

# Influence of gender factors on the development of female personality in the epoch of patriarchy

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**Abstract.** Consideration and analysis of the image of a woman, its specific features of manifestation in various historical epochs of the formation of Russian statehood contributes to the full and adequate reproduction of the cultural panorama of public life in Russia. The article discusses the position of the Russian woman in a traditional normative society. The main factors that influence the development of a female personality in the period under review are analysed, the reasons contributing to the rejection of women from traditional behaviour and the attitude of society to such marginal manifestations of behaviour are highlighted. Authors pay special attention to influence of the Russian Orthodox Church as an integral part of society on development of the Russian woman as individual and on formation of stereotypes of female roles in family. This experience can be used for attempt of forecasting the development of the female personality in modern society.

## 1 Ancient Russian women

It is considered that the period of traditionally normative relations characterizes a woman as a predicate of a husband, a man and, consequently, the place of a woman is determined solely by the house, and her behaviour is determined solely by submission. Following the Bible, the transition from paganism to Christianity made a woman in Russia one of the most worthy carriers of the faith. The researcher Feoktist abbot (Kirilenko) describes the woman's belonging to the Christian faith as follows: "If you want the character of a woman to have humility without humiliation, pliability without vulgarity, inexhaustible love, which, especially caring for the good of the soul, tries to bring the earthly good, "If you want it all, make her a Christian [1]."

Scientists, who studied the position of ancient Russian women, interpreted the period of the X-XV centuries in different ways. There is some disagreement in opinions on the social status of Russian women in society: from complete dependence to economic equality. Historians I. Belyaev, S. Solovyov, B. Romanov, relying on Old Russian documents, noted

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the economic viability of women during these centuries, while N. Kostomarov, A. Amphitheatrova, E. Zabelin expounded their view of a woman as a permanent slave and hostage social and church traditions. S. Kharitonov refers to the opinion of A. Schapov, who mentions the deprivation of a woman and the hegemony of her husband in the family [2]. The XVI century, according to anthropologists, made a significant change in the lives of Russian women - sharply narrowed the rights and power.

## **2 Epoch of «Domostroy»**

With the entry of Russia into the period of patriarchy (the system of social structures and practices in which male domination was adopted, the suppression and exploitation of women), the Russian woman “moved away” from society and lost its former rights to land property, limiting itself only to home and family. According to Russian and Western historians (S. Shashkov, E. Schepkina, K. Klaus, S. MacNelli) [3], the Russian woman moved from the status of social activist to the status of recluse, which was the result of the influence of church rules and customs on the life of a woman.

The Domostroy, a set of laws, rules, and recommendations for the maintenance of life and the family, determined the primacy of the man in the family, thereby sharply curtailing the rights of women. The place of the woman was determined solely by the house, and the behaviour was determined solely by obedience. There was a clear regression in the public life of the Russian woman. Russia, in the image of a woman, has entered a new phase, which can be defined as “epoch of terem and of domostroy”. Female obedience was traced at all stages of life: from birth to death. The birth of a girl in a Christian family meant the birth of a tender, sensitive, pious helper, bearer of the sons of men.

Parents had a great responsibility in bringing up a true Christian girl who never lost faith in God under any circumstances and trials. The father's anger was always fair and justified, while motherly compassion for the child seemed to be opposed to his anger by her mercy and forgiveness. Having become a legitimate wife, a woman had to fully reveal her abilities in housekeeping and become a worthy wife to her husband in all his affairs and desires. Christian marriage was built primarily on spirituality, and without the blessing of Heaven, all beauty, joy, value of family life could be destroyed at any time.

But the sanctity of marriage, defined by the apostolic epistles, embraced the sexual relationship of husband and wife as complementary, loving each other people. Sexual relationships were the crown of their spiritual intimacy, so in the ancient Church the first week the newlyweds lived like brother and sister. This contributed to a deeper understanding of family life.

## **3 Patriarchal model of the Russian family**

The patriarchal model of the Russian family and society determined the attitude towards a woman from the standpoint of the “heroic (bogatyr) ideal”, assigning to her a subordinate, secondary role in both public and family life. Of course, if you compare a woman with a hero, she will be a weak, defenceless creature, but mental qualities were equal to physical ones and a woman turned out to be weak on both sides. According to V. Ivanitsky, from the point of view of a gender approach, as a social affiliation, in Russia “... for centuries, women have had to bear on their shoulders, both male work and male roles and male responsibility [4].” But the church insisted on an absolute division of rights and duties.

Also, according to V. Ivanitsky, “Domostroy” insisted on the coincidence of sex and gender. The division of functions has become absolute, the division of rights has become an empty concept due to the fact that one part did not have any rights. Thus, the dual role,

described in detail and dictated by the church, made the woman completely dependent on her husband. Made from the rib of a man, she must be close to her husband's heart, obedient and submissive to him, not fearing him. Y. Maksimov notes the well-known phrase belonging to Apostol Paul: "let the wife see that she fears her husband [5]". A wife must obey her husband as the Lord, obey infinitely, like the Church, Christ. Thus, the Christian wife was the organizer of the Kingdom of God in the family. The requirement for his wife was loyalty. Spouses had to trust each other without fear. A shadow of doubt could darken or even destroy a marriage. The injustice was that with an unhappy marriage, the blame lay on the woman. But it happened that often the husbands themselves became the instigators of divorces, why the woman did not get any easier and they had to bear all the sorrows on their shoulders.

The marginality of behavior was determined by a departure from the general rules: a marriage of convenience, prodigality, female adultery, disobedience. Interested marriages were considered sinful, due to the fact that the wife bought a husband. In Christian society, the woman, who had interested marriage, assigned the role of "shrews" and the right to change admires like her clothes. Such marriages led to the antichristian principle, that is, to carnal love, which led to debauchery. Adultery of married woman meant a potential threat to female honor, marked as inadmissible within the framework of socially encouraged behavior [6]. The question of divorce was not found in favor of the woman. Being divorced, she became, according to the law, an adulteress. Adultery was considered as a great sin, and adulterers were placed in the same category as thieves and robbers. It was strictly forbidden for a married woman even to look at a stranger not to anger her husband and the Lord God. However, "double standards gave a man, especially with a position, material wealth and who is getting on in years, the relative freedom of choice of spouse and mitigated by adultery, severely condemned in women, the burdens of the existence with an unloved person [7]".

Women's unfaithfulness very often turned into violent reprisals, encouraged by public opinion. Serving the canons of morality, the society not only condemned the girl who sinned before marriage, but also could put her to death. History knows cases when the repentant women were given to a monastery. The life there could be compared with the life in prison. The criminals were kept in solitude and shackles. Women, who killed their husbands, were brutally treated to and, judging by the sophistication of the punishment, the people got jollies out off the cruelty towards the victims. It was possible to pity in the soul, but not in public. There wasn't any protest, wasn't any defence from the husband's tyranny, from the husband-traitor. But nevertheless, as S. Morozov notes: "... according to the peasant conceptions, a woman without a husband had no independent value; besides, "remain unmarried too long" was a shame, therefore a peasant woman preferred marriage to girlhood, even the worst [8]".

Church law regarded only a sacrificial attitude from women's part. Society was guided by the same rules. To become a true Christian was to give up freedom in favour of the faith, which gave its protection instead. The consolation was in the very purpose of being the woman on the Earth: to give birth to children, to serve God. The history of the Church knows many women, who proved by their lives and deeds that Christian women were able to endure many torments and hardships and to die martyrs to the faith (Ulyana Osorgina, Xenia of Petersburg).

## 4 Research Method

Concrete historical approach and diachronic method allow authors to study the problem in the context of a certain historical time sample. Comparative approach in the article defined

a possibility of comparison of opinions of different authors and provided a possibility of consideration of the problem from various points of view.

## 5 Conclusion

The specifics of the dominant images of the Russian woman from the point of view of historical anthropology based on historical documents occupy a significant part in the works of Russian thinkers, but they all have a particularly descriptive form as a representation of historical fact. We, in turn, can use this experience to attempt to predict the development of a female personality in modern society. Consideration of the development of the personality of a woman and her role in the life of society contributes to identifying trends in the solution of many current women's issues. The fact of the existence of discrimination of Russian women is easily traced from ancient times. In addition to social stereotypes, church rules and obligations were imposed on females. The model of the image of a woman in the era of patriarchy, having gender specificity, has gone through a transformation from the representation of a woman as a male predicate, a recluse, under the dominant influence of church traditions and customs, to a socially active woman contrasting the generally accepted laws of the church and society. But the rules of conduct for women prescribed by the Russian Orthodox Church entailed a life without doubts or reflections on life: everything is as it should be. The strict rules of "Domostroy" did not endow the woman with leading qualities in society, but on the other hand, she has all rights within the family, and the family played the main role in the fate of any Russian woman.

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