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## THEORETICAL CONCEPTS OF FEMINISTIC LITERARY CRITICISM OF THE SECOND WAVE

**Abstract.** The article explores the theoretical concepts of gender studies, which are reflected in the literary criticism of the 1970s, which fell on the second wave of the feminist movement. The texts created by the pioneers of gender researches in philological science were a significant scientific fact, but until now this direction is in the process of institutionalization and development.

The author analyzes the works of scientists from France, Great Britain and the USA, which have become classics of gender studies in literary criticism. It is traced how this trend developed, which influenced the formation of modern philological science, how researchers fought against patriarchal ideology, discriminatory practices rooted in social culture, and stereotypes prevailing in public consciousness.

The article introduces how the conceptual apparatus, methodological tools, and the theory of gender studies were formed, which brought serious changes to hermeneutics and interpretation of literary texts. The works of S. de Beauvoir, H. Cixous, L. Irigaray, N. Shore, A. Rich, E. Showalter, S. Gilbert, and S. Gubar, who examined the dominance of the patriarchal symbolic order by the example of representative experiments of classical literature. The author introduces the details of the methodology, critical interpretations and conclusions of feminist literary criticism, represented by diverse, often contradictory scientific texts, challenging both patriarchal gender norms and the order on which gender imbalance was based.

**Key words:** feminist literary criticism, gender theory, method, S. de Beauvoir, Hélène Cixous, L. Irigaray, N. Shore, A. Rich, E. Showalter, S. Gilbert, S. Gubar.

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### Екінші толқын феминистік әдеби сынының теоретикалық тұжырымдамалары

**Аңдатпа.** Мақалада 1970 жылдардың әдеби сынында бейнеленген феминистік қозғалыстың екінші толқыны мен тұстас келген гендерлік зерттеулердің теоретикалық тұжырымдамалары қарастырылады. Филология ғылымында гендерлік пионерлері құрастырған текстер көрнекті ғылыми факт бола отыра, қазіргі уақытқа дейін бұл бағыт институцияландырумен даму процесінде. Әдебиеттанудағы гендерлік зерттеудің классикасы болып табылатын Франция, Ұлыбритания және АҚШ елдері ғалымдарының еңбектері талданады. Заманауи филология ғылымының құрылуына себепші болған бұл бағыттың қалай пайда болғаны, түбірі әлеуметтік мәдениеттен етек жайған патриархаттық идеологияға, дискриминациялық тәжірибеге және қоғам санасында қалыптасып кеткен таптаурындарға зерттеушілердің қалай қарсы шыққаны қарастырылады. Қазіргі уақытта гендерлік зерттеу перспективті бағыт болып табылады.

Мақала герменевтика және көркемдік тексттің интерпретациясына ауқымды өзгерістер алып келген гендерлік зерттеу теориясының ұғымдық құрылымы, әдістемелік құралдарының қалыптасуымен таныстырады. Мақалада патриархаттық символикалық тәртіппен басым болған классикалық әдебиетті репрезентативтік тәжірибе негізінде қарастырған С. де Бовуар, Э. Сиксу, Л. Иригаре, Н. Шор, А. Рич, Э. Шоуолтер, С. Гилберт және С. Губар еңбектері талданады. Автор әдіснаманың егжей-тегжейлерімен, сыни интерпретация және қарама-қарсы қойылған, гендерлік дисбалансқа негізделген патриархаттық гендерлік қағидаларға үн тастайтындай әртүрлі феминистік әдеби сындардың нәтижелерімен таныстырады.

**Түйін сөздер:** феминистік әдеби сын, гендерлік теория, әдіс, С. де Бовуар, Э. Сиксу, Л. Иригаре, Н. Шор, А. Рич, Э. Шоуолтер, С. Гилберт және С. Губар.

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### **Теоретические концепции феминистской литературной критики второй волны**

**Аннотация.** В статье рассматриваются теоретические концепции гендерных исследований, нашедшие отражение в литературной критике 1970-х годов, пришедшейся на вторую волну феминистского движения. Тексты, созданные пионерами гендерных штудий в филологической науке, явились значительным научным фактом, но и до настоящего времени это направление находится в процессе институционализации и развития.

Анализируются труды ученых Франции, Великобритании и США, ставшие классикой гендерных исследований в литературоведении. Прослеживается, как складывалась это направление, повлиявшее на становление современной филологической науки, как исследователи боролись против патриархатной идеологии, дискриминационной практики, уходящей корнями в социальную культуру, стереотипы, сложившиеся в общественном сознании.

Статья знакомит с тем, как формировался понятийный аппарат, методологический инструментарий, теория гендерных исследований, привнесшие серьезные изменения в герменевтику и интерпретацию художественных текстов. Анализируются труды С. де Бовуар, Э. Сиксу, Л. Иригаре, Н. Шор, А. Рич, Э. Шоуолтер, С. Гилберт и С. Губар, рассматривавших на примере репрезентативных опытов классической литературы доминирование патриархатного символического порядка. Автор знакомит с деталями методологии, критическими интерпретациями и выводами феминистской литературной критики, представленной разнообразными, часто противоречащими друг другу научными текстами, бросившими вызов как патриархальным гендерным нормам, так и порядку, на котором основывался гендерный дисбаланс

**Ключевые слова:** феминистская литературная критика, гендерная теория, метод, С. де Бовуар, Э. Сиксу, Л. Иригаре, Н. Шор, А. Рич, Э. Шоуолтер, С. Гилберт, С. Губар.

### **Introduction**

The first wave of the feminist movement, which falls at the end of XIX – early XX centuries, was characterized by the requirement of legal equality between men and women, the movement's supporters primarily advocated for women's voting rights, for equal access to education, and for improving the economic conditions of their lives, regulating the norms of family law. The movement of the second wave of feminism begins in the middle of the 1960s – early 1970s, this period signified other goals, designed to awaken the consciousness of society and accelerate the changes in the status of women. This time, the movement attempts to "liberate" the weaker sex from the subjugation and dependency, that stems from women's limited societal functions as housewives, mothers and wives.

Activists of the second wave of feminism have been disappointed with the results of the previous struggle for equality of women and men which primarily targeted the formal legal interests. Despite expectations imposed legal measures had no effect on the actual gender equality, so the feminists of the second wave advocated in favor of overcoming public stereotypes and proclaimed the need of feminization of the world.

The second wave of the feminist movement has put forth the demands of "liberation" of women and the introduction of additional legislative changes, including the equality of civil rights (without special emphasis on political rights), the right to equal pay, reproductive rights, the right to abortion and contraception, combating discrimination by gender, and resisting domestic violence and sexual abuse and others. Feminists of this time rejected established practices of the social order and attempted to overthrow gender stereotypes, believing in a collective female gender identity.

In the second wave of the feminist movement, according to the theorists, the source of gender inequality is not based on the natural social constraints but on a patriarchal ideology, discriminatory practices rooted in social culture, stereotypes in the process of socialization, and the usual separation of male and female roles of labor. These are results of an established social stratification rather than of natural biological differences. Thus, the conditions of the second wave feminism had moral dimension which significantly differed from the goals of the earlier period.

The second wave feminism challenged both the patriarchal gender norms and the order, of gender imbalance. But it should be noted that in the 1980s,

certain groups branched out from the movement, such as Difference Feminism. This approach recognizes the existence of the natural differences between men and women, it argued that women's strive towards egalitarianism (from French -. Equality) can lead to the decomposition of the female gender identity and to the loss of traditional feminine qualities of empathy, care, affection, tenderness—a shift towards male purposes and values cultivated by men. A major role in the ideology of the feminist movement of this period was the goal of true social equality of both sexes, it assumed a radical transformation of society. And the main reason of oppression was, according to the feminists of the second wave, the patriarchal structure of society. The struggle of the movement for gender equality was based on the recognition of women as subjects of discrimination, by definition of Simone de Beauvoir, the "second floor" gender.

Following the changes in the society and democratization in the Soviet Union in the second half of the 1980s there were no immediate changes in the division of gender roles. The breakthrough came about a decade later. Without a doubt one could say that the end of the twentieth century – the first decade of XXI century can be referred to "the era of gender." Gender perspective has gained unprecedented momentum and socio-cultural interest, there was a great increase in the volume of publications in this field. "Feminine" and "masculine" were the leading categories in scientific publications in a variety of fields, and gender became the most discussed topic at scientific conferences and seminars. Gender left a strong imprint in science, journalism and social studies of the former socialist republics. The problem of gender inequality caused heated debate. Although this situation was undoubtedly positive, it's hard not to agree with the fact that the resolution of gender issues in the CIS countries and, more generally, countries of the former socialist camp, moved with great delay. And the need to bridge the gap in the first place was connected with the need to translate basic feminist text to Russian and other national languages.

Currently, gender theory is one of the most promising studies which is offered to students at many educational institutions. The idea of gender as a political tool that serves to challenge the relationship between the biological nature of humans and their cultural roles is taught at most universities. Academic programs at Harvard, Princeton, Oxford, Yale and many other well-known universities offer for courses on gender theory. The CIS countries also introduced this field in various departments. Gender theory today

is a lot of diverse, often conflicting scientific texts on a wide range of issues, such as race, gender, sexuality, identity, politics, culture, etc.

The study of gender problems today – is one of the massive intellectual trends of our time. Without gender theory any serious changes in the philological science, hermeneutics and interpretation of texts are impossible in the present and the future. From the beginning the second wave of feminism has gained academic voice both within gender studies and beyond.

### Experiment

French feminist theory began to emerge in the 1970s in a highly politicized climate of protesting students. The first women's groups were formed in 1968 under the name of "women's liberation movement" («Mouvement de Libération des Femmes», or MLF). French feminists – Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, the authors of the French gender theory, and followed Simone de Beauvoir's ideas of *The Second Sex* that the woman is "a friend." Beauvoir can be recognized as one of the first authors of the twentieth century to draw attention to the current situation. She was the first to raise awareness of changing the prevailing and apparent concepts that allow men subjugate and control society (Bovuar, 2017: 214).

In her works, Beauvoir formulated the main foundations of feminism, and although the book was published in 1949, it is still widely read and studied in the world, a lot of research is based on the book. Beauvoir rediscovers the concept of "woman". She tries to understand the meaning of the words "man" and "woman" and makes an interesting observation: the concepts of "man" and "woman" in society are not used equally. The word "woman" is always defined as "no-man," as a negative, in opposition to the "man." While the word "man" always has a positive value, since he (man) is the humanity as such, whereas the word "woman" has no intrinsic value, it is always defined in correlation with "man". The author presents a woman as a slave, like slavery, she insists that she has always been subjugated by men. At the forefront of research, the central arguments S. de Beauvoir makes is that in modern society, being a woman is determined by the opposite sex. Philosopher Beauvoir defines women as "Other", describes its otherness as a fundamental characteristic of the category. From the author's perspective if the otherness principle works in social, racial and other groups (e.g., in relation to foreigners, indigenous or representatives of the other

racés, etc.), it must work in relation to the woman. A. Gritzanov notes, "This situation creates both as externalization of women, coupled with the loss of her freedom and a certain set of sexual-behavioral and benefits" (Gritzanov, 2002: 87).

S. de Beauvoir believes that "a woman is not born a woman, but becomes a woman in the process," as the product of the formation of the "Other", or the secondary gender. The study of the formation of woman is a plea that begs to disprove the myths about women and femininity. To confirm her thesis, the author draws from a huge number of sources, from personal life experience to the analysis of works of Claude Lévi-Strauss on kinship systems and psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan. Beauvoir's methodology embodies the true phenomenology of "women in the situation." The author reflects on the negative view of the female body from the male perception. She writes that you should consider pregnancy and motherhood a negative situation when women don't have control over their own bodies. The purpose of Beauvoir's book is creating an idea that a woman should get out of the shadow of a man, cease to be the "Other", excluded from the overall social system. A branch of feminism that created by S. De Beauvoir was picked up by French researchers Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva.

### Results and discussion

Hélène Cixous is a theorist of feminism, novelist, poet, literary critic. Her doctoral thesis devoted to the work of James Joyce, and other scientific papers related to the avant-garde writers of the twentieth century – James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Jean Genet, Clarice Lispector and others. Cixous also owns works devoted to the classics, Shakespeare and Stendhal, but key issues for its feminist criticism are the definition of the unconscious, bisexuality and "women's writing".

In 1975, Cixous has published a critical essay "The Laugh of the Medusa" (translated in English in 1976) and «Souffles, Des femmes» – the most famous work in contemporary feminist theory. Both works, especially the first, caused a great interest from the scientific community, and became the most cited works of the researcher. "Laugh of the Medusa" is referred to as an introduction to feminist rehabilitation literature. Cixous's most famous essay is based on a psychoanalytic interpretation of the Greek myth that the author challenges the orthodox patriarchy. She discovers a direct connection between the social status of women and their lack of literary history.

Women's writing, a working term referred to as the "letter" is practiced mainly by women, to the text creation female literature methods. Women's writing concept – a revolutionary idea. Hélène Cixous, which is most often associated with her name, but we must admit that it is probably the most nebulous and vague. However, one cannot deny the pivotal importance of the concept in gender studies. Cixous's theory of women's writing is a feminist theory, because it claims that the patriarchy is a special cultural and historical phenomenon with established power relations. The author wonders why anything feminine is usually identified with a natural origin, that is subjected to be monitored and controlled, while the masculine has an autonomous and dominant beginning.

«Souffles. Des femmes» expands the views of the author on the connection between female desire and female language. In his writings, Cixous reflects on the matters that guide human life: body, soul, passion, love, sex. She writes about eroticism, heterosexuality, homosexuality, gender identity. Her works reveal the author's views on the sexual experiences of women and its representation in the literary text. In the article, "The woman – body – text," Cixous writes, "Women's works are closer to the voice and to the living language of the flesh than those of men. They have more freedom, they seek not so much to say how to feel, but to touch and transmit tactile sensations through the voice. Women's writing rehabilitates the repressed in a symbolic beginning of the archaic mother. The voice of the old "Great Mother" sounds throughout the body, penetrating through, and echoing in the letter. The text is not based on the ordinary laws of composition, rather it flows freely spreads like suddenly spilled liquid. Let us recall the primitive fears and fantasies associated with blood with menstruation. And I would even likened this expiration text vomiting process" (Cixous, 1995).

Cixous's work is not limited to the ethical requirements that are advocating for a respectful and correct attitude towards the female sex, and the female world. According to the author, it is important to change the thinking and habits, the foundations on which rests the traditional difference between the male and female worlds. She writes about the need to change the gender status and the role of women in a patriarchal society and to eliminate the source of male dominance.

This means rethinking the relationships that are identified with patrilineal genealogy, in which male dominance is prevalent. Cixous believed that it was important to remind women about their significance

in history, to make changes in the symbolic male order. Another American literary theoretician Naomi Schor, argued that the loss or "absence" of women in the symbolic order is a "natural" consequence of phallogentrism, a system aimed at establishing the rule of male subjectivity (Shore, 1987: 112).

Patriarchal culture gives men the benefits at the expense of women, it creates a society dominated by men. Cixous, based on Jacques Lacan's symbolic order patterns related to the works of Freud and de Saussure, connects the language, the human psyche and sex. Lacan's theory of developing the concept of preoedipal male ego (nonlinguistic) is symbolized to the castration complex, which is both a sexual and a linguistic model. Imagined formalized as a feminine space. It is related, according to Lacan, to the body and to the mother's breast. The symbolic order is related to Paternity Law in gaining language and gender differences.

H. Cixous in "The Laugh of the Medusa" was first coined the term «écriture féminine», which is translated into Russian as "women's writing". The author argues that "a woman should she write about myself: should write about women and bring women to literature, from which they were violently unlearn, as well as from his body – for the same reasons, under the same law and the same fatal purpose. A woman must immerse themselves in the text – but at the same time in the world and history – his own movement"(Cixous, 1976).

Cixous believes that the only way to get a certain degree of freedom and power over their own lives for women – is to begin to create. It acts as "Laughter of Medusa" for new ways of thinking and feminine letter in literature. The essay was the main text of feminist criticism because of his sharp criticism of patriarchal politics. This is one of the most influential texts of feminist philosophy, based on the post-structuralism and psychoanalytic theory. Concerned that, as a woman is traditionally presented in "male" literature, Cixous begins its analysis, referring to the classic figure of Medusa. She recalls how Medusa was introduced in culture for centuries. Traditionally, it was portrayed as a physical and moral monster with long snake hairs that fascinated and paralyzed men who looked at her. Before its formidable look fossilized men. Medusa in Cixous is a symbol of female anger. It should blow up the Law of the Father (the term Jacques Lacan).

It is no accident that perception ancient antique image of Medusa is the same in different contemporary authors. So, Professor in Gender Studies and Religion Emily Culpepper wrote the

work "Ancient Gorgon. The face of modern women's anger, "in which she said that the image of Medusa opens a long series of feminists who perceive her face as an expression of his rage, and its" history can lead to an interesting study of power and its use "[8.65]. Robert Graves came to the conclusion that the myth of Medusa keeps the memory of the late onset of matriarchy and patriarchy (Culpepper, 2003: 144).

E. Cixous interprets the image of Medusa in the same plane. With the help of ancient way she tries to express what is common to all women, "who were repressed culture, generated total, depressing the symbolic order. In the patriarchal society the feminine is understood as a sign of inferiority. Women are welcome to join their alleged curse, the symbol of which, according to Cixous, is Medusa. But Medusa Cixous laughs that is joyful and destructive act, almost Dionysian laughter, which can direct the female literature in new ways. Therefore, in the first paragraph of an essay E. Cixous describes women's writing as liberation, and interference in the male symbolic order. Women's perspective in the literature, according to Cixous, due to the fact.

Phallogentrism dominant male linguistic and philosophical system or, more simply, male bias, do not allow women to have access to their own narratives. Without it, access to women lack knowledge about the many ways to be a woman, so that they do not have the body and are a nobody. It is extremely important – Cixous says – that a woman should, in the broad sense, "write itself" and "embed themselves in the text – both in the world and in history – through its own women's writing (Cixous, 1975). Essentially, Cixous calls for women to assert themselves in the "letter" and the world, to leave him his literary trail. "Laughter of Medusa" – a call to arms, a call for women to return to their bodies, their identity and sensuality through a woman's letter. Changing this situation – a very complex theoretical and practical problems,

"I will talk about women's literature; about what she should do. <...> A woman must immerse themselves in the text – but at the same time in the world and history – their own movement.

The future should not be determined by a past. I do not deny that the past is still sitting in us. But I refuse to amplify it, throw it indestructibility halo, like fate, biological and cultural mix. Waiting – my imperative.

I am writing this as a woman, and women. When I say "woman", I mean a woman in her inevitable struggle against the conventional man; universal

type of a woman who should lead women to a sense of its importance in history. But, firstly, it must be said that, despite the enormous oppression that kept us in the "darkness" – that is, forced to accept the darkness as our attribute – does not currently exist some common or typical woman" (Cixous, 1975).

The main objective of the author of "Laugh of Medusa" is to cast doubt on existing literature and the social order, to force women to get out of them and give a new vision of women, women use writing as a source of strength and inspiration. E. Cixous encourages women to focus on their personality, especially in the body of the individual. The essay contains an argument that women's writing – a tool that women should use to protect themselves, to find freedom, they lost in the patriarchal society. The author criticizes the logocentric system of society, calling it phallogocentric calls to violate this social practice. Dictionary of gender terms gives the following definition of this concept "Phallogocentrism – term psychoanalysis Jacques Lacan denoting patriarchal symbolic order, wherein the mark is positioned as phallus preferred masculine (unlike excluded from symbolic order femininity). In feminist papers used as a synonym for hard androcentrism" (Shevcheko, 2013).

The author examines the issue of women's writing, its features and the works related to women's writing: "It is impossible to define the practice of feminist writing, and this inability to stay because this practice cannot be driven into the frame of the theory, limit rules – but that does not mean it does not exist. But it will always surpass the discourse that is governed phallogocentric system; it is always in areas that go beyond the submission of philosophical and theoretical dominance. She always understood only by those entities that destroy the automatism, a figure standing on the periphery, where the authorities do not reach" – the author notes – hence the need to approve such literature, to give form to its movement, its immediate and long-range routes. It should be borne in mind that the gender opposition, which has always worked for the benefit of man, and kept her books to its laws, has historical and cultural boundaries. Literature already exists,

Cixous argues that there is no "ordinary" or "typical" women, it focuses its research on what women have in common "What we have in common, I'll tell you. But it strikes me above all the infinite variety of individual constitution of women: it is impossible to talk about women's sexuality, general, equal, classified in certain standards – just as it is impossible to talk about the general for all people unconscious. Women imagery inexhaustible, like

music, like painting, and prose: its flow fantasies infinite (Cixous, 1976). The researcher says that a woman should cease to exist by measuring the masculine criteria and start to express themselves, based on their own experiences:

"<...> I would like to see a woman wrote and opened this unique empire so that other women, other unrecognized sovereigns could exclaim: I too crowded; my desire to also generate new desires, my body, too, no one knows the famous songs. Again and again, I overflow the flow of light – which can result in a form much more beautiful than those imposed on me from above, and are sold under the guise of fate.

Therefore: Write! Letter created you for you – for yourself; your body – is yours, take it. I know why you do not write. (And why I did not write before I turned 27). Because the literature – it is something high, too high, too great for you, it is reserved for the great – that is, for the "great men" – and [so] they engaged in "stupid". <...>

Write, even if no one will hold, nothing stops, neither the man nor the mad capitalist machine, in which the publisher – sly, obsequious servants imperative economy is working against us and behind us, or you yourself. Grinning readers, editors, and big bosses do not like sincere female texts. They are afraid of them.

I write woman: woman must write woman. The man – a man. Therefore, here you will find a hint of the man; let him talk about his masculinity and femininity: it will concern us only when men open their eyes and look at myself without blinders" (Cixous, 1976).

Hélène Cixous opposes the idea of binary oppositions in the system. She calls them "the patriarchal binary thought", in which there are opposite poles, such as active / passive, sun / moon, culture / nature, intelligence / feelings, etc.. In this patriarchal hierarchy of the woman, according to Cixous, always associated and / or symbolized with negative and passive start. For Cixous patriarchal point of view it allows a woman to be either passive or non-existent. Women's letter, according to the author, can lead to the destruction of hierarchies and oppositions, which limit the hidden life.

Another French philosopher and psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray, the author of works «Speculum. De l'autre femme» (1974), «Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un (Éditions de Minuit)» (1977). («This Sex which is not One» (on the Eng. lang.) Et al., Sees a definite connection between social organization and physical morphology. The researcher notes that the structure and specific properties of the world is

largely due to the body morphology and especially sexual identity. This means that women, deprived of its own morphology and the corresponding symbols, are doomed to follow the laws imposed phallogocentric logic. They operate in a system dominated by men, where He achieved his supremacy through repression and denial of femininity. In the opinion of the philosopher, in a symbolic manner the woman is not entitled to your own unique genealogy,

Feminist art criticism the UK and the US also developed their complex theories and methods of gender analysis of literary texts. During the 1970-1990-ies the main work of the Anglo-American feminist critics have focused on the women's discourse strategy for the further development and theoretical rethinking of women's writing. Thus, the American researcher Barbara Johnson analyzes the work of the French philosopher, theorist of "letters" Jacques Derrida "Letter and distinction", "Grammar", "Speech and Phenomena."

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar wrote an interesting study «The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination» (1979). Using the metaphor of the attic as the conclusions of the monograph authors reveal how, apparently observing patriarchal secular norms, the English-language women writers of the XIX century, used a wide range of methods for the expression of rebellious women pulses. They either renounced her sex, hiding behind a male name (George Sand and George Eliot), which was, by definition, Gilbert and Gubar, metaphorical transvestism; half-crazy or had a reputation eccentric person (Aphra Behn and Margaret Cavendish) or hiding behind a pseudonym (three Bronte sisters). So women writers overcame his fear of authorship, based on the belief of patriarchal society that lady to be a writer indecent. Writer of past eras have experienced an illness that Gilbert and Gubar call "schizophrenic authorship" (Gilbert S., Gubar, 2000: 69). Since women in this time lacked the authority, they tried to assert their own identity as a writer. Researchers have identified in the literature of the Victorian era the two most frequently recurring type of woman. These were the most common and contrasting female characters – a female monster, and a female angel. Since women in this time lacked the authority, they tried to assert their own identity as a writer. Researchers have identified in the literature of the Victorian era the two most frequently recurring type of woman. These were the most common and contrasting female characters – a female monster, and a female angel. Since women in this time lacked the authority, they tried to assert

their own identity as a writer. Researchers have identified in the literature of the Victorian era the two most frequently recurring type of woman. These were the most common and contrasting female characters – a female monster, and a female angel.

Adrienne Rich explored traces of the female silence in a collection of essays about women of African-American descent «On Lies, Secrets and Silence. Selected Prose, 1966-1978»(1979) ("The lies, the secrets and silence "). These works are aimed at trying to read suppressed, distorted or disguised messages that are encoded in the women's writing. They require a different reading strategy that goes beyond the superficial penetration reading, which takes full advantage of a "letter" in order to preserve what is still impossible to decipher.

Elaine Showalter, known American scholar of literature, a representative of the feminist critique, the author of "Their own literature: British women novelists from Bronte to Lessing" (1977), "Towards a feminist poetry"(1979). It introduced into scientific use the term "Gynocriticism" which differs from the simple analysis of literary. According to the authors' note "Dictionary of gender terms", "Feminist criticism, according to Showalter, focuses on women as male reader of texts, it is a "political and polemical" and has a limited ability to create his theory. Such criticism explores the importance of gender codes, examines the "woman-as-sign" in the historical and social context. Social orientation of feminist criticism is due to a significant influence of the ideas and concepts of S. de Beauvoir. Gynocriticism also focuses on the figure of a woman-writer and looking for design tools for the analysis of women's literature "(Shevchenko, 2013).

## Conclusion

Feminist literary criticism has arisen on the basis of the women's movement in the second half of the 1960s – early 1970s. It exists in almost all fields of art and culture, its goal is the liberation of literature and art in general from logocentric thinking patriarchal culture. Gender academic research allowed not only to promote the women's texts, but also became the axis of the feminist reflection. "Women's writing" helps to overcome social role imposed upon women to express their feelings, spirituality, corporeality, femininity. The theoretical concept of the second wave of feminism characterized by pluralism and diversity, their main goal – to reveal the hidden and the apparent marginalization and oppression of women in the existing androcentric discourse. In

general, in the field of feminist theories have been many, but even more outstanding issues. Despite the fact that feminist criticism has gone through some internal divisions and disagreements on the basic theoretical issues, it has made a significant contribution to contemporary culture.

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