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Women in Culture. Introduction to the Issue

The late 1960s and early 1970s development of liberation discourses (post-colonial, racial, ethnic, gender, environmental, etc.) resulted in them turning not only and not so much into an intellectual strategy, but instead, in their entering culture as social practices, and becoming the main patterns of behavior and models of thinking.¹ In this context, the feminist discourse,² which initially developed as a political and legal narrative of the struggle for women's rights, unfortunately became a world view and even an ideological discourse of opposition and competition between the sexes as it spread. In view of the above, the current cultural situation pursued by feminist activists in terms of gender can be described as a struggle for *alpha* leadership between an antagonist and a protagonist in the course of a liberation discourse (Gaag, 2014; Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1985, pp. 551–604; Wood, 2011). Such a struggle is also often described in the terminology of Darwinian natural selection and, therefore, it is realized in social practices as an all-out war between the “oppressors” and the “oppressed,” justified by the criteria of biological (non)utility in nature or society.

Presenting the situation in this way herein is not a defense of traditionalist or conservative attitudes, nor is it a denial of the validity of the problems that gave rise to the liberation discourses. While pointing out the above shortcomings of similar discourses, especially feminist ones, we at

1 We consciously avoid concertizing the subjects of discourse because we are not talking about one particular subject but about the model according to which they are constructed.

2 What we mean is the feminist discourse as a whole, without taking into account the dissimilarities in the content of successive waves within the movement (Evans i Chamberlain, 2015, pp. 396–409). In our case, this does not apply, generally speaking, to new objects of oppression indicated by the fourth wave of feminism, since this issue of the journal is devoted to male and female discourse.

the same time recognize their important role in the attempts to solve current social problems. Undoubtedly, discrimination, violence, harassment, etc., are a cancer on the body of contemporary culture, and it is the liberation discourses, through their radicalism, that have been able to diagnose these problems. However, culture differs from surgery in that in the latter, therapy is clearly separated from the problem, whereas in the former, they are now inseparable one from the other. A surgeon can be sure that his or her interference will change the body to a specific, intended extent, while an attempt to change culture does not eliminate any content from it; on the contrary, it expands such content, adding new attitudes, strategies and scenarios of interaction, patterns, images and norms. In this way, feminism did not replace what it opposed, but was added to it as an alternative. Attempts to change the paradigm by means of a cultural displacement (Troitskiy, 2015, pp. 72–73 [66–75]) of certain patterns from social pragmatics, even if not political but ethical mechanisms of regulating behaviors are involved, do not lead to the desired result but, on the contrary, to an obligatory actualization (Troitskiy, 2015; Troitskiy, 2018, pp. 165–180; Nikolayeva i Troitskiy, 2018, pp. 3–19) and thus to the adaptation of the object to the manipulative influence of the subject. We see this as the feminist movement seeks to influence traditional cultural attitudes. In this case, the displaced object always adapts to the new conditions, accommodates the accusations and works with them, reaching a new level of resistance to influence,³ while the feminist theory in each new wave of its evolution marks ever new points of influence on the cultural fabric of contemporaneity.

The reference to masculine and feminine in our publication should not be interpreted as an effort to reassert heteronormativity (Ingraham, 1994, pp. 203–219; Hartmann, Klesse, Wagenknecht, Fritzsche i Hackmann, eds., 2007; Pospelova i Karagapolova, 2012), rejecting the richness of gender issues as a social construct (Richards, Bouman i Barker, eds., 2017). The purpose of using such terminology is different: we want to point to cultural attitudes, which are expressed in practices that have existed for centuries before the emergence of gender theory, which were based on the respective models and which are recognized (because they are an object of criticism and protest) by gender theory itself. The adoption of a similar methodology, moreover, outlines the subject matter of our study, which is limited to European culture, excluding African, Asian and other cultures in which gender identification, according to some scholars, is not explicitly

3 For the interpretation of culture as a virus, cf.: Weinstock, 1997, pp. 83–97.

binary (Nanda, 1990; Bacigalupo, 2003, pp. 322–343),⁴ while the gender binarity inherent in Europeanized cultures is seen as a manifestation of colonialism (Lugones, 2007, pp. 196–198).

The fierce debate between the bearers of different patterns materializes in a constant (almost militant) confrontation, in which radicalized differences at the level of broadly defined corporeality ultimately lead to open conflict. This is the case with skin color, gender, disability and even human-animal differences, realized either in the form of conservative practices (eugenics, selection, apartheid, dog hunting, etc.) or in the form of the protection of liberal attitudes and cultural diversity taken to radical embodiment (reverse discrimination, eco- and zoofascism, etc.). In both of these cases, it is the body that proves to be not only a marker of biological belonging to a particular social group, but also a tool for influencing a particular group as a whole. If we shift our perspective slightly towards the study of armed conflict, if we look at this problem historically, it shall appear quite familiar and obvious: violence against specific bodies of the opposing group has been seen as a way of exerting influence on the group as a whole.

The female body is seen primarily as a group body through which the body of a male representative of that group could be destroyed/humiliated (Altinay i Pető, eds., 2016; Hernes, Kuehnast i Oudraat, eds., 2011). The female body as a tool for the manipulation of the male body appears not only in situations of violence and murder by alleged enemies, but also in the case of revisions of social roles conditioned by gender differences (Enloe, 1983; Sjoberg i Via, eds., 2010). Such cultural attitudes concerning the inseparable link between male and female corporeality in the context of one social body have their origins in the oldest, archaic layers of culture and as such are still present in contemporary consciousness. Similar cultural attitudes will constantly recur under conditions of irrational, involuntary action, in the form of cultural reflexes, primary narratives and patterns that are embodied in social behavior and discursive practices. It is precisely such impossible to rationalize attitudes and patterns that this issue of this journal is devoted to. The authors' aim was to identify similar patterns, to describe and analyze them on the basis of historical material, without treating them politically or ethnically, and to show them in the context of the relevant cultural and historical situation.

4 The same point was made by the Russian ethnographer Bogoraz, who noted during his expeditions to the Chukchee in the early 20th century that shamanic practice did not establish gender boundaries, while the most powerful shamans were “transformed men” or “transformed women” (Bogoraz, 1910).

A similar approach was proposed to the participants of the Feminine and Masculine Discourses in Culture conference (the 1st international scientific conference in the planned series, *Topoi of the Culture of the East and West*), held at the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Cracow on 25–26 March 2019. This special issue is not a collection of conference materials, as out of all the articles submitted to the editor only three were presented as papers at the above mentioned conference. All of these have been additionally reworked in depth for this edition.

The articles presented in this issue reflect major changes in the social and discursive practices of different regions, from the 16th century to the present time. The authors were not restricted by time or region, but it so happened that the published texts deal with cultures of European origin (Russia, England and its colony on the North American continent in what became the United States, and Poland) over the last five centuries. The articles are arranged according to a chronological principle—from the oldest to the newest phenomena and trends. An additional formal principle of this issue was the geographical location of the scope of the individual articles. In this way, the articles can be categorized as follows: the texts by Anna Troitskaya on the 16th century in Elizabethan England and by Riley Bolitho on the Puritans, form a complimentary set. Other articles, devoted to the cultural area of Russia and the Soviet Union, are placed in different sections throughout the issue. In the early pages, there is a text by Elena Ovchinnikova and Sergey Troitskiy on the Russian 16th century along with a study by Laia Perales Galán on Soviet culture. These articles are devoted to practical problems. The authors utilize various methodological approaches, mainly employed by cultural studies (history of culture) and art history. The issue concludes with a more theoretical article by Oksana Kozhemiakina on contemporary perspectives on gender.

The article by Elena Ovchinnikova (Saint Petersburg State University) and Sergey Troitskiy (Saint Petersburg State University) *Gender Identification in Russian Cultural Discourse. From the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment*, drawing on Russian sixteenth century manuscripts, shows changes that were becoming visible in the family culture at the time. Thus, beyond traditional patriarchal patterns, a clear normative division of functions between the husband (man) and the wife (woman) emerged. The consolidation of a system of mutual relations between domestics in the *Domostroy*, which already existed before as a set of self-evident cultural attitudes, contributed to the fact that the elements of this system gradually began to be perceived in culture as independent actors. This, in turn, lead to the 18th century men and women being already perceived also as existing outside the family, for example as independent subjects of economic relationships.

Anna Troitskaya (Herzen Saint Petersburg State University) proposes a slightly different perspective on the cultural practices of the 16th century in her article, *Male and Female Portrait: Towards the Typology of English Elizabethan Miniatures*. It is a literally and figuratively different perspective. Firstly, the article refers to England during the reign of Elizabeth I. Secondly, the study uses a methodology appropriate to history of art studies. The author shows how masculine and feminine discourses were shaped in visual rhetoric, how gender patterns were constructed in the portrait miniatures of the Northern Renaissance on the example of Elizabethan England, which gender features were emphasized in them, and by what visual means they were expressed. The miniature portrait appeared in England in the sixteenth century and immediately became a way of communicating cultural practices associated with the gendered identity of the person depicted.

A sort of continuation of the “English” theme in the issue is Riley Bolitho’s (Saint Petersburg State University) article *The New England Puritan: History, Social Order, and Gender*. It addresses the issue of male and female discourse in Puritan culture. The last is considered primarily as a religious project, initiated in England of the 16th–17th centuries and developed in the English colonies, including North America. The researcher convincingly demonstrates that all gendered attitudes of the Puritans were based on Scripture, while contemporary claims of an “outdated” division of gender and social roles in Puritan families are not an implication of their respect for tradition, but primarily an expression of their religiosity and knowledge of the Bible.

The article by Monika Stankiewicz-Kopeć (Jesuit University Ignatianum in Cracow), *Personal Model of the Polish Woman During the Enslavement Period. Around Pamiątka po dobrej matce by Klementyna Tańska-Hoffman* takes the reader to occupied Poland of the first fifty years after the last partition of the country. The researcher focuses on the novel by Klementyna Tańska (Hoffman) *Pamiątka po dobrej matce, czyli jej ostatnie rady dla córki* [*A memento of a good mother, or her last advice to her daughter*]. It was written with an intent of shaping national role models, to provide an example of a “true Pole,” and to form a system of moral models and rules of conduct. “Proper” dissection of the social roles of men and women within a model for Polish self-identification was one of the tasks of the Polish literature of the time. The novel studied was no exception. The researcher consequently analyses the gender models of the “Polish nation representative” as presented by Klementyna Tańska, adding that today this novel should be treated as a testimony of the time, an artifact and a historical document rather than as an outstanding literary work.

Laia Perales Galán (Saint Petersburg State University) also refers to a specific work to identify the cultural attitudes of a particular culture in

a particular period. Such an example is the Soviet film titled *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (1979) directed by Vladimir Menshov (1939–2021). In her article, *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears: A Matter of Gender and Fate*, the researcher analyses the female images presented in the film in terms of how they reflected/shaped gender stereotypes and cultural attitudes in the Soviet Union of the 1970s. Moreover, the scope of the article is broadened by reaching out to other Soviet films from the same period.

An article by Oksana Kozhemiakina (the Bohdan Khmelnytsky National University of Cherkasy, Ukraine) *Communicative Foundations of Gender Discourse* presents a philosophical approach to gender issues. The generalizing potential of philosophy allows the reader to formulate his or her own understanding of the texts that make up a given journal issue, to interpret the articles, and to answer the questions posed in them independently.

Krzysztof Duda presents his article in the convention of research on the authenticity of social being and sexuality in a historical context. The author undertakes to present these phenomena on the example of Jan Nieciśław Baudouin de Courtenay. Bringing closer the issues of justice and equality in public life, he also creates an opportunity to take a fresh look at this outstanding, yet currently forgotten language and culture researcher.

In addition to the issue topic section, the regular sections are also included. In the first of them, Cross-Cultural Management, we present an article written by Agnieszka Knap-Stefaniuk (Ignatianum University in Cracow) and Joan Sorribes, titled *Values in Managing a Contemporary Enterprise – the Perspective of Intercultural Management*, which aims to determine the role and importance of values in managing a contemporary enterprise, taking into account the perspective of intercultural management.

In the Varia section, we offer the following five articles: in the first one, Marlena Gęborska (University of Silesia) proposes to look at the film adaptations of youth literature of the 21st century as a system of cultural codes; Katarzyna Rynkowska (Adam Mickiewicz University Poznań) in her text *A Journey to the Extremes of the Senses – Searching for New Forms of Spirituality* takes up the issue of significance of those forms for the West-erner searching for metaphysics; Beata Bigaj-Zwonek (Ignatianum University in Cracow); in her article *Echoes of Goya in Graphic Images of Social and Political Conflicts*, brings closer the features of the Spanish master's graphics and presents examples of his works from different periods, which indicate a link with his artistic language; the next article, by Katarzyna Korneluk-Markiewicz (Ignatianum University in Cracow), titled *The Icelandic völva and the Old Polish Witch. A Comparative Analysis* compares

information from Icelandic sagas and Old Polish folk tales on the cultural role of witches; the last text, by Konrad Oświecimski (Ignatianum University in Cracow) titled *The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Context of the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election Campaign*, takes us back to contemporary issues, still vividly troubling the public opinion.

We wish you an enjoyable and inspiring read.

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