

Socialism – a Dark Continent?

On Wednesday, 17th June 2009, a panel discussion was organized by the Centre for Women's Studies and the Croatian Sociological Association, to mark the publication of the second edition of *Vjeran Katunarić's book Women's Eros and the Civilization of Death* (Zagreb: Jesenski & Turk, 2009). The discussion took place at the premises of the Sculpture Museum (the Glyptothèque) of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb.

This certainly was an unusual event in more ways than one. To begin with, it is very rare in Croatia for scholarly books to be published in new editions. This certainly includes books in the field of sociology, usually published in very modest print runs. In addition, it is also very rare for a title republished after a full quarter of a century to meet with such an enthusiastic reception and undivided appreciation in professional circles. Finally, it does not happen very often that a numerous audience decides to follow a more than three-and-a-half hour long discussion taking place at an event that seems, in outward appearance, to be essentially a book promotion and an occasion to pay well-deserved homage to its author.

The event, however, proved to be much more than that. Everything that was heard that evening on the first floor of the Zagreb Glyptothèque was very interesting as a diagnosis, a real litmus test

Socijalizam – tamni kontinent?

U srijedu 17. lipnja 2009., u organizaciji Centra za ženske studije i Hrvatskoga sociološkog društva u Glijptoteci HAZU u Zagrebu, održan je razgovor u povodu drugog izdanja knjige *Ženski eros i civilizacija smrti* Vjerana Katunarića (Zagreb: Jesenski i Turk, 2009).

Riječ je o – zbog više razloga – nesvakidašnjem događaju. Ponaјprije, prava je rijetkost da se u Hrvatskoj objavljuju druga izdanja znanstvenih, pa i socioloških knjiga, tiskanih najčešće u vrlo skromnim nakladama. Nadalje, rijetkost je i to da neki naslov, punih četvrt stoljeća nakon pojave izvornog izdanja, naiđe na nepodijeljeno zanimanje i uvažavanje cjelokupne strukovne javnosti. Konačno, nije česta pojava ni to da brojna publika više od tri i pol sata ostane svjedočiti razgovoru koji je u osnovi ipak bio zamišljen kao prigodno predstavljanje knjige i odavanje više nego zaslužene počasti njezinu autoru.

Sve što se te večeri čulo u historiji na prvom katu Glijptoteke vrlo je zanimljivo kao dijagnoza, pravi lakmus papir današnjeg stanja percepcije odnosa teorije i aktivizma. To vrijedi ne samo u pogledu onoga što se na tribini nekoliko puta pomalo staromodno nazivalo »ženskim pitanjem«, nego i kad je riječ

of the present-day perception of the relationship between theory and activism. This goes not only for what was referred to several times during the evening as a “women’s issue”, but also for those excluded in other ways from full and equal participation in all spheres of social life. Nevertheless, since the topics taken up by the participants mainly revolved around studies related to a female gender perspective, the diagnosis was particularly revealing in that regard: one could discern the premises upon which present-day Croatian feminism is based and the stage of development achieved in the whole field of activity related to it, at least in the circles of those theorists and activists who participated in the discussion.

On the other hand, if the focus is put upon the book which was the occasion of the event, one is forced to conclude that very little was said about it, especially from the perspective of the scholarly discipline within which it originally appeared, namely sociological theory. At the very beginning of the discussion, *Inga Tomić-Koludrović* came up with an innovative interpretation of the book within that framework. She said that – based on her rereadings of the book – she would claim that what was at stake here was “a very early attempt in Croatian sociology to at least supplement the then usual macro theoretical approach to relations between men and women if not with a micro then at least with a meso approach”. Tomić-Koludrović also said that the book actually “questions the dominance of the macro approach not only in theory, but also in feminism, pointing to a possibil-

o drugima isključenim po različitim osnovama iz potpunog i ravnopravnog sudjelovanja u svim oblicima društvenog života. Ipak, budući da su teme kojima se skup bavio kao polazište imale žensku rodnu perspektivu, dijagnoza aktualnog stanja bila je pogotovo indikativna u tom pogledu: iz predstavljenoga se moglo zaključivati o tome na kakvim je pretpostavkama zasnovan današnji hrvatski feminizam, kao i o stupnju razvoja koji je u Hrvatskoj dosegula ta djelatnost, barem u krugovima onih teoretičarki i aktivistica koje su u razgovoru sudjelovale.

Kad je, međutim, riječ o samoj knjizi koja je bila povod okupljanju, malo je toga rečeno, osobito iz perspektive znanstvene grane u okviru koje je nastala, a to je sociološka teorija. Na samom početku razgovora, *Inga Tomić-Koludrović* vrlo je inovativno ustvrdila da je u ponovljenom čitanju uočila da je riječ »o vrlo ranom pokušaju u hrvatskoj sociologiji da se za to vrijeme uobičajeni makroteorijski pristup o odnosima muškaraca i žena nadopuni, ako ne mikroteorijskim, a ono barem mezoteorijskim pristupom«, kao i to da knjiga zapravo »propituje dominaciju makropristupa ne samo u teoriji, nego i u feminizmu, te da ukazuje na mogućnost da se nekim drugim pristupima, u ovom slučaju sociopsihološkim, pokuša izići iz makropriče marksizma i teorije sustava«.

Te, na samom početku razgovora izrečene tvrdnje, tijekom cijele

ity of exiting – by means of the use of different approaches, in this case a socio-psychological one – from the macro narrative of Marxism and systems theory”.

These claims, voiced at the very beginning of the discussion, provoked no further commentary during the entire evening. Other statements that reflected on the book from a theoretical standpoint in any sort of way were rare, and largely amounted to a claim made by *Rade Kalanj*, according to which its author included classical sociological approaches in a discussion of a contemporary subject-matter. Later on, an unrelated but implicitly opposed argument was made in passing by *Ankica Čakardić*, in whose opinion “the book is not pure sociology, since it writes about contingency, Eros, etc.” In implicit contrast to Tomić-Koludrović and Kalanj, Čakardić concluded that the book “therefore does not require a sociological interpretation”. Another potentially theoretical interpretation of the book came from *Nadežda Čaćinovič*, who informed the audience that she did not study the contents of the book when it first appeared, as she was then preoccupied by different theoretical issues, but now that she has read it she could assert that many of the foundations it was built on do not hold. However, as has already been said, this interpretation remained a “potential” one, since the speaker did not further elaborate on the claim she made.

Everything else that was said related not to the book itself, but to the times in which it first appeared and was publicly promoted, or to the events that had occurred in the time that has elapsed between then and now. The

večeri više nisu naišle na repliku. Drugi iskazi koji na bilo koji način teorijski problematiziraju knjigu bili su rijetki i zapravo se uglavnom mogu svesti na tvrdnju *Rade Kalanja* da je autor u suvremenu tematiku koju razmatra uključio klasične sociološke pristupe. Znatno kasnije i nevezano za konkretni povod, *Ankica Čakardić* izrekla je tvrdnju neizravno suprotstavljenu onima što su ih zastupali Tomić-Koludrović i Kalanj. Prema njezinu mišljenju, [Katunarićeva] »knjiga nije čista sociologija, čim piše o kontingenciji, Erosu itd.«. Prema Čakardić, dakle, »tekst nije [samo] sociološki i ne traži stoga [samo] sociološko tumačenje«. Još je jedno potencijalno teorijsko tumačenje knjige došlo od *Nadežde Čaćinovič*, koja je nazočne obavijestila da se knjigom u doba kad je objavljena nije bavila, jer je bila u drugim teorijskim vodama, a sad kad ju je proučila može ustvrditi da mnogo toga na čemu počiva ne stoji. Tumačenje je, međutim, kao što je već rečeno, ostalo »potencijalnim«, jer govornica nije nakon te tvrdnje pobliže objasnila svoj zaključak i stav.

Sve ostalo što je na skupu izrečeno nije se ticalo knjige same, nego vremena u kojem je nastajala i prvi put bila promovirana, ili pak događaja u vremenu koje je proteklo između toga trenutka i današnjice. U većem dijelu skupa, štoviše, nije čak bilo riječi o dijalogu, nego o nečemu što bi se moglo opisati

contributions to the event can actually be better described for the most part as a series of more or less nostalgic monologues than as a proper dialogue.

In the first part of the event, *Biljana Kašić* mentioned the names of persons active in various branches of feminism and women's studies in the 1980s. She described their fields of specialization and listed which different approaches to feminism could be found in the scholarly journals published at that time. She claimed that this was "not the case with the journals today", and also remarked that the time of the original publication of the book was "a time of solidarity of men with feminism". Speaking from his personal perspective, the author of the book spoke about "the veil pulled over the collective memory" and concluded that the "the young people look bleary-eyed at what took place then". According to Katunarić, this is due for the most part to the "Diaspora",¹ whose

kao niz – više ili manje – nostalgичnih monologa.

U prvom dijelu predstavljanja *Biljana Kašić* je tako spomenula imena osoba djelatnih u području feminizma i ženskih studija u osamdesetim godinama, kao i područja njihove specijalizacije, te navela koje se sve različite pristupe feminizmu moglo naći u ondašnjim časopisima. Ustvrdila je potom da to »nije slučaj s časopisima danas«, a napomenula i to da je vrijeme u kojem je knjiga nastala bilo »vrijeme solidarnosti muškaraca oko feminizma«. Govoreći iz vlastite perspektive o vremenu nastanka knjige i sam je njezin autor potom govorio o »kopreni na kolektivnoj memoriji« i ustvrdio da je »pogled mlađima zamućen na ono što je bilo«. Prema Katunariću, odgovornost za to najvećim je dijelom na »dijaspori«,¹ či-

¹ Unlike the term "Gastarbeiter", used in the socialist period to denote Yugoslavian nationals working in the German-speaking countries, the term "Diaspora" was used in 1990s Croatia to denote all those of Croatian ethnic origin who had emigrated from the country for economic or political reasons. In practice, however, it referred particularly to those who had emigrated in 1945 for political reasons (i.e. for fear of persecution under the newly established Communist regime, because of their political affiliation with the Ustashi regime or the Roman Catholic Church). The return of these people and/or their descendants to the country in the postsocialist period, and the prominence they were given in the political institutions and the media, also meant that a new hegemony was established in the symbolical order. It featured and made

¹ Za razliku od pojma »Gastarbeiter«, koji se u socijalističkom razdoblju upotrebljavao kao oznaka za državljane Jugoslavije na radu u zemljama njemačkoga govornog područja, u Hrvatskoj devedesetih pojam »dijaspore« upotrebljavao se kao oznaka za sve osobe hrvatskoga etničkog podrijetla koje su otišle iz zemlje zbog ekonomskih ili političkih razloga. U praksi se, međutim, to osobito odnosilo na one koji su u emigraciju otišli 1945. godine, zbog političkih razloga (npr. zbog straha od progona u novouspostavljenom komunističkom režimu, na osnovi prethodne političke povezanosti s ustaškim režimom ili katoličkom crkvom). Povratak tih ljudi i/ili njihovih potomaka u zemlju u postsocijalističkom razdoblju te važnost koja im je dana u političkim institucijama i medijima stvorili su pretpostavke za uspostavu nove hegemonije u

perception of the events has entered the textbooks.

As much as all of this could have given rise to an interesting discussion, it did not, unfortunately, eventuate. No attempt was made to elaborate upon these claims from a theoretical perspective, especially one that would have taken into account a wider social context and tried to account for or hypothesize on the causes of the cursorily mentioned phenomena.

The non-theoretical inspiration of the major part of what was said that evening became apparent at the moment in which the moderator *Valerija Barada* tried to provoke a more elaborate explanation of the reasons for the current regression of the position of women in Croatia. Namely, *Gordana Bosanac* had previously stated that one of the indicators of the depth of that regression was the fact that today – in contrast with the situation in the 1980s, when this was simply unimaginable – the Ministry of Culture had financially supported the publication of Weininger's *Sex and Character*. What's more, the culture biweekly *Zarez* refused to publish Bosanac's commentary on that fact. However, the opportunity for further elaboration on the topic, offered by moderator Barada, was not taken. Instead, Bosanac concluded her participation in the discussion simply by stating: "I lament for those times."

especially prominent the perspectives of those who were not affected either by the discourse or the practices of socialist modernization of the country.

ja je percepcija ondašnjih događaja ušla u udžbenike.

Iako je sve to moglo biti vrlo zanimljiv povod za daljnji razgovor, do tog razgovora nažalost nije došlo. Na skupu nije bilo pokušaja rasprave o tim tvrdnjama iz teorijske perspektive, a pogotovo ne one koja bi pokušala uzeti u obzir širi društveni kontekst te objasnila ili pokušala pretpostaviti uzroke usput spomenutih pojava.

Neteorijsko nadahnuće većine onoga što je te večeri bilo izrečeno, možda je najočitije bilo u trenutku u kojem je voditeljica rasprave *Valerija Barada* pokušala potaknuti podrobnije raščlanjivanje razloga današnje regresije položaja žene u Hrvatskoj. *Gordana Bosanac* je, naime, prethodno ustvrdila da je pokazatelj te regresije činjenica da danas – što se osamdesetih godina po njoj nije moglo dogoditi – Ministarstvo kulture financijski podupre objavljivanje Weiningerova *Spola i karaktera*, a da njoj dvotjednik za kulturu *Zarez* odbije tiskati komentar toga poteza. Mogućnost daljnje analize uzroka takvih promjena, koju je voditeljica Barada ponudila, Bosanac međutim nije prihvatila, nego je vlastito sudjelovanje u razgovoru zaključila rečenicom kojom je jednostavno ustvrdila: »Žalim za onim vremenom«.

simboličkom poretku. Ona je uključivala i osobito isticala poglede onih na koje nisu utjecali ni diskurs ni praksa socijalističke modernizacije zemlje.

If we turn our attention to the recent history and current position of feminism in Croatia, it is also worthwhile noticing that nobody elaborated during the discussion on *Rada Borić's* claim that “the split on the women’s scene in the nineties [...] followed the same matrix as other splits [of that time]: the nationalist one, or to put it more mildly, [it was based] on the different perceptions on what happened to us then”. The same goes for *Vesna Janković's* claim, according to which “the developments of the nineties disprove [Katunarić's] assumptions” [on the consistency of the women’s Eros]. Janković had concluded this based on her participation in the developments on the independent scene of the 1990s. These showed her “the dark side”, i.e. that “women are not immune to patriarchal agonism”.

It was briefly mentioned in some contributions to the discussion that Croatia has experienced a retraditionalization of social life in the postsocialist period. But apart from that general claim, there were no attempts to expound on *Rada Borić's* assertions that “it does no credit to Croatia that it does not have [academically institutionalized] women’s studies” and that “the position of the feminists in Croatia today is difficult”. The same goes for *Biljana Kašić's* claim that “the [political] order today” is based on “score-settling with the feminists and feminism of the nineties”.

Of course, it can be argued that an essentially celebratory event is not the proper place to expect detailed answers to the important questions posed by the

Kad je riječ o nedavnoj povijesti i aktualnom trenutku feminizma u Hrvatskoj, vrijedi zapaziti da tijekom razgovora nisu pobliže razmatrane ni tvrdnje *Rade Borić* o tome da se »raskol na ženskoj sceni devedesetih [...] dogodio na istoj matrici na kojoj su se dogodili i drugi: nacionalističkoj, ili recimo blaže na različitim percepcijama onoga što nam se dogodilo«, ni *Vesne Janković*, koja je rekla da »događanja devedesetih opovrgavaju [Katunarićeve] teze«, jer joj je njezino sudjelovanje u nezavisnoj sceni devedesetih pokazalo i »tamnu stranu«, odnosno da »žene nisu imune na patrijarhalni agonizam«.

U pojedinim priložima raspravi kratko je konstatirano da je Hrvatska u postsocijalističkom razdoblju doživjela retradicionalizaciju društvenih odnosa. No, osim na tako općenitoj razini, na skupu nisu detaljnije razglabane ni tvrdnje *Rade Borić* o tome da »ne služi na čast Hrvatskoj da nema ženske studije« i o »te[šk]om položaj[u] feministkinja u Hrvatskoj danas«, kao ni *Biljane Kašić* o tome da se »poredak danas« zasniva na »obračunavanju s feministkinjama i feminizmom devedesetih godina«.

Dakako, moguće je ustvrditi i to da u osnovi slavljenički skup nije mjesto na kojem bi se moglo očekivati detaljne odgovore na bitna pitanja koja nameće današnji položaj feminističke teorije i prakse u Hrvatskoj. No, pitanja su postavljena, a tvrdnje izrečene pa sada očekuju odgovor i analizu na

current position of feminist theory and practice in Croatia. However, claims have been made and questions have been put forth. Answers are now in order, and the editors of this journal have kindly opened its pages to contributions discussing the topics mentioned in this report.

Of the many possibilities to expound on the topic, the most important question seems to me to be one that was posed by Inga Tomić-Koludrović towards the end of the evening. Tomić-Koludrović asked whether the causes of the host of contradictions and issues that arose following the last decade of Socialism in Croatia were not already contained in the nature and practice of that same political order. Or, more precisely, has not the way in which feminism was practiced in the 1980s contributed to the theoretical weakness and splits on the women's scene in the 1990s?

The question was left unanswered, partly because it was rhetorical, and partly because it went against the grain of the so far undisturbed "optimism of memory" with regard to the state of Croatian society, theory and feminism in the 1980s.

Regardless of the political attitude and personal memories one has of that time, it seems to me necessary to try to analyze the developments that took place then from the perspectives of contemporary social and cultural research. Without such an analysis, leading, one hopes, to a better understanding of the past, we cannot even begin today to disentangle what seem at times to be incomprehensible contradictions.

stranicama stručne periodike koje je uredništvo ovog časopisa ponudilo za raspravu.

Od brojnih tema koje se nadaju raspravi, osobno mi se pritom najvažnijim čini odgovoriti na pitanje koje je pri samom kraju skupa postavila Inga Tomić-Koludrović. Ona se zapitala nije li uzrok brojnih kontradikcija i nevolja koje su slijedile nakon posljednjeg desetljeća socijalizma u Hrvatskoj već u naravi i praksama samoga tog socijalističkog poretka? Drugim riječima, valja se zapitati nije li teorijskoj slabosti i razdorima na ženskoj sceni devedesetih kumovao i način na koji se u osamdesetim godinama bavilo feminizmom?

Pitanje je ostalo bez odgovora, dijelom stoga što je bilo retoričko, a dijelom vjerojatno i stoga što je razbilo dotad nepomučen »optimizam memorije« u odnosu na stanje društva, teorije i feminizma osamdesetih godina prošlog stoljeća.

Bez obzira na to kakav stav i osobne uspomene imamo na to vrijeme, smatram da je nužno pokušati ondašnje događaje analizirati iz perspektive suvremenih društvenih i kulturnih istraživanja. Bez takve analize, koja bi – valja se nadati – pridonijela boljem razumijevanju prošlosti, ne možemo ni pokušati razmrsiti ono što nam se danas katkad čini nerazumljivim proturječnostima.

Nažalost, mišljenja koja su se čula tijekom razgovora u povodu drugog izdanja *Ženskog erosa i civilizacije smrti* samo su pojačala

Unfortunately, exchanges that took place during the panel on the occasion of the second edition of *Women's Eros and the Civilization of Death* reinforced my perception that for the social sciences and the humanities in Croatia today, Socialism in many ways remains what the understanding of adult female sexuality was to Freud and psychology back in 1926 – a dark continent.

In the year 2009, it seems imperative that some light should be shed on this dark continent of Croatian Socialism. If it is true – as has been repeatedly asserted in the panel – that “the position of women in society is the best indicator of the level of development of a civilization”, this job could also begin by an elaboration of the various aspects of the nature and position of feminism in the country in the 1980s. In addition to contributing to an understanding of what happened on the women's scene in the two decades that followed that period, such an analytical effort would help to disprove the so far justifiable claim made by Biljana Kašić, according to which “women's studies are not an object of interest to sociology”. In my opinion, everything that has been reported on here could become the topic of an eminently sociological analysis, as well as a number of related topics that could not be covered in this report for reasons of space.

moj dojam da današnjim društvenim i humanističkim znanostima u Hrvatskoj socijalizam umnogome ostaje ono što je Freudu i psihologiji 1926. predstavljalo razumijevanje seksualnosti odrasle žene – tamni kontinent.

U 2009. godini, čini mi se prijeko potrebnim pokušati baciti malo svjetla na taj tamni kontinent hrvatskog socijalizma. Ako je točno – kao što je na skupu više puta izrečeno – da je »položaj žena u društvu najbolji indikator razvijenosti civilizacije«, ovaj bi posao mogao započeti i razmatranjem različitih aspekata naravi feminističke djelatnosti i općeg položaja feminizma u Hrvatskoj osamdesetih godina prošlog stoljeća. Osim što bi pridonio razumijevanju svega što se događalo na ženskoj sceni tijekom dvaju desetljeća koja su uslijedila, takav bi analitički napor pomogao opovrgnuti zasad utemeljenu tvrdnju Biljane Kašić da »ženski studiji nisu predmet interesa sociologije«. Predmetom takvog – eminentno sociološkog – interesa može, čini mi se, biti sve što je ovdje preneseno od razgovora vođenih 17. lipnja, kao i cijeli niz drugih tema koje u ovom kratkom članku nažalost nisu mogle naći mjesta.

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