

The Quest Of Women And Revisionist Mythmaking In Muinar And The Penelopiad: Just Voices Or “Just” Voices?

Author

Ayşe Ceren Öner^{1*}

Affiliations

¹Master’s Program in English Language and Literature, Yeditepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences, İstanbul, 34755, Turkey

*To whom correspondence should be addressed;

E-mail: ayseceren.oner@std.yeditepe.edu.tr

Abstract

The aim of the present study is to explore the emancipatory potential of revisionist mythmaking strategies employed in two contemporary novels, Margaret Atwood’s *The Penelopiad* (2005) and Latife Tekin’s *Muinar* (2006), through dialogic, intertextual, and deconstructive relations. Offering a comparative account by means of a three-fold theoretical basis between the two novels, this dissertation explores women’s paths to seek justice. Both novels portray rebellious women and give voice to their alternative stories. The analysis demonstrates that the retelling of mythic tales connects the past to the present and narrows the gap between absence and presence via specters. To this end, the thesis firstly examines dialogism and the way it is used to challenge the credibility of a narrator. In doing so, it draws on Bakhtin’s dialogism and its feminist interpretations. The second aim is to investigate how women oppose hegemonic discourse(s) through the dynamics of intertextuality. These dynamics and strategies are predominantly discussed with the ideas of various female critics such as Ostriker, Irigaray, and Cixous. In the last analysis, the study focuses on the concept of justice via Derridean deconstruction. Both novels are accordingly analyzed with references to concepts such as *différance*, *justice l’avenir*, and *hauntology*.

Keywords: Comparative; deconstruction; Derrida; justice; revisionist mythmaking

INTRODUCTION

Literature often mirrors with a special clarity the tensions and fractures in the community in which it is produced and the way in which people negotiate their cultural practices and identities in that accidented landscape. The tension between the customs of society and an individual's life choices is particularly salient in literature. Having said that, the content and communication of a narrative is not free from hegemonies or the power structures of a culture, place or period of time. Especially mythological texts demonstrate that patriarchy has been exerting a strong restrictive effect on the life of women often because women are perceived as embodied reflections of moral values (such as honor or virtue) for the entire family, community or even state. I am interested in this complex intersection point with the greater focus on the negotiation of rebellious perspectives in women's novels and I believe that both English literature and Turkish literatures are particularly illustrative in this respect.

When patriarchy's powerful tools, mythological narratives, are closely examined, the extent to which the oppression of women is deeply rooted becomes clear. As a result of centuries-old social mechanisms and oppressive cultural values, women's voices are silenced, freedom is immensely restricted, and rights are disintegrated. Thus, to point to such suffering and create a change to achieve a just society, myths are to be deconstructed with revisionist mythmaking techniques via an intertextual glimpse and revisionist vision. The rejection of dominant traditions, the recovery of ignored stories, and the establishment of new myths are all aspects of this method, which is an important literary tool for such authors interested in social justice. I aim to examine the aspects and dynamics of this literary method to observe and analyze the transformation of the self and society through analyzing two contemporary novels, *The Penelopiad* (2005) by Canadian writer Margaret Atwood and *Muinar* (2006) by Turkish writer Latife Tekin.

RESULTS

This thesis asks two primary questions: How does revisionist mythmaking help women actualize a transformative and emancipatory potential for self and society? Is it possible to achieve gender-justice through revisionist mythmaking? To be able to answer these questions, I try to discover their inferences with regards to three correlations: Dialogism as a means to challenge the credibility of a narrator, intertextuality as a tool of modification and recovery from the hegemonic discourse, and deconstruction as a technique on the track of justice.

Both *Muinar* and *The Penelopiad* provide a refuge for women in literature by highlighting myths and folktales as hegemonic discourse and deconstructing their phrase regimen using dialogism and intertextuality. As Cixous (1976) puts forward “[i]n woman, personal history blends together with the history of all women” (pp. 252-253), they bring women onto the stage as individual and collective Others, which results in breaking the authoritative codes of hegemony whose moral message includes female obedience. Alicia Ostriker (1982) defines revisionist mythmaking as such:

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... Like the gods and goddesses of classical mythology, all such material has a double power... Myth belongs to “high” culture and is handed “down” through the ages by... authority. (p. 72)

She suggests the change of the old stories by female knowledge and experience as intending to disrupt the collective male gaze in literature and culture. She calls this change “correction” as “they are retrieved images of what women have collectively and historically suffered.” While *Muinar* offers this correction by modifying various mythic and folk stories in which women have been misrepresented and silenced, *The Penelopiad* does as such by mainly focusing on the retelling of one ancient narrative: *The Odyssey*. The dialogic voices in *Muinar* and *The Penelopiad* destabilize the meaning decided and assigned by the hegemony by addressing the problematic dynamics of the dominant discourse’s mechanism of meaning-making. As a result, they cast doubt on the patriarchal narrator’s credibility. Along with dialogism, the chosen novels encompass intertextuality in attempt to retell myths by reflecting women’s experiences. Finding a sanctuary area in which they can correct and modify the old narratives, women can decentralize the unity of meaning in patriarchal phrase regimen. Myths, which are thought to reflect the daily life and roles of ancient women, can be positioned in a very important place in this respect. That’s why, the mythological rewriting technique reinterprets the quiescent women in myths and turns them into active subjects by deconstructing the assigned roles and shedding light on their ulterior features. By utilizing revisionist mythmaking method in alliance with deconstruction, both texts confront other truths along with the experience of the marginalized and suppressed. Also, deconstruction helps them bring out a significant potential to redeem the injustices of the past by bringing the voice of the Woman or the Other, alterity, and the hope of “just” voices. Especially through spectral justice and by problematizing the institution of law,

Atwood and Tekin unravel the problems with gender-injustice and bring out the emancipatory potential of women's writing.

DISCUSSION

To start with the definition of myth, although there is no single one, there have been efforts to specify it with different approaches: While for Bronislaw Malinowski (1984) myths are “a cultural force” transmitted through a “pragmatic charter of primitive faith and moral wisdom” (pp.101-143), for Roland Barthes (1988), they are “a type of speech” (p. 109), and for Carl Gustav Jung (1984), “original revelations of the preconscious psyche” (p. 154). Thus, it can be concluded that the myths, for which it is not possible to reach a full definition, are multi-layered. T.S. Eliot (1917, p. 15) argues that no poem or work of art has a stand-alone, isolated meaning. But if this trace were to be followed, a “male” would always emerge from the meanings produced, which is seen in myths, too. Hélène Cixous (1975) states that it is because of the phallogocentric tradition, especially of the Western, which elevates the masculine and privileges it over the feminine discourse. As a result, there is a fallacious connection between truth and male.

Patriarchy frequently employs myths as one of the most powerful means to subjugate women in the process of depriving and othering them. Mythological narratives and folk tales are primarily the result of oral tradition and thus collectively authored texts. With their monolithic and hegemonic structure directing towards a certain truth, such texts reveal an oppressive mechanism as well as male dominance and privilege. Two texts are to be examined here to demonstrate this oppression. The first is the ancient Greek epic, *The Odyssey*, which centers the heroic actions and tough journey of Odysseus, the king of Ithaca. However, it does not really convey much information about Penelope, except that she is Icarius' daughter, marries Odysseus, moves to Ithaca, looks after Telemachus (their son), and waits for Odysseus when he is away. She is also portrayed as a smart, patient, faithful wife. Agamemnon makes comments about her. It is read in the Homeric lines as follows:

She's much too steady, her feelings run too deep, Icarius' daughter Penelope, that wise woman.”
(Book 11: 500-505).

[...] So even your own wife – never indulge her too far. / Never reveal the whole truth, whatever you may know / Just tell her a part of it, be sure to hide the rest (Book 11: 500-505).

It is understood that Greek patriarchal male gaze positions Penelope, and maybe women in general, to a place where they stand out only with their forbearance and obedience; yet still, they are not to be trusted. A similar conclusion can be drawn with the second text, from a Turkish folktale, to be examined as well. According to Sarıkız Legend, the little girl Sarıkız lives with her father in a small village. One day, the father decides to go on a pilgrimage. Before leaving, he entrusts Sarıkız to the imam of the village. As time passes, she grows up and blossoms. The young men of the village are attracted to her and race to marry her but she turns them down. They can't stand rejection and spread rumors about her "honor." The father, returning from the pilgrimage, hears this and signs his daughter's death warrant to "cleanse his honor." He leaves her to die on the hill and returns to his own village. Years later, when the father hears that Sarıkız has attained sainthood and is wandering the mountains with her geese, he can no longer bear the longing for his daughter and returns to the hill where he first abandoned her. When it is time for prayer, he requests water from his daughter in order to perform ablution. Sarıkız brings him a bucket of water. The father tells his daughter that he wants fresh water, and the salt water suddenly turns into fresh water. The father, tears welling up in his eyes, believes his daughter is a saint. He apologizes to his daughter and then runs over to the hill across out of shame. Soon, a dark cloud descends over Mount Ida. After the clouds have dispersed, the shepherds searching for Sarıkız and her father find them dead on two separate hills and bury them there and build a stone tomb. As it is seen, masculine discourse filled with patriarchal values indicate male-dominated power over women that silences them, leaves them helpless and even kills them. Therefore, if mythmaking is considered as shaping the previously constructed discourses by solidifying its position in societies and enforcing its values, then revisionist mythmaking helps challenge such ingrained doctrines.

Alicia Ostriker defines revisionist mythmaking as appropriating a tale for a different end to achieve a cultural change eventually (1982, p. 72). She underlines the importance of female experience through which the previous discourse is corrected. Thus, the revised myth does not only refuse to conform to the mainstream norms and the oppressive authority, but it also has the potential to compensate for the limitations of the prevailing myth.

Intertextuality, which term goes hand in hand with revisionist mythmaking, is used by Julia Kristeva (1980) to signify a literary text's inevitable relation with and reference to others whether through various techniques such as allusions, repetitions, and transformations, or similar features in the shared reservoir of literary convention. Intertextual interpretations open

new possibilities for the Other as they challenge the authoritative textual strata along with oppressive values rooted in cultures.

Revising myths could be a strong point of departure towards gender justice. To go over some techniques employed by revisionists, the importance of women's writing needs to be underlined first. As Cixous (1975) suggests in her famous essay *The Laugh of the Medusa*, women should write about and for themselves (p.880). “[They] should break out of the snare of silence.” (p. 881) and “[they] have only to stop listening to the Sirens (for the Sirens were men) for history to change its meaning.” (p.885). She highlights the misrepresentation of women in and through myths told by the male-gaze. Apart from *l'écriture feminine*, Irigaray's mimicry stands out. She asserts the following:

One must assume the feminine role deliberately. Which means already to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus to begin to thwart it. To play with mimesis is thus, for a woman, to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it. It means to resubmit herself... to ideas about herself, that are elaborated in/by a masculine logic, but so as to make "visible," by an effect of playful repetition, what was supposed to remain invisible. (1985, p. 72)

As can be considered as another technique, Ostriker (1982) offers stealing their language by stating that “[She] deconstructs a prior "myth" or "story" and constructs a new one which includes, instead of excluding, herself.” (p. 72). As a result, revisionist mythmaking through intertextuality offers a project aimed at plundering "the sanctuaries of existing language” (p. 71) by diverse groups that are less privileged.

My third theoretical focus of my thesis is deconstruction, which can hardly be defined with a formal or dictionary meaning. Derrida does define it, though, by presenting its various aspects, throughout his career. However, I would like to especially focus on its being as a pursuit on questioning and problematizing “the foundations of law, morality and politics.” (Derrida, 1992, p. 8). Also, according to Spivak (2013), deconstruction “questions the privileging of identity so that someone is believed to have the truth. It is not the exposure of error. It is constantly and persistently looking into how truths are produced.” (p. 27). Thus, it can be stated that both revisionism and deconstruction are closely engaged in the ways through which truths are generated, presented and suppressed, and more importantly, because they both seek for justice.

Justice and deconstruction have a direct and strong relationship. Firstly, Derrida separates justice from law: “The justice of law, justice as law is not justice. Laws are not just as laws.

One obeys them not because they are just but because they have authority.” (1992, p. 12). He problematizes authority as a motive or urge to do things on the Kantian basis – in conformity to duty, rather than from duty. Since the authority of law cannot be based anything but themselves, they are regarded as performative and ungrounded. Law is deconstructable as it is a structure built on transformable textual layers. Derrida claims, though, that justice is beyond law, and it is undeconstructable. Therefore, the possibility of deconstruction on law and its impossibility on justice places deconstruction “in the interval that separates the undeconstructibility of justice from the deconstructibility of droit (authority, legitimacy and so on)” which would lead to the conclusion that “deconstruction is justice.” (1992, p. 15).

The undeconstructibility of justice and what Derrida means should be examined with some important terms such as *différance*. In French, there are two words that derive from the verb “differer” and have the same pronunciation. Despite that, they have different meanings. It can be used to express both difference and deferral. As a result, signifiers have traces of other words, which can be seen only with the written words. Given what structuralists such as Saussure and maybe even Plato favor, that spoken words are superior to the written, through *différance*, Derrida is in the position of criticizing logocentrism, which is a central tenet of the deconstructivist approach. The lack of immediate presence results in aporia: Justice, just like *différance*, is “infinite” because “it is irreducible” and as such because it owes and is “owed to the other,” and such singularity “is the very movement of deconstruction.” (1992, p.25). Justice is impossible in the present, always postponed, yet at the same time, it calls for immediacy. Therefore, it is always “yet-to-come”. (1992, p. 53). In that, Derrida urges that to be on the path to the just, one has to confront the ghost of the past, the specter that is “non-present present” (2012, p. 5). Apparition of ghosts and *différance* are both deferred and spatial and justice is non-present; however, it does not mean that we should stop demanding it because, as Derrida argues, it is the responsibility that makes justice imaginable. To learn to live with ghosts, being with them between life and death, would create a change to live more justly.

Based on the theoretical background presented above, this thesis study analyzes two novels in a comparative framework. One of them is Margaret Atwood’s *The Penelopiad* (2005). It was published as a part of Canongate Myth Series. Atwood does not only give voice to Penelope but also the twelve maids from the ancient Greek epic *The Odyssey*. Penelope tells her own bibliographic story from Hades in modern times. At the same time, she is haunted by the maids murdered in the Homeric epic. She tries to account for their deaths while they constantly interrupt her. Penelope and the maids finally face each other in Odysseus’ trial through the end

of the novel. That section is told by the maids' perspective, and it reveals that the court as an institution serves patriarchy rather than justice. That is why, a special attention is paid there. The other text to be analyzed in this study is Latife Tekin's *Muinar* (2006). Muinar was a daughter of a king in an unknown period. After being immortalized by angels, she is now a ten-thousand-year-old crone who does not have a body, but a voice activated when she wakes up in people. She has awakened in countless women, had fluent conversations with them, and stayed with them until their deaths. This novel begins with her awakening into a woman whom Muinar calls Elime – a writer in her fifties. Muinar's purpose is to prepare Elime for her old age. They talk about various topics like history, politics, and literature. Muinar addresses the women's issue by resorting to mythical narratives.

The reason I have chosen to analyze these novels varies. First, Although Atwood and Tekin are from different regions and have different writing styles, they share and communicate a common concern, which is to give voice to women and articulate their demand for justice by using the same literary device: revisionist mythmaking. Second, both *The Penelopiad* and *Muinar* are contemporary novels, employing revisionism through dialogic and intertextual glimpses to challenge the hegemonic discourse that shapes myths. Both portray rebellious women and reveal their suppressed voice as a result of centuries of patriarchal oppression. Also, through the retelling of mythic and folk tales, they connect the past to the present and narrow the gap between absence and presence via specters. Furthermore, in terms of textual strata and content, both novels are engaged in deconstruction. They also celebrate and employ polyphony along with diversity. They bring alterity and hope for "just" voices into the stage, at individual and collective levels. However, they have not been studied within a comparative framework before; therefore, I aim to address this issue and would like to contribute to academia.

The manner the narrative voices are manifested is of utmost importance not only because it shapes the flow of conversation among characters but also because it sets the tone and direction of communication between the author and the readers. The combination of all the components of a text can create a unity called monologism which is a single structured model performed by a single authority. Namely, the monologic work has only one center that can dictate an authoritative meaning. According to Mikhail Bakhtin, instead of monologism, what is needed is a decentralization of code and message through "unpredictable change" of characters and constant interaction of alien discourses (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 254). At this intersection, he introduces dialogism as the need for an ongoing dialogue to generate meaning. It thrives best when more than one voice, one consciousness shares the same surroundings with different fields

of vision. Feminist critics are particularly drawn to dialogism as it allows for such polyphony and thus seeks justice in both the literary and social realms. Such critics, like Bauer and McKinstry (1991), argue that monologic mentality eliminates distinct voices, which result in gender-specific violence. They put forward that “feminist dialogics” encourages the destabilization and deconstruction of such repressive and dominating paradigms.

Dialogism can be found in *The Penelopiad* where Odysseus is told to be “tricky and a liar” (p. 2) by Penelope and “the prince of deceiving” (p. 93) by the maids. It can also be studied in the chapter *Home Life in Hades* found after the court scene. Besides, the chapters told by the maids start with “The Chorus” and it is possible to read dialogism there, too. It is also found in *Muinar* especially when Elime watches a race on television, falls asleep, and communicates with Muinar in her dream. Through stream of consciousness, they jump into various topics yet in fact they head toward renegotiating deeply ingrained social values. Dialogism can also be detected when Muinar conveys the stories of several women. Once, she passes on the story of a woman named Hurraniyar, who has two sons. They discuss on “light” by assigning a metaphorical and sacred meaning behind it. Hurraniyar reacts against it even though her sons try to exclude her from such a discussion and context.

The dialogic approach functions as a litmus test, revealing the hegemonic relationship between storytelling and truth by examining how trustworthy ancient stories and folktales are. These novels not only call the authority's phrase regimen and credibility into question, but they also devise intertextuality to modify the representation of women and recover from authoritative discourse.

Intertextual interpretations open new possibilities for justice to-come as they challenge the authoritative textual strata along with oppressive values rooted in cultures. Such interpretations can be found in *Muinar* through the reference to the Trojan War and the retold version of the Legend of Sarıkız. Muinar tears down the latter because Sarıkız is portrayed as a cruel fairy without feet and with jinn blonde hair. She is no longer a pure, virgin, obedient woman who only tries to protect the values of her father, that is, the men. In the revised text, there is not only one Sarıkız.

She always pulls women's husbands to her den on the dark winter nights and makes love until the morning without showing her face, suffocates them at sunrise and leaves them in the mouth of the den... God forbid, the mouth of the den is not the worst one. Sarıkizes in the thermal regions attract the men to the hot lake and drown them. (pp. 83-84)

As seen here, Sarıkız has evolved and multiplied. Now they take their place in horror stories. This can be a strong indication of the subversive impact of feminist mythological rewriting on patriarchal dominion. That is, Muinar's revisiting the stories that have been told for ten thousand years destroys masculine authority and challenges women's underrepresentation in the previous discourse.

In *The Penelopiad*, intertextuality is prominent via Penelope's references to past events, especially when she responds to Agamemnon's gossips about her.

Hadn't I been faithful? Hadn't I waited, and waited, and waited, despite the temptation – almost the compulsion – to do otherwise? And what did I amount to, once the official version gained ground? An edifying legend. A stick used to beat other women with. Why couldn't they be as considerate, as trustworthy, as all-suffering as I had been? (p. 2)

Considering Agamemnon's death and his comments about her, the quotation above can be interpreted as Penelope implying that she had to behave that way not because she really wanted but because she was forced to survive in that patriarchal community. Her tone reveals that she does not think it is fair for women to be compared and imputed as such. However, time to time, she compares herself with Helen by underlining her reputation as being smart and patient. When it comes to the gossips, she defends herself against Agamemnon's warnings to Odysseus in *The Odyssey*. Furthermore, she does not accept the underlying reason behind his not revealing his identity in collaboration with Eurycleia when he returns to Ithaca. As a result, intertextuality with a wide web of textual references presents multiple layers of meaning in which women's voice and demand for justice can be heard.

The last correlation I make and analyze with justice is a deconstructive one. Deconstruction can be traced in *Muinar* through examination of textual structure. As Jale Parla (2009, p.119) asserts, there is no textual hierarchy. Muinar, a hag waking up in Elime, tells her mythical stories about women like Azize, Faliha, Belinur, Gülcebil, Güldin Gaşka, Güzide Kılıç, and Perizar Ülkü, who are often passive and muted at the beginning due to the male-dominated authority, but then rebel. Their voices are heard individually and collectively. Also, Voices of Elime and Muinar are intertwined and stand side by side through magical realism, flowing dialogism, stream of consciousness, and constant interruptions. Aside from that, the novel's mosaic-like structure stands out, particularly in the way Elime's metafictional composition is dispersed. While Elime's text alone plays a major role in breaking down hierarchical dynamics,

its intersperse throughout the book adds into its postmodern and deconstructive quality. Deconstruction is also evident in *Muinar* via hauntological relationship. For instance, Muinar starts talking to Elime right away. She sounds vituperative, frequently cursing politicians or patriarchal figures. She also always speaks in a condescending and patronizing tone. Her restiveness can be read through within the aporetic call for immediacy in terms of justice, as Derrida would suggest.

For there to be ghost, there must be a return to the body, but to a body that is more abstract than ever. The spectrogenic process corresponds therefore to a paradoxical incorporation. Once ideas or thoughts (Gedanke) are detached from their substratum, one engenders some ghost by giving them a body. Not by returning to the living body from which ideas and thoughts have been torn loose, but by incarnating the latter in another artifactual body, a prosthetic body, a ghost of spirit, one might say a ghost of the ghost... (2012, pp. 157-158)

Muinar can be considered as a guiding spirit then - like a Socratic daimon. At the beginning of the novel, Elime describes her "a smoky-blue shadow coming off my chest." (p. 13). Muinar does not appear in flesh or in a bodily form; however, she is somehow attached to Elime's mind and voice, which points to undecidability, too. She exists in the text just like Arendt's "unexamined notion of knowledge" (1971, p. 429) because she is a ten-thousand-year-old hag who is knowledgeable about a vast section of fields. She makes Elime question diverse historical and political occasions by entering a dialogue with her and by presenting a more divine knowledge. She also conveys the stories of other women like Faliha, Belinur, Güldin Gaşka who are all dead but now echo the injustices of past against women.

Deconstruction in *The Penelopiad* is especially noticeable in the chapter named *The Chorus Line: The Trial of Odysseus, as Videotaped by the Maids*. In this chapter, the twelve maids demand justice on account of their murder. The defense attorney claims that Odysseus had the constitutional right to kill them as they were his slaves (p. 178). The judge interrogates them further about what they did to deserve to be hanged (p. 178). In response, the defense attorney accuses the finest and "most beddable" ones of having sex with the Suitors (p. 179). The judge consults to *The Odyssey* because he considers it as the primary source on this subject – thus, he believes it to be "the main authority" (p. 179). The judge refers to a passage in which it is stated that the maids, who were completely unprotected, were raped and asks both the lawyer and Penelope to witness. They both state that they were not there. Penelope also adds she "tended to believe them." (p. 181).

Judge: But you did not punish them, and they continued to work as your maids?

Penelope: I knew them well, Your Honour. I was fond of them. I'd brought some of them up, you could say. They were like the daughters I never had. (Starts to weep.) I felt so sorry for them! But most maids got raped, sooner or later; a deplorable but common feature of palace life. It wasn't the fact of their being raped that told against them, in the mind of Odysseus. It's that they were raped without permission.

Judge (chuckles): Excuse me, Madam, but isn't that what rape is? Without permission?

Attorney for the Defence: Without permission of their master, Your Honour.

Judge: Oh. I see. But their master wasn't present. So, in effect, these maids were forced to sleep with the Suitors because if they'd resisted they would have been raped anyway, and much more unpleasantly?

Attorney for the Defence: I don't see what bearing that has on the case.

Judge: Neither did your client, evidently. (Chuckles.) However, your client's times were not our times. Standards of behaviour were different then. It would be unfortunate if this regrettable but minor incident were allowed to stand as a blot on an otherwise exceedingly distinguished career. Also I do not wish to be guilty of an anachronism. Therefore I must dismiss the case. (p. 182)

This case draws attention to the limits of testimony as well as the postponement – or difference - of justice. In Lyotardian terms, this can be read as a "wrong" because first of all, the damaged is a victim and is lower in the authoritarian hierarchy (1988, p. 5). How, in the 'absence' of power and evidence due to temporal shift, will she prove the harm to authority? As stated before, Derrida (1992) extends deconstruction as a pursuit on questioning and problematizing “the foundations of law, morality and politics.” (p. 8). In accordance with this exposition, it can be drawn forth that Atwood impugns the operation of law by pointing out its postponement for centuries and finally its cancellation with groundless accusations and excuses. Owing to the emancipatory function of deconstruction, she highlights law's failure to create a critical dialogue in which it weaves between past and future.

Hauntology is at the core of *The Penelopiad*. Penelope, and the maids, haunt Odysseus but she is also haunted by the maids, who are depicted like dark witches without their feet touching the ground. Benjamin (1969) brings out the redemptive function of hauntology by stating that we should pause and take some time looking back to “awaken the dead” (p. 257). Penelope tries to

redeem herself by storytelling, not drinking the Water of Forgetfulness, and confronting the maids about what she did (not do) to them.

All in all, everyone has a duty to contribute to this “possibility of the experience of justice”. Drucilla Cornell (1999) justifies the need for such a commitment to responsibility as follows:

[T]he l’avenir of justice does not mean that we can escape our responsibility to engage in political and judicial battles as they are present to us now. The call of the Other is concrete. Justice is beyond calculation, but we must calculate, participate, if we are to meet the obligation to be just...We are called by other women to serve justice. We are also called by justice to be just and thus to recognize, to articulate, the injustices of this system of law and of right as it relates to women (pp. 115-116).

Cixous (1976) puts forward “[i]n woman, personal history blends together with the history of all women” (pp. 252-253). *Muinar and The Penelopiad* bring women onto the stage as individual and collective Others, which results in breaking the authoritative codes of hegemony whose moral message includes female obedience. Both novels question the credibility of the narrator through dialogism, try to achieve recovery from their (lack of or) misrepresentation through intertextuality, and encompass spectral justice and re-mythify mythic and folk stories. As a result, they challenge the axioms functioning in favor of men that are enforced by and through patriarchal values and phrase regimen. In case of the impossibility of witnessing or differend, Lyotard (1988) suggests the fields such as philosophy and literature produce new idioms. Mythological rewriting functions in a way that it eliminates injustices through language. According to Lyotard (1998), the legitimacy of one side does not presuppose the legitimacy of the other. However, implementing a single rule of judgment to both to resolve their differend as if it were simply a legal dispute would be unfair to “(at least) one of them.” This unlitigable situation refers to the condition: the absence of “a universal rule of judgement.” (p. 12). That is, since each situation harbors a singularity of position, the quest for a universality would only create injustice, especially for those who are deprived of speech and where the case is the impossibility of testimony. As a result, justice is unattainable, non-present and yet-to-come but requires immediacy and unique treatment. Derrida (1992) states that justice is “the experience that we are not able to experience” but “there is no justice without this experience” because if there is no demand for justice, then there is “no change to...a call for justice.” (p. 16).

CONCLUSION

Regarding the first question asked at the beginning - how does revisionist mythmaking help women actualize a transformative and emancipatory potential for self and society?- revisionist mythmaking provides women with a potential emancipation through the self-conscious process of recovering from the male-gaze and presenting a more accurate representation of their own. This potential may also apply to the social and cultural level as women access language, they point to the problems and injustice created by the hegemony. They challenge and alter patriarchal discourse with multiple attempts in literature and in other fields, which can fuel a collective change. Nevertheless, to achieve a collective change, not only women but every individual should face their ghosts. They need to be haunted to haunt. Emancipation necessitates hearing the specters' messages and demands. Justice is deferred and spatial, thus will never be achieved due to the temporality. However, to imagine justice is to be on its path, which requires a sense of responsibility, results from communicating with ghosts. This gives an insight for the second question I asked: Is it possible to achieve gender-justice? Since justice requires immediacy and women have already suffered and been exposed to multiple types of violence for ages, a true justice is unachievable; yet attaining a fairer world for future generation is only possible through women's quest on the way to justice.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

- Agamben, G., & Heller-Roazen, D. (1999). *Potentialities: Collected essays in philosophy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Allen, G. (2000). *Intertextuality*. London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
- Allport, T. (2009). *Women writing trauma: An analysis of psychological trauma in Ingeborg Bachmann's Das Buch Franza, Christa Wolf's Cassandra, Patricia Grace's Cousins, and Ngahuia Te Awakotuku's Ruahine-Mythic Women* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. The University of Auckland.
- Arendt, H. (1971). Thinking and moral considerations: A lecture. *Social research*, 417-446.
- Atwood, M. (2003). *Negotiating with the dead: A writer on writing*. London: Virago.
- Atwood, M. (2010). *The Penelopiad: The myth of Penelope and Odysseus*. Edinburgh: Canongate.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination* (Ed. M. Holquist & Trans. C. Emerson). Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1984). *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Ed. and Trans. C. Emerson; Intr. Wayne C. Booth). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bauer, D. M. & McKinstry, S. J. (1991). *Feminism, Bakhtin and the dialogic*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Barthes, R. (1987). *Criticism and Truth* (Trans. K. Keunemen). London: Athlone Press.
- Barthes, R. (1988). *Mythologies*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Barthes, R. (1977). The Death of the Author (Trans. S. Heath). *Image music text*. (pp. 142-148). London: Fontana Press.
- Beyer, C. (2000). Feminist Revisionist Mythology and Female Identity in Margaret Atwood's Recent Poetry. *Literature and theology*, 14(3), 276-298.
- Benjamin, W. (1969). Theses on the Philosophy of History (H. Zohn, Trans.). In H. Arendt (Ed.) *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken Books: 253-264.

- Booth, W. (1986). Freedom of interpretations: Bakhtin and the challenge of feminist criticism. In G.S. Morson (Ed.) *Bakhtin. Essays and dialogues on his work*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. 145-76. (Originally pub in 1982, *Critical Inquiry* 9)
- Bottez, M. (2012). Another Penelope: Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad*. *University of Bucharest Review. Literary and Cultural Studies Series*, 2(01), 49-56.
- Burton, S. (1996). Bakhtin, Temporality, and Modern Narrative: Writing" the Whole Triumphant Murderous Unstoppable Chute". *Comparative Literature*, 48(1), 39-64.
- Cameron, A. (1973). *Porphyrius-the charioteer*. London: Clarendon Press.
- Caruth, C. (2002). The Claims of the Dead: History, Haunted Property, and the Law. *Critical Inquiry*, 28(2), 419-441.
- Cixous, H. (1976). The Laugh of the Medusa. (Transl. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen). *Signs* 1(4), 875-893.
- Cixous, H. & Catherine, C. (1986). *The Newly Born Woman*. (Trans. Betsy Wing). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cohan, J. A. (2009). Honor killings and the cultural defense. *Cal. W. Int'l LJ*, 40, 177.
- Cornell, D. (1999). *Beyond accommodation: Ethical feminism, deconstruction, and the law*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Cullingford, E. B. (1994). The Historical Poetics of Excrement: Yeats's Crazy Jane and the Irish Bishops. In K. Hohne & H. Wussow (Eds.), *A Dialogue of Voices: Feminist Literary Theory and Bakhtin* (NED-New edition, pp. 20-41). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Davis, C. (2005). Hauntology, spectres and phantoms. *French Studies*, 59(3), 373-379.
- Derrida, J. (1982). *Margins of philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Derrida, J. (1992). The Force of Law. In D. Cornell, M. Rosenfeld & D. Carlson (Eds.). *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*. London: Routledge.
- Derrida, J. (2005). *Sovereignties in question: The poetics of Paul Celan* (No. 44). New York: Fordham Univ Press.

Derrida, J. (2012). *Specters of Marx: The state of the debt, the work of mourning and the new international*. New York: Routledge. (Original work published 1993)

Derrida, J. (2016). *Of grammatology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Direk, Z., & Lawlor, L. (Eds.). (2014). *A Companion to Derrida*. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.

Eigler, F. (1995). Feminist criticism and Bakhtin's dialogic principle: Making the transition from theory to textual analysis. *Women in German Yearbook: Feminist Studies in German Literature & Culture*, 11(1), 189-203.

Faris, W. B. (2004). *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

Fitzgerald, R. (1963). trans. *The Odyssey of Homer*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Fóti, V. M. (2006). "Speak, you also": On Derrida's Readings of Paul Celan. *Mosaic: a Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, 77-90.

Fritsch, M. (2005). *The Promise of Memory: History and Politics in Marx, Benjamin and Derrida*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Gilbert, S. M., & Gubar, S. (2020). *The madwoman in the attic: the woman writer and the nineteenth-century literary imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press. (Original work published 1979)

Gould, J. (1980). Law, Custom and Myth: Aspects of the Social Position of Women in Classical Athens. *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 100, 38-59.

Goulimari, P. (2014). *Literary Criticism and Theory: From Plato to Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge.

Greene, G. (1991). *Changing the story: Feminist fiction and the tradition*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Guilland, R. (1948). The Hippodrome at Byzantium. *Speculum*, 23(4), 676-682.

Gün, G. (1986). The woman in the darkroom: Contemporary women writers in Turkey. *World Literature Today*, 60(2), 275-279.

Gündoğan, D. (2009). Benzerlik bilgisinden dışıl büyüğü gerçekçiliğe: Latife Tekin romanları Sevgili Arsız Ölüm ve Muinar'da alternatif kadın öznelliği [From similitude episteme to feminine magical realism: Alternative female subjectivity in Latife Tekin's novels Dear Shameless Death and Muinar] [Unpublished Master's Thesis]. İstanbul University.

Halasek, K. (1992). Feminism and Bakhtin: Dialogic Reading in the Academy. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 22(1), 63–73.

Howells, C. A. (2006). Five ways of looking at The Penelopiad. *Sydney Studies in English*, 32(2006), 5-18.

Irigaray, L., & Burke, C. (1985). *This sex which is not one*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

Irigaray, L., & Gill, G. (1985). *Speculum of the other woman*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

Irigaray, L. (1993). *je, tu, nous: Toward A Culture of Difference* (Alison Martin, Trans.). New York: Routledge.

Jung, C. G. (1984). The psychology of the child archetype. In A. Dundes (Ed.). *Sacred narrative: Readings in the theory of myth*. (pp. 244-255). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Jung, S. (2014). 'A Chorus Line': Margaret Atwood's Penelopiad at the Crossroads of Narrative, Poetic and Dramatic Genres. *Connotations: A Journal for Critical Debate*, 24(1), 41-62.

Kant, I. (2008). *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. New Haven: Yale University Press. (Original work published 1785)

Kenny, D. P. (2003). Socratic Knowledge and the Daimonion. *Aporia*, 13(1), 26-40.

Kristeva, J. (1980). Word, Dialogue and Novel. In L. S. Roudiez (Ed.), *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. (pp. 64-91). New York: Columbia University Press.

Liotard, J. F. (1988). *The differend: Phrases in dispute*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Malinowski, B. (1984). The role of myth in life. *Sacred narrative: Readings in the theory of myth*, 193-206.

- Miller, J. H. (1987). *The ethics of reading*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Miller, J. H. (2007). 'Performativity as Performance/Performativity as speech act: Derrida's special theory of performativity,' *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 106: 219–35.
- Miner, V. (2006). Fictions and Frictions [Review of *The Penelopiad; The Tent*, by M. Atwood]. *The Women's Review of Books*, 23(5), 20–21.
- Montaigne, S. D. M. E. (1958). *The complete essays of Montaigne*. (Trans. D.M. Frame). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Mora, N. (2009). Violence as a communicative action: Customary and honor killings. *Journal of Human Sciences*, 6(2), 499-510.
- Morson, G. S., & Emerson, C. (1990). *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a prosaics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Nisbet, R. (1980). *History of the Idea of Progress*, New York: Basic Books.
- Ostriker, A. (1982). The thieves of language: Women poets and revisionist mythmaking. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 8(1), 68-90.
- Parla, J. (2008). The wounded tongue: Turkey's language reform and the canonicity of the novel. *PMLA*, 123(1), 27-40.
- Parla, J. (2009). Kadın Destanı Olur Mu? [Is the Epic of Women Possible?]. *Kültür ve Siyasette Feminist Yaklaşımlar* 6.
- Pehlivan, E. & Yazıcıoğlu, S. (2020). *Chronotope and Polyphony in Contemporary Women's Literature*. [Unpublished Master's Thesis]. İstanbul Üniversitesi.
- Pérez, A. M. L. (2015). *Postmodernism in Angela Carter's Short Fiction: a Žižekian Approach* [Unpublished Doctoral dissertation]. Universidade de Santiago de Compostela.
- Rich, A. (1972). When we dead awaken: Writing as re-vision. *College English*, 34(1), 18-30.
- Rosen, J. M. (2013). Minor Characters Have Their Day: The Imaginary and Actual Politics of a Contemporary Genre. *Contemporary Literature*, 54(1), 139-174.
- Salmon, P. (2020). *An event, perhaps: A biography of Jacques Derrida*. London: Verso Books.
- Saussure, F. D. (1960). *Course in General Linguistics*. Eds Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye with Albert Reidlinger. Trans. Wade Baskin. London: Peter Owen.

- Schrodt, B. (1981). Sports of the Byzantine empire. *Journal of Sport History*, 8(3), 40-59.
- Suzuki, M. (2007). Rewriting the “Odyssey” in the Twenty-First Century: Mary Zimmerman’s “Odyssey” and Margaret Atwood’s “Penelopiad.” *College Literature*, 34(2), 263–278.
- Terziođlu, Ö. (2009). Muinar’da Ekofeminist Kız Kardeşlik [Ecofeminist Sisterhood in Muinar]. *NAREdebiyat* 1: 38-43.
- Tekin, L. (2019). *Muinar*. Can Yayınları, İstanbul. (Original work published 2006)
- Vargova, M. (2007). Dialogue, pluralism, and change: The intertextual constitution of Bakhtin, Kristeva, and Derrida. *Res Publica*, 13(4), 415-440.
- Weber, E. (2018). Literature Calls For Justice. In Rabaté, J. M. (Ed.). *After Derrida: Literature, Theory and Criticism in the 21st Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weiss, P. A. (1987). Rousseau, Antifeminism, and Woman’s Nature. *Political Theory*, 15(1), 81–98.
- West-Pavlov, R. (2009). *Space in theory: Kristeva, Foucault, Deleuze*. Rodopi, New York.
- Yaeger, P. (1991). Afterword. In Bauer & McKinstry. *Feminism, Bakhtin and the dialogic*. Albany: State University of New York Press. 239-45.
- Yildiz, T. (2014). Saussure’den Bakhtin’e Dil-Kültür İlişkisi:” Tümü Kapsayıcı Olgu”. *İdil Sanat ve Dil Dergisi*, 3(11), 115-136.
- Zengin, M. (2016). An introduction to intertextuality as a literary theory: definitions, axioms and the originators. *Pamukkale University Journal of Social Sciences Institute*, 50, 299-327.