

PHILOSOPHY

Shevchenko M.Y., Parkhomenko K.O. **The phenomenon of female subjectivity in postmodern discourse**

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Abstract. The article provides an analysis of the essential features of the woman's subjectivity. The phenomenon of subjectivity is traced in the interaction with the postmodernist philosophical thought so far as it's significant impact factor. The above mentioned aim is realized in studying the famous feminist-philosophers. The following tasks are solved by examination of the characteristics of woman's subjectivity.

Keywords: *identity, female subjectivity, feminist, postfeminism, subjectivity, "queer-identity"*

Introduction: Postmodernism of the second half of the XXth century critically reinterprets the foundations of didactic and rationalistic worldview. They have been replaced by a new philosophy of physicality, marginal concepts of Foucault, Derrida's deconstruction and postfreudianism. The modernist worldview is based on the instability, problematic structures of the subject, society, etc.. At the same time consequently total infraction of these categories is the feature of the post-modern implementation: one category intervenes the other one, the boundaries between opposites are eliminated. Postmodern paradigm (multiple deconstruction of subjectivity) has taken the place of the devalued modernist social and humanitarian theory with its only rational subject. Within this paradigm the concepts of class, race and national identity types in modern culture are also affected by certain changes. They are characterized by thrust against the traditional classical models of thought and culture. In Feminism the category of "woman" has caused no doubts. However, it's not only the point for consideration but it's also a subject of deep studying. Indeed, the basic categories and concepts get a broad interpretation and ambiguity in understanding of the participants of polemic. The feminist theory performs quite important role in the philosophical discourse of postmodernism of the second half of the XXth century. That caused the creation of a new criterion in contemporary discursive practice (the criterion of sexual difference). Nowadays social conditions cause the creation of political vector of the feminist theory in order to replace patriarchal and gender society traditions.

Novelty: The urgent problem of female identity and subjectivity is brought up within the feminist discourse. In "The second Sex" by S. de Beauvoir's the female subjectivity is studied and it starts to be considered as the "other" thing to the male type of subjectivization. And this problem becomes the central in feminist theory leading to study the ways of its representation in culture, literature and philosophy [1].

The Object of the research is to analyze the most significant and prominent conceptions of female subjectivity within the feminist theory.

The materials and Methodology: The well-known theories of female subjectivity are represented in the works of gender philosophers such as S. de Beauvoir, R. Braidotti, J. Kristeva, H. Cixous, S. Kofman and J. Butler as well as in psychological researches made by J. Benjamin, G. Gallun, K. Silverman, T. Brennan. It is

very important to take into account the critics' works by E. Showalter, M. Ellmann, E. Moers, S. Gilbert, S. Gubar, Sh. Felman and M. Jacobus. The representation of research in the field of the female subjectivity in philosophical anthropology, cultural philosophy or in general criticism of the opposition between "truth/falsity" as patriarchal evaluation criteria that marks the female subject as the "other" found in the works by E. Grosz, L. Irigaray, H. Cixous and S. de Beauvoir. In Ukraine and Russia the problems of female subjectivity, especially of women's literary studies, are analyzed by T. Hundorova, N. Zborowski, S. Pavlichko, V. Aheyeva, A. Zabuzhko, I. Zhe-rebkina and O. Kis.

There are two methodological approaches to the interpretation of the problem of female subjectivity, that are represented in two corresponding types. The first so-called "essentialist" approach analyzes female experience and female subjectivity within a single discourse as the one unit. The second "antiessentialistic" approach describes identity as the plurality and at the same time the experience is determined as contradictory and decentralized phenomenon.

S. de Beauvoir's existentialist methodology is the prominent representative of the first type where the author has tried to explain the phenomenon of gender inequality and the sexism origin in society and culture. The question why a man, not a woman has always fought for the ownership right in history is up to answer. S. de Beauvoir shows that it is not associated with the female essence. Existentialism in general is opposed to the philosophical concept of essence and is caused by the peculiarities of female existence. The female existence differs from the male one primarily within the fact that it is connected with the function of reproduction that makes woman play a passive role in history. S. de Beauvoir claims many other reasons for this state of affairs. Firstly, male strategies of various levels are aimed to represent a woman as an object. A man can assert against the "other" that is considered to be a woman. Secondly, it is a voluntary female decision to perform the role of a victim in order to avoid the painful experience of existential freedom and responsibility. This position of a woman may be overcome only when she starts playing the male role, through establishing her own "I" and transforming "the Other" (a man) into the object.

The results and their discussion: During the analysis of the woman status in the culture, S. de Beauvoir has

noticed the fact that either «female» is distinctly disclaimed or it is associated with the features of unattainable value. The first one is always concerned as the real status of a woman, the second one is represented in the forms of images i.e. divine images of women, romantic images in literature and art. S. de Beauvoir explains this contradiction with the existentialist concept of the "Other". The "Other" in existentialism is always the one who threatens my own "I" and my identity, that is why, the only possible binary position may be referred to it. Either "I" adores the highest perfection of the "Other", or "I" suppresses and denies it. This binary, according to S. de Beauvoir, can be found in the attitude to the phenomenon of woman in culture.

Psychoanalysis has significantly influenced the formation of feminist theories in relation to the object. Freudian and Lacanian forms of psychoanalysis study the cultural phenomenon of gender-constructed subjectivity. The psychoanalytic models of female subjectivity have been particularly noticed in the 70's of the XXth century. Feminist theorists have tried to use psychoanalysis to understand subjectivity. The concept of female subjectivity in psychoanalysis is interpreted by mentioning the concept of hysteria. The structures of female subjectivity and woman's desire are interpreted only through the studying of structure of the "Other" i.e. a man.

Further interpretation of feminist psychoanalysis is associated with the attempts to analyze woman's subjectivity without classical Freud's schemes, as well as the topology of female subjectivity. Feminist writers criticized Freud's naturalistic explanation of female hysteria and sexuality because the female sexuality started to be understood as a feature of unsatisfied desire that destroys the female sexuality.

J. Lacan's theory has influenced the development of feminist psychoanalysis and particularly the development of the concept of desire as the basic structure of female subjectivity. Feminist researchers try to create the topology of female subjectivity with its unique features. They refuse to recognize the passive role of women and proclaim the great activity of female subjectivity and the power of their desire.

J. Mitchell and J. Rose in work "Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the École Freudienne" analyze the difference between Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis criticizing the last one according to feminist positions. They are sure that woman's sexuality should be understood in two ways: as a symbolic order and as something that is "constantly slipping" [9]. Thus, woman identity according to Lacan is not stable concept but radical variability.

Famous researchers of feminist psychoanalysis N. Chodorov, L. Irigaray, H. Cixous emphasize the role of preoedipal phase in the development of female subjectivity, when the structure of the subject has not undergone the division into the male and the female. This stage is a wide field for the formation of pure femininity, which has not suffered from the repression by the "Other" (man) yet. That allows to make further investigations in the research of female subjective topology, that is fundamentally different from male.

Using the methodology of Jacques Lacan French scholar L. Irigaray determines hysterical female subjectiv-

ity opposed to patriarchal discourse. The structure of hysteria is explained by L. Irigaray as performative. Hysteria is not essential characteristic of a woman but the parody of female behavior that is expected to be realised [7].

The new approaches of studying the gender practices of deconstruction and the phenomenon of neosexuality (bisexuality, transsexuality, active bisexuality, sex change) raise the problem of identity in the feminist theory. American researcher T. de Lauretis firstly used the term "queer-identity" ("strange", "eccentric") for understanding the notion of the female homosexuality. Thus, the term has started to be used to describe not only homosexual structures (both female and male), but other types of modern identities that are not thought to be normal [8]. The concept of "queer-subjectivity" was presented in works by T. de Lauretis, E. K. Sedgwick and E. Grosz.

T. de Lauretis asserts that the subject of feminist lesbian theory should be eccentric one that is defined in the terms of perversion. M. Foucault defines such subject as marginal subject in the discourse and practices that are implemented through the boundaries of separate sexual identities and communities. The leading model of marginal, eccentric subject, according to T. de Lauretis, is a lesbian one. The interpretation of female lesbian subjectivity as "queer-subjectivity" allows T. de Lauretis to make criticism of essentialist conceptions of lesbian sexuality.

In most cases feminist theory determines the category of woman as a basis for any subsequent political demand without understanding that this category forces the political "closing" of all kinds of experience and is recognized as a part of the feminist discourse. When the category is understood as the representation of the set of values or dispositions, it becomes normative in its nature and, therefore, "eliminating" (exclusive) one. This idea has created the political problem that is disclosed in the aspect that a lot of women in different cultures refuse to recognize themselves as "women" according to feminist theory. That fact leads to the conclusion that they are not women as they have thought before.

The category reflects the limited location of its followers and, therefore, may not provide an interconnection between gender and race, class, ethnicity, age, sexuality and other phenomena that refer to the cultural (mis)identity. Now feminist theorists face the problem whether they should give a new definition of the category of woman making it more inclusive in response to the radical exclusion of the category of woman from hegemonic cultural formations, on the one hand, and the effect of exclusion from the feminist discourse, on the other one. This aspect inevitably introduces the political question: who should make the decision and be responsible for the actions.

Gayatri Spivak is sure that feminists need to deal with "operational essentialism" i.e. false ontology of woman in order to realize her political program. It recognizes that the category of woman is not fully expressive. Julia Kristeva recommends to determine the category of woman as the policy tool without giving ontological integrity to this statement, and she adds that it would be correct to say that women are exist... [11].

The concept of "queer-identity" has been described in the book "Epistemology of the Closet" by E. K. Sedgwick opposes the essentialism of modern gay and lesbian theo-

ries that claim the substantiation of the existence of new alternative forms of subjectivity in culture. The main aim of her methodology is to overcome the so-called "lesbian" and "non lesbian" "gap" in modern feminism and to cope with binary distribution i.e. "normative-deviant" in the discourse of the end of the XXth century. The concept of homosexual discourse according to E. K. Sedgwick is refused to have the discursive autonomy; it does not exist separately depending on its binary opposition. The alternative topology of subjectivity of the "queer-identity" does not define homosexual types of subjectivity. The concept of "queer-subjectivity" is opened to any subject without taking into account her (his) sexual experience or sexual identity.

E. Grosz defines the concept of "queer" as the definition of marginal sexuality and marginal transgressive sexuality that appears while thinking not only about the differences of heterosexual but also about homosexual structure of subjectivity.

Therefore, the "queer" characteristic may be typical to gay, lesbian and heterosexual subjectivity and also to any subjectivity that produces transgressive sexual activity. The basis of the "queer-identity" provides the transgressive nature as the "experimental desire" according to E. Grosz. G. Deleuze has described it as the subjective position of "becoming". According to E. Grosz, the concept of "queer" appears in contemporary feminist theory at the moment of appearing the necessity to avoid the traditional binary oppositions between male and female as the main notions of feminist theory [6].

Feminism of the 80's and the 90's. is characterized by a number of conceptual conflicts and contradictions that have caused the emergence of the postfeminism phenomenon in the 90's. The main contradiction in the feminist theory of the 90's lies between the centered and de-centered gender subjects.

Postfeminism criticizes the tendency of the considering the woman's experience and subjectivity as single ones and their analysis in a separate discourse of feminism. Postfeminism considers identity to be the plural form and the experience to be the controversial one explaining the so-called "policy of differences".

One of the most authoritative researches of the feminist theory in the USA is J. Butler who has developed the performative theory of gender and has disclosed the subject of the feminist collective identity. J. Derrida's theory of the deconstruction and Foucault's work about the discourse and physical specificity of the phenomenon of power have greatly influenced John Butler's conception. Moreover, the Butler's theory aims to overcome the mechanisms of the binarization and hierarchization in culture.

The radical J. Butler's views are summarized in her book "Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of identity". The main object of analysis is the conception of subjectivity. J. Butler deconstructs the individual "I" and the feminist "we". J. Butler criticizes the essentialists' understanding of the structure of female subjectivity in the concept by S. de Beauvoir where the female subjectivity radically differs from the male one. In contrast to S. de Beauvoir, J. Butler shows that the multiplicity of discursive spheres with the localization of a woman and

identifies the differences between the concepts of "subjectivity", "identity" and «difference».

The subject of feminism may not be treated as stable, unified or exceptionally female in case when it doesn't determine the level of the discourse within the subject. J. Butler has proved that the performative subjectivity concept is based on the Foucault's concept of power. Materiality of bodies is referred to the effect of power dynamics and at the same time the performativity plays the role of a recurring imperious ability to produce the discourse phenomenon. Though, J. Butler defines the performativity as a regulatory presentation of socio-cultural authority norms in society. The author critically reinterprets the notion of performativity i.e the performative act as an independent will of the subject. [5].

The famous researcher in contemporary feminist theory is R. Braidotti who indicates the change of the modern woman's identity and considers it to be the alternative-nomadic-feministic subjectivity. She has come to such conclusions with the help of Post-structuralism French philosophy. The author also uses the philosophical views of G. Deleuze as the basis ones for searching the place in male philosophical discourse and language. The alternative models of subjectivity represented in R. Braidotti's works are considered as the type of critical intellectualism. Also this type is referred to nomadic subjectivity, which is opposed to the mental attitudes of phallogocentric ideology and is feminist-oriented. The basic concept with the help of which R. Braidotti builds her philosophical system is the concept of difference. It is not concerned with the structure of "difference-of" relationships based on domination, but it is the structure of "differences-as" i.e. the simultaneous existence of alternative models of culture and thought [2]. The researcher presents the next scheme of understanding of sexual differences that consists of three levels. The first level is focused on the differences between men and women and it performs the diagnostic function. It criticizes the relationship between man and woman as the one between the subject and the "Other". The second level of relations between the subject and the "Other" acknowledges that they are asymmetric and may not be replaced by each other [4]. Insurmountable difference exists not only between a man and a woman but also between real life and feminine image of women as the "Other" in the traditional culture. The third level is the level of feminist policy. It is aimed to overcome the dialectic of domination and to critic the political foundations of the status quo. Feministic policy should pursue the marginalization of the eccentric relation to the phallic political system and the policy of denying it. The third level is called "internal difference", which emphasizes the complex structure of subjectivity. The ratio of unconscious subjectivity and matter requires an understanding of multi-female subjectivity. According to R. Braidotti the positive part of feminist subjectivity is the productive force desire. The researcher emphasizes the understanding of feminism in terms of "moral passion" desire, which supports them. According to R. Braidotti, feminism liberates a woman in her desire for freedom, justice, ease of self-sufficiency [3].

L. Nicholson criticizes the single feminist theory and follows the idea of cross-cultural approach. It includes such discourses as antiracist, anti-imperialistic or dis-

course of sexual minorities in the theory of feminism. Postcolonial feminist discourse also refuses the acceptance of unified and coherent subjective structure, indicating the current post-colonial subject as hybrid, which cannot be the aspect of a single identity e.g. ethnic, historical, and transcendental [10]. Post-feminism contains the idea of post-structuralism and postmodernism and searches a new paradigm. The arguments in favor of postmodern fragmentation concepts of modern theory led to a tendency to change the center of gravity of conceptual structures to the centre of discourse.

Summary: Most feminist theorists recognize and operate with the concept of a woman who sets her own interests and goals within the feminist discourse, on the one hand and, on the other hand, creates a subject that should be presented in the political sphere. But policy and the representation are contradictory terms. The representation tends to make a woman expressive in the political process and at the same time the presentation performs the regulatory function of language with the respect to the category of woman. Therefore, the researchers face an inadmissible simplification of "subjectivity" of woman in permanent terms.

Evidently the theory of psychoanalysis has taken the ambiguous position in the feminist debates about the place of the category of woman in the feminist political discourse.

The arguments on this topic raise a political issue. If not a feminine subject provides a normative model for feminist emancipatory policy, then who/what does? If we cannot recreate the subject in feminist terms then the feminist theory may accept the notion of agency. Feminist policy has lost the categorical basis for its own normative claims without the unified concept of woman. What is the emancipated subject of feminism? If there is no subject, who is to be emancipated?

Feminist resistance to the criticism of the subject shares the concerning with other critical and emancipatory discourses. If depression is to be defined in terms of loss of autonomy, as well as the fragmentation and aliena-

tion of the oppressed mind then the theory insisting on the inevitability of the subject fragmentation can reproduce the very oppression to be overcome. Perhaps we should think about the typology of fragmentation or at least to answer the question whether depression is determined in terms of fragmentation identically or the fragmentation is oppressive. The category of woman is internally fragmented by class, skin color, age, ethnic views. Further criticism of subject is more than just rehabilitation of plural subject with its different "parts" being interrelated in total unity. Indeed, the political criticism of subject provokes the question of the introduction of the concept of identity in the field of politics, because this concept immediately closes the possibility of cultural articulation of the subject i.e. the position could be generated by the new policy.

Feminist theory of psychoanalysis encouraged the reconstruction of practices related to the child's bringing up. That could make narrower the gap between gender differences that is produced by the predominate presence of the mother within her educational role. Re-integration of bringing up that is associated with in the male sphere and the assimilation of autonomy into the feminine create the normative model of the unified ego with a tendency towards androgynous decision. Other researchers insist on specificity of feminism that characterized by matriarchal identification. It provides the basis for an alternative feminine subject, defines itself contextually. In this case, the unified ego reappears not as androgynous, but as specifically feminine subject, organized by the fundamental matriarchal identification.

The process of deployment of gender discourse is dynamic; it constantly forces the emergency of contradictions that are replaced by the new one. Social progress gives a new understanding of woman's identity as part of the gender identity, or as a completely separate, isolated identity. The specific study of this issue will help to deepen the study of general human problem that is one of the central in philosophical studies.

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Шевченко М.Ю., Пархоменко К.А. Феномен женской субъективности в постмодернистском дискурсе

Аннотация. Анализируются самые существенные теории женской субъективности, которые имели значительное влияние на постмодернистскую философскую мысль. Рассматриваются учения известных женщин-философов теоретиков феминизма.

Ключевые слова: идентичность, женская субъективность, постфеминизм, субъективность, феминизм, "queer-идентичность"