The Comparison of Sanai and Rumi's Outlooks Towards Women

Abstract

The position and prominence of women in any society is associated to the attitude of the time and individuals towards women. The place of women in Iranian society has always has been controversial. In the meantime, the works of poets can be a mirror for understanding the situation of women. By considering the fact that the worldview of every poet, writer, or thinker is influenced by the intellectual, social, and cultural memory of the time and place in which the person exists; Sanai and Rumi are prominent Iranian poets whose works reflect the political, social and cultural conditions of their life. The issue raised in this study is the transformation of the position of women in society during the time of the mentioned poets. This research is accomplished by a descriptive and analytical method and relies on library data. Findings show that from the Sanai to Rumi periods, a unique social and cultural change took place that led to the enhancement of the status of women and this has been effective in the depiction of women's personalities. Sanai has a mainly negative and critical view of women and rarely cares about her position as a mother and in the service of her religious attitude towards women; nonetheless, Rumi considers woman as a manifestation of divine beauty; furthermore, in Rumi's poetry, woman is the soul, earth, and essence, and she complements creation and this distinguishes the manner in which the female figure is depicted in the poetry of Sanai.

Research aims:

1. Corresponding the image of a woman in the poems of Sanai and Rumi.

2. Analysis of effective factors in drawing the image of women in the period of Sanai and Rumi.

Research questions:

1. What are the differences between the female image in the poems of Sanai and Rumi?

2. What factors were involved in drawing the image of women in the period of Sanai and Rumi?

Keywords: Sanai, Rumi, Female Image, Comparative Studies, Islamic Theology.

Introduction

The issue of women, their personality, position and place in the family and society are among the issues that, like other cultural and social concerns, are reflected in the mirror of literature and culture of nations. This reflects the individual and social attitudes of the creators of the works and society and displays how they viewed the category of women. Do they think women have the same rights as men? Or that woman is a parasitic and second-hand creature dependent on man, who has no independence of opinion and personality? This and other questions are among the unknowns that this article tries to answer in order to determine the position of women in the studied society, and to present them to the readers and admirers. In this regard, one of the ways to achieve the attitude of societies towards women and examine her personality and position among them, is to study and investigate the literary works and poems of those societies. In examining those poems and works, one should pay attention to the contexts and conditions of society simultaneously. In this article, the position of women in Islamic theology and Sufism is analyzed based on the poems of "Sanai" and "Rumi" by considering the situation of the society of that time and by applying various texts related to this subject. In most of the divine religions, man and woman were created simultaneously, and God created them and provided them with equal opportunities. God makes them complement each other. However, the study of women's image in the history of Iran indicates the ups and downs of the position of women in society and the existence of inequalities. One of the sources that can be a mirror for recognizing the position of women in society are literary works, each of which reflects a set of do's and don'ts of their period. An analysis of these works can provide a clear perspective on the situation of women in different historical periods.

Regarding the background of the present study, it should be said that no independent research with this title has been conducted so far. However, many articles have been written about women in the works of poets such as Rumi. An article entitled "Woman in Rumi's Masnavi" has been written by Nasrullah Emami; according to the author, women in Rumi's Masnavi are not different from men in terms of status; however, the image of woman in the tradition of Persian literature is not very acceptable and desirable, and Rumi's image of woman in his allegories arises from negative symbolic descriptions. In his opinion, woman is the manifestation of soul, voracity, bestows animal, sensual traits, appearance and has superficial judgment and verdict. However, these matters are not the thoughts of Rumi but a reflection of the ideas of the people of his time (Emami, 2010: 27). Another article entitled "The Manifestation of Women in the First Three Books of the Spiritual Masnavi" was written by Mandana Alimi. The author believes that what Rumi has said in his works about women is in fact the result of thoughts and insights in the society of his time. Rumi is a poet who composes social poems and has a close relationship with his surroundings, so he cannot ignore the beliefs and opinions that exist in society and is not affected by them (Alimi, 2011: 163). This research, with a descriptive and analytical method and relying on library studies, seeks to comparatively study the appearance of women in the works of poets such as Sanai and Rumi, and intends to determine the hidden angles about the appearance of women in the Islamic period.

Conclusion

Mystics have a contradictory and significant view of women; On the one hand, the woman is a symbol of darkness and carnal desires and as the exhibition of cunning; however, in a number of Sufi Texts She is the manifestation of light of truth and the demonstration of mercy and divinity. Sanai's poems are mostly based on a negative attitude towards women, and women are a symbol of the world and humiliation; Unlike Rumi, who speaks of women everywhere, she is a symbol of divine light and manifestation, and if he looks at the negative aspects, he immediately turns to symbolism and interprets it. This shows that women have undergone a dramatic change in mystical texts over the course of a century and that negative attitudes have been significantly reduced. In the meantime, the role of thoughts and culture cannot be ignored since the

thoughts of these poets are based on the future of ideas and beliefs in society. In fact, this issue has triggered us to face a contradictory reflection of the female image in Rumi's works. According to Rumi, woman appears in symbols such as earth, soul, spirit and divine love. With a little reflection, it can be seen that, given that human existence is generally a collection of good and evil, in parallel, the female atmosphere is also a combination of these two opposites. Of course, it cannot be ignored that in Iranian society in the century in question there is no ideal and desirable view of women. A comparison of Sanai and Rumi's views on women shows that in Rumi's works, the negativity in Sanai's works towards women has been reduced to some extent.

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