

BASED ON TEACHING MATERIALS WOMAN FIGURE IN THE TURKISH POETRY

A FIGURA DA MULHER NA POESIA TURCA COM BASE EM MATERIAIS DIDÁTICOS

LA FIGURA DE LA MUJER EN LA POESÍA TURCA A PARTIR DE MATERIALES DIDÁCTICOS

Aydan KHANDAN¹

ABSTRACT: In Turkish poetry, the figure of women is important in university curricula. The images of women in the examples shown to students in the taught literary texts are also important in mastering the subject. Since ancient times, woman figure has been one of the most widely used figures in the Turkish literature. We meet women as a lover, a mother and a sister in the works of poets and writers for centuries. In classical poetry, the woman figure has been developed more as a symbol of beauty. When describing the beauty of a woman, the representatives of the Divan literature compared it with the beauties of nature and often equated them with various elements of nature. The value given to women began to change over the period of Turkish literature formed under the influence of the West. Poets and writers are already expressing their views on the role of women in social life and address the problems faced by women.

KEYWORDS: Turkish poetry. Teaching materials. Turkish culture.

RESUMO: Na poesia turca, a figura da mulher é importante nos currículos universitários. As imagens de mulheres nos exemplos mostrados aos alunos nos textos literários ensinados também são importantes para o domínio do assunto. Desde os tempos antigos, a figura da mulher tem sido uma das figuras mais utilizadas na literatura turca. Conhecemos as mulheres como amante, mãe e irmã nas obras de poetas e escritores ao longo dos séculos. Na poesia clássica, a figura da mulher desenvolveu-se mais como um símbolo de beleza. Ao descrever a beleza de uma mulher, os representantes da literatura Divan a compararam com as belezas da natureza e muitas vezes as equipararam a vários elementos da natureza. O valor dado às mulheres começou a mudar ao longo do período da literatura turca sob a influência do Ocidente. Poetas e escritores já expressam suas opiniões sobre o papel da mulher na vida social e abordam os problemas enfrentados pelas mulheres.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Poesia turca. Materiais de ensino. Cultura turca.

¹ Baku State University (BSU), Baku – Azerbaijan. Associate Professor, Doctor of Philosophy in Philology. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3544-7334>. E-mail: elchinibrahimov85@gmail.com

RESUMEN: *En la poesía turca, la figura de la mujer es importante en los planes de estudios universitarios. Las imágenes de mujeres en los ejemplos mostrados a los estudiantes en los textos literarios enseñados también son importantes para dominar el tema. Desde la antigüedad, la figura de la mujer ha sido una de las figuras más utilizadas en la literatura turca. Encontramos mujeres como amantes, madres y hermanas en las obras de poetas y escritores durante siglos. En la poesía clásica, la figura de la mujer se ha desarrollado más como símbolo de belleza. Al describir la belleza de una mujer, los representantes de la literatura Divan la compararon con las bellezas de la naturaleza y, a menudo, las equipararon con varios elementos de la naturaleza. El valor otorgado a las mujeres comenzó a cambiar durante el período de la literatura turca formada bajo la influencia de Occidente. Los poetas y escritores ya están expresando sus puntos de vista sobre el papel de la mujer en la vida social y abordan los problemas que enfrentan las mujeres.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Poesía turca. Materiales de enseñanza. Cultura turca.*

Introduction

Throughout history, gender equality has been an important and urgent problem of social life and this problem has survived to this day. One of the scientists studying the problems of human social development, Herbert Spencer, suggested that it was necessary to compare the positions of women in society at that time in order to analyze the situation in ancient societies. Anthropologists tried to determine the place of women in the family, especially in primitive communities. Over the years, the issue of women's status has been studied in different ways and opinions on how this status was assessed against the background of various social events and changes have been put forward.

As it is known, there is an issue of the status preference of men in the traditional Turkish culture. Issues such as the importance of a man's word in the family and changing the attitude to women giving birth just to boys have not lost their importance over the centuries. Numerous folklore samples confirm this idea:

*The boy is an arrow,
not available at every house
He is angel in the sky,
a golden ball on the ground*

Such sayings as "Let women giving birth to boys boast and women giving birth to girls be frantic with sorrow" emphasize the importance of the boy in the family.

As a result of qualities of women compared with men and the description of these qualities in the literature, we can also determine the value given to women in the art world at

different times. First of all, the description of a woman as a mother and a lover appears in the most ancient sources.

Results and Discussion

Woman figure in the ancient sources

The woman figure was one of the leading figures in folk tales and stories since ancient times in the Turkish literature. While looking through the Turkish literature of the pre-Islamic period, we can meet the woman figure almost in every oral or written samples. This is not accidental, because the woman, mother and sister figures have always been respected in the lives and moral values of the ancient Turks. Women had equal rights as men and played an important role in the family, politics and statehood in the ancient Turkish society.

While looking through Oguz Kagan tale of the Turks, we can see the description of women whom Oguz met and married later. One of the women whom Oguz got married with fell from the sky and the other appeared from a tree hollow. Six boys were born as a result of marriage of Oguz with these women. The formation of Bozok and Uchok tribal unions was given as the will of God.

Women played an important role in the formation of the lover, mother and Turkish tribal union.

The role of women was great in the following periods of management of the Turkish states too. For example, when the title of ruler was given, the ruler's wife was ceremoniously named as “*katun*” (*hatun*). In the Turkish states, women had the right of *hatun*. (KAFESOGHLU, 2017, p. 259).

There were also many regents taking active part in governing the state and politics. *Hatuns* took part in state meetings, received foreign ambassadors and guests themselves.

Even after adopting Islam, women continued to participate in assemblies and divans according to the law. Women took part in battles with men, went on horseback, walked bareheaded. At the beginning of the 10th century, the Arab traveler Ibn Fadlan wrote about what he saw while visiting the house of a Turkish nobleman. We learn from his writings that the girls and women in the family were bareheaded. These bareheaded were extremely pure, clean and decent. Family was considered a sacred institution at Turks.

Woman figure from classic poetry to reforms

We also meet the woman figure in literary works in the post-Islamic period in the Turkish poetry. In classical literature, a woman is mainly a lover. The poets of Divan poetry longed for their lovers, screamed from the oppression of their lovers and usually created poetic samples full of complaints. Woman figures look like each other in the classical poetry. Unlike the poets of Divan poetry, representatives of Ashig literature described women more realistically. The pretty women praised by Seyrani, Garajaoghlan, Govhari were the women that ashigs saw and loved in real life.

The women we encounter in the poetry of the eighteenth-century poet Nadim in the classical literature differ from many standard woman figures. In Nadim's poems, a Tulip-era woman comes to life in front of the reader. These women prefer European style in their clothes, attend events and fascinate with their real beauty:

*Holding upright, belts on the waist,
Pretty women wear new dresses.
He binds the world to himself and enslaves it,
Go, my free cypress tree, you have a state at your head* (KABAKLI, 1994, p. 734).

The value given to women changes in the reforms poetry. The problem of women is highlighted in the works of a number of writers and poets. The ideas of freedom brought by the reforms are manifested in various areas and reflected in the social status of women too. The reformer poets address the issue of women in different ways. In addition to dedicating poems to lover, Ibrahim Shinasi throws a light upon the problem of marriage without seeing in his play "The Poet's Marriage". A woman appears as a mother and motherland in Namig Kamal's poetry.

There is an indelible imprint of a woman - a mother, a sister, a lover, a wife in the life of every poet and writer. In this regard, poets and writers have addressed this figure in their works. We see the woman image in different ways in the poetry of various poets including Abdulhag Hamid, Tofig Fikret, Mr. Shahabaddin, Jalal Sahir Erozan, Riza Tofig Bolukbashi, Ahmad Hashim, Yahya Kamal Bayatli who have been active since the Reforms period. Some of these poets had lost their mothers in the past and this heavy loss had caused to deep sad at them. Thus, many poems by Hamid, Yahya Kamal and Reza Tofig deal with mother loss. Dedicating a poem to his mother, Tofig Fikret expresses his sad feelings after his mother's death in one of his first poems "Uzlet-geh-i Mâder-i Ziyaret".

The poet also touches on the topic of women in another poem "For my nurse" among others, but the topic developed here is another topical issue - women's rights.

The poet describes the hard and unjust life of oriental women in the example of his sister's fate. In the poem, the poet repeatedly states in his poem that his sister didn't die, she was killed. This poem has the same tone as in several other poems by Tofig Fikret. As it is known, Tofig Fikret attached great importance to family, mother, father and child relations. In his poems, he repeatedly spoke about the importance of building a family on solid foundations, on the basis of love and mutual understanding. In this poem, he speaks about bitter fate of a Turkish woman married without love and abused by her husband in the person of his sister who had an unhappy family:

*My poor, poor sister! While imaging
Your sorrow, disaster becoming earth at the end,
Your misaster that you endured for eighteen years
I can't tolerate any more... When it is getting so
The heart will be poisoned to remember the miracle.*

In this poem dedicated to the death of his sister, Tofig Fikret protests both against her death as a result of domestic violence and the violence against all women in general:

*You did not die, you were lowered into that filth
You didn't die, you were killed, poor woman!
Your destiny should not be sufferings,
Your angel does not deserve this evil,
If a woman is miserable, the world will be miserable too!*

T. Fikret Sarvati used works of art on women's freedom such as poems, stories, novels, essays, scientific, publicist articles, as well as highly valuable, illustrated materials published systematically while being the editor of the magazine “*Serveti funun*” (Wealth of sciences).

On one hand Fikret exerted an impact on the consciousness and culture of society and wanted to raise it to a level where women's rights are perceived in order to let women take a worthy position in life and on the other hand, proposed women a sense of struggle for their rights by influencing themselves and worked in the direction too.

The bitter fate of a girl obliged to have a beggary life is spoken about in his poem “*Valida*” among the poems dedicated to women. No matter how hard a woman's life is, she fixes affections upon her baby in her arms. No suffering or hardship can take a mother's love out of a woman's heart. In this poem, the author speaks about mother's love:

*A person seeing her pride while embracing her baby
Couldn't consider that she is a beggar,
Her deep gazes change as she looks at her child
As if they say that
Being a mother is a joyful sorrow” (FIKRET, 1969, p. 28).*

As mentioned above, Tofig Fikret attached great importance to family topic and believed that a healthy family could form a healthy society.

Woman and family topic

Among the poems about the family, the poet's poem "Tezelenen izdivaj" (Renewed Marriage) Tofig Fikret tells about the role of a child in the unification of the family. In the poem the drama of the life of a married couple having frigid relations shortly after their marriage comes to life in front of our eyes. It is a newborn baby who reunites the family and makes the family members laugh. Thus, the poet reminds the reader of the exceptional role of the child and the responsibilities of parents in front of this baby:

*The wife showed her son to her angry husband
"Look, he is our son!" - Then the woman's eyes filled with tears,
The young man laughed too with eyes full of proud,
The continuation of the generation is a glorious need for man
That old marriage was renewed by a kiss. (FIKRET, 1969, p. 25).*

The name of Abdulhag Hamid shall be specially mentioned among the poets dedicating poems to women. Abdulhag Hamid Tarhan touches widely on the subject of women both in his personal life and in his poems. We can see women in three different ways: mother, wife and lover in Hamid's poems. Hamid wrote "Makber", "Olu" (Dead), "Hajle" and "Bir Igbir" for his wife. However, the poet speaks about his wife, his grief over her illness and death in these works. The main purpose of the poet touching on these topics is the thoughts of death and life. It is a search for answers to doubts about the understanding of these two concepts. Poems dedicated to the death of his mother and his first wife, Fatima, are the sign of the important role of woman playing in a man's life. The poem "Magbar", dedicated to the death of the poet's wife Fatima consists of the metaphysical thoughts of a helpless man who was shaken by sudden death and screamed to the Creator. His works "Olu" (Dead) and "Bunlar odur" (These are She) written after this poem have the same atmosphere.

The poet wrote his book "Validem" (My mother) in 1913. The work is written in two parts consisting of 65 couplets. Hamid spoke about the life of his mother, her character, positive human qualities in the first part of the book of poems "Validem" (My mother)" and in the second part, he emphasized the importance of protecting and owning the homeland considering it as mother:

*How many thousands of new born,
children there are
who can put their heart and soul for him,
his child is the nation and the state.
treacherous enemies wounded him
but he will not remain lifeless
there is a lawsuit in this trouble
the nation will defend him
after a painful sleep
he will come to his senses, there is a sign of good!* (TARHAN, 1997, p. 210).

One of the poets touching upon mother-child relations in his work is Rza Tofig. We meet woman figures in his poems such as “*Selma, sen de unut yavrum*” (Selma, forget you too, my child), “*Ajikli ana*” (Sad mother), “*Altın saçlı Hatije*” (Golden-haired Hatije). In these poems, women appear before us as the grief of a girl who lost her mother, the unfortunate fate of the deceased woman, beautiful Hatije, the mothers of martyrs.

In his poem “*Selma, sen de unut yavrum*” (Selma, forget you too, my child) Rza Tofig is helpless to find answers to his daughter's questions about her mother's death and calls her to live in the present without returning to the past:

*Spring comes! Everywhere shines
Flowers bloomed in places where tears shed
The sun is yours, spring is yours, you are a flower
You are an angel created to laugh*

*Smile to gladden my heart!
Let the silent mountains respond to laughter and adorn!
Think neither of the mystery of death, nor of a shadow-like being* (TEVFIK, 1986, p. 73).

With these verses, the poet sees the way to get rid of his helplessness in the feelings he experiences after the death of a loved one in holding on to the life. He says that he finds consolation in her daughter's laughter.

In another poem, on the contrary, Rza Tofig creates a mother figure weigh downing on the loss of her child. This mother is the mother of a heroic Turkish soldier who died for the motherland:

*I knew you by your voice, poor woman!
Your name has become legendary.
I know, you lived and died with honor,
Tell us, there are people listening to your story.
You gave birth to those heroes,
Heroes famous in the world,
Whose places are not even known today.
There is a sad ununderstandable mystery in it* (TEVFIK, 1986, p. 47).

There is the grief and pain of losing a child of a mother who brought up her child with hardship in the poem. The poet shares mother's grief in a unique way. On one hand, he is proud of mother having honorable life and on the other hand, while walking in the cemetery, he becomes sad by the death of unknown soldiers and martyrs as a result of the horrors of war. Rza Tofiq bows in front of thousands of mothers of soldiers and martyrs in the person of a mother:

*I walked chewing those graves,
I thought, I tired by brain.
I felt pain in my heart,
I have a dagger wound in my side.
I have got a stitch every time when I breath,
My eyes in tears are covered with fog,
I have the grief of all orphans,
My heart bleeds. (TEVFIK, 1986, p. 50).*

While looking through Rza Tofiq's poetry, we can see that women, mothers and daughters appear in different forms in his poems. Even in the poems of the poet not devoted to women, we find descriptions of the motherland as a mother. In his poem "*Anadolu*" (Anatolia), the poet likens the homeland to his mother's embrace. The poet states in the poem that Anatolia is the homeland of Turks:

*Anatolia, the homeland of Sultan Osman,
Those places are the mansion of Tughrul Bey!
Our nation was born and raised there.
Those places are mother's arms for us! (TEVFIK, 1986, p. 43).*

Generally, likening of mother and motherland has appeared in as a metaphor used by individual poets and writers in Turkish literature beginning from the poetry of Namig Kamal since the period of reforms. Motherland and mother are the two loftiest beings in human life. Love to the motherland is intertwined with endless love and devotion to mother and is depicted in various works of art.

The woman figures appear mostly as imaginary figures in the poems of many of the poets of the wealth of sciences. It was caused by the attachment of these poets to the symbolism current. Rajaizadeh Mahmud Akram, one of the second generation of Reforms, tried to create a woman figure in his poetry different from the poets of Divan. The woman in his poems is more real. However, the women depicted in the poetry of poets such as Mr. Shahabaddin, Ahmad Hashim, Jalal Sahir appear before us in an imaginary world, under mysterious conditions like the women in the works of French symbolists. For example, Mr. Shahabaddin speaks about a woman in his poem "*Yakazat-i Leyliyya*". The appearance of this woman is not

described in the poem, we see her presence from the music her fingers create on the piano, under the sounds of music in the dark, somewhere far away:

*Let's listen to the night tonight, my dear,
Let's listen to a musical composition:
There is a piano in the distance
Under the influence of young fingers
It cries in a sad tone...
There is a piano in the distance...
It is undoubtedly played by a woman
Who finds an answer to her sorrow in music
My soul, listen, she is weeping.*

The theme of running away, going alone with lover to a place without no one else was very popular in the poems of the poets of wealth of sciences. This theme is also relevant in the poetry of the symbolist Ahmad Hashim. In his famous poem "O belde" the poet wishes to run to an imaginary city with his lover:

*That city is in our dreams
A blue evening scatter it
There is a sea at the foot
That brings peace of mind
The women in that city are beautiful, slender, pure and lover
They have sorrow in their eyes
they are all either nurses or lovers (HASHIM, 2010, p. 96).*

Hashim's lover is as imaginary, distant and inaccessible as of Janab. In his poem "Akhsham" (Evening), the lover is seen as a dream from far away:

*It was evening again...
The lover laughs at the same old place
My sweetheart doesn't come in the afternoon
But she appears on the sea
The moon is a belt around her young waist
The sky above is a mysterious covering
The stars are flowers in her hands... (HASHIM, 2010, p. 154).*

As can be seen from the verses, the poet is looking for his lover in the sky, among the stars and notes that she comes just in the evening. Generally, as in a purely symbolic poetry, the depiction of evening and nighttime is preferred in Hashim's poetry too.

Conclusion

As can be seen, poets appealed to the woman figures in different periods of the Turkish poetry. Women are figured differently depending on the period. Thus, in Divan literature, women are more often figured as lovers. Except for some poets, most of these women are similar to each other, giving trouble to their lovers and ruthlessly breaking their hearts. As the view to women changed generally in the reforms period, woman figure was described completely in different ways in this period. These women are depicted as lovers, mothers, sisters, companions and symbols of the motherland. In all cases, a woman is a valuable being, a caring, irreplaceable being inspiring heroism and self-sacrifice. Since this period the place given to women in poetry has become more important than just being a lover.

REFERENCES

- BOLUKBAŞI, R. T. **Serâb-ı Ömrüm and Other Poems**. Istanbul: Bookstore, 2005.
- FIKRET, T. **Selected poems**. Baku: Azər nəşr, 1969.
- GARBUZOVA, V. S. **Poeti Turtsi XIX veka**. Leninqrاد, 1970.
- HAŞİM, A. **All His Poems**. Piyale, Lake Hours, Other Poems, Jun. İnci Enginün, Zeynep Kerman. Istanbul: Dergah Publications, 2010.
- KABAKLI, A. **Turkish literature**. Istanbul: MEB 1994.
- KAFESOGLU, I. **Turkish National Culture**. Istanbul: Ötüken publications, 2017.
- KAPLAN, M. **Tevfik Fikret's Turkish greats series**. Ankara, Selections from the Nedim Divan. Istanbul, 1981.
- RECAIZADE M. E. **All His Works II**, MEB Publications, Jun. İsmail Parlatır, Nurullah Cetin, Hakan Sazyek, Istanbul, 1997.
- SHAHABEDDIN, C. **All Poems of Cenab Şahabeddin**. İstanbul: İstanbul Literature Faculty Publications, 1984.
- TARHAN, A. H. **All His Poems 1**, Makber, Dead, Hacle, A Voice from Bala, Validem. Istanbul: Dergah Publications, 1997.
- TEVFIK, R. **Abdullah Uçman**, Turkish greats series. Ankara, 1986.

How to reference this article

KHANDAN, A. Based on teaching materials woman figure in the Turkish poetry. **Rev. EntreLínguas**, Araraquara, v. 8, n. 00, e022072, 2022. e-ISSN: 2447-3529. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29051/el.v8i00.17471>

Submitted: 21/08/2022

Required revisions: 23/09/2022

Approved: 18/10/2022

Published: 30/12/2022

Processing and editing: Editora Ibero-Americana de Educação.
Correction, formatting, normalization and translation.

