

A STUDY OF METAPHOR IN LEONY JARDINE'S POEMS "THE MOON AND HER SECRETS"

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Abstract

*This study examines the use of metaphor in Leony Jardine's poetry collection *The Moon and Her Secrets*. The research focuses on how metaphors—particularly structural, orientational, and ontological metaphors as conceptualized by Lakoff and Johnson (2003)—are employed to reflect psychological conflicts, emotional depth, and identity struggles. Using a qualitative descriptive method, this study analyzes selected poems through close reading, supported by Conceptual Metaphor Theory and a psychological literary approach. The findings reveal that Jardine consistently employs the moon as a central metaphor representing secrecy, vulnerability, and transformation. Ontological metaphors dominate, presenting emotions as concrete entities and allowing abstract experiences to be visualized. These results emphasize that Jardine's poetry transforms metaphor into a primary medium for exploring inner conflict and self-discovery.*

Keywords: *Metaphor, poetry, Leony Jardine, conceptual metaphor theory, literature psychology*

Abstrak

*Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan metafora dalam kumpulan puisi Leony Jardine *The Moon and Her Secrets*. Fokus penelitian adalah bagaimana metafora, khususnya metafora struktural, orientasional, dan ontologis sebagaimana dikonseptualisasikan oleh Lakoff dan Johnson (2003), digunakan untuk merefleksikan konflik psikologis, kedalaman emosional, dan pencarian identitas. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis puisi terpilih melalui pembacaan mendalam (close reading), didukung oleh Teori Metafora Konseptual dan pendekatan psikologi sastra. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Jardine secara konsisten menjadikan bulan sebagai metafora sentral yang merepresentasikan rahasia, kerentanan, dan transformasi. Metafora ontologis mendominasi, dengan cara menjadikan emosi sebagai entitas konkret sehingga pengalaman abstrak dapat divisualisasikan. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa puisi Jardine mengubah metafora menjadi sarana utama dalam mengeksplorasi konflik batin dan penemuan jati diri.*

Kata kunci: *Metafora, puisi, Leony Jardine, teori metafora konseptual, psikologi sastra*

1. INTRODUCTION

Poetry is the most condensed and intense form of literary expression, capable of conveying complex human experiences through imaginative, symbolic, and emotional language. According to Eagleton (2017), poetry is not merely a sequence of beautiful words but a medium for constructing meaning, identity, and human experience. Similarly, Gibbs (2020) argues that poetry allows readers to *feel* ideas rather than just understand them intellectually. Thus, poetry serves as a bridge between aesthetic language and emotional experience. One of the most essential devices in poetry is metaphor. A metaphor is not merely a stylistic comparison but a cognitive mechanism that underlies how humans understand the world. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) emphasize that metaphors exist not only in language but also in thought and action, functioning as a primary way for humans to make sense of abstract experiences through more concrete concepts. Kövecses (2020) adds that metaphors form conceptual patterns that allow us to systematize emotions and ideas.

Therefore, in poetry, metaphor becomes a central vehicle for extending meaning, expressing inner experience, and creating emotional resonance with the reader. In the context of contemporary poetry, Leony Jardine presents works rich in metaphorical expression. Her collection *The Moon and Her Secrets* employs the moon as a central symbol layered with meaning—representing secrecy, vulnerability, and identity. Jardine's metaphors transform cosmic phenomena into psychological mirrors, where lunar phases represent the emotional journey of the poetic persona. As Sharma (2021) notes, women's poetry often employs layered metaphors to express trauma, transformation, and resilience. This is evident in Jardine's work, where the moon metaphor functions not only as ornamentation but as a medium for exploring inner conflict, memory, and self-discovery. Thus, this study highlights the importance of understanding metaphor in Jardine's poetry not simply as a linguistic device but as a conceptual tool that bridges emotional, psychological, and identity dimensions.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative descriptive method, as it emphasizes interpretive analysis rather than numerical data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The primary data consist of twenty selected poems from Jardine's *The Moon and Her Secrets*, chosen because they most consistently employ moon and secrecy imagery. Data collection was carried out through documentation and close reading, identifying metaphorical expressions and classifying them into three categories of conceptual metaphor. Data analysis followed the model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), which includes three stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Secondary sources include recent

scholarly works on metaphor, cognitive linguistics, and psychological approaches to literature (e.g., Gibbs, 2017; Kövecses, 2020; Sullivan, 2022). This ensured that the analysis was grounded in contemporary theoretical perspectives.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis reveals that Jardine's *The Moon and Her Secrets* is rich in metaphor, with ontological metaphors dominating, followed by structural and orientational metaphors. This suggests that Jardine employs metaphor not merely as a stylistic feature but as a central device for psychological exploration.

a. Ontological Metaphors

Ontological metaphors are the most frequently found. These metaphors conceptualize abstract emotions as physical entities, often described as having weight, gravitational pull, or container-like qualities. In *Her Secret Gravity*, for example, secrets are depicted as gravitational forces that weigh down the persona. This aligns with Gibbs' (2017) claim that ontological metaphors allow abstract experiences such as trauma and memory to become tangible. By presenting emotions as objects, Jardine emphasizes that psychological burdens are not transient but enduring realities. This technique resonates with Sullivan's (2022) findings that metaphors in trauma poetry often serve as survival strategies, offering readers a way to "see" the invisible.

b. Structural Metaphors

Structural metaphors in Jardine's poetry often employ cosmic imagery to frame emotional states. In *Orbiting Her Silence*, silence is mapped onto an orbital path, suggesting an inescapable cycle of emotional stagnation. Kövecses (2020) argues that structural metaphors allow abstract domains to be understood through more concrete ones. Jardine's structuring of silence as orbit reflects cycles of grief and memory, reinforcing the sense of entrapment within emotional paralysis. This mapping enriches the reader's experience by transforming silence into a spatial and mechanical process, enabling "emotional paralysis" to be imagined as a gravitational orbit.

c. Orientational Metaphors

Although less frequent, orientational metaphors play an important role in shaping emotional contrasts. In *Waxing Doubt*, the waxing moon represents the growth of fear and uncertainty. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) explain that orientational metaphors are rooted in human bodily experience, particularly spatial orientation (up-down, in-out). De Mendoza Ibáñez and Pérez (2017) emphasize that orientational metaphors in poetry create embodied emotional understanding. Jardine's depiction of fluctuating emotions through lunar phases reinforces the cyclical theme of the collection and highlights the instability of

psychological states.

d. Dominance of Ontological Metaphors

Among the three types, ontological metaphors dominate Jardine's poetry. This indicates that her primary focus is to make intangible emotions visible and embodied. By treating secrets, grief, and memories as objects, Jardine underscores the weight of psychological experience. The dominance of ontological metaphors supports Sharma's (2021) observation that contemporary women's poetry often embodies abstract struggles through physical imagery.

e. Psychological Dimensions of Metaphor

Beyond their linguistic function, Jardine's metaphors reveal psychological dimensions. The moon consistently functions as both a witness and a participant in the persona's inner struggles. This resonates with Bachelard's (2000) notion that natural imagery often mirrors the subconscious. The moon thus becomes a metaphorical container for memory, secrecy, and transformation. Through metaphor, Jardine creates a poetic space where inner conflict is externalized. Readers are invited not only to interpret but also to viscerally experience emotions. This supports Gibbs' (2020) assertion that metaphor in poetry enables readers to *feel* ideas rather than merely understand them.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that Leony Jardine's *The Moon and Her Secrets* employs three main types of metaphor—structural, orientational, and ontological—based on Lakoff and Johnson's (2003) Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Among these, ontological metaphors are the most dominant, as they concretize abstract psychological states into tangible entities. Jardine's metaphors transform the moon into a layered symbol representing secrecy, vulnerability, and identity, offering readers a profound exploration of emotional and psychological conflict. This research highlights that metaphor in contemporary poetry functions not only as an aesthetic device but as an essential cognitive and emotional tool. Future research could expand this study by comparing Jardine's work with other women poets who employ natural symbolism, thereby deepening the understanding of metaphor as both a linguistic and psychological construct.

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