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FEMINISMS IN A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE 2018

# Fear, Resistance, Imagination

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**12th Postgraduate Course  
Dubrovnik, IUC, May 21-25, 2018**

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FEMINISMS IN A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE 2018

# **Fear, Resistance, Imagination**

**Programme & Abstracts**

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12th Postgraduate Course  
Dubrovnik, IUC, May 21-25, 2018

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

The topic of the 12<sup>th</sup> postgraduate course *Feminisms in a Transnational Perspective: Fear, Resistance, Imagination* was prompted by the escalation of the global culture of “horrorism”, hate, and militarism connected with the stagnation of the liberal project and a weakened “West.” A plethora of contemporary fears has emerged to mask the destructive consequences of late capitalism and to facilitate the state surveillance of citizens. This is not new, however: fear-mongering, intimidation, awe and submission as social and political strategies have been cultivated for centuries to maintain socio-political hierarchies, religious obedience and reproductive heteronormativity, as well as to sustain a sense of powerlessness, dependence and docility of oppressed social groups.

These circumstances offer many openings for feminist readings of the conjunction of historical contexts, political conditions, cultural frames and gender regimes through which specific fears have been ignited, shaped, symbolized, distributed, and sustained. Contrary to the prolific “neuroimagery” of fear as a universal, ahistorical and non-cultural affect, feminist theorists have argued that emotions are cultural practices not psychological states. They have revealed clusters of affective politics, cultural climates, state and popular ideologies, embodied cognitions, national rhetorics, propaganda wars, etc., that induce a strong emotional response of individuals and groups, and diminish or suppress their critical assessment of the situation, “dangerous others”, and “threats”.

Feminist pedagogy as oriented towards personal and collective empowerment, transformative knowledge, social understanding, activism, the development of critical thinking, and re-imagining of a just society is still our most effective means of resistance against the politics and culture of fear nurtured at the heart of the liberal academia. We therefore invite feminist scholars, researchers, activists, artists and others to reflect on fear as a constantly changing phenomenon at the meeting point of lived, cultural, ideological, economic and communicative practices, as well as to investigate the agencies and strategies of those who oppose fear with the power of bonding, imagination, vision and courageous acts. We welcome proposals for papers, but we are also open to proposals for round tables, performance-lectures or other alternative formats and methodologies of sharing knowledge. Proposals may consider some of the following issues:

- social norms, cultural patterns, life scripts and intimacies as constructed by gender-related fears and anxieties
  - gendered figures and (collective) fears
  - fears of gendered difference and/or difference encountered by variously gendered subject positions
  - fears of intimate citizenship (*related to rights, obligations, recognitions and respect around most intimate spheres of life*) vs. fears of lacking the fundamental
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- requisites of citizenship in terms of rights, equality and redistribution
- gendered fears of social exclusion, marginalization, invisibility vs. fears of being too exposed and unprotected in public realms and digital networks
  - fears of gender binarism, sexual normativity, queer identities
  - conservative fears of “gender ideology”
  - intimidation, surveillance, and governance put in place in the name of protection
  - articulations of gender and fear with landscapes and technologies of surveillance
  - correlation between discourses praising (national) security and privileges, and the paranoid and anxious rhetoric in politics
  - initiatives that explicitly mobilize gendered narratives of resistance to fear or of overcoming gendered bases of fear
  - gender and popular cultures of fear
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# COURSE PROGRAMME

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## Monday, May 21

- 09.15–09.30      Gathering of the participants at the IUC, Don Frana Bulića 4
- 09.30–09.45      Short self-presentation by all participants
- 09.45–09.55      **Renata JAMBREŠIĆ KIRIN** (IEF Zagreb, Croatia): Introductory remarks

**Joint lecture with the course *Feminist Critical Analysis*** (IUC auditorium)

- 10.00–10.45      **Franko DOTA** (University of Rijeka, Croatia): A Fearful Embrace. The State and the Homosexuals in Post-Revolutionary Socialist Yugoslavia (1947-1951)
- 10.45–11.05      *Discussion*
- 11.05–11.35      *Coffee break*

Moderator: ..... **Silvana CAROTENUTO** (University of Naples “L’Orientale”, Italy)

- 11.35–12.05      **Elena BELLINA** (University of Rochester, USA): Performing Voices, Resisting Bodies: The Life Cycle of Female Rice Workers in the Po Valley
- 12.05–12.35      **Lucia AMOROSI** (University of Naples “L’Orientale”, Italy): National Security, Gender and Migration in Contemporary Italy
- 12.35–13.05      *Discussion*
- 13.05–17.00      *Lunch break*

## Afternoon session

- 17.30–18.00      **Evis GARUNJA** (University of Durrës, Albania): Domestic Violence: A Paralyzing Phenomenon for the Albanian Family and Society
- 18.00–18.30      **Slaven CRNIĆ** (CEU, Budapest): The Queerness of Being Afraid: Fear and the Continuum of Male Homosociality
- 18.30–19.00      *Discussion*
- 20.00              **LERO theatre performance** “Kitice i perlice” (Lazareti, Ul. Frana Supila 10)

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## Tuesday, May 22

Moderator:..... **Francesca Maria GABRIELLI** (University of Zagreb, Croatia)

09.30–10.00 **Dubravka DULIBIĆ-PALJAR** (University of Pula, Croatia) and **Brigita MILOŠ** (University of Rijeka, Croatia): The Taxonomy of Fears: Doris Lessing’s “The Golden Notebook”

10.00–10.30 **Ana ROMÃO** (University of Lisbon, Portugal): Representing the Female Soldier in Contemporary Visual Culture. *Our Girl* (UK, 2014)

10.30–11.00 *Discussion*

11.00–11.30 *Coffee break*

11.30–12.00 **Nadia JONES GAILANI** (CEU, Budapest): (E)racing and Racing the Academic Body: Towards a Politics of Vulnerability

12.00–12.30 *Discussion*

12.30–17.00 *Lunch break*

### Afternoon session

17.00–17.30 **Petra PUGAR** (University of Zagreb, Croatia): Narratives of Dystopian Fear and Gendered Resistance in Alasdair Gray’s *Lanark*

17.30–18.00 **Ethem MANDIĆ** (Faculty for Montenegrin Language and Literature, Cetinje, Montenegro): Silence and Raising of the Voice of Woman Between Fear and Imagination in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie Short Story *Imitation*

18.00–18.3 **Maša HUZZAK** (University of Zagreb, Croatia): Her Body and Other Horrors. The Fear of Women’s Bodies in Carmen Maria Machado’s Prose

18.30–19.00 *Discussion*

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## Wednesday, May 23

Joint lecture with the course *Feminist Critical Analysis* (IUC auditorium)

Moderator: ..... **Nadia JONES GAILANI** (CEU, Budapest)

10.00–10.45      **TJ BOISSEAU** (Purdue University, USA): Women with the World at their Feet: Origins of Transnational Feminism at International Expositions held 1876-1965

10.45–11.05      *Discussion*

11.05–11.30      *Coffee break*

11.30–12.00      **Silvana CAROTENUTO** (University of Naples “L’Orientale”, Italy): The Foundational Moment of – the Subjugation of – the Other: Sylvia Wynter and Denise Ferreira Da Silva

12.00–12.30      **Dmitri DOROGOV** (CEU, Budapest): Making Sense of a Moral Panic: Russia’s Biopolitics of Sexual Sovereignty

12.30–13.00      **Jana KUJUNDŽIĆ** (University of Essex, UK): Sexual Violence and Anti-gender Initiatives in Croatia: The Case of Istanbul Convention

13.00–13.30      *Discussion*

*Free afternoon*

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## Thursday, May 24

Moderator:.....**Lada ČALE FELDMAN** (University of Zagreb, Croatia)

09.30–10.00      **Natka BADURINA** (University of Udine, Italy): Who is Afraid of Milena Mohorič? The Memory of a Marxist Feminist in a “Post-ideological” World

10.00–10.30      **Renata JAMBREŠIĆ KIRIN** (IEF Zagreb, Croatia): Revolution in the Fear of Women Revolutionaries

10.30–11.00      *Discussion*

11.00–11.30      *Coffee break*

11.30–12.00      **Elissa HELMS** (CEU, Budapest): Fear and Gender along the Balkan Route: Old Tropes in New Packaging

12.00–12.30      *Discussion*

12.30–17.00      *Lunch break*

### Afternoon session

Moderator:.....**Elissa HELMS** (CEU, Budapest)

17.00–17.30      **Barbara PLEIĆ TOMIĆ** (University of Zagreb, Croatia): “How Could a Mother Do That to Her Children?”: The Fear of the Monstrous Mother

17.30–18.00      **Ana PAVLIĆ** (CWS, Zagreb): Almodovar’s *Julieta*: Another Fierce Woman in Red

18.00–18.30      **Glenda BELEN del ROSARIO HUERTO VIZCARRA** (CEU, Budapest): The Awakening of (Gendered) Fear: A Journey of Resistance/Assimilation Among the Otherness

18.30–19.00      *Discussion*

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## Friday, May 25

Moderator: ..... **Sandra PRLENDA** (CWS Zagreb, Croatia)

09.30–10.00      **Giuseppe GERBINO** (Columbia University, USA): Heroes, Victims, and Forgers: Gaetano Donizetti's *Torquato Tasso*

10.00–10.30      **Mirela DAKIĆ** (University of Zagreb, Croatia): Rethinking Home. Ethics, Politics, Femininity

10.30–11.00      *Discussion*

11.00–11.30      *Coffee break*

11.30–12.30      Course evaluation

*Departure*

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## **ABSTRACTS**

(Participants in alphabetical order)

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**Lucia Amorosi**

PhD Candidate, Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale", Italy

### **National Security, Gender and Migration in Contemporary Italy**

In recent years, Italy has seen a considerable increase in media and political discourse on the protection of national security and identity, often widespread by resorting to explicitly racist and sexist narratives (Calvanese, 2011). Years and years of speeches linked to the so-called "immigration emergency" have led to a considerable increase in the political weight of parties such as the Lega Nord, as well as to the flattening of all the main political parties on more or less explicitly racist positions (IDOS, 2017). The debate generated a few months ago by the law proposal on *ius soli* in Italy and the failure to approve this law testify how the national identity is still represented as intrinsically connected to a certain idea of "defense of the race" at the media and political level (Nagel, 1998). Gender also plays a crucial role in this context: on the one hand there is a constant attempt to legitimize certain actions with the need to protect Italian women from the danger represented by migrants, represented by the media as a danger or a threat, on the other hand, the speeches and the media representations change radically when the rapist, the violent, the murderer is Italian and maybe part of the same family group (Torrìsi, 2017). What happened in Macerata a few weeks ago, when the racist attack of Luca Traini was placed in connection with the murder of a young woman occurred a few days earlier, testifies how the spread of certain speeches and certain rhetoric also translates into an increase of episodes of explicit violence and the urgent need to undermine and deconstruct such rhetorics and discourses.

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**Natka Badurina, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor, Università degli Studi di Udine, Italy

**Who is Afraid of Milena Mohorič? The Memory of a Marxist Feminist  
in a “Post-ideological World”**

Milena Mohorič (1905-1972) was a Slovenian poet and novelist, a fighter for women's rights and a passionate communist. During the Yugoslav break up with Soviet Union in 1948 she was persecuted, interned in mental hospital and condemned to a complete *damnatio memoriae*, together with her political and literary writings (for a wider look on the fear of powerful women on the left I refer you to the recent works by Renata Jambrešič Kirin). The process of Mohorič's rehabilitation started only in 2010, by re-publishing of her short stories written between the two world wars. In 2014 Slovenian writer and literary historian Lado Kralj published a novel based on her life. While today's readers have no problem with accepting Mohorič's literary work, which depicts middle-class women's frustration and depression, it seems that there are huge obstacles for understanding her life choices and her political work. The ironic and post ideological perspective assumed by the author of the biographical novel displays the difficulties of remembering the political passions and conflicts of her time. In particular, the clash between liberal and Marxist feminism, which is one of the main topics in Mohorič's polemical writing, is completely invisible in the novel. As Enzo Traverso (2016) has convincingly demonstrated, the transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century is marked by a sense of historical loss that imbues our memory with melancholia, fear and repression of the past. It seems that what is mostly repressed today is the memory of revolutionary ideas on social equality. In my presentation I will argue that studying biographies of politically active women from the twentieth century can help us to overcome this fear.

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**Elena Bellina, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor of Italian, University of Rochester, USA

Country of birth: Italy

**Performing Voices, Resisting Bodies: The Life Cycle of Female Rice Workers  
in the Po Valley**

This paper investigates the history and the visual representation of Italian *mondine*—the seasonal Po Valley female rice workers—through the singing codes and musical structures of the tunes they sang while working. For centuries, up until the 1960s, thousands of women of all ages used to flood to the fields of the Po Valley for the hard forty-day rice planting cycle. Bent for hours under the sun with their naked legs in muddied waters, these women bonded in female colonies and emancipated themselves far away from their homes. During those forty days, they also had to face the fears generated by the way they challenged traditional patriarchal society because, through their work, they gained economic power to sustain their families, experienced freedom, acquired control over their bodies, and learned how to resist all together.

Yet, their lives had little to do with the national fantasy built about them in the 1940s. These women were constantly enslaved by the scrutinizing gaze of the men, who recruited, controlled, and often abused them. Rice workers were not allowed to talk while working in the fields. They could only communicate by improvising rhyming lines on traditional tunes through which they could describe their fears, talk about their abuses, warn their peers, denounce their exploitation, and collectively resist the daily abuses they underwent at the hands of those men. In this paper, I intend to analyze how singing turned into a powerful, courageous act of resistance for these women. Their voices became performing tools embodying their changing socio-cultural power. In this sense, the rice cycle represented a metaphor of the life cycle of these women in the changing Italian society of post-WWII Italy, as shown in state documentaries and in *Bitter Rice [Riso Amaro]* (1940), the film directed by Giuseppe de Santis that became the manifesto of the *mondine* life.

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**TJ Boisseau, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies,  
Perdue University, USA

**Women with the World at their Feet: Origins of Transnational Feminism at  
International Expositions held 1876-1965**

Generally locked out of control over most forms of governance, corporate leadership, and transnational media production, it was at world fairs and international expositions that organized groups of women were first able to communicate to a mass and multi-national public a vision of themselves as constituent members of nation-states, to articulate a newly collective consciousness of themselves as a sex, to bring specific questions and demands to the attention of publics and power elites, and to find each other and formulate collective organizing with a capacity to cross national borders. Surveying the rhetorical landscape of women's exposition organizing in the few decades surrounding the First World War—a period that many have characterized as a founding moment in women's internationalist organization-building—discloses the degree to which their efforts, however compromised by the nationalist, imperialist, racist, and class-specific ethos characterizing exposition venues, struck a distinctive trans-nationalist and utopian feminist note in ways that presaged the world conferences on women held in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), and Beijing (1995).

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**Silvana Carotenuto**

Associate Professor, Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale", Italy

**The Foundational Moment of – the Subjugation of – the Other: Sylvia Wynter and Denise Ferreira Da Silva**

In my presentation, I would like to focus on the theoretical poetics of two postcolonial authors, Sylvia Wynter and Denise Ferreira da Silva, who analyse the 'originary' historical and cultural instantiation of the fear of 'alterity'. Their critique is set within the deconstructive analysis of the occidental notion of the 'referent we', which gathers the epistemological violence of modernity in the identification of the 'other' as dialectically opposed/ contrary/ inimical/ different/ to be subsumed/ marginalised/ abused, not only in terms of the general violence all this provokes, but in order to set the limits of the dialectics as the ontological, generalised and interiorised mode of thinking for 'all of us'.

Their cultural and philosophical projects and processes of re-articulation and re-imagining humanity in relation to the destinies of blackness, or of 'racial subjection', their anticolonial and decolonial critical positions – especially Wynter's key themes of Man1, Man2, sociogeny, the science of the word, autopoiesis, counter-doctrines, and archipelagos of poverty, and da Silva's 'analytics of raciality', together with her political reading of police violence instigated and justified by the State in contemporary favelas, ghettos, banlieux and global suburbia – open up interpretative and methodological paths for experiencing history, thought, and political activism 'otherwise', producing a vision of the future which necessarily is set beyond the transparency, universalism, historicity, 'exclusive' and 'regulative' power of *homo modernus*.

In this sense, I will read Wynter's "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species? Or, to Give Humanness a Different Future: Conversation" (with K. Mckittrick, who edited *On Being Human as Praxis* (2015) and wrote *Demonic Grounds. Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* inspired, in her discourse on 'racialised geography', by Wynter's critique), and da Silva's *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (1997) and her recent "On Difference Without Separability" (published in the catalogue of San Paolo's Biennale of Art 'Incerteza Viva'), with the aim to indicate their political contributions to the vision of the future – the realm of global justice – that invokes the overcoming of *universal reason* in favour of collective and creative imagination.

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**Slaven Crnić**

Ph.D. Candidate in Gender Studies, Central European University, Budapest

### **The Queerness of Being Afraid: Fear and the Continuum of Male Homosociality**

This presentation addresses the convoluted and dynamic relationship between *male homosociality* and *queerness* from the vantage point of the affect of fear. Indeed, the very distinction drawn between homosociality and queerness rests, in part, precisely on fear, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick demonstrated when she introduced the terms “homophobia” and “homosexual panic” to describe the fracture that separated “men promoting the interests of men” and “men loving men.”

A variety of fear-related concepts and phenomena continually informs queer theory in its efforts to critique the supposedly natural status of heterosexuality. This is especially the case in queer literary and cultural studies, which engages a broad set of representations that resist not only specific sexual identities, but also the more encompassing notion of heteronormativity.

Taking cues from a number of recent works (Furneau 2009; Bibler 2009; Thomas 2008) that emphasize the queerness of certain unexpected tropes and figures in fiction (e.g., nurturing masculinity, bachelorhood, and tender male tactility), this presentation will try to shift the focus from the more prevalent concepts and affects in queer theory (e.g., desire and shame) onto fear. The presentation will proceed to argue that fear is not only constitutive of the continuum of male homosociality, but also potentially transgressive and transformative in its capacity to blur, estrange, or even subvert notions of identity, sexuality, and homosociality.

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**Mirela Dakić**

Ph.D. Candidate at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, (Doctoral Study Programme in Literature, Theater and Performing Arts, Film, Musicology and Culture), Croatia

**Rethinking Home: Ethics, Politics, Femininity**

As a symptom of the destructive outcomes of late capitalism, the home – built at the expense of the other’s homelessness – can become the locus of the investment of fear and the cause of violence and *horrorism*, offending the ontological dignity of the human condition. Placing this problem in the feminist perspective, the paper considers “home” as a deeply ambiguous value, at the same time oppressive and subversive, and looks for the theoretical and political framework within which its critical and emancipatory potentials – as the starting point for the radical change of the mechanisms of its constitution – can be articulated. In this paper the necessity of such *politics of home* is considered through the dialogue between feminist and phenomenological theory, primarily between Luce Irigaray’s and Hannah Arendt’s approach to the subject. Although both critically refer to the destructive tendencies of contemporary society, if we consider them in the light of the status of the home in their conceptual frameworks, they differ in the way they use oppositions such as *private and public* and *labor and action* – on which the history of the “masculine” subject is based, leaving others homeless in Arendtian ontological sense. Pointing out diverging moments between two approaches, the paper considers the way in which the implementation of Irigaray’s deconstructionist “excess of the feminine” – which remains outside of hierarchical dichotomies as a site of resistance and reimagining the present state – can ethically and politically revalue the status of the home in Arendt’s conception of politics as a necessary oppositional strategy in the culture of fear and horror.

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**Franko Dota, Ph.D.**

Postdoctoral Fellow at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka,  
Croatia

### **A Fearful Embrace: The State and the Homosexuals in Post-Revolutionary Socialist Yugoslavia (1947-1951)**

In spring of 1949 widely publicized news on a large anti-homosexual show trial recently held in Dubrovnik fomented fear and a sense of insecurity among those Yugoslav men that engaged in same-sex sexual and erotic practices. In Zagreb, one group made plans to flee the country. Their fears were justified. Almost all of them were soon arrested and put on trial for engaging in “unnatural fornication”.

Of all the twentieth century, the first five years of Communist rule were the harshest for Yugoslav homosexuals. From 1945 till the mid-1950s, at least 250 homosexuals were prosecuted as criminals, or even saboteurs of the socialist project. In courtrooms and in verdicts, homosexuality was branded as a decadent, rotten remnant of the old, overthrown bourgeois regime.

The State explained this repressive urge against homosexuals with another kind of fear: its own concern that homosexual behaviour could be acquired in early adolescent age by “seduction” and “initiation”. The moral panic surrounding the need to ensure a “correct” physical and moral development of the youth – a palpable token of the nation’s and socialism’s bright future – gave substantial leverage to arguments against homosexuality. It was believed that a morally corrupted and physically weakened youth will not have the strength to confront foreign and class enemies.

This presentation will focus on two different and conflicting fears: fear of the Yugoslav homosexuals from State persecution; and the Yugoslav State’s concern that homosexuals represent a peril to the new socialist moral order. Both these fears were historically rooted and socially constructed, and both generated resistance.

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**Dubravka Dulibić-Paljar, Ph.D.**

Lecturer, Department of Croatian Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Juraj Dobrila  
University of Pula, Croatia

**Brigita Miloš, Ph.D.**

Lecturer, Department of Cultural Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,  
University of Rijeka, Croatia

### **The Taxonomy of Fears: Doris Lessing's "The Golden Notebook"**

Doris Lessing's seminal novel "The Golden Notebook" was first published in England in 1962. Reflecting the intellectual and moral climate of the mid-twentieth century, the novel speaks significantly and at times quite openly on racism and homophobia, post-war British Left and second-wave feminism. More than fifty years on from the first publication, the novel still attracts attention, inspires new reading, rereading and interpretation. According to that, the aim of this paper is to propose the reading of Doris Lessing's "The Golden Notebook" in two ways. One would consist of a taxonomic approach that regards the novel as an encyclopaedia of fear. This approach is induced by novel's formal and contentual features (breakthrough, fragmentation). On the other hand, we will argue that the overgrowth of motives and topos of fear in this narrative escalates into paralysis, or stultifying or delusion of fear itself, as a relevant (narrative) actor. The second approach is anti-therapeutic, and it is focused on the comparative analysis of the reception of the work in the time span since its publication to date. This type of analysis will point to current (theoretical) dogma of fear as the principal agent of (narrative) life.

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**Dmitri Dorogov**

Ph.D. Candidate in Comparative Gender Studies, Central European University,  
Budapest

### **Making Sense of a Moral Panic: Russia's Biopolitics of Sexual Sovereignty**

The presentation offers a poststructuralist discourse-analytical study of the anxieties over sexuality, sexual norm and sexual behavior of Russian citizens that have dominated the mainstream political debate in the country since 2012. Over this period, problematizations of homosexuality and other “alien deviations” have been articulated as primary matters of national and state security; the field of discursivity around sexuality and sexual norm has become a dynamic, tumultuous space instigating what has many attributes of a moral panic.

To transcend the limited framework of methodological-nationalist analyses of sexual politics, I argue that the ways these anxieties over homo/sexuality have been collocated in Russia with the signifiers *national security*, *cultural sovereignty* and *traditional values* are symptomatic of the liminal post-colonial positionality of the Russian political subject vis-a-vis the “West”. Challenging the narrow presumption that homophobia is always (and only) about homosexuality — a logic that preempts thinking “more contextually, historically, and conceptually about what might be at stake in claims to homosexual rights [or against them] in different geopolitical spaces”<sup>1</sup>, I argue that the homophobic moral panic in Russia is a culturally complex phenomenon entangled in the subaltern empire's quest to articulate its national identity in relation to its constitutive outside — the “West». Reading the moral panic via Homi K. Bhabha's theory of hybridity, I will demonstrate how the Russian political subject is caught in mimicry of the Western hegemonic political discourse, reversing and subverting it to construct a *paleoconservative* imaginary of anti-Modern indigeneity in the absence of an authentic resource for national identity politics.

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<sup>1</sup> Walcott, R. (2009) Queer returns: Human rights, the Anglo-Caribbean and diaspora politics. *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* 3

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**Evis Garunja, Ph.D.**

Attorney, "Alexandër Moisu" University, Durrës, Albania

### **Domestic Violence: A Paralyzing Phenomenon for the Albanian Family and Society**

Domestic violence is one of the most common phenomena and one of the most unreported crimes in Albanian society and this makes it impossible to measure accurately the magnitude of such a phenomenon (Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights. 1996). Domestic violence is treated more as an individual problem that belongs only to family members and not the society. Is the responsibility of the state and individuals to take effective steps to protect women and children and to stop violence (Qendra Refleksione 1996). Statistics show that only 5 percent of violated women report violence (INSTAT 2006). Studies show that domestic violence, especially against women and girls, has increased during the transition period (Amnesty International Publication April 2006). This complicated problem with its roots in conjugal relationships has a negative impact on parenting as well. Women who are victims of domestic violence are scared, usually have difficulty on concentrating and effectively working with their children (Lloja, A. & Xhemali, B. 2005), are more inclined to avoid or negate the situation and neglect the impact of violence on themselves and their children (Haxhiymeri 1996). A national strategy is needed to ensure that all forms of domestic violence are identified, the causes of violence are determined, its impacts addressed and social policies and various intervention programs implemented to prevent any kind of consequence that may harm the family and the Albanian society as a whole.

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**Elissa Helms, PhD**

Associate Professor of Gender Studies, Central European University, Budapest

**Fear and Gender along the Balkan Route: Old Tropes in New Packaging**

Since 2015, would-be asylum seekers from outside of Europe have become a major focus in spoken, textual, as well as visual discourses of fear along what is known as the Balkan Route to the EU. Longstanding tropes of sexually threatening male Others have been evoked to reactivate and re-channel a variety of fears for individual and collective survival in ways that are reconfiguring faultlines of gender, race, culture, and European belonging. Gendered cues have similarly figured in attempts to counter these discourses of fear as refugee solidarity movements call on empathy and common humanity in the face of gendered suffering and vulnerability. As such fears and counter-emotions drive discourses in EU countries, including the extreme case of Hungary as part of the Balkan Route, countries of the former Yugoslavia are struggling with the complexities posed by the recent past of forced displacement, sexual violence, migration, and being positioned as Other in relation to Europe's core. This presentation will outline the ways in which fear and other emotions are mobilized through gendered associations in selected examples from countries along the Balkan Route.

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**Maša Huzjak**

Ph.D. Candidate at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb (Postgraduate course in Literature and Cultural Studies), Croatia

**Her Body and Other Horrors: The Fear of Women's Bodies in Carmen Maria Machado's Prose**

Carmen Maria Machado's collection of short stories titled *Her Body and Other Parties* presents to the readers the female body as "the uncanny stranger" (Cixous, 1976: 880). Her stories treat matters of the body as deeply personal and unique, but they also inevitably link them to the shared experience of being a woman under patriarchal oppression. Even though the plot centres around an encounter with the surreal or unknowable, what frightens the protagonist, and consequently the reader, is inextricably related to the seemingly mundane – to the female body and its constraints. Female bodies are at the same time "the 'cause' of fear, in a way that is personal" (Ahmed, 2014: 62) and "enclosed by the fear" (*ibid.*). It is a horror that comes from without (patriarchal roles allotted to women) as women are "driven away [...] from their bodies" (Cixous, 1976: 875), and the horror that comes from within (bewilderment caused by the inability to comply to patriarchal demands). The patriarchy leaves women feeling alien to themselves, unable to pinpoint where the discomfort comes from (within or without?), but aware that their bodies have something to do with it, that they are somehow *caged* within them (Gay, 2017: 19). These narratives of haunted bodies are instrumental in tracing the outlines of almost imperceptible fears, as well as collective fears we recognize and know how to name, but still struggle to explain to those in power. Machado's writing is at its most potent precisely when this moment of recognition occurs – the readers are afraid, not because they do not know what is coming, but because they know it all too well.

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**Nadia Jones Gailani, Ph.D.**

Visiting Assistant Professor, Gender Studies, Central European University, Budapest

**(E)racing and Racing the Academic Body: Towards a Politics of Vulnerability**

Using personal and collected narratives, my paper explores the fraught racial identity politics within the academy that women academics of mixed-race or hybrid backgrounds embody. As a feminist scholar of mixed Arab and white descent, I can 'pass' as white whilst I also face the vulnerability of being perceived as not quite white enough, and neither brown enough to be useful to the diversity hiring model employed in the US academic system. Drawing upon the work of Parin Dossa (2009; 2013) who offers a framework that connects antiracist feminism and disability studies and Sara Ahmed's conceptualization of the 'phenomenology of whiteness' in the Academy, this paper will reflect on exclusion based on multiple identities that cannot be disaggregated. Based in an examination of the politics of vulnerability, I offer insight into the affective and embodied impact of ideas of 'fitness' within the academy, and how women of colour – many of whom are also migrants – cannot 'belong' as part of the western academy proper, and are frequently forced to 'prove' that they possess the legitimacy to speak for the women that they study.

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**Jana Kujundžić**

Ph.D. Candidate in Criminology, University of Essex, UK

**Sexual Violence and Anti-gender Initiatives in Croatia:  
The Case of Istanbul Convention**

My research seeks to explore the current political climate on the issue of sexual violence in connection to the case of Istanbul convention. Croatia has signed the Istanbul convention in 2013 but the current debates around it prevent the ratification. Croatian legislation would benefit from the ratification of Istanbul Convention since there are numerous problems with legislation on the sexual and domestic violence and its implementation. For example, only one in fifteen to twenty women report rape to the police, the minimum sentence for rape is one year imprisonment and six months for the sexual intercourse without consent, and the perpetrators are usually released from prison after serving two-thirds of the sentence due to good behaviour. The court trial for rape, up to the first-instance verdict, lasts for an average of three years. There are no rape-crisis centres in Croatia and there is only one centre for the victims of sexual violence. These problems are real and tangible yet the resistance to ratification of the Convention was orchestrated by the religious and conservative actors in Croatia by utilizing the term “gender ideology” as a treat to the traditional Croatian family and to create fear, confusion and moral panic around the term gender successfully imposing such discourse in the public debates surrounding the ratification. Oppositions to the ratifications are a part of the larger anti-gender movement in Europe and Latin America and the term “gender ideology” is a travelling concept (Hemmings, 2006; Cerwonka, 2008; Kovats and Poim, 2015; Paternotte and Kuhar, 2017). In Croatian context, same conservative and religious actors had rallied in the recent past against the health and sexual education in schools and same-sex marriage. In exploring this social phenomenon I use critical feminist theories (Kandiyoti, 1988; Peterson, 1999; Tétreault and Ranchod-Nilsson, 2000; Kapur, 2002; Risman, 2004; Zarkov and Drezgic, 2006; Roberts, 2009; Todorova, 2009; Butler, 2010; Garcia and McManimon, 2011; Yllö and Torres, 2016) and discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995; Tonkiss, 1998; Van Dijk, 2001; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2011). Drawing upon the literature cited above, I will also point out the problems with liberal human rights discourse and successes of existing feminist and grass-roots practices of resistance as well as further opportunities for direct action in fighting for social justice and equality.

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**Jelena Kupsjak**

Ph.D. Candidate and Teaching Assistant, Department of Ethnology and Anthropology,  
University of Zadar, Croatia

### **Affective Economy of Fetuses in Croatia: Nurturing Fears for the Future**

“Why Did They Come By Train” (Zagreb Film, 2015) is an animated short film by Joško Marušić that features a story of a town that is visited by a train filled with fetuses that speak, sing and play. The film found its public in January of 2017 when it went online and became part of the discussion on reproductive rights, family, marriage, and religion. In an interview for the website that released the film, Marušić said that he made it because he had enough of pro-choice supporters and that “behind their so-called fight for human rights stands a concrete ideological interest with the goal of destroying family, faith, and nation.”

During the last two decades, different narratives about family values and rights of the unborn children flourish in Croatian media and public debates. “Why Did They Come By Train” is just one of the examples. What is so interesting in all of these narratives about fetuses is how they become national subjects for which a future is imagined, and, how some words like “ideology” become sticky words that are “saturated with affects, as sites of personal and social tension” (Ahmed, 2004:11).

Following Ahmed, in this paper, I analyze what happens when “love for unborn children” is extended to the question of heteronormativity, a proper family, citizenship, and patriotism. I ask which kind of anxiety and fears are expressed in these narratives and how does circulation of these narratives about “fear for the nation and its future” create affective economies that “materialize the very surface of collective bodies” (Ahmed, 2004: 46).

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**Giuseppe Gerbino, Ph.D.**

Professor of Historical Musicology, Columbia University, USA

**Heroes, Victims, and Forgers: Gaetano Donizetti's *Torquato Tasso***

This paper follows the development of the myth of Torquato Tasso's imprisonment, madness, and final redemption in the literary and musical imagination of the early nineteenth century. Through an analysis of the genesis of Gaetano Donizetti's opera *Torquato Tasso* (1833), I explore the gendered subtext of the Romantic notion of the hero/victim who needs to be saved from the unjust judgment of his contemporaries as well as the fictional (and at times fraudulent) construction of historical memory. An awareness of the responsibility that the present has towards the past tinges Donizetti's opera and turns it into a declaration of faith in the ultimate triumph of truth. However, that truth needed to be invented, for the true, historical persona of Tasso was not what was essential and real about him in early nineteenth-century Italy.

Tasso's identity as both poet and victim made him (in the eyes of the early Romantic generation) a fitting prototype of the individual destined to live in chains, trapped in a world that stifled his inner struggle for happiness. In those same eyes, his imprisonment at the hands of Duke Alfonso II appeared as a metaphor for an inescapable existential condition. In what sense Tasso was a victim depended, to some extent, on the political views of his defenders. He could be seen as subject to an unjust tyrant or vindictive courtiers—in which case the Renaissance assumed a specific political connotation as an age of absolute powers, in contrast with the city communes of the Middle Ages that fought against popes and emperors. Or he could be seen as suffering from his own extraordinary artistic sensitivity, unwillingness to bow to social conventions, and inability to deal, as a man and as a poet, with a repressive reality principle.

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**Renata Jambrešić Kirin, PhD**

Senior Advisor, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb, Croatia

### **Revolution in the Fear of Women Revolutionaries**

The centennial anniversary of the October revolution has been marked by the leftist nostalgia for the time when revolutionary mass upheaval was possible (and indeed successful) and by the rightist “reinterpretations” that portray the Russian revolution as a coup or putsch, merging its popular, commercial, and celebratory memories with “the criminalization of the history of the revolution, and the absolutism of the dominant narrative of violence and terror” (Krausz 2017). What is most lacking in academic discussions about “the dilemmas of Lenin” (Ali 2017) – including the frivolous talks about Bolsheviks preference for free love, film and posters – is the analysis of unfinished project of women’s emancipation as a contested communist legacy in “broken and unequal temporalities of revolutionary change” (Tamás). Why did the gender equality and women’s liberation play such a prominent role in socialist revolutions? First, women workers’ exploitation had been recognized as a corollary of capitalist exploitation and “a central tenet of Marxism since at least the 1884 publication of Friedrich Engels’ *The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State*” (Hetherington 2017); second, the women’s participation in communist parties and socialist governments was considered a key marker of their position at the “ladder of progress”. Having in mind these two hypotheses, a feminist critical approach to the (transnational) history of labour movements may offer right answers about the causes of the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. My recent inquiry about the fate of Yugoslav women communists who were active in the international labour movement from 1918 to 1948 and were sent to Moscow Leninist schools for “thorough theoretical and practical training for Party work” represents such an attempt of understanding almost complete denial and invisibility of those courageous, capable, and ambitious political activists (party cadre of mixed ethnic and class background) in socialist as well as in recent “politics of remembrance”, including those nurturing “The Red Legacy” of October revolution (e.g., <https://theredlegacy.org/en> by Columbia University’s Harriman Institute; Croatian web platform <https://oktobarika.wordpress.com/>, feminist digital archive “Red” from Sarajevo <http://www.crvena.ba/>). Among many entries on this subject – saturated with a fear of ideological misinterpretations and theoretical naivety – I have decided to re-historicize the lives and deeds, and very few ego-documents and recollections of most promising Yugoslav women communists who did their best not to subordinate their individuality, action and agency to the Party’s moral economy of self-discipline, self-abnegation, servitude and sacrifice for the larger cause.

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**Ethem Mandić**

Faculty for Montenegrin Language and Literature, Cetinje, Montenegro  
Ph.D. Candidate at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,  
University of Zagreb

**Silence and Raising of the Voice of Woman Between Fear and Imagination in  
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Short Story *Imitation***

This paper will bring a narrative analysis of the story *Imitation* and show the phenomena of silence and rising of the voice between fear and imagination in the short story. Being one of the key problems of the postcolonial literature, I will examine this problem using theoretical points of view of key authors such as Susheila Nasta, Suleri Sara, Trinh Minh-ha and Margaret Busby.

Trinh Minh-Ha, in her book, *Woman, Narrative, Other* "examines what colored women give their loyalty to, race or gender, as if there is some kind of hierarchy." (Wisker 2010:114) However, in the story *Imitation*, the main character Nkem in fact gives importance and advantage to the family. Her subordinate position stems from the fact that she is the opposite to her husband. He plays a privileged role in society because he puts his own interests and business interests in front of his family unlike Nkem.

The raising of the voice is one of the leading problems in the postcolonial literature. The silence of women is the product of society, the society of men and the fear of freedom. The silence imposed on oppressed women is their premium quality in their family life and her role in society from the men perspective. To be invisible. It is my contention that in Adichie's story Nkem represents a woman who still raises her voice more as a spontaneous reaction and after years of silence and fear. It is not a full awareness of the self and the possibility to be equal in the conversation; it is yet an imagination of the freedom of speech.

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**Pavlić Ana**

Centre for Women Studies, Zagreb, Croatia

**Almodovar's *Julieta*: Another Fierce Woman in Red**

The most important relationship for social construction of gender roles and the concept of mothering is one between mother and the child, according to Chodorow (1989, 1999). Maternal guilt and self-absorbed loss of identity and the Mother of all fears: matrophobia (Rich, 1986) will be analysed through the portrait of the mother and daughter relationship in Almodovar's *Julieta* in all its complexity and destructive power (is mothering a pleasure or a guilt trip?) if one bears in mind that it is *une relation à trois* (Eliacheff, Heinich, 2004). While sharing the feeling of guilt, love and hate at the same time as a bond with other women, Julieta and all the other women in the film are seeking for reassurance and protection from (absent) paternal figure. It is my aim to discuss is there a way out of this patriarchal matrix and which strategies feminism offers to women to breathe easily in these frightful and delightful relationships between mothers and daughters.

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**Barbara Pleić Tomić**

Ph.D. candidate at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb (Postgraduate Doctoral Studies in Literature, Performing Arts, Musicology, Film and Culture), Croatia

### **“How could a Mother do that to her Children?”: The Fear of the Monstrous Mother**

Four infanticide cases that occurred in Croatia in the last couple of years received wide media coverage, causing strong public reactions. In each case, the mother of the child(ren) was the perpetrator, and three out of four mothers committed suicide.

This paper will focus on different representations of motherhood, the contradictions and inconsistencies between motherhood as an idea and ideology and everyday practices of mothering “as a kind of caring labor” that “undermines the myth that mothers are ‘naturally’ loving” (Ruddick, 1995), with special attention being paid to the concept of maternal ambivalence, “mothers’ simultaneous desires to nurture and violently reject their children” (LaChance Adams, 2014). Since media narratives “inform and explain, but also create and reinforce cultural norms” (Barnett, 2016), I will analyse newspaper articles covering the infanticide cases, as well as the general public reactions, i.e. *reader comments* on *online newspaper* stories and discussion websites, because they can “offer a useful lens for examining perspectives on proper maternal and feminine behaviour” (ibid.) Furthermore, the research will include a broader picture of the ideology and representations of motherhood in Croatian society, encompassing the official discourse of laws and regulations, parenting advice books, and the “private” discourse of discussion websites.

The purpose of this analysis is to show how “the romanticization of maternity [that] has divided mothers into the categories of either naturally good or pathologically bad” (LaChance Adams, 2014) affects the public perception of mothers who committed infanticide, whose profile is created on the dichotomy of the self-abnegating, unconditionally loving mother figure and the monstrous, fearsome “non-mother” (*nemajka*), with all of its horrifying characteristics, and how this polarization affects the social construction of motherhood in general.

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**Petra Pugar**

Ph.D. Candidate at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb (Postgraduate Doctoral Studies in Literature, Performing Arts, Musicology, Film and Culture), Croatia

### **Narratives of Dystopian Fear and Gendered Resistance in Alasdair Gray's *Lanark***

The paper analyses the points of overlap of literary dystopia, gender and social fear in the novel *Lanark* (1981) by the Scottish author Alasdair Gray. Starting from an observation of the novel's female characters and their visual representations, the paper engages in a feminist reading to interpret the Scottish society depicted in *Lanark* as one resonating in a gendered position of woman as a subdued subject in the larger patriarchal imperial mechanism of Great Britain. The main interpretative focus is placed on the novel's fantastic narratives depicting devious propaganda which uses a simplistic vocabulary denoting monstrous acts of an underground Institute that reduces human lives for the purposes of an elite class in Unthank, a fictional city mirroring Glasgow. In such context where fear is used as a mechanism of government, resistance in *Lanark* expands beyond traditionally political spheres, employing the female principle as a principle of liberation in a rigid patriarchal society. The paper consults critical sources from postmodernist, Scottish and feminist theories, as well as visual studies, namely works by theorists such as Judith Butler, Alison Lumsden, Mieke Bal and Susan Lanser, to reach the conclusion that the novel's considerations of politics, gender and society shed a new light on the underlying post-WWII reality – located in what Zygmunt Bauman called the 'liquid' phase of modernity – while simultaneously offering possibilities of reimagining the present.

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**Ana Romão**

Ph.D. Candidate at the Centre for Comparative Studies (CEC), School of Arts and Humanities, University of Lisbon, Portugal

**Representing the Female Soldier in Contemporary Visual Culture: *Our Girl* (UK, 2014)**

The first season of the British TV series *Our Girl* (2014) follows a young female enlisting in the British Army and being deployed to Afghanistan. By considering specific scenes/messages from the series, I will conduct intertextual analysis based on fictional works as well as historical and factual documentaries. I will discuss at length the difficulties women face during overseas deployment (Benedict, 2009), relating it to their respective representations in *Our Girl*. I also will provide data regarding the documented abuse (physical and mental) women endure while serving their countries, and give pertinent examples of real servicewomen's trials pertaining their identity as both women and soldiers, how their femininity is required to be detached from their 'violent' soldier selves (Neroni, 2005). Addressing the strand of post-feminism that suggests that the cultural industry emphasizes the idea that female emancipation has been achieved, I will provide evidence that in the armed forces (one of many male-dominated institutions) certain biased depictions of women continue to exist, which in turn influence the social constructions of gender and hinders feminist strives for equality (Oliver, 2013).

Through the analysis of the episodes, I will furthermore address how military-driven entertainment functions as propaganda, not only increasing enlistment, but also suggesting a positive opinion of the 'War on Terror' (Zeisler, 2016). Overall, by analyzing *Our Girl* I hope to deliver an appropriate consideration on the importance that representations of western female soldiers in popular culture have in shaping a culture still immersed in the anxieties and fears shaped by the 'War on Terror'.



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