






“Fluid” temporality: the conflict of gender and age in the postmodern socio-cultural context

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“Fluid” temporality: the conflict of gender and age in the postmodern socio-cultural context

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Abstract

Temporality, being an intrinsic property of the subject/object relations in the multiplicity of the socio-cultural and gender narratives, presents one of the most complicated ideas of postmodernity. The project of temporality embraces ambivalent scripts in their “momentous transition”, revealing the attempts at generalizing ages of men and women in the certain “unified” narratives. The latter is expressed in the triad paradigm of “past-present-future” with “present” as the dominating member. While conceptualizing binary oppositions, namely, the dualism “man/woman”, it is evident that nowadays the biological “intrinsic value” of the human being’s identity has become less relevant. The man/woman’s identity is not fixed anymore by anatomy, at present it is “fluid” with the time and age “shifts” of femininity and masculinity. The decentering “situation”, having transformed the temporal aspects of man/woman’s value in the social practices and corresponding narratives, nowadays demands their valorizing by means of the conceptual impact on the transformations of the “liquid temporality”.

Keywords: postparadigmatic shifts, temporality concepts, corporal mutations, gender identification.

Introduction

The question of the postmodern theoretical impulse on the complexities of the individual as an actor cannot be overestimated in the social and cultural production at the end of the XXth – the beginning of the XXIst centuries. The result of the “post”-postmodern problematization of the “Theory” is defined in terms of uncertain notions: cultural, social, historical, racial, ethnical, gender discourses, which seem to be production-specific in the various contexts. The dialectical nature of postmodernism is excellently defined by F. Jameson (2009), who writes that “the theory seems

necessarily imperfect or impure owing to its own “contradiction”, which can be accounted for the supposition that the postmodern theory in itself is the effort to take the temperature of the age” (p. XI). Some decades ago attempts at theorizing Man or Woman were as a rule connected with the “new” social order of the postindustrial society: nowadays the branches of the social sciences are an “inescapable” part of the Theory. Moreover, the new social order imposes new demands and “loads” upon individuals in their everyday life. Consequently, individuals’ responses are not compulsory, people’s experiencing their lives is increasingly manifold, which is reshaping the vision of the past and the future with the simultaneous interpretation of the present. In Z. Bauman’s opinion (2013) we are experiencing re-distribution of the social forces of the contemporary world, the latter represents the unstructured and under-defined fluid state of the immediate setting of the life politics. Postmodernity and postmodernism have demolished the linear character of the philosophic vision, in general, and its classical interpretation of time, in particular.

The theme of time and the conceptual spheres of the temporality have always been greatly interesting both for intellectuals and for “ordinary” people, first and foremost because of the finiteness of the human life: Chronos has always inspired awe and horror in the human souls. Time and temporality have been presented for ages as one of the most vitally significant paradigms, however, the “postmodern turn” is marked by the emergence of the “postparadigmatic condition”. W. Simon explains the difference between the paradigmatic and the postparadigmatic with a stress on the notion of the “shared meanings”:

Paradigmatic contexts are those that realize a high degree of consensual meanings... Postparadigmatic contexts are those where the seamless integration of consensual meanings begins to dissolve. Appearing in pluralized forms...even the most familiar aspects of social life become sites for conflicting or alternative options. (Simon, 1996, p. 9).

It should be noted that one more feature of the “postparadigmatic condition” seems to be evident: it is an effort to connect postmodern humanities (literature, arts, music, cinematography, etc.), politics, ideology and the science (physics, biology, chemistry, etc.). The effect is a kind of ambiguity of terms and concepts in the metalanguage of the science, and in this very uncertainty of conceptualization the notions of temporality and gender are reflected in the discourses of great postmodernists who have been obsessed with the “language of philosophy” and the “philosophy of language”.

The new postmodern cultural trends have been expanding the borderlines, which existed for centuries. On the other hand, the “telos” of philosophers is the same: searching, fixating and keeping senses for the legitimization of the human being whether we acknowledge it or not, we cannot erect the “arches” of postmodern philosophy without the universal concepts and notions.

In these terms “the universal” means “creating” concepts: “the philosopher is an expert in concepts as in the lack of them” (West-Pavlov, 2012, p. 3). If we put under analysis “temporality”, “gender” and “age”, it is obvious that this triad excites many conceptual questions.

In the classical philosophy of Aristotle time is declared to be a linear progression of the past, the present and the future, and that “interpretation of time” – as Aristotle puts it, – had been common till the XXth century when philosophers began to “interpret” time in the ways other than

the linear order (E. Husserl, M. Heidegger, G. Deleuze, F. Derrida et al.). The psychoanalysis of Z. Freud and J. Lacan contributed much to the conceptual production of time, temporality and gender; by all means, it is necessary to accentuate F. Nietzsche's role as well (West-Pavlov, 2012, p. 4).

Theorists claim, that in terms of the "historical narrative" it is F. Nietzsche's eternal "the same" that lays at the foundation of the postmodern theoretical structure of temporality. His followers called in question many assumptions about humanity and time, e. g. P. Ricoeur (1990) opposed time with the idea of incommensurability between historical and natural time, and that idea to "split the time" into multitudes of incompatible heterogeneous concepts is quite in the mainstream of postmodernism. It should be mentioned that R. Barthes' "the death of the author" implicitly touched upon temporality in terms of the "metalanguage". At the beginning of the XXIst century temporality mainly concerns the ways, in which the sequence of events, a kind of history is physically experienced by those who live in the corresponding "narratives", so the content-oriented problems cannot be excluded and that is where the research into the narratology becomes very important. As for the existentialistic tradition, "temporality" of the human being is opposed to the factor of the "estranged" abusive suppressing time (Boldachev, 2011). The perception of time and temporality has undergone significant changes since the 70s of the last century and is still in the process of its transformation (Cherkun, 2016). As a rule, scientists accentuate that temporality as an intrinsic feature of the object/subject relations presents one of the most complicated and inspiring ideas of postmodernity (Rovelly, 2018).

The perception and experience of time is often considered as an example of dichotomies, a principle of dualism (Atmanspacher & Ruhnau, 1997, p. 2); though there arise problematic objections: time is in itself a vivid example of the triad paradigm, which is represented in philosophy, theology, linguistics, generally speaking, in culture, while temporality is a member of binary oppositions. Though there exist different approaches to the deconstruction of dualities we adhere to J. Derrida's claim (2007) that the "contradiction" of the binary oppositions should be "solved by means of the third member" (p. 52). In the context of this paper it is important to accentuate, that in "temporality" the dichotomy principle does not operate per se. It is worth recollecting that though the basic classical opposition "male-female" was considered one of the main cultural oppositions till the 70s of the last century, the idea of the "third sex" is culturally ancient and well-presented in both science and arts.

Feminism is often presented in its "post"-postmodernism era with the characteristic feature of two separate domains: theory and practice. However, since practice cannot take place without connecting itself to some theory, this supposition rises the questions of politics, institutions and genders, moreover, it rises the questions of the "universal" categories in feminism, in fact, the alternative gender projects are often labelled "postfeminist" (Friedan, 1993).

The latter is significant in the context of the conceptual spheres of time and temporality, because gender researchers ask a key question: "Does the transgender age herald the end of gender as we know it?" The dichotomy of mind and body claimed that there was some inner truth of gender, which the body expressed. The denial of that historical presumption makes the bodily "expressions" and "acts" within the "stream of time" different. Continuous changes in the human experiences create unevenly intense level of stress not only for different genders but also for

different age groups in the binary opposition of “male-female”. The first researchers who paid attention to this factor were the famous S. de Beauvoir and B. Friedan. The author of the revolutionary “The Second Sex” never positioned herself as a feminist, and it is more relevant to refer to the impact of B. Friedan on the problem of women, time and age. The outstanding scientist showed in her greatly influential “The Feminine Mystique” (1963) that the egalitarian marriage is a combination of equity and equality, which in many ways was a response of the young women to the previous age standards. Quite soon it became evident that the “fountain of age” performs differently for men and women, and B. Friedan (1993) gave a thorough investigation of the “age” in the beginning of the 90s. Most of the key issues in her work are connected with the traditional feminist theory (“sex roles”, “changes in the aging process of men and women”, the definition of women in terms of their sexual relation to men” etc., others place the problem of age as temporality in a broad cultural context linking it with the transformations in the male/female identities: “additional” years of human life, a new age dimension that has emerged recently, medical advances, illusions and expectations” of the youth and the old, “the real infirmities of age. The “final analysis” opens the door to the “new possibilities” and new directions in our life experience of time and temporality.

Cultural scenarios that exist at the level of the collective life and individual experiences are being transformed essentially, though not with equal speed and adequate understanding. Social contexts in their changing “landscapes” make people become involved in creating the new dimensions of temporality through their experience of “age models” imposed by pop-culture and mass media. The imposed reflexivity both transforms the surrounding social world and enhances individuation. Nowadays the issues of the old dichotomies and the new ones can be considered key issues among many others in the postmodern socio-cultural contexts.

Review of the recent publications

Social sciences have been known to be accompanied by inevitably “unresolved relations” between the classical metaphysical tradition and natural science. B. Steiger writes that researchers should weave together the investigation of the empirical sciences in the coherent whole with the result of the vivid vision of the human nature. The problem is that an individual is not simply absorbed by the social space, he/she is “turned around” in the processes of the socially structured time. Time, in its turn, is identified with “the processes of social changes, which code scripts of the everyday life situations and metanarratives of life (Kerimov, 2007, p. 20). In order to propose a new approach to history and historical notions, postmodern scientists had to rethink the issue of time (G. Deleuze, M. Foucault, J.-F. Liotard, M. Bergson et al.). G. Deleuze (2011) declares that past, present and future are not parts of the “timeness”, they form two equal and simultaneously excluding each other notions: on the one hand, it is always the limited present (Chronos), on the other, – the unlimited past and future (Eon) (p. 92). M. Heidegger (2001) asserts that temporality is a term used when we comprehend it as proceeding from the assumption of its timeness: when timeness functions as such kind of condition, we call it temporality (p. 364).

Nowadays temporality both as a concept and a term is so widely used that it is often applied as a kind of “general” notion in postmodern studies of culture, philosophy, sociology, literary criticism, linguistics, gender studies, etc. (Huehls, 2009; Baetens, Bru, De Geest et al., 2016; Massey, 2015). Philosophers ask non-traditional questions, such as: what is the political value of

time in the context of postmodernity? They challenge the conventional characteristics of postmodernity as a period, in which authors reject time in favour of space as the primary category for organizing experience and knowledge (Huehls, 2009). The relations between gender and temporality are rather complicated. When the "end of gender" was announced, it meant a "trouble" for gender researchers: "Sex isn't what it is used to be – and neither, it would seem, is gender" (Chanter, 2007, p. 1). The proliferation of "gender" has challenged the concepts of both male and female identities; it is challenging the feminist cultural and political key issues. Gender researchers are in the "Zugzwang" position that makes them ask questions: Does gender precede sex, as some feminist theories have put it? Is there, after all, some incorporeal reality to gender, which is neither reducible to anatomy, nor to cultural or political norms? If transgendered individuals know their true gender, does this suggest that there is some third factor that explains femininity or masculinity? (Chanter, 2007, p. 2). As for feminists they seem to be in the temporal "Zeitnot": "Feminism has died, but I haven't yet" (Vlasova, Grabovska & Galitzka, 2018, p. 11). Feminists provide an example of the stereotype of the true woman, which was ruined conceptually by the political agenda in the second half of the XXth century, - at the beginning of the XXIst century it is the "project of the body", of the women's corporality, which is going into the foreground and which is measured by women's shapes, weight and age (Vlasova, Grabovska & Galitzka, 2018, p. 36). Glorifying a teenager' female image mass culture has contributed to the postmodern image of a female body. E. B. Freedman (2003) stressed that the extent to which women feel discontent with their physical appearance is already evident in adolescence: "In the contemporary United States over half of the thirteen-year-old girls and three-quarters of the eighteen-year-old girls express dissatisfaction with their bodies" (p. 211). The beautiful body as it is presented in consumer culture on the whole and in "fashion Babylon", in particular, is an image of an extremely thin (size 0) and extremely young (15-17) girls.

Madonna is known to be a postmodern icon of the 80s, at that time Madonna was the "cyber-model of the New Woman" (Appignanesi & Garratt, 2006, p. 145), presenting new sexuality. Nowadays Lady Gaga is the "post"-postmodern icon for the generation of millennials. The scientists ask the question: do irrationalist attempts of Lady Gaga have the only aim to transform feminism into new images and symbols? J. Helberstam (2013) analyses Gaga's gender, Gaga's sexualities as "the end of normal": in fact, the researcher asserts that Lady Gaga is a symbol for a new kind of feminism with her power as a queen of media manipulation, a loud proclamation of different "arrangements" of sex, sexualities and – by all means – age.

Touching upon "the future of feminism", scientists analyze this topic in the context of the "potential instability" of existing forms of social systems. S. Walby (2013) puts a stress on the idea that "changes in gender inequality have been moving in a different direction from that of class inequality... Gender inequalities have been slightly declining while those of class inequality have been increasing (p. 161). There occurs a term "the fourth wave" feminism. P. Chamberlain (2017) claims that the "wave narrative" is not likely to cause disagreement; the difficulties, which this new wave narrative have arisen, are closely connected with the feminist discourse, more specifically to tell "stories" – including "histories" about time and temporality (p. 5). Researchers speak about the "near obsession with time of the feminists who want first to free woman from a compulsory "natural order of time" and then to free narratives from the "time constraints". It is worth mentioning such a feature as the tension between experience and the conceptualization of time,

which reflects antimony of the “subjective” first-person accounts and “objective” traditional science views (Arstila & Lloyd, 2014). We cannot but accentuate the interdisciplinary perspectives on the features of the gender-subjective time, “temporality” in epistemology, in literary criticism, anthropology, psychoanalysis, linguistics, history, etc. And then it is necessary to point to the postmodern tendency to split time into multitudes of mutually incompatible heterogeneous concepts of temporality (Rovelly, 2018).

Methodology and interdisciplinary studies: permanence and change

This paper is methodologically grounded on the complex application of different methods and scientific approaches in the continuity of the “liquid modernity”. We must pay a tribute to the postmodernists here, recollecting the famous words: “History is three-dimensional. It partakes of the nature of science, art and philosophy” (Hutcheon, 2001, p. 117). However, postmodernism and interdisciplinary dialogue present a disputable topic: the word “interdisciplinary” has become “a buzzword” in the postmodern studies. Scientists point out that the modern situation has created the context for a “battleground” among disciplines, which is illustrated in the debates among philosophy, psychology, cultural studies, literary criticism, gender studies, etc. On the other hand, the postparadigmatic character of today’s social conditions encourages academic freedom, creativity and interdisciplinary “open speaking”. However, Žižek, the “titan” of postmodernism, claims that “There is no such thing as an interdisciplinary relationship”. “There is no such thing” - is a deliberate allusion to Lacan’s famous words, which indicates the impossibility of two subjects’ positions, or disciplines to reach a union between them on account of the “inevitable remainder” left when each position attempts to communicate with the symbolic order (Day & Holloway, 2017, p. 64). Still the postmodern science affirms that the interdisciplinary approaches are not only beneficial but necessary: each discipline benefits from being in dialogue with other problematic fields. Of course, these ideas reflect the postmodern “axiom” of epistemological pluralism, which asserts that the methodological principles of objectivity are not in need as any subjective assumption can put a claim on the status of the universal theory.

However, underestimation of the methodological basis of the philosophic research is not justified: the historical approach cannot be related as the major outlook principle by the definition of the “common sense”. The comparative-historical method represents – as it has been representing for centuries – the movement from the common to the specific that is per se the movement of both reality and culture, thus representing a key to the interpretation of any phenomenon.

In the research of this article the methods of comparative-critical and interdisciplinary analyses are used with the methodological principles of hermeneutics, discursive analysis, poststructural approaches, the method of the conceptual reconstruction of the temporality and the philosophical ideas of the postmodernity. On the whole, we may say that the analytical method is realized in the given paper.

In the “postmodern turn” great attention is paid to the interpretative approaches, e.g. the discursive analysis (Simon, 2015, p. 64-82). The discursive analysis is one of the examples of the impact, mentioned above, keeping in mind the ways, by which scientists analyze the sociocultural objects. The hermeneutic method, used in this article, is based on the reconstruction of the “sense” of temporality and formation of the new conceptual meaning of temporality in postmodernism.

Interpretation being one of the key methodological approaches in the given paper is connected with the “hermeneutic turn”. J. D. Caputo (2013) writes: “The one word that I think best sums up the postmodern turn is “hermeneutics”, which means the theory of interpretation” (p. 200). The methods of phenomenology are very important while investigating temporality, because in this methodological plane E. Husserl analyzed the subject of the being, which influenced such great philosophers as J.-P. Sartre, M. Merlo-Ponti, P. Ricouer, J. Derrida, M. Bakhtin et al). The phenomenological method is considered here as addressing not the subjects in their being but constituting ways and modes of human beings in their consciousness. As for the phenomenological-existential version of methodology, the approaches to the texts are characterized by “human existence”, man’s/ woman’s experience, and the relation of the text under analysis to the real life, time and temporality. The deconstruction as a complex of approaches and techniques is applied here too. In gender studies critical approaches to the text “deconstruction” is one of the key terms, its specificity lies in discovering “traces of traces” of the previous discursive practices. “The interpretative turn”, asserting the gender oriented hermeneutic analysis of the society and the individual is one of the major methods applied in this paper.

Feminist methodology is represented as a kind of “borderline” among poststructural, cultural-historical, psychoanalytic, hermeneutic-phenomenological and some other methods. While analyzing gender relations, the dominating role is given to the constructivist methodology, gender interpretation of social roles and relations between men and women as sexes, which includes the place and roles of other genders and sexualities, which are present in the twenty-first century. These aspects of methodology are open to other theoretical spaces, but of primary significance is the fact that gender is considered to be socially and culturally constructed, and in this paper gender is represented as the methodology, which can be applied in the analysis of any culture in the different temporal periods of history.

All the methods and approaches given above are represented in this article, which permits the authors to give a detailed socio-cultural analysis of temporality and gender(s) in the postmodern context.

The postmodernization of temporality: gender, sexuality and the “mutations” of age

The impact of the temporality on the sexes and genders, its power over sexualities is tied to the extra-sexual significance of female/male identities making them dependent on the appropriate sociocultural context with the obligatory requirements to meet the demands of the dominating types of relationships.

The legacy of man/woman age, of the temporality of his/her life, previously assigned to people, has been changed recently though the degree, to which people are affected by the current postmodern transformations, may differ within societies. The “age” itself has become the “problem” because nowadays scientists cannot give it an epistemological definition. In this connection we have to turn to another “facet” of the problem: there is a difference in the lifespan of men and women in the western world and in Ukraine. As B. Friedan (1993) put it in her famous book, during the 20th century the age gap between women and men continued to increase. In America of the 1950s the gap was 5 years, in 1990s it was eight (p. 97). In 2019 the average life expectancy is stated to be 71,8 years in Ukraine, which is about 10 years less than in Western

Europe: The average lifespan of women was 78,5, men – 68,5 (https://www.liga.net/deathrate_ukraine). Nowadays when women less die in childbirth, the most dramatic divergence in the life expectancy of women and men is due to the differences of “lifestyles”. Again the latter touches upon the problem of gender identity. Nowadays women in Ukraine have their pension age increased from 55 to 60, still as a rule, Ukrainian women proceed to work – as long as they are able to work – in their professional fields; the reasons are not always in the scope of “self-worth”, the economic situation makes women stay in jobs to earn money: the average “age” pension for a woman who has worked 40 years as a teacher in the secondary school is about 3000 hrivnas (less than 100 euros); according to the official statistics, the average “age” pension in Ukraine is 3,413 hrivnas.

Strictly speaking, in Ukraine women have to work because 9 of 10 women after 60 are widows, as statistic data tell us, they are not able to live on their own pension.

For centuries the “definition” of the woman has been strictly biological, - professional, political, personal, sexual factors have not been taken into account, of primary significance has been their biological role as mothers. In the first decades of the XXIst century the absence of women’s childbearing function is no longer seen as the end of their sexual/ biological function, which previously meant the end of their definition as 100% human beings. There have been valid reasons: additional years of human life, breakthrough in deleting patriarchal cultural dichotomies, etc. Of importance is a great advance in medical and other sciences: with the appearance of test-tube babies and surrogate mothers, reproductive processes are no longer what they have been before. As T. Chanter (2007) puts it: “All you need is lots of money, lots of patience and lots of luck” (p. 1). Still the “historical narrative” of temporality is a complicated one, in postmodernity the intentions of “not very young” people have changed thanks to the rapidly developing technologies of cosmetology and pharmaceuticals.

For ages each generation has produced its own statement of temporality, its problems and priorities. Lately pressures for the liberation of women have been greatly transformed; “lifestyle feminists” proclaimed that feminism had given them the right to “have it all”, i.e. money, sex, fashion and “permanent youth”. On the one hand, some gender researchers state that “the woman’s question” is answered. On the other, - G. Greer (2007) claims that “in the year 2000 more men hate more women more bitterly than in 1970”, she concludes that “our culture is far more masculinist than it was thirty years ago” (p. 9). It may be accounted by many reasons and among them is the fact that women often struggle more successfully on the eternal battlefield of growing old. Traditionally in the patriarchal culture, – and still in today’ world – every woman knows that time “eats” her pretty flash and “drinks” her sexuality day by day. Women understand that to be successful in their professional carriers they must not look “old”. The fitness programs are a “must”, if a woman wants to look sexually active. Today’s granny does not look like a “white-haired lady in a shawl”, not only a woman’s face, a woman’s body is the “battlefield” where she fights for her future, and the results are impressive – with the factor of money taken into account. The most vivid examples are represented in the spheres of cinematography and show business. In France Cher (1946) is considered an “ever youthful version of female beauty”. Though her plastic surgery is “hyperbolic”, it is a fact that she is an “eternal” icon of mass-media. C. Deneuve (1943) – a French singer, model and producer, one of the greatest European actresses, is extremely active in her appearances on the screen in films, series etc., in 2019 she starred in the famous drama film “The

Youth" directed by M. Sorrentino. In Italy S. Loren (1934) who has won a great number of awards in her lifetime, in 2020 is again on the screen in the famous film "The life ahead". Gina Lollobrigida (1927), who was in international sex symbol in the 60s, in 2011 starred in "Box office 3D" by E. Greggio. Dame Helen L. Mirren (1946) is still a world-famous star, her latest works is in "Anna" (2019) – by L. Besson and "The Duke" (2020) by R. Mitchell. (Of course, this list can be much longer if other countries are included). It is necessary to mention that in cinematography men's struggle with "age" has had a significant public effect too, both at professionals and laymen levels. It cannot be scientifically valid if we do not add that it is not the effect of "beauty", it is rather representation of the fact that man is "always mentally and physically capable of great deeds (whatever); men are still "movers and shakers", ("music makers" included).

To provide some changes of temporal measurements with men-actors we may recollect the legendary "The Godfather" with the legendary "icon of man" - Marlon Brando starring in it. In 1972 when the film by F. F. Coppola was launched, Marlon Brando (1924), 48 years old, played the role of the aging patriarch of the mafiosi clan, and he was, in fact understood by public as an "aging actor". Nowadays Al Pacino (1940), who is 80, stars in the highly successful "Hunters" (2020), "Once upon a time in Hollywood" (2019), "The Irishman" (2019). Robert De Niro (1947) stars with no less success in the epic crime films, e.g. "The Irishman" (2019). Clinton Eastwood (1930) is in his 90s a world-recognized director and producer. "The Mule" is a 2018 crime drama film, produced and directed by C. Eastwood, who also plays the lead role there. All mentioned above shows how the "themes" and "modes" applied to the "text" of an aging person – both women and men have transformed since the last century. The transformations concern both visual and mental aspects, the representative example is B. Paton (1918-2020), the world famous scientist in the field of the electric welding, who was the President of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine till 2020 when he resided from the post at the age of 101 years old.

The "postmodern conditions" with their time and age shifts have influenced greatly the modus of identity and the principles of identification. Generally speaking, the problem of women's identity is nowadays put to a large "question mark". In philosophy and gender studies many postmodern researchers have done a lot of work trying to get away from some classical presupposition of the concept of identity.

Here it is worth recollecting the world-famous citation from W. Shakespeare's "As you like it": "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players, ...and one man in his time plays many parts – his acts being seven ages". It seems that Shakespeare's "parts" conceptually do not coincide with the social roles (gender, sexual or other), they are rather visual images of identities – time and age identifications. And Shakespeare is quite postmodern here, as it is one of the most striking features of postmodernism. Nowadays the visual "image" being a part of identity prevails in cultural aspects. Of course, the woman as a person has got a new definition – in her life she is still like a "flower" in H. Bergson's representations of time. By all means we have broken with the definition of age solely through the "psychological impairment on the discontinuities of women's lives" (Friedan, 1993, p. 98). We should admit that another Shakespeare's famous citation from "Romeo and Juliet" – "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet" is taken as a "key sentence" by many people of both sexes now, and many aging women – as well as men – do not want look like caricatures of their former young images in their advanced years. The problem is that all forms of denying one's age are a path to the pathetic trap. The kind

of escaping this trap can be found if we stop considering age as “decline from youth” – i.e. in the narrative of escapism: the story of how to escape the inescapable reality of becoming old. As A. C. Benson wrote “All the best stories in the world are but one story in reality, the story of escape. It is the only thing, which interests us all and at all times, how to escape” (Kaufman & Mack, 2007, p. 7). In the abundance of histories and narratives which exist in the lifetime of any person, which are remembered and kept or rejected and forgotten, the main narrative is always performed on the stage of time within the scenario of temporality. Our histories of temporality are “stories of differences” of our perception of the ways, in which we raise questions of gender and sexuality, subjectivity and individuation. By all means, it is simplistic to make generalization concerning “ages” of man or woman. However, the impact of the current “human conditions” on the cultural, social, ideological dimensions of age cannot be ignored.

According to Z. Bauman (2013), in the “liquid modernity”, – which is his metaphor for postmodernity, – everything, which is solid, loses its stability, transforms its form and acquires the characteristics of the “fluid bodies”. In the “solid modernity” fluid bodies do not keep their forms for a long time, they are always ready to change their forms, that is why temporality is more important for them than space. In some sense solid bodies abolish time, for the liquids, – on the contrary – time is of paramount importance (p. 8). In the “liquid” postmodernity the “liquidity appreciation” plays an immense role, time does not relate with the “absolutes” and established values. The radical transformations of the postmodern life with the sociocultural discourses and narratives of “fluidity” reflect the stage of postmodernity when the “solid world” is conceptually ruined in the changing system of postparadigmatic relations.

Conclusion

Since the time of the antiquity the concept of “Ordo” as the main universal cosmological principle penetrated all the spheres of the human life for thousands of years. The decentering impulse of the postmodern perspective has altered not only the concept of time, but directly transformed the very experience of temporality: postmodern mutations of men/women’s life experience have reshaped both their visions of the past and of the present; postmodernism, in its turn, has deconstructed the concept and the vision of the ancient Chronos. The postmodern project of demolishing the classical temporality is being carried out outside the arena of the traditional “old age”, nowadays it is a question of specificity of the “psychobiographies” – socio-cultural psychological narratives.

From the epistemological point of view, the perception and experience of time represent a certain paradoxical situation: being an example of the “triad” paradigm, vividly represented in theology, linguistics, gender studies, it is often considered a paradigmatic sample of binary oppositions. Postmodern scientists (e.g. G. Deleuze) declare that past, present and future are not parts of the “timeness”. The lack of the epistemological definition of the “age” is stipulated by the fact that there is no abstract “metaphysical measurement” of the human age, – it is always relevant as an “intrinsic value” of men/women’s identity. The problem of the gender identity in the current male/female life span statistics is quite evident: dramatic divergence in the life expectancy of men/women is usually attributed to the women’s more positive “life style”. The women’s identity has also transformed recently due to the role of biological/ medical science: women’s biological childbearing function is not considered anymore as the end of their sexual life. The problem “at

stake" has many shades, both traditional and new ones: the "ancient issue" of the attitude to the woman's "looks" with the new component of "age" and its effects on the careers of politicians, showmen/women, actors/actresses, etc.

The characteristic feature is the fact that the borderline in the binary opposition "mind–body" has not changed greatly, though the principles of the women's identification have been transformed to a certain degree: the women's identity is not fixed anymore by anatomy and physiology, it is "fluid". In the abundance of the gender narratives, which have existed for ages and which are quite new in the mainstream theme of "how to escape". This fact shows that in the postmodern narratives of men/women's age, "value" states itself by means of that significant place, which body, sexuality and age occupy in them and in the "fluidity" of the "post"-postmodern transformations of the twenty-first century.

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