

Male Bodies and Philosophy of Sexual Difference: A Sketch for an Impossible 'Becoming-Man'

Authors : Ovidiu Anemtoaicei

Abstract : This paper offers a possible answer to the question of what it means to think about men and masculinities through the philosophy of sexual difference as developed by Luce Irigaray, employing Gilles Deleuze's concept of 'critique' and arguing, at the same time, for a concept of 'becoming-man' as an expression of this answer. First, while examining the nature of the role of male bodies underlying the theorizing of men and masculinities in the field of the Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities, the paper argues for a turn to sexual difference theory as an answer to the 'gap' between the representations on male bodies and their participation in thought and masculine subjective production. Secondly, sharing Luce Irigaray's critique of Western thought, the paper explores alternative morphological bodily 'locations' for rethinking male imaginary in relation to male embodiments, on the one hand, and in relation to the maternal and the feminine, on the other hand. Thirdly, the paper develops the idea that a phenomenologically-influenced approach towards male bodies might be productive, especially when thought through Irigaray's sexual difference as a relational and experiential ontology. Finally, while showing that Irigaray and Deleuze share a similar critique of Western philosophical thought and of the masculine historical subject, it proposes a rethinking of the concept of 'becoming-man' as an assemblage meeting between Irigaray's theory of sexual difference and Deleuze and Guattari's nomadologic project, as a possibility of thinking change in men's masculine subjective constitution in relation to both women and other men. As far as the ethical implications of such rethinking are concerned, the paper urges for the cultivation of a masculine culture of stepping back and its constitutive political, social and cultural practices so as to make possible the construction of new spaces that would allow for the becoming of at least two subjects based on the respect for their differences.

Keywords : feminist philosophy, male bodies, masculinities, phenomenology, sexual difference

Conference Title : ICWGS 2018 : International Conference on Women and Gender Studies

Conference Location : Tokyo, Japan

Conference Dates : May 28-29, 2018