

**ENGLISH NOVEL OF THE XVIII CENTURY: SOCIO-CULTURAL VERSIONS OF RISE OF THE GENRE**

The historical and literary works about a novel, that appeared while farewelling the 20<sup>th</sup> century and entering 21<sup>st</sup>, can be united due to sociocultural direction of the research aimed at maintaining a dialogue with the predecessors. Radical shift of philosophical and aesthetic context of the last decades and methodological renovation of literary criticism caused dissatisfaction with the notions about the past that seemed to be steady. Never-ending process of asking questions, that trigger reconsideration of established views, provoked the scholars to study the 18<sup>th</sup> century – the time radically changed the destiny of a West-European novel. So it turned to be a literary form that became an example of modern aesthetics.

Outlining the literary critics' point of view that reconstructed the context of spiritual changes in England in 18<sup>th</sup> century, it is possible to mark out a number of topics with great significance for the present. There are a lot of studies about the ways of genre establishment which tent to assess its humanistic potential, to consider the temporal limits of readers' demand for protheistic form of literary works and the consequences of the classical images deconstruction.

Changing mosaic of co-existing literary forms in English culture by the middle of 18<sup>th</sup> century is famous for its genre «masks», «adventures», «lives», «memoirs», «expeditions», «fortunes and misfortunes», «tales». By the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century the term «novel» was not considered to be a common word, it had become a new literary genre depicting everyday prosaic existence.