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Jewish Mysticism and Difference Feminism in Anna Lesznai's Early Love Theory

Anna Lesznai's radical imagining of sex and its use for transcendental purposes heavily relies on Jewish mystical ideas, intertwined with Otto Weininger's theory of gender binarism and Martin Buber's dialogue principle. In her early love theory –part of feminist discourse at the turn of the twentieth century – Lesznai describes *szerelem* as female love, using religious language and ideas from Jewish mysticism, especially those resembling Kabbalistic Hassidic concepts, and ultimately compares sexual union to *yihud – unio mystica* with God. Working within the patriarchal understanding of the biological definition of gender and of the concept of "female difference," Lesznai's difference feminism rooted in the belief that certain personality traits and skills are inherently gendered, reverses the hierarchy by placing women in the position of power, thus turning Jewish mysticism and Weininger's gender philosophy on its head.