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Former East, former West: post-Socialist Nostalgia and Feminist Genealogies in Today's Europe*

This paper connects current studies of post-socialist nostalgia to the issue of feminist genealogies in the contemporary European context. Studies of post-socialist nostalgia can prove significant not only for the former socialist East - to which they have traditionally been limited - but also for the "former West", that is post-Cold War Western Europe. In the first part of my paper I draw a connection between feminist genealogies and post-socialist nostalgia in the former East, looking in particular at the phenomenon of *Yugonostalgia* from a gendered and feminist perspective, and taking my research on the 1978 Belgrade feminist conference *Drugarica Zena/Comrade Woman* as a point of departure. The narrative about Yugoslavia being closer to Western Europe and to Western European feminist movements in the 1970s, in comparison to today's marginalization of post-Yugoslav successor states, indicates that changes in gender regimes are deeply connected to shifts in ideological and geopolitical relations, including the shifting boundaries of Europe after 1989. In the second part of this essay I transpose the study of post-socialist nostalgia to the former West. When looking more closely at Western European countries, particularly at those who had significant communist parties such as Italy and France, it is clear that even in the West certain articulations of post-socialist nostalgia for radical pasts have emerged, helping us to unravel women's and feminist movements' genealogies that have been made invisible. I take the case of the recent Italian movie *Cosmonauta* as a symptom of post-socialist nostalgia in the former West.

Key words:

post-socialism,
nostalgia, gender,
feminism, post-
Cold War Europe

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This piece is a work-in-progress, assembling a number of scattered reflections that will hopefully serve as methodological notes for my current doctoral thesis. In this paper I attempt to draw connections between post-socialist nostalgia and feminist genealogies in the contemporary post-Cold War European context. Studies of post-socialist nostalgia can prove significant for the study of women's and feminist movements not only in the former socialist East - to which they have traditionally been limited – but also in the *former West*, that is post-Cold War Western Europe.¹

Born in a traditionally – and somehow *formerly* – “red” Italian region, Emilia-Romagna, and in Bologna, a city governed by the Italian Communist Party for almost fifty years, I experienced the gradual dismantling of the antifascist Resistance myth, and the fading away of the previously hegemonic socialist culture. At the same time, forms of nostalgia appeared. These range from the nostalgia for the golden age of good public administration, replaced by today's corruption and political scandals, to the nostalgia for the radical student movements of the 1960s and 1970s, who dared to challenge the local communist elite. Nonetheless, very few still dare to positively refer to socialism or communism. In times of economic crisis, lack of labour rights, extreme racism, sexism and homophobia, oppositional politics on the Italian institutional left are made under the banner of “democracy”, while coalition politics on the far left rally under the banner of “antifascism”. The label of “communist”, however, is still used as a widespread insult in right-wing discourses. Post-socialist nostalgia, i.e., nostalgia for “real existing socialism”, seems to have no place in the (former) West.

Former East

When researching on post-socialist Eastern Europe, the notion of nostalgia comes to the fore. Nostalgia is fundamentally ambivalent, it can be restorative or reflective (Boym 2000), but it often resounds with the lived experiences of many former socialist citizens in neo-liberal times. Nostalgic, aesthetic renderings of “real existing socialism” have acquired prominence in popular culture, for instance in *nostalgic* movies on the former GDR, such as *Goodbye Lenin* (Berdhal 2010). Many citizens of former socialist countries express their longing for the security and the prosperity experienced during the socialist era, or, we could say, nostalgia

¹ By suggesting that the field of post-socialist nostalgia can prove significant for the study of women's and feminist movements both in Eastern and in Western Europe, I do not wish to assume any pre-existing category of Eastern or Western ‘women’, nor do I wish to flatten the diversity of experiences between and within the former East and the former West. Rather, I take the specific post-Yugoslav and Italian cases as a ground for possible reflections on the presence (and absence) of post-socialist nostalgia, situating forms of nostalgia as expressed by different generations of urban, highly educated, politically active women (in this case the generation of second wave feminists in the post-Yugoslav space and the generation of Italian antifascist militants). I wish to thank the anonymous reviewer for commenting on this issue and for allowing me to clarify it.

for the existence of a specific form of welfare state that has been dismantled in neo-liberal times.

This phenomenon has recently become an object of scholarly research, inducing historian Maria Todorova to write, paraphrasing Marx, that “a specter is haunting the world of academia: the *study* of post-Communist nostalgia” (Todorova and Gille 2010, 1). Todorova argues that mainstream discourse treats nostalgia in the post-communist world as a “malady”, an anachronism, a dysfunctional attitude towards a “seductive” yet “deadly” ideology, according to moral philosopher Tzvetan Todorov. However, she warns, this condemnation – and the constant comparison between communism and fascism, or Nazism, rather than between capitalism and communism – limits our understanding of the phenomenon:

“...it is not only the longing for security, stability, and prosperity. There is also the feeling of loss for a very specific form of sociability, and of vulgarization of the cultural life. Above all, there is a desire among those who have lived through communism, even when they have opposed it or were indifferent to its ideology, to invest their lives with meaning and dignity, not to be thought of, remembered, or bemoaned as losers or ‘slaves’”. (Todorova 2010, 7)

In the case of the former socialist Yugoslavia, forms of *Yugonostalgia* or *Titostalgia* - the longing for the Yugoslav Federation and for its life-long President Josip Broz Tito - have broader and somehow different implications. As shown in the recent documentary *No country of our time?*², the longing isn’t limited to socialist ways of life, but rather extends to the previous multi-cultural and multi-ethnic setting, wiped out by the wars of the 1990s. The citizens of the former Yugoslav republics, in fact, did not only experience the end of socialism as an economic system, but also “the end of the common state”, followed by “the outbreak of ethnic violence” (Petrovic 2010, 63). The post-socialist era coincided with the post-Yugoslav era, the *before* and *after* socialism with the *before* and *after* the war, even though the wars have affected the different republics in very different ways. In relation to the former Yugoslav context, scholars have noted that nostalgia can take the form of individual paralysis or collective escapism towards war responsibility and complicity (Volcic 2007); on the other hand, it can also draw on the memories of past social justice and multicultural coexistence to criticize present injustices, ethnicization of politics and amnesia, expressing a fundamental “wish for better times” (Velikonja 2008, 132–133).

It is also frequent to discuss post-socialist nostalgia and memories in relation to changes in women’s lives before and after 1989, and in connection to the gendered experiences of the “transition” from socialism to its “post”. Lively discussions have been recently taking place on policies towards women in the former East, and on the ambivalences of “state feminism” and/or “state patriarchy” (Miroiu

² The movie, directed and produced by a multinational research team composed by Josefina Bayer, Daniela Mehler and Aleksandra Vedernjak, is based on a series of oral history interviews conducted in post-Yugoslav successor states. See: <http://seeindialogue.wordpress.com/>

et al. 2007). The experience of “real existing socialism” and its demise had similar effects on gender relations and feminist history in different Eastern European countries: a recent exploration in this direction is the art exhibition *Gender Check: Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe*, the curator was Bojana Pejic (see Pejic et al. 2010). Another important inquiry is Sanja Ivekovic’s documentary *Pine and fir trees – Women’s memories of life during Socialism* (2002).

The issue of post-socialist nostalgia – albeit a reflective, critical one – seems to have an important place in feminist reflections in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. In some specific cases such as the post-Yugoslav one, reflective nostalgia also appears to have a relevant place in the genealogy of feminism itself. I came across forms of *yugonostalgia* during a number of interviews with second wave feminist activists from Zagreb and Belgrade on the subject of the international feminist conference “Comrade Woman – The Woman’s Question: a new approach?” held in Belgrade in October 1978. In the recollected memories, the conference became a landmark or a nodal point that served to structure the narration in terms of geopolitical and historical breaks that occurred in the (former) Yugoslav space³: the international conference took place *before* the end of the Yugoslav Federation and of socialism, *before* the war. For many interviewees, Yugoslavia “had been in Europe” in 1978, because of its policy of open borders and thanks to the multiple cultural exchanges with Western Europe. The conference, therefore, was attended by a number of important Western European feminists (Bonfiglioli 2008).

The pre-war, socialist period is remembered as positive in comparison to the recent post-war one, in which the post-Yugoslav successor states haven’t yet entered the European Union, except for Slovenia. Nada Ler Sofronic, sociologist from Sarajevo, one of the organizers of the meeting, recalled:

“We were often stigmatized as subversive *bourgeois* import from the West (and at the same time, paradoxically, as a female branch of the new left), but we knew that we would not be so sharply punished, compared to the situation in Romania and Bulgaria for example. And, as I’ve said in one recent interview, Romania and Bulgaria are now in Europe, while we are waiting to enter... Although in 1978, I really think this, *we were in Europe*, with this democratic movement, with our openness to the progressive movements and ideas in the West, and the tradition we had in that sense...”

This feeling of “having been in Europe” at a certain point in time interrogates the geographical and historical borders of contemporary European women’s studies, as well as feminist investigations in temporalities and non-linear time (Coleman 2008; Hemmings 2005). The socialist period is described as one in which women had good living standards, and could interact on an equal level with Western women who had the curiosity to travel to Belgrade. The presence of foreign fe-

³ “Changes which may have subsequently taken place in the narrators’ personal subjective consciousness or in their socio-economic standing, may affect, if not the actual recounting of prior events, at least the valuation and the ‘coloring’ of the story” (Portelli 1998, 69).

minists in the former Yugoslavia in the post-war period, on the contrary, assumed a totally different significance, pointing to the unequal status of EU and non-EU citizens in Europe.⁴

The feeling of nostalgia is also connected to the loss of a different gender regime, one in which

“the law was very friendly to women, our law, the socialist law. Officially, in everything there was equality with men. Anything that could be understood as misogyny was officially forbidden. Today I can read in the newspaper: *We don't want women for this job, or women only; we want women who are thirty and nice*. It was completely forbidden at the time, it would be a scandal if someone used this language (...) We were satisfied with law. But we were not satisfied with patriarchy.”⁵

The women I interviewed actively engaged against patriarchal structures in socialist times, and the law would often provide a tool to struggle against patriarchal discrimination in the public sphere, particularly in the labor market, although patriarchy and sexual violence in the private sphere persisted. Even if feminists challenged socialist authorities' claim of having solved the “woman's question” once and for all, socialist egalitarianism – and the transnational circulation of new sexual and gender models in the 1960s and 1970s – provided some possibilities for radical choices and models even in the private sphere. During the 1990s, instead, the neo-traditionalist, sexist nationalist rhetoric opposed the previous egalitarian discourse, and attempted to erase the memory of its emancipatory aspects.⁶ Post-

⁴ To use the words of Sofija Trivunac, psychologist: “It has the meaning of “well, look at these women who are coming and they are well-off and they are well-dressed and they can travel”. That's what it is. In '78 it was not like that, we traveled freely, we had pretty good life standards all things considered and you were not so surprised or shocked to see foreigners here...or women dressed, or women working, articulating, and expressing opinions. It wasn't such a shock. *We were part of Europe at that point, you know, on some level...so...now it has a different meaning. Especially in Serbia: 80% of people, young people, have never gone outside of the country because they are in ghetto.*”

⁵ Interview with feminist activist Sonja Drljevic.

⁶ Belgrade curator and activist Borka Pavicevic recalls in this way the difference in the public discourse: “Well, I have to tell you, I don't like such kind of interviews, but a friend of mine pressed me to have an interview for the newspaper *Blitz* [a Serbian tabloid], it is very popular. (...) But in that personal story I have said for example that I am *not* married. Of course (...) the father of my sons, we are living together. But then I was shocked of how many people called me today to ask me how I can say that I am not married. And then I started to think what's happening (...) because for my generation it was...you were looking at Simone De Beauvoir... that was a statement! I mean, why should you be [married] (...) I was shocked by this neo-conservatism, how comes that people ask you “HOW can you say that?!” Oh my God, I mean...but it was so many years...in my generation it was totally normal to live in that way, not accept the conventions, we didn't even *think* about that!”

socialist reflective nostalgia thus points to a regression in supposedly linear temporalities of women's emancipation, as well as to a deep connection between gender relations and geopolitical and historical contingencies.

Even if these insights emerge from a very specific case, the one of former Yugoslavia, I wonder if post-socialist nostalgia, i.e. a critical form of nostalgia that draw on memories of past struggles and utopias, can have a relevance when investigating feminist genealogies in other parts of Europe, Western Europe included. The discussion over feminist nostalgia in Western Europe is mostly connected to contemporary narratives of *loss* for the 1970s feminist second wave (Hemmings 2005). For the rest, scholarly discussions on post-socialist nostalgia, gender and memory have been mostly confined to the former East.

As Dominic Boyer writes, however, "The idea that nostalgia "belongs" somehow exclusively or even especially to Eastern Europe is pernicious, an aspect of the persistent allochronization (that is, temporal displacement) of Eastern Europe into the imagined margins of the urban, industrial, and scientific centers of Western European modernity." The confinement of studies on post-socialist nostalgia to Eastern Europe is a result of (post-) Cold War geopolitical and mental mappings (Chari and Verdery 2009). It also reflects the widespread idea that the capitalist, freedom-loving West has won the battle towards the un-free, communist East, returned to the linearity of time and progress after having been "frozen" for fifty years (Müller 2002). Cold War mappings of "East" and "West", moreover, had the effect of obscuring women's transnational engagements in antifascist and revolutionary movements across Europe, or what Svetlana Slapsak (2000) defines as the "complicated, dynamic and rather disappointing love affair between women and left-wing movements" during the Twentieth century.

Former West

In post-1989, post-fordist Western Europe, the Eastern (post-) socialist nostalgia becomes an uncanny remnant of the (former) Other, but also an uncanny reminder of the West's former Self, from the fraught fascination of Western working class movements for Soviet and Eastern European "people's democracies", to the radicalization of post-1968 new social movements – including the feminist ones – and their disillusionment with the Old Left. The Berlin wall fell on both sides (Ivekovic 2006) and with it the ideologies of social progress, modernization and mass utopia, often based on imaginary projections for the dream worlds that existed "on the other side of the wall".⁷ After decades of political, social and cultural organiz-

⁷ "Dream worlds are not merely illusions. In insisting that what is not all there is, they are assertions of the human spirit and invaluable politically. They make the momentous claim that the world we have known since childhood is not the only one imaginable. For critical intellectuals from the East, the existence of a non-socialist West sustained the dream that there could be "normalcy" in social life. For their counterparts in the West, the existence of the non-capitalist East sustained the dream that the Western capitalist system was not the only possible form of modern production. (Buck-Morss 2000)

ing, former Western communists became invisible: “in Italy, few years ago, more than one third of the citizens declared themselves as such. Now most of them are silent, their pasts erased from the [collective] memory” (Foa et al. 2002, 3).

A number of recent scholarly studies have engaged with the idea of a “post-Cold War ethnography” (Chari and Verdery 2009) that would encompass the persistency of Cold War cultures on an European as well as on a global level, i.e. for the “former” East and the “former” West. These studies attempt to bridge between post-socialist, post-colonial and post-Cold War studies (Chen 2009). The art field has taken up the challenge, in the wake of the celebrations of the fall of the Berlin Wall. In the Netherlands, the curatorial platform called BAK (Basis voor Actueel Kunst) has launched a “long-term international research, education, publishing, and exhibition project (2008–2013)” called precisely *former West*. The title of the project stands as “an aspired to, imagined “farewell” to the “bloc” mentality; it is a critical, emancipatory, and aspirational proposal to rethink our global histories and to speculate upon our global futures through artistic and cultural practice.”⁸

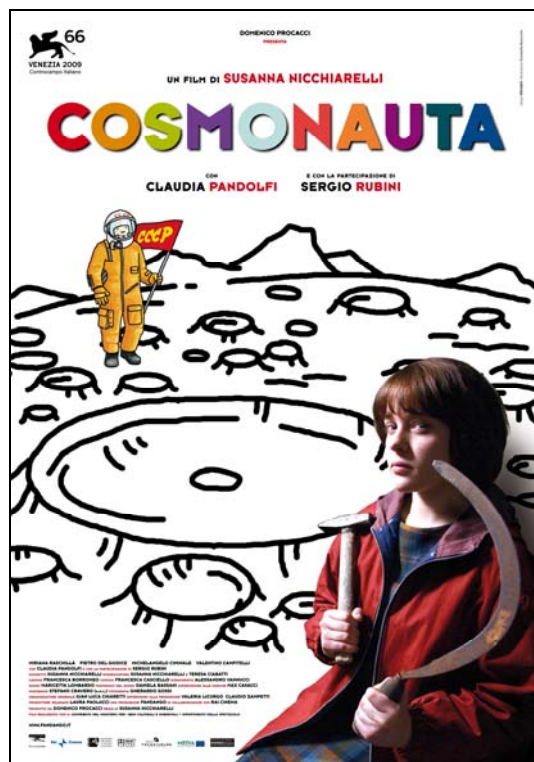
The history of gender and sexuality, as well as the history of women’s and feminist movements, can be a productive vantage point to elaborate post-Cold War global histories. If we strive to overcome neo-liberal, Eurocentric and progress-driven narrations when investigating transnational feminist histories and genealogies, it is important to look at how these genealogies intersected with transnational radical ideas and utopias before 1989, and how the former Western countries - and its gender regimes - were also affected by these travelling theories and movements. When looking more closely at various European countries, particularly to those who hosted important antifascist Resistance movements and communist parties,⁹ it is clear that even in the “former” West certain articulations of post-socialist nostalgia for radical pasts have emerged. These forms of nostalgia can help us to unravel women’s and feminist movements’ genealogies that have been made invisible.

Italy recently had its proto-feminist nostalgic *Good Bye Lenin*: Susana Nicchiarelli’s first movie *Cosmonauta*. It received multiple prizes, including the prize Controcampo Italiano at the Venice film festival. The movie starts in 1957, when the female dog Laika is sent to the space by the Soviets, and the main character, a nine-year old girl called Luciana, refuses to comply with the Catholic ritual of the first communion, locking herself in the bathroom and screaming “I am a communist!” Her clumsy older brother taught her about politics, and about the Cold War space race. Luciana follows the steps of her deceased father, a much regretted comrade, while rebelling against her step-father, a *petit bourgeois* conformist man. She grows up, attends the local Federation of the Communist Youth (FIGC), tries to make her voice heard among her male young comrades, and almost manages to get

⁸ See www.formerwest.org

⁹ Here I refer to the Italian case, but let’s not forget other countries with strong antifascist Resistance movements, whose memories were silenced and repressed, such as for instance Spain and Greece. About the Greek case, see Slapsak 2000.

into a delegation of the Union of Italian women (UDI) travelling to the Soviet Union.¹⁰



A still from the movie *Cosmonauta*

These are also the times of Valentina Tereshkova, the Soviet cosmonaut, the first woman to be sent to the space.¹¹ It shouldn't be forgotten that the ideal of the forward-looking, emancipated Soviet woman constituted for long time an important model – and a rhetorical device- to vindicate women's rights in “backward” Italy. In 1957 *Noi Donne*, the main journal of the Union of Italian Women, denounced the unwillingness of Bologna local authorities to build public washing machines, forcing women to wash the linen in the old lavatories. Soviet progress was then opposed to local backwardness: “While the Sputnik, the artificial satellite,

¹⁰ The Union of Italian Women (Unione Donne Italiane – UDI) was founded in 1944 in liberated Rome under the initiative of the Italian Communist Party, and it included antifascist women belonging to the different political forces of the antifascist unity government. The nation-wide organization had around one million members at the end of the 1940s, and was the Italian branch of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), which federated antifascist, communist and socialist women's organizations all over the world (see De Haan 2010).

¹¹ Besides being a world famous cosmonaut, Tereshkova also acted as Soviet political representative, and had an important role in the Women's International Democratic Federation. She is still revered as a national heroine in post-Soviet Russia.

reaches the sky and represents the most beautiful and fantastic proof of technical progress and of man's intelligence, it seems incredible and absurd that some bureaucrats keep imposing to women a useless exertion, sign of outdated times and customs".



1963 cover of *Noi Donne*,
thanking Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman cosmonaut

The issue of post-socialist nostalgia, gender and feminism deserves to be raised also for the former West during the twentieth century, in order to account for emancipatory models and embodied experiences of liberation that preceded and created the basis for the emergence of the second wave feminist movements. Those “middle-wave”¹² feminist experiences were deeply connected to internationalist working class utopias and to mass politics, and it would be a mistake to discard them because the parameters for feminist languages and engagement have changed overtime. Marisa Rodano (born in 1922), former member of the Italian Communist Party and president of the Union of Italian Women, wrote in her recent autobiography that:

¹² Thorn (2010) talks of a feminist “middle wave” for the communist and social-democratic women’s movements of the late 1940s and 1950s in Canada. A similar argument about the importance of 1940s and 1950s American communist women’s groups has been made by Weigand in her book *Red Feminism* (2001).

“the person who believed in the revolution is placed today in a *diasporic situation*; it is not the land, nor the monuments which are missing, it is the *broken historical continuity*, and with that the continuity and the development and the tiresome critical evolution of ideas, all that could make clear and understandable for the others, and thus, in a mirror, also for one self, the reasons of one’s own acts, of what one has been.” [Emphasis added, our translation]¹³

Because of this *broken historical continuity*, it is hard to put back together the pieces, to recompose the puzzle, since words have *ceased to speak* in an intelligible way. As in the work *Intervista – Finding the Words* (1998) by Albanian artist Anri Sala, where the filmmaker finds a mute footage of his young mother, giving an official speech during a communist youth rally in Albania. He hires an expert to read her lips in the video in order to understand what she is saying, but her once meaningful and enthusiastic declarations now appear only as empty ideological slogans. Thirty years later, the filmmaker’s mother is full of disbelief when she is told that she really uttered those words. I suggest that precisely in the mute presence of past words, and in the disbelief provoked by forgetful remembering, lays the task of the feminist historian. By re-situating these words in past times, and by tracking contemporary forms of nostalgia, remembrance, amnesia and disbelief in the here and now, we can unravel the changes in ways of speaking and of signifying, and thus the political and historical changes in gender regimes and in women’s lives.

As Lydia Sklevicky (1996, 69) put it, quoting Walter Benjamin: “Listening today to the voices of women from the past, can indicate both the wrong choices that should not be repeated, as well as unspent reserves of utopian energy. *For it is an irretrievable picture of the past, which threatens to disappear with every present, which does not recognize itself as meant in it.*”¹⁴ Both the “wrong choices” as well as the “unspent reserves of utopian energy” emerge, showing the complex interrelation between present and past temporalities of domination and emancipation.

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¹³ “Chi ha creduto nella rivoluzione si trova oggi infatti in una situazione diasporica; non sono la terra, i cippi, i monumenti che vengono a mancare, è la continuità storica spezzata e con essa anche la continuità e lo sviluppo e il faticoso evolversi critico delle idee, tutto ciò che poteva rendere visibili e comprensibili agli altri e, perciò, come in un rispecchiamento, anche a se stessi, le ragioni del proprio agire, di ciò che si è stati.” (Rodano 2008, vol. 1, 105).

¹⁴ The quotation is from Benjamin’s Fifth thesis on the Concept of History. Sklevicky’s original passage goes as following: “Osluskivanje glasova žena iz prošlosti danas može ukazati podjednako na pogresne izbore koje ne bi trebalo ponavljati, kao i na neistrosene rezerve utopijske energije. *Jer sa svakom sadasnjosti može u nepovrat isceznuti slika prošlosti, u kojoj ona nije znala prepoznati sebe*” (Walter Benjamin). [Our translation]

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Бивши Исток, бивши Запад: (пост)социјалистичка носталгија и феминистичке генеалогije у данашњој Европи

Циљ овог чланка је да покаже да студије постсоцијалистичке носталгије могу да буду од значаја за проучавање женских и феминистичких покрета не само на бившем социјалистичком Истоку, на који су традиционално ограничене, него и на бившем Западу – дакле у постхладноратовској Западној Европи.

Кључне речи:

постсоцијализам,
носталгија, род,
феминизам, пост-
хладноратовска
Европа

Када се ради о постсоцијалистичкој Источној Европи, питање носталгије избија у први план. Носталгија је у основи амбивалентна, може бити ресторативна или рефлективна (Боум 2000), али често налази одјека у искуству многих грађана „бившег Истока“, у неолибералним временима. Такође се често расправља о постсоцијалистичкој носталгији и памћењу у односу на промене у животима жена пре и после 1989, и у вези са родном димензијом искуства „транзиције“.

У случају бивше Југославије, облици југоносталгије или титоносталгије имају шире и – у неку руку – друкчије импликације. Заправо, грађани бивших југословенских република нису искусили крај социјализма само као економског система, него и као крај „заједничке државе“, праћен „избијањем етничког насиља“ (Петровић 2010, 63). Постсоцијалистичка ера се подудара са постјугословенском ером, *пре* и *после* социјализма са *пре* и *после* рата, чак иако су ратови погодили поједине републике на различите начине.

Наишла сам на облике југоносталгије током бројних интервјуа са феминисткињама из Загреба и Београда, вођених на тему интернационалне феминистичке конференције „Другарица жена – женско питање: нови приступ?“ одржаној у Београду у октобру 1978. За многе од њих, Југославија је 1978, због своје политике отворених граница и захваљујући вишеструким културним разменама са Западном Европом, „била у Европи“. Социјалистички дискурс о женској једнакости у јавној сфери и

трансационална циркулација нових модела сексуалности и рода током шездесетих и седамдесетих година прошлог века обезбедили су неке могућности за радикалне изборе у приватној сфери.

Иако ови увиди потичу из једног сасвим посебног случаја, конкретно – из бивше Југославије, поставља се питање да ли је постсоцијалистичка носталгија релевантна за истраживање феминистичких генеалогичких у другим деловима Европе, дакле – и у Западној Европи. Одређен број недавно објављених научних студија бави се идејом „постхладноратовске етнографије“ (Charl and Verdery 2009), која би укључивала истрајност култура тзв. хладног рата на европском, као и на глобалном нивоу, тј. на „бившем Истоку“ и на „бившем Западу“. Кад се пажљивије испитају западноевропске земље, посебно оне које су имале важне комунистичке партије, као Италија и Француска, јасно је да су се чак и на „бившем Западу“ појавили одређени облици постсоцијалистичке носталгије за радикалном прошлошћу, и да су они повезани са генеалогичким питањима женске еманципације и ослобођења.

Да бих дала пример, анализирам протофеминистички, носталгични италијански филм новије продукције – *Космонауткиња*, Сузана Никиарели. Радња филма почиње 1957. године, када Совјети шаљу у свемир женку пса – Лајку. Деветогодишња протагонисткиња Лућана одбија да се повинује католичком ритуалу првог причешћа тако што се закључава у купатилу вриштећи: „Ја сам комунисткиња!“. То је такође и доба када је прва жена, совјетска космонауткиња Валентина Терјешкова, послата у космос.

Пример напредне, еманциповане совјетске жене задуго је био важан модел и реторичко средство борбе за женска права у „назадној“ Италији. Званична италијанска женска организација повезана са социјалистичким и комунистичким партијама, Савез италијанских жена (UDI), деценијама се борила за женска права. Међутим, како је историјски континуитет прекинут 1989, „они који су веровали у револуцију налазе се данас у *дијаспоричној ситуацији*“ – тврди бивша председница UDI-ја Мариса Родано.

Искуства италијанских жена у интернационалном и антифашистичком ангажовању некако су „престала да говоре“ у савременој, постхладноратовској Европи. Ако их поново сместимо у прошлост и пратимо савремене облике носталгије, памћења, амнезије и недостатка поверења у *овде* и *сад*, можемо да „расплетемо“ промене у начину говора и означавања, као и политичке и историјске промене у родним режимима и животима жена.