

The Doctoral School of History and the Department of History cordially invite you to

Public Defense of the Doctoral Thesis in
History
by

Zsófia Lóránd

on

**“Learning a Feminist Language”: The
Intellectual History of Feminism in Yugoslavia
in the 1970s and 1980s**

will be held on

Tuesday, March 31, 2015 at 10:00

in the

**Gellner room
Central European University (CEU)
Budapest—1051
Nádor 9**

Defense Committee

Chair: Károly Bárd, Legal Studies Department, CEU

Supervisors: Balázs Trencsényi, Department of History, CEU
Jasmina Lukic, Gender Studies Department, CEU

Members: László Kontler, Department of History, CEU

Heike Karge, University of Regensburg

Reader: Bonnie Smith, Rutgers University

Dissertation abstract

Language, concepts and ideology were the key elements to a new feminism emerging in Yugoslavia in the early 1970s. Not much after the second wave feminism had come to the fore in the West in its more and more diverging forms, Yugoslavia also had an organised form of feminism, a phenomenon that remained an exception in East Central Europe until the late 1980s. It was created by a few intellectual women and spread out in the three major cities in Yugoslavia: Belgrade, Ljubljana and Zagreb.

In the mid-1970s the universities in Zagreb and Ljubljana and the students' cultural centres in Belgrade and Ljubljana offered space for the groups which were called *Žena i društvo* [Woman and society]. The group had a “very traditional name, but still, we were feminists from the beginning” – said Biljana Kašić, a sociologist member of the group from Zagreb, studying earlier in Belgrade and later teaching at the University of Rijeka. This name itself tells us a lot about the place of this group within the Yugoslav political and intellectual scene. The phenomenon which I will refer to here mostly as the *new Yugoslav feminism* – sometimes called by the members *neofeminizam*, that is “new feminism”, a name however not acknowledged by all the members of the group – in my reading took a critical, counter-discursive, dissenting stance within the Yugoslav system. The new Yugoslav feminism targeted the proclaimed, yet to them, unfulfilled equality of women in Yugoslavia. They argue from a feminist base, inspired and infused by critical Marxism, post-structuralist French feminism, new theories in psychology, anthropology and sociology, but also referring to the Yugoslav partisan tradition as an emancipatory ideology for women. The arguments take shape first in academic work, the arts and literature, relatively quickly reaching the popular mass media and turning into activism.

This research places itself within the scholarship which treats feminism and the artistic counterculture in Western capitalisms from the 1960s on as dissent. While I also acknowledge that dissidence in the oppressive regimes of the Soviet bloc had different stakes and different limitations and I do take into consideration that we cannot think of East European socialisms in terms of the pure binaries of state vs. individual, collaboration and resistance. Reading through the history of these movements and the theoretical implications arising from that, I base my analysis on the questioning of the binary and rather focus on the tensions and balance within the new Yugoslav feminists discourse. Therefore, my claim is that through rereading concepts and meanings, integrating ideologies and theories from “Western” feminisms and through transfer creating their own version, new Yugoslav feminism is at the same time cooperating with the state and criticising the state.

With the longest feminist history in Eastern Europe between the Second World War (hereinafter WWII) and the fall of state socialism, Yugoslavia offers a case study where the socialist state is challenged based on one of its biggest promises, the equality of women. It is exactly this promise that places new Yugoslav feminism at the crossroads of discourses. In comparison to Western capitalist societies, where feminism was directly clashing with the state about women’s emancipation and therefore clearly appeared as dissent, it is widely discussed that the state guaranteed many of the rights which the North American and most¹ West European feminist groups were fighting for. In the meantime, new Yugoslav feminism is a counter-discourse vis-à-vis the newly emerging oppositional discourses in Yugoslavia too. The oppositional groups

¹ Scandinavia was an exception, cf. “Scandinavian state feminism”. Interestingly and similarly to Eastern Europe, the state offered equality slowed down the development of women’s independent organising and the appearance of radical feminism. Cf. Lesley McMillan, *Feminists Organizing against Gendered Violence* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007).

producing these discourses, either refused to discuss women's rights in search of an agenda of liberal democracy which disregards difference and stating that these were already achieved by socialism and could simply be maintained, or with a bio/ethno-nationalistic agenda, propagated the reversal of the "unnatural" and forced emancipation of women. As we shall see, the new Yugoslav feminists had a cooperative communicative relationship with Western feminisms, with the newly emerging liberals and the state itself as well, even if to a lesser extent. The only group that the *Žena i društvo* members refused to communicate with, at least until the very late 1980s, were the nationalists. It is exactly this diversification of the group and the change of the political environment which signals the end of an era in the history of Yugoslav feminism and this is why my research stops in 1990.

I divided the chapters of this dissertation along disciplines or discourses, taking the different audiences a discipline or publication attracts and the difference in the language a discipline or a type of publication allows. These factors define the ways criticism can be expressed. The first scene, where feminist ideas were formulated, was the academia. The first chapter, "Neither Class, Nor Nature – (Re)Turning to Feminism in the Social Sciences and Humanities", focuses on the academic works investigating feminism, through the prism of concepts such as "radical", "extreme" and "revolutionary", reinterpreting the role of class, work, family, consciousness, and introducing the concept of gender. In the second chapter, "Creation, Instead of Production: Feminism in Literature and Art", I analyse ways of expressing feminist ideas in art and literature, as well as the ways feminist theory and feminist art support and influence each other. The possibilities of women's creativity, and the concepts of the body, violence and motherhood are in the focus in this chapter. The way in the first chapter the "women's question" is replaced by the concept of feminism, the ideological

shift here is marked by the replacement of the concept of “women’s literature” with *žensko pismo*, the local variant of the French *écriture féminine*. The third chapter, “Feminism in the Popular Mass Media” investigates the politics of feminism when it reaches a wider audience, especially the compromises and achievements the mass media requires and facilitates, and also the tension between censorship and independence through popularity and high circulation numbers. I write about feminism’s ambivalent relationship to mass media, with emphasis on the issue of sexism in the genres of women’s and men’s magazines, and the ways the feminist approach to sexuality and violence can be presented in popular mass mediums. Besides the ideological shifts, I analyse the concept of the sexual revolution in detail. The last chapter, “Reorganising Theory: From Kitchen Tables to the Streets, from Theory to Activism” tells the story of new Yugoslav feminism’s “second wave”, that is the time after 1985. This is the time of new forms of activism and self-organisation, when the lesbian movement becomes an important ally and source of inspiration for the feminists and when new energies are gained from the women-only groups. The major concepts of the time are again sexuality and violence, and a further crucial theme is women’s health. I pay special attention to how the new Yugoslav feminists’ access to an international feminist movement was growing and how these connections influenced their discourse and actions.

My Own Place

“Feminism has been historically a complex political practice; its history should be no less so. Indeed, it is engaging in such critical practice that the history of feminism becomes part of the project it writes about; it is itself feminist history.”²

²Scott, *Only Padoxes*, 18.

The year before I started this research, I became a volunteer activist of the main Hungarian feminist NGO working against violence against women, called NANE.³ The experience with women and children survivors of gender based violence put my then ten years of reading of feminist theory, history, literature and art into a new perspective and made me believe that the primary aim of any work I do should be to contribute to the changing of the situation of these women and children. Having grown up in a society without feminism, even starting my higher education without access to feminist ideas, I was deeply impressed when I learned about the existence of such a rich history of feminism in Yugoslavia as early as 1970s and 1980s. These are exactly the decades we, in Hungary in the 1990s were missing from our own feminist history, which is the reason why the first years of my higher education were also the times of the, if not first, then second and third tentative steps of feminist theory and activism in Hungary. Writing this story is writing the story we never had, so that we can have it and share it.

³ Nők a Nőkért Együtt az Erőszak Ellen Egyesület, that is “Women with Women Together Against Violence”, the official English name being NANE Women’s Rights Association.

ZSÓFIA LÓRÁND

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- intellectual and literary history in Eastern Europe in the 20th century
- feminist intellectual history, feminist political thought
- women's art, women's literature (mostly 20th century)
- dissidence in Eastern Europe in the second half of the 20th century
- human rights
- activism and intellectuals

- current research:
 - *The Intellectual History of Feminism in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s*
 - *Feminism in Yugoslavia and the Meanings of Violence in Late Socialist Hungary and Yugoslavia*

EDUCATION

- 2008 – (2015) PhD Program in Comparative History, Central European University, Department of History
- 2006 – 2007
MA Comparative History, Central European University, Department of History
Thesis: “Feminism as Counterdiscourse in Yugoslavia in Two Different Contexts”
Supervisor: Balázs Trencsényi and Jasmina Lukić
Grade: A, with distinction
- 2000 – 2005
MA English Linguistics and Literature, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Faculty of Humanities
Thesis: “Keats and Contemporary Literary Theory”
Supervisor: Ágnes Péter
Grade: 5 (= A in the Hungarian system)
- 1999 – 2006
MA Political Science, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Faculty of Social Sciences
Thesis: “Feminism and Political Science. Analysing Contemporary Political Discourses”
Supervisor: Márton Szabó
Grade: 5
- 1999 – 2005
MA Comparative Literature, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Faculty of Humanities

Thesis: “East European Women’s Identity and Western Feminism”

Supervisor: Edit Zsadányi

Grade: 5

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2009 – 2010 spring “Intellectual History of Feminism and Women’s Literature in Hungary and the Region of Eastern Europe from the 1970s till Today” Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Institute of Cultural Studies and Hungarian Literature, Department of Modern Hungarian Literature
BA-level seminar, own syllabus, independent teaching
4 credits
- 2009—2012 “Gender, Fiction and Sexuality in Central Europe”, (co-teaching) McDaniel College, Budapest
Final year BA seminars, own syllabus, independent teaching
3 credits
- 2011—2012 spring “The Political Languages of Anti-Modernism in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900-1945”, teaching assistant to Professor Balazs Trencsényi, CEU, History Department, Budapest
Rewriting of the original syllabus of the course
MA seminar, 4 credits

RESEARCH PROJECTS

- 2011 – “Negotiating Modernity”, bibliography and outline to the subchapters on the history of feminism in Central and Eastern Europe from the Enlightenment till 2000
<http://negotiating.cas.bg/>, associate researcher and collaborator of a volume with the same title.
Authors of the volume: Balázs Trencsényi, Mónika Baár, Maria Falina, Maciej Janowski, Michal Kopeček. Expected publication date: 2014.
Head of the research team: Balázs Trencsényi
- 2004 – 2006 Discursive “reality” of a political party – Analysis of the Fidesz-MPSZ [leading Hungarian conservative party]. Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Institute for Political Science, Centre of Political Discourse Studies. Head of the research team: Márton Szabó
- 2004 – 2006 Medium – Culture – Literature. Literary and cultural studies in the 20th century. Cooperation of Eötvös Loránd University, Debrecen University and the Herder Foundation. Head of the research team: Ernő Kulcsár Szabó

TRAINING PROGRAMS

2011	NANE Association's [Nők a Nőkért Együtt az Erőszak Ellen Egyesület – NANE Women's Rights Association] training for supporting work with rape survivors
2009 – 2010	“Teaching in Higher Education”, two semester training, Curriculum Resource Centre, Central European University
2008	NANE Association's training for work on the Association's SOS hotline, helping survivors (women and children) of domestic violence
2007 – 2008	Sveučilišta u Zagrebu (Universities of Zagreb), Filozofski Fakultet (Faculty of Humanities), Croaticum – Centar za hrvatski kao drugi i strani jezik (Centre for Croatian as a second or foreign language)
2002 – 2004 Education	ski instructor, Semmelweis University, Faculty of Physical Education

SCHOLARSHIPS (OTHER THAN THE DEGREE PROGRAMS)

2011 – 2012 spring semester	Rutgers University, Department of History and Center for European Studies
2011 – 2012 fall semester	Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Forschungszentrum für Historische Geisteswissenschaften (FZHG) Cooperation between the FZHG, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main and the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. Funded by the Hertie Stiftung <ul style="list-style-type: none">• awarded to one applicant each year
2010 – 2011 fall semester	University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, Serbia. Funded by the International Visegrad Fund)
2005 – 2006	Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, Germany <ul style="list-style-type: none">• for the building of an East European art and literary network

WORK EXPERIENCE

2008 –	Helpline volunteer and women's rights trainer NANE Association [Nők a Nőkért Együtt az Erőszak Ellen Egyesület -- Women with Women Together Against Violence], working with survivors of domestic violence and rape
2007 – 2014	Editor of <i>BORA</i> , a book series of South Slavic women writers

- 2005 – 2014 Program leader of the art exchange project between the Akademie Schloss Solitude and the Attila József Circle, Association of Young Hungarian Writers (JAK), within the frames of a broader Eastern European Network Program of the Akademie
- 2003 – 2008 Editor of *JAK World Literature Series*
- 2003—2007 President of the community of young researchers called the “Gábor Dayka Society” at ELTE

LANGUAGE SKILLS

- Hungarian: native
- English: fluent
- German: fluent
- Serbo-Croatian (Bosnian/Croatian/Montenegrin/Serbian): fluent
- French: basic
- Russian: basic

PUBLICATIONS

1. Books (Edited, co-edited and introductions)

- 2013 *Haza – Home – Heimat. Transnational Literary Festival – Texts from the Festival*. Dűlő, No. 7.
- 2006 *Laikus olvasók? A nem-professzionális olvasás értelmezési lehetőségei* [Lay Readers? Possible Interpretations of the Non-professional Reading] (co-editor, author of the introduction and contributor) Budapest: L’Harmattan.
- 2003 – Books in the *JAK World Literature Series* and in the series *BORA Books*

2. Scholarly articles, book chapters

in print

“Feminist Criticism of the “New Democracies” in Serbia and Croatia in the early 1990s”, in: Michal Kopeček and Piotr Wciślik (ed.): *Thinking Through Transition: Liberal Democracy, Authoritarian Pasts, and Intellectual History in East Central Europe After 1989*. New York and Budapest: CEU Press.

accepted for publication

“Exhibiting Rape: Alaine Polcz in the House of Terror Museum in Budapest”, *East Central Europe*, 2015

2015

- “‘A Politically Non-Dangerous Revolution is Not a Revolution’ – Critical Readings of the Concept of Sexual Revolution by Yugoslav Feminists in the 1970s”, *European Review of History / revue européenne d histoire*, 22:1 (2015)
- 2012
- “(Poszt-)szocialista poszt-feminizmus” (Post-socialist post-feminism), *TNTF*, 2012. summer
- “Emlékek versus emlékművek: Polcz Alaine a budapesti Terror Házában” (Memoirs vs Memorials: Alaine Polcz in the House of Terror Museum in Budapest), 2000, April 2012.
- 2011
- ‘Jugoszlávia retrospektív – az elvárás-horizonttól a tapasztalati térig, és vissza (Drakulić, Iveković, Ugrešić)’ [Yugoslavia retrospective – from the horizon of expectations to the space of experience and the other way round], in: Jolán Orbán and Kristóf Fenyvesi. (ed.): *East-West Passages*. Pécs: Jelenkor. [submitted to the publisher]
- 2009
- ‘Szexuális erőszak diskurzusok a kilencvenes évek (poszt)jugoszláv háborúiban / háborúiról’ [Discourses of sexual violence in and of the (post)yugoslav wars of the 1990s], *Századvég*, 2009. No. 3.
- ‘Feminism in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s, in asymmetrical comparison with Hungary’ [dissertation outline], *Der Donauraum* 2009. No. 1-2. “System Changes in South Eastern Europe: Social, Political and Demographic Consequences” ed. Heinz Fassmann, Rainer Münz, Dieter Segert
- 2008
- ‘Individual Approaches to Feminism in Yugoslav Literature’, in: *Yearbook 9*. ed. Jean-Baptiste Joly and Antonia Lotz. Stuttgart: Akademie Schloss Solitude, 2008.
- 2007
- ‘Who is Afraid of the Political?’, in: Márton Szabó (ed.): *On Politics: Rhetorics, Discourse and Contexts*. Budapest: MTA, Institute for Political Science (E-Books 9), 2006/07.
- 2006
- ‘Štefica Cvek az irodalom sűrűjében. Olvasók, kánonok, politika’ [Štefica Cvek in the jaws of literature. Readers, canons, politics], in: Zsófia Lóránd, Tamás Scheibner and Gábor Vaderna (ed.): *Laikus olvasók? A nem-professionális olvasás értelmezési lehetőségei* [Lay Readers? Interpretations of the Non-professional Reading]. Budapest: L’Harmattan.
- ‘Nemi szerep, nemi identitás a Fidesz diskurzusában’ [Gender role, gender identity in the discourse of Fidesz], in: Márton Szabó (ed.):

Fideszvalóság. Diszkurzív Politikatudományi Értekezések [A Discursive Approach to Political Analysis]. Budapest: L'Harmattan.

2005

‘Nincs bocsánat? Fordítás, filológia, intertextualitás Keats egy versében’ [No Mercy? Translation, intertextuality and philology in a poem by Keats], in: Ildikó Józán and Mihály Szegedy-Maszák (ed.): *A “boldog Babel”*. *Tanulmányok az irodalmi fordításról* [The “Happy Babel”. Studies on literary translation]. Budapest: Gondolat.

2004

‘Testiség, nőiség, szövegalkotás Keats *La Belle Dame sans Merci* című versében’ [Sensuality, body, femininity, creation of texts in Keats’s *La Belle Dame sans Merci*], in: Zoltán Gábor Szűcs and Gábor Vaderna (ed.): *Nympholeptusok. Test, kánon, nyelv és költőiség a 18–19. században* [Nympholepts. Body, Canon, Language and Poetics in 18th-19th Century Literature]. Budapest: L'Harmattan.

3. Translations

Tibor Fischer: *Aki hülye, ne olvassa*. Short Stories [with Kornél Hamvai] Budapest: Gondolat, 2005. [Tibor Fischer: *Don't Read this Book if You are Stupid*. London: Vintage (Random House), 2000.]

Samuel Weber: ‘Ambivalencia: A humántudományok és az irodalom vizsgálata’ [Ambivalence. The Humanities and the Study of Literature], in: Tibor Bónus, Pál Kelemen and Gábor Tamás Molnár (ed.): *Intézményesség és kulturális közvetítés* [Institutionalism and Cultural Mediation], Budapest: Ráció, 2005. [Samuel Weber: Ambivalence. The Humanities and the Study of Literature, *Diacritics* (15), No. 2. 1985.]

Thomas Hyllard Eriksen: ‘Etnikai osztályozás: mi és ők’ (Ethnic classification: us and them), in: *Kultúra és közösség*. Vol. 6. 2002. No. 3. 61-67.

George Lakoff: ‘Metafora, morál, politika’, *Huszonegy*. No. 2. 2001. 36-63 p. [from George Lakoff: *Moral Politics. What Conservatives Know that Liberals Don't*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.]

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION (SINCE 2008):

Panel chaired:

2013

25-27 April, “Alternative Spaces as a Political Challenge?”
Conference: “Historians in Space. 7th Graduate Conference in European History”, Budapest, Central European University, in cooperation with the European University Institute and University of Vienna

Presentations:

2014

16-17 October, “New Feminism and the Yugoslav State: Dissent or Negotiation”

Conference: “New Perspectives in the Transnational History of Communism in East-Central Europe”

Organisers: Department of Philosophy, Adam Mickiewicz University; Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Research Center for the Humanities, Institute of History; Institute of National Remembrance, Poznań
Venue: Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

2013

24-26 May, Friendship and canonisation”

Conference: “Transnational Women’s Literature in Europe”

Organiser and venue: CEU, Budapest; in cooperation with FP7 Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowship and Akademie Schloss Solitude

10-11 May, with Mariann Dósa: “Women and poverty in Hungarian literature”

Conference: “On Borders. The Representation of Poverty in Hungarian Literature”

Venue: Wesley János Főiskola, Budapest

Organiser: journal *2000*

11-15 February, “Neither Class, Nor Nature: (Re)Turning to Feminism – Social Science, Philosophy, History”

Workshop: Encounters in South East European Studies, CEU YURG and IAS – UCL SSEES

Venue: CEU, Budapest

2011

30 Sept – 1 Oct, “Feminista rendszerkritika 1989 előtt Jugoszláviában és annak jelentősége két évtizeddel később” (Feminist criticism of the Yugoslav system before 1989 and its significance two decades later)

Awarded with the prize for the best presentation

Conference: “Gender relations in light of the past 20 years of regime change: post-socialism (?) and post-feminism (?)”

Organiser and venue: University of Szeged

20th-22nd May, “Feminist criticism of the “new democracies” in Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s”

Conference: Liberal Democracy, Authoritarian Pasts and the Legacy of 1989. Comparative workshop on recent history of political and social thought in East Central Europe

Organiser: Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague

Venue: Czech Academy of Sciences, Národní 3, Praha 1

13th-14th May, “State-supported Mass Media as a Forum for Feminist Counterdiscourse? The Yugoslav Case”
Conference: Gesellschaften in Diktaturen des 20. Jahrhunderts – Kulturen, Alltagspraxen, Semantiken. 9. Potsdamer Doktorandenforum zur Zeitgeschichte
Organiser: Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung, Potsdam
Venue: Potsdam, Am Neuen Markt 9D, Bibliotheksgebäude, großer Seminarraum

2010

26th-27th November, “Official State Socialist Discourse on Feminism in Yugoslavia in the 1982 Debate: Anti-Feminist or Post-Feminist?”
Conference: “Dani Marije Jurić Zagorka 2010: Feminizam, antifeminizam i kriza” [Marija Jurić Zagorka Days 2010: Feminism, antifeminism and crisis]
Organiser: Centre for Women’s Studies and the Department of Comparative Literature, Zagreb University
Venue: Centre for Women’s Studies, Zagreb

6th-9th June, “Memoirs vs Memorials: Alaine Polcz in the House of Terror Museum in Budapest”
Conference: 3rd annual Graduate Conference in European History (GRACEH): “Biography and Identity: Dilemmas and Opportunities”
Organiser and Venue: CEU History Department, Budapest

18th June, “The appearance of feminism in the Yugoslav Historiography of the 1970s and 1980s”
Conference: Joint PhD Symposium on South East Europe
Venue: European Institute, LSE, London
Organisers: Centre for the Study of the Balkans, Goldsmiths – Centre for South East European Studies, SSEES, UCL – Research on South East Europe, European Institute, LSE

2009

28th-30th April, ‘Feminism as a Travelling Concept and as Counterdiscourse in Yugoslavia’
Conference: 3rd annual Graduate Conference in European History (GRACEH): Migration and Movement in European History. Organiser and Venue: European University Institute, Florence, Italy.

8th-9th May, ‘Belief, Disillusionment and “Re-illusionment” of Women in Communism – Erzsébet Galgóczi’
Conference: Do Women have Victory Day? Women’s Traumatic Memory and Resistance Narratives. Organiser: Centre for Women’s Studies, Zagreb.
Venue: Galerija HAZU, Zagreb, Croatia

4th-6th December, ‘Feminism in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s’

Conference: 1st Young Scientists Forum on Central and South East Europe.
"System Changes of South East European Societies: Social, Political and
Demographic Consequences"
Venue: Fachhochschule des bfi Wien (Wohlmutterstraße 22, A-1020 Vienna)
Organiser: IDM, Vienna

2008

18th-21st September, 'Redefining Yugoslavia in Retrospect – from
Erwartungshorizont to Erfahrungsraum and the other way round (Drakulić,
Iveković, Ugrešić)'
Conference: 2nd meeting at The Balkan Gateway - International,
Interdisciplinary Conference. The Challenges Of Difference: Equal
Opportunities, Culture, Ethnicity, Social Gender. Venue: Pécs, Cultural
Capital Program.