

A Critical Approach to the Category of 'Woman' in Literature: From Tradition to the Present

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In traditional, modern and postmodern literature, we have always encountered a category called woman. In our classical literature, a woman was a beloved with the same height as a cypress, eyebrows like a bow, etc., who in the best of circumstances met her lover in a pub. In the modern period and to a lesser extent in the postmodern period, women poets took critical approaches to the position of women in literature and society. It is important to note that society and, consequently, literature have long regarded women as a tool for society and poetry and have always written about them; But the approach of post-feminism in society and literature, with a critical approach to all dualisms and instrumentalists about women, presents a critical view of post-humanism in which women are seen as the romantic half of human on earth and in literature, especially in naturalistic literature, women are allowed to without denying, rejecting and humiliating the other half of human, that is the man; appear as an independent and unmediated character in society and poetry without having to deal with presuppositions, criticisms, judgments, etc. This article is a descriptive-analytical method compiled using library resources, aims to enable each of the male and female phenomena in literature to have an independent presence in the text immediately and independently of all ideological and theological views, and to narrate themselves in the world of text. The aim is to enable each of the male and female phenomena in literature to have an independent presence in the text immediately and independently of all ideological and theological views, and to flow in the text and to narrate themselves in the world of text .

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Introduction

Literature has always functioned as a mirror of society, reflecting the prevailing cultural and philosophical attitudes toward humanity. Among these, the representation of the “woman” has undergone significant transformations from traditional, mythological, and classical contexts to modern and postmodern eras. Historically, literature has often depicted women through male-centric lenses—either as idealized, untouchable objects of desire or as disenfranchised entities trapped within oppressive social and traditional norms. While modernism and feminism emerged to challenge these patriarchal structures, they frequently replaced them with new binary oppositions or commodifying frameworks. This article explores the evolution of the female figure in Persian literature and introduces the critical framework of “Phafeminism” (Meta-feminism) and “Meta-humanism” (Fara-humanism) within the School of Wordism (*Maktab-e Asalat-e Kalameh*). The study aims to demonstrate how these frameworks transcend traditional dualistic thinking and provide a platform for a non-reductive, human-centric view of both genders.

Method

This research adopts a descriptive-analytical method, utilizing library resources and primary texts. It critically examines the historical trajectory of the status of women in literature—from classical Persian poetry to contemporary works—while evaluating the shortcomings of traditional, modern, feminist, and ecofeminist approaches. The analysis focuses on the ideological and philosophical shifts within the “School of Wordism” to propose a model that views the woman and the man as independent subjects rooted in “Earth-Subjectivity” (*Zamin-Soozegi*).

Results

The research identifies three major historical paradigms regarding the female figure in literature:

1. **The Traditional Perspective:** Rooted in hierarchical power structures (utility, pleasure, and consequence), the classical view

often rendered women as either passive objects of aesthetic admiration or as inferior beings within patriarchal social codes.

۲. **The Modernist/Feminist Perspective:** With the rise of capitalism and modernity, women transitioned from domestic confinement to the status of labor/commodity. While feminist movements (from the 19th century to the present) have been crucial in advocating for political and social rights, the article argues that they often remain trapped in binary logic, frequently defining the female identity solely in opposition to or exclusion of the male.
۳. **The Phafeminist/Meta-humanist Perspective:** This is the core contribution of the study. Phafeminism (or Meta-feminism) critiques the exclusionary nature of previous movements. It proposes:
 - **The Third Gender approach:** This is not a biological category but an intellectual synergy of “woman-looking humanism” and “man-looking humanism.” It promotes “humanity” as a transcendent category rather than a site of conflict.
 - **Earth-Subjectivity (*Zamin-Soozegi*):** Rejecting the notion of humanity as a separate, superior entity, this view posits that humans are manifestations of the Earth. It advocates for an ecological and human-centered ethics that moves beyond the hierarchy of “man vs. woman” or “human vs. nature.”
 - **Subjectivity in Text:** The article argues for a literary style where men and women appear as independent characters, free from pre-existing ideological or theological judgments. They exist in the text not to be “critiqued” or “used,” but to “be” and “narrate” their own existence.

Conclusion

The critique presented reveals that most literary and social movements—from classical patriarchies to certain radical feminist discourses—have historically viewed the “woman” through the lens of objectification or commodification. The article concludes that “Phafeminism” offers a more holistic alternative. By embracing “Meta-humanism” and “Earth-Subjectivity,” it dissolves the destructive binary wars between genders. In this view, both men and women are recognized as the “loving halves of humanity.” Consequently, a mature literature should allow characters to



emerge organically and independently, liberated from the weight of predefined patriarchal or anti-patriarchal ideological frameworks, ultimately leading to a more authentic representation of the human experience.