

**“Learning a Feminist Language”: The Intellectual History of Feminism  
in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s**

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## Abstract

This work focuses on the (re)appearance of feminist thought and feminist activism in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s. It was a group of mostly young women in the mid-1970s at the universities in Zagreb and Ljubljana and the students' cultural centres in Belgrade and Ljubljana who began reading and writing about feminism. Their group (in fact, three groups in the three cities) was called *Žena i društvo* [Woman and society] and their aim was to reconsider the state-declared emancipation of women. Starting with publications in the field of the humanities and social sciences and with investigating feminist issues in literary and art works, the *Žena i društvo* groups slowly introduced feminist matters into the popular mass media and eventually turned to activism. There is a strong interference between the language they create through the reading of theories, social science and humanities research, art and literature and their activism, language creating practice and practice creating discourse. "Practice" even turns into semi-institutions by the late 1980s in the form of SOS helplines and the first shelters for women and children victims of domestic and gender based violence. Looking at the role of new Yugoslav feminism vis-à-vis the state and its oppositions, my claim is that through rereading concepts and meanings, integrating ideologies and theories from "Western" feminisms and through transfer creating their own version, new Yugoslav feminism is at the same time cooperating with the state and criticising it. In the four chapters of this dissertation, I look at these different attitudes and strategies in four fields or mediums: the humanities and social sciences, arts and literature, popular mass media and activism.

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## Introduction

“We were learning a feminist language. At the beginning I was always rethinking my sentences, asking myself the question: ‘what would this mean in the vocabulary of feminism?’ It was not just words we were translating, it was thoughts.” – this is how Vera Litričin, a medical student when she first encountered the feminist group taking its first steps in Belgrade, summarised her experience. Language, concepts and ideology were the key elements to a new feminism emerging in Yugoslavia in the early 1970s. Not much after the second wave feminism had come to the fore in the West in its more and more diverging forms, Yugoslavia also had an organised form of feminism, a phenomenon that remained an exception in East Central Europe until the late 1980s. It was created by a few intellectual women and spread out in the three major cities in Yugoslavia: Belgrade, Ljubljana and Zagreb.

In the mid-1970s the universities in Zagreb and Ljubljana and the students’ cultural centres in Belgrade and Ljubljana offered space for the groups which were called *Žena i društvo* [Woman and society]. The group had a “very traditional name, but still, we were feminists from the beginning” – said Biljana Kašić, a sociologist member of the group from Zagreb, studying earlier in Belgrade and later teaching at the University of Rijeka. This name itself tells us a lot about the place of this group within the Yugoslav political and intellectual scene. The phenomenon which I will refer to here mostly as the *new Yugoslav feminism* – sometimes called by the members *neofeminizam*, that is “new feminism”, a name however not acknowledged by all the members of the group – in my reading took a critical, counter-discursive, dissenting stance within the Yugoslav system.

The new Yugoslav feminism targeted the proclaimed, yet to them, unfulfilled equality of women in Yugoslavia. They argue from a feminist base, inspired and infused by critical Marxism, post-structuralist French feminism, new theories in psychology, anthropology and sociology, but also referring to the Yugoslav partisan tradition as an emancipatory ideology for women. The arguments take shape first in academic work, the arts and literature, relatively quickly reaching the popular mass media and turning into activism.

This research places itself within the scholarship which treats feminism and the artistic counterculture in Western capitalisms from the 1960s on as dissent. While I also acknowledge that dissidence in the oppressive regimes of the Soviet bloc had different stakes and different limitations and I do take into consideration that we cannot think of East European socialisms in terms of the pure binaries of state vs. individual, collaboration and resistance. Reading through the history of these movements and the theoretical implications arising from that, I base my analysis on the questioning of the binary and rather focus on the tensions and balance within the new Yugoslav feminists discourse. Therefore, my claim is that through rereading concepts and meanings, integrating ideologies and theories from “Western” feminisms and through transfer creating their own version, new Yugoslav feminism is at the same time cooperating with the state and criticising the state.

With the longest feminist history in Eastern Europe between the Second World War (hereinafter WWII) and the fall of state socialism, Yugoslavia offers a case study where the socialist state is challenged based on one of its biggest promises, the equality of women. It is exactly this promise that places new Yugoslav feminism at the crossroads of discourses. In comparison to Western capitalist societies, where feminism was directly

clashing with the state about women's emancipation and therefore clearly appeared as dissent, it is widely discussed that the state guaranteed many of the rights which the North American and most<sup>1</sup> West European feminist groups were fighting for. In the meantime, new Yugoslav feminism is a counter-discourse vis-à-vis the newly emerging oppositional discourses in Yugoslavia too. The oppositional groups producing these discourses, either refused to discuss women's rights in search of an agenda of liberal democracy which disregards difference and stating that these were already achieved by socialism and could simply be maintained, or with a bio/ethno-nationalistic agenda, propagated the reversal of the "unnatural" and forced emancipation of women. As we shall see, the new Yugoslav feminists had a cooperative communicative relationship with Western feminisms, with the newly emerging liberals and the state itself as well, even if to a lesser extent. The only group that the *Žena i društvo* members refused to communicate with, at least until the very late 1980s, were the nationalists. It is exactly this diversification of the group and the change of the political environment which signals the end of an era in the history of Yugoslav feminism and this is why my research stops in 1990.

### **A Brief Overview of the Events, Forums and Members of the New Yugoslav Feminism**

The story begins in the early 1970s: at this point, what we find in the open is journal publications, and what we find backstage is a handful of young women and a few

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<sup>1</sup> Scandinavia was an exception, cf. "Scandinavian state feminism". Interestingly and similarly to Eastern Europe, the state offered equality slowed down the development of women's independent organising and the appearance of radical feminism. Cf. Lesley McMillan, *Feminists Organizing against Gendered Violence* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007).

university professors looking out at the Western feminist movement, beginning to compare the situation in their own country and looking for ways in which their insights can be communicated with consequences of change and not of punishment. As we can see from the interviews and from their biographies, these women came from a homogeneous social background and with two exceptions, were from the same generation. A generation born after the war, from mothers who had a first-hand war experience and very often were themselves active participants of the partisan movement. Unlike their mothers, they were puzzled by the contradiction between the promise of the regime and their own experience of their emancipation, the lives of their mothers who were supposedly equal to their fathers and the women around them, who on the level of discourse were equal to men.<sup>2</sup> The academia seemed to be a relatively safe space for the first tentative publications about “what is happening to American women”.<sup>3</sup> Also, because of the influence of some professors and the openness of some women officials in the state women’s organisation, the *Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena* [Conference for the social participation of women], that is the KDAŽ, some of the young women and men could participate in the conferences and editorial work of the journal *Žena* [Woman]. As we shall see and as research shows, some of the women indeed were dedicated to the betterment of women’s position in society, to such an extent that they

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Sharon Zukin about Praxis: “For several older members of this group, the collective odyssey in dissent began in an unlikely way, in teenage heroism with the Partisans during World War II. [...] They were still party members and, unlike Đilas, remained in the party until the late 1960s.” Sharon Zukin, “Sources of Dissent and Nondissent in Yugoslavia”, in *Dissent in Eastern Europe*, ed. Jane Leftwich Curry, 117-137 (New York: Praeger, 1983), 131.

<sup>3</sup> Silva Mežnarić, “Što se događa s američkom ženom?” [What is happening to the American woman?], *Žena* vol. 30. no. 6. (1972): 57-62.

were willing to give space to the feminist ideas of young women, ideas they themselves did not agree with.

Among the young feminists around *Žena* were Silva Mežnarić, and also Lydia Sklevickỳ, Nadežda Čačinovič, Rada Iveković, Gordana Cerjan-Letica, Vjeran Katunarić. This journal, with a contradictory status between progressive and traditionalist, is also where the women from the previous generation started discussing feminism. Gordana Bosanac and Blaženka Despot as professors supported the new generation of intellectuals working on feminism. The array of journals accepting feminist pieces was extended relatively quickly. From 1975 on, it included *Pitanja* [Questions], *Naše teme* [Our topics], *Argumenti* [Arguments], *Ideje* [Ideas], *Socijalizam u svetu* [Socialism in the world], *Dometi* [Scopes], *Republika* [Republic], *Književnost* [Literature], etc., in the 1980s *Problemi* [Problems] in Slovenia. The student journals, *Mladina* in Ljubljana, *Student* and *Vidici* in Belgrade also provided important forums for new feminist discussions, which is not by accident: the youth organisations enjoyed relative freedom from state control in their activities.<sup>4</sup> With time, the feminist articles reached a wider audience through newspapers and weeklies, such as *NIN* [*Nedjeljne informativne novine* – Weekly Informative News], *Danas* [Today], *Start*, as well as women's magazines, such as *Bazar* published in Belgrade, *Svijet* in Zagreb and *Jana* in Ljubljana. *Naša žena*, another print medium in Ljubljana, was a magazine between the more serious *Žena*, which still followed the party lines about the women's question and the popular women's magazines, with a few feminist articles though. The journalist, writer and sociologist

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<sup>4</sup> The reasons and explanations behind this widely repeated statement are explored in detail in the work of Marko Zubak, *The Yugoslav youth press (1968-1980): student movements, subcultures and communist alternative media*. PhD Diss. (Budapest: CEU, Budapest College, 2013).

Slavenka Drakulić, the sociologist Vesna Pusić – whose research focused on the “glass ceiling” syndrome within socialism –, the journalist (sociologist and psychologist by training) Vesna Kesić and Sofija Trivunac, a psychologist from Belgrade were frequent authors of these popularised articles about serious feminist issues. Helping the spread and exchange of feminist ideas, the media space was open for contributors from all of Yugoslavia and the main papers were also accessible on the territory of the whole country.

The institutional framework was provided partly by the youth organisations also publishing *Student* and *Vidici*, and partly by the universities in Zagreb and Ljubljana: the groups called *Žena i društvo* were part of the sociology departments of these universities. In Zagreb, the most active participants were Lydia Sklevickỳ, Nadežda Čaćinović, Rada Iveković, Gordana Cerjan-Letica, Vjeran Katunarić, Vesna Pusić, Gordana Bosanac, Blaženka Despot, Andrea Feldman, Biljana Kašić, Vesna Kesić, Slavenka Drakulić, Jasna Tkalec, Jasenka Kodrnja. Sklevickỳ, Feldman and Kašić as program coordinators had a great deal of work in bringing together the more academic-focused meetings, which created a discursive space for serious discussions of the latest theories.

In Belgrade, the most important stronghold of new feminism was the SKC, the Students’ Cultural Centre, where the director of the Gallery of the SKC, later the director of the whole institution was Dunja Blažević. Together with program organiser Dragica Vukadinović, and a group of young and talented curators, such as Biljana Tomić and Bojana Pejić, university students and later scholars and professionals such as the sociologist Žarana Papić, the psychologist Sofija Trivunac, the construction engineer Sonja Drljević, the journalist Lina Vušković. Under the auspices of the SKC, Papić,



Blažević, the writer and film-maker Jasmina Tesanović and Nada Ler-Sofronić, the only member of the new Yugoslav feminist circles from Sarajevo, arranged the first international feminist conference in Yugoslavia in 1978. Many women joined the feminist circles after their attendance at the conference.

This famous and canonical conference, however, was preceded by many publications (already in 1972) and a lot of brainstorming, even feminist presentations at KDAŽ organised conferences, first in 1976 in Portorož.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the very visible conference was accompanied and followed by a lot of other events, including public forums, open discussions, exhibitions and literary readings. This is how other young scholars got involved with the group, the Belgrade based literary scholar, Nada Popović Perišić, the psychologist Vera Smiljanić, the sociologist Anđelka Milić and the journalist and media expert Neda Todorović, whose television series also did a lot for popularising feminist ideas. There were also a lot of inter crossings between Zagreb, Belgrade and soon, Ljubljana. The only participant from Sarajevo, Ler-Sofronić became one of the most prolific and creative authors of scholarly work. Two theoreticians from Zagreb working on feminist literary and art theory, Ingrid Šafranek and Jelena Zuppa should be mentioned here too. Because of the curators at the SKC, art and literature was extensively present in the feminist programs, including the flourishing artists from Zagreb, such as

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<sup>5</sup> The other events and conferences about the “women’s question” necessarily also opened up a space for feminist or proto-feminist discussions, but these were not related to the work of the new Yugoslav feminists. For example, as early as 1976 there was a summer school about the “women’s question” at the Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik. Marijana Mitrović, “Genealogy of the Conferences on Women’s Writing at the Inter University Center (Dubrovnik) from 1986 to 1990”, *ProFemina*, Special Issue no. 2 (Summer-Autumn 2011): 157-166, 167. Also cf. Chiara Bonfiglioli, *Revolutionary Networks: Women’s Political and Social Activism in Cold War Italy and Yugoslavia*. PhD Diss. (Utrecht: University of Utrecht, 2012) and Manuela Dobos, “The Women’s Movement in Yugoslavia: The Case of the Conference for the Social Activity of Women in Croatia, 1965-1974,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, vol. 7. no. 2 (1983): 47-55.

Sanja Iveković. Possibilities of feminist writing were presented and discussed through the work of Irena Vrkljan, Dubravka Ugrešić and Biljana Jovanović, among others. It was the group at the SKC which was later joined by a younger generation of feminists, Vera Litričin and Lepa Mladenović, and even later the important anti-war activists after 1991, Staša Zajović and Nadežda Četković.

The Ljubljana scene joined the other two *Žena i društvo* groups later, in the early 1980s. Maybe because of the later awakening of the group, it was more complex in the sense that it found a niche both at the university and the ŠKUC, the Ljubljana students' centre. Silva Mežnarić was an important connection to Zagreb, and young scholars such as Vlasta Jalušić and Tanja Renner met with the lesbian activist and writer Suzana Tratnik, the literary translator who became a motor of the whole group, Mojca Dobnikar, the artist, philosopher and art theoretician Marina Gržinić. The probably most important feature of this group was that lesbian women felt safe within the group to be open about their identity, and straight or still closeted lesbian women worked together in the same group from the beginning. Here, activism and consciousness raising was first introduced through parties, and the group had more connection to the other critical groups, especially the ecological and the peace movement.

The history of the new Yugoslav feminism has its own periodisation, while it was running parallel with the new or second wave feminisms in the "West": after the beginnings in the early 1970s, 1978 was a milestone for having made feminism visible in Yugoslavia and attracting members who did not know about the groups from before. After this phase, there was a turn, to many, a "second wave" around 1985-1986, when many women wanted a change in the work of the groups, focusing more on activism and

consciousness-raising in small, women-only groups. The next phase in their story started around 1990, when more and more new, much more diverse groups were born out of the *Žena i društvo* circles, going in different directions: from political and soon, anti-war activism through a more spelled out LGBTQ activism, anti-violence activism to institutionalising feminist knowledge by the creation of women's studies or gender studies centres and departments at the universities or parallel to them. The phase after 1990 is so different from the times before that this is the time when my analysis stops.

The events themselves can also be categorised. In the early times the meetings were highly informal, taking place in kitchens, cafés or pubs, and due to their size were between a consciousness raising group and a seminar. For example, there were talks about psychoanalysis at Vera Smiljanić's apartment, which Sofija Trivunac remembers not only as professional, but also as "consciousness raising meetings". These grew into university seminars or talks, to which invitations were sent out – such events took place mostly in Ljubljana and Zagreb. In Belgrade, the SKC offered a series of discussions, the *tribina*. These were open to the public, but the organisers and those more interested in the topic of the discussion, often went out for a drink for more casual discussions. The venue was the Marjež kafana, which "we never left in a bad mood", says Lina Vušković. The conferences (the 1978 international one in Belgrade, and then the Yugoslav feminist conferences in 1987, 1988, 1989 and 1990) and the summer schools at the Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik from 1987 on were attracting the largest audience and opened up to women who would otherwise not have attended the feminist meetings. After 1985, the small group meetings returned, this time out of the intention of the group members: both the consciousness-raising groups, where personal experiences were

worked on and the training groups for the SOS helplines for abused women and victims of domestic violence required the closed format. At the same time, because of the SOS helpline and the activities around it, the feminists reached a much wider audience, which could have served even as a basis for a wider grassroots movement, had the war not come. The three groups in the three cities cooperated very closely in the creation of these helplines, sharing knowledge and experience. This is the time when the Zagreb scene is enriched by the joining of the key figures of anti-violence activists such as Vesna Mimica, Katarina Vidović and Nela Pamuković.

The intense interpersonal exchange through the member states and the connections with the international feminist scene took place partly due to the fact that many women studied and worked in different cities. For example Rada Iveković, Biljana Kašić, Dunja Blažević studied both in Zagreb and Belgrade. Silva Mežnarić taught at both the University of Zagreb and the University of Ljubljana. The women in the group were friends, who visited and hosted each other in the other cities. Nada Popović-Perišić's dissertation about the *écriture féminine* was refused for defence in Belgrade and was highly praised and defended in Zagreb. Also, due to the different attitudes of the local KDAŽs, some actions or events were more possible in one city than the other: the Zagreb KDAŽ gave funding to the Zagreb women to travel to the 1978 conference to Belgrade, while the event there was harshly criticised by the KDAŽ there.

The travels of the participants and therefore, the transfer of ideas, in the meantime, were not restricted to the Yugoslav urban life: study and research fellowships provided access to feminist networks and writings in several countries. Throughout the dissertation, my intention is to insert those biographical elements which help to

understand the writings and actions of the protagonists, or the other way round: which leave the reader puzzled by their contradictions. Friendship and love played a crucial role in the formation of the feminist groups: the friendship between Vesna Pusić and Lydia Sklevický is one many women recall with nostalgia. In Belgrade, as Dragica Vukadinović remembers: “Žarana was the sister of Dunja’s husband at that time, Žarko Papić. We were a ‘prijateljsko-porodički ekipa’”. Other relationships meant motivation for young men of the time to learn about feminism and participate in the discussions, such as the partner of Žarana Papić, Ivan Vejvoda. Nadežda Čaćinović emphasised the support she had from her husband, the philosopher Žarko Puhovski.

One of the most touching stories, however, stretches beyond the scope of this thesis, and still, it has a place in the narrative: the British feminist activist from the group Feminist Network (Feminista Hálózat) in Budapest, Antonia Burrows was an English professor in Budapest when she started to come to Belgrade to support anti-war activists in the beginning of the nineties, where they fell in love with Lepa Mladenović. By that time there was already an SOS hotline for battered women in Belgrade where Lepa Mladenović and other feminists were working as volunteers. This experience, personal and professional, with feminists in Belgrade contributed to Antonia Burrows’s high motivation to help women with the foundation of the Hungarian helpline and first registered feminist organisation after 1989, NANE, in 1994. She connected the feminist experts from Zagreb (Centar za ženske žrtve rata – Centre for Women War Victims) and Belgrade (Autonomni ženksi centar – Autonomous Women’s Center), who then did the initial training for NANE’s hotline. The helplines, a shelter for abused women and a new

activist set-up was the new phase of new Yugoslav feminism too, which reformulated itself around 1990 and even more during the war.

### **The Theoretical Consequences and the Place of this Project in the Existing Historiography**

The histories of socialist Eastern Europe are still, as Aleksei Yurchak points out, written in what he calls binary metaphors, which subscribe to a post-socialist master narrative “in the history of socialism that implicitly and explicitly reproduce binary categories of the Cold War and the opposition between ‘first world’ and ‘second world’”, thus ignoring the ethical and aesthetic complexities of socialist life.<sup>6</sup> Within this, Yugoslavia is seen as the exception,<sup>7</sup> which in the meantime leads to a predominant focus on its nationalist dissidents, changing the binary opposition to that between a gullible but still good regime and its evil, bellicose nationalist dissidents at the time I examine here.<sup>8</sup> This exceptionality of the regime is highlighted in those recent important works which, in the meantime, focus on the complexity of socialist everyday life in Yugoslavia, such as the volume *Yugoslavia's Sunny Side* edited by Hannes Grandits and Karin Taylor, with a text

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<sup>6</sup> Aleksei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, c2006), 9.

<sup>7</sup> From the abundant literature on Yugoslav self-management, cf. Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *Yugoslavia* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1971) (esp. from p175); John B. Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia* (London: C. Hurst, 2000); Stevan Mezei, et al. *Samoupravni socijalizam* [Self-managing socialism] (Beograd: Savremena administracija, 1976).

<sup>8</sup> Jasna Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the Nation?: Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism* (London: Hurst & Co., 2002); Stevo Đurašković, *The Politics of History in Croatia and Slovakia in the 1990s*. PhD Diss. (Ljubljana: University of Ljubljana, 2013); Nick. Miller, *The Nonconformists: Culture, Politics, and Nationalism in a Serbian Intellectual Circle, 1944-1991* (New York: Central European University Press, 2007); Nebojša Popov, ed. *The Road to War in Serbia. Trauma and Catharsis*. English version ed. Drinka Gojković (Budapest: CEU Press, 2000); Sabrina P. Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milošević* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2002).

by Igor Duda, and *Remembering Utopia* by Breda Luthar and Maruša Pušnik, Radina Vučetić's *Koka-kola socijalizam*, as well as the Maria Todorova's edited volume about the whole of Eastern Europe, *Remembering Communism*.<sup>9</sup> These approaches certainly present a more elaborate story and they fit my narrative. The two dimensions of a discourse, in this case one that follows and agrees to the state discourse and one which resists it in certain ways, "do not constitute a new binary. They are not in an either-or relationship; rather, they are indivisible and mutually productive".<sup>10</sup> The same theory may apply not only to the everyday experience of the citizens of state socialist countries, but to the intellectuals and the intellectual discourse produced by these intellectuals.

For various reasons, new Yugoslav feminism is a case par excellence of the productive encounter of discourses. Engaging in a dialogue with the state, building on its promise of gender equality, the new Yugoslav feminists do not oppose directly the Yugoslav state, but see women's place there as constant opposition: as Nada Ler-Sofronić puts it, "throughout the thousand year long oppression of women, women could maintain a relatively autonomous position (...) [while] women had to behave towards the power, the system and the order as opposition and they had to observe a sociability in themselves [*društvenost*] through psychological resistance, through reminding themselves of their

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<sup>9</sup> Maria Todorova, ed. *Remembering Communism: Genres of Representation* (New York: Social Science Research Council, c2009); Hannes Grandits and Karin Taylor, eds., *Yugoslavia's Sunny Side: A History of Tourism in Socialism (1950s-1980s)* (Budapest: CEU Press, c2010); esp. cf. Igor Duda, "What To Do at the Weekend? Leisure for Happy Consumers, Refreshed Workers, and Good Citizens", 303-334; Radina Vučetić *Koka-kola socijalizam* [Coca-cola socialism] (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2012); Breda Luthar and Maruša Pušnik, eds., *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Washington, DC: New Academia Pub., 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 23.

dissatisfactory position”.<sup>11</sup> The state admits the lack of full emancipation of women, as we can see in the statements of state representatives at public events about the status of women.<sup>12</sup> They even admit that the “patriarchal consciousness” remained in Yugoslav socialism, and that this should be changed. In the meantime, what they offer, is not enough from the new feminist perspective. The disappointment of this new generation of young women is similar to the experience of the feminists in the US and Western Europe, and this aspect should be constantly kept in mind when we discuss the difference between the so-called East and the so-called West. Despite the differences in the economic and political systems, the new feminist movement and ideology was born out of a disappointment with the promises of the Left, adhering to its leftist orientation.<sup>13</sup>

The new Yugoslav feminists learn about the West and the criticism of existing democracies through the inner, feminist dissidence,<sup>14</sup> thus they are inspired and critical of Western capitalist democracies at the same time, unlike for example the liberal dissident groups in Central Europe. The new Yugoslav feminism, as we shall see, poses strict criticism through pointing out the systemic nature of the oppression of women,

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<sup>11</sup> Nada Ler-Sofronić, “Odiseja ljudskog identiteta žene” [The Odyssey of the human identity of women], *Pitanja*, No. 7-8 (1978): 11-28, 21.

<sup>12</sup> See later in the dissertation, regarding the analysis of the statements about the status of women by state representatives.

<sup>13</sup> Heidi I. Hartmann, “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union,” in *Feminist Frameworks. Alternative Theoretical Accounts of the Relations between Men and Women*, ed. Alison M. Jaggar and Paula S. Rothenberg, 172-189 (New York: McGraw Hill, 1993) and Lydia Sargent, ed., *Women and Revolution: A Discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, c1981). Hartmann’s text was published in Yugoslavia too: Heidi Hartmann, “Nesrećni brak marksizma i feminizma: ka progresivnijem za jedništvu”, *Marksizam u svetu*, vol. 9, no. 3 (1983): 179-217.

<sup>14</sup> Holloway Sparks, “Dissident Citizenship: Democratic Theory, Political Courage, and Activist Women”, *Hypatia* 12. no. 4 (November 1997): 74–110; Regina Graycar, ed., *Dissenting Opinions: Feminist Explorations in Law and Society* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1990). Also, cf. Thomas Crow, *The Rise of the Sixties: American and European Art in the Era of Dissent*, 2nd ed. (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2004).



thematizing new sexualities, and most importantly being the first to thematise the violence women endure, without the intervention of the system (for example, marital rape was not penalised for a long time). Their claim is that the state did not change the *status quo*, one of their conclusions being that once the regime was built on patriarchy, it became ideologically impossible for women to achieve real equality there. Joan W. Scott warns that feminism should dispute “those histories of democracy that attribute earlier exclusions to temporary glitches in a perfectible, ever-expansive pluralist system and that take the extension of the vote, outside its necessarily consistent indicator of the absence of inequality in a society.”<sup>15</sup> The rights provided by the party state were exactly the extensions of the already existing political system, one which the new feminists realised and criticised. To change the structures, a new approach, a new vocabulary is needed. In the meantime, due to the state’s promises and based on their reading into the situation of women elsewhere and the assessment of other feminists of the place of women, to the new Yugoslav feminists the framework of the state does not seem to be a target of attack. As we shall see, the depth and radicalism of criticism depends on the medium or publicity, the time and the theme as well.

I call the new feminist discourse in Yugoslavia a critical one, more similar in its attempt to engage the state in a dialogue than refusing it per se, as most dissidence does. In the meantime, it makes sense to look at this new feminism in the light of dissenting discourses, because of the dissenting status of feminism elsewhere and because of the

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<sup>15</sup> Joan W. Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer. French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard UP, 1996), 18.

windows the dissidents themselves offer for this.<sup>16</sup> While Yurchak, whose approach I find very useful for my own analysis, is critical of Havel, for repeating binaries: “these models, although they provide an alternative to the binary division between the recognition and misperception of ideology, they do so by producing another problematic binary between ‘truth’ and ‘falsity’, ‘reality’ and ‘mask’, ‘revealing’ and ‘dissimulating’.”<sup>17</sup> Havel’s idea of dissidence, in my reading, is more open and has the potential of opening up the concept:

writers who write as they wish without regard for censorship or official demands and who issue their work –when official publishers refuse to print it – as samizdat. They may be philosophers, historians, sociologists, and all those who practice independent scholarship and, if it is impossible through official or semi-official channels, who also circulate their work in samizdat or who organize private discussions, lectures, and seminars. They may be teachers who privately teach young people things that are kept from them in the state schools; clergymen who [...] try to carry on a free religious life; painters, musicians, and singers who practice their work regardless of how it is looked upon by official institutions; everyone who shares this independent culture and helps to spread it,<sup>18</sup>

The new feminists in Yugoslavia did not publish in samizdat, neither were they imprisoned for their writings. However, what I will show throughout this thesis is that they were in search of critical or oppositional positions within the state’s mainstream. They created a micro space where nonconformist ideas could be discussed, critical thoughts were disseminated outside the official classroom space and new research was done despite the resistance of the institutions.

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<sup>16</sup> The political scientist Tihomir Cipek and the historian Katarina Spehnjak provide a list of all the un-researched possible forms of “opposition”, “dissent”, “antipolitics”, “resistance” in the former Yugoslav member state of Croatia, and in their categorisation, new Yugoslav feminism belongs under these labels. Tihomir Cipek and Katarina Spehnjak, “Croatia,” in *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe*, ed. Detlef Pollack and Jan Wielgoch (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, c2004), 185-206.

<sup>17</sup> Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 17.

<sup>18</sup> Václav Havel, “The Power of the Powerless”, trans. Paul Wilson, [http://vaclavhavel.cz/showtrans.php?cat=eseje&val=2\\_aj\\_eseje.html&typ=HTML](http://vaclavhavel.cz/showtrans.php?cat=eseje&val=2_aj_eseje.html&typ=HTML) (Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> August 2014).

Importantly enough, this happened in a country where there was no pre-publication censorship, journals were controlled through funding and where, adhering to a few rules, one could even express criticism of the regime. Jasna Dragović-Soso<sup>19</sup> provides a list of themes the critical discussion of which in the otherwise open field of Yugoslav historiography brought along severe consequences. In Dragović-Soso's words, these were (1) the "inherently positive value of Yugoslav unification", (2) the absolutely negative nature of the Yugoslav regime between the two world wars (depicted as a "monarcho-fascist dictatorship" and "subject to Greater-Serbian hegemony", with the support of non-Serbian "bourgeoisies"), and finally, (3) the official interpretation of the "war of national liberation" and the communist revolution.<sup>20</sup> Many of my interviewees would add to this list, or simplify it to the untouchable status of Tito, the SKJ and the unquestionability of the existence of Yugoslavia.

Sharon Zukin, looking at "possibilities of dissent" in Yugoslavia, argues that "[i]n states that claim to operate on the basis of a Marxist ideology, there is an enormous vulnerability to dissent because of the gap between theory and practice. In capitalist states, dissent arises in more limited institutional contexts, notably over the excesses of administrative agencies or the dishonesty of executive authorities."<sup>21</sup> She claims that due to the framework, the activity of Đilas or the Praxis group is closer to "whistle-blowing" in the US than to East European dissidence. In the meantime, she also debates the "liberalism" of the Yugoslav state, she suggests rather discussing different strategies of

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<sup>19</sup> Who, for example, treats Milovan Đilas as an exemplary case of a dissident, offering another approach to the idea.

<sup>20</sup> Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the Nation?*, 71.

<sup>21</sup> Sharon Zukin, "Sources of Dissent and Nondissent in Yugoslavia", in *Dissent in Eastern Europe*, ed. Jane Leftwich Curry (New York: Praeger, 1983), 117-137, 119.

control, such as creating a controlled space within the state: “neither self-management nor market socialism is as central to Yugoslav development as the relatively noncoercive strategies of labor mobilization and capital accumulation that the leadership established in response to internal and external pressures beginning in 1947 and 1948. And it is wrong to characterize these strategies as liberalism.”<sup>22</sup> Even for critical intellectual positions, there could be severe consequences of a publication in a scholarly journal or in the form of poetry.<sup>23</sup> Editors of journals could also be dismissed by the “publisher” of the journal, i.e. the associations, companies, social, political, educational and other specialised professional institutions,<sup>24</sup> which were working under the umbrella of the SSRNJ (Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Jugoslavije – Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia).<sup>25</sup>

The new Yugoslav feminists, therefore, did not face the same persecution the dissidents of Central European countries or the Soviet Union did.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, there is barely any talk about the situation of women in the work of dissidence in Central

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<sup>22</sup> Zukin, “Sources of Dissent and Nondissent in Yugoslavia”, 120.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. the dismissal of the Praxis professors, and 1971, in the era of the so-called liberalisation, the cases of Ignjatović, Gojko Đogo, Janez Janša. Dragović-Soso, Saviours of the Nation; Nick Miller, *The Nonconformists*; Orsolya Gállos, *Szlovéniai változások* [Changes in Slovenia] (Pécs: Pro Pannonia, 2012).

<sup>24</sup> Zukin, “Sources of Dissent and Nondissent in Yugoslavia”, 122.

<sup>25</sup> Mark Thompson, *Forging War: The Media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (London: Article 19. International Centre against Censorship, 1994), 13.

<sup>26</sup> Barbara J. Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe: Citizen Intellectuals and Philosopher Kings* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2002) and Ervin Csizmadia, *A magyar demokratikus ellenzék története* [The history of the Hungarian democratic opposition] (Budapest: T-Twins, 1995). David Ost, *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics: Opposition and Reform in Poland since 1968* (New York: Columbia UP, 1990); Detlef Pollack and Jan Wielgohs, eds., *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe: Origins of Civil Society and Democratic Transition* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, c2004); H. Gordon Skilling, *Samizdat and an Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1989); James H. Satterwhite, *Varieties of Marxist Humanism: Philosophical Revision in Postwar Eastern Europe* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, c1992); Marci Shore, *Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation's Life and Death in Marxism, 1918-1968* (New Haven: Yale University Press, c2006).

Europe and the Soviet Union: they overlook the shortcomings of state socialism in this regard, which largely defines the possibilities of thinking about feminism in their discourse after 1989. The difficulties of developing a feminist movement in the new democracies in East Central Europe have been discussed by many authors. In countries which offer a rich and compelling discussion of human rights, freedom of speech, social justice, the violation of women in the private sphere and exclusion of women from the public gets little attention, which issue has not been examined by the existing scholarship until very recently and with a few exceptions. A coming-up new research starts tackling these shortcomings.<sup>27</sup> The new Yugoslav feminist criticism of the state, not treated as dissidence, but still, considered with keeping the dissident discourses in other countries in mind, helps us to understand what would have been the opportunities in other East European countries to develop a feminist dissidence. The case of new Yugoslav feminism explains to us how the ambivalent emancipation offered by the state socialist regimes made it impossible for dissidents who by the 1980s almost entirely gave up on Marxism, to relate to a feminism which has at least partly to acknowledge some of the improvements in women's situation in socialist countries.

Nick Miller describes the path from Marxism to Marxist revisionism, followed by a more oppositional stream demanding democracy (or at least freedom of expression, irrespective of nationalist claims, that follow later), and what in Yugoslavia is chronologically followed by the ethno-nationalist opposition (which ideologically is

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<sup>27</sup> See the PhD dissertation in progress by Victoria Harms at the History Department of the University of Pittsburgh with the title *From Dissent to Absent: Hungarian Dissidents and their Western Friends, 1973-2010* and about the case the Polish Solidarity: Kristi S. Long, *We All Fought for Freedom: Women in Poland's Solidarity Movement* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996) and Shana Penn, *Solidarity's Secret: The Women Who Defeated Communism in Poland* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, c2005).

hardly a bearer of the previous waves, even if there were personal overlaps between these).<sup>28</sup> In other countries, such as Hungary, Poland and then Czechoslovakia, dissidents by the 1980s give up on Marxism, many maintain a left-orientation and express their reservations or protest against the introduction of capitalism after 1989.<sup>29</sup> Another element of the shift within which the “Marxist opposition turned into a more general search for standard liberal goals: the right to speak, the right to gather, the right to open critique of their political, social, economic, and cultural system”,<sup>30</sup> is a focus on human rights,<sup>31</sup> which, on the other hand, will also become the focus of the feminist discourse in Yugoslavia with the activist turn in the mid-1980s.

Despite the commonalities between new Yugoslav feminism and Central European dissidents in strategies and in their critical discourse, there are prevailing differences in their circumstances, hence the concept of dissidence in my text will be reserved for the dissident circles in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In his text from 1988, Tony Judt cuts through the abundance of terms (*opposition, dissent, anti-politics, resistance*) and chooses *dissidence* and *opposition*, opting rather for the latter, saying: “my interest is in people and movements that function as opponents of the Party and the state, and which occupy that role in novel ways.”<sup>32</sup> Whereas dissidence may occur in any “complex social system”, where “intellectuals reflect upon the contradictions of their own

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<sup>28</sup> Nick Miller, “Where Was the Serbian Havel?”, in *The End and the Beginning: The Revolutions of 1989 and the Resurgence of History*, ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu and Bogdan C. Iacob (Budapest—New York: CEU Press, 2012), 363-379. 370.

<sup>29</sup> Tony Judt, “The Dilemmas of Dissidence: the Politics of Opposition in East-Central Europe”, *East European Politics & Societies*, vol. 2. no. 2 (1988 Spring): 185-240, 200.

<sup>30</sup> Miller, “Where Was the Serbian Havel?”, 370

<sup>31</sup> Michal Kopeček, “Human Rights Facing a National Past. Dissident ‘Civic Patriotism’ and the Return of History in East Central Europe, 1968–1989”, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 38, no. 4. (2012): 573-602.

<sup>32</sup> Judt, “The Dilemmas of Dissidence”, 186-187

society”,<sup>33</sup> there is a crucial difference between dissent accentuated in societies which “demand conformity” vis-à-vis those which “sustain conformity”. Judt would add Yugoslavia to those which demand conformity, similarly to other East European state socialisms. The system which demands vs. the system which sustains conformity is a division which again would be fruitful to take out from the frame of dichotomies, however, it is important that Judt does not differentiate between the inner qualities of dissidence, but call our attention that the perception of dissidence largely depends on the extent of repression within the regime.

The perception of a certain group by the regime they criticise also defines their actions: the political scientists Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, within the frames of further binaries, delineate the concepts of “ethical civil society” and “political society”,<sup>34</sup> the significance of these categories in Central European dissent is analysed in detail by Alan Renwick.<sup>35</sup> The most important difference between the two positions is that whereas the basis of action for the ethical civil society is the “ethics of truth (...) political society is interest-based”.<sup>36</sup> The former has the capacity to be anti-political, whereas the latter necessarily involves compromise, through for example entering the political arena. In the case of the Central European dissidents, this arena is the state. Further options are to

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<sup>33</sup> As the examples of Yurchak, Grandits and Taylor, Duda and others shows, resistance and criticism vis-à-vis state socialism is not the privilege of the intellectuals, however, “it does mean that its formulation, its dissemination through publication, and its acceptance or rejection of an explicit social project presumes the crucial degree of social integration and development that accompanies the creation, in the broadest sense, of an intelligentsia.” Zukin, “Sources of Dissent and Nondissent in Yugoslavia”, 119.

<sup>34</sup> Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996).

<sup>35</sup> Alan Renwick, “Anti-Political or Just Anti-Communist? Varieties of Dissidence in East-Central Europe and their Implications for the Development of Political Society”, *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 20. no. 2 (2006 Spring): 286-318. 287

<sup>36</sup> Renwick, “Anti-Political or Just Anti-Communist?”, 303

ignore the state. This is what happens in anti-politics and political secession, or to engage the state from the outside. These strategic and ideological choices serve as analytical categories too,<sup>37</sup> and they help in pointing out the difference between new Yugoslav feminism, which decides to engage with the state from the outside and therefore gets closer to a “political civil society”, and the anti-politics of the dissidents of the 1980s.

When looking at feminist activism in the UK and Sweden around the issue of domestic violence, Lesley McMillan analyses possibilities for the feminists in their relations to the state. Her analysis warns of the power any state has over influencing the outcomes of a movement. Quite importantly, McMillan specifies the two, often contradictory ways in which the feminists working against domestic violence, had to relate to the state: on the level of practical policies, the second wave of feminism wanted response from the state in the form of policy changes, while the movement considered the state “responsible for upholding oppressive gender relations.”<sup>38</sup> Linda Briskin delineates two main lines of strategies, those of “mainstreaming” and of “disengagement”,<sup>39</sup> which is very similar to the Linz-Stepan model of civil societies. Although Briskin and McMillan draw their models and conclusions about the examples of liberal democratic states, comparison is possible: the Yugoslav state is similar to the one which “offers relatively safe environments for change but threaten deliberation through a lack of clear

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<sup>37</sup> Renwick, 288.

<sup>38</sup> Lesley McMillan, *Feminists Organising against Gendered Violence* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 17.

<sup>39</sup> Linda Briskin, “Feminist Practice: A New Approach to Evaluating Feminist Strategy”, in *Women and Social Change. Feminist Activism in Canada*, ed. Jeri Dawn Wine and Janice L. Ristock (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1991), 24-40.



opposition”;<sup>40</sup> in this case offering a state implanted program of gender equality, while eliminating opposition, through the dissolution of the independent women’s organisations in 1953. McMillan quotes Charles Tilly, who writes in his *From Mobilisation to Revolution*: “If the state is in the focus of demands, it has the ability to facilitate or repress movements by making collective actions more or less costly.”<sup>41</sup> When weighing the possibilities for resistance, she concludes that when rights are denied or existing ones threatened, a social movement is more likely to emerge, unlike in the case when the demands are institutionalised or already developed. It is more complex in cases when the state claims that it has already provided for these rights and institutions.

This dissertation is at the crossroads of various fields of historiography. Besides the above discussed history of East European state socialism and resistance (from the intellectual history of dissidence to everyday life consumerism), the histories written about women and socialism and the intellectual history of feminism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century are connected to my own work. Reading across these historiographies helped the development of my own argument and contributed to its complexity. The history of new Yugoslav feminism in the 1970s and 1980s is covered in small details in the articles of Barbara Jancar, Sabrina Ramet, Lina Vušković and Sofija Trivunac. The Slovenian part of the story is told in detail by Vlasta Jalušič in her introduction and through the interviews in the volume *Kako smo hodile v feministično gimnazijo* [How We Attended Feminist High School].<sup>42</sup> Interviews commemorate these times in the volume

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<sup>40</sup> McMillan, *Feminists Organising*, 47.

<sup>41</sup> McMillan, *Feminists Organising*, 39.

<sup>42</sup> Vlasta Jalušič, *Kako smo hodile v feministično gimnazijo* [How We Attended Feminist High School] (Ljubljana: /cf, 2002); Barbara Jancar, “The New Feminism in Yugoslavia”, in *Yugoslavia in the 1980s*,

*Aktivistkinje* [Activist women] as well.<sup>43</sup> The 1978 conference is commemorated and analysed in detail in the MA thesis of Chiara Bongfiglioli – later published as an article as well. Some important aspects of the Dubrovnik summer schools are covered in the MA thesis of Marijana Mitrović, later also published as an article.<sup>44</sup> These works have been of enormous help for me to locate those elements of the story of new Yugoslav feminism which are relevant for other researchers and which are yet to be told. The story of the LGBTQ movements is presented in Slovenian by Suzana Tratnik and Nataša S. Segan.<sup>45</sup> There is much more literature available on the post-1991 era in terms of both women's and LGBTQ activism, here I would mention the work of Bojan Aleksov, Bojan Bilić, Elissa Helms, Ana Miškovska Kajevska, Dubravka Žarkov.<sup>46</sup> The histories of women and

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ed. Pedro Ramet, 200-223. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1985); idem., "Neofeminism in Yugoslavia. A Closer Look," *Women & Politics* vol. (8)1 (1988): 1-30; Sabrina P. Ramet, "Feminism in Yugoslavia," in *Social Currents in Eastern Europe: the Sources and Meaning of the Great Transformation*, 197-211 (Durham–London: Duke UP, 1991); idem., "In Tito's Time," in *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans*, 89-105; Lina Vušković and Sofija Trivunac, "Feministička grupa Žena i društvo" [The feminist group Woman and society], in Marina Blagojević, ed. *Ka vidljivoj ženskoj istoriji: ženski pokret u Beogradu 90-ih*, 47-62.

A selection of articles throughout the histories of feminism in Yugoslavia: Jelena Petrović and Damir Arsenijević, eds., *Jugoslovenski feminizmi* [Yugoslav feminisms], *ProFemina* 2nd special issue (Summer–Autumn 2011).

<sup>43</sup> *Aktivistkinje. Kako "opismeniti" teoriju* [Activist women. How to make theory literacy], ed. Vesna Barliar (Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije, 2000).

<sup>44</sup> Chiara Bonfiglioli, "'Social Equality is Not Enough, We Want Pleasure!': Italian Feminists in Belgrade for the 1978 'Comrade Woman' Conference," *ProFemina*, Special Issue no. 2 (Summer–Autumn 2011): 115-123; Marijana Mitrović, "Genealogy of the Conferences on Women's Writing at the Inter-University Center (Dubrovnik) from 1986 to 1990".

<sup>45</sup> Suzana Tratnik and Nataša S. Segan, eds., *L: Zbornik o lezbičnem gibanju na Slovenskem 1984-1995* [L: An anthology of the lesbian movement in Slovenia 1984-1995] (Ljubljana: ŠKUC, 1995).

<sup>46</sup> Dubravka Žarkov, *The Body of War: Media, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Break-Up of Yugoslavia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Bojan Bilić, *We Were Gasping for Air: [Post-]Yugoslav Anti-War Activism and its Legacy* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2012); Bojan Bilić and Vesna Janković, eds., *Resisting the Evil: [Post-]Yugoslav Anti-War Contention* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2012); Bojan Aleksov, "Resisting the Wars in the Former Yugoslavia: An Autoethnography", in Bilić and Janković, eds., *Resisting the Evil: [Post-]Yugoslav Anti-War Contention*, 105-126; Elissa Helms, *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women's Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin

socialism reflect and tell exactly the stories of the changes of women's position under socialism. About the partisan experience of women, there is the work of Ivana Pantelić and Barbara Wiesinger,<sup>47</sup> also Chiara Bonfiglioli and Barbara Jancar.<sup>48</sup> About the situation of women in Yugoslavia, the work of Vera Gudac-Dodić and the edited volume by Latinka Perović,<sup>49</sup> about violence and oppression in women's lives, the writings of Renata Jambrešić Kirin provide crucial information.<sup>50</sup> The debates about the role of state socialism in women's emancipation, together with the historical works assessing the results of the state's emancipatory politics and the new research on the role and agency of women under socialism were also influential for the approach and position of my work.<sup>51</sup>

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Press, 2013); Ana Miškovska-Kajevska, *Taking a Stand in Times of Violent Societal Changes: Belgrade and Zagreb Feminists' Positionings on the (Post-)Yugoslav Wars and Each Other (1991-2000)*. PhD Diss. (Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2014).

<sup>47</sup> Ivana Pantelić, *Partizanke kao građanke. Društvena emancipacija partizanki u Srbiji, 1945-1953* [Partisan women as citizens. Social emancipation of partisan women in Serbia, 1945-53] (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2011); Barbara Wiesinger, *Partisaninnen: Widerstand in Jugoslawien, 1941-1945* [Partisan women: resistance in Yugoslavia 1941-1945] (Wien: Böhlau, 2008).

<sup>48</sup> Bonfiglioli, *Revolutionary Networks*; Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia 1941-45*.

<sup>49</sup> Vera Gudac-Dodić, *Žena u socijalizmu. Položaj žene u Srbiji u drugoj polovini 20. veka* [Women in Socialism. The Position of Women in Serbia in the Second Half of the 20th Century] (Beograd: INIS, 2006);

Latinka Perović, ed., *Žene i deca 4. Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima XIX i XX veka* [Women and children 4. Serbia in the modernisation processes of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries] (Beograd: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji, 2006).

<sup>50</sup> Renata Jambrešić Kirin, "Komunističko totalitarno nasilje: žene na Golom otoku i sv. Grguru" [Communist totalitarian violence: women on Goli otok and St. Grgur], in *Sjećanja žena žrtava nacizma i nedemokratskih režima* [The memories of women victims of Nazism and non/democratic regimes], ed. Sandra Prlenda, 47-67 (Centar za ženske studije Zagreb 2009); idem., "Žene u formativnom socijalizmu" [Women in formative socialism], in *Refleksije vremena: 1945.-1955.* [Reflections of the time: 1945/1955], ed. Jasmina Bivoljak, 182-201 (Zagreb: Galerija Klovićevi dvori, 2012); idem., *Dom i svijet: o ženskoj kulturi pamćenja* [Home and the World: on women's cultural memory], (Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije, 2008).

<sup>51</sup> Francisca de Haan, ed., *Aspasia*, Thematic part: "Gendering the Cold War", vol. 8 (2014).

## Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This thesis, first and foremost, intends to do what Quentin Skinner beautifully calls the “humanist project of interpreting texts”,<sup>52</sup> while it also intends to tell a story. My analysis relies on and hopes to successfully and creatively combine different feminist authors and their way of reading history, from Gerda Lerner to Joan W. Scott, and the linguistic contextualism of the Cambridge School, especially J. G. A. Pocock and Quentin Skinner, some achievements of Reinhart Koselleck’s *Begriffsgeschichte*, and a conceptual-contextual approach to ideologies as done by Michael Freeden. While conceptual history focuses on the meanings of the texts through a contextual reading, for feminist historiography, there always is an explicit political stake in recovering events of the past. In my reading, the two support each other in the sense that it is the interest of feminist historiography to have meanings of concepts central to certain ideologies recovered, while intellectual history’s contextualism implicitly, and often even explicitly subscribes to the importance of the personal within the political. The strategies behind feminist movements always necessarily involve an intervention with language and a struggle for meanings, the reconstruction of which is the primary aim of conceptual and intellectual history, which at the very same time respects the importance of the role of the personal and the individual too.

Since we speak about a group of intellectuals, their textual interventions into the discourse of the state are their most important achievements, which gave a foundation to the first activist steps, leading to the establishment of the first SOS hotlines for victims of domestic and gender based violence in Eastern Europe. In reaction to the still present

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<sup>52</sup> Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics I. Regarding Method* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2002), 90.

“patriarchal consciousness”, they offer a new language. A language created through transfers and translations,<sup>53</sup> or, in Lucy Delap’s phrasing, through various interactions and interchanges.<sup>54</sup> I find Delap’s analytical frame especially useful for my own work, because the framework she borrows from Daniel Rodgers,<sup>55</sup> includes the political actions as well as transnational political association arising from the shared texts. Delap sees feminism as a “shared conversation”, which, though, is “not simply about ideas, but also about creative experimentation”. (39) The meanings of shared languages change in different contexts, and “commence with the diffusion and sharing of key texts, and deepen via the construction of friendship and professional networks.” This leads to the sharing of techniques and practices, including the *sharing of a language* and the creation of “*semantic resources previously not available.*” (66-67) My interest is in the new ideologies and new concepts, the new meanings produced through the sharing of languages. Ideologies not only are based on concepts, but there always is a struggle for the meanings of those concepts.

In order to understand concepts, ideas or ideologies, in order to give my protagonists or “their thought a history, we have to provide an activity or a continuity of action”.<sup>56</sup> In J. G. A. Pocock’s words, for this sake we need to “suppose a field of study

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<sup>53</sup> László Kontler, “Translation and Comparison, Translation as Comparison: Aspects of the Reception in the History of Ideas”, *East Central Europe*, vol. 36. no. 2 (2009): 171-199.

<sup>54</sup> Lucy Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde: Transatlantic Encounters of the Early Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, UK and New York : Cambridge University Press, 2009), 39. Further citations to this work are given in the text.

<sup>55</sup> Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1998).

<sup>56</sup> J.G.A. Pocock, “The Concept of a Language and the Métier D’Historien: Some Considerations on Practice”, in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge: Cambridge UP: 1987), 19-38, 19-20. Further citations to this work are given in the text.

made up of acts of speech, whether oral, scribal or typographical, and of the conditions or contexts in which these acts were performed.” (91) In order to find meanings in context, Skinner urges for a search of intended meanings, not in the sense of the recovery of the deepest emotions in the hearts of people from a long time ago though. “I see no impropriety in speaking of a work having a meaning which it author could not have intended. Nor does my thesis conflict with this possibility. I have been concerned with the converse point: that whatever an author was *doing in* writing what he or she wrote must be relevant to interpretation, and thus that among the interpreter’s tasks must be the recovery of the author’s intentions in writing what he or she wrote.” This, however, does not mean that “we must be prepared to accept whatever statements they make about their own intentions as a kind of final authority”, the reading should be governed by “the prevailing conventions governing the treatment of the issues or themes with which the text is concerned”, that is, the context.<sup>57</sup> Pocock calls the targets of study political languages or political discourse, what was formerly called history of thought and which mainly focused on the isolated work of canonised authors: instead of a focus on the most famous thinkers individually, however, if we want to understand a certain period of time at a set place, we may rather read into the political discourse of that time.

In my own analysis, I use ideology and discourse alternately throughout the text, being aware that feminist authors and activists are often pre-cautious with the term *ideology* itself. I find ideology a more clear-cut term than the overused term discourse, and more useful when speaking about the encounter of feminism with other ideologies, such as Marxism, Marxist revisionism, socialism. Christine Stansell, for example, admits

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<sup>57</sup> Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, 101-102.

to the unease of many feminists, herself as well, with the word ideology: “Ideology, of connotations of dogma, is too strong a description.”<sup>58</sup> In the meantime, she herself emphasises the importance of the changing vocabulary within a certain ideology, such as feminism, through time: for example, the 1920s brought along a change in the feminist movement in the Anglo-Saxon world through a new vocabulary: “These newest New Women spoke not so much about women’s rights but about the human race, labor, democracy and ‘feminism,’ the latter a French word gaining currency in the English lexicon.”<sup>59</sup> Maren Lockwood Carden, when writing a very-very early history in 1974 of the new feminist movement in the US emerging in the 1960s, is more relaxed about a professional use of the word ideology. She explains ideology as “a set of ideas, arguments and principles which make up the rationale for the movement’s existence.”<sup>60</sup> Her definition is taken from social movement theories, which, as she reminds the readers, unlike Mannheim’s *Ideology and Utopia*, treat ideology as a neutral term in the description of social and intellectual phenomena.

“Ideologies are at the heart of political process”, claims Michael Freeden in the introduction of his edited volume, *Reassessing Political Ideologies: The Durability of Dissent*.<sup>61</sup> He also refers to Mannheim as the one who “identified ideologies as systems that endorsed the status quo, in the face of the status quo defenders”. (3) In the meantime, Freeden claims what is also the position of this dissertation, that ideologies are “normal

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<sup>58</sup> Christine Stansell, *The Feminist Promise: 1792 to Present* (New York: The Modern Library, 2010), 426.

<sup>59</sup> Stansell, *The Feminist Promise*, 149.

<sup>60</sup> Maren Lockwood Carden, *The New Feminist Movement* (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1974), 10 and n1, 183.

<sup>61</sup> Michael Freeden, “Political Ideologies in Substance and Method. Appraising a Transformation,” in *Reassessing Political Ideologies: The Durability of Dissent*, ed. idem (New York: Routledge, 2001), 1-12, 1.

and extensive forms of thought.” (1) In his seminal work, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, he bases the interpretation of ideologies on the interpretation of concepts within ideologies, stating that it is the ideologies which select the meaning and establish networks of meaning.<sup>62</sup> Within the networks, meanings also influence each other and depending on the ideology, some of them take a more central place than other concepts. Freeden calls these the core concepts and peripheral concepts within each ideology.<sup>63</sup> The difference between concepts and words, in the words of the founder of conceptual history, Reinhart Koselleck, is that “[s]ocial and political concepts possess a substantial claim to generality and always have meanings [...] in modalities other than words”,<sup>64</sup> they are “thus the concentrate of substantial meanings.” (84) Besides their ambiguous nature, concepts also have a strong temporality, affecting the political and social space of experience (*Erfahrungsraum*) and horizon of expectation (*Erwartungshorizont*), which by the concept embody past and future. (270) Koselleck warns us that without common concepts “there is no political field of action” (74), more or less justifying the conceptual analysis of a feminist phenomenon or rather, various feminist phenomena.

In *Ideologies and Political Theory*, Freeden applies his approach to feminism, as a new ideology with a certain agenda but which, together with the green political thought, is “trying to escape the morphological and interpretative constraints of the older

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<sup>62</sup> Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 54.

<sup>63</sup> Michael Freeden, “Concepts, Ideology and Political Theory,” in *Herausforderungen der Begriffsgeschichte* [Challenging the history of concepts] ed. Carsten Dutt (Heidelberg: Winter, c2003), 57-58.

<sup>64</sup> Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. by Keith Tribe (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, c1985), 83. Further citations to this work are given in the text.



established ideologies”.<sup>65</sup> The attempt to escape these constraints is faced by Stansell and Carden, and is reaffirmed by Delap. Delap adds a footnote: feminism “should remain understood as a term in transition, indicating no accepted and clearly bound set of ideas or political agenda.”<sup>66</sup> This reluctance to set the boundaries of an ideology, even in a marvellously well-argued and researched study of an ideology, as that of Delap’s, indicates the prevalence of the Mannheimian fear of the Marx-Engelsian concept of ideology as dogma and as one which necessarily brings along repression from behalf of those with more power.<sup>67</sup> Diana Coole elegantly cuts through this dilemma, when she writes that over the history of feminism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, “the kind of interventions at each stage were those appropriate to the specific situation they engaged, rather than phases of one continuous project.”<sup>68</sup>

This reluctance to admit feminism is an ideology stems in feminism’s own political agenda: the feminist movement, which influenced, if not generated the writing of the history of feminism, was largely anti-hierarchical and was fighting against the patriarchal language based on and reinforcing these hierarchies. The feminist variety of women’s history was motivated by the feminist movement itself: “a feminist perspective has drawn much of its impetus from the outside our universities, from an alternative and critical viewpoint which has taken its energy from less well-funded, under-resourced institutions [...] Informal feminist history groups, and autonomous, if struggling,

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<sup>65</sup> Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, 485.

<sup>66</sup> Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde*, n1 11.

<sup>67</sup> Freeden, “Political Ideologies in Substance and Method”, 3

<sup>68</sup> Diana Coole, “Unfinished Plaits or Threads? Feminism(s) through the 20th Century,” in *Reassessing Political Ideologies: The Durability of Dissent*, ed. Michael Freeden (New York: Routledge, 2001), 154-174, 156.

resource centres [...] offered support and encouragement.<sup>69</sup> While such an approach has its creative and political advantages, it is also disadvantageous both methodologically and politically. The methodological consequence is that when the history of the movement is written, it is hardly avoidable to speak about the ideologies behind, while the writing of feminist intellectual histories is crucial in order to place feminism in dialogue with other schools of thought, other ideologies, what I attempt to do here.

The field of feminist intellectual history itself, however, has much less representative texts than the history of the movement. Apart from delay and Coole, there are two works I would use as examples. Ute Gerhard's *Desiring Revolution* is the intellectual history of the sexual revolution, read from a critical feminist perspective.<sup>70</sup> Rosalind Rosenberg's 1982 book is another example, one which explores the intellectual roots of modern feminism from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century on.<sup>71</sup> Joan W. Scott's *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, the history of French feminism from 1792 to 1944 through the work of four feminist thinkers, claims to make an attempt to move feminist history out of the tradition it stands in since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. She sees this history of feminism as "the history of women who have only had paradoxes to offer [...] because [...] historically modern Western feminism is constituted by the discursive practices of democratic politics that have equated individuality with masculinity."<sup>72</sup> Instead of a search for "strategies of opposition" of the movement, Scott wants "to understand feminism in terms of the

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<sup>69</sup> Jane Rendall, "Uneven Developments: Women's History, Feminist History, and Gender History in Great Britain," in *Writing Women's History: International Perspective* (45-58), 47.

<sup>70</sup> Ute Gerhard, *Desiring Revolution. Second-Wave Feminism and the Writing of American Sexual Thought 1920-1982* (New York: Columbia UP, 2001).

<sup>71</sup> Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres: Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism* (New Haven : Yale University Press, c1982).

<sup>72</sup> Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, 5. Further citations to this work are given in the text.

discursive processes – epistemologies, institutions, and practices – that produce political subjects, that make agency (in this case the agency of the feminists) possible even when it is forbidden or denied.” (16) In my interpretation, the “strategies of opposition” are born out of these discursive processes.

The independence described by Jane Rendall above has its productive side as well. In the reconstruction of the historian’s profession from a gendered perspective, Bonnie G. Smith’s emphasises the academic affiliations with the institutions existing within rigid structures and representing authority.<sup>73</sup> She argues that women were writing history before they could enter the “professional scene” of history writing, but since they were writing for the marketplace,<sup>74</sup> their subjects and style were also different from the “professional standards” which led to their work being labelled as “amateur”.<sup>75</sup> But this also meant that they were allowed to work with sources and resources post-modern historiography had to rediscover in the form of oral history, history of the everyday life and the relevance of popular culture. One of the ground-breaking authors in women’s history, Gerda Lerner’s historical writing was highly influenced by her work in the women’s movement and her own work with poor, unskilled women. Her experience with consciousness raising lead her to the writing of her seminal essay on women’s consciousness, which became instructive for the next generations of feminist historians, including the feminists of this dissertation, such as Barbara Jancar and Lydia Sklevický.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Smith, B. G. (1998). *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 6.

<sup>74</sup> Smith, 7.

<sup>75</sup> Smith, 7, 38.

<sup>76</sup> Gerda Lerner, “Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges”, *Feminist Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1-2 (Autumn, 1975): 5-14. Later reprinted in idem, *The Majority Finds its Past: Placing Women in History*,

Lerner is an excellent example of how a discourse, an ideological position builds up from personal experience, activist knowledge and academic knowledge. This is important, because the debate whether ideologies are born from movements or movements from ideologies has not been resolved with a verdict on one side or the other, and is irresolvable.

Therefore, while my research in its methodology mostly focuses on published sources, close reading these with the aim of understanding how a new feminist ideology is shaped, I do so with keeping in mind the significance of the individual authors and the way meanings disseminate in their writings. The Cambridge School scholars, as well as Freeden, emphasise the focus on individual texts instead of creating a grand narrative which does not fit into any historical context. Freeden refers to two authors from the 1960s, Robert Lane and Philip Converse, who both worked to expand ideology to the grassroots or individual positions of the common people, against the association of ideology with high politics and the ruling class, as it has earlier been done.<sup>77</sup> The consequence of the focus on a multitude of authors and positions is the “unpacking” of the internal complexity of the major ideological families. Unlike Freeden, I would not call these ideologies “democratically produced”, but through the multitude of voices, these ideologies reveal themselves as what Bakhtin calls polyphonic.

While my work focuses on published materials, which have a set readership and, via the very publication process, a certain authoritative status, in order to be able to write the story of new Yugoslav feminism as a story and to fill in the gaps between the texts, I

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(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, [1979] c2005) and see: Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness : From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-seventy*, (New York: OUP, 1993).

<sup>77</sup> Freeden, “Political Ideologies in Substance and Method”, 4-5.

interviewed 20 participants of the feminist groups of the time.<sup>78</sup> The interviews were semi-structured, where I asked the interviewees about their experience of the feminist group at the time, their intellectual influences, their relationship to the other members of the group, the official women's organisations and other intellectual circles. Instead of oral history writing, what would force me to confront the statements in the interviews and the written sources, elements of the interviews stand as mottos of the chapters and as elements which make this text a narrative, between the analytical parts.<sup>79</sup> This way I hope to let the reader get a glimpse of the lives of the protagonists whose work I analyse in detail and there is space for the personal voices of these protagonists 30-40 years later.<sup>80</sup>

### **Feminism: Conceptual Clarifications**

Once we speak about concepts, ideologies and meanings, I shall give a working definition of what I consider feminism, bearing in mind that the meaning varies from context to context and from author to author. The working definition is from Sara Ruddick, stating that feminism is the acknowledgement that "gender divisions of work, pleasure, power, and sensibility are socially created, detrimental to women, and, to a lesser degree, to men,

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<sup>78</sup> And Nanette Funk at the NYU, who was not a group member, but was in contact with them.

<sup>79</sup> Bonnie G. Smith's *Confessions of a Concierge* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1985), is another not so usual attempt to cross-read the archives and a personal narrative. Smith chooses another technique, writing the story twice, allowing the reader to enjoy the dialogue between the two different narratives.

<sup>80</sup> While I focus on the intellectual history of Eastern Europe after 1945, especially those about the left wing criticisms of the state, the book which methodologically was the most helpful for my own work is Martin Jay's *The Dialectical Imagination*. Jay writes a history of the Frankfurt School through their texts, but also the history of the Institute of Social Research and the individual stories of these intellectuals. Through talking to his subjects, the personal and the biographical are written into the story of a school of thought. At the time of the writing of the book he was also a young scholar, like myself, who, again, like myself, was influenced by the writings of his subjects.

Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

and therefore can and should be changed.”<sup>81</sup> The proposals for the exact ways these divisions are created and the ways they can be changed are those which differentiate the currents of feminism. What Ruddick does not emphasise in her definition, but what should be added to the definition of feminism, in my reading and especially in a state socialist context, is the importance of women’s agency. Women’s agency in changing “the gender divisions of work, pleasure, power, and sensibility” and the way the divisions are created; agency in realising that the existing social structure is defined by patriarchy as an ideology and power structure. Feminism is a human rights conscious ideology, a form of humanism which is defined by respect and responsibility. Responsibility both as the responsibility of feminists and feminism towards their community, as well as identifying what and who holds the responsibility for the status quo. This is in line with my own feminism too. Calling oneself a feminist is also a performative act, by this one is willing to associate herself or himself with feminism as an ideology and as a movement over time and in various spots of the world.

I use the term feminism in singular, being aware of the multiplicity of meanings, definitions, streams, waves, currents attributed to it. These streams, waves, currents of feminism may be contemporaneous and diachronic, while we should try to avoid the “rigid segregation between feminisms”.<sup>82</sup> Linda Briskin criticises Allison Jaggar for the categorisation of contemporaneous feminisms as liberal, radical or socialist, which Jaggar does by locating the roots of feminism in “the mainstream political tradition”. Feminism is indeed in dialogue with other political ideologies, however, a too rigid segregation

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<sup>81</sup> Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace* (Boston, Mass.: The Women’s Press, 1989), 234-235.

<sup>82</sup> Briskin, “Feminist Practice”, 26.

hides that there is more overlaps between the currents than differences. The diachrony and periodisation of feminism should also be treated with caution. In the case of Yugoslavia, the new generation of feminists themselves dig out the story of their predecessors, which proves their shared roots and interests, as I show in the next chapters. Their story, similarly to the stories of the other feminisms in Eastern Europe, encountered a clear caesura with WWII, which, on the other hand, was followed by state-imposed emancipation policies, providing rights to women feminism itself demands too.

Newer histories of the feminist movements in the USA and Western Europe claim that there has rather been a continuous movement and not two waves, “separated by a 40-year hiatus.”<sup>83</sup> The struggle for birth control, participation in the peace movement in the US and Western Europe, and the self-organisation of women of colour in the US have all been there the whole way through. The periodisation would not even hold in the story of Western feminism, not even mentioning a global history of feminisms: the topics around which the feminist discourse revolved were defined by the political context, varying from country to country. From the history of feminism in the “West”, it appears that each time feminism took a new swing and started to reorganise, there was a need to signal the beginning of a new phase, with the label of “new feminism”. The “wave metaphor” was the invention of the “second wave”, that is the 1960s, first found in a 1968 publication, which then led to “lumping all [feminist] foremothers into a ‘first wave’ that stretched back to the 1840s.”<sup>84</sup> This periodisation still prevails, with the idea of the “third wave”

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<sup>83</sup> Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain. The Women's Movement in America since 1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 27-28. Stansell has a very similar claim in *The Feminist Promise*.

<sup>84</sup> Nancy A. Hewitt, “Introduction”, in *No Permanent Waves. Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism*, ed. idem., 1-14 (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers UP, 2010), 1-2.

(and “post-feminism”) of the 1990s.<sup>85</sup> The trap we may fall into here is a self-perpetuating discourse of teleological progress, of superseding the previous generations. It also delimits the feminist agenda and excludes decades of the previous struggles. I prefer to avoid using the term “wave”, though “second wave” indeed is a commonly acknowledged denominator of feminism in the “West” after the 1960s. Also, I mostly use “feminism” and not “feminisms”: feminism already implies a complex set of thought varying through time, space and its own goals in a certain context, but its diverging forms are connected by the definition above.

Considering other terms, such as women’s movement and gender, it is not by accident that I speak about feminism here: in the interaction and interpretation of ideologies, we work with feminism as a set of thought. It indeed is much about gender and gender (in)equality, however, feminism is not solely about gender. Also, it is important to differentiate between feminism as an ideology, the feminist movement(s), the women’s movement(s) which are not necessarily feminist at all, and politics which speaks about the women’s question. Delap’s rich book supports my position again. Her aim is also “to reclaim the difference between feminism and the women’s movement”, while she also admits that the three relevant concepts of the time, the women’s movement, feminism and suffragism are three “overlapping sets of identities and practices”.<sup>86</sup> The differences between the meanings of these concepts are yet again context dependent, and in the context of new feminism in Yugoslavia, they vary depending on the speaker’s position. *Feminism* is only used by the new feminists for

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<sup>85</sup> One of the most popular periodisation is Julia Kristeva’s, cf. Julia Kristeva, “Women’s Time,” trans. León S. Roudiez, in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi, 187-213 (Oxford: Blackwell, [1986] 1996).

<sup>86</sup> Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde*, 3.



themselves, whereas the *women's question* is the domain of the state. Women's movement is the seemingly neutral zone, which both enters and with which both can identify, it may refer to feminism and the state socialist women's movements.

### **An Anachronistic Concept for Analytical Aims: Post-Feminism**

The concept I will use anachronistically is *post-feminism*. To my knowledge, it does not appear in the feminist literature in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s and it only becomes a frequent concept in the Anglo-Saxon feminist literature of the 1980s, describing a phenomenon with multiple meanings from the 1980s in the US and Western Europe – of the many meanings, I will rely on one interpretation.<sup>87</sup> Post-feminism is a concept with a longer history though, even Lucy Delap finds a magazine from 1919 which claims to be post-feminist, describing feminism “a constraining, outgrown version of femininity.”<sup>88</sup> That is, post-feminism already in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century denoted something that is “over” feminism. The use of post-feminism runs parallel with the dangers of a strict diachronic periodisation of feminism into “waves”, as if the feminist goals had been achieved in a chronological order, whereas if we take a closer look, the themes are rather recurring from time to time. In this circularity stand post-feminism, which is a milder form of anti-feminism, the backlashes and anti-feminism itself.

The backlash clearly refuting and attacking, while post-feminism, quite misleadingly, pretends to be the successor of the second wave, being its better version. As Ann Oakley puts it: “primarily a reactive position, defending something that is perceived

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<sup>87</sup> Stéphanie Genz and Benjamin A. Brabon analyse the differences in the meaning of the concept in their book *Postfeminism: Cultural Texts and Theories* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, c2009).

<sup>88</sup> Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde*, 314.

either to have been lost, or to be under threat [...] A backlash must formulate the case that it is opposing: with respect to feminism, it must characterize feminism in a particular way in order to convince us of its basically misguided, damaging nature.”<sup>89</sup> That is, it is part of the backlash to draw a negative, practically misleading picture of feminism. Post-feminism’s strategies are more refined than that: it suggests that feminism (its second wave) is outdated, since “that everything that women could reasonably want has already been accomplished”.<sup>90</sup> The “post-” prefix to feminism, to Amelia Jones, is the death of feminism, and the process through which this is achieved, she describes as follows: similarly to the *backlash*, feminism gets “reduced to a unitary concept”<sup>91</sup> and eventually, other discourses “subsume it under a broad framework”.<sup>92</sup> The main danger of post-feminism, according to Angela McRobbie, lies in the fact “that there is no longer any need for sexual politics,”<sup>93</sup> which in turn gives licence for such a politics to be undone”.<sup>94</sup> Here, “feminism is taken into account, but only to be shown that it is no longer necessary.”<sup>95</sup>

McRobbie and Oakley claim that post-feminism is not much different from anti-feminism. In fact, what we have here is a refined form of anti-feminism, which walks

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<sup>89</sup> Juliette Mitchell and Ann Oakley, “Introduction”, in *Who’s Afraid of Feminism? Seeing through the Backlash*, ed.s Juliette Mitchell and Ann Oakley (London: Penguin, 1997), 3-4.

<sup>90</sup> Mitchell and Oakley, “Introduction”, 4.

<sup>91</sup> Amelia Jones, “Feminism, Incorporated. Reading ‘Postfeminism’ in an Anti-Feminist Age,” (1992) in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Amelia Jones (London: Routledge, 2003), 314-329. 314.

<sup>92</sup> Jones, “Feminism, Incorporated. Reading ‘Postfeminism’ in an Anti-Feminist Age,” 323.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Kate Millett. *Sexual Politics*. New York: Simon & Schuster, c1990 [1970].

<sup>94</sup> Angela McRobbie, “Notes on Postfeminism and Popular Culture: Bridget Jones and the New Gender Regime,” in *All about the Girl. Culture, Power and Identity*, ed. Anita Harris (New York: Routledge, 2004), 3-14. 4.

<sup>95</sup> McRobbie, “Notes on Postfeminism”, 8.

hand in hand not only with the *backlash*, but also with sexism and misogyny. Often times, the attacks against feminism turn into misogyny, the questioning women's basic rights.<sup>96</sup> As for sexism, its most common form is to reduce women to their body and present them as inferior, the way "female sexuality is seen and abused in the male-dominated discourse".<sup>97</sup> McRobbie argues for the same, illustrating her thesis with car advertisements – which, as we shall see in Chapter 3, is not far from representations of women in Yugoslavia of the time. The strategies of post-feminism, which I would call "refined anti-feminism", according to Jones stem in the postmodern, whereas my sources analysed here suggest that these strategies are also present in the discourse of state socialism. Especially in the discursive act of placing (in)equality into a "general human" framework, with complete disregard to gender, when it comes to dealing with the inequality.

The socialist regimes in Eastern Europe responded to some demands of the women's movements in their policies, but even denied the achievements of these movements, presenting the policy changes solely as the program of the communist parties. And at the same time, by declaring all demands fulfilled, the separate women's movements lost legitimacy. Interestingly enough, this is what McRobbie describes in the Western post-feminist case as a discourse in which "female freedom is taken for granted, unreliant on any past struggle (an antiquated word), and certainly not requiring any new, fresh political understanding".<sup>98</sup> Whereas the majority of the East European countries bear a lot in common in this respect, the appearance of new feminism triggers more

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<sup>96</sup> Mitchell and Oakley, "Introduction", 1.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, 12.

<sup>98</sup> McRobbie, "Notes on Postfeminism", 6.

reactions in Yugoslavia, so I will narrow down my argument to the Yugoslav case. Where even the “struggle” aspect [*borbeni*] of the feminist movements is denied, by labelling it bourgeois and therefore, representing only the reactionary interests of a minority. In the meantime, the achievements of the regime with regard to women’s equality is connected to the self-positioning vis-à-vis the West, which again enabled and fed into the argument about the redundancy of the new feminism.

## Sources

My analysis is based predominantly on published sources: journal and newspaper articles, journal special issues, edited volumes and books, works of literature, art exhibition catalogues, TV shows. I also relied on semi-published archival sources, such as exhibition documentations, program reports of institutions to their donors, press clippings, minutes of meetings and correspondences as archived by organisations. For my library research, I have relied on various bibliographies on feminism and the women’s movement in Yugoslavia,<sup>99</sup> as well as the references of my interviewees. My interviewees also gave me some of their publications less easily accessible. Some of the institutions I went to had better documentation, for example the archives of the ŽINDOK Centar in Zagreb hold the material used by Neda Božinović for her history of the

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<sup>99</sup> Dimitar Mirčev and Nada Češnovar, *Žena u samoupravnom društvu: bibliografija radova 1970-1983* [Woman in the self-managing society: bibliography of works 1970-1983] (Ljubljana: Jugoslovenski centar za teoriju i praksu samoupravljanja „Edvard Kardelj”, 1985); Lydia Sklevicky, “Bibliografski prilog” [Bibliographical appendix], *Marksizam u svetu* no. 8-9. (1981): 487-500.; Jasminka Pešut, *Ženska perspektiva – odabrana bibliografija: Radovi autorica 1968.–1997.* [Women’s perspectives – selected bibliography. Works by (woman) authors 1968–1997] (Zagreb: Centar za Ženske Studije, 1998); Biljana Dojčinović-Nesić, *Odabrana bibliografija radova iz feminističke teorije - ženskih studija: 1974-1996* [A selected bibliography of works from feminist theory and women’s studies], (Beograd: Centar za ženske studije, 1996); Tomislav Murati and Davor Topolčić, “Položaj žene u društvu: odabrana bibliografija (1974.-1994.)” [The position of women in society: a selected bibliography 1974-1994], *Društvena istraživanja* vol. 6. no. 1 (1997): 127-161.

women's movements in Yugoslavia.<sup>100</sup> The Students' Cultural Centre (SKC) in Belgrade also has excellent holdings of the materials of the feminist meetings and press clippings. I also rely on the material from the Društvo Vita Activa, Ljubljana. The RTS Belgrade's Archive and its archivists were very helpful with finding the relevant television recordings. In the meantime, I could not access the archives of the Sociološko društvo in Zagreb, upon contact I have learned that they did not have any materials about the work of *Žena i društvo*. The library of the Centar za ženske studije [Centre for women's studies] in Belgrade was under renovation during the time of my research, as was most of the time the National Library of Serbia. The sources missing due to these I replaced from other libraries and personal archives. My library research was conducted in the National and University Library in Zagreb, the "Svetozar Marković" University Library, the City Library and the reading Hall of Periodicals of the City Library in Belgrade, and the National and University Library, Ljubljana.

I relied on the personal archives of Sofia Trivunac, Lina Vušković and Mojca Dobnikar, for which they deserve my deepest gratitude. I would also like to warmly thank Aleksandar Stepanović at the RTS Belgrade, Violeta Andjeković i Lidiya Vasiljević at the ŽINDOK Centar and Dragica Vukadinović at the SKC for their help with their archives.

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<sup>100</sup> Neda Božinović, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji: u XIX i XX veku* [The women's question in Serbia in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century] ([Beograd]: Žene u crnom, 1996); idem., *Neda. Ein Leben für Jugoslawien: von den Partisanen zu den Frauen in Schwarz* [Neda. A life for Yugoslavia: from the partisans to the Women in Black], trans. from French Christine Belakhdar (Berlin: Orlanda, 2001).

## Structure of the Dissertation

I divided the chapters of this dissertation along disciplines or discourses, taking the different audiences a discipline or publication attracts and the difference in the language a discipline or a type of publication allows. These factors define the ways criticism can be expressed. The first scene, where feminist ideas were formulated, was the academia. The first chapter, “Neither Class, Nor Nature – (Re)Turning to Feminism in the Social Sciences and Humanities”, focuses on the academic works investigating feminism, through the prism of concepts such as “radical”, “extreme” and “revolutionary”, reinterpreting the role of class, work, family, consciousness, and introducing the concept of gender. In the second chapter, “Creation, Instead of Production: Feminism in Literature and Art”, I analyse ways of expressing feminist ideas in art and literature, as well as the ways feminist theory and feminist art support and influence each other. The possibilities of women’s creativity, and the concepts of the body, violence and motherhood are in the focus in this chapter. The way in the first chapter the “women’s question” is replaced by the concept of feminism, the ideological shift here is marked by the replacement of the concept of “women’s literature” with *žensko pismo*, the local variant of the French *écriture féminine*. The third chapter, “Feminism in the Popular Mass Media” investigates the politics of feminism when it reaches a wider audience, especially the compromises and achievements the mass media requires and facilitates, and also the tension between censorship and independence through popularity and high circulation numbers. I write about feminism’s ambivalent relationship to mass media, with emphasis on the issue of sexism in the genres of women’s and men’s magazines, and the ways the feminist approach to sexuality and violence can be presented in popular mass mediums.

Besides the ideological shifts, I analyse the concept of the sexual revolution in detail. The last chapter, “Reorganising Theory: From Kitchen Tables to the Streets, from Theory to Activism” tells the story of new Yugoslav feminism’s “second wave”, that is the time after 1985. This is the time of new forms of activism and self-organisation, when the lesbian movement becomes an important ally and source of inspiration for the feminists and when new energies are gained from the women-only groups. The major concepts of the time are again sexuality and violence, and a further crucial theme is women’s health. I pay special attention to how the new Yugoslav feminists’ access to an international feminist movement was growing and how these connections influenced their discourse and actions.

### **My Own Place**

“Feminism has been historically a complex political practice; its history should be no less so. Indeed, it is engaging in such critical practice that the history of feminism becomes part of the project it writes about; it is itself feminist history.”<sup>101</sup>

The year before I started this research, I became a volunteer activist of the main Hungarian feminist NGO working against violence against women, called NANE.<sup>102</sup> The experience with women and children survivors of gender based violence put my then ten years of reading of feminist theory, history, literature and art into a new perspective and made me believe that the primary aim of any work I do should be to contribute to the changing of the situation of these women and children. Having grown up in a society

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<sup>101</sup>Scott, *Only Paradoxes*, 18.

<sup>102</sup> Nők a Nőkért Együtt az Erőszak Ellen Egyesület, that is “Women with Women Together Against Violence”, the official English name being NANE Women’s Rights Association.

without feminism, even starting my higher education without access to feminist ideas, I was deeply impressed when I learned about the existence of such a rich history of feminism in Yugoslavia as early as 1970s and 1980s. These are exactly the decades we, in Hungary in the 1990s were missing from our own feminist history, which is the reason why the first years of my higher education were also the times of the, if not first, then second and third tentative steps of feminist theory and activism in Hungary. Writing this story is writing the story we never had, so that we can have it and share it.



## Chapter 1. “Neither Class, Nor Nature” – (Re)Turning to Feminism in the Social Sciences and Humanities

Vesna Kesić: *“This is what I call ‘a click’ in my own life. Something you always felt was a problem, suddenly had a name. I did read all the books before, but that was all socialist ‘feminism’, unfortunately. It was difficult for us to find a niche to revolt, since this problem, our problem was officially resolved. (...) We wanted to bring feminism into the radical leftist ideas. The reactions from big institutions were very bad. (...) Our feminism was one of the first initiatives to reclaim the civil society, even if we were not completely aware of it. We aimed at autonomy within the state.”*

Sofija Trivunac: *“If you want to change things, first you have to search in yourself. I found communism short-lived, it was imposing on others. Instead of that, I wanted a small group where we can discuss as equals, in the spirit of ‘the private is political’. This was the space where women learned to speak publicly. First many of us were very shy.”*

Slavenka Drakulić: *“What became the Žena i društvo group, first was just a circle in which we, friends who were studying sociology together, Lydia Sklevický, Vesna Pusić, Gordana Cerjan-Letica, Vesna Kesić, Rada Iveković, could sit down and talk to each other. We were reading, it was like self-education, Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer, whatever we could. This made us look at the position of women in Yugoslavia with different eyes, we started seeing the pitfalls of this emancipation from above. In the meantime, women members of the party fought in the war, and it was because of their participation that they could become members of the government and enter public life.”*

Tanja Renner: *“I joined the feminist group in the late 1970s. It was for me much rather a political than a personal choice. I mean, I didn't join feminism because of some sort of personal experience of discrimination, but rather because of the social and political justice I was striving for. I was surprised though by the post-1968 atmosphere, I was disappointed by the gender insensitivity and the very few women in the students' revolutionary circles. I went to Ljubljana from a small village, at the end of the 1970s, by then there was a feminist group already. First there was Mirjana Ule, who was connected to the famous Zagreb feminist group. Then we had our first, ‘kitchen phase’. Vlasta [Jalušić] was there, she said: ‘we have to exist, we have so much to do [as a feminist group].’ ”*

“Criticism of the family and marriage (...) is already the criticism of the state itself” - writes Rada Iveković in 1981.<sup>103</sup> This sentence reveals the essential role of feminism in post-WWII East European socialist states. When speaking about “private matters”, it pushes for a reassessment of substantial issues within the society it speaks about: the political of the private–public division, the role of gender, the division of labour, women’s place in a society as such, which necessarily means the critique of the perseverance of injustice in that society which promises *općeljudske* [a general human] equality. That is, equality to all its citizens, irrespective whether they are men or women. As many of the new feminists sitting at the kitchen tables, students’ cultural centres, pubs and clubs discussing new feminist ideas came from the university both as students and as professors, it was the academia itself which proved to be an important discursive space for the new feminist endeavours. This chapter is about the first inquiries of the new Yugoslav feminists into different approaches to the allegedly already solved “women’s question” in academic texts, from the fields of the humanities and social sciences.

By their textual interventions they stretch the boundaries of the ways the academia thinks of itself and the ways the state presents the position of women in Yugoslavia. Through the reading of new feminist texts from the US and Western Europe, as well as critical Marxist texts from different schools of thought, and sometimes even through philosophy from India, the new feminist discourse in Yugoslavia attributes new meanings to the concept of feminism itself. Their political action in the academic

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<sup>103</sup> Rada Iveković, “Indija je nijema žena. Poklici žena” [India is a mute woman. Howls of women], *Delo* vol. 27. no. 4 (1981 April): 88-108. 101

discussions is rather a discursive one: balancing between disengagement and mainstreaming,<sup>104</sup> they try to create a new language<sup>105</sup> to talk about women's emancipation and the relations between men and women. This involves not only redefining what *feminism* means, but also the reconceptualisation of *consciousness*, *women's universal experience*, *patriarchy*, *family*, *work*, "homosexuality",<sup>106</sup> the relationship between the *private* and the *public*, as well as the introduction of the concept of *gender*. I analyse these concepts and the ideational transfers through which their meanings are set. Furthermore, I interpret the changes in the historiographical reassessment of the role of feminism in Yugoslavia, as this is one of the strongest points where the new feminists challenge the regime, in search of their place. To show the position of the new feminists within the state's discourse, I present some of the state's position and also how through the declaration of the "women's question" as solved, the state assumes a post-feminist position.

The new Yugoslav feminists had their own Marxist base in their scholarship both due to their education a more justifiable discussion, also easier access to publication forums with the leftist stream of feminism. The theme of the relations between the communists and the women's movement is paradigmatic for the focus of the discourse,

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<sup>104</sup> Linda Briskin, "Feminist Practice: A New Approach to Evaluating Feminist Strategy", in. Wine and Ristock, ed. *Women and Social Change. Feminist Movements in Canada*. 1991. 25-40. 26, 29

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Skinner in the Introduction.

<sup>106</sup> Since it is a development of the last decade, the LGBTQ acronym is unused in the texts I analyse. Probably no one even dreamed about that the movement of people with a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual/transgender, queer identity will reach a level when they will have the power to choose their own name. In the research material, the most advanced texts make mention of *gej* [gay] and *lezbejka* [lesbian] people, but the most common is *homoseksualci* [homosexuals]. Since the current position of the movements fighting for the equal rights of LGBTQ people finds the term "homosexual" offensive, one pathologising and stigmatising LGBTQ people, I will refrain from its use unless in quotations, and will only use LGBT or LGBTQ in my own discourse.

inasmuch that left-wing, Marxist and socialist feminisms from all over the world prevail in the new Yugoslav feminist intertexts. This always linked the feminist discussions to the broader frame of Yugoslav state socialist ideology. Both the context and the audience, i.e. the community of the text's implied readers (including the fellow authors in this very issue of the journal *Dometi*, mostly from the *Žena i društvo* group), support this interpretation. There is a debate about a new approach [*novi pristup*] to the women's question [*žensko pitanje*] in Yugoslavia, which for the protagonists of my text is more or less explicitly the new feminism, *neofeminizam*. In several introductions of journal special issues, the editors openly admit that their quest aims at learning from the feminists elsewhere, the difference is in the scale of how much positive elements they find and to what extent is it the negative examples which teach about paths not to be taken. Therefore, it is not only Žarana Papić in the more independent youth journal, *Student* in 1976 (cf. below), but also several articles in *Žena* and other journals, such as *Argumenti* (publishing a documentation of the legendary 1978 *Drug-ca žena* conference) who give voice the opinion framed by Mirjana Oklobdžija in *Dometi* “that even today, in all societies, to a smaller or greater extent, women are ‘second rate citizens’”.<sup>107</sup>

### **Inside and Outside of Institutions<sup>108</sup>**

One finds early texts written by the later members of the *Žena i društvo* groups in different journals as early as 1972. The time when the feminist publications found a stronghold, was the mid-1970s. The two earliest centres were a group of women at the

<sup>107</sup> Mirjana Oklobdžija, “Uvod” [Introduction], *Dometi* vol. 13. no. 2 (1980): 4.

<sup>108</sup> All unreferenced quotations in this subchapter are from the interviews with the person quoted, as listed in the list of interviews in the Bibliography.

University of Zagreb and another group at the Students' Cultural Centre (SKC) in Belgrade, who knew about each others' existence: some of them studied in both cities and therefore had personal contacts, they read each other in the journals, they followed the events in the students' venues. The third important scene, joining a bit later but a source of innovation with growing importance was Ljubljana. Before the seminal conference in 1978, which attracted even more members to join the groups, the academic publications seem even more important, as ones triggering a new way of thinking of feminism.

It was Lydia Sklevický, Vesna Pusić, Gordana Cerjan-Letica, Vesna Kesić, Rada Iveković, Nadežda Čačinović talking and writing about feminism in Zagreb. Looking back, Biljana Kašić (who joined the group later) and Kesić both emphasised the support which they had from the Praxis professors, such as Ivan Kuvačić, Gajo Petrović, Rudi Supek. The professors had their *Čovjek i sistem* [Man and the system] research group, which also had a talk series, where there was a session about feminism. It was also their support which allowed for the formation of the *Žena i društvo* section within the frames of the Sociološko društvo [Sociology Association]. Andrea Feldman, who also joined the group in the late 1970s - early 1980s, for while as coordinator of their events, added that the new feminist group could later use the space of the Association of University Professors, in today's Hebrangova ulica. Sometimes they had financial support from the Italian and Austrian Cultural Centres, this allowed them to invite Dacia Mariani to Zagreb. As the group was becoming more active, there were 100 invitation letters sent out for each event, and some 30-40 women came.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Intellectuals who later joined the meetings in Zagreb, as Andrea Feldman remembers: Nada Mirković (writing for *Svijet*), Alemka Lisinski, Jasmina Kuzmanović, Željka Jelavić, Ines Sabalić, Mirjana Buljan, who was an editor of the Globus publishing house. Here many women authors were translated into Serbo-

The relationship with the Praxis professors was very encouraging for the Zagreb women. Slavenka Drakulić remembers Kuvačić as a “wonderful professor”, who gave them books off the official reading lists. Later they started to get hold of readings on their own: Rada Iveković went to study to Italy, and “Vesna Pusić I think went to the US and she brought us books.” (Drakulić) Nadežda Čačinović was also part of the *Čovjek i sistem* group (formerly attending the Korčula summer schools of Praxis and publishing in the journal), “discussing possibilities of change, the economic and legal frameworks of socialism. Rudi Supek and Eugen Pusić were there and the group held its meetings on the island of Vis. Praxis therefore had quite some influence on the beginnings of the new feminism in Yugoslavia, even though the relationship was not as smooth as these accounts suggest. Biljana Kašić, while emphasises the support from Supek and Kuvačić, also adds: “the Praxis philosophers did not take feminism seriously, and at the meetings women did not comment much.” Vesna Kesić remembers “a very bad encounter with Mihajlo Marković, who said it is OK that we come and talk about feminism, but ‘could you please look more feminine’.

A similar experience is recalled by Nanette Funk, who later became one of the main organisers of the East-West Women group in New York.<sup>110</sup> Funk attended the Korčula summer school in 1973. This was the first time she met Lydia Sklevický and Vesna Pusić. She was surprised by the silence about women at the summer school, except for Zagorka Golubović’s talk about women’s lack of time to participate in self-

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Croatian. Gordana Cerjan-Letica also told me that in the early times, Nadezda Čačinović’s sister, Gabi Čačinović was there too.

<sup>110</sup> At the New School and NYU, connecting feminist women from Eastern Europe and in the States after 1989. Her early and seminal undertaking was a collection of essays by women from Eastern Europe: Nanette Funk and Magda Mueller, eds., *Gender Politics and Post-Communism: Reflections from Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union* (New York : Routledge, c1993).

management (a theme developed later by Blaženka Despot). To break the silence, Funk and two or three other young woman philosophers from France and Norway organised a spontaneous discussion on feminism. They also performed a small “flash mob” as they walked into a lecture chanting a rhyme about the need to talk about women. She remembers Svetožar Stojanović’s and Mihajlo Marković’s shock, which signals that there were authority relations which also defined who speaks about what and how. As for the role of the Praxis-generation women, Kesić also emphasised the influence of the input from academic women like Zagorka Golubović and Anđelka Milić, Blaženka Despot and Gordana Bosanac.

Anđelka Milić, a sociologist who was actually a bit younger than the other women Kesić mentioned, was very important for the Belgrade group too. Which, however, found its base camp in the SKC, rather than the university. The SKC was also the space for the development of a new art scene in Yugoslavia, where feminist woman artists were invited to already in 1975. (About the art scene and its relations to feminism at the SKC, cf. the next chapter.) It was the young director of the gallery of the SKC, Dunja Blažević, who initiated the organisation of the 1978 conference. The sociologist Žarana Papić, her partner, Ivan Vejvoda, Jasmina Tesanović and a lot of other people worked on bringing the conference together. Dragica Vukadinović, who worked as a program organiser at the SKC, told me how this conference, with the input from women from different countries, opened her eyes: “For a long time I thought that the laws of the SRFY were great. I wasn’t aware that the praxis was not that great. When we organised the 1978 conference I was thinking: why would we need feminism? To entertain women? Women here have rights, they should just grab them. During the conference did I start to understand that

something was fundamentally not all right with this seemingly great situation.” Slavenka Drakulić, who was already active in Zagreb before the conference, said: “And then came the Drug-ca conference, I really think it was a trigger, for me for sure. We stayed in touch with many of the women who were there.”<sup>111</sup> The 1978 conference meant the official beginning of the *Žena i društvo* group in Belgrade. The “Tribina” [Forum] series involved a line of academic and activist themes, from women’s writing through women’s political participation to women’s health here.

The group in Ljubljana organised itself a bit later than the ones in Zagreb and Belgrade. The formalisation of the group, however, was preceded by “a kitchen table phase”, the scene of which was mostly the sociology professor Mirjana Ule’s kitchen, as the other sociologist, Tanja Renner remembers it. It was mostly women from sociology and, like Ule, from social psychology. Silva Mežnarić, also a sociologist, was a very important connection between Zagreb and Ljubljana. Vlasta Jalušič, a student of social and political studies, later a professor herself, and Mojca Dobnikar, translator and editor, were also there. As Jalušič remembers meeting Dobnikar for the first time: “We met, shook hands, and we thought: OK, with this woman, it will work.” During the “kitchen phase”, even the renowned Slovenian intellectual, journalist and historian from the dissident circles, Alenka Puhar was present. As Tanja recalls, “later to her anti-communism became more important, which to me was far too right-wing. In the meantime, I think that her opposition to the regime was abused by the right-wing opposition later.” The first feminist special issue came out in 1984, it was prepared for

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<sup>111</sup> For more details about the 1978 conference, see the article by Chiara Bonfiglioli: Chiara Bonfiglioli, “‘Social Equality is Not Enough, We Want Pleasure!’: Italian Feminists in Belgrade for the 1978 ‘Comrade Woman’ Conference”, *ProFemina*, Special Issue no. 2 (Summer-Autumn 2011): 115-123.



the journal *Mladina*, followed by other magazines, for example, *Problemi*. Their first event, a huge party for women only, with 250-300 guests, took place at the K4 club, which later hosted their lectures too.

The Ljubljana women, due to the very colourful youth activist scene in the city, were in connection with many other groups. Their first event “was followed by a huge negative response. Actually, not from the party, but from the subculture circles which we were also part of. The young women in the punk movement, with whom we later established much better relations, were rather arrogantly telling us they didn’t understand why we didn’t like men. In the intellectual circles, they made fun of us for many year to follow.” (Rener) Despite this mocking on behalf of some intellectuals, university professors such as Tomaž Mastnak, Pavle Gantar supported the formation of a feminist group within the *Sociološko društvo*, similar to the *Žena i društvo* groups in Zagreb and Ljubljana. In 1985 the group gave itself the name Lilit, and within Lilit formed a lesbian section in 1987, the first lesbian group in Yugoslavia. Later on, the feminists also used the spaces in the Galerija ŠKUC, and due to the presence of the other activist groups, they opened up their discussions into many directions. Their most important connections were the ecological movement and the peace movement, many feminists were members of these groups too. The “latecomer” Slovenian women therefore had a stronghold both in the academia and the students’ circles, despite their difficulties with certain members of these institutions, and had a lesbian stream developing together with the main feminist line.

The connections with both Western and non-Western countries meant a basic influence for the intellectual development of the Yugoslav feminists. Feminists, like

Nanette Funk came to Yugoslavia, but the Yugoslav women also studied and travelled abroad. To mention a few, which seem to be most relevant: Rada Iveković, a philosopher who was for many women in the group the most important source of intellectual influence, studied in Italy and France, and did her PhD in New Delhi, India. Dunja Blažević, Anđelka Milić and many others had fellowships in the US, Nadežda Čaćinović in Germany, the Belgrade-based literary scholar Nada Popović-Perišić in Utrecht and Paris. Young professional women at the time had the financial means to make low-budget trips abroad. Lepa Mladenović, a psychologist and one of the leading activists of the 1980s hitchhiked one summer (sometime before the 1978 conference) to Zagreb, to meet Rada Iveković, whose publications she already knew. Iveković was already in Italy then, and Mladenović travelled on to London.

Vlasta Jalušič spent 6 months in West Berlin in 1986-87, she was studying the fin-de-siècle German proletarian and bourgeois women's movements. She got in touch with the Frauen für den Frieden group in East Berlin (Ulrike Poppe and Baerbel Bohley) and got acquainted with important West German feminists. She also went to the meetings of the War Resistance International's women-only meetings. Due to the German connections of Jalušič and Dobnikar, the Slovenian publications were the forum where input from the German feminists was shared, balancing out the predominance of Anglo-Saxon, French and Italian authors.<sup>112</sup> To Mojca Dobnikar, a holiday in Berlin was

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<sup>112</sup> For example, Renate Schlesier's "Die Totgesagte Vagina" [The vagina declared dead], trans. Vlasta Jalušič, *Problemi. Eseji* no. 9 (1986): 40-46, a feminist critical reading of Freud, Susan Zimmerman's lecture from Bonn about genetic research and feminism "Pravica o samoodločbe pro nahemniškem maternistvu" [trans] *Problemi. Eseji* no. 9 (1986): 31-33. Rote Zora, "Odpor je mogoč" [Resistance is possible], trans. Milena Mohorič, in *O ženski in ženskem gibanju* [About women and women's movements], ed. Mojca Dobnikar, 100-108 (Ljubljana: Univerzitatna konferenca ZSMS -- Republiška konferenca ZSMS [1985], 1986) and Christine Thürmer-Rohr, "Stud pred rajem" [Disgust in front of the paradise], trans. Mojca Dobnikar, *O ženski in ženskem gibanju*, 109-124.

a formative experience: she met feminist activists, with whom she did non-traditional research about women's activism in Berlin, for example explored the shelters. This visit inspired her to organise a more open event in Ljubljana too, which eventually was the party at K4.

A travel of Slavenka Drakulić to Rhode Island in 1982 was a moment the new Yugoslav feminists' "going global", with all the inherent controversies that implies. She attended the *Sisterhood is Global* conference,<sup>113</sup> where she met a lot of women from the new or second wave feminist movement. Drakulić told me about the conference: "There were only a very few East European women, I mostly remember Polish women. We were interesting to the organisers, they thought that we lived in emancipation." *Sisterhood is Global* and *Sisterhood is Powerful* are two, interrelated projects of the feminism of the 1970s in the US and organised and edited by Robin Morgan. About Morgan, Drakulić emphasises that "she is a pioneer of international feminism". Morgan's *Sisterhood*-project is characterised by the well-intended concept to connect all women in the world and build a worldwide feminist movement. The good intentions and the problems of such a project show well from Drakulić's comment, as the size of the project necessarily meant superficiality too. The presence in the network meant a representative text by Drakulić and Rada Iveković in the *Sisterhood is Global* volume, and founding texts of the new feminism in the US meant a source of inspiration for the early feminist issue of the youth journal *Student* in 1976.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Robin Morgan, ed., *Sisterhood is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology* (New York: Feminist Press, [1984] c1996); *Sisterhood is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement* (New York: Random House, c1970).

<sup>114</sup> Rada Iveković and Slavenka Drakulić-Ilić, "Yugoslavia: Neofeminism and Its 'Six Mortal Sins'", in *Sisterhood is Global*, 734-738.

Feminist activism was closely connected with publishing. Especially Ljubljana was a forerunner in this respect. Mojca Dobnikar worked for the publisher Krt (Knjižnica revolucionarne teorije), where first she was asked to translate Aleksandra Kollontai into Slovenian, and the cooperation followed with several volumes. The journals accessible for publication all over Yugoslavia varied from the student journals, such as *Student* and *Vidici* (both in Belgrade), to independent academic ones such as *Argumenti* based in Rijeka and *Pitanje* based in Zagreb, *Polja* in Novi Sad, or the Sarajevo based *Opredjelenje*. In the field of academic publications, the most controversial one is *Žena*, a publication of the KDAŽ (Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena – Conference for the Social Activity of Women). *Žena*, born out of the women’s movement within the partisan revolution, it became an academic journal about “women in society, women in the family”. In most of the articles, *Žena* places women into either the family or into the social reality of Yugoslavia, it is always their role in society, often as mothers which dominates the journal. The editorial board strives to follow the latest discussions on the women’s question, even feminism. Not with the most positive overtone, of course: “We in *Žena* write about feminism with the aim to show its ideas and concepts, but also the unsustainability of the methods of its struggles. [...] We know, and it was proven in Mexico as well, that the progressive organisations of women and the feminist movement, according to their ideological orientation and those goals and forms of struggle, cannot be equated.”<sup>115</sup> These are the sentences of Marija Šoljan Bakarić, one of the most prominent women in the Yugoslav nomenclature. As we shall see, feminism is most often presented

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<sup>115</sup> Marija Šoljan, “Tajna emancipacija žene” [The secret emancipation of women], *Žena* vol. 35. no. 1 (1977): 5-25. 17

as both bourgeois and too wild, too radical. Šoljan even refers to the “war cries” of the feminists.<sup>116</sup> Curiously, this journal, as I show in Chapter 4, even opened up to themes which later became foundational texts for the beginnings of a more grassroots version of feminism.

The new Yugoslav feminists have miscellaneous memories of the women in KDAŽ. Vera Smiljanić in the documentary *Dosije XX* recalls the support from Marija Šoljan Bakarić,<sup>117</sup> whereas Sonja Drljević, a bridge engineer and activist from the early times, has much worse memories of the Belgrade section, who “decided that we were elitist and we refuse to deal with women’s problems. They were always harsher in criticising us in the media though. Then in 1990 I asked them for some small money for the Belgrade conference, which they gave us, I was surprised.” Indeed, as nationalism was growing, the lines of alliances were shifting and apparently, some women from the older generation started to appreciate the new generation. This is also how Vesna Kesić remembers: “there were some women in the KDAŽ or in parliament who started to understand and support the new feminist ideas, realising that the ‘woman’s question’ cannot be solved through the class question. Jelena Cukrov, Morana Palinković, for example. Also, when the war broke out, in the 1990s I really started appreciate even what these women did for us.”

Women from the old organisation even changed their stance towards feminism: Mojca Dobnikar mentioned Maca Jogan, who is “an interesting person. She was socialist, I found her pro-regime, I always thought back then that what she was doing was very bla-

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<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> *Dosije XX*, directed by Vesna Tokin (Belgrade: LUNA, HAOS, Nada Sekulić, 2001).

bla, without a substance. And later she became more radical, now she is clearly a feminist, one of the few people here who really speak up against androcentrism and misogyny.” Some of the feminists themselves, on the other hand, started their careers in the KDAŽ. Their idea was to use the organisation as a background. Neda Todorović said they contacted her when she started to work for NIN. “I saw their limits, there were many, but it helped me pushing certain issues. I travelled to the World Congress in Berlin with them.” Nadežda Čačinović ended up in the editorial board almost by accident, when as a young scholar applied for an essay prize which she won, and they offered her a job. Through her and Gordana Cerjan-Letica, a lot of feminist material found its place in the journal.

The semi-marginal position of feminism in the academia meant a simultaneous inside and outside position both within the academia and the Yugoslav political discursive space. We speak about students or academics at the beginning of their careers, first sitting in kitchens and living rooms and then conversing in the relatively small and barely funded *Žena i društvo* groups. The position comes with more freedom, furthered the rereading of women’s position in Yugoslav society through theory from abroad. These transferred, translated or in other ways presented texts are often used as a “disguise” of dissenting feminist ideas of the Yugoslav authors. The small circulation of journals, thus the supposedly relatively small audience, ensured by the lower accessibility for a non-intellectual audience, meant that the academia provided a safe ground for dissenting feminism. In a semi-open society, such as Yugoslavia, starting a grassroots, mass based feminist movement would have been impossible, this academic discourse became the starting point for new feminism.

## The Offers from the State of Yugoslavia in Terms of Gender Equality in the 1970s

The state's discourse in the 1970s was reinvigorated by the commemoration of the UN's "Year of Women" in 1975, which was followed by the "Decade of Women", lasting until 1985. The UN Year reinvigorated the women's movements even in countries, such as socialist countries in Eastern Europe, where the discourse on women's emancipation was under the influence of a state for which women's emancipation was not of high priority any more – often despite the fact that there were women in the official women's organisations with innovative ideas.<sup>118</sup> Also, the power imbalance between geographical regions was reproduced within the meetings<sup>119</sup> as well as in the scholarship on the UN year mostly only recognises "women from the global North" and "women from the global South", which categories on the one hand help "transgressing the 'East'/'West' divisions, but it also has the curious effect of further writing out East European women from international activism."<sup>120</sup> For the Yugoslav state, based on the abundance of publications

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<sup>118</sup> Cf. Chiara Bonfiglioli's argument about the KDAŽ in Yugoslavia and Raluca Maria Popa's similar argument about state socialism and feminism, supported by the finding that some women in the state National Women's Councils called themselves or their activities feminist. I think that it is important to emphasise that even though some members of the official women's organisations considered themselves feminist, as the example of the relations of these and the new Yugoslav feminists show, they never took an openly feminist position.

Chiara Bonfiglioli, *Revolutionary Networks: Women's Political and Social Activism in Cold War Italy and Yugoslavia*. PhD dissertation (Utrecht: University of Utrecht, 2012).

Raluca Maria Popa, "Translating Equality between Woman and Men across Cold War Divides: Woman Activists from Hungary and Romania and the Creation of the International Women's Year", in *Gender Politics and Everyday Life in State Socialist Eastern and Central Europe*, ed. Shana Penn and Jill Massino, 59-74 (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, c2009), 61.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. Jocelyn Olcott, "Globalizing Sisterhood: International Women's Year and the Politics of Representation", in *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective*, ed. Niall Ferguson et al., 281-293 (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010); Devaki Jain, *Women, Development, and the UN: A Sixty-Year Quest for Equality and Justice* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, c2005); Hilka Pietilä, *The Unfinished Story of Women and the United Nations* (New York and Geneva: United Nations, 2007).

<sup>120</sup> Popa, "Translating Equality between Woman and Men across Cold War Divides, 240, n7.

related, the UN Year bore high significance and the state made significant efforts to be represented and to represent the program of the Year at home.<sup>121</sup> Reading through some of the texts of the representative of the state organisations, we can have a glimpse at the state's position on the status of women at the time when the new feminist discourse begins.

It was Vida Tomšič who gave her face to most of the events, but Marija Šoljan and other regular authors of the journal *Žena* provided various contributions to the topic too. Their statements show a balancing between the success and achievements and the admission that there still is a lot to do. When introducing the UN Year to the readership of *Žena*, Jasna Gardun starts with the sentence: “in our self-managing society the discrimination of women lost its legal and with ‘bare eyes’ visible forms, at least in the public life”, there still is a lot to do, especially in the fields of education and employment.<sup>122</sup> Marija Šoljan's emphasis is on how women became equal in their

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<sup>121</sup> Cf. e.g.: Dragoljub Đurović, *Ravnopravnost, razvoj, mir: odabrani dokumenti Ujedinjenih naroda usvojeni u Međunarodnoj godini žena* [Equality, development and peace: Selected documents of the UN adopted for the International Year of Women] (Beograd, Sekretarijat za informacije Skupštine SFRJ, 1977).

*Žene 1980: priručnik za konferenciju. Svetska konferencija Dekade Ujedinjenih nacija za žene Jednakost, razvoj i mir, 1980, Kopenhagen* [Women 1980: handbook for a conference. World conference of the UN for Equality, development and peace, 1980. Copenhagen] (Beograd: Informacioni centar Ujedinjenih nacija u Beogradu, 1980).

Merima Stevanović, ed., *Dekada Ujedinjenih nacija za žene: ravnopravnost, razvoj i mir: odabrani dokumenti Svetske konferencije Dekade OUN za žene* [The UN's decade of women: Equality, development and peace: selected documents of the world conference of the UN for women] (Beograd, Jugoslovenska stvarnost, Međunarodna politika, 1981).

Polona Končar and Dimitar Mirčev, eds., *Women as factor of development in Yugoslav self-management society: information on research projects in Yugoslavia*, trans. Cica Stele and Marjan Golobič (Ljubljana: Yugoslav center for theory and practice of self-management „Edvard Kardelj”, 1985).

*Konvencija o ukidanju svih oblika diskriminacije žena* [Convention for the abolishment of all forms of the discrimination of women], (Beograd: Informacioni centar Ujedinjenih nacija, 1983).

<sup>122</sup> Jasna Gardun, “Egalitet ili feminizam?” [Equality or feminism], *Žena* vol. 32. no. 5 (1974): 2-5, 2, 4.



participation in economic production, but “the care for the family is still left to them”.<sup>123</sup> Both of them agree that Yugoslavia has a good legal framework for women’s equality; Gardun calls it a “revolutionary constitution”,<sup>124</sup> Šoljan “the most developed, most humane constitutional system” in the world.<sup>125</sup> Another author in the journal *Žena*, Vaska Duganova argues that the UN Year should be a possibility to make a list of their achievements, “which are not little”, and present them to the world.<sup>126</sup> While she adds that the achievements of other *countries* should also be presented to the Yugoslav public, none of them makes mention of the achievements of non-governmental new feminism in any other country.

All in all, what happens with regard to the UN Year is that those issues which in the opinion of the women from the establishment in Yugoslavia, like Tomšič and Šoljan, need to be addressed, are possible to be addressed and gain more discursive space. Of these issues, the ones most often mentioned are women’s role in domestic work (the “double and triple burden” [*dvostruki i trostruki teret*]),<sup>127</sup> women’s literacy and higher education, the difference between what Cerjan-Letica describes as “productive-economic” and “socio-cultural status” (women’s place in the world of work and in the

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<sup>123</sup> Marija Šoljan, “8. mart. Tridesetgodišnjica pobjede i Međunarodna godina žena” [8th March. Thirty-year victory and the International Year of Women], *Žena* vol. 33. no. 1 (1975): 2-4, 3.

<sup>124</sup> Gardun, “Egalitet ili feminizam?”, 4.

<sup>125</sup> Šoljan, “8. mart. Tridesetgodišnjica pobjede i Međunarodna godina žena”, 3.

<sup>126</sup> Vaska Duganova, “Proklamiranje Međunarodne godine žena nije bilo slučajno” [The International Year of Women was not declared by accident], *Žena* vol. 33. no. 2 (1975): 2-5.

<sup>127</sup> Vida Tomšič, “Zašto je proklamirana ravnopravnost u osnovnim dokumentima Ujedinjenih naroda ostvaruje sporo u praksi?” [Why is the proclaimed equality in the founding documents of the United Nations realised slowly in practice?], interview by Marija Erbežnik-Fuks, *Žena*, 1975. No. 3. 4-11, 9.

home, including sexuality).<sup>128</sup> These statements are paradigmatic in the sense that they are reflections of the state-of-the-art of official standpoints on the *žensko pitanje*. Which still shall be treated as part of the class-question, though it is even “unnecessary [...] to specifically remind ourselves of the class-essence of the so called ‘women’s question’”,<sup>129</sup> that “the liberation of women has a class-character [...] it is the conditions of work and the working man [čovjek] that has to be changed”.<sup>130</sup>

In an interview with Tomšič, the interviewer asks her why she changed her mind, now claiming that “equality” [*ravnopravnost*] should not be about women only, as it had been before, but it should be about the new position of man [čovjek] as such. Tomšič says: “in our self-managing society, we speak about the advancement of the working man (both sexes) [*položaja radnog čovjeka (oba pola)*]”.<sup>131</sup> It is also important for these authors to call the readers’ attention to the fact that the framework is in many ways given, therefore it is up to the individual women to realise these rights in practical terms. On the other hand, due to the fact that the women’s question is a class question, it belongs to the entire Yugoslav society. However, the responsibility to be shared is not that between men and women, but between the family and society.<sup>132</sup> It is not help provided to women, Tomšič continues, the expressions “protection of women, helping women” [*zaštita žene, pomoć ženi*] presuppose women as an object and not as an actor, this is why we should

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<sup>128</sup> Gordana Cerjan Letica, “Godina žene – zašto i otkud u Jugoslaviji” [Women’s year – why and for what in Yugoslavia], *Pitanja* vol. 7. no. 7-8. (1975): 12-15, 12.

<sup>129</sup> Gardun, “Egalitet ili feminizam?”, 3.

<sup>130</sup> Tomšič, “Zašto je proklamirana ravnopravnost...”, 8.

<sup>131</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> Duganova, “Proklamiranje Međunarodne godine žena nije bilo slučajno”, 3.

speak of the “working man and citizen” [*radni čovjek i građanin*] instead.<sup>133</sup> Equally, the burning questions to be dealt with should not happen within one organisation, the KDAŽ, “this is why already the AFŽ was abolished”, all OOURs (*Osnovna organizacija udruženog rada* – Basic organisation of associated labour) and DPO (*Društveno političke organizacije* – Socio-political organisations) should participate in achieving the goals of the International Year of Women in Yugoslavia.<sup>134</sup>

The very claim on how the previous approaches to solving the women’s question should be overtaken by better, more effective ones, which concern the whole society, offers a good potential for what I define as post-feminism in the socialist context. The official Yugoslav women’s organisation’s discourse, especially the texts by Tomšič and Cerjan-Letica raise issues which remain or become crucial later. They call for a conceptualisation of “women’s equality” as a goal to be reached, which, however, should not be an assumption or copying of male attributes. They also emphasise the need for a differentiation between the various levels or fields in which this equality is to be realised. These necessarily include the economic and the socio-cultural, which involve the family and sexuality as well. It is exactly along the lines of these fields and topics where the ideas of the new feminists and the women from the state organisations meet and differ, as we shall see.

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<sup>133</sup> Tomšič, “Zašto je proklamirana ravnopravnost...”, 8

<sup>134</sup> Duganova, “Proklamiranje Međunarodne godine žena nije bilo slučajno”, 4.

## **Strategic Transfers and Self-Definition: Feminism From Abroad, *Žensko Pitanje Kod Nas***

Instead of the state offered discourse on the women's question (*žensko pitanje*), investigations of the ideas of the new feminism bring along a conceptual replacement of the former with the latter. It was the early 1970s, when texts started emerging: reports on the new feminist movement in the United States and various countries of Western Europe, from time to time even South America and Asia, were also published. In reflection on the proclaimed success of women's emancipation in Yugoslavia, there are at least two parallel stories about feminisms "elsewhere" with emphasis on the "new feminism". Telling the story of new feminisms in the world involves evaluation, and therefore, reveals the authors' opinion, in the manner of which these can be read as manifests on behalf of the authors. Especially in case of those Yugoslav new feminists, who, either as young scholars, like Rada Iveković or Žarana Papić, or as established professors, like Blaženka Despot or Gordana Bosanac, are attempting to bring in a new, competing ideology, for which the innocent-looking, informative introductions to the currents of "new feminism" in other countries prove to be a good strategy.

### ***Rada Iveković's Parable of Italian Feminism***

In exploring the different strategies to gain space in the discourse for new feminism, through transfers and translations, I read Rada Iveković's review on Italian feminism as an implicit programmatic text for the new feminism in Yugoslavia. The article comes almost ten years after the first endeavours to understand the new feminist phenomena, the time being mature enough for making explicit claims of themes and concepts. Feminism

is presented through the history of the Italian communists in Iveković's article,<sup>135</sup> which history bears a lot of similarities with Yugoslavia, therefore it offers associations to the local Yugoslav case. Historiography, as I show later in this chapter, plays an important role in the new Yugoslav feminist discourse, however, here the most important aspect is not its historicity. Rather, what makes the text programmatic is the way the author makes an attempt to reconcile the relationship between the women's movement and the communists – in Italy. The story Iveković presents can be read as a parabolic tale for how the relationship of feminism and the communist party should take shape in Yugoslavia.<sup>136</sup> Iveković herself is not explicit about making a comparison, either about offering a trajectory; however, the very communicative situation offers the comparisons and the underlying agenda.

The article of Rada Iveković begins with the emphasis on the proletarian roots of the women's movement, which shall outweigh the traditions of the civil rights based bourgeois roots. It also points out how the different organisation of a political party and a non-hierarchical women's movement or group are hard to reconcile, which assertion applies not only to the early women's groups, but tends to repeat over time. Iveković discusses in detail the situation and its consequences when the more radical and revolutionary women joined the SPI (Socialist Party of Italy) at the fin-de-siècle, which in 1911 severed the ties with the bourgeois women's groups, who were demanding franchise for women. This meant the "liquidation of the women's question", with the elimination of the claim for the franchise, what otherwise was also supported by the

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<sup>135</sup> Iveković, "Talijanski komunisti i ženski pokret", 34. Further citations to this work are given in the text.

<sup>136</sup> Rada Iveković, "Talijanski komunisti i ženski pokret" [The Italian communists and the women's movement], *Dometi* vol. 13. no. 2 (1980): 31-44.

revolutionary feminists. The SPI's argument was that this issue does not concern either the class struggle or the working class and thus the paths of the communists and the women's movement parted for a longer time period. According to Iveković, the interwar period brought along the recognition that there is need for a separate proletarian women's movement, because the working class is ruled by conservative prejudice against women. However, not much changed in the interwar period, when the major issue was the struggle against fascism and women's emancipation was present only as a remnant from the previous century "instead of the swing of the revolutionary flame".

After the overview of the changes after WWII, including the guarantee of the franchise for women, Iveković summarises the conclusion for the new Italian feminists: despite the normative questions being solved and the laws having been changed "in the bourgeois society", patriarchal mentality prevails, proving to be the main barrier for women's liberation.<sup>(37)</sup> This conclusion is followed by a positive evaluation of the appearance of *neofeminizam* in Italy in 1968-69, which stems from the new left movements and student protests, from the experience that even within the student movement women face the same marginalisation and discrimination. Feminism in Italy, concludes Iveković, is "without doubt an *oppositional movement* in relation to the existing social order", as "masses of women, mostly young ones, cannot identify with a single existing political party, not even in the left" (39 [emphasis mine]). Besides this left wing feminism, Iveković mentions "that other feminism", "bourgeois and sexist, which identifies men as the enemy" – this idea comes up in other texts I analyse below, addressing the juxtaposition of "good" and "bad" feminisms.

The importance and specificity of *neofeminizam* in Italy lays in highlighting various topics, which return all over as central concepts of the new Yugoslav feminist discourse: women's creativity in the arts and the humanities, the debates about sexuality (in Italy mostly with regard to the right to contraception and abortion), consciousness-raising – and through this, the relations between the public and the private, domestic violence and sexual violence. The article ends with the optimistic conclusion: “It is encouraging [to see] that all women with a leftist orientation in Italy are in accord in their struggle, irrespective whether they belong or do not belong to regular parties. Because they all belong to the women's movement in a broad sense. This way, today even communist women proudly announce that they are also feminists.”(44) The story Iveković tells, with the closure about the success of the feminists makes the reader think of this as a path to follow.

The implied conclusions for the new Yugoslav feminism are manifold. The argument that the roots of the women's movement, both in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century—fin-de-siècle (first wave) and in the 1960s (second wave) are deeper in the worker's movement and the left in general, addresses both the state establishment and those who want to join the new groups and share the ideas. Further elements of the analysis which can be directly translated into the current Yugoslav context are those of the relations between the SPI and the women's movements in the interwar period and during WWII, reminding to the parallel of the NOB and the *Alijansa ženskih pokreta* (Alliance of the women's movements) and the feminist interrogation of the reasons how women's equality is not achieved, despite the new post-WWII legislation meant to ensure equality. The ambiguous relationship between the SPI and the women's movement, as allies and

contenders of each other is disambiguated when Iveković points out the oppositional nature of the movement.

The closure of the article is of major significance from a terminological perspective: whereas Iveković does not differentiate between the use of the terms *women's movement* and *feminism* throughout the article, here she makes a distinction. To her, unlike my definition of women's movement and feminism, the two concepts are synonymous, women's movements are based on feminist ideology, and it is a significant development in the Italian context that communist women line up behind feminism. In the meantime, she clarifies the agenda and therefore the meaning of *new feminism*, which is defined along themes and concepts which are recurrently present in the Yugoslav case as well. Iveković does not pronounce that the Italian way is the path to follow, and her strategy of implicit parallels is in concert with those texts that introduce other approaches to the *žensko pitanje* from a diverging distance.

### ***In Search of Their Own Feminism: Defining Feminisms***

The recognition of different women's movements, and therefore, feminisms, leads to the description of the different currents of feminism through opposing pairs in the early Yugoslav publications. These texts categorise feminism along the distinction between radical, revolutionary women's movements (Marxist) and the bourgeois ones, on the one hand, and extremist (radical, hyperfeminist) ones as opposed to the moderate (socialist, Marxist) ones on the other. The two oppositions clearly are contradictory to each other, and represent a certain socialist conservatism when it comes to self-expression.



Silva Mežnarić, a sociologist and editor of the journal *Žena*, who lived between Zagreb and Ljubljana and was a member of the CSAW Croatia in 1972, as well as an editor of *Žena* for a while, joining the feminist group *Žena i društvo*, started an articles series introducing American feminism. The “series” ended after two articles, and feminism as a topic returns on the pages of *Žena* only in 1975 with the UN year. Mežnarić’s first article in 1972 bears the investigative title “What is happening to the American woman?”.<sup>137</sup> Her claim is that she wants to demystify the way this “socially-ideationally relevant phenomenon” (57) had been presented in the media up to then. She emphasises that new feminism is not only relevant in the society where it originates, alluding to the Yugoslav situation, and adds that her aim is not to judge, rather to represent, based on the work of other researchers. From analyses from economics and sociology, the author shows the economic and social problems American women face, including employment and reproduction. Her conclusion is that women’s situation in both modernised societies legitimises feminist claims. The feminism in the US Mežnarić sees, however, as “elitist” and one which promotes androgyny. Although she does not discuss in detail the meaning of androgyny, the criticism, in my reading, implies a need for a more radical feminism, which addresses gender relations from the early stage of socialisation.<sup>138</sup> Moreover, the criticism of the promoted androgyny raises questions with regard to the existing gender agenda of state socialism.

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<sup>137</sup> Silva Mežnarić, “Što se događa s američkom ženom?” [What is happening to the American woman?], *Žena* vol. 30. no. 6 (1972): 57-62. Further citations to this work are given in the text.

<sup>138</sup> The text approaches gender from a sociological perspective and discusses socialisation, this is why I also refer to socialisation as definitive for gender relations.

Androgyny is presented as a realistic threat of feminism in the closing quotation Mežnarić's second article. The quote is from a country song from the US with the title "Don't Liberate Me, Love Me", a song born in the spirit of anti/post-feminist backlash by Tammy Wynette, the author and singer of the probably better known song "Stand by Your Man". "Don't Liberate Me, Love Me" tells about a „group of women" (probably a reference to the consciousness-raising groups emerging in the 1960s already) visiting the singer and trying to show her how she is oppressed in her marriage, to which she responds: "my man works hard and takes good care of me /.../ he treats me like a lady /.../ that's the way God wants it to be". The use of this song in a *Žena*-article is at least ambivalent. Similarly to the first article, Mežnarić bases her arguments on research from the US aiming to prove the difficulties the new feminist ideas cause to women, and concludes that the problem is with the "directed" [*usmjerena*] ideologies of women's emancipation. She identifies these as the opposition between "contemporary" and "traditional" ideologies.<sup>139</sup> The *usmjerena* ideology entails a clash between the individual feminist woman and the system, while the radical one addresses "the absolute equality of the sexes", as they "have one common role in this society: the role of human beings". (72) The Women's Liberation Movement seems to be identified as *usmjeren feminizam*, but the "radical" is not identified. All in all, Mežnarić's early writing confirms the positive use of the epithet "radical" when it comes to women's liberation, whereas she seems to misunderstand the various Western positions.

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<sup>139</sup> Silva Mežnarić, "Kako ideologija uobličava život žena" [How does ideology shape women's lives], *Žena*, vol. 31. no. 1-2. (1973): 70-75. 71, 72. Further citations to this work are given in the text.

A few years later, in 1976 in Portorož at the first state-organised conference about women where the new Yugoslav feminists participated, Gordana Cerjan-Letica mentions the problem of the lack of knowledge of and limited access to information about new feminism in Yugoslavia. To her, this is the reason for “so many non-objective and scholarly non-justifiable criticism by us against the feminist movement”.<sup>140</sup> This is an important step in Cerjan-Letica’s understanding of new feminism: in an article about the UN Year, she still suggests that the Yugoslav state’s agenda on women’s emancipation is more complex than that of the UN Year’s.<sup>141</sup> In this other publication from the same year, she prepares an overview about feminism which discusses the issues of radicalism in feminism.<sup>142</sup> Summarising the past ten years of American new feminism as an overall positive phenomenon, her primary aim is to explain the differences between the “reformist” NOW and the “radical” Women’s Liberation groups. Cerjan-Letica locates the radical current of new feminism in the US as “part of the world revolution of human rights which is happening inside and outside our national borders”. (6) She notices that radical feminists, “in the track of the sensibility of the New Left” politicise “the most human and most hidden spheres of human life – such as the family, marriage, sexuality.” (8)

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<sup>140</sup> Gordana Cerjan-Letica, “Neki dominantni stavovi suvremenog feminizma o porodici” [A few dominant positions of contemporary feminism about the family], *Žena*, vol. 34. no. 3. (1976): 100-114, 110.

<sup>141</sup> Cerjan-Letica, “Godina žene – zašto i otkud u Jugoslaviji”, 12-15.

Here, she does not miss the chance to criticise “feminism” as such, presupposing that it is a “women’s movement” which “takes up a male value system as a strategy” and as such, is “doomed to be caricatured and to be viewed with a benevolent smile.”

<sup>142</sup> Gordana Cerjan-Letica, “Feminizam – na tragu radikalizma šezdesetih godina” [Feminism – in the footprints of the radicalism of the 1960s], *Pitanja*, vol. 8. no. 7 (1975): 6-8. Further citations to this work are given in the text.

Cerjan-Letica emphasises the contradiction between the two positions regarding men: one identifies men as “oppressors using social institutions to oppress women” and the other claims that “men, just like women and children, are the victims of the same repressive institutions.”(ibid.) To her, the new American feminists question and attack the “American way of life”, including bourgeois democracy and capitalism, and therefore it is to be appreciated from a Yugoslav perspective. However, she also criticises those organisational forms which “are rather mass entertainment or street theatre” (ibid.), which in another text she describes as those smaller women’s liberation-type of groups, such as ones which “with their performances and other public actions represent only a spectacle of feminism”.<sup>143</sup> Most probably she alludes here to SCUM and WITCH, and rather openly to the guerrilla theatre strategies, which initially came from the mainstream of the New Left, mostly in the protests against the Vietnam War.<sup>144</sup> Cerjan-Letica warns about the implicit influence of bourgeois democracy on the organisation of the American *neofeminizam*, and there seems to be a confusion about the origins of the strategies of the radical groups, when these, instead of being treated as coming from the anti-bourgeois and anti-capitalist New Left, are discussed as remnants of the bourgeois context.

American radical feminists are approached with much more reservation by other authors. In a 1978-issue, “Women, or about freedom” of *Pitanja*, a selection of texts by the members of the *Žena i društvo* group is published. The issue claims to be about the žensko pitanje, and not feminism, while most of the inspiring and quoted texts and the questions posed are those of new feminism. The Sarajevo-based social scientist, Nada

<sup>143</sup> Gordana Cerjan-Letica, “Američki feministički pokret” [The American feminist movement], *Žena* Vol. 34. No. 5 (1976): 60-65.

<sup>144</sup> She mentions these, cf. Cerjan-Letica, “Feminizam – na tragu radikalizma šezdesetih godina”, 8

Ler-Sofronić provides a thought-provoking new theo-methodological frame, based on a critical reading of new feminist theory from the West, for dealing with women's inequality in Yugoslavia. The selection of authors is colourful, and while he is dismissive of Shulamith Firestone for her "extremity" and "overvaluation of women's characteristics", and for overemphasising "women's nature",<sup>145</sup> she is appreciative of Betty Friedan. Whereas Friedan is often criticised by left-wing feminists both in the US and elsewhere for her bourgeois lens of analysis, Ler-Sofronić realises that when speaking of the lives of bourgeois women, Friedan criticises bourgeois values. She finds the idealisation of women by the radical feminist Firestone more problematic: authors like Firestone are "mistakenly" called "radical", claiming "radicalism" back for uses as a synonym for "revolutionary" (21).

"Radical legislative change", in this case in France, is also welcomed by Jasna Tkalec. She welcomes the French "new feminism" born in the aftermath of May 1968, which has a radical agenda, with "the radical demands of the equality of sexual morals for men and women, loudly seeking rehabilitation, from a Freudian position, of women's erotica, the sexuality of children and adolescents and even of homosexuality".<sup>146</sup> This text, inspired by Edgar Morin's essay in the volume *La Femme majeure*<sup>147</sup> interprets the new French feminism as a human rights movement (1162), whereas realises that despite the similarities between the feminist discourse and those of Marxism and

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<sup>145</sup> Nada Ler-Sofronić, "Odiseja ljudskog identiteta žene" [The Odyssey of the human identity of women], *Pitanja*, No. 7-8 (1978): 21. Further citations to this work are given in the text.

<sup>146</sup> Jasna Tkalec, "Dolazak i događaj feminizma" [The arrival and happening of feminism], *Naše teme*, no. 5 (1977): 1160-67. 1161. Further citations to this work are given in the text.

<sup>147</sup> Nicole Lapierre, Edgar Morin and Bernard Paillard, eds. *La Femme majeure, nouvelle féminité, nouveau féminisme* (Paris: Seuil, 1973).

“decolonialism”, women cannot be treated either as class or as an ethnic group. Tkalec suggests looking at women as a “bio-social class” and valorises the potential of the radical demands within the women’s movement (i.e. new feminism), which introduces a specific culture of revolution to the West. (1167) The radical demand of the new feminism involves “a re-analysis of the entire social system, with regard to the past and future as well. This research raises and actualises fundamental social and scientific problems and rephrases them in a completely new way.” (1167)

***The Relevance of New Feminism in Yugoslavia, Based on the Universal Experience of Women and Questioning Class as a Key Category to Women’s Emancipation***

From this range of highly different texts, there is a colourful image of feminism unfolds. Revolution in feminism has the appreciation of the authors, while radicalism is already ambiguous. The attributed meanings vary from positive, for example in the sense of “revolutionary”, and problematic, as much as it is “bourgeois”. Bourgeois feminism is equivocally criticised. Another characteristic of the early steps the new feminists in Yugoslavia take is the strategy of suggesting to look at the new manifestations of feminism as relevant due to the “universal experience” of women, from the perspective of the ideas presented and from the perspective of “our still patriarchal environment”.<sup>148</sup> Universality is useful not only as a “disguise” of the dissenting ideas, but as a category countering the idea that the solution to the class questions is a solution to the women’s question too.

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<sup>148</sup> Žarana Papić – Ivan Vejvoda, “Žena je čovjek. Umesto uvoda” [Woman is a human. Instead of an introduction], *Student*, 1976. No. 9. 7.

One of the early examples is in an issue of *Student*, edited by Žarana Papić and Ivan Vejvoda in 1976 (a rare case where only foreign material is presented in translation). It includes texts from Robin Morgan's edited volume *Sisterhood is Powerful* by Pat Mainardi (from the Redstockings group, which belongs to the above mentioned the "radical" Women's Liberation groups) and Zoe Moss, an interview with Luce Irigaray by Cathérine Clément originally in *La Nouvelle Critique*, one text by Marie-Thérèse Baudrillard from *Politique Hebdo* and an excerpt from Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex*. What they state in the introduction may not look extremely complicated:

It is interesting to get acquainted with insights of the new thinking of the 'problem' of women, her speech [*govor*], agency [*delanje*] and living [*življenje*], and this through a mosaic of broad elements, from analytical-theoretical approaches to personal statements. Though here it is seemingly only about 'foreign experience', a lot of this experience of women is universal.<sup>149</sup>

The introduction does not identify the selection of texts as feminist, but it also avoids the term *žensko pitanje* by "the 'problem' of women", where the quotation marks distance the authors from identifying with those who consider women a "problem". The terms *agency* and *speech* point towards the language of the new feminism, so does the selection from the more avant-garde or radical texts, which, by other authors in the Yugoslav publications, are dismissed for various reasons. Reasons which can be well organised around the evaluation of and reservation to a stream of feminism as radical, revolutionary or extremist on the one hand, and reactionary-bourgeois on the other. The

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<sup>149</sup> Papić – Vejvoda, "Žena je čovjek. Umesto uvoda", 7.

identification or appreciation of these varieties of feminism is rather divergent and needs to be treated in the “revolutionary Yugoslav” context.

The choices of Papić and Vejvoda reflect an appreciation of the radical stream of US feminism, as well as of the more theoretical but in that manner, rather avant-garde French wave. The tendency to affiliate oneself with the socialist Western feminists and thus legitimate the introduction of these ideas into the local context prevails in the Yugoslav new feminist context, however, in this case there is also an attempt to reconcile the complex theoretical approach of Irigaray (and elsewhere, Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva) with an expectation that writing about society serves the revolutionary change in that very society. The cross-reading of US radical feminism with French post-structuralism is an “invention” of the Yugoslav feminists, and here is made explicit by the choice of an interview with Irigaray, made by Catherine Clément, instead of an excerpt from her *Speculum de l'autre femme*,<sup>150</sup> apropos which the interview was made.<sup>151</sup> For discussing the social use of theories, writings, artworks, Clément returns to the concept of *struggle* [*borba* in Serbo-Croatian and *lutte/combat* in French]. Clément’s choice of the word has a new relevance in the new context of the space defined by the success-ideology

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<sup>150</sup> Luce Irigaray, *Speculum de l'autre femme* [Speculum of the other woman] (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1974).

<sup>151</sup> Her texts are later also published in translation, in thematic journal issues, accompanied by comments and explanation from the new Yugoslav feminist authors:

Luce Irigaray, “Ogledao druge žene” [Speculum of the other woman], trans. J. V. and R. I., *Marksizam u svetu*, vol. 8. no. 8-9 (1981): 443-486.

Luce Irigaray, “Izlaz iz pećine” [The way out of the cave], trans. Rada Iveković, *Republika*, no. 11-12 (1983): 107-111.

Luce Irigaray, “I jedna, ne miće bez druge” [One does not move without the other], trans. Lizdek Slobodanka, *Izraz* vol. 36. no. 2-3 (Feb-March 1990): 298-304.

Luce Irigaray, “Taj pol koji nije jedan” [This sex which is not one], trans. Aleksandar Zistakis, *Gledišta* no. 1-2 (1990): 9-16.



of partisans' People's Liberation Struggle, the NOB.<sup>152</sup> Which was followed by smaller-scale "struggles" for the fulfilment of the aims of self-managing socialism.

Clément contextualises Irigaray within 1968 as a movement: "Where, what kind of a relation do you think you have with women's struggle? The question is all the more important since your book was not a book which we would usually call as one designed for struggles?"<sup>153</sup> Irigaray explains her position, which she begins with the assertion that to her, all philosophical discussions have political implications:

Maybe we should go that far that we say there is no 'politics' of women that does not take shape either in the form of apolitical statements or disavowal of the political, this is already a demand [*zahtjev*] which must be fulfilled. [...] In the meantime, if the starting point of women's struggle [*borba*] is simply to get to the steering wheel of power then women wanted what they don't [want], to be subordinated to the phallic order. [...] However, we need to be constantly and without mistakes alert. Phallocracy most probably still has not exhausted all its resources. Are we not witnesses to how today men overtake the women's question [*žensko pitanje*]? It is important for them to be able to keep the initiative within the[ir] discourse.<sup>154</sup>

What Irigaray does in her *Speculum*, is political and radical. Her radicalism is read into a Yugoslav context, where radicalism is read as revolutionary struggle. Through this

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<sup>152</sup>*Narodnooslobodilačka borba*.

<sup>153</sup> Catherine Clément – Luce Irigaray, "Žena, njen spol i jezik" [Woman, her sex and the language], *Student* no. 9 (1976): 7.

All translated texts I quote from the Serbo-Croatian translation, since what I look for is the meanings in that context. Where it seems necessary, I reflect on the change of meanings in translation.

<sup>154</sup> This is a translation into English from a translation from French into Serbo-Croatian. I quote the translation because my interest lays in the language (in the sense of discourse) the Yugoslav readers were presented with.

Clément – Irigaray, "Žena, njen spol i jezik", 7.

reading in *Student*, Irigaray is brought into a dialogue with the American second wave's radicalism (even though radicalism assumes different meanings in the original contexts of French theory and the US movement), as she identifies the need for radical (down to the roots) change in the discourse carrying power relations. Getting positions in the existing phallic [*phallogocentric*] order does not change the discourse and women's place within that discourse. The "women's question" gets appropriated by male political actors and immersed into the existing order – Irigaray does not spell it out here, however, her train of thought reminds of the dichotomy between the use of "women's question" and feminism and the political, strategic implications behind. As feminism takes the women's question out of the patriarchal context, it means taking the initiative and means intervention into the discourse.

Radicalism, and in relation to that, revolution and the revolutionary nature of an ideology or movement is a recurrent theme in the new Yugoslav feminist writings of the 1970s–early 1980s and is a crucial factor in their self-positioning within the Yugoslav discursive space, simultaneously adjusting to and challenging of the status quo. As we have seen above, Iveković, for example, based on Anna Maria Mazzoni's classification, identifies the revolutionary branch of Italian feminism as progressive and points it out as exemplary; however, she refrains from calling it "radical". One of the articles in the hereby analysed issue of *Student*, from *Sisterhood is Powerful* by Pat Mainardi, discusses the "politics of housework", which is not only relevant from the point of the relations between the private and the public (see later in this chapter), but also for a statement which identifies the "women's liberation movement" as "revolution".<sup>155</sup> Here we find a

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<sup>155</sup> Pat Mainardi, "Politika domaćeg posla" [The politics of housework], *Student* No. 9 (1976): 7.

conceptually fascinating distinction between radical, revolutionary women's movements and bourgeois women's movements, on the one hand, and extremist (radical) ones as opposed to the moderate (socialist) ones on the other.

In the above analysed interview with Luce Irigaray by Catherine Clément, Clément and Irigaray agree on the need for a radical change of discourse, and then they go even further by Irigaray's answer to Clément's question of whether she thinks the "class struggle" would sufficiently describe these power relations. Irigaray points out that exactly this is why a radical change is needed: men "overtake the women's question". Irigaray turns the question around and suggests that class be translated into "men and women", and then adds: "Or, we should admit that today's praxis of Marxism is not willing to acknowledge this difference and this exploitation of women."<sup>156</sup> This takes us to another crucial question dividing the state discourse and the new feminist discourse, considering whether solving the class question automatically solves gender equality and makes women's oppression disappear. Irigaray resists this idea by emphasising that Marxism, at its present stage, is not sufficient. This is in contrast with the claims of the KDAŽ, even around the International Year of Women, when the problems women faced were thematised, or the introductions in books like Đorđević's *Žensko pitanje*, which treat the work of Marx, Engels and the early Marxists as not very detailed, but in principle authoritative with regard to the women's question and which persistently take the *žensko pitanje* back to the realisation of *općeljudske emancipacije*.

The first open discussion between the *Žena* editorial board, the KDAŽ and therefore the SKJ and the young feminist women who become foundation stones of the

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<sup>156</sup> Clément – Irigaray, "Žena, njen spol i jezik", 7.

*Žena i društvo* group took place in 1976 at a conference in Portorož. Whereas in the local feminist mythology it does not hold the same place as 1978, looking at the documentation of the debate,<sup>157</sup> we find most of the most important ideas of the new Yugoslav feminists there. At this time, Gordana Bosanac and Anđelka Milić were members of the editorial board of the journal, and Lydia Sklevický, Vesna Pusić, Nadežda Čačinovič-Puhovski, Silva Mežnarić and Gordana Cerjan-Letica all participated in the conference. The editorial board apparently had to explain themselves for the appearance of the *feministička grupacija* at the meeting, offering a variety of understandings of what feminism is: “it is important to differentiate between the feminist movement in its basic starting point and of a provocation for a fight against the male sex and the [...] a progressive movement of women who search for a way for their own action [...] for the political, economic, cultural and other forms of development in their own country.”<sup>158</sup> The introduction, however, emphasises the importance of the Marxist stakes of the issue of women *and the family*, especially the contributions of Vranicki and Šoljan to the conference. So does the closing speech by Breda Pavlič, with the usual conclusion that on the one hand many of the demands of the Western feminists have been provided to women in Yugoslavia, on the other hand that if feminists want to achieve their goals, they have to return to Marx.<sup>159</sup> Which happens only to a certain extent: there is a left-wing, most often Marxist inclination in the feminist theories written by the new Yugoslav

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<sup>157</sup> *Žena*. “Društveni položaj žene i razvoj porodice u socijalističkom samoupravnom društvu” [The social position of women and the development of the family in the socialist self-managing society], vol. 34. no. 3 (1976).

<sup>158</sup> Redakcija, “Portorož i poslije njega” [Portorož and after], *Žena* vol. 34. no. 3 (1976): 2-6, 5.

<sup>159</sup> Breda Pavlič, “Ciljevi i metode suvremenog feminizma” [The goals and methods of contemporary feminism], *Žena* vol. 34. no. 3 (1976): 129-145.

feminists, but they almost unanimously refuse to subsume women's equality under the class question.

Despite the editorial board's gesture to diminish the significance of the feminist participants, they claim the legitimacy of new feminism. Sklevický, in argument for the importance of the "history of forgotten sisters", describes the transition from the "old" feminism to the new wave, which realises that basic rights do not ensure real gender equality and therefore demands a liberation from gender roles through various actions.<sup>160</sup> The new or second wave canon is introduced by Gordana Cerjan-Letica: Firestone, Friedan, Greer, Millett, Margaret Dixon, Margaret Benston.<sup>161</sup> Cerjan-Letica argues for the alignment of feminism with socialism: "the goal of a non-repressive civilisation is there within all heterogeneous left-wing movements", while refuses to treat women as a class.<sup>162</sup> This, in her reading, makes feminism more radical in its demands for equality. Vesna Pusić addresses the anti-, or rather, post-feminist arguments: at first feminism may appear aggressive or explosive, it may even be accused of theoretical incoherence, "however, if we approach it as a manifestation of one broad, global theory, we will much more easily get the dimension of the universality it contains. In other words, even if it is not a theory in itself, it presents a manifestation and is integral part of one broad theory of social change and dialectical development of society."<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Lydia Sklevický, "Od borbe za prava do prave borbe" [From the struggle for rights to the right to fight], *Žena* vol. 34. no. 3 (1976): 52-59.

<sup>161</sup> Cerjan-Letica, "Neki dominantni stavovi suvremenog feminizma o porodici" [A few dominant positions of contemporary feminism about the family], *Žena*, vol. 34. no. 3. (1976): 100-114.

<sup>162</sup> Cerjan-Letica, "Neki dominantni stavovi", 104.

<sup>163</sup> Vesna Pusić, "O nekim aspektima uloge feminizma u suvremenom društvu" [About a few aspects of the position of feminism in contemporary society], *Žena*, vol. 34. no. 3. (1976): 120-124, 121.

The texts analysed above, tentatively but with a growing self-confidence seeking new meanings of feminism, were followed by a more and more conceptually organised academic corpus of texts on feminism. The conference *Drug-ca žena: Novi pristup* [Comrade-ess woman: a new approach, thereafter: *Drug-ca* conference] took place in 1978 in Belgrade, at the Students' Cultural Centre. Dunja Blažević was behind it as institutional support, but the event was a cooperative work of many women from the new feminist groups. For the conference, the organisers had a selected list of texts translated, making the conference literally a canonising event for Yugoslav feminism.<sup>164</sup> Most of the women I interviewed, even if they had been actively dealing with feminism for quite a few years by 1978, think of 1978 as the time “when it all started”. In its conciseness, the conference indeed represented a lot of what new Yugoslav feminism was later on, throughout the next decade.

Themes and arguments of the new left feminism (Marxist or socialist feminism) of the 1960s, represented here by Juliet Mitchell, Sheila Rowbotham and Evelyne Reed, were discussed together with French post-structuralist feminists (the usual suspect Kristeva and Irigaray, the former with her book *About Chinese Women* though) and those radical feminists who, even if they were inspired by Marxism, rather belonged to a new English language line of radical feminism, such as Germaine Greer and Shulamith Firestone. Apart from the texts, the interactions between the guests from Italy, England, Germany also had some cleavages recurring later on: the understanding of the local

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<sup>164</sup> More about the conference, cf. Bonfiglioli, “‘Social Equality is Not Enough, We Want Pleasure!’: Italian Feminists in Belgrade for the 1978 ‘Comrade Woman’ Conference” and the article by Jasmina Tesanović “Što je žensko pitanje?” [What is a women’s question?], *Polet*, 6<sup>th</sup> November 1978, 3-4. Tesanović was also one of the organisers of the conference, a writer and film-maker, who at the time lived in Rome and meant a substantial contact to the Italian feminist scene.

situations on behalf of the guests, for example about the role of the male group members (which was revised later by the Yugoslav members too), or different understandings of where the limits of sexism lay. Partly due to the conference, but also the work before, a more systematic publishing process took place.

The new Yugoslav feminists become more and more conscious of radical feminism being closer to their own vision of feminism, revaluation what “radical” and “militant” means, with reference to the revolutionary partisan tradition as a source of legitimacy. An effective strategy of Vesna Kesić in the magazine *Start* is to compare the feminist movement to the workers’ movement.<sup>165</sup> The comparison is triggered by Kesić’s annoyance with the “militant” *epitheton ornans* of all feminisms in all times, also present in the state representatives’ discussion of feminism. While it is hard to see what it means, writes Kesić, “this is as if the workers on strike would be advised not to choose such a ‘militant’ way of fighting”, and “fighting” here is a “re-vindication of one’s rights.”<sup>166</sup> Clearly, a political system supporting the workers in all places to stand up for their rights and heralding the workers being self-managers of their lives in Yugoslavia as well as women’s equality, cannot afford labelling women voicing the exact same demands “militant.” In the very same magazine, Slavenka Drakulić is reflecting at length on the role and challenges of feminism “as a revolutionary movement”.<sup>167</sup> Nada Ler-Sofronić even reclaims “radical” for those revolutionary leftist ideas she agrees with: due to its essentialism, she suggests that Shulamith Firestone’s *The Dialectic of Sex* from 1970 is

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<sup>165</sup> Vesna Kesić, “Nije li pornografija cinična?” [Isn’t pornography cynical?], *Start* no. 355. August 28, 1982, 74-75.

<sup>166</sup> Kesić, „Nije li pornografija cinična?”, 74-75.

<sup>167</sup> Slavenka Drakulić-Ilić, “Pornografija u novoj prohibiciji” [Pornography in a new prohibition], *Start*, No. February 9, 1985, 68-70.

incorrectly categorised as “radical”, it is rather “extreme” feminism.<sup>168</sup> She continues the reassessment of feminist ideas through critical Marxist thinkers, like many other new Yugoslav feminists, who turn to different leftist schools of thought for new ideas.

### **Critical Marxism, The Frankfurt School and the New Yugoslav Feminists: Inspiration and a Critique of Essentialism**

Feminists in different economic and political systems had their reasons for a deep disappointment with left politics, be it the New Left in Western capitalism or the state’s distorted Marxist agenda in Eastern Europe. Because of this, or despite, there constantly are efforts to reformulate feminism’s relation to these. In Yugoslavia, the articles and speeches by the representatives of the state and especially the KDAŽ are full of the references to Marx, Engels’s *About the Origin of the Family*, all of these subsuming women’s emancipation to the class question. Marija Šoljan Bakarić emphasised that “[d]espite the fact that Marx and Engels did not write specifically about the ‘women’s question’, they did write and tell a lot about it.”<sup>169</sup> Returning to the concept of *općeljudske emancipacije* is one of the most core reactions on behalf of state representatives. I call this a form of post-feminism in the state socialist context. As opposed to that, the position of the *Žena i društvo* group is that the women’s question should precede the class question, or, should be treated differently from that, as it has different characteristics and a different mode of functioning. This is the key moment of the Irigaray-interview in *Student*, when she suggests: “we have to admit that about this

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<sup>168</sup> Nada Ler-Sofronić, “Odiseja ljudskog identiteta žene” [The odyssey of the human identity of women], *Pitanja* no. 7-8. (1978): 11-28. 21.

<sup>169</sup> Šoljan, “Tajna emancipacije žene”, 7. Further citations to this work are given in the text.



difference and this specificity of the exploitation of women, the current praxis of Marxism does not want to know”.<sup>170</sup> Their allies in their criticism are thinkers who were invested in rethinking or further advancing Marxian arguments, as well as feminist thinkers whose work was largely motivated by their disappointment with Leftist ideas lacking a feminist edge.

The authors most extensively writing about the new readings of women’s situation from the direction of other Marxist schools are Blaženka Despot, Nada Ler-Sofronić, Vjeran Katunarić and Nadežda Čaćinović. While Yugoslavia is one of the few East European countries with a strong Marxist revisionist discourse<sup>171</sup> and the some of the Praxis professors supported the feminists, they rely relatively little on the *Praxis* authors. None of my interviewees mentioned, though, that they felt the Praxis discourse passé. Rather, the horizon of these women was opening towards something new, which still offered perspectives even in the light (or rather, shade) of the failure of 1968 and 1971. I mean “failure” not only politically, but also intellectually, though the two are probably hard to separate.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> op.cit.

<sup>171</sup> David A. Crocker, *Praxis and Democratic Socialism: The Critical Social Theory of Marković and Stojanović* (New Jersey: Humanity and Sussex: Harvester, 1983); Satterwhite, *Varieties of Marxist Humanism*; Gerson Sher, *Praxis: Marxist Criticism and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1977).

<sup>172</sup> The picture, however, of the Praxis group was not that simple. Women as a group facing a different kind of oppression did not avoid their attention either. One of the most complex ideas are there in the writings of Mihailo Marković. Who, in the 1980s, becomes one of the leading nationalist intellectuals in Serbia. He is one the authors of the memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts of 1986 and later he became vice president of Milošević in the Socialist Party of Serbia, which position he held until 1995. Marković makes a distinction between group differences stemming from inequalities in economic and political power, like the case is with the classes, the disappearance of which “has only indeed a liberating effect” and between groups with “mere natural differences”, such as nation ???, race, sex. The former must be abolished, but the latter is part of “the existing wealth of cultures, life styles” (Marković quoted by Crocker, *Praxis and Democratic Socialism*, 130-131). It seems that according to Marković, those factors which make women less equal are not merely “natural”, but also social, and while biological difference is a

While after 1968 and 1971, Praxis seemed to have little to offer, at least based on the frequency of their reception (with the only exception of the writings of Blaženka Despot, who comes from the same generation and who is both critical and reflective on their work), other intellectual schools were still attractive to the new feminists. Besides the Frankfurt School, Lukács's Budapest School,<sup>173</sup> especially the work of Mária Márkus and Ágnes Heller is what the new feminists rely on. Heller's article, co-authored with Mihály Vajda,<sup>174</sup> criticising the existing socialism in Hungary for the maintenance of the bourgeois family and suggesting a system of family relations not based on ownership, was published in *Žena* as early as 1974, which shows yet again the mixed position of the journal in relation to patriarchy's survival in socialism.<sup>175</sup> In the 1970s articles from these different Marxist traditions, the Frankfurt School being the most frequent one, appear in the journal *Žena*, and later scattered in many academic journals, such as *Pitanja*, *Dometi*, *Argumenti*. As we shall see in Chapter 3, Marcuse and Heller become important references in Jasenka Kodrnja's criticism of the uses of the concept of the *sexual revolution*.

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given, the "sex-linked masculine and feminine social roles" are to be contested. (Crocker, *Praxis and Democratic Socialism*, 132).

<sup>173</sup> Which Jay identifies sarcastically as the "clone" of the Frankfurt School, but which, however, became one of the strongest revisionist Marxist group in a state socialist country. Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination* xv.; Cf. Satterwhite, *Varieties of Marxist Humanism*; Andrew Feenberg, *Lukács, Marx, and the Sources of Critical Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986, c1981). Also, cf. Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe* and Csizmadia, *A magyar demokratikus ellenzék története*.

<sup>174</sup> Ágnes Heller and Mihály Vajda, "Struktura obitelji i komunizam" [The structure of the family and communism], *Žena* vol. 31. no. 3-4 (1972): 75-84.

<sup>175</sup> It is also there in Gordana Cerjan-Letica's and other feminists' writing. E.g. Gordana Cerjan-Letica "Feminizam – na tragu radikalizma šezdesetih godina", 29.

The psychologically invested Marxian thinkers or “psycho-Marxism”,<sup>176</sup> such as the Frankfurt School and Ernst Bloch reappear in the work of Čačinović, Blaženka Despot, Nada Ler-Sofronić and Vjeran Katunarić. The series in *Žena* begins the line with the reception of Marcuse’s essay “Marxism and feminism”, which Čačinović complements with an introduction where she finds Marcuse’s discourse highly relevant for the local discussion in women’s position, especially the status of women. Unlike what Čačinović sees as “consumable forms of feminism, from bestsellers to clothing and behaviour”, through a reading of Marcuse, who detects the revolutionary potential in feminism, its potential as a new movement is acknowledged.<sup>177</sup> With a rather essentialistic view of women, both Marcuse and Ernst Bloch see potential in the women’s movement, which Bloch identifies as a partial or specialised utopia, among which it is one of the rare honest exceptions. As he emphasises in the excerpt taken from *The Principle of Hope*, elements of these specialised utopias are even included in Marxism, which did not happen with any bourgeois full-scale utopia after Marx.<sup>178</sup>

At the Portorož conference in 1976, Čačinović uses Bloch to point out the problem with the generalising concept of *equality*, in this case as it was promoted by the bourgeois women’s movement. This early feminist concept of equality is not sufficient,

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<sup>176</sup> Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination*, p.

<sup>177</sup> Nadežda Čačinović Puhovski, “Teorijska relevantnost ženskog pokreta. Napomena uz tekst Herberta Marcusea ‘Marksizam i feminizam’” [The theoretical relevance of the women’s movement. Remarks to the text ‘Marxism and feminism’ of Herbert Marcuse], *Žena* vol. 33. no. 5 (1975): 75-77.

Herbert Marcuse, “Marksizam i feminizam” [Marxism and feminism], trans. Nadežda Čačinović Puhovski, *Žena* vol. 33. no. 5. (1975): 77-85.

<sup>178</sup> Quotes are from the English translation: Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, Vol. 2., trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1995): 584.

Nadežda Čačinović Puhovski, “Budućnost žensvenosti, ženskog pokreta koji to još nije” [The future of femininity and the women’s movement, which it still not], *Žena* vol. 34. no. 1 (1976): 56-57.

as it does not provide for the possible use of the rights it achieves. There is a parallel between this argument and what Rada Iveković writes about the Italian women's movement, which recognises and addresses in the late 1960s the shortcomings of the legal approach to women's equality. Whereas in the Italian case, to the empty concept of general equality, the solution is feminism, Čačinović envisions a "feminine socialism, socialist feminism" that takes social categories into consideration, that is besides gender, class too. While she maintains that the theoretical relevance of contemporary feminism cannot be separated from Marxism,<sup>179</sup> Čačinović goes beyond the traditional Marxian category. She furthers Bloch's idea of the change in women's subjectivity, projecting that "the development and reassurance of the quality of a liberated and self-conscious woman turns into a precondition of change in contemporary society." (129) That is, women's equality is not only not ensured by the achievements of the class struggle, the change should take place on several levels, not only on that of social categories.

Nada Ler-Sofronić also relies on Marcuse, and the French sociologist Alain Touraine to suggest the prevalence of women's emancipation over *općeljudske emancipacije*.<sup>180</sup> Ler-Sofronić relies on these authors as they both "speak about the feminisation of society in the sense of the humanisation of society." She uses the authority and the creativity of these Marxist theoreticians to rethink the possibilities of

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<sup>179</sup> Nadežda Čačinović Puhosvki, "Ravnopravnost ili oslobođenje" [Equality or liberation], *Žena* vol. 34, no. 3 (1976): 125-128, 127.

<sup>180</sup> Ler-Sofronić, "Odiseja ljudskog identiteta žene", 21. Further citations to this work are given in the text.

Since there is no reference to the citation of Touraine's writings on the topic, therefore I did not include an analysis of his role in this text. The use of the name of an innovative sociologist is a gesture of Ler-Sofronić's text to notice though.

Later she publishes a whole book about the relationship between feminism and socialism, containing the texts referenced here: Nada Ler-Sofronić, *Neofeminizam i socijalistička alternativa* [Neofeminism and the socialist alternative] (Beograd: Radnička štampa, 1986).

women's emancipation and push forward a feminist agenda. She is also critical of them, for example Marcuse does not question the category of the feminine, which Ler-Sofronić's finds problematic by other authors too. She denounces "the new mystification of the sexual essence of women" (21), including the way it is presented in the new discourse on the sexual revolution and in radical feminist writings. The criticism of essentialism is a criticism of the biologisation of women, which simultaneously offers an understanding of humanism based on the traditional feminine characteristics, such as the listening to the other person, selfless giving, responsibility and understanding. While this reinterpreted humanism is important to Ler-Sofronić, she questions the need to nurture or emphasise women's humane character as something peculiar and which she finds in feminism too. Instead, she recommends a Gramscian historical analysis of women's position (21-22). There is still less reference to current feminist literature here, while the text is proof of an intelligent re-thematisation of women's unachieved equality and a critical eye towards "bio-essentialist" arguments. Vjeran Katunarić praises this feminist scrutiny of feminism, defined as an oppositional activity, for their critical approach to Marcuse's "stereotypical" approach to women.<sup>181</sup> Katunarić gives a comprehensive reading of the Frankfurt School, similarly to Blaženka Despot. Who, similarly to the authors analysed above, is critical towards Ernst Bloch's concept of nature, revisiting the idea of women's nature [*ženska priroda*], through a whole apparatus from the re-reading of Hegel and Marx, as well as Lukács and Marcuse.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Vjeran Katunarić, "Marksizam i feministička inteligencija" [Marxism and feminist intelligentsia], *Argumenti* no. 1 (1979): 197-208, 197.

<sup>182</sup> Blaženka Despot, *Žensko pitanje i socijalističko samoupravljanje* [The woman question and socialist self-management] (Zagreb: Cekade, 1987), 75.

### ***The Personal and Political Act of Reclaiming Consciousness as a Concept***

The readings of Marxist texts with a psychological perspective strengthen the possibilities to reconsider the role of consciousness in the new feminist discourse and in new feminist politics. Consciousness returns into the Yugoslav feminist discussions from a detour: the radical new feminists in the US take a Marxian concept for their grassroots groups, giving the concept a feminist meaning,<sup>183</sup> and they take it back from here. In 1981 Nada Ler-Sofronić locates “the radicalisation of women’s consciousness [*svijesti*] in their awareness [*svijesti*] of their own subordination and exploitation in private life and in their interpersonal relations.”<sup>184</sup> The emphasis here is on the possibilities of reaching and developing women’s consciousness, based on the acknowledgement that there are different types of oppression, which may require different qualities and depths of a “revolutionary praxis”. For a discourse on consciousness and alienation,<sup>185</sup> Ler-Sofronić here turns to the psychological aspects in the critical Marxist theory of Lukács and Lefebvre. She connects this to her argument that since patriarchy existed before capitalism, women’s inequality cannot be resolved by the mere dissolution of capitalism and class difference. The two arguments are combined through Fromm’s research on “primitive” societies, which concludes that there is a direct connection between less hierarchy, aggression and authoritarianism within the society itself and women’ greater

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<sup>183</sup> In Christine Stansell’s opinion, the radical feminist vocabulary in the US is rather Marxist, than feminist as such. Cf. Stansell, *The Feminist Promise*, 230, 245.

<sup>184</sup> Ler-Sofronić, “Dijalektika odnosa polova i klasna svijest”, p

<sup>185</sup> Jay, p... about the reinterpretation of the role of consciousness for Marxism from the direction of Freud and psychoanalysis.

equality and individual freedom. It is a well-defined, strong women's subjectivity that leads to a new radical movement.

Changing the landscape of the "class or gender first" debate, Ler-Sofronić claims this could revolutionise the worker's movement as well. As she says: "there is no equality among unequal parties (...) and understanding women's subordination leads to a deeper quality of class consciousness." The discussion of consciousness from a psychological direction, instead of a socio-economic one, organically takes the text towards the role of the personal: Ler-Sofronić would take "the questions about the 'personal', the 'intimate' or human happiness" back into a socialist discussion of women's place in society. As she reminds us, those days are not far when these "were qualified as bourgeois and counterrevolutionary, and still today, the significant question about the relationship between socialism and the sexual revolution invokes uneasiness, ridicule and often even aggression."<sup>186</sup>

The thematisation of consciousness allows discussions for the personal too. Consciousness becomes a central concept not only for activism (cf. Chapter 4), but also for feminist historiography, which I discuss in greater detail later in this chapter. Gerda Lerner, the feminist historian whose work is influential for my writing of this dissertation too, uses the concept for the foundations of a new feminist historiography, which influences Lydia Sklevický's research in women's and feminist history in Yugoslavia too.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> This and the previous quote: Ler-Sofronić, "Dijalektika odnosa polova i klasna svijest", p

<sup>187</sup> Cf. Lerner, "Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges"; *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-seventy*.

*The Feminist-Marxist Alliance between Yugoslavia and the “West” as a Source of Dissent*

With an awareness of the tradition of feminist ideas in the history of socialist thought, especially through the work of Aleksandra Kollontai, the new Yugoslav feminists relate the explications of the two schools of thought to the dissent of feminism in its own context. Importantly, an apt criticism of the state’s approach to the women’s question was supported not only by critical Marxism, but also the critical stance of Anglo-Saxon feminism towards capitalism. Vjeran Katunarić describes three possible modalities, Marxist feminism, feminist Marxism, and moderate new feminism [umjerenački neofeminizam],<sup>188</sup> and emphasises that Marxism and feminism in the US and Western Europe share their refusal of positivism and objectivism.<sup>189</sup> Rada Iveković agrees on this and emphasises in 1980 already that many ideas of American feminism fell onto a fertile ground amongst intellectual women in Western Europe. For example, Betty Friedan’s *Feminine Mystique* was one of the milestones of post-WWII feminist thought: “a practical and theoretical elaboration on the women’s question within the criticism of contemporary American capitalism.”<sup>190</sup>

Blaženka Despot suggests a “feminised [more feminist] Marxism” on the pages of *NIN*,<sup>191</sup> while Vlasta Jalušić criticises Marxism for various shortcomings, deriving from

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<sup>188</sup> Katunarić, *Ženski eros*, 38.

<sup>189</sup> Katunarić, *Ženski eros*, 43.

<sup>190</sup> Iveković, “Talijanski ženski pokret”, 38

<sup>191</sup> Blaženka Despot, “Feminizirani marksizam” [Feminised Marxism], interview by Dragan Jovanović, *NIN* vol. 35. no. 1723, 8 January 1984, 17-18.



the lack of a feminist “lens” to the world.<sup>192</sup> The issue of the journal *Problemi*, where her introduction is published, is also an exemplary case of exchange of ideas by the new feminists in the three cities, with texts by Despot, Rada Iveković, Sklevický and Renér. “Feminist questions and Marxist answers” (Juliet Mitchell’s phrase) were formulated through translations and interpretations of the work of Mitchell and Sheila Rowbotham, together with the by now less known Evelyne Reed. Gordana Cerjan-Letica wrote an introductory text to the translations of Mitchell and Rowbotham for *Naše teme* in 1980, where she argues that feminism is of use for contemporary Marxism for many reasons:

1. as a movement, it pushes a theoretical problematisation of new emancipatory (revolutionary) powers;
2. as a critical position (towards Marxism) it enables the perception of the actuality of Marx’s model-method for an analysis of contemporary [*građansko*] society;
3. the feminist theoretical penetration into the sphere of the “private” reveals to Marxism a multitude of new and not insignificant elements of social relation in the family and in smaller communities of contemporary capitalism.<sup>193</sup>

Cerjan-Letica’s arguments is an example of how the new Yugoslav feminists walk a tight rope - whether out of conviction that Yugoslavia is better as capitalist societies, or strategically - between contextualising the role of feminism in Yugoslavia or referring to

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<sup>192</sup> Vlasta Jalušić, “‘Žensko vprašanje’ kot izvržek” [The “women’s question” as IZVRZEK], *Problemi. Eseji* no. 9 (1986): 1-8.

<sup>193</sup> Gordana Cerjan-Letica, “Feministička pitanja i marksistički odgovori” [Feminist questions and Marxist answers], *Naše teme* vol. 24. no. 11 (1980): 1970-1974, 1974.

The two texts introduced: Sheila Rowbotham, “Dijalektičke smetnje” [Dialectical disturbances], *Naše teme* vol. 24. no. 11 (1980): 1975-1993. [From idem. *Women, Resistance and Revolution* (London: Penguin, 1975)]; Juliet Mitchell, “Položaj žene” [Women’s estate], *Naše teme* vol. 24. no. 11 (1980): 1994-2012. [From idem. *Woman’s Estate*, London: Penguin, 1971)].

its role in capitalism itself, or, even, pointing out the similarities between the two regimes. This is important because of the scope and relevance of how feminism can provoke and reframe Marxism: is this new frame only relevant for capitalism, or also for Yugoslavia?

The answer is most probably answered by the very fact that this abundance of new socialist feminist texts is published in Yugoslavia. Barbara Ehrenreich has a welcoming reputation through translations of her work,<sup>194</sup> Michèle Barrett's and Sheila Rowbotham's books both came out in 1983,<sup>195</sup> the same year as Lydia Sklevický and Žarana Papić's edited volume, the *Antropologija žene*, with texts such as Ann J. Lane's critical reading of Engels. In her critical text of the often quoted, Ann J. Lane asks the question about Engels's over-canonised *The Origins of the Family*: "How valid is the assertion that in non-wealth producing societies, when women's work was as important for survival as men's, that is when, in Engels's terms, both were equally involved in the production of process, equality between men and women prevailed?"<sup>196</sup> Lane, relying on the findings of research about "ancient societies", which are highly critical of Engels's weak reference to "ancient societies" based on research (Lewis Henry Morgan's book from 1877) which was later questioned by many authors, directs our attention to the class

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<sup>194</sup> Ehrenreich

<sup>195</sup> Michèle Barrett, *Potčinjena žena: problemi marksističke analize feminizma* [*Women's Oppression Today: Problems in Marxist/Feminist Analysis* (London: Verso – NLB, 1980)], trans. Mirjana Rajković (Beograd: Radnička štampa and Kragujevac: "Nikola Nikolić", 1983); Sheila Rowbotham, *Svest žene – svet muškarca* [*Woman's Consciousness, Man's World*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973)] (Beograd: Radionica SIC Studentski izdavački centar UKSSO Beograda, 1983).

<sup>196</sup> Quotes are from the English original: Ann J. Lane, "Women in Society: A Critique of Friedrich Engels", in *Liberating Women's History. Theoretical and Critical Essays*, ed. Berenice A. Carroll (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 4-25. 11.

In Serbo-Croatian it was published in Žarana Papić and Lydia Sklevický, eds., *Antropologija žene. Zbornik* [*Women's Anthropology. An Anthology*], trans. Branko Vučićević. 184-214 (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1983).

or gender issue, again. The very basic problem with the argument of state socialism about women's equality to be subsumed to the class question and *općeljudske emancipacije*, in comparison with the feminist argument that places the dissolution of patriarchy in the first place, is that the former ignores the point implied in the feminist texts that through the equality of men and women, a higher level of human freedom, both of men's and women's, can be achieved. By abiding by texts such as Engels's, it is impossible to talk about women's real equality, and this is the idea the feminist re-readings of Marxism emphasise.

***Criticism of the Existing Division of Labour and the Concepts of Family and Work through the Concept of Gender. Shaking Ground under Heteronormativity and Sexism***

The re-readings of Marxism from a feminist perspective are inspired by and enable the research into women's position in society and the reconsideration of concepts. Already Lane in the critique of Engels relies to a large extent on anthropology and emphasises the relevance of power relationships. In her proposition for a "more progressive union" for Marxism and feminism struggling in an unhappy marriage in 1979, Heidi Hartmann quotes Gayle Rubin about the "sex/gender systems", as a direction out of the stranded situation, and a reaction to the biologisation of women's place in society.<sup>197</sup> Rubin's text was also part of the *Antropologija žene* volume, where the basis of the essentialism debates, the nature–culture opposition, was thematised together with the private–public

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<sup>197</sup> Heidi I. Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union", in *Feminist Frameworks. Alternative Theoretical Accounts of the Relations between Men and Women*, ed.s Alison M. Jaggar and Paula S. Rothenberg (New York: McGraw Hill, 1993) 172-189. 178.

division, which necessarily involved a discussion of the gender-based division of labour in society.

The editors of the volume, Papić and Sklevický warn of the danger of the acceptance of the gendered division of labour as “natural or pre-social”. If we think of it as such, then sex [*pol*]<sup>198</sup> is excluded from the analysis of the *social* division of labour and that leads to the refusal of sex [*pol*] to be considered a social question, argue Papić and Sklevický, based on Ann Oakley’s sociology of housework.<sup>199</sup> It is in this volume that the division of sex and gender, (*s*)*pol* and *rod*, is introduced.<sup>200</sup> The differentiation, as the volume focuses on anthropology, is taken from Gayle Rubin’s “The Traffic of Women”, while the introduction keeps on referring to the aspect where being a man or a woman matters as “sex”.<sup>201</sup> The idea of the way the social aspects of one’s sex matter, is there, but the use of the concept remains chaotic for a few more years after *Antropologija žene* was published. The appearance of the differentiation is crucial in the socialist Yugoslav context, where there is an intended, yet unfinished program by the state to abolish gender based inequality, and the undeniable fact that this program is unfinished can easily be explained by biological reasons.

There are arguments from before *Antropologija žene*, which is the strongest moment of the introduction of the *spol-rod* division into the Yugoslav discourse, to

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<sup>198</sup> Today the analytical category would be “gender”, i.e. *rod*.

<sup>199</sup> Papić and Sklevický “Pregovor,” in *Antropologija žene*, ed. idem, 5-34, 19-20.

<sup>200</sup> Cf. the enthusiastic review of the book by Jasmina Kuzmanović in *Danas*. Jasmina Kuzmanović, “Rod, a ne spol” [Gender, and not sex], *Danas*, no. 113 (16<sup>th</sup> April 1984): 62.

<sup>201</sup> Gayle Rubin, “Trgovina ženama – beleške o ‘političkoj ekonomiji’ polnosti” [The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex], in *Antropologija žene*, ed. Žarana Papić and Lydia Sklevický, 91-151.

The original text, “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex”, was published first in 1975.

dispel the illusion that the biological difference can potentially explain oppression. Since even Engels in his popular *The Origin of the Family* seems to give in to the biological explanation, the new Yugoslav feminists rely on the early socialist feminist authors in the “West” for inspiration. It is there as early as 1976 in Cerjan-Letica’s reference to Kate Millett’s categories of the biological as opposed to the social, which in fact explains oppression.<sup>202</sup> The entire feminist issue of *Pitanja* in 1978 is built around the question of how the social construction of “sexual difference” discussed. Here, Papić differentiates between biology and the “socio-historical process of the formation of the sexes [pol]”.<sup>203</sup> Nada Ler-Sofronić asks a more provocative question in the same journal issue: “If women are naturally subordinate, why is there all the socialisation to keep them in this position?” The process that places and keeps women in subordination, Ler-Sofronić calls “sexual socialisation” [polna socijalizacija].<sup>204</sup> Even in psychology, Vera Smiljanić publishes articles emphasising the social roots of seemingly psychological differences between men and women.<sup>205</sup> The use of the term *spol* remains prevalent in the publications till 1991, even Papić refrains to it instead of *rod* in her 1989 book.<sup>206</sup> In the meantime, the emphasis on the social, despite the conceptual confusion, makes sociology and anthropology essential for the new Yugoslav feminism. This leads to the appraisal of the work of the ethnologist and leading intellectual already in the interwar period, Vera

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<sup>202</sup> Cerjan-Letica, “Neki dominantni”, 104.

<sup>203</sup> Papić, “Odnos polova”, 7.

<sup>204</sup> Ler-Sofronić, “Odiseja ljudskog identiteta žene”, 16

<sup>205</sup> Vera Smiljanić, “Socijalno poreklo psiholoških spolnih razlika” [The social origin of psychological sexual difference], *Psihološka istraživanja* no. 3 (1984): 109-129.

<sup>206</sup> Žarana Papić, *Sociologija i feminizam: savremeni pokret i misao o oslobođenju žena i njegov uticaj na sociologiju* [Sociology and feminism: the contemporary movement and thought about the liberation of women and its influence on sociology] (Beograd: Istraživačko-izdavački centar SSO Srbije, 1989), 41.

Stein Erlich (1897–1980), who was still alive when new Yugoslav feminism started.<sup>207</sup>

Her work and the detection of the non-biological reasons behind women's situation lead to more research about the family and work, involving a criticism of patriarchy as something still present. Dangerously enough, since as Rada Iveković writes: "The criticism of the family and marriage (...) is already the criticism of the state itself."<sup>208</sup>

Stepping beyond heterosexuality as the norm supports the discourse on gender/rod as a concept. LGBT issues become more visible in the activist discourses as well as in popular mass media (cf. Chapters 3 and 4), but there are traces of them in the new Yugoslav feminist scholarship too. For example, Rada Iveković in her article in *Dometi* writes critically about Proudhon's fear of homosexuality, which she sees as petit bourgeois and connects it with Proudhon's prejudice against women. This article realises and critically admits that homophobia and patriarchy are interrelated, which Iveković finds especially problematic in the case of socialist thinkers.<sup>209</sup> Rajka Polić, on the pages of *Žena* in 1988 discusses the ways in which transsexuality could be of use for gender emancipation.<sup>210</sup> The widespread discussion of the *écriture féminine* in literary

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<sup>207</sup> Lydia Sklevický, "Odnos spolova u znanstvenom i publicističkom radu Vere Stein Erlich" [The relation of the sexes in the scholarly and essayistic work of Vera Stein Erlich], *Žena* vol. 42. no. 5-6 (1984): 62-75.

The other anthropologist-ethnologist, who meant spiritual guidance and support for the new feminists was Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin (1926–2002), a professor from the University of Zadar, who for example presented the book *Antropologija žene* at the book launch event.

For new literature on Stein Erlich, cf. Chiara Bonfiglioli, "An Age Fated to Vanish': Vera Stein Erlich's Anthropological Records of Interwar Yugoslavia. Contribution to the web-feature „European history – gender history“, *Themenportal Europäische Geschichte* (2012), <http://www.europa.clio-online.de/2012/Article=547> (Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> September 2014); Andrea Feldman, "Vera Erlich Stein: Odyssey of a Croatian-Jewish Intellectual", in *Jewish Intellectual Women in Central Europe 1860-2000: Twelve Biographical Essays*, ed. Judith Sapor, Andrea Pető, Maura Hametz, Marina Calloni, 327-348 (Lewiston and New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2012).

<sup>208</sup> Iveković, "Indija je nijema žena. Poklici žena", 101.

<sup>209</sup> Iveković, "Talijanski komunisti i ženski pokret", 24.

<sup>210</sup> Rajka Polić, Emancipatory possibilities of transsexuality, *žena*, 1988/1

scholarship (cf. Chapter 2) was extended by an article on lesbian literature by Slađana Marković – though this was published in the journal *Potkulture* [Subcultures] in 1987, together with a selection of important articles about LGBTQ identities and people and I discuss it in detail in Chapter 4. In Slovenia the lesbian movement meant a source of inspiration for the radicalisation of feminism, as the volume *O ženski in ženskem gibanju* [About the women and the women's movement], edited by Mojca Dobnikar shows.<sup>211</sup>

Together with the opening up towards non-heterosexual sexuality and the feminist self-positioning against homophobia, the criticism of sexism appears too. As Iveković notices it on the example of Proudhon, the two walk hand in hand. Sexism is a new concept which needs explanation in the Yugoslav context: “sexism is discrimination based on sex, just like racism is discrimination based on race”, says Iveković.<sup>212</sup> Blaženka Despot and Gordana Bosanac call it simply “spolni rasizam”, that is “sex-based racism”. Sexism as a concept is also explained and criticised in the theoretical texts of Papić. In her definition, it is segregation by sex, where women are almost always underprivileged. In this sense, it is similar to racism, as it bases the difference between human beings on biological arguments.<sup>213</sup> The circle from the detection that the biological arguments are meant to cover up problems with a social basis, to the concept of gender/*rod* and an opening up towards a criticism of heteronormativity and homophobia, closes with the rejection of sexism as an idea or attitude relying on the biological arguments.

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<sup>211</sup> Mojca Dobnikar, ed., *O ženski in ženskem gibanju* [About women and women's movements], Ljubljana: Univerzitatna konferenca ZSMS -- Republiška konferenca ZSMS [1985], 1986.

<sup>212</sup> Rada Iveković, “Objašnjenje uz ženske pokliče” [Explanations to the howls of women], *Delo*, vol. 27. no. 4 (1981): 109-110, 109.

<sup>213</sup> Papić, *Sociologija i feminizam*, 78-79.

It is these biological arguments that structure the division of labour and the meaning of work in human society. The shift in focus when the division of labour is discussed towards gender is certainly a break-through, especially since even the state representatives and the new feminists in Yugoslavia agree that the burdens on women through domestic work is one of the biggest problems women face in socialist Yugoslavia.<sup>214</sup> The topic is there in the early Student issue already, through the article by Pat Mainardi from the Redstockings group in the US about “politics of housework”.<sup>215</sup> Here, as well as in later discussions, the concept of work gets politicised along the lines of the main debate between Marxist or socialist feminists and Marxists/state representatives is the recurrent order of issues: class or women first. In the meantime, the debates involve a fascinating reconsideration of what work actually means and open up further possibilities to cross-read feminism and socialism. Blaženka Despot approaches the concept of work from a Marxist-theoretical perspective, reconceptualising the neglected concept of domestic work through Marx’s concepts of abstract and concrete work.<sup>216</sup> Silva Mežnarić argues that work is necessarily a crucial theme and a widely discussed concept, which is in the intersection of socialism and feminism. From different theoretical but similar ideological background, they both argue for a redefinition of what is work is.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Cf. the article with the provocative title in the journal *Sociologija* from 1979 by the feminist sociologists at the University of Ljubljana: Anuška Ferligoj, Silva Mežnarić and Mirjana Ule, “Raspodjela svakodnevnih uloga u porodici između želje (društva) i stvarnosti (porodice)” [The division of everyday roles in the family between the wish (of society) and the reality (of the family)], *Sociologija* vol. 21. no. 4 (1979): 419-439.

<sup>215</sup> Mainardi, “Politika domaćeg posla”, 7.

<sup>216</sup> Despot, *Žensko pitanje i socijalističko samoupravljanje*, 58.

<sup>217</sup> Silva Mežnarić, “Emancipacija kroz i pomoću rada” [Ideology through and with the help of work], *Žena* vol. 34. no. 3 (1976): 115-119.



In relation to the difference in the approach of feminism and socialism to the private and the public sphere, Gordana Cerjan-Letica quotes Eli Zaretsky saying that “[a]s the socialists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century challenged the legitimacy of bourgeois politics, so did the feminists introduce into the arena of political struggle the private life of the family.”<sup>218</sup> Therefore, role and position of work as a concept is changed in feminism, the second wave bringing along “the politicisation of the sphere of life which in a bourgeois society is solely viewed as private.”<sup>219</sup> Cerjan-Letica is aware that the attitude “is characteristic of the whole leftist movement of the 1960s”, but the emphasis on women and work came with the second wave of feminism. Vida Tomšič, in her article about the advancement of both men and women (which is more important, than the “women’s question”, she claims), admits that there is a lot to do about the family-related duties of women. However, this is not for helping women, but is help provided for the whole family.<sup>220</sup> The feminist approach is different from the official version represented by, in this case, Vida Tomšič, inasmuch that it explicitly admits that there is a gender-based difference in the way work is assigned to people. Gordana Cerjan-Letica emphasises the ideological framing of the family, which is based on the precondition that the private and

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<sup>218</sup> Cerjan-Letica, “Neki dominantni stavovi suvremenog feminizma o porodici”, 101.

Also, cf. Mirjana Nastran-Ule, “O mogućnosti prevladavnja podjele na javnu i privatnu sferu života” [About the possibility of overcoming the division of the public and the private sphere of life], *Žena* vol. 38. no. 4-5 (1980): 148-152.

<sup>219</sup> Cerjan-Letica, “Neki dominantni stavovi suvremenog feminizma o porodici”, 108.

<sup>220</sup> Vida Tomšič, “Zašto je proklamirana ravnopravnost u osnovnim dokumentima Ujedinjenih naroda ostvaruje sporo u praksi?” [Why is the proclaimed equality in the founding documents of the United Nations is realised slowly in practice?], interview by Marija Erbežnik-Fuks, *Žena* vol. 33. no. 3 (1975): 4-11, 9.

the public are separated and thus much of the work indispensable for the survival of society are done for free, invisibly, in the private.<sup>221</sup>

By bringing the private into the discursive arena, the gendered nature of the private-public division is approached too. On the one hand, the division is seen as space, on the other hand, as determinant of the social division of labour. The spatial aspect, the different standards for using the public space is already there in the MT Baudrillard text in *Student* in 1976: the fact that women cannot use the public spaces, for example they face sexual harassment in the street.<sup>222</sup> The dangers of women using the public space and in the home through domestic violence is analysed by Lydia Sklevický as early as 1977<sup>223</sup> and in the 1980s becomes one of the main themes of Yugoslav feminism. (Cf. Chapter 4) Jasna Tkalec's essay "Patrijarhat i brak" [Patriarchy and marriage] in *Delo* relates a question to Horkheimer's statement. While Horkheimer acknowledges that family life is full of tyranny, lies and stupidities, he insists on it as necessary. Tkalec claims that marriage is a masculine institution and the less it corresponds to human nature, the more regulations it requires. She proposes a new model, which finally would not be based on violence and oppression.<sup>224</sup> The other aspect, that of labour, directs one attention, yet again, to the shortcomings of Marx and Engels in this respect. Interestingly enough, what

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<sup>221</sup> Gordana Cerjan-Letica, "Feminizam – na tragu radikalizma šezdesetih godina", 32. The influence of the Frankfurt School is there here too, Adorno on life and work.

<sup>222</sup> Marie-Therese Baudrillard, "Ženska logika" [Women's logic], trans. Žarana Papić and Ivan Vejvoda, *Student*, no. 9 (1976): 8. As she writes: "nothing will change [improve] if we get satisfied with that little change in her oppression. The *mentality* [emphasis in the original] of men should be changed, it is a condition on which the liberation of women depends."

<sup>223</sup> Lydia Sklevický, "Kad žena kaže 'NE' to znači 'NE!'" [If a woman says "no", it means "no!"], *Pitanja*, no. 8. vol. 9 (1977): 15-18.

<sup>224</sup> Jasna Tkalec, "Patrijarhat i brak" [Patriarchy and marriage], *Delo* vol. 27. no. 4 (1981 April): 117-122. 119, 122.

the new feminist authors discover is that early Marxism is already and still rather conservative in its concept of the family. As Žarana Papić writes in her book, Engels, who was radical when it came to social transformations and the class question, from what he calls “revolution, one of the most radical which people have ever experienced” derives a “simple and peaceful ‘contractual’ change of the family system”.<sup>225</sup>

While Papić criticises the research about the family, there still is a slowly emerging feminist focus in the sociology of the family. Papić finds this field with abundance of funding and institutional support problematic, since this is the only one where the category of sex [*pol*] is a relevant category of research, and instead there should be a feminist perspective in the whole of social sciences and humanities. In the meantime, this indeed more traditional field gets slowly affected by the new feminist theories. The research produced by the sociologist Anđelka Milić explicitly acknowledged and used feminist theories for the work on the family. Milić was a professor of sociology in Belgrade, active in the academic work of the new Yugoslav feminists from the late 1970s on. Later she helped and supervised the doctoral work of many important feminists, such as Marina Blagojević and Ivana Pantelić. In her edited volume from 1988, *Rađanje moderne porodice* [The birth of the modern family] she urges to consider the family as a historically changing, even constructed concept, which can and should be approached from various directions. The list of approaches includes the integration of the work on women’s history, which had been written separately of that of the family. This is because women’s history was written within the feminist movement and the feminist intellectual circles, which positioned themselves opposed to the

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<sup>225</sup> Papić, *Sociologija i feminizam*, 41.

academia where mainstream sociological research took place.<sup>226</sup> Milić's aim is to reconcile and combine the two, and she also provides research proving the different loads of unpaid work resting on men and women, while Vesna Pusić analysed the differences in employment rates and statuses of women and men.<sup>227</sup>

Jasna Tkalec provides a critical reading of the treatment of the "women's question" in the "socialist countries of the Eastern bloc" – which is a reference to all the other countries in the region under Soviet influence – because of the inequality in the division of labour.<sup>228</sup> It is not clear if she includes Yugoslavia or not: the text is based on the work of a Swedish sociologist, Hilda Laas. A lot of shortcomings can be detected, following the abrupt measurements to enforce the equality of men and women, such as the imbalance between the domestic work done by men and women, as well as the feminisation of certain manual labour and the lack of women in decision making positions. The article emphasises that the Swedish model is much better than the East European one, but carefully avoids comparing these models to the Yugoslav case. Vjeran Katunarić in his book *Ženski eros i civilizacija smrti* also compares women's lives in capitalism, socialism in the Soviet Bloc and in Yugoslavia, and he claims that the most

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<sup>226</sup> Anđelka Milić, *Rađanje moderne porodice* [The procreation of the modern family], (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 1988), 36.

Also, cf. the research of Tanja Rener: "Svjetla i scene porodičnog rada", [The lights and shade of family work], *Žena* vol. 46. no. 3 (1988): 50-56.

<sup>227</sup> Anđelka Milić, Eva Berković and Ruža Petrović, *Domaćinstvo, porodica i brak u Jugoslaviji* [Household, family and marriage in Yugoslavia], (Beograd : Institut za sociološka istraživanja Filozofskog fakulteta, 1981).

Vesna Pusić, "Žena i zaposlenje" [Women and employment], *Sociologija*, No. 3-4 (1981): 34-53.

<sup>228</sup> Jasna Tkalec, "O konačnom rješenju ženskog pitanja" [About the final solution of the women's question], *Naše teme* no. 1. (1978): 187-199. The title of the texts is rather problematic, which the author seems to fail to take into consideration.

crucial difference between the Soviet Bloc and Yugoslavia from the perspective of women's situation, is that in Yugoslavia there is a feminist criticism of the regime.<sup>229</sup>

### **The Encounter of Indian Philosophy with New Yugoslav Feminism: Third World, Non-Alignment or Post-Colonialism**

Yugoslavia's place in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was integral part of the state's identity. The reception and infusion of non-Western contemporary intellectual thought in Yugoslavia is a discursive practice working against the East-West and North-South divisions, and even more against the concept of Yugoslavia as Balkans and therefore Europe's "Other". Yugoslavia was just as much an exception among the non-aligned countries as it was among East European socialisms, which was a position ensuring that it is at the same time more "exotic" and more "modern" or "Western" than a less civilised Europe, the "real other" of Europe being the socialist countries in the Soviet Bloc.<sup>230</sup> This position defined representations and discourses. Non-alignment being a state-level policy and a central element of the state's ideology, the status of women in the other friendly non-aligned countries was present in the official discourse, for example in articles in journals and magazines.<sup>231</sup> The question naturally arises if women's movements in the

<sup>229</sup> Vjeran Katunarić, *Ženski eros i civilizacija smrti* [Female eros and the civilisation of death] (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1984), pp

<sup>230</sup> Yugoslavia's ambivalent position within the Non-Aligned Movement is shown by the successor states' disinterest in these countries after the war. Boris Tadić as president of Serbia considered rejoining, which was later vetoed by the parliament claiming that they should focus on the EU-accession instead. Nataša Mišković, "Introduction", in *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War: Delhi, Bandung, Belgrade*, ed. Nataša Mišković, Harald Fischer-Tiné and Nada Boškowska, 1-18 (Abingdon, Oxon and New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), 9.

<sup>231</sup> E.g. Eva Grlić, "O pakistanim ženama" [About Pakistani women], *Žena* vol. 37. no. 2-3 (1979): 110-112.

"Položaj žene u Africi" [Women's situation in Africa], *Žena* vol. 37. no. 2-3 (1979): 113-114.

Non-Aligned countries were of any inspiration for the new Yugoslav feminists.<sup>232</sup> During my research I encountered significantly less references to these movements than to the new, exciting developments of feminist theories in the US and Western Europe, which were alluring to the Yugoslav feminists at this time. The smaller scale interest can be explained by the fact that the theme belonged to the official circles of thought and therefore lost its allure to the new generation, but also by the different times when the revival of innovative women's movements happened. Those texts and insights, which influenced the new Yugoslav feminists, however, are definitely worth looking at. In retrospect, in her interview from 2007, Biljana Kašić realises how “amazing was the official solidarity in Yugoslavia with third world women through the non-aligned movement”, which made them aware of the importance of anti-racism and the differences between women in different cultures, economic and political systems.

The representation of women's lives and the integration of non-Western thought into the new feminist thinking were supported by the non-aligned exchange. The SKC's *Tribina* series included the screening of the film about the Indian-Hungarian painter Amrita Sher-Gil (12<sup>th</sup> April 1978), as well as a talk about women's literature which included Kamala Das, a poet writing in English from Kerala (3<sup>rd</sup> March 1977).<sup>233</sup> Ileana Čura, who was active in the organisation of both events, was a young literary scholar from Novi Sad, who did her PhD in England, specialised in Canadian studies, and

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<sup>232</sup> About women's activism and the Non-Aligned Movement, cf. Carolien Stolte, “‘The Asiatic Hour’: New Perspectives on the Asian Relations Conference, New Delhi, 1947”, in *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War*, ed. Nataša Mišković, Harald Fischer-Tiné and Nada Boškovska, 57-75.; Devaki Jain and Shubha Chacko, “Walking together: the journey of the Non-Aligned Movement and the women's movement”, *Development in Practice* vol. 19. no. 7 (September 2009): 895-905.

<sup>233</sup> The event “Women in literature” took place with the participation of Mila Stojnić, Vida Marković, Mirjana Matarić, Ileana Čura; about the work of Maria Cvetaeva, Emily Dickinson, Jane Austen and Kamala Das, therefore a very colourful compilation of women writers.

worked in India in various positions in the late 1960s and early 1970s, later moving to the US to teach there. She does not appear in the later programs of the feminists, unfortunately. Her publications appeared in the journal *Kulture Istoka* [Cultures of the East] the task of which was the transfer between the culture of the non-aligned countries and Yugoslavia. Furthermore, it was the *Antropologija žena* volume, which, by combining the recent theories both from anthropology and sociology, broadened the scope of comparison and references to a globalised world.

The non-aligned affiliation of Yugoslavia allowed for Rada Iveković to study many years in India and finish her PhD in Buddhist philosophy at the University of Delhi in 1972. Her contributions to the feminist discussions helped to broaden the scope and even, if not “to provincialize Europe”,<sup>234</sup> at least to make the transfer not one-directional. Through the reading of Indian culture and Indian intellectual thought, Rada Iveković reassesses Western philosophy, pointing out its relevance and its other meanings in the light of the Indian texts. The results are a critique of Hegel through an already critical reading of the Vedas, which reading is based on Marx as a source.<sup>235</sup> The same text emphasises the silencing of women and the connection between language and power, as it is words, which give one power (as it is in the quote from the Upanishads in the essay). She compares the power of language to the power of the ideology of the ruling class in Marx’s *The German Ideology*. One of the best examples, in Iveković’s opinion, of a parallel prejudiced way of thinking both of women and of India, or rather, the whole of the East, i.e. fallocentrism and eurocentrism, is Hegel. To Iveković, getting acquainted

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<sup>234</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty’s term, cf. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, c2000).

<sup>235</sup> Iveković, “Indija je nijema žena, 88-108.

with non-European cultures, giving a voice to these cultures, is a key to understanding women and to achieve the betterment of the position of both. This is what she does in her later books, *Druga Indija* [The other India], *Indija – Fragmenti osamdesetih* [India - Fragments from the eighties], supported by two edited volumes with texts from Indian philosophy.<sup>236</sup> As she writes in the introduction of *Druga Indija*: “We are often compelled to force onto Indian categories of thought terms which do not correspond to them, by which we commit violence against the contents we deal with, selecting one, excluding an other.”<sup>237</sup> The very act of paying attention to the other’s speech is missing.

The focus on language and power and the use of the term *fallogentrism* are already pointing towards a poststructuralist perspective. The concepts themselves are not there in her *Delo* text yet, while the whole argument is about language already, here supported by Marcuse’s *One Dimensional Man*.<sup>238</sup> In the meantime, in the case of *Druga Indija*, a collection of essays from 1977 till 1982, the post-structuralist influence from Kristeva and Irigaray is explicit: it follows the train of thought which investigates the othering of nature, women and those cultures which are seen as inferior in their difference, “less developed”, in need of development. This perspective is similar to that of the phallogentric order, which sees women as less developed. Kristeva’s concept of the abject<sup>239</sup> and Irigaray’s *Le Speculum* allow Iveković to read through the othering of India

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<sup>236</sup> Rada Iveković, *Pregled Indijske filozofije* [Review of Indian philosophy], (Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet, Zavod za filozofiju, 1981); Rada Iveković, ed., *Počeci Indijske misli. Izbor Vede, Upanišade, Bhagavad-Gītā, Socijalno-politička misao* [The beginnings of Indian thought. A selection from the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gītā, social-political thought] (Beograd: Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod, 1981).

<sup>237</sup> Rada Iveković, *Druga Indija* [The other India], (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1982), 5.

<sup>238</sup> Iveković, *Druga Indija*, 105.

<sup>239</sup> Cf. Julia Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l’horreur* (Paris: Seuil, 1980).



as well as the in varying forms omnipresent oppression of women. Iveković does not reflect on Yugoslavia's place within the East-West discourse explicitly, however, through the way her texts explain the failure of the West and Eurocentric thought to understand Indian thought and culture suggests a more understanding approach to the Yugoslav readers. This is especially relevant from the later perspective, when in the 1990s a post-colonial approach appears in Eastern European scholarship, reading post-socialism as a post-colonial condition,<sup>240</sup> and in Yugoslav feminist scholarship reading Yugoslavia as a post-colonial space. The contemporaneous scholarship does not have this investment though. The phenomenon can be explained by the above described in-between condition of Yugoslavia, which exactly allowed for the cross-reading of Indian philosophy and Western thought.

### **Feminist Chronotopos: Historiography**

Historiography and the reassessment of the feminist past is an affirmative step towards the self-positioning of the Yugoslav new feminists. In addition to this, related to the historical reassessment of the past from the feminist perspective, new theoretical and methodological frames were offered in various fields of the humanities, primarily within anthropology and sociology. This was a phenomenon in the Western academia as well as in Yugoslavia. In the West, the process was a consequence of the important shifts in the dominant paradigm, predominantly towards constructivism, and the rise of various social movements, feminism being one of them. As Rada Iveković puts it, it is characteristic of

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<sup>240</sup> For example, cf. the work of Biljana Kašić, or: Kornelia Slavova, "Looking at western feminisms through the double lens of Eastern Europe and the Third World", in *Women and citizenship in Central and Eastern Europe*, ed Jasmina Lukić, Joanna Regulska and Darja Zaviršek, 245-264 (Aldershot: Ashgate, c2006).

“women’s perspective” – which here stands for a conscious, feminist perspective – that “it searches revalorisation and new evaluation of women’s participation in life, such as the history of the individual disciplines.”<sup>241</sup>

The introduction of the feminist perspective in Yugoslavia, similarly to the US and Western Europe, happens together with the reassessment of the achievements and shortcomings in the various fields in the humanities, which in the case of historiography, means reassessing history and historiography at the same time. Moreover, one of the most striking signs of the shaken control and power of the state socialist states was the spread of criticism arriving from intellectuals, addressing the ideological and intellectual spheres at the same time. In Yugoslavia, historiography was one of the predominant arenas of such discussions. The emergence of nationalism is rather widely discussed in the secondary literature analysing these,<sup>242</sup> while less has been said about the feminist attempts to question the ideological and even “factual” foundations of the mainstream historical narratives. In this subchapter, I will look at these feminist criticisms and rewritings of the official version of history.

The feminist modes of criticism of the state-socialist system in Yugoslavia and its failures of creating gender equality can be very well modelled on the example of historiography. However, even more than that, writing their own history is a step in

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<sup>241</sup> Rada Iveković, “Studije o ženi i ženski pokret” [Studies of the woman and the women’s movement], *Marksizam u svetu*, vol. 8. no. 8-9 (1981): 5-48, 6. Reviewed by Žarana Papić: Papić, *Sociologija i feminizam*, 73.

<sup>242</sup> Cf. Ulf Brunnbauer, ed. *(Re)writing History: Historiography in Southeast Europe after Socialism* (Münster: Lit, 2004); Norman M. Naimark and Holly Case, eds., *Yugoslavia and its Historians: Understanding the Balkan Wars of the 1990s* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003).

About history textbooks and the teaching of Yugoslav history under socialism: Christina Koulouri, ed. *Clio in the Balkans: the politics of history education* (Thessaloniki: Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, c2002).

creating feminist identity and a meaningful contribution to the enhancement of feminist consciousness. At a time when feminism was re-shaping in Yugoslavia, feminist scholars were right to realise that writing their own story is an essential step in self-definition and in gaining legitimacy, and that in this sense also, history is of crucial importance for the present and future. To quote Karen Offen: “earlier generations of [...] feminists understood that ‘remembrance of things past’ is important for plotting the future”, who also points out that these endeavours already appeared in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century feminisms.<sup>243</sup> For the new Yugoslav feminists, the two major topics of interest were women’s role in the partisan movement during WWII and the story of the interwar period first wave of feminism. The two topics are even more interesting if we take into consideration that WWII was rather important for the state-approved historiography, while the interwar non-socialist women’s movement was considered reactionary and therefore erased from the canon of history.

Women’s place in history is necessarily also a philosophical question though. Rada Iveković suggests that from a philosophical question of women’s place in history, for example Hegel’s exclusion of women as those belonging to nature, from history, the real source of empowerment or at least a next step would be the actual writing of women’s history. Women’s actual place in society can be changed also by changing women’s place in the way the history of that society is being told.<sup>244</sup> A year earlier she writes: “Is it possible for us to read women’s history (herstory) in history? It is possible, with some efforts, as we are reading it already here in this place. This is one of the tasks

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<sup>243</sup> Karen Offen, *European Feminisms 1700-1950: A Political History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, c2000), 6.

<sup>244</sup> Iveković, “Indija je nijema žena”, 98-99.

of women's creativity".<sup>245</sup> Vesna Kesić supported this in her text from 1979 in the magazine *Start*, in the form of an overview on the history of feminism in the 20th century in Europe and North America in an article with the title "History has a male gender".<sup>246</sup>

This rewriting of history regards the perception not only of space, but that of time too. Women's time as private time is written out of the history of public time. Blaženka Despot argues that the private—public division in Western political thought permeates the idea of time and therefore our perception of history, from which women are written out. This shows very well that the new feminist historiography, with its double focus on women in history writing and feminism's own history, was working towards a political aim. Despot is able to grasp at an abstract, philosophical level and at the very basic level at the same time: women have no time to participate in self-management, as they have no free time, due to the domestic work they have to perform. This idea recurs as a metadiscourse by sociologist-anthropologists. Time and space are brought together in the narratives and the discursive act of writing these narratives, as well as the reinterpretation and re-canonisation of the interwar predecessors creates a feminist chronotope in the Yugoslav context.

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<sup>245</sup> Rada Iveković, "Ženska kreativnost i kreiranje žene" [Women's creativity and the creation of women], *Argumenti* no. 1 (1979): 139-147, 145.

<sup>246</sup> Vesna Kesić, "Povijest je muškog roda" [History has a male gender], *Start* no. 264. 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1979, 40-43.

Rosemarie Wittman Lamb, "Feministički novi val" [The feminist new wave], *Start* no. 337. 19<sup>th</sup> December, 1981, 50-53.

### *The Official Yugoslav Historiography on Women*

Both historically and ideologically, the official and officially acknowledged historiography in the SFRJ (*Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija* – Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) could not ignore women. Besides the egalitarian project of Marxism, women in the NOB (*Narodna oslobodilačka borba* – People's Liberation Struggle) during WWII literally fought their way into Yugoslav history – an achievement the state intended to commemorate as part of the state-building process, including women as equal to men in the new society. However, characteristically to the entire program on women's equality, the discourse on women's role in the NOB remained largely patriarchal, moreover, as Lydia Sklevický points out, by time the theme in the historical narratives was slowly fading away and there barely is any mention of women in history text books apart from this one element.<sup>247</sup> So, as we will see, the single fact that women's role in one single event throughout history was commemorated did not mean that women's role in history received any further attention. The approach to women and their representation remained patriarchal as it was before state socialism, even in the works praising women for their participation in NOB.

The directive of Tito given in 1948 about the interpretation of WWII history made quite obvious what and how can be told and written about the war. As Tito said at the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference of the KPJ: “without the leading role of the KPJ, we would have today no new Yugoslavia ... nor can one imagine the realisation of brotherhood and unity of our

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<sup>247</sup> Cf. Lydia Sklevický, *Konji, žene, ratovi* / *Konji, žene, ratovi* [Horses, women, wars], posthumous edition, ed. Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin, (Zagreb: Ženska Infoteka, 1996).

Also, see: Rajka Polić, “Povijesni sukob mitova o ženskoj emancipaciji”, *Žena* vol. 44. no. 6 (1986): 73-88.

peoples.”<sup>248</sup> Although, as Jasna Dragović-Soso argues in her chapter on the Serbian nationalist turn in Yugoslav historiography, the same year brought along the de-Stalinisation of historiography too, and thus a liberalisation<sup>249</sup> – at least in a certain sense, for those not accused of “Stalinism”. Dragović-Soso also emphasises that Marxism and Marxist methodology defined the direction of historical research and writing too.<sup>250</sup> This was joined by the program of building a unified Yugoslav nation, in the form of projects like *The History of the Peoples of Yugoslavia*, *The History of the Communist Party/League of Communists of Yugoslavia* and the *Encyclopaedia of Yugoslavia*.<sup>251</sup> She even gives a summary of the “holy cows” of Yugoslav historiography, which I mention in the “Introduction” too: (1) the “inherently positive value of Yugoslav unification”, (2) the absolutely negative nature of the Yugoslav regime between the two world wars (depicted as a “monarcho-fascist dictatorship” and “subject to Greater-Serbian hegemony”, with the support of non-Serbian “bourgeoisies”), and finally, (3) the official interpretation of the “war of national liberation” and the communist revolution.<sup>252</sup>

This summary is of great use if we are looking at the representation of women’s role in post-WWII Yugoslav history. The above explicated same principles were applied to this topic as well, written from a traditional, male perspective on women’s

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<sup>248</sup> Josip Broz Tito, “Politički izvještaj,” (“Political report”) *Peti kongres Komunističke partije Jugoslavije: Izveštaji i referati* (Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia: Reports and papers) (Belgrade, 1948), 128-129. Quoted in Ivo Banac, “Yugoslavia,” *The American Historical Review* vol. 97. no. 4 (Oct. 1992): 1084-1104, 1085-1086.

<sup>249</sup> Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the Nation?*, 70.

<sup>250</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>251</sup> *ibid.* and the detailed discussion of the fate of these cf. *idem.* 72-77. The first edition came to being with Miroslav Krleža as editor-in-chief: *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*. ed. Miroslav Krleža (Zagreb: Leksikografskog zavoda FNRJ, 1954-1971). The second attempt could not be accomplished, exactly because it became the territory of the clash between the historians of the various member states.

<sup>252</sup> *idem.* 71.

participation. However, the way the historiographies on women in WWII were written resulted from a constant interference between the ideological set-up, the methodology and approach and the topic itself. As a result of this interrelation, the principles determined the topic. For example, although women participated in the resistance during WWII in various organisations and in varying numbers, only the participation of those in the NOB was evaluated, while the role of the organisation which later works find the most significant, the AFŽ (Antifašistički front žena – Antifascist Front of Women), an organisation abolished in 1950 by having been absorbed into the National Front's "Women's Section" [*Ženska Sekcija Narodnog Fronta*],<sup>253</sup> was rather underrated.

There appears two predominant ways of women's representation in official WWII histories. One is works specifically and exclusively on women: monographs, collections of essays, documents. The other is general works on WWII mentioning women. A "subgenre" of the latter is personal recollections, memoirs of the war. Although memoirs are not focused on women only, it is remarkable in the sense that it was more widely read and known, coming from authorities of the party or the historical profession. Moreover, in this case there is a clear tension between the subjectivity and authority of the narrator and the women described and written about by this male narrator. Barbara Jancar analyses some of the ways of women's representation in official WWII histories in her book *Women and Revolution*, a research Jancar started in the mid-1980s and which Sklevický reads with surprise and enthusiasm.<sup>254</sup> The works on women's participation,

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<sup>253</sup> Barbara Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia 1941-45* (Denver, Colorado: Arden Press Inc., 1990), 165.

<sup>254</sup> Lydia Sklevický, "More Horses than Women: On the Difficulties of Founding Women's History in Yugoslavia", *Gender and History* vol. 1. no. 1 (Spring 1989): 68-75.

which I analyse and quote based on Jancar's collection, have some remarkable elements as well, one of these features is that while the books devoted exclusively to the women participants in the war stress the huge numbers of women participating, while the argumentation strongly emphasises and supports the basic ideological principles of Yugoslav historiography. In this interpretation, the significance of women partisans lies in their support of the creation of the communist Yugoslav state vis-à-vis the interwar state with its "bourgeois-supported" government. Documentations like the small booklets with the recurring title *Žene Like*<sup>255</sup> collect the names of the women, even some portraits, letters between the women in various units, and constantly emphasise the goal of their actions.

The later version of the *Žene Like* booklet from 1959 opens with a portrait of Tito, and the following text:

"Our women, our daughters, mothers participated with a gun in their hand in the people's liberation struggle. I am proud to be chief commander of an army in which there is such a huge number of women. I can say, that women in this struggle with their heroism, with their endurance, were and are in the first place and first ranks, and it is an honour for the peoples of Yugoslavia, to have such daughters. Tito"<sup>256</sup>

While it certainly is a form of empowerment and emancipatory act to refer to women by their names and represent them with their portraits, instead of showing them as a faceless mass, Tito's portrait and message frames the representation of these women.

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<sup>255</sup>*Žene Like bore se, rade, govore* [Women from Lika: they fight, they work, they talk], ([Split]: Slobodna Dalmacija, [1945]); *Žene Like u Narodno-oslobodilačkoj borbi* [Women from Lika in the People's Liberation Struggle], ed. Mika Žegarac (Gospić: Kotarski odbor Saveza ženskih društava Gospić, 1959).

<sup>256</sup>*Žene Like u Narodno-oslobodilačkoj borbi*, 3.



This may have contributed to the fact that the memory of the heroism of women during WWII was slowly disappearing from the state's historical narrative. The same male-centred narrative characterises two recollections analysed by Jancar: it seems that these narratives simply represent women as props in service of the greater good, that is the partisan revolution. For this, both authors, leading intellectual and politicians after WWII, downplay the significance of the lives of these women without the revolution. Đilas states that the decision to join the partisans was more a turning point for women than for men, and that for this reason, women tended to fight more bravely than men.<sup>257</sup> Dedijer gives accounts of touchy stories about women soldiers who sacrificed their lives “for Tito”. He adds that since most of the women in the war were peasants from undeveloped regions (where they were “treated like slaves”), becoming soldiers in the partisan army meant huge advancement for them. From half slaves these women were given the chance to progress into national heroes, even if sometimes with missing limbs.<sup>258</sup> Practically, the partisan movement gave these women a chance have a more meaningful life and be equal to men, although at the price of their lives or body parts.

Another typical element of the historiographies on women in Yugoslavia is the appraisal of the socialist women's movement and the diminishment of the “bourgeois” ones. For example, Jovanka Kecman's frequently quoted *Women of Yugoslavia in the Workers' Movement and in Women's Organisations 1918-1941*,<sup>259</sup> presents the reader

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<sup>257</sup> Milovan Đilas, *Wartime* (New York – London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977) quoted also in Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia 1941-45*, 97.

<sup>258</sup> Vladimir Dedijer, *With Tito through the War: Partisan Diary, 1941-1944* (London: Alexander Hamilton, 1951), 241-245.

<sup>259</sup> Jovanka Kecman, *Žene Jugoslavije u radničkom pokretu i ženskim organizacijama 1918-1941* [Women of Yugoslavia in the Workers' Movement and in Women's Organisations 1918-1941], (Beograd: Narodna

grave ideological divisions between the various women's organisations and confirms the discrediting of women's groups other than the communist ones. All the above mentioned historical accounts emphasise the change in women's economic situation before and after the war, what is in accord with the SKJ's position about the successes of the modernisation of the state, which included gender equality. The emphasis of women's subjected position in the underdeveloped rural societies was one of the pillars in the discourse, and the belittling of other attempts for changing this, such as the early feminist groups, another.

### *New Feminist Historiography*

The two authors with the most innovative feminist historical texts within the new feminist group in Yugoslavia, Andrea Feldman and Lydia Sklevický agree that at the beginnings of the new feminist activities, history of women and feminism seemed to fascinate the participants the most.<sup>260</sup> For the conference in 1978, the head organisers, Dunja Blažević and Žarana Papić proposed various topics, like women and revolution, modern feminist movements, sexuality and identity of women, and women and culture. The only historian by education in the group, joining it years after the first conference, was Andrea Feldman, but two sociologists, Žarana Papić and Lydia Sklevický also worked on historical topics. Eventually, it was Sklevický who became the most active

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knjiga i Institut za suvremenu istoriju, 1978); Also, cf. Dragutin Kosorić, ed. *Borbeni put žena Jugoslavije* [The road of struggles of the women of Yugoslavia] (Beograd: Leksikografski zavod Sveznanje, 1972).

<sup>260</sup> Andrea Feldman, "Women's History in Yugoslavia," in *Writing Women's History: International Perspective*, ed. Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson and Jane Rendall, 417-421 (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1991), 419.

Lydia Sklevický, "More Horses than Women: On the Difficulties of Founding Women's History in Yugoslavia", *Gender and History* vol. 1. no. 1 (Spring 1989): 68-75, 73.

figure in initiating and pursuing feminist historiography in the 1970s and 1980s. There were articles published on women's history and feminist history from the 1970s on, and under the initiative of Sklevický, in 1984-85 women historians from archives, museums and institutes started to meet within the frames of an extra-curricular postgraduate seminar.<sup>261</sup> This led to the production of many articles about women and history, and this was the period when the harshest criticism on the party-line interpretation of women's place and role in Yugoslav historiography emerged.<sup>262</sup>

This rewriting of history aims at shifting the focus from a tamed mandatory tribute to the canonised socialist women figures, such as Rosa Luxemburg, Clara Zetkin and Aleksandra Kollontai. These names are celebrated in the party line literature too, journals publish their texts, there are articles about their life and work, and scholars refer to them in academic publications. The problem most of the time is that these representations do not allow for a critical re-reading of women's sexuality and place in society in a way which Kollontai's work for example *would* support. Eventually, the new Yugoslav feminist corpus does rely on the liberating aspects of the writings of Kollontai

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<sup>261</sup> Feldman, "Women's History", 420.

<sup>262</sup> After the media reactions in 1978, the next larger discussion happened in 1982, when the SKJ seemed to be willing to discuss the problem, published in the journal *Žena* in full with the title "Social consciousness, Marxist theory and women's emancipation – today" (*Društvena svijest, marksistička teorija i emancipacija žena – danas*), was built around the class question. Stipe Šuvar called here feminism "one of the forms of conservative social consciousness". ("Društvena svijest, marksistička teorija i emancipacija žena – danas" [Social consciousness, Marxist theory and women's emancipation – today], *Žena* vol. 40. no. 2-3 (1982): 71.) Branka Lazić, the new president of the Conference for the Social Role of Women in the Development of Yugoslavia (*Konferencija za aktivnost i ulogu žena u društvenom razvoju Jugoslavije* – the name itself is remarkable) reminded in a speech on the foreignness of these ideas, "imported from developed, capitalist countries", to Yugoslavia, "a socialist, self-management society". (Quoted by Drakulić-Ilić 1984, 102.) Most participants of the debate were women, mostly representing the official party-opinion and referring to the leading man politicians, first of all to Kardelj, as the ultimate authorities.

or Zetkin,<sup>263</sup> but the focus remains on reworking their methodology and reassessing the place of women and the women's movement in Yugoslav historiography.

The first methodologically grounded, systemic work is that of Papić and Sklevický, which at the same time meant a foundation for the semi-institutional activity of the new feminists in the field of history. Semi-institutional both in the sense that it was practiced by non-historians and in the sense that it happened outside the institutions of the historical profession.<sup>264</sup> In their article from 1980, a prelude to the 1983 *Antropologija žena*, Papić and Sklevický give an extensive overview about the latest ideas in anthropology,<sup>265</sup> being at the same time very critical on the previous male-dominated gender-blindness of the field, which of course contributed to the preservation of gender inequality and stereotypes on women. As they write, “male anthropologists do the research, they interpret the phenomena [...] the male anthropologist is thus twice as much an outsider: outsider in the new culture and outsider in ‘women’s world’”.<sup>266</sup> At the same time, they present the latest feminist approaches to anthropology, among them Margaret Mead and Gayle Rubin. Their volume and their position influenced the historical research to a large extent.

Before these theoretical texts, one of the first feminist historical articles published in Yugoslavia was Sklevický's essay in 1976 with the title “Od borbe za prava do prave za borbe” [From the fight for rights to the rights to fight]. Here, she emphasises the

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<sup>263</sup> E.g. Nada Ler-Sofronić, “Dijalektika odnosa polova i klasna svijest” [The dialectics of the relation of the sexes and class consciousness], *Dometi* vol. 13. no. 2 (1980): 5-14.

<sup>264</sup> Cf. Bonnie G. Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1998).

<sup>265</sup> Žarana Papić and Lydia Sklevický, “K antropologiji žene” [To the anthropology of women], *Revija za sociologiju* No. 1-2. Vol. 10 (1980): 29-45.

<sup>266</sup> *ibid.*, 32.

significance to tell the story “of the forgotten sisters”, and introduces the reader to the history of American women’s movements, with special emphasis on second wave feminism.<sup>267</sup> Her choice fell on the US because of the long history of political fight of the country, and since the US was the venue of feminist “renaissance” [*preporod*] in the 1960s. She uses here the term “neofeminizam”, applied to the phenomenon in the 1960s,<sup>268</sup> the very term which the new Yugoslav feminists around this time start to apply to themselves. The years following this article by Sklevický brought along various articles on women’s history. These were the times when Andrea Feldman started to publish her articles, many times on similar topics as Sklevický (on the Association of Women with University Education in 1927-39, for example), many times together with her.<sup>269</sup> As we have seen above, Sklevický’s article on the history of US feminism was not the only one about Western feminism either, Gordana Cerjan-Letica discussed the types of contemporary feminism in *Revija za sociologiju* [Review of Sociology] in 1985.<sup>270</sup>

The turning point in the discussion on the topics of women’s participation in the NOB and feminism in interwar Yugoslavia was Sklevický’s two-part treatise “The characteristics of the organised activity of women in Yugoslavia till the period of the

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<sup>267</sup> Lydia Sklevický, “Od borbe za prava do prave za borbe” [From the fight for rights to the rights to fight], *Žena* vol. 34. no. 3 (1976): 92-99.

<sup>268</sup> *ibid.* 94.

<sup>269</sup> Andrea Feldman, “Visions of History”, *Historijski zbornik* no. 1 (1985): 304-307.

*idem.*, “Prilog istraživanju historija ženskih organizacija – udruženje univerzitetskih obrazovanih žena” [Contribution to the research of women’s organisations – the association of university educated women], *Žena* vol. 44. no. 2-3 (1986): 49-55.

*idem.* and Lydia Sklevický, “U povodu šestog međunarodnog susreta historičarki” [On occasion of the sixth international meeting of historians], *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, vol. 17. no. 2 (1985): 139-146.

<sup>270</sup> Gordana Cerjan-Letica, “Feministički pokret – organizacija, oblici, sadržaj borba” [The feminist movement – organisations, forms, the content of the struggle], *Revija za sociologiju* vol. 15. no. 3-4 (1985): 56-57.

second world war”,<sup>271</sup> following her anthropological analysis of the AFŽ.<sup>272</sup> In the two-part article from the journal *Polja*, Sklevický openly criticises Jovanka Kecman’s approach to women’s organised activity for following far too strictly the official line. Sklevický re-evaluates the other groups which Kecman downgrades as “bourgeois” and (thus?) feminist – or the other way round. Sklevický’s argument is that even if they had not have a socialist agenda, interwar time (first wave) feminists played substantial roles in raising women’s consciousness. This role is under no means less relevant only because it was framed within the limits of liberal democracy and not communism (454), claims Sklevický. As she goes on, she also states that the Alijansa ženskih pokreta [Alliance of Women’s Movements], covering all the non-workers’ and non-socialist women’s organisations, was by no means marginal, but on the contrary, they were those who made women’s problems public and via the activity of whom these issues gained space in the public discourse (455). Later on she writes that, before 1940, women in the KPJ were also hindered by “the omnipresence of patriarchal understanding, which was not an exception even in the rows of the proletarians”: for example, at the 1919 congress, one of the delegates suggested that “women should not be provided with the right to vote, since they are conservative”. This attitude changed only when it became clear to Tito that the partisans have no chance without the participation of women (454). (The same is suggested by Jozo Tomasevich in his book on the Chetniks from 1975.)<sup>273</sup> After

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<sup>271</sup> Lydia Sklevický, “Karakteristike organiziranog djelovanja žene u Jugoslaviji u razdoblju do drugog svjetska rata” [Characteristics of the organised activity of women in Yugoslavia in the period of the second world war], Parts I and II, *Polja*, 308 (Oct 1984): 415-416 and *Polja*, 309 (Nov 1984): 454-456. Further citations to this work are given in the text.

<sup>272</sup> Lydia Sklevický, “AFŽ – kulturnom mijenom od žene ‘novog tipa’” [AFŽ – cultural changes of the ‘new type’ of women], *Gordogan* 15-16 (1984): 73-111.

<sup>273</sup> Jozo Tomashevich, *The Chetniks* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford UP, 1975), 188-189.

summarising the other work pursued so far on interwar and WWII women's organisations, Sklevický concludes that the Alliance was not reactionary, but progressive.<sup>274</sup> The article, Sklevický's style and argumentation are an eminent example for the balancing between one's own critical feminist agenda and embarking the partisan emancipatory processes as empowering women. The latter may also be read as a gesture to the system, while writing a *herstory* slowly being forgotten: when discussing women's participation in the socialist movement, she appreciatively refers to Anka Berus and other crucial female characters from the partisan movement and later the KPJ.

In the article published in the first joint book project of the Zagreb feminists, the *Žena i društvo. Kultiviranje dijaloge* [Women and Society. Cultivating the Dialogue],<sup>275</sup> Sklevický takes even one step further. Here, she refers to the establishment's approach to women in WWII through Hobsbawm's inventing of traditions. She states that the role of women in the NOB or the parties was manipulated by a system which “*takes pride* in the extraordinary numbers of women in the national liberation army and movement”.<sup>276</sup> The invisibility of women would go against their invented tradition, questioning the statement that women were absolutely not hampered by the patriarchal attitude of the leadership to join the NOB, the party or syndicates.<sup>277</sup> After these articles, Sklevický continued her

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<sup>274</sup> Sklevický, “Karakteristike organiziranog djelovanja žene u Jugoslaviji u razdoblju do drugog svjetska rata”, 456.

<sup>275</sup> Rade Kalanj and Željka Šporer, eds., *Žena i Društvo. Kultiviranje dijaloge* [Women and Society. Cultivating the Dialogue] (Zagreb: Sociološko društvo Hrvatske, 1987).

<sup>276</sup> Lydia Sklevický, “Konji, žene, ratovi itd.: Problem utemeljenja historije žena u Jugoslaviji” [Horses, women, wars, etc.: The problems with the foundation of women's history in Yugoslavia], reprint in. idem. *Konji, žene, ratovi*, 13-24. 19. (emphasis mine)

<sup>277</sup> *ibid.*

work on the topic and the introduction of significant Western feminist historians too.<sup>278</sup>

As I mentioned above, her act of reinstating the “bourgeois” type of women’s movements was an act of the identity-building of *neofeminizam* as well. Her argumentation carried the message that the work of present-day new Yugoslav feminists is not a dull imitation of some “Western import”, that it had its forbearers in Yugoslav history, the work of whom was actually meaningful and valuable.

The re-writing of their own history was therefore an identity-project for the new feminists too. It is not by accident that Gerda Lerner and her theoretical framework is often quoted by Sklevický, as part of gaining their own and raising other women’s feminist consciousness: “the awareness of women that they belong to a subordinate group; that they have suffered loss as a group, that their condition of subordination is not natural, but is socially determined, that they must join with other women to remedy these wrongs; and finally, that they can and must provide an alternative vision of societal organisation in which women as well as men will enjoy autonomy and self-determination.”<sup>279</sup> Within the frames of their investigation, Sklevický and other feminists re-contextualised and reconceptualised terms like revolution, emancipation, fight [*borba*], even feminism.

Whereas the arguments of Lerner and many other feminist historians are to a great extent based on women’s invisibility in history,<sup>280</sup> the state socialist Yugoslav case is different. The establishment’s version of history builds upon women and their representation and is used as a source of its own legitimacy. What we see clashing here is

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<sup>278</sup> e.g. Lydia Sklevický, “Natalie Zemon Davis,” *Gordogan* 22 (1986): 85-91.

<sup>279</sup> Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness*, 284, n9.

<sup>280</sup> Cf. Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past*, 1.



the feminist emancipatory and the state socialist ideological aims of representation and interpretation of the role of women in WWII. This clash at the same time, on another level also questions those principles of Yugoslav historiography, which Dragović-Soso called the “holy cows”, but with a completely different message than the nationalist discourses Dragović-Soso analyses. The only point where feminists agreed with the state-approved historiography was the positive evaluation of Yugoslav unification. As for the disdain for the interwar regime and the apotheosis of the NOB and the communist revolution, the feminist criticism is rather harsh and becomes very strong by demanding the promises to be kept and by pointing out the places of empty rhetoric considering women’s equal status. Feminists and nationalists many times criticised the same principles, called out for reconsideration of the same periods, but their final arguments were far away from each other, and as the 1990s showed, they could not have agreed less on any principles. We are looking at feminist women who are writing against the system and within the system at the same time, whose position, therefore, is both oppositional and system-friendly, “amateur” and professional. They are trying to question the status quo by referring to the principles upon which the status quo is built and they are forming alternative forums for their activity while using the existing institutions for the alternative forums.

### **Post-Feminist Socialist Backlash and the Refusal of Feminism**

There is a constant balancing on behalf of the state towards feminism. Some informal or semi-formal ways open up, some get closed off, and there are official events and statements with similar attempts to balance between the state’s own emancipatory

policies and the new feminist claims. Obviously, the state would not want a separate women's movement on the scene, whereas it would endanger their legitimacy to deny women's rights to equality. They admit the problem of the still present "patriarchal consciousness". However, as Vida Tomšič announced in the interview about the UN Year, the solution shall come from the generally human [*općeljudske*] emancipation. It is this position which serves as the foundation of the state's post-feminism. The most effective and common tool to bring forth the post-feminist arguments is the reference to *općeljudske emancipacije*, which is claimed to be a higher-level approach to inequalities than any feminist one throughout history. In the arguments, it is Marxism that supersedes feminism, making it both insufficient, and oftentimes harmful for the achievement of the wished goals. However, they not only see feminism as reactionary, even in the 1980s the counterargument put forth fifty years ago in relation to women's franchise recur: women tend to be conservative, what makes them unreliable and calls out for more control over their activities, participation, and thinking.

A book which is a relatively common point of reference even in the writings of feminists, between the state's anti-feminism and the position of the *Žena i društvo* women, is Jovan Đorđević's *Žensko pitanje*.<sup>281</sup> Đorđević was a professor of law in Belgrade, and in the lengthy introduction of his edited volume, investigates the matter of women's inequality and the potential answers to "the women's question". This introduction is between pro-feminism and the anti-feminism that characterises East European socialism and which I call post-feminism. The pro-feminist aspects of the text

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<sup>281</sup> Jovan Đorđević, "Marksizam i žene" [Marxism and women], in *Žensko pitanje: antologija marksističkih tekstova* [The Women's Question: An Anthology of Marxist texts], ed. idem., 5-122. (Beograd, Radnička štampa, 1975). Further citations to this work are given in the text.

are the acknowledgement that there is an organic relationship between women's liberation and socialism, "one does not exist without the other". (17) He even acknowledges the merits of early "women's liberation" and tries to give account of the "*nova nauka o zeni*" [new scholarship on women] which he sees emerging around the International Women's Year (36) – and not as a result of the emergence of the second wave, which can easily be explained by his largely dismissive attitude to new feminism. From the introduction it seems that Đorđević's agenda is to show how men are equally important actors in the promotion of women's equality. This position is hand in hand with the legitimisation argument posing Marxism and the class struggle as essential for women's emancipation, as well as an overwriting of women's self-emancipation. Most of the text is about what Marx, Engels, Bebel and Lenin did for the women's question, while Marxist women, like Emma Goldman or Aleksandra Kollontai get much less attention. Kollontai, for example, is dismissed as someone whose work was only relevant in her time but is not any longer (98). In the meantime, merits are given to Marx as "the first one who understood the women's question as a total and specific question". (56) In his appreciation of Marx, Đorđević does not acknowledge the history of feminism before and after Marx: "no one up to now has gone further than Marx in the definition of the essence of the women's question". This omission of women from the history of the women's rights struggles makes the historical investigations of the new Yugoslav feminists even more important, and as we shall see, they oppose this predominance of Marxian approaches to gender equality.

It is not by accident, however, that this book becomes a point of reference even for feminist articles later on. Đorđević makes efforts to familiarise himself with the later

works in feminist writing, even though most often in order to argue with them. He questions Simone de Beauvoir's statement about women's work as being perceived inferior and gives an explanation of why domestic work is valuable. (106-109) Luce Irigaray, Kate Millett, Germaine Greer are mentioned and dismissed, together with the "new concepts and terms, such as sexism, machismo, fallocratism, fallocratocetrism [sic], which are all over contemporary literatures of the most extremist and half-ideological feminist radicalism, which often is not far from lesbianism." (47) From a perspective which is attached to one certain reading of how Marx and others formulated the women's question and without giving any references to sources based on which the four concepts are refused, Đorđević repeats the familiar prejudice about radical feminism. At a later point in the text he also adds that "the problem of the women's movement does not solve itself through verbal radicalism, humanist protests, or the defeminisation and depersonalisation of women" (80), aligning radicalism with other ideas and organisational phenomena.

While he refuses humanist protests, women becoming human beings while remaining women is one of the goals he thinks a solution of the women's question in Marx's spirit would ensure. In order to answer the questions framed by Marx and Engels in the *German Ideology* and in Engels's *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, new research is needed from the fields of child and social psychology, sexology, critical anthropology, sociology and political science. (95) However, he finds the idea of women as human beings, which shall be achieved, contradicting to the ideas of "individualistic feminisms". He also claims that "humanism" is irreconcilable with Lenin's ideas about women's equality (76). In the meantime, he does not think that what

he calls “the struggle of the sexes” [*borba polova*] and what in my reading is struggles to achieve women’s equality, is necessarily bad: it humanises the class struggle, but it depends on it too (73). The women’s movement, moreover, “will fall out of history if they don’t follow the revolutionary movement” (78). *Revolutionary* is reserved for the class struggle, while *radical*, as we have seen, is for the unacceptable, dangerous or ridiculous current of the women’s movement. The introduction has some elements of strong misogyny, presented as anti-bourgeois arguments. Since Đorđević does not take gender hierarchies within one social class into account, he easily presents bourgeois women solely as exploiters, expiating not only working class women, but even their own husbands. (75) By disregarding bourgeois women’s subordination within their own class, he also ignores the struggles of bourgeois women for women’s equality. While he recognises women’s double role in society through participation in social production and reproduction, he envisions the dangers of too much sexual freedom in women’s access to free contraception.

The conference organised by *Žena* in 1982, with the participation of even members of the new feminist group, is a good case study for this discourse. Stipe Šuvar’s speech there reminds the audience that „feminism is another form of conservative social consciousness”, therefore it being futile to expect it build off another form of the same. He expresses a rather plastic opinion about feminism: “It’s about that that Marxism explained that these [independent women’s movements] are not needed, moreover, the final consequences may even prove to be reactionary, some women’s political parties, some women’s organisations, if they are not part of a general political struggle for

socialist and communist social ideals.”<sup>282</sup> Another participant at the same event warns of the patriarchal consciousness of women: “we could not possibly speak only about the patriarchal man, without speaking about the patriarchal woman, because we have both patriarchal men and women. I think that in these discussions before the congress [of the SKJ] we can contribute in a way that we warn to the need for a fight for socialist consciousness in society”<sup>283</sup>

Both opinions justify the presence of one general organisation watching over and taking care of the elimination of the remaining patriarchal consciousness, in accord with the new approach suggested by Vida Tomšič. As opposed to their solution, feminism’s danger lies not only in its conservatism or reactionary nature, but also in its tendency to “turn women against men”, as it is a “movement that insists on the opposition of woman as sex [*spol*] to man as sex [*spol*]”.<sup>284</sup> Needless to say, this argument is recurring at almost all occasions when feminism is mentioned. Feminism is presented as aggressive and in the meantime, not serious: “Eventually, feminism bases its theses, all of them, on essayistic wittiness about the male chauvinistic pigs, meaning, about the oppressed sex, as a sex related to the sex which oppresses. This is the original sin of all forms of feminism, without consideration which theses it is varying, because it progresses and by it new accents are coming along.”<sup>285</sup> The quoted lines of Stipe Šuvar reflect on Slavenka Drakulić’s essay, “The Mortal Sins of Feminism”, which was published in 1980 in the

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<sup>282</sup> Stipe Šuvar, “I feminizam je jedan od oblika konzervativne društvene svijesti” [Feminism is also a form of conservative social consciousness], *Žena* vol. 40. no. 2-3 (1982): 71-74, 72.

<sup>283</sup> Stanoslava Oštrić-Koprivica, “Marksistička teorija revolucije dovoljno je širok horizont za emancipaciju” [The Marxist theory of revolution is broad enough a horizon for emancipation], *Žena* vol. 40. no. 2-3 (1982): 69-71, 70.

<sup>284</sup> Šuvar, “I feminizam je jedan od oblika konzervativne društvene svijesti”, 72

<sup>285</sup> Šuvar, “I feminizam je jedan od oblika konzervativne društvene svijesti”, 72

magazine *Start* and where she points out several shortcomings of the functioning of KDAŽ.<sup>286</sup> In his argument and many other statements at the 1982 conference, feminism is both characterised as “misguided, damaging”, which Mitchell and Oakley identify as strategies of the backlash,<sup>287</sup> and at the same time, it also gets “reduced to a unitary concept”,<sup>288</sup> while even a broader, general framework is offered under which the approved endeavours of feminism are subsumed.

The 1982 conference is a good case study, since at this time, the new Yugoslav feminist positions reach a certain crystallised form and find some of their positions. The state organisations and their representatives react to feminism bearing in mind the importance of women’s equality as a state policy, which means that the complete refusal or ridicule of feminism would contradict their own position, the media is a different case. For this, it is interesting though to look at the reactions to the 1978 conference. In an article in *Večernji novosti* [Evening news], a reflection by a journalist is an excellent example for the allegedly censorship free press being more pious than the pope. The article makes the state organisations responsible for allowing such a conference take place: “Why the SSRN and the *Konferencija žena* did not send its representatives and observers?” Due to this “negligence”, “foreigners and “some ‘modern’, ‘avant-garde’ Yugoslav women” were there speaking about women being raped and harassed in the streets and in bars. The author finds these problems non-existent and ridiculous, and believes to have found the real motivations behind the conference, in the form of class

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<sup>286</sup> Slavenka Drakulić, “Smrtni grijesi feminizma” [Mortal sins of feminism], *Danas* 21 September 1982, 15-23.

<sup>287</sup> Mitchell and Oakley, “Introduction”, 3-4.

<sup>288</sup> Jones, “Feminism, Incorporated,” 314.

betrayal: “these women are mad at the working class for producing ... high heel shoes which torture women”.<sup>289</sup> Vesna Kesić interviewed Dunja Blažević, the main organiser of the 1978 conference. Kesić emphasises that “[t]he echo of the conference in the press was not full of good intentions. Dunja had enough ‘problems’ after this conference”, while for Blažević, these reactions have an explanation: “This all way serving another purpose. They wanted to discredit the whole thing and present it as politically suspicious, so they were writing all kinds of things. [...] the woman’s question was not verified as an important social problem, it was rather treated as a cliché. [...] If someone reacts to the public expression of patriarchal mentality and sexism, then these powers silence and label those who would enter into a fight with these expressions. We are not used to, yet, to people acting independently.”<sup>290</sup> These attacks were rather the expression of anti-feminism and often, misogyny.

Another non-institutional reaction to mention is an article from 1980 by Slaven Letica, published in *Pitanja*, a journal often giving space to the above quoted feminist writings too, with the title “A draft (!) to the communist manifest against feminism”.<sup>291</sup> Letica equally attacks the state’s women organisations and the new feminists, suggesting there is little difference between the two, as they put “sexual emancipation” [*spolna emancipacija*] ahead of social and class-based emancipation. With regard to this, Letica emphasises that the women’s movement (and not feminism) has its roots in the “bourgeois

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<sup>289</sup> *Večernji novosti*, 6<sup>th</sup> November 1978.

<sup>290</sup> Vesna Kesić, “Dunja Blažević: Aktivistkinje avangarde” [Dunja Blažević: The activist of the avant-garde], *Start* no. 340. 12 February 1982, 48-49, 49.

<sup>291</sup> Slaven Letica, “Skica (!) za komunistički manifest protiv feminizma” [A draft (!) to the communist manifest against feminism], *Pitanja* vol. 12. no. 1-2 (1980): 53-57.



democratic” movement aiming at horizontal equality.<sup>292</sup> In the case of the new generation, however, even the devotion of the “20-30 neofeminists” is questionable, as they only revolt against their fathers and under the circumstances of the “overproduction of the intellectually today”, they are feminists for career reasons.<sup>293</sup> This argument is supported by various further misogynist statements about “double standards in marital faithfulness”.<sup>294</sup> The article’s argumentation is aiming to build a higher moral ground for the statements of its author, to be achieved with discrediting the usefulness and even good intentions of its targets. He even questions the relevance of Marx’s often referenced early works for the current situation, where in his opinion, the entire *žensko pitanje* needs to be abandoned. Letica’s writing is an interesting case inasmuch it also balances between the ideology approved by the state and the criticism of state policies, in the same forum as the one the feminists appear too.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> It is important to note here that Letica repeats here what is known about the history of the women’s movement from the writings of Jovanka Kecman. Cf. above.

<sup>293</sup> Letica, “Skica”, 56.

<sup>294</sup> Letica, “Skica”, 55.

<sup>295</sup> During our interview, I asked Gordana Cerjan-Letica about their relationship, how her husband’s anti-feminism and her more and more vocal feminism affected their relationship: “This article was not the biggest problem between us, we had a good marriage even then, we still have today. For him, this was not such an important article, more like an intellectual game. This was not dangerous, the KPJ was dangerous.” Slaven Letica became infamous in the feminist circles not only of Yugoslavia, but everywhere where the wars between the former member states of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, as the author of the article in the magazine *Globus* about the “five Croatian witches”. The article accused five women, among them Kesić, Drakulić and Dubravka Ugrešić, of betraying and “raping” Croatia. The case is looked at today as one of the harshest symptoms of the misogyny and anti-feminism of the Tuđman-regime. Gordana Cerjan-Letica still is a feminist scholar who finds the consciousness raising of her students very important. It may be of interest to the readers also interested in the post-1991 political history of Yugoslavia, how she sees the incident: “Yes, he agreed to be responsible for that article. He didn’t write the ethnic part though. And I agree with him completely, to these women their sisters in Ljubljana and Belgrade were more important. They didn’t have a true heart. (...) Nobody had anything against feminism in the Tuđman regime. It’s journalists writing against each other. It wasn’t that serious. Why would the Tuđman regime be against feminism?” For a different position, about the post-1991 regimes anti-feminism in Croatia, Serbia (and Montenegro), Bosnia-Herzegovina and Slovenia, cf. Lóránd, *Feminism as Counterdiscourse in Yugoslavia in Two Different Contexts*. MA Thesis (Budapest: CEU, Budapest College, 2007); Miškovska-Kajevska, *Taking a Stand in Times of Violent Societal Changes*.

## Conclusion

This chapter was aiming to show how the idea of feminism changes and gets more seriously conceptualised from the early tentative questions of “what is happening to women elsewhere?” to the critical readings of Marxist theories from an openly feminist standpoint. In comparison to the state’s stance on the women’s question, the new feminists in Yugoslavia posed different problems and offered different answers. The abolishment of class difference, in their reading, was not an adequate solution to women’s subordination. The dysfunctionality of *općeljudske emancipacije*, which in the mid-1970s defined the state’s position, was proven through the introduction of concepts such as gender and the reinterpretation of other ones, such as consciousness, the private–public difference, work, patriarchy, the family and women’s place within the family. The new Yugoslav feminists start reading feminism against the post-feminist refusal of feminism by the state, and the more they read, the more clearly they see the use of this ideology in their country. Their dissent towards the state is formulated in academic texts and through the transfer of the above-mentioned concepts from one context to the other. As a result, there was a discursive space created by the feminists, which made it possible for them to position themselves as feminist and to rewrite the official version of history of feminism in Yugoslavia, thus delineating their own niche in the history of feminisms in Yugoslavia and the world. These discursive acts allowed the feminists discourse to further developments, for example in the field of the arts and literature.

## Chapter 2. Creation, Instead of Production: Feminism in Literature and Art

Slavenka Drakulić: *“It was Ingrid Šafranek’s writing that made me realise that what I was writing was écriture féminine.”*

Vesna Kesić about Dunja Blažević: *“Contemporary art and the women’s question are in similar position, being marginalised, new artistic practice treated as not a valid form of art. So, Dunja’s support of Drug-ca was not merely for professional reasons, but also personal and political.”*<sup>296</sup>

Dubravka Ugrešić: *“I am not good in groups, any groups, it’s a part of my character, this inability to belong to a group and follow the codes and rules.”*

Marina Abramović: *“I think that all energy, all power is so much in the hands of women and it always has been genetically like that. I feel the complete opposite [to feminists]. I feel I have to help men.”*<sup>297</sup>

“The only positive contribution for the women’s movement from separatist feminism is the theory of women’s creativity” – writes Rada Iveković in one of the earliest collections of feminist articles in the journal *Dometi* in 1979. She continues with the statement: “on the terrain of culture, this stream is not even revanchist, just strategically autonomous, and the richness of its ideas with time will achieve (and has already given) something really precious. In short we can say that on the terrain of women’s acquisition of culture, this orientation has given [to women] a great deal of self-confidence and encouragement.”<sup>298</sup> With this, she understands more of the second wave than it is suggested in the provocative distancing attribute “separatist”, and highlights one of the crucial aspects of feminist theory from the perspective of the lives of actual individual

<sup>296</sup> Vesna Kesić, “Dunja Blažević: Aktivistkinje avangarde” [Dunja Blažević: The activist of the avant-garde], *Start* no. 340. 13 February 1982, 48-49. 49.

<sup>297</sup> James Westcott, *When Marina Abramović Dies. A Biography* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 2010), 79.

<sup>298</sup> Rada Iveković, “Talijanski komunisti i ženski pokret”, 40.

women and life as the experience of people as reflected upon in social movements and political ideologies.

The ambiguity of the interaction between feminist theory and the art scene, including literature, is a substantial aspect of this chapter. Whereas any text can be subject to equal interpretative scrutiny, it is the very interest of theoretical and analytical texts to make their agenda and their position explicit, as can be seen in the case of the texts and their authors analysed in the previous chapter. In the case of works of art, the aesthetic requirement to keep their interpretation open, results from a pact between the artist and the interpretative community. I would hereby rely on Rita Felski's warning to feminist scholars as to be careful with the imposition of an agenda onto an artwork which the specific work itself does not imply, moreover, it may even resist.<sup>299</sup> As do at least some of the works I discuss here. At other times, works of art open up for a feminist analysis, even when no explicit feminist claim is put forward. What many of these works do, in Felski's phrasing, is to "engage sympathetically with feminist ideas".<sup>300</sup> Other pieces, as a matter of fact, more than one would expect in an East European post-feminist discursive environment, are even explicitly feminist.

There are feminist interpretations or relevance for the feminist ideology of artworks or entire oeuvres of artists who do not claim to be feminist. Lucy Delap, for example, finds the role of Isadora Duncan crucial for the early feminist movement, even though Duncan never said she was a feminist. However, her work realised the creative experimentation, which, to Delap, is another constitutive element of feminism, besides

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<sup>299</sup> Rita Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change* (Cambridge, Mass.: Hutchinson Radius: 1989), 12.

<sup>300</sup> Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics*, 12

ideas.<sup>301</sup> In the words of a new Yugoslav feminist author, Slavica Jakobović, about their times: “Feminism [...] is not just about feminism any more, but a demand for the acknowledgement of alternative perspectives and alternative forms of expression.”<sup>302</sup> The focus of Yugoslav feminist theory on the issues of equality, work and a search of the meanings of new feminisms broadened towards the experience and subjectivity of women, towards a more colourful and multi-layered feminism through art and literature, and theories of art and literature.

A sympathetic critical discourse which agrees with the aims of an artist group, style, orientation usually contributes to the development and the canonisation of these artistic practices, whereas the interpretation of fashionable and/or already canonised literary and art works can be a source of legitimacy of a critical discourse, school or group of authors as well. The following chapter focuses on works of art and literature from the 1970s and 1980s in Yugoslavia, which in some way are relevant for my interpretations of feminism in this historical context. The art and literary theories that intertwine with these artworks, predominantly the transfer of certain new theories from the French and Anglo-Saxon academia take up another large part of the chapter.

The French *écriture féminine* is the concept that occupies the Yugoslav feminist theoreticians the most. It is reinterpreted and translated as *žensko pismo* and is read in juxtaposition to the concept of women’s literature, that is *ženska književnost*. The transfers of theory involve some elements of the Anglo-Saxon gynocriticism as well as

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<sup>301</sup> Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde*, 39.

<sup>302</sup> Slavica Jakobović, “Upit(a)nost ženskoga pisma” [The controversy of women’s writing], *Republika* no. 11-12 (1983): 4-6, 5. Quoting Rajner Negele [Nägele], “Modernizam i postmodernizam: granice artikulacije” [Modernism and postmodernism: the boundaries of articulation], *Polja* 291/1983.

research of women's language use in linguistics. Both the gynocritical theories and the writings on the *écriture féminine* tackle on the issues of canon. The main focus is on the definition of feminism and on the ways art contributes to the feminist discourse in Yugoslavia: through which transfers, re-interpretations and translations these meanings come into being. Furthermore, I investigate how the body, women's subjectivity and women's creativity, women's lives and experience in socialism, are conceptualised in these works. Also, similarly to the first chapter, I am looking for the possibilities of dissent in the works analysed. The introduction of this chapter needs to add the apologetic note that I necessarily have to delimit my analysis of complex and rich works of art in order for them to fit into the frame of this dissertation. Since my primary interest lays in the contribution of artworks to the meanings of feminism and the possibilities of dissent, I focus the analysis on these.

As for the art works, I tried to select works based on the following criteria:

- 1) they are written/created by the members of the *Žena i društvo* groups;
- 2) they make explicit feminist claims;
- 3) the important feminist publications connected to the *Žena i društvo* groups find them relevant;
- 4) they are important in their relation to the interpretation of the works analysed based on the previous two criteria.

The categories often overlap, as in the case of Rada Iveković, who is both a member of the group, makes explicit feminist claims and is analysed as an important author by other members, or Dubravka Ugrešić, who is both found relevant by authors of the *Žena i društvo* groups and whose work contributes to the theoretical discussions of the groups.

Slavenka Drakulić, Sanja Iveković, Rada Iveković, Marina Gržinić are all members of the group and themselves make explicit claims, Irena Vrkljan's work was important to the group members, Abramović and Vlasta Delimar have artworks which are relevant from the themes and ideas of new Yugoslav feminism. Katalin Ladik is a special case, as she has strong statements as a woman artist, but was not closely related to the new Yugoslav feminists, her primary space of activities was the Vojvodina art scene. The writings of Biljana Jovanović and Judita Šalgo stretch the boundaries of expressing women's experience through language. Besides the authors from the Yugoslav scenes – the *scenes* being in plural is due to the difference between and many faces of the centres where most of the work was produced –, there were works and artists introduced to the local scene, whose work influenced not only artists and writers, but also curators, critics and theoreticians. The SKC's *Aprilski susreti* [April meetings] in 1976 hosted some of the leading new women artists, such as Iole de Freitas, Gina Pane, Katharina Sieverding, Ulrike Rosenbach. Pane, who did not identify herself as a feminist, but was deeply interested in ways the body, especially female body, and pain relate to each other, was already a guest in 1972 at the SKC. They had a lasting influence on the SKC curators, while the publication of Erica Jong, Chantal Chawaf, Marguerite Duras in Yugoslavia was encouraged by the interest of the theoreticians.

### **Dissenting Art, State Funded Galleries**

The position of art and literature in terms of dissent is even more complex than in terms of feminism. The relative liberty of this field was also a gesture of the state, which resulted in an ambiguous situation. As Aleš Erjavec points out, in Yugoslavia, the state

financed all the avant-garde art practices, which, in his opinion, left barely no other choice to artists and intellectuals but “taking on the ‘dissident’ and hence basically conservative stance of promoting bourgeois (and often nationalist) ideas and rights instead of genuine social rights arising from the new social order as defined in the ideas of self-management”.<sup>303</sup> In the case of art, the subversive act was to dissociate art from politics, to create art “as if politics doesn’t exist”, despite the standards of a socialist realism which “demanded for an apologetic politicization of art and culture”.<sup>304</sup> In the meantime, with the appearance of the post-avant-garde in Yugoslavia, the aim again was to combine “artistic and political claims”,<sup>305</sup> reflecting even on the change in socialist modernism that made it “neutral and passive in relation to its surrounding reality”, the reason why it was renamed by a circle of art theorists *socialist aestheticism*.<sup>306</sup>

The post-avant-garde, post-modernist approaches chose various subversive strategies, even if, as Ješa Denegri suggests “the lack of such a drastic, open opposition on the Yugoslav art scene at the time does not justify identifying the alternative route on the Yugoslav art scene with the phenomena of political and cultural dissidence such as were manifested in other parts of the real-socialist bloc, nor is the alternative route the opposite member in the binomical official/nonofficial art.”<sup>307</sup> The reason in the cases of the academia and popular media, art and literature is that there always is state-

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<sup>303</sup> Aleš Erjavec, “The Three Avant-Gardes and Their Context”, in *Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-Gardes, Neo-Avant-Gardes, and Post-Avant-Gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918-1991*, ed. Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković, 36-63 (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003), 58.

<sup>304</sup> Miško Šuvaković, “Conceptual Art”, in *Impossible Histories*, ed. Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković, 210-246, 235.

<sup>305</sup> Erjavec, “The Three Avant-Gardes and Their Context”, 59.

<sup>306</sup> Ješa Denegri, “Radical Views on the Yugoslav Art Scene. 1950-1970”, in *Impossible Histories*, ed. Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković, 170-209, 176.

<sup>307</sup> Denegri, “Radical Views on the Yugoslav Art Scene. 1950-1970”, 177.



intervention involved, through funding and institutional influence over the appointments of decision makers. Which sometimes was more, sometimes less present, for the latter a paradigmatic case being the SKC in Belgrade. The students' centres were answerable to the local universities only, what meant remarkably more independence for them than what was accessible to art institutions in Eastern Europe. As a matter of fact, the first Student Centre was founded in 1961 in Zagreb, and this became the model for the further centres of the SFRY.<sup>308</sup> If we look at the history of the creation of the students' cultural centres (especially that of the SKC Belgrade), "dissidence" (*dissent* would be more appropriate though) calls out for the broad meaning again. They were founded after the student protests in 1968, to tame the protesters and with the intention that the critical and experimental ideas are kept within a controllable frame. The same way the directors representing *novi film* met, self-organised and created in alternative scenes, like Belgrade's amateur film club "Beograd",<sup>309</sup> the students' cultural centres became meeting points for young, experimenting artists. In Branislav Dimitrijević's opinion, the Studentski Centar in Zagreb was already a progressive scene before 1968,<sup>310</sup> still a place of both control and autonomy.

A paradigm shift is seen at the times of the Yugoslav 1968 by most participants and observers, which led the "dissidents to intellectual horizons beyond Marxism."<sup>311</sup> The

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<sup>308</sup> Lutz Becker, "Art for an Avant-Garde Society. Belgrade in the 1970s", In *East Art Map: Contemporary Art and Eastern Europe*, ed. IRWIN, 391-400 (London: Afterall Book, c2006), 392.

<sup>309</sup> Daniel J. Goulding, "Dušan Makavejev", in *Five Filmmakers*, ed. idem. 209-263 (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1994), 211.

<sup>310</sup> Branislav Dimitrijević, "A Brief Narrative of Art Events in Serbia after 1948" in. *East Art Map: Contemporary Art and Eastern Europe*, ed. IRWIN, 287-297. 288

<sup>311</sup> Marcel Cornis-Pope, John Neubauer and Svetlana Slapšak et al. "1956/1968. Revolt, suppression, and liberalization in post-Stalinist East-Central Europe", in *History of The Literary Cultures of East-Central*

media of communication was similar to the other platforms for the expression and discussion of dissident thought in Eastern Europe, with friends meeting in informal literary and artistic circles, and at the same time different from these with the students' centres and the youth magazines and journals. The former 1968 activists in Yugoslavia were "gradually mastering a discourse that would tease, fool and irritate authorities."<sup>312</sup> After the rather apolitical abstract aestheticism, the new neorealist and avant-garde art forms were not reluctant any more to express criticism.<sup>313</sup> From the perspective of the post-1968 generation, the pre-1968 period regarding the relation of the state and the art scene was not simply ambiguous, it was hypocritical.

Yugoslavia was the only socialist country that exhibited abstract art as early as 1958, participating at the Venice Biennale from 1950 on, showcasing the open and progressive state of the SFRY.<sup>314</sup> Whereas authors like Denegri argue against the label "dissidence", Branislav Dimitrijević uses the term "dissident" for those artistic practices and opinions which in any way oppose "the party line" art practices and norms. He is also aware of the ambiguities behind dissidence in Yugoslavia: many artists used "the climate of 'moderate totalitarianism' that characterised the Tito regime" to make a critical stance while enjoying the benefits. For example "the best-known Serbian dissident artist" Mića

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*Europe: Junctures and Disjunctures in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Vol. 1.* ed. Marcel Cornis-Pope –John Neubauer (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2004-), 83-106. 100.

About cultural transfer in Eastern Europe during the Cold War, cf.: Alfred A. Reisch, *Hot Books in the Cold War: The CIA Funded Secret Western Book Distribution Program Behind the Iron Curtain* (Budapest—New York: CEU Press, 2013); Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).

<sup>312</sup> Cornis-Pope, Neubauer and Slapšak, "1956/1968. Revolt, suppression, and liberalization", *ibid.*

<sup>313</sup> *ibid.* and cf. Dimitrijević, "A Brief Narrative of Art Events in Serbia after 1948" and later references to the work of Sanja Iveković.

<sup>314</sup> Becker, "Art for an Avant-Garde Society. Belgrade in the 1970s", 391.

Popović's show in 1950 was staged as a break with socialist realism. Thus it "became the biggest myth of resistance in Yugoslav art history", whereas Dimitrijević sees it simply as "a way to establish the dissident artist as a person who takes a critical stance towards the political structures", while receives the first state grant right after the show, already in 1950.<sup>315</sup> Dimitrijević's broad interpretation of the concept "dissident" is narrowed down here to the generation of the 1968 student protests. Who, and this cannot be left out of consideration, "wanted more socialism, not less".<sup>316</sup> Similarly to the new Yugoslav feminists, the students of 1968 and later in the SKC were making claims towards self-managing socialism about its promises, be these about women's equality or social injustice.

Dissent and dissidence, as we see from the abundance of ambiguities of the socialist regimes themselves, are not clear categories. Film theoretician Nebojša Jovanović claims that the artists, at least the *novi film* filmmakers, should not be forced into "the set of categorical dichotomies characteristic of derogatory descriptions of socialism" with the "'Artist versus Regime' cliché".<sup>317</sup> This dichotomy, in Jovanović's words

conveniently encompasses many of these oppositions, reaching high up the ladder of outworn prejudices about the totalitarian essence of socialism. According to

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<sup>315</sup> Dimitrijević, "A Brief Narrative of Art Events in Serbia after 1948", 288.

About the right-wing turn in Yugoslav dissent, cf. Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the Nation*; Nick Miller, *The Nonconformists*; Marko Zubak, "The Croatian Spring: Interpreting the Communist Heritage in Post-Communist Croatia", *East Central Europe* vol. 32 (2005): 191-225; Dubravka Stojanović, "The Traumatic Circle of the Serbian Opposition", in *The Road to War in Serbia*, ed. Nebojša Popov, 449-478.

<sup>316</sup> About 1968, cf. Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth, eds., *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956-77*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

<sup>317</sup> Nebojša Jovanović, "Breaking the Wave: A Commentary on 'Black Wave Polemics: Rhetoric as Aesthetic' by Greg DeCuir, Jr", *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*, vol. 2. no. 2 (2011): 161-171, 167-168.

this nostrum, it goes without saying that the Regime is corrupt, tyrannical and vicious, just as it goes without saying that the Artist is guided by an innate sense of freedom and democracy; it goes without saying that the Regime manipulates and deceives and it goes without saying that the Artist knows only the language of truth that simply has to be told.<sup>318</sup>

This image overromanticises the figure of the artist and is contradicting the way the neo-avant-gardes and post-avant-gardes positions themselves. What also follows from Jovanović's argument is the diversity of the work of the different artists would be jeopardised by forcing them under the umbrella of "dissidence".

The contemporaries of the artists in the focus of this chapter were "poking" the regime in their work with different tools and for different purposes. What they share is the politicisation and polemics that come to the fore in art with the emergence of post-modernism and the post-avant-garde, for which the role of the SKC Belgrade and its Galerija, under the direction of Dunja Blažević, was crucial. The ways in which it was done are far from homogenous, but there obviously is a new stream from Lazar Stojanović and Tomislav Gotovac to Makavejev and Žilnik. The experimentation in literary works in Eastern Europe in the 1970s-1980s, according to Marcel Cornis-Pope, is "dramatizing more or less overtly the struggle of a writer, a narrator, or a whole community to give a truthful vision of life in an age dominated by ideological and cultural clichés".<sup>319</sup> This statement, leaving its romanticising overtone aside (which puts it rather to the side of those works which rely on the "Artist versus Regime" cliché), applies to other artistic disciplines too. It is broad enough to allow for the shades of grey a non-restrictive interpretation the art under socialism after 1968 deserves.

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<sup>318</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>319</sup> Marcel Cornis-Pope, "From Resistance to Reformulation", in *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe*, ed. J. Neubauer and M. Cornis-Pope, 39–50, 43.

The young artists in the SKC Belgrade or later in ŠKUC Ljubljana, *novi film* filmmakers and the feminists of the *Žena i društvo* circles were all, if not dramatising, but certainly problematising the lies, shortcomings, hypocrisy of the regime, while they were also part of the system. As Dunja Blažević remembers, “the young people that led and gathered around these centres believed in the subversive, revolutionary power and potential of the arts, which could change not only art and society, but also the world.”<sup>320</sup> This characterisation is recurrent when a new generation or the youth of any context is described. The role of the youth in art, literature and, also feminism in post-1968 (or post-1971) Yugoslavia is one where this subversion and revolutionary spirit is part of the regime’s ideology and simultaneously is questioning it.

As the founding director of the Galerija SKC-a [Gallery of the SKC] and a key figure of the new art scene in Yugoslavia at the time, Dunja Blažević explained, she had the Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) London in mind as model institute for the SKC Galerija, a space created in 1946 to host radical art and culture. The artistic ideal to her generation was Russian avant-garde art, they wanted to “create new art for a new society”, with more socialism, not less. To her personally, self-management should have been “a mixture of socialism and anarchism”,<sup>321</sup> and while her role as director obviously defined the profile of the Galerija SKC-a, she emphasised during our talk that this was her personal inspiration. In the meantime, when talking of a generational experience and inspiration, she named the Frankfurt School instead of Praxis, and mentioned the

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<sup>320</sup> Dunja Blažević, “Who is that singing over there? Art in Yugoslavia and after 1949-1989”, in *Aspects/Positions. 50 Years of Art on Central Europe 1949-1999*, curated by Lóránd Hegyi; in collaboration with Dunja Blažević, Bojana Pejić et al. (Wien: Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, 1999), 92-93.

<sup>321</sup> The only other feminist I interviewed for this thesis who mentioned anarchism as a motivational source was Sonja Drljević.

influence of Guy Debord. The greatest freedom the SKC artists gained from their lack of fear. Which probably and at least partly can be lead back to the fact that some of the leaders, like Dunja Blažević herself, came from high-ranking nomenclature families.

The story Blažević recalls from “1974 or 1975” – signalled a “black wave period” – was a conflict with a new leadership of the Central Committee. They “cleansed” arts and humanities institutions and wanted to appoint a new director to the SKC, instead of Petar Ignjatović, its progressive first director. The six program directors, one of whom was Blažević, protested against the decision and asked the CC representative of her professional grounds, which she, as an engineer, did not have: “So, we sent her away, we were not afraid at all. After this, stories started to circulate. But this is just a story, not important. That was the way, that you were not afraid. Also, we did not have the knowledge [of the risks involved in not being afraid].”<sup>322</sup> The last sentence about the lack of knowledge of the possible consequences, as well as the brave professional arrogance of a generation born in peace time in a country full of promises reveals at least partly the innovation and motivation of both the artists and the feminists. I discuss publication laws and censorship more in detail in the previous and the following chapters, which is well-complemented by Blažević’s emphasis on the importance to work without self-censorship.

It was this environment, entangled with the academic-activist scene at the universities, where feminist art and art theory emerged. As Blažević was in the key position as director of the gallery of the SKC and later on the whole SKC – after which she was the editor and host of a contemporary art TV series (*TV Galerija*) –, she indeed

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<sup>322</sup> The unmarked quotes are all from the interview with Blažević in Sarajevo, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

played a crucial role, which is confirmed by most of my interviewees. There appears to be a consensus on her role and personality, something which Vesna Kesić in an interview from 1982 describes as “the activist of the avant-garde”. Her role and personality represents the inseparability of the regime and its opposition, so the reflection of hers and others on her family background is interesting here as a par excellence case of how the personal and political are intertwined. Also, it shows how consciously one can utilise their background. Jakov Blažević was member of the illegal communist party during WWII, and after 1945 a leading SKJ politician. At around the time of the early phase of the SKC Belgrade and his daughter’s career, he was the president of the parliament of the SRH and member of the presidency of the SRH, the presidency of the SKJ and the SFRY.

In 1982, Vesna Kesić, already editor of the magazine *Start* (cf. Chapter 3), had a conversation with Dunja Blažević, the “activist of the avant-garde” about her work in the past ten years. The two women are both intellectual motors of the feminist circle, which probably contributes to the honesty with which Blažević clarifies the role of her family background and how that influenced the decisions and turns in her career. She sees herself as an intermediary, who has problems when she has to speak about herself, as “it seems that I have nothing to say”.<sup>323</sup> Her perspective is to help other people realising their work, whereas Blažević facilitates the realisation of a new artistic movement of conceptualism. Quite importantly, she identifies it as a movement, which in my reading is important not only as conceptualism indeed works as a movement, but also as it coexisted with and contributed to the emergence and existence of other types of movements and initiatives. In a personal conversation with Blažević, she explained that the SKC was

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<sup>323</sup> Vesna Kesić, “Dunja Blažević: Aktivistkinja avangarde”, 48.

never significantly regulated or punished by the SKJ, even when it was supporting regime-critical ideas or did projects contradicting the aesthetic norms of the regime. Even in the years 1974-75, when many art institutions were purged of their progressive leaders and artists. She attributes their courage to a certain level of *naïveté*, but this boldness cannot be dissociated from the position of Blažević's or Žarana Papić's family.

Dragica Vukadinović talked appreciatively about how both women used their background extremely smartly to bring forth change and create space for free thinking and new art. Vukadinović worked at the SKC in different positions since its foundation and is probably one of the people who know the history of the place best. The ambiguity of her own position Blažević highlights in the talk with Kesić published in *Start*:

Once that I was privileged, have I done enough in comparison with people who did not have the same opportunities and who, in a way, made a much bigger step? [...] In one moment you understand that you adopted a certain kind of asceticism, about which not even you yourself know where it exactly originates from. On the other hand, you have this immense need to create an image of yourself as a *self-made* person; you take care of other people and of your environment, sometimes even more than it would be necessary.<sup>324</sup>

Already in 1982, Blažević makes her dilemma that comes with her position clear. Her interpretation explains her reluctance to attribute that great a significance to her role in the movements, new artistic and new feminist alike.

Curators and organisers, also those in other fields, like Andrea Feldman, Sklevický and Papić in the academia, activists like Lepa Mladenović and Mojca Dobnikar, were the motors behind a creation of a rich new feminist discourse. However, Branislava Anđelković is right to point out that while many important curators in the new artistic movement circles were women, both the representatives of the “official

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<sup>324</sup> *ibid.*



opportunistic culture” and the “rebellious opposition to this cultural numbness, taking the form of dissident political and artistic action” were men.<sup>325</sup> There are indeed traces of the patriarchal canon formation in the Yugoslav art scene of the time, whereas this very dissertation questions the universality of Anđelković’s statement. The women artists and writers in this chapter<sup>326</sup> prove exactly that the participation of feminist curators and editors, as well as critics and scholars provide a context and a cultural production system which provides space for women authors able to explore the possibilities of women’s perspective, feminism and dissent with the combination of the former two.

### **Chronologies and communities**

The mid-1970s is the time when both a new generation of women writers starts publishing, in search of a new voice and new writing techniques, and when the feminist theories of literature and art enter the Yugoslav academic discourse. The entanglement between the literary works and theory is not as obvious, though, as one would expect it to be based on the complex interpersonal relations between the authors of both types of texts. 1976 is the year of the publication of the first translation of a dialogue between French post-structuralist feminists Luce Irigaray and Catherine Clément,<sup>327</sup> an initiative which develops into the special issue of the journal *Delo* on the topic “Women, sign,

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<sup>325</sup> Branislava Anđelković, “How ‘persons and objects’ become political in Sanja Iveković’s art?” in. *Sanja Iveković. Selected Works*, curated and edited by Nataša Ilić and Kathrin Rhomberg (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2007), 20-25. 20

<sup>326</sup> And others analysed by other scholars, for example: Vladimir Kopić, “Writings of Death and Entertainment: Textual Body and (De)composition of Meaning in Yugoslav Neo-avant-garde and Post-Avant-garde Literature, 1968-1991”, in *Impossible Histories*, ed. Djurić and Šuvaković, 96-119. Kopić works with a different canon of women writers, due to his different perspective, which however also proves that there were enough women writers and artists in the 1970s-80s to select from according to the perspective of the analysis.

<sup>327</sup> Catherine Clément – Luce Irigaray, “Žena, njen spol i jezik”, 7.

language” in 1981<sup>328</sup> and continues with several special issues of academic journals: *Republika*’s 1983 issue focuses mostly on Kristeva and Irigaray, *Književnost* in 1986 has an article on Marxist aesthetics and another by Terry Eagleton about psychoanalysis in literary theory, followed by a whole section on žensko pismo. *Izraz* in 1990 publishes a piece about “women’s poetics”.

The new theoretical works are preceded by poetic attempts. In the field of poetry and fiction, there are signs of a new women’s voice in the work of Vesna Parun, Irena Vrkljan, and Katalin Ladik already in the 1960s. However, it is the year 1978 when Biljana Jovanović and Dubravka Ugrešić publish their first volumes of prose, with a new experimental voice. They remain the most productive authors until the early 1980s, when the first volumes of Irena Vrkljan’s important trilogy come out: the *Svila, škare* [The silk, the shears] in 1984 and *Marina, ili o biografiji* [Marina, or about biography] in 1986. Towards the end of the 1980s there are Slavenka Drakulić’s novels *Hologrami straha* [Holograms of fear] and *Marmorna koža* [Marble skin] in the bookstores, as well as a further novel by Ugrešić with the title *Forsiranje romane reke* [Fording the stream of consciousness], the first fictional piece of the until then theoretician Rada Iveković, *Sporost-oporost* [Slowness-bitterness], and this is the time when Judita Šalgo starts publishing books.<sup>329</sup> There was also an abundance of translations of the work of Marguerite Duras, Erica Jong, Doris Lessing, Marguerite Yourcenar, to mention the most important names. A very brief overview, as the one presented here, shows plastically how fruitful this period for women’s literature was, with the appearance of, as we shall see in

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<sup>328</sup>*Delo* vol. 27, no. 4 (1981).

<sup>329</sup> Judita Šalgo, *Život na stolu* [Life at the table] (Beograd: Nolit, 1986); *Trag kočenja* [Skid marks] (Novi Sad: Književna zajednica Novog Sada, 1987).

the analyses, various innovative textual enterprises. The publications were preceded and accompanied by a series of different events which were mostly generated by young curators, theoreticians and art organisers. The SKC went against the tide with the organisation of the international art festivals called *Aprilski susreti*, that is, “April Meetings” of new media art, as well as other experimental avant-garde events.

The SKC Belgrade, therefore, not only hosted the 1978 *Drug-ca* Conference and provided space for the *Žena i društvo* tribine, but also brought the international art scene to Belgrade. As Biljana Tomić explained to me, they really felt that their Yugoslavia of the time was completely on a par with the art scene in Paris or New York. The first memorable encounter happened in 1976 within the frames of the *Aprilski susreti*, which left deep traces in the participants, as Biljana Tomić remembers, since they stayed in contact for a long time after the event. To her, Katharina Sieverding as a phenomenon left a lasting effect, the powerful femininity she represented. The SKC’s vibrant art scene was in general inspiring: the “group of six” or “Group70” with Raša Todosijević, Gergelj Urkom, Neša Paripović, Zoran Popović, Era Milivojević and Marina Abramović started their careers here. The SKC was where art works like “Was ist Kunst, Marinela Koželj?” by Todosijević or “Art Must be Beautiful, Artist Must be Beautiful” by Abramović were born, contributing to the understanding of the feminist curators and artists of the role of feminism and gender in art – even if, as we shall see, Abramović herself adamantly refused to be considered a feminist artist.

It is not only that important new art from the West came to the big Yugoslav cities: *novi umjetnost* travelled from Yugoslavia too. The group OHO participated in a MoMA exhibition in New York in 1970; Sanja Iveković had her first group exhibitions in

1971 in Paris and Graz, the first solo (with *Une jour violente* at the Arte Fiera) in Bologna in 1976; Marina Abramović exhibited alone first in 1974 in Naples (*Rhythm 0*) and Milan (*Rhythm 4*), and the next year in Amsterdam (*Role Exchange*). All in all, the *Žena i društvo* event series is worth returning to, as these quite well represent the feminist art project of the time.<sup>330</sup> Talks about Virginia Woolf, women's creativity by Dacia Mariani –the Italian feminist and writer, a frequent guest of the Yugoslav feminists –, women's literature as “writing of the other” [*Ženska književnost – drugo pismo*], about language and *sex*, about lesbian literature. The SKC also offered a rather strong feminist film program with films from Canada, Germany, France, Britain, and the work of a Costa Rican director, Patricia Howell. At one *Tribina*, a public discussion at the SKC in 1977 about “women in literature”, four critics talked about the work of Marina Tsvetaeva (Cvetajeva), Emily Dickinson, Jane Austen and Kamala Das. The four critics were Ileana Čura, Mirjana Matarić, Vida Marković, Mila Stojnić.<sup>331</sup>

### ***Écriture féminine* and New Literary and Artistic Canons for Feminism**

The two feminist approaches to art and literature in the 1970s-80s which later turned out to have been the most influential both appear in the Yugoslav discursive space. The *écriture féminine* is interpreted and translated based on a systematic reading of the French literature, whereas research methods and interpretative strategies which resemble to a great extent to what became known as Anglo-American *gynocriticism* come about in a

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<sup>330</sup> The list of the events see Vušković and Trivunac, “Feministička grupa Žena i društvo”.

<sup>331</sup> Interestingly enough, their work does not appear later in the publications where the authors from the *Žena i društvo* group publish, and though there is no available transcript of the talk, the choice of the authors discussed and the title suggests that the approach was closer to the one the feminist authors later refer to the terrain of the old approach to *ženska književnost*.

more diverse and scattered form. The latter mainly manifests itself in the rereading of canonised women authors and artists, as well as in the re-evaluation and re-publication of less appreciated and forgotten ones. Translations and the publishing of authors from other countries can be added as another mode of contribution to the “Yugo-gynocritical” approach. However, as it tends to occur in the case of new Yugoslav feminism, the boundaries between the two streams are far from clear-cut. Intrinsically, both gynocriticism and the *écriture féminine* aim at the re-writing of the canon. While the canons of different theoretical schools are not identical, the introduction of new names and new authors to the scene happens from both streams. The other prevailing and fascinating way the two, abroad and at the time clearly divided approaches is the way their names are confused: in the journal *Republika*, the *écriture féminine*, the *parole de femme* (translated as *riječ žene*) and *Women’s Studies* are mentioned on the same page, literally and metaphorically.<sup>332</sup> The *écriture féminine* and *Women’s Studies* are even presented as each others’ equivalent.<sup>333</sup> The list of these concepts show how overwhelming and fascinating an experience it was for the Yugoslav feminists to encounter all these theories and movements at once.

The feminist theoreticians and artists create pieces of writing and visual art which are in agreement about each others’ statements, theory and art practice often converge in their attempt to find a *lieu* for women’s voice, perspective or subjectivity in the literary and artistic canon. Ignoring the difference in the initial stance of the two, inasmuch that gynocriticism begins its search by locating authors and the *écriture féminine* is in search

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<sup>332</sup> Jakobović, “Upit(a)nost ženskoga pisma”, 4.

<sup>333</sup> “Upitnik o ženskom pismu” [Questionnaire about the *écriture féminine* – an inquiry by Katarina Vidović], *Republika* no. 11-12 (1983): 235.

of new possibilities of writing, the new Yugoslav discourse comes up with a framework that reveals the emancipatory aspects of both, with the differences strengthening rather than refuting them. In the meantime, eventually both gynocriticism and the *écriture féminine* refrain from a restricting definition of what constitutes women's writing.

### ***The Écriture Féminine into Žensko Pismo***

The concept of the *écriture féminine* has been surrounded by considerable debates in both the English and French speaking contexts. Definitional difficulties arise in the Yugoslav discussions too. The Yugoslav theorists end up with the translation *žensko pismo*, which again is an expression with layered meanings. As opposed to the most common English version of the *écriture féminine*, “women's writing”, *žensko* means „feminine”, rather than „women's”, which in itself is controversial, as “feminine” points towards the constructed, the façade, the attributed (already in the discussions of the time, and even more with the spread of the sex—gender division from the mid-1980s on), while “women's” is more open, when it means both the biological and the social or cultural, and more closed when it restricts the concept to those who are biologically female. Moreover, *pismo* means both “script” – also as in *Sveto Pismo*, that is “the scriptures” or “Holy Writ” –, “writing system” or “lettering”, but also simply “letter”. Later Nada Popović Perišić, one of the most knowledgeable theoreticians in Yugoslavia of the *écriture féminine*, talked to me about the consequences of the choice in the translation, including the mocking it received as “women's letters”. Ingrid Šafranek in an essay from 1983 mentions the dilemma between translating it *pismo* or *pisanje*, the latter indicating

the process of writing, instead of a ready piece of written text.<sup>334</sup> Through the translation, however, much of the mystification of the concept is tamed, and through translation and transfer the *écriture féminine* in the socialist Yugoslav context turns into the key concept of dissent, involving other central concepts, such as agency, subjectivity and creativity.

By this, the concept of the *écriture féminine* overarches disciplines and the questions it raises concern not only literature, but also the visual arts and film. It brings feminism and art together, as we shall see in the work of various artists. At the same time, the Yugoslav discussion of the possibilities of women's creativity through theory blurs the lines between theory and literary theory, between the academia and the political. The former is a process which characterises the appearance of post-structuralism, for example in the work of Kristeva, Cixous, Irigaray.<sup>335</sup> The issue of the political in, as well as the social relevance of the writings of the post-1968 French feminist theorists are often discussed and debated. Authors like Toril Moi and Cecilia Sjöholm argue for a strong political relevance of these writings,<sup>336</sup> and not accidentally is an interview with Irigaray about the political in her work published in *Student* edited by Žarana Papić. It appears, however, that the political in these theories is innovatively recovered in the writings of the Yugoslav authors. During the discussions, the *écriture féminine* is turned into *žensko pismo*, countering the ideas of *ženska književnost* and *općeljudske emancipacije*. The

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<sup>334</sup> Ingrid Šafranek, “‘Ženska književnost’ i ‘žensko pismo’” [“Women's literature” and “women's writing”], *Republika* no. 11-12 (1983): 7-28, 15.

<sup>335</sup> *Sexual/Textual Politics* “starts with ‘literary theory’, and ends with the concept of ‘theory’ that is starting to mean what it means today, namely someone like Marxist, poststructuralist, postcolonial, psychoanalytical, queer, feminist or variously postmodern thoughts about subjectivity, meaning, ideology and culture in their widest generality.” Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (London – New York: Routledge, [1985]2002), 176.

<sup>336</sup> Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*; Cecilia Sjöholm, *Kristeva and the Political* (New York, NY: Routledge, c2005).

feminist content and intention of the concept *écriture féminine* is necessary to ensure the dissent in these discussions, whereas it is the Yugoslav feminist interpretation which endows it with an explicit political potential.

The state efforts for women's emancipation, similarly to what we have seen in the previous chapter, included the support and encouragement of women's participation in the intellectual and artistic sphere, in this case again, as part of the *općeljudske emancipacije*. In *Žena*, an article from 1981 about Slovenian women's poetry enthusiastically heralded that after the partisan revolution, Slovenian poetry opened up towards women's perspective on the world and therefore, literary creativity was not a male privilege any more. However, by the achievement of women's equality even in the field of literature, there is no need for a specific man's or woman's perspective any more, literature can return speak about the generally human again: "[t]he question of women's lyric poetry and women's art is becoming principally the question of lyric poetry and art, and not of women".<sup>337</sup> In art and literature, as in society, politics and the academia too, women's perspective and needs are subsumed under the generally human. This is a result of the same post-feminist strategies which the state applies in each case, using the claims of the general human emancipation and the revolutionary change is society to silence women's demands formulated through feminism.<sup>338</sup> In the case of literature, moreover,

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<sup>337</sup> Denis Poniž, "Pitanje 'ženske lirike' u suvremenom slovenskom pjesništvu" [The question of women's poetry in contemporary Slovenian poetry], *Žena* vol. 39. no. 5-6 (1981): 40-48.

<sup>338</sup> This is one of the arguments of Chapter 1, where based on feminist theories of post-feminism, I claim that the SKJ and the state in the East European socialist systems, and especially in Yugoslavia, applies similar strategies as those which the second wave feminists can detect in the US and in Western Europe and which they define as post-feminist. In Amelia Jones's interpretation, post-feminism first reduces feminism to a unitary concept, then is discursively and photographically executed as post-feminist in the popular press which is followed by other discourses accepting some of its aims and then subsuming it under a broad, "generally human" framework. Jones, "Feminism, Incorporated", 314, 323.



the state's ideological frame is mutually supportive (or permissive) with the formalist-structuralist schools of literary theory present in the Yugoslav academia, which oppose the biographical-referential reading of literary texts. This view of literature perceives feminist approaches as one promoting exactly referentiality and a biographical reading of texts. Therefore, the referential approach and the formalist approach share a platform when it comes to feminist approaches to literature.

The attitudes of scholars of literature and writers of “high literature” carry suspicion and presumably hostility towards the idea of a feminist discussion of women and literature, especially the *écriture féminine*. When for the special issue on feminism and literature of the journal *Republika* Katarina Vidović sends out a questionnaire about *žensko pismo* to approximately two hundred people working on literature, 95% of the addressees do not respond.<sup>339</sup> The introduction of feminist art and literary interpretation is not made easier by its reception and acceptance by women authors or artists either. About Marina Abramović and her ambivalence towards feminism I write in detail later in this chapter, whereas as an example of the atmosphere it is worth to look at an interview-article by Vesna Kesić, prepared for the magazine *Start* – analysed in the next chapter. In the article “Our Women in Space” Kesić introduces, discusses and interviews of a surprisingly long list of women who write science fiction novels in Yugoslavia.<sup>340</sup> Dunja Grbić, Lidija Razumović, Dušica Lukić, Marina Mihajlević, Eleonora Akrap reflect on the genre of sci-fi and genres as such, the discussion's main focus being the gendered

<sup>339</sup> “Upitnik o ženskom pismu”, 235-239. The two published responses represent two different positions: the literary scholar Irena Lukšić refuses feminism as it diverts attention from the important issues in women's lives (cf. the discussion about the state's anti-feminism in Chapter 1, while the “Feminist Section Ivana Brlić Mažuranić of the Croatian Writers' Society” gives a playful answer in the name and style Ivana Brlić Mažuranić.

<sup>340</sup> Vesna Kesić, “Naše žene u svemiru” [Our women in space], *Start*, no. 245. 14 January 1978, 55-57.

nature of literary genres though. The authors think of sci-fi on the one hand as a literary genre that would open the doors to “literature”, meaning high-brow genres, on the other hand, they see it as traditionally not perceived as a feminine form of literature, unlike the trivial romance or children’s books.

The statements of the sci-fi authors are a snapshot of a wide range of the burning issues about women and literature: the representation of their perspective or subjectivity and their place in the canon. Most of the interviewed authors are specifically dismissive towards feminism and the feminist views on women’s writing and are sceptical if their work would ever become widely accepted. Dunja Grbić calls the feminist movements “ridiculous” and claims that she is not interested in feminist literature, whereas Lidija Razumović expresses her doubts if it is possible at all “to take this [women’s and feminist] literature by us seriously. For that, we would need to break a lot of prejudice [...] Maybe elsewhere it is easier, because it is known who is a ‘minority’, but by us we are reading all the time that we are equal.”<sup>341</sup> The two views, in their difference, characterise some of the discursive-ideological environment the feminist ideas which arrive in the years around the publication of Kesić’s article. Kesić attempts to offer a definition of a “women’s genre”, claiming that a genre turns into a “women’s genre” the moment women write it.<sup>342</sup> The definition, however, proves to be more complex, as we shall see in the following discussions.

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<sup>341</sup> Kesić, “Naše žene u svemiru”, 57.

<sup>342</sup> Kesić, “Naše žene u svemiru”, 57.

### *Interpreting Marxian Thought from the Žensko Pismo and Reaching Feminism*

In the spirit of the time, without necessarily being systematically aware of differences between the various feminist approaches to art and literature, Rada Iveković publishes an essay in 1979 investigating the possibilities of women's creativity.<sup>343</sup> This text is relevant not only due to being among the first publications about women's creativity and women writing, but also, in the tracks of Irigaray, for its successful combination of Marxian ideas and French post-structuralist feminism, as well as for delineating issues that are crucial for the further discussions of art, literature and feminism. Before the discussion of Anglo-American gynocriticism and the French ideas of the *écriture féminine*, in this text Iveković depicts the framework of the division between the two. In her call to stop searching for the "missing women" and the urge to start an investigation of what "women's creativity" means. The text delineates what we call today *écriture féminine*, based on source texts which conceptualise it. Iveković suggests focusing on the emancipatory element in women's creativity: not only in art, literature or the academia, but in society too. The text, in its argumentation, takes inspiration from a broad spectrum of authors, mostly following the trajectory of the critical reinterpretation of Marx by Luce Irigaray.<sup>344</sup> Iveković looks at the sources of women's oppression and the way work is distributed within society: the trivial, repetitive, therefore meaningless work is domestic

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<sup>343</sup> Iveković, "Ženska kreativnost i kreiranje žene", 139. Further citations in this section to this work are given in the text.

<sup>344</sup> See Luce Irigaray, "The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine" [*Pouvoir du discours/subordination du féminin*, 1975]; "Women on the Market" [*Le marché des femmes*, 1978]; "Commodities among Themselves" [*Le marchandises entre elles*, 1975], in *This Sex Which Is Not One* [*Ce Sexe qui n'en est pas un*, 1977] trans. Catherine Porter (Cornell, Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985), 68-85; 170-191; 192-198.

Iveković later writes a comprehensive article about Irigaray alone: Rada Iveković, "Filozofija Luce Irigaray" [The philosophy of Luce Irigaray], *Republika* no. 7-8 (1985): 80-92.

work, performed by women. However, asks Iveković, “isn’t this [despised, repetitive techniques of work] despised because the one who uses it [performs it] is despised, is woman?” (142).

Through the example of two textile artists, Milica Zorić and Jagoda Buić, Iveković directs the reader’s attention to the potential to “revert the situation” (142). Their oeuvre, apart from the material and technique, is rather different from each other’s. In discovering what I would call today “subversive potential” in women’s work, Iveković is inspired by Marx’s “A contribution to the critique of Hegel’s philosophy of right”, whereas in the discovery of the role of the mystified and hysterical for women’s expression, she reads Irigaray’s *Speculum de l’autre femme* and *Ce sexe qui n’en est pas un*.<sup>345</sup> The other Marxian influence in Iveković’s text is the statement that women’s oppression by men is not a conscious “evil” act of men, neither is it a coincidental correlation, rather, it is “historical necessity [arising from] all class based and other inequalities” (144). However, in the explorations of the results of women’s oppression, she relies on Irigaray: in the men’s world, a woman is left to the role of the image in the mirror, “a woman is what is not, her history is empty history, non-history, the history of the other, a history of power of which she is excluded” (143).<sup>346</sup> When women have no language, they shall try what Milica Zorić and Jagoda Buić and others achieve in their visual artistic work: “to start speaking through (their own) technique, however superseded, conquered, manufactured, utilised, subjugated” (145).

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<sup>345</sup>*Speculum de l’autre femme* was originally published in 1974, *Ce sexe qui n’en est pas un* in 1977, these are the copies Iveković references. The parts I think were most influential see in the footnotes above.

<sup>346</sup> Without quotation marks, from Irigaray’s *Speculum* (Paris, 1974 edition).

While offering a path of women's emancipation through Irigaray's theory, Iveković urges to turn the critique of language into the critique of the class-based, patriarchal language together with the class-based and patriarchal society. Woman is not only excluded from language, literature, philosophy (or art), the question is not only how she enters these spheres, but also how woman turns into an active member of society and how she changes that society. That is, women's agency through changing their own situation in a culture (society), with another expression from the French post-structuralist feminists, is a *phallocratic culture* (146).<sup>347</sup> Through becoming an artist, or through employment outside the household, woman becomes a creator of her own life [*kreatorka vlastitog života*]. The closure of the first text in the new Yugoslav feminist corpus working around what later returns as the *écriture féminine* intertwines the political with the artistic and academic. Which, in my reading, shows that there is an always already political in the concept of the *écriture féminine*, ensured by its subversive potential, easily discovered through a Marxian reading of Irigaray's philosophy inspired by Marx.

In this early essay, Iveković speaks about two crucial concepts, without naming them: *écriture féminine* and feminism. In the following years there is a growing community of academic women explicitly placing their texts into the corpus of other texts reflecting on the possibilities of feminism in literary and art theory and also the meanings of the *écriture féminine*. There are attempts to relate feminism as activism and theory. The literary scholar Ingrid Šafranek admits in a public discussion in 1983 organised by the *Žena i društvo* group, documented in a special issue edited by Slavica Jakobović in the literary journal *Republika*, that she arrived to feminism from the direction of theory.

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<sup>347</sup> Cf. Irigaray, *Ce sexe*, Paris, 1977.

She regretted not having known more of the movement before her theoretical fascination and was happy when her personal political stance and her theoretical interest reached a common ground.<sup>348</sup> Šafranek's thorough text, as well as many articles in the special issue of *Republika*, already reflect on not only Irigaray, but also Cixous and Kristeva, the two major authors on the *écriture féminine* in France at the time. The debate, as it is published here, with the participation of Šafranek, Iveković, Jakobović, Vjeran Katunarić and Jelena Zuppa, reveals the major lines of concern about the celebration even of a reinterpreted concept of *écriture féminine*. The fear of the reductionist potential of the concept is expressed (by Ingrid Šafranek) together with a criticism of the refusal of Cixous to give a concrete and fixed definition of the *écriture féminine*. The latter is mocked by Katunarić, who suggests that if the definition is impossible, it makes no sense to stay at the public forum, everyone can go home. Zuppa suggests that "the drama" Katunarić proposes is unnecessary, supporting Šafranek who explains that while it is hard to articulate a definition due to the "natural openness" of the concept, it is not impossible.<sup>349</sup>

It is not impossible, as the various attempts to think about the *écriture féminine* show. Already in a *Žena* article from 1980, Jelena Zuppa argues that with the avant-garde women have started to search for linguistic expressions of their presence in history, and they do so through a search for their own sexuality and imagination.<sup>350</sup> Sexuality and the body play a crucial role in all interpretations of the *écriture féminine*, where the body

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<sup>348</sup> Šafranek, "'Ženska književnost' i 'žensko pismo'", 10.

<sup>349</sup> "Diskusija" following the essay in Šafranek, "'Ženska književnost' i 'žensko pismo'", 23.

<sup>350</sup> Jelena Zuppa, "Žena pisac i suočanje s vlastitim položajem žene" [The woman as author and the confrontation with her position as a woman], *Žena* vol. 38. no. 6 (1980): 50-62, 52.

shall be more than “a theme, it should be a motivation of writing and a principle of its articulation”,<sup>351</sup> as Šafranek explicates a few years later. Part of this experience is the detection of the otherness of our subjectivity, a “new presence of women in the written text (and in spoken language), for a new possibility of the symbolism of the female character”.<sup>352</sup> This cannot be a pure theoretical language, Zuppa adds.<sup>353</sup> Zuppa’s protest against over-theorising the concepts also directs the reader towards texts she reads as manifestations of the concept, therefore what shall come instead of theorising is actual literary examples, while her own definition is also based on a thorough reading of authors from Simone de Beauvoir to Kristeva and Cixous.

A few years after the interpretations of Zuppa, Iveković, Šafranek and Jakobović, Nada Popović Perišić publishes a book based on her dissertation.<sup>354</sup> A dissertation which could not be defended at the Philosophical Faculty of the University of Belgrade, but was appreciated in Zagreb and later gained recognition to its author throughout the Yugoslav academia. This case is another example of the unpredictability of the system and how the decentralised Yugoslav state and its institutions were possible to be played out against each other. Popović Perišić’s book is a complex theoretical text interpreting how the new post-modern theories from Barthes through Derrida to Deleuze and Guatarri offer a new interpretation of literature. She extensively works on the idea of *žensko pismo*, systematically reading through the oeuvre of Cixous, Kristeva and Irigaray, but also

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<sup>351</sup> Šafranek, “‘Ženska književnost’ i ‘žensko pismo’”, 22.

<sup>352</sup> Jelena Zuppa, “Novo žensko pismo: da bi se kazalo život” [New women’s writing: so that life can show itself], *Delo* no. 4 (1981): 15-28, 16.

<sup>353</sup> Zuppa, “Novo žensko pismo: da bi se kazalo život”, 16.

<sup>354</sup> Nada Popović-Perišić, *Literatura kao zavodjenje* [Literature as seduction] (Beograd: Prosveta, 1986). Further citations to this work are given in the text.

Béatrice Slama. The book gives details of the difference between the approaches of these authors, which makes it probably the most profound account on the *écriture féminine* and the least locally (i.e. Yugoslav) focused narrative or interpretation of it. Concluding the chapter about the concept, Popović Perišić emphasises the potential richness of difference and otherness which *žensko pismo* enables, it always being the “writing of the other” (49). In the traces of Barthes, pleasure and seduction become metaphors of reading and writing. This is a point when a criticism of the existing and ruling approach is introduced by Popović Perišić: “What does it mean today to speak of seduction?”, she asks.

The difficulty to answer the question lies in the fact that “the intellectual language today is governed by a moralising imperative, which killed all concepts of pleasure. Christian morality, positivistic, rationalist morale and the Marxist ethics unwarrantedly repressed pleasure.” (25) It is from this direction that the concept of equality is replaced by difference and otherness, in an attempt to make up for inequality and the oppression of those other and different. This is why Toril Moi’s interpretation is valid here. Moi claims that the theories by Cixous and co. resist the use of the concept of equality seen “as a covert attempt to force women to become like men”,<sup>355</sup> but in their discursive acts they are in fact feminist. Moi writes about Cixous: “according to accepted English usage, her indubitable commitment to the struggle for women’s liberation in France, as well as her strong critique of patriarchal modes of thought, make her a feminist.”<sup>356</sup> This tension between the pressing for equality and the otherness of women, the aesthetic in literature and art and the factual of biography (from the arts’ perspective, at least), pleasure and

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<sup>355</sup> Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, 96.

<sup>356</sup> *ibid.*, 102.



seduction on the one hand, positivism and rationalist morale on the other, takes shape in the tension between the concepts of women's literature and women's writing.

***Equality, Difference and the Way These Increase or Reduce Freedom of Women and of Literature***

In the meantime, it needs to be kept in mind that whereas the body and sensuality are crucial to the *écriture féminine*, as we have seen above, Kristeva and Cixous resist the reduction of writing to one's biology, which shows in their selection of authors too. For Cixous, for example, Jean Genet's writing stands for her idea of the *écriture*. The potential of reductionism when speaking about women's literature is addressed by Ingrid Šafranek. She begins her essay on women's writing and women's literature about her unease with reducing rich works of literature, such as Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* "solely to its 'feminine perspective' on the world and to an already known set of problems". Instead of reducing the issue to the biological sex of the author, Šafranek wants to focus on

works in which the authors are more or less aware of their specificities [*specifičnosti*] – which are not only their sex [*spol*] – where they register their own difference [*različnost*], not only at the thematic, but also textual level, in the effort to frame their position as women-subjects-which-write.<sup>357</sup>

The contrast between the two approaches is best described by the two concepts in the title of the essay, *ženska književnost* [women's literature] and *žensko pismo* [women's writing, that is the *écriture féminine*]. The former may refer to anything that was written by

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<sup>357</sup> This and the preceding quotation: Šafranek, "'Ženska književnost' i 'žensko pismo'", 7.

women, and is therefore an empty category, similarly to the overused concept of *žensko pitanje* in politics. Moreover, *ženska književnost* undergoes semantic devaluation and is used with reference to an inferior type of literature, written by women and for women and which in the binary system of values is therefore the opposite of the important, serious, artistically relevant literature written by men.

Šafranek detects that not all women write in “women’s *gender*” [*u ženskom rodu*], which is a sign of the fact that women are “so embedded into the ‘male’ culture, language and society [...] that instead of expressing and valorising their difference, all until a few days ago, it seemed to them more important to prove their ‘equality’”.<sup>358</sup> *Žensko pismo* supports women’s difference, instead of “equality”. “Equality” [*jednakost*] in the meaning of women’s emancipation on the surface or on the level of propaganda and laws that are not observed in practice. In the sense of women’s sameness, uniformity with men, while by reproducing the binaries, “equality” always implies the subordination of “women’s” to “men’s”, of the feminine qualities to the masculine ones, whereas *žensko pismo* urges women to experience and express their subjectivity. Whether there is this difference for sure, the Yugoslav authors not only that do not agree, they also point out rather meticulously in their fresh reading experience of Cixous, Kristeva, Irigaray, as well as Beatrice Didier, Rosa Rossi and Elisabetta Rasy<sup>359</sup> the contradictions in the writing of the individual authors. Seeing the contradictions is partly due to the easy access to the

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<sup>358</sup> Šafranek, “‘Ženska književnost’ i ‘žensko pismo’”, 7-8. (Emphasis mine.)

<sup>359</sup> Cf. the references to Didier’s *L’écriture-femme* (not *féminine*) in Šafranek’s “‘Ženska književnost’ i žensko pismo”, 20-21. Also, cf. Rosa Rossi, “Riječi žena i jezik želje” [The words of women and the language of desire], *Delo* vol. 27. no. 4 (1981): 29-36; Elisabetta [Elisabetta] Rasy, “Neke riječi na jeziku hraniteljke” [A few words to the language of the woman breadwinner], *Delo* vol. 27. no. 4 (1981): 83-87.

work of these authors, partly due to their indeed complex and changing position about what exactly the *écriture féminine* is.<sup>360</sup>

As much as the Yugoslav feminists would want to have a new concept countering the biologisation and reductionism in *žensko pismo*, they are also aware of the dangers it entails. Instead of it being a source of subversion, “women’s texts” may be reduced to “the myth of the eternal feminine, emotionalism, intuition, physicality, organicity [*organičnosti*], and in fact this all is there, existing in these texts [we discuss as *žensko pismo*]” (17). The ways women’s difference from men vary, and may be useful for a feminist purpose, though. Šafranek points out an empowering and an oppressive version. When it is done by the women authors valued by the Yugoslav feminists, it is about their own empowerment – not usually described by this concept though, mostly it is otherness [*drugojachnost*] and power [*premoć*] –, while “when men speak about differences, willingly or unwillingly but most of the time what they mean by it is inferiority” (17). To counter the male canon’s concept of women’s difference, a canon of important women authors is being compiled during the investigations into the meaning of *žensko pismo*: Chantal Chawaf, Marguerite Duras, Marguerite Yourcenar enter the scene via these theoretical texts. Their appearance is related to the (neo)avant-garde, which Šafranek and Zuppa consider as liberating for women writing, allowing space for experiments which lead to either the *écriture féminine* or to *žensko pismo* (14).<sup>361</sup> Slavica Jakobović relies on Rainer Nägele’s analysis of the transformation of the monolithic discourse and what

<sup>360</sup> Cf. the discussion between Iveković and Šafranek about Kristeva in “‘Ženska književnost’ i ‘žensko pismo’”, 15-16. The next quotations are all from: Šafranek, “‘Ženska književnost’ i ‘žensko pismo’”.

<sup>361</sup> Since I am still not convinced that the Yugoslav authors mean the same by this as the French theoreticians, I would insist on using both terms when relevant.

happens to the modern novel.<sup>362</sup> Zuppa's analysis of Chantal Chawaf serves as a summary of the benefits of *žensko pismo* for the feminist movement: it is a result and at the same time, a memento to the liberation of the body, of the maturing (or ripening) of women, moreover, finally, eventually it is a break from Catholic taboos – something that had not been achieved up to then, as also Nada Popović Perišić argues.<sup>363</sup>

### ***Yugoslav “Gynocriticism”, or a Canon of Their Own***

Unlike *žensko pismo*, the writing about women authors and therefore, the compilation of a history of women's writing or a feminist canon which in Western literary scholarship can be identified as *gynocriticism*, does not enjoy such detailed theoretical attention, whereas it is widely “practised”. Elaine Showalter creates the concept to describe the woman as writer in the centre of feminist literary criticism, the “woman as producer of textual meaning, with the history, themes, genres, and structures of literature by women. Its subject include the psychodynamics of female creativity; linguistics and the problem of female language; the trajectory of the individual or collective female career; literary history; and of course, studies of particular writers and works.”<sup>364</sup> In its approach, *gynocriticism* certainly bears in common certain basic features with the concepts of the *écriture féminine* (Cixous) and *différence sexuelle* (Irigaray), while forcing the terminology directly onto the Yugoslav discourse is not completely adequate, considering that the term is not widely used until the publication of Biljana Dojčinović's

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<sup>362</sup> Jakobović, “Upit(a)nost ženskoga pisma”, 5.

<sup>363</sup> Zuppa, “Novo žensko pismo”, 28.

<sup>364</sup> Elaine Showalter, “Toward a Feminist Poetics” [1979], in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory*, idem. ed., 125-143. (London: Virago Press, 1986), 128.

*Ginokritika*<sup>365</sup> in 1993, which, however, is already beyond the scope of this investigation. There is awareness of Showalter's work in the early Yugoslav feminist theoretical writings, though, and what we find is a fascinating synchronicity with the Western trends in feminist literary scholarship and theory, through innovation and reinterpretation. Ljubiša Rajić offers a concept which combines or brings the different approaches under one roof (literally, on the pages of the journal *Republika*): “*istraživanja ženskog pisma*”, that is the research of women's writing / feminine writing / *écriture féminine*,<sup>366</sup> while Ljiljana Gjurgjan reads Virginia Woolf through Gilbert and Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* in the same journal issue.<sup>367</sup>

In terms of a new literary canon, it crosses borders of the Yugoslav republics, as well as the borders of the country. This is partly due to the lack of an abundant number of foremothers, and partly due to the integrative approach of new Yugoslav feminism to the feminisms elsewhere. Being confronted with a large number of iconic authors and forerunners in the Western English-speaking space, Italy and France, to Vesna Kesić, the situation in Yugoslavia appears to be characterised by absence. Through her formulation of the absence of certain types of authors, she exactly envisions what by time becomes part of a local discourse and therefore a local canon:

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<sup>365</sup> Biljana Dojčinović-Nešić, *Ginokritika. Rod i reprodukcija književnosti koju su pisale žene* [Gynocriticism. Gender and the reproduction of literature written by women] (Beograd: Književni društvo “Sveti Sava”, 1993).

<sup>366</sup> Ljubiša Rajić, “Feminologija i književnost na anglo-američkom i skandinavskom području” [Feminology and literature in the Anglo-American and Scandinavian areas], *Republika* no. 11-12 (1983): 112-132, 113.

<sup>367</sup> The work of Gilbert and Gubar is read in relation to Virginia Woolf: Ljiljana Gjurgjan, “Dvoznačnost funkcije mitt ‘domaćeg anđela’ u romanu V. Woolf ‘Ka svjetioniku’” [The double meaning of the function of the myth of the “domestic angel” in the novel *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf], *Republikano*. 11-12 (1983): 156-162, 156-9.

We do not have a single brave spiritual leader like Erica Jong [...] neither a pamphleteer like Esther Vilar, neither someone like Elaine Morgan, who would, from a woman's perspective, discuss the existing 'male' (since they were created by men, so their mark unavoidably remains there) sociological and anthropological theories about the origin and the history of the world and humanity.<sup>368</sup>

While identifying a lack of something, she also provides a definition of a desirable feminist literature. Before the first discussions of the new, feminist approaches to women and literature, she not only provides a possible definition of feminist writing and feminist art, but she points towards the possibility of a reconstructed canon in a comment in brackets: "something similar we had in the previous century in the Illyrian Dragolja Jarnević". Along these lines continue working other feminist scholars, who therefore reconstruct important elements of the oeuvres of not only Dragolja Jarnević, but Cvijeta Zuzorić, Ivana Brlić Mažunarić, Isidora Sekulić and Zdenka Marković.<sup>369</sup> These go along with the discussions and analyses of the work of Virginia Woolf, Marguerite Duras, Chantal Chawaf, Sylvia Plath, Doris Lessing, Marina Cvetajeva, Marguerite Yourcenar in *Žena, Republika* and *Delo*.

The beginnings of a writing of women's literary history and the concept of *žensko pismo* is broadened by Anglo-American linguistic texts, approaching the relationship between women and language mostly from the direction of linguistics, preliminarily semantics and sociolinguistics. Relying on the work of Robin Lakoff and the authors Casey Miller and Kate Swift, there are descriptive analyses on the differences in the

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<sup>368</sup> Kesić, "Naše žene u svemiru", 57.

<sup>369</sup> Divna Zečević, "O Dnevniku Dragolje Jarnević" [About the Diary of Dragolja Jarnević], *Republika* no. 11-12 (1983): 163-169; Gabrijela Vidan, "Cvijeta Zuzorić i Dubrovčani" [Cvijeta Zuzorić and the people of Dubrovnik], *Republika* no. 11-12 (1983): 170-181; Nada Popović-Perišić, "Kritički pogledi na delo Isidore Sekulić" [Critical remarks to the work of Isidora Sekulić], *Treći program. Radio Beograd* vol. 3. no. 70 (1986): 26-27.

language use of women.<sup>370</sup> The research on language use are presented parallel with *žensko pismo* and often are complemented by writings from the field of social sciences, such as Despot's work on women and self-management and Jasna Tkalec's piece on patriarchy and marriage.<sup>371</sup> The social position and reality of women authors and artists is not left out of consideration either, on the pages of *Žena*, there is the sociological research by Marina Blagojević, presenting the results of a research on 100 students and 100 artists. This work is continued from a more contemporary perspective in the work of Jasenka Kodrnja, in her doctoral dissertation published in 2000.<sup>372</sup>

### **Practicing Creativity as a Woman, Writing Feminism, Writing the Sisterhood**

Already before the new feminism in Yugoslavia, pieces like Kiš's *Mansarda* (1962), Makavejev's *WR Mysteries of Organism* (1971), Žilnik's *Rani radovi* (1969), Raša Todosijević's *Was ist Kunst?* (1978) raise doubts if women's emancipation and the ideology around it are indeed a success.<sup>373</sup> These works mostly scratch the surface of the matter if there is something wrong around gender in Yugoslavia, through various strategies of representing female characters and investigating their influence on the

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<sup>370</sup> Virdžinia Velien [Virginia Valian], "Lingvistika i feminizam" [Linguistics and feminism], trans. Nevena Pantović-Stefanović and Vesna Biljan-Lončarić, *Delo* vol. 27. no. 4 (1981): 1-14; Kejzi Miler and Kejt Swift [Casey Miller – Kate Swift], "Semantička polarizacija" [Semantic polarisation], trans. Gordana Marković, *Delo* vol. 27. no. 4 (1981): 53-65; Damir Kalogjera, "O jeziku i spolu" [About language and sex], *Delo* vol. 27. no. 4 (1981): 37-52.

<sup>371</sup> Tkalec, "Patrijarhat i brak".

<sup>372</sup> Jasenka Kodrnja, *Društveni položaj žene umjetnice: doktorska radnja* [Social position of women artists: doctoral dissertation] (Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Filozofski fakultet, 2000).

<sup>373</sup> In relation to the recognition of the lacking gender equality and the problematic nature of the Yugoslav new wave cinema, see the text about Živojin Pavlović's film from 1967: Branislav Dimitrijević, "Sufragettes, Easy Lays and Women Faking Pregnancy: Representation of Women in the Film *When I Am Pale and Dead*", in *Gender Check. Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe. Exhibition Catalogue*, ed. and curated by Bojana Pejić, 46-53 (Wien: MUMOK Stiftung Ludwig Wien and Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, 2009).

course of events, related to social change or creation. It was art and literature emerging parallel with the new feminism, the two often in dialogue with each other, which could eventually provide more complex answers and pose more complex questions. Works range from the search for women in Yugoslav art and literary history to an investigation of the possibilities of women's creativity, questions which are also raised by theory at around this time. In this subchapter I will focus on a selection of works by Sanja Iveković, Irena Vrkljan, Slavenka Drakulić and Dubravka Ugrešić giving answers and posing new questions in relation to the theoretical discussions analysed above.

A provocative montage, a technique often employed by the young visual artist, Sanja Iveković, was prepared by her with the title *Women in Art – žene u jugoslavenskoj umjetnosti* [Women in Yugoslav Art] in 1975. The montage, which has not been exhibited up to now but has been featured in albums on the artists' work,<sup>374</sup> consists of two parts. The first one is a selection of photo portraits from the art magazine *Flash Art*, of contemporary women artists from all over the world, including Katharina Sieverding and Ulrike Rosenbach. These are the *Women in Art* with capital letters. The other part is a set of drawings, ink on paper, of women with schematic, but different faces, made by the artist. The drawings are the handwritten *žene u jugoslavenskoj umjetnosti*, “*jugoslavenskoj*” being written with shaky children's handwriting, in tiny letters. The small letters in the title and the even smaller script in the title drawn on the piece itself enhance the striking contrast between a new, rich pool of women artists coming up elsewhere and the poor situation the artist faces in Yugoslavia. Iveković, an artist trained in Zagreb but also active in Belgrade and from a very early stage of her career, exhibiting

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<sup>374</sup> Sanja Iveković, *Selected Works* (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2008), 43.



internationally, in her recollections of the time confirms her experience of a male-dominated art scene of the time.

The montage and the disappointment reflected in the childish writing and simple drawings present us an artist aware of the difficulties of her position. By the act of making the drawing, she formulates her own position, which is a position of quest and precariousness, but still, a position. This is what Joan W. Scott describes as an interaction between creating a subjectivity through “discursive processes – epistemologies, institutions, and practices”.<sup>375</sup> It confronts the optimistic articles in the journal *Žena* about women artists and writers in Yugoslavia, while also resonates to the endeavours of important internationally known artists, such as Mary Beth Edelman, and the re-canonising attempts of art and literary theorists in Yugoslavia and in the West. Iveković continues her work with reflection on her gender and her body, and her *Women in Art – žene u jugoslavenskoj umjetnosti* functions as a metaphor for this subchapter, as it reflects on the role of the artist as a woman and represents the need for a community of women artists, where, in the meantime, each one of the members of the groups remain an individual, with a name.

Another early work by Sanja Iveković, *Structure*, is a photo-collage of 10 photographs of women, repeated 10 times and arranged as a 10x10 crossword. The photographs are matched with 10 sentences, typical slogans for women in the tabloid press: “Completely unknown just a year ago”, “Still waiting for her master’s return”, “Her life is filled with suffering”, “She will try to become a mother”, “She learned how to become good-looking”, etc. The images and the texts can be read onto each other by the

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<sup>375</sup> Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, 16.

viewer, as if they were organised along two axes. Like by Roman Jakobson, where “poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection onto the axis of combination.”<sup>376</sup> The work is a flick to Iveković’s male fellow artists who produced structuralist art in the form of the so-called “analytical painting”, a type of conceptualism, “a work type that was seen as ‘radical’ and ‘intellectual’ by contemporary audiences. This is where Iveković marks herself apart from most of her male peers: in her ability to demystify, to be simultaneously seriously engaged *and* tongue-in-cheek, to show empathy but also ‘to give the finger’ to her own artistic milieu.”<sup>377</sup>

Personality, gender, together with other social determinants of an artist’s position almost unavoidably lead women artists and writers towards the biographical. Own autobiographies and the autobiographies of other women often appear via one another. The Bakhtinian concept of *heteroglossia*, as well as an interplay of personal and authorial voices as described by Susan Sniader Lanser may apply here. This technique of sympathetically reflecting on the lives and fates of other women through one’s own story I call the *writing of sisterhood*. Differently from the *écriture féminine*, which focuses on the self and the own body, while reflects on the lack of a coherent self, this technique has a very personal narration with a strong narrative “I” which, in the meantime, using its authorial faculties, borrows voices and lives of other women create a polyphonic narrative. Irena Vrkljan’s early trilogy is the best example of the writing the sisterhood I found in the Yugoslav context, while the technique is obviously not an exclusively Yugoslav phenomenon. One of its best examples from the feminist literature of the 1970s

<sup>376</sup> Roman Jakobson, “Nyelvészeti és poétika” [Linguistics and Poetics], in idem., *Hang, jel, vers* [Sound, sign, poem], ed. Iván Fónagy and György Szépe, 229–244 (Budapest: Gondolat, 1972), 242.

<sup>377</sup> Andelković, “How ‘persons and objects’ become political in Sanja Iveković’s art?”, 23.

may be Marilyn French's *Women's Room*, with sources of inspiration from Dostoyevsky to Faulkner. What makes this type of writing particular and different from a heteroglossic novel is the tone and the approach to its characters. The dominant authorial-personal narrative voice is sympathetic towards the women whose voices the text represents and critical towards patriarchy. This critical approach to patriarchy entails both the social experience of women and the modes of representation of women in canonised, patriarchal art.

Irena Vrkljan, who starts and establishes her career as a poet, already lives in Berlin, more precisely, shares her time between Berlin and Zagreb, when she publishes the first part of her trilogy, with the title *Svila, škare* [The Silk, the Shears] in 1984. The novels are very poetic, with a subtle and carefully woven language, sharing several elements of Vrkljan's own biography. Vrkljan builds up a narrative, which is highly personal, while using various narrative techniques to give voice to other women's experience: in the first book, it is the mother and the sisters of the narrator present with an emphatic role, in the second book, *Marina, ili o biografiji* [Marina, or about Biography], it is the Russian poet Marina Tsvetaeva,<sup>378</sup> in the third, the actress Dora.<sup>379</sup> The mother and the sisters of *Svila, škare* are shown through the narrative of the first person narrator, who tells about her childhood spent in abandonment, with a subordinated mother and a tyrannical father, and two younger twin sisters. The places in the narration are the stations

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<sup>378</sup> Irena Vrkljan, *Svila, škare* (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske [Biblioteka Zora], 1984); *Marina, ili o biografiji* (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske [Biblioteka Zora], 1986). All English translations are from this edition:

Irena Vrkljan, *The Silk, the Shears and Marina, or, About Biography*, trans. Sibelan Forrester and Celia Hawkesworth (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, c1999).

<sup>379</sup> *Dora, ove jeseni* came out in 1991 (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske [Biblioteka Zora], 1991), therefore I will not discuss it in greater detail, as the scope of this dissertation does not extend beyond 1990.

of the narrator's life, from Saint Sava street in Belgrade through Istria and Zagreb to Berlin. We also learn how she becomes a poet and a member of the Writers' Association. The autobiographic personal-authorial narration is shared with the two twin sisters through their letters. The sisters, Nada and Vera grew up in the same oppressive family, and until their voice gains space in the narrative, the reader only sees through the lenses of the narrator. They are either more privileged from the perspective of the older sibling, or with even less agency over their fates than their older sister who, due to her age and courage, left the family house early in her adulthood.

The first book is dedicated to "Virginia Woolf. Charlotte Salomon. Women, who wish to flee from childhood. The call of false submissiveness. For anger. And for recollection."<sup>380</sup> The evocation of these creative foremothers finds a deeper fulfilment in the middle novel, choosing Marina Tsvetaeva as a foremother to the writer-narrator. *Marina, or About Biography* uses both the biography and the writings of the Russian poet as guest texts in the narration. The narrator makes the reader feel Tsvetaeva's feelings through the feelings of the narrator herself, a double mirror of the pain these women felt. It is in this middle novel that Vrkljan poses a self-reflectively ars poetic question, addressed to Marina:

Is there any way of seeking? A woman, women, the world in my head?  
Our happiness in splinters, Marina, that life afterward. Shreds, of rationality, of discovery.  
We are composed also of lives that have passed. With this realization it is possible to fly away from here, from this grey zone of Berlin. It is possible to move along other roads, to stand behind the low fences of a suburb of Prague or in Meudon (the sounds of planes and cars here immediately retreat), it is possible calmly to

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<sup>380</sup> Vrkljan, *The Silk, the Shears*, 3.

accept predicted losses. And so take up residence in the imagined. Because we must live somewhere.<sup>381</sup>

The women “in the head” of the narrator create the world of the trilogy, where the narrator herself indeed finds herself and her characters, women she reads and women who read her. The narrator grows up in a sense of orphanage throughout her childhood, despite the presence of her biological parents, finds a community of women “in her head”, or rather, through writing them into her life.

Vrkljan herself becomes a foremother or example of a generation of women writers after hers. The next author to be analysed here, whose writings are characterised by a different style and language, Slavenka Drakulić, considers Vrkljan as an example for her own writing. Drakulić’s literary language is closer to her journalistic writing, with sharp remarks of details and precise but short descriptions of characters. Besides her important book of essays *Smrtni grijesi feminizma* [The Mortal Sins of Feminism] and her work for the weeklies *Start* and *NIN*, which are discussed in the other chapters of this dissertation, she publishes two important novels in the late 1980s.<sup>382</sup> Both novels are interwoven not only with the theme of female creativity, but also the social and artistic position of the female body and the complexity in the role of motherhood. Motherhood is central in her second novel, *Mramorna koža* [Marble Skin], which will be discussed later through this chapter. *Marble Skin* evolves around the story of a sculptor and her mother,

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<sup>381</sup> Vrkljan, *The Silk, the Shears*, 130.

<sup>382</sup>Slavenka Drakulić, *Hologrami straha*. Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske [Biblioteka Zora], 1987; in English: *Holograms of Fear*, trans. Ellen Elias-Bursać (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1992).

idem., *Mramorna koža* (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske [Biblioteka Zora], 1988); in English: *Marble Skin*, trans. Greg Mosse (New York: Harper Perennial, [1994] 1995).

idem., *Smrtni grijesi feminizma. Ogledi u mudologiji* [Mortal Sins of Feminism. Essays on Testicology] (Zagreb: Znanje, 1984).

and approaches female creativity through the sculpting work of the daughter. In this novel, their relationship, the matter of language and the creativity of the narrator are indivisible intertwined. The first one, *Hologrami straha* [*Holograms of Fear*] is the story of a woman, a first person narrator of Lanser's personal narrative, who has to face a kidney transplant. The author/narrator tells her story from the bed in the hospital, where she is laying alone, her family far away.<sup>383</sup> In her very vulnerable position she is thinking about her mother and her own almost grown-up daughter, her best friend who committed suicide, her childhood, her family, while other women appear around her as moral and emotional support. This, in Jasmina Lukić's interpretation, signals "the narrator's awareness of belonging to the female world",<sup>384</sup> and it is this particular style of writing which I would again call the *writing of the sisterhood*. Sisterhood as concept is another metaphor, this time of the feminist movements, coming rather front he activist language and standing for solidarity amongst women. Drakulić's writing is more that of the reporter's, the inner monologues are presented through the often objective lens of the narrator. In comparison to Vrkljan's trilogy, which is more of a poetic dialogue between women who have parallel histories, Drakulić creates a polyphony of female voices.

The writings of Dubravka Ugrešić are also in search of the ways one as a woman can write, and while both her work and her position in the feminist groups differs from the two previous authors, she shares their reflexivity on women's issues and in particular on the gender of the author. Her approach is experimental and playful at the same time,

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<sup>383</sup> A later novel, *Kao da me nema* (As if I wasn't there) has a similar beginning, with a heroine starting her narrative while laying on a hospital bed. However, in their innovation and literary merits the two books cannot be compared.

<sup>384</sup> Jasmina Lukić, "Women-Centered Narratives in Contemporary Serbian and Croatian Literatures", in *Engendering Slavic Literatures*, ed. Pamela Chester and Sibelan Forrester, 223-243 (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1996), 236.

best represented by her short novel (or “patchwork novel”) *Štefica Cvek*, in the short stories of *Život je bajka* and in the novel *Forsiranje romane reke*.<sup>385</sup> Ugrešić did not participate in the feminist discussion on *žensko pismo*, neither was she a regular participant at the meetings of the *Žena i društvo* group. Her literary interests lay in modernism and literary theory, even if not those with a feminist approach: her dissertation was written on three Soviet-Russian male authors, Jurij Trifonov, Valentin Rasputin and Andrej Bitov, all belonging to the 1970s modernist, state-supported stream of prose of the Soviet Union.<sup>386</sup> Women’s issues evolve in her fiction writing, and probably this leads her to the publication of an article, presenting the work of the Russian writer Ludmila Petrushevskaya [Ljudmila Petruševska]. Ugrešić develops a term for Petrushevskaya’s writing, calling it “a paradigmatic women’s prose”. In the argument, this is a first person narrative close to the Russian *skaz*, a mode of narration basically characterised by the presence of a narrative consciousness, while thematically this new women’s prose is limited to the everyday life of women.<sup>387</sup> The work of Petrushevskaya is appreciated by Ugrešić, and what she calls “paradigmatic women’s prose” returns in more of her works of fiction too. The everyday, the trivial are just as important in Ugrešić’s early writing as is the magical and the problematisation of matters from literary theory. The texts of Ugrešić tell of a deep and wide knowledge of literary theory and

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<sup>385</sup> Dubravka Ugrešić, *Štefica Cvek u raljama života* ([Štefica Cvek in the Jaws of Life] (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske [Biblioteka Zora], 1981) and *Život je bajka* ([Life Is a Fairy Tale] Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske [Biblioteka Zora], 1983). In English both published in: Dubravka Ugrešić, *Lend Me Your Character*, trans. Celia Hawkesworth and Michael Henry Heim (London: Dalkey Archiv Press, 2005). idem. *Forsiranje romana reke* (Zagreb: "August Cesarec", 1988), in English: *Fording the Stream of Consciousness*, trans. Michael Henry Heim (London: Virago Press, 1991).

<sup>386</sup> Dubravka Ugrešić, *Nova ruska proza kretanja u ruskoj sovjetskoj prozi 70-ih godina* [New Russian prose movement in the Russian-Soviet prose of the 1970s] (Zagreb: Liber, 1980).

<sup>387</sup> Dubravka Ugrešić, “Surovo žensko pismo” [Brutal women’s writing], *Republika* no. 5-6 (1988): 163-166, 164.

sometimes puzzlingly read like examples of a perfect textbook. The fascination of her texts lays in how she is able to make the reader aware that the gender of the author *does* matter and in the ways she achieves this awareness. Whereas the previously discussed two authors often rely on the personal narration to direct the attention to the gender of the voices, by Ugrešić the author is most often subject to the literary game, where the fictional space and boundaries of the fictive are problematised, placing the author and the narrator on the terrain of this game.

The first books of Ugrešić are full of intertextual references. Many of these pave the way to feminist readings, like the recurrent allusions to Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and *Madame Bovary* (both in *Štefica* and *Forsiranje*). She incorporates elements of popular culture from fairy tales to fashion magazines into her writing. We should keep in mind that popular media and culture are both medium and theme of the *Žena i društvo* group: several feminist authors published critical texts on mass culture, especially that addressing primarily women, like magazines or the trivial romance.<sup>388</sup> Ugrešić contributes to the debates about the role of popular culture and trivial romance in women's life and the way it should be evaluated in her novel *Štefica Cvek u raljama života*. *Štefica* is a pastiche of the trivial romance, with a two-level narration: we have a first-person self-conscious narrator who is herself an author and who wants to write a novel. Our narrator receives ideas and advice from friends, family (her mother and the friends of the mother), colleagues and acquaintances, which turn more and more into demands impossible to fulfil. Based on the demands of the future readers, she decides to

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<sup>388</sup> Cf. Chapter 3., especially Drakulić, *Smrtni grijesi*; Svetlana Slapšak, ed. *Trivijalna književnost. Zbornik tekstova* [Trivial literature. Selected texts] (Beograd: Radionica SIC, 1987); Dunja Blažević, "Idealna žena" [The ideal woman], *Književne novine* 25<sup>th</sup> March 1980, 45-48.



write for women, and since for women one writes romantic stories, the author-narrator begins writing the romance of Štefica Cvek, a young unhappy typist. The second level of the narration, therefore, tells the story of Štefica Cvek in third-person. The hopeless heroine is looking for advice among her friends and in popular women's magazines for her problems of how to be beautiful, successful and most crucially, how to catch a husband. Whereas the author/narrator often resists the clichés prescribed by the rules of the trivial genre and often points out the low value in women's popular literature, she has a sympathetic voice for her heroine. She often addresses her and in their imaginary dialogues the author-narrator attempts to fulfil Štefica's dreams of becoming the ideal woman of the magazines, who is smart, beautiful and finds a husband.

This author-narrator is the author of an obviously post-modernist text claiming a place in the literary canon, even through the references to male authors: Flaubert, Shakespeare, Bruno Schulz. Although the presence of Shakespeare, as well as a contemporary art exhibition in Štefica's life are just as useless as are the women's magazines: these all promise her something unachievable. Besides the sympathy of the author-narrator towards Štefica, she also makes a stand for the readers of the trivial, those women and genres that are pushed on the margins of the same canon. Eventually, the central character or the "real heroine" is the narrator-author herself. It is her mind which the reader is continuously allowed to look into and it is her struggles with the feminine genre, the trivial romance, which the reader follows from the first ideas till the finished text. It is on the pages of *Štefica* that Ugrešić creates other female voices, who then influence the narrative, either as characters who give comments to the author-narrator about how to write, or as the friends of Štefica telling her how to live. The friends of

Štefica, the relatives and friends at the author-narrator's mother's house are like a women's choir, like women singing Balkans folk songs.<sup>389</sup> It is again a different, however, still powerful approach to the *writing of the sisterhood*. Another important element to the *writing the sisterhood*, in my reading, is the personal. Fictive or referential, but there is a narratorial autobiography interwoven with the text. Throughout her career Ugrešić smartly uses autobiography, which becomes more emphatic in her post-1991 writing, but it already is present in her early work. Mostly through the profession of the narrator, who is then a writer herself, and whose personal struggles are with her own writing.

The short stories in *Život je bajka* are focused on the narrative voice and the gender of the narrator or implied author through the technique of rewriting classical and canonised short stories from Gogol's *The Nose* to Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata*. The latter deserves more analysis, as a case study of how Ugrešić makes the gender of the implied author or narrator matters. The situation is familiar to the readers from Tolstoy's text: passengers sit in a closed cabin of a train and one tells a story about his wife to the other. The text of Tolstoy gives a strong opinion about women and their place in society, which has a history of interpretation both as misogynic and sympathetic. The elements of the plot from Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata* are repeated by Ugrešić, who gives the story an ironic twist at the end. It turns out that the passenger with the tragic narrative about his wife was a pickpocket and the story, like a tale by Sherezade, was serving only the goal to distract the attentions of the audience from something else: here from watching their

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<sup>389</sup> Celia Hawkesworth, *Voices in the Shadows: Women and Verbal Art in Serbia and Bosnia* (New York: CEU Press, 2000).

purses. There is a gender aspect in the relation between speaker and listener, narrator and audience to be noted here. In order the narrative situation to be credible, that is to achieve the atmosphere of trust and understanding between the two people in the train's compartment, both of them have to be male. This narrator is usually also the implied author of the text. These author-narrators in Ugrešić's work are most often women, whose gender Ugrešić handles with ease, as something natural and obvious. Creating a male narrator for this short story is the precondition to be able to create a character who would tell his story to another man, the narrator, who then can narrate the story of this other men, and the story will be written by the author with the name Dubravka Ugrešić.

Beyond the investigation of the possibilities with a male or female narrator or implied author, Ugrešić's stories often make fun of the fixed roles of masculinity and the manifestations of patriarchal power. Many of the male characters are punished or caricatured, like in the pastiche of Gogol's *The Nose* the lost body part is the penis of a man about whom we learn to be a womaniser. The problematic nature of patriarchy and its influence on literature takes shape in meta-conflicts between authors, like in the short story *Lend Me Your Character*, and peaks in the story of the novel *Fording the Stream-of-Consciousness*. The three dysfunctional men (the Truck Driver, the He-Man, the Intellectual) in *Štefica Cvek* fit this framework too. Ugrešić uses the absurd and the grotesque to take revenge on those male characters (written by male authors like the character in *Lend Me* and *Forging*) who embody common heroes of canonised Western literature and who abandon, cheat on, steal from the female characters. Ugrešić uses a conscious voice about her own narration, which goes beyond the self-conscious narrator in the sense of Wayne C. Booth, and by adding an extra, meta-level to her narratives, she

always already produces an interpretative frame to the next level of the narrative. This technique foregoes the texts literary analysis and inscribes her own reception.

The reception of Ugrešić's writing by the feminist literary community was not unanimously enthusiastic. Ugrešić herself, as we can already see in her literary interests, was not a regular member of the *Žena i društvo* group. When we talked about her experience of the time, the way she remembers she thought it was a good thing that it existed, sometimes she visited their events, but she did not find it important from the perspective of her own work. Writing about writing, creating art about women's creativity is, however, not the only way of working on feminist issues, questioning the status quo of patriarchy or the legitimacy of the state socialist regime. Reflections on women's writing and women's creativity oftentimes involve reflection on motherhood, femininity, beauty, the body.

### **Motherhood and/in Writing**

Motherhood is one of the recurrent tropes of the discussions of *žensko pismo* and women's creativity in general. The concept is addressed and discussed in many works from art through literature to sociology, a popular theme offering new approaches to one of the most contested issues of the new feminism emerging in the 1960s. However, it is not only feminism that shows a keen interest in the topic: looking the socio-political background of the discussion, we see that the reform of motherhood was a major concern of the Yugoslav state. As the articles in the journal *Žena* or the health advice books I analyse in Chapter 4 show, however, the state still imagined women primarily as mothers, which view necessarily brought along a rather traditional representation of motherhood as

a concept. It was more avant-garde at the time early socialist feminism fought for its political importance, as the writings of such charismatic figures of the movement as Clara Zetkin and Aleksandra Kollontai prove. New feminism wanted to regain the concept and reinterpret it. Motherhood also remains in the centre of feminist interest in the post-Yugoslav space after 1991, as the edited volumes of Biljana Dojčinović and Ana Vilenica show.<sup>390</sup> It is in artworks where women around the new feminist group in Yugoslavia explore the ambiguities in the relationship between motherhood and feminism. The tension is between mothers, who are also women, being therefore sisters, while through their educative role, mothers appear also as those who identify with the values of patriarchy and impose them on their daughters.

In the lives of the new Yugoslav feminists, there is even a generational clash between them and the foremother partisan women, often in high political positions. The *Žena i društvo* group members themselves become mothers too, so the topic becomes important from the other side as well. In the meantime, the maternal body is one which counters the image of sexualised female body. We are witnessing a time when, due to the debates about the construction of masculinity and femininity, the constructedness of motherhood enters the discussions too. The interviews with Élisabeth Badinter, the author of the taboo-breaking book questioning the myth of the motherly instinct,<sup>391</sup> are on the front page of Yugoslav weeklies. A mother herself already at the time, Drakulić prepares interviews with Élisabeth Badinter and Erica Jong, one of the most popular feminist

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<sup>390</sup> Biljana Dojčinović-Nesić, ed., *O rađanju* [About giving birth] (Beograd: Asocijacija za žensku inicijativu, 2001) and Ana Vilenica, ed., *Postajanje majkom u vreme neoliberalnog kapitalizma* [Becoming a mother at the time of neoliberal capitalism] (Beograd: uz(bu))na)), 2013).

<sup>391</sup> Élisabeth Badinter, *L'Amour en plus: histoire de l'amour maternel (XVIIe-XXe siècle)* (Paris: Flammarion, DL, 1981).

writers in the US of the time. Jong not only wrote about the explorations of women's femininity, but about her relationship to her own mother and her own motherhood. At the very same time, feminism of the time reclaims motherhood as women's right to choose their way of mothering. The metaphor of motherhood and birth giving to creativity is reinterpreted and mapped in order to question the small numbers of women in art and literature, while the very search for the artistic foremothers also relates to a sense of (inter)generationality of the new feminism.

"Matriarchy is a myth", claims Rada Iveković in her article about women's creativity. Matriarchy as a concept is ambiguous: the claim for its existence can involve a denial of women's subordination by implying that it is women who are in fact in power. However, the claim that it existed some time in history is more empowering, as it questions that patriarchy is the only social system since the birth of humanity. No matter, however, of one's perspective of matriarchy, in a discussion of women and creativity, motherhood as a concept cannot be discarded. While Iveković resists the essentialisation and reductionism behind this idea, she does not dismiss the concept of motherhood in the discussions about femininity as such: "Woman as a category is created through birth giving", while birth giving, in another metaphor, is conceived as creativity.<sup>392</sup> This idea returns in Nada Popović Perišić, another author extremely knowledgeable of the latest trends of postmodern theories of motherhood, quoting Roland Barthes's "all writing is abortion and birth giving".<sup>393</sup> She, however, turns the metaphor around in a way which is empowering women: "Women's writing gives birth to writing. [...] The woman has to

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<sup>392</sup> Iveković, "Ženska kreativnost i kreiranje žene", 139.

<sup>393</sup> Popović-Perišić, *Literatura kao zavođenje*, 39.

write herself: that the woman writes about the woman, and calls women to write.”<sup>394</sup> Both Popović Perišić and Branka Arsić<sup>395</sup> analyse Julia Kristeva’s texts on motherhood and creativity, Kristeva’s, whose famous essay, *Héretique l’amour*, appeared in translation in the *žensko pismo* issue of the journal *Republika* in 1983.<sup>396</sup> The ambiguity of motherhood and writing provides more space to think about women’s creativity. Ingrid Šafranek, while investigating the possibilities of *žensko pismo*, also emphasises the importance of mothers and the relationships of mothers and daughters. What is there about it, also in psychoanalysis, is wrong, writes Šafranek, and has been turned into something “occult”, probably in fear of a “recreation of a matriarchy”.<sup>397</sup> Whether matriarchy ever existed, is questionable. But we can see from these texts that theoreticians are clearly aware of the power behind a new approach to and a reclaim of motherhood as a concept.

Artists and writers offer us a broad spectrum of dealing with the concept. Slavenka Drakulić’s second work of fiction, *Marble Skin* revolves around a mother–daughter relationship. The daughter, the narrator of the novel, is a sculptor. She usually uses clay or wood for her work, except when she makes marble sculptures of female nudes made after her own mother’s body. From the narration slowly unfolds the difficult relationship between the mother and the daughter, characterised by silence, the impossibility for them to connect through language and by the taboo of the body, making it impossible for them to connect through physical intimacy. The appearance of a man in

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<sup>394</sup> Popović-Perišić, *Literatura kao zavodenje*, 48.

<sup>395</sup> Branka Arsić, “Mesto majke i mesto oca” [The place of the mother and the place of the father], *Gledišta* no. 1-2 (1990): 39-49.

<sup>396</sup> Julia Kristeva, “Heretika ljubavi” [Héretique l’amour], trans. Vesna Hrvatin, *Republika* no. 11-12 (1983): 67-84.

<sup>397</sup> Šafranek, “‘Ženska književnost’ i ‘žensko pismo’”, 21.

the mother's life escalates the tension, culminating when the man and the then adolescent narrator begin to have an affair behind the back of the mother. When, at the beginning of the narrative, the daughter meets the mother after a long time, the mother is ill and restrained to bed, her illness and passivity opening more space for the narrator to contemplate about their relationship. The book begins with a question, posed by the narrator to herself, when she talks to a critic about her sculptures depicting the mother: "How could I tell her, how could I make her understand with words, what a woman's body is?"<sup>398</sup> It is the words she lacks and the marble she chooses, so that with the help of the sculptures with "marble skin" and hollow space inside she enter into dialogue with her mother. As the illness in the case of *Holograms*, so ensures the profession of the daughter in this novel a more conscious awareness of the characters of their own body. The body, sexuality and the maternal is how *écriture féminine* is circumscribed. Drakulić attempts to access through language the feelings and tensions her women narrators and characters experience.

The search for and creation of a new female subjectivity is present in the only pre-war fictional work of Rada Iveković, the novel *Sporost–oporost*. In the book, the reader meets again a mother–daughter relation with all its complicities, from the daughter's perspective, where the father stands for the authoritarian patriarchy. Iveković is exploring the ways one starts speaking, "how language comes to being"<sup>399</sup> and how the relationship between mother and daughter alters when in the narrative and through language it is the

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<sup>398</sup> Drakulić, *Marble Skin*, 3.

<sup>399</sup> Rada Iveković, *Sporost–oporost* [Slowness–roughness] (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske [Biblioteka Zora], 1988), 7. (my translation)



mother who is given birth to by the daughter's writing. On the early pages of the novel reads:

There is something I am not certain of: if I came to being from you, in a moment when fissure has not yet separated our pains, which one of us gives this original scream, with the shriek of horror, with this howl of life in face of the misgiving death? Who is the mother of whom then?<sup>400</sup>

Iveković's novel closely experiments with the issues in the theoretical investigations of the *écriture féminine*. The moment of birth is a moment of a cry or shriek, of gaining voice, in becoming and in separation. A mother is born, a baby is born, and then the daughter through writing recreates the mother, and through writing recreated herself as a subject and created herself as a mother, giving birth to a text. The novel *Sporost-oporost* is a manifesto on the side of the oppressed mother and against the patriarchal oppression of the father.

The tension between the autonomy of the daughter and the contentious relationship of the parents, where either of them can turn into an oppressor takes a radical, life-and-death shape in an early project plan of Marina Abramović. Abramović was not only not a member of the *Žena i društvo* group, she adamantly claims not to be a feminist. Still, she is relevant in and related to this chapter for various reasons. She started her career in Belgrade's SKC, under the curatorship of Dunja Blažević and later with the support of Biljana Tomić. She was a member of a group of six artists, the only woman. Her work at the time, as well as later on, focused on the body and control, a deconstruction of control and the limits of endurance and pain. Her refusal of feminism is phrased through statements which unluckily oversimplify feminism, if not even testify of

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<sup>400</sup> Iveković, *Sporost—oporost*, 10.

an ignorance of the multi-layered meanings of feminism. These include Abramović's opinion that "in Yugoslavia, Western style feminism never seemed necessary" or "I feel I have to help men", when she is asked about feminism.<sup>401</sup> Still, she did participate in group exhibitions with a majority of feminist artists like Gina Pane, Iole de Freitas, Katharina Sieverding (whom she knew already as guests of the SKC in Belgrade),<sup>402</sup> and worked not only with Blažević and the other feminist curators in Belgrade, but also for example Ursula Krinzinger, who apparently was struggling to convince Abramović of the potential in feminism.<sup>403</sup>

Abramović also recounts her early impression with Rebecca Horn as an "independent female artist", with whom if she compared herself, she could see that she was not strong enough yet (73). One of the very early influences she recalls is that of Vida Jocić, a painter who was teaching little Marina about art, a Ravensbrück KZ survivor herself, whose memory Abramović honours in a later work. Her encounter with Hannah Wilke is also of high significance in the story of Abramović's artistic development (140), and Wilke's work is a foundational part of the new feminist artistic canon of the "West". While it was not only women, who played an important role in her career,<sup>404</sup> they definitely are there. Moreover, looking at many of her work, Krinzinger's interest is not surprising. Neither is Blažević's disappointment with Abramović's position to feminism, which the curator mentioned in our talk. Many of Abramović work,

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<sup>401</sup> Westcott, *When Marina Abramović Dies*, 97.

<sup>402</sup> Philomena Magers and Margarethe Jochimsen, eds., *Frauen machen Kunst, 8 Dezember 1976 – 31 Januar 1997*. Bonn: Galerie Magers, 1976.

<sup>403</sup> Westcott, *When Marina Abramović Dies*, 129. Further citations to this work are given in the text.

<sup>404</sup> Of the men, I would mention Tomislav Gotovac, Richard Demarco, Tadeusz Kantor, Joseph Beuys.

especially her early work, stretch the boundaries of patriarchy and patriarchal control. Already her strive towards becoming *strong* as an artist, manifested in the *Rhythm* series, for example her refusal of help when she fainted in *Rhythm 5* (67-69). The focus on equality and cooperation in her work with Ulay, in pieces like *Breathing In / Breathing Out* and their performance of a combination of androgyny and sexual organs is a slap in the face of patriarchal male-female relations. Despite her denial, there is an aspect of solidarity in *Role Exchange*. The theme of art as commodity and women as commodity is also there in *Art Must Be Beautiful*. In my reading these works are in a strong tension with Abramović's ardent anti-feminism.

Her biography is consciously built into her oeuvre, through own projects, from their departure with Ulay walking the Chinese Great Wall to *Balkan Baroque* and the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (which made her unquestionably world famous), through interview books and authorised monographs. This is how the story of the highly ambivalent relationship between her and her mother is known. Abramović's mother, Danica Rosić Abramović was the director of the Museum of the Revolution and Art, a powerful person, if not in the Yugoslav, then in the Belgrade museum and gallery scene, who looked at her daughter's artistic work as an embarrassment. Dunja Blažević told me during our discussion that Danica Abramović called Blažević when she heard about her daughter's project plan of *Rhythm 5* and wanted Blažević to talk Abramović out of her idea (73). Blažević did not do so. Abramović's anger about the maternal control leads early in her career to a project draft, which, luckily enough, was not realised, but which is described in various books and other presentations of Abramović's life work.

Whatever her motivation, it is clear that at this time she was willing to risk everything to follow her impulses. Indeed, in 1970 she even submitted a proposal to the Galerija Doma Omladine, Belgrade for a performance (*Untitled Proposal*) in which she planned to dress in the clothes her mother would have chosen for her to wear and then place a gun loaded with one bullet to her temple. For Abramović, this piece has two possible endings, one of which ends with the trigger being pulled and Abramović presumably dying or at the least sustaining a head wound. The alternative ending has the trigger being pulled without fatal or mortal consequences, in which case she would redress the way she wanted to dress and then go her own way. It is as if ‘she would rather kill herself than be bound by the rules of Western civilization’ (Abramović *et al.*, 1998: 25).<sup>405</sup>

The mother as a representative of the oppression by civilisation is a telling metaphor, while the lack of a discussion of the father’s responsibility signals one the blank spots in the artist’s work from a feminist perspective, which perspective considers patriarchal oppression systemic and takes it as a starting point of its analysis. In this story, both mother and daughter betray each other, break the sisterhood they cannot experience together. Shaming and name calling, specifically calling women whores, are common strategies of silencing women, especially when they want to subjectify their body and sexuality. Abramović, who always used her often naked body as a major medium in her art, also remembers her own mother calling her a whore for her art.<sup>406</sup> She recalls this when discussing the creation of her piece *Role Exchange* (1976), in which the artist changes place with an Amsterdam prostitute, Suze, in a window of the red light district, while Suze takes her place at her exhibition opening.

The case of a controlling and abusive mother and an abusive father in the life of Abramović also signals the reality to which feminism activism later reacts. The story as it is told in Westcott’s biography presents one of the most horrifying scenarios a child can

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<sup>405</sup> Mary Richards, *Marina Abramović* (London and New York: Routledge), 90-91.

<sup>406</sup> Westcott, *When Marina Abramović Dies*, 104.

grow up in: the father was physically abusive towards the mother. The mother used the child Marina “as a human shield” to protect herself, while at other times was beating and cruelly disciplining the child. All this under the surface of an exemplary family with both parents in high positions within the socialist nomenclature. The probably most well-known contemporary artist from Yugoslavia, fits a feminist interpretive and historical frame of the time. Adding her work to this chapter is both ahistorical, as she would disagree of being treated as a feminist artist and many aspects of her work and other statements contradict feminism, and historical, if we look at many of the concepts and ideas her work evokes and discusses.

Compared to Abramović’s pieces, in the early writings of Dubravka Ugrešić, mothers represent social reality outside literature, a reality, which, however, reads and reacts to literature. In the play between the narrative levels and the stretching of the boundaries between the text and “reality” outside the text, there often is a narrator who is an author writing a text, a typical case of a narrative within the narrative, which facilitates self-conscious narration. In *Štefica Cvek* and the short story “Lend Me Your Character” Ugrešić adds implied readers to her story, who, in the frame narrative, tell the writer-narrator about their ideas and demands about the literary text they want to read. Besides the polyphony of female voices, this technique is remarkable because the voices of the female readers are put in the mouth of the mother of the writer-narrator. The circle is even broader with the friends and relatives of the mother in *Štefica Cvek*, who do not agree with the choice of ending of the writer and demand a more spectacular and more exciting happy ending, closer to kitsch than to the concept of a post-modern intertextual novel full of meta-discourses. The writer leaves the scene with tears in her eyes: “I felt

utterly alone. ... I left with a bitter taste in my mouth ... I thought ... about how we are chronically infected by the fairy tale...”<sup>407</sup> In the meantime, it is the mother of the writer in “Lend Me Your Character” who bursts out in tears of despair upon learning that her daughter has a secret scholarly project, *A Lexicon of female literary characters*. These mother figures resist the feminist or artistically experimental endeavours of the writer-narrator, posing a conflict, however, their representation is serious in its playfulness. Ugrešić eases up the generational clash, being ironic both about the traditionalism of the mothers and about the grandiose plans of the writer-narrator about a “real women’s novel” or about the lexicon, which, of course, is also self-irony on her behalf. These mothers are just as caring and supportive, as they are the symbols of what the daughter wants to surpass and change, something we may call the patriarchal order.

### **Revolutionising (Through) the Body. Issues of Beauty and Femininity**

The way Ugrešić treats the theme of mothers stands out amongst the contemporaneous works. In the other cases, the corporeality of the maternal and the female are intertwined just as much as the maternal and *žensko pismo* are. These new assessments of the female body have three main aspects, that of sexuality and sexual pleasure, that of female beauty and the construction of femininity, and that of violence. About the latter, I will write more in the next chapter, as much as it concerns the way violence as such got to be discussed in the Yugoslav discourse of the time, and I will point out its relevant aspects in this part of the thesis from the perspective of the body and beauty. While the re-appropriation of the female body, together with the re-appropriation of motherhood, are

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<sup>407</sup> Ugrešić, *Steffie Speck in the Jaws of Life*, in *Lend me Your Character*, 96-97.

the two most important acts of new feminism in the West, with the most subversive potential vis-à-vis the status quo, as we have seen and as we shall see, many artists and writers refuse being calling themselves feminists or being identified as woman artists. In the meantime, this does not hold them back from experimenting with new expressions of femininity and female identity. I look at their work with the presumption that these new approaches contribute to new feminist understanding irrespective of the feminist position of their authors, especially in a discursive environment already with a feminist vocabulary perceptive to feminism.

As Jasmina Lukić writes, Slavenka Drakulić was the first author in Yugoslav literature to have brought female sexuality from a woman's point of view into the discourse.<sup>408</sup> In the spirit of her essayistic writing, which I discuss in the previous and the following chapter, in her two early novels, *Holograms of Fear* and *Marble Skin*, Drakulić directs the attention to the troubled relationship of women to their bodies, shaped throughout expectations, discipline and violence, but also a surface of desire and appreciation. In her writing, women do not accept with ease the objectification of their bodies, posing a "long war of the naked Venus". The trope is one well characterising her work and the contemporary women's art scene: the naked Venus, similarly to Sofija Trivunac's walking caryatid,<sup>409</sup> is demanding its moment and its space in art history. These bodies often bear resemblance to the Venuses and caryatides of the male artists in their appearance, but not in their behaviour. They scream (Ladik), they speak of their orgasm (Delimar), they speak of their lack of orgasm, they pretend to masturbate (Sanja

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<sup>408</sup> Lukić, "Women-Centered Narratives in Contemporary Serbian and Croatian Literatures", 236.

<sup>409</sup> Sofija Trivunac, "Karijatida koja je prohodala" [The caryatid who started walking], *Vidici* no. 1-2 (1984): 5-9.

Iveković) or they lie down in the middle of a fire circle and almost die (Abramović). Or, their bodies are not beautiful any more: they are ill. In *Holograms of Fear* we see women represented through their body in decay. The emphasised presence of women and the lack of male characters who would be enabled to have either a (voyeuristic) seeing or a(n authoritative) speaking position, that is who are neither focalisers<sup>410</sup> nor narrators, prevents the narrator of experiencing her own body as an object of someone else's desire. This happens so not only due to the centrality of her illness, but the disease de-sexualises the female body, makes it undesirable and therefore, for men, valueless. However, by claiming both the position of the narrator and the focaliser, the narrator takes control of and develops a very conscious relationship to her own body, not letting it become an object. This is further supported by the exploration of the relationship of the own body to other women's bodies, developing a resistance to objectification, a new revolutionary technique which offers a self-liberating possibility to the female readership of the novel.

Similarly to many other feminists of the time, Drakulić refutes and refuses the ideology of the "sexual revolution" as liberating for women (cf. Ch. 3) and the sociological argumentation of the essays takes another approach to the conflict of alienation and objectification of the female body. Sanja Iveković has a sarcastic drawing of the unfulfilled promises of this revolution, with the title *Čekajući revoluciju (Alice)* ([Waiting for a revolution. Alice] 1982). The simple drawing with a girl or young woman looking at a frog, who in each drawing has a different colour, was never exhibited, but is part of the artist's catalogues. Expecting a revolution, in a context which is supposedly

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<sup>410</sup> Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, trans. by Christine van Boheemen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, c1997), 150.



post-revolutionary and where women have more than a princess would ever have dreamt of, is already sarcastic. The colours of the frog are the wrapping of the promises of a revolution, which may change, but neither these promises, nor the prince will arrive. The drawing is a gesture both to the partisan and the sexual revolutions, they come, but are still the very same little frog. As the rest of Iveković's work from the time, in various approaches and forms, tells us. It is her and Marina Abramović who most explicitly reflect on the political regime: putting the symbols of the Titoist regime and their own bodies in interaction offers layered interpretations of the place and possibilities of the female body within the system.

Sanja Iveković's *Trokut* [*Triangle*] was a performance in 1979, turned into a photo installation afterwards, where the triangle is set up of the artist, a man on a roof and a policeman on the street. It takes place on occasion of the visit of President Tito to Novi Zagreb. The artist sits on her balcony when Tito pays his visit in the part of Zagreb where she lives. As the description of the video explains, for security reasons, there is a man on the roof of the opposite building, who can see the artist on her own balcony. She reads a book and imitates masturbation, while the car convoy of Tito is welcomed by the masses on the street. The man on the roof notices her and calls the policeman on the street on his walkie-talkie, who then rings the doorbell of the artist and orders that "the persons and objects are to be removed from the balcony."<sup>411</sup> Bojana Pejić, interpreting the piece years later, sees it being

‘about’ the *liaison dangereuse* between sight and power, between *voir* and *pouvoir*. [...] This piece is a visual channel in which the exchange of two looks takes place. In saying this, I merely want to suggest that this situation differs

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<sup>411</sup> Sanja Iveković, *Personal Cuts* (Wien: Triton 2001), 104.

slightly from the Panopticon elaborated by [Jeremy] Bentham and Michel Foucault, who deal primarily with surveillance techniques performed in a closed space, where the person knows that he or she is observed, without, however, knowing exactly when this happens. In this performance both male and female subjects are actively involved: the artist sees the security man, and the security man sees her on the balcony. Iveković posits herself in a situation of “women as spectacle” and exposes herself to the active masculine look.<sup>412</sup>

In the meantime, she attracts the attention by taking her sexual pleasure into her own hands, at once ignoring and mocking the cultic male leader of the country, a symbol of the ambiguity of the fulfilled emancipation of the comrade-ess. Moreover, a country where both the new feminists and the artists of the new centres seemingly enjoy spiritual freedom, are apparently observed and disciplined in their private spaces, which loses its privacy by the nearby presence of the political leader. This work of Iveković involves aspects of her work on the construction of the female body and female beauty through control and norms, but also her critical stance towards the political regime. An even more explicit expression of this position is a collage exhibited at the *Zagrebački salon* of the Croatian Association of Artists in 1979, with the title *Rečenica* [Sentence]. There are photos of the artist in different poses, each photo rendered to a word of the sentence: “Činjenica da se danas naglašava potreba za većom disciplinom i odgovornosću govori nam o tome koliko u nas još uvijek ima ponašanja koja nisu u skladu sa proklamiranim ciljevima.”, that is “The fact that a need for stronger discipline and responsibility is stressed today tells us that there still exists behaviour that is not in line with our proclaimed goals.”<sup>413</sup> This piece uses the dogmatic language and the free moves of the

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<sup>412</sup> Bojana Pejić, “Metonymische Bewegungen/Metonymical moves”, in Sanja Iveković, *Personal Cuts*, 85-103 (Wien: Triton 2001), 98.

<sup>413</sup> Sanja Iveković, *Selected Works*. Curated and edited by Nataša Ilić and Kathrin Rhomberg (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2007), 116

body of the artist, and unlike the collages *Titov album* [Tito's Album] (1980) and *Tito's Dress* from around that time, it was shown at a prestigious public exhibition. If we look at these works in a dialogue with the work of Vlasta Delimar, Biljana Jovanović or Slavenka Drakulić about women's sexuality, it also is a reference to the interference of the leader cult with a woman's sexual enjoyment, i.e. with sexual liberation of women, i.e. the missing sexual revolution.

The control of the body is much more of an internal than an external one in the work in Abramović. However, in *Rhythm 5* (1974) she decides to use the five pointed star as a centre piece of her performance. While the artist denied the star referring to communism,<sup>414</sup> it is hard not to read the performance in its context. The difficulty in admitting the reference to the regime lies in the evoked further interpretation: while to Abramović, this piece, as well as other performances in the *Rhythm* series, is about the limits of control and boundaries, mental and physical, the red star allegory brings in issues of self-sacrifice for a higher goal and heroism, tropes of the partisan war. Westcott himself, while quotes Abramović's refusal of the red star interpretation, attaches the work to "the heroism of her parents and the mythology of Yugoslavia".<sup>415</sup> This is probably the most extremely emotionalising and simplifying interpretation of the often recurring symbol, which carries both the layer of communism (cf. *Communist Body, Fascist Body* in 1979 with Ulay) and that of witchcraft, as in *Thomas Lips* in 1975. Cutting the star into her body is also about the shaping of her own life and her very own body. As opposed to Iveković though, who has a clearly critical stance towards Tito's character, Abramović

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<sup>414</sup> Westcott, When Marina Abramović Dies, 69.

<sup>415</sup> *ibid.*, 67-69.

claimed to have an appreciation already in the 1970s for Tito's evident hedonistic lifestyle as a model of sexuality. Other art historians, such as Kristine Stiles notice her "adoration for Tito" as well: "her attachment is exemplified in a photograph of Tito in her New York office, which she hugged to her body in 2007, proclaiming continued 'love' for the renewed leader of her childhood and adult life who was 'passionate in everything – food and drink, love and hate, decision-making, who behaved as if there was no distinction between his love life and important Party business.'"<sup>416</sup> Probably if anything, it is this later work of Abramović is what definitively draws the line between her and that corpus of artistic work which one may attach to the first two decades of new Yugoslav feminism.

One of her very early works, on the other hand, the 1975 video, *Art Must Be Beautiful, Artist Must Be Beautiful* is a piece which calls out various feminist interpretations. Especially in light of the other feminist works in the discursive space around. The more and more aggressive hair combing of the artist herself, while repeating the title sentence, is leading towards the artist causing herself more and more pain, while becoming more and more emotionally involved. The hair-combing, a mandatory beauty rite of women, turns into self-hurting and self-disciplining, what patriarchy through fashion often does to women. The combing is in a way a slap in the face from the artwork, the market aspect of the art scene, where often it is not the artwork that defines its value and artists are treated as products themselves. The art market seemingly imposes the same rules for everyone, still, there is a general expectation to women to be

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<sup>416</sup> Kristine Stiles, "Survey. Cloud with Shadows", in *Marina Abramović*, ed. Kristine Stiles et al. 33-94 (London: Phaidon, 2008), 59. The inner quote by Abramović is from her *Balkan Epic*.

“beautiful” and in the history of art, this is exactly where their place was, to be beautiful bodies painted, sculpted, written by male artists.

Her later work, the above mentioned *Role Exchange* also reflects on the consumerism in art and the corruption by capitalism, and in attempt to point out the problematic nature of this, Abramović again uses her body and a thematisation of her femininity. The female body as an object of art, the exceptionality of a female artist, her being reduced to her body again when treated by the art market. Abramović’s *Art Must Be Beautiful* can also be read as a counter piece to Raša Todosijević’s *Was ist Kunst, Marinela Koželj?* (1978), where a male voice is asking a young woman in front of the camera “Was its Kunst?” and hits her head and face after each question. This piece is a good example for the spirit of the age, when male artists in Yugoslavia start reflecting on patriarchy. In a similar vein, when earlier Dunja Blažević asks the artists she worked with, including Todosijević and Abramović, to bring an object which is important to them, Todosijević brings his girlfriend, Marinela Koželj. What we see in the video, fits rather into the long line of the portrayal of violence against women and femicide in the history of art. Abramović, inflicting the violence onto herself, through combing her hair, a seemingly everyday beauty practice, shows the forceful expectations about the female body and takes back the agency from the hands of others, as a last grasp for control.

The political and the violent are the two prevailing motives of Iveković’s *Osobni rezovi* [*Personal Cuts*] (1982). The history of the SFRY itself exemplifies how women slowly disappear as fighters and are left as happy housewives or worker women at the belt-conveyor (cf. Ch.1. about historiography and Ch.3. about the changes in popular women’s press). We meet with images from this history in *Osobni rezovi* in an unusual

format: the images from the show of the state TV *The History of Yugoslavia* from the past twenty years flash up between two “personal cuts”. The artist has a black sock or stocking pulled over her head, looking like a terrorist or a bank robber. “The terrorist act that Iveković associates with this takes place in the field of vision in which real violence – the cut in the mask – merges with structural violence – represented by the relationship of the individual and the medium of television, which is political power in the broader sense.”<sup>417</sup> – writes Eiblmayer about this work, correctly indicating the interplay between levels of violence and the problems the piece makes us aware of. In the meantime, it is again in accord with the issue of the role of women in Yugoslav history raised by feminist historians, like Andrea Feldman and Lydia Sklevický just at about the same time this video was produced and broadcast. However, the cutting off a mask can also be seen as a bitter but powerful act of self-liberation: the mask imposed on the individual through media, history, political regime. The face expression of the artist, however, is not liberated, but as the film rolls and the cuts are inflicted, is more and more desperate.

Femininity, consumerism, mass media, violence and politics are the topics around which the work of Iveković in the 1970s and 1980s is organised. Some of the work tackles on one of the topics, but the best ones combine them. Her early photo montage projects, *Dvostruki život 1959-1975* [*Double Life 1959-1975*] (1975), *Tragedija jedne Venere* [*Tragedy of a Venus*] (1975), *Gorki život* [*Bitter Life*] and *Slatki život* [*Sweet Life*] (1975-76), *Crni fascikl* [*The Black File*] (1976) work with pairs of images: one from the media, usually tabloid press, put in couple with something unusual: either photos from the artist’s personal pictures, or in the case of *The Black Files*, the nudes from sex

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<sup>417</sup> Silvia Eiblmayer, “Personal Cuts” in. Sanja Iveković, *Personal Cuts* (Wien: Triton, 2001) 13-16, 13.

advertisements are contrasted with the small portraits of missing girls from the dailies. One of the pictures from the 62 pairs of images of *Double Life* 1959-1975 are advertisements of cosmetics and other beauty products from women's magazines, the others depict the artist in a certain period of her life. The pictures are matched based on the similarity in situation, position, props or the location. However, it is strikingly visible that one set of the images are stylised and touched up, whereas the artist's own ones are amateur photos we all possibly have at home in albums or drawers.

*Tragedy of a Venus* follows a similar pattern, but here one set of the 25 photographs are from the special issue on Marilyn Monroe of the magazine *Duga*, the other set is again from the artist's personal holdings. The piece reconstructs the chronology of the magazine, showing the artist and Marilyn Monroe on parallel pictures from their childhood till their young adulthood. *Bitter Life* and *Sweet Life* reflect on each other too. Both are series of photographs pairs. The one side of *Bitter Life* encompasses images from the black chronicles, of *Sweet Life* from the "scandal columns", while the images on the other sides depict the artist again. These works of Iveković use the method of appropriation of imagery from the media where women's body is used for urging and propagating consumerism, taking it back for formulating different images of women and the female body. The use of the photographs from her personal files, together with images available to the wider public, but eventually referring to the personal plays around the dichotomy of the public and the private and the role of the female body in these relations. As Silvia Eiblmayer, Austrian art historian and the curator of a later exhibition of Iveković notes: "this is not done with the intention of creating a 'counter-image of the identical', but rather to present the fiction of both sides – the 'public' and the 'private'",

by “bringing herself into play as a structural figure of reference in the broad field of representation.”<sup>418</sup>

The market and a criticism of consumerism are approached from a different perspective in Iveković’s work, in Ugrešić’s play with the genre of popular women’s magazines and women’s literature in *Štefica Cvek*, and Abramović’s *Art Must Be Beautiful* and *Role Exchange*. Women are in a double role in market relations: they are both consumers and products. The environment of these works is worth mentioning, with a short analysis of the role of consumerism in Tito’s Yugoslavia. Branislav Dimitrijević quotes an anecdote, a scene he witnessed in the *kafana* of some small mountain village in Serbia:

Two local people, well-informed guests, discuss the actual international affairs. One of them is prophesising the end of the communist block and the final collapse of its economic policy, while the other defends the traditional trust on the strengths of Russia, what should be joined and could be trusted. These arguments of his Russophile and pro-communist fellow make the first man really angry, he stands up and shouts with his typical South Serbian accent: ‘If this is really your opinion, why are you not drinking *kvas* and put your spare money in rubel, instead of drinking Cola and Whiskey and put your money in dollars?’<sup>419</sup>

Besides being funny, the anecdote shows the atmosphere of self-managing socialist Yugoslavia in the 1970s, where there was Volkswagen Golf produced from 1972,<sup>420</sup> Renault 4 from 1973,<sup>421</sup> Levi’s 501 jeans from 1983 (in the Varteks Factory),<sup>422</sup> and as

<sup>418</sup> Eiblmayer, “Personal Cuts”, 14.

<sup>419</sup> Branislav Dimitrijević, “Sozialistischer Konsumismus, Verwestlichung und kulturelle Reproduktion. Der Postkommunistische ‘Übergang’ im Jugoslawien Titos” [Socialist consumerism, westernisation and cultural reproduction. The post-communist transition in Tito’s Yugoslavia], in *Zurück aus der Zukunft. Osteuropäische Kulturen im Zeitalter des Postkommunismus* [Back from the future. East European cultures in the time of post-communism], ed. Boris Groys et al., 195-277 (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2005), 200.

<sup>420</sup> “Fenomen Golf: Automobil sa dušom” [The Golf phenomenon: Car with a soul], *BH Dani*, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2002 <http://www.bhdani.com/arhiva/265/t26515.shtml> (Accessed: 4th June 2009).

<sup>421</sup> History of Revoz d.d., <http://www.revoz.si/en/inside.cp2?cid=50A1DC36-A564-8F6D-AAEF-BB43A84AB644&linkid=inside> (Accessed: 4th June 2009).



Igor Duda argues, the “consumer craze” was rapidly growing from the 1960s till the end of Yugoslav socialism.<sup>423</sup> Pejić summarises the late 1970s as follows: “the age of High Communism in a Yugoslavia characterised by an extreme combination of consumerism-cum-communism, legalised abortion and a one-party system. Levis [sic] jeans and a centralised economy. It was an era of sex (in Yugoslav films), drugs (at home) and rock’n’roll played in public dance halls which as any public room throughout the county displayed a photographic portrait of the President.”<sup>424</sup> Consumerism was used to maintain the power of a regime, Tito’s authoritarian state socialism. Iveković’s work smartly finds the common point in these. So did many of the Yugoslav feminists, like Slavenka Drakulić in her essay on the role of mass media in maintaining a false image of gender equality and sexual revolution,<sup>425</sup> or Dunja Blažević on women’s magazines, which are addressing women as mothers and wives, but Blažević is also critical on the commodity-fetishism of these magazines.<sup>426</sup> About the latter, I write more in detail in the next chapter.

Some of the smaller-scale projects of Iveković reflect more directly on women’s representation in the media. The works *Dnevnik* [*Diary*] (1975-76), *Make Up – Make Down* (b/w version 1976, colour version 1978), *Instrukcije br. 1* [*Instructions No. 1*]

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<sup>422</sup> “Varteks Denim potpisao ugovore s Levi’som i Dockersom” [Varteks Denim signed a contract with Levi’s and Docker], *Vjesnik*, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2001.

<http://www.vjesnik.hr/pdf/2001%5C12%5C22%5C13A13.PDF> (Accessed: 4<sup>th</sup> June 2009).

<sup>423</sup> Igor Duda, “Tehnika narodu! Trajna dobra, potrošnja i slobodno vrijeme u socijalističkoj Hrvatskoj” [Technology for the people! Consumer goods, consumerism and free time in socialist Croatia], *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* vol. 37. no. 2 (2005): 329-578.

<sup>424</sup> Pejić, “Metonymische Bewegungen/Metonymic Moves”, 96.

<sup>425</sup> Slavenka Drakulić-Ilić, “Žena i seksualna revolucija” [Women and sexual revolution], *Dometi* no. 13. vol. 2 (1980): 45-50.

<sup>426</sup> Dunja Blažević, “Idealna žena” (Ideal woman), *Književne novine*, 25 March 1980, 45-48.

(1976), *Un jour violente* (1976) and *Un jour secrète* (1976) involve elements of the “natural” phase of women’s everyday life: the application of make-up. The slowness of the video work *Make Up – Make Down* and the rituality of *Un jour violente* and *Un jour secrète* distance this everyday practice, as do *Diary* and *Instructions No. 1* also, with different strategies. *Diary* is a series of 7 photo collages, composed of magazine advertisements of cosmetics and photographs of cotton napkins for make-up removal, with the stains of colourful make-up, used by the artist herself, calling the attention to the prosaic materiality of the seamless beauty of the images in the commercials and involving the “personal” residues of the artist. In the video *Instructions No. 1*, the artist draws lines with an ink pen onto her neck and face, marking the directions for a beautifying massage. After she follows her instructions, the ink lines get destroyed and the beautifying moves of the massage leave smudgy patches on the face and the neck. The painting of the face as an act resembles both to the application of make-up and the rituals in cultures where the painting of the face or the body precedes important actions, like war or hunting, whereas the lines drawn are similar to the patters drawn by the plastic surgeon before the operation.

The early Sanja Iveković works represent very well the ambiguities of the beauty industry for women, especially in a socialist/communist society, where the initial and official image and the attempt for the elimination of consumerism refuses these products. Iveković’s works place question- and quotation marks around the products and their commercials, but do not refuse these completely. What she does in her visual work can be put in par with to the early work of Slavenka Drakulić. In the essay “Why do women like

fairy tales?”<sup>427</sup> Drakulić argues that despite their simplicity, trivial romance novels mean an escape from the everyday reality of state socialism. However, speaking of Yugoslav consumerism in Iveković’s work, it should be noted that the advertisements Iveković uses for her collages are mostly from French and Italian magazines and not from the local ones, and as I have said, her work is not unanimously and only critical towards the phenomenon, her work as a simple anti-consumerist protest would not be very interesting.<sup>428</sup> I could compare her standpoint to that of Ugrešić in *Štefica Cvek*, where the hopeless heroine is looking for advice among her friends and in these magazines for her problems of how to be beautiful, successful and how to catch a man, first of all. The critical stance of the author/narrator towards the popular genres is expressed by the refusal of the “fake” ending of the story of Štefica, where she falls in love with a millionaire film director or by the advice of the magazines which do not solve the horrible troubles of the poor heroine.

### **In Conclusion: Feminism and the Status Quo**

As I argue above and throughout this chapter, these works analysed are hard to be categorised under one concept of feminism or one concept of dissent, whereas they involve aspects of both. As an example, I would look at the interpretation of the work of the probably most important artist of the time from a feminist perspective, Sanja

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<sup>427</sup> Drakulić-Ilić, *Smrtni grijesi feminizma*, 33-45.

<sup>428</sup> This is also how Anđelković interprets her work: “her art is neither a moralist criticism of consumerism nor is it a dissident criticism of socialism. Unlike her male peers, she approaches both ideological frameworks with serious caution. She is aware that there is no such thing as objective distance, that there is no way that a non-involvement or some puritan exclusivism can lead to meaningful criticism.” Anđelković, “How ‘persons and objects’ become political in Sanja Iveković’s art?”, 22.

Iveković. In retrospect, Branislava Anđelković sees her “another manifestation of cultural dissidence”,<sup>429</sup> whereas Bojana Pejić writes about her that “she was not a dissident artist, but she was the first of her generation to express a clearly feminist attitude.”<sup>430</sup> Probably it is Iveković whose work stands with the same meanings and connotations without the rest of the feminist context, but is certainly supported by those. Another case when art becomes overtly critical of the regime, in a Chinese box-narrative structure, is the film version of *Štefica Cvek*. The director was Rajko Grlić, the script was written by him and Ugrešić, and the film was first broadcasted as a television mini series of 3 episodes, later turned into a movie. In order to keep the generic autoreferences, the plot was changed from the writing of a novel into the making of a film, the main character not being a writer-narrator, but a film director. The cast of characters is complemented by a boyfriend for the main character, Dunja, who is a television literary critic and in his show subserviently bashes new, critical art not following the party line. Dunja is annoyed by the parvenu attitude of her boyfriend and breaks up with him, as their relationship faltering culminates around the boyfriend’s cynicism about Dunja’s movie (about *Štefica Cvek*, the unhappy typist in search of happiness) and his review of a book he has not even read but in which he discards. The aspects of gender, high and popular culture and dissent are smartly combined with the introduction of the boyfriend’s character. The production of the film, as well as its broadcast on state television meant that the movie was supported by the state, the state which then is criticised in the film. Grlić, who is a son of the Praxis

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<sup>429</sup> Anđelković, “How ‘persons and objects’ become political in Sanja Iveković’s art?”, 21.

<sup>430</sup> Pejić, “Metonymische Bewegungen/Metonymical Moves”, 98.

philosopher and dissident Danko Grlić and the author of the novel *Sjećanje* Eva Grlić,<sup>431</sup> often talks about the complicated conditions under which his films were produced and distributed. Another detail worth mentioning is that Ugrešić in our talk for this dissertation in 2012 said that she did not like the result of the movie production. Still, the film through its production, with the character of the boyfriend and through the director himself, connects the writing of Ugrešić and through her, the feminist discussions of women's creativity to mainstream media as well as the critical filmmakers of the time. In the meantime, it indeed has a different atmosphere and takes the story of Štefica more towards the grotesque and less the sympathetic, taking away much of the most important innovative aspect of Ugrešić's original text.

The art and literature around the new Yugoslav feminist circles has a lot of innovation, one of the most important of this being a solidarity and sympathy for other women, their lives and experience. As we have seen, the new feminist theories of art and literature also urge towards this: redefining the language in which we can speak and think of women through the *écriture féminine* and its local version, the *žensko pismo*. The art historical corpus and the literary canon offered to women, be they artists and writers, readers (literary scholars), curators and editors, is being rewritten by exactly these women. If needed, through the transfer of good examples, but also through creating a space where new art can find a niche. So it does, reassessing the place of women in canons, the approach to women's body, the way motherhood is perceived. In this chapter,

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<sup>431</sup> Eva Grlić, *Sjećanje* [Recollections] (Zagreb: Durieux, 1998). Grlić belonging to the wartime generation of women, the book tells important stories about the life of a participant of the partisan movement, of someone who believed in the Tito regime and ended up in the concentration camp on the island of Sveti Gregur (the women's equivalent of Goli otok), after which she lived the life of the wife of a dissident. In all these stories of the life of a very strong woman we find the elements of the failures of the promised emancipation of women in socialist Yugoslavia.

my aim was to show some of the lines of these endeavours, while there is a lot remains to be said, for example about the contributions of Katalin Ladik, Marina Gržinić, Radmila Lazić, Biljana Jovanović, Judita Šalgo.

### Chapter 3. Feminism in the Popular Mass Media

Neda Todorović: *“My baba [grandma] was a suffragette, from Sarajevo, her name is Petra Jovanović. She was a member of the Kolo srpskih sestara there. She is one of the older generation feminists talking in the Ona emission about feminism before the second world war. (...) When I became the editor of Bazar, that was a great chance to give a voice to feminism. We had a circulation of 360.000, that means a huge influence. I called Slavenka Drakulić, Vesna Pusić, Sofija Trivunac, Lepa Mladenović to write for us. Some men were telling me how our feminist articles were outrageous, as Bazar is a family magazine, where these themes are inappropriate. I didn’t care.”*

Vesna Kesić: *“Start was a huge niche for liberalism, in the good and in the bad sense. (...) After the Drug-ca conference, I wrote an article about it and gave it to the editors. They were mad. They asked me, what is this now, what are you going to publish this bullshit. All these women, they were just out for a good f\*\*\*. This editor just projected his own story, his own perspective, it was him who was just going to conferences to womanise. Then a couple of years ago I got my revenge, I told him this a few years later. (...) I was intimated and I was scared, but I didn’t shut up. This was kind of the male discourse in the editorial site. And I knew I couldn’t start crying, then they wouldn’t take me seriously.*

*It was the same when I made an interview with Shere Hite. She said something ironic about male sexuality in the interview, about which my editor told me: we cannot attack our readership, and our readership is male. So I said, but you attack your female readers all the time. I had to fight for every line. Looking back at it, it was a funny heroic time, but at that time it was pretty much frustrating.”*

Slavenka Drakulić: *“Everybody asks this about Start. [What it was like to work there as a feminist.] It had very serious contributors, and there we had space, they gave us space. I published interviews with Gloria Steinem, Noam Chomsky, etc. Well, they published naked women, but it was very soft porn, not everything was shown. It was perceived ideologically as some kind of an opposition to socialist puritanism and hypocrisy. We understood that as some kind of provocation, not that we liked it, of course we didn’t, but we took it that this was the price you had to pay.*

*And it had circulation you couldn’t imagine today, 300.000. Many women worked there, Jelena Lovrić, who already then was a very important political journalist, also Maja Miles wrote there about justice and Vesna Kesić. (...) This was something that sells. We found it subversive to publish feminism in such a magazine. You couldn’t be directly oppositional, but through the interviews with Barthes, Foucault, etc., you could write these ideas into the horizon.”*

By the beginning of the 1980s, feminism in Yugoslavia is more and more present in the popular mass media, a process which started with one of the initial main forums of feminist ideas, the magazine *Start*. Daily newspapers, weekly and bi-weekly magazines, TV and radio programs report on feminist events abroad and in Yugoslavia, women belonging to the feminist groups in Zagreb, Ljubljana and Belgrade are invited to TV and radio discussions on issues regarding women and society, and, most significantly, the very same women extensively publish in the very same media, about feminist issues. The latter signals a shift from the previously existing discussions in these mediums about women's emancipation and gender relations due to the explicitly feminist intervention. After almost ten years of its re-appearance in Yugoslavia, in which time it was usually present in specialised professional spaces for a specialised public with specialised interpretative skills, like the art and literary scene, theoretical journals, sometimes in the youth press, the extending appearance of feminism in the mass media means the opportunity to reach and involve a much broader audience or scale of recipients than feminism had before.

Based on the popularity, the circulation and distribution, who the authors creating the media were and how extensively feminism was present, I chose four media products to serve as three case studies for this chapter: two television programs of the Radio-Televizija Srbija (Radio-Television Serbia, RTS) called *Ona* [She] and *Ženski rod, muški rod* [Female gender, male gender], which I treat as one project, and two magazines, *Bazar*, a glossy women's magazine with one of the highest circulations and *Start*, a



political-cultural and/or men's<sup>432</sup> magazine – already quoted in the previous chapters too. The three cases are very different as far as the topics, the genre, therefore the context of the feminist articles or themes are concerned. However, all raise the same question: how does the feminism presented in these media differ from the feminism presented in other fields. The criteria are the choice of topics and language; the position of the articles and their authors to the medium: if they are critical, dissenting towards the medium itself; their attitudes towards the political and ideological system.

Based on the three cases, I will show how feminism in the Yugoslav popular mass media is at the same time accommodating to the medium in which it appears, while it also is subversive both towards the medium and towards the wider political context. Regular creators and contributors of the mass media products presenting feminism were the journalist and media scholar Neda Todorović and Đurđa Milanović – Todorović was the editor of *Bazar* and of the television series *Ona*, Milanović was the editor of the magazine *Svijet* –; Vesna Kesić and Slavenka Drakulić writing for *Start*, later Kesić editing it too; other feminist authors engaged by the three to write for them, two of whom I will refer to more extensively: the psychologist Sofija Trivunac running an advice section in *Bazar*, and Vesna Mimica, one of the initiators of the SOS helpline in Zagreb, writing about violence against women for the same magazine. Other authors, such as Vesna Pusić, Lepa Mladenović, Žarana Papić also appear in these mediums from time to time.

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<sup>432</sup> Pedro Ramet, “The Yugoslav Press in Flux”, in *Yugoslavia in the 1980s*, ed. idem., 100-127 (Boulder and London: Westview, 1985), 106.

Wikipedia, “Start (magazin)”, [http://sh.wikipedia.org/wiki/Start\\_%28magazin%29](http://sh.wikipedia.org/wiki/Start_%28magazin%29) (Accessed: 7<sup>th</sup> March 2011).

In view of the focus of this thesis, “feminist content” is reduced here to topics discussed in the feminist circles, as theoretical texts, research, art and literature, activist projects. Moreover, since similar topics were discussed by the state or by the media in general – and an analysis of this material would be very important, but would stretch far beyond the borders of the dissertation –, I chose examples where participants of the feminist groups, or the group as a whole, were authors or references. Mass media and popular culture were not only a forum for the feminists, but also material in the focus of their research. There is a self-reflexive relationship between feminist writings in and about the mass media, especially if we take into consideration that often the authors publishing in the mass media are the very same authors writing *about* the mass media.

The chapter looks at the feminist analyses *of* mass media, as a point of comparison to the feminists’ writings *for* the mass media. To point out the contradictions feminism faces when turning to the mass media, I briefly look at the story of the *Ms.* magazine, the first commercial feminist magazine in the US after WWII. *Ms.* magazine is also interesting from a transfer perspective: many of its authors and themes appear both in *Bazar* and *Start*, and later Drakulić publishes her essays in *Ms.* *Start* publishes an interview with the founding editor of *Ms.*, Gloria Steinem, and both magazines feature the work of leading feminists also present in *Ms.*, such as Germaine Greer, Erica Jong, Catherine MacKinnon, Andrea Dworkin. Similarly to Steinem’s approach in *Ms.*, the new Yugoslav feminists also use their magazine surfaces as a space for activism. Within the analysis of the three case studies, I focus on the themes which also shape activism: violence and sexuality. The concept of the *sexual revolution* serves also as a meta-trope to the story of feminism in socialist Yugoslavia, within the context of popular media and

contemporary art promoting new sexuality, and the state promoting itself as having been born out of a revolutionary movement. The feminists who are predominantly in this chapter, Slavenka Drakulić, Neda Todorović, Vesna Kesić all argue for the acknowledgement of women's need for popular media, and through the acknowledgement of their needs, also their subjectivity, finding a source of subversion and acceptance there. This brings into consideration the acts of sympathy and understanding as the crucial feminist strategy.

### **The Mass Media in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s**

The most decisive factor when it comes to media in a state socialist system is control. The institutions and persons in control of media production and distribution are defining the content and the space of communication, as well as the limits of criticism and dissent. Almost all Western analysts in the 1970s and 1980s consider Yugoslavia as a special case in this respect too. Most characteristically, media ownership and media control was more liberally organised than in the rest of the East European state socialist countries. The tension between the means of control still maintained and the freedom through commercialisation characterises the situation.

Considering media liberalisation, the new media law in 1960 explicitly ruled out censorship,<sup>433</sup> with the exception of eight areas. The spirit of this law, with some changes, for example as for the division of labour between the federal and the republican levels, was indicative until the first multi-party elections. The eight “taboo” issues were about material (1) “constituting a criminal offence” against the people, the State or the JNA, (2)

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<sup>433</sup> Gertrude Joch Robinson, *Tito's Maverick Media: The Politics of Mass Communications in Yugoslavia* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, c1977), 55.

“revealing or disseminating false reports or allegations causing public alarm and menacing public peace and order”, (3) “revealing military secrets”, (4) revealing economic or official secrets “of special importance to the community”, (5) “propaganda inciting to aggression”, (6) acts which may disturb the relations between Yugoslavia and other countries (the practice showed that this mostly meant the control of the reports on non-aligned countries and the Soviet Union), (7) “cause harm to the honor and reputation of the peoples, their supreme representative bodies, the President of the Republic, and similar injuries to foreign peoples”, (8) constituting “a violation of public decency”.<sup>434</sup> The last element became a charge against the magazine *Start*, for example. However, as I argue in the previous chapters, the size of the audience a journal reached influenced what level of control seemed desirable to be exerted. As most high cultural products cannot survive on the market, these remain financially dependent and therefore controllable.

Youth press has an in-between position as a medium reaching a broad market and in the meantime in terms of funding is dependent on the state.<sup>435</sup> It shows from the regulation that various elements which would belong to the media law, fall under other legal regulations, the civil code or the criminal code. This was reflected by the 1970s in the republican level decisions: when the republics had more authority in regulating their own press, Slovenia removed most of the eight restrictions, with the exact argument that even these points were regulated by state secret and libel laws.<sup>436</sup> Apart from the few years following the Croatian Spring in 1971, when censorship became harsher, the devolution of press control continued in the 1980s as well, by then media was “with

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<sup>434</sup> Robinson, *Tito's Maverick Media*, 41.

<sup>435</sup> About the controversies on the youth press, cf. Zubak, *The Yugoslav Youth Press*.

<sup>436</sup> Robinson, *Tito's Maverick Media*, 60.

scarcely an exception, controlled at the republican level and geared for republican audiences”.<sup>437</sup>

Yugoslavia had a semi-open public sphere, where media did not have pre-publishing censorship, therefore, the SKJ needed other means to maintain its influence and control. To ensure this, the state used institutions and funding. The Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia ([Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Jugoslavije], SSRNJ),<sup>438</sup> under the guidance of the SKJ was in charge of appointing the director, the editor-in-chief and the managing editor of most newspapers. As for regional and local newspapers, the municipal authorities were in charge, but these were also under the influence of the SSRNJ. The news magazines and other written media belonged either to newspaper companies or to associations within the SSRNJ, such as youth and student associations.<sup>439</sup>

Besides the organisational aspect, according to the data given by Pedro Ramet, 80 per cent of journalists were party members and the information published about politics and the economy were mostly acquired via governmental channels. Robinson confirms Ramet’s thesis: based on a research about “freedom of criticism in various Yugoslav elites”, journalists tend to be less critical than other groups of the Yugoslav decision-making elite.<sup>440</sup> Part of the explanation for this tendency lies in the highly political process of their selection. Furthermore, there were annual reviews of the media products

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<sup>437</sup> Mark Thompson, *Forging War: The Media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (London: Article 19. International Centre Against Censorship, 1994): 5.

<sup>438</sup> The former People’s Front, the largest mass organisation in Yugoslavia between 1945 and 1990, which was overseeing local and specialised organisations, including the youth and the women’s organisations, and, as we have seen, the publishing and editorial boards.

<sup>439</sup> Thompson, *Forging War*, 13.

<sup>440</sup> Robinson, *Tito's Maverick Media*, 125.

and the supervising body, like the publisher's councils under the authority of the SSRNJ, could issue warnings, give penalties to editors, or even dismiss them and the journalists who wrote articles the council found unacceptable. In some cases,<sup>441</sup> issues of journals or newspapers could be banned or confiscated. In the case of those newspapers, journals or magazines which were funded by the SKJ or the SSRNJ, the end of funding meant the end of the medium as well, the most famous example being the journal *Praxis*.<sup>442</sup>

Funding, however, was not only a controlling force, but a liberating one, too. With the introduction of self-management, the previously exclusively state-financed mass media was in the ownership of autonomous cooperatives (usually under the umbrella of the SSRNJ); media financing was not done by state subsidies, but was based on market demand.<sup>443</sup> As a result, in the 1950s, newspapers faced a big drop in circulation, and in order to regain the readers' interest, papers with large circulation started to use "lively makeup, cartoon strips, detective stories, and somewhat spicy love serials to arouse audience interest and provide relaxation and entertainment", with sports, crimes and disasters gaining more space on the pages of the press too.<sup>444</sup> Regarding the cartoon strips and the "somewhat spicy love serials" it should be added and emphasised that many of these were sexist and as we shall see, counteracting to the feminist texts they were accompanying. Briefly, there was a strong stream of commercialisation in the media, which was expected to survive on the market. Commercialisation and consumerism was

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<sup>441</sup> Cf. George Schöpflin, *Censorship and Political Communication in Eastern Europe: A Collection of Documents* (New York : St. Martin's Press, c1983).

<sup>442</sup> Ramet, "The Yugoslav Press in Flux", 110.

<sup>443</sup> Robinson, *Tito's Maverick Media*, 25.

<sup>444</sup> Robinson, *Tito's Maverick Media*, 33.

well-established by the 1970s, including tourism. As Igor Duda summarises the era in his analysis on the development of tourism: Everyone was entitled to their personal happiness, and happy citizens should be able to enjoy a certain standard of living. Hence greater quality of life included well-stocked shops and tasty restaurant food, as well as the right to enjoy nature at the weekends and on holidays. Consumerism and tourism were interrelated. Socialism was in-between.<sup>445</sup>

In the meantime, the SKJ was often emphasising the duty of the press in “correctly informing the public and educating public opinion”.<sup>446</sup> The more conservative members of the SKJ were accusing these newspapers for “degrading public taste for monetary gain” and the Belgrade Institut za novinarstvo [Institute for Journalism] was commissioned to make a study on the “sensationalism” of the press.<sup>447</sup> The appearance of new genres also characterised the process: afternoon papers, consumer magazines and in the television, quizzes and audience participation shows appeared.<sup>448</sup> The afternoon papers were often written more “flamboyantly”, with an “off-hand style and sexier content”,<sup>449</sup> whereas in some cases, for example in the case of the magazine *Start*, the editors were trying to maintain both high-level journalism and high circulation, ensured by the publication of images of naked women in explicitly erotic body postures.

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<sup>445</sup> Igor Duda, “What To Do at the Weekend? Leisure for Happy Consumers, Refreshed Workers, and Good Citizens”, in *Yugoslavia's sunny side: a history of Tourism in Socialism (1950s-1980s)*, ed. Hannes Grandits and Karin Taylor, 303-334 (Budapest: CEU Press, c2010) 331.

<sup>446</sup> Robinson, *Tito's Maverick Media*, 33.

<sup>447</sup> Robinson, *Tito's Maverick Media*, 51.

<sup>448</sup> Robinson, *Tito's Maverick Media*, 51. Ramet emphasises that Yugoslavia was the only communist country which had tabloid press. He is referring to a research showing that out of the ten papers with the highest circulation, four papers are tabloids, and another two are sports papers and two religious ones; according to this research, only “one prestigious secular paper – *Politika* – ranks in the top ten”. Ramet, “The Yugoslav Press in Flux”, 108.

<sup>449</sup> Robinson, *Tito's Maverick Media*, 51.

## **Feminism in the Popular Mass Media – Theoretical Considerations and the *Ms.* Case**

Feminism was gaining space in the mass media in the 1980s not only in Yugoslavia, but in the United States and Western Europe as well. It is not surprising that the presentation of feminist issues by feminist authors reached the Yugoslav media too: many of the participants of the feminist circles earned their living as professional journalists and were writing for various magazines, on various topics. Almost a decade of feminist activity was followed by entering a new publicity with a new interpretative community, with different expectations and provided by other institutions from the academic and art scene where Yugoslav feminism was initiated.

Aspects of the difficulty in popularising feminism, the relations between consumerism and gender, popular genres and gender, and as far as the new recipients are concerned, the horizon of their expectation [*Erwartungshorizont*] should be examined. Approaching mass culture's gendered genres, it needs special emphasis that we are not dealing exclusively with women's magazines here. It was a rather obvious step for *ELLE* or *Vogue* in the West, as well as for the Yugoslav women's magazines, to report on this "new" approach to women's issue, to offer some feminist perspectives, to interview feminists, etc. The French *Marie Claire*'s account on feminism is even cited in *Žena*. However, in the Yugoslav case, the popular "men's media" (media, mostly magazines, made with a specifically male readership in mind – we will see the characteristics later)



and the tabloid press were also publishing feminist articles, written by members of the *Žena i društvo* groups.

Gender-sensitive media research suggests that gendering genres in mass media helps selling it.<sup>450</sup> Most mass media products create boundaries along gender lines in order to ensure their target group of audience. Traditional masculinity and femininity patterns return not only in the symbols and characters, but already in the genres, as well as in the public—private division of both genres and topics. Whereas in Yugoslavia, there was a period where the gender divisions turned more flexible, as the analysis of Todorović will show us later in this chapter, most popular culture offers products along the line of binary oppositions: cooking, fashion and romance for women, sports, adventure and pornography for men, Barbies for girls, Matchbox for boys.<sup>451</sup> In John Fiske's analysis, even news shows, as a representation of politics, are meant rather for men than for women. The gendered products, especially magazines for men and women, play a role in the dis- or encouragement of their readers to feel competent in or entitled to certain topics. Furthermore, we should keep in mind that as in all binary oppositions, there is a hierarchy of values, and so is in the case of gendered popular media. In the socialist Yugoslav context, the gendering of politics through the media is one marker of the unfulfilled gender equality.

The case of the *Ms.* magazine in the US is an example for an attempt to create a commercial feminist magazine. Its failure on the press market reveals aspects of the

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<sup>450</sup> Cf. John Fiske, *Television Culture* (London: Routledge, 1987); Anne Cronin, "Advertising Difference: Women, Western Europe and the 'Consumer-Citizenship'", in *All the World and Her Husband: Women in Twentieth-Century Consumer Culture*, ed. Maggie Andrews – Mary M. Talbot, 163-176. (London: Cassell, c2000); Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

<sup>451</sup> Fiske, *Television Culture*, 179.

relationship between feminism and capitalism. The founders of the *Ms.* magazine in the US, with Gloria Steinem as the initiator and as the person elaborating on the concept, attempted to create a popular feminist magazine. *Ms.* is not only an example by which many theoretical issues can be raised, but also, Steinem and the magazine were in contact with the Yugoslav feminists and Steinem certainly had some influence on what happened in the popular section of Yugoslav feminism. In the *Ms.* project, “popular” was understood in the sense of “widespread”, as well as “emerging from the realm of popular culture”, popular culture being the “the realm of commercial culture, where ‘images and icons compete for dominance within a multiplicity of discourses’, where the dominant ideology and interests of commercial producers clash with the needs and desires of its consumers but also must ‘engage audiences in active and familial processes.’”<sup>452</sup> The hope of Steinem and the other editors of *Ms.* was to enter the popular sphere, which would have made it is possible to have more control over their representation in front of the wide public. Their experience is symptomatic for feminism’s meeting with the mass media: whereas feminist activists needed the media’s attention for their work, as Amy Farrell, one of the historiographers of the *Ms.*-story puts it: “media had the power to ‘create’ the movement through the attention they gave it, but they also had the power to destroy it – by turning their cameras and reporters’ attention elsewhere.”<sup>453</sup>

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<sup>452</sup> Amy Erdman Farrell, *Yours in Sisterhood: Ms. Magazine and the Promise of Popular Feminism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 5. On the history of *Ms.* magazine and the controversies of creating a commercial feminist magazine see, also Gloria Steinem, “Sex, Lies, Advertising”, *Ms.* (July-August 1990) <http://depts.uwc.edu/wmsts/Faculty/steinem.htm> (Accessed: 15th March 2011) and Mary Thom, *Inside Ms.: 25 Years of the Magazine and the Feminist Movement* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1997).

<sup>453</sup> Farrell, *Yours in Sisterhood*, 23.

The media's post-feminism was behind Steinem's efforts. The press is always selecting from the feminist issues, and their judgement often does not coincide with the feminist preferences (what is of course true for any issue of any actor from civil society). A further strategy of the media was, however, directly contradicting the feminist principles and strategies: the media preferred to select interesting-looking feminists and focus on their personality, not on the issues they represent. The per excellence case of post-feminist strategies, admitting to some of feminism's claims in order to dismiss it as a whole.<sup>454</sup> For Steinem's *Ms.*, the aim was to avoid this "celebrity-based" image of feminism.<sup>455</sup> Eventually, the magazine could not survive as a commercial product on the market, mostly due to the contradictions with the advertisers: there were few products and even less advertisements which were not based on the patriarchal gender division of goods and "sex" selling products, "sex" here meaning the objectified female body. The case of *Ms.* is an example of how the "[a]ttempts to alter popular consciousness through the mass media [...] greatly underestimated the ability of established order to absorb dissent while offering mere appearance of change",<sup>456</sup> when after a hopeful period with a circulation of 400-500.000 copies, *Ms.* became a specialised feminist magazine for a smaller, engaged audience, financed by a foundation.

The division between feminist media and mass media, as well as feminist high culture and popular culture, are rather flexible in the Yugoslav context. They, however,

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<sup>454</sup> Cf. Amelia Jones's claim quoted in the Introduction: when feminism gets "reduced to a unitary concept", other discourses "subsume it under a broad framework". Jones, "Feminism, Incorporated. Reading 'Postfeminism' in an Anti-Feminist Age," 323.

<sup>455</sup> Farrell, *Yours in Sisterhood*, 23.

<sup>456</sup> Farrell, 6. Quoting: Peter Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened: America in the 1970s*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1990. 35-36

do share concerns which came up around the *Ms.* magazine. The conflict between having one's own media and the difficulty to reach the market, as well as the conflicts arising from a non-feminist or post-feminist media which wants to use and control feminism through control is there in both cases. Instead of an own medium though, in Yugoslavia feminist women become editors of women's magazines and reporters of TV shows, moreover, editors of magazines like *Start*, where due to the devolution of power and the relative weak state control, it is up to their own ability to negotiate to publish feminist content and to write from a feminist perspective. It is a question though, if mass media and the established order it represents "absorbs dissent" or is subverted by it.

### **Feminists Writing about the Women's Press**

There were two journalists with significant theoretical work on women's magazines from a feminist perspective, Neda Todorović and Đurđa Milanović. Milanović suggested to change the existing structures and discourses, so that women's and mass media cease to serve the maintenance of women's marginal position.<sup>457</sup> In relation to Milanović's argument, Todorović describes two main tendencies<sup>458</sup> in the post-war Yugoslav women's press: one tendency is the (re-)introduction of content about topics traditionally—socially attributed to women, such as domestic work or fashion, into the "fighter-type" women's magazine ("fighter" here is a reference to the partisans),<sup>459</sup> the

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<sup>457</sup> Đurđa Milanović, "Teze za drugačiji pristup žene i masovnih medija" [Theses to a new approach to women and mass media], *Žena* vol. 38. no. 6 (1980): 2-12; "Prikaz literature o odnosu žene i masovnih medija" [Literature review about women and mass media], *Žena* vol. 38. no. 6 (1980): 32-40.

<sup>458</sup> Neda Todorović-Uzelac, *Ženskaštampa I kultura žensvenosti* [Women's press and the culture of femininity] (Beograd: Naučna knjiga, 1987), 12; 59-73.

<sup>459</sup> *Žena u borbi* and *Žena danas* were often identifying with feminist aims, in the 1930s even identifying themselves as feminist. In 1936, *Žena danas* was even heralding the arrival of *novi feminizam* [new

other tendency is the creation of new magazines, specifically for women in a “traditionally feminine” manner, with a focus on beauty and the household.<sup>460</sup>

The fighter-type women’s magazines started their career in the late 1930s, mostly serving as a mobilising force and therefore, offering a different view on women. *Žena u borbi* [Woman in struggle] and *Žena danas* [Woman today] were the magazines of the partisan woman and were not only informing the woman fighter about major currents in politics, but also giving advice for performing everyday domestic work. These early magazines were not questioning the gendered division of labour though; they were rather helping women overcome their double burden. In the catalogue for the exhibition *Ženska strana / Women’s corner*, the curators bring three typical examples from these magazines: “do not tire yourself with unnecessary moves”, “save your strength on small errands” and “use your strength rationally in the household”.<sup>461</sup>

Both tendencies identified by Todorović eventually lead to the gradual disappearance of the fighter-type magazines from the market. In the period under study, the five women’s magazines in Serbo-Croatian with the highest circulation were: *Svijet* (published in Zagreb from 1953 till 1992), *Praktična žena* ([Practical woman], Belgrade, from 1956 till 1993), *Bazar* (Belgrade, from 1964 till 1990), *Nada* (Belgrade, from 1975 till 1993, renewed in 2001), and *Una* (Sarajevo, from 1974 till 1994).<sup>462</sup> The shift from the originally emancipating magazines was rapid; the magazines increasingly focused on

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feminism], the struggle of women for their rights. Đorgović, Panić, and Popović, *Ženska strana / Women’s Corner*, 52.

<sup>460</sup> Todorović-Uzelac, *Ženska štampa i kultura žensvenosti*, 75-76.

<sup>461</sup> Marija Đorgović, Ana Panić, Una Popović, *Ženska strana / Women’s Corner*. Exhibition catalogue (Belgrade: Muzej savremene umetnosti – Muzej istorije Jugoslavije, 2010), 35.

<sup>462</sup> Todorović, *Ženska štampa*, 78.

beauty, fashions, and the previous advisory sections on domestic work were now filled with recipes and the latest trends in cleaning tools, no longer reflecting on the *burden*-aspect of domestic work. Reading through two decades of *Bazar*, I have even found an article series from 1975 “helping” the reader become a model following the image of the English Twiggy: the “School for models” series is advising young girls how to achieve Twiggy’s looks with a diet,<sup>463</sup> transforming their body into skin and bones – following a worldwide trend and moving further and further away from the partisan woman, but at the same time also from the new, “woman—worker—mother”<sup>464</sup> type.

The change in women’s press was not left unnoticed, either by the women’s section of the party and authors following the state socialist ideology on women’s emancipation, or by the feminists. At one of the conferences organised in 1982 by two Zagreb-based journals, *Žena* and *Naše teme*, to which party representatives, academics from outside and from within the feminist groups were invited and where, as I point out in the first chapter, the state’s post-feminist reactions were clearly spelled out, the Slovenian sociologist Maca Jogan asks the question whether there is a need of a women’s press at all. Or, she continues, “we have already matured and progressed far enough in the process of women’s emancipation, that this kind of a press we can eliminate”.<sup>465</sup> She claims that one of type of women’s press, the “easy” version, is “for enjoying one’s pleasure, killing time [*razonoda*] is in essence conservative and patriarchal, it helps to maintain women’s historical isolation and partial sociability”. In her argumentation, in

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<sup>463</sup>*Bazar*, no. 261. 25 January 1975, 57.

<sup>464</sup>Todorović, *Ženska štampa*, 76.

<sup>465</sup> This and the next two quotations are all from Maca Jogan, “Konzervativne vrijednosti kao ‘mučne’ istine” [Conservative values as the “disturbing” truth], *Žena* no. 2-3 (1982): 53-56, 55.

accord with the position of the state, “women’s press needs to be political, but not political in an alienated way”, that is, it should deal with all questions from the reality of “everyday life” and that these questions should place into the centre strategies of the global socialist social development. What Jogan proposes here, is a return to the pre-war and wartime women’s press. However, as opposed to Todorović’s feminist typology, Jogan does not consider the existing women’s magazines “conservative”, even though they offer traditional gender patterns to women. Despite the fact that in a state socialist system, which promotes and requires women to be employed outside the household, this means the support of the double shift. On the contrary, Jogan does not find the push of women into the second shift of work a problem, she considers the occupation with domestic work and with the fulfilment of beauty expectations, like diet, a leisure time activity. Women’s less access to free time and lack of time to get engaged with political and social issues, to participate in self-management is addressed from a feminist perspective in the work of Blaženka Despot (cf. Chapter 1).

The women in the feminist circles have a different view on the roles women’s press offers to women. Neda Todorović’s above-cited book, *Ženska štampa* [Women’s press] is the most thorough analysis of the situation of women’s press in Yugoslavia. Todorović’s research is theoretically supported by mostly French literature, making her aware of the latest changes in Western women’s press due to the strengthening of new feminism. She is also critical of traditional women’s press based on the patriarchally constructed notion of femininity, to her, this proves that “conservative spirit” is still present in Yugoslav society. Her criticism regarding two elements of the domestic

women's press are both relevant as feminist issues and as motivations for her own new approach to women's press as a genre (both her work in *Bazar* and in *Ona*).

First of all, the “engaged”, in fact, “alibi” topics are constant elements of all the magazines. They usually come on the starting pages and present women as social—political beings. In Todorović's opinion, these are though only “alibi” for the traditional approach to women on the rest, the majority of the pages of the magazine.<sup>466</sup> The alibi-topic is a reflection of the official stance towards women's problems, which are not treated systematically, but on a from time to time basis, in the form of campaigns, like the UN year of women or some “resolution of the parliament about women's social position” (86). The other is the theme of tragedy, destiny, predestination: the topic of violence is recurrent in most of the Yugoslav women's magazines. What Todorović finds problematic and harmful is that women are most often presented as victims, and when (as most often) they are victims of partnership violence, the violence is presented as “a reaction to women's disobedience”. Moreover, “the logical continuation of the content which cultivates crime and warns the woman that the status quo is her ideal reality, present topics which address unusual, supranatural and unexplainable phenomena.” (106) The section on horoscopes and the presentation of unhappy events of one's life as the working of powers we cannot control, combined with the sections on violence against women, maintain and confirm women's passive nature (106-107).

Todorović is arguing for a women's press that is empowering for women, one which is not confirming but challenging the patriarchal concept of femininity. A new approach had been promised after WWII. As it is discussed in her historical overview,

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<sup>466</sup> Todorović, *Ženska štampa*, 79. Further citations to this work are given in the text.



there was an active, responsible, socially and politically conscious model for women, compared to which the image offered by these magazines is a regression. Todorović sees this as a remnant of conservatism, however, unlike Jogan, she does not see women's magazines as a sign of women's pursuit of leisure and laziness, rather, as a symptom of the unfulfilled emancipation of women. She is also critical on the state and its measurements, which does not treat the women's question seriously enough and hides it behind spectacular but empty "resolutions". Therefore, she does not blame women for their position, neither for reading the press produced for them. She finishes her book with the statement that women's press is a marker of women's position in society, a consequence of the real phase of women's social emancipation, and it will present women as "one-dimensional" as long as society treats them as such (142). Despite the affect the way society sees women on women's press, Todorović herself makes attempts to change women's press and to change women's social status through that.

Reading magazines as women's leisure time activity, which was not only a topic in the sociological and philosophical feminist discussions, but apparently an issue recurring in the women's magazines and other popular media too, has a third approach in the work of Slavenka Drakulić. For scholars like Jogan, who did not belong to the feminist groups and whose approach and rhetoric is close to that of the state's, these magazines are encouraging women to become more passive and abandon the opportunities the new system is offering. Todorović, on the other hand, suggests that as long as the Yugoslav or any society is not advanced enough to change women's positions from the still-existing traditional one, the women's press will remain the same. Drakulić, however, offers a third perspective, making claim for women's right to free time and

leisure. The text in which she explicates on the idea of leisure and consumerism as a form of resistance to an authoritarian system is from the early 1990s though. She followed up on the idea in her volume of essays from 1992, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed*,<sup>467</sup> a continuation of her stream of writings in the 1980s pointing into the direction of the re-evaluation of women's traditional leisure time activities.

The essay "Why do women like fairy tales?" ["Zašto žene vole bajke?"]<sup>468</sup> examines the popularity of trivial romances (in Serbo-Croatian: *herz-roman*) available at the newsstands and also published in women's magazines as a series. She sees "erotic" men's magazines as a counterpart to the cheap romantic stories, as both started to flourish on the market as a result of the "sexual revolution" – the concept I discuss in detail below – and both use traditional and stereotypical images of women, which do not exclude, but complement each other (36). It shows both the double-faced nature of the sexual revolution and the consistency in the logic of patriarchy. Drakulić describes the basic plot of the romance novels and how they present clichés of femininity and masculinity, romantic love and happy marriage (35). Despite their triviality, Drakulić emphasises their social relevance: only one title, *Život* [Life] was sold in 3.600.000 copies in 1978 (34). There is a demand for the genre, what cannot be left out of consideration, even if there was not domestic, Yugoslav production of these, those available were mostly imported from Western, English-speaking countries.<sup>469</sup> Besides the presentation of traditional

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<sup>467</sup> Slavenka Drakulić, *How We Survived and Even Laughed* (New York: Harper Perennial, [1992] 1993).

<sup>468</sup> Drakulić-Ilić, *Smrtni grijesi feminizma*, 33-45. Further citations to this work are given in the text. The article was first published on the pages of *Start*, no. 299. 3 July 1980.

<sup>469</sup> Drakulić mentions here the different ideological background of these novels, which is something further away from the socialist ideals, but does not go into deeper analysis. It is a question if the short remark on capitalism is a mandatory gesture or if exactly, a deeper analysis would be too problematic for her at the time of the publication.

gender roles, a regular objection against the trivial romances is their low literary quality: the media should inform and educate, and one's free time should be used creatively (cf. previous discussions). Drakulić analyses an unpublished survey by the publisher Vjesnik on the readers' habits and remarks of reading trivial romances. All in all, the conclusion is that the majority of the readers are overburdened women who do not have either time or strength to read anything more complexly written, whereas they do notice the poor literary quality of the novels. These readers, adds Drakulić, lack real relationships and love – exactly the dream, the “fairy tale” offered by these booklets. Drakulić claims that simply “by abolishing and stigmatising this kind of a press, we do not abolish the demand/need” of women in Yugoslavia (44).

Similarly to Todorović, Drakulić would not abolish the trivial from women's magazines. She does not see it as a necessity due to the societal relations, but as a fulfilment of women's needs – deriving from the very same societal relations. She quotes Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*, where Greer claims that the majority of men do not know anything about the world of women's imagination, due to the gendered division of genres (34). Drakulić here argues for women's right to their own pleasure and calls out for a respect of their needs – through which she makes reading of trivial romances a proactive deed, a call for change. Similarly to the research by Janice Radway a few years later, where Radway comes to the conclusion that reading romances has a proto-feminist potential.<sup>470</sup> The way Dubravka Ugrešić works with the genre in the *Štefica Cvek* novel analysed in Chapter 2 fits into the image of the new feminists supporting, or at least,

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<sup>470</sup> Janice A. Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

seeing the potential in the “easy” women’s genres: as I show it in my analysis, the novel is mocking and playing with the trivial, however, it has a sympathetic attitude to the genre. Also, in literary research, Svetlana Slapšak edits a volume on trivial literature, canonising the research on the genre itself within the discipline.<sup>471</sup> Comparing standpoints on popular women’s press in Yugoslavia, we can conclude that the new feminist agenda, treating women’s press as liberating, make a claim for women’s pleasure according to the also in Yugoslavia in feminist well-known and often referenced Luce Irigaray, “the refusal of pleasure intersects with the prohibition of female agency and thus has ideological, and explicitly anti-feminist effects.”<sup>472</sup> Irigaray’s argument is that in the Western subjectivity, “woman has to remain a body without organs... The geography of feminine pleasure is not worth listening to. Women are not worth listening to, especially when they try to speak of their pleasure.”<sup>473</sup> The consumption of trivial romances and women’s magazines, from this perspective, can be a step towards women’s expression of their needs and their pleasure, towards women becoming active and assertive.

### **Feminism by Feminists in the Popular Press**

Four media products are in the primary focus of this analysis, all of which have journalists or editors from the new Yugoslav feminist groups. The feminist content is scattered in various topics which I will analyse in the following parts of this chapter,

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<sup>471</sup> Slapšak, *Trivijalna književnost*.

<sup>472</sup> Jones, “Feminism, Incorporated”, 326.

<sup>473</sup> Luce Irigaray, “Cosi Fan Tutti”, in *This Sex Which is Not One* [1975], trans. Catherine Porter, Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985. 90. Published in Slovenian in. Mojca Dobnikar, ed. *O ženski in ženskem gibanju*. Quoted in Jones, “Feminism, Incorporated”, 326.

however, it is useful to point out in advance how and to what extent these papers took on the task of representing feminism directly. Popular press is a double edged sword when it comes to a feminism: even in Yugoslavia, in the name of a “new sexual freedom” and due to commercialisation, the press becomes more and more sexually explicit, which is easily accompanied with it becoming increasingly patriarchal too.

The probably most ambiguous example of the four, the magazine *Start* began its career in 1969, as a recreation magazine. However, this market was already occupied by the magazine *Vikend*, so the editorial board of *Start* “boosted the subscriptions” with photos of naked and half-naked women. A shift followed the appointment of a new chief editor in 1973, when the magazine began publishing more extensively about political and cultural topics.<sup>474</sup> According to Pedro Ramet, this was the time when *Start* became a “highly respected magazine”.<sup>475</sup> Indeed, looking at the magazine between 1975 and 1991, it has various important issues discussed on the level of a quality weekly, while until its closing down in 1991, *Start* continued the publication of the images of naked women, as well as obscene joke strips on the last pages. These included rude ridiculing of gay men and caricatures on domestic violence and rape. After the change in profile, the next shift in the history of *Start* was brought along by the appointment of a young, new editor, Mladen Peše in 1980, when the magazine started to aim at a younger readership, with articles on rock music, modern art and fashion. From the perspective of this paper, it should be mentioned that feminist curator, Bojana Pejić from the Belgrade SKC and Žarana Papić were authoring some of these articles. The new editorial continued

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<sup>474</sup> Ramet, “The Yugoslav Press in Flux”, 108.

<sup>475</sup> *ibid.*

publishing “daring and sometimes highly controversial interviews with well-known Yugoslav personalities.”<sup>476</sup> Besides the interviews, *Start* published provocative editorials too, as the one in 1983, accusing a large number of party members and leaders to have committed crimes, mostly economic ones.<sup>477</sup>

The curious mixture of tabloid-like joke strips, the pornographic<sup>478</sup> images of women, the dissenting reports and interviews and the feminist writings is made even more curious than the exceptionally high level of journalism in *Start*. In an interview with Ramet, one editor said that *Start* is the “most analytical of periodicals in Yugoslavia” and the other newspapers (i.e., editors and journalists working for other newspapers) view them as “elitist and being too clever”.<sup>479</sup> Considering the political—cultural articles and interviews in the magazine, the informant may be right. The images were not only a tool to attract costumers and raise subscription rates, but were the target of criticism from the SKJ too. The state’s puritanism was shown towards the media as well, which, on the other hand, discovered the potential for provocation in these. It should be noted that parallel with the provocative endeavours of the youth press or young artists, there was a suburban<sup>480</sup> popular culture developing, which was explicitly misogynist.<sup>481</sup> Still, the

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<sup>476</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>477</sup> *ibid.*, 117. Cf. *Start*, No. 362. 26<sup>th</sup> March 1983.

<sup>478</sup> I will use the word “pornographic” for all the images showing the genitalia and exposing the models of the pictures in sexually provocative, at the same time, submissive positions. I am aware of the controversies in the division between “erotic” and “pornographic”, and in my opinion, in the case of *Start*, the representation of women in these images is pornographic, rather than erotic. The complications of the problem are also discussed in Chapter 3 on feminist art and literature, as well as later on in this chapter.

<sup>479</sup> Ramet, “The Yugoslav Press in Flux”, 108.

<sup>480</sup> “Suburban” in the (East) European sense, with pre-fabricated blocs and mostly working-class inhabitants.

<sup>481</sup> Cf. Eric Gordy, *The Culture of Power in Serbia: Nationalism and the Destruction of Alternatives* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 1999) and Marina Blagojević, ed. *Mapiranje mizoginije u*

quality and openness not only convinced feminists to work for *Start*, but many of them remembers having read the magazine from early times on.

It was from the beginning of feminist organising that Kesić and Drakulić worked for *Start*, and were later joined by Pejić and Papić, and other feminists like Jasenka Kodrnja and Maja Miles. *Start* published their articles on feminism, a topic most often brought in by Kesić. She reports on the “Drug-ca” conference in 1978,<sup>482</sup> but also provides overviews on the history of feminism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe and North America in articles like “The Feminist New Wave” and “History has a male gender”.<sup>483</sup> Ironically enough, in Serbo-Croatian history is grammatically female. Here, she does not do original research like Lydia Sklevický published in specialised journals, but a popularising-informative article,<sup>484</sup> similarly to another one in translation about the “New feminist wave” by Rosemarie Wittman Lamb, familiarising the reader with the work of Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer and Erica Jong.<sup>485</sup> The magazine also published a series of interviews with Gloria Steinem, Erica Jong, Élisabeth Badinter, even one of the last interviews with Simone de Beauvoir, and one with Shere Hite.<sup>486</sup> The interviews place the feminist women in the row of well-known and acknowledged male intellectuals like Moravia, Garcia Marquez, Barthes, I.B. Singer, Hobsbawm.

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*Srbiji: Diskurs i prakse* [Mapping the misogyny in Serbia: discourses and practices] Vol. 1-2. (Belgrade: Asocijacija za žensku inicijativu, 2005).

<sup>482</sup> Vesna Kesić, “Drug-ca”, *Start* no. 256. 15 November 1978, 45-46.

<sup>483</sup> Vesna Kesić, “Povijest je muškog roda” [History has a male gender], *Start*, No. 264. 7 March, 1979, 40-43.

<sup>484</sup> Kesić, “Povijest je muškog roda”, 40-43.

<sup>485</sup> Rosemarie Wittman Lamb, “Feministički novi val” [The feminist new wave], *Start*, No. 337. 19 December, 1981, 50-53.

<sup>486</sup> Steinem interview (no. 390. 31 December 1983.), talk with Jong on motherhood and feminism (no. 342. 13 February 1982.), Badinter-interview (no. 457. 26 July 1986), de Beauvoir-interview (no. 460. 6 Sept 1986), Hite-interview (no. 308. 12 November 1980).

Whereas *Start*, due to its double function as a men's magazine and as a political bi-weekly seemingly is not an ideal forum for sharing women's personal experience neither the way it is done in feminist forums nor in the mainstream women's media, there are a few exceptions when women's personal experience *does* resurface in *Start*. In a few articles, the author manages to turn her personal story into an issue of wider interest, into something political and therefore published on the pages of this magazine. A strikingly progressive example is Jasenka Kodrnja's story about her own birth giving, which thematically belongs to the beginnings of a women's health theme within the feminist movement in Yugoslavia and which I discuss more in detail in the next chapter. It reflects the relations between the editorial board and their journalists, however, that the editors do not hesitate to add a short notice to the article: they have removed the name of the hospital from the article, not due to the lack of hard evidence or to make the legal protection of the magazine explicit, but since "it is only one person's experience". The art, literary and theoretical aspects of feminism were also present on the pages of *Start*, in the form of interviews, exhibition and book reviews, reports on new foreign books or reportage. From Julia Kristeva through women in Slovenian media hardcore and Yugoslav rock to women authors of domestic science fiction, the reader also meets the work of Erica Jong, Dubravka Ugrešić, Biljana Jovanović, Katalin Ladik.

The relations within the editorial, however, were far from unproblematic. As the interviews quoted by Drakulić and Kesić tell us, the male editors were not supportive of the feminist content. For example, when Kesić wrote the article about the 1978 conference, the editors wanted to give it a title like "Trle babe feminizam", meaning something like "old, ugly women's feminism". As she remembers: "I'm not even sure



how I could fight this off. Even the technical editor, who was just responsible for the layout, he got totally mad and threw away the article.” In the meantime, the circulation of 300.000 copies meant a huge publicity and these articles did reach the readers. Similarly to *Start*, the women’s magazine *Bazar* had a very high circulation too. Another similarity between the two magazines is the argument against feminism, claiming that the presence of feminist ideas offends the (imagined) readers of the magazines. As Kesić recalls: “It was when I made an interview with Shere Hite. She said something ironic about male sexuality in the interview, about which my editor told me: we cannot attack our readership, and our readership is male. So I said, but you attack your female readers all the time. I had to fight for every line. Looking back, it was a funny heroic time, but at that time it was pretty much frustrating.” Neda Todorović has different memories of her work as the editor of *Bazar*. When she started to bring in feminist articles, some men from different positions warned her that since *Bazar* is a “family magazine”, feminist topics on violence and sexuality should not be there. A magazine for women is a family magazine, while the only high circulation political bi-weekly is for men only – in socialist Yugoslavia in the 1970-80s.

Todorović was not only active as a researcher of media, she was also the editor and commentator of *Ona* and first author, later the editor-in-chief of the Belgrade-based women’s magazine, *Bazar*. *Bazar* was a classic women’s magazine, with fashion advice, recipes, in the 1980s giving lots of space to Jane Fonda, diets and exercise, from time to time reporting on the recent developments in the feminist movement in Western Europe and the US. It contained the mandatory “alibi-topics”, that is, interviews with famous and successful women or reports on socially relevant topics. It also ran romance serials, not

only from the popular register though: besides Danielle Steel, there were writings by Doris Lessing, Chekhov, Katherine Mansfield, I. B. Singer. Part of the socially engaged and politically relevant publications was an abbreviated version of Vesna Pusić's article on women's employment, decorated with a colour portrait of the young and beautiful Pusić, taking up one third of the pages.<sup>487</sup> The cultural sections report on Ugrešić's above mentioned *Štefica Cvek*, but these articles are in significant minority. The publication of controversial or system-critical elements was less characteristic for this magazine. However, *Bazar* also gave space to political themes, for example they reported on the newly published biography of Tito by Vladimir Dedijer<sup>488</sup> – which all in all served much more the aim to boost the leader-cult –, and more importantly, there feminist issues were also discussed on the pages of the magazine. If these were discussed explicitly as feminist issues, is another question. There are three series of articles which plastically exemplify the mixture of discourses, combining mostly Western-originated feminist discourse, the local feminist one, and the discourse of the typical women's magazine.

From after the appointment of Todorović as editor, *Bazar* had another feminist stronghold, in the person of Sofija Trivunac, a psychologist from Belgrade. As she recalls, her advice was considered quite radical by the general audience, and as her picture was next to the column, readers could recognise her. It happened that men walked up to her on the street to give her offensive words for her writing in *Bazar*, which these men considered harmful. She also reflected on how her looks mislead men, because as a petite blond woman, she was often treated as a “blondie”, a girl not to be taken seriously,

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<sup>487</sup> Vesna Pusić, “Žena i zaposlenje” [Women and employment], *Bazar* no. 439. 19 November 1981. From her article in *Sociologija*, vol. 23. no. 3-4 (1981).

<sup>488</sup> On this biography, see: Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the Nation*.

so she could shock people with her clear and devoted feminist opinion quite easily. Her story is not only symbolic as it represents stereotypes and in general, the reception of feminism, it also shows the results of a wider media reach in case of the popular products and the clash between the mild looks (of a magazine or of an author) and the strong content.<sup>489</sup>

If *Start* and *Bazar* meant a wide distribution of feminism throughout Yugoslavia, the TV documentary series *Ona* (in 1980-81) and *Ženski rod – muški rod* [Female gender – male gender] (in 1978) reached an even wider audience. These shows were on the program of the TV Beograd's second channel between 18.30 and 21.30. By the late 1970s, watching TV, together with listening to music, became the favourite leisure time activity in Yugoslavia.<sup>490</sup> As for censorship, it should be noted that television was exposed to much more control than either *Start* or the women's magazines: "If anything is to appear on TV it has to pass hundreds of officials and readings. What is permitted in a book cannot be stated on stage. What is not allowed in the theatre can pass in a movie, but what passes in a film cannot be shown on TV."<sup>491</sup> Television's special role is well-

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<sup>489</sup> Besides *Bazar*, the Zagreb based magazine *Svijet* and the Slovenian *Jana* should be mentioned. *Svijet*, edited by Đurđa Milanović for many years, also published important articles about violence against women and women's rights. This was the first place where Vesna Mimica, about whom I write more in detail in the next chapter, shared her experience of partnership violence. Cf. *Svijet*, 6 July 1984.

*Jana*, while it mostly published non-feminist, "traditional feminine" (cf. Todorović) content, is interesting for its crossing of boundaries. Maca Jogan, who otherwise is highly critical of women's magazines, chooses *Jana* to respond to Blaženka Despot's statements and argue against the legitimacy of feminism in self-managing socialist Yugoslavia. The case is interesting, since an argument for feminism published in a political paper, is refuted in a women's magazine. Cf. Despot, "Feminizirani marksizam"; Maca Jogan, "Ali je posebna ženska organizacija rešitev?" [Is a separate women's organisation a solution?], *Jana* vol. 13. no. 10. 7 March 1984, 6.

<sup>490</sup> Duda, "What To Do at the Weekend?", 317.

<sup>491</sup> Ivo Bresan, in *Vjesnik*, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1989, quoted by Thompson, *Forging War*, 16.

discussed in the article of Maruša Pušnik: whereas at the time of its appearance TV “was condemned as being in conflict with the socialist attitude regarding the possession of commodities”, “on the other hand, people as well as the propagating authorities always found ways around their own constraints” and propagated television as “a modernising force, socialist educator, and a symbol of progress.”<sup>492</sup> According to Neda Todorović, they had no difficulties with the authorities making these two series on feminist topics and feminism, however, as we shall see, the medium defined at large what and how was said in these programs.

The two reporters of the two series, Todorović herself and Rada Đuričin both considered themselves feminists. Đuričin is an actress, who, among other things, made a theatre production from Jong’s *Fear of Flying*, performing the novel in the form a monologue and was impersonating Aleksandra Kollontai on the stage of the Yugoslav Drama Theatre – she consciously chose these roles, aiming at transmitting feminist messages to her audience.<sup>493</sup> Besides her theatre roles, she made a 40 minutes long documentary about the 1978 conference.<sup>494</sup> Todorović’s show, *Ona*, was about various topics regarding women, and the feminist attitude was as explicit as in Đuričin’s series.

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Still, the case of the film adaptation of Dubravka Ugrešić’s *Štefica Cvek* stands out here: it was first a TV mini series, with much more explicit political references. Probably since the film was a trivial romance pastiche, it may have seemed harmless and apolitical.

<sup>492</sup> Maruša Pušnik, “Flirting with Television in Socialism. Proletarian Morality and the Lust for Abundance”, in Breda Luthar and Maruša Pušnik, eds., *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*, 227-258 (Washington, DC: New Academia, 2010), 229.

<sup>493</sup> Interview with Rada Đuričin, *TV Revija*, 9th March 1979. (SKC Presarijum)

Interview with Rada Đuričin, *Novosti*, 9th April 1987. (SKC Presarijum)

<sup>494</sup> *Ženski rod, muški rod*, dir. Branka Bogdanov. RTS Archiv reference: 172002.

Todorović and the editors of the series, Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, chose issues like domestic violence, rape, abortion, feminism.<sup>495</sup>

The most important emission of *Ona* was the one with the title “Are you a feminist?”, from 1981. It smartly combines feminists and the “regular citizen” on the streets, therefore providing both professional answers and a snapshot of the public opinion, which the former is supposed to shape. As for the street-interviews, gender and age show interesting patterns: older women urge young women to *be feminists*, two older women claim that it is high time to take steps as men do nothing in the household, “women serve them from dusk to dawn”, whereas a few women express fear that feminists hate men, or that they, unlike the feminists, are “first of all mothers”. A peak of the show is a couple where the man claims there was no need for feminism, whereas he does not let his wife speak, even though the woman tries. The scene continues with the man telling Neda Todorović that she herself had more rights than her editor – to which Todorović responds that her editor is a woman as well. This scene makes obvious some of the prejudices against feminism, as well as the absurdity of a man with oppressive behaviour questioning the need for feminism.

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<sup>495</sup>*Ona: Ljubav na silu* [Love by violence], ed. Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, 1980. RTS Archiv reference: 177951.

*Ona: Brak naš nasušni* [Marriage our need], ed. Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, 1980. RTS Archiv reference: 177885.

*Ona: Stop za rodu* [Stop to the stork], ed. Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, 1980. RTS Archiv reference: 180411.

*Ona: Novi muškarac* [New man], ed. Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, 1980. RTS Archiv reference: 181889.

*Ona: Da li ste feministkinja* [Are you a feminist?], ed. Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, 1980. RTS Archiv reference: 169912.

The show has interviews with women from the *Žena i društvo* groups too, in which they share important thoughts on feminism, against those prejudice which can be seen both on behalf of the “people of the streets” and the politicians who appeared in other emissions, Vida Tomšič (*Stop za rodu*) and Jovan Đorđević.<sup>496</sup> Rada Iveković sums up what this thesis is about to do as well: “We want to clear the concept from the negative connotations, we need that term [feminism]. [...] Of course, we do not fight for the privileges of women.” (*Da li ste feministkinja?*) Katunarić, Pusić, Kesić, Sklevický, Drakulić all speak in the emissions, about the double shift, wage gap, the problematic nature of the sexualised representation of women in the media. Vesna Kesić discusses in detail how sexism is still accepted in Yugoslavia, whereas racism and nationalism are not. This, she says, is surprising as one would think that “racism based on sex” is not tolerated any more.

Despite the empowering or emancipating topics, the show *Ona* presents scenes where women are treated without respect. An example of the latter is a scene (in the part about abortion), where a female gynaecologist humiliates a visibly lower class patient for having abortions instead of using contraceptives and tells to the reporter into the camera: “it’s easier for *them* to come for an abortion than other forms of contraception”. The viewer does not find out who this “them” is supposed to be and what their life conditions are. The series sometimes also relies on the opinions of people from the establishment. Jovan Đorđević is presented as the main authority about women’s emancipation in the episode *Glasam za ženu* [I vote for women], and Simone Veil’s fight for women’s

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<sup>496</sup>*Ona: Glasam za ženu* [I vote for women], ed. Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, 1982. RTS Archiv reference: 180386.

contraception rights in France is evaluated positively as she was “not fighting as a feminist”, whatever that shall mean.<sup>497</sup> Vida Tomšič in the emission of *Ona* called *Stop za rodu* [Stop to the stork] presents her positions known from her other utterances and publications, also the ones analysed in Chapter 1. In the show, she explains why a separate feminist movement is unnecessary and that feminism turns women against men, whereas the aim is to realise self-management together. Todorović tries to remind her that this animosity between women and men is more characteristic of “old forms of feminism”, suggesting that the new wave is something to pay attention to. Strategically, she wants to stand up for the new Yugoslav feminists, while creates an “other”, evil feminism, leaving space for the state’s anti-feminism to have something to refuse. The old stereotype about the “old feminism” is for example fought against in the work of Lydia Sklevický. The journalist-commentator also provokes Tomšič with questions about the role of the AFŽ and the possible continuity between the AFŽ, the *Savez žene*, later KDAŽ, and the new feminists. Tomšič, here as elsewhere, refutes this statement. In the episode *Are you a feminist?*, there are two elderly women (one of whom is the grandmother of Neda Todorović, as she told me during our interview) who tell about their experience of the women’s movement before WWII and the liberating effects, by which the show presents a certain continuity between the pre-WWII women’s movements and the new feminist discourse. Feminism here is defined as a movement, which besides equal rights, fights for the acknowledgment of women’s separate identity, their rights

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<sup>497</sup>*Ona: Priča o nerođenom detetu* [A tale about the unborn child], ed. Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, 1979. RTS Archive reference: 180413.

entailing right to abortion, divorce, and has its roots in the new left and the avant-garde, as well as their investment in peace and green issues.

Looking at the entire series of emissions, *Ona* seems to be a proto-feminist show with some explicitly feminist input. All its episodes investigate topics crucial from the point of women's emancipation, and some issues are even empowering, for example the one about women's participation in politics or the other about new models of masculinity. (*Glasam za ženu, Novi muškarac*) Neda Todorović interviews politicians who are against both first and second wave feminism, reacts to their statements critically, but eventually a few anti-feminist or anti-women opinions are present in each emission of the show. It leaves the feminist analyst, in this case, me, with the impression what the show is balancing between the general prejudice against feminism (a snapshot of which is presented in "Are you a feminist?"), the state's post-feminism, and the new feminist positions. In this sense, the TV show, as the most popular and probably most influential mass medium, carries all the characteristic features, but advantageous and disadvantageous for the advancement of new feminism in Yugoslavia. Further aspects of this controversiality emerge with regard to body politics, sexuality and violence.

### **Sexuality, Pornography and Violence on TV and in *Start*, *Bazar*, *Svijet***

#### ***Engaged or Cynical: Start***

Kesić asks the question in the title of an article: "Isn't pornography cynical?". The question could be applied to *Start* itself. Besides the pornographic images of women,



*Start* identifies itself as a version of *Playboy*: they publish articles from *Playboy*, and follow the latest news around the American magazine. A curious incident, where positions collide into each other, is the reportage about Christie Hefner, the daughter of the founder of *Playboy*, who takes over the magazine. Christie Hefner claims to be a feminist and is dedicated to convince the readers that *Playboy* itself is a feminist enterprise: they support feminist foundations (not all of whom accepts the support, though) and the women who work for *Playboy* – their position at the magazine is not specified – have “great opportunities”.<sup>498</sup> Two even more controversial events in *Start* were one a series from the memoir of the once famous porn star, Linda Lovelace and the magazine’s treatment of Shere Hite. Lovelace’s diary caused a major upheaval in the US, when the former celebrity describes the criminal acts and massive violence by which she was forced into the porn industry. The 1<sup>st</sup>-person narration in parts in a magazine full of pornographic images turns Kesić’s question whether pornography is cynical into a feminist meta-question about *Start* as such. It leads back to the question if the feminist publications in *Start* were dismantling the master’s house with the master’s tools, or this is another case of mass media “absorbing dissent while offering mere appearance of change”.<sup>499</sup>

Hite’s case is equally dubious. A few weeks after the interview with her, made by Kesić, the editors publish nude images of Hite, with the following comment: “Hite gave an interview to our magazine only after serious hesitation, because she is perseveringly against magazines which publish female nudes”, and then comes the explanation that

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<sup>498</sup> Donna Rogers, “Feministkinja na čelu Playboya” [Feminist as the head of Playboy], *Start* no. 351. 3 July 1982, 70-71.

<sup>499</sup> Cf. Carroll quoted by Farrell.

someone found images from 13 years ago about Hite where she appears naked, in pornographic positions, and now, after Hite gave the interview to *Start*, the magazine makes some of these photos available to its readers.<sup>500</sup> The same year, *Start* wants to publish Hite's latest success book as a serial and asks for the rights from the author. The agency representing Hite demands the magazine to apologise for the publication of the nudes and then they can publish the latest book for free. *Start* places the following text in front of the article series which they do publish eventually: "This letter from Shere Hite and her representative leave us no choice. We, therefore, apologise for the publication of the unbecoming pictures, and we will not argue too much either in admitting the sexist nature of the small text which we published next to them."<sup>501</sup> The magazine's editors react in a way which is hard not to read as cynical. They use the often-seen claim against feminism, accusing feminists of being prude and hypocritical at once. While overshadowing the conditions under which Hite's nude photos were taken as well as the conditions under which these became public. That is, if the photos were for private use, or to ask Hite herself what she thought of these pictures in retrospect.

The feminist reactions on pornography, through the pornography debate in the US enter *Start*, and this is the only medium at the time where the topics is discussed. Ironically, *Start* indeed becomes a "polygon" for feminism. The boundaries between sexuality (and a new, non-patriarchal discussion on women's sexuality, cf. *sexual revolution* and the article series in *Bazar*), eroticism (for example in art) and pornography are flexible and discourse-dependent, as the case of this magazine proves again. For

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<sup>500</sup> "Žena bez odjeće" [Woman without clothes], *Start*, No. 315. 14<sup>th</sup> February 1981, 4.

<sup>501</sup> "Sve o snošaju. The Hite Report on Male Sexuality" [Everything about sexuality], *Start* no. 329. 29 August 1981, 84.

example, Hite and Steinem, the two US feminists most often present in *Start* take stand against any form of pornography. Steinem's statement is quoted in the article about Hefner, published in *Start*: "When reading *Playboy*, I feel like a Jew reading Nazi literature."<sup>502</sup> On the local scene, however, the positions vary: Kesić and Drakulić, the two authors most often writing about pornography, take more flexible stands, both of them in their own ways.

The point in common between Kesić and Drakulić is that pornography is a male genre, and in that form, deprives women of action and their subjectivity. However, when there is a choice between liberalisation of pornography and or banning it, the latter they consider censorship, and neither of them would vote for censorship. The Yugoslav context can be rather enlightening here: the state was equally critical of the pornographic or erotic content, as of the introduction of new social movements and ideologies; therefore, the new feminism fell under the same umbrella of control as pornography. It is telling about the readers of *Start* that Kesić uses references to Foucault, de Sade, Henry Miller and Passolini, to support her argument, where she clearly differentiates between erotica and pornography, emphasising the research from the US that claims that the rate of rapes is growing and the cases are becoming more violent by the growing access to pornography.

The positions of the two feminist journalists who most often contribute to *Start* and both of whom are members of the editorial board for a certain period, are similar, but certainly not identical. Drakulić's criticism and the basic difference from the US feminist position represented by the initiators of the anti-pornography campaign, lies in the

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<sup>502</sup> Rogers, "Feministkinja na čelu Playboya", 70-71.

Marxist background of Yugoslav feminists, which they usually try to employ in their argumentation on any topic related to their feminist agenda. For Drakulić, but also Kesić, bourgeois morality is as subjugating for women as is pornography: they see the roots of pornography in this morality. Therefore, they believe in the elimination of this morality, that being a prerequisite for the elimination of the form of pornography that subjugates women.<sup>503</sup> In the article “Isn’t pornography cynical?” Kesić warns about the danger that speaking out against pornography can push one into the group of “moralising crusaders” who would ban anything with a sexual content. At the same time, the very same act makes one confronted with the “not any less hypocritical liberal stance”, the one stating that pornography is good, even progressive. Having come to a similar conclusion in her reference to the early Marx, instead of a freedom of speech discourse aligned with liberal thought, Drakulić argues against the same bourgeois morality Kesić is criticising.

Despite their different starting points, the two authors agree about the cynicism behind the statement that “pornography (euphemistically called ‘erotica’) turns woman into a ‘subject’”.<sup>504</sup> Kesić and Drakulić reach the refusal of this statement from different directions: Kesić is arguing with the “liberals”, whereas Drakulić is in debate with a Yugoslav journalist, Igor Mandić, known for his anti-feminist articles and belonging to the mainstream, SKJ-accepted line of authors. In his view, via pornography (as something refused by the clergy) one can get liberated from the slavery of sexuality imposed by the class-based society. As we have seen above from her sarcastic reaction (“By this logic,

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<sup>503</sup> As Drakulić writes, from the point of the bourgeois morale, any change diverting from the “rights, politics, religion”, about which Marx writes in his early works – note that the reference is the early Marx! –, even revolution itself, is immoral. Drakulić, “Veliki grijeh na malom ekranu” [Big sin on small screen], *Start* no. 325, 5 July, 1981, 10-11.

<sup>504</sup> Vesna Kesić, “Nije li pornografija cinična?”, 74-75.

porn magazines would be the major proving range [*poligon*] for feminism.”<sup>505</sup>), for Drakulić this argument is unacceptable.

Kesić supports her argument in another article, warning, along the lines of Marcuse and Foucault, that pornography, rather than being liberating, can achieve exactly the opposite of what its promoters advertise; it can therefore oppress and suppress, rather than liberate (of taboos and hypocrisy).<sup>506</sup> In the “cynicism-essay”, she takes an openly feminist stand (as we have seen in the case of the *Bazar*-series, such an act was far from “natural” in the Yugoslav media context), agreeing with the Western (American and Canadian) authors she read.<sup>507</sup> Kesić emphasises that “feminists do not put pornography on trial because it shows sex and the human body, but because it does it in an unscrupulous and dehumanised way, usually combined with psychological and physical violence against women.”<sup>508</sup> She finishes the article with the warning against the “democratisation of pornography” happening in Yugoslavia.

The most sensitive article vis-à-vis hypocrisy by Drakulić is the one with the title “Men are something different”.<sup>509</sup> Here, she detects and criticises the pretentiousness of the Yugoslav press policies, which have double standards for male and female nudity, as well as for the nudity of Yugoslav women and women from elsewhere. This hypocrisy reaches so far, that even serious measures of censorship are taken in its name. The actual

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<sup>505</sup> Slavenka Drakulić, “Dugi rat nage venere” [The long war of the naked Venus], *Start* no. 303. 3 September 1980, 18-20, 18.

<sup>506</sup> Vesna Kesić, “Kako svući pornografiju” [How to undress pornography], *Start* No. 294. 30 April 1980, 18-19.

<sup>507</sup> There are no names mentioned in this article, they are “a group of American authors” and the director of the movie *Not a Love Story*, the Canadian Bonnie Sher Klein.

<sup>508</sup> Vesna Kesić, “Nije li pornografija cinična?”, 75.

<sup>509</sup> Slavenka Drakulić-Ilić, “Muški su nešto drugo” [Men are something different], *Start* no. 293. 16 April 1980, 66-67.

case Drakulić uses as a starting point is the scandal that resulted in an issue of *Polet* withdrawn and destroyed. The Zagreb based youth journal's nude photograph of the goalkeeper Miran Šarović was found unacceptable in post-publication censorship. This case is contrasted to and complemented with another case, the nudes of a young Croatian woman, Moni Kovačić published in *Start*, amongst many other nudes the magazine is so well known for. We learn that most of *Start*'s pornographic photographs are acquired from Western agencies, and as Drakulić remarks: "our girls do not get undressed, they are chaste, only the girls in the rotten West do that." The attitude she calls both petit bourgeois hypocrisy and patriarchy, prevailing in Yugoslavia in 1980. She is aware, in the meantime, that representing men in nudes would destroy the power imbalance between men and women: "we cannot say that the photo of a naked man is a contribution to the equality of the sexes. But it is not possible to further maintain the old myths when they are collapsing by themselves [...]" This case of *Polet* is not about that photo and 10 cm of naked male meat."<sup>510</sup>

Writing an article based on a tribina at SKC Belgrade, organised by the Žena i društvo group, Kesić also admits that is not the "15 cm" which creates men's dominance: it is rather "centuries when men were seizing various forms of power and domination."<sup>511</sup> The source can be located in the division of the public and the private, seen in the long history of the male prerogative to speak in public, which, however, has its symbolism, such as the microphone: "the already proverbial prototype of phallic symbols, one of the

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<sup>510</sup> Drakulić-Ilić, "Muški su nešto drugo", 66-67.

<sup>511</sup> Vesna Kesić, "Simpoziji o seksu" [Symposium about sex], *Start* no. 375. 4 June 1983, 7.

most effective tools to maintain [dominant] positions.”<sup>512</sup> The dominant position of men defines whose body can be sexually objectified. Kesić is clear about the interrelatedness of a morality which on the surface refuses rape and perversion and causes them at the very same time. Kesić joins Drakulić’s argumentation, warning that “*sexual revolution* didn’t bring anything new as far as the relation of the sexes [*spol*] is concerned”, “erotic” art and media production is “for the need, of the will of men”.<sup>513</sup> The situation, therefore, cannot be turned upside down, as “those who do not have their own body, do not have their own language either”.<sup>514</sup> That is, the hassle around the male nude of the goalkeeper is without a real reason, while it is not the way feminists want to dismantle inequalities either.

Women’s control of their body depends on their access to control their own subjectivity. Post-modernism apparently reaches the feminist argumentations in Yugoslavia, which takes us to an important meta-level observation. Curious as feminist participation in *Start* may seem at first, besides the practical reasons (relative intellectual freedom due to financial independence), there is also a discursive motivation: in a magazine publishing pornographic material, the visual and linguistic space opens up for discussing pornography in various ways. In *Start* pornography is present both as primary content, and this allows for the secondary level discussion about it. We saw that in the case of women’s magazines, Neda Todorović calls the intellectual-political articles “alibi-topics”, preceding the fashion—beauty—cooking sections for which the readers in fact buy these magazines. These are an alibi, for making the magazine and its readers look

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<sup>512</sup> Kesić, “Simpoziji o seksu”, 7

<sup>513</sup> Vesna Kesić, “Adam u evinom kostimu” [Adam in Eve’s costume], *Start* no. 319. 11 April 1981, 9.

<sup>514</sup> Kesić, “Adam u evinom kostimu”, 9.

and feel more politically engaged and intellectual. In the case of *Start*, one might wonder if feminism is an alibi for the pornographic and tabloid-like content, or the other way round, these are indeed just the price of the necessary compromise to maintain economic and therefore, relative political independence. Either way, as a result, *Start* becomes a curious mixture of *Ms.* and *Playboy*.

Pornography is a topic around which Kesić and Drakulić enter a critical debate with the radical feminists in the US, people they usually refer to in agreement. The debate on the pages of *Start* is with Catherine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, who were, however, influenced by Millet and Firestone, and supported by Steinem, Hite, Adrienne Rich. The point which makes the Yugoslav authors suspicious of the American anti-pornography activists is the matter of freedom of speech. The concern is there in Kesić's text on cynicism and pornography, which article, however, makes an explicit claim against pornography though. Drakulić's argument about the danger to freedom of speech is complemented with a disdainful enumeration of the allies of the feminists of Women Against Pornography (WAP). WAP was the organisation with the two leading anti-porn US feminists, MacKinnon and Dworkin in the first line. WAP achieved an amendment to the civil rights ordinance in Minneapolis in 1983 and in Indianapolis in 1984, according to which women could sue producers, sellers and distributors of pornographic material in civil court. (Both were reversed soon after the first acceptance.) Drakulić expresses her surprise that not only support feminists censorship, but they even accept the alliance of conservative republicans, who otherwise oppose the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment)<sup>515</sup>

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<sup>515</sup> The most important aim of the early second wave in the US.



and the right to abortion, contraception and the equal rights of “homosexuals”.<sup>516</sup> The allies of WAP are those otherwise against feminism and who consider communism immoral and criminal, says Drakulić. For this, it is important to know that Dworkin herself was active in difference left wing groups, and both her and MacKinnon has been cautious when it came to freedom of speech, being aware that the restriction of freedom of speech jeopardises the feminist cause too.

The porn-debate opens up a broader question about the status of feminism in the mid-1980s, in the US and in Yugoslavia. The source of women’s subordination and exploitation shall be identified and be agreed upon, and in Drakulić’s opinion, the anti-pornography campaign suggests that the sexually explicit images are those which degrade women in the first place. She takes sides along the opposite, i.e. that there is a cultural-social context, which ensures women’s subordination. She explicates the sources of subordination through the concept of consciousness industry:<sup>517</sup> claiming that there indeed is no freedom of speech, which, however, never is an abstract freedom, it is always dependent on the social and cultural context. Pornography, therefore, is no doubt complementary to other forms of repression, but banning it would not be “smart” either. As feminists, in their promise, do not want to exchange one hierarchy for another, they want “a revolutionary consciousness, way of life, culture, values.” Then she asks the question deeply rooted in the Yugoslav context: “Does feminism, like all revolutionary movements up to now, go on the road of justifying the means in the name of the

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<sup>516</sup>This and the quotations in this paragraph are all from: Slavenka Drakulić-Ilić, “Pornografija u novoj prohibiciji” [Pornography in a new prohibition], *Start* no. 419. 9 February 1985, 68-70.

<sup>517</sup> Cf. Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *The Consciousness Industry: On Literature, Politics and the Media*, trans. Michael Roloff (New York: Continuum Books/ Seabury Press, 1974). The crucial text here was first published in German in 1970 with the title “Baukasten zu einer Theorie der Medien” [Building blocks to a media theory].

envisioned goal?” All revolutionary movements include the partisan one, resulting in a system where freedoms of speech and expression are restricted.

***Cautiously radical: Bazar and Ona***

The growing self-awareness of feminists in Yugoslavia is plastically traceable on the pages of *Start*. The general critical attitude of the magazine, which often is indeed cynical as well, combined with the explicit visual representation of sexuality opens up the discourse towards feminist discussions. Women’s magazines open up to feminism, but the genre prescribes and facilitates different realisations. What happens in *Bazar* and *Svijet*, the two magazines with most feminist content, is a more women-centred discourse on women’s sexuality, aiming to dismantle the oppressive myths of women’s sexuality, including those suggested by the very images in *Start*. Important actors behind the feminist presence in the popular press, a controversial theme for second wave feminists, like Todorović and Drakulić believe in its crucial role for the promotion of feminism and women’s rights.

An example supporting this position is the debates that *Bazar* published: an article-series focusing on the *sexual revolution* entitled “All You Know and Do Not Know about Sex”, prepared by Todorović, and mostly based on the work of American sexologists, who were either feminists or working on LGBT sexuality, or were in other ways questioning so far omnipresent taboos on sexuality. Besides Shere Hite, there is the psychologist Evelyn Hooker, whose research on male homosexuality in 1956 initiated the process and largely contributed to the decision of the American Psychiatric Association to remove homosexuality from the handbooks of psychopathology in 1973 and declare

that it is not a disorder, but another form of human sexuality. Another psychiatrist, Helene Kaplan, was among the first to encourage people to enjoy having sex. Furthermore, there is Alfred C. Kinsey (whose book on women's orgasm renewed the entire discourse on the topic) whose students from the Kinsey Institute are quoted in the article series.

The series begins with the following paragraph, which is the starting section of all the articles in the series:

The eighties of the twentieth century announced the end of the era of male sexual rule [*vladavina*]. Since women started to talk loudly and to write about sex, many prejudices, first of all those about woman as the weaker sex, started to dissolve like soap bubbles. In this feuilleton, we make an attempt, with the help of the most contemporary sexological literature, to reveal some of the most ingrained myths.<sup>518</sup>

The introductory text throughout the eight parts of the series becomes even more radical in its language, when it changes *vladavina* [rule] to *diktat* [order, dictate],<sup>519</sup> and instead of “*revealing* a myth”, chooses to “*destroy* some ingrained myths about women's inferiority in sexual life”.<sup>520</sup> It presents the subjection of women's sexuality to patriarchal discourse as grave and the means to end it as drastic. Most of the articles are structured along the lines of the “myth vs. fact” style of argumentation. Besides extensive quotes from the “most contemporary sexological literature”, the article largely relies on “ordinary women's” quotes about their own experience. Unfortunately, the quotes representing the readers' voice, are not based on local research, but are taken from Shere Hite's report series, therefore the women cited are from the US. This may distance the

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<sup>518</sup> “Potrebna je samo ljubav” [All that's needed is love], *Bazar* no. 433. 27 August 1981. 60.

<sup>519</sup> “Nezadovoljna žena” [Unsatisfied woman], *Bazar* no. 435. 24 September 1981. 60.

<sup>520</sup> “Orgazam, što je to?” [Orgasm, what is that?], *Bazar* no. 434. 10 September 1981. 60.

reader from their statements; they are from the world of the heroines of trivial romances sold at the same newsstands as *Bazar*, coming from the land where true romantic love is possible, even though the statements taken from the Hite-reports lack stylisation and aim to be realistic and characteristic of any woman's experience.

The quality and radicalism by which the series is attempting to “dissolve myths about women's sexuality” is uneven, and so is the currency of information in the articles. Most topics are presented with care, and the information shared offers women a more liberated perspective on their femininity. For instance, the first article scrutinises the widespread statement of the popularised sexual revolution which promotes having sexual relationships with various people. The article shows how this is simplistic and is not offering women a real alternative, and how it fits into the framework of the patriarchal idea of sexuality.<sup>521</sup> The following two articles in No. 434 and No. 435 are rather educative, indeed dissolving myths about women's orgasm and “unsatisfied women”: the way the Hite-reports are giving women a voice to talk about their pleasure, an issue not only in feminist sexology, but also in French post-structuralist feminist theory, so do these two texts. The article “*Nezadovoljna žena*” [Unsatisfied woman] emphasises that men have had the exclusivity for a long time to speak about human sexuality and orgasm, necessarily from their perspective, so it is their judgement that a woman who does not have orgasm is “neurotic and frigid”.

What may be obvious in the intellectual discourses, appears here as novelty and the author uses a simpler language and illustrates the statements of the article with other women's everyday words. Similarly, the articles on the “free woman”, on menopause and

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<sup>521</sup> “Potrebna je samo ljubav”, 60-61.

the closing article with the title “To the New Sexuality” are also rather progressive and in accord with the statements in feminist publications. In “The Free Woman” [*Slobodna žena*],<sup>522</sup> the author is criticising the reactions in society to single women, based on and maintaining/creating stereotypes. On the pages of a magazine which offers women beauty tips, fashion advice and recipes, this may be controversial, however, the article, irrespective to the context of the magazine, emphatically refuses these stereotypes, which present single women as pathological or abnormal, certainly unfeminine. For example, a single woman in her thirties is a “sickly ambitious Amazon” [*bolesno ambiciozna muškobanja*], an image of the independent woman which shatters over the image of the indeed ambitious partisan women, who were fighting for their goal with their own hands and were highly appreciated for it, until the new peace time, where women’s patriarchal ideas are allowed again. The article questions the legitimacy of the double standards, providing men with a greater freedom of choice.

This series, based in this respect also on Hite’s ideas, identifies the centrality of fertility in the patriarchal mainstream discourses on orgasm and menopause.<sup>523</sup> According to this discourse, measuring women’s value by their reproductive capability, women in or after menopause lose femininity and therefore become valueless, their partners may even leave them for a younger partner. To contradict this, the article brings fact and proof from women’s experience and new research, claiming that “menopause is just another phase in

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<sup>522</sup> “Slobodna žena” [The Free Woman], 58-59

<sup>523</sup> Cf. the research of Alfred C. Kinsey and Masters and Johnson: Alfred C. Kinsey, *Sexual Behaviour of the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behaviour of the Human Female* (1953), William G. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson, *Human Sexual Response* (1966) and *Human Sexual Inadequacy* (1970). These works contributed to the “normalisation” of public discussion about non-procreative acts of sexuality, like homosexuality, premarital sex, masturbation. Cf. also Gerhard, *Desiring Revolution*.

women's lives and part of their femininity".<sup>524</sup> The illustration of the article is a bit misleading: a pretty elderly woman is drinking wine with a younger man, a counter-image to the one patriarchy approves of. The image is misleading inasmuch that the article does not mention that women should take over the habit of men in leaving their spouse for a younger partner and as in other texts feminists warn against the dangers in a simple role reversion, cf. Drakulić's article above about the male nudes.

The majority of the articles are about that aspect of the sexual revolution which encourages people to enjoy their sexual life and enter as many sexual encounters as possible. What the series elaborates on the most is the different needs of women to enter sexual encounters and to be able to enjoy these in their own way, ignoring prejudice. It is the last article in the series which raises an equally important issue that is part of one's sexual freedom: women's right to say no.<sup>525</sup> This connects the entire series on women's sexuality to violence against women, thus entering the terrain of anti-violence activism. The *Bazar*-article reflects on the fact that whereas in theory, all people have the same sexual liberty, women are still in the process of learning that they have the right to make decisions about their own body. Feminist theoretical writings and the first activist attempts both place emphasis on this, in Yugoslavia more focused on the right to refuse sexual intercourse or unwanted "compliments", which can easily turn into harassment, in Western Europe the most burning issue being the right to abortion. The need to discuss women's basic rights to their bodies, from the right to sexual pleasure to the right of not

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<sup>524</sup> "Nikad nije kasno" [It is never too late], *Bazar* no. 439. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1981, 58-59.

<sup>525</sup> "Ka novoj polnosti" [To the new sexuality], *Bazar*, no. 440. 8<sup>th</sup> December 1981, 60-61.

being physically harmed signals the necessity of a sexual revolution to happen and that it is not yet achieved.<sup>526</sup>

The article in the *Bazar*-series which rather visibly lags behind is on male homosexuality and appeared after the article on lesbian women. Whereas this first article is again mostly based on Hite and therefore presents a rather supportive and anti-patriarchal perspective on lesbian relationships. In the already seen “myth vs. fact” style, it refuses the misbelief that women become lesbians when they are forced to have sexual intercourse with another woman and emphasises the hardships in lesbian women’s lives: “The right that these women live the life of their choice comes into being with enormous difficulties. Since contemporary societies, in this respect as well, are male societies.”<sup>527</sup> The article “Something third”, on the one hand, stresses that homosexuality is not a disease, quotes Evelyn Hooker to support the argument, who says that it is “a way of expressing one’s sexuality”, and even presents a part of Kinsey’s research, according to which 37 of 100 men had “homosexual contact” from puberty to maturity.

On the other hand, it also divides the source of male homosexuality into two categories, one bodily [*organska podloga*] and one psychological. The first seems to be what Hooker and her colleagues identified as natural sexual behaviour and attitude, whereas the latter presents male homosexuality as a disorder, which is brought along by being raised by a strong mother and a weak father, or as one personal story testifies, by a mother who is critical of traditional masculine behaviour. The article even addresses the question if homosexuality can be cured – the answer being yes, with psychotherapy. This

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<sup>526</sup> Cf. Sklevický, “Kad žena kaže ‘NE’ to znači ‘NE!’”.

<sup>527</sup> “Žena na ljubavnoj silu” [Woman on the crossroad of love], *Bazar* no. 436. 8 October 1981, 58-59.

contradicts the research Hooker did, which ruled out homosexuality as a disorder leading to the statement that therefore, there is no reason to cure it. I would also point out the ambiguity that a text in an article series meant to dissolve myths about women makes women who refuse the patriarchal value system (single mothers) responsible for turning their children homosexual. As the article claims that homosexuality is curable like a disease, it implies that it is these women (the mothers) who cause their children what is presented as a “problem”, or even, disease.

The presentation of male homosexuality is distorted here, mixing the feminist article series with a rather homophobic approach: it presents the new perspectives, but does not challenge all the homophobic myths. The language and concepts chosen show a significant imbalance between the presentation of male and female homosexuality: the term “homosexual” is used only for men, while women are referred to as *lezbejke*. The use of the term “homosexual” is in accord with the pathologising discourse the article brings in, and the more so if we consider the fact that due to its medical sound, LGBTQ communities today prefer not to use it for themselves, the term recalling the time when their sexual identity was pathologised.

The other two sections of *Bazar* to examine more in detail, one on the women’s shelters and an advice sections, are much more based on readers’ letters than the article series on sexuality, therefore are closer to the reality of the Yugoslav readers. Sofija Trivunac’s advice section ran between May 1983 and May 1986,<sup>528</sup> the series on women’s shelters between 21<sup>st</sup> June 1985 and 25<sup>th</sup> October 1985. Sofija Trivunac is a

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<sup>528</sup>*Bazar*, No. 479. 27<sup>th</sup> May 1983 – No. 557. 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1986. The section was always on inside of the back cover of the magazine.



psychologist, important member of the Belgrade *Žena i društvo* group, and as Neda Todorović said, she wanted to have a feminist advisor for the article series “Between Us” [*U četiri oka*].<sup>529</sup> “Between Us” is a classical advising section for the readers, which was first introduced by the Zagreb-based magazine *Svijet* [World] in 1958, with the same title “Between Us”, in Todorović’s words: “establishing a post-war wave of intimate confessions in front of the eyes of the public”. Noticing the shift in relation to what can be said in public, she adds: “by this, *Svijet* was becoming more and more similar to the Western women’s magazines.”<sup>530</sup> Indeed, the possibility to speak about one’s intimate problems, real stories without revealing the person behind the story is almost the opposite of how the public sphere works in a semi-open socialist society.

The genre of the advice sections in a women’s magazines consists of two letters: one written by a reader about their problems in their private life, the other is the response of the journalist or psychologist. It lacks interlocution, the advisor cannot specify or clarify any of the statements of the reader, who in this situation becomes co-author of the article or section. In this sense, the reader—author exposes her/his intimate problems to the authority of the advisor and to the other readers of the magazine, while she/he does not have the opportunity to react on how their problem is interpreted and presented through the advice-response. On the one hand, in this originally specifically women’s genre, there is an empowering capability, as women’s problems become public and this publicity is legitimated by the medium that enables it. On the other hand, by the lack of interlocution, the women sharing their private matters with the public are left without

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<sup>529</sup> Interview with Neda Todorović, 1st February 2011, Belgrade.

<sup>530</sup> Todorović, *Ženska štampa*, 80.

opportunity to voice their opinion on the advice from the authoritative advisor. The third aspect is the nature of the letters: the concept behind the advice sections is that the other readers find themselves in the problems told in the letters and use the advice in their own lives. Therefore, it was an enterprise with huge responsibility and uncontrollable outcome Trivunac took on.

Regardless of the uneven discursive position between advisor and advice-seeker, Trivunac's answers aim at dissolving many of the misbelief and prejudice about women's sexuality and behaviour. Instead of a detailed analysis of the 78 pages of correspondence, I focus on the most common elements. There are many questions about sexuality, which reveal very traditional relationship structures at the time. Responding to the letters, Trivunac tries to convince women that they are in charge of their bodies and no one else should have control over them. For example, she suggests to the readers of *Bazar* to listen to their instincts and feelings when their partner presses them to have sexual intercourse: it is not women's duty to satisfy their partners' sexual needs. When one of the letter writers tell her that she is raised in a strict family which would not allow her to have premarital sex, the advisor explains to her that she does not have satisfy the family's expectations, she is the one to make decisions about her body. In the field of sexual questions, her answers are in accord with the statements of the sexuality series from 1981.

More complex are the cases where parenting is in question, a very shaky terrain as the feminist advisor is often left to make a decision between the interests of a mother and her child, often a young woman. These are the cases where the information one could gain from a dialogic relation is seriously missing: one reader cannot make a difference

between gently fatherly behaviour and incest, and we can read about mother—child conflicts, where the mother is single or divorced. Fathers caring for their children, cuddling and nurturing them is a relatively new phenomenon in Yugoslavia, as the *Ona* report from the television show (*Novi muškarac*) and the articles on Swedish men show. Trivunac in her answers tries to balance between for example letting a father being gentle, as long as it is not hidden sexual abuse, and emphasises that mothers face a lot of difficulties, that their position is hardened both symbolically and financially in these societies. Again, the format of the correspondence does not allow Trivunac to find out more about the specificities of each situation, whereas it may happen that the situation is really dangerous for the child. Importantly though, she urges young girls who do not feel safe or loved in their families to become independent, both from their families and from men. They should study and start their own life, while warns them against marrying young, emphasising that marriage cannot be a solution to their dependence on someone, it is just another dependence on another person. All in all, Trivunac always promotes the feminist models vis-à-vis the patriarchal system of values and relations.

*Bazar's* third series I look at, “SOS for Battered Women” [SOS za pretučene žene] was initiated upon the opening of the first safe shelter for battered women in Zagreb, on the initiative and under the direction of the Zagreb *Žena i društvo* group. The series features activists who founded the SOS helpline and the shelter, for example the activist Vesna Mimica, a ballet dancer who educated herself to proficiency in the field of violence against women and was one of the initiators of the Helpline. The series is set up of a variety of materials, from a call to readers to contribute with their own stories, the presentation of the legal background in Yugoslavia, as well as information from the

activists who are also experts in the field of violence against women. To engage the readers, *Bazar* starts a poll, where the readers are asked to give their opinion if such a house would be required in Belgrade as well. Readers should answer a detailed question sheet, where they are asked to describe their experience of domestic violence, what injuries they suffered and if the perpetrators had to face any legal consequences.<sup>531</sup>

The introductory text to the call and the article series is written by one of the Zagreb experts, initiators of the helpline and the shelter, Vesna Mimica. She clearly condemns domestic partnership violence, while also emphasises that it is serious and widespread, affecting all social strata. Domestic violence is a “social crime”, “the most brutal violence, which is happening behind closed doors”, adds Mimica.<sup>532</sup> She also explains that the growing rate of domestic partnership violence does not necessarily denote a growing number of actual cases, but the number of reported cases. The reason is that we started to speak about something that was not conceptualised as a crime for a long time and therefore it takes time until it comes out of latency. By inviting the readers to write down their experience, *Bazar* offers another space where something earlier conceived as a private matter can appear in a wider public. *Bazar’s* gesture, as we shall see in the next chapter, was the next step after feminist activism brought the theme to the fore. However, *Bazar* contributes to the anti-violence activist efforts, as by the very act of publishing the stories of battered women, the magazine shows support. This proves to the victims that their stories are listened to and are held real, that is there are people who believe them.

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<sup>531</sup> Vesna Mimica, “SOS za pretučene žene. Za azil ili ne?” [SOS for Battered Women. For shelters or against?], *Bazar* no. 533. 21 June 1985, 35.

<sup>532</sup> *Bazar*, No. 542. 25 October 1985.

The readers' letters most of the time stand up for this supportive role. In the seven parts of the article series, there are two or three letters per issue disclosed, and only one is written by a man who is admittedly abusing his own wife. The letters from the battered women present a picture of what it is like to be in a violent relationship, informing the readers about a phenomenon not publicly discussed before. These women all vote for the establishment of safe houses, the authors of the letters themselves are often women in need of the shelter themselves, who have nowhere to go and are ashamed to speak about what is happening to them. There is a very serious group of the letter writers, who believe that their partner has a reason and therefore the right to beat them. This tells again a lot about the status of the topic within Yugoslav society. Even the women who think their partners have the right or reason to batter, would agree to see a safe house opened: "there would be experts who know what to do",<sup>533</sup> suggesting that the existing social welfare system is not prepared to offer any help in case of domestic violence. The actual fact that women think anyone has the right or the right reason to beat them testifies to this gap in the system. The letters from the women in a battering relationship has, therefore, this function too: to show the readers what also the SOS helpline activists claim, that the violence against women is a systemic problem with many women involved. Violence against women being a systemic problem strengthens women's belief that being beaten and abused is not their failure in any way and they are not alone with their severe problems.

The letter from the abusive man is clearly a counter-example, a snapshot of the "criminal's mind". It uses a degrading, misogynistic language about women and contains

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<sup>533</sup>*Bazar*, No. 536. 2 August 1985.

all the elements which attempt to legitimate domestic violence: his “little wife” does not “work”, only sits at home and chit-chats with the other female neighbours, so when he goes home and the house is not in immaculate order, he gets frustrated and has no choice but to beat her.<sup>534</sup> In the opinion of the letter’s author, wife-beating is a matter which belongs to the private sphere and couples should be left to take care of it themselves.<sup>535</sup> The tone and style of the letter are rather stereotypical, makes one suspect that is either compiled of more letters or written by the editors, in order to sum up the widespread false beliefs about violence against women. In the meantime, if we compare this letter to what is available nowadays around the topic on internet forums, where the authors can also anonymously express their opinions and admit their deeds, it may even be original.

The feminist message of the personal recollections and the strong moral position of Mimica in the introductions is weakened by some other elements of the series. First of all, in the second article in the series, the editors start adding the “expert opinion” of a psychologist from the Belgrade Institute of Mental Health, Mladen Kostić, who handles the letters as if the authors needed marriage counselling and were not victims of a crime. Kostić offers his opinion by statements like “obviously both are contributing to the situation”, on the contrary to the feminist initiative of safe houses claiming that the battering and abuse is the responsibility of the person who perpetrates it.<sup>536</sup> The medical professional is presented as a greater authority than the feminist activists, who, however, introduce the new type of thinking and knowledge which in fact and actually gives

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<sup>534</sup> Cf. this with Chapter 1 on the work *Žensko pitanje* by Jovan Đorđević, who considers bourgeois women who are not employed the “exploiters” of men.

<sup>535</sup> *Bazar*, No. 536. 2 August 1985.

<sup>536</sup> Cf. the details in Chapter 4.

ground to the creation of the shelters and which seem to defiance the perspective of the article series otherwise. Apart from another element, the last article, bringing examples for prevention of and protection from domestic violence in the US, in West Germany and in Sweden. What is in accord with the feminist angle is that the article urges legal changes based on the Western experience, hence the misleading title: “The Shelter is Not a Solution!”.<sup>537</sup> The title can be read as opposing shelters, whereas what the article states is that without special legislation that bans and penalises domestic violence, the phenomenon will not stop to exist. However, the report on Sweden, already full of stereotypes about the independent and Amazon-like Swedish women, end with a bracketed message that the reporter of Tanjug from Yugoslavia is beaten by his Swedish wife, therefore there may be a need for shelters for men as victims of domestic violence. The author does not use any of the research on the statistics regarding the male—female ratio of victims of domestic violence, although these were already available from the feminist groups founding and running the helpline and the shelters. The article does not even reflect on the responses *Bazar* received to its own poll. With the allegations about the way women abuse the power they get from real equality, such as in Sweden, the article contributes to the anti-feminist discourse, which often uses the argument that feminists want to reverse the uneven power relations in order to take revenge.

We have two different sets of readers’ letters in the shelter-series and in “Between Us”. The language and the choice of concepts is ambivalent in the two series. Many reader—authors of the letters refer to “patriarchy” and a “patriarchal” value system or patriarchal upbringing as something delimiting them, both in their ability to enter sexual

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<sup>537</sup> “Azil nije rešenje” [Shelter is Not a Solution], *Bazar*, No. 542. 25<sup>th</sup> October 1985. 36.

relations and in their decision to leave a battering husband. This type of a consciousness is supported by the state-imposed gender discourse on equality and this gender equality as progress, as well as by articles like the ones in the series “All That You Know and Do Not Know about Sex”. However, the articles in the shelter-series fall into the trap of presenting the help of battered women as something directed against men, instead of something aiming at helping, saving those in need: the apparently good legal framework in Germany they describe as something “absolutely against men”, and then add: “but in fact, it protects women”. The two statements after one another simplify the problem as a “war of the sexes”, and not as a human rights issue, a relationship between abuser and abused.

Another aspect to note is that none of the three series in *Bazar* (“All That You Know and Do Not Know about Sex”, the shelter-series and “Between Us”) write down the word “feminism”, except for one case, which is the letter from the battering husband: “I see that you started to advocate these ridiculous feminist problems [...] this, your poll, I consider the highest brazenness”.<sup>538</sup> Whereas the context of the statement discredits its author, it is not entirely sure whether feminism is cleared from the negative, anti-feminist connotations. The anti-feminist strategy is harsher than the explicitly post-feminist one, it poses feminism as harmful as well as “ridiculous”, not serious enough. Since *Bazar* does not use the word “feminism”, it is not possible for it to explain the concept either, to clear it from the meanings attributed to it by opposing ideologies. The silence about the word is especially strange, considering that the founder of the Zagreb shelter, the group *Žena i društvo*, is a feminist association. Šere Hite’s feminism is not made explicit either, and

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<sup>538</sup>*Bazar*, No. 536. 2 August 1985.



even Trivunac's article series seems to be "smuggling" in the feminist ideas. The price paid for the access to the mainstream medium is the silence about the name of what provides the ideological background to all three series.

Sexual and gender based violence as a topic is gaining growing attention at the time in Yugoslavia, so even the TV show *Ona* has emissions about women's beauty and its precarious representations,<sup>539</sup> as well as about domestic violence, about rape and about abortion.<sup>540</sup> There are the ideas around these issues which have extensive literature already at the time, and the mass medium shares the crucial new knowledge, important statements being revealed. For example, in the emission about domestic violence, the police interviewed admits that when battered women revoke their report the day after the police was called to their house, it is due to their fear of the abusive partner. On the other hand, there is plenty of misconceptions and prejudice from behalf of the social system: a policeman attributes violence to drinking, whereas a psychologist suggests counselling for couples where one partner abuses the other. Both ideas were questioned by feminist professionals. A further niche to spell out both the relevant knowledge and misconceptions is when Todorović presents the new law, which may be protective of the women and children with an abusive man in the household: according to this, the parent who has custody of the children, gets the apartment. Reacting to this new law and domestic violence, two men from the Centre for Social Work claim that "this is just a form of quarrel, only physical", and one of them views the new regulation on apartment ownership as unfair, since a man can lose the apartment he worked for thirty years to a

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<sup>539</sup>*Ona: Žena iz oglasa* [Women from the advertisement], ed. Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, 1979. RTS Archiv reference: 180410.

<sup>540</sup>*Brak nas je nesušni; Ljubav na silu; Priča o nerođenom detetu.*

woman “who has never worked”. Their position is questioned and refuted by Todorović in the show, exposing the state institution to a feministically driven criticism. It is worth noting here that in Yugoslavia in the early 1980s social work experts from a state institution can make a statement on the state television that women who raise children “do not work.” The clearly positive element from the perspective of the spread of feminist ideas in the TV show is Todorović’s position. She is usually supportive and sympathetic towards the victims of violence she interviews, be them rape or domestic violence survivors, representatives of both groups being presented in the show. She is not afraid to contradict the social work experts, and as we have seen above, asks back to Vida Tomšič about her own stereotypes on feminism.

### **The Sexual Revolution and Feminism’s Discontents**

Marxist revisionism and humanism is the venue for reconsidering the *sexual revolution* concept in the Yugoslavia of the 1960s. The Yugoslav *novi film* and the philosophers around the journal *Praxis* were both looking for revisions of the existing system.<sup>541</sup> The *Praxis* group’s argumentations for the advancement of “free creativity for all individuals” as “the ultimate aim of a true Marxist programme: man is a being of praxis and only through creative activity do human beings realize their uniquely human potentials”<sup>542</sup> shows a strong relationship between filmmakers and philosophers. In accord with the Praxis-concern, one of the most prominent directors of *novi film*, Dušan Makavejev,

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<sup>541</sup> Daniel J. Goulding, “Dušan Makavejev”, in *Five Filmmakers*, ed. idem, 209-263 (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1994). Also, cf. Satterwhite, *Varieties of Marxist Humanism*; Sher, *Praxis: Marxist Criticism and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia*.

<sup>542</sup> Herbert Eagle, “Yugoslav Marxist Humanism and the Films of Dušan Makavejev,” in *Politics, Art and Commitment in East European Cinema*, ed. David W. Paul, 131-148 (London: Macmillan, 1983), 132-133.

whose movie *WR: Misterija Organizma* (*WR: Mysteries of Organism*)<sup>543</sup> plays around the work of Wilhelm Reich, “addresses more specifically another overriding concern of Marxist humanists: the immoral consequences of dogmatism, bureaucratism, elitism and charismatic leadership.”<sup>544</sup> As for the Praxis Marxists, also for Makavejev, the biggest crime committed in the name of the socialist revolution and the betrayal of its principles was the “the passive subordination of the masses to elites and to charismatic leaders.”<sup>545</sup>

The problematic subjection of the masses to a leader through dogmatism evolves in *Misterija Organizma*. While Reich’s work is a tool for Makavejev to express his criticism. Herbert Eagle is right to note that whereas Makavejev is seen by Western critics as Wilhelm Reich’s adherent, this is by far not that simple.<sup>546</sup> In the film, Reich’s theory becomes as dogmatic as was the communist revolution, with the dogma now being sexual revolution. The major female character, Milena uses the same scenery, gestures, rites and symbolism as the communist leaders in Yugoslavia and the Soviet Bloc, and as Daniel J. Goulding remarks, in spite of all the propaganda, there is no orgasm happening in the movie, “scenes of sexual intercourse are separated by dissolves and inserts.”<sup>547</sup> Goulding interprets this as a filmic equivalent to Reich’s belief about the age of incomplete sexuality, but considering the context of the film, namely self-managing Yugoslavia, and the way the film promotes Reich’s idea with the already mentioned tools “borrowed” from charismatic leaders of communist states, I would conclude that Reich’s

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<sup>543</sup> *WR: Misterija Organizma* (*WR: Mysteries of Organism*), dir. Dušan Makavejev.

<sup>544</sup> Eagle, “Yugoslav Marxist Humanism and the Films of Dušan Makavejev,” 133.

<sup>545</sup> Ibid.

<sup>546</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>547</sup> Goulding, “Dušan Makavejev”, 232.

work is placed under the same ironic scrutiny as all other political phenomena discussed in the movie.

The issues around the role of Reich in Makavejev's critical film are parallel to the place of women in this film. To choose Milena as the main character and to promote the new sexual revolution is at least ambiguous. On the one hand, her role points towards the problems of women's unfulfilled equality (a topic marginally discussed by Praxis philosophers and other Marxist revisionist groups in East Europe, like the Lukács School) and represents women's upsurge against male oppression ("Death to male fascism – freedom to female people"<sup>548</sup> – says Milena in her speech to the inhabitants of the block where she lives and where she organises a march). On the other hand, the exact same manner of presenting and organising the new "revolution", as I have argued in the case of Reich, makes Milena's role and women's attitude a target of Makavejev's ironic mockery, leaving more space for later feminist approaches to the problems of Marxism and self-managing Yugoslavia.<sup>549</sup>

Although most probably the most wide-spread meaning of the *sexual revolution* attaches it to the 1960s, Woodstock and 1968 Paris, neither the term nor a sudden and liberating change in sexual behaviour is the result of the 1960s, it looks back to a much

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<sup>548</sup> Blaženka Despot uses the same Marxist expression in her criticism on the current state of women's equality in Yugoslavia in the 1970s, embedding it into her re-reading of Marx and Hegel: "On the other hand, we know that to confine history to historical beings who are, to a lesser extent conditioned by nature, is an absolute scientific premise (Hegel) for racism.(...) To confine a woman to her natural, biological role is racism. Male racism." Emphasis mine. Blaženka Despot, "Women and Self-Management," trans. S. Ninić, *Socialist Thought and Practice. A Yugoslav Monthly* (March 1981): 34-38.

<sup>549</sup> For more details on the reception of Makavejev's work, cf. Goulding, "Dušan Makavejev"; Eagle, "Yugoslav Marxist Humanism and the Films of Dušan Makavejev".

longer history.<sup>550</sup> This history is both discursively and historically-genealogically relevant from the Yugoslav feminist perspective. The meanings attributed to the concept determine which social and cultural transformations are relevant for its “realisation”, as most debates about sexual revolution focus mostly on the question if it did actually take place or not. For this, there needs to be an understanding of *what* needs to take place. The new Yugoslav feminist discussions about the concept have a broader context, emerging from the 1960s on. The concept per se reached “its peak” at the time when the feminists of the 1960s in the US expressed their claim to use it for the description and prescription of women’s liberation. Prior to that, the concept had already travelled from Germany and Russia to the US, then back to the continent in the 1960s, especially to the Federal Republic of Germany, Scandinavia and France, so that from the 1960s it is barely possible to trace back its exact travel routes. The Yugoslav context can be viewed as a further new turn of the concept *sexual revolution*, first with the *novi val* [new wave] of Yugoslav cinema and its relationship to the Marxist humanist philosophers’ group called Praxis and then with the appearance of the new Yugoslav feminists.

The by now iconic American feminist, Kate Millett in her *Sexual Politics* warns us against overusing *sexual revolution*. She writes: “[t]he term ‘sexual revolution’ has such vogue at present it may be invoked to explain even the most trivial of socio-sexual fashions. Such usage is at best naïve”.<sup>551</sup> Millett urges to look at the history of women’s emancipatory struggles and achievements in their sexual liberation and see the phases of

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<sup>550</sup> Cf. besides those quoted below: Simon Szreter, and Kate Fisher, *Sex Before the Sexual Revolution: Intimate Life in England 1918-1963* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010); David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War. The Sexual Revolution An Unfettered History* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Gregory Carleton, *Sexual Revolution in Bolshevik Russia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005).

<sup>551</sup> Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, c1990), 61.

the developments. She identifies the first phase of the sexual revolution between 1830-1930, which, due to the totalitarian turn of Leninism and the spread of fascism, was followed by a backlash from the interwar period till the late 1950s. As opposed to the period Millett describes as the first phase (1830-1930), the period of 1930-1960 is a “reactionary era”, which, instead of subverting patriarchy, “often subverted for patriarchal ends” and “acquired a new exploitative character of its own.”<sup>552</sup> The increase of sexual freedom for women at that time is not a result of social change, but merely of the appearance of better technology in the manufacture of contraceptive devices. Therefore, Millett’s seminal and programmatic book refuses the valorisation of what for other authors<sup>553</sup> is the first wave of the sexual revolution and calls out for a second one, with “truly revolutionary change” for women, in the tradition of the 1830-1930 phase. The need for revolution was shared, among others, by Juliet Mitchell and Germaine Greer in their work, which was as programmatic as Millett’s.<sup>554</sup> Mitchell also gives a good overview on the second wave canon, with de Beauvoir, Millett, Shulamith Firestone, Ellen Wilson, reading them as alternatives to the Marxist way. However, she does not use *sexual revolution* as a central or special concept. On the other hand, in the *Female Eunuch*, it is conceptually very important that Greer strictly differentiates between the terms *resentment*, *rebellion* and *revolution*. These are all possible reactions to the injustices suffered by women, but in their effect, they cannot be compared. Greer agrees

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<sup>552</sup> *ibid.*, 63.

<sup>553</sup> E.g. Timm and Sanburn, *Gender, Sex and the Shaping of Modern Europe*; Martin, “Structuring the Sexual Revolution”; Weeks, *Sexuality and its Discontents*.

<sup>554</sup> Juliet Mitchell, “Women: The Longest Revolution”, *New Left Review* vol. 40 (December 1966): 11-37. Online: <http://www.marxists.org/subject/women/authors/mitchell-juliet/longest-revolution.htm> (Accessed: 23 April, 2009); Greer, *The Female Eunuch*.

with the Marxist feminists on women being the “real proletariat”<sup>555</sup> and representing “the most oppressed class of life-contracted unpaid workers, for whom slaves is not too melodramatic a description” (369), still, in her view the means to change women’s position in society have to be different. She would like to avoid the introduction of a “revolutionary discipline” for women (25), as well as confusing reaction or rebellion with revolution, either in the form of “women aping men” or women “training themselves as fighting force”, since “in our time, violence has become inhuman and asexual.” (353-354) Learning from the results of the Second World War and the Bolshevik revolution, concluding that “wars cannot be won” (354), Greer suggests that the “chief means of liberating women is replacing of compulsiveness and compulsion by the pleasure principle” (366).

It may be interesting to mention that similarly to feminism, the sexual revolution has also a first and second significant period, or we can even say, wave. Moreover, it has a long interrelation with Marxian ideas and left wing movements. Again similarly to the case of feminism, authors argue about periodisation, some discard it, and some, like Millett or the sociologist John Levi Martin, rely on it. Martin argues for the existence of a visible and clear-cut first and second wave in the history of sexual revolution.<sup>556</sup> This is many times forgotten even by authors writing about the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. In the meantime, most of the literature I have consulted, originates the concept from Wilhelm Reich and mentions it together with the name of Freud and Marcuse. The

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<sup>555</sup> Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (London: Flamingo, 1991 [1970]), 25. Further citations to this work are given in the text.

<sup>556</sup> John Levi Martin, “Structuring the Sexual Revolution”, *Theory and Society* vol. 25. no. 1 (February 1996), 105-151, 105.

first edition of Reich's *The Sexual Revolution: Toward a Self-Governing Character Structure* came out in 1936, Marcuse's seminal *Eros and Civilisation* in 1955, whereas Freud apparently did not use the expression as such. As Martin's research shows, the concept itself appears first in the early 1900s. Importantly, this is also the time when it explicitly employs Marxian ideas and is followed by a clash between hardliner Stalinists and "sex radicals".<sup>557</sup> Despite the flourishing of sex radicals in Russia,<sup>558</sup> Lenin's own "hostility to sexual licence" and the severe oppression ordered by Stalin manages to marginalise these groups and prevent the spread of their ideas. The conservative turn in the Communist Party, first with Lenin and even more oppressively by Stalin abolished thoughts of sexual freedom from the party line ideology and attributed it to urban decadence.<sup>559</sup> It is important to add that in the work of Aleksandra Kollontai, despite the lack of the term itself, there are important statements and propositions for "unprecedented changes in the nature of sexual relations". Another utterance of hers quoted: "This revolution is called into being by the change in the economic structure and by the new role which women play in the productive activity of the workers' state."<sup>560</sup> Kollontai was

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<sup>557</sup> The idea of sexual revolution in the first wave is a mixture of "Marxian ideas about the association of superstructure and economic change, Nietzschean critiques of morality, Freudian notions of sex-economy, and a modernist faith in science and progress." Martin, 106. As for the first use of the term *sexualrevolution*, Martin is critical on those who attach it right away to Reich and as the first work he found (leaving space for other explanations and origins), he names Wilhelm Heinrich Dreuw *Die Sexual-Revolution* from 1921, published in Leipzig. The book was a joint project of public-health professionals, jurists, feminists and others "to enact certain reforms having to do with sexual legislation regarding prostitution and the treatment of venereal disease." (Martin, 110) However, after this book, the next source on sexual revolution is Reich's book, and beyond doubt, it has been incomparably more influential for the following generations.

<sup>558</sup> *idem.* 110.

<sup>559</sup> Annette F. Timm and Joshua A. Sanburn, *Gender, Sex and the Shaping of Modern Europe. A History from the French Revolution to Present Day* (Oxford – New York: Berg, 2007), 184-185.

<sup>560</sup> Aleksandra Kollontai, "Winged Eros" [c. 1923], 276. in. *Selected Writings*, (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1980). See also *The Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman*, ed. Irving Fetscher, trans. Salvator Attanasio (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971).



also severely and abruptly marginalised as the internal opposition of Lenin's, which her sexual politics certainly contributed to.

### ***Yugo Feminist Interventions***

Taking inspirations from the Western developments, but also having been raised in the Yugoslav socialist revolutionary discourse, the new Yugoslav feminists cannot but reflect on the *sexual revolution*. As we shall see, most authors agree what Kesić sums up in *Start* as *sexual revolution* “did not bring anything new as far as the relations between the sexes is concerned.”<sup>561</sup> Ingrid Šafranek, writing about *žensko pismo* in the literary journal *Republika* in 1983 approvingly states the increase of self-consciousness of women, which is due to feminism, an awareness of writing, coming from the post-modern, and a new relationship to the body. This new relationship embodies the status of the sexual revolution at the time: “the famous ‘sexual revolution’ which for women brought along probably more harm than benefit, but which still means a new relationship to the body, a general de-tabooisation of sexuality.”<sup>562</sup> The first systematically feminist and also critical article came out in 1975 by Jasenka Kodrnja in the *Review of Sociology*.<sup>563</sup> In the tradition of sexual revolution activism and theory, Kodrnja treats it as a broader social concept, a marker of social change and processes. Basing her interpretation on Marcuse, while also opening it up, Kodrnja necessarily ties it to the concept of “change” and poses the question when and under what circumstances “change” happens and whether this can

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<sup>561</sup> Kesić, “Adam u evinom kostimu”, 9.

<sup>562</sup> Šafranek, “‘Ženska književnost’ i ‘žensko pismo’”, 19.

<sup>563</sup> Jasenka Kodrnja, “Seksualna revolucija (Marginalije na temu)” [Sexual revolution. (Marginalia to the topic)], *Revija za sociologiju* vol. 5. no. 3 (1975): 46-53.

be subsumed under the concept of *sexual revolution*. In answer to the question, she emphasises that the abolition of sexual prohibitions is not a revolution, but a range of changes which prolong the alienation of human beings. This change of norms leads to a wide range of contradictions with regard to men and women, from contraception duties to women's share of domestic work. The conclusion is that "in an environment where the patriarchal structures are strong, women pay a very high price for the liberation of their body" (48).

The denial of old morality, in the West Christian morality, is simply an anti-thesis of the old thesis, one that is simply "quantitative change, without the element of synthesis" (49). By "liberating the sexual instinct" in this manner, we reach the institutionalisation and commercialisation of sexuality. As Kodrnja adds, this happens even in the case of journals with serious political content (49). The context is the "consumer society", which the Yugoslav regime obviously does not identify explicitly with. However, the media regulations allow for the exact processes described by Kodrnja, especially in the case of *Start*, but also with regard to the comic strips in *Student*. The author knew and had access to both. In this conceptual analysis, Kodrnja suggests the introduction of a new concept describing the phenomena in her opinion inadequately called the sexual revolution. Since these do not mean essentially new relations that liberate men (in the sense of "human beings", *čovjek*), they should be called *unsuccessful sexual revolution*. In order to be called *revolution*, what needs to be achieved is new, "humanised relations of human beings, without the ballast of sexual prejudice, based on emotional reciprocity and social equality. The theoretical basis of this movement is a combination of classical feminism, psychoanalysis (this is where the attention to the

*libido* comes from) and Marxism (humanisation of relations, abolition of the [gendered/class-based] division of labour).” (50)

Eventually, Kodrnja sums up the preconditions of a real *sexual revolution* – which are partly the preconditions for gender equality as well; therefore *sexual revolution* means a revolutionary transformation of gender relations. It includes the free development of personality, with a strong individualist overtone, as well as women entering into production. In the closing paragraphs Kodrnja returns to the issue of the individual and warns that “liberation (in the Hegelian sense) or individualisation (Fromm)” is “a result of the humanisation of man, based on a *socio-cultural revolution*” (53). Besides Marcuse as a main source of inspiration (and here, much less a target of criticism than in other writings by the feminists in Yugoslavia), Ágnes Heller features at length in the discussion. Heller works on the issue of sexual relations and the family;<sup>564</sup> but her perspective attempts to stay away from feminism and is consequently focused on general terms. She argues for the humanisation of sexual relations, without the “ownership aspect”, and in Kodrnja’s reading, calls out for “camaraderie and friendship” (51). Following this trajectory, Kodrnja also looks at the longer-term consequences of the possible realisation of a sexual revolution, which would create men [*čovjek*] who are more suitable to build and understand communism. A revolution of emotionality and sensibility is also no less important than sexual-political change. She warns that this is the interest of socialist countries, many of whose problems derive from the still present patriarchal spirit: “Even if sexual revolution in itself does not build communism, by

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<sup>564</sup> It is partly an article about this topic that leads to her persecution in Hungary. Both the text quoted by Kodrnja and the text by Kodrnja herself are from before Heller’s emigration.

insisting on the social division of labour based on sex and by proclaiming communist values, it makes the building of communism easier.” (52)

Kodrnja never specifies where she places Yugoslavia on the map of “environments where patriarchal structures are strong” and she often speaks of the situation in consumer societies. Her eventual argument is that the *sexual revolution* should still happen in socialist countries, thus hinting at Yugoslavia as well. On the other hand, for her, “classical feminism”, which she defines as a “bourgeois” endeavour for a formal and legal equality of men and women, should be suppressed, for which she combines a new Marxist discourse with Marcuse, Heller, and a rather out-of-the-blue quote by Zygmunt Bauman – another example of the eclecticism of new Yugoslav feminism and a more gender-oriented and therefore radical feminism. In the meantime, as we have seen, she remains explicit about her feminist motivations. The only surprising turning point of this otherwise rather progressive text is when in defence of its own agenda, it turns conservative by bringing in a discourse of “total collapse of morality” and the mention of “perversions” affirmed by it, including homosexuality amongst sado-masochism and pornographic comic strips and films. This signals the early confusion of many new Yugoslav feminists when it came to LGBT issues, which did not become more inclusive and progressive before the 1980s.

Vis-à-vis the discourse on the *sexual revolution*, Slavenka Drakulić was even more radical. She is sarcastic about the fact that the concept is presented in the lexicon “Science about Sexuality”<sup>565</sup> (*Nauka o spolnosti*) as something “that exists for fact”, that

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<sup>565</sup> Drakulić is not referencing the article, but most probably the book in question is the Dušan Dohčević, ed., *Nauka o spolnosti* (Beograd: Interpres, 1971). It is even more surprising that this source is from 1971,

is, as something that happened and is over already. Her argumentation is based on the criticism of the concept itself, relying on the Marxist definition of *revolution*. This interpretation of the concept was widely present in contemporaneous Yugoslavia: revolution meaning radical change affecting the entire society. Drakulić works with the conclusions of Shere Hite, whose research on sexuality became increasingly popular in Yugoslavia. The first “Hite Report”, a sociological, content-centred qualitative analysis was about women’s sexuality and came out in 1976 in the US,<sup>566</sup> and was almost immediately reviewed in Yugoslavia, for example in the magazine *Start*.

Hite’s work supports Drakulić’s argument, who differentiates two meanings of the concept: the one promoted both by handbooks like the *Nauka o spolnosti* (cf. above) and by the mass media as a finished process, which in fact means a more explicit language and imagery of the same patriarchal sexual relations where the same power relations prevail. The other is the liberation of women, a new understanding of the relations of the sexes as well as sexuality. Drakulić sums it up: [From the mass media] “it seems that the most significant change brought along by the sexual revolution is the (sexual) liberation of women.” (46) Whereas this does not mean that women gained economic independence through what the Marxist terminology calls “participation in the production”, and women are still treated as sexual objects. There is not such a detailed analysis here as in Kodrnja’s work, but both authors seem to sketch the prerequisites for a radical (that is, revolutionary change) along the same lines. Hite, quoted by Drakulić, turns around the order in a way to reach women’s liberation, by claiming that women’s sexuality cannot

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but already by this time the “revolution” was presented as a successful project which reached its aims. Drakulić-Ilić, “Žena i seksualna revolucija”, 45. Further citations to this work are given in the text.

<sup>566</sup> Shere Hite, *The Hite Report: A Nationwide Study on Female Sexuality* (New York: Macmillan, c1976).

be dissociated from their social status, which makes the promotion of *sexual revolution* in the sense of “women’s liberation” understandable in any society that wants to cover up the fact that it keeps women oppressed.

As in the case of Kodrnja, here too one wonders whether this is also a reference to the Yugoslav situation, especially with taking this sentence into consideration: “It is one thing to proclaim a revolutionary change, its realisation is another.” (47) As very often, Yugoslav feminists refrain from targeting explicitly the local regime, still, in their writings about the sexual revolution they are not as careful as about many other issues, where they emphasise that it is other (Western, capitalist) countries that are discussed. As Drakulić is moving towards her conclusion, she becomes more radical, pointing out that the instrumentalised sex all the self-proclaimed post-sexual revolution forums promote “is exclusively about selfish lust without real contact between the partners and apart from that, an occupation with exclusively personal problems” and it “leads to passivity, to complicity with the status quo.”<sup>567</sup> This is a revolution on the reins, a limited change without broader social effect, the realisation of which prevents a more dangerous and radical change in society.

Therefore, the *sexual revolution* is not even a non-revolution, but rather a *politically non-dangerous revolution*, “an attempt on behalf of the system to play hide-and-seek with the individual”. (50) Drakulić detects the traces of a promise and how that promise of a revolution was abused for the maintenance of power relations and the *status quo*. Drakulić a year later publishes a text (analysed above), where, in the footprints of Enzensberger, she reminds the reader on the emptiness of any reference to morale: as we

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<sup>567</sup> Drakulić-Ilić, “Žena i seksualna revolucija”, 50.

know from Marx's early works, from the point of the bourgeois morale, that is "rights, politics, religion", any change, even revolution itself, is an immoral deed."<sup>568</sup>

While the source for Drakulić is Hite, Kodrnja abides by the Marxist discourse and the Frankfurt School re-readings of it, with references to Marcuse, Zygmunt Bauman and Ágnes Heller. The remnant of the Marxist approach by Drakulić is her valorisation of *revolution*. Her emphasis on the effects of this revolution on women gives a stronger feminist tone to her text. Both Kodrnja's and Drakulić's criticism show how the Marxist restrictive definition described above can be useful for the practice of feminism. The feminist approach to the *sexual revolution* is based on a strict interpretation of *revolution* itself, mostly taking the Marxist version of the concept as a starting point. In its restrictive nature, this interpretation supports the critical edge in the way feminists after the 1960s evaluate the sexual revolution, as we have seen above, and also in the Yugoslav case. This restrictive Marxist idea of *revolution* takes the term as a "legacy of 1789, of the nineteenth century, and of 1917" and a "redemptive act dedicated to liberate oppressed nations, classes, and all mankind."<sup>569</sup> As Marx saw revolutions, they are "grandiose movements and epochal turning points" identified with class struggle and "the class transfer of state power", or as Marx and Engels, and later Allende, as Régis Debray in his book on Chile put it: "transfer of power from a minority to a majority class".<sup>570</sup> The way the historian Lynn Hunt sees the age of the French revolution as the paradigm of the Marxist core definition of revolution broadens the concept's boundaries. In her

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<sup>568</sup> Drakulić, "Veliki grijeh na malom ekranu", 10-11.

<sup>569</sup> Perez Zagorin, *Rebels and Rulers, 1500-1660. Vol. I: Society, States and Early Modern Revolution: Agrarian and Urban Rebellions* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982): 5.

<sup>570</sup> *ibid.*, 12.

interpretation, the French revolution was the time when “the notion of the ‘political’ expanded and changed shape” and when “new forms and meanings of political languages, political ritual, political organisation” appeared. “French people learned a new political repertoire: ideology appeared as a concept and competing ideologies challenged the traditional European cosmology of order and harmony.”<sup>571</sup> It is ideology and the political culture of the Revolution that “provides the logic of revolutionary political action”,<sup>572</sup> and here she criticises those authors who imagine revolution to be deducible from social structures and conflicts: “Through their language, images, and daily political activities, revolutionaries worked to reconstitute society and social relations.”<sup>573</sup>

Women’s sexual freedom, which is one result of a real sexual revolution, involves their freedom from violence. In a significant text with a powerful title, ‘If a woman says ‘NO’, it means ‘NO’!’,<sup>574</sup> Lydia Sklevický conceptualises the basics of women’s sexual freedom waiting to be achieved. She is critical to the new rape legislation in Croatia, seeing it as moving backwards. She supports her argument with details on the history of feminism as an authentic movement which had to distance itself from the left and supports women’s right to stand up for themselves. Surprisingly, or not even that much so, women’s right to say no, to be safe in their sexuality as well, is even more revolutionary than their right to have extramarital sex and to have more sexual partners. The popular women’s magazine *Bazar* – which I will analyse in more detail – comes out

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<sup>571</sup> Lynn Avery Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, c1984), 2.

<sup>572</sup> *ibid.*, 10-11.

<sup>573</sup> *ibid.*, 12.

<sup>574</sup> Cf. the article: Sklevický, “Kad žena kaže ‘NE’ to znači ‘NE!’”



with an article offering a similar argument. It is the last article in the series which raises an equally important issue as part of one's sexual freedom: women's right to say no.<sup>575</sup> The article reflects on the fact that whereas in theory, all people have the same sexual liberty, women are still in the process of learning that they have the right to make decisions about their own body, guaranteed in South East Europe only in the past few decades. The article in *Dometi* discussed above is not the only occasion Drakulić is highly critical of the "revolutionary" label of something rather retrograde. Her text, "The long war of the naked Venus", critiques the cynicism of heralding the sexual revolution without real effect, and as she puts it:

The erotic magazines, which have such a revolutionary function [note the irony here], created a general euphoria around the so-called sexual revolution, an euphoria in which they don't see the forest from the tree, creating an illusion that despite all, the naked female body testifies of some sort of a liberation of women. By this logic, porn magazines would be the major proving range [*poligon*] for feminism.<sup>576</sup>

These magazines, as well as the rest of popular media, the same way as images through the history of art, do not represent women as individuals: their subjectivity is lacking and silenced, whereas women's new image should be exactly what it has not been yet.

## Conclusion

By the end of the 1980s, feminism in Yugoslavia has reached a multifaceted and relatively wide audience. As we have seen, the success in presence was not always a success in content. However, what was certainly achieved here and not in the other media

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<sup>575</sup> "Ka novoj polnosti" [To the new sexuality], *Bazar* no. 440. 8 December 1981.

<sup>576</sup> Drakulić, "Dugi rat nage venere", 18.

and forums, was the opening up towards the private, the everyday life of ordinary women, reading women's magazines and watching TV, writing reader's letters to the editors. Various crucial topics managed to get to the agenda of various publicities and basic messages about crucial social issues, but even theory, were transmitted. There can be seen an ambivalence between the genres: from this analysis it seems that while in *Bazar* feminism was opening up towards the private sphere and thus became the personal political, in *Start* even personal stories and matters had to be presented as political in order to be interesting for the editors. The recurrence of certain authors along certain topics shows how interrelated the actors are, but by the wide presence in popular media suggests that these circles were not that closed and exclusive, after all.

The way the new feminists in Yugoslavia work with the concept of the *sexual revolution* is indicative of their position vis-à-vis the regime and other individuals and groups with a critical and innovative stance toward the regime itself. The mid- and late-1970s provide a legal and discursive framework for experimentation and criticism. The feminists criticise and question both the state's discourse on women's equality and that of popular culture and the non-feminist subculture about the achieved *sexual revolution*. Sexuality is considered politically less dangerous, as it seemingly belongs to the private sphere, and the post-1971 agreement between the regime and its citizens entailed less politics in return for a freedom to experiment, both in culture and the economy. However, by the concept *revolution*, as well as through the lens of second wave feminism, sexuality is everything but a-political. The strategy of using Marxist terminology and the promises of Marxian ideologies considering women's equality is successfully employed by the new Yugoslav feminists in this case too. The case of *Start* and *Bazar* show how the

“dismantling of the master’s house” can be initiated with the “master’s tools” and points towards possible success. The way a concept moves from one context to the other, gets altered through the context and through language and translation, contributing further to this liberating and liberated condition. The discussion of the *sexual revolution* is paradigmatic of the time, up to the early 1980s, when Yugoslavia still seemed to be a framework for a better socialism, where even feminism could gain a critical position and from the private experience the political could be changed.

## Chapter 4. Reorganising Theory: From Kitchen Tables to the Streets, from Theory to Activism

Biljana Kašić: *“It was a ballet dancer, Vesna Mimica, who gave her first testimony on her abuse. And around 1986 we started a feminist discussion group, which was a completely new thing, it was like a consciousness raising group, but there were also theoretical discussions, I remember that Vlasta Jalušić gave a talk about Hegel and Marxism. (...) Some academic feminists felt obliged to support other women. For example Lydia Sklevickỳ, Rada Iveković, Andrea Feldman. We were not in the front-line and did not do as much as other members, such as Katarina Vidović, but we were there. It was Vesna Mimica, who did our instruction, since none of us had an idea of how to deal with the SOS hotline and then we started with a very serious self-education. In order to protect the women victims of male violence, we had very strict rules. This filtered out a lot of women, they either did not agree or the training was too much for them. We also had a debate with the victimologists, we wanted to help the victims or women survivors, and not search for the reasons of their victimisation in them. The other big debate was about men, if we should support men and families on this hotline or not. There was no doubt; women were a central focus for us and it was a clear feminist politics that women were those who deserved our unconditional support and that it was a helpline working on feminist principles. With the help and support from the women in Belgrade and Ljubljana, the Zagreb SOS started in March 1988 as the first SOS hotline for women in the socialist/communist countries.”*

Vera Litričin: *“No one thought first that the SOS would bring anything new into this society, people were convinced that beating women and children is just part of the mentality here. (...) I think we succeeded in setting up the SOS hotline, because the politicians thought it was nothing, if they give it, then women will leave them alone.”*

Gordana Cerjan-Letica: *“First I was approached by women travelling Europe, from the US, they were Quakers, and they mentioned a woman from the US embassy who organised a consciousness raising group. I asked Lydia [Sklevickỳ], because we were friends, to come with me there, so we joined the group. This was a very important personal experience, a first hand female experience for both of us. It was more radical feminism, in this group, not moderate, but very good for me. We were discussing patriarchy as the enemy, women’s reproductive rights, orgasm, sexuality, contraception.”*

Mojca Dobnikar: *“Vesna Mimica came to Ljubljana in 1987 to tell her story. The SOS hotline was founded in 1989, the state youth organisation gave us some of their own money, and they also have us an office. The phone was not*

*for free for a while, then for a while yes. They had a lot of help from the Zagreb women at the beginning. Later even a policewoman and a prosecutor joined them, who were not feminists, but had a lot of legal knowledge. I think it is interesting in Slovenia that many feminist theoreticians, even Vlasta and Tanja were afraid of going into this direction of violence against women, as we would represent women as victims, and they saw a danger in this. For the first meeting of the SOS group in January 1989 we invited all the feminists in Ljubljana, but only Milica Antić came. She said she would not work on the helpline, but she is happy to provide research if needed.”*

Lepa Mladenović: *“On the last day of the Yugoslav feminist meeting in Ljubljana, in 1987, we suddenly decided to make a final document. It was our pledge to ourselves about what we wanted to work on. To ourselves. We didn’t want to accuse anyone and we didn’t ask the state for anything. To me, what mattered was that I gave my word to my group.”*

In order to realise the “personal is political” within Yugoslav new feminism, the first, necessary step was to turn to the experience of individual women, which showed the problems with the emancipation which was guaranteed on paper, but had many flaws in practice. These experiences proved to be a basis for political action and this way, the activist work became a new kind of research and a source of a different kind of knowledge. Both chronologically and intellectually, the new Yugoslav feminists’ trajectory is describable as a transition from theory to activism. To quote Ingrid Šafranek again, she was sorry for having encountered feminism first through literature and not through feminist politics, and her arrival to activism from the academia is characteristic for many other new Yugoslav feminists. In the meantime, the feminist scholarship and new approaches to the most burning issues of feminist activism create a discourse that shapes the tools and the agenda of the women who become activists later on. In this chapter, I try to reconstruct the transfer of feminist academic knowledge into activism and the influence of the activist work on the academic discourse.

The shift towards activism, which is seen as a “second wave” of the new Yugoslav feminism, around 1985-86, meant an opening up towards higher level politics and fits into the emergence of a new civil society in the region, especially as the political landscape in Yugoslavia and the entire region of Eastern Europe was changing. The languages of human rights and democracy were slowly entering the Yugoslav discourse, and the feminists had their own conceptual input. The feminist groups, in the meantime, were taking steps to institutionalise and organise themselves across Yugoslavia in a more effective way, within the frames of “all-Yugoslav” feminist meetings, the first one of which took place in Ljubljana in 1987. While there was an effort to formally tighten the connections between the already interwoven groups in Zagreb, Ljubljana, Belgrade, slowly in Novi Sad, the groups were becoming more diverse internally: not only because it was becoming increasingly clear who will be an activist and who does academic work, but along identity lines too. Finally the lesbian group members were gaining more and more voice, which led to a significant restructuring of the *Žena i društvo* groups and definitely gave it new energies. The most important step, also signalling a “second wave” of new Yugoslav feminism, was the creation of the officially women-only groups.

The topics, along which new Yugoslav feminism was transforming and which brought along the introduction and reinterpretation of concepts, were women’s health and violence against women. These topics were of central interest for the “Western” feminism and the connecting points between the West and the Third World, thus meant the widening of the Yugoslav feminist networks too. Attempts to build a mass movement faced significantly more resistance from behalf of the state than some bright-eyed humanities students reading obscure French theories. In the meantime, work in

criminology, psychology and sociology proves to be a discursive foundation to the new and growing activism. As for the sources and the methodology of this chapter, it should be emphasised that as there is a shift in the activities of the feminists towards activism, there also is a shift in the focus on the sources: archival materials and the interviews with the participants are at least as interesting here as are the academic publications.

The widespread and shared interest in women's health and violence against women lays in the recognition that these are both symptoms and sources of other forms of inequality. Violence, health and the body are indissociable from the issues in the centre of the new feminisms after the 1960s, including sexuality, reproductive rights, the construction of gender identities. In the socialist East European context, in the meantime, discussing women's health and violence against women is controversial towards the state too, as it reveals many of the contradictions between the state's gender policy and the new feminist agenda. In a context which claims to be in control of the lives of its citizens, law and order, as well as to have achieved women's equality, it is a transgressive act to problematise the invisible violence in the private sphere, which in the meantime is omnipresent in the public sphere as well. It is in the 1970s that family violence enters the public discussions in the United States and Western Europe, but also in many "third world" countries and the UN Year of Women in 1975 largely contributes to the globalisation of the discussion.<sup>577</sup> According to Janet Elise Johnson, writing about Russia

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<sup>577</sup> Cf. e.g.: R. Emerson Dobash – Russell P. Dobash, *Women, Violence, and Social Change* (London: Routledge, 1992); S. Laurel Weldon, *Protest, Policy, and the Problem of Violence against Women: A Cross-National Comparison* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, c2002); Julie Peters – Andrea Wolper, ed.s. *Women's Rights, Human Rights: International Feminist Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Margaret E. Keck – Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell UP, 1998).

and basing her analysis largely on Keck and Sikkink's work on the globalisation of activism

this new global feminism was expedited by the creation and popularization of the composite concept of 'violence against women'. (...) Although different groups of feminists, from the North and South, had raised various gender violence issues – such as rape, domestic violence, female genital mutilation, torture of political prisoners, and dowry deaths – until the mid 1970s these had been separate campaigns (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 171). Framing all these issues as violence against women created solidarity between movements – all forms were constituted equal, none exoticized – but also allowed for 'autonomous self organization' (Weldon 2006).<sup>578</sup>

Importantly enough, in the case of violence against women, women's rights and human rights converge so clearly, that women's issues cannot be treated as economic issues any more. In relation to the role of the UN, Johnson claims that "violence against women was different from the typical women's issues raised at the United Nations because the concept's central assertion was women's right to bodily integrity."<sup>579</sup> The UN played an important role in the internationalisation of the campaign against violence against women, while the networks and transfers happened at much lower, activist levels, as the Yugoslav case demonstrates very well.

The previous chapters have already shown authors and forums pointing towards a broader discussion and new approaches to feminism as a human rights movement. The main issue addressed here is the long-time present but almost always silenced violence against women, which later terminology addresses as partnership violence, intimate partner violence, domestic violence. (Throughout the chapter, I will use the terms violence against women and domestic violence, and refer to them with the acronyms

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<sup>578</sup> Janet Elise Johnson, *Gender Violence in Russia: The Politics of Feminist Intervention* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, c2009), 19-20.

<sup>579</sup> Johnson, *Gender Violence in Russia*, 20.



VaW and DV respectively.) Sanja Iveković's work about violence represents an early new feminist perspective, for example in her *Osobni rezovi* (*Personal Cuts*, 1982) which I analyse in Chapter 2, or the piece *Crni fascikl* (*The Black File*, 1976) where nudes from sex advertisements are contrasted with the small portraits of missing girls from the dailies, thus pointing towards the connection between prostitution and crime. What gradually takes shape in the academic literature is understood in Iveković early work on violence already and there are hints to it in the literary work of Slavenka Drakulić too. A similarly understanding approach is reflected in the articles series of Maja Miles in *Start*, the writings of Vesna Mimica in *Bazar* and *Svijet*, as well as the article series in *Bazar*.

### **Women-Only Feminist Groups: The “Second Wave” of New Yugoslav Feminism and the Lesbian “First Wave”**

This was a time for other types of organising too: what took place in the private or semi-private, such as Mirjana Ule's kitchen table in Ljubljana, the SKC *tribine* in Belgrade or the *Žena i društvo* Zagreb seminars, prepared the participants for activism in the public sphere. They were entering the streets too: within the available possibilities, for example in the form of *anketiranje*, that is street polling, around topics such as “what do you think of equality” or “solidarity among women”. If the academic work was a preparation of a feminist language, the *tribine*, seminars and informal talks were a scene of activist socialisation, and the women-only groups became a nest for explicit political participation. This new phase is the time where the quote in my Introduction comes from. Vera Litričin remembers it as: “We were learning a feminist language. At the beginning I was always rethinking my sentences, asking myself the question: ‘what would this mean

in the vocabulary of feminism?’ It was not just words we were translating, it was thoughts”. She also told me how they were discussing the new knowledge with Nadežda Četković, rethinking their sentences together. As an ophthalmologist, Vera Litričin came from the medical profession, and only when joining the feminist group she came to realise that the so-called objective scientific knowledge the medical school endowed her with was not that objective and scientific: “This was the first time I heard that it is not true that women physically cannot be raped.” Vera Litričin’s story shows how the women in the group had to change their perspective on the basic phenomena in their lives, which was often confrontational for them.

The turn came around 1985-1986, when the more consciousness raising type of meetings started. Beyond doubt, the “master mind” behind it was Lepa Mladenović. A psychologist by training, she started travelling to workshops about women’s health and through this, she learned about new methods for women’s organising. After the academic dominance of new Yugoslav feminism, where Zagreb was definitely more visible as most journals and the predominant number of intellectuals were based there, the Belgrade SKC and the Ljubljana group contributed significantly to the shift into activism. It is a funny coincidence, though, that it was in Zagreb where the first SOS helpline was founded. The focus, as I emphasise already in the introduction, was steadily shifting towards the body, sexuality (including sexual identity and orientation, contraception, sexual life), health and violence. The themes, as well as the years of experience with the male members or regular participants at different events and meetings predicted the moment when the question whether men should participate came up.

The experience of Lepa Mladenović with the women's health workshop based on the idea that women can share their own experiences and work towards change better in a women-only group convinced her that the *Žena i društvo* group needs reorganisation too. She realised that the safe space helps not only the consciousness raising of women, but it even secures the learning environment significantly better than a mixed group: "By this time, when I discovered the method 'workshop of experience', I was sick of the repetitiveness of our discussions." When the decision about men's participation came up, it also meant a turning point for the new Yugoslav feminist group. Some women left, while others joined or if they were there earlier already, they became stronger and more vocal members of the group. Whether someone was for or against the women-only groups depends on how they perceived the participation of men before, as well as one's sexual identity. The participating men were often the partners of the feminists, mostly from left-wing or liberal circles. Also, the intellectual men, who in Serbia later became important members of the anti-nationalist opposition of Milošević, were often attending the meetings of the *Žena i društvo* group at SKC. However, there were mixed feelings of the women at the same meetings about their presence.

For some women, the creation of the women-only groups was a reason to leave the group. Sofija Trivunac, for example, gave the following explanation: "When the group decided that we will exclude men, I left. After my training in England, I believed that women should feel equal and strong in mixed company, and this women-only group felt like a step back in history." However, she had other reasons to leave, which she admits too: "I was also tired already and wanted to focus more on my research, my private practice and my clinical work." Other members, though they disagreed with the

exclusion of the men, stayed. Lina Vušković emphasises that there were some men genuinely interested in feminism attending the meetings, like Ivan Vejvoda and Nebojša Popov. She added that Vejvoda's dissertation was about the changes in the marriage law after the French revolution. In the first chapter of this dissertation, I extensively cite the early feminist issue of *Student*, which he edited with Žarana Papić. The participation of men was a matter of debate between the Ljubljana group members too, in Mojca Dobnikar's memories, Vlasta Jalušič was for letting men stay, while Suzana Tratnik was against. As I mention earlier in the dissertation, the Ljubljana group's first big public event was a women-only party, a huge success with hundreds of guests.

From the Zagreb group, Vesna Kesić and Nadežda Čačinović talked more in detail about their experience with the men in the group, which experience was mixed and depended on the individuals. Kesić sums up her explanation for the behaviour of some men in the group: "These times were also difficult because some leftist male colleagues, around the feminist initiatives, they were also against the initiative." They were often against the feminist ideas: "Žarko Puhovski, the famous philosopher, or Slobodan Drakulić, the husband of Slavenka Drakulić told us things that we take them back to pre-Marxist struggle, that this is bourgeois. They were just jealous, because they were not the first ones, they always wanted to be first in all revolutionary thought. They just wanted to have the attention. Once I threw out Slobodan Drakulić. He always wanted to talk first all the time, to make speeches. He was the first to advocate liberalisation of drugs, alternative pedagogy, so he wanted to be first in this too. This is what I learned from the women who came to *Drug-ca*: don't let men talk in your name. I realised that we can't always work together." She refines the picture by adding that there were men who were

supportive and contributed to the discussion in a meaningful way, for example Vjeran Katunarić, who really did understand what feminism was about.

Slobodan Drakulić was a problematic person in view of Čačinović too, who in her memories was asked to leave the *Drug-ca* meeting itself, as the women from France and the UK found it hard to deal with his constant comments and questions disrupting the flow of the discussion. She sees the role of her husband as more complex: “Puhovski was extremely helpful in my life. He was, for example, doing the indexes for my books. But also with the children. He, on the other hand, didn’t like coming to our discussions. He was worried about the quality, the argument of the discussions, he was warning me how not to let emotions take over the arguments. He followed Hannah Arendt’s idea that emotions should not be part of politics.” I would like to point out the difference between the way Čačinović remembers her husband’s reaction to feminism: from a common ground, which is serious scholarship, seeing his concern against feminism as a concern for her and her group’s academic quality. Whereas, this concern came from a lack of understanding of new feminism’s position about the personal, the private, the emotional bearing political and academic significance.

Lepa Mladenović remembers the situation in a simple and balanced way: it was always one or two men who came to the meetings. Asking the same questions and making the same comments, however, which forced the group to always return to the beginnings of the discussion. And added to this, came the fact that the women had more and more a motivation to discuss personal matters. It was not only the content of the discussions, however, that changed due to the gender of the participants, but the very identity of the groups. The lesbian feminist movement became stronger and eventually

occupied a crucial space within the feminist organising. The Belgrade *Žena i društvo* group from this point on was a mixed group of lesbian and straight women.<sup>580</sup> In Ljubljana, from the feminist group Lilit, the LL – Lezbična Lilit was founded in 1987. In Zagreb, the lesbian group founded in 1989 got the name *Lila inicijativa* [Lila initiative]. In the Slovenian lesbian-feminist history, this was the first wave of the lesbian movement, followed by a second one in 1990 with the foundation of the Roza Club and the magazine *Revolver*. It should be emphasised that in Ljubljana, there were lesbian events taking place from 1984 on, within the gay festival organised by Magnus, the gay section of ŠKUC. The festival always included lesbian programs, such as talks, films, exhibitions. Another significant difference is that in Slovenia, the lesbian and the feminist movement developed side by side. The first party only for women, in ŠKUC, was a great success, with hundreds of participants. LL was in touch with the other feminist and lesbian groups, including the feminist group Trešnjevka in Zagreb and also co-organised the first all-Yugoslav feminist conference in Ljubljana in 1987.

The meetings of the Yugoslav feminists, who had been in contact with each other from the beginnings as the previous chapters show, happened on the one hand within the frames of the academic intensive courses of the Inter University Centre in Dubrovnik and within the frames of the Yugoslav Feminist Meetings. In Dubrovnik, there were courses about the women's question already in 1976, with international and Yugoslav participants, and the first feminist course took place in 1986, followed by three others till

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<sup>580</sup> Relying on the self-identification of the time, here I do not use the LGBTQ acronym.

1990.<sup>581</sup> The all-Yugoslav feminist meetings came almost ten years after the *Drug-ca* conference in Belgrade in 1978 and were clearly influenced by the new, more activist way of organisation of the *Žena i društvo* groups. The first took place in Ljubljana in 1987, the next in Zagreb in 1988, then in 1990 there was a meeting in Belgrade and in 1991 again in Ljubljana. The themes of the 2-3 days long meetings focused mostly on the feminist *movement* in Yugoslavia and elsewhere, as well as VaW, health, lesbian identities, the right to abortion and the dangers of population policies.<sup>582</sup> This was, moreover, a time for the feminists to travel more frequently to international women's meetings and workshops, which were emerging in the frames of the globalising women's movement, for example around "women and health" events. The organisational and gender change in the groups is accompanied by a self-periodisation of the Yugoslav feminists: the time of turning to activism was considered the "second wave" of new Yugoslav feminism.<sup>583</sup>

### Textualising the Lesbian Movement in Yugoslavia

LGBT rights and lesbian identities were present in the artistic and academic publications and works during the entire history of new Yugoslav feminism. However, these issues were not spelled out as clearly as in the second half of the 1980s and were not always attached to the concepts and ideas central to Yugoslav feminism. It was in Slovenia, on

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<sup>581</sup> About these, cf. Marijana Mitrović, "Genealogy of the Conferences on Women's Writing at the Inter University Center (Dubrovnik) from 1986 to 1990", *ProFemina*, Special Issue no. 2 (Summer-Autumn 2011): 157-166.

<sup>582</sup> Mojca Dobnikar and Nela Pamukovic, eds., *Ja(z), ti, one ... za nas. Dokumenti jugoslovenskih feminističnih srečanj 1987-1991* [I, you, they ... for us. Documents of the Yugoslav feminist meetings 1987-1991]. (Ljubljana: Društvo Vita Activa and Zagreb: Centar za žene žrtve rata – ROSA, 2009).

<sup>583</sup> The appearance of the term "second wave" is also related to its growing popularity in the terminology of "Western", especially US feminism.

the pages of the critical youth journal *Mladina*, that the first special issue on lesbian identities was published in 1987, with a front page portraying two kissing women holding to female signs, connecting lesbian identity and the feminist movement. Already as early as 1985, the feminist issue of the same supplement of *Mladina*, *Pogledi*, included a translated text by Anne Koedt about the lesbian movement as the radical avant-garde of feminism.<sup>584</sup> The new, Belgrade based journal *Potkulture*, that is “Subcultures”, came out with an issue full of texts about the LGBTQ movements and identities. These were mixed with articles about elderly people as an endangered group (a sign of the problems with the entire social welfare system in socialist Yugoslavia), but also had a report from the feminist polling project *Akciona anketa* I analyse below. After the “use” of LGBTQ identities for the arguments about the concept of gender in the academic publications and the articles of mixed qualities in *Bazar* and *Start*, these publications aim at creating a movement. The publications also show that the gay movement stood on more solid feet for a bit longer period of time and that, however, the lesbians could rely on them.

In *Potkulture*, Đorđe Čomić creates a list of possibilities for advice and advocacy centres for gay men. Interestingly enough, when the article admits that there is no “gay culture”, that is gay cultural scene in Yugoslavia which is comparable to those in the “West” (that is, New York, London or Paris), the author lists the gay clubs in Belgrade, Ljubljana and Zagreb.<sup>585</sup> This could be a dangerous move, although, as the article also mentions, there is growing acknowledgement and legal liberalisation in the SFRY for

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<sup>584</sup> Anne Koedt, “Lezbično gibanje in feminizem” [The lesbian movement and feminism], *Mladina, Pogledi* vol. 12 Summer, no. 2 (1985): 10-11.

<sup>585</sup> Đorđe Čomić, “Strah, mržnja i gej kontrakultura” [Fear, hate and gay counterculture], *Potkulture*, no. 3 (1987): 50-57.



LGBTQ people. In this issue of *Potkulture*, the only article about lesbian identity is a text by Slađana Marković about lesbian literature (cf. Chapter 2),<sup>586</sup> while there is more conceptual clarifications considering how one speaks about LGBTQ people, especially gay men. As we have seen in the cases analysed in the previous chapter, this still was quite problematic at the time, often not respecting the dignity of those spoken about. The Canadian sociology professor and gay rights activist John Allen Lee's article tells about the political stakes of choosing between the concept gay and homosexual, and the French sociologist, Michael Pollak discusses the changes of self-perception and social perception of gay men in the US and Western Europe.<sup>587</sup> As later Tomaž Rudolf, a gay rights activist in Slovenia describes, *gays*, unlike *homosexuals*, "are aware of their identity, they cultivate it, they are active on the gay (or 'their') scene, they are acquainted with gay culture and approachable."<sup>588</sup>

As for the lesbian movement and identities, the 1987 *Pogledi* supplement of *Mladina* strives to dispel prejudice against lesbian women, including those which presuppose that homosexuality mostly concerns men and there is no real lesbian sexuality, only ugly women disappointed in men.<sup>589</sup> We should note here that while in

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<sup>586</sup> Slađana Marković, "Zemlja bez jezika" [A land without a language], *Potkulture*, no. 3 (1987): 58-60.

<sup>587</sup> John Alan Lee, "Ne tu reč! Ne gej za homoseksualca!" [Don't use that word: gay meaning homosexual], *Potkulture*, no. 3 (1987): 60-69.

Mikael Polak [Michael Pollak], "Muška homoseksualnost, ili: sreća u getu?" [Male homosexuality, or: happiness in the ghetto?], *Potkulture*, no. 3 (1987): 70-79.

<sup>588</sup> Suzana Tratnik, "Lepotne napake lezbištva" [Nice mistakes of lesbianism], *Revolver*, no. 12 (June-August 1994), reprinted in Tratnik and Segan, eds., *L: Zbornik o lezbičnem gibanju na Slovenskem 1984-1995*, 50-51.

<sup>589</sup> Cf. ILIS – COC, "Deset vprašanj lezbičnosti" [Ten questions about lesbianism], *Mladina*, no. 37 (October 1987): 26-27.

*Potkulture*, the articles are translations and thus are published with names, in this issue the editors appear only with their first names. There are important basic statements about lesbianism being present in human history from its beginnings, that around 5-10% of women are lesbians, that neither homosexuality nor lesbianism is a disease and therefore there is no need to cure it, neither can it be cured. The concept of “mandatory heterosexuality” also appears and its outdatedness is explained.<sup>590</sup> Another article emphasises that lesbians are women, that is one does not cease to be a woman for loving another woman.<sup>591</sup> The statement related to the article demands equal rights for lesbian women, the end of discrimination against and criminalisation of homosexuality, the right to sexual education which is not heterosexist (another term which is new in the Yugoslav public discourse) and in general, the right to one’s control over their own bodies. These claims are shared in many ways with the feminist movement. The articles in the special issue rely to a large extent on the knowledge and demands of international feminist networks, such as ILIS (International Lesbian Information Service) and COC Amsterdam (*Cultuur en Ontspanningscentrum* [Center for Culture and Leisure]), the probably oldest LGBT organisation in the world, founded in 1946. Another sign of the growing integration of the Yugoslav feminist and lesbian movement into a globalising movement, while the support of the Amnesty International, published in the same journal issue,

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The supplement in *Mladina*: “Nekaj o ljubezni med ženskami” [A few things about women loving women], edited by Suzana, Roni, Erika, Nataša, Marjeta and Davorka. *Pogledi*, Summer 14, no. 8, in *Mladina*, no. 37 (October 1987): 21-28.

<sup>590</sup> “Problemi vsiljene heteroseksualnosti” [The problems with mandatory heterosexuality], *Mladina*, no. 37 (October 1987): 23.

<sup>591</sup> Radicalesbians, “Ženske, ki se identificirajo kot ženske” [Women who identify as women], *Mladina*, no. 37 (October 1987): 24-25.

signals the integration of the rights of LGBTQ people into a broader human rights agenda.

### **New Language about Women's Body through Scholarship on Violence and Health**

After the shaping of the problem in journalism and art, scholarship and a methodology forged from scholarship and activists' experience provided a language and terminology for not only discussing, but dealing with VaW and DV. The discourse on violence, in the meantime, was closely interrelated with the discourse on women's health, which, as we shall see, was endangered by violence in a more complex way it was thought to be the case before. It is important to note that it was the feminism in the US from the 1960s on which most drastically intervened in the existing discourse, their ideas inspired by various traditions and ideologies. In Yugoslavia, the academic VaW discourse developed first and the fastest within criminology and gained a lot from victimology, with a more and more visible feminist influence on parts of the discourse. Victimology turned out to be a controversial field not only for feminism working on VaW, but it was used extensively in the more and more widespread nationalist ideology, especially in Croatia. The discipline has a general dubious status from the perspective of the feminist approach to VaW. This is due to the different reasons of its focus on the victims. One intention is to help the victims of crime, in order to achieve justice, based on the insight that punishing the perpetrator is not enough, the victims psychological, physical and financial recovery is just as important. The other intention is to explore the reasons and sources of victimisation, which, however, often and easily shifts into victim blaming. The feminist

approach, positioning itself firmly within the human rights tradition, claims that the person responsible for a crime is the person who committed it.

The knowledge coming from feminist criminology, which was committed to the first goal and refused the second one, was transferred into the Yugoslav discourse through the work of especially one scholar, Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović. Her work was complemented by the work of the activists who set up the SOS helpline, the shelters and the entire anti-violence movement. Nikolić-Ristanović later became one of the greatest authorities in the field of gender based violence from the former Yugoslavia. Her work in the 1980s reflects the development of the field in the country plastically. She is one of the first experts of victimology in Yugoslavia, a discipline which was a novelty all over the world in the 1960s.<sup>592</sup> In my reading, the most important aspect of the writings about VaW by Nikolić-Ristanović, in the tradition of the feminist methodology developed a few decades earlier in the US and the West of Europe, was the reinterpretation of the former *facts and proofs as prejudice and preconceptions* about rape and other forms of VaW. The new conceptualisation was the basis of further action, and in the Yugoslav case, also the terrain of clearly formulated criticism towards the state. Instead of the Marxist (in fact Engelsian and Bebelian) approach to women's position, new sources of women's oppression were detected. Economic inequality and subjugation gets reinterpreted as stemming from sexual oppression. The way women are oppressed, therefore, also gets

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<sup>592</sup> In Yugoslavia, about this cf. Vladimir Vodinelić, "Kriminalistička viktimologija: novo učenje u kriminalističkoj znanosti" [Criminal victimology: a new study in the criminal sciences], *Bezbednost i društvena samozaštita*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1990): 28-34; vol. 5, no. 3. (1990): 40-49.

Zagorka Simić-Jekić, "Razgraničenje viktimologije od drugih krivičnih nauka" [Differentiating victimology from other studies in criminology], *Pravni život* vol. 35, no. 12. (1985): 1181-1194.

new definitions. All this includes insights that rape is not the sole form of violence against women and that it is not only children who suffer as victims of domestic violence.

In the case of Nikolić-Ristanović, her work is influenced by psychoanalysis (Freud and criticism of Freud) and by new feminist publications, mostly in the field of psychology and sociology. Quite importantly, the 1980s the volume *Antropologija žene* edited by Papić and Sklevický is extensively referenced in Nikolić-Ristanović's publications too. In its language, her book from 1989 combines legal terminology and the vocabulary of the new feminism. The influence of the legal discourse and victimology explains the title of the book as well: "Women as crime victims" [*Žene kao žrtve kriminaliteta*].<sup>593</sup> Whereas the book takes a clear position about VaW and DV, the title directs the attention to women's victimisation, which resonates with the fears of those feminists who were cautious with organising the movement around VaW. In the meantime, the book's content is more complex. The author discusses the sources, reasons and forms of women becoming victims of criminality, as well as possible ways of possible assistance for women crime victims. She offers an overview of the latest literature about the topic published both in Yugoslavia and in English language.

*Žene kao žrtve kriminaliteta* offers a systematic typology of the different ways of women's victimisation, which necessarily involves conceptual clarifications. One of the most important cases is that of *rape*. Here Nikolić-Ristanović equally discusses new, normative literature on how rape needs to be assessed and the existing regulations. The two obviously represent a different language. The legal system of the SFRY as well as

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<sup>593</sup> Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, *Žene kao žrtve kriminaliteta* [Women as crime victims] (Beograd: Naučna knjiga, 1989). Further citations to this work are given in the text.

the author differentiate between various forms of *sexual violence*, which therefore mean different legal categories. Legally, rape [*krivični deo silovanja* or simply *silovanja*] is a form of violent act, when penetration with genitals into genitals happens. Regulations acknowledge other forms of sexual violence, which, however, are considered less severe: sexual misconduct, i.e. *bludna radnja* (everything that is not penetration with genitals into genitals). This typology is not different from most rape regulations in Europe and North America at the time and even today. The innovative input to the discourse on rape from behalf of Nikolić-Ristanović is the introduction of good practices from other countries, especially the US, which started to appear as a result of the feminist movements' demands and actions. For example, in Florida rape was redefined instead of an assault on one's "moral" and gets to be categorised as any physical assault. Traditionally, the legislation against sexual offences treated these as a matter of "morality", the signs of which are still today there in the legal language about rape, so moving the terminology towards physical violence makes this type of crime more serious.

A further innovation in the Florida law, as the author notices it, is that the victim's "masochistic tendencies" as well as the "resistance [physical resistance] of the victim as an essential criterion for rape" are eliminated. (37) Therefore the law allows less space for *victim-blaming*.<sup>594</sup> *Victim-blaming* is a crucial concept of the feminist approach to

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<sup>594</sup> The concept of victim blaming enters the Anglo-Saxon political discourse which largely influenced the entire human rights discourse in the 1970s. The anti-racism and anti-poverty movements, as well as the feminist movement started using it extensively. Cf. Sarah Williams, "Left-Right Ideological Differences in Blaming Victims", *Political Psychology* vol. 5. no. 4 (December 1984): 573-581. According to some sources, for example Wikipedia, William Ryan coined the phrase "blaming the victim" in his 1971 book with the same title: *Blaming the Victim*. Ryan argues that victim blaming is an ideology that justifies racism and social injustice against black people in the United States. The origins of the concept may be traced back to the discussions of the Shoah, Adorno identifying the contempt for the "weak" as one of the justifications of fascism to destroy groups of people. Cf. Theodor W. Adorno's *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950). "Victim blaming", [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victim\\_blaming](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victim_blaming) (accessed 4th September 2014).

VaW, which, was not widely used in the new Yugoslav feminist discourse until 1991. However, the principle was there both in the methodology of the activists and in Nikolić-Ristanović's book. Here, the entire thematisation of rape is influenced by fresh research from the field of criminology, which is clearly influenced by the new feminist tendencies. It relies on articles from the journals *Victimology* and *Crime and Delinquency*, such as Gerald D. Robin's "Forcible rape: Institutionalised sexism in the criminal justice system".<sup>595</sup> The position Nikolić-Ristanović presents through the removal of rape from the semantic space of sexuality and morality and through lifting the blame from the victim and shifting it onto the perpetrator, corresponds with the claim feminist authors have raised in various articles and art works, for example the articles quoted in the previous chapters, such as Sklevický's "Kad žena kaže ne, znači ne", the articles on rape by Miles and Vušković, or Sanja Iveković's *Sweet Violence*.

*Rape* is in the focus of several levels of feminist discussion. Approaches from other fields than criminology involve different sources and offer new definitions. While Nikolić-Ristanović focuses on the legal aspects and her explanations stem from a criminological approach, an article in the journal *Gledišta* edited by Daša Duhaček in 1990, written by Nevenka Gruzinov-Milovanović, explores the topic from a cultural and sociological perspective. This article also summarises many of the ideas that came up one way or the other in the earlier texts. She places *rape* in the context of patriarchy and interprets it in the context of gender based violence against women, perpetrated by men. She relies on new feminist literature from the US, such as Brownmiller's *Against Our*

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<sup>595</sup> The article referenced: Gerald D. Robin, "Forcible rape: Institutionalised sexism in the criminal justice system", *Crime and Delinquency*, 1977. br. 2. The same journal issue has two other articles about female offenders too.

*Will*, but also Andra Medea and Kathleen Thompson's *Against Rape*, Jennifer Temkin's *Rape and the Legal Process*,<sup>596</sup> and articles from various journals, including ones from the field of criminology and psychology. From *Against Rape*, she quotes: "Rape is not an isolated act. It is not aberration, deviation of sexual behaviour. Rape is, very simply, a final act on the continuum of male-aggressive female-passive."<sup>597</sup>

This dissociation of rape from its stereotypical place and explanation is presented in a more personal tone, the author often expresses her disappointment with the current situation, when she repeatedly begins sentences with the phrase "unfortunately". Gruzinov-Milovanović emphasises that the legal prosecution of rape does not replace the achievement of women's sexual autonomy, which in her reading would be the best way to prevent rape. She enlists and criticises the various myths about the victims lying about rape, provoking it, or the one about rape being "part of human nature". The article refuses the biological or natural motivation of rape and pertains that it is a social product, ending with the strong claim that "rape, above all, is a form of brutal psychological and physical violence [...] a form of physical violence where sex is just a weapon."<sup>598</sup> It also refers to Nikolić-Ristanović and the two approaches complement and support each other. Gruzinov-Milovanović's analysis largely relies on the work of Jovica Stojanović,

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<sup>596</sup> The referenced books: Andra Medea and Kathleen Thompson, *Against Rape* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974); Jennifer Temkin, *Rape and the Legal Process* (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1987).

<sup>597</sup> Nevenka Gruzinov-Milovanović, "Sociološki i kulturni aspekti silovanja" [Sociological and cultural aspects of rape], *Gledišta* vol. 1-2. (1990): 170-184, 171. (The translation is mine, from the Serbo-Croatian translation of the original English text.)

<sup>598</sup> Gruzinov-Milovanović, "Sociološki i kulturni aspekti silovanja", 183.



*Silovanje* [Rape], which is an overview of the cultural history of rape and which book relies on such current feminist literature as Brownmiller's work.<sup>599</sup>

Less focused on the cultural aspects and more on the legal, Nikolić-Ristanović's *Žene kao žrtve kriminaliteta* also works towards dispelling the myths about rape. There is a strong focus on the victims of rape: for example, she extensively quotes sources questioning the role the attractiveness of the victims plays in them getting raped. (150) A further specification on the forms of rape, the most detailed one in the Yugoslav feminist literature from before 1990 is in Nikolić-Ristanović's book. A form of sexual violence, the perception of which reveals many aspects of the values of a discourse, is what in English is called *marital rape*. In Serbo-Croatian, *silovanje u braku*, that is "rape in the marriage". A rape committed by one spouse, mostly the husband, against the other, mostly the wife, has not been penalised for until the last decades neither in Europe nor in North America. From Nikolić-Ristanović's critical perspective, it is assessed as a result of "a conservative bourgeois understanding of marriage, where woman is the property of the man." (38) A form of victimisation from which women are still unprotected in Yugoslavia (at the time of the publication), with the exception in Slovenia.

She calls legislation not penalising marital rape "backward", comparing it to the laws in France and Great Britain, which are more permissive towards murder if the perpetrator and the victim are spouses, and not strangers. (33) Marital rape is often an

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<sup>599</sup> Jovica Stojanović, *Silovanje* [Rape], (Nikšić : Univerzitetska riječ, 1988). His later, misogynic book: *Strah od žena: fenomen ženske agresivnosti* [The fear of women: the phenomenon of female aggressiveness] (Beograd: Čigoja štampa, 2012).

Interestingly enough, Stojanović later starts publishing misogynic books revealing the truth of "women being the stronger sex." Cf. Ana Jovanović, "Žene u moćnom lancu tiranije nad muškarcima", <http://www.e-novine.com/entertainment/entertainment-tema/76772-ene-monom-lancu-tiranije-nad-mukarcima.html> (accessed 4th September 2014)

exception in even those countries where the prosecution of rape does not depend on the report of the victim. Quoting another source,<sup>600</sup> we learn that some countries (Hungary, Poland, Slovenia), despite the more progressive regulation which does not expect the victim to start the legal process but the state takes over the task, exclude cases where the rape happens in a relationship, i.e. marriage or partnership (40).

Prostitution and human trafficking are discussed by Nikolić-Ristanović in the same section as rape, and although their analysis is not detailed, by the structure of the book it can be concluded that the author treats these two as related to sexual violence. The other big field of violence against women she identifies as *krivični deo koji ulaze u domen porodičnog nasilja* [criminal act which enters the domain of family violence], that is, domestic violence. (48) While the main focus is on physical violence, the author succeeds to delineate (and often by this, introduce concepts of) other forms of victimisation of women. For example, the omission of paying alimony is also a form of victimisation, as someone breaks the law and there is a victim suffering the consequences. Nikolić-Ristanović interprets VaW always also from an economic and partly class perspective. Her conclusion is that the frequency of this type of victimisation of women is indicative of the fact that women are still often economically dependent. (46) Which confirms “the need for a sex [*pol*] specific legislation”,<sup>601</sup> as most laws do not specify the sex of the subjects, while this is “crucial for a real protection of women under criminal law” (47).

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<sup>600</sup> N. Memedović, “Sloboda ličnosti, polni moral i njihova krivičnopravna zaštita”, *Jugoslovenska revija za kriminologiju i krivično pravo*, no. 4. (1975): 714.

<sup>601</sup> Today we would use gender, but as the original uses sex [*pol*], I kept the author’s terminology.

While the omission of paying alimony is an economic form of victimisation, Nikolić-Ristanović brings contraception and reproductive rights into the framework of the general victimisation of women (24). Reproductive rights have been the basic rights women have fought for since the early steps of the women's movements. Considering the denial of these as a form of a crime committed against women signals a new approach, where reproductive rights become one's basic, inalienable rights. The author calls "women's right to choose about giving birth to children" as "one of the most important proclamations following the triumph of the socialist revolution." (idem.) This is one point in the argumentation of the book where the author criticises socialist societies for not abiding by this proclamation when "there is a growing demand for the increase of natality in socialist societies, which leads to more and more restrictions [of women's right to choose] and the growth of "family ideology." (idem.) From the dedicated pro-choice commitment, forced abortion and denied abortion are both considered as forms of violence against women, a violation of their physical integrity. Related to which the book mentions *klitorektemija* [clitoridectomy] and *infibulacija* [infibulation], both of which are forms of female genital mutilation, without entering into details about them, but the themes gain growing attention in the feminist discourse in Yugoslavia in the mid-1980s, as the programs of the *Žena i društvo* in Belgrade show.<sup>602</sup>

The feminist aspects of victimology, as well as the development of the entire field leads to a focus on the victims in the book of Nikolić-Ristanović. And vice versa, the focus on the victims allows for feminist discussions within the discipline. By focusing on

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<sup>602</sup> "Female circumcision" comes up also in the *Žena i društvo* programs, showing a BBC film about FGM in Sudan, together with a discussion, introduced by Vanda Krajnović, 24<sup>th</sup> June 1987. ŽINDOK D-73/1987

the victims, the book is placing less and less responsibility on the person who is victimised. It promotes the understanding of the rationale of the victims, and in the meantime explains reasons of *latency*, while emphasises the need for an increased *victim protection* throughout the text. Cases of violence against women are categorised by Nikolić-Ristanović not only by the type of the crime, but also according to the differences between the victims. There is separate discussion of crimes against underage people and *nemoćne osobe* [people under care], which is in line with the legal categories. It is the subjectivity of the victim that appears in a new light. The reasons most common for not reporting crimes, especially in cases of intimate partner violence and sexual violence, are fear of and dependence on the perpetrator. (50-52) Nikolić-Ristanović in this book does discuss the phenomenon later called *psychological violence* as a separate form of violence, which concept enters the activist discussions of the time. She also emphasises the fear from the perpetrator among the reasons for latency (lack of public or official knowledge due to lack of reporting).

The rape part of the book is also based on comparative research from Yugoslavia and other countries, and despite the clarity of the text's position on most issues, there are some surprising details and arguments. The author quotes uncritically a research which claims that in Yugoslavia, according to the data, victims most often do report crimes such as intimate partner violence and rape. In the latter case the rate quoted is 80%, that is the number of cases which *are* reported.<sup>603</sup> Considering the other claims of Nikolić-Ristanović's book and looking at statistics from countries where the research was

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<sup>603</sup> A. Makra et al., "Viktimologija i društveno samozaštita s posebnim osvrtom na silovanje" [Victimology and social self-protection with special respect to rape], *Naša zakonitost*, no. 5-6 (1985). Quoted in Nikolić-Ristanović, *Žene kao žrtve kriminaliteta*, 54.

performed with different methodologies, this is highly unlikely. Already the non-representative polling done by the FGŽD research (analysed below) and the letters from the readers of the magazine *Bazar* (cf. Chapter 3) suggest that the situation is not as good as the police statistics attempt to present it. At this point there is a discrepancy between the author's knowledge and awareness that characterises most of her book and her uncritical attitude to the research quoted here. Progressively for her time, Nikolić-Ristanović reflects upon and attempts to dissolve the fears around false testimony [*lažna optužba*]. She offers data proving that the rates of false testimonies and accusations are not higher in the cases of sexual violence than in the cases of other crimes and provides a critical overview of “fantasy theories”.<sup>604</sup>

The most radical and therefore fascinating part of the book from the perspective of the relationship of feminism to state socialism is in the historical overview of women's social position in different socio-political systems. While the aim of socialism is “the humanisation of human relations and of the relations between the sexes and the emancipation of women” (23), “the process of socialisation of women in the socialist family has not changed significantly in relation to capitalism.” The “complex social action”<sup>605</sup> has not taken place, as the persistence of the double burden shows, among other things. Questioning the state narrative on women's equality, Nikolić-Ristanović claims that capitalism has also done a lot for women's equality, to a large extent due to the pressure from behalf of the women's movement. Although, she adds, “it only went

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<sup>604</sup> Based on Robin and S. Edwards, “Female Sexuality and the Law”, review in the *British Journal of Criminology*, 1982. no. 4. Quoted in Nikolić-Ristanović, *Žene kao žrtve kriminaliteta*, 56.

<sup>605</sup> Vida Tomšič, *Žena u razvoju socijalističke samoupravne Jugoslavije* [Woman in the development of the socialist self-managing Yugoslavia] (Beograd: NIRO Jugoslavonska stvarnost, 1981): 86. Quoted in Nikolić-Ristanović, *Žene kao žrtve kriminaliteta*, 23.

halfway”, which means that we have half-finished processes in both socialist and capitalist of societies regarding VaW, concludes Nikolić-Ristanović. The step where the capitalist societies miss out on the improvement of women’s position is the lack of a “revolutionary spirit”, which in itself however, is not sufficient in the case of the socialist countries either. The solution suggested is the empowerment of women, on several levels. The spread of knowledge about the ways women are victimised is one crucial step, making women aware of the dangers and the public of the phenomenon of VaW. Nikolić-Ristanović does not use the concept of “consciousness raising” which even other sources turn to, however, the idea offered is very close to that. Besides interfering with the discourse, women’s economic equality is a crucial step in order to “overcome nature”. “Nature” here is the inequality which, according to the author, is at least partly created by women’s dependency caused by their reproductive tasks and alleged physical weakness. As a third step, Nikolić-Ristanović emphasises that legislation is important, but many of the existing laws would be sufficient, if the implementation was not impeded by the persevering patriarchal attitudes.

The probably least developed part of the book from a feminist point of view is the one investigating the psychology behind women’s victimisation. The idea itself is problematic and necessarily implies victim blaming, as it assumes that there is something in women that predestines them to become victims. Nikolić-Ristanović disputes with the Freudian theory of Helene Deutsch about women’s passivity and masochism as sources of their victimisation through Karen Horney, but Deutsch’s victim blaming arguments are still present in the text. The role of Deutsch is not that equivocally questionable though, it is her approach to women as internally masochistic which gets most criticism. In the

meantime, both Horney and Deutsch are important figures in the renewal of psychoanalysis from a women's and feminist perspective.<sup>606</sup> Besides the discussion of Deutsch's theory of masochism and passivity as psychological specificities of women presented in the book, Nikolić-Ristanović also identifies women's verbal provocation as a reason for their physical victimisation. As it has been later proven, abusers do not need any incentive to abuse once they decide to do so, therefore battered women are battered whether they speak up or not.<sup>607</sup>

Smoothing the victim blaming aspect, Nikolić-Ristanović adopts Horney's concept of the "neurotic woman", as one different from "normal women". While this is a dangerous juxtaposition, often employed by oppressive patriarchal discourses, Horney argues that masochism is not biologically determined, women are not masochists "by nature": it is a result of the expectations and the abuse they face (8-10). Moreover, the masochism-passivity discussion is closed with Horney's explanation of women's victimisation by women's dependent position, with special respect to "the emphasis on their physical weakness and inferiority" and the presumption that "it is in their nature that they rely on others and that their life has a meaning only according to others (family, husband, children)." (10) To Simone de Beauvoir's statement about women being "the victims of their biology", Nikolić-Ristanović adds: "women are victimised in a specific way by nature and while this [nature] is not its cause, it still is an important factor in women's victimisation, including criminal victimisation." (5) The social factors behind

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<sup>606</sup> Cf. Janet Sayers, *Mothers of Psychoanalysis: Helene Deutsch, Karen Horney, Anna Freud, Melanie Klein* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991); Jean Strouse, ed. *Women and Analysis: Dialogues on Psychoanalytic Views of Femininity* (Boston, Mass.: G.K. Hall, 1985, c1974).

<sup>607</sup> Cf. Lundy Bancroft, *Why Does He Do That?: Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men* (New York: Putnam's Sons, c2002).

women's oppression, which Horney identifies as "dependency", are confused with the biological factors, however, what both Horney and interpreting her through de Beauvoir, Nikolić-Ristanović realise is that women are victimised on various levels in society simply for being women.

The author is attentive and punctual when identifying the pertaining clash of two interests when it comes to victim protection influenced and motivated by the improvements in the field of victimology. The recognition of these conflicting interests to a large extent emerged from the feminists broaching the difficulties of women when seeking justice for their victimisation by violent acts motivated and often even justified by their gender. Nikolić-Ristanović warns that the victim's wish for justice and the wish that the victim does not become "stigmatised, humiliated and cast off in her own environment and re-victimised" during the process, due to the way systems of justice work, are often in contradiction with each other (53). In the meantime, there obviously is a third interest, the interest of the society that the perpetrator is punished, adds the author, and reintroduces her claim for a new legal and institutional approach to protect women. Her criticism of the state is largely motivated by feminist ideas, whereas her work is not always in accord with the second wave feminist approach. This, however, appears mostly in those parts of the book that are less connected to women's victimisation.

It has to be added, however, that victimology is a controversial discipline, not only because it can easily feed into the approach to women as by nature and irrevocably helpless victims who have agency to change their lives. When victimology approaches DV and VaW and it lacks the feminist perspective, it easily shifts the attention from women to children and thus tends to present women primarily as perpetrators of DV. The



scholar who first joins the international organisations of victimology as a discipline is Zvonimir Šeparović. He organises international conferences and publications in the field of victimology, including one in Zagreb in 1985 and another in Dubrovnik in 1988, the latter even focusing on domestic violence.<sup>608</sup> His approach to the topic, however, is problematic, inasmuch as it repeats prejudice surrounding VaW and DV. Šeparović uses the categories of *nasilje u obitelji*, that is “violence within the family” and even *stradanje u obitelji*, that is “suffering within the family”, but mostly focuses on children under the category of “family”. In his book where he introduces the discipline, there is a short subchapter with the title “*Nasilje nad supružnicima*” [Violence against (between) the spouses], where he first and foremost emphasises that women also commit violence against men, despite the new feminist category of *zlostavljena žena* [battered woman].<sup>609</sup> The fact that in the meantime he quotes the relevant feminist literature for further inquiries (literature that contradicts his statements) and admits that it is hard for women to leave the abusive partner, creates a weird tension in his writing.

There are similar serious inconsistencies in the edited volumes of the two conferences Šeparović organised. There are papers, such as one about incest by Imogene L. Moyer or another about the crimes against ethnic women workers in Australia by Maartje Bozinovic,<sup>610</sup> as well as writings by Nikolić-Ristanović which represent cutting

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<sup>608</sup> Zvonimir Paul Šeparović, ed., *Victimology: International Action and Study of Victims*. 2 Vol.s (Zagreb: University of Zagreb and Samobor: "Zagreb", 1988); Wanda Jamieson and Zvonimir Paul Šeparović, eds., *Domestic Violence: Selected Papers Given at the International Workshop on Domestic Violence 1988 in Dubrovnik* (Dubrovnik and Zagreb: [s.n.] and Samobor: "Zagreb", 1988).

<sup>609</sup> Zvonimir Šeparović, *Viktimologija: studije o žrtvama* [Victimology: studies about the victims] (Zagreb: Pravni fakultet and Samobor: “Zagreb” radna organizacija za grafičku djelatnost, 1985), 190.

<sup>610</sup> Imogene L. Moyer, “Differential Power and the Dynamics of Father-Daughter Incest”, 89-96; Maartje Bozinovic, “Victimisation of Ethnic Women Workers in Melbourne”, 117-120. In Šeparović, ed., *Victimology: International Action and Study of Victims*.

edge scholarship and are in line with the human rights approach refusing victim blaming. On the other hand, the volume from the 1985 Zagreb conference includes the text “Yugoslavia: Right to Life before Birth” by Vladimir Paleček, who was invited by Šeparović himself, to give a talk about abortion as genocide.<sup>611</sup>

It is crucial to mention another aspect in the novelty of a feminist oriented professional discourse on violence. According to the feminist approach, incest and child abuse [*abuzus djeteta, zlostavljanje djeteta*] are symptoms of DV and VaW, unlike the often made claim that when a father abuses his child sexually, it is because of the mother’s negligence. Imogene L. Moyer’s text is one of the first ones in Yugoslavia that explains the phenomenon from this new perspective. In previous publications, such as the volume *Kriminalitet na štetu maloljetnika* [Crimes harming underage children],<sup>612</sup> it is still the negligence approach that dominates. Nikolić-Ristanović, and sometimes even Šeparović, works towards familiarising the readers with the more current scholarship. However, incest becomes more widely discussed in Yugoslav states only after the

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<sup>611</sup> It should be added that the selection of papers and articles with often contradictory positions in the volumes edited by Šeparović in 1990-1991 enters the nationalist discourses about political victimhood and responsibility. Šeparović starts a journal, *Viktimologija: Časopis za stradanja ljudi* [Victimology: A Journal to the Question of the Human Suffering], the first issue [out of two altogether] of which publishes a wide selection of articles around the theme “minority rights”. This allows space for the discussion of “Homoseksualci kao manjinska socijalna grupa” [Homosexuals as a minority social group] and statements in the introduction about “the victims of Bleiburg, the suffering of Andrija Hebrang, the victims of Dachau, the suffering of Alojzije Stepinac”, “all victims of all crimes, including those of četniks, ustaša, partisans, Russians and Germans [more peoples listed], Albanci i Srbi”, and then adds: “the victims of the Croatian Spring in 1971”. The unlimited enumeration of victims from every historical period and all over the world, however, has many elements in the centre of contrveries of Yugoslavia at the time. The second, last issue of the journal is about Kosovo, with an article: “Deklaracija o kršenju prava pripadnika hrvatskog naroda u Republici Srbiji i pokrajinama Vojvodini i Kosovo” [Declaration about the violations of the rights of the members of the Croatian nation in the Republic of Serbia and the independent provinces Vojvodina and Kosovo]. With this article the journal and its editor enter a discursive space with clearly different stakes than those concerning victims of crimes and violence and shifts towards the debates around the war and the collapse of Yugoslavia.

<sup>612</sup> Mladen Singer, Ljiljana Mikšaj-Todorović and Zdravka Poldrugač, eds., *Kriminalitet na štetu maloljetnika* [Crimes harming underage children] (Zagreb : Školska knjiga, 1989).

dissolution of the country, largely relying on the experience with the SOS helplines and shelters already existing. Vera Litričin told me how she came to the idea to a separate SOS helpline for young girls, incest and rape victims: she realised that the shelter originally set up for grown up women with their children does not suit the needs of young girls who have to leave their homes as their own parents abuse them. This was already in 1993, and the Incest Trauma Centre was founded a year after. The work of Nikolić-Ristanović also ripens in the post-1991 period, for example it is due to her efforts that the *Viktimološko društvo*, the Society of Victimology is founded in Belgrade in 1997, with the aim to help victims of crimes and focus on prevention.

The feminist approach of Nikolić-Ristanović becomes more and more clear as her work matures. She started working more closely with the feminists after 1992 and mostly on war rape and war mass rape, but then she attended conferences and workshops together with Lepa Mladenović and Lina Vušković, among others. However, as she remembers, her interest in the women's issue is older than her interest in victimology. "The rights of women always also meant my own rights, my own fight against stereotypes" – the personal motivation in her case also explains the courage to start a research that in many ways went against the grain at the time. The ignorance of her professors in the field of VaW and DV worked in her interest, however: as the professors were not familiar with the topic, they let her do what she wanted to. It occurred during the presentation of her research at the SKC event organised by the *Žena i društvo* group, how limited the understanding of her supervisor was of her work, when he made a comment after the presentation and ended up in a fight with the feminist participants, who had a much clearer idea of what Nikolić-Ristanović meant. The Institute of Criminology and

Sociology had abundant material, also journals from abroad, and due to the network of the Yugoslav Society of Criminology, she could travel to conferences and consult with other experts. “The 1990s was just the opposite”, she adds. “I didn’t find any literature, for example there was nothing available on qualitative methodology in Serbia.” The late 1980s, however, was a promising time. Based on Nikolić-Ristanović’s research, there were attempts to change the laws about VaW and DV, in cooperation with the SSRNJ. There was a promise on behalf of the organisation that DV would become a criminal offence, and so would marital rape too. The negotiations went slowly though, and in the meantime, the country collapsed.

### **Women’s Health and Women’s Bodies in a Feminist Perspective**

Women’s health and women’s reproductive rights, in themselves interconnected, both are intrinsically related to sexuality. Less common has been the claim that VaW and women’s health are just that intrinsically related, whereas work with women who are survivors of domestic and partner violence clearly shows the health-damaging effects of these crimes. The Western *biomedical model* not only “separates the individuals from their wider, social environment”,<sup>613</sup> it is also organised according to gendered power relations.<sup>614</sup> While women’s “potential for biological reproduction is what separates

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<sup>613</sup> Lesley Doyal, *What Makes Women Sick: Gender and the Political Economy of Health* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 15.

Doyal’s earlier work on the health care system was published in Slovenian in 1985: Lesley Doyal, *Politična ekonomija zdravja* [The political economy of health], trans. Vijolica and David Neubauer (Ljubljana : Kresija, 1985). The publication of this book is another sign of the complex relations between critical leftwing thinking and state imposed socialism, as well as the limits of openness in Yugoslavia.

<sup>614</sup> Cf. Doyal, *What Makes Women Sick*, 16-17 and Ann Oakley, *Essays on Women, Medicine and Health* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, c1993).

women's health needs most clearly from those of men",<sup>615</sup> this difference was subsumed to the patriarchal hierarchies and overshadowed other differences between women and men, exactly due to the exclusion of the social and the mental as crucial factors effecting the health of the individual. Leslie Doyal in her book *What Makes Women Sick* sees the potential of "the participation of feminists in a wider, new, global health movement [...] to de-universalise the Western approach",<sup>616</sup> that is to canonise other approaches to health than the model of *organised medicine* and to broaden the meaning of health to other aspects of the human life. Health care issues discussed from a feminist perspective has been one of the major driving forces behind women's movements from the early times of the movement. As we shall see, through the matters of health, networks of women's health opened up for the Yugoslav feminists, and especially for the women in the Belgrade group, which shaped the groups and their focus to a large extent.

As for women's health, Gordana Cerjan-Letica retrospectively thinks that this would have been a theme around which women could have organised: "a friend gave me the first copy of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. I saw how a women's movement can be organised along the issue of women's health, this book was very important to me." Although she saw the potential, and she herself even participated in a consciousness raising group at the US embassy in Zagreb with Lydia Sklevický, after her recognition it took some time for the Yugoslav feminists to share their interest in women's health. For Lepa Mladenović a few years later, working on women's health meant getting to know methodologies and organisational skills of the women's movement elsewhere and her

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<sup>615</sup> Doyal, *What Makes Women Sick*, 24.

<sup>616</sup> Doyal, *What Makes Women Sick*, 15.

knowledge led to a radical transformation of the feminist group's activity in Belgrade and through Belgrade, in the other centres as well.

Access to health care or the improvement of the institutions related to women's reproductive conditions (contraception as well as prenatal care and child birth conditions) were on the top of the lists of demands of the feminist movement after the 1960s. What is recognised as a problem by the second wave in the West by the 1960s, by the Yugoslav feminists in the 1970s-80s and other East European women's groups in the 1990s and 2000s, is that state implemented modernisation takes its tolls at the patients' autonomy. This is independent of the type of the system, be it a centralised, command economy like or a more decentralised and market-oriented one.<sup>617</sup> Yugoslavia was claiming to take a self-managing stance to socialised medicine too. As the authors Saric and Rodwin, in an article about the Yugoslav health care system, claim: "despite social ownership, the way the Yugoslav health care system was financed and organised was not much different from that of countries having a national health care service. The system of virtually universal entitlement to basic health services and the quasi-monopsonistic position of the health insurance funds rather than ownership appear to have determined the behaviour of health care workers and beneficiaries."<sup>618</sup>

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<sup>617</sup> Mark G. Field, "The Soviet Legacy: The Past as Prologue", in *Health Care in Central Asia*, eds. Martin McKee, Judith Healy, and Jane Falkingham, 67-75 (Buckingham-Philadelphia: Open UP, 2002), 68.

<sup>618</sup> Muhamed Saric and Victor G. Rodwin, "The Once and Future Health System in the Former Yugoslavia: Myths and Realities", *Journal of Public Health Policy* (Summer 1993): 220-237. 220.

Also, see Heike Karge, "Transnational Knowledge into Yugoslav Practices? The Legacy of the Second World War on Social Welfare Policy in Yugoslavia", *Comparativ. Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung* no. 5 (2010): 75-86; idem., "Sozialfürsorge und Gesundheit in Ost- und Südosteuropa im langen 20. Jahrhundert", *Südosteuropäische Hefte* vol. 1. no. 2. (2012): 89-94.

More simply put, the Yugoslav health care system was not so different from the other health care systems in Eastern Europe in terms of the centralised nature of its management. In the federal system, however, the resources were not allocated equally between the member states: there were “significant differences in income, per capita expenditures on health and welfare, and in the distribution of physicians and hospital beds.”<sup>619</sup> As Donna Parmelee’s research shows, the community and the consumers had little influence on health planning.<sup>620</sup> Saric and Rodwin also emphasise that there was an attempt by local authors to “create myths about the system based on an ideologically biased image of its uniqueness.”<sup>621</sup> Interestingly enough, one of the editors of the book promoting this uniqueness was Slaven Letica,<sup>622</sup> the husband of Gordana Cerjan-Letica, with whom this is not the only occasion when explicitly, as we have seen in Chapter 1, or implicitly, as we shall see here, the feminists do not agree.

Socialised medicine in many ways brought along progress in the socialist states in post-WWII Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia included. Importantly enough, its ideological roots allow socialised medical systems to share several aspects of many Western health care systems,<sup>623</sup> which are also criticised and challenged by different feminist groups

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<sup>619</sup> Stephen J. Kunitz, “What Yugoslavia Means: Progress, Nationalism and Health”, *Supplement to Health Transition Review* 6 (1996): 253-272, 258.

<sup>620</sup> Cf. D. E. Parmelee et al. *User Influence in Health Care: Some Observations on the Yugoslav Experience* (Lund: Scandinavian Institute for Administrative Research, 1979) and idem. “Medicine under Socialism: Some Observations on Yugoslavia and China”, *Social Science and Medicine* 21 (1985): 719-32. Quoted in Saric and Rodwin, “The Once and Future Health System”, 221

<sup>621</sup> Saric and Rodwin, “The Once and Future Health System”, 222

<sup>622</sup> Slaven Letica and Berislav Skupnjak, eds., *Health System in Yugoslavia* (Zagreb: Centre for Health Cooperation with Non-Aligned and Developing Countries, 1985)

<sup>623</sup> Even if the access systems are different, cf. the typologisation: Bismarck system, Semashko system, Beveridge system. Cf. Jörgen Marrée and Peter P. Groenwegen, *Back to Bismarck: Eastern European Health Care Systems in Transition* (Aldershot, Hants, England – Brookfield, Vt.: Avebury, c1997), 5-8.

emerging after the 1960s. In the socialist systems, besides Marxism,<sup>624</sup> it was the ideas of the German hygienists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that were equally present. Socialised medicine was based on the Marxian idea that “the introduction of socialism, therefore, would permit (in contrast to capitalism) the creation of social and economic conditions that would greatly limit illness and premature mortality”.<sup>625</sup> The Soviet system’s ideational background, which influenced the other East European countries too, was complemented by “the populist tradition of *zemstvo* (land) medicine”.<sup>626</sup> Despite the mixture of “scientific medicine” and “*zemstvo* medicine”, when it came to actors and healing practices, the centralised medical model prevailed over the local knowledge of healers, and especially midwives. This was characteristic in all the countries in East Central Europe, including Yugoslavia. The local forms of “*zemstvo* medicine”, however, were to be eliminated in the name of modernisation.

The ideas behind this socialised medical model and the policies born out of it affected women’s reproductive health too,<sup>627</sup> not only in the health care institutions, but also through the education of the population. In the Soviet model, medical education was also centrally organised. Two authors, Melanie Ilić and David L. Ransel, researching the policies regarding to women’s health in the Soviet Union, agree that there was a targeted

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<sup>624</sup> Cf. especially Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845)

<sup>625</sup> Field, *The Soviet Legacy*, 69

<sup>626</sup> Field, “The Soviet Legacy: The Past as Prologue”, 68-69

<sup>627</sup> I use the concept in its current meaning, as defined by the World Health Organisation of the UN: “Within the framework of WHO’s definition of health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, reproductive health addresses the reproductive processes, functions and system at all stages of life. Reproductive health, therefore, implies that people are able to have a responsible, satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so.” World Health Organisation, „Reproductive Health”, [http://www.who.int/topics/reproductive\\_health/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/reproductive_health/en/) (accessed 25<sup>th</sup> March 2014)



attack on the midwife traditions in the rural areas. Based on their research, both from the 1920s on (Ransel) and in the Khrushchev era (Ilić), the midwife-tradition was not to be incorporated but eliminated. Ransel goes as far as calling this a “Bolshevik modernist attack on rural women”, with articles published about the “evil babka undermining efforts to bring modern ideas to the village”.<sup>628</sup> On the one hand, he sees this as “an assault on the village women’s world of knowledge and mutual support”,<sup>629</sup> on the other hand, he explains the slow progress at least partly with the failure of health officials “to appreciate the importance of the midwife status”.<sup>630</sup> The efforts continued and found forum in the women’s magazines, which offered medical advice which “was supposed to replace the old wives’ tales and the interference of unqualified local midwives in the care of babies and young children”.<sup>631</sup> The centralisation efforts in the health care system contributed to the decrease in infant mortality rates. It has to be added here that the reorganisation of the health care system was accompanied by a change in better nutrition provided to pregnant women, therefore it is difficult to decide what contributed more to the numbers of infant mortality.

Women’s knowledge, which was transmitted through the midwives, was replaced by what was considered scientific medicine. This replacement of one type of knowledge with another one does not take into consideration that the new knowledge, held to be better in every possible way, was also an invented tradition of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>628</sup> Daniel L. Ransel, *Village Mothers: The Generations of Change in Russia and Tataria* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana UP, 2000), 48, 49-50.

<sup>629</sup> Ransel, *Village Mothers*, 48

<sup>630</sup> Ransel, *Village Mothers*, 69

<sup>631</sup> Melanie Ilić, “Women in the Khrushchev Era: An Overview”, in *Women in the Khrushchev Era*, ed. Melanie Ilić, Susan E. Reid, and Lynne Attwood, 5-28. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan 2004), 6.

century.<sup>632</sup> When looking critically at these so called improvements, feminists decipher them as efforts to interfere with women's reproductive health, a politicised act, involving the danger that the state treats women not as citizens but those creatures, bodies, who ensure the reproduction of a society. In the meantime, women's reproductive health and freedom is of special concern for women as a group and women as individuals, it being a separate but crucial factor in ensuring a woman's physical and mental well-being.

The information literature published in Yugoslavia for women about their bodies is a good example of how the education of women about their own health is always connected to advice on how to take better care of their families. The double role women had to fulfil in socialist societies is reaffirmed in this literature. It aims to ensure better health conditions for women and is thus empowering, but places women in the traditional position of mothers and housewives. The leaflets and books available about the topic document this approach. The three books I analyse below were preceded by advice sections in the journal *Žena u borbi*, the AFŽ leaflets and well as an AFŽ publications: a booklet Janja Herak Szabo with the title *Higijena žene u trudnoći, porođaju i babinjama*,<sup>633</sup> republished in 1961 and followed by a similar one with the title *Higijena žene sa naročitim osvrtom na higijenu i ishranu za vreme trudnoće*.<sup>634</sup> At around this time there were further sources available: the earliest one of the three I analyse, *Higijena*

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<sup>632</sup> About this, cf. W. S. Bynum et al., *The Western Medical Tradition 1800-2000* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1-6.

<sup>633</sup> Janja Herak Szabo, *Higijena žene u trudnoći, porođaju i babinjama* [Hygiene of women in pregnancy, birth and afterbirth] (Zagreb: Glavni odbor AFŽ Hrvatske, 1948).

<sup>634</sup> Milica Bošković, *Higijena žene sa naročitim osvrtom na higijenu i ishranu za vreme trudnoće* [Hygiene of women with special focus on hygiene and nutrition during pregnancy] (Beograd: Zdravstveni narodni univerzitet, 1958).

*žene* was written by a man, Blagoje Stambolović from 1959,<sup>635</sup> as well as the one with the title *Žena i dom* by Živka Vidojković, from 1973.

Both *Higijena žene* and *Žena i dom* were printed on cheap paper and almost with no illustration – apart from not very alluring black and white drawings of women’s reproductive organs. Both books followed the line that places women’s reproductive function in the centre of their health and therefore concludes that this shall define a larger part of their lives. *Žena i dom* dedicates the book to women, that is to: “spouses, mothers and women who care about their health and beauty”. *Higijena žene* defines motherhood as the “main *natural* task of women” [glavni prirodni zadatak žene]. Both blurbs emphasise beauty, while neither of the books offer visual material supporting the idea, which signals one of the main contradictions of the socialist project of gender equality: as the beauty models constantly recur, the poor quality of its representation (in magazines as well as fashion products) carries the meanings of deprivation instead of emancipation for women.

In the meantime, the books offer sufficient information on contraception and Stambolović even provides information about heterosexual sexual intercourse. Neither of the books discusses abortion though, despite the fact that it was legal and a widespread means of contraception in Yugoslavia.<sup>636</sup> The third book, *Guarding Your Family’s Health* by Mary Senechal, is a translation, printed with colour photo illustrations on glossy paper. The idea here too is that nothing is more important to a woman than the health of

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<sup>635</sup> Blagoje Stambolović, *Higijena žene: kako žena da sačuva svoje zdravlje* [The hygiene of women: how to take care of your health] (Beograd – Zagreb: Medicinska knjiga, 1959); Mary Senechal, *Sačuvajte zdravlje svoje obitelji* [Guarding Your Family’s Health] (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1974); Živka Vidojković, *Žena i dom: lečenje lekovitim biljem, ishrana i zdravlje, kozmetika* [Woman and home: healing with herbs, nutrition and health, cosmetics] (Beograd: Dom i porodica – Preševo: Progres, 1973).

<sup>636</sup> Cf. *Prica o nerođenom detetu*, Chapter 3.

her family. Only the last chapter reminds the implied reader: “Don’t forget about yourself!” The latter book’s language and design represent a different, more colourful and attractive atmosphere, while the message is probably even more conservative than those of the two other books: it represents a nuclear family where the mother is taking care of the well-being of the other family members and the father is the main bread-winner. *Guarding Your Family’s Health*, together with its view on women, is sold both metaphorically and literally by its shiny design.

Women’s right to sexual pleasure and fulfilment is either not discussed at all, or if it is, it is taken for granted in these publications: in *Higienija žene* the author quotes statistics of women’s orgasm during sexual intercourse with a man they are married to. The more progressive statements include those that frigidity as lack of orgasm may not be the fault of the woman, but her partner’s lack of ability to please her, as well as an overview of women’s orgasm. Meanwhile, the author suggests that “women with normal sexual sensitivity experience orgasm during all, or almost all sexual intercourse.”<sup>637</sup> This presupposition implies that still, women’s ability to reach orgasm is a proof of their “normal” sexuality, which excludes non-heterosexual women from the sphere of normality. It also positions orgasm not as something depending on both partners but as an objective factor of women’s normality.<sup>638</sup> Reproduction is another theme where various crucial aspects are left in the dark. Control over reproduction is not presented as a right, and apart from contraception, which is there, almost all other angles are missing:

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<sup>637</sup> Stambolović, *Higijena žene*, 112-115

<sup>638</sup> For the cultural history of women’s orgasm, cf. the groundbreaking new research of Alfred Kinsey, as well as William Masters and Virginia Johnson in the 1950s and 1960s, renewing the discourse on women’s sexuality, as analysed by Ute Gerhard. Ute Gerhard, *Desiring Revolution. Second-Wave Feminism and the Writing of American Sexual Thought 1920-1982* (New York: Columbia UP: 2001) 51-80.

abortion, as I mention it above, but also pregnancy and the rights of the pregnant woman who wants to carry her child to birth. This involves one's right to access to health care and sufficient nutrition during the pregnancy, but also the right to the control over one's body during pregnancy and during labour. The medicalised birth model, part of the achievements of socialist modernisation and socialised health care, questions the latter.

### ***Žena* and the Women's Health Movement**

As we have seen before already, the journal *Žena* played a crucial and yet ambiguous role in the distribution of new feminist ideas offering criticism of the system. There are several journal issues in the 1970s and 1980s that present, interpret or criticise the new feminist ideas appearing in the West. Articles with a traditionalist approach (which includes the conservative socialist one suggesting that women's emancipation had to be subsumed to the class question and/or was already solved) and ones with a critically feminist, even radical stance are mixed in the journal. As far as women's health as a topic is concerned, in my reading the traditionalist approach imagines women as preliminarily mothers, whose other interests need to be subordinated to the needs of their children and families and whose sexuality is unproblematic in the sense that they enjoy orgasm, but do not want sex and especially do not initiate sex more often than it is appropriate. The concepts such as "often" and "appropriate" are neither specified nor questioned in works of this type. As editor, later only author of the journal *Žena*, Cerjan-Letica compiled sections about women's health in general and with special focus on reproductive rights and birth giving, with the aim to counter these traditionalist articles as much as the frames of *Žena* allowed it. As in the case of other themes too, *Žena* is between the official state

policy and more radical, feminist positions, and the drastic difference between two issues or even the articles in the same issue depend on who had more influence within the editorial board in a given moment.

The thematic issues related to women's health, representing a feminist approach and critical towards the existing model, were published in the 1980s and were edited by Cerjan-Letica. The publications included translations of and references to the grassroots and radical feminist publications from the United States that either managed to formulate or to synthesise and represent the demands of the feminist movement vis-à-vis the existing health care system. These sources include the *Our Bodies, Ourselves (OBOS)* publication,<sup>639</sup> and the work of Ann Oakley, Barbara Ehrenreich, Sheila Kitzinger and Marsden Wagner. Cerjan-Letica's introduction to *Žena's* 1986 special issue "Women and Health" promises topics addressed in the women's health movement [*ženski zdravstveni pokret*]. These include women and medicalisation, women and iatrogenic diseases, the relationship between health and the women's employment, the division of labour among health care workers/employees, reproductive health and violence against women. In the very same issue, an interview series starts with women who worked as doctors in the partisan movement during WWII.<sup>640</sup> The selection of translations the editor explains with the lack of proper research in Yugoslavia: medical sociology, a discipline combining

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<sup>639</sup> *OBOS* was eventually published in 2001 by the AŽC, a feminist NGO in Belgrade, which is a descendant of the SOS helpline and thus also, the *Žena i društvo* group. Cf. *Naša tela, mi* [Our Bodies, Ourselves], ed. Stanislava Otašević, trans. Dušanka Vučinić et al. (Beograd: Autonomni ženski centar protiv seksualnog nasilja, 2001).

<sup>640</sup> "Kazivanja partizanskih liječnica" [Stories of partisan woman doctors], interviews by Fric Špicer. Saša Božović and Cila Albahari, *Žena*, vol. 44. no. 1 (1986): 62-72.; Mira Vrabčić and Zora Steiner, *Žena*, vol. 44. no. 4 (1986): 38-49.; Ruža Frančetić Blau, *Žena*, vol. 44. no. 6 (1986): 89-95. these are either complementary, providing a women's perspective and being critical, or may have been added to balance out the foreign literature and prove that Yugoslavia is a special case which does not have the problems of the West.

social aspects and the medicinal one, was in a very early stage.<sup>641</sup> Eventually, it was Cerjan-Letica who became one of the main researchers in the field.

The selection of the texts and the choice of concepts in the “Women and Health” special issue aims not only at institutional criticism, but also claims new definitions. The mention of iatrogenic diseases, that is the avoidable harm resulting from treatment in a medical facility or from advice provided by a member of the medical institutions, already hints at the anti-institutional approach of the selection. Since the topics are discussed in light of recent sociological and medical scholarship, they also tackle the gender issues in the organisation of health care labour. Most importantly, Cerjan-Letica openly emphasises the feminist approach of this scholarship<sup>642</sup> and includes violence to the selection of topics in focus. The concept is reinterpreted from a radically critical feminist perspective when *violence* is “understood here in its broad social context – from its most subtle form hidden in protective paternalism to the most savage forms of violence which are manifest as a form of social pathology”, writes the editor.<sup>643</sup> Reading through the lines, the text suggests that medical intervention against the will or without the informed consent of the patient leading to iatrogenic disease is a form of violence – as it was stated in the publications the issue of *Žena* presents here.

*Health* is redefined in the new scholarship too: “the language about health and illness” is dominated by the biomedical sciences that define health as the lack of illness and the need to limit it. The new definition, however, takes the concept out of this context

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<sup>641</sup> Cerjan-Letica mentions one research comparing male and female health and chronic illnesses, but that one is without a sociological perspective. 26

<sup>642</sup> Gordana Cerjan-Letica, “Žena i zdravlje” [Woman and health], *Žena*, vol. 44. no. 1 (1986): 23-26, 23.

<sup>643</sup> Cerjan-Letica, “Žena i zdravlje”, 23.

and places *health* into the frame of human rights by defining it as a “preservation of mental and physical integrity and control over one’s body.”<sup>644</sup> Control over one’s body means taking it out of the hands of the modern and centralised institutions, which argument in this issue of *Žena* is presented through the writings of women whose unquestionable authority, even within the socialist Yugoslav context and despite coming from a capitalist context, is emphasised in the introduction. Barbara Ehrenreich is presented as “one of the prominent Marxist critics of contemporary medicine”, Marsden Wagner as coming from “a respectable and official institution”, the UN’s World Health Organisation.

What Jasenka Kodrnja in her article in *Start* from 1981 described as her own experience, Wagner systematically criticises as part of institutionalised health care: the use of uncontrolled medical technology, unnecessary diagnostic equipment and the neglect of the social aspects, which lead to women’s experience of childbirth as violence, as well as to iatrogenic illnesses.<sup>645</sup> She emphasises women’s right to information and to control. Wagner’s opinion is that these are integral parts of the protection of women’s health, a concept extensively promoted by health care institutions and as we have seen, extensively promoted in the socialist states too. The questions raised by Wagner are pursued further in an article after the “Women and Health” special issue of *Žena*, by the author Željka Karalić, by whom I have not encountered other publications that appeared relevant for this research. Relying also on the *OBOS*, Karalić already uses the concept of *hospitalisation of birth* [*hospitalizacija poroda*], and introduces a new aspect of birth

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<sup>644</sup> Cerjan-Letica, “Žena i zdravlje”, 23-24.

<sup>645</sup> Marsden G. Wagner, “Trudnoća, porod i nakon poroda. Zdravstvene službe u Evropi” [Pregnancy, birth and after birth. Health services in Europe], trans. Anita Kontrec, *Žena* vol. 44. no. 1. (1986): 53-61.



giving, which is the *quality of birth*. Whereas infant mortality rates and the lowering of these ruled the discourse, the role and importance of the quality of birth in the future of the health of the mother and the infant was not even present as a faint idea for a long time. Therefore there was little information accessible about the quality of birth giving in Yugoslavia; it was rather something women discussed with each other, often without being able to find the words describing what happened to them, writes Karalić.

Already in the language of her article, Karalić presents all concepts and ideas of the new women's health movement regarding birth. For this, she gives the credits to the feminist movement and the new health movements. Reading it in the broader context, what happens is that based on ideas taken from the Western feminist and women's health movement, an author in the official journal of the state's women's organisation presents critical ideas of the way women are obliged to give birth in Yugoslavia.<sup>646</sup> When explaining hospitalisation, she emphasises its consequences for the woman. An example is that by putting on the hospital pyjamas, there is a loss of identity taking place – the individual women's experience is contrasted to the achievements of modernised and centralised medicine. The medical approach defined by hard science is countered not only by a presentation of the dangers of *medicalised birth* as discussed by Wagner (42), but also concepts as *rooming-in* (that is the new-born and the mother sharing the same hospital room), *self-regulated feeding* (instead of [breast]feeding the infant according to a prescribed schedule, promoted by the institutionalised medicinal model), the idea of the fathers' presence during birth and *natural birth*, where, as opposed to medicalised birth,

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<sup>646</sup> Željka Karalić, "Rađanje u bolnici ili kod kuće?" [Birth giving in the hospital or at home?], *Žena* vol. 44. no. 5. (1986): 38-45, 40-41.

the woman has a chance to give birth without medical intervention. While as a result the baby is healthier, it is also empowering for the mother, as “women are enabled to get to know their own bodily functions better, which raises their self-confidence, which is the basis for a better prepared motherhood” (43).<sup>647</sup> Karalić claims that while in Yugoslavia, the main reason for the hospitalisation of birth is the lowering of the mortality rates, despite the almost 100 per cent of hospitalisation, there is an inadmissibly high level of infant mortality. (43) For this high level of infant mortality, the article blames the health care policies introduced by the state as part of its ideological framework.

Jasenska Kodrnja publishes the story of her birth giving in 1981, around the time of the beginning of the re-evaluations of birth giving conditions in the US and in Western Europe from a feminist perspective.<sup>648</sup> Kodrnja thematises the violence she experienced during her medicalised birth giving:

I imagined giving birth to one’s own baby as a joyful deed, in which personnel, whom this is their profession, helps us. After giving birth, I felt as if I had been raped: by some unknown people, institutions, circumstances.<sup>649</sup>

Her article is a complementary one to the report series by Maja Miles on various faces of violent, and for women, endangering oppression by patriarchy, which I analyse in the previous chapter. During our interview, Sofija Trivunac recalled her memories of her birth giving experience, which supports Kodrnja’s story and which made Trivunac more aware and focused on the topic: “After I gave birth to my second daughter, I started

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<sup>647</sup> Here, the author makes a differentiation between high and low risk pregnancies.

<sup>648</sup> Cf. Bonnie B. O’Connor, “The Home Birth Movement in the United States”, *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* vol. 18. no. 2. (1993 Apr):147-74 and the early work of the iconic figure of the US home birth movement: Sheila Kitzinger, *The Experience of Childbirth* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972) and *Birth at Home* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1979).

<sup>649</sup> Jasenska Kodrnja, “Dnevnik jedne roditelje” [Diary of a birth giving woman], *Start*, no. 335. (21<sup>st</sup> Nov 1981): 56-57.

working more intensely on trauma prevention during child birth. This was based on my very bad experience in a socialist hospital. I wasn't participating in the feminist group then any more, but I think that this was serious feminist work, we focused a lot on power relations and stereotypes." Trivunac at this time began to work with Eva Reich, the daughter of Wilhelm Reich who became a doctor with a focus on childbirth and babies, promoting her ideas all over the US. Trivunac learned to use of Reich's body-work to release tension. Her approach was in line with the new Western schools, which treat child birth as an organic process, advise baby massage and support sex life during pregnancy, thus de-tabooing the pregnant female body.

Karalić's article and Kodrnja's about her personal experience, also my interview with Trivunac reflect on the social and gender aspects of women and the health care system. Similar arguments emerge in the texts of Nathanson and Kickbush in *Žena*. These articles stretch the boundaries and question values about the unbiased health care system with the single objective of healing its patients in the best possible way. As another theme in her paper, Karalić analyses the power relations between the male doctors and their female patients. She identifies all the rituals related to the position of the doctor and patient as part of the patriarchal culture, in a society where women have a marginal position. (44) Her references are the radical feminist texts of Ann Oakley, who provides a thorough and firm critical analysis of these power relations in her writings from the 1970s. Nathanson writes about the so far neglected differences in the morbidity and mortality rates depending on sex [*spol*], while Ilona Kickbush provides an implicit critique of the health advice books mentioned above. Kickbush questions the image of women as those solely or most responsible for the other people in the family, which

image contributes to and dwells on the idea that even in the modern, nuclear family women keep their traditional role as those closer to the body and to nature. This image is a mixture of the modern (through the small family) and the ancient (through the essentialist and even esoteric assumptions of women being closer to nature), which assigns women the role of the “house doctor” [*kućni liječnik*].

While women’s traditional role is clearly inferior to that of the doctors in the health care system, Kickbush and in her introduction to her article, Cerjan-Letica detect the possibilities to question the status quo. Women as “the representatives of the lay referral system, lay medical knowledge” support, but also often contradict the “professional” medical system.<sup>650</sup> Along the lines of this interpretations, I would say that the health care advice books for women aim at keeping women at bay, while the texts produced by the feminist movement, cf. those of Ehrenreich and Oakley, aim at a liberation from this system. It is this liberating effect the women’s health movement promotes, and it reaches the feminists in Yugoslavia through publications such as the ones above and through networks I present below.

### **The *Žena i društvo* Group in the Global Women’s Health Movement**

New knowledge was produced not only in the academia, but in the activist scene too. And the new knowledge acquired or achieved meant a call for more activism. The members of

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<sup>650</sup> Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, “Bolesne žene iz viših klasa” [The „sick” woman of the upper classes], trans. Gordana Cerjan-Letica, *Žena* vol. 44. no. 1 (1985): 26-38.

Constance A. Nathanson, “Bolesti i uloga žene. Teorijski pregled” [Illness and the feminine role: a theoretical review], trans. Gordana Cerjan-Letica, *Žena* vol. 44. no. 1 (1985): 39-47.

Ilona Kickbush, “Žene i zdravstvena zaštita u obitelji” [Women and family care: a role expectation], trans. Anita Kontrec, *Žena* vol. 44. no. 1 (1985): 48-52.

the *Žena i društvo* groups learned and created knowledge about VaW, as well as founded new organisations to help victims of VaW and to change the circumstances. In the words of Mary E. Hawkesworth about feminist activism becoming global from the 1970s on: “activists who seek to promote change through information politics require knowledge that can challenge factual claims, issue frames, moral arguments, and perceptions of political significance. Feminist research centres played a crucial role in transnational activism, producing knowledge that activists can deploy in their work.”<sup>651</sup> In Yugoslavia, organising aimed at reaching out to the broader population meant entering a new level, one which was more clashing with the state’s sphere of influence and which presented the possibility of a larger scale grassroots organising.

Women’s health was an important, even if not the only theme that contributed to the questioning of discourses and the reinterpretations of concepts, and through these gave way to political action (or the other way round), and also helped rethink the ways women organise. It was also the issue, with its broader field, VaW, around which the feminists in not only Western countries could connect. So, the new Yugoslav feminists, after having their Western network (the “Sisterhood is Global” network, for example, was still a largely West-centred one, where the other countries seemed rather exotic, cf. Chapter 1), had a chance for real cooperation, independently from the state, with women from “Third World” countries, including women from the countries within the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

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<sup>651</sup> Mary E. Hawkesworth, *Globalization and Feminist Activism* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, c2006), 72.

That women's health was a ground for building a movement was not only the idea of Gordana Cerjan-Letica, but also the experience of Lepa Mladenović. She went to a meeting organised by the feminist group ISIS in Switzerland in 1985. ISIS or Isis International (the group changed its name from time to time, originally taking it from the Egyptian goddess Isis) "began when a group of feminist activists from different countries and regions, working on the burning issues affecting women around the world, started communicating with each other. (...) We began as a small collective of women, gathering information from local groups and the feminist movement and sharing it through the Isis International Bulletin and resource guides. We also organized some of the first international feminist meetings, all of this on a shoestring budget, powered by the energy of women and feminist activists around the world."<sup>652</sup> ISIS started its exchange of women activists from feminist groups all over the world in the early 1980s. Isis started an exchange programme for women activists from different parts of the world. Because of its success, the Isis collective in Geneva, Switzerland "decided to concentrate on this work and so, in agreement with the Isis collective in Rome, it changed its name to Isis Women's Cross Cultural Exchange or Isis-Wicce."<sup>653</sup> This was the group which invited Mladenović for their own "workshop of experience".

The study visit was for 3 months, which already shows that real learning and work was the goal. For one month, there were fifteen women from five continents to talk about

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<sup>652</sup> Isis International, "Our History", [http://www.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=29&Itemid=241](http://www.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=29&Itemid=241) (accessed 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014).

<sup>653</sup> More about ISIS and their role in the global feminist network, cf. Ana Maria Portugal, "Isis International: A Latin American Perspective", in *Developing Power: How Women Transformed International Development*, ed. Arvonne S. Fraser and Irene Tinker, 103-114 (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2004), 105-111. And also Hawkesworth, *Globalization and Feminist Activism*, 71-72.

their lives. Mladenović recalls this as a crucial event to her: “This changed my life, it was the first time I could really think about myself. Because usually you don’t have time to think about yourself, you can’t get rid of this judging eye of patriarchy watching you. And then there you are, for 24 hours a day with women from Nicaragua, South Africa, China, Kenya, Paraguay. In South Africa, there was still apartheid. I think we always wanted to have women-only groups within *Žena i društvo*, we just didn’t know how. Here I learned how to facilitate discussions where we exchange experience.” In the group in Switzerland, the participants talked a lot about sexuality, violence and health, and came to the conclusion that “health is everything, in a way.” After her return, Mladenović and the younger activists of the *Žena i društvo* group in Belgrade decided to suggest the change of rules and exclude men from the women’s experience workshops, which I write more in detail above. As a result, sensitive issues such as women’s health or violence were discussed in the women-only groups, but the *tribine* were still open to the general public, so men could participate there.

The issues raised by women’s health movement in the US and adopted by *Žena* could gain space in a more radical and interactive space through the *tribine*, the discussion series in the SKC Belgrade. The selection of the topics was wider than in the journal articles, which was due to the more flexible framework of the discussion series and the freedom the group in Belgrade, at this time often called FGŽD (Feministička grupa žena i društvo – Feminist group women and society), enjoyed. There was a whole series of events about women’s health in March-April 1986, mostly women-only events due to the sensitive topics. It began with an event about the “feminist approach to

women's health" in general, where Lepa Mladenović talked.<sup>654</sup> Gordana Cerjan-Letica came with a very provocative title, "Medicine or poison: medicine as the tool of social control", while Sofija Trivunac facilitated a discussion about abortion ("What abortion means to us?"). Here, in Mladenović's memories, 25 women came together and shared their experience, it was surprising how many of them had an abortion already. It was important that almost everyone from the *Žena i društvo* group came, even those who were not supporting the idea of the women-only group in general. Health, body image and nutrition were discussed in relation to women as the ones eating (and how that affects their health and looks) as well as feeding others (being mothers and housewives) and the contradictions and difficulties behind it. The talk was facilitated by Vesna Dražilović, who later continued to work about the theme of women and the health care system. A further *tribina* took place about women and AIDS led by Sladjana Marković, as well as another one about the myth of women's heterosexuality by Sonja Lončar. To make women more aware of their bodies, a medical doctor, Svetlana Mitraković was asked to hold a talk about hormonal change and menopause.<sup>655</sup>

The strong critique of health care institutions was continued in a talk about violence-free child birth and alternative modes of birth giving with Snežana Simić, Danica Radović-Solomun i Snežana Adašević-Petrović and another about the experience of female patients in psychiatric hospitals, where former patients were invited to share

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<sup>654</sup> The documentation of the FGŽD in the ŽINDOK Centar and the list of events of the SKC do not always agree on the exact dates. The reason is probably that events sometimes had to be rescheduled. It is for sure, however, that the "Women and Health" series took place March and April 1986. About the first event, the date in the ŽINDOK file is: 8th April 1987. Cf. ŽINDOK D-76/1987. The SKC events are listed in *Ka vidljivoj ženskoj istoriji: ženski pokret u Beogradu 90-ih* [Towards a visible women's history: the women's movement in Belgrade in the 1990s], ed. Marina Blagojević, 49-60. (Beograd: Centar za ženske studije, istraživanja i komunikaciju, 1998).

<sup>655</sup> ŽINDOK D-28/1988



their experience. The Democratic Psychiatry movement in Italy and so called anti-psychiatry in Britain practices highly influenced Lepa Mladenović and her views on the violence produced by institutions of psychiatry, and in my reading of her work, also on the way women's health and VaW are treated by institutions. This attitude implied that the institution of psychiatry is totalitarian, violent and it does not heal the mentally different, and that mental hospitals should be demolished and new mental health centres opened. It is important to emphasise that in relation to the wide and complex set of approaches, schools and texts of the field of anti-psychiatry, Mladenović's focus was on the more humane treatment of psychiatric patients.

The motivation behind this is her personal experience of a friend of hers getting into a mental hospital, where Mladenović, a student of psychology, saw how repressive that system was: "And then you are thinking how is it possible that all these systems are made on the wrong premises." After this happened, in 1976, she went to Italy, she was volunteering at the alternative psychiatric centres and the transformed psychiatric hospitals: "To me it was fantastic, a new revolution, here was a social movement that changed the power order of society. I tried to change things here too, so in 1982 I organised a big conference here, with the leading figures from Europe. And then nothing. We couldn't change the institutions, there was no one with power from the inside. (...) They [the anti-psychiatry groups and people in Italy] were not sensitive to feminist issues, so I also had quarrels with them. The two movements never were together." The critical attitude against those in power determining who counts as normal and therefore a citizen with full rights is a motivation behind both her feminism and her work in psychiatry, and the experience with the latter clearly influenced the former. The influence

of anti-psychiatry, as we shall see, becomes a point of reference for the co-workers and experts of the SOS telephones.<sup>656</sup>

Public discussions were a chance to disseminate knowledge of women's rights, which are taking more and more space in all the Yugoslav feminist activities, by the polling research around the topics, and most importantly, the set up of the SOS helpline for battered women and children. In Nikolić-Ristanović's footprints, there was a lecture about victimhood in the *tribina* series, by Vlasta Ilišin and Vesna Marković in 1988, and a year later she herself gave a talk too about her book *Žene žrtve kriminaliteta* with Slobodanka Konstantinović Vilić and Dafinka Večerina. Večerina is the lawyer in Croatia who substantially contributed to the foundation of the first SOS helplines. A further theme of the critical discourse on VaW, female genital mutilation (FGM) was also recurring in the new Yugoslav feminist circles, as also the feminist community in the West was becoming more and more aware of female genital mutilation as a violation of women's body, largely due to the globalising networking of women activists. It is still often called "female circumcision" at the time, for example in the *Žena i društvo* program showing a BBC film about FGM in Sudan, followed by a discussion, introduced by

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<sup>656</sup> Lepa Mladenović was also extensively publishing about the topic, until 1991 the following articles:

Jasna Borovnjak and Lepa Mladenović, "Nova psihiatrija: ne bavimo se bolešću, nego sa životom" [New psychiatry: we do not deal with diseases, we deal with life], *Potkulture*, no. 3 (1987): 117-119.

Lepa Mladenović, "Implikacije feminističke terapije" / "The Implications of Feminist Therapy," *Knjiga rezimea sa 31 sabora psihologa*, (Belgrade, 1983), 132.; "Proizvodnja majke: nacrt za odnos majke i ćerke" [The production of mothers: a sketch to the mother-daughter relationships], *Vidici*, no. 1-2 (1984): 23-35.; co-editor, *Alternative psihijatriji: Materjali sa međunarodnog skupa "Psihijatrija i društvo"* [Alternatives of psychiatry: Materials from the international conference "Psychiatry and society"] (Belgrade: Lila Ulica, 1985); with Biljana Branković, "Mreža – Alternative Psihijatriji" [Alternatives to Psychiatry], *Kultura*, no. 68-69 (1985): 170-178.; ed. with Aleksandar Petrović, *Mreža alternativa* [Network of Alternatives] (Kragujevac: Svetlost, 1987).

Vanda Krajinović, in 1987.<sup>657</sup> As one can see from the documentation of the FGŽD Belgrade and the discrepancies between the SKC and the ŽINDOK documentation, some of the planned events did not take place eventually, or were changed significantly. However, this documentation shows that the topics were of high interest for the women in the group.

Through the health topics, there was a new route for the Yugoslav feminists to get integrated into international women's networks. The correspondence with organisations, individuals and editorial boards of publications intensifies throughout the 1980s. The editorial of a newly founded journal, expressing a growing interest in a worldwide network on women's health, the *Health Quarterly By and For Women Worldwide* in Genève invited the group to participate in the journal's work<sup>658</sup> and to meet them at a women's health congress in Costa Rica. The conference was organised by the Costa Rican group CEFEMINA, Centro Feminista de Información y Acción [Feminist Information and Action Center].<sup>659</sup> Another Genève group, the *Dispensaire des femmes* [Clinic for Women] sent an invitation to a tour of the author Rina Nissim. Nissim was a founder of the clinic and a promoter of naturopathy, a naturalistic approach to health care. She mainly focused on the consequences of naturopathy for women's health, and her work was discussed in one of the meetings of the FGŽD.<sup>660</sup> A grassroots feminist journal, the *Connexions. An International Women's Quarterly* from California also contacted the

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<sup>657</sup> 24th June 1987. ŽINDOK D-73/1987

<sup>658</sup> ŽINDOK D-166/1986 Letter from the *Health Quarterly*

<sup>659</sup> ŽINDOK D-303/1986 Letter from CEFEMINA

<sup>660</sup> Cf. Rina Nissim, *Natural Healing in Gynecology*, trans. Roxanne Claire (New York : Pandora, 1986). ŽINDOK D-305/1987. The letter is from 18<sup>th</sup> February 1987.

Belgrade group, to ask for information about them and offering copies of their journal: the following issues focused on AIDS and women's reproductive rights.<sup>661</sup> Another woman, Katherine Forrest, who worked as a medical doctor in California on methods of contraception, sent a personal letter and her articles to her "sisters" in Yugoslavia: as she wrote, her Slovenian origins made her feel even closer to the efforts of the Yugoslav feminists.<sup>662</sup>

The correspondence of the FGŽD Belgrade shows how feminist networking took place between Yugoslavia and the rest of the world: it is much more random than the transfer and reception in the academic feminist publishing, therefore it offers less official routes to reach new contacts, like the physician in California or the Costa Rican women's group. The "Third World" countries were slowly occupying a stable place on the Yugoslav feminists' map of global feminism, which can be seen for example in the 1988 Akciona Anketa report, where statistics on VaW from other women's networks in Nicaragua, Peru, Madrid, London and the US are presented.<sup>663</sup> A few years before, the point of comparison would have been the US and Western Europe, and maybe the East European state socialist countries.

### **Transferring Knowledge: The SOS Telephones**

The foundation of SOS helplines for abused women and children in my reading is one of the most important achievements of the new Yugoslav feminists and it indeed is presented as a milestone in the history of feminist groups. Still, my interviewees talk

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<sup>661</sup> ŽINDOK D-106/1990. The letter is from 25<sup>th</sup> April 1990.

<sup>662</sup> ŽINDOK D-110/1987. The letter is from 24<sup>th</sup> July 1987.

<sup>663</sup> ŽINDOK D-41/1988. "Žene protiv nasilja nad ženama" [Women against violence against women]

about it as the least problematic endeavours they have entered. The SOS telephones accessible to women all over the member republic of Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia brought along greater visibility for the feminist ideas and meant the creation of a parallel institution working on a topic that belonged primarily under the sphere of responsibility of the state. Violence against citizens by other citizens falls under the penal code and would require measurements from the carriers of legitimate state violence, that is the police, and then are to be prosecuted by the institutions of executive power. It is not the peculiarity of state socialist regimes that this does not happen, as the history of anti-VaW activism in the “Western” countries show. However, these parallel institutions pose a greater challenge to an authoritarian state with control of all its institutions. The fact that the Yugoslav state did not show interest in stopping the helplines from coming to being, according to my interviewees proves that the topic was not important to them. In the meantime, in my interpretation the fact that violence in the homes was viewed as a private matter meant that it was committed secretly by individuals, for which the state was not to blame. The situation was much more difficult with the violence committed by the state maintained health care system, which aspect of activism did not even develop further before 1991.

About the relevance of the SOS helplines and shelters from the perspective of feminist politics, Gordana Cerjan-Letica quotes the authors of one of the most important books about VaW, R. Emerson Dobash and Russell P. Dobash’s *Women, Violence, and Social Change*. In 1988 the book was still manuscript and Cerjan-Letica got hold of it at a conference in Cardiff about VaW. In her review article, Cerjan-Letica explains the basics about the feminist movements’ initiative of the struggle against VaW, with special

respect to the feminist response to the problem. These are informing and educating the public; setting up SOS telephones and consultation centres; creating a network of safe houses and shelters.<sup>664</sup> The Dobash and Dobash quote is not accidentally quoted in detail:

“The refuge stands at the heart of the battered-women’s movement and is important for a variety of reasons. For the woman, it serves as a physical space where she can temporarily escape from violence, find safety and make decisions about her own life. Contact with other women helps overcome isolation and a sense of being the only now with a violent partner. For the movement, it provides the psychological location from which to organise, and serves as a base for practical and political thought and action. (...) Thus, the refuge itself become a fundamental means by which feminist politics is developed, sustained and rekindled within the context of the problem itself and in close contact with the daily lives of its sufferers. The refuge provides an almost unique opportunity for creating a change for women that not only assists women who have been battered but also stretches beyond those who seek refuge. The provision of a physical space so thoroughly enmeshed in the problem itself and in the lives of the women and refuge workers is unique for most social movements, and it is doubtful that a movement, rather than just a provision of service, could have developed or sustained without it.”<sup>665</sup>

That is, there is a great relevance of the shelters for the feminist movement, one depends on the other. It is a big step for feminist politicking and this is why it is far more than just another service provided for people in a certain need. It is the “personal is political” coming to life and the helplines and the shelters play exactly this role for feminists in the Yugoslav case too.

The first SOS hotline was founded in 1988 in Zagreb as *SOS telefon za žene i djecu žrtve nasilja* [SOS telephone for women and children victims of violence], whereas the planning had a longer history in Belgrade then already. Among the founders there

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<sup>664</sup> Gordana Cerjan-Letica, “Nasilje prema ženama u obitelji” [Violence against women in the family], *Žena*, vol. 46. no. 6 (1988): 28-38, 32.

<sup>665</sup> Instead of translating back into English from the Serbo-Croatian translation of the manuscript, I quote from the published English language version: R. Emerson Dobash and Russell P. Dobash, *Women, Violence, and Social Change* (London: Routledge, 1992), 45.

were Katarina Vidović, Vesna Mimica, Biljana Kašić, Nela Pamuković. The Zagreb telephone started with 50 volunteers – this number is impressive and signals the board reach of the initiative.<sup>666</sup> Organisation wise, the SOS telephone in Zagreb was a hybrid though: the Opštinske konferencije SSO Trešnjevka and the Sekcija za društvenu aktivnost žena in 1986 supported the initiative of the Ženska grupa [Women's group] Trešnjevka. The latter was founded in 1985 under the auspices of the environmental association SVARUN, an ecological activist group, which they left in 1988 and from then on worked as a separate entity.

The Zagreb SOS helpline worked 24h a day, with 50 volunteers, taking 4h-shifts.<sup>667</sup> During the first month, they had calls from 500 women and 32 children.<sup>668</sup> In an apartment in Trešnjevka, they set up a shelter with 3 beds, where one woman could stay for 20 nights. From today's perspective, the 20 days are not much, however, the mere fact that this option was on the table meant the acknowledgement that a woman behaves differently and come to different conclusions if she is in the threatening vicinity of the abuser than when they are not, and it also gives a new meaning to one's right to be safe from beating and humiliation.

The women in Belgrade have colourful memories of the foundation of the Zagreb telephone. As Vera Litričin recalls:

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<sup>666</sup> For the sake of comparison, the Autonomni ženski centar, which currently runs the SOS in Belgrade, has 15-20 volunteers at most, and the Hungarian helpline of the NGO NANE is maintained by 10 volunteers.

<sup>667</sup> Dražena Peranić and Merima Hamulić, "Ko to lomi adamovo rebro", *Oslobođenje*, 6th November 1988. (Presarijum SKC)

<sup>668</sup> Vesna Mimica, "Kako smo u Zagrebu počele da se organiziramo protiv nasilja nad ženama. Povodom 20 godina rada skloništa AŽKZ-a – 2011" [How we started to organise against violence against in women in Zagreb. On occasion of 20 years of work of the AŽKZ – 2011], <https://www.facebook.com/autonomna/posts/730171820327934:0> (Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> September 2014).

“The idea came from abroad (...) Nada Četković translated texts from French, and Katarina Jeremić did a masters degree in the US, where she also attended a course on SOS hotlines. Dafinka Večerina, a lawyer was also helping. Lepa [Mladenović] went to this 3-months course on women’s health in Geneva. We were more and more deeply discussing this theme in the all-Yugoslav gatherings. We have always been interested in the topic, but our discussions were becoming more specialised by time. I was very much surprised when the Zagreb women succeeded, they were so young, and it was we advising them. It was a big step and a good model, the way they just started it without any hesitation.”

Lepa Mladenović said that she had been planning to start a helpline in Belgrade already in 1985, after her women’s health workshop organised and provided by ISIS. The preparations for the helpline, with the support coming from the colleagues in Zagreb, began already in 1987, but then she travelled again, on a fellowship to Italy to continue her work on anti-psychiatry. This impeded the beginnings of the helpline in Belgrade, while it is documented in ŽINDOK that a member of the FGŽiD Belgrade went to Zagreb for a seminar in early 1988.<sup>669</sup> Then in 1989, more women came from Zagreb, including Dafinka Večerina and a friend, Katja Jeremić, whose role is emphasised by everyone I asked about the creation of the helpline. The Ljubljana SOS helpline started in 1989, in Belgrade eventually in 1990.

In Belgrade, the institutional preparations of the SOS helpline are well-documented and we can see the long list of state institutions, including the city government, the police, hospitals and social services, contacted by the feminists from FGŽiD for information about raped women.<sup>670</sup> Eventually, however, it was a woman in the Dom Omladine [House of Youth, a cultural centre for youth programs] of the city of Belgrade who understood very well the significance of the help such a telephone means

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<sup>669</sup> ŽINDOK D-27/1988, ŽINDOK D-28/1988, ŽINDOK D-29/1988

<sup>670</sup> ŽINDOK D-29/1988



and offered her office from 6 pm to 10 pm every day for the purposes of the line. They were not even registered, so unlike the Zagreb situation, the unofficial helpline worked in an official building and without any actual official framework. As Mladenović added, later the helpline “changed the society”, especially when they had media coordinators and the topic of DV entered the wider media (cf. Chapter 3). The helplines in the three capitals had a reach throughout the respective member states.

Ideationally, the helplines and the shelter were both based on feminist principles. The activist women working on it had their background in the feminist theories and methodologies I discuss in the previous chapters. Even women with an already serious academic career, such as Rada Iveković worked on the helpline. Her knowledge, as well as the others’ was turned into practical knowledge and professional help providing through the integration of helpline material from different sources: the anti-psychiatry movement means a source of knowledge about the respect for the client and the self-control over not abusing our power as aid-providers. Feminist scholarship offered explanations of and data about the oppression of women, implicitly or explicitly even solutions to change inequality. For the helplines’ methodology, manuals from the US and UK were used, most of these acquired informally. The above mentioned friend, Katja (Katarina) Jeremić studied in Amherst, Massachusetts, and upon the encouragement of her friends at home, did a training there about VaW. Women from the US came to train the volunteers. The basic principles of the helplines in Zagreb, Belgrade and Ljubljana were (and still are) those shared by feminist organisations working to help women and children suffering from private violence.

The journal *Žena* again proves to be a strange bedfellow for the feminists: Kodrnja and Vidović, actually an issue before Cerjan-Letica's account on the Cardiff conference, explain the most important principles of the freshly started SOS helpline in Zagreb. The key concept behind the SOS methodology is women's solidarity and the feminist explanation for the existence of VaW is that there is "the patriarchal principle of power which feminism considers the foundational one among the other aspects of power." The authors find it important to elucidate that the feminism they talk about "is not delimited neither exclusive (...) rather it uses all that's available from the existing discoveries and aspires for syntheses, in the core of which one finds, as constitutive elements, Marxism, existentialism, anti-psychiatry, syntheses which would mean a different lens of looking at and a different pattern of the male–female, individual–society, human community–cosmos relations."<sup>671</sup> Indeed, the work on VaW calls out for a mix of methodologies and the importance of providing definitions of feminism. The basic principles of the SOS helpline, based on the feminist self-understanding of its foundation, include that the volunteers on the helpline "do not blame the woman for her problem, and this is what is the biggest difference between the SOS and the more established therapeutical methods which one encounters in the social work centres and in the psychiatric practices. So that women, who are the victims here and who come to the SOS for help, are not burdened any further." What, they add, in this case would be done to them by the experts of these institutions.

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<sup>671</sup> Jasenka Kodrnja and Katarina Vidović, "SOS telefon za žene i djecu žrtve nasilja" [SOS Telephone for women and children violence victims], *Žena*, vol. 46. no. 5 (1988): 68-77, 69-70. Further citations to this work are given in the text.

A further crucial principle of the SOS helpline is the utmost respect for the clients, as well as that the volunteers focus on the autonomy and the self-confidence of the clients, whom they actually at this time mostly call victims. (74) This is an important terminological debate between feminist help organisations, whether the *victim* or the *survivor* is the more appropriate term, mostly driven by the question what is more empowering for the women involved and strategic for the movement. The reason for the use of the term victim, among others, is to emphasise the faultlessness of the person victimised and to defer from the approach of the institutions, which often blame the individuals for their situation.

This is what later is marked by the concept of victim blaming. As Kodrnja and Vidović emphasise, victim blaming even happens in the Yugoslav institutions of social work, healthcare and law enforcement. (76) Their statement is proven already by an expert at the conference I write about below, where the claim is that “how a woman reacts to the aggression from a man depends on her level of emancipation”.<sup>672</sup> Importantly, the SOS volunteers never fail to emphasise that women from all social standing can become victims of DV. When it comes to institutions and methodology, Vidović at a conference later explains that the SOS-approach is different, not better or worse, but different: “We talk. We have a telephone, we give information, we support women, our discussion is full of support.”<sup>673</sup>

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<sup>672</sup> Ujević Buljeta, “O mogućim uzrocima i načinu prevencije”, 72. Cf. next footnotes about the *Žena* roundtable. “Okrugli stol *Žene*. Nasilje u obitelji”, *Žena*, vol. 47. no. 1-2 (1989): 54-83.

<sup>673</sup> Kodrnja, “SOS - drugačije od institucija”, *Žena*, vol. 47. no. 1-2 (1989): 71-72, 71. Cf. next footnote.

An article from after 1991, which however contains many of the crucial insights of the work of the feminists on the SOS helplines: Mojca Dobnikar, “‘Feministično socialno delo’? Ne, hvala! Za političnost in proti izgubi spomina” [“Feminist social work”? No, thank you. For the political and against the losing of memory], *Delta* vol. 3. no. 3-4 (1997): 117-130.

The positions of the institutions, which are criticised by the SOS volunteers and the new Yugoslav feminists in general, are spelled out at a conference in 1989, co-organised by the SSRNH, the editorial board of *Žena* and the Zagreb office of the KDAŽ, which in its name already has not only women, but the family too: “Konferencija za društveni položaj žene i porodice grada Zagreba” [Conference for the social status of the woman and the family of the city of Zagreb].<sup>674</sup> The event is organised under the influence of the changes slowly infiltrating the public discourse after the foundation of the first SOS helpline in Zagreb. The conference proves how important the foundation of the SOS helpline was and how much a new approach to VaW was needed. Also, the “dialogue” was very similar to the earlier occasions, for example the *Žena* conferences

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<sup>674</sup> “Okrugli stol *Žene*. Nasilje u obitelji” [Roundtable *Žena*. Violence in the family], *Žena*, vol. 47. no. 1-2 (1989): 54-83.

Mladen Singer, “Poticaji za promjene” [Incentives for change], 55-58.

Zdravka Poldrugać, “Sto pokazuju istraživanja” [What research shows], 58-61.

Ljiljana Mikšaj Todorović, “‘Tamna brojka’ u otkrivanju počinitelja” [“Dark numbers” in revealing the perpetrators], 61-63.

Lana Pető Kujundžić, “Kažnavanje i kaznena politika” [Punishment and penal politics], 63-65.

Katarina Vidović, “Pitanja bez odgovora” [A question without answers], 65-66.

Biljana Kašić, “Negacija problema – na primjeru incesta” [Denying the problem – on the example of incest], 66-67.

Ivo Švel, “Razgovaramo o vrhu ledenjaka” [We are talking about the peak of the iceberg], 67-69.

Olga Petak, “Patrijarhalni odgoj kao izvor nasilja” [Patriarchal upbringing as a source of violence], 69-70.

Jasenka Kodrnja, “SOS – drugačije od institucija” [SOS – differently from the institutions], 71-72.

Hela Ujević Buljeta, “O mogućim uzrocima i načinu prevencije” [About the possible causes and modes of prevention], 72-74.

Rafael Pejčinović, “Što pokazuju zagrebački podaci” [What Zagreb data show us], 74-76.

Melita Singer, “Zašto samo o djeci?” [Why only about children?], 76.

Nina Kadić, “Najbitinja je ipak prevencija” [The most important is still prevention], 76-77.

Mira Tecilazić Bašić, “Prijedlozi za izmjenu propisa” [Suggestions for changing the regulations], 77-79.

Zdenka Pantić, “Nasilje nad djecom pri razvodu brakova” [Violence against children during divorce], 81-83.

when the representative of the official or state organisations and the feminists met. Each party repeated its own positions, although it was the official side that was expected to react to the criticism of its work (cf. MacMillan and Briskin above the relations between the state and social movements). What we can see is that the political and social institutions still focus on the family and children, in an attempt to exclude the gender aspect. They prefer not to speak about incest and in general the sexual abuse of children,<sup>675</sup> or even if they do, the gendered aspect of the family as well as its patriarchal roots are not mentioned.

In the opening lecture, Mladen Singer, a renowned criminologist speaks about psychological and physical violence, without mentioning any other forms of violence or the gendered aspect. Both in his talk and in the one by Ivo Švel, a paediatrician, the “weak” are the children and the elderly, irrespective of gender. On behalf of the institutions, it was only Melita Singer, from the *Žena* editorial board, who called the attention to the importance of speaking about women too, following the example of the SOS helplines. Besides the focus on gender, the SOS principles also include a more detailed terminological differentiation between physical, psychological or emotional, sexual and economic violence, all as sub-cases of DV and VaW. In her lecture, Katarina Vidović explains this and introduces a whole set of concepts the previous speakers do not use. She speaks about patriarchal power, which is made up of the psychological, social and economic dependence of women on men. This dependence makes the various, yet

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<sup>675</sup> Cf. Mikšaj Todorović, “‘Tamna brojka’ u otkrivanju počinitelja”, 61-63.

Petõ Kujundžić, “Kažnavanje i kaznena politika”, 63-65.

interrelated types of violence possible, moreover, claims Vidović, together with many other feminist experts in the field, “VaW generates the other forms of violence.”<sup>676</sup>

She also argues that we need a different concept of the family. In the terminology of the state institutions, the family is “a priori a harmonic community and an ideal form of human life”. The problem here, again, is that then, if violence happens, “it is the family to blame and not the concrete individual with his or her own concept of sex and family roles.” The concepts the institutions use influence the way these institutions react to the phenomenon of gender based violence, or as Vidović puts it: “the reactions from the institutions is not just unsatisfactory, these indirectly contribute to the maintenance of the status quo, the existing relations between men and women.” This exactly is the victim blaming aspect, which feminism criticises. The starting point of this approach is “that the oppression of women is conceptually built into the bases of civilisation and throughout human history and in all societies (irrespective of class, ethnicity, race, religion and all other differences), on the negation of women’s individuality, capability and the power of women.”

The statement “irrespective of class, ethnicity, race, religion and all other differences” is a new element of the new Yugoslav feminist discourse: it signals the awareness of the significance of such differences, as well as the awareness, based on the knowledge from the SOS experience, that these differences do not define who becomes a victim of VaW. Because of the new knowledge about the nature and the consequences of DV and VaW, the new feminists of the SOS helplines demand separate legislation of

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<sup>676</sup> This and the following quotations in this paragraph are all from Vidović, “Pitanja bez odgovora”, 65.

VaW, claiming that due to the complexity of the issue, the already existing legislation is not sufficient.

The participants from different institutions, such as social services, youth centres and hospitals, do not agree. The representative of the institute of social work of the city of Zagreb, Rafael Pejčinović even claims that the gender of the victim does not matter and thus should not be so important.<sup>677</sup> The paediatrician Švel at least speaks about incest, though he claims that in Yugoslavia, “we have a much more humane approach to children than the German, the French or some others. There are differences. For example, while by us there is also rape of children [*silovanje nad djetetom*], but by us there has never been a sexual abuse of a child [*seksualnog zlostavljanja djeteta*]. We have not seen such a thing yet. An infant with a cracked anus or vagina, that we have not seen yet...”<sup>678</sup> The argument is hard to decipher, as the rape of a child is the sexual abuse of that child, which can indeed result with the mentioned serious physical injuries.

Countering these incredible statements, the SOS volunteer Biljana Kašić talks explicitly about incest, the first one at the conference using the term. She emphasises that there is a “negation in terms of the existence of incest”, with the exact intention that then “we can imagine that by us, that does not happen”. The other step in the negation is the naming of the perpetrator. She cites statistical data of “world experience”, which claims that 95-99% of incest against children which happen within the family, are done by men.”<sup>679</sup> Also, in the statistics made based on the first 10 months of the SOS helpline in Zagreb, the volunteer Nina Kadić shares that during this time, 560 children turned to the

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<sup>677</sup> Pejčinović, “Što pokazuju zagrebački podaci”, 74.

<sup>678</sup> Švel, “Razgovaramo o vrhu ledenjaka”, 69.

<sup>679</sup> Kašić, “Negacija problema - na primjeru incesta”, 67.

helpline, out of whom 20% told about their incest experience.<sup>680</sup> This shows very well, how important the research function of the SOS helplines was, which Vidović calls “action research.”<sup>681</sup> The fact that in the first ten months, 4.000 women turned to the helpline proves that VaW was a burning issue in Yugoslav society at the time and that the existing institutions, including health care, did not offer sufficient help to the problem.<sup>682</sup>

The SOS helpline manuals were constantly improved with newer and newer material from other groups, as well as based on the own experience of the women working on the helplines. The results of the *Akciona anketa* I discuss below meant a contribution too. The concepts the surveys work with are already from the feminist inspired helplines for victims of domestic violence. Mental violence [*psihičko nasilje*] is one the new concepts introduced by the founders of the helplines: as opposed to the victimological and criminological works, the helpline founders could employ concepts which were not present in the legal system, as they focused on the victim and direct help provided to her, which allowed them to think outside the framework of the legal system and legal terminology. Mental violence consists of humiliation, offences, the emphasising of the other person’s subordinated position. The lack of this concept and category in criminal law, however, was in the centre of the helpline members’ criticism of the system.

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<sup>680</sup> Kadić, “Najbitinja je ipak prevencija”, 76.

<sup>681</sup> Vidović, “Pitanja bez odgovora”, 72.

<sup>682</sup> A year later, another important conference takes place in Ljubljana, which is documented in the volume Zoran Pavlović, ed., *Nasilje nad ženskami. Zlasti v družini* [Violence against women. Especially in the family] (Ljubljana: Inštitut za kriminologijo pri pravni fakulteti v Ljubljani, 1990).

Here, again, volunteers from the helplines participate together with scholars, for example the lawyer Dafinka Večerina, Dobnikar, Kašić, from the hotlines, and the feminist scholarship is represented by Nikolić-Ristanović and Mirjana Ule.



As Vidović says, they found it “irritating that in the criminal law there is still no qualification of *domestic violence as a criminal act*, rather it is still treated as misdemeanour, minor offence [*prekršaj*], that is as disturbance and peace of the home.” Also, it still is prosecuted only if the offended party reports it [*privatno gonjenje*], unlike crimes which are prosecuted automatically. The SOS activists also brought up marital rape as a crime to be treated as such.<sup>683</sup> Moreover, they were working to dissolve the myth of the streets as the most dangerous place for a woman: as the statistics show, it is much more likely that a woman gets violated in her home, by a relative or her partner, than on the street. This was confirmed in the answers from the women interviewed in the *Akciona anketa* organised by women in Belgrade.

**“Smrt Seksizmu, Sloboda Ženama”:<sup>684</sup>*Anketiranje* and Going Grassroots**

On the way to the initiation of the SOS helplines, the Belgrade group initiated a polling, calling it *Akciona Anketa* [action polling], to gain insight about women’s lives in Yugoslavia through experiences which were not discussed so far. This idea about the representation of women’s experience resonates to the activities to establish the helplines, as well as to the principles behind the reorganisation of the Belgrade FGŽiD into women-only groups and open *tribine*. The questions raised and answered in the *Akciona Anketa* have not been present either in the official discussions about women’s lives, or in the feminist-inspired social science research of Vesna Pusić, Nikolić-Ristanović or Anđelka

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<sup>683</sup> This and the previous quote: Peranić – Hamulić, “Ko to lomi adamovo rebro” (emphasis mine)

<sup>684</sup> “Death to sexism, freedom for women”, paraphrasing the partisan slogan “Death to fascism, freedom for the people”. Woman, age 40, from Belgrade. ŽINDOK D-42/1988 “Žene govore o nasilju” [Women talk about violence], from the survey “Žene protiv nasilja nad ženama”

Milić. The answers are valuable material for further organising, even if the sample is not representative for the entire Yugoslav society, considering that it was women in the centre of Belgrade who answered the questions. The polls in three subsequent years (1986-1988) were organised around three topics, closely related to each other: women's dissatisfaction with men (1986), solidarity among women (1987), and women's health and VaW (1988). The venues of the polling were the following central spaces in Belgrade: the Terazije (1986), Kalenić pijaca [Kalenić market] (1987) and the main railway station and the Knez Mihajlova street, Belgrade's main street (1988).

The results were analysed by the FGŽiD members, however, not all is documented and there is important data missing. As the reports written by the activists doing the surveys admit, due to the methodology (or rather, the circumstances), the results may not be punctual. To mention the most basic ones: besides the location, it already is selective who agreed to answer the difficult questions, while even for those women who were willing to participate, an in depth interview might have resulted in different answers. Still, these surveys are important sources on the topics that were of interest for the new Yugoslav feminists. Moreover, doing the surveys was one of the first steps to initiate discussions with unknown women on the streets about their views on their own situation in the Yugoslav society. Already the results from this small scale research provided feedback to the group about what other women in Yugoslavia wanted, what their realities and problems were. The expansion and the continuation of the project would have been a starting point for a more expanded feminist movement, had the break-up of Yugoslavia and the war not changed the landscape of feminist activism.

The institutional support from the SKC probably contributed to the fact that the members of the FGŽiD could do the survey, as a letter was sent to the police announcing this activity.<sup>685</sup> The permission for the surveys was an important step in the process of reaching a wider population with the feminist messages. This was not an easy step and certainly not one supported by the state institutions. A similar, important and almost forgotten attempt is when also in Belgrade, Vera Litričin went to a factory with Sonja Drljević, which Litričin recalls: “we were interviewing women there. We also talked to a gynaecologist who worked at the factory: he told us that there were many, many miscarriages in the factory, because women were overworked. They often took night shifts to be able to be with their children during the day. This was the first time that they heard about the fact that it is not just exhausting, but also dangerous, since it is unhealthy to exchange the day with the night.” The work they started with the factory stopped. Yet, a few years later, it became possible to talk to women in an organised form about their experience living in Yugoslav society.

It was Lepa Mladenović who played a central role in all three surveys. The questions reflect on the experience she had when she started travelling to meet other women’s groups working on women’s health and VaW. As she mentioned during our interview, they were then already reading the radical feminists’ work on rape and VaW, Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon, and there are references to Mary Daly in Vidović’s writings. The three surveys in the three subsequent years have an arch: from the matters of division of labour in the household towards women’s solidarity and finally, health and violence. The surveys were always analysed, the final analysis by Lepa

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<sup>685</sup> ŽINDOK D-54-1988 from 4<sup>th</sup> March 1987.

Mladenović with other women, for example Sladjana Marković and Žarana Papić. There were much more activists interviewing women during in the street polls. The names of those who worked in the surveys in 1988 are listed in the letter to the police: Jasna Borovnjak, Sladjana Marković, Marija Vojinović, Ljiljana Milovanović, Gordana Obradović, and from another source it appears that Žarana Papić also participated.

Already the themes and questions resonate to the ideas and practice of the worldwide feminist struggle against VaW. Also, these questionnaires from the beginning had the underlying aim of building a wider women's movement, both by the act of asking women about these experiences and thus raising their awareness of their situation already and by publicising the knowledge from the surveys. The questionnaires also surveyed about women's willingness to organise, moreover, women's willingness to organise for the betterment of their own position resurface in all three surveys. For example, the interviewees are asked if they would be willing to participate "in a strike/demonstration against men who beat and rape women" (1986), in actions where "women organise in a struggle for their rights" (1987) or simply "in feminist actions" (1988).

As Lepa Mladenović and Sladjana Marković summarise it in their analysis about the 1987 survey: "On the one hand women feel uncomfortable to identify with women, on the other hand they would very much want to fight for their rights, which tells about the ambivalence and the great strength which the situation of women generates."<sup>686</sup> The answers to the questions prove that women – the ones who were asked – would be interested and willing to organise together with other women: 75% said yes in 1987 to the

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<sup>686</sup> Lepa Mladenović and Sladjana Marković, "Dok stojim za tezgom niko mi ništa ne može. Akciona anketa žena, na Kalenić pijaci", ŽINDOK D-66/1987

question: “If there was a possibility that women organise in a struggle for their rights, would you participate in these actions?”<sup>687</sup> and in 1988 90% of those answering supported the idea of the creation of an SOS telephone for women who suffered violence.<sup>688</sup>

The solidarity amongst women, however, was perceived differently when different questions were asked. This solidarity seemed to be less strong, since women were reluctant to say “mi, žene” [we, women / us, women]. Women answering in 1987 to the survey understood the statement as admitting to their imposed inferiority. However, as the answers above show, the same women would see no problem to organise, to group with other women for their rights. In the 1987 survey analysis, which as a genre is treated creatively and which therefore often shifts towards a political pamphlet, the authors emphasise that “[c]hange will only happen if solidarity is understood as a political category”. They see this as impeded by women’s lack of awareness of the fact that despite the differences in their economic or social background, they have shared interests. It was after this survey in 1987 where the women from SKC FGŽiD noticed that it was “women in fur coats”, that is women seemingly from a better economical background, who refused to answer to their questions. The report documents the shock and disappointment of the women in the feminist group, facing the class difference in a socialist state standing between women. These early reflections on the class aspect are worth mentioning in light of the later criticism from behalf of other activists as well as scholars about the new Yugoslav feminists for their lack of class sensitivity, coming from

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<sup>687</sup> “Solidarnost između žena” ŽINDOK D 66/1987

<sup>688</sup> “Žene protiv nasilja nad ženama” ŽINDOK D-41/1988

a middle class background and from families with a good standing within the establishment.<sup>689</sup>

The survey analysis in 1988 reflects on the burdens mandatory heterosexuality puts on women who are single, or live in a relationship with a man out of wedlock, or do not have children, as well as on lesbian women. As if society wanted to compensate these women for the violence married women experience in their marriage from the husbands, writes sarcastically Mladenović. Being an unmarried, especially lesbian unmarried women is a vulnerable position, threatening to be pushed to the margins of society. As one of the interviewees of the 1988 *Akciona Anketa* says, as she is “alone” (meaning not in a heterosexual relationship), even though she works for the factory for 27 years, unlike the married colleagues, she was only given a room in a barrack with unbearable and health-damaging conditions.<sup>690</sup> By this time in the FGŽiD, lesbian women and their problems gain more space and more word in the activities and statements. Based on the archival material, the interview situation cannot be reconstructed, however, it is in the analysis report that at least one woman talked to the interviewers about her sexuality and the difficulty of being lesbian: “nowhere can you even mention that you love a woman, and not a man. As if the whole society was heterosexual, as if there were not lesbians and gays all over the city.” The two examples quoted in the report highlight the fact that not all women were equal or were oppressed to the same extent in Yugoslavia, that there were differences stemming not only in sexuality, but also class.

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<sup>689</sup> Cf. Žarkov, *The Body of War*; Miškovska-Kajevska, *Taking a Stand in Times of Violent Societal Changes*.

<sup>690</sup> Lepa Mladenović, “‘Odlučile smo da izađemo iz čutanja.’ Žene protiv nasilja nad ženama” [We have decided not to be silent any longer. Women against violence against women], ŽINDOK D-40/1988

Another aspect to be emphasised is how the potential of organising has a clear political focus and a critical edge towards the state. In the 1987 survey about women's solidarity, women are asked what they think of the KDAŽ, the official women's organisation. Mladenović and Marković conclude from this: "the women asked do not experience the KDAŽ as an organisation which is protecting their interests and through which they can realise their rights, but rather as an institution which serves the system and as such contributes further to gender based discrimination."<sup>691</sup> As we have seen above and in the previous chapters, the role of the KDAŽ, was more ambiguous from the perspective of the new feminist groups in Yugoslavia, with a few attempts to cooperate with the feminists. However, by asking the question in the survey, the FGŽiD Belgrade clearly works towards the formation of an independent group, representing women's needs and standing up for women's rights. That women do not trust and are disappointed in the state institutions is further confirmed by the 1988 survey, where women admitted that in cases of violence they receive no help from either the police, or the family, or those passing by.<sup>692</sup> This also shows the tabooing of VaW in society and resonates to the feminist criticism of the ideas of the family.

The questionnaire in 1988 originally focused more on women's health, recognising the strong connection between women's health and violence against women. This version of the questionnaire was not used eventually, as they decided for a simpler one, focused directly on VaW. In the analysis prepared, Lepa Mladenović explains that in

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<sup>691</sup> Lepa Mladenović and Sladjana Marković, "Dok stojim za tezgom niko mi ništa ne može. Akciona anketa žena, na Kalenića pijaci" [Until I'm standing by the counter, no one can do anything to me. Action polling of women at Kalenić market], ŽINDOK D-66/1987

<sup>692</sup> Lepa Mladenović, "Odlučile smo da izađemo iz čutanja", ŽINDOK D-40/1988

the eyes of the institutions, health and violence are rarely related to each other, while these conceive women as “reacting to violence in a confused and irregular way”. While in fact, violence affects their health in forms of diseases such as depression and migraine, lack of sleep and eating disorders.<sup>693</sup> The violence and the silence around it, caused by the “patriarchal imperative” blaming women for being violated, adds to the damage violence does to women’s nervous system, writes Mladenović. The argumentation of this report from 1988 is supported by numerous quotes from radical feminists from the US, whose theoretical work is deeply rooted in and is in a constant exchange with women’s activism, such as Adrienne Rich, Susan Brownmiller, Andrea Dworkin. The strong moral statements against violence and patriarchy quoted from these authors connect the local Yugoslav feminists to the radical feminists in other countries and the transfer of a radical political language contributes to the sharpening of the Yugoslav discourse too, the Yugoslav feminists reaching a new level of activism, with clear political aims.

### **In Conclusion: Feminism, Human Rights and Democracy before the Wars**

“During the work on the SOS we realised that we were doing was political, not just humanitarian,” said Lepa Mladenović. From the creation of the forums and semi-institutions for the elimination of the violence against women, a new type of politics arises. As the FGŽiD Belgrade claims in an article in *Student*: “Violence is a political problem. The SOS telephone is women helping women, not an obtrusion of feminist

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<sup>693</sup> Lepa Mladenović, “‘Odlučile smo da izađemo iz čutanja.’ Žene protiv nasilja nad ženama” [We have decided not to be silent any longer. Women against violence against women], ŽINDOK D-40/1988



ideologies”.<sup>694</sup> This different approach to the public sphere and a new self-perception was supported by the changing political landscape in the whole of Eastern Europe around the fall of the Berlin wall, leading to new political organising in Yugoslavia too. This not only meant the strengthening of ethno-nationalism which had been infiltrating the public space for several years by then,<sup>695</sup> but also a more explicit feminist reflection on politics, and later the diversification of feminist groups, including the Women’s Party [ŽEST, Ženska stranka]. While the multiplication of the feminist groups is the moment when my story ends, the discourses preceding it still belong here. Through the discourse about VaW, the place of feminism is explicitly rethought in a human rights frame, and the interconnectedness of women’s political participation and the concept of democracy gets growing attention. Women who will take a lead in feminist activism and intellectual intervention against the spread of ethno-nationalism, such as Daša Duhaček and Vlasta Jalušić, but also Lepa Mladenović and Rada Iveković publish articles in the last years before the war which signal the beginnings of a new era. A new era where, as they envision it, women’s political participation and role in democracies is the focal point, and not anti-war activism, which they are forced to do eventually.

Politics and the political participation of women, in light of the emerging alternative political entities, make the question relevant again. Women’s political participation is not about the insider matters of the SKJ, neither in the not much trusted KDAŽ, but a change to influence the public sphere. This political sphere, even in 1989-

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<sup>694</sup> Feministička grupa “Žena i društvo” SKC Beograd, “Još jednom o SOS-telefonu. Nasilje je politički problem”, *Student*, 29<sup>th</sup> March 1989 (Presarijum SKC-a)

<sup>695</sup> Among others, cf. Bogdan Denitch, *Ethnic Nationalism. The Tragic Death of Yugoslavia* (Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) and also Popov, ed., *The Road to War in Serbia*; Ramet, *Balkan Babel*.

1990, still meant that of the state, however, there was a growing dissatisfaction with the emerging new political entities as well. Since the dissent of the new Yugoslav feminists had its focus on the political power, although engaging the state from the outside,<sup>696</sup> balancing between what Linda Briskin calls “mainstreaming” and “disengagement”,<sup>697</sup> the attention was slowly shifting towards the new groups and parties, as their significance was becoming more and more clear and present.

On the pages of the Sarajevo journal *Oslobođenje*, in an article about the Zagreb SOS helpline the authors still quote the promises of Vida Tomšič and Kata Pejnović, as well as the founding meeting of the KDAŽ (by the abolition of the AFŽ) and contrast the promises with the situation in 1988. The article emphasises both the unequal economic status of women, with its consequences as well as the prevailing values that make it acceptable. This information is accompanied with the results of the FGŽiD *Anketiranje* about violence against women. The framework the authors rely on is the SFRJ: “Feminists in Yugoslavia want nothing more and nothing less than what is guaranteed them in the Constitution”. The article also quotes a woman from the SOS-founder Trešnjevka group, Nihana Kadić: “Our goal is to achieve the end of the patriarchal system. Our goal is to stop empty political phrases of women’s situation, which have anyways been up to now reduced to women’s reproductive function.”<sup>698</sup> It is the knowledge the activists gain from the experience of women in Yugoslavia, shared on the SOS helpline, which sharpens their political statements, while it is the political environment that tolerates the statements published in the media.

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<sup>696</sup> Renwick, “Anti-Political or Just Anti-Communist?”, 288.

<sup>697</sup> Briskin, “Feminist Practice: A New Approach to Evaluating Feminist Strategy”, 24-40.

<sup>698</sup> Peranić – Hamulić, “Ko to lomi adamovo rebro”, (emphasis mine)

The growing dissatisfaction of women's status in Yugoslavia in trace of the anti-VaW work was accompanied with dissatisfaction with the way women were disregarded by the emerging political groups and parties. Feminist political organising was targeting both the patriarchal remnants in the SFRJ and the new conservatism and the ethno-nationalism of the new forces. That politics without women is problematic, that is, that a "democracy without women is not a democracy", as the slogan from 1993 says,<sup>699</sup> is one of the prevailing messages around the emerging times of the new elections.<sup>700</sup> In Slovenia, a volume with texts by the most important feminists and the foreword of Žarana Papić investigates the place of women in the emerging new democracies.<sup>701</sup> The FGŽiD tribina on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1990 asked the question: "are we really just mothers and wives?",<sup>702</sup> which was answered by many of the powerful members of the *Žena i društvo* group, reflecting on the position and role of women in the new society. The group's aim at the time was to enhance women's significance as a target group of politics, so the events in 1990 also include a discussion with representatives of political parties, organised by the newly founded *Ženski LOBI* (Women's lobby), an organisation grown out of the *Žena i*

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<sup>699</sup> Ženski Parlament, "To the Serbian Parliament", Belgrade, September 1992. *Žene za žene. Vanredni bilten SOS-a* [Women for women. Special issue of the SOS bulletin]. No. 5. November 1993. 90-91.

<sup>700</sup> Cf. Jim Seroka and Vukašin Pavlović, ed.s., *The Tragedy of Yugoslavia: The Failure of Democratic Transformation* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, c1992); Ramet, *Balkan Babel*; also Popov, ed. *The Road to War in Serbia*.

<sup>701</sup> Anuška Ferligoj, Tanja Renner and Mirjana Ule, eds., *Ženska, zasebno, politično ali "ne vem, sem neodločena"* [Women's, private, political, but "I don't know, I'm undecided] (Ljubljana: Znanstveno in publicistično središče, 1990).

<sup>702</sup> "Paket novih mera za žene: da li smo samo supruge i majke?" [The package of the criteria for women: are we really only wives and mothers?]. Speakers: Neda Božinović, Stanislava Zajović, Vesna Pešić, Sonja Liht, Sofija Trivunac, Nataša Aćimović i Maja Korać, 6<sup>th</sup> June 1990. Cf. Vukadinović, "Hronologija", 49-60.

*društvo* group, with another question: “Who are women going to vote for?”.<sup>703</sup> The *Ženski LOBI* was already active about the Yugoslav legislative processes, especially about the laws on family planning and population policy, that is, the planned laws restricting abortion.<sup>704</sup> Which will be a more burning problem a few years later and mobilises women all over Croatia, Serbia, but especially in Slovenia.<sup>705</sup>

In 1990, there already is a growing number of articles by the feminists from the *Žena i društvo* group and the new groups growing out of it protesting and criticising the ethno-nationalist discourse, which clearly shows a new, and as we know by now, much bigger threat not only to women’s emancipation, but to the general safety of all citizens in the member states of Yugoslavia. This theme belongs to this dissertation and this chapter only inasmuch as it tackles already in 1990 the way women’s political participation. Vesna Pešić, a member of the Belgrade opposition in the 1970s, founder of the Helsinki Committee in Serbia and UJDI in 1989, as well as *Ženski LOBI*, targets the new patriarchalism of the nationalist political parties and politicians, and refutes the spreading conservative arguments about the voting habits of women. As the accusation goes, women are less reliable voters, who anyways vote according to the will of their

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<sup>703</sup> Beogradski ženski lobi, “Pitanje strankama: da li ce žene glasati za vas?” [A question to the parties: are women going to vote for you?], Speakers: Nebojša Popov and Svetlana Slapšak (UJDI), Milosav Jovanović (RSJ), Gordana Marjanović and Tomislav Kresović (NDM), Milan Nikolić and Sonja Liht (SDS - J) and the representatives of the Demokratski forum, Demokratska stranka and the Stranka Jugoslovena, 1st November 1990. Cf. Vukadinović, “Hronologija”, 49-60.

<sup>704</sup> “Sastanak Beogradskog ženskog lobija povodom peticija Skupštini SR Srbije i Društvenom savetu za planiranje porodice” [A meeting of the Women’s Lobby in Belgrade on occasion of the petition to the Parliament of the Socialist Republic Serbia and the Social committee for family planning], 13<sup>th</sup> June 1990.

“Beogradski ženski lobi – usvajanje peticije povodom Zakona o braku i porodici i Rezolucije o populacionoj politici” [Women’s Lobby Belgrade – petition on occasion of the Law about marriage and family and the Resolution about population politics], 21<sup>st</sup> June 1990.

<sup>705</sup> Cf. Eva Bahovec, ed. *Abortus - pravica do izbire?! Pravni, medicinski, sociološki, moralni in politični vidiki* [Abortion – the right to choice?! Legal, medical, sociological, moral and political aspects] (Ljubljana: Skupina "Ženske za politiko", 1991).

husbands.<sup>706</sup> The struggle against nationalism continues and becomes one of the main themes of feminism in Croatian, Slovenia and Serbia after 1991.<sup>707</sup>

The ethnic aspect of Yugoslav politics is slowly addressed by the new Yugoslav feminists too. They are late-comers with the introduction of the issue of Kosovo on their agenda, but the attempts are there. As the Yugoslav feminist conferences in 1987, 1988, 1990 and 1991 show, the women in the *Žena i društvo* group had a plan to involve more and more women from all the other member republics. If they had failed without the wars as well, we will never know. However, as a sign of their interest, in 1988 they invited a scholar from Berkeley, Janet Reineck to give a talk at the *Žena i društvo tribina* session about her research on women in Kosovo.<sup>708</sup> In the meantime, as the principles of the SOS helpline also claim, violence against women happens irrespective of one's ethnicity, race or class, which also calls out for the same solidarity to all women who need help. This solidarity is more clearly spelled out in the *Oslobođenje*-article about the helplines, when the women volunteering on the Zagreb helpline call out for the rights of women in Kosovo "to claim control their own bodies." Furthermore, connecting to the growing

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<sup>706</sup> Vesna Pešić, "Kako muž kaže" *Omladinske novine*, 14<sup>th</sup> November 1990. (Presarijum SKC)

also, In relation to the offers of the new parties, Ivana Balen, *Nove omladinske novine*, 1<sup>st</sup> April 1990. nemtalálom

<sup>707</sup> Cf. Vesna Teršelić, "Širanje našeg civilnog prostora: žene u mirovnim inicijativama" / "Expanding Our Civil Space: Women in Peace Initiatives", English trans. Renée Franić, in *Žene i politika mira. Prilozi ženskoj kulturi otpora/ Women and the Politics of Peace. Contributions to a Culture of Women's Resistance*, ed. Rada Borić – Željka Jelavić – Biljana Kašić, 19-24 (Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije, Zagreb, 1997); Vesna Kesić, "Muslim Women, Croatian Women, Serbian Women, Albanian Women," in *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalization and Fragmentation*, ed. Dušan I. Bjelić and Obrad Savić, 311-321 (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002); Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, ed., *Women, Violence and War: Wartime Victimization of Refugees in the Balkans*, trans. Borislav Radović (Budapest: CEU Press, 2000); Vesna Kesić, Vesna Janković and Biljana Bijelić, eds., *Women Recollecting Memories: The Center for Women War Victims Ten Years Later* (Zagreb: Center for Women War Victims, 2003).

About the situation in Bosnia and Hercegovina, cf. Helms, *Innocence and Victimhood*.

<sup>708</sup> Cf. Janet Reineck, *The Past as Refuge. Gender, Migration, and Ideology among the Kosova Albanians*. PhD Dissertation. Berkeley, California: UC Berkeley, 1991.

ethnicisation of rape, they emphasise again that rape is primarily a form of VaW, which returns later in the anti-nationalist feminist discourse after 1991.<sup>709</sup> The article also gives voice to a group of women representing Albanian women in Kosovo, who call the attention to the oppression of women in Kosovo, also taking shape in their lack of control of their contraceptive rights.<sup>710</sup>

Another promising event of the late 1980s and the shift of new Yugoslav feminism towards party or high level politics is the welcoming of feminism by other scholars on the spectrum of the new political movements. New political movements mean potentially new politics. There were a few articles on and by the new Yugoslav feminists pointing towards the new social movements approach to feminism in the late 1980s.<sup>711</sup> The 1990 issue of the Novi Sad based journal *Polja* publishes a special issue with the title “New political movements. Woman as a political being”. The two parts of the title refer to two different, yet interrelated themes. The issue includes an essay about the new political culture by Milan Podunavac, relying on political science approaches such as Almond and Verba’s *Civic Culture*, already a novelty in state socialist politics, a few more texts about politics and political culture in general, and a text on the ecological

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<sup>709</sup> According to the categorisation of Miškovska-Kajevska, there were two major groups of feminists both in Croatia and Serbia after 1991: anti-nationalist and patriotic feminists. Miškovska-Kajevska, *Taking a Stand in Times of Violent Societal Changes*. About the ideological position of the anti-nationalist feminists, cf. my forthcoming article: Zsófia Lóránd, “Feminist criticism of the ‘new democracies’ in Serbia and Croatia in the first half of the 1990s”, *Political Thought in Eastern Europe after 1989*, ed. Michal Kopeček and Piotr Wcislik (Budapest: CEU Press, 2014).

<sup>710</sup> Peranić – Merima Hamulić, “Ko to lomi adamovo rebro”

<sup>711</sup> Ljubiša Despotović, “Novi društveni pokreti” [New social movements], *Polja*, vol. 34. no. 333. (1988): 477.

Vlasta Jalušić, “Žene, politika, revolucija” [Woman, politics, revolution], *Književne novine*, no. 779-780. (1-15 July 1989).

Rada Iveković, “Feminizam i emancipacija” [Feminism and emancipation], *Književna reč*, July 1989.

movements. The feminist movement is introduced and analysed after this, by another young political scientist, Vukašin Pavlović, who relies on the work of Papić, Iveković, Jalušić, Drakulić and Despot, as well as German feminist scholarship represented by Ute Gerhard and Frigga Haug. The special issue has several articles by Allison Jaggar and one by Ann Oakley, signalling a new era of radical feminism reaching Yugoslavia, as well as a time when academics who are not coming from the *Žena i društvo* group take the Yugoslav feminists seriously.<sup>712</sup>

Another comprehensive, large last gesture to the developments of new Yugoslav feminism, signalling the potential of a new era, is a selection of texts by Daša Duhaček in the journal *Gledišta*. In her introduction, Duhaček offers an overview of the state of the

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<sup>712</sup> “Novi politički pokreti. Žena kao političko biće” [New political movements. Woman as a political being], *Polja*, vol. 36. no. 375-376. (May-June 1990).

Milan Podunavac, “Politička kultura i “nova politika”, [Political culture and a new politics], 181-183.

Ljubiša Despotović, “Pokreti ka politici” [Movement towards politics], 184.

Radivoj Stepanov, “Zakoni i novi društveni pokreti” [Laws and new social movements], 185.

Ivan Cifrić, “Subjekti ekološkog angažmana” [Subjects of ecological engagement], 186-188.

Vukašin Pavlović, “Uspon i iskušenja neo-feminizma [The upsurge and the temptation of neofeminism], 189-191.

En Okli (Ann Oakley), “Politika u muškom svetu” [Politics in a man’s world], trans. Slobodan Cicmil, 192-197.

Blaženka Despot, “Znanje i moć” [Knowledge and power], 198-199.

Valentina Krtinić, “Novi socijalni pokreti” [New social movements], 200.

Alison M. Džagar (Alison M. Jaggar), “Feminizam kao politička filozofija], trans. V. Krtinić, 201-202.

Alison M. Džagar, “Predlozi liberalnog feminizma za promenu društva], trans. Vesna Knežević, 203-206.

Marina Arsenović-Pavlović, “Feminizacija vaspitano-obrazovanog sistema (socijalistički mit o demokratičnosti obrazovanja)” [The feminisation of the educational system (a socialist myth about the democratisation of education)], 207-210.

Alena Hajtlinger (Heitlinger), “Pronatalističke politike stanovništva], trans. Slobodan Cicmil, 211-213.

Viktorija Vukičević, “Kineskinja između tradicije i savremenosti” [Chinese women between tradition and contemporariness], 214-217.

Alison Džagar, “Problemi u radikalnoj feminističkoj politici], trans. V. Krtinić, 218-219.

art of feminism in the era at the time. She acknowledges her predecessors and colleagues Nada Popović-Perišić, Blaženka Despot, Rada Iveković and Žarana Papić, among others, and adopts Julia Kristeva's periodisation of feminism and pays a lot of attention to a new stream of feminism, the socialist feminism influenced by radical feminism, as it is represented by Allison Jaggar. Duhaček provides a systematic overview of the current state of feminist ideas with the aim of "defining feminism for showing the richness of feminist approaches", but also, in the footsteps of the ideas of Jaggar, to explicitly define feminism as politics.<sup>713</sup> Besides or after the liberal, Marxist and radical streams of feminism, there is a new, socialist feminism or new Marxist feminism, which is to a large extent influenced by the criticism of power, focus on sexuality and identity of radical feminism, but which is "sensitive to the differences between women themselves". (4-5) It is clear that for Duhaček, this a stream to follow. She also directly criticises the "authoritative ideology of socialism", which in fact, through the formal equality of women, only worked towards "women's marginalisation." (8) This official ideology even supported the patriarchal value system forced upon people by the church, in Yugoslavia these being Catholicism, Islam and the Pravoslav church. These two institutions, the party and the church(es), sustained the patriarchal oppression as an everyday experience for women in Yugoslavia in the past decades, claims Duhaček.

By 1990-91 the stakes of the feminist discussions shifted from the focus on women's emancipation, its (im)possibility to happen through the focus on the class question, and the problems with the division of labour between men and women to the

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<sup>713</sup> Daša Duhaček, "Feministička gledišta i gledišta o feminizmu" [Feminist viewpoints and viewpoints about feminism], *Gledišta*, No. 1-2. (1990): 3-8. 4. In 1988, the issue of *Pogledi* also rethinks what is to be done about feminism, outlining a new movement. *Problemi. Eseji* no. 3 (1988).



issue of violence against women and women's political participation. These topics lead to conceptual reconsiderations as well as interventions with state institutions in socialist Yugoslavia, but they also forecast the issues raised by feminism in the multi-party systems in the new states and the issues the new countries face during the war. After the break-up of Yugoslavia, the feminists will have to deal with war violence against women and an ethno-nationalist conservative discourse on the role of women in society, with emphasis on their reproductive rights. The post-1991 feminist agenda largely relies on the agenda from the late 1980s, uses its concepts and builds itself from its organisational forms. The national question, defining politics and policies for many years to come, also has some traces in the feminists' discourse and activism in the late 1980s: not only the talks about women in Kosovo, but also by the organisation of the Yugoslav feminist conferences and the closing of the ties during the foundation of the SOS helplines, which forecast the strong anti-nationalist and anti-war positions of many feminists during the wars.

## Conclusion

Vera Litričin: *“That this was a pionirski rad, I only realised later, when the wars broke out.”*

Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović: *“Despite the hard times in the 1990s, we had a decade before that. So, at least we didn’t start from scratch in the 2000s. We had already the shelters, the SOS, the legal knowledge. We knew what was needed to help women.”*

Thinking of the history of feminism in the past two decades, Christine Stansell decides to call it “a feminist promise.” As she explains: “Few feminists sign in for life. [...] I anticipated a quick exit, because the cause seemed so indisputably just and the remedies so obvious. [...] We were after the business of being fully human. And in the late 1960s, achieving full humanity seemed like the most natural thing in the world.”<sup>714</sup> Stansell faced what “my” new Yugoslav feminists also had to face: that the feminist project is never done, though small successes can be achieved. The new Yugoslav feminists reflected on the promise of the partisan movement and the emancipation program of Yugoslav socialism, criticised the state for its betrayal of its promise and hoped to make real change. The greatest change they did achieve was the creation of a new feminist language, an intervention into the existing discourse on women and women’s rights, thus providing not only a vocabulary, but also new organisation ways, forms of collectivities, even parallel institutions for the years that came after the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991.

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<sup>714</sup> Stansell, *The Feminist Promise*, 395.

As we have seen, there is an arch of the developments of new Yugoslav feminism, marked by different interpretations of concepts and thus constantly contributing new meanings to the ideological setup of feminism. The first steps, explored in Chapter 1, were taken in the academia. The closed circles and small audience enabled a few academic women and men to start thinking about the developments of new feminism in the US and Western Europe and search for its relevance in Yugoslavia. As I emphasise at several points of this dissertation, the narrative of the partisan movement and women's important role in the independence of socialist Yugoslavia was convincing, and therefore the new feminists were trying to reconcile feminist ideas with the existing ideology, while also using them to express dissent. Gordana Cerjan-Letica, Lydia Sklevický and Rada Iveković published articles about the currents of feminism in France, Italy and the US, presenting them with a focus on their relevance for Yugoslavia.

The investigations into the possibilities of feminism in Yugoslavia, exploring the radical, liberal, and revolutionary versions emerging elsewhere, were supported with the rethinking of concepts such as work, family and patriarchy, and with the introduction of a new terminology for gender and sexism. The KPJ's discourse on women's emancipation was dominated by the prevalence of the class question and the general human emancipation, *općeljudske emancipacije*. This makes the focus on gender [*rod*], until 1990 used alternately and as an equal to the social aspects of one's sex [*(s)pol*], one of the key concepts in the dissenting discourse of the feminists. Their allies in the debate with the state are critical Marxist thinkers, especially the Frankfurt School, despite their shortcomings concerning women, for example their essentialism, which the new Yugoslav feminists critically assess. Their other ideological allies are left-wing feminists

in the Anglo-Saxon world and the Marxist roots in the work of such French post-structuralist feminists as Luce Irigaray, which are emphatically spelled out in the Yugoslav readings too.

French theory is just as important in the fields of arts and literature, as we have seen in Chapter 2. Arts and literature offer a space for a parallel discussion with the “women’s question” being replaced by the concept of feminism: replacing the concept of “women’s literature” with *žensko pismo*, the local variant of the French *écriture féminine*. The theoreticians, curators and artists and writers together contribute to a changing landscape of the Yugoslav art scene, which the visual artist Sanja Iveković criticises for its formalism and patriarchalism in her 1975 “*Women in Art – žene u jugoslavenskoj umjetnosti* [Women in Yugoslav Art]. The refusal of patriarchy is framed in the work of both Rada and Sanja Iveković, the fiction of Slavenka Drakulić, Judita Šalgo, Irena Vrkljan, combined with a new frame for thinking of the female body and sexuality. Women’s creativity and women’s writing are not simply subjects of theory here, as Drakulić, but also Dubravka Ugrešić and Sanja Iveković extensively reflect on it. The appearance of strong women artists and writers, from the by now very famous Marina Abramović, who refuses to be called a feminist, to the feminist activist, curator, artist and theoretician Marina Gržinić, happened with the emergence of new feminism in Yugoslavia, despite the claim that women’s equality was ensured and that there was no need for a separate agenda for women in art. The order of events proves the opposite and the work of these women shows that there was a need for new discussions of women’s creativity, women’s body and motherhood.

Popular mass media, the theme of Chapter 3, presents many of the ideas of the intellectuals and artists whose work I analyse in the previous chapters. Women's magazines, a political bi-weekly which also functions as a men's magazine, *Start*, and TV shows present the issues on the agenda of new Yugoslav feminism. These mediums show not only colourful examples of publishing and censorship practices in Yugoslavia, but offer space for a more explicit language about sexuality and violence. High circulation numbers and audience rates mean access to more people and the wider audience requires the "tuning down" of the use of the terms 'feminism' and 'feminist'. The ideas and many of the concepts are there in these publications, but due to the prejudice against feminism, the authors are careful with their uses. The fact that despite relative independence (due to the high circulation numbers, the magazines could finance themselves from advertisements and subscriptions), self-censorship appears is a symptom not only of the pressure from the state, much rather of the conservatism of the audience. This is telling about the ways the proclaimed equality of women and men did (not) reach the population and did not considerably change the patriarchal attitudes to women.

Sexuality and violence are the central themes of the reorganised feminist groups, as we have seen in Chapter 4. Supported by the lesbian members of the group and joining the international women's networks against VaW and for women's health, the women in the *Žena i društvo* groups acquire new knowledge, which influences not only the feminist language but the forums too. The women-only groups offer a safe space for the discussions of intimate issues, which then in the spirit of "the personal is political", influenced the feminist political agenda as well. Activism reaches the streets with a polling project of the SKC Belgrade, and the feminist approach to supporting women and

child victims of domestic and partnership violence get to the wider population of Yugoslavia through the SOS helplines in Zagreb, Ljubljana and Belgrade, and the first shelter in Zagreb. Thematising the lack of protection of women and children from violence in the homes and the violence and injustice women face in the health care system, one of the symbols of modernised self-managing socialism, is already a direct criticism of the failures of the equality project of the state. The results of this criticism and the negotiations we will never know, because the framework of self-managing socialist Yugoslavia fell apart in 1991. However, the vocabulary created in the past two decades and sharpened in the second half in the 1980s proved to be useful both for the war times and hypothetically would have changed the landscape of pluralist democracies too.

Looking at these two decades of history of new Yugoslav feminism, there is a growing radicalisation in their dissenting position towards a weakening state. Through the introduction of a new language, the shortcomings and failures not only of the new feminist discourse, but institutions and policies were crystallised. The inspiration, interestingly enough, came from the “Western second wave”, but the firm basis to this position was provided by the peculiar tradition of the partisan movement in Yugoslavia, involving hundreds of thousands of women.<sup>715</sup> This tradition was a source of strength in

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<sup>715</sup> According to data based on the *Leksikon Narodnooslobodilački rat i revolucija u Jugoslaviji 1941-45* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1980) quoted by Barbara Jancar, out of the 800.000 partisans fighting in the NOV (People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia – Narodno-oslobodilačka vojska i partizanski odredi Jugoslavije), 100.000 were women. Those involved in the AFŽ counted around 2.000.000. Out of these, 600.000 were carried off to concentration camps (German, Italian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Ustaše), where around 282.000 of them died. In the course of fighting, 2.000 women reached an officer's rank and many of them were elected members of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia. After the war, 91 women were accorded the honour of National Hero. Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia 1941-45*, 205.

the belief of the next generation of young women that they were entitled to equality, as their mothers and grandmothers fought for it themselves. When the question is asked why and how the presence of a strong and coherent form of feminism was possible in Yugoslavia during socialism, the answer in my interpretation lies in this tradition, in the often mentioned, almost commonplace yet real openness (easy of travel and access to knowledge differing from the state ideology) of Yugoslav socialism and in contingency: the women who got to know each other, the way friendships were forged, the decisions the group members made.

The presence of a feminist dissenting discourse in a socialist regime in Eastern Europe helped me realise the post-feminist attitudes of socialism: feminism was not refused in the name of conservatism or traditionalism, but in the name of progress. In Eastern Europe, in this case, in Yugoslavia, we have emancipation policy without feminism, which still bears a lot in common with the demands of feminism in the “West” emerging in the 1960s. A further point to think about more would be how the “separate waves” of feminism in the West, which, as Nancy Hewitt puts it, delete decades of feminist activism, coincide with the emancipatory politics of East European socialisms. While I think that “emancipation from above” lacked those crucial elements, so well pointed out by the Yugoslav feminists, which might have led to real equality and emancipation, I also agree with recent research claiming that the proto-feminist endeavours should indeed be acknowledged<sup>716</sup> – yet again, as it is done by the Yugoslav feminists.

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<sup>716</sup> de Haan, ed., *Aspasia*, Thematic part: “Gendering the Cold War”; Bonfiglioli, *Revolutionary Networks*; Popa, “Translating Equality between Woman and Men across Cold War Divides”.

The limits of my research are partly the limits of the material in focus. The *Žena i društvo* groups were centred in the big cities of the three most developed republics of the SFRY, their members were middle class intellectual women, and the homogeneity of the group unavoidably led to a sociability problem. Again, as I show at the end of Chapter 4, this could have slowly changed had the wars not come, but it remains a question if the developments of a pluralist capitalist liberal democracy would have supported class and ethnic diversification of feminism. However, what we know is that the new feminist knowledge did not reach the vast majority of women. For example, Elissa Helms concludes that the women's rights activists in Bosnia-Herzegovina were almost totally unaware of the work of the *Žena i društvo* groups.<sup>717</sup>

Besides the issues the groups themselves do not thematise, I miss out on a few topics which, though would be interesting, were only marginally addressed. For example, religion, which is there only in a few articles with a feminist orientation,<sup>718</sup> and the way feminists discuss fascism<sup>719</sup> are two themes that are important predecessors of the burning issues of the 1990s. It would be interesting to broaden this research with the search for traces of feminist dissent in other countries in Eastern Europe, for example Russia, or the little feminist group in Szeged, Hungary in the late 1980s. Based on the claims of the new Yugoslav feminists, a re-examination of the presence, but mostly absence of the situation of women as a group in the discourse of the dissidents in Central and Eastern Europe is something I would like to do one day.

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<sup>717</sup> Helms, *Innocence and Victimhood*, 51, 65.

<sup>718</sup> Maca Jogan, "Rastakanje partijarhalnih razumljivosti u feminističkoj teologiji" [The erosion of the patriarchal intelligibilities in feminist theology], *Žena* vol. 46. no. 1-2 (1988): 90-95.

<sup>719</sup> There is an abundance of references to fascism in the feminist texts, mostly in the writings of Rada Iveković and Nada Ler-Sofronić.



Of the issues and themes explored in this dissertation, but which limited by the scope and the proportions in the length of the subchapters, I see potential in further work on the conceptual analysis of the discussion of work as a concept, mostly cross-reading the work of Blaženka Despot and Anđelka Milić; the ways the feminist approach motherhood develops, for example in the work of Drakulić, Rada Iveković and others; the ways motherhood as a concept intersects with the research on work; based again on the work of Rada Iveković, the relations between feminism in the other non-aligned countries, the countries in the “Third World” which are not members of the NAM and Yugoslavia, as an early phase of a globalising feminism and a parallel story to the institutional narratives of the state of Yugoslavia and the UN. Last but not least, another conceptual analysis should be done, where the conceptualisation of violence is compared in the discourse of “official” socialism, feminism and the other dissenting discourses: this research would gain a lot from a regional comparison, pointing out the differences and similarities between Yugoslavia and other state socialisms in Eastern Europe, with and without a feminist input.

My exploration would like to contribute to the diversification of the history of feminism, through a story of new feminist dissent in Yugoslavia, with all the details from the attempts to intervene with existing socialism from the direction of critical Marxism through a fascinating variety of work of women artists to anti-violence activism. A story taking place in a country at the time of the Cold War, which is neither “East”, nor “West”, of a feminism which is not the socialist state solving the “women’s question”, not the “Western second wave” and not the postcolonial women’s movement of the “Third World”, hopefully contributes to the reconsideration of categories we think in

about post-WWII history. Also, as much as the categories of “normal” (“Western”, “first world”) and “exotic” or “other” (“Eastern”, “Communist”, “Third World”) should be rethought, so should the perception of Yugoslavia as the ultimate exception in the history of post-WWII East European be treated with some reservation. While the coherent and organised feminism emerging in Yugoslavia is indeed exceptional in the region, much of the intellectual input it relies on is part of a shared regional context and most of the criticism this new feminism frames against the state could be addressed to any other post-WWII socialism in Eastern Europe and dispels many of the myths about the East–West divide. Thus, a history of a feminist group from one country in the region interferes with our understanding of the history of feminism and the history of women’s emancipation in the region and beyond.

## List of Abbreviations

AFŽ – *Antifašistički front žena* / Anti-Fascist Front of Women

KDAŽ – *Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena* / Conference for the Social Activity of Women

NOB – *Narodna oslobodilačka borba* / People's Liberation Struggle  
SC – *Studentski Centar* / Students' Centre

SFRY (SFRJ) – *Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija* / Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

SKC – *Studentski Kulturni Centar* / Students' Cultural Centre

SKJ – *Savez komunista Jugoslavije* / League of Communists of Yugoslavia

ŠKUC – *Študentski kulturno-umetniški center* / Students' Cultural and Art Centre

SRH– *Socijalistička Republika Hrvatska* / Socialist Republic of Croatia

SSRNJ – *Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Jugoslavije* / Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia

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D-66/1987 Lepa Mladenović and Sladjana Marković, "Dok stojim za tezgom niko mi ništa ne može. Akciona anketa žena, na Kalenić pijaci" [Until I'm standing by the counter, no one can do anything to me. Action polling of women at Kalenić market]

D-40/1988 Lepa Mladenović, "'Odlučile smo da izađemo iz ćutanja.' Žene protiv nasilja nad ženama" [We have decided not to be silent any longer. Women against violence against women]

D-41/1988 "Žene protiv nasilja nad ženama"

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