FROM NONCONFORMIST LIFESTYLE TO FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS: READING SUNČANA ŠKRINJARIĆ AND DIVNA ZEČEVIĆ IN THE CONTEXT OF YUGOSLAV SECOND-WAVE FEMINISM

By
Natalija Stepanović

Submitted to
Central European University
Department of Gender Studies

In partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Arts in Critical Gender Studies.

Supervisor: Professor Jasmina Lukić
Second Reader: Professor Susan Zimmermann

Vienna, Austria
2021

Abstract

This thesis traces the ways in which two Yugoslav writers, Sunčana Škrinjarić and Divna Zečević engaged with recognizably feminist issues such as marginalization of female intellectuals, embodiment and sexuality, as well as inequality in the public and domestic sphere. I argue that, while their early works primarily display affection toward unconventional lives and persons, Škrinjarić and Zečević eventually articulated feminist stances and produced a number of women-centered texts, including two lengthy life narratives. As they did so before these issues and plots entered wider circulation with the emergence of second-wave feminism in Yugoslavia, their works are omitted from recent scholarship. With the aim of putting them in dialogue with feminist literary studies (Jasmina Lukić and Andrea Zlatar) and historiography (Chiara Bonfiglioli and Zsófia Lóránd), I argue that the authors introduced a novel literary persona, "the feminist intellectual".

The first section examines women's scholarly pursuits by associating them with Antonio Gramsci's articulation of the organic intellectual who, unlike the traditional intellectual, emerged from the working class to act as its representative. As Gramsci insists that organic intellectuals are produced through education, as well as immersed in daily life, his theory is useful in analyzing women's intellectual work, frequently done in between errands, and in countering claims of their innate mental inferiority. Moreover, it is applicable to socialist Yugoslavia as the state had to re-establish its intelligentsia. The following section examines the stratification of Yugoslav intellectuals, and depicts critical discourse used to challenge its exclusionary tendencies: second-wave feminism. By relying on narratology as well as recognizing links between literary motifs and wider cultural context, analytical chapters of the thesis examine the ways in which Škrinjarić and Zečević used (auto)biographical genres to depict failed gender performance, a topic that, as I show by using feminist and queer theory, has subversive potential. Also writing about melancholia, undisciplined bodies and, unconventional (hetero)sexuality, these writers challenged normative constriction of a proper Yugoslav woman, primarily present as the figure of the working mother. Finally, I connect Škrinjarić's and Zečević's texts with elaborations of the publishing projects closely related with (Yugoslav) second-wave

feminism: the poetic of “women’s writing” that, as understood by literary scholar Ingrid Šafranek, had stylistic as well as material components, and the idea of writing as a collective effort. By emphasizing the complexity and longevity of their efforts to portray women’s life trajectories, their own as well as those belonging to their contemporaries and feminist foremothers, Dragojla Jarnević, and Zofka Kveder, I argue that Sunčana Škrinjarić and Divna Zečević should be included in the history of Yugoslav women’s movement.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of original research; it contains no materials accepted for any other degree in any other institution and no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

I further declare that the following word count for this thesis are accurate:
Body of thesis (all chapters excluding notes, references, appendices, etc.): 27186 words
Entire manuscript: 29999 words

Signed Natalija Stepanović

Table of Contents

" … to work, even in poverty and obscurity, is worth while."

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

1. Introduction

This thesis supplements the history of Yugoslav women's literature with works and public engagements of two overlooked Croatian writers: Sunčana Škrinjarić and Divna Zečević. Working at the same time as more widely acknowledged literates associated with the local second-wave feminism, notably Slavenka Drakulić, Dubravka Ugrešić, and Irena Vrkljan, Škrinjarić and Zečević depict attempts to claim identities of an artist and an intellectual as well as various setbacks. I argue these authors, by negotiating with established modes of becoming, articulate a feminist point of view through comparison of male and female life trajectories as well as motifs such as femininity, physicality, and sexuality. While mostly remembered as a fairy tale writer (Škrinjarić) and an academic studying folklore (Zečević), these intellectuals, who have been participating in the literary life since the 1960s, left extensive oeuvres that should be (re)interpreted as a part of recent feminist inquiry into Yugoslav political as well as cultural history.

Solitary figures living on the outskirts of Zagreb, Škrinjarić and Zečević never joined feminist circles. Their contributions to the movement are limited: Škrinjarić's debut novel *Ulica predaka* [*The Street of Ancestors*] (1980) briefly sparked the interest of her contemporaries, and Zečević published a scholarly essay and a prose fragment in 1983 issue of literary journal *Republika* [*The Republic*] that introduced the topic of women's literature to the Croatian public (Lóránd 2018, 101). I see Škrinjarić and Zečević as important because their works illustrate the gradual development of feminist thought and aesthetics as well as continuity of feminism as a political movement, primarily visible through their research of 19th and early 20th-century women writers. As they depict formative experiences in two extensive autobiographical narratives, Škrinjarić in her coming of age trilogy and Zečević in her diary, and enter literary circles in-between recognizably revolutionary generation of antifascist fighters and the second-wave feminists, these writers obstruct neat periodization of Yugoslav women's movement. Mostly composed of stories on unruly women and their (failed) creative pursuits,

Škrinjarić's and Zečević's oeuvres, as, according to Sidonie Smith, female autobiographies often do, introduce "mess and clutter" (1993, 20) to normative tales of intellectual becoming. The fragments of their main life narratives, coming of age trilogy and diary, started appearing in print from the 1960s onward: Škrinjarić published a series of stories, while Zečević mostly wrote poetry and short prose. Later revealed as parts of extensive literary projects (i.e. their autobiographical works), I argue that these fragments showcase recognizably feminist attitudes and motives before such issues gained mainstream recognition through the intervention of the new wave of Yugoslav feminists. Equally invested in other forms of life writing,[1] such as letters, biographies, and confessional poetry, Škrinjarić and Zečević contributed to the articulation of "women's writing", the aesthetics that *followed* the renewed interest in women's identities and social standing.

Born in Zagreb in 1931, Škrinjarić, as literary scholar Irena Lukšić notes in the overview of her life and work,[2] gained recognition in the 1960s, primarily as a writer for children (Lukšić 2001, 119). In the 1960s and '70s, Škrinjarić also published a dozen of short stories in literary journals and daily papers, eventually gathering them in 1978 collection *Noć s vodenjakom* [*A Night with an Aquarian*]. Along with her 1980s texts, she republished them in the 1991 book *Jogging u nebo* [*Jogging into the Sky*]. While working at Radio Zagreb, Škrinjarić began writing radio plays. As she remarked in conversation with Lidija Dujić and Ludwig Bauer, an academic and a writer who coedited the book *Knjiga o Sunčani i Severu* [*The Book about Sunčana and Sever*] on her relationship with poet Josip Sever, Škrinjarić considered *The Street of Ancestors*, the first part of her Bildungsroman[3] trilogy, to be her best work (2011, 8). Subsequent parts, *Ispit zrelosti*

[1] As literary scholars Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson explain in *Reading Autobiography*, a book that summarizes a decade of coediting and co-writing as well as findings from the authors' monographies, "life writing" is a term they use for all confessional, fictional and historiographic texts taking "life as [their] subject" (2001, 3) while "life narratives" are generically diverse self-referential texts (ibid).

[2] Originally written as a foreword to the 1997 edition of Škrinjarić's selected prose, Lukšić's essay "Autobiografija u raznim licima" ["Autobiography from Various Narrative Points of View"] was republished in English in 2002.

[3] According to Smith and Watson, *Bildungsroman* is pseudo-autobiographical genre detailing the protagonist's maturation and integration into society governed by gender norms as well as class and racial distinctions (2001, 101-2). While Smith and Watson underline the fictional nature of the genre that doesn't align with Škrinjarić's trilogy as I believe that it is largely factual despite being narrated in the third person (as autobiographies occasionally are [2001, 4-5]), I have chosen to use the term due to its significance in feminist literary studies. In *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics*, Rita Felski argues that women writers *reworked*

[*The Matriculation Exam*] (2001), and *Bijele strijele* [*The White Arrows*] (2004), were partially published as short stories written in the first person, and, as her novelistic debut, rewritten in the third person. While narrated as the story of Tajana, an aspiring writer from an abusive bourgeoisie family struggling to adjust to the new regime, the depicted events, such as employment at Statistics Bureau and Radio Zagreb as well encounters with recognizable cultural personae, largely coincide with Škrinjarić's life. I think that Tajana is a character who functions as the author's double. The only major divergence, the fact that Škrinjarić gave birth to her daughter in 1954 while Tajana remained childless, challenges normative formational experiences of women's (auto)biographies.

The 2004 edition of Škrinjarić's selected works, that was, as it is visible from her letter to editor Ante Matijašević included at the very end, published in collaboration with the author, described the trilogy as autobiographical. Along with this categorization, Škrinjarić's professed proclivity toward using personal experiences as inspiration (Dujić and Bauer 2011, 8), makes me inclined to think of her coming of age novels as confessional. The trilogy exemplifies "personal storytelling" (Smith and Watson 2001, 14) that displays longevity and generic fluidity comparable with Divna Zečević's extensive diary as well as more prominent autobiographical series, Irena Vrkljan's novels *Svila, škare* [*The Silk, the Shears*] (1984), *Marina ili o biografiji* [*Marina or about Biography*] (1986) and *Dora, ove jeseni* [*Dora, this Fall*] (1991). However, as it was published (and, presumably, finished) in 2004, in post-socialist period, Škrinjarić's trilogy seemingly doesn't belong in this thesis focusing on Yugoslav literary history. I decided to include it for several reasons: it helps in establishing a parallel with Zečević's life narrative that details similar experiences while also illuminating gendered power dynamic of Yugoslav cultural space and, consequentially, underlining Škrinjarić's commitment to the feminist mindset that is either unacknowledged or denied in analyses of her work (Matijašević

Bildungsroman, 19th-century genre in which heroines are either forced into upholding oppressive social order or punished for their transgressions (1989, 123-5), into "narratives of female self-discovery" that don't revolve around "heterosexual romance plot" (ibid, 122). As for writing about oneself in the third person, I haven't encountered this mode in Yugoslav women's literature. However, Lyudmila Petrushevskaya, a Russian author who influenced Ugrešić's understanding of women's writing, switches between the first and the third person in her 2006 memoir *The Girl from the Metropol Hotel*: previously published as a short story "Young Berries", one of the most poignant episodes, description of narrowly escaped sexual assault as witnessed by someone else but clearly happening to the author, evokes Škrinjarić's ability to shift between observing her characters and channeling their perspectives.

2004; Lukšić 2001). Also, due to temporal distance to the events it depicts, Škrinjarić's autobiographical trilogy has a degree of frankness that wasn't present in her earlier prose: unlike the short stories eventually integrated into the narrative of Tajana that focus on intimate encounters and domestic plots, full version engages with the cultural politics of the 1950s and 1960s. Already present in her 1988 novel *Kazališna kavana* [*The Theatre Café*], the portrayal of bohemian circles in the 1950s Zagreb, *The Street of Ancestors*, *The Matriculation Exam*, and *The White Arrows*, along with being an engaging female formational narrative, describe negotiation with gender norms and embodiment of rapidly changing socialist femininity during a period frequently underrepresented in feminist historiography – Cold War era (Bonfiglioli 2014, 1).

Škrinjarić, who confided in Dujmić while giving her correspondence and a number of personal photos included in *The Book about Sunčana and Sever*, was convinced that no one will work on her oeuvre once she died (Dujić and Bauer 2010, 12). After her death in 2004, Škrinjarić is, in Croatian literary studies, well regarded as a writer for children, but, as proceedings from 2008 conference organized in Osijek, the only publication analyzing her works at length, demonstrate, her writing aimed at adults is rarely considered and framed as an example of established literary styles such as realism and postmodernism (Ivančić 2009; Ljubešić 2009). As she isn't mentioned in feminist overviews of Yugoslav feminist art (Lukić 1996; Lóránd 2018; Lóránd 2019), with the exception of Celia Hawkesworth's 2001 essay "Croatian Women Writers 1945-95" that includes all women writers publishing during socialism, Škrinjarić's "fluent, evocative style" (Hawkesworth 2001, 264) has yet to find its place in local literary history as well as regional feminist research.

Divna Zečević was born in Osijek in 1937. She moved to Zagreb to pursue a degree in English and Yugoslav languages and literatures and, eventually, earn a doctorate under the mentorship of Professor Ivo Frangeš. After a brief period of lecturing and working in the administration of the Museum of Serbs in Croatia, Zečević began to study oral literature and folk customs at the Institute for Folk Art. At first primarily interested in Croatian modernist poetry and reluctant toward entering the field, especially when the research required visiting remote villages, carrying hefty equipment, and managing transcripts, Zečević eventually became a prominent folklorist. According to her

colleagues Ljiljana Marks and Ivan Lozica who co-authored her obituary after she died in 2006, she permanently influenced the discipline by arguing that fictional motifs influence an individual's lived experience as well as that fiction-like narrating is a daily occurrence rather than a practice limited to literature (2006, 220).

Equally invested in her own daily routines and reflections, also interpolated with literature and lives of the others, namely diary of Croatian 19th century literate Dragojla Jarnjević, the first local professional woman writer (Zečević 1985, 63) whom she relentlessly studied, Zečević kept a diary from 1961 until her death. Along with personal experiences, critical essays, and project ideas, Zečević, as she remarked while seeking a publisher for her collected poems, also used her diary to write verses and prose passages (Kursar Pupavac 2008, 7) some of which were published in *Netremice* [*Intently*] (1976), *Pjesme i fragmenti* [*Poems and Fragments*] (1990) and *Autoportret s dušom* [*Self-portrait with the Soul*] (1997). Detailing usual occurrences, urban setting, and "sadness in [her] stomach and tiredness" (Zečević 2008, 48), *Intently* and *Poems and Fragments supplement* Zečević's life narrative as it is presented in her diary on which I will be focusing. Remembered as "living for her scholarly and literary work" (Marks and Lozica 2006, 221), since marrying in 1967 and giving birth to her daughter Marijeta a year later, Zečević attempted, often unsuccessfully, to divide her time and attention between the public and domestic sphere.

Literary critic Marija Ott Franolić, whose doctoral thesis turned book *Dnevnik ustremljen nedostižnom* [*A Diary of the Unattainable*] compares Zečević's diary with autobiographical narratives of intellectual or artistically inclined women struggling with social limitations and gender norms (2016, 15), compiled, transcribed, and edited the manuscript that was published in 2017 under the title *Život kao voda hlapi* [*Life Evaporates like Water*]. As with Škrinjarić, temporal distance (and in this case, different editor: segments Zečević submitted for publishing as far less revelatory than the extended, posthumously published version) allowed a lesser degree of (self)censorship. My thesis puts Ott Franolić's observations on the frank depiction of femininity, embodiment, motherhood, and intellectual work in Zečević's diary in dialogue with Škrinjarić's works as well as recent scholarship on Yugoslav women's movements. Spanning over several decades, Škrinjarić's and Zečević's generically diverse texts are

important in introducing the figure of the feminist intellectual, a learned woman attempting to claim her place in the public sphere while also struggling (and, occasionally, refusing) to embody femininity: as such, they represent an important novelty in Yugoslav literary and cultural history. The following sections analyze the writers' strikingly contemporary portrayals of sexual violence, creativity, and urban living and argue that they contribute to knowledge on the position of women in socialism as well as represent innovative literary topics.

2. Methodology

Because it is preoccupied with the lives of women as depicted in confessional writing, scholarly, and fictional genres, this thesis follows feminist inquiries into women's autobiographies that combine textual analysis with careful contextualization. According to Smith and Watson, the ways of narrating experiences through which the autobiographer claims a certain identity are culturally imposed and, as such, should be considered within their context (2001, 34). However, life writing isn't, emphasize the authors, mere reflection of events as they occurred (ibid, 10) – hence, textuality is as important as content. In order to elucidate both of these components of life writing, I have relied on feminist narratology while also trying to establish correlations between motives found in Škrinjarić and Zečević and recent feminist scholarship on Yugoslav socialism.

Along with established ways of interpreting women's life trajectories while having the influence of gender on possible plots and themes in mind, as elaborated by feminist scholars Domna Stanton and Consuelo Rivera-Fuentes, I have used narratological terminology to precisely describe the novelty that female formational stories introduced into entrenched patterns of Croatian, male-dominated literary canon. Throughout analytical sections, I aimed to connect stylistic traits and thematic tendencies found in Škrinjarić and Zečević with existing scholarship on Yugoslav women's writing: Jasmina Lukić's and Andrea Zlatar's essays as well as contributions by the subsequent generation of scholars, notably Zsófia Lóránd (who builds upon Lukić) and Marija Ott Franolić (who relies on Zlatar). Along with Lóránd, whose 2018 book *The Feminist Challenge to the Socialist State in Yugoslavia* traces the emergence of second-wave feminism in

Yugoslavia in its artistic and activist aspects, I have relied on works by feminist historian Chiara Bonfiglioli. Bonfiglioli's understanding of local feminist activism as a perpetually present critical current was especially important for inserting Škrinjarić and Zečević into the timeline of Yugoslav women's movement.

3. Intellectuals in Theory and Practice

3.1. "Permanent Persuaders"[4] or Construction of a Socialist Intellectual

In his overview of most important concepts in cultural studies, the book *Keywords*, leftist scholar Raymond Williams claims that the term "intelligence" was present since the middle ages with overwhelmingly positive connotations (2015, 121). That wasn't quite the case with "intellectual": the term that dates back to the 19th century was mostly used in a negative manner, especially when indicating a social group (ibid, 122). It had, notes Williams, "implications of coldness, abstraction and, significantly, ineffectiveness" (ibid.) that lasted well into the 20th century. The emergence of "intellectual" is usually connected with the Dreyfus affair (1894-98). In 1898, the celebrated proponent of naturalism Émile Zola defended army officer Alfred Dreyfus who was, with sparse evidence and a hefty dose of anti-Semitism, accused of collaborating with Germans and denounced as a traitor (Drake 2005, 8-13). Zola's famous article "J'Accuse...!" ["I Accuse . . .!"] in which he "launched a frontal attack on the machinations of the military establishment" (ibid, 15) polarized French learned men who rapidly responded and took stances in contested political issue by either propagating democratic values or defending the nation and its authority (ibid, 21-3). The term "intellectual" entered wider circulation during the affair (ibid, 22).

In Marxist theory and revolutionary organizing it inspired, the role of intellectuals underwent significant changes. According to British historian Peter Thomas, Marx and Engles, who have written about "the philosophers" when analyzing ideology and division of labor, never fully elaborated intelligentsia's role in overthrowing the bourgeoisie because their major works were published before the group gained cultural significance

[4] Gramsci 1992, 9

(2007, 68). Thomas contrasts their vagueness with Antonio Gramsci, whom he depicts as "the Marxist theorist … of the intellectuals" (ibid, 2007, 69). Perpetually preoccupied with this topic, Gramsci scrutinized paradoxical position of intellectuals in (capitalist) society: they can uphold existing stratification through ideological legitimization or contribute to critical discourses (and actions) that aim to dismantle class divisions (Jones 2006, 97).

Gramsci argues that each class produces "one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields" (1992, 5). Intellectuals, continues Gramsci, are neither unified nor independent and seeking common inner traits is a methodological error as belonging to this group is established through "the general complex of social relations" (ibid, 8). His most important interventions are demystifying intellectual labor by privileging education over the individual talent (Gramsci 1992, 37; Jones 2006, 88) as well as broadening the category of "the intellectual". Not only did Gramsci consider everyone working in organizations and in administration to be intellectuals (consequentially, he decreased the gap between *distinguished scholars* and *working masses* by reframing intellectuals as participants in the realm of production [Thomas 2007, 73]), he also argued that each activity has a cerebral component and, even more radically, that each person has a capacity for critical reflection (Gramsci 1992, 323). Before examining his famous claim that everybody is an intellectual, I will provide a brief history of Gramsci's writing about this contentious group.

While Gramsci's most famous contributions to critical theory are published in *The Prison Notebooks*, series of notes and essays which he wrote while imprisoned by Italian fascist regime between 1929 and 1935, [5] his detailed engagement with stratification and mission of intelligentsia dates back to the unfinished essay "Some Aspects of the Southern Question" (1926) in which he discusses Italian regional politics and proposes the alliance of peasants and workers as a way to counter totalitarian tendencies (Buttigieg 2011, 11). Within this alliance, intellectuals' involvement is not foregrounded, but several

[5] The first complete Italian edition was published in 1975. Excerpts in English appeared in 1971. Full English version wasn't published until 1992, despite the fact that a significant portion of Gramsci's oeuvre was in circulation and highly regarded among critical theorists.

remarks are important indicators of Gramsci's subsequent, detailed analyses of their role in world history (1992, 17-23). In the essay, Gramsci reiterates Marx and Engles' stance articulated in *The Communist Manifesto*: he states that the proletariat is the "protagonist of modern history" (1994, 334) whose task is steering peasants and intellectuals toward communism. However, the working class lacks the linguistic tools necessary for elaborating its mission – the intellectuals should strengthen the connection between proletarians and peasants by providing the needed articulation. While this scheme seems achievable, Gramsci, primarily writing about Italian context and divisions between industrial north and agricultural south, notes that existing intellectuals, even those who have experienced poverty, are uninterested in politics and unwilling to embrace communism (ibid, 387). This situation could, proposes Gramsci, be remedied through formation of the working-class intellectuals (ibid, 336). Due to being arrested before finishing the essay, it remained unclear who were apt candidates for such paramount role.

Gramsci extensively wrote about the intellectuals in *The Prison Notebooks*. In these texts he, according to Thomas, aimed to reclaim legitimacy denied to the working class as the reigning class, the bourgeoisie, has been deciding who qualifies as an intellectual (2007, 74). Its representatives, the traditional intellectuals enforced a narrow understanding of mental labor by projecting "their own image as that of intellectual *tout court*" (Gramsci 1992, 77). Conversely, Gramsci claims that

> all men are intellectuals, one could therefore say: but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals. When one distinguishes between intellectuals and non-intellectuals, one is referring in reality only to the immediate social function of the professional category of the intellectuals, that is, one has in mind the direction in which their specific professional activity is weighted, whether towards intellectual elaboration or towards muscular-nervous effort. This means that, although one can speak of intellectuals, one cannot speak of non-intellectuals, because non-intellectuals do not exist. (ibid, 9)

If that is so, why does it seem that only a few possess intellectual abilities? Gramsci argues that this illusion is maintained through selective education: the upper classes, already immersed in scholarly thought and subjected to physical discipline needed for

prolonged studying within their families, enter formal education with learned abilities that are perceived as talent (ibid, 37-42). As a result, processes through which "intellectuals of various levels are elaborated" (ibid, 10) seem like innate to the upper classes. Gramsci proposes that new strata of intellectuals can emerge from the working class: unlike individuals inclined toward socialist agendas (i.e. bourgeoisie intellectuals who join ranks with the proletarians in order to guide them), organic intellectuals are immersed into quotidian life of the working class while still able to articulate its historical task (ibid, 15-7; Jones 2006, 85). Discursive expertise is insufficient: Gramsci insists that the new intellectual has to be an active participant in "practical life … constructor, organizer, 'permanent persuader' and not just simple orator" (1992, 9).

As he argues that intellectuals are *produced* through education, Gramsci's account is useful in countering sexist claims about inborn male genius and its counterpart: biologically inferior female intellect. However, his wording is, from a contemporary perspective, somewhat perplexing: he clearly states that both genders should be educated together in publically funded institutions (ibid, 1992, 29), but mentions only men[6] in his much-quoted sentence about all of them being intellectuals. Curiously enough, the contemporary commentators such as Thomas and Jones haven't reflected on his awkwardly gendered phrasing: despite the fact that they are writing in the early 2000s, well after feminist challenge to exclusionary language, and even engaging with feminist applications of Gramsci's concepts (Jones 2006, 75-6), the authors paraphrase the sentence without trying to establish who is signified by the word "men". While the obvious answer seems to be that "men" means "people", the long history of excluding and delegitimizing female intellectuals should make contemporary critics cautious. I think that, within Gramsci's paradigm, both men and women can be organic intellectuals as education (combination of vocational training and abstract, "disinterested" learning previously open only to upper classes [1992, 27]), is the only way to claim that position, and Gramsci explicitly states that women should be educated following the same curriculum as men. Before transitioning to the Yugoslav context, I will briefly analyze shifts

[6] "Tutti gli uomini sono intellettuali, si potrebbe dire perciò; ma non tutti gli uomini hanno nella società la funzione di intellettuali" (Gramsci 2014, 16) in the original.

that occur when the category of gender in introduced to understanding of intellectuals and their political accountability.

3.2. "Women Who Think Through Their Situation"[7]

In her famous essay *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Virginia Woolf challenges the exclusion of women from European intellectual tradition. According to Woolf, patriarchal prejudices, as well as unequal division of care work, prevented female writers from entering the literary history: she envisions Shakespeare's sister whose talent was suppressed by the Edwardian gender norms (2015, 35-8), and depicts obstacles, primarily lack of independent income and private space (ibid, 61), that discouraged women from intellectual pursuits. Simone de Beauvoir, "the first modern writer to problematize the question of the relationship of gender to knowledge" (Evans 2009, 37), further articulated a woman's place in arts through the figure of "independent woman" as conceptualized in her seminal work, 1949 classic *The Second Sex*. The rhetorical question at the end of chapter "The Independent Women", the only one under subsection "Toward Liberation", sets the tone for de Beauvoir's understanding of a clever woman's predicament: she wonders "how could women ever have had genius when all possibility of accomplishing a work of genius – or just a work – was refused them" (de Beauvoir 2011, 924)? De Beauvoir argues that the right to vote and equal access to professions are needed for women to achieve their independence (ibid, 888). While slightly less optimistic than Woolf and her understanding of emancipatory potential of careerism, as visible from the claim that work under capitalism is alienating (de Beauvoir 2011, 888-9), she emphasizes economic foundation of emancipation.

The situation of women, as de Beauvoir sees it, isn't only structured through legislation and economy – in accordance with her existentialist disposition, she focuses on freedom and distinction between subject and object. Intellectual women, unlike many of their counterparts, know that they are subjects but norms of femininity and heterosexual romance push them toward renouncing subjecthood and *posing* as objects (ibid, 891).

[7] De Beauvoir 2010, 893

However, rejecting femininity, a time consuming-practice that renders women passive, would also mean to deny oneself as both men and women are "sexed human beings" (ibid, 891). This conundrum leads to an impossible choice between becoming a subject (denied to women because of their femininity) *or* becoming a woman (and failing to become a subject as such position is culturally inaccessible to women). Consequentially, an intellectual woman tries to do both, but her performance is *unsuccessful*: she improperly embodies gender, trying to seem "uninhibited, but stiffens instead. She senses this, and it irritates her: suddenly an unintended piercing spark of intelligence passes over her totally naïve face" (ibid, 894). De Beauvoir clearly establishes an antagonistic relationship between intellectual pursuits and conventional femininity. As a female *intellectual*, one can fail professionally, but, as a *female* intellectual, one can also fail in becoming a woman. De Beauvoir argues that women were occasionally allowed entry into the realm of knowledge: however, this limited access wasn't comparable with mastery of men over "arts, literature, and philosophy, … attempts to found the world anew on human freedom" (ibid, 921) as "the restrictions that education and custom impose on woman limit her grasp of the universe" (ibid, 924). While de Beauvoir hints that socialism would lift the listed restrictions (ibid, 888), her writing strongly resonated with women *living* in socialism – Yugoslav feminists. Ana Bogić, a scholar studying reception of feminist theory in (post)socialist context, mentions that de Beauvoir's sentence about coming into womanhood ("One is not born but rather becomes a woman" in 1982 edition) was frequently referenced (2017, 382). Even though *The Second Sex*, unlike the rest of her oeuvre, wasn't published in Serbo-Croatian until 1982 (it became an instant success that sold in 20 000 copies), de Beauvoir's understanding of women's place in society was tremendously influential in feminist circles (ibid, 329).

Unlike Woolf and de Beauvoir, whose texts on learned women were published well after the figure of (male) intellectual became a cultural staple, Mary Evans argues that exclusion of women from the production of knowledge predates the constitution of contemporary intelligentsia.[8] Evans shows how Enlightenment logic, consolidated between 1780 and 1820, established masculinity as universal and, consequentially,

[8] That is, if we take the Dreyfus affair as the turning point.

framed femininity as a secondary realm of difference (2009, 31). She describes this asymmetrical arrangement as "the Enlightenment settlement" and claims that it effectively prevented everyone from disregarding "a sense of gender difference" (ibid, 33) that organizes both intellectual production and "politics of subjectivity" (ibid, 38). Despite enabling women to participate in intellectual life in a limited manner, it allowed them to either defend their specificity *or* emulate (male) universalism (ibid, 30-3). Prevalence of men in all scholarly spheres is, continues Evans, "pan-European phenomenon" with literature, especially British prose from the 19th century onward, as a rare exception: it has been often a tool for women writers to negotiate their social standing, achieve financial independence, and enter cultural history (ibid, 32).

4. "Workers, peasants, and honest intelligentsia":[9] Making of Yugoslav Intellectuals

4.1. Taxonomy of Yugoslav Intellectual

Previously mostly agricultural society, post-war Yugoslavia underwent rapid modernization and collective re-education: "the people's consciousness was to be pulled from the moorings of their traditional-patriarchal or conservative-bourgeois lifeworlds; their hearts and minds were to be won for the social revolution" (Calic 2019, 173-4). Pathos-filled and unlike her usual historiographic style, Calic's formulation succinctly communicates the extent of the overhaul in Yugoslavia. Because "education and socialist training" (ibid, 173) became issues of major importance, various administrative and cultural workers needed to be recruited and shaped through state-funded and, officially, gender-blind schooling system (ibid, 204). In her 2011 book *Udarnik! Buntovnik? Potrošač…* [*Striker! Rebel? Consumer...*] that analyzes vehement disputes over mass culture as well as a variety of popular genres in socialist Yugoslavia, Kolanović argues that intellectuals held "privileged place in propagating and legitimizing dominant ideological values" (2011, 54). As newly established federation was an alliance of "workers, peasants, and honest intelligentsia" (ibid, 129), literates were expected to propagate the socialist cause, especially during the immediate post-war period. Albeit

[9] Kolanović 2011, 129

short-lived in Yugoslavia (ibid 216-7), socialist realism with its imperatives of reflecting the world populated by ordinary heroes and heroines making great sacrifices for the future rule of the proletariat (Einhorn 1993, 254) was an influential poetics in the 1940s and the early 1950s. The shift from the state-mandated aesthetics toward (re)affirmation of modernist styles, as philosopher Dušan Bošković argues, occurred in 1949, when Slovene functionary Edvard Kardelj spoke in favor of freedom in scholarship and art (2011, 125). Unlike socialist realism that was, according to Bošković, primarily oriented toward regulating content rather than form (ibid, 123), approaches to literature that gained popularity in the following decades foregrounded textuality (Lukić 2001, 86). According to Lukić, this novel framing contributed to the understanding of literary text "as autonomous [and] self-sufficient" (ibid, 86) that, in the 1970s and 1980s, allowed articulation a number of critical discourses (ibid, 87-8).

While occasionally treated as such, the Yugoslav intelligentsia wasn't homogenous: Malešević's and Kolanović's taxonomies of the groups showcase nuances of the local socialism. While both rely on already existing elaborations of the intellectuals' role (Gramsci's, Bauman's, and Etzioni's), the scholars are careful to situate them within the Yugoslav context. After developing typology that combines Gramsci and Bauman,[10] Malešević argues that the main type of Yugoslav intellectual was "organic legislator"; *organic* due to hailing from the underprivileged classes and being produced through the state's schooling system, and *legislator* due to understanding himself/herself as an authoritative proponent of "unquestionably scientific and true" (2002, 66) discourse. He contends the claims about perseverance of bourgeois intellectuals in the new system (Kolanović 2011, 106; Calic 2019, 224): interwar Yugoslavia lacked an established educational network and cultural production, and numerous traditional intellectuals opted for exile (Malešević 2002, 63). Hence, new intelligentsia was produced by the socialist system: "the state intellectuals", a group whose task was to "articulate and promote the official party line and to legitimize actual policies by making reference to Marx's and

[10] In his 1987 book *Legislators and Interpreters*, Zygmunt Bauman establishes opposition between intellectuals as legislators (their modern role) and intellectuals as interpreters (their postmodern role). Bauman argues that, while two approaches to intellectual work are coexistent and codependent, modern intellectual is to be understood as a legislator as his/her role is to deliberate in moral and aesthetic controversies (1987, 4). Postmodern intellectual doesn't aim to impose one narrative but allows dialogue between various communities consequentially acting as an interpreter (ibid).

Lenin's work" (ibid, 64) were intended outcome while leftist critics (philosophers gathered around journal *Praxis*) and ethno-nationalists were "'waste' of the same process of creation" (66). Also mentioned by Calic as a mostly male group founded in 1962 with the goal of exploring alternative interpretations of Marx' s works through engaging with new left thought (2019, 218-9), Malešević characterizes "the Praxis school [as] certainly the most important theoretical development in communist Yugoslavia" (2002, 64). The feminists are omitted.[11]

Kolanović's understanding of Yugoslav intelligentsia underlines its dynamic character: while the immediate post-war period was marked by diminishing influence of university and establishment of Party institutions, cultural centers and educational facilities for workers, governed by a selected few (2011, 71), academic intellectuals gradually reclaimed their authority by relying on traditional disciplines and arguing in favor of their neutrality. Moreover, newly established journals, magazines, and other media outlets enabled emergence of independent or "bohemian" intellectuals[12] (ibid, 105-6). Listed groups of intellectuals, together with workers and peasants were supposed to form "supranational class subject" (ibid, 61). While this stratification hadn't explicitly excluded women, intellectuals, posing as guardians of aesthetic values, frequently disregarded genres directed toward the female audience as "sentimental kitsch" (ibid, 149). The 1980s, a period described as "decadent socialism" (ibid, 288) that witnessed passing away of *the* aesthetic authority, modernist writer Miroslav Krleža, was marked by greater participation of women in cultural production as well as affirmation of previously marginalized gay and lesbian subcultures (ibid, 289).

[11] Malešević only references "sexism" as part of nationalist values which led to Yugoslavia's demise (2002, 72), Similarly, Calic engages with socialist project of women's emancipation (2019, 204), but doesn't mention feminism despite discussing a variety of alternative cultural currents and mentioning prominent feminists Slavenka Drakulić and Rada Iveković as anti-war activists. Omission seems even stranger given that, despite the marginality of feminism in academia, *Praxis* professors supported feminist research group "Woman and Society" and had sessions on "women's question" within their own "Čovjek i system" ["Man and the System"] group (Lóránd 2018, 32).

[12] When discussing differences between academic and independent intellectuals, Kolanović references essay "Are Public Intellectuals an Endangered Species?" by sociologist Amitai Etzioni in which he explains that the academic PIs have to uphold strict methodological and stylistic standards while also being able to communicate with the public while bohemians, who tend to earn by writing and editing, may become insufficiently scrutinous due to being overly popular (2006, 11). Similarly, academic intellectuals are threatened by being cryptic and too discipline-oriented and, consequentially, losing their touch with the audience as well as their status of *public* intellectuals (ibid, 14).

4.2. From Women's Emancipation to Feminist Dissent

Referenced within *all* (occasionally) conflicting Yugoslav understandings of gender equality which will be outlined in this section, Marx's paraphrase of Fourier's claim on women's social status indicating "level of humanity attained by a society" (Harsch 2014, 17) fundamentally influenced Yugoslav endeavor of "general human emancipation" (Lóránd 2018, 48). As Lóránd demonstrates through analysis of feminist dissent which, unlike the term "dissidence", communicates a willingness to engage with the state while remaining critical of its policies (ibid, 8-10), full emancipation came to be regarded as a partial failure by the local second-wave feminists. While remaining its most vehement critics who, as Lóránd summarizes, claimed that "once the regime was built on patriarchy, it became ideologically impossible for women to achieve real equality" (ibid, 8), the rebellious post-1968 generation wasn't the only one to challenge the manner in which the state grappled with patriarchy. Bonfiglioli argues that archival documents belonging to the state's organizations indicate continuity of critical discourses on devaluation and exploitation of women (2021, 69). The historian counters common portrayal of strive for emancipation as restarted by each new generation (Iveković and Drakulić 1996, 734; Zlatar 2004, 79) and claims that the Yugoslav case should be understood as "long women's movement" (2021, 73) rather than as ebb and flow of acquiescence and activism.

Pioneers of Yugoslav feminist history, Lydia Sklevicky and Andrea Feldman were, according to Lóránd, invested in the past to affirm legitimacy of the feminist agenda (2018, 59). Primarily focused on suffragettes and inter-war activists as well as women's role in National Liberation Movement (ibid), these scholars emphasized the continuity of the Yugoslav women's movement: Sklevicky dates its beginnings to the mid-19th century (1996, 243-50), and Feldman argues that bourgeois and proletarian inter-war feminists, despite disputing about the role of the class, occasionally collaborated in the struggle for the right to vote (2004, 237). The rhetoric of emancipation was already present in space that was to become socialist Yugoslavia.

Founded in 1920, Komunistička partija Jugoslavije [The Communist Party of Yugoslavia], was the first political group to offer a comprehensive platform for women's

emancipation (Calic 2019, 80) and, following the Second World War in which women participated in record numbers (ibid, 154; Bonfiglioli 2014, 4-6), to grant them full citizenship and access to welfare services. Modeled after the Soviet example of combining “equality in the public sphere” with “social motherhood in the private sphere” (ibid, 8), the 1946 Constitution marked a turning point in women’s legal and social status. Also emphasizing the significance of the post-war policies, Serbian philosopher Adriana Zaharijević argues that the 1974 rendition of the Constitution went further by proclaiming gender-based discrimination illegal, allowing abortion on demand, and enabling just division of inheritance and marital property (2017, 266). While these new legislations allowed women to become “equally representative of the working people” (Zaharijević 2014, 95), egalitarianism wasn’t entirely observable in practice. Naming practices were a telling example: implemented in 1946 (Sklevicky 1996, 90), the family law allowed both men and women to keep their prenuptial last name but, as the introduction to Slavenka Drakulić and Rada Iveković’s contribution to *Sisterhood Is Global* anthology shows, women tended to change theirs (1996, 732) and, consequentially, obscure matrilinear trajectories.

According to Bonfiglioli, critiques of women's inequality predate emergence of the second-wave feminism in Yugoslavia: they were consistently present in official discourses, primarily those belonging to women’s organizations such as the Antifašistički Front Žena [Antifascist Women’s Front] and, following its dissolution in 1953, Savez Ženskih Društava [Union of Women’s Societies]. Founded in 1942 and led by a group of women who have proved themselves to be trustworthy comrades (Bonfiglioli 2014, 6), the Antifascist Women’s Front continued working in the postwar period with the agenda of representing “women’s concerns” as a part of “wider class-based” issues (ibid 2021, 69-71). While the organization’s cadres shared the Party’s stance on feminism as a bourgeois distraction from proletarian solidarity (Bonfiglioli 2021, 71), the historian argues that they addressed the disparity between formal rights and daily practices, criticized devaluation of women’s work and unequal division of household labor, called out Party members on their patriarchal views, and internally discussed violence against women (2014, 13). As they engaged with the listed feminist issues, Bonfiglioli argues that these activists belong to the middle or *red* feminist wave, the mid-20th century movement

focusing on improving women's citizenship rights in collaboration with the state (2021, 67). Partially developed as a critique of Sklevicky, whose stance on gender equality as a revolutionary legacy taken away by the state apparatus (1996, 54-63) is heavily influenced by the second-wave standards that foreground autonomy of women's organizations and dismiss activism within official structures (Bonfiglioli 2014, 4), Bonfiglioli's research elucidates multiplicity of regional feminism. By challenging the understanding of the Cold War era as uniformly conservative, Bonfiglioli is important for analyzing female intellectuals who entered the public sphere before articulation of the Yugoslav second-wave feminism. While challenged by the young advocates of women's rights who came to prominence in the 1970s and '80s, Zaharijević argues that state-endorsed emancipation remained relevant, especially in campaigning for inclusive education and ameliorating double pressure of employment and housework (2017, 270).

The new generation of educated and outspoken city-dwellers, as the Yugoslav second-wave feminists are described by Lóránd, challenged "the socialist state … based on one of its biggest promises, the equality of women" (ibid, 2). Lóránd emphasizes that, unlike the vast majority of dissidents in the socialist bloc, who occasionally marginalized feminist concerns (ibid, 178) or even reproduced patriarchal values (Einhorn 1993, 59-68), these women worked *with* the state and relied on publically funded spaces and journals when promoting female artists or publishing on feminist ideas (Lóránd, 2018, 31-3). Born after the Second World War to parents who experienced it first-hand (ibid, 2018, 3), the feminists started articulating their dissents in the early 1970s within academia as well as during informal encounters (ibid, 5), "sitting in kitchens and living rooms" (ibid, 42). Yet to become established scholars, women who tentatively voiced their challenge to state socialism by writing about globally circulating concepts and implicitly applying them to the Yugoslav situation (ibid, 70), were mocked, marginalized, and underfunded (ibid, 42). Lóránd traces the feminists' entry into the mainstream through art and mass media (ibid, 6): she states that *Drug-ca žena: Novi pristup* [*Comrade-ess Woman: a New Approach*], the 1978 conference organized in Belgrade and attended by a number of internationally known proponents of various feminist and left critical approaches (ibid, 46-7), an event occasionally credited as the turning point of the movement (ibid, 46), significantly contributed to the visibility of Yugoslav feminism. Moreover, gradually

developed network of “Žena i društvo” [“Woman and Society”] research groups, first of which was founded in Zagreb (ibid, 32-5), signified that feminism was there to stay.

Lóránd notes that, while these feminist scholars worked on, a new generation, empowered by political gains and affected by the economic crisis, came to prominence around 1985/86 (2018, 172) and oriented itself toward consciousness-raising and grassroots organizing. The historian emphasizes that this activist generation established SOS telephones for abused women which marked a reorientation in the relationship with the state as they were “parallel institution dealing with violence between citizens” and, as such, implied *tempering* with the state’s jurisdiction (ibid, 193). As *The Feminist Challenge to the Socialist State in Yugoslavia* shows, the late 1980s witnessed proliferation of feminist organizations dedicated to specific issues and identities, many of which participated in anti-war efforts during violent disintegration of Yugoslavia (ibid, 6).

Slavenka Drakulić’s section of the essay published in *Sisterhood Is Global* anthology, a follow-up publication to the 1982 Rhode Island conference that, according to Lóránd, solidified Yugoslav feminists’ place in the international women’s movement (2018, 38) aptly demonstrates the relationship between Marxism and the second-wave feminism. Important because it was part of a highly publicized polemic during which feminism was denounced as a preoccupation of “few female intellectuals, who don’t do much in any case” and use feminism as “the means for advancing their personal, selfish agendas” (Drakulić 2020, 151), the essay was republished in Drakulić’s 1984 collection *Smrtni grijesi feminizma* [*The Mortal Sins of Feminism*]. Drakulić, who combines the materialist approach with her sardonic wit, counters the Party’s framing of feminists as proponents of foreign thought originating in capitalist countries (ibid, 143) who impose false consciousness on regular working women (ibid, 151). However, the essay clearly indicates that she doesn’t envision feminism as anti-socialist. Drakulić argues Marx and Engles were among the first proponents of women’s emancipation (ibid, 153) as well as that, as both Croatian and shorter English version state, “the women’s movement does not mean a separation from socialist forces. On the contrary, it means *contribution* to socialist transformation of society, from a specifically *women’s* perspective” (Iveković and Drakulić 1996, 738). While the locally published version could be dismissed as negotiating with the state by superficially agreeing with its policies to secure space for feminist

critique, I think that the fact that the translation, intended for international feminist audience (including Western radicals who were occasionally anti-state as they deemed it irreparably patriarchal [Zaharijević 2014, 94]), indicates an honest commitment to socialism.

As for the ideological, rather than generational differences, Zaharijević argues that, along with the state-supported project of women's emancipation, Yugoslavia had two critical currents. The first, which she, somewhat imprecisely, as virtually all Yugoslav feminists were proponents of socialism, labels as "socialist feminism", encouraged women to be active subjects of their emancipation and fight gender roles (2017, 272). Nada Ler-Sofronić, a social scientist and one of the rare feminists from Sarajevo, is, according to Zaharijević, the main representative of the above-mentioned stance as she advocated "word revolution" (Ler-Sofronić 1986, 126) and class solidarity while framing oppression of women as the model for all relationships based on unequal distribution of power (Zaharijević 2017, 272). Ler-Sofronić is also interesting because she, similarly to Drakulić, counters dismissal of feminism as a preoccupation of a few learned women. While agreeing that they are "especially vocal within the movement", Ler-Sofronić argues that they, similarly to the organic intellectuals as depicted by Gramsci, articulate "interests of the most oppressed women" rather than imposing their own views (1985, 105). Zaharijević states that the second current, liberationists, argued that socialism never reformed the private sphere (2017, 274-6). While insisting that "the … revolution has not always been able to cross the threshold of the family" (Morokvasic as cited in Zaharijević 2014, 95), Zaharijević asserts that liberationists weren't "anti-socialist or anti-Marxist" (2017, 276).

As Lóránd and Zaharijević show, listed scholarly and activist practices reshaped Yugoslav socialism and its self-understanding as fully successful in emancipating women. Issues discussed in feminist groups, such as violence against women, female sexuality, and unequal division of care work, were reflected in art and literature. Voracious readers and translators of foreign textual production, Yugoslav feminists eventually managed to create literature of their own.

5. Marginal Intellectual Trajectories

5.1. Male Role Models, Female Disappointments

In her essay “Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading”, American literary scholar Patrocinio P. Schweickart compares three narratives about ardent readers becoming writers. The first one, Wayne Booth’s speech at 1982 Modern Language Association convention is a success story: influenced by a tale of his great-grandfather, a craftsman who read fiction while laboring which eventually left him disabled due to awkwardly bending to do both at the same time, Booth was set on becoming an academic. He managed to do so: coming into prominence with 1961 book *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Booth’s ability to engage with narrative structures as well as ethical implications of texts fundamentally shaped literary studies (Doyle Springer 2000, 259-60). Reflecting on obstacles he overcame, Booth mentions adoration toward the written word that sustained him and quotes *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* in which the civil rights leader describes similar devotion (Schweickart 1996, 410-11). Schweickart focuses on the part which Booth omitted in his address and notes that Malcolm X’s access to books (literally, he taught himself to read as an incarcerated adult) was structured by racial discrimination; unlike Booth whose experiences were validated by *the great works*, Malcolm X saw the Western canon as part of asymmetrical power relations (ibid, 412). She notices another, unmarked, omission: “deleted perspective” (ibid, 412) of a women reader/writer and *recovers* it by referencing an early feminist classic, Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own*. Convinced in the universality of his narrative about somewhat of an underdog pursuing his passions and eventually claiming a rightful place among those he admired, Booth, as Schweickart argues, fails to see his life trajectory as less than archetypal:

> From the standpoint of the second and third stories of reading, Booth’s story is utopian. The powers and resources of his hero are equal to challenge he encounters. At each stage he finds suitable mentors. He is assured by the people around him, by the books he reads, by the entire culture, that he is right for the part. His talents and accomplishments are acknowledged and justly rewarded. In short, from the perspective of Malcolm X’s and Woolf’s stories, Booth’s hero is fantastically privileged. (ibid, 414)

While Schweickart primarily engages with the ways in which race and gender influence cultural reception and production, *slight* adjustments could transform Booth's story into an exemplary socialist narrative of upward class mobility and underprivileged boy entering intelligentsia. Commonly referenced in Yugoslavia, either as a real possibility for proletarians entering state-funded education or exposed as a fraudulent promise of the administration by the critics of the regime,[13] this intellectual trajectory is reiterated with variations in Škrinjarić's and Zečević's works. A narrative one can inhabit is, for both authors, structured by gender, class, and ethnicity. Predicaments of female artists and intellectuals whom we encounter in their oeuvres diverge from those of their male counterparts: often without supportive peers, lacking in time and space for work, and never quite sure if they are *right for the part*, marginal intellectual trajectories illuminate *the inhospitality* of archetypal stories. Halted, unproductive, and maladjusted periods and lives, descriptions of failure rather than success, are foregrounded by Zečević and Škrinjarić and, as I argue in this section, illuminate disparities within the cultural sphere in nominally egalitarian Yugoslav society.

Authors fascinated with confessional genres and shifting modes of narrating one's and others' lives, Škrinjarić and Zečević produced a variety of (auto)biographical writing, including two overarching narratives: a *Bildungsroman* partially published as a first-person narrative and an extensive diary. While failure certainly isn't at the forefront when we systemize depicted events (published books, participation in the literary life, intellectual exchange with the peers and influence on subsequent generations of feminists), it is given a prominent role within the narration that, as Smith and Watson argue, shouldn't be interpreted as a mere reflection of its historical circumstances (2001, 10). Because "they offer subjective 'truth' rather than 'fact'" (ibid), stories that the authors have written about themselves diverge from what we, retrospectively, came to see as tales of overcoming great difficulties and leaving influential works that redefined literature, both academically and artistically. Born in the 1930s, awkwardly positioned between antifascist fighters and the second-wave feminists, and coming of age in the 1950s,

[13] Exemplified by the emergence of organic intellectuals, upward mobility was enabled by state-funded projects discussed in the previous chapter: diminishing illiteracy, mandatory schooling, and free higher education.

partially influenced by male-dominated bohemian circles and (selectively) relaxing sexual mores,[14] Škrinjarić and Zečević have had limited opportunities to negotiate their marginality, especially given hostility toward confessional genres they were prone to. Hence, their autobiographical narratives can be framed as non-celebratory[15] *failure stories*. Similarly to life narratives that, as English poet and social critic Stephen Spender elaborated in his essay "Confessions and Autobiography", combine "externalized and internal points of view" (ibid, 5), that is, ventures of a "social or historic personality" (Spender 1980, 116) witnessed by others and simultaneously reframed via self-observation, failure for Škrinjarić and Zečević has an external and an internal dimension. Occasionally related with misperforming in the public sphere, stuttering or stumbling before an audience, failure is depicted as internal experience of improper gender embodiment (also frequently observed by others) – hence, for a female artist/intellectual more than a public persona is under scrutiny. While Smith and Watson emphasize the importance of this dual point of view, Spender also notes that "self-revelation of the inner life is perhaps a dirty business" (ibid, 118). His remark is to be taken as a warning to read cautiously because narrators who proclaim to be the most truthful tend to fib and evade in order to present themselves as they want to be seen (ibid), but "dirtiness" of female confessionary texts has different implications: unruly bodies, *oversharing* about unconventional sexuality and socially unacceptable reproductive choices, topics present in Škrinjarić's and Zečević's main life trajectories as well as foregrounded when

[14] While the "sexual revolution" of the 1960s and the 1970s was the most comprehensive (albeit ambivalently feminist) challenge to *proletarian puritanism* (Lóránd 2015, 123), women writers reflecting on the 1950s, such as Irena Vrkljan in *The Silk, The Shears* and Sunčana Škrinjarić in *The Theater Café*, depict bohemian circles as sexually libertarian. This bohemian lifestyle, best exemplified by open marriage between Vrkljan and her first husband, Zagreb poet Zvonimir Golub, is, in works of Vrkljan and Škrinjarić, often characterized as primarily benefiting men.

[15] Writing about the Antifascist Women's Front, Lydia Sklevicky suggests that a shift in optics is needed to see "everyday life, embodiment, sexuality; women, all kind of outsiders, losers, the oppressed" (1996, 67) as issues and subjects worth historiographical research and uses James Clifford's term "noncelebratory histories" (i.e, narratives about the past produced by centering discourse instead of viewing it as a direct way toward reconstructing history [ibid, 73]) to introduce new, feminist approach apt for researching presence and eradication (mostly the latter) of women from official (Yugoslav) history. I found the concept interesting because Sklevicky implements it as a way of looking into topics pertinent in Škrinjarić and Zečević – the phrase itself denotes a certain *negative* orientation, privileging failure over success. Moreover, in Clifford's elaboration "noncelebratory histories" avoid attributing concepts to a single source and, instead, favor "ideas as enmeshed in local practices and institutional constrains … they stress the historical discontinuities, as well as continuities, of past and present practices" (1986, 11) which makes them useful for analyzing intricate timeline and multiple origins of the long Yugoslav women's movement.

researching or creating various heroines, can disqualify women from claiming the position they aim to achieve – in this case, that of an artist/intellectual.

As Smith and Watson demonstrate by engaging with the large corpus of Western autobiographical canon, identities accessible for claiming, denying, and re-modeling are shaped by their context, "there are models of identity culturally available to life narrators at any particular historical moment that influence what is included and what is excluded" (2001, 34). When it comes to Škrinjarić's autobiographical trilogy and Zečević's diary, two main, conflictual patterns of becoming are "the (socialist) intellectual" and "the (married) woman". The tension, occasionally implied or reflected upon in life writing (ibid, 35), is to be located in antagonism between masculine coding of the intellectual and opposite coding of normative womanhood. The main models of identity in Škrinjarić's and Zečević's narratives are composite: I have decided to bracket the adjectives as socialism and marriage are given ambivalent role and their relationships with intellectual work and womanhood are frequently renegotiated. Sidonie Smith's discussion of representativeness and rebelliousness, concepts developed in two major works on autobiography, Georg Misch's *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity* and Karl Joachim Weintraub's *The Value of the Individual*, helps in elucidating models of subjectivity in Škrinjarić and Zečević. For Misch, autobiographies, despite being expressions of one's personality, are always representative to a degree due to their authors' engagements in the public sphere and reliance on circulating discourses (Smith 1987, 7). Misch's disciple Weintraub sees the value of confessionals differently: rather than being a proper representative of his time, a truly interesting autobiographer revolts against social mores thus turning himself into an outcast (ibid, 9). Before interpreting life narrative of Anglo-Saxon women writers, Smith argues that both ways of belonging to one's context are "men's life scripts" – women's access to the political and cultural life is constricted and attempting entry to public arena "transgresses patriarchal definitions of female nature by enacting the scenario of male selfhood" (ibid, 7). Similarly, an outcast's position is enabled by his possibility of belonging to societal order as "only in the fullness of that membership can the fullness of his rebellion unfold" (ibid, 10). While private/public divide was shifted by the socialist imperative of full employment, possible plots and identities were still limited for female protagonists – vividly showcased by Zečević's inability to speak in front

of an audience, her "attempt to speak, but only dust fell out of my mouth, I was failing and giving up every attempt to prevent my death" (2017, 146), the authors' meandering trajectories demonstrate the prevailing inaccessibility of Yugoslav cultural life. Neither vehement proponents nor dissidents, Škrinjarić and Zečević recount striving toward acclaim and authorship as well as challenging socialist framework.

Circumstances of production and publication differ between Škrinjarić and Zečević – even though both published some autobiographical writing (the full first book as well as episodes from subsequent parts of the autobiographical trilogy and parts of the diary and prose fragments, respectfully) in the socialist period, genres dictate relationship between time of depicted events and time of narrating them. The full texts were published after the collapse of Yugoslavia, in 2004 and 2017, but depicted occurrences, either narrated retrospectively in Škrinjarić's *Bildungsroman* or reflected on as they are happening as Zečević does in her diary, reveal cultural dynamic of a period frequently looked over in feminist engagement with Yugoslav socialism – the Cold War era (Bonfiglioli 2014, 1).

Škrinjarić narrates her coming of age trilogy in the third person: unlike in *A Night With an Aquarian* she opts for an external narrating instance which allows her an ironic distance from depicted period, Tajana's formative years spanning from the early 1930s until the late 1950s. As the narrative cuts off before her *creative maturity*, Tajana's potential to become self-realized artist is present only through conflating the protagonist and the author who gained prominence in the 1970s. A precocious child, Tajana started journaling at an early age, "she wrote how no one likes her, about her beautiful eyes and antipathetic face … about her first menstruation, about disappearance of Edita Goldberger"[16] (Škrinjarić 2004, 96). However, her first *public* writing attempts, penning confessional poetry while at school literary section immediately after the war was met with disapproval and accusations of being "backward, sentimental, and, the worst of all, reactionary" (ibid, 184-5). When her poetry collection, submitted for publishing in literary

[16] Interwar "career woman", Edita Goldberger was a family friend killed during the Holocaust – reference to her disappearance is listed with Tajana's personal inscriptions. This is common in Škrinjarić's texts; she depicts major historical events as subtly woven into daily life which can be interpreted as challenging the strict separation between private (bourgeois girlhood) and public (racial laws in Independent State of Croatia) that largely structured the history of autobiography as a genre.

journal *Izvor* [*The Well*],[17] was derogatorily called "some sort of typically female scribbling" (ibid, 347), Tajana becomes increasingly aware of the marginalization of female creative professionals. Pushed toward children's radio programs and excluded from noteworthy projects such as adaptation of Krleža's plays or struggling with poverty and deemed unhinged like Vesna Parun, "the greatest Croatian female poet" (ibid, 335), she is warned by an older colleague that their male peers are mostly interested in romancing her as "prestigious placements are intended only for men, naturally, those belonging to their circles. Women are only companions, secretaries … editors of unpopular shows" (ibid, 333). As she is exposed to sexual violence from an early age, Tajana's attempts to participate in artistic circles, both official and bohemian, are further undermined.

Zečević, who began writing her diary in 1961, upon graduating from university, already "feeling [helself] to be a failed existence" (2017, 26) in her mid-20s, describes years closely following the final paragraphs of Škrinjarić's text. Occasionally reminiscing about her unhappy childhood, "displeasing mother … not being a kind of child she wanted" (ibid, 402) and cruel socialization into *proper* feminine behavior Tajana also experiences, Zečević further strays from conventional journal logs (i.e. tracking autobiographical events as they occur [Smith and Watson 2001, 193]) by interpolating events of her life with fictional fragments such as poetry authored by her or others as well as essayistic paragraphs on literature and social issues. Similarly to her lifelong academic fascination, the diary of 19th century Croatian writer Dragojla Jarnević,[18] Zečević's diary moves away from classical self-referential writing through literary devices such as second person address in the following passage:

[17] An actual journal, published between 1948 and 1951 and edited by Josip Barković, an author of socialist-realist prose. Unlike the first two parts that focus on Tajana's upbringing, the third part traces her entry into the workforce and involvement with artistic circles. It has an increasing number of traceable historical references, the most important being the triptych of writers: Kleža, who doesn't appear as a character but gets mentioned as the pinnacle of Yugoslav literature, Marija Jurić Zagorka, described as adored for her romances but obscure and poor before death, and Vesna Parun, a poet who embraces Tajana as a protégé. Depicted as strange but stoic by Škrinjarić she is, similarly to Zagorka, lauded as a feminist foremother by contemporary scholars (Sklevicky 1996: 245-7; Lóránd 2019: 110). These vignettes allude to the relationship between gender and success that Škrinjarić further develops in Tajana's life narrative.

[18] In her book on Dragojla Jarnević, Zečević's argues that the writer narrated personal anecdotes in "a novelesque manner" (1985, 37), that is, in accordance with reigning literary fashions (ibid, 13). Through comparative analysis, Marija Ott Franolić shows that Jarnević and Zečević shared the tendency toward fictionalizing some segments of their lives (2016, 252-3).

> Where are you headed, Divna? Stand at your place. Where is your place? You live at all the places – just not your sick place. What is happening with you are where does it lead? I have to ask you this as everyone else does. … Homeless, you know that you are homeless with a miserable Museum [of Serbs in Croatia] job that is as insecure as your rented room. … You always weep – when you reach your limits and it is pointless then – now, every attempt to look you in the eyes. I am seeking understanding for your bitter soul – for your affection, your desire for love, and my carefulness is met with your desperate confusion. I am holding my hand on your hair and waiting for you to calm down. (Zečević 2017, 117)

Precarious working and living situation as well as frequent emotional upheavals largely shaped Zečević's diary of "failed ambition and creative impotence" (ibid, 30). Struggling to publish her confessional prose, rejected by the literary journal *The Republic* in 1962, as well as her poetry, deemed insufficiently avant-garde in Jure Ujević's 1975 article "Žena u suvremenoj književnosti" ["The Woman in Contemporary Literature"][19] while halfheartedly working at cultural institutions, first the museum and then at Institute for Folk Art, Zečević never managed to join the academia in the manner she desired to – as a lecturer at the Department of Croatian Language and Literature. Despite portraying herself as "one stupid, persistent and diligent woman, good for making conversation but not for assistantship, there are plenty of smart men for that" (ibid, 61), she constantly compares her limited opportunities to those available to men.

Škrinjarić does the same. In both of these narratives of intellectual development, limitations are mapped out through contrast – restrictions of "script of a woman's life" (Smith 1987, 10) come into focus in interaction with men's trajectories. As brief overviews of Škrinjarić's and Zečević's life narratives show, it is not only that institutions are more open to men. The cultural canon itself, as in Booth's anecdote at the beginning of this section, valorizes aesthetical criteria favoring male plots and protagonists – after all, everyone's competing to work on Krleža's plays while female literary figures depicted by Škrinjarić, such as Zagorka and Parun, are pushed to the outskirts of cultural life. Despite

[19] Ujević's ability to group women writers into a single article indicates their marginal position – discussing male writers would take volumes.

being interested in feminist classics such as Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, and Dragojla Jarnević (whose diary partially owns its critical acclaim to her analysis) from the early 1960s, Zečević primarily worked on writings by *the great men*. Before fully turning to folklore and hagiographies, she gained her qualifications by studying avant-garde poet Antun Branko Šimić as well as Croatian 19th-century nationalist movement. Škrinjarić and Zečević engage in what Smith describes as "paying tribute to the lives of men" (1987, 54), both living (peers gaining recognition and securing themselves prestigious occupations) and dead (canonical writers): their texts are suspended "between paternal and maternal narratives, those fictions of male and female selfhood that permeate [their] historical moment" (ibid, 19). Oscillation between paternal and maternal lines, while also happening *domestically* as tense mother-daughter relations and identification with fatherly figures, allow the authors to engage with literary history as well as with their contemporaries: academic and bohemian intellectuals they have encountered in Zagreb. Striving to join their circles, Škrinjarić and Zečević are simultaneously working on entering male plots and circles as well as embodying/performing culturally acceptable womanhood whose script of dressing up, childbearing and rearing, housework, and emotional labor leaves little time for reading and writing.

Due to their keen interest in literary production, the authors meet and write about a variety of notable men, sometimes with admiration, occasionally ironically. While recounting numerous interactions and recording vignettes on different cultural workers and nonconformists, they compare themselves with two significant parallel plots: that of regime writer Slavko,[20] modeled after proponent of existentialism Antun Šoljan (Dujić and Bauer 2010, 7), and that of esteemed professor Ivo Frangeš. Intellectual role models doubling as romantic interests, these men are *success stories* against which the

[20] When considered holistically, the most obvious male counterpart in Škrinjarić's output would be poet Josip Sever – the longevity of his presence in the author's life, as well as his influence (according to Bauer, Sever encouraged Škrinjarić to pursue writing full time), neatly parallels relationship between Frangeš and Zečević. Depicting Sever as a "holy fool" akin to Dostoevsky's heroes, in her short stories "Oči mrtvih pjesnika" ["The Eyes of Dead Poets"] and "Severlije" ["Severlia"], dedicated to the poet following his death in 1989, Škrinjarić recalls him as "more than a brother, less than a lover" (1995, 38), a man who "loved strange people, we never mingled with currently known and esteemed. Maybe we avoided those uniformly cheerful and successful" (ibid, 36). As Škrinjarić's portrays it, Sever's trajectory consisted of rejecting, rather than utilizing, opportunities for upward mobility – hence, the poet's biographical narrative isn't comparable with Booth's success story.

protagonists measure their laborious attempts to get their works published and participate in the cultural production (as an editor at Radio Zagreb and as an academic) on the equal terms with their male counterparts. Difference in genre (i.e. separation between the all-knowing narrator and Tajana's limited point of view) allows a variety in a degree of knowledge on "characters" beside the protagonist – Slavko, overly self-confident literate who plagiarizes Tajana's writing and drags his papers in a briefcase so someone wouldn't do the same to him, occasionally squabbling with the regime but managing to avoid repercussions, is mocked by the narrator. Ivo Frangeš, also briefly falling out of favor over national question in the 1980s, is highly regarded by Divna and listed among "the only four people with whom I fell spiritual connection: my father [Nikola Zečević, an amateur poet], Thomas Mann, professor Frangeš, and Ivo Andrić [Yugoslav modernist writer and Nobel prize laureate]" (Zečević 2017, 3), is, expectedly, far more opaque figure. Nevertheless, they share the same role – their efforts justly awarded and their prominence widely acknowledged, Slavko and professor Frangeš display what the authors could have done if not for the gender difference/discrimination based on it.

When it comes to dissidents rather than representatives, they are given a more prominent role in Škrinjarić's writing (both in her life narrative and generally): Zečević craves a life outside monogamous marriage and bureaucratic job and notes that "if [she] were a man, [she] would have visited all of the taverns in the world" (2017, 4) but concedes that she is a provincial woman who craves order and decency. Škrinjarić's inclination toward less than upstanding citizens predates the publication of her autobiographical trilogy – one of the episodes included in its final part, the novel *The White Arrows*, appears as a short story narrated in the first person. Originally published in daily papers *Večernji list* [*The Evening Papers*] in 1969 and included in *A Night With an Aquarian* a decade later, "The Family" is about companionship between the narrator, her bother, and a man known as Count, a polyglot and occasional scenographer. Urged to seek stable employment and "start living seriously" (Škrinjarić 1978, 13), the narrator is also encouraged to "get married as every honest woman, and Count is not a good match, he only yaks and fibs" (ibid) – as these imperatives indicate, normative woman's script includes not only paid labor but also heterosexual marriage, outcomes avoided both in the short story and in the novel in which it was eventually included (as Tajana's

adventure narrated in the third person). Perpetually on the cusp of divorcing her husband Petar Zdunić, Zečević is similarly critical of marriage and exemplary female lives. Neither fully incorporated as intellectuals nor able to become properly womanly, Škrinjarić and Zečević authored stories that resonate with persistent double bind of female autobiography described by Smith as "vulnerable to erasure from history because it is, on the one hand, an 'unfeminine' story and, on the other, merely the 'inferior' word of woman" (1987, 54). Smith's understanding of dangers connected with stating one's truth publically and, consequentially, speaking from the position of authority aptly explains obstacles Škrinjarić and Zečević faced when attempting to publish their confessional writing in the 1950s/60s. Also, it resonates with Rebecca Solnit's depiction of femininity as a "disappearing act" and recurring motif of failed gender performance found thought authors' oeuvres.

Reminiscing about her own artistic formation and perils of urban living as a young woman in 1980s San Francisco, American essayist Rebecca Solnit compares bodily autonomy with claiming ownership over one's writing despite being conditioned to do otherwise (2020, 66-70). She sees the erasure of commonly renounced matrilineal genealogies (Smith 1987, 54) in the politics of naming (i.e. taking partner's family name in marriage, a practice still present in Yugoslavia despite legal changes):

> Feminity at its most brutally conventional is a perpetual disappearing act, an erasure and silencing to make more room for men, one in which your existence is considered an aggression and your nonexistence a form of gracious compliance. Your mother's maiden name is often requested as the answer to a security question by banks and credit card companies, because it is assumed her original name is secret, erased, lost as she took on the name of a husband. It's no longer universal for women to give up their names but still rare to pass them on if they're married, one of the ways in which women vanish or never appear. (ibid, 71)

While vast differences in context should be considered, Solnit's claim applies to Škrinjarić, whose connection with her grandmother, interwar feminist Zofka Kveder, as well as her daughter, popular writer for children Sanja Pilić (Hawkesworth 2001, 263), is obscured by naming customs. It also reflects Zečević's stance as she resolutely refused to use her

hyphenated last name when signing texts. Another link between these three autobiographical narratives is the issue of legacy (or lack of thereof). While listless Tajana remains apathetic when she notices that Slavko stole some of her passages from their ongoing correspondence and even tells him that he may use "her insignificant life … in one of [his] stories" (Škrinjarić 2004, 394), Divna fiercely fights against a colleague plagiarizing her research and goes as far as suing him for copyright infringement in 1990.[21] Due to texts covering different life periods, the issue of preserving one's works is handled contrastingly – while both doubt their talent, Tajana treats her poetry collection carelessly and Divna goes to great lengths to preserve her writing, both scholarly and autobiographic, by carrying her manuscripts wherever she goes as well as hiding the diary during the civil war. The very last sentence of her diary, both in the manuscript and in the edited edition,[22] underscores negative affect and personal story a as tale of defeat rather than triumph: with a hand shaky from early-onset Parkinson's disease, she notes:

> I can barely write. Never
>
> I was never well. (Zečević 2017, 616)

Despite ending on such a somber note, the diary (more as an object and publishing project spanning over 60 years and connecting distant feminist generations than as a text) is an example of astonishing resilience and, ultimately, belief in one's ability to contribute to cultural life as well as leave something for the future.

Before turning to issues of embodiment and sexuality as well as artistry and writing as work, I want to outline the dynamics of male versus female biographical trajectory in Škrinjarić's other works – namely, in three radio plays, *Konferencija za štampu ili ponovno sužavanje* [*Media Conference or Narrowing Again*], *Vježba za četiri glasa* [*A Practice for Four Voices*] and *Tamna soba* [*The Dark Room*] as well as in her novel *The Theatre Café*. Written in the 1970s and the early 1980s and aired at Radio Zagreb during her time there,

[21] The episode is very interesting because it demonstrates the subversiveness of *slant* quoting in quotidian life: Zečević, after she had called the colleague on the phone to tell him that he "he shits in front of someone else's door, then knocks to ask for toilet paper" (2017, 436) and realized that it could harm her case, decided to tell that her insult was actually a quoted folk saying "'Writes in gold, seals with shit!'" (ibid, 452). Despite being feigned, the reworking of already circulating discourse while defending originality of one's creation indicates the multiplicity of feminist discursive strategies.

[22] The photograph of the final page of the manuscript is included in the book so it is apparent that nothing follows this entry.

Škrinjarić's radio plays, similarly to her prose, shift from the more traditional representational mode of her early short stories toward clashing of different voices and perspectives, run-on sentences, and privileging female characters' arcs commonly found in her autobiographical trilogy as well as in *The Theatre Café.* Relying on preoccupation with the troubled artist, his work, and its eventual distortion, frequent in Croatian literature of realist and modernist periods, Škrinjarić depicts disenchanted writers, past their peak and struggling with a creative block, confronted by journalists seeking the next literary sensation (in *Media Conference or Narrowing Again*) or admirer desiring to become a muse (in *A Practice for Four Voices*). In their long monologues, the well-travelled and well-received literates narrate of their "adventures and vocations" (Smith 1987, 17) and convey "existential angst and alienation" (ibid) due to pressure to publish yet another masterpiece or fear of being exposed as a fraud – unlike the female artist in *The Dark Room*, there are judged on the basis of their *production*. For the most part sexless creators, their bodies are brought into focus only in passing, as deviant sexuality that inspires writing and serves as a good headline or within tales of seducing female fans. That is not the case in *The Dark Room*: in fragmented cacophony of voices discussing who should move into reclusive protagonist's studio apartment following her death, the artist's body is equally important as her halted creative attempts. Mingling accounts of the artist's life frequently scrutinize her looks: one neighbor notes that she was "a woman like every other … two hands, two legs, two breasts, well she didn't have much of breasts nor ass" (Škrinjarić 2004, 66) while others note that she was "visited by all kinds of suspicious fellows" (ibid, 78), condemn her childlessness, and ascribe her melancholy to lacking a husband – *reproductive* failure is foregrounded by those living in the artist's immediate vicinity. As for her creative output, it is nonexistent. Despite her school colleague describing her as gifted painter and a writer from an early age, and others recalling that she was an avid reader, clacking on her typewriter all through the night, and throwing her poems into an old chest kept in her room, it is never revealed whether her writing was published. I am inclined to think that it was not. The lonesome artist's best friends tell how

> she painted many paintings
> and burned them on the field one day
> I have no talent for painting, she said. (ibid, 68)

This indicates that she did the same with her poetry, especially since the artist herself[23] tells that she vowed to silence due to words always seeming somehow false,

> I WANTED MY OWN LANGUAGE, BUT I
> FAILED. (ibid, 4)

While she, similarly to her male peers, strives for originality, Škrinjarić shifts the focus when depicting creative woman's trajectory: confined to her cramped room with only a dog as a companion, the play takes nonexistence literary: the protagonist is already deceased. Hauntingly complete eradication of woman's works is only slightly remedied by the presence of her voice and feeble attempt of narrating her own life.

Two other female voices emerge to articulate their own, even more obscure, experiences. Romani mother of ten who lives in the abandoned bus as her family is denied a state-owned apartment tries to unsuccessfully justify her right to get one. Similarly to the artist's, her *overproductive* body is judged by the tenants, but their discourse, centered on supposedly poor upbringing of *uncivilized* children, is simultaneously shaped by gender and ethnicity (i.e. ever-present racism against the Roma). The artist's neighbor from the adjacent apartment complains about typewriter sounds and explains that "she has to get up early in the morning, I work in the factory, it is not like in an office, I couldn't attend school, paupers, we lived in the village, and then the war came, father died, mother somehow managed to get by" (2004, 6). Articulating the limits of upward mobility, this brief autobiographical paragraph, together with Romani woman's slightly longer, repetitive narrative, can be interpreted as Škrinjarić's willingness to explore submerged voices that rarely enter cultural sphere, even *within* texts on overlooked trajectories of female creatives who, eventually, did become recognizable characters in Yugoslav women's writing (Lukić 1996, 228). Remaining preoccupied with the same issue, representation of changing modes of femininity and plots available to

[23] While the rest of the voices blend together as the play nears its end (arrival of the new tenant who lets some light into the apartment), the protagonist's voice is easily recognizable by capital letters. However, temporal relationships between them are less clear: it is not indicated whether the artist's speech precedes stories about her or she contributes while already dead (this wouldn't be impossible as Škrinjarić did occasionally use elements of fantasy and science-fiction in her less-known short prose).

heroines, in her 1988 novel *The Theatre Café* Škrinjarić depicts visitors of *Kavkaz*, the gathering place of Zagreb 1950s bohemia. Eventually remodeled into a respectable institution, *Kavkaz* was recognizable by its most famous patron, unnamed poet and translator easily identifiable as Tin Ujević,[24] the center of café life admired by the crowd of "students and youth wanting to make art ... outcasts, crazed intellectuals, those writing maniacally in secret, and underappreciated, gifted ones" (Škrinjarić 1988, 33). Primarily focusing on women passing through the café rather than on known cultural figures, the author explores marriage as a social imperative and a possibility for upward mobility – while Franković correctly identifies this motif (2010, 116-7), she fails to acknowledge Škrinjarić's elaboration on impossibility of alternatives:

> The girls, admittedly, attended university, worked, went to youth work actions, but marriage was still the secret agenda, because a woman lacking that status was considered suspicious and odd, a person who is not all there. Society accepted women artists with some sort of ironic benevolence. If they were boyish, everything would have been easier to explain. The need for creating middling works was just a suppressed desire for a man they overcame. Beautiful women were assisted in their careers by wise and powerful leaders … Malicious opinion that Simone de Beauvoir's hand was led by Sartre while she was writing was still present in the seventies. (1988, 80-1)

Usually avoiding extensive political commentary, instead opting for irony or mentioning political topics as digressions to the main narrative, in the quoted passage Škrinjarić, still relying on her mocking tone when describing men in power as wise, connects the question

[24] Mostly focusing on developing typology of characters commonly found in modernist texts on urban landscapes, Sanja Franković, along with Ujević, also recognizes the character mentioned as Lojzek as writer Vjekoslav Majer and argues that these bohemian geniuses "represented comic and tragic aspect of survival" (2010, 118). Vaguely describing oppression of women as "female isolation" (ibid, 113-4), Franković doesn't see similar opposition in female trajectories: while Ivona marries to escape poverty, and Mia forgoes her acting ambitions after doing the same, Eda, who pens poetry and remains single, dwells in her tiny room, eventually dying in anonymity. While the two ways to prevail are at the forefront for male characters, the female ones are faced with either acquiescence or eradication. The protagonist of the short story "The Tree" (written in 1985, published in 1991), Eda shares a lot with Škrinjarić's more memorable heroines, such as Tajana (melancholic disposition, sentimental imagination, and an ascetic communist as a father) and the artist (confinement to a studio apartment in socialist block). While *The Theatre Café* doesn't have the main character, Eda signals the author's interest in marginal female trajectories (rather than those belonging to significant men foregrounded by Franković).

of gender, its *proper* and *improper* reiteration (*the looker* versus *the tomboy*) with issues of authorship and critical dismissal. Referencing attribution of de Beauvoir's works to Sartre, Škrinjarić's take is similar to Zečević's acrid commentary on 1987 article about Borhes and María Kodama – enraged because Kodama's writing is barely mentioned, Zečević notes that the article paints her as "an ideal woman: always serving a great man … the woman is also a writer, but she is notable for turning herself into a doormat for him to step on" (2017, 401). Dating to the late '80s, these remarks reframe women's inability to establish themselves in literature as more than a personal failure and hint at systemic reasons behind it, globally, by referencing de Beauvoir and Kodama, as well as in Yugoslav context.

5.2. Femininity in the Making

Claiming and conveying a certain identity was not merely a creative venture: newly established socialist regime set out to shape the Yugoslav population into "physically and morally healthy, brave, and creative" (Duda 2017, 10) citizens. Embodied by exemplary personae such as the partisans, shock work heroes [*udarnici*] (Hofman and Sitar 2016, 248) as well as "new 'woman-worker-mother' type" (Lóránd 2015, 125), these normative identities with their productive, functional bodies form a background against which Škrinjarić and Zečević explore marginal subjectivities. Going beyond contrasting triumphant accounts of male intellectual achievements and female meandering attempts of entering the public sphere, the authors delve into the specter of undisciplined bodies and reject normative sexuality (monogamous heterosexual coupling), eventually giving these aberrations a political edge.

Fascinated with lumpenproletariat since her first short story collection, Škrinjarić's "Noćni trg" ["The Night Square"] (1976) is a tableau of those gathered at the central part of Zagreb consisting of farmer's market and the main cathedral – places of commerce and worship during the day, the area is inhabited by beggars and sex workers at night. Depicted as lacking permanent address and unable to communicate in articulated manner, opting for "murmuring and grinning, stammered nocturnal speech" (1978, 59),

these characters have severely damaged bodies that merge during debauchery. While I think that Škrinjarić established parallel between inner and outer decay a tad too simplistically, the short story can be interpreted as a reversal of socialist collective, citizens whose bodies are clearly separated, optimally shaped, and publically displayed in ceremonies mixing militarism and athletics to convey that the Yugoslav society was "fully organized and disciplined whole" (Pejić 2001, 62). Byproducts of swift urbanization, the urban poor, remained a permanent fascination for Škrinjarić. Depicted from neutral, distant perspective in her early short story, moving through the city at dusk becomes a gendered endeavor when focalized through female characters in *The Street of Ancestors* and *The Theatre Café* as *shady* places promise adventure as well as carry a threat of (sexual) violence.

Mostly focused on her own nonbelonging, Zečević describes herself as a "mistake of the nature" that "should have been born as a boy" (2017, 94), eventually making an *inventory* of her

> outsider status at fifty-two.
> 1) by place of birth, in the national and religious sense
> 2) I live outside marriage and in illusory marriage for a dozen years
> 3) socially and professionally – alone, excluded, unsocial, isolated, and fearing public performances
> 4) generally – as a woman – an outsider in the male circle of scholars and writers (ibid, 438)

Written in 1989, this feminist articulation of lacking a proper place, while also conveying national tensions about to escalate as well as a personal predicament, is an expression of "emigrant sentiment" that Ott Franolić sees as crucial for placing the diary within the poetics of women's writing as conceived in French and Anglo-Saxon feminist thought (2016, 264-7). Occasionally desiring to move abroad (but seeing this endeavor as yet another missed opportunity), Zečević was never factually an émigré – however, this stance connects her with the main representatives of women's writing whose works prominently feature moving and traveling (Vrkljan) and, during the 1990s conflicts, political exile (Drakulić, Ugrešić). Slightly more difficult to spot, Škrinjarić's fascination with the underworld that transformed into articulation of female experiences aligns with an

alternative view of women's prose, developed through Russian influences and articulated by Ugrešić in her 1988 essay "Surovo žensko pismo" ["Brutal Women's Writing"]. As Lóránd summarizes, Ugrešić argues that introduction of first-person narrative (*skaz*) as well as trivial, everyday matters fostered development of women's writing (2018, 110). Despite not developing the issue, Ugrešić also mentions that featuring marginalized characters, generally popular in alternative, "black" prose allowed voices of "thieves, drunks, madmen, homosexuals and – finally – a woman" (1988, 166). While differently articulated, Škrinjarić and Zečević share an investment in marginality and introduce the issue in a way that is to become a recognizable trait of Yugoslav women's writing, both as an *imported* and modified theoretical concept (Lóránd 2019, 113-4) and lively literary production.

Another notable mode of straying from newly *forged* socialist subjectivity is portrayal of (mental) illness and suicide – eventually recognizable as a reoccurring topic in Yugoslav women's writing,[25] similarly to depiction of demimonde, these motifs are not *immediately* visible as gendered. In Škrinjarić's 1969 short story "Posjet" ["A Visit"], unnamed narrator recalls coming to see her aunt who is suffering from undefined illness: the author, who will rewrite very similar interaction in *The Street of Ancestors* as relationship between Tajana and meek Auntie, plain sister of her despotic mother, included remark that hints at prescriptive dimension of normalcy. Trying to imagine aunt's inner monologue,[26] the protagonist thinks that she is proud because "her niece is young

[25] Used by Serbian author Biljana Jovanović to "criticize institutional psychiatric practice" (Lukić 1996, 229), the topics are depicted by all three main Croatian representatives of the poetic. In her 1981 novel *Štefica Cvek u raljama života* [*Steffie Speck in the Jaws of Life*] Ugrešić treats them farcically – preceded by parodied advice from women's magazines, a warning not to use a hairdryer while bathing, Steffie attempts to overdose by mixing a few sleeping pills with multivitamins. Vrkljan, other than examining lives of actress Dora Novak (declared untreatable and living as a shut-in) and poet Marina Tsvetaeva (dyed by hanging), mentions a number of friends who committed suicide. Drakulić dedicates one of the chapters from her 1987 novel *Holograms straha* [*Holograms of Fear*] to the relationship between gender and staging one's death. Writing about her friend Nina, who "was losing her footing … and simply decided that she couldn't go on" (Drakulić 1992, 27), her neat, carefully planned gas asphyxiation and an orderly apartment she left behind, the author frames her considerateness as a feminine trait that Lukić interprets as signaling a women-centered world of the novel (1996, 236-7).

[26] Shift to narration in the third person enabled Škrinjarić to disregard this limitation in knowledge and channel parallel trains of thoughts which allowed her to include marginalized voices directly, without *editing* instance commonly found in her early prose. *The Theatre Café* ends on that note – while the final chapter is about Ivona and Irena who married into wealth, the very ending is series of letters written by Ana, a side character committed to sanatorium after a botched abortion and a suicide attempt.

and beautiful, she really made it in life. She finished school, and she will find a good husband … the niece has an excellent job and speaks several languages" (Škrinjarić 1978, 8-9). While the niece doesn't confirm truthfulness of this account, quoted fragment indicates that the notion of *good life* aligns with a very specific life script. Škrinjarić's subsequent works are mostly dedicated to those who stray from it: zealous partisan fighter accusing the new regime of not being sufficiently communist (Eda's fathers as well as Tajana's The Real Daddy) whose dissident status displays the importance of prior belonging (Smith 1987, 10), artistic bohemia disregarding socialism for quite different reasons, and, finally, women who haven't *made it* and whose outcast position reveals patriarchal coding of conventional life trajectories. Hinting at the hereditary dimension of *madness*, the narrator, after mentioning that Tajana is occasionally daydreaming about throwing herself under the train, ironically scrutinizes the young heroine: "she couldn't overcome her oversensitivity. She would still cry before sleeping and weep like unhinged during sad movies in the cinema" (Škrinjarić 2004, 354). As she is nearing her thirties, Tajana's reluctance to start a family of her own is regarded with similar suspicion by other characters – both lines of commentary implicitly rely on contrasting images of femininity (stoicism versus girlish emotionality, that is, married mother versus a spinster). The connection between madness and gender is made more explicit in *The Dark Room*: while her strange behavior such as monologuing aloud and barking with her dog is mentioned, the artist is primarily regarded as insane by her neighbors because she is a woman living alone. Describing her as "not all there … always wanting what she couldn't have", one of the neighbors remarks that "if she have had three ruffians, she wouldn't have time to dwell on it" (Škrinjarić 2004, 73).

In one of the rare direct quotations, Divna copies a letter sent by her parents in 1964 in which they, once seeing her as a promising young woman, berate her for becoming a family disappointment. Ascribing her unhappiness to lacking a husband as well as permanent employment, staples of proper Yugoslav womanhood as embodied by working mother type, the parents criticize Zečević's obstinate efforts of staying in academia. Continuously reflecting on her discontent and moodiness, and, after her daughter also starts struggling with depression, seeking help from a psychiatrist, the

diarist redirects her anger from herself to wider cultural imperatives. While, just after receiving the letter, she connects her disposition with "being miserably indecisive due to being a woman and always seeking safety" (Zečević 2017, 93), that is, individual circumstances, Zečević increasingly polemicizes against normalcy itself, remarking that "psychiatrists uphold a kitsch image of community and treat people according to kitsch model" (ibid, 366). Rudely questioned why she didn't have any more children during a therapy session and, in one of their vicious fights, warned by her husband that "she should be grateful for being married and having a child because she would have ended up in an asylum if not for him" (ibid, 384), Ott Franolić imagines Divna after the first of such accusations as nearly suicidal:

> It is possible to visualize Divna's feelings after reading that letter. Living in damp, rented rooms, wearing threadbare skirts and blouses, doubting her mental and intellectual abilities, fearing that she is "dumb and limited" and that she will never become much of anything, that all her efforts were pointless because she will never become notable as a poet or scholar. And then she receives such letter from her own mother. Before reading it, it is as she was standing on the windowsill, thinking whether to jump and end her misery. After, probably wondering why she hasn't done so. (2016, 140)

While the diary doesn't indicate that Zečević seriously contemplated suicide, Ott Franolić's vivid description conveys intensity of her inner turmoil that was, as both of them note, partially caused by oppressive gender norms, pressure to enter marriage, dedicate oneself to family (ibid, 140) and show an appropriate affect while doing so. Not only part of *proper* woman's scripts, zeal and optimism were crucial segments of socialist ideology – hence, these malcontent and melancholy heroines represent a double challenge to dominant structures. Paired with reflections on embodiment and sexuality, the challenge gains recognizably feminist contours.

Already disrupted by previously discussed motifs such as a character of the artist that, as Lukić argues in her overview of female and feminist voices in Croatian and Serbian literatures, allowed both autobiographical poetics by linking the authors with their heroines as well as rebelling against "conventions related to gender" (1996, 228) due to

its nonconformity,[27] and investment in the outcasts lurking at the margins of new social order, norms become the most apparent through failure to embody them. Interesting because they, as women born in interwar Yugoslavia and spending their formative periods in society whose feminine ideal shifted from the androgynous figure of partisan fighter toward socialist citizen required to be elegant while still modest and practical (Sitar 2020, 110), witnessed clashing of several notions of womanhood (Lukić 1996, 226), Škrinjarić and Zečević also conceived gender as performed. Predating (belated) local spreading of the most notable articulation of the concept, Judith Butler's, but already present in Simone de Beauvoir and her portrayal of an intellectual attempting femininity and getting *exposed* by a sudden spark of wit breaking through her demureness (2011, 894), the notion of femininity as self-made was well-established in socialism. Part of official culture that urged women to signal success of modernization without succumbing to consumerism or *vulgarity* (Sitar 2020, 104-5) with a constant threat of failure to meet "standards associated with the moral order of the social space" (ibid, 116) *and* counterculture of performance artists who, starting in the 1970s, framed their bodies as material that gains aesthetic qualities in their works (Pejić 2001, 63-4), the self as constantly in the making is, in Škrinjarić and Zečević, present in descriptions of beautifying and disciplining practices as well as in scenes of failed emulation. In a passage resonating with Irena Vrkljan's description of childhood as "only a game, pretending to be a child for your parents, for teachers, for all grown-ups – not to cause them pain when something evil and already disfigured shows under the round, innocent face" (1999, 20), Škrinjarić narrates how Tajana

> wanted to make everyone like her, but that was very tiring, she had to strain herself, pretend, be kind, her real nature would rupture through like a volcano after few attempts and she would momentarily ruin and spoil everything, then she was desperate, her lovely intentions turning to something nasty and stupid, she lacked

[27] Reflecting about her position in academia in 1984, Zečević notes that she only received books from poet Drago Ivanišević while her other male colleagues weren't as considerate: "he would bring me his poetry, but it was said that he was crazy, only a crazy person would gift his books to a woman" (2017, 340). While made in passing, this remark signals that, similarly to creativity, *insanity* can function as a way of breaking gender norms.

> perseverance, she would throw herself on the floor, kicked her legs in anger and cry. (ibid, 60)

The body becomes visible in attempts of *contorting* it into proper womanhood. Throwing a tantrum, biting a classmate with her "horrendous, vampire-like teeth" (ibid, 30), and having early bursts of sadism, Tajana's occasionally monstrous body gets adult rendition in the character of the artists and her animalistic traits. Oscillating between grotesque and beautiful (Tajana's feigned loveliness and the artist's nude form on the balcony admired by one of her neighbors), Škrinjarić's female character display *queer* form of rebellion that surpasses the conventional understanding of feminist agency as well as dissent in the socialist bloc. Their inability to conform, neither planned nor pleasurable, as *improper* gender occasionally is for the feminists, can be examined within Jack Halberstam's articulation of failure as an event with aesthetic qualities that reveals patriarchal underpinnings of "feminine success" (2011, 4) while also forming an alternative feminist archive that privileges "shady, murky modes of undoing, unbecoming, and violation" (ibid). An underside of optimistic belief in future emancipation, the author describes "shadow feminism" as a proclivity for bond-breaking, inactivity, halting, and suffering (ibid, 124), that is, states often not regarded as resistance (ibid, 129). Lukšić, arguing that Škrinjarić doesn't belong to the corpus of Croatian women's writing because she hasn't articulated a coherent feminist stance in her works (2001, 124), clearly has a certain, albeit unmentioned, ideology in mind: while Škrinjarić isn't interested in self-realized heroines reveling in their ability to overcome setbacks with the support of like-minded *sisters*, her exploration of uncanny, ailing, and lonesome (female) characters undoes scripts for successful living.

Fluctuating between an urge to "spoil everything, to wreck" (Zečević 2017, 77), disdain toward social rites, newly established socialist ones as well as provincial, petty bourgeoisie conventions she witnessed as a child in Osijek, feelings that Ott Franolić describes as rebellious desire for freedom (2016, 147), and attempt to fit in by parroting small-minded opinions such as "that it is important to marry, because He can leave when he pleases" (Zečević 2017, 88), Divna occasionally attempts to fit in only to sabotage her belonging later on. Unlike Zečević's unconventionality, which she deems as positive, Ott Franolić ascribes her outbursts of crudeness and cruelty to emotional immaturity (2016,

2-3) and frames activities more easily recognized as political, such as critiquing unequal division of housework and position of women in academia (ibid, 184-8), as important for considering Zečević as a part of regional feminist history. While clearly approving feminist efforts, as she noted in the early 1980s, as well as contributing to the famous 1983 issue of *The Republic* that introduced the topic of women's writing to Croatian public, Zečević was primarily prone to "antisocial femininity" (Halberstam 2011, 124). Especially hostile toward her female colleagues at the Institute, in 1979 she daydreamed:

> The director [Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin], that bitch, is asking me when will I be finished with the dissertation, when will I plan my future research, etc. I am listening to her with a sadistic expression and answering: Don't you know? I resign, I don't give a fuck about your science and fucking folklore. You will get it in writing tomorrow. Fuck off! (Zečević 2017, 275)

While immediately apparent in her productive periods, diligent scholarship as well as well-crafted and carefully edited poetry, feminist quality of these outbursts is difficult to detect as they, even more than a constant marginalization of *deserving* women artists and scholars, go against conventional notions of successful (or, as Halberstam argues, even feminist) life narrative. Sharing more than being in-between two modes of *active* femininity, partisan and neo-feminist one, Škrinjarić and Zečević articulate overlapping experiences of marginality, alienation, and self-sabotage that is, occasionally, also able to sabotage reigning social norms.

5.3. Unruly Bodies, Unconventional Sexualities

While physicality is widely recognized as a key topic in women's writing, as indicated by Zlatar's 2004 essay collection *Tekst, tijelo, trauma* [*Text, Body, Trauma*], the extent to which it should define the poetics is open to dispute. In her 1983 essay, Šafranek warns against reducing women's writing to its recognizable motifs, such as "affect, intuition, physicality, and organicity" (1983, 17), and, despite defining it as "writing the body as felt from within" (ibid, 20), argues that formal traits (avant-garde textuality) should be privileged over the content. Šafranek's conclusion is clearly articulated, but her

argumentation is meandering between emphasizing and downplaying the role of body in women's writing. In Ugrešić's engagement with the concept, physicality, along with already-mentioned interest in daily, *trivial* matters, *compensates* for the lack of explicit articulation of gender difference in the writing of Petrushevskaya (1988, 165-5) thus enabling interpretation of her prose within the context of women's literature. Zečević, finally publishing her analysis of Jarnević's diary in 1985, was reluctant to disclose too much about the writer's unspecified illness. While Zečević insists that Jarnević's outsider status was an outcome of the desire for intellectual work and "sensible personality" rather than her ailing body (1985, 12), Ott Franolić reveals that the 19th-century literate suffered from incontinence (2016, 243) and imagines hardship of constantly having to secretly handwash soiled petticoats (ibid, 244-5). Shifting between silence and disclosure, the body, crucial for performing womanhood, holds an important place in Škrinjarić and Zečević, both as an individual experience of having an improper one, and a way of interacting with others via sexual relations and their *consequences* that primarily affect women: contraception and abortion.

From the depiction of warts on Tajana's hands to her frequent failures at gym class, Škrinjarić reflects on the body quite often and, unlike in her early prose, doesn't establish a clear distinction between normative and marginalized bodies, opting to blur it instead (Smith and Watson 2001, 42). By introducing the character of ex-partisan Šile who attends high school as an adult and, much to her peers' dismay and Tajana's admiration, excels in military training courses, she contrasts two dismissed models of femininity: overtly androgynous fighter, a character written out from war fiction published immediately after it (Kolanović 2011, 203-7), and middle-class girl unable to participate in important components of socialist life such as sport that was, as one Yugoslav scholar put it in 1948, meant to foster "upbringing of healthy, advanced, strong working youth" (Klasić 2017, 211). Breaching another separation, that between private and public, Škrinjarić introduces displayed nudity as a motif in her plays. The literate in *Media Conference* claims that writing the bestseller was his only way to fame as he "gets cold too easily to walk the streets naked" (2004, 28), and the artist in *The Dark Room* is remembered as lying outside in nude. While seemingly belonging to widely recognized unconventionality of creative types (Lukić 1996, 228), referenced themes evoke two famous Yugoslav performance

pieces, Tomislav Gotavac's 1983 nude walk in Zagreb, and Sanja Iveković's 1979 *Trokut* [*The Triangle*] in which she pretended to masturbate on the balcony during Tito's visit to Croatian capital (Pejić 2001, 52-3). Very different as topics, exercise and performance art both take the body as something to be (re)made through action (Pejić 2001, 64) and, similarly to question of identity that is to be shaped through general emancipation (for the regime) or in writing (for autobiographers), show commonalities between the official culture and the dissident (albeit never outright sanctioned [ibid, 62]) circles.

Zečević, equally uninterested in vigorous exercise and choosing to use little of the free time that she had for reading and writing, often discussed her ailing and aging body as well as censorship of all physical matters during her pre-war upbringing: this sequence is emphasized in Ott Franolić's analysis (2016, 206-9). Progression from the hidden body to the body making itself felt through swollen feet and shaky hands, rheumatism and Parkinson's disease, is equally present as another contrast, established during Zečević's early period and intensive identification with male role models: complaining about feeling sluggish during menstruation, she separates hormonal body from mind and imperative to "overcome emotions through will, work like a man" (2017, 70). Duality that, as Smith argues, structured history of the Western autobiography by dividing universal, male subject from the female, embodied one (1993, 23) who negotiates its secondary status and makes a mess of established protocols for life-writing (ibid, 20), similarly affected Eastern bloc. Due to its commitment to women's emancipation, it wasn't as outright sexist as it was in the West – however, Pejić, noting how Marxist theorist György Lukács saw a person as split between their animal aspects and spiritual bearer of class consciousness (2001, 56), argues that bodies were assigned roles according to their gender: often pushed to the background as a supportive characters belonging to a collective in socialist art (ibid, 59), women were only given a central place when naked, in "communist nude" (ibid, 62). However, eroticization didn't necessarily imply emancipation: Škrinjarić and Zečević were skeptical about outcomes of "sexual revolution" and its potential to liberate women.

By reflecting on rapidly changing sexual politics of the second part of the 20th century, the authors also expose two ideals of partnership, romance shaped after popular literature (upheld by Škrinjarić's characters, ironized by the narrator), and intellectual

camaraderie (in Zečević's diary as well as her analysis of Jarnević's writing), as asymmetrical. *Documenting* the development from the post-war puritanism (Dobrivojević 2016, 85) toward gradual liberalization, presence of sex in mass culture as well as 1974 Constitution that established abortion as a right (ibid, 94-5), Škrinjarić and Zečević question the relationship between female identity, both in its *reproductive* function (being a wife and a mother that should *override* other modes of becoming), and during the intercourse itself. In her 1971 short story "Jedno ljeto" ["One Summer"], Škrinjarić depicts a libertine woman, the type of narrator frequently dismissed in classic histories of confessional genres (Smith 1987, 11), having a fling in semi-private corners of a costal town. Equally apathetic to her lover as she is toward possibility to start a family, the heroine sees both as a "perpetual and unavoidable nightmare of repetition" (Škrinjarić 1978, 31): while not utilizing recognizable feminist motifs such as coercion, harassment, and abortion frequent in her subsequent works, Škrinjarić depicts potentially subversive indifference that decenters men in women's life scripts. Also appearing as an aftermath of the first sexual encounters in the trilogy as well as in *The Theatre Café,* and while not representing outright rebellion, challenging gender ideologies that ascribe meaning to the hymen thus making it "inside/outside boundary" that structures the experience of the embodied subject[28] (Smith 1993, 12), apathy in "One Summer" can be understood as the beginning of Škrinjarić's engagement with patriarchal sexual mores. Similar setting (summer fling, possibility of getting caught, etc.) is repeated in the trilogy with a different affective undertones; sentimental Tajana genuinely falls for her summer lover, handsome law student Marko, but the affair is given a somber coda in Slavko's warning that she might end up needing a visit to a clinic. As the historian Ivana Dobrivojević shows through engaging with archival materials as well as medical reports, despite being decriminalized at the beginning of the decade, getting an abortion in Yugoslavia during the 1950s required an evaluation from a commission which resulted in a number of "already underprivileged women seeking unlicensed providers" (2014, 87) – in *The Theatre Café*, Škrinjarić writes about immediate post-war period, noting that

[28] Dubravka Ugrešić who, in *Steffie Speck in the Jaws of Life*, writes of the protagonist's two deflorations also challenges patriarchal framing of the first intercourse as a singular experience able to change a woman's identity.

> abortions were banned, everything was done slyly, secretly. It was operated on kitchen tables, in suspicious pre-war practices and, naturally, all without anesthesia. A woman must suffer for her guilt, her lust, desire that is twisted and illicit. (1988, 117)

Also depicting two abortions, the first one, Ana's attempt to perform it by herself, as well as Eda's, forced upon her by her lover, Škrinjarić skillfully shifts from ironizing general opinions on a woman who *found herself pregnant* toward centering female perspective and unmasking unequal division of power in romances. Returning to the topic in her short story "Mesareva ljubav" ["The Butcher's Love"], published in 1996 collection *A Dog's Path*, the author describes the abusive relationship between Ana, a child working as a servant, and a well-off, married butcher who murdered her after finding out that she is about to give birth to his child. Framed as a case told to the narrator by a judge who reminisced how it was the only time she had sought a death penalty that "turned to a prison sentence, the neighbors told how he was good and hardworking" (Škrinjarić 1996, 55), the short story is eerily relevant portrait of patriarchal violence and gendered discourses on sexuality.

Zečević, by referencing her "frigidity", a trait that, along with domestic disputes, made her marriage into an illusion she mentions when elaborating why she thinks of herself as an outsider, disregards sexuality in favor of seeking intellectual companionship with her peculiar, platonic romantic interests – professor Frangeš, priest Soldo, and a much younger colleague. While her investment in men, as Ott Franolić shows through comparing Divna's and Dragojla's manuscripts, shift between desire and aiming to emulate "that successful and spiritual man … unconstrained by social, financial or moral limitations" (2016, 259), Zečević, in a manner similar to Škrinjarić, displaces events nominally recognized as the turning points, such as entering marriage (ibid, 144) and constantly references male entitlement to female bodies (ibid, 374). Realizing that books were sent to her out of *gallantry* rather than respect and meeting an university friend looking for an affair rather, as she hoped, discussion, Divna remarks that "only when the boys offer their beds, there are a lot of work and opportunities for a woman" (2017, 375). In Ott Franolić's interpretation, depicted events indicate marginalization of women in academia (2016, 186). As Zečević felt that she was "dwelling of remote outskirts of the

literary life" (2017, 181), precisely noting why is that so by depicting a combination of identity traits and material circumstances *othering* her, Ott Franolić's reading adequately summarizes the scholar's tumorous entry into the public life.

Zečević's remarks on sexuality, that, similarly to her engagement with failure, move from personal (musings on perceived lack, i.e. "frigidity", and unrequired love) toward systemic analysis of social norms and public policies that, as for Škrinjarić, interfere via invasive gynecological procedures as well as baffling, constant pressures to *indulge* men in sexual relations as well as prioritize family life and have multiple children. Upon getting pregnant, Zečević mentions her 1960 abortion: while that year marked the beginning of further liberalization, women were still forced into justifying their decision in front of commissions (Dobrivojević 2016, 95). Zečević recalls how she, after having been denied by several doctors, barely managed to get an abortion in time, witnessed "horrid screams and physicality so far from dignifying" (2017, 125) on the ward. While following decades facilitated access to contraception and abortion (Dobrivojević 2016, 95), knowledge on sexuality was either severely lacking or substituted by pornographic imagery (ibid, 93-4) and, as Zečević's experiences indicate, patriarchal in undertones. Liberatory for some, mostly heterosexual men, and in some genres, such as coming of age prose in which, as Kolanović concludes after an extensive analysis of works produced between 1950s and 1980s, frank displays of arousal were often "supportive toward patriarchal structures" (ibid, 286).[29] Sexual revolution was widely acknowledged as important, albeit problematic for women's emancipation (Šafranek 1983; 19; Lóránd 2015, 121-6). As Lóránd demonstrates by analyzing women's writing as well as popular press, that, as the case of Zagreb-based magazine *Start* shows, published a curious blend of pornography, sexist humor, and feminist articles, the sexual revolution, whose influence was felt through the 1970s and 1980s, was limited in its subversive potentials (ibid, 133). Both Škrinjarić and Zečević were aware of those limitations. Frequently writing about discrimination in intellectual circles of the 1950s and 1960s, they continued to engage with physicality and

[29] Šoljan, a Croatian writer who, as Lidija Dujić established in conversation with Sunčana Škrinjarić, inspired the character of Slavko, was one of the main representatives of the genre widely discussed in Aleksandar Flaker's 1976 *Proza u trapericama* [*Jeans Prose*]. While Flaker's research, according to Kolanović, omitted disparities between male and female coming of age experience, she dedicated a significant portion of her book to the issue (2011, 173).

sexuality as a number of feminist texts, both scholarly and popular, increased. As Škrinjarić's short story "The Butcher's Love" and Zečević's vehement passages against banning abortion and imposition of traditional gender roles, articulated feminist point of view during severe 1990s backlash (Knežević 2004, 260) against gained rights.

In an essay "'Uvijek imamo zakaj plakati' ili Bilješka o starici koja nija htjela pripovijedati" ["'We Always Have a Reason to Weep': or a Note on an Old Woman Who Refused to Narrate"] included in her 1986 collection of scholarly texts, Zečević tells about failed effort to gather folk tales: arriving to the village on holiday, she met a woman claiming not to recall anything about folklore due to grief. While unwilling to be recorded, the woman narrated about her granddaughter who was murdered in a courthouse by her abusive husband while seeking a divorce – the perpetrator was punished with twelve years in prison and, claims the old woman, "he didn't get that much for killing my granddaughter, but for killing the lawyer" (Zečević 1986, 248). Similarly to "The Butcher's Love", "We Always Have a Reason to Weep" is a story of women narrated by a woman: an unlikely protagonist of women's writing, the illiterate villager and, as Zečević remarks, skillful narrator, tells about generational trauma (she also suffered after being forced into marriage with a significantly older, sickly widower), loss, and inadequate legal system as well as patriarchal customs, that is, key issues for Yugoslav second-wave feminists. Zečević, after reconstructing the story from the notes taken during the conversation, choose to include it among her academic writings: this unorthodox strategy, criticized by one of the reviewers, academic and writer Pavao Pavličić who dismissed the second part of the book as an attempt to popularize the field by depicting curiosities of village life (1987, 249), shows the author's commitment to exploring cruelties of living in patriarchy even when the genre demands *objectivity*. The main point of the essay, as I see it, isn't that the tale about the woman and her granddaughter is *bizarre*: rather, it is common. Zečević was deeply affected by these encounters. While always aware of class differences between her group of traveling scholars and rural population they studied, in one the prose passages from *Poems and Fragments* the author imagines an alternative life trajectory in which writing would be substituted with craftsmanship:

> Even if illiterate, I would have escaped marriage. I would take up needlework, learn something, I would crochet and embroider in tiny stitches. I would not lift my head from work. No one would see my face. (2008, 39)

Another link between the two writers and the second-wave feminist is commentary on queerness and gay identities. While their depictions of heterosexuality read as queer in a wider sense (i.e. unconventional), Škrinjarić and Zečević, similarly to their contemporaries (Lóránd 2015, 131-2), evoke recognizable albeit occasionally stereotypical or outright homophobic gay types such as predatory lesbian (Škrinjarić), egalitarian couple (Zečević), and effeminate, closeted intellectual (both). While mentioned in passing, these characters indicate changing sexual mores as well as blind spots in nominally feminist oeuvres. Škrinjarić, who, in *Theatre* Café, critiques the 1950s imperative of staying *discrete* about one's homosexuality if wanting affirmation in the arts as well as depicts a lesbian as a lecherous creature lurking in the shadows, and writes a about Tajana's romantic friendships, explored queerness in her 1977 story "Trovanje biljkom" ["Poisoned by a Plant"]. The story juxtaposes fervent rambling of a woman enamored with a plant that she eventually swallows in hope of carrying its offspring, a letter in which she professes that "male body was never that smooth and elastic … it was better to sleep with a silent plant, being embraced and taken until exhaustion, being perfectly absent from life" (Škrinjarić 1978, 97), and a conclusion written in an official manner, stating that "lonely missis Jane Doe", now deceased, was behaving erratically "as confirmed by the statement of her ex-husband, respected and orderly citizen whose life has always been impeccable" (ibid, 100). While marginal, queer plots and types elucidate new (and often troubled) relationship toward the body and sexuality. It fundamentally shaped Škrinjarić's and Zečević's life trajectories, contrasting them with those of their male counterparts and role models who, albeit not always living *impeccable lives*, gained acclaim and validation with far less struggle, both because their style wasn't a novelty, and because they simply had more time for intellectual work. The next chapter will examine creative work as a way of overcoming perceived lacks and failures, that is, analyze the issue of writing in its dual aspect, as a formal intervention into conventional storytelling (in Škrinjarić and her praised genre-bending prose) and as an activity requiring

space and time (in Zečević and her laborious efforts to handle researching folklore, writing poetry, and doing housework).

6. On Creativity

As already indicated in the section on life trajectories, literary genealogies are, for Škrinjarić and Zečević, male-dominated thus aligning with the field that Zlatar depicted as "male, self-satisfied discourse of Croatian literature during 19th and 20th century" (2001, 3). While attempting to discover female creatives who came before them or, as Woolf puts it on the very end of *A Room of One's Own*, "drawing [their lives] from the lives of the unknown who were [their] forerunners" (2015, 82), both authors, at first neutrally and then polemically, portrayed writing as masculine.

In *The Theatre Café* as well as in her autobiographical trilogy, Škrinjarić contrasts two canons – the official, socialist-realist one and the alternative one, an eclectic mix of bourgeoisie writers and European modernists. *The Theatre Café* depicts the generation that, as Škrinjarić frames it, replaced identification with Pavel Korchagin, the working-class protagonist of the 1932 novel *How the Steel Was Tempered* by Russian socialist-realist writer Nikolai Ostrovsky, with reciting decadent poetry and melancholic verses authored by exclusively male writers. Tajana's reading habits, governed by inability to differentiate between *proper* and trivial literature as well as tendency toward naïve reading, "the experience of involvement and identification disdained … by much of modern literary criticism" (Felski 1989, 102), subvert aesthetic hierarchies and rules of receptions while also displaying lack of access to female antecedents. While some, such as Zagorka and Parun, appear as peripheral figures, Škrinjarić depicts regime literature as shaped by male role models, critics, and editors. In a crazed attempt to get her poetry published in *The Well*, a journal edited by his co-fighter in the second World War, Tajana's father contrasts socialist canon with *real* literature authored by "Flaubert, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, … Proust" (Škrinjarić 2004, 348): not as explicit as in her passages on women in art and access to abortion, by listing names Škrinjarić outlines the dynamics of Yugoslav literary life before the emergence of second-wave feminism.

Despite being briefly fascinated with her aunt, who was, due to her refined penmanship and narrative talent, known as "the woman-philosopher" among family, in one of her fragments Zečević positions herself as the first woman to follow her father and grandfather, both amateur poets, in writing verse. She recalls how she, in adolescence, copied her father's poetry and imagined herself to be the author – breakage in identification occurred when Zečević stumbled upon "love poems clearly written by a man for a woman" (1990, 27). After realizing that she is unable to, as she puts it, *claim* her father's poetry and, by extension, his place in heterosexual romance plot, Zečević concluded that she is obliged to "write something for [herself]" (ibid). While brief, this fragment signals creative trajectory that has autobiographical as well as historical components: the narrative about passage from identification and imitation toward style that deviates from the masculine norm is also a story about the development of Yugoslav women's writing, a poetics to which, as I will argue in this chapter, Škrinjarić and Zečević belong to. While both engage with recognizable topics of the corpus such as embodiment, sex, and domestic confinement as well as write in confessional mode occasionally *interpolated* with fiction that is, as Lukić shows, predominant in Croatian women's writing (1996, 238), their works exemplify two aspects of the novel style: Škrinjarić's texts primarily showcase formal inventiveness, and Zečević depicts writing as labor requiring very concreate, material conditions such as respite from housework and a separate space, *a room of one's own*.

Similarly to Zlatar, who describes the emergence of women's writing as a promise of overhaul in local literature (2004, 79), Lóránd deems it "the concept of the era" (2019: 113) and details its entrance to feminist literary studies: at first a *curiosity* discussed in feminist circles, women's writing was introduced to the wider public in 1983 issue of *The Republic*. Moreover, it is used to (retrospectively) group works of key literary figures. While contemporary scholars aptly describe their poetical differences (Lukić 1996, 229-38, Zlatar 2004, 83), Ugrešić, Vrljan, and Drakulić, along with Daša Drndić and Rada Iveković, are usually listed as the representative authors (Lóránd 2019, 110-1).[30] The first

[30] In texts about Yugoslav women's writing, I haven't encountered the most prolific author of the period: Ana Žube. In his article on Žube, who published more than 1500 widely read romances during the 1970s and 1980s, Ante Bašić argues that the author contributed to the development of feminist literature by realistically depicting domesticity and juxtaposing lives of several female protagonists (ibid, 123-8).

extensive elaboration of the concept, 1983 essay "'Ženska književnost' i 'žensko pismo'" ["'Women's Literature' and 'Women's Writing'"] by Ingrid Šafranek, with the exception of Ugrešić's early works, predates the literary production associated with the term: a transcript of a lecture organized by "Woman and Society" group, Šafranek's text, along with introducing the term "žensko pismo" (one of possible) translation(s) for Hélène Cixous' *écriture féminine*, references issues such as literary production and reception, periodization, and relationship between high, formally complex art and popular culture. Defining it as articulation of women's difference on textual and thematic level (Šafranek 1983, 15; Lóránd 2018, 103) and positioning is as *equally* shaped by feminism and the avant-garde emphasis on the textuality as *the* theme of literature (Šafranek 1983, 19),[31] Šafranek warns that "žensko pismo", a concept originally elaborated in Cixous' 1975 poetic manifesto "The Laugh of the Medusa", should be differentiated from women's literature, that is, all literary production authored by women (ibid, 12). According to Lóránd, who signals specificity of the concept by referencing it in original, "žensko pismo" isn't a simple translation, but "an expression with layered meanings" (2019, 113). As an

Moreover, Žube relied on *gathering* her fans' experiences for inspiration (ibid, 123) – this strategy connects her with (auto)biographical impulse in women's writing of the former socialist bloc (Einhorn 1993, 253; Lukić 1996, 238). Similarities indicate that Žube's romances and literature that is given more critical attention are influenced by the same cultural shifts such as women's entry into the public sphere and restructuring of gender roles that certainly contributed to many *private antagonisms*. As I see it, omission of Žube from the feminist canon is connected with the distinction between *literary* and *popular* as well as importance of formal criteria in (feminist) literary studies. While popular culture is frequently featured in Yugoslav women's writing, mostly in Ugrešić who ironically imitates genres such as romance and pornography (which is, as Lukić shows, her way of implementing "postmodern narrative strategies" [1996, 230]), but also in Vrkljan's early enchantment with the movies, and Škrinjarić's depiction of effects of *trivial plots* on her heroines' romantic reveries, the corpus, along with privileging female narrative trajectories and perspectives, is formally inventive. Žube's astonishing popularity suggests that what an average reader would consider paradigmatic female plot (heroine who, after a bit of trouble, usually gets her happy ending as Ugrešić puts it at the end of *Steffie Speck in the Jaws of Life*) diverged from narratives of artists and intellectuals foregrounded by Yugoslav writers and scholars.

[31] While clearly influenced by Julia Kristeva, a French feminist critic who, in her 1974 book *Revolution in Poetic Language*, argues that social order can be effectively undermined through literature (1986, 113), Šafranek's praise for the avant-garde is slightly perplexing as it was present only marginally in Croatian women's literature (e.g. expressionist elements in Pavle Milić and Verka Škurle-Ilijić [Detoni-Dujmić 2001,192-9]), I see it as a way of disregarding, by then outdated, socialist realism and linking women's writing with Yugoslav openness to modernist, anti-representational art, a stance widely regarded as the sing of the state's modernity that Lukić connects with Yugoslavia's efforts to separate itself from "other communist dictatorships" (2001, 86). Insistence on associating women's writing with textually-inclined, canonical modernism helps Šafranek not to seem outright antagonistic when trying to claim space for (local) literary women and what she perceives as the articulation of their difference that, as Lóránd shows, challenges the notion of "'generally human'" that shaped Yugoslav project of women's emancipation as well as the local literary scene (2019, 115).

adjective “žensko” can apply to femininity rather than strictly to womanhood which distinguishes Yugoslav rendition from typical English translation of *écriture* feminine as “women’s writing” and signals an anti-essentialist stance (ibid, 113-4) also noticeable in Šafranek’s listing of representative authors that includes Colette, Marguerite Duras and Jean Genet (three examples provided by Cixous [1976: 879]), Marcel Proust, “the most female writer of all time” (Šafranek 1983, 8), as well as a number of her contemporaries (ibid, 10-11). As for the second part of the phrase “žensko pismo”, Lóránd observes that “pismo” can mean “scripture”, as in Holy Scripture (which underlines subversive potential of women’s writing as a practice going against entrenched cultural codes), general writing system, or simply a letter (2019, 114). The third translation underlines *sender-receiver* dynamic exemplified by Šafranek’s experience of being an admirer of exclusionary, masculine culture who gradually discovered women’s literature (1983, 8-9) and, in congruence between “personal experience [of revolt] and interest in theory”, claimed novel scholarly identity: that of a feminist literary critic. While reluctant to get *too* personal and counter methodological standard of dispassionate reading, Šafranek frames the anecdote as common experience: this brief autobiographical passage in the midst of dense, theoretical text is very similar to formational narratives in Škrinjarić and Zečević.

Šafranek proposes two ways of periodizing women’s literature. The first emphasizes orientation toward difference: negated at first, it gained negative connotations due to de Beauvoir’s elaboration of femininity as an imposed constraint, only to be affirmed by post-1968 generation (1983, 16-7). The second distinguishes between embracing existing forms while being thematically innovative, an approach that marked the period from 17th to 19th century, and expression open toward writing *in* the female embodiment (ibid, 18). While Šafranek, who primarily worked on French literature, mostly references theorists and literary women from within that field, her brief engagement with periodization resonates with Anglo-Saxon feminist current and its privileging of literary history. Lóránd describes this similarity as implicit influence of gynocriticism, Elaine Showalter’s term for feminist inquiry into “woman as writer” that includes “psychodynamics of female creativity; linguistics and the problem of a female language; the trajectory of the individual or collective female literary career; literary history; and, of course, studies of particular writers and works” (1993, 268), in Yugoslav feminist circles.

Albeit not as referenced as its French counterpart, Lóránd argues that it shaped critical engagement with literary women, both canonized and obscure (2019, 113). For Škrinjarić and Zečević this investment in female ancestors, while not backed by feminist theory, is present in formational narratives, primarily as inability to find any, as well as in their research of two female literates, Kveder and Jarnević.

Šafranek is attentive toward material circumstances and class issues: this trait distinguishes Yugoslav articulation of the poetics from the French one as Cixous, while briefly mentioning "the imbecilic capitalist machinery, in which publishing houses are the crafty, obsequious relayers of imperatives handed down by the economy that works against us and off our backs" (1976, 877), primarily focuses on psychic obstacles that prevent women from writing. Cixous presents capitalism as dull and stiffening rather than outright exploitative: utopic possibilities of female creativity don't require fundamental changes in the sphere of (re)production. Šafranek quotes Cixous' remarks on feeling inferior and undermined when faced with literature reserved for "the great – that is, for 'great men'" (1976, 876) but supplements them with additional unfavorable conditions such as "historical lack of systemic education, difficulty in entering cultural field, oppressive role of the family, male partner, and motherhood" (Šafranek 1983, 9). While summarizing the history of Western women's literature, she mentions that "writing has always been a privilege" as "assembly line worker doesn't write, nor did a medieval peasant" (ibid, 18). I find this intervention important because it shows that the concept of "women's writing" underwent transformations upon arriving to Yugoslavia due to specificity of local second-wave feminism that was shaped by interaction with critical Marxism (Lóránd 2018, 2-3) while still countering the state's gender-neutral approach to emancipation and literary production (ibid 2019, 114). As Felski warns after analyzing female formational narratives, Western feminist writing, both scholarly and literary, often lacks class component and opts for subjective resolution and celebration of "autonomous selfhood":

> the class-blindness of almost the entire body of feminist literature, the discrepancy between its subjective perception of addressing the needs of all women and a model of emancipation which is for the most part restricted to an educated middle class. (1989, 151-2)

Yugoslav understanding of women's contribution to culture as shaped by gender *and* class is valuable in supplementing this omission. Already influenced by several feminist currents when introduced, the term continued to be reinterpreted during the two international conferences in Dubrovnik (in 1986 and 1988) (Jakobović Fribec 2004, 2). Its final rendition, Ugrešić's 1988 essay "Brutal Women's Writing", written as commentary for translation of Petrushevskaya's short story "Among Friends", offers a brief overview of Soviet women's prose characterized by "two main principles: first-person narration close to 'skaz' (or 'skaz' itself) and thematic limitation to female everyday life" (1988, 164). Appearing around 1830, *skaz* is originally oral form in which the narrator, limited by his or her perspective, addresses listeners in vernacular speech (Schmid 2014, 787) – Ugrešić notices all of these traits in Petrushevskaya whose narrator, due to her repetitive, meandering speech fails to communicate a coherent account of her life (1988, 165). As Lóránd emphasizes, Ugrešić's articulation of the concept has narrative as well as thematic component (2019, 122): similarly to avant-garde textuality, *skaz* brings "the telling process … into sharp focus" (Schmid 2014, 793). As the theoretical elaboration of "women's writing", Škrinjarić's and Zečević's works display dual intervention into established modes of literary production.

Lukšić, whose interpretation of Škrinjarić's prose is, as demonstrated by the essay collection dedicated to the writer and her works (primarily their pedagogical *usefulness*), still authoritative, foregrounds form: while claiming that Škrinjarić primarily focuses on male characters (2001, 127), she argues that her fragmentary, lyrical style resonates with Šafranek's understanding of women's writing (ibid, 123). Škrinjarić occasionally does privilege male narrative trajectories, notably in her 1970s radio plays on literates: as showcased by the dynamic between male creator and female admirer in *A Practice for Four Voices*, this division possibly indicates that "becoming a writer" wasn't a conceivable plot for women. Lukšić's claim doesn't quite apply to Škrinjarić's prose. *The Street of Ancestors* is, as the rest of trilogy, a female formational narrative – while influenced by male role models and writers, Tajana's coming of age primarily occurs through negotiation with various types of femininity as well as encounters with, at the time of depicted events, obscure literary women. *The Theatre Café*, the book on which Lukšić bases her stance, contains two essayistic paragraphs on authorship and abortion, issues of major

importance in feminist circles, and *shifts* focus from *the great men* (Ujević and Majdak) toward anonymous women: Ivona, Mia, and Eda. In her short stories, Škrinjarić centers female confessionals or, when depicting male characters, remains attentive toward *gendered* issues such as physicality and marginality.

In comparison with her earlier prose, which is either fully written in the first person ("One Summer") or narrated by clearly separated instances ("Poisoned by a Plant"), the most significant novelty in Škrinjarić's novelistic debut, *The Street of Ancestors*, is rapid alteration between different discourses. The prime example of the writer's genre-bending style, the novel aptly incorporates recognizable traits and topics of women's writing into innovative narrative framework: Lukšić describes it as *skaz* because the uninvolved, or, in narratological terms, extradiegetic and heterodiegetic (Rimmon-Kennan 2005, 98), narrator mimics figural speech and assumes characters' perspectives (Lukšić 2001, 129). The uninvolved narrator is not impartial: characters' idiolects and interior monologues are frequently ironized, either through commentary or through juxtaposition with objectively depicted events and inserted newspaper clippings. Usually interpreted as communicating "historical framework" (Lukšić 2001, 130; Ivančić 2008, 80), the collage of reports and advertisements supplements the main story-line, Tajana's maturation, by showcasing limits of characters' perceptions and distance between domestic confinement and public life, that is, the protagonist's initial space and her eventual destination. The narrator's mastery over the depicted events is apparent in manipulating time: the only prolepsis in the novel (and in the consistently lineal temporality of the trilogy) reveals how Tajana's childhood trauma shaped her adult relationships. Rather than to reassure the reader and hint at possibility of optimistic outcome, typical for Western feminist *Bildungsroman* (Felski 1998, 133), foreshadowing is used to depict the protagonist's unconventional (hetero)sexuality and undermine her fantasies of being rescued from her bleak home by a handsome suitor:

> Her mother lashed her once, she was left with feelings of humiliation and hatred, later, when she grew up a bit, she wanted to be hit by men, and she also sought the velvety, immobile tenderness of the teddy bear [Tajana's childhood toy], those thing cannot be found in one person, so there always needed to be several. (Škrinjarić 2004, 41)

Occasionally overt, the narrator mostly retreats to provide space for the characters' perspectives and acts as an *arranger* of views that, along with adding to stylistic complexity of the texts as they are written in different dialects, showcase conflicting ideologies that influence Tajana's strive to conform as well as attempts to rebel:

> Should he have married a woman with a past, even if her beauty is unquestionable, perhaps with imperfections, but they are overshadowed by eyes, look dreamy and passionate, and soft skin, and golden locks, it is boring to listen all their nonsense, always yakking about the same, and the girl is between them, she sticks out, she is some superfluous brat who refuses to greet the passersby. Say, I kiss your hand, says her lovely amiable debauched Mommy, but she is silent, nicely dressed, in white socks and shoes, lacquer with white, and in a beautiful blue corduroy dress, what an angelic face, say some people, but she is very persistent and doesn't want to greet anyone and doesn't want to go to school and doesn't want to behave how they want. (ibid, 27-8)

In only two sentences, the narrator switches from Tajana's stepfather's narrated monologue, a technique that, according to Cohn's classification of possible ways of depicting consciousness, "reproduces verbatim the character's own mental language" while keeping "the third person reference" (1978, 14), through depiction of Tajana's feelings, toward listing Mommy's requests ("Say, 'I kiss your hand'") and others' opinions ("what an angelic face") in the form of free indirect discourse. These phrases, as the narrative technique requires, should be attributed to the characters (Rimmon-Kenan 2005, 117) rather than to the narrator who only collages them with description of Tajana's defiant behavior.

At the end of the novel, Škrinjarić uses narrated monologue to unsettle the reader, convey Tajana's youthful inability to adequately understand the adult world, and communicate her passivity and vague dread when faced with sexual violence that some contemporary critics, such as Ljubešić, fail to recognize (2008, 38). The narrator channels thoughts of Tajana's biological father who favorably compares his "little, perfectly clean and healthy daughter" (Škrinjarić 2004, 134) with his ex-wife, Tajana's mother, before kissing her on the mouth. After this act, which Tajana recalls when forcedly kissed by one

of her dates, the novel concludes in the depiction of the protagonist's entrance into adulthood, symbolized by slashing and tossing the beloved teddy bear. Albeit short, the final sequence confirms that notion of Škrinjarić fully assuming her protagonist's infantile perspective (Matijašević 2004, 10-1; Ivančić 2008, 83) is simply incorrect: the difference between the writer's early short stories and her novel is the switch toward a multiplicity of points of view and styles of speech. As I see it, the ending's poignancy is in the difference of knowledge between the narrator (and, consequentially, the reader) who is informed about the father's intentions and the *ignorant-turned-disillusioned* protagonist who is yet to fully grasp the situation. In the context of autobiographically-inclined regional women's writing, telling one's life in such a way is, perhaps, a lesson on the genre: along with contributing to general openness toward experimentation typical for the corpus, it shows that, as Smith and Watson argue, despite commonly held understanding of "personal storytelling" (2001, 14) as a complete and coherent account of one's life, "both the unified story and coherent self are myths of identity. For there is no coherent 'self' that predates stories about identity, about 'who' one is" (ibid, 47). Also apparent in *The Dark Room* that offers diverging narratives about the artist's life without privileging one account over others, not even that of the artist herself, Škrinjarić's stylistic ingenuity, along with *announcing* important traits of women's writing, a poetic that was, in 1980, yet to be articulated in Yugoslav feminist circles, illuminates possibilities and limits of confessional writing. [32]

In his 1994 book *Representations of the Intellectual*, Edward Said describes the intellectual[33] as someone who "will not adjust to domesticity or to humdrum routine" (1993, 33): while he doesn't engage with the issue further, this remark indicates a specific predicament of (Yugoslav) female intellectuals. Not only did they, to use Gramsci pictorial description, "sit for sixteen hours on end at … work-table" (1992, 37) as their male

[32] Vrkljan, whose works are recognized as the prime example of autobiographical prose (Lukić 1996, 233; Zlatar 2004, 88), does similarly: in her 1984 novel *The Silk, The Shears*, among personal recollections, she inserts two diverging accounts of family history, letters by her sisters Nada and Vera.

[33] Unlike the previously discussed thinkers who tend to conceive intellectuals as a group, Said develops more individualistic theory of an intellectual as a dedicated amateur (i.e. not a specialist within his or her field) motivated by "love for and unquenchable interest in the larger picture" (ibid, 90) and dedication to publically siding with the oppressed (ibid, 10). The concept of "the exile" he uses to describe the status of an engaged intellectual in a hostile community (ibid, 67) resonated with Croatian feminist intellectuals facing persecution during 1990s conflicts (Lukić 2001, 85-6).

counterparts, but they were also, as I show by analyzing Zečević's diary, obliged to do the major part of care work. Hence, their time was, to build upon Gramsci's portrayal of intellectual labor, split between work desk and stove (or some other appliance newly introduced to Yugoslav market). Ott Franolić, who reflects on Zečević's discontent over the realization that she is spending around three hours a day on chores, notes that split, fragmentary schedule is common patters in female intellectuals' confessional narratives (2016, 198-200): mumbling profanities while letting the lunch burn, Zečević was, as her obituary testifies, known for seeking refuge at the Institute, in her work.

Often mentioning her double burden (literary, Zečević depicts herself as carting both books and groceries), the scholar started performing the majority of domestic duties in the 1960s. As visible from her 1964 to-do list, Zečević's daily schedule consisted of cooking and cleaning that left her, as she notes, "without ability to concentrate – warm and sleepily tired" (2017, 104) – unequal division of domestic duties, typical for Yugoslavia as well as the rest of the Eastern bloc (Massey et al 1995, 360), continued throughout her marriage. As Massey, Hahn, and Sekulić showed in the 1989 survey that confirmed the long-established fact that women's entry into the workforce hasn't lessened their obligations in the private sphere (1995, 360), sole belief in gender equality, either as an official, the Party's stance (ibid, 363), or as a view held by an individual woman,[34] was insufficient in eradicating the "second shift". Busier than even after becoming a mother, Zečević displays significant disdain for housework in her passages on domestic life: at first dismissing it as a boring, petite bourgeoisie concern, the scholar offered a complex articulation of the issue in 1985. Combining factors recognized as influential by Massey, Hahn, and Sekulić, primarily patriarchal attitudes and parallels between the gendered division of paid and unpaid labor (1995, 363), with the local second-wave vocabulary, Zečević depicts her situation as being denied time for intellectual work in order to uphold male privilege *and* existing class structure. While conveying personal resentment, Zečević uses her experience to reflect on general issues in a way that resonates with retrospective sociological analysis as well as the conglomeration of Western feminism and critical Marxism typical for Yugoslavia. While commenting her husband's angry

[34] The survey indicated that, while a woman's support for gender equality wasn't a factor when it comes to performing housework, the men's views significantly influenced their willingness to contribute (ibid, 371).

remarks on her studies which he saw as compromising their *nuptial happiness*, Zečević recalls that she, "like a real female outlaw" (2017, 363), entered postgraduate education without consulting with anyone and, consequentially, refused to be "always available to her household and family" (ibid, 362). She contrasts this *transgression* with repetitiveness of female life trajectories:

> […] the majority of the slavish female class serves to maintain the marriage, and marriage is needed by men so another workforce of enslaved female producers could be raised among children for further marital reproduction and the nurturing superior, ruling male class. If some woman thinks that the situation today is different, that is, better than before, she is deeply mistaken. (ibid, 363)

Even though she routinely associates femininity with unruly embodiment, that is, *biology*, in the analysis of housework, Zečević primarily defines women through their place in division of labor. Moreover, she writes of herself as not fully siding with *the class* she was born into – while the terminology is significantly different, the scholar reiterates portrayal of feminist life trajectory as refusal to succumb to entrenched life scripts.

Similarly to Šafranek, Zečević articulates the class issue in broad terms. Ott Franolić lists circumstances, such as lack of adequate housing and the rising cost of living, that prevented the scholar from fully dedicating herself to writing (2016, 193). While, as Ott Franolić emphasizes, Zečević's family was, objectively speaking, in a better position than the majority of Yugoslav population (ibid, 195), their struggle to obtain an apartment, which finally ended when they moved to a newly built three-bedroom one in 1978 after a long period of renting rooms and sharing a studio, indicates specificities of living in socialism (ibid, 194). Ott Franolić describes Zečević's dissatisfaction over the lack of consumer goods and small comforts such as taking a taxi instead of public transportation as well as her aversion toward Prečko, the neighborhood which she considered irredeemably ugly (ibid, 204) as well as populated by crude, filthy people. However, Zečević's relationship toward the working class is ambivalent: when writing about well of intellectuals and reflecting on stratification of scholars, that is, division between those from academic families and newcomers to the field, she sides with the workers. While the polarity between the urban intellectuals and peasant population they are researching is

clearly established in Zečević's scholarly writings, in her diary she conceives herself as caught in between the social strata. Permanently displeased with her income and inability to afford winter clothing and fixing her teeth, in 1983 she remarked that "with the amount that we make, we belong in this proletarian shithole [Prečko]. It is easy to be concerned for the working class – and live in a quiet house in the nice part of the town as many in positions of power do. It is questionable whether they are worried about the pathetic and ugly working class – or – themselves" (2017, 316). Far from sympathetic identification and socialist realist discourse, quoted passages indicate that, while Zečević aptly used Marxist discourse, her siding with the proletarians on the basis of lacking privileges that the established intellectuals have is primarily directed at criticizing the second group, rather than celebrating or reforming the first.

As she started working at the Institute, Zečević entered academic circles and became aware of disparities within them. Disgruntled due to handling the majority of housework, upon visiting a female colleague in her posh townhouse, Zečević noted that she hires "a woman to mind her child, and another girl for the kitchen" (ibid, 153) that is, that she is able to engage in intellectual work due to delegating care work to other women. Zečević frequently reiterates this stance on domestic sphere sabotaging scholarly pursuits and female intellectuals (herself included) as caught between their reproductive duties and creative ambitions. During the 1970s and '80s, Zečević repeatedly argued that writing is labor like any other and polemicized against "blasé intellectuals" (ibid, 240) whom she saw as segregated from the working masses and closely knit to the regime bureaucrats. In 1973, she stated that she has "more communist ideals than revolutionaries who lost their revolutionary innocence due to living the good life" (ibid, 246). Albeit showing a great deal of consideration for villagers whose folk tales she analyzed as carefully as texts canonically recognized as literary, in her diary Zečević frequently disdains *the masses* as well as desires *the good life*. While contradictory, depicted oscillations indicate that proper surroundings and ability to structure one's own time are preconditions for intellectual work. These material circumstances are, as Ott Franolić establishes, frequently referenced in autobiographical narratives of female scholars and creatives. However, in Zečević's diary, the class issues, both as the unequal division of reproductive labor and inherited privileges that distinguish some intellectuals

from others, illuminate specificities of local context that influenced subsequent articulations of women's writing. While her diary clearly displays signature generic openness, evident in lyrical and essayistic excepts some of which she used in her poetry and polemical articles, Zečević is primarily concerned with *mundane*, material conditions that foster women's entry into literary productions rather than with stylistic interventions needed for the articulation of their difference once they are already part of the field.

While her article on Dragojla Jarnević as well as selections of excerpts from, then unpublished, diary of the 19th-century literate are more prominent, as she reuses the majority of her points in 1985 volume on the author, Zečević also published a prose fragment "Mirođija" ["Spice"] in 1983 issue of *The Republic*. Presumably selected to exemplify the local variety of women's writing, the prose piece consists of two images: in the first one, the narrator depicts how she, while milling around the kitchen, glimpsed at the apparition of the man she desired[35] while the second one is a dream sequence in which the narrator observes a woman and a turtle in the mountain well. Cleverly playing with points of view as well as with language, as the man is seemingly *conjured* through a variety in pronunciation of the word "mirođija", Zečević conveys suppressed eroticism and ethereal unity that culminates in the question "who is that woman and whose life is preserved in the cleft, high up, like a little bit of see-through lake water, with a hearth of a fugitive hidden in the turtle and my dream?" (1983, 212). Opting for significantly different motifs than in her other texts that primarily depict realities of life, in the fragment Zečević recasts the domestic setting, usually depicted as stiffening confinement, through innovative narration. Hence, her intervention isn't limited to content, that is, circumstances preventing or fostering female creativity: it has also has a stylistic component.

7. Sunčana Škrinjarić, Divna Zečević, and History of Yugoslav Feminism

In addition to recording their experiences and producing generically diverse life narratives, that were either recognizable as their own or attributed to other marginal subjects, Škrinjarić and Zečević used (auto)biographical trajectories to establish continuity with the

[35] As her diary reveals, it is Soldo, a Catholic priest with whom she frequently corresponded in the 1980s.

pre-war generation, that is, the 19th and early 20th-century literary women. For both authors, these divergent biographical trajectories, simultaneously based on enactment and refusal of entrenched *womanly roles* of a wife and a mother, became an important source of inspiration and example of resilience as well as the way of engaging with political issues of their time. Tendency toward interpolation of different female experiences and centering women's stories, those of the authors' contemporaries as well as historical ones, is reflected in concepts retrospectively used to describe Yugoslav women's writing as "sym-gyno-graphical" (Zlatar and Ott Franolić) and "writing the sisterhood" (Lóránd).

Used by Zlatar to describe mirroring life trajectories in Vrkljan's novel *Marina or about Biography*, "sym-gyno-graphy" is, as Ott Franolić explains when using the concept to analyze similarities between Jarnević, Zečević, and herself, an amalgam of two neologisms: Domna Stanton's "autogynography" and Consuelo Riviera-Fuentes' "sim/bio/graphy" (Ott Franolić 2016, 239-40). According to Ott Franolić (ibid, 239), Stanton, whose engagement with female confessionals dates back to the early 1980s, coined the term "autogynography" to signal gender difference (ibid, 239) apparent in women's life writing. However, her intervention, while affirming some, by the time she republished her essay in 1988, well-established traits of female autobiographies such as privileging "discontinuous, digressive, [and] fragmented" (1988, 137) narration and private sphere, primarily domestic interrelatedness, over individual achievement in public and professional life (ibid), shouldn't be limited to adding women to the autobiographical canon. She also challenged the status of reference, that is, understanding of the genre as honestly depicted life, as well as agenda of a feminist critic whose "own identity depended on the referential reality of the woman in the text" (ibid, 140). As Tess Cosslett, Celia Lury, and Penny Summerfield summarize in the overview of feminist scholarship preceding essays from their 2000 co-edited volume *Feminism and Autobiography: Text, Theories, Methods*, "excising the 'bio', that is 'real life', from 'autobiography'" (2000, 7) allows women to write about themselves without obliging them to pen a truthful testimony. The shift from realistic representation toward textual constitution of feminine subjectivity (Stanton 1988, 139) is important in understanding Yugoslav articulation of women's writing and its privileging of avant-garde form as well as peculiarities of Sunčana

Škrinjarić's and Divna Zečević's life writing. While writing about herself as if she were someone else (Škrinjarić) or using historical personae to investigate her intellectual curiosity and unconventional sexuality (Zečević), these authors challenged the limits of the genre while incorporating awareness of gender difference.

As for the collective aspect of this feminist project, Ott Franolić explains that she relied on Riviera-Fuentes (2016, 239), a scholar who refused to interpret texts as a disinterested reader while favoring mutual codependence and mapping one's identity through (textual) encounters (2000, 248). By introducing the biological term "symbiosis" to life writing, Riviera-Fuentes emphasizes relationality, already recognized as a common trait of female (auto)biographies (Stanton 1988, 138) – however, this interrelatedness isn't based on ascribed roles within the family but on shared experience of queer sexuality that obfuscates linear temporality by occupying "not only a textual/sexual space but also a time *warp*" (Riviera-Fuentes 2000, 250). Collectivity, as it is present in Škrinjarić's and Zečević's works, has ambivalent rather than strictly positive implications. Valued by the socialist regime, belonging to the collective and upholding the communitarian spirit is seemingly disregarded by Škrinjarić and Zečević as they portray lonesome heroines, oppose the culture aimed at the masses (Škrinjarić) or disdain the working people populating socialist blocks (Zečević): as I show in this section, while markedly gendered experiences are present throughout their oeuvres, overlapping of life trajectories primarily characterizes Škrinjarić's and Zečević's biographical text. As such, they resonate with another depiction of Yugoslav women's writing as "writing the sisterhood". Coined by Lóránd, the phrase acknowledges feminine difference as well as recognizes belonging to the group, that is, two traits also communicated by neologism "sym-gyno-graphy". Moreover, it positions the corpus between the two articulations of togetherness: Yugoslav camaraderie of the working people and Western, women-only kinship.

As she elaborates after analyzing scholarly texts as well as fictional output in the 1970s and '80s Yugoslavia, Lóránd uses the term "writing the sisterhood" to convey dual indebtedness of local textual production to *écriture feminine* and gynocriticism as well as an acute awareness of womanhood as shared experience: "'writing the sisterhood' is a genre and a technique of sympathetically reflecting on the lives and fates of other women through one's own story" (2019, 118). While some instances of mutual recognition

involved their contemporaries, the Yugoslav authors, as Lóránd points out while interpreting Vrkljan's portrayal of Tsvetaeva, occasionally sought kinship in the literary canon (ibid, 119). Škrinjarić, who, while asked to contribute to commemorating her grandmother in 1978, on one-hundredth anniversary of her birth, hasn't published about Zofka Kveder until 2004, experienced a curious overlap between *familiar* and literary foremothers. With the exception of her anonymous gifted aunt, interaction with historical life trajectories was different for Zečević who, while clearly critical about Jarnević's conservative stance on women's participation in politics, heavily identified with the literate, especially her doomed romances, heavy workload, and the status of a perpetual outsider.

Kveder, described by Feldman as an ardent advocate of women's suffrage and social rights who sided with interwar socialists over middle-class feminists (2004, 239), is, in biography authored by Slovene literary scholar Katja Mihunko Poniž, depicted as a convent girl escaping abusive childhood home to pursue higher education and a literate who, despite eventually gaining recognition in artistic as well as political circles, suffered bouts of melancholia due to her troubled home life (2006, 284). While emphasizing Kveder's contribution to South Slavic women's movement(s), Mihunko Poniž is vague when it comes to the writer's socialist agendas (ibid, 283) that clearly come through in her literary debut, 1900 short story collection *Misterij žene* [*The Mystery of Woman*]. *The Mystery of Woman*, a sequence of fragments on anonymous women, with the exception of the touching tribute to Kveder's free-spirited friend who disregarded patriarchal customs, focuses on revealing private and inner life of peasants and proletarians. Škrinjarić's essay on Kveder, "Zapisi o baki koja sja" ["Notes on My Grandmother Who Glows"], the very final segment of her collected works, is included in 2004 edition of Kveder's collection. Interpolating family recollections and facts about her grandmothers' career in literature and journalism, Škrinjarić, in her signature lengthy sentences, portrays Kveder's duality implied in vastly diverging accounts of Feldman and Mihunko Poniž. While she never met Kveder who committed suicide in 1926, Škrinjarić read her works during childhood, imagining Slovene as melodic, cryptic language of fiction. Depicting herself in a position similar to Tajana's whose formational years occurred in the midst of dignified ancestors, the author gazed at portraits decorating her family home. Škrinjarić describes Kveder as one of her doomed heroines:

> [she] lived fast and brazenly, recklessly and without caution, gave birth to three girls, divorced her first husband and was abandoned by the second one, edited literary journals and women's magazines, corresponded with numerous prominent and anonymous people …, with all her literary talent, she also had some sort of urge to self-destruct. (2004, 588-9)

Moreover, Škrinjarić's essay establishes matrilineal transference between Kveder and herself through early reading experiences that double as a lesson on the value of form and linguistic queerness, traits prominently featured in the multiplicity of voices found in Škrinjarić's prose. The final peculiarity, off-hand remark on Kveder, "serious and lovely suffragette" (Škrinjarić 2004, 586), disapproving "modern feminism" and "constant pursuit of beauty and youthfulness" (ibid, 590) could read as Škrinjarić's mischaracterization of feminism. I don't think that is the case: I believe that Škrinjarić observed mainstreaming and commercialization of feminism in the early 2000s and used Kveder, "role model to many women during the past century" (2004, 590), to distinguish regional women's movement from such tendencies.[36]

Unlike Kveder whose feminist activism was widely acknowledged, Dragojla Jarnević, one of few female participants in 19th century national movement equally known for her *spinsterhood* as for her writing, was yet to become a feminist role model[37] when Zečević started working on her diary in the early 1960s. Unable to complete formal education due to untimely death of her father and financial struggles that followed, Jarnević supported herself by sewing and tutoring (Prlenda 2006, 187). Devotee to the national cause, she published sentimental and patriotic poetry and prose that was, as historian Sandra Prlenda notes, despite aligning with ruling literary fashions of the era, unfairly dismissed as lacking in literacy[38] and style (ibid, 186). Her most extensive work,

[36] For a detailed analysis of popular feminism in the post-socialist context, see Maša Grdešić's book *Cosmopolitika: kulturalni studiji, feminizam i ženski časopisi* [*Cosmopolitics: Cultural Studies, Feminism, and Woman's Magazines*] on the Croatian edition of monthly *Cosmopolitan*.

[37] In her 1980s articles on notable women, Sklevicky credits both Jarnević and Zagorka as early proponents of feminism (1996, 250). However, their oeuvres are framed quite differently – while Jarnević's intimate confessions and her efforts to independently sustain herself are given equal attention, Zagorka is primarily portrayed as a journalist interested in political issues of her time rather than an author of romances.

[38] Jarnević, like the rest of those belonging to the educated bourgeoisie, used German in daily life: Prlenda notes that she was influenced by German romanticism, but switched to "Croatian vernacular" to uphold "national … spirit" (2006, 186).

the diary she kept for 41 years, was characterized as pathological and perverse (ibid, 187) and, until 2000 critical edition with commentary by Irena Lukšić, the scholar who authored the only comprehensive interpretation of Škrinjarić's prose, published only in excerpts, primarily those detailing events related to the national movement (Ott Franolić 2016, 243).

When asked to contribute to the 1983 issue of *The Republic*, Zečević, along with her own fragment on extramarital affections, submitted Jarnević's description of an affair with a young peasant boy whom she supported monetarily. Arguing that the passage deviates from 19th-century morality, Zečević notes that it remained controversial for her contemporaries, male critics who portrayed Jarnević as „a 'poor' woman lacking 'welcoming home' and 'a master'. Dragojla, in moments of crisis, suffered due to circumstances singling her out; it seems that the critics suffered much more, that is, replicated general opinion about 'the proper place' of a woman in society far more frequently" (1983, 169) than the diarist herself. Besides sarcastically summarizing biases within literary studies, Zečević, in a manner similar to contemporary critics such as Smith and Watson, argues that Jarnević subverted stereotypical connection between sexuality and the archetype of *femme fatale* and introduced "the career woman" as a novel identity in regional literature (ibid, 169). In 1985 book on the literate, Zečević reiterates these claims as well as supplements them with more extensive class analysis to showcase "the connection between the spiritual sphere and material base" (1985, 33). According to Ott Franolić, working on the manuscript was, for scholar who, similarly to Jarnević, struggled to find time for creative pursuits, suffered due to feeling excluded, and heavily identified with male role models whose triumphal life trajectories were impossible to embody (2016, 252-8), "almost like looking at the mirror, recognizing herself in another [woman]" (ibid, 260). Receiving immediate acclaim from feminists such as Sklevicky (1996, 244-5) as well as from Zlatar who was, at the time, a recent graduate working in publishing, Zečević's work on Jarnević's diary finally *confirmed* her belonging to Yugoslav feminist circles.

In her book about Jarnević, Zečević noted that "a person thinks of their destiny … within governing literary motifs of their time" (1985, 13): her works, as those authored by Škrinjarić, are somehow *before* their time as they depict female creatives attempting to

grapple with embodiment, marginality, and unconventional sexuality without the established vocabulary to do so. In their own confessional narrative and through biographies of other women, Zečević and Škrinjarić contributed to the formulation of a novel literary figure: the feminist intellectual.

8. Conclusion

In this thesis, I argue that Škrinjarić and Zečević, two writers who are, due to creating in between established feminist generations, still peculiar, peripheral figures omitted in recent scholarship on Yugoslav feminism, authored comprehensive oeuvres in which they "attempted to think through their situation" (de Beauvoir 2010, 893). My main agenda was to, following Bonfiglioli's intervention into Yugoslav political history, shift the timeline of cultural history and showcase continuity of Croatian women's literature through interpretation of two "infinitely obscure lives" (Woolf 2011, 65). Moreover, I attempted to put their textual production in dialogue with Lóránd's comprehensive history of second-wave feminism in Yugoslavia. While not fully participating in activities that proliferated in the 1970s and '80s, Škrinjarić and Zečević, whose works were referenced by their more prominent contemporaries only to be forgotten by the subsequent generation of scholars, consistently foregrounded female voices and experiences.

The authors greatly invested in life writing and (auto)biographical genres, Škrinjarić's and Zečević's narratives of female formative experiences privilege artistic pursuits over entrenched plots of romance, marriage, and motherhood. As such, even when portraying reclusiveness and passivity, that is, dispositions not immediately recognizable as feminist, they showcase that normative stories about creativity and intellectual becoming are, just as Yugoslav bohemian and academic circles, fundamentally inhospitable toward female protagonists. Along with two extensive life narratives, the coming of age trilogy and the diary, Škrinjarić and Zečević published a number of generically diverse (auto)biographical texts. These works display development from the portrayal of individual revolt and personal failure toward a systemic critique of inequalities that the socialist project of women's emancipation never managed to fully

eradicate. As some of them, notably Škrinjarić's trilogy and the novel *The Theatre Café* as well as earlier parts of Zečević's diary, describe experiences that occurred in the 1940s, '50s, and '60, a period, as Bonfiglioli argues, commonly understood as uniformly regressive (2014, 1), they are useful in reexamining the timeline of Yugoslav women's movement. Moreover, Škrinjarić's and Zečević's tendency to explore physicality and sexuality of a variety of marginalized subjects offers insights into rapidly changing gender norms and possible ways of embodying socialist womanhood. By continuously returning to issues of authorship, acclaim, and legacy, the two literates questioned what does it mean to be a female intellectual in socialist Yugoslavia.

While oscillating between admiration for the exclusive, male-dominated literary canon and attempts to establish the alternative via "women's writing", a novel style able to incorporate gender difference, Škrinjarić and Zečević, as I show by engaging with the reception of Western feminist theory in socialist Yugoslavia, are early representatives of "women's writing", poetics primarily associated with the works of Ugrešić, Drakulić, and Vrkljan. In the section on literature, I, following Lukić, Zlatar, and Lóránd, examine Yugoslav reception of the term and show how its dual articulation, understanding of writing as a textual practice as well as labor requiring specific material circumstances, relates with Škrinjarić and Zečević. As I demonstrate through narratological analysis, Škrinjarić's intervention is primarily textual. However, her lauded ability to incorporate a multiplicity of styles of speech and points of view elucidates asymmetries in knowledge and power, the issues of major importance for feminists. Likewise, while mostly documenting struggles to ensure time and space for scholarly and literary work, Zečević's texts, as noticeable from her prose fragment "Spice", have artistic components that shouldn't be overlooked. Finally, I show that these two literates went beyond striving to enter the history of literature as lone, gifted individuals – Škrinjarić and Zečević, by engaging with life trajectories of women's rights advocates Dragojla Jarnević and Zofka Kveder, penned out matrilineal narratives of intellectual becoming and creative maturation.

Other than placing them within a story of Yugoslav women's movement, in this thesis, I wanted to eulogize Sunčana Škrinjarić and Divna Zečević as literates whose life writing, as Solnit puts it her memoir *Recollections of My Nonexistence*, "changed the

collective story from the old overarching story built on endless silencing … storytellers … who have broken that silence with their voices and made room thereby for other voices to be heard, perhaps before they too become survivors with terrible stories to tell" (2019, 195). As I came to relate with their stubborn efforts to work on, write, publish, and commemorate their lives in an environment hostile toward unconventional women and their stories, I hope that the others will be able to do the same.

Bibliography

Škrinjarić, Sunčana. *Jogging u nebo*. Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1991.
Škrinjarić, Sunčana. *Kazališna kavana*. Zagreb: Mladost, 1988.
Škrinjarić, Sunčana. *Kuća od riječi*. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga, 2004.
Škrinjarić, Sunčana. *Noć s vodenjakom*. Čakovec: Tiskarsko-izdavački zavod "Zrinski", 1978.
Škrinjarić, Sunčana. *Pasji put*. Zagreb: Školske novine, 1996.
Škrinjarić, Sunčana. *Tamna soba: drame*. Zagreb: Stajer-graf, 2004.
Zečević, Divna. *Autoportret s dušom*. Zagreb: Duriex, 2008.
Zečević, Divna. *Dragojla Jarnević*. Zagreb: Zavod za znanost o književnosti Filozofskog Fakulteta,1985.
Zečević, Divna. *Književnost na svakom koraku: Studije i članci*. Osijek: Izdavački centar Revija, Radničko sveučilište "Božidar Maslarić", 1986.
Zečević, Divna. "Mirođija." *Republika: mjesečnik za književnost, umjetnost i društvo*, Vol. 39 (1983): 211-212.
Zečević, Divna: "O Dnevniku Dragojle Jarnević." *Republika: mjesečnik za književnost, umjetnost i društvo*, Vol. 39 (1983): 163-169.
Zečević, Divna. *Život kao voda hlapi: izbor iz dnevnika 1961-2006.* Zagreb: Disput, 2017.

Bašić, Ante. "Ljubić u maniri Scarlett O'Hara: Ana Žube, *Ne traži me u sebi* (1985)." *Nova Croatica: časopis za hrvatsku književnost i kulturu*, Vol. 5, No. 5 (2011): 113-143.
Bauman, Zygmunt. *Legislators and Interpreters. On Modernity, Post-modernity and Intellectuals*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987.
Bogić, Anna. "Becoming Woman Simone de Beauvoir and *Drugi pol* in Socialist Yugoslavia." In *"On ne naît pas femme: on le devient" The Life of a Sentence*, edited by Bonnie Mann and Martina Ferrari, 315-330. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2017.
Bonfiglioli, Chiara. "Communisms, Generations, and Waves: The Cases of Italy, Yugoslavia, and Cuba." In *Gender, Generations, and Communism in Central and Eastern Europe and Beyond*, edited by Anna Artwińska and Agnieszka Mrozik, 66-81. New York and London: Routledge, 2021.
Bonfiglioli, Chiara. "Women's Political and Social Activism in the Early Cold War Era: The Case of Yugoslavia." *Aspasia*, Vol. 8 (2014): 1-25.
Bošković, Duško. "Intelektualci u vlasti: društveni obrasci u formativnim godinama druge Jugoslavije." *Filozofija i društvo*, Vol. 3 (2011): 122-135.
Buttigieg, Joseph A. Introduction to *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 1., by Antonio Gramsci, 1-64. New York: Columbia UP, 2011.
Calic, Marie-Janine. *A History of Yugoslavia*. Translated by Dona Geyer. West Lafayette: Purdue UP, 2019.
Cixous, Hélène. "The Laugh of the Medusa." *Signs*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Summer, 1976): 875-893.
Clifford, James. "Introduction: Partial Truths," In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics*

of Ethnography, edited by James Clifford and George E. Marcus, 1-26. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1986.
Cohn, Dorrit. *Transparent Minds. Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction.* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1978.
Cosslett, Tess, Celia Lury, and Penny Summerfield. "Introduction." In *Feminism and Autobiography. Texts, Theories, Methods*, edited by Tess Cosslett, Celia Lury, and Penny Summerfield, 1-22. London and New York, Routledge, 2000.
de Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*. Translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany Chevallier. London and New York: Vintage Books, 2011.
Detoni-Dujmić, Dunja. "Croatian Women Writers from the 'Moderna' to the Second World War." In *A History of Central European Women's Writing*, edited by Celia Hawkesworth, 7-13. New York: Palgrave, 2001.
Dobrivojević, Ivana. "Planiranje porodice u Jugoslaviji 1945–1974." *Istorija 20. veka*, No. 2 (2016): 83-98.
Doyle Springer, Mary. "Booth, Wayne C." In *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms*, edited by Irena R. Makaryk, 259-261. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2000.
Drake, David. *French Intellectuals and Politics from the Dreyfus Affair to the Occupation*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
Drakulić, Slavenka. *Holograms of Fear*. Translated by Ellen Elias-Bursać and Slavenka Drakulić. London: The Women's Press, 1993.
Drakulić, Slavenka. *Smrtni grijesi feminizma*. *Ogledi o mudologiji*. Zaprešić: Fraktura, 2020.
Duda, Igor. "Uvod: od nazadnosti do svemira, od projekta do zbornika." In *Stvaranje socijalističkoga čovjeka. Hrvatsko društvo i ideologija jugoslavenskog socijalizma*, edited by Igor Duda, 5-22. Zagreb and Pula: Srednja Europa, 2017.
Dujić, Lidija, and Ludwig Bauer. *Knjiga o Sunčani i Severu*. Sisak: Aura, 2010.
Einhorn, Barbara. *Cinderella Goes to Market: Citizenship, Gender, and Women's Movements in East Central Europe*. London: Verso, 1993.
Etzioni, Amitai. "Are Public Intellectuals an Endangered Species?" In *Public Intellectuals An Endangered Species?*, edited by Amitai Etzioni and Alyssa Bowditch, 1-30. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006.
Evans, Mary. "Auto/biography as a Research Method." In *Research Methods for English Studies*, edited by Gabriele Griffin, 31-46. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005.
Evans, Mary. "Can Women be Intellectuals?" In *Intellectuals and their Publics. Perspectives from the Social Sciences*, edited by Christian Fleck, Andreas Hess, and Stina E Lyon, 29-40. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2009.
Feldman, Andrea. „Proričući gladnu godinu – žene i ideologija jugoslavenstva (1918. – 1939.)." In *Žene u Hrvatskoj: ženska i kulturna povijest*, edited by Andrea Feldman, 235-246. Zagreb: Institut Ženska infoteka, 2004.
Felski, Rita. *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics*. *Feminist Literature and Social Change.* Cambridge: Hutchinson Radius, 1989.
Franković, Sanja. "Kazališna kavana – kulturna sinegdoha grada Zagreba 50-ih godina XX. stoljeća." *Hum: časopis Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Mostaru*, Vol. 6 (2010): 105-123.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Gli intellettuali e l'organizzazione della cultura*. Roma: Liber Liber, 2014.
Gramsci, Antonio. *Pre-Prison Writings*. Translated by Virginia Cox. Cambridge: Cambridge UP: 1994.
Gramsci, Antonio. *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 1. Translated by Joseph A. Buttigieg and Antonio Callari. New York: Columbia UP, 2011.
Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers, 1992.
Grdešić, Maša. *Cosmopolitika: kulturalni studiji, feminizam i ženski časopisi*. Zagreb: Disput, 2013.
Halberstam, Jack. *The Queer Art of Failure*. Durham: Duke UP, 2011.
Harsch, Donna. "Communism and Women." In *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*, edited by Stephen A. Smith, 488-504. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014.
Hawkesworth, Celia. "Croatian Women Writers, 1945-95." In *A History of Central European Women's Writing*, edited by Celia Hawkesworth, 256-278. New York: Palgrave, 2001.
Ivančić, Ivana. "Realistička proza Sunčane Škrinjarić." In *Život i djelo(vanje) Sunčane Škrinjarić: zbornik radova s međunarosnoga znanstvenoga skupa Zlatni danci 10*, edited by Ana Pintarić, 77-83. Osijek: Sveučilište "Josipa Jurja Strossmayera", Filozofski fakultet Osijek, Hrvatski znanstveni zavod Pečuh, 2009.
Iveković, Rada, and Slavenka Drakulić-Ilić. "Neofeminism and Its 'Six Mortal Sins'." In *Sisterhood is Global. The International Women's Movement Anthology*, edited by Robin Morgan, 730-738. New York, Feminist Press, 1996.
Jakobović Fribec, Slavica. "Od ženskog pisma do rodno potpisane književnosti." *Zarez* No. 123 (2004): 1-10.
Jones, Steve. *Antonio Gramsci*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.
Klasić, Hrvoje. "Fiskultura u službi naroda. Uloga tjelesnog odgoja u stvaranju jugoslavenskog socijalističkog društva 1945.-1952." In *Stvaranje socijalističkoga čovjeka. Hrvatsko društvo i ideologija jugoslavenskog socijalizma*, edited by Igor Duda, 201-221. Zagreb and Pula: Srednja Europa, 2017.
Knežević, Đurđa. „Kraj ili novi početak – Feminizam od šezdesetih do danas u Jugoslaviji/Hrvatskoj." In *Žene u Hrvatskoj: ženska i kulturna povijest*, edited by Andrea Feldman, 247-260. Zagreb: Institut Ženska infoteka, 2004.
Kolanović, Maša. *Udarnik! Buntovnik? Potrošač… Popularna kultura i hrvatski roman od socijalizma do tranzicije*. Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak, 2011.
Kristeva, Julia. *The Kristeva Reader.* Edited by Toril Moi. New York: Columbia UP, 1986.
Kursar Pupovac, Smilja. Foreword to *Autoportret s dušom*, by Divna Zečević, 7-9. Zagreb: Duriex, 2008.
Kveder, Zofka. *Misterij žene*. Translated by Anamarija Paljetak. Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 2004.
Ler-Sofronić, Nada. *Neofeminizam i socijalistička alternativa.* Beograd: Radnička štampa, 1985.
Lóránd, Zsófia. "'A Politically Non-dangerous Revolution Is Not a Revolution': Critical Readings of the Concept of Sexual Revolution by Yugoslav Feminists in the 1970s." *European Review of History*, Vol. 22, No.1 (2015): 120-137.

Lóránd, Zsófia. “Sisterhood and Second Wave Feminist Stakes in Women’s Art and Women’s Literature in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s.” In *Feminist Circulations between East and West*, edited by Annette Bühler-Dietrich, 109-128. Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2019.
Lóránd, Zsófia. *The Feminist Challenge to the Socialist State in Yugoslavia*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
Lukić, Jasmina. “Pisanje kao antipolitika.” *Reč*, No. 64/10 (December 2001): 73-102.
Lukić, Jasmina. “Women-centered Narratives in Contemporary Serbian and Croatian Literatures.” In *Engendering Slavic Literatures*, edited by Sibelan Forrester and Pamela Chester, 223-243. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1996.
Lukšić, Irena. “Sunčana Škrinjarić: Autobiography from Various Narrative Points of View.“ *Croatian Studies Review*, Vol. 2, No.1 (2002): 119-133.
Ljubešić, Marko. “Postmodernistički obrisi u ‘Ulici predaka’ Sunčane Škrinjarić.” In *Život i djelo(vanje) Sunčane Škrinjarić: zbornik radova s međunarosnoga znanstvenoga skupa Zlatni danci 10*, edited by Ana Pintarić, 37-43. Osijek: Sveučilište “Josipa Jurja Strossmayera”, Filozofski fakultet Osijek, Hrvatski znanstveni zavod Pečuh, 2009.
Malešević, Siniša. “From 'Organic' Legislators to 'Organicistic' Interpreters: Intellectuals in Yugoslavia and Post-Yugoslav States Marso.” *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Winter 2002): 55-75.
Marks, Ljiljana, and Ivan Lozica. “Divna Zečević Zdunić (1937-2006).” *Narodna umjetnost: hrvatski časopis za etnologiju i folkloristiku*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (2006): 219-221.
Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. “The Communist Manifesto.” In *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, edited by David McLellen, 245-272. New York: Oxford UP, 2000.
Massey, Gareth, Karen Hahn, and Duško Sekulić. “Women, Men, and the ‘Second Shift’ in Socialist Yugoslavia. *Gender & Society*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (June 1995): 459-379.
Matijašević, Ante. Foreword to *Kuća od riječi*, by Sunčana Škrinjarić, 5-19. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga, 2004.
Mihurko Poniž, Katja. “Zofka Kveder.” In *A Biographical Dictionary of Women’s Movements and Feminisms. Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*, edited by Francisca de Haan, Krassimira Daskalova, and Anna Loutfi, 282-285. Budapest and New York: CEU Press.
Ott Franolić, Marija. *Dnevnik ustremljen nedostižnom: svakodnevica u ženskim zapisima*. Zagreb: Disput, 2015.
Pavličić, Pavao. “Divna Zečević, *Književnost na svakom koraku, Studije i članci*, Mala teorijska biblioteka 20, Izdavački centar ‘Revija’, Radničko sveučilište ‘Božidar Maslarić’, Osijek 1986, 268 str.” *Narodna umjetnost*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (1987): 248-249.
Pejić, Bojana. “Dekonstrukcija seksa: tijela komunizma/tijela u komunizmu.” *Treća*, Vol. 3, No. 1-2 (2001): 48-67.
Petrushevskaya, Lyudmila. *The Girl from the Metropol Hotel. Growing Up in Communist Russia*. Translated by Anna Summers. New York: Penguin Books, 2017.
Petrushevskaya, Lyudmila. *There Once Lived a Girl Who Seduced Her Sister’s Husband, and He Hanged Himself. Love Stories*. Translated by Anna Summers. New York: Penguin Books, 2013.

Prlenda, Sandra. “Dragojla Jarnević.” In *A Biographical Dictionary of Women’s Movements and Feminisms. Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*, edited by Francisca de Haan, Krassimira Daskalova, and Anna Loutfi, 185-188. Budapest and New York: CEU Press.
Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith. *Narrative Fiction. Contemporary Poetics*. London and New York, Routledge, 2005.
Rivera-Fuentes, Consuelo. “Doing Sym/Bio/Graphy with Yasna.” In *Feminism and Autobiography. Texts, Theories, Methods*, edited by Tess Cosslett, Celia Lury, and Penny Summerfield, 247-251. London and New York, Routledge, 2000.
Said, Edward W. *Representations of the Intellectual: the Reith Lectures*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996.
Schmid, Wolf. “Skaz.” In *Handbook of Narratology*, edited by Peter Hühn, Jan Christoph Meister, John Pier, and Wolf Schmid, 787-795. Berlin, München, and Boston: De Gruyter, 2014.
Schweickart, Patrocionio P. “Reading Ourselves. Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading.” In *Essentials of the Theory of Fiction*, edited by M. J. Hoffman and P. D. Murphy, 410-431. London: Leicester UP, 1996.
Showalter, Elaine. “Towards a Feminist Poetics.” In *Twentieth- Century Literary Theory*, edited by K. M. Newton, 268-278. New York: Macmillan Education, 1993.
Sitar, Polona. “Stiletto Socialism Social Class, Dressing Up, and Women’s Self-Positioning in Socialist Slovenia.” *Aspasia*, Vol. 14 (2020): 104-123.
Smith, Sidonie. *A Poetics of Women’s Autobiography*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1987.
Smith, Sidonie. *Subjectivity, Identity, and the Body. Women's Autobiographical Practices in the Twentieth Century*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993.
Smith, Sidonie, and Julia Watson. *Reading Autobiography. A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.
Sklevicky, Lydia. Konji, žene, ratovi. Zagreb: Ženska infoteka, 1996.
Solnit, Rebecca. *Recollections of my Nonexistence*. Penguin Random House LLC, 2020.
Spender, Stephen. “Confessions and Autobiography.” In *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, edited by James Olney, 115-122. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980.
Stanton, Domna C. “Autogynography: Is the Subject Different?“ In *Women, Autobiography, Theory*. *A Reader*, edited by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, 131-144. Madison and London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988.
Šafranek, Ingrid. “Ženska književnost i žensko pismo.” *Republika: mjesečnik za književnost, umjetnost i društvo* Vol. 39 (1983): 7-28.
Thomas, Peter. “Gramsci and the Intellectuals: Modern Prince versus Passive Revolution.” In *Marxism, Intellectuals and Politics*, edited by David Bates, 68-87. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. .
Ugrešić. Dubravka. *In the Jaws of Life and Other Stories*. Translated by Celia Hawkesworth and Michael Henry Heim. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1993.
Ugrešić, Dubravka. “Surovo žensko pismo.” *Republika: mjesečnik za književnost, Umjetnost i javni život*. Vol. 44, No. 5/6 (1988):163-166.
Vrkljan, Irena. *The Silk, The Shears* and *Marina; or about Biography*. Translated by Sibelan Forrester and Celia Hawkesworth. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1999.

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. Blackwell: Willey, 2015.
Zaharijević, Adriana. "Dissidents, Disloyal Citizens and Partisans of Emancipation: Feminist Citizenship in Yugoslavia and Post-Yugoslav Spaces." *Women's Studies International Forum* Vol. 49 (2015): 93–100.
Zaharijević, Adriana. "The Strange Case of Yugoslav Feminism: Feminism and Socialism in 'the East'." In *The Cultural Life of Capitalism in Yugoslavia. (Post)Socialism and Its Other*, edited by Dijana Jelača, Maša Kolanović and Danijela Lugarić, 263-284. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
Zlatar, Andrea. "Tko nasljeduje 'žensko pismo'? Poetike različitosti suvremene hrvatske produkcije: Irena Vrkljan i Daša Drndić." *Sarajevske sveske* Vol. 2 (2001): 1-15.
Zlatar, Andrea. *Tekst, tijelo, trauma: ogledi o suvremenoj ženskoj književnosti*. Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak, 2004.