

An Emic Approach on the Perception of “Woman” By Woman Minstrels

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ABSTRACT

The Minstrelsy (Âşıklık) tradition has an important place in the Turkish culture and is a live tradition which continues its existence in verbal and written cultural media from centuries ago until today.

Minstrels are folk artists who act as a society spokesman, reflect the world view, taste of art, life order and traditions of the society, maintain them and serve as a bridge to pass them down to the future generations. When the tradition is considered regarding woman minstrels, and to the extent they are determined, many woman minstrels have performed their art within the minstrelsy tradition since 17th century; however, they have not been able to perform many aspects of the tradition (apprenticeship, traveler, being in the assemblies of minstrels etc); the studies on woman minstrels have been of more interest since the last quarter of the twentieth century. Woman minstrels about whom there have been inadequate studies have been considerably neglected. Minstrelsy has been seen as a man’s profession and “woman” as a theme has been widely used by the male minstrels.

In the present study, starting from the folk songs of the well-known woman minstrels (like Telli Suna, Özlemi, Sarıca Kız, Didari, Şahturna, Selvinaz, Sürmelican and so on), the position of the “narrator-lyric hero” will be examined both as a subject and an object. How woman minstrels see “woman” as a narrator-lyric hero will be discussed from an ethical point of view.

The social roles of woman minstrels in the tradition and the problems caused by these roles will be presented; it will also be revealed whether this affects their art as a “narrator-lyric hero”.