

Éva Antal, Eszterházy Károly University, Eger, Hungary

Mary Wollstonecraft's Lifework: Feminism, Intertextuality and Interdisciplinarity IDEA, 3rd February



Eva Antal addressed the question of interdisciplinarity in a presentation she gave to IDEA research members and students. She started by illustrating the peculiarities of the Hungarian system. Thus, due to the requirement for students to obtain a combined BA in two subjects, Eva started combining the disciplines of her choice, namely philosophy and English, early in her career. She ascribes to her early reading in deconstruction and in English studies (critical thinking, feminism, poststructuralism) the start of her personal intellectual 'liberation' and a progressive detachment from the framework of German thinking still prevailing in the Hungarian University system.

Her personal practice of interdisciplinarity is linked to her belonging to a research team on the history of philosophy of education at Eger. Moreover, the Doctoral School of Education she works with has a program: history of education and a sub-program on philosophy of education. As is most common in Hungary, the dominant research approach is German-centered with a selection of male philosopher taught to a predominantly female cohort of students. She therefore undertook to focus on alternative approaches and histories of education that give attention to women writers.

The theories of education occupied a central place in 18th and 19th Britain, with thinkers and historians such as Catherine Macaulay, author of *Letters on Education* (1792), and Mary Wollstonecraft, novelist and proto-feminist radical philosopher. Antal therefore decided to focus on the highly original figure of Mary Wollstonecraft, still untranslated in Hungarian. Her aim is to publish the first monograph in Hungarian on Wollstonecraft.

This subject demanded a '**metadisciplinary**' level (Fish): it involves approaching literary criticism, feminist criticism (**herstory**, not history), as well as cultural studies, and literature, while starting from a philosophical approach in the history of education and philosophy. Eva provided a suggestive image of the demands interdisciplinarity poses to researchers: during her recent stay at the University of Glasgow, her work meant using almost all twelve subject levels at the university library (Level 4: Education / Level 5: Psychology / Level 6: Politics; Sociology, Gender Studies etc...)

Eva Antal introduced her view on interdisciplinarity by quoting Julian Huxley's definition of Interdisciplinarity as integrative "with centripetal power". She then provided a framework based on Julie Thompson Klein's *Interdisciplinarity: History, Theory, and Practice* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1990).

Eva Antal concluded her presentation with some information about successful research grant applications at Eszterházy Károly University. When she was vice-dean she coordinated a programme financed by the European Commission via the Hungarian Government --- (Széchenyi 2020) and administered a 1 million Euros grant (2014-2017), which now involves

50 research groups. Interestingly, 9 of these belonged to the humanities (3 in history, 3 in education, literature, philosophy, translation). These grants require individual and group reports monthly, annually with the checking of the indicators of research achievements. (published articles, conferences).

Eva Antal's suggested bibliography on interdisciplinarity

- Coles, Alex and Alexia Defert, (eds.) *De-, Dis-, Ex-, Volume 2.: The Anxiety of Interdisciplinarity*. London: Blackless Books, 1998. Print.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell. 1996.
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- Fish, Stanley. "Being Interdisciplinary Is so Very Hard to Do." *Profession* (1989): 15–22. Print.
- Haraway, Donna. *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. New York: Routledge. 1989
- Moran, Joe. *Interdisciplinarity. The New Critical Idiom*. New York London: Routledge, 2010. Print.
- Warner, William B., and Clifford Siskin. "Stopping Cultural Studies." *Profession* (2008): 94–107. Print.