

EDITOR'S NOTES:

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During the East Europe subsection meeting during the AAAs in Washington DC last fall, somebody suggested that AEER should start focusing each issue on a particular theme. This is what I've tried to do in this issue. The theme this issue is The Body. The inspiration for this theme came from the second meeting of the Fifth Regional Seminar on Gender and Culture at Central European University, Budapest, in March 2002. I attended that seminar and, along with several authors in this issue, presented work that focused on East and Central European bodies during some historical period. We would like to thank Susan Zimmerman, Susan Bandy, and Jasmina Lukic for all their help and support in organizing and putting on that seminar.

In addition to the overarching theme of The Body, several other threads tie some of these essays together. First, I wanted to highlight the voices of people from this region, even if their work is not anthropology, strictly speaking. So I've begun the issue with a series of short essays by a Hungarian ethnographer about her own bodily experiences and the meanings attributed to these bodily experiences in her world. I thank Sara Kaiser for working so closely with this writer to bring us her material. In addition to this local ethnography, I have also included work from some of anthropology's cognate disciplines in Poland, Serbia, the Czech Republic, and Russia. In these analyses from Polish drama, Serbian art history, Russian history, and Czech and Russian sociology, I found that many of the concerns addressed by anthropologists were likewise highlighted. For example, Dorak explores the concept of gender as a performance both inside and outside the theatre, as well as the problem with the idea of 'feminism' in Poland. Cupic problematizes the concept of 'orientalism' in the Serbian context in ways that inform not only her own work in art history, but also that of anybody interested in the representation of 'Serbianness' in any context. Gradskova's work on gender equality in post-revolutionary Russia, as she rightly addresses in her introduction and conclusion, is extremely important for setting the stage for us to understand contemporary relations between women and men, representation and experience, politics and domesticity in that country. Finally, the sociological work from

Haskova and Kalacheva also certainly fits into the general paradigm of work done currently by some anthropologists.

The second set of themes I've identified amongst these papers allow me to group the papers into meaningful units of two or three papers. I begin the issue with three works (Gera, Belousova, Haskova) that explore childbirth and the relationship between bodies, technology, and medical authority during different time periods in Hungary, Russia, and the Czech Republic. The next group of three papers (Harvey, Dorak, Gradskova) all explore some of the difficulties in both analyzing and even defining gender equality in the region. The next grouping of two papers (Smith, Gille) focus primarily on experiences of embodiment in post-socialist Hungary, although Smith also works comparatively with material from Belarus. The two papers in the next group (Kalacheva, West) look at the production of gender ideologies in women's magazines in the postsocialist period in Russia and Hungary. Finally, Cupic's paper seems to stand alone in this issue. Yet, at the same time, her concern with deconstructing the accepted conceptualization of 'orientalism' is similar to Harvey's concern with establishing a definition of 'womanism,' Belousova's concern with the concept of what is 'natural' in Russia, and Gille's concern with 'Europe' as a meaningful term in Hungary. All four papers seek to establish working definitions of Western jargon that are more appropriate for the history, politics, and societies of East and Central Europe.

Finally, I want to announce here that anybody working on research concerned with food in East-Central Europe should keep AEER in mind. Krista Harper and I are editing a special issue on this topic next spring and would like to see work from as many different countries in the region, and as many time periods, as possible. Please send your inquiries by February 1, 2003 to me at bwest@uop.edu or Krista at kharper@anthro.umass.edu. We look forward to working with a large number of people working on food.