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Negative sexuality as a passive social attitude

Each culture demands conformity to norms and social expectations and it is usually common knowledge what should be done in order to comply with them. Consequently, it is very hard to follow the path of authentic and positive self-actualisation. This demands reflection on the existing world, a strong sense of individual identity and autonomous patterns of behaviour. Individuals who do not practise social norms are vulnerable to ostracism, discrimination and social isolation.

Sexuality and its social and political aspects

Human sexuality is one of the most highly regulated areas of life. Breaking sexual norms is regarded as more scandalising than non-normative behaviour in other spheres of life. Social discourses¹ define what is acceptable and what constitutes “healthy sexual attitudes”. It is evident what form of sexual self-actualisation² is proper and what rules should be followed when establishing sexual relations.³ There is social pressure on the institutionalisation of human relationships⁴ and their practice in a monogamous⁵ and heteronormative⁶ form.

¹ Areas of socio-political reality.

² Actual sexual behaviour.

³ The totality of interpersonal erotic phenomena.

⁴ Marriages and other forms of entering into legally recognised interpersonal relationships.

⁵ Monogamy: each partner lives and has sexual relations with one person.

⁶ I.e. such where only relations between partners of opposite sex are regarded as normal.

It seems socially obvious which sexual preferences⁷ constitute a social norm, and which are a “perversion” or “deviation”. In this way the process of socialisation⁸ is conducted as part of negative sexual politics.⁹

What is negative sexual politics and how does it influence the human being? It is social politics on sexuality which is marked by a negative attitude towards what is sexual and erotic. Authentic sexuality¹⁰ remains a taboo sphere. It is not an acceptable subject for public discourse, and the only message which enters the public sphere is the one conforming to the criteria of social norms. Individual sexuality is to remain in the private sphere. However, since the private sphere is also public, most of the time the private human being reproduces the expected cultural patterns.¹¹ Even when alone, it is difficult to free one’s authentic sexuality, and a liberal attitude to sexual pleasure is associated with “showing off”. Transgressing social norms is seen as “bad” and involves the risk of social ostracism.¹² The set of convictions concerning sexuality which I have just summarised forms the basis of negative sexual realisation. It burdens the individual with a sense of shame for his/her own needs, thoughts and behaviour. As a result, authenticity and sincerity are hampered by a fear of rejection. This makes it difficult to achieve egosyntony, i.e. a sense of coherence and acceptance of one’s own sexuality as part of oneself. A model heteronormative society like the Polish one provides little opportunity for positive sexual existence, life in harmony with one’s own needs and public acceptance of sexual diversity. Compliance with socially-dictated guidelines intensifies the situation whereby the existence of all things “strange” may become a threat to representatives of such sexual identity. Acting in accordance with the norm reinforces and “hardens” it.

Positive sexuality is characterised by an open and accepting attitude towards one’s own and other people’s sexuality. It leaves no room for shame, discrimination and other forms of violence. Sex-positive reality makes it possible for individuals to be themselves and feel safe, to actualise their sexuality,¹³ to freely develop and gain education and to enjoy a sense of acceptance.

⁷ Individual preferences concerning the object and methods of sexual self-realisation.

⁸ The psychological process by which an individual adapts to society. It most often takes place under pressure of the immediate environment and educational institutions.

⁹ I.e. the process of socialisation conveys information concerning sexuality from the perspective of negative sexuality.

¹⁰ While there is disagreement as to the existence of authentic sexuality, regardless of the approach, authentic sexuality means living in harmony with oneself.

¹¹ Models learnt in the process of socialisation and regarded as a norm in a given society.

¹² Exclusion through hostile attitude or actual casting out of the social group.

¹³ Obviously, sexual self-realisation must respect the limits of other people’s freedom. A sex-positive attitude is not violent, but anti-discriminatory: it aims to eradicate violence.

Social attitude is a way in which an individual functions in the world. It may be active and involved, when a person exerts an influence on the surrounding world and moulds reality according to his/her own outlook. A passive social attitude entails a situation when a person does not actualise his/her outlook and does not practise his/her values, choosing instead to live according to the norms of the existing reality. It may stem either from a lack of an autonomous set of values, which leads the person to conform to those accepted by society, or from fear of having to fight for the values which are precious to him or her.

A sex-positive attitude, which does not assume the existence of “improper” types of sexuality, is at the same time a proactive social attitude. The acknowledgment of all sexualities as “normal” and “acceptable” entails a political struggle, thus the actualisation of sex-positive values in one’s life involves an active sexual attitude and contributes to building sex-positive space.¹⁴ Through their outlook, lifestyle and cooperation with other like-minded people, individuals who build sex-positive social space become social activists, since their actions aim to change the existing social and political order.

Political philosophy and sexuality

How is it possible that we are so expert at recognising the limits of sexual norms? This question was addressed by Michel Foucault in one of the most interesting texts concerning human sexuality. The philosopher, once considered revolutionary, today regarded as a classic, analysed European history of the last centuries in order to demonstrate that sexuality is a construct which oppresses people.

Michel Foucault was one of the most influential exponents of bio-philosophy,¹⁵ and it is difficult to imagine today’s political thought without his contribution. His analysis of power relations is still relevant and remains fundamental for anti-establishment movements. His texts (Foucault, 1978/2009, 1979/2008, 1980/2014) demonstrate the importance of the biological aspect of our existence for power relations, the results of a statistical approach to the population and the implication of knowledge in the processes of power. The development of knowledge about the population is meant to lead to increased social productivity, thus creating the foundations of a totalitarian system. At the same time,

¹⁴ Space is understood here as socio-political reality in general.

¹⁵ A stream of political philosophy which stresses the political significance of biological life and related questions of political power. Foucault was one of the best-known representatives of this approach.

the possession of power entails influence over the shaping of discourse, i.e. the whole of the currently established vision of reality. In this way the group involved in population management acquires the right to dictate the truth about the world, which in turn has a direct bearing on power relations.¹⁶ In other words, whoever possesses knowledge, also possesses power. In *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault, 1976/1978, vol. 1, 1984/1985, vol. 2, 1984/1986, vol. 3), Foucault observed that sexuality is a construct invented by power in order to control the population. He also claimed that it is society at large which creates a political system, thus giving rise to the hierarchical division of power. The deployment of sexuality has been designed in such a way as to make use of individual energy. Foucault outlined the theory of the triad: power – knowledge – pleasure, demonstrating the forms in which sexuality appears in public discourse.

Analysing history of Europe from the point of view of sexuality, Foucault observes that the idea of sexuality did not “always exist”, but is a product of a biopolitical process of social organisation. What we nowadays understand as sexuality was once regarded as a biological phenomenon. Since biology is natural, sexuality did not use to be as controversial as it is today. Foucault points to social changes taking place in the seventeenth century as the origin of a new way of thinking about sex, leading to the depreciation of sexuality. This phenomenon increased in the course of the eighteenth century. Social norms shape a new type of man with a characteristic psychosexual sphere; verbal and mental censorship means that there are subjects which should not be raised in conversation, or should be talked about in a specific way; there are types of behaviours which become subject to normative restriction. Similarly, human thoughts come to be regulated by power, deciding what is permitted. What we imagine should also conform to the socially preferred norm. In this way, normative censorship leads to self-censorship. Historical analysis confirms Foucault’s hypotheses concerning sexual repression. Sex is dependent on power, which decides what is acceptable and what is forbidden.

The machinery of the system evolved and in time allowed sex understood from the medical point of view. The population needs to be measured in order to be efficiently managed. This led to the development of institutions of control and prevention of teenage sex. The verbal norm of medical sexual lexicon appeared alongside non-normative, “vulgar” vocabulary. Banished to the recesses of the human unconscious, sexuality becomes frus-

¹⁶ Relations between entities (individuals, groups, institutions, symbols) that include components of power.

trating for the individual. At the same time, it should be observed that Foucault criticised the assumption about the existence of a true person repressed by power. The process of depreciating sexuality is implicated in power relations which take place within a human being. Equally, there is no one, objectively dominating discourse of sexuality. The deployment of sexuality¹⁷ constantly multiplies discourses of sexuality, all of which, however, constrain the human being.

In this way sex comes to be surrounded by a web of injunctions and rules based on the assumption that sexuality is a negative aspect of human life. Foucault argued that the whole machinery of sexual norms and meanings serves to control the numbers of the population and labour force. Sexuality is to be linked with the economic category of productivity. However, sex cannot be eliminated and what is officially repressed crops up between the lines on every occasion. The nineteenth century brings a variety of “perversions” and the supremacy of heterosexuality and monogamy as social models to be reproduced by good citizens. Foucault points to the important processes of the semanticisation of sexuality,¹⁸ such as a hysterisation of woman¹⁹, pedagogisation of children’s sex²⁰, and socialisation of procreative behaviour.²¹ All of the above contributed to the development of the image of the modern nuclear family.²² Sexual attitudes were juxtaposed in the opposition “deviations vs natural sexual order”. What was normative was considered natural, and this narrow sexual norm came to be guarded by fear and shame. The sphere of permissible behaviour was controlled by a threat of social stigma. However, the processes of depreciating sexuality were not repressive as such. According to Foucault, the fact that power came to rule the body resulted from discursive practices produced by society.

¹⁷ “The machinery of the system”, whose mechanism of rules and prohibitions constructs the idea of sexuality in a way that makes it useful for power. The deployment of sexuality aims to manage and constrain sexuality.

¹⁸ The process of ascribing and producing meaning.

¹⁹ A stream of pseudo-science concerned with female psychology and physiology, which saw the origin of women’s mental problems in the disturbed sexual sphere and in defects of the uterus. All non-normative behaviour in women was qualified as hysteria and “treated” with brutal methods.

²⁰ The elimination of sexuality from children’s developmental process; habits instilled in children were to limit their contact with sexuality. Hence all prohibitions which still function in today’s culture, such as the one demanding that children should sleep with their hands on top of the sheets, or that boys should not keep their hands in their pockets. This was meant to limit the opportunities for touching erogenous zones by children and adolescents.

²¹ This concerns a set of prohibitions and injunctions pertaining to reproduction. People should form monogamous heterosexual couples, formalise their relationships and observe a traditional wedding ritual. Only then are they allowed to have children, which also is implicated in a web of social norms.

²² A social model in which the family consisting of two generations: parents and children is the basic unit of the social organism. Characteristic of industrial societies, it still constitutes a common social norm.

Foucault saw the revolution in the perception of sex brought about by Freudian psychoanalysis²³ as a development contributing to an increase of knowledge about society and to the search for truth. However, seemingly freed from public discourse, instinctive drives immediately came to be absorbed by the deployment of sexuality. The desire to build a body of knowledge about sex led to clinical classification, science, the postulate of causality, proper sexuality, a method of interpreting sexual confessions and their medicalisation. Sexuality was seen as naturally prone to pathology, which is why it is so closely watched by the all-knowing eye of the institution.

The relation between power and sex is obvious. Power produces sex and sexuality; it establishes the norm for them, eliminates them from public discourse, or, on the contrary, introduces them into such discourse in a specific way; establishes prohibitions, censors and controls, and, since it has the law on its side, legalises and criminalises. What is at stake in the game is control, with sexual repression as one of its tools.²⁴ The deployment of sexuality is a system of significations and references which serves to create a social norm that causes people to be obedient to the requirements of the system and to fulfil their obligation, i.e. be productive. Submission to power entails acceptance of the sexual norm dictated by that power. It is immaterial whether it is Victorian modesty²⁵ or consumerist temptation,²⁶ the actualisation of the norm established by power always involves a negative sexual attitude. Compliance with sexual models can be likened to following orders in the army. It is sad, unreflective, servile and passive. Out of all potential sexualities, the ones that are actualised are those which conform to normative sexual models. In addition, following such models comes to be seen as an expression of individual agency.²⁷ Sexual discourses are an intricate machinery, in which the human being becomes ensnared as in a spider's web. We comply with complicated systems of rules and prohibitions with pride and devo-

²³ At the turn of the nineteenth century, Freud introduced sexuality into psychological discourse. He proposed the concept of sexual drive and the natural need to release sexual energy, and suggested that mental disorders result from disturbed psycho-sexual development. He also discussed the problem of children's sexuality and included analysis of the patient's sexuality in his therapeutic method (psychoanalysis).

²⁴ Apart from social repression, such as ostracism and normativity, there is also self-repression in the form of a sense of guilt and shame, as well as institutional repression, i.e. the law, coercive institutions such as the police, prisons and mental hospitals.

²⁵ The Victorian era of the second half of the nineteenth century was characterised by an excessively high level of elimination of sexuality from public discourse, coupled with an obsessive reduction of all reality to the sexual sphere.

²⁶ Modern sexual discourse uses nudity and sexuality for marketing and consumerist purposes. Although sexuality is omnipresent, this does not contribute to the expansion of the sphere of sexual freedom.

²⁷ A psychological power connected with one's self-image, developed through interaction between the self and the environment and the effectiveness of the individual's impact on reality.

tion. Such sexuality is imposed from the outside, and does not come from the individuals themselves; it does not result from self-discovery and creative freedom.

Psychological thought in the context of negative sexual discourses

The history of psychological thought also emphasises the influence of repressed sexuality on individual autonomy and its relationship with the established political discourse. The claims put forward by Adorno, Fromm, Reich and Horney accord with the spirit of Foucault's analysis.²⁸ Conforming to the majority is an evolutionary defence mechanism which serves to preserve our lives. However, in the context of submission to authoritarian power, such a strategy may lead to psychological pathology; it is thus not an adequate strategy in the fight for survival. Humanising oneself²⁹ through the actualisation of social norms creates only a façade identity, and the attendant lack of original, autonomously developed selfhood causes psychological instability and a sense of "inward emptiness". Thus submission leads to the annihilation of what is unique and individual; people who practise this method become dehumanised and dissolve in the system.

In his work *The Authoritarian Personality*, Adorno described the conditions conducive to the emergence of a fascist attitude. The F-scale he developed aims to measure the likelihood that an individual will succumb to the machinery of totalitarian power. Adorno's questionnaire includes such variables as: conventionalism, authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, anti-intraception, superstition and stereotypy, power and "toughness", destructiveness and cynicism, projectivity and ... sex. A fascist personality follows models, lacks reflection, has a competitive approach to life, looks for authority and pays excessive attention to sexual matters. Emotionally unstable, such an attitude is passive and makes social norms more rigid, fossilising culture and strengthening the social mechanisms of hierarchisation and dehumanisation³⁰ of non-privileged groups.

Wilhelm Reich was another thinker who saw the relation between the depreciation of sexuality and an authoritarian attitude and devoted a lot of his research to the question

²⁸ It must be borne in mind, however, that their psychological thought differed from Foucault's in that it assumed the existence of a truly free individual, who is entangled in the web of power relations.

²⁹ Understood here as the inward construction of oneself as a human being and an expression of one's humanity.

³⁰ Lack of acknowledgment of the humanity of members of such groups.

of sexuality and power. In *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (Reich, 1933/1946) he analyses the role of sexual repression in the process of affirmation of Nazi ideology by German society in the 1930s. The middle class of the time found self-actualisation through identification with power, fatherland, honour, nation, duty and institution. Reich observed that in the atmosphere of repressed sexuality, the official taboo was compensated by a number of practices, suggesting that sadistic and masochistic aspects of sexuality tend to increase under a totalitarian regime. Such practices serve to alleviate anxiety about one's responsibility for one's life and the frustration caused by the repression of *orgon* (biological sexual energy). For Reich, self-actualisation is a way to achieve freedom and happiness, and sexual repression arouses anxiety, which becomes one of the most effective means of social control. In this way, the struggle for power occurs on the field of relations between politics and the body. If one internalises social norms as indicators of what is permitted, power wins.

Erich Fromm developed the analysis of the disintegration of identity in the process of submission to totalitarian power. In his *Escape from Freedom* (Fromm, 1941; published outside the United States as *The Fear of Freedom*), he describes how people are ready to relinquish their freedom in return for social acceptance. Civilisation and culture restrict the individual, impose social norms and repress his/her natural needs. In the process of sublimation, the socially repressed drives become the basis for functioning in a given culture. If repression exceeds the capacity for sublimation, the individual feels terrorised. Thus, like Adorno and Reich, Fromm observes that repressed sexuality is connected with the political aspect of our existence in the world. He describes two sexual attitudes accompanying the process of submission to authoritarian power: the sadistic and masochistic one, which he analyses in the context of a negative sexual attitude. We mean here SM³¹ practices devoid of the element of self-acceptance, creativity and trust. Such sadomasochistic tendencies result in feelings of powerlessness, inferiority and insignificance of a human being. In order to rid oneself of such feelings, the individual develops the need to depend on other people and institutions; to control and be controlled. In Fromm's analysis, the rationalisation of such needs takes the following form: masochistic dependence on someone comes to be regarded as faithfulness or love, the sense of inferiority as the rightful form of realisation of actual deficiencies of the person, and suffering as the result of objectively existing and unchangeable circumstances of the sadomasochistic relation. Masochistic tendencies are twinned with sadistic ones. Fromm distinguishes three

³¹ SM is an abbreviation for sado-masochism used in sexology.

types of such tendencies: the first is the desire for absolute control, the need to make others dependent, the second involves a tendency to exploit other people and things, both in the material and psychological sense (e.g. a desire for certain feelings). The third is wanting other people's harm and deriving pleasure from the suffering of others. It may seem that both the sadist and the masochist are subjects in the relation with the Other. However, this is not the case. They create themselves exclusively in the relation with the Other, and are objectified by such relations. Both those attitudes serve to disguise the feelings of loneliness, powerlessness and lack of a sense of one's worth. They are thus destructive mechanisms which lead to the disappearance of the individual's identity.

Fromm proposes that a fascist personality represses the original I and replaces it with the artificially created pseudo-I. The artificial ego develops in the course of interaction with the outside world, but it is the individual who creates the cognitive situation which results in the adoption of pseudo-identity. It is thus the individual who creates his/her identity. The adoption of mechanisms creating an artificial ego leads to a constant internal conflict and feelings of insecurity, caused by a lack of true identity founded on real experience. Striving to submit to authoritarian power, such an individual stabilises his/her anxiety and sense of danger at a low level. As can be seen, the process of subjectification through a sadomasochistic relation with hierarchical authoritarian society is artificial, as involvement in the mechanisms of authoritarian power does not lead to authentic self-actualisation but to "suspension" in the state of mental suffering characterised by a negative SM attitude. At the same time, it is a lifestyle preferred by power, which aims to manage the population correctly, i.e. accurately and productively.

In *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (Horney, 1937), Karen Horney also addresses the phenomenon of fascist personality and characterises it as neurotic. According to Horney, a neurotic displays such traits described above as anxiety, conformity, internal conflict, the need for sadomasochistic love. Internal neurotic conflicts are fuelled by drives which, unlike in Freud's theory, are unique to neurotics and arise as a result of feelings of alienation, powerlessness, fear, hostility. Thus neurotics aim to achieve a sense of security. According to Horney, the root and characteristic feature of neurosis³² lies in the neurotic structure of personality, which she terms character neurosis. It is a state of tension between contradictory tendencies that make up a given character. The neurotic tries to achieve the impossible task of resolving the conflicting internal aspirations.

³² A whole class of anxiety and affective (emotional) disorders.

Horney described contemporary reality³³ as times which required compliance and self-denial. Such submission to current discourse leads to internal conflicts and is accompanied by difficulties in establishing healthy interpersonal and partnership relations. Horney also explored the role of the environment and need for love. Every conflict arises as a result of a certain repression and is then projected by the individual on the outside world. It is manifested in obsessive striving for power, prestige, love, and in possession mania. Usually such disorders correspond with the sexual sphere, in which the individual must excessively dominate or loves to be humiliated. Like Fromm, Horney analyses SM from the point of view of negative sexuality. The neurotic also displays excessive reliance on the approval of others and a chronic lack of a sense of security, which leads to the need for co-dependency. This is caused, among others, by a low sense of one's worth. Inhibitions, which I understand as masochistic situations in which one denies oneself the satisfaction of one's needs, are also a characteristic feature of neurosis. Aggression also features as one of Horney's neurotic categories. While its manifestations, such as domination, excessive demands, ordering others around, deception or criticism, are often unconscious, they definitely cause observer discomfort. The last type of neurotic disorders concerns the sexual sphere, and Horney's description of neurotic love has many affinities with Fromm's.

One of the central neurotic emotions, according to Horney, is irrational and total anxiety, which takes the form of a vicious circle. Neurotics try to cope with this anxiety in a number of ways dictated by the mechanisms of repression and rationalisation. The neurotic has not developed, and so cannot rely on, natural defence mechanisms. Horney stresses the importance of unconscious fear for the intensity of disorders and capacities to deal with anxiety. With hostility and aggression being inevitable results of anxiety, the repression of hostility leads to a sense of overwhelming powerlessness. On the other hand, isolated and repressed emotions are intensified in the moment of emotional outburst and come to "live their own life". Horney sees the roots of neurosis in early childhood, when children are taught about the world, people, and themselves.

In *Neurosis and Human Growth* (Horney, 1950), Horney shows the formation of a wide range of anxiety disorders. She points out the negative impact of the culture of individual

³³ Horney was born in 1885 in Germany, where she practised psychoanalysis until her emigration to the United States in 1932. Her contemporary reality is thus the reality of German capitalism in the 1920s and 30s, and American capitalism of the 1930s, 40s and 50s.

competitiveness, the basis of liberal free-market capitalism, in which one must climb over other people's heads in order to be better, to achieve more, to win. This leads to the appearance of hostile tension among people, and in turn causes a sense of insecurity and anxiety, as well as a destructive emotional isolation. The development of a child in such a disturbed environment obviously entails the appearance of neurotic disorders. Character neurosis, according to Horney, results from the frustration of the need for security, which in unfavourable circumstances cannot be satisfied in the family home. However, fear and hostility, which are a natural reaction to such frustration, must be repressed since their expression would put the child at risk. Repression, in turn, contributes to the development of basic anxiety, which is the driving force of neurosis. Striving to alleviate the anxiety, the child may use four main coping strategies: compliance, affection, power and detachment. With time, these four defence mechanisms against basic anxiety become fixed and rigid attitudes, with their corresponding structure of needs such as dependence, domination, power, detachment, perfection...

The psychological reflection described above combines with and complements Foucault's vision of the world of power and sexuality. Depriving the human being of free sexuality also deprives him/her of autonomy, identity, a sense of self-worth and the possibility of happy self-actualisation, replacing them with fear, compliance, the acceptance of social hierarchy and violence. This concerns both the developmental process of children and the world of adults entangled in the system of power relations. The liberal humanities³⁴ show that sexual freedom is a crucial aspect in the creation of egalitarian societies, free of violence in the form of social divisions, normative injunctions and power.

From the psychological point of view the depreciation of human sexuality has disastrous results such as the destruction of coherent identity and the ensuing mental suffering. A human being whose body, thoughts and behaviour are constrained is denied the possibility of authentic self-actualisation, the production of a sense of self-worth and aspirations towards the achievement of well-being.³⁵

³⁴ By liberal humanities I mean theories proposed by thinkers searching for alternatives to the totalitarian reality, theoreticians of the anti-discrimination movement, studying strategies of achieving freedom and of antisystem resistance.

³⁵ The concept of well-being extends the definition of health as lack of illness to include the subjective factor. Well-being is made up of mental, biological and social components, and the concept stresses their influence on the sense of life satisfaction.

Polish film and erotic culture

Social norms are both subtly shaped by, and in turn they shape, a given culture. Obviously, the dominating ideology also has a decisive influence in this sphere. Aside from political culture, society produces certain mechanisms for passing on cultural models, such as erotic culture, which is a series of norms connected with sexuality. Thus an analysis of the erotic image on the example of selected cultural productions of a society can reveal the society's attitude to sexuality.

Cinema shapes popular consciousness and is a perfect medium for the dissemination of political propaganda. The range of what is permissible in films is connected with the norm imposed by the institution of the state. Censorship operates on both the institutional and mental level, and everyone knows what can, or cannot, be shown. Cinema is a perfect tool of social control, and propaganda strategists of totalitarian regimes, such as Goebbels or Stalin, appreciated the role of cinema in the moulding of popular consciousness. Foucault (1979/2008, 1980/2014) claimed that discourse is shaped by those who are privileged to present knowledge about the world. Debord (1967/1970), in turn, suggested that appropriating the semantic sphere of social reality is the key to the control of the masses. The power to decide what is regarded as what, the power over the category of the spectacle.³⁶ according to Debord, the aim of power is mind control.

Polish society in the communist period was conservative. One can quote theories attributing sexual deprivation to the influence of Christian ideology (Endsjo, 2011; Graff, 2010; Lew-Starowicz & Kasprzycka, 2011). It was this ideology, among others, which shaped Polish twentieth-century mentality, with its cultivation of patriarchy,³⁷ condemnation of sexual pleasure, elimination of bodiliness from public space, ossification of the negative sexual attitude towards the self and the world, rape culture³⁸ and tabooisation of sexuality as such. However, as follows from our discussion so far, it is not only the Church but also power that has an interest in the tabooisation of sexuality. This happens in societies that internalise such values as security, productivity and desire for truth.

³⁶ The state of reality where commodity and consumption have totally dominated social life, obscuring the entire visible world.

³⁷ The type of social organisation that regards the hierarchical superiority of the male gender as qualitatively better in terms of humanity. Such situation is connected with the discrimination of women and the elimination of their influence on the shaping of political reality. It is a phenomenon indirectly enslaving women.

³⁸ A state of widespread sexual violence and transgression of the limits of other people's sexual privacy, resulting from lack of knowledge about assertiveness and the necessity of obtaining sexual consent. The phenomenon is connected with the belief that the sexual act is the duty of women and the privilege of men, which must be unconditionally observed. It leads to widespread verbal, psychological and physical harassment.

Analysing Polish cinema of the communist period, it cannot be said, however, that the atmosphere surrounding sexuality was particularly rigid. Even if it was not as spectacular as in the West, Polish culture also underwent a kind of sexual revolution. The loosening of social norms under the communist regime happened at its own pace, in the atmosphere of scandal and moral ambivalence. The climate of the Polish sexual revolution was excellently presented and analysed by Dr Karol Jachymek of the SWPS University in Warsaw during his seminar entitled *Sex in Polish Cinema*.³⁹ The process was aptly captured by Andrzej Banach: "Since then many things have changed in Poland, the flesh is not so sinful any more. But nature abhors a vacuum, and this pertains also to the nature of social habits. The new [communist] order takes over from the old [Romantic-Catholic] one everything that is necessary to maintain order as such [i.e. power]. Eroticism is a type of freedom: *liberté* in its libertinism. As once people too concerned with their bodies did not want to think about eternal life, so now [in communist Poland] they do not want to think about the future [i.e. the future of Poland]. So far the state's attitude to eroticism is guided by tradition; slowly, however, a modern secularism is coming to life here." (Banach, 1974, p. 56).

The secular reality, which was slowly taking root in communist Poland, "inherited" a number of norms, which, despite the broadening range of permissible sexual discourses, still fossilised the negative sexual attitude. A deeper analysis of the presentation of eroticism in Polish cinema can be found in Krzysztof Kornacki's article „Naga władza. Polskie kino erotyczne (schyłkowego PRL-u)" (Naked Power. Polish Erotic Cinema of the Late Communist Period) (2008).

Irrespective of the period, Polish cinema was the space through which political truth was disseminated in the public sphere. At the same time, however, films conveyed the fascination held by nakedness and eroticism. Hard as it may be to imagine for the readers of this text, who are used to the common access to information, there was no Internet at the time, no pornographic web pages, portals devoted to sexual health or dating apps. The availability of the erotic stimulus was extremely low. While there may have been printed pornography, access to audio-visual materials was virtually non-existent. VHS technology which appeared towards the end of the communist period was not commonly used for erotic purposes. In addition, not everyone could buy and store erotic videotapes in a secure place and watching pornography was not socially accepted. As a result of unavailability of sexual stimuli, there was a great interest in the so-called erotic "moments", i.e. erotic scenes in the movies. Sometimes people went to the cinema only to watch films which featured such "moments", only to experience a minute of erotic content. We may list

³⁹ An academic seminar conducted at the SWPS University in Warsaw in 2015/16.

such examples as the first shot of a naked breast in *Młodość Chopina* (Young Chopin) from 1951, or the erotic dance from *Gangsterzy i filantropi* (Gangsters and philanthropists) from 1962. These are only two examples, but eroticism in Polish cinema is a wide subject. Erotic “moments” were commonly part of the director’s design, or a marketing ploy. People want to be able to express themselves freely in their art, including expression on sexual subjects.

The message conveyed by culture served the purposes of sexual education. In the early communist period people derived much of their picture of sexuality from what they were told (mainly myths and religious prohibitions), their own experiences (which, given the lack of sexual education were neither positive nor safe) and from erotic scenes in films. Later on, access to western publications became easier, but cinema still played a special role in broadening knowledge about sexuality among Polish men and women. Cinema everywhere reflects the social climate of the epoch and the spirit of the times, and Polish cinema was no different, reproducing the atmosphere which surrounded sexuality at the time. Films featuring erotic scenes enjoyed great popularity and were extremely important for the sexual development of many Poles. Even today many representatives of the older generation remember watching such scenes as moments of the awakening of their sexual awareness.⁴⁰ Sexuality fascinated them and aroused their curiosity, which is hardly surprising. On the other hand, the way in which such scenes shaped the Polish erotic sensibility leaves a lot to be desired.

Thus erotic scenes became a model of eroticism and of sexual realisation in Polish culture. An analysis of this cultural message is a depressing experience. Despite the erotic “thaw” which accompanied the loosening of social norms, eroticism in Polish cinema is part of negative sexuality. Most of what was shown provided a negative sexual model. Sexuality was presented as a marital duty,⁴¹ as a trump card or a method of making business,⁴² something heteronormative,⁴³ a male preserve,⁴⁴ a symbol of female degradation.⁴⁵ Polish

⁴⁰ The moment when one becomes aware of the existence of the sexual sphere, of the erotic dimension of the world and of one’s own sexual energy.

⁴¹ Polish films reflect the Polish phenomenon of “marital duties”, i.e. having sex out of a sense of obligation, not desire.

⁴² The scene of a sexual intercourse of a young woman with a guard from the film *Rewizja osobista* (Body search, 1972).

⁴³ While Polish cinema promoted heterosexual eroticism, many films included homosexual elements. Homosexual characters are usually men from art circles or repulsive and dangerous figures: see *Gdy spadają anioły* (When Angels Fall, 1959), *Tysiąc talarów* (A Hundred Thalers, 1959), *Ojciec* (The Father, 1967), *Brzezina* (The Birch Wood, 1970), *Dzięcioł* (The Woodpecker, 1970), *Stracona noc* (The Lost Night, 1973), *Ziemia obiecana* (The Promised Land, 1974), *Barwy ochronne* (Camouflage, 1976), *Zakłętą rewiry* (Hotel Pacific, 1975), *Doktor Judym* (Doctor Judym, 1975).

⁴⁴ It is not difficult to find Polish films in which the male protagonist plays a seducer, building his character on erotic conquests and his own charm. One must mention here all secret agents in the style of the famous Lieutenant Borewicz from the TV series *07 zgłoś się* (07 Come In).

⁴⁵ Even the famous “sex bombs and kittens”, i.e. the famous actresses of communist Poland (Pola Raksa, Kalina Jędrusik, Maria Probosz, Katarzyna Figura) did not represent free, emancipated female sexuality, but were always shown with a man by

cinema also contributed significantly to building rape culture.⁴⁶ Any deviations from the accepted sexual norm were presented to the public in the atmosphere of scandal.⁴⁷ Cultural patterns conveyed to Polish society by films include sexism, homophobia, heteronormativity, shame connected with one's sexuality or sexual activity, violence against women, frustration caused by a negative picture of sexuality, and fear. All of such phenomena connected with violence are shown as the norm and gain social acceptance. It is such models, among others, which shape the beliefs about sexuality prevalent in Polish society.

Unlike the generation growing up in communist Poland, young people today have access to the Internet, which opens the opportunities for development and self-study. In spite of this, the level of sexual education among young Poles is shockingly low. The Internet, as it turns out, does not help to acquire valid knowledge, and the negative sexual models described above are still perpetuated in Polish culture. An individual brought up in this culture is not, on the whole, adequately cognitively equipped to use the Internet "correctly". Today what people search for on the Internet is "bad" pornography⁴⁸ instead of scientifically validated knowledge. What is still lacking is a positive approach to sexuality, one which enables a healthy sexual development and free search for, or assimilation of, information related to it.

The immediate environment remains the main source of knowledge about the world. While some regard the family as a fallen educational institution, it still has a great influence on upbringing and is an active factor in the process of socialisation. It is the family home which instils patterns of negative sexuality. Transgenerational message⁴⁹ that a child receives from older family members conveys patterns deriving from the communist times. Passing on what they learnt in their youth to their children, they apply old social norms to new times. As a result, home sexual education is usually false and does not build the foundations for positive self-development in the sexual sphere. Lack of opportunities for a positive and free discussion means that young people have no chance of satisfying

their side, and were often objectified. Sometimes female "debauchery" was condemned, as in the film *Seksolatki* (Sexy Teens) from 1971.

⁴⁶ Rape scenes can often be found in films belonging to the war genre. War-time eroticism in Polish cinema was characterised by brutality. One might mention here the famous scene from the film *Pierwszy dzień wolności* (The First Day of Freedom, 1964). Numerous scenes showing negative sexuality also featured in the popular Polish TV series *Wojna domowa* (Family wars, 1965–1966).

⁴⁷ The film *Dwa żebra Adama* (Adam's Two Ribs) shows the story of a man who wants to live with two women at once, which arouses controversy among the local community and the Church.

⁴⁸ The phenomenon will be described in more detail in the next section.

⁴⁹ The message passed on from generation to generation.

their curiosity and often leads to lack of self-acceptance. Young people's sexual frustration⁵⁰ should largely be blamed on social mentality, the legacy of the communist and post-communist times at the turn of the century. The bygone social norms and cultural patterns are still in use today.

The condition of sexual education and sexual patterns of the communist era

As long as there is no atmosphere of positive sexuality, i.e. the reality of full sexual acceptance, there will not be mental approval for positive sex-education. Our society still has no awareness of sexual freedom and no knowledge about safer sex.⁵¹ There is only the possibility of watching "bad" pornography, i.e. the type presented on RedTube.com or PornHub.com. Such recordings, full of brutal violence and sexist role division⁵² and lacking in conversation, which is a vital aspect of the sexual act, only serve to perpetuate negative sexual patterns.

"Bad" pornography presents young people with impossible demands regarding the physical look of their sexual partners or patterns of establishing sexual relations and having sexual intercourse. Young people want to meet the unrealistic demands created by sexual intercourses shown in films and try to make their bodies look like the computer-enhanced bodies of porn actors. Undoubtedly watching such pornography does not entail a positive attitude to sex and does not contribute to making associations between such notions as freedom, equality and sexuality. "Bad" pornography is another factor which contributes to the development of a negative attitude to sexuality in the public and private sphere. Apart from having harmful social impact, it also has a bearing on the functioning of the brain,⁵³ the moulding of whose neural activity, as is well-known, happens mainly through experience, especially during the growing-up period, and thus influences our image of the world and ourselves as well as our behaviour.

⁵⁰ A psychological phenomenon which occurs when sexual development is hampered. The atmosphere of negative sexuality leads to problems which young people experience when exploring their own and other people's sexuality and developing their own, authentic sexual identity. This results in psychological tension and unpleasant emotions.

⁵¹ The term „safe sex” is not part of the lexicon of sexual education, because sexual contacts are never 100% safe. This is why the term safer sex is preferred.

⁵² This pertains to the discrimination of human sexual needs. Sex is seen as serving male, not female pleasure. Only women (and not men) are entitled to “foreplay” and other forms of psycho-erotic relation.

⁵³ See the website yourbrainporn.com for information about the impact of pornography on the brain, the psychology of human emotions and sexual behaviour.

The fundamental sexual rights which every human being should be able to enjoy, the sexual equivalent of human rights, have been described by the World Health Organisation. The Declaration of Sexual Rights (World Association for Sexual Health, 1999), which aims to guarantee that all people live in freedom and dignity, includes the following: the right to sexual freedom, the right to sexual autonomy, sexual integrity, and safety of the sexual body, the right to sexual privacy, the right to sexual equity, the right to sexual pleasure, the right to emotional sexual expression, the right to sexually associate freely, the right to make free and responsible reproductive choices, the right to sexual information based upon scientific inquiry, the right to comprehensive sexual education, the right to sexual health care. Unfortunately, without a positive atmosphere which would provide support for sexual development and approve the sexual aspect of being, there is no chance of realising the rights described in the Declaration.

The 1970s brought the introduction of sex education in Poland. As demonstrated by Agnieszka Kościańska (2014) in *Płeć, przyjemność i przemoc* (Sex, Pleasure and Violence), the aim was to frighten rather than educate. Kościańska describes the history of Polish sexology against the background of the mental climate of the epoch and changes in the sphere of manners and morals regarding sexual norms. It was aversive education whose objective was to discourage young people from engaging in any form of sexual activity.⁵⁴ This approach, however, worked against the social need for information about sexuality, evidenced by the popularity of such cult texts as *Co każdy chłopiec wiedzieć powinien* (What Every Boy Should Know) and *Co każda dziewczynka wiedzieć powinna* (What Every Girl Should Know)⁵⁵ as well as Michalina Wisłocka's famous *Sztuka kochania* (The Art of Love, 1984). While these publications left a lot to be desired from the scientific point of view, they did provide some information about sexuality. State and Church authorities and conservative society, however, attempted to reduce access to sexual education, and the books were difficult to buy. Passed around among friends, they played an important role at the time when information about sexuality was scarce.

The beginning of the 1980s brought a breakthrough publication *Seks partnerski* (Partner Sex) by Zbigniew Lew-Starowicz (1983), which addressed the issue of sex from a scientific point of view. However, there was never any room for wide and open discus-

⁵⁴ Polish cinema conveyed a similar message. The famous film *Seksolatki* (Sexy Teens) from 1971 shows the hardships faced by a couple of teenagers (especially the girl) who have decided to start their sex life.

⁵⁵ Famous books about sex education in communist Poland. They even became the subject of one of the episodes of the cult TV series *Wojna domowa* (Family wars).

sion about sexuality. The generations brought up in the atmosphere of negative sexuality cannot overcome their cognitive and emotional barriers and suddenly come to actualise their sexual freedom. Once traumatised, sexuality as a rule stays as such (unless one makes an enormous effort to overcome the trauma), especially when a negative attitude is socially rewarded. Shaped in this way, negative sexuality is one of the sources of psychological and social problems of Poles. At the same time, it remains a universal mechanism of strengthening totalitarian power.

The problems encountered by sexual educators today are not much different from those of the communist era. Lack of knowledge about sex among young people is as overwhelming and the shame involved in any discussion of sexual matters as great as they used to be.

In this situation there is no likelihood of the sexual taboo being overcome, as the attempt to liberate oneself from a negative attitude to sexuality, in the absence of social approval of such efforts, seems pointless. When young people want to fight for sexual education, they are discriminated by the state and Church. Repressions are, perhaps, even greater today than in communist Poland. The sexuality of Polish men and women has always been a trump card for state authorities, but for the current authorities in Poland it has become a matter of utmost importance. Sex educators also experience repressions involving social ostracism, mobbing in schools, and obstacles in the practice of their profession. Polish state as an institution displays a discriminatory attitude and conveys a negative message about sexuality. This affects also lower-rank state institutions such as the education sector. Teachers express negative views about sexuality, and handbooks for the subject "Education for Family Life"⁵⁶ are full of statements which do not accord with the current knowledge about human sexuality. Such are the results of political pressure put on the teachers of the subject. Politicians claim to believe in the superstitions presented by such handbooks (or perhaps they find paying such lip-service politically useful). Members of Sejm (parliament) on the whole perpetuate sexual stereotypes as "good" and "natural". The fight for the rights of sexual minorities is commonly regarded in Polish Sejm as "homoterrorism", and homosexual people are often equated with people with paedophile disorders. In the common interpretation of Article

⁵⁶ See *Skrót analizy merytorycznej podręczników do WDŻ* (Abbreviated Report on Handbooks for Education for Family Life) prepared by Grupa Ponton. A particularly unprofessional handbook is *Wędrując ku dorosłości. Wychowanie do życia w rodzinie dla uczniów klas I-III gimnazjum* (Travelling towards Maturity. Education for Family Life for Class 1–3 of Secondary Schools) edited by Teresa Król.

18 of the Polish Constitution, marriage in Poland is strictly and exclusively a union of two people of opposite sexes, and at the same time it remains the only legally recognised form of relationship which guarantees a number of legal rights. The conservative parties block any discussion about civil partnerships; Polish law “forces” transsexual persons to take legal action against their parents (if one wants to have their sex changed); medical treatment connected with sexuality (biological sex correction, in vitro fertilisation, abortion, contraception, psychotherapy for victims of sexual discrimination) are not seen as fit to be funded by the national health service. “Gender scare” became a trump card in the last parliamentary campaign⁵⁷ of the conservative parties, which warned that gender was a leftist theory making boys effeminate and turning girls into butch women, and thus threatening the survival of Polish society and the sacred Polish family. In all, Polish media and institutions convey a negative message concerning all aspects of sexuality distinguished by sexology.

This seriously hampers the efforts to stop the pathologisation (by traumatising and restriction of access to scientifically validated knowledge) of young people’s sexual development and to achieve legal emancipation of sexual minorities. Firstly, sex education in Poland is practically non-existent, as can be seen in the report prepared by Grupa Ponton.⁵⁸ Secondly, it is aversive. Thirdly, it is often reduced to the heteronormative practice of putting on a condom, which is not a success, but another failure. Mere knowledge about contraceptive methods does not mean that a young person will see the point of using them, will not be afraid to buy contraceptives, will want to discuss them with his/her partner; it will not encourage young people to consider their own and other people’s sexual needs, and will not make the sexual taboo disappear.

Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children, a World Health Organisation collaborative study, provides information about the well-being of children aged 11, 13 and 15 in 43 countries (Inchley et al., 2016). The report shows how poorly Poland ranks in such categories as having safer sex, acceptance of one’s own body and acceptability of violence.

Sex education is not lessons on anatomy and contraception. Sex education is psycho-education, a process which should accompany people at all stages of life. It is a study of developmental processes and of the condition of culture in which we live; it is learning self-acceptance, the production of a sense of self-worth, respect for oneself and others and

⁵⁷ Polish parliamentary election in 2015.

⁵⁸ See Grupa Ponton’s reports on <http://ponton.org.pl/pl/raporty>

assertiveness. Sex education should offer emotional support and scientifically validated knowledge, provide young people with a sense of security and with tools for self-study. The effect of such psycho-education should be to develop a sense of comfort, self-worth and an anti-discriminatory attitude.

Positive sexuality

Sex education should take place exclusively in the stream of positive sexuality, a world-wide sexological and cultural movement. The Sex-Positive (or Sex-Affirmative) Movement engages in information, education and therapeutic activity. It is a socio-philosophical approach which affirms all human sexuality.

What does it mean to affirm all human sexuality? It means that all needs, behaviour, feelings, thoughts, fantasies and whims are regarded as natural, valid and normal. It means the acceptance of one's sexuality, which is seen as part of our identity, coherent with the rest of our "I". It is evident that other people's sexuality may be markedly different from our own and that there are as many types of sexuality as there are human beings. Since people seek to develop their own sexuality and to support others in their endeavours, the movement creates a safe space and conditions for such development. Sexuality is discussed openly and without anxiety, violent behaviour is eliminated and care is taken to ensure our behaviour does not harm others. Such an affirmative attitude to human sexuality has often been inspired by Wilhelm Reich's theory of sexual energy described above.

The approach is characterised by an active sexual attitude. Curiosity goes hand in hand with the courage of self-development. The possibility of sexual realisation and affirmation takes place in conditions of security and trust, and in the atmosphere of deepened awareness and self-acceptance.

The Sex-Positive Institute plays an important role in promoting sex-positivity, engaging in the organisation of many activities both on its own premises and in other locations. It provides education on the Internet, runs workshops, and holds a series of lectures *Critical Sexology* in the clubs of Krytyka Polityczna, raising subjects which fall outside classical, medicalised sexology.

Thanks to the opportunity of working within this movement, we the sexologists do not have to deal only with vaginismus or erection disorders. The sex-positive movement gives us the opportunity to provide support in all areas of sexuality. We can advise on

the use of aphrodisiacs⁵⁹ or erotic gadgets. We may run sessions of sex-coaching.⁶⁰ We may run workshops on playfighting⁶¹ or the Shibari art of bondage.⁶² We may provide practical advice, setting sexological goals and working out solutions that improve a person's well-being. We may refer one to appropriate literature, advise consulting a lawyer about anti-discrimination law, or recommend a sex-positive club for swingers.

There are many people today who need help in exploring and accepting their sexuality, and clinical sexologists face the prospect of a useful, pleasant and diverse line of work. Sex-positive spaces will expand, and there will be more and more people in need of "working through" their problems.

A ready-made solution?

There is already a socio-philosophical theory that includes the postulates of positive sexuality, namely queer theory, which combines elements of sexual affirmation, breaking away from normative sexuality and resistance against power.

Queer theory was formulated in the spirit of Foucauldian analysis of the social norm. It questions such notions as a binary division of the sexes,⁶³ gender roles,⁶⁴ identity⁶⁵ and sexual orientation.⁶⁶

At present competing for protection with other minorities remains the only alternative to the negative sexual reality. Legal change as such, however, is insufficient, as it can only improve the situation of a group marginalised as a result of its "abnormality" and place such a group in the mainstream at the expense of another socially excluded group. It is an alternative for people who do not want to follow the socially accepted heterosexual monogamous pattern of a family with children, a dog, thirty-year mortgage, the only dif-

⁵⁹ Erotic substances; there is a range of natural aphrodisiacs and diets, as well as chemically produced substances.

⁶⁰ Advice on personal sexual development.

⁶¹ Erotic martial art. Practised for erotic entertainment.

⁶² The art of binding the body with ropes.

⁶³ The belief that there are two genders: male and female.

⁶⁴ The belief that every gender is characterised by natural patterns of behaviour, i.e. gender stereotypes.

⁶⁵ Sexual identity pertains to the subject's self-image. Identity is built throughout one's life and should be the outcome of autonomous self-reflection. One may regard oneself as a man, a woman, both genders at once or invent many other variants of sexual identity.

⁶⁶ The direction of sexual interest. Sexology distinguishes three main sexual orientations: heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual. The situation becomes complicated when we notice that sexual interest is fluid – it depends on the stage of our developmental process, on the situation, on the partner... It is also difficult to determine orientation in the case of people with a unique, non-binary gender identity.

ference being that the family in question consists of a homosexual couple. Queer people reject all indicators of normality as such, claiming that a subject deserves respect in his or her own right. In this way the process of acquiring subjectivity is divorced from social norms and demands. Such an extension of subjectivity⁶⁷ opens the opportunity to liberate our sexuality, to become whoever we want without fear of being called “deviant”, “fairy” or “pervert”. Queer theory is also firmly grounded in political resistance, its practical aspect being the fight against all hierarchies and limitations imposed by the existing reality. Radical acceptance is to be a remedy for power relations, obliterating those which develop in interpersonal and social relationships. There is no longer any need for institutionalised power. Thus queer is a rebellion against the current reality, a basis for a better, equal and free world. Queer is love of oneself and others.

Unfortunately, this beautiful theory, which provides a recipe for the abolition of all the spectrum of negative sexuality: normativity, tabooisation and stereotypisation, cannot be implemented in the existing reality. There are, of course, queer circles and many people describe themselves as queer. However, a queer revolution in Poland is impossible, since knowledge of the theory is limited to intellectuals in the field of the humanities. While Marxism, unlike queer, is a complex idea, it is available to the general public since it deals with universal experiences such as poverty, hunger and exploitation. Queer also addresses a universal problem, i.e. violence, but it is a problem which does not arouse widespread objection. People are so used to violence that they no longer notice it, regarding it as natural instead. Violence is widespread and universal. A highly up-to-date, valid and engaged report, *Przełamać tabu. Raport o przemocy seksualnej* (Towards Breaking the Taboo. A Report on Sexual Violence) prepared by the STER Foundation provides data concerning Polish society.⁶⁸ According to the report as many as 87% of the surveyed women experienced some form of sexual harassment in their life. As many as 37% engaged in sexual activity against their will, 23% experienced attempted rape and 22% were actually raped. Only 8.7% never encountered any form of sexual violence.

⁶⁷ When it is no longer necessary to conform to social expectations in order to be regarded as a good citizen, all social divisions into human and “sub-human” beings disappear. As a result, the range of subjects expands and ways to become a subject multiply, as everyone becomes a subject through living in their own particular way. There are also interpretations of queer theory as a break with humanocentric philosophy (the analysis of reality from the human point of view), which sees living creatures as such (not only people) as worthy subjects

⁶⁸ The report was produced as part of the project *Tabu – prawa ofiar przemocy seksualnej* (Taboo: the Rights of Victims of Sexual Violence) implemented by the STER Foundation for equality and emancipation in cooperation with the Victoria Association for Women’s Rights from Rzeszów and the WAGA Association from Gdańsk. The report, edited by Magdalena Grabowska and Agnieszka Grzybek, was published in 2016.

The perpetrators of violence against women usually remain unpunished. According to the survey, women did not report the acts of violence against their sexual freedom to the police, either because they felt embarrassed and ashamed (33%) or because they did not believe the police were able to help (53%). The majority of the surveyed women (67%) preferred to cope on their own.

While the report makes clear how widespread sexual violence against women is, there are also many other groups which can identify themselves as victims, and many more kinds of violence which can be considered: sexual violence,⁶⁹ physical violence,⁷⁰ psychological violence,⁷¹ symbolic violence,⁷² cultural violence,⁷³ internet violence,⁷⁴ economic violence,⁷⁵ social violence⁷⁶ and systemic violence.⁷⁷ There is no sufficiently strong propaganda against discrimination for anti-violence movements to enjoy real political power or have their message widely publicised by the media. Who calls violence by its name today? In the times when violence is the norm, only few people have the privilege of noticing it. Who nowadays is surprised by the fact that people are not equal? Who will draw the conclusion that homosexuality is on a par with heterosexuality? And who understands that the very assumption of the binary nature of gender implies a plethora of violent mechanisms; that we are at every step “implicated in gender”, as Judith Butler (1990) suggested? In the current Polish situation queer reflection is available only to the few privileged enough to have education which enables them to understand this theory. Speaking plainly, queer in Poland is, ironically, only an option for the rich financially and spiritually; for cultural activists who fight against all kinds of discrimination on a day-to-day basis. Whether queer is a theory that has a chance of being widely understood is an open question. At present there is no indication of a rapid increase in the popularity of queer theory among Polish society.

⁶⁹ All acts against someone else’s sexual freedom.

⁷⁰ Direct use of physical force against another.

⁷¹ All acts invalidating or undermining other person’s subjectivity, such as harmful behaviour, ranging from neglect, through manipulation, to psychological violence.

⁷² A category introduced by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu; it is a form of violence which occurs in the symbolic and social sphere.

⁷³ When is culture violent? For example when we are dehumanised in the process of gender socialisation, and, depending on our gender, we are deprived of the possibility of emotional or intellectual self-actualisation.

⁷⁴ So-called cyber violence, which is distinguished as a separate category since it occurs in the sphere of virtual reality.

⁷⁵ Unequal access to resources, financial exploitation or restricting one’s freedom by means of money.

⁷⁶ Violence inherent in the social structure. Dehumanising social hierarchy. The examples include racism, sexism or classism.

⁷⁷ Violence which is legal and established by the law. Concentration camps were legal once; today refugee camps and police violence are legal.

Considering the opportunities for the creation of non-violent spaces, it should be noted that women, because of their gender, are in a position that is more conducive to the acceptance of queer theory than men. The feminist movement and the history of women emancipation give women the chance to acquire a sense of equality. Women commonly know that their gender is not “worse”, that they are free and can achieve self-actualisation in any way they want. Men, on the contrary, have no such experience. They live in a reality where “being a man” means fitting into a model that demands meeting a lot of expectations and making sacrifices. They do not engage in reflection on gender equality and have no movement for equality or the tradition of male emancipation. Representatives of traditional feminism might rightly observe here that the model of manhood is endowed with a number of privileges connected with the male gender. Women, however, also have their privileges, which in the modern feminist view are surely important, perhaps even more important than the male ones. Women are culturally allowed to actualise their emotional sphere, they may establish close relationships of friendship, empathy and support for each other. These are crucial adaptive mechanisms, which enable psychological survival of members of a discriminated group. Consequently, we can talk about the philosophy of sorority⁷⁸ and ethics of care.⁷⁹

Culture dehumanises men as much as women. While the western culture of the last centuries required women to keep their houses clean, bear children and be obedient, so it required men to compete, rape and “be tough”. The masculinisation process instilled during sexual socialisation of men compels them to achieve subjectivity through the actualisation of their gender role. This hampers pro-equal attitudes. While in Poland there may be room for a positive approach to sexuality, there is no space for the movement for positive masculinity. At present, the adoption of a pro-equal attitude by men entails failure to actualise their social role, hence it means non-compliance with the norm and the attendant discrimination. Without intellectual engagement it is very difficult for men to question the sexual order. At the same time, men are a massive social group, which is as necessary for the implementation of equality as women. Violence against men goes unnoticed and there are no initiatives which would play a role equivalent to that of feminist organisations.

⁷⁸ A social phenomenon based on values such as unconditional support, care, love, empathy or understanding. The opposite of fraternity, i.e. male pattern of close relation built by shared fighting or blood relationship.

⁷⁹ The socio-political movement which puts emphasis on sisterly values in the process of building society. This ethical position was analysed by, among others, Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings.

While there are Men's Rights Activists⁸⁰ abroad, Poland lacks a space for a debate about positive masculinity, which would be a positive alternative to queer theory for men, or a transitional stage on the way to the practice of queer existence.

Queer theory today is not accessible to the average member of the public. However, this does not preclude activity aiming to foster positive sexuality outside this theory. One example could be the much-called for appearance of the movement for positive masculinity, which could exist alongside the movement for positive femininity, active within the wider feminist movement in Poland. It would constitute a major breakthrough on the road to equality and a chance for positive self-actualisation for numerous people who identify with masculinity. This would concern especially non-homonormative people, who find it particularly difficult to find ways of positive self-actualisation in harmony with their sexual identity.

The current state of social activity for positive sexuality

Instead of proclaiming the failure of the sexual revolution in Poland, we should perhaps claim that the revolutionary process is currently in the phase of stagnation and may still gather momentum one day. The political atmosphere at present may not be favourable to such statements, but it should be noted that the times of repression always lead to increased resistance.

There are many Polish organisations which contest the sex-negative message conveyed by culture and the media. They include a range of feminist, queer and anti-discrimination groups, such as: *Ponton* (Raft), *Kampania Przeciw Homofobii* (Campaign against Homophobia), *Stowarzyszenie Lambda* (Lambda Association), *Transfuzja* (Transfusion), *Hostel interwencyjny dla osób LGBT* (a Shelter for LGBT people), circles associated with the left movement, Queer UW (University of Warsaw), *Porozumienie Kobiet 8 Marca* (The 8 March Women's Alliance), *Codziennik Feministyczny* (Feminist Every-Daily), *Ratujmy Kobiety* (Let's Save Women), *Te Tematy* (These Matters), *Portal Zdrowia Seksualnego* (The Portal of Sexual Health) and of course *Instytut Pozytywnej Seksualności* (The Sex-Positive Institute).

The above-mentioned groups gather volunteers, people socially and politically engaged. It should be remembered that the struggle for sexual freedom entails political

⁸⁰ A movement for gender equality and non-discrimination in which the activists are men. The movement stresses the need to fight for male emancipation from the oppression of the male social role.

resistance. The groups carry out a variety of social activities: sexual education classes,⁸¹ anti-discrimination workshops,⁸² workshops strengthening a positive sexual attitude,⁸³ lectures,⁸⁴ seminars,⁸⁵ debates⁸⁶ and conferences.⁸⁷ They organise cultural events.⁸⁸ They publish numerous articles, erotic self-help manuals, handbooks of anti-discrimination classes, scientific and popular books,⁸⁹ as well as Polish translations of sex-positive texts in foreign

⁸¹ I will not describe "Education for Family Life" lessons here, since they do not play their proper role in sex education. It is difficult to establish which classes in sex education have actually been held, since sex education in Poland is controversial and often is frowned on at school. Such workshops usually take a few hours and it is difficult to prove that they actually took place. At the same time, there is a demand for sex education skills. In May 2015 *Poradnia Bliżej Siebie* ("Closer to Each Other" Clinic) organised a course for sex educators, and in spring 2016 *Instytut Pozytywnej Seksualności* (The Sex-Positive Institute) held a *Course of Positive Sex Education of Children and Adolescents*. People who have completed such courses sometimes become volunteers working for *Grupa Ponton* ("The Raft" Group), or hold their own classes. In October 2015 *Grupa Te Tematy* ("These Matters" Group) held a course entitled *Te Warsztaty – zajęcia z edukacji seksualnej (i nie tylko)* (These Workshops: Classes in Sex (and Other) Education).

⁸² Official data can be obtained about those organised by non-governmental organisations. The workshops held at schools, like sex education classes, are usually run by private individuals. One should also mention the activities organised by the Klamra (Buckle) Foundation.

⁸³ In January 2016 the Feminoteka Foundation organised Wen-Do self-defence workshops. The Sex-Positive Institute offers a range of workshops: in 2016 the workshops included, for example, *Kocham seks! Warsztat dla entuzjastów_ek seksu* (I Love Sex! A Workshop for Sex Enthusiasts). The Lambda Association runs a series of legal workshops for LGBTQ people *Masz prawo* (You Have the Right), *Warszawski Kolektyw Syrena* (Warsaw Mermaid Group) runs *Warsztaty feministyczne* (Feminist Workshops).

⁸⁴ The Feminoteka Foundation holds a series of lectures *Akademia feministyczna* (The Feminist Academy). The Sex-Positive Institute organises lectures *Czym jest seksuologiczna praca z ciałem* (Sexologist Work with the Body). In September 2015 the SWPS University held a meeting *Selfie, seksting, pornografia – co zagraża młodym w sieci* (Selfie, Sexting, Pornography: Dangers Young People May Encounter on the Internet) and in June 2016 a lecture *Seksualność rodzaju męskiego, czyli z czym boryka się współczesny mężczyzna w swoim życiu seksualnym* (Sexuality of the Male Gender or Problems Faced by Contemporary Men in their Sex Lives). In the academic year 2015/2016 *Krytyka Polityczna* held another series of lectures *Seksuologia krytyczna* (Critical Sexology).

⁸⁵ The group "GENDER I SEKSUALNOŚĆ w polskiej nauce i praktyce społecznej" (GENDER AND SEXUALITY in Polish Science and Social Practice) runs a series of seminars in the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The Institute of Slavic Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences held a series of seminars *Transformacja norm seksualnych i tożsamości narodowej po 1989* (The Transformation of Sexual Norms and National Identity After 1989) in 2016.

⁸⁶ The Museum of the History of Polish Jews POLIN held a meeting *Ruchy wolnościowe i antydyskryminacyjne – współczesne inspiracje* (Equality and Anti-Discrimination Movements – Contemporary Inspirations) in March 2016. Also in March 2016, a debate entitled *Feminizm po amerykańsku? Feminizm po polsku?* (American Feminism? Polish Feminism?) was held in Warsaw.

⁸⁷ In November 2015 a conference was held in Kraków under the title *Gender – Edukacja – Praca II. Uczelniane rozwiązania antydyskryminacyjne* (Gender – Education – Work 2. Anti-Discrimination Solutions in Higher Education). The Congress of Women is held every year in Warsaw; the last year's Congress included a panel on sexualisation of children and adolescents. Warsaw University held an international interdisciplinary conference *Queer Strategies* in June 2016.

⁸⁸ As every year, the informal group Ulica Siostrzana (Sister Street) held *Feministyczna Akcja Letnia FALA*, an educational feminist summer camp for women. *Benefity na Maniłę* is a series of fund-raising concerts and cultural events. There are also erotic fairs *Warsaw Boudoir*. *Queer Crash* was a cultural event organised in 2016, the proceeds going to the shelter for LGBTQ people. *Klub Sportowy Gwiazda* (The Star Sports Club) promotes equality. Until 2016 The Polish Radio broadcast the programme *Seks nasz powszedni* (Our Daily Sex).

⁸⁹ It is impossible to list all the numerous articles. In my opinion important Polish texts include Katarzyna Surmiak-Domańska's *Beznadziejna ucieczka przed Basią. Reportaże seksualne* (Hopelessly Running Away from Basia. Sexual Documentary Features, 2007), Marta Konarzewska and Piotr Pacewicz's *Zakazane miłości. Seksualność i inne tabu* (Forbidden Loves. Sexuality and Other Taboos, 2010), Krzysztof Tomasiak's *Gejery. Mniejszości seksualne w PRL-u* (Sexual Minorities in Communist Poland, 2012), Andrzej Depko and Ewa Wanat's *Chuć, czyli normalne rozmowy o perwersyjnym seksie* (Desire, or Normal Conversations about Perverse Sex, 2012), Anna Grodzka's *Mam na imię Ania* (My Name is Ania, 2013), Wiesław Sokoluk and Bianca Beata Kotoro's *100% mnie, czyli książka o miłości, seksie i zagłuszaczach. Niezbędnik młodego człowieka* (100% of Me, or a Book

languages.⁹⁰ They organise social campaigns, demonstrations, meetings and pickets.⁹¹ Sometimes the activists hold workshops for one another in order to enhance the quality of their work against discrimination.⁹² What is also important, they make psychological help available and even if the private sector offers better quality of such services, one may still find adequate forms of psychological support in mutual support, self-help and therapeutic groups.⁹³ The organisations also keep a close watch on the legal situation and seek ways to reach discriminated people. One should also mention art, from high to pop and street art, and culture affirming sexuality and promoting a healthy sexual attitude. In this way such organisations create spaces that are free from violence.

The difference between positive and negative sexual attitudes is not strictly binary. Depending on the situation, one may sometimes adopt a positive and sometimes a negative attitude. People are human, and cannot be expected to preserve a positive attitude all the time. For some, the maximum of their effort will be the creation of a positive interpersonal relation, others may engage in anti-discrimination education or organise political demonstrations. There is no objective measure of social attitude, and factors such as human individuality, diversity and uniqueness should be taken into account. One should also bear in mind the fact that each individual's personality is constantly undergoing

about Love, Sex and Jammers. A Young Person's Essential Guide, 2013), Zbigniew Lew-Starowicz's *Za drzwiami mojego gabinetu* (Behind the Door of My Surgery, 2014), Kinga Kosińska's *Brudny róż. Zapiski z życia, którego nie było* (Dirty Pink. Notes from a Life that Never Was, 2015), Volume 6 of the *Trans/wizje* journal *Seks-pozytywizm* (Sex-positivity, 2015), Agata Jankowska and Michał Pozdał's *Męskie sprawy* (Male Matters, 2016). See also *Portal Zdrowia Seksualnego* (Portal of Sexual Health), www.kinkywinky.pl and the sex-positive blog proseksualna.pl

⁹⁰ Many texts considered controversial by Polish society have been published, enabling readers to have access to foreign scientific works on sexology and erotic self-help manuals. See for example Polish editions of Erika Lust's *Let's Make a Porno*, Deborah Anapol's *Poliamory*, Dossie Easton and Janet W. Hardy's *The Ethical Slut: A Practical Guide to Polyamory, Open Relationships and Other Adventures*, Esther Perel's *Mating in Captivity: Unlocking Erotic Intelligence*, Jack Morin's *Anal Pleasure and Health: A Guide for Men, Women and Couples*. Unfortunately, a great number of controversial texts remain untranslated.

⁹¹ Fundacja Autonomia (The "Autonomy" Foundation) from Kraków runs the campaign *16 Dni Akcji przeciw Przemocy ze Względu na Płeć* (16 Days of Action against Sex-Related Violence). *Manifas*, annual rallies and demonstrations for women's rights are held on 8 March in many cities in Poland. The Equality Parade is also held every year. *Odzyskać Wybór* (We Want the Choice Back) group organised several rallies outside the parliamentary buildings in 2016.

⁹² The Museum of the History of Polish Jews POLIN organises meetings for activists of anti-discrimination movements. One should also mention the activity of the informal group SPINA, which runs workshops for activists on how to prevent burnout, work in a team, resolve conflicts and deal with emotions that accompany social engagement; SPINA also provides counselling on how to ensure a sense of psychological comfort in activist work.

⁹³ The psychological support groups described take different approaches to their work. Still, their common goal is to provide support and development through group meetings. There are many groups for non-heterosexual and trans-sexual people run by LGBT organisations such as Lambda or Transfuzja. There are even more groups for women experiencing domestic violence and for victims of sexual abuse. One should also mention Plejady (Pleiads), the first support group for people in polyamoric relationships, active in 2014–2015, as an interesting and useful initiative and the *Czarna Gwiazda* (Black Star) group for consensually non-monogamous people, active from 2016.

a process of development and he or she may act differently depending on the situation or their current mental state. Human sexuality is as fluid as human thoughts, language, interpersonal relations, resources⁹⁴ and capacity for social and political engagement. Healthy functioning in the surrounding world should be flexible. It is important, however, to strive towards a positive sexual attitude in harmony with oneself, one's capacities and social competences.

It is crucial that there should be as many activists and organisations working for positive sexuality as possible, so that there are both propagators and recipients of the culture of freedom. It is important to convey a positive message about, and image of, sexuality, in order to make people see it in a positive light. This will influence their outlook on the world and themselves as well as their relations with others.

Towards liberated sexuality?

Foucault's bio-political narration is today developed by such scholars as Giorgio Agamben, one of the most famous of bio-political theorists. Both Foucault and Agamben share engagement in discovering possibilities of resistance against the violent machinery of power, i.e. the category of so-called bio-resistance. How to liberate the body from the relation body – power? In such analysis, liberated sexuality becomes the cornerstone of freedom. In order to illustrate the similarities and differences between the lines of bio-resistance suggested by Foucault and Agamben, I am going to draw on Krzysztof Pacewicz's work *Zboczony seks jako bioopór. Między Foucaultem a Agambenem* (Deviant Sex as Bio-resistance. Between Foucault and Agamben).

For Foucault, the struggle for our "soul" with bio-power takes place inside our minds. The submission of the body results from thought control, and the depreciation of sexuality serves to re-direct vital energy from an individual towards the population.

Agamben stresses that bio-politics has always been the instrument of power. In his *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Agamben, 1995/1998), he describes the category

⁹⁴ I.e. psychological resources (emotional capacity, psychological resilience, attention), social resources (social support, a sense of security and belonging), physical resources (somatic health, opportunities for activity) and material resources (housing conditions, finances, material quality of life). All of them contribute to the current condition of one's resources, which has a bearing on the possibility of exercising political influence. The more resources one has at his or her disposal, the more he or she can expend on social activism.

of bare life,⁹⁵ which is fundamental for the biological management of people, as the capacity for violent action against physical existence lies at the root of every law.

Two notions are used to distinguish between these two lines of bio-political thought. The traditional Foucauldian analysis has been termed ethopolitics, which stresses the interest in norms as the source of mechanisms of social oppression and production of individuals implicated in the processes of control. Agamben's narrative, in turn, is called zoopolitics, which emphasises his interpretation of political mechanisms in the context of biological rather than political management.

For Foucault, sexual identity is the result of the relation of domination, stressing the unnatural sources of our sexual preferences and of our image of ourselves as sexual subjects. The category of what is natural is thus constructed by the accepted political discourse.

In both philosophies the body is constructed and controlled from the start. However, there are ways of escaping from this relation. Rebellion in the sexual sphere is the most damaging to power. For Foucault, experiencing physical pleasure holds the potential for emancipation; creative sensuality, the abandonment of the category of desire and sexuality bring liberation from tyranny. Normatively transgressive sexual dynamics is the key to the liberation of the body from power relations. The possibility of using our bodies in an "abnormal" way breaks away with the necessity to fulfil social obligations. "Prefer what is positive and multiple, difference over uniformity, flows over unities, mobile arrangements over systems. Believe that what is productive is not sedentary but nomadic" (Foucault, 2004, p. xv). This is an optimistic picture of sex evoked in the earlier period of Foucault's activity, as opposed to the one presented in the first chapter of *The History of Sexuality*. "From bodies, their organs, surfaces, recesses and curves one must derive non-disciplinary eroticism: the eroticism of elusive and transient bodies, chance meetings and gratuitous pleasure" (Foucault, 2001). In this way Foucault outlined the subversive potential for liberating bodies from the bonds of the system.

Agamben tends to deploy the theological lexicon in his political analysis. His theory of regaining freedom is ephemeral, and his analysis of the existing possibilities is carried out in a utopian context. His work *The Coming Community* (Agamben, 1990/1993) includes the project of the community of free subjects. The key notion here is whatever, *quodlibet*:

⁹⁵ Presumably what is meant is pure, "bare" sphere of a human's being in the world, which entails also being part of the political world.

“the Whatever in question here refers to singularity not in its indifference with respect to a common property (to a concept, for example: being red, being French, being Muslim), but only in its being *such as it is*” (italic original) (Agamben, 1990/1993, p. 1). Agamben postulates abandoning all kinds of definitions, and thinking in terms of pure potentiality of love or desire. The sexual object dissolves in possibilities. According to Agamben, a sexual act freed from attachment to singularity, to particular predicates or properties is the foundation of resistance against power. The category of profanation is especially important: the possibility of free use of our bodies is a form of profaning them in the eyes of power. A radical aimlessness of the use of sexual organs endows sexuality with liberating characteristics; resistance is actualised in the questioning of the functionality of the body, in the non-realisation of biological and social norms.

Examples of Foucauldian bio-resistance may include positive (non-neurotic) BDSM⁹⁶ practice, while in Agamben they will involve anal and oral sex. Obviously, possibilities of liberated sexuality are far more extensive than that. I leave the reader to imagine other practices. After all, this is what it is all about: every person should have the chance to invent new forms of sexual self-realisation and break the universality and normativity of sexuality. In both thinkers various forms of free sexual play break with the pressure to re-enact normative behaviours and sexual fantasies. They both encourage constant bio-political experimentation. They remind us that every time we engage in “deviant sex”, we release our bodies from the bonds of power.

Attitude to sexuality vs social activity

As I have attempted to demonstrate, a number of humanist theories show mechanisms of constraining sexuality. Cultivating a negative social attitude, i.e. remaining passive in the face of the existing reality leads to the development of a false identity, builds a façade personality and perpetuates the spiral of anxiety. It supports the mechanisms of submission to power and makes the process of managing the population more efficient.

The practice of everyday realisation of seemingly innocuous social norms and injunctions leads to great evil. Violence is born at the most basic level, as Hannah Arendt described

⁹⁶ BDSM is a kind of sexual realisation involving several types of role division, body binding, activating various fetishes, with full consent of the persons taking part in this form of sexual game.

in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Arendt, 1951) and *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (Arendt, 1964). The way we live creates a shared social reality. It is our behaviour and mentality which build the world in which we live. Practising a negative sexual attitude entails a passive social attitude, since it is connected with the category of submission to power and the development of sexual norms, consequently leading to social violence and marginalisation of social groups. A negative sexual attitude also involves the decline in the sense of autonomy with respect to one's body, thoughts and behaviour.

It is very important to liberate and accept one's sexuality. This involves resistance against the world dominated by power relations in which people are constantly threatened with marginalisation, and suffering and violence are the common norm. It is, at the same time, a way towards healthy psycho-physical development and well-being. My analysis of current Polish reality in the context of sexuality offers an anti-utopian vision. I point out that the existing state of affairs may be replaced by a jointly built non-violent space of free subjects. It is a process that requires a positive reconsideration of the individual private sphere as well as the public sphere of socio-political life. It is a process which relies on constant development and strives for a positive sexual attitude. It may be unique and individual, but it remains a proactive social attitude, irrespective of the individual's political engagement.

As can be seen, the process of liberating sexuality is vitally important in building resistance against the violence of the existing power relations. Positive sex education, understood as the possibility of self-acceptance and self-development for all people, should mould a proactive social attitude, one full of empathy, ability to question and think critically, and to fight against violence in all its forms. The rejection of dominating negative social normativity in everyday life is a proactive social attitude which may contribute to the expansion of the sphere of freedom.

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Negative sexuality as a passive social attitude

Negative sexuality is a type of sexuality that does not form a part of the sense of identity and self-acceptance. It is burdened with feelings of shame, guilt and threat. In Polish society there is an atmosphere of negative sexuality, marked by a lack of tolerance towards diversity and sexual freedom understood as free expression of oneself. It is a situation which threatens psychological well-being. The depreciation and normativisation of human sexuality are implicated in relations of power which fossilise the social status quo. This leads to a totalitarian management of our sexuality and perpetuation of the status quo as a result of psychological mechanisms of submitting to totalitarian power. To show these processes I refer to such thinkers as Michel Foucault, Erich Fromm, Theodor Adorno, Wilhelm Reich and Karen Horney.

Such reality is also a result of social processes which have shaped it. Influential here were the processes related to power and culture. Negative models have been present in our culture for a long time, a fact which I exemplify by analysing Polish culture through Polish cinema of the communist period. Today, passive social attitudes have resulted in continued cultivation of these negative social norms.

I show alternatives to the atmosphere of negative sexuality, describing the movement for positive sexuality and its benefits for psychological health of individuals and society.

While I throw doubt on the possibility of the popularisation of queer theory in Poland, I also show some universal strategies of resistance against those exercising power over human sexuality. I describe the phenomenon of bioresistance and liberating physicality drawing on the example of works by Krzysztof Pacewicz about the theories of Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben. In more practical terms, I analyse the present condition of sexual education and anti-discrimination movements in Poland.

In my work I want to show that a sexually positive life attitude, which means a life of acceptance of oneself and others and a creation of a non-violent space, enables universal self-acceptance and self-development. It is also a proactive social attitude because it requires intellectual and political involvement with respect to emerging reality. I believe that positive sexuality supported by positive sex education and social involvement is a very important element of resistance against power relations.

Keywords:

positive sexuality, negative sexuality, social attitude, Polish culture, sexual education, philosophy of politics, psychology, sexology

Negatywna seksualność jako bierna postawa społeczna

Negatywna seksualność to seksualność, która nie składa się na poczucie tożsamości i samoakceptacji. Jest obarczona wstydem, poczuciem winy i zagrożenia. W polskim społeczeństwie panuje atmosfera negatywnej seksualności. Brak jest tolerancji dla różnorodności i wolności seksualnej rozumianej jako swobodna ekspresja siebie. Jest to sytuacja, która zagraża dobrostanowi psychicznemu. Deprecjonowanie i normatywizowanie ludzkiej seksualności jest uwikłane w relacje władzy, które petryfikują dany stan społeczny. Prowadzi to do totalitarnego zagospodarowania naszej seksualności i utrzymywania tego stanu dzięki psychicznym mechanizmom ulegania władzy totalitarnej. By pokazać te procesy, przywołuję myślicieli i myślicielki takie jak Michel Foucault, Erich Fromm, Theodor Adorno, Wilhelm Reich i Karen Horney.

Taka rzeczywistość jest też rezultatem procesów społecznych, które ją ukształtowały. Miały na to wpływ procesy związane z władzą i kulturą. Negatywne wzorce są obecne w naszej kulturze od dawna. Polską kulturę analizuję przez pryzmat kina polskiego epoki PRL-u. Kulturowanie tych negatywnych norm społecznych to bierna postawa społeczna.

Pokazuję alternatywy dla atmosfery negatywnej seksualności. Opisuję ruch pozytywnej seksualności i jego zalety dla zdrowia psychicznego jednostki i społeczeństwa.

Poddaję w wątpliwość możliwość popularyzowania teorii queer w Polsce. Pokazuję pewne uniwersalne strategie oporu wobec władzy nad ludzką seksualnością. Opisuję zjawisko biooporu i uwalniania cielesności na przykładzie pracy Krzysztofa Pacewicza o teoriach Michela Foucaulta i Giorgio Agambena. Analizuję kondycję edukacji seksualnej i ruchów antydyskryminacyjnych w Polsce w czasie teraźniejszym.

Moja praca ma pokazać, że sekspozytywna postawa życiowa, czyli akceptacja siebie i innych oraz tworzenie bezprzemocowej przestrzeni umożliwia powszechną samoakceptację i samorozwój. Jest jednocześnie aktywną postawą społeczną, ponieważ wymaga zaangażowania intelektualnego i politycznego we wpływaniu na zastaną rzeczywistość. Uważam,

że pozytywna seksualność, wspierana pozytywną edukacją seksualną i zaangażowaniem społecznym, to bardzo istotny element oporu wobec relacji władzy.

Słowa kluczowe:

pozytywna seksualność, negatywna seksualność, postawa społeczna, kultura polska, edukacja seksualna, filozofia polityczna, psychologia, seksuologia

Note:

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