A Feminist Reading of Kizer's "Persephone Pauses"

Salma Backroush Almaleki

Department of English Language and Literature
Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University
Riyadh – Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Abstract

This paper discusses the adaptation of Demeter and Persephone's myth by the American poetess Carolyn Kizer. The poem is a dramatic monologue, exploring Persephone's part of the story and her journey to the Underworld with Hades. The poem is approached from a feminist point of view. The paper sets two sections, the first reviews the theoretical parts concerning mythology and feminism, the second presents the application of the feminist theories on Kizer's poem. The study aims to provide answers to crucial questions of the differences between the myth and the poet's interpretation, portrayals of Demeter and her daughter Persephone, and the myth's reinvented themes, as well as the depictions of her heroine. The study has arrived at some outcomes; first, Kizer's poem is describing womanhood in Persephone's individuation. Second, Kizer's version is exploring woman's psychological rather than social states. Third, the poetess composes her poem as a dramatic monologue to give the rightful voices to her heroine.

Keywords: adaptation, dramatic monologue, feminist poetry, gods and goddesses, Greek mythology

Cite as: Almaleki, S. B. (2018). A Feminist Reading of Kizer's "Persephone Pauses". *Arab World English Journal for Translation & Literary Studies*, 2 (1).

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awejtls/vol2no1.12>