

A COMPARISON OF THE COURTESANS'S MISFORTUNE IN THE NOVEL LA DAME AUX CAMELIAS AND THE OPERA LA TRAVIATA THROUGH PLOT ANALYSIS

KAMELYALI KADIN ROMANININ VE LA TRAVIATA OPERASININ OLAY ÖRGÜSÜ BAĞLAMINDA KADIN KARAKTERLERİNİN YAZGILARININ KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI

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Özet

Alexander Dumas fils'in yazdığı Kamelyalı Kadın romanı ve Giuseppe Verdi'nin bestelediği La Traviata operası gerçek aşk ve ölümlerle karşılaşan elit bir metresin sözde zevk dolu hayatının ve trajik sonunun öyküsünü anlatmaktadır. Ölüm sebebi 19. yüzyıl edebiyatında ve operasında en sık görülen ve romantik olarak kabul edilen, özellikle günahkar kadınların günahlarının kefareti olarak yakalandığı düşünülen verem hastalığıdır. Toplumun Marguerite'nin ve Violetta'nın günahları hakkındaki önyargıları, kadın kahramanların yaptıkları büyük fedakarlıkla silinir: Sevilen erkeğin namusu ve şerefi için terk edilişi. Bu çalışmada, romanın ve operanın kadın karakterleri ve hayata veda edişleri olay örgüsü bağlamında karşılaştırılmıştır. Besteci Violetta için daha huzurlu bir veda seçerek, operadaki karakterlerin ve seyircinin romandakine kıyasla daha az acı çekmesini sağlamıştır. Besteciye kıyasla yazar kelimelerin gücünden daha özgürce faydalanabildiğinden dolayı, düşkün bir kadın olmanın ve yapılan fedakarlığın psikolojik boyutlarını derinlemesine ifade edebilmiştir. Fakat, besteci de müzikal ve teatral unsurların gücünü kullanarak seyirciyi büyüleyebilmiştir ve eserin opera dünyasının vazgeçilmezlerinden biri olmasını sağlamıştır. Yöntemi ne olursa olsun, her iki sanat eseri de seyircisini ve okurunu onurun, saflığın ve aşkın gerçek doğasıyla ilgili sorular sormaya yönlendirir. Elit metreslerin alt sınıf olduklarını düşünmeye meyilli olan yüksek sosyete, onların şefkat, anlayış ve sevgiye ihtiyaç duyduklarını gösterir. Hikayenin başarısının altındaki sebep, düşkün bir kadının yürek burkan ölümünün kullanılarak toplumun ön yargılarıyla yüzleştirilmesidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Kamelyalı Kadın, La Traviata, Alexandre Dumas Fils, Giuseppe Verdi, Opera, Edebiyat

Abstract

The novel *La Dame aux Camelias* written by Alexandre Dumas fils and the opera *La Traviata* composed by Giuseppe Verdi depict the so-called pleasurable life and tragic end of an elite courtesan, who faces true love and death. The reason of death is tuberculosis, a disease which was the most popular and romantic one, accepted to be suitable especially for sinful women as a redemption of their sins in the 19th century literature and opera. The society's prejudices about Marguerite and Violetta's sins are erased by the great sacrifice that the heroines do: Leaving the beloved man for their sake of dignity and honor. In this paper, the novel and the opera are compared through the plot analysis and the end of the stories of the heroines. The composer provides the characters in the opera and the audience to suffer less compared to the novel, via choosing a slightly peaceful farewell for Violetta. The author could express the psychological dimensions of being a fallen woman and the sacrifice made more profoundly, since he could use the power of words more freely than the composer. However, the composer could mesmerize the audience via the potential of musical and theatrical elements, thus ensured the work to be one of the legends of the opera world. In any circumstances, both the art works lead the audience and the reader to ask questions about the true nature of dignity, purity and love. They expose the courtesans' need for compassion, sympathy and tenderness to a higher class society who are prone to think that courtesans are low by

class. The success behind this story is making the society face its prejudices through the dramatical death of a fallen woman.

Keywords

La Dame aux Camelias, La Traviata, Alexandre Dumas Fils, Giuseppe Verdi, Opera, Literature

References

The fiction of the 19th century French courtesans includes expensive, high class and stylish prostitutes. These women were significant figures in the literary imagination of the period. As well as providing sexual pleasure for men who could afford them, they also served to represent the fears and fantasies of both genders. The fictional courtesans created by male authors are categorized in two parts; of which the most memorable representatives are Nana by Emile Zola, and Marguerite of Alexandre Dumas fils. Nana represents monstrosity and narcissism; indifferent to the pains she causes. In contrast, Marguerite is the symbol of the fallen woman who is aware of her betrayal of the feminine ideal; so she sacrifices herself for the goodness of her beloved (Holmes, 2018: 450-452).

The stage version of La Dame aux Camelias was a great success; the role became as desirable as any of the Shakespearean heroines. The appeal of this sad story to the 19th century audience was expected; the romantic heroines of the time, whether she was Anna Karenina, Madame Bovary, Nana or Camille, were doomed and faced inevitable death at last without a happy-ever-after (Gardner, 2003).

During the time of Dumas fils, having a mistress was relatively acceptable. However, since they threatened the sanctity and the stability of the family, they were not categorized as natural or empathetic. Society both created and condemned mistresses and courtesans. They were desired as a distraction from life. The "high society" women were both jealous and curious about these sinful women and their wealth. These tendencies were clearly shown during the auction sale of Marie Duplessis's belongings following her death; it was a "safe" way to explore the impure richness of such a dishonorable woman (Guined, 2014).

Opposing to the religious or lofty topics of earlier eras, the Romantic period in music and art focused on the regular person. There was an attraction to emotion, nature and death. One of the most used themes to draw death was disease. Tuberculosis was a common one during the time (Goldberg, 2016). Throughout the history, no other disease had the same cultural impact of tuberculosis. 19th century was the height of the tuberculosis disease. One in four individuals died from it at its peak. In contrast to its high mortality, tuberculosis was associated with delicacy, femininity, or even intelligence. Once it was thought to strengthen sexual desire and beauty, as well as increasing creative genius. (Muto, 2011: 612). In another point of view, tuberculosis was thought to be caused by moral decay or living too fast. Now it is known that the real reason of the disease is a bacillus thriving in conditions of poverty or overcrowding. It is not a pretty illness as described in arts; in contrast, it was a dangerous one on the rise (Gardner, 2003).

romanticized ideas about the courtesan and the disease. Alexandre Dumas fils wrote his novel La Dame aux Camelias during this cultural confusion period. The consumptive courtesan is both a carrier of this disease and an irresistibly beautiful seductress. The potential threat emphasized by drawing a courtesan in consumption shifted the cultural view from spiritual to medical discourse, changing the European culture sociologically (Muto, 2011: 612).

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