

## Analysis of Metaphor in *Shahnameh*: Aesthetic, Imagerial, Eloquent, and Linguistic Perspectives

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### ABSTRACT

Ferdowsi, the Iranian poet from Tus, uses the device of imagery to depict circumstances, moments, behaviors, physical beauties, and different aspects of nature and life, as they are. An epic undertone is detectable in most of these images. Accordingly, this paper aims at studying the different types of metaphors in Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*. Certain words and expressions such as the *moon*, *cypress*, *daffodil*, *flower*, *lion*, *panther*, *dust something*, *split the heart in half*, and *boil* are frequently used in their metaphorical meanings. Following their place in *Shahnameh*, others are used less frequently, for example, *the ferocious zebra*, *the gigantic demon*, *hazelnut*, *red date*, *precious corals*, and *debt to wisdom*. This paper explains the meanings of these words and expressions and the type of metaphors in each case to further shed light on *Shahnameh* from different standpoints including aesthetics, imagery, eloquence, and linguistics.

**Keywords:** Dead metaphor; Extended metaphor; Implied metaphor; Personification; Standard metaphor

### INTRODUCTION

*Shahnameh* is an exceptional epic in Persian literature, and the narrator, an expert in Iran's national epics, is a great representative of the genre. Via the device of poetry, Ferdowsi has depicted life and its many aspects, including wisdom, patriotism, culture, customs and traditions, art, war, peace, and the connection between man and nature. Most depictions in *Shahnameh* are infused with epics and combine mythology with real life.

Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* has dynamic terminology and extensive semantics. Ferdowsi has embodied and structured ancient Iranian stories and mythology in a literary work. Metaphors used in *Shahnameh* help the reader extract the meaning from the depth of the text. Metaphor is a way of thinking. Using his

literary and linguistic skills, Ferdowsi has shaped the many stories of *Shahnameh* into visual complexes conveying deeper, more profound meanings.

*Shahnameh* is a set of poems depicting Iran's mythical intuition in the form of a chain of anecdotal interactions. These mythical, symbolic notions shaped into a form of narrative depict the importance of language in narrating and its history. The use of the many forms of literary devices makes *Shahnameh* more than just a poetic text. *Shahnameh* is a mirror reflecting Iran's ethics and art, and its central role is to protect the thoughts, ideologies, beliefs, and dreams of Iran and pass these on to the next generations. One of the ways used to achieve this is to use metaphor to tell a story. Compared to metaphors used in

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Persian odes and sonnets written by royal and personal poets, the metaphors used in *Shahnameh* are much more robust and of much higher value. Metaphors in Ferdowsi's poetry reflect the facts and the truths represented through the characters and convey much more than the apparent and concrete meanings of the words. The language used through the metaphors in *Shahnameh* matches that of Khurasani literary style, rooted in the poet's historical, epic, and mythological frame of thinking.

"Ferdowsi tries to use the image<sup>1</sup> as a device to convey moods and depict moments and different aspects of nature and life as they are happening, wrapped within the context of a given event." (Shafi'ei Kadkani, *Image in Persian Poetry*, p. 440).

When depicting the properties of characters or objects, Ferdowsi compels the reader to [not just read, but] imagine the characters or objects depicted, understanding their prominent properties.

Based on their frequency in *Shahnameh*, the following types of metaphor are covered respectively:

- A. Dead metaphor
- B. Extended metaphor
- C. Implied metaphor
- D. Standard/personification metaphor

Bear in mind that the types of metaphor listed above are chosen based on overlapping in meaning with their Persian corresponding titles; however, aspects of each type might be lost in translation. To further clarify, each type is explained at the beginning of the corresponding section.

### Dead Metaphor

As defined in Persian rhetoric, Metaphor is using one word instead of another, based on similarities or an association established between these words. In other words, it is a form of simile where only the metaphoric word remains (Shamisa, Sirus, *Rhetoric*, p. 145 and 146). By definition, in Persian, this is called "direct metaphor", almost equal to "dead

metaphor" in English, where a word to which a simile is referred represents another word. The following examples from *Shahnameh* represent this type of metaphor.

-In the story of *Farangis* mourning the death of *Siavash*, Ferdowsi writes:

All people let their hair loose  
*Farangis* cut her long black lasso  
 tied it around her waist  
 scratching the flower, that blooms,  
 by her hazelnuts  
 (Vol. 3: 153 & 154, 2351 & 2352)

In the verses above, the words "Lasso", "hazelnuts", "flower", and "bloom" are used instead of *Farangis*'s hair, nails, and face (both *flower* and *bloom*), respectively.

In an epic setting, everything can be tainted with mythology. Ferdowsi, however, respects the boundaries of reality; hence, in the whole book of *Shahnameh*, not one image is found where its components are not naturally present (Shafi'ei Kadkani, Mohammadreza, *Image in Persian Poetry*, p. 464).

To describe the characters' appearances in *Shahnameh*, or the characters as a whole, Ferdowsi often uses words and expressions like cypress, moon, idol, daffodil, flower, spring, and new spring, hat, jujube, pearl, two rubies, two precious corals, musk, etc.

-In the story of *Shideh*<sup>2</sup> getting killed by *Keykhosrow*, *Afrasiab* cries out, saying:

That moon-faced warhorse rider  
 That cypress by the river  
 (Vol. 5: 277, 699)

"Cypress" is a metaphorical reference to *Shideh*; "moon-faced" is an allegorical compound for *Shideh*.

-In a description of *Rudabeh*:

"In *Mihrab*'s Palace"  
 to the hero he told

"There is a graceful cypress,  
 who sends her worshippers wandering  
 through the gardens,  
 she, the moon of *Kabulestan*  
 (Vol. 1: 164, 423, & 424)

<sup>1</sup>. From among imagery devices, only metaphor has been covered in this paper.

<sup>2</sup>. "Shideh", Afrasiab's son, otherwise named "Pashang" (Rastegar Fasaee, *The Dictionary of Names in Shahnameh*, p.637).

"Graceful cypress" and "the moon of Kabulestan" are metaphors used to describe *Rudabeh*.

In the story of *the kingdom of Shiruyeh*, after the death of *Khosrow Parvez*, *Shirin* Prepares for death:

She carried poison on her

The cypress of the lawn sewed herself a cerecloth

"The cypress of the lawn" stands for *Shirin*, and "to sew a cerecloth" to prepare for death.

-In the story of *Bahram Gor and the four sisters*:

He saw the plain filled with moons

And found the way to the city to be short  
(Vol.7: 332, 462)

Here "moons" stands for beautiful women.

-In the following verse, "the tall cypress" metaphorically stands for King *Kawus*, and the "orchard" stands for "Iran":

The news scattered all over the world

The cypress has left the orchard

(Vol. 2: 138, 180)

-Ferdowsi complains about getting old in the following verses:

Alas, you, the enchanting, young cypress

How did you become this frail?

(Vol. 8: 52, 376)

My valuable pearls started to get enfeebled

And that free cypress was brought down.

Those desolate daffodils became agitated

And that free cypress bent in the back

(Vol.8: 52, 385 & 386)

In these verses above, "free cypress" stands for the body frame of the poet, "desolate daffodils" for his sad eyes, and "valuable pearls" for the poet's teeth.

-In the following verses, "petal" is a metaphor for the face (*the story of Bahram Gor and the gem merchant*), "Spring" is a metaphor for "girl", (*the story of Dahgan's daughter being killed by Bahram*), "the painted image" and "spring" stand for Ferdowsi's companion, and "Mehregan" for old age (*introduction to the story of Hormazd's kingdom*).

Your face genuinely resembles the pomegranate bloom

As if the petals were washed in wine

(Vol. 7: 353:841)

The Khagan of China was father to a girl

To whom the sun would bow

While the Khagan was accompanying the army in open fields,

She left the palace for the ball

When the furious dragon descended from the mountain

And took the flower in a blink of the eye

(Vol. 9, 148: 2338 – 2340)

You, the spring, the painted image, where have you gone?

And with you, have taken the adornments of the garden into hiding?

This Mehregan is scented with your memories,

So I fill my cup with your wine

(Vol. 8, 316: 11 & 12)

-In the following verse, "Cypress", "full/round moon", and "hat" are metaphorical equivalents for *Rudabeh's* tall body, face, and scented hair, respectively:

He saw a cypress with a round moon for her face

And on that moon of the face, she had a hat of ambergris

(Vol. 1, 159:357)

-Ferdowsi describes *Sindokht* in the following verses:

There was a daughter to Khagan, a daughter resembling the moon

If the moon had two black tresses around her face

Red lips and a nose thin like a quill

The two precious corals smiling and the daffodils wild

(Vol. 9, 145: 2292 & 2293)

"Two precious corals" stands for lips, and "daffodils" stand for eyes.

-In the story of *Manouchehr (the mubeds asking Zaal questions)*, Ferdowsi uses the expressions "twelve cypresses", "thirty branches", and "two horses", as metaphors for twelve months, thirty days, and day and night, respectively, which are rare examples of dead metaphors:

Out of tact, wisdom, and ingenuity

A mubed asked Zaal

About the twelve cypresses standing fresh and glorious

Each has thirty branches

Neither less nor more in Persian [calendar]

The other asked about the two valuable, fast-riding horses

One like a sea of tar

The other, water-clear like white crystal  
(Vol. 1, 218 & 219: 1251-1255)

Throughout the *Shahnameh*, metaphors are so skillfully integrated within the structure of poetry that, the reader does not perceive them as detached elements. On many occasions, Ferdowsi has employed a variety of words in their metaphorical meanings, to describe the darkness of the night, the sun and its beaming light, and the sky. There is no pointless wording in Ferdowsi's poetry; he paints the full picture in a verse or two:

-The imagery of the sun, the sunlight, the night, and the sky.

As the sun unsheathed its dagger

That yellow-colored fur cape appeared  
(Vol.9, 565: 782)

The yellow-colored cape is a metaphor for the sun (and the sun unsheathing its dagger is personification, which is an example of a standard metaphor).

-*The story of the kingdom of Hormazd*

As the lapis veil pulled away and hid  
The mountain of yellow ruby appeared  
(Vol.8, 328: 228)

The "lapis veil" is a metaphor for the night, and the "mountain of yellow ruby" stands for the beaming daylight.

-*The story of the kingdom of Anushirvan*

It was as if they put a chalice of yellow ruby  
Over the lapis veil

They saw the moon in the king's face  
And the royal court all cheered.

As the beaming lantern appeared from beyond the mountain

The earth resembled a golden wishbone  
(Vol.8, 164: 1880-1882)

The expressions "yellow ruby", "the lapis veil", and "the beaming lantern" are metaphors for the sun, the night, and the sun, respectively.

-*The story of the kingdom of Khosrow Parvez*

As the universe's candle went back inside the urn

And the dark night let her tresses down  
Both armies sent out vanguards

To guard themselves against the ill-wishing, opposing army

(Vol. 9, 18:130 & 131)

Here, "the universe's candle" stands for the sun, and "the urn" stands for the sky.

-*the grand battle of Keykhosrow and Afrasiab*

As the sun held up her golden shield  
And the night wore that turquoise hair  
(Vol.5, 286: 839)

As the spring streamed down

The heart of the king of the Turks disheveled with dread  
(Vol.5, 282: 787)

"Golden shield" here stands for the sunlight, "turquoise hair" for the darkness of the night, and "the spring" for the sun.

-*The story of Humay Chehrzad*

As the face of the sun got dark on the west  
The sky wore black silk [cloth]

"Black silk" is a metaphor for the darkness of the night.

-*The story of Jamshid*

The other day, as the lapis arc

Took out and revealed the yellow ruby  
A (lavish) feast was prepared with partridge and pheasant

And enjoyed by hearts filled with hope  
(Vol.1, 47: 138 & 139)

Here, "lapis arc" and "yellow ruby" are metaphors for the sky and the sun, respectively.

-*The story of Kaykavos*

It was a long, turbulent night  
Then the sun put on her crown  
(Vol.2, 80: 84)

"crown" stands for the sunlight.

*The story of Siavash*

As the sun peeked from behind the mountain  
She spread ruby over the plain of tar  
"Ruby" stands for sunlight, and "the plain of tar" stands for the night.

-*The story of the Khagan of China*

As the night revealed her black tresses  
And the moon's back curved with anguish

Giv and his cavalry, on a quest  
That was hindered for three days

Then the sun wore her crown  
Raised and sat on the ivory throne  
(Vol.4, 275: 1033 – 1035)

The metaphors employed in the verses above are "black tresses", "crown", and "the ivory throne", which stand for the darkness of the night, sun rays, and the sky, respectively.

-In his unique epic, Ferdowsi employs animals and supernatural creatures to depict the characters of the story, their behaviors, and their acts of valor, namely, lion, panther, fox, zebra, dragon, demon, ...:

Upon hearing what they had to say  
Piran's face turned dark, his heart filled with  
rage

"You poor, miserable things"

He comforted his heart

"Filled with pains and concerns,

Positively unaware that

Here and now, your time comes to an end,

For a whale hath come forth

Wearing an armor of panther skin

(Vol.4, 227: 286-289)

In the last verse, "the sea" stands for Iran, and "whale" stands for Rostam.

He ordered Aškash<sup>1</sup> to gather an army of thirty thousand

Roaring, spear-bearing lions

And lead them to Khwarazm, while banging on a huge drum,

An army resembling a roaring wolf.

(Vol. 5, 93: 199 & 200)

-Here, "spear-bearing lions" is a metaphor for brave warriors (*the story of 12 rooks*).

When Sindokht heard this,

She prostrated, face on the ground

He approached his daughter, a smile on his face

The face was jovial like a day outspread under the night

He gave her the tidings that, the warrior panther

Has cut the hand of the belligerent zebra short

(Vol.1, 848 – 850)

-"The warrior panther" is a metaphoric expression for *Mihrab* of Kabul, as "the belligerent zebra" stands for *Rudabeh*.

My heart heavy, for the immense demon

Has partnered with the great king

(Vol. 9, 215: 345)

-"The immense demon" stands for Khosrow Parvez's wife, Shirin. Ferdowsi explains choosing this metaphor in prior verses, stating that mubeds disapproved of the matrimony of the two. Ferdowsi uses "the immense demon" for Shirin, and the great king stands for Khosrow Parvez (*the story of Khosrow Parvez*).

When Sohrab the lion-slayer saw him

His heart filled up with hubris

"Hey, you," he said,

"You, who has escaped the claws of the lion,

Who has yet to taste the scar inflicted by the brave lion"

Rostam, overcome by desolation, lost [the control of] his claws,

And clasped the body of that warrior panther.

(Vol.2, 236 & 237: 881, 882)

-"lion" in the third and fourth verses and "panther" in the last verse above are metaphors for Sohrab.

"Here comes the lion to the trap," he said

Singing, playing music, with a full chalice

And as the body of that enormous elephant met the ground

This pain tore my heart

(Vol. 6, 178 & 305: 208 & 1402)

-In the first verse, from the story of *the seven labors of Esfandiar*, and "the enormous elephant" in the third verse, from the story of *Rostam and Esfandiar*, are metaphors referring to *Esfandiar*.

"This is no war", he thought to himself

"I take no shame upon myself for establishing this relationship with Shangol<sup>2</sup> [by espousing her daughter]

But it will be the death of me,

Unless I see the land of Iran [again],

For I have stayed for too long,

A lion remaining in the fox's trap"

(Vol. 7, 428: 2178 – 2180)

In the last verse, "fox" and "lion" are metaphors for Shangol and Bahram, respectively (*the story of Bahram Gor*)

<sup>1</sup>. Aškash, an Iranian Hero who marshalled the Baloch nomad troops by the order of Keykhosrow, to attack Tooran

<sup>2</sup>. *Shangol*, contemporaneous with Bahram, was the king of India, whose kingdom stretched to the borders of China (The dictionary of names in Shahnameh, vol. 2, p. 627).

To finish this section on dead metaphors, an example of the word "jewel" is presented, which stands for words/saying (*the story of Kasra Noushinravan*).

"Bring out of the concealment that shining jewel"

Told the king to Bozorgmehr

Meaning: "spill your wise words".

### Extended Metaphor

The evolution of Persian poetry can be categorized into four phases:

*In the first phase, the use of image and imagery is limited, and the poetry is no different from everyday speech. The poems of Abusalik Gorgani are of this type (Shafi'ei Kadkani, p. 379).*

*The second phase can be called the phase of compound sensory imagery. The most prominent example of this era, *Shahnameh* by Ferdowsi, is the most natural form of Persian poetry, both in that the images are simple and both ends of imagery exist within the realms of natural life (same, p. 397).*

*The third phase is an extension of the previous phase, with the difference being that the poets apply the material, tangible imagery, and relying on imagination, they apply the elements which exist in the real world as the images in their poems. *Manouchehr* is one of the poets of this era (same, p. 279).*

*The fourth phase is when poetic images become known, fixated, and stabilized, and poets distance themselves from sensory experiences (same, p. 279).*

As mentioned above, *Shafi'ei Kadkani* places the poetry of Ferdowsi in the second category, where images are compound. Extended metaphors in *Shahnameh* are composed of these compound images. "In Persian, these metaphors are called compound or allegorical metaphors; however, the title "allegorical" best suits the cases that are adages or proverbs. Allegorical metaphor is a compound allegory that has the quality of an adage to it." (Shamisa, P. 177). An allegorical metaphor is a complete sentence and not just a word. In an allegorical metaphor joins two or more parts through the allegory (Kazzazi, p. 120). [Based on the definition, this type of

metaphor overlaps the most with "extended metaphor" in English.]

The examples of extended metaphor presented in this section and their meanings are from the writer's memory, a thorough study of *Shahnameh*, and matching the meanings with trusted, reliable references, the list of which has been presented in the bibliography.

To conclude his stories and convey the actual meaning and/or the lesson enfolded in those stories, Ferdowsi uses extended metaphors, some of which are repeated throughout *Shahnameh*, as repetition is a linguistic characteristic of Khurasani style.

"To leave something in a trail of dust" is a metaphor meaning to destroy something, and since *Shahnameh* is an epic, this is one of the frequently-used metaphors:

Oh, what the son of Siavash did

For he left both Iran and Touran in a trail of dust

(Vol. 9, 173: 2776)

For I know what she did to the king of Iran

That she left the battalions of Iran[s Army] in a trail of dust

(Vol. 3, 22: 270)

The exact meaning is also metaphorized as "to dust something", i.e., to cover something in dust:

... as they collide on the battlefield

He dusts him with the dark powder

(Vol. 2, 203: 407)

To split/ cut the heart, or to have your heart cut in two halves, which stands for becoming/being fearful, anxious, and miserable:

For what are you petrified,

With your heart split in halves?

(Vol. 3, 277: 2774)

His mind occupied with gloom, his heart in halves

For his heart was filled with dread with this

(Vol.8, 349: 582)

In the second verse, "heart split in halves" is a metaphor for being afraid, and in the last verse, "heart in halves" stands for worrying.

It is noteworthy that Ferdowsi uses different verbs in this combination, i.e., "[for the heart] to get in halves", "to be in halves", and "to cut [one's heart] in half", each of these can be

interpreted differently, depending on the general meaning of the sentence and the surrounding words.

"To rip the skin off the body" is another example of extended metaphor, meaning to be in great pain

Back from caring [for a sick / in-need being], he went to bed crying

As if he ripped the skin off of his body  
(Vol.1, 186: 790)

He crept into the dark, fleeing  
As if he ripped the skin off of his body  
(Vol. 4, 223: 822)

The word "kaftan", meaning "to rip", is an archaic Persian word. Using such words is a characteristic of Khurasani literary style.

"To have one's cup brimming" stands for "to die" in the second verse of the first line, and "to hate/ be filled with repulsion" in the second verse of the second line.

For this task is inglorious, as well as difficult  
For Sasan's offspring's cup was brimming  
(Vol. 9, 155: 2454)

Shiruy was poisoned  
And the world had its cup brimming with the king  
(Vol. 9, 291: 596)

"To mix poison and theriac", meaning "to be two-faced / hypocrite"

For you can set the town affray  
And mix poison and theriac, from elsewhere  
(Vol. 3, 82: 1261)

"To mix honey with bitter gourd" which is a metaphor for "to turn a friendship into an enmity"

"What is this you have invoked?" he asked,  
"For you have mixed honey with bitter gourd"  
(Vol. 2, 41: 525)

"To have poison for fruit and colocynth for leaves", meaning "to have ghastly outcomes":

Why plant a tree with one's own hands

Which will have poison for fruit and colocynth for leaves?

(Vol. 3, 97: 1495)

"For the hill to appear out of chasm" is a metaphor meaning "for the right/ good to appear out of wrong/bad":

Why have you perished?  
For the hill has appeared out of the chasm  
(Vol. 9, 127: 1663)

"To hand something to the wind" means "to waste something":

Every day, he handed a treasure to the wind  
Disregarding today or tomorrow  
(Vol. 5, 300: 1584)

"To hand someone/someone's head to the wind, meaning "to have someone killed:

Counting on your oath, Siavash handed his head over

And out of obstinacy, you handed him to the wind

(Vol. 5, 188: 1791)

"For the buffalo to be enveloped in leather" is a metaphor meaning "for the secrets of the future to be hidden":

It is yet to see what will happen to you out of this misery

For the buffalo is enveloped in leather  
(Vol. 4, 72: 1006)

"To leave one's seat" stands for to leave

Na'man and Nozar left their seats,  
The two virtuous lancers  
(Vol. 7, 281: 308)

"For one's heart to leave its seat" stands for "to get worried:

If not for the defeat of Humay  
A wise man's heart shall not leave its seat  
(vol. 6, 142: 103)

"To set one's throne on the moon", meaning "to become very venerable":

Now he asked for tributes from every country

And set his throne on the moon  
(Vol. 6, 56: 772)

"To throw a brick in the water" is a metaphor meaning "to do something futile"; in *the story of Bahram Chobin*, after whipping *Parmodeh*<sup>1</sup>, Bahram realizes what he had done was futile.

Bahram realized the wrong in his doing of *Bahram Chobin*, after whipping *Parmodeh*<sup>2</sup>,

Bahram realizes what he had done was futile.

Bahram realized the wrong in his doing

For he had thrown a brick in water and gotten it wet

(Vol. 8, 388: 1212)

In the verse above, both "throwing the brick in the water" and "to get it wet" are metaphors for a futile action.

"To be the key to a closed-door" stands for "to be happy after hardship"; in the following verses from *the story of Bahram Chobin*, Ferdowsi describes the scene where the body of the Persian champion is found:

The time arrived at last when they found him

As if he was the key to a locked door

(Vol. 8, 369:916)

In *the story of Kaykavos*, Ferdowsi describes the reaction of Zaal and Rostam to the capture of Kawus in Mazandaran as:

For the turning wheel (of destiny) surrendered me to the demons

As if the wind blew in and took everything away

Upon hearing this, he ripped his skin off of his body

But keeping this from both friends and foes

(Vol. 2, 88: 235 & 236)

Here, the expression "the wind taking everything away" stands for "to ruin everything", and "to rip the skin off one's body" stands for "to become anxious".

Ferdowsi goes on to say:

"The sword has come short in its sheath"

Told Dastan, son of Sam, to Rostam

"We no longer can walk around idly,

Or rule the throne on our own,

For the king of the world is seized in the dragon's breath.

What misery is this to have descended upon Iranians.

(Vol. 1, 88: 238, 239, & 240)

In these verses, the expressions "for the sword to come short in its sheath", "to be seized in the dragon's breath", and "the king of the world" stands for "to feel a rush to fight", "to be in danger", and "Kawus", respectively.

"To throw a stone at the jug" stands for "to try/test someone"; in *the story of Siavash*, on the issue of *Siavash* and *Rudabeh*, the mubeds tell Kawus to try *Siavash* by making him pass through the fire:

If you want to know the truth

You need to throw the stone at the jug

(Vol. 3, 232: 451)

"To reap smoke from a fire" is a metaphor for losing something others profit from. In *the story of Dara, son of Darab*, despair takes over Eskandar as he witnesses Dara dying, to which Dara replies using this allegory:

"Do not cry, for there is no benefit to it" told him

"I have reaped but for smoke from a fire."

(Vol. 6, 401: 359)

"To have wind left in your fist" is a metaphor for "to do something useless":

"If I turn my back towards them," said Goodarz,

Or move forward towards them,

My army is to follow

And I will be left with nothing but the wind in my fist."

(Vol. 5, 105: 351 & 352)

In this part of *the story of 12 rooks*, when Bijan goes to Give and asks for his permission for the battle, Goodarz refuses by reasoning that fighting Afrasiab will be of no use.

"To reap what one sow" means to see the results of what one has done; in *the story of*

<sup>1</sup>. *Parmodeh* was the son of the Turk king, who, after finding out Bahram had killed his father, went to war with Bahram and was defeated (The Dictionary of Names in Shahnameh, Vol. 1, p. 245).

<sup>2</sup>. *Parmodeh* was the son of the Turk king, who, after finding out Bahram had killed his father, went to war with Bahram and was defeated (The Dictionary of Names in Shahnameh, Vol. 1, p. 245).



*Rostam and Esfandiyar*, when *Esfandiyar* sends his son, *Bahman*, to *Rostam*, he tells him: "When you go to *Rostam*, be careful not to be deceived by his tricks, and tell him that everyone will reap what they sow:

You will reap what you sow  
And will hear what you speak  
(Vol. 6, 232: 233)

"For one's breath to smell of milk" is a metaphor for "to be a child":

His breath still smells of milk,  
Yet he asks for swords and arrows.  
(Vol. 2, 180: 144)

This section is from *the story of Sohrab*, when he is still a child, yet seeks to fight.

"To have water raised past (the top of) one's head" stands for to have no way out/ to be hopeless:

"For my work is done now," he told him,  
"The water has raised past my head now"  
(Vol. 6, 341: 343)

### Implied Metaphor

As mentioned before, a dead metaphor (in Persian) involves a noun that has been likened to another noun, and later, has completely replaced it. In the past, "Dead metaphor (clear metaphor) was called *absolute* metaphor (Kazzazi, p. 100). Many examples of this type of metaphor in *Shahnameh* were presented before. The next part of this paper covered extended metaphors in *Shahnameh*. The following part provides examples of "implied metaphor, [which] is applied to verbs, transforming them to the base form" (Shamisa, p. 169). "Implied metaphor is a form of a verb, or driven from a verb" (Kazzazi, p. 119). In *Shahnameh*, for example, the verb "to boil/to come to boiling" has been frequently used, in different meanings; in addition, the adjective "boiling", derived from this verb, is also used as a metaphor. Other verbs used as implied metaphors in *Shahnameh* include: *to laugh/smile*, *to sell*, *to fly*, *to burn*, *to sew*, *to bloom*, *to weave*, *to wash*, and *to sift*. This type of metaphor is called *subordinate metaphor* in Persian, and best overlaps with implied

metaphor in English, as the use of the verb in a metaphoric sense usually implies an allegory. It should be noted that to understand the meaning of these metaphors, the setting of the story and the surrounding words must be considered.

"To sift" stands for "to rain". In *the story of Keykhosrow*, Keykhosrow states that, by killing Siavash, Afrasiab has brought on rain of fire and flames:

He shed the blood of Siavash unjustly  
And brought upon this land a rain of fire and flames  
(Vol. 4, 15: 112)

"To burn" is a metaphor for "to be in misery"; in *the story of the arrival of Siavash*:

"Loose your arrows upon them," he told him  
"So Tous will be burning at heart"  
(Vol. 4, 50: 661)

"To smile" in the following verse from *the story of Khosrow Parvez*, stands for "to become happy":

For that famed army, Khosrow's heart smiled  
Like a flower in springtime  
(Vol. 9, 101: 1543)

In *the story of the kingdom of Yazdgerd*, after the death of *Yazdgerd*, his admirers say:

Alas, you, the young king  
You fell asleep, yet your soul is awake  
(Vol. 9, 367: 693)

Here "to fall asleep" means "to die".

The verb "to boil" has two different meanings in the following verse:

Upon hearing their words  
The general boiled, coming to a different decision.  
(Vol. 1, 176: 625)

In verse above, "to boil" stands for "to get angry", whereas, in the following verses, it means "to toil / to work hard":

The messenger returned from Sam  
Cheerful with good news  
He talked and boiled and told many a tale  
And in the end, he gained his allegiance

(Vol. 1, 182: 734 7 735)

"To sell" is a metaphor standing for "to show something off", as *Rostam* tells *Esfandiyar* in these verses:

You are aware that the unjust try hard  
To sell war and [/ as] masculinity  
(Vol. 6, 304: 1381)

"To have one's heart arise" stands for "to fall for/in love with", as when *Sudabeh* sees *Siavash* for the first time in *the story of Siavash*:

She saw *Siavash* of a sudden  
Her [head] filled with racing thoughts and  
her heart arose  
(Vol. 3, 14: 135)

The following verse is from that same story, where "to wash" stands for "to clean from":

"Your actions," *Siavash* told her,  
"And your words fill me with worries.  
But now we agree  
To wash our hearts from spite."  
(Vol. 3, 56, 57, 856 & 857)

The verb "to burn" is also used in different meanings, including "to put through great pain and agony" and "to make someone mourn", respectively, in the following verses:

He is the son of *Qobad* and the great-grandson of *Fereydoon*  
A warrior beast, trustworthy and caring  
But I will burn him, and his father  
He will be burned too, as *Kawus* was burned  
for his son  
(Vol. 5, 286: 543 & 544)

In the following verses from *the story of Bahram Gor*, "to filter" stands for "to put an end to" something:

Upon hearing this, *Bahram* stood up  
And bent down, ready to wrestle like a man  
He grabbed his opponent at the waist  
As a lion attacks a ferocious zebra  
Threw him on the floor, so hard his bones in  
pain  
And his face filtered out of color  
(Vol. 7, 419: 2011, 2012 & 2013)

In the following verse from *the story of the kingdom of Hormazd*, "to wilt" stands for "to become sad":

As *mubed* heard these words out of the  
king[']s mouth],  
He wilted, biting his hip  
(Vol. 8, 346: 538)

### Personification Metaphor

The last type of metaphor we cover is the personification metaphor. In this type of metaphor, one thing is likened to another through a description or a descriptive expression taken from the latter and coupled with the former, the former being a human/living thing and the latter not. Structure-wise, there are two types of metaphor: Dead and Standard (direct and indirect) (Kazzazi, p. 122 & 123).

There are two types of personification metaphors used in *Shahnameh*:

1. A metaphorical phrase, e.g., the heart of the era
2. A metaphorical sentence where personification using a verb is used as a metaphor. Most standard metaphors in *Shahnameh* are of this type.

### Personification

Personification is an imagery device used in metaphors, through which a human feature or a trait is allocated to a non-human thing.

"One of the most beautiful forms of imagery is the one the poet's mind applies to non-living objects found in nature and gives them motions and living features through creativity and imagination". (Shafi'ei Kadkani, p. 149)

It should be noted that personification takes many forms in both Persian literature and the literature of other countries and languages, and therefore, it cannot be precisely categorized. In Persian however, "the most outstanding form is what has been titled as "personification metaphor"" (Same p. 155).

Most personification metaphors in *Shahnameh* are tinted with epic undertones, which are predominant in *Shahnameh*. "The one difference between *Shahnameh* and other literary works is that, the metaphors Ferdowsi uses in *Shahnameh* are very tangible, and *Shahnameh*, unlike the works of other poets, is

not filled with complicated, hard-to-grasp metaphors (Same, p. 448)."

Some examples of personification metaphors are presented in this part, taken from *Shahnameh* in two edits: Moscow Prints and *Dr. Khaleqi Motlaq* edition.

... he said, then invited Parmodeh  
To his famous court.  
They kept company, feasting till the night  
Let down her black hair  
In the verses above, taken from *the story*  
(Vol. 2, 197: 1002, M.)

Here "smoke" is a metaphor for sighing.

In *the story of Yazdgerd*, in the following verses, "Vice's hands" is a metaphorical phrase; vice is personified as a person with hands:  
The world was reborn and fresh, thanks to  
the power and the will of God  
As if they tied vice's hands

In the following example from *the story of Nozar*, "The world" is allegorized as a horse galloping and stomping:

As Nozar heard Qarun had left  
He followed him, fast and ferociously  
He rode galloping, for a time lost was to  
compensate for  
For the world to stomp on him  
(Vol. 2, 26: 304 & 305, M.)

He picked thirty thousand swordsmen  
All warrior horsemen  
And dispatched them to cross Jayhoon  
Scraping water's face with their ships  
(Vol. 4, 187: 267 & 268, K.)

In these verses, water is personified to have a face that is scraped and scratched by *Afrasyab's Army* (*The story of the great war between Keykhosrow and Afrasyab*).

In the following verse from *the seven labors of Rostam*, "door of fear" is a metaphorical phrase where fear is allegorized to a house with a door. It is a standard metaphor without personification:

He took a canebrake for the night's shed  
And took safety at the door of fear  
(Vol.2, 22: 286, K.)

In the following verse, there are two personification metaphors (Kazzazi, *The Ancient Letter*, Vol. 7, p. 911), as "wisdom" is likened to a person who makes Bahram Gor to pay his "debt", and "debt" in turn, is likened to a chain or a leash from which Bahram frees his neck by the words he speaks.

First, he said prayers  
And freed his neck from his debt to wisdom  
(Vol. 6, 596: 2364, K.)

In *the story of the arrival of Siavash*, Ferdowsi writes:

Hey, you, the sharp-clawed, lion-slaying  
father

For [even] elephants do not go to war with  
you

For no horseman saw your back

For your hand is the heart of the world / the  
time

Here, "the world/ the time" [the present era] is given the property of having a heart through personification metaphor. "The heart" is also a metonym for the place where "power" and "courage" are found.

In *the story of Keykhosrow* in the following verse, "the sun" has been personified to have a face:

The turning sky took another spin  
And the sun showed her face in Virgo  
(Vol. 3, 11: 134, K)

In *the story of Eskandar*, "destiny has been likened to a sword-wielding warrior who has scarred *Eskandar's* heart:

Hearing this, he returned to the shade of the  
tree

With his heart scarred by destiny's sword  
(Vol. 6, 105: 1543, K.)

At the beginning of *the story of the seven labors of Esfandiyar*, "the earth smile" and "the sky crying" are personifications.

The earth shall not smile unless the sky cries  
For the weather is like the king's hand  
Raining in spring  
Plentiful, like the diligence of the kings  
(Vol. 5, 220: 10 & 11, K.)

in these verses from *the story of Siavash*, "the sun" is personified as a warrior unsheathing her blade.  
 The general told the wise man:  
 "Soon as the sun unsheathes her blade,  
 Go to Siavash, alert and attentive  
 And see what the wise bird orders"  
 (Vol. 3, 16: 175 & 176, M.)

## CONCLUSION

The stories in *Shahnameh* are categorized into three stages: mythical, epic, and historical. Metaphors, and images in general, are the most frequent in the imaginary part. With the second stage, the epic era, which starts with the death of Rostam, the closer it gets to the historical stage, and as the epic undertone fades, the image and imagery devices become less frequent.

The general rule with the dead metaphors in *Shahnameh* is, that the metaphoric words have a feature in common with the meaning they reflect. Implied metaphors in *Shahnameh* are usually proverbs used to depict the heroes' behavioral characteristics and convey ethical lessons. Extended metaphors are conveyed through verbs or verb-driven words and best be interpreted based on the context and their neighboring words. This usually comes in the form of personification. Personification metaphors (standard metaphors in general) reflect a picture in the form of a metaphorical phrase and sentence, in which a feature is attributed to something without actually having that feature. Non-personifying metaphors are rare in *Shahnameh*.

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