

CULTURE IN TRANSITION COUNTRIES

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CHANGES IN FEMALE INTIMACY IN SELECTED WORKS OF THE RED LIBRARY

Lucia Valková

Gender and its analysis have become important tools, markers and aspects of the evaluation of social structures over the course of several decades. Social hierarchy, social status, social interactions and the functioning of structures are reflected in a given culture, its production and cultural artefacts. One such cultural artefact is literary creation, where we will focus on the works of female authors. Women as writers have found themselves in an uneasy situation, and by their works they too have reflected society and their place in it. For a long period of time they could not write under their own names, less their works be considered worthless. In our work we will focus on the depiction of female intimacy and sexuality in literature, on the effects of the sexual revolution in the 1960s and also on other factors. The activization of women's movements from the 18th century to the present (especially the first and second waves of feminism) were the main impulses for change in society and their demands were directed towards the equal status of women and men. For a better orientation, we will outline a brief look at women in the 19th and 20th century, illustrating the changes in their social status.

By the end of the 19th century women were mere objects of the male gaze and desire in the most countries. Society functioned in a de facto patriarchal arrangement that controlled, built and transformed it according to its own vision of the world. These manifestations

were reflected in every area of human life, starting with the state establishment, through the legal system and onto the reflection of art. A woman was a being who, in the primary sense, existed to be viewed by others. Only after the success of the feminist movements has the position of women started to change radically. “Whether concerned with the literary representations of sexual difference, with the ways that literary genres have been shaped by masculine and feminine values, or with the exclusion of the female voice from the institutions of literature, criticism, and theory, feminist criticism has established gender as a fundamental category of literary analysis” (Showalter, cited in Cviková 2014, p. 77).

The new social status of a woman gradually caused her to transform from an object of desire and subordination into a subject of change and knowledge. The 20th century created a woman as a reality, a concept of social and cultural importance. “Feminist interventions in the production and reception of the arts have made a distinct contribution towards revealing art to be a cultural practice that has historically excluded the subjectivities of women” (Wright, 2003, p. 20). Women began to reflect their position in a masculine world in their own way, language, an own experience. They became co-creators of power, society and culture.

Women in literature: ‘Red library’

The reflection of woman’s subjectivity has become a theme and a source of inspiration for the expansion of literary works and the creativity of the authors. Genres created for a female audience and also created by women, have begun to emerge. ‘Red library’,¹ originally a sub-genre

¹ The name is derived from the popular Red Library editions published by the Rodina company in the inter-war period. A typical feature was a distinctive red label.

of literature, was originally intended for women. The central theme is usually a love affair between a man and a woman, mostly with a happy ending; the story, told in vernacular language, takes place in the past. The main heroine and her monogamous suitor are attracted to each other from the first moment. A fundamental conflict stands in the way of their union, but the conflict is miraculously solved at the end and their love is fulfilled. This leitmotif, together with the cover with a masculine exotic man and a half-naked woman were the hallmarks of red library.

Despite the fact that the Red Library edition has gradually disappeared and been replaced by other editions, under the influence of popular culture it has become an eponym for female literature itself, with distraction as its main mission. It is a popular product and its stories offer readers an escape from reality. However, the transformation of society and emancipation have also gradually been adapted to the heroines of the Red Library novels. Readers needed female characters they could identify with, real-world figures with similar problems. Due to the liberation from social conventions and sexual revolution in the 1960s, wider opportunities opened up for women. Their desires and imaginations became feasible, and women also gained freedom in their own sexuality and intimacy, which was reflected not only in the storylines but also in the style of writing of the authors. These aspects conditioned the gradual separation of the so-called erotic novel.

As we mentioned above, the transformation processes that allowed the change in the social position of women were also reflected in art and literature. A new type of author has been gradually created and legitimized with their own language, stylization and a different identity in the masculine world. The identity of an individual, in our case the writer, is formed via the interaction of relationships between individuals.

It is formed through contact with others and, in particular, through their ideas of ourselves “... her person is not a statue sculptured by one man [...] it is she herself who creates different sculptures, although inspired by the efforts of [...] other people” (Čermák, 2001, p. 82). The expression of our own identity, which we present, not only ostentatiously, but also by verbalizing, is another aspect. In this context, the Czech psychologist Ivo Čermák (2001, p. 85) talks about narrative identity, which can be the result of the ongoing process of creating one’s own story, and confrontation with the stories of others and the myths present in culture. “Narrativity unites the different *me* aspects” (Čermák, 2001, p. 85), “... we are the stories that we tell about ourselves” (McAdams, cited in Čermák 2001, p. 85). The transformations that enter into the narrative of one’s own individuality are also reflected in the identity of the author, who has an even greater freedom in the creation of different identities, not only of their own. The personality of a female author is often reflected in the creation of characters, influenced by the various circumstances of her own existence within the social and cultural reality that she lives in. On the other hand, the female author must also cope with the linguistic representation of her world, which is influenced by the reproduction of stereotypes. American writer Erica Jong speaks in this respect in *Fear of Flying* (2015, p. 147): “So I learned about women from men. I saw them through the eyes of male writers. Of course, I didn’t think of them as *male* writers. I thought of them as *writers*, as authorities, as gods who knew everything and were to be trusted completely. ... it implied my own inferiority.”

In particular, the female feminists, who came up with the *écriture féminine* concept, drew attention to the issue of female writing. From this point of view, the feminine way of writing expresses what it means to be not only a woman in terms of her own nature but an implication of a culture that has created some form of femininity. The problem of a

female author is, in particular, the limitation of the phalocentric order of language – male symbolism (Wright, 2003, p. 12-13). This aspect has led to a focus on “... the problematic emphasis on the female body and maternal body, writing from the body which renews for women the difference that is denied to them in the phalocentric discourse” (Wright, 2003, p. 13).

Policy of power (patriarchy), gender strategy

Male superiority in society is also reflected in the thematization of the relationships between men and women. Relationship structures are not only a matter of mutual interaction and the influence of society, but also a matter of imaging through artistic artefacts, including literary art. Pleasure, freedom and individuality are the most prominent factors of media reality projected into everyday life. Male symbolism, which created the public space and is reflected in society in all its aspects, constituted and legitimized itself by its own tools of power.

In this context, we follow the concept of French philosopher and cultural theorist Michel Foucault, who analyses power relations through contradictory strategies, including sexuality. Their common intersections are found to be “transversal” struggles, which aren’t limited to one country. The struggles are the manifestations of power as such (uncontrollable power over man, the human body, etc.). These are “immediate” struggles, as they criticize instances that act directly on individuals and do not seek the “principal” but the closest enemy (Foucault, 1991, p. 45-47). The main objective of these defiances is the technique, the form of power. It is this power that applies to the everyday life of an individual and forms him into an entity.

Foucault perceives the subject on two levels: “... as a subject to someone else through control and addiction”, and “... tied to his own identity through consciousness and self-knowledge” (Foucault, 1991,

p. 47). Society claims power over an individual by constructing the categories of sexuality, gender and sex, attributing a certain position in society to him. According to Foucault: "Sexuality has become the subject of a relationship between the state and the individual, a subject that is public" (1999, p. 34). The body became the means of the exercising of the power of the state, whether it was its sexuality or gender representation.

In this context of determining one's own individuality based on social norms, Foucault speaks of creating a "biopower" over the individual, his body and identity. The state has exercised its sovereign power over the survival of intimacy and sexuality of individuals through a complex structure of institutions. The body, which we could perceive as neutral, acquires political importance in society. The body is reflected upon similarly by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu: "The social world constructs the body as a sexually defined reality and as the depository of sexually defining principles of vision and division" (2000, p. 13). In this sense, the body can act as a cultural sign that defines imaginary meanings, and at the same time creates them.

The French philosopher and sociologist Gilles Lipovetsky points out: "It is then that we are entering a postmodern culture [...] when delight and stimulation of senses become the prevailing values of ordinary life. [...] postmodernism is the democratization of hedonism, the universalized consecration of the New, the triumph of anti-institutionalism and the end of the divorce between the values" (2003, p. 144). Sexuality began to conceal two paradoxes – to some extent it still remains a taboo, but on the other hand it has become a required part of everyday life. Private intimate experience in a relationship on one hand, "sexualisation" of almost every area of life on the other, the daily presence of erotic and sexual subtext in media images. The body has become a commodity. The constant presence of physicality is backed by desire, sexuality, impudence and lust.

Intimacy, the body, sex as a commodity

The human body was “... an opportunity created by culture and realized during human interactions” (Turner, cited in Bauman 2006, p. 68). In the 19th century the body was considered to be an economic stake, where the male body provided work and the female body was the instrument of reproduction – the maternal body. Today, the body is not just a representative of the workforce and the ability to give birth. According to Foucault, socially constituted sexuality acquires power over the body and individual. At the same time, sexuality is perceived as the source of an individual's identity and a way of recognizing his identity. British sociologist Anthony Giddens perceives sexuality as building different lifestyles. “It is something each of us ‘has’, or cultivates, no longer a natural condition, [...] sexuality functions as a malleable feature of self, a prime connecting point between body, self-identity and social norms” (2012, p. 25). Similarly, the Slovak psychologist Gabriel Bianchi is referring to the British sociologist Jeffrey Weeks “... In the times of late modernity the lifestyle has become a subject of choice, which includes all dimensions of sexuality and intimacy – sexual identity, sexual orientation, age and mode of reproduction, the type of family, partnership, housing...” (2013, p. 7). Bianchi points to the most frequent metaphors of sexuality and sexual identity, which are: “... (self) discovery, construction, embracing, social practice, fiction, narratives, roles, scripts, performance” (2013, p. 8). These terms are combined by their crucial importance for the self-constitution of a human. He relies on the criticism of new individualism by Weeks, which is summarized in two points. The first point is the mentality of managerial colonization of private everyday life adapted to new forms of sexuality.

... erotica is manipulated by performance optics (fordistic sexuality), imaginativeness is pushed out by market offer,

taylorization (segmentation) of sexuality is driven by dominance of consumption, and capitalist values penetrate deep into intimate life, colonize intersubjective processes and inevitably transform the world of sexuality. The relationships are defined on the contract platform (prenuptial agreements), dating shifts to the principle of self-advertising through marketing of relationship values. A form of complex commercialization of intimate life is in progress. (Ibid., p. 8)

In the second point, he criticizes hedonistic values as the foundations of contemporary individualism, which is the cause of the “dissolution of human relationships”, “... private life is primarily a source of comfort and enjoyment – it is a space of emotional isolation in which the resources/properties are replaced by emotional relationships” (2013, p. 8). The individual abandons his bundles and commitments; his goal is the volatile enjoyment of pleasures and consumption of bodies which creates exciting and ecstatic experiences.

Intimacy is a personal experience each of us has, therefore it has become an effective medium for pop culture. Through intimacy we objectively reflect what we perceive as personal, in terms of world-view, sexuality, taste. This kind of personal intimacy becomes a public issue that causes embarrassment for recipients, as there is still some taboo in everyday communication. On the other hand, the recipient receives the assurance that it is a natural part of everyday life. Sociologist Zygmund Bauman says that “The postmodern body is above all a consumer of experience. It consumes and digests experiences. It is a tool of pleasure because it uses the natural ability to respond to stimuli” (2006, p. 78-79). Such a body must be powerful in terms of perception and ability to respond, absorb pleasure, whether sexual, gastronomic, visual, or other.

Explicit body imagery, sexual enjoyment, intercourse, as well as discourse about sexuality, have become paradoxical. They represent a highly intimate act between partners and on the other hand they are publicly displayed through words and images in the pornography industry. Thus, sex, sexuality, and intimacy have become public affairs, and in Foucault's view they are subordinated to power structures that are able to display them themselves. It is "... public sexuality that presents the (female) body to be consumed" (Lišková, 2009, p. 17).

As the Czech sociologist Martin Fafejta also points out, "... a patriarchal society often perceives sexuality, at least externally, as sexual subjugation or even the conquering of a woman by a man. Institutions of heterosexuality call upon women to be kind, beautiful, etc., and thus become the subject of men's desire" (2002, p. 597). We see the consumption of the female body par excellence especially in pornography which has been referred to by feminists as "expressive sexually explicit materials that subordinate women through pictures and words" since the 1980s (Lišková, 2009, p. 11), and they see in it a cause of male violence against women as well as their unequal status in society.²

In the media and audiovisual sphere women are introduced into a system of masculine symbology that controls language and image code. The British film and cultural theorist Laura Mulvey says: "Woman then stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning" (1999, p. 804). Negative connotations in female portrayal are implied mainly through pornography and can be tracked at several

² We are aware of the need for pornography for the reflection of society; precisely through the visualization and verbalization of sexual practices we can distinguish deviant sexual behaviour or sexual behaviour disorders.

levels. Detected issues include “objectification (women are depicted and perceived as objects), dehumanization (women are depicted and presented as less than human), humiliation and degradation (women are portrayed as if they enjoyed the humiliation and found it sexually exciting), violence and sexual assault (sexual assault on women is seen as normal, acceptable, and even pleasant to women), inequality (sexual relations depicted in pornography are based primarily on female subordination and male domination)” (Lišková, 2009, p. 19).

Transformation of sexual scripts

Based in particular on the positions of social constructivism of sexuality and identity of an individual, we will outline the theory of sexual scenarios by sociologists John H. Gagnon and William Simon: “Scripts are involved in learning the meaning of internal states, organizing the sequencing of specifically sexual acts, decoding novel situations, setting the limits on sexual responses and linking meanings from nonsexual aspects of life to specifically sexual experience” (cited in Wiederman 2015, p. 7). They add further: “Scripts are a metaphor for conceptualizing behavior within social life. Most of social life most of the time must operate under the guidance of an operating syntax, much as language is a precondition for speech. For behavior to occur, something resembling scripting must occur on three distinct levels: cultural scenarios, interpersonal scripts, and intrapsychic scripts” (cited in Wiederman 2015, p. 7).

Cultural scenarios are formed by a general social institution in terms of rules, formulas, schemes and a system of sanctions. They serve to predict and interpret actions, and at the same time to determine what is perceived as sexuality. Simon and Gagnon point out: “As important as sexual cultural scripts are, they are not synonymous with sexual behaviour.... cultural scenarios are rarely entirely predictive

of actual behavior, and they are generally too abstract to be applied in all circumstances” (cited in Wiederman 2015, p. 8). They function in a plane of unconsciousness – “Types of schemes used to organize our experiences, which usually consist of sets of stereotypical actions” (Fafejta, 2014, p. 155). On the basis of a heteronormative understanding, we can speak of a legal definition, religious understanding, and thus a subordination to institutional forms.

Interpersonal scripts are based on applying cultural scenarios to specific situations. On the basis of general scenarios, partners create their own, more specific, more subjective preferences. They create complementary scenarios to the cultural ones; their form must be negotiated in a relationship. Plurality is a typical feature of them. In case of both partners’ agreement, there may also be different sexual practices that do not occur in the cultural scenario but provide satisfaction for partners.

Intrapsychic scripts represent the most intimate scenarios – individual fantasies about the sexual life of an individual. Even in this case we talk about socially conditioned ideas; we can only have ideas that occur in society at least partially. Michael Wiederman, an American psychologist, adds: “... intrapsychic scripts represent the particulars of each individual’s unique sexuality, including those aspects that cannot be formed into words” (2015, p. 8).

In a specific way cultural scenarios also form sexuality-related emotions that form the basis for interpersonal scenarios. Fafejta states: “Intrapsychic scenarios do not only set personal preferences but also the sexual identity as a whole, because no forms of identity, for which there are no intrapsychic scenarios, can exist” (2014, p. 156). However, these are based on cultural and interpersonal scenarios and are confirmed through them.

Simon and Gagnon in their hypotheses also disagree with Sigmund Freud; they don’t reflect his thoughts on the constant conflict between

the cultural notion of sexuality and natural instincts. Based on the aforementioned socially constructed levels of sexual scenarios Simon and Gagnon oppose Freud's theory. They focus on mutual social and biological conditionality. In relation to interdependence, Roy F. Baumeister and Tyler Stillman identify the erotic plasticity, which they define as "... the degree to which the sex drive is shaped by social, cultural, and situational factors. High plasticity means that the sex drive is highly amenable to such influences, whereas low plasticity suggests indifference or even immunity to such sources of influence" (2006, p. 1). Giddens's theory of "plastic sexuality" (2012, p. 10-11) is based not only on the emancipation in the relationship, but also in the claim of a woman to sexual pleasure. "Plastic sexuality is a decentralized sexuality, free of the need for reproduction" (2012, p. 10). His perception liberates the experiencing of female sexuality and intimacy as an autonomous right that is not bound by the demands of society in relation to the natural role of a woman in it.

However, the scenarios are not gender-equal; the sociocultural distribution of sex is recorded in the sexuality. "According to the theory of sexual scenarios, sexual interactions are not accidental, nor are they the result of individual strategies of the individuals involved. ... These scenarios include situational meanings, behaviors of the participants and the arrangement of interactions determined by interpersonal³ scenarios that are culturally available and are learnt interactively" (Marková, 2012, p. 123). Simon and Gagnon talk about shifts in the content of the scenarios. For the paradigmatic society,

³ For more see: Marková, Dagmar. 2012. O sexualite, sexuálnej morálke a súčasných partnerských vzťahoch. p. 124. There is a limited number of interpersonal scenarios; for heterosexual interactions there are at least two: female and male. A male scenario tells the man how to behave in a situation, what is his role and what behaviour to expect from a woman. The same principle applies to a female scenario.

cultural scenarios dominated with a limited repertoire of “ritualized improvisations” (Fafejta, 2014, p. 160).

In the post-paradigmatic society, additional scenarios become acceptable to the wider public. The tolerance towards non-traditional intrapsychic and subsequently interpersonal scenarios is increasing, which has a direct impact on the changing of cultural scenarios. The social interactions of partners are associated with sex scenarios where a wide range of individual perceptions are revealed. This openness is also caused by the erasing of the stereotyped view of female sexuality and its determination for reproduction. Despite the liberalization of female sexual activity in the cultural scenarios, awareness of its negative assessment by society remains. Simon talks about the possible characterization of paradigmatic society in terms of sexual lack; on the contrary, post-paradigmatic is manifested by sexual surplus. “Sex is no longer considered to be that important and serious, sexuality actually becomes vapid” (Fafejta, 2014, p. 163).

Literature is one of the means of reflecting social structures, including human relationships, predominantly relationships between men and women in view of the heteronomical cultural framework of our society. As Jong writes (2015, p. 27) “In the whole history, books were written by sperm, not by menstruation blood”.

Interpretation of selected “red library” novels

As we have pointed out, intimacy and sexuality are parts of an individual and also public reality that is formed not only by individuals but also by society. The responses of society and its institutions to changes in the intimate and sexual sphere are the subject of the public discourse on sexuality, the relaxation of female intimacy and the personal enjoyment of one’s own pleasure. Different attitudes to our own sexuality and sexual relationships result from the impact of cultural scenarios and

our individual application on particular interactions. All these aspects can also be observed in literature. We will interpret the relationship interactions in which the main heroines of the selected works find themselves, with respect to their own identification and awareness of their sexual aspirations.

The novel *Fear of Flying* by Jong⁴ was originally published in 1973; a Slovak translation became available only in 1992. The novel received a contradictory reception for the way it depicted female sexuality, but it has made its way into the list of important works of the second wave of feminism. It is a young woman's confession about her own life, exploring herself and her sexual aspirations. The work blends citations of famous literary works, elements of psychoanalysis, a considerable sarcasm on the part of the narrator and consistent descriptions of situations and feelings of the main heroine. In searching for herself and her place in the world she finds herself in a relationship triangle, between a husband and a lover. Her husband directs her and creates her background but fails to fulfill her sexual aspirations. The work presents the disunity of the main character in perception of herself. Despite the proclamation of self-emancipation and independence, she acknowledges... "I simply couldn't imagine myself without a man. Without one, I felt lost as a dog without a master; rootless, faceless, undefined" (2015, p. 78).

Isadora is a character who is looking for a way to harmonize real life and her ideas. She replaces unattainability with intercourse and a certain hedonism. "He was so beautiful lying there and his body smelled so good. I thought of all the centuries in which men adored women for their bodies while they despised their minds. [...] that was how I so often felt about men. Their minds were hopelessly befuddled, but their bodies were so nice. Their ideas were intolerable, but their

⁴ American writer and poet became famous for this work in particular.

penises were silky. I had been a feminist all my life ... but the big problem was how to make your feminism jibe with your unappeasable hunger for male bodies” (2015, p. 88).

“... I’m like the girl in *Story of O*.⁵ I want to submit to some big brute” (2015, p. 126). Her character is an example of a woman’s inclination and desire for a certain form of conquest, which is exciting to her and, to a certain extent, also liberating.

Fifty Shades of Grey by E. L. James was published in 2011, and in Slovak in 2012, as the first part of a trilogy of romantic-erotic novels. It describes a Cinderella-like tale involving a student, Anastasia Steel, and a young billionaire, Christian Grey. Thanks to the massive number of books sold, some BDSM practices have been brought to the wider public awareness. The colloquial language, storyline and unsurmountable differences will resolve themselves during the saga. Based on selected extracts, we want to point out the sexual scenarios that were implemented from the intrapsychic scenario (Christian Grey) not only to the interpersonal (Christian and Anastacia), but also to the cultural expansion of the reader’s audience. “It’s the same, the smell of leather, citrus-scented polish, and dark wood, all very sensual. My blood is running heated and scared through my system – adrenaline mixed with lust and longing. It’s a heady, potent cocktail. Christian’s stance has changed completely, subtly altered, harder and meaner. He gazes down at me and his eyes are heated, lustful... hypnotic” (2011, p. 379).

“We aim to please, Miss Steele,’ he murmurs. ‘Come.’ He takes my elbow and moves me to beneath the grid. He reaches up and takes down some shackles with black leather cuffs. ‘This grid is designed so

⁵ It is a legendary erotic novel that portrays various kinds of interpersonal and intrapsychic scenarios, in which we find the desire of a woman for the absolute conquest of a man or of more men. In the case of the main heroine, we can also speak of a sexual slave who fills her own sexual desires.

the shackles move across the grid. ‘We’re going to start here, but I want to fuck you standing up. So we’ll end up by the wall over there. ‘He points with the riding crop to where the large wooden X is on the wall. [...] This is beyond fascinating, beyond erotic. It’s singularly the most exciting and scary thing I’ve ever done. I’m entrusting myself to a beautiful man who, by his own admission, is fifty shades of fucked up” (2011, p. 383- 384).

In the story of Anastasia, who does not want to give up her own freedom and autonomy in favour of a dominant partner, we see subordination to his aspirations in the end. Behind the sacrifice of Christian’s sexual preferences to rescue their relationship, there are the hidden opportunities for the exciting experiences he offers. In the end, she tends to be more subjected to his desires in which she finds her own satisfaction.

Sexual practices that have been respected only within some closed group have been discussed and supported by the mainstream audience. Despite the numerous criticisms of the literary level of the work, it is a sign that the verbalization of the idea of female sexuality and intimacy is shifting, or is kept at a relatively high level. Hidden and tabooed ideas of women regarding their own sexual desires are moving not only to the edges of pornography, but they also entered into the so-called “rape culture”⁶ *Fifty Shades of Grey* is one of the examples of not only producing a stereotypical thinking of women about their own submissiveness to a man, but also an element of “rape culture” ... “Rape culture includes jokes, TV, music, advertising, legal jargon, laws, words and imagery, that make violence against women and sexual coercion seem so normal that people believe that rape is inevitable. Rather than viewing the culture of rape as a problem to change, people in the rape

⁶ A society or environment whose prevailing social attitudes have the effect of normalizing or trivializing sexual assault and abuse. (Urban Dictionary, 2017)

culture think about the persistence of rape as just the way things are” (WAVAA rape crisis centre, 2017).

On the one hand, we have the feminist reflection of women trying to deconstruct and distort not only symbolic masculine power in heteronomic society, and on the other hand the production and reproduction of the images of female subordination, sexual desire, and their efforts to win male attention, which the works of the red library contain. In selected samples, we reflect the common character of the authors and their concepts – the subjugation of a woman to a man, the “search for an animal”, which seizes a vulnerable, though independent woman. In displaying female sexuality, the desire for a dominant man appears. Although the female heroines were emancipated, successful, independent and active, they remained controlled.

On the basis of selected literary examples, it is possible to see shifts in sexual scenes that society can accept and to a certain extent transform into wider interpersonal scenarios or even into the cultural context. The trivializing of some forms of violence against women is implicitly not only present in men’s behaviour towards women, but also in certain aspects of female subjectivity and the perception of their own individuality. The socially accepted plurality of our fantasies in the sphere of intimacy and sexuality is gradually moving into the interaction of male-female relationships. The constantly reflected problem of violence against women, abuse in pornography, their subordinate status to men, has been translated into stories of literary heroines as well as to the bedrooms of real women.

“Sexual liberalization, feminism and pornography point to the same goal: to build a barrier for feelings and hold them aside. It is the end of the sentimental culture, the end of happy endings and melodrama; a cool culture comes, where everyone lives in their own bunker of indifference, safe from their own and strange passions” (Lipovetsky, 2003, p. 104). Lipovetsky associates himself with Christopher Lash’s

claim that the fashion for sex, pleasure, autonomy, and spectacular violence has replaced sentimental happy endings (2003, p. 105-106). One of the causes is also the mass culture, which is saturated on one hand with images and texts full of sentimentality and unrealistic “fairy-tale” relationships, and on the other hand with real stories about the inability to make them happen.

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