CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusion

In *Circe* (2018), Miller takes the story of an infamous antagonistic witch and shows her as a complex character vilified because she is a victim of patriarchy. Yet despite her struggles, Circe continues to pave her own path in controlling her life by asserting her agency. Thus, Miller goes against the notion that ancient Greek myths are inherently rooted in a patriarchal supremacy belief. Circe's character here reflects McClure's description of how Greek literary traditions gravitate towards female characters who defy gender norms and expectations. As such, this thesis identifies and analyses the agents and victims of patriarchy in this novel to analyse the workings of the patriarchal system within this novel, which will then highlight how Circe's assertion of her agency challenges the patriarchy and its norms.

In applying Sylvia Walby's structure of patriarchy, this thesis discovers that there are seven victims of patriarchy and four agents of patriarchy. However, this thesis focuses only on five victims of patriarchy (the nymphs, Circe, Pasiphaë, Perse, and Scylla) and three agents of patriarchy (the male gods, Helios, and Odysseus). This is due to how the additional two victims of patriarchy—Penelope and the slave girls—are discovered through analysing Odysseus as an agent of the

patriarchy. Similarly, the fourth agent of patriarchy, Perses, is discovered by analysing Pasiphaë as a victim of patriarchy.

This thesis also discovers that there are overlappings in some structures. When analysing the nymphs, this thesis discovers that the structure of patriarchal relations in sexuality and male violence here are interlocked because nymphs are commonly sexualised and objectified, and by reducing nymphs as sexual objects, they become the targets and victims of male violence. Similarly, in analysing Circe as a victim of patriarchy through male violence, this thesis discovers that it also overlaps with the patriarchal structure in relation to the state. Circe's rape is a result of systematic patriarchy due to the lack of accountability and persecution of committed male violence by the state, making the state becomes at fault as they are the perpetrators of such violence. The interconnectedness of these structures proves how the patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices that dominate women and how the six structures Walby presented affect one another.

To break free of patriarchal social structures, Beauvoir states that there are four strategies a woman can employ to break free of their immanence to reach transcendence: going to work, becoming an intellectual, working to achieve social transformation, and refusing to internalise otherness. This thesis discovers that in this novel, one character employs all four strategies in reaching their transcendence, and that is Circe. Circe's actions in asserting her agency follow these four strategies as a means to take control of her own life. Following Beauvoir's four strategies, Circe asserts her agency by working through her magic,

embracing intellectualism through her continuous learning of her magical prowess, striving for a social transformation by protecting her son, and rejecting the role of the "other" imposed by the gods and accepts herself as the object.

By having agency, Circe became the subject capable of making and enacting her own decisions. Circe is no longer "the other" or "the object" in striving for transcendence but rather the subject. Furthermore, by breaking free of her immanence, Circe's quest to assert her agency then ultimately challenges the patriarchy, as Circe no longer abides by patriarchal structures and its norms and rules. As per Trites' statement, Circe's character shows a striking contrast from the beginning of the novel to the end.

5.2 Suggestions

In expanding the analysis of this thesis, future studies could apply the Hero's Journey. Knowing how Circe originates from *The Odyssey* and is commonly known for her depiction as an evil witch, applying the Hero's Journey theory to Miller's *Circe* (2018) could illustrate a significant transformation of Circe's narrative from being traditionally depicted as an antagonist to a protagonist.

Furthermore, with the rise of feminist-esque mythological retellings being published, future studies could also discuss this novel or other feminist retellings of Classical mythologies written by female authors using Gynocriticism. Studying this topic could help discover the untold stories of female characters who are often forgotten or vilified in classical myths. This could prove the significance of how

women in ancient myths, particularly ancient Greek myths, are not damsels in distress but rather powerful women with agencies of their own.