

This collection of essays brings together an international team of scholars and graduate students to shed light on literary texts in English through the lens of feminist theory. With its wide-ranging aspects on the feminist movement since its inception with Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), the book explores literary representations of female voices from diverse cultures and communities around the world. This book presents women's struggle within the tight grasp of patriarchy in the works of female writers from diverse communities - Dorris Lessing, Toni Morrison, Betty Mahmoody, Azar Nafisi, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and Ann Bonwill (translated by Burcu Ural Kopan) - and one male writer - Khaled Hosseini.

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ACROSS CULTURES

Editor: Olgahan BAKŞI YALÇIN

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ACROSS CULTURES

Editor
Olgahan BAKŞI YALÇIN

+90 536 663 97 66
+90 286 217 22 24
/paradigmaak
/divit_kitabevi
/paradigmaakademiyayinevi


paradigma akademi
Basın Yayın Dağıtım



www.paradigmaakademiyayinlari.com
www.divitkitabevi.com | paradigmaakademitasarim@gmail.com




paradigma akademi

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ACROSS CULTURES

Editor
Olgahan BAKŐI YALÇIN

Paradigma Akademi



FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ACROSS CULTURES

Editor
Olgahan BAKŐI YALÇIN

Sertifika No: 32427

Çanakkale Kitaplığı
Araştırma İnceleme Bilişim Yayın Matbaa
TİC. LTD. ŐTİ.

Paradigma Akademi Basın Yayın Dağıtım
Fetvane Sokak No: 29/A
ÇANAKKALE
e-mail: fahrigoker@gmail.com

Dizgi & Kapak
Himmet AKSOY

Matbaa
Vadi Grafik Tasarım ve Reklam LTD. ŐTİ.
Sertifika No: 47479

Kitaptaki bilgilerin her türlü sorumluluđu yazarlarına aittir.

Bu Kitap T.C. Kùltür Bakanlıđından alınan bandrol ve
ISBN ile satılmaktadır. Bandrolsüz kitap almayınız.

Mart 2022
Paradigma Akademi



CONTRIBUTORS

Olgahan BAKŞI YALÇIN

Assistant Professor, İstanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University,
olgahanbaksi.yalcin@yeniyuzyil.edu.tr,

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5527-9200

Saman HASHEMPOUR

Associate Professor, İstanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University,
saman.hashemipour@yeniyuzyil.edu.tr,

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1756-3929

Sultan KOMUT BAKINÇ

Assistant Professor, İstanbul Haliç University,
sultankomut@halic.edu.tr,

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-7815-389X

Ihab JABBAR

MENA journalist, Jimmy jib operator, UTV,
ehabusamma@gmail.com,

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3719-8036

Burcu ALTUN GÜNAY

Instructor, İstanbul Medipol University,
burcugunay@medipol.edu.tr,

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4176-3314

Aya Riyadh AL-RUBAYE

College Administration Manager, Imam Sadiq University,
totadana90@gmail.com,

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-9435-4330

Cemre ÇELİK

Instructor, İstanbul Aydın University,
cemrecelik@aydin.edu.tr,

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4812-6895.

Olgahan BAKŐI YALÇIN

Having studied English Language and Literature at Ankara University between 1996-2001, Olgahan Bakőı Yalçın earned her MA in the same field and institution in 2009. She holds a doctoral degree from American Culture and Literature, Kadir Has University, İstanbul. Her principal research area includes English and American Literature as well as Film Studies, with specific interests in Gender Studies. As an Assistant Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at İstanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University, she currently teaches graduate and undergraduate courses such as Women's Literature, Post-war American Fiction, Adaptation Studies, and Gothic Tradition in Literature. She also supervises MA and Doctoral students across a range of research areas that include feminist and post-colonial theoretical explorations.

Saman HASHEMİPOUR

Saman Hashemipour, associate professor, read English Language and Literature at the undergraduate level. He graduated in American Studies and completed his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature. The former lecturer at English Language and Literature and American Studies departments is now teaching at the English Language and Literature department at Istanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University. Hashemipour has edited three and authored seven books including *Life into Literature: Orhan Pamuk in His Works* (2017), *Logoteunison* (2019), *Discrimination is Evil* (2020), *Sampling Adaptation* (2020), *National Notion Lives Out World Literature* (2021), and *Orwellian and Pamukian Instantiations* (2021). Hashemipour teaches courses on research methods, ethics, postcolonial literature, comparative literature, and American literature at undergraduate and graduate levels. His articles generally consist of comparative studies of American, British, Turkish, and Persian works of literature in the realm of cultural studies and humanities.

Sultan KOMUT BAKINÇ

Sultan Komut Bakınç graduated from Hacettepe University, English Language Teaching Department in 2003. She earned her M.A degree (2009) and Ph.D. degree (2016) from Kadir Has University,

American Culture and Literature Department. She has been working as an Assistant Professor at Haliç University, Department of English Translation and Interpretation. She participated in Comenius (2011) and Marie Curie CTMEE (2013-2016) Projects and Professional Fellows Program by the United States Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (2012). Her short stories, book reviews, interviews, and articles have been published by various journals and internet sites. She is the translator of *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* by Sara Ahmed (*Duyguların Kültürel Politikası*, Sel Yayıncılık, 2015) and the author of a short storybook, *Öte* (Everest Yayınları, 2019).

Ihab JABBAR

Ihab Jabbar graduated from the English department, faculty of Arts, at the University of Tikrit in Iraq in 2012. Before graduation, he started his journalism career in the Al-Sumaria news agency as an assistant cameraman. He also worked as a correspondent and cameraman in various TV stations and news agencies. He completed his master's degree in the English Language and Literature Department at Istanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University in 2021. He writes articles about MENA politics, Human rights, and Feminism on various platforms and newspapers.

Burcu ALTUN GÜNAY

Burcu Altun Günay graduated from American Culture and Literature department at Istanbul University in 2002. After graduation, she started her teaching career in an Aviation school and taught general and aviation English to candidates of pilots and flight attendants. She also worked as an English teacher in various private Language Teaching Centers. She prepared students for IELTS, TOEFL, YDS, and English proficiency exams between 2004 and 2013. She also gave general and professional English lessons in an Anatolian and Tourism Management High School between 2005 and 2016. She completed her master's degree as the top student in the English Language and Literature Department at Istanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University in 2021. She joined Medipol University Language School in 2016 and she has been giving General and Professional English lectures in various departments of Medipol University since then.

Aya Riyadh AL-RUBAYE

Aya Riyadh Al-Rubaye graduated from the College of Arts – English Language and Literature Department at Imam Sadiq University in Iraq in 2012. During her undergraduate studies and after graduation, she worked in the same university as a manager assistant in the TOEFL center. In 2017, she started working as the college administration manager in the College of Arts and since then, she has been in the same post. In 2021, she finished her studies and got a master’s degree in English Language and Literature from Istanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University in Turkey. Besides her job, she is giving lectures in the English Language and Literature Department at her university.

Cemre ÇELİK

Cemre Çelik graduated from the English Translation and Interpretation Department at İstanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University in 2017. After that, she worked as an English lecturer at the same university. In 2020, she completed her master’s degree in English Language and Literature with the thesis entitled “Analysis of Gender Roles in Translated Children’s Books in Turkish Literary System from the Perspective of Semiotics of Translation” at İstanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University. Now, she is a Ph.D. candidate in the Interlingual and Intercultural Translation Studies Department at Yıldız Technical University. She is also giving lectures in Applied English and Translation Department at İstanbul Aydın University.

CONTENTS

CONTRIBUTORS	iii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER I	
Can the Object Speak? Literary Feminism in Context.....	9
<i>Saman Hashemipour</i>	
CHAPTER II	
The Burden of Motherhood, Space and Identity in “To Room Nineteen” by Doris Lessing	33
<i>Sultan Komut Bakıncı</i>	
CHAPTER III	
Self-Conception and Individuality of Black Female Characters in <i>The Bluest Eye</i>	49
<i>Ihab Jabbar</i>	
CHAPTER IV	
Post-Colonial Feminist Discourses and Orientalisation of Iranian Women	71
<i>Burcu Altun Günay</i>	
CHAPTER V	
Transcending the Boundaries of Patriarchy: <i>A Thousand Splendid Suns & Half of a Yellow Sun</i>	95
<i>Aya Al-Rubaye</i>	

CHAPTER VI

Universe of Meaning in Source & Target Texts: Exploring Feminist Discourses in a Children's Story Through Semiotics of Translation . 119

Cemre Çelik

INTRODUCTION

We, the signatories, appeal to women and men of goodwill and of diverse cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs, ethnic and social origins to join us in a global endeavor to build, in solidarity and compassion, a culture of peace in the domestic realm and in the public sphere.

Only together, women and men in parity and partnership, can we overcome obstacles and inertia, silence and frustration, and ensure the insight, political will, creative thinking, and concrete actions needed for a global transition from the culture of violence to a culture of peace.

(UNESCO Statements on Women's Contribution
to a Culture of Peace, September 1995)

These two statements are taken from the Declaration and Platform for Action prepared by the delegates during the Beijing Conference in 1995 aiming to achieve greater equality and opportunity for women. This aim, which was expressed a quarter of a century ago, still maintains its validity. On International Women's Day in 2021, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Women Executive Director, asserts that "We need women's representation that reflects all women and girls in all their diversity and abilities and across all cultural, social, economic, and political situations. This is the only way we will get the real societal change that incorporates women in decision-making as equals and benefits us all" (UN Women, 2021). This assertion is the vision of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and the vision of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. As is clear from the endeavors of women worldwide, in spite of many advances in the history of the feminist movement and thought, male domination still exists in most cultures affecting the lives of both women and men and shaping their perspectives of the world. Thus, the agenda of feminism has always been to call for a

radical social change so as to liberate women, children, and men from the domination and violence of patriarchy.

For centuries, women in almost all cultures have been distressed by male dominance and aggression. They have been stereotypically given the province of emotion while men have occupied the realm of reason. Women have been “excluded for centuries from participating in public life and rendered dependent on men for financial security (Mohammadi, 2021, p.32). They still endure occupational segregation and salary disparities, as well as a lack of access to certain jobs. They are even denied access to basic schooling and health services far too frequently. Not only are women subjected to violence and discrimination in all corners of the world but also, they are disproportionately underrepresented in political and economic decision-making. Resolving these issues as soon as possible will have far-reaching effects on the lives of individuals, more than one can easily recognize, since empowering women will help boost economies, spurring productivity, development, and growth of countries. Thus, as Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka puts it, “We need women’s representation that reflects all women and girls in all their diversity and abilities, and across all cultural, social, economic, and political situations” (UN Women, 2021). Women’s issues require immediate attention and action for the sake of all of us, women and men.

One cannot deny the power of literature in highlighting the status and experiences of women in different parts of the world. To this end, some of my graduate students and colleagues from various University Departments related to Literature and Language in Istanbul and Iraq working on women’s issues in diverse cultures have gathered to contribute to this book project, entitled *Feminist Perspectives Across Cultures*. As Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie states, “Gender is not an easy conversation to have. It makes people uncomfortable, sometimes even irritable. Both men and women are resistant to talk about gender, or are quick to dismiss the problems of gender. Because thinking of changing the status quo is always uncomfortable” (2014, p.40). The anti-patriarchal analysis in each chapter, thus, might make some readers uncomfortable but for the sake of ensuring equality and peace in our future, we need to raise awareness regarding the ill effects of patriarchy

not only on women but also on men and children. In line with this aim, the studies in this book aim to show how it is possible to dismantle the reality created by patriarchy. If we understand that what we face in our daily lives is an illusion rather than reality, we can bring change to the many patterns of male domination. To be able to do so, we must distinguish between it and any alternative, and in this book, we hope to demonstrate that each and every individual is capable of creating an alternative for himself/herself in spite of the forces inside and outside our societies.

Saman Hashemipour provides a survey of the feminist movement, thought and theory in Chapter I, entitled “Can the Object Speak? Literary Feminism in Context.” He reflects the many voices in which feminist criticism speaks starting from Mary Wollstonecraft’s canonical text *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) and ending with the writings of Gayatri Spivak as well as Judith Butler. As Hashemipour tells us, the exclusion of female voices from the institutions of literature, criticism, and theory has established gender as a fundamental category of literary analysis. In this vein, feminist criticism based on feminist philosophy and aesthetics of art studies the position of women in creating works of art. As Hashemipour further relates, it studies how the feminine aspects of the author’s life—such as pregnancy experiences—are reflected in the language. In addition, Liberal feminism, Radical Feminism, Popular Post-Feminism, and Feminist Tendencies in/after Twentieth-Century Western Literature are some of the subheadings within this chapter. Hashemipour concludes his study with a brief look at the four waves of feminism, which are interwoven into women’s rights, civil rights, and social justice movements such as the defense of sexual freedom and the LGTBI, and the denunciation of sexism in the media in opposition to gender-based violence and stereotypes.

Chapter II, called “The Burden of Motherhood, Space and Identity in “To Room Nineteen” by Doris Lessing” offers an analysis of Dorris Lessing’s story “To Room Nineteen” (1963) through the lens of space and identity theories, with a focus on the relationship between the burden of motherhood and suicide. In this chapter, Sultan Komut Bakınç asserts that Doris Lessing, an expert in portraying the inner difficulties of

women, depicts a marriage in which the protagonist attempts and fails to fulfill the socially acceptable role of motherhood in her classic short story. Komut Bakıncı draws our attention to the fact that while the issue of suicide has been widely researched by a large number of authors, the suicide of mothers is not a typical theme. This chapter further argues that the focus placed on the sanctity of marriage and motherhood may explain why authors do not prefer to depict married women characters who commit suicide. Finally, it is concluded that since women have been consistently defined in terms of their biological functions under patriarchy, childbirth and being an ideal housewife who rigorously adheres to gender stereotypes are considered as the way to physical and emotional pleasure for women. However, as Komut Bakıncı argues, Lessing presents the story of a young woman's search for a space in which she could get rid of the responsibilities of being a mother and housewife, a search for freedom that takes her to her death.

In Chapter III, Ihab Jabbar raises questions about the suffering of black women and the difficulties they face every day in their lives in American society. Entitled, "Self-Conception and Individuality of Black Female Characters in *The Bluest Eye*," this chapter analyzes Toni Morrison's novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970), in which we follow the story of a black girl called Pecola Breedlove who is insanely obsessed with the idea of beauty. Throughout the story, she develops an inferiority complex that stimulates her desire to be blue-eyed and white-skinned. In this chapter, Jabbar argues that in her novel, Morrison provides the reader with the dominant notion of white beauty that is the ultimate goal of this little black girl who is also denied of the elements of black beauty. In this sense, it is especially important to compare Pecola with her friends, particularly Frieda and Claudia, who are presented as both black but not ugly and vulnerable enough to go insane like her. It is concluded that a close reading of the novel illustrates how the self-conception and individuality of black female characters are adversely affected when they experience sexism, abuse, violence, and misery under both black and white male oppression. Interestingly, the novel's themes of racism, incest, and child molestation have led to several attempts in the United States to prohibit it from schools and libraries.

In the next chapter, entitled “Post-Colonial Feminist Discourses and Orientalisation of Iranian Women”, Burcu Altun Günay analyzes the colonialist and Orientalist representations of the Iranian, especially Iranian women in *Not Without My Daughter* (1989) by Betty Mahmoody and *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003) by Azar Nafisi. This chapter comprises examples of these female authors’ alleged feminist discourses and Orientalist assumptions revolving around Muslim women. While Mahmoody and Nafisi supposedly claim to defend the rights of oppressed Muslim women in their memoirs, they have contributed to the victimization of Iranian women by applying negation and affirmation strategies. Hence, the main focus of the chapter is to show how third-world women, in this case, Iranian women, are pictured as passive, filthy, speechless, backward, and oppressed Muslims, along with stereotypes constructed by the West. Altun Günay argues that the significant landmarks of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and the terrorist attacks of 9/11 have been used as excuses to create Iranophobia and Islamophobia in these texts. As many Iranian-American memoirs, as a genre, reiterate, Mahmoody and Nafisi continue to consolidate the image of Iran by employing anti-regime conflicts and posit Iranian women in the center of their arguments.

In Chapter V, “Transcending the Boundaries of Patriarchy: A Thousand Splendid Suns & Half of a Yellow Sun,” Aya Riyadh Jawad Al-Rubaye examines the representation of women in Khaled Hosseini’s *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2008), and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). Al-Rubaye argues that both novels tackle the major issues of colored women in their own ways to find their voice and rights in a male-dominated world. This chapter focuses specifically on the status of women in highly restricted countries such as Afghanistan and Nigeria that follow the strict rules of patriarchy. This view is analyzed through the investigation of Hosseini’s novel in which we are presented with a clear picture of the sufferings of Afghan women. Al-Rubaye also concentrates on the ways women use to dismantle the chains of patriarchy such as education and self-awareness to be independent, strong and prove that they have equal capabilities with men. These ways are depicted in *Half of a Yellow Sun* in which the female characters are portrayed as strong women who can break the stereotypical image of

womanhood in restricted societies. Unlike Mariam and Laila in Hosseini's novel where they appear as victims of the tumultuous war of Afghanistan, the depiction of Olanna and her twin sister Kainene in Adichie's novel are representations of women who struggle for equal status and stand up for their rights against an oppressive society. This chapter, finally, concludes that all women must take firm actions and rebel against the patriarchal ideology for true liberation, which requires the deconstruction of patriarchal society.

The final chapter, entitled "Universe of Meaning in Source & Target Texts: Exploring Feminist Discourses in a Children's Story Through Semiotics of Translation", examines the book *Naughty Toes* (2011) by Ann Bonwill and its Turkish translation, *Kıpır Kıpır* (2014), by Burcu Ural Kopan. Cemre Çelik focuses on this children's story for the framework of her study since she argues that it is an excellent example of the subversion of gender clichés imposed on children. In this study, the story is analyzed within the framework of the semiotics of translation through the source text in the light of the operations of literary text analysis compiled by Sündüz Öztürk Kasar (2009) from the studies of the Paris School of Semiotics. Thereafter, the Turkish translation of the book is evaluated using the Systematics of Designificative Tendencies developed by Öztürk Kasar (Öztürk Kasar and Tuna, 2017) to determine if there are any transformations of the meaning in terms of manipulating potential feminist readings in the target text. Çelik aims to find if the target text also provides a pragmatic turn in terms of gender-based clichés, like the source text. The chapter concludes that analyzing the source text within the framework of the semiotics of translation provides an opportunity to discover the implicit behind the explicit and thereby gives the translator the opportunity to make translation decisions in accordance with the context and purpose of the source text.

Specialized knowledge of critical literary theory, or indeed any academic background, are not required to follow the lines of discussion in this book, since the various concepts, terms, and theories are explained in context to guide the readers. The following chapters are not in chronological order of publication but as a group, the chapters foreground the depth and extent of the victimization of the female

characters under the codes of patriarchal society and how only a few could achieve true emancipation. We hope that this collection of essays will throw light on the very complicated issues of women in different communities around the world and help the reader find an alternative, any alternative in which women and men can create their own reality rather than following the strict gender roles imposed on them. Like Adichie asks us in her influential essay, *We should all be feminists*, we must “begin to dream about and plan for a different world. A fairer world. A world of happier men and happier women who are truer to themselves” (2014, p.25). To this end, we must understand and deeply criticize patriarchy so that we can realize the fact that we already have the power in our hands to promote peace in the contemporary world.

References

- Adichie, C. N. (2014). *We should all be feminists*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Mlambo-Ngcuka, P. (March 2021) Statement by Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka on International Women’s Day 2021. UN Women. Retrieved on 15.02.2022 from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2021/3/statement-ed-phumzile-international-womens-day-2021>
- Mohammadi, A. (2021). Shakespeare’s Sister and the Crisis of Women’s Autonomy: A Critical Analysis of a Room of One’s Own. *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(1), 31-46.
- Öztürk Kasar, S. (2009). “Pour une Semiotique de la Traduction”. *La Traduction et ses Metiers*. ed. Colette Laplace, Marianne Lederer, Daniel Gile. Caen: Lettres Modernes Minard.
- Öztürk Kasar, S.& Tuna, D. (2017). “Shakespeare in Three Languages: Reading and Analyzing Sonnet 130 and Its Translations in the Light of Semiotics”. *IJLET International Journal of Languages’ Education and Teaching*. 5(1), 170-181. www.ijlet.com. DOI Number: 10.18298/ijlet.1723
- UNESCO Statements on Women’s Contribution to a Culture of Peace, September 1995. Retrieved on 15.02.2022 from <https://www.culture-of-peace.info/annexes/declarations/Beijing.pdf>
- Vaughan, G. (1997) *For-Giving: A Feminist Criticism of Exchange* Austin, TX: Plain View Press.

