

## (Re)writing of Feminist Themes in Two Authored and Translated Women-centered Novels in the 2000s Post-Islamic Revolution<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This interdisciplinary study examined feminist concepts of gender and sex in post-Islamic Revolution Iranian novels authored and translated by women, employing a framework integrating Egbert and Sanden's (2019) feminist theory, Suwardi's (2010) feminist literary criticism, and Lefevere's (1992) rewriting theory. The study analyzed *Cheraqha ra Man Khamoosh Mikonam* by Pirzad and *Unless* by Shields, translated by Sharafi, through a descriptive corpus-based thematic analysis focusing on women-centered themes such as occupation, power, silence, and sexual desire. Feminist theory provided a foundation for understanding systemic oppression and intersectionality, while feminist literary criticism revealed how patriarchal ideologies and gendered power relations were embedded and contested in the texts. Lefevere's rewriting theory contextualized these concerns within literary production and translation, emphasizing how translation reshapes dominant poetics to amplify marginalized voices. The findings showed that both novels adapted and recontextualized feminist discourse, demonstrating the transformative potential of rewriting in shaping feminist themes for diverse sociocultural settings. While *Unless* explored women's sexual desires through internal struggles aligned with global feminist dialogues, *Cheraqha ra Man Khamoosh Mikonam* intertwined these desires with societal expectations and personal sacrifice, reflecting localized cultural norms. This adaptation of global feminist discourse to the Iranian context enriches Iranian feminist literature, enabling women to voice their concerns, promote collective discourse, and foster social change by elevating women's voices and experiences in contemporary Iran.

**Keywords:** *Cheraqha ra Man Khamoosh Mikonam*, Feminism, Feminist literary criticism, Gender and sexuality, Rewriting theory, *Unless*, Women-centered novels

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## 1. Introduction

Translation can democratize communication and promote transnational feminist discourses, but its effects on feminist literature are underexplored, especially when addressing complex concepts like sex and gender (Flotow, 2017). Women authors and translators in Iran have significantly influenced contemporary literature, embodying the social and cultural changes in women's lives over recent decades. The rise of female authors has led to a heightened gender consciousness in their works, while female translators have actively engaged with the socio-historical context of Iran, shaped by education and societal factors (Farahzad, 2017; Sharifi, 2017).

This study examines the representation of feminist concepts of sex and gender in Iranian women-centered novels from the 2000s, analyzing both original and translated works to explore how translation transforms feminist themes and reflects local sociocultural realities in post-revolutionary Iran. The study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most prevalent women-centered themes in novels authored and translated by women in the 2000s, and how do these themes function as literary devices within the framework of dominant poetics to reflect feminist concepts of sex and gender in Iran's sociocultural context?
2. What similarities and differences are apparent in the thematic construction of gender and sexuality in women-centered novels—both originally written and translated into Persian—within the literary landscape of 2000s Iran?"
3. How do thematic instantiations of gender and sexuality diverge between an originally authored Persian novel and its translated counterpart within the Iranian literary context of the 2000s, and what implications do these distinctions hold for understanding the the negotiation of feminist discourse in post-revolutionary Iran?

This interdisciplinary study applies Egbert and Sanden's (2019) feminist theory and Lefevere's (1992) rewriting theory to explore feminist concepts of gender and sex in Iranian literature. By employing feminist literary criticism (Rana & Rashid, 2020; Suwardi, 2010) as the analytical part of framework, the study interrogates how

gender hierarchies and women's experiences are constructed and represented in literary texts—a method that foregrounds the critique of patriarchal norms and the articulation of female subjectivity (Bassnett & Lefevere). The analysis centers on two women-centered works—Pirzad's *Cheraqha ra Man Khamoosh Mikonam* and Shields' *Unless*, translated by Sharafi—to examine major feminist themes as literary devices (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990). Situating these texts within the context of post-revolutionary Iran, the research highlights how feminist literary criticism reveals the negotiation of identity, agency, and resistance in women's narratives, and how translation serves as a mediating force shaping the reception and sociocultural impact of these works (Niechciat, 2019). This approach not only illuminates the distinct ways Iranian women writers challenge patriarchal discourse and make visible women's lived realities, but also underscores the transformative power of translation in amplifying feminist perspectives within the local context (Niechciat, 2019; Talattof, 1997).

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

### **2.1. Women-centered Works authored by Iranian women after the Islamic Revolution in 2000s**

In the 2000s, Iranian women-centered literature advanced feminist discourse by “articulat[ing] their protests against sexual oppression and reflect[ing] their struggle for identity” (Talattof, 1997, p. 535). Authors such as Parsipur used metaphor and surrealism to “weav[e] aesthetic experimentation, Iranian women's rights issues, and resistance to the patriarchal state ideology together” (Mukherjee, 2020, p. 121). This marked a departure from pre-revolutionary works, which “did not give rise to a feminist literary movement” (Talattof, 1997, p. 536). As Niechciat (2019) notes, these narratives “helped to shape feminist discourse and inspired future generations of writers and other artists” (p. 89).

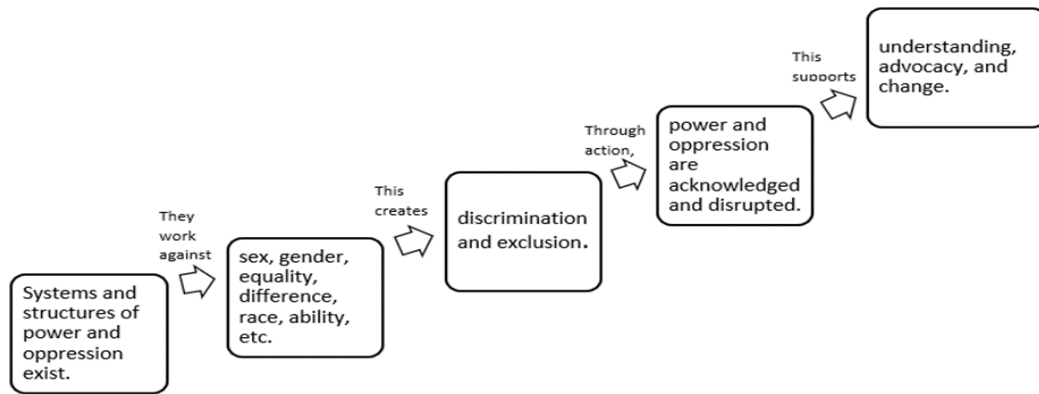
### **2.2. Women-centered Works Translated by Iranian women after the Islamic Revolution in 2000s**

Feminist translation, as articulated by Godard (1989), empowers women writers to express their experiences and challenge suppression through language (pp. 42–56). In the 2000s, Iranian women translators became increasingly prominent, marking what Farahzad terms a period of “professional presence” in which “women worked as professional translators, which is closely related to the social and historical setting of the country in that era” (Farahzad et al., 2016, p. 8). These translators strategically selected and translated women-centered and feminist works, thereby “competing against the doxa of the publishing sphere and produc[ing] heterodoxa by publishing translations of secular feminist works” despite regulatory constraints (Sharifi, 2022, p. 6). Their agency was shaped by education, professionalization, and accumulated capital, enabling them to introduce global feminist texts and stimulate nuanced public discussions on gender and identity (Farahzad, 2017, p. 10). This translation movement not only amplified women’s voices but also inspired further literary works, reflecting a broader shift in Iranian society.

### **2.3. Feminist Theory**

Feminist theory seeks to describe and explain gender systems while addressing ethical issues (Sarı, 2022). Egbert and Sanden (2019) propose a model illustrating how feminist theory can raise awareness of oppressive systems and acknowledge diverse perspectives. Their model posits that oppressive structures exist and act against individuals, with overlapping identities potentially leading to prejudice and exclusion. Through knowledge and action, these oppressive structures can be disrupted to promote change and understanding (Egbert & Sanden, 2019).

**Figure 1**  
*Model of Feminist Theory*



### 2.3.1. Feminist Concepts

The feminist theory focuses on equal rights, gender equality, legal protection, and social and economic emancipation for women (Sari, 2022, p.35). This study examines sex and gender concepts using Hughes' (2002) sociological definition, based on postmodernist and poststructuralist approaches, and presents them from a sociological perspective.

### 2.3.2. Sex vs. Gender

Hughes (2002) argues that meaning is context-dependent, emphasizing the distinction between sex as biological and gender as socially constructed. Her poststructuralist approach challenges traditional binary distinctions by incorporating historical contexts beyond biological determinism (Hughes, 2002). Gender-marked terms reflect societal gender distinctions, influencing perceptions of roles and contributing to women's invisibility; feminist analysis critiques these terms to advocate for equitable language use (Hellinger & Bußmann, 2001).

## 2.4. Feminist Literary Criticism, Rewriting and Feminist Translation Studies

Rewriting, as defined by Lefevere (1992), involves adapting texts to align with specific ideologies or poetics, introducing new concepts into literary systems (Hermans, 2004). This process is deeply intertwined with power dynamics. From Foucault's perspective, power is productive and omnipresent in social relations (Foucault, 1990; McNay, 1992). Bassnett and Lefevere (1990) argue that translation

functions as a form of rewriting, shaped by cultural and ideological contexts. This process allows translators to introduce new concepts, such as feminist themes, into literary systems, thereby reshaping dominant poetics and fostering inclusivity in literature. Feminist translation serves as a form of rewriting that challenges patriarchal norms by highlighting marginalized voices and creating spaces for feminist discourse within translated works (Al-Awawdeh, 2023). Dominant poetics plays a crucial role in this process by influencing both the creation and reception of literature through literary devices such as genres, symbols, main themes, and prototypical characters (Lefevere, 1992). By reshaping these narratives to include diverse female experiences and perspectives (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990; Castro & Ergun, 2018), feminist literature fosters greater inclusivity. Through rewriting and translation, it contributes to broader social change by promoting nuanced understandings of gender roles. This process empowers women's voices within the literary landscape while challenging traditional gender norms embedded in dominant discourses. Moreover, this empowerment allows women to reclaim agency over their narratives. Feminist writers may reinterpret existing texts to reflect alternative experiences of womanhood that counter traditional representations (Baker, 2006). By doing so, they not only challenge patriarchal structures but also contribute to a more inclusive cultural canon where diverse voices are recognized and valued. Ultimately, this transformation can lead to significant shifts in societal attitudes towards gender equality.

### 3. Methodology and Corpus

The present study is a non-automated corpus-based descriptive and explanatory study. It examines one corpus with two elements. The first element consists of the women-centered Persian novel, *Cheraqha ra Man Khamoosh Mikonam* (Things Left Unsaid) and, the second consists of the translation of the women-centered English novel, *Unless*, by Shields.

The two selected novels are both women-centered, Persian-language works that received literary awards in the 2000s. *Cheraqha ra Man Khamoosh Mikonam*, written by Pirzad, was the 2001 Pekka Award winner, the 2001 Hoshang Golshiri Foundation Best Novel Award winner, the 2002 Islamic Republic of Iran Ministry of Guidance yearbook, and the 2001 Yalda Literary Award winner. The second novel examined in this study is the Persian translation of Carol Shields's *Unless* (2002), a women-centered English-language novel that was shortlisted for both the Orange Prize and the Booker Prize in 2002. The translation, completed by Mehri Sharafi, was published by Roshangaran, a publishing house dedicated to women's studies and focused on translating and disseminating works authored by and about women across diverse cultural and literary fields. This translation was produced in the third decade following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, reflecting a significant engagement with feminist literature within the Iranian sociocultural and political context (Sharifi, 2017). Both works boldly challenged oppressive structures in women's social and interpersonal relationships by explicitly addressing gender and sex concepts.

### 3.1.1. Thematic Analysis of *Cheraqha ra Man Khamoosh Mikonam* by Pirzad

Zoya Pirzad's novel, *Cheraqha ra Man Khamoosh Mikonam*, offers a nuanced portrayal of an Iranian-Armenian housewife, Clarice, living in Abadan during the 1960s (Taheri & Rankhambe, 2015). The story explores Clarice's daily struggles amidst social and cultural restrictions that limit women's private lives (Mousavi, 2020). Pirzad uses innovative techniques to reveal hidden nuances of women's sexuality through bodily narratives (Tajalli, 2024). The arrival of the enigmatic Simonian family sparks emotional turmoil for Clarice as she develops a complex attraction to Emile. Clarice is interested in Emile, who is lyrical and gallant but frequently controlled by his mother. However, this fascination proves fleeting when Emile falls for another woman (Tajalli, 2024), prompting Clarice to reassess her desires within her marriage. Through this narrative, Pirzad provides insight into Iranian culture while highlighting themes of identity and personal growth. The novel

concludes with Clarice gaining psychological clarity as she navigates her emotions within a complex social landscape.

### 3.1.2. Thematic Analysis of *Unless* by Sheild

Carol Shields' *Unless* explores Reta Winters' struggle as she copes with her daughter Norah abandoning college for life on the streets in Toronto. Norah seeks meaning through her cardboard sign reading "GOODNESS." Her transformation follows witnessing a Muslim woman's self-immolation, highlighting women's powerlessness in patriarchal societies. The novel critiques literary marginalization while exploring personal growth amidst adversity and societal expectations that exclude women. (Stovel, 2013).

## 3.2. Theoretical Framework

This interdisciplinary study integrates three theoretical approaches—Egbert and Sanden's (2019) feminist theory, Suwardi's (2010) feminist literary criticism, and Lefevere's (1992) rewriting theory—emphasizing their complementary roles in analyzing feminist themes within literature. Egbert and Sanden's feminist theory provides a foundational understanding of systemic oppression and intersectionality, focusing on how power structures marginalize individuals based on sex, gender, race, and other identities. While originally developed for educational contexts, its core principles of recognizing and disrupting oppressive systems are broadly applicable to the analysis of cultural texts, including literature. This framework allows the study to foreground the social realities and lived experiences of women, aligning with the goals of feminist literature to challenge societal inequalities (Arinder, 2020; Sari, 2022). . By incorporating Hughes' (2002) poststructuralist distinction between sex and gender, the study critiqued binary constructs and highlights the role of language in perpetuating gendered invisibility (Hellinger & Bußmann, 2001). This integration bridges abstract theoretical principles with concrete literary analysis, ensuring a comprehensive approach to exploring feminist themes in women-centered



novels. Building on this foundation, feminist literary criticism offers a specialized lens for examining how patriarchal ideologies and gendered power relations are embedded, contested, and reconfigured within literary texts. It provides critical tools to analyze narrative strategies, characterizations, and thematic concerns that reflect and resist societal inequalities (Rana & Rashid, 2020; Suwardi, 2010). By bridging abstract feminist theory with concrete literary analysis, this approach highlights the ways in which literature can serve as a medium for social critique and transformation. Finally, Lefevere's rewriting theory situates these feminist concerns within the dynamics of literary production and translation. Lefevere's rewriting theory in this study is not applied for direct comparison between source texts and their Persian translations. Instead, it functions as a conceptual bridge connecting dominant literary themes—specifically, the poetics and narrative devices—found in both authored and translated women-centered novels. This approach enables the analysis to trace how feminist concepts of gender and sex, and their associated themes, are introduced and negotiated within the literary discourse of post-revolutionary Iran in the 2000s. By focusing on the ways in which rewriting mediates and adapts feminist discourse across authored and translated texts, the study highlights the transformative potential of rewriting in shaping and contextualizing feminist themes for diverse sociocultural settings. Thus, Lefevere's framework is instrumental in revealing how literary production and translation collaboratively contribute to the articulation and dissemination of feminist ideas, rather than serving as a tool for comparative textual analysis.

### 3.3. The Procedure

This study employed an interdisciplinary approach to analyze feminist themes in literature, integrating Egbert and Sanden's (2019) feminist theory, feminist literary criticism, and Lefevere's (1992) rewriting theory as its theoretical framework. The analysis focused on the first 100 pages of selected novels, examining women-centered themes through structured data collection and classification. Using Egbert and

Sanden's feminist theory, gender-marked items were identified at the sentence level to highlight systemic oppression and intersectionality within the texts. Feminist literary criticism was applied to explore how patriarchal ideologies and gendered power relations were embedded and contested through narrative strategies and thematic concerns. Lefevere's rewriting theory was utilized to compare feminist themes in authored versus translated works, emphasizing the transformative role of translation in reshaping dominant poetics. Findings were organized into tables to visualize patterns and trends, offering nuanced insights into gender identities and experiences.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

This section analyzes women-centered themes in the Persian-language texts of *Unless* (translated into Persian as *Magar Ankeh*) and *Cheraqha ra Man Khamoosh Mikonam*, focusing on representations of feminist concepts related to gender and sex. Through thematic frequencies and contextual examples, the discussion explores how these novels engage with and reflect the sociocultural realities of women within patriarchal structures within the Iranian context. Furthermore, the analysis considers how *Unless*, as a translated text, participates in a process of "rewriting" (Lefevere, 1992) *within the Persian literary system*. The goal is to identify how these themes are expressed and nuanced *within the Iranian context*, rather than comparing the translation to the original English source.

##### 4.1. Representation of Feminist Concepts as Women-Centered Themes in *Unless*

Table 1: Representation of Gender as a Feminist Concept in Women-centered Themes in *Unless*

No.	1. Women-Centered Themes of Gender		Frequency of Themes
1	Women's occupation	1. Women are supposed to do marginal or not very important jobs	4
		2. Women are supposed to do domestic works	4

		3. Women are supposed to be mothers and do mother`s duties	1
2	Considering women as weak creatures	1. Women are considered to be weaker than men in a patriarchal society.	1
3	Women`s judgment by their appearance	1. Women are judged by their beauty and their appearance not by their mental abilities, their skills or qualifications.	2
4	Women`s Silence	1. Women lack power and are silenced by patriarchal rules.	2
5	Women`s Power	1. The union between women makes them powerful.	3

The first group of women-centered themes in *Unless* centers on women`s occupation, with women often relegated to marginal or less significant jobs. Reta, a multi-talented writer and translator, exemplifies the struggle to overcome patriarchal expectations and pursue creative ambitions, reflecting the broader societal view that “translators are handmaidens to authors, women inferior to men” (Simon, 1996, as cited in Stovel, 2013, p. 220). The following excerpt illustrates the marginalization of women`s work and the societal pressure to prioritize domestic responsibilities:

چطور می‌توانید بین زندگی خانوادگی و زندگی حرفه‌ای خود تعادل برقرار کنید؟

این دیگر چه جور سؤالی است؟

خانم وینترز ترجیح نمی‌دهید که به جای ترجمه‌ی کارهای دکتر وسترمن داستان نویسی خودتان را ادامه دهید؟ خواهش می‌کنم دوباره این موضوع را پیش نکشید. با همسران چگونه آشنا شدید؟ او در مورد کار نوشتن شما چه نظری دارد؟ (ص. ۲۷)

Ex1.: *Unless* explores the challenges faced by women in their careers due to patriarchal expectations. Reta interprets French feminist pioneer`s work, empowering herself and boosting her confidence. This shift from traditional hierarchical relationships to equal literary work highlights women`s challenges (Stovel, 2013, pp. 220–221). The Persian translation of *Unless* places particular emphasis on these occupational themes, highlighting how societal expectations confine women to subordinate roles, especially within the Iranian context. The novel *Unless* intricately

examines the intersections of women's writing, domestic life, and motherhood, engaging with feminist debates on gender roles and power by foregrounding how women's voices are marginalized in both literary and social spheres (Guenther, 2010, pp. 149–151). These themes—particularly the complexities of the mother-daughter relationship, the creation of maternal discourse, and the challenge to patriarchal definitions of women's work—are also reflected in the Persian translation. The translation emphasizes Reta's journey as she reconstructs her identity and maternal connection through writing, thus highlighting the ongoing struggle against the trivialization of women's experiences within both Western and Iranian contexts.

«اون زنی رو که بهار گذشته خودشو آتیش زد یادتونه. همین جا تو کشور خود ما، درست وسط تورنتو بود.» ... «یه زن عرب بود که از این چیزای بلند سیاه پوشیده بود. ایثار.» ... «به هر حال یک زن مسلمان بود. با لباس سنتی. هیچ کس نفهمید کی بود.» . «ولی یه نفر سعی کرد اونو کمک کنه. من در این مورد مطلبی خوندم. یه نفر سعی کرد آتیش رو خاموش کنه. یه زن.» (ص. ۱۰۰).

Ex.2.:The depiction of Norah's trauma after witnessing the self-immolation of a Muslim woman in *Unless* functions as both a narrative of personal and collective female suffering and a symbolic act of protest and solidarity, "mirroring the silencing and marginalization of women in patriarchal societies" (Guenther, 2010, pp. 149–151). In the Persian translation, these themes are preserved and, in some respects, even accentuated, resonating with Iranian readers who are acutely aware of issues related to gendered oppression, religious identity, and social protest (Sharifi, 2017, pp. 3–4). The translation foregrounds the complexities of motherhood, trauma, and female solidarity, highlighting how women's voices challenge and disrupt patriarchal expectations—an effect that aligns with Shields's explicitly feminist project (Falcus, 2017, pp. 311–312). By examining how the Persian translation adapts and recontextualizes these feminist themes, the study demonstrates the transformative potential of rewriting: the translated text becomes an active site for negotiating and disseminating feminist concepts of gender, sex, and agency within a new cultural framework (Sharifi, 2017, pp. 2–4). This approach illustrates that translation is not a

passive transfer of content but a dynamic process that shapes and amplifies feminist discourse for diverse sociocultural audiences. Thus, the Persian *Unless* serves as a powerful example of how rewriting through translation can foster cross-cultural feminist dialogue and contribute to the evolving discourse on women's empowerment in post-revolutionary Iran (Sharifi, 2017, pp. 3–4).

#### 4.2. Representation of Feminist Concepts as Women-Centered Themes in Themes in *Cheraqha ra Man Khamoosh Mikonam*.

Table 2: Representation of Gender as a Feminist Concept in Women-Centered Themes in *Cheraqha ra Man Khamoosh Mikonam*

No.	Women-Centered Themes of Gender		Frequency of Themes
1	Women's Occupation	1. Women are supposed to do marginal or not very important jobs	4
		2. Women are supposed to do domestic things	1
		3. Women are supposed to be mothers and do mother's duties.	2
		4. Women's careers may elevate them in society, boost their self-esteem, and advance their place in society.	1
2	Women's Power	5. The union between women makes them powerful.	2

واژگن با این همه کار فرصت ترجمه کردن هم پیدا می کند؟ تو چرا کتاب ترجمه نمی کنی؟» چند لحظه نگاهش کردم که با لبخند نگاهم می کرد. مادر گفت «وقتش کجا بود؟ شش ماه بیشتر ست پرده ی اتاق خواب ها را نشسته.» (ص. ۸۱).

Ex2.: Clarice, a dedicated mother and translator in Pirzad's novel, faces significant barriers as her mother devalues translation as a marginal profession and prioritizes domestic duties, preventing Clarice from pursuing her vocation (Heidari & Sasani, 2021, pp. 184–185). This dynamic highlights the broader struggles of women who internalize societal expectations and neglect their own needs, resulting in stress, anxiety, and diminished self-esteem due to rigid gender roles (Heidari & Sasani,

2021, pp. 184–185). Clarice's fear of losing her image as the perfect mother further illustrates the confining nature of patriarchal stereotypes. The novel also introduces Ms. Noorolahi, a secretary who advocates for women's solidarity and empowerment, demonstrating how occupation and unity can elevate women's self-worth. Additionally, Pirzad employs literary metaphors, such as the sweet pea flower, to subtly explore women's sexuality and desires within restrictive cultural contexts (Tajalli, 2024, p. 1; Zarlaki, 2014), emphasizing the complexity of female identity and agency. Through such nuanced symbolism, Pirzad challenges dominant gender discourses and foregrounds the multifaceted nature of Iranian women's experiences. This novel exemplifies the post-revolution transformation in Iranian women's authored novels by foregrounding women's issues, gender hierarchy, and the complexities of female identity within a patriarchal society. Through figurative language and nuanced narrative, the novel brings private female experiences—such as domestic struggles, identity crises, and negotiation of societal expectations—into the public literary sphere. This approach marks a significant departure from pre-revolutionary literature, as post-revolutionary women's novels are characterized by heightened sensitivity to gender relations and a focus on making women's private experiences public, thereby challenging dominant cultural narratives and contributing to the evolution of feminist ideas and women's agency in contemporary Iran (Talattof, 1997, p. 531; Hashabeiky, 2012, pp. 142–143; Niechciał, 2019, p. 89).

Figure 2: Representation of Gender and Sex as Feminist Concepts in Women-centered Themes

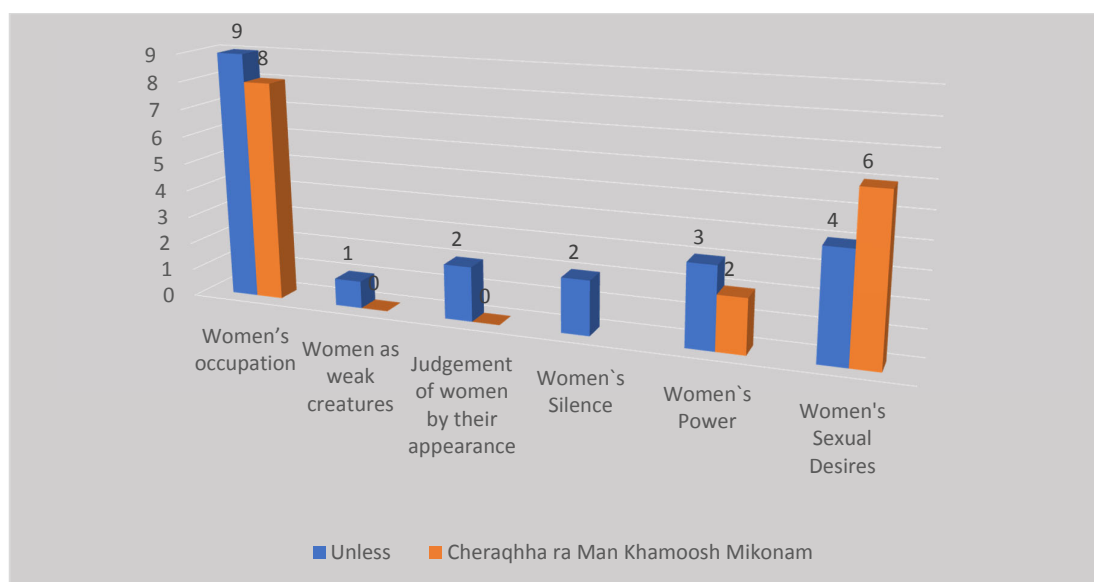


Figure 2 illustrates, *Unless* focuses on women's occupation with eight cases, followed by women's power with two cases, women's silence with two cases, and judgement of women by appearance with two cases highlighting the diverse gender-related themes in the novel. The concept of sex is represented by the theme of women's sexual desire with six cases. *Cheraqhha ra Man Khamoosh Mikonam* focuses on gender-related themes that regard women's occupation with eight cases, followed by women's power with two cases. On the other hand, the concept of sex is represented by the theme of women's sexual desire with six cases.

The results of this study revealed that both authored and translated women-centered novels foregrounded themes such as women's occupation and power, emphasizing the struggles and ambitions of women within a patriarchal context. The consistent emphasis on women's professional identities demonstrated a shared commitment to portraying women's agency and challenging their marginalization in broader socio-cultural narratives. By examining how both authored and translated works adapted, mediated, and recontextualized feminist discourse, this study showed the transformative potential of rewriting in shaping and contextualizing feminist themes for diverse Iranian settings. As Sharifi (2017) noted, the translation and circulation of feminist works like *Unless* in Iran reflected a negotiation between

patriarchal agendas and the subversive potential of feminist literature to foster new forms of female identity and empowerment. This dynamic mirrored the broader evolution of Iranian women's literature after the Islamic revolution, which was marked by heightened sensitivity to gender hierarchy, women's suffering, and the articulation of private female experiences in public literary spaces. Together, authored and translated novels contributed to the articulation, dissemination, and evolution of feminist ideas, challenging dominant cultural narratives and expanding possibilities for women's agency and self-expression in contemporary Iranian society.

## 5. Conclusion

This study examined gender issues in two Persian-language, women-centered novels from the 2000s, a period marked by growing engagement with feminist discourse in Iranian literature. By applying Egbert and Sanden's (2019) feminist theory, feminist literary criticism and Lefevere's (1992) rewriting theory, the analysis revealed how themes like women's occupation, power, silence, and sexual desire function as literary devices within dominant poetics to reflect feminist concepts of gender and sex in Iran's sociocultural context. Both *Unless* and *Cheraqhha ra Man Khamoosh Mikonam* foregrounded women's professional struggles and agency, illustrating how patriarchal systems marginalize women's work while simultaneously showcasing their resilience. While both novels shared themes like sexual desire, their portrayals diverged: *Unless* framed desire through internal struggles aligned with global feminist dialogues, whereas *Cheraqhha* intertwined it with societal expectations, reflecting localized cultural norms. These distinctions underscored how feminist discourse is negotiated differently in authored and translated works, shaped by Iran's unique sociocultural landscape. By examining how both novels adapted and recontextualized feminist discourse, this study demonstrated the transformative potential of rewriting in shaping feminist themes for diverse settings. As Sharifi (2017) observes, the translation of works like *Unless* reflects a negotiation between patriarchal agendas and feminist literature's



subversive potential to foster new forms of female empowerment (pp. 2–4). This dynamic mirrors post-revolution Iranian women’s literature, which articulates private female experiences in public spaces, challenging dominant narratives (Talattof, 1997, p. 531). Authored and translated novels collaboratively contribute to the evolution of feminist ideas, as seen in *Cheraqhha*’s emphasis on domestic-professional tensions and *Unless*’s Persian translation, which accentuated themes of motherhood and solidarity to resonate with Iranian readers (Sharifi, 2017, pp. 3–4). The cross-cultural adaptation of feminist themes enriches Iranian literary discourse, introducing nuanced discussions—such as *Unless*’s “appearance judgment” theme—that expand local feminist frameworks. These works illustrate Hughes’s (2002) argument that women’s identities are rooted in sociocultural contexts, while Lefevere’s rewriting theory clarifies how feminist poetics mediate global and local narratives (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990). Ultimately, the interplay of authored and translated literature fosters inclusive dialogue, elevates women’s voices, and drives social change, underscoring the transformative power of feminist rewriting in post-revolutionary Iran.

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