**T.C.**

**ÇANAKKALE ONSEKİZ MART ÜNİVERSİTESİ**

**SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ**

# DEBUNKING AND REWRITING OF THE ANCIENT MYTHS IN THE WORKS OF MARGARET ATWOOD AND JEANETTE WINTERSON

**Yüksek Lisans Tezi**

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Yüksek lisans tezi olarak sunduğum "Debunking and Rewriting of the Ancient Myths in the Works of Margaret Atwood and Jeanette Winterson" adlı çalışmanın, tarafımdan, bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurmaksızın yazıldığını ve yararlandığım eserlerin kaynakçada gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu, bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanılmış olduğunu belirtir ve bunu onurumla doğrularım.

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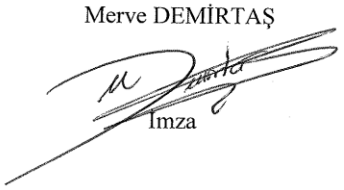

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# ABSTRACT

**Debunking and Rewriting of the Ancient Myths in the Works of Margaret Atwood and Jeanette Winterson**

The analysis of The Penelopiad and Weight in terms of Jungian archetypes of rebirth, shadow, trickster and scapegoat constitutes the intellectual impulse of this study. This study puts forward that the main aim of these two novellas is to show that the goal of human endeavour is the quest for individuation through inner knowledge. Myths and archetypes play an important role in this individuation process. The characters in the novellas complete such a quest by coming across with rebirth, shadow, trickster, and scapegoat archetypes that they unconsciously experience while the readers go through the same process through identifying themselves with the mythical characters and through recognizing the presence of rebirth, shadow, trickster, and scapegoat archetypes in their own lives and cultures. In The Penelopiad and Weight, Margaret Atwood and Jeanette Winterson rewrite the ancient myths of Penelope and Odysseus, Atlas and Heracles in a way that fills the gap between mythical thought and contemporary realities.

Keywords: The Penelopiad, Weight, archetype, rebirth, shadow, trickster, scapegoat, individuation.

# ÖZET

**Margaret Atwood ve Jeanette Winterson'ın Eserlerinde Antik Mitlerin Yıkılması ve Yeniden Yazılması**

Penelopia ve Atlas'ın Yükü adlı eserlerinin Jung'un arketipleri olan yeniden doğuş, gölge, düzenbaz ve günah keçisi açısından incelenmesi bu çalışmanın entellektüel altyapısını oluşturmaktadır. Penelopia ve Atlas'ın Yükü romanlarının amacı da insanların temel çabasının içsel bilgi ile ulaşılabilecek bir bireyselleşme arayışında olduklarını göstermektir. Bu bağlamda mitler ve arketipler bu tür bir bireyselleşme sürecinde önemli bir role sahiptirler. Söz konusu romanlardaki karakterler bu şekildeki bir bütünlüğe bilinçdışı bir biçimde deneyimledikleri yeniden doğuş, gölge, düzenbaz ve günah keçisi arketipleri ile karşı karşıya geldiklerinde ulaşırlarken, okuyucular da kendilerini söz konusu mitik karakterlerle özleşterip, Jung'un arketipleri olan yeniden doğuş, gölge, düzenbaz ve günah keçisinin yaşamlarında ve kültürlerindeki varlığını anladıklarında kendi içsel bütünlüklerini tamamlamış olurlar. Penelopia ve Atlas'ın Yükü eserlerinde Margaret Atwood ve Jeanette Winterson, Penelope ve Odysseus, Atlas ve Heracles mitlerinin yıkılması ve yeniden yazılması da bu tür bir bireyselleşme sürecine mitik düşünce ve çağdaş gerçeklikler arasındaki boşluğu dolduracak biçimde katkıda bulunmaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Penelopia, Atlas'ın Yükü, arketip, yeniden doğuş, gölge, düzenbaz, günah keçisi, bireyselleşme.

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# INTRODUCTION

This is a research into classical myths in relation to the contemporary fictions of two women novelists, Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad* (2006) and Jeanette Winterson's *Weight* (2006). The novellas in question use the mythical characters of Penelope, Odysseus, Twelve Maids, Atlas and Heracles as representatives of Jungian archetypes of rebirth, shadow, trickster, and scapegoat. In both novellas, Atwood and Winterson rewrite the ancient myths and Jungian archetypes in a way that reveals the relation between ancient archetypes and contemporary culture and man.

In *The Penelopiad* and *Weight*, Atwood and Winterson debunk and rewrite the ancient myths, and in both novellas, the writers ironically revisit the past and give voice to the long-silenced figures of antiquity to tell their own stories. By using the most widely-known myths, the writers, Atwood and Winterson, consciously accept and acknowledge the existence of myths as influential systems of representation still influential in contemporary culture and literature. The multilayered structures of the novellas, thus, not only propose the different types of archetypes but also stress the importance and the validity of archetypal criticism in contemporary culture and literature.

> A mythic awareness may need to persist if we are to have any sense of meaning in the world at all: the configuration within which human life can most fundamentally be understood as falling ... may in the end need to be understood as a matter not of scientific order but of a poetic order which is inherently mythic (Falck 1994: 119).

As Falck claims, the exploration of the use of myths in literature creates a mythic awareness which, in turn, helps us to have a sense of meaning in our life. It is because the subtitles of cultures and men can be better explained and understood through the archetypal patterns proposed by myths themselves. Attitudes towards humanity, culture, individual, and in particular towards nature, birth, death, life, love are projected in mythic narratives and, at the same time, in literary works that make use of myths.

In this sense, both *The Penelopiad* and *Weight* use myths and ancient archetypes as influential representatives of roles and attitudes that men and women unconsciously experience and as the embodiments of stances assumed to be natural by the members of

society. In these novellas, the Jungian archetypes of rebirth, shadow, trickster, and scapegoat are explored in a contemporary cultural and literary context so as to explore both the "individuation" process of the characters in the novellas and the modern man's "individuation" process, "the process by which a person becomes a psychological 'individual', that is, a separate, indivisible unity or 'whole'" (Jung 1955: 275).

This dissertation, therefore, puts forward that the main aim of these two novellas is to show that the goal of human endeavour is the quest for wholeness through inner knowledge. Such an inner knowledge is obtained through a journey towards the centre of the psyche. The characters in the novellas complete such a quest by coming across with rebirth, shadow, trickster, and scapegoat archetypes that they unconsciously experience while the readers go through the same process through identifying themselves with the mythical characters and through recognizing the presence of rebirth, shadow, trickster, and scapegoat archetypes in their own lives and cultures. In this sense, the mythical characters in *The Penelopiad* and *Weight* become "shadow" of modern man mirroring common anxieties, fears, and everything that we refuse to acknowledge about ourselves. Coming into terms with our inner psyche makes us become integrated into a well-functioning whole. Myths and archetypes play an important role in this individuation process because

> [t]hrough this process of individuation one has to enter his unconscious part of psyche and encounter with a number of forces and images which Jung calls archetypes (Sophia 2010: 75).

Thus, the analysis of *The Penelopiad* and *Weight* in terms of Jungian archetypes of rebirth, shadow, trickster, and scapegoat provides an intellectual impulse of this study. This archetypal analysis will be made with a special emphasis on the importance of myth as a special system of representation still influential both in contemporary culture and literature. In the paratexts of *The Penelopiad* (2006) and *Weight* (2006), it is stressed that

> Myths are universal and timeless stories that reflect and shape our lives- they explore our desires, our fears, our longings, and provide narratives that remind us what it means to be human.

It is also one of the main aims of this study to explore the traits of myths that make them universal and still valid in contemporary cultures and literatures. Therefore, in the first chapter of this study, the focus will be on the definitions of myth and mythical thinking along with the effects of mythical thinking on the formation of culture.

The second chapter will be about myth criticism, the use of myths in literature and the definitions of the terms rebirth, shadow, trickster, scapegoat and individuation along with the politics of the use of these archetypes in a contemporary literary setting. In the third and the fourth chapters respectively, *The Penelopiad* and *Weight* will be analysed according to the theoretical framework defined in the previous chapters. And in the conclusion chapter the comparative analysis of the two novellas will be made.

# CHAPTER ONE

# MYTHS AND MYTHICAL THINKING

## 1. Defining the word "Myth"

The word "myth" inhabits a multifaceted zone between literature, philosophy, anthropology and even religion. In other words, myths form the significant foundational stories for literature, philosophy, anthropology and religion. At the same time, myths are based on human experience and have a level of reality. Therefore it is difficult to categorize the word "myth" since its definitions cover a broad range of implications from fabrication, superstition to symbolic social truth, from reflection of the unconscious, to the representation of tradition and social politics.

The problem of how to define myths in their relation to literature, philosophy, anthropology and religion has been a deep concern for the authorities since the ancient time of Plato. The problem here is to explain the relation of rational, philosophical truths to traditional beliefs. Throughout the history, while some regarded myths as fabrications designed to control the superstitious crowds, some interpreted them as allegorical and philosophical truths of humanity. In his article "Myth, Symbolism, and Truth", David Bidney gives a long account of the controversial issue of how to define myths. According to Bidney (1955: 379-392), The Greek Sophists regarded myths as important social entities revealing the naturalistic and moral truths of a society in an allegorical way. Plato, on the other hand, was against this kind of allegorical interpretations as he favoured the philosophical thinking over mythical thinking. For Plato, the higher truth could only be reached by way of philosophy. Contrary to Plato, Neo-Platonic and Stoic philosophers of the Hellenistic period favoured myths because they considered them as means of preserving the traditional authority over the state. During the European Renaissance in the $15^{th}$ and $16^{th}$ centuries, there occurred the revival of ancient Greek body of myths and literature. Ancient myths were highly regarded as they were considered to be the poetic and artistic revelations of human emotions and aspirations. During the Enlightenment

period, however, myths received negative criticism, because the scholars of the time believed that myths were the result of ignorance and delusion.

Though the approaches to the definition of the term are diverse, it is possible to say that there has always been a relation between myth and reality as there still is. Myths give expressions to our common experiences, and thus urge us to undergo, to shape and to survive those experiences. When we look at the intellectual undertakings of mankind we can see that the common dominator is to introduce some kind of order. Human beings have a natural instinct to attribute a meaning to the world, and thus, to bring an order to the environment in which they live. Due to our meaning-seeking nature, we tend to create a more or less unified vision of the cosmic order, social order and the meaning of individual's life. As a result of our endeavours to create meaning in this life, mythmaking became the primal and universal function of the human mind. Since myths are the embodiment of the collective expressions of society, the society itself regards them to be true and valid. Therefore myth is reality; a social entity used as the designation of reality. Today, it is obvious that myths are still important in that they show the evolution of human thought and emotions. Myths, without losing their ancient background, are regarded as the pragmatic capacity of human mind. Myths are not only the early stage out of which the more sophisticated intellectual disciplines of modern culture developed, but also they are the permanent grounds on which those intellectual modern disciplines rest.

It is possible to approach the study of myth from different viewpoints. This research uses myths as exemplary models for the primordial revelation of human mind. Thus, this research primarily is an attempt to show how myths still supply models for human behaviour giving meaning and value to life. The method of this research is, therefore, to analyse the works of the writers using mythical characters and stories in their novels. It is also the purpose of this study to show how the writers in question proceed from one mode of behaviour to the other by debunking and rewriting the ancient stories in our time.

Understanding the structures and the functions of myths in traditional societies not only clarifies a stage in the evolution of human thought but also helps us to understand where our modern society does stand in this argument. Therefore, the starting point of our discussion will be to focus on the various definitions of myth and the nature of mythical thinking together with the functions of these myths in the progress of society.

## 2. Definitions of Myth and Mythical Thinking

"Myth" as a complex, multifaceted cultural reality can be defined and interpreted from various viewpoints. It is impossible to find a single definition that will cover all types and functions of the term. The fact that scholars discuss various possible definitions of myth also demonstrates the vitality but the slippery nature of the term. Definitions and the study of myth can be divided into several classes; namely anthropological approach, ritualistic approach, psychological approach, philosophical approach, structural approach and semiotic approach.

In his *The Birth of Tragedy*, which was originally published in 1872, Nietzsche criticises the destruction of the classical body of myths and mythology by the Socratic rationalism. Nietzsche (1995:85) defines myth as "a concentrated image of the world" and as "an abbreviature of phenomena". In his work, Nietzsche points out to the dissoluble relationship between myth, culture and society. He claims that

> a culture which has no fixed and sacred primitive seat [myth], is doomed to exhaust all its possibilities, and to nourish itself wretchedly on all other cultures- there we have the Present, the result of Socratism, which is bent on the destruction of myth (85).

Recent literature shows that modern culture also struggles to reach its historical roots, and it displays an unsatisfied desire to restore the ancient myths that have endured exhaustion caused by the sceptical rationalism of the times. For Nietzsche, myth constitutes a significant element in the mechanisms of society, because he believes that there is no such thing as absolute truth about man, therefore any explanation about the existence of human beings and the value of human life should be mythical.

The study of myths gained a new dimension with the works of Carl Gustave Jung. Jung, an important name of psychological view of myth, attempts to figure out the relation between myth and the collective unconscious of human psyche. For Jung, collective unconscious constitutes the deepest layer of the human psyche. Jung claims that collective unconscious of human psyche is not loaded with individual complexes but with culture's collective representations that are archetypes. These structural elements of collective unconscious give rise to mythology, the body of myths. Thus, myths become the

embodiment of archetypes residing in the collective unconscious of psyche. In *The Science of Mythology* Jung and his collaborator Kerenyi (2002: 5) argue that

> mythology is held to explain itself and everything else in the universe not because it was invented for the purpose of explanation but because it possesses among other things the property of being explanatory.

For Jung and Kerenyi (87), since myths are the original revelations of human psyche, the primitive mentality does not create myths but experiences them.

Jung's influence is very apparent on the studies of Joseph Campbell who examines the relation between myth and ritual from psychoanalytic viewpoint. In his book, *The Power of Myth*, Campbell (1988: 5) argues that

> Myths are stories of our search through the ages for truth, for meaning, for significance. We all need to tell our story and to understand our story. We all need to understand death and to cope with death, and we all need help in our passages from birth to life and then to death. We need life to signify, to touch the eternal, to understand the mysterious, to find out who we are.

Some mysterious phenomena in life such as creation of the universe, fate, birth, death cannot be directly explained in ordinary language and images. Myths bring necessary explanations for these mysteries, and through rituals, they help people experience the world. They also help people go through the chaotic situations in life by teaching how to cope with the psychological and physical challenges that they may face in various stages of their lives.

Levi-Strauss, on the other hand, brings structuralist approach to the study of myth: in his "The Structural Study of Myth", Strauss (1955: 428-444) makes a detailed analysis of a well-known Oedipus myth from a structuralist viewpoint. Levi-Strauss claims that the structural similarities among myths can be traced in all cultures. Therefore an analysis of the relationship among diverse cultural units provides us with the universal principal thought which is almost the same in everywhere else in all times. For Strauss, myths are the results of human need to make sense of the world and to cope with the cultural contradictions and dilemmas. Myths, then, become the logical means of resolving fundamental contradictions. These dilemmas and contradictions such as birth/death and good/bad constitute the basic structures of myth. For Strauss, one of the most important characteristics of myth is that it is a diachronic narrative which explains the past, the

present and the future simultaneously. In Strauss' terms (430), "[b]ut what gives the myth an operative value is that the specific pattern described is everlasting; it explains the present and the past as well as the future". Thus, myths are crucial cultural and linguistic units the study of which lays bare the collective, universal principles of human thought because the collective mythological imagination is not replete with the economic and political aspects of one single culture.

Contrary to the general tendency of defining myth in its relation to science, religion, language and other fields, Soviet critic Alexei Losev (2003: 7) defines myth "from the perspective of itself as seen through the eyes of myth". In his book *The Dialectics of Myth*, which was first published in 1930 in Russian, Losev argues that what myth says is backed up with experience. Myth is about the primordial intuition and the primordial condition of human consciousness. Losev (8) argues that "myth is always and necessarily reality, concreteness, vitality and is an utter and absolute necessity, non-fantasy, and non-fictiousness for thought".

In *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes analyses the basic myths circulating around in contemporary society. Barthes (2009: 131) defines myth as a "system of communication, that is a message". Barthes analyses myths through semiology. For Barthes, since myth is a type of speech, the way in which a myth conveys its message is more important than the object of this message. He argues that myth is a socially constructed reality. Myth, therefore, reflects the power relations in society. Though it is seemingly natural and innocent, myth is replete with the dominant ideologies of our time. Barthes (168) argues that

> [w]hat the world supplies to myth is an historical reality, defined, even if this goes back quite a while, by the way in which men have produced or used it; and what myth gives in return is a natural image of reality.

The task of myth, then, becomes not to hide its ideology but to naturalise it. On the other hand, with this notion in mind, therefore, the task of a mythologist is to alienate himself from both the "myth-consumers" and from other forms of behaviour and language by which myth is created. In this regard, most critics acknowledge myth as a vital principle that still plays a practical role both in the mental habits and politics of modern society as well as the ancient society.

In the light of these definitions, one can say that myths have been invented to explain the human enterprise from the very early ages. In the first place, myths have an important place in the daily lives of ancient societies. Ancient societies have evolved around the need of bringing plausible explanations on the things that remained mysterious and unexplained due to a lack of scientific and anthropological knowledge that we have today. Myths, therefore, can be considered as a proto-science which brings the physical and material world in reconciliation with the spiritual and metaphysical world that is the world of senses. These informative and explanatory functions of myth teach society to conform to an existing social order.

One needs to remember that, in their definitions of myth, Nietzsche, Jung and Kerenyi, Campbell and Losev share nearly the same notion that myths are the products of the intuition of early mythmakers and the primordial condition of human psyche. Myths, then, are the products of human wisdom, and their function is to create a philosophy of life. In this sense, mythmaking becomes a kind of quest for knowledge. People create myths through logical and rational observations of the universe so as to find answers to the otherwise incomprehensible phenomena.

The ritual basis of a myth is another dimension of its pragmatic functions. Myths teach us a great deal about the societies in which they have originated. Ancient myths serve as guides to some rules and regulations essential to the maintenance of society, family, and kinship. The messages of myths are conveyed through rituals. These rituals teach us to act according to the socially determined and accepted manners of a society, of which we are members. That is why we still have mythological rituals in our societies such as table manners, wedding ceremonies and funerals, joining the army, celebrating festivals, etc., as those bind the people living in the same society by creating a discourse about the sense of belonging. These practices indicate that mythical thinking is still at work. We need those rituals to integrate ourselves into our society and to catch up with the moral necessities of life. Otherwise our social life, as Campbell (1988:8) warns us, may be occupied by

> the news of the day including destructive and violent acts by young people who don't know how to behave in a civilized society. Society provided them no rituals by which they become members of the tribe, of the community.

It would be a great mistake to define myth simply as something "not true". As Campbell argues, the rituals produced in correspondence with the myths of a society are very

important. It is the function of myths to develop adequate expressions on certain cultural and historical phenomena, and thus to produce necessary rituals for the society. If it is a hunter-gathering society, its mythology is necessarily loaded with the myths foregrounding the relation between men-nature and predator-prey. If the people in a society are farmers, their mythology should consist of myths about seasons and husbandry. As the social structure changes so do the necessities of people and thus their myths.

Rituals do circulate among people as the vehicles of social control. Myths and mythical thinking produce rituals, and rituals provide necessary ceremonies for social behaviours in a society. While some myths and rituals seem outrageous or even impossible, they are almost always rooted in the real values, expectations and attitudes of the society that has created them. Therefore rituals allow man not only to dream of great things but also to pass on lessons of cultural values and morality to future generations. The aims of ritual myths are to teach individual to dominate individual passions, suppress individual desires and subordinate individual will to a larger social or divine plan. Through these kinds of myths, people in a society learn to embrace a sense of duty which will promote mutual understanding and orientation in society.

Along with practical traits, myths also have psychological dimensions. They serve as initiation stories which enable us to integrate ourselves in larger settings than our own small environments in which we live. Myths are backed up with archetypal entities and symbols that function to uncover the hidden or mysterious aspects of reality. They help us understand and accept the painful realities of existence such as danger, fear, death, sickness, fate, misfortune and disease. By explaining them as a sacred order of the universe, myths help us discover the value of life in all the chaotic situations we may face through the stages of our lives. This mystical function of myths make people come to terms with the wonders of the universe. Thus myths allow people to experience awe before such phenomena. Therefore, myths are alive, ever-changing; and they touch upon literature, anthropology, sociology, religion and upon practical, daily matters such as hunting, harvest, wedding, seasons, clothing and medicine.

Myths are also considered to be the early forms of human psychology. They are "original revelations of the preconscious psyche, involuntary statements about unconscious psychic happenings" (Jung and Kerenyi 2002: 87). The tales of gods and goddesses in mythology, heroes, monsters, half-human; half-animal creatures, abductions, the world

being carried on shoulder, and such stories all mirror the complicated and unrevealed plane of human psyche. Mythology, therefore, constitutes the logical framework of myths through which a society creates its ontological view of life, and myths become individual texts which have both shaped and been shaped by this logical framework. The analysis of this large collection of texts which we call mythology teaches us a great deal about human psyche. Believing that mythmaking reveals human anxieties, some prominent psychoanalysts such as Freud and Jung directed their studies at the interpretation of the classical myths to explain those anxieties. Today, in psychoanalysis, there are lots of terms that reveal many kinds of human anxieties, the treatments of which are modelled after ancient myths: Oedipus complex, Atlas complex, Cassandra syndrome, Electra complex; these are the terms that were coined by the interpretation of the ancient myths. We use these terms to explain certain psychological disorders. Myths and mythical thinking reveal the dark corners of human psychology and the intuition of early mythmakers. Myths give certain forms to those psychological cases which the psychiatrists discover in their laboratories.

Myths are the symbolized, concrete forms of the products of mythical thinking. While myths provide us with the rituals about how to integrate ourselves into the realities of the cosmos, mythical thinking creates a meaning of life. Myths present a collective expression of society. Then, myths become traditional narratives that are used to designate the realities of a society. In order to be able to fully understand the terms, it is important to analyse the relation between myths and the society in which they have been originated; and the functions of mythical thinking in people's lives

As a myth is a sacred story that interprets the world, it does something more than just interpret the world: dramatized by rituals, myths offer a deeply felt and believed schema, an ideology as an organic view that the world around us is an organization evolving into some more progressive and idealistic state. Myths tend to turn into a complex body of institutional relations that dictates us to do this and behave that way in an organization of a machine through which we can map, track or imagine. In the same manner, mythmaking creates a culture which is constantly organized into a system of relevant logic. Mythology, then, comes up as a narrative, meta-logic as opposed to scientific logic which falls beyond logos. Thus mythical thinking refers to a body of symbols whose meanings go out of the frame of empirical and logical condition of human knowledge. Mythical thinking aims at

explaining the major frame of existence in complex symbolism as it attempts to explain the universe and complicated realities of existence such as death, disease, misfortune, fear, fate, and such other phenomena. Mythical thinking provides a philosophy of life. While myths, the symbolized, concrete forms of mythical thinking, provide us with the stories helping us come to terms with the realities of life, mythical thinking provides us with the ways and means to create and organize myths in a systematic way. Therefore myths and mythical thinking have always been the part of meaning-seeking and organizing mediums of our lives and they still are.

Seemingly antithetical, mythical thinking and scientific thinking have had pragmatic functions in organizing people's way of living and thinking, especially at times when people did not hold in their hands the technical know-how so as to understand their environment and cosmos. While scientific thinking provides us with the testable knowledge of the world, mythical thinking foregrounds a philosophy of life and provides us with the means and ways of organizing myths in a systematic way. Therefore, mythical thinking is an intellectual way of thinking.

The fact that myths have been remembered and repeated for over a long time in multiple versions indicates that they share common features with people's lives. They have been deemed worthy of repetition because they tell us something about ourselves. The paratexts of *The Penelopiad* (2006) and *Weight* (2006), the main reference books of this study, point out to this characteristic of myths: timelessness and universality:

> Myths are universal and timeless stories that reflect and shape our lives- they explore our desires, our longings, and provide narratives that remind us what it means to be human.

Myth is what is social and what is common to culture. Because, the archetypal and symbolic imageries in myths are based on the experiences of people in particular society at that particular time and place. Therefore myths are bound to culture. Nevertheless, the presence of the similar and almost the same motifs and archetypes across different myths of different cultures can be explained by the transcendental nature of myths. Myths, then, also become the expression of arcane and permanent tendencies in nature of man. In this view, myths have become structural metaphors of society which contain all the essential world view of culture. Thus, myths are outside time and place and they show what is constant in human experience. The archetypes and symbols in myths are kept alive through

constant repetition and reconsideration by means of literature and art. This is one of the main approaches of this study. The characteristics of myths and mythical thinking not only refer to the pragmatic and psychological ancient philosophy of life, but also these characteristics show us the foundation and the evolution of culture from various different perspectives. In both novellas, *The Penelopiad* and *Weight*, the study of the primordial constant images in human experience and the reflection of these images, such as faithful wife and globe-bearing Atlas, in literature will give us clues about repeated themes in basic human experiences.

Along with discussing the universality and timelessness of myths and mythical images, the politics and discourses that they produce are of equal importance in this study. As the writers, Margaret Atwood and Jeanette Winterson show in their book the ordering function of myths and mythical thinking are important mediums among the dynamics of a society. Myths are the oldest systems of meaning operating within certain codes and social conventions. Socially produced and historically conditioned codes and conventions are the most fundamental parts of the consensus ideologies created by the discourse of myth. The power relations represented in myths and in archetypes, such a faithful wife, a non-querier hero and a citizen, are still in the service of the dominant ideologies of our time. On the one hand, as in the case of *The Penelopiad*, we try to debunk the politically oriented archetypes so as to find out the doxa of them. On the other hand, as in the case of *Weight*, we try to find an alternative ways of self-expression through the universal archetypal figures. In both cases, however, it is important to lay bare the ways and the principles of the construction and the circulation of certain ideologies through myths and mythical thinking.

# CHAPTER TWO

# MYTHS AND LITERATURE TODAY

## 1. Myth Criticism

Myth criticism between 1930s through the 1980s came to dominate the literary world and enjoyed its heyday from the 1940s to the middle of the 1960s. Thanks to the impressive growth and attractiveness of the early twentieth-century anthropology and psychology, (and the narrowness of the reigning formalism and historical scholarship) myth criticism helped scholars of different fields respond to the aridities and absurdity of a purely scientific world by putting emphasis on the newly uncovered anthropological truths about the primordial human consciousness with its commitment to the idea of community and its gods and rituals.

Since the term "myth" has various different connotations and meanings, there are also different approaches to myth criticism as well. The approaches towards myth criticism differ according to the critic's attitude towards the term itself.

> There is no doubt that Myth is one of the most muddled and abused concepts in our critical vocabulary. It has been defined as a lie, a popular delusion, as mystical fantasy, as primitive science, as a record of historical fact, a symbol of philosophical truth, a reflection of unconscious motivations, indeed, any unconscious assumption (Block 1952: 52).

Though, most people recognise myths as insignificant psychic products, they are, actually, charged with meanings that concern man's both past and present situations; and this is what entitles them to consideration to philosophy, anthropology and literature.

In relation to the use of myths and archetypes in literature, studies made in cultural anthropology and psychology constitute the fundamental parts in the formation of the underlying principles of myth criticism. Historically speaking, the study of myths and archetypal patterns in literature began with the new developments in the fields of anthropology and psychology following the publications of James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890) and Jung's *The Archetypes and Collective Unconscious* (1934). The origin

of archetypal literary criticism is rooted in the works of these two important theorists since their works have contributed to the underlying principles of such criticism.

The advancement made in anthropology at the end of the nineteenth century is one of the most important influences on the growth of myth criticism. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890) becomes one of the most prominent examples of a comprehensive cultural anthropological study in which Frazer investigates the parallels between the beliefs and rituals of early cultures and those of Christianity. Frazer's work sets an example for anthropologists and critics as well as writers. In his study, Frazer points out the essential similarity and universality of man's chief wants and concerns. These similarities are especially reflected in mythology. Frazer (2009: 301-302) exemplifies those similarities as such:

> Under the name of Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis and Attis, the peoples of Egypt and Western Asia represented the yearly decay and revival of life. In name and detail the rites varied from place to place: in substance they were the same.

In *The Golden Bough*, though he does not make any explicit definition of myth, Frazer studies on the ritual basis of myths by examining the rituals and myths which are repeating themselves around the image of dying and resurrected god. For Frazer, myths and rituals are equally important, because they help us understand how archaic man positioned himself in relation to the universe.

The impact of Frazer's work was evident when James Joyce published his experimental work, *Ulysses* in 1922. In *Ulysses*, Joyce uses his own experiences in Dublin and the story cycle of Homer's epic *The Odyssey* synchronously. There are other writers who, in later years, took up Joyce's experimental work as an example. For instance, John Updike's *Centaur*, published in 1963, is about a relationship of a father and a son living in Pennsylvania. However, the characters simultaneously live in both the sphere of Greek mythology and a contemporary setting of Pennsylvania. These writers blend the sphere of myth and reality in their works.

Another contribution on the formation of myth criticism is the works of Jung and his theory of archetypes. By developing Freud's theories of personal unconscious, Jung argues that humanity has a collective unconscious in which the shared beliefs and modes of thoughts of humanity are restored. According to Jung (2003: 2-3), there are two types of

unconscious: One is *personal unconscious* and the other is *collective unconscious*. The term "collective" is used for the second type of unconscious because it is believed to be universal; and it has contents and modes of behaviours that are more or less the same in everywhere and in all individuals. Jung defines archetypes as the core elements of the unconscious psyche which give rise to the myths. In other words, this unconscious level of psyche manifests itself basically in myths, rituals, dreams and literary works. These studies urged the critics and writers to study beyond the simple story patterns of myths so as to find the signs of man's psyche:

> For literary critics and theorists, Jung functions as a master teacher whose learning and poetic insight equip his readers to recognize the functional stories behind stories and grasp the core images whose content and form underlie the myths, tales, and legends of the world's diverse literary traditions (*The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* 2001: 989).

Myth criticism began to emerge during the 1930s and focused on those patterns in a literary work that commonly occur in other literary works through the presence of archetypes, recurring images, figures and story patterns. The publications which lead us to the myth criticism clearly show that critics showed a stance against the pure logical explanations of human behaviours by claiming that they must pay attention to symbolism and the working of unconscious if they were to understand the notions culture and the cultural products of society.

In 1934, Maud Bodkin's work *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* was published. In her work, she applies Jung's theory of archetypes to literary works. She analyses the major archetypal patterns in what is considered to be the great literature of Western civilization. She makes studies on the theme of rebirth in Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner"; the theme of heaven-hell in Coleridge's "Kubla Khan", in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and in Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Suzanne K. Langer's *Philosophy in a New Key* was published in 1941. What she defines as a "new key" is "symbolism" and she stresses the importance of symbolic meaning and artistic significance rooted in myth, ritual and human history. Langer (1948: xiii) claims that

> But the people who recognized the importance of expressive forms for all human understanding were those who saw that not only science, but myth,

> analogy, metaphorical thinking and art are intellectual activities determined by "symbolic modes".

For Langer, myths are very influential mediums of society which provide a framework in which people can interpret the world and come to terms with his or her desires and the conflict between those desires and the unnatural forces that undermine these desires.

In 1950s and 1960s, archetypal criticism was at its peak thanks to the work of literary critic Northrop Frye. By the mid 1950s, the New Critical "close reading" of the texts had been a dominant theory and practice of literary criticism. Nevertheless, some scholars began to argue that this critical approach failed to consider the historical and biographical background contexts. With the publication of Nortrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) the New Criticism was challenged, because, unlike New Criticism and a close reading of a text, this new school of criticism proposed to link one literary work to another by finding out conventional elements and archetypes. It is very obvious that Frye was influenced by the works of Frazer and Jung. Frye's main aim was to define the archetypal criticism and to determine the context of it. Frye (2000: 99) defines archetypal criticism as such:

> I mean by an archetype a symbol which connects one poem with another and thereby helps to unify and integrate our literary experience. And as the archetype is the communicable symbol, archetypal criticism is primarily concerned with literature as a social fact as a mode of communication. By the study of convention and genres, it attempts to fit poems into the body of poetry as a whole.

Archetypal criticism focuses on the generic, recurring and conventional elements in literature which cannot be purely explained as matters of historical influence or tradition. Such criticism tends to interpret a text by focusing on recurring images and archetypes in a literary work. Since archetypes are considered to be communicable symbols, archetypal criticism also deals with literature as a social fact and as a means of communication.

Archetypal criticism has been quickly accepted by the scholars and critics since it gives a writer or critic to work on any genre from any period by making analogies with other disciplines namely anthropology and psychology.

> It [archetypal criticism] worked as a critical instrument on any genre from any period and place. Also it apparently posed no singular or radical threat to the established canon of great works (Leitch 2010: 125).

While archetypal criticism has its own principles, it also links literature and literary works to other disciplines, namely anthropology and psychology. Therefore such criticism gives a critic a chance of broadening his approach to reality. Northrop Frye (*Anatomy of Criticism),* Robert Graves (*Greek Myths* and *The White Goddess),* Maud Bodkin (Archetypal *Patterns in Poetry),* Richard Chase (*The Quest for Myth*) and Joseph Campbell (*The Hero with a Thousand Faces*) are among the prominent myth critics.

With the publication of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* in 1949 feminist criticism became a challenge to the traditional norms of English literary studies. In *The Second Sex* (1949) Simone de Beauvoir analyses the examples of archetypal women myths that still actively work in our culture. She shows the process of how archetypal women myths have been naturalised and customized. Beauvoir summarizes the motives behind the naturalisation of archetypal patterns in everyday social and political life:

> History has shown that men have always held all the concrete powers; from patriarchy's earliest times they have deemed it useful to keep woman in a state of independence; their codes were set up against her; she was thus concretely established as the Other (2010: 159).

With Beauvoir's influential work, archetypes and myths have begun to be considered as influential mediums in persuading women of the naturalness of the gender roles.

Through the end of the 1980s, the content of archetypal criticism began to be challenged especially by women writers. The eighties was a decade in which traditional hierarchies were being challenged in every sphere of life: Class, race, social authority, sex and gender roles, colonialism were all subject to critique and reconsideration. There occurred fundamental changes in the notion of identity, sexuality and gender. Those changes inspired a debate on how specific literary practices affect the process of socialization. Writers began to question the notion of literary theory, the traditional character representations, narration and storytelling. These debates lead to myth and fairytale criticisms by revealing the alignments of these genres with cultural practices and discourses in literary canon as well as in Western societies. From 1980s onwards, not only the recurring patters were analysed through archetypal criticism but also how those recurring patters had been affecting the process of socialization were put into a debate. Especially women writers gave myth criticism an important place in their writings and there came out the feminist archetypal criticism. Feminist archetypal critics were sceptical

about the Jung's theory of collective unconscious and the workings of Frye's archetypal criticism since they considered the archetypes as social constructs. The main aim of feminist archetypal critics was to challenge the historically established women archetypes by putting them in reconsideration and even in recreation.

Critics like Simone de Beauvoir, Mary Elleman and Kate Millet are among the first writers revealing the literary history of women's images. The dominant stereotyped images of female characters began to be discussed. Those critics started a debate on how specific literary practices affect the process of socialization along with the notion of identity, class, race, sex, gender roles and social authority. Those debates lead to feminist myth and fairytale criticism. From that time onwards, the writers began to analyse the recurring patterns and certain archetypes of literature such as wife and mother in their relation to the process of socialization.

Along with the names and works mentioned above, Adrienne Rich's "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision" (1971), Alice Walker's "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens'" (1974), Helene Cixous's "The Laugh of Medusa" (1976), Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) Estella Lauter's *Women as Mythmakers: Poetry and Visual Art by Twentieth Century Women* (1984); and Estella Lauter and Carol Schreier Rupprecht's *Feminist Archetypal Theory: Interdisciplinary Re-Visions of Jungian Thought* (1985) are among the influential publications contributing the formation of feminist archetypal criticism.

Those writers while endeavouring to lay bare the alignments of myths and fairytales with cultural practices and discourses were aware of the fact that rereading of critical theories and methods of literary tradition might be possible only if those theories and methods are challenged from with their own assumptions. In 1979 *The Bloody Chamber*, a short story collection written by Angela Carter was published. All of the stories in the collection are based upon fairytales and myths. As Salman Rushdie (2006: xiv) writes in the "Introduction" to Carter's *Burning Your Boats*, a short story collection first published in 1995, "[s]he takes what we know and, having broken it, puts it together in her own spiky, courteous way; her words are new and not knew, like our own". In her revisions, Carter uses themes of widely-known examples of fairytales, namely "Bluebeard", "The Beauty and the Beast", "Snow White", and "Little Red Riding Hood". In Carter's versions, contrary to the general expectations and traditions, the women characters appear as self-

serving and viable. By means of debunking and rewriting the traditional tales, she brings the latent context of the stories to the surface. “She opens an old story for us, like an egg, and finds the new story, the now-story we want to hear, within” (xiv). Similarly, Jeanette Winterson and Margaret Atwood are also among the influential writers who frequently use mythical settings and characters in their fictions.

> The small body of published feminist archetypal criticism deals primarily with women writers and often with their women characters, who resist the identities socially imposed on them. In looking for women’s reality beneath concealing patriarchal versions, feminist archetypal criticism often refers to mythic patterns (Rigsby 2009: 31).

As Rigsby argues, feminist archetypal criticism views Jung’s ideas of collective unconscious and Frye’s notion of archetypes in literature with more scepticism. However, feminist archetypal critics do not totally reject the theories of archetypal criticism, but, rather, they carry the discussion of the presence of archetypes in literature further by pointing out the social and political outcomes and variations of the term “archetype”. Thus "archetype" begins to be recognized as a

> tendency to form and reform images in relation to certain kinds of repeated experience, so as varying from culture to culture and from individual to individual, rather than as an eternal and universal form (Lauter and Rupprecht 1985: 13-14).

In particular, feminist archetypal critics propose that archetypes are not absolute social truths but merely social constructs. Therefore, the main aim of feminist archetypal critics is to show the construction process of certain archetypes through narration and storytelling. Feminist archetypal critics, through debunking historically established women archetypes, endeavoure to create new women archetypes who challenge to the conventional representations and the rules of a society.

Modern cultures pay little attention to myths and archetypes. In the course of the time, the whole body of myths have been changed or modernized in their relation to the current popular school of criticism of the period. So as to survive and be still in the service of man, myths and archetypes continuously change their forms, and thus take on familiar shapes. The content of the old myths or rituals can decay but the symbolic meaning of them never disappears. A writer may use traditional myths for varying different purposes. The writers such as James Joyce and John Updike, for instance, use myths so as to equate

the symbolic form of life and emotions stored in their consciousness with those of the ancient myths. On the other hand, the writers such as Simone de Beauvoir, Angela Carter, Margaret Atwood and Jeanette Winterson use myths with premeditated intentions of laying bare the workings of the symbolic meanings of myths in society from different perspectives. As Andrew Lytle (1959: 335) says "their [myths'] tone and meaning speak of no time, no country. They are outside time; they are always and forever about what is constant in human experience". Since myths are universal and there are different approaches to myth criticism, so are there varying degrees of fruitfulness in the use of those traditional patterns.

Within this framework, the aim of this study is not only to trace the survival of ancient myths and mythical patterns in modern literary genres but also to analyse the survival of myths as a form of thought. The basic argument of this study is that ancient myths and mythical patterns appear more and more frequently in our century's literature; it is because the notions of realism and objectivity are inadequate in describing the concerns and conditions of people. Therefore the writers tend to use the rhetorical strategies of myths more frequently in their works.

## 2. The Use of Myths in Literature

Myths have always been an important element of literature and the literature can be considered to be a way of extending myths and archetypes. We usually recognize myths in our own literature by identifying familiar elements from traditional myth. A literary work may attempt to create or re-create certain narratives, themes and archetypes which have influential functions in organizing people's lives. Myths provide an open laboratory for the analysis of human behaviours, anxieties and all kind of emotions persistent in human nature. In this sense, mythology provides literature with a grand dictionary defining almost every phenomenon related to this world and also beyond it. And literature makes use of this grand dictionary very frequently. Coupe (2006: 2) explains this close relationship between myths and literature as such: "We will discover that 'mythology', the body of inherited myths in any culture, is an important element of literature, and that literature is a means of extending mythology".

It is obvious that it is not an arbitrary or a random decision for the writers to use myths and mythological figures in their works. The most important reason lies in the

mythmaking process itself. Since we use stories to shape the world, likewise storytelling shapes how we see ourselves and how we construct our notion of self in the past and present.

> All narrative constantly involves artifice: telling a story is not an innocent act, involving a natural sequence of events which are simply 'extracted' and recounted. Rather narrative involves selection, organization, and interpretation on the part of the narrator (Nicol 2009: 27).

As Nicol claims in this passage, it is apparent that storytelling has a political dimension. Therefore it is important to analyse the poetics and the politics of myths in order to explore the ways in which narratives and images structure a discourse of their own.

Through the course of history, symbolic and metaphorical descriptions assigned by myths begin to affect people's appreciation and understanding of reality. In this formulation, it must be noted that the language of mythmaking, which necessarily borrows from the poetic language that is very concentrated and symbolic, is one of the most important elements of mythmaking that greatly contributes to this process. Mythmaking language directly appeals to powerful emotions such as fear, pity, happiness and passion rather than to a critical mind. Thus it works through the unconscious realm of the psyche.

This symbolic language is loaded with ideological discourses and rhetoric which aim at directing our perceptions and behaviours to more unified moral conventions. Such kind of moral and political dictations coming along with the rituals of myths present an overall view of life as befitted to traditional perceptions and ideologies of society. As Philip Wheelwright (1962: 3-4) says metaphorical language and, thus, mythmaking language are unique entities. That is they are capable of "holding tensions within it", "can accomplish transferences from one thing to another", and "it is presentational". Myths, like literature, use symbolic and metaphorical language so as to interpret the cosmological, social, material and political aspects of everyday life. In this sense, myths are considered to be the transcendental dimension of human thought.

The mythmaking language is also a truth-seeking language in which the innate truths of humanity and men are put into words. The language of myth turns the intangible phenomena of social and secular history into the archetypal motifs of birth, growth, death, rebirth, damnation, salvation, fate, etc. Moreover, the aim of this truth-seeking language is to formulate morality as in the case of myths and other narratives which aim at

indoctrination. Therefore myths seem to be the common language of all mankind and all races, ages and cultures.

As Gilbert and Gubar state (2000: 36) “Myths and fairytales often both state and enforce culture’s sentences with greater accuracy than more sophisticated literary texts”. Classical myths provide a cluster of archetypes and symbols ready at hand and this gives the writers a specific discourse that makes it easier to explore the human conditions in certain specific circumstances.

Archetypes, “the contents of the collective unconscious” (Jung 2003: 2), are considered to be inborn and universal. Therefore, they are indispensable parts of myth studies. Archetypes “persist through the ages and require interpreting ever anew. The archetypes are the imperishable elements of the unconscious, but they change their shape continually” (Jung and Kerenyi 2002: 117). As Jung proposes, through analysing the changes occurred in “the contents of the unconscious” we can also analyse how and why people have passed from one mode of representation to another. Such kinds of changes are closely related to the changes occurred in the mechanisms of a society and thus culture and literature. Analysing such kind of changes or similarities makes us understand how and under what circumstances people have passed from one mode of representation to another.

Myths drive from countless generations of oral telling. They circulate around in multiple versions. It is not easy to canonize their diversity into standard versions and authorized interpretations. This situation and the imaginative function in the very nature of myths inspire the writers to challenge and redefine the symbols and discourse provided by myths. In this sense, myths remind us there is always something else to be said or imagined.

We live in an age that almost everything as well as human nature is under the control of technology, logos and sciences. The restrain over an imaginative thought of people makes us alien to our own nature. Because it is generally believed that the sensory world is deceptive and therefore science can only develop by turning against the world of senses. By equating myth with the aesthetics, Nietzsche (1995: 85) also argues that in the absence of myth every culture is bound to lose its “healthy creative natural power”.

The very nature of myths inspires people to create or re-create them ever anew through the ages. It is because, on the one hand, while myth implies a social and cosmic

order, on the other hand it liberates human minds from the notion of present time and place by creating the promise of entirely different mode of existence. As Burns (1996: 291) claims:

> Myths hook and bind the mind because at the same time they set the mind free: they explain the universe by allowing the universe to go on being unexplained; and we seem to need this even now, in our twentieth century grandeur.

Mythical thinking involves both imagination and social order. These two different notions work harmoniously in the nature of myth. Myth has the function of preservation and conservation as it functions to explain the unexplained, thus, to bring and to preserve an order. It also stimulates imagination. Through its ordering function, myth promotes the notions of society and tradition. Through an imaginative function, it prevents us from equating the constructed social order with the eternal truth. Therefore this imaginative function of mythical thinking urges us to challenge and reform those given and constructed rules. This characteristic of mythical thinking is one of the most important reasons of why we still need to study myths in our present time and how myths still inspire the writers in contemporary literature. Naturally, this unique characteristic of mythical thinking and myths inspire myth studies and foreground the place of myth in literature, another notion in which social order and imagination work together.

### 3. Jungian Archetypes of Rebirth, Shadow, Trickster, Scapegoat and the Definition of Individuation

In 2005, *The Myths* series was initiated by Canongate Publishing House. Canongate's aim is to bring together some of the most famous writers, each of whom has retold an ancient myth in contemporary way with new perspectives. As stated in the website of the series "The Myth is a long term global publishing project where some of the world's most respected authors re-tell myths in a manner of their own choosing" (*About The Myths*). Authors in the series include Margaret Atwood, Jeanette Winterson, Karen Armstrong, AS Byatt, David Grossman, Milton Hatoum, Natsuo Kirino, Alexander McCall Smith, Tomás Eloy Martínez, Victor Pelevin, Ali Smith, Su Tong, Dubravka Ugresic, and Salley Vickers. Among those writers, Atwood with her novella *The Penelopiad: The Myth of Penelope and Odysseus*, and Jeanette Winterson with her novella *Weight: The Myth of Atlas and Heracles* are the main works of reference for his study.

*The Penelopiad* is the story of the return of Odysseus, this time however, told from the mouth of Penelope. Similarly, *W*eight is a contemporary retelling of the story of Atlas and Heracles. In their retelling of the ancient myths, both novellas display strong similarities in terms of the use of Jungian archetypes of rebirth, shadow, trickster and scapegoat. By rewriting and revising the ancient stories and archetypes in contemporary literary and social contexts, Atwood and Winterson actually make an analysis of our apprehension of archetypes in contemporaneity. Through the exploration of the ancient archetypes regarded as "common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us" (Jung 1955: 4) in a contemporary literary and social contexts, the readers are presented with the consensual view of contemporary realities.

In her book, *In Other Worlds: Science Fiction and Human Imagination*, Margaret Atwood (2011: 91) claims that

> The novel proper has always laid claim to a certain kind of truth- the truth about human nature, or how people really behave with all their clothes on except in the bedroom- that is under observable social conditions.

In *The Penelopiad* and *Weight*, however, we have a chance to observe the ancient characters with all their clothes off that is freed from the "boundaries and the limitations of the ancient epic story world" (Steals: 2009: 101), and in their confrontation with their unconscious and shadows. As the ancient myth characters are freed from the constraint of their mythic realms, similarly, the readers are also freed from their old assumptions and knowledge of the ancient stories. Thus, such a debunking and rewriting of the ancient myths create a mythic consciousness in contemporary literary context that stems from an unconscious desire to relocate the cultural and individual identity within the framework of primordial revelations of human mind. As Northrop Frye (2000: 136) argues in *Anatomy of Criticism*

> [myth] serves to connect the collective unconscious with man's self in the modern world. Myths are transcendent in nature and explore the psychic residue in man's consciousness.

Such a study of rewriting and revising the ancient myths in a contemporary literary context, once again, brings out the issue of literary art's relationship to some very deep instincts and tendencies in human nature that archetypal criticism deals with.

Historically speaking, the studies made in cultural anthropology and psychology constitute the fundamental parts in the formation of archetypal criticism. The study of myths and archetypes reveals about the mind and the character of a person. Just as dreams are believed to reflect the unconscious desires and anxieties of an individual, so myths and archetypes are believed to be the symbolic projections of a person's beliefs, values, aspirations, fears, and in short his characteristics. In this sense, Jung's studies on archetypes and archetypal images developed an understanding of archetypes as being the "first and foremost psychic phenomena that reveal the nature of the soul" (Jung 1955: 6). Accordingly, Jung's studies on archetypes and Jungian archetypes of shadow, trickster, scapegoat and his idea of individuation constitute the theoretical framework of this study.

The use of ancient archetypes in our contemporary literary and cultural frameworks is of great importance. As stressed in the paratexts of *The Penelopiad* and *Weight*, people are estranged from their natural roots as a result of over-adherence to reason. Consequently, "Our intellect has achieved the most tremendous things, but in the meantime our spiritual dwelling has fallen into despair" (Jung 1955: 16). Therefore, it becomes important to analyse the current apprehension of archetypes and their relation to modern man in our literary and social contexts so as to come to terms with our spiritual world in contemporaneity.

### 3.1 Rebirth

One of the most important archetypes present in *The Penelopiad* and *Weight* is rebirth since the ancient mythical characters in the novellas go through a rebirth process in a 21st Century literary environment. The archetype of rebirth is a foundational archetype in both novellas, and also it signifies a transformative process occurring everywhere both in nature and in individual. It is because, as Jung (2003: 75) termed it, "Nature herself demands a death and rebirth".

In *Four Archetypes* (Jung 2003: 53-56), five different forms of rebirth archetype are defined. These are "metempsychosis", "reincarnation", "resurrection", "rebirth (renovation)", and "indirect rebirth". Metempsychosis is described as the extension of life by passing through different bodily existences. In reincarnation, human personality is regarded as continuous, therefore "when one is incarnated or born, one is able, ..., to remember that one has lived through previous existence..." (Jung 2003: 54). The third form

of rebirth, resurrection, is defined as a reestablishment of human existence after death, with the implication of some change or transformation of the being. Rebirth (renovatio) is described as rebirth within the span of individual life with profound changes in individual. The fifth form of rebirth is seen as an indirect one in which the individual witnesses or takes part in some rite of transformation, and thereby shares a divine grace. In any case, rebirth demands a death, loss and discovery that contribute to psychic and spiritual growth of a person. For Jung, such a transformation is one of the prerequisites of individuation.

Rebirth is a process that is beyond perception. Jung (2003: 5) suggests that "rebirth is an affirmation that must be counted among the primordial affirmations of mankind. These primordial affirmations are based on what I call archetypes". Since rebirth demands individual and spiritual changes, the presence of rebirth archetype suggests a struggle that leads to a new realization of self. In *The Penelopiad* and *Weight*, the characters go through the third form of rebirth that is resurrection. That is because, the ancient mythical characters and myths, which are considered to be invalid and dead according to the world view and literary understanding of our times, are resurrected in contemporary literary environment. In both novellas, we witness the individual and spiritual changes in the characters due to the resurrection process. Through debunking the ancient myths in contemporary literary environment, Atwood and Winterson liberate the ancient mythical characters from the boundaries and assumptions of traditional narratives. Put in a contemporary literary and cultural environment, the ancient characters become the embodiments of modern man. Therefore in their rebirth process, there occur significant changes in the characters of all the story characters. Such changes also signal the changes in modern man's apprehension of archetypes and pave way to the analysis of how people have passed from one mode of representation to the other.

### 3.2 Shadow

Shadow, as can be understood from the implication of the word itself, is any part of ourselves that we reject. Among other archetypes shadow is "the most accessible of these, and the easiest to experience" (Jung 1959:8). It is one of the most common archetypes and reflects the deeper, hidden aspects of our psyche. Shadow embodies the dark, hidden and potentially troubling characteristics of a person. Like a trickster archetype, shadow archetype challenges the rules and conventions of society, and it tends to create chaos.

Generally, shadow is not allowed to find an expression in our life. A person can recognize shadow in others, but denies recognizing it in himself, and, therefore, he prefers to project it onto others. According to Jung (1959: 8) "[t]he shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort". So as to recognize the presence of shadow, one must withdraw from making projections.

To come to terms with individual shadow is one of the most important steps towards "individuation" which is "the essential condition for any kind self-knowledge and it therefore, as a rule, meets with considerable resistance" (Jung: 1959: 8). Most of the time, our ego and super-ego prevent us from encountering with our shadow. Being instinctive and irrational, shadow is, therefore, prone to projection. As a result of the instinct of projection, we try to project our personal inferiorities to perceived moral deficiencies in someone else. Thus, on the part of individual, "projections change the world into the replica of one's own face" (Jung 1959: 9).

The basic characteristics of shadow, which are rejection, denial and projection, are apparently used in both *The Penelopiad* and *Weight*. The presence of shadow archetype in the novellas is rather a complex one. While the mythical characters in the novellas become the shadows of every other character in the stories, they also become the shadows of modern man as well as that of the writers themselves.

The use of shadow archetype and the identification of this archetype with modern man make the reader come to terms with objective realities and archetypal images present in every individual and in every culture. As Colin Falck (1994: 116) argues,

> The mythic mode of consciousness is a vision of reality, and therefore also of men's place in reality, in which the perceived presence and activity of certain gods, super-human creatures, or cosmic forces, is accepted by a community as an adequate and satisfying perception of all the main events of the world as it is ordinarily experienced.

Human consciousness has multiple layers containing both mythic and rational inclinations. In modern cultures, which are mostly scientific-oriented, rational inclinations and needs are easily satisfied, whereas mythic needs strive to find alternative outlets. Since myths are the concrete and primary forms of man's inner-most realities, it is more important to create an awareness of mythic consciousness in modern societies.

### 3.3 Trickster

Trickster is one of Jungian archetypes who appears in the myths of many cultures as well as literatures. In Greek mythology, for instance, Hermes is the most important and well-known trickster figure. Likewise, Odysseus in *The Odyssey*, Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Prospero in *The Tempest,* Mephistophilis in *Dr.Faustus* are famous examples of trickster figures in world literature. Trickster is a rather complicated figure due to

> his fondness for sly jokes and malicious pranks, his powers as shape-shifter, his dual nature, half animal, half divine, his exposure to all kinds of tortures, and – last but not least- his approximation to the figure of saviour (Jung 2003: 160).

To embody within itself such contradictory characteristics is what makes the trickster figure both complex and ambiguous at the same time.

According to Jung and his studies "On the Psychology of the Trickster-Figure" (2003: 159-179), as its name suggests trickster is a figure who plays tricks on others. Trickster archetype is defined as boundary crosser. He crosses both physical and social boundaries. He changes shape from male to female and from human to animal. He is also the one who goes against conventional behaviour. Trickster often blurs the distinction between male and female, right and wrong, sacred and profane. Trickster archetype can appear as cunning or fool. Nevertheless, in some cases, the trickster and the figure of cultural hero are combined in one single trickster figure as in the case of Odysseus. Then, trickster becomes a clever man who tries to survive the dangers using trickery as defence.

In *The Penelopiad* and *Weight*, the trickster archetype is used as an important element that points out the flows in so-called carefully constructed societies as well as individuals. In this sense, trickster also embodies the shadow archetype, because

> [t]he so-called civilized man has forgotten the trickster. He remembers him only figuratively and metaphorically, when irritated by his own ineptitude, he speaks of fate playing tricks on him or of things being bewitched. He never suspects that his own hidden and apparently harmless shadow has qualities whose dangerousness exceeds his wildest dreams (Jung 2003: 173).

The use of trickster archetype in *The Penelopiad* and *Weight* provides an awareness of such an important archetype that is able to go beyond boundaries and guides modern man

through endless character possibilities thanks to his being rich and contradictory in nature. Such an awareness is very important for societies because

> an individual or society which can consciously and deliberately invoke and integrate the Trickster into its psyche will experience a creative and transforming archetype (McNeely 2011: 13-14).

The main objective, here, is to understand and accept trickster archetype as an agent in the differentiation of evil and the trickster.

### 3.4 Scapegoat

Scapegoat is one of the most enduring archetypes in human behaviour. We usually come across with a scapegoat archetype as a stock character mainly in literary works. By definition, scapegoat is "someone who is blamed for something bad that happens, even if it is not their fault" (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* 1995: 1266). Cassandra in Greek Mythology, Grendel and his mother in *Beowulf*, Cinderella in *Cinderella*, Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, Tessie Hutchinson in *The Lottery*, and Monster in *Frankenstein* are well-known examples of scapegoat characters in mythology and literature. Scapegoating is a process by which a group of people find someone within or outside the group to represent the evils and wrong-doings of that group.

In *The Golden Bough*, James Frazer (2009: 557) associates the idea of scapegoat with "the transference of evil" and

> the evil of which a man seeks to rid himself need not be transferred to a person; it may equally well be transferred to an animal or a thing, though in the last case the thing is often only a vehicle to convey the trouble to first person who touches it.

It is very obvious that the use and the presence of scapegoat archetype stem from individuals' desire of relieving themselves of their relationships to the self and to the other. It is because the presence of a scapegoat relieves individuals of their own responsibilities and strengthens their sense of power and righteousness. The easiest way to cope with conflicts and unwanted situations is to project them to others. People look for a scapegoat to blame so as to relieve himself of responsibility. This situation can be associated with the shadow archetype whose most distinctive characteristic is its being prone to making projections. In Jungian terms, the scapegoat is considered to be other expression of the

shadow projection. In this sense, we do not consciously accept our faults; however we accept and see the faults of others that are scapegoats.

Usually, the scapegoat is expected to be somehow different either due to age, gender and hierarchical situation in a society or due to religion and nationality. Going against the implicit or explicit rules and conventions of society is also the reasons of becoming scapegoat. Scapegoating is a process that may cause undesirable and destructive results both to individual and society. Consciously or unconsciously, all people can play a part in scapegoating process; therefore, we need to become conscious of it.

In *The Penelopiad*, scapegoat archetype can be associated with the Twelve Maids of Penelope and, in some cases, Penelope herself. In *Weight*, Atlas and Heracles are presented as scapegoat characters who are condemned to bear the ills of others. The scapegoat archetypes in the novellas in question are the visible forms of the ills of societies, and the faults of individuals and most importantly the continual tendency of projection (shadow) in human nature.

> The evils are invisible and intangible; and, on the other hand, there is a visible and tangible vehicle to convey them away. And a scapegoat is nothing more than such a vehicle (Frazer 2009: 587).

In this sense, therefore, *The Penelopiad* and *Weight* are considered to be tangible vehicles to remind the modern man of the presence of scapegoat archetype and how modern man, consciously and unconsciously, pursue and take part in the act of scapegoating.

### 3.5 Individuation

Jung (1955: 21) believes that "one must learn to know one self in order to know who one is". The desire of self-knowledge is the first step towards individuation which denotes a "process by which a person becomes a psychological "individual", that is a separate, invisible unity or "whole" (Jung 1955: 275). Such an awareness and increase in self-knowledge, however, require our encounter with our inner-most instincts, desires, anxieties, impulses, and with our shadows. Individuation, therefore, is a psychic process that requires the development of human psyche over the course of life in which a person adopts himself accordingly both to the outer world and to the internal needs of his own being. According to Jung, most of the time, people confuse self-knowledge with the knowledge of their conscious personalities. Anyone who possesses ego-consciousness

takes it for granted that he knows himself. But ego only knows its own contents, not the unconscious and its contents. What is commonly regarded as self-knowledge is therefore a very limited knowledge, most of which depends on social factors and the knowledge of ego-consciousness. Nevertheless, individuation requires the knowledge of unconscious.

In *The Penelopiad* and *Weight*, we come across with the most influential and common archetypes stored in our collective unconscious both in terms of psychology and literature. Myths are transcendent in nature and explore the psychic remnants in man's consciousness. Therefore, these novellas not only remind us of the ancient myths and archetypes, but also they question the validity and apprehension of archetypes in our times, in contemporaneity. The use of myths and archetypes in contemporary literary texts creates a mythic awareness which, in turn, helps us to have a sense of meaning in our life, and to complete our individuation process. By combining the ancient stories with our modern world and by making an analogy between ancient archetypes and modern man, these novellas make the reader to attain an individuation process in a Jungian sense. In Jung's (1955: 288) terms

> [c]onscious and unconscious do not make a whole when one of them is suppressed and injured by the other. Consciousness should defend its reason and protect itself, and the chaotic life of the unconscious should be given the chance of having its way too. This, roughly, is what I mean by the individuation process.

The aims of *The Penelopiad* and *Weight*, and in general the aim of *The Myths* series, exactly mirror what Jung calls the definition of individuation. "The chaotic life" of our unconscious finds an expression in our material world which, in our age, is closely associated with reason. In this way, we find a chance to observe men's inner-most desires, fears, anxieties, and impulses through the ancient archetypes. Also, by making an analogy between ancient archetypes and modern man, we question our apprehension of ancient archetypes in our present literary and social context.

The rapid changes and developments in science and technology, along with modern man's over-adherence to reason, left our unconscious, which is transcendental and a more universal, far behind. Within this conflicting situation preventing us from attaining individuation process, *The Penelopiad* and *Weight* "remind us what it is to be human" by making us encounter with our shadows, and with the archetypes of rebirth, trickster and

scapegoat. Since such an encounter takes places in our modern literary and social context, it becomes easy for us to relocate our consciousness and reason into our collective unconsciousness.

> A cultural stage may later be reached in which there exists a mode of objective consciousness, together with a fully-developed sense of the self and of its relationship to an "external" world- but in which there also continues to exist a deeper mode of awareness beneath this self- consciousness which remains mythic in its over-all patterns (Falck 1994: 121).

*The Penelopiad* and *Weight*, and *The Myths* series in general contribute to create a mythic awareness in an "age of reason" since they aim at exploring and explaining our "sense of the self" and "its relationship to external world" within mythic mode of consciosness. Such an analysis of ancient myths in contemporary literary and social context is important because "separation from his instinctual nature inevitably plunges civilized man into the conflict between conscious and unconscious" (Jung 2002: 58). Through reminding readers the importance and the necessity of mythic consciousness, *The Penelopiad* and *Weight* contributes to the individuation process of their readers in contemporaneity.

# CHAPTER THREE

# THE ANALYSIS OF *THE PENELOPIAD*

## 1. Rewriting the Myth of Penelope as "Shadow" of Modern Man

Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad* is the second book of *The Myths* series published by Canongate Publishing House. It was first published in Great Britain in 2005 following the publication of *A Short History of Myth* by Karen Armstrong, the first book of the series. In *The Penelopiad*, Margaret Atwood chooses to rewrite the ancient myths of Penelope and Odysseus, and it is based on Penelope's narratives of Odysseus' adventures, her marriage with Odysseus, her life in Ithaca and her relations with her parents and her Twelve Maids. Nevertheless, *The Penelopiad* is not the only fiction of Atwood containing ancient myths and mythical characters.

As an author, Atwood has always been interested in classical myths. In her first poetry collection, *Double Persephone* (1961), for instance, she uses myths and mythical characters, and her fascination with ancient myths and fairy tales are followed by other fictions of the writer such as *Surfacing* (1972), *You Are Happy* (1974), *Lady Oracle* (1976), *Bluebeard's Egg* (1983), *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), *The Robber Bride* (1993), *The Blind Assassin* (2000) and *Oryx and Crake* (2003). Margaret Atwood is the author of more than 35 works of fiction most of which are translated into several languages other than English. She has won many major prizes including the Man Booker Prize for *The Blind Assassin*, the Giller Prize for *Alias Grace* and the Common Wealth Writer's Prize for *The Robber Bride*.

As being once the student of Northrop Frye, Atwood believes in the power of myths, fairytales and archetypes in creating social and personal realities. In an article she wrote for *Publishers Weekly* (November 28, 2005), Atwood says that

> Strong myths never die. Sometimes they die down, but they don't die out. In many ways, myths cannot really be translated with any accuracy from their native soil- from their own place and time. We will never know exactly what they meant to their ancient audiences. But myths can be used- as they have

> been, so frequently- as the foundation stones for new renderings that find their meanings within their own times and places.

It is very obvious from Atwood's statement that she uses ancient myths in her works as the "foundation stones" for the contemporary realities and preoccupations. By using myths, fairytales and mythical characters in her fictions, Atwood tries "to link contemporary concerns, as exemplified in the popular culture of the day, to those addressed by the great literary masters" (Cooke 2004: 22).

In *The Penelopiad*, Margaret Atwood uses the myths of Penelope and Odysseus as the foundation story for her fiction. Atwood ironically revisits the past and gives the long silenced figures of antiquity such as Penelope and Twelve Maids to tell their own stories from their own perspectives. Although it is relatively short, the multi-layered structure of the novella gives scholars and researches several alternative ways to look at the text ranging from archetypal criticism, revisionist mythmaking to feminism and postmodernism.

In "Flirting with Tragedy", for instance, Earl G. Ingersoll makes a generic study on the novella driving the main argument of his study from the idea that "*The Penelopiad* reads like a very early Greek tragedy" (Ingersoll 2008: 113). In her study, "Five Ways of Looking at *The Penelopiad*", Carol Ann Howells (2006: 5-18) presents us five different ways among "many alleyways in *The Penelopiad* that we might explore". These ways are "Negotiating with the Dead", "Revisioning Myths", "Penelope's Tale", "The Handmaids' Tales" and "*The Penelopiad* as Performance". Mihoko Suzuki's "Rewriting the *Odyssey* in the Twenty-First Century: Mary Zimmerman's *Odyssey* and Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad* (2007) compare and contrast the two different revisions of the ancient myth in contemporary literature. Similarly, Rita Slapkauskaite (2007) and Saman Khalid (2010) analyse the novella in question in terms of its conformity to the idea of postmodern fiction. Kiley Kapuscinski (2007) and Shannon Carpenter Collins (2006) analyse the text in terms of feminism. Hilde Steals (2009) compares and contrasts *The Penelopiad* and *Weight* in terms of the use of parody and burlesque in postmodern rewriting of the ancient myths. In her thesis, Julie Vondamme analyses the several different presentations of Penelope as a myth and a novel character. In this chapter of this dissertation, I will analyse *The Penelopiad* and the characters of Penelope, Twelve Maids and Odysseus in terms of their

associations with Jungian archetypes of rebirth, shadow, trickster, scapegoat, individuation and the relation of modern man to these archetypes.

The myths of Odysseus and his wife Penelope are well-known myths of classical antiquity that have long attracted many the readers and listeners in quite dissimilar societies. Although the myth of Odysseus is an epic tale relating the adventures of its male hero, *The Odyssey* is also the tale of the most unusual marriage and the most loyal wife that is Penelope who shines out as the most notable female character depicted in an epic:

O bless'd son of old Leartes,
Thou at lenght hast won
With mighty virtue thy unmatched wife
How good a knowledge, how untouch'd a life,
Hath wise Penelope! How well she laid
Her husband's rights up, whom she lov'd a maid!
For which her virtues shall extend applause
Beyond the circles frail mortality draws,
The deathless in this vale of death comprising
Her praise in numbers into infinites rising. (*The Odyssey*: 461)

While her husband, Odysseus, is dealing with various obstacles in his way to his homeland, Penelope is also facing with many hardships in her quest of remaining loyal to her husband.

In Homer's *Odyssey*, the story of Odysseus begins with the description of the current state of Odysseus' kingdom which, during his long absence, is crowded and usurped by the arrogant suitors who are frustrated by the delayed marriage decision of Penelope. Odysseus, on the other hand, has been having trouble getting back home. When the story begins, it has been ten years since the end of the Trojan War, and twenty years since Odysseus first left his home and his wife Penelope to set sail for Troy. *The Odyssey*, thus, is based upon the illustrated wanderings of Odysseus after the Trojan War.

Atwood explains her reason of choosing the myth of Odysseus and Penelope for *The Myths* series as such:

> Don't ask me why, because I don't know. Let's just say that the hanging of the 12 "maids"- slaves, really- at the end of *The Odyssey* seemed to me unfair at first reading, and seems so still; and that my brain was addled early in life by reading Robert Graves's *The Greek Myths* (*Publishers Weekly* November 28, 2005).

This is exactly the starting point of Margaret Atwood for her novella *The Penelopiad: The Myth of Penelope and Odysseus*. It is because, she (2006: xxi ) says, "The story as told in *The Odyssey* doesn't hold water: there are too many inconsistencies. I've always been haunted by the hanged maids; and in *The Penelopiad*, so is Penelope herself" (All further references will be to this edition).

*The Penelopiad: The Myth of Penelope and Odysseus* consists of twenty nine episodes. All these episodes are entitled individually. Eleven of those episodes are the chorus lines consisting of the twelve maids of Penelope. As in the case of ancient drama tradition, this chorus of twelve maids comment on the story. The ancient epic characters in this novella go through a rebirth process in a Jungian sense with dramatic changes in their personalities, and accordingly, in *The Penelopiad*, Penelope assumes the role of a trickster figure, Odysseus are the shadow of Penelope, and Twelve Maids, on the other hand, are scapegoat characters reflecting the unconscious and primordial desire of modern men's urge of relieving themselves of their own responsibilities through projection.

At the very beginning of the novella, Penelope tells that while descending to the realm of Hades, everyone carries a sack which is full of words and stories. In these sacks, there are not only the stories that Penelope, Odysseus and the Maids tell about themselves, but also there are stories told about them by others. In Penelope's terms

> each of these sacks is full of words- words you've spoken, words you've heard, words that have been said about you. Some sacks are very small, others large; my own is of a reasonable size, though a lot of the words in it concern my eminent husband (1-2)

Every person is defined through those stories; and each story has different consequences in life. The stories told about Odysseus made him a great hero and a trickster archetype. The stories told about Penelope made her the archetype of ideal, faithful wife. However the stories told about the maids made them mere scapegoats and caused their deaths.

It is very clear that how you are defined to the world through representation and storytelling has important consequences in life. Odysseus is celebrated, Penelope is praised, but the maids are condemned. This is the reason why Penelope feels a necessity to tell her own story. She states that her sack is neither too big nor too small. This moderate size sack filled with the words concerning her husband is carried by her and ironically it symbolizes how she has been silenced during her lifetime and how she has been confined

into the story of her husband. She now realizes that carrying this sack has no use for her anymore.

> And what did I amount to, once the official version gained ground? An edifying legend. A stick used to beat other woman with. Why couldn't they be as considerate, as trustworthy, as all-suffering as I had been? That was the line they took, the singers, the yarn-spinners. *Don't follow my example*… (2).

Here, it is obvious that Penelope is not content with the ideal archetype she has been turned into through her story, or rather through the story that was told about her husband. Penelope has been fated to inhabit the male-defined identity and, inevitably, the male-defined identity inhabits her now. However, she chooses to retell the stories in her sack just as Atwood herself chooses to retell the familiar story from the huge sack of mythology.

The title of the novella, *The Penelopiad*, signals from the very beginning that the story we would soon enjoy reading will be the story of Penelope herself. And From the very beginning, Atwood makes references to the canonical epic poems such as *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, and The *Aeneid*. As clearly understood from the titles, in *The Iliad* the story of the siege of Ilium is singled out; in *The Odyssey* we listen to the heroic adventures of Odysseus from his own narration; in *The Aeneid* Aeneas's legendary journey to Italy sets up the core of the events. And it is very obvious that *The Penelopiad* will be the story of Penelope, and therefore, her own accounts of the ancient story will be singled out in the text.

### 1.1 Transformation from a Simple Housewife to a Female Trickster

As a trickster character in *The Penelopiad*, when Penelope at long last receives an opportunity to tell her own story centering on herself as its main character, her subjective point of view contrasts with the canonical account of Homer. As Atwood's Penelope removes herself from the traditional story-frame where her thoughts and actions are surrounded by ambiguity stemming from her forced silence, and as she narrates her version of the events from a subjective perspective, she chooses to emphasise her own cunning and manipulation of the events. Atwood's Penelope explicitly focuses on her own version of the story through minimizing the significance of Odysseus while, simultaneously, increasing her own: "Now that all the others have run out of air, it's my turn to do a little

story-making. I owe it to myself. I've had to work myself up to it: It's a low art, tale telling" (3-4). Since the old mythological tradition along with the ancient poets died and the myth characters go through a rebirth process in a contemporary literary text, Penelope feels an urge to do her own story-making. Penelope, Twelve Maids and Odysseus are resurrected as words in the twentieth century literature. Penelope explains such a rebirth process as such:

> I have no mouth through which I can speak. I can't make myself understood, not in your world, the world of bodies, of tongues and fingers; and most of the time I have no listeners, not in your side of the river. Those of you who may catch the odd whisper, the odd squeak, so easily mistake my words for breezes rustling the dry reeds, for bats at twilight, for bad dreams (4).

It is obvious from her statement that Penelope addresses to our unconscious mind and she invites us to the mythic mode of consciousness separated from the world of bodies. Gone through a rebirth process, the ghost of Penelope is telling her story from the realm of Hades. She is haunted by the ghosts of the twelve maids killed by her husband. Since being dead now, she claims to know everything that she did not know previously. Therefore, she intends to tell us what is unknown both to her and to us, the readers; she acts as all-knowing narrator.

She starts to narrate her own story from her childhood which she believes has an important influence on the formation of her self-sufficient personality on which she would rely very frequently in the future. She is the daughter of King Icarius of Sparta and a Naiad, a sea nymph. Since the oracle tells him that Penelope would weave his shroud, her father orders her to be thrown into the sea when she is quite young. Nevertheless, she is rescued by a flock of ducks. After this event, she develops a mistrust of other people's intentions, even those of the people closest to her.

Penelope has to survive with her reputation as "all-suffering", "constant" and "quintessentially" faithful wife as she knows well how to manipulate people and events. The one piece of advice that Penelope's mother gave on her wedding day becomes a strategy for Penelope:

> Water does not resist. Water flows. But water always goes where it wants to go, and nothing in the end can stand against it. Water is patient. Dripping water wears away a stone. Remember that, my child. Remember you are half water. If you can't go through an obstacle, go around it. "Water does" (43).

From then on, as befitted to being the embodiment of shadow and trickster archetypes, she begins to go through the cracks of others' stories in order to hide the cracks of her own.

From the episode of "Waiting" onwards, she begins to narrate her life during the twenty years in the absence of her husband. She talks about all the rumours going around about Odysseus's absence. According to one rumour, Odysseus and his companion get drunk at the first port; however according to another one they eat a magic plant and lose their memories. It is told that Odysseus engages in a fight with a one-eyed giant Cyclops, though this giant is actually rumoured to be a one-eyed tavern keeper and the quarrel is over non-payment of the bill. Some say Odysseus is captured by Circe in an enchanted island; however others say it is just a whorehouse. Penelope cynically adds that, at her face, people prefer to tell the nobler versions of the stories related to the battle with the monsters and the quarrels about gods as they prefer to whisper the other versions among themselves.

It is obvious that both Odysseus and Penelope are the embodiments of trickster archetype and that Odysseus is actually the shadow of Penelope. In Greek mythology, Odysseus is a celebrated hero, best known for his quick-witted mind, his cleverness, courage, and his eloquent and persuasive speaking abilities. He is called "Odysseus the Cunning" due to his clever and quick mind. He is a proud and arrogant character. He is the master of disguise in both appearance and voice. Therefore, he is considered to be a complete trickster figure. Moreover, trickster archetype and a cultural hero figure are combined in the character of Odysseus. As a trickster figure and a cultural hero, Odysseus tries to survive the dangers using trickery as defence. Nevertheless, in *The Odyssey*, while the trickster nature of Odysseus is celebrated, Penelope's trickster nature is always suppressed.

Although, Penelope's virtue and fidelity are the most important traits which are strongly emphasized in Homer's version of the myth, there are various other traits of Penelope that need further analysis. For instance, contrary to the general expectations and instead of weeping and mourning for her husband, Penelope cleverly keeps the suitors at bay who are trying to force her into a marriage by usurping the wealth of the kingdom. She also devices a game of shroud to be able to put off the suitors with false promises. She weaves a shroud of Leartes during the day and, at the same time, each night she unravels it with the help of her maids. For three years, she uses this game of shroud as an excuse to

her delayed marriage decision. In this way, Penelope comes over her silence by weaving act. Since the right to utter a word is taken away from her by the male characters and the poet himself, Penelope is expected to display her abilities in her own sphere of the household. Therefore this purely feminine act shows Penelope's quick-witted mind and her trickster nature.

Moreover, as a trickster, Penelope is not a submissive woman character as she is believed to be. When the story is read carefully, it is easy to recognize that on some occasions, Penelope challenges the authority of her husband. For instance, when Odysseus finally reveals his identity, instead of unquestioningly welcoming him, Penelope insists to clearly identify the stranger who claims him to be Odysseus. She challenges his words with the test of bed. This special bed is made by Odysseus from an olive tree and the root of the bed is an integral part of the bed chamber itself. This unusual architecture is known to Odysseus and Penelope only and by questioning Odysseus about this special token before acknowledging him as her true husband, she shows her ingenuity. Under such circumstances, Penelope stands out from the crowd as the most notable female figure in classical antiquity that shines out with her fidelity, loyalty and cleverness. Instead of yielding to the demands of the others, she handles the situation with independence and ingenuity; and without a male assistance she manages a kingdom, raises her son and finds a way to decide upon her future and marriage.

Disguising skill, courage, cleverness and ingenuity are the characteristics of the trickster archetype, and even in the official version of the story, Penelope displays these characteristics explicitly. Nevertheless, Penelope as trickster archetype is suppressed by the general conception of womanhood in Homer's version of the myth, and therefore remained unrecognized. Nevertheless, in *The Penelopiad*, she finds a chance to single out her trickster nature through presenting herself as a trickster archetype

In "The Suitors Stuff Their Faces", Penelope meets her suitors in the underworld. This episode resembles to "Book Eleven" in *The Odyssey*, in which Odysseus descends to the underworld and meets the heroes of the Trojan War. Going beyond boundaries are another ability of trickster figure, because "the trickster figure can move between past and present, between the world of dead and the world of living (Vandamme 2010: 50).

In the episode of "The Shroud", Penelope explains the nature of the "game of shroud" and how she uses trickery as a defence:

> Here is what I did. I set up large piece of weaving on my loom, and said it was a shroud for my father-in-law. All day I would work away at my loom, weaving diligently, and saying melancholy things like 'This shroud would be a fitter garment for me than for Leartes, wretched that I am, and doomed by the gods to a life that is a living death'. But at night I would undo what I had accomplished, so the shroud never got any bigger (Atwood 2006: 112-113).

The shroud itself has been turned into a story and named as "Penelope's Web" which, later on, comes to be used for any task remained mysteriously unfinished. However, Penelope does not like this wording. If the shroud was a web, then, she should be a spider. And she defends herself by saying "I had not been attempting to catch men like flies: on the contrary, I'd merely been trying to avoid entanglement myself" (119). With these statements, Penelope acknowledges her cunning nature as well.

The episode of "Heart of Flint" is perhaps one of the most important episodes in the novella in which we learn the true motivation of Penelope and recognize her as a trickster archetype. At the beginning of the episode, she tells that upon meeting Odysseus after twenty years, she did not immediately go and hug her husband passionately as it would naturally be expected because she thought that her coldness and hard-heartedness would reassure him that she had not been throwing herself into the arms of everyman who came across her way. However through the end of the episode, she completely debunks the myth of Penelope as a paragon of morality and faithful wife, and thus, she creates a new character whose trickster and shadow natures are underlined:

> Odysseus told me of all his travels and difficulties- the nobler versions with the monsters and the goddesses, rather than the more sordid ones with the innkeepers and whores. He recounted the many lies he'd invented and the fraudulent life histories he'd concoted for himself, the better to conceal his identity and his intentions. In my return, I related the tale of the suitors, and my trick with the shroud of Leartes and my deceitful encouraging of the suitors (172).

In the "official version" Odysseus is represented as a great warrior who has dealt with the obstacles relying on his strength, wit and cleverness; nevertheless here Penelope claims that it is herself who as a dutiful wife makes Odysseus seem more important and eminent person than actually he is. With this way, she gains a good reputation, becomes

indispensable to Odysseus and thus no one can dare to question such a devoted wife who dutifully sacrifices her life while enduring the long absence of her husband and looking after her son and estate. So she can get away with all her affairs with her suitors.

Penelope is not happy with becoming a simple desperate housewife legend. She is not content with being known for her weaving, devotion and her discretion. She wants to show how she makes fool of Odysseus who is reputed to be the cleverest hero of the classical age and how she deceives his son, the suitors and even gods, and gets away with her guilt. She tries to show us that her actions have never been manipulated; on the contrary she manipulates others. And this manipulation can only be successfully controlled by her as a trickster archetype.

> The two of us were- by our own admission- proficient and shameless liars of long standing. It's a wonder either one of us believed a word the other said. But we did. Or so we told each other (173).

While telling her motivations, Penelope takes up the role of a trickster that has been attributed to her husband in Homer's version. As Hilda Steals (2009: 109) asserts,

> *The Penelopiad* affirms the official version of Odysseus as a trickster artist, "a spinner of falsehoods". Yet Atwood also delegates the role of a cunning artist to Penelope who repeats and ironically criticises ancient myth.

In *The Penelopiad*, Penelope affirms Odysseus as trickster, and at the same time, by doing so she, unwittingly, recognizes Odysseus as her shadow in terms of trickery and deceit. In her own story, Penelope expresses her abilities in trickery, disguise, cleverness, cunning, the things that did not find a place in Homer's version of the story. When freed from the boundaries and moral codes of the classical world, she feels an urge to tell her own story which has long been neglected: "I can say this now because I'm dead. I wouldn't have dared to say it earlier" (Winterson 2006: 40). She tells her own story to bring out its timeless truths. The readers can also clearly sense that what Penelope says and does still address our most essential fears and desires such as fear from the high powers, an urge to obey the social conventions in order to be accepted by the society, a fear of being a outcast, a fear of punishment and death, a need to be appreciated, a need to express oneself, etc.

In the episode of "Yelp of Joy", Penelope recounts the story of the return of Odysseus. This is also the episode in which the readers can fully understand the resemblance between Penelope and Odysseus in terms of shadow archetype. According to

the Homer's version of the story, upon his return, Odysseus disguises himself as an old beggar with the help of Athena in case there should be a treacherous act against him. In disguise of an old beggar, Odysseus demands an audience with Penelope saying that he brings the news of Odysseus. At one point in their conversation, Penelope tells him about a dream she had, and asks him to interpret this dream. It is because "I described my sufferings at length, and my longing for my husband- better he should hear all this while in the guise of a vagabond, as he would be more inclined to believe it" (138).

This dream has a very important place in the resolution of the main events. The old beggar interprets the Penelope's dream as an omen from gods about the return of Odysseus. He tells that Odysseus will soon return and punish all those suitors who have been tormenting the queen and the kingdom. Upon hearing this interpretation, the queen announces that there will be an axe tournament among the suitors for Penelope's hand for marriage and that the old beggar will be among the contestants.

> I knew that only Odysseus would be able to perform this archery trick. I knew that the beggar was Odysseus. There was no coincidence. I set the whole thing up on purpose (139).

In order to show her gratitude about the news the old beggar brings, Penelope orders her old maid to wash the old beggar's feet. While washing his feet, the old maid recognizes him to be Odysseus thanks to an old scar on his foot. Nevertheless, Penelope has already identified the old beggar as her husband, Odysseus:

> The songs say I didn't notice a thing because Athene had distracted me. If you believe that, you'll believe all sorts of nonsense. In reality I'd turned my back on the two of them to hide my silent laughter at the success of my little surprise (140-141).

Penelope confesses that she has already recognized the old beggar as his husband Odysseus. This is naturally what we can expect from such a clever female character that has been playing clever tricks on people so as to manage her kingdom in the absence of her husband. However, she decides to remain silent as she knows very well that

> if a man takes pride in his disguising skills, it would be a foolish wife who would claim to recognize him: it's always an imprudence to step between a man and the reflection of his own cleverness (137).

Penelope recognizes Odysseus as a trickster figure who is capable of deceiving and manipulating others and accepts his ingenuity. However, she acknowledges herself as the real disguiser and trickster who makes fun of both her husband and others. She unfurls her trickster abilities and by comparing herself with Odysseus. Through her own accounts of the events that have been previously known to us by Homer, Penelope acknowledges herself as a trickster archetype who is involved in the acts of trickery, disguise and shape-shifting so as to survive her reputation as an ideal wife in a male-defined society. Just as Odysseus uses trickery as defence, Penelope uses her abilities as a trickster figure so as to protect herself from being an outcast and a scapegoat

While narrating the events from her own conscious, Penelope, unwittingly, expresses Odysseus as her shadow not only in terms of being trickster but also in terms of brutality and sexual misconducts. In Homer's version of the story, it is obvious that Odysseus has sexual affairs with goddesses and nymphs. In Book 5, it is told that Odysseus has been living with Calypso for several years. The aim of Calypso is to make Odysseus immortal and take him as her husband. He also has an affair with the princess Nausikaa of the Phaecians and Circe. In *The Penelopiad*, Twelve Maids accuse Penelope of sleeping with the suitors. They even claim that Penelope urges Odysseus to kill Twelve Maids since they know the misconducts of Penelope. Penelope herself also admits that there go around the gossips of her sexual conducts: "The more outrageous versions have it that I slept with all of the Suitors, one after another- over a hundred of them- and then gave birth to the Great God Pan" (144). Penelope's colloquial remarks and sexual implications such as "I have to admit that I occasionally daydreamed about which one I would rather go to bed with, if it came to that" (105) make the reader suspect of Penelope and her loyalty to Odysseus. Penelope also accepts that she shares Odysseus' guilt in killing the Twelve Maids. Nevertheless, Penelope's denial of recognizing her shadow shows that she is far from completing the individuation process:

> Others have noted the fact that I did not dismiss or punish the twelve impudent maids, or shut them up in an outbuilding to grind corn, so I must have been indulging in the same kind of sluttery myself. But I have explained all that (144-145).

Penelope prefers to talk about her cunning and her use of trickery as defence, but she is prone to project the blames of the death of Twelve Maids to others: "Who could believe such a monstrous tale? Some songs aren't worth the breath expended on them" (144).

### 1.2 Helen as Shadow of Penelope

Penelope in *The Penelopiad* is presented rather a complex character. On one hand, she is trying to foreground her identity as trickster, and on the other hand, she fails to hide her envy of Helen. In this sense, Helen becomes the shadow of Penelope reflecting Penelope's own desire of being a center of attention in terms of beauty. Helen is famous for her divine beauty; however Penelope considers Helen as nothing but a person of loose morals. Throughout her narration, Penelope confesses that she is not happy about being known only for her devotion to her husband and her weaving act. Since Helen enjoys the things that have been not allowed to be present in Penelope's life, Penelope projects her personal inferiorities and unsatisfied desires to perceived moral deficiencies in Helen.

In the episode of "Asphodel", Penelope broods over the conception of beauty as a myth and she makes a comparison between herself and her cousin, Helen. She states that her cousin Helen is frequently conjured up by the magicians just because she is considered to be the most beautiful woman on earth.

> I never got summoned much by the magicians. I was famous, yes- ask anyone- but for some reason they didn't want to see me, whereas my cousin Helen was much in demand. It didn't seem fair- I wasn't known for doing anything notorious, especially of a sexual nature, and she was nothing if not infamous (20).

On the one hand, the episodes in which Penelope talks about Helen indicate that Helen is the shadow of Penelope, because Helen embodies such things as beauty, love and praise that are not allowed to find an expression in Penelope's life. On the other hand, such episodes also indicate that Penelope has not recognized her individual shadow, and therefore she is prone to projections. Here, Penelope projects her feeling of envy and her unsatisfied desire of showing off her beauty. What Penelope does is to project her personal inferiorities and unsatisfied desires to perceived moral deficiencies in Helen. Penelope criticizes Helen that she has never been punished for her sins and even the gods, just for the sake of her beauty, preferred to forgive her. The instinctive and irrational side of Penelope continues to criticize Helen as such:

> Helen was never punished. You'd think Helen might have got a good whipping at the very least, after all the harm and suffering she caused to countless other people. But she didn't (22).

As for Penelope herself, she is aware of the fact that she is not as beautiful as Helen. That is why she has to present something else in order to survive in the male dominant world.

> I was smart, though: considering the times, very smart. That seems to be what I was known for: being smart. That and my weaving, and my devotion to my husband, and my discretion (21).

These are the things that are considered to be the essential qualities of Penelope. Still, weaving and devotion to husband are not enough to make her special; on the contrary these are what helped her husband be a more distinguished male hero in society. This is why the magicians prefer to conjure up a face that launched a thousand ships instead of a simple wife spending her life weaving a shroud. This is also the reason why no one has ever been interested in Penelope's myth while the myth of Helen has been revived and rewritten over and over again.

### 1.3 The Twelve Maids as Scapegoats

The Twelve Maids of Penelope that appear as scapegoat characters in Homer's version of the myth still continue to have the same function in *The Penelopiad*. Nevertheless, in *The Penelopiad*, Twelve Maids have the privilege of a speaking act, something that they are deprived of in the official version of the story. By allowing Twelve Maids to speak, Atwood criticizes the social and individual tendencies of humans to find scapegoats to relieve themselves of their responsibilities. In this sense, scapegoat archetypes usually appear as the embodiment of the ills of otherwise a decent society. In this sense, Twelve Maids represent the ancient need for a figure upon which people can project their undesirable characteristics. This also signals the persistence of shadow (projection) figure in our consciousness.

The twelve maids which have been totally silenced in Homer's version become important characters in Atwood's novella. They act as a chorus making moral comments on the story that is being told. In the episode of "The Chorus Line: A Rope-Jumping Rhyme", maids are introduced in the story for the first time. In this ten-stanza poem, the maids comment on the importance of having the privilege of speaking:

we did much less
than what you did
you judged us bad
you had the spear
you had the word
at your command (6).

From the very beginning, the maids draw the readers' attention to how they have been exposed to scapegoating. Both in Homer's version of the story and in *The Penelopiad,* Twelve Maids are presented as the embodiments of the scapegoat archetype. As they explicitly express in the poem above, Twelve Maids are subjected to scapegoating and discrimination since, as being slaves, they are deprived of all kinds of defence acts. Apart from being scapegoat archetypes, Twelve Maids become the tangible forms of the ills of society, and most importantly, they reflect the primordial tendency of projection (shadow) in human nature. The idea of scapegoat is the result of individuals' desire of relieving themselves of their relationships to the self and to the others through abdicating their responsibilities upon someone else, and such an abdication is possible only through projection.

In the episode of "The Chorus Line: Kiddie Mourn, A Lament by the Maids", the Twelve Maids tell about their parentage in the same manner as Penelope does in the previous episode. However, the maids do not have nobler things to tell such as king fathers, nymph mothers, gods and goddesses:

> We too were born to the wrong parents. Poor parents, slave parents, peasant parents, and serf parents; parents who sold us, parents from whom we were stolen. These parents were not gods, they were not demi-gods, they were not nymphs or Naiads (13).

They are sold and set to work in the palace. They are forced to do every kind of labour including giving sexual pleasures to the noble men. "our bodies had little value" (14) they say, and thus, imply that their status in society make them vulnerable to discrimination and scapegoating.

In the following chorus episodes, the maids continue to lament for their poor parentage which deprives them of every kind of privilege that the nobles have, even the privilege of speaking their minds.

Oh gods and oh prophets, please alter my life,
And let a young hero take me for his wife!
But no hero comes to me, early or late-
Hard work is my destiny, death is my fate! (52)

Twelve Maids consider being scapegoats as their fate. Twelve Maids become the tangible forms of the ills of ancient society, a society that is prone to involve in discrimination and sexism to support status quo.

In "The Chorus Line: The Perils of Penelope, A Drama", the maids totally debunk the myth of Penelope as a moral agent. It is interesting that this episode is organized as a play-acting section presented by the maids in the form of a dialogue. It has a prologue spoken by Melantho, the favoured suitor of Penelope. In his prologue, Melantho says that "[t]here is another story" (147). While defining the character of Penelope, he uses colloquial adjectives such as "Penelope the Prissy", "no shrinking sissy" (147). He claims that Penelope has been masking her lust and misconduct behind her weeping and moans. The characters of Eurycleia and Penelope are also played by the maids themselves. Through the dialogue between them, Eurycleia and Penelope are talking about how to conceal the sexual affairs of Penelope with the suitors. Only the twelve maids know this fact, and as a result they are murdered. Penelope tries to justify this decision by saying:

And I in fame a model wife shall rest-
All husbands will look on, and think him blessed!
But haste-the suitors come to do their wooing,
And I, for my part, must begin boo-hooing! (151).

It must be noted that this episode is titled as "Drama" and the readers are to decide whether it is to be called a tragedy, comedy or a satire. From the points of the maids, this is a tragedy; a tragedy of their being sentenced to death by conspiracy; the tragedy of the false accusations which will turn them into traitors and scapegoats. Nevertheless, since it includes brazen sexuality and pranks, this episode can considered to be a satire criticizing both the conventions and rituals of the society and the main story told by Penelope. This criticism especially is directed to the scapegoating still prevalent in our times.

In the episode of "The Chorus Line: The Trial of Odysseus, as Videotaped by the Maids", the classical characters and the 21st Century environment are totally mixed together. Here, Odysseus and Penelope are put into trials by the maids. There are attorney,

judge, clients and a videotape. Therefore, this trial scene is used as a symbol of what the writer and we, as readers, do now: We judge and evaluate the old story and the characters from our 21st century perspectives. It is probable that if we were living in a different age or period, our interpretations would possibly be different. While rewriting and evaluating the old story, it is natural that we are affected by the standards of our time and literature as in the episode the judge points out: "However, your client's times were not our times. Standards of behaviour were different then" (182). In this episode Atwood makes the criticism of our so-called flawless and so-called humanitarian society. In this episode, when we build and analogy between the ancient society of Homer, which pursue the act of scapegoating, discrimination, sexism and status quo, and our own society that are still unable to recognize and accept the acts of scapegoating, we can conclude that our modern society has not yet completed its individuation process.

To sum up, such a multi-voiced and multi-perspective nature of this novella is the result of the interrelated use of Jungian archetypes; rebirth, shadow, trickster, and scapegoat. The myth of Penelope and Odysseus is one of the most well-known myths of classical antiquity. The mythical characters in *The Penelopiad* go through a Jungian sense of rebirth process with dramatic changes both in the personalities of the characters and the story worlds. Analysing such a rebirth process in contemporary literary and social contexts enables us to observe how modern men have passed from one mode of thought to the other. In her book *Once Upon a Time: Myth, Fairy Tales and Legends in Margaret Atwood's Writings*, Sarah A. Appleton (2008: 1) claims that

> From the figure of Little Red Riding Hood in *The Handmaid's Tale*, to the retelling of *The Odyssey* in *The Penelopiad*, Atwood's novels re-scrutinize the common assumptions behind the tales and re-conceptualize the feminine and masculine archetypes derived from these narratives. From- in particular- a Jungian perspective, the archetypes no longer hold power; in fact, the traditional figures-, i.e., the virginal maiden, the wicked stepmother; the heroic champion, the wise old woman- come unbound from their rigid restrictions, gaining depth and dimension in Atwood's portrayals.

In a traditional sense, these archetypes such as the virginal maiden, the wicked stepmother, the heroic champion, the wise old woman may no longer hold power; however it is true that the power of these archetypes in the formation of our cultural and individual perceptions is still prevalent in our times. Therefore, to invoke these archetypes and, like Atwood has done in *The Penelopiad*, to redefine and re-conceptualize them in our present

literary and social context is of great importance in analysing primordial behaviour patterns still at stake in our times.

### 1.4 Margaret Atwood as Literary Trickster

Apart from the story characters, the writer of the novella, Margaret Atwood, herself assumes the role of a trickster thanks to her wisdom, knowledge of the ancient myths and mastery in such a revisionist practice. As argued by Steal (2009: 110)

> Margaret Atwood, the cunning female artist who possesses knowledge and wisdom, reaffirms this archetype. Her use of past texts presupposes knowledge of canon, while her critique requires wisdom, or irony. As a cunning trickster, she parodically inscribes (or reweaves) and undermines (or unravels) classical myths and mythical interpretations.

While debunking and rewriting the myth of Penelope and Odysseus, Atwood also projects her own feminist ideas to the character of Penelope. Generally, "Atwood's fiction allows women to play roles usually reserved for men" (Cooke 2004: 24). Penelope's own narration re-defines her identity as a mere ideal wife archetype that has been taken for granted. What Atwood does is to transform Penelope into a storyteller, orator, mythmaker, a trickster, and a successful disguiser. These are the roles that are enjoyed only by Odysseus himself in Homer's version of the myth. This kind of a study is necessary for a woman writer as argued by Gubar and Gilbert in *The Mad Woman in the Attic* (2000: 17):

> [...] she [a woman writer] must come to terms with the images on the surface of the glass, with, that is, those mythic masks male artists have fastened over her human face both to lessen their dread of her "inconsistency" and- by identifying her with the "eternal types" they have themselves invented- to possess her more thoroughly.

As a trickster figure, Atwood crosses the boundaries and goes beyond the realm of Hades. In *Negotiating with the Dead: a Writer on Writing*, Atwood (2003: 159) argues that

> All writers learn from dead. As long as you continue to write, you can continue to explore the works of writers who have preceded you; you also feel judged and held to account by them. But you don't learn only from writers- you can learn from ancestors in all their forms. Because the dead control the past, they control the stories and also certain kind of truth.

Likewise, in *The Penelopiad*, Atwood resurrects Homer and ancient myth of Penelope and Odysseus so as to explore the primordial revelations of human mind. We can still

recognize the presence of archetypes of rebirth, shadow, trickster and scapegoat in literatures and cultures of our times. Such a recognition and acceptance is one of the foremost principles of attaining a personal individuation.

> The dead may guard the treasure, but it's useless treasure unless it can be brought back into the land of the living and allowed to enter the realm of the audience, the realm of readers, the realm of change (160).

As a trickster writer and the shadow of modern man, Atwood explore the changes and the similarities between ancient representations, recognition of rebirth, shadow, trickster, scapegoat, and the apprehension of such archetypes in contemporaneity.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# THE ANALYSIS OF *WEIGHT: THE MYTH OF ATLAS AND HERACLES*

## 1. Ancient Myths Residing in the Consciousness of Modern Man

Jeanette Winterson is the author of 23 literary works as well as many other works including screenplays and journals. Her writing has won many literary awards such as the Whitbread Award for Best First Novel by *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985), the John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial prize by *The Passion* (1987), and the E. M. Forster Award. In her works Winterson generally explores the controversial themes and issues such as gender, sexual identities, fantasy, the power of imagination, and reality, history, art, writing, and storytelling. In short,

> [t]he novels of Jeanette Winterson share an interest in dispersion, in not following a unique theme and, at the same time, they are clear examples of the plural quality of a certain kind of narrative (Sanchez 1996: 95).

Jeanette Winterson challenges her readers by questioning the nature of art, writing, storytelling, and history. Winterson's fiction frequently questions the assumptions about narratorial identity, and the relation between objective reality and fictional artifice. Indeed, in many of her novels, Winterson deals with rethinking and rewriting of history in an ironic way. In her works, she uses fairytale tradition and mythmaking tradition that ultimately become subversive revision and rewriting of the foundational texts of Western literature from a critical perspective. In *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery*, Winterson (1996: 166) claims that

> [w]e are a speculative, subjective, changing people and each new generation considers itself more enlightened than its predecessor; a view that science both encourages and depends on. Literature (all art) takes a different view; human nature, emotional reality is not seen as a progress from darkness to light but as a communication, with ourselves and across time, so that work entirely out of date by scientific standards is as fresh and meaningful to us as it ever was.

It is obvious from her statements that Winterson uses myths and fairytales so as to excavate new meanings and perspectives out of old stories.

In *Weight*, Winterson debunks and rewrites the ancient Greek myths of Atlas and Heracles while raising critical questions about life, its boundaries, individual responsibilities, identity and desire. Here, Winterson's main concern is to explore the limitless possibilities of recognition of the self through the Jungian archetypes of rebirth, shadow, trickster and scapegoat. For Winterson, storytelling and story-making are important ways of enlarging our worldviews. She believes that "stories are a way of making sense differently, of enlarging upon what we are and not being afraid of the unruly elements within it" (Winterson 2006: appendix 5). Thus, storytelling and storymaking provide us with the new forms of understanding the varieties in human nature. The main aim of Winterson's storytelling is to create new ways of changing and shaping one's perception of the self so as to attain a Jungian sense of individuation. Through rewriting the familiar stories, she, herself, aims at foregrounding more hopeful and alternative realization of individual identity and understanding the varieties in human nature.

While debunking and rewriting the ancient myths of Atlas and Heracles, Winterson uses an analytical and critical approach which is entirely absent in the nature of the official myth itself. Within one single story world, Winterson deals with the relations among people of our time and between people and culture as she gives an imaginative apprehension of science and presents different archetypes so as to contribute to the reconsideration and the reinvention of the readers' worldviews.

Like Margaret Atwood, Winterson creates alternative voices by giving a chance to Atlas and Heracles to tell their own stories. However, unlike Atwood, Winterson, here, interrupts the course of the story and tells about her personal life and childhood memories in a way that builds an analogy between the stories of Atlas and Heracles and her own biographical accounts. Therefore, she not only proposes alternative voices but also she provides the readers with different layers of meaning.

Like *The Penelopiad*, *Weight* is divided into fourteen chapters; and those chapters are entitled individually. Moreover, there are an "Introduction" part and a "paratext" to the novella in which the writer explains the reasons how and why she has decided to rewrite the ancient story of Atlas and Heracles.

In the paratext section, Winterson starts out by writing about the formation of a sedimentary rock over long years. She tells that the sedimentary rock is formed on the sea bottom over vast expanses of time. Such a rock consists of various horizontal strata. And while the oldest stratum lies at the bottom forming the core, the newest one lies on the top. And each stratum contains the fossiled remains of the plant and animals. Here, Winterson builds up an analogy between sedimentary rock and the pages of her book. She claims that while the strata of a sedimentary rock contain fossils indicating the time span at which the strata were originally laid down, the pages of a book similarly contain the record of a contemporary life in which they are written.

> The strata of sedimentary rock are like the pages of a book, each with a record of contemporary life written on it. Unfortunately, the record is far from complete. The process of sedimentation in any one place is invariably interrupted by new periods in which sediment is not laid down, or existing sediment is eroded (Winterson 2006: xiii-xiv).

In this paratext section, figuratively, Winterson refers to the relation between the myth tradition and her attempt to rewrite one of the stories from an old mythological tradition. The formation of a sedimentary rock symbolizes the myth tradition. Just like a sedimentary rock, mythologies and myths are formed over vast expanses of time. The common experiences, fears, anxieties and desires of human beings form the myth tradition. Our stories, experiences, fears and desires, in short, our common anxieties about life may change according to the time in which we live. However, we still tend to tell stories to come to terms with the necessities of our time. This is why the formation process is still in continuation. Very similar to the formation of a sedimentary rock, Winterson takes the ancient myth which symbolizes the oldest stratum lying at the bottom and over it, layer upon layer, and she builds a new story which has also multiple layers of meaning within itself. This new story, though having a new appearance now, is closely related to the other strata and to its core.

Like the strata of a sedimentary rock, in this novella, there are different layers of stories. In the core of all these stories, there are the official versions of the myths of Atlas and Heracles, each of which symbolises different aspects of human condition. In another stratum (or a page), there we find the new versions of those ancient stories, this time, however, set in the contemporary world with different endings. In another one, there is also Winterson's own biographical world. Moreover, each reader may find or infer another

different body of meaning related to his/her own psychology. And this will make another stratum over the other ones. This means that the novella intermingles the world of ancient myth with the modern world and the Winterson's own biographical world; and therefore it proposes us different layers of meaning.

In the "Introduction" section preceding the first chapter, Winterson tells about her decision to choose the subject of her novella. She tells that when she was asked to choose a myth to write about, she immediately decided to write the story of Atlas and Heracles without a second thought. It is because,

> these portents, these returns, begin the unconscious connection with the subject, an unconscious connection that waits for an ordinary moment of daylight to show its face (xvii).

This statement of Winterson clearly proves that myths and mythical thinking have still an influential and an arranging function on people's thoughts and lives as mentioned in the previous chapters.

"We think we live in a world of sense-experience and what we can touch and feel, see and hear, is the sum of our reality" (Winterson 1996: 135). However, there are also primordial and archetypal realities that we have to come across in order to complete our individuation processes. In this sense, Myths give explicit shape and content to such archetypal realities that cannot always be explained by pure logical arguments. Myths, therefore, help us understand and come to terms with the bitter realities of life and our own anxieties such as fear, death, loneliness, and desire. This is the reason why Winterson chose the myth of Atlas and Heracles to rewrite. She claims (2006: xviii) that *Weight* is not a simple story of the punishment of Atlas or the adventures of Heracles:

> *Weight* moves far from the simple story of Atlas's punishment and his temporary relief when Hercules takes the world off his shoulders. I wanted to explore loneliness, isolation, responsibility, burden, and freedom too, because my version has a very particular end not found elsewhere.

What Winterson tries to do is to explore the familiar themes of loneliness, isolation, responsibility, burden, and freedom by building up an analogy between those ancient archetypes of re-birth, shadow, trickster, scapegoat and modern man. In this sense, myths provide concrete symbolisms and archetypes that make it easier for the writers to explore the human conditions and reactions in a specific circumstance.

While excavating the ancient myth in order to explore the familiar themes of responsibility, free-will, individual identity, duty and desires, Winterson also excavates her own life and burdens from which she has been seeking a relief like Atlas. She integrates her own biographical story into the story of Atlas and Heracles: "*Weight* has a personal story broken against the bigger story of the myth we know and the myth I have re-told" (xviii- xix). Winterson associates herself with ancient archetypes, and this shows the unconscious connection of human psyche with these ancient archetypes.

The most important reason of Winterson's rewriting the ancient myth is to explore the permanent truths about human nature. She proves that myths are the embodiments of the permanent truths of all human beings firstly, by equating her personal story with that of Atlas's story and secondly, by telling us that how the story of Atlas helps her free herself from her own personal burden:

> All we can do is keep telling stories, hoping that someone will hear. Hoping that in the noisy echoing nightmare of endlessly breaking news celebrity gossip, other voices must be heard, speaking of the life of the mind and the soul's journey (xx).

In *Weight*, we are expected to explore the shared motifs between modern man and the ancient archetypes of rebirth, shadow, trickster, scapegoat, the relation between myth and literature, and the power of myths in arranging people's life. By juxtaposing, the notions such as individual motive versus social integrity, the moral question of boundaries and desires, and fate versus free-will, Winterson analyses their relation with modern man and literature of our time.

In the official versions of the myths of Atlas and Heracles, Atlas belongs to an illustrious family. He is a Titan who is one of the first-born sons of the Earth. They are of enormous size and strengths. Titans, also known as the Elder Gods, were the supreme rulers of the world. Cronos, the head of the Titans, had ruled over the other Titans until his son Zeus dethroned him. With his brothers, Atlas engages in a war against Olympians which is called the Titanomachy. At that time, Cronos is ruling the world with his sister-queen Rhea. Cronos has taken the habit of swallowing all his children since he learned that one of his children would dethrone him in the future. When Rhea gives birth to Zeus, her sixth child, she secretly carries him off to Crete and gives her husband a black stone wrapped in a cloth. Later, when Zeus is grown, he rebels against Cronos and forces him to

disgorge all the children he has swallowed. This event is followed by a terrible war between the Titans and Olympians. At the end of the war, Titans are defeated by the Olympians and Zeus punishes all his enemies. However, it is Atlas who suffers the most terrible fate. He is condemned

> To bear on his back forever
> The cruel strength of the crushing world
> And the vault of the sky.
> Upon his shoulders the great pillar
> That holds apart the earth and heaven,
> A load not easy to be borne. (Hamilton 1942: 69).

In Western culture, the image of Atlas is still used in various ways. He is the symbol of endurance, strength and stoic thinking; obedience. Therefore he is depicted as kneeling down on one knee with a huge globe on his shoulders. Today, his name is equated with "the one who carries" and "the one who endures". The image of Atlas has also become the symbol of a person who works hard and produces much.

On the other hand, Heracles is one of the most famous heroes of Greek Mythology best known for his superhuman strength and the Twelve Labours he has to accomplish. Heracles is a semi- god; the son of Zeus and mortal Alcmena. Zeus's wife Hera has always been jealous of Heracles (as she has the habit of giving troubles to the women whom Zeus has an affair). She tries to murder the infant Hercules by putting a serpent in his cradle. Luckily for Heracles, he is born with great strength and kills the serpent. When he has already proven himself as a great hero and won the great support of his father, he is driven mad out of blue by the goddess Hera. In his frenzy he kills his wife and children.

Heracles decides to consult the Oracle in Delphi about what he should do to regain his honour. The Oracle tells him to go to Eurystheus, king of Mycenae, and serve him for twelve years. As an aonement for his crime, he is sentenced to perform Twelve Labours. The eleventh task that is the main subject of *Weight* is to get the golden-apples of the Hesperides. The encounter of Atlas and Heracles begins when Heracles sets on his eleventh labour that is fetching the golden apples of Hesperides. The Hesperides are the daughters of Atlas and the garden is dedicated to Hera. Therefore Heracles needs the help of Atlas to accomplish this task. Upon meeting Atlas, Heracles makes a bargain with him. The bargain requires Heracles to carry the weight of the heavens on his own shoulders while Atlas is away on duty. Atlas immediately consents to the bargain as it means being

relieved of his burden, though for a short time. At the end of the mission, Atlas returns with the apples; but this time he is too reluctant to take the burden back, because in the meantime he has realised how pleasant freedom is. Therefore he tries to urge Heracles to carry on lifting the weight of heavens for an indeterminate length of time. Angered by this trick of Atlas, Heracles feigns agreement with the proposal. But he says he needs a cushion for his shoulders and asks Atlas to take the weight back just long enough for him to get one. Atlas agrees and takes the weight back. Freed from the burden, Heracles takes the apples and runs away. Although, like Odysseus, Heracles symbolises great bodily strength, courage and power, his intellect is not as strong as that of Odysseus. Throughout his life, he has ultimate confidence of his strength and powers. And this over-confidence is what makes him selfish and arrogant. His motivations are driven by his emotions rather than his intellect. Unlike Atlas, he is rebellious and active.

In the official versions of the myths of Atlas and Heracles, the two characters appear as cultural heroes living upon their bodily strength. The official versions of the myths underline the trickster characteristics of Atlas and Heracles in a Jungian sense: They are both cunning; have dual natures; half human, half divine, and they are exposed to all kinds of tortures. Nevertheless, in *Weight*, Winterson explores the characters of Atlas and Heracles as scapegoat archetypes who are, in one way or other, punished by their society because of what they are. In this sense, they represent the modern man who is condemned to carry on the rules and conventional behavioural patterns of a society in which they live. By adding autobiographical elements into the story of Atlas and Heracles, Winterson associates herself with these archetypes and tells us her own story of how she has been transformed from scapegoat to trickster.

### 1.1 What Makes Atlas a Trickster Is What Makes Him a Scapegoat

In the episode of "Weight of the World", Atlas begins to tell his story starting from his parentage. It must be noted that both Atwood and Winterson begin to tell their stories starting with the parentage of their main characters. While talking about their lineages, the characters, Penelope in *The Penelopiad* and Atlas and Heracles in *Weight*, emphasize the affect of their parents and society on the formation of their individual identities. Atlas gives the mythological accounts of his parentage that have been known to all, that is he is the son of Poseidon, a sea god, and the Earth. He depicts his father as deep, sometimes calm, but never knowing no boundaries and restrictions. On the contrary, his mother, the

Earth, has strong outlines and boundaries. However, the common feature that binds these two totally opposite personalities is their unpredictability. From that union Atlas was born as one of the Titans, half man, half god.

Atlas is living in Atlantis. He has a garden and daughters named the Hesperides, who is tending the garden of Atlas. Therefore, the garden is called "The Garden of Hesperides". It is a special garden because, in this garden, there is a golden apple tree which has been given to Hera on her wedding day by the Earth. Hera loves that tree so much that she assigns the task of guarding it to Atlas. One day, the Titans have revolted against the Olympians; and thus, the war brakes out between these two opposing groups. There are several different versions of the story but the certain thing is that "what began as just a cause became just excuse" (Winterson 2006: 19). The war has continued for ten years. Along with her brother Prometheus, Atlas is punished by the Olympians. Prometheus is condemned as he has stolen the fire form gods; and Atlas is punished as he has engaged in a war with the Olympians over being the sole ruler of the world. "Like my brother Prometheus, I have been punished for overstepping the mark. He stole fire. I fought for freedom (14). Nevertheless, he was hindered by "*Boundaries, always boundaries*" (14).

Here, Atlas is both a trickster and a scapegoat character. "Overstepping the mark", going against the conventions and rebelling against the rules are the typical of trickster archetype. Nevertheless, at the end of the war, Atlas is punished for going against the conventional behaviour and turned out to be a scapegoat character who is condemned to carry the world on his shoulders.

Atlas' punishment is befitted to his character. Besides his being strong, he loves the earth, he knows how to deal with the soil, and he knows the planets very well. Therefore, he has been condemned to carry the world on his shoulders:

> Because I loved the earth. Because the seas of the earth held no fear for me. Because I had learned the positions of the planets and the track of the stars. Because I am strong, my punishment was to support the Kosmos on my shoulders. I took up the burden of the whole world, the heavens above it, and the depths below. All that there is, is mine, but none of it in my control (21).

There could not have been more torturous punishment for a person who loves his possessions and freedom. This was also the reason of the war. He fought for ruling the world; he wanted to take the world as his possession. What he had fought for, suddenly,

turned out to be his own punishment. The entire world now belongs to him. "All that there is, is mine, but none of it in my control. This is my monstrous burden. The boundary of what I am. And my desire? *Infinite space*" (21). What makes him a trickster character is actually what makes him scapegoat.

Every time he tells this story, Atlas remembers it differently and, therefore, he adds up different things to that story. However, every time he comes to the same ending, the same conclusion.

> I keep telling the story again and though I find different exists, the walls never fall. My life is paced out- here and here and here- I can alter its shape but I can't get beyond it. I tunnel through, seem to find a way out, but the exits lead nowhere. I'm back inside, leaning the limits of myself (14).

He has the power to change the shape of his story but he cannot get himself out of the boundaries of that story. That is because Atlas himself is the one who determines the boundaries of his story. He leans on the limits of himself as the world leans of his strength. Nevertheless, he has always been longing for an "infinite space" (16). He interiorizes his identity as a scapegoat so much that he totally ignores his trickster characteristics. Thus, his power of shape-shifting, his cunning, and his cleverness, the things that can rescue Atlas from his monstrous burden remain unrecognized.

This episode also represents the conditions of modern man. As Winterson (1996: 122) argues:

> Save my soul from what? From ordinariness, from habit, from prejudice, from fear, from the constraints of a life not chosen by me but strapped onto my back. How to make the burden fall? Through Books. Language caught and made to serve a master. Ariel across time and space.

Desires and boundaries are the ultimate truths for us. Today, people have technology and all the means to explore what still remains unexplored. We have infinite space as well as infinite desire to know and to have more. However, the more we want to have, the more we destabilise the nature either by means of wars or by means of pollution. Besides these kinds of hindrances, we fear the things that we do not know or explain such as fate, godly punishment, our desires and the boundaries of the world. While yearning for being infinite, we have to lean on our own limits. People unquestioningly tend to adopt the characteristics dictated by society and ignore their desires. Ordinariness, prejudice, habits and the

boundaries/constrains of life entrap people's souls and imaginations. Therefore, we turn out to be our own punishments like Atlas. Just like Atlas, people turn out to be scapegoats. Winterson uses art, literature and language as vehicles through which we can complete our individuation process. Winterson's storytelling as well as that of Atlas is an intellectual activity, and the main objective of this intellectual activity is to create alternative ways of recognizing individual self.

After taking up his burden, day by day, Atlas begins to associate himself with his burden. He begins to hear people speaking. He hears different versions of a single event; different perspectives. He believes that he not only carries the world itself but also carries all the potentialities of it. For him, the world and he is not separate entities anymore. There is only World Atlas. And like Penelope does in *The Penelopiad*, here, Atlas makes references to the ancient mythological tradition in which he has been made into a story: "Listen, there's a man telling a story about the man who holds the world on his shoulders. Everybody laughs. Only drunks and children will believe that" (Winterson 2006: 25). Even though, in our era, the ancient myths are generally considered to be simple stories told out of idle amusement, they tell us about ourselves more than we know about ourselves.

In the episode of "Three Golden Apples", we see that Atlas has finally reached to the tree and got the two of golden apples. It becomes a rather awkward experience for Atlas to feel free again after so many years spent bending under the weight of the world. The more he becomes a part of what he must bear, the more it becomes easy for him to naturalise his duty and fate without questioning them. This is why Atlas begins to question his fixed identity and absolute destiny only after his myth is debunked and only after he is freed from his burden. When his monstrous burden is taken off from his shoulders, he begins to feel the real weight and pain. He realizes that it is not the weight of the world but the weight of his own thoughts and uneasiness about his life that weigh him most:

> He tried to understand the ways of gods and men, and was mentally constructing a giant history of the world. His thoughts kept him from dying. His thoughts kept him from feeling. What was there to feel anyway- but pain and weight? (66).

Here, Atlas turns out to be the symbol of modern man who is constantly engaging in creating grand narratives so as to attribute meaning to the world and also to his place in this world. This discussion, mirroring the situation in which we are living, indicates that

mankind is in a great struggle to live up to the ways of gods and men. In order to feel ourselves more important and aloof, we are embroidering the history of the world with what we have accomplished. We are deliberately exaggerating our duties, responsibilities, the rules and regulations that we have to obey and our places in this world. Generally, we deter ourselves from questioning what we are doing, because the more we question the more we feel the weight on our shoulders. By vigorously dealing with our duties and responsibilities, we try to forget about the boundaries encircling us, and half deliberately, half unconsciously we illusion that we freely live in an infinite space. Entrapped and restricted by the idea of fate, sense of responsibilities, duty and dictated conventions and customs, we tend to naturalize our constructed identities just as Atlas becomes the World Atlas.

This realization comes when he is given a chance to look at his life from a distance, from an objective place. While carrying the world on his shoulders, Atlas can only see the bottom of the world, the part directly touching his shoulders. However, now, he can see the globe in its full shape. At the beginning of the novella, Atlas defines himself as the World Atlas; not as World and Atlas. But, now, a critical distance is put between World Atlas and it becomes World/Atlas again. This means that Atlas begins to recognize himself as a psychological "individual", that is a separate, invisible unity or "whole" (Jung 1955: 275), and thus he is about to achieve his individuation.

When World Atlas becomes the World and Atlas again, the sense of defamiliarization has occurred in him. Likewise, through debunking the myth of Atlas and Heracles, Winterson puts a critical distance between the old story and the text she is writing. In this way, we are alienated from our old assumptions and we begin to question the notion of fate/free-will, responsibility/duty, and desires/restrictions just like Atlas does himself. Like Atlas, we are stripped of our value systems; therefore we are "left to face existence without recourse to accepted judgements of right or wrong" (Nicol 2009: 52).

In "Woof", having taken up his burden back from Heracles, Atlas is watching Mars. Now, Atlas is completely separated from his ancient world and his epic mate Heracles. He is put into the modern world of science and technology. The speaker in the novella signals this dramatic change: "No one told him the old gods had vanished or that the world had changed through a pale saviour on a dark cross" (Winterson 2006: 123). Through this debunking process, our perception of mythic characters has changed as well as the

characters' own perceptions about their identities. In this episode, Atlas meets a dog named Laika. Laika was a Soviet space dog who was the first animal being sent to space; and consequently she became the first animal died in the orbit of the universe in 1957. As little was known about the impact of spaceflight on living creatures at the time of Laika's mission, there was no expectation of her survival. It was thought humans would be unable to survive the launch or the conditions of outer space, so engineers viewed flights by non-human animals as a necessary precursor to human missions. She was forced into a kind of martyrdom.

Laika is still there flying dead around the orbit of the universe. Therefore, she will remain unattended and bounded with ropes around her neck forever till the world ends. While still flying in the tiny satellite, she hits Atlas. Atlas defines her as faithful and trusting as she showed no resistance to people who put her in a tiny capsule and sent her to death. By cracking the satellite, Atlas gets Laika out and unlaces her from the ropes and cables around her body. Laika tells about the world. Her world is the world of 1957 and Soviet Union. Therefore, Atlas thinks that "everyone now ate beetroot and turnip and shivered in zero temperatures in concrete apartments" (133). Laika's story is very similar to our stories. We tell about the things known to us. Today, we can talk about the surface of the earth's atmosphere, the nine planets evolving around the sun and beyond. However, we, still, do know everything and what is unknown to us becomes our boundary. Nevertheless, each day or each era, boundaries change, and humans create new boundaries for themselves. While talking to Laika about these matters, a very strange thought suddenly occurs to him: "Why not put it down?" (134).

During the course of the novella, Atlas changes from an epic hero performing his fate as befitting to the gods' will to an existentialist novella character that questions his identity and thus, begins to see his own story with a new perspective. He slowly puts his weight down, then stands up and raises his head. At last, he is totally liberated from his burden and "nothing happened" (150). This liberation makes Atlas realize that he is not carrying the world on his shoulders; instead he is carrying the things he made up, the things that he believes as being absolute and infinite truths. Actually he is carrying the dictated rules and regulations of his society. "Atlas looked back at his burden. There was no burden. There was only the diamond blue earth gardened in a wilderness of space" (150). During the course of the novella, Atlas meets his shadow (Heracles), he recognizes his identity as

scapegoat, he begins to question the nature of his identity and at the end, he decides to put down his burden and he is stripped off his identity as scapegoat hero. The healing power of individuation makes Atlas realize his individual self better.

The novella ends with inconclusive statements paying attention to the unknown and unpredictable future. “But I think it is Atlas and Laika walking away” (151). This very final line of the novella implies that Atlas is now freed from the boundaries of the novella as he has been freed from his archetypal image of the ancient world. Perhaps Atlas is now walking towards different stories and different endings. These lines also echo Winterson’s statements in the paratext preceding the introduction that the process is still in continuation. Myths are not bound to the notions of time and space as we are.

### 1.2 Heracles: Scapegoat Hero

In “Heracles”, we are introduced to Heracles as a Scapegoat Hero. As son of Zeus, he has great bodily strength and courage. He undertakes difficult tasks relying upon his strength, and thus he is known as the hero of the ancient world. Nevertheless, Heracles’ heroism is a forced one. And now, he is visiting Atlas so as to accomplish his eleventh labour: to steal the golden apples of Hesperides. “ ‘And who’s to balme? Said Atlas. ‘Not your father Zeus, but your foster-mother Hera’” (29). Heracles’ social status and inferior position when compared to Zeus is what makes him scapegoat. People’s social status determines their vulnerability to scapegoating act.

So as to accomplish his eleventh labour, Heracles makes Atlas an offer. He will carry the world himself while Atlas is on his duty to get the golden apples. “I will take the world off your shoulders while you go. Now there’s a handsome offer” (34). This seems to be a fair deal. Atlas is the only person who can get the apples for Heracles. Likewise, Heracles is the only person who is strong enough to carry the weight. After so many ages, Atlas would be relieved off his burden while Heracles would get closer to accomplish his twelve labours. This is how the lives of two different characters are crossed over.

After making the bargain with Atlas, Heracles goes directly to the Garden of Hesperides so as to kill Ladon, the guarding serpent of the garden. It is an easy task for Heracles to kill the serpent, since he has spent most of his life unquestioningly killing someone. There, he meets Hera. Heracles feels that he both fears and desires her. He is

sexually attracted to his own tormentor. They engage in a conversation about fate. Since Heracles considers Hera as his fate, he blames her for all his wrath and agonies. However, Hera is against the idea of fate stating that "If I seem like fate to you, it is because you have no power of your own" (41). It is very interesting that a goddess, a high power, an authority should question the notion of fate. This conversation makes Heracles think about his fate and freedom, and the idea that what if there is always a second choice:

> Until today he had gone about each task unconcerned by the one before or the one after... It was his fate. Fate could not be questioned or considered. Today, for the first time in his life, he thought about who he was (43).

Heracles begins to question his identity. And he realizes that he has associated himself with his own burden very much like Atlas who associates himself with the weight he has been carrying. Like Atlas becomes the World Atlas, Heracles becomes a Scapegoat Hero. Like Atlas, Heracles has not yet realized his individuation; because he still identifies himself through the tasks and forced identity bestowed upon him.

By making her characters question their identities along with the notions of fate/ free-will and desires/boundaries, Winterson challenges the idea of fixed, unitary and coherent type of individual. Her strategy is to reconfigure the ancient archetypes in a way that opens up a space for a possibility of resistance and a construction of alternative and more hopeful realization of identity and individuation on the part of readers.

In the episode of "Thought-Wasp", Heracles and Atlas are engaging in a Socratic conversation about the meaning of life and their function in the order of that life. Heracles is continuously questioning his identity: "Why are we doing this, mate?" (49). However, Atlas is against asking such a question as he thinks that "[t]here is no *why*. There is only will of the gods and a man's fate" (51). Atlas does not believe that there is such a notion as freedom. He associates freedom with a country that does not exist, very much like Utopia. Atlas seems to be too conventional to continue to the philosophical questioning of fate and free-will. Likewise, Heracles is also too distracted to make further comments on the question he has put. Both of them tend to perceive the world and their identities through a range of discursive and narrative constructs, especially meditated by culture, religion and authority. In this sense, Heracles becomes the shadow of Atlas. It is because Atlas recognizes his unwillingness of questioning his identity and conventions as a moral deficiency in Heracles.

The next morning, it is the time to exchange the burdens. Heracles will hold up the world on his shoulders on behalf of Atlas; and Atlas will fetch the golden apples of Hera on behalf of Heracles. Freed from his burden, Atlas goes to the Garden of Hesperides. There, Zeus is waiting for him in disguise. When Atlas enters the garden, Zeus introduces himself as Parsimonious; and warns him that it is Zeus who has ordered Atlas' punishment. Therefore, he might me angry of Atlas now. Atlas mentions about the bargain between him and Heracles stating that Heracles wants to bear his own and Atlas' punishment for a while; and besides he wants to have time to think. Zeus is alarmed on the face of this answer because he says "[r]eal heroes don't think" (57). Atlas explains that Heracles is thinking about himself and his identity. He thinks about the gods' biddings that he has been obeying without any contradiction, and about the validity of such a slavish imitation.

In this encounter, Zeus symbolises the power; the authority. He might be the symbol of all kinds of systems of representation that aim at indoctrination and consensus ideologies with oppressive discourses. He might be the symbol of religion, authority, power, republic, and all that restrict men's free-will and actions by imposing upon them set of rules and regulations which have been naturalised and equated with the eternal truth. This is why he is alarmed upon hearing that Heracles is thinking. Since thinking gives way to questioning, and as a consequence of it, questioning gives way to challenge every kind of totalitarian discourses and representations, therefore, as a representation of authority, Zeus fears that his power would be weakened from within. With such symbolic encounters and philosophical questionings, Winterson continues to work within particular discourse while simultaneously contesting it through an imposition of the promise of a more hopeful realization of identity.

Meanwhile, Heracles becomes tired of carrying the world. The weight of the world is much heavier than he has thought. Especially, while he is thinking about his twelve labours, his fate and his desires, the world is getting much heavier. Heracles realizes that his body is strong but in nature he is very weak; and his "strength was a cover for his weakness" (59). Since no one has ever dared to challenge this tall, heavy and well-built man, Heracles feels confident about himself. Likewise, he has never dared to question the justice of the gods or the notions that he does not understand very well. Nevertheless, his encounter with Atlas makes him sceptical about the things he has naturalised and equated with the eternal truth. When he sees Atlas and how he has become a part of what he must

bear, Heracles is estranged to the idea of duty and fate. Moreover, since the archetypes we have long known are presented in a different context now, we, as readers, are also invited to think about the notions that we equate with the eternal truths. Exchange of the burdens make the characters question their identities openly. The characters begin to question the sense of the self and their relation to the external world beyond their fixed identities.

### 1.3 Jeanette Winterson as Trickster

The first episode of the novella is entitled as "I want to tell the story again". In this episode, Winterson acknowledges that the recurrent language motif of this story will be that expression. In her fictions, Winterson frequently uses recurrent themes such as "I am telling you stories, trust me" (*The Passion* 1987: 13), "Tell me a story" (*Lighthousekeeping* 2005: 46) and "I want to tell the story again" as in the case of this novella. With these statements Winterson, like Atwood, calls her readers' attention on storytelling and writing process. During the course of the story, she haunts the readers with such expressions. In this way, she makes references to writing, reading and the inevitable politics of these writing and reading processes on the formation of personal and social ideologies. She reminds the reader from the very beginning that this novella is not intended to be a pure fantastic work. Therefore, while reading, the readers must pay attention to the way in which the fantasy and the realities of our time, including the writer's own personal realities, are intermingled into the rewritten story of Atlas and Heracles. Thus, a critical distance between the old text and the text of Winterson would urge the readers to look at their world with critical eyes. As Marvel (1990: 168) claims, Winterson is

> hoping all the time that [making stories] will challenge people, both into looking more closely at these things they thought were cut and died and also, perhaps, into inventing their own stories.

The search of the self as a personal quest, the desire to demolish the fixed boundaries both between the individual self and society and between reality and fiction are the main themes of this novella as implied by the writer from the very beginning.

The first sentence of this episode is "The free man never thinks of escape" (Winterson 2006: 3). With this statement, Winterson implies that she will explore the restrictions and limitations surrounding us and our struggle of finding alternative ways so as to free ourselves from those limitations. She backs up this recurrent theme of novella by

frequently repeating the phrase "*Boundaries, always boundaries"* (14). While enlarging the worldview of the readers and proposing alternative ways of constructing individual identity, Winterson mainly focuses on the notion of desire; the notion which is dominated by boundaries. There has always been a conflict between men's desire of being infinite and the limitations imposed upon men. Therefore, in this novella, we will explore this ancient encounter of humans against the notions of free-will, fate, freedom, boundary and limitation. This repeated sentence, "*Boundaries, always boundaries*", constitutes the moral of the novella that is desire opens up new spaces for an alternative realization of individual identity.

From the second paragraph onward, Winterson focuses on the creation of the world. Here, Winterson alludes to the imaginative apprehension of the world and the science: At the beginning there was nothing. There was no time and space concept. There was just a huge void. One day this happiness was brought to an end by the creation of the world along with the time and space concept. Afterwards, human beings and other living creatures came out and everything in the world was arranged in a way that fits into the notions of time and space. Today, we know the world we created; we believe in hell we invented. This creation process is depicted in a very scientific language so as to fit it in the era in which we live. It is because we have been learning about the atoms, radioactivity, uranium, radium, big bang. Therefore we tend to explain what is going around us with such terms and knowledge. However, different cultures are telling different creation stories according to their cultures, their knowledge of the world, in short, according to time in which they live. After all, it is a kind of make-believe game: " 'Tell me the time' you say. And what you really say is 'Tell me a story'" (7). It means that all sorts of human acts, let it be literary, scientific, religious or politic, are turned into stories that serve the ideologies of the time in which they are produced.

Like Atlas, Winterson realised that she was free to choose her own destiny when she freed herself from her own burden that she had been carrying by leaning on the limits of her own. In "Leaning on the Limits of Myself", Winterson intermingles her own biographical story with those of Atlas and Heracles. The writer's personal story constitutes another stratum of this multiple layered story world. Like Atlas and Heracles, the personal story of Winterson is marked by her struggle for self-knowledge and freedom and her refusal to be the victim of oppression and scapegoating.

Winterson makes her own definitions of fate and decision. She claims that there exists a complex relationship between these two terms. We define fate as just the opposite of what decision is; and we tend to equate fate with life. When Winterson was born, her biological mother gave her away as an orphan. Later, she continues to tell, her adopted mother also rejected her. These were the decisions of her mothers; but they became Winterson's fate. The decisions made by others and the things that Winterson calls her fate constitute her present and future as well as her past. As she has no one to carry her, she says, she has learned to carry herself: "we tease ourselves with fancy notions of free will and self-help courses that direct our lives" (99). At this stage of her life, Winterson embodies the scapegoat character since she becomes the victim of her own biological parents.

She tells her own story so as to set an example of how the stories of Atlas and Heracles are rewritten in a way that decodes the condition of modern man. What you consider as fate might be a decision of someone else. Likewise, what you believe to be your fate might actually be your own decisions. Through the ancient story of Atlas and Heracles, Winterson explores the varieties of the character possibilities.

The ancients believed in fate; because they had already reconciled with the fact that humans were not capable of changing everything. Therefore, the notion of fate made it easier for people to accept the bitter realities of life. The notion of fate was arranged in a way that made people to understand and to accept the painful realities of existence such as fear, death, fate, and misfortune. By explaining them as sacred orders of the universe, myths helped people to discover the value of life together with all those chaotic situations they might face through the stages of their lives. However, we are alienated to this wisdom of life. Therefore, we do not know how to define and cope with the notions of fate/free-will and desires/boundaries. Today, modern men are torn apart between the "force of patterns inherited and patterns re-enacted by our own behaviour" (99). On one hand, we want to be infinite in this world that is believed to be infinite; on the other hand, however, we want to find a consolation in life in the face of our failures by crediting a presence of a high power in those failures. We yearn for being infinite through our success and accomplishments in the world. However, in the face of a danger or a failure, we tend to credit a name of a high power, let it be a god, fate, custom, authority; in short, everything that limit men's free-will. We live in a world that we have created, likewise, we believe in fate and gods that we

have invented. In our struggle of being infinite, we draw our boundaries and limits by ourselves. It means that we are leaning on our own limits. And this is why modern men undergo an Atlas Complex.

> We mostly understand ourselves through an endless series of stories told to ourselves by ourselves and others. The so-called facts of our individual worlds are highly coloured and arbitrary, facts that fit whatever fiction we have chosen to believe in. It is necessary to have a story, an alibi that gets us through the day, but what happens when the story becomes a scripture? When we no longer recognize anything outside of our own reality? (Winterson 1996: 59)

We know the story of Atlas and Heracles and who they are from the mythological tales of classical antiquity. Through this tales Atlas becomes "world Atlas" and Heracles becomes a scapegoat hero. Both Atlas and Heracles begin to associate themselves with their constructed identities. Likewise, we mostly construct our identities through the scriptural authorities in our lives. So as to free ourselves from the restrains of our society and reason, we have to count upon our imagination through which we can recognize our real selves. Likewise, in *Weight*, both Atlas and Heracles and Winterson struggle against "*Boundaries, always boundaries"* (Winterson 2006: 14). Winterson argues that such a struggle against the boundaries of life and reality can be made through imagination and fantasy.

> Struggling against the limitations we place upon our minds is our own imaginative capacity, recognition of an inner life often at odds with the external figuring we spend so much energy supporting. When we let ourselves respond to poetry, to music, to pictures, we are clearing a space where new stories can root, in effect we are clearing a space for new stories about ourselves (Winterson 1996: 60).

In *Weight*, by building up an analogy between her story and the story she is writing, Winterson tries to make her readers to think about their own lives and, therefore, she invites her readers to add up various different strata, each of which is constituted as a result of the readers' critical approaches to the text, to the existing strata of the story world. This prevents the readers from being the passive consumer of the text.

In "Desire", Winterson interrupts the course of the story with her biographical accounts. As she frees Atlas from his burden, now she is trying to liberate herself from the burden of her past and present. According to her own biographical accounts, she still does not know anything about her biological parents. Her biological parents mean nothing more than DNA for her. She was brought up by her adopted parents. When she was a kid, it was

the time of war. And the fear of death changed all her life. The guns and gas-masks drew so strict boundaries of her family's life that even after the war was over, her parents continued to live as if the war were still going on. As in the case of "[t]he free man never thinks of escape" (3), at those times, Winterson was inventing her own ways out of the world by pondering over the globe. She was becoming a character in her own fictions, and by this way, she had a chance to escape the realities of her time. In real life, however, she could free herself from the realities of her own life only when she rejected to accept the conventional identity models dictated by her adopted parents.

> I thought that if I could only keep on telling the story, if the story would not end, I could invent my way out of the world. As a character in my own fiction, I had a chance to escape the facts. There are two facts that all children need to disprove sooner or later; *mother* and *father*. If you go on believing in the fiction of your own parents, it is difficult to construct any narrative of your own (139).

She put down her weight by creating a world of her own that is not defined by any authority but her. She has managed to throw her weight off by stepping out of the boundaries of her family as her heart desires by way of constructing her own identity.

In the world of ancient myths whose boundaries are defined in very strict and absolute terms, Atlas and Heracles could not find a chance to construct narratives of their own. In her novella, Winterson gives them a space and a freedom to fabricate new stories for themselves with the same beginnings but different endings. She separates the old story from its traditional environment just as she tries to separate herself from the traditional concepts such as family. By debunking and retelling the story, Winterson finds a chance to express herself, her weight and the way she handles with her own burden. At that point writing and myth studies become an important medium for her in her struggle of understanding the life itself. She pursues her art not for its own sake but for "experiences that will enrich your understanding of life and Human Condition" (Atwood 2003: 94). She identifies herself with her characters accepting that she shares something common with these archetypal images as we all do. Winterson argues (1996:26) that

> Those Greek myths warn us of the dangers of recognizing no reality but our own. Art is a way into other realities, other personalities. The book does not reproduce me, it re-defines me, pushes at my boundaries, shatters the palings that guard my heart. Strong texts work along the borders of our minds and alter what already exists.

In line with what Joseph Campbell argues about the study myths, she ponders over the myths of Atlas and Heracles to get her experience of being alive in equal and friendly terms with her own innermost reality. Winterson wants to tell the story again for its own sake, for her own sake. She mirrors her emotional life through the stories of Atlas and Heracles. While excavating an ancient story, she is actually excavating her own psychology and the shared fantasy of human beings. As Arlow (1961: 375) argues

> Accordingly, the myth can be studied from the point of view of its function in psychic integration- how it plays a role in warding off feelings of guilt and anxiety, how it constitutes a form of adaptation to reality and to the group in which the individual lives, and the formation of the super ego.

It is very obvious that Winterson chooses to study myths so as to find clues about the wisdom of life and her own innermost realities. By building up an analogy between her personal life and the stories of Atlas and Heracles, Winterson gives way to her own anxieties about her own struggle of getting over the boundaries in her life. By debunking the stories of Atlas and Heracles and by explicitly laying bare of her own biographical account, she invites the readers to explore the shared motives in their own lives. Moreover, the readers are invited to explore the myth tradition with a more philosophical approach.

# CONCLUSION

## 1. "I want to tell the story again"[1]

As this study illustrates, each culture produces its own myths so as to secure fundamental rituals and politics for individuals to create a sense of belonging to a society. The contents and the characters of myths are shaped according to the present necessities of our times: We do not recognize certain cognitive structures as "myths" mainly because we still experience them. People still need myths, because the psychological dimensions present in god-people, individual-society, husband-wife, child-parent, and also archetypes related to creation, birth, death and the awe of afterlife are still valid today as they were in the past.

Myth is not merely a pre-scientific and primitive form of knowledge which exists to satisfy primitive man's curiosity about the world. As pointed out in the first chapter, prominent myth critics such as Nietzsche, Frazer, Jung, Kerenyi, Levi-Strauss, Barthes, Campbell and Losev all agree in their definitions of the term that there are fundamental relations between myths and reality, culture, and history. Myths are the collective creations of humans. Therefore, they can be considered as powerful social realities which govern the thinking and behaviour of a large group of people. Relation of the myths to the most essential aspects and traits of human life and their ever-changing quality is what makes them worthy of reconsideration in today's literature.

Interpretations of traditional and ancient myths, as argued in the second chapter, vary from a mere analysis of the similar patterns across different literary works to aesthetic and artistic reconsiderations, and from criticism and irony to self-expression. As argued in the second chapter, there are three fundamental reasons for myths to become a central concern for a large body of the 20$^{th}$ Century criticism. In the first place, myths provide us with certain archetypes, such as rebirth, shadow, trickster, and scapegoat, all of which reveal the symbolic images and tendencies of humans stored in the collective unconscious. Since

[1] This is the recurring language motif and also the title of the first episode of *Weight* (Winterson 2006: 1).

myths are the symbolic expressions of the arcane and permanent tendencies in human nature, they also provide the writers with means of exploring the universal human behaviours and characteristics.

> it is fair to say that the literary attractiveness of mythology is due to its enduring depiction of significant and sometime very uncomfortable relationships, some admittedly between man and his environment, but others of at least equal importance between man and his fellow men, and between man and his deities (Workman 1981: 36).

Another fundamental characteristic of myth that makes it appropriate for revisions in literature is its evolutive capacity and its dynamism. These two traits are the very essence of the notion of timeless myth. Thanks to their evolutive capacity and dynamism, myths change their shapes and contents according to the present necessities of time and society. Moreover, while explaining the universe and the phenomena that belong to it as the part of a cosmic order, myths, thanks to the imaginative function of mythical thinking, also liberate the human mind from the notion of time and place by creating the promise of an entirely alternative mode of existence.

In *The Penelopiad* and *Weight*, this study analyses the Jungian archetypes of rebirth, shadow, trickster and scapegoat along with the impact of these archetypes on human psyche in terms of individuation. While analysing the universal tendencies in human nature through ancient archetypes, Atwood and Winterson seek for cultural and philosophical representations and interpretations of the ancient archetypes in the modern world. The main aim of these writers, therefore, is to promote fresher and alternative ways of understanding sexual, emotional and intellectual self through ancient representations.

Jung (1955: 280) argues that "[t]hinking existed long before man was able to say: "I am conscious of thinking". Such a self realisation is possible only through the integration of conscious with the unconscious. The Jungian term of such integration is individuation. Individuation is a natural and necessary process of becoming a healthy individual. It is because

> [c]onscious and unconscious do not make a whole when one of them is suppressed and injured by the other. Both are aspects of life. Consciousness should defend its reason and protect itself, and the chaotic life of the unconscious should be given the chance of having its way too-as much of it as we can stand (Jung 1955: 288).

Accordingly, *The Penelopiad* and *Weight* present us various different character representations stored in the collective unconscious mind. Jungian archetypes of rebirth, shadow, trickster, and scapegoat are presented through the relations of these archetypes to each other and, in general, to society. “We do not think of distrusting our motives or of asking ourselves how the inner man feels about the things we do in the outside world” (Jung 2002:60). Both Atwood and Winterson explore various possibilities of recognition of the self with the help of imagination and creativity in an age in which the unconscious mind is suppressed by reason.

In the official versions of the myths, the characters of Atlas, Heracles, and Odysseus; Penelope, Twelve Maids are presented as stock characters of hero, ideal wife, and slaves respectively each representing a different aspect of ancient society. This study illustrates the characters in *The Penelopiad* and *Weight* as Jungian archetypes of shadow, trickster, and scapegoat: In *The Penelopiad*, Penelope singles out her abilities in trickery, disguise, and cunning, the things that did not find a place in Homer’s version of the myth. When freed from the boundaries and moral codes of the classical world, Penelope takes up the role of a trickster that was attributed to her husband in the official version of the story. While narrating the events from her own unconscious, Penelope unwittingly identifies Odysseus as her shadow not only in terms of being trickster but also in terms of brutality and sexuality. The character of Helen also becomes the shadow of Penelope in *The Penelopiad*. Since Helen enjoys the things that have been not allowed to be present in Penelope’s life, Penelope projects her personal inferiorities and unsatisfied desires as perceived moral deficiencies of Helen. The Twelve Maids of Penelope appear as scapegoat archetypes just as they do in Homer’s version of the myth. Nevertheless, in *The Penelopiad*, they have the privilege of speaking act. They represent the ancient need for a figure upon which people can project their undesirable characteristics so as to relieve themselves of their responsibilities and faults.

In *Weight*, Atlas and Heracles are presented as scapegoat heroes who are punished for what they are. Overstepping the mark, going against the conventions and rebelling against the rules are typical of trickster archetype. Nevertheless, these two characters are punished because of their trickster natures. Throughout the story, the characters question their identities along with the notions of fate-freewill and desires-boundaries. In *Weight*, the ancient archetypes are rewritten in a way that opens up a space for a possibility of

resistance and a construction of alternative and more hopeful realization of identity and individuation on the part of the readers. In this study, the writers, Atwood and Winterson are also analysed as trickster archetypes. As trickster figures, both writers crosses the boundaries and go beyond the ancient stories that we have known for so long. While excavating ancient stories, the writers actually excavate the contents of the collective unconscious of humanity. As stated in the paratexts of the novellas, the writers chooses to study on myths so as to find clues about the wisdom of life and people's innermost realities.

This study shows that myth studies and literature are equally important as psychological studies so as to attain individuation. As argued by Jeanette Winterson (1996: 117) "[a]rt is a shared human connection that traces the possibilities of past and future in the world of now". Primordial revelations and representations of human minds are reborn in contemporary literary and social contexts, and in that way, both the writers and the readers have a chance to struggle against the limitations we place upon our minds as a result of over-adherence to reason and conscious. "The individual is increasingly deprived of the moral decision as to how he should live his own life, and instead is ruled, fed, clothed and educated as a social unit" (Jung 2002: 8). Through creating mythic awareness, Atwood and Winterson create modern texts through which readers in quite dissimilar societies can trace "the possibilities of past and future" in the world of contemporaneity.

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# DEBUNKING AND REWRITING OF THE ANCIENT MYTHS IN THE WORKS OF MARGARET ATWOODN AND JEANETTE WINTERSON

MERVE DEMİRTAŞ