

КУЛЬТУРОЛОГІЯ

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ANDROGYNY: THE WAY TO OVERCOME GENDER ASYMMETRY

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The author has examined an androgyny in the context of gender relations. The author has researched various interpretations of the androgyny phenomenon and worked out her own conception, based on theories of S. Bem and K.G. Jung. The androgyny is interpreted as specific state of mind of the human, who has reached integrity and overcome gender opposition's male/female. The author stresses, that androgyny has become a necessity in the modern technological world for its effective functioning and progress. An androgyne is an embodiment of future human, because the world viewing of the contemporary mankind is still under gender asymmetry. The phenomenon of gender asymmetry and its negative consequences for the development of human and society have been analysed. The author has argued, that androgyny appears to be an effective way to overcome gender asymmetry.

Keywords: androgyny, androgyne, gender asymmetry, male, female.

Formulation of the problem. The phenomenon of androgyny is one of the most controversial and fundamental question in the culture throughout the history of mankind. For centuries the problem of androgyny has become more complex, because it has turned out the subject-matter of many modern humanities, such as psychology, social and gender studies, literature. This phenomenon had been interpreted and analyzed since ancient times starting with the well-known Plato's «Symposium». Vivid interest didn't exhaust in the Renaissance, the Age of Enlightenment and the period of the Romanticism. Researches have been lasting till now. Among the most significant modern scientists of 20-21th centuries, who study androgyny, we should mention M. Eliade with his work «Mephistopheles i Androgyne», C.G. Jung and his concept of an androgyne as a realization of perfect human being. The most exhausting researches in the sphere of psychology were made by American psychologist Sandra Bem, who developed the scale of measurement of the androgyny.

Analysis of the last researches and publications. The problem of androgyny also was touched upon by psychologists Sh. Burn and by J. Butler, B.P. Hopkins in gender studies. Among Ukrainian and Russian researchers, whose works are dedicated to the different aspects of the androgyny, we should mark out V. Sukovataya, I. Klyocyna, N. Kopylova, N. Kalka, N. Groshovkina.

Being guided mostly by the elaboration of S. Bem and using her measurement of psychological androgyny, these scientists examined the level of androgyny and its correlation with masculinity and femininity in some social aspects (for example, in family relationships). The most of them agreed that androgyne is more balanced and harmonic type of person than individual, who has dominating masculine or feminine characteristics.

Emphasis of undetermined parts of the common problem. We should emphasize that researchers mainly depict attractive features of an androgyne, but, from our point of view, there is no profound and many-sided analysis of the androgyne

potential, i.e. what kind of challenges and risks this phenomenon can provoke.

Aim of the article. That's why we aim to study such aspect of androgyny potential, as overcoming of gender asymmetry. For reaching this aim the following tasks has been set: 1)to analyze main conceptions of androgyny and working out our own view; 2)to investigate the essence of the gender asymmetry's problem; 3)to study androgyny as an effective way to neutralize gender asymmetry.

Setting out of the main material. There are many various approaches to examining the androgyny phenomenon. Modern humanities in some way appeal to the figure of the androgyne. They may have different interpretations of this problem, but the fact is that the great interest is provoked by the archetypal, profound nature of this phenomenon. We can trace androgynous characters in ancient mythologies, literature, art, where human mind associates with this figure ambivalent peculiarities – this person is an embodiment of perfection, has the best features of human being, but at the same time he/she is too perfect to be entered to the society. That's why androgyne is a little bit out of the «normal» social life, anticipates it.

In religious studies there is almost the same situation. Christianity has versions about hermaphroditic nature of the first man in the Earth, Adam. An outstanding religious philosopher N.A. Berdyayev emphasized that, neither man, nor woman, but only androgyne is the closest to the image of God. He believed that differentiation between male and female is the consequence of cosmic defeat of Adam. Appearance of Eve makes Adam to be strongly attached to the «natural», profane world. M. Eliade developed similar interpretation and declared, that Adam is «an image of divine archetype» and also the androgyne. Moreover, as the mankind descends from Adam, every person has such potential perfection of the androgyne.

In Judaism, in cabbala and some Christian theologian one can find the version about androgynous nature of Jesus Christ. For example, Irish philosopher and theologian of 7th century Johannes Eriugena

gena interpreted myth of the androgyne's splitting as the part of global cosmic process. He considered that splitting had been the result of the first-born sin, and this process ends when human assumes his/her integrity again. And the very Jesus Christ was first, who had reached such reintegration. Thus he unites both sexes in his own nature, because after his resurrection he was neither man, nor woman.

The figure of the divine androgyne, who is both mother and father and the origin of all existing is traced in Hinduism and Egyptian religion as well: Indian divine cow-bull Aditi, mother and father of all gods; Ra, who copulated with himself and bore another gods, people and the whole world.

As for psychology and psychoanalysis, we should stress that the figure of the androgyne became the basis for C.G. Jung's «Self», that is the final result of person's individualization. C.G. Jung marks, that during the cultural development of the European civilization the androgyne has become a symbol of person's integrity, who has overcome the conflict of oppositions. Androgynous «Self» appears the distant goal for human to reach the highest personal ideal.

It is remarkable that C.G. Jung also mentioned androgynous nature of Christ, referring to the Catholic mystics. He claims that androgynous feature of Christ testifies initial contamination of oppositions, and not the existence of primitive atavism. Androgynous Christ is the symbol of the person's inner goal, which must be reached during his/her earth life.

Modern psychological and gender studies also appeal to the figure of androgyne and research the phenomenon of psychological androgyny. The most influential theory of androgyny has become S. Bem's conception, based on her test of androgyny's measurement. This study is significant for both psychology and genderology. Sandra Bem took many tests and found out what characteristics androgynous type of person has. She also marked out and compared feminine, masculine and unidentified types. The scientist concluded that androgynous psychological type is characterized by high adaptivity, flexibility, moral stability, successfulness in contrast with masculine or feminine types. Androgyne takes the best qualities of male and female and doesn't prefer anyone. He uses one or another way of doing («male»/«female») which will be the most relevant to the situation. Researcher argued the person who has both masculine and feminine features, androgyne, is healthier and more developed individual in all respects. S. Bem defined androgyny as «an emancipation of both sexes, and not the fight of women for equality in the men-oriented society», not the fight between men and women. Moreover, the psychologist claimed that masculinity and femininity are social and historical constructs, they are the result of cultural discourse. So, these categories and their peculiarities are rather artificial than natural, biological. S. Bem proved that masculine or feminine characteristics depend on cultural values dominating in some society and they may vary. As we can see, her theory correlates with the M. Foucault's conception about the role of discourse in gender formation. This outstanding philosopher believed

that such social discourses, as family, school, law, church, science, medicine, history have imposed «the truth about sex», tried to fix and prescribe all its aspects and to determine its «norms». Thus, according to Foucault, all gender's characteristics appear to be unnatural and false, because they are results of the discourse. So, because of discourse person is held away from the truthful idea of the gender. Moreover, in traditional societies people's right to choose one or another type of behavior is strictly limited by their gender.

Apart from S. Bem's theory we should mention three modern conceptions of androgyny developed by Fabio Lorenzi-Cioldi, famous social psychologist of the last of XXth – early XIXth centuries. He has summed up existing psychological researches about androgyne and marked out three main conceptions. In the first item he defines androgyne according to the Bem's theory and characterizes him as balanced person, who combines equally both male and female features and is more flexible than traditional gender type. But, at the same time, under this theory androgyne is still within the prescribed type of gender behavior. The author declares that androgyne is personification of stereotypical male and female characteristics, so that androgyny is «a socially approved gender dichotomy».

In the second conception Lorenzi-Cioldi states the idea of «merging» male and female in androgynous personality. But, as opposed to previous conception, this merging means absolute removing differences between two genders, masculine or feminine characteristics don't appear at all. Merging of male and female produces another, unique type of person, unlike both genders. This person is free from any feature of gender. But this conception can hardly ever be realized in social life because of its incompatibility with existing gender stereotypes.

The third and the most radical conception is based on category of gender cognitive scheme. If in the first conception androgyne embodies equally male and female features, chooses one or another depending on situation; in the second one gender characteristics merge and transform in some unique form; then in last conception dichotomy male/female doesn't exist at all. Androgyne here is the person who hasn't this opposition at the cognitive level. This person is out of gender.

From our point of view, «cognitive» conception is the least actual nowadays. Modern society is realizing the Bem's type of androgyne even in the most developed and progressive countries. But still androgyne – is the person of future, because the great part of contemporary world is under strong «usual», stereotypical differentiation of male/female and associating with it forms of personal behavior, the set of psychological features and norms of world viewing.

Our own conception of androgyny is the closest to S. Bem's theory and C.G. Jung's idea. So, we consider that androgyny of gender based on present reality is rather psychological process than final result. This is symbolic action intended for neutralization of conflict binary opposition masculine/feminine, for gaining personal integrity, rather via acceptance and harmonic co-existing and balance

of both male and female features, then through refusal from one or another gender's attributes. Actually, individual, the notion synonymous to the human, person, literally means «indivisible», «integer», «not-dualized» from the Latin «in-dividus». The effectiveness, adaptivity, stability and flexibility of androgynes, discovered by S. Bem, are determined not only by their harmonic joining both male and female forms of behavior, but by their capacity to break through the limits of social stereotypes. They manage to change usual gender discourse and to create their own, unique.

Apparently, the phenomenon of androgyny is much wider than the only relationship between two opposite genders and the way of dichotomy neutralization. It deals with problems of social stereotypes and «force of discourse under the things» (Foucault). But what is more subjected to the pressure of the traditional society's stereotypes than gender question? So, at the very field of gender the problem of stereotype's pressure can be solved first of all, and androgyny has such potential.

One of the most important issue provoked by the gender stereotype is gender asymmetry, which is characterized by domination of one gender and discrimination of another one. Gender asymmetry runs through the all spheres of social life. Moreover, gender asymmetry roots in the deepest level of the language and discourse. For centuries, in the most of European countries gender asymmetry concerns the rule of patriarchy. This significant shift in gender aspect has resulted to global consequences in the matter of male/female. The point is that male features have associated with «true» human characteristics, and women are at the periphery, they are a little bit defective. Thus gender asymmetry means superiority of men's significance in society and has resulted to such negative phenomenon, as strict regulation of «male» and «female» qualities. This regulation applies to almost all spheres of life: both personal, emotional side (for example, spread stereotypes of female high emotionality and a lack of rationality, vice versa man should be more reserved in his feelings, be rational and aggressive), and social. In social life gender asymmetry has provoked limitation of opportunities for person to realize him/herself in professional areas, because nowadays such negative stereotype, as «male/female» profession still exists. Inadequate positioning in the gender aspect not only declares some set of «male/female» features, but it has imperative character and places person within strict framework – exit out of limits is considered to be deviation from social norms, and such individual will be a marginal.

However, basic and the most influential field, where gender asymmetry expands is the language, because it defines peculiarities of world viewing and serves for certain discourse formation that, in turn, becomes a powerful instrument of person's mind control. According to modern linguistic studies, in English, French and German languages man is a center of the world's image, he is a starting point in the most of grammar structure's buildings. Thus constructing of reality's picture arises from masculine's point of view and female serves as a passive object or is ignored at all. This linguistic attribute is realized in features such, as iden-

tifying notions of «man», «woman» and «human» which have the same root «man» («homme» in French and «Mann» in German); the most of feminine nouns are derived from masculine; masculine nouns can denote notions of any gender, especially in social and professional lexicology. Besides, male and female are sharply opposed and demarcated to one another in qualitative and quantitative aspects, that has brought to domination of male as common to all mankind and developed gender asymmetry.

However, for the last twenty years one can observe a tendency of changing in correlation of male/female in the most progressive European countries, first of all among Scandinavian states. Gender asymmetry is getting weaker, because roles of men and women are becoming more equal in society. And what is more important – traditional gender discourses are also changing. As Scandinavian experience shows, society is able to be flexible and open concerning the question of person's social roles and refuse from strict differentiation and regulation between male/female.

But still considerable part of the modern world has been under traditional conception of genders' correlation, where male prevails over female, so the problem of gender asymmetry's overcoming is actual one. This is complex and long-term process, based on changing of the discourse from «imposing the truth about gender» to more liberal and open position of society. The process of gender asymmetry's overcoming should take place in all spheres of social life: in family relations, educational programs, professional and economic areas, in politics. Anyway, an overcome of gender asymmetry means going beyond binary opposition of male/female and deep overestimation of these categories. To reach such state of mind an individual should realize the failure of traditional idea of gender; she/he should appear to be in metacontext concerning usual image of the world. One of the reasons to overestimate such incapable way of world viewing is an acute conflict and nonconstructivity of gender asymmetry, because problem of gender always deals with the fight for the power and the right to dominate between men and women. Besides, preferring one set of qualities (traditionally, male) and rejecting another (as a rule, female), people deprive themselves opportunity to be more effective in their lives.

A response to the problem of gender asymmetry should be sought in qualitatively another attitude to the gender as it is. Reality changes much faster than human's mind: its present state demonstrates that in fact men and women have become equal in many spheres – they can equally take care about children, participate in politics and economics, and be in science. Those reasons, which used to make differences between men and women, first of all in social sphere, and after that in their psychological intentions, have exhausted themselves. Because of the high level of the technological progress gender differentiation of work (that took place in ancient societies and originally led to the gender asymmetry) both man and women can get job in any sphere and do it professionally. Political power, assigned to men for many centuries because of the same technological reason (men were stronger physically and do hard work, women took care

about children and home) is carried out effectively by women as well. The care of the children, which during the centuries is considered to be exclusively woman's duty, nowadays is successfully shared between mothers and fathers, as Scandinavian society has proved. As S. Bem stressed in her outstanding work «The Lenses of Gender», principles of work's division, based on sex and the system of male political domination have produced a set of cultural convictions and social practices, which have been dying. Modern technologies have totally changed context of the public life. These obsolete gender forms are not actual nowadays and impede the development of the society and an individual. But modern technologies are not able to finish with the inertia of previous cultural and political heritage.

So, it must be global psychological change, based on androgynous approach to the gender question, when some person's peculiarities are considered as just human's characteristics, and not as «male/female» nature. Androgynous approach to the gender asymmetry takes into account differences between man and women, but at the level of sex, and not the gender as social, psychological category. Androgyny allows solving artificial controversy between genders and neutralizing binary opposition of male/female. Moreover, it can enlarge person's opportunities in self-realization in social and personal life as well, because the more different qualities he/she has, the more instruments of opening up the reality he/she owns. Androgynous person is freer and opener psychologically. Androgyny is able to develop society with another values and guidelines: it is built not around the domination of one gender or another; it is based on equal communication and effective cooperation. Such society is free from strictly prescribed roles of «man's/woman's» kind of activity; here person can choose his/her own type of behavior and emotionality depending on situations. Androgyny effectively solves such an acute problem, provoked by gender asymmetry, as inequality in professional sphere: on the one hand, there is no difference between male or female activity, on the other hand, there is no obstacles choosing the profession in society.

To sum up, the very androgyny appears to be the most adequate response to the problem of gender asymmetry for following reasons: facts of changing reality, provoked by impetuous technological progress, challenge mankind to alter the attitude to the gender, because effectiveness and harmonic cooperation of society have become in the foreground. Traditional division and differentiation male/female, especially in professional and industrial spheres have been obsolete and impeding. The human needs to make the transition and go beyond the conflict opposition of male and female, but it would be psychologically hard to refuse totally from rooted, traditional gender differentiation. Thus androgyny is the «middle way», which can facilitate the transition and at the same time

realize it, because androgyny doesn't demand to refuse from gender attributes or cardinaly change them – it enlarges the concept of the human and gender, integrates various human's features, traditionally marked as «male» or «female». Moreover, the essence of androgyny is wider than only gender asymmetry's issue – androgyny is a result of centuries-old development of the human, his/her the most perfect embodiment and guideline for modern society. This correlates with ideas of many outstanding philosophers and psychologists (such as C.G. Jung, M. Eliade, N. Berdyaev, S. Bem etc.) about the highest level of human's evolution, the «Self», divine personality, who experiences all controversies inherent to the world and finds his/her own way to overcome them, that will take human to the personal transformation.

Conclusion and proposals. Resuming this article, we should mark out following points. The phenomenon of androgyny has long-standing history, an androgyny is always considered as an embodiment of perfect human, who managed to overcome dichotomy of the world viewing, the high level of the person's self-realization. The androgyny is a specific state of mind, reached by an individual experience of going out social gender stereotypes. Generally, in the modern world to be an androgyny is rather psychological process than final result. This process means gaining personal integrity, rather via acceptance and harmonic co-existing and balance of both male and female features, then through refusal from one or another gender's attributes. But one of the most serious obstacles in the way to androgyny is gender asymmetry, which has deep roots in the European cultural and social heritage. Gender asymmetry substantiates domination of male features and periphery of female ones, it produces strict differentiation between male and female, and what is more, – regulations what man/woman must do, having male/female sex, and impossibility to vary these norms. Gender asymmetry imposes restrictions not only on the gender aspect of human, but on his/her professional, social, economic possibilities, diminishes person's effectiveness in society and his/her own life. But such gender restrictions, provoked by gender asymmetry have already obsoleted in conditions of modern technological progress. So, the acute necessity to overcome gender asymmetry has appeared. The most adequate solution of this problem is the androgyny, changing guidelines first of all in the attitude to the gender issue. The androgyny is the way to facilitate the transition from the traditional, obsolete image of the world, based on gender asymmetry, which hinders the progress, to the new, more effective world viewing, intended to cooperation and integration without gender prejudices. Androgyny takes into account differences between man and women, but at the level of sex, and not the gender as social, psychological category. Androgyny neutralizes binary opposition of male/female and solves conflict controversy between genders.

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АНДРОГІННІСТЬ: ШЛЯХ ПОДОЛАННЯ ГЕНДЕРНОЇ АСИМЕТРІЇ

Анотація

Автор статті досліджує андрогінність у контексті гендерних відносин. Автор наводить різноманітні трактування явища андрогінності та розробляє власну концепцію, базовану переважно на теоріях С. Бем та К.Г. Юнга. Андрогінність трактується як специфічний психологічний стан людини, яка досягла внутрішньої цілісності та пододала гендерні опозиції чоловіче/жіноче, що постає необхідністю в умовах сучасного, технологічно розвинутого світу для його ефективного функціонування та подальшого розвитку. Андрогін, на думку автора, є людиною майбутнього, оскільки свідомості більшої частини сучасних людей притаманне бачення світу з позиції гендерної асиметрії. В статті детально аналізується явище гендерної асиметрії, його негативні наслідки для розвитку людини та суспільства. Автор доводить, яким чином андрогінність виявляється дієвим способом подолання гендерної асиметрії.

Ключові слова: андрогінність, андрогін, гендерна асиметрія, маскулінний, ремінний.

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Аннотация

Автор статьи исследует андрогинность в контексте гендерных отношений. Автор изучает различные трактовки феномена андрогинности и разрабатывает собственную концепцию, которая базируется преимущественно на теориях С. Бем и К.Г. Юнга. Андрогинность трактуется как специфическое психологическое состояние человека, который достиг внутренней целостности и преодолел гендерные оппозиции мужское/женское, что становится необходимостью в условиях современного, технологически развитого мира для его эффективного функционирования и дальнейшего развития. Андрогин, по мнению автора, является человеком будущего, поскольку сознанию большей части современных людей всё ещё свойственно мировоззрение, обусловленное гендерной асимметрией. В статье детально анализируется явление гендерной асимметрии, его негативные последствия для развития человека и общества. Автор последовательно доказывает, каким образом андрогинность оказывается действенным способом преодоления гендерной асимметрии.

Ключевые слова: андрогинность, андрогин, гендерная асимметрия, маскулинный, феминный.