

GENDER STEREOTYPES: SOUNDS FAMILIAR



Edited by: Monja Šuta-Hibert

BAUK FEMINAUK
BOGEY FEMITEACHING

The Initiative for Creative Dialogue and Education – ICDE

**GENDER STEREOTYPES:
SOUNDS FAMILIAR?**

Edited by: Monja Šuta-Hibert

Sarajevo, 2016

Gender Stereotypes: Sounds Familiar?

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**Monja
Šuta-Hibert**

INTRODUCTION

Terms such as feminism, gender equality, engaged art, and so on, sound familiar, don't they? However, if we had to explain each of these terms precisely, we would certainly have more questions than answers.

The issue of gender discrimination in the fields of education, science, religion, legislation, social security, and media is frequently present through various activities of the non-governmental sector. These issues sound familiar, don't they? However, we often see that, in a wider social community, the very mention of these issues causes a wave of stereotypical reactions.

Negative myths and the exclusive patriarchal constructions we attach to everyday situations that are almost routinely interwoven through the lives of men and women are mostly

She obtained her Bachelor and Master's degrees from the University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Comparative Literature and Library Science. During and after her studies, she worked as the coordinator and translator on the projects in the area of culture and translation at the Goethe Institute in Sarajevo, and at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies in Sarajevo from 2005 to 2011, within the Master programme in the field of democracy and human rights. She acquired her first work experience in the field of documentary film and non-formal methods of education during many years of working at the Pravo Ljudski Association, which she founded and where she served as the executive director for eight years. She managed numerous projects at the local and international level, and in the last five years she was a guest lecturer at the Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Education and Teaching, and at the University in Warsaw, Institute for Western and Eastern Slavic Studies. In September 2014, she joined the TPO team where she works as the coordinator of the project "World Ethos in Bosnia and Herzegovina" and is the creator of the educational programmes and initiatives. Her work and engagement is mainly directed toward the research of various issues and fields related to media pedagogy, gender issues, informational literacy, collaborative and participatory practices in learning and teaching processes, as well as working with youth and teachers throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

familiar, aren't they? Although they are sometimes extremely distressing and unjust, we often repeat them ourselves without critical awareness of why this is so.

The terms such as stereotypes, clichés, and prejudices are familiar, aren't they? Most of us think that we are immune to them; however, we play our roles each day, generate the recognizable life situations we inherited from our beloved mothers, fathers, tradition, school and the educational system, religion, the media and culture, etc.

What type of life situations are we referring to, which gender stereotypes, prejudices, and discriminatory practices stem from the stereotypical behavioural patterns, how to break the circles of violence and oppression, what we can laugh about, and how to rise above the banality of life which sometimes presents us with seemingly insurmountable obstacles – all of these are issues and stories bounded in a specific and humorous way in a book you are reading right now.

The book "Gender Stereotypes: Sounds Familiar?" has been created within the project "The Initiative for Creative Dialogue and Education". TPO Foundation Sarajevo created the edition "Bauk Feminauk" ("Bogey FemiTeaching"), together with the group "Brkate" ("*Moustached*") and the comic book illustrator Jakov Čaušević, with the aim to encourage the questioning of prejudices related to feminism, gender equality, and the position of women in contemporary B&H society through humorous illustrated situations. Our selection of the comic book form of expression, in combination with burning issues, is not only a potential opportunity to get closer to younger generations, but also an ideal opportunity to act in an educational and encouraging manner. Although the initiative, in the beginning, aimed to publish twenty comics and introduce them through an art exhibition to the general public – especially the youth – the team quickly decided to take it a step further. Through positive response and a great interest from the youth, together we

“discovered” that comics were the ideal form for interdisciplinary approach to learning and teaching, and that they were a great educational tool for those who were not interested in traditional educational methods.

In that sense, the edition “Bogey FemiTeaching” is complemented through the book “Gender Stereotypes: Sounds Familiar?” which represents a unique combination of the so-called educational comics with shorter thematic texts that deal with different gender and feminist issues and aspects related to education, patriarchal family values, law, science, religion, politics, media, domestic violence, and many other gender-based discriminatory practices.

We are deeply convinced that critical questioning of the norms of gender politics in a society, and particularly if done in a humorous way, can help us to approach the issues of discrimination, oppression, and exclusion together, and in a more realistic manner. The fundamental motive that led us through the creative process was the fact that those who knew very little about feminism were usually its fiercest critics, and those who were the loudest in claiming that they were not hostages of gender stereotypes and prejudices were those who repeated them every day.

Finally, through a specific selection of topics and examples from everyday life, characteristic visualization and interesting textual comments and sketches, this book - in a way - represents postcards from the lives of feminist activists and all those who do not publicly express this identity, but are committed to gender equality. In other words, the feminist doctrine is truly not a bogey, but merely a potential possibility, an idea of a world in which women and men, as well as all other marginalized groups and individuals, participate equally in all spheres of life. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?!

PATERNITY LEAVE

Did you hear that some guy called Damir, from finances, requested a paternity leave so he can be with his baby?!

Haha, what a henpecked doof!
What, so that his wife can go back to work?
Haha! She's out and about and he's rocking the baby all day long! What did the boss tell him?



?!?

Man, what do I know. He should get his hormones in check and slam his fist against the table! It is a wife's duty to take care of the children, while the husband earns the money.



Back For Work

Are you two out of your mind?! I know Damir, his wife barely survived the childbirth, she will not be leaving the hospital any time soon, and fathers have no legal right to a paid paternity leave. Who should be rocking the baby instead? Huh?!





**Ena
Bavčić**

It is well known that there are multiple genders in B&H language. The word for gender, 'rod', also stands for 'family relations'. As it can also mean 'race', it can be perceived as a biological

trait which refers to a group of species that are linked through certain common physiological characteristics – such as, for example, the human race. Gender can also be a characteristic of a verb – we distinguish transitive, intransitive and reflexive verbs, as well as being a literary trait (lyrical, epic and dramatic). However, none of these 'genders' can be discriminated against.

But let us start from the beginning – what is discrimination? Everyone talks about this discrimination, and I just cannot see it. My neighbour says that it is something that was invented in the West, and now people here are making a lot of money based on this discrimination. Indeed, discrimination is not even our word, it is a Latin word (*discriminare*). But wait a minute, are not biology and astronomy also Latin words? Policy and mathematics as well?

WHAT IS DISCRIMINATION?

She was born in Sarajevo in 1985, where she graduated from the Faculty of Social Work and obtained her Master's degree in Human Rights and Democracy. She is the author of a short documentary, "The Others", designed and produced by Kratkofil Punch, Banja Luka. She has published two articles on the subject of identity politics and issues of 'others' in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the political magazine MALMOE Vienna, Austria, and the website of the association for human rights and freedom of speech Censorship Plus, Croatia. In addition, Ena has published articles on the right to decent work (collection of papers "Two Faces of Social Justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina", Pulse of Democracy), and has contributed to the creation of the "Glossary of LGBT Culture" by Sarajevo Open Centre, writing about the terms "gender" and "patriarchy". She currently works as a consultant for human rights within the Office of Civil Rights Defenders in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

One of the most widespread prejudices created by this dichotomy is that one sex is always better, stronger, more capable, and that sex (gender) is seen in a society as being active and dominant, while the other is subordinate, weaker, and passive. It is the feeling of superiority over the other sex (gender) that represents the basis for the most widespread form of discrimination: sex/gender discrimination.

These are words that we use constantly, why is it a problem if we have one more word of Latin origin?

By its etymology, discrimination means to separate, to make a difference.¹ "Discrimination is most commonly defined as the practice of treating a certain

person or a group of persons differently, because of their real or perceived status or characteristics."² The strongest initiators of discrimination are prejudices. From Latin: praeiudicium. Prae-before + iudicium - judgment: prejudices are judgements or opinions formed beforehand or without the knowledge of the facts. Therefore, we can say that prejudices are irrational attitudes that usually occur by generalizing or attributing some (unfounded) characteristics to a group of people.³

Since all species, including the entire human race, are divided by sex/gender, discrimination based on sex (gender) is the most widespread form of discrimination. "All men are jerks" and "all women are gold-diggers" are generalizations. Because if 5 out of 10 men are jerks, and 5 out of 10 women are gold-diggers, that does not mean that all men and women taken into consideration have the abovementioned characteristic. After all, there is a good reason why some men act like jerks, and some women like gold-diggers – but we will discuss that a little bit later.

Gender discrimination actually always refers to the sociological definition of gender. Historically, the term gender was first used

in the 1960s to mark the difference between male and female. This sociological understanding of gender was soon after shaped through feminist theory to indicate social processes which separated people and social practices based on sexual identities.⁴ And here is a clear distinction between biological sexes, i.e. the sex we are born with, and that of identity, the sex we identify with. We can simply say that the sex is something that other people use to classify us, while gender is more about the identity, something we personally feel, that does not have to be in accordance with other people's perception necessarily. Like sex, gender is divided into male and female, as well as neutral.

Creating sexual identities causes a dichotomy (duality, diversity) of behaviour on which a relationship of hierarchy and power is formed. One of the most widespread prejudices created by this dichotomy is that one sex is always better, stronger, more capable, and that one sex (gender) is seen in a society as being active and dominant, while the other is subordinate, weaker, and passive. It is the feeling of superiority over the other sex (gender) that represents the basis for the most widespread form of discrimination: sex/gender discrimination. In our language, a macho man is someone who is strong, stable, and reliable, while the name of the female sexual organ is used as a synonym for cowards and traitors. This term is so degraded that it represents the worst human characteristic.

Some of the consequences of gender discrimination are: sexual abuse, harassment based on pregnancy/birth (sexual and reproductive rights), as well as lower pay and unequal conditions for employment (economic and social rights). Thus, almost all women in the world, members of the so-called weaker sex, have experienced some form of discrimination, whether in the sphere of education, health, employment, or any other form of public action.⁵

But aside from the divisions in behaviour, there are norms regulating the "union" of two sexes/genders. It is "normal" that two



(different) sexes are joined together by a contract, i.e. the female sex has to connect with the male sex. This union (commonly and legally referred to as marriage) primarily serves to further the reproduction of the human race. Further reproduction, they say, is necessary in the 21st century, when we have 7 billion people in the world, and are facing a huge overpopulation of the countries. Why? What do you mean, why!? "So we do not vanish from the face of the earth!"

And of course, the union of the sexes is something that is highly socially regulated. Women, as the weaker and more emotional sex, the sex that is focused on the family, must always strive for stability of that family. Therefore, according to the social norms, the role of a woman is that of a safekeeper of a family unit. If a woman is abandoned by her husband, or if, God forbid, she leaves him, the society perceives her as a woman who has not been able to fulfil her role; she becomes a "fallen woman":

"There must be something wrong with her, he wouldn't look for other women if she was as she should have been", or

"I know him, he's a good man. But she's a harpy, she would nag him until he would beat her; let her cry all alone now."

However, if a woman's husband dies, that woman is supposed to grieve for her husband forever and idealize her primary union, according to the patriarchal society.

Of course, a large number of women and men are very happy with their biological roles of parents and spouses, and many



people behave in accordance with certain standards, not because they are forced to do so, but because they want to. However, these social norms can be very harmful for those who do not comply with all the specific standards, such as, for example, single mothers or men who want to stay at home and look after their children. Single mothers often have to deal with the real challenges of feeding the children and caring for them, in addition to judgement or pity they receive from their environment.

And how to survive in the modern society? By working, of course. Now, work and gender/sex - it is a whole new pair of shoes. Women began participating in the public life in the late 19th century, but even today, men are considered to be more talented and more capable for working, and women are considered to

be much better at dealing with child-rearing. A woman who chooses to work usually has a lower salary than the men in the same position, or can even not get the job despite having the same qualifications, since she is considered less productive. Why? Mainly because women give birth. And realistically, they are somehow clumsy, timid. And someone needs to pay for that maternity leave.... Why would anyone pay a woman who is sitting

As we can see, simply because of gender norms, many people think that men should act like jerks (also, as jerks who earn a lot of money), and women should be beautiful in order to seduce a man who will work for them.

at home and raising children? Who forced her to give birth? (And here we immediately forget the importance of the slogan "Let us not vanish from the face of the earth!".) Thus, women are placed in a position where they have to choose: career (work) or family.

But it is better for her to choose family because the man is the one who should provide for the family, he should go to work and hold a job. And what if a man cannot find a job? That is his problem. Dweeb. I bet he would like to stay at home and take care of children, and his wife to go to work! "By God, it wasn't like that before, for a man to stay at home, change diapers, and a woman to work." Norms for the behaviour of men determine that a man who wants to take care of children is not a real man, so he becomes a henpecked wimp, manipulated by his wife. Precisely because of that, the feeling of love towards his children becomes shameful and unacceptable, and a man who shows tenderness and love becomes a "fallen man". As we can see, simply because of gender norms, many people think that men should act like jerks (also, as jerks who earn a lot of money), and women should be beautiful in order to seduce a man who will work for them.

Glitches also occur when physiological sex is in contrast with someone's own perception of own sex. All of us know about "tomboys", that is, women who dress and act like men, and

“sissies” – men who dress and/or act like women, but only a few people know that there are also persons who do not feel like they belong to any gender, or they feel they could be of both genders (androgynous persons). So, if you are a “tomboy” or a “sissy”, that does not mean that you are going to have a particularly good time out in the society. We also know that it is not nice to label these people with such names, because it is considered discriminatory. And yes, persons who do not act in accordance with their physiological sex usually suffer a lot of violence and discrimination.

So, to summarize, gender is variable, gender roles might force us to be something we do not want to be, and discrimination prevents many persons from having access to social services (health, education, employment), access which should be equally granted to everyone. The consequences of gender-based social discrimination are huge, and the benefits are meagre. All persons are born with equal rights, and no one is less valuable because he or she is different. Therefore, every day, in any opportunity, we should affirm and call for gender equality through our words and actions!

- 1 <http://latin-dictionary.net/definition/18054/discrimino-discriminare-discriminavi-discriminatus>
- 2 Čaušević, Jasmina, et. al. *Glossary of LGBT Culture*. Sarajevo: Sarajevo Open Centre and Heinrich Böll Foundation. 2012 p. 73.. <http://soc.ba/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Pojmovnik-Finalna-verzija-manja-verzija.pdf>
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Beasley, Chris. *Gender & Sexuality: Critical Theories, Critical Thinkers*. London and New Delhi: Thousand Oaks, 2006 p. 12
- 5 <http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/women-s-rights/gender-based-discrimination>

Great job! I can tell that you practiced and mastered the material.



Bravo! I'm pleasantly surprised to see that we have a girl on our team as well. Did you practice with someone?



Yes, I practiced with him. I'm glad I was able to help him master the material.



I'm glad

Bank
FemiNank



**Elmaja
Bavčić**

EDUCATION AND GENDER: HOW DO WE MISS THE OPPORTUNITIES?

She is an activist and a feminist, born in 1983 in Sarajevo, where she graduated from the Department of Comparative Literature and Library Science at the Faculty of Philosophy. She obtained her Master's degree from the Department of Gender Studies at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Post-graduate Studies, University of Sarajevo. She works on issues of education, feminist theory, and political activism. She lives and works in Sarajevo.

Gender bias is something that surrounds us and we are constantly exposed to it. It enters our lives from our birth and is reflected in the fact that, right after birth, we are dressed into colours which “belong” to our sex and which follow us throughout our childhood, kindergarten, education, friendships, schools, and all other aspects of our life.

We can clearly recognize gender bias in sentences such as: “Boys do not cry!”, “Be nice, you are a girl!”, “Boys play with cars, not with dolls!”, “You talk like a girl!” We have all had these things said to us at least several times, and many of them migrated into our own communication and play with our peers. Nothing changed when we started school. Not only were we groomed, dressed, taught and made to be boys or girls, but the entire school atmosphere dictates what represents appropriate behaviour, as well as the appropriate expectations for either of the sexes.

For example, during PE class, the teacher would say “boys can play football, and the girls can play volleyball”. And when a boy plays poorly, the others would say “you play like a girl!”; they are not aware that girls can also play, since they never play football with

the boys. During music education classes, girls are encouraged to sing in a choir, but it is sometimes considered shameful for a boy to do the same. During our work in school, we can often hear

A common stereotype is that women are better in occupations that require provision of care, such as caregivers, nurses, and so on, while men are much better in occupations that require technical skills, for example, craftsmen and engineers. Teachers, society, and family support such stereotypes in numerous cases and direct students toward such occupations.

phrases such as: "Girls should get in line here, and boys there!", "Boys will take the blue papers and girls the pink ones", and so on.

Textbooks in schools are an issue on its own.¹ Have you ever counted the number of times female scientists are mentioned in textbooks for biology, chemistry, or physics? Is there a discussion - and if yes, in what manner - on why there are no renowned female scientist and how come all major

scientific discoveries have been made by men? Are there really no renowned women scientists? Or in terms of social sciences such as history, for example, have you ever wondered how many women left their mark on our past? Had any of them played an important role in a society? Did women have an opportunity to participate in major policy decisions that changed the course of history? Where were women during the great wars?

Textbooks which completely ignore one sex send a wrong picture of what is good for all students. Together with the already established social perceptions of what is appropriate for girls and what for boys, they are introducing new stereotypes about what boys love and know, and likewise for girls. In Western Europe, there are prejudices regarding the understanding of mathematics—prejudices that men are more analytical and women are more emotional often lead to teachers who frequently accept the prejudices that girls simply cannot master certain things!²

All of this is ultimately reflected in our choice of secondary education. A common stereotype is that women are better in occupations that require provision of care, such as caregivers, nurses, and so on, while men are much better in occupations that require technical skills, for example, craftsmen and engineers. Teachers, society, and family support such stereotypes in numerous cases and direct students toward such occupations.

The consequence of that is that girls often choose schools such as hairdressing vocational school, gymnasium, medical vocational school, and boys choose schools that prepare them for jobs as economists, mechanics, etc. However, if boys or girls decide to step outside of common perceptions of what is appropriate for their gender, they are often exposed to negative comments and negative perceptions which are almost always associated with their gender. For example, we usually say that male hairdressers are effeminate, while we refer to women in mechanical engineering as "butch" or "masculine", and so on.

Feminization of professions is a way of combating gender inequalities by encouraging the greatest possible extent of participation of women in certain vocations. This concept is very good, especially for those professions where there is a lack of women, such as science, engineering, computer technology, and so on. However, the problem is that the attempts of feminization are almost never done in these professions – what many feminist theories claim is that feminization is possible only in those professions that have ceased to be a place of power.

The atmosphere at school often reflects gender stereotypes even in the segment of the division of labour. Many professions at school are gendered and, most frequently, gym teachers or principals are men, and psychologists, secretaries, etc., are women. Such division of labour is very well supported by textbook policies; one study showed that, in school textbooks, all officials, farmers,

military personnel, politicians, policemen, and priests were men, while women were mainly mentioned only as peasant women or housewives.³

Positions in education which carry a greater responsibility, such as school principals, board members, as well as ministers, have been held by women in recent years as well. While it is a very good thing to have persons of both sexes represented in the management of schools and education, and for these persons to create educational policies and ways of learning which are adapted to both girls and boys, in the fields of preschool, primary, and secondary education not only is the presence of women noticeable, but an almost complete absence of men is also noticed. The fact that the educational system has opened its doors to women is not indicative of gender sensitization of the entire system, but rather of the phenomenon called the feminization of professions.

Feminization of professions is a way of combating gender inequalities by encouraging the greatest possible extent of participation of women in certain vocations. This concept is very good, especially for those professions where there is a lack of women, such as science, engineering, computer technology, and so on. However, the problem is that the attempts of feminization are almost never done in these professions – what many feminist theories claim is that feminization is possible only in those professions that have ceased to be a place of power. What does that actually mean? It means that when a particular area has no influence anymore, then all other categories are allowed to become a part of it.

And it is an honest truth—a woman will rarely get the position of a Minister of Finance or Security, while positions in areas such as health and education may be given to them. If you listen to the elders when they talk, or if you read certain pieces of literature, you will know that, in the past, teachers and doctors were actually the most educated people, especially in small towns, and

everyone asked for and valued their opinion. Today, the situation is completely different – our female teachers are not respected by the community, and parents frequently argue with them, and even threaten them if they give an unsatisfactory evaluation or comment to pupils. Male and female teachers also have much lower salaries than, for example, engineers, businessmen, and so on. And finally, when we talk about the budget – if there is an economic crisis, whose income is the first in line to be cut? Well, of course, that of teachers, workers, and all other categories which do not have any power in society.

This is precisely why it is important for us to deal with the issues related to gender stereotypes. To talk about why there are no female scientists in the textbooks, why boys and girls are perceived as having different characteristics despite having essentially the same ones, and why different values are attributed to different genders. If we decide to open ourselves to that which is Other and Different, it will only open up more options for a better and more interesting future – we have been working for years on the fact that we all have the same right to education and to choose what to learn and work, why should we let prejudices prevent us from doing exactly what we want to today when we have so many available options?

- 1 Thus far, reading comprehension practice books have been most commonly analysed, but other textbooks are also promoting gender bias. You can read more on gender analysis in textbooks in Puhalo, Srđan and Milinović, Jelena, *What is the Gender of Reading Comprehension Practice Books? / Analysis of Reading Comprehension Practice Books used in Elementary Schools from Gender Perspective*, Banja Luka: Gender Centre – Centre for Gender Equality, 2007
- 2 <http://library.wcsu.edu/dspace/bitstream/0/58/1/calvanese.pdf>
- 3 Analysis of textbooks shows that women mentioned in ninth grade reading comprehension practice books are represented as housewives or peasant women. Men were assigned a wider variety of professions. The most frequently mentioned are: peasant, official, and military personnel, followed by: state official, policeman, servant, and priest. The lack of female professions certainly paints a vivid picture of how much care was (not) given to gender equality and non-stereotypical representation of genders in creation of textbooks. Such representation of women and men often unintentionally sends a message about the roles the members of a particular gender may take within a society. *Gender Analysis of Reading Comprehension Practice Books in RS*, p. 81.

OFFICER - A COMPLICATED WORD

BAUK FEMINAUK



Hey, have you seen how Enes got his life together? He fixed up his apartment, got a job, got married...

Married, seriously? Whom with?

Yeah, seriously, he married an officer. Works in the army.

Get a load of that! Enes is gay? I had no idea we had gay marriages here. Since when?

No, man! He married a woman. She's an officer.



**Lamija
Begagić**

THREE ANECDOTES, ONE FRIDAY

She was born in Zenica in 1980. She graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy, Department of the Literatures of the Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. She is the chief editor of children's magazines "Tom Thumb" and "The Hummingbird", a co-author of the "The Reading Comprehension Practice Books for the Fifth Grade of Elementary School", an associate of the magazine for more equitable education "Školegijum" and the magazine for literature, culture and literary issues, "Word", a columnist in "Urban Magazine" and for the portal lgbt.ba. She writes and publishes short stories, collected in two books thus far: "The Reunion" and "One-Way", and several anthologies in Bosnian, English, Czech, and German language. She won dozens of awards for short stories in B&H and the region. She lives in Sarajevo with her husband and two children.

Having a child in elementary school, another in kindergarten, working from home, having several jobs at once, including the one eternal, unpaid job of housekeeping, is certainly not easy. My daily routine includes getting up early, going to bed late, and constantly balancing between the various duties and responsibilities, endless multitasking.

The daily routine of my eldest child, at least during the school year, also does not provide many reasons for taking it easy and in stride. School obligations do not cease when he comes home; instead, they multiply: tasks, assignments, presentations, projects, a short break, and then going to the training – that is what a day in life of my eleven-year boy looks like.

I manage to raise him between keeping him alive, between two boring lessons in Nature, between two texts for two newspapers.

In these time-warps, we waddle around the kitchen, cut apples, make lemonade, and, by stealing time away from duties, we occasionally manage to live.

This is one of our Fridays, from dawn to dusk.

9:00, morning, homework

How much homework did you have? - I ask while we squeeze the juice out of a pomegranate.

A little; just to draw something for SCR – my son answers, between two sips.

Can I have a look? – I ask, taking the notebook even before he answers, to see the drawing my offspring created for the assigned topic of “Gender Equality”.

I am greeted by a broad smile of a muscled guy lifting a pair of weights high up into the air. Beside him there is a girl, with tiny muscles, the exertion to lift them visible on her face, her lips twisted to show a combination of sadness and suffering. Below, there is an inscription-motto: “Women are a little bit weaker than men, but they have the right to play sports.”

This homework for the class on “Society, Culture, Religion” draws out of me another one of those sighs, the type whose subtext is: Oh, no, here we go again...

So I plough onwards, while the topic is hot. Again:

Why is not this woman smiling while she is lifting weights? – I ask him reluctantly.

Because it is not easy for her.

How come? Does she like what she is doing?

Of course she does, but it is not easy because her muscles are not big enough.

An entire battlefield opened up there in front of me, gender roles, prejudices, stereotypes and the need to explain to him that love and commitment rather than physical qualities are the path to success in sports as well as in certain other spheres of life, that muscles and strenuous exercise have a cause-and-effect relation, that weights are lifted within the weight categories, that there are small men and big women, that...

I did not do any of that. That weekend I took him to Konjic and introduced him to my friend.



Son – I asked him after a while, while we were doing some other homework – do you remember Dajana, the one who took us around Konjic two weekends ago?

Logically!

What do you mean, logically?

Logically, I remember her –how could I forget her?

And it is logical that he remembers her. In fact, it would be weird if he managed to forget Dajana. Because Dajana is not like those aunts who pinch your cheeks while saying fun things like “Who’s your crush? / What’s your favourite football team? / Who do you

A normal family is a family in which there is love, and not the one that has a mommy, a daddy, a blond daughter, and a mischievous little boy.

like better: your mom or your dad?”. On the first day, we talked to Dajana about jumping into Kazan, the jumps from the Old Bridge and the waterfall in Jajce, about the mountain rescue service and the ways to provide

first aid while, in the middle of the promenade along the river Neretva, my son played a victim, and she provided the first aid. The second day, we were figuring out the easiest way to climb Prenj, and in the afternoon we accompanied her to her training session, so he could see this skinny girl, as tall as he is, weighing fifty kilos, lift 63 kg in snatch and 80 kg in the clean and jerk. And additionally, she laughs, listens to Remi and Sassja, and has fun with other girls and guys from the weightlifters Club “Neretva”.

It is a good thing he did not forget Dajana because then he did not forget what Dajana managed to and what the SCR homework failed to teach him. He received praise for his homework. From the lesson with Dajana, he learned that school and life sometimes did not have much in common.

17:30, afternoon, parent-teacher meeting

A bit on school code of conduct, a bit on missed classes, the

announcement of field work. One of those routine parent-teacher meetings where we sit in the pews, look at our watches and are, inevitably, transported back to our own school days, with a slight discomfort in the pit of our stomach.

The teacher would not want to take more of our time if there are no questions, and of course there are not any. The meeting is over. There were no questions, but there was a bottleneck at the exit, each parent stopping for a quick private chat with the teacher. She says she is satisfied with the class, the children are really lovely, even that boy, although the trauma is not an easy thing, he misses his mom. The mom of that boy works abroad, while he lives in Sarajevo with his father. Parents nod their heads with compassion, waving their hands, leaving the classroom while whispering to each other.

If there are no more questions, and of course there are not, the routine parent-teacher meeting is over. I return home despondent.

Where does Deni's dad work? – I asked my son after I had come home.

In Croatia, he builds tunnels.

And Arijana's?

In Germany. He brings her those glitter markers.

Deni and Arijana were not mentioned after the parent-teacher meeting. There were no questions about them, as there were not any about that boy. Neither Deni nor Arijana nor that boy did anything bad to anyone else; they did not come up with a childish prank, they did not act contrary to the rules read at the beginning of the meeting. Unlike Deni and Arijana, that boy is just a little bit chattier than the others and likes to take part in every activity. If his mother was not abroad, working, while he stays at home with his father, he would probably be thought of as a versatile and curious child.

And Ali's mom? – I ask.

Well, I do not know. The teacher said that we should not ask Ali about his mom.

When he started first grade, we studied a lesson on family from a textbook published by a great publishing house "Creative Centre" from the neighbouring Serbia, on my initiative. I remember very well his enthusiasm with those colourful pages about different types of families: there were single-parent families, large and small, similar and different families. The authors of the textbooks from over there, unlike those over here, did not fall into the stereotypes nurtured by daily advertisements for detergents and margarine.

A normal family is a family in which there is love, and not the one that has a mommy, a daddy, a blond daughter, and a mischievous little boy.

When we launched the story about the family once again, through Ali and his mom who worked abroad, I once again pulled out this book from the shelf, as pulling a Joker from the bottom of the card deck, and read out loud the sentences written by a Croatian writer Julijana Matanović in the afterword: "Children can ask the most difficult questions. I did not believe it until the morning when the kindergarten friends of my four-year old daughter asked me why her dad never picks her up. On that day, I started analysing what I read to my M. In one book, a mother and father took their child to the park, in another one the dad baked a cake, while the mother wrapped the gifts, in the third, a happy family of parents with two children went on a holiday. There was not a single sentence in which I could see myself. I do not know whether I was sad, sick, or angry because of that. I started making up stories for M. which had similarities with her own short biography. Maybe someone who has never dealt with a relationship that does not fit the usual picture of children's happiness will not see all the beauty of the HEDGEHOG. Most often, we do not concern ourselves with things

which do not affect us directly.”

The “Hedgehog”, which inspired Matanović’s text, is an illustrated children’s book published in 2007 by a Zagreb publishing house MD. The book was written by Katarzyna Kotowska, and translated from Polish by Ivana Vidović Bolt. The book which

talks about the journey of a boy and his parents on the path from deciding to adopt a child until the moment when they finally become a family is not on the list of additional teaching aids, just like other books that would show the children that the only measure of happiness in family is love.

I am a mother of two of my own children. One is adopted, the other is not. Which one is less my own? The one for whom I did not stand in queues of the bureaucratic apparatus, or the one for whom I did not lie under the neon lights and for whom I said no to the drip, said I can do this?

19:00, a meeting at the club before tomorrow’s tournament

The coach is upset with Elma’s decision to withdraw from going to the tournament at the last minute because Hana, who is NOT her friend, is going and Mia, who IS her friend, is not going. If Mia is not going, Elma is not either, no matter that this is the national championship, no matter that her coach was preparing her for this for many weeks.

In the evening, after the “Elma-Mia” case was rehashed several times, while cutting pears and squeezing oranges, my husband is on the phone with his mom.

Bah, it is a joke, so what if her friend is not going... They should take up ballet then! – my husband says, clearly annoyed.

Ballet? – I ask him afterwards, clearly annoyed.

Yes, ballet. Or they should not train anything, this is a sport, not a soap opera.

I try to inhale and exhale, and then to let it go. I try not to judge harshly this person with whom I am raising my children. I know

he does not mean that, that it was just a clumsy use of words.

I know there is no excuse for clumsy use of words. There is no excuse for "own" and adopted child in the formal request of the Centre for Social Work. There are biological and adopted children, and both of them are your own. I am a mother of two of my own children. One is adopted, the other is not. Which one is less my own? The one for whom I did not stand in queues of the bureaucratic apparatus, or the one for whom I did not lie under the neon lights and for whom I said no to the drip, said I can do this?

There is no excuse for lousy terminology. Nor for bad jokes in conversations with loved ones. Because there is always someone listening, someone who is eleven and who will tomorrow think that the verses of a popular song he is humming while having breakfast "you're not made for school, you're made for the kitchen" are not a solid irony, but the truth of life. Someone who will tomorrow think that ballet is for cry-baby BFF girls, and that table tennis is a sport for fearless boys. Someone who will, on a day when he meets Hamdija, Zenica's Billy Elliot, the only boy student of the Ars ballet school, point a finger at him and say who-knows-what.

Friday comes and goes, and Saturday comes after it, a day we look forward to.

It is all good while we wait for tomorrow with joy.

It is all good while, no matter what today was like, we believe that, with a lot of effort and a lot of talk, there will always come a Saturday when not a single mom will stay at home ironing the laundry while the dad drives the children to the mountain.

WiFi
((••))

BAUK FEMINAUK

The year 1941, Hedy Lamarr, a famous Hollywood actress and a scientist, is working on an invention for steering torpedoes by frequency-hopping.



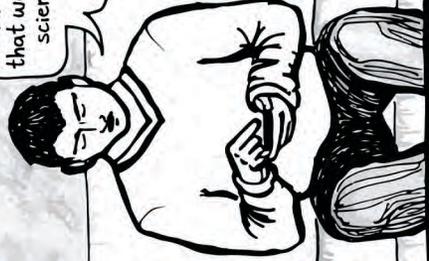
Today, that technology is used for cell phones, Bluetooth, and Wi-Fi.



Are you on Facebook right now?



Yeah, I'm telling this one chick that women weren't meant for science and technology, but for staying at home and making babies.





Jasmina
Čaušević

Women's issue
within science

is dual.

INVISIBLE FEMALE SUBJECTS

She was born in 1976. She got her Bachelor's degree from the Department of Literature and Language at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade, and obtained her Master's degree from the Gender Studies in Sarajevo. She is the editor, author, and co-author of numerous publications. She published theoretic texts, poetry, and translations in literary and culture magazines – "ProFemina", "Izraz", "Zenica Notebooks", "Album", etc. She works on issues of feminist linguistics, culture, and women's and LGBT rights. She lives and works in Sarajevo.

First of all, it considers the women
within science, or, more precisely,
their absence.¹

Is it possible to imagine that someone
who concerns themselves with women's
or gender studies
becomes a member of
the Academy of Science in the Balkans?²

Did you know that Hedy Lamarr, a famous Hollywood actress and beauty, was an innovator in the field of wireless communication? In 1942, as a well-known anti-fascist during the Second World War, she filed a patent for steering torpedoes by frequency-hopping, which was impossible to predict and tamper with back then. Did you know that this technology is today used for mobile phones and that Wi-Fi would be impossible without this

innovation? Hedy Lamarr did not receive any reward or gratitude for this huge innovation, but the International Innovator's Day is nowadays celebrated on November 9, i.e. her birthday. When someone says that women do not understand the IT science, feel free to laugh and tell them this story.

Whether we have a traditional understanding of science— as an accumulation of objective facts which lead to a true understanding of nature, or a relativistic one – as the truth

Through the centuries and millennia, dominant social systems did everything in their power to make women “disinterested” for creation of knowledge –from the fact that they were not considered as “mature” persons, that their fathers/husbands could do whatever they wanted to them (sell them, torture, and even kill them), to the fact that they did not have the right to go to school, and later on, in the 19th century, when they were allowed to be “slightly” educated, that they could not enrol at universities, they were not allowed to vote in elections, they had no right to property, no right over their bodies, etc.

which is a social construct established in accordance with social specifics in a particular historical moment, to question the relationship between science and gender policies means, above all, to put in the foreground the feminist critical reading of medicine, philosophy, biology, literature, economics, law, in other words - art, science, culture, and everyday life in the broadest sense.

As the history of civilization reveals, what almost all societies - with few exceptions - had in common was that women - in every sense and in every sphere of public life - were inferior to men, and that they enjoyed the rights very selectively, if they had any rights at all. Additionally, following the path of the Western civilization and

what we were taught in schools, in deliberations on women in public life from Plato (i.e. from the 4th century BC) until the 18th

century, women's participation in scientific, cultural, or political life was not a separate topic of analytical deliberation. This fact in itself sufficiently demonstrates that women have been ignored and excluded from all spheres of public life for over 2000 years.

When it comes to the general discussion on equal intellectual, mental, and other abilities of women and men, the opponents of feminist ideologies often cite the facts that there were no successful women in many professions - there are no renowned female mathematicians, composers, scientists, painters, philosophers, etc. - without wondering whether there really were not any, or whether we only never learned about them in school; without wondering, if there really were not any of them, why was that so? Instead, they simply conclude that women, "by their nature" are not mentally equal to men. In order to more accurately explain the question- why there are no renowned female names among the male scientists who are lauded for the world's greatest scientific discoveries -I will use the reply given by Eva Bahovec:

The answer is, at the very least, twofold. First, there is the argument that can be summarized by the metaphor of "own room": women had no objective possibilities. There were no preconditions for them to enter into the sphere of public life, to concern themselves with philosophy, science, and art. Neither education, nor scientific work was available to them, nor did they have their own life. (...) Secondly, but equally important, (...) it may be that, in fact, something is wrong with the very idea of science, history of science, and the history of ideas. There must be something very wrong in the structure of science, scientific discovery, accumulation of knowledge, and the underlying way the scientific community creates all that Thomas Kuhn refers to as "normal science".³

Through the centuries and millennia, dominant social systems did everything in their power to make women "disinterested" for creation of knowledge - from the fact that they were not

considered as “mature” persons, that their fathers/husbands could do whatever they wanted to them (sell them, torture, and even kill them), to the fact that they did not have the right to go to school, and later on, in the 19th century, when they were allowed to be “slightly” educated, that they could not enrol at universities, they were not allowed to vote in elections, they had no right to property, no right over their bodies, etc. Thus conceived tradition and experience have left their effect on the role of women in science, which “naturally” and “normally” belongs to men, because they have been engaged in science from time immemorial. How could there be women who were engaged in science, when they were not allowed to be educated in the field of science? However, what is even more paradoxical, there were outstanding female scientists even with all these restrictions in place, but they are left out of the history, their work is not written about, and they are simply buried in time. There were female scientists, but they are rarely taught about in schools.

Many women have made their mark in the world’s history of science, and here, due to limited space, I shall mention only a few whose innovations changed the science and the world: **astronomers** Hypatia (cca. 370 - cca. 415), Caroline Herschel (1750-1848), and Maria Mitchell (1818-1889); **mathematicians** Maria Agnesi (1718-1799) and Ada Lovelace (1815-1852); **medical scientists** Elizabeth Blackwell (1821- 1910), Florence Sabin (1871-1953), and Dorothy Hodgkin (1910-1994); **physicists and Nobel prize winners** Marie Curie (1867-1934) and Maria Goeppert Mayer (1906-1972); a **seismologist** Inge Lehmann (1888-1993); **chemists and Nobel prize winners** Gerty Cori (1896-1957) and Irène Joliot-Curie (1897-1956); **biochemists** Rachel Brown (1898-1980) and Gertrude Elion (1918-1999) - also a **Nobel laureate**; a **psychoanalyst** Anna Freud (1895-1982); an **anthropologist** Margaret Mead (1901-1978); **geneticists** Barbara McClintock (1902-1992) and Rosalind Franklin (1920-1958); **computer scientists** Grace Hopper (1906-1992) and Hedy Lamarr (1914-2000); a **neurologist and a Nobel laureate** Rita Levi Montalcini

(1909-2012); a **primatologist** Jane Goodall (1934).

The history of science in Bosnia and Herzegovina also abounds with women. Very briefly, for a better understanding of the origins of the story on gender and science in these areas, and



without delving into political motives, we should mention that the forty-year integration of B&H in the Habsburg Monarchy had an important impact on lives of female children because of the new attitude towards the necessity of education, which opened for women the entrance gates to cultural, artistic, scientific, and any other public space in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The periods around the two world wars, the time of changes in the ruling ideologies, the socialist period, and the wartime in B&H, as well as the present, were marked by the exceptional women

in science. Let us recall only some of the women who have left a deep mark on the history of science, thought, and life of our country: **doctors** Ševala Zildžić-Iblizović (1903-1978) and Maša Živanović; **mathematicians** Vera Šnajder (1904-1974) and Mirjana Vuković (1948); **a radiologist** Jelena Đorđević (1929-1988); **an immunologist and a paediatrician** Zulejka Popović (1930-1991); **chemists** Jela Grujić-Vasić (1923-2009) and Natalija Dozet (1923); **a computer scientist** Branislava Peruničić (1936); **a microbiologist** Mirsada Hukić (1950); **a biologist** Jasna Šarić (killed in 1993).

Feminist studies, which are based on questioning the predominant knowledge through critical resistance to subordination and taking things for granted, show that even science is not an objective fact but that it is, like everything else, a social construct, because scientific "exclusion is not practice based on knowledge, skills, talents, but on the basis of various biological, social, or locational characteristics".⁴ And finally, feminist deliberation on the history of science is essential for us so that the names of outstanding female scientists, their work, and contributions to science do not remain forever buried in the past. We also need feminist deliberation on science in order to break the personal prejudices and change the attitude towards women in science, i.e. toward their titles and professions, and in order not to be surprised if a world-renowned neurosurgeon announced as a speaker at a conference turns out to be a woman. As a matter of fact, when addressing this woman, it would be fair and grammatically correct to use the gendered noun used in B/C/S languages for female neurosurgeons.

- 1 Bahovec D. Eva (2009). *Science, Gender, and Stupidity*, in: Babić Avdispahić, Jasminka, et. al., eds. *Gender and Science*, anthology. Sarajevo: CIPS, 2009, p. 75.
- 2 Blagojević, Marina (2009). *Scientific Excellence at the Semi-Periphery: Hierarchies, Exclusions, and the Feminist Strategy for Creation of Knowledge*, in: Babić Avdispahić, Jasminka, et. al., eds. *Gender and Science*, anthology. Sarajevo: CIPS, 2009, p. 38.
- 3 Bahovec D. Eva (2009). *Science, Gender, and Stupidity*, in: Babić Avdispahić, Jasminka, et.al., eds. *Gender and science*, anthology. Sarajevo: CIPS, 2009, p. 75.
- 4 Blagojević, Marina (2009). *Scientific Excellence at the Semi-Periphery: Hierarchies, Exclusions, and the Feminist Strategy for Creation of Knowledge*, p. 29

Gender equality is one of the main principles of our political party. Our female colleagues in the party are completely equal to their male counterparts.



In the party offices...

Chairman, our female colleagues disagree that discrimination against new mothers can be solved by removing maternity compensations...



What do women know?! They're just there as a window dressing for the electoral lists.

Is this gender equality something that's only on paper or is it applied in practice?



We are absolutely devoted to putting gender equality into practice. Just look at our electoral lists!





**Arijana
Aganović**

WOMEN AS POLITICAL AND PARTY DECORATION

Adornment of electoral lists with the names of women according to the formula prepared by the B&H Central Election Commission guided by

the B&H Election Law, has grown into a traditional pre-election event in which all political parties take part in an effort to establish an equal ratio of men and women on the lists. This traditional event is also joined by the media which often talk about women and their success in balancing private and public life by asking questions on “women’s” issues, not taking into account that all common “human” issues are actually “women’s” issues as well. The campaigns that promote women talk about women voting for women, occasionally also about women’s solidarity, and very rarely about the issues women are facing, all of which represents a shift away from gender-sensitive policies and advocacy for gender equality in political life. In addition to the fact that 40% does not represent an equal relation, because 40% is not 50%, women become the less represented gender referred to by this quota, through default and inherited habits of a patriarchal society. Why is that so?

Born in 1984 in Sarajevo, she obtained her Bachelor’s Degree in Comparative Literature and Library Sciences at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo, and a Master’s degree in Religion Studies at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Post-graduate Studies, University of Sarajevo. From 2007 to 2012, she worked in the field of theatre and literature at the B&H Association of Writers. Since 2010, she worked at the Sarajevo Open Centre on various projects within the field of human rights and political participation. She is one of the editors of the anthology Political Participation in B&H, published by the Sarajevo Open Centre. She is currently the director of the Boris Divkovic Foundation. She is active in politics and is a member of the main Board of the political party Our Party (Naša Stranka).

I will outline the two most visible examples of apparent political participation of women (in B&H): the first is the mandatory, legal representation of women on electoral lists (40%), and the second is the participation of women in forums as separate bodies which exist in political parties and are exclusively comprised of women.

The issue of gender-sensitive policies is science fiction for B&H political life and the simple principles of equality become mission impossible when the turbulent period of forming assemblies, parliaments, and governments occurs after the election, i.e. when mandates are distributed in a manner clearly showing that, despite the appropriate representation on the lists, there are no women within the executive and legislative power, because the few female names that were on the electoral lists were misplaced in the meantime.

Through these two manners of including women in political life, the attention is often shifted away from the problems that women, but not only women, face in their everyday life. The issue of gender-sensitive policies is science fiction for B&H political life and the simple principles of equality become mission impossible when the turbulent period of forming assemblies, parliaments, and governments occurs after the election, i.e. when mandates are distributed in a manner clearly showing that, despite the appropriate representation on the lists, there are no women within the executive and legislative power, because the few female names that were on the electoral lists

were misplaced in the meantime. Serving as decoration on the electoral lists remains the only manner of participation of women in political life, as the results of previous formation of parliaments on many levels of government in B&H most frequently show that there are no women at the decision-making positions, and if there are any, they are few and far between.

Questioning gender stereotypes is a part of deliberation on the political participation of women and an issue that largely

determines the review of the political culture in B&H. When we observe this issue from different segments, we see that the patriarchal attitude prevails in politics towards women and their role as the supporting element which is of no serious consequence within the political life, and even within the formation of government or policy-making of a party that will concern not only the women, but all citizens as well. Political life in which women's forums within the political parties are the most active part of the party dealing with women, is reducing their participation to being a decoration of a party, which further shows that women are present in the parties but not in the politics and decision-making. Legal regulations or the organization of women within the political parties are not the problem; the problem arises when these two ways of promoting women remain only at the level of decorating the lists, and hide the real problem and non-participation of a group of citizens in political life in an equal and dignified manner. Negative stories about the participation of women in politics are common and do not encourage women to engage in politics, nor to get involved in political life through their initiatives and activism. Women's forums at times paint a picture of women in political parties as a separate section dealing with the follow-up activities unrelated to political profiling of parties, and these are often related to humanitarian work, knitting, crocheting -in short, socializing without political significance.

Legal regulations or the organization of women within the political parties are not the problem; the problem arises when these two ways of promoting women remain only at the level of decorating the lists, and hide the real problem and non-participation of a group of citizens in political life in an equal and dignified manner. Negative stories about the participation of women in politics are common and do not encourage women to engage in politics, nor to get involved in political life through their initiatives and activism.

Here is an example that vividly paints the picture of gender equality in a country where gender equality is brought to a level which will often be referred to as exaggerated, which is, of course, just a way of drawing attention to the simplest life situations in which equal position is associated with practical actions. In this case, I am referring to Sweden, a country of equality and respect for human rights, and the issue that was discussed during the winter period was gender-sensitive snow clearing. In this case, it was not about exaggeration, which would be one of the first comments on the announcement of this manner of clearing the snow, but it was about practical actions which will facilitate the daily life of the citizens of Stockholm. Based on the research performed by the city authorities in Stockholm, it was concluded that women more frequently ride bicycles, take children to kindergartens and schools, and use footpaths. Based on these findings, city services for snow clearing cleaned these areas first, in order to avoid crowds or delays in arriving to school or workplace. Gender-sensitive budgeting or snow clearing in Stockholm shows that we can respond to everyday situations and problems practically and, in doing so, advocate for equality and dignity. Gender-sensitive budgeting is nothing more than an equal distribution of money which will facilitate everyday life for everyone, not just for women.

Sex and gender equality policy is not only the promotion or appointment of women on electoral lists and organizing within the forum, but it is an issue of all citizens whose goal is the facilitation of everyday life.

BAUK FEMINAUK

MAN BEHIND THE WHEEL





THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

**Dermana
Šeta**

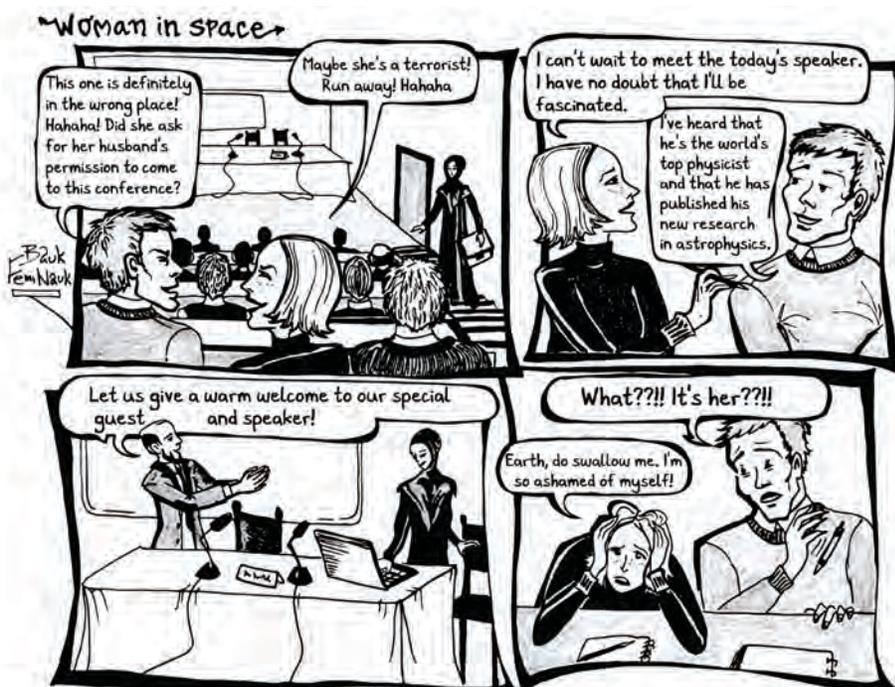
If I had to choose the most important word for myself, it would be the word context.

As an Anglicist and a translator for many years, I am aware of the untranslatability of certain concepts and ideas, even when they seem similar or same. I have also continued my activism and academic work, to a large extent focused on the specific B&H context, attempting to understand the relationship between its religious and gender issues. One such issue (certainly the most visible and most frequently analysed, although I do not consider it as the most important) is that of the covering worn by Muslim women. (I will use the terms "covering worn by Muslim women" or "hijab", referring to a type of modest dressing which covers everything except the face and hands.) While, seemingly, the dilemmas on the covering worn by Muslim women exist in many countries, the only adequate way to understand this phenomenon is through its deep contextualization. Muslim women who wear headscarves in Bosnia and Herzegovina do not have immigrant origins, have no doubts related to integration

She obtained her Bachelor's degree at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo, and her Master's degree in Religious Studies at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Post-graduate Studies, University of Sarajevo. Her fields of interest are: sociology of religion, gender, and family, and religion and human rights. She is the author of several researches and numerous articles. Her Master thesis was published as a book named "Why the Headscarf? Muslim Women of B&H Speak about Their Life and Work with Hijab", 2011, CNS & CIPS. She is a doctoral candidate at the Sociology Department of the Faculty of Political Sciences in Sarajevo. Šeta, MA, is currently leading the project on the establishment and organization of Marriage and Family Department (women's activism/ marriage and family), at the Administration for Religious Affairs of the Islamic Community in B&H.

and assimilation or challenges of learning a language shared by, for example, those Muslim women living in other parts of Europe. B&H Muslim women create their own identity in the post-socialist B&H in which men and women have legally equal rights to education, employment, and equal compensation for their work.

Unlike in other places, women wearing the hijab in B&H are faced with prejudices that are not primarily related to the safety of others or the fear of the unknown. Here, prejudices are mainly based on our previous experience of socialism during which it was not possible to be a socially engaged person while being visibly religious, due to the regime's atheisation. This means that, for a certain period of time, people have not had the chance to



socialize with educated and/or socially active Muslim women who wore hijab. The situation was certainly not made better by the Muslim experience from 1950, when the covering of face was banned by the Law on Abolishment of Traditional Muslim women's

dress/veil (known as *zar* and *feredža*), but the social action was successfully directed toward a complete rejection of the Muslim women's clothing, which was, in its entirety, represented as retrogressive and an obstacle to education. Such circumstances were a precursor for the creation of the most common attitude present in our society, the one which considers that Muslim women who cover themselves are probably less educated and less in tune with societal trends, or are automatically seen as Islamic theologians. We should add here the partial impact of geopolitics and the global demonization of Islam present here as well, although not to the same degree that it is present elsewhere.

As someone who considers human integrity and autonomy as key values given to us humans by God, or values that we obtain through our birth, I believe it is not appropriate to discuss how people dress, or what a certain

woman wears, or what she looks like. I believe that we have to work in unison to ensure a safe space and environment where there will be opportunities for all people to build themselves up – to educate themselves and to read both the Quran and the work of Shakespeare. Therefore, I hereby decide not to talk at all about why Muslim women wear covering. They simply believe that it is a part of their religion. Which happens to be visible. Thus, the visibility of practicing this religious rule is, in a way, a collateral thing (of course, in a way, it is also not, because this religious rule, as opposed to some other rules, has obvious social implications as well).

If this were a public speech, right about now someone from the audience would ask a question about secularism. What to do with that now? Well, we are going to make a distinction

Because removing diversity out of sight does not remove diversity itself, but it only quenches it, closes and restraints it. And such restraint (especially of religious diversities) did not yield the best of results in our fairly recent past.

between secularism as an ideology (visible in certain variations in the Turkish Kemalism or French Laïcité) which aims to remove visible religiosity out of society, and secularism as the state/administrative principle according to which there must be no direct influence or impact of any worldview (it does not have to necessarily be religious, although it most commonly refers to it) on the state and its institutions, and the decisions made on behalf of that state must not be inspired by a particular worldview. However, this does not mean that faith is (still) a private matter. This means that, in a pluralistic society such as ours, citizens should live so as not to endanger the rights of others. Because removing diversity out of sight does not remove diversity itself, but it only quenches it, closes and restraints it. And such restraint (especially of religious diversities) did not yield the best of results in our fairly recent past.

We will, therefore, continue to stick to our context jealously. We will not copy-paste here the debates and dilemmas which are traditionally and historically not common to us, neither from the West nor from the East. We should not be afraid of the covering worn by Muslim women, we know what it is about, we have "invented" the covering worn by Muslim women according to most of the Western countries, and for that matter, are partially responsible for its banning. We will talk about it wisely, within our specific context. To find solutions, legal frameworks, and possibilities which will enable us all, without discrimination and with the respect for others, to direct our potentials toward the building of our society that desperately needs all available capacities.

Not to be accused of waxing theoretic, I recalled some of my repressed experiences that I will share with you as the examples for illustrating and highlighting the essence of some of the previously mentioned assertions.

Anecdote 1

The summer SFF atmosphere is in the air. Nicely dressed, ready for the theatre, my husband and I walk through the city. By the Eternal Flame, a visibly upset woman approaches me holding a large bottle of mineral water in her hand. She frantically grabs my arm. She pours a full bottle of water on my head, saying to my husband, "Hajji, you have covered her!" My husband, a professor of sport education, fourth dan karate master, tries to calm the woman saying, apparently in vain: "I did not." Two older women approach us, and yell at him: "What have you allowed her to do to your wife, hit that fool?!" Recognizing that this is a person with a mental issue, I turn to my attacker and in a soothing voice say: "Calm down, ma'am." My husband, for some reason, explains to those ladies that he is a master of karate and that it would certainly not be good if he had hit my attacker.

Anecdote 2

I graduated from the department of Anglistics. An experienced colleague, a Catholic, recommended me for working on a project of the European Commission. People call me. They ask for my CV. I send it. Without a photo. They call again, saying: "The CV is excellent. Exactly what we need. You got the job. You have her recommendation. You don't even have to come for the interview. Come on Monday." I come. The first day, all of them behave as if everything is okay. The second day, the boss's boss, who is staying only for a few days, calls me for an interview. He says: "I lived in Malaysia, I know what this is about, but if possible, let's get rid of that practice when we go to the Republic of Srpska. It could be seen as a provocation". I answer back: "I want a country where all of us will be able to fully be who we are, alongside one another. And, anyway, I just translate." "Well, yes," he says, "but still." "I do not think so, thank you. You do what you must. But I know my rights and what my next step would be," I say, with my most threatening attitude. Of course, I had no idea about any of my rights, or what that next step would be. We left it at that. Later

on, a Slovenian expert would tell my aunt who lives in Slovenia to tell me that quite an uproar was raised in the project because of this, and that a Pole, an atheist, stood up in my defence, a man who still, years and years after that event, does not understand

Essentially, I want to tell you that Muslim women were not a uniform, homogenous group of women, but that there is a variety of us: right-wing, left-wing, ecologically more or less conscious, feminists, and those who are not.

why I cover myself. Or anything related to Islam. But he is a very consistent and honourable man.

Anecdote 3

I met the late Father Luka Markešić on a joint inter-religious study trip to Arizona (USA) around 2007. Later, some of the Americans who hosted us came to visit us in Bosnia. It was Sunday. The American group was divided into several smaller groups. I go to the meeting place, they tell me: "You will be translating with Father Luka, at the Saint Anthony church". I go there, the church pews packed to the brim with the faithful; I find him—he is getting ready for the altar. I ask: "Father Luka, what should I do?" He says: "What do you mean, you will translate. Our American guest, a Protestant minister, will hold a part of the service which can be held by non-Catholic Christians, and you will do the consecutive translation." As I understood it, it would be like someone else holding a part of the khutbah (part of sermon) during the jummah (Friday congregational prayer in Islam). "Well, Father Luka, is not it plenty for these faithful Catholics that the Protestant minister is going to speak to them, all they need is to have a Muslim woman in a hijab translating for them?" "That's right." "And is it allowed for women to stand here, Father Luka?" "You are allowed to stand where I say, just wait for my sign." And he left. When he was done with his part of the service, he announced: "Now our Protestant brother from America will briefly address you and our Ćermana will translate." There was no end to my concerns. It is a particular challenge to translate the quotations from the Scriptures and

their interpretation. And it is especially difficult to do that in front of people to whom those words are important and significant, while you yourself obviously do not belong to that community. Father Luka did not even blink, my concerns seemed ridiculous to him. He believed in me more than I did myself. In a way that only truly great people do. Unfortunately, I never managed to thank him for that.

As the writing of this article was also a certain form of therapy for me, I kept coming up with more situations that I could talk about. For example, when I found myself in the Vatican during the first "*urbi et orbi*" speech of the former Pope Benedict XVI, or when I stayed in an Orthodox Monastery for women in Kosovo, or how I am occasionally approached on the street by women who ask me what surah from the Quran is good if you have this or that problem, or to boast about their children or grandchildren going to maktab...

Essentially, I want to tell you that Muslim women are not a uniform, homogenous group of women, but that there is a variety of us: right-wing, left-wing, ecologically more or less conscious, feminists, and those who are not. I know that many will quickly place the story on the covering worn by Muslim women into some pre-made Orientalist or traditionalist or ethno-national narrative. Sometimes maybe even with a good reason, because of some previous experience. However, the truth is that we are also a part of the society; we are influenced by a variety of ideas, social trends, political trends, music genres. That every day we enter into a new link in the chain of life, not knowing what awaits us there. Hoping, together with others, for a better tomorrow.

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CHORES

BAUK
FEMINAUK

My husband never helped me with the chores, dearie.



The amount of food I've cooked, dishes and clothes I've washed, carpets I've dusted, dust I've swallowed... Never even got a proper "thank you".



Put that down, my big boy, you're not meant to clean like a woman!

10 minutes later





ON FAIRY TALES, PRINCESSES, AND FAKE CROWNS

**Azra
Smailkadić-
Brkić**

Fairy tales we grow up with are all alike. In a land far, far away (we do not know where) lives a girl infinitely beautiful, good, and noble, but often despised

and abused by others. The plot in fairy tales is usually very tedious for our main female character, but the joy is even greater when, in the end, He arrives – Prince Charming – and saves Her, automatically bestowing her with the status of a Princess. Shortly thereafter, He takes Her to a magical land on the back of his horse, to his magical castle where the two of them – and what else should they do – live happily ever after.

She is a journalist with a Master's degree in human rights. Her MA thesis "Violence against Women: From the Bedroom to the Battlefield", has been chosen for publication as one of the best theses in 2004/2005 academic year. She worked as an assistant and academic tutor at the "Gender Studies" Master programme at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Post-graduate Studies, University of Sarajevo, and as the consultant in the project "Women, War, and Peace" within the PBS Network in New York. She received a scholarship from the prestigious University of Columbia in New York for attending a specialized programme for human rights defenders. Throughout her life, she fought against gender stereotypes, despite probably not being aware of that initially. She cannot stop fantasizing about a world free of prejudices, stereotypes, and all forms of discrimination. Azra was born and raised in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and is currently living in New York

Girls grow up with fairy tales, pink dresses, and fake crowns, while boys play with marbles, balls, and plastic guns. It is very rare to see girls playing with marbles, and we almost never hear about boys having Cinderella read to them before bedtime. And so they grow and grow and grow. And then they are grownups. Today,

upon turning 18, it is not so important whether the princess will fall for the Prince. She might scope out the “market”, see what the offer is like, but she has better things to do. Graduate from the

Today’s princes are usually doctors. I have heard somewhere that the best daughter is the one who marries a doctor. Because this is the only way for a dad to repress the emotional pain caused by the fact that he had a daughter, and not a big hulk of a son.

university. That’s right –school first, love second –such is the advice of the experienced moms and dads, as well as the entire immediate and extended family.

His Majesty the Doctor

And then, somehow, she is done with the university. But the torments of the potential princess are not over. The next task is “plush life”. There are two

common ways to achieve this. Very simple. The first and harder way is to find a job and then search for the prince. The other, much easier way, is to search for the Prince immediately, through an expedited procedure. Today’s princes are usually doctors. I have heard somewhere that the best daughter is the one who marries a doctor. Because this is the only way for a dad to repress the emotional pain caused by the fact that he had a daughter, and not a big hulk of a son. But let us get back to the potential princesses. By the time she is twenty-five, everything she does is tolerated. Whether she had found a job or not. Whether she had nearly caught the Prince or not. All of that is charted down to experience. But sometime after turning twenty-five, the pressure becomes stronger and stronger until it explodes as she hits the thirties. However, let us still hope that our potential princess did not allow herself to be overrun by time, i.e. that she has found the prince on time and the D-Day is approaching. In other words, let us imagine our princess had graduated from the university, found a job, and now she needs to marry no one else but His Majesty the Doctor.

Nice Families

And then the D-Day is here. Both of them are from nice families, he is nice and she is nice, everything is so nice it could not be any better. She is in all white, he is in whatever he is in, as that does not matter much. Never mind that there is no white horse –they will eventually find something to take them on a ride to their fairy tale life. And then, like in a fairy tale, the clock strikes midnight, all those nice families and guests disperse and the D-Day comes to an end. Not a single fairy tale continues from this point.



However, let us try to come up with a realistic continuation of the fairy tale. Our princess has now formalized her status, she has nothing else to worry about, and her Prince no longer has anywhere to flee. The key difference the two of them should now accept is the fact that She read fairy tales as a little girl, walked

The truth is that princesses from the beginning of this story very rarely become queens. Pink dresses are very often forgotten in the closets. After a few years they do not fit anymore. Princes lose their hair during the time and along with it their white horses and the sense for romance. Every ball also implies the moment when the clock strikes midnight.

in a pink dress with a crown on her head, while He busied himself with marbles and balls. But never mind, it is easy for two of them to resolve this. He will remind her several times to “be careful not to lose the crown on her head”, and she will remind him that he is married now and needs to straighten out his priorities.

And now a bit more on those nice families. At the beginning, almost everything runs smoothly. Mother-in-law is, you know, OK – although, the fact is that there are no such mothers-in-law in fairy tales. Everything is fine until some time passes and the mother-in-law asks: “Anything new?” This question is directly related to the dynasty successor. Everyone is of course hoping for a male successor, no one even imagines a different scenario. The mother-in-law’s questions are acceptable once or twice – the pampered Princess swallows it somehow, but the third time, she gets on her nerves. And then she dares to snap back. She lets her tongue loose. She tells her that she does not want it right now. She wants to pass the final bar exam. Or to obtain her Master’s degree, it does not matter. Tensions and potential disputes will be swept under the rug as soon as the boy successor is on the way. Of well, if the unthinkable does happen– that is also fine. The second one will surely be male. And then the nice families are usually back to being how they used to be and everything is fine again, nice and

neat. But not for long.

Why would it be easy when it can be complicated?

In fact, the time has come for the princess to go back to work. Well, now the big question is – who is going to take care of the successor? His or her mother? And here is when the tensions slowly start to build up again. Things are heating up. Which granny takes better care of the child? Which granny the child prefers? Granddads are more or less irrelevant factors in this. That is how it is when things start heating up. When they start heating up, they start boiling as well. There is no end to this. One problem is swept under the rug, the other swims up to the surface. And so on, and so forth. Life is lived according to the principle – why would we have it simple, when we can have it with the abundance of stereotypes.

Joking aside, the truth is that princesses from the beginning of this story very rarely become queens. Pink dresses are very often forgotten in the closets. After a few years they do not fit anymore. Princes lose their hair during the time, and along with it their white horses and the sense for romance. Every ball also implies the moment when the clock strikes midnight. And we all know that glittering garments become rags after midnight, carriages turn into pumpkins, and beautiful horses turn back into mice.

Instead of a Conclusion

Is an audience necessary for love? Is it an unwritten rule that all daughters-in-law and all sons-in-law have to hate their mothers-in-law? Why is it important to know if the still unborn baby is a boy or girl? Is it really because of the need to buy blue or pink baby clothes? Is it possible to think about marriage and not keep falling into the pitfalls of expectations? Is it a good idea not to tie the idea of marriage so tightly to the D-Day, luxurious robes, and the number of guests, but to focus on what comes after? Why is that part constantly missing from the fairy tales?

In short, is it possible to begin to live our own lives and not to constantly live according to the expectations and needs of the others – playing the roles assigned based on empty stereotypes and prejudices? Ultimately, is it time for princesses and pink dresses to go out of fashion once and for all?

There are many answers, and each of us should write their own...

INHERITANCE



BAUK
FEMINAUK



UNTIL DEATH DO US PART

**Melika
Šahinović**

I assume you are one of those girls whose upbringing and education were more or less indistinguishable from the upbringing and education of your peers. The first lessons you learned were to be honest, hardworking, to care about your family, respect the elderly, and so on. When it comes to marriage, that is when you realize you do not understand anything. Some are talking about one thing, the others about a completely different thing, everyone has something smart to say about the real values, the husband, the children, the family. Their advice is different, and the majority of them is traditional and patriarchal: when you are about to get married, you have to think twice whether he is the man of your life, you have to respect and obey him, to care for the children and your family. And then come the warnings: make sure that you are on good terms with everyone; do not let someone hear you when you are fighting; even if he does something wrong, stay silent, this too shall pass – brew a pot of coffee, talk to

She works as the project coordinator at TPO Foundation Sarajevo within the projects on human rights and peace building, and the empowerment of youth and women through academic and activist engagement aimed to improve the development of the democratic civil society. In 2010, she graduated from the Department of International Relations at the International University of Sarajevo, and is currently working on her Master's thesis on the application and practices within the UN CEDAW Convention in B&H. Her specific interests are the international law and diplomacy and the analysis of external policies and international organizations. She volunteered in the non-governmental sector since her early student days, and plans to continue doing so. Throughout her work, a specific focus has been directed toward the support of young people in B&H society through informal education and economic and political empowerment.

him, and move on; he has the right to be angry, he is the head of the family; you have children, you need to live for them; and God forbid divorce, a divorcée, children of divorced parents... While others, possibly the parents, would speak about the importance

The fact that women who divorce their husbands or partners wait for years for their property and thus for one of deprived human rights – the unhindered use of their property speaks volumes about the system which is not making it easier for them. Women, who frequently gain custody of children and are responsible for their further education and upbringing after divorce, at that point, are only starting to fight for something that already belongs to them and their children.

of education, financial independence, the reminders of your own values and mutual respect, joint property, and so on. Are they saying this out of their love and commitment to you or because of their own mistakes or experience –you do not even know at this point.

And you still understand nothing, so you ask yourself why they mention the fights and divorce while you have not even gotten married, and you are not planning to divorce – what a nonsense, you and your future husband are made for each other, you love each other more than anything in the whole wide world and you will never have

a single quarrel. And they are talking about property, that your name should be added in the property ledgers– what hassle and boring administration!

From today's perspective, we should say that we have moved from a standstill on the issue of settling property issues more efficiently after the divorce, but B&H society, i.e. women in most cases, continues to struggle for years to resolve the issue of division of property. The fact that women who divorce their husbands or partners wait for years for their property and thus for one of deprived human rights – the unhindered use of their

property speaks volumes about the system which is not making it easier for them. Women, who frequently gain custody of children and are responsible for their further education and upbringing after divorce, at that point, are only starting to fight for something that already belongs to them and their children. *"What a boring TV show, this can only be for those who married out of interest and not out of love"*, Jasna says, while adding people to the list of names in her planner to whom she needs to send the invitations for her dream wedding. *"All is settled– I have a Master's in architecture, a job, I made an agreement with Adnan that both of us would get a loan from the bank and buy an apartment in which we would live, I plan to have two children and live happily ever after..."*

Jasna is married, she and her husband bought an apartment, she is already pregnant with their first child. They are invited to the office of Public Notary to complete all the paperwork regarding the apartment. A lady briefly went over their rights and the procedure, saying that partners have a possibility of creating a marital or premarital agreement, and a possibility of specifying both names in the property ledger, which would mean that both Jasna and Adnan would own the apartment. *"I do not need to be labelled as a "gold-digger" and have Adnan doubt my love"*, Jasna did not want to think about it, while Adnan paid no attention to it. *"Why split the property and complicate things with administration, we will just have the apartment entered in the ledger as the property of one person, in Adnan's name. Everything I own is his, and all that*

The Law from 2005 clearly states that the property jointly acquired during marriage or cohabitation may be entered in the property ledgers under a single name only if both spouses agree. If the property has been entered under both names, it is divided in equal parts between spouses in case of divorce. But who thinks about such agreements while love blossoms?

he has is mine, let us not complicate things with such formality", they both concluded.

The Law from 2005 clearly states that the property jointly acquired during marriage or cohabitation may be entered in the property ledgers under a single name only if both spouses agree. If the property has been entered under both names, it is divided in equal parts between spouses in case of divorce. But who thinks

Values, hard work, and a life devoted to building the family and raising children, responsibilities which mostly fall on the woman, now become a worthless investment as the material side of a story is the most important link which is under the control of a man.

about such agreements while love blossoms?

Adnan does not come home for days at a time, under the excuse that he is on a business trip; it is obvious that he has another life; he does not even spend time with children anymore. It all

became clear to Jasna. The words she heard once upon a time go through head: quarrels, divorce, property, contract... *"Love is gone and I have to accept it, a divorce is the way out of this hell for me and the children. Adnan will agree because he already has a different life."* She found the courage to confide in a friend who divorced a few years ago –she knows that she suffered for years until her divorce was finalized. The friend told her that, currently, the property was divided only if the man voluntarily agreed to the division during the divorce proceedings and in the ratio he stipulated, rarely within the legal framework.

Jasna comes to a new point in life, she is preparing to talk with her already ex-husband in order to work everything out as soon as possible –following the principle of you take what is yours and I will take mine, let us wish good luck to each other, and carry on with our lives. On the way from disappointment in love, remorse because of the unsigned premarital or marriage contract, to failure to reach an agreement regarding the division of property,

she is currently at the stage of calculating who worked and earned more. Their calculations do not match, so it is difficult to come to an agreement. Values, hard work, and a life devoted to building the family and raising children, responsibilities which mostly fall on the woman, now become a worthless investment as the material side of a story is the most important link which is under the control of a man. Adnan has not agreed to equal division of property. He does not want to share the acquired property because he believes that Jasna earned less than him and thus does not have the right to one half of the mutual property.

And then they go to court. Family Law in both B&H entities does not treat the division of property in the divorce proceedings, stating that it should be resolved by a separate lawsuit after a divorce or dissolution of an extramarital union, which is legally equated with marriage after three years. In most cases, this lawsuit is filed by the wife, the mother, Jasna. And after gathering the necessary documents, going through painstaking administration in order to obtain a divorce and terminate the divorce proceedings, that is when her troubles have just begun.

Jasna is suing her ex-husband and father of her children for something that already belongs to her. The new lawsuit requires a new proceeding, new documentation, significant amount of funds, and includes the services of lawyers, court fees, testimonies, court expert fees, and so on. To make matters worse, these processes have an unpredictable duration. Jasna's dispute before the Municipal Court in Sarajevo lasts for almost eight years, and

Why do not women take advantage of the laws they are provided with and find the courage to sign a premarital or marital agreement and do away with "taboo" issues and prejudices? Why do they go to school and work, raise loans and build houses, if they will literally donate these and other properties acquired during marriage to their husbands or partners?

even more time will pass before the final judgment! In addition to Jasna being divorced, now she is even more humiliated, evicted from her home, forbidden to use what belongs to her.

Jasna wonders why the proprietary process was not settled within the divorce proceeding, which would make the administration process easier and shorten the traumas women and children go through? Why do the current law and practice simultaneously deny one of the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of the European Convention which states that a legal entity is entitled to unhindered enjoyment of his or her possessions? Why do not women take advantage of the laws they are provided with and find the courage to sign a premarital or marital agreement and do away with "taboo" issues and prejudices? Why do they go to school and work, raise loans and build houses, if they will literally donate these and other properties acquired during marriage to their husbands or partners? Why are divorced women and their children exposed to social prejudices and why does not the society start to change these practices?

All we can do is wait and see. Or stand up and do something about it. Now. Immediately.

ON THE TROLLEY BAUK FEMINAUK

Some maniac rubbed up against me from behind in the trolley yesterday! Disgusting! I never know what to do in situations like that.

Just relax and enjoy it! Hahahaha

Three days later...

Mate, you don't have a ticket, step out!

Hey! Get your hands off me or I'll break your face!

Oh, just relax and enjoy it...





WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING, HELP, OR PROTECTION

Radmila Žigić

"I did ask, but they said, first you find a job and then you find an apartment and figure it out on your own. Simply, this country does not even exist. They do not care that I had a problem with my husband who wanted to kill me one night. I have no one to turn to at all."

Since 1998, she works on planning, research, and management in women's organization "Lara" in Bijeljina. As a researcher and an analyst, she participated in various research projects in the field of gender equality in the media ("Gender Responsible Reporting during Disasters", "Women in B&H Daily Newspapers"), in the election process ("Women in 2004 Local Elections"), in the field of gender budgeting ("Recommendations and Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming within the Local Budgets in Bosnia and Herzegovina", Civil Association Vesta, Tuzla, 2008), etc. She is the editor and author of several publications and research papers ("Her Life Afterwards – the Experiences of Helping the Victims of Human Trafficking in B&H and the Republic of Croatia", 2010/11, "Women in the History of Semberija", 2010/2012, "Peace with a Female Face", 2014). She graduated from the Department of Journalism, the Faculty of Political Sciences, in Belgrade, 1984. She worked for twenty years in the media, as a journalist and editor.

Before the adoption of the Law on Protection from Violence in Austria in 1995, one of the founders of the first Austrian women's safe house, Rosa Logar, stated: "Our dream is that, one day, we can close all safe houses, and only leave one that will be opened as a museum, where women can come, see, and never forget how hard it was for women who were forced to hide from violent partners and for the activists who have created houses like this from nothing."¹

Rosa Logar, one of the most famous European experts and activists in the field of recognition and struggle against gender-

based violence nowadays, is still miles away from fulfilling her twenty-year-old dream. Women still have to hide from violence, and the capacities of all 26 safe houses in Austria are currently mostly filled.

My interlocutor from the beginning of this article does not share Rosa's dream; she dreams the current Austrian dream of full safe houses, just as I and a group of my friends did when we opened a safe house "from nothing", 15 years after the group of feminists from Vienna gathered around Rosa Logar, whose work was an inspiration for us. We had hoped that by opening the safe house we could help women who suffer violence and who have nowhere else to escape, to protect them and help them to continue to live without violence. The only thing is, things are different in Bosnia. Here, it is necessary to first crack open the locked awareness, or, in common tongue, to open people's minds. In Bosnia, women are not even allowed to run away from violence. That is why this will be an article with a minimum of academic sources and statistical data, illustrated by a series of short anecdotes which were engraved in my memory and the memory of my colleagues during our work with women victims of violence.

Love, Knife, and Dad

"Just be patient, can't you see that he even wants to buy you a car. He hits you, what of it, he is a man. My husband also beat me, and I toughed it out", a social worker at the Centre for Social Work says to a young blond woman sitting across from her on a wooden, scratched up chair, her face black and blue. "And you, what did you do? You upped and ran to a safe house, you want to destroy your marriage?!"

A month later, a social worker from the safe house, pale and shocked, looks at her colleague from the Centre for Social Work, who angrily slams the custody agreement on the table:

"What is this? She left for Austria, leaving the children in his care! What kind of mother is this? You have ruined this woman's

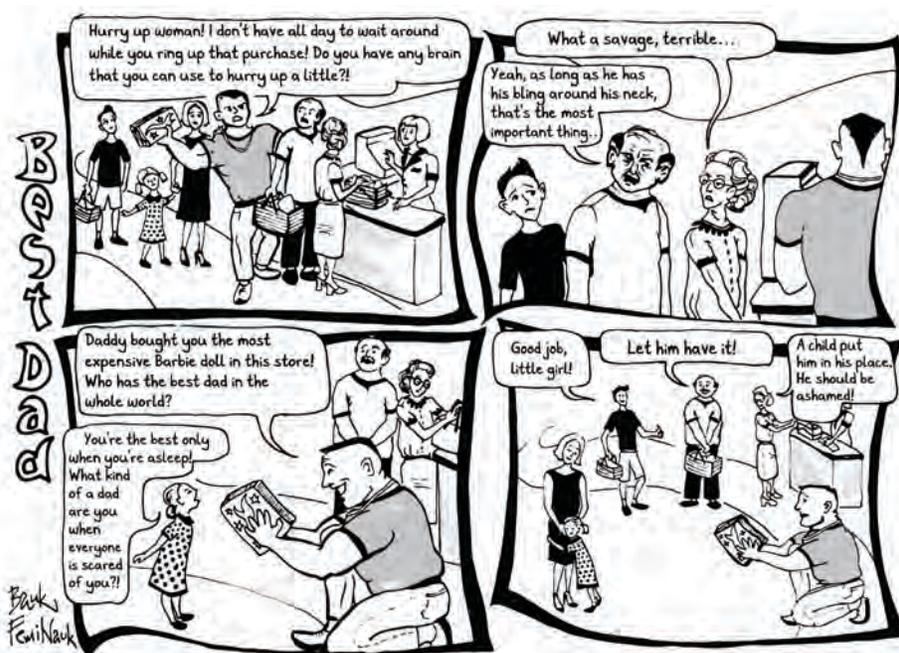
marriage! Destroyed a family! Are you sane? And with a husband like that!"

"He pulled out a knife on her, he even admitted it to the police", one confused social worker is trying to explain to the other the clear situation of violence.

"She is lying! He said that only so that she would not look like a liar in front of the police and because he loves her! What will the poor man do with two children now, and she just wants to go to Austria?!"

"It is only temporary, until my brother finds me a job. Children will come to live with me", the blond woman tries to explain, looking much calmer and put-together this time.

"Your brother, yeah right, your lover is looking for a job for you, I know. That is why you were beaten. And now you want to take his children away from him, too."



The woman takes the document and leaves the office accompanied by a social worker from the safe house. As they

sat in the car, she started to cry: "Whatever I do, it is wrong", she said, looking at nothing in particular. Social worker from the safe house, now calm, comforted her: "Well, at least she admitted that you were beaten, which she did not do when you were sitting in front of her with bruises on your face. "Yes but, according to her, I deserved it"², the young blond woman added with bitterness before they started the engine and drove away from one of the bastions of the patriarchy in the Balkans – the Centre for Social Work.

The situation of financial stability of safe houses is alarming in the Federation of B&H as well, because the state refuses to finance the need of women to "run away" from the situation of domestic violence. The house belongs to the man so he cannot be evicted, and there is no money for women "bothered" by violence. Thus, the circle closes.

She is not Suitable for a Safe House

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, eight women's non-governmental organizations³, with great effort and from nothing, just like Rosa Logar and her friends did before, opened safe houses for women and children victims of violence. In the first years, most of the safe houses were filled to the brim.⁴ In recent years, there are less and less victims, since the state started regulating the area of domestic violence in a "more serious manner".⁵

"By establishing the facts, we concluded that N. N. has been exposed to violence perpetrated by her son, which was preceded by a verbal fight about the already disturbed family relations. Since there is an auxiliary building within the family property to which N. N. can move in order to avoid verbal confrontations with her son, we conclude that there are no grounds for issuing the decision for her stay in a safe house, and therefore the request of the named subject for the issuance of special support measures for her relocation to a safe house is dismissed as unfounded..."⁶

"The named subject has voluntarily left the family house and

taken the children away from their father, supposedly because both she and her children were exposed to violence. Since it was determined during the house visit that the husband of the named subject and the father of the children is the sole provider of the family, the request to grant access to a safe house for her and the children is arbitrary and the investigation of violence is unfounded, and as such it is dismissed..."⁷

It is not a satire, although it would be good if it was; these are paraphrased replies of centres for social work to the requests of women for accommodation in safe houses, some of which were submitted to the B&H Ombudsperson and qualified as a violation of human rights of victims.⁸ To be more precise, these are excerpts from the practice of social work centres in the Republic of Srpska, but the situation of financial stability of safe houses is alarming in the Federation of B&H as well, because the state refuses to finance the need of women to "run away" from the situation of domestic violence. The house belongs to the man so he cannot be evicted, and there is no money for women "bothered" by violence. Thus, the circle closes.

According to the study on the prevalence of domestic violence, published in 2012 in B&H, about 47% of women stated that they have experienced some form of violence during their life – physical, psychological, economic, or sexual. During the research, about 11% of women older than 18 years stated they are currently living in some type of violent situation. According to the records of police services, about 2,000 women⁹ annually report instances of violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is less than 1% of the estimated number of victims. That is why, for the women of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the situation in Austria is a dream which we cannot seem to reach, a dream in which the perpetrators of violence are kicked out to the curb, or the women, at the very least, are granted access to safe houses.

- 1 Mlađenović, Lepa. *WOMEN'S SAFE HOUSE, Vienna, 1996*. Available at: http://www.womenngo.org.rs/sajt/sajt/izdanja/feministicke_sveske/Fs_s5/bec.html, (20.06.2015.)
- 2 From the Victims of Family Violence records, beneficiaries of the "Lara" Foundation Safe House. All personal data has been erased in order to protect the privacy of the protected woman.
- 3 Safe Houses in B&H are located in: Bihać (Women of Una), Banja Luka ("United Women" Foundation), Modriča (Citizen's Association "Future"), Bijeljina ("Lara" Fondacija), Tuzla (Viva Women), Sarajevo (Foundation of local democracy), Zenica ("Medica"), Mostar ("B&H Woman" and Caritas)
- 4 From 2007 to 2012, 688 women and 851 children were placed in two safe houses in the Republic of Srpska. During 2014, the Centres for Social Work in this entity authorised the placement of 32 victims of family violence, 21 women and 11 children. Data sources: Gender Centre of the Republic of Srpska and the Ministry for Family, Youth, and Sports, available at: http://www.vladars.net/sr-SP-Cyrl/Vlada/centri/gendercentarrs/Pages/Borba_protiv_rodno_zasnovanog_nasilja_ukljucujuci_i_nasilje_u_porodici.aspx, <http://www.vladars.net/sr-SP-Cyrl/Vlada/Ministarstva/mpos/oPorodica/Pages/Splash.aspx#collapsible1>
- 5 It was not possible to obtain the data on the number of women and children who stayed in safe houses in the Federation of B&H.
- 6 According to the new Law on the Protection from Domestic Violence from 2012 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Srpska, number: 102/12), the exclusive jurisdiction for approving the accommodation of victims of violence in safe houses lies with the Centres for Social Work. According to previous law, the police also had the possibility to place the victim into a safe house.
- 7 From the Safe House Bijeljina archives. The data indicating the identity of the victim have been erased or changed.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Recommendation related to the appeal submitted by the Women's Organization "Lara", the Office of Ombudsperson for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, P-79/14
- 10 There is no integrated data on reports of domestic violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The number of about 2000 women was obtained as an average by adding up the number of active criminal investigations of domestic violence in the Republic of Srpska and the Federation of B&H and the number of misdemeanor proceedings launched in the Republic of Srpska in the last three years.

BAUK FEMINAUK

BLONDE BEHIND THE WHEEL

Have you heard that
joke: what do you call a
blonde behind the wheel?

She's called a female driver,
and a person that tells jokes
like that one - a chauvinist!





ANECDOTES FROM EVERYDAY LIFE

**Zlatan
Delić**

Life Necessities

As we know, our societies are divided based on many segments, and one of these segments is certainly the division of toilets based on sex/gender which is considered completely normal, a daily routine, something that is learned. It is therefore considered extremely shameful when men use women's toilets and vice versa, and such situations are often seen as extremely disturbing. However, when a person breaks this rule and enters the toilet which is not intended for people of their own gender, there is a high possibility that most of the people in a particular coffee shop, restaurant, or public toilet, will, without any pretentiousness, condemn that person by giving them the stink eye, through body gestures, comments like "God forbid", or disapproval followed by the standard "...tsk, tsk, tsk...", or could even openly and without restraint attack that man or woman. This is why we should always keep in mind that there are no male or female clothing, jobs, haircuts, colours, or toilets, but we attached such meaning to them since shoes, colours, cars, hairstyles, handbags, and toilets do not have sex or gender– we

He was born in 1987 in Tuzla, where he obtained his Bachelor's degree in Literature (world and south-Slavic) and B/C/S Languages at the Faculty of Philosophy. He obtained his Master's degree at the Gender Studies Department of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Post-graduate Studies, University of Sarajevo. He is the author of the book "Turbo-Folk Star (Constructing the Female Subject within the Songs/Lyrics of Lepa Brena, Svetlana Ceca Ražnatović, Severina Vučković, and Jelena Karleuša)". He is a member of the editorial board of Patchwork, a magazine for feminist and gender theories, critics, and social issues, and of B&H Heritage, the annual publication of the Museum of Literature and Theatre Arts. He works on issues of subjectivity, literary and feminist theory, gender and cultural studies. He lives and works in Sarajevo.

named them as such. If a woman uses the men's room, she might be seen as someone who shaves her face or has an Adam's apple, while the man who uses the ladies' room might be characterized as a homosexual, accompanied with mockery—"see that sissy"—because there is a prejudice in the society that gay men probably use the women's restroom. But these are just prejudices aimed to humiliate that person. Similar prejudices in the past were, for example, belief that women were not smart or capable enough to be educated so they were not allowed to attend school or go to university, or that men who were not wealthy did not need to receive education because their brains had not developed sufficiently. Today we know that such things are not true, that they are nonsense. So perhaps an alternative solution to this problem would be to have unisex toilets, not only because that would cause less division between men and women in the society, but also because there are persons whose sexual and gender characteristics do not fit into standard understanding of male or female. These are intersex persons who are born with sexual characteristics of both sexes, and they live, work, obtain education, and exist among us, although they are stigmatized in our society full of prejudices. Existence of a common unisex toilet in a bar would make their life easier, and our society would become much more equal for all of us. Therefore, when we enter a public toilet, we should always bear in mind that the toilet as well is a more recent invention. And unisex toilets already exist in our homes, shared with family members who are not of our own gender. We always need to keep in mind: our societies are divided – but both men and women have the same physiological needs! Next time we are standing at the door of a public toilet we can also imagine a society in which people know that an inscription on the door and real life are not one and the same.

Our Bodies, Our Choice

The cults of beauty directly determine how a woman or a man should look, or what is "feminine" or "masculine". The terms

“feminine” and “masculine” are not natural phenomena in the society, but we gave them meaning, naturalized them, and made them normal segments of society. In that regard, hairiness of a female body is unacceptable, disgusting, nasty, and very strange, while it is completely normal, common, and even considered desirable for a man. Body hair is, as we know, the characteristic of all people regardless of their gender, race, nation, or the part of the world they live in, but one half of human population, i.e. women, is forced to remove their body hair. Any kind of deviation from this rule is considered to constitute a borderline abnormal



appearance, as a woman who does not remove her body hair and thereby publicly shows her “hairiness” might very often be a victim of various verbal attacks (sometimes even physical attacks, depending on the situation in which she finds herself).

Men, on the other hand, may decide to shave their armpit hair or even the hair on their legs (not necessarily for sports that require shaving) and not be judged by the environment in the same way the women are judged. Certainly, a man who shaves his body hair might be the subject of possible mockery, but never to the same extent as a woman who decides not to remove the hair on her legs. Shaving and eliminating traces of hair for men and women should be a personal choice because no one can make decisions regarding our bodies but ourselves, and no one has the right to make fun or question our own choices.

Consciously or not, all of us are witnesses to how the food and pharmaceutical industries, as well as the entertainment industry, are using the female body with the purpose of profit. Women are constantly exposed to the latest methods of weight loss and cosmetic ventures, the latest achievements in cosmetic surgery and constant attacks by foreign fashion industry – it is almost impossible to escape such attacks.

Therefore, it is important to remember that it is only hair, and not our overall identity, beauty, or acceptability in society. There is nothing on the human body of which people should be ashamed. Our bodies are our decisions.

Baby Meal

Magazines, advertising billboards, television, movies, and almost all the media are full of photos of women in provocative poses with the purpose of sexually attracting men. These kinds of photos exist of men as well, but are much rarer. Thus, throughout their life, women are expected to weigh 10 to 20 kilograms less than they do, in accordance with the models on billboards through which companies, whose owners are mostly men, earn a

lot of money. Consciously or not, all of us are witnesses to how the food and pharmaceutical industries, as well as the entertainment industry, are using the female body with the purpose of profit. Women are constantly exposed to the latest methods of weight loss and cosmetic ventures, the latest achievements in cosmetic surgery and constant attacks by foreign fashion industry – it is almost impossible to escape such attacks.

Men, unlike women, mostly think their bodies are OK. Of course, there are the ideals for what a proper, muscled, male body should look like, but the society is much more tolerant of a man who is overweight, badly dressed, not groomed, or frumpy.



On the other hand, there is something called motherhood – and it is often imposed as the unavoidable role in woman's life, so a woman who can have children, but does not want to, is considered insensitive, egoistic, etc. So, for example, if I as a

man have children and take care of them, the society will see me as an outstanding father, even if I am very shallow; if I have children and do not take care of them, my masculinity will not be questioned; if I have children and am focused on my career, no one will think I am selfish because I do not stay at home; if I am married or am in a relationship and my wife or partner and I decide to sacrifice our careers and stay home to take care of children, in most cases it will be her career that gets sacrificed, even if she has a better paid job. However, although motherhood is one of the basic identities of women around the world, breast feeding is considered as highly disturbing and rude. On the other hand, naked women's breasts stare us down from the billboards and most people are not bothered by that at all.

Before we embrace some of those double standards, and regardless of whether showing naked woman's breasts in public bothers some of us or not, let us keep in mind that if we accidentally witness a situation of a mother breastfeeding in public, it is only and exclusively a matter of feeding her baby!

Those Days of the Month

Menstruation is one of the biggest taboos in many societies, and is related to various myths and misapprehensions which are nothing else but mechanisms by which women are characterized as less capable in relation to men. Menstruation is often used as a method by which the society disparages a woman, representing her as an emotionally unstable individual, seeing menstruation as a reason for woman's behavioural changes. Men who go through several mood swings during a single day do not have to worry that the society would depreciate them based on the physiological characteristics of their sex, while the same rules do not apply to women. In other words, if I am having a bad day, week, month, or even year, the society will never use my physiological characteristics as the reason for changes in my behaviour. My ability to make decisions and my general work capabilities will never be questioned because of a certain

period of the month. My boss will never mention physiological characteristics of my sex as an explanation for my personality, and neither will he consider me to be an emotional person who does not know how to control his own behaviour because I am a man. The same situations with women are always explained in a way that menstruation is “culpable” for changes in a woman’s behaviour. Although the menstrual cycle may be very disturbing and problematic, most women consider menstruation as nothing more than a simplest physiological trait of a human organism, which is completely logical.



Although menstruation is a common function of a human organism, it is used as the element of discrimination of women within the leadership positions in the society because it is thought that women will make crazy or irrational decisions during of “those days of the month”. Men put in a lot of time and effort in making women believe that women’s decisions are not logical, rational, or objective. They often do that in very emotionally-driven ways! The biggest mistake women and men can make is to

accept these stereotypes and really believe that menstrual blood and menstruation is some type of “danger” and a serious reason for women to be ashamed of their bodies.

Note for the girls: the next time you get terrified that “you had a leak”; remember that menstrual blood is the most normal thing in the world. The other half of the humankind should get used to your reproductive organs. Imagine this – women today are partially ashamed of their menstruation, but a mere few centuries ago they were locked up and isolated from the entire community during of “those days”! In only a few decades, women in one part of the world had achieved something that used to seem impossible!

Stereotypes and Facts Regarding Blonde Jokes

Among the most popular and most common jokes in many cultures are the jokes about blondes, and there are various myths regarding blond persons of female gender, which mainly represent blond women as stupid. The interesting fact is that, although they are represented as stupid, at the same time they are represented as very sexy and attractive. It suffices to look at the billboards and see that the majority of models on them have blond hair. So, blondes are always beautiful, good, naive, and sexy – let us remember Barbie dolls – the original and most famous Barbie is a blonde. Blondes are most commonly represented as scantily clad infantilized beings, incapable of conversation, whose only function is to entertain and send a message that life is beautiful and funny and it is actually great to be stupid. Such stereotypes caused a number of problems related to double standards in the society and a hypocritical attitude toward blond women – it seems that, according to those standards, a woman cannot be sexy, good looking, well dressed, made up, educated, and smart at the same time. This kind of stereotype is not related only to blond women, but to “beautiful and good looking” women in general. The reverse situation was never an established opinion in the society based on which it is considered that a handsome,

well dressed, blond man is necessarily stupid and infantile. On the contrary, the same man will be characterized as a businessman having a lot of money and driving a fancy car. If a woman with similar characteristics has a fancy car, we will think that she had married well, or simply wants to marry well. Any stereotype is meaningful only in the imaginary world in which it functions. The question remains if we are ready to sacrifice our intelligence and capability of making decisions, and allow ourselves to live exclusively in small and limited worlds?!

Attention! Men in Traffic

If I, as a man, am negligent while driving, that would never be characterized as a general characteristic of my sex/gender, nor would anyone shout at me from the other car or from the street: "You drive/park like a man!" However, that happens to women every day, whether they made a mistake or not. There are also jokes about the ability of female drivers, and women's abilities in driving are even used as a method of disparaging during the process of learning how to drive. Most of us have probably heard the following: "don't hold the steering wheel like that, you drive like a woman".

Even though in societies with prevalent patriarchal values there is a conventional wisdom that women are bad drivers in general, statistical data shows that men cause the majority of road accidents. Without a doubt, there are negligent female drivers as well, but it is well known that, compared to men, their number is negligible. Ironic, isn't it?



Everyone knows just how successful you are in your line of work and how significant is the circulation of your newspaper.



She is precisely who I want on our front page!



You know very well that a newspaper's circulation is the only valid measure of its success!

Circulation
Bauk
FeminNauk

You are unlike some other women – please support us in our campaign to promote successful, emancipated women. Your success and leadership should serve as an example for many women.



Why don't we instead print a photo from the promotion of women leaders on our front page?





**Dragana
Dardić**

WOMEN IN THE MIRROR OF THE MEDIA

“Considering the exceptional power and importance of the media, it is quite possible that one of the hardest battles for feminism of the future will be fought in this very field.”¹

She was born in 1971 in Banja Luka. She graduated from the Department of Journalism at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade, and obtained her Master’s degree in Gender Studies at the University of Novi Sad. She was an active journalist for two years (working at Radio Yugoslavia, Daily Telegraph, Radio Free Europe, and was a correspondent of the Reuters agency and BBC radio). Since 2004, she works at the non-governmental organization Helsinki Citizen Parliament of Banja Luka, and becomes its executive director in 2011. She is the author, co-author, and editor of several publications: “Thank You for Asking me How I Feel”, “A Study on Domestic Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, “Gender Equality”, “Gender Equality and Judicial Practice in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, “Analysis of Comprehension Practice Books for the Fourth Grade of Gymnasiums and Vocational Schools” (in: What is the Gender of Reading Comprehension Practice Books?), “Guidelines and Recommendations for Socially Responsible Reporting in order to Combat Domestic and Gender Based Violence”, and “Manual for Reporting on Marginalized Groups”. Since 2004, she works as the training facilitator on the topic “Media Appearances and Coordination with the Media”.

Many of you have certainly heard the phrase: “It did not happen if it was not published in the media.” It is not only true, but it vividly and unambiguously represents the power and impact of the media in the society. And if we are judging based on this phrase, then women “did not happen”. They are almost entirely missing in the headlines which “highlight” the male leaders of political parties, ministers, assembly deputies, board directors, mayors, international representatives... They are missing as well within the news on economy, defence, agriculture, police. Women in the media, as competent interlocutors explaining their opinions, are rather an exception to the rule.

Numerous instances of media monitoring carried out thus far have confirmed that women are quantitatively under represented within the media contents, in comparison to men. According to some research, they are less represented even within the obituaries.²

The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) is the largest and longest project that deals with the representation of women in

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Men are seldom or never asked about their family status, which suggests that the actual life of a woman is determined by her marital relations and household duties, and not by her job or her professional career.

the world media. It includes the analysis of major informative news outlets in the countries around the world, and is carried out every five years. The first monitoring was organized on January 18, 1995 in 71 countries, and the most recent one was in March 2015 and followed the media reports in 130 countries.

The last published report from 2010 stated that “only 24% of people we hear or read about in the newspapers, on the radio and television are women”. The report further notes that “the

world depicted in the news remains predominantly male”, and that this picture does not correspond to the reality in which half of the world’s humanity consists of women.³

Although quantitative indicators of the representation of women in media content are important⁴, even more important is the way in which they are represented.

What is this picture of women given to us by the mass media like?

According to the report of the GMMP, it turns out that women’s age was far more important than the age of men (because the age of women is twice as often mentioned in the news) and that their

marital status is of particular importance because, in comparison to men, it is mentioned four times more often.⁵The media is much more interested in whether these women are married and how old they are, than they are in their competences and knowledge.

Men are seldom or never asked about their family status, which suggests that the actual life of a woman is determined by her marital relations and household duties, and not by her job or her professional career. And while it is quite common to ask a female parliamentary deputy or an alderwoman how they manage to take care of the house and children with so many parliamentary duties, when have you last heard a journalist asking a male politician about how he coordinates his job and household chores?

Furthermore, the research in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia from 2007⁶ shows that women are dominant in the newspaper articles only in the reports on entertainment and sex industry, i.e. as sex

workers, or as persons who maintain their households, i.e. as parents. In the analysis of the obtained data, it is also concluded that through such depiction of women “the media retain the traditional symbolic polarization of gender roles and division of labour, according to which the productive tasks are attributed to men, and the reproductive ones to women”.

An integral part of the media production is also the advertising. We are exposed to hundreds of advertising messages every day which bombard us from the TV screens, bus stops, waiting rooms, billboards, and which are telling us what to buy and how to look.

The images of desirable, young women with perfect bodies,

The aggressive cosmetic industry continuously and consistently sends the same message that women are not naturally beautiful and desirable enough, that they need a whole range of different products in order to cover up the imperfections and to prolong the socially acceptable period of youth.

perfect tans, without any wrinkles, acne or freckles, gleaming smile, and hair full of volume are shoved in our faces. The aggressive cosmetic industry continuously and consistently sends the same message that women are not naturally beautiful

The female body appears in the advertisements for anything and everything – cured meat, car tires, casinos, perfumes, men’s and women’s clothes; women are dominant in commercials for laundry detergents (presumably, only women know how to use them), household appliances, and food products (presumably, only women should know how to cook and how to use a vacuum cleaner).

and desirable enough, that they need a whole range of different products in order to cover up the imperfections and to prolong the socially acceptable period of youth. This constant exposure to media pressure by the cosmetics industry reinforces the market chase for new facial and body creams, pomades for cellulite removal, new mascaras that increase the volume of your lashes, new teas for weight loss, and so on. Newspaper and television articles and advertisements

are setting themselves up as the authority in determining what makes a woman beautiful, and very often in the imperative/commanding form: “Be beautiful for him!”, “Dye your hair blond, because blondes are IN!”, “Bronze your skin even before the summer...”, and so on.

The female body appears in the advertisements for anything and everything – cured meat, car tires, casinos, perfumes, men’s and women’s clothes; women are dominant in commercials for laundry detergents (presumably, only women know how to use them), household appliances, and food products (presumably, only women should know how to cook and how to use a vacuum cleaner). In the commercials for beer, which are predominantly sexist, women are there to bring their beloved man a bottle of beer, carefully and unobtrusively, so as not to bother him while he’s watching a football match.

The consequence of such media reporting and advertising messages is reflected in the increased number of girls and women suffering from anorexia and bulimia, lacking self-confidence, and, above all, missing the female role models with whom they can identify, and who are not reduced to the beauties from *Cosmopolitan* and *Joy*.

Teenage girls are a particularly vulnerable category because of their relative “cultural innocence”, as mentioned in the analysis of teenage magazines by Mima Simić⁷, since teenage girls are just starting to go through the process of “gendering”, socialization, and sexual literacy and are extremely sensitive to media messages.

The media are not merely the transmitters of knowledge; they are the producers of knowledge as well. And what we

all have to keep in mind when we talk about the ways of media representation of women and men, is the type of role models we offer to either of them.

The media are not merely the transmitters of knowledge; they are the producers of knowledge as well. And what we all have to keep in mind when we talk about the ways of media representation of women and men, is the type of role models we offer to either of them.

Images and messages disseminated through the media are far from the concept of gender equality which we stand for. And to illustrate this, I will share with you an anecdote in which the main actors are a 12-year-old girl and a daily newspaper in B&H.

Namely, on the eve of the local elections in 2012 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, one top-selling daily newspaper launched the “Contest for the Prettiest Female Candidate in the Local Elections”, and announced special prizes for the top three candidates. There were many writings and discussions about this beauty contest, and one day my daughter’s friend asked me: “But does that mean that only beautiful women can get involved in politics?”

This question from a 12-year-old girl painfully illustrated how much influence the media have on the creation of public attitudes, especially those of young people.

What message did a top-selling daily newspaper want to send by announcing the “Contest for the Prettiest Female Candidate in the Local Elections”? Women in our society are sufficiently discouraged from engaging in politics even without the media; why do they need to be additionally discouraged by having their values, knowledge, and capacity reduced to a question of looks and beauty? And how are we to raise our children in the spirit of equality while the media engulfs us in misogynistic messages, strengthening the existing relations of power based on the subordination of one sex?

In this question from a 12-year-old girl, we can also see one of the dangers of the media selectivity in the presentation of women’s roles (which are reduced to the role of mother, seductress, sex worker), which is the fact that, in this way, women - and especially young women - are denied access to different role models.

- 1 Blagojević, Marina (1998). *Feminism at the End of the Century: Lessons on Diversity*, ed: Savić, Svenka ed. *Feminist theology*. Novi Sad: Futura publications. 9-17.
- 2 The author of the publication “Women in Dailies: Visibility, Roles, and Stereotypes”(2007), Milkica Milojević, used the game “what would happen if the aliens only had enough time to take a few daily newspapers from the planet Earth” in order to investigate the extent and manner in which five daily newspapers in B&H report about women. Milojević stated “that the aliens would probably conclude that there are at least three times more men than women on this planet, that even this small number of women on Earth probably do nothing and make no decisions on anything, that the women of planet Earth are mainly divided into two groups: they are beautiful, good looking, scantily clad, and spend a whole day shopping, or they are suffering from some disease, are refugees, or are victims of violence, that only the men of Earth deal with politics, business, and sport, and that men of Earth are dying more often, because there are more of them even in the obituaries”.
- 3 The GMMP reports are available at: <http://whomakesthenews.org/gmmp/gmmpreports>

- 4 The underrepresentation of women in certain areas covered by the media, such as politics, economics, business, military affairs, law, etc., leads to the conclusion that there are no women experts in these areas. Thus, they are denied or negated the social competence to speak on specific topics, and the media continue reflecting and maintaining the established social beliefs of who belongs where.
- 5 More about the report “Global Media Monitoring Project 2010” is available at: http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Imported/reports_2010/global/gmmp_global_report_en.pdf
- 6 The research includes the analysis of nine daily newspapers (Glas Srpske, Oslobođenje, Dnevni avaz, Jutarnji list, Večernji list, Slobodna Dalmacija, Politika, Blic, Večernje novosti) from B&H, Croatia, and Serbia. See *Stereotypisation: Representation of Women in Printed Media in South-East Europe* (eds. Nirman Moranjak-Bamburač, Tarik Jusić, and Adla Isanović). Sarajevo: MediaCentre.
- 7 Simić, Mima (2007). Sex and the Globalization of Female Teenagehood: Croatian and Serbian Teen Magazines of the New Era in: Moranjak-Bamburač, Nirman, et. al., eds. *Stereotypisation: Representation of Women in Printed Media in South-East Europe*. Sarajevo: Media Centre.

Double Standards

Bank
Femi/Kauk



I know her, the way she dresses and the places she goes to, it's no wonder this happened to her!

I know, right? All the women nowadays are walking around half-naked and on their own, no less! And then, when something like this happens, it's always the guy's fault! Why did she provoke him if she didn't want it?!

A FEW DAYS LATER

You know what happened to me the other day? The police picked me up in a raid! They received a tip that some hooligans have weapons and that they are planning a showdown.

They picked me up just because I was wearing a football jersey!

Unbelievable, dude! You can't even wear what you want without it being used against you! Pthui!





Zilka
Spahić-
Šiljak

WHY ARE WE STILL TALKING ABOUT SEXISM?

She is a professor of gender studies, and her fields of interest include gender, religion, human rights, politics, and peace building, with years of experience within governmental and non-governmental sector and the academic community. She is the programme director of TPO Foundation Sarajevo and teaches at several universities in B&H and abroad. As a researcher at the post-doctoral programme of Harvard University, she published the book "Shining Humanity – Life Stories of Women Peace Builders in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (TPO Foundation, 2013 – B&H edition, and Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014 – English edition). During her engagement at the department of Religious and Gender Studies at the University of Sarajevo, she published: "Contesting Female, Feminist, and Muslim Identities: Post-socialist Contexts of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo" (CIPS of the University of Sarajevo, 2012) and "Women, Religion, and Politics" (IMIC, TPO, CIPS, 2007, and an English edition in 2010). The research she is currently working on at the Stanford University focuses on the intersection of gender, leadership, and politics.

It can often be heard that women have been granted all the rights, and that everything is regulated by laws, and that women who continue to insist on gender equality cannot tolerate men

or even feel superior to them, or they invent problems where there are not any. Such women are usually referred to as feminists – feminism having been given a pejorative connotation here – they are seen as being dissatisfied because their private life is a mess, and thus preoccupy themselves with issues they make up for the sake of personal gain. Most women and men suppress their problems, or are gender-insensitive or gender-blind to discrimination based on gender, or have generally been desensitized to all social problems surrounding them. Those who recognize that problems still exist but that they are perhaps only differently packaged in the wrapping-paper of modern

patriarchy and neoliberal ideology, individualism, enrichment, spending, and self-sufficiency, encounter difficulties because they point their finger to where it hurts the most.

Corporate and neoliberal economies, particularly through the media, send a clear message to women that they should focus on their private life, appearance, beauty, spending, and comfort, while

However, it is important to remember that discrimination and sexism on the basis of gender are not unique to only men or only women; everyone participates in it, either actively or passively. However, the facts demonstrate that men tend to benefit the most from sexism because they do not want to give up the position of power they have in relation to women.

care for others and a critique of the very system which is the source of economic and all other inequities are entirely lacking. A strong woman is a woman who “chooses” to earn and spend, and thus to become numb and insensitive to the problems of those who are excluded by the corporate world and who do not have any chance to succeed.

Women who criticize the deleterious effects of neoliberal ideology and system of

values are usually thought to be responsible for their own “failure” because they did not try hard or did not fight enough. Responsibility shifts onto the individual who seemingly has the feeling that she can only make substantial changes through her own efforts. Such messages of individual responsibility blur the reality and it can often be heard that successful women lecture other women on meritocracy as a measure of success: “All of this I have earned through my own hard work and dedication, and nobody helped me with that”. Some women may have the good fortune to succeed through their own efforts, but they often fail to see a huge number of other women who are subjected to discrimination and structural violence, and no matter how capable they are, they will not get a chance to express themselves. Also, they do not see that they are themselves subject to subtle

forms of sexism, which they sometimes see as a compliment, and sometimes fail to perceive in the first place.

However, it is important to remember that discrimination and sexism on the basis of gender are not unique to only men or only women; everyone participates in it, either actively or passively. However, the facts demonstrate that men tend to benefit the most from sexism because they do not want to give up the position of power they have in relation to women. Established cultural patterns of behaviour favour the maintenance of *status quo* and the seemingly superior position of a man, regardless of his qualities and capabilities.

In B/C/S languages, the word for sexism is borrowed from the English language and refers to stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination based on sex, mostly in reference to women. In our language, sexism reminds some people of the sexual act, and the very mention of the word causes giggling and a feeling of discomfort. Those who are slightly more informed will shake their heads since they see sexism as just another “ism” imposed on them from the West, and they do not need that because they have no prejudices and they do not discriminate.

However, everyday life shows that women are exposed to sexism, both to its aggressive version which is abundant with distasteful and vulgar terms, and to that benevolent, well-intentioned sexism which is so sophisticated and so well masked that many are not even aware of it. As much as we strive to regulate the issues of discrimination and sexism through legislation, it is difficult to change the pre-set and learned cultural behavioural patterns and the mentality of the people who most often resort to cognitive shortcuts when they pass their judgment about someone or when they want put someone “in their proper place”.

Modern ways of expressing misogyny and sexism are quite ambivalent and are based on the fact that men observe the women who fit into the traditional role with admiration and

reverence, while the women who question the patriarchal order and violence are met with a certain dose of reserve and impugment. Many studies show that one's competence, kindness, and sensitivity are evaluated differently. Housewives are usually seen as sensitive and good women, while feminists, who might also be housewives, are seen as insensitive, power-hungry individuals. Their competences are recognized, but they are negated the sensibility traditionally attributed to women.



Aggressive sexism justifies male dominance and traditional division of gender roles, and when women dare to raise their voice against dominance and demand their place in decision-making and creation of policies relevant to the life of families and communities; they are proclaimed to be feminists. This is one of the ways to thwart any attempt to change the order of domination and to maintain *status quo*.

Benevolent sexism appears harmless and well-intentioned at first glance, but it is, in fact, discriminatory and patronizing. Women are told that they deserve attention and protection, and that a man should take care of them, love them, support them financially, and spare them from any hard work due to their role as mothers. In addition, a woman's biological role of being a mother is even glorified, and she is sometimes referred to as the queen-mother, deserving of utmost respect. At first glance, it sounds nice and tempting to be placed on such a pedestal, but if this glorification is considered a little more seriously, then you quickly realize that a woman cannot get down from that pedestal when and if she wants

to, because each step away from it is seen as ungratefulness for the honour, attention, and protection she has been given. Benevolent sexism is actually a double-edged sword that flatters many women. It confirms and praises the traditional role of a mother, educator, teacher, and a generally virtuous woman who has a sense of family and other people, all of which is important for most women, and there is nothing controversial about it. The problem arises when a woman is denied her right to get involved and to express herself in other fields of activity because of that important role of being a mother, especially in terms of decision-making and policy-making positions related to the family, as well as the community and society as a whole.

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Women who remain within the boundaries of traditional gender roles are respected and accepted as they do not pose a threat to male dominance and power.

male dominance and power. For example, it can often be heard that a wife of a prominent citizen is a valued member of the society. These women enjoy the benefits of the social status of

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their husbands, but also because they are willing to play by the rules of tradition and social expectations. Many women experts in specific scientific fields were invited to debates or activities along with the wives of certain prominent men, who in actuality did not have any expertise in the field in question. When asked what their wives might say about a particular topic, the answer would always be along the same lines – they are wives of prominent

“individuals” – as if this was enough in itself. Such situations actually best reflect the gender politics of one cultural milieu in which active patriarchal traditionalism provides legitimacy and preservation of social statuses. It would be interesting to see what role the former US president Bill Clinton would have should his wife, Senator Hillary R. Clinton, become the President of the United States. Would he continue the tradition of presidential wives and organize charitable dinners, balls, and book clubs, or would he continue to work in the fields of law and policy which fall under his expertise?

A woman who has competence in certain fields, but lacks social legitimacy of motherhood and marriage will not be respected as a woman who lives and works in accordance with traditional gender roles. Even when she meets the traditionally expected roles, she is still not accepted because she dares to question the existing order of power, discrimination, and injustice. Therefore, it is very difficult to fight against the benevolent sexism because

most women find it suitable, whether it is due to ignorance, or due to lethargy and lack of interest, and partially in order to preserve their own position of power over other women and male children in a patriarchal family environment. This “self-sacrificing micro matriarchy”, as named by Marina Blagojević, is suitable for most women because this sacrifice is rewarded with the social status a woman enjoys through her husband and other male members of her family.

The only way to step out of the vicious circle of sexism and stereotypes is to work on increasing the awareness of both women and men about the importance of partnership and joint action instead of competition and exclusion. It is also important that children and young people are prepared and educated to accept partnership and solidarity instead of hierarchy and domination through primary and secondary socialization, and this will be possible only if they are aware of the harmful effects of stereotypes and sexism, and particularly the benevolent type, whose golden curtains hide discrimination, injustice, and exclusion. This is, of course, a huge challenge for everyone, whether they are protected by thick walls of the centres of power or by the beautiful cages of queen-mothers’ pedestals, or they are simply lulled into lethargy of the margins and the periphery.

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SUMMARY

The book "Gender Stereotypes: Sounds Familiar?" is a part of the *Initiative for Creative Dialogue and Education* project. Together with the group "Brkate" ("Moustached") and the comic book author Jakov Čaušević, TPO Foundation Sarajevo designed the comic book edition: *Bauk Feminauk (Bogey FemiTeaching)*. The aim of *Bogey FemiTeaching* is to challenge prejudices on feminism and gender equality, and to question the position of women in contemporary Bosnian-Herzegovinian society through the use of comics and humour. Our choice of comics is twofold. It has the potential to engage young people in a variety of subjects, while simultaneously acting as an educational tool in an encouraging and non-intimidating manner. Initially, our team aimed to publish twenty comics and to present them to the wider public - especially the young people - via an exhibition. However, we decided to take the project a step further due to the positive interaction and the great interest these young people showed during the exhibition. This experience also led us to conclude that the comics are an ideal form for an interdisciplinary approach to education. They serve as a great motivating tool for all those who are not as interested in the traditional educational methods such as books, for example.

Building on this initial success, the edition of *Bogey FemiTeaching* was completed with an additional book, "Gender Stereotypes: Sounds Familiar?", which represents a unique combination of educational comics with shorter thematic texts. They directly challenge and question a variety of gender and feminist issues, as well as discourses tied to education, patriarchal family values, law, science, religion, politics, media, domestic violence, and many other gender-based discriminatory practices. We are strongly convinced that a positive contribution towards a more realistic representation of the existing discrimination, oppression and exclusion can be made only through critical evaluation of

the politics of established gender norms, seen through the lens of humour. In other words, FemiTeaching should not at all be seen as a bogey. Instead, it should be seen as an opportunity to visualise an idea of a world in which women and men, as well as all other marginalized groups and individuals, participate equally in all spheres of life.

A FEW WORDS FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS

Throughout my work as an educator, I have asked parents and teachers (myself included) the same question countless times: what kind of children do we want to raise? What are the beliefs and values that we want to instil in them and are we even aware of the power that we have in this process? In the imaginary world of wishes and desires, both teachers and parents see the children they are raising as good and decent people in the future, see them happy and confident, full of self-confidence and tolerance, successful and surrounded by friends. The real question, however, is how do we do that, what do we do and what can we do to make them become what we (at least declaratively) want them to be? Here is where the clamour starts, and the answers are evaded and out-voiced by the criticism of everything that exists – society, the media, neighbourhood, computer games, and “general decline of morals and values”.

To raise and educate children and young people, whether you are a parent or a teacher, is the most complex job in the world. It raises more questions than it can provide answers to, forces us to face our own, frequently learned “truths” and values, and to reconsider and observe them in the context of lives of our children and the youth. Or, we do not do any of that, we just live, letting things happen on their own, hoping that, eventually, everything will turn out well. Overwhelmed by a sense of powerlessness to deal with ourselves, in the first place, and then with the children in front of us, we often resort to short-term solutions in terms of child-rearing, trying to survive the day and too often forgetting that everything we do and say leaves a deep and lasting mark, shapes the identity, creates the image the children will adopt about themselves and the world in which they live, and instil the values and principles which will guide them.

Indeed, how to raise children and guide the youth in the process of becoming good people? And what does that actually mean? And, after all, what does education have in common with a book on gender equality? Everything.

Child-rearing gives us a framework within which we define ourselves and our roles, it affects who or what we identify with, what we believe in, and how we act on that

basis. Therefore, the understanding of and the struggle against prejudices and discrimination are associated with gender roles in the very basis of education, and even self-education, if you will. All the facts and data stated in the book, the illustrated scenes we encounter and witness on a daily basis are a consequence of the (lack of) education. The only question is how it came about, how and when we need to fight against it, and why we ourselves often agree to be a part of the “silent majority” that condones such a state.

First of all, it is important to understand that stereotypes, prejudices and, consequently, discrimination, are integral parts of education; they are not acquired, but are learned patterns of behaviour and belief deeply rooted in our being from the moment we are born and the moment we become aware of the world around us. Likewise, stereotypes and prejudices are universal ways of thinking and acting, rather than selective ones; therefore, the book in front of you goes beyond the issue of gender equality, touches on important issues that affect the perception of self, as well as of the “other and different”, forces us to question the learned and engrained ways of thinking, and gives us a different perspective of the reality we maybe never considered (in such a way).

“No one is born hating another person... People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”

Nelson Mandela

Stereotypes are a subconscious function that helps us to navigate a world full of the unknown, allowing us to make conclusions about phenomena and people we do not know on the basis of few criteria or characteristics. By attributing a number of characteristics to a whole group of people (whether good or bad), the stereotypes are consequently drawing us into the story that there are “us” and “them” in the world. And not only that, this simplified black and white view of the world makes us believe that all of “us” are different, special, and unique, and that all of “them” are exactly the same which is why they all belong to the same group. The exceptions within this story only “prove the rule”.

We would be able to somehow recognize and overcome the problem with stereotypes if they were not the fertile ground for the development of prejudices that add an emotional charge to these unfounded generalizations and teach us how to feel towards the “others” and, therefore, how to treat them. In order to be accepted, respected, feel safe and confident, we perceive “our own group” as better, more capable, and more valuable, and lightly attribute the opposite qualities to the other group and judge them without even knowing them. Without questioning these acquired beliefs, we continue to live our life by interpreting everything that happens around us through the prism of what is already learned and by taking only what is fitting within the already established system of values, passionately defending our prejudices out of fear of losing our status and the role we were given. Because of the strong emotions that accompany all prejudices, it is very difficult to fight against them (only) through arguments, statistics, and facts, no matter how clear and justified they may be.

But if this is really so, if stereotypes and prejudices are deeply woven into the foundation of our being, then what can we do and what is the role of adults, especially parents and teachers in this process?

“Intelligence plus character -
that is the goal of true education.”

M. L. King

Step 1: Recognize your own prejudices

The fight against prejudices begins with personal confrontation and recognition that none of us, including parents and teachers, is completely free of stereotypes and prejudices, i.e. of learned behaviours and opinions. Only when we are willing to do so, we can become aware of our actions and words, and observe all the ways we, consciously or unconsciously, instil in children and young people these and similar beliefs and convictions. Even when we are not ready to give up our own convictions and beliefs, it is our duty to offer the children and young people a different experience, to raise questions, offer different models and sources, examine and problematize things, and not to enforce a single perspective simply because we have the authority to do so. And this book is just that – a source of knowledge and different perspectives.

Step 2: Open up a dialogue

We have to talk openly about the stereotypes and prejudices, without ulterior motives, accusations, or previously devised scenarios and responses. The most common problem is that these kinds of topics are considered taboo, or it is thought that children, and even high school students, are unable to tackle and understand them (which also constitutes a stereotype and prejudice). Mistake number one. Give it a try and you will be surprised by how much wisdom and strong sense of social justice lies in the children’s common sense and perspicacity. Not to make sweeping generalizations, a number of children and young people will probably, without much reflection, repeat the already learned phrases, or defend certain adopted stereotypes

and prejudices with a lot of conviction. Use some of the articles found in the book in front of you. Begin with questions or issues that will introduce them to the subject and give them a chance to express their views and opinions without your intervention. Read an article and open the discussion. Help them use solid arguments within discussions, task them with temporarily adopting new or conflicting roles and ask them to develop counter-arguments from different perspectives, and help them find other sources of information as well. In short, talk about these issues whenever you get a chance.

Step 3: Teach them to “be themselves”

We all need to feel that we belong, that we are a part of a group. But that does not mean that we must always share the opinion of others and blindly follow the set of often unwritten rules. We should encourage children to have their own opinions from an early age, help them understand that they have the right to be different, and to make good decisions for themselves. We need to encourage them to meet other people that share similar values and interests, thus building “their groups” and social networks. If we do not do that, they might believe that they are primarily defined by belonging to groups they did not even chose themselves (sex, gender, nationality and religious affiliation, place of birth, etc.), and might live their lives believing that the roles have been handed out long ago, that rules are established, and that nothing can change because it has “always been and always will be like that”.

Step 4: React, but wisely

Ensure that, by fighting against prejudice, you do not run into the same trap of “lumping together” all those who disagree with you. The ability to listen to an opinion different from our own, to think about it and try to understand it (without necessarily agreeing

with it), is one of the most important social skills that we need to instil in children and youth. How? Precisely by encouraging them to freely express their opinion, and then to listen to it, without judging. It also does not mean that you will agree with it or approve it (even silently). No, it is our duty to always act on prejudices but also to choose the best path and way, as adults, by not engaging in heated debates, but by opening and offering different opinions and perspectives, asking the right questions, and constantly reminding them of argumented and critical reflection. And here we come to the next most important goal in child-rearing and education, and that is the development of critical thinking.

Step 5: Develop critical thinking

Critical thinking, as a disciplined process of questioning and analysis of reality, is not an innate skill – it is learned. The development of critical thinking implies plenty of opportunities to ask the right questions, to reason logically, to explore, solve problems, find evidence, and to make conclusions. And, most importantly, critical thinking is the basis for the development of empathy and sense of justice. The individuals who think critically perceive prejudices and stereotypes as mistakes in reasoning, fight against dogma and uncritically established social norms and rules, and against injustice of any kind.

Step 6: Develop empathy

Develop empathy among young people, that magical ability to experience and live through events and feelings different from everything they previously learned, to identify themselves with other human beings no matter how different they might be. Empathy helps us to see and experience ourselves from the perspective of someone else. Just as the critical thinking opens our minds, empathy opens our heart.

And in the end, there is no end. The fight against prejudices and stereotypes is an everyday and eternal struggle with ourselves, and with the world around us. Read this book with an open heart and mind, listen to what they will say to you, and do not be afraid to change. For it is only by changing yourself, that you can change the world.

Radmila Rangelov-Jusović
August, 2015

BOOK REVIEW OF “GENDER STEREOTYPES: SOUNDS FAMILIAR?”

The book “Gender Stereotypes: Sounds Familiar?” is a very useful and interesting publication that confronts us with prejudices created around the concepts of gender and feminism. Through twelve texts, it demonstrates that gender stereotypes exist within the social and ideological matrices, but also that they become an integral part of our own misconceptions in our daily life. The reality and actual suffering, which can be identified in a number of specified life situations and stories, act as a fierce reminder of the difficult and painful fate of women in our region, as well as the coherent and professional training material in the field of gender studies and the study of gender stereotypes. In this context, the value of this book is that, in a simple way, through showing the real situation, it involves the readers in the process of recognizing such situations and sensitizes them to resist the accepted and established gender stereotypes.

Messages found within these texts have been further highlighted through the comics found within. The use of comics and the actualization of certain gender stereotypes in the form of comic narration is another element that draws the attention of the reader and moulds the framework within which a specific gender stereotype and its actual existence is formed. The drawings and clear dialogue models, along with the humorous and ironic tones, contribute to the overall expressiveness and persuasiveness of the texts and their message. Thus, the elements of the comics represent the attractive parts of this book, whose dramaturgy is (subordinated and) determined by the functions of each individual text.

Highlighting certain gender stereotypes through the comic medium explains the textual thematisation of that gender stereotype and its implications in real life, at the same time

moulding the value matrix by which is contextualizes, interprets, and condemns the actual (female) discrimination. This type of intervention in the book truly represents an interesting and successful combination in which the text and the visual component clearly and explicitly identify and evaluate that problem.

Thus, a number of texts in this book deal with cases of discrimination against women and the existence of gender stereotypes in the field of education. *Education and Gender: How Do We Miss the Opportunities?* and *Invisible Female Subjects* indicate that we live within the culture of disappearance –female characters are disappearing in this culture and there is no place for them in school textbooks, there are no women in the world's history of science, and for centuries women were not allowed to attend schools. In such situation, the educational system still has certain (previously established) professions at its disposal, and the process of feminization of professions includes only those professions that have no social power.

In the texts *What is Discrimination?* and *Why Are We Still Talking about Sexism?* we are introduced to the key concepts mentioned in this book. The book otherwise does not insist on the presentation and explanation of theoretical assumptions based on which a methodical framework for the analysis would be created, although these postulates can be identified, and these two texts are important from the point of understanding the concepts such as discrimination, gender and gender roles, as well as power and sexism. In this context, the highlight of benevolent sexism and its correlation with consumer ideology and cultural matrices which promote the consumerism is particularly important.

Three Anecdotes, One Friday, The Circle of Life and *Anecdotes from Everyday Life* are narratives which thematise specific and realistic scenes and situations from everyday life. These are situations in which we, often completely innocently and impercievably, accept the destructive stereotypes and participate in their further

reproduction and affirmation. Jokes about blondes, attitudes about women behind the wheel, and the expression of personal opinion and feelings in a variety of (un)pleasant situations determined by gender stereotypes, represent an expressive and honest way of presenting the *stream of consciousness* that gives authenticity to these texts and, at the same time, shows that the elimination of discrimination from our sight does not abolish the discrimination itself.

On Fairy Tales, Princesses and Fake Crowns and *Until Death Do Us Part* are texts which expose the fabulous and ideal images of modern marriages and roles today's princesses and princes play within them. These texts describe some of the gender roles and functions women should meet, in accordance with the established stereotypes, in order to enter into a happy marriage. The analysis of such situations points to the tragedy of human destinies when they fail to live their own lives but adopt behaviours in line with society's expectations, and play the pre-fabricated gender roles.

The attitudes and information presented in the texts *Women as Political and Party Decoration* and *Without Understanding, Help, or Protection* warn us of the difficult conditions in which women in the society of Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to live. The fact that there are no women in high political echelons and in places where decisions about the fate of citizens are made, and that they appear as show-biz and aesthetic fixture even in the political niche, indicate something which is a logical consequence of the activity of the patriarchal cultural matrix, which also controls the processes of political socialization. However, the data showing the extent to which women are exposed to domestic violence is the hard truth that reminds us that discrimination against women will, unfortunately, continue in the future.

Women in the Mirror of the Media is an overview of the mass media and their participation in the creation of meaning and the creation of certain gender stereotypes. There are no women within the media content dealing with political and economic

issues. Ergo, there are no women in those processes which generate power and manage the social structures. Women are represented in the entertainment content where women's bodies and their destinies are incorporated into the elements of *celebrity* and *striptease* culture. The media are interested in the marital status of women and the gender roles they play in a society, but not in their knowledge and competence.

All of these displays of various aspects of the social reality in which gender stereotypes are reproduced and affirmed on a daily basis serve as a high-quality manuscript of great importance. The value of this book lies not only in the fact that such descriptions and interpretations of gender stereotypes and discrimination against women are a rare occurrence in this region, but also in the fact that the book creates a referential critical framework within which the major problems of current discrimination against women are identified and analysed.

The book is interesting, and its educational quality serves as its recommendation as useful and indispensable literature for all those who work on the issues of gender roles, discrimination and the position of women, but also for all those who study sociological, political, cultural and media phenomena from the point of moulding the social functions and gender roles, and the existence of various forms of discrimination. It convincingly warns us that the concepts of oppression, domination, and control have not disappeared and that a vast fight for a different understanding and application of the principles of social power awaits us, especially when it comes to the status of women.

Damir Kukić

First of all, it is important to understand that stereotypes, prejudices and, consequently, discrimination, are integral parts of education; they are not acquired, but are learned patterns of behaviour and belief deeply rooted in our being from the moment we are born and the moment we become aware of the world around us. Likewise, stereotypes and prejudices are universal ways of thinking and acting, rather than selective ones; therefore, the book in front of you goes beyond the issue of gender equality, touches on important issues that affect the perception of self, as well as of the "other and different", forces us to question the learned and engrained ways of thinking, and gives us a different perspective of the reality we maybe never considered (in such a way)...

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