

WOMEN'S STATUS AND WESTERN EUROPEAN CIVILISATION DEVELOPMENT

Traditional society changing over

“Gender is the category, that one can not get rid of. Is the one of the deepest rooted human features.¹” Biology assigned the different functions for males and females of Homo Sapiens. Evolution strengthened and improved this variety. Our civilisation reflects them, our religion and education raise them to a power/ intensify them². In these analyses of woman’s situation and status during ages of western civilisation development, the chronological sociological change will be presented. Technological innovations, the progress of knowledge, science and philosophy will be treated as the main factors of influence on social roles and positions of both genders.

In the society steered by tradition, true aims and aspirations of individuals do not reflect on their lots/ destinations. Family, wealth, religion and power are the tools of social control, opposing to autonomy. Adaptation is the minimal programme. The targets are unreflectively bestowed on the members of community³. Their position is absolutely dependent of the age and the class of birth. Women are totally subjected and do not have any influence on their lives. Pejorative opinions discovered by misogynists blame women of many lacks. Aristotle think that: “female is a female because of deficiency of some characteristics...” Bousset, claims that she is an “unfortunate man, casual creature”. Michellet defines woman as a “lenient vertebrate.”⁴

¹ Erving Goffman, „Człowiek w teatrze życia codziennego.” Warsaw 1981.

² A. Moir, D. Jessel „Płeć mózgu. O prawdziwej różnicy między mężczyzną a kobietą.” Warsaw 1993, p.18

³ Compare to David Riesman, *Samotny tłum*, Warsaw 1996.

⁴ Felicja Borzyszkowska - Sękowska „Trzecia płeć? Kobieta 2000.”, Bydgoszcz 1999, p. 33.

Only a woman was periodically befoul and impure. Celebrating over her begging rituals was necessary to let her being allowed to husband's bed and religious community. She would be preferably exclude from archaic society if not her indispensability as the tool of procreation. In that sort of world, woman do not pass culture towards new generations but is used only as the carrier of male seed (sperm).

In the society steered with tradition, high birth rate was not result of lack of contraceptive methods and knowledge. It was based on life style, convictions about human wealth, children, women, gender and meaning of human existence⁵. Tribes' conflicts, wars, epidemics, and default of proper hygienic means and medicines for the prosaic pains and health problems were causing very high deadlines of infants. Huge mortality of children was pushing people to have the biggest number. Lack of entertainment services and slower life pace determined spouses to go more often to their bedrooms. Endless amount of birth-giving and feeding these infants who survived, were deeply exploring women's organisms. It was the main reason of short medium of women's lives. It was giving another chance to get married to the widowers.

Although women underwent sexual and world view revolution, which gave them a chance to make their own choices and let them allot bigger demands in accordance to their partners. Nowadays, women do not let terrorise themselves and thanks to contraceptive techniques live longer, healthier and happier. They do not loose teeth and hair because of fulfilling matrimonial obligations. In present societies children stopped being economic value. The change of family models into smaller, nuclear ones provided better conditions of breed and education in the highest objectively possible standards⁶. Progress took women into orbit of external – out of home - world. New times called “ the epoch of individual”, which was preceded by two other historical periods: “epoch of tribes” and “family's epoch”⁷. Enormous historical progress processes are spreading into all spheres

⁵ Eadem, p. 37.

⁶ Eadem, p. 82.

⁷ Muller- Lyer E. „The evolution of Modern Marriage” London 1930, quotation after Krystyna Slany op. cit. p. 88

of life and have the influence on all of economic- social reality changes.

However, the sources of patriarchal pressure didn't die away. They bases on irrational and ideological roots. Emerging from unconscious system of convictions they determinate the way how people think⁸. Moreover, popularisation of psychology becomes the element impossible to postponed according to women's emancipation and their entrance on the work market area and their demand of equilibrium. Psychology informed both man and women about Freud complexes, deadened instincts and reasons of neurosis. Psychology caused bigger requirements from marriage institution and everyday partner's life then ever before⁹.

Referring to matriarchal roots of human existence (that will be mention below), thesis of cyclical processes of domination in nature might be reconsidered as rather probable. In accordance to some male authors, the world is slowly coming into stage of female privilege and power. Personally I believe it is extremely distant future.

Prehistory - Matriarchal order of archaic societies

Before cultural progress in Crete, Minor Asia, in Athens or Lemnos..., basing on archaeological discovers and literature assigns, feminine and motherhood's symbols were strongly visible in religious aspects and philosophy of life. In many ways woman was much more privileged than a man. Prehistoric matriarchat (lat. "Mater"(mother)+gr. "arché"(power)) took a place about 6000 years ago, and according to feministic researches lasted throughout 99 percent of prehistory of mankind. Stone epoch was even called

⁸ T. Szkołuta: Nowoczesność i tradycja, Lublin 1995, p.184 .

⁹ Denis de Rougemont: Miłość a świat kultury zachodniej, PAX , Warszawa 1999, p.221.

“paleolit matriarchat¹⁰”. It was devoted to “Big Mother” reigning over life and death during millions of years¹¹.

Etymological researches show, that within all tribes living from collecting and hunting there was no power in the meaning of “arché”. Therefore, there is no centralised compulsive system, but all the group members in the equal grade influence making the final decision. At the same time, despite of the fact that women were providing 60 to 80 percent of food for the family, kept in touch with spiritual world and usually initiated sexual contacts, the one whose voice meant more is a special man. What gives him a decision maker status in the matters referred to surviving? Probably the glory of best hunter, physical strength, successes in killing and special aura connected with this power over life. Importance and influence of women was still visible but postponed by masculine fascination of killing¹². Diversification of roles appeared in treating man as the executive organ and a woman as the source of sexual energy-essential to be a good killer. Later, patriarchal tradition, basing on this roles diversity, accused woman of being exclusively guilty of “primordial sin”. Therefore claimed lower value of woman (1 Tm 2, 14)¹³.

Among population of primitive hunters, the best hunter was the most wanted husband. According to some anthropologists' opinions, aggression of males rises with the presence of females ready to copulation¹⁴. The man turned into violence is the one who conquers woman. After long and heroic defence, she capitulates allowing to be taken for the highest possible price (most likely the promise of marriage)¹⁵.

¹⁰ Doris P. Jonas, David Jonas „Weib und Macht. 5 Millionen Jahre Urgeschichte der Frau” („Kobieta i władza. Pięć milionów lat prehistorii kobiety.”), Frankfurt 1988, p. 184.

¹¹ Compare to: Georg Baudler „Bóg i kobieta.” Historia przemocy, seksualizmu i religii., URAEUS, Gdynia 1995, pp. 22,23.

¹² Ibidem, pp. 30, 31.

¹³ Ibidem, p.66.

¹⁴ Ibidem p.67.

¹⁵ compare to Ibidem, p.97.

In humankind prehistory, the protection of home fireplaces was ascribed to female divinities¹⁶. The picture of woman and mother – the creator of light and domestic warmth longest lasted despite of Malta, on Crete¹⁷. Woman and sexual experiences known thanks to her and a child born from female bosom, were the centres of symbolical world. It generated new psychophysical structure of Neolit man, making permanent settlement possible for humankind¹⁸. Woman owing to her sexuality was defeating the wild forces of nature creating civilised life space¹⁹.

Woman and mother lost their central places in society at the moment when a man took possession of the power over human life subjected to the laws of violence. Ritual victims sacrificed by primordial folks to appease gods were most of all young girls, which seems to be a paradox in this situation²⁰. Until the mankind will not be released from violence, the patriarchat will be in charge. When the power of killing will be taken away from a man, symbols of woman and mother returns²¹.

Women in ancient Greece and Rome

The ultimate fall of highly developed matriarchal cultures dates back to the second century B. C. Greece was conquered by Ahays and Dorres, Trusses were colonized by Italics on the Apennine Peninsula. In conquered Europe, the invaders introduced a new political order, hierarchical society and the domination of male gods in religions. Slaves, both men and women appeared as a new category; as a result of the mentioned conquer. Female slaves predominated, as men were generally killed during wars.

In fact, the roots of feminism are to be found in the secular discrimination of women. Already in ancient Greece, women were politically and legally discriminated against. The first step to a

¹⁶ Ibidem p.122.

¹⁷ Ibidem p.169.

¹⁸ Ibidem p.193.

¹⁹ Ibidem p.154.

²⁰ Ibidem pp. 124-134.

²¹ compare to Ibidem pp.192/193.

patriarchal system was to lay down the rule of paternity as well as patrilocal marriage. This meant that women, locked in houses were separated from the support of their origin groups, and that the influence of these groups finally broke up²².

Homer described, an earlier culture than his own, the Mykens culture, in which women, free, even at the moment of turning to a slavery system, had some privileges. They attended the councils of war and made their own decisions, also those political ones. In Homer's Greece, women had only half the life chances, in comparison to men. Since the day they were born, a woman was considered of less worth. The father was the only one able to decide whether the baby should or should not live, regardless of the mother's will. Baby-girls were left abandoned more frequently than boys. Even those allowed to survive, were fed worse than boys. As an exception, Sparta established a special committee, which decided whether to keep a baby alive by taking into account its health, not sex. And that was something that Greeks could not comprehend²³. Women in Athens were excluded from social and public life, because of their lack of education, and the fact that they were often old when they got married (their thirties). In the seventh century B. C. Solon legalized brothels. In ancient Greece a wife was hidden in the kitchen, surrounded by slaves and children. In public, a man was accompanied by a hetaera, someone like Japanese geisha. The so-called hetaeras, descended from immigrant and slaves, were supposed to entertain men during feasts. They also provided sexual services and were never allowed to get married.

Some of the thinkers, like Aristotle, were concerned about the social and intellectual inequality of genders, which weaned men away from family life. He postulated women's education, so that they could become husbands' partners²⁴. At the same time, however, Aristotle wrote: 'Man is naturally a higher being, women – the lower'.

²² Ciechomska, Maria. 1996. „Od matriarchatu do feminizmu.”, Poznań, „Brama”, p. 15-17.

²³ Eadem, p. 26.

²⁴ Eadem, p.29.

Misogynism was born in ancient times, as well as pederasty. However, in the Hellenistic era, due to Alexander Macedonian's conquests, when geographical horizons were broadened, Greek women acquired new privileges. Against this 'new wave' of educated women, artists and sportswomen, Greeks created a new myth, which explained the social inability of women – the history of Pandora. Pandora opened her box of evil, which scattered all over the world. In the 5th century B.C. "Orestey" by Ayschylos was performed in Athens. The play was full of so-called anti-matriarchal content. Ksenofont drew up the rules of women's education. A woman or a girl, according to his opinion, was only a sweet idiot who should know as little as possible, understand as little as possible and remain under strict control, not asking any questions. She ought to remain absolutely inexperienced and be easily ruled by her husband²⁵.

Voices demanding the improvement of women's situation appeared. Aristotle in the matter of women's education, Plato, was postulating equality of sexes and Euripides condemning the faithlessness of men. In his compositions, Euripides described the revenge of betrayed women. Sofocles in his "Antigun" expressed the personal conflict between genders and promoted the woman and the values, which she represented. The main character – Antigun – became a symbol of love, freedom and contempt in the fight for power. In Aristophanes' drama, "Lisistrata" a woman refused to perform marital duties to the men returning from wars.

The resistance of women themselves occurred occasionally, but it is worth mentioning the example of one woman, Agnodice, in the 6th century B. C. was sentenced to death for changing her identity and becoming a doctor, hidden in a man's costume. Thanks to the wide protests of Greek women Agnodice was saved²⁶.

The other category of women in those times was the Amazons. According to mythology, they were descended from Ares and Harmony. These warlike women founded towns by the Thermodont River in Cappadocya – Eol's Kyme and Mitylena. The Amazons built the splendid temples of Arthemid. In Lydia, they fought against

²⁵ Eadem, p. 30.

²⁶ Eadem, p. 31,32.

Bellerofont. Their queen, Penthesilea, was an ally of Praxas at Troy until Achilles killed her²⁷.

Meanwhile, in Rome, the family and public virtues of ladies were praised. Cornelia, the wife of Scipio Africanus and other patrician matrons should serve as a good example. The everyday life of Roman women depended on their wealth and social position. The high standard of living was characteristic of wealthy women, who spent most of their time out, in the vapor baths, theatres or at the feasts. This way of living was possible due to the hard work of a large number of servants. Most of the servants were slaves, who were made to work in the fields and lived in terrible conditions. Those, who lived and worked in Roman houses, were treated much better. Women slaves often had an opportunity to get a job: as administrators, hairdressers, lecturers and nurses. In spite of this, they were constantly humiliated by the lord, who had the right to abuse them and by other male slaves who could do the same. In a case of insubordination, the women could even be killed²⁸.

The law was strict for women, who had the reputation of being reckless and lavish /Cato/. Livius glorified women from the past, but only those who were completely concentrated on the house and maternity. Quintilian, however, supported women's education; Plutarch disapproved ways of isolating women from the outer world and compared the differences between sexes to the difference between human individuals²⁹.

Since Hellenistic times and Empire, the situation for Roman women had become better. Marriage without a husband's domination over the wife was instituted in 161 B. C.. Women, who worked, especially as doctors, were given a legal status³⁰.

Roman religion acknowledged priestesses, called vestals, who were highly respected by people. But since the unrestricted king's authority had been established, the ritual role of a woman became only a religious legitimacy of his authority. This explains ritual prostitution, accepted and forced by men on one hand, and the

²⁷ Borzyszkowska- Sękowska, Felicja. op. cit., Pp. 197,198.

²⁸ Ciechomska, Maria. op. cit., p. 34.

²⁹ Eadem, p. 35.

³⁰ Eadem, p. 35.

demand of chastity of priestess on the other. Describing the Babylonians, Herodot mentioned the duty of every Babylonian woman no matter what her social status. A woman had to provide sexual services in the temple of Aphrodite at least once during her lifetime. Known for her strict customs, even Sparta had a sacral house of ill fame, near the temple of Dionisos. Such rites penetrated even into Judaism in the Canaan Land, producing objections among Israeli prophets. In one of his reforms, king Josses finally removed a sacral brothel from the Temple of Jerusalem (2Krl 23,7)³¹.

Roman vestals were captives who became State mothers of family ("mater familias"). They had the legal status of a wife of Pontifex Maximus. Watching the sacred fire was connected with purity and it emphasized the religious and political function of virginity. In fact they lived like slaves, locked in a harem, remaining virgins until their thirties. Later they were allowed to get married, if they wanted to. In 394 A. D., this pagan and inhuman practice was abandoned, thanks to emperor Teodosius, who put out the 1000-year fire of goddess Vest³².

The Roman provinces had a different tradition. Celts cherished a number of female goddesses, with the warrior-goddesses among them. They accepted divorces, concubines and the right that women had to choose their future husbands by themselves. Celt women were equal to men.

On the contrary, in Germane, a more patriarchal system was the leading one. In spite of this, some outstanding individuals, like priestess Veiled, who negotiated with Rome on behalf of Batavia tribe, are to be admired. The determination of German women, who were fighting to death only not to be captured, also commanded people's respect³³.

The Early Christianity

According to the Bible, woman is the cause of original sin. Because of her stupidity, characteristic for her sex insubordination

³¹Baudler, George. op. cit., Pp.220-221.

³²Ibidem Pp.225-226.

³³Ciechomska, Maria. 1996. op. cit., p. 37.

and women's curiosity, Eve brought the downfall not only on herself and Adam, but also on whole generations until the end of the world. Even the Ten Commandments were addressed to a man. The IX commandment says: 'You shall not desire the wife of your brother.'³⁴ In the earliest version of the Book of Exodus, the last commandment said: 'You shall not desire the house of your brother. You shall not desire the wife of your brother, the slave and the donkey, nor any of the things which belong to him.' As can be seen, women belonged to the inventory stock. According to the Old Testament, adultery was treated as a theft. Saint Mathew adds: 'Everyone who leers at a woman has already committed adultery' (Mt 5, 28)³⁵. The second description of the Creation of man says that God first created a man, then a woman. The authors of Epistles constantly address the congregation as 'brothers'. Meanwhile Jesus made a kind of revolution in the treatment of women.

As Franz Alt says, Jesus was the first one to treat women in a different way comparing to those who lived earlier and later than he did. He not only asserted their freedom and equality, but also by his own attitude and activity created a new model deserving to be followed³⁶. Where the violence rule appears, also a man's rule reigns, where violence disappears, a symbolic representation of a woman reappears. Those who followed Jesus' way, experience an unparalleled, since the time of 'the great hunts', a mother's care and love, no matter if it comes from a woman or a man. The Praise of freedom, in the Letter to Galats, ended with such words: "there is no longer a Jew or a pagan, there is no longer a slave or a free man, there is no longer a man or a woman, as everyone is the one in Jesus Christ."³⁷ In my opinion however, if Jesus had been really convinced of women's equality, he wouldn't have allowed Mary Magdalene to kneel down and wash his feet with her own hair, tears and expensive fragrant oil. He would have had to raise the woman, who prostrated herself before him, help her get up, and then get up himself, and say

³⁴ Ciechomska Maria. Nieobecność. „, Mass Media.”1999, p.45.

³⁵ Bible.

³⁶ Mynarek, Hubertus. 1995. „Jezus i Kobiety. Miłosne życie nazarejczyka”, Gdynia. Uraeus., p.12.

³⁷ Bible, Ga 3, 28.

to her as if they were equal: 'Why do you humiliate yourself in front of the man, who is not sinless as well?'

Undoubtedly, the person who played the crucial role in the first community, after Jesus' death, was a woman herself. Thanks to her, the dogma came into existence. Mary Magdalene initiated the faith in the Resurrection, as a base of Christianity. As well as being a charismatic woman herself³⁸, without Mary Magdalene there would be no Christianity. She was the first to announce the Resurrection. At the same time, the largest branches of Christianity: Catholics and the Orthodox reject women's rights to do the church's duties.

The primary Christianity was, to a certain degree, feminine. This meant that women were encouraged by the ideas of equality for all people and loosening of family relationships. In the Acts of the Apostles and the Letters of St. Peter one can observe women as the leaders of primitive communities, performing and managing Eucharistic duties³⁹. Asceticism was the price that women had to pay for their independence and the possibility of acquiring spiritual knowledge. However, together with institutionalization, the Jewish tradition came back and women were deprived of their functions⁴⁰. St. Paul from Tars put an end to this fundamental role of women surrounding Mary Magdalene. The signs of 'primitive matriarchal order' had been therefore removed⁴¹. In early Christianity a woman remained under a man's control. St. Paul used to say: 'Let the wives be submitted to their husbands as to the Lord'⁴². Mary, the mother of Jesus is a good example of this. She remains passive. She doesn't rule herself and her body. Nobody asks her for permission. She is totally submitted and remains unaware of the miracle that takes place inside her body, until Joseph tells her about it. Mary loses everything to the Church and her vocation sets a good example to every woman.⁴³

³⁸ Mynarek, Hubertus. op. cit. p.54.

³⁹ Baudler, Georg. op. cit., p. 377.

⁴⁰ Ciechomska, Maria. 1996. op. cit., p. 38,39.

⁴¹ Eadem, Pp. 55-56.

⁴² Letter to Ephesians 5:22-23.

⁴³ Hubertus Mynarek, op. cit., p. 110-112.

The Middle Ages

In the early Middle Ages, Roman law dominated in Southern Europe. In Northern Europe, tribal traditions of barbarians were in most cases beneficial to women⁴⁴. At the beginning of Christianity, women as deaconesses, heard confessions, said masses and administered the Holy Communion. Convents appeared in the sixth century. Before the rule of St. Benedict was accepted in ninth century, every Mother superior wrote her own rules and presented a statute for her convent herself⁴⁵. In the Middle Ages the Church proclaimed spiritual equality of man and woman. The woman, nevertheless, was called a temptress, who led men astray, just like biblical Eve did. A characteristic of patriarchal violence-fascination and a negative opinion about “sexualism”, led to the restriction of women’s rights. An ascetic depreciation of “sexualism” and a woman herself became more aggressive. Tertullian called a woman ‘the devil’s gate’ and blamed her for the death of God’s son⁴⁶. St. Hieronim makes women responsible for the evil of the whole world. Thomas Aquinas used to say: ‘ Woman belongs to those defective fruits of nature, who owe their existence to a faulty penis.’⁴⁷ It’s worth mentioning the situation of nuns, who were in service with those in superior positions – the other nuns and clergymen, who acted as confessors, supervisors, protectors and legal advisers. The equality of nuns’ rights in relation to the other nuns, God, Christ and the Holy Church has not been established. Higher offices were meant for educated and wealthy women of noble birth, who could spend most of their time contemplating, and were allowed to give orders. Women from the lower classes of society used to get less important positions⁴⁸.

The language of the Bible and the lesson of the Church are so strongly connected with a theory of God’s masculinity, that the whole cultural and lingual account of the Revelation reflects the

⁴⁴ Ciechomska Maria. 1996. op. cit. p.46.

⁴⁵ Eadem, p. 47.

⁴⁶ Baudler, Georg. op. cit. p. 379.

⁴⁷ Sokołowska M. 1995. Rozdeptane na chwałę bożą, Gdańsk, p. 43.

⁴⁸ Mynarek, Hubertus. op. cit. p. 69.

patriarchal society system. At the moment, a feministic theology protests against this point of view. There are two sections of this theology: reformatory and radical. The first one refers to an unconventional Jesus' attitude towards "fallen" women and the fact, that women were permitted to join the group of Jesus' students. The Church doesn't care much for the fact that Martha was the first one to say the words: 'You are the Messiah, the Son of God.' While Jesus' students ran away or denied him, women remained under the cross and were the first witnesses of the Resurrection, though nobody believed them. Against the men's belief, considering Mary the embodiment of female ideals, the feminists declare that she continued the prophetic mission of Israel. In one of her songs, "Magnificat", Mary suggests that the powerful should be deprived of their power and the weak should be exalted. This is regarded as a relativism of men's supremacy. In the first period of Christ's religion women performed church duties. Later, however, the development of institutionalization brought back the old-testamentary regulation of women's freedom. Not to mention the medieval mystics, who were thought to be the precursors of feminist theology⁴⁹. The radical section creates a different 'church of women' claiming, that the official Church cannot be reformed. The positive aspect of feminist theology is its total ecumenism in relation to the ecumenicity of anti-feminism⁵⁰. It gathers all the official Churches and Christian communities, not to mention other religions. Let's go back to medieval Europe.

On the Slavs' territory, the depreciation of a woman consisted of the absolute subordination to a man, a father and later – a husband. It was a common rule to kill newborn girls, or widows after husbands' death, especially among the upper strata⁵¹.

After the year A. D.1000, a fast economic development took place in Europe. New inventions appeared which made life easier: a chimney pipe, hard soap, buttons, a glass mirror and a surge in the building of huge cathedrals⁵².

⁴⁹ Ciechomska, Maria. 1996. op. cit., Pp. 296,298.

⁵⁰ Eadem, p. 300.

⁵¹ Eadem, p. 52.

⁵² Eadem, p. 53.

The uncertain status of women became apparent during crises and cataclysms like the economic depression of the XII century and during epidemics. Women could rarely experience such friendly gestures like the law, prohibiting compulsory marriage against their will. Once king Kanute the First announced it, influenced by his wife, Emma. Women had no legal status, but they were sometimes given economic rights. In the same way the craft guilds employed women, towns bestowed privileges on tradeswomen and saleswomen. Women carried on free professions, like a doctor f. ex. They could study in one of Salerno`s medical schools, gaining fame as Throtula (Trotula) did⁵³.

Then, Early Middle Ages brought crusades, and together with them an inhuman invention, the chastity belt. It had been used as incredibly brutal method guaranteeing wives` faithfulness and could lead even to death⁵⁴.

At this time, the Church gave in to the anti-feministic tendencies, which was partly Thomas Aquinas` doing. In the middle of the 14th century, the golden bulla announced that the queen was only a wife of the king to whom she should be obedient and from that point until the time of Queen Elisabeth the first, the word `queen` referred only to a king`s wife, not to an individual sovereign.

Practicing free professions became forbidden and the work of women was considered worth less, when compared with men`s work. This led to feminization of poverty and in some cases, to prostitution⁵⁵.

In times when knighthood glorified a woman, she became a lady, protected by her knight, who until death to be loyal and faithful to her. Meanwhile, women from the rabble came under the so-called `law of the first night`, “*ius primae noctis*”. The contrast seems to be quite shocking.

Renaissance

⁵³ Eadem, p. 54.

⁵⁴ Eadem, p. 54.

⁵⁵ Eadem, Pp. 59,60.

New technological possibilities woke up economy in Renaissance. Imposing system, manufacture and production orientated on the market needs provided economical growth of western world⁵⁶. Those who wanted give any educational opportunities to women, were thinking only about certain level of good manners. Reformation didn't help women at all. Martin Luther was considering unmarried women, as egoists opposing to the Bodes will. In this light, future existence of monastic communities was questioned. Following Luther's convictions, one can find out that inconveniences of pregnancy and delivery women should treat as the God calamity. Luther didn't left any doubts that even if husband betrays his wife, she has no right to refuse him the sexual submissiveness.

Continuing these trends, Calvinists appeared even more repressive for women demanding death penalty for unfaithful wife and total conformity of the wife to her husband⁵⁷. Reformation contributed to the picture of beggars- women and women rambling in the streets and increasing amount of prostitutes.

The wave of inter-European hunting for witches slowly grow, to achieve its apogee on the ages break at XVI and XVII century. According to Dominican Henry Kraemer (nominated to become the member of "Holy Officium" in South Germany) in profligacy points fair sex, with obscenity and bad black magic spells they draw down the justice anger on a human kind.⁵⁸ In the year 1486 the bull of pope Innocent VIII "Summis desiderates" was announced. Together with it, inquisitor's manual written by Henry Instytor and Jacob Sprenger, called "Malleus Maleficarum" which means "The hammer against witches" was printed out.⁵⁹ In authors opinion men are privileged gender because Jesus Christ has taken male personality. They were also persuaded of demonism of women's nature. According to this last conviction, in 1565, in Germany the book of Adam Schubert was published. Author performed with appreciation a husband biting his

⁵⁶ Eadem, p. 65.

⁵⁷ Eadem, Pp. 67,68.

⁵⁸ Robert Lewandowski, Introduction from: „Młot na czarownice. *Malleus maleficarum*.”, Wyspa, Wrocław 1992, Pp. 5 - 8.

⁵⁹ Op. cit., p. 9.

wife until her death. On heap into flames most of all were sent herbalists, midwives, lonely, wired and extraordinary women. In conformity with "scapegoat" theory, witches were exterminated most intensively during cataclysms and economical crisis. Only a woman was a witch. In the mediaeval profession of magician was some dose of knowledge and wisdom, but witch was considered only as ugliness, sly evilness and lewd (dissolute) orgies with devils.

In XVII century well known were opinions about lower level of female intelligence in comparison to male one. Very popular became assumption that woman occupied with science, art, or even only literature neglects her proper obligations. First professional actresses and singers who appeared in Italy were recognised as evil seducers and the Church started to defeat them. The crowds of street women, staying permanently without the roof over their heads and financial means to survive increased producing more and more prostitutes, beggars, fortune-tellers, and thieves. Governments from time to time hunted for them and then forced them to compulsory, non-profit work in horrid conditions.

There were women who joined brigands, organised robbers or accompanied to soldiers as Marquette (info for Chris: I mean sutlers esp. from France).⁶⁰

Alternative of traditional female destiny (marriage or spinsterhood) was, at least in catholic countries, cloister (female monastery) New feminine cloisters, which treated education of girls as the prime aim were found. Nuns propagating teaching the catholic topics made the basic capacities like reading and writing available also for average or poor girls. Therefor the level of knowledge slowly got better.

The occupation truly in fashion especially among higher strata of society started to be science. In England special scientific magazine, exclusively for female readers has been published.

The equal spiritual value of genders underlined Marie de Jars Gournay in her tractate "About equality of men and women". In 1617, in Great Britain, Esther Sowerman published special manifest

⁶⁰ Maria Ciechomska, op. cit., p. 89.

postulating improvement of destination of all the representatives of her sex.⁶¹

Enlightenment and womanlike subjects

In eighteenth century European women still stayed under male guardianship. The process of de-feminisation of some traditionally feminine jobs just started. Invention of a “spinning mill machine” in England left thousands of women bereaved of their work places. Especially that the usage and service of this spinning thread machine belonged to men. Luckily, at the same time, in Switzerland and in France, new crochet-needle techniques had been discovered. It became new possibility of domestic profitable occupation for women. Industrialisation demanded also the work of mercenary labour forces on hire. At the beginning of century, average wage of female hired worker was just the half of male hired worker salary for the same afford and not much more than salary of a child⁶².

This epoch produced another misogynist philosophers. Emmanuel Kant claimed that thinking causes the harm of damaging the woman’s beauty. Jan Jacob Rousseau required total submission of the wife to her husband without any personal rights even without the right to keep her own religion. David Hume claimed that “ inferiority and weakness of women are absolutely incurable.” Despite of these critical opinions towards women, philosophers were the ones who openly proclaimed ideals of freedom and equality. Therefore they facilitated future development of women’s liberation movements⁶³.

To repulse such a discriminating ways of thinking, women saw a chance for themselves in French Revolution. First written official declaration of women, fighting for their rights was included in Women’s Rights Declaration. The prime article of this assignment says: “ a woman is born as a free creature and stays equal with a man in all the rights...”⁶⁴ In January 1789, French king Ludwig XVI

⁶¹ Compare to: Eadem,, Pp. 90-93.

⁶² Eadem, Pp. 102, 103.

⁶³ E. Domańska: Historia feminizmu i feministyczna historia , Odra 1994, nr 7-8, p. 23.

⁶⁴ Kronika kobiet , Warsaw 1993, p.315.

received petition called “Supplicate from women of Third Class”, where he was asked to make the access to education and occupation possible for women. At first women indeed acquired numerous privileges. Among them most important was legal individuality in the eyes of law, the right to inherit, to choose a husband, to initiate divorce, or to wear more comfortable outfits⁶⁵.

One of the most meaningful personages at the initial stage of feminism creation was Angelica Marry Wollstonecraft. She published “Defence of women’s rights.” in 1792. It contained protest against dependence and submission of women, plus critic of the narrow possibilities of personal intellectual development for women.

Women of nineteenth century

At the beginning of nineteenth century, Napoleon established legislation code within almost all Europe. It drastically reduced not numerous rights fought out by women during French Revolution. In the positivism epoch, Henry Thomas Buckle and John Stuart Mill were discussing woman’s nature from the opposite points of view. First claimed that women live in the world more ideal and abstract from reality than men, who are do focusing on facts. Second one suggested in contrary, that women are realists strongly grounded on the floor. However both were supporting equality⁶⁶. In their times, status of women was not much different from the status of Afghani or Iranian women today, unless they were not obliged to cover their faces and hair with “chaffar”.

The congress of suffragists became an inspiration for European women to fight for their rights. In 1848 in Seneca Falls, Declaration of Principles was proclaimed as a part of Declaration of Independence in U.S. constitution. New schools started to teach professionally traditional women’s occupations. Nevertheless, the access to regular higher education was not available for women until the end of century. The first who let the fair gender into it’s walls was University of Zurich. The Art Academies resisted the longest. At

⁶⁵ Maria Ciechomska op. cit., Pp. 104, 105.

⁶⁶ Eadem, p. 112.

the beginning of XX century still didn't let women to study nature on live models cases⁶⁷.

At the end of century, new work places for women appeared, especially among public services, like post offices and offices, or in the sector of services. These jobs were only available for unmarried women. Popular form of activity run by rich, well-educated women, except writing, was running artistic- literary saloons⁶⁸.

In some countries the situation was slowly getting better. In 1856, in Sweden unmarried women over the age of 25 were recognised as persons having full law capacity.

Gentle gymnastics of young girls became popular. The women in more dynamic sports were still unaccepted. Bicycle race for women organised in Bordeaux in France evoked international scandal⁶⁹.

XX century

Difficult period of parliamentary reforms from 1909 to 1911 in England provoked huge boom of the suffragists` actions. Their leader Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughter Christabel were organising numerous demonstrations, manifestations, they were interrupting during political organisations meetings and political parties sessions. When being arrested they responded with starvation`s strikes⁷⁰.

Modernism on the turning point of ages as the result of industrialisation, urbanisation, bureaucratisation and democratisation pushed women to migrate from countryside into cities. Women Liberation Movements started to be successful. In the common conscience new picture of women working outside her home started to be accepted. Domestic works achieved new ideological value. More careful breed of children and higher hygienic level, tidiness or aesthetics standards totally absorbed women`s time. Technical innovations created a new trend of making domestic tasks easier. The inventions of iron, vacuum- cleaner, refrigerator, sewing- machine, kitchen mixer, were available at the beginning just to narrow group

⁶⁷ Eadem, p. 113.

⁶⁸ Eadem, p. 15.

⁶⁹ Eadem, p. 118.

⁷⁰ E. Domańska, op. cit, p. 24.

of users. Feminine sports started to be accepted. Work of married women outside the household was slowly rising. Methods of family planning led to diminish number of children. All these changes had lots of opponents. In 1931 the Pope in Rome, Pius XI published Encyclical, which condemned women's emancipation, family planning and coeducational schools. "Unnatural equality of rights for both genders will be pernicious for woman herself⁷¹."

Nevertheless, also women themselves noticed some dangers coming with too much of equality, although the "second shift" expression invented by Hochschild in eighties was very distant yet⁷². "Equality is not justice." - wrote Ellen Key, desiring woman's emancipation among the spiritual sphere and not in demanding the same physical affords as from a man according to professional occupation. This Swedish (1849-1926) pointed at the fact, that running household takes so many physical and psychical forces, that woman should not try to come up to man in the profitable work area⁷³.

The First World War showed the importance of woman in economic system. They worked in offices, factories and industrial services. They successfully executed jobs earlier denied to female crew⁷⁴.

Hitler ideology treated women as the objects. They were just reproducers of pure Arian race. Those who potentially could give birth to genetically less valuable children was forced to be sterilised or had to do an abortion. The possibility of education was closed to them. All aspirations different than housekeeping were treated as "intellectualism", which was recognised as being offensive⁷⁵.

In 1935 Heinrich Himmler opened "Lebensborns" which were supposed to take care of unmarried Arian mothers. Indeed, they were rather similar to brothels. They became institutions to produce

⁷¹ Quotation after: Ciechomska, op. cit., p. 140.

⁷² A .R. Hochschild, „The second shift: working parents and revolution at home.", New York, Viking 1989.

⁷³ Felicja Borzyszkowska- Sękowska, op. cit., p. 23.

⁷⁴ Eadem.

⁷⁵ Maria Ciechomska, op. cit., p. 143.

valuable “human material” and to sexually serve to Nazis` elite, turning women into procreative mares.

At the same time, the concentration camps for Jewish and Gypsy`s women were the places of different sort of execution. They were bitten, forced to hard work, starved, used as experimental objects for pseudo- medical researches. They were sterilised under compulsion and forced to prostitution⁷⁶.

During Second World War women had to replace men in some male occupations and get professional jobs. Legislation and state propaganda organisations were supporting this necessity. Lots of orphanages and kindergartens were built⁷⁷.

After the war, patriarchal models of family idyll returned propagated in mass media. However, despite of customs, moral, law and propaganda laying pressure to provide conservative ideology, progressing development of techniques, new methods of production and work organisation, generated huge number of employment offers for women. In 1963, western countries officially noticed the problems of gender discrimination. Rapport announced by UNESCO was pointing at women`s situation and the crisis of marriage⁷⁸.

Outside the sphere of politics, oral contraceptive pill had been discovered as the most certain preventing method. After the year 1970 feminine counterculture blossomed. New magazines, music bands, theatres, cabarets, film groups, or entertainment halls dedicated especially to women started to arise one by one. Feministic movements of black women developed, as well as lesbian organisations and associations of prostitutes. New terminology appeared in dictionaries. One of the words unknown before was “sexism”. Sexist`s character of European culture was loudly discussed in public. In RFN and in Italy the divorce obtaining legislation became liberalised. Finally governments mentioned above, allowed propagate information about contraception and legalised abortion. Ireland abolished constraint celibate of female employees in public services, lasting till then⁷⁹.

⁷⁶ Eadem, p. 144.

⁷⁷ Eadem, p. 150.

⁷⁸ Eadem, p. 161.

⁷⁹ Eadem, pp. 166-169.

In eighties ladylike politics started to become professional. Last bastions of male supremacy like Liechtenstein or canton Appenzeller in Switzerland bestowed voting in election rights on women. Although women were finding “glass ceiling” and were rather rarely observed on managing positions, mass media started to promote new ideal model in fashion – “the woman of success”⁸⁰.

The Women’s Liberation Movement, which appeared in 1960. and 1970., demanded more than only political and juridical equality. Looking at history and culture from feminine perspective, feminists rejected lots of traditions that were appreciated from ages and commended existing relations between man and woman. The fruit of feminism is specialisation of professional institutions for women in following areas: information, services, tourism, education, sports, medicine, art, advises...

Final remarks

Despite of hard conditions in the world dominated by masculine ideology, women, thanks to their extraordinary spiritual and intellectual attributes, inscribed themselves in the columns of the history. It’s not enough to mention famous Athenian poet- Saffo, philosopher –Teano, astronomer – Aglaonike (who was able to predict eclipse of the Sun and Moon), sovereign of Halikarnas – Artemisya (who personally commanded the war ships during Salamina battle in the year 48 B. C.)⁸¹. The huge appreciation in ancient Rome got gynaecologist – Elefanti, optician – Salpe, pharmacist – Olimpias⁸². In former ages medical books about obstetrics was published by experienced midwives: English - Jane Sharp, Deutsche- Justine Ditrich Siegemindin, French – Elisabeth Cellier. Experiments with blood preparations made Marguerite de la Marche. The book written by Lukrecia Marinella “About nobility and virtues of women and defects and sins of men.” was printed out in Venice. It was parody of antifeminist pamphlets. It is worth to notice Italian scientists of Enlightenment: Laura Bassi, Maria

⁸⁰ Eadem, pp. 173, 174.

⁸¹ Eadem, p. 31,32

⁸² Eadem, p. 35.

Gaetana Agnesi, painters: Rosabella Carriera, Angelica Kaufmann and Elisabeth Vigee- Lebrun. During French Revolution women activity in many areas was visible on the example of Madame Roland in politics, Olympia de Gouges in writing, Theroigne de Mericourt in military forces of Revolution.

What about Maria Curie – Skłodowska? She invented chemical element –radium.

Discrimination caused the phenomena of women passing their whole lives hidden under the male costume. In case when secret was recognised, until the times of Enlightenment, the law provided very row punishments⁸³. Even French writer Aurora Dudevant, to publish her books had to hidden herself behind the male pseudonym George Sand, because her profession as for a woman was not in a good taste⁸⁴.

In contrary to general criticism pointed at fair sex, women of different epochs were absolutely irreplaceable as muses being inspiration for the greatest artists. For some examples might be used: Gioconda, Forhania, Laura, Charlotte Stieglitz, Matylda Wesandonk, Beata Dolska, or Hańska.

According to Folsom (1934), the process of big social change brought with modernisation was running in following order:

- progress in new scientific discovers, technological innovations, new ideologies, and scientific trends,
- change of economical stratification of societies,
- change of social stratification of societies,
- change in cultural and individual area of society stratification.

The progress reduced physical effort, especially of women in hard domestic obligations. Spare time, just for exclusive use of individuals lengthened radically. Economical changes caused general professional activation of women. Family life started to be isolated from profitable work life outside the home. The world of social existence started to be more and more complex and miscellaneous thanks to growing diversity of social roles accomplished by men and

⁸³ Eadem, p. 89.

⁸⁴ Felicja Borzyszkowska- Sękowska, op. cit., p. 27.

women...⁸⁵ At present, society highly values women's occupation. Mainly from the economic point of view, but also as the carriers of new values at work, at social relations and within family. Some of these new qualities are: co-operation in the name of achieving personal, individual aspirations of both members of couple and their kids, as well as, potential outgrowth of economic and cultural standards in families.

⁸⁵ Compare to: Krystyna Slany „O kwestii kobiecej: dylematy i kontrowersje.” Krzysztof Frysztacki „Z zagadnień socjologii stosowanej” Krakow 1996.