

Abstract

This thesis explores how the notions of gender complementarity and gender performance have been refigured in *The Mirror of Beauty* by Shamsur Rahman Faruqi and *My Name is Red* by Orhan Pamuk in the light of Judith Butler's theory of gender as performativity, I argue that Butler's proposal for a new feminist genealogy has been explored through the characters of Shekure and Wazir Khanum in the two novels. Both women push for a way to redefine what 'feminine desire' or a woman's inherent sexuality means. The word 'refiguring' here refers to looking at a cliché from a new perspective that helps breathe new life in it, as explained by Keith Jenkins in his book *Refiguring History: New Thoughts on an Old Discipline*. The female protagonists of these two novels challenge the traditional concept of gender and gender categories, and in many ways these novels can give us new 'refigured' perspectives on the notion of gender. The female characters in question, Wazir Khanum and Shekure, struggle to create for themselves, a subversive and discursive space that can help their transgressive feminine desire to prosper. This transgressive feminine desire is how they view their own sexuality and how they redefine for themselves what terms like body, space and desire signify. Both women also prefer to 'act out' rather than submissively mould any sexual desire they might experience, to the norms of society. Most of the previous studies related to these novels have focused on the questioning of official historical narratives while sidelining the issue of women's sexuality. This dissertation will make a more conscious effort to discuss the latter, and thus will be of special significance to future researchers who are looking at the way postmodern novelists redefine the official historical narratives, especially the ones that concern Muslim women.