

A B S T R A C T S

Darja Zaviršek

DISCOURSES ON VIOLENCE AND HELP

Sociologist Darja Zaviršek, Ph. D., is a senior lecturer for anthropology and social work at University of Ljubljana School of Social Work, lecturer on community mental health and gender issues, and founder of Modra - Organisation for research and promotion of psycho-social needs of women.

The author surveys the fundamental principles of work with women experiencing violence and points out the following: understanding gender specific socialisation, the importance of information, the terminology used by the victim, empowerment, awareness that help to the women is at the same time help to their children, understanding the women's stories, making a plan for protection, etc. next, she deals with the knowledge needed by social workers in working with the abusers whose common characteristic is that they cannot empathise with the effects of their acts on their victims. The paper clarifies why work with women, children and abusers has been neglected in social work, and tries to find an answer to why violence is being performed, maintained and concealed. Following psychoanalytical feminist paradigm, the author attempts to bring into focus the identification of a child with the subject of desire who in the Western cultures is regularly the man, and introduces the concept of intersubjectivity the idea of which is to make either the man or the woman the subject of desire. This would fundamentally change gender specific knowledge and open up possibilities for new identity positions with regard to gender.

Andreja Čufer

WOMEN IN RELATION TO SPACE AND SOCIETY

Sociologist Andreja Čufer, M. A., is co-founder of Women's Counselling Office and Women's Centre and works on various non-governmental projects and actions related to women.

The term »women's spaces« does not only signify physical spaces such as rooms or houses; the space is here a category which signifies a possibility that a person steps out of the roles imposed by society. In our case it means the space in which a woman can brush off the roles and patterns she endures in her everyday life and attempt to find her identity. Regularly we find ourselves in situations in which we directly or indirectly receive messages that we are not what we think we are. The author's intention is to clarify what space is, what meanings and symbols determine it, which are its dimensions and how they are reflected in the wider social context. She also wants to show the relation between women and space: which spaces belong to women and what happens if women are found in the spaces to which they »by definition« don't belong. Furthermore, she tries to clarify why women so often operate in the dualism of negative and positive, good and bad. The different spaces assigned to women are often defined in contradictions. On the one hand, they are underscored, bereft of importance (housekeeping), while on the other hand they are glorified and worshipped (motherhood).

Silke Bercht

»BECAUSE I COULDN'T FIND ANY FOOD I'D LIKE« ON THE LOSS OF A FREEDOM

Social worker Silke Bercht works on theoretical questions concerning eating disorders and is a counselor in this field.

The paper analyses the specific forms of eating disorders as processes in which taking food and the related meanings represent the core of the subjective recognition of one's own needs and

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bodily representations. The body and taking or avoiding food are symbols by which the person articulates herself. The author presents the psychodynamic concept but also points out that eating disorders are a specific field of dealing with sexual differences and inequalities in the Western world. In this context, eating disorders are an imaginary form of solving conflicts in a gender specific dependent society. They are a strategy by which control over life is maintained. Women with eating disorders are presented as moving between two points of an arc which gives the body the position of the body as a »forgotten strangeness« (*vergesenste Fremde*), but it is also the field through which power is manifested (*Austragungsort der Macht*).

Vesna Leskošek

THEORY AND PRACTICE IN THE FIELD OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Social worker and pedagogue Vesna Leskošek, M. A., is manager of Youth Help Centre of Ljubljana Moste-Polje Social Work Centre.

In 1996, three books have been translated into Slovene on sexual abuse, and the year before an edition by various authors on violence and sexual abuse. In content and in the level of theoretical reflection, they differ considerably. The paper examines all four along the lines of the views, doctrines and practices they introduce. The practice of psycho-social services in this field is quite bad and often rather unacceptable to the victims. The reason for this situation is, beside the lacking system, a weak professional doctrine. The author compares the books on their definitions of sexual abuse, its causes, the goals of intervention, the means and the role of professionals. The differences are great and should be the object of more serious debate, particularly because of their effects upon the survivors of sexual abuse.

Mojca Urek

FROM FEMINIST SOCIAL ACTION TO FEMINIST SOCIAL WORK

Social worker and sociologist Mojca Urek, M. A., is assistant lecturer at University of Ljubljana School of Social Work and a member of Women's Counselling Association.

The paper displays several common practices of social services which are either insensitive to women's needs or more clearly sexist. Focusing on violence over women, which is perhaps the most acute feminist topic, the author suggests a few possibilities offered by the feminist theoretical framework and its rich social practice. She finds that even before the phrase »feminist social work« was introduced, the women's movement in Slovenia had for years been involved in social activities which opened a number of taboo topics and answered concretely to certain needs of women, inadequately covered or completely overlooked by traditional social work (family violence, rape, sexual abuse etc.). Besides, the feminist social actions practised in Slovenia are described.

Diana Jerman

A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S COUNSELLING OFFICE

Social worker Diana Jerman is head of the project »Šentmar - Help, Self-Help and Information on Mental Health« in Koper.

The paper presents the activities of Women's Counselling Office on the basis of a case study and a questionnaire from the first two years of that non-governmental organisation's practice. The work of Women's Counselling Office is based on the feminist perspective which brings a new dimension into counselling. The principles of the work are: total confidentiality of personal data, access free of charge, support to discriminated women. Besides, the concept of the Office includes the principle that both participants in the process of counselling have certain skills that they jointly use in solving problems.