

Gender-Based Conceptual Metaphors in Nour Abel Meguid's *Oreedo Ragolan* (*I Want a Man*) أرِيدُ رَجُلًا (2011)

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Abstract

Conceptual metaphors are an indispensable element not only in the interpretation of literary texts, but also in the representation of the author's actual perspective in life. The paper aims to explore the representation of gender metaphors in Nour Abdel Meguid's *Oreedo Ragolan* (*I Want a Man*) (2011), a novel that has achieved much fame as a literary work and as a TV series as well. Based on Lakoff's and Johnson's (1980, 2003) and KÖVECSSES' (2016) Conceptual Metaphor Theory and adopting the Pragglejaz Group's method (2007), results

show that gender metaphors are used as a tool to represent a revolt against the oriental social perspectives of male supremacy, male chauvinism, and misogyny. Opposed to the traditional attitude of men as superior to women, the main female characters in this novel are portrayed as more powerful than and as dominating their male counterparts. Accordingly, the study helps reveal the author's female-biased attitude in portraying the characters and describing their behavior.

Keywords: Gender Metaphors, Gender Bias, Feminism, Conceptual Metaphors

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1. Introduction

Metaphors are not just figurative devices of language. Rather, they control the way we think and even act. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 4), our conceptual system is metaphorical in nature and metaphors play a central role in defining our everyday realities. Conceptual metaphors, therefore, can be used as a tool to detect a wide range of relations between two distinct domains, source and target, to reveal how far they manage to govern the way we think and behave towards different aspects of life. In the current study, conceptual metaphors are used as a tool to detect how the characters are portrayed in Nour Abdul Meguid's *Oreedo Ragolan* (2011). Lakoff's and Johnson's (1980, 2003) and KÖVECSSES' (2016) Conceptual Metaphor Theory as well as the Pragglejaz Group's method (2007) are adopted in the current study to investigate and account for the author's female biased attitude in portraying the characters and describing their behavior.

2. Conceptual Metaphors

The essence of conceptual metaphors as explained by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 5) is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. In other words, a conceptual metaphor is "a systematic set of correspondences (mappings) between two domains of experience" (KÖVECSSES, 2016, p. 14). Such correspondences occur when some relations are mapped from one domain, the source domain which is typically concrete, to another domain, the target domain which is typically abstract.

Conceptual metaphors differ from linguistic metaphors in the sense that linguistic metaphors are no more than linguistic expressions that are used metaphorically forming the basis of conceptual metaphors. *We must save time*, for instance, is a linguistic metaphor because time is represented as a valuable thing such as money that must be saved. *We must save time*, therefore, is a manifestation of the conceptual metaphor TIME IS MONEY. Accordingly, conceptual metaphors are more complicated than linguistic metaphors. The mapping process that is associated with conceptual metaphors forms certain conceptual patterns that govern the way we think and behave towards different aspects of life. This helps in the formation of social attitudes, values and sometimes ideologies (KÖVECSSES, 2016).

In this respect, KÖVECSSES (2016, p. 14) states that conceptual metaphors are pervasive. They occur not only in literary works as ornamental devices to enrich their artistic value and effect, but also in everyday language. Furthermore, metaphorical mappings and structures are universal since the human brain is universal. However, Lakoff (1993, p. 245) explains that metaphorical mappings vary in their universality. Some are universal, others are widespread, and some others are cultural-specific. Some of the universal metaphorical structures are what Lakoff and Johnson (1980, pp.15, 16) called *orientational metaphors*. This type of metaphors is related to directions and opposite relations. Examples of orientational metaphors are up/down, in/out, on/off, deep/shallow, and so

on. According to the up/down structure, for instance, the universal norm suggests that everything that is good, virtuous, healthy or positive is up; while everything that is bad, mean, evil, unhealthy or negative is down. Consequently, Lakoff and Johnson (1980, pp. 14- 17) suggest some examples of the up/down structure such as the following:

- HAPPINESS IS UP / SADNESS IS DOWN
- HEALTH AND LIFE ARE UP / SICKNESS AND DEATH ARE DOWN
- HAVING CONTROL AND FORCE IS UP / BEING SUBJECT TO CONTROL IS DOWN
- VIRTUE IS UP / DEPRAVITY IS DOWN
- RATIONAL IS UP / EMOTIONAL IS DOWN

It is worth mentioning here that Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) structure of HAVING CONTROL AND FORCE IS UP / BEING SUBJECT TO CONTROL IS DOWN is of considerable relevance to the study at hand since it attempts to account for the author's attitude against the male-dominated oriental society as reflected in the novel under investigation.

Lakoff & Johnson (1980) propose two other types of conceptual metaphors in addition to the orientational type explained above: *ontological metaphors* and *structural metaphors*. An ontological metaphor is a metaphor in which an abstraction such as an activity, emotion or idea is represented as something concrete such as object, substance, container or person (ibid, p. 25). Lakoff and Johnson (1980, pp. 25-34) display three main types of ontological metaphors: container metaphors, entity metaphors as well as substance metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) also display *personification* as another type of ontological metaphors. They define

personification as an ontological metaphor in which a thing or abstraction is represented as a person (p. 33). The third type of conceptual metaphors displayed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) is the *structural metaphor* which provides the richest source of metaphors according to Lakoff and Johnson. Such a type of metaphor allows us to use one highly structured concept to structure another (p. 61).

KÖVECSES (2016, p. 16) argues that conceptual metaphors are grounded. That is, many source domains are linked to particular domains due to similarity or resemblance between them. He gives the example of LIFE IS A GAMBLING GAME to explain the concept of perceived similarity between both domains. Despite that, there are many other cases where the source domain cannot be viewed as similar in any way to the target. He gives the example of INTENSITY IS HEAT which is a generic-level version of several conceptual metaphors such as ANGER IS FIRE, ENTHUSIASM IS FIRE, CONFLICT IS FIRE, and so on. According to KÖVECSES (2016), the concept of HEAT bears no resemblance to that of INTENSITY. However, conceptual metaphor theory suggests that there is a correlation in experience between INTENSITY and HEAT. When we engage in activities at a high intensity (physically or emotionally), our bodies develop body heat. INTENSITY, therefore, may be correlated with HEAT in a way that allows HEAT to be used as a source domain for INTENSITY which is used as the target domain. That type of conceptual metaphor where there is no real resemblance between the source domain and the target one is referred to by Grady (1997) and later by Lakoff and Johnson (1999) as *primary metaphors*. According to Graddy (1997), primary metaphors are those metaphors that involve a binding between two distinct concepts, which he refers to as primary source and target concepts, arising from

different primary scenes and the correlations that characterize them (ibid, p. 26).

Grady (1997, p. 112) also suggests that several primary metaphors can be put together to form compound metaphors. He proposes the metaphorical complex of PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY as an example to show how it is based on several primary metaphors such as PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS, DIFFICULTIES ARE IMPEDIMENTS, CIRCUMSTANCES ARE SURROUNDINGS, and so on.

The connection between the source and target domains is, then, abstract rather than real. Although they both react similarly in our minds, sometimes there is no real connection between them. It is the human mind that establishes such an abstract connection between them to help the mapping process to occur between the elements of the two domains. In addition, the relationship between the two domains is asymmetrical (Graddy, 1997, p. 9). That is, the process of metaphor is always directed from the source domain to the target domain, not the other way round. However, there are some cases where there is confusion between both domains. Lakoff and Turner (1989) discuss the issue of complex domains and explain that the existence of pairs like MACHINES ARE PEOPLE and PEOPLE ARE MACHINES does not contradict the principle of asymmetrical relationship between source and target domains:

Of course, two different metaphors might share two domains but differ in which is source, and which is target, and also differ in what gets mapped onto what. We can have cases such as PEOPLE ARE MACHINES, e.g. *My mental wheels aren't turning today*; and also, the different metaphor MACHINES ARE PEOPLE, e.g. *My computer hates me*. But there are two different metaphors because the

mappings go in opposite directions and different things are mapped. (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 132)

Conceptual metaphors are based on *image-schemas*, which are defined by Ahrens and Say (1999, p. 95) as “the concepts in the source domain that conceptual metaphors allow to be mapped onto corresponding concepts in the target domain.” In other words, image-schemas represent the abstract structures that emerge from our experiences of the world (cf. Johnson, 1987 & Lakoff, 1987). Accordingly, the image-schemas that characterize the source domains are always mapped onto the target domains. It is important, then, to note that image-schemas are always derived from the source domain. Some of them are containers, paths (source-path-goal), force and others. The LIFE IS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor, for example, derives concepts related to the image-schema of path. The path in the source domain of JOURNEY is related to the path a journey follows to reach a particular destination or goal. This image-schema maps onto the path at which one takes in life to reach goals. Similarly, the same LIFE AS JOURNEY metaphor may be related to the image-schema of speed.

Attempting to guarantee that the metaphorical mapping is consistent in both source and target domains, Lakoff (1990, 1993) proposes the concept of *Invariance Principle*:

Metaphorical mappings preserve the cognitive topology (the image-schema structure) of the source domain, in a way that is consistent with the inherent structure of the target domain. (Lakoff, 1993, p. 215)

According to the *Invariance Principle*, the image-schema that exists in the source domain in a conceptual metaphor must map onto the target domain of the same metaphor. In the image-schema of

CONTAINERS, for instance, what is interior in the source domain must be linked to what is interior in the target domain. It is not acceptable to find what is interior as compared to what is exterior.

Despite the importance of Conceptual Metaphor Theory for the study of language, much criticism has been directed to it. KÖVECSES (2016) displays some of the charges against the theory and tries to present evidence to disprove them. First, conceptual metaphor theory is accused of working with the concept of domain which is not a well-defined concept. KÖVECSES (2016, p. 22) refutes this assumption claiming that conceptual metaphor theory works with a clear definition of domain that goes back to Fillmore's (1982) theory of frame semantics. In this respect, a domain, or a frame, is a coherent organization of human experience. For KÖVECSES (2006), this definition works appropriately in most cases with reference to conceptual metaphors.

Other points of criticism directed to conceptual metaphor theory and explained by KÖVECSES (2006) are concerning how metaphors can be identified in discourse, how the study of metaphors should be based on real data rather than just lexical or intuitive data, in addition to other inquiries related to similar methodological issues. Attempting to answer these inquiries KÖVECSES (2006) states that though the issue of the need to use real data for metaphor analysis is a valid point that might reveal a point of weakness of conceptual metaphor theory, he believes that Conceptual Metaphor Theory has a wider mission than just looking for metaphorical expressions and creating the mappings behind the conceptual metaphors to determine how a cluster of conceptual metaphors constitute larger systematic groups. For KÖVECSES, the most vital part of the mission of conceptual metaphors is "to describe the particular syntactic, discursive, social, pragmatic, rhetoric and aesthetic

behavior and function of metaphors in real data" (2006, p. 23). However, most of researchers who conduct such a type of research work out an aspect of conceptual metaphor theory that is neglected by traditional scholars. Consequently, the lack of sufficient attention to the syntactic, pragmatic and other features of metaphors results from conceptual metaphor theory scholars' efforts to add a cognitive dimension to metaphor that was mostly absent in previous work. KÖVECSES (2006) concludes his argumentation concerning this point of criticism mentioning that the mission of conceptual metaphor theory is to collaborate with other metaphor researchers to know much more about metaphor and its application.

Despite the criticism directed to conceptual metaphor theory, it remains one of the effective theories in the study and analysis of language. It is not just a tool used by researchers to set up connections between similar or distinct domains. Rather, it is an important variant that typically contributes to the formation of our ideas, opinions, beliefs and even ideologies in life.

3. *Oreedo Ragolan (I Want a Man)*

Though most women in Eastern societies have somehow managed to gain their rights and freed themselves from men's dominance, there are some areas where male chauvinism and gender stereotyping are still prevalent and are traced by some modern writers in their literary works. Nour Abdel Meguid is a Saudi-Egyptian novelist, poet and journalist who is concerned with Arab traditions in general and Arab women in particular. In her writings, she tends to adopt a feminist attitude while depicting discriminatory practices against women. In a TV interview on Al-Qahira Wannas Channel (2018)¹, Abdel Meguid commented on adopting a feminist attitude in most of her literary works saying:

الحياة ليست إمراة فقط، بل هي حياة متكاملة بين رجل و إمراة تربطهم مواقف متعددة. نعم أناقش قضايا نسوية و لكن من خلال الرجل و المجتمع. لم أحاول في أي من رواياتي أن أسلط الضوء على المرأة كإمراة أو على الرجل كرجل، بل على الموقف الإنساني، على الحدث، على قضية ما أحاول قدر الأماكن وضعها بين يدي القارئ أو المتفرج في حالة تحويلها إلى عمل درامي مثلما حدث في أريد رجلاً حيث ناقشت قضية مهمة و لازلت أقول أنه رغم كل ما قدمناه إلا أن تلك القضية مازالت بحاجة إلى إلقاء مزيد من الضوء عليها. (Abdel Meguid, 2018)

Life is not just a woman: it is integrated between men and women. I agree that I discuss feminist issues in my works, but I deal with these issues through man and society as well. I never attempt to focus on the woman as merely a woman or the man as a man. Rather, I focus on the human situation, on the event or on a particular issue that needs to be put under the spotlight. This is the case of *Oredo Ragolan (I Want a Man)* in which I displayed an important issue that still needs to be widely discussed in other works.

Oredo Ragolan (I Want a Man) (2011) is one of Abdel Meguid's successful novels that achieved much fame as a literary work and as a TV series as well. In this novel, the author criticizes male dominance in some Upper Egyptian towns through discussing the issue of some families' refusal to have baby girls. *Oredo Ragolan (I Want a Man)* simply narrates the story of Selim Abel Meguid and his beloved wife, Amina, whose marital life was ruined because she gave birth to two baby girls. When doctors informed her that any attempt to be pregnant once more would threaten her life, her mother-in-law, Yamna, forced her son to marry another woman only for the sake of having a baby boy. The way the author portrays the characters of the novel and describes their feelings and attitudes serves to refute the common sense of

inferiority against women on the one hand, and helps the researchers reach a conclusion concerning the author's feminist attitude on the other.

4. Literature Review of Male and Female Metaphors

Investigating how the images of men or women are depicted through conceptual metaphors, the researchers find out that many studies have proven the association of conceptual metaphors related to weakness and derogation with women in different fields of life.

Adopting Lakoff's and Johnson's (1980) theoretical framework, Hines (1999a, b) studies the metaphors associated with women in the English language, whether slang or standard. She concludes that there are consistent widespread metaphors in English equating women with desserts and with animals. Such conceptual metaphors typically underlie the image of woman as sexual objects (Hines, 1999a, p. 145). Hines asserts that the WOMEN AS DESSERTS and WOMEN AS ANIMALS metaphors strongly belittle the image of women in society because they are shown as symbols of powerlessness, and derogation.

Investigating the representation of women in teenage and women magazines and adopting Lakoff's and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Lopez (2007) concludes that women are represented metaphorically as dessert, animals, babies, supernatural creatures and in very few cases as members of nobility. When portrayed as foods, mainly desserts, women are deprived from their uniqueness while reducing them to sexual objects that must cultivate their outward appearance to attract men (Lopez, 2007, p. 38). Furthermore, when linked to animals, women are negatively viewed as submissive creatures whose main and only role is to satisfy man's sexual desires. This

connotation is also emphasized by linking women to babies who are immature. In addition, portraying women as supernatural creatures negatively represents them as aggressive and as having powers that might lead to fatal consequences. The only positive metaphorical representation associated with women in Lopez's study is when they are portrayed as members of nobility reflecting their virtue, goodness, beauty and power.

Following the same theoretical framework, Koller (2011) investigates the metaphors used by journalists to describe businessmen and women. Koller (2011) follows both the Pragglejaz approach (2007) and Steen's method for identifying conceptual metaphors (2002). Koller's study concludes that the conceptual metaphors used to describe businessmen and women positively represent women as more competitive and as showing more tendencies towards care, attention, control and leadership than men.

Turpin (2014) explores the representation of women through the conceptual metaphor WOMEN ARE ANIMALS and the ideology about gender that is conveyed by the metaphorical linguistic expressions generated through this conceptual metaphor. Her analysis comes to the finding that the types of animals applied to women come mainly from the source domains of pets, farmyard and wild animals, typically conveying negative representations for women's behavior and beauty. Turpin (2014) finds out that understanding women as pets implies the idea of subjugation and domesticity because women, as well as pets, are supposed to be weaker and smaller in size than men. Moreover, viewing women as farmyard animals portrays the idea of servitude to men. Furthermore, linking women to wild animals represents them as dangerous and menacing, thus encoding more negative connotations than pets and livestock.

Detecting the WOMEN AS DESSERTS and AS ANIMALS metaphors to verify Hines' (1999a, b) findings, Kang (2015) comes to nearly the same results as Hines assuring the degrading stereotypical image women have in society.

Ahmad (2018) explores the conceptual metaphors used to describe women in Nigerian newspapers adopting Lakoff's and Johnson's (1980) theory in accordance with Lazar's (2005) notion of feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA). Like Koller (2011), Ahmad (2018) makes use of the Pragglejaz Group's (2007) metaphorical identification procedure at the linguistic level in addition to Steen's (2002) metaphorical identification procedure at the conceptual level. The results of the study show that women are shown as: FORCE, HOME MANAGERS, and BUILDING MATERIALS, provoking positive connotations on the one hand, and as WEAKER SEX, ANIMALS, PLANTS, MACHINES, and COMMODITIES, provoking negative representations on the other.

Though the results that Ahmad (2018) comes to include a few conceptual metaphors that evoke some positive connotations, most of the other conceptual metaphors assert the negative way women are represented through in the Nigerian society.

Adopting Lakoff's and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory, Shokym et al. (2022) examine gender representations in Kazakh language of the *Explanatory Dictionary of the Kazakh Literary Language* and the *Kazakh Dictionary*. The researchers end up with the result that men are often described through the metaphors of ANIMALS and BIRDS denoting courage, strength and predominate social roles as there is a great similarity of the predatory qualities of animals and birds with the strength and heroism of men. On the other hand, women

are represented as MYTHICAL CREATURES, ANIMALS and DISEASES, indicating external beauty and pain.

Derki (2023) conducts a cross-cultural comparison of women representations in English and Arabic from a conceptual metaphor perspective in terms of the source domains of ANIMALS, PLANTS and OBJECTS. The researcher concludes that conceptualization is primarily associated with cultural beliefs that are not universally shared. This accounts for the differences in the connotations of some similar metaphors in both languages. Unlike English, most of the metaphor conceptualizations related to the three adopted source domains in the study, women representations are shown to be positive. According to the Arabic metaphors, women stand for beauty, originality, pride, superiority, fertility, bestowal, purity, fidelity and love. The researcher ends his study recommending further research to be conducted to examine women representations in Arabic from other perspectives since Arabic is loaded with metaphorical expressions related to women with few studies conducted to cover this area of research.

As seen from the above discussion, many conceptual metaphors linked to women negatively imply a sense of subjugation and derogation for being represented as weaker, more aggressive, more bad-tempered, more immature and more uncontrolled than men. Moreover, women are negatively seen as no more than means of achieving sexual pleasure. Men, on the other hand, are assigned features of masculinity, stability, physical strength and power. Though some studies reflect a few positive conceptual metaphors associated with women, the majority still emphasizes the negative image fossilized in society concerning women.

5. Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the metaphors used to conceptualize men and women in Abdel Meguid's *Oreedo Ragolan* (2001)?
2. How can the negative and positive connotations of the identified metaphors contribute to the reflection of the author's actual perspective in life?

6. Methodology

Based on Lakoff's and Johnson's (1980, 2003) and KÖVECSÉS' (2016) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the Pragglejaz Group's method (2007) is adopted to identify male and female metaphors in the novel under investigation using the following steps:

- 1- Read the entire text to establish a general understanding of the meaning.
- 2- Determine the lexical units in the text (words and phrasal verbs).
- 3- a- For each lexical unit, establish its meaning in context considering what comes before and what comes after the lexical unit.
- 3- b- For each lexical unit, determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts.
- 3- c- If the lexical unit has a more basic contemporary meaning in another context, decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.
- 4- If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical.
- 5- Check difficult cases against at least two recent corpus-based dictionaries. (Pragglejaz Group, 2007, p. 3)

7. Analysis and Discussion

Adopting Lakoff's and Johnson's (1980, 2003) as well as KÖVECSES' (2016) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, and adopting the Pragglejaz Group's method (2007), the analysis begins with identifying the conceptual metaphors related to women representations in Abdel Meguid's *Oreedo Ragolan (I Want a Man)*, followed by the conceptual metaphors related to men representations, both positively and negatively to reach a conclusion concerning Abel Meguid's feminist attitude in the novel. The analysis focuses on gender metaphors involved in depicting eight characters: (1) **Selim Abdel Meguid**: the protagonist; (2) **Yamna**: Selim's mother; (3) **Amina**: Selim's wife; (4) **Madeeha**: Amina's mother; (5) **Ezzat**: Amina's father; (6) **Hala Tolba**: Ezzat's lover; (7) **Khaled**: Selim's friend; and (8) **Layla Abdel Kader**: Khaled's divorcee.

7.1. Conceptual Metaphors Related to Women

The analysis shows that women are conceptualized metaphorically by the author to evoke a particular interpretation in the minds of her readers. It is found that most metaphors related to women imply positive connotations to booster strength, purity, beauty, fertility, and faithfulness of the female characters. Even metaphors with negative connotations are employed to present external deviation from the norm.

7.1.1. Conceptual Metaphors with Positive Connotations

1- WOMEN ARE DIAMONDS

➤ Example 1:

"سعيد بيامنة رغم أنه أكثر من يعرف قوتها وصلابتها." (Abdel Meguid, 2011, p. 63)

"He is proud of Yamna though he knows well about her **power** and **rigidity**."

➤ Example 2:

"يامنة نقية رغم صلابتها، حنون رغم جمودها." (ibid, p. 210)

"Yamna is **rigid** but pure, **tough** but kind-hearted."

Yamna, the protagonist's mother, is depicted as a stubborn woman whose decisions are never disobeyed. The terms "جمود", "قوة", "صلابة" are repeatedly used in a way that likens this female character to a diamond which is known as the most rigid naturally occurring material known. The conceptual metaphor WOMEN ARE DIAMONDS emphasizes the firm personality of the female character; like diamonds which are very hard crystals and difficult to break, Yamna is characterized by her self-confidence and emotional stability. Accordingly, the metaphor prioritizes the author's feminist attitude through signifying the concept of women's power and rigidity as well as through mapping the mental and emotional stability of women to correspond with the physical strength of diamonds.

2- WOMEN ARE BODY PARTS

➤ Example 3:

"مديحة رأس جبار." (ibid, p. 31)

"Madeeha is a **mighty head**."

Keeping in line with giving women power and rigidity, another female character is described as having a master mind and dominance over the others. The current conceptual metaphor likens Madeeha, Amina's mother, to the head, the highest part of the body that contains the brain and controls all the other senses. The author's selection of the head describing it as "جبار" (mighty) is intended to reinforce the dominance and superiority of the female character. This agrees with the *orientational metaphor* suggested by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) of HAVING CONTROL AND FORCE IS UP/ BEING SUBJECT TO CONTROL IS DOWN (p.15) and that of RATIONAL IS UP/ EMOTIONAL IS

DOWN (p. 17). Accordingly, this conceptual metaphor strongly reflects what the author wants to highlight regarding women in general as:

- Women stand for power, hegemony and supremacy.
- Women's existence in life is essential.
- Women represent reason and rational thinking.
- Women's minds should never be underestimated.

3- WOMEN ARE BIRDS

Example 4:

"هالة طليبة عصفورة قلبه تبحث عنه وسيجدها. العصفير
دوماً تبحث عن أعشاشها." (ibid, p. 83)

"Hala Tolba, the **sparrow** of his heart is searching for him, and he will find her. **Sparrows** always search for their nests."

This conceptual metaphor represents the other side of women as being as delicate and tender as birds. The small size and the domestic nature of the sparrows convey the positive indications of the metaphor that conceptually represents the weak soft side of women. In this metaphorical mapping, representing a female character as a flying bird that has all the freedom to fly away corresponds to an independent woman who eventually returns to her home. The positive connotations of the sparrows indicate delicacy, tenderness, and endearment that could be regarded as the keys to women's femininity. In another context, it is referred to by the author as "ضعف المرأة أنوثتها" "the weakness of women indicates her femininity" (ibid, p. 248).

4- WOMEN ARE FRUITS

➤ Example 5:

"أنا عايزة الفراولة تشتغل في السينما أو التليفزيون."
(ibid, p. 113)

"I want the **strawberry** to work in the cinema."

➤ Example 6:

"شفتي بقى إنك فراولة وعمرك ما هتكوني خيار؟"
(ibid, p. 113)

"Have you seen that you're a **strawberry** and you'll never be a **cucumber**?"

Similar positive connotations of women are emphasized in examples 5 and 6, representing the WOMEN ARE FRUITS conceptual metaphor. The context of these examples is quite necessary for the interpretation of the metaphor as they are used by a female character to admire the appearance and beauty of her best friend to increase her self-confidence. The attributes of fruits like strawberry are mapped to correspond with the beauty and sweetness of women while negating the attributes of vegetables like cucumber that is employed to deny ugliness. Girls are often likened to strawberries to indicate sweetness and uniqueness.

It is worth noting that the conceptual metaphor WOMEN ARE FRUITS is different from that of WOMEN ARE DESSERTS which belittles the image of women in society by representing them as powerless creatures only used for sexual purposes. This is neither intended nor asserted in the way women are depicted in the novel under investigation.

5- WOMEN ARE CELESTIAL BODIES

➤ Example 7:

"وعاد ينظر إلى وجه القمر وهو يعتذر."
(ibid, p. 102)

"He returned looking at **Moon's face** to apologize."

This conceptual metaphor is employed to assure the attributes of beauty, uniqueness, and purity. The moon is used to conceptualize the face of a baby girl that is full of innocence, a source of light in

darkness or a guiding beacon in the protagonist's life.

6- WOMEN ARE SHELTERS

➤ Example 8:

"مدیحة كانت تشعره أنها ملاذہ ومسكنه."
(ibid, p. 80)

"Madeeha always makes him feel to be his **refuge** and **home**."

Oxford Learner's Dictionary Online defines "refuge" as "shelter or protection from danger, trouble, etc."², while "home" is defined in the same dictionary as "the place where you are living and that you feel you belong to." Accordingly, when women are described as "refuge" and "home", they are attributed to protection, safety and serenity which are positive distinctive features characterizing women.

7- WOMEN ARE LIFE

➤ Example 9:

"إنه بدونها يموت."
(ibid, p. 80)

"Without her he dies."

This conceptual metaphor describing the kind of relationship between Ezzat and Madeeha represents the image of women as being the source of life. The absence of women, therefore, is an equivalent to death as indicated in the given extract. This metaphor assures the idea that women's existence is essential as previously explained in the WOMEN ARE BODY PARTS conceptual metaphor.

7.1.2. Conceptual Metaphors with Negative Connotations

The two conceptual metaphors displaying negative connotations related to women are basically related to the external appearance of only one female character in the novel.

1- WOMEN ARE PUPPETS

➤ Example 10:

"لبلى عبد القادر لا شيء سوى دمية من صنع أطباء التجميل."
(ibid, p. 124)

"Layla Abdel Kader is no more than a **doll** made by plastic surgeons."

This metaphor of the doll, a lifeless toy produced for entertainment, is utilized to describe the artificial beauty of Layla. She is no more than a pretty face and an attractive body. Using this conceptual metaphor of WOMEN ARE PUPPETS is highly significant throughout the novel. Though it displays a feature with negative connotations of women, it implicitly advocates the idea of women's natural beauty that should not be spoiled by plastic surgeries. Accordingly, natural beauty is conceptualized to be related to the Moon as in example 7 in addition to examples 11 and 12 below. Artificial beauty, on the other hand, is generally compared to man-made products like a puppet or a rocket.

➤ Example 11:

"يا بنتي أنت زي القمر."
(ibid, p. 114)

"You're **pretty like a Moon**, my dear."

➤ Example 12:

"بنت زي القمر."
(ibid, p. 102)

"A **pretty** girl"

2- WOMEN ARE SPACE VEHICLES

➤ Example 13:

"يا بنتي ليلي مراته دي كانت صاروخ."
(ibid, p. 114)

"His wife Layla was a **rocket**, my dear."

Comparing the same female character, Layla, to a rocket implies negative connotations, reflecting her extreme beauty that is as artificial as a rocket, and referring to her as a just sexually attractive woman.

As seen from the analysis, the conceptual metaphors related to women in *Oreedo Ragolan (I Want a Man)* are exploited by Abdel Meguid to assert the image of women as symbols of power, stiffness, intelligence and dominance, contradicting the prevailing image of men in oriental societies as representing authority, superiority and strong will. As a woman, Abdel Meguid knows well how women think and behave. She delves into the inner self of women that is full of contradictions and displays the other positive womanly characteristics of being the source of life, serenity, beauty, delicacy, and goodness. Even the conceptual metaphors that evoke negative connotations imply distortion in the physical appearance only and are skillfully used to highlight the concept of natural versus artificial beauty.

7.2. Conceptual Metaphors Related to Men

Regarding the conceptual metaphors related to men, it is found that most of the male metaphors imply negative connotations. The author's reliance on gender metaphors aims to enhance the image of women while bringing disgrace upon all the male characters in a way that presents a direct interpretation to the title of her literary work *Oreedo Ragolan (I want a man)*.

6.2.1 Conceptual Metaphors with Positive Connotations

1- MEN ARE PILLARS

➤ Example 14:

"سليم هو العمود الذي تقف عليه حياتها."
(ibid, p. 22)

"Selim is the **pillar** of her life."

This extract shows how Yamna views her son, Selim. Though she is a woman of a rigid personality as explained earlier, he is the backbone of her life. He is the pillar, and

her life might get ruined if he is broken. The symbolic significance of the pillar when used to refer to the most important figure in the family has its origin in the Arab culture where pillars are used to support the load of the roof of the entire house. Regarding men as the source of life support is one of the common beliefs that agrees with the oriental view of men as superior to women.

2- MEN ARE GIFTS

➤ Example 15:

"أنت متعرفيش سليم عبد المجيد دا إيه، دا هدية."
(ibid, p. 51)

"You don't know Selim Abdel Meguid. He's a **gift**."

➤ Example 16:

"تتركه (خالد) وهي تعلم أنه هدية."
(ibid, p. 336)

"She leaves him though she knows well that he is a **gift**."

Keeping the same oriental view of men as superior to women, two different male characters are described in two different occasions as "gifts". This agrees with the belief that men are women's chances in life which is also prevailing in our Eastern societies.

3- MEN ARE SHELTERS

➤ Example 17:

"هالة هي المرأة الوحيدة التي تنتفض بين ذراعيه ليشعر أنه ملاذها و مسكنها."
(ibid, p. 80)

"Hala is the only woman who trembles in his arms to make him feel that he is her **refuge** and **home**."

➤ Example 18:

"العصافير دوماً تبحث عن أعشاشها."
(ibid, p. 83)

"Sparrows always search for their **nests**."

This conceptual metaphor is shared for both genders and is represented with

almost the same words. The word “nests”, mentioned in example 18, the home and shelter of birds, is used to refer to Ezzat, implying the same connotations concerning protection, safety, and serenity for both genders. However, the representation of the MEN ARE SHELTERS conceptual metaphor implies other negative indications. It is all about Ezzat and his dominating wife Madeeha on the one hand, and his lover Hala on the other. He could only feel his masculine superiority as a source of power and protection with Hala who is weak by nature. Consequently, Ezzat’s being the source of protection for Hala stems from the idea of her weakness not from his power since “woman’s weakness is the source of man’s power” “ضعف المرأة هو قوة الرجل” (p. 80). Ezzat is a dependent character who can only feel and practice his sense of power over weak women rather than strong dominating ones.

6.2.2. Conceptual Metaphors with Negative Connotations

1- MEN ARE ANIMALS

➤ Example 19:

"بين ذراعي مديحة كان يشعر أنه قط صغير يلحق صحن الحليب خوفاً لا جوعاً أو حباً." (ibid, p. 248)

“In Madeeha’s arms, he felt as a **small cat** licking the milk plate because of fear rather than hunger or love.”

➤ Example 20:

"أمينة عشقت وتزوجت وضاجعت فأراً قبيحاً كريهاً." (ibid, p. 286)

“Amina loved, married and slept with a **disgusting ugly rat**.”

➤ Example 21:

"وقف الذئب الجريح وهو يترنح من الألم." (ibid, p. 319)

“The injured **wolf** was swinging of pain.”

The three given examples carry different negative representations of men in the novel. In the first example, Ezzat,

Amina’s father, is compared to a cat that is afraid of its master. When men are conceptualized as cats, they are assigned negative attributes such as subjugation, timidity and humility. Ezzat is described here not only as inferior to women but also as a subdued person that is guided by fear. This contradicts the common oriental belief of men as having supremacy and hegemony over women.

The second example assures the same negative aspects of humility and derogation of men through likening Selim to a “disgusting ugly rat”. Generally, rats capture negative traits such as fear, cowardice, and timidity. The adjectives "قبيحاً كريهاً" add more to the negative connotations of the metaphor.

Furthermore, the third example describes the same character, Selim, as a “wolf” symbolizing betrayal and dishonesty. When Selim is compared to a wolf, the cunning deceitful nature is emphasized, while when compared to a mouse, the traits of being despicable are implied. In fact, examples 20 and 21 that liken Selim once to a rat and another to a wolf for his wife refute the previous two conceptual metaphors showing him as a pillar for his mother and as a gift for his wife at the beginning of their love relationship. Selim, therefore, is good and supportive as a son, not as a husband or a man.

Again, the author’s biased attitude against male supremacy and hegemony over women is obviously traced in the way she begins her novel giving positive descriptions to the protagonist, then she ends the novel representing the same character as coward, unfaithful, and disgusting. The contrast between both descriptions at the beginning and at the end of the novel may be a call for women not to take men as the only source of safety and support in their lives. With or without men, women must be able to conduct successful lives because nothing is taken for granted in life.

2- MEN ARE BODY PARTS

➤ Example 22:

(ibid, p. 31) "عزت قلب ضعيف."

"Ezzat is a **weak heart**."

This conceptual metaphor is shared with that previously examined one of **WOMEN ARE BODY PARTS** but with different representations for both genders. Women when represented as body parts are linked to the head to signify power, dominance, and intelligence. Differently, Ezzat in this example is likened to a "weak heart", prioritizing his representations as a weak humiliated person whose free will is lost. The competition is between the mind reflected in Madeeha and the heart reflected in Ezzat i.e. reason versus affection. It ends with the ultimate defeat of Ezzat's "weak heart" in the presence of Madeeha's "mighty head".

3- MEN ARE CLOTHES

➤ Example 23:

"كان بدلة أنيقة تتجول إلى جوارها."

(ibid, p. 110)

"He was an elegant **suit** roaming next to her."

In this example, Ezzat is compared to a piece of clothing: an elegant suit roaming next to his wife, Madeeha. Ezzat is depicted as a man of no will or spirit. He is, like the suit prepared only for formal occasions, kept as a husband to complete the social image of the couple. A sense of humiliation is overtly traced with the use of this conceptual metaphor that depicts a male character as a lifeless piece ornament.

4- MEN ARE PUPPETS

➤ Example 24:

(ibid, p. 31) "كانت مديحة تحركه بعينها."

"Madeeha was **controlling him** with her eyes."

This is an extension of traits of the same character, Ezzat, depicting him now as a puppet controlled by his wife. The idea of male subjugation and humiliation is strongly emphasized in this conceptual metaphor in a way that contradicts the common beliefs concerning men in society. He is a lifeless puppet that is not even controlled by his wife's hands, but by the movement of her eyes. This is one of the shared conceptual metaphors with negative connotations for both genders but with a slightly different interpretation. The conceptual metaphor **WOMEN ARE PUPPETS** shows the absence of will of the female character in relation to her outer appearance. However, in example 22, the same metaphor indicates not only the absence of will of the male character, but also his acceptance to be wholly conducted and dominated by his wife.

5- MEN ARE CHILDREN

➤ Example 25:

"سليم عبد المجيد القاضي الأسمر ما هو إلا طفل أحمق ترغمه امرأة لا تعرف كيف تكتب اسمها على الزواج." (ibid, p. 286)

"Selim Abdel Meguid, the brown-skinned judge, is no more than an **idiot child** obliged by an illiterate woman to marry."

This conceptual metaphor comparing Selim to an "idiot child" dominated by his mother evokes senses of immaturity and childlike behavior on the one hand, and absence of free will on the other. Again, the given conceptual metaphors with positive representations of Selim are refuted. In addition to being cowardly and unfaithful, he is now represented as weak-kneed. It is his mother who determines his decisions. In fact, Yamna's dominance managed to destroy Selim's settled marital life with Amina when she obliged him to marry another woman for the sake of the birth of a baby boy.

The analysis of the metaphors related to men reveals the author's serious attempts

to show men as coward, unfaithful, immature, childlike, marginalized, and humiliated. Although there are some few conceptual metaphors with male positive representations, they have been refuted by the author using many negative conceptual metaphors revealing her intention to revolt against such a male-dominated society where women are still suppressed and suffering till our present time mainly in rural areas.

7. Conclusion

The analysis of the conceptual metaphors considering gender representations in The Egyptian society as depicted in Nour Abdel Meguid's *Oreedo Ragolan (I Want a Man)* (2011) comes up with the following results:

1- Conceptual metaphors evoking positive representations related to women are frequent as compared to those related to men. The most pervasive conceptual metaphors of women are:

- a- WOMEN ARE DIAMONDS.
- b- WOMEN ARE BODY PARTS (the head).
- c- WOMEN ARE BIRDS.
- d- WOMEN ARE FRUITS.
- e- WOMEN ARE CELESCIAL BODIES.
- f- WOMEN ARE SHELTERS.
- g- WOMEN ARE LIFE.

Conceptual metaphors related to men with positive representations are:

- a- MEN ARE PILLARS.
- b- MEN ARE SHELTERS.
- c- MEN ARE GIFTS.

2- Conceptual metaphors evoking negative connotations related to women are rare in comparison to those related to men. The negative metaphors for women are:

- a- WOMEN ARE PUPPETS.
- b- WOMEN ARE SPACE VEHICLES

For men, we have the metaphors of:

- a- MEN ARE ANIMALS.
- b- MEN ARE BODY PARTS (the heart).
- c- MEN ARE CLOTHES.
- d- MEN ARE PUPPETS.
- e- MEN ARE CHILDREN.

3- Some shared Conceptual metaphors have similar connotations for both genders:

- a- WOMEN/MEN ARE SHELTERS.

Others have different ones:

- a- WOMEN/MEN ARE BODY PARTS.
- b- WOMEN/MEN ARE PUPPETS.

4- Women in the novel are linked to rigidity, dominance, power, protection, serenity, beauty, intelligence, reason, delicacy, goodness and life.

5- Men are proven to be coward, weak, dishonest, dependent and emotional.

6- Power in the novel is linked to women while weakness and subjugation are used to describe men in a way that contradicts the traditional stereotypical view of women as suppressed and less superior to men.

To sum up, the way the main characters are portrayed in *Oreedo Ragolan (I Want a Man)*, as examined following Lakoff's and Johnson's (1980, 2003) as well as KÖVECSES' (2016) Conceptual Metaphor Theory and adopting the Praggeljaz Group's method (2007), signifies the author's feminist attitudes against the male-biased concepts that are still practiced against women in some parts of our society. The final findings of the study, therefore, underscore the author's feminist attitude and

her call for a society where women and men are equally treated without any sort of discrimination or derogation for them both.

Notes

- ¹ This part of the interview is retrieved from the following link:
<https://www.youtube/xYM3UXaOQps>
- ² This definition is retrieved from the following website:
<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>

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