

Conceptual Metaphors for Women in Three Afghan Poetesses: A Case Study of Mahjoubeh Heravi, Homaira Nakhat Dastgirzada, and Baran Sajadi

Afsaneh Habibzadeh Vahedyar¹

Seyed Mahdi Zarghani^{2*}

Abstract

Informed by discursive and lived experiences, Afghan poetesses have many representations of poetic phenomena. Female-centred metaphors provide an image of women's situation and orientation in Afghanistan. This study explores the metaphors for women in three Afghan poetesses who represent a spectrum of Afghan people and poets. Closely tied to tradition, Mahjoubeh Heravi adopts and maintains a traditional mindset toward women. Homaira Nakhat, on the other hand, adopts a reformist approach; she starts from a traditional point of view and becomes more modern, transcending her representations of women from passive to active. In stark contrast, Baran Sajadi deviates from tradition, challenges the norms, and breaks the taboos. The scope of this study is limited to the poems of the above-mentioned poetesses. Adopting a content analysis approach, this study explores the grand metaphors for women in the three poetesses to expose their worldview.

Keywords: Afghan Women Poetry, Baran Sajadi, Conceptual Metaphors, Homaira Nakhat Dastgirzada, Mahjoubeh Hervai

Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Informed by discursive and lived experiences, Afghan poetesses have many representations of poetic phenomena. Female-centred metaphors provide an image of women's situation and orientation in Afghanistan. This study explores

1. Ph. D. Student in Persian Language and Literature, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran. (avahedyar@gmail.com)

*2. Professor in Persian Language and Literature, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, *Mashhad, Iran. (Corresponding Author: irzarghani@yahoo.com)

the metaphors for women in three Afghan poetesses who represent a spectrum of Afghan people and poets. Closely tied to tradition, Mahjoubeh Heravi adopts and maintains a traditional mindset toward women; Homaira Nakhat adopts a reformist approach; and Baran Sajadi deviates from tradition, challenges the norms, and breaks the taboos. The scope of this study is limited to the poems of the above-mentioned poetesses.

2. Methodology

This library research extracts the metaphors for women from the works of the above-mentioned poetesses, explores the biography of each poet, correlates the metaphors with their lives, and categorises the metaphors in light of their significance in representing women. Lastly, the study investigates their mindset and worldview.

3. Theoretical Framework

This research is a combination of theories on conceptual metaphors and content analysis. The definition of “metaphor” is limited to the theories on conceptual metaphors.

4. Discussion and Analysis

Though Mahjoubeh Heravi grew up in a traditional household, she was a reformist. Her poeticity is informed by traditional norms and concepts such as praising/glorifying knowledge, religious icons, ethics, and nature. Though she addresses issues such as freedom and the individuation of women, her romantic mindset echoes the male-dominated literary and cultural tradition. The frequent images of female captivity de-individuate her poeticity. She is the embodiment of women who – either unknowingly or out of fear – follow the footsteps of men in poetry. In her worldview, women are conceptualised and represented as alienated, captured, hunted, slaved, bounded, and faithless individuals. Having the opportunity to travel abroad and broaden her mind, Homaira Nakhat Dastgirzada moved to Bulgaria and the Netherlands. Influenced by her travels and different cultures, she moved beyond a simple traditionalist to a reformist poetess. Her poetry reveals her persistent call for reforming the male-dominated cultural tradition of her country, Afghanistan. She does not ignore the tradition but views the cultural tradition as a sick body in need of multiple surgeries. Though cancer affected the content of her poetry, it did not affect her call for reformation. At first, she called upon the men to actively participate in reformation, but then she focused on women.

One can categorise her poetry as a constant war on two fronts: with cancer and the male-centred culture and tradition.

Baran Sajadi is the representative of the third generation of Afghan poetesses. She used to live in Iran and is categorised as a diasporic poet. Unlike the traditionalist Mahjoubeh Heravi or the reformist Nakhat Dastgirzada, she was a nonconformist. Due to her nonconformism, she had to leave Iran and migrate to Canada. Her oeuvre is not as canonical as the other two poetesses, but young as she is, she managed to publish more books. Judging by her two books, one can argue that Sajadi moves beyond content and form. For her conceptualisations, she employs three groups of metaphors: women having the upper hand, taboos, and women as inferior to men, all of which intend to fight the male-dominated cultural tradition.

5. Conclusion

Heravi, Nakhat, and Sajadi are representatives of three generations of Afghan contemporary poetesses. Heravi represents a voice which orients toward the literary-cultural tradition but is not transcendental enough to be considered a discourse. Nakhat represents the second generation, the reformists, who identify the problems in male-dominated cultural traditions and poetically call for reformation. Representing the third generation, the rebellious Sajadi adopts a nonconformist approach and employs femininity and corporality to constantly move between the ideal and the real.

Bibliography

- Habibi, S. 1399 [2020]. *Banova'n-e Sokhanvar: Pazhoohesh-I dar Mored-e A'sar-e Zanan-e Sha'er Dari-Pardaz-e Afghanistan*. Kabul: Academy of Sciences. [In Persian].
- Heravi, M. 1347 [1968]. *Divan*. Mohammad, A. G (ed.). Herat: Tab-e Kotob-e Herat. [In Persian].
- Kovecses, Z. 1393 [2014]. *Moqadameh-I Karbordi bar Estea'reh*. Shirin, P. E (trans.). Tehran: Samt. (*Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*) [In Persian].
- Mojaddadi, M. Sh. 1402 [2023]. *Ra'z-e A'farinesh: Dr. Homaira Nakhat Datgirzada, Ravi-e Eshq va AzadAndishi*. Herat: Farhang-sara-e Bahreh. [In Persian].
- Nakhat Dastgirzada, H. 1400 [2021]. *Divan*. Herat: An. [In Persian].
- Navabi, Q. H. 1356 [1977]. *Mahjoubeh Heravi*. Pishavar: Al-Azhar. [In Persian].
- Rahmani, M. 1393 [2014]. *Pardeh-Neshina'n-e Sokhangoo*. Fatemeh, S (paraph.). Tehran: Nega'h-e Moaser. [In Persian].

Sajadi, B. 1392 [2013]. *Sang-Baran*. Kabul: Tak. [In Persian].

Sajadi, B. 1394 [2015]. *Period*. Kabul: Amiri. [In Persian].

Yasna, Y. 1400 [2021]. *Zan-Nameh-e Naqd-e Goftema'n-e PedarSalar*. Kabul: Maqsoudi. [In Persian].

How to cite:

Habibzadeh Vahedyar, A., Zarghani, S.M. 2024. "Conceptual Metaphors for Women in Three Afghan Poetesses: A Case Study of Mahjoubeh Heravi, Homaira Nakhat Dastgirzada, and Baran Sajadi", *Naqd va Nazaryeh Adabi*, 18(1): 151-177. DOI:10.22124/naqd.2024.27920.2592

Copyright:

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to *Naqd va Nazaryeh Adabi (Literary Theory and Criticism)*.



This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided that the original work is properly cited.