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MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT - FIRST PHILOSOPHER OF FEMINISM

Mary Wollstonecraft is sometimes called the "Mother of Feminism". Basically, all her work is related to women's rights. In her book "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" (1792), now considered a classic of feminist history and feminist theory, Mary Wollstonecraft argued primarily for the rights of woman to be educated. Through education would come emancipation.

Key words: vindication of women's rights; feminism; co-education; women's weakness; dependence; suffering; feeling; mind; intelligent citizenship.

The problem statement. Relative successes of the women's movement in the struggle for gender equality have conditioned the relevance of research devoted to the study of "philosophy with a woman's face" in general and the history of feminism - in particular. The search of sources of feminism is one of the historical and philosophical problems which around are focused of contemporary authors. Herewith chronological boundaries of the genesis of this doctrine vary between the epoch Renaissance (Isotta Nogarolla, Laura Cereta, Christine de Pizan) and mid-twentieth century (Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan). Honorary rights to be considered the founder of feminism are Aphra Behn, Mary Astell, Poullain de la Barre et al).

On this background Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), author of "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman with Strictures on Moral and Political Subjects" (1792), one of the fundamental feminist texts of modernity, noticeably stands out. Since the publication of this essay more than two hundred years have passed. But basic philosophical principles of "A Vindication...", which was characterized in those years as "a formidable manifesto against the male gender and a female utopia with elements of the hot defenses of poor creatures so viciously oppressed", have not lost their significance in the 21st century.

Analysis of researches dedicated to the problem.

While all over the world there is a growing interest in the work of the Mary Wollstonecraft [Todd, J., 2000; Tomalin, C., 1992; *Feminist Interpretations...*, 1996; Sapiro, V., 1992; Taylor, B., 2003; O'Neill, W., 2014; Kelly, G., 1992; Johnson, C., 2002; Ferguson, M., 1994; Janes, E., 1997], in our country her works have not yet become the object of a comprehensive analysis. There are no monographs on her life and work of the writer, there are practically no dissertations exploring her scientific heritage. It is pity because today the ideas of this outstanding philosopher are still relevant. Perhaps this is due to the fact that in Ukraine, as many believe, there is no particular gender bias, and there is no need to study such work as "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman".

The aim of our article is an analysis of M. Wollstonecraft's basic ideas in order to prove the thesis of its priority in substantiating the philosophy of feminism.

Research and discussion. The socio-legal status of the female was the most prominent motive of M. Wollstonecraft. The views of the writer on this problem are most consistently and fully set forth in the above mentioned essay, her pedagogical works and novels. She notes that

women of her time occupy a subordinate position in society, which she often characterized as a state of "slave submission". She compares the position of women with the position of domestic animals, "lower in reason", completely dependent on the will of the owner. Women have a subordinate position in all spheres of life, including in the family. They did not have any rights, only duties.

But according to M. Wollstonecraft, rights and duties are inseparable. The reasons for such oppression she finds in the system of female education and upbringing. By the writer, such education is the main tool for changing attitudes towards women in society. She believes that the statement about the inferiority of the female mind is formed under the influence of the desire of men to strengthen the dominant positions, to strengthen the subordination of women. A woman, as a human being, should have the same rights that are guaranteed to a man. M. Wollstonecraft believes that the imaginary "natural weakness of a woman", her irrationality and interests are a consequence of the lack of freedom of choice, her inadequate socialization, subjection to men and gaps in education.

"If women are rational creatures they should be urged to acquire virtues that they can call their own, for how can a rational being be ennobled by anything that is not obtained by his or her own efforts?" - asks the writer-philosopher. In her essay, she offers a program of joint equal public education in the day school system. "Men and women must be educated, in a great degree, by the opinions and manners of the society they live in". In these schools girls and boys should study together by a rational educational program, and in such way it is possible to improve existing relations not only between children from different social backgrounds, but also between the sexes.

M. Wollstonecraft set a great value on a mutual affection between persons of an opposite sex. She regarded it as the principal solace of human life. It was her maxim, "that the imagination should awaken the senses and not the senses the imagination." In other words, that whatever related to the gratification of the senses, ought to arise, in a human being of a pure mind, only as the consequence of an individual affection. According to the writer, an educated woman is able to strengthen family-marriage relations, giving them a more rational character. The main function of women is the education of future generations. M. Wollstonecraft understood the family sphere as the basis for the social life of a woman. "Make women rational creatures and free citizens, and they will quickly become good wives

and mothers; that is, if men do not neglect the duties of husbands and fathers". She believed that women should get civil rights on an equal basis with men and that would open up new areas of woman's activity (business, medicine and even political representation). An educated woman, a competent citizen, a sensible housewife should contribute to the progress of all humanity. Changing the social status of a woman will lead to a change in the whole of society.

Mary Wollstonecraft is considered the founder of an influential current of feminist thought. Her difference from other early authors in defense of women's rights is that she demanded to use political means (legislation) to change the subordinate position of women. Unlike the rebellious women of aristocratic descent, Wollstonecraft acted on behalf of the vast majority with a whole programmatic demand for women's rights. Many researchers agree that the writer is the ancestor of the liberal direction of feminism, which calls for providing equal opportunities to the sexes. His supporters believe that the oppression of women lies in the refusal to grant them equal rights with men. They recognize social policy as an important potential in establishing women's access to economic opportunities and civil rights. Their main requirements include: the elimination of the legal, economic and public dependence of women; guarantees of independence and objective opportunities for obtaining and improving education and awareness; the establishment of norms and rules that would ensure the same choice and opportunity, which will certainly lead to an improvement in the social status of women.

Liberal feminists distinguish socialization and training as the most important stages in the formation of an individual. "Strengthen the female mind by enlarging it, and there will be end to blind obedience". However, M. Wollstonecraft's statements against "unnatural differences" in society, criticism of some forms of ownership and an attempt to bring together private and public spheres are interpreted by some researchers as the roots of socialist feminism. But I agree with Professor Virginia Sapiro, the author of "A Vindication of Political Virtue: The Political Theory of Mary Wollstonecraft" [1992], which won the American Political Science Association's Victoria Schuck Award for the best book on women and politics, who believes that the views of M. Wollstonecraft on the protection of women's rights are wrongfully attributed to any modern trend of feministic thought. M. Wollstonecraft's philosophy anticipates many ideas of modern feminism, not only liberal or socialist one.

The 20th century and the second wave of feminism actualized her person and returned her ideas ahead of time to the arena of progressive intellectual discussions. Modern western science provides a wide range of studies of M. Wollstonecraft's works. It can be divided into three groups: biographical studies, general works on the history of feminism and works on specific aspects of her activities. For a long time, M. Wollstonecraft was better known thanks to the events of her life, which were told in her first biography, written by her husband William Godwin, political philosopher and novelist. In his memoirs W. Godwin wrote: "There are not many individuals with whose character the public welfare and improvement are more intimately connected, than the author of "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman..." The strength of her mind lays in intuition. She was often right. She was often right, by this means only, in matters of mere speculation. Her religion, her philosophy (in both of which the errors were comparatively few, and the strain dignified and generous) were, as I have already said, the pure result of feeling and taste. She

adopted one opinion, and rejected another, spontaneously, by a sort of tact, and the force of a cultivated imagination; and yet, though perhaps, in the strict sense of the term, she reasoned little, it is surprising what a degree of soundness is to be found in her determinations".

Great importance for the study of the biography and socio-political views of M. Wollstonecraft are sources of personal origin. Most of the epistolary heritage of the writer, as well as several generations of her family, including letters and diaries of her husband W. Godwin, her daughter Mary Shelley and daughter's husband Percy Shelley, famous English poet, are in the Oxford Bodleian Library. In 2010 these materials were digitized and presented on the Internet. Also all personal letters of the writer (354 letters) were published, where we can see many events of her life more clearly. M. Wollstonecraft led a life that was significantly variance with stereotypical notions of her time. Her life deeds, like her work, testify to the firmness and passion of her character, as well as independence of her judgment. Supporter of political reforms, fighter for human rights, writer, reviewer, philosopher, the author of a national education project and early feminist are all of these definitions equally characterize M. Wollstonecraft's figure. During her short literary career (only ten years: 1787-1797) she published eight works of authorship, made a chrestomathy for young women, made three literary translations into English and wrote several hundred reviews for *The Analytical Review*. M. Wollstonecraft was known not only in Britain, but also in France, in the Scandinavian countries and North America. The writer was one of the literary celebrities of her generation.

However, her fame was partly scandalous (the English society of the XVIII century was not ready to understand and accept the idea of female emancipation). "It is time to effect a revolution in female manners - time to restore to them their lost dignity. It is time to separate unchangeable morals local manners". Such words clearly frightened her contemporaries, especially representatives of the weaker sex. M. Wollstonecraft came from a patriarchal family belonging to the middle class of English society, where his father was a tyrant. His humiliation predisposed her to independence already at early age.

She did not receive a systemic education, however she managed to develop her own intellect and create her original works. She had early to earn a living in her professional activities. Her crafts were traditionally female (companion, governess, teacher) and not typical of the majority of women of that time (journalistic, literary, trade representation). Unlike women writers of those years, she initially did not have a high social status. Former companion and governess, then the owner of a private school and the author of several artistic and pedagogical works, M. Wollstonecraft was influenced by the political views of the Protestant dissenters from Newington Green (open space in north London) and then radical environment of the publisher Joseph Johnson. She became a very radical writer considering that "slavery to monarchs and ministers, which the world will be long freeing itself from, and whose deadly grasp stops the progress of the human mind, is not yet abolished". M. Wollstonecraft wrote the work "An Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution" (1794) about the history of the great event which was happening in front of her (she was in France at that time). Warmly supporting the revolution she still denounced the French radicals acted like "a race of monsters" and "made a mockery of justice". She shifted from initial enthusiasm for the French Revolution to bitter opposition to its excesses.

M. Wollstonecraft argued that institutions could not be created out of nothing: they must grow through gradual evolution. To destroy existing institutions because they do not conform to a preconceived scheme is to be guilty of "fatal presumption" which the writer witnessed when she was in France. M. Wollstonecraft was offended by the way that the Jacobins refused to grant Frenchwomen equal rights, denounced "amazons", and made it clear the role of women was to conform to Rousseau's ideal of as a helper to men. Jean-Jack Rousseau's political philosophy heavily influenced the French Revolution and much of his work was agreed by M. Wollstonecraft.

However, she asks why French philosopher's theories about education of the whole person can't be also expanded for women. She questions Rousseau's writings on the place of women and why their natural potential is not allowed to unfold. It is easy to see the philosopher's attitudes on gender as well as education when reading his quasi-novel "Émile" (1762). This work is written in the form of a fictional father's guide to the education and development of a fictional son (Emile). Rousseau argues that the best upbringing for a young boy must, along with developing his intellect and ability to live in a virtuous society, also allow for his masculine drive for independence. French philosopher writes that if men are properly educated they are capable of being all at once passionate, creative and able to exist within civilized society's restraints. This is, however, a delicate balance and in order to maintain it they need to be free of women's distractions. In his novel Rousseau also talks about the education of Emile's wife, Sophie. "When once it is proved that men and women are and ought to be unlike in constitution and in temperament, it follows that their education must be different. A woman's education must therefore be planned in relation to man. To be pleasing in his sight, to win his respect and love, to train him in childhood, to tend him in manhood, to counsel and console, to make his life pleasant and happy, these are the duties of woman for all time, and this is what she should be taught while she is young".

For Rousseau there is only one kind of "good woman" who doesn't try to intrude into the areas of life belonging to men (work, politics etc.). It is a woman who promotes only those abilities that please and serve men, who submits to his judgment and aims at delighting him in all things, and finally who raises his children. He states his preference when describes a right woman for Emile: "a homely girl simply brought up, (rather) than a learned lady". Finally in his book Rousseau attacks female education. "Her education is neither showy nor neglected; she has taste without deep study, talent without art, judgment without learning. Her mind knows little but it is trained to learn; it is well-tilled soil ready for the sower". Rousseau believes that an educated woman is a threat to her husband and society as a whole.

Mary Wollstonecraft admired much of Rousseau's work. In her letters she wrote that "he rambles into the chimerical world in which I too have often wandered". In many respects she was an attempt at a feminist revision of French philosopher's theories. Rousseau's work was typical of that time as it was essentially a man's world. What M. Wollstonecraft argued for was to extend the basic ideas of Enlightenment philosophy to women including Rousseau's educational ideas of how to educate boys to girls. But she was against his writings on the education of women and their place in society. She wrote: "The woman, who has only been taught to please, will soon find that her charms are oblique sun-beams and that they cannot have much effect on her husband's heart when they are seen

every day". If pleasing is all that a woman is meant to do in society then this society is not at the level it could be.

M. Wollstonecraft argues that the home, family life narrows women's horizons, constricts their affections and restricts their sense of public responsibility. This woman cannot be virtuous, vigorous citizen. In "A Vindication..." she denotes that a housewife becomes a mere "like a blind horse in a mill" which bored husband drifts away every evening to search out more "piquant society". The writer adds a real life example: "Poorer women, who must earn money to help support their families, are spared this fate since gainful employment always bestows self-respect and dignity; but a middle-class woman, wholly supported by her husband is in a truly deplorable state, becoming either a frivolous parasite". M. Wollstonecraft feels that Rousseau's theories attack the female sex, claiming that women are weak and artificial and not capable of reasoning. She considers that "this was Rousseau's opinion respecting men: I extend it to women... a woman must be intelligent in her own right" because "meek wives are, in general, foolish mothers".

M. Wollstonecraft agrees that naturally female are the weaker sex but the socially accepted role of a woman is not because it is the tried and true method but through oppression and the lack of aspiration to change. Well-educated women will be good wives, mothers, friends and not the humble dependent of her husband and they will ultimately contribute positively to society. "Let women share the rights and she will emulate the virtues". M. Wollstonecraft maintained that if girls were encouraged from an early age to develop their minds, it would be seen that they were rational creatures and there was no reason for them not to be given the same opportunities as boys with regard to education and training. Women could obtain the professions and have careers just the same as men. In proposing the same type of education for girls as for boys, M. Wollstonecraft also presumed that they may be educated together. It was even more radical than anything proposed before. The idea of co-educational schooling was simply regarded as nonsense by many educational thinkers of that time. It was fashionable to contend that if women were educated, they would lose any power they had over their husband. M. Wollstonecraft was furious about it and maintained that she did not wish women to have power over men but over themselves. She had a picture of an ideal family where the babies were nourished by an intelligent mother and not sent away to nurses. And fathers were friends to their children rather than tyrants. Essentially family members were all regarded as rational beings and children should be able to judge their parents like anyone else. Family relationships therefore became educational ones.

M. Wollstonecraft's theories on education go further than Rousseau's ones not only because they are extended to women but because of the idea of co-education. One of the M. Wollstonecraft's books was printed under the interesting and ambitious title "Original Stories from Real Life: with Conversations Calculated to Regulate the Affections, and Form the Mind to Truth and Goodness" (1788). Like her first book "Thoughts on the Education of Daughters" (1787), it was intended to shape the education of young people. Although it may look, at first glance, like a simple collection of children's tales, "Original Stories" sets forth a series of philosophically sophisticated models for adult conversations on ethics with children. By engaging these stories with their teachers, children would gradually learn to govern themselves by rational rules of moral conduct. M. Wollstonecraft addressed her book to mothers

and children, expecting the growing numbers of literate middle class women to read the stories aloud to their babies until they could read on their own.

The stated intention of "Original Stories" was nothing less than liberating children from the irrational modes of education that prevailed in late eighteenth-century European culture. The only difference between the sexes with regard to this bad system of education was that boys grew up to be men, who held most of the power in society, despite their preparation for handling it wisely or justly. In M. Wollstonecraft's view, neither boys nor girls would acquire the virtues necessary for gaining salvation in the eyes of God while subjected to such a bad education that stimulated the passions to triumph over reason and thus morality. Provocatively comparing children to chattel slaves, she asks, "Why then do we suffer children to be bound with fetters which their half-formed faculties cannot break?" because parents of "the present generation have their own passions to combat with", they were unreliable educators of their own children. "Cruel necessity" demanded that tutors must step in to teach these children as in Rousseau's "Emile".

The most authoritative contemporary researcher of life and work of M. Wollstonecraft is Janet Todd, the professor at the University of Aberdeen (Scotland). Professor J. Todd is an internationally renowned scholar of early women writers and author of many critical works on subjects ranging from working-class poets and Restoration tricksters to Rousseau. Most recently she has been working critically on Jane Austen, both as an author and as a global phenomenon. She has collected, edited and published the M. Wollstonecraft's letters. "The Collected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft" contains all of her known correspondence.

Enlightenment feminist and famed author of "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman", M. Wollstonecraft was also one of the most distinctive letter writers of the eighteenth century. She talked and thought on paper; her letters were a large part of the drama of her life. In them she grows from an awkward child of fourteen to the woman of thirty-eight facing death in childbirth. Wollstonecraft's letters, whether written in haste or carefully composed, opinionated or vulnerable, stand out among those of other contemporary writers for their candor and lack of sentimentality. They create a palpable world, a sense of inner vitality, revealing a woman of consistent character who nonetheless struggled to reconcile disparate aspects of her life: integrity and sexual longing; the needs and duties of a woman; motherhood and intellectual life; fame and domesticity; reason and passion. Written in cramped lodgings and swaying boats, in the wilds of Scandinavia and cold Paris, these letters record not a finished, ordered life viewed retrospectively but the dynamic process of living. Collectively, they form a remarkable work of autobiography that reveals the many dimensions of M. Wollstonecraft's genius.

Based on them, J. Todd has written the biography of Mary Wollstonecraft and her daughters. "Mary Wollstonecraft: A Revolutionary Life" by Janet Todd remains one of the most important contributions in exploring the extraordinary life of the first philosopher of feminism. Excitable, proud, highly imaginative, and terrifically self-assured, M. Wollstonecraft moved through a remarkable range of intellectual and moral positions with the determination and tenacity that marks an authentic search for truth and self-fulfillment. The biographer stresses the seriousness and originality of this search, carefully tracing the elements of morality, politics, sexuality, and imagination that kept

reconfiguring themselves in M. Wollstonecraft's views back to her experience. This canny and articulate biography also makes it clear that the mother of modern feminism was a drama queen of no mean proportions: tactless, self-absorbed, with a capacity for complaint and reproach as inexhaustible as her energy and intellectual openness. Despite, or perhaps because of, the burden of her gender, and despite her poverty, frequent depressions and occasional suicidal moments, M. Wollstonecraft's achievement was astounding: several novels; many essays, reviews and books of advice; and, notably, "A Vindication...", a fundamental feminist document. The biographer analyzes the writer's contribution to the protection of women's rights and recognizes the strong spiritual principle that has stood the test of time in the writer's work.

When, in October 1790, Edmund Burke, member of British parliament, published his "Reflections on the Revolution", a great sigh of wonder went up from the rich and powerful in Britain as they flocked to read such an eloquent excuse for their fears and prejudices. 35 000 copies were sold almost at once. This was a huge number on any criterion. Only twenty eight days after the "Reflections" hit the streets of London, a furious little book entitled "A Vindication of the Rights of Men" was produced by the republican publisher Joseph Johnson. It sold so well that Johnson brought out another edition three weeks later. This time the author was revealed as Mary Wollstonecraft, 31 years old, who had written several progressive stories and booklets but had not yet tried her hand at political polemic.

The revelation of the author's name led to predictable outrage. Horace Walpole, English politician, for instance, denounced her as a "hyena in petticoats". But hyena had no finished yowling. And in January 1792, Johnson brought out another book by M. Wollstonecraft. This was "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman", which became a feminist textbook for 200 years and more. Despite its slightly bossy style the new book infuriated important men almost as rapidly as it absorbed Johnson's growing female readership.

Not all the angry men were reactionaries. William Godwin, who's "Political Justice" (1793) was very fortunate to escape prosecution for sedition, denounced the "Vindication" as "deficient in method and arrangement". Godwin met Mary Wollstonecraft at literary dinner parties and was irritated by her strong views and especially by her strong expression of them. In her works and in her conversation M. Wollstonecraft directed her fire at received notions, particularly the complementary nature of men and women, he the leader, in Janet Todd's words, "rational, ambitious and strong", she the leader, "emotional, intuitive and tender".

There are other biographies of Mary Wollstonecraft and among them it is worth noting the extensive work of the British researcher Claire Tomalin, known for her biographies on Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, Samuel Pepys and Jane Austen. Her first book "The Life and Death of Mary Wollstonecraft" won the Whitbread Book Award. It is a vivid evocation not only of what Mary went through but also of how women lived in the second part of the eighteenth century. Most of all, however, author makes M. Wollstonecraft unforgettable.

In 1997 C. Tomalin organized the exhibition about Mary Wollstonecraft and her daughter Mary Shelley, which told about the fate of two extraordinary women of that time, mother and daughter. Mary Shelly, novelist, short story writer, dramatist, essayist, biographer and travel writer, is

best known for her Gothic novel "Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus" (1818).

In London in July, 2004 C. Tomalin has unveiled a blue plaque in honor of Mary Wollstonecraft at 45 Dolben Street, Southwark, where she lived from 1788. Claire Tomalin also edited and introduced Mary Shelly's story for children, "Maurice". In the late 1960s-1970s under the influence of feminist studies the emphasis shifted from the personality of M. Wollstonecraft to her works, which are trying to study today in a holistic relationship with the events of her life considering also the cultural and intellectual background of that era. For example, the book "The Woman Movement: Feminism in the United States and England" by William L. O'Neill, ex-professor of history at Rutgers University (New Jersey, USA). This unusual book traces the development of the feminist movement in America and, to a lesser extent, in England. The comparison between the movements is enlightening.

Professor W. L. O'Neill starts with Mary Wollstonecraft and investigates the development of the attack on Victorian institutions right up to the 1920s and on to the 'permissive' society in which we live. The story covers all facets of the movement: the struggle for enfranchisement, for property rights, and education, for working women in industry, for temperance and social reform. These remarkable women leaders live in these pages, but even more in the Documents which form the second part of the book.

The author believed that the ideas of M. Wollstonecraft were too progressive for her time. He concluded: "If she was born a generation or two later, when many women began to fight against the laws and prohibitions that limited them, her life could have been very different; not necessarily happier but certainly more productive and more obvious with respect to the needs and interests of her sex".

Susie Steinbach, American professor of history in the Hamline University's College of Liberal Arts, and the director of the University Honors Program, wrote the book "Women in England 1760-1914: A Social History" [2004]. It is a rich and fresh survey of women's lives between George III and the First World War. Using diaries, letters, memoirs as well as social and statistical research, the author looks at life - expectancy, sex, marriage and childbirth, and work inside the home, for all classes of women. S. Steinbach shows the poverty and struggles of the working class as well as the leadership roles of middle-class and elite women. She considers the influence of religion, education and politics, especially the advent of organized feminism and the suffragette movement. The author looks too at the huge role played by women in the British Empire: how imperialism shaped English women's lives and how women also molded the Empire. She shows the tension between the political, legal and cultural restrictions against women and the impressive range of activities in which they nevertheless engaged. The ideas of M. Wollstonecraft on the status and rights of women are interpreted by S. Steinbach in line with liberal feminism.

"Colonialism and Gender Relations from Mary Wollstonecraft to Jamaica Kincaid: East Caribbean Connections" [1993] by Moira Ferguson, professor of English at University of Missouri, Kansas City, is against the historical background of slavery and colonialism. This work investigates how white and Afro-Caribbean women writers have responded to feminist, abolitionist and post-emancipationist issues. The author aims to reveal a relationship between colonial exploitation and female sexual oppression. Moira Ferguson juxtaposes English and Dominican writers of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, from M. Wollstonecraft's linking of

colonialism and women's oppression, to contemporary women's views of the British colonial project.

The author highlights usually veiled intersections between the texts of Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Austen, Anne Hart Gilbert, Elizabeth Hart, Jean Phys, and Jamaica Kincaid, and underscores their feminist agendas in the context of slavery and colonialism. Beginning with a discussion of M. Wollstonecraft's polemic for women's rights in the metropolitan center, M. Ferguson shows how that polemic linked colonial slavery to female subjugation and male desire. Colonialism and gender from Mary Wollstonecraft to Jamaica Kincaid (professor of African-American Studies at Harvard University) traces a discourse of struggle between writers and activists at the metropolitan center and those at the political periphery. "The continuum of their writings", notes M. Ferguson, "further suggests that during 150 years of slavery, emancipation, and post-colonialism, recognition of the link between gender and colonial relations became commensurately clearer".

"Mary Wollstonecraft and 200 years of feminisms", edited by Eileen Janes Yeo, professor of social and cultural history at the University of Strathclyde (Glasgow), based on the conference of the same name which celebrated the anniversary of the publication of "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman", held at the University of Sussex in December, 1992. To mark the 200th anniversary of M. Wollstonecraft's death, this book brings together contributions which capture an important and continuing moment in feminist scholarship and practice. They range from interdisciplinary readings of Wollstonecraft's texts to historical explorations of later feminist movements to interpretations of the politics of gender in key parts of the world today. The book reflects a convergence of feminist theory, scholarship, and practice. Its themes include the roles of imagination, reason, and romance in sexual politics; the problems of forming feminist identities; the tensions between ideas of equality or common humanity; and differences of sex, class, and race power. These make it required reading for anyone engaged in current feminist analysis.

To study the socio-political ideas of Mary Wollstonecraft, the comparative-historical method is considered optimal, which allows to make the necessary comparisons of various socio-political concepts in order to identify their common features, characteristics, originality and degree of borrowing. The evolution of her political views revealed fully in her works devoted to the French Revolution.

The ideas of M. Wollstonecraft on the issue of woman's equality are studied within the framework of the problem approach from the point of view of the social and right status of a woman, her role in family and marriage relations, female upbringing and education. "The education of women has been attended to more in recent years than formerly; but they're still regarded as a frivolous sex, and are ridiculed or pitied by writers who try to improve them by satire or instruction. It is acknowledged that they spend many of their earliest years acquiring a smattering of accomplishments, but strength of body and mind are sacrificed to libertine notions of beauty, to the desire to get themselves settled by marriage - the only way women can rise in the world", - she wrote. The issue of female education was one of the main concerns of M. Wollstonecraft, more than others. She argued that the inaccessibility of full-fledged education for women was the main reason for their low position in society. She also explained the passivity of European women in the political and social life of their countries by low educational level.

Despite the fact that M. Wollstonecraft was one of the consistent critics of the family system of her time, she did

not deny the institution of marriage and its significance for civilized society. She believed that the marriage as union between a man and a woman should be based not on submission, but on such classical republican concepts as freedom of choice, equality, mutual respect, friendship, and care for each other. M. Wollstonecraft offered a woman to look for alternative happiness in knowledge, favorite business, work and creativity, which sounded defiant in her century. In her opinion, constant occupations of daily household soften mind and health of a woman, making her too sensitive, weak, and dependent on emotions. Mary Wollstonecraft offered to curb feelings and emotions, which are bad advisers in life, by mental exercises. She believed that a man and a woman have one common dominant in life - self-improvement and development of their talents. She blamed the existence of gender inequality established from immemorial time by male dominance.

M. Wollstonecraft believed that a woman, like a man, is able to control herself through mind. In "A Vindication..." we see her strong faith in the power of the human mind, which can withstand any evil temptations. By developing sensuality and emotionality in a woman, as Rousseau suggests, society just deprives them of the opportunity to use fully this universal tool. It extends the principle of rationality to any type of activity from to the upbringing of children, but in reality society rarely follows it. According to M. Wollstonecraft, society cultivated "unnatural sensitivity" in women, and she harshly criticized for that her contemporaries. In most cases she saw female representatives as vain, impermanent, idle, stupid, superstitious, cunning, frivolous and childish. Especially it was characteristic of women from high society whose behavior allowed men to talk about female inferiority. Ideal woman of Rousseau (Sophie) is homebody person who should not take part in any public life of society.

But M. Wollstonecraft considered the private sphere could be an aid for the public sphere. She admitted that women can also participate in public affairs, where rationality, formed by proper education, will help them not to forget about natural and respected functions of wives and mothers. The public-political life of country will only benefit if women are allowed to learn useful skills, and not be only a pleasant adornment. In the spirit of the ideas of her time, M. Wollstonecraft's manifesto in defense of female equality contains the requirement of a "revolution of female behavior". "I earnestly wish to point out what true dignity and human happiness consist in; I want to persuade women to aim at strength of mind and body, and to convince them that the soft phrases 'susceptibility of heart' 'delicacy of sentiment', and 'refinement of taste' are almost synonymous with expressions indicating weakness, and that creatures who are the objects only of pity and the kind of love that has been called 'pity's sister' will soon become objects of contempt. So I dismiss those pretty feminine phrases that the men condescendingly use to make our slavish dependence easier for us, and I despise the weak elegance of mind, exquisite sensibility, and sweet docility of manners that are supposed to be the sexual characteristics of the weaker sex. I want to show that elegance is inferior to virtue, that the most praiseworthy ambition is to obtain a character as a human being, whether male or female, and that lesser ambitions should be tested against that one".

Conclusion

M. Wollstonecraft's times are not our; her attitude are often alien, her prejudices frequently grate. Her pres-

criptions for women (in common with those proffered by virtually all progressive moralists of her day, including other feminists) are dauntingly tern. But if we want to understand her, these are differences to explore, not to deplore or to ridicule. She was a troubled, determined woman who, in the late 1780s, became a type of thinker unique to the late Enlightenment: a radical philosopher, one of a small group of left-wing Protestant aufklärer (guide) who, inspired by the American and French Revolutions, sought to turn the 'liberty of reason' to libertarian political ends. Self-educated in advanced thought and also deeply pious, M. Wollstonecraft was preoccupied with issues that still resonate politically: individual rights; material and cultural inequalities; the social consequences of sexual difference, as well as with others that require some stretch of historical imagination for their significance to be grasped: theodicy and the workings of Providence; the Christian-Platonic ideal of erotic transcendence (with which she hoped to remodel female sexuality); the Rousseau's critique of civilization.

To all these matters, M. Wollstonecraft brought an enormous appetite for innovation and disputation - leading impulses behind her feminism - while to her career as a revolutionary propagandist she brought a passionate utopianism, an absolute faith in the eventual arrival of a 'perfect age' of universal freedom. Mary Wollstonecraft was a woman ahead of her time. She was faced with many problems (sometimes they were of her own making) and she is much like the women of today seeking the life does not push women to the bottom of the rung while only males climb the ladder. What better time to open her books and see what she went through. M. Wollstonecraft's unpredictable and often contradictory behavior is not ignored or excused. But although she is once accused, grotesquely, of "sounding like Burke in his Reflections", neither is she short-changed. The full force of her achievement emerges more strongly from stern criticism, as does the fact that her life was, above all else, a revolutionary one. There was so much passion and challenge in her as if she was constantly at war with everything and anything, enjoying every moment of the fight. Such fighters as Mary Wollstonecraft does not live long in the world. She was the embodiment of contradictions. She suffered from her impulses. Her passionate nature tore her apart. Such a strong woman like Mary was so vulnerable when it came to love. But if she were not susceptible to the pain of the heart, there would be hope for us.

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МЕРІ ВОЛСТОНКРАФТ - ПЕРШИЙ ФІЛОСОФ ФЕМІНІЗМУ

Відносні успіхи жіночого руху у боротьбі за гендерну рівність обумовили актуальність досліджень, присвячених вивченню "філософії з жіночим обличчям" взагалі та історії фемінізму зокрема. Однією з історико-філософських проблем, навколо яких концентрується увага сучасних авторів, є пошук джерел фемінізму. При цьому хронологічні межі генези відповідного вчення варіюються між епохою Ренесансу (Ізота Ногаролла, Лаура Черета, Христина Пізанська) та серединою ХХ століття (Симона де Бовуар, Бетті Фрідан). Почесним правом вважатися фундатором фемінізму наділяються Афра Бенн, Мері Естел, Пулен де ля Бар та ін. На цьому тлі помітно виділяється постать Мері Волстонкрафт (1759-1797), авторки "Обґрунтування прав жінки" (1792). Стаття присвячена доведенню тези про історико-філософський пріоритет Мері Волстонкрафт в обґрунтуванні основних феміністських принципів. Ця жінка-близкавка жила у ХVIII столітті, коли "права жінок" вважали такою ж абсурдною річчю як "права тварин". І навіть більш абсурдною, тому що перші закони, що захищають коней і собак від насильства, з'явилися на двадцять років раніше від актів, що захищають жінок. У ту епоху влаштовувалися революції, боролися за скасування рабства, кидали виклик релігії, але мало хто замислювався про права жінок. М. Волстонкрафт стверджувала: жінки повинні мати ті ж права, що й чоловіки. Запорукою цього має стати гідна освіта для жінок, яким штучно закрили доступ до пристойних навчальних закладів. М. Волстонкрафт була впевнена, що здатність до раціонального мислення не пов'язана зі статтю, а жіноча "слабкість" та готовність підкорятися є ніщо інше, як наслідок чоловічого прагнення виховати ці якості у жінках. У статті доводиться, що задовго до сучасних дебатів про економічну роль домашнього господарства, М. Волстонкрафт вперше в історії зробила висновок про те, що в суспільстві, де домашні обов'язки не оплачуються, зберігатиметься економічна залежність жінки від чоловіка. Домашні справи та материнство вона називала "формою розумного громадянства", розглядаючи їх як джерело особистого задоволення або страждання жінки. Аж до ХХ століття людство відмовлялося прийняти її, передвісницю фемінізму, такою, як вона була: зухвалою, відчайдушною, не завжди щасливою жінкою, але яка завжди знала собі ціну. І все ж деяких представниць слабкої статі її шлях надихав та підтримував. Серед них - Елізабет Браунінг, Жорж Санд, Вірджинія Вулф і Мері Шеллі. Тільки з появою наукової феміністської критики (1960-1970) праці М. Волстонкрафт нарешті були визнані основоположними для даного філософського напрямку.

Ключові слова: обґрунтування прав жінок; фемінізм; гідна освіта; жіноча слабкість; залежність; страждання; почуття; мислення; розумне громадянство.

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