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SEXUAL REPRESENTATION IN THE POSTMODERN PHILSOPHICAL DISCOURSE

The purpose of the article is to discover the peculiarities of the interpretation of sexual representation in the postmodern philosophical discourse; to analyze the way of becoming the category of sexuality an integral part of feminine subjectivity; to compare the ways of interpretation of the category of sexuality in the works of the Western and Ukrainian researchers. **Methods and approaches.** To investigate the theoretical framework in the postmodern philosophy the cross-disciplinary approach is used. The comparative approach is methodologically important to clarify the problems concerning feminine subjectivity. The very approach provides the researcher with the opportunity to review the cultural peculiarities of the given historical period. **Scientific novelty.** Following the peculiarities of the gender approach it was discovered that the modern interpretation of the category of feminine subjectivity includes not only racial, class and ethnical differences, but the peculiarities of a sexual character. Unfortunately, the category of sexuality is still the way of women's oppression. Nevertheless, this category is now an important tool when representing the versatile nature of feminine subjectivity. The problems of sexual marginality are considered to be the way of destroying gender stereotypes. **Conclusion.** It is proved that the postmodern philosophical discourse has contributed serious transformations when interpreting the feminine nature and changed the attitude to the very category of sexuality. The interpretation of the category of sexuality is a certain touchstone clarifying the attitude towards a human being in general and towards a woman in particular. It is determined that nowadays the problems of sexuality raise some concerns and anxiety posing more questions than giving the answers. One point is absolutely clear: it is impossible to investigate the nature of a modern human being out of the postmodern philosophical discourse. What is more, it is impossible to investigate the postmodern philosophical discourse out of the categories of human sexual representation.

Key words: postmodernism, sexuality, feminine subjectivity, gender, human being, marginality.

Actuality of the research

At the end of the XXth century there was a new paradigm of the social development based on the priority of the value of the human life. The representatives in various fields of the humanitarian knowledge take part in the researches of this approach to the human being, human existence and human activity.

Postmodernism as a complex philosophical movement of the present time concerns the "problem of the human being" at the time of the drastic changes, transforms directly the common paradigms of theoretical thinking. This process of changes transformation also deals with the problems of the construction of gender subjectivity and gender relations.

The achievements of the Ukrainian society on the way to the gender reconstruction showed all the complexity and ambiguity of this process having proved an absolute necessity to develop a new system of notions aimed to the elimination of the gender inequalities.

It should be noted that the very problems of the development of the feminine subjectivity, being closely connected to the philosophical postmodern achievements, reflect the common postmodern attitude in which the normalization of changes is one of the key aspects.

The works of such feminist philosophers and gender researchers as J. Butler, J. Kristeva, H. Cixous, L. Irigaray, T. Moi, I. Zheriobkina, O. Kis, T. Vlasova and others concerning the disputes of feminine subjectivity made an outstanding contribution to the development and interpretation of the versatility of the given themes.

Methodology

There is no doubt that in general gender studies are of inter-disciplinary character, that is why it is reasonable to use the inter-disciplinary approach when presenting the material. The comparative method plays an important role when interpreting

feminine subjectivity. The fact is that when discussing the problems of the feminine and the masculine it is impossible to avoid the analysis of the cultural continuum of the given historical epoch in which such problems are solved.

Material

Postmodernism as a unique cultural situation appeared in the second part of the XXth century and put in the forefront various problems connected with the determination of the subjectivity, identity problems, the problems of sexual representation and many others. All these problems are still drawing close attention of the foreign and Ukrainian researchers. Considering postmodernism as a special modern type of thinking, scientists say about a great versatility of the artistic forms and styles, about the possibilities of their plural interpretation and about the alteration of the conventional cultural and spiritual values.

Saying about the postmodern surveys, the researchers point out the fact that the given theories are based either on modern simplified concepts or on the retrospective models which have no credibility. At the same time it should be noted that the very concept of postmodernism involves a risk of overestimated modernity, its exaggerated significance of the present. Actually its "dramatic" breakthrough appears to be more or less natural, at least a predictable consequence of what had happened earlier. Some philosophers think of postmodernism as of an intellectual fashion that is capable only to reflect an academic variant of the consumer ethics [4]. Thus it is the philosophers' opinion that the categories of modernism and postmodernism are of temporary aspect showing invariably significant measurements of the interaction between them [1]. In their works the researchers say about the personal experience of an individual as about the most closed circle at the same time underlining the necessity of knowing the others to know something about themselves.

Nowadays sexuality is central to understanding a great deal about humanity and society. Studying sexuality involves understanding all its intersections and connections with a lot of issues such as poverty and racism. Therefore, sex research furthers the understanding of power, marginalization, and other social issues. That is why it should be stressed that sexuality is not just about identity and behaviours, it is a tool to understand society and issues of power.

As it is known in the idealistic culture the experience of the integral subjectivity is inseparable from the cognition of nonhistorical constant such as the human nature. Here we can cite the words of Oscar Wilde who as far back as in the XIXth century said that the only thing we knew about the human nature was that it was changeable. In his opinion, a change is the only human peculiarity which is possible to predict and only our difference one from another is of the true value. The famous writer rejects the notion of the essence of the human nature as a constant stating that only when throwing the conditions and rules of life we can change the very human nature [13].

Postmodernism destroying and\or rethinking the accepted philosophical categories gives some new possibilities to discuss the new categories which were not paid an appropriate attention due to the closure or even prohibition to discuss these categories. These "prohibited" and "uncomfortable to discuss" phenomena include the rethinking of the role of the category of sexuality when developing the human identity and the issues of sexual marginality. Recently these issues and the questions connected with them are the main themes in the works of the contemporary philosophers. It should be noted that the discourse of sexuality in the modern world in general and in modern Ukraine in particular is still producing an ambiguous, often extremely negative reaction even among the most educated people. The researchers pay attention that our country especially nowadays strives to live "normal", as "all civilized countries" trying to apply this principle to the sphere of sexuality. Paradoxically the tries to admit the serious changes in the sphere of sexuality and gender equality are transforming into the propaganda of returning to the traditional family values and into the lack of tolerance to the "difference" of the others.

As the Ukrainian gender researcher T. Vlasova stresses that "… sexuality is "never just sex": all discourses about sexuality are the internally connected discourses about something else; sexuality is not just a constant thread that unites the total character of the human experience, it is "the final dependent variable that needs more explanations than it can produce" [1, p.22-23]. The researchers insist that all changes in modern cultural situation

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always produce changes in sexuality itself. What is interesting is that some philosophers refuse to consider the category of sexuality only through the prism of the private life and social reproduction of the family. They say that in this case the sphere of private is "conceptualized as more natural, nonhistorical and apolitical sphere" [3, p.58-61]. It should be noted that among the leading philosophers, psychologists and other specialists dealt with the problems of the representation of sexuality there is no single approach to its definition. So, the famous American sexologist A. Kinsey considers sexuality as "a rational economy to produce the orgasm", besides he does not connect sexuality with the intercourse, pregnancy and child delivery [8, p.372]. The other researchers consider sexuality only in connection with love and pleasure in a heterosexual pair [9]. The important fact is that some western sexologists and feminists have refused to discuss the connection of the maternal love and sexuality [6]. Nevertheless, taking into account all the approaches to the study of this question we can assume some false perception of sexuality as the separate sphere not connected with the other fields of the social life.

There is no doubt that the perception of sexuality in our country differs markedly from the common western views on this question. In the Ukrainian and Russian discourses the researchers see "a certain fear" that is not the fear of sex as a practice but a fear of sexuality as an autonomous sphere independent of social, religious or metaphysical fields of activity and thus connected with the West [2]. At present sexuality is considered to be one of a great number of gender practices, often as something opposite to everyday life. Sexuality can be defined as "the sphere where the forces of laws and identities governing the everyday life can be stopped and when developing the personality the sides and properties which are usually in exile start to play an important role" [11, p.213-227]. Certainly, from the researchers' point of view, in this case the social and economic conditions are of great importance creating or destroying certain patterns of life system and family arrangement.

Nevertheless at present the other point of view prevails. According to it sexuality is not special, different social practice but it is "one of the various threads in everyday life" [3, p.61]. According to the phenomenological approach to the body, sexuality is a constantly present aspect of an individual or a family being, the movement in space or speaking. Sexuality is "neither a separate sphere of life nor a separate order of meanings; it is integrated into the behavior in general" [3, p.61]. We can agree with E. Kosofsky Sedgwick who claims that sexuality is "a large number of actions, expectations, descriptions, pleasure, identity formations and knowledge in men and women and which [sexuality] gravitates towards a denser concentration around certain genital feelings but which is not defined by them to the full extent" [11].

It should be noted that the perception of culture is often realized through the attempts to comprehend the historical process in the context of a social process and as carefully and thoughtfully as possible conceive the complexity of both phenomena and the respective demonstrations of the discrimination. The life and freedom of people are dependent on such comprehension especially when speaking about the cultural discrimination i.e. both cruel repressions because of racial and\or sex discriminations and the attitude towards people called the cultural differentiation. Therefore, a lot of philosophers put forward an assumption that the discrimination is the essence of culture [1, p.46]. The philosophers point out the fact that various researches devoted to the complex relationships between the center and the periphery, dominant and subordinated cultures, conformism and anomalies had existed earlier and lasted longer than the fashion to postmodernism exists. Thanks to these works we can realize that the dominant culture can not only provide the explanation of marginality in general and sexual marginality in particular but it can produce it. In its turn the sexual marginality appears to be able to consolidate the powers that can be relatively challenged later.

Speaking about the cultural marginality of the subcultures, it is claimed that it directly depends on the cultural significance which these subcultures occupy in society. Furthermore, the paradox is that various subcultures are included in the heterosexual cultures which widely criticize them. The researchers emphasize the fact that the whole spectrum of the significant points for a discussion in the field of the Western culture from the very beginning of the XXth century appears to be "… ineffaceably connected to the historical concrete character of such notions as homosocial\homosexual concerning not only men [4, p.43-44]. It should be noted that at the same time there

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is an epistemological revaluation of these categories and such specific crisis of the notions is irreversibly reflected on other oppositions made the basis of the modern organization of culture (masculine\feminine, majority\minority, natural\artificial and others) [4, p.43-44]. The fact that such crisis becomes apparent particularly in many other aspects proves the more saturation of the modern culture with the ideas and images connected to the homosexuality. The homosexuality is taken as something exaggerated and excessive, as something present somewhere "there" but as something that cannot be finally defined. The approach to the marginality expresses the various mix of prejudice, blatant discrimination, hysteria, paranoia, fear, hate, rancor, indifference, tolerance, moral permissiveness etc. It also should be noted that in our country till recently male homosexuality is regarded as an asocial behavior and female homosexuality is considered to be a disease. The female marginals are thought to be clinically ill and they can be sent to the obligatory psychiatric treatment.

In the context of the western postmodern culture the definition of the identity concepts always played one of the leading places in the cultural paradigm. M. Berman wrote that "our society is filled with people who are ardently yearning and consciously striving for authenticity; countless anonymous men and women all over who are fighting, desperately and against all odds, simply to preserve, to feel, to be themselves" [4, p.325]. Transgression gives a new feeling of self-consciousness to a person. The opposition of the authentic essence of a person that is deep inside to the secondary essence generated by culture and having the external evidences due to the upbringing is one of the most important and ambiguous issues nowadays; because the real value of life is in the individual singularity. That part of us which differs us one from another is an exclusive component and it is the component that produces our unique value. The need to release an internal wish, as some modern researchers think, threatens to loosen the sex differences. Therefore, we can see an increasing concern of the society produced by the possibility of blurring of the sex differences. The transgressive desire of the individual often makes take their opposite both as a destroying reaction to the categories which characterize the depth of individuality and as the substitution of categories on which the dominant structure based on and which prohibit these desires. Nowadays the attempts to attach a great importance to the homosexuality coexist with a long tendency of ignoring this problem. The philosophers note that with the demonstration of homosexuality as a crucial factor in culture, the modern society cannot understand what homosexuality really is – a strong susceptibility of the individuals which are halfway to the sexes, deviations, a secret subculture, an internal or external enemy. The modern gender critic Judith Butler in her book "The Gender Trouble" reflects the problems of homosexuality to unmask the gender theory, refute its defining terms appeared as the fashion on homosexuality. Butler polemically claims that from the point of view of a marginal it seems that heterosexuality recommends "the normative sexual role which is impossible to achieve in principle whereas as the constant inability to identify oneself clearly and consequently in this role reveals that heterosexuality not only can be the law obligatory for everybody but it is rather an annoying comedy" [5, p.122]. The modern researchers consider the problem of marginality from the different points of view. So, G. Steiner defines homosexuality in the course of postmodernity [12]. The French researcher L. Irigaray raises an assumption that the fundamental structure of the patriarchate is per se homosexual paying the crucial role to homosexuality and claiming that any sexual competition is "homosexual in the structural way" [7]. R. Scruton does not consider homosexuality as an accidental perversion but gives the primary meaning to it, calling it "the key issue of modernity" which on conditions of "the appropriate research" will give us "the profound vision of morality" [10, p.263].

Another important issue of nowadays is the presentation of the feminine sexual discourse. The philosophers often note the absence of such discourse in the modern culture highlighting the discourse which expresses the male vision of the issue, for example pornographic, literary or medical. It is stressed that to say openly about her sexuality "a new woman" should enter into the men's world on the basis of either heterosexual personality as men imagine, or as a lesbian in the costume of male transvestite [1].

Scientific novelty

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From the point of view of a gender approach to all attempts to rethink feminine subjectivity we cannot but say that the interpretation of the category of "woman" has begun to include the differences of racial, class, ethnical and sexual character. That is why in the modern philosophical discourse the notion of "feminine subjectivity" is not only as the social and political category, as the symbol of the suppression of women, but also as an integral part of the very category of feminine subjectivity. We think that the issues of sexual dissidence should be considered as the way of rethinking of common human values and various stereotypes on the way to eliminate the numerous omissions in the modern postmodern discourse.

Conclusion

The category of sexual representation as one of the main symbols of postmodernism has always given and still gives some "social and psychological concern" and raises increasingly more controversial problems. Postmodernism without any doubts has brought some modern transformations to providing new sexual meanings and interpretations. It is impossible to research the nature of a human "self" and their identity beyond the theoretical field of postmodernism. It is also impossible to research the theoretical field of postmodernism beyond the discussion of the problems concerning sexuality as an integral part of feminine subjectivity in particular.

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СЕКСУАЛЬНА РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦІЯ У ФІЛОСОФСЬКОМУ ДИСКУРСІ ПОСТМОДЕРНІЗМУ

Ціль роботи. Виявити особливості трактувань питань сексуальної репрезентації у філософському дискурсі постмодернізму; проаналізувати, яким чином категорія сексуальності стає невід'ємною частиною жіночої суб'єктивності; порівняти інтерпретацію категорії сексуальності у роботах західних та вітчизняних дослідників. **Методологія.** Для здійснення теоретичних розвідок доцільним є використання междисциплінарно-

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го підходу, а також важливим для аналізу жіночої суб'єктивності, виступає компаративний метод, який дає дослідникові можливість по-новому подивитися на культурно-історичний фон епохи. **Наукова новизна.** В результаті аналізу були виявлені різні інтерпретації поняття жіночої суб'єктивності, що включають в себе відмінності як расового, класового та етнічного характеру, так і містять сексуальні особливості. З'ясовано, що категорія сексуальності ще й досі виступає засобом пригнічення жінки та одночасно є важливим інструментом репрезентації багатогранності феномену жіночої суб'єктивності. Проблеми сексуальної маргіналізації інтерпретуються як засіб подолання гендерних стереотипів. **Висновки.** Доведено, що філософський дискурс постмодернізму сприяє трансформаціям у розумінні жіночої природи та змінює саме ставлення до категорії сексуальності. Інтерпретація категорії сексуальності є своєрідним лакмусовим папірцем, що висвітлює ставлення до людини в цілому, і до жінки зокрема. Встановлено, що питання сексуальністої репрезентації викликають певне занепокоєння і тривогу, ставлячи більше питань, ніж надаючи відповідей. Доведено, що природу сучасної людини неможливо висвітлити поза теоретичним дискурсом постмодернізму, який, в свою чергу, неможливо висвітлювати поза поняттям сексуальної репрезентації людини.

Ключові слова: постмодернізм, сексуальність, жіноча суб'єктивність, гендер, людина, маргінальність.

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СЕКСУАЛЬНАЯ РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИЯ В ФИЛОСОФСКОМ ДИСКУРСЕ ПОСТМОДЕРНИЗМА

Цель работы. Выявить особенности трактования вопросов сексуальной репрезентации в философском дискурсе постмодернизма; проанализировать, каким образом категория сексуальности становится неотъемлемой частью женской субъективности; сравнить интерпретацию категории сексуальности в работах западных и отечественных исследователей. **Методология.** Для осуществления теоретических исследований целесообразным является использование междисциплинарного подхода, а также важным для анализа женской субъективности выступает компаративный метод, который дает исследователю возможность по-новому взглянуть на культурно-исторический фон эпохи. **Научная новизна.** В результате анализа были выявлены различные интерпретации понятия женской субъективности, которые включают в себя отличия как расового, классового и этнического характера, так и содержат в себе сексуальные особенности. Выявлено, что категория сексуальности еще до сих пор выступает как способ угнетения женщины, одновременно являясь важным инструментом в репрезентации многогранности феномена женской субъективности. Проблемы сексуальной маргинализации интерпретируются как способ преодоления гендерных стереотипов. **Выводы.** Доказано, что философский дискурс постмодернизма способствует трансформациям в понимании женской природы и изменяет само отношение к категории сексуальности. Интерпретация категории сексуальности является своеобразной лакмусовой бумажкой, которая освещает отношение к человеку в целом, и к женщине в частности. Установлено, что вопросы сексуальной репрезентации вызывают определенную обеспокоенность и тревогу, ставя больше вопросов, чем предоставляя ответов. Доказано, что природу современного человека невозможно исследовать вне теоретического дискурса постмодернизма, который, в свою очередь, невозможно исследовать вне категорий сексуальной репрезентации человека.

Ключевые слова: постмодернизм, сексуальность, женская субъективность, гендер, человек, маргинальность.

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