

Model Revision of Female Identity and Mythical Images in Modern Woman Poets' Fairy Tales: Anne Sexton and Carol Ann Duffy

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Abstract

This article explores the approaches that modern women poets use in their revised mythical notions to expose and implicate the inappropriate effects of patriarchal norms and conventions on women and gender inequality. This study addresses Anne Sexton and Carol Ann Duffy as modern woman poets who redefine archetypal myths and revise fairy tales to narrate the stories of those who have been left out of historical and cultural narratives within female characters. Sexton and Duffy shake up gender stereotypes with determined humorous plot complexities, allowing women to shed the secondary classic roles assigned to them. The female characters in the poems recapture their power through literary reconstruction, confronting male dominance and instilling guilt for feeling worthless. These modern women poets focus on what the female characters in their fairy tales think, feel, react, and decide what they look like in appearance, which is not employed in these writing norms in common fairy tales. Sexton and Duffy are the innovative versions of fairy tales, in which the poets not only satirize the patriarchal society in which they grew up but also reject the female stereotype that their upbringing assumed. This study examines the feminist messages that Sexton and Duffy's fairy tales intended to convey to reveal the poets' position on feminism and their relationship with the female role models and male characters they portray in their fairy tales. The findings confirm that these revising approaches and changing writing fairy tale norms can aid in creating a female identity and generate a critical return to the patriarchy's despotism discourse.

Keywords: Gender Stereotype, Fairytale, Myth, Model Revision, Female Identity

1. Introduction

Feminist criticism tends to revise fairy tales due to political and aesthetic changes. The author's feminist agenda exists which intends to change the image and notions of women in modern society. A feminist poet, Ostriker (1982) remarks the principal reason for revising fairy tales is to challenge and revise the gender stereotypes that these fairy tales embody. Feminism's political agenda, there are aesthetic motives related to the position of women authors in the literary canon. For centuries, women writers have been excluded from serious literary studies simply because they write personal poetry and remove the poet's self-rewriting established stories and gaining literary status (Ostriker, 1982). Mallon (2022) suggests classic fairy tales are flawed in a feminist narrative account of the challenges and opportunities.

In the 1970s, feminists devoted fairy tales a critical attention, breaking the magic that had captivated readers for centuries. By clarifying the role of fairy tales in cultural battles over gender, feminism has revolutionized the study of fairy tales and sparked debates that have changed the way society thinks about fairy tales and language. Fairy tales and feminism challenge and rethink conventional wisdom about fairy tale female heroes, offering new insights into the stories produced by modern women authors and storytellers. Fairy tales and feminism explore new texts and contexts beyond national and cultural boundaries that have restricted individuals understanding of fairy tales (Hasse, 2004). However, Jorgensen (2019) notes feminist folklorists have long argued that women's bodies are represented differently from men's bodies in fairy tales, in normative and sexist ways.

One of the works that inspired the reworking of fairy tales was Anne Sexton's *The Metamorphosis* (1971), which disillusioned Grimm's fairy tales. In his stories, Sexton satirizes traditional approaches of heroism, romance, and virtue, turning them into tales of greed, incest, and violence. Sexton's main motive is to explore subjects other than her difficult reality and her self-crisis, and she devotes most of her poetic energy to confessing the intimate details of her own life. However, Anne Sexton's personal life continued to influence fairy tale narratives, casting the same shadow of uncertainty and ambiguity on her attitudes toward characters who lived in fairy tales. The following discussion of fairy tales is the same as Sexton's early poetry has expressed, even though the poet insisted on a feminist position and sought to establish an objectivity that was lacking in her early poetry. Transformation is plagued by dilemmas and struggles for female identity. Dula (2021) also acknowledges the influence of Angela Carter and Anne Sexton in the late 20th-century fairy tale revival and the feminist desire to give voice to female characters. In keeping with the rise of feminist criticism in the 1970s, which challenged reductionist cultural and literary representations of women, they rewrote fairy tales and classic myths to promote the empowerment of women's roles in the patriarchal world. It undertakes the artistic task of questioning and denouncing norms and institutions, and gender equality.

Duplessis (1975) identifies Duffy and Sexton as a dual consciousness operating between traditional perceptions of women and criticism of their restrictive views of women. The current study adopts this duality and restriction in classic fairytales and Sexton and Duffy break fairytale-writing norms. The modern women poets' attempts to revise these erroneous perceptions are powerful re-drafts. This revision might be anti-mythical, documenting perceptions that classical myths are invalid and paralyzing to women. Mehrpouyan et al. (2014) stress that contemporary women writers reflect feminism and the elaboration of female identity in their work. Furthermore, the writer's movements, techniques, and thematic works aid the contemporary world in understanding women's issues and feminine notions in different circumstances and stages of life. Mehrpouyan and Zakeri (2023) add a free authorial personality, female states of mind, realist point of view, existentialist considerations, and human-centered observation in a patriarchal society are authorial reusing shapes in modern women's writing.

Ostriker (1982) aptly points to women poets, we look up to the sacred, we look up, but we do not look up and possibilities for a better world emerge. Cortés Vieco (2019) adopts the modern women poets turns into an ambiguous mirror that simultaneously reflects Sexton's self-image and that of other women.

This article examines the myth-making strategies of the female identities in Anne Sexton's chosen poems. Carol and Anne's Feminist revision attempt a great project involving many other poets and writers. The scope of this paper, however, is limited to these two literary figures due to the complementary perspectives they present and the common subversive techniques they adopt such as humorous and at times bathetic plot twists. Sexton and Duffy challenge gender stereotypes and confront male domination and incompetence through their literary work, allowing female characters to embrace their power. This paper assumes that these writing strategies aid in building independent female identities for women, artists, and non-artists, and generate the necessary critical responses to oppressive discourses of hegemonic masculinity. These reactions can incorporate the characteristics characterized as womanly that build up and authentic various leveled and complementary relationships to hegemonic manliness which, by doing so, ensure the overwhelming position of men and the subordination of women.

The researcher explores a model in female identity and mythical images in modern woman poets' fairy tales with a special focus on Anne Sexton and Carol Ann Duffy's writing.

2. Research Method

This study was conducted through descriptive-analytical using library sources. Data were collected library method, a step-by-step process used to gather data, through the selected writers' original works, books, essays, analogous studies, and papers on identifying and analyzing female identity and mythical images within Anne Sexton and Carol Ann Duffy's works.

some studies were conducted on Sexton and Duffy's works but very few comparative studies present an analysis of the conventions of contemporary feminism as a model revision of female identity and mythical images in modern woman poets' fairy tales.

In light of the objectives of the study, the survey of female identity and mythical images was investigated in each writer then a mode of critical discourse, which focuses on culturally gender-determined differences in the literary interpretation of their works was carried out. The content of Sexton and Duffy's works was done as a research technique to follow and track replicable and valid inferences on archetypal myths and revise fairy tales to narrate the stories of those who have been left out of historical and cultural narratives within female characters. Hence, the data were analyzed in a unique synthesis of feminism and fairytales. Eventually, the scholar highlighted key findings in the results section with supporting original literary examples, and next the results are discussed and critical suggestions and contextualizing the investigative issue within the conclusion.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. *Feminism and Fairytale*

Feminist theory, which flourished in the aftermath of the 1960s women's liberation movement, has targeted texts written by male authors who attribute secondary roles to women and represent them in disempowering contexts. It thus resonates with women's simultaneous search for equal rights and opportunities in the socio-political arena. Cixous (1976) called on all women to get the new woman out of the old by getting to know the new woman, by loving her to make ends meet, and by getting over the old immediately. Showalter (1979) responded to Cixous's call by introducing "gynocriticism" to the feminist lexicon. Showalter divides feminist criticism into two varieties according to their focal points: While the first variety is concerned "with a woman as the consumer of male-produced literature," the second focuses on a woman as "the producer of textual meaning," in other words, on a woman who engages with female creative power and possibilities of a female language. Rich (1973) defines revision as entering an old text from a new critical direction" and, more importantly, an act of survival. In the assumptions we are immersed in, we cannot know ourselves.

This effort is therefore valuable not only as an urgent response to perpetuating male inequality but also as an opportunity to foster self-awareness that ultimately leads to collective action by women. Gilbert (1980) Using parallel vocabulary and focus, the outsider position traditionally attributed to women makes it possible to sneak into the house of myth observe it all, and tell us for the first time what it all means to them. In this regard, the revisionist strategies of Sexton and Duffy, like their predecessors and contemporaries in feminist criticism and the production of women's literature, serve to amplify women's distinctive voices.

Bonet (2022) notes Feminism and Fairy Tales Classical fairy tales are powerful transmitters of romantic myths, suggesting that women internalize only those aspirations that seem appropriate to the true sexual function within the patriarchy. Warner (2014) also argues that fairy tales are only an expression of the values of collectors and writers bound by time and class. A clear example of this idea is the importance of beauty for female characters. Lieberman (1989) states that girls win awards when they are the most beautiful of all. Boys win when they are brave, active, and happy. Being beautiful certainly means being chosen, but beauty is also associated with humor and kindness, and impatience is more associated with ugliness, affecting children's expectations when reading stories. As Rowe (1986) uses it, these stories, which celebrate passivity, dependence, and self-sacrifice as the heroine's basic virtues, argue that the survival of the culture is the result of women's orientation towards womanhood, motherhood, and family life. It suggests that it depends on accepting the role to be played.

In contrast to these ideals, 1960s feminism denounced the relationship between beauty and female impotence, and the systematic control of the female body as a desirable object for men. Rodríguez (1996) therefore argues that since the 1970s, most fairy tale depictions tended to be steeped in feminist ideologies, and less and less patriarchal stereotypes. Most of these feminist retellings are focused on reshaping traditional models of beauty and deconstructing patriarchal archetypes. J. Phelps (Tatterhood and Other Tales), Jane Yolen (Sleeping Ugly), Linda Kavanagh (The Ugly Sisters Strike Back). Thus, modern fairy tale narratives are marketed to young adult readers and use parody, irony, and aphorisms to portray heteronormative narratives Duggan, Haas, and Callow (2016) provide alternative narratives from a point of view. Thus, queer adaptations such as Donoghue's *Kissing the Witch* (1993) and Winterson's *Sex with the Cherry* (1989) are similar to Delaney's *The Beauty of the Wolf* (2020) and Sullivan's *Fairy Tales* can be found as part of the third-wave feminist movement as well. The revisions are part of fourth-wave feminism, both focusing on gender norms and giving voice to the long silences and repressed female characters of fairy tales. It stands out from other fairy tale collections because it not only tells the story from the point of view of but also introduces a non-heteronormative successful conclusion and speaks candidly about confidential topics such as domestic violence, virginity, and incest. Along with Cinderella's rewrite, Slipper Shod would be the focus of this paper's analysis. These retellings are necessary for today's society, with global social movements such as #MeToo and Sullivan's story addressing issues that have been historically and culturally silenced.

Sexton initiated writing poetry on the advice of a therapist. A therapist recommended writing as a treatment for a mental problem. Writing poetry became a distraction and an outlet when Sexton was depressed and overwhelmed by the imaginary voice that drove her to suicide. Sexton participated in some workshops, including Robert Lowell's writing seminar, where she met many well-known authors who later influenced her career such as Plath and Starbuck continuing to write her poetry is the result of Sexton's first book, *To Bedlam, and Part Way Back* Kimmelman (2005).

Gill (2003) states Sexton's denominational poetry had gained prominence among many American poets. Prominent literary names have been associated with the movement, but Anne Sexton stands as a more consistently uniform denomination than others do. Among the major figures in confessional poetry were Plath and Lowell, who sought to tie their poetry to broader cultural themes. However, Sexton maintains her work as personal and autobiographical. Sexton's poems provide insight into the poet's struggle with mental illness, depression, and her multiple attempts to help her end her life. Yet, the most powerful of Sexton's confessional works tackled taboo subjects that were barely expressed in poetry before. Sexton's accomplishment was her direct and external portrayal of the intimate details of female identity, the female body, and sexuality.

3.2. *Mythic Images and Female Identity*

Hall (1989) suggests Sexton initiated the idea of rewriting fairy tales because his daughter, Linda Gray took an interest in them. The choice of story to transform was "spontaneous and instinctive. She possessed a special meaning to her, and then she chose what she liked. It must have received the subliminal messages it mentions in its analysis, but in reality, it cannot help transforming familiar messages through the filter of wit that permeates all poetry. A fitting title for such an innovative poetic intervention. Hall (1989) explains Sexton's collection by noting the continuity of her voice and tone. A distinguishing feature

of many of Sexton's poetry is her frank and methodical voice, which lends an air of absurdity to her treatment of the subject matter of her poetry. The humor in these "transformations" works similarly, but perhaps with a darker, sillier emphasis. *Metamorphoses* (1971) compasses sixteen of her poems in new settings of Grimm's fairy tales. In addition to an introductory prologue that introduces her work in its entirety, the first part of each poem serves as a mini-prologue, presenting the core of the subject from a contemporary perspective and then retelling the story in question. In Sexton's opening poem, entitled *The Golden Key*, Sexton anticipates Gilbert, reveling in the advantages of her position as an outsider, and recognizing herself as her poetic persona, e.g. I am here:

The speaker in this case
is a middle-aged witch, me-
tangled on my two great arms,
my face in a book
and my mouth wide,
ready to tell you a story or two.
I have come to remind you,
all of you:
Alice, Samuel, Kurt, Eleanor,
Jane, Brian, Maryel,
all of you draw near.
Alice,
at fifty-six do you remember?
Do you remember when you
were read to as a child?
Samuel,
at twenty-two have you forgotten?
Forgotten the ten P.M. dreams
where the wicked king
went up in smoke?
Are you comatose?
Are you undersea?

The speaker, in this case, is 'me', a middle-aged witch. She is the 'witch' of the story, inviting the reader to pay attention to the clichés with happy conclusions and happily ever after of traditional fairy tales. It is notable her poem is not based on a young female character, but instead introduces a 16-year-old boy to a group. This boy wants answers, 'he's all of us'. The golden key she symbolizes the boy reads: *Opens this strange book of stories/Changes the Brothers Grimm*. Sexton's phrasing in her second line expresses her aspirations as a poet through metonymy." it looks like her own 'Strange Storybook' represents her long-standing interest in exposing the patriarchal codes embedded in familiar narratives. The second line presents as another metonymy that acts on another level.

The Transforming Grimm Brothers contextualize not only transforming men in general but also altering their problematic perceptions of women, reimagining the stories they created with stories told in a different method. Colloquial language, similes, and metaphors add to the effect that Sexton also seeks to create by draining the dull romantic elements of the typical narrative and de-emotionalizes fairy tales to identify given gender roles and the oppressive pressures of socio-cultural structures such as marriage, delivery, childbirth, etc. In the opening poem of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, she ironically glorifies the virginity and the innocence of women. This poem presents the cultural vision of femininity and female identity as a beautiful object:

A virgin is a lovely number:
cheeks as fragile as cigarette paper,
arms and legs made of Limoges...

This opening reveals the archetypal female figures and identities that have dominated poetry and novels for centuries as a reflection of what Ostriker (1982) convokes in the collective male imagination. Sexton, however, employs a different metaphor to describe the so-called ideal of a beautiful and delicate woman. A humorous adaptation of the Petrarch and Elizabethan heraldic traditions of praising beloved body parts with phrases such as red cheeks and rosy lips, *Snow White* is as fragile as cigarette paper, cheeks, arms, and legs of Limoges China:

Once there was a lovely virgin
called Snow White.
Say she was thirteen.
Her stepmother,
a beauty in her own right,
though eaten, of course, by age,
would hear of no beauty surpassing her own
...
Beware, beware, they said,

but the mirror told me,
 the queen came,
 Snow White, the dumb bunny,
 opened the door
 and she bit into a poisoned apple
 and fell down for the final time.

The rest of the poem, as the original fairy tale, is a story of Snow White and her stepmother's attempts to kill her due to her once-best beauty. As the slang term "dumb bunny" suggests, Snow White is unable to escape her stepmother's spite, despite the dwarves' help. Finally, her stepmother makes her bite her poisoned apple and she falls into a deep sleep. Thanks to her prince, she expects to wake up. What was unexpected was the way Sexton portrayed his scenes securely:

As the prince's men carried the coffin
 they stumbled and dropped it
 and the chunk of apple flew out
 of her throat and she woke up miraculously.

It is a total baton and subverts the dynamics of a typical romantic bond between a prince and a princess. Sexton writes her bizarre finale with a Baden twist, highlighting the absurdity of such a simple solution. At the end of the verse, Snow White is again observed rolling her China Blue eyes. Chinese blue doll eyes suggest a mechanical nature or a kind of inertia of the female character and identity. Nothing is more than a doll. These final lines of the poem recall the words of the Evil Queen in the original story, expressed with irony and factually by the speaker, and can be interpreted as Sexton's criticism of the portrayal of women and female identity and beauty. Sexton advocates that women should internalize the idea that their social position depends on their beauty, whereas the male contemplates usually determining the boundaries of where women stand:

However on the third day the prince
 covered the palace steps with cobbler's wax
 and Cinderella's gold shoe stuck upon it.
 Now he would find whom the shoe fit
 and find his strange dancing girl for keeps.
 He went to their house and the two sisters
 were delighted because they had lovely feet.
 The eldest went into a room to try the slipper on
 but her big toe got in the way so she simply
 sliced it off and put on the slipper.
 The prince rode away with her until the white dove
 told him to look at the blood pouring forth.
 That is the way with amputations.
 They just don't heal up like a wish.
 The other sister cut off her heel
 but the blood told as blood will.
 The prince was getting tired.
 He began to feel like a shoe salesman.
 But he gave it one last try.
 This time Cinderella fit into the shoe
 like a love letter in its envelope.

Sexton in her other poem, Cinderella remarks that story in which Cinderella fits into the shoe / like a love letter into its envelope. This simile indicates a celebration of love between the heroine and the prince, which is almost always crowned with a happy marriage ever after in the end. Marriage is also performed in poetry. Nevertheless, Sexton's ironic candor and anomalous image work again to show that there is something wrong with this banal thinking. The ball where lovers meet is a marriage market, and the prince can freely choose the woman he wants to marry as if he were going shopping. As in most of Sexton's Transformations, the most noticeable part of the poem is the closing stanza, which, after being introduced by the opening, conveys the subversively humorous message with a punchline:

Cinderella and the Prince
 lived, they say, happily ever after,
 like two dolls in a museum case
 never bothered by diapers or dust,
 never arguing over the timing of an egg,
 never telling the same story twice,
 never getting a middle-aged spread,
 their darling smiles pasted on for eternity.
 Regular Bobbsey Twins.
 That story.

In the marriage process, not only Cinderella but also the prince turns into a doll in a museum. Similar to the engraved figures in Keats' Grecian urn, they are frozen in time with smiles on their faces. However, Sexton applies the same image to stress the insufficiency of commonly accepted views on marriage, which overlook the broader realities and hidden challenges of partnership and parenthood unlike Keats, who cherishes the power of art with the Grecian urn and poetry. The twist that damages the much-celebrated idea of marriage is that Cinderella and the prince have lost contact with life; they are doomed to silence without a chance to discuss or an issue to solve together. Sexton points out that the simplification of patterns fails to express or understand relationships. Even though the characters and their actions are the same, the novelty and significance of Sexton's work capture the potential to look differently at social norms and conventions for female characters and women's identities taken for granted. Ostriker (1982) also asserts despite the ruthless changelessness and the pre-determined plots of the fairy tales, this time at least 'the teller is mobile'. This narrative mobility enables the poet to tell alternative stories to the reader, which would in return enable the audience to re-assess familiar themes and their restrictive hold on individuals, particularly women.

Both Carol Ann Duffy's *The World's Wives* and Sexton's *The Transfiguration* suggest the poet's thematic interest in this volume that began with his first encounter with the title. The British English colloquial expression "The world and her wife, which are a great many people, especially at a particular place and at a particular time", takes on new meaning with Duffy's slight change in appearance. Dowson (2016) explains that dramatic monologues voiced by iconic female characters in mythology as well as by fictional wives of famous male literary, historical, and common cultural figures reveal women's potential to overturn the atavistic concept of women as men's accessories. The collection's opening poem, "Little Red Cap," not only subverts the classic fairy tale with a feminist agenda but also allows Duffy to narrate her journey as a poet and portray male pressure. The challenges faced by Duffy are reminiscent of those that Gilbert and Gubar (1979) considered in the work of contemporary women authors trying to find their voices within male-dominated Victorian literature. In this regard, the young narrator of the poem gives himself up to being caressed and fascinated by the work of the wolf while reading it aloud. This could be interpreted as suggesting male dominance in literature and increased publishing opportunities for men. After only 10 years, speakers will be able to recognize:

But then I was young – and it took ten years
In the woods tell that a mushroom
Stoppers the mouth of a buried corpse, that birds
Are the uttered thought of trees, that a greying wolf
Howls the same old song at the moon, year in, year out
Season after season, same rhyme, same reason. I took an axe

Initial fascination is replaced with disappointment and an ensuing sense of artistic awareness as a woman poet. It is no coincidence that the poem closes with an unexpected twist which is the present wiser woman's / poet's symbolic murder of the wolf:

To a willow to see how it wept. I took an axe to a salmon
To see how it leaped. I took an axe to the wolf
As he slept, one chop, scrotum to throat, and saw
The glistening, virgin white of my grandmother's bones
I filled his old belly with stones. I stitched him up
Out of the forest I come with my flowers, singing, all alone.

In *The World's Wife* with Barry Wood (2005), Duffy describes that the grandmother's bones represent "the silent women who aren't present in English Literature" as Dowson (2016) cited. The wolf considered the male genius superior throughout the ages feeds on female identity, support, and imagination while either misrepresenting or completely disregarding these characters in the art and literature. Winterson (2015) in her review of the collection stressed the organic link between women and creative power and compellingly interpreted the same lines from:

Which flew, straight, from my hands to his open mouth
One bite, dead. How nice, breakfast in bed, he said
Licking his chops. As soon as he slept, I crept to the back
Of the lair, where a whole wall was crimson, gold, aglow with books
Words, words were truly alive on the tongue, in the head
Warm, beating, frantic, winged; music and blood

Hence, it is a fitting piece to open a sequence of poems created with the now independent voice of the poet who intends to cherish various manifestations of female identity and women's solidarity.

"Eurydice" revisits the theme of artistic creation via Eurydice's retelling of what has happened in the underworld with her husband Orpheus, or "Big O," as she calls him. Tired of remaining silent in the background, Eurydice, who seemingly agrees with all the explanations that speak for her feelings, says:

Bollocks. (I'd done all the typing myself,
I should know.)
And given my time all over again,
rest assured that I'd rather speak for myself
than be Dearest, Beloved, Dark Lady, White Goddess etc., etc.
In fact girls, I'd rather be dead.

She addresses her female friends and tells them the story of her suffocating marriage exacerbated by Orpheus's inflated ego due to her fame as a poet. Orpheus is simply a different version of the wolf that tells the same story season after season in the previous poem as follows:

I must follow him back to our life -
 Eurydice, Orpheus' wife -
 to be trapped in his images, metaphors, similes,
 octaves and sextets, quatrains and couplets,
 elegies, limericks, villanelles,
 histories, myths...

Eurydice is regarded to represent women embedded in literary and sociocultural models who feel trapped in their ties. Whereas in the classic myth Orpheus, despite being told otherwise, looks back at Eurydice in the underworld, fearing that the gods may be fooling him and not give his wife back, Eurydice of Duffy's poem does everything she can to make him turn his head. She light-heartedly tells her friends what occurred:

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.

These subversive complexities disrupt the commonly accepted dynamics of marriage based on women's passivity. Orpheus' eternal love is celebrated throughout, giving voice to the seemingly incompetent women behind victorious men. In addition, Dowson (2016) points Duffy overturns this romantic facade. Eurydice does not intend to go back to her old life and simply wants to be heard. The following lines are also notable in the sense that this time she becomes a different version of the woman poet embodied in the figure of Little Red Cap:

It was an uphill schlep
 from death to Life
 and with every step
 I willed him to turn.
 I was thinking of filching the poem
 out of his cloak,
 when inspiration finally struck.
 I stopped, thrilled.
 He was a yard in front.
 My voice shook when I spoke -
 Orpheus, your poem's a masterpiece.
 I'd love to hear it again...

Eurydice stops because she eventually finds her voice of appreciation for Duffy's poem. As Ostriker (1982) and Gilbert (1980) say, if women must first steal language, now is the time to use language to construct distinct female identities and attitudes.

The myth of Circe is another story Duffy re-fabricates to further empower its heroine and show the arguably justifiable causes behind the impacts. Circe of the source story is an enchanter who can transform those who offend her into wolves, lions, and swine with magical potions. When Odysseus comes to her island Aeaea with his men, she alters the crew into swine. Since she falls in love with him, she agrees to reverse the spell, and the two become lovers for a year. Yet, Duffy's poetic frame compasses only Circe whom the poet portrays as embracing her gifts as a sorcerer and reclaiming her power through them as follows:

I'm fond, of nereids and nymphs, unlike some, of the pig,
 of the tusker, the snout, the boar, and the swine.
 One way or another, all pigs have been mine -
 under my thumb, the bristling, salty skin of their backs,
 in my nostrils here, their yobby, porky colognes.
 I'm familiar with the hogs and runs, their percussion of oinks
 and grunts, their squeals. I've stood with a pail of swill
 at dusk, at the creaky gate of the sty,
 tasting the sweaty, spicy air, the moon
 like a lemon popped in the mouth of the sky.

Circe expresses, as she tries out new recipes with the bodies and relishes them with joy akin to erotic pleasure. Duffy applies the typical image of a woman in the kitchen, but the way Circe explains the ingredients implies more than a simple cooking preparation:

which uses the cheek – and the tongue in cheek

at that. Lay two pig's cheeks, with the tongue,
in a dish, and strew it well over with salt
(...)
nymphs, with those piggy eyes. Season with mace.

Further, Circe's illustration of pigs with human attributions hints at the pleasure of revenge: these men -turned pigs- with unique features appear to receive what they deserve. Thus, Circe has already made this obvious when she states that all pigs have been hers in the preceding lines. Circe's culinary instructions to the nymphs reveal the most unforgivable guilt of men who ignored their feelings:

Well-cleaned pig's ears should be blanched, singed, tossed
in a pot, boiled, kept hot, scraped, served, garnished
with thyme. Look at that simmering lug, at that ear,
did it listen, ever, to you, to your prayers and rhymes,
to the chimes of your voice, singing and clear? Mash
the potatoes, nymph, open the beer. Now to the brains,
to the trotters, shoulders, chops, to the sweetneats slipped
from the slit, bulging, vulnerable bag of the balls.

This half-angry and half-celebratory tone gives Duffy's work on myth its subversive twist. The final line of the stanza highlights the theme of revenge with its menacing tone that lies beneath the surface: "When the heart of a pig has hardened, dice it small". Women have been unjustly labeled as witches and devious enchanters so many times; so be it, Duffy defiantly says and writes the story of a woman who seems to cherish and does justice to these labels:

Dice it small. I, too, once knelt on this shining shore
watching the tall ships sail from the burning sun
like myths; slipped off my dress to wade,
breast-deep, in the sea, waving and calling;
then plunged, then swam on my back, looking up
as three black ships sighed in the shallow waves.
Of course, I was younger then. And hoping for men. Now,
let us baste that sizzling pig on the spit once again.

Circe no longer watches passively she confronts her myth and her past and tries to solve the case with the man in the spirit of solidarity with her female companions (Kayışcı Akkoyun, 2021). Literature, with its creative capacities and persuasive force, has been delivered because the web page wherein most of these highbrow endeavors of diverse fields approximately gender have converged, developing metaphors for a probable discrimination-loose world, and effecting inevitable adjustments with inside the perceptions in their readers (Hadisi and Ameri, 2021).

4. Conclusion

For female writers, fairy tales are an important source of information for many of their writings, but for feminist poets since the 1970s, fairy tales have been an essential theme in literary production. Motivated to engage with the conventional norms of patriarchal societies and rethink the stereotypes of women living within these narratives, feminist writers reveal the underlying sub-contexts of these narratives, making them more accessible to adults. Sexton and Duffy is a groundbreaking restructuring of the fairy tale in which the poet not only satirizes the patriarchal society he grew up in but also rejects the stereotypes of women the upbringing purported. The feminist message expressed by Sexton and Duffy's fairy tales was intended to convey the positions of contemporary female poets on feminism and their relationships with female role models and male characters portrayed in fairy tales. Sexton and Duffy reconstruct classic mythological images and redefine female identity.

As Duplessis, the researcher also sought to indicate the destructive potential of revised mythical image approaches in the work of the poets', Sexton and Duffy, who explored this vestige of dual consciousness. These approaches, which range from humorous illustrations, relentless plot intricacy, and regaining power through conflict and confession, are necessary to recognize the harm done to women's experiences and voices. Revising female identity and mythic images in modern women's fairy tale writing is a fight against gender inequity. It is difficult to eradicate ingrained beliefs and customs that have been conveniently held as the only truth for centuries. However, this challenge does not vanish the value of the effort. Despite this, dialogue, and cultural perception, can alter poetry and fairy tale narratives.

While their poetry reveals the boredom behind wonder, the mediocrity behind an illusion, or the depravity behind beauty, they fade away with the fairy-tale convention of a happy ending, leaving their lives untouched, the land of fairy tales, and the secret sad truths of the modern world. Women's subordination to unheroic men and the patriarchal system, while young women are sent to domestic silent prisons or old women are denounced by malevolent powers who lash out at conservative male-supremacist values are fading out.

The findings show that these modified approaches and altered fairytale norms can help shape women's identities and lead to a definitive return to the tyrannical discourses of patriarchy.

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