
FEMINISMS IN A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE 2014

Feminist knowledge in action

**8th Post-graduate course
Dubrovnik, May 26-30, 2014**

The course is supported by:

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

THE RACHEL AND BEN VAUGHAN FOUNDATION

GLOBAL FUND FOR WOMEN

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Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik:
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FEMINISMS IN A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE 2014

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Programme & Abstracts

8th Post-graduate course
Dubrovnik, May 26-30, 2014

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Envisaged as a follow-up to the topic discussed the previous year (“Feminist Critique of Knowledge Production”), this year's course will be devoted to the concept of “Feminist Knowledge in Action”, its pertinence and shortcomings when set against the current pressure to legitimize all intellectual work in performative terms of usefulness, functionality and practicality, let alone “efficiency, efficacy and effectiveness” (McKenzie).

The course will provide not only a venue for re-considering actual academic, educational and political outcomes of feminist interventions in the field of humanities, as well as culture in general, but will also attempt to return to the long-standing, thorny issue of theory versus activism divide in a historical perspective. For instance, how could we re-connect the proto-feminist models of the “vita activa” (Arendt), through which women were encouraged to take part primarily in cultural debates, with feminist and post-feminist concept of (political) action in the academe? What is at stake in endeavors to present activism as a form of theoretical knowledge, or vice-versa, and do these endeavours equally pertain to all areas of feminist engagement? Does this conflation of what used to be treated as different practices of thinking and doing smack of justification in front of endless provocations coming from various angles, questioning the purpose of feminism, now that western democratic discourse seems to have successfully adopted and neutralized the rhetoric of gender equality and “equality of profitability”? What forms of subversion are provoked by production of feminist knowledge with respect to the neoliberal university agenda? In which way has the context for bell hooks’ “politics in the classroom” changed? How is the “participatory action research” translatable from social sciences to other types of knowledge without becoming a new manipulative strategy? How do feminists working in disciplines of philosophy, sociology, literary, cultural, film and performance studies manage new hierarchies of the production of knowledge, imposed by the logic of marketing and profit, which rule out certain theoretical and interpretive methodologies, objectives and aims as being out-dated, exhausted, superfluous, or of no interest to the “majority” of students and general reading public alike?

We would welcome not only papers, but also new formats and methodologies of sharing knowledge! The main points of discussion will be as follows:

- how do we understand and counter current backlash against feminism in general, and in particular against women’s studies and gender studies departments in many universities?
 - what is the status of gendered knowledge and feminist research in current changes in academia which foster interdisciplinarity, mobility and work in community?
 - how do we argue against the current disqualification of feminist knowledge by its re-signification as mere ideology?
 - where does feminist knowledge situate its action(s), how does it mark its specific transitions from instrumental/technical and interpretive to critical/emancipatory paradigm (Humble)?
 - how to re-conceive the transmission of feminist knowledge, non-formal education and good practices in trans-historical perspective?
 - how far from us is the utopian idea of feminist university outlined by Woolf in her *Three guineas* – do words “poor”, “experimental” and “adventurous” hold the same resonance today?
 - in which ways is action the outcome of knowledge production and in which way is it its instigator?
 - what meanings does the idea of “embodied knowledge” hold today, and to what extent is artistic practice a vehicle for its transmission?
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COURSE PROGRAMME

Monday, May 26.

09.00–09.15	Gathering of the participants at the IUC, Don Frana Bulića 4
Moderator:	Lada Čale FELDMAN (Zagreb, Croatia)
09.15–09.45	Short self-presentation by all participants
09.45–10.00	Lada Čale FELDMAN (Zagreb, Croatia) Introductory Remarks
Joint venture with the course <i>Feminist Critical Analysis</i>	
10.00–10.45	Tracy C. DAVIS (Chicago, USA) What is Activism?
10.45–11.15	Discussion
11.15–11.45	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.45–12.30	Leonida KOVAČ (Zagreb, Croatia) Polyrhythmics and Migrating Voices
12.30–13.00	Discussion
13.00–15.00	<i>Lunch break</i>
Afternoon session	
15.00–16.30	Marina PETKOVIĆ LIKER (Zagreb, Croatia) Workshop: Away from Terror. Female Gesture as Response to Crisis
16.30–16.45	<i>Break</i>
Moderator:	Ivana PERICA (Zagreb, Croatia / Vienna, Austria)
16.45–18.15	Presentations by (post)doctoral students
	Calvin KEOGH (Ireland / CEU, Hungary) Feminists Becoming-Deleuzian: A Reconfiguration of Feminist Knowledge in Action
	Petra BELC (Zagreb, Croatia) Women's Experimental Cinema in Yugoslavia
	Jennifer VILCHEZ (USA / CEU, Hungary) Films for the Feminist Engagement in the Classroom
18.15–18.45	Discussion

Tuesday, May 27.

Moderator:	Rada BORIĆ (Zagreb, Croatia)
09.00–09.45	Daša DUHAČEK (Belgrade, Serbia) Arendtian Concept of Judgment: Between Thinking and Acting?
09.45–10.15	Ivana PERICA (Zagreb, Croatia / Vienna, Austria) Arendt's Critique of Politics and Micropolitics
10.15–10.45	Discussion
10.45–11.15	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.15–11.45	Iva ROGULJA PRAŠTALO (Zagreb, Croatia) The Abject Body – Feminist Readings of Hannah Arendt's Philosophy (J. Kristeva, L.M.G. Zerilli, J. Butler)
11.45 – 12.15	Lada ČALE FELDMAN (Zagreb, Croatia) Feminist Knowledge in Acting (Margarete von Trotta, <i>Hannah Arendt</i>)
12.15–12.45	Discussion
12.45–15.00	<i>Lunch break</i>
Afternoon session	
Moderator:	Moderator: Biljana KAŠIĆ (Zagreb, Croatia)
15.00–15.45	Rada BORIĆ (Zagreb, Croatia) Feminist Approach to Justice – Activist Response
15.45–16.30	Elissa HELMS (USA / CEU, Hungary) Rejecting Angelina Jolie: Gender, Sexuality, and Victimhood after the Bosnian War
16.30–17.00	Discussion
17.00–17.15	<i>Break</i>
17.15–17.45	Volha PIATRUKOVICH (Belarus / EHU, Lithuania) Achievements and Failures of Belarusian Women's Movement: the Case of The National Gender Platform
17.45–18.00	Presentation of the e-book <i>Feminist Critique of Knowledge Production</i> (Napoli, OUP, 2014) On behalf of the editors: Renata JAMBREŠIĆ KIRIN (Zagreb, Croatia)

COURSE PROGRAMME

Wednesday, May 28.

Moderator:Elissa HELMS (USA / CEU, Hungary)

09.00–09.45 **Svetlana SLAPŠAK** (Ljubljana, Slovenia)
Women Novelists and Love as a Tool of Changing Historical Perspective

09.45–10.15 Discussion

10.15–10.45 *Coffee break*

10.45–11.15 **Francesca Maria GABRIELLI** (Italy / Zagreb, Croatia)
Isotta Nogarola's Defense of Eve: Protofeminism in Disguise

11.15–11.45 **Nicole AARON** (Canada / Otago, New Zealand)
Devadasis in a Postfeminist Era

11.45–12.15 **Zahra MODARES MOUSAVI** and **Ghazaal BOZORGMEHR**
(Tehran, Iran / GEMMA Hungary / Spain)
Going Beyond Limitations: Artistic Practices as a Way to Communicate
Feminist Concepts

12.15–12.45 Discussion

Free afternoon

20.00– **Marina PETKOVIĆ LIKER & Arts Organisation Fourhanded (Public performance)**
Away from Terror. Female Gesture as Response to Crisis. Theatre of Empathy. Attempts N.

Thursday, May 29.

Joint venture with the course *Feminist Critical Analysis*

Moderators:**Jasmina LUKIĆ** (CEU, Hungary)
& **Tracy C. DAVIS** (Chicago, USA)

09.00–09.45 Ethel BROOKS (Rutgers, USA) & Snežana OTAŠEVIĆ (Belgrade, Serbia / Rutgers, USA)
Struggles Over Space, Affect and the Limits of the Human: Romani
Belonging in Belgrade

09.45–10.15 Discussion

10.15–10.45 *Coffee Break*

10.45–13.15

Workshop with (post)doctoral students

Ema BAKRAN (Zagreb, Croatia)
Nataša BAN PALUNČIĆ (Dubrovnik, Croatia)
Nadiya CHUSHAK (Ukraine / Australia)
Asma HEDI NAIRI (El Manar, Tunisia / Ankara, Turkey)
Dzenita JOLDIĆ (Tuzla, B&H)
Durga LAMICHHANE (Kathmandu, Nepal)
Natallia PAULOVICH (Belarus / Warsaw, Poland)
Natia TSIKARADZE (Tbilisi, Georgia / Sweden)

13.15–15.00 *Lunch break*

Afternoon session

Moderator:**Svetlana SLAPŠAK** (Ljubljana, Slovenia)

15.00–17.00

Presentations by (post)doctoral students

Elizaveta ZHUK (Moscow, Russia)
Modern Sport and Gender Challenges

Maryna SHEVTSOVA (Ukraine / Berlin, Germany)
EU-ization and New Social Movements in Non-member-states: Promoting
Gender Equality and LGBT Rights in Turkey and Ukraine

Daniela MAJIĆ (B&H / Croatia / Netherlands)
Jeffrey Eugenides's *Middlesex* and Feminist Legacy

Demet TUFAN (Ankara, Turkey)
An Overview of Feminist Standpoint Theory: Incorporating Women's
Subjectivity in Political Action

17.00–17.30 Discussion

COURSE PROGRAMME

Friday, May 30.

Moderators: Lada ČALE FELDMAN & Renata JAMBREŠIĆ KIRIN
(Zagreb, Croatia)

09.15–11.15 **Lois WEAVER** (London, GB)
What Tammy Found Out, a Front Line Report from the Back Porch,
the Schoolyard and the Dinner Table

11.15–11.45 *Coffee break*

11.45–12.30 Course evaluation

Departure

ABSTRACTS

(Participants in alphabetical order)

Nicole AARON, PhD candidate (Canada)
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Devadasis in a Postfeminist Era

This paper explores devadasi women and non-government organisation (NGO) interpretations of the contemporary devadasi practice in Karnataka, India. Devadasi women are dedicated to the Hindu goddess Yellamma before attaining puberty and are usually forced into sex work by society in the name of religion. Previous research on devadasi women indicates that the position offered empowerment through access to ritual status and elevated familial position, but my findings indicate that understandings of devadasi women as religious/devotional figures and empowered breadwinners have shifted, which may be connected to contemporary NGO interventions into devadasi women's lives. Through the action of government and non-government organisations to eradicate the practice, and promote conjugal marriage as a primary 'solution' to the devadasi 'problem,' the identities and practices of devadasi women have transformed. In this paper, I will discuss how knowledge production shaped activism against devadasi women, and how this activism created a new understanding of devadasi women amongst themselves and outsiders. Applying postfeminist understandings of agency to ethnographic fieldwork, I will investigate alternative possibilities for understanding the contemporary devadasi practice and current NGO interventions. In particular, are (white) Western conceptions of feminism useful in oppressive contexts? Is such a feminism applicable to women of colour in the third world? What are the alternatives?

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Participant of the workshop with (post) doctoral students

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Women's Experimental Cinema in Yugoslavia

Biljana Belić, Divna Jovanović, Bojana Vujanović (Belgrade), Tatjana Ivančić (Zagreb) and Dunja Ivanišević (Split) were one of the few women experimental filmmakers active between 1960s and 1980s in the former Yugoslavia and are accordingly rarely mentioned within the mainstream discourse on this practice. Their films, in which they sometimes appeared themselves, are characterized by sexuality, lyrical subjectivity, and diarist approach, and diverge from the general tendencies of cinema-club production of the period, which has made them "hard to evaluate" and accept within the established aesthetic and theoretical understanding of alternative film. However, if making movies means being an active player and one who controls her own destiny (Levi), then "film becomes a process of self-realization" (Sitney). In that sense, their films, which weren't acts of conscious or intentional feminist critique, were motivated most likely by the desire to create and re/establish themselves as authors and persons. In this presentation I will show how these pioneering female experimentalists utilized visual language of cinema to articulate their unique female experience and mention the difficulties they faced within the field of "male" artistic practice. Precisely because of their non-commercial character imbued with highly valued spirit of discovery, inquiry, innovation and freedom, experimental films can be treated as a place with a revolutionary potential. That made – and still makes – them an ideal space and a tool for re-articulation, expression and research of female identity, experience and knowledge.

Rada BORIĆ, MA (Croatia)
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Feminist Approach to Justice – Activist Response

The presentation has an aim to introduce Initiative for Women's Court – feminist approach to justice, a joint regional initiative to address the issue of gendered violence during the conflict/war(s) in former Yugoslavia during the 90-ies and immediately after the war(s). Feminists from the countries of former Yugoslavia have over the years developed important connections and have strongly resisted to nationalism and war, contributing to recognition of *women's experiences and inputs to transitional justice processes*. Being aware that institutional justice is/tend to be subordinate to the political pragmatism and that institutions do not provide satisfactory answers to widespread violence against women, feminists from 'the region' decided to organise Initiative for Women's Court for former Yugoslavia.

History of women's courts teaches us alternative forms of courts (women's courts, tribunals and hearings) provide special space for women to testify about challenges they face during the war and post-war period, but also about process of healing and women's pursuit for justice. Public hearings allow women to share their realities and to destabilize narratives that have been produced and perpetuated by dominant political discourses.

Center for Women's Studies is a part of the Initiative for Women's Court and together with other regional partners actively participates in the process of understanding what is justice for women, thus contributing to the *strengthening of the autonomy of women* and striving to increase women's visibility as peace builders and promoters, not just victims of war and post-war violence.

I will talk about the process of organizing Women's Court and its intention to 'remedy injustice' and violations of human rights by calling into question the conventional categories that allow these violations to occur, and involving crossing certain boundaries, such as those of nationality, class, gender and age.

Prof. Lada ČALE FELDMAN (Croatia)

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Feminist Knowledge in Acting (Margarete von Trotta's Hannah Arendt)

Margarete von Trotta's film *Hannah Arendt*, dealing mainly with the episode of the philosopher's life which produced her famous *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, renewed controversies surrounding the initial reception of this report. In contrast to the criticisms of the film which insisted on its referential aspect – the "truth" of Margarete von Trotta's biographical rendition, of Hannah Arendt's interpretation of Eichmann's moral responsibility, as well as of the moral responsibility of Jewish representatives for deaths in concentration camps – this contribution will try to discuss the impact of the film in terms of its three intertextual frames of reference: first, the current cinematic appetite for "playing for real", especially for playing prominent middle-age female public figures (for instance, Queen Elisabeth II by Helen Mirren or Margaret Thatcher by Meryl Streep); second, Hannah Arendt's own ideas on "acting", conceived in its double, political and theatrical sense, as well as on *vita contemplativa/vita activa* dichotomy, given the difficulty of artistically *enacting* "the life of the mind"; third, the way Margarete von Trotta inscribes her film into the tradition of iconographic representations of "the woman of ideas", insisting not so much on Hannah Arendt's own feminist allegiances, but on feminist implications of her acting on the public stage.

Nadiya CHUSHAK, PhD (Ukraine/Australia)

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Participant of the workshop with (post) doctoral students

Prof. Tracy C. DAVIS (USA)

Northwestern University, Chicago

What is activism?

The term "activism" emerged a century ago to describe a mental concept with real world outcomes. This etymology is important for feminist scholars because it implies that activism originates in the mind and becomes agential action. But what, in contrast, do we tend to attribute as activist? This lecture explores the genealogy of activism across the domains of art, writing, and politics from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, focusing on the intersection between psychology and phenomenology and the classification of Henrik Ibsen's pathbreaking work.

Prof. Daša DUHAČEK (Serbia)

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Arendtian Concept of Judgment: Between Thinking and Acting?

Hannah Arendt never wrote the last part of *The Life of the Mind* which was to have been devoted to the concept of judgment. To date this concept is a place of contention, and some consider it a significant challenge just "to throw a bit of cold water on the tendency among political theorists" to interpret Arendt's concept of judgment as the one which bridges the gap between thinking and acting. Others, such as Judith Butler, pose what appears to be a rhetorical question: "...is thinking in Arendt's sense always an exercise of judgment...?" If according to Butler, not only is theory an activity but, in fact, theory *exists* as an act, then there seems no rift to be overcome.

This presentation will take its cue from Arendt's own statement that judgment is of "... relevance to a whole set of problems by which modern thought is haunted, especially to the problem of theory and practice..." . It will explore the implications of a continuous reassessment of Arendt's theory which appears to be directed at rearticulating the concept of the political. If this assessment is undertaken by feminist theorists and /or activists -who often use Arendt against Arendt – then the issue is: how the judgments of the actor, the spectator, and the storyteller may unfold, given that the *conditio per quam* of the political is plurality.

Francesca Maria GABRIELLI, PhD candidate (Italy / Croatia)
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Isotta Nogarola's Defense of Eve: Protofeminism in Disguise

Isotta Nogarola (1418-1466), a humanist scholar who at the early age of eighteen had already acquired acclaim within the northeastern Italian humanist circle thanks to her Latin epistles, decided in 1441 to seclude herself in a room of her mother's house, choosing a life of perpetual celibacy that enabled her to elude the *aut maritus aut murus* adage. Possibly triggered by the accusation of incest brought against her in 1439 by an anonymous pamphleteer who capitalized on the widespread misogynist bias according to which "an eloquent woman is never chaste", this unprecedented and carefully pondered decision, interpreted as religious by her contemporaries, enabled her to fulfill her urgently felt intellectual vocation without overtly defying the patriarchal horizon of expectations. The first years of seclusion were also years of literary silence, during which she dedicated herself in particular to sacred studies. Finally, after a decade of literary invisibility, Nogarola felt entitled to confront the age-long tradition of misogynist interpretations of the Genesis account in her Latin work commonly known as the *Dialogue on Adam and Eve* (1451). The text under consideration can be read as offering a sophisticated revision of the scriptural representation of the first woman, one that simultaneously accepts and resists the stereotype of female inferiority, ultimately depatriarchalizing the biblical subtext and serving as an avenue both for Nogarola's self-authorization and for her protofeminist advocacy. Indeed, it is the purpose of this paper to show how the Veronese woman author's contribution to the Renaissance discourse on gender stems from an alert strategy of negotiation that can be read as protofeminist inasmuch as aimed, by way of the reinterpretation of the figure on which the Western conception of femininity is founded, at legitimizing women's desire for acquiring and displaying knowledge, a knowledge that carries, as in the case at issue, the potential to become a means of (proto) feminist action in the field of culture.

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Rejecting Angelina Jolie: Gender, Sexuality, and Victimhood after the Bosnian War

Feminist critiques of nationalism have focused on the gendered foundations of nationalisms associated with oppressive political domination and often aggressive war violence that takes the symbolism of woman-as-nation to its logical extremes. Less well understood, especially in the case of the former Yugoslavia, is the relationship between gender and concepts of nation among victimized groups, despite the tendency of all nationalisms to portray their nations as victims. Starting from the controversy and activist responses surrounding the making of Angelina Jolie's recent feature film about war rapes in the Bosnian war, and extending to wider representations of and debates around survivors of wartime rape in the Bosniac (Muslim) dominated parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina, this talk approaches the gendering of national narratives of identity and collective victimhood as a challenging and ultimately restrictive context for women's activism.

Elissa Helms is Associate Professor and Head of the Gender Studies Department at the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. A socio-cultural anthropologist specializing in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the former Yugoslavia, her research and publications have addressed various gendered and sexualized aspects of nationalism, post-conflict reconciliation, international intervention, post-socialism, and women's NGO activism. Her book *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women's Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina* was recently published by the University of Wisconsin Press. She is also co-editor, with Xavier Bougarel and GerDuijzings, of *The New Bosnian Mosaic: Memories, Identities, and Moral Claims in a Postwar Society* (Ashgate, 2007).

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Feminists Becoming-Deleuzian: A Reconfiguration of Feminist Knowledge in Action

Read in the context of Arjun Appadurai's diagnoses of 'modernity at large', the views of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari are of particular relevance to questions concerning group and individual identities in a globalized world. Their models of 'rhizomatics' – which opposes rupture, fluidity, and multiplicity to the rooted systems of arborescence – and 'nomadology', which challenges the tendency of Western philosophy to operate from a fixed or sedentary position – are amenable to analyses of the destabilization of modern subjectivities under conditions of mass migration and mediation. Switching from figurations of subjectivity to epistemic positionings, this presentation will consider the relevance of Deleuzian concepts to feminist knowledge production in a transnational context. Taking the conceptual dyad sex/gender as an example, it will consider the usefulness of rhizomatics and nomadology as frameworks in the work of mapping traveling concepts in feminism and how they have been assessed by feminist critics such as Rosi Braidotti, Karen Caplan, Claire Colebrook, and Clare Hemmings. In regard to the imbrication of gender and sexual difference with other variables such as class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality, it will also consider the compatibility of a Deleuzian analytics with the long-established feminist framework of intersectionality and whether it can be reconciled with assemblage theory in what Jasbir Puar describes as a 'becoming-intersectional assemblage'. Finally, in regard to the importance of mapping the cultural, material, and political effects of feminism, it will consider Deleuze and Guattari's controversial concept of 'becoming-woman' in regard to 'embodied knowledge' and bodies of 'knowledge in action' which mark the transitions of feminism from theory to activism and from criticism to emancipation.

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Polyrhythmics and Migrating Voices

The lecture is concerned with the recent multimedial work in progress *Polyrhythmics and Migrating Voices* by Croatian artist Nicole Hewitt. The project that consists of experimental film, slide-projection, audio installation and set of live performances addresses the topic of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in Den Haag, but it doesn't deal with any particular war crime neither with any of the culprits or their victims. Instead, it focuses "peripheralia" of the trials where the real protagonists are precarious workers, as well as the respectable employees of the Tribunal (court interpreters, analysts, victim support professionals, etc.) who 20 years ago were refugees from the war zones in ex-Yugoslavia in a status of illegal or semi-legal immigrants in Netherlands. The project deals with all that which participates in the technologies of trial and its media transmission. The basic theme of the project is relation between (im)possibility of verbalization or visualization of trauma

and media production of reality, including production of the intelligible social subjects with their pertaining identities. *Polyrhythmics and Migrating Voices* explores a position of living body in interspace of personal and official history; processes of becoming and existing within a language; migratory states excluded from the register of perceptibility, speakability and imaging, but yet existing in various registers of memory: at intersection of past and future, in the elusive present. In the process of articulation of this artistic project Hewitt appropriates forensic methods and so doing she simultaneously unweaves the sediments of her own memory, as well as the structural layers of the images of Den Haag's trials for the war crimes at the territories of former Yugoslavia, images generated by electronic media and digital technologies.

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Jeffrey Eugenides's Middlesex and Feminist Legacy

Jeffrey Eugenides's *Middlesex*, a fictional autobiography of an intersex person, poses several questions of high relevance for contemporary feminist theory and politics. Merging a generic, cultural and corporeal hybridity, the novel explores how theoretical, medical, popular and religious discourses meet in attempt to explain and categorise an intersexed body. The main aim of this presentation is to explore how the legacy of feminist scholarship and activism is mobilised and incorporated but also challenged and unsettled in the narrative which critically engages with heredity and transmission of knowledge in general. Theoretically informed narrator, Calliope/Cal, undertakes his onto-epistemological quest in order to investigate the origins of his bodily uncertainty. Related to this is the question of alterity which both enables and sets the limits to our access to knowledge (as theorised, amongst others, by Butler). Cal tries to reconstruct the traces of the Other in himself both literally (genetics) and metaphorically (history, habits, myths). Search for the origins of his condition is, however, taken to the extreme. Thus, Cal challenges both presumed corporeal and cultural foundations of self and undermines the originary myths of any kind. The novel inherits and passes on an old *nature versus nurture* debate but it also tackles the limits of the politics of recognition. In that sense, the presentation will critically focus upon the strand of reception of the novel which condemns Cal's desire to embody a feasible (in this case male) body by objecting to novel's alleged restoration of heteronormativity and elimination of sexual indeterminacy.

Ghazaal BOZORGMehr, MA and Zahra SAHAR MODARES MOUSAVI BEHBAHANI, MA (Iran)

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Going Beyond Limitations: Artistic Practices as a Way to Communicate Feminist Concepts

There are restrictions and bans introduced by the government on feminist activism, and even academic studies with feminist perspectives in Iran; prohibitions which, particularly in the academia, are benefitting from the new backlash against feminism in most universities with a focus on humanities around the world. In such circumstances when the public media is also not accessible for transferring feminist thoughts, creativity is necessitated. Therefore, strategies such as study groups organized outside the universities which act on an interdisciplinary basis as well as artistic practices can be helpful in promoting feminist thoughts among the public (non-academic population).

Feminist study groups can function as translating teams to translate feminist works from Persian to English and vice versa, widening the transnational perspective on feminism; they can, at the same time, create comic handouts and use Dramatic Performances to convey feminist concepts to a huge population including women and children as the next generation.

In Iran, in the context of restrictions on freedom of speech in media, cartoons and animations have found their specific attractiveness in discussing social problems. Thus, even though comic books are not that common in Iranian culture, they can now be counted on as a promising artistic instrument in conveying feminist ideas and even the knowledge. As part of the presentation we are going to explain how creating regular comic handouts and distributing them informally through activists and related NGOs could be a way to reconcile feminist theory and activism outside the academia and a small step from abstraction to action through these culture building practices and raising awareness.

Feminist awareness can also be promoted through other artistic domains such as the Dramatic Performance or "Naghali". As another part of the presentation, we are going to present how Dramatic Performance or Naghali can be used as a tool for communicating concepts and meanings. This kind of performance has been traditionally associated with

performing the legends of a certain book of Persian epic poetry called *Shahnameh*. This job was previously reserved only to male performers. However, in recent years women have joined the arena.

As a case study for this section, we are going to elaborate on the performance of an Iranian actress in March 2013 in the University of Stanford before an audience mostly including academic figures. We are going to make an analogy between this performance as a case of academic endeavor with the performances of another Iranian lady who performs the same stories outside the academia, in rural areas for the public who are mostly comprised of women and children. The goal is to see if and how these two performances can unite academia with activism.

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Arendt's Critique of Politics and Micropolitics

In her seminal *Human Condition* (1958) and especially in *On Revolution* (1963) Hannah Arendt has criticized the 'social' as an 'anti-political' category. Throughout her work, she has stressed the importance of the distinction between social i.e. private matters and the political life, disregarding thereby the poststructuralist/postmodern and feminist social politics altogether. Arendt's distaste for the women's emancipation was surely the main reason she was not only criticized but even thoroughly forgotten by the mainstream feminists. At the same time, she was often remembered only as a famous student and lover of Martin Heidegger (an interpretation still present in the 2012 movie *Hannah Arendt*, dir. Margarethe von Trotta). The Arendtian potential for democratic, emancipatory politics was not discovered before the 'performative readings' of Arendt's text, proposed by Bonnie Honig at the end of the eighties and in the nineties.

Arguing against some one-sided interpretations of her political thought, I would like to explain the background of Arendt's critique of the 'social': In this line of argument I read Paolo Virno, who in *Scienze sociali e "natura umana"* (2003) and *Grammatica della moltitudine* (2003) analyses the neoliberal relapse to the 'natural' state. As, according to Virno, the bio-political paradigm reduces the particular human "monde" (social dimension) to the state of "ambiente", his critique of this 'natural state' (as opposed to 'social activities') recalls Arendt's her highly controversial distinction between the "social" and the "political". Aware of all the impasses and miscomprehensions her social/political divide may arouse, I would like to discuss its applicability not only to the post-democratic i.e. neoliberal state, but to the possible Arendtian-feminist politics as well.

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Workshop proposal: Away from terror. Female gesture as response to crisis
Duration: 2 hours

Content / topics:

To distance ourselves from the terror we live in and try to find a different language and communicative space, to change the perception of time, to open communicative field which requires no words as we know them. To finish a cup of tea together, to endure the tension together, the fear, the uncertainty. To dare touch the painful place, to be willing to understand. To be able to let the voice be heard, to sound, to sound together, to sing.

What comprises the female gesture? What is the natural female reaction in a particular situation? What is silence in a performance? What is being, waiting, existing in space, feeling and sympathising together? Can we first shut up (ourselves, the space, the world) in order to speak differently? Dare we speak about the painful place? Can painful place be creative? Can that place give us an answer?

How to work with performers on topics that interest me? How to provoke a specific kind of performance which at the same time utilises my own experience and experience from others through incessant presence and improvisation, but also precisely follows previously arranged rules of the game? How to achieve a performance which exists on the thin line between documentary and exalted theatricality?

Execution:

At the workshop we shall attempt to address the above mentioned questions. All participants will be invited to be performers, observers and co-players at the same time.

The performance of *Away from terror. Female gesture as response to crisis. Theatre of empathy. Attempts N.*, two evenings after the workshop.

A play will be performed for all workshop participants. The workshop is a kind of preparation for a possibly different approach to participating / experiencing / understanding a play. After the performance everyone will be invited to stay for a friendly conversation. Feedback after watching the play would be highly beneficial to our further research into this topic / play.

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Achievements and Failures of Belarusian Women's Movement: the Case of The National Gender Platform

My future presentation aims to contribute to the gender-related (women, gender and feminist) activities of Belarusian NGOs from feminist perspective. There are several questions which I suppose to research: 1) How is the gender-related activism is organized and institutionalized? 2) What are the difficulties? 3) How does the current political situation influence and shape the "gender sector" in Belarus?

The current situation with Belarusian women's movement is a typical example of how the feminist idea of struggling for women emancipation becomes an insufficient reason for consolidation of people who are interested in it. How feminist problems are raised in the Belarusian public discourse is predominantly liberal approach to feminism which is based on aspiration to equality of rights and opportunities between men and women. However, as we can see, these two groups ("men" and "women") are represented as two homogeneous groups which are don't contain any differences, contradictions and struggles.

All my argument I want to exemplify on the case of the National gender platform. The National gender platform, which was elaborated about 2 years ago in Belarus by the civil society actors, was declared as a strategic document and supposed to contribute and promote consolidation of civil society in Belarus for struggling gender equality. Its authors expected it to be a platform for consolidation the efforts for achieving gender equality in Belarus and for gaining influence on decision-making process for implementation of gender policy. About two years has passed since the time it has been created and announced and now we can see that this initiative didn't perform the tasks it was supposed to do. Why this had happened? What are the reasons?

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The Abject Body – Feminist Approach to Hannah Arendt's Philosophy (J. Kristeva, L.M.G. Zerilli, J. Butler)

Regarding the fact that Hannah Arendt, while writing *The human condition* as a book crucial for her political theory, didn't elaborate much on the problem of the body and its role in the process of forming the *political*, contemporary feminist criticism has for decades participated in a comprehensive quest for something that Linda M.G. Zerilli calls *the Arendtian body*. While trying to distinguish weather her hesitation to address the problem of the body (or

maybe her deliberate diminishing of its importance?) is symptomatic for the reconstruction of Arendt's perspective on feminism, all three authors have pointed out that the position of the body is radically unfavorable. Dominant public discourse, claim Kristeva, Zerilli and Butler, almost always represses the body ascribing it ever the same adjective – *abject*. While American feminist Linda M.G. Zerilli focuses on the violent nature of the law dividing private from the public (body from the *polis*) and the fact that the implementation of that law results in abjection of the body (as well as the human condition), Julia Kristeva points out that bond between body and speech is too strong to be questioned so the body can't be reduced to its reproductive and manufacturing role. As the antipode to symbolic dimension of the language Kristeva introduces the semiotic nature of *maternal body* – body which will, after it is subjected to the repressive mechanisms of the phallogocentric discourse, exists only as abject. Abject body will then manifest itself as a Freudian symbol continuously reminding us of how thin the line between subject and the world (private and the public) really is. Embracing the terminology, Judith Butler also addresses the *abject body* but in her reading the above mentioned adjective isn't necessarily ascribed to woman's/mother's body but to any body which, for any reason, vary from the imposed ideal – white, heterosexual male body. Although it remains doubtful whether any of the above mentioned interpretations of Arendt's body politics can comprehend the complexity of the problem in case, it is certain that all three authors point out some valid questions which still remain actual.

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EU-ization and New Social Movements in Non-member-states: Promoting Gender Equality and LGBT Rights in Turkey and Ukraine

Established, primarily, as an economic union for regional cooperation, by the end of the twentieth century the European Union turned its attention to the promotion of democracy, human rights, and "good governance". If for almost 50 years the EU used to overlook the democratization keeping this issue out of its foreign policy agenda, already by early 2000-s it became the largest global actor, exporting European values across the region and the globe, having left behind even the US. Promotion of democracy, human rights and rule of law emerged into an essential part of Europeanization that can be defined as the impact of the EU on both member-states and third countries to adapt their domestic institutions in order to correspond to the norms and regulations of the Union.

The studies on Europeanization and democracy and human rights promotion have barely mentioned, till recently, the progress of the accession countries in the area of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) rights and gender equality policy. This could be explained, partially, by lack of attention to these issues, in particular, in the European Commission annual progress reports: in spite of the active promotion of gender equality policy, for example, the information about the impact of Europeanization on domestic changes is very limited. The purpose of my research project is to examine the variation of outcomes caused by the usage by the European Union of similar instruments and means for Europeanization of the third

countries by promotion of the gender equality and LGBT rights and to identify national and/or external factors that could explain these differences. At the same time I analyze the shifts in the domestic opportunities for political mobilization of feminist and LGBT movements caused directly or indirectly by the EU actions and the ways in which, influenced by these shifts, social movements in third countries reshape their tactics and long-term strategies

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Women Novelists and Love as a Tool of Changing Historical Perspective

In many popular historical novels (more or less blending with the love-adventure genre type) love is an unpredictable plot element, fostering happy ending or a happiness of an individual in history as an arbitrary outcome, more dependent on a genre convention than on credibility. If love is realized, it stays out of history and the couple "retires" from the world as a rule. Compared with Alexandre Dumas, Paul Féval, Walter Scott, James Fenimore Cooper, Rafael Sabatini or Alexandre Poushkin, some women novelists stand out in their plot constructing, which presents love as a crucial force/motivation or a decisive type of behavior initiating and defining the action in history – thus establishing an important place in social structuring. Such basic discrepancy is analyzed in the novel *Gadfly* (1897) by Ethel Lilian Voynich and *La bicyclette bleue* by Régine Deforges (1981) and its nine sequels (til 2007). *Gadfly* became influential in a global sense, becoming the compulsory reading in all the socialist countries, from USSR and China, including the early Yugoslav socialism (translations in the 50' of the 20th ct). Beside the social-political obligation, the novel was genuinely popular among young people. In the work of Régine Deforges, the initial pastiche of *Gone With the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell (1936) serves as a convincing vehicle for proposing another perspective – the one in which a couple in love has to "perform" their relation in different social and political environments, proving that love both creates political and social reality and is created by it. In both cases, authors form an argument which interacts with revolutionary movements and left-oriented political positions. The third case is a Yugoslav Vera Obrenoviæ-Delibašić with her novel *Kroz Nièiju zemlju* (Through the No-man's Land), in which through action and risk a Muslim woman's emancipation is accomplished. Being labelled a Soviet sympathizer, the author spent several years as a political prisoner, and the reprints of her novel re-surfaced more than 30 years later: her career was limited to translation.

I want to compare women authors in the same genre, who managed to write-in national or other than revolutionary-left ideas into their work (Emmuska Orczy, Zagorka, Erica Jong and others) in order to argue that the revolutionary-left positioning coincides well with contemporary emancipatory movements and ideas incorporated in them. However, this distinction does not exclude evident emancipatory meanings in other women authors' work. The comparison should serve to map a much larger map of emancipatory interventions by women authors in their inclusion into popular genres and the system of power and cultural authority.

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An Overview of Feminist Standpoint Theory: Incorporating Women's Subjectivity in Political Action

Feminist Standpoint Theory, emerged in 1970s as a feminist critical theory, is defined as 'a method or theory of methods to guide future feminist research' by the leading figure of the theory, Sandra Harding. With its Marxist and Feminist roots, it rejects 'pure' postmodern or poststructuralist theories; however it does not abstain from augmenting postmodern and poststructuralist elements within the theory. Having a recent history, it has attracted the researchers interested in epistemologies and methodologies with its specific nature; since it relates the production of scientific knowledge and practices of power in a controversial way by both keeping the structures and emphasizing the specificity of the woman subjects. This is a prominent reason to put the theory on pedestal for its defenders. However, criticisms have been spiked immediately; mainly because of the 'slipping and sliding nature of the theory' between modernism and postmodernism methodologically. How could it be possible to generate a theory which benefits from both modernist and post-modernist dimensions? The idea beneath this situation is the quest for truth and political act together in feminism. The situated knowledge gathered from multiple standpoints leads the way of feminist politics since feminist politics is 'essentially epistemological' as Feminist Standpoint Theorists state. This presentation intends to examine Feminist Standpoint Theory with the quest for reaching a different perspective of incorporating women's subjectivity in political action. While bringing the Feminist Standpoint Theory into question with its modern and postmodern dimensions, I will also touch upon how the theory links feminist theory and politics.

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Films for the Feminist Engagement in the Classroom

In the United States, there is a collective memory of students, from elementary to university, that recollects the pure excitement of experiencing the instructor rolling in the media cart, containing a television and media player, into the classroom. To watch a film in class not only signified a means of learning in which there was individual engagement (the lights out, eyes on the screen, like the cinema) followed by group engagement, but also a sense of entertainment. The media cart was a welcomed educational tool, providing relief from any believed monotony of lectures and note-taking. These days, many classrooms include media equipment or digital additions as part of the curriculum. To what extent is film still soliciting active engagement from students in educational settings? Particularly in a time when listening and watching (just as reading has) grasps less and less attention? With these question of engagement in mind, what type of films are being added to curriculums? How is it viewed as art and/or social commentary, or is it at all? Could particular films introduce concepts of feminism and political awareness in productive ways?

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What Tammy Found Out

Extended Title: Lois Weaver in 'What Tammy Found Out, a Front Line Report from the Back Porch, the Schoolyard and the Dinner Table'

Tagline: A performance lecture about education and class; high art and popular culture; performance and human rights; feminism and femininity; and sex and aging.

Short Copy Tammy WhyNot is a performance persona who claims to be a trailer park survivor who gave up a career in country music to become a lesbian performance artist and a university researcher. What Tammy Found Out is a performance lecture that will present findings from her 64 years of research on issues from education and class to sex and aging.

Long Copy with Short Bio Tammy WhyNot is a performance persona who claims to be a trailer park survivor who gave up a career in country music to become a lesbian performance artist and a university researcher. Tammy is dedicated to the facilitation of public engagement in social and economic justice and experimental forms of democracy. She applies her considerable courage and uncomplicated curiosity to her research project, What Tammy Needs to Know...about education and class; high art and popular culture; performance and

human rights; feminism and femininity; and sex and aging. What Tammy Found Out is a performance lecture that will present findings from 64 years of research. Tammy's alter-ego, Lois Weaver, is Professor of Contemporary Performance Practice, Queen Mary, University of London and an independent performance artist and activist. She was co-founder of WOW Theatre in New York and has collaborated with the Split Britches Company since 1980. She was Director of PSI12: Performing Rights in 2006. Her practice-based research uses performance to initiate conversations on human rights in wide-ranging projects.

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Modern Sport and Gender Challenges

For a long time women were deprived of the opportunity to do sports. Over the years women's participation in sports competitions engendered a new challenge. At the end of the 1960th a special procedure of gender verification which for more than 30 years was a precondition for female athletes participating in sports competitions was introduced. It was aimed at preventing men from participating in women's competitions. The methods of gender verification were changing but the achievements of genetics and medicine didn't make it perfect enough which can be proved by case studies. Mistakes occurred soon after gender verification adoption as well as they still occur in the XXI century though the procedure became selective, sometimes making female athletes to assert their rights both to participate in sports competitions and to be called women. This issue is closely connected with the concept of femininity in sport.

Another challenge is transsexuals' participation in sports events. Nowadays the debates about male-to-female transsexuals' participation in female sports competitions are not that uncommon. The concerns are obvious: a man naturally has more physical strength than a woman, so the main question is whether male-to-female athletes retain that innate advantage after sex reassignment surgery and hormonal therapy or not. If the answer is positive, it's a violation of the main sports principle of fair play. But on the other hand there is an international principle of non-discrimination, including non-discrimination on the ground of sex and gender identification. In case of male-to-female transsexuals' participation in female sports competitions these two principles can come into conflict. Starting from 2004 transsexual people are allowed to participate in sports competitions under some conditions. This decision provoked a lot of opposite opinions.

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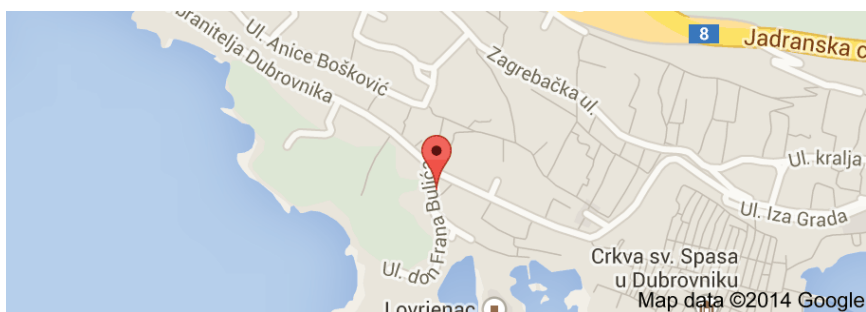
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