

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

The poem “Eurydice” by Hilda Doolittle, which has a mythical resemblance from the Greek myth “Orpheus and Eurydice,” portrays the phenomenon of oppression experienced by the persona ‘I,’ who is later known to be Eurydice itself. The Greek myth “Orpheus and Eurydice,” which becomes the foundation of this poem, depicts the tragic love story that separates Orpheus and Eurydice between the upper world and the underworld. The myth focuses on Orpheus’ attempt to save Eurydice from the underworld, but the poem “Eurydice” focuses on Eurydice’s journey to survive in the underworld.

This study is concerned with Hilda Doolittle’s Poem “Eurydice.” In the book entitled *H.D. Collected Poem* by Hilda Doolittle, there are five chapters, and each chapter contains several poems, including, the chapter *The God*, in the second chapter of the book, to which the poem “Eurydice” belongs. This poem tells the story of Eurydice, as the persona ‘I,’ who is trapped in the underworld for a second time because Orpheus was unsuccessful in rescuing her. The poem examines Eurydice’s longing for freedom and her defiance of oppressive forces that seek to control her. This study is intended to describe the persona ‘I’ in the poem, specifically the feelings of being oppressed that the persona ‘I’ renders.

It is possible for someone to deny or dismiss the existence of oppression experienced by an individual or a group while still recognizing that they may be the subject of oppression (Frye, 1983:2).

This study is carried out as library research. The writer adopts Abrams' concept of mimetic approach and Marilyn Frye's theory of oppression. The analysis comes in two stages: mythical allusion and oppression. Since "Eurydice" is a poem that is influenced by Greek mythology, it is necessary to apply allusion to establish a relationship between the poem and the mythical background against which it was written. The analysis results in the poem "Eurydice" as a response to the Greek myth "Orpheus and Eurydice" and the persona 'I' struggling to face oppression. This study is expected to be beneficial for the general readership as well as readers of English literature.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the topic and the background of the study, writer found three questions to be formulated. The following are the formulation of the research questions:

1. How does the relation between the poem "Eurydice" and the Greek myth "Orpheus and Eurydice"?
2. How is the oppression of the persona 'I' portrayed throughout the poem?

1.3 Objectives of Study

The following are the objectives of the study, based on the research question:

1. To identify the relation between the poem “Eurydice” and the Greek myth “Orpheus and Eurydice”
2. To identify the oppression of the persona ‘I’ portrayed throughout the poem.

1.4 Previous Study

The writer found four studies on “Eurydice” by H.D. as the object of the studies that has the most relevance to the least with the topic chosen by the writer. The first study is an academic journal of English and American studies entitled *Revisionist Myth-Making In H.D.’s “Eurydice”* by Cristina Salcedo González. González analyzes “Eurydice” poetry through myth-criticism. In her analysis, she recognizes that H.D. uses a new strategy to disassociate her poems from the dominant mythological story, allowing the poet to compete with the existing classic story. The finding shows that H.D. contributed to the rewriting of the myth from a female perspective as well as the way she created various classic stories. The author focuses on H.D.’s method of revolutionizing mythical stories through poetry from her own perspective.

The second study is an English literature thesis entitled *Exploring Queer Poetics in H.D.’s Archive and “Eurydice”* by Tess Oberholtzer. Oberholtzer describes how H.D. deviates from social and modernist norms, which allow her to set her boundaries or rules while exploring her queer identity, from her earlier defensive dis-identification to the point at which she finally realized it and

expressed it through poetry. The queer theories of reticence by Catherine Imbriglio and dis-identification by José Muñoz is applied in his study.

The third study is a twentieth century study in literature entitled *H.D. and Eurydice* by Margaret Bruzelius. Bruzelius sees the conflict between the idea of a distinct gazer and the surrounding universe as perfectly captured by H.D.'s writing in these poems. H.D. develops a strategy for widening vision by layering it in her subsequent usage of pictures such as the palimpsest, the signet, and the hieroglyph, ensuring that there can be no limited relation between the gazer and the gazed.

The fourth study is an article entitled *First-Wave Feminist Notions in H.D.'s "Eurydice"* by Raluca Reinerth. The article discusses the feminist elements present in H.D.'s "Eurydice." The findings show that "Eurydice" depicts the essence of the first feminist wave, a first wave of female empowerment.

The previous studies above mainly focused on Hilda Doolittle's poem "Eurydice." In the first study, González talks about the way Hilda Doolittle rewrites myth through her poem by applying the tactic of re-visionary mythopoesis towards poetic displacement; second study focuses on the queer identity that Hilda expresses through "Eurydice" poem; third study discusses the conflict between the idea of a distinct gazer and the surrounding universe as perfectly captured by H.D.'s poem "Eurydice;" fourth study discusses the feminist elements present in H.D.'s "Eurydice." However, this thesis differs from the previous studies above, as this thesis discusses the oppression that the persona 'I' confronts throughout the poem by using theory of oppression,

also identifying the relation between H.D.'s poem "Eurydice" and the Greek myth "Orpheus and Eurydice" by applying mimetic concepts.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The oppression experienced by the persona 'I,' or Eurydice itself, which has mythical resemblances from the Greek myth "Orpheus and Eurydice," becomes the topic of this study. Thus, the scope of the study is to discuss the mythical allusion and the oppression occur in Hilda Doolittle's poem "Eurydice." The analysis will consist of denotation connotation of the poem, poem's allusion, the relation between the poem "Eurydice" and the Greek myth "Orpheus and Eurydice," and the oppression of persona 'I' by applying the mimetic concept by M. H. Abrams and theory of oppression by Marilyn Frye. The poem "Eurydice" by Hilda Doolittle

1.6 Organization of Writing

Chapter I: Introduction

The first chapter consists of the Background of Study, Research Question, Objectives of Study, Previous Study, Scope of Study, and Organization of Writing.

Chapter II: Theory and Method

The second chapter consists of theories and methods used to analyze the study. Theories that are used are theories of lyric, denotation connotation,

allusion, mimetic, and oppression. Moreover, the research approach is mimetic, and library research is the method of collecting the data.

Chapter III: Oppression on the Persona ‘I’ Portrayed in H.D’s Poem “Eurydice”

The third chapter consists of the result analysis based on the topic and the research questions, which focus on the oppression of the persona ‘I’ as well as the relation between the poem and the Greek myth. The analysis will use the theories from Chapter II.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

The last chapter of this study explains the conclusion from the analysis of the study.