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GENDER STEREOTYPES IN VICTORIAN LITERATURE

Among the most famous writers of the Victorian era there are generally mentioned such as novelists as Charles Dickens, William Thackeray and Thomas Hardy. But no less noteworthy is the women's literature presented by such authors as Elizabeth Gaskell or Anne, Charlotte and Emily Brontë. However, their careers as the writers were somewhat different from those of male authors. This may be explained by the general situation in the country and the role of women in society, which was still governed by strict norms and rules but already had glimpses of feminist rebellion and rejection of inequality of rights.

The gender played an important role in hierarchical Victorian society and naturally determined almost every aspect of an individual's potential. This stated that men and women were different not only in their biological nature but legal rights as well. While men were independent, women always depended on their husbands. Men could participate in politics and in paid work, while women were meant to run households and raise children. Usually shifting this balance provoked a negative reaction. The same applied to education. Not to mention the attitudes to the sexual relationship, especially by Puritans, whose elevation of marriage and the family into something sacred was incompatible with a frank acknowledgement of sensuality. But the process of female identification was set up and it could not be stopped.

Boarding schools for girls were being opened in increasing numbers. Women of strong character began to open up professions unavailable to them before that time. They became writers, journalists and nurses. The step was also done to achieving economic independence at a low level: in such professions as workers in factories. The phenomenon of *female Victorian prose* emerged. The domestic experience which formed the basis of Victorian woman's knowledge found an appropriate form in novels as the best genre to describe the joys and sorrows of affection or domestic troubles of life along with woman's attempts to identify and self-affirm. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar initiated a feminist approach that celebrated female literary authority as an “essential process of self-definition” in the face of both a patriarchal tendency to define women and a traditional association of the creative act with a masculine production or begetting [2, p. 153].

Starting an artistic career meant for women to accept a challenge and to be prepared for prejudice and criticism through the lens of hierarchical stereotypes. In 1862, Gerald Massey pointed: “Women who are happy in all home-ties and who amply fill the sphere of their love and life, must, in the nature of things, very seldom become writers” [3, p. 81]. Some female writers were not ready to reveal to the world the authorship of their works. Even though some women were published under their real names, there were some of them who chose to write under the male pseudonyms. An example of a writer who turned to the method of writing under a male pen-name *George Eliot* was Mary Ann Evans. She was motivated by a desire to be taken seriously and to protect her private life from unwanted attention and condemnation from society, which would never accept her relationship with a married man.

George Eliot herself was one of the people who criticized that time's habits in female literature and speculating about the psychological and moral impact of women's experience on the structure and content of the novel. She found most of the feminine literature of her day inept and derivative, and wondered “how women have the courage to write and publishers the spirit to buy at a high price the false and feeble representations of life and characters that most feminine novels give” [1]. She considered some of the literature inauthentic, “an absurd exaggeration of the masculine style, like the swaggering gait of a bad actress in male attire” and wished women to substitute “the hard drudgery of real practice” for feminine fantasy and self-indulgence [1].

Development of female prose in the Victorian age was accompanied by numerous difficulties in the historical and social context. Female authors had to face the problem of neglect and rejection, along with the need to conceal true authorship. Nevertheless, it became a manifestation of rebellion against the canons of that time and a requirement to recognize a woman to be worthy of being called a writer.

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THE SPECIFICS OF TEACHING WRITING TO SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Writing and written speech were previously considered in the methodology of teaching foreign languages mainly as a means of learning, which was reflected in all previous school curricula. The fact that written speech was not the purpose of teaching a foreign language was the reason that little attention was paid to this issue in the methodological literature. The problem of teaching writing is relevant because now it is often possible to observe an insufficient level of students' written speech development.

The object of our research is teaching writing in English. The subject is the specifics of teaching writing at secondary schools. The following tasks were set in this paper: 1) to explore the skills and abilities needed for students to master the written language; 2) to analyze existing methods of teaching writing; 3) to investigate the types of tasks used for the development of writing skills.

In accordance with the requirements of the new State Standard of Basic and Complete General Secondary Education, mastering the written language requires students to develop the following skills: to make extracts from the text, study notes, abstracts; write short congratulations on birthdays, other holidays, express wishes (30–40 words, including writing the address); write works and essays; fill in the forms (indicate name, surname, gender, age, citizenship, address); write a personal letter on a sample / without reliance on a sample, using material from one or more topics learned in oral speech and reading, using the necessary formulas of language etiquette (the volume of a personal letter 80-90 words); identify various facts, phenomena, events and impressions; compose written supports for oral statements (reports, abstracts) [1, p. 112].

Writing as a learning goal is provided in the curricula of different schools at all stages of studying. The development of the ability to express one's thoughts in writing, to use writing as a means of communication is put forward as the final requirement for the writing skill development at secondary school level. The subject matter and volume of written statements should be expanded, the qualitative characteristics of texts should be improved [5, p. 84]. The content of education at this stage should be more informative and based mainly on authentic material: samples of epistolary type – texts of letters, leaflets, as well as articles from newspapers and magazines. For middle school students (5-6 forms), these texts serve as models for the development of the following specific skills:

- inform a foreign friend about himself/herself, his/her family, school, the city, about their interests and hobbies;
- request the same information from your recipient;