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Book Review

Sözcükler Meleği: Marge Piercy ve İlkörneksel Eleştiri by Ayþe Lahur Kırtunç. 1995. 105 pages. Available from: İleri Kitabevi Yayınları, SSK. İşhanı A Blok, No: Z 02, Konak, İzmir, Turkey.

Rüçhan Kayalar

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Ayşe Kırtunç's *Sözcükler Meleği: Marge Piercy ve İlkörneksel Eleştiri* (The Angel of Words: Marge Piercy and Archetypal Criticism) presents a fine example of critical theory put into practice. The introduction summarizes briefly, yet quite inclusively, the major arguments of "Archetypal Criticism" based on Carl Jung's concept of the "collective unconscious," and further developed by critics such as Northrop Frye, Leslie Fiedler, W.H. Auden, Richard Chase, Maud Bodkin and Francis Fergusson, showing them to constitute, when taken together, an outstanding trend in contemporary literary theory and criticism. Kirtunç then successfully analyzes a number of archetypal patterns that exist in four novels by the present-day American woman writer Marge Piercy: *Braided Lives* (1983),*Vida* (1984),*Small Changes* (1987) and *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1992). The first developmental chapter draws attention to the archetypes of "nature as the healer," along with those which emphasize the relationship between " woman" and "nature," and discusses them as symbols of fertility, life and motherhood. The next chapter concentrates upon archetypes of sexual abuse and motifs of rape apparent in the novels. This is followed by a chapter which deals with the archetypes of "the lonely old woman" or "the witch." The chapter which comes next examines the archetypes of "closed/locked rooms, small spaces and narrow corridors," all of which connotate "imprisonment." The last developmental chapter focuses on the archetypes of rebirth and the journey motif.

The book thus provides an interesting and original insight into the appreciation of these four novels. It appears to be useful first of all to students and teachers of literature as well as to those with a specific knowledge and interest in literary criticism. It is at the same time an illuminating source for the non-academic reader

concerned with the intellectual phenomena of the modern world. It helps the reader enlarge his/her vision of literature and literary criticism and reconsider his/her views of current social cultural, political and environmental aspects as well as realities of the modern world. Kirtunç's final remarks, describing Marge Piercy as a universal writer who tackles problems that are common concerns of women of all societies, are, therefore, quite justifiable.

As Kirtunç points out, two issues seem to be of primary interest for Marge Piercy. One is the physical, sexual and social oppression of women in contemporary societies with male dominated power structures. The other is the ever-increasing environmental pollution as a constant and fatal threat to nature. The orderly survey and examination of the archetypal patterns which represent these essential concerns of the novelist render Kirtunç's work an interesting and original critical study.

Of the four novels surveyed in this work,*Vida* appears to have received, however, less concern by the author. For example, only two paragraphs are devoted to *Vida* in the first chapter and the next chapter contains only one paragraph concerning *Vida*; while the novel is not at all referred to in the following chapter. In the other chapters,*Vida* happens to be again less emphasized when compared with the other three. Although this discrepancy in terms of the concern devoted to each novel may stem from the inadequacy of the specific archetypal patterns identifiable in Vida, this impairs to some extent the comprehensiveness of the work. In sum,*Sözcükler Meleği: Marge Piercy ve İlkörneksel Eleştiri* merits attention and its contribution to literary studies in Turkish well deserves praise and appreciation. It informs the Turkish reader about a contemporary American woman writer, Marge Piercy, and familiarizes him/her with the works and universal concerns of this author, while also enlightening and inspiring him/her in terms of critical thought and evaluation. Kirtunç has managed to fill in a considerable gap in the field of literary studies in Turkish through her compact, yet highly comprehensive study.

Works Cited

Piercy, Marge. *Braided Lives*. London: Penguin Books, 1983.

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