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## FEMINISM AS... MULTICULTURALISM? IRIS MARION YOUNG ON THE CONCEPT OF MULTICULTURALISM

### INTRODUCTION

When, at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, the doctrine of multiculturalism was born in the USA and Canada, it was made up of representatives of contradictory trends in political theory and social philosophy. In the face of increasing tensions caused by the multicultural character of both societies, they sought policy programs that would solve some of the growing contradictions and conflicts, and on this way they met under the roof of a jointly erected building – a newly emerging family of program concepts, soon named together as multiculturalism. The differences dividing them did not disappear, but after mutual concessions they found themselves in a common field of readiness to recognize the expectations and demands of cultural minorities. Liberals approached communitarianism, recognizing that some needs of cultural minorities must find understanding in the form of necessary extensions and changes in common law, on the other hand, communitarians admitted that the rights of communities to live autonomously defined by their own norms and cultural patterns must to some extent be limited in terms of respecting the law of all citizens in the given country, and based on the Western, liberal understanding of human rights. The first were ready to introduce these changes – in the smallest possible scope, as far as it is absolutely necessary. The others were ready to agree – vice versa – to trim some of the cultural minorities' freedoms, but also to the smallest extent possible. In other words, the first wanted to allow public recognition of group cultural difference to the smallest, and others – to the greatest extent possible. They were all connected by recognition – impossible for classical, individualistic liberalism – separate public and social needs and the rights of cultural minorities, although the dispute was to continue. The doctrine which proclaims the need and necessity of such recognition and the programs connected with it is today called multiculturalism. Together, they shared the conviction that classical assimilationism based on the liberalist understanding of human rights has actually lost its usefulness.

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What interests me in this article is the fact that in addition to the representatives of both poles of the controversy at the time, the “founding fathers” of multiculturalism\* can also be found equal to them in the coining of doctrine “founder’s mother,” widely known then the feminist theorist just like the other multiculturalist scholars, professor Iris Marion Young.\*\* And no one was surprised at that time. Well, one might ask: And should they be? Well, knowing what we know today about the relationship between multiculturalism and feminism, it seems almost inconceivable how it could have been possible at all.

For today, and this state of affairs has been formed just a few years after the formation of multiculturalist doctrine, the occurrence of a significant contradiction between multiculturalism and feminism seems to be for the most believers of both doctrines, as well as for many politicians and the wider public something absolutely evident. Both program doctrines, as feminism constitutes a doctrinal bundle, combine together a great deal, above all the fundamental opposition to assimilationism, widely regarded as a proper program of coping with the torments of multiculturalism. But further, the roads soon diverge in certain matters and advocates of both anti-assimilation concepts, even against their mutual sympathies, face the choice: either freedom of life according to their cultures for cultural minorities or freedom of choice of equal way for men and women, which is the foundation of feminism.

Is it possible to reconcile cultural practices of some minorities, such as life-threatening, physically and mentally abusing women like female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriages imposed even on young girls, forcing women to close their own lives exclusively in the private sphere, privileging men’s divorce laws, etc. (the list of cultural norms and patterns of practices and restrictions harmful to women in their freedoms in comparison with men is very long in some cultures, it concerns the overall position of women in a society dominated by men\*\*\*). Is it possible to implement such a model of life in cultural minorities and to force it on women even when they do not want to, can this be reconciled with the feminist program of

\* On the liberal side, let us list here above all Will Kymlicka and his two multicultural works: *Liberalism, Community, and Culture* (1989) and above all *Multicultural Citizenship* (1995), from the side of close communitarianism of Charles Taylor the article of 1992 *The Politics of Recognition*, released two years later in the book *Multiculturalism* with the voices of representatives of both orientations of multiculturalism in a very lively discussion around this article. The creation of multiculturalism and its many other creators and their publications can be found, for example, from a very competently written compilation of Michael Murphy *Multiculturalism: A Critical Introduction* from 2012.

\*\* She entered the podium of the founders of multiculturalism with the book *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, which was later reissued, also very popular in feminism itself, published in 1990.

\*\*\* See. e.g., Birgit Sauer, Sabine Strasser (eds.), *Zwangsfreiheiten: Multikulturalität und Feminismus*. The authors mention a long list of “forced marriages, honor killings, clitoridectomy, women trafficking and coercion to wear a headscarf” repeated in the feminist literature and state the contradiction between the multiculturalism program based on the recognition of the right to cultural self-determination and the feminist program that demands equal treatment and equal rights for both sexes and protection against gender-sponsored violence (2008, p. 7).

women's liberation from such oppression and the demand to equate all freedoms for both genders in society?

And this right, the right to unequal, worse treatment of women, to their exploitation and oppression, and sometimes even to violence against them, is demanded by the leaders of some cultural minorities that this is what their culture requires them to do. And if this is the case, then multiculturalists, opting for the recognition of minority rights to live in accordance with their own cultures, act *eo ipso* as opponents of feminism.

A well-known contemporary feminist who at first, although not in such a prominent position as Young, was fully convinced in creating the doctrine of multiculturalism was the British scholar Anne Phillips. She writes in 2010 that “the belief that gender equality is in conflict with multiculturalism has become today daily bread both in common, publicly discussed debates, as well as in academic debates” (Phillips, 2010, p. 1).

To understand how possible this misunderstanding was, if it was a misunderstanding at all, it is necessary to recall the main foundations of Young's concept, its idea of democracy based on group representations, in the hope that it will explain why it was possible to include this feminist in the pantheon of Founders of Multiculturalism.

## FEMINISM AT THE TIME OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF MULTICULTURALISM

Multiculturalism is born in a specific new social situation in the US and Canada. The feminism of the new wave, began in the second half of the 1960s, is at this time a doctrine firmly embedded in the consciousness and political practice of Western societies, internally very diverse, clearly centered on the two lines. In addition to liberal feminism (referred to by Young as a “humanist”), “gynocentric” feminism (defined by Young) grew up and even dominated this trend. While liberal feminists were still moving mainly on the basis of liberal human rights, fighting for the actual implementation of these rights also with regard to women, “gynocentric” feminism refused to recognize certain standards of liberal society in its classic form, above all maintaining that there is no universal human being, inherent in every unit and constituting a hypothetical subject of these human rights. The gender difference turned out to be so fundamental that it could not be disregarded, as e.g. the race. The gender difference (occurring on the basis of various cultures in the form of socio-cultural gender) requires – if equality of all people is to become a reality – just unequal treatment or, in other words, *equal* treatment of *different* needs of both genders. “Being blind” to this difference, as proposed by the liberal concept of human rights, did not make these laws neutral, equally benevolent for all people, because from the cloak of the humanistic “universal person,” person-in general, a person of male gender

was emerging. Allegedly gender-blind human rights turn out to be more of a man's rights, because it is *the varies* of a man's species that they are cut up. Liberal feminism, on the other hand, persisted in the conviction that the difference between the sexes should in any case disappear in the public sphere and somehow become transparent.

"Gynocentric" feminism confirmed the strengthening of the so-called identity trend (it concerns separate group identities of the sexes), convinced that gender difference in different gender variants is culturally defined in various ways, but has a solid biological basis and we cannot count on its disappearance as a result of cultural assimilation. On the contrary, this difference should be considered permanent and feminine gender as equally socially valuable as men's gender, though different from it. Separatist feminism, because it was called this way, mobilized social support to fight for the equality of both sexes, and not for the disappearance of the difference between them. The society should have changed so that both types of people, both sexes, also more broadly, in all their cultural variants (*gender*), had equal recognition in their otherness, in their separate cultural identity.

At the same time, in the 1970s and 1980s, the phenomenon of refusal of race and cultural groups to assimilate into a mainstream culture gradually grew. Both Afro-Americans and Hispanics, especially, and following their example, the Indians began to demand recognition of their cultural diversity as equal to the culture of the mainstream (after all, white and Anglo-Saxon at the root). They began to expect the public to recognize their different cultural needs as worthy of equal satisfaction and inclusion (e.g. Latin Americans began to demand that their language be recognized as official, next to English). Only individuals managed to achieve success on the way of assimilation and to join the mainstream with a good result. The majority even trying to assimilate failed and willingly joined minority groups reevaluating their cultures as equally worthy and equally important, in the light of which their bodily and cultural diversity appeared not as ugliness, disability, humiliating otherness, but as something beautiful, noble, worthy of at least equal recognition in society. Also in Canada, the French-speaking inhabitants of Quebec came back with redoubled strength to their demands for far-reaching cultural and political autonomy; some have never stopped dreaming of the independence.

Assimilationism – and it is the merit of Young, that in the program of liberal feminism she noticed the sexual version of assimilationism (women to men) – it ceased to be a widely recognized life strategy. Instead, people began to demand political recognition of group differences (in law, in the range of social and customary norms accepted in society, etc.), recognizing and respecting the "group difference" (as Young called), and it seemed that it was necessary to reconcile with this new situation and give way to these demands. It is in this, the real political, practical meaning that the famous Harvard sociologist with a rather neoconservative inclination, Nathan Glazer, announced in the title of his publication that today, "We are all multiculturalists" (Glazer, 1997). Not with enthusiasm, as it is often mistakenly interpreted, but in the act of political realism, he agreed that now there is no other way and cultural

minorities should be considered equally important and that equally specific needs should be met with mainstream members. It is the careless readers of Glazer (perhaps the readers of the title itself, or duplicating the disintegration already circulated) that popularized the title of his article as a slogan of joy from the ever-growing success of the platform of political multiculturalism. In such a situation, both in the liberalist trend, pushing all group differences in society to the sphere of private lives of individuals, and in the stream of communitarianism, which was willing to sacrifice most of the individual freedoms on the altar of community good, the founders of the doctrine of multiculturalism appeared, proclaiming, whether under compulsion or on the contrary, with enthusiasm, the necessity to see the existence of a group diversity of public and civic society. They were joined by a feminist, who was in turn based on what is important – “gynocentric” feminism, Iris Marion Young, a political scientist of the Chicago university.

## HETEROGENEOUS SOCIAL ONTOLOGY AS THE BASIS OF CRITICISM OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY (IRIS MARION YOUNG CONCEPT)

In the criticism of the society of liberal democracy and in the presentation of the foundations of an alternative society of democratic cultural pluralism, the notion of “group difference” plays a central role in Young. It is a difference that *de facto* constitutes social groups that each society shares. The nature of these differences is, to some extent, variable, dependent on a particular society, especially its history (when it comes to ethnic and cultural groups), on the other hand some differences are universally present (like sex or age). Unfortunately, despite such a fundamental role of this category, it is difficult to find a definition of the concept in the author’s texts.\* Its content emerges, very ambiguously, from the theoretical entanglements in which the notions of “group difference” and “social group” are used. Instead of definitions,

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\* Andrzej Szahaj finds something that in his opinion can be regarded as a definition of “social group” in the Young meaning (I quote in his translation): “A social group is a collective of people who differ from at least one other group because of their cultural form, practice or way of life. Members of a group have [a sense of] specific kinship with each other because of similar experiences or a similar way of life, which makes them associate with each other more than with those who are not identified with the group or otherwise regarded as different. Groups are expressions of social relations, a group exists only in relation to at least one other group” (Young, 1990, after: Szahaj, 2004, p. 35). It is rather a description of the group type to be distinguished from others. The following remark of the Polish author sounds more promising when he writes: “a group according to Young is not an aggregate of individuals, nor a voluntary association, because it has an identity that *precedes* individual identities of its members and conditions them” (Szachaj, 2004, p. 35). It promises to direct the author’s attention to this “preceding” identity of individual group members, the nature of their cultural specificity.

there is always enumerative exchange of these groups, which it seems, is not just an exemplifying role, but actually almost completely covers the designatum of this term. Here is a list that not all elements are enumerated at every opportunity: racial and ethnic groups, women, gays and lesbians, old people, people with disabilities, people who are ill.<sup>\*</sup> On different occasions, the author emphasizes the cultural diversity of these groups, which leads to their specific ways of behavior, as well as the characteristics that depict them, not always falling in the register of mainstream needs or occupying other positions in the hierarchy of values.

This *cultural* difference creates such a strong impression, it is always present in these groups, although the *biological* factors – sex, age, health status, etc. – are distinguishing them in some of these groups, but also the diversity of skin color or race traits. The diversity of needs and behaviors always appears in the cultural form, but one should pay attention to a significant difference. In the case of groups such as women, the elderly, the disabled, the specificity of their needs is at the beginning biologically conditioned, while within specific societies adopts the form of specific cultural patterns, such as gender, while in other cases, the diversity of the needs of their members is created only in cultural layer, and their biological diversity, even one that is striking, is merely a historical circumstance, as is the case with African American, Indian or Hispanic groups, not to mention explicitly and originally culturally funded groups like the French-speaking inhabitants of Quebec, who are hardly able to speak of any more distinctive and significant biological specificity.

This ambiguity does not create any problems when it remains at the level of abstraction characteristic of the author. Directly in the social practice, the ontological type of this group difference is already significantly important.

For the effects of certain biological differences are irremovable, they can be neutralized in social practice at most. For example, such neutralization and not the abolition of sexual difference would in the future be possible to resign from the woman's pregnancy function. In other cases, such as age, the difference can not even be neutralized, especially in the age group of children. In the case of differences of pure cultural origin, their abolition (and not only neutralization) turns out to be quite possible, even if they are accompanied by biological differences, which, however, give rise to consequences only because of their cultural distinction. People of different races may, as a result of socialization in their cultures other than their parents function completely in accordance with these new cultures, their "skin color" can actually become something from the point of view of social place and roles "transparent," which one can be "blind" to. A person originating from the Francophone culture in Canada can completely assimilate into the English-language mainstream. Such assimilation seems completely impossible in the case of biological differences such as gender or age, or, for example, disability. After assimilation to another culture, it will

\* E.g. she writes: "Recent decades have witnessed a resurgence of this *politics of difference* not only among racial and ethnic groups, but also among women, gay men and lesbians, old people, and the disabled" (Young, 1990, p. 159).

find its group counterpart (a Muslim woman can completely depart from Islam, but not femininity), and assimilation to a different biological group generates at most a new gender, e.g. “masculine woman,” “elderly gentleman pretending to be a young man”, etc. This distinction, to which the author does not pay full attention, will turn out to be fraught with consequences when cultures fundamentally differently comprehend biologically determined relations, as societies that have become and become multicultural due to the influx of immigrants cultivating cultures far away from Western cultures.

In this critical remark, I will stop here and return to the presentation of the concept of Young. The thesis of heterogeneous character, of the inhomogeneity of society, of its group structure, is a strong argument in the polemic with the classic then liberal conception of social justice of the type presented by John Rawls (1994) and his supporters, and even polemicists.

The second point, which is equally critical of the concepts just mentioned – and the classic assimilationism was based on them – is the author’s postulate regarding the very point of departure of the social justice theory. Focusing on the just distribution of goods in society, as liberals do, could even be accurate if the society were homogeneous about their needs and the differences in it would be disparate. But since homogenous society is not, and is never homogenous even a monocultural in the ethno-national-religious sense, society is still divided into significantly different sexual and age groups, according to health, according to sexual orientation, etc., is the starting point for liberal considerations over social justice is a failure from the beginning. It is necessary to go beyond the problem of distribution, which is stratified in nature, resembles a ladder of many levels, but from a dualistic relationship of power and servitude. If this relationship were also changed depending on one’s abilities and merits, one could treat the power as one of the goods and refer to it also the problem of distributional justice. But in a society with a group structure there is another situation: one of the groups usually gives itself power and subordinates the rest. And another imposes its own cultural vision, which justifies its power in the unsuitability of the members of other groups to exercise it. This is “cultural imperialism,” although the rulers, often even in good faith, are convinced of their impartiality in the description of the situation. “Impartiality” turns out to be biased, and “attributing to itself impartiality is fed only by cultural imperialism, enabling the particularistic experience and perspective of the privileged group to parade in the outfit of universality” (Young, 1990, p. 10) (that is why, as the author continues, the liberation from the bonds of the prevailing culture and seeing each other in a different light, in the light of each group’s own, gaining an authentic group identity in which what is presented as ugly, crippled, underdeveloped, stupid, bizarre, etc. in prehistoric culture, turns out to be equally beautiful, fully harmonious, wise, human, etc.). In a word, since it is different than assumed by liberalism, the distribution can no longer be the starting point for building a social justice program. “I argue that instead of focusing on distribution, the concept of justice should come from concepts

of domination and oppression. Such a change of perspective raises the question of who makes decisions [in society], puts the division of labor and culture at the center, and all this affects social justice, and it is often overlooked in philosophical discussions.” And he adds: “a typical situation is when philosophical theories of justice refer to a social ontology in which there is no place for the category of social groups. I show that where there are differences between social groups and some groups are privileged, while others are oppressed, social justice requires explicit recognition and addressing these group differences in order to bear the oppression” (Young, 1990, p. 3). Already in the introduction he also writes (and further emphasizes this in the book) that the division of functions in society should be changed into a dual contrast, “task-defining and task-executing work” (Young, 1990, p. 7) – “assigning tasks” and “carrying out tasks.” Those who define the goals of social work and life and those who have the task of only implementing them create a bipolar relationship, not a field of gradual transitions. And this is the relationship of domination. It sometimes exacerbates itself until the form of the group’s use of oppression and violence against subordinate groups. This is not just about uneven distribution of goods. This is not just about uneven distribution of goods.

It is Young who decides about the need to propose a different program of dealing with social injustice than liberalism proposes. The liberals are only talking about retouching in a hierarchically-laden distribution ladder and maintaining the rigor of an impartial application of the same principles of differentiation for all. She is about a thorough reconstruction of the whole society. And this reconstruction goes not to replace the existing group with another group – because social injustice would remain unchanged, and not towards the abolition of groups, which is also suggested by liberals when groups even see – because the abolition of biologically different groups/culturally simply cannot succeed. On the contrary, it is about the affirmation of the diversity of society into groups, it is about “social equality that affirms group difference and creates conditions for inclusion and participation for all groups in public life” (Young, 1990, p. 11). This means the necessity of “creating procedures that ensure that the voice of each group becomes publicly audible, thanks to the establishment of a group representation institution” (Young, 1990, p. 12). Success along this path would mean the emergence of a new type of society, which the author does not always call the same name, but one seems to prefer. This is to appear “democratic cultural pluralism” (Young, 1990, p. 163), constituting a different new “ideal of liberation” in emancipatory movements, “providing a positive meaning of group difference.”

How would this new society look like? The author, despite her efforts, did not go far to the point, which is hardly surprising. I do not devote much attention to this matter, because just this positive side of the book later found some noticeable continuation (although some attempts were and are being made in this spirit).



## “DEMOCRATIC CULTURAL PLURALISM” IN THE YOUNG PROGRAM

If I had to put the author's position in this matter briefly, in my own words, I would do it like this: Moving away from Scylla's liberal multiculturalism, which is too willing to make concessions for a group difference, it is possible to get dangerously close to the Charybda's communitarian multiculturalism. Liberal Will Kymlicka is not ready to depart too far from the ideals of a very homogeneous public society, but nevertheless sees the need to correct state law in terms of making some accommodation for cultural minorities (to which, incidentally, only ethno-national and possibly religious minorities count).

On the other hand, communitarians go too far in recognition of the separateness and autonomy of groups, willingly agreeing with their striving for internal unification and cultural stiffening, which results in the abolition of minority oppression across society by transferring minority oppression to previously oppressed groups, usually managed by the patriarchal elders. For minorities defined by biological differences, such as women, people with a different sexual orientation, etc., it can mean falling from the rain into the gutter, a complete release into even stricter cultural norms than those that allow them to be oppressed in mainstream culture. This is connected with the acceptance of the prevailing in these groups emphasis on community life, which in the understanding of the current culture of the group is based on a far-reaching limitation of individual freedoms. Instead of the dictatorship of liberal Western culture in the whole society, the dictatorships of individual group cultures would result from the considerably more limited model of individual freedoms.

Therefore, the author sees the solution somehow in the middle of this field of possibilities. She is fascinated by the model of governance and management in the multi-group communities of residents of big cities, which too cleanses the real tensions in the cities on the one hand between different groups, on the other hand between the authorities of the liberal mainstream and groups wanting to live their own way. It is at this level of local communities (but not in provincial-rural or small-town communities that remain close to the ideals of insensitivity to the individuality of communitarianism). At the level of multicultural cities, for some time there has been forged civic self-government cooperation that creates a sense of life for residents “at home,” and at the same time it is connected with some mutual understanding and recognition of the different needs of other groups. However, there is no – or rather could not be – sharp district autonomies, and cultural communities do not create any hierarchy; their representatives operate on an equal level with each other. Units can belong simultaneously to many groups without falling into conflicts this way, because the groups have no separatist power.\*

\* A special role in this system would fall in the ‘neighborhood assemblies’ of which he writes, “I imagine neighborhood assemblies as the basic links of democratic participation that could consist of representa-

That's more or less in my opinion an image of a positive solution to the problems of multiculturalism emerges. This model would not have to embrace the whole of society at all levels. The author understands that more traditional solutions are needed at the level of state authorities, as well as in certain aspects of state life. All in all, this would be the society of this "democratic cultural pluralism" or maybe – as I would like to call it – a representative multi-group democracy based on a group representation system.

This is not a clear picture, the author merely sketches it, although it often gets into very detailed analyzes, but rather of existing situations, whereas in relation to the proposed model, it remains on the floor of a greater generality or the comforting spirit of metaphors. Therefore, it can easily be suggested by such a program outline.\*

But let us give her the same voice in a few issues raised here. Liberalism, even noticing the existence of separate groups in the society, stubbornly tried to push them out of the public sphere, denied their public existence. This distinction and the separation of the public sphere and the private sphere were meant to serve it, among other things. In their view, "the public sphere represents universal citizenship [where people are all equally people in general – my remark K.Ś] and individual differences are located in the private sphere, which in turn leads to the exclusion of [groups] from the sphere of the public." In contrast to liberalism, "radical democratic pluralism recognizes and appreciates the public and political significance of group social differences as a tool to ensure the participation and inclusion of each individual in social and political institutions" (Young, 1990, p. 168). This threatens to reinforce separatism in groups and is a threat. "Separation of the group and its self-management bring with it the risk of creating homogenization pressure in the groups themselves and create new privileges and exclusions" (Young, 1990, p. 167-168). But it is as if the author does not worry so much, because "contemporary social emancipation movements have discovered in group autonomy an important tool of internal strengthening and creation of a language specific and perspective" (Young, 1990, p. 168). She certainly means the experience of feminism in the initial period of the rebirth of this movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Then feminism also applied the tactics of group separatism before it grew stronger and was able to cope with external tensions. Summing up the considerations on the general outlines of her own concept of a just society, she writes: "I tried to prove that the ideal of a just society as a society that eliminates group differences is both unrealistic and undesirable.

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tion of jobs, councils of residents of blocks of flats, local churches and clubs, etc., as well as individual units." Later, representations of such neighboring assemblies would present it higher in regional assemblies (Young, 1990, p. 252).

\* She sees the role of theoreticians in the processes of social change. They are not the ones who lead them. They are not the ones who lead them. She writes about the concept proposed by her and her chances for implementation. "Social change grows out of politics, not philosophy. All ideals are a fundamental step in the politics of emancipation, because they refute our assumption that it must be as it is. They propose points of view from which one can actually criticize and inspire to launch the imagination of alternatives" (Young, 1990, p. 256).

On the other hand, justice in a group-differentiated society requires social equality of groups and mutual recognition and affirmation of group differences. Caring for a group of diverse needs and care that all groups have their representations, serves this social equality and strengthens this mutual recognition which destroys the foundations of cultural imperialism” (Young, 1990, p. 169).

## FINAL REMARKS

Concluding this brief sketch devoted to the very unique among the creators of the multiculturalist doctrine Iris Marion Young, I will return to the question posed at the beginning: How could such a symbiotic combination of her feminism and multiculturalism be even symbiotic which, I will remind you, was soon under the feminists’ fire, initiated by the famous article by Susan M. Okin (1990) and the violent debate that arose by it (I want to devote another topic to this topic, to which this will be the kind of introduction).

Today, there is no doubt that despite the significant convergence, even sharing, of the same vision of a just society, based on a more or less recognized recognition of the cultural and group diversity of the public sphere, there are many conflicts when attempting to implement group freedoms for specific groups of people. It seems that Iris M. Young was not yet dealing with cultural groups with a very deeply rooted patriarchal inclination, at which the still occurring sexism and patriarchy in Western cultures seems very mild. In this matter, the intensification of the ideologies and practices of patriarchy in the minority cultures at that time was similar to that characteristic of the society of the United States and Canada at the time. A real clash of cultural patterns and cultural practices regarding gender roles, as well as ways of treating children, animals and the environment took place a few years later, when in the newly emerged multicultural societies, cultures of immigrant minorities began to appear in a very decisive manner with a demand for recognition of their cultural and group identity, much more distant from the host cultures. Young herself was beginning to perceive these dangers, but she definitely did not consider them particularly troubling at that time. In her conception of a just society of cultural pluralism, it was relatively easy to find a solution.

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## FEMINISM AS... MULTICULTURALISM? IRIS MARION YOUNG ON THE CONCEPT OF MULTICULTURALISM

**Keywords:** assimilation, feminism, group difference, social group, cultural group, oppression, the politics of difference, recognition, cultural democratic pluralism.

**Abstract:** The conflict of feminism with multiculturalism seems to be inevitable to most of theorists, especially on the side of feminism. It has been a staple in the debates for about twenty years now. Surprisingly among the founding fathers of the doctrine of multiculturalism there was also one founding mother, academician and outstanding feminist, prof. Iris Marion Young. How was it possible? Trying to find the answer to this interesting question the author of this paper has reconstructed Young's critical arguments, concerning both lines of the then multiculturalism, the liberal and the communitarian one. There have been also recalled main theses of her concept of society, which should have solved problems resulting from multicultural structure of societies of US and Canada, the case objects of her interest. The model society, "democratic cultural pluralism," is based on recognition of cultural groups. Each society is in this sense heterogeneous. Such a society would be non-hierarchical; all groups would be represented, in a horizontal manner, in the neighborhood and regional assemblies. It seems likely that Young was overlooking the inevitable conflict between feminism supporting "gynocentric" point of view, and multiculturalism representing ethnic and national-oriented point of view, because at the time of her investigations and conceptualizing her model society (the end of 80s in US and Canada) the discrepancy between minorities' and mainstream cultures in matters of gender was not very large. The situation changed later, after a massive immigration of people representing cultures much deeper and more aggressive in their patriarchic and sexist cultural rules and norms.

## FEMINIZM JAKO... MULTIKULTURALIZM? O KONCEPCJI MULTIKULTURALIZMU IRIS MARION YOUNG

**Słowa kluczowe:** asymilacja, feminizm, różnica grupowa, grupy społeczne, grupy kulturowe, ucisk (*oppression*), polityka różnicy, uznanie (*recognition*), demokratyczny pluralizm kulturowy

**Streszczenie:** Konflikt między feminizmem a multikulturalizmem wydaje się wielu współczesnym nieunikniony i sytuacja taka trwa od ponad dwudziestu lat. Jednak wśród klasycznych twórców multikulturalizmu wywodzących się zarówno z liberalizmu, jak i z tradycji komunitariańskiej (łączył ich sprzeciw wobec asymilacjonizmu), znalazła się też wybitna akademicka uczona, feministka, Iris Marion Young. Jak to było możliwe? W artykule w poszukiwaniu odpowiedzi na to pytanie przypomniane zostały krytyki, jakim I.M. Young poddała multikulturalizm w obu jego wariantach. Zostały też zrekonstruowane zręby jej programowej propozycji zbudowania społeczeństwa „demokratycznego pluralizmu kulturowego”, opartego na uznaniu heterogeniczności społeczeństw wynikającej z ich kulturowo-grupowej struktury. Miałoby to być społeczeństwo niehierarchizowane grupowo, w którym władza opiera się na poziomych zgromadzeniach reprezentacji wszystkich grup kulturowych. Fakt niedostrzeżenia konfliktu między patriarchalnymi kulturami mniejszości etniczno-religijnych a grupą kulturową kobiet i reprezentującym ją feminizmem można zapewne tłumaczyć tym, iż w polu uwagi Young nie występowały wówczas jeszcze mniejszości imigranckie, wywodzące się z kultur bardzo odległych od zachodnich, w których wzorce patriarchalno-seksistowskie są znacznie głębsze i bardziej agresywne niż te, które występowały w owym czasie (początek lat 90.) w USA i w Kanadzie.

