

Extended Abstract

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Trend Analysis of Post-1990s Women's Poetry with a Focus on Representative Female Poets Pantea Safaee and Fatemeh Salarvand

Kazem Rostami Shahrbabaki*  (Corresponding Author)

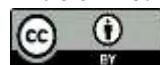
Mahsa Roun 

Introduction

Throughout the history of Persian poetry prior to the Constitutional Revolution, the dominant literary current was thoroughly masculine in nature. The study and critical analysis of women's poetry has, for the most part, remained neglected in literary historiography. With the Constitutional Movement and the simultaneous rise of women's activism and their social demands, women began to play a more prominent role in society. Nevertheless, in the domain of poetry and literature, no significant stylistic transformation emerged that could be regarded as a lasting literary current. Although modernist intellectuals occasionally addressed women's issues in their writings, such concerns were never at the core of their intellectual or socio-political agendas. Rather, they were often treated as secondary matters, instrumental to the broader objective of transforming Qajar absolutism into a constitutional order and implementing modernist ideals. During the Pahlavi period—often described as the height of women's activism across political and social spheres—female participation encountered both progress and setbacks, with significant milestones such as the establishment of the Women's Center during Reza Shah's reign, and, later, the proliferation of women's organizations and associations during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah. The impact of these socio-political dynamics on women's poetry is evident in the emergence of influential figures such as Forough

* PhD Student of Persian Language and Literature, Imam Khomeini International University of Qazvin, Qazvin, Iran.
natenamak@gmail.com

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Farrokhzad, Simin Behbahani, and Tahereh Saffarzadeh. Since the Pahlavi era is not the primary focus of this study, we refrain from detailed examination here, merely noting that most literary transformations of that period were one-dimensional, largely aligned with feminist discourse and characterized by a deliberate distancing from traditional Iranian cultural patterns, whether viewed positively or negatively.

After the Islamic Revolution, and particularly with the socio-political opening of the 1990s and the Reform Movement, women's poetry achieved a distinctive literary presence.

Method, Literature Review and Purpose

This research employs the fourfold model of literary current analysis—namely: (1) socio-political context, (2) supportive circles and institutions, (3) theorization and canon formation, and (4) emergence, continuity, and dissemination—to examine the women's poetry of the 1990s as a distinct current, with a special focus on the works of two representative poets, Pantea Safaee and Fatemeh Salarvand.

The analysis of any literary current requires attention to its origins, the role of supportive networks, the modes of its dissemination, and the efforts of critics to consolidate and legitimize it. Since literary currents are deeply shaped by the political, social, and cultural transformations of their host societies, the women's poetry of the 1990s must likewise be studied with a historiographical awareness of its broader context. Accordingly, this study delineates the current of women's poetry in the 1990s through the aforementioned four components.

Previous scholarship on women's poetry has provided only brief and cursory references to current analysis, particularly in relation to the post-Revolutionary period and, more specifically, the currents emerging from the 1990s onward. Thus, a focused study in this area is both timely and necessary. The aim of this research is not merely to compare two poets, but rather to demonstrate—through close textual evidence—how the major socio-political upheaval of the Reform Movement engendered a women's poetic current that combined and reconciled two formerly antagonistic literary streams.

Discussion

Post-1990s poetry, influenced simultaneously by revolutionary and intellectual traditions, blurred rigid thematic and ideological boundaries. Women's demands were articulated alongside religious values and revolutionary ideals, yet through a distinctly feminine voice and subjectivity.

This study shows that the rise of the Reform Movement and the ensuing cultural and social shifts marked both the emergence and continuity of what may be termed post-1990s women's poetry. The women poets of this current cannot be neatly categorized as radical intellectuals, nor wholly as revolutionary or devout writers. Instead, they represent a balanced socio-literary stance, simultaneously engaging with feminist demands, social critique, romantic expression, and devotional themes. A hallmark of their work is the sustained presence of a feminine voice and perspective, evident even in their religious and Ashura-inspired poetry—an element that sets them apart from earlier post-Revolutionary women poets, whose devotional works generally lacked a distinctly feminine subjectivity.

In sum, the moderation and maturity of language, the breadth of vision, the freedom of perspective, the thematic diversity, and the bold treatment of romantic themes imbued with femininity—alongside devotional and Ashuraic motifs—collectively shaped a distinctive space for women's poetry in the 1990s. This current is thereby clearly distinguished from the poetic trends of the immediate post-Revolutionary years.

Keywords: Literary current analysis, women's poetry, post-Revolution poetry

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