

Abstract

Myths, especially those of Greco-Roman antiquity, are seen as the cornerstones of the Western culture and its values. Even today, many parts of our lives are constructed around their basis, as they are embedded in our consciousness. But these myths are centred around a male gaze on the world – this is something what the poems, especially those disassembling and re-arranging mythical stories, in the collection *The World's Wife* by Carol Ann Duffy seek to undermine. The aim of my thesis is to examine the process in which the poetic language is able to subvert the prevalent patriarchal view on the Western world originating already in the times of Classical Antiquity, and continuing to be expressed in tales and narratives throughout the history, until the 20th century. Thus, vocabulary in itself has come to be embedded and with meanings that reflect the centuries long social order. Duffy is re-focalizing the mythical and legendary narratives through the female gaze and changing the perspective of how they are commonly understood. Through this, the words loaded with centuries old meanings are disrupted and contested. As these stories are so well known, they offer great ground for the distortion of their narrative through the contemporary lens and also illumination of characters, mainly women, who were pushed to the background. The poetic devices and the aspects of the ancient myths, fairy-tales, and legends which were changed or added to the narratives in the poems of Carol Ann Duffy are examined in the context of gender theory, with the focus on the feminist perspective, based mainly on the notions of Helene Cixous and her text *The Laugh of the Medusa*, as for Cixous it is precisely poetry that offers the greatest space for the repressed to write and insert themselves into history.