
FEMINISMS IN A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE 2016

Reclaiming the Future. Feminist Engagements for the 21th Century

**10th postgraduate course
Dubrovnik, May, 16-20, 2016**

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MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, EDUCATION AND SPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

THE RACHEL AND BEN VAUGHAN FOUNDATION

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Reclaiming the Future. Feminist Engagements for the 21th Century

Programme & Abstracts

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

After analyzing feminist practices of inheriting and archiving the past, the 2016 Dubrovnik course devotes its attention to feminist engagements with the future, which the first decade of the new century has already exposed to an extraordinary vastness of acts of expropriation: recent natural and political catastrophes – epochal displacements, widespread migrations and wars, social engineering, assault on community values, security and freedom, the dramatic curtailment of civil liberties, increase of global military capabilities, the license for the preservation of massive privilege and inequality, unemployment, precarity, austerity measures, financial cuts in education, failure of the welfare state, increased violence against women, children, minorities, the other...

The aim of the 2016 course is to discuss how to intervene both in the ways we inherit the past, and open up towards the future, not so much in order to emphasize temporal categories, but to mobilize past and present existential and material dispositions for a future that resonates with a feminist agenda: a more hospitable Europe and a more collaborative world, a different university, other forms of sisterhood and care. In these and other fields of its ethical, political, sociological, philosophical and aesthetic interventions, the 2016 Dubrovnik course will try to propose an open, differential, eventuating matrix for feminist (re)thinkings of history through the discursive resistance to all – past and future – dogmatisms and forms of despair.

The future is a sensitive zone of contestation. On the one hand, the materiality of contemporary and absolute *danger* is compromising our sense of the future, producing a global refusal and denial of what might appear on the horizon of the unexpected. On the other, the already-constituted norm/ality of generalized lack, fear, anguish, threat, precarity and unpredictability, cannot but reveal the ghost of a *radical futurity* that keeps haunting the present. This course will try to reconsider to what extent feminism has historically been, and proves to be a precious form of defiance and insurrectionary power, capable of producing new figurations of the future.

We invite contributions which study, discuss and promote the forms of feminist engagements that reclaim (or even ex-claim) both past and present visions of the responsibility for the future. We welcome reflections which envisage a whole range of feminist practices, decisions, actions, critical and artistic interventions that care for what comes from/as/in the future, from a new future, from the future-to-come.

We welcome not only papers, but also new formats and methodologies of sharing knowledge. The main points of discussion, among others, will be:

- how to confront and transform all ‘foreclusionary structures’ (no future, the end of history)?
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- are there neglected or insufficiently explored feminist legacies and utopias, be they philosophical or artistic in nature, be they explicit or implicit?
 - how to relate differently to the concept of time, by transforming and working on the notion of another temporality from the vantage point of difference (sexual and any other)?
 - how do contemporary feminists formulate and fulfill the task of hospitality to the other? what texts (verbal or visual, past or present) can be read as exploring the issue of hospitality in line with a feminist agenda?
 - what could be the distinctly feminist concepts and practices of democracy and justice for the future?
 - what is the feminist stance on a new international law and the sustainability of basic life processes?
 - what is the future of feminist theory, activism and/or criticism?
 - gender, modernity and technology: what are the lessons from the past and prospects for the future, given the forms of sociality ensured by virtual worlds?

The invited guest for the 2016 course is Elizabeth Bronfen, co-editor, with Misha Kavka, of the book *Feminist Consequences: Theory for the New Century* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2001). This publication has proved foundational in re-visiting the history of feminism (in psychoanalysis, representation and theory), in investigating *the ethics of affect* that touches women (in response to colonialism and to the question of pain, proposing specific forms of feminist metaphors and narratives), in vindicating the pleasures of agency (redressing, contingencies, activism), in interrogating the gift of difference of a feminist future (unfolding, becoming, reclaiming sexual difference, the future as justice).

The proceeding of the 2016 course will be published in an edited volume together with the papers presented at the 2015 course.

COURSE PROGRAMME

Monday, May 16th

09.00–09.30

Gathering, welcome address by co-directors and the self-presentation of participants

Moderator: **Silvana CAROTENUTO**

09.30–10.15

Elisabeth BRONFEN (Zurich, Switzerland)

Over Her Dead Body revisited. Moving from tragic melancholy into the romance of a new morning

10.15–10.45

Discussion

Lecture is shared with the course *Feminist Critical Analysis*

10.45–11.15

Coffee break

11.15–12.00

Lada ČALE FELDMAN (Zagreb, Croatia)

Nora's name, Nora's claim

12.00–12.30

Ana TOMLJENović (Zagreb, Croatia)

A match made in the future: Ibsen's philosophy of history

12.30–13.00

Discussion

13.00–16.00

Lunch break

Moderator: **Renata JAMBREŠIĆ KIRIN**

16.00–18.00

Teodora Narcisa GIURGIU (Bucharest, Romania)

Irony and silence as sharp weapons used by spinsters: Poetic disobedience in E. Dickinson and F. O'Connor

Ana FAZEKAŠ (Zagreb, Croatia)

Bitch better have my money: Female eros and aggression in contemporary pop music

Marija OTT FRANOLIĆ (Zagreb, Croatia)

Has feminism betrayed motherhood?

Tuesday, May 17th

Moderator: **Francesca Maria GABRIELLI**

09.00–09.45 **Dagmar WERNITZNIG** (Klagenfurt, Austria/Oxford, UK)
Gender, nonviolence, and peace: a synopsis

09.45–10.30 **Biljana KAŠIĆ** (Zagreb, Croatia)
Resisting the future? Facing a nostalgic past!

10.30–11.00 Discussion

11.00–11.30 *Coffee break*

11.30–12.15 **Michelle MORKERT** (Chicago, USA)
U.S feminist futures: Transnational solutions

12.15–13.30 **Rada BORIĆ** (Zagreb, Croatia)
The future of feminist education and activism: Croatia as an example

13.30–16.00 *Lunch break*

Moderator: **Biljana KAŠIĆ**

16.00–16.45 **Brigita MILOŠ** (Rijeka, Croatia)
Feminism(s) (as) proxy

16.45–17.30 **Brigita MALENICA** (Hamburg, Germany)
Who comes after identity? Or what does the political subject mean to future feminisms?

17.30-18.00 Discussion

Wednesday, May 18th

Moderator: **Lada ČALE FELDMAN**

- 09.00–09.45 **Silvana CAROTENUTO** (Naples, Italy)
“Lampedusa”: the future of female writing after the shipwreck
- 09.45–10.15 **Simona MICELI** (Naples, Italy)
Migrant women writers in Italy: a sociological glance at migration literature field
- 10.15–10.45 Discussion
- 10.45–11.15 *Coffee break*
- 11.15–12.00 **Francesca Maria GABRIELLI** (Italy / Zagreb, Croatia)
Strategies of feminist defiance in Marija Gundulić’s defense of the female sex (1582)
- 12.00–12.30 Discussion
- 12.30–16.00 *Lunch break*
- 16.00–18.00 **Round table with (post)doctoral students and moderator
Silvana CAROTENUTO**

Petra BAKOS JARRETT (Serbia / CEU, Budapest)

Laura LAPINSKIENE (Lithuania / Uni Stockholm, Sweden)

Tijana MATIJEVIĆ (Serbia / Uni Halle, Germany)

Thursday, May 19th

Moderator: Rada BORIĆ

09.00–09.45 **Svetlana SLAPŠAK** (Ljubljana, Slovenia)
SF & SF – Science fiction and sexualities of the future

09.45–10.15 Discussion

Lecture is shared with the course *Feminist Critical Analysis*

10.15–10.45 **Gloria CASANOVA** (Bologna, Italy)
Liquid feminism in a liquid society: from cyber-feminism to web 2.0; women, politics and participation

10.45–11.00 Discussion

11.00–11.30 *Coffee break*

11.30–12.15 **Sandra PRENDA**
Anachronism or the Future? Yugoslav socialist dilemmas on women's organizing and self-management

12.15–12.30 Discussion

Free afternoon

18.00 **Book launch party**
Camphorwood Binder (Renata Jambrešić Kirin)

Friday, May 20th

Moderator: **Sandra PRENDA**

09.00–09.30 **Renata JAMBREŠIĆ KIRIN** (Zagreb, Croatia)
Do a larger number of women at the top guarantee a brighter future for the region? A satirical moral of Croatia's first woman president

09.30– 10.15 Final discussion on feminist futures moderated by **Silvana CAROTENUTO**

10.15–10.45 Discussion

10.45–11.45 Course evaluation

Departure

ABSTRACTS

(Participants in alphabetical order)

Elisabeth Bronfen (Zürich, Switzerland)
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Over Her Dead Body revisited. Moving from tragic melancholy into the romance of a new morning

My lecture will return to issues discussed in my book on representations of feminine death, so as to ask: How relevant and timely is a discussion of feminine sacrifice in literary and visual texts in the early 21st century? And what alternatives do we find for this thanatological logic in contemporary culture? The particular revision I want to explore is one based on Stanley Cavell's work on tragedy and its possible averting, which, as he formulates it, consists in "to see and to stop" the very action that produces and engenders the cycle of fatal consequences. Using the widely celebrated *Gone Girl* (Flynn's novel and Fincher's film) as my point of departure, I will treat this as an early 21st century comedy of remarriage that explores what it might take to keep tragedy, and with it the feminine sacrifice, at bay. I will then return to Shakespeare's dramas, so seminal to Cavell's discussion, and look at texts that celebrate the feminine corpse (*Hamlet*, *Othello*) in relation to those that are able to move beyond this logic (*Much Ado about Nothing*, *Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*). The questions I will address include: When does something necessarily turn into a tragedy? And what does it take to avoid tragedy (the problem plays), or to move beyond tragedy, to undo the tragic impulse (the romances)?

Rada Borić (Zagreb, Croatia)
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The Future of feminist education and activism: Croatia as an example

Is the future of feminist education on the outside an oppositional and transformative force, or a force that could operate more effectively from 'within' the current structures? In what kind of interactions lies the future of activism? With regard to mainstream scholarship, following Virginia Woolf's question in *Three Guineas* (1938) "What kind of education do we need", I will try to show, with the example of the Centre for Women's Studies, how feminists managed to disrupt mainstream/malestream education and kept their autonomous position. To address the challenges to feminism, particularly the rise of neo-liberalism and the de-democratisation, as well as the threats of new conflicts/wars and 'refugee crisis', experience and knowledge of feminist movements in the region might offer some alternatives. Women's Court – a feminist approach to justice and the first women's court in Europe, organised by feminist groups from the countries of former Yugoslavia, might be an example of how to strengthen networks of mutual support and solidarity and encourage the creation of different feminist concepts of responsibility, care and human security. An alternative future depends on the future of feminist education and activism, no doubt.

Silvana Carotenuto (Napoli, Italy)
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“Lampedusa”: the future of female writing after the shipwreck

It does not happen in water.
It does not happen in ice.
Even if the closest water is furious
And the far-away ice is broken in the centre.
Then where?
Where does the shipwrecked body disappear?
(Lina Prosa, “Lampedusa Way”)¹

Recently an appeal to the future of humanity in its feminist vindication was uttered by the Nigerian writer Chimamanda G. Adichie: “We should all be feminists”. In a counter-song, Lina Prosa, the playwright from Sicily, answers back: “We are all migrants”. What links the two sentences, here somehow provocatively evoked, certainly without the writers knowing, in order to comprehend the writing of women in relation to the future? A conditional tense, a state of fact; the common emphasis on the collective personal pronoun; the political human adhesion to the respect of women, the condision of the condition of migrancy. A title and a sentence: the poetics of writing in Adichie and Prosa are very different; still, they share the same ethical task: to bring testimony to the diasporic vicissitudes of today - from Nigeria to the States, from Africa to Italy – by vindicating the justice of their testimony to the future – of women, of humanity – in the world.

I presented my research on Adichie at the Summer School last year; this year I would like to concentrate on Lina Prosa’ work, her *Trilogy of the Shipwreck*, by showing the future of writing when it is in the hands of a woman responsibly exposed to the death of so many humans beings in the once-hospitable waters of the Mediterranean. In “Lampedusa Beach”, “Lampedusa Snow” and “Lampedusa Way”, the responsibility of the author is toward the drowning of a young African woman, the assideration of her brother in the Italian Alps, and the search of their lost bodies by the adopted relatives. What is extraordinary in Prosa’s *Trilogy* is the ability of her writing to become the intimate flesh and body of the extreme instant when life turns into its opposite, death, by materialising on the stage the song of singularity and difference of the victims of the contemporary holocaust, together with their final appeal to the sharing of the impossible event with the other – within and outside themselves, individually and collectively. It is an appeal that the survivors of the young couple’s experience and the witnesses of their initial departure will accept in “Lampedusa Way”, when they understand the ‘desire’ of the island: the indication of the road, the ‘way’, together with the song by Frank Sinatra, “My way” that accompanies their dance taking place for the first time, together, on the stage in the conclusion of the play. The dance celebrates the assumption in themselves of the experience of the other: ‘clandestinity’, ‘migration’.

“We are all migrants” – it is the assumption of responsibility, the task of female creativity, the opening to the reinvention of the future, the justice of its shared invention.

My deconstructive reading will specifically refer, among the feminist texts devoted to the future event of testimony, to:

¹ Lina Prosa, *Trilogia del naufragio*, Editoria & Spettacolo, 2013, p. 105 (m.t.).

E. Balibar, "Constructing and Deconstructing the Universal: J. Derrida's *Sinnliche Hewissheit*";
D. Cornell. "Derrida: the Gift of Future", in C. Douzinas (ed), *Adieu Derrida*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

J. G. Kronick, *Derrida and the Future of Literature*, State University of New York Press, 1999.

R. Rand (ed.), *Futures of Jacques Derrida*, Stanford U.P., 2001.

My article on C. G. Adicie is:

"A Kind of Paradise: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Claim to Agency, Responsibility and Writing", in *Art and Ideology in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Fiction. A Classic Anthology*, Bydell & Brewer, 2016 (in print).

Gloria Casanova (Bologna, Italy)

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"Liquid feminism in a liquid society": from cyber-feminism to web 2.0; women, politics, and participation

What are the lessons from the past and prospects for the future, given the forms of sociality ensured by virtual worlds?

This paper is an empirical proposal focused on the new form of feminism as part of a *liquid society*. The main questions of this work concern *gender*, *modernity* and *technology* with a retrospective on the Cyber-feminism movement as part of the big change in modern feminist literature. The third wave of feminism opened the doors to the interaction between women and machine, theorizing the use of technology as useful for gender emancipation.

The main aim is to analyze the historical processes started from the 90s until today with a particular emphasis on women 2.0 political participation.

To this extent, I propose two open case studies based in Italy and in Ireland. Firstly, I will analyze "Se Non Ora, Quando?" ([http:// www.senonoraquando.eu/](http://www.senonoraquando.eu/)) an Italian women's movement; secondly, I propose an Irish view on gender participation in the internal debate on abortion (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34741326>), both cases born in Web 2.0.

Thanks to Web 2.0 today it is possible to re-think Feminism as part of a liquid society. And, with Social Network Analysis (SNA) it is possible to study a range of web participation including the liquid version of feminism.

Lada Čale Feldman (Zagreb, Croatia)
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Nora's name, Nora's claim

Taking as a pretext two relatively recent Croatian kitschy prefabrications of Ibsen's *A doll's house*, this contribution will endeavour to examine the reasons for the enduring provocation of this half-heartedly acknowledged feminist myth, especially given the fact that the majority of rewrites of the story do their best to undermine its open-endedness, i. e. Nora's final leap into an undefined future. I will also address two philosophical readings of the play (by Stanley Cavell and David Rudrum) which focus precisely on its closing scene, disregarding however this time the dramaturgical logic that precedes it. I will show that, with all their best emancipatory intentions, these readings fail to take into account not only structural and generic features, but also some crucial contextual underpinnings of Ibsen's text. The mis-readings I underline thus inadvertently point to unacknowledged analytical biases that govern the reasoning of their authors and prevent them to give to Ibsen's text - and to Nora's (un)imaginable future - its full feminist due.

Ana Fazekaš (Zagreb, Croatia)
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***Bitch better have my money*: Female eros and aggression in contemporary pop music**

This paper proposes a short analysis of the connection between (hyper)sexuality, (pseudo) feminism and aggression (in both positive and negative terms) in contemporary mainstream pop music made by and for women, and the implications and potential repercussions these discourses have in regard to their vast young fan base.

Phenomena like Lady Gaga's *little monsters* movement (aimed to affirm diversity and gender fluidity), Rihanna's explicit lyrics about sadomasochism and her inhabiting of the masculine position in the hip-hop tradition (characteristic also of artists like Nicki Minaj, Angel Haze and others), Beyoncé's female empowering yet strongly patriarchal lyrics as well as more recent politically engaged performances, and FKA Twigs' study of the male gaze and rich post modernistic aesthetics are just some among many that deserve critical appraisal in contemporary feminist theory. It is not only the content itself that is analytically interesting, but also the modes in which these ideas are administered. It is important to research the transgressive powers of various art forms in light of new media, especially the ways in which art in its broadest sense can communicate with the millennial generation.

For the first time ever, even the youngest generations have access to incomprehensible amounts of information literally in their pockets, children form social media alter-egos before hitting puberty and the open channels of communication world-wide via Twitter and Instagram create an illusion of closeness to pop icons personally while reducing responsibility for one's words in an essentially schizophrenic situation where virtual public space is entered from the safety of one's personal physical space.

Obviously much of feminist and some queer idea(l)s are spreading more than ever, but the question arises: how much weight can feminist thought have if it is reduced to marketable form, and if young generations lack the instruments, knowledge and time to critically appraise what is served to them through these trends (sic!) and are bombarded with sexualized imagery long before they reach the maturity needed to process these messages...

Francesca Maria Gabrielli (Italy & Zagreb, Croatia)
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Strategies of feminist defiance in Marija Gundulić's defense of the female sex (1582)

In 1584 the Croatian philosopher Nikola Vitov Gučetić (Nicolò Vito di Gozze) published a dialogue in the Italian vernacular on Aristotle's *Meteorology* that was withdrawn from circulation due to its female-authored paratext. Namely, Gučetić's wife Marija Gundulić (Maria Gondola) prefaced the work with a dedicatory epistle (dated 15 July 1582) characterized by an unprecedented polemical edge: for the first time in Croatian literary history a woman took up the pen to attack the city of Dubrovnik (Ragusa), voicing a defense of both another woman, her friend Cvijeta Zuzorić (Fiore Zuzori), and of the female sex as such. The volume was reissued in 1585 with a truncated version of the preface. The two-page *censura* did not expurgate Gondola's pro-woman reasoning, but only her invective against the Ragusan Republic. As it seems, the neoplatonically inflected discourse on the preeminence of the female sex was not perceived as dangerous inasmuch as it followed the conventional lines of the early-modern debate over women's nature, the so-called *querelle des femmes*. In her letter-treatise, Gondola drew in particular on the arguments her husband articulated in the phyloginist dedicatory epistle that prefaced his 1581 dialogues on beauty and love; dialogues that feature as their only speakers the two friends Maria Gondola and Fiore Zuzori. In this paper I will analyze the relation between the two dedicatory epistles in defense of the female sex in order to point out the subtle ways in which the female-authored text both complies with and resists the male-authored model, enacting a strategy of defiance that, as is my aim to show, deserves to be considered feminist. What is more, Maria Gondola's defense of her friend Fiore Zuzori, an early call to female (and feminist) solidarity, invites reflection on the delicate question of sisterhood, and on its indisputable relevance for the future of feminism.

Teodora Narcisa Giurgiu (Bucharest, Romania)
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Irony and silence as sharp weapons used by spinsters: Poetic disobedience in Emily Dickinson and Flannery O'Connor

Social conformity and communal precepts find their nourishing soil in the almost indestructible fixity imposed by canons, be they of a social nature, moral, judicial, ecclesiastical, aesthetic or of any other sort.

For almost all its entirety, human society has been male-centric, canons being constructed by men, its laws being most often than not to the detriment of womanhood, and unfortunately, not only were these rules accepted by women, but most of the times confirmed by their own attitudes.

Yet rebels and forerunners have always existed, and when we speak of feminism, we cannot help mentioning Emily Dickinson as a precursor to, and Flannery O'Connor as a discreet yet powerful presence in the movement to resist and overthrow the status quo. And their worth increases even more having chosen from the rhetorical array that elevated "lethal" weapon – fine irony, frequently enriched with black humor.

Such verbal devices have been employed since time immemorial in the struggle against pre-established forms of order, and in the ranks of those masters of words, Dickinson and O'Connor enlist as true ladies-at-arms, metaphorical militants against the overbearing impositions of male-oriented structures.

Yet irony relies not exclusively on words – there is a powerful layer, usually disregarded, that comes to the perfect completion of any highly convincing discourse – and that is silence. Despite the fact that they embraced different literary genres, Dickinson and O'Connor speak the same language, one where sharp irony is interwoven with obmutescence.

I will attempt to show affinities between the two artists, how irony can shape the poetic universe of their works and how silence enhances the powerful effect of such a rhetorical device. Towards the end I will try to see how the heirloom of Emily Dickinson and Flannery O'Connor can help us to anticipate post-post-modern developments in the hybridization of the literary text.

Renata Jambrešić Kirin (Zagreb, Croatia)
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**Do a larger number of women at the top guarantee a brighter future for the region?
A satirical moral of Croatia's first woman president**

Despite the abundance of misogynistic and incorrect humour at the expense of ambitious women in high political office, the general opinion is that women leaders are less inclined to nationalism, and more keen on diplomacy, consensus and compromise, which is extremely important for all countries in the Balkans. Political humour about top women leaders is an influential communicative channel of resistance to dominant social constructions of gender as it is a mighty device for creating new stereotypes about ideal and successful

“public woman”. The intention of this paper is to point out that humour, as a distinctive discursive mode defined “by its acceptance of ambiguity, paradox, multiple interpretations of reality, and partially resolved incongruity” (Mulkay 1988), becomes an important indicator of the post-socialist political unconscious of nations suppressing their longing for the authoritative but beloved father figure. The Croatian nation is especially proud of its handsome and skilled female president who is inclined to present herself as a symbol of nation, unity, victory, and regional superiority. The fact that the purpose of her populist ruling is to uproot social antagonisms by “flowing into a higher instance (the nation)” (Iveković 2013), is often a target of leftist political satire but also of feminist groups and female stand-up comedians. However, the intersection of gender, politics and humour in performative art, digital folklore and new social media takes me to “a deeper analysis of how social and institutional transformations occur” (Gal and Klingman 2000) whose preliminary thesis is that a larger number of women in high political office in the region does not guarantee a brighter future in the Eastern European region but a continuation of neoliberal politics of recession, austerity, historical ruptures, and rivalries.

Biljana Kašić (Zagreb & Zadar, Croatia)
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Resisting the future? Facing the nostalgia of the past

The idea behind my presentation is to deal with the obstacles and anxieties that emerge on the horizon of feminist thinking, having in mind the conceptual links and traces of past(s) and facing the loss of “the longest revolution” (J. Mitchell 1966) as its political imaginary. On the one hand, the paper will endeavour to ‘check’ to what extent the argument that “without undoing the possibility of revolutionary time”, feminists cannot inhabit the present as a *spacetime* for their engagement, as posed by Robin Wiegman (R. Wiegmann 2000) at the threshold of the 21st century. On the other hand, it will address the dilemma of how the *feminist present* will be viable or even thinkable without facing, competing and dialoguing with “time, memory, and history” (E. Grosz 2004) including its ‘revolutionary’ historical legacy. A close analysis of key concepts, including “left melancholia” (W. Brown) and “postmemory” (M. Hirsch) in a tensional relation to “cruel optimism” (L. Berlant), that, by exposing ‘the capitalist neoliberal order of the now’ signifies the change that will not occur except through the current effects of cruelty, shows what issues and/or momentums will enable shifts in order to create a feminist self-critical positioning. In short, how can feminism once more become a transformative habitation of feminist visionary ideas despite the imperative of Homi K. Bhabha’s (1994) significant question: “Who defines this present from which we speak?”

Brigita Malenica (Hamburg, Germany)
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Who comes after identity? Or what does the political subject mean to future feminism?

Until recently, the concept and the problematization of the (political) subject seemed to be left to a historicized feminist critique of androcentric thought in the 1970s. From its renewal within the social movements in the 1960s, feminist theory and feminist politics have changed in various ways. On the one hand, these changes are due to inner-feminist critique and debates; on the other hand, they are part of changing currencies of epistemological concepts as well as of altered hegemonic political practices. After manifold post-structuralist turns in the humanities and the fragmentation of scientific as well as activist feminism, the question needs to be asked once again how the lost common utopian goal of establishing a just society can be substituted or reformulated. This question has become much more urgent not only as a result of the neoliberal transformation of states and societies but also because of the highly visible strengthening of radical right-wing politics in many European countries. In view of these political urgencies, current feminist debates about the status and the future of feminism often go back to the term of the subject, thus questioning the paradigm of agency. In my contribution to the topic of "Reclaiming the Future. Feminist Engagement in the 21st Century," I would like to question the relevance of the subject within current feminist thought. How is the concept of pluralistic identities challenged as a fruitful political goal and what are the strategies in reformulating a new feminist approach to the concept of the political? What are feminist insights into the architecture of current conflicts and its gendered constitution? Hence, can a utopian view on the political subject be found in texts by feminists like Rosi Braidotti, Rita Casale, Nina Power and Judith Butler? Analyzing their approach to subjectivity, I explore how feminism reclaims the political space for a future democracy and where possible coalitions can be found.

Simona Miceli (Napoli, Italy)
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Migrant women writers in Italy: a sociological glance at migration literature field

In the last two decades there has been an increase in migrant writers who have published texts in the Italian language. The issue that lies at the heart of my research is: what kind of relationship is there between migration experience and public writing activity?

As is well known, migration can be seen as a 'total social fact' that represents a pivotal turning point in the life of whom has experienced it (Sayad, 1999). For this reason, I believe it is worth to take into consideration the ways in which the migration experience is shaped through narration, hence, the choice of interviewing some women writers and collecting their life stories.

My proposal will take into account two main issues. The first one revolves around the link between past and future in the migration/writing experience. On the one hand, migrants need to deal with the past and the chasm that migration plays in their life. On the other hand,

the migration project addresses also the future and it is steadily questioned. Therefore, I propose to create a link between memory and future through the category of 'the capacity to aspire', which is an expression used by Appadurai (2004) to indicate a social and cultural ability practised in the present days, so as to plan the future. Does migration influence the aspirations of these women? Can it be considered an incentive to the writing activity?

The second issue I would like to discuss is whether or not these writers intended to charge their texts with a social purpose. I will try to answer this question by comparing what they say during interviews and what they wrote in their texts.

In this sense, this research aims at showing that radically different experiences, texts and socio-cultural positions are collected under the same and too general label of "migration literature".

Appadurai A. (2004). *The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition*, in Rao V., Walton M. (eds), *Culture and Public Action*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Sayad A. (1999). *La double absence. Des illusions de l'émigré aux souffrances de l'immigré*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil.

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Feminism(s) (as) proxy

In my proposal I address one of the numerous dilemmas that have arisen during the process of setting up the Centre for Woman's Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences in Rijeka; the dilemma of representation. In the context of this paper the word 'representation' needs to be understood in terms of voicing, promoting or standing for and my approach to it consists of two lines of argumentation:

- Positioning of the CWS as an academic unit in the actuality of post-feminism or the problem of late beginning
- Positioning of the CWS in the local context or the problem of beginning late

Concluding remarks point towards the slippery ground of proxy-situations, and likewise, to the position of new *figural* possibility.

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Feminist futures: Transnational solutions

Feminisms in the United States exist at a precarious crossroads in contemporary culture within a political climate that not only allows, but also incites backlash to feminist gains through hegemonic patriarchy's asserted claim to a legitimized voice within the public electoral sphere. Antithetically, fervid national anti-feminist and racist political discourse exists side by side with progressive social action and legislation, and political party leaders publicly embolden discriminatory practices and policies that previously percolated just beneath the surface in camouflaged codes. Cultural rhetoric during the 2016 presidential campaign reinforces once again that U.S. jingoism advances injurious exceptionalism whereas transnational feminist theorizing and activism clearly indicate "successful" solidarity models for social change and betterment of communities. Making feminist sense of this cultural bifurcation requires an intersectional approach to forecast feminist futures and strategies locally, nationally, transnationally, and globally. This paper will analyze the political fault line upon which these feminist futures teeter and will offer recommendations for lasting approaches and coalitions.

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Has feminism betrayed motherhood?

In Western society women and men mostly have the same educational trajectory and both men and women freely choose partners and jobs, but at one point in their lives many women decide to become mothers. How does feminism treat this difference?

Motherhood is surprisingly rarely written about and debated in feminist theory. It is almost as if feminism cannot escape its early efforts to step away from earlier forms of Western thought which insisted on defining women primarily through biology and to make room for women's other achievements in society.

Motherhood as a practical biological fact is undergoing serious threats, since mothers are often the first to feel the effects of economic crisis. Motherhood makes women vulnerable in the labor market, but it also changes their perspective. It is precisely through motherhood – or the fact of *not* being a mother – that many women realize the true constraints of a woman's situation.

Motherhood should not be seen as the essentialist or prescriptive norm for women, but the fact that mothers in our society share a similar "situation" has to be addressed. It is therefore necessary to return to Simone de Beauvoir's *La Deuxième Sexe* (*The Second Sex*). It is in this feminist classic that biology has a vast influence on women's situation, even though, paradoxically, de Beauvoir sees motherhood as threatening to women's identity. As feminists, we have a responsibility to ask questions that could affect the future of women's lives, and through a rereading of *The Second Sex* we can change the way we look at women and their situation and imagine different lives for them in the future.

Since the 90s, the feminist movement has been preoccupied with identity questions – how to define femininity and who can speak about women’s issues. The result is the fragmentation and depoliticization of the woman question. In my view, motherhood is one of the fundamental concepts that can make us rethink women as a collective group.

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Anachronism or the future? Yugoslav socialist dilemmas on women’s organizing and self-management

My paper deals with the narrative framework of Yugoslav socialist women’s policies from the beginning of the 1950s until the mid-1980s. In particular, I am interested in analyzing the way the policy issues were framed as a precondition of better understanding and contextualizing the history of official women’s organizations in socialist Yugoslavia. Transforming the realm of reproduction of life was in line with the Marxist program of liberating women through reforming and socializing the family and domestic economy. The framing of this project as pertaining to the worker’s family, and not to women as such, as well as the gradual institutionalization of these issues in the form of social work, health, general education, and consumer industry, decreased the visibility of the role of women’s organizations, and perception of these particular issues as gendered. Moreover, Yugoslav preoccupation with political and ideological rivalry with the Soviet Union and its state socialism imposed de-etatization and self-management as the key points of difference of the Yugoslav model of socialism. Thus the grand narrative of de-etatization and socialist self-management gradually imposed itself on the discourse about the realm of physical reproduction as well. From the primary documents produced by women’s organizations, though, it is clear that activists saw these policies as an integral part of the project of women’s emancipation, and that they were eager to preserve their influence in the decision-making at various levels. The hegemony of the ideological discourse of self-management undermined the authority of women’s organizations and their successes. Holding on to the utopian idea of socialist self-management, and believing that the immediate participation of women in self-management bodies could not be substituted by representation through women’s organizations, increasingly seen as anachronistic, the leaders imagined the future without the need for women’s organizing.

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SF & SF – Science fiction & sexualities of the future

Feminist utopias, from Aristophanes on, always include new sexual behavior introduced by women and then accepted by men. We might look for the element of carnivalesque habits here and the world turned upside down for the occasion of carnival, and the changes of sexualities as a key symbolic feature; but what happens when a popular contemporary genre like sci-fi introduces narratives of new sexual regimes? Authors like Doris Lessing or Ursula Le Guin openly introduce a feminist perspective, but what to say about Stanislav Lem and the brothers Strugacki? After mapping the historical continuity of feminist utopias concerning sexualities, I focus on the ideological turn which occurred in the mid-19th century with the demand for legal equal rights for women and the communist project, including new a sexual regime (“free love”). Although there are some utopian and science-fiction narratives which confusingly mix colonial phantasies of the Other and the future, the real turn happens with the reality of communist revolutions, which systematically abandon previous promises of changes in sexual regimes, thus producing a new need for utopia. Analyzing imagined sexual regimes in a genre so heavily packed with ideology; one could conclude that the main condition for predicting, inventing or constructing the future is a change of sexualities.

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A match made in the future: Ibsen's philosophy of history

In his preliminary notes for *Hedda Gabler*, Ibsen wrote: “men and women don’t belong to the same century”, implying not only that they live in radically different realms but that the relation between them is somehow failing to function in the present.

Although Ibsen is an acclaimed master of the retrospective technique, he not only managed to stage the past in the present, he found a way to incorporate the future into the present showing us that a harmonious relationship between man and woman can only be expected in the future. Focusing on the conflicts that arise between female and male characters in his plays, particularly *Hedda Gabler* (1890), *Rosmersholm* (1886), and *The Lady from the Sea* (1888), I will try to describe why their relationship is always deferred and why they will match and form a couple somewhere else – in a time to come.

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Gender, nonviolence, and peace: a synopsis

The practice of violence, like all action, changes the world, but the most probable change is to a more violent world.
(Hannah Arendt, *On Violence*)

This paper aims to contextualize intersections between gender, nonviolence, and peace within a global and transdisciplinary spectrum. The discursive trajectory includes feminist activism versus (para) military aggression, as well as conflict prevention and disarmament strategies in conjunction with civil rights agendas.

Women's tangible experiences transculturally as agents of social change — especially at the local, community, and regional levels — commends them as bringing essential knowledge to the building of lasting peace. Excluded, until recently, from the dominions in which societies decide to administer political violence, because they were deemed inadequate for military service and generally untrained in the use of weaponry, it can be empirically observed that as a consequence women's adoption of action choices has historically emphasized means other than armed confrontation. Female citizens have thus in history learned by compulsion and choice to become proficient in exploring the enormity of the human experience with regard to utilizing nonviolent action, having done so for centuries before historical analysis had begun or coinage of terminology had formalized its study. With enlarging roles for women, increasing knowledge of the potency of civil resistance, and widening appreciation that peace-building must forthrightly include both women and nonviolent action, it is possible to perceive realistic means for constructively facing the future.

ROUNDTABLE

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My doctoral project focuses on the way colonialism, racism and sexism mark certain bodies as predisposed for living among the ‘elusive borders’, which encircle special economic or cultural groups or zones without national or transnational borders involved. I argue that such ‘elusive borders’ mark those territories of Central and Southeast Europe (CSE), which fell prey to human-made ecological devastation and to date have not been salvaged. In order to investigate how those ‘elusive borders’ are being discursively and materially created and maintained, and what is the effect of those ‘elusive borders’ on humans and nonhumans living ‘within’ and ‘without’, I devised a research design with a double agenda. Firstly, I posited Central and Southeast Europe as borderlands, which have been historically marked by an unstable difference towards both eastern and western hegemonic powers. Secondly, I explore the current status of thinking about environmental justice issues in CSE, especially in relation to gender. For that I turned to contemporary long narrative forms, such as feature films and novels, which thematize post-1989 CSE social and environmental issues as interrelated. Therefore, in the interpretative part of my project, while closely reading fictional accounts, I am tracing the way the ecological effects of Central and Southeast Europe’s transformation to a market economy construct, reconstruct and sustain the ‘elusive borders’, which mark parts of the population as ‘losers’ of the transformation. Within this framework, by analyzing the semiotic and material transfers between human and nonhuman embodiments of nature, I aim at ethical reflections on environmental health and environmental justice issues in CSE, in relation to global networks of pollution and social and environmental in/justice.

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My PhD research is focused on Lithuania, a *post-socialist* country that seems to be stuck in the permanent state “of transition”. Social processes of growing youth unemployment and precarization (Lorey, Standing, Berlant, and Butler) take place at the intersection of increased transnational mobility and the neoliberal transformations of social institutions (privatization, commodification of education, work, housing, leisure etc.). Articulation of these processes and production of decolonized knowledge through transnational networks, resilience and collective resistance at the European semi-periphery are at the core of my research interests.

In my presentation I will discuss increasingly *precarious* living in Lithuania and everyday life strategies to escape this condition by resisting hegemonic power regimes (patriarchy, capitalism, neoliberalism, precarization, etc.). I would also like to question, together with other participants, how experiences of rage and despair can lead to moments of hope and passion? How the futurities can be collectively imagined as brighter and more just? I will present some preliminary insights from my pilot fieldwork about everyday struggles, precarious lives and fragile alliances between groups of people spanning nation-state borders. Mobility,

spirituality, further education/re-training, establishment of autonomous communities, urban activism and queer kinships are some of the strategies that I have noticed so far. I want to approach this from a critical perspective which challenges the stagnant terminology of post-soviet or “lagging behind”, encourages questioning of the East-West binary divide, and pushes an analysis of feminist mobilization and activism in a “from below” manner rather than applying imported standards for measuring progress and the validity of feminist dreaming.

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PhD thesis presentation: *From post-Yugoslavia to female continent: feminist reading of post-Yugoslav literature*

I would like to focus on the methodological questions that have proven to be the most challenging in my research. Firstly, I would like to show why and how I decided to delineate the corpus of prose works according to certain cultural criteria and how feminist theory backed me in that attempt. Secondly, I would like to briefly retell my struggle to justify the application of feminist theory in analysing the work of post-Yugoslav authors, as well as to build on some more general feminist inquiries into literature and culture, which all eventually led me to conclude something about the “autonomy” of literature and “objectivity” of the scientific work. Together with other participants, I will consider taking my trials and errors as a kind of an experimental evidence of feminist theory claims.

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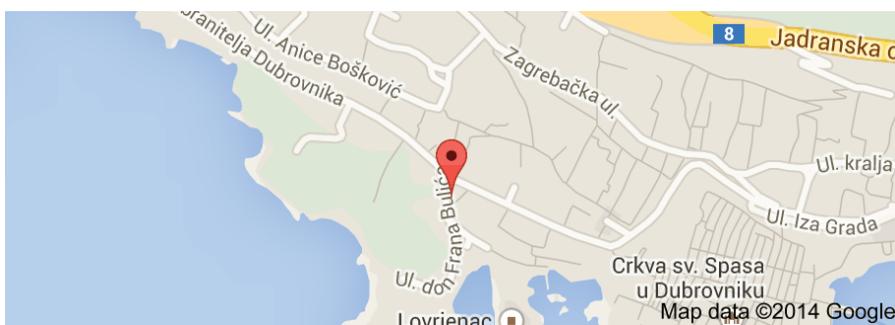
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