



Social and Cultural Components of Femininity in Shahrzad's a Thousand and One Nights Stories

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Abstract

The research was purposed to study social and cultural components of femininity in Shahrzad's a thousand and one nights' stories. The research universe consisted of all Shahrzad's a thousand and one nights' stories. The sample included the gendered stories. the research was designed as qualitative in terms of thematic analysis. The femininity concepts based on either effeminate content or the heroine of the romantic, fiction, journey, jinni and fairy, pedagogics, wisdom and virtue stories were reviewed and extracted by implementing the content analysis. The findings indicated that woman was the most crucial subject of a thousand and one nights' stories; and played a significant role in all the stories. Also the more important point to be discussed was that the narration was attributed to be created by a woman, Shahrzad. Sharzad could express a new narration for femininity by storytelling and not only saved her life but also she could reconciliated her homeland with femininity. In fact, she brought the femininity from text to context so to be heard.



Extended Abstract

Introduction: Historically, human beings have always questioned femininity and masculinity, and different theories and attitudes have emerged. One of the important points about gender conceptualization is that most of what we know is related to Western cultures, but these patterns are not universal. Femininity and masculinity vary by culture. Therefore, there was a need to enrich the research literature based on the distinctions between what is feminine and what is masculine in different cultures. Understanding these feminine and masculine concepts also helps to understand social structures and the possibility of changing them. Storytelling can be considered as one of the oldest and most ancient arts of all human races. Among the popular literature in the Orient, A Thousand and One Nights seems to represent more than any other text the cultural dynamism among the peoples of the Orient because it consists of stories from which one can see cultural attitudes. On the other hand, the protagonist and narrator of the story was a woman for the first time. A woman who had different characteristics. The research was purposed to study social and cultural components of femininity in Shahrzad's a thousand and one nights' stories.

Methods: The research universe consisted of all Shahrzad's a thousand and one nights' stories. The sample included the gendered stories. the research was designed as qualitative in terms of thematic analysis. The femininity concepts based on either effeminate content or the heroine of the romantic, fiction, journey, jinni and fairy, pedagogics, wisdom and virtue stories were reviewed and extracted by implementing the content analysis.

Results: The findings indicated that woman was the most crucial subject of a thousand and one nights' stories; and played a significant role in all the stories. Also the more important point to be discussed was that the narration was attributed to be created by a woman, Shahrzad. Sharzad could express a new narration for femininity by storytelling and not only saved her life but also she could reconcilliated her homeland with femininity. In fact, she brought the femininity from text to context so to be heard.

Conclusion: In that a thousand and one nights are similar to today's society that due to the ruling patriarchal culture and thinking, we still face restrictions, deprivations and gender discrimination. It is natural that women also seek ways to escape and save themselves in different ways. Society, culture, and even the cycle of psycho-sexual development was meant to marginalize and make women and femininity different. It seemed that the woman herself and femininity, was a deconstructionist who had come to break the specified definitions and create new definitions. She wanted to analyze the image of femininity in several ways because she was stuck in the pressure of repetition. Like Shahrzad, in a thousand and one nights, she fought not only for being and living, but also for the survival of femininity.

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authors discussed the results, reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript. This article is contributed to the Fatemeh Rahmatian's Phd dissertation in psychology at Shahid Beheshti University. The supervisor professors were Dr. Shahriar Shahidi and the advisor professors were Dr. Fatemeh Bagherian and Dr. Leili Panaghi.

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