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**Sense of Fear and Folk Tales:
A Comparative Discussion of Turkish and Irish Narratives**

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ABSTRACT

Culture is strongly embedded in folk tales, and as such, they can be an indicator of cultural differences between societies; they can also show that emotions are the same across times and cultures. One of the best examples that can be given in this regard is the way in which the 'fear' feeling is handled in fairy tales as an important image. Although different images or forms of expression are used in the folk tales of different cultures, the excitement of the sense of fear never changes. A hero generally desires fear and then tries to control this. In fairy tales, this situation gains importance in two different ways. The first is the way the fairy tale heroes feel fear and the other is the narrative that the tale narrator uses to connect the listener with a sense of the heroes' fear. From this two-way perspective, it can be seen that there are interesting similarities and differences when Turkish and Irish tales are compared. Heroes encounter fear in similar situations: they encounter extraordinary creatures, magic and mystery, travel to unknown lands and encounter ghosts or death in disguise. In addition, the use of fear in the narrative forms of Turkish and Irish tales differs. The extent to which the tale narrator will transmit the sense of fear to the listeners is important. The narrator may transmit the fearful environment or objects by creating a fearful atmosphere for the listener, or by choosing the opposite, preferring to alleviate and simplify the description of the fearful situation or objects. If these two situations are discussed on the basis of fairy tales, cultural differences can be seen more clearly. In this study, *Turkish Tales* by Naki Tezel and *Irish Fairy and Folk Tales* by W. B. Yeats will be used to compare the sense of fear in Turkish and Irish tales.

Key Words: Tales, Sense of Fear, Turkish Tales, Irish Fairy and Folk Tales.

1. Introduction

The fact that fairy tales narrated in different parts of the world have common elements has always been a subject of interest. Where the fairy tales first appeared or where a fairy tale was first told is also discussed (ARICI, 2004). However, what the commonalities are and how they are transmitted form the basis of the subject we want to investigate. Tales narrated almost everywhere in the world mention extraordinary creatures or extraordinary situations. The tales' typical beginning, 'Once upon a time', gives the signal that stories of mysterious and unknown lives will follow. Although there are various emotions within this mystery, we can say that the emotions of curiosity and 'fear' are particularly prominent. Aristotle's mention of fear and pity in relation to the concept of catharsis in his *Poetics*

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proves the deep-rooted history of this issue. It can be said that it is possible to examine the sense of fear in two ways. The first aspect to examine is the way in which the heroes in fairy tales experience fear. The other is related to the tale's narrative style. The use of fear as a style in storytelling can be an important cultural indicator that needs to be examined: the way the storyteller transmits the sense of fear to audience is noteworthy.

It can be said that both heroes of fairy tales and listeners to fairy tales use common images from various cultures in their way of experiencing fear. In this study, Turkish and Irish tales will be compared with examples from this perspective, using *Turkish Tales* by Naki Tezel and *Irish Fairy and Folk Tales* by W. B. Yeats².

2. Fairy-Tale Heroes Encounter with Sense of Fear

Fairy-tale heroes often confront a sense of fear when they encounter extraordinary creatures. In some fairy tales, fairies, spirits, witches or giants represent evil, so we feel that the hero's emotions are filled with fear. In this case, evil is something that the hero has not seen until that time and has not yet experienced. The hero who is afraid of what he does not know will overcome his fear as he gets used to this situation.

For example, in the tale entitled 'The Golden Nightingale' in Naki Tezel's book, the sons of the Sultan must go to the other side of Kafdağı (a mythological mountain) to capture the golden nightingale (Tezel, 2008). It is said that terrible giants, evil and pain are on their way. Although this situation frightens the sons of the sultan, each of them volunteers in turn. First, the eldest son departs and after a while he cannot continue. Then the middle son embarks on the same adventures, but he fails, too. Finally, the youngest son departs, despite knowing that his older brothers cannot return. It is thought that he will also fail. Despite all the difficulties, he retains his courage and finally succeeds. There are other Turkish tales similar to this one. One of them is related to the famous hero of Turkish tales 'Keloğlan'. Keloğlan goes seven floors below the surface of the earth and finds a land there. He meets with the sultan of this land. He engages in heroic acts and eventually comes back to earth.

In Yeats' work, although the subjects are different, we can say that there are similar tales in terms of fear and heroism issues. In these fairy tales, the heroes are frightened by extraordinary situations, but then they manage to cope with this feeling. For example, the hero of 'The Soul Cages', Jack, always wanted to meet a merrow (a merman). So he tries to find one, which takes a long time. He finally meets one, and dares to travel to the bottom of the ocean to go to the merrow's land. Even though he is very frightened at first, Jack eventually becomes bold enough even to travel alone to the merrow's land.

In both Turkish and Irish tales, the hero's courage to travel to mysterious and unknown lands and the fear of their supernatural creatures disappears over time. However, despite the common feelings, quite different elements draw attention. For example, in Turkish tales, giants feature as scary characters, while in Irish tales, small creatures, commonly elves and fairies, feature more as the fearsome characters. The hero of Irish fairy tale 'Jamie Freel and the Young Lady' dares to be the guest of little fairies. These little creatures plan to kidnap a young woman. At this point, it is noteworthy

² "The famous Irish Literary Revival, also referred to as the Irish Literary Re-naissance or the Celtic Twilight, was led by a group of intellectuals who thought that a national literary and cultural life was vital to Irish nationality. The most notable figure and leader of the movement was the poet and dramatist William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)" (Veldeman 2018, p.14).

that the young man dares to do something that no-one else dares to do: he intervenes in the fairies' plans and rescues the young woman.

An old ruined castle, about a quarter of a mile from his cabin, was said to be the abode of the "wee folk." Every Halloween were the ancient windows lighted up, and passers-by saw little figures flitting to and fro inside the building, while they heard the music of pipes and flutes. It was well known that fairy revels took place; but nobody had the courage to intrude on them. (Yeats 1892, p. 57)

Jack's desire to meet a merrow and his fascination with these notorious creatures is famous among sailors, who want to experience a sense of fear. The involvement these creatures have with magic is scary. Fairy-tale heroes often prefer to stay away from sorcerers. But for Jack, it's different. The danger the fairy-tale hero puts himself in makes the tale interesting.

The Merrow, or if you write it in the Irish, Moruadh or Murrúghach, from muir, sea, and oigh, a maid, is not uncommon, they say, on the wilder coasts. The fishermen do not like to see them, for it always means coming gales. The male Merrows (if you can use such a phrase--I have never heard the masculine of Merrow) have green teeth, green hair, pig's eyes, and red noses; but their women are beautiful, for all their fish tails and the little duck-like scale between their fingers. Sometimes they prefer, small blame to them, good-looking fishermen to their sea lovers. Near Bantry, in the last century, there is said to have been a woman covered all over with scales like a fish, who was descended from such a marriage. Sometimes they come out of the sea, and wander about the shore in the shape of little hornless cows. They have, when in their own shape, a red cap, called a cohullen druith, usually covered with feathers. If this is stolen, they cannot again go down under the waves. Red is the colour of magic in every country, and has been so from the very earliest times. The caps of fairies and magicians are well-nigh always red. (Yeats 1892, p. 68)

The story about the merrow creates a mysterious atmosphere for the listeners. Thus, the hero's courage is more evocative.

In Irish tales, there is an interesting term that does not feature in Turkish tales: 'changelings'. This term refers to a child who is changed by fairies. There are some examples found in Yeats' works, including in 'The Brewery of Egg-shells', 'The Fairy Nurse', 'Jamie Freel and the Young Lady', 'Morraha' and 'The Story'. In addition, Yeats' poem 'The Stolen Child' contains images on this subject. The adventures of the re-discovery of children abducted by fairies are associated with a sense of fear. Parents' fears of losing their children are the main source of these tales. In this case, telling such tales in order to cope with this fear, and eventually reinstating the abducted or changed babies, means controlling the sense of fear.

Mrs. Sullivan fancied that her youngest child had been exchanged by "fairies theft," and certainly appearances warranted such a conclusion; for in one night her healthy, blue-eyed boy had become shrivelled up into almost nothing, and never ceased squalling and crying. This naturally made poor Mrs. Sullivan very unhappy; and all the neighbours, by way of comforting her, said that her own child was, beyond any kind of doubt, with the good people, and that one of themselves was put in his place. (Yeats 1892, p. 53)

The hero of Yeats' 'The Brewery of Egg-shells', Mrs. Sullivan, claims that her baby has been replaced by another baby, but nobody believes her. One day an old woman proposes a way to reunite her with

her real child. When Mrs. Sullivan does what old woman says, so she can find her real baby, the fairy that has been replaced by the child disappears. Yeats' poem on this subject is also quite striking. It is said that Yeats made Ireland's supernatural stories the main source of his work: 'The Irish supernatural stories are always the fundamental sources of his inspiration no less than the ancient Greek and Byzantine civilizations' (Zhenqi, 2018, p.962).

In changeling tales and in other kinds of tales magicians and wizards are key characters, just like in Turkish tales. Wizards often feature in Irish tales. In fact, it is difficult to say whether they are good or bad, as they also help people from time to time. In Yeats's work, the tales in which the main subjects are magicians are follows: 'Bewitched Butter (Donegal)', 'A Queen's County Witch', 'The Witch Hare', 'Bewitched Butter (Queen's County)', 'The Horned Women', 'The Witches' Excursion', 'The Confessions of Tom Bourke' and 'The Pudding Bewitched'.

We can say that old sorceresses or hags correspond to witches in Turkish tales. Common descriptions are noteworthy. For example, in the tale called 'Bewitched Butter (Queen's County)', the sorceress is described as follows:

She appeared of great age; her countenance was extremely ugly and repulsive; her skin was rough and deeply embrowned as if from long exposure to the effects of some tropical climate; her forehead was low, narrow, and indented with a thousand wrinkles; her long grey hair fell in matted elf-locks from beneath a white linen skull-cap; her eyes were bleared, blood-shotten, and obliquely set in their sockets, and her voice was croaking, tremulous, and, at times, partially inarticulate. (Yeats 1892, p.152)

Although the sorceress rescues people from a difficult situation, she has an evil side. The narrative of what she looks like as she casts shows her face to become strange and scary: 'she had them all nearly exhausted. Her countenance now began to exhibit evident traces of vexation and disappointment. She got quite pale, her teeth gnashed, her hand trembled, and as she cast the ninth and last hair into the fire, her person exhibited more the appearance of a female demon than of a human being' (Yeats, 1892, p.156).

When we compare Turkish tales and Irish tales, we see that old sorceresses have similar characteristics. Feminist research on this subject draws attention to the types of stepmothers and witches that appear in European tales.³ But in Turkish tales, there is no clear link between a sorceress and a stepmother. In addition, although there is a type of sorceress in Turkish tales, the tales do not focus on her spells and the topic of sorcery is not deeply developed. Turkish fairy tales make brief reference to spells, but in the Irish tales, the magic is explained in detail. In 'Bewitched Butler', an old woman who is the sorceress sings a number of hymns, and does some work to break a spell on animals. Activities such as boiling water and grass and burning fire for witchcraft are not encountered in Turkish fairy tales. In this respect, magic, performed by sorceresses, is a less dominant subject of Turkish tales, where instead spells are usually carried out by fairies or giant mothers. In Naki Tezel's work 'Fairy Girl', the fairy girl does carry out some spells, but these spells are innocent and not effective. For example, she orders flour and other ingredients to bake themselves into bread in the

³ Sempruch, J. (2008). *Fantasies of Gender. The Witch in Feminism and Literature*. Purdue University Press.

Jackson, L. (1995). Witches, wives and mothers: Witchcraft persecution and women's confessions in seventeenth-century England, *Women's History Review*, 4.

oven, and they follow the orders of the fairy girl. But in Irish tales, the subject of magic can be thought to be unique to people in the real world. The spells do not happen suddenly: rather they take effort.

Another form of heroes facing fear sense is encountering ghosts. Ghosts play an important role in Irish tales. Examples of ghost tales in Yeats' work are: "A Dream" ^[1]_{SEP} "Grace Connor", "A Legend of Tyrone", "The Black Lamb", "Song of the Ghost", "The Radiant Boy", "The Fate of Frank M'Kenna", "Smallhead and the King's Sons".

GHOSTS, or as they are called in Irish, Thevshi or Tash (taid- hbhse, tais), live in a state intermediary between this life and the next. They are held there by some earthly longing or affection, or some duty unfulfilled, or anger against the living. "I will haunt you," is a common threat; and one hears such phrases as, "She will haunt him, if she has any good in her." If one is sorrowing greatly after a dead friend, a neighbor will say, "Be quiet now, you are keeping him from his rest;" or, in the Western Isles, according to Lady Wilde, they will tell you, "You are waking the dog that watches to devour the souls of the dead." Those who die suddenly, more commonly than others, are believed to become haunting Ghosts. They go about moving the furniture, and in every way trying to attract attention. (Yeats 1892, p.227)

In ghost tales it is said that the weak souls of young children are in danger: 'When a very young child dies, the western peasantry sprinkle the threshold with the blood of a chicken, that the spirits may be drawn away to the blood' (Yeats, 1892, p.228). In addition, it was believed that the souls of the dead sometimes took the shapes of animals⁴. In the tale 'The Fate of Frank McKenna' by Yeats, when the hero dies, his soul appears to a young girl: an event which naturally produced great terror and fear: 'One night, about a fortnight after his funeral, the daughter of Daly, the herd, a girl about fourteen, while lying in bed saw what appeared to be the likeness of M'Kenna, who had been lost. She screamed out, and covering her head with the bed-clothes, told her father and mother that Frank M'Kenna was in the house.' (245).

There is almost no presence of ghosts in Naki Tezel's *Turkish Tales*. In addition, we can say that animal figures are used as symbols of death and rebirth in Turkish tales. In some fairy tales, animals appear as disguised people. The most commonly used figures in these tales are pigeons, sparrows, deer, fishes and horses (Demirdağ, 2019). Some fairy tales say that disguised animals are genies or fairies; in some fairy tales, people are bewitched by genies or fairies. For example, in the tale called 'Black Cat', the black cat is actually a handsome prince. In this tale, the sultan has three daughters. The sultan asks them to throw a golden ball from the balcony out of the palace to find their fortune and look for their fortune wherever the ball goes. All single men in the land who hear this news gather in front of the palace. Each of them wishes to stand in front of the golden ball. Thus, he will be able to marry one of the sultan's beautiful daughters. First, the eldest girl throws the ball, and the ball, which does not stop in front of any of the handsome men who have stood in front of the palace, goes and stops in front of an old hut. When everyone objects to this, the princess throws the ball again, but when the ball stops in the same place, they ask her to throw another one, saying that 'God gives three rights', but when the ball stops at the same old hut, the princess has to go to there. Although the hut seems old and poor, the princess believes that a door inside the hut will lead her to a palace of extraordinary beauty when she enters the palace she finds no one but a black cat. The princess feeds the cat well and sleeps

⁴ "Tales are marks that leave traces of the human struggle for immortality". Zipes, Jack. (2009). "The Changing Function of the Fairy Tale". *The Lion and the Unicorn* 12(2): 7-31

in a beautiful bed, and the black cat that follows her. Everything seems fine, but at midnight she is woken by a sudden noise and she is very scared. The next day she returns, frightened, to her home palace. When it is the middle girl's turn, she throws the golden ball like her older sister and experiences the same things (three repetition rules in fairy tales). She also expels a black cat. The youngest girl also throws the ball at same place and she goes to the old hut. She eats good food and feeds the black cat. At night she sleeps with the cat in the same bed. Finally, it turns out that the black cat was actually a handsome prince bewitched by a fairy. In the end they fall in love with each other and marry (Tezel, 2008). In this fairy tale the daughters of the sultan are afraid to hear frightening sounds at midnight. Staying alone in a foreign place and hearing scary sounds causes them to experience a sense of fear. Although they do not see ghosts, they have the idea of ghosts.

In Turkish fairy tales, pigeons usually are beautiful fairy girls in disguise. But in the fairy tale 'The Goat Girl', the beautiful girl is dressed as a goat. In another fairy tale, we see a fairy girl disguised as a fish. These uniquely beautiful girls hide their beauty in this way. But in the end, a handsome young man, a prince or a sultan discovers their beauty and falls in love with them. In the fairy tale 'Green Bird', the beautiful princess who gets beaten and insulted by her husband finds her salvation by being turned into a green bird and escapes. The 'sehزade' theme, which is the transformation of a fairy into a bird shape, is also used frequently (Tezel, 2008). We see that these heroes are also used as common figures in various fairy tales. For example, it is used in the 'The Trout' tale of Naki Tezel's hero brother motif, who is transformed into a goat. In this fairy tale, a girl and her brothers who lost their parents fall on the road and when a very thirsty brother wants to drink water from a deer trail, his sister warns him. She says he will turn into a deer if he drinks water from there. But unable to withstand the thirst, the brother drinks water and becomes a deer (Tezel, 2008). Researchers often emphasise the use of common figures in tales. Deformation or changing of shape is interpreted as a death journey in a sense. It is stated that the hero's departure from home, a troubled period and then a return home, are expressed with the motif of disguise and in fact the main factor that prepares the story for a happy ending is the symbolic death and rebirth of the hero (Ozan, 2011, p.82). Therefore, it is said that the 'maturation process' of the heroes disguised as animal shapes is reflected in the form of changing clothes. In this case, the heroes, who take the form of birds, deer, swans, fish and snakes, have gone through an ordeal for a time and then mature; in other words, they have become an adolescent or an adult, and as a reward, become a king or a sultan and marry their true love. In Irish tales, disguise is used in 'The Fate of the Children of Lir'. In this tale, the stepmother transforms the children into four beautiful, perfectly white swans. The stepmother actually wants to kill them but she fails. However, their transformation into swans can be seen as a kind of death. After years of suffering, when the children regain their human forms they are old people and then they disappear. So when they became animals, they actually died and were temporarily disguised.

4. Conclusion

In Turkish and Irish fairy tales, similar situations can be observed in terms of encounters with feelings of fear, but it can be seen that there are quite different elements in the way these situations are reflected. There are differences in the style adopted in the narratives of tales. In Turkish tales, we cannot say that it is the author's intention to convey fear to the listeners. Even when the heroes face fear, the listeners are not expected to fear because the narrative of this subject is not exhaustive. The transition from fairy-tale hero through fear and onto courage is fast, usually too fast to allow the listeners to feel fear. In the Irish fairy tales, the narrative of fear is expounded in more detail. The

awakening of fear is particularly important. Creating a dark and mysterious atmosphere is an important feature of fairy tales. For this reason, it is also important that listeners to the tales face the sense of fear. While courage is prominent in Turkish tales, it can be said that the intensity of fear and the prevalence of fearsome characters are of great importance in Irish tales. Differences of the same type draw attention. Although the sense of fear is used as a common element in fairy tales, it is noteworthy that there are significant differences, especially in narrative style.

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