

ANDROCENTRISM IN THE DISCOURSE AND STRUCTURE OF POLISH ETHNOLOGY. PROLEGOMENA

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Abstract

The objective of the present article is to make a preliminary study and to create a “map” of the phenomenon of androcentrism in Polish ethnology and cultural anthropology. Androcentrism – understood as the domination of masculine norms in culture – has become, since the 1970s, one of the subjects of interest of anthropology in Western Europe and the United States. Anthropology, inspired by feminism, thus has coined the concept of “androcentric bias” in this discipline which is both *strictly* scientific and institutional. The author shall endeavour to analyse the discourse and structure of Polish ethnology using this concept and this very instrument. He also discusses whether it is possible to overcome the androcentric bias at the discourse level (or would this lead to ginecentrism, which is equally limiting?).

The actual control and power exercised by men over academic institutions in ethnology and the early interest in folk culture fully confirm the thesis of a strong androcentric element existing in Polish ethnology. Although the author does not aspire to exhaust the topic, or to reach final conclusions, the examples mentioned in the present article show rather unequivocally that Polish female ethnologists – doing fieldwork, organisational work, conducting lecture and writing – were indeed, following de Beauvoir’s terminology, “the second sex”.

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Autor stawia sobie za cel wstępne rozpoznanie i stworzenie „mapy” androcentryzmu w polskiej etnologii i antropologii kulturowej. Androcentryzm – jako dominacja norm męskich w kulturze – od lat 1970. stał się przedmiotem zainteresowania na gruncie antropologii krajów Europy Zachodniej i Stanów Zjednoczonych. Antropologia inspirowana feminizmem sformułowała koncepcję „androcentrycznego skrzywienia” w tej dyscyplinie, mającego wymiar zarówno *stricte* naukowy, jak i instytucjonalny. Wykorzystując tę koncepcję, autor stara się zanalizować dyskurs i strukturę polskiej etnologii właśnie przy użyciu tego narzędzia. Rozpatruje też możliwość przezwyciężenia androcentrycznego skrzywienia na poziomie dyskursu (czy jego skutkiem nie byłby, równie ograniczający, ginecentryzm?).

Fakt sprawowania rzeczywistej kontroli i władzy nad instytucjami akademickiej etnologii oraz wczesne zainteresowania kulturą ludową w pełni potwierdzają tezę o obecności w polskiej etnologii silnego pierwiastka androcentrycznego. Jakkolwiek autor nie pretenduje do wyczerpania tematu ani do ostatecznych wniosków, to przytoczone w artykule przykłady raczej jednoznacznie przemawiają za tym, że polskie etnologiki – badaczki, organizatorki, wykładowczynie i autorki – stanowiły de Beauvoir’owską „drugą płeć”.

Key words: androcentrism, androcentric bias, Polish ethnology and cultural anthropology, mythisation

According to the general dictionary definition, androcentrism consists in a strong focus on men, male values, as well as norms represented and expressed by men, which eventually become dominant in a given cultural system (the Greek term *andrós* means literally “man”). In this approach, androcentrism is a feature of patriarchal cultures universalising the male perspective and awareness. This term was introduced into the scientific vocabulary by Charlotte Perkins Gilman in her book *Man-Made World* of 1911 (1911) where she defined it as a social fixation on everything that is male-related. Studies on androcentrism – its essence, sources, functions, reproduction mechanisms – are currently among the main trends of reflection in many sciences inspired by feminism. Ethnology and cultural anthropology have also generated many studies of this phenomenon. It is even considered that these trends appeared in anthropology specifically as a reaction to the identified phenomenon of “androcentric bias” visible in its practices (Lamphere 1996: 488). The wave of critical analyzes which started in the 1970s was caused predominantly by two circumstances. First of all, in the forming period of anthropology in the USA, female researchers were highly influential figures. The discipline itself was of a relatively more egalitarian nature – from the point of view of the gender category – than other social sciences of that time. Secondly, this egalitarian nature was, however, lost in future decades, as androcentrism became the privileged and emphasized model for describing reality (di Leonardo 1991: 5–6).

In the present paper, I shall tackle the issue of the “androcentric bias” in relation to the history and the present state of Polish ethnology (cultural anthropology). This issue is topical and constitutes somewhat of a “white spot” in the interpretation and understanding of this discipline’s history. Detailed studies of this field would require, of course, lengthy source analyses concerning the theories that were formulated, fieldwork practices and text analysis systems, as well as studies of the institutional dimension in which the discipline functioned. This is a task by far exceeding my ambitions, as well as capabilities. Trying, therefore, to adapt my intentions to my possibilities, I would like to check, in the most general sense, if the thesis on the existence of androcentrism in our discipline is also relevant to the case of Polish ethnology. The comments and findings that follow can only be treated as a preliminary, and sometimes makeshift, inquiry, hence the word “prolegomena” used in the title.

I

The eminent American anthropologist Robert Lowie made an intriguing confession at the end of his life. He admitted during one interview that, when doing fieldwork in different societies, he was prey to very mixed feelings: from instant liking to deepening aversion to the people he studied. Oddly enough, he came to like Crow Indians. He confessed to a “fondness without reservations” for those warriors from the plains

adorned with feathered headdresses. Why was it so? Lowie explained: "When a Crow Indian learns that his wife has cheated on him he cuts her nose off. This is a reaction I can understand and which, in a way, seems normal" (Charbonnier 2000: 11). No doubt that this declaration, full of candour, leaves nobody indifferent. Claude Lévi-Strauss commented on Lowie's confession in the following words: "I perceive him (i.e. Lowie – note by W.K.) as a role model, for there is no work more objective, calmer or clearer than his. When reading his works one gets the impression that the author is a completely disinterested scientist studying these societies with full objectivity" (Charbonnier 2000: 11).

As it results from the above considerations, the impression that the researcher has an objective and disinterested approach and is full of cognitive innocence, may be constructed on the basis of his description of male-female relationships. Lowie sympathises with Crow men, understands their acts, accepts their values and the behaviour which results thereof. He deems normal to cut off one's wife's nose. This true connoisseur of diversity in this case feels no dissonance nor inappropriateness. Lévi-Strauss follows in his footsteps. Nowadays, a lot is being said and written about the fact that this type of impartial inclination, this objectivistic purity, is, in reality, an attitude which distorts cognitive procedures and the study practices of anthropology. The critical trend in feminist anthropology defined a separate category for this type of behaviour called "androcentric bias". This phenomenon was systematically diagnosed for the first time by Rayna Reiter (1975). She came to the conclusion that anthropology as a whole is polluted by "the assumptions which pervade our culture as a whole". The patriarchal world universalises the male element at every level of social life; the same happens in science. Anthropology also orders and describes the world according to a male idiom. This leads to a situation where results of ethnographic research are doubly biased: firstly, due to the male anthropologist running the fieldwork, secondly through male informants if they happen to live in a society dominated by manifestations of the male domination at many levels.

Classical ethnological monographs or fieldwork reports were in fact merely tales of a male world told by male informants to male fieldworkers and later on forwarded to male readers. What could have been the content of field reports by Franz Boas had he not worked only with male native informants such as George Hunt (the son of a Scottish man and a woman from the Tlingit tribe) and men from the Tsimshian tribe – Henry Tate, Marius Barbeau and William Benyon – but if he had instead cooperated with Indian women? What could we have learnt in such case about the mythology of the people of the northwestern coast, their rituals and daily routine? Michał Buchowski and Wojciech J. Burszta, two scholars not connected to the feminist trend in anthropology, also pointed to the huge impact that the choice of informers may have. They asked the following questions: "Would the ethnography of the Trobriand Islands, written by Bronisław Malinowski, have looked the same if he had not been under the influence of

his informants from Omarakana? Would it have been possible for Marcel Griaule to describe Dogons in this way, especially their developed mythology, without the help of his main informant – Ogotemeli? Turner also stressed the significant role played in his Ndembu study by his friend and informant – Muchona” (Buchowski, Burszta 1992: 8). I shall tackle the feminist revision of Malinowski’s Trobriand ethnography in the further part of this article. At this point I would like to mention the reservations to Turner’s concept of *communitas*: its critics accused him to have omitted the gender issue – the factor which most clearly sets it apart from *societas* (Tokarska-Bakir 2010, 25–33).

The androcentric bias was also the reason why cultural depictions presented by men were so close and understandable for other scholars. A good example of this is Lowie’s aforementioned confession and the approving reaction by the author of *Structural Anthropology* – meanwhile ethnographies written by women were considered marginal in the discipline. For the same reason monographs of Australian autochthons show groups entirely dominated by men and the reports concerning North American tribes broadly describe the diversification of male social roles while women are limited to popular clichés – cooks, mothers and nannies (Klein, Ackerman 1995: 4).

The identification of the “androcentric bias” issue was, obviously, not the end of the problem. Female scholars wondered what benefits could result if it was eliminated. The most important advantage which was pointed out was the fact that one could abolish the assumption stating that biology defines the fates of both genders which was *implicitly* expressed by many anthropologists. This would be the more valuable since this assumption is clearly contradictory to every serious study program on cultural diversity. The type of criticism mentioned here would, moreover, make it possible to start a new type of studies: on women and the gender asymmetry in foreign cultures, as well as on the status of women in our culture. There is, as I believe, no need to add that this type of studies has already been implemented.

II

Do the discussions on androcentrism in Western Europe and in the United States have anything in common with the Polish situation? Could similar problems also be found in Polish research? Could androcentric bias also be identified in the strategies for doing ethnology in Poland? In tune with good conference manners one should agree with the following statement by Katarzyna Kaniowska (1995: 66) – “The history of anthropology teaches us [...] that in reality it was either created by exuberant extroverts or downright neurotic introverts”. However to take even one further step seems risky. Let us, however, leave aside the creation of a catalogue of academic character archetypes. This task is equally interesting as it is funny, but by far not the most urgent. It is namely time to mention much more important circumstances: the academic discourse in Polish ethnology represents basically the perspective of white,

educated, heterosexual men from the middle-class. To acknowledge the existence of androcentrism is therefore neither a heresy nor a surprising discovery but only a logical consequence of the development of ethnology so far in Poland, on the one hand, and the conclusions drawn in anthropological circles abroad, on the other hand. Let us examine these circumstances.

There is no doubt as to the fact that Polish ethnology was founded by men and not by women. One could now draft a long list of the names of pioneers and creators of institutional ethnology – Hugo Kołłątaj, Zorian Dołęga Chodakowski, Oskar Kolberg, Ludwik Krzywicki, Kazimierz Moszyński, Jan Poniąkowski, Adam Fischer, Jan Stanisław Bystroń etc. At the same time one might note that women appear only incidentally. The thesis on the androcentric sources of this discipline is strongly supported by the work *Etnografowie i ludoznawcy polscy* (2002) (trans. N.K. *Polish Ethnographers and Folk Scholars*). This is a set of biographic profiles of people connected to Polish ethnology (I would like to note that apart from ethnographers this book features also museologists, regionalists and social activists with a certain flair for ethnography). Among those 112 figures we find 40 women who, obviously, are in minority although not overwhelmingly. What is more telling in this context is that the majority of them played an advisory role, were assistants doing completing work and helped in editing or keeping archives. As a rule, women in the history of Polish ethnology were rather in the background, leaving the more prominent positions, functions and sources of authority to their male colleagues. Men were those who would carry out serious research and present them in influential papers, quoting other men in bibliographic footnotes. Men, again, founded ethnological journals and organised academic centres as well as research centres.

One should add here that questionnaires filled by students of the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Poznań (UAM) turned out to be especially revealing. I asked them to mention women's names – no longer living, as to avoid having lists of people with whom they had classes – significant for Polish ethnology. What was the outcome? Usually none, since most of them could not mention even one such name. Incidentally students would only mention Cezaria Baudouin de Courtenay-Ehrenkreutz-Jędrzejewiczowa (for what an original name that is!) and Maria Antonina Czaplicka because she had recently been featured in a current issue of "National Geographic". This was, of course, merely a mini-experiment of local range whose outcome can certainly not be generalised. However, as it results thereof, an alternative, female lineage in Poland is not recognized by students. This happens to be at the same time a remark to the teaching system of the history of this discipline.

Coming back to the main train of thought – male ethnologists fulfilled managerial roles in the structure of Polish ethnology. The reference to the example of the Poznań ethnological centre created as early as in 1919 is also symptomatic. Its consecutive directors, almost for 100 years already, were: Jan Stanisław Bystroń, Eugeniusz Frankowski, Janusz Gajek, Józef Burszta, Zbigniew Jasiewicz, Aleksander Posern-Zieliński and

currently Michał Buchowski. These are undoubtedly important figures for the development of the discipline, however, at the same time, they are consolidating its androcentric character. This example shows clearly that they do not only deal with symbolic representations of domination.

Many arguments may be named to explain this state of affairs. One of the most important, in my opinion, is the customary marginalisation of women's achievements, also visible in the academic structures. Women were indeed the second sex in academia as "institutional science had for centuries been a highly patriarchal structure" (Pakszys, Sobczyńska 1997: 9). Certainly the best known example of such marginalisation is Margaret Mead, still the most legendary woman-anthropologist, called at some time by a "Time" journalist "the mother of the world". In the years 1925–1975 she published over 1300 scientific and popular papers, spent whole seasons fieldworking and made thousands of academic lectures which, nonetheless, did not bother those who were belittling her accomplishments. A typical illustration of the degree of criticism aimed at Mead can be found in the opinion by Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard who declared that "Coming of Age in Samoa" is a book full of "[...] a woman's twitter and a feminine work with a clear inclination towards picturesqueness" (Lutkehaus 1995: 203) (to which this scholar would oppose a prose devoid of emotions, embellishments and anegdotes, scientifically barren and therefore, in his view – masculine).

Mead's case is not isolated. Ruth Behar points to the institutional marginalisation of many female anthropologists who experimented with the classical form of academic narration, not separating the critical style (acknowledged) from the creative one (assumedly forbidden in science) (Behar 1995: 7). Among those experimenters excluded from the mainstream of science, one could certainly name Alice Cunningham Fletcher, Elsie Clews Parsons, Zora Neale Hurston, Ella Cara Deloria and Ruth Landes. From the Polish perspective a similar situation concerns the written work of Kazimiera Zawistowicz-Adamska which is currently being interpreted in the context of the "ethnography of experiencing" (Kafar 2007). One should note in this context that almost identical arguments, referring to alleged "femininity", and by the same discrediting the achievements of women, were voiced already in the 19th and 20th centuries concerning the work of female painters, sculpturers and other artists who dared to encroach on the "male" field of art.

In this context, another important issue is the phenomenon defined nowadays by the popular expression of the "glass ceiling and sticky floor". This phrase describes practices, hidden and discreet, but at the same time common and widespread, which make it difficult or virtually impossible for women to make careers comparable to men – both in terms of the financial dimension, temporal aspects and prestige level. Such a mechanism has been diagnosed and acknowledged in relation to corporations, media, big companies or local enterprises. However, people are still reluctant to accept that this is also the case at universities.

Since we do not wish, however, to delve into the mechanisms which regulate the male cultural order, let us come back once again to Lowie's confession. Could his inclination towards "male" Crow Indians be in any way connected to the fact that Polish early ethnology was so entranced by folk culture? This analogy is far less far-fetched than it might seem at first glance – the understanding of the folk perspective was connected to many meaningful contexts. This can be symbolised by the words of a poem by Gustaw Ehrenberg (1848): "The people are like a sweet countryside lass who smiles gracefully at everyone" (trans. N.K. pol. "Lud to jest wiejska dziewczyna urodna, Co wdzięcznie każdemu się śmieje"). As a contemporary commentator put it "the raptures over folklore and peasant beauty are not focused on the attractiveness of countrymen (Libera 1995: 147) – this admiration does not go to a man". The peasant-maniac perspective led folklorists to highly "enjoy robust, firm country lasses" (Skotnicki 1911: 368). "As a rule, a scholar would be interested in folk culture "because of its beauty", and the terms *rusticor* and *rusticatio* do not only denote an interest in the countryside, but also define the person who "plays with" countryside (Hernas 1965: 18).

The process of mythisation of folk culture in ethnology – as described by Czesław Robotycki and Stanisław Węglarz (1983) in an article, whose main message I am trying to follow here – consists in including the convictions of the scholar into the theses on the subject of the research or the interpretation of facts in the name of certain values. But can we really deem that "fatherland vampirism" and "slavicophile paralysis" (according to Maria Janion's terms) are the only results? Or perhaps should we add the male, androcentric, if not even sexist, approach to the topic of folklore in ethnology? Is this not the direction in which the currently undertaken work consisting in "unveiling intentions [...] reinterpreted [...] and new reading of ethnographical materials [...] in the categories of meaning, myth, culture" should go (Robotycki, Węglarz 1983: 8)? "This phenomenon may either be ignored – as the authors wrote – or perceived only in the historical dimension. This means that we would have to admit that, for instance, Goszczyński or Pol for some reason mythicised folk culture, but that Kazimierz Dobrowolski's accomplishments are the sheer quintessence of scientific objectivity" (Robotycki, Węglarz 1983: 4). The wording of this sentence and its internal logic allow us to add a further part: namely, if we erroneously interpret the mythisation of folklore in Polish ethnology, we can admit that Dobrowolski mythised it, but Robotycki and Węglarz certainly did not.

Thanks to efforts meant at unveiling the mythisation of ethnological knowledge, we know very well nowadays that the ideas which ethnologists had about folk culture were usually conceptualised at an unconscious level. Moreover, "for the whole duration of the national captivity folklore ideology was strictly connected to the national liberation ideology, and fulfilled an important patriotic function" (Węglarz 1994: 87). But is this really the only myth-generating context in which knowledge of folk culture was shaped? What of the frequently expressed feeling of superiority in relation

to this culture, with the idealised object of studies, the conviction that the researcher played the role of discoverer and noble explorer of that, which on its own, could not only not speak for itself but even be defined? Don't we indeed find here clear traces of the fact the scholar introduced his own beliefs into the theses he formulated on the subject of the research or interpreted facts in the name of certain values? There are clear and already recognised threads of a romantic ideology (the myth on Ossian, ahistoricity, patriotism/volkism) in the Polish ethnological discourse, some elements pointing to exoticisation have been defined and we might even suspect the existence of a Polish variety of orientalism. But behind all those strategies is there not a hidden, overarching, judging and voyeuristic eye belonging to a white male and reflecting its patriarchal scientific discourse?

When in the 1970s Anette Weiner (1976; 1988) started her fieldwork on the Trobriand Islands, she did not have to study all the aspects of indigenous life in their minute and complex details. Bronisław Malinowski et al. had already done that job. Therefore, she decided to focus on reinterpretation and studied first of all female roles, as well as relationships between the *genders*. By the same she became entangled in the same critical dialogue with her predecessors. The *gender* category, as Weiner pointed out, had long been absent in anthropological research, which is even more surprising since this is one of the pillars of individual identity. When Malinowski studied and described the natives of the Trobriand islands, one of the best-studied matrilinear communities in the world, he neglected the domain of female activities and endowed men with all the responsibility for reproducing the values of that culture. According to the Weiner this was a big mistake which allowed her to produce an original interpretation of social institutions, allegedly already so well-studied. The cultural gist of the famous *kula* exchange, is a good example. According to Malinowski it was highly symbolic, while Weiner suggests that it is a practical way of chasing fame, renown and recognition but exclusively by and for men. As we can see, it turned out it was not only possible but also greatly inspirational to make an alternative interpretation of social institutions.

Therefore, if someone asked for the rationale and justification for adopting a female of feministic perspective in ethnology, one could answer that it is worthwhile for the sake of a deeper reflection and self-awareness of the discipline, as these values are nowadays no longer questioned. It seems that *re-studies*, such as Weiner's fieldwork, would be advisable in just about every region of Poland. This is a huge workload for future projects. Unfortunately, completing fieldwork, redefining the rules for collecting materials, redrafting of research instructions is hard to imagine in the current situation. This does not mean, however, that one should give in to despair and settle for a statement on time inexorably escaping. Indeed, a huge challenge lies in the classical studies, materials and monographs. The wealth and complexity of the realities presented in these texts does not have to be inferior to the extra-textual reality. In this light, some traces become fairly obvious. Suffice it to quote the classical ethnological work which is a systemic description of folk culture of the region of Great Poland (Wielkopolska).

“The descriptions from the third volume of *Kultura ludowa Wielkopolski* (The folk culture of Great Poland) – according to the words of its editor – reflect adequately the social popular and intellectual culture of the Great Poland region” (Burszta 1967: 9). “Adequately” – what is exactly meant by that? In this work composed of three volumes there are chapters devoted to rural professions (blacksmith, potter, miller, fisherman, wheelwright, cooper, tanner) mainly performed by men. We will find detailed depictions of hunting, bee-keeping, carpentry, housebuilding, there are also a few words about sawmills, fullers and oil mills, authors will also describe dialects, musical folklore, as well as the rich and varied customs and traditions. In a separate part devoted to the “world lore” the issue of genders and their different roles or social statuses is not either tackled. The private dimension of folk life, the sphere of female experiences, the womanly *fait social total*, is virtually completely omitted. The woman, as an individual figure, appears only in the chapters “about demons” and “about withcraft” where she shows her ugly face of a Slavonic “medicine woman” and enchantress, a witch, a ghoul or a hexer (*pl: ciota, jędzona, zmore, heksa*).

Can this type of research strategy be deemed a proper foundation in order to “adequately” describe the social and intellectual aspects of folk culture in Great Poland? But is it not so, that this ethnographic depiction shows its discursive-androcentric skeleton? Czesław Hernas (1965: 138) clearly reckons that “the vogue for folklore and native culture was created under the sign of popular folk love lyrics”. The popular love poem should be considered the first source of interest in Polish folklore (Hernas 1965: 177). The songs of peasants which enthralled the imagination of poets and folklorists were an emanation of an Arcadian vision but with a clearly male character. We are witnessing here the private world of man “where a woman is not an individual but merely a sexual representation, the eternal Eve” (Poggioli 1960: 51–52). But this is not all. The folkloric descriptions of the human body and corporeality as such, also turn out to be stubbornly schematic, for they merely touch upon a few chosen parts of the body, completely skipping the domains considered improper, degraded or dirty. These descriptions are obviously anchored in the philosophical, most often even Platonian and theological sciences of the body which strongly delimit that which is shameful from that which is allowed (Abramowska 1987: 141–142, 147–148). The feminist trend of cultural criticism proves (as a continuation of the clear reflection of Michel Foucault) that deleting the thread of the body and corporeality in texts is almost always a way to exclude women who traditionally were connected to nature, biology and the body. The abovementioned example seems to fully confirm this.

In Poland it was Joanna Tokarska-Bakir (2004) who first made us aware of the fact that on the basis of shreds of information and scraps of source data and an intense absence one could come near a “presence” (or rather a secondary representation), and paint a picture of that which had been marginalised, suppressed, muffled. This researcher wrestling with the *crème de la crème* of Polish classical ethnography, i.e. the work of Kolberg, tried to find in these volumes traces of Jews. As it transpires, according to

this source, Polish lands were inhabited by Hutsuls, Boykos and Tatars. Jews, on the other hand, seem to have been swept under this multiethnic carpet. The very succinct passages where they are mentioned, single stories, single examples of sayings – how infinitely rare when contrasted with the rest – sum up, however, a brief, blunt and quite explicit tale of Polish folk antisemitism.

The aforementioned anecdote about Robert Lowie (Charbonnier 2000: 11) explains that he liked Crow Indians and that is why he studied and described them. But for which reasons, which sympathies, should we ask, did the Polish folklorists and ethnologists study and describe folk culture? Androcentrism is, as I believe, one of the possible answers. This suggestion, however, does not settle the matter. The demythisation endeavour in Polish ethnology must still endure, however, for a serious deconstruction never ends. On the contrary, it should not only undermine that which it touches but finally, inexorably and in the most logical way, also put itself in question. We should note here explicitly that androcentrism in ethnology (and in any other dimension of social life) is not, of course, determined by the biological gender, since the *sex* does not entirely define the way of thinking, acting and imagining. The present attempt to examine native academic tradition from this perspective was supposed to show only the evident immersion of ethnology in a patriarchal culture. Even if the luminaries of Polish ethnology were exclusively women, the conclusion would be the same – contemporary western culture means, let us quote Pierre Bourdieu (2004), “male domination”, based on pillars such as family (the first experience of dividing social roles), the Church (propagation of the negative image of femininity) and school, and in the broader sense the whole educational system, including the respectable university (consolidating the division between genders and reinforcing the patriarchal conviction on gender skills and destinies).

To finish, I would like to tackle the alternative to the “androcentric bias” in ethnology (being aware of the presence of the clear androcentric element in formulations based on senses such as watching, seeing, observing). If it is a *strictly* historical entity, brought to life in the past and reproduced by a network of social institutions, it may also be at some point annulled or at least discredited. What then, what instead? Some of the female researchers assume that it is possible to overcome the *androcentric bias* and quote the *casus* of ethnocentrism. They claim that one can efficiently defeat the tyranny of enculturation and get efficiently disanchored from the cultural dimension. *Double-consciousness* appears as a remedy to androcentrism and the result of its suppression. It is supported by the conviction that male and female models of reality actually (co?)exist. A female researcher, when getting down to work, must be aware of the entanglement in the patriarchal structure, both for herself and in relation to members of groups in which she works.

This is indeed a bizarre assumption. Personally, I do not believe in the existence of what we could call a perspective from nowhere or some natural point of view. Many female researcher rightly pointed to its inconsistency (Baer 1997: 248–257). If women

are better able to study other women in other cultures, this would mean that male issues should be taken care exclusively by men. If women are able to deal with the problem of androcentrism, one not only negates equality of sexes but also the current form of anthropology as a science. From then on this would have to be only a domain for women busy studying the life of women. Marilyn Strathern added that the category of double consciousness is a common methodological mistake repeating the distortions of traditional anthropology. In the end it is about a postulate of replacing one, androcentric bias, by another bias, this time ginecentric. As a final coda, closing the main text, I would like to quote Roch Sulima (1987: 71). Actually he did not tackle issues discussed in the present paper. However, if we replace the categories of that which belongs to our group and that which is alien to it by androcentrism, his ideas seem highly relevant. It turns out then that it is the “object and at the same time the instrument of the research; it is the scale and object of scaling [...] it is a category of description and entity, it occurs in scientific models and ethnomodels. This is what the individual power (overpower), and the weakness of the category”.

III

As mentioned in the introduction, the present article is only a preliminary description of the problem, drafting a “map” of androcentrism in the discourse and structure of Polish ethnology. It would be difficult to consider these conclusions as conclusive, and the thesis presented in the title was purposefully sharpened. Just like in other countries Polish ethnology and cultural anthropology was co-created by women from the very beginning: organisers, lecturers, researchers and authors. As I expect, many of them, after having read the text, may feel offended since their scientific biographies prove that androcentrism can be overcome in our discipline. On the other hand, however, the quoted examples of male-centric structures and discourse concerning folk culture speak in favour of a different thesis. Polish ethnologists were the “second sex”. The sources and mechanisms of this degradation should be reconstructed and by the same eliminated.

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