

Magdalena Kozhevnikova

HUMAN-ANIMAL HYBRIDS AND CHIMERAS IN SCIENCE: HISTORY AND TODAY

(Summary)

This article reviews the history and present state of research on the creation of human-animal hybrids and chimeras. The idea has been present in culture since ancient times and was picked up by scientists a long time before breakthroughs in DNA were made. Scientific experiments in the field of chimerization and hybridization are a continuation of thought experiments expressed in a variety of cultural texts and artefacts throughout the history of mankind. The author reviews the scientific implementation of this ancient idea – from simple transplants between different species and different sexes to xenotransplantation and further on to genetic engineering.

Today's development of individual stem cells therapies and the production of new medicines and healthcare products are claimed to be the goal of such research, yet in the future, “upgrades” (enhancement) of people with animal genes and the transfer of selected biological characteristics to the human species will become realistic possibilities.

Due to the unpredictable consequences of such research, both concerning individuals and humankind, such a prospect raises serious concern among scientists. As a result, questions appear regarding the potential threat to humankind, which in turn calls for the revision of the concept and development of a new vision of who “man” is in this age of biotechnology.

Key words: hybrids, chimeras, humanimal, human nature, bioethics, biotechnology, history of science

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THE POSTMODERN OPENING IN POLISH SOCIO-CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY.

A PROJECT REALISED?

(Summary)

The aim of this paper is attempt to show the postmodern opening in the Polish ethnology. On the one hand, the text shows that the character of 'Polish' postmodernism was shaped over the course of the accelerated reception of theory and concepts formulated in international anthropology two decades earlier. On the other hand, the article stresses that postmodernism – understood as a condition of socio-cultural reality, but also as a general context of the trends and currents of thought arising from the criticism of negatively valued modernism – sharpened and delineated intuitions and trends, as well as existing theories. This postmodern opening, which took place in anthropology at the ontological, epistemological and meta-discursive levels, covered not only the anthropological literature, but also had an impact on the rethinking of field research and on the related research practices. This was also an important stimulus for “self-reporting” in anthropology, which proved to be a significant development not only for increasing the self-awareness of researchers, but also for redefining their proposed cognition.

Key words: socio-culture anthropology, post-ethnography, postmodernism, postmodern opening, discourse, knowledge, identity of discipline

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Jacek Nowak

JEWISH NEIGHBOURS. SOCIAL TIES AS RECALLED BY INHABITANTS OF SOUTHERN POLAND

(Summary)

The memory of Polish and Jewish relationships is one of the most intriguing issues within sociology and social anthropology. The present study focuses on neighbour relationships and collective memory. By exploring memories of witnesses of the events predating World War II, this paper demonstrates that the cohabitation of Poles and Jews did not generate community-building ties. Due to the extensive cultural alienation of Jews, the spatial proximity was not sufficient for close relationships to flourish. Rather, these groups predominantly showed limited community bonds, marked by a tolerance for otherness that did not translate into solidary actions. Poles remember that Jews were somewhere close but their otherness prevented them from having more intimate, constructive neighbour relationships. Based on witnesses' memories, the paper demonstrates that the memory of relationships between individuals is more positive than the memory of relationships between the two communities. Built upon stereotypes, the latter reinforced the negative image of Jews as a community despite positive experiences with individual Jews who were close neighbours.

Key words: neighbour relationships, collective memory, Polish-Jewish relationships, community

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LOCAL INTERPRETATIONS OF HASIDIC PILGRIMAGES TO POLAND AND UKRAINE (LELOV, LIZHENSK, UMAN)

(Summary)

Hasidic pilgrimages from Israel, the United States, and other countries of the world to the graves of tzaddikim in Poland and Ukraine have been growing since the 1980s and 1990s. The rapid development of pilgrimages after the fall of the former Eastern bloc not only changed the landscape of the researched areas, but also influenced memory and identity as well as the economic and political strategies of their inhabitants. In the article, based on ethnographic fieldwork in Lelov and Lizhensk in Poland, and in Uman, in Ukraine, I describe three initiatives, which have resulted from the boost in the pilgrimages, and which shape various local reactions. These are: the festival “Ciulim-Cholent Day” in Lelov; the activity of a local blogger from Lizhensk, who popularises the knowledge on Hasidism and Jewish pre-war inhabitants of the town; and protests against Hasidim organised by the Council of Civic Organizations in Uman. Two interpretations of the pilgrims’ “rights” to the visited sites emerge from the analysed material. One of them is organised around the concept of “return”, which embodies the myth of the shtetl. According to this perspective Hasidic pilgrims are seen as Jews visiting the graves of their ancestors and restoring the world which was destroyed with the Holocaust. The second perspective is based on the idea of foreign “invasion”, which calls for local resistance.

Key words: heritage, Polish-Jewish relations, Ukrainian-Jewish relations, Jews, Hasidim

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