

SEX AND GENDER: SOCIAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE AND METHODOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE ISSUE

Стаття присвячена дослідженню понять «стать» і «гендер» у соціальній структурі суспільства. Простежено розвиток теоретичних концепцій гендеру, проаналізовано вплив філософських течій на формування гендерних теорій. Показано, що гендерні дослідження останніх десятиліть виявили, що поняття статі, гендеру і гендерної асиметрії стають головним предметом вивчення філософії фемінізму, а маскулінність – одним із напрямків постфемінізму. Тому з'явилися праці про «кризу маскулінності» і переваги «фемінних» психологічних рис, переосмислення питання місця та ролі жінки в сучасному світі, без вирішення яких неможливий поступальний розвиток сучасного демократичного суспільства. Розглянуто процес взаємодії природних відмінностей та соціокультурних впливів у реалізації прав та можливостей для жінок і чоловіків у суспільстві.

Ключові слова: *стать, гендер, гендерні ролі, маскулінність, фемінність, чоловіче, жіноче.*

Статья посвящена проблематике пола в контексте гендерных исследований. Показано, что гендерные исследования последних десятилетий выявили, что понятие пола, гендера и гендерной асимметрии становятся главным предметом изучения философии феминизма, а маскулинность – одним из направлений постфеминизма. Поэтому появились труды о «кризисе маскулинности» и преимуществах «феминных» психологических черт. Переосмысление вопроса места и роли женщины в современном мире, без решения которых невозможно поступательное развитие современного демократического общества. Рассмотрен процесс взаимодействия природных различий и социокультурных влияний в реализации прав и возможностей для женщин и мужчин в обществе.

Ключевые слова: *пол, гендер, гендерные роли, маскулинность, феминности, мужское, женское.*

The article is devoted to the issue of sex in the context of gender research. The gender research of recent decades indicate that the notion of sex, gender and gender asymmetry are becoming the main subject matters for feminism philosophy studies, while masculinity is one of the directions of postfeminism. Therefore studies on «masculinity crisis» and predominance of «feminine» psychological features appeared. As well as reframing of the issue of a woman's place and role in the modern world, without solving of which the upward tendency of the modern democratic society is impossible. The process of interaction of natural and socio-cultural differences in the effects of the rights and opportunities for women and men in society.

Key words: *sex, gender, gender roles, masculinity, femininity, male, female.*

Topicality. The issue of sex falls within the field of philosophical problematics since the ancient times, taking its inherent forms of discussions every epoch and enlightening this or that aspect. Every epoch approached the subject in its own way, gradually deleting it from its research field. Only in the end of the 20th century, when changes in the social structure and political life took place, established stereotypes peculiar for the previous century collapsed and moved the issue to the level of theoretical study. Gender theory became one of the directions that study the issue of sex, namely the attitude and status of a woman and man, their social life and acquired life experience, realization of

their social and role characteristics and peculiarities, having started gender research.

The aim of the article is the research of the issue of sex in the context of gender research. Gender is something into what society turns physical, anatomical and psychological differences between people. The notion of male and female behavior, masculine and feminine manners, actions, speech are carried by gender constructs, whereas they embody social expectations towards the characteristics of «a real man» and «a real woman». These are not biological facts, they are culturally specific beliefs that organize social practice one way but not another.

Gender methodology is a cross-disciplinary methodology. It includes philosophy, sociology, psychoanalysis, literary studies. Consideration of many problems connected with gender issues remains urgent. Nowadays in Ukraine there is a tendency to deepen the research of gender topic.

Forming of the gender approach did not accidentally coincide with a wide-ranged discussion of the philosophical issue of correlation between the biological and social nature of a human. The issue of gender identification, defining the role of the social and cultural, on the one hand, and of the biological, on the other hand, became the focus of discussion in the West.

Having started a new thinking paradigm, which focuses on a person's sex, gender methodology brought new problems of human existence to the foreground of social studies. These problems turned out to be universal, considering that sex – not only as a personal thing, but also as the notion of gender – is a universal characteristic of human beingness. Reconceptualization of the issue showed that this obvious truth used to be ignored in traditional social studies which distanced «sex» and «human» from each other. A man was a «human» with his «sex». Therefore the issue of a human was the primary issue of philosophy, while the issue of sex was the secondary one. Psychology was neutral or «sexless» (I. Kon) and it was oriented to the masculine norm [*Introduction to gender studies, 2001: p.92*].

Theoreticians of feminism are beginning to study social technology of forming gender roles, the way people form gender awareness through different social institutions, art, science and, finally, everyday experience. «Gender as a social aspect of sex attitude», researchers claim, «is constructed and expressed in many spheres of social life. It includes culture, ideology, discourse practice, though it is not equated to them. Gender differentiation in domestic and professional tasks, state organization, sexuality, violence structure and many other aspects of social organization influence gender relationships».

One of the peculiarities of the modern stage of gender research is that alongside with women men are more often chosen as its subject matter. For some authors the question at issue is the fact that gender class or social group does not keep up with the call of the times: their activity and group self-consciousness, conception of the type a person can and must be do not accord

with social demands and must be radically changed. Other authors perceive the social processes as a threat to «natural» basis of human civilization and encourage men as traditional protectors of stability and order to put an end to the degradation and bring the society to the quiet and safe past [*Introduction to gender studies, 2001: p.562*].

Up to the middle of 1980s the books and research papers of medical and biological character were devoted to male problems. After that the number of publications rose, capturing more and more new topics and spheres of knowledge. More editions about men and for men appeared. These editions included a considerable body of interesting new data about different aspects of male being. Yet the correlation between the notions «male being» and «masculinity» remained open for discussions. Male research means the subject field that includes everything concerning men, the biology of male body including. Masculinity is more often interpreted as a special social identity which exists in a particular environment and is changed together with it.

As well as other gender categories «masculinity» does not have any clear definition and is defined in at least three different ways:

– masculinity is a category referring to a complex of behavioral and psychical qualities and peculiarities that are objectively inherent in men as contrasted with women;

– masculinity is a category referring to one of the elements of symbolic culture of society, a complex of social conceptions, mindsets and believes in who a man is and what qualities are attributed to them;

– masculinity is a system of directions referring not to an average but to an ideal «real» man, this is a standard of manliness.

But individual qualities, stereotypes of mass consciousness and societal norms as well as our conception of real, desirable and the way things should be never coincide. Therefore different canons of masculinity exist, as well as different paradigms of studies that complement each other. Moreover they are implemented by different academic disciplines.

Psychoanalysis is the most popular paradigm of masculinity and femininity within gender research. It is universal in a sense that it accepts universal male qualities as well as mechanisms and stages of forming of male character. Nevertheless it is considered that the following qualities are not biologically given and are formed in the process of individual development as a result of interaction between a child and parents.

Most social scientists and psychologists are nevertheless skeptical towards the psychoanalytical paradigm. Basic categories of psychoanalysis are not scientific notions, they are metaphors, and its conclusions cannot be statistically proved. Different schools and trends in psychoanalysis (Freud, Jung, neo-Freudians, Lacan) are conceptually not in accord with each other, as the same terms denote different things. Following ordinary sense psychoanalytical theories reduce masculinity to sexuality and describe it using sexological terms. Psychoanalytical paradigm allows expressing and describing subjective

experience of men related to «masculinity crisis», but specifically historical social realities, and especially mechanisms of social changes, evade it.

In the light of psychoanalysis masculine self-consciousness and behavior are becoming the result of imitation of and identification with a certain man-father or his symbolic image.

Masculinity and femininity are not connected with biological sex; they consist of distinctive psychological features, historically predetermined by cultural peculiarities of a certain social environment. Masculinity is associated with activeness, independence, self-confidence, while femininity is associated with dependability, timidity, and sentiments.

One of the key gender issues is the issue of patriarchy. At the beginning of 1990s a Sociology Professor S. Walby (Great Britain) supplemented the issue of patriarchy with sociological content, having defined patriarchy as «a system of interconnected social structures with the help of which men oppress and exploit women».

Male domination appeared as a result of women giving birth and raising children and narrowing their life activities to motherhood and housework only. Women completely depended on their physiology; frequent pregnancies, taking care of babies resulted in women's dependency on men as breadwinners. Gradually, institutionalization of patriarchy as a system of social control and order took place, transforming from microlevel as the sphere of private relationships on a household scale to macrolevel as a system of social relationships. All modern societies exist in ideological networks of patriarchy having only few differences in the degree and character of manifestation of social inequality as to the status of men and women, i.e. gender inequalities [Ivashchenko, 1998: p.86].

The last in the list of theoretical gender perspectives is the feminist theory, the central tenet and starting point of which is oppression, oppression of women in (capitalistic) society. Feminism is being quickly developed in the direction of practical proposals generation as to probable ways of overcoming the oppressed state of a woman as a social issue of capitalistic society.

The main postulate of feminism lies in the idea that it is beneficial for all men to keep patriarchy as a social order where women are systematically oppressed by men in all spheres of life. But in an ideal society individuals need to have opportunities to do the jobs that suit them the most regardless their sex. Contrary to labor division by sex feminism proposes a concept of cultural labor division, according to which sex behavior or rather gender behavior is defined by the cultural development of society.

Modern feminist theoretical perspective brought to life by political feminist movement is available in three trends:

- Liberal or moderate feminism;
- Marxist or socialistic feminism;
- Radical feminism.

A common feature of all trends is their focus on the topic of oppression of a woman, and differences lie in the approach to definition of this social phenomenon and suggestions of ways to overcome it. Liberal feminism deals with exposing discriminative forms of treatment of women with the following solving of the problem by means of state reforms.

At first liberal ideas concerned exclusively men and male liberation from monarchical rule. A significant contribution to formulating the necessity of emancipation was made by the English philosopher and politician J. Mill. His ideas about equality of women are explicated in the essay «The Subjection of Women» which was written in 1863. There he criticized the principle of «primary domination of one sex over the other» as unjust in its core which is «one of the main obstacles on the way of humanity to perfection». He offered to substitute it for the principle of «ideal equality» which suggested no power or privileges for any of the parties as well as denying the incapacity of either of them.

The political doctrine of liberalism by itself encourages its followers to admit equality of women in society. But at a certain stage of its development it contradicts itself. On the one hand, individual freedom is advocated, on other hand, liberal ideologists are against any interference of a state to support the condition of equal opportunities to implement such freedom. States, which build their politics on the basis of liberal ideology, follow the principle of financing the social sphere. One cannot expect to see the wide spreading of a positive act policy directed at the level of increasing of women participation in political life of these states. In this way liberalism, being the main trend within which the concept of equality of women was directly implemented, justifies the positions of opponents to practical reaching of female equality specifically because they rely on person's own powers that should not be supported by the state. Liberal ideology embodies its inner contradiction that has significant practical consequences.

Marxist, or socialistic, feminism is based upon the idea that oppression of women is the result of capitalistic and patriarchic social relationships, and liberation from oppressed state is possible and connected with completion of capitalistic phase and overcoming the cruel control of men. Radical feminism sees the cause of the problematic situation in the existence of patriarchy, that is male domination and control over women irrespective of economical system and encourages to fight for freeing from such control.

The main goal of feminism is to introduce canons into science, confrontation of cultural concepts and canonic topics with feministic theories.

The main feature of female research is the development of collective ways of activity. Although women – scientists, medical workers, artists and many others – work alone, they often unite their resources (knowledge, skills and energy) for collective work, the result of which puts an emphasis on united effort of a group but not on individual efforts. Firstly, collective activity is the reciprocal support in complicated endeavors. Secondly, the majority of issues

need to be assessed not by one person, but by experts with various knowledge and experience.

The difference between female research and studies of women lies in the consideration of female life experience within social and cultural reality as the basis of a scientific research that changed not only the type of argumentation but also brought inquisitiveness to it. Traditional researches about women stopped being studied as scientifically justified statements, which can explain unequal social positions of men and women. «Theories», which assigned certain irrationality, timidity, skillful housekeeping to women, are now considered to be male strategies. The combination of male experience of creating theories that also claimed to represent specific life demands of women and their peculiar perception of reality.

It was important for the first stage of female research to reveal and name the differences between men and women. The main task consisted in supplying the information from women and about women in order to create in this way the basis for new theoretical concepts. From this moment it became important to devote gender research to continued criticizing of the outplacement of women, and more emphasis is made on critical analysis of mechanisms connected with hierarchization than on description of power mechanisms. Unlike the previous one, criticism of stereotypical representation of femininity is trying at the same time to adjust the representation, that is, to substitute it for a more «correct» one.

Femininity and masculinity as perfect parts of a whole are complemented with variants of ways of male – female subjectification, which reflect the urge to equal entering the social life.

The definition of a man and a woman, differences between femininity and masculinity are changed with the flow of time. Different conceptions exist simultaneously, becoming less or more significant; they are combined, correlated with each other in order to define the characteristics of a human through the differences between sexes.

REFERENCES

- Introduction to gender studies, 2001* – Introduction to gender studies / [ed. by I. Zhrebkina]. – Kharkov: KCGS; St. Petersburg : Publishing house «Aletheia», 2001. – Part 1. – 708 p.
- Vinogradova, 1993* – Vinogradova T.V. a Comparative study of cognitive processes in both men and women: the role of biological and social factors // Questions of psychology. – 1993. – No. 2. – P. 63-71.
- Golovko, 1997* – Golovko B.A. Philosophical anthropology – K. : SMN, 1997. – 240 p.
- Ivashchenko, 1998* – Ivashchenko A. Gender scientific perspective: from ideology to politics // Sociology : theory, methods, marketing. – 1998. – No. 6. – P. 78-91.
- Person in essential..., 2004* – Person in essential and existential dimensions / [by edited by V.G. Tabakowska]. – Kyiv : Scientific thought, 2004. – 244 p.