

**Spiritual practices and economic realities:
Feminist challenges**

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Zagreb, 2011

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Part one:

**Spirituality, religiosity and
secular lives of women**

SHAPING THE UNSEEN: SPIRITUALITY, RELIGIOSITY AND SECULAR LIVES

The collection of texts represents the materials from the third and the fourth postgraduate course held in IUC Dubrovnik in spring of 2009 and 2010. The courses were entitled *Spirituality, religiosity and secular lives. Feminist challenges for theory and practice* and *Old/New economic inequalities: Feminist concerns and visions*. On the first sight two fields – spiritual and economic – might look too distant from each other to be binded by the same cover, but when viewed from a feminist perspective they establish new connections not present in conventional epistemological models which mainly (in principle) focus on one particular field thus refraining from challenging their interconnectedness.

Still, we decided to arrange the texts respecting their separate ‘secular lives’: spirituality, religiosity and secular lives were the topics of the first seminar, thus those contributions will be presented in the first part of the book. The first part comprises eight texts which address the ways in which we as feminists and scholars rethink and reflect the significance of spirituality, religiosity and secularism in our lives. While we witness oppressive situations for women on the entire planet, spirituality is usually associated with male domination in heaven. Feminists examine specific ways in which male religions have maintained a secondary status for women, and help us challenge this. This is, no doubt, in many ways, connected with male theism, and it has also been assumed that such theism is the only spirituality available and suitable for all. For the last several decades feminist research on religiosity and spirituality views prehistory, history, theology, anthro-

pology, archaeology and other disciplines as the space for rereading and redefining what is called Transcendent, as well as questioning the position of women inside the religion(s).

What appears as 'pure' secularity may in fact carry traces of religious heritage or manifest a spiritual dimension that does not meet the eye immediately. We wanted to examine how our strivings for empowerment might converse with our transcendental aspirations and also how spiritual dimensions relate to our pursuit of knowledge. Among many of the questions raised over the week in fruitful discussions and breathtaking spiritual dance were how did we draw the line between knowledge and faith, and did we see spirituality and religious experiences as incompatible with feminist politics.

Our questions and following papers were particularly inspired by **Durre Ahmed**, our keynote speakers, whose text „Modernity, fundamentalisms and Islam: a psycho-cultural perspective“ opens our Collection. Ahmed challenged 'received wisdoms' about modernity, fundamentalism and Islam and brought a feminist perspective of the psychology of Islamist masculinity and its expression(s) in the contemporary global/political context. For Ahmed the roots of psychological extremism are inherent to Western modernity's philosophical discourse, and the distorted internalization of modernity into 'high' and 'low' Islamism. Both 'high' and 'low' Islamists exhibit distinctly modern features similar to what feminists call a hegemonic masculinity: a hypermasculinism, intense misogyny and psychopathological attitudes to gender. From a feminist critical perspective, then, Islamic and other fundamentalisms represents hyper-masculine expressions which artificially negate spiritual tendencies in favor of logo-centric supremacist thought.

What about knowing the *Other* across religious and ideological differences? Are religious boundaries insurmountable in our meeting with the Other? How do we relate to the Other across religious and spiritual boundaries? How do we know the "Other" when s/he belongs to a different denomination, faith, or subscribes to a different ontology? **Jaleh A. Taheri** tries to answer to those questions in the text „A divine imperative? God's role in the empowerment of women in post-revolutionary Iran“, investigating the current situation in Iran to help us understand 'God's role' in the empowerment of Iranian women and how the current 'feminine' invasion of the public sphere has resulted in the 'crisis of masculinity'.

Spiritual practices differ from religion, states **Stine Simonsen Puri** in the text „Divine women: on young female middle class Bharatanatyam dancers in Delhi“ while exploring relevance of religion and sensuality

through dance and dance as a spiritual embodied practice. The study of spiritual practices potentially opens up to a more feminine conceptualization of divinity. Spirituality in India is also a politicized concept, connected to secularism, which in India is manifested as religious pluralism rather than religious neutrality. As the dance is conceptualized as a spiritual practice, Bharatanatyam creates a space in which the modern Indian woman can explore the relevance of religion to her own life as well as her own sensuality.

Ivana Pražić is perceiving theoretical, methodological, conceptual and ontological uncertainties that contextualize her subjectivity at (academic) work and political impediments imposed on her 'presence' (as the Other) in Indonesia in her contribution entitled „In search for 'the Tionghoa body' in post-New Order Indonesia: some challenges to transnational feminist practices from within postcolonial perspectives“.

The spiritual world of the late Antiquity, on the dawn of Christianity, is represented by the text „The long-lost love of Saint Augustine: a story“ by **Iva Grgić Maroević**. She was intrigued by the Augustin's renouncing his own wife after he devoted himself to spiritual path. Not only that she disappeared as a partner in a rhetorical and philosophical narratives of the Christian theologian but her 'bodily' disappearance questions Augustin's idea on love and it questions his 'earthly morality'.

Late medieval society was exceedingly keen on presenting graphic details related to the body, as well as curious about its functioning, particularly in regard to its sexual functions. **Marina Miladinov** in „Bodily fluids in the construction of late medieval gender“ discusses fluids that were charged with greatest symbolic significance such as blood, especially menstrual blood, which served a variety of purposes in polemic writings, thus showing the extent of power that was attributed to it. Bodily fluids were seen as particularly revealing and were therefore often used in various circumstances to diagnose the sanctity or the sinfulness of the person emitting them.

Feminists claim that women's spirituality reflects the hidden part of women's culture and women's power, and that both were universally accepted until the modern era of pre-industrial societies. According to this belief women's lives were not subordinate and their spirituality was not treated as subordinate prior to the modern era. Women's values linked the physical with the spiritual and were monistic and holistic rather than split and dualistic. There is a huge area of female-defined spirituality which generates and feeds into feminist philosophy and activities. **Simona Delić** in „Casuistic Southern European traditional ballads about St Catherine of Alexandria: a comparative approach“ interprets Croatian and Spanish ballads about St

Catherine of Alexandria, a saint-intellectual whose life and *passio* are located by the legend in the fourth century.

Judith Samson in the „Discussions of gender and sexuality issues at Marian pilgrimage sites in Europe“ places her research in the context of the proclamation of the Catholic fifth dogma that officially accords Virgin Mary the title of *Co-redemptrix*. That means that human salvation would not have been possible without her who suffered along with Christ. At the same time the messages of the Lady of All Nations and other pilgrimage sites, and the discussion of the new dogma focus on the alleged dangers of secularism and one of its prominent phenomena: feminism whose ‘dogma’ threatens religious dogmas by insisting on women’s right to their own bodies.

In the call for proposal we asked the question of how do we address the multiplicity of New-Age spiritual and bodily quests for vital connections to force/power/energy, but no participants presented their views of one of the most vital spiritual, theoretical and practical insight into women’s spirituality today. With the New Age came an explosion of interest and participation in women’s rituals and rites, both those assumed to come from the past, and others re-created for the present.

Feminists refuse male-defined hierarchy and its appropriation of theological and spiritual considerations. In establishing a feminist concept of spirituality which, as Merlin Stone wrote in the end of the 1970s: “Women have gained an inner strength (...) that will help us to confront the many tangible and material issues of the blatant inequalities of society as we know it today”.¹ Stone discusses the relevance of a different, Goddess spirituality to feminism and suggests that it has a significant role in women’s struggle. This aspect of Goddess spirituality within the feminist movement was motivated by the similar feeling that has encouraged women to rediscover and reclaim female artists, writers, scientists, political leaders and bring entirely new perspective of looking into the past and future. Researchers started to rethink the concept of universal deities assuming that such female-centred religion was accompanied at the very least by a much more powerful and significant social role for women than that they bear in patriarchal religion, and that such female power and religion were overthrown by force in the interests of a male hierarchy which has been upheld ever since. References which were universal to the previous situations were, it is assumed, destroyed, perverted, ignored. One of the major responses from feminists to the opening up of this *religion of knowledge* comes in the reclaiming of tra-

1 *Great Goddess* issue of *Heresies*, 1978, p. 2.

ditions from the past associated with rites and ritual practices. There is reclamation of 'women's wisdom' and we are witnessing experience of spiritual identity within a female theism developing into actual practice of 'Wicca' or witchcraft. The word Wicca derives from the Anglo-Saxon meaning to bend or to shape. Those women who preserved the knowledge of such subtle forces of unseen were called Wicca or Wicce. "They were those who could shape the unseen to their will. Healers, teachers, poets and midwives, they were central figures in every community" wrote Starhawk, a major voice in the feminist spirituality movement.² *The Spiral Dance* presented an eclectic mix of theology, feminist theory, mind-expanding exercises, poetry, and rituals for celebrating the ancient seasonal festivals of the year. In it Starhawk espoused three principles central to her theology. Goddess was seen as immanent in the world, all things were interconnected, therefore magic must be ethical and include a focus on social justice. Goddess Religion fostered community to re-define maleness/femaleness and to transform a deteriorating planet into a place for life-affirming culture.³ In her other work Starhawk⁴ elaborated the role of "ritual as an agent of societal change", advocating the "fusion of spirituality and politics". She developed her theories of the "culture of estrangement," the patriarchal mainstream based on 'power-over', and the emerging Goddess-centered communities which emphasize 'power-from-within'.

Feminist Wicca is only part of a new spiritual dimension seeing today's oppressions of women by linking the systematic killing and tortures of the past with current forms of the same thing: clitoridectomy, rape and the multitude of oppressions against our sexual and personal autonomy. Male exploitation of the Earth is linked to male domination of nature and the desire to control the world and women. Feminist movements, among them V-Day, a global movement against violence against women, view violence against women as interconnected with the destruction of the Earth and its resources⁵ and as a direct result of the exclusive male value system. Individ-

2 Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance: A Re-birth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess*, 1979; 1989.

3 Among many centers and programs that promote holistic approach is Omega Institute for Holistic Studies. Its mission states to "honor the mind, body, heart, and spirit in each individual, knowing the need to balance and blend all these elements. (...) we encourage authenticity as a means to build trust, and as essential to the growth and development of the whole". See: <http://eomega.org>.

4 Starhawk, *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex, and Politics*, 1982.

5 *Stop raping our greatest resource: power to women and girls of the DR Congo* is a global V-day campaign calling attention to the wide-scale atrocities committed every day against women and girls in eastern DR Congo. See: <http://drc.vday.org>.

ual spiritual growth becomes more and more connected with the activism: “We believe in joy and self-love and life affirmation and are committed to struggling against patriarchal oppression ... we are opposed to teaching our magic and our craft to men until the equality of the sexes is reality”.⁶

Today we are more aware of woman’s history, her power and how it was overthrown. We are able to communicate with ourselves and other women with more confidence, more strength, re-inspiring and renewing our energies. The Goddess we know from material already available is a symbol of all aspects of woman – intellectual as well as spiritual, emotional, physical, technological, practical, all at once.⁷

If feminist spirituality is to realize its potential of re-energizing and re-inspiring women to make them use of the past to redraw the future, it must also reclaim the right to women’s intellectual status. Then and only then can an integration of mind, body and spirit be achieved, and, as many women now come to believe, the goddess within ourselves re-emerge.

6 Zsuzsanna Budapest, *The Holy Book of Women’s Mysteries*, 1979.

7 “We believe that just as it is time to fight for the right to control our bodies it is also time to fight for our sweet woman souls. We believe that in order to fight and win a revolution that will stretch for generations into the future we must find reliable ways to replenish our energies. We believe that without a secure grounding in women’s spiritual strength there will be no victory for us” (Budapest, 1979).

MODERNITY, FUNDAMENTALISMS AND ISLAM: A PSYCHO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE¹

He alone is modern who is fully conscious of the present.
(Jung, 1964: 153)

MODERNITY AND FUNDAMENTALISM

By now, many studies show that religious fundamentalism is not restricted to Islam but is a powerful presence in all religions across the globe. In the Judaeo-Christian world, its rank and file comprise well-educated individuals living in, what are in many ways, postmodern societies². Reflecting what is today part of a growing critique pointing to a ‘cultural crisis’ in and about

1 This paper is drawn from Ahmed’s book *Penetrations: Modernity, Fundamentalisms and Islam*, Stree Publishers, Calcutta (in press). It is based on lectures given by the author on “Spirituality, Religiosity and Secular Lives: Feminist Challenges for Theory and Practice”, at the IUC Centre, Dubrovnik, May 2009. A shorter version appears in *Islam and Europe: Crises are Challenges*, Foblets and Carlier (eds.) University of Leuven, 2008.

2 In the academic world today, it is fashionable to talk of post-modernity. Its features are the globalization of business and culture across national boundaries, fragmentation, and a general mistrust of ‘grand narratives’ and absolute truths. It asserts that all knowledge is subjective and relative, and here the feminist perspective in many disciplines has played a major role in challenging the modernist paradigm. However, while posing intellectual and philosophical challenges, postmodernity remains more of a debate within the global intellectual elite. In fact, some believe that it is better called ‘high’ modernity, in which through a process of reflexivity, social practices are constantly examined and, as new information comes in, transformed. This includes feminism, which is an ongoing evolving project.

modernity, fundamentalism, as Habermas says, is “an exclusively modern phenomenon”³.

Briefly, modernity refers to the modes of social life which emerged from about the 17th century onward, when, along with the Enlightenment, Western Europe underwent political and industrial revolutions. The latter, heavily subsidized by the project of colonialism, initiated a process of change that steadily started transforming the entire world and which we call modernity⁴. As Karen Armstrong puts it, “Western civilization has changed the world, nothing, not even religion can ever be the same” (Armstrong, 2000: xi).

Given that religious fundamentalism today is not just restricted to Islam, modernity can be linked to a certain ‘mind set’ about how we think about self, others and the world at large. In many ways, this idea of the self has been a long-standing and ongoing concern in feminism, which has extensively critiqued the construction of the self in Western moral and political philosophy in the 20th century. The critique is important since the self is pivotal to issues concerning agency, the body, personhood, identity, and power relations and is, thus, one of the most significant issues in feminism. Even outside of academic philosophy, the self is a crucial idea since it ultimately concerns our conception of a human being and human nature, you and I. How each of us responds to this conception will impact our understanding of religion generally and specifically Islam.

Feminist philosophy and the modern self

Existing dominant notions of the self are primarily based on the (neo) Kantian notion of a freely choosing ethical subject functioning on the basis of pure reason leading to pure moral truth which transcends culture. Thus, the self is identified with abstract rationality. Similarly, economic behaviour is seen as the application of reason to prioritize desires and devising means for their satisfaction. In short, the self is either *homo rationalis* (rational man) or *homo economicus* (economic man). For decades, western

3 Jürgen Habermas, *Faith and Knowledge*. Speech given at acceptance of the Peace Prize of German Publishers and Booksellers Association. Paulskirche, Frankfurt, 14.01.2001. Translation by Kermit Suelson.

4 Some key features of modernity are economic production, urbanization, centralized bureaucratic states, the privileging of science and rationality over religious faith and a belief in progress based on science and technology. In the last century, it also includes women's rights and feminism. These features of course did not have a uniform impact on what we today call post colonial societies, but collectively form an *idea* of what it means to be a modern person or state.

feminism has challenged this idealized and narrow conception of the self, claiming that Western philosophy and popular culture is derived from the experience of predominantly white, heterosexual, economically advantaged men who have wielded social, economic and political power, dominating the arts, literature, media and scholarship (Myers, 2004)⁵. To this extent, in “law, customary practice and cultural stereotypes, women’s selfhood has been systematically subordinated, diminished”, even when it has not been outrightly denied. Cast as a lesser form of the masculine individual, woman is the Other and thus, is the non-person, non-agent, non-subject (ibid.).

Kant’s free and rational self, according to feminism, is not raceless, sexless, ageless, classless or genderless. Whether as ethical subject or *homo economicus*, he is actually a “white, healthy, youthfully, middle-aged, middle class, heterosexual Man” (ibid.), playing two dominant roles: as an impartial judge/legislator or as a self-interested bargainer/contractor in the marketplace. Either way, He rules through politics and commerce, both domains in which women have been historically excluded. In short: “In western culture, the mind and reason are coded masculine, whereas the body and emotion are coded feminine ... To identify the self with the rational mind is to privilege a narrow idea of reason and to masculinize the self” (Lloyd, 1992). This split between an emotional, nonverbal, ‘feminine’ body and a rational ‘masculine’ mind is of course simultaneously a critique of the Cartesian dic(k)-tum about the self: *I think, therefore I am/exist*, leading to what Susan Bordo called “the Cartesian masculinization of thought” (Bordo, 1999; see also Bordo, 1987; Bordo 1986: 441) and what innumerable feminists in different disciplines have called the ‘logocentric’, ‘phallocratic’, ‘disembodied’ mind in Western cultural and intellectual consciousness.

The critique of Cartesianism is not limited to feminists and is today part of a new emergent paradigm that is more holistic. But outside of academia, in much of the real world, Cartesianism remains firmly entrenched. Today, via the modernity project, regardless of where we come from or whatever our faith, vast numbers of people have internalised the legacy of ‘dead white males’, manifest in questionable ideas about life, nature, human psychology and religion. What does this mean in psychological terms?

The self and psychology

Psychology is a modern discipline about the self, having its genesis in the work of Freud and Jung in the early 20th century. Since then, of course, much

5 The review article also contains a comprehensive and detailed bibliography.

has seemingly changed, but the Freud/Jung differences continue as distinct epistemological premises underlying the therapeutic project. The feminist debunking of Freud notwithstanding, his ideas of the self, unfortunately, remain powerfully present in our consciousness. Numerous surveys/summaries made at the end of the twentieth century list him among the worlds most influential thinkers and words such as 'id', 'ego', 'unconscious' are part of the conceptual repertoire of millions. As *Newsweek* puts it, his views are equated with "universal common sense"⁶.

Briefly, in the Freudian scheme a mentally healthy person has a well-developed capacity for rationality and the ability of will power to control that which is not amenable to logic and reason. This is the ego, the 'I', who must control and civilize the unconscious id. In short the ego/self is equated with *logos*. Once the rational ego is developed, religion seems irrational, leading to the common notion that "those who think can't believe and those who believe can't think". Thus, for Freud, religion was an 'infantile neurosis', an 'illusion' without a future. This, of course, has not happened, witness the global resurgence of religion.

In contrast, Jung disagreed with Freud about the significance of religion in human life and a major theme in his work pertained to the loss of the 'Feminine' in Western theological consciousness. Exceedingly critical of Christianity and often called a heretic, Jung nevertheless claimed that the religious impulse was inherent to the psyche and should be taken seriously. Given that the main quarrel between Freud and Jung was around religion and the self, in light of present religious realities, one needs to have a basic idea of Jung's critique, which was not just about Freud's ideas but also of modernity, Christianity and western civilization, in his words the psychology of "the white man (and woman) in general" (Jung, 1964: 210).

Examining the rise of fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Karen Armstrong differentiates between two (Jungian) ways of thinking, *mythos* and *logos*. *Logos* concerns the rational, pragmatic, scientific, enabling functioning at a practical level. *Mythos* has to do with meaning, 'making sense' of the complex, emotional experience called 'life'. Mythical stories were never meant to be taken literally, but rather symbolically. They are metaphors, symbols for situations and experiences that we all encounter and which have a strong impact on us. As Armstrong points out, in the West this dimension of *mythos* has been overwhelmed by overvaluing of *logos*

6 "Freud's Enduring Legacy: How his Ideas Still Shape Psychotherapy" – Cover Story, *Newsweek*. 4.7.1998.; see also, *Time* magazine's special issue on leading thinkers of the 20th century. 29.3.1999.

which has precipitated a crisis of meaning in the individual and collective Western psyche (Armstrong, 2000). In short, as Armstrong reminds us, “it is a mistake to regard myth as an inferior mode of thought, which can be cast aside when humans have attained the age of reason (Armstrong, 2005: 4)⁷.

Armstrong is just the most recent and well-known author in a long line of others who have similarly diagnosed a malaise afflicting the West as linked to its loss of *mythos*. They include Paul Ricoeur, Ernst Cassirer, Mircea Eliade, Gilbert Durand, James Hillman, Joseph Campbell to name just a few. One refers to them, as a way of moving to Jung, who more than 50 years ago, was one of the first to alert the West to the psychological dangers of its loss of *mythos*, what he called the loss of the ‘symbolic life’, and the resulting havoc and sickness this loss has created in the Western individual and collective psyche. My dilemma is this: How can I explain that there is a sickness within the Muslim world, in a context where the audience itself has been repeatedly diagnosed by its own ‘doctors’ as sick and severely handicapped when it comes to understanding religion generally, including its own? My existential situation demands that I begin with ‘you’. With a Muslim audience it would be the other way around. Sickness implies being [a] patient. So, before discussing Islam, let us understand what afflicts, by now, not only the Western ‘self’ but also many others.

The Jungian self

Instead of postulating what we should be like, that is, rational and in control of our self, Jung viewed the psyche as it exists in our experience. Everyday life confirms that our consciousness is numerous mosaics flowing through different levels of awareness.

The best way to imagine this inner diversity is the pantheon of mythology which, in fact, is the earliest model of both the psyche and religion. Every culture has a mythology and none has a single, permanent, perpetually ruling god. Different gods, male and female, have different domains which constantly intermingle. The gods frequently behave in (in)human ways. Mars, of war and bloodshed, has a secret affair with Venus. Apollo rules over knowledge and reason but could be quite irrational with humans and other gods. In short, they are multifaceted; at one level benevolent and responsible for agriculture, health, love, war, knowledge, death etc. At another, quite capable of cruelty and treachery. Very much like you and I as we experience the self(s) on a daily basis.

7 As Armstrong put it in a television interview, when it comes to religion, the West has “lost the plot”.

The figures of mythology can be seen as symbolic person-ifications of different sides to us depicted through different genders, which in turn, can have different qualities and styles. So the psyche is 'polytheistic', or polyvalent, containing masculine and feminine which have many variations in form and style. Zeus and Apollo are different from each other and both have to contend with the bisexual Hermes or Dionysius who express a more ambivalent idea of masculinity. Similarly, the female form is host to Artemis, Venus, Kali and Sappho. Each is a style of consciousness, a psychological attitude, suggesting different perspectives on life, events, and relationships. These attitudes and qualities are evident in both sexes, yet uniquely embodied.

From this angle, the Kantian/Cartesian/Freudian 'ego' of rationality and will power is Apollonian, exemplified by the hero(es) of Greek mythology. Thus, what feminism calls the logocentrism of the Western self is, in this Jungian framework, not only 'masculine' or 'patriarchal', as feminists say it is, but also heroic in its confrontational predisposition to conquest through power. So who is this masculine self?

The literal and symbolic

Everyone agrees that religious fundamentalists take texts literally, but what is its opposite? If it is the symbolic, then the loss of *mythos* is the loss of understanding and responding to the symbolic. So one will have to try and explain this almost extinct 'language' (in the West) before using it to explain Muslims and Islams. Because the fact is, that while it is not 'spoken' widely in the West, in much of the rest of the world, it remains the 'mother tongue' of billions, albeit unconsciously.

To begin with, what most people think are symbols are actually signs, such as matchstick figures on doors of public restrooms. Similarly allegories are more substitutive in nature in which one thing stands for another. As the word *symbolleîn* in Greek suggests, it means to 'throw together', implying the coming together of two unrelated things into a third unity. Symbols, such as in all mythologies, can never be fully explained and will always have an element of mystery. Take the example of the universally present common myth of the Hero. In spite of many variations it has certain typical, universal motifs (Campbell, 1990). In Western culture, for example, it is personified in Ulysses, Oedipus, Hercules, Jason etc. Briefly, the story is of a young male, born in unusual circumstances such as missing a parent, or extremely rich or poor. A separation from origins and place of birth is followed by

difficult journeys, confrontations, tests, trials and battles. Finally, he is victorious and returns to his origins as Ruler, Lawgiver and Redeemer. Then, either through betrayal or pride (*hubris*), heroic self-sacrifice or simple mortality, there is his 'fall' and death. Interestingly, the lives of the founders of all major religions follow a similar trajectory. Modern mythical heroes e.g. Superman, Rambo, Terminator, follow the same themes and story but the only difference is, they refuse to die.

Typically, symbols have multiple layers of meaning. At one level, the myth is a rite of passage, of transition from boyhood to becoming a man. The story/ritual is an enactment of psychological attitudes required for separation from familial protection, 'dying' to childhood and being 'reborn' an adult. It is still present in rituals of joining the army or college, and also in 'primitive' tribes in which teenage males are sent to the jungle, expected survive on their own and then return to the community. This process involves the emergence of reason (*logos*) which is needed to survive natural forces, and/or planning complicated battles/campaigns. Similarly, the process includes the ability to withstand and inflict pain, leading to will power. Thus, the pain and fear involved in the separation from the familiar/comfortable, are transformed into reason and will power. In the symbol of the hero, the instrumentalist dimension of his newfound *logos*, reason/rationality, can be called 'masculine' or 'heroic' and is reinforced through (will) power.

In short, phenomenologically, the symbolic is both physical (literal) and psychological/metaphysical. At the latter level, the symbolic evokes not only various emotions, but because of multiple meanings, will always also contain an aspect of mystery and a transpersonal dimension, what we call a 'sense of the sacred'. Symbols thus, 'say' and 'do' what cannot be said or done in any other way. Beyond coping and transcendence, they are catalysts for potential transformation of consciousness, identity and the self.

CARTESIANISM AND THE LITERAL

In the absence of *mythos*/symbols what are the consequences of a dominant *logos*? It is literalism, which is how fundamentalists look at religion. But what about the non-believer?

To take things literally is to take them as facts. By definition, facts can have only one, SINGULAR meaning. For example, science is based on facts, and functions like *logos*, on the law of non-contradiction. That is, a fact cannot have two different meanings. Water is made of $H_2 + O$ and there can be

no two ways about it. But when we drink, look, or swim in it, we don't think of it as H_2O . Rather, we experience or relate to its qualities. This meaning is personal, can be ambiguous, multiple. By itself, H_2O carries no meaning other than what is a literal fact about the material element.

There is a world of fact and a world of meaning and *mythos* has more to do with *eros* which is less about sex and more about a general interconnectedness of various qualities and relationships, between not only people, but also phenomena. Thus, in order to explain 'depression' we connect it to colour (blue) or weight (feeling heavy) or depth (feeling 'low') etc. This is an example of the psyche's natural symbolic capacity, as it tries to explain an invisible, but real experience/perception. The language of *mythos/eros* is ambiguous, metaphorical, based on interconnections and multiple possibilities in meaning and relationships. It has to be since it is about the complexity and experiences of life. The most significant events of life are universal but experienced intensely by the individual. Birth, death, love, its loss and betrayal, are archetypal myth-themes which engage us at a different level from, say, the molecular structure of water.

In the absence of symbolic capacities, when confronted with the world of *mythos* including the meaning(s) of religion, the logocentric mind can only see it in two ways, namely, right/wrong, either/or, for/or against. Thus, religion has to be literally true. Or then, irrational nonsense, and this is what mostly happened in the west which heralded the 'death of God', leaving what Sartre called the "God-shaped hole in western consciousness". Since then, something has filled that hole.

The fact is that people kill as much in the name of God as they kill without it. In the 20th century, between the two world wars, the Gulag, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, more than 200 million people died violent deaths for reasons that had nothing to do with religion, and all this occurred either in Europe or originated in the modern secular west. Besides Saddam and the determinedly secular Baath Party, there have been no non-western equivalents to Stalinism, Fascism, the Holocaust, apartheid, or the inventions of chemical, nuclear and biological weapons. As Karen Armstrong notes, ethnic cleansing is a by-product of modernity. Overall, the sheer scale of the genocides in the previous century, whether the Holocaust, the Indian partition, Rwanda, Cambodia, the Balkans, not to mention the Oklahoma bombings and periodic massacres of school kids in Britain and in the U.S.; indicate that there is something inherently self destructive within the modern 'self' and that fanaticism and fundamentalism lurks deep within the human psyche. Secular or religious, there is a Taliban within the modern person.

By now there is a huge body of work from within different disciplines that place these ego-attitudes at the heart of modernity and its psycho-cultural condition. Deep ecology, critiques of science, feminist spirituality and ecofeminism, particularly, have analyzed how these attitudes underpin the environmental crisis. They suggest how woman/body/nature are, from the view of the Cartesian ego, psychologically synonymous, regarding as this ego does, both women and nature as objects to be tamed, owned, mastered and manipulated at will. Thus, the *logos* Armstrong refers to as dominating modernity is, from this feminist point of view, a fundamentalist machismo that permeates our ideas ranging from politics and health to science, development, progress, religion.

The ascent of the heroic

A major domain of the manifestation of the symbolic is culture in the broadest sense of the word and to study human nature is to study its culture(s). While I will shortly discuss the problematics of the modern tendency to separate it from religion, culture can serve as a symbolic canvas as well as a diagnostic aid about collective health and sicknesses. A psychoanalytic history of Western culture shows how, over 2000 years, its ideas of both God and human have steadily become narrower and highly masculine. Seen as a symbolic enactment of the myth of the hero – like Jason and his ‘quest’ to the top of the mountain, – the hero’s ‘ascent’ in western consciousness can be seen as a movement from South to North, and like Moses, towards Light, Height and Law. Beginning in the Mediterranean and its mother Goddesses, it moved through an initially gender-diverse Greek pantheon into the Age of Heroes and ultimately, Zeus gave way to the masculine God-the-father of Christianity. The vestiges of the Divine Feminine, as Mary in Roman Catholicism, were ultimately erased in Northern Germany and its determinedly material and heroic Protestant Christian Ethic. Significantly, the foundations of modern science and other crucial consciousness changing technologies, such as the printing press, emerged from the Germanic milieu and language.

Psychology itself reflects the heroic ‘ascent’ especially in Freudian-Cartesian ideas of the strong thinking/rational ego-mind who is ‘in charge’, imperiously surveying the id and its strange irrational forces of the unconscious ‘below’/body: namely, all the diversity including the feminine dimensions that are ‘repressed’. Freud’s ideas are inseparable from his historical and cultural context. The rational ego’s approach to the ‘id’ down there is

to control and civilize it, which was also the justification for colonialism, in resonance with Freud's statement: "where id is there ego shall be. It is a work of culture" (Freud, 1933: 106). 'South', thus, is a physical, cultural, ethnic and psychological place. It is as much 'out' there as it is 'within', inferior and colonized. Like Nature, it is something to be owned and mastered. By the turn of the 20th century, almost if in protest of this suppression over millennia in the West, the psyche 'erupted'. With the advent of Freud and psychology, the first two dis-eases to be 'discovered' were schizophrenia or 'multiple personality disorder', and hysteria (the wandering uterus) by definition, a disease only women could have.

This is not simply a historical exercise but about cultural realities having serious consequences. For example, while hysteria was epidemic in the West till the 50's, today it is almost non-existent. Feminism itself can be seen as part of this ongoing struggle of the psyche. The word 'psyche' represented as a beautiful woman, originally meant 'soul' and psych-logy, a logos-of-the-soul. Its battles are far from over. Today, the conception of the self has taken two established trajectories: the Cartesian-Kantian hero continues to rule in the development of medical psychiatry in which the self has been reduced to a 'mind' residing in the head/brain and its biochemistry of 'hard' facts. In tandem, there is the 'soft' psychotherapeutic project in which, till last count, there are more than 350 schools of psychotherapy. Collectively, they point to the vast multiplicity of the human psyche, albeit in suffering, representing pluralistic and feminine defiance of modern masculism.

Given the intertwined roots of psychology and religion, much of what we call psychopathology can be seen as a secularization of 'heretical' tendencies, which in Western/Christian public imagination is represented by Joan of Arc and the witches of the Inquisition. Today women still bear the brunt psychologically. Even as multibillion dollar global psycho-pharmaceuticals promote a masculine 'mind' as a model, WHO claims that gender disparities remain a crucial issue in mental health.⁸ Worldwide more women suffer from depression than any other illness. Almost everywhere women are given more pills than men having the same condition. In the U.S., women receive twice as many prescriptions, more multiple and repeat prescriptions and more prescriptions of excessive dosages than men (Matteo, 1988: 742).⁹ In short, we are either mad or bad.

8 WHO. 'Gender and Women's Mental Health'. http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/genderwomen/en/

9 See also Nellis, 1988. Also, 'Richer but less happy, we are now a pill-popping people'. Jackie Ashley. *The Guardian*. UK 11.02.08.

The West's loss of *mythos*, or the symbolic, is in psychological terms, the loss of psychological and spiritual diversity. Not only of the many feminine aspects of human consciousness, but also other styles of masculinity different from the heroic. The heroic ego of reason and power is just one important aspect of the self. In light of the reality of many diverse inner selves and their steady obliteration/relegations to pathologies today, Jung's definition of mental illness is simply a "one-sidedness in the presence of many" – which is another way of describing fundamentalism.

CARTESIAN-CHRISTIANISM

'Theos' in Greek means god, as in mono-theism, and theo-logy, a logos-of-(a) god. But 'theos' also constitutes 'theory' and the intellectual/academic endeavour of theo-rizing, that is, constructing a framework for meaning/understanding. As Einstein said, the theory determines what we can observe. As such, there is a god (theos) behind any construction of meaning/theory. Thus, any god is ultimately an attitudinal perspective, a way of life. Specific creeds as 'beliefs', are secondary. What is important, in modern parlance, is the 'life style', which is a more accurate reflection of one's actual beliefs.¹⁰

As a perspective, rational logic can also psychologically become god, functioning as a sort of religious conviction. The 'death' of god does not mean that the human need for meaning has disappeared, it has simply been replaced, for example, by ideals/gods of material security, welfare, humanism etc. In its quest for singular answers, *logos* generates an attitude of MONISM. This attitude of singularity, of one (literal) meaning, can be called psychological MONO-theism, and it may have nothing to do with one's religion¹¹. So keep in mind the distinction between religion as a belief and as a psychological attitude of mono-theism, and the two may have nothing to do with each other. We keep seeing frequently how people continue to fall into the grip of seemingly non-religious ideologies but which exercise

10 "A creed gives expression to a definite collective belief, whereas the word *religion* expresses a subjective relationship to certain metaphysical factors" (Jung, 1964: 507).

11 It is important not to confuse a religion with psychology. Religion is about belief and psychology about an attitude, and one can exist without the other. Judaism, for example, is monotheistic as a religion but psychologically it has an undefined god and the Torah has a myriad faces, one for each Jew in exile. Similarly in Islam, there are the proverbial 99 Names of God which are (innumerable) Attributes of Deity and are qualities that also exist within humanity. Yet both are firmly monotheistic religions.

a psychological power similar to religion. Similarly, a religious or secular Hindu can be termed a psychological mono-theist if he believes that only his view of the wor(l)d is the only 'real' and correct one, or if he insists that the only 'correct' view is to see Hinduism as 'irrational'.

Christianity, however, stresses a particular belief to the exclusion of all others. In the context of Western modernity, Jung claimed that "our (West's) true religion is a MONO-theism of consciousness" (Jung, 1967: 51). He was referring to the dual presence of Christian monotheism and scientific rationalism as dominant attitudes in Western consciousness. Psycho-theologically, Christ was literalized into an exclusivist idea of a male person-as-God. By simply accepting the literal 'fact' of Christ, my salvation is assured. Evil cannot touch me and is separate from me, it is Other-than-me. Eve-il. If I don't accept and believe this as a 'fact', even if a Buddhist saint, I am damned. This splitting of faith and reason, good and evil, is in sync with the Cartesian splitting of mind and body leading to a world view, a *weltanschauung* that can be called 'Cartesian-Christianism'¹². That is, the modern tendency to conceptually split phenomena into exclusivist, antagonist domains, rather than as complementary aspects of a Unity. Religion and culture/secular is just one example of this type of categorizing.

But Cartesian-Christianism is not just about Christian fundamentalism which is simply an extreme pole of a spectrum featuring, let us not forget in any case, well educated, well to do people, who believe in the Bible literally, inhabiting highly 'modernized and developed' societies. For Jung, the dogmatic foundations of Christianity, in which good and evil have been split off from each other, have been reinforced by the Cartesian split and created a moral sickness in the western individual and collective self. For Jung, between Europe's internally bloody history and colonialism, "the white man carries a very heavy burden ... the evil that comes to light within man is of a gigantic proportion ... for the Church to talk of original sin and to trace it (to) Eve is a euphemism. The case is graver and grossly underestimated" (Jung, 'The Undiscovered Self', 1964).

12 Hillman, 1983. See especially Chapter 5, 'A Running Engagement with Christianity'. Cartesian Christianity is unique since it has created an inner, psychological (Cartesian/Freudian) mono-theism as well as a literalized belief system (Christianism). As Hillman points out, Christianity literalizes history into facts: everything comes with a date and (continues to be) the only religion which has consistently attempted to prove/disprove its claims through scientific evidence such as historical dates, archaeology etc. But no such attention has been given to confirming the existence of the devil. Particularly, in light of the impossible-to-resolve 'Problem of Evil' in Christianity, this kind of moral reductionism and heroic masculinist thinking provides the justification for all types of action and violence against an evil which is forever 'out' there.

Thus, the issue is not just about Christian fundamentalism. What Jung is saying is that it is vital to recognize the evil within the self, which he calls the 'shadow', and its universality to the human psyche. Honestly speaking, there is much about us that is neither heroic nor in our ego's control: thoughts of prurience and lust, doing and saying things we regret, from lying to over eating and being haunted by emotions of desire, betrayal, rage and vengeance – and these are perhaps only mild evils. Christianist dogma makes what is basically one's own evil, into a metaphysical principle of the devil, which is then endlessly mulled over philosophically as the 'Problem of Evil'. Denied psychologically within the self, through a process of moral reductionism, it is projected onto others. Psychologically, this means that the ego, what Jung called 'Number One' (Jung, 1989: 45) in our personality, refuses to recognize or legitimize all other aspects which are different from its values of will power and reason. Split off from awareness, the denial of these other aspects of the self are projected outside in the world where "they become paranoid fears of invasion by enemies. On the one hand we have individual insanity, on the other, insane collective projections upon other people, whole races and nations" (Hillman, 1980: 33).

To repeat, Cartesian-Christianism is not about believing Christians, fundamentalists or not. Jung and Hillman's concern is how utterly unaware most westerners are about this religious subtext in their unconscious:

The Christian mind cannot allow a destructive possibility co-present with love and goodness ... it splits the [negative] and projects it onto the enemy ... the heathens, the Jews, Catholics, terrorists ... I am more worried about the shadow of Christianity working in our mind-sets ... The Christian heritage is constantly at work ... like a toxin, invisibly inside our feelings and reactions and ideas, preventing us from seeing ourselves and our world ... you and me, too, we cant help but be Christian ... (Hillman, 1983: 78-84).

The point being made by Jung, Hillman et al, is that today the human capacity for large scale destruction is unprecedented and the moral aspect of our consciousness has not progressed in proportion to 'progress' in technical power. For Jung, "it is not that present day man is capable of greater evil than the man of antiquity... He merely has incomparably more effective means with which to realize his propensity to evil. As his consciousness has broadened ... his moral nature has lagged behind. That is the great problem before us today. *Reason alone no longer suffices*" (Jung, 1964: 574). Simi-

larly, as Karen Armstrong puts it, “we may be more sophisticated in material ways, but we have not advanced spiritually beyond the Axial Age: because of our suppression of mythos we may even have regressed” (Armstrong, 2005: 117).¹³ This imbalance is because the moral dimension has fused with adolescent and exclusivist ideas of both reason and religion. Cartesian-Christianism has cut itself off from the psyche’s theological and psychological diversity including not just the feminine, but also all sorts of other unpalatable, dark and negative aspects that exist in us, irrespective of gender.

Between an unconscious Cartesianism which exclusively claims the ‘light’ of reason and insists on singularity of meaning, and a similar unconscious Christianity which also absolves one of the darkness within, evil is seen in others, outside of the self. MONO-theos is morally reductionist, all issues seen in terms of black/white, good/bad, either/or. Such heroic masculinism is evident today in globally popular films such as Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings. Reflecting a reductionist, adolescent view of both God and human, these narratives are thoroughly masculine; weapons of destruction are associated with magical power and the focus is on devices, not on deliberation and negotiation. Instead of philosophical wisdom, there is only one way of viewing the world which is a decisive battle between good and evil. The goal of victory is destruction, extermination, annihilation. Even though, all mythologies in all cultures tell us that there are other options such as redemption, reconciliation.¹⁴ Not to mention the truly Christian ideals of love and forgiveness.

From the Jungian perspective, Germany was the ‘pinnacle’ of the ascent of the hero from South to North culminating in a ‘rational’ Protestant Christianity, and the foundations of science are based principally in the German language and milieu. Its *mythos* literalized, Germany became the logical locus for something as unimaginable as the Holocaust. The disembodied, compartmentalized, super-rational modern psyche could ensure that “a concentration camp could exist in the same neighbourhood as a great university”. However, it is important to note that Jung’s verdict on Germany’s role in the war was to see that nation as simply carrying the huge burden of what was actually the shadow of the West as a whole; and which was deeply connected with the unacknowledged religious crisis of entire

13 In Jung’s words: “The destructive powers of our weapons has increased beyond all measure, and this forces a psychological question on mankind: Is the mental and moral condition of the men who decide on the use of these weapons equal to the enormity of the possible consequences?” (Jung, 1964: 457).

14 Marina Warner: ‘Fantasy’s Power and Peril’. *The New York Times Book Review*. 16.12.2001.

Europe: "This is not the fate of Germany alone, but all Europe. It is no small matter to know of ones own guilt and evil, but there is nothing to be gained if one's shadow... remains unconscious ... [it is] incorrigible".¹⁵

In the last decade, the symbol that encapsulates the relationship of Cartesian-Christianism to modernity is the image of Radovan Karadžić, the man behind the massacres in Srebrenica and other atrocities in the name of ethic cleansing in the Balkans. A psychiatrist by profession, and initially communist, he was well-known for giving interviews always with the Bible close by.¹⁶

Thus, Islamist or otherwise, fundamentalism and fundamentalists are inherent to modernity as an expression of a particular, psycho-theological consciousness which, via colonialism and modernity is today globally present. Putting it simply, secularism is a sanitized word for what Hillman calls Cartesian Christianity or what Jung called the West's "true religion ... a monotheism of consciousness". A decade before 9/11, Hillman's observation on Christianity and the modern person remains relevant for today (and other fundamentalisms):

Terrorism and nihilism are already in our western world view, terrorists are the incarnation of the nihilism that is inherent to our system of thinking...its roots lie in our religious unconsciousness' (Hillman, 1983: 140-143) ... You have to face this level of Christianity because that is where its world conquering force lies. Its not Christian love that's conquered the world... It's successful because it mobilizes the will, and the will needs fundamentalism or it does not know what to do ... there (has to be) only one meaning, one reading of the text, for instance, the one meaning of Christ's suffering (Hillman, 1983: 81-82).

To sum up: the modern mind, irrespective of religion, is overwhelmingly Cartesian, masculine, positivistic, Apollonic, Protestant Christian, and heroic (Hillman, 1985; see also Hillman, 1980). It is unable to deal with, and reacts with violence to that which it considers different from itself, including that which is feminine, other modes of masculinity, the intermediate, ambiguous and the symbolic/metaphorical, in short, the domain of *mythos* and the Feminine. From a psychological perspective, fundamentalism

15 Jung, 'After the Catastrophe', 1964: 440-443. See also Vol. 10 'The Fight with the Shadow', 444-457.

16 Maggie O'Kane: 'Hunting Radovan' *The Guardian*. London 20.2.2001.

may be expressed in a religious or non-religious idiom but is imbued with Cartesianist-Christianist principles. To reiterate yet again, this should not be seen as contesting Christianity as a religion, so it is best to let Jung speak: “I do not combat Christian truth. I am only arguing with the modern mind” (Van Der Post, 1978: 234).

This ‘mind’ as Armstrong points out, has made “‘God’ a wholly notional truth reached by the critical intellect”, and thus, has itself ‘killed’ the life nourishing symbol central to the Christic *mythos* by literalizing it. What we call the ‘sense of the sacred’ points to a mystery, it requires not only myth and ritual but an ethical and moral dimension expressed and lived in daily life, ‘a way of life’. All sacred texts are less about correct ‘beliefs’ and more about how to cope daily with this beautiful, painful, paradoxical, frequently confusing and difficult business called ‘life’ – and about how to die.

Every religion urges humans to try and live according to two core, related principles: do unto others as you would have others do unto you, which automatically leads to the idea of compassion. These are the challenges of religion and they have been marginalised today by either taking mythical symbols as literal facts and hence ‘right’, or simply denying them altogether. As we know, the ‘dark epiphanies of the 20th century’ have revealed that secular humanism does not automatically evoke compassion and nor does religious belief per se. These failures tell us that the problem is not with one religion or another but with human nature. Thus, it is imperative to be aware of how we conceive of and understand the human self, particularly its relationship with religion.

MONO-theism and the modern self

The nature of fundamentalism in every religion today exhibits similar Cartesian-Christianist feature in which the world of ‘facts’ dominates at the expense of meaning(s): excessive literalism, an exclusivist attitude, singularity of meaning and a reliance on history-as-fact, which as every school child knows, is frequently the perspective of the ‘winner’ (of sundry battles). This historicism bears directly on individual and collective consciousness which, in modern times, believes that historical ‘facts’ determine us to the exclusion of everything else. It ranges from the ‘case history’ project of psychotherapy’s excessive reliance on words (‘the talking cure’) and reducing the meaning(s) of life to what happened in childhood; to rigid ethno-religious ideas of identity and the creation of nation states based on the politics of nationalism and literalized spiritual geographies.

The emphasis on literal, concrete, historical facts as *the* determining factors in the individual/collective life ensure that other, more meaningful perspectives are not considered important when it comes to 'making sense' of human existence. Today it is evident that even apart from the Muslim world, it is the literalist-historical view of religious and political identity that dominates. Modern disciplines, such as archaeology, inspired Hindu-fundamentalists to destroy the Babri Mosque and there is similar psychology at work in the archaeological research on Jerusalem. Thanks to modernity, Hinduism today is actually Cartesian-Christianist-Hinduism. Similarly, we have Cartesian-Christianist-Judaism or Buddhism, and of course Cartesian-Christianist-Islamism.

Internalised today by millions belonging to different religions, or not to any, (that is, Cartesian Christianity), the insistence on psychological singularity is a kind of implicit ideology, supplying images and appropriate feelings about self and other, creating a fantasy of what it means to be 'a people'. Every concept is MONO-theised, whether as a one-dimensional theo-logic-al god or a 'secular' (Cartesian-Christianist) political ideal. For instance, One God is accompanied by One Faith (orthodoxy/modern secularism). There should be One Law (sharia/WTO), One State (darul-Islam/globalization), served by One body of the faithful. A beautiful evocation of the ideal totalitarian (and paranoid) society.

This literalised, idealised unity requires for its earthly (Cartesian-Christianist) realization, an ideal man, the Hero, who, even as his *logos* denies *mythos*, 'sees' obstacles on a mythic scale. Whether the story is retold in an Islamic, Christian, Jewish or Hindu setting, some dragon of dangerous strength must have its head chopped off, traitors everywhere must be sought out and eliminated since, 'you are either with us, or against us'. The Marxists, therefore, require(d) the Capitalists, the Western Powers their Communist threat and more recently, Muslims, who in turn, require the Great Satan and their own heretics (minorities and women). The Hero is always looking for 'problems' since only then can *logos* function, by 'solving' them. As such, the heroic requires problems and by implication, Final Solutions.

Both Jung and Hillman reiterate that it does not matter if one is Christian or not, 'believer' or atheist. Rather, it is a particularly narrow psychological *attitude* towards self, others, religion, knowledge, in short, life itself as lived by the modern mind. The 'mono-theism' of modern consciousness, being in this case Christian(ist), makes most modern individuals today 'behaving Christians' (Hillman, 1983: 140-143) who judge themselves and others, not necessarily according to the paradigmatic meaning of Christ's

message which was love and compassion, but according to the consequences flowing from what happens when his life, 'death' and message is reduced to literal historical fact-as-creed having a singular meaning, all of which are further reinforced through Cartesianist ideals.

It is important to remember that most of the Islamic world was colonised and even more importantly, that as a harbinger of modernity, colonialism was deeply linked to the missionary endeavour. Which is not to say that everything wrong in the Muslim world(s) has to do with Cartesian Christianity, nor that we should return to the past and start living in caves. The point here has been to identify certain psycho-religious dynamics within modernity which are coming from a distorted vision of Christianity and which fuels all sorts of extremism, including the way we relate to self, society and any religion. Religious or 'secular' (Cartesian-Christianist), as participants in a global modernity, we are all influenced by what Hillman calls "this extraordinary religion, the religion that we are all in no matter how hard we try to deny it or escape it..." (Hillman, 1983). We are all in the same boat.

By and large, the only ones trying to escape in academia are ecofeminists, and other men and women who link Christianity with the environmental crisis.¹⁷ Additionally, there are numerous feminist scholars engaged in a critical re-viewing of Judaism and Christianity, but who are not throwing out the baby with the bathwater. That is, they are claiming their spiritual rights within these and other traditions by radically revisioning them and as such, are reclaiming Christianity from patriarchal Christianity.¹⁸

Globally, the by now burgeoning literature on feminism, religion and spirituality indicates that the significance of interconnectedness is paramount in the feminist reviewing of religion and its contemporary variants. It is worth noting that in the new revised edition of a premier reference text, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, the longest new addition (80,000 words) is the compound entry on 'Ecology and Religion' and 'Gender and Religion'. As noted by the German scholar Ursula King, this is the strongest evidence for the occurrence of a massive paradigm shift in the scholarship on religion (King, 2005).

17 For example, Noble, 1992; Primavese, 1991; Scherer, 2004; White, 1991.

18 For example, Schussler Fiorenza, 1983; A. N. Wilson; Christianity and Modernity. *The Guardian*, London 5.12.2000.; Selvidge, 1996; Ostriker, 1993; Pardes, 1992; Schussler Fiorenza, 1992; Tribble, 1984; Reuther, 1983; Pagels, 1989. Finally, there are many radical scholars such as Mary Daly and Carol Christ giving the 'Goddess' movement some exceedingly sophisticated conceptual frameworks vis a vis Western women's spirituality and feminism. For the moment, much of this work remains marginalized by the 'malestream', but it is only a matter of time before these trends will become fully evident.

The Enlightenment paradigm's heroic (Cartesian-Christianist) vision separates everything into warring dualisms, including faith from reason. This leads to asking foolish questions (and answers). *Time* magazine once did a cover story on Evil (10.06.1991), posing the question "If God is all good and all powerful, why is there evil?" This is an adolescent proposition. The fact is that Divinity Itself has never claimed that it is exclusively kind and good. Whether in the Hindu (and Greek) pantheon, or the 99 Names, or in Tao, the concept of Divinity is 'paradoxical', in which opposites exist *simultaneously* as part of a mutually defining Unity. This is as true for our bodies which have male/female features as it is for our psyches. The problem, then, is not with any religion per se; or about being modern or not, rather, it lies in the heroic, adolescent vision which we bring to our construction of both knowledge and meaning regarding self, other(s) and the transcendent/Divine. Ultimately, it is our partial, unbalanced view of what it means to be human and the resulting distortions in understanding any religion.

An environ-mental crisis

The European, or rather the white man in general is scarcely in a position to judge his own state of mind. He is too deeply involved ... From time immemorial nature was always filled with spirit. Now, for the first time, we are living in a lifeless nature bereft of gods.

(Jung, 1964: 431)

The environ-mental imbalance is ecologically a relatively recent development. Psychologically too it was initiated within roughly the last three hundred years of a 5000 year known history. The major force behind it was the Western religious and intellectual 'mind' and its ideas of the self, Nature and human nature. As Armstrong puts it, Western modernity is a "child of *logos* founded on the technological replication of resources and constant reinvestment of capital" (Armstrong, 2005: 103), and it is this 'child-hero' as *homo economicus* which has changed the world in a way that has had disastrous environ-mental consequences. Soon after 9/11, the question "why do they hate us?" was raised in the US. One recurring answer was "they" were motivated by envy of the west's life style. At that time I found this answer absurd but on further reflection, there is much truth to it: The psychological bed-

rock of global capitalism is based on desire and its inevitable corollary, envy. Both are constantly generated by the global advertising industry, reinforcing the self as *homo economicus*. Our psychological relationship with spiritual heroes, the prophets, saints and sages of *mythos* have been forgotten in favour of the scientist/inventor/warrior/ politician/economist in the mythic quests of 'progress'. Yet, there is absolutely no evidence that we are morally/ethically better persons than our ancestors. If anything, we are regressing.

Myths and symbols, because they speak of eternal truths, do not die but keep reappearing according to the times, which today is the Age of the Literal. For example, female hysteria has given way to anorexia nervosa which becomes a symbol of the state of the Feminine. Without the capacity to comprehend their message(s), the moral and ethical transformative potential of *mythos* remains dormant. The price for 'progress' is becoming self evident, not just in the massive and growing psychopharmacological industry, but most vividly in the natural environment which symbolically reflects the ravaged human psychological condition in a demythologized world. The pathologizing and erasing of inner diversity is reflected in the steady extinction of different species.

CULTURE AND ISLAM

The upheaval of our world and the upheaval of our consciousness are one and the same. No one who does not know himself can know others and in each of us is another whom we don't know.

(Jung, 1964: 177, 325)

Europe's 'alter ego'

Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations', while ill informed, incorrect and dangerous, rests its case nevertheless on the concept of culture, albeit conceived in a frozen, monolithic manner. It is in many ways a fundamentalist world view¹⁹. Since the 1990s, other foreign policy intellectuals in the U.S., have differed with Huntington's vision, but simultaneously also believe that international issues will now primarily be "cultural and philosophical ... the

19 Both have static rigidly defined notions of the religion-culture matrix and both can be considered extreme, disembodied and hypermasculine perspectives based on a brutal and macho predisposition to violence.

west urgently needs a prolonged process of cultural self examination and philosophical revaluation” (Brezinski, 1993).

It is to the West’s credit that beyond Jung/Jungians, by now numerous scholarly voices have been conducting this self examination, but which, unfortunately, is usually expressed in such convoluted academic terms that the impact remains marginal. So, before discussing Islam and culture, it is important to be clear about why this subject has suddenly become so important. I think one main reason has to do with issues of identity, not just for Muslims but more so regarding Europe/Europeans. Thus far, I have tried to show how psychologically, the secular ideal is Cartesian-Christianist, even though ostensibly it claims to separate religion from culture. Beyond psychology, by now there is a substantive body of work in sociology, history, and social theory also showing how in fact, European identity as a ‘cultural’ construct is not only rooted in Christianity but even more significantly, is deeply linked to Islam.

In *Inventing Europe: Idea, Identity, Reality* (Delanty, 1995) the sociologist Gerard Delanty goes beyond Edward Said’s ideas about Orientalism and the making of an ‘imaginative geography’ in which Europe represents civilization and Muslims/Islam as the barbaric/uncivilized counterpoint. As Delanty point out, prior to the Enlightenment the idea of Europe was synonymous with Christendom. In spite of the subsequent abandoning of religion as a signifier of European identity, Christianity or rather its worldview, as contrasted with the West’s encounter with Islam, nevertheless remains an indelible part of Europe’s identity. “No coherent idea runs through European history from the earliest times to the present and the historical frontiers of Europe have themselves shifted several times. Yet something can be discerned in the great flux of history and it is not the history of unity but adversity” (2). In short, the longstanding conflict between Christianity and Islam, ensured that “from the seventh century onwards, the idea of Europe came to be articulated against Islam” (23). Put simply, a key dimension of European identity is constructed on the basis of what it is *not*, namely Muslim/Islam, in Delanty’s words “the culture and civilization of the Occident owes its origins to the Orient” (16).

Historians/social theorists/anthropologists have similarly shown how the “transition from Christendom to Europe, from a religious to a secular identification, did not involve the elimination of the Christian element” (Coles, 1968: 149).²⁰ Re-coded into a universal civilizational project of the

20 See also, Cardini, 2001; Asad, 2002; Strath, 2000; White, 2000; Yeğenoğlu, 1998, Yeğenoğlu, 2006.

Enlightenment it is worth keeping in mind the strong bonds between the missionaries, colonialism and the foundations of modern disciplines such as anthropology. In short, if today there is anxiety in Europe about Muslims, this is because of secularism's Christianist underpinnings whereby Islam/Muslims are the 'other', the 'alter ego' against which European identity is defined (Delanty, 1995: 65). Ostensibly separated and placed in the private domain, religion nevertheless continues to surface in the area of culture and cultural identity.

Generally speaking, as Derrida points out, separating religion from other domains such as politics, economics or law is deeply problematic since one would have to clearly establish "the essential traits of "the 'religious' as such" from those that establish, for example, the concepts of ethics, justice." "The fundamental concepts that often permit us to isolate or pretend to isolate the political [for example] ... remains religious ... or in any case theologico-political." One can note that Derrida too linked the global resurgence of religion with a strong critique of modernity and globalization. For him, if one remains within the Enlightenment tradition of opposing dualisms – reason versus religion, science versus religion etc – then of course they will be eternally incompatible. Most importantly, for him too, globalization is essentially Christian and Latin, what he calls 'globalatinization' (Derrida, 2002: 63).

Culture and religion

One raises these issues to draw attention to the manner in which we are handicapped when it comes to assessing the rising tensions around us. The question of culture is deeply complicated and it is important to be self aware of the religious subtext in 'secular' concepts such as culture. I believe that it is critical to understand that this separation of 'religion versus culture' has serious psycho-political consequences since it stems from the modern Christianist idea of religion being primarily a mental belief and a system of worship. Thus, when it comes to Islam, somehow the question becomes one of culture and cultural differences and whether Muslims can be culturally assimilated etc. The following statement by Bernard Lewis – an academic soul mate of Huntington – sums this up: "... for Muslims the word 'religion' does not have the same connotations as it has for Christians ... for Muslims, Islam is not simply a system of faith and worship ... [it] concerns the whole complex fabric of life" (Lewis, 1993). Lewis is of course entirely correct. But what is rarely mentioned in these debates about Islam and the West, and

as vast numbers of Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists will tell you, actually *every* religion concerns the 'whole complex fabric of life'. Except, by Lewis' own admission, Christianity. Nevertheless, this *exception*, especially Protestant Christianity has become the decisive *norm* within which questions of 'religion' and 'culture' are framed.²¹

Most languages do not reflect the same meaning of the words 'religion' and 'culture' as they are used today.²² Today, many leading scholars of religion agree that prior to the Enlightenment, religion in Western Europe could not be analytically or practically separated from all other aspects of culture. Nevertheless, as they regretfully admit, today it is Protestantism which has become "the paradigm of what constitutes a 'religion'" (Lincoln, 2003: 2-3)²³ indicating that the entire academic edifice of religious studies requires serious re-examination.

In all non Western societies, religion and culture were, and largely still remain, unified in the idea of a 'way of life' having a visible and invisible dimension. Virtually all human activity was carried out simultaneously along an (invisible) vertical axis of transcendence and a visible/sensory horizontal axis of culture. Together, they formed a scaffolding, creating an inner, psychological space, which gave even the most mundane activity meaning. Bathing, eating, sex, war, marriage, agriculture not to mention especially the arts, all were embedded in this vertical/horizontal matrix in which the roots of culture were deeply intertwined with religion (as is evident in the Chartres cathedral). In short, it is the symbolic world of *mythos* and its modern residual vestiges of 'culture', that constitutes the ground beneath our feet, the soil and environment which profoundly influences the course

21 As pointed out by Tambiah, in Roman times 'religion' was not a doctrine or dogma of speculative interest but something one "felt and did". While early Christianity still retained the all inclusive view, it also developed a definite conception of itself and with regard to other faiths, became strongly exclusive and intolerant. The present usage of 'religion' comes from the Enlightenment and its emphasis on schematizations of 'doctrine', 'dogmas', 'beliefs'. The process of 'objectification' was taken further through the colonial period and contact with other religions. By the beginning of this century, "Western scholars had already labelled the great religions as isms: such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism" (Tambiah, 1991: 32).

22 In Urdu, two words are used interchangeably for religion. *Mazhab* means going in one direction, school of thought. Strictly speaking it refers to the four main legal schools of Islamic jurisprudence, and does not appear in the Quran. *Deen* refers to phenomena that are regular, predictable, the word for 'city' (*madina*) is from the same roots denoting social norms that define city. It may also simply mean 'perspective'. As such, it has an inclusive range of meanings spanning ethics and worldview to eschatology and social order/norms. Its various meaning are reflected in different verses of the Quran. The closest word for 'culture' is *tehzeeb* which refers to pruning the tree, to make it look tidy.

23 Lincoln is at the University of Chicago and President of the American Association of Religion (AAR).

of our psychological and moral-aesthetic development as human beings. The question arises, if either of these – religion and culture – are cut off from each other, can they fulfil their developmental and humanizing/divinizing function? That is, can culture without religion, psychologically sustain us, and vice versa?

Cultural diversity and psychological unity

In the west, it is self evident that there is so much cultural activity that one can be swept away by a mania if one decides to sample what is on offer. More often than not, it is also linked to money and becomes a commodity to be consumed. Even otherwise, life in the West is about speed, movement, and experienced by the outsider as manic hyperactivity. So, while cultural ‘vitality’ is evident, the answer to whether it psychologically sustains the individual, lies in a more hidden, private domain, of the psychiatrist/psychologist’s clinic and the thriving psychopharmacological industry. Some of the best selling prescription drugs today worldwide are for anxiety and depression. In 2006-2007, sales of four out of five of the top drug categories had to do with illnesses directly or indirectly related to psychological conditions, with the largest proportion of sales in the US, Europe and Japan.²⁴ One can also note the high rates of depression among adolescents in Europe and the US where suicide is the third leading cause of death in adolescents.²⁵

A survey of various indicators of societal health suggests that suicide is “one indicator of social health in which religious nations fare much better than secular nations” (Zuckerman, 2005). It is notable that within the last four decades, there has been a 60% increase in suicide worldwide.²⁶ In Belgium it has doubled.²⁷ With the exception of China, the majority of suicides worldwide are males. While the most recent statistics indicate that suicide is highest in ex-communist countries, among the rich countries Belgium, Finland, Japan and the Nordic states stand out. (Climate is not the main reason since Ukraine and Sri Lanka figure high also.) The 10 countries with the lowest figures are considered highly religious.²⁸

24 The top five therapy classes at ATC3 level from Jan 2007-2008 were: Cholesterol and Triglyceride regulators, Anti-ulcerants, Anti-depressants and mood stabilizers, Anti-psychotics and Anti-epileptics. For the last two decades the biggest money spinners for global pharma are related to psychological conditions. Upjohn’s top bestsellers in the US also rank high in global sales: Halcion is a sleeping pill and Xanax for anxiety. Prozac is a global bestseller.

25 Richard Friedman. *The New York Times*. 15.4.2008.

26 *Economist* 21.6.2007.

27 International Association for Suicide Prevention. (IASP) Newsletter. France. July. 2002.

28 “Religious Affiliation and Suicide Attempt”. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*. 161:

One can discern certain self evident connections but the question of belief/nonbelief is not the point, rather it is of a widespread anxiety/depression among males, particularly among young males. WHO estimates that in ten years, 1.5 million people will kill themselves every year.²⁹ Other sources project that in less than ten years one third of the world's population will be prescribed psychiatric drugs.³⁰ Anxiety/depression, in the Western context, can be seen as a response to manic hyperactivity, and depression as an attempt to find an inner balance, experienced as a slowing down. The direction is vertical, but downward, towards depth which is an attribute of contemplation, not action. In short, while there is plenty of cultural consumption in the West, as a whole, there is, if not manic depression, then anxiety-depression leading to high suicide rates in countries such as Belgium and Finland.

Conversely, in contexts such as Pakistan where religion seems to be intensely present but stifles/denies free cultural expression, it leads to a different pathology and is expressed in the form of obsessive compulsive behaviours particularly around the body, whether in the context of religious injunctions, the bodies of women and as an extreme symbol, suicide, though the figures are not as high as in the west. In sum: religion and culture form a matrix and when cut off from each other lead to various pathologies. Eventually whether depression or compulsion, the issue has to do with a search for meaning.

Islam and culture

Most of the analyses of fundamentalism in Pakistan revolve around the 'high' Islamist who inspires and finances his 'low' brother and sisters. It is comparable to a farmer planting and harvesting the seed which is 'low Islamism'. These analyses are invariably contextualized in terms of poverty and the 'brainwashing' of the *madrasah* educational system. This is a very facile view. The seed itself, in this case an infant, does not carry a gene for terrorism/fundamentalism. A child inherently has the potential to become a great mathematician, musician, scientist, philosopher – virtually anything is possible. This socio-economic view overlooks the fact that mass poverty and lack of education has been a longstanding reality in most Muslim societies. What is lost sight of, is that ultimately both farmer and seed are heavily

2303-2308. December 2004.

29 IASP Newsletter, op. cit.

30 Harper's Index. May 1997. Sources listed therein.

dependent on the soil and environment, which in this case is culture as it exists in an interlinked matrix with religion.

One of Islam's greatest strength has been its ability to adapt to different cultures. Beyond some basic rituals and the unifying centrality of the Quran in Arabic, there is really nothing else that 'holds' it together other than a symbol (Kaaba) which essentially serves as a signifier for 'direction'. Within a 100 years of its inception in the desert of Arabia and the Middle East, Islam reached and settled in dispersed regions spanning three continents and widely divergent societies/cultures. If this inherent adaptivity to other religions/cultures was not part of its *raison d'être*, Islam could not have given rise to 5 great civilizations – the Mughal, Ottoman, Persian, Moorish and Spanish. Each was a distinct civilization of the highest order and at the same time uniquely Islamic.

Before the modern virus of Cartesian-Christianist-Islamism, the majority of Muslims were part of the vast and nebulous popular spiritual expression known in the West as Sufism, but the majority of its adherents largely know it as simply 'Islam'. Jung, who was also one of the West's great scholars of comparative religion, called Sufism "Islam's secret backbone" (Jung, 1984: 336). Secret, in the sense that it was so intertwined with culture that it was difficult to distinguish the two.

As part of the Indian subcontinent, Pakistani culture and hence its Islam, is primarily Indo-Persian Islam which subsumes the rich *mythos* of two ancient civilizations, not to mention the multi layered world of *mythos* which is the Quran. I was raised in an environment in which the Arabic Quran, the Persian poetry of Rumi (16th century) and the Punjabi poetry of Bulleh Shah (16th century) and others, were intermingled in conversations on religion (not to mention Bach and Handel). Apart from language/poetry, this intermeshing of culture and religion, in particular of Persian/Central Asian Islam and Hinduism, is fully visible in the exquisite beauty of Mughal architecture and in the classical music and performing arts of India even today. In short, it is important to remember that what is today called 'Sufism' was, as Armstrong points out, the normative form of Islam until the end of the nineteenth century (Armstrong, 2000: 101). As such, people did not see themselves as 'Sufis' but simply Muslims and to this extent Edward Said is correct in saying that there are actually innumerable (indigenous) Islams (Said, 2002). Its countless cultural manifestations provide the best evidence for Islam's inherently pluralistic and inclusivist worldview.

Today, this secret backbone has been severely damaged. The reasons are numerous: the colonial and modernization projects, 20th century geopoliti-

tics, dick-tatorial regimes 'officializing' Islam by 'Islamizing' society and the world wide promotion of Saudi-Wahabi Islamic 'money-theism' and its MONO-cultural vision which has resulted in cultural vandalism across the Muslim world. It is one of the most deadly assaults on the innumerable forms of Islam whether in China, South and South East Asia, Africa or even in Europe and the USA. My research has discussed how indigenous Islam is inevitably more 'feminine' in its style, including its pluralistic approach to religion and spirituality (Ahmed, 2002; also Ahmed, 1995).

The *logos* centred analytic gaze of the West on a logocentric Cartesian-Christianist-Islamism, neglects the dimension of culture and cultural history, perhaps because it is no longer aware of it within itself. How much of western 'aid' is directed at enriching, preserving and strengthening cultures under siege since colonialism? Today, in any case, all cultures are also under siege from a Christianist/Latinist MONO-cultural globalization.

(CARTESIAN-CHRISTIANIST-ISLAMISM)

A major problem with the present discourses around Islam, including among Muslims themselves, is the constant conflation between the psychological and the sociological/political. While all religions teach us how to live with others, ultimately all of them, most importantly, address the mystery of death. This is something that all of us will experience and know nothing about. Hence the need for symbols, for as Campbell said, "the fear of death is the beginning of mythology". Death is a uniquely individual experience and to this extent, the psychological primacy of religion is paramount. It is one area where there are no experts and has to be faced alone. So while it is important to study the elements constituting Muslim identity construction³¹, my concern here is the psychological dimension. Of not only the Islamic conception of God and its 'Feminine' aspect(s), but also how its variations resonate within the Muslim psyche as mediated by modernity.

Unlike Christianity, God in Islam is beyond gender. The 'He' is more of a linguistic constraint rather than a theological imperative and there is

31 As Castells points out, while we all can agree that sociologically all identities are constructed, the real issue is how, from what, by whom, and for what. The human self and its sense of identity is dynamic, complicated, multidimensional, drawing from history, geography, biology, collective memory, power structures, media, religion, to name just a few. It becomes all the more complex in the context of globalization and communities in Diaspora. Castells, 2004. All these dimensions, and others, have been brought to analyses of Islam and Muslims and I don't dispute their relevance.

no such notion as 'Father' (or Mother). (Refer to Popes statement of March 2008.) For centuries, numerous commentaries on the 99 Names of God have categorized them as Names of Majesty/Power and Names of Beauty/Compassion, that is, they can be seen as symbolically 'Masculine' and 'Feminine'. This 'gendering' is similar to Taoism's *Yin* and *Yang* which together make for the Great Absolute and scholars have noted these similarities between Tao and Islam (Murata, 1991). Internally, I think most religions are structured around this symbolic dialectic which is not about warring or exclusively existing opposites, but rather, as contrasting, interconnected, mutually defining, and complementary qualities. Life is both male and female.

Seen from this perspective all religious fundamentalism can be understood as a hypermasculine approach to text, interpretation, meaning and expression, which negates and devalues the Divine Feminine and I have discussed these issues in *Gendering the Spirit* (Ahmed, 2002). Psycho-theological hypermasculinism, past and present, also explains why heresy and the violence directed at it, frequently concerns a more feminist/feminine vision of a given religion, hence Joan of Arc and the witches. In Greek, the word 'heresy' actually means to 'choose for one self'.

The west's shadow

Broadly speaking there are two types of (Cartesian-Christianist) Islamists. The first are economically successful and well educated, frequently in the sciences such as engineering and medicine and who constitute the leadership of groups such as Al-Qaida. They can be termed 'high' fundamentalists and are the ideologues of these movements. Thoroughly modern and present in many Muslim societies, Muslim feminists had noted two decades ago how many Islamists were well educated especially in modern disciplines. If today they are globally present, North and South, it is because there is a unity of a modern literalist, logocentric 'mind'. It is imperative to remember that the 'bad boys' of Islam – Wahabism, Salafism and similar Islamist ideologies – emerged after coming into contact with western modernity, and all scholars locate them as modern movements. The fact that Islam does not have an official clergy or Church, no 'Rome' or 'Canterbury', has been true for 1500 years. But, today, within roughly just the past 3 decades, Saudi money-theism has successfully first created a clergy (the 'high' Islamists), and then will follow the inevitable 'Church'. This of course will be encouraged by the west since it is in resonance with its own centralized religious institutions. It

is also intellectually easier to 'deal' with a handful of 'officials' rather than a cacophony of innumerable voices and languages all claiming to be Muslims.

Between Western unconsciousness, modernity and the Saudi-Wahabi theo-cultural bulldozer, the psycho-spiritual (cultural) diversity of Islam is being steadily obliterated. This is a disaster for any natural phenomenon, and religion is no exception. All religions are languages of the soul and like all languages have numerous dialects and accents. Today, this idea has its literal counterpart in the notion that all Muslims must 'speak' with just one accent, in one dialect, namely Saudi-Wahabi Islam. Even though 85 percent of more than a *billion* Muslims are not native speakers of Arabic. If the west indiscriminately encourages this direction towards institutionalised, 'official' representatives and institutions, it will be assisting in the eventual extinction of 85% of the Islamic spiritual/cultural rainbow, replacing it with the monolithic 'monochromatic bigotry' of Wahabi Islam.

For Jung, the West had basically destroyed its own religion and via the modernity project threatened the world not just physically but also psychologically and spiritually.

No wonder the western world feels uneasy, for it does not know what it has lost through the destruction of its numinosities (symbols). It has lost its moral and spiritual values to a very dangerous degree. Its moral and spiritual tradition has collapsed, and has left a world wide disorientation... The great religions of the world suffer from increasing anaemia... (Jung, 'Healing the Split', 1977: 254-261)

This disorientation and collapse is evident in the denigration of the feminine dimension of the psyche and theology in Islam (and all other religions). It can be summed up by the situation in Algeria during the 1980s and 1990s in which fundamentalists threatened to kill the unveiled woman and secularists the veiled one. Similarly, the shadow of the West's youthful, heroic, rational power driven self is literally evident in the young males who comprise the bulk of 'low' Islamism. 99% of all suicide bombers in Afghanistan and Pakistan are below the age of 20 and demographic trends in most Muslim countries show that the population is becoming younger and younger. Thanks to modern technologies such as amniocentesis enabling female foeticide, already the male/female ratios are changing to more males.

From whichever angle I see the situation, past, present, future, we are all connected. The genesis of the Taliban, it should not be forgotten, was the cold war and eventually a real but 'proxy' war between basically the U.S. and

the Soviet Union in which the Pakistanis and Afghans were foot soldiers. One can note here again, the terrible violence inflicted on the non-western world in the post colonial era, during the cold war. Africa is another example. A recent publication shows how even as recently as between 1996 and 2002, two wars claimed several million lives in just Zaire (Congo) alone. Even one of the most conservative media voice in the West cannot deny that “cold war politics helped create the calamity that is ... much of Africa, today”.³² Here, again, one can see the Cartesianist (Marxist)-Christianist (U.S./West) paradigm at work.

The similarly calamitous war in Afghanistan lasted over almost two decades during which tens of thousands of children were either killed, or lost one or both parents. Vast numbers were put into segregated orphanages run by semi-literate ‘low clerics’, mostly in Pakistan, which, during the 1980s, had the world’s largest refugee population (5 million). Thousands of young males had literally NO experience of woman – as mother, aunt, sister, grandmother etc. This absence of the psychological experience of the feminine was reinforced by the indoctrination of a hypermasculine interpretation of Islam which only emphasizes the Names linked to God’s power, vengeance etc, not the dominant ones of Love, Mercy, Compassion and Beauty, to name a few. In sum, the feminine, Divine or human, has been rendered wholly ‘Other’, obliterated in the psychological and theological consciousness of the Taliban and many other Muslims. And once this sort of mutation occurs, it takes generations to reverse.

The last word

So we seem to be trapped between two sides of the same coin: on the one hand Cartesian-Christianism, either overtly religious or covertly in the guise of globalized modernity/secularism. On the other, its Islamist variant. For Huntington and the Islamists, the question of identity stands resolved. Both ‘know’ who they are and claim that we can either be with them or against them. So where do people like many of us here, including myself, locate ourselves in the ‘choice’ between extremisms? The third option is to accept and acknowledge that you and I are interconnected and at some basic levels, most of us are hybrids, simultaneously both us/them. It is only from this third space of hybridity that the core question arises for both Europeans and Muslims. That is, how can I retain my religious/cultural authenticity and yet live comfortably with difference?

32 ‘Africa and the C.I.A.’ Book Review Section. *The Economist*. 24th Feb 2007 p. 83.

Thus far, I have used the term ‘the other’ as it has been problematized in/by different disciplines, particularly in the context of identity. To speak of the ‘other’ is to speak of difference, that is, of diversity. Speaking as a Muslim and a psychologist, I find much of the academic theorizing and preoccupation about the ‘other’ rather banal including the business of ‘celebrating difference’. Given that the Quran is substantially anchored in Old and New Testament narratives, Islam is itself a hybrid, yet unique. The Quran takes diversity as a given, in fact a necessity serving three fold interrelated functions as evident in three statements: “Among God’s signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues and colours. In that surely are signs for those who possess knowledge/learning” (30:22). Thus, the first function is a reflective one, the contemplation of Nature and acknowledgment and glorification of God. Elsewhere the Quran states “... We have created you, male and female, and have made you peoples and tribes that you may know/recognize one another...” (49:13).

The second function of the ‘other’ concerns knowledge of not just the diversity of our species but specifically about oneself. One simply cannot ‘know’ anything without the presence of contrast/difference and this is both a biophysical law and a cognitive, socio-cultural one. The human sensorium functions on the principle of contrast. For example, a uniformly white environment creates visual distortion, disorientation and eventually a ‘blindness’ equivalent to being in a dark room without any light. “Information”, as Bateson put it, is “a difference that makes a difference”.³³ Here one is not referring to the rather meaningless idea of information/knowledge ‘for its own sake’³⁴ which only leads to accumulation of quantity (facts) of information. Rather, it is the quality of understanding, of information with a purpose, as ‘a difference which makes a difference’. The sages intuitively grasped the necessity of information-as-contrast when they urged student/seekers to travel, reflecting the Socratic dictum ‘know Thyself’. In short, no knowledge is possible without contrast/difference.

The Quran is quite clear that humanity was never meant to be religiously/culturally/physically/linguistically etc., uniform and identical: “we have

33 “... the interaction of parts of mind is triggered by contrast ... information is a difference that makes a difference”. Bateson, 1979: 94-100. One of the best books on the mind/body ‘problem’. See also his discussion on the significance of the image in human perception, pp. 32-38.

34 And spin offs such as ‘art for arts’ sake’, ‘curiosity for the sake of curiosity’. Other similarly phony debates include essence vs. diversity, religion vs. science, religion vs. ‘secular humanism’, functioning on the taken-for-granted ‘chasm’ between faith and reason, hence: “those who believe cannot think and those who think cannot believe”. The fundamentalist variation on this theme is “those who believe don’t need to think”.

made you different ... so you may recognize/know each other". Beyond acknowledging the glory of the diversity of nature/humanity, the 'other' becomes critical to self knowledge. In a Zen master's words: "To understand himself man needs to be understood by another. To be understood by another, he needs to understand another" (Hora, 1959: 236-242). The question is, understanding to what end?

'The end' for everyone is the experience of death and a culture's relationship with it reflects key epistemological premises.³⁵ I will not go into the details of this important issue, other than again point to the presence of the adolescent hero ideal which leads to a general denial of decay and death in western culture. Socio culturally, it is evident in a glorification of youthfulness and corresponding absence of the elderly in media and public life. Medically, witness the multimillion anti-ageing technologies, plastic surgery etc and the bias towards genetics and a preoccupation with origin(s) rather than end. When the inevitable happens, it is a lonely business, removed from life and view, confined to hospitals, mortuaries and funeral homes. In the developed countries, three quarters of deaths occur behind hospital screens and a quarter with no close relatives present. Even mourning has been 'abbreviated' with the bereaved no longer wearing black.³⁶

Returning to the third and ultimate function of difference/diversity and the significance of the 'other', as the Quran says:

For each one of you did We prescribe a spiritual law and a well defined way (a code in secular matters). And if God had so willed He might have made you one community (by force) but He wishes to show your perfection (the capacities and capabilities) that He has endowed you with. Therefore compete with each other in pursuing the good (5:48).

Thus, we are not (meant to be) the same because of the varied nature of the 'capacities and capabilities' we have been (potentially) endowed with. The goal of understanding is to perfect these differing capabilities and which

35 The fear of death is of course cited as the reason for religion by those who dismiss 'the package' as a whole. Interestingly, it is in those same cultures valuing 'knowledge for its own sake', that this fear of death is most evident. Witness the obsession with youth and health and a general distancing from old age and death in the growing mortuary industry and its trappings. "...A society's fear of sacred space, which is a fear of life lived by what always appears to be the long odds of faith, goes with its reluctance to commit itself to the burden of distinguishing between re-vitalizing fresh perspectives and faithless subversions. For lack of something worthy of reverential attention it must worship life in its precarious time bound condition --- it must worship youthfulness." (John P. Sisk, *Georgia Review*, Fall 1989).

36 Editorial on euthanasia, *The Economist*. 20.07.1999.

can (potentially) develop in the encounter with the 'other'/difference, hence "compete with each other in pursuing the good". What is implied here, is that we first recognize that what we share most strongly with the 'other' are our weaknesses and limitations, our flaws and failures. Only then can we consider what sets us apart, that which makes us distinct(ive) and different. That is, our positive potentialities whereby we 'distinguish' ourselves from others, particularly those capacities as they manifest in the pursuit of 'the good'. In short, the 'other' serves as a mirror in which we can glimpse what is first and foremost one's own darkness, the shadow, and the evil potential in all of us. By way of explanation, let me bring the body into the picture and put it bluntly: while outwardly we may be different, when it comes to our shit, we are all the same.

It is not easy to acknowledge to oneself, leave alone to others, certain aspects to us which can only be termed shitty. Lust, vengeance, greed, rage, ambition, envy, violence, perversions, fetishes, treachery, betrayal, the list is endless. This inner world of demons will not go away however much we try and avoid or deny it. Its psychological power and volcanic impact is evident in phrases such as 'when the shit hits the ceiling' and being 'shit scared'. Yet, as a natural phenomenon, shit shadows us as long as one is alive. But it is also a vital part in the regeneration of life and the best natural fertilizer, as expressed in the more scientific word 'humus'. Which is also linked to 'humility'. Both are linked to the idea of the ground, low, earth (human?). So to be aware of one's shit, is to remain grounded, down to earth, humble. Only then is there the possibility of growth, new awareness and qualitatively different understanding. The catalyst-mirror for this process of growth is also the 'other'.

Today, the process of facing/seeing one's malodorous side(s), one's own shit, has become literally difficult and is a symbol of our blindness about it. In the West, thanks to modern plumbing and efficient methods of garbage disposal it is hardly to be seen. Out of sight out of mind. Unconscious. Given its overwhelmingly public presence in the Muslim world, and in the absence of contrast/difference, it is also rendered 'invisible'. Living literally surrounded by it, like a fish in water or the air we breathe, it is out of daily awareness. Present in full sight, we lack the insight into its meaning and remain unconscious.

Individual or collective, our shit, this (un)acknowledged fact of life, will not disappear simply because we are no longer aware of it, and nor can it

fulfil its revivifying function if we see it belonging only to the 'other'.³⁷ Writing in 1961, Jung made some comments regarding the Cold War and Soviet Union, which, I believe, remain valid for today's situation, vis a vis Islam:

Western man, representing the kind of consciousness hitherto regarded as valid ... sees himself forced to take extraordinary measures of defence. What he fails to see is that it is his own vices, publicly repudiated ... that are thrown back in his face... It is the face of our own shadow that glowers at us across the Iron Curtain... This state of affairs explains the peculiar feeling of helplessness that is creeping over our western consciousness... We are beginning to realize that the conflict is in reality a moral and mental problem... But all our attempts have proved to be singularly ineffectual ... as long as we try to convince ourselves and the world that it is only *they* who are all wrong, morally and philosophically ... instead of making a serious effort ourselves to recognize our own shadow and its nefarious doings ... because we are doing practically the same things as *they* are, only with the additional disadvantage that we neither see nor want to understand what we are doing under the cloak of good manners.

(Jung, 'The Function of Religious Symbols', 1977: 244-245)

Jung insisted that individually or collectively, if the shadow remains unconscious, it would simply continue to be projected onto others. Orienting oneself in an interconnectedness that is rooted in a recognition of our common imperfections, is to remain grounded in humility. When this is acknowledged, only then can any type of interfaith/intercultural dialogue be productive otherwise it remains a dialogue of the deaf. Obscured by an endless stream of phony debates (religion versus science, culture versus religion, culturally relative values etc) the basic question begging to be asked is about old fashioned virtues, 'the pursuit of the good'. I find it difficult to believe that the Ten Commandments are culturally 'relative'. Thus, the 'other' is critically crucial to my awareness/consciousness in different ways. S/he provides both a mirror which keeps me grounded in humility and a foil against whom I am urged to assess and develop my specific potential(s) in pursuit of the good.

Like individuals, religions share similar features but each has a unique 'mix' leading to a distinct profile in which certain aspects are emphasized

37 If anything, now the stuff is being generated as nuclear 'waste' and even as I speak there are ships dumping this in oceans or looking for poor countries that will willingly take it.

and others less. For example, fear, love and knowledge of God are common to the three monotheisms, but they are emphasized differently, giving each monotheism a unique identifying profile (Schuon, 1985). Christianity, for example, talks of fear and knowledge but its most prominent feature is love. Similarly, while fear and love are urged in the Quran, its main emphasis is on knowledge. Judaism too contains all these dimensions but the most prominent has to do with fear. All these are different *styles* of relationships to the Divine and today of course, are completely inverted in their expressions: instead of love there is hatred, instead of knowledge there is ignorance and instead of fear, a fearless-ness expressed at all levels of social and political life.

Before any of the monotheisms can claim their identifying essence, they too must confront their own shadow(s)/shit. Not only as it has accumulated over millennia, but especially in the denial and denigration of the Feminine by their patriarchal spokesmen and leaders.

CONCLUSION: PAST IMPERFECT, FUTURE TENSE

An honest admission of modernity means voluntarily declaring oneself bankrupt – what is still more painful – renouncing the halo of sanctity that history bestows.

(Jung, 1964: 152)

Having lived through two World Wars, Jung's writings are as much about the collective and cultural as they are about individual psychology³⁸. The bulk of his 20 Volume *Collected Works* focused on the Judaeo-Christian West and the role of 'the white man in general' in creating the modern world. While acknowledging the West's achievements he was also ruthlessly

38 This is not to suggest an uncritical acceptance of Jungian ideas particularly in light of Jung's own relative ignorance about Islam. Additionally, he has also drawn criticism from various quarters including certain schools of feminism for being essentialist and conservative. Simultaneously, there is a flourishing post-Jungian European-Anglo-American discourse and one which is not limited to the clinical context. In fact, it is more at the cultural level that Jung's ideas, reworked, expanded and deepened by post Jungian scholars, including feminists, continue to have a growing impact especially in the humanities and academic cultural studies, and in certain men's movements regarding religion and spirituality. To this extent, when utilized broadly, many of Jung's ideas remain useful in an arena in which the discourse on religion remains stultified at various levels.

critical since he perceived its ultimately enormous potential to destroy itself and the entire world.

A problematic controversial figure in the history of psychology, Jung can nevertheless be considered ahead of his time. Deriving his data from decades of psychiatric practice, Jung was of the view that the European was/is essentially 'pseudomodern' (Jung, 1964: 210). That is, white people are unconscious about themselves, their religion and the disastrous collective impact of this unconsciousness on the world. Christianity particularly, had been cut off from its ancient psycho-historical matrix in the Feminine, and scientific rationalism has prevented the unfolding, maturing and assimilation of the religious impulse in the consciousness of its white adherents. The Nietzschean 'death' of God has made the white man believe s/he is 'Almighty'. But this does not make him divine, "it merely fills him with arrogance and arouses everything evil in him" (Jung, 'After the Catastrophe', 1964: 437).

In the light of the two World Wars and the large scale man-made catastrophes of the last century and till today, the truly modern westerner person would be at the very least, sceptical about such 'progress'. Whether as Christian believer or atheist, in both instances, Jung's diagnosis is bad news, even dangerous, not only for the West but because of its power, for the rest of the world. The danger comes from the white person's "loss of 'soul'/psyche", and the global impact of terrible distortions created by it.

The only way forward is by looking into the rear view mirror of cultural history. For the West, it means a clarity and recognition of one's past and a heightened self-awareness of the destructive capacities of the self: an acknowledgment of the individual and collective 'shadow', of guilt not just limited to the Holocaust which was a symptom of a deeper malaise. This is a painful process, requiring ruthless honesty and self contemplation, and few individuals are willing to do this.

For Jung a truly modern person, then, "is often to be found among those who call themselves old fashioned" (ibid.). That is, those who can examine the existential self awareness of one's own destructive potential and yet remain connected with the eternal dimensions of religion. Hence, the genuinely modern person is a radical, since s/he interprets religion according to the context of the time and not official dogma, as lived experience not just blind faith: "modern man abhors faith and the religions based on it ... he wants to *know*, to experience for himself" (Jung, 1964: 171) The emergent identity is not based on an inflated grandiosity about self, history, religion, but a tentative humility grounded in religious/universal values.

A rare occurrence as an ideal-type, this combination of existential self-awareness and a recognition of an inner, transcendent impulse, was becoming evident in the West, even during Jung's life time and especially towards the end of the war. Since the 1960s this subjective current in the West is now fully visible in the spectrum of New Age movements and the search for spiritual alternatives. How successful they are for the modern westerner is another matter, but collectively, they signal the paradoxical problematics and potentials of what Jung called 'modern man in search of soul':

This then is the great problem that faces the whole of Christianity: where now is the sanction for goodness and justice which was once anchored in metaphysics? Is it really brute force that decides everything? Is the ultimate authority only the will of whatever man who happens to be in power? (Jung, 1964: 438)

On the whole, Jung remains, in many ways a prescient and important figure, not only in depth-psychology, but also for his ideas about Christianity as transmuted into a key factor in the cultural crisis of modernity. After the Second World War, the existential crisis of the European psyche, was for Jung, the initial stage of a post-Enlightenment *weltanschauung* and a sense of the self rooted in a more inward, contemplative attitude which, as I said earlier, has more to do with degree and depth, rather than action which seeks position and power. But as early as 1933, he sensed that this self reflective awareness would be problematic for the West, since the U.S.A. psychoculturally represented the antithesis of the requisite psychological qualities for self-awareness: "... we see as the Western world strikes up a more rapid tempo – the American tempo – the exact opposite of quietism... Perhaps it is a final race between aging Europe and young America" (Jung, 1964: 196). The race, for Jung, was about a spiritual and psychological self-awareness tempered by a profound recognition of one's inner capacity for destruction. This was the European experience. While leaving the 'winner' to history, Jung was certain that until the West as a whole came to terms with its 'shadow' World War II was simply a 'curtain raiser' for future catastrophes (Jung, 1964: 487). Unconscious of its shadow the west would continue behaving like a

... bird of prey with his insatiable lust to lord it in every land, even those that concern him not at all ... that megalomania of ours which leads us to suppose, among other things, that Christianity is the only

truth and the white Christ the only redeemer... To make matters worse, the enlightened European is of the opinion that religion and such things are good enough for the masses and for women, but of little consequence compared with immediate economic and political questions (Jung, 1964: 193, 185).

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MODERNOST, FUNDAMENTALIZMI I ISLAM: PSIHO-KULTURALNA PERSPEKTIVA

Autorica iz feminističke perspektive razlaže psihologiju islamističke muškosti i njegove izražaje u suvremenom globalnopolitičkom kontekstu, polazeći od premise da su korijeni psihološkog ekstremizma inherentni filozofskom diskursu zapadne modernosti i iskrivljenoj internalizaciji modernosti u ‘visokom’ i ‘niskom’ islamizmu. Sljedbenici obje varijante islamizma pokazuju izrazito moderne crte slične onom što feministkinje nazivaju hegemonijskom muškošću: hipermaskulinizam, intenzivnu mizoginiju i psihopatološki odnos prema rodnom. Locirajući svoj diskurs unutar post-psihoanalitičke kritike modernosti, autorica istražuje i aspekte tomu simetrične psihodinamike koja se nalazi u podlozi suvremene globalne paranoje sažete u ideji “ili si s nama ili si protiv nas”. Tako tekst razvija pojam ‘fundamentalizma’ kao fenomena usko vezanog za iskustvo zapadnoeuropske modernosti, koje se pak manifestira kao ‘mentalni sklop’ kojeg (post)jungijanci nazivaju ‘kartezijanskim kristijanizmom’. On je pak duboko vezan uz patrijarhalni, herojski maskulinizam te prožima globalno bujanje vjerskog fanatizma koji nastaje u kontekstu kolonijalizma i neoglobalizacije. Stoga islamistički preporod možemo promatrati kao nesvjesni kartezijansko-kristijanistički islamizam. Stvarnost globalnog ‘terorizma’ (islamističke politike, bombaši samoubojice) tako se nadaje kao posljedica penetracija: u psihološkom smislu, penetracije zapadnoeuropske (kartezijansko-kršćanske) modernosti, a u doslovnom penetracije homofobičnog/homoerotskog dijaloga/borbe/nasilja u jezik rata. Iz feminističke kritičke perspektive, islamski (i drugi) fundamentalizmi tako predstavljaju hipermaskuline izražaje koji umjetno negiraju duhovna nastojanja u korist logocentrične supremacističke misli. Tekst stoga upućuje na feminističke i kulturne prostore otpora hipermaskulinim, mizoginim tendencijama i otvara put prema uravnoteženijem ‘ženstvenom imaginariju’.

A DIVINE IMPERATIVE? GOD'S ROLE IN THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN POST-REVOLUTIONARY IRAN

Development does not take place in a vacuum; it cannot exist in isolation from external and internal influences. The vast literature within the post-colonial and post-development discourses has, if nothing else, demanded that development studies proceed with more inclusive, cautious and culturally sensitive projects. In this paper I will focus on the significance of religion as a powerful tool for women's empowerment. Conservative interpretations of religion have a negative reputation (especially Islam) in regard to broadening women's capabilities. However, there are several cases in which, even the most conservative interpretations of religion are utilized by women to secure various rights and access. I will use the case study of Iran and the implications of the religious rhetoric of the Islamic revolution and the post revolutionary state in two areas of women's empowerment and development: education and health. Although I will focus primarily on the positive achievements and strides forward, this is not to disregard the various complications and setbacks women have faced under the Islamic Republic. Due to the brevity of this paper it is not possible to address all of the complexities regarding this issue and instead I present a narrative that challenges predominant stereotypes and misconceptions of Islam and "gender development". Through a discussion of the importance of indigenous (or grassroots) development this paper will illustrate the power of the "voice

of God” in improving the situation for women (in education and health) within the Iranian context.

Religion and development: rejection of the “my way or the highway” moto

The impact of the post-colonial critique on the development paradigm has significantly challenged the imperial nature of “modernization” projects in the Third World. Scholars such as Edward Said, Chandra Mohanty and Gayatri Spivak explain the importance of empowering and legitimizing “sub-altern”, native and indigenous paradigms. For them, the greatest crisis of colonial and neo-colonial projects is the colonization of the mind and the imposition of the Western paradigm. Post-colonial scholars challenge the very meaning of development as rooted in colonial discourse where the North is enlightened and progressive and the South is backward, degenerative and primitive. Ashis Nandy joins in this criticism by denouncing the anthropocentric doctrines of modern imperialism (sophisticated methods of acculturation) as ancient forces of greed, dominance and violence (Nandy, 2008). Although Amartya Sen is wary of this cultural relativism, these voices of rejection from the “barbaric world” have left their impact on the development discourse. To Arturo Escobar, post-colonial critics have “the potential to turn a critique of conventional development into productive ‘relearning’ to see and reassess the reality” (McEwan, 2008: 126). Although there still is much progress to be made, at least it is no longer assumed that development projects will be accompanied by the acquisition of Western cultural traits and values.

The shift from the dichotomy of the West and the “rest” is particularly important. The previous paradigm of traditional societies as evolutionary dead ends and Western as modern, innovative and efficient no longer stands without criticism. Although post-colonial theorists are criticized for the esoteric nature of their criticisms their critiques bring forth essential and poignant points. Escobar comments that “language is fundamental to the way we order, understand, intervene and justify” interventions in the developing world (McEwan, 2008: 126). Restructuring the way we speak and write about development is just as important as the projects on the ground. Taking this into consideration, even the definition of culture has seen a revision from one that is inherently stagnant to one that is an active component of social change. “Culture is not only a product or vehicle of ac-

commodation and contestation but is increasingly used as a development tool by a variety of development actors (international agencies, government, non-governmental organizations and grass roots activist" (Schech & Haggis, 2008: 53). The World Development Report in 2000 claimed that the fight against poverty must build on the social capital that bonds communities together and foster vertical ties between the poor and affluent (Ibid.) Following the same fashion, the World Bank now argues that there is a need "not only to help bring global knowledge to developing countries but also to learn about indigenous knowledge (IK) from these countries, paying particular attention to the knowledge base of the poor" (Briggs, 2008: 108). By effectively undermining the notion of a single path to development the post-colonial critique ushered in a diversity of perspectives and priorities. In the past native cultures were considered irrational, imbued with folklore and too place specific to offer any meaningful solution to underdevelopment (Briggs, 2008: 108). Yet, thanks to scholars like Spivak, Escobar and Said the monopolistic development paths of the North have been deeply challenged and uprooted making way for a diversity of perspectives and priorities. "The remaking of development must start by examining local constructions, to the extent that they are the life of and history of the people, that is, the conditions of and conditions for development" (Briggs, 2008: 107). Today there is an increasing recognition of the importance of indigenous knowledge by development practitioners.

Challenging stereotypes and misconceptions are critical to this new mandate. It is important to ask: Who decides the development imperative? Who speaks on behalf of whom? Who is silenced by this discourse? These questions help us to understand how location, economic role, social dimensions of identity and the global political economy differentiate between groups and capabilities for development. Post-colonial feminisms, for example, allow for competing and disparate voices among women. Rather than reproducing colonialist power relations where knowledge is both produced and received in the West they demand a plurality of voices where each woman can speak for herself. No longer do white middle-class women have the power or prerogative to speak for their "silenced sisters" in the South (McEwan, 2008: 126). Muslim feminists do not look to Western ideas of feminism but instead look to their own religion for liberation and inspiration. They demand their rights from within the Islamic framework and believe that Islam honors, respects and empowers women. They cite special provisions from within Islamic law that give women extra rights in some cases even above men. For example, in Islam women are encouraged

to work and are not obliged to share their income with their family or society, whereas men are obliged by Islam to provide. (Shavarini, 2005: 332). Women enjoy these types of “benefits” in Western societies where Muslim feminists claim that women are forced to subscribe to the dominant masculine archetype.

A statement by Dr. Shahin Tabatabai, Khomeini’s delegate to the tenth Women’s Conference of the United Nations graphically articulates this point:

Muslim women have been used by Western imperial powers, who encourage them to become Westernized, to give up the traditional spiritual, ethical and religious values of their society for the sake of an empty, absurd and consuming society. This is what the West does to the brains and spirits of the East. It empties its contents. It was this that Muslim women were forced to leave their own cultural mold, their human values and adopt alien characteristics. Then, empty handed, with an impotent spirit, they were left crippled and without content, like robots to fulfill the Western imperialist intentions. They made us believe that our religion was full of myths, was old fashioned and had no spiritual meaning, was reactionary, ugly and detestable (Reeves, 1989: 154-5).

To achieve effective empowerment and autonomy over their own lives women must search from within their own paradigm. Scholars like Spivak, Mohanty and Said through their work have reiterated the importance and strength of development from within. This means rediscovering their own culturally specific alternative definitions of a “good life” that is feasible in their own local spaces (Esteva & Prakash, 1997). This indigenous redefinition is what forcefully and violently took place in Iran during the Islamic Revolution.

THE IRANIAN CASE

Iranian Revolution: rejecting Westoxification

The Iranian Islamic Revolution was one of the greatest wake up calls to Western nations regarding the negative consequences and implications of forced modernization (Westernization). The pro-Western Shah of Iran was

overthrown by a popular revolution in 1979. The rhetoric surrounding the Islamic Revolution focused on the rejection of imposed Western (destructive) values on the Iranian population by the secular agenda Shah. The revolution was a mass grassroots movement supported by both religious and secular sections of society reacting to Reza Shah's hypocritical policies that threatened both Iran's national and religious identity. The demands of those involved with the anti-Shah movement were overwhelmingly about social justice and freedom from Western imperialism. Concerns regarding the "Westoxification" of the Iranian women were central to the revolutionary rhetoric. To most revolutionaries the Shah's ideal woman was the embodiment of all social ills and during the revolution shouted slogans against the concept of women as "objects" of mindless value and demanded respect and social value for all women. Traditional Iranian society not only esteems women for their role as mothers but also as bearers of familial and community honor or *namus*. The importance of *namus* in Persian culture cannot be overstated. It comes as no surprise then that the policies of the Shah, which jeopardized the protection of this essential value of *namus*, instigated mass mobilization. Numerous religious activists and religious clerics addressed the issue of protecting women's social value. Ayatollah Khomeini, the recognized leader of the revolution, promised freedom, equality and dignity to women. He claimed, "Islam has never been against the freedom of women. It is, to the contrary, opposed to the idea of woman-as-object and it gives her back her dignity" (Paidar, 1997: 214). Khomeini spoke to the common held belief that women would benefit by returning to the Islamic dictum. As Afshaneh Najmabadi comments, "The glory and depth of Iran's Islamic Revolution was its recognition that in order for a revolution to occur woman must be transformed. The centrality of gender to the construction of an Islamic political discourse thus changed that which had been marginal, secondary, postponed, illegitimate and discredited by the previous regime of the Shah into that which was to be central, primary, immediate, and authentic" (Najmabadi, 1998: 60). For many Iranians Islam gave them the rhetoric and divine mandate to reject outside imperial control - especially when it came to women.

Women's involvement and enthusiasm during the revolution significantly contributed to the transformation of gender relations into a revolutionary discourse. Their movement into the political sphere was further supported by Ali Shariati's emphasis on Fatima, the granddaughter of the prophet Mohammad, as the prime role model for Iranian women (Shariati, 1980). Fatima was not only respected for her qualities as a mother and

wife but more importantly for her political activism as a revolutionary Shia woman. Ayatollah Morteza Mottahari and Ali Shariati argued in their lectures, writings and sermons that Islam does not stand in the way of women's education, work and active participation in society. On the contrary, they asserted that Islam gives women honored and privileged place in the community (Esfandiari, 1997: 35). Once Iranian women were encouraged into the public sphere not only by the rhetoric of the revolution and later by post Iraq war economic necessity they did not retreat.

The redefinition and politicization of gender identity by revolutionary rhetoric manifested itself materially in the adoption of the veil by activist women. The veil came to symbolize the rejection of imposed modernization and Westernization by the Shah. Many non-religious women even took to wearing the veil during the revolution as a political statement of liberation from the sex-object mentality of the West. Furthermore, not only did the veil become a powerful political statement, it also became a means of bypassing sexual harassment and gaining respect (Afshar, 1996: 124). The veil, as a culturally and religiously significant custom took on a new meaning and sent an unavoidable message to Western feminists around the globe. To many Western feminists, the veil represented seclusion, gender segregation, subordination and honor and still is touted as a symbol of women's bondage in a religiously legitimized patriarchal world. Yet, Muslim feminists in Iran assert that the veil is a native form of expression that liberates and protects women from sexual abuses that permeate Western societies (Shavarini, 2005: 332-3). The freedom to freely mix with men (and not be harassed) was one of the most liberating experiences for women activists during the revolution, something that Western women rarely experience. Women may enter men's spheres in the West but they are expected to take on certain male characteristics to maintain respect and are still largely treated as sex objects. Women who adopted the veil during the Islamic revolution demanded to be valued not for their bodies but for their political and social contributions to society. During these anti-Shah movements the gender division of role and space diminished significantly leading to one of the most noteworthy accomplishments of the Islamic revolution - the mass entrance of women into the public sphere.

The confinement to the private sphere is one of the largest obstacles to women's empowerment worldwide and the dictum of the Islamic revolution broke down that barrier almost overnight. Ayatollah Khomeini was not just the leader of the revolutionary movement but also an authoritative and revered religious figure. Thus, when he called for women to attend

public demonstrations and ignore night curfews his 'permission' effectively allowed women to leave their homes without their husbands' or fathers' permissions (Bahramitash, 2003: 233). He took away the doubt in women's minds about the propriety of taking to the streets at any time of day or night. Khomeini put Islam on women's side and gave them a new and extremely powerful weapon for their struggle towards empowerment. On his triumphant return from exile in March of 1979 he addressed his women followers and told them, "Islam has involved and will involve women in *every* aspect of life" (Reeves, 1989: 181). With Islam now as part of their arsenal women entered the previously male dominated public sphere.

Islam: revealing opportunities for women

Through the movement of women into the public sphere during the revolution, and the support of religious rhetoric to remain there, women found a plethora of new opportunities. Iranian women took the language of Islam into their own hands in order to counteract many of the attempts by the post revolutionary regime to return them to the private sphere. As Haideh Moghissi comments, "The Islamic regime has not opened the gates. Women are jumping over the fences" (Najmabadi, 1998: 59). Contemporary Iranian women activists, like Nobel Prize winner Shireen Ebadi, who place their demands within the language of Islam, impose a divine mandate on their government to address their concerns. It was as devout Muslims that elite women in Iran have successfully encountered the demands of them and took the Islamic republic to task for not delivering in its Islamic duties (Afshar, 1996). "In virtually every field- family law, employment, the arts, presence in the public sphere and space, even matters of dress- women forced the government to retreat" (Esfandiari, 1997: 42). Demands were no longer framed by "I want" but "I am entitled to" within the context of Islam (Kian-Theibaut, 2002). It is from within the religious framework that women in Iran of all sections of society have made significant developments (not only elites) especially when compared to gender and development indicators in other the Middle Eastern nations¹.

1 It must be noted here that there was indeed a minority of elite and more Western educated women who faced negative consequences after the 1979. These women comprise a majority of the ex-patriot Iranians that left the country after the Islamic Revolution and, hence, their memoirs and research view the Revolution and its aftermath as primarily negative. Writings from Marjane Satrapi (*Persepolis*) and Azar Nafisi (*Reading Lolita in Tehran*) are from this particular standpoint. Their concerns and views are well known within Western socio-politics and my quest here is not to discount their concerns and frustrations but to focus on another viewpoint

Examples of positive effects

Paradoxically the implementation of *sharia* law in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution has made women major protagonists of social, cultural political change. These changes have created greater autonomization and individualization of women (Kian-Thiebaut, 2002). Empowerment is defined by UNICEF as the “collective action by the oppressed and deprived to overcome obstacles of struggle and inequality which have previously put them in a disadvantaged position” (Golnar, 1999: 203). In terms of empowerment and poverty reduction, education and health are two of the most important factors for women.

Education

Since the Islamic revolution in 1979 the percentage of educated women in Iran has dramatically increased. One of Ayatollah Khomeini’s critical goals in his population policies was the education of the masses. Khomeini proclaimed that getting an education was a religious duty for all Iranians, including women. Before the fall of the Pahlavi dynasty, female enrolment in universities reached a peak of around 31 percent (Shavarini, 2005: 334). These low figures illustrate the unequal access to education during the Shah’s period. Women who remained illiterate or outside the education system were mainly from traditional and religious families who lived in rural areas or held lower incomes. Statistics show a huge shift after the 1990s. For example, before 1970, 55 percent of all females in Iran were illiterate but that number dropped to 8.7 by 1999 (Bahramitash & Kazemipour, 2004: 37). In addition, according to the Human Development Report 2007/8 the adult female literacy rate is at 77 percent and youth (15-24) literacy is at an all time high at 97 percent (Nations, 2007/8). During the early years after the revolution Khomeini further promoted women’s involvement in education through the Iranian Literacy Movement Organization (LMO). This organization addressed women whose greatest obstacle to education was the distance they had to travel to learning centers. The Iranian LMO took every measure to hold meetings close to residential homes and sometimes even sent instructors into villages and private residences (Golnar, 1999: 205). These efforts were very effective and many women who would not have otherwise received an education now had the opportunity to read and write within a safe “Islamic” space.

that is not usually addressed or acknowledged outside of Iran.

The Islamic packaging of Iranian Universities effectively established and secured the trust of traditional families who compose a majority of the Iranian population. Sociologist Jaleh Shaditalab from Tehran University comments on the importance of “Islamic packaging”:

Before the revolution, some families did not want their girls to go to school because their teachers would have been men. But since it came in an Islamic packaging, the people were more willing to accept it as Islamic education. That’s why you see the rate of enrolment in schools rise. Now we see the share of girls in universities... (and) families now think the universities are teaching Islamic beliefs, and that there is not harm in their daughters going to university because they are sleeping in (single-sex) dormitories (Shavarini, 2005: 336).

Furthermore, the gender segregation that came along with the Islami-zation of education was particularly effective in drawing out women from conservative and traditional families. These families (majority of Iranians) no longer feared for the reputation of their daughters if they went to school as they would not be mixing with boys. As seen from the statistics quoted above nearly every woman in Iran today receives a basic level of education. More women each year apply for higher education. Currently the number of women enrolled in universities has surpassed that of men and in 2006 women comprised 65 percent of incoming students. Also, in several previously male dominated fields women are taking over. For example, in the applied physics department of Azad University, 70 percent of the graduates are women - a statistic that would make many Western universities proud (Harrison, 2006). There has even been talk within the *majlis* (parliament) of instituting affirmative action for men in some fields that women now dominate (Shavarini, 2005: 331). With fewer distractions and less options for their free time women pour themselves into their studies. Women find great freedom and refuge in their education.

Islamic feminists see education as the most important step towards empowerment for women. This reverence for education has existed in Iran for centuries making it is no surprise that women today still seek respect, value and independence through education. Under the current Islamic republic the religious education of women is essential to reclaiming Islam from the misogynist clutches of many male religious leaders. Greater access to education and the right that women are exercising in learning about their faith

and what it offers them has been the most important pathway to success (Afshar, 2007: 419). Azam Nuri, one of the first women to be promoted to the higher echelons of civil service emphasizes the importance of education: "Women must arm themselves with knowledge, they must seek to learn at any age under any condition be it at work or at home...They must study. Our religion recognizes no limit whatsoever for learning and the acquisition of knowledge. Once humanity is armed with knowledge, it can remove all the problems" (Afshar, 2007: 427).

Health

Health and education are two factors that usually go hand in hand. There are many studies that illustrate the positive relationship between health and education. Each factor increases the success and improvement of the other. Demographer Marie Ladier-Fouladi has noticed an extraordinary shift in women's health and consequently women's consciousness. It is usually assumed that conservative, and especially in fundamentalist societies, that fertility rates increase instead of decrease due to the discouraged use of contraceptives. In Iran, however, the situation is quite opposite. Contraceptives are in fact endorsed and encouraged by the Islamic state and empirical evidence shows a significant decline in the number of children being born. Fertility rates steadily declined after the revolution from 7.9 in 1966 to 6.8 in 1981 but after the mid-1980s fertility rates plummeted drastically to 3.5 in 1993 (Ladier-Fouladi, 1997: 197). The UN Human Development Report for 2007/8 now shows Iran's fertility rate at 2.1 - nearly the same as the United States. Part of the reason for the decline was Imam Khomeini's *fatwa* in 1980 regarding birth control where he declared that Islam in fact authorized contraceptives. This legitimated the use of contraceptives for a predominantly conservative society and the Ministry of Health even set up free clinics to distribute contraceptives. Furthermore, Iran has the only state funded condom factory in the Middle East and actively encourages contraception as a means of family planning. Again, similar to the United States, nearly 75 percent of the population in Iran uses contraceptives whereas in Jordan (a country championed by the United States for its more "Western" policies) remains at a mere 56 percent (Nations, 2007/8).

In addition to clinics that disburse a whole range of free contraceptives, sex education for couples who wish to get married is mandatory. Iran is the only country in the world where engaged couples cannot receive a marriage license unless they show that they have attended contraception classes

(Muir, 2002). "In the first half hour (of these classes), the students watch a film dealing with the sexual needs of men and women, telling them how to stimulate their partners and explaining to them about the erogenous zones of men and women" (Roshanak, 2005). Such sexual education is unparalleled by any other Middle Eastern country. The importance of healthy families in Shia Islam and Iranian culture means that discussions about healthy and pleasurable sex are not only accepted but are *essential* to promoting a healthy society. Healthy families and happy satisfied couples mean a stronger Islamic society. Unlike other Islamic countries where discussions about sex are taboo the Iranian government and people embrace the importance of sexual education as part of a religious right and duty.

Not only has the fertility rate changed dramatically but also infant mortality severely dropped with the introduction of the social services of the Islamic Republic. A government that is informed by the laws of Islam must also provide for the basic needs of its citizens. It is part of its moral obligation. From 1976 to 1991 the infant mortality rate of 112 per 1,000 births dropped to 32 per 1,000 births as recorded by the Ministry of Health. Such a substantial drop can no doubt be attributed to the achievements of vaccination coverage, which increased from 20 percent before the revolution to 92 percent in 1991 (Ladrier-Fouladi, 1997: 203). This reduction of infant mortality has favored a drop in the desired number of children. Women are both motivated and armed with supplies and education to control their pregnancies. This awareness is particularly empowering and today you find a new self-consciousness and a desire to exist as an individual within Iranian women.

Implications and future consequences

The above discussion of the Islamic Revolution and its impact on Iranian woman within the spheres of education and health clearly show that there are definite advantages to the use of religion in contemporary Iran. Iranian Muslim feminists cite education as the most important social institution for the advancement of women's status. By raising women's consciousness about education has provided a platform from which the achievements above have been made. Knowledge of what obstacles and barriers women face is the first step towards empowerment. Furthermore, higher education provides an intellectual space where women can begin to reassess their public and private roles. This awareness, combined with improved health, gives women a fighting chance at improving their own situation. The key here is

that Iranian women will improve *their own* situation. Assistance from external sources should not be abandoned but it is important that the feminist movement in Iran maintain its integrity and is not co-opted or assimilated. Each painstaking step forward is significantly more sustainable than an external development project because it comes from within. Iranian feminists remain critical of both mainstream Western feminism and of misogynist interpretations of Islam. The use of Islamic values and rhetoric still maintains an important place in civil society today as is evident by the debates surrounding the green movement spurred by the 2009 presidential election.

How can the improvements in education and health mentioned above translate into substantive rights and realities? The answer is not simple but with more education and better health women have addressed not only a goal of development but an indicator of development. These improvements in their basic nature are necessary preconditions for improvements in other areas. For example, women pursue higher education for several different reasons yet probably the most common and important reason is to achieve financial independence (either as individuals or from their parents). In an article regarding the feminization of higher education Shavarini shows that women seek a better and financially more secure life through their education. University education provides women not only with respect and freedom but the improved opportunity for a suitable marriage (enhances their dowry) or entrance into the job market (Shavarini, 2005).

These advancements, however, do not come without setbacks and obstacles. Women's participation greatly exceeding men's in universities and there is increased competition for jobs in a country with a large youth population and high unemployment, not to mention the negative impact of renewed sanctions and hostile relations with the United States. As Iranian women and men continue reflect on and re-evaluate their roles and identities their demands and expectations of the post-revolutionary regime will be hotly and intensely debated. The immediate signs of such intense social transformation surfaced in the aftermath of the 2009 presidential election. The rise of the Green Movement and the debates within and without illustrate that religion still remains an important and critical tool for civil society. There are disparate interpretations and uses of Islam but its central yet complex role cannot be denied or negated.

Taking all these factors in mind, what is clear from the above illustration is that religion has been and will continue to be a powerful tool for women in Iran to improve their situation. The importance and power of indigenous knowledge and the voice of the subaltern woman could not be

illustrated in a more poignant example. Women in Iran have rejected both Western ideas and misogynist notions from within Islam and Iranian culture. They have and continue to redefine themselves on their own terms and no one else's. By taking Islam into their hands through education women in Iran are forcing men, religious scholars and the government to reconsider several gender preconceptions. Therefore, from the development perspective, it is important to continue to respect the richness of Iran's internal debate and the integral role women play in shaping Iranian politics through their use of religious rhetoric and values.

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Sažetak

BOŽANSKI IMPERATIV? BOŽJA ULOGA U OSNAŽIVANJU ŽENA U POST-REVOLUCIONARNOM IRANU

Rad se fokusira na značenje religije kao moćnog oružja za žensko osnaživanje. Konzervativne interpretacije religije imaju negativnu reputaciju (posebice islam) glede proširenja ženskih sposobnosti. Međutim, u nekim slučajevima žene koriste čak i najkonzervativnije interpretacije religije kako bi osigurale različita prava i pristup u društvu. Autorica na primjeru Irana raspravlja implikacije korištenja islama nakon Islamske revolucije u dvije sfere: ženskom obrazovanju i zdravstvu. Predstavljena je naracija koja se suprotstavlja prevladavajućim stereotipima i pogrešnim shvaćanjima o Iranu, islamu i „rodu i razvoju“. Kroz raspravu o važnosti unutarnjeg razvoja, rad ilustrira moć „božjeg glasa“ u poboljšanju situacije za žene (u području obrazovanja i zdravstva) unutar iranskog konteksta.

DIVINE WOMEN: ON YOUNG FEMALE MIDDLE CLASS BHARATANATYAM DANCERS IN DELHI

A short introduction to Bharatanatyam

According to Hindu mythology, *Shiva* was the first dancer of what was later to become Bharatanatyam. He was asked by *Brahma* to dance for a group of gods and goddesses. They were all so pleased by his performance that he was requested to ensure that humans would learn his dance in order to continuously entertain the gods (Rangacharya 1996:2). When Shiva's wife *Parvati* copied her husband's dance, she danced in a very soft and feminine way, and this was similarly appreciated. Shiva and Parvati then instructed a sage by the name of *Bharata Muni* in the masculine (*tandava*) as well as the feminine (*lasya*) movements. He was asked to pass on this knowledge of the dance to humanity by writing a text with the specification of the enactment of the stories of the gods and goddesses, a text which at the same time was intended to educate people with divine knowledge through entertainment (Rangacharya 1996:xxi). Bharata Muni is said to be the author of the *Natya Sastra* written around the 2nd AD, a book on theater and dance techniques still read by dancers today.

Historically, the first signs of a dance practice resembling present day *Bharatanatyam* was in the South Indian areas of *Tamil Nadu* during the 5th century (Gaston 2005:27; Kersenboom 1989). The dancers, now known as the *Devdasis*, were connected to village temples where they would dance

daily in front of statues of temple deities as well as outside the temples during processions. The dancer was ritually married to the temple deity for whom she did many daily chores, of which an important one was dancing for their pleasure. Through a second ceremony, a patron (often royalty or wealthy landowner) would be selected for her. After the ceremony the Devdasi was to perform in her patron's court or home to entertain him in addition to her ritual dance in the temple (Gaston 2005:40). The Devdasi tradition peaked in the 17th and 18th century, when they were generously supported by the royal court of Thanjavur. During this time there were Devadasis who even owned their own land, and enjoyed a certain amount of freedom as they were not married to 'common' men.

However, as power structures shifted with the growing power of the British in the 19th century, the prestige of the Devdasis declined as they were less supported by the court. Gradually they as entertainers outside of the temples became associated with prostitution. This eventually led to the introduction of the Devdasi Bill of 1947, in which dance was banned as part of temple rituals in Tamil Nadu (Gaston 2005:80).

During the same time a number of upper class *Brahmins* in *Madras* started calling for a revival of the dance (Gaston 2005:81). By then the dance was reinterpreted for stage performance by non-Devdasis and was named Bharatanatyam. As part of this revival of the dance, the dance itself moved from the villages to the cities, where a number of dance institutes were founded. Today, Bharatanatyam has spread from Tamil Nadu to all the larger cities where thousands of students are learning from both private teachers and at dance institutes.

Bharata means India and *natya* means dance in Sanskrit, a name given to the dance previously called *sadir*, during the revival of the dance. Today Bharatanatyam is considered one of nine national dances in India. The dance consists both of purely rhythmic (*nritya*) parts as well as narrative parts. The narrative dance (*natya*) depicts stories from Hindu mythology as well as the relationship between the gods and their devotees.

In 2005 while an MA student of anthropology in Copenhagen, I enrolled as a dance student in one of the dance institutes of Delhi. For seven months I came daily to learn the dance and to talk to the dancers, in order to understand the significance of the dance for young middle class women (before marriage) in an urban environment. In the following I wish to bring out the significance of the spiritual element in the dance and how this may become empowering for women in a setting which is primarily male dominated. It is important to note that the significance of the dance

is dependent on the life circumstances, related to gender, class, age and location of each dancer, and is not as such inherent in the dance. However, it is beyond the scope of this article to discuss these axes of inequality as I focus on a specific segment of dancers, who are those dominating the field of Bharatanatyam in numbers and in the level to which they are exposed to the dance at nationally recognised stages.

The paper is divided into two parts. In the first part I illustrate how dance when implied as a methodology in academic work, can overcome a clear distinction between faith and knowledge. The second part consists of observations on how Bharatanatyam dance affects the dancers experience of her position in society, and basically empowers her.

Dancing to know

Fredrik Barth, in a study on the cosmology of New Guinea, has argued that cosmology should not be understood as an ordered whole existing independently of its producers. Cosmology should be approached as a living tradition of knowledge (Barth 1987:86). People partake in the production of cosmos by constantly integrating personal experiences into their conception of cosmos (Barth 1987:87). In this line I see the practice of Bharatanatyam as a practice of generating a cosmos in which they can move close to the divine. The dancers relationship to Hindu gods and goddesses, is not based on belief or faith but on personal experiences with the gods and goddesses through the embodiment of both the gods as well as their devotees, an experience that overcomes distinctions between the sacred and the mundane.

The best way of unfolding this statement I believe is by giving more insight into the methodology which brought me to an understanding of the cosmos in which the dancers move. A methodology which not only opened up for my understanding of the dance, but also a sense of the levels of reality in which people moved around me in India as well as elsewhere.

Richard Schechner, a Professor of Performance Studies, has pointed out that whereas academics have mainly dealt with performing arts from the point of view of the performance, people working within the arts have mainly dealt with the learning process (Schechner 1985:16). Also within anthropology, dance has primarily been studied in its finished form (in a performance situation) rather than through the coming into being of dance (in the dance practice). One reason might be that anthropologists first of all have been interested in the interrelationship between dance and society. As a consequence, the focus has directly or indirectly been put on the function

of dance in relation to society. This is either a function for the dancers as a form of communication, or a function for the society as a form of integration (Reed 1998, Spencer 1985, Hanna 1996).

My approach was more phenomenological and existential. I was first of all interested in what the dance did to the dancers. I was working with the assumption that dance is a way of exploring life. This was inspired by my supervisor Kirsten Hastrup's work on Shakespeare theatre. I believe her assumptions on theatre may easily be transferred to dance, especially in the case of Bharatanatyam as it is not only abstract movements, but also a form of dance theatre. Hastrup claims that theatre is not a metaphor of life, but life itself (Hastrup 2004a:19). The important point that Hastrup makes is that even though we may be able to distinguish between life and art, there is no ontological difference between the two as art is a way of living (Hastrup 2004a:313). Thinking beyond those distinction in this particular field brought me to challenging distinctions between the sacred and the profane, knowledge and belief as well as subject and object.

The point is that dance was a unique opportunity for me to experience the relationship one can have to Hindu gods and goddesses. By learning to embody Shiva and show love for Krishna, I got an insight into Hinduism which was not based on written information, peoples explanations, but on personal experiences. In that manner dance was a methodology – one might say a feminine methodology – which gave space to the body and to emotions.

The differentiation between knowledge and belief is implicitly connected to the distinction between science and religion. Traditionally within anthropology of religion, this distinction was at the same time what differentiated 'us', the scientist, from 'them', our informants. Whereas 'we' have knowledge based on objective reflectivity, 'they', coming from a worldview based on religion and magic, have belief (Overing 1993:3). Even though their belief might have its own rationality, as Evans-Pritchard for example illustrated in his seminal work on witchcraft of the Azande (Evans-Pritchard 1963), still *our* knowledge is the truth in terms of what is the reality of things. The differentiation between science/knowledge and religion/belief is thus based on a differentiation on the level of ontology between an objective reality and an imaginary world.

Anthropologists have most often approached religion at the level of how it is practiced, namely through religious rituals (Eriksen 1998:297). Religious rituals are then seen as the dramatic element of religion. However, we should be careful to assume that ritual is an expression of a belief already

there. From that vantage I do not only see Bharatanatyam as a representation of a Hindu worldview. On the contrary I claim that Bharatanatyam is a practice, generating a experiences of different levels of the relationship between human and divine beings, out of which a sense of one's position in cosmos develops. In order to understand just parts of the complexity of this relationship I need to give some more details about the dance itself.

Dancing with Krishna

The Devdasis' dance developed as part of the *Bhakti movement* that appeared during the 8th century AD in South and East India. The Bhakti movement was an alternative to the Vedic order of the Brahmin priests, as devotees could reach the divine directly by establishing an emotional relationship to gods and goddesses. *Bhakti* is translated as devotion (Fuller 2004:155). Emphasis was placed on the arts as a path to the divine. In the 18th century when the Devadasi tradition was at its highest, music compositions were created on the basis of Bhakti poetry describing the relationship between a god and devotee, compositions which still form a basis of the bharatanatyam dance today.

In bhakti-poetry the god is addressed in a devotional manner. The idea that one can reach the divine through devotion was preached by *Krishna* in the *Bhagvad Geeta*¹. This levelled devotion and emotion with the textual knowledge of the Brahmin priests. Today the principle of bhakti is integrated into general Hindu practices.

The bhakti-poetry is written by men, however, the narrator is a first-person female. The poems are about a *nayika* (heroine) longing for her beloved Lord, the *nayaka* (hero), who in many cases is *Krishna*. Dancers explained to me that the intensity of the ultimate longing to unite with the divine is best compared with a female's longing for her beloved. In the movements, the dancers perform both the part of the *nayika* and *nayaka*, but with a focus put on the *nayika* (female devotee).

In the poems and in the dance, the primary emotion is *sringara-bhakti* translated as devotional love. One dancer illustrated what this means in the following quote:

1 This was the only text I heard the dancers refer to when trying to explain their belief. The Bhagvad Geeta exists as part of the important Indian epic, the Mahabharata. It stands out from the rest of the story as it is written in poetic language. The Bhagvad Geeta is translated as 'the Lord's song' and consists of the words song by Krishna as he manifested himself on earth to his devotee Arjuna at a battlefield (Dowson 1984:43).

You cannot show bhakti separately and love separately. For me bhakti comes because of love (...) when you take bhakti the love goes to the god. So when you are performing, when you are expressing yourself to the god it is not only love. Because he is beyond everything worldly, normal love is not there, it is bhakti. Like spirituality is involved with love. It is not only love, it is spiritual love.

To understand this spiritual love it is necessary to have a sense of the nature of Krishna. Krishna is considered to be the 8th incarnation (*avatar*) of Vishnu, born on earth to save humanity from evil (Dowson 1984:160). As a child he was extremely naughty, but was still adored by everyone around him. As an adult he became something of a lady charmer, and all the milkmaids (*gopikas*) in his village were in love with him. In a popular image of Krishna, he is in the woods dancing with each and every gopika, all simultaneously. This is said to illustrate that he had the power for each person to feel his presence at the same time. Most dancers will explain how Krishna has become their favorite god after learning dance items like *varnams* and *padams* that involve Krishna. One dancer gave the following reason for Krishna being her favorite god:

Krishna, he is more worldly, he enjoys life. Rama [7th avatar of Vishnu] is so idealistic, I don't want to be too idealistic. Vishnu and Shiva you cannot approach you can only praise them, you cannot be one with them. I can imagine playing with Krishna, I cannot imagine playing with Shiva.

In playing with Krishna and by showing him spiritual love a separation between the worldly and the divine is bridged. Durkheim not only divided the world into the sacred and the profane, but also the human being itself. In his theory on religion, the soul is associated with the sacred and the body with the profane (Durkheim 1915:262), which to a great extent is a mirror of a dominant Christian cosmology at the time of writing. However, playing with Krishna or showing love for Krishna is not an act of a soul existing independent of the body, rather the emotions are deeply rooted in the body.

In dances based on bhakti poetry (e.i. *varnam* items), the dancer starts by illustrating a single paragraph or sentence from a poem (referred to as a 'line'). Then this line is repeated several times in the song. As the line is repeated the dancer "leaves" the language of that line and dances another scene, where the same kind of emotions are felt. One dancer gave me the fol-

lowing example to illustrate how. The line is of a poem describing how a *na-yika* (heroine) saw a reflection of Krishna in the water and looked back and saw that he was not there. After having danced that situation, the dancer can choose to dance a scene where she sees the light of Krishna in the woods and afterwards realizes that it is the light of the moon. As an experienced dancer you are free to work with different elaborations.

Another way of elaborating on the above line can be in showing varying emotions that can be felt in that same situation. The dancer can show how the glimpse of Krishna in the water brought happiness knowing that he pays attention to her. She also can redo that situation by showing the sorrow she feels as she realizes that Krishna is not there. Or she can show the jealousy she feels, because she believes that Krishna only pays attention to her for such a short time compared to other devotees. All these are thought of as different aspects of one's feelings for the god. The cyclical nature of the elaborative dance is a way of deepening one's feelings for the god and the longing to be united with the divine. This is conceptualized as a longing of the soul. One of the dancers described:

The *na-yika* represents the *atma*, the individual soul, which wants the union with the *paramatma*, which wants the union with the god.

The Sanskrit word for soul, *atma* has two meanings: individual soul and supreme soul. This is an interpretation related to the Vedanta philosophy. Vedanta is among the most influential branches of Indian spiritual philosophy. It is associated with the *Upanishads* scriptures in which the divine is represented through a poetic form in a mystical as well as monistic way. In this philosophy the *atma* or supreme soul is one single entity residing in each being. Yet, in day-to-day life the *atma* is divided, as people do not realize the unity. Therefore the supreme soul has been given its own name, the *paramatma* (Sahay 1998:70). According to Vedanta, the goal of human existence is its absorption into the supreme soul of the universe (Dowson 1984:81). The method for this, is by looking inward, in order to realize how one's own soul is connected to the divine soul. The dancers likewise expressed that the dance is a method of realizing this relationship:

(...) the union is not going to happen one fine day when the *paramatma* from there and the *atma* from here and there is a clash. No we all know that is not what we mean. What we mean is the realization of

the god within you (...) Bharatanatyam is a mean to experience the divine within you.

I assert that to experience the divine within in Bharatanatyam comes from embodying the gods and goddesses and from feeling a strong emotional bond with these. Also as a dancer one experiences a physical strength in one's body that grows along with the dance practice. In extraordinary situations this is felt as an indefinite power, which may open up to divine bliss. The experience of bliss is a long chapter in itself. In the following I wish to focus how the dance as a spiritual practice can empower female dancers.

The spiritual veil

In theatre, according to Hastrup, there is always implicitly an 'other' present when acting (Hastrup 2004a:74). Even when rehearsing, actors are constantly aware that they are being watched. The audience when dancing Bharatanatyam is not just the gods and goddesses, but their family and friends, and society in general. Actions (including dance) are always relational, as one acts (and dances) with an awareness of the presence of others.

Michael Jackson uses the word intersubjectivity to denote the existential condition of both being a subject for oneself and being an object for others (Jackson 2002:30)². My attention here is on the aspects of intersubjectivity directly related to the female body. I am interested in the tension between the personal experience of the sexed moving body, and one's moving body as a gendered object to others.³

Within feminist theories, the female body as an object to men's gaze has been vividly discussed. Less attention seems to be given to the subjective experiences of the female body. Mary John, who focuses on women in India, has pointed out that most studies on this segment are ignoring female subjectivities and desires because they are only focused on the subordination of women in relation to men (John 2002:23). In line with this, Edwin Ardener identified the real 'problem of women' as a consequence of the difficulty in getting women's version of the world (Ardener 2001). The dance practice,

2 Jean-Paul Sartre is probably best known for pointing out the condition of being both a subject and an object (Østerberg 1996). However, Jackson declares his main inspiration to be Hannah Arendt with her distinction between the private self and the public persona (Jackson 2002:2).

3 Here I will not elaborate on the theoretical discussion on the relationship between sex and gender, but I used the distinction here to illustrate the difference between having a biological body, and the values attached by others to that body as a consequence of its sex (Eriksen 1998:153).

however, provided me with a unique entrance into female subjectivity in India, which did not only come from listening to what they had to say, but also to share a part of their lives which they had chosen for themselves.

In a book on the relationship between dance, sexuality and gender, Judith Hanna Lynn argues that Bharatanatyam is a way of encoding female subordination, since the devotional aspects of the dance embrace female inferiority (Hanna 1988:109). According to Hanna, when learning the dance the female dancer through her body incorporates and naturalizes a subordinate position in relation to men. A dancer who had read Hanna's text told me:

It [Hanna's text] is pathetic! You can easily see that she has not learned the dance herself!

The dancers again and again objected to the way they as Indian women have been defined by Western people as oppressed. This, I believe to some extent has to do with the experience of empowerment in dance. The empowerment as I see it is related to the spirituality of the dance at two levels. At one level the spirituality 'protects' them from society moralities, and at another level the experiences of being in touch with the divine gives them a certain power, which 'spills' over to their life in general, also when not dancing.

Stepping out of the dance Institute, the noise, dust, and heat of Delhi always hit me in the face. What struck me even more was the fact that I was under the observation of the millions of people (as well as animals) populating the streets. In the Institute, I could observe myself and move my body freely. Outside the Institute, I was the object of the gaze of others and had to follow the unwritten rules of how to move in the streets. In public I tried to hide parts of my body behind my scarf and I avoided eye contact with men. The peace that I had reached with the dance practice was broken. The difference between inside and outside the Institute was reflected in the way the dancers used their bodies. They would go from an over-expressive, to a more self-protective way of moving.

In a study on love poetry in a Bedouin society, Abu-Lughod has argued that poetry existing in the private sphere represents an opportunity for women to express personal experiences that otherwise violate the male-dominated public discourse. In the poems personal experiences of erotic love are 'recasted' as socially shared experience (Abu-Lughod 1986:239). In

that way, messages that contravene the official discourse are *veiled* through convention and tradition (Abu-Lughod 1986:239).

Similarly to the Bedouin love poetry, I suggest that Bharatanatyam is a way of veiling an expressiveness of the body as the dancer has an opportunity to move her body in a sensual way otherwise not accepted. In Bharatanatyam the expressiveness is not verbal but corporeal. The point is that with their dance, they may express a desire for love that they cannot otherwise verbalize in a public context where premarital love is not accepted. Most of the dancers are given the choice to find their own husbands out of love, but they cannot make their love public until they have decided to marry. Others were choosing to have an arranged marriage.

Abu-Lughod uses the public/private differentiation as a way of overcoming the one-sided view upon women's subordination. She argues that the power structure is dependent on space, thus in the private sphere one can evade the male-dominated discourse of the public space. As a performing Bharatanatyam dancer, the dancer is displaying her body in the public space of the auditoriums. Therefore public space cannot simply be equated with a dominant discourse in which women are repressed.⁴ For example, in the public places around the new shopping malls in Delhi, young women walk around in tank tops while holding their boyfriends hand. The way the females display their bodies through clothes and movements is dependent on context rather than the difference between public and private sphere. Therefore we need another framework than the private-public continuum, in order to understand how females create spaces for intimacy.

I suggest that Bateson's concept of play and frame is a way of understanding the veil of dance, without it being dependent on a private setting. I see dance as a certain frame that is set apart from the social relations of everyday life, and at the same time embedded in it. According to play is distinguished from non-play through meta-communication establishing a frame of play. The frames seldom exist alone. Most often there will be double frames or frames within frames (Bateson 1972:188). In the case of Bharatanatyam a frame communicating that 'this is divine' encircles the frame 'this is dance'.

Anne Marie Gaston, a sociologist as well as a Bharatanatyam dancer, has argued that the desire for the spirituality of Bharatanatyam is actually a desire for social acceptance. She claims that if the dance had not been acknowledged as a spiritual practice, it would not have been accepted because

4 I will not go into a discussion on the public discourse on women in India. My focus is not in the verbalized positioning of women. What I am interested in is the experience of women moving in space. What I identify here is simply the difference in experience dependent on context.

of its erotic content (Gaston 1996:313). I would not go that far. However, the fact that the dance is presented to a public as a highly spiritual practice creates a veil around the dancers. Initially, this social acceptance related to the spiritual content of the dance is needed for the dancers to be able to dance. As a dancer explained:

Krishna Iyer made the dance respected. I am grateful to him. If it wasn't for him I might not be dancing because those are the conditions we have to live in.

Krishna Iyer was one of those partaking in the re-invention of Bharatanatyam around the 1940s, when the dance went from a devalued dance of the Devdasis to a cherished dance of the middle class. Part of this reinvention was the establishment of a direct connection between the dance and Indian spiritual philosophy. According to Schechner, this re-invention was a 'restoration of behavior' of an imagined past through a conformity to classic texts such as the *Natya Sastra* (Schechner 1985:69). In this process, the ancient dance was created through the present dance and *not* the other way around (*ibid.*). As the newly restored dance corresponded to the sacred texts, the dance became not only accepted but also respected.

Frames should also be understood in a spatial manner. Upon entering one of the auditoriums around New Delhi staging Bharatanatyam dance performances, it felt like entering a little oasis compared to the life in the Delhi streets. There were *mandalas* made of flowers on the floor, and the women present were all dressed up in their finest saris and jewelry. Referring back to de Certeau, spaces are practiced places (de Certeau 1984:117). If we combine this theory of space with Bateson's theory of frames, I argue that through the practice of place, spaces are framed. In the auditoriums, a meta-message is communicated through the movement in place "saying" that everything that happens within this space is divine (cf. Bateson 1972:188). This is communicated/practiced for example as a dancer enters the place of the stage and she does the exact same thing with her body as entering a Hindu temple. Rather than being a matter of private and public space, I believe the dancers as performers move in public spaces that are framed as a dance space, and at the same time a divine space. Frames thus may serve as veils. Within this spatial frame, the dancer can move in sensual ways that are not appropriate in most contexts.

One dancer told me that she had rejected an offer to dance at a restaurant since there was no stage, and therefore felt that she was not properly

separated from the audience. In other words, the space in public was not properly framed and thereby a veil did not protect her. In addition, I was told how one dancer had performed outside an auditorium in a village-area, for people who had not seen such a performance before. The dancer had become quite scared, when out of excitement the audience had been screaming and clapping during the performance. The audience through their practice also partakes in framing the space. Because the audience did not frame the space properly, she could not enjoy the dance, as she felt vulnerable.

Overcoming the problem of dance

Even when the dancer is performing for a “proper” audience, she might be respected as a dancer, but not necessarily as a social person. Dancers explained how they felt that people generally thought of them as dancers with a lot of respect. Yet, the same people would not want a performing dancer as a wife or daughter-in-law. It is not dancing as such that might be considered against the moral code, but it is dancing in public space. One dancer explained to me that her boyfriend had told that in case they got married, he would support her in opening a dance school where she could teach and perform. However, he would not allow her to dance outside her dance school. Several dancers told me that they thought that Bharatanatyam is mostly respected as a kind of cultural education for young females, but not as a lifestyle.

In her study on dance in Northern Greece, Jane Cowan argues that females encounter dance as pleasure, but also as a problem. Therefore dancing is an ambiguous experience for the female dancer (Cowan 1990:188). In the dance, she is encouraged to act in ways she would otherwise not do in public, yet, “letting go” is viewed upon with suspicion. Her sexual expressivity though valued within the dance, is a central issue for other people in defining her as a social person in a context in which these movements are not accepted (Cowan 1990:190).

I have encountered several studies on Indian women that stress their ambiguous position in the social structure. This is being related to the position of Hindu goddesses who are both seen as fertile and destructive (Trawrick 1996), and also to the family structure of India, in which women are split between loyalties towards natal and conjugal ties (Raheja & Gold 1996). The claimed repression of Indian women has been interpreted as a consequence of men’s attempt to control these ambiguities (ibid.). In addition, dancing women have been seen as ambiguous, because they are being

associated with divinity as well as prostitution since they historically have been both temple and court dancers (Gaston 2005).

As part of the revival of the dance, dancers tried to come to terms with the ambiguity associated with the dance by downplaying *sringara* (erotic love) and instead focus more on *bhakti* (devotion) (Gaston 1996:89). This started a debate between the Bharatanatyam dancers Rukimini Devi and T. Balaraswati (ibid.). Rukimini Devi was a Brahmin woman connected to the theosophical society who opened the first dance institute in Madras. She designed the dress used today for performances, revealing less skin than the Devdasis did, while stressing the spiritual potentiality of the dance. T. Balaraswati on the other hand came from a Devdasi community. She called for a continuation of the Devdasi dance as it had developed through centuries both as a temple dance and as a court dance. Their discussion focused on whether something spiritual could also be erotic. Devi was skeptical towards it while Balaraswati stressed that there in India had always been such a connection between spirituality and sexuality, most known example being the *Kama Sutra* (Gaston 1996:91).

The dancers from the dance Institute did not distance themselves from the Devdasis despite their function in the courts. Interestingly, they seemed to glorify them and even ascribe them with 'purity'. This was not through a concealment of the part of their history that took place in the courts, but rather through an acknowledgment of the dual role as both temple and court dancers. One dancer gave this explanation for the dual role:

We cannot neglect the whole female sexuality and female desires (...)
I feel that it is quite true that the Devdasis pampered themselves to satisfy that part of their female part. They probably got so much in love with God, all the stones [statues of gods] that the devotion came to such an extreme that it became love and they started performing.

That Devdasi were devoted to God and were feeling human love at the same time is not seen as a contradiction, but as a natural development. The Devdasis are thus recognized as both spiritual and social beings. One dancer told that she thought that in the courts, the human needs for love and sex were satisfied for the Devdasi through her relationship to her Patron. Here, the dancer rejects the idea that the dance in courts was only for the pleasure of men and that the dance was a means of exploitation. By claiming that dancing in courts was also a pleasure for the dancers, they are holding on to themselves as subjects. I believe that through the interpretations of the

Devdasis, the dancers take an active role in defining themselves as dancers of the present.

Spirituality and eroticism is not experienced as a contradiction for the dancers. In a spiritual practice, through their bodies the dancers relate to others who are an object of their love. The desire for unity thus involves eroticism. Just as we cannot separate the dance from life in general, we cannot separate the personal life of the dancers from their spiritual life. A dancer described how this is fused in the dance when she was talking about a performance she did:

(...) at that time I had a huge crush on this guy. So before going on stage I looked at an image of Krishna and I imagined that it was that guy. After that I really did well.

The dancer did not look at a picture of the guy, but at a picture of Krishna, because in the dance the love for a human being may fuse with the love for god. As discussed above in relation to the bhakti dance items, the dancer as a devotee has to show devotional or spiritual love (*sringara bhakti*). However, the gods themselves show a very human love for each other. Therefore, in enacting the gods, the differentiation between worldly and spiritual love is fused. As explained by one dancer:

The love for Radha [Krishna's mistress] that Krishna has, that kind of love only we [people] are having. It is very much worldly love, it is not spiritual love.

Because they are acting the love between the gods in the dance, the dancers are showing a worldly love. The worldly love is a love of the gods and therefore it is at the same time divine love.

I noticed how the dancers themselves were strict judges towards other dancers, when they thought that they were showing their desires for love in a too human way. In that case they would think of them as 'vulgar' as opposed to the good dancers who were 'subtle' and 'cute'. According to Cowhan drawing on Foucault, the audience through their surveillance of the dancer exercise a kind of control (Cowhan 1990:190). Paradoxically, she observes that it is women more than men who are actively judging the young girls if they go too far. Also, according to Cowhan, the female dancer is not just evaluated on her dance, but also on her assumed intentions with her dance. Similarly, the dancers would judge every dancer who they assumed

was motivated by fame and money rather than respect for the art and spiritual development. As judges of the performers, the dancers maintain that a unity of spirituality and eroticism exists. However, it depends on the dancer.

Whereas Greek dancers describe their experiences of dance both as pleasure and problem because of their concern for the audience's opinion, the Bharatanatyam dancers only describe their experiences of dance as 'pure pleasure' and 'joy'. The dancer tries to free herself from an ambiguity by naturalizing it, thereby purifying the dance. Holding on to the joy of dance is at the same time a way of claiming the authenticity of their own subjective experiences of dancing which are not felt as ambiguous. The dancer thereby insists that she dances for her own pleasure and not as an object for the pleasure of others.

Masculine and feminine strength

Judith Butler has argued that gender is not conditioned by the sexed body but is something performed. Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, defined as a 'process of performativity' (Butler 1998:35-37). What makes her argument interesting in this context, is that the Bharatanatyam dancers do as many male characters as female characters. Therefore, if we follow Butler's logic, they would also become male.

Initially, my assumption was that the dance socialized the dancers according to gender norms of being female in a particular way (Simonsen 2005a). Even though I wanted to prove Hanna wrong in her argument that these norms were categorized by an inequality of gender, I now see that I was indirectly working with the same assumptions, namely that the dance taught the dancers to be *women* in a certain way. In asking questions about how the dance affected them as women, to my surprise, they even rejected gender as a category inscribed in the body. Rather the male and female categories for a dancer had to do with movements and energies. One dancer explained:

When we perform the male characters we have to take the male characters with us or within us. You cannot say that I am a female taking the masculine. You have to feel now you are a man.

Another one used the concepts of masculinity and femininity, which are not ascribed to the sexed body, when answering my question on how the dance affected her as a woman:

It is not so much about man and woman in the physical form, it would be more about the feminine and the masculine coming together...it [dance] gives you both powers at the same time, to handle things. One has to learn both female and male roles to be complete.

This completion connected to the practice of both masculine and feminine movements. It is very difficult to distinguish masculinity and femininity in the dance. Masculinity does not necessarily mean hardness but can also be the exercise of full control, which may be in a very calm way. The feminine on the other hand might be soft, however, when female gods become angry, they become wild because of the lack of the control that the male gods have. When learning to dance a dance on *Devi*, the consort of Shiva, who takes many forms, one of them Durga, I felt a certain feminine force, which however was felt as being very masculine, as I learned in the dance how to master one of her many weapons. Durga is considered an embodiment of the feminine force, *Shakti*. Several dancers referred to Shakti, when explaining how the dance gave them strength:

I think basically dance uplifts the person. They say that the power which moves, the power which allows everyone to exist, is the creative power, the power which is associated with Shakti in gods, in their wives. So Shakti represents each and every power, though females are associated with Shakti *only* (laugh), but still that kind of power it comes out while practicing.

Hence, the dancers not only come to terms with their masculine sides, they also feel the strength of their femininity, whether it is embodied in female or male characters. Therefore, the dancers are far from victims of their gender, rather the dance makes the dancers realize the strength of their sex as well as their abilities of moving beyond the category of the female gender through the refinement of skills.

Returning to Jackson, when taking control over the balance between self as subject and as object, gives an 'existential sense of empowerment' (Jackson 1998:21). Power, according to Jackson, should not be understood in terms of domination (*ibid.*). Rather, we need to include both the concrete and imaginary levels of human life to understand the meaning of existential empowerment. For example, when a dancer feels connected to Shakti or a masculine energy when dancing, this can be experienced as a kind of empowerment.

Existential empowerment, even though it does not refer to a power in a socioeconomic context, spills over to the socioeconomic life through its impact on the agency of the dancers. This is for example reflected in the choice of a dancer to cancel her engagement upon realizing that the groom once married would not let her perform. The same dancer explained to me how the dance practice had made her develop a sense of independence, and that this gave her the strength to take such a decision. The dancers also have an opportunity to make their dance into their career. Most of the dancers wished to establish a career before they got married and they had no intentions of being housewives like most their mothers were. A career as a dance teacher and performer represents one such opportunity. Yet, the amount of money that one can make in the field is limited, and therefore for the majority this does not translate into economic independence.

Yet, the dance gives the dancers a confidence, as one dancer put it: 'it [the dance practice] does wonders to your confidence'. This confidence begins as a confidence in the body, but it is also felt as a confidence in oneself as a person and as a woman.

Bharatanatyam provided me with a methodology, which I believe was a way of exploring more feminine sites of Hinduism (in line with Durre S. Ahmed's exploration of masculinity and femininity in religions; Ahmed 2002). This was a methodology, which allowed me to use both body, mind and soul. The methodology opened up to an understanding of a group of women in contemporary India, who through dance explore spirituality, which at several levels becomes empowering for them.

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Sažetak

BOŽANSKE ŽENE: O MLADIM PLESAČICAMA BHARATANATYAMA IZ SREDNJE KLASI U DELHIJU

Autorica u tekstu istražuje koliko indijski ples Bharatanatyam može biti osnažujuć za jednu skupinu indijskih žena. Bharatanatyam je jedan od indijskih nacionalnih plesova koji se nekoć plesao u hramovima južne Indije kao dio ritualnih praksi, no danas je oblik umjetnosti koji se izvodi uglavnom na pozornicama u urbanim središtima. U tekstu se raspravlja o implikacijama metodologije koja se tiče tijela, uma i duše, kako na razini plesačkog obrazovanja, tako i na razini akademskog istraživanja značenja plesa. Sugerira se da se takav pristup vjerovanju i znanju može smatrati otvorenijim ženskoj duhovnosti. Pored navedenog, autorica raspravlja i o duhovnom elementu plesa u odnosu na društveno okruženje u kojem se plesačice moraju kretati unutar prihvaćenih modusa ponašanja kako bi nastavile svoj plesački život.

IN SEARCH FOR “THE TIONGHOA BODY” IN POST-NEW ORDER INDONESIA: SOME CHALLENGES TO TRANSNATION- AL FEMINIST PRACTICES FROM WITHIN POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE

Prior to attending the Summer School Spirituality, religiosity and secular lives. Feminist challenges for theory and practice (IUC, Dubrovnik, May 2009)

... I remember I was somewhat clear about the topic of my prospective PhD dissertation. In fact, I recall how thrilled I was when I first learned about the last year's Summers School call for proposals. "That's just where I need to go in order to get refreshing insights into the issues, concepts, as well as analytical units that resonate so well with my evolving dissertation!" I applied with much confidence and, excitingly, got accepted. At this moment of spatial and temporal self-recontextualization, however, I ought to go through the abstract once again and see where I was approximately one year ago. Hence the abstract reads:

I find that all the (groups of) issues broadly framed within the topic of *Spirituality religiosity, and secular lives: feminist challenges for theory and practice* envisaged to be discussed in this year's Summer School at the IUC well address theoretical and methodological limitations, conceptual and ideological uncertainties, as well as persistent, though in no way coherent, ontological restructuring(s) that I see at work in my personal/academic journey in Indonesia.

Therefore, I would like to present my thus far undertaken quest for the topic of my prospective dissertation in order to illustrate what kind of methodological/disciplinary, theoretical, ideological, and otherwise political impediments my subjectivity keeps imposing on my “presence” in Indonesia, as well as to reflect upon the genealogies that I see at work in structuring those impediments. Although these impediments and limitations emerge from and in my racialized and otherwise gendered/politicized body that I “bring into the field,” so to speak, I have also discovered that ideological agenda of engaged activist writing aimed at “political empowerment” might prove to be problematic in my (academic) quest. Indeed, I intend to discuss what I perceive as dangers inherent in uncritical adherence to both concept and practice of “empowerment,” as well as its potentially hegemonizing effect within the postcolonial social and religious context. I would also propose theoretical and practical challenging of the mentioned concept/practice from within postcolonial theoretical perspectives and writing/cognitive practices that I have thus far encountered in certain transnational feminist texts.

I would foremost wish to present how I perceive that theoretical, methodological, conceptual *and* ontological uncertainties contextualizing my subjectivity at (academic) work here could be creatively deployed by expanding on Saba Mahmood’s theoretical/ideological framework developed in her *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (2005), to which I intend to pay special attention in my presentation.

Finally, I deem it important to present my current social surrounding – post-New Order Indonesian (Javanese) society – through giving a brief overview of changing practices, policies, as well as politics of to the Indonesian citizenship central ideology of *Pancasila*, with a special reference to those changing policies aimed at regulating the *Tionghoa* (i.e. “ethnic Chinese”) citizen(ship)s in present-day Indonesia.

In the duration of the Summer School in Dubrovnik last May....

... the initial excitement, however, subsided in no time. I don't remember discussing much of the religious/secular transgressions in the anthropology of my self, as Mahmood would have it (2005). No body asked me of my religion, religiousness, piousness, faith, nor of my spiritual practices and/or beliefs. I did speak about these to some, though, while hearing and knowing about their spiritual journeys in turn. My general unease stems from the fact that I learned next to nothing about religion/spirituality-related troubles of the

Summer School participants, except academic-wise, when (normatively) envisaged/discussed as conceptual and analytical units deployed against (an) other(s)...

I was rather disappointed to discover that (most) participants did not seem to mind reproducing the dichotomizing personal/academic split, provided that a large portion of presentations were – to my understanding – completely devoid of any attempts to position the authors within their respective (con)texts, which, it may easily be argued, represents basic methodological and ideological tool in feminist critical writing. Indeed, I deemed that most participants felt rather comfortably settled within their (trans)Eurocentric feminist imageries while keeping themselves busy with engendering and/or effectuating various feminist liberating agendas over silent others.

In short, I felt utterly alone there, having arrived from afar, loaded with burdensome experiences, highly destabilized emotions, and guilt-ridden imageries... A few talks with Durre, though, deconstructed the guilt-trip as instrumental in reproducing just the kind of (post)Christian Cartesian subjectivity I most feared then and still dread now. Perhaps it is as unjust as it is unjustifiable of me to recall the impressions from the Summer School in Dubrovnik provided my limited interaction with others due to my emotional fatigue. However, a year or so after, the event remains thus imaged in my mind. Though I feel much less, if at all, guilty to say that I still do not think much of the overwhelming Eurocentrism and to it instrumental feminist discourse-production I sensed in duration of the Summer School in Dubrovnik ...

If imag(in)ed, my overall state back then closely resembles the state of mind that Sister Aloysius, as played by Meryl Streep in the movie “Doubt” (2008; Director: John Patrick Shanley), was experiencing towards the end of the narration. The last scene, when Streep bursts into tears out of the anguish of the (ethical) doubt with which Sister Aloysius has been living with, is well expressive of my doubts with regard to living and earning a degree (in the so-called “humanities”) in Indonesia. At times, it has felt like screaming out of despair, frustration, and uncertainty of every kind, and in particular in relation to the justifiability of my intellectual endeavors here. “I’ve been having such doubts,” whined Sister Aloysius in the end of her “Doubt.” So have I, sister...

Sometimes reading helps to reconnect. As a way of looking for (projecting?) my selves in the (words of) others, I suppose. There is a great amount of relief in finding conceptual framework(s) that legitimize the kind of anguish that living with doubt/doubtful existence entails. I have learned in time that postcolonial discourse is the place where doubtful thinkers may howl inces-

santly and with much delight, challenging every single basic assumption and conceptual construct until the very structure of one's cognition dissolves in the emotional turmoil. It's like a big pond of floating thoughts and brooding feelings, sticky and warm, smells like turmeric powder and fried mustard seeds, tastes like tender coconut, and is hard to leave. Or as a reality one needs to endure until another kind of revolution than the ones we've seen effectuates a more just practice of social justice than those encountered in the wide array of liberal democracies worldwide. I remember the kind of excitement (goose bumps, in fact!) that I experienced when I read through Spivak's (2004) utopian dream of (another) social revolution, whose exact lines I cannot recover at the moment of packing all my books to send over oceans, seas, and continents that are layered between the Island of Java and Balkan Peninsula...

Luckily, I did some footnoting prior to entrusting my books to the sea, wind, and Serbian customs officers. Thus:

I have been reflecting on my long intellectual journey to "struggle to know." Why is knowing a struggle? It is a struggle because you have to spend years learning what others told you is important to know, before you acquire the credentials and the qualifications to say something about yourself. It is a struggle because you have to affirm first that you have something important to say and that your experience counts (Kwok Pui-lan, 2002: 29).

It may be argued there is much insecurity behind the need to commence one's writing by referring to a quotation, as I just did. I do admit I feel rather insecure as to how to produce this text. I feel that my thoughts require some sort of textual(ized) authorization that would secure legitimacy to my text's readability right from the outset of its wording, whose very title introduces a body of an other...

...That is why I remembered Pui-lan, to encourage myself. I find deep comfort in knowing that one's intellectual anxieties have already been articulated by an other. Nowadays I often think of "struggling to know" as a manner of searching for support in unknown others (and their texts). The author's "dismissal" (Foucault, 1977) and discursive subjectivity formation (Butler, 1993) notwithstanding, I do imagine a living, breathing woman behind the above lines. For—if I am not entirely mistaken—friendship, solidarity, and care entail bodies. And I believe there is much caring not *in the quotation above* (as the academic parlance would have it), but *in the woman who wrote those lines*, mistaken as I may be in thinking so.

Prior to “knowing” Pui-lan I was reflecting on my intellectual journey as a lonely, isolating struggle to know. How thankful, relieved, and encouraged I was when I read the above lines! I felt much less lonely in a fundamental, ontological sense of the word, knowing about the existence and the work of Kwok Pui-lan, my limited understanding of her complex theorization nevertheless. Deployment of the term “ontological” is to emphasize the importance of this encounter to me, and will be frequently utilized throughout this text. When I read (a part of the work by) not only Pui-lan, but also by Chandra Mohanty and Saba Mahmood—to name a few important encounters here—I thought of my unease as shared.

Indeed, my (academic) existence in Indonesia has been source of much of my unease and anxiety for almost four years now. Particularly in the sense that for the most part of the mentioned period my (corporeal) subjectivity has been oppressing me, embodying a subverted subjectivity, or a non-“First Worlded” white woman, within the “global South.” Provided my inability to escape pondering the complexity of the relational structuring emerging from the endurance of my subjectivity within the Indonesian (Javanese, more precisely) society, no wonder that for a long time I thought I would conduct a research focused on an othered (“the *Tionghoa*,” as the title suggests) body. As I started realizing that such a study would be instrumental in not only production, but foremost a sort of intellectual absorption/annihilation of an other’s (embodied) subjectivity,¹ my academic interests have taken a different course in the ten months that have elapsed between my attendance of the IUC Summer School and the present moment.

What if sexuality is not the common (or most important) denominator behind the power relations of inequality underlying the subject-formation in contemporary Indonesian society? What if the quest for social justice in Indonesia entails a hermeneutics of (an)other(ed) ethics than the one whose cultural genealogy is grounded in Christianity? What if the conceptualization of justice presupposes serious transgression of epistemological boundaries delineated through adherence to the idea of supremacy (post)Cartesian rational(ity), to borrow Durre Ahmed’s term here? And what if – as Durre (in my mind) would put it – the (post)Cartesian mind-body split never did occur at a substantial rate in the subjectivity formation of the *Tionghoa* citi-

1 I refer here to Butler’s elaboration of the postmodernist (Foucauldian) theorizing of the politics of power imagined to be instrumental in the formation of the “self” (body, or subjectivity, as Butler would have it) through discursive mattering(s). Thus, “[t]o claim that discourse is formative is not to claim that it originates, causes, or exhaustively composes that which it concedes; rather, it is to claim that there is no reference to a pure body which is not at the same time a further formation of that body” (Butler, 1993: 10).

zenry? In short, what if the “Tionghoa body” does not need a Butlerian discursive restoration? And what kind of “restoration” was I called to undertake anyway? *In recent few months I have grown accustomed to being called “Mr. Bean.” Shops, streets, parking lots, market places would resound with “Mr. Bean!” cries followed by outbursts of laughter amidst which I would wish to vanish. At first, I thought it was quite aggravating not to be perceived as a woman. Wasn’t it obvious I was a woman? And wasn’t it of any importance to those voicing the cries that I wished to be perceived as a woman? In their unabashed amazement, wouldn’t they see and acknowledge my femininity? In the course of time I spent trying to interpret my angry internal response to those cries, I started thinking of my current socio-political context as the one in which my Eurocentrism, through the global construction of whiteness as the primary politically powerful feature of my subjectivity, had had the chance to flourish in abundance, deploying feminism as its discursive tool. No, it wasn’t too important that I was a woman, or it was only of secondary political significance, in terms of my mattering whiteness. The frustration of embodying a politically subverted, non-“First Worlded” kind of whiteness, or that of being a white woman (rather than a man) had little, if any political significance in the matter of inter-personal affairs and cultural interaction. Whereas in the so-called process of identity formation my LGBTIQ activism, non-EU citizenship, and feminist practices all mattered greatly in that they were aimed at securing my “underprivileged” political position, the overwhelming economic power of whiteness could here and now be hardly destabilized by them. In fact, it seems that my self-perceived queerness developed through a self-fulfilling Eurocentric diversification, will only become a hegemonizing discourse when deployed in my current context. To which extent the practice of solidarity, or transnationalism, does manage to transcend the historical particularities and political urgencies of the national, I keep wondering...? In short, what if a transnational feminist restoration of “the Tionghoa body” in post-New Order Indonesia that I had in mind prior to attending the Summer School in Dubrovnik would merely represent another undisturbed attempt at “writing the wrongs” (Spivak, 2004)? By constructing the other(ed) subject(ivity)-citizen(ship)–in this case, the Tionghoa–upon the premise of its imag(in)ed victimhood, I am not creating a (history of a) monolithic category, neatly packed underneath the conceptual unit of “the Tionghoa body”, and against which I emerge as some sort of savior?*

God willing, I will find a way not to produce a dissertation over the bodies of others, once I will have found an institution that would guide me through my academic voyage, that is. As it is now, in between leaving the current and

looking for a new PhD program, my intellectual exploration seems to have moved into the realm of fiction... But then again, aren't the postcolonial studies to a large extent about exploration of the politicalness of imagination...? When I think about the journey that I am about to undertake, the one that will translate Serbia (rather than Java) into "here" (instead of its current state of being "there"), I think of all the (ontological) translations that I will have to go through in order to reconstruct my self in those settings. Extremely-dry-skin problems in winter; hair-fall problems throughout the year; communicational problems forever, everywhere, and with most people; problems to "find my place under the (capitalist) sun" in Serbia.

I wonder if Butler is as popular in intellectual/activist circles as she was when I left...

Transnational as trans-European

[A] comparison between Western feminist self-presentation and Western feminist representation of women in the Third World yields significant results. Universal images of the Third World woman (the veiled woman, chaste virgin, etc.), images constructed from adding the "Third World difference" to "sexual difference," are predicated upon (and hence obviously bring into sharper focus) assumptions about Western women as secular, liberated, and having control over their lives. This is not to suggest that Western women are secular, liberated, and in control of their own lives. I am referring to a discursive self-representation, not necessarily to material reality. If this were material reality, there would be no need for political movements in the West (Mohanty, 2003: 42).

"Once a Butlerian thinker, always a Butlerian thinker" is what I sometimes fear. Admittedly, when I read the lines I have thus far written it startles me to realize how well-settled I have come to feel within Butlerian discourse that it comes natural to articulate my self through reproducing it. After all, there is a modest number of years behind my (varied) feminist self-construction(s) through non-governmental activism and privileged access to academia. The activist/academic² focus on finding discursive ways

² The slash here is to stress the acknowledgment of the importance not to reproduce the hierarchizing dichotomies in one's (feminist) writing, or – in Butlerian parlance – in the process of discursive formation of one's (feminist) subjectivity. The usage of slashes as a means to

for subverting the regimes of (hetero)normativity regulating the subjectivity (Butler 1993) has hindered my ability to think beyond the “Butlerian boundaries.” Indeed, most analytical units elaborated by Butler seemed so well applicable in the activism aimed at securing the rights of sexual minorities back home, in Serbia, that (as much as I am ashamed to admit it) I saw them as universally valid up till recently.

To state that Butler’s theorizing the politicization of sex(uality) that transcends the discursive limits of gender to materialize subject³ well reflects those nation-states⁴ where rights of individuals are (ideally) evaluated against the articulation and fulfillment of what is called “sexual freedom(s)” appears to be an obvious and easily arguable claim to me. However, once I stepped out of the libertarian socio-political imagery⁵, the regimes of heteronormativity, sexuality, gender, subjectivity, to name some of the key concepts theorized by Butler, appeared not only non-translatable into, but foremost useless within my (current) Indonesian surrounding. It took me a good while (and a few readings of Saba Mahmood’s *Politics of Piety* (2005)) to fathom the epistemological limitation and ideological hegemony that an elaboration in line with the Butlerian call to challenging the discursive regimes of normativity perceived as regulatory of subjects through constructing a research placed in the present-day Indonesia, as I originally planned, would effectuate.

Talking about privileges: my attendance of the 2009 Summer School on *Spirituality religiosity, and secular lives: feminist challenges for theory and practice* was as sobering as it was a frightening intellectual endeavor. Judging from the topic, I thought I would find myself in a surrounding where my ontological/scholarly doubts would not be at odds with all sorts of feminists that I hoped I would meet in the duration of the course. And there I was, in the group of (almost exclusively white) Euro-American⁶ women, whose

blurring the conceptual boundaries and hierarchizing dichotomies between the deployed terms will be one of the writing methods deployed in producing this text.

3 Subject-citizen would be a more appropriate term here, given the contextualization of Butler’s discourse within “the historical condition of postmodernity,” as Grewal and Kaplan (1994) termed the current historicalness. In both cases, however, the universalist premise underlying those discourses that politically mistaken the notion of (contemporary) historicalness for secular liberalism seems rather problematic given its hegemonizing effect intentionally divested of the particularity and irreducibility inherent to the variety of societal formations of democracy.

4 State of nations sounds more accurate in this case.

5 Which, in turn underlies the material reality of Serbian socio-political transition, I would argue.

6 This observation refers to Europe/North America as a geopolitical and epistemic space rather than to the exact number of participants holding with EU/North American citizenship.

presentations I would readily place within the Western feminist knowledge production “leaving the fundamental identity of the Euro-American feminist on her way to liberation untouched” (Mohanty, 2003: 239), as I already phrased otherwise above. Were it not for a few “subalterns,” I would have probably drowned in depths of my agonizing ontological loneliness. Once again, I find it striking to have realized that apart from very few women, most participants found it irrelevant to provide for any self-positioning in their works.

And yet, the importance of being mindful about mattering one’s self from within other(ed) – in this case, Indonesian – socio-political reality was well articulated by Laura Sears as long back as in 1996. Thus, in her introduction to *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia* she argued that fixed categorical markers used in feminist discourses to denote concepts of ‘feminine,’ ‘female,’ and ‘woman’ failed to convey what she perceived as “shifting and illusive margins of feminine identities.” In turn, Sears coined the term “fragile identities” which, in her opinion, was broad and elusive enough to express the variety of ways in which “subjects are constituted as feminine ones” (Sears, 1996: 4). Similarly, Elizabeth A. Castelli argues against fixing the meaning of the term “woman” used as an analytical category. Thus, in her introduction to the volume comprising the essays exploring complex relationship(s) between women, gender and religion from the perspective of feminist studies in religion, Castelli argues that the terms “women,” “gender,” and “religion” are inherently unstable, since “[n]one of them is tied in an unproblematic way to an easily discerned, identified, or fixed object.” As such, each of these terms represents a “powerfully ‘troubled’ category,” which is always historically and discursively constructed (Castelli, 2001: 3-4).

I still recall an episode that I experienced in Dubrovnik, when I had to defend my subjectivity by (ex)claiming – I am some kind of woman! – against those who found my questioning of certain taken-for-granted feminist categories inexcusable, to recall again here, with a deep sigh: nothing of an unease about knowing (as a hegemonizing, reductionist – normative, in other words) practice in there... In that sense, I abandoned the above mentioned doubts regarding my stay/studies in Indonesia in the months following the Summer School. That’s, perhaps, where the beyond in the postcolonial studies substantiates. Maybe one needs to endure the experience of non-existence of “a monolithic category of woman” – to the extent of believing that no (ideological) alliances were to be taken-for-granted – in an existential, material, corporeal manner. After all, it took a leap into the social body/imagery of other-hood for

Mahmood to produce her brilliant work. And to acknowledge the convenience of anthropology in terms of conducting her research...

From transnational to translational

Be that as it may, there is as long as the project of “unlearning one’s privileges” has been neatly deconstructed by its originator, Gayatri Chakrabarty Spivak (in Shaikh, 2007), I will be quite honest about one of the main effects that my production of PhD dissertation will have: my self-empowerment, to deploy this overused coinage here. True, it might be that the hermeneutics of human rights through anthropological lenses and as refracted through the genealogy of “Sam Poo Kong” Temple in Semarang (Java) might be of some interest in “de-hegemonizing” human rights from without the materiality of (Western) liberal democracies in as much as I intend to disturb the universalism behind the hegemonizing “human rights” paradigm by producing such work. At the same time, however, I would very much like to experience what has been constructed and imaged as the privilege of earning my PhD at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London back where I come from. Being (some kind of) European, I am as provincial as it takes to sustain my “Europeanhood;” no, I will not deny the political power underlying the London-related imagery, its deconstruction notwithstanding... So now that SOAS would have me as PhD student, all I need to do is to find funding for studies/living in London, the amount of which alone effectuates the very concept of privilege-ness.

In the meantime, in July-August 2009 I was back in Jogjakarta, enjoying the privilege of attending another summer school, this time on “Human Rights and Human Development.” This regular annual event, largely sponsored by HIVOS, is part of the “Promoting Pluralism Knowledge Programme” and – at the moment – gathers academics (postgraduate students) and human rights’ practitioners from Uganda, India, Holland, and (most recently) Indonesia. The fact that I found my self among the Indonesian group of participants kept troubling me throughout the duration of the training, to the point that I kept referring to it as “rather problematic” till the end. And despite the fact that none of Indonesian participants found my presence potentially/effectively “colonizing.” Not long ago, I finally realized that this “fear of colonialism” and power relations of inequality behind differently racialized bodies were foremost troubling to me, understood here as a disempowered European subject. Why, indeed, should my Indonesian co-participants be troubled by what I constantly kept reminding them of, and what I perceived as a power-rela-

tion distortion incorporated into my white-thought-not-Anglo-Saxon⁷ body? This Eurocentric concern of mine was in no way crucial to Indonesians; the fact that I kept ranting about it seems embarrassing now, my “benevolent concerns” nevertheless. “All benevolence is colonial” (Spivak in Shaikh 2007: 182). And so is mine... It took another thorough reading of Spivak’s “Writing Wrongs” (2004) to make me rethink my poor self-positioning in my preliminary research proposal, the one that I presented in Dubrovnik:

For the purposes of the essential and possible work of righting wrongs—the political calculus—the great European languages are sufficient. But for access to the subaltern episteme to devise a suturing pedagogy, you must take into account the multiplicity of subaltern languages. This is because the task of the educator is to learn to learn from below, the lines of conflict resolution undoubtedly available, however dormant, within the disenfranchised cultural system; giving up convictions of triumphalist superiority. [...] This is the argument about cultural suturing, learning from below to supplement with the possibility of the subjectship of rights (Spivak, 2004: 208; 209).

In that sense, I started rephrasing the questions from above. What if such discourse [as the one that I produced in the first section of this text] applied to (or against) current Indonesian context and theorizing subject(ivity)-citizen formation, would be conducive to yet another epistemic hegemony?

The “Spivakian perspectival shift” from above I understood as the urgency of constructing a less patronizing relating of my self to the chosen object of study (Sam Poo Kong Temple). “What I am struggling to know?” seemed the right kind of question to be asked... I want to know how justice can be conceptualized, lived, practiced, claimed, experienced, (re)produced in a society whose political reality is grounded in several historicizing cultural currents, among which liberalism is one, though not necessarily a predominant, trend. I believe I can learn about the manners of effectuating justice understood without and along the libertarian box by conducting a research that would enable me to explore genealogical (trans)formation(s) of Sam Poo Kong Temple in Semarang through anthropologizing the kind of universalism that underlies the

7 I cannot avoid mentioning the language here. Inasmuch as my body is (almost invariably) constructed as English-speaking (thus economically powerful) within my current surroundings, I wish to keep the imperfections of my English language visible throughout this text. In other words, I don’t want to have my text proof-read; if possible, I would like to keep the flaws in my English visible, hoping to achieve a discursive formation of my other-than-“First-Worlded” subjectivity in (each and every) reader in that way.

hegemony behind the politics of human rights. The fact that I chose this site as the entry point and the theme of my prospective research is rather telling, though not necessarily surprising. Constructed as the other(ed) and recently reformed subject-citizens, the Confucian and/or Tionghoa-related sites have been turned into commensurable analytical units ideally suited for discursive production of citizen-subjects in line with humanist paradigm. Yes, I wish to learn about the ways in which the humanist paradigm gets translated into the social reality of democratic(izing), post-Reformasi Indonesia.

In short, I want to learn about democracy from within contemporary Indonesia rather than in those states that usually categorize as “Western liberal democracies.” I am fully aware that Indonesian state enjoys poor reputation as a democracy. However, I would like to challenge the limitations of the libertarian understanding of “justice” as effectuated through criminal justice/human rights’ approach and seen at work in my limited, Eurocentric, views and explore the kind of ontology that appears more conducive to social cohesion than the one that is grounded in post-Enlightenment rationality and current libertarian ideology.

Thus my most recent, yet still preliminary, proposal (the one that got through in SOAS) reads:

(Re)forming (Historical In)Justice through Politics for Human Rights in Post-New Order Indonesia: Genealogy of Kelenteng⁸ Sam Poo Kong in Semarang

In the Central Javanese town of Semarang, the religious site marked by the growing architectural complex known as “Kelenteng Agung Sam Poo Kong” has recently (2005) marked its 600th anniversary. Indeed, in the foreword to the accompanying tri-lingual (Indonesian, Mandarin, English) volume published in the following year by the Foundation *Kelenteng Agung Sam Poo Kong* it is said that the site had been undergoing renovation aimed at transforming it into one of the most prominent landmarks of Semarang. The series of shrines within the temple are dedicated to a range of *Konghucu* deities, the main one being that of Sam Poo Kong, or deified Ming dynasty Admiral Cheng Ho (Zheng He).

Less than a decade prior to this event what has become known as “anti-Chinese violent riots” claiming property and lives of numerous ethnic-Chi-

⁸ “Kelenteng” is a term utilized to denote a “Chinese temple” in Indonesia, a complex of buildings/shrines dedicated to various Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist (generically: “Konghucu”) deities.

nese citizens marked Indonesian (in general) and Javanese (in particular) socio-political scene (Purdey 2006; Eklöf 1999). The number of reported rapes of the ethnic-Chinese women was staggering. Judging from the decade that elapsed between these events and the renovation of *Kelenteng Sam Poo Kong*, the current era of *Reformasi* in post-New Order Indonesia seems to have ushered in substantial changes in the country's practice and politics of pluralism.

It appears that the site, related to Semarang's ethnic-Chinese community throughout centuries, is today (both historically and symbolically) constructed as evidence to Indonesia's unity in diversity and inter-ethnic and inter-religious tolerance. Hitherto marginalized, even illegal religious practices related to Buddhist, Confucian, Taoist, and non-mainstream Islam (also known as *kejawen*) shrines were subdued by means of tourism-related objectification, commodification, and seemingly apolitical cultural consumption during most part of the New Order regime.

Today, however, *Kelenteng Sam Poo Kong* no longer welcomes tourists; the complex is currently undergoing (re)construction. Conspicuously, the site is being rearticulated into a public testimony to the country's slow but decisive shift towards democracy and pluralism that goes hand in hand with politics of expanding the Pancasila ideology to include the "Konghucu" into the list of officially recognized state religions. Not incidentally, this "political empowerment" is structured through an exclusionary act, through which the site remains inaccessible to those visitors who could be (self)determined as "tourists."

Nevertheless, the site remains accessible through publications (books, brochures, and VCDs) to all those interested in purchasing such materials. Thus, the "*Kelenteng Agung: A Brief History's*" offers a historicizing account of the journey that led Zheng He to the northern coast of Java in the early 15th century, thus attempting to do justice to this somewhat neglected and understudied historical figure. Historicizing claims notwithstanding, the book can easily be mistaken for a hagiography produced through a recent theological reinterpretation of Zheng He's voyage. No doubt, from within modern(ist) historiography, the text would be categorized as a mythography and dismissed as epistemologically unsounded.

In line with my intertwining engagement in both academia and human rights' activism, what particularly interests me in relation to both society and materiality of the *Kelenteng Sam Poo Kong* is the genealogy behind what I have come to perceive as its prolonged, rather than recent, politics for pluralism and human rights, within and without Indonesian political

scene. One way to look at the political transformation of the site would be to interpret it as a result of the long-term efforts of human rights' groups within and outside of Indonesia, whose activism and lobbying contributed to democratization of Indonesian state politics and ushered in inclusivist, non-discriminatory policies towards the state's religious and ethnic minorities⁹, coupled with political pressure exercised by the international community. Indeed, reformation of the institution of citizenship along *Tionghoa/Konghucu*-inclusive lines, so to speak, is typically deployed as one of the main indicators of the socio-political democratization of post-New Order Indonesia.¹⁰

In a non-universalist (re)reading of human rights that I propose here, Indonesia is acknowledged as a modern, democratizing post-colony from its inception in 1945. In my opinion, genealogical exploration of ideological shifts in the *Tionghoa* citizen-subject formation would reveal a much more dynamic topography of democratization than the one offered by "Old Order-New Order-*reformasi*" chronological/political outlining. The main questions that trouble me are how to do epistemological justice in terms of conducting an emic research that would prove sensitive enough to delineate subtle and non-modernist methods of negotiating "group" and "individual rights" of the "ethnic Chinese communities" as practiced/experienced within fundamentally, though not entirely, non-post-Enlightenment ontologies/theologies? How to fathom and articulate the relationship between this site, wider political issues related to "Chinese-Indonesian" citizens, and *Pancasila* ideology? What, exactly, are the lines along which the terms such as "*Konghucu*" and "*Tionghoa*" are being cognized, whose bodies they inform/are informed by them, and in what ways are they being politicized? In addition, how could I relate the study of the site with intention to conduct a research that would focus on practices of justice and ethics?

9 Such as the official ban of the requirement for the ethnic-Chinese Indonesian citizens to produce "Surat Bukti Kewarganegaraan Republik Indonesia" (i.e. certificate of Indonesian citizenship) when acquiring Identity Cards; official promulgation of *Waisak* and *Imlek* as public holidays; recent passing of the anti-discrimination bill, etc. See *Inside Indonesia* (95; January-March 2009: <http://insideindonesia.org/content/view/1170/29/>), "Bill against racial discrimination passed" in *The Jakarta Post*, October 10, 2008 (<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/10/29/bill-against-racial-discrimination-passed.html>), and "A historical, contemporary record of SBKRI" by Kurniawan Hari, in *The Jakarta Post*, October 19, 2008 (<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/10/19/a-historical-contemporary-record-sbkri.html>).

10 See "Winning discriminations" by Emmy Fitri in *The Jakarta Post*, January 11, 2009 (<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/01/11/winning-discriminations.html>); "Ethnic Chinese still face hurdles to get ID cards: Survey" by Adianto P. Simamora in *The Jakarta Post*, December 15, 2008 (<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/12/15/ethnic-chinese-still-face-hurdles-get-id-cards-survey.html>).

In short, this research will make an attempt to produce an ethnographic account of a site whose historically sustained hybridity and of it informing relational tensions will be approached as that political polinormativity which could best be explored from within the politics for human rights perspective, and in an epistemological search for non-libertarian forms of pluralism. I propose here that the mentioned site offers insights into the ways in which what today's scholarship explores/constructs as politics and practices of pluralism has been informed in genealogical, rather than linear-positivist, discursive mattering of its archeological, mythic/historical, technological, theological/ritualistic, and foremost onto-societal (corpo)realities.

In epistemological terms, concepts of citizen-subject, human rights, and democracy will be taken as conditional rather than fixed analytical tools whose contextualization, I will propose, transcends the boundaries of their libertarian (self)appropriation both at horizontal and vertical global societal levels so as to include exploration of transnational imagery, historicizing mythography, as well as civic theology in a seemingly politically unlikely environment – Indonesia. The latter in particular (civic theology) will be understood here as ideological reformation of the Pancasila ideology on the one hand, and ethical basis for subject-formation grounded in (*Konghucu*) theology on the other.

At this point of my text it must have become obvious I would not try to reach any kind of conclusion. I need to go back to packing and preparing to leave Java. "When are you coming back to Yogya?" or "Will you come back to Yogya?" is what I am frequently being asked nowadays. I can only offer an uncertain "I don't know" with a warm smile intended to soften the effectuation of a kind of destabilizing force that doubt is known to leave behind...

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U POTRAZI ZA „TIONGHOA TIJELOM“ U POSTNOVOREŽIMSKOJ INDONEZIJI: NEKI IZAZOVI TRANSNACIONALNIM FEMINISTIČKIM PRAKSAMA IZ POSTKOLONIJALNE PERSPEKTIVE

Ovaj rad pokušava izložiti neke od poteškoća s kojima se autorica istraživanja suočava u nastojanju da prepozna i pozicionira kako subjekte planiranog istraživanja tako i teorijske okvire, odnosno metodologiju za njegovo izvođenje. Nacrt teme istraživanja, kojeg je izložila na seminaru u Dubrovniku u maju 2009. godine, uvelike se razlikuje od konačne verzije teksta objavljene u ovom zborniku. Objavljeni rad je nastao gotovo godinu dana nakon održavanja seminara koji je, kao ključni događaj za novo reflektiranje i teme i teorijskog okvira, integriran u tkivo teksta oslikavajući dijalektički proces kroz koji autorica pokušava artikulirati epistemološke neadekvatnosti svog početnog istraživanja. Autorici se, naime, isprva činilo da se izučavanju praksi isključenja/uključenja kineskih građana/ki u instituciju indonežanskog državljanstva u postnovorežimskom periodu može pristupiti promišljanjem tijela (otuda „*Tionghoa* tijelo“). Shodno tome, prvobitna ideja autorice je bila da se fokusira na režime normativnosti u okviru kojih subjekti istraživanja politički djeluju podržavajući, odnosno odstupajući od rasno/etičko/vjerske norme koja ih proizvodi. Vremenom se, pak, pokazalo da je izbor teorijsko-metodološkog okvira istraživanja čin koji je sam po sebi krajnje političan te da bi odabir analitičkih jedinica koje je razvila Judith Butler (1990; 1993) u „liberalno-demokratskom“, odnosno „zapadnom“ (akademsom i političkom) poretku zapravo djelovao homogenizirajuće u kontekstu suvremenog indonežanskog društva. Drugim riječima, a slijedeći pouke G. Ch. Spivak (2004), sam istraživačko-interpretativni okvir koji se bavi diskurzivnim uspostavljanjem pravde za (post)kolonijalne subjekte nužno mora ukazati na neravnopravnost koja se generira (i) kroz same zapadnocentrične epistemološke prakse.

THE LONG-LOST LOVE OF SAINT AUGUSTINE: A STORY

This is a story about a boy who grew up in Africa, then moved to Europe, and eventually returned to Africa as a different man. It is also a love story, and a tragic story - in my view, tragic in more than one respect.

The boy's name was Aurelius Augustinus and he was born in the city of Thagaste, the present day Souk Ahras in Algeria, in 354. His father, Patrius, was a bureaucrat of the then eclipsing Roman Empire, his mother was a housewife, a homemaker, a Christian (a follower of the uprising religion of the times), and her name was Monica. The parents were quite well-off and, seeing that the boy was talented, dreamed of a successful future for him. A successful future meant then, as it does now (just think of the sixteen or seventeen centuries that divide us) a good career and a marriage that brings wealth, or at least no trouble to the family.

So, at the age of sixteen they send him off to Carthage to study rhetoric, which then meant more or less what all the human and social sciences today mean to us. He studies diligently, living as a pagan intellectual, resisting her pleas to embrace the Christian religion, and instead becoming a Manichaean, but he also engages in wild life. By the time he is seventeen, he meets a young woman of his own age and falls in love. They start living together, but she is poor and of no origin whatsoever. So the mother Monica, when she finds out, is violently opposed to the relationship. Meanwhile Aurelius Augustinus and this woman, whose name we never learn, give birth to a son, Adeodatus ("Given by God"). The fact changes nothing in the mother's attitude.

The family of three escapes to Europe, to Italy - to Rome, Florence, and then Milan. Aurelius Augustinus is ever more sought as a rhetorician, a philosopher, even some kind of a preacher. The family is happy. But Augustinus meets Ambrosius (later St Ambrose), who not only teaches him away from Manichaeism, and slowly towards Christianity, but also imparts to him that not living with a woman is a higher way of living, that not having sexual, or even sensual desires (those that Augustinus had when he stole succulent pears from another man's tree, and those that Augustine will have when he listens to music) makes you somehow better, and Augustinus starts hating himself for having a body bestowed with the five senses. Then the mother Monica, by that time a widow, follows her son to Europe, shows up, and decides that having a proper wife would somehow solve the problem. So she decides to find one. The woman of Augustinus' heart is sent away, she is forever to stay in Africa, her son is to stay with his father and grandmother, and a suitable wife is to be found.

What Monica considers a suitable wife is found, but she is eleven or twelve years of age (not yet to be married, not yet *nubilis*, not yet a spinster) and they all have to wait. While the woman Augustinus has loved for so many years has to return to Africa, leaving her only son behind, and swearing (allegedly to his new God) that she would never know another man, Augustinus waits for a turn in his life with lightness, takes another concubine before converting totally to Christianity, before being baptized by the same Ambrosius, before swearing to total celibacy.

The boy, now man Aurelius Augustinus has a great career as a philosopher and a theologian, goes back to Africa, the city of Hippo Regius, and in 395 becomes a bishop, a fierce opponent of a number of heresies, and known as Aurelius Augustinus Hipponensis.

That his son dies in the meantime, at the age of eighteen, is a source of great sorrow to him, but not of actual grief, for he already believes that a better life awaits his son, and is particularly glad that his son died before he could ever know trouble, i.e. a woman.

Augustinus never again speaks of his son's mother, the woman he has lived with for fourteen years, he only speaks of his general lust, and how he has to fight with it, even as a bishop, even in his dreams.

In 397, at the age of forty-two, he starts writing about his life, in Latin, and by 398 finishes his *Confessiones*, considered by many as the first autobiography in the Western world, in the (almost) modern sense of the word, also owing to the fact that in the eighteenth century the French philosopher and writer Jean-Jacques Rousseau chose the same title for his memoirs.

The first *Confessiones*, though, are the book where we read the story I have just told. Augustinus later writes many books, developing the concept of the Church as a spiritual “City of God”, distinct from the material “City of Man” (his most influential work is *Civitas dei*), and dies in 430, at the age of seventy-six, already famous, worshipped by many.

Christianity has recognized in Augustinus one of the most important figures in its development, a Father of the Church, and made him a saint, St Augustine. His thought profoundly influenced the medieval worldview. Many Protestants, especially Calvinists, consider him to be one of the theological fathers of Reformation, because he taught on salvation as depending exclusively on divine grace, and not on human will, which he obviously distrusted. Among the Orthodox he is usually called Blessed Augustine.

His mother was also sanctified for the role she played in his conversion to the religion. The Catholic Church considers her a protector and a model of all Catholic mothers. She is supposed to be the ideal of the commendable, flawless, exemplary mother’s love, just as Augustine is ideal in his love of God. In the *Confessions*, ostensibly the story of Augustine’s conversion from Paganism to Christianity, the concept of love, both in the sense of *cupiditas* (which we can explain, if not translate, as the ardent, immoderate and fundamentally “evil” desire to possess something material and decaying, ranging from money to another human’s flesh, and soul) and in that of *caritas* (where other people are loved and mercifully helped insofar they are God’s creations, i.e. where love is a consequence of faith), occupies an important place, the second being, of course, the goal to aspire to. In her PhD thesis written under the tutorship of Karl Jaspers and the subsequent book published in 1929, *Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustin. Versuch einer philosophischen interpretation*, (“The Concept of Love in Augustine. An Attempt at a Philosophical Interpretation”) Hannah Arendt, starting with the chapter “*Amor qua Appetitus*” (“appetite” makes us long for that we cannot possess – *appetitus habendi*, and, once we possess it, makes us fear to lose it – *metus amitendi*) dealt with these concepts in the *Confessions* and in the rest of Augustine’s work. She explored both their force and their contradictions, claiming that they co-existed rather than formed a system, because Augustine’s work is of a “heterogeneous character”, because we should not “impose on Augustine a systematic spirit and a logical rigor that he never possessed”, and because “coherence was unknown to him”, all of which makes his work ever more “rich” and “seductive”.

Arendt’s interest was philosophical - clearly, there is no mention of the narrative, the biography. But if we read her philosophical analysis back into

the story of Augustine's life, its incongruence becomes ever more striking. Whenever he speaks of love, Arendt affirms, he speaks of the fellow creature, the neighbor, the other. However, this love of the other should not depend on the *lex scripta in cordibus nostris* (the law inscribed into our hearts) but on the *lex Dei* (the law of God). Is this the reason, I ask myself while reading parts of the *Confessions* again, for which the woman inscribed in Augustine's heart was to be banished?

By one of those strange coincidences, another author published a book on Augustine, although entirely different in kind, in the same year, 1929. Giovanni Papini, an Italian journalist, essayist, critic, poet, and novelist, one of the most outspoken and controversial Italian literary figures of the early and mid-twentieth century, was influential first as a fiercely iconoclastic editor and writer, then as one of the leader of Italian Futurism, and finally as a spokesman for the Roman-Catholic religious belief. His *Sant'Agostino* follows the protagonist's life chronologically, partly paraphrasing the *Confessions*, partly consulting other sources and trying to understand the "history of Augustine's soul" and the meaning it can acquire as a model across centuries. Since it was not Papini's intention, according to his own words in the introduction under the title "My Encounters with St. Augustine", to silence down any of his "bad deeds", as many "well-meaning" commentators have done, one of the chapters, "Betrothed", (though the title itself refers to Augustine's "relationship" with the girl chosen by his mother to become his wife) is largely dedicated to the story we are re-reading together. In the chapter we find stereotypically misogynous sentences, as when Papini speaks of the period during which Augustine breaks up with the one he loves as of the last time when "woman (...) the one who ate the apples, the one who cut Samson's hair, the one who killed Holofernes" had any power over his life, but it is still generally dominated by the author's compassion for the "African woman" who was "treated so cruelly". This, as Papini states in his otherwise immense admiration for the saint, is to remain an "unresolved problem of Augustine's life", an "eternal enigma" and an unjustifiable gesture that those who worship the great man cannot quite reconcile themselves with. If we think of the concepts of *cupiditas* and *caritas* for a moment again, we can say that Papini, a man and militant Christian, was equally struck by the total lack of the latter as I, as a woman and feminist, am eighty years later.

Are we pursuing a naively a-historical approach? I think not. Of course we must be aware that Augustine, generally recognized as the epitome of a series of oppositions between late Antiquity and the Christian Middle Ages,

as well as the “bridge” between the two, must have necessarily combined in his worldview two versions of misogyny. The first, theorized by Aristotle and widely accepted in Classical Antiquity, relies on the idea of a woman as a deformed, a “failed”, a blemished, an aborted attempt of a man, as pure “matter” which provides a vessel for “the form”, the manly principle, in order to produce offspring. This view was also reflected in Roman civil law, where the *pater familias* owned his children in the same way that he owned other members of his household, and in cases of divorce, the children always stayed with him, belonged to him. Any mother, then, was a surrogate mother, so to speak. The Christian version of misogyny, on the other hand, builds on the concept of sin, placing the “original sin”, which estranges Man from God, in precisely the same “vessel”, projecting all the other evils on this native other, and naming it Eve. Motherhood becomes its/her only redemption. In the spirit of Antiquity (although the Roman Empire of the West was already disintegrating), Augustine’s son Adeodatus was to stay with him. In the spirit of Christianity, redemption (and respect) was granted to a mother, but not Adeodatus’ mother. It was reserved for Monica, who, in the narrative (quizzically?), occupies the place of Virgin Mary.

Petrarch, in his 1358 prose treatise *De secretu conflictu curarum mearum* (known as *Secretum*), chose Augustine as the confessor of his own sinful youth and a model of his own conversion, partly recognizing and partly silencing their similarities, but with no mention of a female character. Tin Ujević, perhaps the greatest Croatian twentieth-century poet, identified him, in his essays, solely as “the son of Monica”. So, if anyone has been a-historical, it is surely Papini’s “well-meaning” theologians and historians of The Church, but also the distracted poets who forgot one of the great tragic love-stories of Western Civilization *ante litteram*, dating, i.e., to the times before romantic love was invented and even before Tristan and Isolde, before Heloise and Abelard.

The acclaimed Norwegian writer Jostein Gaarder (author, in 1991, of *Sophie’s world. A Novel about the History of Philosophy*) was, instead, struck by the story, and wrote, in 1996, *Vita Brevis. Floria Aemilia’s letters to Aurel Augustine*, in the form of an epistolary novel, and with the help of an old trick: a manuscript found and then translated. In this case, the manuscript was found in Buenos Aires, it was in Latin, and it was titled *Codex Floriae*. Gaarder chose to express his compassion for the “wife” of Augustine by inventing a probable name for her: Floria Aemilia, and by also telling a probable story: that she was, at least while they stayed in Africa, as learned as

he was, and that, on return, she continued to be a rhetorician, a philosopher, even some kind of a preacher.

In *Vita brevis*, Floria Aemilia writes a long letter to her former lover, describing Monica's manipulations and greed, as well as the intensity and completeness of their relationship, exposing Augustine's self-centeredness in regarding her as the embodiment of sin and not once caring about the pain he caused her. By way of a "sexual metathesis", speaking through the "invented" character Floria, Gaarder finally finds a plausible manner of organizing this chaotic aspect of Augustine's autobiography, filling in the gaps, explaining the "enigmas" (as Papini would have it), quoting from and commenting on all those passages from the *Confessions* which a contemporary reader (a feminist or not) finds so shocking and which the theologians and/or moralists of the Catholic church haven't taken the time to (try to) explain. To the passage from Book Six, for example, where Augustinus states that when his "concubine" was "torn" from his side as a hindrance to his marriage, his "heart which clave unto her was torn and wounded and bleeding", but that he "procured another" (woman), Floria objects both that although he cannot forget the woman he loved, he still praises God for having taken her away, and, *mutatis mutandis*, that by confessing another weakness he tries to ingratiate himself with his readers. To the passage from Book Nine, where Augustine defines the son Adeodatus as „born of his sin“, and, after describing the boy's intellectual gifts which „struck awe“ in him, praises the Lord again for having taken him from the earth, because he can now „remember him without anxiety, fearing nothing for his childhood or youth, or his whole self“, Floria replies that the absence of compassion for a mother's feelings also „strikes awe“ in her. And she refuses to believe in a God who thinks nothing of wasting a woman's life just in order to „save a man's soul“.

In Gaarder's narrative, though, Floria Aemilia insists on another dualistic approach – that in which Antiquity, which she identifies herself with and which "knew" how to recognize and respect "the senses", is opposed to Christianity, which Augustine embraced, separating the physical from the spiritual realm. While we can follow Gaarder in presenting Christianity as cultural vandalism towards the multifaceted richness of former times, the paradigm shift presented by Floria's beautiful love letters partly simplifies the continuity between the two versions of misogyny we have been mentioning.

With all these reserves, by displacing a centuries-long point of view, by voicing another (female and feminist standpoint, *ante et post litteram*),

Vita brevis has paradoxically managed to both complete and reverse Augustine's story. The latter, although not figuring in Joseph Campbell's "The Hero with a Thousand Faces" was traditionally understood as one more of the examples of this author's "monomyth". For, Campbell's book, written in 1949, spoke of departure, initiation and return, with the woman seen only as temptress. To Gaarder's Floria, who departed, was initiated to suffering and returned, the tempter was the man. But she is less prone to condemning him than we might expect. And although she compares herself to Dido in several places, she does not consider suicide, instead becoming reconciled to a life filled with recollections and, above all, learning – not a wasted life, after all.

So this is also a story about a girl who grew up in Africa, then moved to Europe, and eventually returned to Africa as a different woman. It is also a love story, and a tragic story - in my view, tragic in more than one respect.

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ZABORAVLJENA LJUBAV SVETOG AUGUSTINA: PRIČA

Ispovijesti Aurelija Augustina, nastale u četvrtom stoljeću, općenito su smatrane prvim djelom zapadnoga kulturnog kruga koje se kvalificira za naziv „autobiografija“, a njihov autor ličnošću koja spaja duhovni svijet kasne Antike s nadolazećim kršćanstvom, odnosno Srednjim vijekom. Ovaj prilog iz te autobiografije bira priču koja zapinje za feminističko oko: Augustin je niz godina živio u vezi sa ženom koja je bila ravnopravna družica njegovih ranih bavljenja retorikom i filozofijom i s kojom je imao sina Adeodata (Božidara). Tu priču brojni su kršćanski teolozi kasnijih stoljeća, proučavatelji Augustina, zanemarivali. Prilog raspravlja o doprinosu koji reafirmaciji tog važnog i kontradiktornog narativnog toka daju tri posve različito impostirana djela: *Pojam ljubavi kod Augustina* Hannah Arendt (1929), *Sveti Augustin* Giovannija Papinija iz iste godine, te *Vita brevis* Josteina Gaardera iz 1998. Zaključuje se da je tek posljednji, romaneskni način, uspio Augustinovoj zaboravljenoj ljubavi priskrbiti glas. Zato je ovaj prilog njezina priča.

BODILY FLUIDS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF LATE MEDIEVAL GENDER: A SYNTHESIS

In the wake of philosophers, anthropologists, and sociologists questioning the significance and the limitations of the body in the second half of the 20th century, a number of medievalists have devoted themselves in the past two or three decades to the issue of bodily fluids and the role they had in defining the body's integrity within the medieval worldview. Despite its alleged otherworldliness and piousness, late medieval society appears to have been exceedingly keen on presenting graphic details related to the body, largely as a result of curiosity about its functioning. Of all the bodily fluids, blood has naturally attracted most attention both in the Middle Ages and in modern scholarship, owing to its high symbolic value and its life-sustaining significance; and the research of scholars such as Caroline Walker Bynum, Miri Rubin, Bettina Bildhauer, Monica H. Green, and Joan Cadden (see Bibliography) has exerted a profound impact on the way we now look at issues such as the veneration of the Eucharist, the medical practice of bloodletting, taboos related to conception, menstruation, semen, and childbearing, and even medieval anti-Semitism. In my present synthesis for the seminar on feminism and spirituality, I will frequently refer to these seminal discoveries in relation to blood, but my intention is to extend some of the insights to additional medieval sources and to the question of other bodily fluids, such as breast milk, spittle, excrements, tears, and even pus, and to analyze them as to their role in constructing gender.

Today, we tend to shudder and recoil at the sight of virtually any bodily fluid, and those that are shown on purpose, such as saliva, semen, or squirt-

ing breast milk, are often restricted to the outlawed field of hard porn. In his book on the *Anatomy of Disgust*, William Ian Miller has indicated that disgust has rather fluid boundaries in terms of emotion, being as it is mostly combined with self-loathe, horror, fear, contempt, shame, or hatred (Miller, 1997: 24ff). We tend to describe a view of such substances flowing from the body or of objects smeared with them as “disgusting” or “terrifying”, largely depending on whether their excretion is presumed to involve pain or not, but in both cases we would probably explain our reaction in relation to hygiene, claiming that they might carry bacteria or transmit disease in some way or another. It is only secondarily that we may happen to reflect on the culturally determined concepts of pollution and taboo, and yet these concepts inevitably work on our mind and make us feel threatened even by seeing such things, let alone touching them. In the modern world, disgust is thus readily explained through “rational” thinking and medical information, and when we glance at the medieval sources, the first impression that we get is their obsession with the body and its excretions. For modern historical anthropology, however, the prominence of bodily fluids in medieval discourse basically has to do with three issues, and all three are intricately connected with the construction of gender.

Firstly, it is the medieval view of the human organism as an enclosed container that was not supposed to “leak”, whereby the skin played the crucial role of separating the inside from the outside; challenging this border was seen as a threat to the body’s integrity which, if occurring involuntary, showed weakness and imperfection, but if voluntary, could imply powers that threatened the surroundings (Miller, 2010: 3, 143; Bildhauer and Mills, 2003: 2; Bildhauer, 2006: 86).

Secondly, it was the Hippocratic theory of the four humours, which basically stated that the human body was dominated by the qualities of temperature and moisture (hot vs. cold and moist vs. dry) and by four fluids (blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow or red bile), and that the various combinations of these were responsible for the person’s complexion and disposition, i.e. appearance, character, and health (Hippocrates, 10ff). Even though elaborated already in the section on medicine of Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologies*, it was particularly from the thirteenth century onwards, when a number of important ancient Greek philosophical and medical writings had become known to the Western world through Arab mediation (e.g. Aristotle’s *De animalibus* or Galen’s *De usu partium*) that the medieval knowledge of the body moved on from the level of mere repetition of older sources with a moralizing hue and ventured into producing a synthesis of anatomic knowl-

edge, whereby female physiology became a subject of especially intense research and controversy. The theory of the four humours was universally adopted and applied not only to explain various bodily conditions, stages of life, dietetic preferences, general mental disposition, or even ethnicity, as we shall see later, but was also widely applied to gain insights into the nature of the sexes, female sexuality, and the process of procreation (Cadden, 1995: 15f and passim).

Finally, the third issue that defined the medieval view on bodily fluids was the conviction that corporeal states and marks revealed the condition of the soul, or rather the sinfulness within and the chances of salvation. Thus, all disturbances in health were associated with sin and, as a material sign of that, bodily fluids were seen as particularly revealing, which is why they were used in various circumstances to diagnose either the sanctity or the damnation of the person emitting them (McCracken, 2003: 4ff).

As I have just emphasized, the Middle Ages did not invent any of these, except perhaps what was related to their deep involvement with fighting against all sorts of sin. The two medical traditions that coloured the medieval worldview, the Galenic and the Hippocratic, were significantly complemented by Aristotelian ideas and provided the largely clueless medieval medicine with a system it could adopt as its basis. Small wonder that Aristotle's view on woman, which today we would experience as extremely misogynous, became highly popular and were seen as corroborating the Christian ideas of the inferiority and sinfulness of woman as the daughter of Eve. Thus, his distinction between form and matter was applied to masculine and feminine bodies as reflecting the dichotomy of the spiritual and the material. Nevertheless, Bettina Bildhauer is right when she corrects Judith Butler's claim that the bodies of women were seen as the "bodies that don't matter" because they "failed to materialize" (Butler, 1993: 16). Bildhauer has emphasized that they were, in fact, considered as purely material, yet insufficiently formed – which was proven by the fact that they were in continuous flux, unable to preserve the boundary between the inside and the outside and thereby their integrity. In other words, physical imperfection, as a reflection of old age, disability, spiritual corruption, or femininity, was supposedly revealed in an incontinent, "leaking" body (Bildhauer, 2006: 86; cf. Miller, 2010: 62; for a modern context, cf. Manderson and Peake, 2005: 234).

Menstruation was the most infamous among such "leakages" and was considered the most powerful one. In fact, it was not even blood in the first place – while the Latin term *sanguis* was applied to the inside, male, "good" blood, and *cruor* to blood that was spilt in violence, presumably also by

men, the term for this leaking, “bad” female blood was *menstruum* – which could be all too easily associated with *monstruum* (Bildhauer, 2006: 131-2). Indeed, menstrual blood was believed to have a monstrous impact on the surrounding world – even at the times of Pliny the Elder it was known that contact with it “turns new wine sour, crops touched by it become barren, grafts die, seeds in gardens are dried up, the fruit of trees falls off, the edge of steel and the gleam of ivory are dulled, hives of bees die, even bronze and iron are at once seized by rust, and a horrible smell fills the air; to taste it drives dogs mad and infects their bites with an incurable poison,” as he wrote in his *Natural History* (Pliny, II, 548-9), which was in circulation throughout the Middle Ages and acquired additional authority through the encyclopaedic endeavour of Isidore of Seville. Medieval men could reach such words of wisdom through the treatise *On Women’s Secrets*, which was circulating in the medieval period under the name of Albert the Great, but was most probably written in the late thirteenth or fourteenth century by one or more of his followers. Pseudo-Albert quotes Avicenna as saying that, if you took the hairs of a menstruating woman and placed them in fertile earth under the manure during winter, then in spring or summer, when they are heated by the sun, a long, stout serpent would generate, and then it would generate another of the same species through seed (Pseudo-Albert, 19) – and that same Avicenna allegedly stated that “the womb of a female is like a sewer situated in the middle of a town, where all the waste materials run together and are sent forth: similarly, all superfluities in the woman’s body run together in the womb and are purged from that place” (as quoted in Pseudo-Albert, 134)¹.

Taking into account all this filth and destructive power related to the menstruating womb, it is no wonder that men were horrified at the prospect of coming into direct contact with it: sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman was believed to transmit leprosy, while in the *quaestio* 9 of Book IX of his treatise *On Animals*, the genuine Albertus Magnus discussed the question “whether the flow caused eye infection,” concluding that the menstrual flow would indeed run into the eyes and infect them, and if those eyes encountered another object, which had a receptive surface, such as a polished mirror or the eyes of another person, they could immediately infect them, since they contaminated the air and the infection would travel until it encountered a looking glass (Albert the Great, 312). It is obvious that we are

1 However, Lemay has observed that Pseudo-Albert, or rather the so-called Commentator B, deliberately falsified Avicenna and that this statement came from Arabic astrological writings (cf. Lemay, 1992: 18).

only a step away here from the belief about the “evil eye”, which also played an important role in accusations against witches and the corresponding manuals for inquisitors, such as the notorious *Malleus maleficarum*, written by Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger in 1487. One should note, however, that the belief in the “evil eye” has been present in many cultures throughout the world and was also common in ancient Greece.² Even the circumstance that the most feared “evil eyes” belonged to elderly women finds its explanation in this view of *menstruum*: when a woman stops menstruating, that means that she retains her blood within her body, and its concentration makes it even more toxic, so that, according to Pseudo-Albert, but also to many other medieval sources, such a gaze can easily kill a child lying in its cradle by “infecting the eyes of women and transmitting the poison through the air to the child” (Pseudo-Albert, 54).

Frequent use of menstrual blood occurred in relation to love spells or impotence cure. Thus, Catherine Rider mentions the case of a woman from Montailou who collected her daughter’s first menstrual blood in order to prepare such a potion for her future husband (Rider, 2006: 104). Certainly it may be labelled black magic, but it was not necessarily the sort of magic practised by professional sorcerers; rather, it was the everyday, pragmatic magic that was widely practised in the Middle Ages as a complement to religion, since the latter was sometimes experienced as insufficient in providing small, everyday gratifications. A good amount of evidence for such milder trespassing of Christian laws is found in penitentials, manuals that were made for confession purposes and advised priests what penances to impose to their parishioners in particular cases. Penitentials are a source much preferred by social historians, since they are largely based on actual practices that could be observed in the community and therefore required reaction on the part of the Church. Thus, they offer abundant evidence on the subject of home-made potions as well: the eight-century *Paris Penitential* required the confessant to admit whether he or she has given someone to drink blood or semen “for love or for any other purpose” and a number of later penitential manuals (e.g. by Burchard of Worms, d. 1025) imposed penance to women for secretly giving their menstrual blood to their husbands to eat or drink (penance: five years), or for taking their husband’s semen orally in order to inflame their own lust (penance: seven years) (Richards, 1991: 30).

It should be noted that women were not the only social group thus marked with the red stain of corporal deficiency and moral corruption. In

2 An overview with bibliography can be found, for example, in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece*, ed. by Nigel Wilson, 284-5.

fact, medieval scholars tend to include three types of social outcasts into this unfortunate class: women, Jews, and monsters. On the latter two types, extraordinary research has been done by Ruth Mellinkoff, who has collected a huge amount of visual materials in which she analyzed various marks used by medieval painters in order to indicate negative characters in their pictorial compositions. (Mellinkoff, 1981 and 1993) Among them, one can notice several that can be associated with bodily fluids, the most prominent being red hair and ruddy cheeks, typical of Judas and the tormentors of Christ (e.g. “Flagellation of Christ” by Master of the Messkirch, c. 1530-1538, Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, Mellinkoff, 1993, II: plate VIII.8; cf. Mellinkoff, 1982 and Gow, 1995, esp. his linguistic analysis, 67ff).

This image reflected the medieval belief that a child conceived during menstruation would be born with red hair, as if permeated by menstrual blood, whereas rosacea, a chronic condition characterized by facial redness and often accompanied by pimples, thus resembling measles or smallpox, was explained as the young body’s effort to purge itself of menstrual blood absorbed while still in the womb (Thomasset, 1992: 65). In fact, it was believed that a menstruating woman could give birth to all types of degenerate beings, a belief as old as the apocalyptic Book of Esdras, which says in Book 4, verse 5:8 that “a menstruating woman will give birth to a monster.” But as I have already mentioned, if we look more closely at these pictorial examples, almost all of which refer to the betrayal of Christ and to his passion, the protagonists bearing these marks of shame are either Judas or the mockers and tormentors of Christ on the cross, and if we look even more closely, we may notice that some of their other attributes include bulging eyes with dark, arched eyebrows, long noses, and money bags, which are clearly recognizable as typical instances of medieval anti-Semitism in visual representation. It is also quite striking that these depicted individuals often have open, oozing sores, on which flies and other repellent insects are seen to feed (e.g. “Crucifixion” by a South-German artist, c. 1490, Städelsches Kunstinstitut Frankfurt, Mellinkoff, II, plate VIII.13; „Crowning with Thorns” by Master of the Karlsruhe Passion from Alsace, c. 1450, Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, Mellinkoff, II, plate I.72; „Beheading of John the Baptist” by Master of Freising Neustift, c. 1480-1490, Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Mellinkoff, plate VIII.14).

The connection between women and Jews as both feared and persecuted social groups goes even further. In the past decade, scholars have been paying an increasing attention to the medieval belief that the male Jews actually menstruated – a topic that has been most exhaustively treated by Irvn

M. Resnick and David Biale, both experts in Jewish studies with a special interest in rituals. In his article on the “Medieval Roots on the Myth of Male Jewish Menses” (2000), Resnick has shown that the myth of menstruating Jews began to spread around the mid-twelfth century, parallel to the rise of allegations that Jews ritually murdered children and desecrated the host, followed by the first pogroms. In an attempt of explaining their own prejudice, medieval Christians conjured a theory that Jews needed to drink children’s blood in order to make up for their monthly loss of it, thereby turning the accusations into a discourse on cannibalism. The corrupt Jewish nature was, of course, explained by their sin of murdering Christ, for which they were being punished with a flux of blood that, according to some authors, notably Cesarius of Heisterbach in his *Dialogue on Miracles*, afflicted them in a particularly debilitating way on Good Friday, the day when Christ spilt his blood for the humanity (Resnick, 2000: 251). Apart from that, Jewish deficient disposition was believed to include other infirmities, such as a melancholic and anti-social nature, weak digestion, and haemorrhoids, all of which were aggravated by the climate in which most of them lived and their “gross and salty nutriment” (Albert the Great, 310; Resnick, 2004: 146). Yet it must be said that Jewish authors answered with equal pungency, as evident from the numerous examples of polemic treatises collected in Biale’s book on *Blood and Belief* (2007). Calling Jesus Christ a “bastard and a child of menstruation and lust,” a thirteenth-century French Jewish polemicist Nathan Official claimed that Christians should be punished for saying that “something so holy had entered into a woman in that stinking place – for there is nothing in the world as disgusting as a woman’s stomach, which is full of faeces and urine, which emits discharge and menstrual blood and serves as the receptacle for man’s semen” (Biale, 2007: 102). Nathan’s contemporary from southern France, David Kimhi, made a similar argument, claiming that Jesus must have been sustained in Mary’s womb by menstrual blood, since at birth he showed all deficiencies of the post-lapsarian man; moreover, the fact that he was fed by his mother’s milk is an indication that she menstruated, all of which led Kimhi to the conclusion that Jesus could not have been conceived by the Holy Spirit (Biale, 2007: 102).

Now, this last claim may need some explanation for those who are not well acquainted with medieval beliefs regarding the numerous functions of *menstruum*. According to Pseudo-Albert, as well as his predecessors and followers in the business of explaining the female body, menstrual blood also had a single, but important positive function: when a woman was with

child, her flux would cease and the blood would be led by a thick vein towards the heart, where it was hot (we should remember that one of the main aspects of woman's imperfection was that she was too "cold", same as the Jew), in order to be cooked and made suitable for feeding the foetus; after the birth, the process would take place in a similar manner, except that the blood would be "concocted" to produce breast milk. Pseudo-Albert also added a comment on the desirable size of women's breasts: "You might wonder whether small breasts are better than big ones. The answer is that medium-sized ones are the most beneficial. Large ones are not useful because the heat in them is diffused all over, and since they do not have much heat their digestion is poor. Small ones are not good because they have little nourishment" (Pseudo-Albert, 110; cf. 71, 99, 122).

Coming back to the Virgin Mary and the issue of her menstruation, medieval Christian theologians were in fact themselves rather preoccupied with the issue, since the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception would become a dogma of the Catholic Church only in 1854, whereas in the Middle Ages it was still widely debated (Wood, 1981: 717ff; cf. McCracken, 2003: 3). The doctrine implied that Mary did not menstruate, since she was born without sin, yet the whole thing contained a considerable difficulty – if Jesus lacked the same bodily origins as other human foetuses, it implied that he was not fully human, which presented a great problem concerning the relevance of his role in redemption. The problem became particularly acute with the evolution of the Marian cult, which focused on the Virgin nursing the baby Jesus in texts and pictorial representations. In his *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas tried to solve these dilemmas by admitting that Mary did, indeed, menstruate, but that her menstrual blood had not been tainted by the lust of sexual intercourse (*impuritas libidinis*) and that, therefore, it was somehow qualitatively different from that of other women (Biale, 2007: 102-3). Indeed, in a number of subsequent pictorial representations, Mary's breast milk is shown to have nutritive value for individuals other than Christ – for the whole Church – and is thus assimilated to blood flowing from Christ's wounds, which has a redemptory quality.³ In fact, the equation between nursing Mary and bleeding Christ is corroborated in visions experienced by a number of late-medieval mystics, such as Ida of Louvain, Lutgard, or Angela of Foligno, who were taken by Christ and "nursed directly at his breast," sucking the blood from his wound. The image of the

3 As in the famous painting „Mass of St Gregory,“ a panel from an outer wing of the altar of St Anne and the Holy Family (Soest, Church of St Maria zur Wiese, 1473). Cf. Bynum (2007), plate 3 (unfortunately a b/w reproduction).

nursing Christ was one of the favourite metaphors of Catherine of Genoa and Catherine of Siena, who repeatedly called Christ's wound a breast (Bynum, 1987: 140, 142, 185; Lester, 1995: 204, 206-7, 211-2).

Yet a woman did not have to be the mother of God in order to overcome the organic processes burdened with the unflattering associations of decay, corruption, penetrability, and frailty. There was a way in which even ordinary women could "renegotiate the boundaries of her own body" (Lester, 1995: 190) and triumph over biological processes, thus becoming equal to men in integrity: and that was asceticism. The phenomenon prevalent among the female living saints of the later Middle Ages, for which Rudolph M. Bell has coined the term "holy anorexia" (Bell, 1985), was apparently a direct result of this desire and, moreover, tolerated by the hierarchical church and admired by the society at large. A number of women who engaged in extreme and self-destructive penitential practices, which were not exclusively connected to food, but almost regularly had to do with bodily fluids and their emission or retention, have been venerated as saints.

The following examples have largely been collected by Caroline Walker Bynum, whose seminal work on the fasting practices of late medieval female ascetics remains unsurpassed (Bynum, 1987). Her cases mostly originate from the area of today's Benelux and northern Germany on the one hand, and Italy on the other, but also include a few women from the English and French lands. Virtually all of them have something to do with bodily fluids and without this somewhat lengthy quotation of her findings the present synthesis would not be complete.

Thus, Bynum mentions an ascetic called Elisabeth of Spalbeek, who was described by her hagiographer as producing "neither saliva nor sputum from her mouth, nor any mucus or other fluid from her nostrils" (Bynum, 1987: 352) and a recluse from Normandy, of whom James of Vitry wrote that she "for many years ate and drank nothing, and neither from her mouth nor from any other natural organs did anything go out" (Bynum, 1987: 91). Thomas de Cantimpré explicitly mentioned the moment when Lutgard of Aywieres had ceased to menstruate and Roger Bacon described a woman from the diocese of Norwich who did not eat for twenty years, and still she retained good stature, "emitting no excretion from her body, as the bishop proved by careful examination." (Bynum, 1987: 91) And an account of Jane Balam from the area around Poitiers stated that she excreted neither faeces nor urine, did not menstruate, never sweated except from the armpits, dis-

charged no filth or dandruff from her hair, and only occasionally gave forth spittle from her mouth or tears from her eyes (Bynum, 1987: 211).

The preservation of corporal integrity was expected to continue even posthumously – like their male counterparts, ascetic women were liberated from decay and, instead of becoming food for worms, they remained incorrupt, emitting sweet scent and soft light. Because in fact, even during their lifetime they *did* emit something – once these women were closed for ordinary excretions, it could result in extraordinary effusions. First of all, it was blood, clean blood, of course, with which the ascetic would come closer to Christ's passion. It was not only blood that resulted from severe self-lacerations, but also supernatural, mystical bleeding, which seems particularly prominent in the lives of female saints from the Low Countries. To name only a few examples: Ida of Louvain, Ida of Léau, Mary of Oignies, and the afore-mentioned Lutgard all suffered violent nosebleeds during Eucharistic ecstasies (Bynum, 1987: 123, 203) and Lutgard's biographers report that even her hair would drip with blood when cut. With the famous Italian ascetic Catherine of Siena, blood would gush forth from her mouth after receiving the host (Bynum, 1987: 123, 177). And then, of course, there were the stigmata, in which a woman could achieve ultimate identification and a mystical union with Christ. The first documented case in female ascetics that included all five wounds and the crown of thorns is that of Ida of Louvain (d. 1300), whose stigmata had the form of coloured circles. From that point on, this phenomenon was reported rather frequently among female mystics – in some, the wound would bleed periodically, most notable on Fridays or on the Friday of Crucifixion, and sometimes they were accompanied by scourge marks on their backs, or red marks recognized as espousal rings on their fingers (Bynum, 1987: 201, 274).

Another interesting type of bodily emissions was oil, which could miraculously come forth from the saint's tomb, but for our purposes it is more interesting to consider cases when it allegedly came out of the living saint's body. Thus, Lutgard is reported to have exuded oil from her fingertips, while her saliva would become sweet during Eucharistic visions, such as nursing on Christ's breast, and she is reported to have performed miraculous cures with it (Bynum, 1987: 122-3, 392). The oil exuded by the saintly woman's body was usually considered not only curing, but also nurturing, like a purified version of breast milk, without the menstrual associations. An especially extravagant case of such emission was that of Lidwina of Schiedam, documented in a testimony of the town officials, who watched her closely for three months in order to ascertain the veracity of her miracles.

The document solemnly attests that she deprived herself of food and drink completely, and that she shed skin, bones, and even portions of intestines, which gave off sweet odour and which her parents kept in a vase until Lidwina herself, worried by the gossip they excited, asked her mother to bury them (Bynum, 1987: 126).

Concerning the nurturing character of these latter emissions, it is particularly interesting to observe the large number of accounts speaking of mystical lactation. We have touched upon the topic earlier on, in connection with the Virgin Mary. Similarly to hers, the breast milk of female saints was considered pure and particularly nurturing, and as the Middle Ages seem to have been rather unaware of any erotic connotations linked to the woman's breasts, the beneficiary of such miraculous milk could be young and old, female and male. The afore-mentioned ascetic Lidwina was quite fond of nursing others, as she explicitly saw it as analogous to the Virgin's nursing of Christ. All her hagiographers report that on a particular Christmas, a certain widow Catherine, who was taking care of her, had a vision that Lidwina's breasts would fill with milk on the night of the Nativity. And indeed, Lidwina had a vision of Mary surrounded by a host of female virgins, and the breasts of all of them were filled with milk, which poured out through their open tunics, filling the skies. When Catherine entered the room, Lidwina rubbed her breast and gave her to drink from the milk three times, after which Catherine did not need any food for days. One of the hagiographers added that the same grace was given to Lidwina again, and that on that occasion she fed her confessor, John Walter, but in two other hagiographical accounts it was stated that the confessor was not present at the appointed hour and therefore did not receive the precious gift (Bynum, 1987: 129, 211).

With the help of a miracle, ascetics could also live on their own breast milk if the situation required. According to a thirteenth-century account by Thomas of Cantimpré, Belgian ecstatic Christina the Astonishing once fled into the remote desert, where she prayed for food and her virgin breasts swelled with milk, on which she sustained herself for nine months. Later she was persecuted and chained by her sisters as a lunatic, but her breasts filled again, this time with oil. Since the oil was curative and managed to heal the sores of one of her sisters, she was set free.

It is interesting that breastfeeding could also be used in spiritual discourse that was purely masculine, i.e. in monastic circle. In the following sermon of Bernard of Clairvaux, written for abbots and prelates, it becomes clear to what extent the imagery of breastfeeding was void of sexuality in

medieval times. Speaking about the need to be gentle towards young monks, St Bernard says: "There is no pretence about a true mother, the breasts that she displays are full for the taking. She knows how to rejoice with those who rejoice, and to be sad with those who sorrow, pressing the milk of encouragement without intermission from the breast of joyful sympathy, the milk of consolation from the breast of compassion... learn that you must be mothers to those in your care, not masters... show affection as a mother would... be gentle, avoid harshness, do not resort to blows, expose your breasts: let your bosoms expand with milk, not swell with passion..." (Bynum, 1982: 118; cf. numerous medieval paintings on St Bernard's mystical lactation). However, the ability of woman to breastfeed could and did enflame also negative fantasies in the late medieval world, culminating in the belief that witches were regularly suckled by demons and that one of the most reliable ways to identify a witch was to find the so-called "devil's teat" on her body, well-hidden in intimate cavities and crevices, an accusation that resulted in most painful and degrading explorations by the inquisitors (Purkiss, 131-7, 241-3; Holmes, 1993: 68, 70-1, 75).

Perhaps the only bodily fluid that incited outright disgust in the Middle Ages was pus. Its putrid stench, the sight of decaying flesh, and the excruciating pain suffered by the diseased person tended to cause nausea in those times as much as today, despite the fact that, according to Galenic and Hippocratic medicine, pus was composed of waste materials and corrupted bodily humours, which meant that it was considered a phase in the healing of a wound. It was therefore to be brought to surface and expelled, and medieval surgeons often applied suppurative medicines to wounds, despite some isolated medical voices warning against the procedure. (e.g. Henry de Mondeville [ca. 1260-1316], known as "the father of French surgery"; for a relevant extract from his *Treatise on Surgery*, cf. Grant, 1974: 800-6).

Concerning the nausea-provoking qualities of pus, it is small wonder that some of the extreme medieval ascetics would come to the idea of forcing themselves to come into direct contact with it, by which act they wanted both to overcome a sensation that belonged to this world and show humility with respect to God and their fellow man. Although many saintly men and women are known to have bandaged ulcerous sores despite having to overcome strong disgust (e.g. St Francis of Assisi), it seems that some of the more extreme practices were related exclusively to late-medieval female asceticism. In an episode that has become notorious far beyond the medievalist circles, Catherine of Siena volunteered to tend a sick nun, whose cancerous breast emitted horrible stench, and in order to overcome her loathing,

which he considered a sign of pride and therefore the work of Satan, she took all the washing of the sore, together with the pus, put it into a bowl and drank it up. That night, she had a vision of Christ inviting her to drink blood from his pierced side, and it was with consolation that she realized that her stomach no longer needed any food nor could digest it (Bell, 1985: 25, 117). The parallel between these two things – decay and life, feat and reward – is found in biographies of some other ascetic women, such as Catherine of Genoa, who ate lice, and Angela of Foligno, who drank water that came from washing the sores of lepers. As one of the scabs stuck in her throat, she said that it tasted “as sweet as the holy communion” (Mazzoni, 1999: 16, 53; cf. Bynum, 1987: 246).

My last bodily fluid in this synthesis will be one that is permanently present in our lives, rarely perceived as disgusting and, moreover, almost exclusively associated with women, although without any physical reason: tears. Interestingly enough, tears do not appear to have been gendered in the Middle Ages to the same extent as today. Even though medieval authors sometimes mention tears as a sign of womanly softness and even a typical feminine trick to impose a woman’s will on men, the authority that the salty drops acquired as a result of the belief in the so-called “gift of tears” often prevailed and a man was considered saintly if he could cry profusely, at least in religious contexts (cf. Nagy, 2000). In the Christian East, an entire tradition evolved around this issue, with a line of thought that could be traced back to the New Testament. As an expression of “joyful sorrow” (using the words of John Climacus from his *Ladder of Perfection*), tears were seen as a result of compunction, which entailed not only remorse or regret for the past deeds, but also an incitement, a step forward, a visitation from God (Chryssavgis, 2004: 131ff). In that context, tears could be equally granted to men and women, and we could almost say that medieval sources speak of crying men more often than of crying women.

As a proof of genuine penitence, tears were even used as legal evidence in witch-hunt processes and were explicitly recommended by *Malleus maleficarum*, the inquisitor’s manual that I mentioned earlier on. There it is recommended that the judge should ask of the culprit to shed genuine tears if she is innocent, or else to refrain from false tears, by using the following words: “I conjure you by the bitter tears shed on the Cross by our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world, and by the burning tears poured in the evening hour over His wounds by the most glorious Virgin Mary, His mother, and by all the tears which have been shed here in this world by the Saints and Elect of God, from whose eyes he has now wiped

away all tears, that if you be innocent you do now shed tears, but if you be guilty that you shall by no means do so. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen” (Malleus, 348). The manual further warns the inquisitors that some witches try to smear their cheeks with saliva, or that they burst into tears later, when they are back in their cells, and we can only imagine the horror of the situation which dried up the tears of the accused woman even though her life depended on those few drops of salt water. However, the inquisitors had their own logic and concluded that

the reason for a witch’s inability to weep, it can be said that the grace of tears is one of the chief gifts allowed to a penitent; for St Bernard tells us that the tears of the humble can penetrate the heaven and conquer the unconquerable. Therefore there can be no doubt that they are displeasing to the devil, and that he uses all his endeavour to restrain them, to prevent the witch from finally attaining to penitence. / But it may be objected that it might suit with the devil’s cunning, with God’s permission, to allow even a witch to weep; since tearful grieving, weaving, and deceiving are said to be proper to women. We may answer that in this case, since the judgments of God are a mystery, if there is no other way of convicting the accused, by legitimate witnesses or the evidence of the fact, and if she is not under a strong or grave suspicion, she is to be discharged” (Malleus, 348).

We may only hope that there were indeed women who managed to escape this vicious circle of sadistic logic.

As can be seen from this brief overview over the topics related to bodily fluids and their role in the construction of late medieval gender, the subject is vast and the range of usable historical sources indeed intriguing. On the whole, it can be observed that most of the fluids do not seem gendered *per se*, at least at first glance, since they were actually physically depending on the male or female sex; and in those rare cases where they were not, as in the case of tears, they actually seem to have been less gendered than today. However, their *use* in the construction of gender, in terms of opposites such as integrity/penetrability, firmness/softness, stability/corruptibility, etc., is indeed crucial. We must not forget that medieval people still believed in the ancient view of male and female sexes being virtually two variants of one and the same human being – thus, the representations of female genitals as the “inverted” male ones were supporting the conviction that woman was an imperfect or deformed man, while medical manuals speaking of concep-

tion, such as the afore-mentioned Pseudo-Albert, openly stated that all foetuses were at first male, but that a female child would eventually be born if something interfered with the normal and desirable order of things (Miller, 2010: 6). With respect to this, it remains an open question, worth reconsidering, whether the attention given to bodily fluids in the medieval period actually aggravated the subjection of women, or it was rather that women could obtain integrity, identity, and even power, through their manipulation, even if it ended in physical self-destruction as it happened with the late-medieval female ascetics.

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Sažetak

FUNKCIJA TJELESNIH IZLUČEVINA U KONSTRUKCIJI RODA KASNOG SREDNJOVJEKOVLJA: SINTEZA

Unatoč naglašenoj duhovnosti i pobožnosti, društvo kasnog srednjovjekovlja bilo je izrazito sklono otvorenom prikazivanju pojedinosti vezanih uz ljudsko tijelo, što se može pripisati radoznalosti u pogledu njegova načina funkcioniranja, osobito spolnih funkcija. Još od ranocrkvenih otaca u kršćanstvu je prevladavalo vjerovanje da su svi poremećaji zdravlja posljedica grešnosti i da, općenito, stanje ljudskoga tijela odražava izgled dotične osobe za spasenje. Tjelesne izlučevine smatrale su se osobito jasnim pokazateljima čovjekova duhovnog stanja te su se stoga često i u raznovrsnim okolnostima koristile za dijagnosticiranje svetosti ili pak grešnosti osobe od koje su potjecale. Izlučevina s najvećim simboličkim nabojem bila je, daka-ko, krv – osobito menstrualna – a moralni sudovi povezani s njome bili su veoma često rodno obojeni te je u polemičkim spisima služila u najrazličitije svrhe, čak i one srednjovjekovnog antisemitizma. Međutim, gotovo jednako su zanimljive s rodnog stajališta i neke od manje istaknutih tjelesnih tekućina poput mlijeka, suza, sjemeni i gnoja te jedna sasvim simbolična, ustvari nepostojeća, izlučevina koja se smatrala tipičnim dokazom svetosti – mirisno ulje. Autorica članka navodi primjere iz niza primarnih izvora – medicinskih traktata, polemika, hagiografije, penitencijala i dokumenata vezanih uz progon vještica i pogrome Židova – te sintetizira obilje znanstvenih radova istaknutih medievalista, sociologa i povjesničara medicine kako bi izvela zaključke o načinu na koji su tjelesne izlučevine korištene u konstrukciji roda u kasnom srednjovjekovlju.

CASUISTIC SOUTHERN EUROPEAN TRADITIONAL BALLADS ABOUT ST CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA: A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

This attempt at an interpretation of what is, in fact, an offshoot of the Southern European ballad tradition of St Catherine – the Spanish and Croatian traditional ballads – is merely a first endeavour to approach this complex and interesting subject, which actually calls for multi-layered interpretative and transdisciplinary approaches that surpass the frameworks of this paper. I came across the ballad of St Catherine whilst working on a comparative study of Croatian and Spanish ballads. The exemplary nature of its plot – exemplary in the sense of moralistic ballad narrations – prompted me to look into it more closely, due to the fact that I had also been interested earlier in the relation between ballad plots and exemplarity and/or the casuistic nature of their content. When speaking of casuistry, I do not intend the legal aspect of Early Modern rational thought, but rather André Jolles' revised folkloristic concept of *casus* (Jolles, 2000; Stierle, 1984), particularly his identification of the formation of narrative paradoxes in folklore (Delić, 2001).

Hence, this paper wishes to interpret the casuistry of traditional European ballads about St Catherine of Alexandria. The traditional balladry in question is a genre of oral poetry that was sometimes considered to belong to the so-called canonically favoured tradition, although it developed also as a common project of the elites and the folk, sometimes as part of the in-

famous European globalised past (passed on, for example, during the Crusades), but which resists unambiguous interpretations thanks to the formulaic characteristics and dream-like structure of the ballad poetry discourse (Easthope, 1983).

One can also recognise the characteristically casuistic transgressive nature of the genre – its transgressiveness resulting from the shaping of the narrative paradoxes – in the ballads about St Catherine, a saint-intellectual who is perhaps a synthesised character and whose life is, according to the legend, located in the 4th century. The ballads about St Catherine place before the reader and/or listener very contradictory demands for identification with the character. Poetically the most accomplished Croatian and Hispanic ballads are those that have accepted the call for the spiritualisation of the main character, so that we read the ballad stories as spontaneous creations of ‘a philosopher of everyday life’ and as plots of the epistemological, personal and collective maturing and cognition of individuals, particularly women, also to be interpreted as one of the outcomes of an individual cultivation of this saint, so unlike the heroic cultivation, where the cult of St Catherine was exploited for political purposes (Walsh, 2007). Besides, it is impossible to generalise a certain universal topos of St Catherine’s representation, not even within any of the separate branches of the tradition; instead, the shaping of the character depends on the individual shaping by the narrators and/or on diverse sub-types of the traditional plot that have been diffused by these European traditions throughout the many centuries of this ballad’s life. However, there is a danger that, as a result of the use of secular oral poetry formulae (Armistead; Silverman, 1982: 135-136), the entire plot of the individual ballads, within which traces of Mediaeval philosophical ideologemes have been preserved, could be read as an anti-intellectualist and anti-elitist casus that duplicates those ideological conflicts that we could have expected the casus to annul, revealing all the ambivalence and fissures, and their openness to ideological manipulations and distancing from ‘the liberal democratic quality of the pagan heritage’ in the elaboration of narrative possibilities.

If we approach one of the most popular forms of the St Catherine legend from the aspect offered by the literary and aesthetic characteristics of the *Golden Legend* – this legend modifies to some extent the three-part structure of hagiographical texts – the desire for sanctity, the process of achieving perfection and proven sainthood (Baños Vallejo, 1989: 136-138). Catherine, who was most probably a synthesised character of fictional origin (Walsh, 2007) introduces herself at the very beginning of the *Golden Legend*,

through the mimetic aspect of a woman who is an intellectual-philosopher in a narration that doesn't have a fixed, but rather a roving point of view. Her intervention with Emperor Maxentius against his making sacrifices to pagan gods is given first as a third-person narrative, with the remark that the discussion was conducted 'with numerous syllogisms, allegories and metaphors', and with 'arguments [that were] sometimes strictly realistic, and sometimes mystic' only then to address him in the first-person, abandoning the 'academic style' of presentation (VoráGINE, 1982: 766-769). We could perhaps also recognise in this change in the narrative mode traces of the ideologemes of Mediaeval theology, the debate in which Christian scholastics, as well as Islamic and Jewish philosophers took part, with references perhaps to the pagan origins of the saint in the legend, read from the Christian point of view. And if we were now to wish particularly to emphasise Catherine's discussion with the wise men, this future saint, who, according to a legend originated in Alexandria, that famous crossroads of three religions (Walsh, 2007), defended it would seem the thesis on the unity of religious and philosophical truth, accepted in the 12th century, admittedly not without objections, even by Jewish theologians (De Lange, 1996: 152-155), while Maxentius could have also been the representative of the theory of the 'twofold truth', which is attributed to the Islamic philosopher Averroes, although, according to Č. Veljačić, it entered Europe in a distorted form (Kalin, 1987: 72; Veljačić, 1983: 95). Averroes also advocated the separation of religious and philosophical truth, the latter being unsuitable for the common folk because 'a simple and preaching-like' procedure (Kalin, 1987: 72) was more fitting for them, whilst the controversy around the separation of religious and philosophical truth was not unknown in Judaist theological thought either (De Lange, 1996). The story in the *Golden Legend* then continues, largely in the third-person narrative, with Catherine's dispute with the philosophers, and how Catherine converted even the philosophers to Christianity, while the legend then goes on in concise narration by presenting the figures on Catherine's proof of sainthood, her passion, her incarceration during which she even convinced the Empress to accept Christianity, followed by the breaking on the wheel and decapitation (VoráGINE, 1982: 769-772). A report is then given in enumerative style on Catherine's posthumous miracles, while her virtues are listed once again. In that part, the most prominent is the thematic aspect of the character (J. Phelan) that will, along with the above-mentioned mimetic aspect, be important for our understanding of the ballad. Hence, it seems that the most interesting literary and ethical part is devoted to the discussion of the types and modes of

comprehension between Catherine and Maxentius. It should be mentioned that it was precisely at the transition from the 11th to the 12th century that there was a shift away from the misogynous stance in the pastoral tradition, as neohistorians have pointed out, so it seems that perhaps the character of Catherine, too, is quite exceptional in the Mediaeval representations of women, taking upon herself the representation of both the woman and the man, 'that which brings him down to earth, [to] the physical', to his soul (Dalarun, 2001: 61-62). We have emphasised this popular philosophical casuistic nature of the legend despite the fact that the sequence of the debate with the wise men is not mentioned in the ballads themselves; however, because it seems that the ballads – which probably owe their existence and diffusion to the clerical environment and itinerant *dijaks* [religious school students] – preserved some of the traces of the above-mentioned Mediaeval popular philosophical ideologemes that attain an almost Humanistic flavour, as was noted by the historians of the 19th century, when the majority of the ballads about St Catherine were recorded from the oral tradition. In performance, the ballads themselves elaborate diverse narrative possibilities that are also potentially contained in the offshoots of Mediaeval popular philosophical thought.

It is interesting to note that the simple style of the legend, often also applied in sermons, contaminated the poetic discourse in the aesthetically most accomplished ballads (Bošković-Stulli, 1978: 92-99). In that process, the balladistic weighing of diverse norms of choice between spiritual and secular life in an illustrative paratactical dream-like style (A. Easthope) that shatters the cause-and-effect link, characteristic of oral poetry (W. J. Ong) is added to the original cognitive casuistry of the popular text of the *Golden Legend*. Perhaps this legend about St Catherine, who has become a patron saint of philosophers in Christian iconography, deserves the credit for the upward educative trends in certain historical periods, not so much in the sense of gradual New Age secularisation, but rather in the gradual filtering of the rational thought that was transmitted through preaching practice along with the legend of this saint.

If we now turn our attention to the Croatian ballad tradition, we can see that this ballad is relatively rare in comparison with the rich hagiotopographical tradition of this saint in Croatia. Apart from lyrical poems and brief prayers among the recorded poems, we observed two basic types of the ballad about St Catherine. One is a local type, largely in hexametric verse with 19th century variants, recorded in Istria and the Kvarner region, and the other is octosyllabic, as exists in the 19th century records from the

broader Croatian region (in the Split hinterland, in Zagorje and Istria). Today these records are kept at the Ethnographic Department of the HAZU [the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences], while the transcriptions of the poems are housed at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb. There is a noticeable connection between modern ballads – inscribed in tradition at the end of the 19th century – and old sources, the prose hagiography from the 15th century, and particularly the versified legend of the Korčula confraternity of the 17th century (Bošković-Stulli, 1978). Speaking about sources, it should be noted that Catherine’s father is named as ‘Koščica’ in one of the variants of the ballad, this probably being the folklorised name of the legendary Costus, referred to by name back in the Greek hagiography of Simeon Metaphrastes from the second half of the 10th century, and then again in the *Golden Legend* (Walsh, 2007). However, the ballad story of St Catherine’s life is elaborated upon in a style quite different from that found in pious literature¹. In the concise ballad tale, there is no room for expansive narration about the desire for sanctity, which, in the versified legend, arises in Catherine after Christ appears to her, when he initiates her into the mystery of faith. Where the versified legend from Korčula described the torment suffered by the Christians in Alexandria, as well as how Catherine tried to convince the Emperor Maxentius to abandon his idols, which were not ‘gods’ but rather ‘fiendish devils’, the ballad elaborates the mimetic aspect of the saint, concentrating on the threat to the girl’s honour in the sequence of Catherine’s being proposed to, which carries on in formulae of Catherine’s rejection of the suitors, in which the desire for sanctity of the future saint is represented.

The Croatian versified legend treats the process of the honing of the spiritual perfection of the saint, and its narrative dwells particularly on the dispute with the wise men and the success with which Catherine manages to convert these unbelievers to Christianity. On the contrary, there is no place in the ballad either for the sequence of the debate with the wise men, or for the appearance of the sovereign called Maxentius, or for Caesar’s wife who visits Catherine in prison, and whom the saint also converts to Christianity. Catherine’s virtues and her piety are presented in the traditional ballad through the formulae of her rejection of the suitors, who are not attributed explicitly as ‘enemies of Christians’ in the text.

Thus, Catherine’s dispute with the philosophers and her discussion with Maxentius are possibly ‘translated’ in the ballad into the rivalry between the

1 See Delorko 1960:164 for the list of known versions and variants of this ballad.

suitors. The suitors include ‘a powerful king’ and ‘kings and viceroys’. Only in one of the variants of the poem is there an explicit mention of the saint’s erudition, in the verses ‘Kate bile knjige štije’² [Cate reads white books] that are an exceptionally successful poetic adaptation: ‘Kate bile knjige štije/ Na prsim joj sunce grije/ A na čelu misec sjaje/ A na glavi zlatna kruna’ (ibid.) [Cate reads white books/ The Sun does warm upon her breast/ While on her forehead the Moon does glow/ Upon her head a crown of gold]. In another poem we also encounter the formula “Sama, Kate, knjiga dođe” [To Cate, books come of their own accord], a learned formula possibly of Baroque origin³ inserted in a lovely poetic adaptation of the promise to Catherine of ascension into Heaven: ‘Ve nebu budeš korunjena/ Med angeli Gabrijeli,/ Na koruni dvanajest zvizda/ Sake zvizde sunce sije/ I da svetu Katu grije” (Strohal, 1883, No 4) [In the Heavens you shall be crowned/ Among the angels of Gabriel/ Twelve stars upon the crown/ From each star the Sun does shine/ So as to warm St Cate]. The formula of Catherine’s erudition is mentioned in another variant in which it is clearly linked with piety: ‘Pred svetom Katom knjiga stala,/ Sveta Kata verne kleči/ I vu knjige Boga moli’ (Kotarski, 1918: 26) [Before St Cate the book did pause,/ St Cate in faith fell to her knees/ And in the book she prayed to God]. Beside these lovely examples in the traditional ballads that are known to us (we are not sure if this is also the case in other manifestations of folklore) the legendary attribute of Catherine’s erudition does not take hold, while the ballad concentrates on presenting the story-telling sequences in which there is a listing of formula-tropes regarding a girl’s honour (although one has always to count in folklore on attributes that are passed over in silence, but are implicitly present as the tacit knowledge of the bearers of tradition). In the Istrian variants, Catherine rejects the material goods offered to her by the suitors: ‘Neću muža za sve blago/ za kamenje koje drago’ (Volčić, 1851: No 11) [Not for treasure do I want a husband/ not for stones that are precious]. The torture to which Catherine is submitted in the legend (incarceration, the wheel, decapitation) are synthesised in another ballad into torture on the wheel and dungeon, represented in indirect third-person narration (“Bora vama, sluge moje,/ A vi kola opravite,/ A na kola oštre koce,/ A na koce oštre nože,/ A na nože oštre ustre,/ A na ustre Katarinu”) [“Behold, my servants,/ Let prepare me a wheel,/ And prepare me the sharpened sticks on the wheel,/ and sharpened scissors on the knives/ and on the scissors our St Cate”],

2 See the unpublished version in Banić (1881-1885:492-494; ms. IEF 182 III:493).

3 In Kanižlić’s epic poem *Sveta Rožalija* [St Rosalia] (1780), the ‘book’ is called ‘the letter’. See Kravar, 2008: 845-846.

while this polysyndetonic figure strengthens the formula of torment in the poem. The wheel is absent in other versions and, in place of it, Catherine is incarcerated in the dungeon: 'They took the star and Danica/ and Catherine by the hand'⁴. In one of Volčić's versions (Volčić, 1851: 6), as in the version from the Filip Banić collection (Banić, 1881-1885: 492-494), both motifs are present. In the final sequence of Catherine's ascension into heaven, an angel or Jesus appears to Catherine; the formula of her departure from earthly life is materialised in the formula of her being crowned. This is the verse: 'Na koruni dvanajst zvizda/ Sake zvizde sunce sije/ I da svetu Katu grije' (Strohal, 1883:10). [Upon the crown were twelve stars/ Each star shines like the Sun/ And warms Saint Cate.] If we bear in mind the multiple coding of Mediaeval texts (Jauss, Todorov), the same that we also recognise in folklore texts, Catherine's journey from torture to heaven could be interpreted as a journey of spiritual maturing.

It is interesting that even the attribute 'pagan unbelievers' present in the legend submerges in the ballad into a connotative layer or is fully metamorphosed, while Catherine's torturer is presented also by the formula-trope, it's seems to us, that interprets him as 'a rejected suitor', and this ballad translation could be described as the mechanism of the so-called familiarisation (M. Lüthi) or placing the narration in the family context, in its literal and analogical sense, that cannot be avoided even by devotional ballads. Ballads sometimes also elaborate the sequence of the sinfulness of Catherine's father, while allotting the role of helper to her mother (HNPIKO, 1997: 433-444). However, it is possible that such a division of roles is also part of the Mediterranean ballad tradition of St Catherine, for the stereotyped "family romance" is frequently to be found in the Mediterranean tradition. But certain analogies between diverse Southern European ballad traditions are worth pointing out here, without entering into the reasons for such allocations of roles as appear in the ballads. Among the formulae of Catherine's proven sanctity that are common to other Mediterranean traditions, for example, we also find the formula of the seat in Heaven intended for Catherine, common to both the Croatian and Catalan tradition: the verse reads "Kate sidi na zlatoj katride/ anželičen božjin Katarina šije"⁵ [Catherine sits on a golden chair/ And sews for one of God's angels] corresponding with the Catalan verse "Tres cadiras hay al cielo Catalina por sentarte" (Milá, 1895: 26).⁶

4 Banić 1881-1885, IEF 182/III, No. 208, 493.

5 Volčić MH 59B, No. 11; MH 59a, No. 118.

6 We find the same motif in the romance: "Tres cadires tens al cel, totes tres pel teu regalo".

Another mechanism that is present is the process of synthetisation not characteristic only to the fairy-tale genre (B. Holbek): the numerous miracles that embellish the saint in the versified legend from Korčula, even during her lifetime – as in Greek and Latin hagiographies (C. Walsh) – also being proof of her sainthood while she was still on earth, are being reduced in the Croatian ballads to miraculous interventions by angels or Christ at the moment of the saint's death. Once again in such a plot we can seek for the literal and the analogical interpretation (T. Todorov). But, at this point, we will merely register the genre markers of the ballad in relation to the legend of the saint. A similar type of miracle appears in the plots of other traditional family ballads and love ballads that tell the tales of miserable women and dishonoured maidens.

Furthermore, it would seem that the plot of the ballad is gradually shaped as a poetic reflection on the dilemma of the choice between spiritual and earthly life. Perhaps, also, this and other legendary ballads make possible the endings of other family ballads (Delić, 2001). In other words, family ballads often have 'crime and punishment' as their theme, along with graveside 'compensation' to the suffering women, which hence unavoidably imposes the comparison of those female characters with the saint (ibid.). That is why modern ballads can be comprehended in their analogical sense as poetic endeavours at mediation in the choice between mundane and spiritual life in this world, as a plot of cognitive individual maturation. That is how folklore in this ballad, one of the rare devotional ones with international diffusion (Armistead, 1997: 631), has adopted one of the complex representations of women in both high clerical culture and in popular culture (Dalarun, 2001: 41-71).

If we now concentrate on the transformation of legendary material, as it is known in the *Legenda aurea*⁷ in the body of European ballads about St Catherine,⁸ what is particularly interesting is the exceptionally rich mate-

Castellar de Nuc, 1922, Doc. No. 63 AMP.

7 Naturally enough, that is not the sole source of the legendary material about St Catherine in Europe. See Maitland, Mulford 1998:130-145; Walsh 2007.

8 Ballads about St Catherine have been noted in diverse European traditions: those of Finland, Denmark (Grundtvig 1853), Germany, Slovenia, Croatia, Italy, France and the Hispanic countries. See Armistead in Costa Fontes, 1997: II, 631. These ballads "most – if not all – doubtless go back independently to hagiographic sources". Armistead, in Costa Fontes 1997 II:631. There are two main ballad groups that mutually differ from the content aspect, both in the interpretation of the torture to which St Catherine is submitted, and in the degree of 'folklorisation' of the hagiographic legend. And while the Finnish ballads and German ballads see the source of the saint's martyrdom in the kings 'Herod' and 'Maximilian', following hagiographic tradition in that process (Kuusi 1977: 312-314; Röhrich; Brednich 1965-1967: 289-293), the Ro-

rial of Hispanic ballads which, among other, are a part of the children's *romancero*.⁹ Some fifty variants from almost all branches of the Hispanic ballad tradition are kept in the Archive Menéndez Pidal in Madrid alone, interpretations of which would deserve a separate monograph. Thanks to the kindness and hospitality of the recently deceased Prof. Dr. Diego Catalan, who enabled our access to the material, we were able to obtain an insight into that rich collection. This ballad, which was often sung and recited by girls in a circle-dance, also offers a finely nuanced value system, particularly in those versions that contaminate with the ballad *Marinero al agua*.

The ballad is well-known throughout the entire Hispanic and Lusitanian ballad tradition in two basic forms: as a relatively short ballad, which is the form typical to Catalonia, Portugal and the Canary Islands and is based on the narration of the saint's martyrdom and her ascension. The second, longer ballad that we find in the Castilian-speaking region, among the Sephards in Morocco and in diverse traditions in Latin America, is also a consequence of contamination with other religious (or devotional) ballads, the most frequent of which is again *Marinero al agua* (Salazar, 1994). These two forms often exist together in traditions, although certain regional traditions give precedence to one or the other type.

If we were to summarise the shorter ballad type, its content would be as follows: Catherine's parents, who are 'unbelievers', punish Catherine during a religious celebration because she does not want to participate in their rituals. While Catherine is awaiting torture or during torture (on the breaking wheel or at the stake), an angel descends who calls her to ascend to heaven. The ballads usually end with a moralistic reflection on the contrast between the future life in heaven and life in this world.¹⁰

In these ballads, the piety formulae are reduced to Catherine's opposition to the faith of her parents. The narrative sequences list formulae of Catherine's piety and celestial redemption, so we recognise the ballad as a

mance tradition (Italian, French, Hispanic and Portuguese) accuse her family for Catherine's martyrdom. In those traditions, Catherine's parents, or her father, are the major source of the martyrdom. Croatian tradition is situated between these two groups, with an accusation that blames the 'king', although they do also introduce the members of the family as protagonists of the plot. On folklorisation of religious texts, see Bošković-Stulli, 1978:81.

9 See Susanne Petersen's Pan-Hispanic Ballad Index: <http://depts.washington.edu/his-prom/espanol/ballads/balladaction.php> /7.IV.2010./

10 French tradition is quite uniform in condemnation to hell of the saint's father (Barbeau 1937), while Catherine and her mother are adjudged worthy of heaven. See Doncieux, 1904: 391-396. In one of the ballads in the Italian tradition, the father begs for forgiveness from Catherine after he becomes convinced of Catherine's miraculous inviolability that neither incarceration nor hunger can harm. See Nigra, 1888: 540-541, No.149.

religious example which, in the more recent Sephardic versions from Morocco that have been probably ‘imported’ from the Peninsula in recent times (Martínez Ruiz, 1963: 166-167; Armistead, 1978 II: 237), transmit the moral of popular piety. Although the attribution of intellectual quality of the main character in the majority of the ballads belongs to the connotative stratum, in one of the versions from León that we submit in attachment to this article, we also encounter the verse ‘Y con unas disciplinas la atormentaba’ in which the mention of ‘discipline’ as part of the saint’s martyrdom also alludes perhaps to the *artes liberales* in which the Catherine from the legend is skilled.

The plot becomes more complex in those ballads in which contamination exists with the ballad entitled by the folklorists *Marinero al agua*. It would seem that the juxtaposing of the ballad *Marinero...* with the ballad about St Catherine belongs to the type of sequential concatenation in which the narrative affinity between the two sequences is built up upon opposites (Salazar, 1994). The protagonists in both ballads are very different characters in many ways: if Catherine is a saint who, according to the *Golden Legend* ‘destroyed everything that the devil tried to develop within her’ (Vorágine, 1982: II, 765), that is, ‘arrogance, physical lust and worldly ambitions’ then the seafarer would embody, according to the folkloric system of values, the extreme opposite. In the ballad *Marinero al agua*, the sailor experiences a ‘shipwreck’, finding himself in a position to ask for help from the figure of the redeemer who is represented by the character of the devil. The devil promises to help but only under the condition that the sailor’s soul be promised to him and not to god. The sailor’s response is then different, and prevailing is the mocking tone in a *mock testament* that is a sort of iconoclastic parody where different parts of sailor’s body are promised to different members of ecclesiastical institutions.

However, in some cases it seems that St Catherine’s ballad and *Marinero al agua* not only contaminate each other, but that their value systems overlap too. The eschatological struggle between Good and Evil is reduced in those ballads to a carnivalesque mode, while sometimes the legendary ballad evolves into the agnostic or atheist value system. In some variants, St Catherine herself experiences a ‘shipwreck’ on her arrival in heaven, just like the mariner in *Marinero al agua*, so that she now finds herself in a position to ask for help from the figure of the redeemer who is represented by the character of the devil in the ballad type of *Marinero al agua*.¹¹ There

11 “Al subir las escaleras, Catalina cayó al agua/ –¿Cuánto me das Catalina por si te saco del agua?/ –Te doy todos mis navíos, también mi oro y mi plata”. An unpublished version by

are other even more unusual variants in which Catherine appears in the role taken in other ballads by the diabolical character, even though she is God's emissary: she promises to save the mariner under the condition that he hands up his soul to God.¹² The pious message necessarily contaminates with the absent figure of the devil, absent in this ballad but probably present in the narrator's and public memory. So the ballad, too, offers comparison with the legend of Faust, whose role, as we can see, is sometimes adopted by the saint herself.

These latter variants are, it would seem, inscribed in the tradition of the *post mortem* miracles of this saint, who enjoyed considerable repute in the Hispanic countries, although there are also signs of criticism of the saint cults in certain variants, stemming perhaps from the Reformation. In some versions, St Catherine requires the mariner to entrust his soul to her, and not to God, which the mariner refuses, and he also introduces anti-clerical elements into the testament in that place (Pinheiro Torres, 1972).

Finally, taking into account the fact that the majority of Hispanic versions within which the contamination between the ballad of St Catherine and *Marinero al agua* occurs do not count on the narrative explanation of the supernatural voice that promises salvation to the mariner, the ambivalent poetic discourse allows for the possibility that the voice could belong to the devil or, alternatively, to St Catherine.¹³ Moreover, in some of the ballads the devil is mentioned expressly as a mediator in the mariner's salvation. If we were to accept this assumption, we would have two mutually different examples in those ballads: one that glorifies the cult of the saint in non-contaminated ballads, and another that "demystifies" the cult of the saint who is criticised through the so-called *mock testament* in the ballad *Marinero al agua* that is added to St Catherine ballad, and forms with that ballad a new unity.¹⁴ The diverse strata of tradition present in the Hispanic ballad are even

Lourdes González from Las Monas (Yomezana, Asturias). Archive Menéndez Pidal (Madrid).

12 RPM, 199-200. "Cuando subía Catalina, cayó una grande borrasca,/ de truenos y relámpagos/ cayó un marinero al agua./ -¿Qué me das, marinerito/, por sacarte de ese agua? (...)/ -Yo no quiero tus navíos/ cargaditos de oro y plata,/ quiero que cuando te mueras/ a Dios le entregues el alma".

13 In a particular romance from Elche (Alicante), narrated by Angela María Botella in 1923 (Doc. No. 73 AMP, p.2) it expressively says: 'El demonio tan sutil respondió por otra banda/ ¿qué me das marinerito/ y te sacaré del agua?'

14 See a version from Astorga published in RTL 1995: 298: "-El alma es para mi Dios que me la ha dado prestada;/ el corazón pa María, por ser María Sagrada;/ Los ojos para los ciegos/ pa que vean por donde andan;/ los dientes para los viejos para que royan las castañas;/ los oídos pa los sordos pa que oigan lo que hablan;/ las tripas para las peces pa que naden por el agua,/ el pellejo para el cura pa que se haga una sotana;/ los recortes que le queden/ para tocar las campanas". On mock testaments in the Portuguese tradition in which the allusions to sinful

more complicated if we take into account those discussions on the iconoclastic and the iconophylic tradition and the trade in relics that was present as early as in the Mediaeval tradition of St Catherine (Walsh, 2007).¹⁵ Relics that were proof of the simultaneous earthly existence of saints and their presence in heaven gave a powerful impetus to cults of saints in the Middle Ages, and thus also to that of St Catherine (Walsh, 2007). Admittedly, St Catherine's *passio* itself records the saint's prayer that her body not be transformed into relics; still, that *passio* 'cannot be understood as an iconoclastic tractate', while the *inventio* of Catherine's relics, in the opinion of mediaevalists, undoubtedly prompted the development of the cult, which became one of the most important saint cults in late Mediaeval Europe (ibid.).

If the origins of the ballad really have to be sought in these Mediaeval layers of tradition, then the character of the mariner, in those ballads in which he rejects Catherine's assistance, would have to be seen as a representative of the iconoclastic tradition. The 'mock testament' itself, so popular in the Portuguese branch of the Hispanic ballads (Pinheiro Torres, 1972), perhaps does also contain a trace of popular echoes of the Reformation tradition in Spain.¹⁶ In this way, tradition expresses an ambivalent stance towards erudition and spirituality that is valued and regarded, on the one hand, as redemptive, but from which it also shrinks, at the same time, within one and the same ballad (due to those very 'mock testaments'). In addition, it is not improbable that these ballads, in their many variations also reveal, in the 'mock testaments', traces of critical awareness regarding the philosophical debate on the diverse types of cognition, reminding us that these sources of translation in the ballad formulae of the marriage proposals are still not forgotten.

And to conclude, the casuistic interpretation of the saints' lives and other dogma of official religiosity is frequent in the carnivalesque folklore tradition. The legendary ballads do not reflect rigid and dogmatic attitudes, but rather offer a specific fusion between the novelistic and religious elements, the anti-clerical and the pious, appertaining religious moral. However, this ballad is frequently to be found in the children's ballad repertoire. And the ballad was particularly popular in children's circle-dances, as is evidenced by a notation on the margin of one version of the ballad that is kept in the

priestly life are more explicit see Pinheiro Torres (1972:175-176).

15 There is also mention in the *Golden Legend* of a miracle experienced by a priest from Rouen, indicating the existence of the cult of St Catherine in French Normandy.

16 See the catalogue of the exhibition 'Erasmus en España'. Grundtvig interprets the reason for the Danish ballad remaining in 'secular robes' by the secular character of the Protestant tradition (Grundtvig 1853:543-546).

Archive Menéndez Pidal in Madrid: '(...) And when they complete reciting the ballad in the circle-dance, they all leap upon the one who represents Catherine in the game and throw her into the air; this causes tickling, because of which the entire dance ends up in an uproarious noise. Whenever I watched the game, I used to think: Here is a lovely sight that represents holy tradition and ends up with the invisible intervention of Mephistopheles, who puts to sleep the religious ideal and transforms these childish bodies into nervous mechanisms, slaves to the power of laughter.'¹⁷ In a Cuban version, which is a part of children's folklore, too, the motif of the mystical marriage with Christ is also reduced to children's versified tale and equalised with an ordinary secular marriage, although devoid of a metrical pattern:

—¿Cuánto me das, marinero, por que te saque del agua?

—Te doy todos mis navíos, todo mi oro y plata;
a mi mujer que te sirva y a mi hija por esclava.

—Nada de eso yo quiero, sino casarme contigo.
(Chacón y Calvo, 1913:52)

—How much do you give me, sailor, for me to put you out of the water?

—I give you all my ships, all my gold and my silver,
I give you my wife to serve you, and my daughter for your slave.

—I do not want anything of it, but I want to marry you.

However, it would be unjust to interpret the introduction of anti-clerical elements into the ballad solely as a consequence of the playful character of the act of singing or reciting a ballad, or as a result of a lack of understanding of the plot on the part of children as informants. This is an instance of one of the key paradoxes of folklore, 'simultaneously attributed a major role in transmitting and preserving cultural institutions and [making] efforts to have them respected by the individual, while creating at the same time socially acceptable filters for the repressive measures that those same institutions impose' (Bascom, 1965: 298). If we were also to recognise in the plot of the ballad of St Catherine the story of the maturing of the individual, then this would seem to us to be ambivalent in the Hispanic tradition, prompting us to an allegorical reading of the plot while its manifest contents continue

17 This version was noted down in Alcuéscar by García-Plata, a folklorist from the province of Extremadura. RTE 1995:230-231. We reproduce the text, here in English translation from the document No. 95 from the Archive Menéndez Pidal in Madrid.

to retain their importance. And once again, we read the story of the cognitive maturation of an individual, a woman, in the mediation of the choice between spiritual and mundane life, and as one of the branches of the individual cultivation of the saint. Finally, the comparative approach shows us that, as an international ballad that is not the result of genetic affinity but rather of the typological coincidences of the clerical traditions from which the ballads derived, this poem about St Catherine was shaped as a thematic casus of choice between spiritual and secular life. We believe that a more detailed insight into other European ballad traditions could confirm this thematic casuistic dominant. The Faustian topic is added to this theme in the Hispanic ballad tradition, surrounding the choice between spiritual and secular life with an even greater ambivalence. In the end, we can mention that the secular formula of the unbelievers who are Catherine's parents in the plots of both the Spanish and the Croatian ballads is sometimes attributed with concrete ethnonyms and members of particular religious groups (Jews, Moors, Protestants) which allegedly question the spiritual dimension of Catherine's ascension into heaven, if we did not think that this ballad is principally a part of children's folklore. It would seem that the ballad plot of St Catherine is showing its twofold Janus-like face, uncovering the 'splendour and misery' of each reading.

APPENDIX

A. CROATIAN TRADITION

Kad priminu kralj Košćica
Osta Kate sirotica
Svega svita lipa ptica.
Al je prose tamo s mora
Svega česa svoga dvora
Za gospoje sluge svoje.
Služit će je kralj i bani
I ostali svi glavari.
Majka joj se njena šeće
Gori doli uz tavane,
Kad je bila blizu Kate
Kate bile knjige štije

Na prsim joj sunce grije
A na čelu misec sjaje
A na glavi zlatna kruna;
Ter joj majka ovako veli:
Tebe prose priko mora
Za gospoje sluge svoje
Svega česa svoga dvora,
Služit će te kralj i bani
I ostali svi glavari.
Kate majci odgovara:
Od otrole hitka ženo
Nespominji moga muža
Nek negine tvoja duša,
Isus me je prstenova
Desnom rukom zlamenova
A livom je prstenova.
Kad to sluge oćutiše
Pa se natrag povratiše
Ter gospodaru kazali:
Kate kaže da ti neće,
Da je Isus prstenova,
Desnom rukom zlamenova.
Kad on sluge razumio
On je njima besidio:
Bora vama sluge moje,
A vi kola opravite,
A na kola oštre koce,
A na koce oštre nože,
A na nože oštre ustre,
A na ustre Katarinu,
Svu mi Katu razmaknite,
Milosrđa neimajte.
Toga jedva sluge dočekaše,
Oni kola opraviše,
A na kola oštre koce,
A na koce oštre nože,
A na nože oštre ustre,
A na ustre Katarinu.
Tri je puta vapijala,

A četvrti ne mogaše,
nego k nebu pogledaše.
Isus joj je govorio:
Nu neboj se Katarino,
Eto Isus k tebi leti,
On će tebe zagrliti,
U raj te hoće odvesti,
S anđelim ćeš pribivati,
Slavu vičnju uživati.¹⁸

(Free adapted English translation)

When King Košćica passed away
Sweet Cate was left an orphan child
The loveliest bird in all this world,
But suitors came from by the sea
With all the honours of their courts
All court ladies as her servants,
She'd be served by kings and gov'nors
And all the other chieftains, too.
Her mother was walking
Up and down,
When she drew near to Cate
Cate was reading white books
Upon her breast the Sun was warming
And the Moon upon her forehead glowing
Upon her head a golden crown;
And her mother says these words:
—Suitors from across the sea
Offer court ladies as your maids,
All the honours of the court,
Kings and gov'nors as your servants
And all the other chieftains, too –
Catherine answers to her mother:
—F frivolous woman, leave me be

18 An unpublished version. Banić 1881-1885, IEF 182/III, No. 208, 492-494. Narrated by Miho Banić from Donji Dolac. The poem is entitled 'Kate sirotica' [Cate the Orphan] in the Banić manuscript.

Speak not to me of any husband
 Let your mind not be a'troubled,
 Jesus made me his betrothed
 With his right hand gave his blessing
 With his left put on the ring -
 When he heard the servant's words
 He spoke to them:
 —Upon my word, servants of mine,
 Go now and prepare the wheel,
 Upon the wheel put sharpened stakes,
 Upon the stakes put sharpened knives,
 Upon the knives put sharpened points,
 Upon the points place Catherine,
 Draw Catherine apart for me,
 Let there be no mercy for her.
 The servants then set to in haste,
 First they did prepare the wheel,
 Upon the wheel put sharpened stakes,
 Upon the stakes put sharpened knives,
 Upon the knives put sharpened points,
 And on the sharp points - Catherine.
 Three cries were all that she could utter,
 With no strength left to give a fourth,
 Instead she looked at Heaven above.
 Then Lord Jesus spoke to her:
 —Have no fear now Catherine,
 Here now, Jesus flies to you,
 He will clasp you in His embrace,
 And take you up to Heaven with Him,
 With the angels you will live,
 Eternal glory will be yours.¹⁹

19 An unpublished version. Banić 1881-1885 (br.208:354-355; IEF 492-494). Narrated by Miho Banić from Donji Dolac. The poem is entitled 'Kate sirotica' [Kate the Orphan] in the Banić manuscript.

B. SPANISH TRADITION

Era Santa Catalina que murió martirizada,
La atormentaba un rey porque quería gozarla.
Porque no la conseguía dos mil martirios le daba.
Y con unas disciplinas cruelmente la atormentaba.
Mientras más golpes le da Catalina más galana.
Mandó arrojarla a un horno y a Catalina quemarla.
La tiraron en el horno pero nada la dañaba.
Mandó hacer una rueda de cuchillos y navajas,
Para hacer a Catalina en doscientas mil tajadas.
La rueda ya estaba hecha, la santa ya preparada,
La diban a echarla a ella y un ángel del cielo baja.
—Catalina, Catalina, que Jesucristo te llama.
—Jesucristo, ¿qué me quieres? ¿Jesucristo ¿qué me mandas?
—Que me vengas a dar cuenta de la tu vida pasada.
—La vida ha sido buena, la cuenta la daré mala.
Así murió Catalina de ángeles arrodada.
Válgame Nuestra Señora, válgame la Virgen Santa.²⁰

(free adapted English translation)

There was Saint Catherine who died as a martyr,
A king put her on torments for he wanted to seduce her.
And when he could not seduce her, he gave her two thousand torments.
And he tortured her with some disciplines.
More and more he racked her, Catherine was more joyful.
He gave an order to throw her into the oven to burn Catherine alive.
They thrown her into the oven but nothing could harm her.
He gave an order to construct a wheel made of knives and razors.
To cut Catherine in two thousand and one pieces.
The wheel was already made, a saint was prepared,
They were to throw her on the wheel and an angel came down from heaven.

20 Recited by Teresa Fernández Suarez, 54 years old, from Lánacara (León). From the Eduardo N. Torner collection, 1916. The manuscript from the old archive of the Fundación Archivo Menéndez Pidal. Made available through the kindness of Dr. Diego Catalán.

—Catherine, Catherine, Jesus is calling you.
—Jesus, what do you want from me? Jesus what do you order me to do?
—I order you that you should give an account of your life.
—My life was good, but I will give a bad account.
This is the way Catherine died surrounded by angels.
Help us Our Mary Queen, help us Saint Mary!

Fragments from J. De Vorágin's *Golden Legend* (St Catherine) (translated from Latin into Spanish by José Manuel Macías, published in Madrid by: Alianza Editorial 1982: 776-777). English translation by Nina Antoljak.

(...) Catherine immediately gathered together some of her servants, made the sign of the Cross, and left her palace with them, setting out through the streets of her city. It did not take her long during her walk to notice that many of those who spoke of believing in Christ, in order to escape death, still finally accepted the adoration of false gods, hastening to the place in which sacrifices were made. Then, deeply wounded in her most intimate feelings, which were religious feelings, she spontaneously appeared before the Emperor and said to him:

—It would be better, Sire, due to the honour of the position you enjoy and if you have an ear for the voice of reason that, instead of supporting the cult of false gods, you believe in the Celestial Creator.

And then, in the position in which she was standing, at the door of the pagan temple, she began a long discussion with the Emperor and, availing herself of numerous, perfectly dialectical syllogisms, with the use of allegory and metaphor, citing contentions that were sometimes strictly realistic, and at other times mystic, she proved the truth of a series of precepts. Finally, abandoning the academic style and using ordinary expressions, she said:

—In the statements that I have just presented, I have preferred to use scholarly language and procedures, since I have shown you respect, regarding you as an intelligent and learned man, for whom philosophy is close to your heart, but now I ask you openly and directly: What do you hope to achieve with this senseless gathering? Why are you compelling those people to venerate senseless idols? When you are so delighted observing this magnificent temple that was built by human hands, and admiring the lavish treasure with which it is ornamented, despite the fact that all that magnificence and grandeur is nothing more than dust that can be borne away by the wind at any moment, why do you not marvel at the Sky and the Earth

and the Sea and the host of things that are worthy of the admiration that is deserved by those elements? How much better it would be for you if you knew how to appreciate the beauty of the Sun, the Moon, the Stars and the infinite profusion of heavenly bodies that ornament the heavenly vault, and that you admire the meekness and humility with which they respect the laws that govern them! Just think how both day and night, since the world began and up until it ceases to exist, those heavenly bodies, never growing weary and never departing from their paths, have been advancing from East to West and from West to East. When watching such a magnificent phenomenon, ask yourself the question: Is there some being more powerful than they? Listen carefully to the answer to that question that will come from your own mind. Your reasoning will respond positively; and it will tell you that the being who laid down the laws that determine their movement and who subjected them to those laws, not permitting them to leave their orbits, is more powerful than they are. If you think upon those answers, you will realise that, no matter how much you might seek, you will never find anything that could supersede in magnitude that transcendental being, or any who could be compared with him; and when you come to that conclusion, venerate that Transcendental Being and worship Him, for He is the God of Gods and the Lord of Lords.

Thereupon, Catherine began to discuss eloquently and wisely the theme of the Resurrection of the Son of God. The Emperor listened to her in silence for a long time, unable to produce any argument at all contradicting the doctrine being put forward by the girl; but later, regaining his former state of mind, he interrupted her and said:

—Enough now, enough! When we have completed the submission of sacrifices to our gods, we shall resume this conversation and respond to your contentions (...).

Translated into English by Nina Antoljak.

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KAZUISTIČNE JUŽNOEUROPSKE TRADICIJSKE BALADE O SVETOJ KATARINI IZ ALEKSANDRIJE: KOMPARATIVNI PRISTUP

U tekstu se raspravlja o kazuističnoj prirodi tradicijske južnoeuropske balade o svetoj Katarini iz Aleksandrije, svetici intelektualki, čiji život i muku (*passio*) predaja locira u IV. stoljeće. Riječ je o pjesničkom žanru karakteristične transgresivne prirode koji pripada tzv. kanonskoj favoriziranoj tradiciji i koji je bio dio neslavne europske "globalizacijske" prošlosti (tradirane, primjerice, tijekom križarskih ratova), no koji se opire jednoznačnim tumačenjima. Ove balade čitatelju i slušatelju postavljaju vrlo proturječne zahtjeve identifikacije s likom s različitim ishodima u pojedinim ograncima europske baladne tradicije. U tom je smislu nemoguće izvući neka opća mjesta i predodžbe o svetoj Katarini, čak i unutar pojedine baladne tradicije. Naime, karakterizacija likova ovisi o pripovjedaču i o odabranom narativnom obrascu i gradnji zapleta. Poetički najuspješnije balade i romance su one koje nude uživanje u duhovni život svetice i poziv na spiritualizaciju. U nekim pak ograncima hispanske tradicije romance o svetoj Katarini kao da pozivaju na čitanje u širem društvenom kontekstu, raskrinkavajući ideologiziranost zapleta. Pritom i same zapadaju u paradokse karakteristične za žanr kazusa duplicirajući rasističke i "imperijalističke" vrijednosti koje su kao kazusi bile pozvane dokinuti. Poglavitno se to odnosi na "pripitomljavanje" lika svetice koju se subverzivno koristi i za antiintelektualističku kritiku elitne kulture, iz koje su možda balade i potekle, kao prežetak mizogine, antisemitske i maurofobne tradicije u ženskoj kulturi pripovijedanja. Drugdje pak romance o svetoj Katarini, kao sastavnice dječjeg i ženskog folklora, spiritualiziraju lik svetice omogućujući kazivačima i slušateljima/čitateljima uživanje u duhovni život svetice i familijariziranje sa svetičinom potencijalnom "virtualnom magijom".

DISCUSSIONS OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY ISSUES AT MARIAN PILGRIMAGE SITES IN EUROPE

Introduction

This paper deals with the discourses on feminist topics at two Marian pilgrimage sites: the *Lady of All Nations* in the Netherlands and the *Black Madonna of Częstochowa* in Poland. In this article I will show that these Marian pilgrimage sites do not only function as places of religious devotion, but also as sites where the delineation of the moral and social future of Europe (and the world) is contested. Following the assumption that “it seems that the fight for future society must be fought on the terrain of contemporary sexuality” (Weeks 1986: 89) different Catholic groups and individuals seem to react to current (international) political debates, especially on the issues of women’s reproductive rights as well as gay and lesbian rights, at pilgrimage sites. While some groups are in favour of the liberal paradigm of the EU and try to find a synthesis between it and Catholicism, others challenge this liberal paradigm as a danger to the social, moral and political order. The *Lady of All Nations* calls for a new dogma; *Mary Co-redemptrix*, is seen as an especially powerful tool for intervention in various ways, e.g. supporting the pro-life movement and in safe-guarding the so-called dignity of marriage, as well as that of “man” and “woman” in the face of struggles for gay and lesbian rights. The *Black Madonna of Częstochowa* as keeper of religious,

ethnic and gender identity also plays an important role in supporting the value of motherhood and pro-life activities.

Methods

This paper is part of a PhD research project on gender and sexuality discourses at Marian pilgrimage sites in Europe. Anthropological fieldwork – participant observation, informal conversations and interviews – was carried out for six months at the pilgrimage sites of the Lady of All Nations and of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa in 2009. Other relevant pilgrimage sites in Europe were also visited. Moreover, discourse analysis of various texts – pamphlets, books, websites, videos and brochures – was done.

The Lady of All Nations and *Pro deo et fratribus* – The Family of Mary Co-redemptrix

The devotion to the *Lady of All Nations* only started at the end of the Second World War. It is a modern apparitional cult that began when, in the period from 1945 until 1959, the visionary Ida Peerdeman (1905-1996) received 56 messages from Mary using this new title. Like other Marian apparitions in the 20th century, in the beginning the messages focused on the dangers of secularism, which was associated with communism. In recent times the international missionary community *Pro deo et fratribus* – *Family of Mary Co-redemptrix* (PDF-FM) the secularism against which the *Lady* warned has been related to moral decay, which they link with abortion and homosexuality. However, this interpretation of the messages is challenged by a Catholic LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender) group in Malta who understands the Lady's call "no matter who or what you are, come to the Lady of All Nations" (41st message) as a divine recognition of non-heterosexuals in the Catholic Church (Samson, Jansen, and Notermans forthcoming).

The members of PDF-FM, which is led by the Austrian priest Father Paul Maria Sigl and has its main seat in Rome, have caused a revival of the devotion by providing daily masses and other spiritual services. After the death of Peerdeman in 1996, a number of priests and sisters of PDF-FM moved into the chapel in Amsterdam that was erected as a transitory place of worship until enough money is collected to build the church the Lady requested. These sisters and priests have contributed to the popularity of the *Lady*, especially by organizing (inter)national prayer days in different countries that regularly draw thousands of pilgrims. PDF-FM was founded

by the Slovakian Bishop Pavel Maria Hnilica in 1968 to evangelize the countries of Eastern Europe in particular. On the website of the Vatican they are described as

a spiritual family made up of people of different ages, vocations and states of life who, in the light of the message of Fatima and in a spirit of reparation devote themselves to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception by practicing Evangelical witness and charity. The charisma of the Association is Marian, priestly, missionary and ecumenical and finds the centre of its unity in love for and fidelity to the Pope...The specific areas of activity...are the new evangelization, the 'ecumenism of charity', prayer for Christian Unity...¹

The community consists of about 40 priests, 160 apostolic sisters and 15 brothers, as well as about 200 lay members. The sisters and brothers are engaged mainly in social work, while many of the priests give lectures and attend Marian conferences around the World. Economically they are dependent on donations and selling their self-produced music CDs, DVDs of prayer days, candles, rosaries and other devotional objects via the chapel in Amsterdam and globally via the webpage *www.de-vrouwe.net*, which they call the "official website of the [devotion to the] Lady of All Nations". In the Ukraine their ecumenical activities – especially with regard to the Orthodox Church – have been acknowledged and supported by different institutions and the state. In 2005 the Ukrainian state set up a youth ministry that launched a pro-life campaign together with "Triumph of the heart", the name of the East European relief agency of PDF. While this ecumenical activity gets PDF material support from the Ukrainian government for their pro-life activities, during the prayer days and in the Amsterdam chapel all participants are Catholic, apart from guests specially invited to express their devotion on the stage.

Until now the apparitions have not been acknowledged by the Vatican, but in 2002 the local bishop of Haarlem M. Jozef Punt, whose authority is decisive in this matter, declared them to be authentic. During (inter)national prayer days that take place regularly in the Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany, but also in places like Tanzania, Brazil or the Philippines, the cult draws up to 10,000 pilgrims. During the rest of the year the chapel

¹ http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/laity/documents/rc_pc_laity_doc_20051114_associazioni_en.html#PRO%20DEO%20ET%20FRATRIBUS%20?%20FAMIGLIA%20DI%20MARIA%20ASSOCIATION).

of the *Lady* in Amsterdam remains a relatively quiet place that is well-attended for regular Sunday services by a group of faithful devotees. Despite its significant international distribution, the devotion is unknown to the majority of Dutch people. Nevertheless, its supporters have been highly successful in spreading the *Lady's* demand for a new Marian dogma, *Mary Co-redemptrix*, across the globe. An example is the professor of theology in the United States, Mark Miravalle, whom I shall discuss later. Further, the *Lady of All Nations* can be found on diverse religious websites and is linked to other (acknowledged and unacknowledged) Marian apparitions like Fatima and Medjugorje. The *Lady* has not only appeared in Amsterdam, but also in places like Akita (Japan) and the United States. She also appeared in another small place in the Netherlands, Valkenswaard, where her main message was that "abortion must stop now all over the world". The visionary, Agatha van der Palen-Molki, also received the stigmata of Christ, and after her death her husband, a former Dutch missionary in Papua New Guinea, erected a chapel in 1999. This chapel attracted many pilgrims, especially from Belgium and Germany, but as no official permission for it had been asked and the neighbours protested against it, in 2005 the sanctuary had to be closed according to a court decision. However, a small group of about 10 – 20 devotees still meets every evening in a small private room close to the chapel to pray, sing and testify to one another. They also pray and sing once a month in front of an abortion clinic in Eindhoven, a city close to Valkenswaard. Despite the icons being the same, devotees of Valkenswaard stress that there is no link to the chapel in Amsterdam and most devotees in Amsterdam do not know about Valkenswaard.

The devotion in Amsterdam has a strong transnational dimension that is also reinforced by the dissemination of its "revolutionary" (Margry 2007) painting that shows Mary as a Christ-like figure alone in front of the cross. This visual message of an empowered Mary is so strong that the supporters of the devotion go to great lengths in their verbal messages to point out that Mary has no power of her own, but is given her strength by God and that she points to Jesus. This defensive discourse is so pronounced because opponents of the dogma argue that it aims at replacing Jesus with Mary, or even worse, gives rise to the re-emergence of an old pagan goddess in Christian guise. Sometimes a link is also made between the religious empowerment of Mary that could lead to a religious empowerment of women in the Church e.g. with regard to allowing women to enter the priesthood (Margry 2009: 196). Miravalle countered this claim by observing that "God chose to involve a woman in redemption, not a priest, a bishop or Pope; that

is true Christian feminism”(Miravalle 2008), thus emphasizing the opposition between being a woman and being a priest. While I have encountered this claim in feminist theology (Hamington 1995), so far I have not come across any devotees of the *Lady* who interpreted the dogma or the image in that way. Instead women are called to participate as “spiritual mothers of priests” to strengthen male priests and cause an inner renewal in the times of secularization and crisis of faith (Clericis 2009).

At the same time, in its public discourse *PDF-FM* also emphasizes that Mary is the mother of everyone, regardless of ethnic or religious background. Amsterdam is seen as being of special symbolic importance as it is associated with the liberal secularism of Western societies that they reject and also because it is a miracle city², a dimension that is largely forgotten today. In this line of thinking, the *Lady of All Nations* is interpreted as the only way to bring about world peace by unifying humankind and the declaration of a new fifth Marian dogma, *Mary Co-redemptrix*, is claimed to be the necessary condition for her to intervene with power.

The Queen of Poland

The chapel of the *Black Madonna of Częstochowa*, who is also known as the *Queen of Poland* is a very popular pilgrimage site that is not only seen as the so-called spiritual capital of Poland, but also an important place in the preservation of Polish history and identity. Jasna Góra (meaning “bright hill”, the name given to the hill on which the sanctuary was situated by the Pauline Fathers) in Częstochowa has a long pilgrimage tradition that dates back about 600 years. It is officially acknowledged by the Vatican and got strong (spiritual and political) support from Pope John Paul II (1978-2005) who visited it six times. What is more, it has acquired significant national meaning during the various occupations as the symbol of Polish identity and independence. The victory over the Protestant Swedes in the 16th century for example, has been attributed to the Madonna and she received the honorary

2 On 15th March 1354 a sick man in Amsterdam was given the communion for the sick. Due to his sickness he vomited the communion wafer and the remains of his last meal that were thrown into the fire out of respect for the Holy Communion. The next day however the communion wafer was found unharmed in the ashes of the fire. It was carried to the local priest, but returned to the sick man’s place three times. This was seen as proof for the true presence of Christ in the Holy Communion. Later a chapel was erected on the place and to which a yearly sacramental procession was made; this is called the “Silent Walk” as it is done by the devotees in absolute silence, due to the former prohibition of processions in the northern Protestant part of the city. During the reformation the procession tradition ceased, but was taken up again in 1881; in recent years around 8,000 people have participated in it.

title *Hetmanka* (commander-in-chief of the armed forces) as a result. In this context, the pilgrimage site has functioned as a forum for different groups to make statements, especially with regard to the European Integration Project and with regard to the issue of family values. The *Black Madonna* has been referred to, for example, in various public statements as the role model for Polish women, especially with regard to motherhood. Since 1989 the international meaning of Częstochowa has increased again: in 2006 pilgrims and tourists from 73 countries visited Częstochowa, with the majority coming from the United States, Italy and Germany (P.M. 2007).

The chapel of the *Black Madonna* is in the care of about 100 fathers and brothers of the Pauline order that was called upon to build a (defensive) monastery in Częstochowa in 1382. Their main charisma lies in providing the sacraments of confession and mass, so that John Paul II once called the sanctuary “Poland’s biggest confessional and altar”. Next to taking care of the spiritual well-being of the pilgrims by offering counselling services and a confidential telephone service that is aimed at e.g. women considering abortion, they offer the spiritual adoption of conceived (but as yet unborn) children.

To understand the political meaning of the Catholic Church in general and Jasna Góra in particular, one needs to consider that “throughout history, membership of the Catholic Church has been one of the most important components of the identity of a Pole” (Kepel 1994). After the Nazi regime had annihilated many members of the intelligentsia of Poland, the Catholic clergy was the only organized group left to perpetuate values alien to communism. Further, through the (racial) politics of Nazism, and later Communism, Polish society was made into a society that was ethnically and religiously almost homogenous, with over 95% of Polish people belonging to the Catholic Church. Today, with Poland having become a democratic state, the membership of the EU with its secular paradigm, and a steadily growing number of immigrants from different national, ethnic and religious backgrounds, the implicitness of Polish identity as Catholic, as promoted by the Church, is once more challenged. The *Black Madonna*, whose unique and clearly visible scars on the cheek have been interpreted as a co-suffering with the Polish people, plays a significant role in these discourses about Catholicism, national, European and gender identity.

Since the late 1990s the Polish Church actively supported Poland’s integration into the European Union. It has seen this also as a chance to strengthen Catholicism in the allegedly morally decayed Western European countries, and was encouraged by Pope John Paul II (Graff 2003:110 f). For

this political help, the Church demanded from the government a revision of the abortion law which made it into the most restrictive in Europe (Graff 2003: 110). It shows that the Polish Church had become a highly politicized institution that emerged from the communist period as the highest moral authority ascribing to itself the leading role in the fight for democracy (de Busser 2007: 2; Herbert 1999: 277). This most controversial and socially divisive area of involvement of the Church on the issue of abortion (Eberts 1998: 823) however has resulted in a serious loss of popularity of the Church among the majority of Polish Catholics who have claimed that the Church should confine itself to religious matters (Millard 1999:140; Korbonski 2000: 127).

Marian symposium in Amsterdam

On May 31st 2008 PDF-FM organized a Marian Symposium in Amsterdam. Among those invited were not only the local bishop Mgr. Punt and Father Brouwer, the spiritual guide of Ida Peerdeman for many years, but also international guest speakers such as Mgr. Arthur Burton Calkins, Father Damian Fehlner, Prof. Dr. Judith Gentle-Hardy and Prof. Dr. Mark Miravalle. Miravalle has founded the *Vox Populi* movement to collect signatures from all over the world to petition the Pope in favor of the 5th Marian dogma. Since in 2002 Bishop Punt declared the Marian apparition to be authentic, Miravalle calls upon the messages of the *Lady of All Nations* to support the demand for the new dogma. In doing so, he argues in a similar fashion to Father Sigl, that only an empowered Mary can help us overcome the social and moral problems of today's (Western) society, something on which I shall elaborate below.

The symposium was not public, but directed at a small selected audience. Only two papers, the one by Calkins entitled *Our Lady of All Nations, the woman of Genesis and the Apocalypse*³ and the one by Miravalle called *Mary Co-redemptrix and the fifth dogma: Perennial Christian Truth; contemporary call of the Lady of All Nations*⁴ can be found on the website www.devrouwevanallevolkeren.nl. On the website airmaria.com⁵ however there is a video streaming of all lectures, including the one by Prof. Gentle, but that by Father Damian no longer works and is therefore not accessible.

3 http://www.de-vrouwe.net/downloads/english/080531_symp_mgr_calkins.pdf (last accessed 17.06.2009).

4 http://www.de-vrouwe.net/downloads/english/080531_symp_miravalle.pdf (last accessed 17.06.2009).

5 <http://airmaria.com/2008/07/29/video-amsterdam-coredeemption-conference-2-dr-judith-gentle-proclaiming-the-coredeemption-dogma-now/> (last accessed 17.06.2009).

Gentle-Hardy is a theology professor and a pastor of the Anglican Church. She can be described as a representative of the so-called classic Christian orthodoxy which opposes gay rights within the Church. This issue has been the subject of controversy and discussion in the Anglican Church since the Lambeth conference of Anglican bishops in 1998 in which the vast majority rejected gay rights in favor of keeping unity in the Church, and has led to the exclusion of the openly gay bishop, Gene Robinson at the 2008 conference. Gentle-Hardy's lecture *Proclaiming the coredemption-dogma now* focused on why the 5th dogma is needed from an Anglican viewpoint. Gentle-Hardy set out – quoting John Paul II – to wonder, whether there is a “meta-historical reason for our [Christian] divisions.”⁶ However she asserted that the world now needs the common witness of “our unity... in a time of crisis of truth in the West, and the all-pervasiveness of moral relativism threatening the very institutions of civilization.”⁷ She claimed that the “Anglican Union has lost its moral compass so severely” that even the long tradition of internal divisions cannot prevent a radical break in the Anglican Communion. She named as a possible breaking point the conference at Lambeth that summer (2008), without naming the gay rights issue, so that she must have assumed that everyone in the audience knows about it. She also claimed that other Protestant mainline denominations suffer from a “denial of the natural law and of objective truth in which the entire Western World is awash today.”⁸

This reference to the natural law is typical for the moral reasoning of conservative Christians and started in the 13th century when Thomas Aquinas introduced a specific anti-gay rhetoric with reference to the natural law that he claimed was ordained by God (Westerfelhaus 1998: 281). The natural law is however only called upon in the area of (homo)sexuality within Christian moral reasoning. Gentle-Hardy hinted at the issue of homosexuality through mentioning the Lambeth conference and that way asserted that heterosexuality is the only God intended and sanctified form of sexuality. She talked about “denial of objective truth” as if giving homosexual people the same rights as heterosexuals would lead to a loss of (Christian) truth and therefore endanger the whole (Christian) moral existence. This homophobic discourse of course is not new. Most conservative Christians

6 <http://airmaria.com/?sn=20&vp=1710&prefx=shrtv&plyrnb=1&ttl=Short%20Series:02.58> (last accessed 17.06.2009).

7 <http://airmaria.com/?sn=20&vp=1710&prefx=shrtv&plyrnb=1&ttl=Short%20Series:04.50> – 05.10. (last accessed 17.06.2009).

8 <http://airmaria.com/?sn=20&vp=1710&prefx=shrtv&plyrnb=1&ttl=Short%20Series:06.00> (last accessed 17.06.2009).

base it on the biblical story of Sodom. While the Jewish Rabbis and early Christians understood the punishment of Sodom as a reaction to their inhospitality and abuse of outsiders, John Chrysostom was the first Church father to interpret it as a punishment for same sex desire (Carden 2004: 128). Since then, this interpretation has been used in homophobic Christian discourses to declare all kinds of moral and social problems to be rooted in the acceptance of homosexuality.

To also include the Roman Catholic brothers and sisters, Gentle-Hardy talked about attending a lecture of a Catholic professor on an “Ecological theology of the Holy Spirit” at a Catholic American University which “absolutely frightened me [Gentle]”⁹. As “one of the highlights of the talk”¹⁰ the professor who remains unnamed had claimed that the Catholics respect for life must now also include the environment and the eco-systems of the world. Gentle-Hardy criticized this as “latest stealth weapon that lets Catholics off the hook of being solidly pro-life for human beings from womb to tomb.”¹¹ One might wonder about this reasoning: why would an inclusion of respect for the environment exclude or diminish the respect for human beings?

Gentle-Hardy’s concern was focused on Christian unity, which she proposes to attain through controlling non-heterosexual and female bodies in much the same way as it is often done in discourses on national unity (Bracewell 1996; Gal and Kligman 2000; Helms 2008). She goes on to say that our human efforts at Christian unity seem to constantly fail and that we are therefore in need for “divine intervention”, made possible through embracing the Virgin’s Mary mystery of co-redemption.¹²

Her lecture could also be read as a warning for the Catholic Church: if there were to be acceptance of LGBT rights within the Catholic Church, it might lead to a similar danger of division. Actually the Catholic LGBT group in Malta worries about this division between so-called liberals and conservatives. While they are convinced that the Holy See’s teachings on homosexuality are not right and even a “sin” towards LGBT people, they stress at the same time their love for the Church and are concerned about its

9 <http://airmaria.com/?sn=20&vp=1710&prefix=shrtv&plyrnb=1&ttl=Short%20Series:06.32> (last accessed 17.06.2009).

10 <http://airmaria.com/?sn=20&vp=1710&prefix=shrtv&plyrnb=1&ttl=Short%20Series:06.50> (last accessed 17.06.2009).

11 <http://airmaria.com/?sn=20&vp=1710&prefix=shrtv&plyrnb=1&ttl=Short%20Series:07.40> (last accessed 17.06.2009).

12 <http://airmaria.com/?sn=20&vp=1710&prefix=shrtv&plyrnb=1&ttl=Short%20Series:10.40> (last accessed 17.06.2009).

unity. Their combination of praying the rosary, visiting Marian pilgrimage sites like Medjugorje and reading texts of John Paul II and Benedict XVI as well as of liberation theologians can be seen as an attempt to reconcile different strands within Catholicism. Thus, apart from the LGBT issue they conform to the teachings of the Catholic Church, including e.g. on abortion. As one group member said to me: “I don’t think a true Catholic could ever support abortion”.

Miravalle is also concerned about abortion, as his lecture at the chapel of the United Nations shows, but first I want to look at his paper given in Amsterdam. Like other so-called conservative theologians he has taken up the dialogue with (secular) feminism. He claims that the new dogma – among other effects like seeing Mary as a role model to co-work at human redemption as responsible Christians –

would furthermore be an organic clarification and reaffirmation of the dignity of woman. ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only Son’ (John 3:16). God so loved woman that he wanted woman involved in the salvation of all humanity – not a priest, not a bishop, not a pope, but a woman. This is authentic Christian feminism. This is where a woman discovers her mystery, and it is where woman has a proper sense of awe in her femininity, that God has such a deep respect for her that the Father providentially predestines that a woman will work side by side with the man-God in the work of redemption. This is Our Lady, where femininity has its most dignified moment in human history...¹³

However, feminist theologians have long since pointed out that women have not so far benefited from the elevation of Mary through the previous dogmas, but that she as “virgin mother” had become an unattainable role model (Schillebeeckx and Halkes 1993). Miravalle reifies this dichotomy between Mary as a perfect woman and the everyday life of women that is full of frailties and flaws like all human life by claiming that in Mary “femininity has its most dignified moment in human history”. This statement has many implicit assumptions. First of all, it seems to imply that femininity lived by so-called ordinary women is less dignified. Secondly, he apparently claims that there is only one (essential) femininity to which all women should aspire. In contrast, feminists theorists like Judith Butler have pointed to the

13 Written version of the lecture on the web-site www.de-vrouwe.net: www.de-vrouwe.net/downloads/english/080531_symp_miravalle.pdf (last accessed 17.06.2009).

construction and multiplicity of female (and male) identities (Butler 1990). For doing this however, she has received (implicit) criticism of Pope Benedict XVI in his 2008 Christmas message, and is described in some books available at both pilgrimage sites as the “chief gender ideologist” (Meetschen 2009; Roccella and Scaraffia 2006; Kuby 2007) trying to attack the so-called dignity of man and woman and whose theories are seen to be put into practice by the EU’s anti-discrimination policy.

Prof. Miravalle in New York and on youtube

Prof. Miravalle gave a PowerPoint supported lecture entitled *The Lady of All Nations* in the church of the Holy Family – *The United Nations Parish* – in New York on 08.12.2007. Starting off, he points at the symbolic meaning of standing in front of “the meeting point of all Nations”¹⁴ talking about the *Lady of All Nations*, thus hinting at her universal importance. His main concern is the bad shape the world in general is in today, with the main symptoms being moral degeneration, family breakdown and terrorism. In the *Lady of All Nations’* call for the new dogma of *Mary Co-redemptrix* he presented the remedy, as Mary would then be in a more powerful position to intervene on humankind’s behalf. However, he was not so much concerned about political terrorism in this lecture, but another form of it: “not only terrorism in the world, but terrorism in the womb.”¹⁵ He quoted Mother Teresa who was a strong supporter of the pro-life cause: “You are not going to have safety in the streets, if you don’t have safety in the womb”¹⁶. To this Miravalle added: “the womb has become the most single dangerous place in the world...the single most dangerous geography today is the womb”¹⁷. By creating a direct link between political terrorism and abortion he fashioned a mental image of the woman’s body as a (potentially) dangerous territory and of the fetus being an innocent person in danger of being killed like so many people in terrorist attacks. To further support his argument of fetuses having full personhood, he showed a picture of an embryo isolated from the female body. The use of these ultra-sound images as “social documents... to award to the fetus the status of personhood more typically attributed to the infant after birth” (Sturken and Cartwright 2001) has become quite co-

14 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CIRH-t-Cgoc&feature=related>: 02.10 minutes (last accessed 17.06.2009).

15 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3D7C426kHU>: 00.25 minutes (last accessed 17.06.2009).

16 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3D7C426kHU>: 00.30 minutes (last accessed 17.06.2009).

17 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3D7C426kHU>: 00.50 (last accessed 17.06.2009).

mon within the pro-life movement to support fetal over maternal rights. Jenny Hockey and Jane Draper have pointed out that it has become possible for these images to work so powerfully because of the Western privileging of visualization to support truth claims, so that e.g. the felt experiences of pregnant women and traditional markers of pregnancy have been replaced by these ultra-sound images (2005: 49).

Moreover in this way, Miravalle made women who had an abortion responsible for today's social and political problems: no economic, no political, no other societal reasons are discussed as possible causes.¹⁸ In contrast to that, a member of the above mentioned Catholic LGBT group – who also opposes abortion – calls for an analysis of the societal structures of injustice that have led women to make this decision. Miravalle's conclusion was to call for the devotees to write to the Pope in favor of the dogma, providing them with the address of the Vatican. However, for those who accept his argument, it can also be read as a call to (political) action: abortion stands in the way of society's well-being and therefore cannot be tolerated.

Spiritual Adoption in Częstochowa

Jasna Góra, as the main seat of the Pauline order, has also become the international center for the Spiritual Adoption movement. Spiritual adoption means that an individual (of any age or marital status), a couple or a group prays daily for a conceived yet unborn child for the duration of nine months to ensure that it is not aborted.

The movement started in Poland when a Polish journalist found a leaflet about Spiritual Adoption in a church in London in the 1987 and decided to introduce it to Poland. On the 2nd of February 1987 the Pauline Fathers started the Spiritual Adoption and in 1994 John Paul II gave his official blessing to the activity, and so the official Spiritual Adoption Center was opened. First it was situated in the Family Council office. On the 5.16.2004, the day of the pro-life saint and physician Gianna Beretta Molla, the center was moved into the inner court of the sanctuary that is run by a lay woman. Beretta Molla was the first lay woman who was also a “working mom”¹⁹ to reach sainthood because she developed cancer during her fourth pregnancy,

18 In a similar way Father Sigl during the prayer day of the Lady of All Nations 2002 in Cologne (which coincided with the yearly pride parade in Cologne) described homosexuals as responsible for social and political decay as they through their major sin of practicing their sexuality are responsible for giving Satan so much destructive power.

19 www.saintgianna.org/sainthood.htm.

but refused an abortion to have a chemotherapy and consequently died after the birth of her daughter.

Everyone can enter the center and get information (in Polish) from brochures and other materials such as small plastic figures representing a ten-week old fetus. People who want to take part can write their names in a large book to leave written proof of their commitment. According to the woman in the office there have been more than 40 million people participating in it up to now. However, it is hard to establish precise numbers of how many people actually take part in it as there are many ways to participate: people can do it in the office, at the end of some masses at bigger events at Jasna Góra, at home by reading/ praying the text for themselves, by watching television TRWAM, a Catholic television station linked to *Radio Maryja* or by listening to *Radio Maryja* or Radio Jasna Góra.

Radio Maryja is a controversial Catholic radio station (Jenkins 2007: 67) whose director Father Tadeusz Rydzyk once claimed that women who had an abortion should have their heads shaved like the women who were accused of prostituting themselves to the Nazis during WW II (Ramet 2006: 134). This drastic statement refers to the perception of women as reproducing the nation “culturally, biologically and symbolically” (Yuval-Davis 1997: 2). In both cases the women are perceived as traitors of the nation, either through (alleged) sexual relations with the enemy or through failing to reproduce biologically. Tricia Cusack has pointed out for the case of Ireland that the two icons dominating the imagination of the nation’s womanhood were the Virgin Mary and Mother Ireland (2000: 548). With the *Black Madonna* being also the *Queen of Poland*, *Radio Maryja* – in connecting themselves to Jasna Góra through organizing pilgrimages for children, youth and adults as well as transmitting important events – uses the most powerful national and religious symbol to underline the role of women as mothers as their religious and national duty.

The woman running the Jasna Góra office however describes the beneficial effects of taking part in the spiritual adoption for the participants as manifold. Examples are couples who had grown distant in their marriage and became closer again through praying together, women who could not get pregnant and suddenly found themselves expecting a child, a young woman who was received a proposal shortly after she and later her fiancée joined Spiritual Adoption. In this way pro-life activity becomes at the same time a kind of couples or family therapy, so that Spiritual Adoption has the positive double effect from the believer’s perspective of protecting (heterosexual) marriages and unborn children.

Another important group for whom Spiritual Adoption is seen as a sort of spiritual therapy is made up of women who had an abortion themselves. When they confess this sin to one of the Pauline Fathers they are often sent to the Spiritual Adoption centre. In this way the woman running the office also becomes a kind of counselor for them. There is a special leaflet for these women with different steps, of which the most difficult one is often the part of forgiving themselves. In most cases however, the women succeed in finally forgiving themselves, so that the Spiritual Adoption movement for them has become an active way of dealing with their pain and feelings of guilt. A group of American women from New York came to Częstochowa in 2004 on a post-abortion pilgrimage to deal with the same issue because they see in the scars of the Madonna the scars left by abortion on women, but they did not take part in the Spiritual Adoption. They regard it as too confrontational for a woman who is still on the path of “healing from abortion”.²⁰

Conclusion

This investigation into the discourses on feminism, homosexuality and abortion at two different Marian pilgrimage sites has shown that an empowered Mary, as the envisioned Co-redemptrix the *Lady of All Nations* or the *Black Madonna* as *Queen of Poland* and *Hetmanka*, does not necessarily lead to an empowerment of women within the Church or in society. On the contrary, these representations of Mary are used by some conservative Catholic groups to assign to women once more the role as mothers and to contest the legal access to abortion that pro-choice lobbies unsuccessfully tried to make into a common European law. In a larger frame these activities can also be understood as interventions in preserving European identity as Christian versus the secularism of the EU.

Looking at these statements and the aim of this summer school to build a bridge between feminism and spirituality in its various manifestations, it becomes clear how important, yet difficult, is the ongoing discussion on the issue of abortion and feminism, as well as gay and lesbian rights. I think we, as feminists, need to respect the agency of so-called conservative religious people, including women, who oppose abortion from reasons of faith or for whom pro-life activity can have a healing effect. On the other hand, I think we need to be careful about the political implications of these religious discourses, especially when they are brought forward by powerful political agents like *Radio Maryja* or a group that has influential contacts in the

20 [www.postabortionhelp.org/pdf/files/Our Lady of Czestochowa.pdf](http://www.postabortionhelp.org/pdf/files/Our%20Lady%20of%20Czestochowa.pdf)

Vatican like *PDF-FM*, and when they make women into the sole responsible party for today's manifold political, social and ecological challenges.

At the same time it is equally important that Catholic groups which now present feminists and women's rights as well as gay and lesbian rights as secular enemies recognize that feminists as well as gays and lesbians are just as concerned about the well-being of society as themselves, and that they are often motivated by religious and spiritual reasons.

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RASPRAVE O PITANJIMA RODA I SEKSUALNOSTI PRI MARIJANSKIM SVETIŠTIMA U EUROPI

Iz različitih razloga, mjesta hodočašća još uvijek privlače milijune posjetitelja svake godine. Dok većina hodočasnika dolazi iz vjerskih pobuda, neki su motivirani i političkim razlozima. To je posebno slučaj kod nekih marijanskih svetišta u kojima različite vjerske skupine raspravljaju o pitanjima roda i seksualnosti. Čini se da za mnoge konzervativne kršćane mjesta hodočašća postaju mjesta otpora liberalnoj paradigmi EU, posebno vezano uz reproduktivna prava i prava LGBT (lezbijki, gej, biseksualnih i transrodnih) osoba. Ovaj rad istražuje diskurse o tim pitanjima koji nastaju u dva specifična mjesta hodočašća, svetištima Gospe svih naroda u Amsterdamu i Crne Gospe u Częstochowi u Poljskoj. Riječ je o vrlo različitim svetištima, no rasprave koje se pri njima održavaju upadljivo su slične i upućuju na transnacionalne marijanske mreže. Oba svetišta su posebno zanimljiva u kontekstu ljudskih prava žena, budući da predstavljaju osnaženu Mariju, Gospu svih naroda kao suotkupiteljicu (sa značajnom ulogom u ljudskom otkupljenju), a Crnu Gospu kao Hetmanku (zapovjednicu oružanih snaga). Autorica raspravlja o širenju svjetovnih i religijskih diskursa o ženskim i LGBT pravima pri tim svetištima, posebno u vezi s političkom liberalnom paradigmom Europske Unije, koju neki konzervativni katolički društveni akteri percipiraju kao protivnu kršćanskom naslijeđu Europe.

Part two:

Challenges of old/new economic inequalities

OLD/NEW ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES: FEMINIST CONCERNS AND VISIONS

At the recent celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the Zagreb Centre for Women's Studies, in April 2010, Slovenian philosopher Eva Bahovec said that feminist pedagogy and activism are insufficient forms of action in a neoliberal society. In sharing this feeling, we decided to dedicate the Dubrovnik postgraduate course in May 2010¹ to the sphere of life most responsible for the reproduction of patriarchal supremacist concentration of power in the hands of the few – which is economy. In our call for proposals, we asked for feminist reflection on the causes and effects of old/new economic inequalities in various contemporary contexts but also for good practices of woman's resistance to consumerist utopias and liberal discourses, for practices that imply nurturing of nurturing feminine spirit and raising woman's economic, cultural and symbolic capital.

Differences in wealth and social security come up as one of the most striking divisions separating not only nations and continents but also citizens within a society.² At the same time, the welfare gap is a driving force, a constant irritating factor that facilitates and stirs the processes which

1 The fourth postgraduate feminist seminar *Challenges of old/new economic inequalities* (Dubrovnik, May 24-29, 2010) gathered 23 women from 5 continents. This collection encompasses the best papers and most stimulating research ideas presented at the seminar and later rewritten to meet the questions, remarks and suggestions formulated in seminars discussions.

2 Using World Bank data for 2000, the average per capita wealth in the top 10 wealthiest countries is a staggering 170 times greater than the average in the bottom ten. At the same time, the developed and faster developing economies have faced the stunning rise in social inequality.

undermine the economic and social divide – such as migration, social upheavals and new social initiatives. Radical economic inequality is also the impetus for political struggle to change a governing model that speaks to the aspirations of the majority, and demands democratic regulation of the global economy.

The very beginnings of women's movement for gender equality saw (middle or upper-class white) women forging their political goals from the position of political and economic deprivation, which had nothing to do with Marxist ideology. During the second-wave of feminism in the late 1960s and 1970s, radical feminists strengthened their political platform following some leftist premises – women's "double oppression" by men and capitalism – but also contested attempts to reduce the problem of patriarchy to the Marxist-Leninist pattern of class struggle. The concrete issues were put on the agenda: equal pay, economic independence of women, demands for day care, criticism of the division of labour in the nuclear family, liberalisation of the abortion law, reform of the matrimonial law, equality in education and at work, and, most important, the question of "housewives' wages", a political issue at the time.³ In this pivotal period of modern European history, one wing of radical feminists took it for granted that "the condition for any feminist struggle is for all women to belong to the same social class".⁴ Those who opposed such a view, however, also made their sentiments clear. Women gathered under the Women's Liberation Movement (MLF), founded in 1971, but also other feminists across Europe, provided a critique of leftist movements and their levels of engagement with women as not competent to cover the interplay of language, culture, politics, ideology,

3 As Gisela Bock and Barbara Duden have argued, unpaid housework is quite a recent phenomenon and has emerged with the industrial and capitalist transformation of society since the 18th century. Only over time was child and family care exclusively attributed to women only and defined as non-work, whereas „work“ was defined as paid work. Cf: *Frauen und Wissenschaft. Beiträge zur Berliner Sommeruniversität für Frauen*. Juli 1976. Courage Verlag Berlin 1977, pp. 118-199. According to French feminists (F. Bourgeois, J. Brener-Martin, D. Chabaud et al.), the feminist macro-economical analysis of domestic work in capitalist societies has to underline the central role of women for the reproduction-individuation process characterizing the capitalist time "which requires the simultaneous mother-and-child constitution". ("Travail domestique et famille du capitalisme", *Critique de l'économie politique*; No. 3, 1978, pp. 2-23.). See also articles published in the British magazine *Socialist Woman* and far-left newspaper *The Black Dwarf* (1969-1982), manifest of the *Mouvement de Libération des Femmes* (Luxembourg), 1972, and different MLF journals across Europe; Belgian magazines *La revue nouvelle*, 1974, No. 1, *LEF-cahiers*, 1977; Swedish magazine *Kvinnobulletinen* (Women's Bulletin), the mouthpiece of feminist Grupp 8, 1970-1980, For more information comp. FRAGEN database, the selection of pivotal European feminist texts (<http://www.aletta.nu/aletta/fragen/database>).

4 Cf. Françoise Picq, "Féminisme, matérialisme, radicalisme", *La Revue d'en face*, No. 13, 1983, pp. 39-57. (<http://www.aletta.nu/aletta/fragen/database>)

and sex and their impact upon the unprivileged status of women. Therefore, the “women’s question” – that united feminists across the global challenge of the Cold War block politics – was moved beyond an economic horizon to create a vision of a society built on alternative ideas: global sisterhood, gender equity and new family. Due to the global crisis, third-wave feminism, despite its different achievements on a much wider transnational women’s agenda, has to cope again with many “historical” women’s issues such as the importance of *women’s unpaid work* for national income and the link between the reduction of job opportunities and the reduction of women’s labour rights in finance-led capitalism.

As it always has been the case with discontinued women’s histories, contemporary feminists have entered into the sphere of economic expertise transversally, opening several parallel fronts of activity across capital market-based geographies. Women scholars have established the academic field of feminist economics that gives serious attention to women and global restructuring of workplaces and modalities of work in the domestic and public spheres (flex-work, the growth of service sector, modern slavery, deskilled “feminized jobs”, transborder work commuting, “affective work”). Feminist economists are successful in combining earlier incompatible categories on daily basis – econometrics with women’s budgets, macroeconomic models with theories of marriage and women’s double day; pay equity with the decline of national economies and low fertility rate.⁵ According to Geoff Schneider and Jean Shackelford, there are ten principles of feminist economics: (1) There can be no such thing as a definitive list of the principles of feminist economics; (2) Values enter into economic analysis at many different levels. (3) The Household is a locus of economic activity. (4) Non-market activities are important to the economy. (5) Power relationships are important in an

5 The 1993 publication of Marianne A. Ferber and Julie A. Nelson’s *Beyond Economic Man* was a landmark in both feminist scholarship and the discipline of economics. The handbook was enlarged a decade later and entitled *Feminist Economics Today* (2003). Besides growing production of books in the field of feminist economics, there is Routledge peer-review journal *Feminist Economics* that advances feminist enquiry into economic issues affecting the lives of children, women and men; examines the relationship between gender and power in the economy and the construction and legitimization of economic knowledge; extends feminist theoretical, historical and methodological contributions to economics and the economy; offers feminist insights into the underlying constructs in the discipline of economics and into the historical, political, and cultural context of economic knowledge; provides a feminist rethinking of theory and policy in diverse fields, including those not directly related to gender; includes cross-disciplinary and cross-country perspectives. There are also useful feminist blogs such as Nancy Folbre’s *Economix* (<http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/tag/nancy-folbre>), Allison Martell’s *Economic Women* (<http://economicwoman.com>), *Marginal Revolution* (<http://www.marginalrevolution.com>) or the “Glass Hammer” (<http://www.theglasshammer.com>).

economy. (6) A gendered perspective is central to the study of economics. (7) Human beings are complex, and they are influenced by more than just material factors. (8) People compete, cooperate and care. (9) Government action can improve market outcomes. (10) The scope of economics must be interdisciplinary.

The other perspective has been opened by powerful women following Badiou's remark that money matters in the struggle for a better world. Aude de Thuin, a French business woman, founded the Women's Forum for the Economy and Society in 2005 that offers its own vision of sustainable development. The Forum created a global network in order to strengthen the influence of women throughout the world and to draw up concrete action plans to encourage women's contribution to society. On the "home front", feminist activists show that without cross-gender and cross-race solidarity with other disadvantaged people there is no fruitful struggle for the protection of the social and labour rights of women who are, in a postindustrial society, more often than not doomed to return to their homes (through part time homework jobs) or leave their families to take care of more wealthy neighbours' family members across border.

The job opportunities for women opened by the growth of the service sector, telecommunication, tourism or the media industry versus trends toward deskilling, reskilling, and an increased level of gender polarization in the occupational division of labour, are reflected in feminist scholarship as part of the general issue of global development ("jobless growth") and accompanying technological innovations that are not used to eliminate inequalities in society or to empower disadvantaged people to take part in the decision making process. However, global co-movement of money and people results in an increasing number of legal and police regulations that restrict the flow of migrant workers, while stimulating financial innovation, commercialization and new forms of exchange (of money, goods, services and knowledge). But increasing importance of debts, contracts, obligations and linking on all levels, despite the neoliberal agenda on individualism, "difference" and "identity" as most important in social life, brings a larger interdependence of citizens on a global scale and gives value to universal values such as equality, solidarity and common goods.

Developed economies based on industrial patriarchy and financial capitalism are both responsible for the fact that women comprise more than fifty percent of the world's population, but own only one percent of the world's wealth. Seventy-five percent of the world's women cannot get formal bank loans due to lack of permanent employment and other goods to offer as se-

curity. On the other hand, some statistics show that women are responsible for buying eighty percent of household goods in the U.S. so that women's responsibilities stretch much further than making decisions about washing powder.⁶ Recession, unemployment, migration waves, class divisions and the failure of post-Keynesian economy have directed the discussion on the social role of women into (at least) two opposed directions: feminists and social analysts point out that once again women and girls are the shock absorbers of economic crisis, while some economists claim that women are "the greatest untapped resource on earth", that economic growth will be driven by women. According to these optimistic voices, if companies want to succeed they will have to come around to "women's way of doing things" and accept the advantages of „female patterns“ of behaviour (tendencies toward being less aggressive and more consensus-seeking, less competitive and more collaborative, less power-obsessed and more group oriented) as decisive for interactive management business.⁷ Summarizing his cynical and antifeminist narrative on how structural economic changes do actually suit women's needs and career opportunities, a commentator of *The Economist* concluded: "It would be a grave mistake to abandon old-fashioned meritocracy just at the time when it is turning to women's advantage".⁸

Developmental strategies designed for developing countries also count on women as social partner on the assumption that women are more reliable, more responsible, more risk-averse, and more prone to self regulation than their male counterparts. But, instead of leading to westernized "progress", the increase of per capita wealth or democratic equality, these programs of crediting women and gender specific "partnership for development" more often than not lead to the decline of cultural norms and gender relations in societies occasionally penetrated by capitalist market-base value

6 Cf. the article by Jane Foley "Women on course to control larger proportion of wealth" (<http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate-uk/2010/02/03/women-on-course-to-control-larger-proportion-of-wealth>.) Accessed on February 10th, 2011.

7 Alison Maitland, coauthor of the book *Why Women Mean Business* (2007), considers that "companies need to ask why their own systems – which they perceive as being meritocratic – are failing to retain and promote women in larger numbers. Perhaps the 'meritocracy' on which they pride themselves is unconsciously skewed towards the dominant male norm. It's assumed that because men have occupied positions of leadership for so long they are natural leaders – and women are not." A. Maitland is quoted by Nicki Gilmour in her article "2010 Gender Equality is Here, and Other Media Myths that Keep Unconscious Bias Alive" (<http://www.theglasshammer.com/news/2010/01/07/2010-gender-equality-is-here-and-other-media-myths-that-keep-unconscious-bias-alive>).

8 The article "Womenomics: Feminist management theorists are flirting with some dangerous arguments" is written by "Schumpeter", *The Economist*, December 30th, 2009. (<http://www.economist.com/node/15172746>). Accessed on January, 15th 2011.

system. Not to speak of the breakdown of ecosystems and exhaustion of natural wealth in developing or the emerging economy countries caused by commercialization of natural resources.⁹

The increased “feminization” of migration (half of around 214 million international migrants are women) have posed questions on how migration, development and deindustrialization link with gender. What effect does female migration have on a homeland’s social reproduction, wealth distribution, spending of remittances, gender and generational relations? What kind of meaningful solution may local knowledge offer to underdevelopment? Sasia Sasken claims that neoimperial “re-composition of labour and capital” includes both the attraction of immigrant labour from the global periphery to the industrialized world as well as the physical decentralization of industrial production to Export Processing Zones (EPZ) on the periphery.¹⁰ The strategy of these EPZ’s is that they tend to employ young women who were previously unwaged workers because they are the most docile form of labour. International financial institutions have played a crucial role in these processes which bring destruction to ecosystems and socio-scapes across “the third world”, and that is why their “woman friendly” investment policy should remain a constant target of feminist critique. Similar problems could be observed in transitional economies where the situation gets even more complicated by the civilizational regression of acquired gender and workers’ rights in former socialistic societies, while the welfare gap between the European North and the unstable, turbulent and revolutionary South gets bigger and bigger.

In modern western democracies, gender equality is guaranteed by constitution, but the economic and social indicators of gender inequality are

9 In her contribution, Jaleh Taheri has summarized the feminist postcolonial critique of dominant developmental discourses: “Who decides the development imperative? Who speaks on behalf of whom? Who is silenced by this discourse? These questions help us to understand how location, economic role, social dimensions of identity and the global political economy differentiate between groups and capabilities for development. Post-colonial feminisms, for example, allow for competing and disparate voices among women. Rather than reproducing colonialist power relations where knowledge is both produced and received in the West they demand a plurality of voices where each woman can speak for herself. No longer do white middle-class women have the power or prerogative to speak for their ‘silenced sisters’ in the South . (...) ‘The remaking of development must start by examining local constructions, to the extent that they are the life of and history of the people, that is, the conditions of and conditions for development’ (Briggs 2008: 107)”. (Taheri contribution in this volume)

10 Most influential books by Sasia Sasken are: *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (2006), *Globalization and its discontents. Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money* (1998), *The Global City* (1991), *The Mobility of Labor and Capital* (1988).

still striking.¹¹ However, the biggest obstacle to feminist struggle for an alternative and more just social model is a lack of solidarity between women across ethnic, social, religious, cultural and other lines. So, in the times of transnational networks of feminist actions against violence and poverty, Simone de Beauvoir's question is still increasingly important – why do women not share a group solidarity even though their oppression as the “second gender” is based on “universal patriarchy”? De Beauvoir's advice that the women's movement should be part of left-wing political and intellectual forces is far from a life-saving solution in the context of contemporary leftist disorientation, androcentrism and revolutionary blindness.

As the Zagreb international conference “The Collapse of Neoliberalism and the Idea of Socialism Today” (May 3-7, 2010) has demonstrated, the leftist think-tank (Slavoj Žižek, Gianni Vattimo, Samir Armin and Michael Lebowitz) could not reach consensus on issues such as which type of socialist egalitarianism would they support; who should lead the social upheaval or “new world revolution” and, most importantly, what is their opinion about the “gender trouble” within past and present socialist projects.¹² Tatjana Jukić, the speaker at the only women's round table during the Zagreb conference nicely highlighted the structural blindness of socialist ideology to “sexual differences” that, according to Carol Pateman, is genuine political difference – “sexual difference is difference between freedom and subjection.” Jukić argued how, unlike communism, socialism cannot be described in terms of Gilles Deleuze's “revolutionary becoming machine” philosophy. Only communism feels affinity for the woman, Deleuze's woman who is the platform for becoming, *devenir-femme*: “Comparably, this would mean that gender politics in socialism is always inadequate, precisely because it does

11 According to philosopher Jacques Rancière, our democratic systems call for egalitarianism, but there is only a trace of egalitarianism that truly exists – in elections (“each vote counts”) or within the judicial system (“justice for all”). Equality is an origin for political and other action, not the other way around, since equality is always practiced and verified in social practices. Equality, as the core of the political, will not be accomplished by elections and parliamentary system. Where the police logic and egalitarian logic confront, that is where “politics occur”. It is the *disagreement* that gives birth to politics. Disagreement, disputes and combat against sexual violence implicit to patriarchal social contract (R. Ensler's “andocracy”) have marked the history of feminist movement and feminist struggle for a more rightful world. This struggle has always caused “politics to occur”, spreading radially and transversely, from private homes to parliaments. We must not forget that most of the methods of modern civil resistance – nowadays used by anarchists, alterglobalists and unionists – were invented by suffragettes.

12 Although they were unable to agree on the type of alternative egalitarian society which they were inclined to – Scandinavian or some other type – the speakers shared a uniformly aggressive, competitive and arrogant manner, and at no time (neither in interviews or published texts) did they mention the issue of gender (in)equalities within socialist agenda.

not necessarily succeed in grasping the structural affinity between women and communism”.¹³

The authors whose papers are gathered in the second part of the collection are prone to re-examine the structural affinity between feminist scholarship and new social models based on the principles of solidarity, equity, sustainability, participatory democracy, and pluralism. Therefore readers could be perhaps disappointed that the authors did not deal with typical “economic issues” such as the difficulties of combining career and parenthood, the problems of unemployed women and the growing army of single mothers, the hardships of professional women who reject motherhood or delay child-bearing for so long that they are forced into the arms of the fertility industry. But, the collection offers a wide range of research scopes, theoretical perspectives and in-depth case studies from different corners of the world – Brazil, Pakistan, Iran, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia – bringing together feminist scrutiny, criticism and new ideas for women’s empowerment. However, here are the best presentations and most stimulating research ideas and fieldwork notes rewritten and revised after the seminar according to academic format but keeping the sparkle of their rebellious spirit, sharp feminist eye and the belief in change from within the academy.

Genevieve Vaughan offers the most radical gift paradigm (the art of unilateral giving) which is more basic and widespread than the logic of exchange but is considered inferior in the andocracy. Vaughan presents her conception of language as verbal gift giving that can break through the patriarchal capitalist mould of the human as *homo oeconomicus* and provide a rationale for a gift economy as the economy of *homo donans*. According to her, recognizing gift giving as the basic human economic interaction and exchange as its negative variation can guide us towards an alternative understanding of the dire social, economic and environmental problems that world is now facing. One of such radically different worldviews is that of the solidarity economy as a global grassroots economic structural reform movement. It is usually promoted as an alternative to social exclusion in the

13 “It is this woman, *devenir-femme*, the becoming-woman not unlike the spectre from the first sentence of *The Communist Manifesto*, that then haunts everything which later evolves as gender politics in socialism. Which means that gender politics in socialism is always inadequate to begin with, because it cannot but fail to grasp this structural affinity between women and communism. It is therefore questionable if one can analyze the politics of gender in socialism at all without taking into account this formative failure or miss” (Jukić’s essay “Žena kao revolucija: od Garbo do Tita” ([Woman as revolution: from Garbo to Tito], *Zarez*, vol. 12, no. 285, 10.06.2010, p. 22) was first presented at the panel *Women and (per)formative socialism* organized by the Zagreb Centre for Women’s Studies on May 5th, 2010, <http://www.subversivefilmfestival.com>.

most deprived social contexts, but also as „building alternatives for people and planet“¹⁴.

According to **Zora Kovacic**’s firsthand experiences as researcher and volunteer in Brazilian community of Palmeiras in Fortaleza, the solidarity economy in Latin America starts from entirely different premises than neoliberal values such as individualism, competition, materialism, accumulation, and the maximization of profits and growth. For Kovacic, the community of Palmeiras provides a fascinating case on how an alternative system may allow poor people to live in dignity by giving them a voice in the management of community’s institutions. Like gift economy, the solidarity economy model offers an alternative valuation language dependent on the integration of all aspects of human activity: social interaction, political participation, economic participation and the access to education.

The social benefits arising from the grassroots solidarity economy – inclusion, citizenship, dignity, economic empowerment – are not included in the partnership model initiated from above. **Violeta D. Schubert**’s analysis of two Australian government programmes for development shows how access to cross-sector partnerships does not imply real empowerment of disadvantaged people and woman. The inclusion of women as a representative category reinforces the notion of them as “different” and powerless. The partnership between decision-makers and non-government actors (women’s organizations) more often than not led to the perpetuation of existing power or relational inequities that such “partnerships” are designed to eradicate. Beyond the “ultimate trope of engagement”, Schubert acidly concludes, policy makers constantly re-assess, improve and refine policies (such as partnership model) as if their failure is simply “a matter of poor implementation, insufficient resources allocation or a lack of ‘will’ on the part of the development subjects.” Thus feminists who challenge (Eurocentric) development projects or criticize women’s access to powerful institutions risk to be treated as traitors to the values of progress and humanity.

That there is little, if any, room to challenge either access to development agendas or the political systems that uphold its installment on European

14 It is the name of the book *Solidarity Economy I: Building Alternatives for People and Planet* (2008) edited by J. Teller-Elsberg, Th. N. Masterson, E. Kawano. See also *The Social Economy: International Perspectives on Economic Solidarity* (2009) ed. by Ash Amin. As review for Amin book noticed: „The Social Economy is a topic of considerable contemporary research and policy interest. From creches to environmental services, from consumer cooperatives to social housing, governments in many countries have begun to introduce legislation to support social enterprises... according to locally specific factors.“ (<http://www.flipkart.com/social-economy-ash-amin-international-book-1848132816>).

periphery, confirms the anthropological study on Bosnian female professionals between hegemonic Western man and de-authorized Balkan men by **Lejla Sunagić**. Like many other well educated women from the region, economically and socially empowered through their recruitment in the international organizations, Sunagić has been present at the very margins of the public sphere. Her feminist education enables her critical voice – critical towards both hegemonic masculinity in the ranks of the top UN organizations and the prevailing patriarchal masculinity of Bosnian men – but it also prevents her from occupying the position of power. Namely, almost the only way to enter the scene of decision-making is to collaborate with actors implementing *gender mainstreaming* policy – the one in which the radical and transformatory edge of the feminist agenda has been lost and the feminist struggle against women's poverty, victimization, discrimination and disadvantage has been transformed into administrative buzzwords.

If development and gender mainstreaming policies in the eastern European periphery are designed to reduce the hierarchies, political polarisation, gendered income gap, and poverty of large sector of population, than the experiences of local woman entrepreneurs have to attract more and more attention. The research conducted by **Melanija Belaj** on Croatian women in the production of alcoholic beverages and **Jelena Milinović** on female entrepreneurs in the Bosnian town of Banja Luka demonstrate how economically independent woman are still torn between the traditional paradigm of the sacrifice for the family and the entrepreneurial spirit. Taking into considerations all kinds of obstacles that women entrepreneurs have been faced with, Milinović concludes that women who build their entrepreneurial self, which is capitalized over time, can not go back – “for themselves and for the whole society it is irreversible women's emancipation potential that targets future generations”. Belaj's observations are not so optimistic. Changes in the gender division of tasks in the production of alcohol, typical for the surrounding area of Zagreb, are remarkable and woman are more and more often taking the leading position in family farms. But, it still happens that besides being invisible, female entrepreneurial roles as well as promotion in the media are very often misdirected. Festivities such as the Best Housewife/Country Lady contest wrongly misdirect the promotion of rural women and obliterate their entrepreneurial spirit and allocation of social resources such as material goods, power and reputation.

The last two texts also contribute to the understanding of global economic and financial crisis as well as the current challenges of Central and Eastern European regions where the socialist inheritance and neoliberal

capital come into collision on daily basis. The situation is becoming particularly difficult because of recent economic development, e.g. the impoverishment, new class antagonisms, very high degree of foreign ownership of banks and industry and high levels of debt in once-proud welfare states of the Eastern bloc. The shared understanding of civil rights, consumption patterns and lifestyles are gradually homogenizing our continent, but the price of the “European dream” has been paid by an army of migrant workers with precarious lives, by the ever-widening welfare gap, and by constant relocations and (neoliberal) regulations of industries and businesses.

Sandra Prlenda gives the example of the textile industry workers in Croatia in which she reveals a typical transitional story of marginalized women’s resistance to adverse conditions brought by the “economy of depression” and the neoliberal global re-composition of labour and capital. Over-valorization of hardships in male-dominated industries (such as ships manufacture) followed by consequential marginalization of woman workers in trade unions, political forums and the public sphere, are being reflected as an array of unequal social relations and power differentials characterizing labour markets in Croatia and all around the region. The issue of feminization of the current Balkans migrations and socio-psychological effects for families and communities where migrant woman have become the breadwinners, is very up-to-date in regional feminist discussions. As **Maja Hrgović** concluded in her contribution: “Although this situation can be observed as a great step in economic emancipation of women in the Balkans, women migrants struggle with what is sometimes a no-win situation – rising hostility toward immigrants in the West, deprivation of the contacts with the children, higher rate of divorces, and psychological problems caused by all this”. Hrgović’s findings are instructive while they indicate a spectrum of needs, moral drives and desires that could clarify recent human migrations and transnational forms of earning and spending money besides plain economic interests.

The inside views help us understand the lack of passion for integration processes in the outskirts of Europe, in countries becoming more and more nostalgic about the socialist past, the times when ideas were marketed instead of goods, and the belief in bright future was more in vogue. On the other side, the interest for social movements in Latin America rather than socialist heritage of the Central and Eastern Europe, encouraged by the European Research Council and its generous grants, is not an obstacle for feminists to look for worldwide alternatives to neoliberal premises – materialism, competition, commercialization, the maximization of profits and

growth, the aggregation of individuals' preferences. As our small "trust of feminist minds" has demonstrated, feminists are ready to come forward and with their knowledge, experiences, criticism and innovative actions, help us find "the radically different worldview that can make another world possible" (Genevieve Vaughan).

THE GIFT IN ECONOMIC AND LINGUISTIC COMMUNICATION

The economy we have is not working. Neither is the patriarchal paradigm in which it developed and which helps to keep it in place. Both the economy and its paradigm have attempted to conduct and explain the world without women because women are likely to be mothers and mothers practice a different economy. That is, caregivers of small children (whether individual women or whole villages) practice a unilateral gift economy with a logic of its own, not because they have some sort of nurturing essence but because children require unilateral care in order to survive.

Maternal care, direct giving, can be considered as a mode of distribution which is as important and as real as the mode of distribution based on market exchange. Direct giving is an economic structure with a superstructure of ideas and values which are often in opposition to those of the market and its superstructure. This has the effect that two opposing economic models are locked together in the same culture and often or even usually in the same person. The gift economy model is not recognized as such however and is seen as moral or instinctual behaviour, a circumstance which contributes to its domination by the economy of market exchange.

Although it is popular to call for interdisciplinary approaches, the combination of the fields of linguistics and economics is not often broached. I had a personal introduction to this combination when I was quite young and have been trying to understand the connections ever since. What I have found is that both language and the economy can be considered as forms of communication. One is verbal and the other is material communication.

In both cases something passes from one person to another to satisfy needs of some kind. In both cases communication has to do with creating human relations and forming community. The first, material communication, is the actual creation of the bodies of the people in the community by the free giving of goods and services to children, and in every life it precedes linguistic communication. It is the interpersonal source of embodiment.

My hypothesis is that mothering is an economic model with a logic of its own, which is the basis of a possible economy, a gift economy *and* that it is also the basis of language. That is, language should be understood not as the codification and decodification of information or the use of tools or “doing things with words” or the expression and understanding of intention or the implementation of rules of a Universal Grammar, but as verbal gift giving, verbal mothering.

With this hypothesis I hope to sketch a feminist theory of communication, language and economics that does not exclude mothering, but instead makes mothering fundamental. It is important to do this in order to reframe and reform epistemology because the way we know has a lot to do with who we think we are, and the politics we practice, especially since we call ourselves *homo sapiens*. Right now *homo sapiens* is creating havoc, destroying the planet. Knowing is not enough. Nor is it the deepest or the first human interaction with the world. Material communication, giving and receiving come before knowing. All humans, women and men, are *homo donans* before we are *homo sapiens*. The mother is the first environment. In fact she *is* the environment for the child in the womb and after the child is born, she is a proactive need-satisfying environment as caregiver. The child is a creative, not a passive, receiver.

Patriarchy and the market economy together eliminate a viable, general and inclusive or even *gender neutral* model of the mother from the culture. We need to put this model back in the economy, and in academia, in economics, linguistics and philosophy in order to redefine our species as *homo donans*. We also need to use it to make the connection of the maternal with episteme of indigenous gift giving (Kuokkanen 2007) and claim for mothering the various experimental gift economies that are now being tried on the internet and in alternative communities.

Perhaps it is clear already how patriarchy eliminates the model of the mother but it not so clear how the market does it. I believe this elimination happens through the mechanism of exchange itself, which excludes gift giving while exploiting it, requiring the replacement of each potential gift with an equivalent. While exchange seems normal and natural, even a particu-

larly human capacity, its logic contradicts that of the direct gift. And the seeming neutrality of the market – concentrating on exchange value, the commodity as an object and its equation with money – is an exclusion of the positive model of unilateral caregiving, nurturing.

The market requires scarcity in order to function. If there were abundance, gift giving would be easy and hierarchies would falter. No one would work for capitalists in order to make a living. When too much abundance accrues in the system, it is wasted in wars in order to create the necessary scarcity to control the population, while maintaining wealth and power in the hands of the few – arms manufacturers, “security forces”, suppliers of the military and other vested interests. The gift economy seems difficult or even impossible in scarcity but in abundance it is easy and even delightful. It is not the “fault” of gift giving that makes it impractical but of the context of scarcity in which it has to take place. A case in point is the internet knowledge economy which functions on the basis of abundance and is birthing a number of gift economy projects such as free software, freecycling and peer-to-peer groups.

There are many ways the market economy exploits gift giving. For example the 40% that would have to be added to the GDP if housework were counted in monetary terms (Waring 1989) is a huge gift that is being given to the market as a whole, mostly by women. Surplus value as that part of the labour time that is not covered by the salary of the workers, is also free to the capitalist though forced or leveraged from the workers. The inputs of Nature into the market economy have been calculated as worth twice the Global GDP in monetary value (Costanza 1997). The gifts of nature are originally free for the taking by creative receivers but in Patriarchal Capitalism many of them are captured by privatization – and those that remained as part of the commons like water and traditional seeds, are now becoming the property of global corporations. These resources have also been polluted and depleted in the commodification process, creating scarcity in the present and depriving future generations of humans and other species of our planetary birthright, the possibility of living in a gift economy.

What I propose is to work toward the elaboration a free economy based on mothering not on the market. I propose this because a mothering economy would satisfy needs and safeguard the environment but also because I think the logic of mothering is fundamental for our humanity, and that exchange is a negative derivation of gift giving, the elaboration and implementation of which is actually psychologically harmful to everyone. The logic of exchange promotes the ego orientation, competition and greed which

motivate the mechanisms of capital and merge with the Patriarchal values of domination. The replacement of gift giving by exchange as the “social nexus” is the point of deviation in our thinking that leads to our present global calamity.

Indigenous peoples have usually taken a different road and had and have gift economies of various kinds. They have usually been read by Western anthropologists as if they were on the same road as we are however, and their gift economies have been seen as “primitive exchange”, a sort of undeveloped early stage of the market based on constrained reciprocity, debt and obligation – with the reward being reputation or status. The anthropologists do not notice the unilateral provisioning gift economy that is the context both of symbolic gift giving and of the positive relations that are formed *beyond* debt and obligation. Many indigenous societies were and are more successful than our own at creating human happiness. Partly this is because in gift economies there is not a drastic break between the logic of the economy of childhood and that of the adult economy. In Capitalism on the contrary, we have to radically transform ourselves as we grow up in order to transition from the maternal economy into a gift-denying market economy.

Lets look at some of the characteristics of the logics of gift and exchange.

Gift	Exchange
Unilateral, turn taking	Constrained by lateral exchange
Other oriented	Ego oriented
“Mind reads” needs	Expression of needs in money
Gives value to other	Gives value to self
Cooperative	Competitive
Mostly qualitative	Mostly quantitative
Gift passes “forward”	Accumulation
Transitive logic	Logic of equation & identity
Includes other	Defends self from other
Creative receiver	“Earning”, profit taking
Requires abundance	Requires and creates scarcity
Imbalance towards others	Balance in binary interactions
Positive human relations	Debt and obligation
Mutuality and trust	Servitude and suspicion
Community interdependence	Separation, independence
Gives to market	Takes from givers but denies & hides gift giving

I believe the market economy causes a kind of blindness towards unilateral giving because exchange, based on identity and equivalence, is self reflecting and self validating and so much more like what we think of as logic. This makes exchange over-visible while gift giving is under-visible. There is a gift syllogism though – If A gives to B and B gives to C then A gives to C. This chain of implication can be extended to a circulation of gifts, which creates positive relations of community among the people who are doing it. In community gift circulation everyone receives as well as gives so everyone is sustained and no one goes without.

Most of the problems that have puzzled Western philosophers could be solved by seriously reintroducing the model of the mother into their thinking about thinking. By finding a common root of language and economics in gift giving we can generalize the logic of the unilateral gift to society at large beyond gender, making philosophy, economics, linguistics and many other disciplines look very different. Long standing problems like the oppression of mothers and women can be reframed and addressed by understanding the reason for their denigration as a conflict between two economic and cultural models.

I want to just briefly sketch what I mean by language as verbal gift giving. Cognitive linguists Lakoff and Johnson (1980) started a kind of philosophical revolution some 30 years ago when they began to revise the concept of metaphor, recognizing it as a cognitive device coming from common human experiences of the body. They continue to affirm today that “the corporeal or spatial logic, arising from bodily experience, is exactly what provides the basis for the logic of abstract thought” (Lakoff and Johnson 2002). It would have been more accurate if they had said “*intercorporeal*” logic and *intercorporeal* “bodily experience”. Lakoff and Johnson introduced and made popular the idea of image schemas, which come from the implications of interactions between the embodied mind and the environment (but somehow the mother is not considered part of the child’s environment). Some of these schemas are – up and down – which map to other areas like “Up is good” or “More is up” and “path to goal” which maps to areas like “life is a journey” or “love is a journey” or containers scheme, going into or out of containers, which maps to categorization. Lakoff and Johnson’s work contains a vast collection of these image schemas and the metaphors deriving from them which I will not go into now.

I believe the image schema that underlies both material and verbal communication is the interactive, interpersonal sensory-motor schema of giving and receiving, first located not in the body of the child alone but *intercor-*

poreally, beginning in a moment in which the child has recently been part of the body of the mother, in the womb and proceeding through the long period during which s/he is dependent on the mother's need- satisfying gifts and services for h/er body's very existence. This is a *complementary intercorporeality* which is embodied in the individual and *implies* the body/mind of the other.

Independence (autonomy) is actually a false ideal of patriarchy and capitalism, because it does not recognize the constitutional interdependence of everything. The child is first inside the mother's body and then is embedded in the material care which is accomplished by the mothers body (and mind), and later as the child grows older s/he continues to be embedded more directly in the gifts of the environment and society at large. Everyone is dependent on the gifts of air, sunlight, warmth, and all the products of Nature and culture (whether free or accessed through the market). What we call "independence" in Capitalism is really usually just efficient integration into and dependence on the market.

Recent studies on mirror neurons (Gallese et al. 2007) show that children as well as adults unconsciously simulate what others are experiencing, so we can suppose infants actually know what their mothers are experiencing when they are giving to them and vice versa. Thus "giving is receiving and receiving is giving" even neurologically. The material care that children receive is an important part of their early sociality. Material communication is at the same time also interpersonal social communication. To me studying the development of children without their intercorporeal experience is like studying the development of the baby kangaroo without considering the fact that it is living in its mother's pouch. The cognitive psychology project itself excludes the mother-child interaction by concentrating on the individual from the skin inward not recognizing that for anything at all to happen from the skin inward there have to be constantly renewed conditions of care from beyond the skin.

The repetition of the mother-child interpersonal intercorporeal interaction gives rise to a pattern of giving and receiving, which anchors and elicits sociality from the beginning. This pattern is positive because it has survival value. It also gives us access to the experiences of others, which are formed in the same way, and it can be projected upon Mother Nature/Mother Culture whose gifts we receive/perceive, elaborate and give again. From this point of view, giving and receiving is the underlying pattern or image schema of material *and* verbal communication, expressed and embodied in a routine that the child learns with her mother's milk, a minimal play

or script with three roles: giver, gift (or service), and receiver. This routine which is repeated in many different ways is the interpersonal intercorporeal experience that “provides the basis for the logic of abstract thought”.

The child can play any of the roles of this routine. S/he is a giver because s/he gives smiles, cries and gestures (as well as urine and feces) which are creatively received by the parent. S/he is carried and birthed, given to life by the mother and is given her/him-self by adults like a gift from hand to hand. S/he creatively receives mothers' care of all kinds, and also the perceptions and experiences that come from her surroundings. Sometimes this creative reception means that s/he proactively (not passively) goes out to explore the world around her/him, crawling to reach the table, grabbing the keys and chewing on the book. That is, the creativity of the reception includes the fact that the child actively goes forward to receive the perceptual gifts.

The roles of the dependent child necessarily imply the roles of the mother. The role of giver of cries implies a receiver, and the role of being the gift given from hand to hand also, while the role of infant receiver implies an actively engaged, attentive and repeated giver who is always doing “mind reading”, guessing the needs of the child and is successful in satisfying them. The child can play these three complementary roles his/herself, and quite early can understand the other's part in the interaction because s/he also takes turns and plays that part in another moment. (S/he knows it by doing it).

We can abstract the schema according to different emphases. The basic schema is A gives B to C. However B is given by A to C and C receives B from A constitute the schema from different starting points. One common variation on the schema is A gives directly to B when there is not a gift object involved but a service such as cleaning, dressing, carrying etc. The unilateral giving changes in character according to the kind of gift that is given or service that is done. Giving can transform into an activity with multiple steps as when for example the mother warms the milk for the baby. Warming the milk is a service that is then transmitted as a gift of the warm milk to the baby. Relations of mutuality and trust arise from the repeated unilateral satisfaction of needs in these patterned interactions. The gift schema thus has positive relational implications and it becomes part of the child's identity. It is already part of the mother's identity because the mother herself learned the gift schema in childhood and continues to practice it in various ways throughout her life.

My hypothesis is that the interpersonal gift schema can be seen as a basic communicative cognitive-linguistic structure which is projected, modified

and used at different levels and in many different ways. At the linguistic level verbal products are given and received, passed from one person to another, satisfying communicative needs. The assembly of these verbal products into broader units by applying – giving the words to each other in syntax provides a way of constructing linguistic gifts, which are understandable by all because everyone who survives childhood has had to experience maternal care and consciously or unconsciously continues to play and project the roles of the gift schema and its variations from childhood on.

Unfortunately the schema of giving and receiving can also function as the schema for harmful transitive actions like hitting, hurting, beating, shooting and killing. I believe that the construction of gender in our culture, by putting little boys in a gender category opposite to that of their mothers, alienates them from recognizing and performing the nurturing gift schema they are actually using, and encourages them to replace it with hitting. (Phrases like “Take that!” “You asked for it!”, “It serves you right!” recall gift giving). Like giving, hitting touches the other, enters her/his proxemic space and establishes a relationship - though one of dominance and fear rather than one of mutuality and trust. Violence is thus a deep distortion and negative mirror image of gift giving communication. It may even appear to be the *basic* schema rather than gift giving, and thus to justify acts of violence, and even war. It also may appear to be the violent structure of the human, even of Nature and of reality itself. Violence also serves to force others into a permanent gift giving position towards the dominant person or group or nation. Hierarchies of power are actually hierarchies of gift giving “upwards” held in place by commands and “transitive” violence “downwards”. These hierarchies are also used to support the market. Perhaps exchange, the market and the law seem better than violence as such. However the market has the disadvantage that it allows and promotes economic violence, hides, discredits and exploits gift giving and makes an egalitarian maternal gift economy impossible.

There are many issues in the study of language that can be seen differently in the light of giving and receiving: In the speech situation itself the giver, speaker (or writer) gives word-gifts to the receiver, listener (reader), which satisfy the receiver’s need for a means to create mutual human relations to things, ideas, perceptions. The speaker is the giver, the verbal product is the gift, and the listener is the receiver. At the beginning of the philosophical turn towards metaphor there was a study of the “conduit metaphor” by

Michael Reddy (1979)¹ which showed that there are hundreds of metaphors in English about communication that use the idea of the conduit. These, like “I can’t get my idea across” and “conveying one’s thoughts”, “sending a message”, were considered erroneous despite *vox populo vox dei* because language was seen as tool-using² and because the transfers seemed not to be like the real world where giving something to someone means the giver doesn’t have it anymore. But that is because we live in an exchange economy where scarcity is normal. In a gift economy we would live in abundance, and we do experience abundance linguistically because we do not lose the word-gifts we give to others but can re-create and re-combine them at will. From our linguistic capacity we can understand something of what it would be like to live in material plenty even if we don’t have any experience of it in our present reality.

We have an abundant store of verbal gifts and can always make more, giving the gifts of words and replaying the roles of the gift schema in the sentence itself. In fact the subject of the sentence can be seen as giver, the predicate as gift or service and the object as receiver. The roles of the image schema of the gift can thus be seen as transferred into the transitive grammatical constructions of language. The ditransitive construction can be seen as the variation on the schema in which there are two steps in the giving as we saw above, where the mother warms the milk (a service to the milk which passes as part of the gift to the receiver) and gives the warm milk to the baby. Sentences of the type “Mary bakes the cake for Sue” function the same way.

I will just mention a few more aspects of language that can be seen differently from this point of view. The linguistic creativity that Chomsky talks about is not, as he seems to think, an end in itself, not just verbal exuberance or munificence. Rather we create linguistically in order to satisfy the communicative needs of others for a relation to something and it is on the basis of this satisfaction of needs that we develop and communicate new ideas.

We know others have these needs by “mind reading”³, putting ourselves in their places, figuring out what it is they do not know and giving them the word gifts that people in their/our linguistic community give for that kind of thing. If it is true that we create relations with others by satisfying needs,

1 The critique of the conduit metaphor remains a tenet of cognitive linguistics and demonstrates the extent to which this discipline is still operating in the anti-gift exchange paradigm.

2 Reddy wanted to encourage this interpretation.

3 „Mind reading“ is a term used in psychology for a skill children develop relatively early for understanding how others would feel and think in the same situation.

giving and receiving material gifts and services, we can also create relations by giving them verbal gifts. These are not relations of obligation and debt but positive relations of mutuality and joint attention. Since the gifts of language are much easier and faster to produce, give and receive, the relations created are not as intense and binding as are the relations created by giving and receiving material gifts. Nevertheless they affirm mutual recognition and a kind of species specificity, a common identity as humans and as part of a linguistic community. As substitute gifts, words remain associated with the gifts they have substituted and therefore refer to given aspects of the material and cultural environment. Common human relations are provided to these parts of the environment through verbal substitute gift constructions. New combinations of linguistic gifts allow us to attend to combinations of the non linguistic gifts that are given to perception. The information that we pass on to others through linguistic gift combinations can be true, satisfying a need of the other to know or false, like an ego oriented exchange. It can be beneficial like a gift or harmful like hitting.

The “slots” and “fillers” that linguists see as explaining adjectival “attribution” or the “merger” of words with each other, can be understood as “needs” (slots) and “need-satisfying gifts”(fillers). That is, “red” can be given to “ball” because “ball” cannot express redness on its own and so has a need for “red”. The mystery of recursion can be clarified by considering each new subject as the beginning of a new gift act, taking the receiver in the previous phrase as the giver in the subsequent one:

This is the dog that worried the cat
 That killed the rat that ate the malt
 That lay in the house that Jack built.

“Dog” is given, then “that” is given in a new giver role. “Worried” is given in the gift/service role and “cat” in the receiver role. “That” is then given in the giver role for “cat”, “killed” in the gift/service role and “rat” in the receiver role etc.

An epistemology based on gift giving and receiving can be construed by viewing language in the way indicated by these brief examples. This approach would also lead us to understand perception as the reception of the perceptual gifts of our surroundings and perhaps to project the mother onto Earth as Indigenous people often do.⁴

4 If the mother is a particularly proactive environment for the small child, the environment can be seen as a less proactive mother.

An epistemology of this kind would pave the way for a movement towards a gift economy. It would allow us to become conscious of the gifts we are already giving and receiving as mothers, as children, as women and men, as indigenous peoples and colonized peoples, and even as colonizers and capitalists, as Mother Earth and all her children. It would allow us to see that the market is actually a small and alienated mechanism which floats upon the gifts of the many and indeed is parasitically dependent on them.

We have been led to believe since Aristotle that reason, *logos*, is an abstract rational process that has very little to do with mothering. Through the centuries the image of the dominant patriarch and of money have merged and have become the prototypical image of domination. Instead if we take the image schema of the gift as a basic structure of language and economics, we can understand *logos* as an abstraction from the mother-child interaction. The so called faculty of reason does not exist on its own but is derived from the schema of giving and receiving.

If the image schema of the gift is the basic intercorporeal logic of communication, projecting the mother onto Nature and the Earth can only help us find our place here as a species which is particularly maternal because we do nurturing verbally and mentally as well as materially. Patriarchy and capitalism have dispossessed our species of its birthright by dominating and destroying mothers and Mother Earth and by dominating and distorting both the economy and economics, both language and linguistics.

It seems at this juncture in history that there is no alternative to (fallimentary) Patriarchal Capitalism but more Capitalism. Instead we need to build a new economic mode by accessing and recognizing the multifunctional gift schema we already possess. In fact those of us who are able to recognize the giving and receiving maternal capacity within us (whatever our gender or sexual identity) should be the leaders of this movement. I believe most of these people are women.

We need to create a matriarchal (Goettner-Abendroth 2009, Sanday 2003) gift economy, matriarchal not in the sense of a mirror image of patriarchy but an egalitarian economy based on the maternal gift values. In order to do this we need to give value to the gift economy and to the gift paradigm, to mothers and to our species as *homo donans* and *recipients*, the species of the maternal gift.

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Sažetak

EKONOMIJA DARIVANJA I NOVA PARADIGMA DARA

Ekonomija darivanja predstavlja oblik raspodjele s vlastitom logikom koja je temeljnija i raširenija od logike razmjene, ali je nedovoljno prepoznata i smatra se manje vrijednom. Djeca ne mogu uzvraćati jednakom mjerom te stoga traže jednostrano darivanje. Majčinska ekonomija ranog djetinjstva razrađena je u ekonomijama darivanja odraslih ljudi u domorodačkim društvima, kao i u pojedinim društvenim pokretima i društvenim eksperimentima te na internetu. S druge strane, ekonomija koja se temelji na tržišnoj razmjeni iskorištava logiku darivanja i na taj se način stapa s patrijarhatom kako bi stvorila sustav dominacije i kontrole manjine nad većinom. Tržišno utemeljena paradigma tako iskorištava majčinsku kulturu. Ideja jezika kao verbalnog darivanja može probiti patrijarhalni kapitalistički model čovjeka koji je *homo economicus* i osigurati opravdanje za ekonomiju darivanja i za čovjeka koji je *homo donans*. Priznavanje darivanja kao osnovne ljudske privredne interakcije i razmjene kao njezine negativne inačice može nas dovesti do drugačijeg shvaćanja teških društvenih, ekonomskih i ekoloških problema s kojima je svijet suočen, i pomoći nam da pronađemo radikalno drugačiji pogled koji bi omogućio drugačiji svijet.

SOLIDARITY ECONOMY AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO SOCIAL EXCLUSION: A CASE STUDY FROM BRAZIL

Introduction

Brazil is the textbook example of inequality¹. The economic participation of the poor is limited to the consumption of basic goods; savings levels are too low; and profits are skewed towards the high income classes (*The Economist*, 14/04/2007). This unsustainable situation has given rise to Solidarity Economy (SE), a very successful and rapidly expanding phenomenon. “SE has been an important response of workers and communities to the transformations that have occurred in the labour market” (SENAES, 2006: 7). In 2005 there were 14,954 SE enterprises in 2,274 municipalities, involving 1.25 million people (SENAES, 2006: 28).

The first part of the paper will illustrate the historical roots of the SE movement. Brazil has a long tradition of authoritarianism and limited political participation. “Populist policies are partly at the root of the identification of the poor as non-citizens” (Goirand, 2003: 22). It is in the last three decades that social movements have acquired political relevance, and SE emerged in the mid 1990’s. SE enterprises take different forms – 54% are associations, 33% are Informal Groups, and 11% Cooperative Organizations (SENAES, 2006: 19). They encompass a variety of activities, from

1 See for example Allen, T. and Thomas (eds), A., *Poverty and Development into the 21st Century*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004; or Todaro, M. and Smith, S. (eds), *Economic Development*, Pearson Addison Wesley, Harlow, 2003.

the production and distribution of goods and services to education, micro-credit, political participation, responsible consumption and environmental projects.

In the second part of the paper, the theory behind SE will be explored. Since SE focuses on the economic empowerment of poor, the analysis has a strong socialist imprint. The exclusion from production effectively results in the exclusion from citizenship, leading the poor to a paralysis (Goirand, 2003). The critique of the capitalist economy will be based on three points: the restriction of social analysis to methodological individualism, the alienating effect of waged-labour, and the failure of the market to allocate resources in a socially desirable way.

In section three, an example of SE will be illustrated by the case study of the “Banco Palmas”. This project was born in 1973 as an association of the inhabitants of a slum in Fortaleza. The association was created as a means of political mobilization of the inhabitants of Palmeiras, whose main objective was to obtain the provision of basic public services, such as water and electricity. In 1998, an informal bank, Banco Palmas, was created to boost economic activity. The bank provides micro finance to support production and consumption.

Finally the paper will consider the criticisms of SE. Critiques internal to the movement highlight the fragile nature of SE enterprises when faced with competition from the capitalist sector. The neo-classical criticism points at the impossibility of SE enterprises to deliver economic growth, as the removal of competition deprives agents of the incentive to increase productivity and accumulate wealth. The case of Bank Palmas highlights the problem of growing beyond the sustainability level and the enclave character of SE.

The concluding remarks will show how the emergence of SE is *per se* an important advance in addressing the issues of social exclusion and inequality and developing an active civil society in Brazil’s young democracy. The contribution of this movement is to emphasize the importance of including the poor into the economy and to recognize that the social effects of the allocation of resources and profits are fundamental to the maintenance of a dynamic economy. SE constitutes a valuable solution to unemployment and social exclusion.

Historical background

SE is one of the many responses of the poor to social exclusion. It was born “right after industrial capitalism, as a reaction to the frightening improve-

ishment of the artisans caused by the diffusion of machines and factory organization of production” (Singer, 2002: 24). People that did not have any social relevance individually gained an important role when associated with others. Solidarity governs this kind of association because only through collective action the poor can have a voice (França-Filho and Laville, 2001).

The importance of SE lies in the fact that social movements have been virtually absent in Brazil until the 1980’s. In the years after independence, civil society organizations had to rely on personal ties with government officials to overcome the non-interventionist stance of the state. The coffee oligarchy dominated the country’s economic policies, following a tradition of rent-seeking arrangements since colonial times (Abreu and Bevilaqua, 2000: 41). The creation of institutions of social solidarity by the state (Bethell, 1986) reveals the patronizing approach of the state to the masses, whereby provision of social security was aimed at ensuring stability.

After 1929, coffee prices collapsed, with devastating effects for an economy where coffee represented 67.2% of exports (Abreu and Bevilaqua, 2000). The international depression caused a sharp cut in foreign investment. The political reaction was the 1930 coup by Vargas (Ferrari, 1964). Vargas is considered the father of Brazilian labour laws (Malloy, 1977) who initiated and maintained a policy of political repression, especially during the *Estado Novo* (1937-45). The state planned the industrialisation of the country and organized labour to this purpose. “State-sponsored unions, constituting instruments of labour management, frustrated genuine working/class aspirations and made possible the embourgeoisement of union bosses” (Abel and Lewis, 1985: 278).

By 1945, increasing social pressures and the fractionalisation of the Vargas coalition led to Vargas’s fall. In 1960, Brazil entered recession, aggravating the political crisis. The import-substituting industrialization required a shift to the production of consumer durables and capital goods. According to C. M. Lewis’s lecture (held at LSE, 09/02/2007), this led to a distributional conflict, as the market for consumer durables and capital goods was constituted by the middle classes and required a squeezing of income towards these classes and away from the working class. Fear of social instability created the basis for the *coup d’état*. “In 1964 a military coup silenced a broad variety of popular movements, from trade unions to the landless movement and popular education. State authoritarianism destroyed democratic civil society. Parties were dissolved.” (Novy and Leubolt, 2005: 2025).

Economic stability and social discipline were achieved at the cost of political repression. The military dictatorship suppressed labour activism,

banned student political organizations, and restricted political opposition (Levine and Crocitti, 1999: 241). The 1970's were the years of Brazil's economic "miracle", with an average gross domestic product growth rate of 8.9 percent per annum (*The Economist*, 14/04/2007).

Social costs and increasing foreign debt undermined the stability of the regime in the long run. Starting with the 1982 debt crisis and followed by a deep recession, the military regime incurred in growing criticisms from the civil society, and in 1985 democratic rule was re-established. The first union was created, and the Landless Movement appeared. The Constitution of 1988 freed cooperatives from the tutelage of the state, providing a legal basis to secure their activities.

The 1990's saw an opening to foreign trade and capital flows. "Economic policies suddenly became extremely outward oriented without taking into account that radical shifts in the policy regime ... may have consequences for the behaviour of the economy" (Foders, 2001: 154). Rising debt and a series of hyperinflation cycles led to four changes of currency in a row (FAO, 2007). Only the 1994 Real Plan managed to stabilize, temporarily, the economy. Chronic inflation is explained by Saad-Filho and Mollo (2002) as the manifestation of unsolved distributive conflicts. Inflation, acting as a flat rate tax, hit particularly hard the lower classes, deteriorating living standards.

SE emerged in response to "the social crises of the lost decades of 1980's and 1990's, during which the country was de-industrialized, millions of job places were lost, bringing about mass unemployment and increased social exclusion" (Singer, 2002: 122). Unemployment reached 12%, particularly concentrated among the urban and the young sectors of the population (Quadros, 2003).

The growing precariousness of the labour market led to a polarization of labour in two sectors: the formal and the informal workers. "Out of ten work places created in the 1990's, only one was officially registered" (Pinto, 2004: 10). Only 38% of the economically active population had some kind of social security coverage (Ibid). Underemployment increased because precarious work contracts were preferred by employers as long as workers "have less rights, are not protected by collective conventions and can be rented for any sudden need" (Pinto, 2004: 11).

The workers excluded from the formal labour market started forming associations for mutual help. "Rather than complementing the welfare state, which in the Brazilian case was never completely developed, associations attempt to respond directly to the crisis of waged employment" (Pinto, 2004: 17). SE as a theory was only defined later on, as an explanation of this

new and growing movement and became part of national policies since the Workers' Party assumed presidency in 2001. In June 2003, the SE Secretariat was created, inside the Ministry of Labour and Employment, directed by Paul Singer. The main function of this institution is to create a legal framework that protects non-waged workers, so as to insert the unemployed in the formal labour market (Singer's conference, Camaçari, 10/08/2006).

Economics as participation

We define the economy as a set of social relations. Economic activity is embedded in the social organisation of the community where it takes place. Social relations determine the division of duties, the organisation of the productive process, and the distribution of goods. "The mode of production is a *social* phenomenon" (Wood, 1995: 24).

"The starting point of capitalist production is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production" (Wood, 1995: 21). Social relations in capitalism are based on inequality, which is created by this separation. The determining factor in the formation of social relations is property. People own capital or labour power, and interact with other members of the society offering what they own: their means of production, or their labour force. The state has a central role in maintaining the system, as it guarantees property rights.

With time, the analysis of capitalism lost its context specific character, becoming a description of production abstracted from its social origins. The Marginalist revolution took the social out of economics (Fine, 2002), and made the capitalist mode of production appear as the only possible mode of production. The "arbitrarily asymmetric treatment of state and economy stems from the untenable notion that the capitalist economy is a private sphere – in other words, that its operation does not involve the socially consequential exercise of power" (Bowles and Gintis, 1986: 67). Social behaviour is described through the "reductionism of the social to the aggregate of individuals and crude optimizing behaviour" (Fine, 2002: 191). Production, transactions and distribution of duties and goods are determined in abstraction from social organizations.

The starting point of SE analysis is the critique of the neoclassical neglect of social structures. SE focuses its critique on three main areas, the use of methodological individualism, the alienating effect of waged-labour and the role of the market as a source of social welfare.

Assumptions on the behaviour of economic agents are necessary in order to forecast people's behaviour. Methodological individualism assumes economic agents to be rational individuals pursuing their self-interest (Gravelle and Rees, 2004). SE bases its critique on the consideration of economic agents as primarily social beings. "Nobody, as Marx rightly insisted, seen 'in his isolation produces values', and nobody, he could have added, in his isolation cares about them; things or ideas or moral ideas 'become values only in their social relationship'" (Arendt, 1958: 165).

SE reasserts other principles of economic behaviour, inspired on Polanyi's work (Pinto, 2004: 31). These are house-holding, reciprocity, redistribution, and trade (Polanyi, 1957). Reciprocity is the sense of responsibility that characterizes production for one's family (Polanyi, 1957: 48). Transfers of goods are a social factor; they are embedded in human relations (Ibid). Individualism fails to capture the sense of responsibility that stimulates economic activity in a community. Redistribution stems from the sense of belonging to a social group. Individual activity can be seen as a coordinated mechanism of production, serving communal needs. Institutions provide a track for the collection, storage, and redistribution of goods and services (Polanyi, 1957).

Whether these principles are a better explanation of why people engage in economic activity is not in the interest of this analysis. The point is, social motivations have to be considered. "The liberal identification of capitalism and freedom, the anonymity of exchange and the irrelevance of the identities of the parties to a contract," (Bowles and Gintis, 1986: 27) pose a severe limitation on the practical usefulness of neoclassical analysis of the economy as a social reality. Methodological individualism fails to provide a theory of aggregate social behaviour (Ben-Ner and Putterman, 2000).

Secondly, the workers are separated from the ownership of the means of production. "The worker's labouring activity is an external, forced labour, a means rather than an end in itself ... The waged-labourer produces a commodity over which she has no property rights. It is an alien commodity" (Lebowitz, 1992: 20). The worker seeks to overcome this alienation by consuming the commodity. The need to consume more and more goods leads to the immiseration of the worker (Lebowitz, 1992). The incentive to work is given by the need to avoid starvation. In order for the system to work, the protection of society must be eliminated (Polanyi, 1957). Waged labour reduces people to instruments of capital.

Arendt argues that human beings acquire an identity, and dignity, only in the social sphere. "A life without speech and action ... is literally dead

to the world; it has ceased to be a human life because it is no longer lived among men” (Arendt, 1958: 176). Work is a way of defining one’s own contribution to her community, an affirmation of one’s identity. “People produce themselves through their social practices,” they are socially constituted individuals (Bowles and Gintis, 1986: 145). In SE work is the central value of economic activity, rather than just a means to an end, “the worker is confronted with the possibility of becoming the subject of his/her own learning and development. ... It is not only a matter of education to work, but work that rescues the individual” (Pinto, 2004: 25).

Finally, the role of the market is questioned. “Adam Smith argued that not only are individuals led through the pursuit of their self-interest by an invisible hand to pursue the nation’s interest, but this pursuit is a far more desirable way to ensure that the public interest will be served than any alternative” (Stiglitz, 1996: 7). Welfare economics states that a socially desirable distribution of wealth can be achieved through the market mechanism. The market is neutral. The issues of efficiency and utility are separated.

Because efficiency is based on individualism it is extremely problematic to establish a collective decision making process, which does not restrict individual freedom of choice, takes into account the preferences of all individuals and where no individual preferences determine social preferences (Ng, 1979). In a majority voting system, “majority decisions do not always have to lead to a consistent collective preference ordering” (Doel and Velthoven, 1993: 93). Arrow speaks of “a ‘democratic paralysis’, a failure to act due not to a desire for inaction but an inability to agree on proper action” (Nath, 1969: 136).

The market mechanism fails to achieve a socially desirable allocation of resources when people do not have the material means and knowledge to take advantage of the market. The failure to provide material means to the poor consists of a “unit problem”: the resources offered by the market respond to the needs of a representative individual, not those of specific persons. For example, traditional forms of credit are not available to the poor, because they demand very small units of credit, whose interest does not cover the transaction costs involved in setting up a loan. Consequently, the poor are systematically excluded from traditional sources of credit.

The market fails to address social problems. An extremely polarized society restricts the movement of capital to the high income classes and creates political instability. In fact, advanced capitalist economies have moved away from extreme poverty of the working class. A welfare system controls for decent living standards of all citizens. Bowles and Gintis define these

changes as “accommodations”, i.e. institutional adjustments to “personal rights and property rights capable of muting the explosive potential of the clash between these rights” (Bowles and Gintis, 1986: 33).

SE attacks the root of social exclusion, by overcoming the alienation of the worker from the means of production. Workers own the means of production and participate in the management of capital. Solidarity encourages people to work outside the utility-, or profit-, maximising logic (Singer, 2002). Solidarity is not taken for granted as a natural predisposition of people and it is by no means a coercive organisation. The fight against competitiveness and individualism is aimed at the reorganisation of the economy, not at the annihilation of individuality. The objective of a solidarity culture is to combine the collective with individuality, using the ideas of justice, equality and respect of individual differences and freedom.

Singer sees a great revolutionary scope in SE, as an alternative mode of production that is sustainable and replaces capitalism. In SE there is “unity between the ownership and the use of the means of production, remuneration of labour according to its social value, and the reversion of alienation” (Santos, 2003: 64). However, Santos argues that rather than a new mode of production, SE represents an “innovative set of social relations of production” (2003: 88) within capitalism.

Three principles define relations of production in SE: cooperation, self-government and human development. Cooperation substitutes competition as the engine of economic activity. “Social productivity results from the combination of social labour, from the cooperation of the limbs and organs of the collective worker” (Lebowitz, 1992: 82). Employment is created so as to include every member of the community. The price system does not act as an equilibrating mechanism between supply and demand. Prices reflect the value that society attributes to labour.

Self-government means collective property of capital and participatory management. In order to avoid alienation, every worker owns part of the firm and has an active role in managing production. Participation is intrinsically part of SE. Social action is *recursive*, as it is played and replayed continuously; it is *constitutive*, as social actors are transformed by their very acts; and is “aimed at changing or stabilizing the rules governing resource distribution and human development” (Bowles and Gintis, 1986: 118-20).

Human development is the third main aspect of SE. Education is fundamental to the diffusion of cooperativist values and, consequently, to the strengthening of SE (Singer, 2002). The goal of associated production is to ensure better living standards and education to all members. The surplus is

invested in new technologies, in education or is equally distributed among members, depending on the collective will (Singer, 2002). Decision power builds up people's confidence. Collective decision making creates social consciousness, promoting a sense of citizenship. "This form of political economy is aimed at an amplified reproduction of life and not at accumulation" (Pinto, 2004: 22).

The theory fails to consider the transition from capitalism to Solidarity-based production. How solidarity-based firms should respond to the competition from capitalist firms is not mentioned. From empirical observation, a sensible conclusion is that cooperatives can live side by side with capitalist firms. Production within the cooperative ensures the respect of all cooperation principles for its members. However, when faced with competition, the solidarity firm acts just like a capitalist enterprise. The solidarity-based firm retains its significance only as far as it performs its educational role.

Banco Palmas

One of the most renowned and successful examples of SE is that of Bank Palmas in Fortaleza. The project was created by the inhabitants of a slum, who generated "another economy" offering a singular and sustainable example of local development (França Filho and Silva Jr, 2006). Fortaleza is the capital of Ceará, a state in the North East of Brazil, where 55% of the population lives under the poverty line (Melo Neto, 2003). Tourism sustains the economy in the coastal region, where most of the population lives. In 1973, the settlers of a beach area in Fortaleza were expelled because new hotels were to be built. According to Mr Melo, director of Bank Palmas, "they were transferred to the south of Fortaleza, in a region that had only weeds and mud. It was a great marsh" (2003: 99). Faced with impossible living standards, people started organizing themselves and, in 1981, the Association of Settlers of the Palmeiras Neighbourhood (ASMOCONP) was created.

The Association started to mobilize the population, demanding from the local authorities what was their right (Silva Jr, 2004). The success of the political mobilisation improved the confidence and the sense of community of the inhabitants of Palmeiras. In 1991, the local population organized the seminar "To inhabit the inhabitable". "The name of the seminar says everything. It was impossible to live in that neighbourhood where nothing could be found. There was no sewage system, no water plumbing" (Melo Neto, 2003: 100). The settlers elaborated a decennial strategic plan to urbanize the neighbourhood by 2000, demanding support from the local govern-

ment (Silva Jr, 2004). On the day the central square was inaugurated, a sign was put up saying “The community of Palmeiras made and inaugurates its square”. “This was very important, because it emphasized the identity of the neighbourhood. The first step to develop a place is to make its settlers like it” (Melo Neto, 2003: 100).

In 1997, an evaluation of the project was made. The pact succeeded in urbanizing the neighbourhood, but poverty was at the same level. The improvements had made life in the neighbourhood more expensive, forcing 30% of the settlers to move somewhere else (Melo Neto, 2003). “Close to 1,200 children were roaming the streets, as there was no place for them in schools. Illiteracy rates in the community reached 75% of settlers” (*UA Magazine*, 2002: 10).

Faced with this fact, we made a bet: we will create a project for the generation of income in order to guarantee that people keep living in the neighbourhood. ... The idea was to create a system in which people could produce and buy locally. This idea led in January 1998 to the creation of Bank Palmas (Melo Neto, 2003: 101).

The creation of Bank Palmas was facilitated by the non-governmental organisation *Cearah Periferia*, which donated R\$ 2,000 to form the initial capital of the bank (Silva Jr, 2004: 35). The main objective of the project was to provide micro-credit to the population in order to give them the means to engage in economic activity. The bank also subsidized consumption. The central idea is that people are “prosumers”, i.e. producers and consumers at the same time, there is no division between supply and demand (França Filho and Silva Jr, 2006). “There is a permanent campaign in the local schools, churches and other local groups inviting people to consume products from local businesses. This campaign is entitled: *Neighbourhood Purchases: More Jobs*” (Changemakers, 2007).

In order to encourage consumption within the neighbourhood, the Bank created a credit card, PalmaCard, which provides micro-credit for local production and consumption, without prerequisites like cadastral consultations, verification of income or collateral. The requirements for borrowing credit are: to be a member of ASMOCONP, to be a responsible person, which is evaluated through the reference of the neighbours, and to agree to produce and buy locally (Melo Neto, 2003). The introduction of a bank changed the function of the association. “Before, all members had free access to the facilities and information of the association, and more,

they were sure that the association would mobilize to attend the collective need... In the Bank, the needs that are being attended are individual” (Silva Jr, 2004: 36). Micro-credit is an instrument born out of the market economy. At the same time, it responds to the needs of the community, absolving a social function. Bank Palmas created a hybrid system, which represents a meeting point between SE and market economy.

Four programmes were created for the community as a whole, aiming at social and economic sustainability: a Laboratory of Urban Agriculture, “Palmoricó”, a women’s hatchery and a school of SE (França Filho and Silva Jr, 2006). No one was producing food, due to a lack of available spaces in the neighbourhood for crops and livestock. The Laboratory of Urban Agriculture provided credit to grow vegetables in people’s back yards. “Palmoricó” was a micro-credit programme for the breeding of Caipira hens, which complemented the production of food.

Social programmes are aimed at the most vulnerable members. Women are the beneficiaries of one of these projects. In 2000, ASMOCONP created the *Incubadora Feminina* (the women’s hatchery), with the purpose of assisting women at the margins of society: single mothers, alcoholics, ex-convicts. “The programme includes a food security strategy, which guarantees a six-month delivery of nutritional, psychological, medical follow-up and professional training” (UA Magazine, 2002: 10). “When they learned a profession, they receive some credit and go to work: social inclusion through work” (Melo Neto, 2003: 104). Finally, a school of SE was established, Pal-matech. The school teaches business management, solidarity-based business, SE, and, mostly to children and youngsters, solidarity culture (Melo Neto, 2003).

The success of the project makes ASMOCONP/Bank Palmas one of the most emblematic cases of SE in Brazil (França-Filho and Laville, 2001). However, all efforts converged to ensuring subsistence, not a sustainable development of the community. Today, of the 5 thousand families that live there, 80% live on less than two minimum wages per month, and 70% of the population does not have formal employment (França Filho and Silva Jr, 2006). The project is still financially dependent on donors, i.e. national and foreign non-governmental organisations.

Critiques

This section will look at some of the criticisms of SE, both from within the movement and from the practical results of the application of such theory.

From a theoretical point of view, SE does not define a new mode of production. Santos asserts that SE does not present “sufficient indications of being able to provide a material base capable of reproducing its relations of production on a large scale” (2003: 19). SE merely redefines relations of production within capitalism. Cooperation and shared ownership of the means of production can be incorporated into the capitalist system. In fact, the literature is divided on the role of SE in the capitalist economy. On one hand, there is the idea of competing with capital, on the other, the wish to create autonomous networks that will cooperate with the market to regulate supply and demand (França Filho, 2006).

In the first case, the focus of SE is on the creation of an alternative source of production. The risk in this case is that cooperatives tend to be absorbed into the capitalist system (França Filho, 2006).

There is a tendency of the association to function as a private enterprise or a public service. ... the submission of an associative project (autonomous and spontaneous) to the functional imperatives, based on formal management, and on the pursuit of quantitative results (França-Filho and Laville, 2004: 130).

SE enterprises base their strength on people’s sense of solidarity. The safety net provided by solidarity only holds when there is no other alternative. Once the living standards and economic conditions of people improve, association no longer represents the only way out of poverty.

In the second case, SE is seen as a complementary mechanism to the market, aimed at alleviating unemployment and absolving the social function (França-Filho, 2006). SE works as a safety net for firms on the verge of bankruptcy, not as an engine of growth. Very little research and development is carried out in SE enterprises and initial investment is always limited as it comes from the poor (Holzmann, 2003). SE is unable to provide an industrial base to the economy, or any kind of firm that requires economies of scale.

One limit of the Palmeiras community is that it is an enclave of production. The fact that official unemployment in the community runs as high as 80% indicates how integration in the labour market did not accompany the increase in living standards in the neighbourhood. It has to be noted that the SENAES is currently pushing for a legislative reform, which will give a *carteira assinada* to the workers of cooperatives and SE enterprises (Singer,

10/08/2006). Presumably, the inhabitants of Palmeiras will be part of the formal labour market in the near future.

From the point of view of neoclassical economics, the proposal of SE is fundamentally flawed. A system based on cooperation cannot lead to capital accumulation, because it fails to provide the incentive for such accumulation. An example is offered by the experience of Israel's kibbutzim. The kibbutzim were founded by the state with the purpose of absorbing immigrants, providing settlement and defence. The organisation of the kibbutzim is similar to that of SE, "traditionally they all had common ownership and democratic [self] management" (Simons and Ingram, 2003: 593). In the long run, the kibbutzim failed to provide a valid alternative to the capitalist system, and were privatized. "As the capitalist economy grew, the alternatives to the kibbutz became more apparent and attractive" (Simons and Ingram, 2003: 595). The communal system of production that characterizes the kibbutz excludes the possibility of individual enrichment, subtracting the incentive for people to increase production. The comparison between kibbutzim and SE enterprises is limited by the fact that the latter are spontaneous, self-funded organisations, while the kibbutzim were founded and funded by the state. However, as SE enterprises become profitable, more members are encouraged to join the cooperative in order to expand production. This mechanism enables a process of differentiation within cooperatives, which gradually leads to the negation of the solidarity principles which founded the cooperative itself (Holzmann, 2003).

Finally, the great visibility that the media is giving to SE is more a consequence of President Lula's neo-populism than of the movement's success. Even though the number of SE enterprises in the country is increasing, this remains a marginal phenomenon affecting only very small scale production and isolated communities. Most SE enterprises appear in the suburbs of the main cities and have very limited spill over effects to the rest of the economy. Many firms, which turned into cooperatives as they were on the verge of bankruptcy, abandoned the cooperative system as soon as their profits started to rise again (Holzmann, 2003).

Conclusion

In light of the previous discussion, an assessment of the relevance of SE in Brazil can now be made. There are different levels at which this question can be approached: as a social movement, as a theory and at the practical level. These will be considered in turn. As a social movement, the impor-

tance of SE lies in the fact that it is one of the first spontaneous grass-root movements of the country. In the 1990's, inflation destabilized the economy, leading to falling real wages, increasing foreign debt and wide-spread unemployment. SE responds to the employment crisis, it has "imposed the social and political recognition of the popular classes as collective actors endowed with an identity and rights for the poor no longer linked with their institutional definitions as outcasts" (Goirand, 2003: 23).

From a theoretical point of view, the movement's scholars claim that SE is "a superior alternative to capitalism, for it provides a better life to those that adopt it" (Singer, 2001: 113). Man, not capital, is the source of value. "SE is a form of economy destined to the collective well-being and not to the accumulation of wealth" (Roldão, 2004: 31). In this respect, women's contribution to collective well-being in house-holding chores and child care is recognized and economically valued, as in the case of Bank Palmas through credit for consumption. However, gender inequality is maintained casting a dark shadow on the quality of this alternative. From a feminist perspective, SE represents a step forward in recognising the role of women in society but it is far from promoting emancipation of women as their role is relegated to the household. Gender inequality is maintained but it does not lessen the contribution of SE to human development. The theory of SE presents some very interesting intakes in displacing a male oriented economic system. The revolution suggested in the consideration of society and the economy is based on the principles of reciprocity and solidarity. Caring for each other is recognised as one of the pillars of human activity. Male oriented theories of growth are improved by and integrated with feminist ideas, in a movement towards sustainable growth.

The practical application of SE, as illustrated by the case of Bank Palmas, highlights both the strengths and weaknesses of the project. Bank Palmas is widely quoted as the most successful example of SE in the country, as the living conditions in Palmeiras increased dramatically in the past ten years. At the same time, the project is heavily dependent on external funding (Melo Neto, 2003) and the economic benefits of the mobilisation of credit and increased production are restricted to the neighbourhood, given its autarkic character.

Given the ambivalent results of SE, the movement is quite easy to criticize. As soon as the associates escape the poverty trap and are faced with the opportunity of high incomes offered by the capitalist sector, SE tends to be abandoned. The difficulty of SE enterprises to overcome the subsistence

level to become profit making firms can be explained in terms of lack of incentives caused by the elimination of competition.

SE is developing slowly, by trial and error practices, and faced with intense competition from the capitalist sector. It represents the struggle of the mass of the unemployed and socially excluded to improve their conditions. The potential of this “alternative economic system” lies in its capacity to rescue people from extreme poverty. SE represents a viable solution to unemployment and social exclusion. Once people have the means to enter, or re-enter, the capitalist labour market, SE exhausts its function. In a country like Brazil, where the government’s responsiveness to people’s needs is subordinated to its economic goals, a safety net for the poor and coming from the poor is very much needed. SE ensures economic participation of the lower strata of the population, increasing the circulation of capital and the level of economic activity in the economy. Capitalism in the highly unequal Brazilian society becomes socially sustainable when combined with this “other economy”.

Evaluating people in a multidimensional fashion shifts the focus from economic growth to human development and lifts the pressure on increased consumption and environmental degradation. The sustainability implications of solidarity economy also present an opportunity for further investigation.

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EKONOMIJA SOLIDARNOSTI KAO ALTERNATIVA SOCIJALNOJ ISKLJUČENOSTI: PRIMJER IZ BRAZILA

Ekonomija solidarnosti javlja se kao teorijska kritika ekonomskog metodološkog individualizma te kao društveni pokret koji se suprotstavlja društvenoj isključenosti, posljedicu razvojne strategije brazilske vlade proteklih trideset godina koja je utemeljena na tržišnoj privredi. Individualni se postupci unutar ekonomije solidarnosti oblikuju prema spoznaji da ljudi djeluju u društvenom kontekstu, prema načelu uzajamnosti, te usklađuju svoje ponašanje kao građani kroz povratnu interakciju sa svojom zajednicom. Društvo tako nije skup pojedinaca nego zajednica, to jest rezultat sudioničkog planiranja ekonomskih, društvenih i političkih institucija koje odgovaraju na određene potrebe zajednice. Kao društveni pokret, organizacijski modaliteti ekonomije solidarnosti pojavljuju se u raznorodnim oblicima i ovisе o kontekstu zato što odgovaraju na lokalne potrebe. Ovdje predstavljeno istraživanje usredotočuje se na analizu iskustava iz Fortaleze, na jedan određeni oblik organizacije ekonomije solidarnosti u siromašnom susjedstvu. Analiza ovog primjera dobro ilustrira jedan od glavnih problema u Brazilu: siromašne se građane obično ne obuhvaća popisom stanovništva pa tako ne mogu dobiti državljanstvo ni potraživati osnovna prava ni usluge od mjesnih vlasti – opskrbu električnom energijom, komunalne usluge, mogućnost obrazovanja za svoju djecu ili socijalnu zaštitu. Zajednica siromašnih mještana iz Palmeirasa u Fortalezi pruža zadivljujući primjer kako, polazeći od zahtjeva za građanskim pravima, zajednica susjeda stvara alternativni sustav koji ljudima omogućuje da žive dostojanstveno tako što im omogućuje da upravljaju institucijama zajednice. Mještani su ekonomski aktivni uz pomoć sustava mikrokreditiranja koji se ne temelji na kamatnom sustavu nego na alternativnoj moneti čija vrijednost ovisi o doprinosu ljudi općem blagostanju zajednice. Tako vrijednost moneta ne odražava razinu ekonomske aktivnosti, nego blagostanje zajednice kao cjeline, pa i žene koje odgajaju djecu i brinu za kućne poslove pridonose njenoj vrijednosti. Isto tako, pristupačnost obrazovanja ključna je za ovaj projekt pa tako i za solidarnost, ekonomiju darivanja i suradnju kao dominantne načine vrednovanja društvenog života.

FROM 'RADICAL' TO 'DOCILE': OR WHAT HAPPENS TO GENDER AFTER ACCESS TO DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

Introduction

The extent to which the strategies of access, inclusion and mainstreaming have been able to breakdown symbolic or actual boundaries that have rendered gender equity and women's development ineffective continues to require critical examination. This is particularly so in the case where women are included as a representative 'gender' component in approaches such as partnerships. Indeed, the discourses of partnerships for development, including the gender and partnership paradigms, are now ubiquitous and part of the orthodoxy of development practice. There is an ever-increasing call for cross-sectorial partnerships to be formed between government, civil society and the private sector, or various paired configurations of these sectors such as public - private partnerships, community engagements between government and civil society, or corporate social responsibility frameworks between private sector and civil society groups. Moreover, the nature of these partnerships can be formal/ contractual or voluntary, of short or long term duration, project specific or institution wide, global, regional, supranational or 'grassroots' level. Irrespective, as discussed in this paper, in all the fluidity or multiplicities in the configurations the inclusion of gender concerns in partnerships for development can be perfunctory if not invisible. With few exceptions, they are generally geared towards the inclusion of 'best' individuals or representative 'sectors' of society and have a strong

gender-neutral tendency. Just as importantly, partnerships are based on notions of integration and inclusion and as such have an equally strong tendency toward perpetuating and reinforcing the mainstream or dominant social, economic and political values and systems. That is, there is a greater likelihood that existing power or relational inequities become more deeply embedded than there is for challenging them.

Development studies, especially gender and development, is awash with critiques of approaches such as participation, integration and mainstreaming. It is clear, for example, that in the critiques of the participatory approach, just as with the integration or mainstreaming approaches, there continues to be a fundamental problem relating to an inability to systematically address disadvantage or uneven power relations and thus we settle for ‘chipping away’ (Rao and Kelleher 2005: 58) at it ineffectually. With few exceptions, such studies highlight the extent to which the hierarchies and values that are dominant in the society and/ or development institutions and systems are reproduced. For example, Bruegel notes in relation to participation that there are “limitations of ‘integrationalist’ participatory models” which provide “formal access to existing structures of power, rather than the resources to challenge that power” (Bruegel 2005: 6). So too, *access* to partnerships and networks as a mode of enabling ‘voice’ (enabling those that would otherwise be denied access to decision-making to ‘speak’ before and with decision-makers) has been identified as not leading to empowerment or affective positive change (cf. Mercer 2003: 749; Hickey 2002). Indeed, as Cleaver highlights ‘empowerment’ has “become a buzzword in development, an essential objective of participation” but “its radical, challenging and transformatory edge has been lost” (Cleaver 1999: 599). Likewise, the notion of ‘empowerment’ carries with it a particular kind of subtext about the empowerment *outcomes* being sort and the kind of empowered subject that it seeks to produce – one who is informed about their rights, their place in the society and how to achieve what they need to through the systems and institutions that represent them rather than one who has the tools with which to stand back from the society and be empowered to challenge or reject development.

The inherent contradiction of development practice is that while it seeks to address uneven power, or other forms of disadvantage, it is itself the vessel through which the dominant ideologies, values and power structures are communicated and reaffirmed. That is, development stems from an innately uneven or hierarchical relationship between donor and recipient, service provider and ‘intended beneficiary’, or simply put between the ‘developed’

and the 'developing'. Perhaps to distance itself as an industry from any colonial legacy or imperialist intent, there have been a myriad of approaches in international development to incorporate more inclusive platforms informed by and involving the participation of representative categories of the development subjects (recipients) such as 'women' through 'community consultations', 'participatory development', focus groups, and broadening of governance to include multiple stakeholders. Certainly, a significant component of the strategy for gender equity to date has focused not only on greater participation of women but the integration (mainstreaming) of women and gender issues into existent societal systems and institutions. This is so, for example, in the case of political rights and the electoral quotas strategies as they can also be reflected in alternative development discourses such as Islamic feminisms.¹

In short, one of the key problems with development is that it reaffirms and in many ways obfuscates uneven power relations (cf. Mercer 2003: 742-3). It has a strong tendency toward the domestication of difference, potential conflict and contestations that arise from deeply embedded systems of hierarchy, uneven resources and exchanges. Rather than challenging broader societal and international power structures, in other words, the development 'machinery'² enfolds subjects into systems and processes that appear apolitical, technical, bureaucratic and managerialistic, and to borrow Arturo Escobar's phrase, "naturalized and normalized."³ What I argue here is for the necessity to be more mindful of the dangers of the domestication tendency in which actors (or participants) become managed subjects, self-regulating and unconscious protectors or perpetrators of the systems of their own regulation (cf. Phillips and Ilcan 2004: 397). This is difficult given that continued engagement with development, through an appeal to 'shared humanity', and the use of such terms as 'partnership', 'collaboration', 'consultation' and participation suggests that it is possible to challenge or change the status quo - to do 'good' - this is indeed an integral component of development but in it lies the danger of what Kapoor refers to as 'narcissistic samaritanism' (2005: 1206). In this, there is a promise of 'empowerment' or the addressing of social discrepancies and discriminations and the tackling

1 See for example Fallon 2003; Paxton, Hughes & Painter 2010; Kudva 2003; and Moghissi 2008: 541 for Islamic feminism.

2 Ferguson *The Anti-Politics Machine*, 1990; 1994: 178; see also Parpart 1997: 223.

3 This quote from Escobar relates to a response to critiques of post-development and in this draws attention to the fact that the "normative stance has always been present in all development discourses, even naturalized and normalized" (2000: 13).

of uneven power relations simply through having gained access to systems and institutions.

Cross-sector partnerships and the power of capital to do 'good'

The idea that we are caught up in a web of 'complex interdependence'⁴ and thus the *need* to build partnerships, alliances between north and south, across institutions or sectors of society, and in the case of gender between men and women, has not only been around for a long time but reflective of the strategic directions of the major international development institutions (Cleaver 2002). For example, the shifting nature of the political economy of aid or what is referred to as the 'new architecture of aid' with a focus on policy reforms rather than investment (Mosse 2006); the increased and re-oriented aid paradigm post-September 11th in which aid and humanitarianism is more explicitly tied with issues of security (cf. Weiss 2000; Duffield 2001); and the collapse of communism, have all contributed to the significant re-fashioning and embedding of the role of the private sector in development. Further, following the challenges to multinational corporations in the 1980s with various critiques and negative images in relation to engagement with the third world (sweatshop, exploitative labour and environmental degradations and lack of accountability, etc), the successful reinvention of private corporations as humanitarian actors is remarkable. In fact, by the 1990s the changing nature of the relationship between private corporations and the UN was abundantly clear⁵. Today, there is a preeminent call for multi-lateral and national companies to re-invent themselves as a "positive force for good" to solve the "numerous humanitarian crises and endemic problems facing the world" (Warhurst 2005: 152). The discourse of cross-sector partnerships incorporating the so-called three sectors of society – government, private sector and civil society – has gained particular saliency and yet, as noted by Selsky & Parker "closer examination of the distribution and balance of power both within partnerships and in embedding contexts is needed" (2005: 867).

The collapse of the communist bloc, in particular, reinvigorated the development interventionist strategy in terms of the centrality awarded to reforms demanded of transition societies along the lines of liberalisation,

4 The idea of partnerships being indicative of complex interdependence is discussed by Beall (1996: 4).

5 For a detailed account of the various trends relating to the incursion of the private sector into development see Mukherjee and Reed 2009.

privatisation and democratisation. It was not a matter of capital suddenly becoming noticed as the missing link so much as the valorisation of its on-going centrality to resolving underdevelopment and other social problems. Alongside new aid modalities and increasing emphasis on partnerships in relation to the 'Third World', societies caught up in post-communist transition were expected to incorporate reforms to their political, economic and social systems in order to join the 'international community'. The role of emergent states was fashioned along the standard lines of neo-liberal governance whereby government's role is perceived in terms of "securing the conditions for market and social cohesion" (Jessop 1999: 350). This is in many ways paradoxical, however, since simultaneously to this broadening of governance paradigm in the key locales of neo-liberalism in Britain and Western Europe there has been a re-formalisation or re-centralisation of state power.⁶ Nonetheless, the various reforms demanded of transition societies highlighted the tenet that the path to democratisation and development is primarily economic. Avenues for challenging the orthodoxy of belief about this path to democracy and development in such an aid milieu is impossible and thus it is understandable that transition societies focus on illustrating building capacity to work *with* the dominant international systems.

But, some writers question whether gross imbalances of power between so-called partners can be legitimately referred to as partnerships (see Mayo and Taylor 2001). The motives of the private sector continue to be suspect for some since, despite the advent of corporate social responsibility, it can be difficult to see that there is common vested interest between institutions directly concerned with 'profit' or securing a greater share of resources with those of the public institutions or development or humanitarian organizations that most often deal with the ramifications of inequity of distribution of power, resources and access. Further, in international development practice partnerships have highlighted the problem of inequity arising from 'local communities' often being absent or weak partners and thus their legitimacy and authority to influence in doubt (cf. Cousins and Kepe 2004). Likewise, although there are many comparative studies of partnerships from across the developing world (Ashman 2001; Weihe 2008), the appropriateness of partnerships for specific tasks is usually a sensitive issue in which deeper scrutiny is required (Franceys and Weitz 2003: 1087). That is, though

6 See for example, May, Cloke and Johnsen discussion of the complex relationships not only between central and local government but their non-statutory partners and an even deeper insertion of central government personnel in both local and civil society as of decentralisation (2005: 704).

the term 'partnerships' is now taken for granted, in most cases it is easier to deduce what does *not* constitute a partnership rather than what does.

Further, alongside the broadening of governance the ability of minorities or disadvantaged groups to affect or co-opt 'difference' for their own good remains elusive. That is, despite the rhetoric of cross-sector partnerships, difference is not only ever present but also often strategically co-opted for further 'vested interests'. The success of cross-sector partnerships is more often than not measured by the engagement itself and thus the power differentials and motives for participation of particular stakeholders is either taken for granted or rendered irrelevant to the good produced by an exchange between presumably diametrically opposed sectors such as private corporations and humanitarian organizations. Moreover, assuming that there can be a categorical unity of the private, government or civil society sectors, there is a particular problem in so far as any individual or organisations can stand for and speak on behalf of the sector in any given context. So too, the individual as a category is often idealised, but there is a strong tendency toward seeking out individuals that stand for a particular sector or category. In most cases the need to form cross-sector partnerships requires more a categorical representative from across 'government', 'civil society', 'community', 'gender' or the 'private sector' as if there is no particular heterogeneity or uniqueness to specific or actual persons or units who are representing the sectors or categories – one stands for all. In short, partnerships simultaneously valorise the individual as it endeavours to dehumanise actual persons.

Humanitarian organisations and NGOs are no less susceptible to working with vested interests in which collaboration with the private sector is a significant strategy to supplement depleting resources and loss of funding available through non-profit/ government sectors. Given that cross-sector partnerships can at best reflect relations of mutual dependence, but in reality uneven power and influence, the role of 'civil society' is particularly important to consider. The civil-society sector's contribution to any partnership may often be intangible and/or uncounted in the final analysis (Ashman (2001: 1104), and yet the ideal of a vibrant 'civil society' sector that can inform development has an enormously influential presence in contemporary discourse (Wiktorowicz 2000; Belloni 2001). Indeed, it has been awarded an almost unquestioned status as the basic tool with which to measure successful transition to an emergent stable development context, openness, capacity building, and democracy.

For development and humanitarian actors, the notion of ‘civil society’ is flexible and allows for fluid interpretations or nuances that encompass a broad range of forms of local and international organisations and is therefore ‘notoriously elusive’ or problematic (see Hickey and Mohan 2005). The extent to which civil society in the developing societies is independent or indicative of indigenous, local or grassroots representation is particularly problematic. Because of the imperative for a ‘civil society’ or ‘community’ engagement component to be present in development partnerships today, in most cases it is difficult to disaggregate the type of organisations and the extent to which they represent ‘community’. There is for example a vast difference between national or community organisations and international non-government organisations operating formally with their ‘in-country’ counterparts or working in partnerships *in cognito* in various countries via local organisations such that the chain of command, decision-making is obscured. Certainly, the perceived legitimacy of NGOs within a given ‘community’ constitutes their most valuable intangible asset (Ashman 2001: 1109) when negotiating with business and government and renders them a particular kind of authority to speak *on behalf of* a community. But the complicated nature of relations between international NGOs’ and their local counterparts (Hickey and Mohan 2005: 244; Mercer 2003) the forms of direct and indirect influence and agenda setting by the international NGOs on local ‘partners’, and further the frequent volatility or impermanence of non-government organisations which can be formed, reformed or disbanded in relatively short periods of time, makes it difficult to see the real input or influence of local units and thus the extent to which they are independent voices emanating from within the society and not simply mere vassals through which multiple stakeholders’ interests or donor agency agendas can be voiced. ‘Civil society’ and related to it ‘community’, tend to be terms, like partnership, which are most often understood or defined “more by implication than explicitly”⁷ and in development discourse, by and large have complex power structures and forms of social selection (exclusion) about who represents whom.

Based on several years of engagement in two cross-sector partnerships two case studies are presented below to illustrate these points. The first is of a global partnership paradigm involving voluntary engagement in a cross-sector partnership that seeks to address entrenched urban problems – the United Nations Global Compact Program – Cities Program. The second is

7 See Johnson & Wilson 2000: 1899; also Cleaver 1999: 603.

of a more community/ local focused cross-sector partnership between various 'stakeholders' seeking to economically empower Indigenous Australians via a financial literacy program.

A gender-blind global partnership model?

The UN Global Compact Program (UNGC) is reliant on voluntary engagement by the private sector to form partnerships with the UN systems to address entrenched development problems. Deeper scrutiny of the motives of participating private corporations to the UNGC is particularly lacking despite some recent attempts to tighten the communication of progress reporting mechanisms and expulsion of a small number of member corporations found to be lacking in relation to following the 10 principles upon which membership is based (see Kilgour 2007). Gender equity is one of these principles but to date there is little if any concerted focus on drawing out a commitment from the member corporations specifically addressing gender concerns. This is no less apparent than in the case of the UNGC-Cities Program.⁸ In an attempt to engage with the UNGC a Melbourne based venture capitalists group, The Committee for Melbourne, established the UNGC-Cities Program. The 'Melbourne Model' framework for engaging cross-sector partnerships was perceived to resolve inherent competition, conflict and tension across different sectors of society by enabling like-minded, highly motivated and socially conscious individuals to go beyond corporate, institutional or personal vested interests to identify and address an entrenched urban development issue. Though individuals drive the process, however, the other precondition of engagement is that there is benefit for all stakeholder groups, particularly the private sector. The paradox here is that simultaneously to the applauding of the motivated individual the model does not call for individual citizens free of corporate or institutional vested interests but those who stand out from among institutions or organisations as either experts or highly motivated. Much depends, in other words, on the kind of individuals selected, and whether it is possible for them to set aside their own motives, vested interests, and power and status aspirations. This form of pre-selection is juxtaposed with the need to be nominated or invited to participate by their 'peers'.

8 The case study of the UNGC-Cities Program presented in this paper is based on the author's formal and informal engagement with the program 2003-2006. I am particularly indebted to Dr. Carmen Lindemann, then Master of Development Studies student whose research and engagement in the establishment of the international component to the Program provided invaluable feedback to my analysis here.

Significantly, though the UNGC principles are adopted there is no specific mention of the gender or other criteria of the individual stakeholders in the 'Melbourne Model' other than they should want to be involved and that their 'peers' have recommended them as the 'best' person for delving into the specific issue/ problem around which the project is based. The 'best' person is also assumed to be responsible for representing their company or institution and thus the solutions or outcomes sort must be of direct benefit to it. In short, there is enormous pressure on the individual representatives to illustrate progress, good investment of resources, staff and time commitment by their corporation or institution.

The premise of a global partnership across cities is based on the idea that a city, irrespective of whether it is in the developed or developing world, has concentrated networks and pools of relations that can be tapped into for purposes of development.

Thus, the various challenges and inherent contradictions of this framework notwithstanding, the first international city was approached and subsequently joined the program – Porto Alegre, Brazil alongside the inaugural launch of the Cities Programme.⁹ The essential characteristic for the successful international implementation of the Melbourne Model was that the process be coordinated by a non-political, independent organisation, with strong networks and credibility within business, government and civil society. This organisation is referred to as 'the city secretariat'. Establishing the local secretariat thus became a key condition for joining the UNGC Cities Program alongside the identification of a pilot project and a cross-sectorial partnership group formed following the processes outlined in the Melbourne Model.

Whilst the stated goal was the formation of networks aimed at fostering democratic and inclusive practices to increase the credibility and legitimacy of the Committee, it was clear that not every group in society could or is likely to be included in a framework that depends on informal networks or word of mouth connections of individuals. This typically led to reliance and affirmation of exclusionary tendencies inherent in existing power structures, patron-client and other modes of creating networks of power. The relative absence of women, for example, may nominally be seen as a result

9 Through an informal networking strategy the Mayor of Porto Alegre was approached by Lindemann. Between 2003 and 2006 a number of other cities also became involved, some through their own initiative but most approached either by the Director of the UNGC-Cities Programme or affiliated members of the program, including a number of interns from the University of Melbourne.

of them not being recommended by their 'peers' as 'best people' but it also speaks to issues of entrenched gender values in the society that omit their contribution. Just as importantly, most of the member cities from developing societies in particular have sought greater assistance for carrying out local activities calling for funding, research, technical assistance and further knowledge of the conceptual framework presented by the Cities Program. However, for the International Secretariat, through the process of carrying out workshops among the partners local committees are expected to resolve such issues. The natural assumption for member cities, however, is that engagement would bring increased visibility and connection to the UN systems if not funding and resource allocation to their projects. In the absence of this, only city members in more developed societies seemed able to move their projects forward while the resource disadvantaged ones continually frustrated by the process.

Understandably in the absence of clear decision-making structures, which is inherent in the notion of partnerships, certain individuals and stakeholders assume a kind of leadership role for driving the process.¹⁰ Importantly, such a loose aggregation around 'entrenched urban problems' and the manner of identification of 'best people' led to a natural selection process in which women and gender issues were omitted. It was not only a problem of the principles of engagement but in the very nature of the cross-sector model of incorporating multiple stakeholders that the institutional power and gender dynamics were reproduced. As Parpart notes, "participation in the structures of governance, particularly political parties, bureaucracies, the military and economic institutions, is regarded as *generally available to all citizens*" and because of this the outcome in most cases is that governance is 'gender-neutral' (Parpart 2004: 1, my emphasis).

'Coming to the table with power'? Indigenous community representation and cross-sector partnerships

The second case study presented is of an Indigenous Australian community being invited to participate in a cross-sector partnership alongside a financial institution and various stakeholders from government and non-government agencies involved in Indigenous governance and services. Some Indigenous development 'problems' are undoubtedly of 'third world' proportions in terms of mortality rates, longevity, high instances of preventable diseases and accusations of human rights abuses, etc (see O'Donoghue 1999;

¹⁰ Brinkerhoff (2002) likewise noted it was individuals who drive partnerships.

Eversole 2003). Moreover, though numerically small, indigenous Australians are perhaps the most researched and intervened peoples of Australian society – inundated with researchers, government and non-government organizations that either impose or voluntarily seek their engagement in various ways. Alongside the frequent ‘heavy handed’ approach into affairs of its citizens (which many have argued would not be imposed on non-Indigenous citizens) by the government (see Altman and Hinkson 2007), there is a proliferation of various private corporations, in ‘partnership’ with community and non-government organisations, becoming engaged in ‘capacity building’ projects for Indigenous communities. The cross-sector partnership discussed here focused on delivery of a financial literacy program as part of the broader call for economic empowerment strategies that would enable Indigenous communities to break the cycle of poverty and welfare dependence.

Though financial literacy is but a small component to the overall goals of economic empowerment, the attempt to bypass the typically draconian and patronising approaches of enforced income quarantine strategies adopted by the Australian government¹¹ by providing the means by which indigenous people would learn to appreciate money and learn how to save was notably different. And yet, with few exceptions, the potential for individuals to transform their lives (become empowered) through voluntary participation was in the end difficult to realise primarily because of the nature of such partnerships. While formally ‘everyone agreed’ to the partnership goals the ultimate voice still resided within the stakeholder group as a whole (and the dominant stakeholder within this group) rather than the members of community participating either in the program or the governance body. This ‘democratic’ process of decision-making typically has the effect of silencing the very people that it intends to empower unless they make up a majority within the governing body.

Significantly, the major stakeholder voice in such a partnership is the one that contributes a substantial amount of the funding/ resources. In this case the private (financial) corporation that sought a return on their investment through the illustration of progress or success – typically through ‘hard facts’ (statistics). Likewise, for the administering NGO, evidence that pointed to the efficacy of the program was critical since it could not continue beyond the pilot phase and could not present a case for further funding from the existing contributors or potential new donors without justifying

11 See for example, the welfare-income management or quarantine strategy – Billings 2010.

its demonstrable success. The negotiations in and out of steering committee meetings, and the negotiations relating to the content of the eventual report that emerged from two years of research, highlighted the intricate and delicate nature of multiple interests, motives and expectations involved in such engagements. For the sole Indigenous representative on the Steering Committee, however, the cross-sector partnership and the engagement with a powerful financial institution was a promise of breaking the cycle of poverty and discrimination and thus had little to do with the efficiency or efficacy of the financial literacy program *per se*.

It was clear that economic empowerment based on notions of financial literacy (knowing about money, how to save, etc), cannot lead to eradication of poverty much less social inclusion. In particular, financial literacy programs are in many ways similar to the ideals of microfinance in that social inequities or ‘empowerment’ are assumed to come with the coming (individuation) of money. Nonetheless, the neo-liberal ideas inherent in having a private corporation that has at its core the business of money involved in such a partnership suggested for many of the Indigenous participants a promise of the secrets of success, power, being revealed - just as gaining access to systems and mainstreaming of gender was assumed to enable a means of getting at the workings of power to change it in such a way that it worked better for women.

Notwithstanding the difficulties implied in adopting western economic liberal conceptions of money as private or individual being in stark contrast to Indigenous modes of relations and obligations of exchange that render money to be more ‘social’, for many Indigenous participants the engagement with more powerful institutions and the partnerships model simply reaffirmed the impenetrability of power. Moreover, given that women bare the overwhelming burden of caring for children family, the call to ‘save more’ by not giving to family, seemed for many female participants in the program nonsensical if not threatening to their way of being and their place in social and kin networks. I had a chance to speak informally with one woman participating in the program, and asked, “What do you think of all this I asked?” She replied, “I thought this would help, there are six in my family, it is so embarrassing waiting on government to put the money in your bank, next day everyone comes, all gone – how can I save, do I say no to my children?” Being poor, being a woman, and being Indigenous was not something that can be easily addressed through participation in projects that are of short duration and do not have the institutional or systematic supports in place for long term engagement.

In short, the language of partnerships makes it imperative to adjust, compromise and reach consensus. By their nature, they cannot accommodate disparate views or individual agendas and yet are more accommodative of the agenda of individual partners who have committed the most substantial resources. Moreover, in either the illustration of a compelling case of 'success' or identification of areas for further 'improvement' of the program, a representative 'compelling' case of a woman was sought but individual women's struggles were difficult to capture or address. So too, though the Indigenous elder was concerned with the very poor and the plight of indigenous mothers in supporting their families, the cross-sector partnership was not geared towards the goal of addressing this fundamentally pressing issue. Because such partnerships are voluntary in nature, and given the multiple motives and interests for engagement, it is difficult for a consensus to be reached about the ultimate goals or responsibilities without compromise – in the end what is settled upon is what is *doable* within the limits of the capacities of the partners. But, the promise of partnerships, as with empowerment more broadly, is not technical, managerial or practical solution-based – it is the promise of the eradication of poverty, difference and discrimination. This became clear in informal discussions with the elder in which the envisaged outcome of gaining access to the powerful, the decision-makers, was moving toward the lifelong dream of indigenous self-determination. To be sure, he did not assume that this particular project would achieve all that previous attempts to address deep rooted discrimination and deprivation had not, but he did hope that it was at least a step in the right direction, "At least we are coming to the table now".¹²

Inclusion of difference, affirmation of the same

it is precisely the issue of what happens as of 'coming to the table' that I am concerned with here. That is, as of gaining access, participating in development projects and engaging in partnerships, the problem of the promise of getting the key that unlocks the door that has barred equity, respect and dignity remaining elusive continues. In the above case, for example, there is a promise that through participation in a partnership with a powerful financial institution it would not only be economic independence and self-regulation that is achieved but also social and political empowerment, the fulfillment of the dream of Indigenous self-determination. Though unreali-

12 I am indebted to my then Honours' student Sophie Adams whose research findings provided impetus for me to explore the notion of 'coming to the table' in this paper.

stic and unrealisable perhaps, this is precisely the promise of partnerships. Getting close to power suggests that there is a capacity to absorb power, or at least to affect decision-making where normally it is not possible. Nowhere is the promise of coming close to power as it is in the discourse of partnerships. In the current dominant societal systems and institutions, the assumption is that power is overwhelmingly situated within capital, the private sector. It is for this reason that UNGC among many other development institutions, are calling for partnerships with the private sector. But, access to power does not beget power. Simply 'coming to the table' with powerful Others is insufficient in itself if you do not 'come' to that table with a store of power, or a negotiative advantage that is somehow unique, that cannot be replaced by an indiscriminate category of 'gender', 'community', or an 'Indigenous representative'. What I am arguing here is that partnerships, as with participatory development, and mainstreaming or integration strategies, implicitly convey a promise of redressing power and relational inequities through a transformed relationship between essentially diametrically opposed systems and peoples, of incorporating difference in the service of 'sameness'.

In fact, it is often difficult to know what the intent of 'partnerships' is but that it should lead to empowerment of some kind is indisputably the key message that is communicated to those participating in such frameworks. For Larner and Craig, "the whole domain of partnership appears to be characterised by plurality and slippery movement between multiple scales, mandates, techniques, accountabilities and participants" (Larner and Craig 2002: 1). In the authors' views, it is a kind of 'everything-and-nothing polysemy' and in the case of local partnerships in Aotearoa New Zealand represent

an integral part of a new form of social governance that attempts to send legible signals about social stability and inclusivity to global markets, while urging active orientation to and participation in these fields on local subjects (2002: 2).

Significantly, as Mathews highlights in relation to the rights-based approach, the tendency of development to reduce engagement to the 'technical' and 'programmable' is "of little influence in practice and weak at challenging development orthodoxy and global inequalities" (Mathews 2007: 79). So too, as Mathews adds, "the language of mainstreaming and integration is a universe away from the language of struggle" (ibid.). Likewise, Hickey

argues that “the rhetoric of ‘partnership’ may actually obscure a process whereby clientelist relations displace mechanisms for accountability”, and in this transnational non-government development organisations partnerships “may perpetuate participatory norms that are based on the asymmetrical reciprocity of clientelism, rather than the more equitable relations of solidarity and citizenship” (Hickey 2002: 844). Hickey concludes that “the problem is located within a dual tendency to depoliticize issues and strategies of participation, and overlook the local and historical context of citizenship formation in developing countries” (2002: 853; see also Gardner and Lewis 2000).

Partnerships serve to conceal the actual workings of power and decision-making that then has the effect of dispossessing its agents of their own rationales and true instrumentalities (Mosse 2005: 10). To be sure, partnerships for development is a discourse that is born out of both neo-liberalism and participatory development – a hybrid, often uneasy fit, between bottom-up and top-down approaches in which there is an inherent obscuring of the nature of uneven power relations, or acknowledgement that development is, as Nzegwu points out, a ‘hierarchical arena’ (Nzegwu 2002: 16). As Mercer notes below, the call for partnerships suggests a call for greater responsibility and enabling the poor states and their civil societies to take ‘ownership’ over their own development:

Their focus on participation and good governance obscure a more covert and insidious expression of power which simultaneously empowers and normalises the actions of development partners. Understanding partnership as a performance alerts us to the various strategies employed to achieve particular outcomes by different partners who are positioned within an asymmetrical framework of power relations (2003: 759).

Given that partnership ‘regimes’ are now present in all facets of supranational, national and local levels of engagement between development and would-be-development actors such as private corporations, it is imperative that the utility of this approach alongside the suite of approaches in development be more deeply interrogated. In case of EU, for example, “local partnerships are fast becoming a new orthodoxy” and brought into EU policy as “a key part of the attempt to counterbalance fears of fragmentation with notions of integration, and as a means of mobilizing agencies and actors behind economic and social policy goals” (Geddes 2000: 784). But, she adds,

the dominant practice of local partnerships “enshrines elitist, neocorporatist and neopluralist principles, and excludes or marginalizes more radical egalitarian and solidaristic possibilities” (ibid.). So too, the mainstreaming of gender into EU policy has for some commentators been consistent with the strategy of encouraging policies that ‘fit’ or resonate with ‘existing dominant frames’ (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000: 435).

Disaggregating gender from the partnerships milieu

That partnerships, same as the participatory models of development, have a tendency to include those who are unlikely to pose a threat or challenge to existent systems and approaches is implicit in the construct of ‘stakeholders’ or interest-bearers. But, there is a vast difference between terms such as ‘alliances’ and ‘coalitions’ which imply a political activism platform and the typical understandings of ‘partnerships’ today which is imbued with an apolitical, managerial-speak nuance and intent – a matter of ‘process’ and ‘efficiency’ as many commentators have noted. The very use of a managerial, corporate-type term renders what is essentially a call for a violent rupture or a threat to the status quo into one of complicity and a docile, apolitical subjectivity. That is, development planning/ processes have rendered systematic discrimination of women into a non-violent, non-threatening interaction and my concern is that ‘partnerships’, through their very normalcy, benign and non-politically threatening façade, do not enable closer interrogation into what they are and what ‘good’ they produce in and of themselves.

The particularity of women’s needs, concerns, demands of development are in no small way subsumed, toned down by reference to the concept of ‘gender’ today as employed by development institutions, especially NGOs. The concept of gender is essentially de-sexed (rendered powerless or impotent) and in many ways the generic seed of this process was evident in the ascendance of the term ‘gender’ above ‘women’ (i.e., in the shift from WID to GAD). The burden of poverty being greater on women (the feminisation of poverty thesis), and the shift to ‘gender equity’, likewise the move towards gender mainstreaming, are all platforms in which the problem of discrimination and disadvantage faced specifically by women was transformed into a problem of poor gender relations, and further a problem of women being left behind, excluded from institutions and systems and thus merely requiring inclusion, integration. Thus ‘empowering’ women becomes a call for greater ‘collaboration’ between men and women and the inclusion or enfolding of women into existent societal systems. The issue of inclusion is

especially important for understanding the approach taken towards gender equity. The centring of women's activism around the issue of gaining access to public life (right to work, education, political representation, participation in public institutions and decision-making, etc) is generally a triumph of the feminist activism of many centuries. Indeed, though the discrimination of women is manifold and complex, integrating women in 'all facets of public life' (Fraser 1999: 893) was and continues to be the essence of feminist activism, especially in relation to gender and development. It is taken for granted that it is in the public sphere of life that woman's transformed roles and identities can be successfully navigated.

Setting aside the issue of the potentials for reproducing the values and hierarchies (paternalism) residing within the domestic or familial domain into the public sphere, there is a strong propensity of domestication and confinement of women in the public sphere that continues to pose significant challenges for women's advancement. Indeed, the valorisation of public life, 'citizenship' heralding freedom, individualism, independence and gaining access to work, education, political representation and gender 'mainstreaming' have not yielded all that it promised¹³. Moreover, economic inclusion, adoption of rights-based and participatory approaches, and the setting of electoral quotas, etc, are all premised in some way or another on the idea of public life being the only or supreme avenue for women's empowerment. That is, though social transformation is perceived as relational, dependent on relationships between men and women or partnerships between and across institutions or different sectors of society, it is fundamentally about *public* and civic relationships that are of primary focus.

To be sure, the discourse of partnerships is not simply part of the mainstream development machinery. Gender and development scholarship just as key women-focused agencies are invoking the partnerships paradigm in various ways. Shiva, for instance, reinforcing an essentialist construct of a more nature-attuned 'third world' or 'indigenous' woman, argues that women are in a relationship akin to a partnership with nature:

By stating a partnership with nature in the politics of regeneration, women are simultaneously reclaiming their own and nature's activity and creativity. There is nothing essentialist about this politics because it is, in fact, based on denying the patriarchal definition of passivity as the essence of women and nature. There is nothing absolutist about it

13 For a similar argument, see Jahan 1995; Charlesworth 2005; Walby 2005.

because the 'natural' is constructed through diverse relationships in diverse settings. Natural agriculture and natural childbirth involve human creativity and sensitivity of the highest order, a creativity and knowledge emerging from partnership and participation, not separation. The politics of partnership with nature, as it is being shaped in the everyday lives of women and communities, is a politics of rebuilding connections and of regeneration through dynamism and diversity (Shiva 1992).

This suggests that women are 'naturally' geared towards partnerships, equality and conciliation rather than domination or exploitation. The paradigm of partnerships is akin to working with power because, perhaps, it is taken for granted that they are institutionally barred from ever usurping power in their own right? In short, the discourses of 'participation' and 'partnerships' reinsures that the efficacy of the development systems remains intact from potential critique or challenge to their very existence and not just to their *modus operandi*. In this, however, development systems and institutions, just like women, are both subjects and objects of development – are themselves also both regulators and regulated. Most development organisations and institutions, as with the programs and policies they construct, are enmeshed in mega systems and political and economic regimes that are difficult to challenge. So too, women are not just objects of development, they are its subjects and narrators and as such can coincidentally or inadvertently become so enmeshed in the systems, strategies and structures that it is difficult to be other than co-opted, appropriated into espousing mainstream ideologies and strategies that support their own regulation.

Mohanty's critique of western feminist scholarship and its essentialising tendency drew to our attention the need to be more critically aware of the colonising subtexts of constructs such as the 'Third World Woman' (Mohanty 1988; see also Wood 2001). Mohanty noted that 'colonisation' "implies a relation of structural domination, and a discursive or political suppression of the heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question" (1988: 61). The notion of a 'partner' and the strategies increasingly imposed for 'working with partners' reflects a similar mode of codification. As such, the partnerships discourse is a 'knowledge' construct that reinforces not just access *to* but inclusion *in* the systems and processes that regulate the 'Other'.

The notion of 'voluntary engagement', for example, suggests that there is no coercion or imperative to engage but this is not necessarily the case. But, there is no doubt that a partnership imperative is present, just as there is one

to 'consult community' as it provides legitimacy to proposed interventionist strategies. At the UN instruments level, partnerships for development, though often nothing more than mutual agreements or memorandums of understanding, have increasingly become mandatory for aid recipient countries (cf. Mercer 2003; Slater and Bell 2000:350). Indeed MDG8 highlights the dictate of what are predominantly 'donor' institutions compelling partnerships upon aid recipients.

In this, partnerships are predominantly concerned not with the development subjects (recipients) *per se*, but rather the potential agents that can work for or on behalf of them – the missionaries or cultural attaches carrying the message or values of development. As such, partnerships are geared towards the inclusion of development actors with some kind of institutional capacity to inject new knowledge and suggest solutions to entrenched societal problems. Irrespective, what is most often achieved through partnerships is the domestication of the weak or the cooption of difference through access and inclusion into systems that then make it difficult for any actor to stand apart from the development project itself or to enable, where necessary, to challenge it outright.

Engagement in any aspect of the overall development project invariably involves engagement in a discursive field in which the actors themselves become both apolitical and yet holders of power in reinforcing the de-politisation intent of the development project. Moreover, there is a perception (sometimes explicitly but more often than not implicitly voiced) that there are no alternative models of development other than that being championed at the time. That is, development actors by and large seek to inform, improve, refine, re-assess or critique processes and policies that have not led to good or 'best' outcomes as if it is simply a matter of poor implementation, insufficient resources allocation or a lack of 'will' on the part of the development subjects. There is indeed little if any room to challenge to either the development machinery or the political systems that uphold it. The working with 'what we've got' ethos is omnipresent and reinforces the directions or approaches of powerful institutions.

In short, participation in partnerships has become part of the lexicon of 'good' development. A particular strength of 'belief' that takes on a kind of religiosity and morality of 'goodness' in an almost evangelical sense of a 'call' to help, to preach the 'good' of Development, to accept the 'word' of Development – to understand and follow the 'path' of Development that the enlightened believer ('the developed') understands and follows. Indeed, the precept of 'doing good' resides deeply within the collective psyche of devel-

opment and humanitarian actors and it is often difficult to critique or reject – i.e., the ultimate trope of engagement is that development, democracy and some kind of humanitarian endeavor is meaningful, worthwhile and necessary and thus challenging development or humanitarian institutions or systems is akin to being a traitor to values of humanity – “at least they are doing something” as one of my development studies students said. As Cornwall notes, the ‘buzzwords’ used in development (including the term ‘development’ itself),

gain their purchase and power through their vague and euphemistic qualities, their capacity to embrace a multitude of possible meanings, and their normative resonance. The work that these words do for development is to place the sanctity of its goals beyond reproach (2007: 472).

Rather than settling for the development-speak that partnerships promise to incorporate, if not eradicate difference, I am concerned with the regulation of difference so that it becomes non-threatening, manageable and domesticated through inclusion or engagement and thus, in Cornwall’s words, “leaves much of what is actually done in its name unquestioned” (2007: 471).

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OD 'RADIKALNE' DO 'POSLUŠNE': ŠTO BIVA S RODOM NAKON OMOGUĆAVANJA PRISTUPA PROGRAMIMA RAZVOJA I PARTNERSTVA

Oni koji pozivaju na “zajedničku ljudskost” i koriste pojmove i modele “partnerstva”, “suradnje” i “konzultacija”, smatraju da je omogućavanje pristupa mrežama odlučivanja samo po sebi dovoljno za osnaživanje nepovlaštenih skupina, posebice žena. Sam pojam “partnerstvo” pretpostavlja suglasnost aktera nevladinog sektora (civilnog društva, humanitarnih organizacija ili privatnih korporacija) da se zajedno založe za promjenu javnih politika. Međutim, u stvarnosti “partnerstvo” upućuje na rezultat pregovaranja između pojedinačnih interesa koji cementira razjedinjenost/razliku. Partnerstvo tako postaje oblik simboličkog federativnog sustava vladavine na marginama formalnog političkog sustava, koji ipak osnažuje neoliberalni etos samoodgovornosti, individuacije i disagregacije. Nadalje, homogenost unutar svake grupe ili sektora koji stupaju u odnos partnerstva uzima se zdravo za gotovo, dočim se kvaliteta odnosa ili pregovaranja zainteresiranih strana rijetko propituju. Unutar dominantnog diskursa rodno osviještene politike (*gender mainstreaming*) nedovoljno se istražuje u kojoj mjeri pristup sferi odlučivanja sam po sebi utječe na smanjivanje razlika u odnosima moći te koliko uključivanje žena utječe na učinkovitost razvojnih politika u korist žena. Naime, uključivanje žena kao reprezentativne nepovlaštene kategorije samo potvrđuje njihovu “različitost”, to jest nejednakost. U slučaju “partnerskog” pripuštanja žena u sfere odlučivanja postoji opravdana bojazan da taj model perpetuira, pa čak i pojačava, postojeće odnose moći, a time i nejednakost, tamo gdje ih je trebao ukloniti ili smanjiti.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: CONTESTING LOCAL GENDER REGIME AND WESTERN HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

Introduction

The post-conflict Bosnian society built on the ruins of a socialist state and its ideology of alleged equality, today is divided along many lines. Beside the ethnic division as the most pronounced split and the class division as the fastest growing one in the country, the gender division line does not receive political recognition neither much scholarly attention. While this can be true for many societies, the Bosnian social reality has been added an additional split on the national and international field following the entrance of the international actors¹ to the local scene.

In this research, I analyze the entanglement of the gender division of the Bosnian society and dynamics imposed by the international community. After having been neglected previously, the research on how gender construction in the conflict and post-conflict/development period is impacted by the international actors has recently gained importance among scholars (Eifler 2008). Researchers (Krasniqi 2008, Schaeuble 2008) have demonstrated that the intertwining between the gendered subjectivities of the conflict and post-conflict countries, on the one hand, and liberal peace strategy im-

1 The participants in the Western-led peacekeeping mission and the post-war reconstruction.

ported by the international interventions, on the other hand, produces effects that may cause a serious rupture of the social order and thus deserves more attention in the field of research.

In the context of the growing attention to the interplay between the gender order in post-conflict societies and international missions, this research explores how the presence of the international organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter Bosnia) has affected the social reality in the realm of gender order. The international organizations in Bosnia created the labor market for both nationals and internationals and thus formed a transnational field in which many Bosnian men and women have found their jobs. Contrary to the situation with high positions in national firms and institutions, international organizations are places with relatively equal numbers of Bosnian women and men at senior positions. The Bosnian women who hold senior positions in international organizations would presumably not have equal level opportunity for social and economic empowerment within the national economy due to the traditional domination of men in the public sphere in the Bosnian society. The opening of the labor market in the international organizations has been an opportunity for Bosnian women to gain a presence in the public sphere in a way that is conditioned by, and sometimes in conflict with, the 'traditional'² gender-related context in the country. Thus, the masculinized public sphere in Bosnia, notably the world of work, has been challenged by the emergence of an international labor market that has increased the presence of high-ranked female employees. The latter share the work field with Bosnian men employed either in the international organizations or in the public employment hence challenging gendered hierarchies at work and normalized inferiority of the female employees.

It is important to note that this reconfiguration of the gender identities in the public sphere in Bosnia occurs in the transnational field marked by strong power relations between the international and local context. While the post-war religious and ethno-national renaissance nourishes the gender identities so to comply with the patriarchal values, the international actors in Bosnia provide a fertile soil for deviation from the 'traditional' gender

2 The socialist time recorded high economic activity of women. However, demand for the labor decreased after the war (1992-1995) and employment started to decline. In this situation, there is a concern that the opportunities within the national economy to get the job favored men to women. This trend has been supported by the practice of treating women as reproducers of the nation through revitalization of the family and their domestication in the private sphere. In the similar vein, the women who in the socialist time emigrated for job faced the accusations by their countrymen for the neglect of tradition, the disappear of community and white plague.

order by means of the neutralization of the gendered positions in the labor market. Thus, a key question arises: What are the effects of collision between the patriarchal construction of gender identities in line with nation and state building of the post-war Bosnia on the one hand, and the promotion of Bosnian women as competent, individualized actors in the labor market in the international organizations, on the other hand? The answer to this question involved the analysis of the ways in which the role of men and women, and consequently the relation between them, has been reconfigured in the Bosnian public sphere, particularly in the world of work, as a consequence of international intervention. The results of the field research indicate that the resistance of the Bosnian male professionals towards the Bosnian female professionals in international organizations is a medium for resisting the international intrusion in the local social settings which endangers, *inter alia*, the masculine air of the public sphere. This leads to the climate in which Bosnian men and women develop a distance between themselves on the ground of dyadic characteristics pertaining to the national and international context.

Bosnia: internal other, external other, Europe's other...

As noted previously, the reconfiguration of gender identities studied in this research occurs at the time of the state and nation building in Bosnia when the gender identities have become a highly important factor of the social order. The interpretation of gender identities is often employed as a tool to protect the growing national values against pushing external forces. The new democracies after the break of Yugoslavia (1991) provide numerous examples on restoration of patriarchy that is used as a form of refusal to go along with the incorporation with the global arena. For example, Schaeuble (2008) analyzes the case of resurgence of the Croatian masculinity in the face of the externally-imposed authority, i.e. request by ICTY for extradition of the war criminals. The intervention of the international community and the request for the extradition of the men that defended the manliness at the war time are understood as an attack on the masculinity of Croatian men. In this line, I explore the tension following the reconfiguration of the gender regime as an answer of local level to international influence.

The presence of foreign nationals in Bosnia before the war in 1990s was insignificant. The situation changed in the mid-1990s after the influx of the foreigners coming to Bosnia with the international post-reconstruction mission. The Dayton Peace Agreement (1995), that put an end to the war in Bos-

nia, mandated a wide range of the international organizations to monitor, oversee, and implement components of the agreement. The Office of High Representative in Bosnia has many governmental and legislative powers; NATO-led international peacekeeping force troops serve to implement the military aspects of the peace agreement; socio-economic development of Bosnia is mostly coordinated by the World Bank, the IMF, numerous UN agencies and foreign governments' development agencies. Bosnia is also a place with the growing number of foreign NGOs that participate in building civil society. Briefly, a small country of Bosnia has turned into a big polygon of the international actors.

It is important for this research to reiterate that the encounter between Bosnians and international actors is marked by the power relationship, i.e. relations of the domination and subordination. This is a result of the fact that Bosnian state is hardly functional and thus totally dependant on the foreign aid in many ways. In addition to that, the power relation is supported by the representation of Bosnia as an oriental place and Europe's 'Other' (Helms, 2008). The encounter between the Bosnian local concept and international concept is marked not only by the dichotomy at the level of the local-international, where local means static and backward model and international dynamic and up-to-date model, but evolves also the East-West opposition. This connotation has also added on the legitimization of hegemonic role of the international actors in the encounter with Bosnia.

Finally, the process of the opening up of the Bosnian society to the foreign intervention and influence coincides with the period when Bosnian ethno-national groups were busy with asserting their ethnic identities in relation to each other in the first year of the after-war period. Therefore, apart from adjusting the position among themselves, Bosnians were faced with the other positioning process – positioning themselves in regard to the foreigners – which was an additional layer in dealing with identity crises. Certainly, this dynamic has weakened negotiation power of Bosnians in the positioning vis-a-vis the foreigners. Thus, the process of the post war ethnification of Bosnia involves the construction the *internal* 'Other' who belongs to the two remaining ethnic groups in the country. Apart from this othering at the level of the ethnic group, the social reality in Bosnia recognizes an *external* 'Other' imagined in the international actors in the country. The *external* 'Other' is perceived as a threat to the ethnification process by each ethnic group, despite different reasons and different standpoints of the each ethnic group towards the *external* 'Other'.

The international organizations in Bosnia have been engaged in reconstruction of the society and spreading democratic values, one of them being gender equality. Although the scope and perspective of this research does not allow the elaboration of the gendered nature of international missions, I would briefly argue that as much as we can say that Bosnian state is male-dominated country, the international intervention there is dominated by men, too. An example is international intervention in Bosnia where almost all leading positions of the international community in Bosnia are held by men.³ This is not surprising since it is recognized that gender-blind politics of territorial states is reflected mainly in international institutions (Rogers, 1983). They are gendered institutions and the fact that global capital is gendered should not be neglected either (Connell, 1996: 167). Many studies showed that the international agencies in their headquarters have practice of gender discrimination especially at the level of recruitment and promotion (Rogers, 1983). Contrary to this practice at headquarters, the international community in Bosnia offers—to a good extent—non-discriminatory policy in recruitment and promotion for Bosnian men and women.

This contradiction between the gender regimes in the international institutions themselves and the gender sensitive policy build in the countries of their intervention may deserve an inquiry. However, this research will remain focused only on the issue of the reconfiguration of the gender identities in the Bosnian public sphere under an implicit intervention of the international actors.

The Bosnian women in war time: bread winners or moral losers?

UNPROFOR, UN protection forces created at the beginning of 1992 to secure designated areas in Croatia, were sent to Bosnia following the escalation of the violence in summer 1992. Its starting mission in Bosnia in form of securing support for distribution of the humanitarian aid was later scaled up to the demilitarization of the 'safe areas'. It has been confirmed that UNPROFOR was the largest peace keeping mission in the UN history (Baumann, Gawrych and Kretchik, 2006). In order to function in the country, UNPROFOR created a transnational field composed of the international mission staff and the local people working for their mission, mostly as interpreters. The latter were predominantly Bosnian women given that at the same time Bosnian men were being recruited in the national army(ies).

3 Since 1995 as many as 7 officials held the Office of High Representative in Bosnia; all of them were men. The same holds for the Deputy High Representatives.

The image of Bosnian men, in army costume, going to the battlefields confirmed a stereotypical image of manhood in the times when the nation is in danger. It supports Mostov's (2000) description of creation of masculinity through heroic defenders of the nation. Having in mind that masculinity and femininity are relational contracts (Connell, 1995) one could expect that Bosnian women remained in the shadow of the heroic life of men. However, Bosnian women annulled, as Krasniqi calls it, 'masculinist definition of femininity' (2006) since they were the first to encounter the external Other by entering the transnational field as local employees. Earning money at the time of the war when people were hardly surviving on humanitarian food, was an empowering tool for many women within their families. These women became breadwinners, sometimes sustaining more than one family. They received a tacit legitimization of their capability to earn in the field out of control of the local men as it meant violation of the ethno-national binary relation between brave soldiers on one hand and 'anxiously waiting brides, wives and mothers' (Schaeuble, 2008: 173) on the other hand. The break of such a gendered war dynamic turned into backlash against the women who were not 'waiting' females, but active breadwinners.

Many female interviewees were former interpreters of UNPRPOFOR. They were not enthusiastic about the role they had in the war since it was a huge burden that they suddenly had to carry, sometimes in very young age. Some of them found themselves in the world that was strange to their cultural habitus.

My parents were atheists, the Party members, which made me think that, being freed from religious perception, I should have been emancipated in terms of gender roles. However, I can see it now that I was brought up in a very conservative, or better to say traditional way when it comes to men/women domains and relations. For me, entering the world of the foreign soldiers was not a comfortable task. I felt uncomfortable in that milieu. Many times I wanted to give up, but the importance of the financial support at that time was too big to do it. In many instances, I noticed disgust of Bosnian men and women when I would appear accompanied by the foreign soldiers with whom I worked. I felt ashamed. I talked about it with my female colleagues. We would sum up this issue by explanation that those who are looking suspiciously at us must be jealous since we earned good money in time when there was no money in the country. Still, it did help me a lot to feel better (UNDP, female, 39).

As this account show, the uneasiness the Bosnian women working at the international sector were experiencing was caused by the stigma that was raised about them by the local population. The social stigmatization of the Bosnian women working with UNPROFOR was an outcome of breaking the feminine image of a protection-needed woman now dressed in foreign army uniform and placed in the world foreign to the local men. This imperiled the control of men over women in the local context and created a feeling of dispossessed men. In addition, the reports on the sporadic non-professional and improper conduct of UNPROFOR soldiers during the mission in the country reinforced the doubts about the rightness of women's engagement with the international mission.

Throughout their witnessing, the female interviewees repeatedly claimed that working in the international organizations during the war included consequences they were not prepared for. Many accounts revealed the branding of the Bosnian women interpreters as whores, betrayers and spies.

A few of us [Bosnian girls interpreters] and a few UNPROFOR soldiers were sitting in an improvised garden of a destroyed hotel, having a coffee. We used to stop for a coffee in rare occasions when we happen to be in an urban place.....You know, we spent a lot of time together and got to know each other. Besides, it was not ordinary time that we shared in those years. It was a difficult time for both sides and that experience made a tie between us. Suddenly, a drunk local soldier approached us shouting and calling us [interpreters] names since we were sitting with the "collaborators of our enemy", while his brothers are being killed in the battlefield. Then, he took out the gun and started shooting in the area (UNPROFOR, female, 42).

It is of little surprise that the stigmatization and branding was the main issue the women complain about regarding the overall work experience. It was coming out during the interviews before the other work-related disadvantages, like dangerous work, stressful tasks and minimal time off, long field work and separation from family.

When I asked the women about the way their families, that have certainly participated in sustaining the patriarchal social order, look at their engagement that was morally questioned in the public, some answers showed disillusion. Here is one of them:

When I started working for UNPRPFOR, I felt disoriented for the first time in my life. My family teaching was in contradiction with such a role of mine in the public, among soldiers. But, at the same time, my family was happy that I had had the chance to get that job. Thinking about that contradiction, I felt almost betrayed by them [the family] (UNPROFOR, female, 42).

This witnessing resonates the split in which Bosnian women found themselves. To use Seifert's (2008) context, they were individualized to become competent actors in the labor market while social conditions run against this trend. Even in the cases when the family, as the central authority for the women's orientation in the society, approves their individualization, their stepping out the traditional terrain was not approved at a more general level of social scale.

While Bosnian men confirmed their manhood or 'the patriarchal Balkans machismo' (Schaeuble, 2008) in the battlefields, at the same time they felt they were losing their manhood when it came to their role of sustaining families (Mostov, 1995) and thus controlling them. Once the war was over, men had to restore their dominance in the family, which had to be confirmed publicly. This suggests that world of work-as-a public sphere- was the field for Bosnian men to regain their manhood. However, their transition from the battlefield to the work place was a difficult experience. The masculine public sphere that they left to go for the battlefields has changed: in the meantime the dominant masculinity has been set by the Western men, while previously dominant patriarchal masculinity of Bosnian men has been confronted with a challenge in the form of the growing number of the Bosnian women economically and socially empowered through their recruitment in the international organizations. The external 'Other' is not any more *external* to Bosnian men as it used to be in the war time. Now, the external 'Other' has become a part of the Bosnian man's everyday life and somebody in whom Bosnian men mirror themselves.

International labor market after the war

The conditions and form of the labor market created by the international organizations in Bosnia changed after the war. The war vehicles and armed soldiers in various national uniforms disappeared from the streets. The international organizations have now settled down the offices in the business centers from which they claim to steer the socio-economic development of

the country. In this environment a new wave of the gender reconfiguration occurred at work place through the interaction between the international organizations, as a Western hegemonic model of organization, and national institutions with the male domination of decision making-positions.

The state building in Bosnia is strongly impacted by the international community. The international institutions partner with national institutions on different issues of socio-economic and political development in the country. However, the partnership is not based on equal footing. In the face of the resistance of the local forces towards externally tailored socio-economic reforms, the international community often uses pressure to realize its agenda, which is facilitated by financial dependence of the country on external aid. Within this power relation context, Bosnian men, occupying the forefront of the national companies and institutions, are faced with highly positioned local women representing the international organizations and their missions. The encounter between the two at the shared work terrain is marked by the tension between de-authorized local men and the local women empowerment by the Western men. The ways in which this tension is articulated is analyzed in the following chapter.

Resisting the female professionals

As noted above, the gender-polarized space of the work place in Bosnia has been disturbed by opening up of the international labor market. The latter has brought Bosnian women to high professional positions that include their cooperation with the high-ranking men from the national institutions. In this cooperation, the majority of female interviewees claim to be treated unprofessionally and not be accepted as equal partners. Many of the accounts indicate that the men try to assert their primacy at work, confirming Lorber's (1991) claim that the relationship at work place and the control over work process are generally affected by the symbols of gender. In a non-formal conversation with a group of women, I asked about the ways in which men were trying to minimize their professionalism at work place. These women mostly noticed that men were ignoring their opinions or were making jokes in relation to them, putting them in embarrassing situations. This attitude is recognized by Cockburn (1991) claiming that, in order to generate a masculine culture in and around their work where women should feel to be 'out of place', men's discourse very often belittles women and minimizes their professional impact. Almost without exception, the female intervi-

ewees said that they were constantly forced, while introducing themselves at the meeting, to declare their marital status:

At the meetings, when I do not want to give an answer as to my marital status, the Bosnian colleagues, in the form of a joke, persistently stop my argument forcing me to answer whether I am Ms. or Mrs. I feel like they want to convey the message that my professionalism is measured by the marital status, i.e. rules that are rooted in the local context, regardless of my managerial position and benefits I gain in the international sector (UNHCR, female, 33).

Having in mind the general tendency of the generation of masculine culture at work place, majority of the accounts by the women from the international organizations could stand also for the women working in the national companies/institutions. However, the professional women from international organizations are subjected to double discrimination: gender-based discrimination on one hand, and the discrimination resulting from the fact that they work in the field of the *Western men* who dictate the hegemonic masculinity in the world of work. The Western hegemonic model obstructs the construction of gender division in the work place linked to allowed behaviors and location in physical space (Lorber, 1992), while the patriarchal forces in the Bosnian public sphere insist on confirming it. The confrontation of these two models has brought to the surface the issue of the competing masculinities discussed in the following chapter.

The female professionals between de-authorized local men and hegemonic Western men

The first few years of the post-war reconstruction of Bosnia were characterized by an 'invasion' of international organizations with various agendas related to an overall social transition. The new concepts of society management were being offered from everywhere. The young Bosnian state was a weak partner in negotiation of the arrangements for the implementation of reconstruction programs. Throughout these programs, often qualified as a part of aid industry, the state officials were faced with the challenges of the Western civilization, like good governance, human right, gender equality, and thus they were dependant on the guidance by and collaboration with the international actors. This situation deepened the distinction between the local/inferior context and international/superior context. Needless to

say, the resentment towards the international mission under these circumstances soon started growing.

The feeling of inferiority that local men developed in face of the Western professional staff was recognized as one of causes for discrimination of the women working for the international organizations. Here is what one of women said in this regard: "Sometimes, the colleagues from civil service discredit us from the first contact knowing that we come from an international organization. They take us for the 'wiring' of the Western 'philosophies' "(UNHCR, female, 42). In order to counteract the inferiority status vis-à-vis the Western masculine model, Bosnian men try to amplify the hegemonic position in relation to Bosnian women. Another woman said that she was aware that in many instances women were seen as the weak sex and thus recruited in order to be manipulated by the Western 'Enlighteners'. This implies that Bosnian men consider themselves as tough players in co-operation with the international institutions looking at the women involved in the same as a threat for the national interest. Thus, the power relation between the local and international context is negotiated through rapport towards women and the assessment of their professional capability.

A male gaze from inside the international field:

'The new Scheherazades' as partners for Westernization

The previous analysis depicted the binary positions between professionally de-authorized Bosnian men from the national sector and the Western ones whose superiority is confirmed by the authorization of the international protectorate of the country. The analysis indicated that the tension between the two is negotiated through treatment of the female professionals employed in the international sector. In this chapter, I aim to provide a gaze of the Bosnian men from inside the international field. I interviewed the local men employed in the international organizations with the aim to capture their view on the gender regime in the international organizations.

The interviews with the male employees in the international organizations show that they are very much aware of the power structure informed by the interplay between gender and status (local-international). This notion underpins overall aspects of their work experience. Their accounts strongly reflect the dichotomist relation between the international and local context, where the latter is, as they claim, perceived by the internationals as an Oriental model characterized by the gender regime in which women are oppressed by men. In this context, women are perceived by the international

staff as the victims of the Balkans men and therefore are offered protection in the place of work.

One of the interviewees claimed that the preconception of Bosnia as an Oriental place included the image of Bosnian women as discriminated against and consequently unskilled and uneducated. Therefore, the international actors did not count at the very beginning on women as employees for the international mission. A Bosnian male employee with the World Banks explains how this preconception has suddenly dissolved: "The foreign employers were fascinated to discover in Bosnia new Scheherazades, skilled, educated and adaptable to the new work philosophies. It resulted in their warm acceptance by the international staff (WB, male, 43)." This fascination of the external Other by discovery of the 'new Scheherazades' as capable actors at work market, he says, led to ever bigger recruitment of the women in the international sector. Until this point, his account indicated the recognition of the work-related competency of Bosnian women, which is denied to them at the national labor market. However, later in his account, the professionalism of women tended to be replaced by the matter of femininity and their natural 'representativeness' as a reason why local women are chosen to work with the international staff. The use of naturalized stereotypes of male and female attributes (Cockburn, 1991) reflects the following account:

Women are more often taken to the meetings outside than men, while men are more often assigned the tasks in the offices. The public events are reserved for women. Even non-formal relation is different. The international staff tend to get familiarized with the female employees. Their relationship might develop in friendship and their acquaintance might continue after work. On the other hand, the relation between the international staff and male employees is much more formal. Rarely it goes beyond work limit (WB, male, 33).

This understanding was the basis on which another male interviewee hinted that they felt discriminated against and marginalized in the work place in relation to the local female employees. The reason for their marginalization some male interviewees saw in the shift of prejudices: discovery of the 'new Scheherazades' and close collaboration with them meant reinforcement of the stigmatization of local men as a static and backward. Consequently, they are perceived as less flexible in the interaction with international staff and less suitable for their missions. One of male local employees commented:

They [the international staff] find us [local men] 'irreparable' (nepopravljivi) in terms of social dynamic. They believe we can not change. Therefore they rely on women. Both the international male and female staff is inclined to give a better treatment to local women. They also tend to treat them as their protégées from the Balkan men (EUPM, male, 38).

Despite the feeling of being neglected, the notion of 'irreparable' resonated as a compliment for local men. It shows their strength in dealing with the external Other.

Conclusion

The social mobility of women across the national/international line led to othering between the local men and women. The men from the national sector look at the women from the international field as a threat to their masculinity and try to amplify the male dominations in the national space by making women feel out of place (Cockburn, 1991). In doing so, they tend to raise the issue of the natural stereotype of women being weaker sex and thus chosen to be manipulated by the international actors. At the same time, the Bosnian men from international organizations tend to explain the high positions of their female local colleagues as an opportunity seized due to the discrimination of the local men in the international field.

On the other hand, the majority of Bosnian women stress the inferior status of the national work place and the low competencies of its staff in comparison to the international standards. Consequently, they look at Bosnian men as inferior to them and to the Western men. The life in between the two realities, the national and international, puts the women working in the international sector in a challenging situation. Despite the general satisfaction with their work for the international sector, they feel as if they became strangers in the native environment. The international work environment closes them in the bubble of the 'counter-world of work' that reshapes their values and life style, which might turn into a disadvantage given the limitations and temporaneity of the international field. The female interviewees are aware that they might face a backlash regarding the employment opportunities after they return to the national public sphere once the international organizations have left the country. It is imaginable that their negotiating power in the post-international phase will be drastically decreased since, I would argue, the socio-economic empowerment of

women was not the result of internal forces, but was rather the opportunity seized by the women under certain circumstances.

In line with a growing focus on the issue of intermingling of local and international gender culture, where a great importance is attributed to the state and international organizations, this case study developed in the scenario of Bosnia is an attempt to contribute to a broader discussion of how the external impulses are incorporated in the local context and subjectivity constraints at the public level. A further study could flash out how the othering among the local men and women in the public sphere, as a result of the international intervention, affects their rapport in the private one and what further gender reconfigurations are induced out of it.

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List of abbreviations

EUPM	European Union Police Mission
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IOs	International Organizations
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
UNPROFOR	The United Nations Protection Force that was the UN peacekeeping force in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Yugoslav wars
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WB	World Bank

MEĐUNARODNE ORGANIZACIJE U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI: OPONIRANJE LOKALNOM RODNOM REŽIMU I ZAPADNJAČKOJ HEGEMONIJSKOJ MUŠKOSTI

Tema istraživanje jest svijet rada i radnih odnosa kao prostor nadmetanja lokalnih i međunarodnih aktera u kojem se pregovaraju i propituju rodni identiteti. Dočim u nacionalnim institucijama i tvrtkama u Bosni i Hercegovini dominiraju muškarci na visokim položajima, što smanjuje vidljivost žena u javnom prostoru, tržište rada stvoreno djelovanjem međunarodnih organizacija u Bosni i Hercegovini pružilo je domaćim ženama priliku za društveno i ekonomsko osnaživanje. Zaposlenice koje su dobile odgovorne funkcije u međunarodnim organizacijama ne mogu očekivati isti oblik podrške i povjerenja unutar nacionalne ekonomije i državne uprave zbog tradicionalne dominacije muškaraca u javnoj sferi u bosanskom društvu. Osvajajući svoje mjesto unutar tog izdvojenog i utjecajnog tržišta rada, profesionalne žene su osvojile javni prostor na način koji je uvjetovan, a nerijetko u sporu, s tradicionalnim rodnim odnosima u Bosni i Hercegovini. One su tako žrtve dvostruke diskriminacije: rodne i kulturalne diskriminacije svojih sunarodnjaka s kojima profesionalno i svakodnevno komuniciraju te poslovne diskriminacije unutar institucionalnog radnog okružja u kojem lokalni zaposlenici imaju ograničenu mogućnost napredovanja ("upword" mobilnost) a zapadnjački muškarci diktiraju pravila hegemonijske muškosti. Istraživačica osvjetljuje jaz unutar postojećeg rodnog režima koji uzrokuju ekonomske aktivnosti žena u „međunarodnom polju“ dovodeći u pitanje granice privatnog i javnog u nacionalnom kontekstu te „normaliziranu“ inferiornost žena na radnom mjestu i platnim listama. Autorica također naznačuje dalekosežne posljedice stanja kulturnog distanciranja i intimnog otuđivanja žena i muškaraca u privatnoj sferi, uvjetovanog snažnim utjecajem međunarodnih političkih i socioekonomskih čimbenika na lokalnu zajednicu.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN POST-SOCIALISM: WOMEN'S SACRIFICE OR EMANCIPATORY POTENTIAL? RESEARCH ON WOMEN IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN BANJA LUKA

Introduction

This paper represents a part of the master thesis with the same title¹ and deals with women's entrepreneurship in a very complex social, temporal and spatial context of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Entrepreneurship in a global sense has become a very important part of social and economic development, and increasing attention in recent years has been devoted to women's entrepreneurship, since they are recognized as a significant human resource in overall economic development. With incorporation of gender equality in the institutional and legal systems, the economic role of women has gained even greater importance and become an important part of many international, regional and national normative documents, strategies and programs.

My personal interest in this topic comes from my deep awareness of the entrepreneurial spirit, which can be broadly understood as readiness for a new, different, unusual ways of solving problems, courage, risk taking and willingness to recognize and exploit opportunities. I believe that entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial spirit among women (regardless of the type

¹ The complete master thesis is available at the Center for Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies of the University in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

of business they are working in) is an important emancipatory potential for them as well as for their descendants and future generations.

Once when the “necessity becomes a virtue” (Blagojević, 2006), the change is irreversible. It is precisely this hypothesis that I want to prove with my research, while challenging it in the juxtaposition of the ideology of women’s sacrifice that has been for centuries imposed as a part of the “women’s fate”, in a fatalistic manner, in the Balkan region.

In light of social and economic reform processes and transition, which are quite painful for Bosnia and Herzegovina, due to among other things a dramatic increase in unemployment, disproportionate labor supply relative to demand and existence of various forms of discrimination (gender, age, physical appearance, or beauty, education, class, etc), I believe that the admission of women in private business in this volatile environment takes a great courage, but often also represents pure necessity.

In the neoliberal market economy conditions, self-employment and start of own business is one of the important ways of gaining profit. Additionally, self employment also creates a new development opportunities at the individual level, builds self-confidence and enables individuals to realize their potential, changing the traditional patterns of gender roles and power relations in favor of women (i.e., development is not only an economic category, but also social and individual). However, I would note that women’s entrepreneurship should not be seen only through pink glasses, but it is important to highlight the other side: exploitation, debt and fear for survival, and “systemic inhibition” (Blagojević, 2002a:483-484), which interfere women in their path to success.

My research approach is multidisciplinary and draws on the principles of economic sociology, arguing that any economic activity must be viewed as social one and that the separation of economic interests from social relations is completely illogical. The objectives of this study are not only descriptive and cognitive, but also activist in terms of impact on future policy-making aimed at developing and supporting women’s entrepreneurship. The first part deals with the transition and survival in our economy and specifically with the changes in everyday life (which mediates between the global world and individual actors) with special emphasis on changes in gender roles of women and the creation of new winners’ and losers’ groups. Special winners’ group in this context is women who enter the world of entrepreneurship.

The second part of the paper focuses on women in entrepreneurship, from global to local context and focuses on research findings on the qualita-

tive analysis of interviews with women entrepreneurs that I conducted in Banja Luka in the period January-March 2008. The second part is indeed, the qualitative analysis of individual women entrepreneurs' experiences. Crossing the road from global to individual, trying to understand the causality of social phenomena in relation to women's entrepreneurship, I have arrived to the point where I presented possible a new quality: a typology of women entrepreneurs with specific patterns of activity and behaviour. The paper concludes summarizing arguments and research findings and offers new directions for future research on this topic.

Transition and changes in gender roles of women

Unexpected collapse of communism and socialism has changed the world, and this dramatic change was particularly experienced in countries of the former Yugoslavia. The nineties of the last century, changes in the social system and the war took place all in a very short period of time; men have become extremely vulnerable group (Blagojević, 2002b:32), while women have become the losers in the economic, political and other social spheres.

To clarify the ambiguous position of women "before" and "after" 1989 when the collapse of the socialist system began, it is important to briefly say something about the legacy of socialism especially when it comes to women's rights. By proclaiming equality between women and men in the socialist countries in all spheres of life, the socialist systems gave women a legal subjectivity and personal autonomy that they had not had previously (Einhorn, 1993:21) and which differed from the position of women in Western countries or Third World countries. Women were granted the right to vote, were mobilized into the labour force, education was compulsory, constitution guaranteed women's equality, equality in marriage and marital relations was promoted as well as liberal reproductive rights and rights to acquire property.

Socialism radically reshaped gender relations, by re-creating different forms of privileging men, because women were given a double role and double burden of "worker" and "mother", by which their "natural" traditional roles in family and society were actually "petrified" (Einhorn, 1993:31, Šinko, 2004:31). It can be argued that "state socialism emancipated women not as equal citizens, but as worker-mothers" (Einhorn, 1993:40). However, in addition, acquired rights and the relative economic and social security still brought a big step forward for women.

Since 1989 there has been a radical change of social system – privatization and market economy have transformed all institutions, government, schools, workplaces, households, through which socialist regime was constituted. Social changes after socialism have the common name of “transition”. Essentially, simultaneous social, cultural and economic changes occurred as part of broader processes of globalization and went far beyond the borders of nation-states than it might appear at first. The main feature of the economic reality in transition was the decline of standard of living, as a result of the economic crisis. Privatization had many negative effects for women. Economic and physical burden of biological reproduction “was put on the back of women”, and privatization spurred not only gender discrimination but also discrimination based on age and physical appearance, especially in the sector of services which became increasingly important in industrial societies (Blagojević, 2002 2004a:18).

The economic situation of women is defined by education, labor market position and the direct and indirect forms of discrimination that they experience. It is particularly important to view their economic situation in a complex combination of paid and unpaid work (the share of women’s unpaid work in GDP has not been evaluated yet). Characteristics for Balkan countries are high proportion of women in the workforce and a large percentage of women who invest in their education (both legacy of socialism), which is a key strategy for acquiring social capital, and thus provides better chances for achieving gender equality (Blagojević, 2004b:71). Although the key factors of the legacy of socialism in terms of women’s emancipation were high level of education of women, state support for child care and working mothers and high participation of women in the workforce, it became clear that the education of women apparently did not help them to get better chances in the labor market, which is regularly assumed by theories of human capital in a market economy (Pollert, 2003:342). It was noted that this it was not a market that determined the position of women, but just their sex (gender), which is in contrast with their high involvement in education and the potential they have (Blagojević, 2004b:94-95). Conflict of reconciliation of the family and professional status complicated even more the position of women in the labor market, which lead number of women to “quickly reconstruct their interests in relation to new economic realities” (Rudd, 2000:534). In transition, survival became a fundamental feature of everyday life. The speed of transition made it very difficult to adapt to these changes and it created the feeling of shock and helplessness (Blagojević, 1997a:29-30). Hence, it can be concluded that the transition is “a multidimensional

process of destruction of society in all its vital areas and activities” (Milić, cited in Blagojević, 1997a:32).

Results of these changes were not equal impoverishment of women, nor formation of a new gender regime, but creation of different winners’ and losers’ groups of women and men. Losers of transition were working class, middle class families with children, especially families of single mothers, rural populations, ethnic minorities, particularly Roma.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina the range of losers is even larger due to the war, with particularly vulnerable groups of war widows² and refugees (Blagojević, 2004a:18). Among winners’ groups are the entrepreneurs, men and women, who within this reality had courage to make very important personal and professional shifts, which eventually lead to establishment of new gender relations. In this sense, the question is how the new gender relations affect economic changes and vice versa? It is also important to consider the way in which gender relations are reflected in the polarization of income and wealth distribution in the new market economy, and how gender relations in the sphere of personal and family are affected by the economic empowerment of women.

According to Catherine Hakim,

difference and diversity are now the key features of the female population, with likelihood of increasing polarization between work-centred and home-centred women in the 21st century (Hakim, cited in Bottero, 2000:783).

According to Sylvia Walby, which might be applicable for the local context of Bosnia and Herzegovina,

women are polarising between those, typically younger, educated and employed, who engage in new patterns of gender relations somewhat convergent with those of men, and those, particularly disadvantaged women, typically older and less educated, who built their life trajectories around patterns of private patriarchy. These new patterns are intertwined with diversities and inequalities, generated by social divisions including class, ethnicity and region (Walby, cited in Bottero, 2000:782).

2 Loss of husband in the war was the main reason why widows were in the role of head of the family in 78% of households (Kukanesen, 2003:9).

Reducing inequality on one side does not mean its elimination, but it may mean that it will be moved to another field, and there is a reasonable question whether the gender differences become “revitalized in the new economy on a semi-periphery in which the marketization of women will be an integral part of economic development” (Blagojević, 2004a:22).

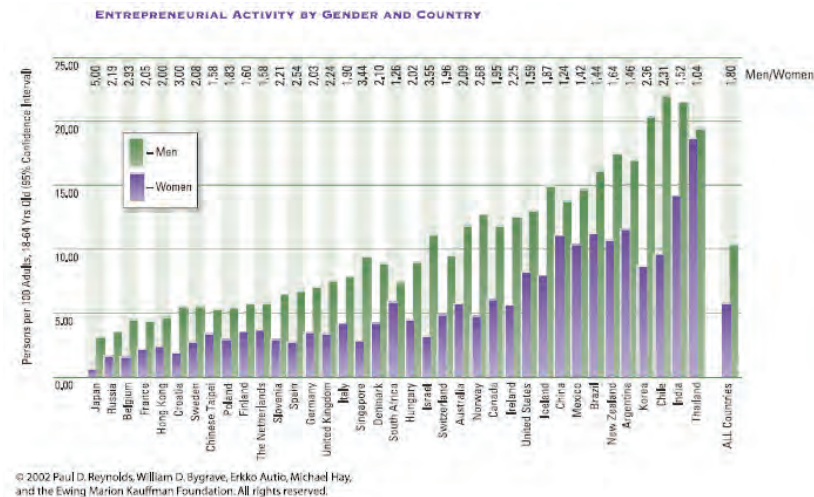
Bearing in mind all these complex processes, it can be said that any profound social change is eventually the difference between generations. In the context of Balkan countries, with rapid and profound changes in the transition, the lines of separation are even more pronounced. Generations of mothers have previously tried to reconcile family and employment, as spheres opposed to one another, to the detriment of their own resources, while the younger generations of women are faced with a situation of creating a new identity and transition from “self-sacrificing woman to self-investing woman” (Marody and Giza-Poleszczyk, cited in Blagojević, 2004a:21). It can be briefly concluded that all aspects of the transition associated with gender regimes show that this is a very complex dynamics with different and surprising outcomes. The changes largely go toward collapse of gender differences on one hand, and their strengthening on the other. Within all these changes women’s entrepreneurship is an opportunity to be in a winners’ group and to positively affect the self and the environment. For these reasons, the next section of this paper will deal with women in entrepreneurship.

Women in entrepreneurship - from global to local context

Studies on women entrepreneurs around the world are numerous and research reasons for starting a business, position of women in the labor market, role of professional training programs in advance of operations, issue of balancing professional and family life, effects of different projects of women’s empowerment in entrepreneurship, performance management, transformation of gender relations and family relations under the influence of the empowerment of women, the phenomenon of “glass ceiling”, structural and social barriers to women entrepreneurship, socio-economic profiles of women entrepreneurs and so on. Due to space limitations here, I’ll give only a brief overview of some of the researches, starting from a global perspective, through regional (the Balkan region), to the national perspective, through research in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Regarding the global view of the situation, I’ll mention the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), launched in 1999 with the aim to measure

the differences in the level of entrepreneurial activity among countries, to reveal the factors that lead to the promotion of entrepreneurship and to propose policies to stimulate national entrepreneurial activity. I will also draw on the report *Women in Entrepreneurship in 2003* by Maria Minniti and Pia Arenius which gives an excellent analysis of patterns of women's entrepreneurship, sources of financial support, entrepreneurship of high potential and supremacy of the family enterprise. Information on entrepreneurial activities by gender and country in their research shows that there is less entrepreneurial activity of women in almost all countries.



Picture 1: Entrepreneurial activity by gender and country (Minniti and Arenius, 2003:4)

Furthermore, according to their findings, women's entrepreneurship is a cross-cultural phenomenon and has two main components: 1. variables that affect entrepreneurial behavior, which are universal, but they also have gender-specific aspects; 2. aspects of entrepreneurial behavior that are specific to each country. Factors influencing women's entrepreneurship are the demographic situation and family structure, literacy and education. Men and women in entrepreneurship face different obstacles and different requirements - women have more family responsibilities. Both men and women rely on social networks to access resources, but these networks operate differently with regard to gender differences; women in poorer countries have much smaller networks and less geographic mobility than men. Regarding education, the report shows that entrepreneurial activity is highest

in countries with the highest illiteracy of women, with a note that those who run the business are not the illiterate ones, but people who have education and skills for the exploitation of opportunities for profit.

The general findings of Maria Minniti and Pia Arenius analysis can be summarized as follows:

- Despite the rapid increase of women in professional and managerial jobs, there is still a large gender gap in entrepreneurship. On average, the probability is that 50% more men than women will become entrepreneurs.

- In poorer countries, population growth and illiteracy of women are associated with high level of entrepreneurial activities among women and men. By contrast, the economic security in the form of welfare and stability of employment contributes to smaller entrepreneurial activities.

- Compared with men, women entrepreneurs are using less amounts of start-up capital and their dealings are of a smaller scale and yield slower growth.

- There is a correlation between the level of women's entrepreneurship and participation of women in different sectors and management positions. In richer countries, this correlation is positive, in poorer it is negative.

These findings support the claim that the entrepreneurship of women is a way out of poverty and the road to equality. Women around the world regardless of their different contexts show very encouraging signs of the existence of entrepreneurial spirit (Minniti and Arenius, 2003).

According to the research *Women Leaders: Case Study of Serbia* (Radović Marković, 2007), there are more and more women in business and they show certain characteristics such as confidence, independence and willingness to cope with risks, the ability to balance professional and family life (most are married). Higher levels of education, integration of personal and professional, intuition, social skills, high level of competence, willingness for communication and innovative solutions, investment in professional growth and proactivity are also additional characteristics that set them apart.

On the other side, the barriers to the advancement of women in business are very similar for the entire Balkan region and share more or less the same characteristic patriarchal attitude towards women including androcentric corporate culture. Women find it hard to reconcile professional and family life and lack experience and sometimes even a desire for self-promotion. On the other hand, most men have negative attitudes towards women in high positions, believing that it distorts the traditional Balkan society in which women should be the boss in the family, and not at work, and identifying

women in business with feminist (negative) connotations. They also feel that this violates the “natural” balance of equality and diminishes the role of men in society and family. It is indicative that the young women (18-35), in contrast to such attitudes of men, have shown a growing interest in entrepreneurship and the possibilities of achieving their professional goals.

The research of Slobodanka Markov in Serbia, namely **Vojvodina** (Markov 2005, Markov, 2006) explored motives of women to enter entrepreneurship, areas and the size of business, assumptions for entry into the business, problems and constraints faced by women in private business, satisfaction and future plans. According to the findings of her study, women who have entered the private business are well-educated; professional composition of the women entrepreneurs is very diverse; age for entering the business has changed over time towards older age (due to the transition and privatization, in which many women have lost their previous jobs); women entrepreneurs come from all social strata. Motives to enter private business are mainly subsistence, then proving their own abilities, striving for achievement and higher degree of freedom in making decisions. The main characteristics of women entrepreneurs were perseverance, persistence, willingness to learn. Obstacles are the following: 1. greater responsibilities in the family and work on three fronts: household, children and families, work; 2. lack of start-up capital; 3. negative attitude of the social environment towards women in business. It was noted that one of the major problems is lack of confidence and courage to expand business and more risky operations.

Other researches analyze the status of women in entrepreneurship. One such study, that of Ivanka Avelini Holjevac and Petar Galičić (2005), analyzed the status of women in entrepreneurship in **Croatia** (2005) and concluded that the structure of entrepreneurship is dominated by men, although women in the past decade made significant numerical progress in implemented entrepreneurial ventures. Women use different styles of leadership, they are concerned about the company and use the soft skills to deal with people. Women understand the role of manager as the person who coordinates the relationships in a team and participates in the joint work process, where all share responsibility for the success and achievements of the team. It is rather more difficult for women to start an enterprise than their male colleagues due to lack of information but also due to social pressure within the framework of the traditional division of gender roles. These barriers in turn translate in lack of self-esteem and family support for women. In addition to social barriers there are financial and legal ones such as lack of property to secure loans, legislative framework which

does not encourage but sometimes even inhibits development of women in entrepreneurship. It is evident that the entrepreneurship of women has great potential and the authors proposed measures to encourage women to engage in entrepreneurship: 1. financial support and further education; 2. establishment of entrepreneurial centers for women; 3. incentives for entrepreneurial projects of women; 4. tax deduction for home assistance for all employed women and women entrepreneurs; 5. improving the infrastructure for child care; 6. change the education system in accordance with the needs of the development of modern entrepreneurship (Avelini Holjevac and Galičić 2005:34-44).

The research of Biljana Acevska in Macedonia (Acevska, 2002) was the first survey on women entrepreneurs conducted in **Macedonia** and explored the similarities and differences among the companies run by women, barriers to business growth and support that women entrepreneur's need, bearing in mind various dimensions: activity, size, level of education, start-up capital, finance, labor and many other dimensions. The findings showed the similar situation as in other countries in the region: many women have experienced the uncertainty and were exposed to low-paid jobs in the informal economy; there is a gender gap in terms of horizontal and vertical job segregation and unequal opportunities for career advancement, with patriarchal social standards to the detriment of women. Examined women were from different branches. There was identified number of barriers, financial, tax, institutional, market and social, which impede the growth of enterprises run by women. Men entrepreneurs also face those barriers, but they are more pronounced among women. What women identified, which for men was not the case, are the barriers of patriarchal norms – women's ideas and initiatives in the business are not taken seriously, the environment is often even offensive, which makes women feel a lack of support and encouragement. It has been shown that women who succeed in business, despite the barriers, have the correct projection of business success and gain the respect of family and environment. Beside various barriers and needs, this study also identified success factors, among which are: hard work, skills and knowledge, good business relationships, the ability to find and exploit opportunities, family support, support of spouse / partners, consultants and support instructor for small and medium enterprises, the support of influential business people, close ties with political parties and politicians, membership in women's associations. Also it proposed specific measures to improve women's entrepreneurship: improved access to information through networking, amendments to the law on public procurement and

the strengthening of entrepreneurial capacity through professional training.

Pilot study on socio-economic status of women in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (Bakšić-Muftić, 2003) was conducted in 2002 with the aim to determine how women in BiH see their socio-economic status, on a sample of 428 women³ from Banja Luka, Mostar and Sarajevo.

According to this survey, as the cause of unsatisfactory position of women in BiH the respondents highlighted poor economic situation, unemployment and lack of money, and then the effects of war (Bakšić-Muftić, 2003:73-74). 63.32% of the respondents felt that women's opportunities for employment are worse than for men, and 27.34% responded that chances are equal. 54.21% felt that promotion opportunities are worse for women and 32.48% that they are equal. This perception is more related to how they saw their own position, because in terms of psychological spheres the employment and career are the most indicative criteria of (in)equality. The survey also showed that there are three intertwined trends at the labor market: first, that discrimination by gender in employment and work is never open and public, but indirect, through the entire system of attitudes, relationships and behaviors that hide its true nature; secondly, women often do not recognize the issue of discrimination, especially when it comes to subtler forms; third, there is a feminization of lower-valued and poorly paid jobs (Bakšić-Muftić, 2003:18-19).

All this points to the difficult economic situation, in which an alternative for a better future can be starting your own business. Regarding the willingness of women to start their own businesses, 59.58% of the respondents said they would launch their own businesses, while 39.72% gave negative answer.⁴ As for women who have spoken negatively, it has shown that the lack of education, knowledge and information affects their confidence in their ability, as a subjective issue, but also as an objective problem. 34.12% of the respondents said they had no confidence in their skills and knowledge, and 8.82% that they did not have the necessary information to run an independent business. 15.30% of the respondents indicated the reasons that

3 "When asked why the status of women in Bosnian society was unsatisfactory, one of the interviewees replied: because they are women. This lapidary answer discusses the cultural and traditional context of Bosnian society, understanding the role of men and women and according to them the status of men and women in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (Bakšić-Muftić, 2003:7).

4 Willingness to start their own business was the highest among respondents with high school education, and lower among women with a university degree (which could be explained by the fact that women with university education have a greater chance for better paid jobs in the labor market).

have roots in the patriarchal tradition: 6.8% of respondents felt that business is not women's work, and 8.24% indicated the reason of non-acceptance by male family members. What this pilot study showed is the increased number of women who are ready to start their own business: in the same survey in 1998, when only 18% of women said they were ready for such a step, 59.58% of women who were ready for it in 2002 represent a significant step forward (Bakšić-Muftić, 2003:15).

As it can be seen from the above review of available relevant studies, entrepreneurship of women plays a more prominent place in research, activism, and system projects examining various aspects of female entrepreneurship, recognizing the great strength of women's human resources, which have generally been marginalized, undervalued and insufficiently researched. It can be expected the growing interest in women's entrepreneurship that it will be accompanied by the relevant international and national arrangements and support.

The brief overview of recent researches on women entrepreneurs had a purpose to give some information on the status and issues related to women entrepreneurs and their potential. They served as a basis for implementing my own pilot case study in Banja Luka, as I wanted to explore similarities and differences compared to other conducted researches and possibly to give some new insights in the scope of women's entrepreneurship.

Research on women entrepreneurs in Banja Luka

This section contains a survey on women entrepreneurs that I have conducted in Banja Luka in the period January-March 2008. It contains information on the subject, objectives and methods of research, the sample, the main research thesis, followed by the results of research, with analysis of reasons and interests to enter into entrepreneurship, systems of support and solidarity, obstacles and environments faced by women entrepreneurs, and harmonization of professional, private and family life. As a final result the research presented the typology of women entrepreneurs with patterns of activity and behavior, which also contains proposals for possible general measures to support their work.

Subject, objectives and methodology

Research subject were women entrepreneurs in urban Banja Luka area. The research had several objectives, as follows:

◦ Descriptive objective: gaining insight into the basic characteristics of women entrepreneurship in Banja Luka.

◦ The cognitive objective: gaining new knowledge about the work of women entrepreneurs, opportunities for work and social and personal obstacles they face.

◦ The activist objective: this research would provide the basis for strengthening and supporting women's entrepreneurship through concrete actions of the state, and also their networking among themselves and with other associations in the region and beyond.

Research methods were combined: the analysis of documents, collection of quantitative data, interviews with entrepreneurs and qualitative analysis. In the period 26.01-17.03.2008 I conducted individual interviews with 20 women entrepreneurs (in one case, I interviewed two women who run a joint business together), living and working in Banja Luka. I found them using a snowball method - the first few women entrepreneurs were selected based on my personal knowledge of them, and they gave me their recommendations for the other women, which facilitated easier access to them and enabled me to undertake interviews required for this research. Due to the size, this pattern cannot be considered representative, but certainly findings obtained through interviews of these 20 entrepreneurs have sufficient importance in terms of getting answers to the research questions and hypotheses, as well as setting some guidelines for further research on women's entrepreneurship.

For the selection of women entrepreneurs, the main criterion was that the woman owns or partly owns the business, but not only as their property on paper, but to really run the business. This was important because in Bosnia and Herzegovina men often found businesses on behalf of their spouses or other close relatives, to avoid conflicts of interest and the like, but it is insufficiently explored question of how much these women have or don't have an impact on business or on the decision-making processes. Therefore, the official records of ownership of private firms are not reliable enough in terms of selection of sample for research⁵.

5 Certainly this phenomenon is worthy of the attention - it would be interesting to investigate a series of questions: how and why men founded the company on behalf of women, whether these women really are not interested to work in private business or in some way have "no" access to "their" firms; whether and how they can influence decision-making, at least in the sense not to sign the papers for the operations about which they do not know enough, or that may be unlawful; whether and to what extent they bear the consequences of wrong or illegal business of men who de facto run these companies; if they eventually begin to develop an interest and enter into a business that is registered to them; whether it happens and under what

It was advisable to include as many different branches, because it was important to find out the authentic experiences of different women on the same issues, so the sample contains a variety of services and production branches, from simple to highly sophisticated ones (hairstylist, beauty salon, the agency for advertising, translation agency, accounting office, florist, IT company, the company for telecommunications and security equipment, glass processing, television, copier, center for the body correction and shaping, dental clinic, fertility clinic, architect bureau, tailor shop, trade and construction, wholesale⁶). For the purpose of this research the firm size was not relevant neither in terms of annual revenue or number of employees.

Ten women entrepreneurs (50% sample) were involved in a business that matched education and occupation acquired during school. The second half dealt with the different types of business - however, with regard to our educational system where there is no adequate vocational orientation and educational programs are not accompanied by changes in social needs, and formal qualifications are often not responsive to market needs, it is noted that it has no worse effect on their success in business, but can have very positive effects: these women entrepreneurs are committed to the jobs they like and which they have talent for.

Regarding the structure of the birth place, the vast majority of the interviewed women entrepreneurs was born in Banja Luka where they live today. In some cases they were born in Banja Luka, but during the period of childhood they grew up in border municipalities as well as smaller communities with the characteristics of the village and the traditional way of life. Some women had studied in other cities (Belgrade, Sarajevo, Novi Sad), after which they returned to Banja Luka. One woman entrepreneur has the experience of emigration (living in Germany for several years) that was not caused by war events, and another woman entrepreneur came with her family to Banja Luka as an internally displaced person (as a result of the war) and she experienced start from the ground zero in the new environment.

Also, it is worth mentioning that most of women started their own business in the marriage. Only 2 of 15 married women had their business before marriage. One divorced women launched the business after the divorce, and in the case of other divorced women, according to her assessment, her financial and personal empowerment led to divorce. These facts are men-

circumstances that they later undertake the business from men, etc.

6 The woman entrepreneur who owns the said wholesale asked me not to state what type of goods were being traded, to protect her identity.

tioned because they influence the priorities in terms of interest (reasons) to run their own business, which certainly becomes more complex when there are family responsibilities and have different and multiple consequences.

The main thesis of the research

As stated in the title and the introduction of this paper, the main thesis of this research is that entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial spirit of women's provides a long-term emancipatory potential, but also keeping in mind the possibility that the optional route can also be the ideology of women's sacrifice and today still present „self-sacrificing micro-matriarchy“ (Blagojević, 1997b).

The research findings

1. The reasons (interests) to start their own business

My research began with general open questions about women, about their companies and what encouraged them to become self-sufficient in the business. I relied entirely on their open answers. As this research shows, the most common causes or interests to start their own businesses were personal and family, usually combined (if at the time of starting a new business a woman entrepreneur had her own family): the desire for independence in the work and challenges that private business carries, dissatisfaction with previous work, inhibition, or the inability of professional advancement on the earlier job, a revolt against their own exhaustion in the work for others that was undervalued, against the pressure and stress, or against political turbulence, and the survival of families in crisis. Interestingly, the primary interest for majority of respondents was not money.

I worked in two companies; it was not enough for a living. It was not easy, it was difficult. There was no salary. (...) I wanted to prove myself, to be independent, not to depend on anyone. I thought that I had knowledge, experience, will and goal. I wanted to succeed and I knew that I would make it. (Gordana /52/, the owner of the wholesale)

Some women became entrepreneurs by accident, coincidence, and not having previously thought about running their own business. However, they had the courage to seize the opportunity and crucial element for the decision was a support of their partner, father, mother or extended family.

In terms of interest (reasons) for independence in the business one of the essential matters is also the attitude towards work and satisfaction as a result of doing business. In this part, the feelings of women respondents can be briefly described as ambivalent, in terms of love-care: there are love for business and pleasure to work with it, and feeling of concerns, great effort and expenditure of energy.⁷ What is imposed here is a great similarity with the the love-care ambivalence in parenthood. This might indicate an indirect conclusion that women entrepreneurs have some kind of parental attitude towards their business (and in some cases towards their employees). For a number of respondents who emphasized the love of work and a pleasure doing business, these elements were key to their business success and personal fulfillment and satisfaction.

The essence of my life is devotion to my work. (...) My goal is not wealth. I want to do something I love, with pleasure; I want my associates to be happy, to feel their professional development as a part of my invested effort. (Mirjana /60/, owner of IT company)

Awareness of efforts and personal sacrifices, or caring for their own business, was the attitude expressed by a number of respondents that the life of entrepreneur is difficult; however, there was no intention or action taken to give it up.

What was common to all respondents was awareness of their own power to start the business, whether they had knowledge and experience, whether they had capital, but there was this crucial awareness of an “enterprising self”. This is a very important matter because it is obvious that women develop a desire to mobilize creative impulses in entrepreneurship. Self-determination and reflection are the primary processes to create self and life-path, through the choice of different options on a global scale. In this sense, their own human capital (working capacity, biographies and success) is being constructed into the “enterprising self”, which is reflected in personal change and growth and developed confidence in their abilities and choices (Fenwick 2002:705-8). Thus, although interest in the survival of the family is a very strong driving force for independence in the business, respondents first pointed out the entrepreneurial spirit. The crucial thing was the individual awareness about power, desire and knowledge to go into pri-

7 It would be interesting to examine the relationship of men entrepreneurs in this sense: if they have a parental relationship towards their companies, or they perceive them as successful projects or some other way.

vate business. Of course, these interests do not exclude each other, on the contrary, the combination of family and individual interests proved to be of key importance and it creates a very strong motivation to start, expand and strengthen the business.

Parental attitude towards private business was shown through the ambivalent feelings: love-care. Along with the expansion of private business, it also strengthens the very women entrepreneurs who develop their “enterprising self”. When it is developed and becomes an integral part of the personality, it certainly affects the other relationships with people, family, attitude towards themselves.

2. Systems of support and solidarity

In this part of the interview it was important to know whether patients have the support of family, the wider environment, as well as other entrepreneurs (women and men), considering that kind of support necessary to all, especially within the “survival economy”, when a system of family and social networks becomes crucial for survival (Blagojević, 1997a). It is also possible here to gain insight into the social capital that these women had (or not), implying by this term in the broad sense family and social relationships, education and background, which in each case is shown as extremely important for the starting position of each individual - the higher the social capital, the better positions and the greater opportunities are on the table.

Women entrepreneurs who participated in this research in most cases had different systems of support and solidarity from the people close to the family, friends and the others. Most often it was a supporting spouse / partner, as well as parental families (most prominently as moral support), which was especially important if the entrepreneurship in the family was present in previous generations (which also confirms the thesis about the emancipatory potential of entrepreneurship). In addition, in some cases, there is peer support, which is focused on practical help at work. Through most of the answers respondents highlighted the view that it is very hard for women to survive if the support of the environment is absent.

My mother was a great manager, my father was an important figure in sport. (...) If there is no wider support, it is not good. (...) The key in this story is the family support – it’s a prerequisite for women in business. Therefore women in business are rare, not because we are not smart. (...) If a woman is progressing and has a success, she must

have had the family support. (Arijana /45/, the owner of the company for telecommunications and security equipment)

It was interesting to notice that in some cases independence was expressed through the attitude of women entrepreneurs that they did not need any support, which should be taken with a grain of salt, but also the possibility that women entrepreneurs, in situations where there is no support from the environment, build their own individual strategies of “self-reliance“, which are the most appropriate for themselves and their environment.

I do not have any support, but I never asked for it. I got used not to talk about anything. I am a bit mysterious, I like to do things and to tell them later, it annoys me to explain. (Gordana /42/, the owner of the company for trade and construction)

From this we can conclude that the support of the family, either primary (parental) or their own, has the very great importance for the success of women in business and their personal sense of satisfaction and fulfillment. Women who came from the entrepreneurial families emphasized that fact as something that is in their “genes“, although it can be more accurately defined as a significant social capital that these women have had in their families. When support is absent, women entrepreneurs build their own individual strategies to help them cope with the everyday life and use different negotiating positions for their goals.

3. Obstacles and business environment

Regarding obstacles of various kinds, it was very important to find out how respondents perceived those barriers and whether they are aware of gender specific difficulties for women in business.

Identified barriers were different: financial, fiscal, structural, legal, social, etc. The most often those are: resistance to the environment against successful women, social attitudes that women are obliged to sacrifice for the family, lack of initial capital, corruption, fragile rule of law, “glass ceiling“. The research showed that a number of respondents identified gender-specific barriers to women in business, and those were respondents who at first glance do not suffer from discrimination, but however, at the same time they were also aware that such position could still be used for their own benefit, by choosing the right tactics and investing enough purposeful energy.

A woman must invest double energy and strength. She must have a trump card more. The role of women is heavy, but also good because it makes you grow more rapidly. (Brankica /40/, owner of advertising agencies)

A number of respondents see obstacles in business as something that is not related to their gender, or identify them as a purely business problems, the problem of envy and jealousy of other people who are not entrepreneurs and, in their opinion, do not see the more difficult side of entrepreneurship. Some respondents said they felt no obstacles in the business, either due to husband's "protection", or due to the specific job, which in some cases allowed more space for maneuvering. Here is necessary to have a certain detachment, for in Bosnia and Herzegovina there is no are still no business which operate without obstacles.

Also there was an interesting statement of Anđelka /46/, tailor shop owner, who responded to this question: "No, my children are already grown up." This lapidary answer summed up the whole story of women in business as the issue of reconciling work and family, social attitude that woman's primary responsibility is family, the issue of (self) imposed guilt felt by a large number of employed women in relation to their own children and family. By having children already grown up, a big load of social norms, which is terribly burdensome, distracting and exhausting for women⁸, was taken off of the back of woman entrepreneur.

Women entrepreneurs identified specific structural, social, economic and political obstacles, and obstacles for women in business and they were able to fairly accurately describe their business environment and identify the aggravating factors that affect business. These factors, as expected, are related with the general instability of the transitional society and politics and poor economic circumstances. Barriers for women in business were identified as undervaluing and underestimation, belittling their technical and human capabilities, considering women as sex objects, and implicitly the problem of harmonizing work, family and private life.

8 In addition, it is interesting to note that two out of three single women entrepreneurs in the sample felt that their independence in the business was hindering factor for the establishment of intimate or marital relationships with men. It is summarized briefly by Branka /42/, beauty salon owner: "Guys are afraid of me. There is abhorrence." And the short answer, this "abhorrence", also summarizes the relative cultural (still!) unacceptability of women's independence in business and life.

4. Role conflicts: how to balance different roles and preserve their own energy?

Given the difficult issue of reconciliation of work, family and private life, and considering that women entrepreneurs must be viewed in the light of their different roles, or as complete personalities, it was very important to find out about their marital or family status, whether they have children, how many people live in their households and how they describe their family situation.

When it comes to harmonizing various roles, it turned out that support of their husbands / partners and family was of great importance, although some respondents pointed out the lack of time for spending with the family. This finding is in the frame of the finding that parenting and domestic work as women's major consumers of resources, in competition with the work, create a conflict in women, and this conflict is even greater as more educated a woman is and the more importance she gives to the needs arising from employment (independence, economic security for themselves and their children, sociability, etc.) (Blagojević, *Roditeljstvo* 1997:162). Respondents by large felt that they should invest in children, particularly in their education and creating new social capital, which again proves the thesis about the long-term emancipatory potential of entrepreneurship. In this sense, I consider important a question of the development of gender awareness, which is a potential for change and space for negotiating women's position in partnership and intergenerational relations.

I have a husband and two sons. One son is already in the business, we will give him a good education. (second son) is the second year of high school. My husband was with me day and night, and I along with him. We support each other. It's a synchronized version of the family. I draw strength from my family harmony. (Arijana /45/, the owner of the company for telecommunications and security equipment)

Of course, the picture is not always idyllic and stride in terms of being single or divorced has its own specificity. Three women entrepreneurs from the sample were unmarried and single status carries certain privileges for them. One of the respondents had a specific situation, which she herself causally linked with her own empowerment:

With me it is an extremely unusual situation. I live with ex-husband. When the marriage was plunged into crisis because of the inability to

harmonize work and family, there was a gap between husband and me. I thought that staying in the same context was not good. We had a two-year break, then we became close again. In the beginning it was difficult. Do not be a slave to form. (Nataša /38/, the owner of television)

The last question in this group was related to how women entrepreneurs harmonize work, family and other personal matters, such as friendship, interests, hobbies, recreation and so on. Here there is ambivalence: satisfaction - lack of time.

Everything is without any order. I sleep very little, four to five hours. I went to work the fifteenth day after having birth. My mom helps a lot, I go to recreation when I get some time and it's difficult to align everything even though I can be flexible to organize. (Gordana /37/, the owner of the agency for translation)

Satisfaction is almost nonexistent at some respondents and their everyday life is filled mostly with work and care for others, but there is awareness of the need for private time and relaxation.

It can be concluded that the harmonization of the various roles is continuous "walk on a thin wire" for most women entrepreneurs, especially those who are married, and it is much easier for those who do not have their own family. Partnership relations and family situation were mostly described as good, and most respondents, because of the relatively egalitarian distribution of income, have the ability to influence family relations and family decisions in their favor. One can see that the rules do not exist: one can not simply argue that family relationships take place according to certain paradigms, or according to who earns more, it just shows that everyday life always "escapes" theories.

Women entrepreneurs balance family, work and personal interests in their own way, some of them emphasized the importance of paid help at home as something that every woman should have, if she can afford it, although there are some opposite opinions, but with the attitude that it is their own choice. Either way, structural and institutional support to families in the upbringing and education of children and organized home help certainly are ways to make life easier.

5. Typology and behaviour patterns

Based on the research, my goal was to establish a specific typology of women entrepreneurs, primarily for practical reasons related to the possibility of institutional and non institutional measures to support their work and development. Although the research was conducted on a relatively small sample, I believe that the following typology provides ample space for future verification and testing its accuracy with other research methods:

◦ Women entrepreneurs at the margin – Women entrepreneurs who start from this position do not have enough social nor real capital. They often come from relatively poor families. They mainly enter entrepreneurship out of necessity, but due to lack of social and real capital they progress difficultly (although not impossible if they start investing on time in capital formation). They are engaged in services or manufacturing for others, but their businesses have no power due to lack (Harford, 2006:19) nor they are sufficiently scarce, which makes negotiating position of the woman entrepreneur in the struggle for survival in the market pretty difficult. They view their work as difficult and insufficiently rewarding, and most of them are not aware or are not sufficiently aware of the structural barriers to women in business⁹, and have still not built an “enterprising self”. Key conditions for the release of these women entrepreneurs from the stage at the margin are first of all investment in their education, then access to entrepreneurship and other social networks, combined with favorable loans and other types of professional and financial support. If they receive such support, they cross to the middle level.

◦ Women entrepreneurs at the middle level – These women entrepreneurs have pretty good social relationships and positions that provide them with real capital and a good starting position. In some cases, at the middle level there are also those women entrepreneurs from the margin, who managed to provide the previously mentioned support. They typically perform tasks related to services (e.g. accounting - this profession has proved to be very safe asset, either in normal or in times of crisis; or services such as luxury, or beauty care services, which have permanent clientèle /business relationship that is based on establishing a permanent bond of trust with clients/, but which are sensitive to the decline of standards). It should be noted that they can move to a higher level in these types of business, if they introduce something new and scarce. Their interests are mainly combined

⁹ These women entrepreneurs can feel the problem of undervaluing women, but they can not adequately name it nor identify their exhaustion as a “women’s problem”, it is reasonable to believe that some of them feel that this is part of the “women’s destiny”.

personal and family, primarily personal desire to achieve independence in work and secondary family interests in terms of economic survival. Support of parental family is often very important, and of their husbands as well, but not necessarily, because they have businesses that are usually not financially very large or they fall into the “women’s domain”, so they do not threaten anybody. These women entrepreneurs recognize less the structural barriers to women (although there are individual differences), but they are generally the most satisfied with their lives and have a pretty good position in the family and elsewhere. If they demonstrate a willingness to “stride” from the average of their activities and if they obtain financial and technical support from institutions, without much risk they can go to the top level, with the proviso that it is possible that many of them will not be interested in it because the top level, no matter how professionally rewarding, requires much more personal sacrifices.

◦ Top women entrepreneurs (women entrepreneurs at the highest level) – These women entrepreneurs have large social and real capital, either from the primary family (parents), or from their own, through unreserved support from family (especially their husbands) or other types of personal social relationships. Their interest in starting a business is primarily personal (desire for achievement, challenge, self-confidence, in some cases the need for personal integrity) and the secondary interest is economic survival of families. These women deal with big money, their business operations are profitable or highly sophisticated. They are well educated; invest a lot in their children and have high expectations of themselves and others. One possible factor X, which makes these women’s top entrepreneurs, is discipline. The personal and financial discipline, with the ambition and desire for progress and very clearly set objectives, makes an essential factor that leads these women to the top. It is interesting also the observation that these women entrepreneurs are the most aware of the structural barriers to women in business¹⁰, while at the same time they are the most aware of social and structural barriers to successful business in general, from the economic situation, followed by political instability. They are ready to help other women in business, to show initiative and willingness to organize the network of women entrepreneurs and invest in socially responsible activities. In this

10 It seems sometimes that level of awareness of gender inequality is inversely proportional to the degree of individual discrimination – gender equality is often the most highly advocated by highly aware women who really have the least need for it, due to good advantages and bargaining power in potentially discriminatory situations. In contrast, women who really suffer the greater consequences of discrimination often interiorize misogyny or refuse to acknowledge the existence of gender discrimination.

sense, the state should count on these women entrepreneurs and help them through various incentives and facilities for their business.

Within this typology different transitional phases are possible. All the above typical variations and transitional phases may be subject to further research and deeper analysis, and testing and verification.

Finally, I consider it important to note that the “enterprising self” with social and real capital (education, money, social networks), along with discipline and clear objectives as a factor X, is a winning combination for success. Entrepreneurs who once embark in an independent business and build “enterprising self”, which is further developed and capitalized, can no longer come back - for themselves and for the society as a whole it is an irreversible women’s emancipatory potential, which aims at future generations of their descendants (regardless of sex). As these women say,

I belong to a group of women who protect the interests of women, and men are not an obstacle or the competition for me. My daughter took over the business and is now a promising young entrepreneur. (...) That was my goal, you succeed when you succeed with your children. My 17 year old granddaughter will continue - the third generation gets the harvest. (Mira /63/, the owner of accounting bureau).

All women should fight for themselves, their jobs and their rights. They need to summon up the courage to start with business. Women should not allow to be subordinated. (Zorana /33/, the owner of florist shop)

I like it when women know what they want and what they don’t want. I like it when I’m pleased with myself – and I am. (Gordana /42/, the owner of the company for trade and construction)

Conclusion

This paper gives one possible insight into the entrepreneurship of women, observed in the post-socialist context. In this environment, the entry of women into private business takes a great courage, but often it presents a necessity for survival, which eventually leads to changes in gender relations, both at the individual level, and at generational level. Self-employment and start up of one’s own business is one of the important ways of gaining profits, but not only that, it could enable new development opportunities and at the individual level build self-confidence and allow one to develop their

full potential while at the same time changing traditional patterns of gender roles and power relations in favor of women.

To prove that entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial spirit of women is a long term emancipatory potential, both for themselves and for future generations, I conducted a qualitative case study of women entrepreneurs in Banja Luka, which briefly revealed that crucially important for the independent business was the individual awareness about power, desire and knowledge to go into private business, combined with family interests.

Along with the expansion of private business, it strengthens the very women entrepreneurs who develop their “enterprising self”. When it develops and becomes an integral part of the personality, it certainly affects the other relationships with people, family, attitude towards themselves and it is crucial emancipatory potential for these women. Support of the family, either primary (parental), or their own, is of extremely great importance to the success of women in business and their personal sense of satisfaction and fulfillment. When this support is absent, women entrepreneurs build their own individual strategies to help them cope with the everyday life and use different negotiating positions for their goals. Women entrepreneurs identified specific structural, social, economic and political obstacles and obstacles for women in business. They were able to fairly accurately describe their business environment and identify the aggravating factors that affect business. These factors, as expected, are related with general instability of the transitional society and politics, and poor economic situation.

When it comes to the harmonization of private, family and professional life, it is a continuous “walk on a thin wire” for most women entrepreneurs, especially those who are married, and it is much easier for those who do not have their own family. One sees that the rules do not exist: one cannot simply argue that family relationships take place according to certain paradigms, or according to who earns more, it just shows that everyday life always “escapes” theories.

And finally, as a result of research I have created a typology of women entrepreneurs with the basic division of the women entrepreneurs at the margin, women entrepreneurs at the middle level and top women entrepreneurs. The higher they go forward in a continuum of progress in the business, the higher emancipatory potential is. Within this continuum and typology there are various possible transition phases. As a matter worth mentioning is that the “enterprising self” with social and real capital (education, money, social networks), along with discipline and clear objectives as a factor X, is a winning combination for success. Women entrepreneurs who

embark in an independent business and build “enterprising self”, which is further developed and capitalized, can no longer come back - for themselves and for the society as a whole it is an irreversible women’s emancipatory potential, which aims at future generations of their descendants (regardless of sex).

The intensity and complexity of changes in Bosnia and Herzegovina make it difficult to draw a simple conclusion on the general direction of change. As my research was a small pilot one, it would be useful to conduct some new studies that would encompass all of the aspects and examine in depth cause-effect relationships; to include exploration of families and associates of women entrepreneurs; to examine the problem of access to financial and other resources and the effects of development and micro-credit programs that target women entrepreneurs as a group; to research even more long term potential of entrepreneurship on a larger sample of women entrepreneurs; to research different generations within one business; to conduct a panel study over 5 year period; to examine additionally resilience of women entrepreneurs in time of economic crises and so on.

It is possible to test and validate ideas and findings from this study with new researches and other methods and to apply these models in other professional spheres. Together with a joy when discovering new knowledge, we need to retain a critical attitude. From the standpoint of knowledge about us, it’s a very healthy start.

Translated by Jelena Milinović, proofreading: Steven Powell and Anamaria Golemac Powell.

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Sažetak

PODUZETNIŠTVO U POSTSOCIJALIZMU: ŽENSKO ŽRTVOVANJE ILI EMANCIPATORNI POTENCIJAL: PODUZETNICE IZ BANJA LUKE

Poduzetništvo je u globalnom kontekstu postalo važna sastavnica društvenog i ekonomskog razvoja, a sve veća pozornost posljednjih godina posvećuje se poduzetništvu žena jer su one prepoznate kao značajni ljudski resursi. S obzirom da poduzetništvo i poduzetnički duh nose u sebi dugoročni emancipacijski potencijal, moje je istraživanje usmjereno na provjeru te hipoteze. Riječ je o kvalitativnom istraživanju provedenom od siječnja do ožujka 2008. godine koje sadrži analizu dvadeset intervju s poduzetnicama iz Banja Luke. Teme koje sam istraživala su: motivi pokretanja vlastitog „biznisa“, sistem podrške i solidarnosti unutar obitelji i izvan nje, prepreke s kojima se susreću te usklađivanje privatnog, obiteljskog i profesionalnog života. Jedan od rezultata istraživanja je pokušaj stvaranja vlastite tipologije poduzetnica: *marginalne poduzetnice*, *srednje uspjezne* i *najuspješnije poduzetnice*. Svima njima je zajednički poduzetnički duh, spremnost na novo, drukčiji, neuobičajeni načini rješavanja problema, hrabrost, preuzimanje rizika, spremnost da se šansa prepozna i iskoristi. Razvoj vlastitih potencijala i sposobnosti te jačanje samopouzdanja preduvjet je za promjenu tradicionalnih obrazaca rodних uloga i odnosa moći u korist žena. No u ovom sam istraživanju uzela u obzir i onu drugu stranu poticanja poduzetničke atmosfere među ženama u neoliberalnom kontekstu: višestruke uloge, eksploataciju, dugove i ovisnost o financijskom tržištu, strah za opstanak te „sistemske inhibicije“ koje ometaju žene na njihovom putu ka uspjehu. Istraživanje je potvrdilo i hipotezu da poduzetnice koje su osnovale svoju tvrtku ili obrt te vremenom razvile i učvrstile poduzetnički duh, više ne mogu natrag – taj duh predstavlja nepovratni emancipacijski potencijal koji pokreće i buduće generacije. Ili riječima Marina Blagojević, jednom kada „od nužde nastane vrlina“, promjena je nepovratna.

FAMILY ECONOMY – WOMEN AND THE PRODUCTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Introduction

In this paper I will show part of the results of a study conducted for my dissertation considering changes in the family economy, which have occurred in the sphere of family production of alcoholic beverages during the past decades in Croatia (especially since it gained its independence in 1991), in terms of gender division of tasks related to alcohol production. In my doctoral thesis I explored the culture of family production of alcohol in the Zagreb area, specifically in Zagreb County. The intention of the thesis was to address the subject that unites several relevant ethnological and anthropological issues. This is primarily the production of alcoholic beverages which in Croatian ethnology is usually considered and explored as part of material culture, or as part of a certain male-dominated agro-economy. In this article I am going to ethnographically illustrate the self-perception and social (mis)recognition of the few Croatian women enterprisers engaged in grape growing and wine-making as well as honey beverage production. Changes in gender division of tasks in the alcohol production reflect on family relationships and lives of members of these families, which I will take a more detailed look at.

The consumption of alcohol belongs to the social spheres of research of traditional culture, referring to the life and year cycle customs, as well as to the exploration of sociability and spiritual practices of a particular community. As a starting point in developing a theoretical, analytical and inter-

pretative framework, I singled out the insightful approach of Mary Douglas (1987), an anthropologist who believes that drinking, especially that of spirits, plays an important role in the social construction of the world. Alcoholic beverages, according to Douglas, structure social life and in fact sometimes act as markers of identity that determine the boundaries of exclusion from and inclusion into a specific group. In addition, Douglas believes that alcoholic beverages, or the culture of their production and consumption, construct an ideal world, substantiating their symbolic and ritual roles. Douglas and three other anthropologists, Igor and Valerie de Garine (2001) cum Thomas Wilson (2005), believe that alcohol production and consumption can be explored both from the political and the economic perspective, because on a micro-level it is included in economies of some families as part of the home industry, while at the same time, on the macro level, it takes part in the economy of a particular community, region or state. In addition to the symbolic and political and economic approaches, I think that a gender perspective in the research related to the spirits and alcohol is also very important. The latter was introduced in the field of ethnology and cultural anthropology by social anthropologist Dimitra Gefou-Madianou (1992). She has taken an interest in the role of gender division into male and female domains of production and consumption of liquor, and questioned the role of alcoholic drinks as part of an anti-domestic discourse, but only as far as male gatherings are concerned. She also questioned the role of alcohol consumption in “all male gatherings” and in “all female gatherings” taking into account the public and private sphere (Gefou-Madianou 1992:14).

Ethnographic data from the earlier period

The Ethnographic material that I analyze refers to the description of the material, spiritual and social aspects of traditional grape growing and wine-making in the Croatian territory. The main body of those texts, from the mid-19th century to the end of the first half of 20th century, consists of the contributions and related monographs to the *Zbornik za život i običaje* (Almanac of Life and Customs, later *ZBNŽO almanac*; Lukić, Luka 1919; Lovretić, Josip 1897; Lang, Milan 1922). I also analyze individual monographs which are not part of *ZBNŽO almanac*, but their scope and content follow its form (Ivanišević, Frano 1906; Jardas, Ivo 1994; Žic, Ivan 2001), as well as unpublished materials – the manuscripts stored in the Department of Ethnology in Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences (Antičić, Petar 1900; Bosnić, Rade 1909; Tentor, Matija 1897) and manuscripts from

the Documentation Department of the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research (Stepanić, Slavko. 1982-1986).

According to books and manuscripts, the tasks related to fruit processing which subsequently results in produced alcoholic drinks are usually in the domain of the male part of extended-type families. Year in year out, the male part of a family followed the rhythm of duties in vineyards and handled organization of these tasks. Women of all ages who were able to work were mainly involved in the tasks of picking grapes or other fruit, whereas the processing itself, such as making wine or brandy, was, according to older ethnographic material, always in charge of men. The space where grapes were processed into wine was fully in the domain of men - such as basement, wine cellar or still room for making brandy. According to ethnographic data, it was the space where men dominated and where they developed their sociability. So, *konoba* (tavern), *vinski podrum* (wine cellar) and *pecara* (still room) were the places used by men exclusively. The distribution of other rural, agricultural and livestock activities is gender-compatible to a greater extent, and women are involved in the production of almost all other agricultural crops.

Ethnographic data from the socialist period (Cvetan and Supek-Zupan)

These ethnographic texts were partly dealt with by Croatian ethnologists Dragica Cvetan and Olga Supek-Zupan, who conducted a research in wider surroundings of Zagreb - Plešivica foothills - during 1980s. Olga Supek-Zupan (1979) explored the economics of the village on the Plešivica foothills near Jastrebarsko. Her study partially referred to the production of wine and viticulture in the region because at the time it was one of major industries prevalent in this area. Dragica Cvetan (1991) wrote about the social aspects of small cottages in vineyards called *klijeti* in Plešivica foothills and clearly placed viticulture and oenology, the production and consumption of wine, into the domain of male activity. In addition, Cvetan considers *klijeti* and the production and consumption of wine as symbols of local and regional identity of the Plešivica farmers.

There are different forms of small cottages in vineyards throughout the Croatian territory. These usually provide only temporary storage space for tools and shelter for people in event of rough weather. In the vineyards of the Plešivica region around Jastrebarsko, *klijeti* were outbuildings located outside courtyards. *Klijeti* in the northwest Croatia, more precisely in the area of Plešivica vineyards called *is*, or *his*, played a special role in the past.

It is perhaps related to the fact that, as noticed by some ethnologists, vine growing and viticulture in northern Croatian areas, particularly the north-west, were an integral part of every farm and their importance was more about fitting into the culture and mentality of the population, than about the existential dependency on the agricultural industry, much more pronounced in the south (Šestan 1992: 6). Cvetan sees *klijet* as a male domain of the quotidian, at the same time making reference to male gatherings in *klijeti*, and concludes that *klijeti* were stages for numerous social interactions, particularly between families and neighbors. In the Plešivica foothill region, *klijet* was also a place for ritual events (in autumn men used to go to *klijeti*, where they tasted and baptised the wine). Apart from that, between two vintage seasons (usually in spring) male groups used to gather in *klijeti* in order to discuss local current affairs.

Social life in *klijeti*, as well as other similar buildings, is nowadays very different from what it used to be in the past. During the late 20th century, small cottages in vineyards become spots for outings, as well as places of meetings of men and women and family gatherings, which in the modern context become places used by family members equally, regardless of age or gender affiliation.

This, in brief, is what can be found in Croatian ethnographic material and the modest background theoretical literature. The authors Cvetak and Supek-Zupan are only partly interested in economic, symbolic and spiritual meanings of the production and consumption of wine as a male space within which the values of masculine culture are reproduced, confirming the ideas of masculinity and male dominance in rural economies.

Gendered labour division on European farms

Since the beginning of the 1980s there has been considerable research in European countries on women in agriculture with particular emphasis on both the situation of women within family farming, and on the gender division of family labour (Gasson 1980; Whatmore 1991; Haugen 1991, 1993; O' Hara 1998). The interest in the topics of farm women developed largely as a critical response to the way in which women's labour had been treated as irrelevant to agricultural research, with the subsequent focus on the farmer as predominantly male (Brandth 2002: 181). Interesting studies were conducted in Norway, Denmark, Germany, England and Spain, each of them observing and reflecting the position of women in rural family life, their role, involvement and recognition that is particularly pronounced in

the north of Europe, in Norway and partly in Denmark. In Germany, the impact of government policy on entrepreneurship in the rural sector is visible, particularly for women entrepreneurs (Prugl 2004: 350). As far as literature on women in family farms is concerned, Berit Brandth recognizes three main discourses within which one can observe and understand the role of women in family life. The position of women that emerges from the *discourse of family farm* can be described as subordinate and invisible with traditional sex role attitudes forming a significant component of their productive identity. According to Brandth, studies attempting to explain why farm women have been given a position of inferiority as farmer's wives have dealt with patriarchy, property, commodity, production, sex roles, biologism, tradition, agrarian ideology and so on. This imparts status to them as victims of the power of historically based discourses, or as "products" of discriminations, Brandth also notes that farm women's main strategy in order to ensure the survival of the family farm is loyalty (Brandth 2002:195)

The *discourse of masculinisation* applies to technological, structural and cultural changes in agricultural production, and what this has meant to gender relations.

The *discourse of detraditionalisation* and diversity places the genders in a multitude of various subject positions in line with the new economic reality and post-modern plurality and the shifting character of identity formation. Within this discourse women and men identify with a subject position that differs from the positions of "farmer's wife" and "farmer". The individuals are described as actively constructing their own occupational identities such as manager and entrepreneur, distant from traditional farm identities. According to Brandth, the dominant discourse in literature is the *discourse of family farm*, which also according to my research is the most present discourse I found in the field, especially in vine growing families (Brandt 2002:196).

Women's field narratives

My research was based on interviews with families that are in the business of family alcohol production both for profitable and non-profit purposes. Families that produce alcohol for profitable purposes may have been more interesting for the study, because their businesses directly reflect on the overall economic development of Zagreb County where I conducted my research. I spoke with women from two vine growing families, of which one is from Zelina, and another from the Plešivica wine road, and the women

from honey and candle-making families that produce gingerbread, candles and *gverc* (fine alcoholic beverage made of honey).

1) I interviewed three generations of women in the honey and candle-making family - Draženka, aged 56, her daughter Ana, aged 25, and Draženka's mother-in-law Zlata, aged 71.

Their family has been in the honey and candle making business for over seventy years now. Business was always passed from father to son, as is the case with today's middle generation in the family. What was interesting about the last passing over of the business was the fact that most of the work related to the family's traditional craft was taken over the daughter-in-law, Mrs. Draženka - wife of the son that actually inherited the family business. While interviewing the oldest member of the family - Zlata, who is now a widow - I found out that women who became members of the family consequently shared the business with their husbands, thus helping the family craft, being in charge of making gingerbread and biscuits, although they did not have a master craftsman degree. The honey and candle making craft includes making gingerbread and *Licitors*, candles, the production of *gverc* - alcoholic beverages, as well as the distribution and sale of these products. In the past, the sale mostly took place on feast days - rural church fairs, during the holiday season. The whole family was involved in the business, in terms of both production and distribution. However, the production of *gverc* and the organization of its sale on feast days was in charge of the men of the family. This is how it used to be until the last generation that has taken over the family business (Draženka and her husband). The honey and candle making craft as it existed in the past is now slowly dying out - feasts take place on rare occasions and people do not visit them. Like all other forms of traditional crafts, this one has also started to take some new forms that are adapted to modern demands. This, at least in the case of the family production of alcoholic beverages, is affirmed in the sphere of new selective forms of tourism - such as cultural, culinary and rural tourism. The affirmation of traditional crafts includes visiting various exhibitions of traditional and culinary products, promoting the products, additional education and other dynamic tasks that have been completely taken over by Draženka. On the other hand, her husband, who has a master craftsman degree in this craft, like his father and his grandfather before that, relinquished the chores that had been performed explicitly by the men in the family - the production and distribution of *gverc*, and allowed Draženka to take care of them, while instead he is in charge of baking gingerbread and making *Licitors*. In the past, one could always see a wife and a husband together serving guests

at honey and candle making fair stalls. Draženka and her husband broke off with this tradition and at present she organizes the transport of goods to fairs with the help of her mother-in-law and daughter, while at the fair she occasionally accepts assistance of other male traders with setting up the stand, tents and big barrels full of *gverc*:

It is not easy, but I cannot do otherwise. I like this job and I want to do it, but sometimes it is difficult to set up the barrels when they are brought to a fair. Sometimes I need other men who have their own stalls with drinks to give me a hand. And sometimes I feel embarrassed, but what choice do I have when my husband does not want to do it anymore? He found it difficult to accept the changes, and still, changes do occur in our business. If we do not accept them, we will not keep our family tradition, the family craft and all that goes with that. (Draženka)

Although Ana, Draženka's daughter, is still unsure about her future, in my opinion, her statement says a lot in favour of good prospects of the family business, at least in the form in which it is run by her mother.

I am not sure yet how things will be. I have learned everything, I watch my dad when he bakes biscuits, but I would never want to do it myself. I could teach somebody else who is interested to bake *Licitar*s and gingerbread. I prefer the part of work that my mother has taken over - going to fairs and holding the shop where we sell our souvenirs, traditional souvenirs. I am interested in that. And I would like to continue the production and distribution of *gverc*, because it is really special and long lasting and something that is left for posterity. (Ana)

This family's economic subsistence is based on the commitment and active involvement of Draženka – the moving force of the whole production and sales of mead (*gverc*) and other souvenirs. Although her taking over of business shifts away from the traditional role of women in this trade (there almost aren't any or they are not in charge of mead sale and production), she has not given up, but expanded the production by opening a small souvenir shop selling mead and other souvenirs, such as gingerbread and honey biscuits. Therefore, she managed to keep up the business even during the socialist era, selling drinks at church fairs and nowadays even at her own shop. Her husband's role cannot be disregarded, but she still gets most help from

her mother-in-law and daughter. Draženka has proudly kept her husband's family tradition and, despite his occasional opposition to overpromotion as he sees it, Draženka has not given up, although without excessively distinguishing herself in promoting her products.

2) In a vine growing and wine making family from the Plešivica wine road I interviewed two generations of women – Ljubica, aged 67, and her daughter Mirjana, aged 39. The family owns vineyards in Plešivica-Okčić sub-region. Over the past fifteen years, vineyards were renewed and technology developed. The family has been cultivating the vineyards since 1900, and according to some testimonies even longer. Also, in 1900 they have started the official production of beverages for sale.

The course of changes and attitudes related to the production and consumption of alcoholic beverages made of grapes (especially wine) can be traced through individual elements typical for changes related to rural areas, especially in the second half of the 20th century. One of them is the deagrarization in the second half of the 20th century (Puljiz 1974: 11). During the seventies and eighties of the 20th century Drago, Ljubica's husband, stopped working in agriculture for a few years and found employment as a truck driver. During this time all the activities relating to the vineyard and farming were taken over and organized by his wife Ljubica and she even started to manage the wine-cellar.

It means that she was in charge of wine production for several years in a row – not only for the family's needs, but also for sale (approximately from 1969 to 1978). Her husband Drago, aged 70, speaks very reluctantly about this period, admitting that he was embarrassed by the fact that Ljubica had run the business related to the vineyard and wine cellar, because at the time it was an unusual job for a woman:

On one occasion, our best man mocked Drago because I was making wine for several years. He used to make fun of him and ask him if he was incompetent so he had his wife making wine for him. It was considered to be a public embarrassment. But, what could we do? If we wanted to keep it, we had no other choice. (Ljubica, aged 67)

However, the financial situation of the family was very hard at the time when the children were small. As sometimes the sale of wine and grapes was in decline, both parents had to work several jobs, meaning they were forced to split duties to support their large family.

The transformation of patriarchal relations in families of the Plešivica foothill region that was analyzed by Olga Supek (1986: 47-60), can be observed in this family only in the light of the fact that at the moment of financial crisis for the family, the husband took initiative and looked for work outside the home, leaving Ljubica to look after the vineyards and household, not wanting her to seek employment outside the home. This shows that the employment of women outside the home, their taking to the labor market, is a greater evil within the patriarchal worldview than taking over “men’s jobs” and entering the traditionally male space of the family farm. They have never given up on vine growing, partly due to the fact that it has always been one of the most important profitable industries in the region. Today most of the work related to the vineyard and wine making, as well as the catering industry, is supervised by their youngest son Drago, aged 37, who was even president of the local wine group “Club of Friends of Good Wine” from 2003-2007. His older sister Mirjana, aged 39, also lives in the household together with the parents and brother and his family, and tries to take part in the family business as much as she can, depending on her steady job in the civil service. Mirjana is a nutritionist, but works as a food technologist. Her graduation thesis was in some way marked by the family tradition, with the subject comparing the crown and cork plugs in wine production. Mirjana demonstrated practically, on a selection of wines from their own production, that cork plugs are much better and more useful. The oldest son of the family completely gave up the family business, and the decision by two younger children to take over was, according to their sayings, completely or partly influenced by their mother who had worked in the vineyard and taught them how to do this kind of work as soon as they were old enough to help her.

3) In a wine-growing family of the Zelina wine road I spoke with Mirjana, the older daughter of a renowned vine grower and winemaker, from whom she is taking over the business very slowly and confidently. This family owns vineyards in the Zelina wine-growing subregion of the Prigorje region, and resides in the same household in Biškupci Zelinski, near Sv. Ivan Zelina. The family counts seven members. Only four members are actively involved in agriculture and vineyards, since the family consists of two little children and one elderly lady. The family has owned and cultivated their vineyard since 1967, which makes them relatively “young” vine growers. They cannot, that is, like some other families, rely on a centennial family tradition, because at one point in the past the production had been stopped. I spoke with Mirjana, the older daughter, who is now slowly taking over the

business after she quit from civil service. Mirjana has decided to continue and, as she puts it - “create” the family tradition. She raises her two children in the same spirit, having involved them from an early age in the activities related to growing grapes and making wine. Additionally, Mirjana’s husband, who was born in the Međimurje region, joined his wife in keeping the family business, so Mirjana’s father added his surname to their own well-known surname. Mirjana is very devoted to her work and also works as an accountant of two associations - “Wine Roads of Zagreb County” and “Croatian Rural Products”. Moreover, she is not only active in administration and marketing of the family business, but is also a brilliant expert in wine production, which can be seen from her testimony:

Oh, it is far from easy. I do this because I love our region and the people here. My work enables me to put these two passions together. There is always something going on, I interact with different people and travel a lot - it is not easy. You know, when the days of vintage come... I spend three months in the cellar – worrying, tasting, and supervising every detail... I know that it sounds a bit ridiculous, but to me it is like taking care of my children’s health. Oh, it is a wonder. (Mirjana)

Mirjana has also taken over from her father the making of the Kraljevina wine, an indigenous variety of wine, the recipe of which has been passed on in the family for generations. It is very unusual for a daughter to take over her father’s business and not allow anyone else to participate in it (in this case making a special traditional sort of wine, Karaljevina). According to her testimony, she skillfully ignores the oenological advice to enrich the wine with some new extracts in order to refresh the bouquet, and make it more modern. She does not want to do it, because she believes that the Kraljevina should remain a drinkable family wine as it has always been in the past.

Mirjana is the head of production and sales, and her initiative has been important for keeping the family trade, and thus the family tradition. Still, it seems that her own empowerment by her work and recognition in the market have also taken place within a patriarchal tradition. In the promotion of the family trade certain promotional items, such as web pages or tourist board promotional leaflets, always feature her father and husband, sometimes even their children, while Mirjana stands behind the scenes of the whole family tradition promotion.

Conclusion

Due to changes in the late 20th century occurred in the rural areas of Europe such as accelerated technological progress, modernization, deagrarization and detraditionalization, the status of women has changed in the rural families.

As I have stated before, the research carried out in Norway, Denmark and Germany witnessed the affirmation of women in jobs related to the rural sector and in families whose main income comes from agricultural resources. In Germany the development of women's entrepreneurship in the rural sector is viewed through the prism of liberal environmentalism that has overcome the pitfalls and obstacles of the patriarchal family system (Prugl 2004: 352). In Norway, during the nineties one can track the changes that began in the fifties, mainly the modernization of agriculture which includes a professional approach and full involvement of women, especially the middle and younger generations (Haugen 1990: 190).

Each family and personal narrative that I have mentioned demonstrates detachment from tradition, or detachment from the ethnographical records that describe traditional vine growing during the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. In the honey and candle making family, women of the family completely took over the segment of the business that relates to the production of alcohol, in order to keep the family's traditional craft and make it survive as a new form of tourist supply and demand. In the vine growing families mentioned in this paper that offer their products under a special form of wine tourism (wine roads), it is also evident that women are responsible for continuing the family tradition of viticulture.

The roles of the women mentioned are invaluable to their families. Owing to them – Draženka, a candle dealer, or Ljubica, a Plešivica winemaker's wife – their family trades stayed alive even during socialism, having developed into new forms of tourism adapted to modern market demands over the past twenty years. On the other hand, even though every one of them, notably Draženka or Mirjana (winemaker from Zelina), has established herself in the production and distribution of alcoholic beverages, their roles were not conspicuous or clear enough, let alone recognized by the public. In my view, the reason for this lies in the remnants of the patriarchal system with zero tolerance to women's prominence in the trades belonging solely to men in the past (by these I mean alcohol production and distribution). The invisibility of women in rural life, which my narrators are mostly part of, was also brought up by Tea Škokić in her paper at a conference of the Croatian Ethnological Society, where she noted that in addition to being

invisible, their roles, as well as their promotion in the media, are very often completely misrepresented (Škokić, 2010). There are several instances mentioned by Škokić in relation to the Best Housewife/Country Lady contest, which misrepresent the promotion of rural women and obliterate their entrepreneurial spirit and empowerment. In this respect one can only question the holding of the Wine Queen contest, instead of a potential Best Female Wine Maker contest. On the other hand, by using appropriate promotion, women in Italy and the United States manage to empower and establish themselves in the trades relating to the production and distribution of alcoholic beverages. According to Marina Blagojević, the discrimination of women can also be seen as a disparate treatment in the public sphere, resulting in their unfavorable position in the allocation of social resources such as material goods, power and reputation (Blagojević 2002: 479). Consequently, in the light of everything I have mentioned, I would like to go back to Berith Brandth's reflections on possible discourses in terms of the position of rural women throughout Europe. It appears that performance, establishment and empowerment of my interlocutors can be inscribed into a *family farm discourse*, depicting woman as still invisible and subordinate to patriarchal patterns of family life, as one who is ready to do everything in her power in order to insure the survival and security of her family.

Translated into English by Sandra Miletić.

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Sažetak

OBITELJSKO GOSPODARSTVO – ŽENE I PROIZVODNJA ALKOHOLNIH PIĆA

U radu se osvrćem na promjene u obiteljskom gospodarstvu, točnije unutar obiteljske proizvodnje alkoholnih pića tijekom posljednjih desetljeća u Hrvatskoj, a koje se tiču rodne podjele poslova vezanih uz proizvodnju alkohola. Naime, prema etnološkoj građi prikupljenoj u istraživanju za potrebe disertacije "Etnološki i kulturnoantropološki pristup kulturi obiteljske proizvodnje i uživanja alkohola", vidljivo je da se u proizvodnji alkoholnih pića sve više afirmiraju žene što je novost u usporedbi sa socijalnom i ekonomskom situacijom obiteljskih gospodarstava s kraja 19. i početka 20. stoljeća. Pozitivne promjene obzirom na prekid rodne determiniranosti u raspodjeli poslova vezanih uz proizvodnju alkohola posljedica su, između ostalog, i razvoja novih oblika turizama u Hrvatskoj (agroturizam, kulturni i kulinar-ski turizam). Istraživanje je provedeno u mjestima u okolici Zagreba, a metodološkim postupkom dubinskog nestrukturiranog intervjua razgovarala sam sa šest žena u obiteljima koje se bave vinogradarstvom i vinarstvom te proizvodnjom rakija i pića od meda. Promjene u rodnoj podjeli poslova vezanih uz proizvodnju alkohola, osim na obiteljsku ekonomiju odražavaju se i na obiteljske odnose, cjelokupni život članova spomenutih obitelji te na društvenu percepciju žena koje osvajaju tradicionalno muške prostore proizvodnje, prodaje i promocije alkohola ne samo kao proizvođa s kontroliranim podrijetlom nego i kao (regionalnog) simbola identiteta.

HOW TO EMPOWER TEXTILE WORKERS

The text will address some questions and issues stemming from the Centre for Women's Studies' recent experience of having organised an educational project directed towards (female) textile workers. Methods of feminist activism, idea of sharing of knowledge, possibilities of the translation of feminist classroom dynamics into different context, as well as Ethical concerns that arise from different positioning of 'partners' in the raster of class and other privileges, are some of the issues that the text will open, without giving definitive answers to any of them.

Feminist education beyond women's studies: experiences

As an activist organisation focused on education, the Centre for Women's Studies has for years been organizing a non-institutional women's studies programme, ranging from blocks of two 16-hours seminars on different topics, to two semesters long comprehensive programme with more than twenty different seminars and workshops. For the most part our students were young women in their twenties and early thirties, but there was a non-negligible portion of middle-aged women who wanted to continue their education with something novel, women-focused, empowering and liberating. Another significant group of our beneficiaries – as it is called in 'project-speak' we had to adopt during years of fundraising – were female politicians, for whom for several years the Centre organised workshops and projects aimed to encourage them towards assuming leadership positions and contribute to the increase of female participation in politics. After se-

veral cycles of educational and advocating activities, a sense of impatience and slight frustration grew out of not witnessing what we expected and hoped to see: a trans-party coalition of female politicians gathered around strategic issues related to women's interests and position. Unfortunately, in Croatian politics female politicians fail to transgress party boundaries and act together in critique or in presenting new initiatives when national and local parliaments discuss legislation and policies related gender or women specific topics, such as medicinally assisted reproduction, labour law, pro-employment measures, social transfers, maternity benefits, fees for kindergartens/preschool education, equalisation of retirement ages. How much support and 'pushing' our feminist agenda on female politicians, in hope that something called 'state feminism' (Lovenduski, 2005) emerge, not only through gender equality machinery, but as a genuine interest and determination to actively promote gender equality on every level, is enough? When is a time for female politicians to take responsibility and act not just following party discipline no matter what is at stake, but independently, courageously, and hand in hand with political opponents, if the situation demands? Those are some of the issues raised after several cycles of different educational and advocating projects. Reflection on the practice of feminist activism in area of education thus include re-evaluation of needs, goals and methods, as well as occasional reality checks related to purposefulness and effectiveness of our work in the current political context.

These problems notwithstanding, the work with women politicians was and still is seen as something that women's organisations routinely do, in many countries, but especially in countries where transition to more democratic forms of governments is directed by foreign aid and agencies that use civil society organisations to make more efficient changes in shorter time. This is also the case with other democratic standards, such as rule of law, protection of human rights, public accountability, fight against corruption, ecology etc.

However, collaboration of women's organisations and working women is not necessarily as smooth. Feminist support to working women always necessarily implies a class issue. There is a certain reticence, more present than in relation to politicians, coming from a sensed inequality of power, an objective imbalance of privilege that stems from differences in class, education, income, location, political influence. Although professional activist's position is often a precarious one, a gap in level in education and rhetorical power in the most cases is biased in favour of activists in relation to manual workers.

In concrete case of the Centre for women's studies, there is also an adequate explanation for dominant intellectual, and somewhat elitist, profile of the organization: it had, after all, been founded for fostering feminist education and developing theoretical approach to feminist activism, which in time of foundation of the Centre (1995) was in state of expansion in areas of peace activism, combating consequences of war and sexual violence, advancement of women's human rights, and feminist art. One can note that female worker's rights were not systematically addressed, however, women's sections of trade unions were established and are seen as a natural place for dealing with workers' issues. Poverty, reduction of workers' rights and failure of the state to address unemployment and insecurity that women faced in increasing numbers were concern of a coalition of women's groups that has been created at the same time (see Women's election platform, 1997). Inside of the women's network, it is a realm of women's sections of trade unions to systematically defend the interests of workers' rights, where they developed significant expertise. There is no place in this article to further discuss history and geography of women's activism in Croatia, especially ups and downs of Women's Network of Croatia, suffice to say that there was and is a tacit distribution of areas of work, priorities, specialisation and expertise among women's groups that makes crossing borders sporadic.

Back to the origins of the Women's Day: textile workers in the new century

As the economic and structural crisis in the country went deeper after 2005, however, it became painfully obvious that principle of specialisation has to be put aside due to ethical concerns and pressing question that started to occupy women in the CWS: "what can we do for them?" In the Croatian media, women at the sewing machine became the image of industrial labour that slowly disappeared in the country, appearing as mere illustration in newspapers and mute images on television when the topic of declining industry was discussed *in general*. However, problems of textile industry were not addressed in public space, particularly not at the same level as problems of shipbuilding industry, for example.

As in the rest of contemporary Europe, Croatian textile industry is facing extreme challenges. The former backbone of regional economies, employing predominantly female labour force, it is in urgent need of serious restructualisation, in order to preserve and to increase productivity and competitiveness, and to save as many as possible workplaces without seriously undermining social stability of local communities. Textile industry

is important branch in several Croatian counties, often with century-long tradition. Economic and social situation in local communities with textile industries is characterized by high unemployment rates due to the recession and collapse of other industries. The status and perspectives of Croatian textile industry have been objects of economical analysis and strategic planning (see *Strategic determinants of the development of textile and clothing industry in Croatia for the period 2006-2015*, written by the Economic Institute in April 2007 for the Croatian Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship). Workers in textile and clothing industry in Croatia have the smallest average salaries, and the industry is characterized by low work productivity, lower work costs, and constant fall of employment rate. The main source of work productivity increase is reduction of employment. According to this study, in the period between 2005 and 2015 Croatian textile and clothing industry would unavoidably face the loss of workplaces ranging between 30% and 40%, depending on the realized scenario (successful restructuratisation vs. status quo). That means the loss between 11,000 and 15,000 workplaces, in majority occupied by women.

The economic crisis in Croatia in recent years has uncovered to the public not only the extent of degradation of the industry in general, but also a deep gender division in the structure and perception of the industrial sector. Our attention has been attracted by protests of textile factory workers who due to layoffs remain not only without jobs, but with virtually no prospects of new employment. Specifically, the practical unemployability of women aged 40-50 years, particularly for workers with lower education level, has become alarming in Croatia, with unforeseeable consequences for the local communities. In the position of the Croatian textile industry, we recognized the neuralgic point of women's work. The image of dishevelled textile workers expressing their utter desperation on national television when faced with lay-offs urged us to reflect on what kind of support and education we can provide from our field of work in order to make workers more efficient in communicating their claims. Our women's studies educational programme for years was based, among other things, on empowering women to find their own voices, while programmes for female politicians were also designed to increase skills of public speaking and self-presentation. It was a kind of knowledge which we were ready to share, and thought of as useful in both short and long term for female workers.

The project was designed in cooperation with the Trade Union in Textile, Footwear, Leather, Rubber of Croatia and Croatian Association of Independent Croatian Unions, who acted as partners in the project with which

we applied for EU funding.¹ It was developed as a pilot-project relaying on support, training and empowerment needs of textile workers, especially the trade union representatives, to assist them in coping with challenges in the workplace and in the union action. In a series of conversations with partners and associates we detected several groups of problems that are associated with gender inequality and that impede the positioning of the textile industry and textile workers themselves in the negotiating process, both at national and local level and at the level individual companies.

As we learned from that analysis of needs, female workers employed in textile industry, and their representatives, are characterized by several common features. They are mostly unskilled and semi-skilled workers (with elementary education only) from small communities, aged between 35 and 50. They are often the only wage earning members of their households, with under-average salaries, which significantly contribute to the feeling of economic insecurity and their low mobility. Other relevant features are limited availability of educational opportunities (lifelong learning programmes, education for democratic citizenship, alternative women's education), unavailable mechanisms for protection of women's, human and workers' rights, vulnerable position of women in still dominant patriarchal society (both in family and in the work place), which all result in inadequate technical and social competences and skills for successful participation in negotiations, and advocacy of their interests. They are mostly unaware of gender specific aspects of their position and unprepared for fully benefiting of potential special measures (such as self-employment programmes for women over 40 years or similar), or for formulating their own general, or gender specific demands. Therefore, they present particularly vulnerable group in the process of restructuralisation of the industry which, in any scenario, is to consist of dismissals.

Our target group finally consisted of union representatives (shop stewards) and members of the workers' councils from selected textile facto-

1 The project under the title "Improving workers' participation in equal opportunities policies" was conceptualized in 2008 and implemented during 2009 in Zagreb and in three counties in northern Croatia. It was funded by the European Commission through the programme PHARE, a 'pre-accession instrument' for the applicant countries that prepare to join the European Union. The heading of the programme line under which the project was funded was "Enabling the Civil Society Sector for active contribution in the pre-accession process in the Area of Democratisation and Human Rights". Promotion of economic and social cohesion is one of the three objectives of the PHARE programme. There is always a consciousness about the political ambivalence of the situation where a feminist organisation educates and empowers workers to be able to 'survive' the 'transition' to 'market economy' and economic crisis with the help of EU money and thus contributes to the 'social cohesion'.

ries from the Counties of Međimurje, Varaždin and Križevci-Koprivnica, three northern counties where textile industry was and still is one of the key branches, and where there is a sufficient number of viable factories and firms with an unsecure, but still potentially positive future. Those are women and men that would carry on the burden of negotiating with employers and other union activities in critical times of financial recovery and restructuring of companies and factories they work for. Although they had practical experience in negotiating, they were lacking some specific knowledge and skills that can improve their efficiency and argumentation. The project intended to provide them with an on-going support during the first year of their mandate as union representatives. The core of the educational programme thus consisted in acquainting them with current political and economic context, including analysis of latest developments in economic and social policies, labour legislation, social and health insurance; legal framework for gender equality and anti-discrimination measures; basic and advanced knowledge of communication techniques and skills; concepts, experiences and practical advice on mobbing, sexual harassment, stress and stress-induced psychological and health problems; discussion on political participation of women at the local level (Borić et al., 2009).

Empowering or moribund voices? Ambivalence as outcome

On the first glance and at the level of information only, the educational contents were based on the appropriately documented and accessible sets of information. Certain parts of the modules were not entirely different from those that could be met in various other educational programmes including those from the mainstream union, business or corporate sectors. However, the specific added value lay in the contextual educational framework within which they were presented and taught, that no professional corporate, or even union consultancy could recreate. This conclusion is based not only on our conscious intent of using feminist methodology that includes standpoint methodology, active listening, empowerment, disrupting gender roles, but also on the feedback and comments at the end of the project.

Namely, at the times it seemed, especially with the advent of recession and the acute crisis in the country, that our educational effort, already limited in scope, represents to hundreds of concerned workers whose working conditions not only were often worse than we have imagined, but even deteriorated, a drop in the ocean of more pressing needs. During year 2009, up to August only, 3900 workers in the textile industry have lost their jobs. The

peak of the crisis was in the summer and early autumn when one factory after another was forced to dismiss hundreds of workers or to declare bankruptcy. These circumstances have dramatically affected the completion of the project. The original plan was that union representatives use the gained knowledge and skills in the negotiating process directed to improving of their working conditions, to adoption of new collective agreements and negotiating at the level of local economic and social councils. On the contrary, suddenly there was a need of negotiating the terms of layoffs, bankruptcy and dealing with the unemployment. The priorities of our partners moved from getting education to providing of basic needs.

Some of less expected or planned outcomes were, however, interesting and telling. Several positive changes and developments were noted by the workers themselves, particularly in the field of communication skills that they had opportunity to use both while dealing with managers and with the media. Their increased self-confidence and assertiveness, which was the result of self-awareness and learning of effective models of communication, helped the union representatives to take an active role in a crisis situation – they launched a media campaign, were convoking press conferences, negotiated with the membership the decision to file for bankruptcy and thereby preserve jobs and ensure regular pay check. They have detected themselves the bad public relations strategy of their companies and the ministry, they managed to anticipate steps and to gain public sympathy. They were able to control emotions when information was distorted by the managers and the media and to achieve the required emotional detachment. The level of awareness has increased in relation to recognizing their strengths as well as the weaknesses of the ‘other side’. Finally, they also sometimes claimed not to be able to apply what they have learned, because on the managerial side they continued to face the wall of non-listening. Some suggested that similar educational programmes and workshops for communication skills should be offered to the management, and they even proposed a joint training with them.

An interesting outcome was noted by the union leadership: they noticed rapprochement between the leadership and the membership, increased cohesion within the union, strengthening of trust between two groups where there is often a mistrust that stems from dissonance of what members expect from the leadership in terms of solving problems, and what those later are able to achieve. Similarly, more positive image of the civil sector and NGOs appeared, and they were able to identify potential allies among women’s and other civil organisations, media, etc. The final lesson learned, by all of us,

was that the best remedy for combating stress is to take matters into their own hands through action and activism. Not without pride, the union representatives recognized that they had become teachers themselves because they had the knowledge and skills passed on to their membership.

This palpable pride has led to a common conclusion that women have the knowledge that they were ready to use and that they just need more encouragement, assertiveness and support. What the wider community can and should do for the full development of women's potential in the field of leadership is to create conditions so that women can take responsibility and engage the public. This means above all to ensure uniform distribution of housework, which is modern European dictionary called reconciliation of work and family life for both women and men. Strengthening social services (nurseries, kindergartens, extended stay in schools, leisure and sports activities for school children in small communities), better public transportation options for all family members, computerization of households and schools to use new communication technology has increased the level of awareness and connectedness of citizens, and would allow women greater independence and autonomy available free time that can devote the political, trade union and civic engagement in the community. The above improvements are the responsibility of state and local community: all policy planning and financing for development must take into account gender analysis and gender perspective. Greater accessibility and effectiveness of mechanisms to combat discrimination (Attorney General, the judiciary, legal services) must also be systematically encouraged, especially in areas where, because of their specificity increased likelihood of multiple discrimination (rural areas, with greater proportion of ethnic minorities such as Roma, and with a significantly older population, and an increased proportion of unemployed older women). Only when the government takes clear responsibility, and encourage these changes we can expect positive changes in social values and expectations of women. This was the conclusion of the project based on the methodological optimism that those kind of development projects impose.

The ambivalence of this story's ending, though, has to be kept. There is no closure on this one. As the crisis progresses, not only economical, but political, social, ecological and moral, the uncertainty of the future prevents any rational planning, despite the belated finalisation of the Croatia's accession to the European Union. There is no bright future for struggling women and men who keep going. A worker went back to evening school and finished the programme for a book-keeper – but there is no job for a book-keeper in her county, there is too many book-keepers for too few businesses.

Perhaps all we did is helping them retain their dignity, which they, as honest workers, already had. And we have got a self-doubt back.

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Sažetak

KAKO OSNAŽITI TEKSTILNE RADNICE

U tekstu je otvoreno nekoliko pitanja proizašlih iz iskustava zagrebačkog Centra za ženske studije u organiziranju edukacijskih projekata usmjerenih osnaživanju žena u politici te tekstilnih radnica. Među njima su metode feminističkog aktivizma, ideja dijeljenje znanja, mogućnosti prijenosa specifične ženskostudijske obrazovne dinamike u novi kontekst, kao i etička pitanja koja proistječu iz različitog pozicioniranja 'partnera' u ovakvim projektima u rasteru klasnih i drugih privilegija. U tekstu su naznačeni problemi s kojima se susreće domaća tekstilna industrija i radnice i radnici zaposleni u njoj, opisan je proces učenja koji je doveo do nekih pozitivnih pomaka u samosvijesti i praktičnim komunikacijskim vještinama sindikalnih povjerenica/ka, ali i neizvjesna budućnost radništva općenito u stanju duboke ekonomske i političke krize u zemlji i suvremenom svijetu.

VOICES FROM THE REGION: EUROPEAN DREAM TURNED INTO NIGHTMARE

I had a personal motive to dedicate a part of my journalistic work to researching new migration patterns in the Balkans, other than believing that the topic is important, exciting, and far-reaching. Both my parents were *gastarbeiters* - labour migrants temporarily working in Western Europe. The story is, in fact, familiar and stereotypical: up through the early nineties, my father was the breadwinner in our family - as were many men from Croatia. He also worked at construction sites all over Germany and came home only for holidays. After the war broke out, my father couldn't easily find a job anymore. So my mother took over. Together with a few other women who were refugees from Bosnia whom she had become friends with, my mother went to Italy to be the caretaker of an old woman.

When I read about thousands of abandoned children in rural Romania, whose parents went westward to work, I think about my own lonely childhood, growing up with one parent always away. (Although, it's not completely fair to make such comparisons, since I did have unquestionable emotional and material stability). So, when I applied for the Balkan Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence programme, I knew immediately what would be the topic of my research: women taking over the labour exodus from the Balkans, and its influence on women's emancipation and the family structure.

The stipend allowed me to travel throughout Europe. I visited Romania, Bulgaria, Austria, Germany, Italy. When I went to do the research in the summer of 2009, my daughter was only two months old, an infant, so

it was extremely hard for me to leave her for a period of time - although, I knew she'd be in good hands, with her father and my family. But, making that sacrifice helped me to understand the emotional pressure of the migrant women, *gastarbeiters*, who were forced to separate from their families because of utterly poor living conditions. (This comparison is not very fair either, because those women's situations were far more horrible than mine ever was.)

With generous help from the Erste Foundation and the Bosch Foundation, I wrote a feature story based on my travels and interviews with more than a hundred female *gastarbeiters*, their families, employers and friends. The story won me the first prize in the prestigious programme within Balkan Investigative Reporting Network. More importantly, it was republished in the media all around Europe, which helped those brave and marginalized migrant women gain more visibility. The story, I think, fitted great with the topic of the Dubrovnik feminist course. Rather than retelling it again, I'm presenting the original text that is the product of my research.

Although she celebrated her 29th birthday only a week ago, Alina looks as if she is in her forties. Her straggly hair, bitten nails and swollen, constantly blinking eyes do her no favours and give the impression of a haunted person. "All he needs to do is to make sure the girls are clean, fed and do their homework, but it's still too much for him," she says of her husband. "It's easier to whore around, drink and gamble. With my money." Ignoring the beautiful view from the sunny terrace of a cafe in Deruta, a quiet Italian town near Perugia, Alina lights another cigarette, recounting the phone conversation she had an hour earlier with her teenage daughters in Romania. When Alina left her hometown of Gaesti in 2006 to work in Italy as a home help for an elderly wheelchair-bound woman, her husband Cosmin, 37, remained at home to mind the children. But four days ago he disappeared along with all of the family's money, her daughter had informed her. Alina is part of a growing phenomenon - women from the Balkans, working in the West, who have become the sole breadwinners for their households. It is a reversal of the traditional pattern in which men emigrated to work abroad, leaving their wives at home. Such a change is placing great strain on many families.

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDESA, which tracks migration patterns all over the world, says that, since 1990, women emigrants have outnumbered men in nine Balkan countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro,

Romania and Serbia. UNDESA reports show that, while women make up 49.6 per cent of global migration statistics, in the Balkans, this figure is 54 per cent.¹ This phenomenon is most noticeable in Macedonia and Bulgaria, where women make up 59 per cent of migrants. According to a 2008 World Bank estimate, of the 7.9 million people who have emigrated from the Balkans, women make up 4.3 million, or 54.4 per cent.²

In the past, women from the Balkans usually stayed at home with their children while their husbands worked in the coalmines and steelworks of the West, sending their hard-earned money back home. When they traveled abroad, women did so mainly to accompany their husbands as they sought work, or to join them later under family reunification policies. However, the collapse of the Iron Curtain in 1989, technological advances in the workplace and the armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia in the nineties triggered a process of feminisation in labour migration in the Balkans. Manual work in factories gave way to new forms of employment in the service sector that required or preferred female workers. As a result, more women are migrating from the Balkans than ever before, and more are becoming the main financial providers for their households.

The professions traditionally reserved for immigrant women from the Balkans are generally in poorly paid and socially unattractive sectors of the economy for which there are local labour shortages. Specifically, Balkan women usually find work as cleaning ladies, waitresses in cafes and restaurants, hotel chambermaids and carers for the sick and elderly. According to a study conducted in 2007 by Open Society Romania, out of the almost 255,000 Romanian women working temporarily in Italy, 88 per cent have worked at least once - often illegally - as a home help.³

Sociologists note that, while this new trend has presented women from the Balkans with a new source of empowerment, it has taken them away from their families and created new pressures. Families in which women have become sole breadwinners have undergone a thorough metamorpho-

1 Yearly reports on migration from United Nations' Department of Economic and Social Affairs
http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/2009Migration_Chart/2009IttMig_chart.htm.

2 World Bank Data: Gender Statistics (<http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/gender-statistics>); Migration and Remittances Data (<http://econ.worldbank.org>); Migration Database with Gender Breakdown, 1990 - 2000 (<http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTPROGRAMS/EXTINTERNATIONAL/0,,contentMDK:22691826~pagePK:64168182~piPK:64168060~theSitePK:1572893,00.html>)

3 The report of the Open Society Romania: "Living abroad on a temporary basis. The economic migration of Romanians: 1990-2006" (<http://econ.worldbank.org/document=27>)

sis, they say, posing unforeseen challenges to traditional patriarchal Balkan family structures.

“Female migrant breadwinners are the reality for a great proportion of families in the Balkans,” Croatian sociologist Ivan Prolic says. “The trend is on the rise, re-configuring traditional families, making changes to patriarchal mentalities and shaking up rural communities,” he adds. Prolic says the trend is so recent that little research has been conducted into it. “Sociologically, it is interesting and should definitely be explored with greater attention,” he concludes. It’s tough for the ‘badante’.

Alina does a job that not many Italians are prepared to do, and does so for what they would consider an offensively low salary. All the same, she manages to send 400 euros back to her family every month. In addition to her salary, Alina has another incentive that she hopes will make her sacrifice worthwhile. The handicapped 77-year-old she is looking after has promised to leave the house to her helper when she passes away. “I’m waiting for her to die,” Alina admits matter-of-factly, puffing away at yet another cigarette. Because of this promise, she copes with the fact that she does not much like her employers, whom she believes to be racist. She notes a report from the newspaper *Corriere della Sera* last summer about an Italian woman who was arrested after abusing and virtually enslaving her Romanian housekeeper for a year. Threatening to report her as an illegal immigrant, she had forced her to live in the basement.

Meanwhile, immigrants like Alina also have to cope with the scorn of local residents. In Italy, as in the rest of Western Europe, anti-immigrant sentiments have increased since the economic downturn of 2008, according to a report by Rome-based NGO *Caritas Migrante*.⁴

Italy’s rightist government chafes at the EU’s open border policy and the fact that, since January 2008, citizens of the newest EU members, Romania and Bulgaria, can more freely move and work anywhere in the EU. Still, immigration specialist Antonio Ricci says that Italy should be grateful for its more than 2.5 million registered immigrants and approximately 700,000 illegal immigrants. In an aging society with a very low birth rate, the economy would suffer severely without immigrant labour, especially small and medium sized firms, he says.⁵

Privately-hired carers from Eastern Europe who care for the sick and elderly, cover gaps left by the country’s inefficient welfare policy, experts

4 “Dossier statistico immigrazione 2005” (IDOS, Roma, 2005).

5 “I romeni in Italia: tra rifiuto ed accoglienza” by Franco Pittau, Antonio Ricci and Laura Timsa (Edizioni Idos/Sinnos, Roma, 2010)

say. For these reasons, home helps were excluded from the toughened anti-immigrant measures imposed last year by the Italian government. Still, the public's disdain for both men and women who look foreign, be they from Romania, Albania or Morocco, is readily apparent. This animosity can be detected in the way many Italians pronounce the word 'badante', which refers to foreign women working as carers. Alina is fed up with it. "Shop assistants in supermarkets always follow me around to see if I'm stealing something, and some people won't return my greeting in the street. It's humiliating and happens a lot," she says. "My friend from Bulgaria, another badante, says I'll get used to it, but I never will," she adds.

Whilst demand for migrants is created by gaps in the labour market in Western Europe, the poor economies of most Balkan states provide an almost limitless supply of women ready to temporarily leave their families to work abroad.

Surveys in 2006 and 2008 by Gallup Balkan Monitor revealed that deep dissatisfaction with living standards in most Western Balkan countries has been one of the main reasons behind migration trends. Although financial reasons are the main motivation for working abroad, most female immigrants I interviewed in Italy, Austria, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania and Bulgaria believe the benefits of migration go beyond money.

Neda Plesa from Boboljusi, in Bosnia, is a loud, witty woman in her late thirties. With an almost constant smile on her face, it's hard to imagine her being sad. Yet she says she suffered from serious depression before she found work abroad. Like a few hundred other women from Bosnia's north-west, Neda has found a new career in northern Austria. Since 2004, she has worked on a dairy farm outside Linz. "My job is one per cent inspiration and 99 per cent perspiration," she jokes. But she still sees her job as an escape from a life she likens to prison. "My ex-husband thought a woman shouldn't work and that a man should be provide for the family... typical Bosnian macho stuff," she recalls. "While he worked in a construction company, I stayed at home, bored and lonely, cooking, eating and watching TV and getting fatter. "When I asked him for money, I had to explain exactly what I needed it for. It is called economic violence and it eventually destroyed my self-respect," Neda concludes. Thanks to her job in Austria, Neda is now reasonably well-off, divorced and has discovered a passion for backpacking.

Mira Bator, 38, from Kiseljak, in central Bosnia, also says that her migration has not just been about money. She, too, feels a new life working abroad has given her self-respect. Bator left Bosnia for Zagreb, Croatia, in 2007 to work in her cousin's shoe store as a saleswoman. Her unemployed husband

and pre-school son, Adam, joined her last year. "My parents want me to quit my job to take care of Adam and think my husband should provide for the family," she says. "But I don't have a problem with being the breadwinner. It makes me feel self-confident and proud of myself. "Being confined within four walls could never make me feel this way," she adds.

Westward economic migration has deprived some villages and small towns of almost all their working-age women. If anyone wants to know what a world without women would look like, they should visit Varshets, a remote town in Bulgaria's Montana district. Famous for its mineral springs, it is also renowned for the fact that its approximately 5,000 inhabitants are mostly wifeless, jobless husbands and motherless children. The town's women have gone to work in Italy and Spain, sending back the earnings they have made as badante or workers in the catering industry. Even on hot and sunny summer days, not a single woman is to be seen in the Bor-Cvor snack bar on the main street. The place is packed with men, laughing and chitchatting over simple tables covered with chequered red-and-white covers. Defying the stereotypes of male-only communities, Varshets looks peaceful, orderly and pleasant. The men hang around in the bar every day, supporting each other while they wait for their wives to come home for vacations.

Peter Dimov, 45, a construction worker with a warm smile, has not seen his wife since last year. He admits he wept when his son recently asked what colour his mother's eyes were, because he couldn't remember. Peter's readiness to talk about his loneliness and longing in the middle of a pub and in front of other men, contradicts another stereotype about men, as do his friends' compassionate attitudes. They admit to similar experiences. The men of Varshets have learned to cook and help their daughters get through adolescent crises. Thankfully, their attitude toward this complete reversal of the usual patriarchal family model appears to be healthy. "I never appreciated what my wife did for the kids and the household until I lost my job and she went to work in Italy," Peter admits.

"Now, raising my boys, I realise how hard it is to be a housewife. Construction work is a piece of cake in comparison with this," he jokes, while others nod approvingly.

While improved living standards represent an obvious benefit for female emigrants, it often comes at a high price. Just like many Western businesswomen, women migrants from Eastern Europe often suffer from medical conditions, which, according to the American Psychiatric Association, may include depression, difficulties adapting to their new situations, mood swings and despair. Meanwhile, Romania has experienced a new, horrify-

ing syndrome: suicides by children whose mothers left them behind when they went abroad. In 2008, according to a study conducted by UNICEF and the Social Alternatives Association in Romania, almost 350,000 Romanian children had at least one parent working abroad, of which around 126,000 were without either parent. In 2006 and 2007, at least 19 children killed themselves, often - their suicide notes reveal - as a result of acute feelings of parental rejection or abandonment. Several of these suicides occurred in Dambovită county in central Romania, a place that is infamous for the number of parentless children.

In Alina's home town of Gaesti, the side-effects of families torn apart by migration are evident on every corner. The town is populated almost exclusively by children and grandparents who have assumed parental functions since the children's parents migrated westwards to work. The look of the village explains why people are ready to do anything to leave and seek a better life in Italy, Spain or elsewhere. Makeshift houses are covered with old carpets and even rusty sides of refrigerators for insulation. Packs of skinny dogs and groups of even skinnier kids wander around, playing in muddy puddles and piles of unrecognisable, malodorous waste in the main street.

Adrian is nine and his sister Irina is only seven. They hang around a deserted bus station, playing games on their Nintendos. Their mother went to Spain two years ago and has not come back. She has not called or written, although she sends their grandmother money every month. When asked what they want most in life, they say in unison "iPod". "I don't miss our mum and I don't want her to come back," Adrian says, his big eyes fixed on the toy in his hand. "Granny says she's left us for good, and has a new boyfriend now. I don't want to meet him."

According to the Romanian National Authority for Child Protection, children like Adrian and Irina face a precarious future. Their living standards and the pretence of normal lives are only secure as long as their parents keep sending money and their grandparents are alive and well. If this status quo breaks down, they might end up in dismal orphanages and eventually be recruited into prostitution or crime.

Female breadwinners from the Balkans struggle with what is sometimes a no-win situation. The dream of emancipation through participation in the Western labour market can turn into a nightmare, especially for their families. While the challenge that this trend poses to traditional patriarchy is welcome, the process can also result in children who no longer appreciate the difference between a mother who drops by for a week or two every summer and a new iPod.

Short biographical information about the authors:

Dr Durre S. Ahmed is Chairperson and Senior Research Fellow at the Center for the Study of Gender and Culture, Lahore, Pakistan. From 1976-2009 she taught at the National College of Arts, Pakistan's premier arts institution. As an internationally acknowledged expert on socio-psychological and cultural dimensions of Islam and Muslims in Europe, as well as on gender, religion, culture and science, she has been engaged in researching and teaching at various universities, educational and public institutions. Apart from numerous research papers and book chapters, she is the author of *Masculinity, Rationality and Religion: A Feminist Perspective* (1992), editor and contributing author of *Gendering the Spirit: Women, Religion and Postcolonial Response* (2002) and a six volume series on *Women and Religion*. Dr. Ahmed was awarded the Fatima Jinnah Memorial Gold Medal by the Government of the Punjab, Pakistan, for outstanding contributions to education and research (2008), the Izzaz-i-Fazeelat President of Pakistan Award for Academic distinction (2009), and other international and national recognitions. She has served as a juror of the Commonwealth Writers Prize (2009) and the Templeton Prize for Religion (2009-2011).

Dr Melanija Belaj is assistant at the Institute of ethnology and folklore research, Zagreb, since 2001. After completing her undergraduate studies in ethnology and comparative literature, in 2005 she defended her masters thesis entitled *Family photos - analysis and interpretation in the ethnological-anthropological science framework* at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb. At the same University she defended her Ph thesis *Ethnological and anthropological approach to the culture of family production and consumption of alcoholic beverages*. From 2003 to 2005 co-hosted in the Croatian ethnological society Club organizing lectures in the field of ethnology and cultural anthropology. Currently, she participates in the science project "Food Culture Within Social Changes of 20th and the Beginning of 21st Century" head by Nives Rittig Beljak.

Rada Borić, MA, is a feminist linguist and activist. Executive director at the Centre for Women's Studies in Zagreb and lecturer and trainer on feminist issues. Former program coordinator of Center for women war victims and spokesperson for women's human rights internationally; regional coordinator of V-day, global movement against violence against women, member of the Executive Board of the European Women Lobby; co-director of postgraduate course Feminisms in a Transnational Perspective at IUC Dubrovnik and a writer of numerous texts on feminist issues. Co-editor of the book, *The Suitcase: Refugee Voices from Croatia and Bosnia* (California University Press, 1997), and editor of the *Glossary of Gender Equality* (Office for Gender Equality, Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2008). She wrote the first Finnish-Croatian-Finnish Dictionary and was awarded (by Finnish president Tarja Halonen) Order of the Knight of the White Rose of Finland in 2007. In 2010 Forbes Magazine pronounced her one of the most influential feminists of the world.

Dr Simona Delić is a Senior Research Assistant at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb (Croatia). Her research interests so far have been: Croatian and Spanish ballad studies, translation studies, and comparative literature. She has published scholarly articles on these topics as well as a book (*Between the Slander and the Curse: The Family Theme in Croatian Traditional Ballad*, Zagreb, 2001; Award of University and other Professors, 2002). She completed her postgraduate education at the Complutense University in Madrid (DEA) and enriched her scientific experience while working at the Archive Ramón Menéndez Pidal (Madrid, Spain). She obtained her PhD degree at the University of Zagreb in 2004. She has translated from Spanish into the Croatian language contemporary Spanish and Latin American novelists: C. Fuentes, L. Leante, J. Marias.

Dr Iva Grgić Maroević teaches theory and history of translation and feminist translation studies at the Department of Italian, University of Zadar. A translator herself (of Pirandello, Woolf, Maraini and others), she has published numerous texts in the fields of Italian literature, translation studies and women's/gender studies. She is the editor of the Virginia Woolf series of the Centre for Women's Studies, where she has also lectured. She has edited and co-edited several collections of papers on translation-related topics, and is the author of two books: *Osman and His Doubles. A Trans-*

lation Study (Zagreb-Dubrovnik, 2004) and *Poetics of Translation in the Twentieth Century* (Zagreb, 2009). She is currently president of the Centre for Women's Studies in Zagreb and former president of the Croatian Literary Translators' Association.

Maja Hrgović is a journalist and fiction writer, born in Split, Croatia. She graduated in Croatian and English language and literature at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb. Since 2003, she has worked as a journalist in *Novi list*, Croatian national daily newspaper, covering culture and social issues, as well as gender issues. For her research on socio-economic migrations of women in Eastern Europe, Hrgović won the first Prize for journalistic excellence, awarded to her by Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, Erste Foundation and Bosch Foundation. Her journalistic work has been represented in numerous international media, including the book *Identity: The Search for Belonging in a Changing Europe* (2009).

She also writes fiction and critical essays on literature. For her first short story collection *Pobjeđuje onaj kojem je manje stalo* (Profil, 2010) she received Kiklop, national literary prize.

Dr Renata Jambrešić Kirin is senior researcher at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research (Zagreb) in the field of oral literature and oral history. She is a head of the project *Gender and Nation: feminist ethnography and postcolonial historiography* (2007-2011) and the co-director of the postgraduate courses *Feminisms in a transnational perspective* (2007-). Her research and publications predominantly deal with the subject of contemporary women's history in Croatia as mediated through the female autobiographical narratives, testimonial literature, women's writings and ethnographies. She co-edited five collections of papers and published the book *Dom i svijet: o ženskoj kulturi pamćenja* [Home and the world: on women's cultural memory] (2008).

Zora Kovacic is being awarded a BA in Economics and Development Studies from the University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies (London, UK, 2007). She was recognized as the most distinguished student in the Economics Department for the year 2005-2006. Her BA dissertation's topic was "Solidarity Economy" (she researched an array of NGOs

and microcredit institutions in São Paulo and Salvador, Brazil). She was also a volunteer at the Ecovillage “Fundação Terra Mirim”, Salvador, Brazil and created a network of ecovillages, establishing a relationship with over 40 Brazilian NGOs and 10 foreign NGOs, as well as organized educational activities with the children of the “Ecological School”. At the moment, she is in the process of attaining a Joint European MS in Environmental Studies from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Barcelona, Spain) and the Technische Universität Hamburg (Hamburg, Germany).

Dr Marina Miladinov is a lecturer in Church History, Latin, and English at the Theological Faculty “Matthias Flacius Illyricus” in Zagreb, Croatia. She obtained her PhD degree in Medieval Studies from Central European University, Budapest. Since then, her main field of interest has shifted to include the Reformation period, yet focusing still on the cult of saints and its uses or abuses. In 2004, she co-founded the Croatian Hagiography Society “Hagiotheca” and remained its president until last year. Her work has been presented in a number of articles in Croatia and abroad, as well as a book entitled *Margins of Solitude: Eremitism in Central Europe between East and West (10th-11th Centuries)* (2008). Although gender studies do not directly form part of her scholarly research, she has taught a number of courses related to the role of women in Christianity and its missionary enterprise. Ms Miladinov also works as freelance translator in the fields of art history, architecture, social studies, and history.

Jelena Milinović holds Master’s degree in Gender Studies and her thesis was on women’s entrepreneurship. She is Ph.D. candidate in Gender Studies with the thesis on leadership of women in BiH. She had excellent academic records from the Master’s program Gender Studies and as an economist she is particularly interested in development policies, globalization, leadership, gender budgeting, labor market, migrations and other relevant themes. She works for the Gender Centre of the Government of the Republic of Srpska (institutional mechanism for gender equality) in the middle management position of Head of Department for Coordination, Education and Cooperation.

Ivana Pražić earned her B.A. degree in Art History at the University of Belgrade (Serbia), and her M.A. degree from the Bangalore University (India). In Serbia she is engaged in translating theory and fiction, as well as activism promoting human rights of sexual minorities. In 2006 she won Darmasiswa scholarship at the Gadjah Mada University (Indonesia) and thereafter enrolled in a Ph.D. program at the ICRS-Yogya. Upon completing two out of four years of this program she was admitted into a Ph.D. program at the School of Oriental and African Studies (London). She is currently searching for funding to support her research entitled “Politics for Human Rights in Post-New Order Indonesia: Genealogy of *Kelenteng Sam Poo Kong* in Semarang.” She has published articles in various scholarly journals on a wide range of topics, from women’s accounts of Hajj to Buddhist Art o Gandhara to tourism studies in Indonesia.

Sandra Prlenda holds a M.A. in History and is preparing a PhD thesis at the École pratiques des hautes études in Paris and at the University of Zagreb. She works as research and publishing coordinator in the Centre for Women’s Studies in Zagreb, Croatia, where she also taught a course on women’s and gender history. Her research interests are situated in the area of gender and social history, nationalism and memory studies. She co-edited the book *Kulturno pamćenje i historija* [Cultural memory and history] (Zagreb, 2006).

Judith Samson holds an MA in Jewish Studies and is currently employed as a PhD candidate at the institute for Gender Studies at the Radboud University Nijmegen. The title of her anthropological PhD research is “Gender, Sexuality and Pilgrimage at Marian pilgrimage sites in Europe”. It deals with various groups involved in Marian devotion to make statements on gender and sexuality issues in relation to European politics, such as international missionary groups, women who had breast cancer, Hippies and Catholic sexual minorities. She has been active in the alterglobalisation movement and various political (lesbian) feminist groups in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium such as Feminist Attac, the Amnesty International Women’s group, the COC and Famba. She has forthcoming articles on “The Gender Agenda: New Catholic Fundamentalist Framing in Europe” and “Reading Images of Christ. The struggle over homosexuality in popular religious images of Jesus”.

Dr Violeta Schubert Duklevska is an anthropologist with ongoing research interest on contemporary Macedonian society, with particular expertise in areas of kinship, politics and gender. Her doctoral thesis explored aging bachelorhood and the problems of navigating selfhood in a socio-centric and rapidly changing society. She is a lecturer in Anthropology and Development Studies in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Melbourne. In her position as the Development Studies Program Administrator and Internship Coordinator she is extensively involved with development agencies and organisations, has conducted critical evaluation research on cross-sectorial partnerships between business, civil society and government and supervised many postgraduate students in the broad areas of gender, development, land reform, conflict, security, protection and humanitarian action.

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Genevieve Vaughan (born in Texas, USA) lived in Italy from 1963 to 1983, when she returned to Texas and started the Foundation for a Compassionate Society, an all-woman activist foundation with projects based on the idea of the gift economy and the political implementation of 'women's values.' Coordinator of International Feminists for a Gift Economy, she is presently in Italy, doing research on gift giving and language. Her books (*For-Giving: A Feminist Criticism of Exchange*, 1997; *Homo Donans*, 2006 et al), an array of essays, a film on her life titled "Giving for Giving" and extensive video records are all available, free of charge, on her website www.gift-economy.com.

