

FEATURES OF INTERPRETING THE IMAGE OF A WOMAN IN FICTION (GENDER ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM)

ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ТРАКТУВАННЯ ОБРАЗУ ЖІНКИ В ХУДОЖНІЙ ЛІТЕРАТУРІ (ГЕНДЕРНІ АСПЕКТИ ПРОБЛЕМИ)

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For many centuries, there have been discussions about the similarities and differences between women and men. As a rule, the superiority of men in social, intellectual, moral and spiritual aspects was proven. A woman was considered a "devil's vessel", an inferior person, deprived of all rights. She did not have the right to sit next to a man at the table, lived in specially designated living rooms, and was subjected to constant humiliation and insults from men. The difference was also manifested at the level of clothing and appearance: a woman could not wear trousers, long hair was considered decent for her, and short hair – for men. In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance women were often accused of hypocrisy, theft, treachery, talkativeness, lies, and mercenariness. On the other hand, in the Renaissance, artists and poets began to praise the beauty and spirituality of women. Thus, in Dante and Petrarch, a woman becomes an object of worship and admiration, a muse for the poet. Classical courtly poetry of the Middle Ages is suffused with the idealization of women by male poets. Before the heyday of chivalric love lyrics, which experts associate with the formation of the right to sexual free choice, in the literature of the Early Middle Ages the treatment of women was different. In ancient literary monuments, such as, for example, Icelandic sagas, which reflect the tribal mentality, women were not given a place at all, since they were representatives of a foreign clan and therefore had no aesthetic status in the tribal sagas. In the literature of Western Europe of the 17th and 18th centuries (the novels of Charles Sorel, Paul Scarron, Gustave Flaubert, Daniel Defoe), images of thieves, women of easy virtue, and scoundrels appear.

Attention should be focused not on the rivalry between a man and a woman, but on the uniqueness of each individual, where the main principle is their harmonious union under the condition of absolute social equality. Society should be built not on conflicts, but on mutual understanding and cooperation, where their socio-social equality is guaranteed, where there should be no domestic violence, which, unfortunately, remains widespread both in Eastern countries and in some European societies. A man and a woman should not only recognize their differences and common features, but also develop them in a spirit of mutual respect and support.

Key words: gender aspects, the image of women in literature, dualistic value system, Renaissance humanists, antinomy, social and family relations.

Протягом багатьох століть велися дискусії про схожість та відмінність жінок та чоловіків. Як правило, доводилася перевага чоловіків у соціальному, інтелектуальному, моральному та духовному аспектах. Жінка розглядалася як «судина диявола», неповноцінна особа, позбавлена всіх прав. Вона не мала права сидіти поруч із чоловіком за столом, жила в спеціально відведених окремих житлових кімнатах, зазнавала постійних принижень та образ з боку чоловіків. Різниця проявлялася також на рівні одягу та зовнішності: жінка не могла носити штани, для неї пристойними вважалося довге волосся, а для чоловіків – коротке. Жінок часто в Середньовіччі та в епоху Відродження звинувачували в лицемірстві, крадіжках, підступності, балакучості, брехливості, продажності. З іншого боку, в епоху Відродження художники та поети починають оспівувати красу та одухотвореність жінки. Так, у Данте, Петрарки жінка стає об'єктом поклоніння та захоплення, музою поета. Класична куртуазна поезія середньовіччя сповнена ідеалізацією жінки поетами-чоловіками. До розквіту лицарської любовної лірики, яку фахівці пов'язують із формуванням права на сексуальний вільний вибір, у літературі Раннього Середньовіччя трактування жінки було іншим. У стародавніх літературних пам'ятниках, таких, наприклад, як ісландські саги, що відбивають родовий менталітет, жінки не приділялося місця взагалі, оскільки вона була представницею чужого роду і тому не мала естетичного статусу в родових сагах. У літературі Західної Європи XVII–XVIII століть (романи Шарля Сореля, Поля Скаррона, Гюстава Флобера, Даніеля Дефо) з'являються образи злодійок, жриць кохання, шахрайок.

Слід зосереджувати увагу не на суперництві між чоловіком та жінкою, а на унікальності кожної особистості, де головним принципом є їхній гармонійний союз за умови абсолютної соціальної рівності. Суспільство має будуватися не на конфліктах, а на взаєморозумінні та співпраці, де гарантована їхня суспільно-соціальна рівність, де не повинно бути домашнього насильства, яке, на жаль, залишається поширеним як у східних країнах, так і в деяких європейських суспільствах. Чоловік і жінка мають не лише визнавати свої відмінності та спільні риси, а й розвивати їх у дусі взаємоповаги та підтримки.

Ключові слова: гендерні аспекти, образ жінки в літературі, дуалістична ціннісна система, гуманісти Відродження, антиномія, соціально-сімейні стосунки.

Introduction. For a very long time, humanity has been pondering and reasoning about the similarities and differences of the biological and physiological nature, social functions, and the role of a man and woman, their interrelationship both in social, socio-political, family, and sexual aspects, as well as in the specifics of their spiritual and physical organization, which is often considered in the dualistic value system of “higher – lower”, “better – worse” [1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9]. For many centuries, as is known, there have been discussions about this hierarchy in the comparative assessment of men and women, where the superiority of men in social, intellectual, and moral terms was most often proven, while the spiritual, moral nature and social role of women were downgraded.

The analysis of the latest researches and publications. Modern literary studies, as well as philosophical and sociological sciences, fruitfully investigate and analyze the problems of the relationship between a man and a woman, examine the various components of a woman's character and how it has changed over the centuries. This is evidenced by numerous monographs, scientific articles and investigations, where the evolution of a woman is presented as a continuous process of development of the “best part of humanity” and striving for perfection. V. Averianov, B. Bevzenko, S. Bem, Sh. Bern, O. Vilkova, M. Vikhliaiev, T. Vlasova, Yu. Volkova, L. Voronko, T. Hovorun, V. Hoshovska, I. Grabobska, V. Kravets, K. Levchenko, T. Melnyk, L. Shtylyova, S. Pavlychko, I. Zhrebkina, O. Kis, L. Kobelyanska, L. Smolyar, N. Sukhim, O. Yarosh and others studied various aspects of the problem of gender relations between a man and a woman, analyzed the features of the reflection of the image of a woman in literature and art. Researchers have different points of view and views on gender problems of society, on the function of woman in it, but in one their views coincide: “the position of woman in society determines the level of its educational, socio-economic development” [10, p. 21].

Task setting. The purpose of the article is to analyze the introduction of gender stereotypes into fiction, to consider the evolution of views on a woman from the “devil's vessel” to the recognition of her social equality with a man and prophetic hypotheses about the return of matriarchy. The purpose and task of the investigation is also to clarify the uniqueness of representatives of different sexes, where the law of life is not struggle, but their union with the recognition of absolute social equality.

Presentation of main material. The history of discrimination against a woman and its evaluative interpretation moves from the well-known formula “vessel of the devil”, through the recognition of her

as a “man” by a majority of two votes at the papal council to the recognition of her social equality with a man and to prophetic hypotheses about the return, starting from the 21st century, of matriarchy. And here the most important role was played by women who fought for their rights. Now men have already started talking about their discrimination. In particular, our compatriots increasingly appeal to the laws of Ukraine, in which it is necessary to treat elders and women with respect and where men are not mentioned. But if we return to the history of the “man – woman” problem, it should be noted that women were constantly humiliated and insulted by the so-called “stronger sex”, forbidding them to sit next to them at the banquet table, offering to live in specially designated living rooms, which affected the history of architectural decisions of the “female half of the house”. In clothing for many centuries, gender specificity has been emphasized – the “dress code”, speaking in modern language. Traditions in this matter were so strong that, for example, wearing a man's suit, in particular trousers, as is known, became one of the grounds for condemnation by the churchmen of Joan of Arc, which led her to the bonfire. And in the 19th century, Georges Sand decided to assert herself and fight against the established stereotype of women's clothing, appearing in society in a man's suit, which caused a storm of criticism. True, some violations of the dress code were also used by men. For example, the romantic T. Gauthier wore a provocative red vest. But here we are not talking about gender-based masquerade, which is used by modern transvestites, but about a form of social-ethical or aesthetic protest against established canons.

The sharp antinomy between a man and a woman was also emphasized in hairstyles: for a long time long hair was considered decent for women, and short hair – for men. The establishment of equality between a man and a woman in the 20th century was also reflected in fashion, when the differences between women's and men's clothing and hairstyles were erased.

Both medieval and Renaissance authors of satires in fabliaos and novellas accused women of treachery, hypocrisy, talkativeness, lying, and mercenary spirit. But the Renaissance turned out to be controversial. On the one hand, it was the time of the “witch-hunt”, when beautiful women who possessed “folk medicine” were in danger, and on the other hand, female beauty was glorified by artists and poets who dared to depict female nudity. The Renaissance era also put forward the criteria of women's intellectuality, following one of which was reflected in fashion – increasing the forehead due to shaved hair by five to six centimeters as a sign of intelligence.

Humanists of the Renaissance, continuing the traditions of chivalrous courtly poetry of the 12th and 13th centuries, began to praise both physical and spiritual beauty of women: Dante made his Beatrice a symbol of the Divine Idea and a guide to Paradise; due to the image of the golden-curved beauty Laura in Petrarch's sonnets, for almost 200 years in Western European poetry, only blondes dominated, and, in contrast to the modern unfair reputation of them as limited doll fools, which was largely contributed to by Hollywood movies, they were also marked by high spirituality, intelligence, and morality. Although in fairness it should be noted that British scientists, comparing blondes and brunettes, gave preference to blondes even in the intellectual sphere. True, Shakespeare dared to introduce not only the black-haired Dark Lady into poetry with his sonnets, but also to deny her moral perfection, admitting that "If thy unworthiness raised love in me, / More worthy I to be beloved of thee" [11].

The French novelist of the 18th century, Antoine Francois Prevost, also portrayed the fatal vicious woman, who created the image of Manon Lescaut, who received the status of an "eternal image" of a vicious, unfaithful, but beloved woman. However, in addition to male enemies, women also had defenders. Not only the Provençal poets of the Middle Ages, who created the cult of the "Beautiful Lady", but also, for example, the English poet of the 17th century. John Donne, who wrote the treatise "In Defense of Beautiful Women", and Richardson with his ideal-virtuous Clarissa and Pamela, and Shakespeare, who created not only the image of the Dark Lady, but also the images of Juliet, Desdemona, Lady Macbeth and the villainous daughters of King Lear: Shakespeare did not attack female beauty as such, he saw different women and different men. A lot of classical authors of the 19th and 20th centuries. created images of decent women, although there are echoes of the old tradition of denouncing the imperfection of female nature in H. Flaubert, the author of the novel "Madame Bovary", and in U. Thackeray, who created the image of the cunning intriguer Becky Sharp, and many other writers.

It should be noted that the language preserved the semantics of the word "witch" – the common name of a woman – "vedunia", i.e. cognizant, although in the history of word use there was clearly a reassessment of the value of this property of women. Women in the representation of men in the Early Middle Ages also knew the secrets of military art, not only healing, creating a love potion, magic, they could maleficate, "send" curses. In the oldest medieval European monuments, which have preserved the features of

everyday life, the psychology of behavior, formed in matriarchy with its gynocracy – the dominance of the position of women in social and family relations – there is a mention of Amazons, from whom male heroes (for example, the hero of the Irish sagas Cuchulain) were trained in the art of war. "Disciples" entered into temporary marriages with Amazon women, and after the expiration of the training period and the birth of a child, they were forever expelled from the *tribe*. The image of a female-warrior, whom a man can defeat only by *cunning* (a common reproach addressed to women, not men), is present in the "Song of the Nibelungen". It conveys the features of matriarchal life and its values in the image of Brunnhilde – almost a giantess who brilliantly wields weapons and physical strength – qualities that were long excluded from the set of "femininity", where weakness and the need for male help dominated. It is curious that in the USA, in connection with the company that the mass media undertook, fighting against the harmful fashion for thin beauties (as you know, this fashion led to a sharp drop in the birth rate), they began to cultivate the "Brunhilda type". A kind of "restoration" of the qualities of a woman warrior is observed in the modern tendency to recruit women into the army, which is especially practiced in Israel, the USA, and Ukraine, as if reviving the ancient ability of women to be skilled warriors, wield weapons, and not only possess femininity – the main quality that men valued in women, calling them the "weaker sex", although the "love-war" metaphor, where the relationship between men and women was equated to military actions, has already appeared in chivalric literature (remember: in antiquity, the Trojan War began because of a woman – the beautiful Elena).

In general, the image of a woman in literature is ambiguous. So, in ancient mythology, the goddess of wisdom – a woman Athena, who was in charge of crafts, being a distant analogue of a business woman, not tolerating rivalry, turned the earthly girl Arachne into a spider because the carpet she wove was superior to Athena's creation. True, Erasmus of Rotterdam also made the bearer of stupidity a woman, created an allegorical image of Mrs. Stupidity.

In the Ukrainian language, Wisdom, Truth, Loyalty, Beauty are of feminine gender, which is worth paying attention to. After all, apparently, there are traces of matriarchy-archetypical semantics here, the meaning does not appear in them arbitrary, but men forget about it, appealing to the words Malice, Envy, Revenge, etc., attributing these properties primarily to women. Of course, it should be emphasized that we are not talking about the idealization of a woman with the help of linguistic arguments, but

only about a fair approach that would consider the psychological nature of a woman from the point of view of the laws of dialectics.

In medieval satire, no less happened to men, where first of all doctors, lawyers, and swindlers were ridiculed for their cunning, greed, and meanness, which, of course, do not mean that these qualities necessarily belong to the nature of men in general. If, as is known, in the Middle Ages the education of women was home schooling and illiteracy was widespread, although there were educated women at the social top, then it should be remembered that in the Renaissance era they began to seriously engage in the education of women, and in the 17th century, libraries for women and youth were created, the targeting of which, however, emphasizes a certain intellectual immaturity of female readers. Women writers appeared in the 16th–18th centuries: Margarita of Navarre, Madame de Lafayette, Madeleine de Scudery, Afra Behn, and others, who created images of beautiful women superior to men in their moral principles.

Let's return to the interpretation of a woman in the classical courtly poetry of the Middle Ages, saturated with the idealization of woman by male poets. Before the flowering of knightly love lyrics, which experts associate with the formation of the right to sexual freedom, the interpretation of a woman in the literature of the Early Middle Ages was different. In ancient literary monuments, such as, for example, the Icelandic sagas, which reflect the clan mentality, the woman was not given a place at all, since she was a representative of a foreign clan and therefore did not have an aesthetic status in the clan sagas. In later Irish sagas, there is already a list of positive, from a man's point of view, qualities of a woman. Thus, Emer, the wife of the ideal hero Cuchulainn, had the following qualities: the gift of silence is mentioned first (apparently, already then the talkativeness of women was noticed, who, as it has now been proven, say more words in a minute than men and need more verbal communication than they do); then the gift of cleanliness, the gift of skillful cooking, the gift of healing, singing, dancing, and lastly the gift of beauty are mentioned. But all this was a list of ideal qualities of women from a man's point of view, as mentioned above. In the “Senior Edda”, where advice is given on when and how to marry, there is a piece of advice: “Never praise the ice until you cross the river, and the woman until she dies”.

In chivalric literature, completely different criteria and evaluations of women appear, which, of course is connected with the social structure, family relations, ethical norms and values of that time. As is well known, the appearance of the literary

and cultural phenomenon of the knightly cult of women was facilitated by the right of the majority. According to it, only the eldest son inherited the land – the main wealth of the Middle Ages – and the castle. The rest of the sons had to leave the parental home and find themselves a patron, to whom they performed knightly service. To this socio-economic and very prosaic reason, we owe the emergence of the poetic cult of admiration for a woman, most often the wife of a lord. The cult of the Lady had its origins in the provisions of the chivalric code on the protection of the weak and oppressed, which included a woman. This code was transformed into the glorification of a woman, which in Provence was considered the first duty of a knight. Due to poverty, serving knights could not find wives among themselves and strove to achieve love, and not only by platonic, poetic, beautiful courtship of a woman, praising her beauty, first of all, with a series of exquisite compliments. Instead of modern attributes of courtship – candies, flowers, visits to restaurants – poetic praise of a woman was used, and her ideal poetic portrait was created. The protection of the beauty of a pictorial image (portrait) could become a reason for a duel between knights, each of whom considered his Ladylove more beautiful. Most modern scientists believe that the cult of the Lady was very often not so much an expression of genuine feelings, as much as a form of vassal loyalty, a ritual that entered the life of the knightly class, although in the Provençal chivalric lyrics you can find real masterpieces of sincere admiration for the beauty of the chosen Ladylove's heart and the depth of feelings of a knight in love.

The courtesan cult of women flourished in the 12th century, already in the 13th century it begins to decline. Friedrich Schiller's famous ballad “The Glove” is devoted to the crisis of this cult, where the lady, out of a vain desire to show off her faithful service and love to the courtiers, demands that the knight pick up the glove, which fell on the circus arena among the wild animals. “Herr Ritter ist eure Lieb so heiß / Wie ihr mir's schwört zu jeder Stund, / Ey so hebt mir den Handschuh auf” [12], says the lady. The knight, showing courage, raises his glove and with the words “Den Dank, Dame, begehrt' ich nicht...” [12] throws it in the lady's face, realizing that she does not love him, but only wants to “boast” about his loyalty and love to others. Ritual love is abolished, replaced by the cult of sincere and deep feelings, which are required by each other between a man and a woman and which were described already in later centuries by George Sand, F. Stendhal, E.M. Remark and others.

The Renaissance era partly continues, as already mentioned, the glorification of the beauty of a lady, but in Dante, Petrarch, and the Petrarchists, Platonic love-admiration dominates, where the woman is the Muse of the Poet, a poetically beautiful beloved, as in Petrarch, or an abstract symbol of Truth, as in Dante. In the 17th and 18th centuries, images of thieves, swindlers, and women of easy virtue appeared in the literature of Western Europe in the novels of Charles Sorel, Paul Scarron, Gustave Flaubert, and Daniel Defoe.

Recently, when gender issues attract attention no less than the “women's question” in the 19th century, there have been attempts to prove the physical and biological superiority of men. They began to refer to the fact that his brain is bigger, that he masters abstract thinking to a much greater degree than a woman. At the same time, operating on bodily and physical criteria, they forget that men worldwide live less than women, that there are 8 times more interchangeable centers between the left and right hemispheres of a woman's brain, that a child's intelligence depends to a much greater degree on the mother's

genotype than the father's, and, therefore, the intelligence of men is genetically derived from women, not to mention that only a woman possesses the miracle of giving birth to a child, without which humanity would have perished. And although, according to psychologists, a man resorts to lying five times a day, and a woman – ten times, he surpasses her in the use of violence twenty times.

Conclusions. It is thought that what needs to be clarified is not the superiority of a man or a woman, but the uniqueness of representatives of different sexes, where their union is the law of life, of course, with the recognition of their absolute social equality. It is not a war between the sexes, but their peaceful union should be implemented in a society where their public and social equality is guaranteed, where there should be no domestic violence, which is so widespread nowadays not only in most countries of the East, but also in European countries where men dominate. Men and women must recognize and cultivate their differences and similarities, resisting the so-called “third sex” that is threateningly fashionable these days.

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