

TYPES OF HANDMADE DOLLS IN TURKEY

Melda Özdemir¹

ABSTRACT

Handmade dolls, plastic, wood, glass, ceramic, any mineral, soil, plaster, leather, cloth and so on. They are human form toys made of materials. Handmade dolls art is the world's oldest hand-crafted art that emerged from the assessment of the increased fragments available to show the future responsibility of the mother of the daughter-in-law. Handmade dolls collectors and decorators do not have any jobs in our society and they have characteristics that appeal to people of all ages. The ornaments that complement the clothing such as dolls, ethnic dolls, different national dresses, necklaces, ear, wrists and necklaces, earrings, bracelets and rings attached to fingers carry all traces of folk culture and art.

These dolls, which are produced with different materials under different names in different regions of our country, take their names according to the material they are making and they reflect the characteristics of the area in terms of production and clothes. This study aims to introduce handmade doll varieties which are made in Turkey and are still being made. Doll varieties will be supported by visuals while giving information about the construction techniques to be categorized according to the material used.

Keywords: Handmade; Doll; Culture; Folklore.

JEL Classification: Z10

1. INTRODUCTION

In our society, dolls appeal to collectors, decorators and actually everyone from all ages regardless of their profession. Ethnographically, these dolls have the traces of folk culture, art, clothing of different nations and accessories such as necklaces, earrings, bracelets which complement the clothing (Gülensoy, 1996).

In ancient times, dolls were considered as protection talismans and idols as well as toys. They were also used for some religious or spell-related purposes such as worshiping, casting a spell, distributing remedy or power, scaring enemies, keeping them at graveyards and as the symbol of their ancestors.

History of dolls dates back to old times in Turkey. It is known that dolls were used for religious and spell-related purposes by Turkic tribes in the Middle East.

In some regions of Anatolia, dolls are called as "dodu" or "gade". It is said that these words stem from Shamanism. Doll culture appeared in Shamanism in the form of rain prayers, puppetry and scarecrows (Toygar, 1987).

Apart from these, in our folk culture there are other doll-related practices which exist in Anatolian daily life (Erdem, 1998). Some of these dolls are used in childbearing, weddings and Turkish puppetry or seen as scarecrows, snowmen and dolls as toys.

¹ Gazi University, Faculty of Art and Design, Handicrafts Department, Gölbaşı-Ankara-Türkiye (meldaozdemir@gmail.com)

2. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF DOLLS IN TURKEY

History of dolls dates back to old times in our country. It is also known that dolls were used for religious and spell-related purposes by Turkic tribes which grew as nomads in Asia.

Dolls, which carry an economic, social, cultural and most especially religious meaning, have an important role in Turkic folk culture.

There is a rich doll-related accumulation in Turkic folk culture and it dates from old Turkic religion, Shamanism. It is also said that words such as “dodu” and “gade” which are used in some regions of Anatolia stem from Shamanism. We see doll culture as part of rain prayers, birth customs and puppetry in Shamanism.

These customs still exist in Anatolia in our day. In our country, dolls are usually used in regions where it does not rain for a long time in order to make it rain. Apart from that, in our folk culture there are other doll related practices which have a part in Anatolian daily life. Some of these dolls are used in childbearing, weddings and Turkish puppetry or seen as scarecrows, snowmen and dolls as toys.

During birth process, dolls are associated with various believes. In some regions of Anatolia, dolls are used for infertile women who cannot have a baby. The woman, who wants to have a baby, puts a wrap around her belly and makes the wrap hold a rag doll right on her belly. By doing so, it is believed that infertile woman can have a baby thanks to the direct skin contact with the rag doll.

As we mentioned briefly, dolls are largely used in rituals to invoke rain where it does not rain for a long time. Dolls which children carry around with them during rainmaking prove the richness of our folkloric accumulation.

One of the oldest theatrical plays of Turks is puppetry. That being said, dolls can be counted as a type of puppet. Puppetry, which is the art of manipulation of inanimate figures, is very popular in our country as it is in many cultures. Physically, puppets correspond with dolls. Their head and hands are usually made of wood or hardened paper mache.

Scarecrows, which are a type of doll, are used during summer in order to keep harmful birds and naughty children away from ripe crops in various regions of Turkey. Scarecrows are basically a “T” shaped structure made of wood. Their head is usually a pumpkin and their eyes, nose and mouth are drawn using natural dye derived from plants. They wear an old cap or felt hat. They are also dressed in old extravagant clothes to discourage harmful birds and thieves.

In recent years, it became a tradition especially in big cities to put a doll along with the decorations made of flowers and ribbons at the front-end of the wedding car which will host the bride and the groom. Most of these dolls are plastic and bought from a store. Moreover, they are usually dressed in a bridal. These dolls represent the wish of a healthy baby for the newlyweds.

Another type of dolls that we see in the regions with sufficient snowfall of our country is snowman. Snowman is generally built by children and decorated with a hat, coal eyes and brows, a carrot nose and a scarf. It is considered as a doll with toy features until the sun melts it.

In Anatolia, girls play with dolls named “gelin” (bride in Turkish) which are made by village girls’ themselves or their elders. On the other hand, you can buy dolls at toy stores in the cities.

Girls play with dolls in our country until puberty hits. In some regions, an odd ceremony takes place in order to make girls around 10-12 give up playing with toys. This ceremony is called as “rag doll wedding” in Konya. Friends of the girl and all neighbors receive an invitation for this rag doll wedding. On the day of the wedding, rag doll gets dressed in a bridal and it is put in a high place in the room.

These types of dolls are the toys which are usually created to meet children's need to play with dolls.

Even though we have a rich accumulation based on folkloric traditions, doll production is not developed sufficiently in our country.

First studies treating the subject as toy and tourist souvenir production were started in technical school for girls between 1937 and 1938. Doll production classes started to be offered in advanced technical and artistic schools for girls. In addition, doll production studies, which had been launched in Ankara Technical Higher Teacher Education School for Girls in 1948, were taught in a higher education institution for the first time in 1982. Doll production classes are still offered in a higher education institution named Gazi University Faculty of Vocational Education. Vocational school programs for girls also provide doll production education.

Voluntary agencies have contributed greatly to the development of doll production in our country. World's first exhibition of dolls with folkloric clothing was held at Taksim Municipality Garden in İstanbul with the participation of 20 countries in 1936.

Folklore Research Department of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism held a worldwide competition on dolls with folkloric clothing in order to encourage the production of these dolls in 1986.

Today, concerned units of universities and public and private institutions hold doll exhibitions and competitions. People who come out in these competitions are awarded with monetary awards or gifts. Encouragement of participants contributes to this art branch and its popularization.

Handicrafts are the most prominent elements that symbolize the culture of a nation. They are the most vivid products that represent the cultural identity of a country. They play an important role in the prolongation and development of a country's customs and life style. They also help handing down those values from generation to generation. There are various handicraft branches in our country. One of the most prominent branches is doll art.

Dolls appeared in our education system after the proclamation of the Republic, which was very beneficial to our society. Women who have the most tiring job which includes taking care of their home became more and more involved in family economy. People started to perform our rich handicraft more consciously owing to the technical education provided in higher education institutions. The place in family of women, who are trained in these institutions and contribute to family economy, changes and becomes more appreciated accordingly. Turkish women meet their needs thanks to their educative studies and by doing so they reflect the emotions, thoughts and traditions of their society by means of their products.

Doll production, which is the transformation of remnants and raw materials into a handmade product, can be performed anytime at home by everyone from all ages, genders, education levels, whether they are disabled or not. It is also a cultural and economic activity which contributes to the family economy as a career or a side job.

Dolls which have a place in childbearing, funerals, weddings and religious believes such as rain prayers constitute the prominent part of our folk culture especially in the countryside.

Handicrafts which represent people's emotions and thoughts still exist in our day, even though we are now in the ever-growing science age. Especially the dolls dressed in our traditional wear among those handicrafts yield money for individuals. Also, they have an important role in tourism and promotion of the country.

Accommodation, sightseeing, food and beverage services and shopping have a place in tourism. Tourists who visit a country or a region want to buy a portable, decorative and authentic product which features the customs and characteristics of that region. Thus, those kinds of dolls are the touristic souvenirs favored by domestic and foreign tourists.

Regarding the “souvenir” sector in world tourism, folkloric dolls have doubled the economic revenue in tourism because of the cultural message that they carry. Another reason behind that is the fact that they are portable, charming and appealing in respect of collection. Even though doll production is an art branch that can be developed further in our country, we do not fully make use of their potential contribution to national economy in tourism sector. However, it is possible to improve the dolls in order to ensure economic efficiency preserving their folkloric features. It is also possible to create a prototype and produce it in those regions.

“Soğanlı dolls” which are produced in Cappadocia region and Soğanlı villages in Yeşilhisar, Kayseri can be an example to this. These dolls make a significant contribution to tourism revenue. It can be said that the only source of income for these people is handicrafts. Marketing of Soğanlı dolls is currently very popular in all tourist centers.

In our day, countries which are experienced and successful in tourism sector gain foreign exchange by marketing authentic and handmade souvenirs. In most of the industrialized countries, it is known that handmade products are of great value. However, many values continue to change in this industrialization period. Some of those values are life style habits and tastes. That is to say, the necessities of the time have to be considered in the production of handicrafts without spoiling their authenticity.

In this regard, “Damal dolls” which have been marketed domestically and abroad are considered as a gratifying example. Damal dolls are plastic dolls manufactured in Damal, Ardahan and dressed in miniature traditional wear of the region. These dolls are very detailedly dressed with a fez on their head and embroidered socks on their feet decorated with beads, buttons and ribbons and they represent the Turkmen clothing in Eastern Anatolia. Some of the Damal dolls are handmade rag dolls dressed in traditional wear rather than manufactured plastic dolls.

It is important for the tools, which are used in the production and composition of dolls and mass production of their clothing, to feature local characteristics and to be portable, well packed, affordable and made from obtainable materials in order to increase the tourism revenue in our country.

Considering all these matters, it is evident that dolls make a great contribution to tourism revenue and that they provide economic, social and cultural benefits.

3. TYPES OF DOLLS

Dolls exist in many domains with religious and spell-related purposes. They appear in the form of toys and puppets in particular. Regarding their real production and usage area, they usually belong to the rural life rather than the urban life. Even though they are known as dolls in cities, people from Anatolian villages call them some other vernacular names such as “gelin, güççe, korçak and kurçak.”

As for traditional dolls, it can be seen that most of them are handmade dolls made by mothers or grandmothers for their children or grandchildren respectively.

Rag dolls rank first among the other toys that girls play with almost in every region.

Dolls have different functions. Considered as a toy, their most known function is to entertain the children. In addition to this, another important function of dolls is to prepare girls for their future social role as mothers.

Easily and promptly obtainable and affordable materials such as rags are used in handmade doll production.

Dolls are made of materials such as rag, brushwood, dry plant, tree branch, wool, corncob, soil, broom and seashell.

There is not a certain classification of dolls. The reason behind that is the fact that producers can come up with new techniques anytime. That is to say, doll production depends on the materials on hand and the creativity of people. Doll classification method used in this research was prepared in accordance with the literature review done on this subject and the content and the implementation of the “doll production techniques I” course offered in the Department of Decorative Arts under the Department of Handicraft Education in Gazi University Faculty of Vocational Education.

Traditional dolls come under 16 categories in terms of production techniques and materials. These categories are as follows:

Wooden doll: The body and the legs of this doll are made from tree branches of different sizes. Sticks are used for its arms and they get removed after they are wrapped with cloth. That leaves the doll with arms made of cloth. Then a round head stuffed with cotton and covered with white cloth is attached. Facial features such as eyes, brows, nose and mouth can be either embroidered or painted. The most beautiful example of wooden dolls is Soğanlı dolls which are sold in Cappadocia and Nevşehir in Turkey (Güler and Özdemir, 2002).

Figure 1. Soğanlı Dolls



Source: <http://www.cnnturk.com>. Date of access: 03.01.2017

Rag dolls: The arms, legs and the body of a rag doll are actually separate little pillows which are stitched together afterwards. Its head is formed by pinching and roping the upper part of the body. Its face can be either embroidered or painted. Eyes can be made of buttons or beads. The clothing of a rag doll can be either sewed or knitted in accordance with the regional characteristics and the purpose. Wool yarn, corn silk and corn stalk are used as hair. Some of the rag dolls are made from one pillow and called as bundle dolls. Bundle doll is again a little pillow enswathed with a square cover folded into half forming a triangle. Its head is covered with muslin. Once again, its face can be either embroidered or painted.

Figure 2. Rag Dolls



Source: Student Works

Figure 3. Rag Dolls



Source: Own Elaboration, 2013

Figure 4. Rug Dolls



Source: www.bez-bebekler.com. Date of access: 03.01.2017

Sock dolls: Sock dolls are the easiest to make. It only requires an old sock, a sewing kit and stuffing. Stuffing can be cotton, old rag, newspaper, detail paper etc. Body, head, arms and legs of a sock doll are prepared separately. These body parts are stitched together afterwards in order to form the doll figure. Its face can be either embroidered or painted. Colored buttons are also used for the eyes. The clothing of a sock doll is designed as it is wished.

Figure 5. Socks Dolls



Source: <http://www.kültür portali gov.tr>. Date of access: 03.01.2017

Figure 6. Socks Dolls



Source: <http://www.nazarca.com>. Date of access: 03.01.2017

Dolls made of waste: These dolls, whose skeleton is a long thin stick or a piece of wood, have a body stuffed with materials such as foam, sponge and rag. As for the arms and legs, plant-based materials such as wheat stem, rye stem and raffia palm are used. Its head can be either a cloth stuffed with cotton or a wooden bead. Its face is drawn with colorful pens. The clothing of these dolls is designed as it is wished.

Figure 7. Dolls Made of Waste



Source: Students works, 2010

Paper dolls: Paper dolls are human figures cut out of paper. They can be either sitting or standing. The clothing of a paper doll is also made of paper. Clothes can be attached to the paper doll by using hooks made of paper. Paper clothes are usually decorated with rags, plant seeds and feathers.

Figure 8. Paper Dolls



Source: <http://www.pinterest.com>. Date of access: 03.01.2017

Dolls made of a scoop or a spoon: They are made of a scoop or a spoon attached to the middle of a long and thin stick. They are dressed in cloth pieces to make them look like a woman.

Figure 9. Dolls Made of a Spoon



Source: <http://www.pinterest.com>. Date of access: 03.01.2017

Clay and dough dolls: These dolls are made of clay, mud or dough which is two parts flour and one part white glue. Its head, body, arms and legs are glued together with white glue, after those parts get dry. Clothes can be decorated with dough or cloth. Its face can be painted with gouache paint, watercolor paint, or colorful marker pens. Different techniques can be used at the same time while working with dough and clay. For example, a doll figure can be set out using materials such as wire, wooden bead and egg shell. Afterwards, they get covered with dough in order to obtain a sharp figure (Koçak, 1993).

Figure 10. Clay and Dough Dolls



Source: Students Works, 2010

Dolls made of corncob and corn silk: Before producing the doll, dried cornhusks are put into water until they soften. Its skeleton is a “T” shaped wire with corn leaves wrapped around it. Production of these dolls begins with the formation of the arms. The leaf that is used for the arm is shaped into a curved figure as a real arm. The leaf also gets tied tightly to the wrists. Several layers of corn leaves are used for the formation of the body and they are tied at some parts considering the slimness of the waist. For the skirt, corn leaves are used once again. If it is preferred to dress the doll in pants, the same technique which is used for the arms is implemented. Its head can be either a cloth stuffed with cotton or a wooden bead. Its hair is made of corn leaves or corn silk. As for the hat, a knitted hat or a corn leaf cut into a triangle can complement the look. Its eyes, brows, mouth and nose are painted on the face with colorful pens.

Figure 11. Dolls Made of Corncob



Source: Left image students works, right image: <http://www.önem forum.com>. Date of access: 03.01.2017

Dolls made of chalk and soap: These dolls are made from plaster or chalk. Their brows, eyes and mouth are embroidered except for the dolls made of stone. Wool yarn or corn silk can be used for the hair. They can also have some handmade accessories such as necklaces or bracelets with bone beads.

Figure 12. Soap Dolls



Source: <http://www.pinterest.com>. Date of access: 03.01.2017

Broom dolls: The technique used for broom doll production is very similar to the technique used for dolls made of a spoon or a scoop. Broom which is attached to a long stick gets wrapped with rags. The face is decorated with ready-made materials such as beads, sequins and cloths. These dolls can be either man or woman with hair made from corn silk or wool yarn.

Figure 13. Broom Dolls



Source: <http://www.pinterest.com>. Date of access: 03.01.2017

Dolls made of wool and orlon: These are the dolls whose skeleton is a wire wrapped with wool yarn or orlon thread. The clothing of these dolls is made from materials such as cloth, drumhead, corn husk, raffia palm, bead and paper. As for the head, bead, cloth or foam can be used. Its head is decorated with colorful marker pens.

Figure 14. Wool Dolls



Source: <http://www.nazarca.com>. Date of access: 03.01.2017

Seashell dolls: For this type of dolls, seashells are combined together in order to form a doll figure. Seashells can be glued together or a wire can be used in order to keep them together. Sequins, beads, dried nuts and dried seeds are used for decorative purposes.

Figure 15. Seashell Dolls



Source: <http://www.pinterest.com>. Date of access: 03.01.2017

Dolls made of stone: These dolls are formed by combining stones of all sizes in order to create the skeleton of the doll. Big flat stones are used for the body and the head, while little stones are favored for the feet. Stones are attached together with small pieces of dough. Its arms and clothing are completely made from dough. Its face is painted with gouache paint. Moreover the clothing can be decorated with materials such as cloth, sequin and bead.

Wire dolls: Main material of wire dolls is wire. They are used for the formation of the skeleton. Their head is actually a sock stuffed with materials such as rag and sponge. As for the hair, wool yarn and thread can be used. Their clothing can be knitted or made of materials such as cloth, leather, corn leaf and raffia palm.

Figure 16. Stone Dolls



Source: <http://www.pinterest.com>. Date of access: 03.01.2017

Tragacanth dolls: These dolls have a wire skeleton and stuffed body parts which are produced in accordance with certain body sizes. Cotton and tragacanth are used for the face, hands and feet. They are dressed in traditional wear which represents Turkish folklore.

Figure 17. Tragacanth Dolls



Source: Own Elaboration, 2008

Dolls made of various materials: One or more techniques mentioned above can be implemented on materials such as dried plants, matchsticks, empty spools, pine cones, egg shells, animal skin, ling, crotch, wool, brushwood, wires, rags, nutshells, dough and tree pieces in order to produce various types of dolls (Koçak, 1993).

Figure 18. Dolls Made of Various Materials



Source: <http://www.pinterest.com>. Date of access: 03.01.2017

4. CONCLUSION

Doll production is a very beneficial art branch that gives housewives a chance to produce at home and increases production, considering the fact that doll production is a handicraft owing to which remnants are recycled. Dolls which represent the traditional wear of Anatolian women is one of the prominent handicrafts which increases the tourism revenue of the country and promotes the country's itself.

As a result, dolls have to be considered as a souvenir. Thus, public institutions and organizations should cooperate on this matter, carry out activities by doing local, production-oriented research while preserving the traditional features. These points mentioned above are of great importance in order to sustain our existing cultural values and to promote our country.

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