

**THE REPRESENTATION OF EURYDICE MYTH  
IN SARAH RUHL'S PLAY *EURYDICE*  
AND KATHY ACKER'S *EURYDICE IN THE UNDERWORLD***

**Ezgi DERE**

**Yüksek Lisans Tezi**

**İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı**

**Danışman: Doç. Dr. Tatiana GOLBAN**

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TEKİRDAĞ NAMIK KEMAL ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
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İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI  
YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

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**DANIŞMAN: DOÇ. DR. TATIANA GOLBAN**

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## **BİLİMSEL ETİK BİLDİRİM BEYANI**

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**TEZ ONAY FORMU**

Ezgi DERE tarafından hazırlanan The Representation of Eurydice Myth in Sarah Ruhl's play *Eurydice* and Kathy Acker's *Eurydice in the Underworld* konulu YÜKSEK LİSANS Tezinin Sınavı, Namık Kemal Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim Öğretim Yönetmeliği uyarınca ..... günü saat .....’da yapılmış olup, tezin ..... OYBİRLİĞİ / OYÇOKLUĞU ile karar verilmiştir.

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Mitoloji, evrensellik özelliğiyle kültürlerin ve toplumların ortak, benzer özelliklerini içinde barındırarak kültürlerin ve toplumların omurgası ve arşivi olma rolünü üstlenir. Birçok amacı ve özelliği bulunan mitler; işlevleri, biçimleri ve içerikleriyle çağlar boyu birçok alanda ilgi odağı olmayı başarmış ve bu bağlamda birçok edebi esere konu olmuştur. Bu sebeple, farklı bakış açıları ve farklı anlamlar ortaya koymaya çalışan birçok yazar, şair ve oyun yazarı için esin kaynağı olmuştur. Orpheus ve Eurydice miti de antik dönemden günümüz okurlarına dek ulaşarak etkisini sürdürmüştür. Mitin orijinal versiyonunda ve adaptasyonlarının birçoğunda odak Orpheus figüründe iken 20. yüzyıl itibari ile özellikle kadın yazarlar tarafından Eurydice karakterine ses verilmiştir. Bu bağlamda bu amaca hizmet eden iki eser, klasik Yunan miti Orpheus ve Eurydice mitinin versiyonları olan; Kathy Acker'in oyunu *Eurydice in the Underworld*'te ve Sarah Ruhl'un oyunu *Eurydice*'te yazarlar Orpheus mitinden mitsel öğeler kullanarak hikayeyi Eurydice' in bakış açısından anlatarak ona ses verme sürecinde mitin hangi amaca hizmet ettiğini ve anlamlarını revize ederek, yeni anlamlar ve bakış açıları sunmayı hedeflemişlerdir. Bu bağlamda bu tezin amacı, Orpheus ve Eurydice mitinde ve adaptasyonlarında Eurydice'in tasvirini, miti ve eserlerdeki mitsel

ögeleri psikolojik arketipler olarak çözümleyerek aynı zamanda mitin ölüm ve yaşam, kadın ve erkek, ataerkillik ve anaerkillik gibi v.b. konularda mitin arada kalmışlığını feminist teori aracılığıyla sunmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler; Eurydice, Feminism, Mit, Mitemler, Ölüm, Postmodern, Yaşam

## ABSTRACT

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Mythology with its universal traits, becomes a backbone and an archive of cultures and societies with the help of the shared and similar features. Myths include serves multiple purposes and have various characteristics that via their functions, forms, and contents become an attraction centre in several fields. Therefore, myths became a focus for several writers, poets and playwright who assumed a responsibility to revise the perspectives and meanings. In the meantime, Orpheus and Eurydice myth is one of the myths that was highly alluring not only to the ancients, but also continues to impress contemporary readers. In the original myth and its adaptations, the focus is on Orpheus figure, whereas in the twentieth century the focus is given more to Eurydice figure and especially female authors give voice to Eurydice. In this context, two of the versions of the classical Greek myth serve this purpose, which are Kathy Acker's play *Eurydice in the Underworld* and Sarah Ruhl's play *Eurydice*. Two of the writers use the myth and mythical units by juxtaposing the new and old meaning with new ones to present the position of the character Eurydice in their works. In the process of using these mythic patterns, the writers tell the story from Eurydice's point of view, with the aim to revise and construct new meanings and viewpoints. In this sense, the aim of this thesis is to

analyse the representation of Eurydice in the myth and mythical units as the examples of psychological archetypes in the works of the two writers and also present ambivalence of the myth by displaying the binary oppositions as death and life, femininity and masculinity, matriarchy and patriarchy through the lens of feminist theory.

Key Words: Death, Eurydice, Feminism, Life, Myth, Mythemes, Postmodern



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## INTRODUCTION

Mythology, with its universal traits, becomes a backbone and an archive of cultures and societies with the help of the shared and similar features. Therefore, the myths were explained by several artists, poets, writers, critics. Meanwhile, one of the most enchanting myths in Western literature is that of Orpheus and Eurydice. To begin with the classical representation of the myth, can be seen this tragic paradigm in various literary texts belongs to the different historical and cultural backgrounds, as in the works of Plato's *Orpheus and Eurydice*, Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Book X, Fable I, II; Book XI, Fable I) (8 A.D), Virgil's *Georgics* (Book II), Rainer Maria Rilke "*Orpheus, Eurydice, Hermes*" (1907), Kathy Acker's *Eurydice In The Underworld* (1997), and Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice* (2003) among the most known of the versions of the myth.

The writers of different literary backgrounds scrutinize this myth. However, Orpheus and Eurydice myth is one of those myths that was highly alluring not only to the ancients but also continues to amaze even the readers of the contemporary world. Two of the writers use the Orpheus myth as a framing device to present the position of Eurydice and more obvious that the position of women in general within the contexts of the feminist perspective, in order to create and construct new meanings. Both of writers use the myth and mythical units in their works. By juxtaposing the new and old meanings with new ones, the writers actually focus on the main character of the works and myth, Eurydice. In the process of using these sequent of events as a mythic pattern, writers aim to tell the story from Eurydice's point of view to revise and challenge the earlier established meanings and construct the new viewpoints and meanings to the works. Yet, the aim of this thesis is to present an analysis of two versions of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth which are Kathy Acker's play *Eurydice In the Underworld* and Sarah Ruhl's play *Eurydice*. The versions of the myth will be analysed in this study from a vantage point that assumes to indicate the Orpheus and Eurydice myth is fundamentally a transition story, in some respects, between death and life, femininity and masculinity rather than a tragic love story.

This approach to the myth and two of the works needs to be a further examination to display the stories as a psychological archetypes and regard to analyse each mythical unit which they include. As Levi- Strauss suggests that these mythical units are as essential parts of mythology.

The framework of this thesis is largely predicated on the main character, Eurydice as a silenced character or as a female character there is not given a place actually as a subject in classical Greek myth and several versions of the myth, especially it may be seen more obvious in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In fact, various available versions of the myth share the similar thematic concerns. This study attempts to display the scheme of themes, symbols and motifs in each work and basically how the myth and versions serve to convey the meanings and perspectives which they carry.

In chapter I, in this thesis will be discussed the explanation of myth, its functions, mythical units of each work and how they are presented in the original myth and in the retellings of the myth. On the other hand, there must be a further analysis of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice in classical Greek mythology and its some earlier references as Ovidian version of the myth.

In this chapter, the function of the myth will be discussed and there are some approaches to interpret both the Orpheus and Eurydice myth and its adaptations. In this sense, this study deals with some contemporary approaches to myth. Thus, frequently the study utilises from the psychological theories of Jungian, Freudian and in some respects, from the studies of the structuralist Levi Strauss' approach to the myth. At the same time, the main purpose of this thesis is to present the evolution of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth in terms of shifting perspectives from Orpheus to Eurydice. Throughout the history of literature various adaptations of the myth written from Orpheus' viewpoint and actually there is not a notable reference about Eurydice's personality or about her origin. Thus, Helen Sword in her study she argues that the place of Eurydice and she mentions about Eurydice's "only obvious archetypal significance resides in a negative role; that of women-as-other, woman as death, woman the dark continent..." (1989, p. 408)

Freud also mentions about women as “*dark continent*” that he uses this term to display women’s sexuality and obscurity. The only scene Eurydice takes place which is the death scene. She stands in the mythical scene only as a wife of Orpheus there is no significant reference about her occupation and interest and etc. as Orpheus. Various adaptations of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth presented from this point of view by earlier writers. At this point, first female writer who gave the expression to Eurydice was H.D... She shifts the perspective from Orpheus to Eurydice. She tells the story from Eurydice’s point of view. In this sense, in each chapter, the mythic patterns of each events in the myth and in the adaptations will be discussed from various theoretical points of view in this study.

## **1. Carl Gustave Jung**

Carl Jung, as one of the most mentioned psychoanalyst and philosopher, he is noted for his various theories, studies upon psychology and myths. Analytic psychology is frequently used in the interpretation of the myth. Thus, this study will deal with some Jungian theories on the interpretation of the Orpheus myth. Speaking of Jungian theories on myth, it is necessary to scrutinize these theories. To adapt his theories to the Orpheus myth, it is important to understand Jung’s theory of archetype. Archetypes introduced by Jung as a concept which are the universal patterns of the collective unconscious. The key to Jungian theory of myth actually lies in his idea of collective unconscious that for him, the collective unconscious serves as “the repository of man’s experience” which is all comprised of “archetypes”. (Jung, 1966:81). Jung explains the archetpe in his essay *The Psychology of the Unconscious* as in the following lines:

The Collective Unconscious, being a repository of man’s experience and at the same time the prior condition of this experience, is an image of the world which has taken aeons to form. In this image certain features, the archetypes of dominants, have crystallized out in the course of time. They are ruling powers, the gods, images of the dominant laws and principles, and of typical, regularly occurring events in the soul’s cycle of experience. In so far as these images are more or less faithful replicas of psychic events, their archetypes, that is, their general characteristics which have been emphasized through the accumulation of similiar experiences, also correspond to certain general characteristics of the physical world. (Jung, 1966: 81-82).

According to Jung, the collective unconscious serves as a form of psychological inheritance. He identifies four major archetypes but there are various archetypes such as father and mother archetypes. From this context, in Orpheus and Eurydice myth we deal with the issue of relationship between man and woman. In this respect, the Orpheus and Eurydice myth and its adaptations will be analysed through the lens of Jung's theory of archetype.

On the other hand, Jung suggests that each relationship is represented by only one archetype. (Jung, 2013). That is, the myth associates with the relationship man and woman. However, the Orpheus and Eurydice myth has attracted numerous artists, philosophers, writers and so on, in western literature. Nevertheless, it has been applied to various art forms from novel to opera, from painting to cinema. It seems that its impression can be seen in the twentieth century literature. There are plenty of adaptations of the myth written in twentieth century, these are the main ones; Rainer Maria Rilke "*Orpheus, Eurydice, Hermes*" (1907), H.D. "*Eurydice*" (1917), Margaret Atwood "*Eurydice*" (1976), Kathy Acker "*Eurydice in the Underworld*" (1997), Sarah Ruhl "*Eurydice*" (2003). The common features of the works they share that the focus of versions is on the representation of Eurydice. The two writers shift the point of view from Orpheus to Eurydice. In a way, given a voice to Eurydice by the contemporary writers. Helen Sword comments on this issue she says in her work:

Modern women writers, penetrating both the literary marketplace and the canon in increasingly large numbers, have used their new found intellectual clout to reject woman's traditional Eurydicean role as long-suffering wife, abandoned lover patient muse, and death filled archetype. (1989: 409).

It is highly essential for this study, since the main aim of this thesis is to reveal the position of Eurydice in the works which are Kathy Acker's *Eurydice in the Underworld* and Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice*.

The word myth derived from word 'mythos' which corresponds a specific kind of spoken narration. There is no notable information about how is told first. However, the Orpheus and Eurydice myth appears in Virgil's *Georgics* (29 BC). Approximately a generation after the myth emerges in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (8 AD). In earlier versions

of the myth, Orpheus was the forefront. Thus, presented very often as a tragic figure who mourns for his beloved Eurydice and as a lover and artist who tries to defy his wife from death with his magical power of music. Nevertheless, the development emerges in evolution of the myth especially in twentieth century, where the adaptations of the myth reflect female psychology, by giving Eurydice a voice actually by giving a chance to narrate the story from her point of view.

In chapter II, in this study will be discussed the version Kathy Acker's play as one of the most appealing myths in literature is one of the Orpheus myth. Thus, the writer uses this mythical story to create new meanings and viewpoints. Therefore, the writer entitled the play as *Eurydice in the Underworld* she uses the myth as a device to suggest both symbolic and physical existence of Eurydice in the underworld. Acker presents some recurrent mythical patterns, such as their marriage, the death of Eurydice, the descent of Orpheus to the underworld to defy her from death, there are other mythical units of the myth, but Acker divides the mythical events into chapters in her work. Unlike her representation of Orpheus in the play, in the original version of the myth Orpheus is presented as a superhuman artist who enchants the living, non-living creatures by the power of his music and the death of Orpheus. (Bulfinch, 1962). But this version of myth separates itself from this mythic pattern. As a female writer of the twentieth century, in *Eurydice in the Underworld*, Acker presents Eurydice as a real woman with cancer who lives in the twentieth century. Thus, Acker's Eurydice eludes herself from being an archetypal figure. Although Acker gives Eurydice a voice, she creates a passive, Eurydice as in the version of Ovid. This passivity has its source in her illness and in association with her issue of accepting or denying death. As a matter of fact, Acker's Eurydice rejects the idea of death, especially in the scenes which patriarchal implications are observed. These implications are imposed upon Eurydice through her husband generally. This means patriarchal authority subjugates Eurydice; therefore, she is placed as a passive character who tries to have a position against patriarchal hegemony. In Acker's *Eurydice in the Underworld* what is new, she suggests that both Eurydice and Orpheus are not mythic figures anymore, especially Eurydice wears a mask of a tragic figure actually, who eludes herself from the mythic representation of Eurydice from the original Greek myth. Conventionally, Orpheus is

presented as a hero who tries to defy his beloved Eurydice from death by descending in the underworld as in the version of Ovid and in many other versions of the myth, but Acker also challenges representation of Orpheus by presenting him who does not want to recover Eurydice from death, as Helen Sword says in her study “Orpheus soundly rejects Eurydice both as an archetype and as an individual.” (1989: 418).

In Acker’s version of the myth, the scenes which take place in the underworld contains violence, crime and sexuality that these scenes are not seen in other versions of the myth. So, these are can be defined by using the theories which we will be discussed later in this article. Therefore, Acker’s version of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth will be discussed in the second chapter of this study. There are multiple points of views to be observe in the play, hence this study focuses on these mythical representations in the play. Although there are several viewpoints to the myth, this study aims to analyse Kathy Acker’s work *Eurydice in the Underworld* in this chapter through some contemporary theories towards to death and sexuality which are related to some gender issues to explore Acker’s Eurydice in the work.

## **2. Claude Levi-Strauss**

There are various ways to interpret of the myths. One of the most mentioned philosophers in our age is the one of Claude Levi-Strauss who is an important name as an anthropologist and structuralist. There can be seen his deep relevance in interpreting the myths. According to Levi-Strauss, the myth is an evidence which displays the universality of the function of the human psyche. The elements of a certain myth, always, has no meaning in itself. That is to say, the myths must be seen as a whole. The philosopher proves his claim anywise. He begins with a myth of a certain society that he detects the other elements which are not found in a single myth. Then, Levi-Strauss scrutinizes his investigation through the Greek myths and identifies the structural similarities between the myths. The similarities between the myths, all along, there are various assumptions that similar societal structures produce similar myths.

Levi-Strauss refers that myth and thought which independent of any historical circumstance. According to Levi-Strauss, due to myth shares multiple morphological



similarities, myth becomes language. Therefore, he claims that myth has its own characteristics which make it myth or language itself. In the meantime, he suggests that the myth “cannot simply be treated as language, if its specific problems are to be solved, myth is language: to be known, myth has to be told; it is a part of human speech” (Levi-Strauss, 1955). He mentions that myth “is language, functioning on an especially high level where meaning succeeds practically at ‘taking off’ from the linguistic ground on which keeps on rolling” (Levi-Strauss, 1955: 430). Levi-Strauss also mentions that the *mytheme* which is the smallest constituent units of a myth that he defines the myth as “like the rest of language, is made up of constituent units or mythemes, is a relation, and the meaning of a myth is to be found in bundles of such relations.” (1955: 431).

### **3- Carl G. Jung and Claude Levi-Strauss’ Theoretical Perspectives on Myth**

Carl Gustave Jung as a psychologists, conceives this as stable, universal and archaic patterns and images of all people all around the world that derives from the collective unconscious (*archetypes*) (Jung, 1980). Thus so, on the occasion of existing in the collective unconscious, the myths resemble each other. Therefore, Levi-Strauss’ approach is an attempt to explain these similarities. Hereby, this approach represents new similarities which are not found in others. For that reason, Levi-Strauss claims that the resemblance of the myths is as the common structure of human psyche (Yücel, 1977)

Although the plot of the play in Acker’s *Eurydice in the Underworld* continues similarly as in the original myth. Acker plays with the expectation of the readers that she subverts the situations and the development of the characters, she presents them from an innovative point of view and also brings new meanings and perspectives to the myth such as Eurydice is as a subject ( tells the story from her point of view, she is given a voice in a way.), sexuality, illness, gender issues, Orpheus’ unwillingness to quest for Eurydice also his unwillingness to the journey to the underworld, and the perception death and life, and their negative attitude towards the concept of death (Eurydice in some ways, not particularly).

In Acker's play *Eurydice in the Underworld*, the archetypes of death and life and the other related notions are indicated by the writer from a different point of view, Acker presents Eurydice as a woman who has breast cancer. She creates a unique character who eludes herself from archetypal representation of Eurydice. Acker with her representation of Eurydice gives an impression that the emergence of the illness influences her approach toward death. Thus, the dilemma of Eurydice is implied from this viewpoint, that between accepting or denying death, which is an issue related to the femininity and masculinity, matriarchal and patriarchal. In theological background, the relation of the Orpheus myth between goddess religions which is its certain association to God Dionysus, the importance is given to their tendency to see the death as a feminine realm. While Orpheus obviously sees death as a negative concept which displays the patriarchal notion towards the death, Eurydice attitudes towards the death is ambivalent because the underworld is seen as a kind of feminine realm and by denying or accepting the death she seems that in between the upper world which is ruled by the patriarchal hegemony and the feminine realm which is underworld. It is said that death is seen as feminine this is the reason why is that anthropologist Elinor Gadon other contemporaries stress the fact that the death is seen as feminine according to its theological background (Gadon, 1989). Therefore, Karl S. Guthke refers the gender of death in his study. So, he claims that in some cultures, in art and literature, "regularly personify death as a woman: beautiful, ugly, old and young, motherly, seductive or dangerous" (1999: 7).

In addition to this, Eurydice is the first one who dies as a female character. In this version, the reader meets with different characters as Orpheus and Eurydice from the classical story. As in the love story of the original Greek myth, Orpheus is not a hero anymore. In fact, he even does not want to bring Eurydice with him to the over world. Speaking of differences of the version, it must be known that the writer uses an unusual language in her work *Eurydice in the Underworld* among the other various versions of the myth. Acker, while using the myth as framing device, highlights the importance the language at the same time. In an interview Acker points out the importance of the language in her works when she states: "So that the function of language was secondary to their desire to express what they saw reality, or society, or whatever" (Colby, 2016: 5).

Acker experiences her works as the ordinary language to generate and actually to explore the new forms of meaning and she concentrates on the significance of language as she says, “that language was more real than what it was supposed to be mirroring” (Colby, 2016: 6) and also she perceives the language in terms of its function to provide reality and such social values in the work “as an inverted set of values” (Colby, 2016: 8).

Acker lived in a time when the feminist movement exists, thus, her ideas coincided with the third-generation women writers. Hence, she adopts the feminist’s concerns. So, it means that she apparently reflects her ideas through her works. In this sense, the writer considers writing these notions as a duty yet, again this raises the issue of feminism in her works. As a different character from any earlier or contemporary retellings, Acker presents her Eurydice and in her work **Eurydice in the Underworld**, as Georgia Colby mentions in her study about Acker’s use of language, she focuses on the silent language which appears in the work “as a paradigm silent language of body wherein performance is the act of composition from which the silent language is realised” (Colby, 2016: 7).

Acker’s use of language not only engaged in creating new meanings she challenges with the patriarchal language as well in the work. As it is known to all, many of the Feminist philosophers and writers stand against the patriarchal language which depends on phallogocentrism. As the other feminist philosophers, Helene Cixous in her **The Laugh of Medusa** proposes that women should subvert the oppositions and implications of patriarchy which are imposed upon them, specifically by eluding from the patriarchal language, so she frequently addresses the symbolic order and she offers women to write about women. Cixous believes in writing about themselves will lead them to return their bodies that and it is the only way of doing away with this patriarchal language and to find an alternative language. Thus, she says in her article:

Her words all fall almost always upon the deaf male ear, which hears in language only that which speaks in the masculine. (...) women will confirm women in a place other than that which is reserved in and by symbolic, that is, a place other than silence. Women should break out of the snare of silence. (Cixous, 1976: 881).

On the other hand, Acker purports her work as an embodiment of the silent language as Colby states in her study. This silent language is presented as all the physical pains and sufferings of Eurydice which pave the way for the silent language, as Acker mentions. However, Acker reflects her own story through Eurydice figure in her work, as Sarah Ruhl does in her version. Ruhl dedicates apparently her work *Eurydice* to her dead father. It is known to all that Acker died because of breast cancer. In any case, this situation impacts on the creation and the emergence of the new form meanings which she aims through the work.

In chapter III, the study attempts to display the presentation of Eurydice in Sarah Ruhl's play *Eurydice*. In the meantime, Ruhl's way of using the mythical units and archetypes will be discussed within a further analyse, with the help of the contemporary theories which are basically based on the Freudian, Lacanian and Jungian psychoanalysis. Sarah Ruhl also coincides with the same important period of feminism as Kathy Acker. As Acker, Sarah Ruhl also reverberates her own ideas through her works. Considering their period both the writers lived in and produced their works, knowing the background initially gives us an opportunity to investigate the works their perspectives.

The third wave feminists support the idea of equality that, although there are given some official rights in terms of equality, the patriarchal perception which consider the women inferior and the men as superior does not change. Ruhl presents a passive Eurydice as Kathy Acker. In her play *Eurydice* she deals with the issue of language and along with Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray some of their ideas are compatible for the language issues. Ruhl's Eurydice is also different from all other various versions of the myth. There is no mother figure in the play as in the other versions, however, Ruhl adds a father figure and the issue of language to play thus Eurydice experiences a double passivity between her father and husband. The first understanding towards Ruhl's play to appreciate it as point of transition from the other earlier works. The play reflects Ruhl's personal life that in one of her interviews she says:

Orpheus tale has always with me more than any other Greek myth. I'd seen so many beautiful retellings from Cocteau to Black Orpheus, rarely does anyone look at Eurydice's experience. I always found that troubling... There's an exception a beautiful 1904 Rilke poem

called Orpheus, Eurydice, Hermes looks at Eurydice's experiences at the fullness of her death when Orpheus arrives, with a kind of ambivalence... I'm so compelled by the questions the myth raises about music and language and the idea of Eurydice going into the underworld and meeting her father there. The play is really dedicated to my father, who died when I was twenty and he was fifty-five. Eurydice transparently personal play. (Weckwerth, 2004: 28-35).

Ruhl states why she engaged in writing Eurydice from the point of view of Eurydice, although she finds it as a trouble. She indicates that the issue of language and the father figure are not unintentional. Both serves the work as a device to present the work from Eurydice's viewpoint. Ruhl presents largely a faithful style of adaptation to the myth that she is all driven by her own great sorrow at the death of her father. She skilfully shifts the focus from Orpheus to Eurydice and, by doing this, she creates new perspectives and new meanings at the same time. She adds the chorus as a device which are Big, Loud and Little Stones. She employs the classical Greek chorus as a repetition device which its function is to regulate the grief of Eurydice and to give directions to her also it responsible for regulating all the characters' emotional states. (Durham, 2013).

In other respects, along with the issue of language will be discussed in terms of Freudian a Lacanian theories on language. The influence of feminist theories is also observed both in the works and will be analysed by the present study in terms of death and sexuality. These feminist theories are highly prominent for the aim of this thesis concurrently proper to both of the works. French feminists agree with the idea that the bodily power is often associated with the female. Therefore, the idea of death strengthens the end of female. French feminists indigenise the idea that the only way to subvert patriarchy and to gain subjectivity, the female should adopt her own body, and embrace herself what she is. Helene Cixous explains this by showing the importance on accepting the body, in her *The Laugh of the Medusa* as she says:

Women must write herself; must write about women and bring woman 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. Woman put herself into the text – as into the world and into history – by her own movement. (Cixous, 1976: 880).

Cixous argues that the woman should write about women, therefore, the female can get rid of this phallogocentric implications and patriarchal language. As French feminism developed from Lacanian theories on language, it is also prominent to scrutinize the Lacanian approach and its reflections in the works.

Ruhl's play *Eurydice*, the plot of the play or the mythic pattern continues similarly as in the classical Greek myth of Orpheus. She presents Eurydice as a female character which seems from the 1960's. In the act I, the reader can perceive it from the stage direction and also Ruhl's depiction of her swimsuit she wears in the first scene. As in the other versions of the myth in her play, Eurydice dies just after her wedding ceremony but not by a snake, but by a man who is called A Naughty Interesting Man, who is also the ruler of the underworld. This scene emerges similarly in Jean Anouilh's play *Eurydice*, a man who wears mackintosh follows every action of Eurydice, he is also represented in the play as the ruler of the underworld. But obviously the representation of the characters is different. Ruhl's style of representation of the characters is highly distinctive. The Naughty Interesting Man, in the day of their wedding ceremony finds a letter which is from Eurydice's dead father. Thus, he tricks Eurydice by saying her he has a letter from her dead father. So, his plan serves this purpose, as she goes to his flat as soon as she leaves her wedding ceremony. She takes the letter from The Naughty Interesting Man, but while she flees from his advances, she falls down the stairs, so she dies. After her arrival to the underworld the father and the stones meet Eurydice there. She wants to speak, opens her mouth tries to speak but just a noise is heard. Because she forgets how to speak, read and write and all of the things about her life. As we discussed earlier the issue of language is seen in this scene. The stones serve as a legislation device for soothing the grief of Eurydice in Hades. Yet the stones, as a device of chorus, aim to protect the story to come up to the expectations of the readers, audiences as it mostly known, for that reason that the common and shared cultural issues are presented as a force which stimulates the emotional stability, the reason why actually the reader already knows the original story and how the tale supposed to go as they expect. (Durham, 2013).

From this point, Ruhl's *Eurydice* retells the Orpheus myth with her contributions to the story, and she makes a distinctive work by giving Eurydice a presentation as a

subject via shifting the point of view from Orpheus to Eurydice. The second death is in Ruhl's adaptation of the myth, what is attracted in the work that she explains in one of her interviews with Paula Vogel in a magazine, "I'm interested in her voice, a voice that hasn't been heard before I'm interested in anyone who dies twice." (Vogel, 2007: 53).

Elsewhere, she comments that no one is interested with her voice, her representation, so she decided to give a voice to Eurydice, although she finds it troubling. Because Eurydice is the one who dies and experiences a journey to the underworld but in fact, the reader really does not see her experience. The play reveals the contemporary life. Ruhl presents it in the play Orpheus and Eurydice who are on the beach, in the elegant high-rise apartment and etc.

Along with the issue of language this study associates with the Lacanian theory of language. According to Lacan the language acquisition is divided into three periods which are the "*Mirror, Symbolic and Real*" he points out that his approach to the analytic psychoanalysis theory as "unconscious instructed like a language" (Lacan J. , 1977: 20). Through the theories of language, Ruhl's representation of Eurydice in terms of language issues which relates the work as the patriarchal language imposed upon the female will be analysed in the particular chapter.

Lacan's theory of stages offers a convenient linguistic pattern in distinguishing how subject functions essentially. The progress of the subject to function as a subject is driven by our possible capacity to misperception of the 'real' due to the fact that one must construct his/her sense of 'reality' via the language. This means the language directly effects our sense of the reality to reach the real. In Ruhl's play when Eurydice dies and forgets speaking, reading and writing, according to Lacanian theory of the stages in Eurydice's situation she experiences in the underworld corresponds with Lacanian *Imaginary Stage*. Since death means the separation from the language which patriarchy controls in the world of living. Thus, with the help of the patriarchy she reaches the archetypal mother.

In the *Imaginary Stage* Lacan suggests that the infant does not distinguish himself/herself from the others, since the achievement of identity information of the

infant takes place only in the mirror stage. (Lacan J. , 2001). As it is understood from the Lacanian theory of stages, the

*Imaginary Stage* is the period which the infant learns the language. Lacan indicates that the importance of the language in which especially an existence of a language is pointed. Therefore, the conversations of the parents about their infants and the process of giving name to them are quite significant for their future. In this period the infant sees himself/herself as a part of his/her mother. (Booker, 1998).

Nevertheless, the infant becomes aware of his/her self. However, in this stage the infant does not achieve a clear identity information, in this respect, to achieve the subjectivity of his/her self, the infant has to part her/ his company with the mother. Due to the fact that the infant may become a subject in condition that keeps himself/ herself away from the Oedipal conflicts, which Toril Moi presents clearly the transition and the differences between the stages and what is needed to become a subject. (Moi, 2003: 89). From this point of view, it is understood that the *Imaginary* for Lacan, activated by the child's accession into the *Mirror Stage*. Toril Moi in her *Sexual/ Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*, implies this situation:

The Mirror Stage thus only allows for dual relationships. It is only through the triangulation of this structure, which, as we have seen, occurs when the father intervenes to break up the dyadic unity between mother and child that the child can take up its place in the symbolic order and thus come define itself as separate from the other. (Moi, 2003: 98).

From this stand point it is necessary to look over the other stages. Thus, in Ruhl's play, the father figure calls forth Eurydice's entry to the '*Symbolic Order*' as Moi states that symbolic order is a place where the language controlled by the 'Law of the Father' it is provided by the father figure, by excluding the mother figure from Eurydice's life and teaching Eurydice how to speak again. Moi clarifies this as the unconscious realm which has own code of ethics, set of values that symbolic controls over the society "All human culture and all life in society is dominated by the symbolic order" (Moi, 2003 98).

As it is observed that the language is controlled by '*The Law of the Father*' since as it is indicated above in Moi's work, it is patriarchal order which puts the female aside



within the symbolic order which puts the female aside within the symbolic order due to the fact that the female is seen as the sign of inferiority, as the sign of lack, as Freud claims. In the meantime, Moi makes clear the issue of lack in her work by saying: “To enter into the symbolic order means to accept the phallus as the representation of the Law of the Father. All human culture and all life in society is dominated by symbolic order and thus by the phallus as the sign of lack.” (Moi, 2003: 89).

As a feminist philosopher, Helene Cixous discusses the same concerns as Moi she addresses the symbolic order in her *The Laugh of the Medusa*, she martially how the female can challenge with this symbolic order. Therewithal, she suggests that writing is significant for women to defy this symbolic order and this is the only way to win over this patriarchal language. She gives importance to writing since the act of writing will return the female to her body. As she explains, “It is by writing, from and toward women, and by taking up the challenge of speech which has been governed by the phallus, that women will confirm men in a place other than silence. Women should break out of the snare of silence.” (Cixous, 1976: 881).

On the other hand, in Ruhl’s play the patriarchy imposed upon Eurydice through language, since the father teaches and directs her into the language as the character who knows how to speak, read and write although no one has ability to speak except the father figure in the underworld.

*The real stage* is associated with the themes such as death and sexuality, that numerous philosophers as Freud and Barthes especially on writing represent the idea which Lacan calls it “*Jouissance*”, although in many languages there is not a clear translation of it, as it is understood from its meaning. Lacan presents it basically as correspond us with the word ‘pleasure’, and Freud puts it beyond the pleasure principle and whether we like it or not, *Jouissance* is related to what he calls it as ‘*death instinct*’ or in other words ‘*Thanatos*’ and he claims that it is impossible to reach *Jouissance* (Homer, 2013). In his studies, Freud enucleates the term:

In biological functions the two basic instincts operate against each other or combine with each other or combine with each other. Thus, the act of eating is a destruction of the object with the final aim of aggression with the purpose of the most intimate union. This concurrent

and mutually opposing action of the two basic instincts gives rise to the whole variation of the phenomena of life (Freud, 1940: 148).

Therefore, the issue of death will be discussed in the particular chapters and its association with both of the works.

According to Lacan, after the infant learns language and also includes himself/herself into the symbolic order the only 'Real' the infant can experience is death. Since, when death is experienced, the infant returns to symbolic order and from this standpoint, the *Real Stage* is a place where the infant should exist after the infant is born. (Balkaya, 2013). Likewise, this necessity is valid for the symbolic order. However, Eurydice as a silenced character, in both Acker's *Eurydice in the Underworld* and Ruhl's *Eurydice*, experiences death, from this viewpoint, how the works present Eurydice's experience of death is the main purpose of this thesis.

Luce Irigaray, as Helene Cixous, discusses the issue of language and she claims that she finds out an alternative way to subvert the patriarchal power which is imposed upon women. In her *The Power of Discourse and the Subordination Feminine* she displays how female is presented by patriarchal "The feminine is always described in terms of deficiency or atrophy, as the other side of the sex that alone holds a monopoly on value: the male sex." (2004: 69).

She points out the symbolic order at the same time as Cixous. As it is observed, contemporary feminist philosophers share the similar concern in terms feminist literary theory. Therefore, Irigaray, as Cixous mentions this lack of organ which actually depends on Freudian theory she comments on "the little girl neither she nor any woman has" (Irigaray, 2004: 69). The impact of the male discourse obviously can be seen in Ruhl's play. It is seen that Eurydice does not free herself from this patriarchal oppression due to the fact that she exposes this patriarchal oppression through her husband, Orpheus in the world of living, and through her father by symbolic order in the underworld. That is to say, she is between her father and her husband in a way. Starting from this point of view, she implies the problem of the symbolic which is imposed upon through the language, so, in her article *When Our Lips Speak Together*, she declares why the female needs her own language to subvert the patriarchal impositions:

If we don't invent a language, if we don't find our body's language it will have too few gestures to accompany our story. We shall tire of the same ones, and leave our desires unexpressed, unrealized. Asleep again, unsatisfied, we shall fall back upon the words of men – who, for their part have “known” for a long time. But *not our body*. Seduced, attracted, fascinated, ecstatic with our becoming, we shall remain paralyzed (Irigaray, 1985: 214).

Therefore, she represents the idea of '*mimicry*' in her article *This Sex Which is Not One* (Irigaray, 1985) as a strategic essentialism. In fact, Lacan defines it which functions as a camouflage in terms of technical sense. But Irigaray defines it as a necessity to elaborate this phallogocentric order when she says: “There is, in an initial phase, perhaps only one ‘path’, the one historically assigned to the feminine; that of mimicry” (Irigaray, 1985: 76) and she adds “To Play with mimesis is thus, for a woman, to try recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it” (Irigaray, 1985: 76).

Irigaray clearly explains the use of mimicry as she says it is “*playful repetition*” and “*pretending*” (Irigaray). So, she suggests that the effect of mimicry is a kind of device so that the female both have a possibility to cover up a place in language and also to protect themselves from this patriarchal destruction. Therefore, Ruhl's Eurydice uses mimicry to recover herself from this patriarchal oppression. Although she uses '*mimicry*' to imitate both her husband and her father in a sense she fails in achieving this. Because again she finds herself within the patriarchy either with her husband in the upper world or with her father in the underworld until her second death.

Julia Kristeva is another feminist philosopher whose works are greatly influenced by Lacanian psychoanalysis. At this juncture, Lacanian '*symbolic stage*' controls over the '*imaginary*' and '*real stage*' because it is particularly conducted by '*The Law of Father*'. From this point of view, according to Kristeva, Irigaray, and Cixous, female is closer to return the '*imaginary*' due to the fact that the females have not a place for themselves in '*symbolic stage*'. Since they have always an alternative way to get rid of it. And yet, Kristeva's term semiotic which she places for woman, corresponds with Lacanian theory of '*imaginary*'. More obviously, the semiotic is the matriarchal side of language that displays the inner drives which also oppressed by the symbolic embodiment of '*The Law of the Father*'. Thus, she claims that If semiotic

disrupts this symbolic embodiment *The Law of the Father* in that case, there arises a possibility of an alternative language for the female.

Therefore, the issue of death is significant to examine in Orpheus myth to reveal Eurydice representation and the nature of the myth. Thus, by applying Kristeva's theories and Freudian approach to death to the myth is important and worth to analyse. The fore mentioned theory that discussed in Lacanian *real stage* from this viewpoint, the myth can be seen as the embodiment of returning to the womb of the mother because the infant's only possible way to return the place where he/she begins which is the *Imaginary Stage* (Balkaya, 2013). At this junction, this approach to death, does not see death as a negative concept or as a destruction; on the contrary this viewpoint to death is strengthened in the myth and in the adaptations because the female can recover herself from this patriarchal boundary and from this symbolic order as well with the help of death.

Kristeva also connects this issue of death to the language. In her *Black Sun* she clarifies the issue of death by saying: "For the speaking being life is a meaningful life; life even the apogee of meaning. Hence if the meaning of life is lost, life is can easily be lost: when meaning shatters, life no longer matters, in his doubtful moments have depressed person is philosopher" (Kristeva, 1992: 6).

Taking into account all of these theories and their presentations in both of the works from the matriarchal point of view towards to death and both Kristeva's and Freud's approach can be seen in earlier adaptations of the myth, especially in Ovidian version of the myth, which displays death as a source of sorrow, which is actually the end of something and as a place where it is seen as a focus of curiosity to reach endless love. To interpret the myth and the versions of the myth is essential on studying myth for this reason it is necessary to know the history of the myth. It will be discussed in given chapters.

## CHAPTER I

### 1. The Definition of Myth and the Approaches in interpreting Myths

Many of the contemporary philosophers attempted to explain myths. There are various definition about the myth in literature but there are some notable explanations from the most known philosophers who studied on myth, such as Joseph Campbell, who provides a definition for the myth in his *The Hero with A Thousand Faces*:

It has been as a primitive, fumbling effort to explain the world of nature (Frazer); as a production of poetical fantasy from prehistoric times, misunderstood by succeeding ages (Müller); as a repository of allegorical instruction, to shape the individual to his group (Durkheim); as a group dream, symptomatic of archetypal urges within the depths of the human psyche (Jung); as the traditional vehicles of man's profoundest insights (Coomaraswamy); and God's revelation to His children (the Church). (Campbell, 2004: 353-354).

Traditionally, it is considered that the word 'myth' comes from Greek *mythos*, which means story. In the Oxford English Dictionary, the definition of myth as "A traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining some natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events." So many scholars see myth from a different perspective. Therefore, there are given various definition of myth. Tatiana Golban provides an explanation of myth in her study:

Myth reveals essential truths about human condition in an emblematic language, and we become aware of these truths in this language and in the narrative of myth. Through story and language myths manage to tap the human psyche, which is a gigantic, infinite depository of all knowledge about man and his relation to Divinity. Universal knowledge becomes available as individual knowledge only through the realm of myth. (Golban T. , 2014: 18).

Afterwards, myth becomes as a device for the poets, authors and playwrights and artists also for the art-forms. In some ways, they keep the interest alive upon myth. They bring new dimensions to the classical myth and discover new meanings; thus, they add

to the myth their own new perspectives. The meaning of any given myth can be disclosed in two ways: by searching its origin out and or finding it from the artistic creation of the work. The significant step to understand the literary work is to know the sources which the writer used, within this context, it is important to know mythical texts, mythical elements which are alluded to in order to analyse the works.

Speaking of myth, there are numerous ways to interpret the myths. And the concern of this thesis arises from this point that to interpret the myth this study utilizes some postmodern approaches that makes us aware that most of the approaches are related to each other in a way in terms of the themes which are include in the both works discussed. Structuralist approach, psychoanalytical approach, feminist literary theory among the approaches used in order to interpret the myth.

Carl Jung in his studies suggests that the idea of *archetype*, represents the universal pattern which penetrates from the collective unconscious as mythological themes. To make it more clearly, he claims that archetypes are the symbols and common myths which penetrate both our conscious and subconscious level, he points out the idea of collective unconscious, which is represent some memories, ideas and etc. shared by the cultures all over the world through the history. In fact, these shared notions are what he calls *archetypes*, thus, these shared concepts exist in dreams , in mythical stories which contain the characters, sequence of events in it all corresponds with the Jungian archetype (Jung, 2013). There are plenty of archetypes, Jung suggested, but in the myth, we associate with the characters as the archetypes as the embodiment of the man and woman relationship in general. In the myth of Orpheus, death is a recurring motif. Both the death of Eurydice by a snake bite and her second death by the gaze of Orpheus and also the death of Orpheus when dismembered by Maenads are given in the myth as recurrence. At the same time, as the lovers Orpheus and Eurydice correspond as the embodiment of archetypes, Orpheus is the archetype of hero who descends to the underworld in order to defy his beloved wife from death and also the archetype of magician who moves all living and non-living beings. Eurydice is the archetype of lover who dies twice. In addition to this each sequence of event corresponds with Levi-Strauss' idea of mytheme. At this junction, this study deals with the presentation these motifs which are the issues as the matter in hand in two of the adaptations of the myth.

French Anthropologist Levi-Strauss brings a new perspective to the myth. According to him, to study a culture deeply one must deal with the language of the culture. Thus, he suggests that the study of language must be examined. According to Strauss the method is simple, take a myth and separate it to smallest part which he calls it 'mytheme' in this respect each mytheme corresponds with each event in the story (Strauss, 2001). Levi-Strauss in his *Structural Study of Myth*, explains mytheme as in the following lines: "The mytheme consists of a relation, in turn these mythemes "are not isolated relations, but bundles of such relations, and its only as bundles that these relations can be put to use and combined so as to produce meaning." (Levi-Strauss, 1955, p. 211). As myth represents a system of signs, the mytheme which is in a constant process of fusion that it will constantly transform the constitutive units into new system. From this respect, Tatiana Golban suggests that

The newly emerged system reveals the capacity of the same elements to appear in another form, even in an inverted one, but, eventually, following the course of some successive transformations through a sufficiently extensive body of myths, this change reveals primarily the relationship, the inverted symmetry, the isomorphous resemblance to the previous system. (Golban T. , 2014: 25).

As Levi-Strauss, Roland Barthes writes in his *Mythologies* "Myth is a language" (Barthes, 1970: 10). In fact, he claims that mythology is a kind of speech that gives to the people messages. So, there arises a mission for the ones who read the myths, to comprehend what the language means actually. There is, more structuralist focus on regarding the myth. Orpheus and Eurydice, instead of individuals, they are seen as the symbols of something more; from Eurydice's viewpoint, the embodiment of the female existence: from Orpheus viewpoint, the artistic experience of Orpheus and from both their point of view, they are as lovers that represent the embodiment of the human experience on the issue of true love. So, from these various perspectives, as it is seen, the story turns from the story to allegory. Therefore, in the original Greek Orpheus myth there only a few notable events which correspond to the mythemes when the myth and the adaptations of the myth are taken into account:

- 1- the death of Eurydice both physically and metaphorically
- 2- the grief of Orpheus which caused by Eurydice's death
- 3- the descent of Orpheus into the underworld
- 4- the desire of Orpheus return to life with Eurydice
- 5- the second death of Eurydice by the gaze of Orpheus
- 6- the dismemberment and death of Orpheus

According to Strauss, myth resembles the language, so the structure of the myth shares the common characteristics with the language, which is made of several units. So, as the language, the myths are made of several units which are aggregated that Levi-Strauss claims that these units are composed of binary oppositions and they are related to each other. From this viewpoint, the aim of this research is to analyse the different interpretations of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice in terms of the representation of Eurydice, by giving examples of suggested ideas and theories in both Acker's *Eurydice in the Underworld* and Ruhl's *Eurydice*.

Wontedly, there are innumerable interpretations of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. The first versions harkening back to Ancient Greek myths which are introduced themselves in poems, songs, operas and paintings and other art forms for centuries. Among the interpretations, Kathy Acker's *Eurydice in the Underworld* and Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice* are unique, in substitutions for the story of Orpheus who is the great as a super human with his power of music as very talented musician figure, they hone in on the story of Eurydice, Acker presents Eurydice as a woman with cancer in some autobiographical tone displays as a female character who is in between accepting or denying death. Ruhl also provides a unique presentation of Eurydice whose deliberate choice in the play causes her second death. She gives both more different and innovative perspective than the most known other versions of the myth, the most poignant situation is that the relationship she develops with her dead father. But further analysis of these differences is scrutinised in the particular chapters.

It is important to know about the origin of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice; this gives us a possibility to recognize differences and similarities between the works. In these different interpretations, although they follow the same plot and the mythic



pattern generally, the themes also carry the similar characteristics, but the focus of each work on the characters are highly distinctive, although two of the writers present Eurydice as the main character of their works.

There will be a further analysis in the chapters but to interpret the myth and the adaptations of the myth deeply, it is necessary to know the background of the myth. Through the ages people witnessed the evolution of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth both in Greek and Roman world our argument will be discussed that what they thought about Orpheus and what are differences and similarities between the texts. We have many ancient sources about the myth that the versions will be determined in this work in a chronological order.

## **2. The Representation of the Orpheus and Eurydice Myth in Literary History**

The myth Orpheus and Eurydice has been an attraction point for countless poets, writers, novelists, dramatists, composers, and artists. There appears a question that why has the Orpheus myth been so popular in modern era? It has a good but simple answer. The literary tradition of fairy tales is an inspiration for modern era. The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice and the meaning of the myth evolves in literature in time therefore, its meaning changes through the ages. As many other myths, the Orpheus and Eurydice myth evolves into the art-forms in order to express the meaning of the myth and to demonstrate how the myth changed through the ages. I guess because of this fact Orpheus also is a crucial figure for both the ancient and modern world. In the book, *Orpheus in the Middle Ages*, John Block Friedman mentions about the myth's potential to adaptability and he says, "The key to a myth's vigour is its adaptability." (Friedman, 1970: 210). In this sense, by sharing common concerns of the human being, such as death and life, it inspires the ones who attempt to create a new sort of writing through the myths. Actually, independent from a myth each of the adaptations also becomes a unique work, because it becomes a different kind of piece of work although it is an 'adaptation 'of a myth. In her work, Eva Kushner in the studies on the reappearance of myth in literature she states:

The permanence of myths as they manifest themselves in modern literature lies not in fixity of narrative detail, nor in an ontological unity of the human mind as enshrined in the world of myths, nor again in the preservation of a classical flavour, but in the very dynamics of myth itself. (Kushner, 2001: 303).

The story of Orpheus and Eurydice and its origin in literature dates back about the sixth and early fifth century B.C., C. M. Bowra in his article *Orpheus and Eurydice* mentions about its origin, although it is widely known as a Greek myth, the information about its origin is limited. The story emerges first in attic reliefs then throughout the history of literature countless adaptations can be seen. While some of the adaptations share the similar plot, but the others are different, in ancient adaptations from the viewpoint their Orpheus is successful to bringing Eurydice back. (Bowra, 1952).

We have already the depiction of Orpheus from many various sources. Orpheus is in many sources introduced as a Thracian bard, who is endowed with superhuman skills. It is said that he was the son of Muse Calliope who is the patron of epic poetry and king of Thrace Oeagrus in different sources, whereas he can be seen as Apollo as well. Edith Hamilton, in his *Mythology*, makes a mention of Orpheus as following:

Orpheus: On his mother's side he was more than mortal. He was the son of one of the Muses and a Thracian prince. His mother gave him the gift of music and Thrace where he grew up fostered it. The Thracians were the most musical of the peoples of Greece. But Orpheus had no rival there or anywhere except the gods alone. There was no limit to his power when he played and sang. No one and nothing could resist him. (Hamilton, 1998: 103).

Orpheus also seen as quasi magician, rather than an artist so Hamilton in his work presents him as a magician like being and “it is clear that no maiden he wanted could have resisted the power of his song” (Hamilton, 1998: 104). By this means, he insinuates that Eurydice is lured by the power of his music as well.

Thorough the ages, the Orpheus and Eurydice myth is narrated by numerous authors by this means, and there are countless versions of the myth. But the most known version of the story is Orpheus is a proverbial musician who enchants all of the living and non-living beings. When he plays his lyre, the rocks and the trees move and follow him: such powerful is his music that overcomes the death also moves the gods of underworld. Orpheus falls in love with Eurydice. In their wedding day, Eurydice is

bitten by a serpent and dies. Orpheus laments for his beloved Eurydice's death. His music enamours all of the beings in the underworld. Hades and Persephone allow him to return Eurydice back with him on condition that he does not look back at Eurydice until they reach the upper world. Unfortunately, he feels curious whether Eurydice actually follows him or not. Thus, he turns back and looks at Eurydice. Woefully, Orpheus loses Eurydice forevermore. (Hansen, 2004). W.K.C. Guthrie, in *Orpheus and The Greek Religion*, gives a depiction of Orpheus; "Orpheus is first and foremost the musician, with magic in his notes. Aeschylus knew him as the man who charmed all nature with his singing." (Guthrie, 1993: 39).

As in the myth and in the versions of the myth the power of Orpheus' song and his miracle is shown. For instance: in Roman poet Ovid's version *Metamorphoses* Orpheus is given as "The poet of Thrace, with songs like this, drew to himself the trees, the souls of wild beast, and the Stones that followed him." (Ovid, 1-66).

Plato provides a depiction of Orpheus as a great singer and lyricist, in a sense, in general appearance he has the same depiction in classical literature. The most telling story about him is that he charms all living and non-living beings and all nature by the power of his song, moving the rocks and trees, changing the streams of the rivers, and enchanting all the animals. Pindar and others ponder on the part that he played in the Argo-expedition. Guthrie explains that Pindar is the first one who accidentally connected the story of Orpheus as a participant. Virgil and Ovid narrate how Orpheus convinces the deities of the underworld Pluto and Proserpina and the shades in it to retrieve his beloved Eurydice on condition of not looking back at Eurydice. Thus, there appears the failure of bringing back his bride to the upper world.

Numerous stories are told about the excellent singer from Thrace. Guthrie presents that Orpheus was the son of a Muse Calliope and he implies that the most mentioned is his mother. His father is also mentioned as Apollo but more often Oiagros who is a Thracian river god. (Guthrie W. K., 1993). We are told so much about his influence, but the information about his life is limited. The only story mostly associated with him is of the death of Eurydice and his journey to the Hades to recover her and in various accounts the sequence of events which leads to his death.

In the meantime, Orpheus was regarded by the Greeks as the founder of a kind of religion that much written in the Orphic religion, which is appeared approximately in sixth century and late fifth century. Therefore, it is known today as Orphism, which has own set of values, and religious doctrines. He is seen as founder of a mystery religion, which is related to god Dionysus. He is seen as a sort of prophet and as a teacher who leads this religion. Guthrie implies that in his work *Orpheus and Greek Religion*:

Orpheus whatever may have been his origin, appears in history as a human prophet and teacher, whose doctrine was embodied in a collection of writings. He did not have a new and entirely distinct species of religion to offer, but a particular presentation or modification of religion. Those who found it congenial might take him for their prophet, live the Orphic life and call themselves Orphics. (Guthrie, 1950: 9).

Although no one was likely to believe that the assumption is real, there are some debates about whether Orpheus actually existed. But as it seems, the classical writers where not much preoccupied with the existence of Orpheus. In this debate of Orpheus and Orphism, Guthrie mentions about Orphism: “Orpheus story can be severed from all connection with religion, and moreover the artist is thinking in every case of his own composition, his poem or his vase, not of the preservation of a consistent tradition.” (Guthrie, 1993: 25).

According to this religion, the soul of the man is thrown and imprisoned into an alien body. The relationship between Orpheus and this mystic religion is important to comprehend the representation of Orpheus in some works. The most important feature of this religious movement is given by Michael Grant as he says “The most original feature of Orphic doctrine was its much increased emphasis on the judgements and rewards awaiting mankind in the afterlife” (Grant, 1962: 274).

This is significant due to the fact as we discussed in introduction, death is seen as feminine, matrilineal. So, in terms of its association with matriarchy, this religious movement offers death as a sort of reward. So, it can be seen clearly that the followers of this religion and this religious doctrine give importance to the death and the afterlife. Thus, this belief of afterlife requires a proper life style. From this stand point, Geoffrey Miles makes references to this religious doctrine when he says:

Orpheus (it is said) taught that men could purify themselves of this taint of original sin by proper ritual practices and an ascetic lifestyle, including vegetarianism, celibacy, and avoidance of women (there seems to have been a misogynistic strain in his teaching which may be reflected in the myth of his death at women's hands). (Miles, 1999: 62).

However, in the narration of Ovid, Orpheus rejects Maenads because he does not want to be with maenads after he turns to the upper world. From this point of view, the disruption of all the interest of Orpheus depends on his grief, because of the loss of his wife, Eurydice. Ovid describes Orpheus as the lover who mourns for his dead wife. Freud, in his *Mourning and Melancholia*, differentiates between mourning and melancholia. He gives distinct differences between them. Therefore, Freud's description of a melancholic person that fits into Orpheus' rejection of Maenads. So, Freud says:

Features of melancholia are profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity.... The reaction to the loss of someone who is loved, contains the same painful frame of mind the same loss of interest in the outside world (Freud, 1914-1916: 244-245).

In Acker's version, in fact, Acker pulls her Orpheus away from the mythical representation. He is a hero except for the fact that he does not want to recover Eurydice from death. In addition to this, when the religious doctrines are taken into account his gaze in the underworld can be seen as a way of abandoning the world of women and his tendencies towards the feminine. Thus, in its relation to Orphism which is related to god Dionysus due to the fact that he is thought to be the founder of this mystic religion and its relation with god Dionysus, Orpheus is seen as Dionysiac, that is, he presents some characteristics of a transitional figure, who is in between masculinity and femininity (Jung, 2013). This similar concern can be seen in Acker's representation of Orpheus.

Acker's work, in fact, reflects the things that are given in the versions of the myth by women, Orpheus is always seen as an animus figure and this figure reflects the female psychology, in Jungian terms, what he suggests in his studies, in both man and woman from the day they are born until their death, both of the sexes have an aspect both physically and spiritually which corresponds to the opposite sexes. The female aspect in man is anima, the masculine aspect is woman animus.

There are numerous adaptations of the myth, but among the other adaptations of the myth there is a notable that contributes to comprehend how Eurydice is represented in the canonical works. In this sense, Ovidian version of the myth is chosen for the work in terms of its representation of Eurydice and its approach to the issue of death. Therefore, it is essential to analyse the representation of Eurydice in Acker's *Eurydice in the Underworld* and Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice*.

Ovid was one of the canonical Roman writers who connects with the Orpheus myth. In his work *Metamorphoses* (*Book X, Fable I, II; Book XI, Fable I*), he gives a place to this famous myth. Speaking of myth and the adaptations of the myth, it is really necessary to deal with the background of the works and also the periods which the writer belongs to. When the period of Ovid is taken into account, which correspond to the period about (8 A.D.), the position of the female within the Roman society is clearly seen that it was patriarchally constructed. In *Gender and Sexuality*, Alison Sharrock defines woman as *passive* and *silent* (Sharrock, 2002: 96). In this sense, it can be said that of existing hierarchical system, which accepts the male superiority and the female inferiority. So, the French feminists objects to this hierarchical system, and in both of the works we deal with the similar concerns.

In *Metamorphoses* the story involves in the *Book X, Fable I, II; Book XI, Fable I*. The story begins Orpheus and Eurydice with their marriage ceremony. In the very day of their wedding, while Eurydice is dancing with other Naiads in the forest she is bitten by a serpent and she dies. Orpheus laments for his newly wed bride, Eurydice in grief. His songs are so impressive that his lament moves every living and non-living being on earth and in the underworld. So as to defy Eurydice from death he travels to the underworld. He moves Hades and Persephone as well in the underworld. Thus, Orpheus is warranted by the god of the underworld in one condition: that Orpheus walks in front of Eurydice and until both they reach the upper world he does not look back at Eurydice. Unfortunately, Orpheus fails to obey the rule of the gods of the underworld and looks back at Eurydice. Irigaray adverts the gaze of Orpheus and she explains the situation in the following lines by saying "In many traditions, the feminine gender is characterized by the ear and masculine by the eye." (Irigaray, 2004: 134).

As is it seen that the patriarchal hierarchy is implied by the gaze of Orpheus due to the fact that the act of looking, gazing belongs to the masculine. Therefore, Eurydice is impressed by the act of gazing that causes her second death. The authors who urge upon the figure of Orpheus in their utilization of him as a subject, Eurydice frequently remains as an enigma. Within this context, by the gaze of Orpheus, Eurydice dies for the second time and that makes her a forgotten object. As in the many other versions of the myth points out Ovid's indifferent presentation of Eurydice, Ovid ignores the predicament of Eurydice and he states in his *Metamorphoses* upon the gaze of Orpheus as he says:

“What did she have to complain of; one thing; he loved her.” (Ovid, lines 61,62). In this sense, the gaze of Orpheus is seen as the male gaze, which embodies the patriarchal hierarchy imposed upon women. French writer Maurice Blanchot states that Eurydice is a tool of Orpheus' art he says in his work *The Gaze of Orpheus* Eurydice is an instrument of his art. In Ruhl's Play *Eurydice* that his descent to the underworld depends on it “Orpheus has gone down to Eurydice; for him Eurydice is the limit of what art can attain; concealed behind a name and covered by a veil...” (Blanchot, 1981: 99).

Thus, Irigaray refers about gazing of Orpheus and she claims that the gaze of Orpheus reveals the story of the muted female object as a passive being, who is Eurydice in the myth. As in the many of the retellings of the myth Eurydice is a muse of Orpheus who generate his art actually.

Nevertheless, Orpheus causes second death of Eurydice and he loses her twice, but this time for good and all. Feminist theoretician Margaret Bruzelius argues upon the nothingness of Eurydice by the way she sees Eurydice as a forgotten subject and in her work, she makes a mention of Eurydice as following: “Eurydice is twice forgotten first because she is remembered only as the occasion of Orpheus' first miracle his descent to the underworld, and forgotten again when her second death endows Orpheus's voice with such overwhelming power that her loss seems nugatory.” (Bruzelius, 1989, p. 447).

By looking at Eurydice, he breaks all the enchantments which take her from the underworld. As Irigaray, Sword also refers to his failure by looking back at Eurydice,

so she claims that Orpheus fails to embrace both the light of world and the darkness of the underworld:

His characteristic movement, symbolizing both his success and all his failures, located in his turn, his enigmatic backward glance at Eurydice; the gesture by which he attempts, and necessarily fails, to embrace the world of light and the world of darkness in a single all-encompassing regard. (Sword, 1989: 408).

Sword adds a detail to the failure of Orpheus. She enucleates the turn of Orpheus from Eurydice's point of view as following:

Orpheus' turn, admirable and ambitious its motivations, has an unambiguously unpleasant result: she is packed off to the Underworld, chance at life that moments before had been so tantalizingly before her. Bearing none of Orpheus' symbolic baggage, manipulated by his powerful gaze, Eurydice is, comparatively a mythological nobody. Her only obvious archetypal significance in a negative role: that of woman-as-Other, woman as death. (Sword, 1989: 408).

He returns to the upper world in perpetual grief, at the same time Orpheus rejects the Maenads sexual advances. Therefore, the Maenads enraged at his recklessness to their sexual advances, and consequently, Maenads tear Orpheus apart and throw his head into the Hebrus River. The river carries his head to the Lesbos Island and Apollo saves his head from a snakebite and in the end, his head turns into a stone. After all is said and done, his soul returns to the underworld where he meets again with his wife Eurydice. Eventually, at the end of the story, the punishment of the Maenads by the God Dionysus is seen and the story ends. Barthes, in his *A Lover's of Discourse*, argues on the situation that Orpheus experiences and he claims that losing someone who you love, and the perpetual grief can cause this situation: "This endured absence is nothing more or less than forgetfulness. I am intermittently, unfaithful. This is the condition of my survival; for if I did not forget, I should die. The lover who doesn't forget sometimes dies of excess, exhalation and tension of memory." (Barthes, 1979: 13).

In very lines of the story, Hymen figure is seen who the god of marriage is. Traditionally, he gives good omens to the newly wed couples, but in the story the Hymen foreshadows the tragedy in their marriage, he brings no lucky sign as in the lines from



the story “True he was present but no hollowed words he brought no happy smiles no lucky sign” (Ovid, lines 4-5).

As we discussed earlier, the background of the story, the foreshadowing of the Hymen, is parallels with the Ovid’s narration of Eurydice. The hierarchical system which assumes the superiority of the man, can be seen in the version of Ovid by his representation of the position of Eurydice. As in the original Greek myth, as we discussed in the introduction, Eurydice appears in the story as the wife of Orpheus. There is no obvious reference of her physical appearance as a female character, she has no past, have no familial bonds and etc. For this reason, any clue about her subjectivity is lacking due to the fact that Ovid highly accentuates upon the male character, Orpheus. Therefore, all about her past, her familial background is ignored by the writer. By having no past, no origin, she does not have chance to become an individual. As the patriarchal perception agrees, she is not an individual, a subject herself, but an object in a patriarchal era. Thus, as it is seen clearly, Eurydice is presented as a voiceless figure in the version of Ovid. Helen Sword also advises to interpret the myth not only as a tale of lovers but also it is a work about gender issues. She as “–Of that deep-seated gender conflict” (Sword, 1989: 409).

Helen Cixous brings such issues into the discussion as gendered identity, rebellions, and the place of woman which is oppressed by the patriarchal social, sexual and linguistic order within this phallogocentric discourse. Cixous, in her *Sorties*, argues “where is she?” (Cixous, 1975: 153). So, she claims that the female is in *Activity/Passivity* and she adds that sexual distinctions presented by this binary opposition that woman is always seen as *passive*. “Either woman is passive, or she does not exist. What is left of her is unthinkable, unthought.” (Cixous, 1975: 153). Therefore, she aims to display these hierarchical binary oppositions, for instance in this binary opposition what she gives man/woman she claims that what makes them opposites is that their simultaneous existence. At this junction, Ovid keeps Eurydice silent because the female always associated with silence. Thus, Cixous defines silence as “the place reserved for her in and through the symbolic” (Cixous, 1975: 153). As we discussed in introduction of this work, the female within the patriarchal discourse is seen as *passive* and *silent* and, psychoanalytically, the female is under the oppression of ‘*The Law of*

*the Father*' through the language. Lacan calls the term as *nom du père*, that is, the name of the father. It first appeared in Lacan's seminars in the early 1950s. According to Lacan, the name of the father is the law and restrictions that controls the desire. Therefore, the name of the father is deal with the Superego, the Symbolic Order, the Phallus, and the Oedipus Complex.

There are some important symbols in the myth and in the adaptations and in *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine*, Ruether suggests that the snake, serpent is often seen as the symbol of life, fertility, regeneration and life force, because it is seen as the symbol of male sex organ and they are also associated with the water and earth. (Ruether, 2006). At the same time, the powerful image of the snake is frequently associated with death and life. Therefore, the death of Eurydice by a snakebite can be seen as return, which is the symbol of the power of their feminine realm, that calls Eurydice back to their own realm, where is the underworld, because of death is seen as feminine and reigned by matriarchy. If Eurydice wants to be a subject or wants to be an individual, she must return to this realm where no limitations or oppression of the patriarchy. From this respect, the death of Eurydice gives Eurydice strength by dying of a snakebite.

After the death of Eurydice, Orpheus does not put up with the life without Eurydice and to recover his wife he defies to death and descends to the underworld. "He dared descent through Taenarus' dark gate" (Ovid, line 16). The descent motif is given via the descent of Orpheus and is crucial for the examination of the myth in order to display the dual nature of the myth between death and life. Some scholars argue that Orpheus descent associates with his endeavour to reveal the secrets of the underworld. From this respect, Lorena Stookey in her work explains the descent motif: "The descent into the realm of the dead, also known as the harrowing hell, is most commonly undertaken as a quest, either a search for knowledge, wisdom or advise or as an endeavour to rescue, visit or avenge people who have died" (Stookey, 2004: 63).

In Ovidian version of the story the descent seems to represent the courage of Orpheus and his love to his beloved Eurydice, but Sword again discusses Orpheus'

curiosity about the secrets of the underworld and the descend of Orpheus into the underworld by saying that

Orpheus, as an archetypal male poet, descends into the underworld in hopes of capturing and bringing to utterance all the secrets of the unknown. Whether one interprets journey in psychoanalytical terms as a descent into the unconscious, in sexual terms as the descent into the body of the woman physical "Harrowing of Hell" the quest remains, above mastery: over the Other within, or merely over the Other breakfast table. (Sword, 1989: 412).

As we discussed earlier, death seen is as feminine which a realm reigned by matriarchy. So, Sword makes a clear statement about the gender of the underworld when she says in her work: "the Underworld is female: a dangerous alluring realm where mystery and intuition are privileged conventional wisdom and reason." (Sword, 1989: 412). In this case the upper world is realm of patriarchy, as Helene Cixous suggests in her *Sorties* the importance of binary opposition and what makes them opposites actually. From this stand point, the opposition of the matriarchal underworld corresponds with the patriarchal upper world. Under the oppression, and by the reign of the patriarchy, underworld is ignored and omitted and for this reason it is seen as an *unknown*. So, the descent of Orpheus can be interpreted as he leaves the patriarchal discourse behind and travels to the realm of matriarchy where a place as *unknown* for the male as Sword mentions the descend of Orpheus into the underworld "in hopes of capturing and bringing utterance all the secrets of the unknown" (Sword, 1989: 412).

In his narration, Ovid depicts Orpheus' descent as he uses the adjective of dark that it is obviously a clear reference of theory of Freud's "*dark continent*" which he uses to display the obscurity and sexuality of women, Cixous makes a distinctive comment on Freud's idea when she says in her *The Laugh of the Medusa* about the female that "is still unexplored only because we have been made to believe that it was too dark to be explorable" (Cixous, 1976: 885). Her reference to this idea also proper example that applicable to the idea of the femininity of death.

By descending the underworld, Orpheus presents an embodiment of who is between patriarchy and matriarchy. Due to the fact that the presentation of Eurydice in Ovidian version is limited, there is no clue about what Eurydice thinks about death. But

an obvious praise, actually as an acceptance of death by Orpheus, he says “here one road leads us all; Here the in the end is home; over humankind” (Ovid, lines 40-41). From this point of view, Orpheus also accepting death, as Elinor W. Gadon in her *the Once and Future Goddess* says, “humanity was viewed as part of nature, death as part of life” (Gadon, 1989: 12). In the end, Orpheus perceives death as an ultimate end as Freud mentioned earlier.

## CHAPTER II

### 1. KATHY ACKER'S

#### *EURYDICE IN THE UNDERWORLD*

Kathy Acker (1947-1997) is an American playwright, experimental novelist, postmodernist and sex positive feminist writer. She lived an important period in the history of feminism. The place of woman is absolutely different from the other periods, in which the women challenged to gain equality and eventually they gain some opportunities in terms of voting, education and employment. Starting with the 1960s, feminist movement embrace the all women from different classes, and they tried to gain more rights in order to fight with the patriarchal hierarchical system which was imposed upon the female. Therefore, Acker as a feminist writer who lived in this period and experiencing this patriarchal discourse, reflected her ideas through her works which present such issues as gender freedom, challenging the symbolic order via the language, and other issues with which she was actually what she concerned.

As Georgina Colby states in her study, Acker coincided with the third-generation writers, those who gave the impression as many of the second-generation feminist theorists' concerns. Acker lived in the time when the issue of feminism was raised in the literature. In this regard, Acker felt writing against this symbolic order is necessary. She writes in her works, as Colby states, "an assault on the control system" (Colby, 2016: 7) and actually the rejection of the patriarchal language which depends upon "the centralized phallus" (Colby, 2016: 7).

Acker, in *Eurydice in the Underworld* creates a passive Eurydice, as in the Ovid version. As we discussed in the introduction of the present work, her writing is highly distinctive, as Cixous mentions women only by writing to subvert the patriarchy and also Acker plays with language in order to recover from these symbolic order, which

patriarchal discourse imposed upon the female (Cixous, 1976). She uses language as a device to win over patriarchal impositions. Acker knows the fact the place where she lives is already occupied by patriarchy. She is aware that the language is not her own realm, so she tries to create a new language, which is not controlled by patriarchy, thus by doing this, she tries to find her own self and as a writer she tries to find her own creativity. Luce Irigaray clarifies Acker's writing as her unpleasant situation about using mimicry. Thus, she argues that she quests for something new instead of using mimicry. She mentions about Acker's writing as: "Seeing Gender` marks a turning point when Acker, no longer satisfied with deconstructive mimicry, looks for language `other than mimesis` ". (Chissolm, 2010: 52).

In fact, Acker did not pursue a purpose to create a new language as Cixous created an *écriture féminine*. Acker in her *Seeing Gender*, states that instead of utilisation the mimicry she offers to use the language of their body, rather than *mimesis*.

According to Acker, the female can present herself in language as a subject, as an individual and also, they can defy her selves from the phallogocentrism which is deployed by the masculine. For her, the language which she has own, should not be a mere imitation of the masculine, due to the fact that she claims that she must subvert the mimesis. Thus, the female sex, which is considered as lack, can find a language to present her selves by subverting the phallic order. Thus, she says: "Is it possible that the girl can find her actual body, and so what gender might be in language? (...) I am Alice who ran into a book to find herself. I have found only reiterations, the mimesis of patriarchy, or my inability to be." (Acker, 1995: 80-85).

Acker also quotes Judith Butler in her article on Irigaray, a sexual difference. She writes about the matter of body from the viewpoint of Alice, so she ponders on the looking glass of Philosophy, which serves an embodiment of a mirror, to display the subject and the other's other.

Thus, there is, as Irigaray mentions in her article *The Sex Which is Not One* she imparts the way how the women recover their body. Acker Thus, implies the method that what she calls "the initial phase" (Irigaray, 1985: 76) that she gives the importance to the need of displaying how silence that demonstrates the place of woman. So, Irigaray

offers the method, which is a language that women should take in charge to recover their body. In this sense, Acker uses a language that Irigaray proposes.

Acker uses violence and sexuality, and this is what makes her different from the other writers who write the other version of the myth, her play is highly different from other versions of the myth, with various alteration. In her writings, Acker challenges the patriarchal language, so she tries to give a voice to the silenced figures, and she achieves it in a way. Colby states in her study that Acker sees the inadequacy of patriarchal cultures. Accordingly, she considers that writing is necessary about this search for an identity of the female in the inadequate patriarchal cultures. For this reason, she cites Friedman that he sees Acker as a protagonist, as an embodiment of one who “repeatedly demonstrate the inadequacy of patriarchal culture, past or present, as arena for identity.” (Colby, 2016, 9).

As it is seen, for Acker, Greek literature is significant that why the literature full of examples which include patriarchal discourse and Acker as a writer who tries to defy this symbolic order, takes interest in the Greek myth. For such a writer, the Eurydice myth offers a generous source to write and over again. In fact, in the original Greek myth, Eurydice is already represented as a female character who is imprisoned in the patriarchal discourse, as in the version of Ovid.

This myth is originally about death as well. When Acker’s personal life is taken into consideration, one can obviously see that Acker’s *Eurydice in the Underworld* blends her story with story of Eurydice. This is important because by doing this, Acker separates her version from this mythical pattern for the reason that Eurydice is not a mythic figure anymore, she is a real woman with breast cancer, who lives in the twentieth century. Acker’s Eurydice undertakes a tragic role of today’s woman who suffers from breast cancer. In her retelling of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth, the reader faces with Acker’s thoughts about the conventional medicine through Eurydice figure. Especially in the scenes which she meets with the doctor, it is seen that Eurydice accuses the doctor by making her ill again.

Acker’s play combines the drama, and diary. Acker makes a clear distinction between other works by dividing the play into chapters and in three worlds which are

over world, the underworld and the dead world. For the time being, the mythic pattern coincides with the original myth. The only matter is that Acker divides the sequence of events of the mythic pattern into sections. As we discussed earlier, the representation of Eurydice in the play is quite different from the other versions of the myth, for the reason that she does not want to die. Because death is extremely fearful situation for woman who is in the twilight of half-surrender. Due to the fact that Acker presents the Eurydice myth from an innovative perspective, that there can be seen plenty of alteration in her play.

In the first instance, in Kathy Acker's *Eurydice in the Underworld*, the names of the characters are altered. Eurydice is depicted in a room; she has a voice now but the name which is given by Acker is YOU. She has a presentation, but she is still the second person because of the pronoun she is given. Acker chooses deliberately to use the indefinite pronoun, YOU, since Eurydice is an embodiment of human being in between life and death. So, Acker gives a chance to the reader to feel sympathy with Eurydice by giving name her as YOU. In the work Orpheus appears as OR, the name, which is given him, we assume that Acker presents an archetype of a male as Orpheus. The play begins with a quotation from Assia Djebar: "A little Arab girl going to school for the first time one autumn mourning, walking hand in hand with her father. A tall, erect figure in a fez and a European suit, carrying a bag of school books" (Acker, 1997: 1).

By beginning with this particular quotation Acker prepares the reader to introduce Eurydice, from this standpoint it is introduced the childhood of Eurydice. According to the paragraph, as it is seen clearly the girl is presented in between Arab and European and with a father figure can be seen that the girl is also under the reign of the symbolic order, which is reigned by *The Law of the Father*. Therefore, Eurydice is also between the over world and the underworld as the little girl.

The story begins in the over world. The first chapter of the play which is called "The Over world" take place in an apartment fifteen years later. (Acker, 1997: 1). Eurydice depicted in a room. Acker gives an intense depiction of the red colour she mentions "flaming hair" of Eurydice "sitting on a red bed" (Acker, 1997: 1). The importance of the colour red suggests some matriarchal implications. When the



depiction of Eurydice is taken into account there is nothing about red, her existence is also covered by the colour red. In this case, can be mentioned the presentation of Eurydice as a passive one as Helen Sword mentions about Eurydice as in the following lines “Eurydice is, comparatively a mythological nobody. Her only obvious archetypal significance in a negative role: that of woman-as-Other, woman-as-death, the "dark continent" “(Sword, 1989: 408).

The red colour symbolizes passion, and love, but the danger as well. Eurydice thinks that she can put up with the dangers of her illness through her love towards Orpheus, but there is no possibility to such an idea. Her depiction continues by representing woman as a void: “she takes up too much space. Also, she’s mad. Which has nothing to do with anything. She lives in her own world because she makes the whole world hers” (Acker, 1997: 1).

The following depictions are highly interesting the room is described as “the room overlooking the world” (Acker, 1997:1) because it obviously presents references dual nature of the work in between over world and the underworld. Acker gives the portrayal of the stuffed animals, that they symbolize death. As we discussed earlier, the room seems to be in over world and by presenting the stuffed animals in this scene, they are given life again, but as Eurydice, they are also between over world and the underworld as the stuffed animals in her room. Acker gives the relation between the underworlds she resembles Orpheus to Hades “this one’s the spitting image of Hades.” (Acker, 1997: 2).

The idea of in betweenness of Eurydice in the play is displayed by the ‘*Abject*’ (Kristeva, 1941). According to Julia Kristeva, not only the structuralism but also the whole idea of West is phallogocentric. Therefore, Kristeva aims to criticise this phallogocentric viewpoint of West, by giving the body prominence. So, through the body, as her contemporary Irigaray, she displays the connection between the female and culture, history, by using the ‘*Abject*’. According to Kristeva, if the body perpetually experiences the feel of loss, then arises a possibility for the body to become an autonomous. However, it is hard to admit that the process of giving birth or and even a

newly born infant also an abject. And this corresponds with an archaic separation –a separation from the mother, in a sense (Kristeva, 1941).

Acker presents the *Abject* in her *Eurydice in the Underworld*, YOU is going to vomit and until OR helps Eurydice, she vomits, and it is narrated that “she hates more than anything else, the smell of vomit. Does not smell like her own cunt?” (Acker, 1997: 2). Eurydice mentions about the *Abject* through her illness in the play by saying “I’m going to be sick” (Acker, 1997: 2). All of the things she states the smell of her cunt, the smell of her puke brings the idea of *abject*. Although female sex organ is seen as regeneration and bears no negative notions, Eurydice displays a patriarchal tendency towards this when she says she hates its smell and she brings the issue of *abject* into the discussion. Therefore, the idea of abjection empowers the dualism of Eurydice between death and life. Although her sex organ is life force for her, she says that connects her to life. She indicates that she hates the smell of her sex organ. The matter of fact that as French feminists embark on the idea of adopting their body, as they are in this respect, it is important to the female who wants to elude themselves from the subjugation of the patriarchal implications, and it is also valid for Eurydice if she wants to be an identity.

Eurydice’s illness makes her a double passive character. For the reason that Eurydice is not an archetypal figure anymore, Acker separates her representation from the earlier ones. Eurydice has a voice and she undertakes a role of ill and a modern woman who lives in the patriarchal order. Acker’s Eurydice is an ill woman that is in need of Orpheus. The disease becomes more serious it is seen in the scene when she tries to clean her vomit on the ground, but she cannot use her left arm and OR says to her “you only had the operation five hours ago” (Acker, 1997: 3) she such a pitch that she cannot wear her clothes without help of OR.

As we discussed earlier, Acker’s Eurydice seems to embrace the patriarchal viewpoint towards death. Death is seen as feminine in a way. Thus, the patriarchy perceives death as a negative concept. Eurydice uses sexuality to get rid of death. She believes that she can get rid of death with the help of love, sexuality. This case obviously corresponds with Freud idea of *Eros* and *Thanatos*. Freud mentions about these ideas in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* he argues when we meet a resistant, there is a power

inside, which tries to recover itself from the illnesses and the pains with the all possible devices. Therefore, *Eros* is the life instinct and *Thanatos* is its opposite, the death instinct. In his work, Freud defines the death instinct as:

It seems, then, an instinct is an urge inherit in organic life to restore an earlier state of things which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external disturbing forces; that it is a kind of elasticity, or, to put it another way, the expression of the inertia inherit in organic life (Freud, 1920: 30).

Freud states that although *Eros* penetrates the human psyche, the aim of all living being is to reach “inertia inherit in human being” (Freud, 1920: 31). It is obvious that for Acker’s *Eurydice* the death is ultimate end for her there is no way to defy death because although as Cixous mentions the complementary of oppositions, *Eros* and *Thanatos* also are the oppositions that completed each other. Freud makes a clear reference to the death instinct; he implies that the death is ultimate for every living being:

Those instincts are therefore bound to give a deceptive appearance of being forces tending towards change and progress, whilst in fact they are merely seeking to reach an ancient goal by paths alike old and new. Moreover, it is possible to specify this final goal of all organic striving. (Freud, 1920: 32)

Therefore, Freud argues that the final goal of an organism is to die shortly. Because he suggests that before the living beings, there were non-living beings so the purpose of the living being is “the aim of all life is death” (Freud, 1920: 32) and he states that “inanimate things existed before living ones” (Freud, 1920: 32). Freud continues to define what makes the organism die, that is to say, it is stands for the organisms’ drives that it has a purpose already depends on the organisms’ inner inertia.

In Acker’s work *Eurydice in the underworld*, *Eurydice* seems to in between accepting death or denying it. She believes in love and sexuality that can protect her from death. There is an obvious reference to the Freud’s idea of the instincts. Freud points out the issue of sexuality which provides to our study and highlights, that is quite a proper example to define actually what Acker’s *Eurydice* experiences and all of these are drives of the organism that Freud provides an obvious example in his article by saying:

Whereas as regards the sexual instincts, though it is true that they reproduce primitive states of the organism, what the^ are clearly aiming at by every possible means is the coalescence of two germ-cells which are differentiated in a particular way, If this union is not effected, the germ-cell dies along with all the other elements of the multicellular organism (Freud, 1920: 30).

As we discussed earlier, according to Freud's argument on the issue of death, we have an obvious utterance that while the death is an ultimate end, in fact, the main purpose of life is to die, while sexual drives are the signs of a desire to live. Acker's *Eurydice* fully embraces this idea that her dilemmas about accepting or denying death completely depends upon her point of view towards death. Thus, Freud presents an illustration of this idea in the following lines "death is the 'true result and to that extent the purpose of life, while the sexual instinct is the embodiment of the will to live.'" (Freud, 1920: 44).

From this point, Acker's *Eurydice* provides a different perspective towards death. She does not want to die and by her desire to live, we have a clear deduction from the Acker's work that she does not correspond to the classical archetype of the myth, instead, there is a female character who does not want to die, she wants to continue to live in the over world where is reigned by the patriarchal hierarchy. As a female character who is given a voice, she does not want to be in the realm of matriarchy by denying death. At the same time, by presenting a real image of *Eurydice*, Acker's *Eurydice* fully gets out of this mythic pattern.

In Acker's *Eurydice in the Underworld*, *Eurydice* challenges the patriarchal discourse especially in the scenes which obviously display a passive *Eurydice* as an archetypal embodiment of the myth, and as in the Ovidian version of the myth. She is passive because she submits the patriarchal impositions in a way. After the operation of YOU, OR offers her a sexual intercourse and she answers, "I'll be able to be touched in a day or two" (Acker, 1997: 4). Instead of giving a proper answer she says she will be ready while she is in pain due to the bandage in her breast. However, OR insists her to have an intercourse. Although she accepts the offer of OR, in their attempting they become unsuccessful, since YOU sleeps during the intercourse. "Among all the stuffed animals *who*, now like her, live in another world" (Acker, 1997: 4).

Acker, in the beginning of the play as we mentioned, exhibits the stuffed animals in Eurydice's room. As Ruether declares that the stuffed animals and the animals with horns symbolize death and by giving such impression that Acker alludes to the imminent death of Eurydice. Although she tries to get rid of death, as Freud's arguments on death, in fact, death is her reality and as all every living being, death is her ultimate end, and OR is quite aware of her imminent death.

Speaking of Eurydice's presentation, it is very explicit that for the reader, there is a passive Eurydice, especially in some scenes in which they are in the doctors' room. Orpheus and Eurydice seem full of hope, but they learn the cancer metastasis, which is spreading, the results imply the imminent death of Eurydice and after she learns the results she comes to grief. Eurydice blames the doctor for being ill. She thinks that doctors believe that the cause of her cancer is her antioxidant diet. In fact, this is only her assumption. She also challenges the conventional medicine just as she challenges patriarchal hegemony. Then, she decides to use alternative medicine that she believes it is bringing her health back. Eventually, she fails to get rid of this patriarchal order to which she exposed to experience in her process of becoming an individual, gaining her subjectivity. After Eurydice leaves the room the doctor says OR "not many men would do this ... Remain with woman in her condition. I admire you." (Acker, 1997: 6). The patriarchal tendency is seen by the medical authority, which is imposed upon Eurydice.

As we discussed through the work, the patriarchy sees the female as inferior and when the doctor's statement is taken into account, the ill woman is seen as double inferior. So, Irigaray suggests that woman should be given a right for the pleasures of the world, to passion *Jouissance* to a voice, just like men are (Irigaray, 1985). After Eurydice learns the result, she insists highly upon the idea of accepting the death as a negative concept. To reach her purpose she uses sexuality, the *Eros* which Freud explains this, by saying:

We, on the other hand, dealing not with the living substance but with the forces operating in it, have been led to distinguish two kinds of instincts: those which seek to lead what is living to death, and others, the sexual instincts, which are perpetually attempting and achieving a renewal of life (Freud, 1920: 40).

After meeting doctor, they emerge in the scene that they are at home. They have a sexual intercourse again and Eurydice does not feel herself ready to die she asks OR "I'm not going to die Am I?" (Acker, 1997: 9). At this junction, Acker's Eurydice tries to defy death with the help of sexuality and more precisely with the Freudian term *Eros*. In some respects, these are also the scenes which display how Eurydice is in between accepting death or denying it. After she has an operation, she goes to home, due to the fact that she does not want to be there. Acker gives an explanation about Eurydice exactly how she hesitates in accepting or denying death. Although she tries to escape from death, the ultimate end for all the living organism is death, as Freud says. Although her attempts to escape from death brings her to the idea of embracing death, in a way she seems to accept death, that as Georges Bataille in his work he claims that sexuality, however, opens death so he says: "Eroticism opens the way to death. Death opens the way to denial of our individual lives without doing violence to our inner selves, are we able to bear a negation that carries us to the farthest bounds of possibility?" (Bataille, 1986: 24).

From this point of view, as Bataille argues on the issue of death Acker's Eurydice tries to defy from death because we are as impermanent beings it is hard to admit that Bataille says. So, Acker's Eurydice tries to escape from the reality Acker writes as in the following lines: "She tries to escape from reality by being dead. She turns her head to one side, lays it on her shoulder, as far as she can, closes her eyes and as many other as she can. But she can still hear. After a minute she's bored." (Acker, 1997: 12).

In the chapter "*Eurydice When She's Death*" she is depicted where she is while saying "I am in the middle of dirt "(Acker, 1997: 15). The underworld is just the place of dirt. It is obvious that she does not accept death. It is clearly that Eurydice is not content from being in the underworld, where is seen as the feminine realm. This chapter contains violence and at the very beginning of the chapter she mentions about a crime in the realm of dead. The significance this event in the underworld is that she points out the sexes of the murdered and murderer. The ones who are killed are girls and the murderer are male in the play. There arises an argument about the femininity of death, now conquered by the patriarchal order, that this event in the underworld, symbolizes

the end of the patriarchal hegemony, because as it is seen the male hegemony even reaches the realm of death. However, she also does not accept the idea of death.

Although Eurydice does not embrace the idea of death, she displays a tendency towards death. In the following chapter Eurydice says “I am starting from nothing. So slowly” (Acker, 1997: 16) that she is getting closer to the idea of death, and at the same time, although she perceives death as a negative concept, she alludes to death as not an end, but on the contrary, as a beginning. She describes some plants in the underworld such as rose and ivy. By giving these portrayals, the previous archetypal description of the underworld and death is altered by Acker in this version of the myth. As an archetype death and the underworld, both representations of them are always given as the place where the dark and dreadful is. In this version of the myth, Acker describes the underworld as place where the plants grow. That is the reason why both of rose and ivy symbolize regeneration and renewal. She makes vivid depiction in the play “two white roses rise out of the small squares of wet soil placed in the concrete” (Acker, 1997:16) and she continues “I see ivy is crawling like fungus like over the nearest road. There is no more difference between what I’m seeing and who think I am” (Acker, 1997: 16).

Eurydice’s words are significant because she adopts the idea that she becomes a part of the underworld, although she seems to fear death. She seems to both accept and deny death. Eurydice, by accepting death, adopts also the patriarchy, and, by denying death, she adopts patriarchal approach towards death. But with the portrayal of the plants her viewpoint seems to change. In this chapter, it can be said that Eurydice embraces the idea of death hence she adopts the feminine realm.

In the chapter which is called “*in the Courtroom of the Dead*” she wants to escape from death again and she goes to the airport with a taxi, but she returns to place where she comes because forgets to wear her clothes and when she sets out, she loses her way and instead of going to the airport she goes to the place where is called NatWest in which there are a lot of woman which are placed in a bank. She meets a woman there and she says to Eurydice “will feel right at home” (Acker, 1997: 18). In this case, the gathering of women and their way of welcoming Eurydice obviously symbolizes that the underworld is a realm of patriarchy that the women are waiting for her. There are

two important scenes in the play. The first one is YOU being judged by the authorities in the underworld because one of the murders is associated with her and the second one is the court and hospital. Both places she is judged by the authorities, but in turn, she challenges with both of them. Again, there are depiction of red and what is more, the utterance of Jane Eyre's red room. She indicates the red room of Jane Eyre and then the chapter begins with the quotation from Tsvetaeva. In the play, the red room also symbolizes similar concerns with the novel. The prominence of the red room raised by becoming an evident a vivid utterance Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre*.

In the novel, Brontë also provides a red room for Jane Eyre. The red room symbolizes Jane Eyre's obstacles, limitations and, in this sense, the red room symbolizes her personal hell and imprisonment, but not physically, it is emotionally imposed upon her. As a symbol, the red room is what Jane must overcome in her struggles, throughout the story she frees herself and she finally overcomes the red room. (Golban P. , 2003: 127). And in Acker's play *Eurydice in the Underworld*, the red room can be seen as the limitations and obstacles of Eurydice, also as in the case Jane Eyre, where she is exposed to live under the patriarchal hegemony. In following chapter, there are some surprising details. What is new in the story is that of presenting both Orpheus and Eurydice by subtracting the mythic patterns and by taking their classical archetypes out of the frame. So, Orpheus is not a hero as in the other versions of the myth.

Then Acker continues with the chapter which is called "*in the School of the Dead*" and there is a signboard over the door of the school. In this signboard it is written '*The Lovers Betrayal*' (Acker, 1997: 21). The signboard and the writing can be associated with their relationship. This is the reason why Orpheus leaves Eurydice in the underworld, deliberately he lets her die. In the meantime, YOU involves herself in a crime that in fact, she murders someone in the underworld and thus she escapes from the authorities, of the underworld. While YOU flees from the authorities, she meets someone then he guides YOU to take her a place where she can be safe. When YOU is in the building, some schoolboys who are the members of a travelling group come to the building in detail and the reader can understand that they are seen as in their twenties. The description of this sexual intercourse is distinctive from the other ones because YOU, in the scene, intentionally wants to have a sexual intercourse with a different



figure from Orpheus. By doing this, YOU severs all ties with OR. In this sense, her choice of on purpose can be interpreted from various perspectives. Actually, it seems that YOU adopts the idea of death. As we mentioned earlier as Bataille mentions in his work “Eroticism opens a way to death”. (Bataille, 1986, p. 24). In these scenes, the presentation of sexuality is different from the other presentations due to the fact that YOU decides to do it, so it is not offered to her. Eurydice, by sexuality and madness gets rid of all limitations, all the implications of patriarchal hegemony.

In the chapter “*Letter Found from Orpheus after his Death*” Acker shortly sums up the situation after Orpheus descent in the underworld and his actual evaluation about Eurydice. This experience, being dead gives OR opportunity to make a final decision about Eurydice and their relationship. Thus, the statement of Orpheus, his intentional choice to leave YOU in the underworld then arises as an evident for the reader. He leaves YOU in the underworld due to the fact that it is not about his cowardice as Plato mentions in his retelling or not for the sake of revealing the secrets of the underworld as both Irigaray and Sword implies in their studies. He leaves YOU because of his feelings toward her. OR says, he actually does not the one who YOU loves and admires. So, he tells that hated being in the underworld. OR says YOU he left her because of his feelings towards her. He left her in the underworld because he is not powerful as YOU supposes and now what he is doing he would not have a chance to do these things when she is dead. So, he writes YOU in the realization of his real feelings towards her: “I love you and at the same time I was unhappy of every moment when I was with you. I could never and I still don’t, even though I’m dead, understand how these two emotions, opposing each other could both be in me.” (Acker, 1997: 25).

It is clearly understood this detest of underworld for the reason that OR has a clear tendency toward patriarchal point of view towards death. In the final scene of the play Orpheus says “I saw her, and I didn’t want to what I saw. I have returned back here I am glad that I met U because now I can love again.” (Acker, 1997: 26).

In this chapter, it is obviously seen that the gaze of Orpheus gives him a chance to evaluate YOU and their relationship. From this point of view, his gaze is a deliberate choice, neither because of curiosity nor cowardice, as in the other versions of the myth.

OR does not want to stay in the underworld because he chooses a realm which is reigned by male discourse, it is over world. Although Kathy Acker gives Eurydice voice, she creates a passive Eurydice as in the Ovidian version of the myth. Her perspective towards myth is different from all of the versions, because of illness of Eurydice and her love towards Orpheus makes Eurydice as a passive figure because she is an object in a patriarchal order, she is not an individual subject. Her approach towards death is uncertain because of her tendency towards death. Either she accepts death and denies death. From this point of view, she embraces both patriarchal and matriarchal approaches to death. The issue of sexuality makes Eurydice close to the matriarchy. Orpheus is not a hero, as in the other versions, but by leaving her in the underworld, he contributes to Eurydice's freedom, but again there is not a hint about what Eurydice thinks about death in the of the play. This is ambiguous.

## CHAPTER III

### 1. SARAH RUHL'S *EURYDICE*

Sarah Ruhl was born in 1974. She is an American writer and playwright who impressed the contemporary world with her brilliant contributions to her literary heritage. She begins her writing career during her academic career. As Kathy Acker, Ruhl also lived the same important period of feminist movement. She corresponds to the third wave feminist movement and as we discussed in the introduction of this study, third wave feminists fought for the equality in education, in voting, in employment and finally they gained some rights in this sense. But the patriarchal notion remains the same, the female always is seen as inferior, while men is seen as superior that inherited in phallogentric order.

As in the Ovidian version of the myth, both Ruhl and Acker create a passive Eurydice because both of them are subjugated by the patriarchy. The plot of the story with some distinctive alterations continues similarly. Orpheus is an artist, as in the classical archetype of the myth. What makes Eurydice different, distinctive is that Ruhl adds in her play a father figure and the father figure brings the language issues into discussion. It is important to note that the language issue associates with the symbolic order, which under reigns of *The Law of the Father* is imposed upon Eurydice figure. As in the other versions of the myth, especially as in the Ovidian version of the myth, Ruhl's Eurydice lives under the patriarchal hegemony. As we discussed in the introduction, Ruhl says in one of her interviews with a magazine she explains that why she chooses the Eurydice myth:

"I think our generation has to look at Freud and Freud's impact, and many of us say, oh, maybe Freud didn't have it right. Something that he was right about he got from literature. Oedipal complex, from the Greeks. So maybe we ought to go back to the Greeks instead of back to Freud on the Greeks." (Vogel, 2007: 53).

She states that, and although she finds it “troubling” she tells the story from Eurydice’s viewpoint. She is interested in her representation in the myth and in the adaptations. Because she appears only as the wife of Orpheus. There is not any clear information about her personal existence even in some earlier versions of the myth. So, Ruhl assumes a responsibility to dwell on the myth. Therefore, she adds a father figure to the play and her Eurydice is placed between her father and her husband under the patriarchal hegemony.

The figure is deliberately chosen because Ruhl says in the interview that she dedicates her work to her father, which means that the works includes some autobiographical elements. The father figure teaches Eurydice vocabulary after she forgets how to speak and write and by adding the father figure Ruhl frees the play from classical myth. Unlike the other versions of the myth, Sarah Ruhl’s *Eurydice* is not only about the relationship between Orpheus and Eurydice, but it is also about the relationship between the father and Eurydice. The father figure plays a significant role in the , he holds control over the language in the underworld and, although it is forbidden, he is the one who how to speak and write and there arises the issue of language and the language acquisition and also role of the father figure in Eurydice’s life. In Ruhl’s play *Eurydice*, Eurydice as a female character she struggles to become a subject and gain her own individual identity and resists staying as an object in the patriarchal hegemony between her father and her husband. In order to be a subject in this symbolic order, Eurydice must defy herself from the patriarchal language which is imposed upon her.

Sword is also concerned with these issues and she asks from this context: “But when Eurydice learns to speak, to move, to think for herself – to turn upon Orpheus as he has turned upon her – how does the great poet – lover respond?” (Sword, 1989: 409).

Luce Irigaray in her article *Speculum of the Other Woman* mentions this symbolic order that “meaning is based exclusively on a phallic standard” (Irigaray, 1985: 56) and Helene Cixous also argues frequently on this symbolic order that she advises the female to write, because only in this way they can turn their body and get rid of the phallogocentric symbolic order. Cixous claims that “It’s by writing, from and

toward woman, and by taking up the challenge of speech which has been governed by the phallus, that women will confirm women in a place than silence.” (Cixous, 1976: 881).

When the issue of taken into consideration the female is examined in terms of their relation to the language issue. Although Ruhl adds a father figure to the play, there is no allusion to the mother figure, but this is important analyse the character within the frame of patriarchy. Irigaray in her *Bodily Encounter with the Mother* points out the necessity of mother figure, because in order subvert the patriarchal order the female should return to mother and actually return to matriarchy. (Irigaray, 1985).

In the play, there is no mother figure, a fact that enforces the patriarchal implications upon Eurydice. As Irigaray states in her *The Bodily Encounter with the Mother*, ‘female genealogy’ that Eurydice does not have because of subjugated nature both by her father and by her husband. Irigaray claims that to subvert the patriarchy she has to go back to the matriarchy, back to the mother. (Luce Irigaray, 1991). Irigaray in her works especially dwells upon the exploration of the possibilities of the female subjectivity. She gives point to the importance of the subjectivity for both the mother and daughter. Thus, she believes that the female should return to the mothers to overthrow the patriarchal hegemony. Irigaray, within this context, strongly opposes Freud’s *Penis Envy* theory, that she claims that although the daughter does not lack of maternal love in the oedipal phase, it can be seen that the relationship between mother and daughter is problematic. She argues that the purpose of Freud’s theory is to establish a male culture where the female sex is subordinated. Thus, in her article, Irigaray reveals the troubles of the relationship between mother and daughter, by accusing Freud of being as the scholar who aims to establish a male culture which subjugates the female:

Freud is acting like a prince of darkness with respect to all woman, leading them into the shadows and separating them from their mothers and from themselves in order to found culture of men –amongst themselves; law, religion, truth and wisdom. In order to become a woman, the virgin girl must submit to a culture, particularly a culture of love, that to her represents Hades. She must forget her childhood, her mother; she must forget herself as she was in her relationship to Aphrodite’s philotes. (Irigaray, 1994: 110).

So, she states in her writings that she avers the relationship between mother and daughter, and she discusses:

Woman deprived of the possibility of interiorizing her female identity. It is imposed upon her as pure exteriority. And that's one of the reasons why she herself, just like the society that defines her, privileges the mother-son relationship; the mother-daughter relationship reminds woman, women, of their lack of subjective identity, and arouses affects for which there is no corresponding cultural organization. (Irigaray, 1996: 47).

Here, Irigaray gives importance to the creation of female language that can speak of the daughter's bodily encounter with the mother. Due to the fact that woman has been muted and seen as a passive, they do not have access to the language. Thus, Irigaray implies that women need words, images, symbols to represent their lives (Luce Irigaray, 2000: 32). Due to the fact that the female language plays a significant role in the construction of female subjectivity, they have one possible way to create a language of their own and thus they can attain their own identity. So, she claims that the patriarchal male discourse, which is imposed upon the female, can be subverted by the female language, which strongly depends on the established mother-daughter relationship. In this respect, Whitford claims that "We have to discover a language which does not replace the bodily encounter, as paternal language attempts to do, but which can go along with it, words which do not bar the corporeal, but which speak corporeal." (Whitford, 1991: 43).

However, Irigaray emphasizes the inter-subjective relationship between mother and daughter and giving up the mother means the loss of the daughter's subjectivity. As it is mentioned earlier, harmony in the relationship mother and daughter is needed to daughter in order to gain her own subjectivity. (Whitford, 1991: 44).

Within this context, she advocates the importance of establishment of a female genealogy and it is the only possible way is the harmonious relationship between mother and daughter. Whitford says on the issue of relationship bodily encounter: "Let us try to situate ourselves within this female genealogy so as to conquer and keep our identity. Nor let us forget that we already have a history." (Whitford, 1991: 44).

In this sense, in the play Ruhl's intention to present the father figure is deliberate. As it is seen, Eurydice is represented as a passive figure who is subordinated by the patriarchal implications, by the father and by her husband, Orpheus. In relation to the father and language issues, in many scenes of the play takes place in the underworld, so the play also associates with the issue of death in relation to other concerns. The ambivalent nature of death can be seen even in the character list. The name of the lord of underworld turns into "A Nasty Interesting Man" and also the character corresponds with 'Child' character, who appears in the underworld. In the play, although Ruhl preserves the mythic pattern, such as the characters, setting, marriage, death, recovery, inevitable retrospection, Ruhl does not add the mourning songs of Orpheus and his dismemberment at the hands of the Maenads. But she includes a father figure in her play that, as we discussed earlier, makes the play intensively autobiographical. The issue of death is significant for the play. Because Eurydice is subjugated either in the upper world or in the underworld by her father in the underworld and by her husband in the upper world.

As we discussed in the introduction, the infant can return to the *Imaginative Stage* by death because the infant experiences this stage in the womb of mother and by dying symbolically the infant returns to the place where he/she begins. In the play, Eurydice chooses peace and forgets everything and by dying and forgetting about everything in her life she can return to the womb of the mother symbolically, to the *Imaginative Stage*. In addition to the father figure, the play often takes place in the underworld, so it is not surprising the play reflects the idea of death. In the play Ruhl alters the name of the god of the underworld, changes into "A Nasty Interesting Man" this is because she aims to soften the character of the god of the underworld, by this way she makes it attractive.

In her notes to book, Ruhl mentions about the resemblance between her work and Carroll's *Alice in the Wonderland*: "the underworld should resemble the world of Alice in the Wonderland more than it resembles Hades" (Ruhl, 2006: 333). As it is observed through the play, there are similarities between the stories. In *Alice in the Wonderland*, Alice goes to the wonderland with a rabbit through a hole to arrive the wonderland which corresponds to the Ruhl's play where a man guides Eurydice to the

underworld and invites her to a party as in the story of Alice and Eurydice arrives to the underworld with a rainy elevator, as Alice is goes to wonderland with water (Carol, 2003). The play begins with a stage direction; “A young man Orpheus and a young woman Eurydice. They wear swimming outfits from the 1950’s. Orpheus makes a sweeping gesture with his arm, indicating the sky.” (Ruhl, 2006: 333).

The play begins with a scene while Orpheus and Eurydice are on a beach and they are talking. Orpheus is represented as a narcissist figure, as an artist. Ruhl’s male character is not a unique representation, unlike in Acker’s version, which she dwells on myth. Cixous, in her *Sorties*, indicates a proper example that of Orpheus’ traits in the following lines “the self-absorbed, masculine narcissism, making sure of its image, of being seen, or seeing itself, of assembling its glories, of pocketing itself again.” (Cixous, 1975: 153).

The conversation between them reveals Eurydice that shares with Orpheus: “I read a book today” (Ruhl, 2006, p. 335). She thinks that Orpheus will take interest in what she talks about, but Orpheus obviously is not interested in what she tries to say about the book. Then Orpheus asks Eurydice why she is interested in books. (Ruhl, 2006, p. 335). She answers that “it can be interesting to see if other people. Like dead people who wrote books. Agree or disagree with what you think” (Ruhl, 2006: 336). From this frame, Ruhl present an intellectual Eurydice who loves reading and is inquisitive. Thus, Orpheus asks one after other why she insist on reading books and Eurydice replies and to defend herself she says; “I do, I do think up my own thoughts.” (Ruhl, 2006: 336).

For the reason he always talks about himself and his music even though he is together with Eurydice. As it is seen, Eurydice fails to subvert the patriarchal subjugation of Orpheus, due to the fact that Orpheus sees Eurydice as an instrument for his music, not a subject. Judith Bernstock in her study comments on the situation that

“His obsessive need for Eurydice and yet his revived creativity after her final death correspond to the ambivalence of the male artist toward the source of inspiration on whom he depends and yet who regards as a destructive obstacle to his creativity. Whether modern artists see Orpheus as needing to be rid of woman (...) or as incapable of functioning without her.” (Bernstock, 1991:179).



However, Eurydice she has a kind of realization when she asks Orpheus: “Won’t I fall down when the songs end?” (Ruhl, 2006: 339). She has some hesitations concerning being an instrument of Orpheus, but he makes her sure that she will be a tool for his music in order to remember to love of

Orpheus forever, so, he ties a string to her finger and Eurydice ties for him as well. In fact, the string bounds her to Orpheus, but it is also an obstacle for he quest for identity and subjectivity. In this scene, they decide to get married and Orpheus again wishes that “may our lives be full of music.” (Ruhl, 2006: 342). In a marriage, the couples share special feelings, but Orpheus cares only his music. After their decision, Eurydice asks Orpheus what he is thinking about, but Orpheus answer unsurprisingly the same “music” and “her face falls” “(Ruhl, 2006: 342).

He asks Eurydice what she thinks about and she answers that she thinks about a book which she reads. Then Eurydice asks him what he thinks about he answers as “I made up a song for you today” (Ruhl, 2006: 336). He thinks about his songs much more than of Eurydice and Orpheus always talks only about his music. Orpheus sees Eurydice as a device for his art, as in the Ovidian version of the myth, as he states in the play as “I am going to make each strand of your hair into an instrument. “Your hair will stand on end as it plays my music and become a hair orchestra. It will fly you up into the sky” (Ruhl, 2006: 339).

As we discussed earlier the mimicry is attributed to the female because they are regarded as not having the ability to do something themselves. On the other hand, Eurydice seems to embrace the ideas of Orpheus which he imposed upon her, but at the same time, something discomforts her in this conversation, and she tries to escape from the conversation, that is why she asks offers Orpheus going in the water. (Ruhl, 2006: 342). From this perspective, her way out is only the water. Therefore, the water can be seen as a symbol of femininity, a space where Eurydice tries to defy herself from the patriarchal hegemony. Stephen Manning mentions the symbol of the water image from this perspective:

Water; is another primal feminine symbol. In all its many forms, from snow and oceans, to clouds and mist, water remains essentially a feminine symbol. (...) in Greek philosophy,

water has a clearly defined feminine identity. In its association with the moon, the tides, the menstrual cycle, and the various ancient goddesses of the sea, we witness further connections with the feminine principle. (Manning, 2004: 126).

Although the water image gives her some matriarchal implications in terms of escaping from the male discourse, it is obviously seen that Eurydice frequently goes to the water pump, in the scenes which includes the patriarchal implications. Notwithstanding Eurydice stays in between the patriarchal hegemony by her husband in the upper world and by her father in the underworld. Ruhl's describes the father figure as, dressed in a grey suit, reads from a letter" (Ruhl, 2006: 343). He writes a letter for Eurydice and the letter which he reads it is written for his newly wedded daughter, Eurydice. In the letter, the father gives Eurydice advises for a happy marriage and he offers her to "cultivate the arts o dancing and small talk" "keep quiet about politics but vote for the right man" (Ruhl, 2006: 343). As it is seen, the letter is a clear embodiment of the ideal wife who is subordinated by the patriarchal hegemony, but it is not surprising to see these notions in the play when it is taken into consideration the age which the play was written. In fact, the letter is an explicit example that shows the father's consideration upon the patriarchal discourse. For the reason he identifies an ideal woman who should know how to "keep their men" and this respect, Eurydice is represented as an object of the male desire.

Although he is dead and, in the underworld, the father says in his letter to Eurydice "also I am one of the few dead people who is still remember who read and write. That is a secret. If anyone finds out, they might dip me in the River again" (Ruhl, 2006: 344). Ironically, although he is dead, he has the power of language which Lacan states as the '*The Law of the Father*'. Lacan suggests that when the infant comes to the stage of language acquisition, he/she enters to the symbolic order which is reigned by '*The Law of the Father*'. Melanie Millard also in her work proposes the same idea when she says about this situation:

It is not however, until the acquisition of language, when the child can make its desires explicit to another and enter into social exchanges, that this self becomes formulated, that is, named and defined by its entry into the symbolic order. The symbolic is marked by the law of

structuration of meanings which Lacan calls 'nom-du-peré'; the Law of the Father. (Millard, 1990: 154).

Therefore, the presence of the father in the underworld, although he is dead and in the underworld, reveals that he still has the power of language is controlled by the ability of writing so he can utilize the pen again, which means that the power is at his hand to control of his own male discourse. According to Lacan, the language is controlled by the patriarchal hegemony since the infant has only a chance to enter into the language. From this context, it is not possible to mention a fully feminine realm in the underworld for Eurydice, due to the fact that there is a language in the underworld and as it is mentioned earlier, the language in the underworld is under the reign of patriarchal hegemony, by the father figure who is the one that knows the language so it is completely a patriarchal notion. The father issue is made explicit by Ruhl in the play. In the scene, Eurydice in her wedding ceremony she mentions that "a wedding is for father and daughter. They stop being married to each other on that day" (Ruhl, 2006: 345). So, Friedman says in his work about the search of father as "a variation on the search for the father is the profoundly nostalgic conviction that the past has explanatory or redemptive powers" (Colby, 2016: 8).

In this scene, the lord of the underworld, Hades appears with the name of "A Nasty Interesting Man". He finds the letter which is written for Eurydice by her father. He uses the letter of father in order to lure Eurydice and he achieves to get her attraction. By that, she goes with the Man, who is the lord of the underworld, to his apartment. He tries to get closer to her, but she tries to take the letter from him and she achieves to get the letter, but while she flees from the Man, she runs to the stairs and unfortunately "she wavers, off- balance, at the top of the stairwell. She follows the letter, down, down down... Blackout" (Ruhl, 2006: 356). Then Eurydice descends to the underworld by a rain inside elevation "inside the elevator, it is raining" (Ruhl, 2006: 359). In one of her interviews Ruhl comments upon her use of the elevator in the play:

I honestly don't remember where the raining elevator came from, I remember seeing it clearly when I was first writing the play. I knew that Eurydice arrived in this raining elevator, I think it's something about contemporary alienation: The experience of going to the underworld involves an alienation or unfamiliarity. Not a devilish or horrible way, but in a contemporary

way. Like when you go to a mall and you're in an elevator. It smells funny and it's tiny. Then you walk out and you're in a corporate hell. I was thinking about that sort of moral neutrality in the underworld I was creating. (Muse, 2018: 32).

In her notes to play she states that "The underworld should resemble the world of Alice in Wonderland more than it resembles Hades." (Ruhl, 2006: 333). Thus, her use of rain inside elevation also resembles the entrance of Alice's into the Wonderland, it is a kind of bridge which connects the two of the worlds. Like the position of the elevator, Eurydice is also in between the upper world and in the underworld, because she is in the elevator, she is neither in the patriarchal upper world nor in the underworld where is reigned by the matriarchy and also the place where her father is challenged by the feminine realm to construct his own patriarchal notion. However, due to the fact that the language is under the reign of the patriarchal hegemony in the upper world, thus, the language is considered in the underworld. It is impossible for Eurydice to reach a fully matriarchal realm of dead. Luce Irigaray, in a move offers a further discussion about the absence of the female in language Judith Butler in her article states that:

Luce Irigaray argues that woman constitute a paradox, if not a contradiction, within the discourse of the identity itself. Women are the "sex" which is not "one" woman constitute the unrepresentable. In other words, woman represents the sex that cannot be thought, a linguistic absence and opacity. Within the language that rests on univocal signification the female sex constitutes the constrainable and undesignable (Butler, 1990: 13- 14).

She does not have access to the language because, as Lacan claims, the infant can only experience the real by death and also through death the infant can return to the *imaginative stage* as in the womb of the mother so, death brings the infant where she/he begins actually. (Lacan J. , 2001). Therefore, Eurydice until her language acquisition is completed, is represented in between '*imaginary stage*' and the '*symbolic order*'. After she learns the language again, she enters under the symbolic order which is operated by '*The Law of the Father*' and Elaine Millard points out that:

In the Lacanian account of language of acquisition, the phallus is the master signifier, in the face of which the feminine can be defined only as lack. Woman is a gap, a silence, invisible and unheard, repressed in the unconscious. Kristeva argues that this

feminine remains at level of the semiotic, accessibly in patriarchal discourse only at the point of contradiction, meaningless and silence. (Millard, 1990: 157).

In this sense, as we discussed earlier, the absence of the female in the language is reigned by the symbolic order. Thus, until Eurydice learns the language again, she is represented in between the imaginary and the symbolic order in the play. Because she does not know the patriarchal language anymore. Kristeva also dwells on the language issue as Lacan, so she presents this stage as, '*semiotic*' (Kristeva, 1984), although Eurydice seems in the semiotic, she is still between the femininity and patriarchal hegemony which is imposed upon her. However, Butler discusses about the absence of the female in language by saying:

the Feminine sex is a point of a linguistic absence, the impossibility of grammatically denoted substance and the point of view that exposes that substance as an abiding and foundational illusion of a masculinist discourse. This absence is not marked as such within the masculine signifying economy. (Butler, 1990:15).

Some Philosophers, as Freud, say that this absence derives from the '*lack*' of the female but Butler suggests that "the female sex is not a "lack" or an "other" "(Butler, 1990:15). But on the contrary "the female eludes the very requirements of representation, for she is neither "other" nor the "lack". "(Butler, 1990:15). This absence in the language is presented in the play. Since Eurydice is exposed to forget the language and while she is in the symbolic order by her husband in the world of living and by her father, she enters the symbolic order by her father thanks to the language issues. She says in the play that "when I got through the cold, they made we swim in a river and I forgot his name. I forgot all the names." (Ruhl, 2006: 362) But although she forgets his name, she remembers that she has a husband. In the meantime, the father comes and takes her baggage (Ruhl, 2006: 362). Yet, she does not notice that the man who takes her baggage is her father, she thinks that he is just a porter. So, the father calls her name and due to the fact that she forgets all the names she cannot remember even her own name. There a dialogue between them when the father meets her. She says to the father "What is the language you're speaking? It gives me tingles. Say it again." (Ruhl, 2006: 363). In this scene, the father repeats her name again and again. As it is seen that in the

case of Eurydice that the sounds are without meaning which are attributed to names corresponds to mere sounds. As in the case of babies, in their process of the acquisition of language, the sounds that they produce makes them laugh, enjoy. So, in the play Eurydice also imitates her father. Therefore, by imitating him she begins to learn language. The conversation between the father and Eurydice in the following lines, so he says, "I'm your father" (Ruhl, 2006: 363). But Eurydice imitates her father "I'm your father how funny! You remind me of something, but I can't understand a word you're saying. Say it again!" (Ruhl, 2006: 363). The language acquisition of Eurydice as in the example of an infant who by imitating her father, learns the language again. In the meantime, this mimicry can be interpreted as a deliberate attempt to subvert the patriarchal discourse, as Irigaray states that the function of her mimicry. (Irigaray, 2004). In her process of learning the language the father tries to describe the father concept to Eurydice. Thus, he gives an allegoric example as "when you were alive, I was your tree" (Ruhl, 2006: 364) and Eurydice exactly remembers, and she says to her father "my tree! Yes, the tall one in the back yard! I used to sit all day in its shade." (Ruhl, 2006: 364). It is clearly understood from the dialogues that the father makes an obvious description that in the world of living he is the one that Eurydice depends on. Therefore, this may be seen as she is under the influence of the father figure, when she was alive in the upper world.

However, another essential issue is the naming issue, additively the issue of language. Due to this fact, as it is seen through the play, the main character Eurydice is subordinated by language. As Lacan states, about his symbolic stage, he makes a reference to the naming issue. So, he claims that the process of naming children by their parents is important for their future. (Lacan J. , 2001). In this sense, the naming process reveals the beginning position of the female character in attempting to gain her identity as a female. So, in the case of the play, the father says "I named you Eurydice. Your mother named all the other children. But Eurydice I chose for you" (Ruhl, 2006: 364). Within this context, by naming Eurydice, the father takes Eurydice into his own patriarchal discourse. As it is seen, the mother figure is excluded both from the play and in the process of naming Eurydice, so the father figure is an obstacle for Eurydice in the process of gaining her identity as a female.

Under the lights of these theories, it is understood that the father figure by excluding the mother figure in the process of naming Eurydice, separates Eurydice from his mother. As Irigaray claims, the mother figure is necessary for the daughter to gain her own subjectivity. In this frame, the father becomes an obstacle for Eurydice in the process of gaining her subjectivity. After learning language, Eurydice looks for a room for herself. But the stones tell her the reality, that there is no room for the dead. The father makes her a room by using strings and in fact, it can be interpreted as the room is built by the father as a place where he imprisons Eurydice in the underworld. Since, by teaching language to Eurydice, he causes her entrance to the symbolic stage, where the realm is reigned by the patriarchal discourse. In this sense, it can be said that Eurydice is subjugated by her husband by her attachment via strings which Orpheus gives for her finger in the upper world and she is also subjugated by the father figure via the string, room in the underworld. It is obviously seen that Eurydice fails to free herself from these patriarchal implications.

Within this context, Eurydice also realizes she has a husband. In this scene, it is seen the quest of Orpheus for Eurydice. He writes a letter for her and he sends to her. The letter is delivered to the underworld. He says in his letter for Eurydice “I love you. I’m going to find you...” (Ruhl, 2006: 368). She cannot read the letter and the father reads the letter for Eurydice (Ruhl, 2006: 369) and he says to Eurydice “it says; I love you”, “it is like your tree”, “it is like sitting in the shade” (Ruhl, 2006: 370). The father gives the same depiction while he explains the father concept, but he makes a clear distinction between explanations that he points out the nakedness, so he implies sexuality, by saying “It is like sitting in the shade with no clothes on” (Ruhl, 2006: 370). So, Eurydice remembers that her husband, Orpheus. In the string room, the father teaches Eurydice how to read and Eurydice asks her father to tell more stories about their family and she also asks the names of the other members of the family, but father does not tell the names. Then they try to sing, the father cannot remember the melody they get a rhythm “Dada Dee Da, Da da Da da” (Ruhl, 2006: 375). Leslie Durham, in her work, discusses that they forget the words of the song, so these syllables they produce brings the idea of Freud’s ‘*Forth-Da*’ theory. Freud finds this theory when he watches his grandson on the idea is about the subject’s desire. The grandson

symbolically attempts to control the disappearance of his mother, he plays with a spool which is attached with string, and when he throws the spool disappeared he says 'forth' in German it means it is gone and he says 'da', when it returns which means to come. (Durham, 2013: 37). So, Leslie says "This effort to control and connect is made all the more resonant for Eurydice and her father since it is done in the example provided by Freud, with string." (Durham, 2013: 37). In the last scene of the play it is seen that, when Orpheus comes to recover her from the underworld, Eurydice chooses her father. Since her bond with her father is deeper than her bound with husband. When she returns, she finds that her father lies on the ground. So, she chooses to die and dips herself in the river and she lies as her father on the ground. As we discussed earlier, Freud in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, comments on the issue of death. He mentions that the aim of the living organism is to reach "inertia inherit in human being" (Freud, 1920: 31) and he claims that the aim of all the living organism is to reach to die, He says:

Moreover, it is possible to specify this final goal of all organic striving. It would be in contradiction to the conservative nature of the instincts if the goal of life were a state of things which had never yet been attained. On the contrary, it must be an old state of things, an initial state from which the living entity has at one time or other departed and to which it is striving to return by the circuitous paths along which its development leads. (Freud, 1920: 32).

Through the play and in other versions of the myth it is seen that Eurydice is driven to the nothingness, but in this play she chooses to die, she deliberately calls Orpheus. In this case, the factor which leads her to die second is could be related to what Freud says in his work:

If we are to die ourselves, and first to lose in death those who are dearest to us, it is easier to submit to a remorseless law of nature, to the sublime [Necessity], than to a chance which might perhaps have been escaped. It may be, however, that this belief in the internal necessity of dying is only another of those illusions which we have created (Freud, 1920: 39).

Finally, the reason why Eurydice chooses to die for the second time is that Freud explanation about death highly corresponds to Eurydice's case in the play. Freud says that in the case of death, if the one loses someone who is close to his/her and when think that death is not a coincidence, then we have to submit to that death, since it is a relentless law of nature and necessity for all the living organism. Moreover, in the last



scene, the stage falls into a silence that as it is understood, all the characters embrace death, especially Eurydice and her father intentionally chose death in order to free themselves from living by the language which is imposed upon them. Therefore, their choice about embracing death through silence and the void, it is seen that in the lights of the theories, immortality is thought as a matriarchal tradition.

In her play *Eurydice*, Ruhl reveals the issue of death in relation this theme the issue of language and represents Eurydice between patriarchy and matriarchy, in between her father and her husband. What makes her Eurydice different from the other versions and from the original myth is that her Eurydice deliberately choses to die in order to come together with her lost father. The distinctive feature of Ruhl's play is that she adds a father figure to myth and, by excluding the mother figure, she increases the female character's in-betweenness and decreases the chance of gaining subjectivity by this father figure. Eurydice is given as a passive figure due to the fact that she is under the reign of patriarchal hegemony through her husband in the over world and she is also imprisoned by the father figure into the patriarchy through the language issues, although she wants to free herself from this patriarchal hegemony. In the end of the play, Eurydice calls Orpheus deliberately to make him turn back at her. Actually, she chooses death. This time it is not failure of Orpheus. The play ends in the underworld where Eurydice chooses real death and eternity and by dipping herself in the River of Forgetfulness chooses to forget everything. Therefore, this leads Eurydice to embrace the matriarchy, as is it seen the play end in the realm of dead which is seen as feminine realm.

## CONCLUSION

The Orpheus and Eurydice myth is one of those myths that was highly alluring not only to the ancients but also continues to amaze even the readers of the contemporary world. The representation of Eurydice in the classical Greek myth and its various adaptations was omitted through the ages. But, by 1920s especially women writers began to tell the story from Eurydice's perspective. In this sense, both Kathy Acker and Sarah Ruhl use the Orpheus and Eurydice myth as a framing device to present the position of Eurydice within the context of the feminist perspective in order to create and construct new meanings in their works. Two of the writers aim to tell the story from Eurydice's viewpoint to revise and challenge the earlier established meanings and construct the new point of views and meanings to their works.

Therefore, I intend to display the representation of Eurydice in Kathy Acker's *Eurydice in the Underworld* and Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice* with displaying the similarities and differences in each work in relation to the representation of Eurydice in some ancient sources and in the original Greek myth in terms of the certain studied themes and arguments in this study.

In Acker's play, *Eurydice in the Underworld*, Acker uses more aggressive language in her work than the other adaptations of the myth. This characteristic of the work is highly distinctive. In the work, sexuality is given as a life force as in the Ovid's account of the myth. In Acker's play, Eurydice also uses sexuality to hold on the life, but Orpheus does not let Eurydice. Acker's Orpheus is also different from the other Orpheus figures. In many adaptations of the myth, Orpheus is given as an enchanting artist and as a hero who wants to recover his wife from the underworld whereas, Acker's Orpheus is nor artist neither a hero who wants to recover his wife from death. Because

he does not want to descent into the underworld and also does not want to bring Eurydice back with him the reason is, he believes that he can love again.

The theme of death is seen in both of the works. In Kathy Acker's *Eurydice in the Underworld*, Eurydice is seen as she is between in life and death who does not want to die and try to maintain her life by holding Orpheus and sexuality. Although in some scenes which take place in the underworld, she seems to embrace the idea of death, but she actually displays an ambiguous attitude towards death.

The representation of Eurydice is in between life and death, patriarchy and matriarchy. It is observed in Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice* and Kathy Acker's *Eurydice in the Underworld* with considering the original myth and some ancient sources. The themes of death, the statue of Eurydice in relation to the statue of the female in general, the gaze of Orpheus, the issue of language, and the characters as psychological archetypes are analysed in this study.

Sarah Ruhl's Eurydice is also represented in between patriarchy and matriarchy in terms of death as Kathy Acker's Eurydice. Because she is depicted as a female character who imprisoned by the patriarchal hegemony. Through the play, Ruhl's Eurydice does not defy herself from the patriarchal subjugation which is imposed upon her by the father figure and by her husband, Orpheus until the end of the play. Moreover, all the characters in the play reach the underworld which is seen as a feminine realm. All of the characters, by dipping themselves in the River of Forgetfulness and forgetting everything about their life, they elude themselves from the patriarchal discourse which is imposed upon them in the world of living.

In Kathy Acker's play *Eurydice in the Underworld*, Eurydice is represented in between life and death, from Freud's terms, 'Thanatos' and 'Eros' in most of the scenes Eurydice tries to defy herself from death, 'Thanatos' by using sexuality that is, 'Eros', except in some scenes she embraces the idea of death. As in the case of Acker's Eurydice, Ruhl's

Eurydice also in between life and death but obviously accepts the idea of death by erasing her memory about her life.

The representation of Eurydice is different in both of the works. Kathy Acker's *Eurydice in the Underworld* and Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice* which are the versions of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth reflects the age's characteristics which they are written. For instance, in Ovid's version of the myth, Eurydice is a completely a muted figure who is subjugated from by the patriarchal hegemony. Because there is no obvious reference about her about her origin and etc. She has a place in the story as the wife Orpheus. In Acker's version, Although Eurydice has a representation in the play, she cannot exactly leave the patriarchal implications behind her as Ruhl's Eurydice who makes a precise decision to defy herself from the patriarchal hegemony.

The issue of art and gaze is observed in two of versions as in many other versions of the myth. But in detail, in Acker's *Eurydice in the Underworld*, there is no reference about the art of Orpheus as a talented archetypal musician. Acker gives her Orpheus different from the other Orpheus figure that this is what makes her Orpheus distinctive. In ancient sources, Orpheus uses his music to retrieve Eurydice from death. In Ruhl's play *Eurydice*, the art of Orpheus is given to increase Eurydice's passivity since, Orpheus sees her as an object of his art, not a subject. However, in both of the work, as in the many other versions of the myth Orpheus looks back at Eurydice. In Acker's *Eurydice in the Underworld*, the gaze of Orpheus gives him a chance to evaluate their relationship. Thus, after his gaze, Orpheus decides to leave Eurydice in the underworld. Whereas Ruhl's Orpheus is different from this point of view, since Eurydice calls his name on purpose because she wants to unit with her lost father in the underworld, not with her husband.

In conclusion, the representation of Eurydice is given in some respects. In both of the versions of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth, in Kathy Acker's *Eurydice in the Underworld* and Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice*, Eurydice

is represented in between life and death and under the subjugation of the patriarchal hegemony. Acker's Eurydice exposed to the patriarchal implications by her husband and also by medical authorities. Acker depicts Eurydice as a double passive figure. The reason is, she is presented as female figure who with breast cancer. In Ruhl's play, these implications, limitations of the patriarchy are imposed upon Ruhl's Eurydice by her husband and her father. However, Ruhl's Eurydice eludes herself from these implications of patriarchal hegemony by choosing the real death whereas Acker's Eurydice remains ambiguous about death.

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