



Revisionist Mythmaking: Carol Ann Duffy's "Eurydice" from *The World's Wife*

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Carol Ann Duffy,
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Abstract

This study aims to analyze Carol Ann Duffy's poem "Eurydice" which appeared in her poetry collection, *The World's Wife*, in the light of the 'Revisionist Mythmaking' technique. Introduced by Alicia Ostriker, 'Revisionist Mythmaking' has been employed by postmodern women poets to challenge the stereotypical portrayal of females who have been ignored, oppressed, and abused in myth and literature. Duffy's "Eurydice", which uses the rewriting/subversion technique of the myth of Eurydice and Orpheus, is a work that offers alternative perspectives on history. Unlike in the old myth in which Orpheus is the protagonist, Duffy makes Eurydice the heroine and gives her a voice, allowing her to write her poem. Eurydice speaks directly to the reader, expressing her desires, frustrations, and ultimately, her quest for autonomy. Duffy's innovative approach to classical mythology breathes new life into old tales and invites readers to question the ingrained cultural narratives.

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Revizyonist Mit Oluşturma: Carol Ann Duffy'nin *The World's Wife* Eserinden "Eurydice"

Anahtar

Kelimeler

Carol Ann Duffy,
Revizyonist Mit
Oluşturma, Kadın
Edebiyatı,
Cinsiyet, Mitoloji.

Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı Carol Ann Duffy'nin 1999 yılında yayımladığı şiir koleksiyonu, *The World's Wife*, içinde yer alan "Eurydice" başlıklı şiirini 'Revizyonist Mit Yaratımı' tekniği ışığında incelemektir. Amerikalı şair Alicia Ostriker tarafından ortaya atılan ve postmodern kadın şairler tarafından kullanılan bu teknik, tarihte, mitlerde ve edebiyatta ikinci planda bırakılmış kadın sterotiplerine meydan okuyarak onları çürütmektedir. Ovid'in *Metamorposes* adlı öyküsel şiirindeki Eurydice ve Orpheus mit'inin yeniden yazma/ yıkma tekniğinin kullanıldığı Duffy'nin "Eurydice" adlı şiiri geleneksel anlatılara meydan okuyan ve tarihe alternatif bakış açıları sunan bir eserdir. Ovid'in eserinde başkahraman olan Orpheus'un aksine Duffy şiirinde karısını yani Eurydice'i ana karakter yapar ve ona ses vererek kendi şiirini yazmasına olanak verir. Böylece, Eurydice, arzularını, hayal kırıklıklarını ve nihayetinde benlik/kimlik arayışını ifade ederek doğrudan okuyucuyla konuşma şansını elde eder. Duffy'nin klasik mitolojiye yenilikçi bir yaklaşım sunarak eski masallara yeni bir soluk getirmekte, aynı zamanda okuyucuları kökleşmiş kültürel anlatıları yeniden düşünmeye ve sorgulamaya davet etmektedir.

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1. Introduction

Carol Ann Duffy is a renowned British poet who is celebrated for her innovative style and masterful exploration of contemporary themes through her writings. She held the position of the first female Poet Laureate in the United Kingdom in 2009 and she wrote several poems on a variety of topics, including national events of the country. In her conversation with Wroe, she says that “I think all poets, to a greater or lesser degree, need to have a finger on the national pulse. Poetry provides an important alternative voice to journalists or pundits or academics as a way of dealing with things that matter to us all” (Wroe, 2014, para. 1). As a prolific writer, she was granted many awards for her poetry collections such as the Whitbread Poetry Award for “Mean Time” (1993), the Costa Book Award for “The Bees” (2011) and she also received honours such as the Forward Prize and the T. S. Eliot Prize. Apart from holding the post of the first female Poet Laureate, it was the same year that she was named as the first openly lesbian poet. Traces of her childhood – Scottish born with Irish origin -, her amalgamation with British culture, her sexual orientation all lie at the core of Duffy’s unique poetry, which is the exploration of diverse themes and characters. Through her poetry, she perpetuates the female characters who are portrayed as weak, silenced, invisible, and oppressed by excluding their fixed, canonical, and stereotypical representations.

Published in 1999, Duffy’s seminal work, *The World’s Wife*, is a collection of poems in which she reimagines the mythical or historical stories and gives voice to the stereotypical female characters through subversive language. Considered to be included in third-wave feminism, Duffy subverts “the original stories which have male narrators and voices as protagonists [and] unmask women’s perpetual problems stemming from their subordinate positions to men” (Azaklı, 2023: 1) in *The World’s Wife*. There are thirty poems in the collection and the characters are from “[...] fairytales, Bible stories, legends, modern horrors and ancient myths” (Winterson, 2015), including the poems “Little Red-Cap,” “Mrs. Darwin,” “Anne Hathaway,” “Medusa,” “Mrs. Rip Van Winkle,” “Penelope,” and others. This study aims to examine Duffy’s poetic choices, and thematic concerns in “Eurydice,” which appeared in *The World’s Wife* through the lens of revisionist mythmaking, devised and explained by the American scholar Alicia Ostriker in 1982.

2. Myth and Literature

Derived from the Greek word ‘mythos’, myth “is a story which is not 'true' and which involves supernatural beings - or at any rate supra-human beings. Myth is always concerned with creation. Myth explains how something came to co-exist” (Cuddon, 1999: 526). These creation stories can be viewed as foundational texts for they enabled certain groups of people to explain how the universe was created. Thus, having their origin from ancient times, myths can also be viewed as fundamental stories to establish some social, political, and cultural norms, standards, values, or traditions in society, including gender roles. In his seminal work, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), Northrop Frye claims that all genres in literature stem from mythology. By pointing out the close similarity between myth and literature, he states that:

Every society has a verbal culture, which includes folk songs, folk tales, work songs, legends and the like. As it develops a special group of stories, the stories we call myths, begin to crystallize in the centre of this verbal culture. These stories are taken with particular seriousness by their society, because they express something deep in the society's belief or visions of its situation and destiny. Myths unlike other types of stories, stick together to form a mythology [...]. Literature as we know it, as a body of writings, always develops out of the mythical framework of this kind. (Frye, 1990: 443)

Accordingly, myths have the power to shape a society's culture, social norms, beliefs, and attitudes to life due to their affinity with literature. In his comprehensive work, Craig Barnes makes a deep analysis of ancient myths beginning from Minoan culture to Greek and Roman myths. He scrutinizes the social and cultural life of Minoans in which "the feminine was uniformly honored", the women are regarded as "in the center" and even there was no case for women "chased by men in the heat of passion" (Barnes, 2006: 21). He claims that in old myths Mother Earth was associated with fertility and fecundity, representing a matrilineal society; however, due to the changes in the social conditions, and the emergence of a warlike society, her symbolic meaning as the representative of fertility and creative power vanished. He points out that:

the earlier cultures of the ancient world (including the Minoan world) had been matriarchies. [...] it was common to embellish these theories with the hypothesis that there had been at one time a single earth mother or a single goddess religion [...]. The matriarchies and the goddess religions were [...] deposed as a result of incoming invasions of Indo-Europeans who had been warlike and patriarchal. The theory was that these invaders were nomadic and accustomed to killing and that they brought with them horses and war chariots. (Barnes, 2006: 68)

As pointed out by Barnes in the above quotation, the reversal of power relations among the gender roles resulted in the "oppression and subordination, ridicule and killing, and physical and psychological abuse" (Barnes, 2006: 8) of women in the social order. Focusing on the influence of patriarchal notions embedded in Western myths which dictate strict rules, norms, and unchangeable constructs, Barnes says that:

Before the myths, women had been portrayed benignly, after the myths they were portrayed as dangerous. Whereas before the myths battles had not been glorified, after the myths battles and heroes came to center stage. Whereas before the myths nature was represented hopefully and expectantly through flowers and bees and snakes and monkeys, after the myths nature was given the shape of angry, erratic, and vengeful gods represented by thunderbolts and earthquakes, while symbolic snakes were turned vengeful and demonic. These changes were ushered in by a massive storytelling campaign that provided the intellectual and psychological climate for a patriarchal property system. Within that system, as a result, women and their sexuality had to be suppressed, the

view of nature and war had to be changed, and man's relation to time had to be reoriented. (Barnes, 2006: 7)

Accordingly, for the construction of prescribed gender roles and refusing females as autonomous beings, myths have served as a comprehensive framework for literature through centuries. In *Feminist Companion to Mythology*, Carolyne Larrington notes that “myth has been appropriated by politicians, psychiatrists, and artists, among others, to tell us what we are and where we have come from. [...] female figures have too often been viewed reductively, purely in terms of their sexual function, and thus confined in a catch-all category labeled fertility (Larrington, 1992: ix). By claiming that myths “seem an inhospitable terrain for a woman writer” (Ostriker, 1982: 71), Ostriker criticizes how the existing Western mythical stories are full of “the conquering gods and heroes, the deities of pure thought.” In this respect, while the masculinity of Zeus, Hercules, Demeter, Artemis, Poseidon, etc. control the myths by being represented as brave, courageous supra-human beings, the same myths, in contrast, represent “sexually wicked Venus, Circe, Pandora, Helen, Medea, Eve, and the virtuously passive Iphigenia, Alcestis, Mary, Cinderella. It is thanks to myth we believe that woman must be either “angel” or “monster” (Ostriker, 1982: 71). In this respect, while mythologies have been celebrating the masculinity and power of men, women have always been represented as subordinated figures to men. Their roles, duties, and responsibilities have been dictated in myths to influence society's expectations and images in order to conceptualize an idealized woman figure. Thus, one of the most frequent uses of myths is to establish gender roles and show how the social roles of men and women are represented.

3. Revisionist Mythmaking: A Survey

Since the portrayals and experiences of women have been represented in Western mythical stories as stereotypical and traditional, their uniqueness and active roles have been ignored and subjugated. They have been confined to silence and marginalization by patriarchal literature/myths and they have been assigned restricted roles such as wives, sisters, lovers, and mothers perpetually. They have been mostly portrayed as weak, secondary, or submissive to their oppressors. However, beginning with the Suffragette Movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, feminist writers and critics rejected the inferior stereotypical representations and classification of women by male authors in the social arena and the literary texts and began to recognize their own artistic and creative abilities and articulate women discourses inherent to women only. Many feminist writers and critics began to articulate a distinctive language, female language/discourse, created for women only. So, the violated stories and histories of women by the patriarchal myths and discourses have found the chance to reconstruct their language and narrative that has been silenced for a long time.

Emerged in the second feminist wave's women writings, women writers and critics started to challenge the established gender dichotomies by producing immaculate critical works. In her essay, “Towards a Feminist Poetics”, the American feminist writer Elaine Showalter coined the term ‘gynocriticism’ “to construct a female framework for the analysis of women's literature, to develop new models based on the study of female experience, rather than to adapt male models and theories”

(Showalter,1979: 11). Showalter writes that “gynocritics begins when women free themselves from the linear absolutes of male literary history and when stop trying to fit in the lines of male traditions” (Showalter,1979: 11). Like Showalter’s ‘gynocriticism’, the French feminist critic and poststructuralist Hélène Cixous proposed the term “‘écriture féminine’ in her groundbreaking article “The Laugh of the Medusa” (1976). She encouragingly says that “a woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies-for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal” (Cixous, 1976: 875). By opposing the male authors, who have created stereotypical representations of women characters in literary texts for years, she proclaims the imperativeness of escaping the traditional and patriarchal categorizations of women in canonical works. Unlike in the original myth in which Medusa is decapitated, Cixous reinterprets Medusa from a feminist outlook and states that “You only have to look at the Medusa straight on to see her. And she's not deadly. She's beautiful and she's laughing” (Cixous, 1976: 885).

Larrington says that “Mythology, the study of myth, introduces us to new ways of looking at social structures, so that we can examine constants and variables in the organization of human society, in particular [...] women’s roles across different cultures and historical periods” (Larrington, 1992: ix). Accordingly, by focusing on the female experiences in literary texts, many contemporary women authors and poets adopted and generated new techniques to subvert and respond to the oppressive discourse of patriarchal society. In this respect, feminist mythmaking became one of the fields of feminist writers to create a counterattack to subvert the Western mythical stories in which “all the stories about monstrous women, about creatures who are too gross, too angry, too devious, too grasping, too smart for their good, are stories told by men” (Zimmerman, 2021, p. 10). So, the criticism of canonical myths through the lens of feminist mythmaking “calls for the re-examination of the canonical texts and the recovery of the lost texts that couldn’t make their way into the canon and the raising of awareness about their context in a multicultural and multidisciplinary approach” (Dörschel, 2011: 100).

The efforts and energy of feminist artists to regenerate women's discourse is expressed by Adrienne Rich in her renowned poem, “Diving into the Wreck (1973).” In her poem, by diving into the ocean of men-made history, the speaker wants to “explore the wreck” to unveil “the damage that was done” by the androcentric discourses. By criticizing the dominant discourse of patriarchy, Rich points out the necessity and importance of creating a new female discourse since the “book of myths / in which / our names do not appear” (Rich, 1973: 23-24).

The contemporary Canadian author, Margaret Atwood’s *The Penelopiad* (2005) is a landmark work that touches on the issue of feminist revisionist mythmaking. Famous for re-writing fairy tales from a feminist perspective throughout her writing career, Atwood’s *The Penelopiad* is an inspirational work in which she used postmodern narrative techniques to re-construct Homer’s myth of Penelope and Odysseus. To this end, by questioning the literary tradition of Homer, considered to be the father of epic tradition in canon, Atwood “haunts The Odyssey and enables us to ‘hear’ the oppressed female characters who have not been given a chance to speak” (Köroğlu, 2022: 588).

Devised by the American poet and scholar Alicia Suskind Ostriker in her article “The Thieves of Language: Women Poets and the Revisionist Mythmaking (1982),” the strategy of “revisionist mythmaking” allows women poets to redefine and reclaim how female characters are portrayed in myths, which in turn helps them to transcend the prescribed gender roles and rectify a canonical legacy which is dominated by patriarchal discourse. Ostriker states that:

whenever a poet employs a figure or story previously accepted and defined by culture, the poet is using myth, and the potential is always present that the use will be revisionist: that is, the figure or tale will be appropriated for altered ends, the old vessel filled with new wine, initially satisfying the thirst of the individual poet but ultimately making cultural change possible. (Ostriker, 1982: 72)

Thus, feminist revisionist mythmaking calls for an awareness of the established gender roles that perpetuate men as ‘rational, strong, protective, and decisive,’ while women are perceived as ‘emotionally irrational, incompetent, weak, nurturing, and submissive.’ Ostriker states that “since the core of revisionist mythmaking for women poets lies in the challenge to and correction of gender stereotypes embodied in myth, revisionism in its simplest form consists of hit-and-run attacks on familiar images and the social and literary conventions supporting them” (Ostriker, 1982: 74).

Considered to be included in third-wave feminism, Carol Ann Duffy engages in “revisionist mythmaking,” in her poetry collection, *The World’s Wife*, and subverts the conventional portrayal of the mythical Eurydice, who is described as a passive victim of patriarchy. By employing revisionist mythmaking, Duffy challenges traditional narratives and offers a fresh perspective on the characters and themes within the myth because “revisionist mythmaking in women’s poetry may offer [us] one significant means of redefining ourselves and consequently our culture” (Ostriker, 1982: 71). The feminist critique Adrienne Rich defines revision as “the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction” (Rich, 1972: 18). So, looking back for women writers includes specifically the texts that feminist critics call grand narratives that are the ones produced under the male hegemony and they have been constantly ensuring the continuation of those ideologies that aim to otherize, objectify, pacify, and typecast women.

By focusing on many renowned women writers who employed revisionist mythmaking in their works, Ostriker states that “the old stories are changed, changed utterly, by female knowledge of female experience, so that they can no longer stand as foundations of collective male fantasy” (Ostriker, 1982: 73). Seller expresses that feminist rewriting of old myths is “not only a matter of weaving in new images and situations but also involves the task of excavation, sifting through the layerings of adverse patriarchal renderings from which women were excluded, marginalized or depicted negatively to salvage and reinterpret as well as discard” (Sellers, 2001: 22). Thus, revisionist mythmaking has the potential to enrich the understanding of history, it also raises questions about the reliability of historical accounts and the implications of rewriting the past.

4. The World and Myth of Eurydice

Appeared as the twenty-fourth poem in her poetry collection, "Eurydice" is a poem that tells the story of how Eurydice made Orpheus look back and stay in the Underworld consciously unlike in the original myth. In the original myth, Eurydice's role is largely limited to being Orpheus's beloved wife who tragically succumbs to death. Duffy, however, imbues Eurydice with agency and a distinctive voice, empowering her to articulate her perspectives and experiences. This shift challenges the patriarchal narrative that has historically marginalized women in classical myths.

In *The World's Wife*, Duffy assumes the technique of dramatic monologue, in which "[t]he character is speaking to an identifiable but silent listener at a dramatic moment in the speaker's life" (Holman 1980: 141). Since "dramatic monologues offer a convenient framework for staging the performance of the role-reversals of the mythical women" (Rahman, 2018: 89), Eurydice takes control of narrating her untold story and rejects the labels loaded upon her by the patriarchal discourses. Thus, by employing the dramatic monologue technique in the poem that would disrupt the traditional perceptions of mythology, Duffy chooses "a poetic medium that displaced the focus from her own marginal identity to unheard or un-hearable voices" (Goursaud, 2019: 19).

The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is a well-known tale from Ovid's "Metamorphoses," a narrative poem that explores various myths and transformations. The story revolves around Orpheus, a gifted musician and poet, and his beloved wife Eurydice. In Ovid's "Metamorphoses," Orpheus and Eurydice are deeply in love, but their happiness is short-lived when Eurydice is bitten by a venomous serpent and dies. Devastated by the loss of his wife, Orpheus decided to descend into the Underworld to retrieve her. Armed with his extraordinary musical talents, he charmed the gods and even persuaded Hades, the ruler of the Underworld, to allow Eurydice to return to the world of the living. However, there was a condition attached to this mercy – Orpheus had to lead Eurydice out of the Underworld without looking back at her until they reached the surface. Unfortunately, in a moment of doubt and anxiety, Orpheus glanced back to ensure Eurydice was following him, breaking the condition. As a consequence, Eurydice was lost to him forever, condemned to remain in the Underworld.

As it is narrated in the old myth, Eurydice loses her chance to return to the world of living due to the 'male gaze' that traditionally objectifies and disregards female identity. First coined by the British feminist film scholar Laura Mulvey to denote how women are portrayed in films, the term "male gaze" has soon been adopted by different fields of study, including literature. As put by Mulvey, women, under the male gaze in films/theatre/literary texts are reduced to a passive object:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy onto the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact. (Mulvey, 1975: 808)

To this end, in the old myth, Eurydice's victimization/objectification under Orpheus's gaze refers to her limitation and dependency on the dominant culture. While her role is limited to being the beloved wife of Orpheus in the original myth, Eurydice, in Duffy's work, is given the chance to be a distinctive voice who can articulate her feelings and experiences freely.

In patriarchal order, literature/discourse/language is considered to be the fortification of a phallogocentric worldview in which women's roles are limited to being either wife, lover, or mother. At the beginning of Ovid's "Metamorphoses," Eurydice is introduced as "the bride" (Ovid, 2018: 234) however, in Duffy's "Eurydice," she never mentions her stereotypical role dictated by traditional and normative discourses. As the feminist theorist, Patricia Waugh, puts it, in male-dominated literature "language is masculine, articulating a male ideology and a male view of the world [...] in language, the female difference was suppressed until only the male 'norm' remained as the sole voice" (Waugh, 2006). So, by making a revolutionary step to shackle the existing dominant discourse in traditional myths, she gives a revised identity to Eurydice who was assigned to take the role of a limited and passive wife of Orpheus in the old myth.

In Duffy's poem, Eurydice is assigned to take the central character instead of a courageous and powerful hero, Orpheus in Ovid's "Metamorphoses." So, she is given the chance to retell her story to the addressee and enables them to question the validity of the old myth in which she is just deemed to be Orpheus' wife (bride) as a passive victim. The mythical Orpheus is a poet who uses language as a medium to articulate his heroic poem to the world but in Duffy's poem, the Underworld is the "place where language stops" (Duffy, 2017: 58) because it is free from the language of hegemonic cultures, ideologies, power relations, and patriarchal discourses.

In the opening stanza of Duffy's revised poem, Eurydice calls out to the 'girls,' and implies that she is happy with her position in the Underworld since she is no longer the passive and submissive wife of Orpheus as in the living world.

*Girls, I was dead and down
in the Underworld, a shade,
a shadow of my former self, nowhen.
It was a place where language stopped,
a black full stop, a black hole
where words had to come to an end.
And end they did there,
last words,
famous or not.
It suited me down to the ground. (Duffy, 2017: 58)*

Escaped from the boundaries and dictated roles ascribed to her, Eurydice gets the chance to write her poetry in the Underworld in which "Eternal Repose" exists and,

“a girl would be safe / from the kind of a man / who follows her round” (Duffy, 2017: 58). So, deviating from the old myth, Duffy creates a renewed Eurydice who assures the reader that “I’d rather speak for myself / than be Dearest, Beloved, Dark Lady, White Goddess” (Duffy, 2017:59).

In the poem, Duffy takes an ironical stand when Eurydice points out the ability of Orpheus as a poet/creator, who is “writing poems” (Duffy, 2017: 60) while she is just deemed to be the Muse of his poetry. However, she, by undermining his poetic skill, refuses to be his silent muse and is imprisoned in

*his images, metaphors, similes,
octaves and sextets, quatrains and couplets,
elegies, limericks, villanelles,
histories, myths* (Duffy, 2017: 60).

In her interview with Wood, Duffy states that “in my poem Eurydice is settled in the underworld and quite happy not living with a male poet anymore because their life together had been consumed by his poetry and if she offered any criticism he’d sulk” (Wood, 2005).

One of the challenges of the speaker is when she points out that the poetry of “Big O.” (Duffy, 2017: 59) exists and has an effect in a patriarchal order; that is, written “for the men,” on the contrary, her poetry addresses to “girls” (Duffy, 2017: 58), who have been ignored in the man-made discourse. In “Eurydice,” Duffy “subverts the idea in the myth that Eurydice is the passive woman simply happy to be the object of a man’s desire and whim” (Devi, 2019: 170).

In the Victorian Period, there was a growth in the number of women writers; however, they were forced to write under male pseudonyms due to the policy of male publishers who refused to publish their monumental novels. In “Eurydice,” Duffy ironically makes a parallelism between the biased publishers of the Victorian age and the mythical Gods who ignore/disregard Goddesses for being demonic:

*the Gods are like publishers,
usually male,
and what you doubtless know of my tale
is the deal* (Duffy, 2017: 59).

In the following stanzas, the speaker recounts the mythical story of Eurydice and Orpheus but then she abruptly says that:

*Girls, forget what you've read
It happened like this
I did everything in my power
to make him look back.
What did I have to do, I said,
to make him see we were through?
I was dead. Deceased.
I was Resting in Peace. Passé. Late.
Past my sell-by date ...
I stretched out my hand
to touch him once
on the back of his neck.
Please let me stay.
But already the light had saddened from purple to grey.
It was an uphill schlep
from death to life
and with every step
I willed him to turn. (Duffy, 2017: 60)*

In Ovid's "Metamorphoses," Orpheus looks back to ensure that Eurydice is following him, and he loses Eurydice forever. Orpheus's failure is his inability to control his desires which ultimately leads to the irreversible loss of Eurydice forever. However, Eurydice, a resolute and courageous heroine, chooses her freedom to stay in the Underworld by making him look back at her consciously. Accordingly, the changing tone of Eurydice creates 'fiction in fiction' mode which is used as a common device for subverting the hegemonic voice of the canonical works. So, the tragic end for Orpheus in the old myth is actualized by Eurydice deliberately in Duffy's poem.

Thus, it is not the 'male gaze' of Orpheus who victimizes Eurydice to be thrown into the Underworld but her own free choice since she will achieve a chance to speak freely and to change her stereotypical image. As put by the poet in her interview with Wood, the last part of the poem includes "the best lines" since "that's the beginning of her [Eurydice's] own poem" (Wood, 2005). By deceiving Orpheus, "Eurydice gets her freedom from Orpheus: death. Even if she was already dead, she then had the chance to go back to the world of the living, yet she refuses such option in order to prove that she is not a passive object" (Nori, 2020: 76). Eventually, "[t]o be released from the psychological imprisonment of her oppressive husband, Eurydice must also escape from being theorized, enclosed

and encoded by a male discourse which cannot account for feminine experiences and perspective” (Pypeć, 2012: 101). Thus, by challenging the preconceived gender roles dictated by man-made discourses, Duffy succeeds in employing a revisionist mythmaking strategy that enables Eurydice to be the renewed heroine of the poem.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, revisionist mythmaking is a multifaceted phenomenon that challenges traditional narratives and offers alternative perspectives on history. Duffy’s collection of poems entitled *The World’s Wife* is a great example of what is called revisionist mythmaking in terms of converting old traditional texts or characters to more feminist and modern ones. In “Eurydice,” Duffy crafts a powerful and resilient character who refuses to be defined solely by her relationship with Orpheus or her tragic demise. Eurydice speaks directly to the reader, expressing her desires, frustrations, and ultimately, her quest for autonomy. By doing so, Duffy confronts the historical tendency to reduce women to passive roles within traditional narratives. Eurydice’s voice becomes a vehicle for challenging the silencing of female voices in mythology. Duffy’s poem delves into Eurydice’s newfound independence in the afterlife, where she discovers her voice and identity. This departure from the traditional narrative reinforces the importance of women’s autonomy and self-determination, encouraging readers to question and challenge societal expectations regarding women’s roles in relationships and beyond. Duffy breaks the stereotypical images of women in male-dominated literature. Duffy’s innovative approach to classical mythology not only breathes new life into ancient tales but also invites readers to reconsider and question ingrained cultural narratives. “Eurydice” stands as a testament to the power of poetry to reshape our understanding of the past and present, offering a fresh perspective on timeless themes. Eurydice as a woman speaks bravely about how she makes her own decisions and sets an example for female readers to follow her lead. Like other poems in the collection, this one is also worth digging for deeper meanings and has the potential for further research and analysis from different perspectives.

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