Zuzanna Szatanik

De-shamed

Feminist Strategies of Transgression

The Case of Lorna Crozier's Poetry

DESHAMED

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feminist strategies of transgression: the case of lorna crozier's poetry

for paweł

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acknowledgments
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acknowledgments

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copyright information

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IN

chapter

gendering shame

The evidence of decades of trans-
cultural studies indicates that social
codes and moral strictures are socially
constructed, but based on nonspecific
biological elements. Apparently, we
have an inborn capacity for the response
we call shame. But we are taught which
of our actions are shameful. We cannot
become victims of shame until we are
taught about shame. Yet, despite the evi-
dence, there is still an insistence among
both religious fundamentalists and many
sociobiologists that our sense of shame
is an unalterable part of a specific moral
conscience that we are born with.
A belief in such "inborn" shame
is the basis of the Western mythology
of transgression.

Jamake Highwater, *The Mythology of Trans-
gression: Homosexuality as Metaphor* (11)

One

Shame is a common sensation. An unpleasant contraction felt when one is caught red-handed, shame is manifest on a blushing face. It makes one feel both exorbitantly aware of *being* and, at the same time, desperate *not to be*: to disappear or hide. As such, it is an antithetic emotion, described in terms of freezing, withdrawal or paralysis, as well as burning, aggrandisement or transgression. Because of the fact that shame is felt *in* and *on* the body, and, at the same time, breaches the body's limits, it makes one feel too large or too small, both indiscernible and overexposed. A shamed person is therefore perplexingly (un)framed. Indeed, the angst inscribed in the experience of shame is that of "losing face": the fundamental "(Who) am I?" becomes inevitable. In this book, the "I" whose identity is thus unfixed is gendered feminine.

Shame, at the same time, is a cultural phenomenon. Inscribed within basic discourses of the culture of the West, it becomes an instrument of power and subjection. As such, it not only merits a full-fledged study, but also calls for a remedy. As a function of the language rooted in androcentric metanarratives, it has detrimentally affected women since the time immemorial—not only at the level describable in terms of sociopolitical dynamics between (traditionally conceived) genders, but also at the level of the *body*: a non-discursive entity beyond language. Born in discourse, cultural shame transcends discourse; yet, even though the body will not lend itself to deconstructions, rhetorical strategies of shaming, which involve the attribution of values to the body, will. The underlying assumption of the argument presented in this book is that, like shame, the rhetorical disempowerment of shaming discourses will manifest itself in and on the shameless body: at home with one's body, the de-shamed self becomes "riftless." No longer politically disciplined or coerced, such a self may seek its own definition beyond inherited categories: Woman's[1] self, no longer determined by the androcentric language, loses rigid fixity imposed by patriarchal categories: instead, it brings a plethora of possible alternatives into play.

It is, obviously, easier said than done: we are born into and raised in a language that has always already defined our reality. And yet, lit-

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1 Whenever in my work I refer to "woman" (and/or "man") as generalised, cultural constructs, I start the words with the capital letters or use plural forms. I address complexities inscribed in the concept of "Woman" and her affinity to shame in greater detail in the second, theoretical, chapter of this book.

erature, the testing ground for ideas, remains far from "exhausted." Poised against language, self-conscious and self-reflective, literature has the power of annulling and redefining categories not only by deconstructing fundamental oppositions upon which central metanarratives rest, but also by its capacity of exposing the reader to an experience which in itself transgresses discourse. An act of reading, as well as an act of writing, is an existential act, throwing one into the liminal space where the organising principles of the dominant discourses collapse. It is such an experience, born in my immersion in the literary discourse of Canada, that inspires this book: my theoretical reflection concerning the fundamentals of culture is derived from the "literary testing ground" of Lorna Crozier's poetry, whose intuitive attempts to use language against itself result in the disempowering of the rhetoric of shame without resorting to the use of unyieldingly rigid, acceptable, institutionalised, "intersubjectively verifiable" categories. My book begins where she has left off: it uses Crozier's literary intuitions as a pretext to revise existing theoretical visions of shame in order to propose a non-essentialist theory which would acknowledge the value of metaphorical, non-categorial, poetic language as a means to both describe and create reality.

My study's departure point is, at the same time, a point of convergence of the literary discourses, mainstream feminist theories and psychological studies focused upon the nature of the shame affect. It is upon such a fundament that I aim to translate the psychological theory of shame into the language of feminism, thus working out a set of tools by means of which it would be possible to formulate a gendered theory of Woman's shame. First, however, things first.

1.1. shame psychology: androcentrism in therapy

I knew that I needed to intervene. As I continued to gaze into her face and into her eyes, I said, "Imagine me right there beside you as your ally, right there in that room with you. I want you to picture me standing there. Can you see me?" After a pause, Theresa nodded her agreement, her eyes closed. "Yes … I can see you … with me."

Gershen Kaufman, The Psychology of Shame. Theory and Treatment of Shame-Based Syndromes *(306)*

Shame psychology is a field of study originating in the work of Silvan Tomkins, and further evolving in the writings of such major figures in the field as Gershen Kaufman, Benjamin Kilborne, Michæl Lewis, Donald L. Nathanson, Stephen Pattison or Léon Wurmser. Although, in general, it is unaffiliated specifically to either cultural studies or feminist theory, shame psychology offers the most expansive studies of the eponymous affect, and was one of the first academic disciplines to acknowledge shame as a factor crucial to the formation and development of one's identity. Thus far, as a rule, specialists in the area have mostly focused their attention on the negativity of the experience of shame and its destructiveness to the process of identity formation. In their works, shame has emerged as "the most disturbing experience individuals ever have about themselves"—one wounding the self from within (KAUFMAN and RAPHAEL xiii). The wound, however, as Gershen Kaufman and Lev Raphæl imagine it, is not mortal: therefore, the researchers have proposed that shame be fought by means of boosting their patients' self-esteem and helping them discover their "inner power." The validity of their therapeutic goals notwithstanding, the clinical practice seems to rest upon theoretical foundations reinforcing, rather than eliminating, the essential reason why their patients became patients in the first place, which claim the following examples seem to confirm.

Gershen Kaufman's description of one of his "clinical [cases]" (305), providing the motto opening this section of my book, involves a story

of Theresa, a patient of his, and a victim of childhood sexual abuse, who suffered consequences of prolonged exposure to shame. "Physically violating the body," writes Kaufman, "invariably generates profound shame; in response to shame one naturally feels to blame" (305). In Theresa's story two different representations of patriarchal power—the father and the therapist—come to perform, respectively, two opposite functions: that of the abuser and that of the saviour. However, most intriguing about the motto is that its rhetoric seems modelled on representations of gender omnipresent in romantic narratives. In her therapist's account, Theresa becomes a damsel in distress, who passively awaits masculine assistance. The man, on the other hand, actively intervenes, by means of penetrating the woman with his probing look and then entering her mind. Evidently, the therapist-patient relationship reflects the agent-patient hierarchy characteristic of the traditional Western order of gender relations.

Other shame psychologists offer similar narratives. For example, in Nathanson's *Shame and Pride. Affect, Sex, and the Birth of the Self*, Michæl Lewis's *Shame: The Exposed Self*, or Léon Wurmser's "Shame: The Veiled Companion of Narcissism," theoretical ponderings of the authors are often intertwined with the personal confessions of their female patients. Regardless of whether these stories are narrated in the first person, or already "appropriated" by the therapist, the patients are presented as coming to therapy in order to seek illumination: an epiphany by the light of the therapist's authority. The process of helping a shamed woman seems to require that she surrenders herself to the authority, or—like Theresa—closes her eyes in an act of therapeutic submission. The three "case studies" below manifest different facets of the complex relationship between a male therapist and a female patient:

> Consider Laura, a young woman who came into therapy to see if she was "crazy," as her father had always taught her. Well, no, she certainly was not crazy, but she seemed frozen inside, the needing and feeling part of her locked deeply away. Therapy proceeded slowly, intellectually, until the fourth session. I sensed she was feeling shame, a prisoner of exposure. She appeared to be feeling acutely self-conscious during our meetings. After she agreed with my observation, I asked her if she was willing to try something. Looking at me quizzically, she nodded. I invited her to relax in the chair and close her eyes, adding that I would close mine and I would not peak. She laughed. (Kaufman 161)

Sandy and I are well into the initial history, that group of sessions during which a therapist should be the most intrusive. At forty, she has a graduate degree that allows her to make a good living, but is otherwise unhappy with her life. What she wants out of therapy is clear: "I want confidence—believing in yourself. I am so afraid of intimacy that I am afraid if I meet the right person I won't know what to do. Near the end of our first meeting she touched her cheek fleetingly as if to check its temperature, then breathed a sigh of relief and said, "At least I didn't say 'I'm sorry' every five minutes like I used to."... We have agreed that, in order for us to learn what lies beneath her symptoms, I will be permitted to ask several deeply personal questions. (NATHANSON 315)

A patient of mine had a sexual encounter with someone outside of her marriage. She told me that this encounter had occurred several years earlier and that she had felt terribly ashamed. She saw herself as violating the family unit and, because of this shame, found herself so unhappy that she finally confessed her transgression to her husband. It is important to note what she reported she felt after she finally confessed. She said, "After I told him, and he said that he understood and still loved me, I felt as if weight had been lifted from me." In other words, confession had redeemed her, since she would confess to the one whom she transgressed against and who forgave her. (LEWIS 134)

The first patient, Laura (not unlike Theresa), passes from subjection to one patriarchal authority (the father who proclaimed her "crazy") to another (a therapist whose professional training allows him to verify the father's statement). Laura is "frozen inside" and "a prisoner of exposure." The goal of her therapist, therefore, is to warm her up and make her feel comfortable. The first stage of her therapy—slow and intellectual—is a form of a foreplay followed by a breakthrough: Laura relaxes and places her confidence in the man (she trusts he will not peek). As evidenced by the quotation above, the (supposedly remedial) discursive act of *baring* oneself in front of a therapist resembles "a sexual act based on male norms" (BERNSTEIN 23). The process of free associations in particular requires that "the patient [yields] to psycho-analysis,...[abandons herself] to a process, a phrase that implicates the talking cure as a version of sexual seduction" (BERNSTEIN 25). Concurrently, Sandy—the second case study—comes to her therapist for lessons in intimacy, and consents to the man's intrusiveness. The mention of the patient touching her—possibly hot, possibly blushing—cheek and breathing a sigh of relief adds an erotic dimension to Nathanson's description.

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The anonymous woman of the third quote is healed through acts of confession: first she confesses her transgression to her husband and then—to her therapist. In order to be cured, she needs to tell a shame-full story twice, a sine-qua-non of the commencement of the process of recovery. Psychotherapy—especially when based on Freudian psychoanalysis—is similar to confession (not only in its demand that the shameful truth be revealed, but also because it is regulated by the hierarchy inscribed between the therapist and the patient). Like confession, also psychotherapy commonly relies on storytelling and interpreting. Both often focus on sexuality, and particularly on "whatever is considered pathological, perverse or illicit" (BERNSTEIN 16). Like confession, psychotherapy promises absolution through purgation.

What is more—to return to the earlier analogy—in order for psychoanalysis to work, the psychoanalyst has to be consecrated as the father confessor, endowed with a "magnified scope of visual, aural, and silent sources of knowledge" (26), an almost godlike ability to read the unconscious. The "talking cure," in other words, requires that the unquestionable superiority of the therapist be accepted by the patient, and therefore the "talking" part of it gives way to the more important notions of control and silencing. In the light of what has been stated so far, it seems apparent that for a shamed woman thus construed psychoanalysis can be used as a way to further subjugation, rather than liberation.[2]

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2 A Canadian author who intimates the problematic relationship between a woman and her therapist from the perspective of both, a patient and a feminist, is Janice Williamson. In her *Crybaby!*—a narrative which revolves around the memory of childhood sexual abuse—she anxiously observes how someone's memories can be usurped and either certified or invalidated by instances of power. She also offers an insight into how a woman patient is construed as powerless and hence having no access to the truth. "In our culture"—as Williamson asserts—"the figure of the child has a lot in common with the woman who speaks into the wind; in spite of experience and accomplishments, the problem of legitimacy persists" (176). Correspondingly, a woman who narrates her shameful story is a child-woman who speaks with the child's voice, and as such needs to respond to the authority and judgment of her therapist.

Williamson expresses her doubts concerning the therapeutic "act of telling things" a number of times, most clearly, perhaps, in the penultimate part of the book, titled "Fragments of an Analysis." Although the extent to which the methods employed by her therapists rely on Freudian conception of psychoanalysis is not clearly determined, they depend on verbal expression and require that the hierarchy between the doctor and the patient be maintained. "In spite of many satisfying moments of comfort and the fact that good therapy probably saved my life"—writes

1.2. de-centering androcentrism:
toward a reconceptualisation of methodology

Even though the examples quoted above support the intuitive need to revise available theories of shame, I do not aim to propose any alternative forms of individual therapy. Instead, since I am interested in shame as a cultural phenomenon, rather than discussing an apparently neutral concept of a (de)shamed "self," my argument focuses specifically on the phenomenon of the *(de)shaming* of women in the culture of the West. Concentrating upon strategies of transcending shame (which, when translated into the language of popular psychology, connotes "fighting it," or "self-healing"), I am primarily interested in the de-marginalisation of possible parallel (subversive) paradigms of reading of cultural texts, which, albeit potentially therapeutic in individual cases, applies, above all, to a wide cultural context. With such a goal in mind, in order to explore the relationship between Woman and shame I examine ways in which the findings of shame psychologists have been read and interpreted by a group of influential theorists critiquing the principles underlying the metanarrative orders that organise Western societies.

In fact, for over a decade now, a number of feminist, postcolonial, and queer theorists have been involved with the debate addressing the theory of shame as related to their own fields of study. This, in turn, has produced a plethora of cultural and literary interpretations re-

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Williamson—"sometimes I found myself...resenting the conversation" (176). What she subsequently details are, seemingly, the moments of resistance against the authority of her therapists. She notices repeatedly that these specialists—regardless of their gender—work within the constraints of a limited and limiting patriarchal discourse, that they often reiterate overly simplified formulas, and disregard their patient's intelligence and insight. "Talk about 'the child within' drove me wild with fury"—Williamson declares—"as though history were a series of transparent layers to be peeled off one by one" (176). What the narrator senses at times is that she knows more, knows better, as a feminist, a scholar, and a chronicler of her own past. However, she finds herself "playing dumb" (177), and saying nothing. "Why?"—she asks—"It doesn't make sense" (177).

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volving around shame or adopting it as a central concept.[3] For instance, such feminist critics as Simone de Beauvoir or Sandra Lee Bartky emphasise the *paralysing effects* of shame and write about shaming as a cultural mechanism of control, implemented and institutionalised in order to keep women passive. In turn, queer theorists, including Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Sally R. Munt, focus on the *transgressive* nature of the affect. The parallel existence of these two, apparently contrary, perspectives indicates the paradoxical nature of shame. The above notwithstanding, however, both must be taken into account in order to elucidate the dynamics underlying the two processes of my interest: *cultural shaming*, and *feminist de-shaming* of Woman.

And thus, rather than simply due to the fact that the source of my inspiration was the work of a Canadian woman poet, it is mainly via feminist and queer studies that the affect central to this book becomes linked to my third area of interest. The rhetoric of shame, interestingly, seems to harmonise with the language employed by scholars in these fields to address the ever-elusive concept of Canadianness. Yet, while queer theorists emphasise the indefiniteness and unfixedness of Canadian national identity, feminist researchers assert that women and Canadians speak from the same position of the margins. The feminization of Canada, however, precedes the feminist critique of Woman as the Other: for example, in the 19th-century adventure stories set in the Canadian North, the hostile landscape was often addressed by means of the topos of the female body—one which needs first to be tamed and then taken in possession.

Granted, it is in thus gendered Canadian scenery that Lorna Crozier's poems are inscribed. In fact, Crozier's works—including her most recent *Small Beneath the Sky: A Prairie Memoir* (2009) and *Small Me-*

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3 These publications include Joseph Adamson's *Melville, Shame and the Evil Eye: A Psychoanalytic Reading* (1997), *Scenes of Shame. Psychoanalysis, Shame, and Writing* (1999), edited by Joseph Adamson and Hilary Clark, J. Brooks Bouson's *Quiet As It's Kept. Shame, Trauma, and Race in the Novels of Toni Morrison* (2000), and Ewan Fernie's *Shame in Shakespeare* (2002). The more recent works linking shame studies with feminist, and gay and lesbian studies, respectively, are J. Brooks Bouson's *Embodied Shame. Uncovering Female Shame in Contemporary Women's Writing* (2009) and *Gay Shame* by David Halperin and Valerie Traub (2010). As I was preparing this book for publication, the following works were announced as forthcoming: Timothy Bewes's *The Event of Postcolonial Shame* (2011), Neil Seeman's and Patrick Luciani's *XXL: Obesity and the Limits of Shame* (2011) and Amy Erdman Farrell's *Fat Shame: Stigma and the Fat Body in American Culture* (2011).

chanics (2011)—have most often been classified as "prairie writing." Yet, even though the seven poems I have chosen as illustrations of my theoretical considerations make no direct references to Canada as a place, they often focus on the female body as markedly "deterritorialised." By means of the same "topographical" rhetoric, which often looms large in poetic descriptions of the space of Canada, Crozier emphasises the body's transformative properties in order to question patriarchal definitions of Woman and effectively points to such a theoretical space where the theories of shame, gender, queerness and Canadianness meet and intersect.

1.3. an ascending spiral: methodology and organisation of the argument

Attaining thus defined goals, however, requires a rather rigid argumentative frame, fashioned, so to say, upon the principle of the "ascending spiral." Rather than dismiss the findings of androcentric shame psychology, I revise the assumptions of this discipline by recontextualising it within frames of contemporary feminist and queer studies. The consistency of a thus proposed theory would rely upon the "gendered" version of the methodological foundations of shame psychology, yet its applications would go beyond individual therapy. Such a theory aspires to offer tools first to recognise and then to interpretively counteract shaming discourses inscribed within cultural texts of the West.

The methodological position I develop translates into the following composition of the book: in chapter two, "Towards a Theory of Woman's Shame," I first present an overview of selected works by the most influential shame psychologists in order to both introduce concepts I employ further in my work, and—more importantly—to indicate the areas these thinkers have left uncharted due to the paucity of their references to women or gender. It is, in fact, my intention to try and fill in these gaps with the use of feminist and queer theories.

Secondly, I characterise the generalised cultural construct dubbed "Woman" and then proceed to define Woman's shame in light of feminist cultural studies. The definition of Woman which I adopt is historically rooted in the now canonical theory proposed by Simone de Beauvoir, the first feminist author to evidence a close relationship between Woman and shame. Western culture, in Beauvoir's interpretation, tends to identify Woman with her body, and to attach multiple, often self-contradictory and objectionable meanings to the Woman/body construct. The Woman's body is visible; it both *makes* her and *is* her; it is a conspicuous object that others examine and evaluate. In Beauvoir's terms, becoming Woman resembles being taught how to play a role in a cultural performance—a role which requires no lines and no movement, but demands that the trainee go on stage with the acute realisation that an audience is there, invisible, yet watchful and judg-

Kup książkę

mental. In order to guide Woman off the thus construed stage, in the final sections of the second chapter I offer an insight into shame's transformative and transgressive potential. In light of queer theory and the highly ambiguous concept of Canadianness, it becomes possible to demonstrate that shame may provide the stimulus opening up possibilities of various redefinitions of Woman's subjectivity.

To illustrate the applicability of the theoretical perspective worked out in chapter two, I proceed to the third, interpretive chapter, "Lorna Crozier's Feminist Strategies: Four Studies in Transcending Woman's Shame." It comprises four subchapters illustrating particular ways of de-shaming Woman. In the first subchapter, entitled "Transgressing Transgression. Subverting the Authority of the Biblical Creation Myth ('Original Sin' and 'What I Gave You, Truly')," I demonstrate how the ideas presented in the theoretical chapters relate to the paradigmatic experience of Woman's shame. The subject of my investigation is the Biblical Eve and the Original Shame she brought upon humankind. The analyses of Crozier's poems allow me to trace both feminist and queer strategies which prove efficient as discursive tools facilitating acts of "going beyond shame": in this case, the shame attributed to Eve, one of the prototypical models of femininity in Western culture.

The broad perspective of foundational metanarratives of Judeo-Christianity provides a backdrop against which the analyses included in the second subchapter, "Shrinking the Shrink. Subverting the Authority of the 'Classical' Theories of Sex and Gender (*The Penis Poems*)," gain particular focus. In this section, I propose a reading of Crozier's "Poem for Sigmund" and "Tales for Virgins," which belong to a poetic cycle of twelve verses under the common title of *The Penis Poems*. "Poem for Sigmund" is a feminist response to the Freudian concept of "penis envy" and to the cultural sublimation of the male sexual organ. Employing the rhetoric of feminist re-visions of Freud's theories, I aim to demonstrate central characteristics of Crozier's ironic strategy, and to show how she succeeds in de-shaming Woman's apparent "lack." This, subsequently, leads to the debarring of the "oxymoronic" nature of cultural myths narrating (and thus regulating) virginity and its loss, as well as conditioning the shame inscribed in both. The overall effect of such a strategy is the undermining of the "institutionalised truths" about femininity, legitimised by virtue of their rootedness of androcentric psychoanalytic discourses in patriarchal metanarratives of the West.

The third subchapter, "Gazing at the Gaze. Subverting the 'Ocular Regime' ('Alice' and 'Sometimes My Body Leaves Me')," focuses upon two representations of the Woman's body. The bodies in both poems would commonly be referred to as "normal": there is nothing exceptional about them. And yet, it is in these bodies that shame emerges "naturally" due to the objectifying, shaming look the heroines of the poems adopt as their own. My goal is to examine possible counter-looks, ones that transgress the "self-other" duality.

The ensuing, fourth subchapter, titled "Subjectifying the Subject. Subverting the Western Beauty Myth ('The Fat Lady's Dance')," critically addresses meanings attributed to the female body marked as fat. Since contemporary Western culture has rendered the fat body *particularly* visible, in light of the debate on the troubled relationship between shame and visibility it becomes clear why it is the body of a fat woman that would be burdened with an exceptionally negative weight. Crozier's poem, however, consistently unburdens the Fat Lady—not of fat, but of shame-inducing meanings. The interpretive chapter ends with a short résumé entitled "Kissing and Telling."

The analysis of Crozier's de-shaming strategies, carried out within the frame of the theory worked out in the theoretical sections of this book, leads to its final chapter. Recapitulating findings derived from analyses, the "Conclusions" simultaneously confirm the applicability of the proposed theoretical apparatus to the study of issues relating to Woman's shame and indicate possible paths towards further revision of the existing state of knowledge, as well as—consequently—toward the abandonment of detrimental cultural practices. It is thus without any claims to exhaustiveness or universality that the present book aspires to make a foray into a territory of transgression: working from "within" the dominant patriarchal paradigm, the argument presented here leads towards a space in which shame's defining power would no longer affect either the shape of Woman's self, or that of her body.

STRESZCZENIE

od-wstydzona
dépasser la honte

résumé

zuzanna szatanik

od-wstydzona
„wykroczenie" jako feministyczna strategia:
przypadek poezji lorny crozier

(streszczenie/summary in polish)

Niniejsza książka poświęcona jest strategiom wykraczania poza do-
świadczenie wstydu, które – jak wykazuje autorka – stanowi nieod-
łączny komponent wytworzonego przez kulturę zachodnią konstruktu
„kobiety". Rozważania teoretyczne, dotyczące wstydu jako wykorzysty-
wanego przez dyskursy androcentryczne zjawiska kulturowego, autorka
ilustruje swoimi analizami wybranych wierszy współczesnej kanadyj-
skiej poetki Lorny Crozier. Część teoretyczna pracy lokuje się więc na po-
graniczu studiów feministycznych i psychologicznych studiów nad
afektem (tzw. psychologii wstydu). Trzeci z obecnych w pracy teoretycz-
nych dyskursów wywodzi się z pojęcia „kanadyjskości", czy też kanadyj-
skiej tożsamości, przez wielu badaczy łączonego również z teorią *queer*.

W skład części teoretycznej książki wchodzą dwa rozdziały. W
pierwszym analizowane są najważniejsze pozycje z dziedziny psycho-
logii wstydu oraz ukazana jest nieobecność „kobiety" w owych opra-
cowaniach. Drugi rozdział koncentruje się na tych tekstach teoretycz-
nych z dziedziny teorii feminizmu i *gender studies*, w których temat
wstydu został wyraźnie powiązany z kobiecością. Zasadniczym celem
tej części jest przełożenie psychologicznej teorii wstydu (wypracowanej
przez takich badaczy, jak Silvan Tomkins, Gershen Kaufman, Michæl
Lewis, Donald L. Nathanson, Stephen Pattison i Léon Wurmser)
na język współczesnego feminizmu i zaproponowanie swoistej „femi-
nistycznej teorii wstydu". Teoria ta stanowi podstawę do wypraco-
wania takich narzędzi interpretacji tekstu, które z jednej strony opierają
się na badaniach psychologicznych, a z drugiej uwzględniają specyfikę
obiektu badawczych zainteresowań autorki: kobiety jako uogólnionego
konstruktu kulturowego. Kobiecy wstyd – afekt mający odmienne
cechy niż inne rodzaje wstydu – okazuje się zjawiskiem wyjaśniającym
wiele elementów dyskursywnych i pozadyskursywnych, jakie determi-
nują relację kobiecości do kultury zachodniej, wobec czego niniejsza

propozycja teoretyczna może stanowić fundament nowego kierunku w badaniach feministycznych.

Trzeci, analityczny rozdział pracy koncentruje się na strategiach wykraczania poza kobiecy wstyd – czyli „odwstydzania" kobiety – które wywodzą się z teorii oraz literatury feministycznej i obecne są w poezji Crozier. Cechą wspólną owych feministycznych technik od-wstydzania jest kwestionowanie kulturowych „prawd" dotyczących kobiecości i kobiecego ciała. Tematem trzech omawianych w pracy wierszy są te przedstawienia kobiety, które w kulturze patriarchalnej funkcjonują jako szczególnie *wstydliwe*. Owe wizerunki to biblijna Ewa (wiersze pt. *Original Sin* i *What I Gave You Truly*), oraz Gruba Pani (*The Fat Lady's Dance*). Pozostałe cztery analizy (wierszy zatytu-łowanzch *Alice, Sometimes My Body Leaves Me, Poem for Sigmund* i *Tales for Virgins*) prezentują „normalną" kobiecość jako rzekome źródło wstydu.

Zawarte w rozdziałach interpretacyjnych rozważania, które ilu-strują zastosowanie pojęcia kobiecego wstydu w praktyce analitycznej, prowadzą do konkluzji o możliwej zmianie istniejących teorii femini-stycznych lub uzupełnieniu ich o stanowisko nowe. Feministyczna teoria wstydu, której zręby buduje niniejsza praca, stanowi propozycję nieco innego niż dotąd spojrzenia na główny obiekt badań studiów fe-ministycznych – kobietę i relacje, w jakie wchodzi ona we współcze-snym świecie. Zaproponowane interpretacje siedmiu wierszy Lorny Crozier są jednocześnie świadectwem zachodzących już teraz kulturo-wych zmian w postrzeganiu kobiety, prowadzących do wytworzenia takiej transgresyjnej przestrzeni, w której kobiecy wstyd przestaje być jednym ze stałych parametrów kobiecości.

zuzanna szatanik

dépasser la honte.
stratégies feministes de transgression :
la cas de la poésie de lorna crozier

(résumé/summary in french)

Ce livre est consacré à des stratégies de dépassement de l'expérience de la honte qui est, selon l'auteure, une partie inhérente à la construction « femme » dans la culture occidentale. Le contenu théorique de ce travail, qui porte sur la honte en tant que phénomène culturel propre aux discours androcentriques, est illustré par l'analyse des poèmes choisis de la poète canadienne contemporaine Lorna Crozier. La partie théorique aborde donc les thèmes proches des études féministes et des recherches psychologiques sur l'affect (psychologie de la honte). Ces deux discours sont traversés dans ce travail par le discours sur la « canadianité » voire l'identité canadienne que beaucoup de chercheurs et chercheuses analysent dans le cadre de la théorie *queer*.

La partie théorique se compose de deux chapitres. Le premier porte sur les travaux les plus importants dans le domaine de la psychologie de la honte et montre que « la femme » y est absente. Le deuxième chapitre se concentre sur les textes théoriques du féminisme et des *gender studies*, qui se sont déjà proposés d'analyser la notion de honte par rapport à la féminité. L'objectif de la partie théorique est de rapporter la théorie psychologique de la honte, élaborée par des chercheurs comme Silvan Tomkins, Gershen Kaufman, Michæl Lewis, Donald L. Nathanson, Stephen Pattison et Léon Wurmser, au discours féministe contemporain, et par conséquent de proposer une théorie féministe de la honte. Celle-ci permet d'élaborer les outils d'interprétation du texte qui sont basés sur les études psychologiques, mais qui tiennent également compte de la spécificité de l'objet d'étude qui intéresse l'auteure : femme générique. La honte féminine, affect qui est bien différent d'autres types de honte, est un phénomène qui explique de nombreux éléments discursifs et adiscursifs qui composent la relation féminité – culture occidentale, et peut donner des fondements à une nouvelle piste de recherches féministes.

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Le troisième chapitre est analytique et se concentre sur des stratégies de dépassement de la honte féminine qui sont propres à la théorie et littératures féminines et qu'on peut retrouver dans la poésie de Crozier. En principe, ces techniques de dépassement de la honte consistent à remettre en question les « vérités » culturelles pour ce qui est de la féminité et du corps féminin. Trois poèmes analysés dans le livre portent sur les représentations de la femme qui sont particulièrement *honteuses* dans la culture patriarcale : Ève biblique (« Original Sin » et « What I Gave You Truly ») et la Grosse Madame (« The Fat Lady's Dance »). Quatres analyses (consacrées aux poèmes « Alice », « Sometimes My Body Leaves Me », « Poem for Sigmund » et « Tales for Virgins ») présentent la féminité *normale* comme la présumée source de la honte.

Les chapitres interprétatives, qui mettent en application la notion de honte féminine abordée dans la partie analytique, arrivent à la conclusion qu'il est possible de changer ou compléter les approches féministes existantes. La théorie de la honte féminine qui est à la base de ce livre propose une autre manière de voir la femme en tant qu'objet des études féministes et les relations qu'elle entretient dans le monde contemporain. Les sept interprétations des poèmes de Lorna Crozier témoignent des changements culturels pour ce qui est de la perception de la femme, ces changements se situant dans un espace transgressif où la honte n'est plus l'un des apanages permanents de la féminité.

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De-shamed

"Shame is a common sensation. An unpleasant contraction felt when one is caught red-handed, shame is manifest on a blushing face. It makes one feel both exorbitantly aware of *being* and, at the same time, desperate *not to be*: to disappear or hide. As such, it is an antithetic emotion, described in terms of freezing, withdrawal or paralysis, as well as burning, aggrandisement or transgression. Because of the fact that shame is felt *in* and *on* the body, and, at the same time, breaches the body's limits, it makes one feel too large or too small, both indiscernible and overexposed. A shamed person is therefore perplexingly (un)framed. Indeed, the angst inscribed in the experience of shame is that of "losing face": the fundamental "(Who) am I?" becomes inevitable. In this book, the "I" whose identity is thus unfixed is gendered feminine."

(From the "Introduction")

"In her *De-shamed. Feminist Strategies of Transgression: The Case of Lorna Crozier's Poetry*, Zuzanna Szatanik addresses the unsettling subject of Woman's shame, understood as a cultural and psychological phenomenon as well as a literary motif: a subject both important and rarely raised by Polish and international academics alike. The complex, eclectic, methodology adopted by the Author deserves particular credit. Departing from existing psychological and psychotherapeutic studies of shame, burdened by their masculinist, or even misogynist, bias, Szatanik first explores questions concerning the relationship between shame and Woman. Subsequently, she focuses upon discursive remedial strategies of transcending Woman's shame in the culture of the West, which she then illustrates in her interpretations of seven poems by the contemporary Canadian poet, Lorna Crozier. To this end, she employs feminist and queer theories, viewed as necessary complements to the existing psychological studies of shame. These approaches, critically processed are then linked to relevant issues within the field of Canadian studies. The end result is a competent, multidirectional, but at the same time cogent study of Woman's shame in the context of transgressive de-shaming strategies employed in literary texts."

(From the review by Agnieszka Rzepa,
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland)

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ZUZANNA SZATANIK / DE-SHAMED

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