

## GENDER ASPECT OF INTERSEXUAL RELATIONS IN CLASSICAL FOREIGN LITERATURE

### ГЕНДЕРНИЙ АСПЕКТ МІЖСТАТЕВИХ СТОСУНКІВ У КЛАСИЧНІЙ ЗАРУБІЖНІЙ ЛІТЕРАТУРІ

**Filat T.V.,**

*orcid.org/0000-0001-5441-7520*

*Doctor of Philology,*

*Professor at the Language Training and Humanities Department*

*Dnipro State Medical University*

**Klymenko I.M.,**

*orcid.org/0009-0003-1475-1155*

*Lecturer at the Language Training and Humanities Department*

*Dnipro State Medical University*

The problem of relations between a man and a woman has many aspects, among which the most important are family-social, socio-psychological, historical-cultural, biological-physiological. All of them are somehow reflected in the formulation and solution of gender issues. The article examines the reproduction in the history of fiction of the socio-cultural, socio-family and psychological aspects of intersexual relations, attracting monuments from antiquity to the end of the 18th century, which are representative of world literature and culture.

The literature of antiquity, the Renaissance, and the end of the 18th century accumulated significant experience in describing the similarities and differences between a man and a woman in love relationships and everyday life, which the literature of subsequent centuries inherited. In ancient mythology, we encounter the myth of Medea, which reveals the essence, manifestations, and consequences of jealousy between the man and the woman. Because of jealousy, even the maternal instinct disappears. Thus, Medea, out of jealousy for her husband who betrayed her, kills her children. Such situations also arise in real modern life, which indicates that the most ancient monuments artistically recreate relationships that are characteristic of modern society. This allows us to consider this plot as the embodiment of an eternal problem and indicates that in the love relationship between a man and a woman, from ancient times to the present day, jealousy is one of the most persistent feelings, a source of conflicts and crimes. The Renaissance introduces erotic themes into literature, which are reflected in the famous "Decameron" by Boccaccio and the "Decameron" by Margaret of Navarre, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the Renaissance creates an allegorical ideal of an unearthly woman, such as Dante's Beatrice and Petrarca's Laura, and a more earthly woman endowed with bodily beauty.

In modern literature, the most popular novels focus not so much on studying the psychology of relationships between a man and a woman, but on sexual-ideological details that continue the tradition of David Herbert Lawrence's scandalous novel "Lady Chatterley's Lover" and are based on the teachings developed by Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung.

**Key words:** gender issues, the conscious and the unconscious in man, ancient mythology, erotic themes.

Проблема стосунків чоловіка та жінки має безліч аспектів, серед яких найбільш важливими є сімейно-соціальні, соціопсихологічні, історико-культурні, біолого-фізіологічні. Всі вони так чи інакше переломлюються в постановці та вирішенні гендерної проблематики. У статті розглядається відтворення в історії художньої літератури соціокультурного, соціально-сімейного та психологічного аспектів міжстатевих стосунків, залучаються пам'ятки від античності до кінця XVIII століття, які є репрезентативними для світової літератури та культури.

Література античності, Відродження, кінця XVIII століття накопичила вагомий досвід в описі подібності та відмінності чоловіка й жінки в любовних стосунках та побуті, що успадкує література наступних століть. В античній міфології ми стикаємося з міфом про Медею, який розкриває суть, прояви та наслідки почуття ревності між чоловіком та жінкою. Через ревності навіть зникає материнський інстинкт. Так, Медея через ревності до чоловіка, що зрадив її, убиває своїх дітей. Такі ситуації постають і в реальному сучасному житті, що свідчить про те, що в найдавніших пам'ятках художньої відтворені й характерні для сучасного суспільства стосунки. Це дозволяє розглядати цей сюжет як втілення вічної проблеми і свідчить про те, що в любовних стосунках чоловіка і жінки, починаючи з найдавніших часів і до наших днів, ревності – одне з найстійкіших почуттів, джерело конфліктів і злочинів. Епоха Відродження вводить у літературу еротичну тематику, що відбивається в знаменитому «Декамероні» Боккаччо та «Декамероні» Маргарити Наварської, з одного боку, а з іншого боку, Відродження створює алегоричний ідеал неземної жінки, такої як Беатріче Данте та Лаура Петрарки, і більш земної жінки, наділеної тілесною красою.

У сучасній літературі найбільш популярні романи зосереджуються не стільки на вивченні психології стосунків чоловіка і жінки, а на сексуально-ідеологічних подробицях, які продовжують традиції скандального роману Девіда Герберта Лоуренса «Коханець леді Чаттерлей» та спираються на вчення, розроблене Зігмундом Фрейдом та Карлом Густавом Юнгом.

**Ключові слова:** гендерна проблематика, свідоме та несвідоме в людині, антична міфологія, еротична тематика.

**Introduction.** As is known, the problem of relations between a man and a woman has many aspects, among which the most fundamental are the following: family-social, socio-psychological, historical-cultural, biological-physiological [1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8]. All of them are refracted in one way or another in the formulation and solution of gender issues. This article examines the reflection of the socio-cultural, socio-family and psychological aspects in the history of fiction, with engaging of monuments from antiquity to the end of the 18th century, which seem representative.

**The analysis of the latest researches and publications.** “Development of democratic processes in Ukraine under modern conditions, – as V. Kravets rightly believes, – envisages introduction of gender egalitarianism into all spheres of functioning of the society, culturing equality of women and men as an integral condition of adherence to fundamental rights and freedom of a man, which actualizes conducting gender studies” [9, p. 3]. Though the problem of gender relations presents interest to society for hundreds of centuries, but it has become the object of serious scientific research just recently. Gender component has become the object of research of such scientists as 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 et al. and an object of constant academic discussions. A. Kuchuk rightly notes, “the majority of researches actually identify gender equality and equality of a man and a woman in rights, this does not exactly correspond to reality” [9, p. 3], insisting that these components differ much. We will try to prove this, analyzing gender relations in the classical foreign literature.

**Presentation of main material.** It is quite obvious that the most mobile, dynamic, changeable is the socio-cultural aspect of relations between a man and a woman, but the psychological, despite all its multi-layeredness, has a certain basis, which is distinguished by a certain static character, repeatability. For example, in ancient mythology we encounter a myth that is built on the consideration of the feeling of jealousy between a man and a woman. In particular, the goddess Hera, the wife of Zeus, who was very inconstant, and out of jealousy creates a special creature named Argus, on whose body there are a hundred keen eyes and who must watch the adventures of her husband. The myth tells how Zeus's inventive friend Hermes created a musical instrument with which he was able to put all one hundred eyes of Argus to sleep and then kill him. And the goddess Hera decided to

immortalize her faithful servant by placing part of his eyes on the tail of a gray-brown bird – a peacock, and throwing the other part on a thorny bush, on which green berries of Argus, i.e. gooseberries, appeared. That is why many peoples of the world give a peacock feather during a wedding as a talisman against jealousy. But if in the Greek myth a servant-detective suffers from jealousy, then, as we all remember, in the classic work about jealousy, a beautiful, innocent woman, a victim of a man's treachery and envy, Desdemona, dies from this monster with "green eyes", as Shakespeare puts it.

In ancient mythology, even the maternal instinct is violated because of jealousy. Thus, Medea, out of jealousy for her husband who cheated on her, kills her children. Such situations appear and in a modern life, this testifies that in the most ancient monuments relations, characteristic for a modern society are reconstructed. This allows us to see in this topic a situation of an eternal problem and indicates that in the love relationship of a man and a woman, from ancient times to the present day, jealousy is one of the most persistent feelings, a source of conflicts and even crimes.

The famous work “Oedipus Rex” is based on the so-called “Theban cycle” of myths, where fate determines the behavior of men and women. The main character, Oedipus, kills his own father and marries his mother, as predicted by the prophecy, against his free will, because he does not suspect that he is killing his father and marrying his mother. Later, Sigmund Freud, identifying the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious in man, used, as is known, the term “Oedipus complex” to indicate the son's unconscious attraction to his mother and hatred of his father. This concept is based on the idea that human consciousness is multi-layered, that it contains feelings and ideas from the previous experience of mankind over many centuries. As is known, Carl Gustav Jung used ancient mythology and ancient monuments to identify the nature of the “collective unconscious”, which is not controlled by reason [10]. In ancient literature, the ideal of a woman was formed from the point of view of a man, the classic example of which is Penelope from Homer's "Odyssey" as an example of a faithful wife, although this cannot be said about Odysseus himself, who was not faithful to his wife at all. Already here, a different gender approach to men and women is outlined, which is preserved, ultimately, right up to our days, finding a saving explanation in the peculiarities of male physiology.

The socio-cultural situation of that time is refracted in European monuments reflecting the disintegration

of the clan system. In the most ancient monuments, in the epic Icelandic sagas, we do not find detailed female images, because by that time wives had already begun to be taken from a foreign clan, and the status of consanguinity was socially and aesthetically significant. But in later Irish sagas, an image of an ideal woman is created from a man's point of view. This image is the wife of the hero Cuchulainn, Ether. The following is said about her: Ether, firstly, possesses purity, which includes the concept of chastity and cleanliness, then – the gift of good cooking, healing, and only after these properties are beauty and the gift of dancing and singing noted. The fact that purity and the ability to cook well are listed among the first ideal properties of a woman, as if announces the famous formula that exists in modern times: "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach," which modern men readily confirm.

In the Middle Ages, the relationship between a man and a woman in marriage is specifically considered. Thus, in the work "Erec and Enida" by Chretien de Troyes, the problem of the relationship between a man and a woman in marriage is solved. At first, Erec spends all his time with his wife, which gives rise to rumors that he has lost his knightly skills and has become effeminate. These rumors reach Enida, who is upset and begins to reproach her husband. Erec proves his courage by refuting the rumors. The young spouses come to the conclusion that they should not spend all their time together, and each should have his/her own time, allotted both to purely feminine and purely masculine activities, as well as to their friends. This conclusion, which the author of the novel comes to, echoes modern sociological research, claiming that a happy marriage, as a rule, arises where the husband and wife spend no more than 6 hours together, which are divided into morning and evening.

The problem of adultery also arises in medieval literature, in particular in the novel "Tristan and Isolde" by Bedier and Thomas. But there the culprit is the love potion accidentally drunk by Tristan and Isolde, which makes their love irresistible and forces Isolde's husband, King Mark, to forgive them.

In the future, the theme of adultery is one of the cross-cutting one in world literature, which is resolved in various ways, although almost always with a dramatic and tragic outcome. It is enough to recall "Madame Bovary" by Flaubert, "Dear Friend" by Guy de Maupassant, "Bonjour, Tristesse" by Françoise Sagan, "Lucy Crown" by Irwin Shaw, "Dead Ether" by Iain Banks, "The Married Man" by Catherine Elliott, "The Unicorn" by Iris Murdoch.

In urban literature, satire was created primarily on unfaithful wives, old procuresses, and prostitutes.

Thus, in medieval literature, relations between men and women were differentiated depending on the class-social and socio-cultural strata of the population and the poets representing their mentality.

As is well known, the Renaissance introduces erotic themes into literature, which is reflected in the famous "Decameron" by Boccaccio and "Decameron" by Marguerite of Navarre – on the one hand, and on the other hand, the Renaissance creates an allegorical ideal of an unearthly woman, such as Dante's Beatrice and Petrarch's Laura, and a more earthly woman – endowed with physical beauty.

Thanks to Petrarch, for several centuries, only a white blonde began to be praised, with which, as is well known, Shakespeare argued, creating the image of a dark skinned lady in his sonnets. In the Renaissance, sensual beauty becomes a dominant quality in the eyes of men. A stable cliché is created, mentioning gold hair, pearl teeth, coral lips, stars of the eyes, roses of the cheeks and marble skin. This cliché was defeated only after one satirical artist, embodying these qualities literally, painted gold instead of hair, stars instead of eyes, etc. Later, poets followed the line of praising individual features of beauty, but retained, as the French literary scholar Gustave Lanson noted, in the description of a woman's portrait, first of all her face, and then, beginning with the 19th century, her figure. In the 20th century, American literature often included an indication of a woman's height and weight in its description.

All of the above examples are the result of men's vision of women, while literature presented by female authors treats both women and men differently. It is enough to recall "The Princess of Cleves" by Madame de Lafayette, "Jane Ayer" by Charlotte Bronte, "Forest Song" by L. Ukrainka, "Fifty Shades of Grey" by E. L. James.

If in Renaissance literature, love relationships between a man and a woman were treated in an erotic-sexual vein, then in the 17th century, many love stories solved this problem in a purely psychological aspect. At the same time, wishing to introduce male readers to the culture of high love, female writers, in order to make this problem accessible to the male consciousness, resorted to an expanded method of conquering a fortress based on strategic rules and topographic maps, as Madeleine Scudéri did in her novel Clelia (1654-1660).

In the French women's novel of the 17th century, rules for love relationships are created, patterns of development of feelings are revealed, in it the emphasis is most often placed on the beauty of the very process of a man's conquest of a woman in accordance with a set of rules that women borrowed from

d'Urfé's novel *Astrea* [9], which contains the famous twelve commandments of love by Celadon. But in the 17th century, the comic novel developed, the authors of which were men. And here there was no theme of high love, idealization of a woman as an object of love, but satirical-comic types of women prevailed: matchmakers, coquettes, thieves, deceivers.

The 18th century with its cult of enlightenment and interest in the innate nature of man began to actively study not only the psychological aspect of the relationship between a man and a woman, but also the sexual one. In one of the bestsellers of the 18th century, the novel by Claude de Crebillon "Sofa", a confession is given to this piece of furniture, on which sexual games of various loving couples take place. Denis Diderot, who is considered the first sexologist in Europe, made a bet that he would write a work of the same type in two weeks. He wrote the novel "Indiscreet Treasures", in which he managed to combine educational criticism of the ruler with variants of sexual temperaments. The novel is based on the motif of a magic ring owned by the sultan and which makes the objects to which it is directed tell everything about themselves. But the sultan, instead of receiving interesting information about the world around him, directs this ring at the genitals of his subjects, forcing them to reveal the secrets of sex. Denis Diderot also wrote the novel "The Nun", which describes lesbian love in a convent, the reasons for which Diderot sees in the unnaturalness of the existence of a female community devoid of men.

Modern participants in the discussion about the status, rights and attitudes of sexual minorities, in which deputies of the Supreme Council take part, should turn to the concept of the first sexologist of Europe, Denis Diderot, who did not blame the person himself for sexual deviations, but believed that involving others in the discussion of this problem – bearers of normal sexual relations – is vicious.

In the 17th century, works also appeared that reveal the psychology of love among representatives of different classes, for example, in Richardson's novel "Pamela", the moral, spiritual superiority of the servant-maid turns out to be higher than the spoiled Lovelace, whose name has become a household word. In Goethe's "Faust" he interprets the tragedy of love of an abandoned woman – Gretchen, who kills her child, succumbing not only to the prejudices

of society, but also to the malice of others. Goethe himself justifies Faust because in his search for truth he rejects the most attractive thing – Gretchen's love. Goethe left a rather complex analysis of the relationship between a man and a woman in the novel "The Sorrows of Young Werther", where the hero commits suicide because of love, which, as is known, gave rise to the fashion for suicides in Germany during Goethe's time.

In European Rococo literature of the 18th century, the metaphor "love is war" develops, where men and women recourse to intrigue, deceit, as presented in the novel "Dangerous Liaisons" by Choderlos de Laclos or the drama "Intrigue and Love" by Friedrich Schiller.

In the 18th century, according to Maupassant, the first image of a femme fatale in European literature was created. We are talking about the final inserted story in the memoirs of the nobleman Prevost, "The History of the Chevalier des Grieux and Manon Lescaut," where an intellectual, educated, noble member of the gentry falls in love with a prostitute and cannot explain to the reader the reasons for his passion, although Manon Lescaut deceives him, cheats on him, distinguishing between love for money and just love. The theme of love for an unworthy woman, broached by Shakespeare in his sonnets ("He is worthy of a special love, / Who gives his soul to the unworthy" [11]), developed by Prevost, will be reflected in the future. In particular, in the now sensational novel by E. L. James, "Fifty Shades of Grey," where, however, it is the man who turns out to be unworthy, not the woman (at least in the first volume, and the second and third volumes are devoted to the re-education of the "unworthy" and turning him into the "worthy").

The literature of the late 18th century had accumulated a great deal of experience in describing the similarities and differences between men and women in love relationships and in everyday life, which would be inherited by the literature of subsequent centuries.

**Conclusions.** Currently, the most widely read novels focus on studying not only the psychology of relationships between men and women, but also on sexual and ideological details, which continue the tradition of the scandalous novel by David Herbert Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, but this will be discussed later, because Freud and Jung's influence on the love story should be taken into account.

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