

Description for the general public

The project “Affective Poetics: Manifestos and Women's Rhetorical Strategies, 1970-2020” looks at women’s manifestos from two timeframes, 1970-80s and 2000-20s, in order to examine the ways in which modes of anger and affective poetics are used in women’s engaged writing to shape its political potential for mobilizing resistance. Further, the goal of the project is to establish a new, non-linear genealogy of radical women’s writing. In the 2000s a new criticism of neoliberal, mainstream feminism emerged accusing the movement of political inefficiency, complacency to the capitalist condition, and excessive concern for upholding the normative politeness of white femininity. By creating a new genealogy of women’s rhetorics, rooted in the legacy of the so-called second wave of feminism, “Affective Poetics: Manifestos and Women's Rhetorical Strategies, 1970-2020” reveals that the radical spirit is still present in the contemporary women’s movement. The goal of the project is a comprehensive analysis of radical women’s rhetorics in the first two decades of the 21st century against texts deriving from the 1970-80s, emphasizing the continual use of affective poetics, modes of rage and anger in engaged women’s writing.

“Affective Poetics: Manifestos and Women's Rhetorical Strategies, 1970-2020” belongs to the rapidly growing body of research on women’s manifesto. Between the years 2018-2020 three anthologies collecting women’s engaged writing were published hence, creating a pressing need to engage critically with the archived texts. Although the existing anthologies ask their readers to think through the amassed material, their editors, due to the sheer volume of each collection, are unable to closely analyze all gathered sources and explore exhaustively the possible theoretical frameworks. Thanks to its focus on the analysis of affective poetics in radical women’s writing, specifically manifestos, the project pioneers the next step in canonizing women’s rhetorics. The project will therefore make significant contributions to literary and cultural studies, as well as the existing writing on manifesto genre.

Thus far, academic discussions about manifestos have been limited to fields of art history, literary, and social movement studies. Therefore, the study of women’s manifestos, located at an intersection of cultural and literary studies with elements of queer theory, challenges the traditional conviction of which texts are appropriate objects of academic inquiry hence, fulfilling a dual objective. Firstly, a social one i.e. the project works to make heard women’s voices which were previously dismissed, mocked or marginalized. Secondly, the project is innovative in its application of a peripheral theoretical framework (critical queer feminist thinking) to a peripheral text (radical manifesto).

The most important predicted outcomes of the project will be expanding the theoretical toolbox for analyzing radical women’s rhetorics, de-marginalizing engaged women’s writing and legitimizing the use of emotions in women’s manifestos as an effective mode for igniting social change.

“Affective Poetics: Manifestos and Women's Rhetorical Strategies, 1970-2020” will conclude with a defense of the doctoral thesis, prior to which, parts of the research findings will have been disseminated at local and international conferences. In addition, three scholarly articles will be submitted for publication in prestigious, international journals such as *Signs*, *Women’s Writing* or *European Journal of Women’s Studies*.