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Female Discourse

XXI. Century feminine type, intermentality

for Ph.D. dissertation

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Thesis-collection

1. Topic, and raising the problem

The significant question and presenting the female archetype of the XXI. century is the role that some disciplines (especially philosophy and social communication) played in the development of the still perceivable unequal gender relations. One of the methods of understanding the historical context (which belongs to the philosophy of the feminist approach) is to re-read the classical authors, analysing the male authors' viewpoint, including the channels and communication techniques through which social scripts are constituted.

The analysis of the scientific and colloquial reflections is a really important task. They reflect the actual social stereotypes that defined the exemplary social gender roles for long decades, or even centuries. The mingling gender roles and mentalities evolved into an intermediary mentality (intermentality).

The analysis of this intermentality and the related behavioural attitudes can present how the blended mentalities appeared and integrated into the various social structures. To follow the first imprints of the phenomenon, we need to make a distinction between industrially developed social regions and civilisations living in their natural environment.

The aim of research, the task of the research is the localisation, analysis and introduction of the potential inflections of the above mentioned phenomenon, as well as the analysis of mental statuses and customs of the target groups – males and females, men and women. Furthermore, based on the typical mentalities and attitudes, an important segment in the study is dedicated to the comparison of the stereotypical and the newly evolved gender roles. The definition of the male-female characteristics is a fundamental message, which created masculine-value-based essential rule system during the creation of the gender hierarchy.

The stereotype of activity and passivity is rooted in the physiological establishments of sexuality. The woman, the inestimable character of the succession, is considered a *tool* that has to fulfil her obligations. The research aims to insert „the woman” as an equal half into the circumscription of the *human* being's definition with the help of the contemporary interdisciplinary studies, moreover to reinterpret the conventional gender structures.

The research also wishes to find previous respondents, recording and analysing how their lives changed, how the evaluation of their original situation altered, and how the new role models transmitted through the media influenced their approach.

2. Methods used

In a 2003-2008, former research of mine on the altering mentalities, or rather on the male and female attitudes towards stereotypes and their social manifestations was discussed. The target groups of the research were women between the age of 30-45. All highly qualified, single, with or without children, living in urban areas. Their attitudes towards the changing gender roles were examined through life-interviews, recording their concepts about themselves, and about the world that is surrounding them.

In 2012 and 2013, the above detailed series continued with recording another set of interviews. The interviewees were asked direct questions. The members of the target group were women with independent incomes, occupying leadership in their businesses, as well as men with the same age and with some kind of relation to them (colleague, companion, acquaintance, friend). The questions were inquiring about the appreciation of women in the entrepreneurial sphere, in the political and everyday life; about the acceptance of women aiming leading positions; and about opinions in connection with the permeation and the acceptance of feminism.

In 2014, the next step involved the universalization and historical examination of the gender stereotypes. The thesis and fundamental idea was how the women's earlier leading roles had changed in the newly created patriarchal system after the disintegration of matriarchy. The work also discussed new narratives and social institutions that

contributed to the creation of the new concepts. According to the hypothesis, male dominance, as a priori truth, roots in the antiquity. In accordance with the artificially developed stereotype, men should be active in the profit- and power orientated sphere, while women should assist them by dealing with all the time-consuming tasks of the background sphere.

In 2015-16 the research asked how mass media influences the creation of role models, and the appearance of women in the different media; this is a topic that evolves from the previous discussions.¹ The discourse-analysis included power-positioning endeavours as well as the examination of the cultural and social situations. The analysis of contemporary Hungarian female politicians' speeches were based on several hours of recordings of parliamentary remarks, debates and speeches during panel discussions.

The question was, how gender stereotypes appear in the behaviours and expressions of contemporary female public figures; and to what extent they influence female mentality through the media. Apart from linguistic expressions, the evaluation of behaviours and formalities, or that of other secondary and metacommunicational phenomena also appear in the analysis.

This time; however, the core topic of the study was not the appreciation of the female politicians' or public figure's personal features, but the interpretation of their unique manifestations.² The thus

¹ Nagl- Docekal: *Feminista filozófia*, 2006: 65

² Kristeva, *A nők ideje*, 1997: 337

appearing female intermediary mentality was presented by the discursive interpretation of intermentality, while analysing the gender-notions by the devices of social communication instead of integrating communication into the gender studies.

3. Results of the dissertation

3.1 I. THESIS – Creating gender stereotypes

The androcentric, world-forming ideas, the necessary patterns and the rules for living were created by men, and were introduced through contemporary social institutions, through media.

According to this, men are biologically, by birth justified to apriori possess power, determining the gender hierarchy mostly in favour of men. Below described historical analysis is intended to provide a generic overview of how the notions of women and men were interpreted according to the stereotypes based on revelations of public thinkers; how these typologically formulated into stereotypes. And to what extent these are still present in public and private communication spaces. The hierarchical gender relationships are analyzed through texts, with critical approach towards the medium.

The concept of the „human” appeared as a male experience, so settling masculine dominance as a right inherited from father to son; and inferiority as a doctrine taught by mother to daughter. The history of women, and the story of families/genealogy begins with the antiquity only, omitting the era that preceded the social order of patriarchy.

3.2 II. THESIS – The gender roles to be followed

The creation and public presentation of such conventions originate from male philosophers who had the opportunity to talk to the public.

Who determines these patterns, and what are they really like? When examining the conformities to the traditional roles, cultural researchers discuss the significance of mass communication. The media in most of the cases become a definitive opinion-forming platform, which is consciously followed by the audience, so that they can create their own ideas accordingly.³

Trend-changes appear through such channels first. In the highlighted topics mostly men are the ones to declare, women can hardly be perceived by the audience as an authentic source of information or as a summing person, thus even moreshrinking the prestige of women. Most analysis either lack the introduction of female public performance, or they fail to describe its absence. In politics, the opinions of women can only occasionally appear, mostly as a well-known female analyst sitting together with two or three men at the same desk.

The analysis includes a detailed description of Aristotle's gender hypothesis, which became a determining factor of the European culture until the middle of the 20th century. Following its march through the middle ages, the enlightenment and the additional eras until today, quoting male thinkers who expressed their opinions in the topic.

³ Fiske, *British Cultural Studies and Television*. 1987/2000: 254: 290

3.3 III. THESIS – The new, multi-role roles

Women are generally supposed to fulfil the so called female archetype that is artificially created by mostly men. This archetype incorporates the fulfilment of a rather complex role system: the woman should simultaneously be a worker, a partner, a mother, a creator and a housewife.

In case any of these roles are not perfectly met, the individual is considered inappropriate in her femininity. If a medium decides to fight the stereotype of the under-representation of women in their programs (series, debates, thematic discussions, political analyses, etc...), they delegate women who master *masculine* approach and terminology, or whose arguments and viewpoints comply with masculine principles. Unconditional priority is given to those, who flawlessly fit into the artificially maintained male and female stereotypes.

Media would clearly broadcast the processes that create such patterns. Suggesting that practicing the coexistent role models and the creation of a universal personality are essential requirements for subsistence. Behavior standards were transmitted as idealized images, promises or stylized simulacrums for the society. Most women will only retrospectively realize that their behavioral attitudes change by the influences they receive, and that they live in accordance with the mock-life they were expected to follow. Due to the ancient gender reflexes; however, they are unable to create an independent female role – or they do not dare.

3.4 IV. THESIS – Relation of traditions and intermentality

The combination of the traditions and the intermediary behavioural elements was considered in most cases as a problem for the modern active women, regarding both the public and the private sphere.

One common feature was the feeling of being stuck between bourdens, regarding both their professional life and personal development. By analysing the life situations and observations, the newly discovered behavioural models unambiguously indicated the change of the mentality of the genders. The distribution of the topics: work, social activities, partner choice, family, spare time/free time. Fixed gender stereotypes were outlined in their self-descriptions, displaying additional stereotypes, and related lingual tags. The majority of those were infiltrated into the social consciousness, and became emphasized gender-markers, which can be found in the active vocabulary of modern society.⁴

The respondents considered female presence in the economic and business sphere as a natural fact; however, its value and reputation were appreciated in diverse measures. Family and the related activities were mentioned in almost all of the opinions, as being definitely value creating, but time- and energy-consuming as well. Women were complaining less in many cases, although they often emphasized the limited acknowledgement of their suitability and work-efficiency. Feminism is still unsubstantiated, and appeared as a rather negative as

⁴ Horváth: *New Woman's Age (Újnőkorszak)*. L'Harmattan, 2008

progressive movement – and for the elderly people, the whole notion unknown.

3.5 V. THESIS – The appearance of intermentality was lawful

Intermentality can be qualified as a necessarily resulted excrusion or phenomena, which evolved as specific female mental abilities were proportionally emerging, and as a consequence of becoming equal with men.

The research inquired the distinctive role the forming intermediary mentality or intermentality may have in a given population. The answer to this question may be a new, specially defined concept. Intermentality can be qualified as a necessarily resulted excrusion or phenomena, which evolved as specific female mental abilities were proportionally emerging, and as a consequence of becoming equal with men.

During the last few decades, society has indeed made the first steps towards uniformization, which moderately influenced the gradually separating social gender scripts. Intermentality (meaning the alteration of male and female mentalities) also belongs to this category, and as such, it cannot be reckoned as an unambiguously positive phenomena. Reasonable changes, that may still be considered as deviant for the masses - like for instance, the appearance of the plundering woman – have been explained by the exchange of the gender roles.

Corresponding to the modern expectations, and to the necessity of following the paradigms were theoretically prompting the alteration of male and female characteristics, which turned into a premise of social

structuring, subsistence, and emergence. However, this statement is much more acceptable if turned upside down: the premises for subsistence and emergence made male and female characteristics mingle. Male and female intermentality appears extremely obviously in the patterns shown by the media. Certain segments receive emphasis (clothing, language style, status, single women/men and the presentation of the single parents' lifestyle, employer-employee problems, male-female relations, etc.), but the mediated man-and-woman scheme is after all created according to the expectations of men.

Definitive question is, if the behaviour women who are wishing to differ from this pattern, and therefore the mixing of mentalities, is a mere rebellion or a real improvement? It's important to work with the issue, since these patterns present idealized roles. When, for instance, one of the organs introduce a woman in a leading position, they never miss the chance to note that she should also be nice, caring, tactfully seductive, understanding, gently determined and helpful, otherwise her femininity would be doubted in spite of all her masculine virtues.

3.6 VI. THESIS – The discourse of women in public

Most of the public figures did not have a standalone female style complemented by professional narratives.

The interviewees said they were afraid that their individual manifestations and their thoughts would be irrelevant. However; personality and contents structure would create the *discourse*, that, as being the most obvious form of manifestation, should bear distinctive features – equivalently to that of men.

The characters of narrative intermentality can develop similarly to the above discussed interim behavioral patterns. As the use of rhetoric techniques is traditionally considered a male competence, female public figures have to apply them really cautiously if they want to avoid negative receptions.

Female public figures, who are unable to master spectacular rhetoric techniques (raised voice, interference, strength, gesticulation, ironic remarks and verbal aggression), or to find substitute methods, may soon be effaced, or fall away from meaningful discourse. Women are less likely to achieve dominance through verbal aggression, though they often seem to be targets of verbal terror.

4. SUMMARY

Nowadays, the media rarely present successful female career stories, or everyday female casts with a positive approach. In most of the highlighted topics, men are the ones to declare, while women can hardly be perceived by the audience as authentic decision-makers. All this, together with the over-representation of men, strenghtens the expectation that women should remain in the background without forming normative opinions. The representation of masculine values in the media takes its patterns from everyday life. For instance, as for occupations, positions with high prestige (lawyers, managers, riporters, writers or heads of state) are mostly represented by men, while the less rewarding ones are performed by women (cashiers, nurses, cleaners, waitresses).

Social order and hierarchical subordination relations were defined according to the way power was practiced – in ancient societies, in order to became a *full citizen*, the only requirement was to be born a male; in the census, it was enough to certify citizen origin through three or four generations. Besides origin and properties, education also became a privilege, thus with the exclusion of women, that served the establishment of a kind of *gender aristocracy*, with the male being exclusively eligible for power.

Media tend to transmit gender scripts by choosing character types (for series, women programs, morning shows, etc.) who perfectly fit into the stereotypical feminine role. If they do go against

this stereotype, they delegate a kind of woman who perfectly adopted the masculine use of language and way of thinking, flawlessly fitting into the masculine value system. Women may be rewarded for that. Feminine topics are considered less valuable right from the start, so even though the message is formulated in an utmost intelligent way, it will either receive less publicity, or indicate negative reception due to its stereotypicality – all in disadvantage of women.

However, it is rarely seen that their strength and discretion is presented by conceding masculine roles, or by adopting feminine ones. Several men refuse to fulfill feminine functions or jobs, because that is considered to be the loss of prestige. Even though, if he wants to survive, he has to confront these necessary functions and has to adopt some of the traditionally feminine tasks and characteristics. The largest psychic problem is the dissolution of taboos, the reinterpretation of reflexes and adjudicative stereotypes. It can only be successful, if men accept the alteration of feminine mentality, and that of their own as well, since these are interconnected in all circumstances.

5. Key references

Topic: the XXI. century woman, intermentality – is an interdisciplinary topic. Most contemporary researches look at gender stereotypes based on power relations (Nagl_Docekal 2006; Pieper 2008).

Conceptualization, corpus forming: cultural anthropology, life-cycle research, lifestyle and experience analysis (Geertz, Harding, 1987; 2005; Magyari 2006).

Philosophy history: analyse the writings of paradigm-forming philosophers and public figures about women (Aristotle, Plato, v. Weber, Tönnies, Comte-Sponville, critics: Nagl-Docekal, 2006, Hell, 2001).

Social communication: analysis of contemporary female speech. (Fairclough, van Dijk, Bourdieu ('political field')). F. ex.: speech recognition and retention, power positions, success, adursive creativity (language and metacommunicative tools).

Feminism: the critical point of view of the gender system, and references (Butler, Foucault vs. Kuby, 2008). Impact of trends and stereotypes. Changes of the woman mentality (Pieper 2004; Acsády 2002, Griffin, 2003).

Publicity: The study of stereotype-forming media, communication acts, power relations (Habermas, van Dijk: 1994, 2000). Traditions reinforce stereotypes (male: active - woman: passive). In the history of

women, the patriarchal primordial algorithm. (Aristotle, Plato). The stereotypes of women's discourse (Pongrácz-Murinkó, 2009).

Critical discourse analysis, and (content) discourse analysis: CDA and DA: Studies in which women appear as a distinct social category (Fairclough 1992, van Dijk 2002).

Critical point: reinterpreting classics: androcentric viewpoint a priori dominance. (Eg Aristotle, Kant, Weber, Foucault). Gender stereotypes in language and society (Jakusné, Harnus: 2002, Szabó: 2003, 2007).

Intermentality: mother -housewife- partner- worker- priority turns. Women are forced to take intermediate mentality patterns (constraint, direct influence of stereotypes). Women's research analyzes that women assume traditionally masculine roles in the interest of self-expression, enforceability, and compulsion (eg, double-blind) (Nagl-Docekal, Griffin, Kuby).

Gender marker: stereotypical speech acts, characteristic gender attributes, which characterize one gender better than the other (Wodak: 2001, Kegyesné, Szekeres: 2004, Hámori, 2006.).

Media: It is the responsibility of mass communication as it mediates the pattern that members of the society consider authentic. The radiation of the expected roles (Habermas 1993, van Dijk: 2000)

6. V. List of publications about the topic

Újnőkorszak. L'Harmattan Kiadó, 2008. *ISBN: 978 963 236* – study volume

Lánylegény. L'Harmattan Kiadó, 2015. *ISBN 978-963-236-946-4* – study volume

Szemelvények: mai magyar nők nyelvhasználata.

Alkalmazott Nyelvészeti Közlemények, 2007

A matriarchátus mint aranykor, az intermentalitás hőskora.

E-tudomány, 2010/3

A nemek köztes mentalitása.

TNTeF. 2013/1

Intermentality.

E-conom 2016/ősz/DOI

(etc.)

Before appearance:

The history of woman by men I. On the phylogenetic background of gender stereotypes

The history of woman by men II. Aristotle and gender hierarchy

Pipeline: A női alulreprezentáció a társadalmi- és gazdasági vezetésben