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GENDER AND ART IN THE XVII – XIX CENTURIES

Abstract: *The given article deals with the notion of gender, its role in art and the place of females in the works of famous authors of the New Age. The gender norms are being analyzed mainly in the masterpieces of such eminent philosophers and writers of their time as John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Henrik Johan Ibsen, Charlotte Bronte, etc. The fact of women's exploitation as beings not having equal rights compared to men is evident. Even the unique ones had to suffer from the society's crushing their independence and strong will because of the gender stereotypes accepted throughout the world. These stereotypes were depicted by the males' attitude towards females and were supported by any family's regulations.*

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Introduction

Overall, the notion of "gender" means the social behavior and roles, associated with the representatives of either males or females. Gender is created by society as a social model of men and women, determining their social status and role and social institutes (family, political structure, economics, culture, education, etc.). The synonym of this term is "biological gender". From social and psychological point of view, "gender" is a sexual identity and social roles related to either genders.

Although gender does not represent a linguistic category (socio-linguistics and partially psycholinguistics can be considered as exceptions), the analysis of language structures allows to get information about the role of gender in various cultures: what behavioral norms for men and women are fixed in different types of texts; how the conception of gender norms, masculinity and femininity are changes as time goes by; which stylistic features may be correlated to mainly female or male ones; what way manliness and effeminacy are comprehended in diverse languages and cultures; how pertaining to either genders influences on language acquisition; what fragments and thematic branches of world language state it is connected to [2, p. 87-88].

Material and methods

Gender researches of cultural factors of femininity and masculinity forming are based on the central concept of "gender stereotype" and representations. The notion of representation is a key-notion for the paradigm of "gender cultural investigations". At the same time, it is one of the most problematic issues in the field of the terms' definition. Representation has two basic meanings: 1) as "speaking instead of somebody", representing one's interests in politics; 2) representation in art and philosophy (as representation of something existing with the help of other means). It is possible to define representation as a process, by means of which cultural subjects use their language (any system of signs) for meaning production. The objects of representation do not obtain any sense themselves: it is born during the process of interpretation and communication, coding and decoding of texts, it depends on cultural context [7].

Initially researches dealt with the images exploited by culture, constructing a particular image of femininity and masculinity. The results of these investigations brought to that modern cultural production and representations ignore, except, marginalize and trivialize women and their interests.

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That is to say, either women are excluded, or they are represented in a stereotypical way, i.e. as a sexual object or as a housewife. If it goes about single women, they are usually given the jobs of traditional "womanish" type, such as secretary, nurse, flight attendant, etc. As a rule, they are young and pretty, but not well-educated. At the same time, men are represented in the diversity of their social roles and occupations. As a result, if a man is a doctor, then a woman is a nurse; if he is a lawyer, then she is a secretary, if he is a businessman, then she is a shop assistant. That is why mass culture serves for the purpose of firming traditional (patriarchal) female roles as a wife, a mother, and a housewife [6].

Genuinely gender analysis of representation began when instead of "female images" investigators referred to studying "women as images". Gradually the understanding of stereotypes' "nature" has changed to complicating their interpretation. Their actions are based on that society divides particular purposes which are usually characterized as a "common sense". The stereotypes have deep roots in the spheres of oppression and governing, they become the behavioral rules to follow and the ways of social control [1, p. 54-55].

Thus, the representation of gender is not a simple reflection of social stereotypes of mannishness and womanishness; it is more like an active process of selection and performing, structuring and forming, it is a process of giving sense to something [8].

Normative aesthetics of the XVIII century and canonical opinions of art critics of the XIX century form the theoretical frame which is still being used by many modern art investigators who frequently continue using traditional interpretational models and an archaic language in order to analyze not only classical art, but also modern one. During the period the growth of capitalistic industry was followed by a rapid increase of science, natural sciences were developing intensively, especially mechanics, physics, and astronomy. The development of rational thinking furthered the critical reinterpretation and the enhancement of all the spheres of social life: economics, the forms of government; the development of nations, national cultures and national states; the interrelations between the state, society and personalities; the appearance of new social classes; the role of a family, etc.

These changes had to deal with gender interrelations as well. Labor separation between a woman and a man, women's active participation in social and internal family processes, setting the problem of human rights and civil liberties in general course of processes and events, activation of philosophical attitude to the matters of assignment, specific features and gender interaction, the approach to womanliness and manliness [9].

In the epoch of the New Age all of these problems are subjected to critical analysis and particular changes. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that despite its progressive character the culture of the epoch did not bring revolutionary changes into the existing system of gender relations and stereotypes, it did not cardinally changed in general gender state in society. As well as in previous epochs in the culture of the New Age there existed a tradition according to which a woman was treated to like something of the second value after a man, because of her biologic abilities and assignment as an inferior being compared with a man.

Forming by the beginning of the New Age the concept of female education and bringing up, in fact, did not differ from the previous concepts very much on the main principle, i.e. narrowness and concrete direction of women's exploitation: becoming a good wife for a man. The educational system still includes only the things considered as functional from men's points of view. Demands, tastes were being changed, however, until the XIX and even until the XX century it had been the same range of "home sciences". Actually all the traditional systems of female education and upbringing, known in history in spite of the variety of methods and approaches, were similar in one sphere: they were aimed not at the development of all sufficient personality, not at giving a woman an opportunity to occupy a deserved, and, by means of will and appropriate skills, a high post in social life. Almost always women's education was perceived as a collection of some skills and developing programs, stimulating natural female qualities and being able to give women a chance to put their personal life in order. Their benefit to society is in that a woman, who got a deserved up-to-date education, could become a good spouse.

Results and Discussion

Creators and philosophers of all epochs strived for defining the dissimilarities between males and females, tried to create ideals of women's behavior and representation. Their thoughts and ideas were reflected in their scientific and philosophical treatises, works of art, religious literature. Those authors' ideas which were considered as supreme and unquestionable authorities, not only imprinted on minds and consciousness of most people, who did not have an opportunity to form and immortalize their own ideas, but also served as a basis for gender norms, regulating behavior. These authorship lines had already been regarded as an indisputable fact or religious truth, especially in cases when behavioral and gender relations' norms gleaned by them led women's actions into the frames, which corresponded to diverging notions of males.

Thus, a great philosopher J. Locke pointed that natural inequality of genders and superiority of men over women are the results of women's destiny to give birth, i.e. the only significant female role is a reproductive function. In his work "Two Treatises of

Government" he narrated about a person's emancipation, but the person is only a man.

J. Locke, asserting citizens' rights on property and struggling against the claims of absolute monarchy, writes that the right of appropriating property is given to person on the basis of his labor, spent on product of industry. However, women do not belong to the group of people who have the right to use the products of their labor, as it is only men's prerogative. A female has right to use the only property, her dowry.

The representative of the Enlightenment J.J. Rousseau touched upon the problem of gender interrelations in his works as well. In the work "Emile ou de l'education" (1762) he determines the principles of upbringing of a free personality for the both genders' representatives: for Emile (in tome 1-4) and for Sophie (tome 5). Besides, the process of the two genders' upbringing is opposite. Rousseau narrates that a perfect man and a perfect woman should differ spiritually in the same way as they differ externally [3, p. 78-81]. That is why the more separated their life if, the better it is for both of them; as to modern convergence and trans-gendering process, besides gender equality, are the evidence of occurring collapse. It is typical that postulating the principles of male upbringing, Rousseau advises juveniles to be a personality, obtaining inner liberty, self-sufficiency, to defend the independence of their mind and soul, to think independently. However, describing girls' upbringing program, the author offers totally different principles: obedience, patience, dependence on a husband, recognition of their own weakness. In order to compensate her weaknesses a female should try to make her husband like her, to please him [10].

The fact that a woman, trying to find the ways of getting money, occurs in total dependence on her husband, and it deprives her of all her rights and independence. As a pure example of this may be H. Ibsen's play "A Doll's House" (1879) in which the main character Nora begs money for housekeeping from her husband like a slave [4, p. 3-5].

She tries to look nice, to be attractive for her husband in order to make him stay with her, not to abandon her. Meek, always lively Nora, a tender mother and wife, is always taken care by her husband, but in fact, she remains a doll, a toy for him. She is not allowed to have her own opinion, judgments, tastes; her husband never talks with her about anything serious.

As Rousseau does not provide self-determination for a female, because her life goes by in various orientations on her spouse, her "master"; he supports everything that points that this orientation "on others" is biologically programmed in women and it needs to be developed. Almost everything depends on whether a female will be able to please a man, anticipate his wishes, obey his will: her own existence, unity and happiness in her family, prosperity of the whole society. Thus, the process of a girl's upbringing should be totally directed to making her kind, gentle, caring and utterly and completely obeying her husband's will [5].

One of the exceptions of the abovementioned women characters is Jane Eyre, an intelligent, passionate English orphan, depicted by Charlotte Bronte. Through all the difficulties of her life in orphanage, Jane remains strong and can oppose a cruel world, not letting anyone to overwhelm her independence and the strength of her will. The masterpiece goes about a female looking for freedom and pure love. Working as a governess of an eight-year-old girl, Adele Varens, a ward of an aristocrat, Edward Fairfax Rochester, Jane managed to achieve her goal. She proves that women can have the same right as men.

Another exception is Scarlett O'Hara, a figure of the famous books written by Margaret Mitchell and Alexandra Ripley, who was a unique representative of her epoch (the XIX century), able to work, govern her estate (Tara) and to become a mistress of her ancestors' land (Ballihara). Abandoned by her spouse, she managed to do all her best to run her business, to achieve her goals alone and became one of the richest women in the United Kingdom. She could be an idol for women of her time, but most of them disliked her, despised and judged her for her behavior, they simply envied her. Scarlet could behave the way she considered right, ignoring the society's opinion on this point. The character was described by the authors-representatives of the XX century: Margaret Mitchell and Alexandra Ripley, perhaps, that is why she had such extraordinary qualities as no other female of her epoch could have.

Conclusion

Taking all the above mentioned into account, we can conclude that the majority of typical female representatives of the New Age epoch was dependent on their spouses and had to learn to be perfect wives for their husbands from the very childhood. These women could not even imagine the equality in rights with men as they "were satisfied" by any status of theirs. This was caused by gender stereotypes supported in almost every family of the described epoch. Each of the abovementioned authors had their own unique points of view on gender interrelation. The writers' opinions were based on their environment, state of living and, of course, on the society they were surrounded by. However, all of the philosophers agreed in the main point, i.e.: women should obey men's will. Therefore, from the very childhood girls were taught how to behave being a wife. In spite of generally accepted "rule" there were outstanding female representatives who managed to prove that women should not be expected to accomplish housewives' duties, that they have some greater destiny.

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