ABSTRACT

(ANTI)-NATIONALIST DISCOURSE IN EX-YUGOSLAVIA
IN THE NINETIES
-MANIPULATION OF WOMEN’S WRITING-

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In this paper, I deal with manipulative approach to women’s writing during the nineties in ex-Yugoslavia. I analyze some elements of nationalist discourse trough examples of two women writers and their two novels, one from the beginning and the other from the end of the nineties. One of them, Ljiljana Habjanović-Djurović, was a most popular writer in the nineties and a great contributor to nationalist discourse in Serbia, the other, Slavenka Drakulić, was one of the five famous witches from Croatia and feminist writer from exile. These two women, who have different backgrounds, wrote two novels, with different intentions, but with the same effects in the public - one inside and the other outside national borders.

Key words: war, woman and ‘otherness’, nationalist discourse, manipulation, woman writings
“DEFENDERS” AND “ENEMIES” OF WOMEN IN EARLY MODERN ITALIAN QUERELLE DES FEMMES. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CATEGORIES OR EMPTY RHETORIC?

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In 16th and 17th century emerging Italian literature treating women’s social status and ontological nature, or gender relations, there is a repeated mention of the “defenders” and “enemies” of the female sex. The paper aims at examining the implications and discussing the literary and social dimensions of those representations. Firstly, I deal with the formulation of that literary motif and its place in the rhetoric speech of the period. Secondly, I focus on the social milieu and the cultural perceptions that produced those representations. Finally, I examine the depiction of the “defenders” and “enemies” in the writings of Lucrezia Marinella and Moderata Fonte, the first Italian women writers to treat in detail the female excellence and the repressive mechanisms of gender order, and I detect to what extent they challenged the male dominated scheme of their predecessors’ writings.

By examining the interrelation between that literary corpus and the established gender structures and social practices, the paper attempts to draw some conclusions on the ideology, motives and pursuits of those writers and trace whether they argued an improvement in the economical, social and political status of women, they expressed a change in the gender perceptions of early modern Italian society, or they were just self-advertised through an empty rhetoric.

The paper is based on 16th and 17th century Italian treatises or dialogues on the superiority/inferiority of the female/male sex, works of biographical nature on illustrious women, conduct books on women’s proper behaviour, texts on marriage and the different roles of husband and wife in the family, works on love and beauty in the neo-platonic terms or even medical writings on women’s illnesses or feminine embellishment.
The paper explores how culturally constructed narratives shape definitions of gender. Narratives found in Icelandic memoirs and biographies are examined and their pivotal ideas linked to the construction of gender in Icelandic culture as well as to the contemporary discourse on gender in Iceland. Finally, the importance of such narratives in shaping definitions of gender in a traditionally saga oriented culture are discussed.
Spain suffered one major conflict in its contemporary history: the Civil War that ran from 1936 to 1939. The war was a male enterprise, declared, argued and ended by men. But women were there too and fought the war physically and psychologically, although their effort was not credited till recently. With the advent of democracy in 1975, a political “gentlemen’s agreement” was reached to let memories of the Civil War lay dormant for a quarter of a century, to give new generations a chance. Therefore, it is only since the late 1990s that a considerable number of memoirs, autobiographical accounts and fiction on the war are being published. Among them there are quite a few books written by women, which prove their political, emotional and physical involvement with the war effort. Such books describe and analyze the actual time of war and the roles played by women both in the front and in the rear guard (Castañón:1991; Cueva:2000; Chacón:2002), and what women went through in the early post-war period (Caso:1999; Chacón:2002, Suárez Coalla:2001). Such memories are vivid and documented, and inscribe women, once and for all, in the history they have always inhabited, albeit as an invisibilized force.
Abstract

Workshop: The Power of Memory
The power of memory: women making herstories in the 20th century
Three women’s stories from the Central and Eastern Europe
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In this paper I want to analyze three women’s autobiographies from the Central and Eastern Europe, written in 1990s. The first one is written by Hungarian psychologist Alaine Polec, *A Wartime Memoir*; she speaks about her experiences in the last year of the II WW, when she has found herself on the frontline, in between German and Russian armies. Being a victim not only of usual hardships of the war situation, but also of an exceptional situation of mass-raping, and having to cope with the deep personal disillusionment at the same time, Polec examines in her novel the complex strategies of specifically female responses to those challenges. The second book is written by Croatian author, Eva Grlic, whose family perished in the WWII in concentration camps; she has fought as a partisan in the war, but in 1948 was imprisoned in Yugoslav gulag-type of confinement for 2 years. Surviving it all, she has lived to see yet another repressive ideology, nationalism, being embraced as a state one in 1990s Croatia, and then she has decided to write her autobiography “in order to keep remembrance of what has happened”. Finally, the paper will present an autobiography of Vesna Pesic, one of the leaders of the opposition movement against Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia, where she is speaking of her involvement in those events. Her particular feminist perspective is particularly important here. All of these women, none of them professional writer, speak about gendered strategies they used to resist the destructive power of repressive ideologies.
Abstract

Workshop: The Power of Memory

The power of memory: women making herstories in the 20th century

Women in Amber and Mothers in Songs: Internments in Women’s Memories (Wakako Yamauchi and Agate Nesaule)

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The books by Japanese American writer Wakako Yamauchi Songs My Mother Taught Me: Stories, Plays, and Memoir (1995) and Latvian American author Agate Nesaule A Woman in Amber: Healing the Trauma of War and Exile (1995) are based on women’s memories of immigrant and exile experiences. Yamauchi was writing her stories out of her awareness and experiences of historical racism and when alongside dominant stereotypical images of Japanese men and women in American culture the women’s literature was becoming salient in the Japanese American cultural agency. In contrast, Nesaule’s book belongs to very few memory narratives published in America and representing an East-Central European woman’s perspective. Both books contain testimonies of women’s survival, resistance and memory in structures of oppression for women that intersect with history as material and psychic legacy of dislocation. The shared theme of both books is pain of displacements, dispersions and “diasporic journeys” (Brah 183).

Both writers belong to diasporas with distinctive historical experiences, and their journeys contain individual particularities. Their personal identities were constituted in composite transformations of their communities into specifically converted and ‘situated’ collectivities in an American ‘home.’ Race becomes an embodied marker of difference in Yamauchi’s stories of Japanese American acculturation. In Nesaule’s narrative a journey from ‘East’ to ‘West’ stamps invisible differences of ‘whiteness’ shaping her private self behind ‘melting into the pot.’ In/visibility evolves into a common trait of race and ethnicity as the markers of entry and difference in the rituals of melting/belonging. The image of journey and the conversion plot evolve as central for both writers to transcend the boundaries of a ‘specific experience’ constructed in a ‘particular memory’ of a racial/ethnic woman. In their narratives Wakako Yamauchi and Agate Nesaule address the issues of diaspora and nation, tradition and belonging, trauma and cure. Apart from the fact that both writers belong to the generations of displaced people, apart from the fact that they use the plots of origin and travel in the narrative strategies, they write from/about forced ‘homing’ enclosures - the internment camps for Japanese American people and the spaces of detention/emigration for Baltic/Latvian exiles.

Yamauchi’s and Nesaule’s narratives are sad stories of the mother-daughter relationship, and the tropes rendering otherness, invisibility and absence of the mother are central to them. Mothers as figures of difference and abjection in conversion plots emerge in the writers’ remapping of their own ‘daughterly’ genealogy and memory.

Questioning of the national construction of identity across its home and exile experiences is evoked from how and what the daughter remembers in her mother’s life. For example, Nesaule makes her narrative into a confluence of mother-daughter memory narratives. They are textual
enclosures until transformed into a re-memory narrative in which daughter’s journey/nation’s exile is differently imagined and interpreted. This re-memory of a mother’s life takes a diasporic community to its composite origins beyond the emphasis on binary oppositions as “the basis of political cleavage and social division” (Brah 184).

The comparative analysis of the chosen narratives addresses such questions as how the crossroads of gender, identity, and authority in memory writing consolidated in different cultural situations is re-conceptualized in contemporary exile, in immigrant women’s texts. In drawing patterns of forced migrations, both writers address the traumas of displacement and internment as gender-specific experiences. The complexity of the mother-daughter relationship dramatically affected with the forms of violence such as war and racism is a central juncture of representation and self-representation in both books.

On the one hand, the analysis of the books should not attempt to view them as individual products of global issues. The focus should be rather “on the processes that produce the personal and make it historically and politically unique” (Lionnet 4) in what Francoise Lionnet calls the métissage of cultures. On the other hand, the redrawing of national, literary, cultural frontiers and reconsidering “of definitions of geographic and linguistic identity which have regulated the discipline of comparative literature” (Higonnet 3) have been evoked by the readership as recent migrations bring new diasporas, new displacements, new borders. In this context historical experiences of exile cultures, immigrant communities, diasporas, shifting, scattered, dispersed, invite the métissage of the forms of literary thinking about their genealogies across commitments of fixed origins and political constructions of borders.
Abstract
Interpreting Harmful Family Relations: Two Researchers, Multiple Stories?

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The aim of our paper is to consider what narrative approach means within our two separate studies. We both are working on doctoral dissertations on family research. Marianne’s topic is ‘Power and violence in family relations’ and Eija studies ‘Ambivalences of motherhood: experiences and stories at the beginning of motherhood.’ The first data is women’s writings about violence and abuse in their family relations and the other one is first-time mothers’ interviews at the beginnings of their motherhood.

First, we consider in which ways interviews and a writing request produce different kinds of stories. We assume that written stories are probably more attached to the conventions of writing and that interviews may produce mainly socially accepted stories. On the other hand, both ways of collecting data may empower the informants. Second, we examine what kinds of stories there are and what can be told at this moment. More specifically, the impact of cultural, ideological and mythical narratives on personal stories is considered.

Furthermore, we focus on how female subjectivity is construed in women’s stories. A significant part of our project is to analyse gendered, relational, embodied and situated subjectivities. Based on our data we suggest that female subjectivity cannot be characterised simply through the ideology of the ‘strong Finnish woman’ or rational (male) agency.

Finally, our aim is to explore ways of writing a shared article of two feminist family researchers. Hopefully, the two researchers with two data could combine multiple and diverse view on women’s experiences in nowadays families instead of one-sided and narrow story.
In 1857 at age 59, a Flemish woman called Marie Van Langendonck packed her bags and left for Brazil in the company of her two eldest sons. Up until that moment she had been what one would consider a typically 19th century bourgeois: she doted on romantic writers, mingled with artists and politicians, addressed the authorities on political issues, even had several albums of poetry published.

In Brazil, straight out of her comfortable European ‘salon’, she suddenly found herself living in the jungle, surrounded by snakes and jaguars, with a colony of deported criminals from ‘the old continent’ as her nearest neighbours. She solicited an audience with the Emperor Don Pedro II and begged him to promote the founding of a Belgian colony in the south of the country. A number of projects she undertook left her ruined, her sons became entangled in scandals on land speculation, and after 1874 we lose all trace of her.

In this paper I will bring together the results of two years of intensive research that lead me through many different fields, locations, perspectives and disciplines. I will pay attention to both the difficulties in historically reconstructing the life of Marie Van Langendonck, and the numerous epistemological and other questions that rose along the way.

For a number of different reasons this is not a classical biography. To this day Marie Van Langendonck is virtually unknown as a historical figure in Belgium. I started from a strong narrativist perspective in putting the pieces of her puzzle together, inspired by the works of feminist scholars such as Sidonie Smith and Mineke Bosch. Apart from the actual result of that project, this paper will also tell the story of a young scholar trying to maintain that fragile balance between distance and commitment to her subject.
ABSTRACT

WOMEN ACADEMICS AND PUBLISHING DURING NORMALISATION (1968-1989) IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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The proposed paper is a research in progress on publishing and writing mechanisms in the Czech Republic during the so-called Normalisation period, that is, from the suppression of the Prague Spring, a result of which was the abolition of the official censoring authority, to the fall of state socialism. The main source of data for the research are qualitative interviews with women academics who published in humanities and social sciences at the time. The objectives are to explore censoring and self-censoring strategies, and the authors’ strategies to overcome publication restrictions and ideological barriers. Some of the themes which came out of the interviews in the preliminary stage are: resorting to an alternative field/topic than the one that might seem ideologically sensitive; ‘dressing’ sensitive issues into a more acceptable ‘coat’ (such as writing about women’s social issues under the guise of popular women’s interests); and delicate sensitivity to language (choosing a neutral, personally acceptable word or phrase over an ideologically laden one).
In this paper I am focusing on the topic: Remembering Communism and the Period of "statist feminism". Lived and narrated history: memory of 1956 and the communism in Hungary. What were the effects of the 'statist feminism' on their personal life and how it shaped their strategy as political actors? How did this memory contributed to migration decisions? For my work besides the bibliographical research on press and archival material of conservative women’s organizations in Hungary after 1990 and before WWII, I made life story interviews with 23 women representing the five Hungarian rightist and conservative political parties. I also used interviews with conservative women who left Hungary before 1989 to understand similarities and differences. The interviews were made in the EU 5th framework research project of GRINE HPSE- CT-2001-000087. The paper is to uncover the interconnection between lived, narrated and phantasmagoric pasts as far as the different levels of historical memory is concerned. An interesting aspect of conservative women’s organizations is that they reaching back for symbols, for legitimization and for discourses to the pre-1945 Hungary. The question is also interesting in an other framework, which is the framework of resistance to communism: how the remembered past is used for legitimizing changes in life strategies.
ABSTRACT

The radical as the past in the present:
How to write histories of the British Women’s Liberation Movement

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British feminism, both since the early nineties and before, has shown a certain amount of anxiety about ‘forgetting’ the Women’s Liberation Movement (WLM) of the late sixties, seventies and eighties. Sheila Rowbotham, a feminist and socialist active in the WLM from the late sixties, explores this concern in a number of her writings, but through doing reveals a crucial tension. On one hand she demonstrates a clear intellectual position which argues in favour of the importance of tradition and legacy. She warns future feminism against needless repetition, ‘by mining our memories we might save someone sometime in the future’ (1989:299), and emphasises the difficulty of thinking of everything yourself, ‘(t)here are things you need to know from people who know more. Everything does not pop in to our heads (1979:48).

However, in the very same texts she simultaneously employs a textual ‘structure of feeling’ which encourages the reader to yearn for the sense of ‘newness’ Rowbothan uses to describe the early years of the WLM.

In this paper I want to ask the following questions:

• What is at stake in emphasising the importance of tradition to political movements?

• Is there a way of ‘recognising’ the past without trapping the structure of feelings associated with newness – especially belief in change – in the past?

I want to suggest that radical politics – including anti-war activism and women’s liberation – is linked to the ‘sixties’ and ‘seventies’ past in the British political imaginary. Rather than either ‘building on’ these traditions or mourning the loss of the sixties as the ‘Real Thing’ (Stacey 1997) for radical politics, I’d like to discuss ways in which the affective resonances of the ‘radical past’ can be freed. To do this I draw on the sixties aesthetic of the million-strong Stop the War demonstration held in London 15 February 2003. Through peace slogans, sixties-style lettering and flowers, clothes and songs, the radical as the past infused the present: ‘belief in change’ was associated with the sixties yet was no longer lost. I will close by suggesting ways in which this might inspire a methodology for writing histories of the WLM.

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FOUR GENERATIONS OF WOMEN IN MOLDOVA
Life stories and everydaylife in a perspective of structural power

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In my paper I discuss some results from my fieldwork in Moldova, focusing a case study of four generations of women living in Chisinau, the capital of the country. The family which they belong to is of Jewish/ Bessarabian/ Ukrainian origin and their life story narratives give insights into significant historical and political events of the 20th century’s Europe which I want to explore in a gender perspective. Everyday experiences of education, work and motherhood under shifting regimes and localities highlight gendered structural power in relation to revolution, war and globalisation.
Feminist criticism has shown the phallacy of the false distinction between mind and body as developed in enlightenment thought. Similarly memory is not simply a mental activity but is equally deposited and retained in the body. In this paper I wish to discuss what may be understood as 'bodily knowings' and how these are related to memory. Narratives or stories – which are often part and parcel of the qualitative research enterprise – form an important element in many of the empirical research projects that I have been involved in. It is my experience that research participants often spontaneously recall incidents which are connected to the body or bodily experience and which in turn illustrate 'doing gender'. This is perhaps not surprising as both the individual and collective body have been a site of struggle in gendered power relations. There are then two aspects. On the one, depth of experience can mean that the body (in addition to the mind) remembers the experience in particular or it becomes a body reflective practice (to use Connell’s term). On the other hand, it can be argued that situations that have revolved around the body in some way are the ones that 'stick in the mind’ and are recalled in the research situation. In trying to capture the links between narratives, bodily knowing and memory, I will discuss and illustrate in particular the concept of situatedness; the idea that space and place are not neutral constructs but linked to relations of power and gender. Concrete illustrations will be taken from my research projects on the (problematic) working relationship between doctors and nurses in Sweden and on gender inequality in IT companies in Sweden and Ireland. I will further contend that the researcher’s bodily knowings are also an essential epistemological source in ethnographic work.
Abstract

SOVIET WOMAN AND BODY-POLITICS:
THE CASE OF MATERNITY

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The presentation shows some preliminary results of my research on the problem of embodied motherhood in the context of the Soviet history. The presentation is devoted to the problem of contradictions in representations and self-perceptions of women with respect to their experience of pregnancy, childbirth and beginning of motherhood. The main focus is on the construction of maternity in the Soviet cultural and political context. I study the contradictions in representation of motherhood as consequences of the ideological constructions of the soviet woman as "an equal to man" and as "a childbearing machine". The special attention is paid to the study of everyday practices and hidden tactics of survival and compatibility of the two perceptions. The presentation is based on the analysis of the popular magazines of the years 1940-60s and interviews with women of the "soviet generation" about their experience of motherhood.
ABSTRACT

THE EXPERIENCE OF MOTHERHOOD IN THE KIBBUTZ AS EXPERIENCED BY THREE GENERATIONS OF MOTHERS AT THE END OF THE 90’S

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This study aims to explain the meaning of motherhood to mothers of three generations in kibbutzim belonging to the Kibbutz Artzi movement at the end of the 90s.

The starting point of the study is interpretational and tries to examine the ways and meanings in which the subjective motherhood experience is constructed in connection to the collective identity of the changing kibbutz social reality.

The theoretical foundations on which this study rests are feminist approaches that refer to the social structuring of motherhood. Three trends can be distinguished in these theoretical foundations:

1. The radical stream, focusing on the female body and tending to negate the biological birth processes, claiming that motherhood is a patriarchal trap, the source of male control and suppression of the female body (Beauvoir, 1953; Firestone, 1970; Oakley, 1974; Pierce, 1976; Allen, 1986; Rich, 1991).
2. The liberal approach, dealing more with the social and organizational institutionalization of motherhood. This approach encourages women to motherhood and to develop identities additional to that of motherhood. (Dinnerstein, 1976; Chodorow, 1978; Ruddick, 1980; Hirsch, 1981; O’Brien, 1981; Gilligan, 1982; Langer, 1986; Rich, 1989; Allen, 1992).
3. The third approach represents linguistic feminists, who connect language, gender and motherhood. They claim that existing language cannot express the experience of motherhood with its complexities and power (Cixous, 1975; Kristeva, 1980, 1982,1997; Irigaray, 1986; Glenn, 1994).

The subjective and collective structuring of motherhood in the kibbutz is presented via three interconnected circles of content: the cooperative education (Golan, 1953; Plotnick, 1992; Levin, 1997), the family in the kibbutz (Talmon-Gerber, 1972; Rosner et. al., 1978; Ben-Raphael and Witman, 1986; Rosner and Getz, 1996), with the third circle describing the developments in the status of women in the kibbutz (Talmon-Gerber, 1972; Levitan, 1976; Mednick, 1983; Palgi and Adar, 1997).

The research approach is characterized by the interpretive-phenomenological point of view that analyses reality from the perspective of those who experience it. The interpretive analysis of the narrative offered by the statements by the research population employed Grounded Theory, according to the approaches of Glaser and Strauss (1967), Strauss and Corbin (1990) and of Denzin and Lincoln (1994).
30 mothers were interviewed in order to obtain the information, all members of Kibbutzim belonging to the Kibbutz Artzi movement. Ten represented each generation: the founding generation, aged 75-85, the second generation of the kibbutz daughters aged 45-60 and the third generation of kibbutz women aged 27-40.

Three research questions were formulated using theoretical material and a pilot study. The first aims to extract the personal meaning, provided by these women, of the experiences of motherhood to their lives. The second question seeks the generational characteristics in the motherhood experience regarding each of the three generations studied. The third question aims to discover the characteristics of the motherhood experience in the kibbutz beyond the generational aspect.

The issues discerned in the interviews are presented on two axes:
1. The ideological kibbutz axis that presents the attitudes of the speakers towards the kibbutz ideology, towards organizing cooperative schooling, children’s houses, the role of the child nurse and the children’s sleeping arrangements.
2. The mother-gender axis that represents the attitudes of the speakers to their maternal identity, their female identity, to employment, education, their link to their parents’ homes and in particular to their motherhood. The junction of these two axes spreads the multi-voiced mosaic of the motherhood experience, in the encounter between the public voice and the private voice. Together with the personal expression of the research population, exists the potential for changing the reality by its redefinition.
ABSTRACT

MOTHERING AND FATHERING IN FINNISH EXPERT TEXTS IN THE
1980S AND 1990S

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I explore the role of psycho-social knowledge in family work with mothers and fathers. In Finnish expert texts from the 1980s and 1990s two deeply interconnected gendered discourses of parenting and gender can be found: the discourses of exclusive mothering and shared parenting. In both the father is a special point of interest and concern. The fathers are described in a more multifaceted way than the mothers and the talk about fathers is mostly positive and encouraging. Fatherhood is interpreted as a question of the men's individual choice and, at most, as the result of in-family negotiations. The mother's subjectivity is more ambivalent than the father's agency in both discourses. The mothers' agency is rarely taken up as a consideration of women's agency, of her experiences, thoughts, feelings and words. Although the texts clearly address men, as a genre the texts largely function in relationships between women. Mothers and women professionals are invited to discreetly coax men into fatherhood.

In view of the international perspective and in relation to feminist discussions of mothering and fathering, this is very interesting. In Finland and other Nordic countries, the participation of fathers in child care has been more common than in the rest of Europe. Family experts' texts reflect this change in the gendered division of labour. However, the construction of the “new father” may build on such cultural implications of gender that lead to trouble when looking at mothering from the perspective of women. My results indicate that in feminist research, the role of the father should be analyzed in more subtle ways than before.