



CHAPTER 4

Feminism in the Popular Mass Media

Neda Todorović: *“When I became the editor of Bazar , that was a great chance to give a voice to feminism. We had a circulation of 360,000, that means a huge influence. I called Slavenka Drakulić, Vesna Pusić, Sofija Trivunac, Lepa Mlađenović to write for us. Some men were telling me how our feminist articles were outrageous, as Bazar is a family magazine, where these themes are inappropriate. I didn’t care. (...) My baba [grandma] was a suffragette , from Sarajevo , her name is Petra Jovanović. She was a member of the Kolo srpskih sestara there. She is one of the older generation feminists talking in the Ona broadcast about feminism before the second world war.”*

Vesna Kesić: *“Start was a huge niche for liberalism, in the good and in the bad sense. (...) After the Drug-ca conference, I wrote an article about it and gave it to the editors. They were mad. They asked me, what is this now, what are you going to publish this bullshit. All these women, they were just out for a good f***. This editor just projected his own story, his own perspective, it was him who was just going to conferences to womanise. Then a couple of years ago I got my revenge, I told him this a few years later. (...) I was intimidated and I was scared, but I didn’t shut up. This was kind of the male discourse on the editorial side. And I knew I couldn’t start crying, then they wouldn’t take me seriously.*

It was the same when I made an interview with Shere Hite. She said something ironic about male sexuality in the interview, about which my editor told me: we cannot attack our readership, and our readership is male. So I said, but you attack your female readers all the time. I had to fight for every line. Looking back at it, it was a funny heroic time, but at that time it was pretty much frustrating.”

Slavenka Drakulić: *“Everybody asks this about Start. [What is was like to work there as a feminist.] It had very serious contributors, and there we had space, they gave us space. I published interviews with Gloria Steinem, Noam Chomsky, etc. Well, they published naked women, but it was very soft porn, not everything was shown. It was perceived ideologically as some kind of an opposition to socialist puritanism and hypocrisy. We understood it as some kind of provocation, not that we liked it, of course we didn’t, but we took it that this was the price you had to pay.*

And it had circulation you couldn’t imagine today, 300.000. Many women worked there, Jelena Lovrić, who already then was a very important political journalist, also Maja Miles wrote there about justice and Vesna Kesić. (...) This was something that sells. We found it subversive to publish feminism in such a magazine. You couldn’t be directly oppositional, but through the interviews with Barthes, Foucault, etc., you could write these ideas into the horizon.”¹

By the beginning of the 1980s, feminism in Yugoslavia was increasingly present in the popular mass media, a process which started with one of the initial main forums of feminist ideas, the magazine *Start*. Daily newspapers, weekly and bi-weekly magazines, TV and radio programmes reported on feminist events abroad and in Yugoslavia. Women belonging to the feminist groups in Zagreb, Ljubljana and Belgrade were invited to TV and radio discussions, and the very same women extensively published in the very same media. After almost ten years of feminism’s reappearance in Yugoslavia, during which time it was usually present in specialised professional spaces for a specialised public with specialised interpretative skills, like the art and literary scene, theoretical journals, sometimes in the youth press, the growing presence of feminism in the mass media meant the opportunity to reach and involve a much broader audience and scale of recipients.

Based on the popularity, the circulation and distribution, as well as who the authors creating the media were and how extensively feminism was present, this chapter presents four media products to serve as three case studies: two television programmes of the Radio-Televizija Srbija (Radio-Television Serbia, RTS) called *Ona* [She] and *Ženski rod, muški rod* [Female gender, male gender], which I treat as one project, and two magazines, *Bazar*, a glossy women’s magazine with one of the highest circulations, and *Start*, a political–cultural and/or men’s magazine.² The three cases are very different as concerns the topics, the genre and therefore also the context of the feminist articles or themes.

However, all raise the same question: How does the feminism presented in these media differ from the feminism presented in other fields? The criteria are the choice of topics and language; the position of the articles and their authors to the medium: if they are critical, dissenting towards the medium itself; and attitudes of authors and texts towards the political and ideological system.

The media in the focus of this chapter was in many ways influenced by the ideas of the sexual revolution. The concept of the *sexual revolution* serves also as a meta-trope to the story of feminism in socialist Yugoslavia, within the context of popular media and contemporary art promoting new sexuality, and the state promoting itself as having been born out of a revolutionary movement.³ The new sexual revolution discourse of the 1960s, preceded by a long history of sexual revolution starting in the late nineteenth century, was determinedly criticised by feminists in the West, as well as in Yugoslavia. Taking inspirations from the Western developments, but also having been raised in the Yugoslav socialist revolutionary discourse, the new Yugoslav feminists could not but reflect on the *sexual revolution*. Most authors agreed with Vesna Kesić's summary that the *sexual revolution* "did not bring anything new as far as the relations between the sexes is concerned".⁴ Ingrid Šafranek in her writing about the *écriture féminine* and *žensko pismo* sees the feminist-inspired increase of self-consciousness of women also making them aware of their own writing as well as a new relationship to their bodies. Whereas she also finds the sexual revolution harmful to women, through "a general de-tabooisation of sexuality", it nevertheless gave way to a form of women's self-awareness and freedom.⁵ This was "a revolution on the leash", a limited change without broader social effect, the realisation of which prevented a more dangerous and radical change in society. Slavenka Drakulić questions if the phenomenon can be called a revolution with the argument that it did not achieve women's economic independence and that women are still treated as sexual objects.⁶

Based on the three case studies (the two television shows, two women's magazines and the magazine *Start*), this chapter shows how feminism in the Yugoslav popular mass media was accommodating to the medium in which it appeared, while it remained subversive both towards the medium and the wider political context. Regular creators and contributors of the mass media products presenting feminism were the journalist and media scholar Neda Todorović and Đurđa Milanović. Todorović was the editor of *Bazar* and of the television series *Ona*, Milanović

was the editor of the magazine *Svijet*, and Vesna Kesić and Slavenka Drakulić wrote for *Start*, with later Kesić editing it too. The editors engaged other feminist authors for the magazines. Importantly, the psychologist Sofija Trivunac ran an advice section in *Bazar*, and Vesna Mimica, one of the initiators of the SOS helpline in Zagreb, wrote about violence against women for the same magazine. Vesna Pusić, Lepa Mladenović, and Žarana Papić, among others, also appeared in these mediums from time to time. What I call “feminist content” here, for the sake of the coherence of this book, shall be reduced to topics discussed in the feminist circles in theoretical texts, research, art, literature and activist projects.

Mass media and popular culture were not only a forum for the feminists, but also material in the focus of their research. There is a self-reflexive relationship between feminist writings in and about the mass media, the authors publishing *in* the mass media often being the very same authors writing *about* the mass media. Therefore, this chapter looks at the feminist analyses *of* mass media, as a point of comparison to the feminists’ writings *for* the mass media. Within the analysis of the three case studies, the TV shows, the women’s magazines and *Start*, I focus on the themes which are also in the centre of feminist activism at the time: violence against women and sexuality. The feminists whose writing dominates this chapter, Slavenka Drakulić, Neda Todorović, Vesna Kesić and Sofija Trivunac all argued for a form of acknowledgement of women’s need for popular media, and through the acknowledgement of their needs, they found a source of subversion and acceptance there.

THE MASS MEDIA IN YUGOSLAVIA IN THE 1970S AND 1980S

In Yugoslavia, the new media law in 1960 explicitly ruled out censorship,⁷ with the exception of eight areas. The law, with some changes, for example as for the division of labour between the federal and the republican levels, was in effect until the collapse of the SFRJ. The eight “taboo” issues were about material (1) “constituting a criminal offence” against the people, the State or the JNA, (2) “revealing or disseminating false reports or allegations causing public alarm and menacing public peace and order”, (3) “revealing military secrets”, (4) revealing economic or official secrets “of special importance to the community”, (5) “propaganda inciting to aggression”, (6) acts which may disturb the relations between Yugoslavia and other countries (the practice showed that this mostly meant the control of the reports on non-aligned countries and

the Soviet Union), (7) “cause harm to the honor and reputation of the peoples, their supreme representative bodies, the President of the Republic, and similar injuries to foreign peoples”, and (8) constituting “a violation of public decency” (41).

It shows from the regulation that various elements of the media law were also codified in other laws. This was reflected by the 1970s in republican-level decisions: when the republics had more authority in regulating their own press, Slovenia removed most of the eight restrictions, with the exact argument that even these points were regulated by state secret and libel laws (60). Apart from the few years following the Croatian Spring in 1971, when censorship became harsher, the devolution of press control continued in the 1980s as well; by then media was, “with scarcely an exception, controlled at the republican level and geared for republican audiences”.⁸

Yugoslavia had a semi-open public sphere, where media did not have pre-publishing censorship. This does not mean that the SKJ had no means to maintain its influence and control. It happened through institutions and funding. The SSRNJ, under the guidance of the SKJ, was in charge of appointing the director, the editor-in-chief and the managing editor of most newspapers, except in the case of the regional and local newspapers, where the municipal authorities were in charge, also subordinated to the SSRNJ.⁹ News magazines and other written media belonged either to newspaper companies or to associations within the SSRNJ, such as youth and student associations.¹⁰ While issues of journals or newspapers could be banned or confiscated,¹¹ this was not common. Control happened either through appointing the right editors, or through funding: in the case of journals or magazines which were funded by the SKJ or the SSRNJ, the end of funding meant the end of the medium as well, the most famous example being the journal *Praxis*.¹²

Funding, however, was not only a controlling force, but a liberating one, too. With the introduction of self-management, the previously exclusively state-financed mass media was in the ownership of autonomous cooperatives (usually under the umbrella of the SSRNJ); media financing was not done by state subsidies, but was based on market demand.¹³ As a result, in the 1950s, newspapers faced a big drop in circulation, and in order to regain the readers’ interest, papers with large circulation started to use “lively makeup, cartoon strips, detective stories, and somewhat spicy love serials to arouse audience interest and provide relaxation and entertainment”, with sports, crimes and disasters gaining

more space on the pages of the press too.¹⁴ Commercialisation and consumerism were well-established by the 1970s.¹⁵

The commercial tendencies in the media were not celebrated by the leadership of the country. The SKJ frequently emphasized the duty of the press in “correctly informing the public and educating public opinion”.¹⁶ The more conservative members of the SKJ accused these newspapers of “degrading public taste for monetary gain”, and the Belgrade Institut za novinarstvo [Institute for Journalism] was commissioned to make a study on the “sensationalism” of the press.¹⁷ The appearance of new genres also characterised the process: afternoon papers, consumer magazines and on television, quizzes and audience participation shows appeared.¹⁸ The afternoon papers were often written more “flamboyantly”, with an “off-hand style and sexier content”,¹⁹ whereas in some cases, for example in the case of the magazine *Start*, the editors were trying to maintain both high-level journalism and high circulation, ensured by the publication of images of naked women in explicitly erotic body postures.

FEMINISTS WRITING ABOUT THE WOMEN’S PRESS

Neda Todorović and Đurđa Milanović were not only editors and journalists, they extensively published feminist analyses about the genre of women’s magazines. Milanović in 1980 suggested to change the existing structures and discourses, so that women’s and mass media cease to serve the maintenance of women’s marginal position.²⁰ Todorović agreed that the current situation was problematic, putting the phenomenon into a historical perspective. She described two main currents in the post-war Yugoslav women’s press: on the one hand, after the war the “fighter-type” women’s magazines were “tamed down” and turned more conventional by the (re)introduction of content about domestic work and fashion,²¹ on the other hand, new magazines targeted a female readership in a “traditionally feminine” manner, with the topics of exactly domestic work and fashion.²²

The fighter-type women’s magazines stemmed from the partisan movement since the late 1930s, mostly with the aim to mobilise women for the movement. Therefore, *Žena u borbi* [Woman in struggle] and *Žena danas* [Woman today] represented a non-traditional image of women, in their contents both politicising their readers through informing the woman fighter about major currents in politics and serving a

crucial pedagogical purpose, teaching women about hygiene and health. These early magazines accepted that women take care of most domestic labour and in order to help women overcome their double burden, gave them advice for performing everyday domestic work.²³

These magazines gradually disappeared from the market and were replaced by the “traditionally feminine” ones. The magazines *Svijet* (published in Zagreb from 1953 till 1992), *Praktična žena* ([Practical woman], Belgrade, from 1956 till 1993), *Bazar* (Belgrade, from 1964 till 1990), *Nada* (Belgrade, from 1975 till 1993, renewed in 2001) and *Una* (Sarajevo, from 1974 till 1994) were those with the highest circulation in Serbo-Croatian.²⁴ They quickly moved from the focus on politics and women’s equal role in society to beauty and fashion. Even the previous advisory sections on domestic work got replaced with recipes and the latest trends in cleaning tools, showing domestic labour as a lucrative consumer product. *Bazar*’s beauty advice sections included a series of articles in 1975 advising on becoming a photograph model and imitating the looks of the English Twiggy: the series entitled “School for models” promoted for young girls a strict diet,²⁵ one which transforms their body into skin and bones. This image of a woman had nothing to do with the “woman—worker—mother” image of the partisan woman.²⁶

Women in the KDAŽ and the *Žena i društvo* group were equally critical of these new tendencies. Two Zagreb-based journals, *Žena* and *Naše teme* organised a conference in 1982, inviting party representatives, academics and members of the feminist groups. Here, the Slovenian sociologist Maca Jogan asked the question whether there is a need of a women’s press at all. Or, she continues, “we have already matured and progressed far enough in the process of women’s emancipation, that this kind of a press we can eliminate”.²⁷ She claims that this kind of press is “for enjoying one’s pleasure, killing time [*razonoda*], is in essence conservative and patriarchal, it helps to maintain women’s historical isolation and partial sociability”. What Jogan proposed here is a return to the pre-war and wartime women’s press. However, as opposed to Todorović’s feminist typology, Jogan’s concern is that even though these magazines offer traditional gender patterns to women, she does not find the push of women into the second shift of work a problem. What she targets is the occupation with domestic work and with the fulfilment of beauty expectations, for example diet, a *razonoda*, a leisure time activity. As opposed to this stance, women’s less access to free time and lack of time to get engaged with political and social issues, to participate in

self-management was addressed from a feminist perspective by several authors, for example in the work of Blaženka Despot which I analyse in this book in the chapter about feminism in academia.

The women in the feminist circles had a different view on the roles women's press offers to women. Neda Todorović's *Ženska štampa* was the most thorough analysis of the situation of women's press in Yugoslavia at the time. Todorović's research is theoretically supported by mostly French literature, making her aware of the latest changes in Western women's press due to the strengthening of new feminism. She was critical of traditional women's press based on the patriarchally constructed notions of femininity. To her, this proved that "conservative spirit" is still present in Yugoslav society. Her take on the existing women's press and media motivated Todorović not to eliminate the genre, but to use it as a tool to influence and change women's lives.

Todorović was critical of the way political issues were presented in the feminine women's press. She calls them "alibi topics", placed on the starting pages and presenting women as sociopolitical beings. In Todorović's opinion, these are only "alibi" for the traditional approach to women in the rest of the magazine,²⁸ it is a reflection of the state's official stance towards women's problems too. Similarly to the short and superficial articles about women and politics in the magazines, the state does not aim at the elimination of women's oppression systematically, but offers short and superficial campaigns from time to time instead (86).²⁹ The other main target of Todorović's critique is the theme of tragedy, destiny, predestination, related to the recurrent topic of violence. What Todorović finds problematic and harmful is that women are most often presented as victims, and when (as most often) they are victims of partnership violence, the violence is presented as women's destiny or as "a reaction to women's disobedience". Moreover, "the logical continuation of the content which cultivates crime and warns the woman that the status quo is her ideal reality, present topics which address unusual, supranatural and unexplainable phenomena" (106). The section on horoscopes and the presentation of unhappy events of one's life as the working of powers we cannot control, combined with the sections on violence against women, maintain and confirm women's passive nature (106–107), she concludes.

Todorović is arguing for a women's press that treats women as active and political subjects, one which is not confirming but challenging the patriarchal concept of femininity. As it is discussed in her historical overview, there used to exist an active, responsible, socially and politically conscious model for women, compared to which the image offered by these

magazines is a regression. Todorović sees this as a remnant of conservatism, however, unlike Jogan, she does not see women's magazines as a sign of women's pursuit of leisure and laziness, rather, as a symptom of the unfulfilled emancipation of women. The state bears responsibility for this, because in Todorović's view, it hides the women's question behind spectacular but empty "resolutions". Therefore, she does not blame women for their position, neither for reading the press produced for them. She ends her book with the claim that women's press is a marker of women's position in society, a consequence of the real phase of women's social emancipation, and it will present women as "one-dimensional" as long as society treats them as such (142). Todorović's proposal is to change women's press and to change women's social status through that.

For scholars like Jogan, these magazines are encouraging women to become more passive and abandon the opportunities socialist self-managing Yugoslavia is offering. Todorović, on the other hand, suggests that as long as the Yugoslav or any society is not advanced enough to change women's positions from the still-existing traditional one, the women's press will remain the same. Slavenka Drakulić offers a third perspective, making claim for women's right to free time and leisure and creating a language about women and the popular which is mostly motivated by sympathy and understanding as the crucial feminist strategy.

The essay "Why do women like fairy tales?" ["Zašto žene vole bajke?"]³⁰ examines the popularity of trivial romances (in Serbo-Croatian: *herz-roman*) available at the news-stands and also published in women's magazines in a sequence. These, together with "erotic" men's magazines started to flourish on the market as a result of the "sexual revolution" and both use traditional and stereotypical images of women, which do not exclude, but complement each other (36), proving the double-faced nature of the "sexual revolution" and how it does not question the logic of patriarchy. Despite the triviality of these romance novels, Drakulić emphasises their social relevance: only one title, *Život* [Life] was sold in 3,600,000 copies in 1978 (34). She prioritises the attitudes of the readers of these, for which she analyses an unpublished survey by the publisher Vjesnik about the readers' habits of reading trivial romances. What Drakulić finds most important is that the majority of the readers are overburdened women who do not have either time or strength to read anything more complexly written, whereas they do notice the poor literary quality of the novels. These readers, adds Drakulić, lack real relationships and long for love—exactly

the dream, the “fairy tale” offered by these booklets. Drakulić claims that simply “by abolishing and stigmatising this kind of a press, we do not abolish the demand/need” of women in Yugoslavia (44).

Similarly to Todorović, Drakulić would not abolish the trivial from women’s magazines. She does not see it as a necessity deriving from societal relations, but as a fulfilment of women’s needs—deriving from the very same societal relations. She quotes Germaine Greer’s *The Female Eunuch*, where Greer claims that the majority of men do not know anything about the world of women’s imagination, due to the gendered division of genres (34). Drakulić here argues for women’s right to their own pleasure and calls out for a respect of their needs—through which she makes the reading of trivial romances a proactive deed, a call for change.³¹

Comparing standpoints on popular women’s press in Yugoslavia, we can conclude that the new feminist agenda, treating women’s press as liberating, make a claim for the significance of women’s pleasure. According to Luce Irigaray, who was well-known and often referenced in the Yugoslav feminist circles, “the refusal of pleasure intersects with the prohibition of female agency and thus has ideological, and explicitly anti-feminist effects”.³² Irigaray’s argument is that in the Western subjectivity, “woman has to remain a body without organs... The geography of feminine pleasure is not worth listening to. Women are not worth listening to, especially when they try to speak of their pleasure”.³³ The consumption of trivial romances and women’s magazines, from this perspective, can be a step towards women’s expression of their needs and their pleasure, towards women becoming active and assertive.

A famous case of using a mass medium to reach a broader female audience is the *Ms.* magazine, the first commercial feminist magazine in the USA after WWII. *Ms.* magazine is also interesting from a transfer perspective: many of its authors and themes appear both in *Bazaar* and *Start*, and later Drakulić publishes her essays in *Ms.* *Start* publishes an interview with the founding editor of *Ms.*, Gloria Steinem, and both magazines feature the work of leading feminists also present in *Ms.*, such as Germaine Greer, Erica Jong, Catherine MacKinnon, Andrea Dworkin. Similarly to Steinem’s approach in *Ms.*, the new Yugoslav feminists also use their magazine surfaces as a space for activism.

To learn from this comparison, aspects of the difficulty in popularising feminism, the relations between consumerism and gender, popular genres and gender, and as far as the new recipients are concerned, the

horizon of their expectation [*Erwartungshorizont*] should be examined. In the *Ms.* project, “popular” was understood in the sense of “widespread”, as well as “emerging from the realm of popular culture”, popular culture being “the realm of commercial culture, where ‘images and icons compete for dominance within a multiplicity of discourses’, where the dominant ideology and interests of commercial producers clash with the needs and desires of its consumers but also must ‘engage audiences in active and familial processes.’”³⁴ It was a rather obvious step for *ELLE* or *Vogue* in the West, as well as for the Yugoslav women’s magazines, to report on this “new” approach to the women’s question, to offer some feminist perspectives, to interview feminists, etc. The French *ELLE*’s account on feminism is even cited in *Žena*.³⁵ However, it was an entirely different enterprise for an entirely feminist magazine to survive on the market, which *Ms.* did not manage. This happened mostly due to the confrontations with the advertisers: there were few products and even less advertisements which were not based on the patriarchal gender division of goods and “sex” (the objectified female body) selling products. The case of *Ms.* is an example of how the “[a]ttempts to alter popular consciousness through the mass media [...] greatly underestimated the ability of established order to absorb dissent while offering mere appearance of change”,³⁶ when after a hopeful period with a circulation of 400–500.000 copies, *Ms.* became a specialised feminist magazine for a smaller, engaged audience, financed by a foundation.

FEMINISM BY FEMINISTS IN THE POPULAR PRESS

The probably most ambiguous example of the four media products analysed in this chapter is the magazine *Start*. It began its career in 1969, as a recreational magazine. However, this market was already occupied by the magazine *Vikend*, so the editorial board of *Start* “boosted the subscriptions” with photographs of naked and half-naked women. A shift followed the appointment of a new editor-in-chief in 1973, when the magazine began publishing more extensively about political and cultural topics.³⁷ Indeed, looking at the magazine between 1975 and 1991, it had various important issues discussed on the level of a quality weekly, while the rest of the magazine was full of images of naked women, as well as obscene joke strips, e.g. about gay men and caricaturing domestic violence and rape on its last pages. After the change in profile, the next shift in the history of *Start* was brought along by the appointment of

a young, new editor, Mladen Peše in 1980, when the magazine started to aim at a younger readership with articles on rock music, modern art and fashion. It was then that feminist curators from the SKC in Belgrade, Bojana Pejić and Žarana Papić, were authoring some of these articles. The new editorial continued publishing “daring and sometimes highly controversial interviews with well-known Yugoslav personalities” (ibid.), as well as provocative editorials such as the one in 1983, accusing many party members and leaders of corruption.³⁸ The curious mixture of tabloid-like joke strips, the pornographic images of women, the dissenting reports and interviews and the feminist writings were matched with exceptionally high quality journalism in *Start*. According to one of the editors, *Start* was the “most analytical of periodicals in Yugoslavia” and the other editors and journalists working for other newspapers viewed them as “elitist and too clever”.³⁹

Kesić and Drakulić worked for *Start* from the late 1970s on, and were later joined by Pejić and Papić, and other feminists like Jasenka Kodrnja and Maja Miles. *Start* published their articles on feminism, a topic most often brought in by Kesić. She reported on the “Drug-ca” conference in 1978⁴⁰ and provided overviews on the history of feminism in Europe and North America in the twentieth century in articles such as “The Feminist New Wave” and “History has a male gender”⁴¹ (note that in Serbo-Croatian, history is grammatically female). A similarly popularising-informative article was a translation about the “New feminist wave” by Rosemarie Wittman Lamb, familiarising the reader with the work of Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer and Erica Jong.⁴² The magazine also published a series of interviews with Gloria Steinem, Erica Jong, Élisabeth Badinter, even one of the last interviews with Simone de Beauvoir, and one with Shere Hite.⁴³ The interviews place the feminist women in the row of well-known and acknowledged male intellectuals like Moravia, Garcia Marquez, Barthes, I. B. Singer, Hobsbawm. The art, literary and theoretical aspects of feminism were also present on the pages of *Start*, in the form of interviews, exhibition and book reviews, reports on new foreign books. From Julia Kristeva through women in Slovenian media hardcore and Yugoslav rock to women authors of domestic science fiction, on the pages of *Start*, the reader also encountered the work of Erica Jong, Dubravka Ugrešić, Biljana Jovanović and Katalin Ladik.

The relations within the editorial board, however, were far from unproblematic. As the interviews quoted by Drakulić and Kesić tell us, the male editors were not supportive of the feminist content. Even when

there were feminist articles published, the editors tried to change their paratexts in order to alter the message: when Kesić wrote her article about the 1978 conference, the editors wanted to give it a title like “Trle babe feminizam”, meaning something like “old, ugly women’s feminism”. As she remembers: “I’m not even sure how I could fight this off. Even the technical editor, who was just responsible for the layout, he got totally mad and threw away the article”, claiming that the presence of feminist ideas offends the (imagined) readers of the magazines. As Kesić recalls: “It was when I made an interview with Shere Hite. She said something ironic about male sexuality in the interview, about which my editor told me: we cannot attack our readership, and our readership is male. So I said, but you attack your female readers all the time. I had to fight for every line. Looking back, it was a funny heroic time, but at that time it was pretty much frustrating”. In the meantime, the circulation of 300.000 copies meant a huge publicity and these articles did reach the readers.

Similarly to *Start*, the women’s magazine *Bazar* had high circulation too, but Neda Todorović has different memories of her work as the editor of *Bazar*. When she started to bring in feminist articles, some men from different positions warned her that since *Bazar* is a “family magazine”, feminist topics on violence and sexuality should not be there. A magazine for women was a family magazine, while the only high circulation political bi-weekly was for men only—in socialist Yugoslavia in the 1970–1980s. Still, *Bazar* was a classic women’s magazine, imagining women within the family, offering fashion advice, recipes, in the 1980s giving lots of space to Jane Fonda, diets and exercise, from time to time reporting on the recent developments in the feminist movement in Western Europe and the USA. It contained the mandatory “alibi-topics”, that is, interviews with famous and successful women or reports on socially relevant topics. It also ran romance serials, not only from the popular register though: besides Danielle Steel, there were writings by Doris Lessing, Chekhov, Katherine Mansfield, I. B. Singer. Among the socially engaged and politically relevant publications there was an abbreviated version of Vesna Pusić’s article on women’s employment, decorated with a colour portrait of the young and beautiful Pusić, taking up one-third of the pages.⁴⁴

The publication of controversial or system-critical opinions was less characteristic of *Bazar*, the political pages were in line with the mainstream of Yugoslav politics, for example they reported on the newly published biography of Tito by Vladimir Dedijer.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, rather importantly, feminist issues were discussed on the pages of the magazine,

in a fashion that accommodated to the genre. There are three series of articles which plastically exemplify the mixture of discourses, combining mostly Western-originated feminist discourse, the local feminist one, and the discourse of the typical women's magazine.

After the appointment of Todorović as editor, *Bazar* had another feminist stronghold, in the person of Sofija Trivunac, a psychologist from Belgrade. As she recalls, her advice was considered quite radical by the general audience, and as her picture was next to the column, readers could recognise her on the streets. It happened that men walked up to her to make an offensive comment for her writing in *Bazar*, which these men considered harmful. She also reflected on how her looks mislead men, because as a petite blond woman, she was often treated as a "blondie", a girl not to be taken seriously, so she could shock people with her clear and devoted feminist opinion quite easily. Her story is not only symbolic as it represents stereotypes and in general, the reception of feminism, it also shows the results of a wider media reach in case of the popular products and the clash between the mild looks (of a magazine or of an author) and the strong content.⁴⁶

If *Start* and *Bazar* meant a wide distribution of feminism throughout Yugoslavia, the TV documentary series *Ona* (in 1980–1981) and *Ženski rod—muški rod* [Female Gender—Male Gender] (in 1978) reached an even wider audience. These shows were on the programme of the TV Beograd's second channel between 18.30 and 21.30. By the late 1970s, watching TV, together with listening to music, became the favourite leisure time activity in Yugoslavia.⁴⁷ As for censorship, it should be noted that television was exposed to significantly more control than either *Start* or the women's magazines: "If anything is to appear on TV it has to pass hundreds of officials and readings. What is permitted in a book cannot be stated on stage. What is not allowed in the theatre can pass in a movie, but what passes in a film cannot be shown on TV".⁴⁸ Television's special role is explained in detail in the article of Maruša Pušnik: whereas at the time of its appearance TV "was condemned as being in conflict with the socialist attitude regarding the possession of commodities", "people as well as the propagating authorities always found ways around their own constraints" and propagated television as "a modernising force, socialist educator, and a symbol of progress".⁴⁹ According to Neda Todorović, she and her colleagues in *Ona* had no difficulties with the authorities, however, the medium defined at large what and how could be said in these programmes.

The two reporters of the two series, Todorović herself and Rada Đuričin both considered themselves feminists. Đuričin is an actress, who, among other things, made a theatre production from Jong's *Fear of Flying*, performing the novel in the form a monologue and was impersonating Aleksandra Kollontai on the stage of the Yugoslav Drama Theatre—she consciously chose these roles, aiming at transmitting feminist messages to her audience.⁵⁰ Besides her theatre roles, she made a 40 minutes long documentary about the 1978 conference.⁵¹ Todorović's show, *Ona*, was about various topics regarding women, and the feminist attitude was as explicit as in Đuričin's series. Todorović and the editors of the series, Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, chose issues like domestic violence, rape, abortion and feminism.⁵²

The most important broadcast of *Ona* was the one with the title “Are you a feminist?”, from 1981. It smartly combined interviews with feminists and the “regular citizen” on the streets, therefore providing both professional answers and a snapshot of the public opinion. As for the street-interviews, gender and age show interesting patterns: older women urge young women to *be feminists*, two older women claim that it is high time to take steps as men do nothing in the household, “women serve them from dusk to dawn”, whereas a few women express fear that feminists hate men, or that they, unlike the feminists, are “first of all mothers”. A peak of the show is a couple where the man claims there was no need for feminism, whereas he does not let his wife speak, even though the woman tries to interrupt him. The scene continues with the man telling Neda Todorović that she herself had more rights than her editor—to which Todorović responds that her editor is a woman as well. This scene makes obvious some of the prejudices against feminism, as well as the controversy of a man with oppressive behaviour questioning the need for feminism.

Episodes of *Ona* showed interviews with women from the *Žena i društvo* groups too, in which they shared important thoughts on feminism, countering the prejudice of the “people of the streets” and the politicians who appeared in other episodes, such as Vida Tomšič (*Stop za rodu*) and Jovan Đorđević.⁵³ Rada Iveković sums up their efforts: “We want to clear the concept from the negative connotations, we need that term [feminism]. [...] Of course, we do not fight for the privileges of women” (episode *Da li ste feministkinja?* [“Are you a feminist?”]). Katunarić, Pusić, Kesić, Sklevicky, Drakulić all speak in the broadcasts, about the double shift, wage gap, the problematic nature of the sexualised representation of women in the media.

Vesna Kesić discusses in detail how sexism is still accepted in Yugoslavia, whereas racism and nationalism are not. This, she says, is surprising as one would think that “racism based on sex” is not tolerated any more.

The TV show was aiming at showing both sides by inviting state representatives to talk about feminism. For example, Jovan Đorđević is presented as the main authority about women’s emancipation in the episode *Glasm za ženu* [I vote for women], and as a gesture of neutrality, Simone Veil’s fight for women’s contraception rights in France is evaluated positively as she was “not fighting as a feminist”.⁵⁴ Todorović is more confrontational with Vida Tomšič, who, in the broadcast of *Ona* called *Stop za rodu* [Stop to the stork], presents her positions known from her other utterances and publications, also the ones analysed in Chapter 1. In the show, she explains why a separate feminist movement is unnecessary and that feminism turns women against men, whereas the aim is to work for the betterment of self-management together. Todorović provokes Tomšič with questions about the role of the AFŽ and the possible continuity between the AFŽ, the *Savez žene*, later KDAŽ, and the new feminists. While Tomšič refutes this statement, in the episode *Are you a feminist?* are two elderly women (one of whom is the grandmother of Neda Todorović) tell about their experience of the women’s movement before WWII and its liberating effects, by which the show presents a certain continuity between the pre-WWII women’s movements (including the conservative organisations, such as the *Kolo srpskih sestara*) and the new feminists.

Despite the empowering and emancipating topics, the show *Ona* also presents scenes where women are treated without respect. An example of the latter is a scene (in the part about abortion), where a female gynaecologist humiliates a visibly lower class patient for having abortions instead of using contraceptives and tells the reporter into the camera: “it’s easier for *them* to come for an abortion than other forms of contraception”. What the viewer understands from the scene is up to their sensibilities: the educated woman, who entered the male-dominated medical profession, talking dismissively to her lower-class patient, in repetition of the patient–doctor hierarchies.

In *Ona*, Neda Todorović interviews politicians who are against both first and second wave feminism, reacts to their statements critically, but eventually a few anti-feminist or anti-women opinions are present in each broadcast of the show. The show is balancing between the general prejudice against feminism (a snapshot of which is presented in the episode “Are you a feminist?”), the state’s post-feminism, and the new feminist positions.

SEXUALITY, PORNOGRAPHY AND VIOLENCE ON TV
AND IN *START*, *BAZAR*, *SVIJET*

Engaged or Cynical: Start

Kesić's question in the title of an article: "Isn't pornography cynical?" could be applied to *Start* itself. Besides the pornographic images of women, *Start* (while publishing feminist articles) identified itself as a version of *Playboy*: they translated articles from *Playboy*, and followed the latest news around the American magazine. A curious incident, where positions collided with each other, was the reportage about Christie Hefner, the daughter of the founder of *Playboy* when she took over the magazine. The report presents Christie Hefner's claims to be a feminist and her goal to convince the readers that *Playboy* itself is a feminist enterprise Hefner insists in the report that her company supports feminist foundations (not all of whom accepts the support, though) and the women who work for *Playboy*—their position at the magazine is not specified—have "great opportunities".⁵⁵ Two even more controversial events in the history of *Start* were a series from the memoir of the once famous porn star, Linda Lovelace and the magazine's treatment of Shere Hite. Lovelace's diary caused a major upheaval in the USA, when the former celebrity published her book about the criminal acts and massive violence by which she was forced into the porn industry. Publishing excerpts from the first person narration in a magazine full of pornographic images turns Kesić's question whether pornography is cynical into a feminist meta-question about *Start* as such. It leads back to the question if the feminist publications in *Start* were dismantling the master's house with the master's tools, or this was another case of mass media "absorbing dissent while offering mere appearance of change".⁵⁶

In the case of Shere Hite, the journalist-sociologist who became famous for her book about women's sexuality is equally dubious.⁵⁷ A few weeks after Kesić's interview with her, the other editors published nude images of Hite, with the following comment: "Hite gave an interview to our magazine only after serious hesitation, because she is perseveringly against magazines which publish female nudes", and then comes the explanation: nude photographs of Hite, taken 13 years earlier, were recovered and now, after Hite's interview to *Start*, the magazine "makes some of these photographs available to its readers".⁵⁸ The same year, *Start* wanted to publish Hite's latest success book as a series of articles and asked for the rights from the author. The agency

representing Hite demanded the magazine to apologise for the publication of the nudes, in that case offering the latest book for free. *Start* placed the following text in front of the article series (which they did publish eventually): “This letter from Shere Hite and her representative leave us no choice. We, therefore, apologise for the publication of the unbecoming pictures, and we will not argue too much either in admitting the sexist nature of the small text which we published next to them”.⁵⁹

It is on the pages of *Start* that the feminist reactions on pornography, through the pornography debate in the USA, enter Yugoslavia, the magazine being the only medium at the time where the subject was discussed. The boundaries between sexuality (and a new, non-patriarchal discussion on women’s sexuality, cf. the debate about *sexual revolution* and the article series in *Bazar*), eroticism (e.g. in art) and pornography were often blended. The two feminists from the USA most often present in *Start*, Hite and Steinem, take stand against any form of pornography. Steinem’s statement is quoted in the article about Hefner, published in *Start*: “When reading *Playboy*, I feel like a Jew reading Nazi literature”.⁶⁰ On the local scene, however, the positions vary: Kesić and Drakulić, the two authors most often writing about pornography, take more flexible stands, both of them in their own ways.

The point in common between Kesić and Drakulić was that pornography is a “male genre” and is harmful to women. However, when there is a choice between liberalisation of pornography and banning it, the latter they considered censorship. The Yugoslav context can be rather enlightening here: the state was equally critical of the pornographic or erotic content, as of the introduction of new social movements and ideologies; therefore, the new feminism fell under the same umbrella of control as pornography. It is telling about the readers of *Start* that Kesić used references to Foucault, de Sade, Henry Miller and Passolini, to support her argument, where she clearly differentiated between erotica and pornography. She concluded with reference to the research from the USA that claimed that the rate of rapes was growing and the cases were becoming more violent due to the growing access to pornography.

Drakulić and Kesić were critical of pornography, but not just of that: they found the bourgeois morality similarly oppressing for women, moreover, they saw the roots of pornography in this morality. It is this morality that needs to disappear first. In the article “Isn’t pornography cynical?” Kesić warns about the danger that speaking out against

pornography can push one into the group of “moralising crusaders” who would ban anything with a sexual content. However, the “liberal stance” is “not any less hypocritical”, portraying pornography as something progressive: “By this logic, porn magazines would be the major training ground [*poligon*] for feminism”.⁶¹ As a further twist in the story of pornography and feminism, with its publication of both, *Start* did serve as a “*poligon*” for feminism. Bourgeois morality and hypocrisy are identified as a problem in Drakulić’s argument too, but she comes to her conclusion through the reading of early Marx and not the liberal idea of freedom of speech. What the two authors agree about is that despite its claims, pornography does not turn women into “subjects”.⁶²

Marxist revisionism helped Kesić to make further contributions to the anti-porn argument. Relying on Marcuse and Foucault, she claimed that pornography achieves exactly the opposite of what its promoters advertise; it oppresses and suppresses, and does not liberate even of taboos and hypocrisy.⁶³ She takes an openly feminist stand in her “Isn’t pornography cynical?” and unfolds her argument in agreement with Western (American and Canadian) authors.⁶⁴ In reflection to the accusation of prudery, Kesić adds that “feminists do not put pornography on trial because it shows sex and the human body, but because it does it in an unscrupulous and dehumanised way, usually combined with psychological and physical violence against women”.⁶⁵ The spread of pornography in Yugoslavia is a danger, she concludes, despite what some journalists and intellectuals claim. For example, a Yugoslav journalist, Igor Mandić, known for his anti-feminist articles and belonging to the mainstream, SKJ-accepted line of authors views pornography as liberating, since it is both condemned by the clergy and contributes to the abolition of “the slavery of sexuality imposed by the class-based society”. Drakulić wrote her sarcastic response about the “polygon” in response to his articles.⁶⁶

Drakulić’s most sensitive article vis-à-vis hypocrisy was the one with the title “Men are something different”.⁶⁷ Here, she detects and criticises the pretentiousness of the Yugoslav press policies, which have double standards for male and female nudity, as well as for the nudity of Yugoslav women and women from elsewhere. This hypocrisy reaches so far, that even serious measures of censorship were taken in its name. The actual case Drakulić used as a starting point is the scandal that resulted in an issue of *Polet* withdrawn and destroyed. The Zagreb based youth journal’s nude photograph of the football goalkeeper Miran Šarović was found unacceptable in post-publication censorship. Drakulić contrasted

this case with another case, the nudes of a young Croatian woman, Moni Kovačić published in *Start*. We learn that most of *Start*'s pornographic photographs were acquired from Western agencies, and as Drakulić remarks: "our girls do not get undressed, they are chaste, only the girls in the rotten West do that". The attitude she calls both "petit bourgeois hypocrisy" and patriarchy, prevailing in Yugoslavia in 1980. She is aware, in the meantime, that representing men in nudes would destroy the power imbalance between men and women: "we cannot say that the photo of a naked man is a contribution to the equality of the sexes. But it is not possible to further maintain the old myths when they are collapsing by themselves [...] This case of *Polet* is not about that photo and 10 cm of naked male meat".⁶⁸

Writing an article based on a tribina at SKC Belgrade organised by the *Žena i društvo* group, Kesić reflected on this subject, stating that is not the "15 cm" which creates men's dominance: it is rather "centuries when men were seizing various forms of power and domination".⁶⁹ The source of such domination Kesić locates in the division of the public and the private, and it can be seen in the long history of the male prerogative to speak in public. It has its symbolism, such as the microphone: "the already proverbial prototype of phallic symbols, one of the most effective tools to maintain [dominant] positions".⁷⁰ The dominant position of men defines whose body can be sexually objectified. Kesić is clear about the interrelatedness of a morality which on the surface refuses rape and perversion, but which creates and enables these at the very same time. Kesić joins Drakulić's argumentation, warning that "the *sexual revolution* didn't bring anything new as far as the relation of the sexes [*spol*] is concerned", "erotic" art and media production is "for the need, the will of men". The situation, therefore, cannot be turned upside down, as "those who do not have their own body, do not have their own language either".⁷¹

Curious as feminist participation in *Start* may seem at first, besides the practical reasons (relative intellectual freedom due to financial independence), there is also a discursive motivation: in a magazine publishing pornographic material, the visual and linguistic space opens up for discussing pornography in various ways. In *Start*, pornography was presented as primary content, and this allows for the secondary level discussion about it. We saw that in the case of women's magazines, Neda Todorović calls the intellectual-political articles "alibi-topics", preceding

the fashion–beauty–cooking sections for which the readers in fact buy these magazines. These are an alibi, for making the magazine and its readers look and feel more politically engaged and intellectual. In the case of *Start*, one might wonder if feminism was an alibi for the pornographic and tabloid-like content, or the other way round, these were indeed the price of the necessary compromise to maintain economic and therefore, relative political independence. Either way, as a result, *Start* became a curious mixture of *Ms.* and *Playboy*, two media products that both influenced the magazine and its authors.

Censorship in pornography is a topic around which Kesić and Drakulić were both critical of the radical feminists in the USA, while both authors opposed pornography in principle. They questioned the anti-porn campaign of Catherine MacKinnon's and Andrea Dworkin's Women Against Pornography (WAP), who were, however, influenced by Millet and Firestone, and supported by Steinem, Hite, Adrienne Rich, authors very much valued by feminists in Yugoslavia, including Kesić and Drakulić. The Yugoslav authors were, however, suspicious about what the anti-porn campaign would do to freedom of speech. Drakulić expressed her surprise that not only supported these fellow feminists censorship, but they even accepted the alliance of conservative republicans, who otherwise opposed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and the right to abortion, contraception and the equal rights of "homosexuals".⁷² The allies of WAP were those otherwise against feminism, who also considered communism immoral and criminal, wrote Drakulić.

Instead of sexually explicit images as the source of women's subordination and exploitation, in Drakulić's opinion, it is a cultural–social context that ensures women's subordination. She explicates the sources of subordination through the concept of the consciousness industry⁷³: claiming that there indeed is no freedom of speech, which, however, never is an abstract freedom, it is always dependent on the social and cultural context. Pornography, therefore, is no doubt complementary to other forms of repression, but banning it would not help the cause. As feminists, in their promise, do not want to exchange one hierarchy for another, they want "a revolutionary consciousness, way of life, culture, values". Then, in her conclusion, she asks the question deeply rooted in the Yugoslav context: "Does feminism, like all revolutionary movements up to now, go on the road of justifying the means in the name of the envisioned goal?"

Cautiously Radical: Bazar and Ona

The growing self-awareness of feminists in Yugoslavia was plastically traceable on the pages of *Start*. The general critical attitude of the magazine, which was often indeed cynical as well, combined with the explicit visual representation of sexuality opened up the discourse towards feminist discussions. Women's magazines also opened up to feminism, but the genre prescribed and facilitated different realisations. What happens in *Bazar* and *Svijet*, the two magazines with most feminist content, was a more women-centred discourse on women's sexuality, aiming to dismantle the oppressive myths of women's sexuality, including those suggested by the very images in *Start*. Important actors behind the feminist presence in the popular press, like Todorović and Drakulić believed in its crucial role for the promotion of feminism and women's rights.

In support of women learning more about their sexuality, *Bazar* published an article-series with the title "All You Know and Do Not Know about Sex", prepared by Todorović, and mostly based on the work of American sexologists and other experts, for example Shere Hite, Helene Kaplan and Alfred C. Kinsey.⁷⁴ The opening sentence of the series optimistically announced "the end of the era of male sexual rule [*vladavina*]"⁷⁵ This series, based in this respect also on Hite's ideas, identified the centrality of fertility in the patriarchal mainstream discourses on orgasm and menopause.⁷⁶ According to this discourse, measuring women's value by their reproductive capability, women in or after menopause lose femininity and therefore become valueless, their partners may even leave them for a younger partner. To contradict this, the article brings fact and proof from women's experience and new research, claiming that "menopause is just another phase in women's lives and part of their femininity".⁷⁷ What the series elaborates on the most is the different needs of women to enter sexual encounters and to be able to enjoy these in their own way, ignoring prejudice. It is the last article in the series which raises an equally important issue that is part of one's sexual freedom: women's right to say no.⁷⁸ This connects the entire series on women's sexuality to violence against women, thus entering the terrain of anti-violence activism.⁷⁹

The other two sections of *Bazar* to examine more in detail, one on the women's shelters and the advice sections, are much more based on readers' letters than the article series on sexuality, therefore are closer

to the reality of the Yugoslav readers. Sofija Trivunac's advice section ran between May 1983 and May 1986,⁸⁰ the series on women's shelters between 21 June 1985 and 25 October 1985. Sofija Trivunac is a psychologist, important member of the Belgrade *Žena i društvo* group, and as Neda Todorović said, she wanted to have a feminist advisor for the article series "Between Us" [*U četiri oka*].⁸¹ "Between Us" is a classical advice section (the "agony aunt" section) for the readers, which was first introduced by the Zagreb-based magazine *Svijet* [World] in 1958, with the same title "Between Us", in Todorović's words: "establishing a post-war wave of intimate confessions in front of the eyes of the public". Noticing the shift in relation to what can be said in public, she adds: "by this, *Svijet* [and *Bazar*] was becoming more and more similar to the Western women's magazines".⁸² Indeed, the possibility to speak about intimate problems of individuals (moreover, individual women), without revealing the person behind the story, expands the limits of the public sphere in a semi-open socialist society.

The genre of the advice sections in women's magazines consists of two letters: one written by a reader about their problems in their private life, the other is the response of the journalist or psychologist. It lacks interlocution, and the advisor cannot specify or clarify any of the statements of the reader, who in this situation becomes a co-author of the article or section. In this sense, the reader-author exposes her/his intimate problems to the authority of the advisor and to the other readers of the magazine, while she/he does not have the opportunity to react on how their problem is interpreted and presented through the advice-response. On the one hand, in this originally specifically women's genre, there is an empowering capability, as women's problems become public and this publicity is legitimated by the medium that enables it. On the other hand, by the lack of interlocution, the women sharing their private matters with the public are left without opportunity to voice their opinion on the advice from the authoritative advisor. The third aspect is the nature of the letters: the concept behind the advice sections is that the other readers find themselves in the problems presented in the letters and use the advice in their own lives. Therefore, it was an enterprise with huge responsibility and uncontrollable outcome Trivunac took on.

Regardless of the uneven discursive position between advisor and advice-seeker, Trivunac's answers aimed at dissolving many of the misbelief and prejudice about women's sexuality and behaviour. Instead of a

detailed analysis of the 78 pages of correspondence, I focus on the most common elements. There are many questions about sexuality, which reveal traditional relationship structures at the time. Responding to the letters, Trivunac tries to convince women that they are in charge of their bodies and no one else should have control over them. She suggests to the readers of *Bazar* to listen to their instincts and feelings when their partner presses them to have sexual intercourse: it is not women's duty to satisfy their partners' sexual needs. When one of the letter writers complains that her family would not allow her to have premarital sex, Trivunac encourages her to make decisions about her body. She also urges young girls who do not feel safe or loved in their families to become independent, both from their families and from men. Trivunac tells them that they should study and start their own life, while she warns them against marrying young, emphasising that marriage cannot be a solution to their dependence on someone, and it is just another dependence on another person. All in all, Trivunac always promotes the feminist models vis-à-vis the patriarchal system of values and relations.

Bazar's third series I look at, "SOS for Battered Women" [SOS za pretučene žene] was initiated in the light of the plans of the *Žena i društvo* groups of the opening of the first safe shelters and SOS helplines for battered women. The series features activists who founded the SOS helpline and the shelter, for example the activist Vesna Mimica, a ballet dancer who educated herself to proficiency in the field of violence against women and was one of the initiators of the helpline. The series is set up of a variety of materials, from a call to readers to contribute with their own stories, the presentation of the legal background in Yugoslavia, as well as information from the activists who are also experts in the field of violence against women. To engage the readers, *Bazar* started a poll, where the readers were asked to give their opinion if such a house would be required in Belgrade as well. Readers had to fill out a detailed question sheet, where they were asked to describe their experience of domestic violence, what injuries they suffered and if the perpetrators had to face any legal consequences.⁸³ It is here that one of the Zagreb experts, initiators of the helpline and the shelter, Vesna Mimica clearly condemns domestic partnership violence, while also emphasises that it is serious and widespread, affecting all social strata. Domestic violence is a "social crime", "the most brutal violence, which is happening behind closed

doors”.⁸⁴ The same year, in 1985 *Bazar* also publishes a series of readers’ letters about the topic, mostly by women who live in an abusive relationship. These women confirm the need for new forms of help for domestic violence victims: “there would be experts who know what to do”.⁸⁵

When the three series in *Bazar* (“All That You Know and Do Not Know about Sex”, the shelter-series and “Between Us”) thematise crucial feminist issues, the word “feminism” barely ever appears. In one case, it was from the letter of the battering husband whom the articles about the shelters use as a ‘glimpse into the criminal mind’’: “I see that you started to advocate these ridiculous feminist problems [...] this, your poll, I consider the highest brazenness”.⁸⁶ Feminism is presented here through a double mirror: described as something negative from the perspective of someone who beats his wife, in an article series condemning violence against women. However, since the articles do not use the term feminism otherwise and do not connect it explicitly to the struggle for the elimination of violence against women (which connection, as we shall see in Chapter 5, is a strong one), the concept remains foggy at least for the average reader of *Bazar*.

Sexual- and gender-based violence as a topic was gaining growing attention at the time in Yugoslavia, so even the TV show *Ona* had broadcasts about domestic violence, as well as about women’s beauty and its precarious representations,⁸⁷ rape and abortion.⁸⁸ While the policeman interviewed in the part about violence against women admits that when battered women revoke their report the day after the police was called to their house, it is due to their fear of the abusive partner, he attributes violence to drinking, which idea is not refuted. Todorović presents the new law, which may be protective of the women and children with an abusive man in the household: according to this, the parent who has custody of the children gets the apartment. Reacting to this new law and domestic violence, two men from the Centre for Social Work claim that “this is just a form of quarrel, only physical”, and one of them views the new regulation about apartment ownership as unfair, since a man can lose the apartment he worked for thirty years to a woman “who has never worked”. This position is questioned by Todorović, exposing the state institution to a feministically driven criticism. The clearly positive element from the perspective of the spread of feminist ideas in the TV show is Todorović’s position. She is usually supportive and sympathetic towards the victims of violence she interviews, be them rape or domestic violence survivors, representatives of both groups being presented in the show.

CONCLUSION

By the end of the 1980s, feminism in Yugoslavia has reached a multi-faceted and relatively wide audience. The success in terms of the widespread presence was not always a success in content, still, what was certainly achieved here and not in the other media and forums was the opening up towards the private and the everyday life of ordinary women, who read women's magazines, watch TV and write letters to the editor. Crucial topics managed to get onto the agenda of various publicities and basic messages about crucial feminist issues were transmitted. There can be seen an ambivalence between the genres: from this analysis, it seems that while in *Bazar* feminism was opening up towards the private sphere and thus became the personal political, in *Start* even personal stories and matters had to be presented as political in order to be interesting for the editors. The recurrence of certain authors along certain topics shows how interrelated the actors are, but by the wide presence in popular media suggests that these circles were not that closed and exclusive, after all.

A topic that overarches the different media products I have analysed above is the reflections on women and work. For the new Yugoslav feminists, also inspired by different forms of socialism, women's economic independence achieved through work was a central issue. As we have seen in the previous chapters, the double burden and women's access to free time was an equally crucial topic. At the same time, in the anti-feminist discourses in or about popular media, women not working seem to be a shared concern. Maca Jogan sees women's magazines urging women to engage rather in leisurely activities, while the abusive man in *Bazar* legitimises his wife beating by his wife's laziness. In *Ona*, the policeman claims that domestic violence accusations are just an excuse for women to take the apartment away from the man who worked for it. Jovan Đorđević, who appears in one of the *Ona* broadcasts, calls bourgeois women who work in the home exploiters in his book.⁸⁹

The mid- and late 1970s provide a legal and discursive framework for experimentation and criticism. The feminists criticise and question both the state's discourse on women's equality and that of popular culture and the non-feminist subculture about the achieved *sexual revolution*. Even if the language had to be tamed in the women's magazines and on TV, and was constantly questioned and challenged by the other articles in *Start*, a wide audience was reached and the public presence of feminist ideas was paving the way to the activism that was born in the mid-1980s.