

A Possible Approach to the Holocaust Experience and Memory Activism of the Yugoslav (Screen) Writer Frida Filipović

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This presentation focuses on the life and work of Frida Filipović (Greif), an Ashkenazi Jew born in Sarajevo in 1913 (in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy), a Yugoslav writer who professionally developed in Belgrade during the 1930s (in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), the survivor of the Holocaust who testified about it through various art forms (in Socialist Yugoslavia).

The first part of the presentation aims to show how the author's works on specific women's experiences in the Holocaust correspond with her pre-Holocaust established artistic (po)ethic(s) of transposing female tabooed experience. It includes interpretations of her short stories "Roses on Porcelain" (1951) and "Whatever Happens" (1973), and the co-produced Yugoslav-German film *Witness out of Hell* (1965/1967) based on Filipović's original screenplay. While the stories describe particular destinies of old and young Jewish women characters, the film exposes the gendered experience of women in Auschwitz, and the additional trauma resulting from the requirement to bear witness to the original trauma (The Frankfurt trials).

The second part of the presentation focuses on the author's interview/testimony to the USC Shoah Foundation (1998). It sheds new light on the autobiographical aspects of her previous fictional works, as well as on the unique position of some Jewish women in the conditions of the Nazi occupation of Serbia, which enabled their survival. One of the theses of the presentation is that the interview, together with ethnically and gender-motivated war crimes that happened during the wars over a Yugoslav heritage, encouraged Frida Filipović to publish a novel about the Holocaust (*The Bitter Grass*, 2000) transferring the screenplay and previous stories to the page. The aim of the presentation is to build the original methodological frame for the concrete subject and suggest its use in the further memory culture of the Holocaust in Europe, while intersecting literary, Holocaust, trauma, and gender studies.

Keywords: Holocaust, memory activism, Frida Filipović, female writing, Serbia.

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