

THE ISSUE OF WOMAN-SUBJECT-IDENTITY AS AN ATTEMPT TOWARDS SELF-REPRESENTATION OF GENDER¹⁰

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DOI: 10.54503/2579-2903-2022.2-79

Abstract

The *aim* of the research is to examine the features of woman-subject's¹¹ [15, p. 900] self-representation, as well as the identification of the gender peculiarities of women's literature in the poems of female authors who lived and worked in the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century. In the present study the poems are analysed in terms of the gender stereotypes of *femininity* and *masculinity*.

The *actuality* of the paper is conditioned by the attempt and analysis of the subjective manifestations of consciousness of female authors and the problem of woman - subject - identity as a *presence* of writing. Such kind of analysis has been attempted for the first time.

Generalizing the binary gender manifestations of *femininity* and *masculinity*, we notice that they are revealed through aesthetic images, are peculiar to the consciousness of female authors and are expressed through the poetics of their works. Therefore, these texts were viewed from two perspectives: **a.** *expression of gender-related world-image*, **b.** *presentation of a definite gender-related problem*.

Summarizing the study scientifically and theoretically, it should be noted that in the Ottoman Empire female discourse in various literary genres is revealed through structural and paradigmatic specific ethnic elements, therefore, a serious study of the poetics and typology of women's writings with new methodological principles is required.

Keywords and phrases: gender, femininity, masculinity, woman-subject, gender mask, subjectivity, women's writing.

¹⁰ The paper is published within the framework of the project "Women's Issues in the Western Armenian Literature in the Second Half of the 19th Century" of scientific and scientific-technical activities funded by the RA Science Committee. Code: 2IT-6B118.

¹¹ A subject - narrowly meaning an individual who possesses conscious experiences, such as perspectives, feelings beliefs, and desires.

**ԿԻՆ-ՍՈՒԲՅԵԿՏ-ԻՆՔՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ ՀԻՄՆԱԽՆԴԻՐԸ
ՈՐՊԵՍ ՍԵՌԻ ԻՆՔՆԱՆԵՐԿԱՅԱՑՄԱՆ ՓՈՐՁ**

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Համառոտագիր

Հոդվածի նպատակն է՝ քննել կին-սուբյեկտի ինքնաներկայացման առանձնահատկությունները, ինչպես նաև՝ կանանց գրականության գենդերային առանձնահատկությունների նույնականացումը 19-րդ դարի երկրորդ կեսին Օսմանյան կայսրությունում ապրած և ստեղծագործած կին հեղինակների քերթվածներում:

Հոդվածի խնդիրն է՝ վերլուծել կանանց բանաստեղծությունները կանացիություն և առնականություն գենդերային կարծրատիպերի գործնականության տեսանկյունից:

Հոդվածի արդիականությունը պայմանավորված է կին հեղինակների գիտակցության սուբյեկտիվ դրսևորումների և կին – սուբյեկտ – ինքնություն հիմնախնդիրը՝ որպես գրի ներկայություն դիտարկելու փորձով և վերլուծությամբ: Այսօրինակ վերլուծություն կատարվում է առաջին անգամ:

Ընդհանրացնելով կանացիություն և առնականություն գենդերային քինար դրսևորումները նկատում ենք, որ դրանք բացահայտվում են գեղարվեստական պատկերների միջոցով, բնորոշ են կին հեղինակների գիտակցությանը և տրվում են նրանց ստեղծագործությունների պոետիկայի միջոցով: Այդ է պատճառը, որ սույն տեքստերը դիտարկել ենք երկու տեսանկյունից՝

ա. գենդերային աշխարհ-պատկերի արտահայտության,

բ. գենդերային հստակ խնդրի ներկայացման:

Գիտականորեն և տեսականորեն ամփոփելով ուսումնասիրությունը՝ նշենք, որ Օսմանյան կայսրությունում կանացի դիսկուրսը գրական տարբեր ժանրերում բացահայտվում է կառուցվածքային և հարացուցային առանձնահատուկ էթնիկական տարրերի միջոցով, հետևաբար՝ պահանջվում է կանանց տեքստերի պոետիկայի և տիպաբանության լրջագույն ուսումնասիրություն մեթոդաբանական նոր սկզբունքներով:

Բանալի բառեր և բառակապակցություններ: սեռ, կանացիություն, առնականություն, կին սուբյեկտ, գենդերային դիմակ, սուբյեկտիվություն, կանացի տեքստ:

ПРОБЛЕМА «ЖЕНЩИНА-СУБЪЕКТ-САМОБЫТНОСТЬ» КАК ОПЫТ САМОПРЕЗЕНТАЦИИ ПОЛА

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Аннотация

Цель статьи – исследовать специфику самопрезентации женщины-субъекта, а также адекватность гендерных особенностей женской литературы в сочинениях авторов-женщин, живших и творивших в Османской империи во второй половине XIX века.

Задача статьи – анализ стихотворений с точки зрения употребления гендерных стереотипов, связанных с *феминностью* и *маскулинностью*. Актуальность статьи обусловлена обзором и анализом субъективных проявлений сознания авторов-женщин и проблемы «женщина-субъект-самобытность» в контексте *присутствия письма*. Подобное исследование проводится впервые.

Обобщая гендерные бинарные проявления феминности и маскулинности, можно отметить, что они раскрываются с помощью художественных образов, которые характерны для сознания авторов-женщин, и воспроизводятся в поэтике их произведений. По этой причине мы рассмотрели данные тексты в двух аспектах: а) выражение гендерного мирозобраза; б) постановка четкой гендерной проблематики.

Резюмируя исследование с научной и теоретической позиций, отметим, что в Османской империи женский дискурс в разных литературных жанрах раскрывается с помощью специфических структурных и парадигмальных этнических элементов, следовательно, требуется серьезное изучение поэтики и типологии «женских текстов» на основе новых методологических принципов.

Ключевые слова и словосочетания: пол, феминность, маскулинность, женщина-субъект, гендерная маска, субъективность, «женский текст».

Introduction

The concepts [8, p. 5-17] of *female discourse*, *woman-subject*, *female identification*, *female image*, *woman's writing*, *gender mask*, and *situational subject* are but little studied. Until now, no clear answers have been given to the issues of women's emancipation and the relationship between men and women. In this context, of course, there exist many hypotheses and theories [5, p. 161] for the study of man-woman relationships. Although the observation of the social status of women in literature does not tend to become an argument of feminist discourse, the fact remains that in order to reveal the patriarchal culture, in general, it is necessary not to act as a female author.

Therefore, although making a woman the main character of a fictional work, communicating [7, p 56-67] her emotions and feelings to the reader, and talking about her fate is not the solution of the problem itself, it is the right approach from the perspective of coordination of these issues, because each of them, depending on the ideological and fictional subtexts, stands out with the typological and individual features of the author's reflection. Some researchers assert that it is not possible to differentiate between the concepts of women's or men's literature, because there are just *female* or *male* approaches, regardless of the gender of the author.

Based on this, the concept of *woman's writing* is actual, because many literary texts are distinguished by their gender characteristics, which are manifested at different levels of poetics: semantic, structural-compositional, genre, plot, imagery, thematic, lexical, syntactic, and other elements. Despite the above-mentioned, the gender-role domain of woman's vitality differs from that of a man's, consequently, the experiences of women and men also differ and the expressions of the life stages in their texts vary. A fictional text is created on the rational bases of the formation of world-images of both men and women, which are manifested by choosing or not choosing certain cultural and lexical signs. They emerge in the domains of self-identifications of *man-woman* relationships. It is here that woman's writing begins to struggle with man's dominant cultural text, and their categorization becomes possible: *feminine*, *masculine*, and *mixed*.

Theoretical and methodological bases

From a methodological point of view, the paper examined the issues of *gender poetics*, *male-female standards*, and *types of women's writing*. The concept *lyrical hero* (as a subject) involved as a *gender mask* has also been theorized.

For the research, collected works by Western Armenian female authors who performed their literary activities in the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century were selected: "Letters to a Reading Armenian Woman" (1879) by Elpis Kesaratsian, "Glitters" (1902) by Sipil, "Moments of Laziness" (1921) by Haykanush Mark, or the poems "Spring" (1868) [1] and "In Memory of Mr. M. Peshiktashlyan" (1868) [16, p. 4] by Srбуhi Tyusab published in the press, through which the ways of identifying the female *self* have been revealed and the self-representation attempts of female authors have been differentiated.

The selection of the above-mentioned works as research data is accounted for by the possibilities of identifying the concept *lyrical hero*. All the selected poems were written in approximately the same time period, the 1860s-1900s or the first decade of the 20th century, and have the characteristics of a lyrical writing. The authors of all the poems are women. While conducting the research, *comparative* and *gino-critical* methods [13, pp. 216-221] were employed, with the help of which the inner semantic domains of the

poems were identified. Due to these methods, the process of text comprehension¹² [3] (deconstructing, assembling) is most effective, in which each poem can maintain its lyrical independence, thus, ensuring the lyrical untouchability of the collected works as complete systems. This issue at the same time extends towards the structural subtexts of the collected works, which in turn enable analyzing any piece of writing.

Self-Consciousness and Identification

The modern theory of feminism maintains female discourse in its base, the methodological basis of which has not been fully formed yet. On the basis of feminist poetics, the issues of feminist ideology, a woman's self-consciousness, typology, behavior, subjectivity, identification, and individual characteristics of the author are relevant. The feminist literary theory aims at the investigation of social and cultural interpenetrations and transformations of the feminine and the masculine. The study of the works of female writers, who lived and worked in the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century, allows us to understand the national-ethnic codes of gender consciousness as well, because female consciousness, in this sense, is self-sufficient. Female ethnocultural space, woman's thoughts, and speech systems in fictional texts are among the unexplored topics of literary studies. Such expressions can be found in Elpis Kesaratsian's, Srбуhi Tyusab's, Sipil's, Haykanush Mark's, and Zapel Yesayan's poems.

The typological distinction of the stated can be found in Elpis Kesaratsian's poems, which lack the female *self*, instead, the author's voice concerned about the fate of the nation is present. The above-mentioned female authors' literary techniques and forms (the domain of "how?") are special and are directly related to the peculiarities of methodology and style. She identifies woman's emancipation directly with the freedom of the nation:

Singing to our glorious free Homeland,
It is free, and so are its virgins. [6, p 10]

In this context, Elpis Kesaratsian's, Srбуhi Tyusab's, Sipil's, and Haykanush Mark's poems are noteworthy in terms of revealing the typological, methodological, and functional features of the lyrical hero; they are, in general, manifestations of the author's self in women's poetry.

The depiction of reality enables expanding manifestations of female authors' lyrical emotions and feelings through diverse typological expressions of consciousness. The woman-subject, as a special category and the bearer of *Other's* [2] consciousness, has special manifestations in Sipil's poems, in which the emotional images are also related to the ethnocultural space and peculiar not only to her, Sipil-author but also to all people bearing the collective concept of nation, are noteworthy:

I feel some unfamiliar infinity inside myself,
That does not fit into the narrow shell of my soul,
It will break, will smash, will bleed,
Will shatter like a fine vessel of cloud
From the violent wounded struggle in itself,
But it needs those non-existent storms. [14, p. 117]

Referring to Sipil's poetry, Alexander Shirvanzade writes: "Besides being a talented writer, she was a dreamer." [11, p. 10] In Sipil's poetry, there are various

¹² The application of the *graph-based semantic* method with the text comprehension procedure is similar to the *hermeneutic* method.

expressions of feelings and emotions, in which the speaker and the communicator are always women. Nature and love go together in Sipil's poetry.

In the ether, without air,

My soul will get utterly motionless. [14, p. 137]

Describing the storm of nature in the poem "Blue Girl", [14, p. 30-31] she addresses the virgin burning "in the flame of warm desires", deepening the psychological drama of the drowning of the virgin's love. In women's writings, as a rule (and Sipil is no exception), previously taboo topics, which demonstrate the drama of the individual lives of the characters, are also constantly revealed. On that occasion, Arpiar Arpiaryan observes: "Desirous sadness drips from her sorrowful and painful songs." [4, p. 453]

The multi-layered poeticization of the lyrical hero synthesizes the different levels of the woman subject (the subject of speech or the subject of the Word). Through the textualization of the woman's *self*, female voice, timbre, and style, writing is detached from the compulsion to stay in the shadows, in which the masculine is dominant, and from the world in which only male discourse is present. A woman is able to tell and write about herself from her own experience in a way that no man can describe.

Women's poetry is characterized by features of subconsciousness, which can tentatively be called *the world through a woman's eyes*, or the domain of *thoughts, emotions, and relationships*.

The Problem of Woman-Subject and Subjectivity

The separation of the author from the subject is expressed in the domain of the creation of purely women's writing - in the grammatical, lexical, and stylistic domains, while expressive developments are more characteristic at the communicative level. Haykanush Mark's poems were published in the volume "Moments of Laziness" (1921). [9]

The understanding of the world and reality is given to Mark through woman's subjectivity ("Laziness"): "May nothing be moving in the hall. And may the vases, with roses, be drowsing. The piano strings may be playing no dreams. And may not a single thing be swaying! May the wind rise, and may the willows fall in straight folds. May the Tic Tac of the clock be freezing too! May nothing be moving in the hall. May soft scents be wearing off. May the time not be flowing, and the eyes not be looking! May not a single thing be swaying! And may the drowse be waving slowly over the heart." [9, p. 5]

The revelation of the woman's self-consciousness confirms the universality of lyricism, as the *Other's* feelings are also revealed, accompanied by elements of historicity and biography.

Woman's poetry is summed up in the domains of the female poet's identification with her own body, the experience of love, the discovery of the inner world, and her relationships with men. The authors use the broader meaning of affiliation of feelings and emotions in the domain of modified stylistics of folklore sources (image system, the emphasis of alliteration, etc.).

Tyusab's poem "Spring" [1] is important in terms of examining lyrical feelings and emotions, and the tragedy "In Memory of P.M. Peshiktashlyan" [10, p. 4] is a farewell to a beloved teacher and symbolizes the heavenly freedom - the eternal light reached through death.

Rest, your name will fill the air of union.

Rest, may your name be kept alive,

As long as it is noble and kind,

As long as I worship the genius, rest Spirit! [10, p. 4]

The exposure of a woman's self-consciousness in a fictional text provides a sufficient basis for revealing the woman's subject since the lyrical hero in *epistolary* poetry is a conventional character. So the relation to *Other's* subjectivity allows the author to demonstrate the presentation of female self-consciousness in the poetic text at the most.

The purpose of epistolary poetry is to feel what the *Other* does and to bring the fictional character psychologically closer to the reader.

The author succeeds in feeling and conveying the *Other's* consciousness through the character, to express the *Other's* emotions, which indicates the poet's secret desire to make lyrical thoughts more universal.

In Elpis Kesaratsian's poem "Advancement Invitation to Maidens", the manifestations of lexical and stylistic features, through which the author's subjectivity (in a philosophical sense) is revealed through the expansion of the woman's self-consciousness and the pattern of speech communication in a certain historical period (the second half of the 19th century), are notable.

I come to break your chains of ignorance,
Wrap your soft fingers with rose thorns,
Bring warmth to your dumb tongue,
Bring a sweet taste for learning to you.
I come to give might to your winning arms,
Fly, soar to the boundaries of freedom,
So, virgins, go ahead, unite your hearts,
Embrace your freedom now with your souls. [6, p. 10]

Observing from the point of view of *typological* patterns, it is also possible to identify the autobiographical discourse of women's writings, as a result of which a woman presents herself as a subject of speech in the domain of biographical or memoir politics. In this case, the woman-author gains the opportunity to overcome the circumstance of being in the *shade*, where she was driven by traditions, and social and family statuses.

Reading women's literature helps to reveal the characteristics of poetics, autobiographies and memoirs, biographies, world-gender conflict, creation of means and types of psychologism, escape from everyday life, linguistic and graphic systematization of the text, materiality, and levels of metaphorization.

Conclusion

Having studied the manifestations and standards of women's consciousness of their identity in the fictional text, it can be concluded that its formulations have not been studied in Armenian Literature at all.

In the 1870s and 1880s, women's literature, social and literary-cultural activities developed vertically thanks to Elpis Kesaratsian, Srбуhi Tyusab, Sipil, Haykanush Mark, Mari Peilerian, Arshakuhi Teodik, Zapel Yesayan, and other female authors.

The concepts of *femininity* and *masculinity* are shaped by a particular image of the world as an objective and subjective system of characters, the nature of the author's consciousness, the peculiarities of female and male speech behaviors, text style, gender space, and genre systems. In this context, the purpose of women's poetry is the opportunity to feel what *Other* does, to psychologically convey the aesthetic image to the reader, especially the female reader.

Through the female *mask*, the author acquires the ability to experience *Other's* consciousness and makes the lyrical and gender space of the text more universal.

However, in women's writings, it is also possible to find the multifaceted experience that is always in the domain of marginality and is opposed to the traditional biological, social, and role stereotypes created and accepted by men. The peculiarity of women's literature lies especially in the form and purpose of writing, which is focused on the manifestation of women's *self-determination* and *self-identification*.

Acknowledgments

We thank Lili Karapetyan for proofreading the article.

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