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FEMALE AGEING VISUALITY IN UKRAINIAN TV ADVERTISEMENT

Introduction. Women and men are getting different social experience of ageing; they have different attitude to old age; they use different practices of resisting to social and body withering. As for A. Freixas, B. Luque and A. Reina, in current society, "the process of ageing is not the same for a woman as for a man, particularly when we bear in mind the numerous personal, social, and professional aspects that, in the course of life, have made the lives of women and men significantly different" [9]. Different perception of old age and senescence, different means of male/female reacting (at conscious, unconscious, and corporeal levels) on inevitability of losing youthfulness are affected by not only psychological and physiological differences between men and women, but mainly by influence of society that imposes them different models of attitude to their bodies, faces, to her/his "appearance" (this situation is described by Sontag as the double standard of ageing [14]). Thus, it seems necessary to study not only common (i.e. inherent for both men and women), but also specific, gender-oriented, social-constructed "practices of ageing" that have become a subject of female and male gerontology.

Since in modern society male and female habitus (social habits/dispositions to react to one or another context/content in a certain manner automatically, unconsciously) is formed and supported by mass-media (as well as in process of everyday social contacts), special attention should be paid to studying visual and verbal TV-content that constructs different models of attitude to ageing/withering. Different social media-images (including images of old age and ageing) are the subject of social visualistics which is the inter-disciplinary project that develops at the edge of visual sociology, visual culture, visual studies, and media theory. Social Visualistics is a discipline that deals with investigating theoretical aspects of social construction of visuality (social types of visual perception), analytics of sociocultural regimes of vision, and carrying out practical studies of visual practices met in mass-media and everyday life. Social Visualistics tries to answer what is the nature of media-visuality; how does a human act in videosphere; how video-mediality can transform or strengthen his/her habitual attitudes. Consider medial images of female ageing in the context of social visualistics. With this purpose in mind, let us study visual content presented in mass-media.

The study "Female Ageing in TV content" has been carried out at Ukrainian television channel "Inter" (which is in top-5 in Ukraine). TV programs have been recorded (8 hours in a row in one of two days); totally the duration of 232 hours of the so called "time housewives" of television advertising have been analyzed where records have been done from 10.00 to 18.00 in weekdays. In most of the viewed programs the gerontology topic has appeared randomly and irregularly (this fact did not allow determining certain tendencies), main attention has been focused on analysis of advertising video-texts where gerontology problems were arisen regularly and systematically. In aggregate, 245 advertising blocks were viewed and analyzed (with duration of 8–15 minutes each).

Investigation interest to advertising video-images is stipulated by the fact that just advertising in modern world becomes one of the most influential institutions that forms habitus of behavioral and cognitive activities of a modern woman/man. As it has been genially mentioned by J. Baudrillard, the society looks at itself via advertising and it perceives its own images [2]. The advertising offers a list of the most popular images for a certain society that are perceived and reproduced in everyday life by humans. Besides, advertising is a specific mirror of pictorial hyperreality that detects what images have been already "accepted" and fixed at the level of everyday life of modern humans. This is just the reason why the study of advertising mass-media images becomes an important task in Social Visualistics. Such an investigation interest to TV advertising is determined not only by the fact that it uses capacious images that provide clear and visible demonstration of hidden sociocultural tendencies, but also by the fact that advertising is a powerful factor of influencing consciousness and unconsciousness of modern humans. Advertising at mass level translates information on gender, age and behavioral models of human existence constructing certain rules of everyday life. Super-effectiveness of visual advertising as a factor of constructing social behavior and consciousness is explained by the following. First, visualized content is much richer than verbal one, due to this it faster and deeper «implants» human consciousness. Second, multiple repeating of video-images in advertising assists automatic and unconsciousness learning of translated senses.

Analysis of media-presentations of female ageing problems will be performed in the context of social constructivism theory that considers age as a social construction formed under pressure of cultural stereotypes [1; 9; 10; 11; 15]. In the social constructivist perspective, “ageing is a social and cultural category, rooted in the wider structures of society and taking its meanings from them. It cannot simply be read off from biology. Age ordering is, furthermore, itself an active constituent of the social world, providing, like the gender order, one of the most profound elements that structure the social realm. Age and ageing are deeply social” [15, p. 70].

Visual practices of «Masculine domination». In the modern “consumer society”, sex considerably influences age identification of a person. At least, essential appearance of such an influence can be observed in social history of modern women. Under pressure of consumer codes of modern society, a woman might feel herself old (and society starts “stigmatizing” her as old) from a moment of appearing first wrinkles, gill, and extra weight, i.e. starting from approximately 30–35 years old. Similar starting point for arising problems of female gerontology is set also in objective reality. For example, in employment announcements and in advertising of marriage agencies, a typical requirement to women is to be “under 35”. Concerning male age identification, it is less strictly determined: consumer society does not impose hard requirements to a man relating to physical youthfulness and allows him to have deep wrinkles, sagging skin, gill and large stomach pushing age of his senescence up to 60–70 years old. Such different age “coding” of men and women carried out by modern consumer culture confirms the fact of social determination of the age: “falling” of a woman into category “old” is the consequence of not the physical age but the result of appearing wrinkles and changing the contour of her face.

Such “stigmatization” of women can be considered as obvious display of “masculine domination” in modern world that, according to P. Bourdieu, becomes even sharper and more unfair viewed at background of sex equality in rights which is officially accepted and fixed at legislation level. The modern society still operates in the mode of “masculine domination”: “The social world functions (to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the field) as a market in symbolic goods, dominated by the masculine vision: for women, as has been noted, to be is to be perceived, and perceived by the male eye or by an eye informed by masculine categories – those that one implements, without being able to state them explicitly, when one praises a woman’s work as “feminine” or, on the contrary, not at all feminine” [6, p. 99]. Feminist revolution that has

liberated women from many repressive codes of modern culture has been unable to eliminate age discrimination of women rooted at the level of habitus or internal intention to certain norms of behavior. The desire to be young as long as possible, panic fright to become old – such attitudes imposed to women by modern sociality control their behavior, consciousness and body. Such a desperate fight of modern women with ageing can be treated as visible sign of their capitulation before masculine gaze (the gaze of symbolic violence) and symbol of their voluntary agreeing on “masculine domination”. Willing to be “always young”, a modern woman has the goal “to be liked by men”, to accumulate masculine gazes with storing “visual capital” and confirming visual status of female value. Practicing such a life-style, a woman accepts secondary role (background role) and becomes fully dependent upon male estimates, approval or disapproval. She agrees to be only the Icon, the Image, the Beautiful Picture that has fallen into objective of male Gaze. As it has been remarkably mentioned by L. Mulvey, “the woman as icon, displayed for the gaze and enjoyment of men, the active controllers of the look” [13, p. 452].

Masculine orientation of the modern culture can be absolutely clearly seen in modern mass media that habituates (and domesticates) woman to the idea about necessity to fight for man’s attention or (which is almost the same) to fight against wrinkles and withering. Monotonicity and insistency taking place in translating TV advertising on anti-age crèmes and pharmacological means that assist “internal” coping with ageing symptoms (interestingly, they are intended exclusively for women) prove dominance of this cultural vector. Among 245 analyzed advertising blocks, only 40 blocks did not contain advertising of anti-age crèmes. 86 advertising blocks contained such messages from two to four times. Respectively, 119 blocks contained such advertising only one time. Therefore, advertising of anti-age means for skin was translated 340 times during 232 TV hours (i.e., three times each two hours on the average)! Frequency of repeating the same information has important meaning in this case. Meanwhile, the content of this advertising was not too wide: only 11 types of such advertising were translated at the channel Inter during two months, two examples with description are presented in Table below. However, one should keep in mind such psychological peculiarity that information, being repeated several times, is memorized by humans automatically. It is “recorded” at conscious and unconscious levels even if it seems to a person that he/she does not listen to it, ignores it. Thus, we can make conclusion on high social “charging” of the considered advertising messages that “feeds” habitus of female low-value.

Examples of anti-age advertsing

| N | Advertised crème | Visual content | Verbal content |
|---|--|--|---|
| 1 | Crème “Diademine Lift+” | The main hero is doctor P. Caspari, specialist in anti-age dermatology, who is in business suit and is sitting before computer. He gives scientific background (supported by computer schemes) of crème advantages. At the clip end, a face of middle age blonde appears at screen with somewhat guilty smile at her face. | Female voice says: “Skin looks as 10 years younger after 6 weeks? Yes, the crème “Diademine Lift+” supports water balance in the skin and provides it by vitamins, whilst the complex Amino-M-Cell stimulates recovery of collagen needed for supporting the skin elasticity”. Male voice continues: “Professional formula of the crème fills wrinkles and provides lifting effect. The skin seems to be 10 years younger”. |
| 2 | Crème “Revitalift Total Repair 10” L’Oreal | A beautiful woman looks into camera; her face is shown from different viewpoints; she plays the role of obvious proof of crème effectiveness. | Male voice: “10 ultra-active components are simultaneously fighting against 10 features of skin vicissitudes”. Female voice: “Wrinkles become smaller, skin becomes more elastic, and face skin color becomes more uniform. Full renewing and complex approach. 10 features of ageing? We have a solution. Try or we will return Your money!” |

Although only women appeared in 10 out of 11 advertisements of anti-age crèmes, male voice behind the frames was permanently recalling about true intention of rejuvenation – to get male approval and to recover magic of male gaze. For example, in one advertisement (of the crème “Diademine Lift”), the leading role is played by doctor P. Caspari who is the creator of pharmaceutical line of anti-age crèmes. P. Caspari has not even tried to hide his own deep wrinkles at forehead that, according to privately accepted life philosophy, provide charm and life experience to a man (but, at the same time, make a woman ugly or less attractive). Doctor P. Caspari has, in fact, delivered universal male message to women. This message recommends women “to take care over their face” if they do not want to get out of the mainstream of gender popularity. At the clip end, for a short moment a face of blonde appears that with a guilty smile confirms agreeing to follow the logic of fighting against old age.

The cultural code of female “rejuvenation” is beneficially supported and strengthened by another group of advertising video-clips the heroines of which are old women that do not hide their age. As a rule, old actors are invited to advertise medicines although old men can sometimes advertise tea (as, e.g., advertising of the tea Lipton) or beer (as, e.g., the advertising of the beer Zibert). Difference between men and women can be also found in type of medicine they are delivered to

advertise. For instance, old men more often advertise medicines for heart diseases or against pain in joints (that is medicines for the so called “noble” diseases). Concerning old women, they are delivered to advertise medicines that are associated with unpleasant attributes of flabbiness, senility and loss of life tonus. This, at unconscious level, inculcates disgust to female old age and withering, amplifies fright to come into that age of uselessness. TV often translates video-clips where old women advertise gels for fixing sets of false teeth, laxative or abdominal distention means, medicines against pain in spine. In this way, unfixed sets of false teeth and problems with gastro-enteric tract become symbols of female ageing forcing hostility to this age and feeding the desire to be “always young”.

Let us determine possible social effects of such a logic of “symbolic violence” over females that appears itself in forcing women to correspond to male gaze, to play the role of “visual-object-for-male-surveying”¹.

A practice of female visualization, her transformation into visual object opens latent character of social repression/oppression of women in patriarchal society. Social-public female discrimination is only the “upper part of the iceberg” that hides heavy layers of psychological gender disproportions that are fixing themselves at habitus level of female social practices and are presented as something self-evident (“a woman *should* take care over her look, she has to be young,

¹ J. Berger in the book “Ways of Seeing” (1972) describes visual relations between men and women in the following manner: “Men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between women and men but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of women in herself is male: the surveyed, female. Thus she turns herself into an object- and most particularly an object of vision: a sight” [5, p. 47]. L. Mulvey in “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (1975) has proposed psychoanalytical transcription of this thesis as: “In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female form which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness” [13].

otherwise she is not a woman"). A voluntary agreeing of women to "symbolic masculine domination", female submission to masculine gaze eternizes gender inequality with reproducing low-value of female social positions. Female repression realized at the level of practices of viewing/surveying women body is rooted at habitus level. Due to this, it might take a lot of time and efforts to change this social gender misbalance.

The female social is strongly dependent on the female physiological (in fact, the non-social controls female sociality). Because of this, ageing/withering is perceived by women as forerunner of their "falling out" the limits of social usefulness and as sign of their metamorphosis to non-sex, non-gender, non-women. Inevitable injustice of such a situation consists in the fact that fighting against it becomes practically impossible (in opposite to possibility of fighting against gender disproportions in professional sphere) since this fighting takes place in the sphere of biology, that is out of the area of human freedom. As a result, a withering woman might suffer from strong frustration and feel her out of habitual life order (to denote this state, A. Freixas, B. Luque and A. Reina use the terms "demoralization", "deprivation", "marginalization"). A woman, brought up in consumer society and got used to perceive male gaze as a sign of her "adequacy", feels herself invisible and merged into vacuum of visual bankruptcy when she becomes older and loses male gaze (the presence of dialectic connection between concepts of invisibility, unattractiveness, shamefulness and ageing has been stressed by M. Cruikshank [8], T. Calasanti [7], J. Twigg [15], A. Freixas, B. Luque and A. Reina [9]). Due to this, women agree for plastic surgery, suffers from painful manipulations in order to prolong her "visibility", to "conserve" male gaze and to remain a "visual object" (thus, agreeing voluntarily for keeping symbolic violence).

Age discrimination is defined in modern social gerontology by the term "ageism"². It is possible to suppose that, firstly, the problem of ageism concerns women more than men, and, secondly, it is the effect of cross-gender discrimination (more exactly, one direction discrimination – from men to women) rather than the effect of confrontation of different age groups. The phenomenon of ageism can be understood using the concept of "symbolic capital" put forward by P. Bourdieu (scale of symbolic capital is determined by prestige, authority, and popularity of social actor position in society). In consumer society, prestige of man position is influenced not only by character of his (professional and/or social) activity or his successfulness, but also by *what* woman is next to him. Male "prestige-code" in modern juvenal society (that cultivates juvenility) prescribes a man to have young and beautiful (not necessarily loved) woman the functional val-

ue of whom is in strengthening status male positions in symbolic field, in increasing male symbolic capital. "Women can only appear there as objects, or, more precisely, as symbols whose meaning is constituted outside of them and whose function is to contribute to the perpetuation or expansion of the symbolic capital held by men" [6, p. 42–43]. Playing the role of "symbolic instrument" used by a man to increase his symbolic capital, a woman obliges herself to be young. Otherwise, her withering might lead to shaking status positions of her man and to result in her "rotation". "Masculine domination, which constitutes women as symbolic objects whose being (*esse*) is a being-perceived (*percipi*), has the effect of keeping them in a permanent state of bodily insecurity, or more precisely of symbolic dependence. They exist first through and for the gaze of others, that is, as welcoming, attractive and available *objects*. They are expected to be "feminine", that is to say, smiling, friendly, attentive, submissive, demure, restrained, self-effacing. And what is called "femininity" is often nothing other than a form of indulgence towards real or supposed male expectations, particularly as regards the aggrandizement of the ego. As a consequence, dependence on others (and not only men) tends to become constitutive of their being" [6, p. 66]. If first wrinkles and first features of withering appear at woman's face, she becomes unable to strengthen male symbolic capital and, thus, she loses status of woman (or she is deprived this status).

Body Visualization in Female narcissism. In analyzed advertisements, a steady video-tendency is observed and, at the first glance, it is in contradiction with the logic of "masculine domination". Here we mean female narcissism, love to own reflection in a mirror, cultivation of own appearance and, as a result, investment of money and psychological means into image perfection. The mirror becomes a visible sign of this tendency appearing in many anti-age advertisements. The mirror can be sometimes replaced by camera before which female heroines demonstrate their beauty from the best viewpoints. A Woman-Narcissus spends all her free time on self-rejuvenation fighting against wrinkles and afresh color of her face to please her own (but not male) gaze and to be satisfied by appearance of her double-ganger in the mirror. Female narcissism supports phenomenon of sex segregation approving possibility of female self-isolation and existence-for-themselves. Life strategy of narcissism can become a basis and justification for a new tendency in the sphere of family relations described by modern sociologists that appears itself in increasing the number of lonely men and women who freely chose such a style of life. A Woman-Narcissus (as well as a Man-Narcissus) needs nobody, feeds and supports herself by her own self-loving gaze.

² *Ageism*, a concept made popular by R. Butler (1969), is a way to describe prejudice and discrimination against individuals who occupy a specific chronological age. Ageism is therefore an all-encompassing concept that refers to negative beliefs, thoughts, and practices that disadvantage individuals who are defined by chronological age.

Although, according to formal features, the logic of narcissism radically differs from the logic of “masculine domination”, they are connected, in fact, by the same life strategy of perceiving a woman as “visual object”, as “pure vision” where the highest intention consists in “gratification of gaze” (both her own and of others). Therefore, female narcissism can be considered as one more version (erroneously understood as anti-masculine) of female social visualization, as “the effect of the fundamental relationship instituting women in the position of a being-perceived condemned to perceive itself through the dominant, i.e. masculine, categories” [6, p. 68]. A Woman-Narcissus voluntarily confirms and realizes the social project of female low-value, performs her mission via self-affirmation by means of “external look” instead of “internal realization of talents”. She agrees to be only a visual object, only an image in the mirror (at photos or in video) that are perceived with rapture without quenching visual thirst. “Continuously under the gaze of others, women are condemned constantly to experience the discrepancy between the real body to which they are bound and the ideal body towards which they endlessly strive. Needing the gaze of others to constitute themselves, they are continuously oriented in their practice by the anticipated evaluation of the price that their bodily appearance, their way of bearing and presenting it, may receive (hence the more or less marked propensity to self-denigration and to the embodiment of social judgement in the form of physical embarrassment and timidity)” [6, p. 67].

A Woman-Narcissus has a deal not with herself (not with her own intellectual, emotional and soul world), but with those images that have separated from her and transformed into objectified part of the mirror. Such an “externalization” of a Woman-Narcissus has been genially analyzed by Baudrillard J. that has described phenomenon of I-mirror (the person who has identified him/herself with own reflection in the mirror or in eyes of other people). According to Baudrillard, a subject of consumption is not Me and not subject of unconscious, but «You» from advertisement i.e. the subject recovered according to mainstream models. Such *You* is a phantom that appears in the mirror of signs [7]. A Woman-Narcissus deals not with *I* but with *You*, with that visual object that appears in the mirror and that can be perceived as something existing *out of Her*. Manipulating by her mirror double-ganger and operating by a set of her visual images (virtual copies of herself), Woman-Narcissus radicalizes the logic of objectivation of her body as the thing of symbolic exchange, as consumption object.

A Woman-Narcissus is desperately fighting against ageing not only because she is afraid of “male condemnation”, but because she fully identifies herself with her body (more exactly, with its mirror reflection). Since the body and face are perceived by her as signs of personal identity, then she considers body and face

withering as death or metaphysical finis. A. Freixas, B. Luque and A. Reina mention that “in a youth-obsessed culture, the physical signs of ageing are a sign of personal failure” [9, p. 53]. A Woman-Narcissus perceives wrinkles at the face of her mirror clone as the sign of her own disappearing; thus, she undertakes unbelievable efforts to conserve her “I-mirror”. As for G. Lipovetsky, since a modern person occurs face to face with perspective of death without having any “transcendental” support, he/she has to strengthen his/her body competing with time [12].

Conclusions. The paper presents the conception of female ageing as well as two models of interpreting the female gerontologic problems.

The conception of “masculine domination” allows explaining the problem of women social discrimination according to age feature (ageism) the reasons of which should be looked in latent inequality between men and women that feeds the woman low-value as “visual object”. As it has been found in our study, the cultural code of “rejuvenation” is actively enforced to modern women in TV advertisement. This is confirmed by the fact that 205 out of 245 analyzed advertisement blocks contained video clips of anti-age means for women translated from one to four times. Therefore, information on necessity of fighting against old age has been translated, on the average, three times in each two hours of broadcasting. This observation can be treated in twofold manner. On one hand, the aforementioned tendency is the “product” of the modern consumer society that implants the attitudes on body cultivation and youthfulness to persons to make them spending their capitals into “appearance” and, as a result, to promote further confirmation of consumer values. On the other hand, such advertising video-texts have the opposite impact on everyday life by infixing the code of rejecting the ageing to modern women where old age is associated, in the first order, with wrinkles but not with physical age; this type of advertisement simultaneously implants a modern man the code of perceiving a woman as “visual object” that is worth compliments or condemnation depending upon how attractive/young/elastic her face is.

“Female narcissism” has the same patriarch origin underlying necessity for women not only “to be” but “to be young”. As the symbol of this model, it is possible to consider the mirror that can be observed in 5 out of 11 analyzed “anti-age” clips (whilst in the other clips the role of the mirror was played by camera in front of which a clip heroine posed). On one hand, female narcissism can be treated as forceless rebellion of a modern woman against symbolic violence by male gaze; on the other hand, female narcissism is a logic completion of patriarch intentions on transformation of women to “pure visibility”. Social “riskiness” of this model can be seen in tendency of latent strengthening the idea of “capsulating”/self-isolation of women that do not need male society and/or ignoring male attention. Such at-

titudes can be specific justification for life strategy of loneliness that, according to U. Beck, can become the most serious problem of the nearest future [4].

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Summary

Bataeva K. V. Female ageing visuality in Ukrainian TV advertisement. – Article.

The article deals with the analysis of media-presentations of female ageing problems. The analysis is performed in the context of social visualistics that studies social media-images and social constructivism theory considering age as a social construction formed under pressure of cultural stereotypes. Main attention is focused

on analysis of advertising video-texts where female ageing problems arise systematically. It is found that the socio-cultural code of “rejuvenation” is actively enforced to modern women in TV advertisement. This is confirmed by the fact that 205 out of 245 analyzed advertisement blocks have contained video clips of anti-age means for women translated from one to four times. Therefore, information on necessity of fighting against old age has been translated, on the average, three times in each two hours of broadcasting. A practice of female struggling against ageing supports her transformation into visual object (her visualization) which demonstrates latent character of social repression/oppression of women in modern society.

Key words: female ageing, masculine domination, repression, visualization, visual practices.

Анотація

Батаєва К. В. Візуальність жіночого старіння в українській ТВ-рекламі. – Стаття.

У статті надано аналіз медіапрезентацій теми жіночого старіння, який було здійснено в контексті соціальної візуалістики (що вивчає соціальні медіаобрази) та соціального конструктивізму (що розглядає вік як соціальну конструкцію, яка формується під впливом культурних стереотипів). У результаті проведеного аналізу рекламних відеотекстів, у яких розвивалася тема жіночого старіння, продемонстровано, що в сучасній ТВ-рекламі жінкам активно наві'язується соціокультурний код омолодження. Це підтверджується тим, що в 205 з 245 проаналізованих рекламних блоків відеокліпи з рекламою антивікових засобів для жінок транслювалися від одного до чотирьох разів. Таким чином, інформація про необхідність боротьби зі старінням надається в середньому три рази на кожні дві години ефірного часу. Зроблено висновок, що в практиках боротьби жінок зі старінням, які сприяють їх перетворенню на візуальні об'єкти (їх візуалізації), виявляється глибинний характер соціального репресування/пригноблення жінок у сучасному суспільстві.

Ключові слова: жіноче старіння, чоловіче панування, репресія, візуалізація, візуальні практики.

Аннотация

Батаева Е. В. Визуальность женского старения в украинской ТВ-рекламе. – Статья.

В статье представлен анализ медиапрезентаций темы женского старения, который был осуществлен в контексте социальной визуалистики (изучающей социальные медиаобразы) и социального конструктивизма (в котором возраст рассматривается как социальная конструкция, формируемая под давлением культурных стереотипов). В результате проведенного анализа рекламных видеотекстов, в которых развивалась тема женского старения, продемонстрировано, что в современной ТВ-рекламе женщинам активно навязывается социокультурный код омоложения. Это подтверждается тем, что в 205 из 245 проанализированных рекламных блоках видеоклипы с рекламой антивозрастных средств для женщин транслировались от одного до четырех раз. Таким образом, информация о необходимости борьбы со старением транслируется в среднем три раза каждые два часа теле вещания. Сделан вывод, что в практиках борьбы женщин со старением, способствующих их превращению в визуальные объекты (их визуализации), проявляется глубинный характер социального репрессирования/угнетения женщин в современном обществе.

Ключевые слова: женское старение, мужское господство, репрессия, визуализация, визуальные практики.