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## POSTCOLONIAL AND POSTSOCIALIST POSITIONS: CONTESTATIONAL POETRY IN THE GLOBAL CAPITALIST WORLD

**Summary:** The paper suggests considering alliances and coalitions from two perspectives: postsocialism and postcolonialism. This is because both terms, while referring to different geopolitical realities, share the prefix “post” and highlight the importance of questioning relationships between different subjectivities. The author argues that it is crucial to examine the intersection of these two lines and address the issues of racial and gender divisions, racialisation, and class antagonisms within the dominant structures of West European nation-states. Without doing so, it would be impossible to think of effective alliances and coalitions in Europe or contemporary revolutionary poetry. The article proposes a materialist analysis of global capitalism and advocates a different type of knowledge and politics that is transfeminist, migrant, politically subversive, and sexually transgressive. The author also suggests three starting points to propose politically constructed genealogies and entanglements for revolutionary narratives in and of the world. In doing so the lines we obtain are: decolonisation and #BlackLivesMatter!, the LGBTQI+ poetess in the former Yugoslavia, and new, post-, and transfeminism(s) of Colour, Black feminisms, and Chicana. Overall, the author insists on the importance of understanding the complexities and intersections of different subjectivities and geopolitical realities in order to build effective alliances and promote revolutionary narratives.

**Keywords:** postsocialism, postcolonialism, racialisation, post-subjectivities, dissident feminisms, revolutionary narratives and poetry

### Introduction

The purpose of this text is to enter a field of parallel readings in order to create an assemblage that connects authors from the area of the former Yugoslav, Central Europe, and the economic areas of the global North in order to recognise the revolutionary potential of contemporary poetry. Bringing together writers from different backgrounds and

placing them within the same analytical framework, this assemblage seeks to promote revolutionary thought and action. What are the lines of analysis that I refer to as those constructing revolutionary genealogies in contemporary poetry as a political stance? These two lines are postcolonialism and postsocialism, and their points of intersection and divergence. The task, albeit schematic, is to examine the historical and social contexts of both frameworks in order to identify connections, contradictions, and possibilities for resistance and transformation. One way to approach this task is to analyse the power dynamics and hierarchies that emerged during the colonial and socialist periods and the ways in which they continue to shape contemporary societies. At the same time, it is important to recognise the voices and perspectives of those who have been marginalised and excluded by dominant narratives of history and power, such as women, LGBTQI+ people, people of colour, and working-class people. This requires a commitment to listening to and amplifying these voices and engaging with their struggles for liberation and justice.

Construction of revolutionary genealogies requires a critical engagement with the theories and practices of both postcolonialism and postsocialism, as well as willingness to engage in dialogue and collaborate with activists and scholars from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Overall, constructing revolutionary genealogies at the intersection of postcolonialism and postsocialism requires a deep commitment to social justice, anti-racism, and anti-oppression, as well as a willingness to engage in critical and transformative practices. This is a difficult and ongoing process, but one that holds the potential for a profound and lasting change.

## **PART 1: RELATIONS**

### **Decolonisation. Postcolonialism.**

The history of decolonisation and the history of Europe have their roots in the post-1945 period, with decolonisation processes beginning during and after the Second World War. The decolonisation movements affected art, culture and theory. Postcolonialism is a theoretical framework that emerged in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in response to the legacy of colonialism and imperialism. It refers to the intellectual and political movement that seeks to understand and challenge the continuing impact of colonialism on the societies and cultures of formerly colonised countries. In the United States, this period was associated with the aftermath of the African American civil rights movement and challenged US imperialism. Postcolonial, feminist, queer, and Marxist perspectives resulted in important movements in contemporary transfeminism, Black thought and practice, and diasporic art at this time. At its core, postcolonialism addresses the ways in which colonialism and imperialism shaped the economic, political, social, and cultural conditions of colonised societies. It argues that colonialism did not end with the withdrawal of colonial powers, but continued to exert its influence through a variety of mechanisms,

including economic exploitation, cultural domination, and political subjugation. Postcolonialism has influenced several fields, including literature, history, anthropology, sociology, and political science. In literature, postcolonialism has brought about new forms of writing that challenge the dominant Western canon and foregrounded the experiences and perspectives of formerly colonised peoples. Examples of postcolonial writers include Chinua Achebe, Salman Rushdie, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Arundhati Roy.

The key figures in postcolonial literature and theory include: Edward Said – Palestinian-American literary theorist and cultural critic whose book “Orientalism” (1978) is considered a seminal text for postcolonial studies; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak – Indian scholar, literary theorist, and feminist critic. Her “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988) is a seminal text on Eurocentric power structures and the problem of representation; Homi Bhabha – Indian literary theorist and cultural critic who has written extensively on the intersections of culture, identity, and power in the postcolonial world; and Frantz Fanon – Martinican psychiatrist and philosopher whose works address the psychological effects of colonisation and the need for decolonisation. Audre Lorde (1934–1992) was an American writer, radical feminist, professor, philosopher, and civil rights activist. She described herself as “black, lesbian, feminist, socialist, mother, fighter, poet” and became famous for her biomythography *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (1982). Unavoidable are also Maryse Condé – French novelist, critic, and playwright from the French overseas department and region of Guadeloupe. Condé is best known for her novel *Ségou* (1984–85); Cherríe Moraga – a Chicana feminist, writer, activist, poet, essayist, and playwright. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* is a feminist anthology edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa and first published in 1981; Chinua Achebe (1930–2013) was a Nigerian novelist and poet whose works, including *Things Fall Apart* (1958), challenge Western narratives about Africa and foreground the experiences and perspectives of African people; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o – Kenyan writer and activist whose works, including *Petals of Blood* (1977), examine the cultural and political impact of colonialism on Kenya.

We cannot avoid exposing the theoretical positioning of Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy (in Britain), who made visible the racist assumptions hidden in the linear nature of historical development, which gave historical primacy only to the White, mostly male, Euro-American actors and excluded Black people and People of Colour. In the decades following the initial work of Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy in the United Kingdom, postcolonial studies emerged as a theoretical framework that sought to expose the racist assumptions underlying the linear nature of historical development. Through their focus on the legacies of colonialism, postcolonial studies illuminated the ways in which colonialism and its aftermath have shaped the political, economic, and cultural landscape of the modern world. They also aimed to dissolve the binary categories of coloniser and colonised, emphasising instead the interconnectedness and mutual influence between different cultures and societies.

Overall, postcolonial studies played a crucial role in reshaping the way we think about history and power, and they continue to influence scholars and activists around the world.

### **Postsocialism**

The term postsocialism emerged after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and marked the transition from socialism to a postsocialist era. However, unlike postcolonialism, postsocialism was a brutal and violent transition period. In the context of post-Yugoslavia, postsocialism resulted in an upsurge of nationalism and fascism. The term is used to describe the political, economic, and social changes that took place in these countries as they transitioned from a socialist to a capitalist system.

These changes were accompanied by significant social and cultural upheavals as new forms of identity, social relations, and cultural expression emerged. Postsocialism has been the subject of an intense scholarly debate. Some scholars argue that the transition to capitalism was successful, while others criticise the process as marked by widespread social and economic dislocation and inequality. In addition to these debates, postsocialism has also been the subject of significant cultural production. It is essential to recognise that the post-socialist period was not only a time of transition, but also a time of significant social, economic and political upheaval. The transition to capitalism (that did not prove to be an emancipatory project at all) was accompanied by brutal social and political violence as competing groups vied for power and influence in the new political order. For example, the Balkan wars of the 1990s were fuelled by ethnic and nationalist tensions that had been suppressed under socialism, leading to widespread violence and human rights abuses. In the former Yugoslavia, the basic human rights of the LGBT-QI+ community were and are marked by violent marginalisation. The Muslim and Roma communities were and are discriminated. Therefore, it is important to recognise the complex and often contradictory nature of the postsocialist period and its relation to postcolonial strategies and practices.

For many people in postsocialist countries, the transition to capitalism was marked by negative consequences, including widespread unemployment, rising inequality, and political instability.

### **Postcolonialism. Decoloniality. Necropolitics.**

It is important to note that while the postsocialist period resulted in neoliberal global capitalism, postcolonialism brought important cuts and turns. The decolonial movement emerged in the 1990s in response to the perceived limitations of postcolonial theory and the persistence of colonial power structures in the contemporary world. The movement was launched by a group of scholars and activists, primarily from Latin

America and the Caribbean, who sought to challenge the Eurocentric biases of Western academic discourse and develop new ways of thinking and activism that paid greater attention to the experiences and perspectives of marginalised peoples. Key figures in the decolonial movement include Anibal Quijano, Enrique Dussel, Walter Mignolo, and Catherine Walsh. Decolonial theories seek to challenge and criticise the colonial matrix of power, which refers to the interconnected systems of colonialism, racism, capitalism, and patriarchy that have shaped the modern world. The colonial matrix of power has created a hierarchical system of knowledge production and distribution in which Western knowledge is privileged over other forms of knowledge, especially those of colonised peoples and communities.

The colonial matrix of power has operated through various mechanisms, such as the exploitation of resources and labour, the imposition of cultural and linguistic domination, the creation of racial hierarchies, and the erasure of non-Western epistemologies and ways of being. Decolonial theorists argue that the effects of colonialism continue to be felt today, not only in the ongoing exploitation of formerly colonised countries, but also in the persistence of racism, inequality, and exclusion within Western societies. To challenge the colonial matrix of power, decolonial theories seek to centre the voices and experiences of marginalised communities, and to recognise the validity of different forms of knowledge and ways of knowing. Achille Mbembe's concept of necropolitics, introduced in his 2003 essay "Necropolitics," has had a significant impact on postcolonial theory and literature. The term refers to the use of political power to determine who lives and who dies, particularly in the context of colonial and postcolonial societies. Mbembe (2003) argues that necropolitics is a continuation of colonial power structures and an essential element of contemporary political power. Mbembe's concept of necropolitics has been widely used in postcolonial theory and literature to analyse the ways in which colonial and postcolonial states exercise power over their citizens, particularly through violence and the denial of rights. His work has been particularly influential in discussions on the ongoing legacies of colonialism, including the persistence of racialised violence and inequality.

In literature, necropolitics has been used as a lens through which to analyse representations of violence and death, particularly in the works that engage in the aftermath of colonialism and the ongoing struggles for social and political justice. Mbembe's concept has helped to shape critical conversations about the relationship between power, violence, and literature in postcolonial contexts.

### **Summarising Terms and Conditions**

In short, if we are not able to interrogate the relations between these two lines and the unanswered questions imposed on this multiplicity of post-subjectivities by the constantly imposed racial and gender divisions and the processes of racialisation and class

antagonisms within the hegemonic structures of (West) European nation-states, we will not be able to think of alliances and coalitions in Europe, let alone contemporary revolutionary poetry. In the space of the European Union (EU), there are the political demands of Black diaspora citizens in Europe, as well as the movements of highly racialised non-citizens in Europe (refugees and the paperless) and oppressed minorities who have moved to the West as migrant workers from the former East Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and before (from Turkey, the former Yugoslavia, Spain, Italy). It is important to note that post-Nazi Western Europe needed labour for reconstruction after the Second World War. Therefore, the labour force mainly came from Turkey and the former Yugoslavia, as well as from the impoverished south of Europe, from Italy and from the three fascist dictatorships in Europe that existed after the Second World War, Spain, Portugal and Greece.

Along the line of postcolonialism and beyond, there are movements of racialised populations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Along the line of postsocialism, we need to analyse LGBTQI+ peoples and communities in the former Eastern Europe who were treated as second- and third-class citizens, and specifically in the former Yugoslavia there was an ongoing process of marginalisation of ethnic minorities due to the war in the Balkans in the 1990s. Or, to put it differently, can queer politics in Europe and around the world be considered without a more detailed elaboration of the relationship between queer and the categories of nationality and race? NO! What can we learn from conceptualising queer in terms of the nation-state, geography, and the processes of racialisation – institutionalised, structural, and social racism? A LOT!

I am interested in talking about politics, race and gender, certainly about a different knowledge and politics that is transfeminist, migrant, politically subversive and sexually transgressive.

Based on a solid materialist analysis of global capitalism, I propose these positions of revolutionary narratives in the world or in our geographical, political and social environment:

- DECOLONISATION and Why Black Lives Matter!
- The LGBTQI+ poetess in the former Yugoslavia
- The new-, post-, and transfeminism(s) of Colour, Black feminisms, Chicana and Muslim feminisms.

## PART 2: POSITIONS

### 1. Revolutionary Narrative: Yolanda Cornelia “Nikki” Giovanni Jr.

Nikki Giovanni (b. 1943, Knoxville, Tennessee, US) is an American poet, writer, commentator, activist, and educator. She is one of the world’s best-known African American poets and has published numerous books of poetry, poetry recordings, and nonfiction dealing with racial and social issues.

“Nikki-Rosa” is one of Nikki Giovanni’s best-known poems, published in one of Giovanni’s books entitled *Black Judgment* (1968). In “Nikki-Rosa,” Giovanni describes how hard and difficult life was in her family. Influenced by the civil rights movement and the Black power movement of the time, Giovanni’s early work offers a strong, militant African American perspective that led one writer to call her a “poet of the Black revolution.”

#### NIKKI-ROSA (excerpt)<sup>1</sup>

and though you’re poor it isn’t poverty that  
concerns you  
and though they fought a lot  
it isn’t your father’s drinking that makes any difference  
but only that everybody is together and you  
and your sister have happy birthdays and very good Christmases  
and I really hope no white person ever has cause to write about me  
because they never understand Black love is Black wealth and they’ll  
probably talk about my hard childhood and never understand that  
all the while I was quite happy

The poem explores the ways in which White society tends to misrepresent Black Americans by focusing only on stereotypical narratives of hardship and poverty. It becomes clear that these processes are built upon already colonial and highly racialised discourses and practices. Giovanni rejects these superficial narratives and instead emphasises the enduring power of love, connection, and Black identity in her own experience.

“Nikki Rosa” refers to Rosa Louise Parks, nationally recognised as the “mother of the modern civil rights movement” in the United States. When she refused to give up her seat to a White male passenger on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, on December 1,

<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from *Black Judgment* (Giovanni 1968: 10).

1955, she sparked a wave of protest that reverberated throughout the United States. On December 21, 1956, a photograph was taken of Parks sitting on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, while a White man takes a seat behind her.<sup>2</sup> Parks, 43, whose arrest on December 1, 1955, sparked a year-long bus boycott by the local Black community, looks out the window from a seat in the front of the bus she boarded on December 21, when the boycott ended. Parks was originally arrested while sitting in front of White passengers on a bus (Library of Congress, n.d.).

This photograph was taken at the request of reporters who asked her to pose on the bus the day the bus boycott ended. The man sitting behind her was identified as Nicholas C. Chriss, a reporter for United Press International. Parks later told her biographer Douglas Brinkley that she posed reluctantly but agreed because members of the civil rights community also wanted a photograph depicting the moment of change (Library of Congress, n.d.).

One of the most important points in these processes of redefining the world was also the deconstruction of feminism, for example, with and through postcolonialism and, after 2000, with the decolonial turn of feminism (see Lugones 2007).

Fifty years after “Nikki-Rosa,” Njideka Stephanie Iroh (2018) publishes “A Diva’s Dish Darling and You Wish You Had It,” in a historically altered context, but one that asks about the power of subversion of the world.

## 2. Revolutionary Narrative: Njideka S. Iroh

Njideka S. Iroh is a London-born Black Austrian writer, artist, and activist based in Vienna. Through a combination of spoken word, performances, and lectures, she explores the themes of language, power relations, decolonisation, Afrofuturism and the embodiment of knowledge. Her political work has been fostered by her involvement in (trans) national, Black, POC and migrant self-organisations since 2006. Njideka’s poetry is inspired by the African tradition of Oral His\*\_Her\*\_Our\_story, and thus shares rhythm, rhyme, and knowledge beyond the written word. She is a co-creator and curator of the project Bodies of Knowledge – Multiplying Marginalised Subjectivities of Utopia through Art and Storytelling, which was awarded the SHIFT 2015 grant in Vienna.

### A Diva’s Dish Darling and You Wish You Had It (excerpt)<sup>3</sup>

We’re doing well.

<sup>2</sup> The photograph of Parks is held in the repository of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA (<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>), under the reproduction number LC-DIG-ds-07979 (digital file from original item) LC-USZ62-111235 (b&w film copy neg.).

<sup>3</sup> Excerpt from “A Diva’s Dish Darling and You Wish You Had It” (Iroh 2018: 179).



We found a well in the middle of the desert and we're growing flowers.

[...]

Have you got the time to listen while you type and speak the fastest growing language in the world?

10 second attention span.

Lives have become trending topics.

They say the struggle is weak. No, weekly.

It is clear that global capitalism requires us to look anew at racist, homophobic, and discriminatory processes worldwide, not as simple identity differences, but as processes intertwined with capital, new media technology, and changing lifestyles under capital's brutal forms of racialisation and exploitation.

Neoliberal global capitalism, which, I argue, took full hold in 2001 after the 9/11 attacks, introduced war as direct machinery for profit and death. Neoliberal global capitalism has advanced with the deaths of thousands and more. To achieve this, it has relied massively on discrimination, segregation and ghettoisation. The US and other neoliberal global EU satellites have begun working with neoliberal corporate economics and authoritarian, demagogic politics that ignite xenophobic nationalisms and the rise of White Supremacy. Once again, but unashamedly, an enduring process of systemic discrimination has begun. This has powerfully and centrally launched the #BlackLives-Matter! movement.

The once first capitalist world, the Christian capitalist patriarchal colonial and antisemitic regime, with its processes of financialisation and liberalism, going hand in hand with the inclusion in its capitalist (global neoliberal), albeit largely presented, bi-political power matrix of all those perceived in the past as "other" – the non-heterosexual identities, although with large scale discrimination against transgender and intersex persons – presented itself in its almost new "enlightened logic" to produce, on the other hand and simultaneously, an endless list of new others in the West: migrants, refugees, sans-papiers, People of Colour and women coming from other parts of the world, and from other religious backgrounds. On the other hand, in the same place and time, there is the former East and the brutal logic of violence, persecution, discrimination and racialisation. In the former East European space (former Yugoslavia, Russia and other post-Soviet countries), death and social death of any kind (where the value of life is zero) are tangible where there is no mediated violence, but raw destruction.

Thus, when we expose the former East European necropolitics,<sup>4</sup> so evident in the 1990s with the Srebrenica genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina and today with the war in Ukraine, it is because the Foucaultian biopolitics reigns in the meanders of the Occident.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Gržinić and Tatlić (2014).

In such a contextual difference, in the period of postsocialism of the 1990s, which was strongly pressured by the West to forget its socialist past (and to cut all relations to socialism), we recognise other important counter-positions. In the former Yugoslavia: the LGBT movement that organised and intervened critically in Slovenia, then the possibilities of media technology and the Internet that allowed the production of independent projects that took up important cultural and media reflections on the war during the Balkan wars of the 1990s.

On the other hand, the entire former East Europe was blind to racism (although discrimination against Roma and minorities continues to this day). Colonialism was also reflected in a distorted way in the 1990s, formulated that we were “colonised” in various forms and by various forces. In doing so, we voluntarily disclosed our violence and continue to do so today, using physical and judicial violence of incredible proportions against LGBTQI+ people in the former Eastern Bloc, (former Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, etc.), and now we see what is happening in Italy, Florida (US).

Beatings, murders and disregard for their basic human rights. We should not forget that the 1990s was the decade of multiculturalism, while the 21<sup>st</sup> century openly despises the “other.” The latter is always generated through highly racialised mechanisms. This manifests itself in a variety of processes of hyper-discrimination. The revolutionary lesbian, female and trans positions fight back with the power of poetry.

### 3. Revolutionary Poetry: Kristina Hočevar

Kristina Hočevar (b. 1977, Ljubljana, Slovenia) is a poet and Slovene Language and General Linguistics graduate of the Ljubljana Faculty of Arts. She has written seven books of poetry. In 2012, she published *Na zobeh aluminij, na ustnicah kreda* (Aluminium on the Teeth, Chalk on the Lips). This fifth book won the Jenko Prize, awarded by the Slovene Writers' Association to the best poetry book of the past two years. In 2017, she published *Naval*, and in 2021 *Rujenje / Half of a C / C 的一半*.

#### (Untitled)<sup>5</sup>

only these walls are your walls. teams change, sounds alter;  
girls get younger. only behind these bars your body unfolds – there is no  
other dance floor.

you watch all of them – yours and the presumptuous;

<sup>5</sup> Cited from *Relations. 25 Years of the Lesbian Group SKUC LL* (2012). Translated by Anda Eckman and Andrej Završl.

they spawn and hands slither, you breathe and the black sun above us revolves, you electrify  
 and there's no need for difference, in this territory you breathe scarlet, no one can throw iron around these silken necks, there is night and it's day, when we are, we write, when we dance,  
 we write and sounds sway the hips.

and you can only wipe the cocoa powder off my lips.

Hočevar speaks these words into the camera in 2012 for the first LGBTQI+ film about homosexual positions in the former East, *Relations. 25 Years of the Lesbian Group SKUC LL* (2012). Hočevar insists on the border, that you are a lesbian and that makes you different, despite everything, the fact that you do not want to be mixed with everything seems important to me for the whole discussion here. All the positions draw a line, they reach the limit, the threshold and I really like that as a revolution, not everything is ok, the threshold that says: no, here are our histories and that's it. She illuminates the way radical political and poetic changes are generated within the artistic field, especially through literary practices.

Mojca Pišek (cited in Hočevar 2015: 69) wrote the following:

The intimate, as well as social, foundation of Hočevar's poetry is the lesbian voice living out its fragile intimate disposition within a strong social voice, while recounting, though of course not for the first time in Slovenian poetry, a triangle of female protagonists [...] and its erotic, loving, intimate relationships that at the same time speak of the inescapable social framework of intimacy and represent a living metaphor for the social power of art.

The difference between biopolitics and necropolitics becomes very clear when we consider the history of homophobic acts in the post-Yugoslav space. This space is not on another continent, somewhere out there, but here and now, in the middle of the fortress EU (or simply Europe).<sup>6</sup> The processes resulting from the reappraisal of this homophobic history cannot be simply described as biopolitical measures taken by the respective nation-states to protect nation-state heterosexual rights. Everywhere we looked, we saw the bodies of LGBTQI+ members who were beaten and whose lives were threatened, so that they lived under the constant threat of being denied basic human rights. Although

<sup>6</sup> We can speak of a homophobic history that is a necropolitical measure of the respective nation-states. This necropolitics lives alongside the biopolitics of the former West European states, as they like to call themselves. In the US context, for example, Eric Stanley (2011) offers a reading of the thousands of mutilations of trans and queer people that took place in the decade before his text was published. The point is that this is not just a single situation somewhere in some rural spaces, but a reality here and now in developed urban spaces.

the first LGBT event in Slovenia took place almost thirty years ago, deep in the times of socialism, when the first public coming-out project called “Magnus – Homoseksualnost in kultura” (Magnus – Homosexuality and Culture)<sup>7</sup> was organised in Ljubljana in 1984 (which was in fact the first coming-out of all former East European states), the first Pride parade was not organised in Slovenia until 2001, and was the result of an immediate provocation by an incident in a Ljubljana café, where a gay couple was asked to leave because they were homosexual. Vandalism and beatings directed at the LGBTQI+ population, which continued into the new millennium and were repeated in the 2010s, were a sign that Slovenian society was becoming more openly homophobic and transphobic, culminating in 2012 when Slovenians voted against the new Family Code, and in 2015, when a referendum on a bill to legalise same-sex marriage was again defeated. It was not until 2023 that the Family Code Amendment Act came into force, which changed the definitions of marriage and cohabitation for opposite-sex and same-sex partners.

I am interested in talking about politics and interventional politics, practices, and struggles that are transfeminist, transmigrant, and politically subversive. That is where the revolutionary potential lies. I want to emphasise that the Black diaspora, migrants, and Women of Colour (all categories that overlap substantially) have significantly influenced feminist theory to the extent that we now speak of new-, post-, and trans- feminism(s) of Colour, Black feminisms, and Chicana and Muslim feminisms.

#### 4. Revolutionary Rap Poetry: Esra Özmen

Esra Özmen (b. 1990, Vienna, Austria) is a young artist from Vienna with Turkish roots. She is the lead singer of the hip-hop duo EsRAP with her brother Enes. The siblings come from a Turkish guest worker family and grew up in Vienna-Ottakring. Their songs address foreignness, migration background, the Turkish diaspora, their home district and the city of Vienna. Their 2019 debut album *Tschuschistan* reflects the process of growing up between the culture of the Turkish guest worker and the Viennese student life.

Esra Özmen, who performs at concerts with her brother as EsRAP, clearly and powerfully says in their gangsta rap song “Freunde Dabei,” which they perform together with Gasmac Gilmore, “Du hast Privileg, ich hab Freunde dabei” (You have privilege, I have friends with me), bringing into play not ethnic poetry but a whole new poetry by and for a community. Upon the release of their song, she asked, “Do you have friends

<sup>7</sup> The first Magnus Festival was an initiative of the Škuc active members. The programme included an exhibition of gay zines, lectures by Frank Arnal, Guy Hocquenghem, and Alessandro Avanza, film screenings, and parties (see Velikonja 2004: 9). Following the Festival, the organisers founded Magnus, the gay section of Škuc, a cultural organisation for the socialisation of homosexuality. Since then, Magnus has been involved in HIV and AIDS prevention. A few years after Magnus, LL (Lesbian Lilit) was also founded.

with you too? Then tag them! Share the post with the hashtag #freunedabei – let’s show Vienna how big we are!”

It is clear that global capitalism requires us to rethink globally racist, homophobic, and discriminatory processes, not as simple identity differences, but as processes entangled with capital, new media technologies and the change of the mode of life under capital’s brutal modes of racialisation and exploitation.

Why are these positions important?

A very good example of the importance of life and poetry is the work of May Ayim (1960–1996), an Afro-German poet, educator, and activist. Margaret Catherine MacCarroll (2005) argues in her MA dissertation “May Ayim: A Woman in the Margin of German Society” that “Although there is a long history of dark-skinned people living in Germany, this study focuses primarily on the period after World War II and examines concepts of culture, race and ethnicity in order to determine what role these concepts play in the experiences of Afro-Germans like Ayim” (MacCarroll 2005: 1).

MacCarroll suggests that Ayim’s life was marked by a sense of displacement without belonging as she desperately tried to find her place in German and African society (MacCarroll 2005: 3). What is important to note about these and other dissident positions is that they cannot be confined to one artistic field. In order to grasp their significance and the ways in which they radically intervene in art, we must, first, suspend a standard division of art disciplines and, second, constantly (re)consider a broad social, political, and economic context of art. Thus, Ayim’s tragic life and powerful art cannot be understood apart from the genealogy of racism in Germany, which MacCarroll points out by noting that it has not “vanished,” but has “only” been modified. The same processes can be observed in Austrian society.

Therefore, I am interested in talking about politics and interventional politics, practices, and struggles that are transfeminist, transmigrant, and politically subversive. I am interested in conceptualising the place of race, nation-state, and migrants in queer theory and global necrocapitalism, and asking where they stand within the relationship of power and subjugation, saying “Race Trouble: Transfeminism and Dehumanisation.”

## 5. Revolutionary Narrative: Nat Raha

Nat Raha is a poet, and queer / trans\* activist-scholar, based in Edinburgh, Scotland. Her research addresses sexuality and gender, critical theory and Marxism, contemporary poetry and poetics, through creative and critical methods. Raha holds a PhD in queer Marxism (see Raha 2018) from the University of Sussex. Her work focuses on transfeminism, LGBTQ+ genders and sexualities, practices and collectives of care and social reproduction, racial capitalism and decolonisation, and critical theory, across poetry, print cultures, art, politics, liberation movements and hi(r)story. Her current research

also investigates radical transfeminism, race in UK poetry and poetics, and queer and trans print cultures.

In a 2020 special issue of *Journal for the Critique of Science*, entitled “Racial Capitalism. Intersectionality of Sexuality, Struggles and Bodies as Borders,” edited by Tjaša Kancler and myself, we published Raha poems, translated into Slovenian by Vesna Liponik.

**from *apparitions* / [9x9] (excerpt)<sup>8</sup>**

[z / 1]

we creopolitan : our  
c/hanging & relations ,  
our senses of the bodies  
„ what whispers to know flesh  
sensate taste salt weather cane  
/ humidity woven through /  
dis/placed, to be anyw-  
here, all possible futures  
undo logics of land/ed

[z / 2]

lockdown, famine, vacuum, derelic-  
-tion, sanctions, engineered  
, cleared, the hands / mouth,

*moonrise pulls out into us*  
*days, bare foliage scope*

prospect living rui/nation  
in yur ruling domicile , in  
fernos & housing washout, lie  
comms junk / hunger sprawl

[z / 3]

at the trial of yur crimes of invention  
in my charred golden minidress /  
cremated homes, debt && circuits  
capital commission & hate

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<sup>8</sup> Excerpt from *apparitions* / [9x9]. Slovenian translation was published as “Iz *Prikazni* / [9x9]” in: Kancler and Gržinić (2020: 264–265).

dined on flour, divine salt &&  
 threads of your flags ,, aroused,  
 our vulgar comedy, drives &  
 erotics silenced >/your beliefs  
 & rituals :: disintegrating, foxed

In her summary of the article “Transfeminine Brokenness, Radical Transfeminism,” Raha (2017) states “that affects of transfeminine life and their relationship to the material conditions undergirding such life are undertheorized in transgender studies and queer studies.” Therefore, she argues “that the material basis of transfeminine brokenness involves the marginalization of the labor of trans women and trans feminine people within a radicalized and gendered division of labor under capitalism alongside transmisogyny within queer, trans, and feminist spaces and communities” (Raha 2017).

Dissident feminisms that we can touch and that reverberate in our minds and bodies through Raha works, and other trans\*positions call for the abolition of the monolithic history of feminism, which is heterosexual, White, and based on a defined subject of feminism that is supposedly a woman as a predefined biological reality (i.e., based on some kind of natural category of woman). Dissident feminism intervenes in this past and present of monolithic feminism with positions that are marginalised and create antagonistic differentiations based on class, race, and gender. These positions are marginalised in society relative to the White majority in the Western world. Moreover, these positions, conceptualised as minoritarian, are people who are migrants, refugees or paperless from Latin America, Africa, and the former East Europe, and thus, from the perspective of the European Union and Austria, come from minoritarian geopolitical sectors. These people perform jobs that are considered “inferior” (i.e., simply considered pathetic within the hierarchy of White middle-class “decency”) and, moreover, these jobs are abusive and exploitative in terms of basic living conditions of reproduction and economic benefits.

## 6. Revolutionary Narrative: Vesna Liponik

Vesna Liponik (b. 1993, Maribor, Slovenia) studied Comparative Literature and Literary Theory and Slovene Language at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. She received the Nahtigal Prize for her master’s thesis. Vesna Liponik is a young research fellow at the Institute of Philosophy at ZRC SAZU and a PhD student at the Postgraduate School ZRC SAZU. In her master’s thesis she analysed the (non)trope of anthropomorphisation. Her research interests span the field of connections between ethics, ontology, and aesthetics, as well as literary theory and stylistics. She is particularly interested in the transformations of the concepts of “animal” and “human” in contemporary philosophy and aesthetics.

**totalen strah totalne analogije** (excerpt)<sup>9</sup>

totalen strah totalne analogije  
s telesom izčrpat  
ne moreš to kr tak  
mali  
v jamicah te divje tačke mokre sezi  
kaj to dela da je to vse to  
si naselila reparirala se usajaš  
mali  
a ti res misliš  
mali včasih res misli  
ker kaj je to  
kaka pozicija  
ne no ne tak  
pol pa  
bo vse bo to bo pol  
zunaj dišiš

**total fear of total analogy** (excerpt)

total fear of total analogy  
exhaust it with the body  
can't just like that  
little one  
in pits these wild paws wet reach  
what does it do that it is all that  
you've settled repaired you hassle  
little one  
but do you really think  
little one sometimes really thinks  
cause what is this  
what position  
c'mon not like that  
but then  
it will be all that it will then  
outside you smell

<sup>9</sup> Slovenian excerpt from *roko razje* (Liponik 2019: 51). English translation by Vesna Liponik.



Liponik's first poetry collection *roko razje* (eats away the hand) was published in 2019 in the specialised LGBT book series Lambda under the auspices of Škuc and was nominated for the Critical Sieve award, the Veronika award and the Best Debut award. Uroš Prah (2022: 12) writes persuasively about Vesna Liponik's poetry collection saying:

This language works with hands, which are gushing in, digging, uprooting, poking, bringing, putting down, taking, catching, beating, wrapping, burying, scratching, chiselling, touching, pushing, holding, protecting, as well as vacuuming, folding, moving, caressing and, finally, hurting from all this "handling." It seems the only thing the hands never do is rest.<sup>10</sup>

## Coda

To understand where we have gone with these established genealogies as political methodologies, I need to introduce dissident feminism into the discussion. It refers to a broad range of feminist movements and theories that challenge the dominant account of feminism. They aim to break down the one-sided history of feminism and the LGBTQI+ movement that has focused primarily on the experiences and perspectives of White, middle-class Western wo/men, and to focus on the struggle against normative, discriminatory, patriarchal, and racist society. Dissident feminisms (plural) dismantle the one-sided history of feminism and centre the struggle against the normative, discriminatory, patriarchal, and racist society of tomorrow, the core of which is capitalist neoliberal subjugation based on exploitation, dispossession, racialisation, and privatisation.<sup>11</sup> It paves the way to rethink alliances and transgeopolitical communities, while challenging the neoliberal capitalist system that dominates global politics and economics and is based on the exploitation, dispossession, racialisation, and privatisation of people and resources. It is important to emphasise the interconnectedness of forms of oppression such as race, class, sexuality, and to recognise that struggles for justice and liberation should not be separated. In doing so, it is important to emphasise that White people and Black people and White people and People of Colour do not share the same site of oppression. This is not even the case under any type of domination, as the dividing line along race makes it impossible to establish an equivalence of experiences and forms of oppression. Stanimir Panayotov (2018) in his article *Border Thinking: Disassembling Histories of*

<sup>10</sup> Translated by Barbara Jurša Potocco.

<sup>11</sup> For an account of dissident histories, see Luzenir (2013), Preciado (2007; 2013), also Mohanty (1984), and my earlier writings on how dissident feminisms intervene in the past (and present) of the monolithic history of a feminism (which is heterosexual, White, and based on a defined feminist subject that is supposedly a woman as a predefined biological reality) with marginalised positions that cause antagonistic differentiations based on class, race, and gender (Gržinić 2014).

*Racialized Violence* shows that because of these entanglements, we can pull out the tacitly racialised class and ethnicity to shout loudly and powerfully against our small national theories and nationalist taxonomies, and I suggest by rapping, slamming, writing poetry, and making a grand gesture of de-provincialising our lives, our works, and our words by opening words to the world.

Fatima El-Tayeb (2014: 11) suggests the “queering of ethnicity” in our reflections: “A queering, or ‘creolizing’ of theory, if you will, that works on the intersections of concepts and disciplines, opens the potential of expressing exactly the positionality deemed impossible in dominant European discourses, namely that of Europeans of color.”

The text and the positions it sets forth attempt to position the struggle for justice and liberation within a larger context of cultural production, particularly in the realm of revolutionary poetry. By highlighting the need for coalitions and collective action, the text and analysis emphasise the importance of solidarity and collaboration in the struggle for a more just and equitable world.

It also seeks to challenge prevailing literary norms and push the boundaries of what is considered acceptable or legitimate in poetry. This implies that the field cannot be static or rigid, but is constantly in flux, responding to changing social and political realities. The text also acknowledges that there is resistance to this radical reformulation of the field, particularly from those enmeshed in modernist, nationalist literary endeavours. This suggests that the struggle for justice and liberation in the field of revolutionary poetry is not without internal conflict and struggle.

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## POSTKOLONIJALNE I POSTSOCIJALISTIČKE POZICIJE: OSPORAVAJUĆA POEZIJA U GLOBALNOM KAPITALISTIČKOM SVIJETU

**Sažetak:** Ovaj rad ističe važnost razmatranja saveza i koalicija iz dviju perspektiva: postsocijalizma i postkolonijalizma. Autorica smatra da je ključno istražiti kako se rasne i rodne podjele, rasizacija i klasni antagonizam odražavaju unutar dominantnih struktura zapadnoeuropskih nacionalnih država te kako ove teme mogu utjecati na stvaranje učinkovitih saveza i koalicija u Europi. U članku predlaže materijalističku analizu globalnog kapitalizma te zagovara drugačiji tip znanja i politike koji je transfeministički, migrantski, politički subverzivan i seksualno transgresivan. Također, upućuje na tri polazišta kako bi se stvorile politički konstruirane genealogije i zapleti za revolucionarne narative u svijetu. U radu se razmatraju teme dekolonizacije, pokreta #BlackLivesMatter!, LGBTQI+ pjesnikinja u bivšoj Jugoslaviji, te novi, post- i transfeminizam(i) obojenih, crnački feminizmi i Chicana. U zaključku se naglašava važnost razumijevanja složenosti i križanja različitih subjektiviteta i geopolitičkih realnosti kako bi se izgradili učinkoviti savezi i promicali revolucionarni narativi.

**Ključne riječi:** postsocijalizam, postkolonijalizam, rasizacija, postsubjektivnosti, disident-ski feminizmi, revolucionarni narativi i poezija