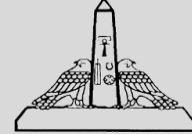


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De-traditionalizing Gender Roles in Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice*

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Abstract:

Utilizing T. S. Eliot's concept of tradition, the present paper seeks to investigate Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice* (2003) as a twenty-first century adaptation of the Greek myth of Orpheus. Ruhl's dramatic methodology is predicated on upending the myth via various dramaturgical strategies, among which are enlarging Eurydice's role and marginalizing Orpheus', creating the character of Eurydice's father (not found in the myth), utilizing different traditional accounts of the myth, and making changes to the original myth's story-line. The paper has reached three findings. (1) The upended form of the myth is suggestive of Ruhl's prioritization of talented dramaturgy over any natural order of major and minor characterization. (2) The marginalization of Orpheus' role and expansion of Eurydice's have accentuated the female voice that had long been subverted over the literary history of the myth. (3) Classical myths tend to be rich raw materials for authors to adapt and transform into any literary genre due to the authors' individual talents adding to the tradition followed in such classical myths.

Keywords: Eliot, Eurydice, female, gender, individual talent, literary tradition, loss, male, myth, Orpheus

Introduction

The forty-four-year-old American playwright Sarah Ruhl (1974-) has written many well-known plays such as *Melancholy Play* (2001), *Eurydice* (2003), *The Clean House* (2004), *Dead Man's Cell Phone* (2007), *In the Next Room* (2009), *The Oldest Boy* (2014), and *How to Transcend a Happy Marriage* (2017). From an early age, she was a precocious writer; she explains to John Lahr: "In third grade, somebody sent me a poison-pen letter. I corrected the punctuation and sent it back" (Lahr "Surreal Life" 1). Ruhl has received many awards, such as the Helen Merrill Award and the Whiting Writer's Award in 2003, the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize for *The Clean House* in 2004, the prestigious MacArthur Foundation Fellowship (with a cash award of \$500,000) in 2006, two-time finalist for the Pulitzer Prize (in 2005 for *The Clean House* and in 2010 for *In the Next Room*). She has become "one of America's most frequently produced playwrights." In 2010 alone, "two hundred and forty-four individual productions of her plays were performed around the country" (Lahr "Mouth to Mouth" 84). *Eurydice* was selected as one of the ten plays included in *The Best Plays Theatre Yearbook 2007-2008*. In 2016, she has been awarded Samuel French Award for Sustained Excellence in American Theatre.

Ruhl has worked on the draft of her play *Eurydice* in 2001. It premiered in Madison in 2003 and at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre in 2004, ran at the Yale Repertory in 2006, and then opened in New York in 2007. As the first of Ruhl's mature plays, "*Eurydice* was the fifth-most-produced" one in 2008-9 (Durham 4). As a start, Ruhl began to work on *Eurydice*, a retelling of the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice from the female character's perspective. Ruhl's version is an amalgamation of the myth (the well-known tale of the gifted musician who, grieving for the loss of his dead wife, journeys to the Underworld to find her) and her own personal experience of losing a father. The setting of the play, as the 2004 version shows, "*contains a raining elevator, a water-pump, some rusty exposed pipes, an abstracted River of Forgetfulness, [and] an old-fashioned glow-in-the-dark globe*" (2). *Eurydice* begins with Eurydice and Orpheus confessing their love. At the wedding, she neglects her guests and meets "the Nasty Interesting Man" (17) who he has a letter for her from her dead father. She unwillingly decides to follow him to his apartment to take the letter. After taking the letter and eschewing his seduction, Eurydice falls down the stairs and dies. She enters the Underworld where she meets her father. She cannot recognize him, nor can she remember anything. But her father patiently and gradually reminds her by re-teaching her the meaning of words and telling her stories about his family. Orpheus grieves for Eurydice and decides to sing a beautiful song in order to go to the Underworld to get her back. The Lord of the Underworld, Hades, agrees to let Orpheus have her back provided that he must walk back to the living not looking behind to see if she is following him. Eurydice understands that she must make the

difficult decision to either continue her relationship with her father in the Underworld or go back and renew her relationship with her husband. She calls Orpheus' name out causing him to look at her. Hence, they are separated once again. The theme of the play is regarded by Victoria Pagan as "the fallibility of the human condition and the inability of art to triumph over the persistence of suffering and the finality of death" (*para* 1). As one of Ruhl's earlier works, *Eurydice* is a deeply personal play based on both literary tradition and imagination.

The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, which dates back thousands of years, was variously told by many great poets and philosophers, such as Ovid, Virgil, Apollonius, Plato, and Aristotle. As Leah Schwebel argues:

The myth of Orpheus figures prominently into literature from the Hellenistic era to the present day, yet the interpretations of the myth have remained anything but static during its transmittance. [It] has undergone so many interpretive changes throughout the ages that the mere mention of the name Orpheus evokes a plethora of images, concepts, literary tropes, and archetypes.

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Despite the miscellaneous narrations of the myth, its basic story can be summarized as follows. Orpheus, the son of the Thracian King Oeagrus and the Muse Calliope, is the most famous poet and musician who attracts birds, wild animals, and even trees whenever he plays his lyre. He meets and marries the nymph Eurydice. Their joy is very short. On their wedding day, she travels through a field with her bridesmaids and, to escape the sexual advances of a stranger (or Aristeus, the god of hunters), she steps full on a nest of snakes. Bitten by a snake, she dies. Inconsolable, Orpheus plays sad tunes on his lyre and travels to the Underworld using his music to charm the spirits especially Hades, the Lord of the Underworld. Hades agrees to let Eurydice return to earth on one condition: "She must follow behind you as you go. If you turn round to see her before she reaches the upper air, she must return here for ever" (Gibson 33). They set off as advised. Unfortunately, Orpheus, to make sure she is behind him, turns and looks back at Eurydice, who seems to fade away. He rushes forward but it is too late. She returns to the world of the dead and is lost to him forever, and Orpheus, heartbroken, returns alone to the land of the living. This myth represents the literary tradition on which Ruhl draws her play.

Despite its prominence as one of Ruhl's earlier works, *Eurydice* has received very little critical attention. All studies published on it are two MA theses in addition to sparse number of scholarly essays. The first thesis, "Balancing the Mythic and Mundane: A Director's Approach to Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice*" (2009) by the director and actress Amber McGinnis Jackson, handles such issues as structure, content, and design and rehearsal processes. The second thesis, "The Fluidity of Collaboration: Directing

Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice* (2016) by Keltie Redfern Forsyth, analyzes the play regarding its style, audience, space, time period, characters, design, and rehearsals. James Al-Shamma's *Sarah Ruhl: A Critical Study of the Plays* (2011) attempts an evaluation of her plays in general investigating Ruhl's influence. Charles Isherwood's article "A Comic Impudence Softens a Tale of Loss" in *The New York Times* (2006) talks about the play's main focus as about the painful choice that comes with the passing of joys and pleasures. Lahr's "Gods and Dolls: Sarah Ruhl Reimagines the Orpheus Myth" in *The New Yorker* (2007) stresses Ruhl's play as a dream of love and loss. Isherwood's "The Power of Memory to Triumph over Death" in *The New York Times* (2007) focuses on Orpheus' woeful act of disobedience as the cause of his tragedy." Michael Feingold's "Mything Persons" in *The Village Voice* (2007) points out how modern playwrights breathe new life into the Greek myth. Victoria Pagan's "*Eurydice* by Sarah Ruhl: The Power of Pretence" in *Society for Classical Studies* (2015) tackles the play as a familiar story of Orpheus who loves Eurydice who prefers going to her father in the Underworld. Ara Vito's "Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice*: A Contemporary Myth" (2015) explains the story of a girl who is caught between unity and disunity, and romance and family, the world of life and the world of death. Among the articles devoted to Ruhl's theatre in general are Hannah Fattor's "Rain Inside the Elevator: Dualities in the Plays of Sarah Ruhl as Seen Through the Lens of Ancient Greek Theatre" (2012) and Thomas Butler's "The Acknowledgement of Love in Sarah Ruhl's Drama" (2013). Fattor's article revolves around Ruhl's plays in general and Butler's tackles the theme of love.

Given this review, the paper, attempting Ruhl's *Eurydice* via a different angle not approached by any of the above-mentioned studies, seeks to answer one question: How does Sarah Ruhl's upending of the Greek myth of Orpheus transform its classical form into a twenty-first century play? Answering such a question requires thinking of three related sub-questions: (1) Why has Ruhl changed the title of the myth "Orpheus" to the play's title of *Eurydice*? (2) What characterization techniques does Ruhl adopt in her adaptation of the myth? (3) What is the impact of Ruhl's adaptation of "Orpheus" on the modernization of classical myths?

Martin Gray refers to the concept of literary tradition by the term "Influence" which he defines as "a writer's conscious or unconscious debt to those who have written before, observable in echoes and imitation of subject matter or style, or via explicit statement or allusion" (Gray 149). To T. S. Eliot, tradition entails the beliefs and practices of culture as well as the fact that it is not derived from a single, stable origin. It is the awareness of the meaning and significance of the entire living literature of the past for the present, and literature not of one country alone but of others as well, and a genius must submit his individuality, his personal angularities, peculiarities, strange oddities to this living tradition. This however does not mean that

tradition has to follow blindly the ways of the authors of the past. Eliot clarifies:

Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in first place, the historical sense...and the historical sense involves perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. (Eliot 14)

The substance of Eliot's argument here is that the past by itself does not constitute "tradition"; the whole of the past literature does not make "tradition." The literature of the past which is of significance in the present constitutes "tradition" for the living author. It is not easy to determine which authors, which forms and which parts of the literature of the past have significance for the author writing in the present. He must work for it; and he must work hard and intelligently to discover the presence of the past. He can achieve this sense only when he is fully responsive to the present literary climate in its affinity with the literature of the past. The most important point is the awareness of the simultaneity of the past and present, of that past which is relevant to the interpretation and understanding of the present.

The importance of tradition for the artist or poet comes to be more prominent when his work of art is to be judged. His work should not be estimated in isolation, but it should be viewed in the context of the whole tradition: "No poet, no artist of any art has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone. You must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead" (15). This is the point: to consider a work of art in the context of the tradition to which it belongs and not in isolation.

In any discussion of tradition, one must be aware of the fact that it is not derived from a single, stable origin. When a new work of art is created, it adds to tradition:

What happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it.... The existing order is complete before the new work arrives, for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole

existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted. (15)

This aforementioned fact is emphasized by Gerard Bruns who argues that tradition is "not a structure of any sort but is just the historicity of open-ended, intersecting, competing narratives that cannot be mastered by any Great Code" (Bruns 11) Michael R. Molino writes:

Tradition...is a palimpsest of discursive surfaces, not something written and then erased, but something written and written again, one layer on top of the other. As each new layer of the palimpsest is written, certain portions seep through or in some way influence the layers that follow. (Molino 6)

Comprising three movements/acts (the first including 7 scenes, the second 20 scenes, and the the third 3 scenes), *Eurydice* is based on certain characters: Eurydice, Orpheus, Father, the Nasty Interesting Man who turns out later to be the Lord of the Underworld (appearing some times as a Child and some other times as a young man), and three Stones (acting as a chorus). Ruhl is not the first author to have adapted an old work into a new one; this has been done by many authors before. For example, Edward Bond has adapted Willaim Shakespeare's *King Lear* into his own three-act play *Lear* in 1971 and Sharon Draper has updated and re-located Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to her own novel *Romiette and Julio* in 1999. In recycling the Greek myth of Orpheus into her own *Eurydice*, Ruhl has, in fact, added, marginalized, removed, and modified figures and elements throughout. In other words, she added new figures such as Eurydice's father (a character not found in the original myth nor in its traditional accounts) and the dramatic devices of the "elevator" and "tricycle"; upeneded the roles of Orpheus and Eurydice by marginalizing the former and widening the latter; replaced the element of the stranger/Aristeus/snake by "the Nasty Interesting man" and the "gods" of the myth by the chorus of Stones (the little stone, the big stone, and the loud stone), described as "semi-human characters" (Geis 263) moving and acting in unison; and modified other issues in the story-line of the story.

As a matter of fact, Ruhl is not the only writer to adapt the myth of Orpheus; there are many other writers who have done this in their own ways over time, but she is the only one who has adapted it in this special way. In his "Introduction" to *Orpheus: The Metamorphoses of a Myth*, John Warden clarifies: "The myth is the raw material of artists: the straight narration of given myth is obsolete by time of litearcy" (viii). Among the many authors who have adapted (or been influenced by) the Orpheus myth are the German composer of Italian and French opera Christoph Willibald Gluck, the Russian compoer and pianist Igor Stravinsky, the French writer Jean

Cocteau, the German poet (and novelist) Rainer Maria Rilke, the French dramatist Jean Marie Anouilh, the American playwright Tennessee Williams, and the American playwright and director Mary Zimmerman.

According to Jackson, such works as "Gluck's 1762 operatic version of the myth, *Orphée et Euridyce*," and "Stravinsky's ballet," *Orpheus* (1947) stress the love story between Orpheus and Eurydice "as the central focus of the plot" (26). In Cocteau's *Orphée* (1925), a fight breaks out between the poet Orphée and a group of angry upstarts at the *Café des Poètes* in Paris. A rival poet is murdered and a mysterious princess insists on taking Orphée and the body away in her car. Orphée suddenly finds himself in the underworld, where the Princess announces that she is Death. Orphée escapes in the car back to the land of the living. In Cocteau's "dream-like play," as well described by Jackson (27), the myth is penetrating via issues like love, sacrifice, trust, and death. In Rilke's poem "Orpheus, Eurydice, Hermes" (1904), the three title characters go through a pastoral landscape on their way out of the depths of Hades. Rilke describes woods, a lake, a rain-filled sky, soft meadows, and a shadow world of grief that arises out of Orpheus' song of lamentation. She also stresses Eurydice's inner feelings as a bride (Rilke "Orpheus,..."). Anouilh's *Eurydice* (1941), set in a train station, shows how Orpheus, a street singer, travels with his father; and while they are waiting at the station, he meets Eurydice, an actress traveling with a theatre troupe, and falls for her at first sight. After marrying and running away together, Orpheus discovers Eurydice's immoral past. Fleeing fear and shame, she is killed in a bus accident and Orpheus is given the opportunity to bring her back to life by a second meeting at the train station. Plagued with doubt about her sincerity of love, Orpheus sends her back to the grave. After his fatal look back, Orpheus follows Eurydice into death. Anouilh's version focuses obviously on such thematic issues as trust (Jackson 7).

Williams' *Orpheus Descending* (1957) is "the tale of a wild-spirited boy," a musician called Val, "who wanders into a conventional community of the South and creates the commotion of a fox in a chicken coop. ... [The] play is about unanswered questions that haunt the hearts of people..." (Williams 151). The affinities between the play and the myth lie in the title character and its love for music. In Jackson's words, "the play is less directly influenced by the myth. ... Williams does not directly reference any names tied to the myth except with the play's title." The only influence it follows is Val's "love of music" and "the power he has to charm people, especially women, with the music from his guitar" (27). In Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses* (1998), the story of Orpheus, the god of music, and Eurydice is told from two perspectives. The first is that of Orpheus, who has just married Eurydice who, bitten by a snake, dies. The distressed Orpheus travels to the Underworld to negotiate with Hades and the gods to free his

wife. Influenced by his sad song, Hades, the god of the Underworld, allows Orpheus to take Eurydice as long as she will follow him and he will never look back at her. If he does look back at her, she will remain in the Underworld. Orpheus agrees but when, on their way back, he looks back and hence could not hear Eurydice causing Hermes to return her to Hades. The second perspective is that of Eurydice, in a style similar to Rilke's. The action is so repeated that Eurydice becomes forgetful and returns to the Underworld ignorant of Orpheus, the man she loved so long ago. Commenting on her two different ways of telling the story, Al-Shamma argues that Zimmerman "retells the story through direct quotation of her sources, Ovid and Rilke, and therefore mirrors their handling of Eurydice" (16). Since Rilke's poem is based on the Greek myth of Ovid, the latter remains the principal source for Zimmerman. This fact that Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses* is "based on the classical mythology by Ovid" is mentioned by Jeffrey Brown in his interview with Zimmeman, who accentuates that "these myths are sort of impenetrable. There is something that always remains mysterious" (*paras* 1,7).

Thus, the different works drawing upon the literary tradition of the myth, like the myth itself, have revolved around the story of Orpheus. Each piece has adapted the myth directly or indirectly in its author's own way to stress Orpheus' bravery and impatient desire to get his wife back. Even the one entitled *Eurydice*, Anouilh's, centres on the two characters equally. Ruhl's *Eurydice*, another clear adaptation of Ovid's myth, is based on the myth but coloured with the playwright's personal experience in a talented way. Ruhl admits there have been many renditions of the myth in her own work. She is aware that Ovid and his followers have said "little more about Eurydice than she felt pain in her heel from her fatal snake-bite as she waited for her husband to rescue her" (Butler 11). She herself expatiates on this issue to Wendy Weckwerth when she argues that the tale

has always stayed with me, more than any other Greek myth. I'd seen so many beautiful retellings from Cocteau to *Black Orpheus*, but 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." Rilke looks at Eurydice's experience at the fullness of her death when Orpheus arrives, with a kind of ambivalence . . . I'm also compelled by the questions the myth raises about music and language. Mainly, though, I was caught with this idea of memory 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* is a transparently personal play.

(30)

In her *Eurydice*, Ruhl has been influenced by the myth directly or indirectly, by those who adapted it. She has her own way that serves her targets. Michael Feingold summarizes the situation by arguing: "Many modern playwrights have tried to breathe new life into the Greek myths. Until Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice*, I never saw a writer make such active efforts to snuff the life out of one. Ruhl clearly doesn't believe in the myth, and displays no interest in its possible meanings...she changes her story's ground rules every few minutes, with a tiresomely whimsical fecklessness" (*para* 8). Paul Hodgins argues something similar by saying that "there's vagueness at the center of this story. Perhaps it's due to the incomplete nature of the Greek myth that Ruhl co-opts" (*para* 5).

Unlike other traditional accounts of the myth, Ruhl's *Eurydice* begins with Orpheus and Eurydice as two young lovers with different characters. While he is interested in "music," she is interested in "words" and "books." Eurydice, Ruhl's mouthpiece, says:

There were—stories—about people's lives—how some come out well—and others come out badly.... It can be interesting to see if other people—like *dead people* who wrote books—agree or disagree with what you think. ... because it makes you—a larger part of the *human community*. It had very interesting arguments. [My italics] (10)

If Ruhl here, by "dead people," "teasingly alludes to the ancient myth" (Jackson 36), she may be referring to herself as becoming part and parcel of the "human community" or (in the Eliotic sense) literary tradition by creating her own play. Moreover, it is clear that Orpheus loves his music more than Eurydice:

Eurydice: What are you thinking about?

Orpheus: Music. (10)

Again, when she repeats the same question towards the end of the first scene:

Eurydice: What are you thinking about?

Orpheus: Music.

Her face falls.

Orpheus: Just kidding. I was thinking about you. And music. (14)

Likely, when he asks her to "remember this melody," she replies: "I'm bad at remembering melodies." The stage directions tell us: "*She sings the melody./She misses a few notes./She's not the best singer in the world*" (11). Thus, unlike Orpheus who is obsessed with his music and melodies, Eurydice is one who indulges in reading books where she finds "interesting arguments." In this way, Ruhl paves the way for the great differences between the two lovers as time passes. These "differences are fully exposed in Orpheus' inability to fully appreciate Eurydice's love for books, and with

Eurydice's struggle to find rhythm and remember the melodies Orpheus sings to her" (Jackson 36).

Ruhl has been indirectly influenced by Rilke. Rilke's poem, "Orpheus, Eurydice, Hermes," which comprises twelve stanzas of varying length, is replete with such pastoral images as "grey rainy sky," "darkness," "roots," "blocks," "rocks," "ghostly forests," "lanscape," "meadows," "pathway," "a branch of olive," "wind," "fearful lightness," "wood and vale and road and hamlet," and "disfigured stars" (Rilke Stanzas 1-6). While such images can be obviously traced throughout the myth, they are marginalized in Ruhl's version. To quote James Al-Shamma, "In Ruhl, the pastoral landscape has been fragmented and dispersed, hinted at rather than openly displayed" (17). Given this, Ruhl's play is not devoid of Rilke's influence. When Orpheus informs his Eurydice that he gets "twelve instruments," the latter asks him: "Where are you going to get twelve instruments? (12)," he refers to an influence of Rilke's poem on Ruhl: "I'm 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 into the sky...Your hair will be my orchestra" (12). He repeats this phrase once again in the second scene of the second act/movement: "Symphony for twelve instruments" (33). In other words, Ruhl's creative use of Eurydice's hair can be well traced in the eighth stanza of Rilke's poem where Eurydice's "hair" is indirectly included: "that blonde woman/who'd sometimes echoed in the poet's poems" (lines 74-5). Moreover, in the seventh scene of the second act/movement, Orpheus writes a letter to Eurydice: "Last night I dreamed that we climbed Mount Olympus and we started to make love and all the strands of your hair were little faucets and water coming streaming out of your head and I said, why is water coming out of your hair? And you said, gravity is very compelling" (39). This part of his letter finds its echo in the ninth stanza of Rilke which refers to Eurydice's hair explicitly: "She was already loosened like long hair,/and given far wide like fallen rain,/and dealt out like a manifold supply" (lines 78-80). Water is a common element here in both Rilke's and Ruhl's works. Ruhl's echoing Rilke's Eurydice here may be to elevate her by praising her hair. Thomas Butler argues that Ruhl is aware of Rilke's poem as depreciating Eurydice: "In this poem, Eurydice is described as 'uncertain, gentle, and without impatience' as she waits for Orpheus" (11). Again, drawing on Rilke's poem here seems to be for retrieving Eurydice's right as a female who has been marginalized in previous myths and plays.

Moreover, Rilke's description of Orpheus as "the slender man in the blue mantle," in the opening line of the 4th stanza, is indirectly echoed and exaggerated by Ruhl in her play. Given this background from Rilke's poem, Ruhl makes the Nasty Interesting Man, who seduces Eurydice, contrast his strength with Orpheus' weakness:

I'm not interesting, but I'm strong... You need to get yourself a real man. A man with broad shoulders like me. Orpheus has long

fingers that would tremble to pet a bull or pluck a bee from a hive... A man who can put his big arm around your little shoulders as he leads you through the crowd, a man who answers the door at parties... A man with big hands, with big stupid hands like potatoes, a man who can cry a cow in labor. (24-5)

The significance of Ruhl's being more influenced by Rilke's poem (second to the myth) more than any other of the previous traditional accounts of the myth lies in the fact that the poem is the only work to focus on Eurydice. Otilia Veres argues: "The power of Rilke's poem lies in its extremely sensitive concentration on, and presentation of, the figure of Eurydice. Unlike Orpheus, who is eager and impatient for the encounter, Eurydice—'the so-beloved' (Rilke)—is 'uncertain, gentle, and without impatience'" (45). That is to say, if Eurydice is passively reflected in the previous accounts of the myth, Ruhl appears to expatiate on her positively; if Orpheus is passively tackled by any of the previous accounts, she appears to accentuate this passivity. All this adds to the character of Eurydice as Ruhl's heroine.

The thirty scenes into which the play's Three Movements are divided are in the most devoted to Eurydice and her father. Moreover, the scenes devoted to Eurydice are so long or longish and the scenes on Orpheus are too short and mostly devoted to Eurydice in that he appears as writing her a letter, calling up her name, or talking about her on the phone. The only scenes tackling the two lovers together in the form of the myth are the first and the fourth scenes of the First Movement. The "Father" figure is not mentioned in the myth and the only traditional account of the myth including it is Anouilh's *Eurydice* in 1941. Although Anouilh's title *Eurydice* is the only one among the several titles adapting the myth to be thus typical with Ruhl's, the former adds the character of Orpheus' "father" employing it for masculine targets since Jean Anouilh is a man. In Ruhl's *Eurydice*, she adds the character of Eurydice's Father. Out of the play's thirty scenes twelve are focused on Eurydice with her father. In other words, the scenes including Eurydice with her father are more than those including her with her husband Orpheus. Here lies Ruhl's individual talent and unsurpassed dexterity: she has been influenced by Anouilh's play in her own feministic way to thus add a "Father" not to Orpheus but to Eurydice, just to serve her feministic target. This is how Ruhl could break away from the many versions of the myth by dramatizing Eurydice as a tragic heroine supporting her experience by bringing her father with her and, hence, stressing her voice as a woman. This interprets Jackson's argument that "as time passed, artists continued to change the focus of the story, depending upon the concerns of their era" (25).

The appearance of Eurydice's dead father writing her a letter (from the Underworld) full of advice for her wedding day reflects how much such a traditional father loves his daughter and hence substantiates her readiness to

leave her wedding for meeting him in the Underworld. Taking a break from her wedding party to get some water at the water pump, she complains about the [un]"interesting people at [her] wedding" and expresses her thirst for her father by saying: "A wedding is for daughters and fathers" and repeating "a wedding is for a father and a daughter" (17). All this is rightly expressed by the fact that like Ruhl in real life, "the wife [in the play] is grappling with her grief over the loss of her father" (Goodman *para* 17). Hence, she here encounters the "Nasty Interesting Man" who seems to be coming to her from the Underworld to deliver her her father's letter. He entices her by the letter to his "elegant high-rise apartment" (20) and she unwillingly follows him to get it. Escaping his seduction, she swiftly snatches the letter but "*trips and pitches down the stairs, holding her letter*" (25) and dies. By this scene the First Movement comes to an end. However, the Nasty Interesting Man (who turns up later to be the Lord of the Underworld) seems to be acting as a god coming to reunite Eurydice with her father. It is through this figure that one puts one's hand on the crucial modifications Ruhl has done on the much-meditated-upon myth concerning the way Eurydice dies and meets her father in the Underworld. Moreover, the great influence her father left upon her made Ruhl depict Eurydice as the woman who prefers her love for her father to that for her husband. That is to say, she prefers nostalgic or familial love to romantic love. Ruhl recalls:

Having someone I loved and adored die...so early, there seemed to be no cultural outlet to deal with that except therapy. I thought, 'Why should this be pathologized?' We're all going to do the dying thing someday. I felt like there was no cultural ritual to organize my feelings. Theater became that for me.'

(qtd by Berson *para* 5)

The Second Movement or "*the movement to the underworld is marked by the entrance of stones*" (26) acting as a chorus. After introducing themselves individually as "a little stone," "a big stone," and "a loud stone" (26), they often speak and move in unison. Their "distance from humanity is displayed in their lack of individuality: they speak in unison, finish each others sentences, and dully recite the rules of this afterlife" (Fattor 9). As the longish stage directions read, Eurydice arrives in the Underworld via an elevator wherein "*it is raining*" (27). This imaginative device of the elevator connects the two worlds together, the world of the living with the world of the dead (the Underworld). Thus, Ruhl upends the myth by telling that it is Eurydice not Orpheus who journeys to the underworld: "*She walks towards the audience and opens her mouth, trying to speak...attempting to tell her story to the audience*" (27). Like the imaginative device of the elevator, the classical device of the chorus connects the two worlds together; and as in classical drama, they comment on the action at times and intermediate between characters and the audience at other times. The stones/chorus

introduce Eurydice to the audience: "Eurydice wants to speak to you. But she can't speak your language anymore. She talks in the language of dead people now" (27). Moreover, after swimming in the Lethe river, she cannot remember anything now, neither her husband's name nor any other name. In Hannah Fattor's words, "The loss of memory that occurs in this transitional space, where the rain inside the elevator erases the memories of the newly-dead passangers, is the first step that separates Eurydice from her previous life and her humanity" (11).

Moreover, the stage directions tell us indirectly that the means of transport via which Eurydice has left the real world for the other world is the "train": "*A train whistle. Eurydice steps onto a platform, surveying a large crowd*" (29). This implies a further influence of Anouilh's *Eurydice* on Ruhl's since the former's setting was a train station where the two lover met twice. Thus, Ruhl is aware of Eliot's concept of tradition that is not confined to deriving from one single stable origin. She has the historical sense that compels her to write with having all generations into account. As "one of the few dead people who still remember how to read and write" (15), "*Eurydice's Father approaches and takes her baggage*" (29). Once dead and forgetting everything like the dead, she mistakes him for a porter coming to help her. It takes him some time until he refreshes her memory reminding her of their life in the past. She gradually remembers her father and her husband who sends her a letter: "Orpheus! My husband. *Eurydice looks at her father. She recognizes him. She embraces her father*" (38). Since "THERE ARE NO ROOMS!" (32) in the Underworld as the Stones have told Eurydice, her "*father creates a room out of string for [her]. He makes four walls and a door out of string. Time passes. It takes him time to build a room out of string*" (34). When she asks her father to tell her "the names of [her] mother and brother and sisters," the Stones cry in unison: "Being sad is not allowed!" (40). However, throughout the second movement, "Eurydice and her father continue to dwell in fond memories of their past, while Orpheus grows more desperate in his sadness" (Jackson 39).

Of considerable relevance to the core of this paper is Ruhl's relationship with her father. He has influenced her life in general and her writing of *Eurydice* in particular. The father was close to his daughters and keen on reuniting them sharing them their love for the arts. In 1994, he died of cancer, while the 20-year-old Sarah was in her first year of university studying English literature under Paula Vogel at Brown University with the intention of becoming a poet. Her father seized the remaining moments of his life to make his family laugh and keep them happy, away from his harsh reality. His final days were spent with his family where they found ways to escape the circumstances by using imagination. Sarah has suffered much from the loss of her father and felt at a loss how to grieve for him. "There's a lack of ritual in the grieving process in our culture, and I missed having that.

I turned to writing as a way to find that missing ritual" (Goodman *para* 17). Writing was her salvation, her antidepressant. Vogel explains:

I assigned an exercise: to write a short play with a dog as protagonist. Sarah Ruhl wrote of her father's death from that unique angle: a dog is waiting by the door, waiting for the family to come home, unaware that the family is at his master's funeral, unaware of the concept of death... I sat with this short play in my lap in my study, and sobbed. ... This former student has become Sarah Ruhl in a way that has made an impact on the next generation all over the country. (Vogel 1)

This is how Ruhl has been convinced by Vogel to switch to playwriting which has come as a result of her passion for her dead father.

The ninth scene of the second movement/act starts with Eurydice's asking her father to teach her more words. The words Father teaches Eurydice are "Ostracize," meaning "to exclude"; "Peripatetic," from the Greek, meaning "to walk slowly, speaking of weighty matters, in bare feet"; and "Defunct," meaning "dead in a very abrupt way" (41). These very words are among the words Ruhl's father has taught her in real life. Lahr puts it: "Each Saturday, from the time Ruhl was five, Patrick took his daughters to the Walker Bros. Original Pancake House for breakfast and taught them a new word, along with its etymology. ... some of Patrick's words—'ostracize,' 'peripatetic,' 'defunct'—are memorialized in the 2003 *Eurydice*." ("Surreal Life" 2). Ruhl points out that by leaving her husband with his music for her father with his words, her Eurydice prefers familial/nostalgic love to romantic love. Moreover, she asks her father to tell her stories about his childhood, his mother, and his own father's adventures; she enjoys listening to him (42). In this, Eurydice echoes Ruhl and, at the same time, enables her to go on in her imaginative conversations with her passed father, a reason why the play seems to be deeply personal or as "an exercise in imaginative freedom, in which riddle and reality coexist, as light as a game and as grave as a decision" (Lahr "Gods and Dolls" 80). Thus, by making Eurydice speak for her, Ruhl is in fact finding a solace for her overwhelming grief over her father's loss. She tells Lahr: "I'm interested in the things theatre can do that other forms can't. So theatre as pure plumbing of self, in a psychological way, seems very readerly to me" ("Surreal Life" 4). Here lies Ruhl's dexterity; by creating the character of Eurydice's "Father" as a new element to the myth, she is utilizing him to give herself a psychological vent.

While she utilizes her individual talent in creating a figure not found in the myth nor in any of its traditional accounts, *i.e.*, Eurydice's father, Ruhl cannot dispense with the element of tradition in supporting her own target in *Eurydice*. In other words, when Orpheus sends Eurydice "the *Collected Works of Shakespeare*" (43), "*The Father picks up the book/He brushes it off/In the string room, [he] teaches Eurydice how to read/She looks over his shoulder as he reads out loud from King Lear*" (44). He reads directly from

the last scene of *King Lear*: "We two alone will sing like birds in the cage./When thou dost ask my blessing, I'll kneel down/And ask of thee forgiveness; we we'll live/And pray and sing..." (44). Through such lines *Eurydice* is well regarded by Isherwood as "an ode to the sustaining power of the love between father and daughter" ("Power of Memory" *para* 13). The rest of the lines King Lear says to his most beloved daughter Cordelia reads: "and tell old tales, and laugh/At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues/Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too,/Who loses and who wins, who's in, who's out" (Shakespeare V. iii. 12-15). Lear says such lines in the opening of the last scene just before the bastard Edmund sends them off to prison and, of course, after Lear comprehends how foolish and stupid he was in misjudging his daughter and disinheriting her. This means that once together, they will never separate, which implies how needing and complementary to each other Cordelia and Lear or, in our case, Eurydice and her father, are. As Thomas Butler argues, "Eurydice experiences a very different but equally compelling form of love with her father in the underworld.... Where the scenes with Eurydice and Orpheus were marked by fanciful love, the scenes with Eurydice and her father are marked by nostalgia" (13, 14). Moreover, Cordelia's imminent death by Edmund is echoed by Eurydice's imminent departure with her husband Orpheus and death. The affinities between Eurydice and Cordelia are so many.

Thus, drawing on *King Lear* as a form of literary tradition in the Eliotic sense in *Eurydice* accentuates Ruhl's dexterity in more than one way. First, adding the figure of Eurydice's father supports Eurydice's role as a heroine and hence achieves Ruhl's target in marginalizing Orpheus' role as a male. This target is further stressed by not giving Eurydice's father a name. Second, referring to the Lear-Cordelia relationship (through the last scene of *King Lear*) vindicates how close the relationship between Eurydice and her father is and, in turn, reflects the real one between Ruhl and her father. In this way, it gives Ruhl a vent to just imagine she is still having conversations with her dead father. Third, expatiating on the relationship between Eurydice and her father who listens out for her in the Underworld substantiates and reasons the former's choice to leave her husband for her father. In Butler's words, "Eurydice gains depth and complexity in her 'vast death' through her encounter with her father who already resides in the underworld" (12). Fourth, the similtude between Eurydice and Cordelia in particular acclimatizes us to accept Ruhl's upending of the myth and making Eurydice the title character of her play, just as Edward Bond has upended Shakespeare's *King Lear* in his own *Lear* (1971) wherein Cordelia has become the tragic heroine.

Moreover, happy with each other in the Underworld, Eurydice and her father try to sing. But, unlike Orpheus, the father "couldn't remember the rest of" of the chords (46). As the stage directions tell: "*He plays the chords*

in the air with his hands: Da Da Dee Da/Da Da Dee Da/Da Da Dee Da..." (46). When Eurydice asks him: "What are the words?," he replies: "I can't remember" and goes on: "Da da Dee Da/Da da Dee Da/ Da da Dee Da..." (46). In Leslie Durham's words, "[t]hese single syllables call to mind a child learning the name for her father—Da Da" (37). Despite the fact that they cannot remember the words, "*they both start singing to the tune of I Got Rhythm*" (46). They go on singing in this way until the Stones stop them:

Stones: "WHAT IS THE NOISE?"

Little Stone: Stop singing!

Loud Stone: STOP SINGING!

Big Stone: Neither of you can carry a tune.

Little Stone: It's awful.

Stones: DEAD PEOPLE CAN'T SING! (46-7)

That is to say, despite the fact that her father is not a master musician like her husband, Eurydice has left the latter, on their wedding day, for the former who resides in the Underworld. They indulge in singing until the chorus of stones stop them. Unlike her husband who was always busy with his music, her father listens out for her. Eurydice herself explains this to her father towards the end of the second movement:

Orpheus never liked words. He had his music. He would get a funny look on his face and I would say what are you thinking about and he would always be thinking about music. ... If we were in a restaurant sometimes Orpheus would look sullen and wouldn't talk to me and I thought people felt sorry for me... I wanted to talk to him about my notions. (51)

As a matter of fact, throughout the text of *Eurydice*, one can notice that Ruhl's modifications are not confined to the myth; they go further to include the dramatic device of the chorus as well. They are always there to give directives or warn against something forbidden in the Underworld: one time, they tell Eurydice "THERE ARE NO ROOMS!" (32); one other time, they warn: "Being sad is not allowed!" (40); a third time, they warn: "STOP SINGING... DEAD PEOPLE CAN'T SING!" (47). Commenting on the role of Ruhl's chorus here, a role more comprehensive than that of the Greek chorus, Durham argues:

While the Stones want to prohibit sadness, they also want to inhibit an excess of positive emotion. They demand from Eurydice and her father a kind of stoicism—an *apatheia*, or indifference to emotion. When they are in the process of reconnecting, and when Ruhl is still in the midst of showing how Eurydice's bond with her father is deeper than her bond with Orpheus, the two attempt to sing. (37)

Moreover, as soon as Eurydice's "father leaves for work" leaving his daughter "alone in the string room," "[t]he Lord of the Underworld enters on his red tricycle" as Child (48). He refers to the string:

Child: What's all this string?

Eurydice: It's my room.

Child: Rooms are not allowed!

(*To the stones*)

Tell her.

Stones: ROOMS ARE NOT ALLOWED!

Child: Who made your room?

Eurydice: My father.

Child: Fathers are not allowed! Where is he?

Eurydice: He's at work.

Child: We'll have to dip you in the river again and make sure
you're good and dunked.

Eurydice: Please, don't. (48-9)

When he seduces her, she informs him that she has "a husband." At such a moment he replies in a way similar to the Nasty Interesting Man's before: "Husbands are for children. You need a lover. I'll be back" (49). The Stones seem to be acting in accordance with the Lord of the Underworld, who repeats some slogans uttered by them before. Furthermore, when "three loud knocks" are heard insistently on the door (55), the Stones warn: "NO ONE KNOCKS AT THE DOOR OF THE DEAD" (55). If the Stones and the Lord of the Underworld (represented here as Child) take the place of gods in the Greek myth, one may argue the role of Ruhl's chorus of stones here is more comprehensive than that we have encountered in classical tragedies such as *Oedipus the King* or *Antigone*. Durham details this issue:

As Ruhl's chorus legislates behavior and attitude for the characters, the audience can evaluate this external mechanism for regulating character behavior and how they might judge nontheatrical entities that attempt to do the same thing. ... Not only do the Stones police emotional equilibrium in the underworld, but they also aim to protect the tale as it most widely known, perhaps because familiar cultural tropes are a force for maintaining emotional equilibrium: when audiences know how a story is supposed to go, they are calmed and reassured as the plot unfolds as they expect. (37)

The arrival of Orpheus into the Underworld to retrieve his wife is reminiscent of the myth, which is radically revolving around him. The stage directions dilate on how so fascinating the "*melody Orpheus hums*" is that everything is taken by it (56). Thus, influenced by his beautiful music, the Stones, despite their tough nature, weep and greet him. The Lord of the Underworld (appearing as Child) allows him to get Eurydice back on one condition: "Start walking home. Your wife just might be on the road behind you. We make it real nice here. So people want to stick around. As you walk, keep your eyes facing front. If you look back at her—poof! She's

gone" (57). This condition echoes the myth's: "She must follow behind you as you go. If you turn round to see her before she reaches the upper air, she must return here for ever" (Gibson 33). Isherwood comments on this condition by arguing:

The most famous unheeded advice in the history of Western literature may be the admonition given by the ruler of the underworld to Orpheus, when that grieving youth went down to retrieve his wife, Eurydice, from the depths, and the lovers began their journey back upward. ("Power of Memory" *para* 1)

Eurydice's conversation with her father over whether to go with Orpheus or not makes her torn between the two of them, between romantic love and familial love:

Eurydice: Do you want to go with him?

Father: Yes, of course!

She sees that his face falls a little.

Eurydice: Oh—you'll be lonely, won't you?

Father: No, no. You should go to your husband. You should have grandchildren. You'll all come down and meet me one day. (58)

It seems that, like Eurydice who feels sorry for leaving her father, her father too is unwilling to let her go. That is why he cunningly warns her in a way that shows her the way to come back to him again, if she desires:

Father: His shoulders aren't very broad, can he take care of you?

Eurydice nods.

Father: Are you sure?

Eurydice: Yes.

Father: There's one thing you need to know. If he turns around and sees you, you'll die a second death. Those are the rules. So step quietly. And don't cry out.

Eurydice: I won't. (58-9)

Her father's question reiterates the Nasty Interesting Man's words to Eurydice in the first movement: "You need to get yourself a real man. A man with broad shoulders like me" (24). After Eurydice leaves him, she looks back and "*turns in the direction of her father*" calling him:

Eurydice: Wait, come back!

Little Stone: You can't go back now, Eurydice.

Loud Stone: Face forward!

Big Stone: Keep walking.

Eurydice: I'm afraid!

Loud Stone: Your husband is waiting for you, Eurydice.

Eurydice: I don't recognize him. That's stranger!

Little Stone: Go on. It's him.

Eurydice: I want to go home! I want my father!

Loud Stone: You're all grown up now. You have a husband. (59-60)

"The great struggle she faces is trying to decide between staying with her father in the underworld or going back to the real world with her husband" (Vito 1). It is important to notice that in the traditional versions of the myth it is Orpheus who succumbs to his desires and looks back at Eurydice despite the gods' rules, while in Ruhl's version it is Eurydice who calls out to Orpheus causing him to look back:

Eurydice: Orpheus!

HE TURNS TOWARDS HER, STARTLED.

ORPHEUS LOOKS AT EURYDICE.

EURYDICE LOOKS AT ORPHEUS.

THE WORLD FALLS AWAY.

Orpheus: You startled me. (60)

As Durham comments, "it is Eurydice who wants to turn back, to engage in sacrilege, not by disobeying the gods but by returning to the comfort of her childhood relationship and forsaking her adult one" (38). Ara Vito expresses the same view when she says: "Ruhl's version switches the focus and the instigation of action to Eurydice and demonstrates that her choice to call out is a result of her own innocent and childlike fear" (5). The significance of this upending lies in Ruhl's target in sending the daughter to her father once again.

Thus, the play ends with Eurydice's losing both her husband and her father. On the one hand, after losing his wife again, Orpheus indulges in reminiscing: "WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR CENTURIES!" (62). "They walk away from each other on extended lines until they are out of sight" (63). On the other hand, believing that he has been separated from his daughter for ever, the father dismantles the string room he has made her one day and, unable to bear the pain of separation, he bursts into a long passionate monologue before "he dips himself in the river" of forgetfulness (66). Moreover, as soon as her father has dipped himself into the river, Eurydice comes back to find her string room gone. At such a moment when she has lost everything, Eurydice "runs to [the Stones] and tries to hit them" (68). The play, to quote Isherwood, "may be the most moving exploration of the theme of loss that the American theater has produced since the events of Sept. 11, 2001, although Ms. Ruhl began work on the play before that terrible day" ("Comic Impudence" para 3). The Lord of the Underworld returns to marry Eurydice; he "is now at least ten feet tall. His voice sounds suspiciously like the nasty interesting man's" (68). Eurydice writes a letter to Orpheus apologizing for her mistake, wishing him happiness, and writing out "instructions for [his] next wife" (70). Like her father before her and Orpheus after her, "she dips herself in the river" (71). This is how the play comes to an end.

Conclusion

Thus, it has become clear that Ruhl's adaptation of the classical myth is distinct from all other adaptations of the same myth such as the German poet Rainer Rilke's in his poem "Orpheus, Eurydice, Hermes," the French dramatist Jean Anouilh's in his *Eurydice*, etc. Although all those creators have adapted the myth in their own masculine way that concentrated on the male character of Orpheus, the only one who has adapted it in a differently creative and talented way is Sarah Ruhl in her *Eurydice*. However, attempting Ruhl's version through Eliot's concept of tradition, the paper has reached three findings and implications.

First, Ruhl has upended the Greek myth in a way to assure that major and minor character is not an order of nature but of creative and talented dramaturgy. She has done so by enlarging Eurydice's role to be thus the centre of the action, marginalizing the role of Orpheus to go thus on the margin of Eurydice's, utilizing and modifying certain elements from previous traditional accounts of the myth such as the "train" and the "father" elements from Anouilh's play *Eurydice* and "rain" and "hair" from Rainer Rilke's poem "Orpheus, Eurydice, Hermes," and changing the myth's story-line such as making Eurydice, not Orpheus, travel to the Underworld and making Eurydice call out Orpheus' name to cause him look back to her. All these changes and modifications depend first and foremost on the playwright's creative process and dramaturgy.

Second, by utilizing literary tradition in enlarging Eurydice's role and marginalizing Orpheus', the playwright has artfully given the female figure a strong voice not given her before over literary history in the previous adaptations of the same myth. Ruhl has skillfully done so by utilizing the character of "Orpheus' father" from Anouilh's *Eurydice* and adding it to her own *Eurydice* to be the heroine's "Father" injecting to it the playwright's own personal experience with her own father in reality. Ruhl's matchless dexterity and talent have been further touched in drawing on *King Lear* from literary tradition to stress the affinities the Father-Eurydice relationship has with the Lear-Cordelia relationship by the end of *King Lear*. Moreover, while it is added to enlarge and strengthen Eurydice's role (in the play) by taking the place of Orpheus (in the myth), Eurydice's "Father" is not given name in the play, just to marginalize the masculine role.

Third, by adapting the Orpheus myth in her own distinguished way, Ruhl has throughout accentuated the fact that classical myths are rich raw materials for authors to adapt and transform into any literary genre depending on the latter's individual talents. In Ruhl's case, her individual talent has enabled her transform the classical myth into a twenty-first century play about love and loss. This has been done via her successful use of adaptation strategies such as her skillful amalgamation of fundamental elements from the myth such as the river of Forgetfulness, traditional elements from the previous accounts such as the father, train, rain and hair,

and her individual talent in inventing other new imaginative elements such as the raining elevator, the water pump, and the chorus of stones. By this Ruhl has successfully adapted the myth into her own play in the same way Edward Bond, for instance, has done Shakespeare's *King Lear* into his own *Lear* (1971).

For future research, aside from Eliot's concept of "tradition," scholars may attempt Ruhl's *Eurydice* as a postmodern text drawing on intertextuality, historiographic metafiction, and hyperreality. Moreover, some scholars may argue it as a study of the conflict between romantic love and familial/nostalgic love. Others may find interest in the affinities between the playwright and her heroine, particularly their relationships with their fathers. Additionally, the stage directions (as a means of narration) with which the play is replete may have some significance behind. Thus, the text remains open for further academic studies and interpretations.

الملخص**الخروج على تقاليد أدوار الجنسين بمسرحية "يورديس" لـ "سارة رول"**
خالد سرواح

يعمد البحث الحالي إلى دراسة مسرحية "يورديس" (٢٠٠٣) للكاتبة "سارة رول" كمعالجة درامية بالقرن الحادي والعشرين لأسطورة "أورفيوس" اليونانية وذلك اعتمادًا على مفهوم التقاليد الأدبية عند "توماس إليوت". تعتمد منهجية "رول" الدرامية على قلب الأسطورة من خلال خطواتٍ دراميةٍ متنوعةٍ من بينها تضخيم دور "يورديس" وتهميش دور "أورفيوس"، وإضافة شخصية "والد يورديس" (التي لا أصل لها بالأسطورة)، والاستفادة من المعالجات التقليدية المختلفة للأسطورة ذاتها، وإدخال تغييرات بقصة الأسطورة الأصيلة. وقد خلصت الدراسة إلى ثلاث نتائج. (١) يدل الشكل المقلوب للأسطورة على مفاضلة "رول" للصنعة المسرحية على النسق البدهي في تصنيف الشخصية ما بين رئيسة وثانوية. (٢) أبرز تهميش دور "أورفيوس" وتضخيم دور "يورديس" صوت المرأة الذي طالما خُفّت صداؤه على مدار التاريخ الأدبي للأسطورة. (٣) تُعد الأساطير الكلاسيكية موادًا خامًا غنية يطوعها الكتاب ويحولونها إلى أي جنس أدبي اعتمادًا على مواهبهم الفردية التي تضيف إلى التقاليد المُتبعة بتلك الأساطير.

كلمات مفتاحية: "إليوت"، "يورديس"، نسوي، النوع، الموهبة الفردية، التقاليد الأدبية، الضياع، ذكوري، أسطورة، "أورفيوس"

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