

**ABJECT REPRESENTATIONS OF FEMALE DESIRE IN POSTMODERN
BRITISH FEMALE GOTHIC FICTION**

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ABSTRACT

ABJECT REPRESENTATIONS OF FEMALE DESIRE IN POSTMODERN BRITISH FEMALE GOTHIC FICTION

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The aim of this dissertation is to study postmodern British Female Gothic fiction in terms of its abject representations of female desire which subvert the patriarchal definition of female sexuality as repressed and female identity as the object of desire. The study analyzes texts from postmodern Female Gothic fiction which are feminist rewritings of the traditional Gothic narratives. The conventional Gothic plot is based on the Oedipal development of identity which excludes the (m)other and deprives the female from autonomous subjectivity. The feminist rewritings of the conventional Gothic plot have a subversive aim to recast the Oedipal identity formation and they embrace the (m)other figure in order to blur the strict boundaries between the subject and the object. Besides, these rewritings aim to destroy the image of the victimized heroine within the imprisoning conventional Gothic structures and transgress the cultural, social and sexual definitions of women constructed by patriarchal sexual politics. The study bases its analyses on Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*, and Emma Donoghue's *Kissing the Witch: Old Tales in New Skins* as examples in which patriarchal definition of the female desire as passive is destroyed and the female desire as active is promoted by the adoption of abject representations, which challenge the strictly constructed hierarchical relationships between men and women. Basing its argument on Julia Kristeva's psychoanalytical theories, which re-

vision the traditional psychoanalytical theories, this study puts forward that by the emergence of postmodernism, which has overtly provided a ground for the marginalized discourses to get into dialogue with the oppressive ones, the abject representations of female desire have gained a positive characteristic that can liberate female body from the control and authority of the male-dominated ideology. Thus, one can chronologically follow the positive development of abject representations of female sexuality in Rhys's, Carter's and Donoghue's works which promote a liberation for the Gothic heroines from patriarchal psychoanalytical identity development, which render female desire active and female body expressive, which rehistoricize female sexuality from a feminist lens and which call for a new world order built upon an egalitarian basis that destroys hierarchically constructed gender roles. As a result, postmodern British Female Gothic Fiction is proved to be offering a utopian ideal of an egalitarian society, but although utopian and radical, not an impossible one to be realized.

Keywords: Female Gothic, abject, Jean Rhys, Angela Carter, Emma Donoghue.

ÖZ

POSTMODERN İNGİLİZ KADIN GOTİK YAZININDA KADINLIK ARZUSUNUN ABJECT TEMSİLLERİ

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Bu tez postmodern İngiliz Kadın Gotik yazınının ortaya koyduğu kadınlık arzusunun abject temsillerini incelemeyi amaçlar. Bu abject temsiller, ataerkil ideolojinin kadın cinselliğini bastırılmış ve kadın benliğini de bir arzu nesnesi olarak tanımlamasına karşı çıkarak bu geleneksel tanımları yıkmayı hedefler. Bu çalışma postmodern Kadın Gotik yazınına örnek belli başlı metinleri geleneksel Gotik anlatılarının feminist bakış açısıyla yeniden yazılmış olanlarından seçer. Geleneksel Gotik olay örgüsü anneyi ve ötekiyi dışlayan ve kadını bağımsız bir özne olma durumundan alıkoyan benliğin Oedipal gelişimi üzerşne kurulmuştur. Geleneksel Gotik olay örgüsünün feminist bakış açısıyla yeniden yazım örneklerinin yerleşmiş kavramları yıkmaya yönelik bir amacı vardır. Bu da Oedipal benlik oluşumunu baştan şekillendirmek ve anneyi ve ötekiyi kucaklayarak özne ve nesne arasında katı bir biçimde çizilmiş sınırları silmektedir. Bunun yanısıra yeniden yazma stratejisini benimsemiş olan eserler Gotik yapılar içerisine hapsedilerek kurban edilen Gotik kadın kahraman imgesini yıkmayı ve ataerkil cinsel politikalar tarafından ortaya konan kültürel, toplumsal ve cinsel kadın tanımlamalarına karşı çıkmayı amaçlamaktadırlar. Bu çalışma Jean Rhys'in *Wide Sargasso Sea*'sini, Angela Carter'ın *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*'ini, and Emma Donoghue'nun *Kissing the Witch: Old Tales in New Skins*'ini kadınlık arzusunu pasif olarak tanımlayan ataerkil ideolojiyi yıkan ve aktif olarak yeniden yaratan

abject temsilleri örnekleyen edebi eserler olarak ele alır. Bu abject temsiller kadın ve erkeği keskin çizgilerle ayıran hiyerarşik yapıya meydan okur. Kuramsal çerçevesini Julia Kristeva'nın geleneksel psikanalitik kuramları yeniden yazdığı çalışmaları üzerine kuran bu tez, marjinal kılınmış söylemlerin egemen olan söylemlerle diyaloga girmesini sağlayan politik bir ortam yaratmış olan postmodernizmin ortaya çıkmasıyla, kadınlık arzusunun abject temsillerinin gittikçe daha da olumlu özelliklere bürünerek, kadın bedenini erkek-egemen ideolojinin kontrolünden ve otoritesinden kurtardığını iddia eder. Böylece kadın cinselliğinin abject temsillerinin olumlu gelişimi kronolojik olarak Rhys'in, Carter'ın ve Donoghue'nun eserleri üzerinden takip edilebilir. Bu eserler Gotik kadın kahramanını ataerkil Gotik olay örgüsüne hapsedilmekten kurtarır, kadınlık arzusunun aktif ve kadın bedenini ifade edilebilir kılar, kadın cinselliği tarihini feminist bakış açısıyla yeniden yazar ve cinsiyetler arası eşitlik ilkesi üzerine kurulmuş yeni bir dünya düzenini kurmayı hedefler. Sonuç olarak, postmodern İngiliz Kadın Gotik yazını ütopyik ve radikal ama gerçekleşmesi imkansız olmayan bir idealin peşinde olduğunu ispatlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadın Gotik Yazını, abject, Jean Rhys, Angela Carter, Emma Donoghue

To my mother, Sema Sözer,
who has taught me the self has no boundaries
and
love has no limits

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