Chapter 5

A Feminist Reading of an Oriental Tale: “Crystal Manor and Diamond Ship”

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ABSTRACT

Tales, which have an important place in the process of socialization, contain various ideological constructions like other narratives. This study aims to analyses an important tale of Turkey’s tale corpus named “Crystal Manor and Diamond Ship” by the terms of feminist critics. This tale is considered among the tales of Anatolian field and is similar to some western tales such as Rapunzel. However, in terms of subject positions, which are one of the focal points of feminist criticism, the main female character, unlike most fairy tales, seems to be planning and implementing the actions that advance the plot, rather than waiting for a man to rescue her.

INTRODUCTION

Tales, which have an important place in the process of socialization, contain various ideological constructions like other narratives. Tales, which are an important part of culture, are collective cultural products and one of the tools that reflect and reconstruct the dominant ideology in society. They, which are an important actor
in the socialization of children, are often examined with their role in education. However, feminist theory is an area of interest as fairy tales are one of the areas where gender definitions are made and these are transferred to new generations. “Although feminisms are multiple, feminists do share certain beliefs. Feminist critics generally agree that the oppression of women is a fact of life, that gender leaves its traces in literary texts and on literary history, and that feminist literary criticism plays a worthwhile part in the struggle to end oppression in the World outside of texts.” (Eagleton, 2013: x). This study aims to evaluate an important tale of Turkey’s tale corpus which named “The Crystal Manor and The Diamond Ship” by the terms of feminist critics. This tale is considered among the tales of Anatolian field and is similar to some western tales such as Raphunzel (Saluk, 2018). However, when it is evaluated through some concepts of feminist theory –such as subject positions-, it can be said that it remains outside the patriarchal discourse.

FEMINIST CRITICISM AND TALES

Feminism is an intellectual movement, which, before all, is concerned with the social roles and positions of the women and the men. Feminism is a doctrine that aims at the women’s having the same rights with the men, and the eluding of the women from the legal and social inequalities (Bolay, 2004: 229). Despite being a women or a men is a result of a biological process, today the women and the men have been casted different roles in today’s society. In that sense feminism is against sexism. It criticizes the behavior of the men; such as the insulting and disregarding of the women. (Butler, 2012: 87). Feminism criticism, with its works, reveals the commoditization of the women-body and the gender apartheid during the course of the history (Antmen, 2012: 8).

Feminist criticism had appeared in the sixties as a result of the social and political struggles in USA, Britain, and France; and then had been adapted in the field of literature (Moran, 2002: 249). The first modern work of feminist criticism is Virginia Woolf’s “A Room of One’s Own”, which was published in 1929. Woolf, in her masterpiece, mentions that even the language itself is a means for gender apartheid (Güzel, 2007: 26), and that in general the position of the women in the society is lower than the men’s. The book emphasizes the discrepancy of the women in the social, literal, and cultural senses (Hum, 2002: 18).

Feminism has three basic issues. The first is the means of oppression against the women, and their differences with the men in the sense of power. In that sense, the principles to minimize the differences have been investigated. The second is mainly about the biological gender. It tries to show up the reasons for the differences
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