

## THE PROBLEM OF FEMININE AND MASCULINE NATURE IN THE CONCEPTIONS OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHERS

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### Annotations:

**Костюк Наталья. Проблема фемінінного та маскулінного у концепціях філософів античності**

Предмет дослідження – концепт формування статі у класичній західноєвропейській філософії, засоби виявлення чоловічого та жіночого в соціокультурному середовищі в концепціях філософів античності. Теоретична актуальність заявленої теми походить від практичної, оскільки очевидно, що питання про жіноче та чоловіче у природі, про те, що означає бути чоловіком чи жінкою в соціумі, які видавалося ще декілька десятиріч тому вже вирішеними, знову вимагають осмислення в силу нових концепцій постмодерністів і нового досвіду в житті жінки та чоловіка. Античний світ, залишивши сучасному культурному людству величезний за своїм значенням спадок, заклавши основи філософії і, в цілому, науки, переважно визначив наступне ставлення до жінки. В еллінському світі вперше постали перед суспільством «радість, краса й кохання», саме в цьому світі – коріння сучасного андроцентризму й гендерної нерівності. Саме тому в соціальній організації людства і загалом у культурі античності співвідношення чоловічого та жіночого веде до загального розподілу за статевими ознаками.

### Key words:

гендер, фемінінне, маскулінне, андроцентризм, античність.

**Костюк Наталья. Проблема фемининного и маскулинного в концепциях философов античности**

Предмет исследования – концепт формирования пола в классической западноевропейской философии, способы проявления мужского и женского в социокультурной среде в концепциях философов античности. Теоретическая актуальность заявленной темы вырастает из практической, поскольку очевидно, что вопросы о женской и мужской природе, о том, что значит быть мужчиной и женщиной в социуме, казавшиеся еще несколько десятилетий тому назад уже решенными, вновь требуют своего осмысления в силу и новых концепций постмодернистов, и нового опыта жизни женщины и мужчины. Античный мир, оставив современному культурному человечеству великое по своему значению наследие, заложив основы философии и науки в целом, во многом определил последующее отношение к женщине. В эллинском мире впервые предстали перед человечеством «радость, красота и любовь»; именно в этом мире – корни современного андроцентризма и гендерного неравенства. Поэтому в социальной организации человечества и в культуре античности соотношение мужского и женского приводит к всеобщему разделению по половому признаку.

гендер, фемининное, маскулинное, андроцентризм, античность.

**Kostyuk Natalya. The problem of feminine and masculine nature in the conceptions of ancient philosophers**

The subject of this article is formation of sex concept in the classical West-European philosophy, the ways of manifesting masculine and feminine nature in the social-cultural surroundings in conceptions of the ancient philosophers. Theoretical relevance of the subject of investigation is caused by the practical one, as the problems concerning male and female nature and roles in the society that only a few decades ago seemed to have been solved require consideration in the light of the current postmodernists' theories and new life experience of men and women. The ancient world gave modern mankind great cultural heritage having created the basis of philosophy and science and predetermined the attitude to women for centuries to come. «Joy, beauty and love» first appeared to the Hellenistic world and it was the beginning of the modern androcentrism and gender inequality. That is why the correlation of male and female nature in the social organization and in the entire ancient culture has turned out to be divisive.

gender, feminine, masculine, androcentrism, ancient.

Problems associated with the formation of the concepts of sex in ancient philosophy and culture, are the subject of particular interest to modern researchers as ways of showing of male and female in the socio-cultural environment today are undergoing significant changes, illustrating the complex nature of the relationship of masculinity and femininity, political and private, freedom and citizenship, and so on. According to scientists, the existence of political, social, economic, and religious differences between men and women in modern societies makes it necessary to appeal to the deep historical grounds of their origin and functioning [4, p. 240–245]. Scientists emphasize that the latest research in the field of gender problems should take into account scientific approaches concerning various aspects of gender analysis of representations of male and female in society [6, p. 85]. It should be noted that although now the gender studies are developing quite rapidly in our country (V. Ageeva, I. Zherebkina, N. Gundareva, O. Zabuzhko,

L. Kobylanska et al.), yet many studies show some uncertainty in methodology and worldviews.

Concerning the issues of sex and gender, scientists usually prefer to start from the position of liberal neutrality, which undoubtedly explains the whole process of deep transformation "post-modernity", and the search for new methodologies and approaches to the analysis of contemporary social phenomena.

Theoretical relevance of the stated theme grows out of practice, because it is obvious that the question of the feminine and masculine nature of what it means to be a man and a woman in a society that seemed solved just few decades ago again require interpretation due to new concepts of postmodernists, and a new life experiences of women and men. In many Western countries, this interpretation takes place in the humanities already long enough and productive: a woman in the West today is one of the most studied subjects of interdisciplinary and cross-cultural studies. Therefore, to address the issue of sex

without the theoretical knowledge accumulated in the works of scholars such as R. Kotsin, P. Deutscher, E. Clark, M. Gatens and others, is impossible today. In Ukraine and Russia, gender studies emerged later and, in general, are developing slowly, but, nevertheless, many important works on the problems of sex and gender, contemporary feminist theory have been published. There may be mentioned researches by N. Chuhim, O. Zabuzhko, V. Aheeva, I. Zhrebkina, G. Brandt, S. Aivazova, A. Voronina, N. Shvedova, S. Ushakin and many others.

It should be noted that in modern philosophical theory the concepts of gender are analyzed, as a rule, in the overall context of a feminist or gender problems without emphasizing them as subjects for a separate study. The novelty of the scientific analysis undertaken in this article is based on identifying the theoretical foundations of defining the specifics of sex in ancient and medieval periods in the history of European philosophy, on identifying the main paradigmatic approaches to the interpretation of the phenomenon of gender in science and culture.

Before proceeding to the problem of the definition of sex, you need to emphasize significant, conceptual distinctions between sex and gender, fixing the attention on the fact that sex is related to anatomy and physiology, while the gender – is the realm of thoughts, feelings, fantasies that have not biological, but cultural connotations, and is interpreted as generic human essence [9, p. 159]. It should also be remembered that the major contribution to the study of the theory of gender issues of male and female, masculine and feminine was proof of the fact that the nature of women (and men) is not natural determined by biology constant, it is a historically mobile form of social organization of people, and hence the main feature of a gender perspective to the analysis of male / female, is the discovery of the universal value of the socio-cultural sex measurements in life of human and society [3, p. 9].

Virtually by all schools of philosophical concepts the male and female are seen as conflicting, though related, ontological and epistemological principles: masculinity symbolizes the spiritual, divine, cultural, rational and universal, and femininity – the natural, physical, irrational and private. These binary oppositions are not determined by people's sexual dimorphism, they are determined by such characteristics of the Western type of philosophizing, as a value-hierarchical thinking and normative dualism. Under the value-normative thinking is understood the approach when philosophers attempt to streamline the differences or diversity in accordance with a hierarchical scheme, calling it a "logic of domination". Normative dualism is a method of differentiation related phenomena, which complement each other, or even simply cannot exist without each other – for example, the mind and body, thinking and feeling, day and night.

These properties of Western philosophizing can be clearly seen already in the Pythagorean view of the world, based on the binary pairs of categories, and the masculine taken in line with concepts such as shape, spirit, order, reason, even, right, light, good and feminine – with opposite categories of formlessness, matter, chaos, physicality, odd, left, darkness, evil. In other words, binarism of thinking and its value-neutrality "mainly determine the manner of perception, categorization and social structuring of sex differences" [1, p. 607].

As the scientists note in antiquity the human mind asked the question: What is man? It is the pathos of the human self-determination became the cause of the strong tendency of ancient philosophy, where the mind and spirit were clearly the priority areas, while the body-sensual side was seen as something vile, as almost an animal that a person has to overcome for all his adult life.

Olle Martin Heystad, thinking about the complex world of ancient man, writes that the newfound spirit and conscious soul has reverse side, i.e. the side hidden behind a common vision of man and of the anthropological model of development. To these invisible and forgotten stories the work about the philosophy of the body by the German phenomenologist Hermann Schmitz is devoted. Having found the spirit and turned into an object of self-reflection, people began to hide bodily considering body senseless and dismissing it as a source of knowledge. Development of the spirit Schmitz describes as follows: "The acquisition of the spirit leads to the loss of flesh". Meaning the body is underestimated and undervalued, which leads to the opposition of physical and spiritual, mind and the senses, which is gradually becoming more common in ancient Greek, Hellenistic, and later – in the European culture. The main task for Schmitz was to show how much people lose (intellectually and emotionally), rethinking and thereby underestimating such an important component of the self as a body. In order to realize the creative possibilities of corporal, Schmitz returned to the era before the "acquisition of the spirit" and the transition from the "myth to logos", i.e., the lifetime of Homer until written fixation of his epic [12, p. 317].

Homeric man is described as a symphony of pulses and the "voices" of different physiological origin. In contrast to the modern man, he perceives his body not as a single organism, but as something inhomogeneous, equipped with different characteristics, that is, the Homeric man has not the body (in our sense of the word), and a variety of different organs and body parts. For Homer body is enlivened not by heart, but by the blood. The core of the Homeric ideas about man is the idea of embodiment of the forces causing impulse activity and call-to-action. This means that a separate explicit physiological center or agency for Homer does not

exist. The texts of the Homeric poems do not contain necessary and important for us, modern people, concepts related to the image of man. For example, there are no words denoting individuality, personality and its features. Allegedly, erotica became one of the most valuable gifts received by mankind from the ancient Greeks. Without condemning sexual desire from a position of morality, they have turned erotica into the art. Nevertheless, the concept of love while it was still uncertain, so Homer is silent about it, talking instead about the passions, embracing his heroes tearing their hearts, when the heroes are trying to achieve their goals and erotic fighting for Fair Helen, or because of her.

In the early stages of the development of philosophy in ancient natural philosophy of V–VI centuries BC., anthropological problems considered solely in the context of the problems of natural philosophy, where male and female are just two alternate and complementary principles, by which the structure of the cosmic whole and human existence is defined – the day / night, life / death, light / dark and etc. [8, p. 390]. For ancient philosophers mind identified with the male, was the identity of virtue. Philosophical knowledge is the contemplation of the external forms of abstraction from the unknowable, irrational matter. It is only possible with a strict control over bodily and sensory experience, which should be free from all the random and chaotic. However, the sensitivity (Eros) plays a significant role in the outlook and worldview of the Greeks, so, for example, Plato cannot bring it outside of his system. He finds another solution – selects the highest type of sensibility, that is, the "spiritual" or "celestial male Eros", which is embodied in the philosophy. Sensuality, not subordinated to reason, unencumbered by random inclinations, Plato called "lower female Eros." It manifests itself in everyday life and is a threat to reason. Thus, Plato eliminates the female subject of philosophical knowledge.

In general, the views of Plato on women are very contradictory. For example, in the dialogue "Timaeus" Plato argued that the souls of cowardly and dishonorable men after their deaths go in women. And in the "Symposium," he tells the legend of the androgyne, combines masculine and feminine, which gave them the strength to defy the gods. Broken by order of Zeus into two halves, male and female seek to reunite in love. Women representing half of the former women, do not feel much affection for men, they are more attracted to women. And men, representing half of the former men, are attracted to a man and the whole male. From here there is a same-sex and opposite-sex love. It is believed that the legend of androgyny symbolizes the idea of a complete human nature and partly testifies to the appreciation of female by Plato. Another proof of the high estimation of the feminine approval by Plato is considered his statement, that in the "ideal state"

women can be "philosophers – monarchs" or "guardians". As is well known, Plato is sometimes called the "first feminist". The views expressed in the "State" of the idea of granting women equal rights with male guards, of equal education for "male and female", of the admission of women to the management level of the ideal state is very radical. But, as it was noted, these ideas have emerged not from desire to emancipate women and not because of the appreciation of the feminine by Plato, but of his political conception. Plato believed that private interests and private property embodied largely in the family prevent the establishment and functioning of the ideal state. He saw the way out in curbing "low female Eros" by deprivation of the family, introducing the institution of common wives and children and public education of children men and women. As the researchers write, abolishing the family and the home education of children, Plato was forced to turn women into men [10, p. 205].

Aristotle even more identified knowledge and rationality to the active masculine and chaotic matter as a lower substance – with the passive female. Aristotle argued that the true parent is always a man. It was Aristotle who defines in the process of passive mother fertilization active form, which is the soul of the future human being, while the woman plays the role of a passive receptacle. Aristotle believed that a woman – a lower being, "as if infertile men", because it lacks the principle of "soul", the identity of rationality. Aristotle considered femininity as a "natural disadvantage" because the female occurs when masculine defeated. Aristotle, referring to the existence of bisexual self-fertilizing animals, believed that separation of the sexes has non-biological grounds, since it is not necessary for the reproduction of the human race. Aristotle treated the sexual differentiation as the ontological principle, "better when the supreme principle is separated from the lower; thence, if possible, and where possible, the male is separated from the female" [2, p. 90].

Aristotle's ideas formed the basis of European philosophy of law. For him, there is no abstract equality; differences were for him the logical basis for the construction of the political hierarchy. Aristotle believed that equality is possible only between identical, similar citizens and cannot be extended to dissimilar, different people. According to him, the biological differences between men and women are the basis of their political inequality. Man – is a full-fledged citizen of the polis, marked with signs of rationality and politic, he identifies a concept of "Man"; woman in comparison with a man is the essence of the lowest type, poor, deprived of rationality. Aristotle constantly stresses that man is by nature superior to a woman, and the man dominates, and the woman is subordinate. Aristotle divides society into two separate and subordinate spheres – policy and housekeeping. The purpose

of the second, lower sphere of the household is to meet physical needs of men, so they, being free from household needs, were able to devote themselves to the highest political life. It should be noted that these ideas of Aristotle became the basis of later developed European philosophy of law. According to Aristotle, the exclusion of women from the public sphere is mainly based not on their role of "homemaker", and on the lack of rational thought. Since the polis is a field of activity for the *logos*, a woman, in whom the *logos* does not dominate, cannot be a full participant in the life of the polis.

Thus, despite all the differences between the thinkers of antiquity, the traditional tenets of Western classical philosophical thought are constructed – as it was shown in Plato and Aristotle – through the exclusion of women and everything which associated with femininity, from the sphere of public, political, social. In this regard, it is appropriate to refer to Cicero, who was for many subsequent generations of scientists primarily a philosopher and moralist. According to the statements, ethics of Cicero had a huge impact on the Christian doctrine of morality and even to some extent laid in its foundation. Treatise "On Duties" by Cicero is recognized in the epoch of the rationalist views; on the eve of the French Revolution Voltaire appreciated it and Frederick II wrote that it was "the best essay on moral philosophy that has ever been or will be written" [11, p. 165]. Thus, in the XVIII century, Cicero's treatises perceived not only as monuments of ancient thought and literature, but also as an effective guide for the application of morality.

Undoubtedly, the image of the ideal (and yet ordinary) citizen, being drawn in his treatise "On Duties" is an image of a man. This man is endowed with reason, that gives him a special love for posterity, he loves and protects his "wife, children and other people" [13, p. 61]. He is inclined to study and investigate the truth, to which joins "the desire to dominate," because "a man, well endowed by nature, agrees to obey only the person who instructs, or trains him or fairly and lawfully commands for the common good" [13, p. 61]. But, describing the "moral beauty", justice, and so on, Cicero never appeals to the woman: he is talking about the friends, slaves, foes, but never about the woman. When he writes about the desire to continue his family, he mentions marriage, the family as a "hotbed of the state", but the connection that he mentions is a connection "between the brothers, and then between cousins and sons" [13, p. 72]. And for Cicero "of all societies there is no better, no more durable than the one in which honest men, similar in their manners, are connected with friendly relations [13, p. 72]. Enumerating those who "are dear to us" – parents, children, relatives – Cicero doesn't remember women. Thus, Cicero not only includes women in the social, civil sphere, but makes no mention of her

in the private, domestic sphere: Woman is a "figure of silence" not only in the rhetoric of Cicero, but also in his philosophical arguments.

It should be noted that women, in general, occupy a prominent place in the works of Euripides, who in ancient times was called a "philosopher on the stage." Apparently, at that time people already became interested in the personal world of women, their mental warehouse, there was a question about the situation of women in the family and society ("Hecuba", "The Trojan Women", "Elektra", "Phoenician", "Iphigenia in Aulis", "Alcestis", "Medea", "Andromache"). In the "Hecuba" Euripides draws a pathetic image of the queen, embodied the tragedy of the mother, deprived by the war (the death of her husband, beloved sons, the youngest daughter, Polyxena, sacrificed on the tomb of Achilles; Hecuba itself of Troy powerful queen turned into a Achaeans' miserable prey). Civil pathetic of Hecuba's image is unusually strengthened by Euripides: Hecuba, being in the Achaean captivity, learning about the treacherous betrayal of the Thracian king Polimestor, lured him with the children in her tent and with the help of Trojan women killed his children, and blinded Polimestor [7, p. 401]. Even when blinded Polimestor predicts to Hecuba death in the depths of the waves, her turning into a "fiery eyed dog" (as prophetic Dionysus told to him"), Hecuba exclaims: "Let it be so: you have been punished by me!" [7, p. 400].

More powerful these heroic and patriotic notes sound in the tragedy "Iphigenia in Aulis." If the life of a young Iphigenia is needed for Greece, the daughter of the supreme commander Agamemnon will not abandon her duty: "It is indecent for the Greeks to bend before the barbarians on the throne. Here there is freedom, in Troy there is slavery" [7, p. 345]. In the "Alcestis" the theme of sacrifice is also developed – though on a personal level – and again a woman sacrifices; when the Thessalian king Ahmet had to find a replacement in the face of death, such a faithful friend was his wife Alcestis. But Euripides's image of woman is rather exception to the general neglect of the ancient world to the spiritual world of women. This is important due to the ancient Greece fundamental preference for homosexual love, which takes many forms, such as: the military partnership, the relationship of the spiritual mentor and the student, and so on.

Step forward makes the Roman love poetry (Catullus, Tibullus, Ovid), which opened in the lovely woman an autonomous person, now is frightening with her mysterious self-will, now is calling along with tenderness of love and compassion; woman forcing to experience a variety of feelings – from delight to disgust. When the young Ovid wrote his love elegies, the common emotional denominator of this genre was love. When the exiled Ovid took up his "Sorrowful Elegies", the main

themes of them became loneliness and memory of friends. Scientists emphasize that friendship in the Roman consciousness was almost legal relation, one of the main links fastening society. For Catullus, for example, a betrayal in friendship was as bad as betrayal in love [5, p. 189]. Ovid picks up this theme, friendship for him is the most important spiritual value, and the basis of friendship is a spiritual community. But such a friendship is a rarity. Wife is the only person in the world of "Sorrowful Elegies," who shares the anguish of lonely poet. From this he feels both easier and harder: he is ashamed to be the cause of the suffering of a loved one – the feeling is very rare in ancient literature, especially relating to women.

Thus, the woman (wife) – is not only an ideal wife, she the perfect friend, she organizes the chaos of the world around the poet and the chaos of feelings inside him, that is why this image is so important in the poetic system of Pontian elegies of Ovid, which undoubtedly had an enormous influence on the world literature. Antique world, leaving to the present cultural humanity great in its heritage value, laying the foundations of philosophy and science as a whole, largely determined the subsequent attitude toward woman. In the Hellenic world for the first time were brought to humanity "the joy, beauty and love" and in this world are the roots of the modern androcentrism and gender inequality. Therefore, in the social organization of humanity and, in general, in the culture of antiquity the correlation of male and female leads to universal separation by gender.

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doi:10.7905/vers.v0i2.579

Received at the editors' office: 14.03.2013.

Accepted for publishing: 15.04.2013

Translation: Tetiana Tarasenko

