

NOT YET EQUAL

REFLECTIONS ON EAST/WEST AND FEMALE/MALE IN A POLISH CONTEXT

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In 2001 I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in the Tri-City area (Trójmiasto, i.e., Gdańsk–Sopot–Gdynia) on the Baltic coast of Poland. My main research interest was constructions of femininity, and the “ways of being a woman” that were culturally available to young, urban, and highly educated women in Poland, more than a decade after the end of state socialism but before Poland’s accession to the EU.¹ As a complement to interviews with young women (and people close to them) and ethnographic observations, I collected written material including a number of short essays by students in the Scandinavian Studies program at the University of Gdańsk for a Swedish language test, on the topic of gender equality and feminism in Poland and Sweden.² Quotations from the essays will be used in this article to illuminate tendencies that emerged in the ethnographic material as a whole.

The aim of this paper is to discuss questions of normality, deviation from norms, and power relations through a selection of Polish student essays that address both gender relationships and the relationship between East and West. The working assumption is that theories of gender and the East–West relation can enrich each other and thus help achieve greater understanding of how both power systems work, individually, and combined.

In the essays, Poland is represented as a worse country in many respects than Sweden for women to live in. Polish society is described as less equal and more conventional than Swedish society, less modern and

more traditional. But the essay authors note that there is also a great deal that unites women in the two countries: they have similar interests and their position is in several ways subordinate to that of men. Sweden has come a long way toward gender equality, according to the students, but is not yet fully equal. Women in both countries have vigorously pursued higher education, but have yet to reach top-level positions in business and politics. Despite the similarities, it seems the disparities are assigned the greatest importance, or are the most interesting for the students. As well, these discussions are to a great extent structured in relation to what I call the transition discourse, that is, the growing Western European and American influence on Eastern Europe since 1989, wherein the West has taken on a status as the ideal and where the transition process, with its elements of neoliberalism and individualism, is considered the only possible path: a kind of linear evolutionism, if you will.

“The transition” was the term used in the social sciences to describe (first and foremost) the economic and political processes of the 1990s and early 2000s that changed the countries in East Central Europe from communist to capitalist.³ The rest of the world regarded the events as a transition, a passage from something foreign to something familiar. “The Others” were to become like “Us”. However, in the countries involved in these processes of change, transformation

seemed to be the preferred term.⁴ People living in Poland, the Czech Republic, or the former Soviet states perceived the events as a transformation of the existing society and not as a move from one society to another.⁵ Naturally, there has been a conceptual debate on this subject among proponents of terms that run the gamut from transformation to revolution, but the concept of transition has been predominant.⁶

I, too, use the notion of transition because it encompasses something more than mere description of the social reality in which the people of Poland and other former Eastern Bloc states have lived for a long time — and are still living in to some extent — since the events of 1989/1991. In addition, the concept captures a fundamental aspect of how the people in these countries perceive and are perceived by the outside world.⁷ It also shapes their self-image, since identities are cultural products that are always interwoven and reciprocal with prevailing social, political, and economic conditions in a given society at a given time.⁸ The endeavor to “become like Europe”, or like the West, has been so accepted in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe that it has essentially not been examined, and capitalism, neoliberalism, and individualism have emerged as indisputable values.⁹

I believe that the gender system — as described by historian Yvonne Hirdman — sorts, in the same way, women and men, feminine and masculine, into discrete categories wherein the masculine-connoted — such as traits, occupations, interests, activities, and places — is



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consistently more highly valued.¹⁰ The striving toward gender equality usually embraces this norm too: it is women — by learning in various ways to “be more like men”, to stand their ground, be more assertive, and so on — who are meant to enter male-dominated arenas in order to gain power, influence, status, and money. Hirdman illustrates this with the A-a and A-B formula: if men are uppercase A, women have historically been regarded as either an inferior version of A (“a”), or as essentially different (“B”).¹¹ The occupational structure, constructed according to a male norm, is one example. Since women, according to the dual logics of the gender system, separation and hierarchy, are not men, but are regarded as an inferior version, “lowercase a”, they do not advance as far in their careers as men. The resulting imbalance reinforces the view of women as less successful; hence they become so. The male norm in the occupational structure thus, to a great extent, makes working women into “lowercase a”, which manifests in pay disparities and the glass ceiling (as the invisible, embedded structures that make it difficult for women to achieve positions above a certain level is usually called; the corresponding opposite phenomenon for men is sometimes called the “glass elevator”, referring to how men are often afforded the conditions for rapid advancement within an organization), which contributes to reinforcing the “uppercase A” norm.¹² However, the difference between the gender system and the transition discourse is that in the context of gender, despite everything, there is a distinct and desirable separation of masculine and feminine, a horizontal sorting (A and B) that is utterly absent from the transition discourse (but existed to the highest degree during the Cold War, when East and West were to be kept apart, perhaps most clearly manifest in the Berlin Wall¹³). Instead there is only the A-a relationship between West and East: the goal has been to “become like the West”, that is, like the old EU countries or the United States. This is the discursive condition of the transition.

This imbalance is also something to which the young Polish women (and men) in the dissertation all relate. It becomes especially clear in comparisons with other countries, as in the student essays, where Swedish women are described as still being in a better position than Polish women. The situation is still not particularly good, even though women’s lives are starting to become more and more like they are in Sweden, the students argue. This evolutionary idea is reproduced by one young man:

We can be grateful that the lifestyle and economic circumstances are changing so fast in my country. Women’s opportunities

to study, to control their own lives, and to feel more independent are getting better. Although this text sounds mainly pessimistic, I also want to express my hope that in ten years I will be able to show that things are better for Polish women and that they can enjoy life as much as their women friends in Sweden.

In this student’s view, and that of the transition discourse, Poland is a “not yet” country, one that cannot yet measure up to Sweden and other EU countries, but will hopefully be able to soon. The “not yet” metaphor is used by many researchers who adopt a postcolonialist perspective. I have borrowed it from an argument by historian Dipesh Chakrabarty. He criticizes the way in which European models, categories, values, and concepts have emerged as universal and directly applicable to processes and conditions elsewhere in the world. He is particularly skeptical about European modernity and its linear evolutionist perspective on history and society, where Europe has taken the position as the crown of creation, while other countries are regarded as not yet developed and sophisticated enough — politically, economically, socially, and culturally.¹⁴ This analysis is also relevant to the post-socialist transition discourse and applicable to the relationship between East and West within the borders of Europe.

Western gender patterns — particularly Nordic or Swedish — are often presented as desirable role models and ideals. In her study of a Swedish development aid project in Romania, ethnologist Agnes Ers describes how the staff constantly reproduced the images of the “Swedish independent woman” in contrast to the “Romanian subjugated woman”, where the latter was considered in need of liberation from patriarchal structures and reactionary husbands. The Swedish model of gender equality was included among everything else the Swedish aid organization was supposed to teach the Romanians — explicitly or implicitly. With knowledge and the passage of time, the Other women would eventually become independent, just like Swedish women.¹⁵ Here again we find the notion of “not-yet”.

Chakrabarty opposes the historicism embedded in the idea of modernity which says “first in the West, and then elsewhere”.¹⁶ I believe that the former “Second World”, that is, post-communist East Central Europe, has been marginalized and patronized in a similar way to the countries in the so-called Third World. Eastern Europeans have been (and still are) regarded as backward and outmoded, as “not yet”. It became apparent

in my dissertation that this view has also been partially internalized by the people of these countries, such as the young Polish women I observed.¹⁷

In this context, historical time is often seen as a measure of cultural distance. “They are fifty [or twenty or ten] years behind us” is a common formulation when Western Europeans describe Eastern Europe.¹⁸ Chakrabarty argues that ideas about capitalism, modernity, and enlightenment in general are thought to have arisen in Europe and thereafter spread across the world (via the colonies). There is also a tendency to regard the histories of colonized countries in terms of shortcomings, absence, and incompleteness — always in comparison with, and having a lack of, that which Europe has represented (such as modernity and capitalism).¹⁹ I suggest that the former communist states of East Central Europe are often regarded in a similar way from both the historical and contemporary perspectives. There is a tendency to see only the drawbacks of the previous state socialist system: the shortage of goods, the dictatorship, the lack of political freedom. Combined with the Iron Curtain’s stark separation of the communist states from the rest of the world, this resulted in the “de-Europeanization” of East Central European countries in the minds of Western Europeans. They were thought to be degenerating, going backwards on the developmental scale of European modernity and as no longer part of the Europe that became the West, along with the United States, during the Cold War.²⁰ Many continue to regard these countries (even from the inside) as incomplete and still developing. However, the transition has been ascribed the potential to remedy this shortcoming and lead them (back) to Europe. For Poland, the transition from East to West can be said to have been largely successful, not least so through the country’s accession to NATO (1999) and the EU (2004). Nevertheless, the country is still widely regarded as “not yet”.

The same view prevails in the student essays. A female student believes that the differences she sees between women’s conditions in Poland and Sweden are due to the fact that Sweden is a welfare state and that Poland “unfortunately [has] a long way to go to become one”. According to her, the Polish government has more important problems to solve right now than “helping women”. This is a consistent theme in the students’ texts and the interviews. They argue that gender equality is an issue that cannot yet be prioritized in Polish politics. The country must first catch up with Europe economically and organizationally; only then can women’s issues be dealt with. “Hard” issues

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concerning the economy and international politics are set against “soft” issues, among which gender equality obviously can be numbered.

There is ambivalence surrounding the meaning of being a woman in Poland today. The students express a wish for independence for Polish women, even while the feminine woman is a cherished icon.²¹ A young man reflects upon the wider consequences of this image of women:

How Polish men regarded their wives — and often still do — is also embedded in the culture. On the one hand, poems about women, their beauty and their uncommon traits abound, but on the other hand, everyday life proves that many men show no respect at all for their “ladies”, whom they actually want to exploit as servant girls. What seems distressing is that Polish women seem not to have been able to eradicate this belief system and simply subordinate themselves, while Swedish women show themselves more as independent individuals, aware of their aims, power, and status in society. In practice, this affects how many women are employed in modern companies. One striking example is the high number of women government ministers in Sweden compared to the few women ministers in my country.

In this student’s opinion, the “pedestal status” women in Poland have officially been given is problematic, given that they have unofficially been “exploit[ed] as servant girls”. This has kept women down and they have not been able to develop traits like independence, awareness, and a personal capacity to act. They have consequently lost out on powerful positions in business and politics, according to the student. He puts much of the blame on the women themselves. Gender scholar Monica Płatek has also discussed the pedestal status of Polish women. She argues that the respect this special image of a woman receives is a constant element of Polish history and national tradition, but that there is no living woman in it — it is merely a symbol.²² According to Płatek, the reality is something else: “Officially, a woman is portrayed as superior, as the priestess of the home, but the home is the only priesthood awarded to women in our part of the world.”²³

Nancy Fraser’s theory on status can be used to understand this situation, one in which Polish women have throughout history at once been elevated and oppressed. Fraser’s concept of status entails full citizenship and equal participation in public life for all citi-

zens, which requires both redistribution of resources and recognition of various groups in society, based for example on sex, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation.²⁴ But even though women in today’s Poland are both revered and have formal access to the job market and politics, they are not equal. How can this be reconciled? Fraser argues that a fundamental transformation of social structures is required to achieve genuine status: women must gain access to all spaces, all jobs, all income levels, and must also be recognized in all areas, not only as beauties, mothers, and housekeepers.²⁵ Fraser discusses gender patterns in communist East Central Europe and posits that even if state socialism entailed a transformation of fundamental social structures, this did not primarily concern gender, since the cultural recognition of women did not change. Nor was the binary arrangement between the sexes questioned. The historian Marianne Liljeström has shown that the problem with the women’s emancipation project in the Soviet Union was precisely this duality: the combination of the ideology of equality and biological determinism.²⁶ The complex relationship between redistribution and recognition (of difference) is articulated in the essay quotation above. They are constituted here as two quantities that are difficult to join, yet impossible to separate. Similar disparities of status are also revealed in the relationship between East and West.

Several students relate the current situation in Poland to the country’s communist history. They describe it as baggage that is weighing down Polish society and has put the country behind its neighbors in Western Europe and Scandinavia — which also applies to gender equality. The ambitions of state socialism toward equality were often personified by the woman tractor driver, a negative stereotype of a sexless, manish woman doing a man’s work. Talking to ethnologist Katarzyna Wolanik Boström, a woman vividly describes her mother, the incarnation of this particular womanly ideal: short hair, flat shoes, men’s jackets, permanent press clothes, and sturdy underwear. “All that was missing was the military uniform as the *pièce de résistance*”, she says and characterizes her hardworking and politically active mother as “totally unfeminine” and as an “energetic, determined, and tyrannical she-man”. The picture of her mother becomes a parody of the socialist feminine ideal.²⁷ Criticism of the communist equality project addresses this: an equalization of gender roles that obliterated what ordinary people considered highly valuable gender-specific traits.

A female student describes social development in Poland: “Women have become strong and demanding

and men have become meek and weak.” Clearly, this change is not appreciated, either by her or by most of the other students. It is obviously not easy to be a feminist and/or a woman in Poland. “Feminist” is a term of opprobrium and the patriarchal patterns are strong.²⁸ However, there is an infectious enthusiasm among the young women and men who are not yet working or involved in a project of forming a family: they are all optimistic about their future in the new Poland. “We can do anything”, says one young woman I met at the university: “Times have changed and we have every opportunity in the world, it’s all up to us.” Life lies in front of them and they just have to reach out and grab it. In an essay, under the heading “Why I am not a feminist”, one woman writes:

The word “feminist” means that someone does not understand men and feels genuine antagonism against them. I have always been a bit skeptical of the male-oriented society, and there are a lot of things I disagree with. But on the other hand, I try to understand a few facts and the reality. That is why I have to say that I am not a feminist. I am aware there are many injustices in various families, but it is the woman’s own fault if she does everything at home without any help from her husband. I would also like to point out the situation in the job market. I agree with feminists that there are many injustices, but they can be explained. It is a well-known fact that men earn more. Studies show that men are more confident and decisive, which makes a better impression on employers. These are just two examples that show that many women are unreasonable in their convictions. The most ridiculous thing I have ever heard is the question “Why are there so many women teachers in Polish schools?” I can answer with another question: “Why are there so many men working in Polish coal mines?”

This attitude is consistent with the individualism and neoliberalism of the transition discourse. Everything is up to us and it is the woman’s own fault if she does not get help with the housework (which is apparently her responsibility) from her husband or higher pay at work. Within the confines of this kind of thinking, the relationship between the sexes has nothing to do with patriarchal, structural oppression or general power disparities between men as a group and women as a group, as feminists have interpreted the inequalities.

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It is instead a matter of personal choice — if you do not make it, you have only yourself to blame.

The student also claims that people who are capable of seeing reality as it is cannot ignore certain facts. Men do better at work because they are good at asserting themselves and women wear themselves out doing housework because they are bad at delegating. A biological understanding of gender thus complements the individualist norm of success. According to this understanding, women seem not to have what it takes to act as individuals. Women and men are understood here, as in several other essays, as fundamentally different from one another, and emancipation is classified as a purely personal matter. Many of the essay authors are not content with the state of affairs, but instead of challenging the socially and culturally constructed patriarchy, they describe themselves as prisoners of a gender-specific psychology and biology. Women “are” in certain ways and men “are” in certain other ways. Women are not interested in politics and men cannot take care of children. Women and femininity are seen as distinctly different from men and masculinity. The sexes are presumed to be diametrically opposed. It is taken for granted that women and men have different skills, different interests, and utterly different ways of being.²⁹ Feminists are described as unsympathetic, hostile, unreasonable, man-hating, and laughable. They overstep the polarized understanding of gender and hence become incomprehensible to others. The essay author seems to believe that women should be happy they do not have to work in coalmines instead of angry that they are poorly paid as teachers. Similar attitudes characterize other students’ texts and several of the interviews.

Transition and gender equality emerge as a recalcitrant equation for women. When freedom and individualism are combined with biological determinism, the same problems arise that Liljeström identified in the communist gender equality project: that the liberation of women (and men, for that matter) is constrained by the frameworks of the binary gender system. The problem has survived the transformation to a capitalist social system with neoliberal overtones. Despite major political changes, the gender arrangements seem relatively intact. Some discursive structures are thus considerably harder than others. Anthropologist Susan Gal and sociologist Gail Kligman argue that gender issues — which cut across all strata and affect all institutions from the level of international politics down to the family and individual — show how much our everyday lives are still shaped by continuities. Division of household labor and gender segregation in the

occupational structure do not change at the same pace as political regimes. Despite everything, there are important continuities between pre- and post-1989 East Central Europe and capitalist and socialist societies before 1989, or between the transition countries and today’s “West”.³⁰ The polarized understanding of gender is widespread and hard to break, while there are geographical and historically specific variations.

A biological understanding of gender is also prevalent among the essay writers who are positive toward feminism and gender equality. Instead of challenging the very idea of Woman, they seem to articulate a position that wants to assign higher value to the so-called feminine qualities and create a society in which the differences between women and men are “treated as advantages and not as drawbacks”. Only one or two students bring up other, more constructivist perspectives. One young woman concludes her essay thus:

I believe it is actually very hard to be a woman these days. First off, we have to combine our families with paid work. So, there is always a great deal that has to be done. If we cannot manage it all, our husbands or partners are dissatisfied and disappointed. Secondly, we also have difficulty taking a stance on various opinions about the role of women in society. This often makes us feel confused and guilty, but it is after all we alone who should take the responsibility. A new image of women must be created, an image adapted to our own needs and demands.

The more difficult the balance between the conventional, family-oriented ideal and the simultaneously coveted position as a strong and independent working woman, the greater the impact of such a novel “needs and demands-adapted” notion of what it means to be a woman. As the gap between demands at home and at work widens, a combination in which all of these demands can be met appears increasingly unreasonable. Here, the unstable nature of the gender is laid bare to the women — that femininity, like other identities, is constructed in social and societal norms; that they are always the result of temporary fixations of meaning, and thus could be some other way³¹ — and with this, the potential opportunity to formulate new ways of being a woman. But we are not yet there, this student seems to believe; this is still a matter of “not yet” — both for the women in Poland and Polish society in general.

In their comparative historical essay *The Politics of Gender After Socialism*, Gal and Kligman describe the East/West opposition as a form of orientalism that identifies the East as the negative end of a cultural contrast that pits civilization against barbarism, wealth against poverty, development against backwardness, etc.³² Within the framework of “intra-European orientalism”, concepts such as normality, progress, and development are defined from a Western European perspective. The countries and peoples of the former Eastern Bloc are thus subjected to a practice of stereotyping; they are locked — albeit temporarily — into certain representations that influence how much scope for action individuals are permitted.³³ “Old” Europe has the power to decide the rules of the game and the “new” Europe is expected to adjust and strive for what Old Europe has identified as good and right. As we have seen, such an ideal also applies to things like gender equality and feminism.

On the other hand, within the power relationships of the transition discourse there is an element of distrust (from the West) of development processes that seem to be going much too fast. The premise here seems to be that a society that has changed completely in a very short time can hardly be stable and reliable — and definitely not normal.³⁴ Something must be missing in “the evolution”. Despite strenuous efforts from the post-socialist countries to adjust to the European norm, the eastern Others seem still to be excluded. One telling example is the fear of “social tourism” and discussion of so-called transitional rules for the new EU countries, including Poland, that came into force in the spring of 2004. The boundary between the major league and the minor league in Europe is maintained and reproduced by the constant shifting of norms and standards in this way, which makes them impossible to meet for the groups defined as the “Others”. The disparities of status remain.

These mechanisms are similar to how the gender system is constantly changed so that equality seems always to be just beyond the reach of women, regardless of formal progress like the right to vote and access to higher education or certain occupations.³⁵ Male dominance and the transition discourse thus have much in common: Poland is not yet equal to Europe, and women — in Poland, Sweden, and other countries — are not yet equal to men. The evolutionary thinking of the transition discourse is also similar to the idea of equality as something that is continuously improved, that is, the notion that as each generation passes, society will — automatically — become more equal.³⁶ The

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idea is that equality will be achieved: not yet, but over time. Unfortunately, feminist scholars, people working for equality, and activists know that things are not that simple. As long as the cultural and political discourses in these areas are filled with unfair power relationships that subjugate some people through stereotypification, exclusion, and othering, while some others are made the norm, neither equality between the sexes nor equality between countries will be achieved.³⁷ It is here that the approaches provided by gender theory can contribute to an analysis of power relationships between East and West, while theories on the former Eastern Bloc's transition and transformation can enrich studies of gender and equality. ≈

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- ¹ Karin S. Lindelöf, *Om vi nu ska bli som Europa: Könsskapande och normalitet bland unga kvinnor i postkommunismens Polen* [If we are to become like Europe: gender construction and normality among young women in transitional Poland], Diss., Gothenburg & Stockholm 2006, p. 13.
- ² The texts referred to are thirteen short examination essays written in Swedish in the spring semesters of 2001 and 2002. Scandinavian Studies is a five-year program leading to a master's degree with a concentration in Swedish, Danish, or Norwegian studies. In addition to language, the students read Scandinavian literature and study culture, social life, and politics in these countries. In the first year, seven students in the third and fourth years of the Swedish concentration chose to write on the topic "Why I am (not) a feminist" and the second year, six students chose the essay topic "Being a woman in Poland and Sweden – similarities and differences". The program is heavily female-dominated, with only one or two male students in each year (with about 12 students in the class for each language concentration), but both times there was one man among those who chose these topics for the written examination. The essays are on file at the department and I have read copies. The material has been de-identified, but I have stated whether the author was a man or a woman. I have also corrected certain linguistic errors to make the excerpts easier to read. Since the texts were written in an exam situation, where the main purpose was to demonstrate written language skills in Swedish, the students' arguments can be expected to be somewhat inadequate (although not necessarily so, of course). In addition, the essays were written under a time limit and the students did not know the topics in advance. Due to these circumstances, the opinions expressed may be relatively crude and stereotypical in nature. The students may have chosen to express themselves differently in another situation. The texts were also written for a specific reader: the middle-aged Swedish woman who was their teacher. That said, it is nonetheless interesting to analyze the opinions articulated in the essays – especially because they coincide to a great extent with other material in the study.

- That they are formulated as they are means they can be expressed and perceived as understandable – they are part of a discourse, at least at the time of the examination: see Anna Sofia Lundgren, *Tre år i G: Perspektiv på kropp och kön i skolan* [Three years in G: Perspectives on the body and gender in school], Diss., Stockholm/Stehag 2000, p. 103.
- ³ See e.g. EBRD, *Transition Report 1999: Ten Years of Transition*, London 1999.
 - ⁴ See Michael Burawoy & Katherine Verdery (eds.), *Uncertain Transition: Ethnographies of Change in the Socialist World*, Lanham 1999, p. 16.
 - ⁵ See also Susan Gal & Gail Kligman, *The Politics of Gender After Socialism: A Comparative-Historical Essay*, Princeton 2000, pp. 120–121.
 - ⁶ For a discussion of various designations, as well as criticism of the alleged evolutionism and teleology of "transitology", see Jordan Gans-Morse, "Searching for Transitologists: Contemporary Theories of Post-Communist Transitions and the Myth of a Dominant Paradigm", *Post-Soviet Affairs*, vol. 20:4 (2004).
 - ⁷ See Gal & Kligman, 2000, pp. 10–11.
 - ⁸ See Nancy Fraser, *The Radical Imagination: Between Redistribution and Recognition*, Gothenburg 2003, p. 181.
 - ⁹ See Gal & Kligman, 2000, pp. 4, 309.
 - ¹⁰ Yvonne Hirdman, "Genussystemet – reflexioner kring kvinnors sociala underordning" [The gender system – reflections on the social subordination of women], *Kvinnvetenskaplig tidskrift*, no. 3 (1988).
 - ¹¹ Yvonne Hirdman, *Genus — om det stabilas föränderliga former* [Gender — on the mutable forms of the stable], Malmö 2001. To illustrate the dual logics of the gender system on separation and hierarchy, the model must be augmented with a lowercase b, which is both separate from and worse than uppercase A. However, Hirdman does not do this and it is my own further interpretation of her model.
 - ¹² Hirdman, 2001, pp. 44 and 193.
 - ¹³ See e.g., Sofi Gerber, *Öst är Väst, men Väst är bäst* [East is West, but West is best], Diss. (forthcoming).
 - ¹⁴ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton & Oxford 2000, p. 8.
 - ¹⁵ Agnes Ers, *I mänsklighetens namn: En etnologisk studie av ett svenskt biståndsprojekt i Rumänien* [In humanity's name: An ethnological study of a Swedish development aid project in Rumania], Diss., Hedemora 2006.
 - ¹⁶ Chakrabarty, 2000, p. 6.
 - ¹⁷ Lindelöf, 2006, pp. 208–212.
 - ¹⁸ See David Wästerfors, *Berättelser om mutor: Det korruptas betydelse bland svenska affärsmän i Öst- och Centraleuropa* [Stories of bribes: The meaning of corruption among Swedish businessmen in Eastern and Central Europe], Stockholm/Stehag 2004, p. 42; Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford 1994, pp. 6, 360–361.
 - ¹⁹ Chakrabarty, 2000, p. 32.
 - ²⁰ See Peter Johnsson, *Polen i Europa: En resa i historien 966–2005* [Poland in Europe: A journey through history 966–2005], Stockholm 2005, p. 38.
 - ²¹ Lindelöf, 2006, pp. 37–38.
 - ²² Monika Platek, "Hostages of Destiny: Gender Issues in

Today's Poland", *Feminist Review*, no. 76 (2004), p. 12.

- ²³ Platek, 2004, p. 17.
- ²⁴ Fraser, 2003, p. 220.
- ²⁵ Fraser, 2003, pp. 246–247.
- ²⁶ Marianne Liljeström, *Emanciperade till underordning: Det sovjetiska könssystemets uppkomst och diskursiva reproduktion* [Emancipated into subordination: The rise and discursive reproduction of the Soviet gender system], Diss., Åbo 1995, pp. 245–246, 255, 419–420; See also Katarzyna Wolanik Boström, "Familjen och omvärlden – sammanflätade teman i polska levnadsberättelser" [The family and the world – interwoven themes in Polish life narratives], in Birgitta Meurling et al (eds.), *Familj och kön* [Family and gender], Lund 1999, p. 106.
- ²⁷ Katarzyna Wolanik Boström, *Berättade liv, berättat Polen: En etnologisk studie av hur högutbildade polacker gestaltar identitet och samhälle* [Narratied lives, narrated Poland: An ethnological study of how highly educated Poles shape identity and society], Diss., Umeå 2005, pp. 112–113.
- ²⁸ Malgorzata Anna Packalén, "Tradition och provokation: Kvinnlighetens röst i modern polsk litteratur" [Tradition and provocation: The voice of femininity in modern Polish literature], *Kvinnvetenskaplig tidskrift*, no. 2–3 (2003), pp. 130–131.
- ²⁹ See Hirdman, 1988.
- ³⁰ Gal & Kligman, 2000, pp. 11–13.
- ³¹ See Ernesto Laclau & Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, London & New York 1984, pp. 104, 121.
- ³² Gal & Kligman, 2000, p. 119.
- ³³ See Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, London 1997, pp. 257–259.
- ³⁴ See Mikael Vallström, *Det autentiska Andra: Om etnografi, etik och existens* [The authentic Other: On ethnography, ethics, and existence], Diss., Uppsala 2002, pp. 59, 78.
- ³⁵ See e.g., Hirdman, 2001, pp. 115, 122, 129–130.
- ³⁶ See e.g., Anna Wahl et al, *Det ordnar sig: Teorier om organisation och kön* [Things will work out: Theories of organization and gender], Lund 2001, p. 172.
- ³⁷ See e.g., Chandra Talpade Mohanty's arguments on global economic and political conditions and their gendered and racialized implications: Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism utan gränser: Avkoloniserad teori, praktiserad solidaritet* [Feminism without borders: Decolonized theory, practiced solidarity], Hagersten 2006, p. 256. The political economy is also pivotal to an understanding of the conditions of the transition and power relationships between West and East in Europe.

