as close to the source narrative as possible. In such sense, it would be possible to talk of retelling as a resulting form of the process of adaptation, which is a polar opposite of an appropriation.

Nevertheless, in order to be considered a form, resulting of the process of adaptation, a retelling should involve a certain amount of alternation made to the source narrative. On the other hand, the amount of alternation in a retelling narrative should be minor, if compared to an adaptation, or, to an appropriation, each as a literary form. In the following chapter, the notion of altering the source narrative shall be explored further, using, as an example, Neil Gaiman's retelling of the Norse myth in *Norse Mythology*.

Should retelling be thought of as a form of adaptation, the notion of alternation, or, of change made to the source narrative must be present. However, once present in the retelling narrative, the alternation made to the source should be dispread with much effort, with much attention being paid to both the source, and the retelling narrative. Should there not exist a balance between the source narrative's original form (i.e. the source narrative's use of the "five-point narrative structure,"[35] the pacing, etc.), and the retelling's alternation of the source narrative, the resulting form of the adapting process may result in producing an adaptation, instead of a retelling. Furthermore, should the resulting narrative differ from the source substantially, the resulting form of the adapting process may become an appropriation.

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[35] Underlining prose, dramatic, or poetic narrative, the five-point narrative structure is a classic structure in narratology, consisting, in total, of five a narrative point, i.e. the exposition, the rising action, the climax, the falling action, and the denouncement, or resolution.

Nevertheless, it may prove difficult to imagine a derivative narrative, the intention of which is to stay as close to the source as possible. Speaking of the process of adaptation, there may appear an expectation for the resulting narrative to differ substantially from the source. Fortunately, the notion of change, or, alteration, in retelling, is the least radical, if compared to an adaptation, or, an appropriation. Adaptation, as a literary form, is a narrative, which may alter the source narrative in many a way (with the exception of the source narrative's story, plot, or theme, which shall *never* be altered). Nevertheless, such alteration shall always be based on the notion of equivalence, i.e. the adapting narrative should retain an amount of the source narrative's phenomena equal to the added, unique material. A similar approach could be applied to an appropriation, which does also approach the source narrative in order to alter it.

Nevertheless, the major difference between an adapting, and an appropriating narrative, is in the way in which the source narrative is approached by the author. Being an extreme form of the process of adapting, an appropriation does only attain a minimal amount of the source narrative. Instead, an appropriating narrative is built on the core properties of the source. In fact, an appropriating narrative is prone to dismiss much of the source narrative, in order for an original narrative to be built, using only the premise of the source.

Still, in light of such information, it is possible to think of a retelling also as extreme form of the process of adaptation. Nevertheless, unlike an appropriation, a retelling narrative must never dismiss the source narrative. In fact, a retelling narrative, instead of altering the source, should supply the source narrative with additional information, with additional phenomena. On the other hand, a retelling narrative should not be assumed to approach the source narrative without any alteration involved. Instead, I wish to suggest a retelling narrative to alter the source in a different manner. In contrast to an appropriation, the retelling narrative is prone to work with several an episode of the source narrative, which are often the most representative of the source narrative' story, plot, etc.

Therefore, a retelling, as a literary form, could be described as the resulting form of the process of adaptation. Being a form of adaptation, a retelling could be assumed to always work with a prior narrative, i.e. the source narrative. Nevertheless, in contrast to an adaptation, and, especially, an appropriation, a retelling narrative is prone to keep close to the source, supplying the source narrative with dialogue, or endowing many a

character with an additional characteristic, instead of taking away from it, or reconceptualising the source narrative to the point in which the connection between the source and the retelling is not visible.

4. An Introduction to Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*

In the final chapter of this thesis, I shall, at last, discuss the role of retelling in Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*. Published on February 7th, 2017, *Norse Mythology* is a retelling *The Prose Edda*, a work by Snorri Sturluson. Nevertheless, Gaiman's *Norse Mythology* should not be thought of as merely a copy of *The Prose Edda*, since Gaiman's focus is primarily on the core of *The Prose Edda*, i.e. the many a tale featuring Odin, Thor, Loki, Balder, or Freya. Furthermore, Gaiman's work is partial to presenting the audience with many an important scene, apparent in *The Prose Edda*, be it *The Death of Balder*, *The Children of Loki*, etc. Since Gaiman's work is based mostly on Snorri Sturluson's version of the Norse myth in *The Prose Edda*, it is *The Prose Edda* to function as the source of Gaiman's work. In *The Prose Edda*, Gaiman is presented with an inventory of myth, utilized by the author in creation of a certain 'overview' of the Norse myth, i.e. Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*.

Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda* is a compilation of the Norse myth, written in the 13th Century, originally intended to become a text-book. Over time, many a passage of the work were lost. Such a situation resulted in the remaining text of Snorri's *Edda* being dispersed into a total of seven, canonical codices. These codices, e.g. *Codex Wormianus*, *Codex Upsaliensis*, the *Codex Regius*, etc. served as an attempt of many a thinker to compile the residue of Snorri Sturluson's writing into a cohesive whole. In such a sense, the ordeal of those to write the codices is similar to the ordeal of Gaiman's, since both the codices, and Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*, were written with the intention of formulating a cohesive whole from a scattered material. As such, the codices should be thought of variants on the original text of Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*.

Nevertheless, to acknowledge the existence of the codices is crucial. Observing the Norse myth to branch out into several a different version is an important link of Sturluson's work to Jung's idea of the archetype. As the Norse myth is observed to evolve, so does evolve to archetypal imagery of the myth itself. Still, the primary work to deal with the archetypal imagery of the Norse myth is Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose*

Edda. *The Prose Edda*, written in resonance with the oral tradition, through which the Norse myth would initially be passed down, is often prone to evoke imagery synonymous with the Norse Pantheon. In light of such notion, I believe it to be the proper approach to think of Snorri's *Edda* as the primary source for Gaiman's *Norse Mythology* (in spite of the fact that Gaiman himself admitted to building the narrative of *Norse Mythology* around *The Prose Edda*). Being the earliest written work to deal with the Norse Pantheon, *The Prose Edda* could, nevertheless, be thought of as the primary source of the many other a narrative to deal with the Norse myth.

Therefore, in order to analyse Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*, I believe a conclusion must, at first, be reached, as to in what way does *The Prose Edda* communicate the mythical phenomena apparent in the narrative. For the purpose of this thesis, I shall discuss an English version of *The Prose Edda*, translated by Rasmus B. Anderson, since I am unable to read, or, to write, in the Old Icelandic. Nevertheless, I shall also attempt to present the narrative structure of Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*, in order to supply some background for both the source narrative, and for Gaiman's retelling of it. Anderson's version of *The Prose Edda* is based on the 6th, and the 7th edition of the *Icelandic Edda*, first published in the 17th Century. Furthermore, Anderson's translation of *The Prose Edda*, published in 1901, is also considering the many a prior translation, which, according to the author, "have been carefully studied."[36]

Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda* is composed of *Gylfaginning*,[37] or, *The Fooling of Gylfe*, portraying King Gylfe's having set out on a journey to Asgard (including *Bragarödur*,[38] or, *Brage's Talk*, a talk between Ægir, the Norse God of the Sea, and Brage, the Norse God of Poetry, expanding *The Fooling of Gylfe* by several a story); *Skáldskaparmál*,[39] or, *The Language of Poetry*, the second section of *The Prose Edda*, discussing the nature of poetry. Lastly, there is the third section of *The Prose Edda*, *Háttatal*, or, *An Enumeration of Meter*. In the third section, Snorri Sturluson is presenting original poetry, in order to point out the variety of verse in Old Norse.

It is important to account for each section of *The Prose Edda*, since Gaiman' *Norse Mythology* is working with the narrative of near every section of the source. The

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[36] Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 19.
[37] Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 49-150.
[38] Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 153-165.
[39] Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 168-219.

only section not to appear in Gaiman's narrative is *Háttatal*, which does not appear in *Norse Mythology*, nor does it appear in Anderson's translation of *The Prose Edda*. Furthermore, in Anderson's translation of Snorri's *Edda*, "only the narrative part of Skáldskaparmál"[40] is translated, with the poetic section being dismissed. Nevertheless, for the purpose of my thesis, the lack of the poetic section is not a problem, since "[Anderson's] version [of *The Prose Edda*] contains more of the *Younger Edda* than any English […] translation."[41] Thus, I am able to analyse both *The Prose Edda*, and *Norse Mythology*, since Gaiman's narrative is working mainly with *The Prose Edda*'s narrative part.

Hence, I should look at, mainly, the first section of Rasmus B. Anderson's translation. The first section is the one to contain most of the material used by Gaiman. Furthermore, the second section should also be discussed, though in part, since *The Language of Poetry* does contain several a story also present in Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*. I shall also use Anderson's translation in light of the aforementioned notion of Anderson's translation being close to Gaiman's narrative by way of content, of detail, etc. Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*, in relation to Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*, shall, thus, be discussed in the thesis's final chapter. In order to be discussed, it is important to establish the presence of myth in Sturluson's narrative, as *The Prose Edda* shall be looked upon as the source narrative of Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*. In such sense, the nature of myth in the source narrative is to be discussed prior to comparing it to Gaiman's text, in order to clarify as to what, precisely, is being compared.

4.1. On the Presence of Mythical Phenomena in Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*

Since I have outlined the constituent phenomena of myth in the thesis' second chapter, I shall attempt to apply these phenomena to Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*. After the Introduction, the first section of Snorri's *Edda*, *The Fooling of Gylfe*, is presented to the reader. In the first chapter of *The Fooling of Gylfe*, King Gylfe, the ruler of Sweden, is on a journey to Asgard. In the first chapter, King Gylfe is portrayed as having given Gefjun, a woman of the Æsir, a land for the ploughing, as a reward for telling Gylfe an entertaining tale.

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[40] Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 19.
[41] Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 19.

In the opening chapter, the audience is already met with a mythical element, i.e. with one of the Æsir, Gefjun, ploughing a land "as large as four oxen could [plough] it in a day and a night."[42] Being the offspring of Gefjun a Giant's, the oxen are portrayed to be extremely large, and strong. It is the first section of Snorri's *Edda* to present to the audience the general direction of the narrative. In a way similar to the Greek myth, the audience is to observe a union among a deity, and a non-deity, e.g. Gefjun, and the Giant. Their union is, subsequently, to produce an offspring, often one of different species, stronger and more powerful, if compared to their real equivalent.

Furthermore, the above tale is to present a further description of Gefjun's ploughing, being as thorough as to tear the land, creating, in the process, an island to constitute Zealand, a part of Denmark. According to the tale of Gefjun's ploughing, the land of Zealand is, at first, torn out of the land of Sweden, creating a hole in the land, which is later be filled with water.[43] Dragged toward the shore, the torn out land is, subsequently, placed in the sea by Gefjun's oxen,

> […] the [plough went] so hard and deep that it tore up the land, and the oxen drew it westward into the sea […]. There Gefjun set the land […] and called it Seeland.[44]

Hence, in the opening tale of *The Fooling of Gylfe*, the audience is presented with a wonderful example of mythical phenomena in action. The tale of Gefjun's ploughing is resonant of the basic principle of myth, i.e. the possibility of an interaction of a divine being, Gefjun, with the world, the environment (which, in the above case, is Sweden). The purpose of such tale is to create a dogmatic narrative, the attempt of which it is to explain the formation of the world. In the case of Gefjun's ploughing, Gefjun's is portrayed to interact with a land, already in existence. Through Gefjun's interaction with the environment, the environment is altered. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the myth of Gefjun may no longer be remembered, or believed, the tale of Gefjun's ploughing does possess the phenomena to constitute a myth. The union of Gefjun and a Giant's is the union of the divine with the non-divine. Such union does possess a mythical. In Norse myth, the Giant race is known to possess the power of shape-shifting. In such sense, the offspring of Gefjun and the Giant's, being of a different

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[42] Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 49.
[43] Which I believe to be the Lake Lögurinn, situated in the east of Sweden.
[44] Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 49.

species, i.e. oxen, could be taken as a little more likely. Such is the case with, also, the children of Loki.

To put it succinctly, the mythical phenomena in Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda* appear as early as the first chapter. The mythical phenomena in the first chapter consist of the trope of a divinity's encounter with both the mythical, although a non-divine being, i.e. the Giant, and with the fictionalized representation of mankind, i.e. King Gylfe. In the third chapter of *The Prose Edda*, the audience is met with the narrative's earliest mention of Odin, i.e. the All-Father. Again, the introduction of Odin is to be viewed as a text-book introduction to a mythical being. As said in Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*,

> He lives from everlasting to everlasting, rules over all his realm, and governs all things, great and small. […] He made heaven and earth, the air and all things in them. […] [He] made man and gave him a spirit, which shall live, and never perish, though the body may turn to dust or burn to ashes.[45]

The above description of Odin is clearly, an attempt at approaching the topic of the divine on several a different level. Hence, I shall look at each of these in isolation, in order to describe them most clearly. Firstly, there is the motif of Odin's divine nature being exemplified through the divinity's immortality. Such a motif is not intended to portray the character of Odin realistically. Rather, it is to affirm the position of Odin in the cultural consciousness, i.e. to paint the divinity as a concept, or, as an everlasting image, instead of Odin's portrayal as an actual being. I believe the main purpose of Odin in *The Prose Edda* to be the portrayal of a being, synonymous with the archetype of "the creator," through the action of who's the world originated, along with mankind. It is, I believe, to display an archetypal image which it is possible to reinterpret and to adapt, or, to appropriate, based on the context. Nevertheless, such an image is never based on empirical evidence. Such an image, as the one of Odin, is always a temporary one, since it is always possible to disprove it with technology, empirical evidence, or to exchange it for a different myth.

Still, in the context of myth, an archetypal image, such as the image of Odin, could be applied to many a different, mythical representation of realistic phenomena.

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[45] Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 54.

With such a myth as the origin of the world, it is possible to attribute the entire subject to a single actor, i.e. to Odin, since an early human society would not be able to grasp, or, to arrive at, the empirical data to deal with the subject. It was not until the second half of the 20th Century that the scientific theory would provide plausible data on the subject. Before the invention of writing, when the myth would only circulate orally, a subject such as the origin of the world, would mostly be reliant on either mysticism, or on imagination, or both.[46] Such a feat would most probably be attributed to an actor—a representation of the divine, bearing a human form—i.e. Odin. In consequence, the way of performing such a feat, would possess the nature of a manual labour, since it would be the intention of the myth to display the world's creation in a way to which mankind could relate,

> The [Sons] of Bor slew the giant Ymer. […] [They] took the body of Ymer, carried it into the midst of Ginnungagap and made of him the earth. Of his blood they made the seas and lakes; of his flesh the earth was made, but of his bones the rocks; of his teeth and jaws, and of the bones that were broken, they made stones and pebbles. […] Of the blood that flowed from the wounds, and was free, they made the ocean; […] took his skull and made thereof the sky, and raised it over the earth with four sides, […] Austre (east), Vestre (West), Nordre (North), Sudre (South).[47]

Although Ymer, the Giant, is a being to have spawned into a void in which the Earth does not exist, the subsequent death of Ymer is no longer as mysterious, as it is fictional (despite the fact that myth, as established, is taken as a dogma, as the truthful recollection of what had happened). In such sense, the process of the world's creation is displayed as a feat which a human could execute, instead of having the form of a fabrication, as does the tale of Ymer's emergence into the void. Nevertheless, the divine nature of Odin is still very much present in the myth. While the ability to create Earth from a Giant's corpse is an ability rather impossible, the way in which the process of world's creation is carried out, is appropriated to a person's ability to create, to build. Hence, it is in the excerpt above, in which I find the inherent aspect of the archetype's personification quite prominent; instead of "willing" Earth into existence, Odin is

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[46] In a manner which, from today's point of view, is close to being associated with almost a pathological longing to establish the origin of the wold as an act of conscious decision

[47] Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 61.

constructing it piece-by-piece, utilizing each part of Ymer's corpse according to a certain purpose.

Having, dealt with each constituent phenomenon of myth displayed in the description of Odin, I shall recapitulate on the information presented within this sub-chapter, in regard to the thesis' second chapter. In the second chapter, I arrive at three constituent notions of myth. Firstly, the notion of myth being a narrative, at first passed down orally, and thought of as a dogma, as the truth. Secondly, the notion of myth being the vessel through which a 'pre-scientific culture' is able to gain an understanding of the world. Lastly, I arrive at the notion of myth being endowed with a set of features, some of which function as an invariable, while the other function solely to provide a cultural distinction.

In the text above, it is mentioned that, in writing *The Prose Edda*, Snorri Sturluson would deal with myth passed down orally as the main source, instead of dealing with written documentation. While there is no written mention on which I could base such theory which I know of, I believe it plausible to believe such theory to be true, since, in the 13th Century, in which Sturluson's work first surfaced, Europe would have already been Christianized, with many a prior mention of the Paganist Pantheon (should a written mention as such have ever existed, in the first place), being erased. In such sense, I believe it possible to think of the myth, which Sturluson transcribed, having been, at first, passed down orally, before being adapted to the written form.

As for the second notion, i.e. the notion of myth's ability to inform a person of the environment, surrounding their culture, or settlement; the notion of myth's ability to explain universal phenomena, such as the rain, the snow, the fire, etc. could be considered as already applied to the excerpt quoted above, in which Gefjun's ploughing is the cause for the creation of the island of Zealand. Furthermore, appearing early in the thesis' text, there is the mention of the origin of the world, which, in Norse mythology, is described as being consequential to the emergence of Ymer the Giant into a shapeless void, Ginnungagap, which lay among the realm of ice, Niflheim, and the realm of fire, Muspelheim. In this chapter, then, the topic is elaborated on, following the narrative into *The Creation of Earth*, as built from Ymer's corpse.

In such sense, this particular tale may be thought as related, most entirely, to the notion of myth's ability to explain the universal phenomena, to inform a member of a certain culture of the environment inhabited by the culture, etc. It is through the provision of a unique, though simple narrative that one is able to learn of universal

phenomena, despite the fact that, from scientific point of view, the logic behind the mythical explanation of such phenomena is pointed out as false, or inaccurate. Nevertheless, I find it possible to, within the cultural narrative of the Norse myth, think of such a tale as sufficient enough to explain a majority of the universal phenomena, especially those related to the creation of Earth. In such a way, it is also possible to consider the tale above to possess particularly the features to be a representation of the second notion of myth's constituent phenomena.

Finally, in the third notion of the constituent phenomena of myth, a myth is endowed with a set of many features, some of which are fundamental to myth in general, while others remain culturally conditioned. The complexity of the matter may arise from the fact that their differentiation is open for interpretation.

Still, I wish to make a case for the motif already discussed in the second chapter, i.e. the motif of "the Highest God." Being one of the fundamental motifs in myth in general, the motif of "the Highest God" is often reappearing across many religious mythologies. The "Highest God" is, usually, an omniscient, omnipotent deity; in such sense, the motif of Odin being an everlasting being, able to rule the entire realm, is as close as one may get to an omnipotent deity. As for Odin's omniscience, it is fairly well established in the Norse myth that, in order to gain wisdom, Odin gave up an eye.

5. Retelling as a Form of Adaptation in Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*

In this chapter, I shall approach the main topic of the thesis, i.e. the categorization of Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology* as a retelling of the Norse myth, as documented in Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*. In such sense, I intend to work with the *The Prose Edda* as the source narrative of Gaiman's work. Nevertheless, I shall also approach the pre-discussed quality of retelling as being a form of adaptation, exemplifying it largely on Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*. Furthermore, the possible categorization of Gaiman's work as being a retelling, should be discussed on the level of myth, in order to determine whether or not does the mythical quality of Sturluson's work appear in Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*. Finally, in order to produce a simple, although a workable case for Gaiman's work being work of adaptation, i.e. a retelling, I shall compare Gaiman's *Norse Mythology* to Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda* and, subsequently, discus their differences.

As established in the second chapter, a retelling is a literary form, resulting from the process of adapting. While being prone to approaching the source narrative with the intention of altering it, a retelling narrative tends to stay as close to the source as possible. Distinct from an adaptation, or, an appropriation, each as a literary form, a retelling narrative is altering the source narrative by way of selection, addition, or, by way of compilation, i.e. the joining together of several an individual narrative, which, within the source, lay scattered, in spite of following a joint plot. On the other hand, adaptation is often prone to changing the setting, or the genre of the source narrative, in order to suit a different medium. Nevertheless, appropriation, while also altering the source narrative substantially, does so in order to present a completely different narrative, retaining only the core elements of the source, instead of simply adapting the source to suit the author's vision, or the contemporary audience.

Furthermore, many retelling narratives seem to be designed with the aim to update the source. In such sense, a retelling may repair many faulty elements of the source narrative. Such is the case with Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*. In several sections of Gaiman's text, such an alternation is to be observed, e.g. in *Thor's Journey to the Land of the Giants*. *Thor's Journey to the Land of the Giants* is a tale, in which Gaiman is working with several stories, originally presented in the 14th Chapter of Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*, entitled *Thor's Adventures*. Neither of the stories appearing in *Thor's Adventures* possess a title of their own. Gaiman's retelling of *The Prose Edda* is combining these into a single story, fusing one-another in order to form a seamless whole. It is, nevertheless, not to say, that the source narrative, retold by Gaiman, does not possess the unity described above, as it clearly does; instead, Gaiman's focus is oriented more on the selection of several representative tales, which allow, essentially, for the portrayal of a single adventure of Thor's, while containing the sense of wonder apparent in the source narrative, or the sense of scale, as displayed in *The Prose Edda*.

In the first story, according to Snorri Sturluson's text, Thor, along with Loki, set out on an adventure, riding Thor's chariot, pulled by goats. In the evening, they arrive at a farm, owned by the peasant, Egil,

> In the evening they came to [Egil] and got there lodgings for the night. In the evening Thor took his goats and killed them both, whereupon he had them flayed and borne into a kettle. When the flesh was boiled, Thor and [Loki] sat down to supper. Thor

invited [Egil], his wife and their children, […] Thjalfe, and […] Roskva, to eat with them.[48]

In Sturluson's text, Egil's son, Thjalfe, is portrayed to break one of the goat's bones, defying Thor's wish. In consequence, the goat, once revived by Thor's magic, is limping. Subsequently, Thor, angered by the situation, is stopped from destroying Egil's farm by the family's plead not to do so, to which Thor's reply is to take both Egil's children, despite it being only Thjalfe to have broken the bone. Hence, both Thjalfe and Roskva become Thor's servants. In such way, the portrayal of Thor could be interpreted on many a level. From a certain perspective, the portrayal of Thor in the above excerpt may be thought of as a portrayal of a somewhat psychopathic character, for lack of a better word, interested only in getting his own way, despite the circumstances. When put between the option of having their entire life turned upside-down, shall Thor decide to destroy Egil's farm, or the option of allowing Thor to take their children, Egil and his wife decide for the later. In this fashion, one could also think of the motif being the same as in many a folktale, especially as the one appearing in *Hansel and Gretel*, in which the father had no choice to avoid starvation, other than losing the children in a forest.

Nevertheless, Gaiman's narrative does not approach the story in the same manner as the original does. Rather, it is the intention of Gaiman's to put in more colour to the story, and to endow the tale with a certain amount of exposition, instead of moving from action to action, as Snorri's representation of the Norse myth often does,

‘We have no food for the likes of you,’ said Roskva […] ‘We have vegetables, but it's been a hard winter, and we don't even have any chickens left.’[49]

Already, Gaiman's text is able to put in a certain amount of agency to the character of Roskva, who, in the original tale in Snorri's *Edda*, is only ever seen as quiet, or, as having no place in the situation at hand. On the contrary, according to Gaiman's text, it is Roskva to have initiated the conversation with Thor, and with Loki. Furthermore, while Gaiman's story does not stray away particularly from Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*, it is through the behaviour of each character that the reader can observe the

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[48] Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 114.
[49] Neil Gaiman, *Norse Mythology* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 135.

difference between the Gaiman's work, and that of Snorri Sturluson. In *Norse mythology*, Gaiman is carefully adding several an element to the original narrative, e.g. the dialogue, the characterization. As alluded to by Gaiman at the WGBH Forum Network's convention at the Boston Public Library, [50] the addition of dialogue to Snorri's original narrative became a crucial point of Gaiman's retelling of Snorri's *Edda*. At the convention, Gaiman mentioned,

> I couldn't change what happened. I couldn't invent material out of whole cloth. But what I could do, was work on the way that something was told. The dialogue was mine. The voice is mine, even if the events are the events of the story.[51]

With this in mind, looking at Gaiman's work as bearing the form of retelling, while being, also, an adaptation of Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*, is much more plausible. While the story aspect of Gaiman's narrative does not differ from the source, there appear many an added notion to the source narrative in *Norse Mythology*, which make the original tale more palatable, and expand on the plot in a meaningful manner. In fact, these particular phenomena are the same as one could encounter in any work resulting of the process of adaptation, be it adaptation, retelling, or appropriation, each as a literary form. I speak of the phenomena, which *expand on* the original narrative. Still, the main phenomenon to push Gaiman's narrative closer to being a retelling, rather than an adaptation, or, an appropriation, is Gaiman's fidelity to the original story, the original plot.

Another important element, added by Gaiman, is the dialogue. It is through Gaiman's use of dialogue that the audience is able to learn of the motivation behind Thjalfe's breaking of the bone. Nevertheless, in order to investigate the importance of Gaiman's addition of dialogue, it is crucial to return to the original narrative. According to Snorri's *Edda*, the story of Thor's taking of Egil's children is concluded with the act itself. However, in Gaiman's retelling of the story—which is, rather, a fusion of several a tale, apparent in *Thor's Adventures*—the situation is different. In Gaiman's text, Egil's children are not kidnapped by Thor. In fact, Roskva is never taken by Thor, and Thjalfe,

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[50] WGBH is an American television and radio programme, located in Boston, Massachusetts. Being a PBS member station, WGBH produces mostly educational content, which is, in turn, made public. The session featuring Neil Gaiman was published through YouTube on May 4th, 2017.
[51] WGBH Forum, "Neil Gaiman: Norse Mythology and American Gods," filmed April 4th, 2017. YouTube Video, 1:23:30. Posted May 4th, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mX7pvtU9m_w

whose name, in Gaiman's work, is spelled as Thialfi, joins Thor and Loki on their adventure voluntarily,

> "Somebody here broke the bone," [Thor] told [Egil's family] in a voice like thunder. […] "I did it," said Thialfi. "I broke the bone." […] Then Thor said, "Tell me why I should not turn this whole place to rubble." […] [Thialfi] said, "It has nothing to do with my father. […] Punish me, not him. […] Let my parents be, and I'll be your bondservant."[52]

Following this exchange, Roskva's demand is to be taken along with Thialfi, a demand rejected by Thor. Nevertheless, it is Thor's intention is to collect Roskva, along with Thor's goats, upon returning from Jotunheim. This particular section could, thus, be viewed as another act of addition, in which Gaiman is adding a sub-servient plot-line to the original narrative; despite not being present in Snorri's narrative, the exclusion of Roskva's from the journey to Jotunheim, the Realm of Giants is rather fitting. In Snorri's *Edda*, the journey to Jotunheim does feature Roskva, albeit only as a minor character, which does not possess much agency in the narrative. On Gaiman's part, it is an important change not to include Roskva in the retelling. Although simplifying the source narrative, Gaiman's retelling is focused on the several major plot-elements of the source, which do not require the presence of Roskva. In fact, since the sole purpose of the story (especially in Gaiman's version), is Thor's journey to Jotunheim, the addition of the plot-line in which Thor shall collect Roskva after returning from Jotunheim does little, but benefit the narrative.

Furthermore, should there be a crucial aspect of adapting applied by Gaiman (while consequently adding another sub-plot into the original narrative), it would be the utilization of Loki as the perpetrator of the situation, in which Thialfi broke the goat's bone. In Snorri's *Edda*, Thjalfe is displayed as having broken the bone without any—to use a colloquial expression—rhyme, or reason. In Gaiman's retelling of the myth, the reason behind Thialfi's breaking of the goat's bone is Loki. In Gaiman's retelling, Loki is the one to convince Thialfi to break the bone, in order to eat the marrow and 'grow up to be as strong as Thor.'[53]

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[52] Gaiman, *Norse Mythology*, 137.
[53] Gaiman, *Norse Mythology*, 136.

In contrast to Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*, *The Prose Edda* does never explain the reason for Thialfi's act against Thor's wish. Thialfi does so, putting the life of the family in danger, without the reader ever being given a proper explanation. Nevertheless, it is in this section, in which the reader can observe the aspect of retelling to improve on the source narrative by added material. Instead of simply altering the source narrative in order to fit a different form, as often seen in an adaptation, or, in an appropriation, each as a literary form, a retelling is often occupied with expanding on the source, with the intention of "repairing" it. Still, the material added in the retelling narrative must possess a place of origin. In the case of a retelling, adding invented material to the source narrative is possible, in spite of it not being preferred. However, the material added to *Thor's Adventures* is not as much invented, as it is copied from a story appearing later in the chapter. In the later story, Thor is described as cursing Loki, whose fault it is that the goat's leg was broken. In the interview for the WGBH Forum Network, Neil Gaiman provided the following insight,

> […] occasionally, I would allow myself to buttress something that happened, from another story. […] I felt like […] I have enough justification from [the] other story to go back […] and put in a buttressing piece of corroborating detail, that makes the story feel […] a little more likely […][54]

Gaiman's admission to adding material to the source narrative of Snorri's *Edda* is an important point in categorizing *Norse Mythology* as a retelling narrative, resulting form of the process of adaptation. Not only does the excerpt cited solidify Gaiman's addition to the source narrative, it is also a sign of Gaiman's approach to, and the subsequent alteration of the source narrative as being intentional, as being conscious. Nevertheless, while, in *Thor's Journey to the Land of Giants*, Gaiman may appear as straying substantially from the source narrative, the opposite is true. Each alteration of Gaiman's to the source narrative is purposeful. Gaiman is using several a technique associated with the process of adapting, in order for the source to suit the contemporary audience. Furthermore, Gaiman's retelling of *The Prose Edda* is also providing *Thor's Adventures* with added exposition, severely lacking from the source narrative.

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[54] WGBH Forum, "Norse Mythology and American Gods."

In Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*, the stories, which serve as the source of Neil Gaiman's *Thor's Journey to the Land of the Giants*, appear each as a single story, following single plot. In the second story of Snorri's 'saga,' Thor, Loki, and Thjalfe are depicted as approaching Utgard, a settlement in Jotunheim. Roskva, although portrayed as being present in the narrative, is, nevertheless, used only as a framing device by Sturluson, in an attempt to follow up directly on the previous story. The second tale of Sturluson's *Thor's Adventures* establishes Thor's meeting with Skrymer, a Giant, asleep in a forest. Upon meeting, Thor is depicted as being already somewhat hostile toward the Giant, intending on hitting him with his hammer, Mjolnir,

> [Thor] girded himself with his Megingjarder, whereby his […] might increased. Meanwhile [Skrymer] woke, and […] arose. It is said that Thor […] forbore to strike him with the hammer, and asked him for his name.[55]

Later in the story, Thor is depicted as accepting Skrymer's proposition to join Thor's party on the journey to Jotunheim, as Skrymer is able to recognise Thor. After joining the party, Skrymer's proposition is to put their collective food and water into a single sack, to which Thor admits. Nevertheless, once Skrymer is asleep, neither Thor, nor Thjalfe, seem to be able to open the sack. In consequence, Thor is trying to murder Skrymer, by dashing Mjolnir against his head. Once hit, the Giant is displayed to wake up, wondering, 'whether some leaf had fallen upon his head.'[56] This attempt of Thor's is repeated twice, at midnight, and at daybreak. After each hit, Skrymer is awoken; leaving the group in the morning, Skrymer is urging Thor's group to continue east. At this point, the second story of Sturluson's narrative is over.

It may appear, to some, that, in order to quickly skim through Sturluson's text, the description above is lacking in detail, or, in mention of other, important information; in fact, the opposite is true. Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda* does not involve enough exposition to paint Thor's action realistically, rendering the text to follow from a premise to premise. Snorri Sturluson's depiction of Thor in *Thor's Adventures* is presented to the audience without any sense of character motivation. Instead, Thor's intended killing of Skrymer is left open for interpretation, rendering Sturluson's narrative incompetent of telling a cohesive story.

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[55] Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 117.
[56] Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 117.

In contrast to Snorri's *Edda*, Gaiman's *Norse Mythology* supplies the motivation behind the Thor's action at every step of the way, rendering the tale much more complete. In a sense, Gaiman's retelling of *The Prose Edda* could be viewed as a sort of a second draft of the source narrative, the desire of which it is to connect many main plot elements of the story together, in order for these to appear interconnected. It is done so in contrast to Snorri's *Edda*, in which the audience is lead from one major plot element to another, with little sense of their being interconnected with one-another. Consider, for example, the following excerpt from Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*,

> Thor grunted and hauled, hauled and grunted. […] "I don't think we're having dinner tonight," he said. "Not unless this damnable giant undoes the laces on his bag for us."

In Gaiman's text, the first blow, following Thor's musing in the excerpt above, could be thought of as being delivered in an attempt to awake Skrymer. After the blow is delivered, Skrymer does so, only to go back to sleep. Once asleep, Skrymer's snoring gradually angers Thor, who, being angry and irritated, is unable to fall asleep. Therefore, at midnight, Thor strikes Skrymer once more, to a similar effect. Gaiman's addition of an explanation of Thor's action is of use not only to justify Thor's wrath over Skrymer; in fact, Gaiman is also adding characteristic to the character of Thor, who, despite being a brute, is portrayed as a three-dimensional character, with the possibility of either giving into the irritation, or staying calm, and collected. While Thor does give into the anger, striking Skrymer a third time, Gaiman's change to the source narrative could be considered a success, giving the character of Thor a layer of character development, which is not present in the source narrative by Snorri Sturluson; truth be told, many a character of Snorri's *Edda* only appear as two-dimensional, with the motivation behind their actions often lacking. In such sense, the development which the audience is able to see in Thor's character is both useful for the narrative, and for the audience, respectively.

On Gaiman's part, the additional layer of character development to a previously 'unrealized' character, is a clear sign of utilizing the adapting process, the result of which is Gaiman's retelling. At this point of the analysis of *Norse Mythology*, Gaiman is gradually introducing additional material, while also omitting the presence of several an over-abundant character, e.g. Roskva. Let us recall, that the process of adapting is the

process of using a source narrative, with the intention of changing it, in order to create a derivative narrative, which, although being derivative, is also to remain close to the source. Often employing a character, or displaying a setting known from the source narrative, the derivative narrative's main purpose is to make the source more palatable to the contemporary audience. In light of this definition, I believe it is plausible to consider Gaiman's story to constitute a form resulting from the process of adapting, i.e. a retelling.

In the third story, Neil Gaiman's version is very close to the version of Snorri Sturluson's. It is, perhaps, due to the fact that the third is the most complete story of Snorri Sturluson's 'saga,' requiring little, if any external input in order to function properly as a story in itself. Following Thor's parting with Skrymer, the group is portrayed to arrive at Utgard, where, upon entering, each is greeted by Utgard-Loke (or, Utgardloki, as spelled in Gaiman's text). Upon entering Utgard, each member of Thor's ensemble is asked by Utgard-Loke, to perform a feat in which they each hold the most skill.

5.1. The Use of Language in Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*.

Perhaps the most important change to the source narrative of *The Prose Edda*, is Neil Gaiman's particular use of language in *Norse Mythology*. While Rasmus B. Anderson's translation of Snorri's text is, clearly, using quite an archaic version of English, being written in 1901, Gaiman's version is, rather, an attempt at bringing the text of *The Prose Edda* to the current millennium. A way in which this is achieved, is through Gaiman's reliance on the addition of dialogue, in place of lengthy descriptions of Sturluson's text. Furthermore, the way in which Gaiman is able to achieve the notion of novelty in the text of *Norse Mythology*, is through the use of contemporary, colloquial expressions. In fact, it is through the many an expression as such that Gaiman is able to resonate with the contemporary audience, in rendering the source text of Anderson's translation of *The Prose Edda* contemporary in itself.

An interesting way of looking at Neil Gaiman's use of language in *Norse Mythology*, is through Gaiman's role as the work's narrator. Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda* does, also, utilize a narrator, whose role is most prominent in the introductory story of King Gylfe's journey to Asgard. Following the introductory chapter, the role of the narrator is divided among King Har, Jafnhar, and Thride, whom

King Gylfe is to question on the nature of the world. In Snorri's *Edda*, each character named here is to take on the mantle of a narrator at one point or another. For example, in the story describing the origin of the world, the tale is being told by each King Har, Jafnhar, and Thride, with their role as the narrator changing through the course of the story. Each character is utilized in order to narrate a certain section of the story, which is being interrupted by Gylfe's questioning of their narrative.

Gaiman's retelling of *The Prose Edda* does not participate in such theatricality, as Gaiman uses the authorial narrator. In *Norse Mythology*, neither King Har, Jafnhar, nor Thride appear. Instead of using lengthy, flowery language in order to establish the rudimentary properties of the work, as does Snorri's *Edda*, the main purpose of the opening chapter of Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*'s is to present the audience with a brief description of each major character to appear in the work. It is done so in a quick, succinct manner, after which the story proper is to begin. Commenting on the quality of the writing in *Norse Mythology*, Gaiman told Chanel 4,

> I [wanted] to use […] relatively short sentences, very crisp, clean language that gets pretty around the edges, but is never pretty for the sake of being pretty. […] I want the dialogue […] to be funny […] I want [the audience] to feel that [they] know these characters.[57]

In fact, in contrast to the writing of Rasmus B. Anderson in the translation of *The Prose Edda*, the writing of Gaiman's is rather simple. In *Before the Beginning, and After*, the second chapter of Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*, the creation of Earth is depicted in a much more palatable manner. In *The Prose Edda*, on the other hand, the myth of creation is described in an incredibly grand, needlessly convoluted language. Nevertheless, it is not to say, that Gaiman's use of language is always succinct. In fact, at a specific section of *Norse Mythology*, Gaiman does appear to consider the possibility of writing in a grand, lengthy manner. In *The Death of Balder*, Gaiman is using quite a hyperbolic language, in order to describe the Goddess Freya swearing each thing in the land not to hurt Balder, the God of Sun, and Freya's son. Still, in Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*, the matter is quite the opposite; instead of relying on complicated constructions in order to amplify the importance of a certain scene, as is the case with Gaiman, the

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[57] Channel 4 News, "Neil Gaiman Interview."

entire text of Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda* is written in a robust, convoluted style, which borders on being impenetrable.

In the fourth chapter of *The Prose Edda*, entitled *The Creation of the World*, the chapter opens with a demand made by King Gylfe, to each King Har, Jafnhar, and Thride, to explain to Gylfe the origin of the world. The source narrative is, with respect to syntax, extremely convoluted. It could be assumed, that the convoluted sentence structure of the prose narrative does, in fact, serve a purpose, which is to endow the narrative with a certain style, making the source narrative read as an olden text, as if written long before the 20th Century. It is, of course, true, that Sturluson wrote *The Prose Edda* in the 13th century (thus making the work older by default), which may, in a way, render the attempt to portray it as such redundant. Such a comment would, nevertheless, be missing the point of the assumption, since, in Anderson's translation, one is not dealing with the source narrative as of the 13th Century; considering Anderson's text, which is a text more recent, compared to Snorri's *Edda*, it may have been possible for the author to either remain with the grand, theatrical language for the sake remaining as close to the source narrative as possible, or to update many sentences, many expressions, in order for the narrative to feel alive. Anderson, in translating Snorri's *Edda*, chose the former,

> Said [Gylfe]: How came the world into existence, or how did it rise? What was before? […] Jafnhar remarked: Many ages before the earth was made, Niflheim had existed. […] Then added Thride: Still there was before a world to the south which hight Muspelheim. It is light and hot, and so bright and dazzling that no stranger, who is not a native there, can stand it.[58]

In Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*, there is no such a frequent repetition of proper nouns, in Snorri's *Edda*. Also, with respect to the many expressions used in the excerpt above, e.g. 'hight,' or 'rise' (used in association with the growth, or, the development of the world), each of these is rather archaic, rendering their potential use in a contemporary text a little questionable. It could also be noted, that each character is spoken of in the third person, despite fulfilling the position of the narrator. Such a phenomenon may just as easily point at the possibility that, although not included in the source narrative as a narrator himself, Snorri Sturluson is putting himself in the position of the scriber, keen

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[58] Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 57.

on transcribing the narrative once spoken. In fact, *The Prose Edda* is Sturluson's transcription of the Norse myths, changing the spoken medium for the written. In such sense, Gaiman's version is different, as the author is working with a written source, which, while altering it further, is not changed into a different medium. Such a form of alternation can be viewed as a property inherent in the form of retelling.

Not only does Gaiman use the source narrative largely in the way in which it was originally written, the author does not stray away from it enough for *Norse Mythology* constitute the retelling form of literary adaptation. As mentioned above, retelling as a literary form, is the resulting form of the process of adaptation, which does provide the source narrative with a fair amount of change made to it, while also expanding on the source narrative by introducing additional information to it, by presenting additional phenomena, or, by endowing each character with an original trait, rendering the character more believable. It is exactly the kind of process which Neil Gaiman applies throughout the narrative of *Norse Mythology*, with the appliance of such phenomena being displayed in the text above. Additionally, the nature of Gaiman's narration in *Norse Mythology* could be compared to the source narrative, i.e. to Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*, by way of which it may become clear to just what degree the change is a substantial one,

> To the north was Niflheim, the dark world. […] To the south was Muspel. Muspel was fire. Everything there glowed and burned.[59]

Regardless of the difference in the spelling of Muspelheim, Gaiman's writing is obviously much more succinct, in comparison to that of Snorri Sturluson, or Rasmus B. Anderson. It is in sections such as this, in which the retelling aspect of Gaiman's *Norse Mythology* shows the most. While clearly reducing some of the source narrative's writing to the core of what is being said, Gaiman's version of *The Prose Edda* does, in fact, keep as close to the source narrative as possible, as none of what is being said in the source is changed by Gaiman. Rather, Gaiman's focus is placed on the most important part of what is being said, disregarding the flowery nature of Anderson's translation. Hence, Gaiman's retelling of *The Prose Edda* is able to use the text of the source narrative in a much more clever, contemporary manner. Furthermore, the

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[59] Gaiman, *Norse Mythology*, 9.

phenomena which differentiate Gaiman's text from acquiring the form of an adaptation, or, an appropriation, is the fact that Gaiman, while adjusting the text, does never quite cross the line of becoming an adaptation; Gaiman's text does never re-imagine the source narrative, nor does it ever re-interpret the source. As noted above, each change of Gaiman's to the source narrative it to make it more consistent, more palatable. Never does Gaiman's retelling of *The Prose Edda* act as an opportunity for the author to alter the source material to fit another purpose, aside from the original one, which is to educate, to inform, etc.

In order to finalize this particular sub-chapter, it is important to talk of, perhaps, the most important addition of Gaiman's to the story, i.e. dialogue. Gaiman, as opposed to Snorri Sturluson, endows each character with the ability to speak, which is an enormous improvement on the source narrative of *The Prose Edda*. Having the characters explain their agency and motivation in many a situation by themselves is a clear improvement on the way in which they were originally written, as they not only become three-dimensional, they also become a vessel, through which the stories of *Norse Mythology* are told. In *The Children of Loki*, the advantage of Gaiman's use of dialogue can clearly be seen, when compared to the narrative apparent in *The Prose Edda*, entitled *Loke and his Offspring*. In the part of the tale discussing the origin of Fenrir, the giant wolf, Gaiman's use of dialogue is much more fitting, than the use of lengthy Exposition in Sturluson's narrative.

The story of Loki's children is a story of the Giantess Angrboda bearing Loki three children, i.e. The Midgard Serpent, Jörmungandr, Hel, Loki's daughter, and the queen of the dead, and Fenrir, the giant wolf, foretold to bring about Ragnarök, the end of days. At Odin's order, Jörmungandr is thrown into the sea surrounding Midgard, the realm of mankind. Hel (or Hella), is made into the ruler of the Realm of the Dead. Fenrir, on the other hand, is feared by Odin, and is, therefore, bound in Gleipnir, a chain

which it is impossible to break free from. Angered by the situation, Fenrir vows to devour Odin at Ragnarök. Hence, as mentioned above, the story of Loki's children does deal with many notions which translate better into dialogue, instead of being told. Consider, for example, the following excerpt from Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*,

> The wolf cub […] spoke as a man would speak, in the language of men and the gods, and it was proud. […] "You have grown so fast, Fenrir," [said Odin] […] "We have here the strongest chains and shackles. Do you think you can break them?" […] "I think I can," said [Fenrir]. "Bind me."[60]

In the excerpt above, Gaiman's narrative could be viewed as portraying the binding of Fenrir as a sort if a game between the Wolf and Odin. While also described as voluntary in *The Prose Edda*, the binding of Fenrir in *Norse Mythology*, the dialogue utilized in Gaiman's retelling of the story is enabling the audience to sympathize with the character, despite being a Giant Wolf; furthermore, the use of dialogue is able to give the character of Fenrir personality, which is lacking in *The Prose Edda*. It is also able to show that, while threatening, Fenrir is not nearly as damnable, as the Wolf's portrayal in Snorri's *Edda* may indicate. Rather, the character of Fenrir is mistreated by Odin, which, in consequence, is to feed the Wolf's hatred for the divinity.

In Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*, the dialogue is lacking substantially. Rather than endowing the character of Fenrir with a personality, which can be observed through the dialogue, Sturluson's narrative is merely describing the action of the story in many a broad generalization, which do not provide much of a connection to the character of Fenrir from the point of the audience. Instead of making the character relatable in any way, the source narrative's perspective of Fenrir is as the half-witted antagonist, whose power is feared by Odin, and whom it is the divinity's desire to bound, in order to prevent Ragnarök. Therefore, throughout the original story in *The Prose Edda*, the character of Fenrir does never appear as anything *but* two-dimensional. The character is only there to follow from premise to premise, without contributing much to the plot, without ever feeling real enough to connect to. In such way, the character of Fenrir does not read as a character in itself, but, rather, as a simple, world-building mechanic for Sturluson, as it is the case with many a character in *The Prose*

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[60] Gaiman, *Norse Mythology*, 78.

Edda. To better imagine the notion of Fenrir as being an under-developer character in Snorri's *Edda*, consider the following excerpt,

> When the gods saw how much [Fenrir] grew every day, and all prophecies declared that he was predestined to become fatal to them, they resolved to make a very strong fetter, which they called Lading. They brought it to the wolf, and bade him try his strength on the fetter. The wolf, who did not think it would be too strong for him, let them do therewith as they pleased.[61]

Again, while not different from Gaiman's text at what is being communicated, the above excerpt is clearly much longer than the one appearing in Gaiman's retelling of *The Prose Edda*. The role of Fenrir as a character is largely unrealized in Snorri's *Edda*, since the character is not given any sort of agency, any sort of personality. Being unable to connect to the character could possibly leave the reader to consider the tale as unrealistic, as well as improbable; while the character of Fenrir is painted as an antagonist in both *The Prose Edda*, and in Gaiman's retelling of the Norse myth in *Norse Mythology*, the psychology of the character is much easily accessible through the use of dialogue, as the character of Fenrir is able to inform the audience of the growing disdain for the divinity at hand, i.e. for Odin.

Furthermore, while the omission of dialogue does, clearly, make the audience connect less to the source narrative, it could also be observed to break one of the fundamental rules of fiction, i.e. the 'show, don't tell' rule. Whereas, with Gaiman's text, the audience is shown the growing disdain of Fenrir's toward Odin, the narrative of Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda* is simply following the plot-line of the story, with complete disregard for the effect it may have on the audience. The binding of Fenrir the Wolf, which is, perhaps, the most crucial point in the entire narrative, is simply told, expecting no audience participation.

It is in a case such this, in which one can observe the benefit of retelling, since, while not inherently bad, *The Prose Edda* is a narrative which, to be read by contemporary audience, is in a dire need of adjustment. While not adjusting the plot of the source narrative, Gaiman's addition of dialogue, and of additional information, does little but enhance the readability of the source, making it not only more palatable for the audience, nevertheless, making the source narrative a better, more complete text.

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[61] Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 93.

5.2. The Presence of Mythical Elements in Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*

At this point, a lot has been said on the nature of Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*, in regard to the work's possible categorization as a work of retelling, i.e. a literary form, resulting from the process of adaptation. While discussed on the level of narrative, language, and character, the main aspect of Gaiman's retelling is, at this moment, severely lacking from the discussion; since Gaiman's retelling is the retelling of the Norse myth, it would be unthinkable not to mention in what manner, and whether at all, do the mythical phenomena of Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda* appear in Gaiman's retelling of the source narrative.

To recapitulate on the nature, and the constituent phenomena of myth, as already discussed in the text above: a myth is a narrative, often a prose narrative, which a 'pre-scientific culture,' a culture yet to invite writing, is telling itself in order to gain the illusion of understanding the environment surrounding it. A myth, being a literary genre, is endowed with a set of many features, divided into those, which function as an invariable in myth around the world, e.g. the presence of a divinity, or, of a mystical element, applicable to explaining a universal phenomenon, and, on the other hand, those, which are culturally conditioned, thus making a particular myth unique to the culture to which it belongs.

Furthermore, it should be mentioned that myth, though often repeated through many different mythologies, is temporary; the myth of a certain culture could be erased, or replaced by another culture's myth in conquest. Nevertheless, it is also possible for a myth to die out, thus being replaced by another. In this section of the thesis, I should look at the way in which Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology* is able to work with the mythical phenomena inherent in Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*, in order to determine whether the mythical quality of Snorri's work does appear in Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*.

In a way similar to the discussion of myth earlier in the text, I believe it might be for the best to explain the presence of mythical phenomena in Gaiman's work by way of an example. In The Death of Balder, the 14th chapter of *Norse Mythology*, and the 15th chapter of *The Prose Edda*, Balder is described as the most beautiful divinity of the

Norse pantheon, whose "face shone like the sun."[62] Loved by each thing in the world, with the exception of Loki, Balder would wake up to one nightmare after another.

After confessing these to Odin, Odin set out on a journey, to find out the nightmare's cause. Searching for the cause, Odin's journey is finalized after the divinity's arrival at the grave of a wise, old woman. Odin's use of magic is able to bring the woman to life, only for Odin to realize the true identity of the woman to be Angrboda, the mother of Loki's children. Nevertheless, Odin is told that Balder would, in fact, die. However, according to Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*, it was right after Balder's confession to Odin that Frigg, or, Freya, set out to take an oath from each thing in the world not to hurt Balder. It is only in Gaiman's retelling of the myth in which the audience can observe Odin's journey to find out the cause of Balder's nightmare.

In an attempt to save their son from death, Freya, Odin's wife, walked through the world, speaking to each thing in existence, except for the mistletoe. Once each thing promised to Freya not to harm Balder, the divinity returned to Asgard, in order to celebrate. Subsequently, the entire Asgard rejoiced. The divine would attack Balder with a sword, a stone, attack to no avail; Baldur could not be harmed. During the celebration, an unknown woman approached Freya, asking of the way in which it was done, for Balder not to be hurt. Freya admitted to swearing each thing in the world not to harm Balder, except for the mistletoe, which, according to Freya, was insignificant. After learning of the mistletoe, the woman left, revealing herself to be Loki in disguise. Once done creating a dart, or, in Sturluson's narrative, a wand from the mistletoe, Loki convinced Balder's blind brother, Hod, or Hoder, to throw it at Balder. Once thrown, the dart pierced Balder, who, in consequence, fell dead to the ground. Loki, being responsible for Balder's death, went into hiding.

It is in the section of the story surmised above, in which I desire to point out the mythical phenomena in Sturluson's, and in Gaiman's work. Thinking of the idea of the archetype, mentioned in the second chapter, I believe it to be possible to consider the portrayal of Balder, in both *The Prose Edda*, and in *Norse Mythology*, as based on the archetypal image of the God of Sun, in a manner similar to the Egyptian God, Ra. It is, nevertheless, mainly the case with the basic, rudimentary portrayal of Balder, as the notion of the archetype can be adjusted to suit a culture, i.e. the Norse, the Greek, the

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[62] Gaiman, *Norse Mythology*, 211.

Native American, etc.; the primary portrayal of Balder could later come to possess several traits, which might be taken from another archetype.

Nevertheless, Loki, the God of Mischief, is not as easy to categorize. The notion of deceit does appear through many a polytheist religion, while often not being exclusive to a single divinity. In the Greek Pantheon, the notion of deceit is inherent to each the character of Zeus, Hera, Prometheus, Cronos, etc. In the Norse Pantheon, also, the notion of deceit is present in the character of Odin, Tyr, Freya, or Loki. Being associated mostly with deceitful behaviour, Loki may function an anomaly among the divine. In fact, the apparent inspiration behind Loki's character is resembling more of a folk, instead of a mythical character. In Germanic folklore, especially, the element of a mischievous, deceitful imp, or, a demon, is present in the character of Rumpelstiltskin.

However, although it may be possible to arrive at such a character as Loki more often in folklore, rather than myth, I already discussed the connection between a myth and a folktale in the second chapter. While the distinction between the pair is clear, in that a myth is a dogmatic narrative, whereas a folktale is a fictional one, the way in which the protagonist is portrayed is, instead, a similarity. In each *The Prose Edda* and *Norse Mythology*, the character of Loki is portrayed to take pleasure from mischief. Since Loki is the smartest, the most cunning of the Norse deities, it is usually Loki's mischief to pose trouble for the Norse deities. Nevertheless, once Loki's trickery is revealed, it is Loki to undo the trickery's effect. Similarly to the tale of Rumpelstiltskin, once the answer to the imp's question is revealed, it is the duty of Rumpelstiltskin to abide by the rules of the game.

Still, in order to think of Loki as a divine being, it may be for the best to assume Loki' mischievous, deceitful nature to be the archetypal trait, which the character is meant to represent. Aside from Loki's nature, there is also the ability of Loki's to shape-shift. I also intend to refer to this ability as an archetypal trait, since it does support Loki's mischievous, deceitful nature. Nevertheless, I am aware that the ability to shape-shift might categorize Loki as being closer to a Giant, rather than a divinity. However, it is the case with many a version of the Norse myth to speak of Loki as the "Son of Laufey," a Giantess. Thus, I shall regard Loki's being a Half-Giant to be crucial trait, as it does support Loki's hatred for Odin, and the other divinities, including Balder. Furthermore, the ability to shape-shift does, also, solidify Loki's position as the God of Mischief, as many tricks of Loki's often involve the said ability.

In order to discuss the presence of other mythical phenomena in Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*, I shall return to the above surmised narrative, comparing Gaiman's version of the tale to Snorri Sturluson's. Both Gaiman's and Sturluson's version begin in a similar way. The main distinction between Gaiman's and Sturluson's version is, again, Gaiman's use of exposition. Before getting at the point at which Sturluson's narrative is to begin, Gaiman's use of exposition is already worth a page. Nevertheless, once reaching the same point, Gaiman's and Sturluson's version begin to resemble one-another. Still, since the comparison of Gaiman's and Sturluson's version must be based on data already acknowledged, I shall, at first, discuss the motif of dream in Snorri's *Edda*, prior to addressing the motif in the work of Gaiman,

> […] asked Ganglere: Have there happened any other remarkable things among the [Æsir]? Har answered: Yes, indeed. […] The beginning […] is, that Balder dreamed dreams great and dangerous to his life. When he told these dreams to the [Æsir] they took counsel together, and it was decided that they should seek peace for Balder against all kinds of harm.[63]

It is often the case in many mythologies to deal with a dream, or, with a prophecy of some sort, as with the inevitable predisposition of death, of future happiness, etc. A prophecy, especially, is often understood in mythology as an authoritative statement, told by a prophet, according to which the future of the myth's protagonist is to unfold. Still, the notion of a prophecy does also appear as being told by a divinity to a mortal, whose purpose it is to spread the message among people. In the case of Balder's nightmare, I shall attempt to establish the difference between the concept of a dream, and the concept of a prophecy, in order to discuss the difference among Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*, and Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*.

According to C. G. Jung's definition, published in a collection of Jung's work, bearing the title *Dreams* (2010), a dream "is an autonomous and meaningful product of psychic activity."[64] To put it simply, a dream is the psyche's response to a person's physical and psychological activity, which, in consequence, is represented in the dream. In the work, Jung's definition of a dream is divided into a pair of groups. The first group is composed of the dreams, which do not provoke a strong, emotional response with the

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63 Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 131.
64 C. G. Jung, *Dreams* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010), chap. 1, Kindle.

person dreaming it. The second group, in contrast, is composed the dreams, which *do* provoke a strong, emotional reaction. Furthermore, the second group is meant to represent the dreams, which shall be remembered long after the waking. In such sense, it is the second group I shall focus on in the following discussion.

Having established Jung's grouping of dreams, I shall proceed into discussing the distinction between a "compensatory," and a "prospective" dream. A "compensatory" dream, according to Jung, is merely the psyche's recollection of a certain thought, information, or a piece of data. Such a though, often being malicious, is prone to be repressed into the sub-conscious during the waking state. In dreaming, it is brought out, in order to be processed. Hence, the purpose a "compensatory" dream, is to function as the psyche's self-regulating mechanism. In fact, the repressed thought must be processed, in order for a person's psyche to achieve the state of equilibrium, between each the conscious, and the sub-conscious.

A "prospective" dream, on the other hand, is based on the "anticipation […] of future conscious achievements, […] like a preliminary exercise or sketch […]"[65] Nevertheless, should the dream in question differ substantially from the future achievement, Jung is prone to label the dream as "merely an anticipatory combination of probabilities,"[66] i.e. an anticipatory proposition, which is created by the psyche, in regard to the future. Nevertheless, should the dream match the following outcome in every single detail, Jung is quite at peace with labelling such a dream a "prophecy."

It may be possible to apply Jung's definition of a "prophecy" to the above excerpt of Snorri's *Edda*, in which Balder's dream of death is taken, by Odin and the other divinities, as a "prophecy." In Sturluson's version of the story, the action to avoid Balder's death is taken immediately after Balder's confession. The attempt to change an unpleasant future is often present as a motif in mythology. Such a motif can be found over many a different mythology, such as the Greek. In the Greek myth, it is prophesized for one of Cronos' children would overtake their father. Upon learning of the prophecy, Cronos' choice is to devour each of the children of Rhea, Cronos' wife. Terrified, Rhea is to hide Zeus, the 6th child, on Crete. Unbeknownst to Cronos, Zeus' life is saved. Later, Cronos is defeated by Zeus.

While vastly different on the surface level, each the myth of Cronos, and the myth of Balder address the same motif, i.e. the attempt to change to future, as it was

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[65] Jung, *Dreams*, chap. 3.
[66] Jung, *Dreams*, chap. 3.

foretold. In Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*, Balder's dream is taken at a face value, once it is confessed to Odin, in spite of Odin's lack of knowledge of the actual future. While the audience may expect the eventual death of Balder, since it is being used in the exposition, the character of Odin is meant to possess zero knowledge of the future. Nevertheless, the major element to make Balder's dream a mythical motif, is precisely the lack of Odin's knowledge. Through it, Sturluson is able to assign a larger, more mystical meaning to the concept of a dream, making it, in consequence, a subject which must be believed by the audience, in order to function. Hence, while not working with the notion of prophecy as defined by Jung, Sturluson is applying the notion of a "prospective" dream into the narrative of *The Prose Edda*, which is treated as a prophetic statement, instead of being one.

Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*, on the other hand, is working with the notion of "prophecy" in a different manner. Instead of portraying Odin as following blindly on Balder's dream, calling for a counsel, Gaiman's version of the text is portraying Odin as a character more wise, and, in turn, more suspicious. It is through the aforementioned search for the cause of Balder's nightmare that Gaiman is able to turn the "prospective" dream of Balder's into a proper "prophecy,"

> [Balder] dreamed of worlds ending, and of the sun and the moon being eaten by a wolf. He dreamed of pain and death without end. […] Balder went to the gods and told them of his nightmares. None of them knew what to make of the dreams, and they were all troubled, all but one of them. When Loki heard Balder talk […] Loki smiled.[67]

At first, I intend to address the notion of the difference in Balder's dream. While in Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda* it is mentioned specifically for Balder to dream of dying at some point in the future. Instead, Gaiman's intention in the above excerpt is to further interconnect *The Death of Balder* with the event of Ragnarök. Nevertheless, while not present in Snorri's *Edda*, this addition may be thought of as yet another aspect of Gaiman's retelling of *The Prose Edda*, as the additional layer to Balder's dream is used in order to form the narrative of Snorri's *Edda* into a cohesive whole.

Yet another distinction from the source narrative of Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda* is Gaiman's pointing out the divinities as having little idea as for what to

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[67] Gaiman, *Norse Mythology*, 212.

make of Balder's dream. Instead of taking the dream at a face value, it is Odin's decision to set out on a journey, in order to find out the cause of Balder's dream. Such a change to the source is rather radical, as it is altering the primordial premise of the source narrative. In adding Odin's quest for learning the cause of Balder's dream, in portraying Angrboda to communicate to Odin every detail of Balder's death, Gaiman is changing the "prospective" dream of the source narrative into a "prophetic" dream.

Subsequently, Gaiman's added material may alter the source narrative to a point, in which The Death of Balder in *Norse Mythology* is possessive of a greater amount of mythical phenomena, than it does in *The Prose Edda*. Such is the case with the "prophecy," as told to Odin by Angrboda. In spite of the concept of dream being often endowed with much underlying meaning within a mythical narrative, the concept of "prophecy" may often be more relied on, as a story-telling device. In the case of The Death of Balder, Gaiman's addition of Odin and Angrboda's conversation is expanding the source narrative. As the character of Angrboda is the mother of Loki's children, it is a meaningful addition by Gaiman, to portray the character of Angrboda holding a grudge against Odin. Also, since Angrboda is present in the source narrative of *The Prose Edda*, it is not as much an act of addition by Gaiman, as it is the act of borrowing material from the source, while applying it in a different manner.

Finally, I shall discuss the scene, in which Freya, or Frigg, is swearing each thing in the world not to harm Balder. Each Gaiman's and Sturluson's version of Freya's strive to save Balder's life is practically the equal by way of narrative, structure, and the language in use. In this section of the narrative, Gaiman does not stray away from the source in any notable manner. Despite using a slightly elevated language in order to heighten the sense of importance of the scene, Gaiman's retelling of Freya's endeavour is practically retold word-for-word, in regard to Sturluson's narrative. The major mythical element in this particular section of The Death of Balder, is the anthropomorphic portrayal of "each thing that [Freya] encountered […]."[68]

In the narrative of *The Prose Edda*, Freya is mentioned directly as speaking to "[…] fire, water, iron and all kinds of metal, stones, earth, trees, sicknesses, beasts, birds and creeping things, that they should not hurt Balder."[69] The scene is portrayed similarly in Gaiman's narrative, displaying each thing in Freya's vicinity to swear to the divinity never to harm Balder. Although it may appear as a surprise, in reality, neither

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[68] Gaiman, *Norse Mythology*, 214.
[69] Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 131.

fire, nor water, possess the ability to speak. As portrayed in both *Norse Mythology* and *The Prose Edda*, Freya's ability to speak to the world is a mythical element, utilized in order provide the story's climax. Nevertheless, it is also a phenomenon often seen in mythology, in which a divinity is able to speak to an inanimate object, or, if animate, a non-sentient being.

Generally, the notion of anthropomorphism is inherent in myth, being the basic principle on which much of religious myth may have originated. As discussed in the second section of the second chapter of the thesis, a myth is a narrative, which a "pre-scientific culture" is using in order to understand universal phenomena. In such way, a "pre-scientific culture" is often using anthropomorphic representation of such a phenomenon as the rain, or, the thunder, in order to gain a vague understanding of the environment. Nevertheless, the ability of a divinity to speak to an inanimate object is not as common in mythology as it may appear.

In the Judeo-Christian mythology, there appear several an example of especially weaponry being displayed as possessing a human characteristic. Nevertheless, it is usually in order to portray the divinity that an inanimate object is endowed with a human characteristic. It may be theorized, taking into consideration Freya's knowledge of the Seithr sorcery,[70] for Freya to put a spell on each object in question, subsequently bringing each of these to life. Unfortunately, there is no basis for such theory, since neither Gaiman's, nor Sturluson's version of the Norse myth point at Freya using sorcery in order to exact an oath from each thing in the world. Ironically, the main aspect of Freya's ability to speak to each inanimate object, according to which it could be possible to point at the mythical nature of such an ability, is inexplicable with regard to either *The Prose Edda*, or *Norse Mythology*. By definition, being explained only by mysticism, or sheer belief, is what makes Freya's ability to speak to inanimate objects a mythical concept.

Thus, I am confident in categorizing Gaiman's *Norse Mythology* as a text not only copying *The Prose Edda* by Snorri Sturluson, but as a retelling. Furthermore, I believe that the above chapter is supportive of the estimate, made in the introductory chapter of this thesis, that a retelling can, in fact, be viewed as a form of adaptation.

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[70] The Seithr sorcery is a form of sorcery, which can be found in Norse mythology. Seithr sorcery it told to have been known by the Vanir, the enemies of the Æsir. Such sorcery was able to foretell the future, bring dead back to life, functioned as sexual magic, etc. Freya, once the leader of the Vanir, is told to have taught Seithr to Odin.

6. Conclusion

The aim of my thesis was to inquire into the possibility of Neil Gaiman's retelling of the Norse myth, in *Norse Mythology*, being regarded as a work of adaptation. The conclusion I was hoping to arrive at, was the possible categorization of a retelling as a literary form, resultant of the process of adapting. In my thesis, I applied the theory of adaptation, as discussed in the works of Julie Sander and Linda Hutcheon, to Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*, which I attempted to analyse on several different levels. In my analysis of Gaiman's text, I looked at several tales as presented in *Norse Mythology*, and compared these to their counterparts in Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*. I analysed each *The Prose Edda* and *Norse Mythology* on the level of motif, narrative, and language, in order to determine whether Gaiman's work does attain for the core elements of Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*. In my analysis, I regarded *The Prose Edda* as the source narrative of Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*.

In my thesis, I decided to use the methodology, which could both support my research of adaptation, as well as of appropriation, while also supporting the development of my own theory of retelling, as being a form resultant of the process of adapting. In order to gain an understanding of an adapting, or an appropriating narrative, along with their constituent elements, I relied heavily on Julie Sander's *Adaptation and Appropriation*, a work, which employs itself with discussing the differences between the pair. Nevertheless, I also applied information published in Linda Hutcheon's *Theory of Adaptation*, to discuss the possible adaptation of a literary text into another forms of media. In both *Adaptation and Appropriation* and *Theory of Adaption*, I was able to find data supporting my presupposed categorization of retelling as a literary form.

Furthermore, in order to be able to establish an idea of retelling as a form of adaptation, I tried to discuss the phenomena constituent of adaptation, both as a literary process, and as a literary form. With regard to Julie Sander's *Adaptation and Appropriation*, I discussed the nature of an appropriating narrative, while also presenting a categorization of an appropriation as being a literary form, instead of a literary process. Once I gathered enough data concerning each an adapting, and an appropriating narrative, I was able to apply said data to a retelling narrative. While discussing the retelling narrative as a literary form, I was also able to add a number of original ideas, considering the categorization of a retelling. In the end, I was able to

arrive at the conclusion of each an adapting, an appropriating, and a retelling narrative appearing on a single spectrum, i.e. I was able to categorize each of these as being a separate form, resultant of the process of adapting.

However, in order to apply the definition of retelling as a literary form to Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*, I resolved to utilize Joseph Campbell's *The Masks of God: Primitive Mythologies*, in order to arrive at a definition of myth which could further support the aim of my thesis. In doing so, I was able to discuss the origin and the nature of myth, mostly in the way in which it appears in religion, in religious mythology. Using Claude Lévi-Strauss' *Myth and Meaning*, I was able to establish the origin of myth to have been in time before the invention of writing, which is a theory resonant also with that of Joseph Campbell's. In such sense, I could utilize Campbell's idea of myth's origin. In utilizing Campbell's work, I managed to establish the property of myth as being built on the Jungian notion of an archetype. In conclusion, I arrived at the notion of religious myth often being based on archetypal imagery, especially on an anthropomorphic representation of universal phenomena.

Nevertheless, since many of the constituent phenomena of myth may also appear in genres outside of myth, I decided to use William Bascom's "The Forms of Folklore: Primitive Mythologies," an article published in *The Journal of American Folklore*. Through this article, I was able to establish the difference between a myth, a legend, and a folktale, which further supported my thesis' development in the practical section. Once I have consulted the works of Joseph Campbell, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and William Bascom, I was able to establish a definition of myth, which I would use in my analysis of Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*. In such way, I was able to contemplate the nature of myth on the level of myth's constituent phenomena. In discussing myth, I tied to focus on both the phenomena, which appear as invariable in myth, as well as those, which are culturally conditioned. In the end, I was able to derive three main, constituent motifs of a myth, which I could later apply to each *The Prose Edda*, and *Norse Mythology*.

Having established the methodology which would be used, I was able to approach the research into Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*. Firstly, I decided to analyse Gaiman's *Norse Mythology* with regard to Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*, on the level of narrative. In order to do this, I selected a story, appearing both in *The Prose Edda* and *Norse Mythology*. Having selected a story appearing in both works, I was able to discuss the similarities between the two, as well as the differences. I analysed the elements of the source narrative deleted by Gaiman, which were either redundant, or

which complicated the both the source, and the retelling narrative. Nevertheless, I also managed to analyse the material added by Gaiman, which, in regard to *The Prose Edda*'s narrative structure, consist mainly of additional exposition.

Secondly, I analysed the retelling aspect of Gaiman's text on the level of language. In order to do this, I repeated the aforementioned approach to both the source narrative and the retelling. Having selected a story apparent in both *The Prose Edda* and *Norse Mythology*, I discussed the language used in the writing of the said stories. Briefly, I discussed the formulation of the source narrative's sentences. I was able to arrive at a conclusion of Gaiman's usage of adapting techniques making the retelling narrative a more palatable, and a more contemporary one. In doing so, I also criticized Sturluson's confusing sentence structure, as well as the author's tendency to write in a convoluted and, at times, even an impenetrable manner. Nevertheless, the main focus of my research was Gaiman's addition, and the use of dialogue. By analysing Gaiman's use of dialogue, I was able to establish, that many of Sturluson's lengthy descriptions lend themselves to being transcribed into dialogue. Such transcription, therefore, is able to make *The Prose Edda* a more relatable, realistic one.

Finally, using the data discussed earlier in the text, I was able to analyse Gaiman's work on the level of the mythical motifs apparent in both *The Prose Edda* and *Norse Mythology*. At first, I discussed the presence of mythical motifs in the work of Snorri Sturluson, categorizing these as such. In such manner, I relied on my prior analysis of myth. Having identified the said motifs in Sturluson's work, I was able to compare *The Prose Edda* to Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*. I compared the two works in order to find out, whether the same, or, at least, similar motifs appear in Gaiman's retelling of the *The Prose Edda*, or whether they are lacking from the retelling narrative completely. In the end, I was able to establish the presence of both the same, and similar mythical motifs in the work of Neil Gaiman. Furthermore, I was also able identify additional, better realized motifs in Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*, which, again, I found to render Gaiman's narrative as being a more cohesive, complete one.

In the end, I was able to conclude Gaiman's *Norse Mythology* as being a retelling of *The Prose Edda*. Furthermore, I also managed to establish Gaiman's retelling of the Norse myth as being a literary form, resultant of the process of adapting. Using techniques of the adapting process, Gaiman was able to both elaborate on Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda* and update it, with both added and deleted material. Nevertheless, Gaiman's retelling does never stray away from the source enough for it to

constitute an adaptation, or, an appropriation. In such way, I am confident in my categorization of retelling as a form of adaptation, as I was able to point out each point of the methodology I used successfully on Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*.

7. Resumé

V úvodní kapitole mé bakalářské práce, nazvané „Úvod", se zabývám zařazením spisovatele Neila Gaimana v kulturním povědomí současné literatury, a označuji jej za autora postmoderny. Díky příkladům z Gaimanovy tvorby docházím k závěru, že je to zejména jeho využívání postmoderních technik, jako jsou pastiš, ironie a intertextualita, co jej řadí k postmoderním autorům. S ohledem na díla jako jsou Američtí bohové, Anansiho chlapci či Sandman, poukazuji na to, že se ve své tvorbě často opírá o již ztvárněné příběhy, které poté adaptuje a přizpůsobuje, tak aby vyhovovaly jak jeho vlastním, tak i Gaimanovu originálnímu narativu. V podobném duchu také představuji Gaimanovu knihu Severská mytologie, v které se naopak nesnaží změnit původní příběh (konkrétně tedy knihu Prozaická Edda Snorriho Sturlursona).

Místo toho Gaiman v Severské mytologii převypráví původní příběh a snaží se co nejtěsněji držet originálu a zároveň k němu přidává další informace, čímž z něj vytváří mnohem ucelenější a soudržnější dílo. Dále se v úvodní kapitole mé bakalářské práce zabývám otázkou, zda by Gaimanovo převyprávění norského mýtu v Severské mytologii mohlo být označeno jako forma adaptace a odkazuji se na práce Julie Sandersové a Lindy Hutcheonové, které se zabývaly studiem adaptace a apropriace.

Ve druhé kapitole mé práce nazvané „Úvod do mýtu" se zabývám původem mýtu a pojetím mýtu jako žánru. Nejprve popisuji původ mýtu, jehož historie sahá do dávné minulosti, kdy se, dávno před vynálezem písma, formovala prvotní lidská společenství. Druhá sekce této kapitoly, nazvaná „O vzniku mýtu", je vystavěna na díle Josepha Campbella „The Masks of God: Primitive Mythologies" a také na úryvcích z díla Claude Lévi-Strausse a Williama Bascoma. Mimo to, se také zabývá pojetím mýtu jako literárního žánru. Kromě zkoumání původu mýtu jako žánru, jsem se snažil projednat a stanovit další možné jevy, z kterých se mýtus skládá; jak jevy klíčové, tak i ty kulturně podmíněné. Celou kapitolu uzavírá diskuze o možném nekonečném opakování mýtu a také výčet jevů, které jsou nezbytné pro jeho existenci, pokud by došlo na změnu jeho formy.

Hlavním cílem třetí kapitoly nazvané „Adaptace jako literární proces, adaptace jako literární forma" je projednání rozdílu mezi adaptací jako literárním procesem a adaptací jako literární formou, čímž bude čtenáři představena teorie adaptace, která bude později použita k zavedení pojmu převyprávění jako podtypu nebo jako formy vycházející z procesu adaptace. V této kapitole se tedy budu zabývat dichotomií

termínu „adaptace". Při formování této kapitoly jsem z velké části vycházel z knihy „Adaptation and Appropriation" od Julie Sanderové a částečně z knihy „A Theory of Adaptation" od Lindy Hutcheonové. Ve třetí kapitole mé bakalářské práce bych chtěl dojít k závěru, v kterém bude pojem „adaptace" sloužit jako termín označující dva rozdílné koncepty, tedy popisující adaptaci jako literární proces nebo samotnou literární formu. Dále také projednávám o rozdílu mezi adaptací, apropriací a převyprávěním, kde každý představuje literární formu.

Ve čtvrté kapitole s názvem „Úvod ke knize Prozaická Edda od Snorriho Sturlursona" je představeno dílo Prozaická Edda od Snorriho Sturlusona, které je vnímáno jako soudržný celek. Dále se v kapitole projednává původ Prozaické Eddy ve 13. století, jakožto přepisu norského mýtu, který byl zaznamenán z ústního podání. Na přepisu norského mýtu se snažím poukázat na mýtické jevy, které jsou Prozaické Eddě vlastní, a jež budou později porovnány s těmi obsaženými v Severské mytologii Neila Gaimana. V této části se vracím k diskusi o mýtu, představenému ve 2. kapitole, a aplikuji výslednou definici mýtu na dílo Snorriho Sturlusona.

Pátá kapitola nazvaná „Převyprávění jako forma adaptace v Severské mytologii Neila Gaimana", pojednává o Gaimanově převyprávění Prozaické Eddy v Severské mytologii, které analyzuji s užitím informací prezentovaných v předchozích částech práce. Srovnáním Gaimanovy Severské mytologie se Sturlusonovou Prozaickou Eddou předkládám možnost, že Gaimanův text vznikl jako převyprávění Sturlusonovy Prozaické Eddy. Dále analyzuji dílo Gaimana a Sturlusona na úrovni narativu, motivu a tématu. Později v kapitole polemizuji nad tím, zda Gaimanovo dílo přidává k původnímu příběhu doplňující informace, čímž by se z Prozaické Eddy stalo ucelenější dílo.

Ve druhé části závěrečné kapitoly, s názvem „Využití jazyka v Severské mytologii Neila Gaimana", porovnávám Gaimanovo používání jazyka s jazykem ve Snorriho Prozaické Eddě, přičemž poukazuji na význam Gaimanova doplněného dialogu, používání kratšího a modernějšího jazyka a také vynechání zdlouhavé expozice. V závěrečné části páté kapitoly se zabývám přítomností mýtických jevů v Gaimanově Severské mytologii a sleduji mýtickou kvalitu možného přetvoření původního příběhu do Gaimanovy tvorby. Aby bylo možné dospět k závěru, je takové pozorování založeno na důkladném čtení jak Gaimanovy Severské mytologie, tak Prozaické Eddy Snorriho Sturlusona. Následně porovnávám Gaimanovo převyprávění s

původní podobou mýtu v Prozaické Eddě, abych zjistil, zda je Gaimanova Severské mytologie mýtickým dílem.

8. Annotation

The theme of my thesis is the possibility of categorizing retelling as a form resultant of the literary process of adaptation. I analyse the theme on the basis of data published in the work of Julie Sanders and Linda Hutcheon, who employ themselves with the study of adaptation, and of appropriation. Furthermore, the theme is analysed on the basis of mythical motif, which is discussed on the basis of the work of Joseph Campbell, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and William Bascom, whose works discuss and analyse mythology. The theme is then discussed with regard to Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology*, and Snorri Sturluson's *The Prose Edda*.

Key words: Neil Gaiman, Norse Mythology, Snorri Sturluson, The Prose Edda, Snorri's Edda, myth, meaning, adaptation, appropriation, retelling, form, motif

9. Anotace

Tématem mé bakalářské práce je možná kategorizace převyprávění jako formy literární adaptace. Téma převyprávění analyzuji na základě údajů, které byly publikovány v díle Julie Sandersové a Lindy Hutcheonové, zabývající se studiem adaptace a apropriace. Dále dané téma analyzuji na základě mýtu jako literárního motivu, o kterém pojednávám na základě prací Josepha Campbella, Clauda Lévi-Strausse a Williama Bascoma, kterých zaměřením je zejména analýza mytologie a mýtu. O daném tématu potom diskutuji při ohledu na „Severskou mytologii" Neila Gaimana a „Prozaickou Eddu" Snorriho Sturlusona.

Klíčová slova: Neil Gaiman, Severská mytologie, Snorri Sturluson, Prozaická Edda, Snorriho Edda, mýtus, význam, adaptace, apropriace, převyprávění, forma, motiv

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