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SUMMARY
THE CONCEPT OF THE HUMAN BODY IN THE CONTEXT OF SELECTED
CARTOON NETWORK CARTOONS

The basic subject of research conducted in this work is the cartoon. The dissertation is an attempt to explain the visible and progressive ugliness, grotesque and abstractness of the characters in the productions of this genre. Making such an assumption a guiding principle of the work is the result of inspiration from cartoon research conducted by Anna Czarna, who, as one of the reasons for the intensification of ugliness occurring in them, gave the society's resistance to the process of aestheticizing reality and the compulsion to „be attractive” in contemporary culture. In order to develop this idea, to demonstrate its relevance and topicality, the research contained in the work focused on the body – its status and characteristics that are to determine its beauty and the ways it is shown in animated productions. The aim of the considerations is to check whether cartoons, which in many cases deny what is socially considered attractive and pleasing to the eye, can be treated as a counter-culture – a conscious form of resistance to the dominant order – to the norms, values and principles of a given culture.

The considerations about the body have been broadened to include a cultural gender theme, i. e., what duties, roles and statuses are attributed in the western circle to a cultural woman and man. In cartoon analyses, this issue was examined by observing and interpreting the characters' behaviour and position in the structure of a given production. In this case, as in the study of character images, attention was focused on whether the way in which gender roles are shown in animated productions reproduces or breaks the socially functioning stereotypes of masculinity and femininity.

The work consists of three chapters. The considerations contained therein are preceded by an introduction and methodological reflection. The dissertation also contains an ending, an annex, (which contains iconographic material supplementing the analytical part) and a bibliography.

The introduction presents the aim of the work, the main research questions and motivations for taking up the issue of attractiveness of the body and the cartoon species. In addition, it reviews works that have been devoted to the cartoon as a separate issue, as well as those texts that focus on the theme of animated film – and the issue of the key genre for this work appears as one of the themes. In view of the presented list, the main assumptions for cartoon research are presented, i. e. the work hypothesis and first research questions. The work focuses on the content of selected Cartoon Network station productions, including how women, men, girls and boys are presented in them. In view of the noticeable and progressive growth of anti-aesthetic elements (ugly, disgusting, disgusting, fearful) in these productions, the aim of the work is to show whether such images can be a response to the obligation of increased care for the body and appearance in contemporary culture. The reflections focused in dissertation therefore focus primarily on the category of the body, but also on what functions, roles and status are occupied by female and male characters in the structure of a given cartoon.

The reflection on the cartoon (with a considerable body of work devoted to animated film) is rarely undertaken in the Polish scientific discourse, which may be the result of thinking about it in terms of an infantile, low-value text for children, but also of limited access to these productions at the time when the most famous American animated film series were created (the so-called „the golden era of animation”). In the years when the largest American animated film studios were being established and operated, Poland was under a communist regime that limited the population's access to Western cultural assets. The intention was to supplement the subject of cartoons with a narrative and to indicate that the articles devoted to it, appearing in recent years in Poland, may testify to the value of both the subject itself and the discussions conducted around it.

The introduction also explains the motivation for the interest in body issues. The need to explore this subject is, in a way, due to the main premise of the work, but it is undeniably a lively, topical and widely discussed topic in Polish and foreign scientific discourse.

Following the introduction of the methodological reflection, different views and ways of approaching the key body category for this work were presented, among others concepts by Michel Foucault, Erving Goffman, Zbyszko Melosik, Anna Łebkowska and Zygmunt Bauman. The review of positions presented in this section is not only a list of various approaches to the study of the body in the humanist discourse, but also highlights the issues to be addressed in the analysis of this category. The review narrative is also adopted by the section on gender. It introduces a division into biological and cultural gender. In relation to

the last of these categories, the main positions defining the social roles of women and men were presented: The essentialist (deterministic) and constructivist approach. Their exact characteristics take place in the fragments concerning the concept of femininity and masculinity. In the methodological part, on the other hand, as was the case with the concept of the body, a research review has been carried out, containing different approaches to how to define and study the cultural gender categories. Among the concepts presented in this part are, among others reflections: Judith Butler and Margaret Mead.

A separate thread was devoted to ways of analyzing body representations and gender roles in the media. The approach to this topic resulted from the specificity of the work, which focuses on cartoons, i. e. media content. Moreover, when (re)constructing the ideal of attractive female and male silhouettes, their media images were taken into account, often serving as a model of the ideal image. Therefore, in order to analyze them, it was necessary to build an appropriate perspective – one that takes into account not only the image itself, but also refers to the specificity of the genre or media text within which the performance functions. All the considerations undertaken in this fragment of the work serve the purpose of building a perspective on the recognition and research of key categories for the work: body, gender and cartoon.

The first chapter of the dissertation takes on a theoretical character and concerns the concept of the ideal body of women and men in contemporary Western culture. In the introduction to the considerations contained therein, the notions of beauty, the canon, Western culture, the modern era and the present have been defined. Thus, the scope of meaning of these notions adopted for the purposes of the work was established, as well as the context of the considerations conducted in the form of Western culture of the modern and contemporary times.

The next part of the first chapter is of a historical and problematic nature. Its aim is to show the changes that took place in thinking about and treating the body between the 17th and 20th centuries. Such a wide time frame is not accidental - it is a period that immediately precedes the times on which the fundamental considerations of this work are focused, i. e. the 20th and 21st centuries. Showing the previous changes that have taken place in the approach to carnality and in defining the beauty of human physicality is intended to foster a better understanding of the current shape of the canon of beauty, as well as to show the process of formation and introduction of activities and lifestyles that are already natural and obvious to contemporary generations. We are talking here about wearing clothes that reveal larger parts of the body: shoulders, knees, stomach or a change of attitude to hygiene.

Further excerpts from the chapter are already related to the modern and contemporary times and focus directly on the changes within the canon of the beautiful body of a woman and a man. The reflections contained in these excerpts show how during the twentieth and early twenty-first century the perception of the ideal image of women and men has changed, who is considered an icon of beauty at that time, and what factors have changed the definition of the beauty of the body of both sexes. A significant part of the attention was devoted to media images that show and promote patterns of the desired image, for example: advertising, film and press releases. In the current media age, they have a significant impact on the audience – also in terms of how they treat and think about their bodies.

The considerations of beauty have been broadened to include cultural gender. The care of the image (especially in the case of women) has long been (and often still is) determined by gender. Maintaining the previously chosen, chronological order of the narrative, the transformations that have taken place in defining „being a woman” and „being a man” over the centuries are presented - with particular emphasis on the 20th and 21st centuries. These deliberations are intended to develop the positions indicated in the introduction: essentialism and constructivism and the way they relate to the role, responsibilities and status of women and men in Western society.

The second chapter is a theoretical reflection on the cartoon species. In its first part, the concepts of the animation process, animated film and cartoon were defined. It also explains why the last of these terms is used in the work. This excerpt also presents the perspective of treating and researching the cartoon, namely to capture and analyze it as a text of culture - and not e. g. of the film genre. Adopting such a perspective means considering it in terms of the creation of a society which is to fulfil certain functions. Although this genre is not important for the duration of the tradition of a given community (which is assumed by the definition of a cultural text), it may nevertheless influence changes within the culture, e. g. the behaviour, habits, or way of thinking of the recipients.

In the following section the considerations are narrowed down and specified only to the cartoon as a separate species. Their aim is to analyse it precisely by indicating the elements and mechanisms that are characteristic for it. The discussion will include the comics, transgressions, intertextuality and double coding that appear in them. A separate thread is devoted to how the body category functions in cartoons. Attention is paid to what laws apply to the physicality of the characters in animated productions (and thus what possibilities they gain in the fictional world there) and whether in their case it is legitimate to talk only about unreal characters created by the animator, in no way referring to real existing people. The

theme of how the cartoons show the characters' attractiveness and the presence of which elements is to emphasize their ugliness is also taken up.

This part of the work becomes not only an in-depth reflection on the cartoon – its structure, functions, characteristic elements, but also a set of notions that can be used in the next phase of reflection.

Chapter three is the analytical part of the work. It analyses selected cartoons of the Cartoon Network station, among others *Dexter's Laboratory*, *Adventure Time*, *Johnny Bravo*, *The Powerpuff Girls* and *Teen Titans*. These productions were examined in terms of how they depict women, men, girls and boys. The aim of the analyses was to check the adequacy and topicality of the hypothesis presented in the introduction, which tries to explain the progressing ugliness of the animated characters, treating the deformed and abstract images of the cartoon characters as a form of counterculture towards the social "beauty regime" of the body. The questions that are posed to the analyzed productions in this context also concern the extent to which the mentioned modification of bodies may result from the very formula of the cartoon as a (mostly) humorous and entertaining text, and whether the category of resistance is also applied to the stereotypical images of femininity and masculinity functioning in culture.

For the analysis we have selected those productions emitted on the Cartoon Network channel, which are still popular. Rankings of the most watched cartoons created by Internet users and a multitude of comments devoted to specific titles on discussion forums on the Internet were considered its measures. The examination of the productions that were made at the beginning of the station's operation, as well as newer proposals, was in turn a procedure that was supposed to show the changes that had taken place over time in their graphic design, especially in the way human heroes were created and their role in a given story. The research contained in this chapter has been further enriched with a reflection on how to construct the reality in which the cartoon characters function. The aim was to get the fullest possible picture of the cartoon's "reality" and to construct answers to the main research questions.

The end of the work takes on a prospective character - it is an attempt to show the possible ways of aesthetic and storyline development of cartoons. In this context, special attention has been paid to the aspects in which the presentation of the bodies and gender roles of the characters in animated productions has changed (and can change). The deliberations focus primarily on the production of Cartoon Network, but they also include references to the work created by other American studios: among others, the Cartoon Network, Walt Disney and Warner Brothers.

In this part of the work, attention was drawn to the currently popular techniques of creating animated films (e. g. the combination of different graphic styles within a single production) affects the way the image of the character is presented and perceived. In this context, the use of 3D technology in animated productions, the introduction of anime style elements or the practice of embodying toys and making them the main protagonists of the production was discussed. Based on the research carried out in the work, as well as on the observations of the currently appearing productions, the issue of what role female characters play in them, and what male characters, was also raised, and whether there are any changes in this respect for the equality of roles and status of both genders in the plots of the latest productions. In addition, the topics of the cartoon itself have been addressed, above all: race, sexual identity and violence. As was the case with the previously discussed issues, the emphasis was particularly placed on what changes can be seen in these areas in the plots of contemporary cartoons.

The reflections on the future of the genre I am interested in in this work focus not only on the content, but also take into account the current way of its transmission, taking place through various media. The expansion of distribution channels for animated productions with new media (Internet, smartphones) is undoubtedly accompanied by rapid development and expanding public access to technology. The question of the future of cartoons therefore concerns not only issues related to the development of the art of animation, but also what is currently happening in social life.

The whole work is crowned with an annex which presents illustrations of the cartoon characters discussed in the work. The list of illustrations is followed by a bibliographical part. It consists of several parts: a list of literature (polish and english), Internet sources (articles, interviews, ratings, information from Internet forums) and a list of episodes of these productions, which were cited in the considerations contained in the paper.

In this dissertation, the cartoons have been analyzed from a culturalist perspective, taking into account, above all, the way in which the appearance of the characters and their behaviour in the context of their gender roles is shown. In the work, the relationship between the cartoon (as a product of society) and the culture to which it refers was highlighted. Selected examples of animated productions were examined in relation to what is happening in social life. In particular, this concerned the attitude towards the body, how to define its attractiveness and what values are considered desirable in the image of women and men.

Looking at both the canons of a beautiful body and the cartoons from the perspective of time, it makes sense to say that this work becomes a story about selected aspects and texts

of culture. It adopts an open structure – which means that although it provides answers to the questions posed in the research, it does not close the possibility of discussing the cartoon species itself or the issues of the body – these are categories that are still evolving, thus constantly creating new, interesting, worth exploring issues and areas of research.

Key words: cartoon, Cartoon Network, body, beauty, gender