

ABSTRACTS

State-socialism — Women — Democratic Opposition

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The Soviet-type policies of women's emancipation were established by the communist parties in the state socialist systems of the ex-Soviet block countries. Mostly driven by economic necessities, these regimes interpreted gender equality beyond political rights mostly as the access to full employment. Gendered inequalities, however, and gender discrimination and subordinating mechanisms persisted in all spheres of social life both in public and private life. The study explores how the primarily state-controlled and censored publications represented the issues of women's emancipation and gender relations and the question of how "secondary", uncontrolled samizdat publications of the small circles of dissident, oppositional intellectuals reflected on these issues. How did such oppositional groups formulate their feminist criticism towards the state-socialist establishment in Soviet block countries in the 1970s and 80s? The methodology of the search for the answers includes the reading of contemporary publications, samizdats, secondary literature about state-socialism, and mainly personal interviews by the author with ex-activists. The patriarchal, internal group dynamics of the dissident circles in the era of Kadarism in Hungary must have been among the reasons why - beyond a few feminist actions and initiatives - no movement and coherent understanding and criticism of state-socialist women's emancipation could be formulated within the democratic opposition.

“Gender” Quarantined in the Hungarian Public and Academic Discourses: Are we to free or leave it?

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We may have invested too much in the emergence, spread, and references to “gender” in Hungary. Yet, our actual achievements weighed up against those expectations seem very disappointing. What were those hopes and what has happened to them in the past three decades? In my paper, I try to provide an overview of the achievements as a point of departure for future research. The picture is a close-up in motion when compared with Zimmermann’s (2017) global historical perspective but seems productive and valid for reflecting on what should be taken into account here and now for the elegiac Hungarian history of “gender”. To explore the reasons, I shall address the politics of science and history of ideas, while knowing that our lived life entails the very intertwined relationships thereof.

The Atrocity Campaign against “Woman” by the “Angry Politician” in Defence of his Aggrieved Entitlements

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Feminist research prioritizes the study of women’s lived life, “womanhood”, and female subjectivity. The focus is partly motivated by the intention to make up for the non-visibility or trivialization of women in the humanities and social sciences. Yet, in my analysis of the women and power nexus, I have decided to directly explore and expose “manhood” and “masculinity”. Instead of inferring the masculinist logic of power relations through its effects on women’s life, I focus on the struggles for regaining hegemonic masculinity that is one important aspect of the contemporary crisis of neoliberal capitalist society. To study the specificity of the strategic repair of the ideal form of masculinity (Raewyn W. Connell, 1987, 1995), I shall analyze the political discourse articulated by the Hungarian government in the media, drawing on Michael Kimmel’s (2013) work on the U.S. context. In contrast with Kimmel’s position, though, I shall point out that the anger of the Hungarian white man in response to his perceived and actual losses is not only characteristic of men who are or imagine themselves to be at the lower points of the scale but is predominantly voiced by the Hungarian political elite in the past ten years with an appeal to an imaginary “brotherhood” in a moral panic over losing his power. The higher his (imaginary) stake, the louder, the more concentrated, and the more unequivocal the order of the arrogant discourse of centralization.

Women and Power in Japan and Taiwan

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It is assumed that part of today's societal difficulties, uncertainties, and crisis in countries of East Asia can be attributed among other factors to the impact of globalization on societal values. Gender roles in society are undergoing significant changes in economically well performing and technologically highly developed countries like Japan and Taiwan. In both countries, the strong heritage of Confucian values notwithstanding, Taiwan seems to perform better than Japan in terms of modernization in terms of gender equality. The study aims to offer some explanations about the diverse, evolving processes of gender empowerment in Taiwan and in Japan. The differing status quo of women in Japan in contrast with that of Taiwan will be attributed to the difference in approaches to female empowerment — depending on the top-down and bottom-up strategy patterns.

Bitch Training: From Makeover Films to Postfeminist Werewolf Movies

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Since the werewolf is a monster that traditionally takes an animal form cyclically during a full moon, in the case of female subjects the transformation is quite obviously linked to the menstruation cycle and, therefore, to the initiation to female sexuality. Although werewolves are associated with excessive violence and promiscuous desire that once were the prerequisites of manliness, the “she-wolf” films analyzed here can be seen as special versions of “makeover” films, where the attributes of the traditional werewolf-change become the signs or at least evoke the phenomenon of “postfeminist” female subjectivity that can be criticized from a Foucauldian point of view. The study demonstrates that being a werewolf is a handy symbol of the contemporary “up for it” female sexual subjectivities that appear to impose new individualized neo-liberal discourses, regulating the subjects through an internalization of regimes of disciplinary power.

Sisterhood: The Formation of the Postfamilial Family in *Big Little Lies*

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The family has been a dominant agent for television series since the first soap operas in which the family functioned as a significant setting. Although the genre and themes of the series move within a much wider spectrum today, the characters' families and their private spheres remain indispensable elements in fictional television series. *Big Little Lies* represents many contemporary family types, but as a new element, the protagonists are only able to run a working family if they come together in a new arrangement, beyond the traditional (certified) blood tie, in the postfamilial family based on their sisterhood bond.

The Relevance of the Debates of the English Speaking Countries in the Mobilization of the Hungarian Government Referring to “Gender Ideology” and in Overcoming False Dichotomies

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The paper attempts to describe the link between the predominantly right-wing or conservative opposition to “gender ideology” in most European countries, and increasingly in Africa and Latin America, *and* the current occurrences of progressive feminist, LGBTQ. and anti-racist activism in mainly English-speaking countries. I argue that if we take this link seriously, it leads to the necessity to overcome widely shared interpretations such as that the mobilizations against the perceived threat of “gender ideology” would be the actualization of an already prepared and elaborated discourse devoid of real life reference that was prepared decades ago and/or a new form of antifeminism and/or a backlash against achieved levels of gender or LGBTQ equality and against further developments to a more fully realized equality. Rather than a dichotomous understanding of being pro- or against equality, we need a framework which can also accommodate the current occurrences of social justice activism; the global power processes that these equality struggles are embedded in; and liberal, Marxist. and feminist critiques of these

new trends. My argumentation relies on the analysis of the propaganda of the Hungarian government against the new MA specialization of Gender Studies at ELTE University and against the Istanbul Convention in 2017.

Flirtation between Religious Fundamentalism and Political Authoritarianism and Their Influence on the Anti-Gender Attacks and the Attacks on Human Rights

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In this essay, I analyze a transnational phenomenon in the form that it is currently taking in Eastern and Central Europe, and particularly in Hungary, at the root of which is a combination of a fundamentalist religious worldview and political authoritarianism. Christian fundamentalism is basically a panic reaction to the individualism and pluralism of the modern age and takes ever newer forms both in Church and theological thought and in current political events. One of its particular forms in the present day is the culture war against gender, which has become an almost global phenomenon. In this analysis, I show that the war against gender is not only a classic backlash that threatens gender and LGBTQ equality but a challenge to the political consensus on human rights protection that has been the prevalent political norm in Europe since the Second World War; and thus, is of a major concern to the European Union and to European democracy in general now.

“Can the Subaltern Speak?”: Subaltern Studies and Zsuzsa Rakovszky’s *The Year of the Falling Star*

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Analyzing Zsuzsa Rakovszky’s novel *A hullócsillag éve* [*The Year of the Falling Star*], I intend to relate to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s ideas on the difficulties of representing disempowered people, in other words, representing the subaltern. According to Spivak’s provocative and inspiring arguments, the

subaltern cannot speak the language of the dominant discourse. I wish to develop this argument and will illustrate that the complex narrative structure of the novel involving the reader's constant participation in the child's narration *can* give voice to the subaltern. I also argue that the novel initiates an interactive relation with the reader in which one can experience the subaltern position in a dictatorial situation. In the first part of my paper, I will focus on the theoretical and narratological problem of representing subordinated figures. The second part consists of the analysis of the novel, concentrating on the focalization and the storytelling of the child figure.