

PART V: Borders of the Millennium: the Present

*It is hard to be a woman in Bosnia and Herzegovina,
and when you are born as Roma woman, your life is twice as hard.*⁵²⁶

The initiated *watering down* and *dissipation* of women's rights and influences achieved with women's move from the private to public sphere during the war continued in post-socialist Bosnia and Herzegovina. Transition, re-building the country, the post-Dayton context, quotas – national, territorial and gender – democratisation and other social contracts proved to be very gendered with regard to the restructuring of women's positions. In the processes of economic reintegration, re-articulation of labour rights and achievement of political power, women's place and role continued to follow a retrograde trend, which started with the most recent war. The main enemies of feminism in the post-Yugoslav space were state and national ideologies, impressively parallel in their discourse, actions and position towards women.⁵²⁷

This part of the book describes women's struggle against being pushed aside in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It deals with women's association and activist efforts, women's fight against neoliberalism and fascism, and the delusions imposed on them by numerous patriarchal structures. Given that the last two decades were substantially saturated with capitalism and neoliberal ideas, such social and economic consensus since the last war has logically requested women's expansion to various labour sectors – often as mere labour force, and not as those enjoying equal rights. Also, one must understand that this is a post-war period where, like during any war, society faces women's participation in different positions, which eventually reinstates a situation much worse than the initial one, applying well-rehearsed repressive methods. In this respect, it is certain that some women in an important positions, or appointed to certain positions for the first time will be omitted from the text but, regardless of efforts and will, it is impossible to mention all important women who influenced change in society in the pages of this book. At the same time, in view of nationalist influences on emancipative rhetoric over the past 20 years and numerous media and political misogynous treatment of women and women's representation, the aim here is primarily to give space to those women who consciously, and in an articulated way, support the fight for equality, to those whose actions are clearly marked with their feminist and activist positioning.

526 Source: <http://www.zenskaposla.ba/content/bit-romkinja-i-politicarka-u-bih> (June 9, 2014)

527 Slapšak, S. (1996) *Žene i rat u bivšoj Jugoslaviji*, source: <http://www.yurope.com/zines/republika/arhiva/96/145/145-16.html> (June 29, 2014)

Patriarchy and Capitalism, Patriarchy and Transition – Bosnia and Herzegovina after Dayton

The Dayton Constitution defines the administrative structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina. With its entry into force, the country was divided into two entities: the Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska. Brčko District was also established as a separate administrative unit. Each of these instances keeps its sovereignty and a high level of autonomy, as well as an entire bureaucratic and political structure. The Federation of BiH is further divided to 10 cantons that are deemed separate units, each with their own government. Such complicated structure and absolute decentralisation of the state, with successful political manipulation, created a mass-scale bureaucratic structure and system that much more often favours politicians than citizens.

An important reminder, repeated by all female activists and left unsaid by the majority, is that not a single woman participated in the signing and negotiation of the Dayton Agreement. What does it mean then to think about Bosnia and Herzegovina after Dayton? To think about women who dedicated their lives to the fight against nationalism, those who honourably fell and those who still hold their lines, despite nationalism, political fraud, tumour and other mortal disease. Are feminism and feminist struggle in Bosnia and Herzegovina doomed to failure? Are we fighting an already lost battle? In what conditions did the fight for equality actually take place in the past twenty years? Misogyny as a war legacy remained deeply rooted in public and private lives of Bosnian and Herzegovinian women.

*Nationalisms in Yugoslavia were built simultaneously with misogyny. What is more, one could say that the gradually deteriorating women's position in society during the final years of socialism was a warning before the breakout of nationalism and disintegration of Yugoslavia.*⁵²⁸

Compared to the present situation, socialism, which was not overly emancipating towards women, seems like a system that gave much more freedom. The number of women in the executive government and in leading positions is declining, with a well-manipulated quota system in voting lists.

*The absence of female votes, of political activists and public personalities, both in socialist and post-socialist eras, is a reflection of a long standing crisis of collective and ethnic identities, and of the discomfort of society, unable to face its past as it is – a complex and traumatic one – without simplification or re-traumatisation.*⁵²⁹

528 Iveković, R. (2000) p. 16.

529 Jambrešić Kirin, R. (2004) *Heroine ili egzekutorice: partizanke u 1990-ima* in *Između roda i naroda: etnološke i folklorističke studije*. Zagreb: institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku:

Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina are mostly mentioned as victims, and much less often as participants in the war. Their role in building of the country is neglected and they are now exclusively viewed through the figure of mothers of killed fighters or violence victims. Unfortunately, many women identify themselves with this role – in the general state of mind of BiH society, patriarchal tradition still comes first, which slows down liberalisation with its oppressive methods, and pushes aside emancipation of female rebels of the 21st century, placing them on the social periphery.

*The first delusion of western promoters of democracy in post-socialist societies is that every country that abandoned dictatorship or communism is actually transitioning to democracy by the very regime change... Another incorrect basic assumption is that democratisation is a natural, almost automatic process that logically follows after the overturn of a totalitarian regime.*⁵³⁰

None of the above assumptions is gender-neutral – they both directly affect women – primarily by avoiding to face the new pseudo-nationalist movements aiming at women's transfer to the private sphere, thus confirming their role as mother and caretaker, and by ignoring the lack of basic aspects of democracy in the transition process that directly affect marginalised social groups, unfortunately mostly comprised of women. Transition, in all its meanings, is a constant struggle and challenge, aimed at a better regulated society. Despite this, negative aspects of transition in BiH and the Balkans proved to affect women more than men. According to Sonja Lokar's statements contained in her presentation to students of Gender Studies at the University of Sarajevo, *Politics and Gender in Transition*,⁵³¹ women entered the transition with certain rights, and as integral parts of groups that dealt with human rights activism. In the majority of former Yugoslav republics, after the election victory of nationalist parties, the first item on the political agenda of new rulers was to reduce women's rights to contraception and abortion. What is more, women have become the biggest group of those described as transition victims. Transition affected women in two ways: as workers in industry and administration; and with the reinstatement of traditional values, the war and overall rise in discrimination.⁵³²

Centar za ženske studije, p. 319

530 Ler-Sofronić, N. (2002) *Kraj tranzicijske paradigme – rodna perspektiva* in Women and Politics: Gender and Political Theory. Dubrovnik: Ženska infoteka, p. 24-25

531 Lokar, S. *Politika i rod u tranziciji* – Lecture held on June 6, 2009

532 Ibid. p. 11-12

Social Rights, Education, Employment

Wartime discrimination against women did not subside during peace. *Women were the first to lose jobs during privatisation, or their working hours were cut in half, or they were put on waiting lists.*⁵³³ In terms of poverty, according to the Statistics Agency data, the percentage of poor population is almost equal among women and men. However, the problem becomes slightly different when other parameters are considered – it is evident that 53.7% of unemployed women accounts for housewives, and that the biggest percentage of poor women accounts for the age group above 65. The same is evident in data on pensions – in 2012, almost 200,000 men and below 100,000 women received old age pensions.⁵³⁴ In the domain of participation in the labour market, data from the BiH Statistics Agency shows that the employment rate among men in 2012 stood at 41.5%, and almost two times lower among women – 22.6%.⁵³⁵ On the other hand, the presented data about the structure of employed persons in 2012 shows us that 9% women belonged to the category of unpaid helping members, and only 2.2% men. The unemployment phenomenon obviously does not affect men and women equally.

Pressured by international institutions and owing to the lobbying of civil society, Bosnia and Herzegovina implemented legislation reform, and almost all laws in the country were amended to provide equal rights to all citizens. Nevertheless, despite the legislative progress, Bosnia and Herzegovina can still be described as a country with significant discrimination rate and a large number of poor and disempowered. *Primarily due to transition and all aforementioned characteristics, 80% of the population belongs to some of the vulnerable groups.*⁵³⁶

The domain of education and right to education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is only the continuation of the socialist system – the Law on Mandatory Elementary Education is implemented, and some cantons also introduced laws on mandatory secondary education. In this regard, if we follow statistics, we can see that there are almost equal numbers of boys and girls in schools, and there are no substantial deviations. Reasons for drop-out from secondary schools are gender-conditioned to a great extent, but given that there are no official state statistics on the number of drop-outs from secondary schools, it is impossible to conduct a deeper analysis of this problem.

In the education domain, this period brought expansion of higher education institutions and, in this respect, every administrative entity worked to open their own universities, or at least their local offices. This

533 Spahić-Šiljak, Z. (2012), p. 103

534 Statistics Agency of BiH (2013): *Žene i muškarci u BiH*, p. 34

535 Ibid. p. 31

536 Borić, B. (2012) *Socijalna pravda u Bosni i Hercegovini* in Politička participacija u BiH, Sarajevski Otvoreni Centar, Sarajevo, p. 123

led to an increased number of female and male students at universities. While such trends favour a higher level of literacy among the population, they indicate several problematic aspects in terms of gender analysis. Primarily, through gender statistics on universities, we can monitor the transfer of power centres. One of the examples is the Faculty of Law in Sarajevo, which was the only faculty in BiH that produced male and female lawyers. Nowadays, it is one of 10 such faculties in the country, deprived of the ideological support from the state that it enjoyed up to 1992.⁵³⁷ In this institution, *since the war, and especially after 2000, there has been evident increase in the number of female law graduates. The percentage of men dropped below one-third in the total structure of law graduates. The feminisation trend in legal education is an indicator of the declining reputation of this profession and decreased financial opportunities provided by the legal profession.*⁵³⁸ As Professor Bakšić - Muftić points out in the text, regardless of the obvious feminisation of legal profession, there are obvious trends of increasing numbers of men in executive and other high-level positions.

When it comes to education – according to data from the BiH Statistics Agency, education is accessible to all citizens of BiH, regardless of gender. While data specified in the Thematic Bulletin Women and Men in BiH⁵³⁹ indicates almost equal numbers of female and male pupils in secondary schools, data on numbers of graduates from higher education institutions shows an interesting trend – gender-sensitive statistics show that female university graduates by far outnumber male graduates, but the difference (up to 30%) levels off in the number of male and female Masters graduates, and the proportion of men and women drastically changes in favour of men at PhD level.⁵⁴⁰ This trend reconfirms the thesis that women in this period only have access to areas that do not constitute sources of power and economic prosperity – as chances for obtaining better positions and jobs with a higher level of education rise, women gradually get squeezed out of this space.

When it comes to other social rights, it is important to note that all formal requirements for exercising social rights by men and women in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been fulfilled – the adopted laws regulate and meet specific women's needs. Unfortunately, there is a huge gap between the laws and their implementation in Bosnia and Herzegovina – although all laws were passed with full respect of human rights, these laws are frequently not implemented in practice. One of such examples

537 Bakšić Muftić, J. (2012) *Pravni fakultet u Sarajevu - Iskušenja u vremenu*. Godišnjak Pravnog fakulteta u Sarajevu, LV, p. 70

538 Ibid. p. 77

539 *Žene i muškarci u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Tematski Bilten 3, Statistics Agency of BiH, Sarajevo 2013, source: http://www.bhas.ba/tematskibilteni/BHAS_Zene_Muskarci_BH.pdf (July 6, 2014)

540 Ibid. p 30

is discrimination against pregnant women: *According to domestic laws, pregnancy may not be the grounds for dismissal, which often happens in practice, especially in privately-owned companies and corporations.*⁵⁴¹

Regardless of the above, this period is still marked by certain victories and the opening of positions for women. For the first time, women have exercised their legal rights in the domain of equal access to certain social and economic structures, patriarchal principles in inheritance, employment and equal rights have been increasingly deconstructed, limits in gender perceptions of professions have moved etc. Unfortunately, as mentioned above, this progress is more conditioned by neoliberal demands of the labour market than by actual progress in the state of mind of female and male citizens.

Women's Association / Women's Movement

Nevertheless, the actual picture of the development of women's rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina is still incomplete without demonstrating the contextualised development of the women's non-governmental movement. Bosnia and Herzegovina became an independent state with almost half a million displaced citizens, destroyed industry and infrastructure, a huge number of dead and missing people, and an enormous scar from war rape. A country that survived genocide (even gendercide) becomes independent with traumas. Nevertheless, several gender-sensitive processes were launched at the end of the war.

First of all, space for women's groups and women's association was opened. From a movement that took care of the population, refugees etc. during the war, and from those that joined Medica Zenica in efforts to directly repair the war consequences, these groups became stronger after the war and better organised in providing aid to the population and responding to the various needs of society, including efforts aimed at reconciliation, education, association etc. According to a research by Zlatiborka Popov-Momčinović, the work of women gathered around those organisations was in no way harmless or simple – after the war, they were pushed aside and often even persecuted by the governmental structures that were actually the same nationalist structures that were in power during the war.

*According to an interviewed activist from this part of the country, the association was thus frequently visited by the police, activists were called for informative interviews, and their children were exposed to constant insults at school and harassment by teachers and other pupils.*⁵⁴²

Women's organisations partly originated from a feminist movement

541 Borić, B. (2012) p. 132

542 Popov-Momčinović, Z. (2013) p. 114

that was active during the war, and partly from activist impetus. Although many of the women involved were not enlightened feminists, as their work was progressing and as they were getting acquainted with the movement, they began to recognise their feminist identities.⁵⁴³ The same thing happened with organisations – from initial activities focused on a narrow community, as retrograde state policies expanded, they expanded their activities through the years – the more women were excluded from decision making processes, the more they moved their activities to the informal sector.

Despite the fact that they acted from periphery, over the years, women's NGOs managed to successfully lobby for several legislative changes. Women's organisations put substantial effort into creating gender-sensitive government structures - Bosnia and Herzegovina is the first country in the region that adopted the Gender Equality Law in 2003, which recommended a quota of minimum 40% of the less represented sex in public institutions⁵⁴⁴. Activists of the women's movement successfully lobbied for the introduction of a 30% quota for representatives of the less represented gender on election lists. Regardless of the incompatibility of the two laws, and the fact that quota difference indicates a form of discrimination, the fact that such initiatives were recognised in law is important. In addition, the efforts of women's organisations also resulted in recognition of domestic violence in the Criminal Code of BiH and regulating the status of civilian war victims, at least in one part of the country.

Apart from the Law, institutions for the promotion of gender equality were created in Bosnia and Herzegovina (a decision made owing in part to lobbying by the women's movement) – BiH Gender Equality Agency (led by **Samra Hadžiabdić – Filipović**) plays a coordinating role between two Gender Centres in the Federation of BiH (Director **Ana Vuković**) and Republika Srpska (the first Director **Spomenka Krunić**, currently **Mirjana Lukač**). These three bodies constitute the state mechanism aiming at the introduction of gender equality, monitoring the state of affairs and implementation of Gender Action Plan. Unfortunately, implementation of the laws and the influence of these formal structures are still far from satisfying, and there is still an evident need for creating a complete administrative infrastructure.

One cannot talk about women's organisations without mentioning the omnipresent donor problem – the fact is that the informal sector and activism often imply *pro bono* work, and women's organisations thus often rely on donors' support. International donors have been numerous and their policies unaligned, which led to the closing down of many initiatives. Struggling for survival, women's organisations were often forced to *hunt* for funding and sometimes to adjust to contradicting donor requests. On

543 Spahić-Šiljak, Z. (2013) p. 12

544 Source: http://arsbih.w1.daj.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/ZoRS_32_10_B.pdf (June 5, 2014)

the other hand, financial independence from the local government is not absolute independence: donations sometimes imply dependence on other governments and international organisations – on their funds, but also on their visions⁵⁴⁵. In this regard, active citizenship is legitimized by donors, and women's organisations are forced to adjust, in order to survive.

*Without the international donor support, even formal recognition of women's rights would not have been possible in BiH. However, an approach that would recognise local experiences and provide local women with space for initiative would result in larger and more meaningful progress and would play a smaller role in the strategies of re-patriarchalisation and re-traditionalisation of current regimes.*⁵⁴⁶

Apart from political lobbying, female activists also made significant progress in peace activism and reconciliation efforts in BiH. In this regard, several publications and research studies were developed in the past years, focusing on organisations, but also on individual women who were active in those associations.

Peacemakers

There was enormous peace activism by women's NGOs and, as mentioned, it was concentrated on responding to the basic needs of the population. At that time, female activists were engaged in activities such as crossing the border, enabling people to meet, providing aid to weakened parts of the population, identifying local needs, etc. With time and donor support, women NGOs' influence was growing. Regardless of the frequent persecution of activists and their organisations by the ruling structures for opposing the current policies, their efforts were still recognised in the community. Their activities were expanding and, with donor assistance, they networked and created a stronger community. Regardless of criticisms that the work of women's peace organisations was apolitical or exclusively sparked by donations, many clearly made significant progress in the processes of facing the past in society. The fact is that BiH society has not fully faced its past yet, and that organisations involved in peace activism failed in organising a significant social movement.⁵⁴⁷ However, we must not forget that all these women acted from periphery – they were involved in peace building efforts at the local level, and men occupied the

545 Zaharijević, A. (2013) *Being an Activist: Feminist citizenship through transformations of Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav citizenship regimes*, CITSEE Working Paper Series 28, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK, p. 19

546 Mlinarević, G. and Kosović, L. (2011) p. 133

547 Topić, T., Živanović, A., Zolja, A. Mirovni aktivizam u Bosni i Hercegovini, p. 49, source: <http://www.zenezenama.org/bos/info/Studija-mir.pdf> p 49

decision-making positions. Given that these women were pushed aside and stigmatised by the rulers at the very beginning of their work, they clearly faced huge resistance from the start. For this reason, all peacemakers deserve tribute for their extraordinary civil courage and humanity.

In the publication *Peace with a Woman's Face – Empowering Women to Deal with the Past*, organisations *Lara* from Bijeljina and *HO Horizonti* from Tuzla identified 11 peacemakers, 11 heroines, women with extraordinary courage, daring and endless goodness⁵⁴⁸: **Azra Hasanbegović**, Mostar, **Vahida Sulejmanović**, Bihać, **Marija Kezić**, Banja Luka, **Duška Andrić**, Zenica, **Željka Prša**, Grahovo, **Marija Divković**, Tuzla, **Mirsada Bajrić**, Modriča, **Dr Lidija Salcer-Šunjić**, Sarajevo, **Branka Čarapić**, Višegrad, **Danica Perić Lončarević**, Bratunac, **Anka Todorović**, Bijeljina.

In her book *Shining Humanity*, Zilka Spahić-Šiljak analysed the life stories of 12 women peacemakers: **Sabiha Husić**, **Danka Zelić**, **Jadranka Miličević**, **Lidija Živanović**, **Nada Golubović**, **Stanojka Cana Tešić**, **Besima Borić**, **Rahela Džidić**, **Amra Pandžo**, **Radmila Žigić** and **Jasminka Rebac**.⁵⁴⁹

The chapter Peace activism in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the post-war period – perspective of female and male activists of the study *Peace Activism in Bosnia and Herzegovina* uses data collected from dozens of female and male activists throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some of these are: **Galina Marjanović**, Duga Banja Luka; **Jasminka Husanović**, Prijateljice Tuzla, **Lidija Živanović**, Helsinki Parliament of Citizens of Banja Luka, **Mirjana Maksimović**, Sanus Prijedor, **Nada Golubović**, United Women, Banja Luka, **Jasna Zečević**, Vive Žene Tuzla, **Mirjana Malić**, Sarajevo, **Nejra Nalić**, Mi-Bospo, Tuzla, **Senka Jakupović**, Sanski Most, **Memnuna Zvizdić**, Women to Women Sarajevo, **Branka Rajner**, Human Rights Bureau, Tuzla, **Danka Zelić**, Women Citizens Association, Grahovo, **Memnuna Mahić**, Eho, Ljubuški, **Amela Salkić**, Women's Forum, Bratunac.

Apart from their peace building efforts, women's NGOs notably paid a lot of attention to healing war traumas. As emphasised, Bosnia and Herzegovina entered this period with a large number of raped, displaced and missing persons and destroyed infrastructure. A large number of NGOs dedicated many of their activities to mitigating the direct consequences of the war, and particularly to achieving justice and resolving women's social issues. However, regardless of the engagements of several women's organisations, the problem of women-war victims in BiH is still nor adequately dealt with. Rape victims now face not only existential problems, but reintegration problems as well.

In her piece *Rape Crime in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Local and*

548 Lara Bijeljina, HO Horizonti Tuzla (2013) *Mir sa ženskim licem – osnaživanje žena za suočavanje s prošlošću*, Kvinna till Kvinna

549 Spahić-Šiljak, Z. (2013)

International Dimensions,⁵⁵⁰ Jasna Bakšić-Muftić says: *Compared to other war events, this topic is not sufficiently covered in Bosnia and Herzegovina itself*.⁵⁵¹ Gorana Mlinarević⁵⁵² also feels that the few NGOs that deal with this problem are not able to make significant progress, especially with the dynamics of changing the position of raped women as stigmatized members of society.

*As mentioned above, one of the most serious issues covered with a veil of silence and denial is the legacy of rape and gender-based war crimes. Society is completely dumb when it comes to problems that victims of gender-based war crimes are facing. True, there are several NGOs that are trying to deal with this issue, but they are not able to do it on their own.*⁵⁵³

The patriarchal society that we currently live in treats victims of gender-based violence completely differently than other war victims. Rights and interests of victims of gender-based crimes are still ignored or intentionally overlooked.⁵⁵⁴ The issue of raped women and their children in Bosnia and Herzegovina is still taboo. With the exception of a few newspaper and scientific articles, one can say that there is practically no public interest in raising the issue of justice for victims of sexualised violence.

Gender Studies

Parallel to the increasing donor interest in women's issues, work to promote women's human rights and strengthen organisations, there has been growing interest in academic engagement in areas of gender, religious, women's and queer studies. The creation of small academic community started as early as in the late nineties.

The introduction of feminist and gender studies in the academic community started in late nineties and early 2000s with individual attempts by feminist scientists - Nirman Moranjak-Bamburać, Jasminka Babić-Avdispahić and Jasna Bakšić-Muftić – primarily in the fields of literature, philosophy and law. At the beginning, their influence comprised of the introduction of feminist issues and topics in university programmes conducted in Sarajevo, but later they

550 Bakšić-Muftić, J. (2004) *Zločin silovanja u Bosni i Hercegovini – lokalna i međunarodna dimenzija in Izazovi feminizma*. 26/04. p. 49-54

551 Ibid, p. 52

552 Mlinarević, G. (2008) *Seksualno nasilje nad ženama kao ratni zločin in Dijalog: Časopis za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju*, 3-4, p. 53-85

553 Ibid. 79

554 Ibid.

also introduced entire feminist courses. Recently, these scientists were joined by **Jasmina Husanović** and **Damir Arsenijević** in Tuzla, and **Danijela Majstorović** in Banja Luka.⁵⁵⁵

With the assistance of women's organisations, these theoreticians slowly organised themselves in informal groups and started informal education and courses with a feminist agenda. At the same time, *Women to Women* launched the *Women's Studies Žarana Papić* in BiH. This project, envisaged as a bi-semester study that should introduce main the ideas of women's studies to the participants, was an informal education initiative by an NGO, but still of great importance, because professors from the University in Sarajevo who established the Masters Programme in Gender Studies in 2006 taught the course. The Programme was launched at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Post-Graduate Studies at the University in Sarajevo.⁵⁵⁶

The next step towards institutionalisation of the Masters programme of Gender Studies at the University in Sarajevo was also made with the assistance of an NGO. International Forum Bosnia opened the Centre for Gender Research in cooperation with feminists, offering numerous programmes, workshops and organising academic debates. The result of these debates is a special issue of a magazine of the International Forum Bosnia dedicated to feminism: *Challenges of Feminism*, with published pieces by **Jasminka Babić-Avdispahić**, **Jasna Bakšić-Muftić**, **Marina Katnić-Bakaršić** and **Nirman Moranjak-Bamburać**.⁵⁵⁷

It is important to note that feminists gathered around *Women's Studies Žarana Papić* actually managed to develop a high-quality programme. In parallel with the implementation of women's studies and under the same project, Nirman Moranjak-Bamburać and journalist **Angelina Šimić** launched *Patchwork*, the first feminist magazine in BiH.⁵⁵⁸ All these activities led to the start of preparations for the official launch of the post-graduate programme. The initiative was launched within the Centre for Interdisciplinary Post-Graduate Studies, which functions at the level of the University in Sarajevo, and the programme was officially launched in the academic year 2006/2007, when it enrolled the first generation of students. To date, 3 generations have completed the study, and the first generation was admitted to PhD study in the academic year 2013/2014.

Jasna Bakšić-Muftić, **Nirman Moranjak-Bamburać**, **Jasminka Babić-Avdispahić**, and **Nejra Nuna Čengić** with Zdravko Grebo were initiators and leaders of the implementation of this idea. These women

555 Mlinarević, G. and Kosović, L. (2011) p. 134

556 Potkonjak, S. et al. (2008) *Između politike pokreta i politike znanja: Feminizam i ženski/rodni studiji u Hrvatskoj, Bosni i Hercegovini i Sloveniji*. Stud. ethnol. Croat., vol. 20, Zagreb, p. 86

557 Babić-Avdispahić, J. (ed.) et al. (2004) *Izazovi Feminizma*, Sarajevo: IF Bosnae

558 Mlinarević, G. and Kosović, L. (2011) p. 134

599 Ibid

are also distinguished BiH theoreticians, whose work set the foundations of contemporary BiH feminism. Apart from these, the following theoreticians from BiH also played active roles in the programme implementation: **Marina Katnić-Bakaršić, Jasmina Husanović, Ugo Vlasisavljević, Asim Mujkić, Damir Arsenijević, Nebojša Jovanović, Zilka Šiljak-Spahić, Lejla Somun-Krupalija, Ajla Demiragić, Svjetlana Đurković and Olivera Simić,**⁵⁵⁹ and academic tutors **Gorana Mlinarević and Lamija Kosović.**

The programme was nominally supported by the Gender Equality Agency in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and by the University in Sarajevo. Unfortunately, financial support again came from international donors – Swedish and Norwegian governments. Upon completion of the project financed by these governments, Gender Studies was not further supported by the University or relevant ministries. Instead of the existing Masters programme, PhD study was introduced, as the continuation of the project, while the Masters study is currently closed. The lack of financial support for Gender Studies evidently demonstrates the passive attitude of the University in Sarajevo, not only towards issues of gender equality, women's rights and rights of sexual and gender minorities, but towards the entire scientific opus that has been recognised by universities throughout Europe not as one, but as several separate academic disciplines.

*(Public) universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina – stuck in reforms related to the Bologna process, weakened due to lack of funding and poor criteria in selection of teaching staff – are characterised by an ambivalent attitude towards gender/feminist education and research.*⁵⁶⁰

Notably, the Religious Studies programme⁵⁶¹ that was also established within the Centre for Interdisciplinary Post-Graduate Studies at the University in Sarajevo in the school year 2007/2008 experienced a similar bureaucratic fate to Gender Studies. This Programme was also closed after two generations of Masters in Religious Studies, some of whom became active and visible theological feminists in BiH.

The most distinguished feminist theoreticians and scientists have already been mentioned above. The following are a few sentences dedicated to a theoretician that made the most important progress in the development of feminist theory in BiH.

560 Karapetrović, M. (2014) *The View from Semi-periphery – About Feminism and Gender Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, in: Young Women in Post-Yugoslav Societies: Research, Practice and Policy, Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, Human Rights Centre, University of Sarajevo, Zagreb and Sarajevo, p. 61

561 Religious Studies were founded in 2006 by an agreement between UNSA and Arizona State University. In the same year, seven persons including Zilka Spahić Šiljak, spent a semester at the ASU to prepare the curriculum.

Nirman Moranjak Bamburać was born in Sarajevo in 1954, where she graduated from the Slavic Languages and Literature Department. She obtained a Masters degree at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb, where she successfully defended her PhD thesis *Metatext and Metatextuality – Problems of Aesthetic Function*. Her paper was later published in the form of a book *Metatekst* (1992) which, at the time of publishing, was a pioneering work in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, and it quickly sold out. Shortly later, the book was reworked and supplemented with several new analyses about important writers of world literature, such as Borges, Nabokov and Eco, and published as a book entitled *Retorika tekstualnosti* (2003). Nirman Moranjak Bamburać PhD, was a full time professor at the Faculty of Philosophy and the Academy of Performing Arts of the University in Sarajevo. She taught literary theory and critique, and narratology at the Comparative Literature Department of the Faculty of Philosophy. She taught theory of acting and direction at the Academy of Performing Arts. She was one of the founders and professors at the newly launched MA programme of Gender Studies in Sarajevo. Nirman Moranjak Bamburać published the following books: *Metatekst* (1991), *Retorika tekstualnosti* (2003), *Izazovi feminizma* (2004) as co-author with J. Babić-Avdispahić, J. Bakšić-Muftić and M. Katnić-Bakaršić, she edited almanac *Bosnien-Herzegovina: Interkultureller synkretismus* (2001), writing the introduction and bibliography. She published around 60 studies and articles in BiH, Croatian, German, Dutch and Hungarian magazines.

Lesbian Activism in Bosnia and Herzegovina – the Need for Articulation

Nearing the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, numerous gender-sensitive processes began. Apart from peacemaking work, the opening of academic programmes and lobbying for legislative amendments, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, intersexual and queer activists started to gather formally.

The LGBTTIQ movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina recorded its beginnings in 2001, when the establishment of a BiH lesbian-gay association was initiated. However, the first official LGBT association in Bosnia and Herzegovina was only formed in 2004 – the Q Association. The Q Association was active for almost 6 years. **Svetlana Đurković, Slobodanka Boba Dekić, Emina Trumić and Alma Selimović** and her closest collaborators worked with the community directly, organised festivals, published manuals and worked on the enhancement of the LGBT population in BiH. The Q Association left an important mark on the LGBT community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2009, the Equilibrium Association was established in Banja Luka, and in 2010, the Sarajevo Open Centre dedicated a special human rights programme to LGBT activism. The association Okvir also started functioning in 2011 and has worked with the LGBT

community in Sarajevo. The Banja Luka Association of Queer Activists was launched in 2013.⁵⁶²

All of these initiatives are linked with the LGBT movement. Unfortunately, apart from an informal initiative that was quickly shut down (Viktorija in Sarajevo) and a lesbian programme by the feminist organisation CURE, lesbian activism does not exist in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a separate movement. Evidently, lesbians as a doubly-vulnerable category – as women and a sexual minority – are still not sufficiently empowered in society to be able to separately organise themselves and provide support to one another. Regardless of the fact that similar organisations exist in neighbouring countries and that lesbians from these countries have frequent and good cooperation with organisations in BiH, there has been no significant initiative for articulating the lesbian movement in BiH to date. On the other hand, there has been an evident lack of interest amongst the women's movement in such initiatives – apart from the CURE Foundation, not a single women's organisation practically deals with these issues. What it more, women's organisations rarely support even formal initiatives, such as petition signings and press releases on the violation of lesbians' human rights. Interestingly, even donor organisations that initiate processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, guided by their own policies and priorities, have not shown any interest in strengthening the lesbian movement in BiH.

When it comes to transgender and transsexual women in BiH, the situation is practically the same. Although transgender and transsexual women face numerous additional problems in BiH society, such as violence, lack of understanding, rejection and discrimination, there are no adequate legal solutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the implementation of basic human rights of trans women, nor any significant initiatives. As a result of the above, trans women are completely marginalised in the society and only able to act from dissident positions.

The non-existence of space for discussion and particularly for action clearly testifies to the unsafe environment and lack of understanding for members of sexual minorities. Until the women's movement clearly announces that it stands behind all women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including those that are clearly placed on the periphery and exposed to the significant pressure of social stigmatisation, we will not be able to talk about the development of the third wave of feminism in Bosnia and Herzegovina – how can the third wave rhetoric be developed if we, women, are still afraid of being in a relationship with those of us who are pushed aside from society, even after the war and all the monstrosity that it brought? How can we discuss feminism in general, if we do not have the courage to support or at least understand different positions of women in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

⁵⁶² More about LGBT activism in BiH in *Čitanka LGBT ljudskih prava*, Sarajevski otvoreni centar, Sarajevo, 2012

There are many important female activists that should be mentioned in this publication. However, as long as the gap between the enacted Anti-Discrimination Law and its implementation is so wide, and as long as LGBTTIQ activists are exposed to attacks, it is not safe to mention any names. For this reason, I will only re-emphasise the importance of supporting lesbian activism initiatives, and appeal to all activists to get engaged on the implementation of the human rights of the most excommunicated outcasts among us.

Roma Women and the Struggle for Violence-Free Life

As members of another minority group, Roma women, together with lesbian and disabled women, lie on the margins of BiH society. Generally, members of the Roma community in Bosnia and Herzegovina still constitute one of the most marginalised groups in society, which makes Roma women susceptible to discrimination on two levels – as women and as members of the Roma population.

*Although the socio-economic situation is difficult for most citizens of BiH, the Roma population is on the social margin. It is beyond question that over 65% of Roma people have no roof over their head, 70% has no access to health care or social protection, over 90% of Roma is unemployed, and Roma children drop out of mandatory elementary schools due to poverty. If we add prejudice and discrimination against Roma to all of the above, it is hard to belong to the Roma community. Roma women are discriminated based on their affiliation with the Roma ethnic minority, based on sex and their social background or status.*⁵⁶³

Jeopardising rights to violence-free life, multiple discrimination, difficult access to the right to education, high unemployment rate, social and especially political marginalisation - these are some of the problems that Roma women are facing on a daily basis, and the public agencies and institutions do not deal with them, or do so only superficially, despite the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina participates in the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, and will preside over the final cycle of the Roma Decade (1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015).

The situation is not much better in the civil sector, especially considering the fact that programmes for the enhancement and equality of Roma women are rare and largely fragmented. There are only a few Roma NGOs with programmes focused on the rights of Roma women and

⁵⁶³ Romkinje za život bez nasilja: odgovor institucija na nasilje u porodici. Prava za sve, Sarajevo 2011, source: http://www.rightsforall.ba/publikacije-bs/docs-bs/Romkinje_za_zivot_bez_nasilja-BH.pdf (June 30, 2014)

tackling discrimination and/or violence against women. Roma women leaders who attempt to influence the enactment of laws and policies about the status of Roma and/or women in BiH are rare and even those initiatives that exist are indirect and concealed. Unfortunately, even feminists and female and male fighters for gender equality only recently started to think and talk about the problems of Roma women.

Hedina Tahirović Sijerčić – a national Roma coordinator – is a distinguished fighter for the rights of Roma women, who emphasised the issues of external discrimination and violence, and internal division among Roma, stressing the positive and negative effects of the Roma Decade in BiH: from focusing on the status of Roma in BiH and European societies to increasing division between Roma and non-Roma populations.⁵⁶⁴ However, to avoid any misconceptions, the position of the national coordinator was not initiated by local politicians. On the contrary, CARE financed this position within the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, expecting the state to recognise the importance of this work and offer Tahirović Sijerčić permanent employment. Unfortunately, there are no indications that this will actually happen. This fact indicates that any progress in the issue of Roma status, and particularly Roma women, is very unstable and mostly made under external pressures. Hedina Sijerčić was born in 1960 in Sarajevo, where she graduated in journalism at the Faculty of Political Science. She worked as the first female Roma journalist and TV producer in BiH. She then moved to Toronto in Canada, where she worked as a teacher in the Toronto District School Board, and as editor of the first Canadian-Romani newsletter “Romano Lil” (1998–2001). She is currently Professor of Romani language, culture and literature at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University in Zagreb, department for Indology and Far East studies. A writer, translator and journalist – she wrote 16 author’s works, and enrolled in PhD study in Leuven in Belgium. Mrs. Tahirović Sijerčić won the Best Promotion reward for presentation of her book *How God Created Roma* at the 21st International Book Fair in Sarajevo. In 2010, she received an award for the best literary work, a book of poetry *Ašun, haćar dukh* [Listen, Feel the Pain], and the international award for poetry *Zlatno pero Pampusza*, Tarnów, Poland.⁵⁶⁵

Indira Bajramović was born in 1968 in Jajce. Although an economic technician by vocation, she is currently an activist and President of the Association of Roma Women *Bolja budućnost* Tuzla. She is also engaged in the secretariat of the Equality Forum, and a Board member of the BiH Helsinki Committee of Human Rights and Management Board of the RING network. She is a candidate for Councillor at the Municipal Council Tuzla on behalf of the Association of Roma Women *Bolja budućnost*. Through her own activities and activities of the association of Roma women, she

564 Source: <http://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/hedina-tahirovic-sijercic-bh-koordinatrica-za-rome-dekada-je-pokrenula-lavinu> (June 30, 2014)

565 Source: http://magoriabooks.com/authors/hedina_sijercic/ (June 30, 2014)

successfully cooperated with many state institutions and NGOs. On the initiative of the Association, the Ministry of Health has thus organised a joint action Week of Roma Health Care in Tuzla Canton for the last five years. This action allows all Roma men and women to take medical examinations and perform tests in outpatient clinics in Tuzla Canton, with or without health insurance. During the years of activism in the field of Roma women's rights, she discovered the biggest problem to be the daily struggle against Roma men who view Roma women's activism as a threat. Bajramović and her colleagues established another nine organisations with programmes focusing on the fight for Roma women's rights. These organisations gave birth to the first Roma women's network *Uspjeh*.⁵⁶⁶

Cyber-Feminists – The Beginnings of a Sub-Culture

In the last decade of the 20th century, a feminism sub-movement – cyber feminism - was created as a direct influence of the development of technologies, IT revolution and increased access to technologies. The first feminist theoretical paper was written in 1984 – an essay by Donna Haraway *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Eighties*. In the essay, Haraway creates a cyborg figure as an ironical political myth, serving feminist appropriation of technology. Cyber-feminism is based on the idea that technology is a space where binary gender and sex divisions can be decomposed and deconstructed. Given that social development brings increasing dependence on technology, this directly affects the development of culture, art and change in social state of mind. Cyber-feminism starts with the utopian idea of the internet as a space free of any social constructs. Although the death of this movement has already been predicted, when it comes to the BiH context, we can say that there is still a need for such a movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina – cyber-feminist Selma Kešetović feels that there is still fear of technology in BiH society, and that there are still development opportunities in the country from this movement. Unfortunately, despite the great effort invested in research of this feminist form, I can only single out a few names of Bosnian cyber-feminists.

Selma Kešetović is a feminist, writer and author from Tuzla. She is the author of novel *Mihael* and *Bog ima miris vanilije*. Her theoretical work is mostly focused on researching deconstruction and construction, with the emphasis on post-modernist overcoming of the historic interpretation of bodily determination and the method of realising desire as the remainder of subjectivity. She completed an MA programme in Gender Studies (Centre for Interdisciplinary Post-Graduate Studies at the University in Sarajevo). She describes herself as a feminist, liberal, fag, cyborg fairy.⁵⁶⁷

566 Source: <http://data.zenskaposla.ba/node/26> (June 30, 2014)

567 Source: http://www.malosutra.org/magazin/index.php?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&

Her texts can be accessed on two blogs.⁵⁶⁸ **valentina pelizzer** is a feminist and director of OneWorldSee organisation, which actually strives towards the creation of a civil society network in the virtual space.⁵⁶⁹ She is also a feminist activist in BiH. One of her distinguished campaigns is *take back the tech*.

Leila Šeper is a feminist, cyber-activist and political activist. Her biggest contribution to cyber-activism is her work on ženskaposla.ba portal. She has organised numerous workshops on cyber violence, security, identity etc. She focuses on the use of new technologies, aiming at achieving positive social change, and especially advocates for the use of free and open tools and programmes, working on their promotion. Leila respects the blog as a form of expressing one's own position and opinion, and is active on social networks. She currently writes about topics related to the political situation, and has been a voice of protest on social networks.

The most recent media initiative is **KRIVA - Feminist Media Production** – a project which creates multimedia contents and, with its feminist policies, opens space for marginalised ideas and practices in society: it openly talks about sex, sexuality, gender, culture, art and marginalised social movements and activism.⁵⁷⁰ The initiative was launched by **Berina Džemilović, Sadžida Hadžić, Nemanja Popović** and **Danilo Marković**.

Artists – Opening of Women's Own Spaces

Contemporary art may not be the most profitable profession in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but it is a productive form that has yielded significant success, much of which can be attributed to women artists. Perception of art in contemporary BiH society, like in other countries in the region, is not nearly on a satisfying level – only rare intellectuals still find art interesting and stimulating, and general public interest is practically non-existent. The obvious evidence of declining interest in art is that almost all cultural institutions struggle to survive, there are practically no budget allocations for culture, and many cultural institutions are currently closed. The lack of interest in art led to a situation where we effectively have no artistic criticism, art theory discourse is at the minimum production level and often targeted only at the community within which it is produced.

Of course, there is an entire ideological-nationalist apparatus, which is trying to reduce culture and art production within their political

layout=category&task=category&id=54&Itemid=32 (July 10, 2014)

568 Sources: <http://arhitektka.wordpress.com/> and http://www.malosutra.org/magazin/index.php?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=54&Itemid=32 (June 30, 2014)

569 Source: <http://oneworldsee.org/content/mission> (June 30, 2014)

570 Source: <http://www.krivazine.com/> (June 30, 2014)

agendas, which can be indirectly blamed for the disastrous state of affairs in art (and other spheres of life). Although this publication will not theorise and problematise the politicisation of art, it is important to note that this is one of the important factors that affect the general position of cultural institutions nowadays.

Regardless of the alleged lethargy and lack of interest in art, and of ideological postulates around it, a substantial number of women artists have appeared in various artistic spheres since 1995. However, before I discuss these women, it is very important to emphasise the difference between women artists in general and those whose work is saturated with feminist critical positioning. Accordingly, theoreticians and historians of art Bojana Pejić and Sarita Vujković differentiate two terms in their book – feminist art and women's art. The authors define feminist art as one in which the authors clearly identify themselves and position their works within feminist policies, and women's art as one in which, logically, the authors do not present themselves in a way to advocate for feminist values, regardless of the fact that their work can be clearly positioned as such.⁵⁷¹ Unfortunately, it is obvious, and Bojana Pejić and Sarita Vujković agree, that the majority of BiH women authors do not define themselves as feminists, nor do they position their work in this way. The reasons for this of course lie in the dominant anti-women and anti-feminist rhetoric of BiH society, but also in the fact that previous artists never identified themselves with feminism, which in a way deprives new generations of artists of the theory models on which they could build and upgrade their positions. Unfortunately, regardless of the artistic practice of the past, young artists are nowadays left to create and set their theoretic, political-feminist models on their own. Another research shows that many artists presently do not think about the critical position of feminism and unfortunately, they are not sufficiently enlightened to determine what feminist engagement is.

*Respondents were asked to explain how feminism influenced their work. In their answers, women artists said that they did not live in an environment with a pronounced influence of feminism and that they rarely thought about its impact on their work. Although they view themselves as human rights defenders, they mostly do not think of themselves as feminists.*⁵⁷²

When it comes to contemporary art in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the immediate post-war period is marked by the works of **Alma Suljević, Šejla Kamerić, Dunja Blažević, Gordana Anđelić Galić, Maja Bajević**

571 Vujković, S. (2010); Pejić, B. (2012) *Microstories: konteksti savremene ženske umjetničke prakse nakon dvijehiljadite*, Banja Luka: Muzej savremene umjetnosti Republike Srpske

572 *Ženski glasovi u izvedbenim umjetnostima Zapadnog Balkana 1990-2010*, NOVA – Centar za feminističku kulturu Podgorica

and **Danica Dakić**. Their creation is saturated with experiences from the war, or linked with war in other ways – refugees, treatment of *others*, violence etc., which is also the case with the younger generation of women artists. We could talk about each of these artists for days. However, due to the limitations of this book, I will be satisfied to mention the following: to emphasise that each of these women had exhibitions outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina and that their works were noticed on the international artistic scene, which enabled each to build an international artistic career; and to refer to further reading and strongly recommend further research.⁵⁷³

Newer generations of women artists are clearer in their political-feminist articulation – e.g. **Adela Jušić**⁵⁷⁴ is one of the founders of the Association for Culture and Art CRVENA, an organisation with feminism and gender equality as defined spaces for action. Apart from Jušić, there are also **Lala Raščić**⁵⁷⁵, **Nela Hasanbegović**, **Emina Kujundžić**, **Lejla Čmajčanin** and **Sandra Dukić**.⁵⁷⁶ *Crvena* is an association for culture and art, established on 8 March 2010. It is an organisation that brings together artists, curators, musicians, activists, with a mission to affirm existing and create new spaces for cultural and artistic production in BiH and worldwide,⁵⁷⁷ and to improve women's position in culture and art. Although a relatively young organisation, *Crvena* has implemented several important projects that position it as the leading organisation that connects feminism, activism and art. One of the most important project by *Crvena* is *What Has Our Battle Given Us?*, where authors Adela Jušić, Lana Čmajčanin, Leila Čmajčanin, **Andreja Dugandžić** and **Danijela Dugandžić Živanović** are using exhibitions, lectures, discussions and actions in public space to map the 100 years of the struggle for gender equality, focusing particularly on the activities of AFŽ.⁵⁷⁸ *Bring In Take Out Living Archive Project*⁵⁷⁹ is a pioneer initiative to archive feminist art in the post-Yugoslav space and it is implemented by the curator team Red Min(e) d⁵⁸⁰ established within *Crvena*. The platform gathers the community of

573 Šejla Kamerić: <http://sejlakameric.com/>, Alma Suljević: http://bs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alma_Suljevi%C4%87, Gordana Anđelić-Galić: http://bs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gordana_An%C4%91eli%C4%87-Gali%C4%87, Maja Bajević: <http://performingtheeast.com/maja-bajevic/>, Danica Dakić: <http://www.danicadakic.com/>

574 Source: <http://adelajusic.wordpress.com/> (July 1, 2014)

575 Source: <http://lalarascic.com/> (July 1, 2014)

576 Borjana Mrđa: <http://borjanamrdja.info/> Irma Markulin: <http://www.irma-markulin.com/>, Irena Sladoje: <http://www.cee-art.com/bosnia-herz/sladoje-irena.html>, Lejla Čmajčanin: <http://www.lanacmajcanin.com/> and Sandra Dukić: <http://www.sandradjukic.com/>

577 Source: <http://crvenared.wordpress.com/crvena/> (July 16, 2014)

578 Source: <http://www.crvena.ba/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/CRVENA-PORTFOLIO.pdf> (July 16, 2014)

579 Source: <http://bringintakeout.wordpress.com/> (July 1, 2014)

580 Source <http://bringintakeout.wordpress.com/about-red-mined/> (July 1, 2014)

artists whose work contributes to the promotion of contemporary art of the region, but also creates new curator practice methodologies upon feminist principles.⁵⁸¹

PitchWise – is the first festival of engaged women's art in BiH. The festival is organised by the **CURE Foundation** and strives to connect feminist artistic production. The festival arose from the need to occupy abandoned and neglected space and transform it into a place of encounters that will bring together socially engaged female artists, activists, theoreticians, feminists and all of those interested in women's issues in BiH and the region.⁵⁸²

Starke is an electro cabaret band from Sarajevo, which criticises and highlights the ironies in BiH reality in its texts, with a special reflection on the use of technology. With their name, texts and scene performance, Starke abandon common musical conduct forms and, in this respect, significantly deviate from the usual matrices and musical styles in BiH. Although the band never had any significant performances on the mainstream scene, it is still one of the most important bands in the articulation of alternative feminist music directions. The members of Starke are Andreja Dugandžić, **Jelena Milušić** and **Jasmina Mameledžija**.

Dunja Blažević is one of the most important women to mark the creation of artistic space in BiH. From 1971 to 1980, Dunja was the director and editor in chief for programmes of the Student Cultural Centre of the University in Belgrade – the first centre for the promotion of art and new media in the former Yugoslavia. From 1980 to 1991, she was the editor in chief of a visual art programme on Belgrade Television.⁵⁸³ Although she started her career in Belgrade and continued it in Paris, since 1996 Dunja has been the director of SCCA (Soros Centre for Contemporary Art), founded by the Open Society Fund of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since 2000, SCCA (Sarajevo Centre for Contemporary Art) has acted as an independent, non-profit professional organisation.⁵⁸⁴ SCCA is one of the most important contemporary art institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Apart from the work and development of SCCA as an institution, Dunja is a distinguished art theoretician and producer for contemporary art and new media, and curator. One of her notable projects is the *Miraz* exhibition, which arose from the project *Women's Legacy – Contribution to Equality and Culture*.⁵⁸⁵ From 2004 to 2007, she supervised the interdis-

581 Source: <http://www.crvena.ba/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/CRVENA-PORTFOLIO.pdf> (July 16, 2014)

582 Source: http://www.fondacijacure.org/index.php?do=article&article_id=492 (July 16, 2014)

583 Source: <http://www.erstestiftung.org/gender-check/bosnia-and-herzegovina-dunja-blazevic/>

584 Source: <http://scca.ba/about-scca/> (July 1, 2014)

585 More about Dunja Blažević: <http://www.erstestiftung.org/gender-check/bosnia-and-herzegovina-dunja-blazevic/>, <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/zensko-naslijede-doprinos-jednakosti>

disciplinary regional project *De/construction of Monuments in Bosnia and Herzegovina*.

Apart from Dunja Blažević, a range of young and talented women work in SCCA⁵⁸⁶. During 1998, SCCA established another department – for video, TV and film production, pro.ba. As with the SCCA, one of the pro.ba founders is an extraordinary woman, **Amra Bakšić-Čamo**. Bakšić-Čamo is a successful film producer, working for CineLink, Sarajevo Film Festival project, teaching at the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo, and acting as President of the BiH Association of Film Workers, which makes her one of the most important women in the world of BiH film.⁵⁸⁷

Film is currently the most popular form for artistic expression in the world and, owing to the already canonised position of media, with which film closely cooperates, its chance to communicate with the audience of various profiles is increasing daily. In this way, it can easily become a place for the entry of dominant forms of discourse, which can use this medium to convey different positions to the audience, packing them in different film expressions. With film's rising popularity, it is crucial to recognise the importance of analysis of political influence on film narration, particularly in the context of gender and sexuality. This is not least in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina where film as an artistic form is currently one of the most popular forms of art. When it comes to film, this artistic form clearly *suffered* the biggest international success (Oscar for the best foreign film for *No-Man's Land*, and Golden and Silver Bears on Berlinale for films *Grbavica* and *An Episode in the Life of an Iron Picker*), making it the only artistic form in Bosnia and Herzegovina that enjoys some popularity and interest. Nevertheless, the development of film is not analysed in BiH in any respect, which allows the misogynous patriarchal positions of ruling neo-nationalist policies to be directly reflected in film. However, due to lack of criticism of film and society in general, these problems are simply overlooked or set as a normal context of social discourse. On the other hand, an increase is evident in the number of women involved in film work who analyse the specificity of war and post-war women's identities.

Apart from women producers, directors enjoy the greatest power on a film set. Significant women have also appeared in this segment of art since 1995. Primarily, there is **Jasmila Žbanić** who won Grand Prix on Berlinale with her film *Grbavica*. *Grbavica* deserves to be mentioned in this edition, as an artistic intervention that problematises issues of women – as victims of sexual violence in war. This came as one of the few public interventions in this issue. Regardless of political manipulation by current governments of both entities,⁵⁸⁸ it remains one of the rare public attempts to talk about problems that victims face.

586 Source: <http://scca.ba/team/> (June 18, 2014)

587 Source: <http://www.bhfilm.ba/udruzenje.php?kat=1&clan=77> (July 6, 2014)

588 More in Husanović, J. (2010) *Između traume, imaginacije i nade: Kritički ogledi o kulturnoj produkciji i emancipativnoj politici*, Edicija REČ, Beograd

Apart from Žbanić, **Aida Begić**,⁵⁸⁹ is director of two feature films, several short films and documentaries, and **Ines Tanović** is a script writer and director.⁵⁹⁰

Literature

This section summarises women's experience of creative work and its effects within education systems and the generation of knowledge, from which women authors are excluded, and emphasises literary poetics of women authors belonging to contemporary literature of Bosnia and Herzegovina – **Nermina Omerbegović** (1964), **Tatjana Bjelić** (1974), **Aleksandra Čvorović** (1976), **Šejla Šehabović** (1977), **Tanja Stupar-Trifunović** (1977), **Adisa Bašić** (1979), **Lamija Begagić** (1980) – the so-called literature after genocide, as understood by Arsenijević.⁵⁹¹ Contemporary and other selected women authors are often listed in textbooks without any particular order or meaning. In terms of their active periods or concepts they treat in their work, they do not belong in some of the chronologies in which they are included. They are regularly subsumed under literature for children, the category in which they are most often awarded, since it is believed to be best for a woman author to be either a children's writer or, on the other hand, a women's writer, never simply a fellow literary author who is not studied as a literary author in general.

Classification of female authors within BiH academic discourses may map the distortion of discourses, building the positions of power that decide the woman's place, and may reveal that universities are deeply misogynous and nationalistic, and therefore exclusivist. However, irrespective of the official canonical and institutionalised forms of literary classification, contemporary women's prose and poetry as *a literature of difference* intertextually builds on models of previous female literary authors, creating new literary and emancipative policies. Women authors of the period did not choose the novel, but rather poetry and story, to confront the post-war situation and its consequences; it is, therefore, interesting that the resistance to a great story was advanced not only through the structure of the text itself (the plot and character development) but also through a small form of narration. Today, in contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina, *it is women authors that mostly write critical and emancipatory literature. They scrutinise the ideological given in a most direct way and, at the same time, openly and explicitly raise their voice both for women and, for the first time in BiH literature, for homosexuals, thus creating a*

589 Source: <http://www.bhfilm.ba/udruzenje.php?kat=1&clan=75> (June 19, 2014)

590 Source: <http://www.bhfilm.ba/udruzenje.php?kat=1&clan=13> (June 18, 2014)

591 See: Arsenijević, D. (2012) *Ljubav nakon genocida* in Sarajevske sveske, 39-40, Sarajevo: Mediacentar, p. 75-89. He here includes Ferida Duraković, Jozefina Dautbegović and Marina Trumić, in the period of 1990s and SFRJ.

social space for them all.⁵⁹² In other words, *such policy has a potential to cause changes in BiH today by challenging and redefining, to use Sinfield's term, 'credibility criterion' of the dominant.*⁵⁹³

A traumatic encounter with the ravages of the war and the concept of trauma is, with these authors, articulated by *ironically questioning stereotypes and embracing the trauma, not as a source of self-victimising pleasure but as the deepest and most precious experience we have.*⁵⁹⁴ In their literary concepts, contemporary BiH women writers have abandoned the boundaries of reading from angles – literature need not only be feminist. This does not mean they have distanced themselves from feminism; quite the contrary, they will not be subsumed under one reading, nor under women's literature alone, but under literature in general.

A hundred years of women's history in Bosnia and Herzegovina, seen as a hundred years of women's literature or women's creative literary work, represents a situation where women's writings left an indelible trace in literature and literary theory, but still remained epistemologically excluded from the very universal notion of literature and everything it implied and accepted in society or within the text. The notion still belongs to male writers, to men, as when we think of BiH or South Slavic literature, the concept always refers to great names such as Andrić, Selimović, Krleža, Ćopić or, more recently, upholders of their poetics, Kovač, Ibršimović, Pekić, Karahasan and Jergović; women are somehow excluded from all of this. They are excluded from literary nights and promotions, from canons and anthologies; they are intertextually excluded from the overall experience of world and domestic literature; they are not considered serious enough, while their books are perceived as a side literature, a subcategory to the official male contemplative literature, whether scientific or literary. All the female authors (literary authors, poetesses, writers or publicists) singled out in this overview of women's literary work in the past hundred years have not had collections of their work published by publishing companies, which usually publish collected literary works, but only those of male writers in a few editions. This remains the case even today, when we have a clearly articulated feminist strategy within literary discourse and female literary authors winning international awards and being translated into more than twenty different languages. Women's literature is excluded from primary and secondary school curricula and from compulsory reading for studies of literature and literary theory, as well as from scientific and cultural institutes such as the Museum of Literature and Performing Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although this Museum has worked for

592 Arsenijević, D. (2006) *Prema politici nade: poezija i postratni period u BiH* in Na tragu novih politika: kultura i obrazovanje u BiH, Tuzla: centar za istraživački, stvaralački i građanski angažman „Grad“, p. 275-299

593 Ibid.

594 Ibid.

53 years, having collected 67 literary and 17 theatrical collections with over 20,000 exhibits, literary collections mostly relate to the creative work and lives of male writers; BiH female writers are not included in the material of the above institution, which testifies to a discriminatory value imperative of literary work and its musealisation. Such a trend actually sends a message that women as authors are not necessary or serious enough for classification, musealisation and the study of history of BiH literary work.

In South Slavic literary environments, male writers are directed to one another, they polemicise with one another, measure against one another, enchant one another, approve of one another, write long public letters to one another and dedicate their literary works to one another. They never dedicate anything to women, not even when they write love poems. If a rare man occasionally dares to, then a poem is dedicated to an initial. [...] In South Slavic literary environments, male writers do not quote women, even renowned foreign women. They always refer to renowned foreign men. [...] In South Slavic literary environments, it is mostly men that are engaged in literature. Men are managers of publishing companies, editors, jury members, members of editorial boards, compilers of anthologies, textbook authors, literary magazine editors, teachers of national history at faculties, authors of the history of local literature, literary critics, members of literary associations and their presidents, literary columnists and reviewers. If a woman does assume a position in literary life, the reason behind it is often found in her loyalty to the world ordered according to men.⁵⁹⁵

Namely, there are three types of texts that women write which, in terms of the narrative structure and topoi they treat in their texts, correspond to the terms: women's, feminine and feminist.⁵⁹⁶ The term *women's text* is simply a text written by women, mostly for women, as female authors are mostly read by women, with men allegedly seldom reading such literature. Even though such texts are not infrequently without a particular literary and artistic value, they still write out a certain political position, as they are texts written by women, mostly for women. This implies a sort of awareness of the peculiarity of women's position that, by virtue of its own existence, strives to represent a patriarchal discourse within literary work as mimicry and wordplay, not as a natural given. The *feminine text* surpasses the distinction of the women's text as it has a better articulated political intention of representing women's experience, to juxtapose it to predominant ideas and canonisations. The *feminist text* has a clear strategy of questioning the methods, objects, goals or principles of the mainstream patriarchal canons, using deconstruction strategies to question the self-evident understanding of patriarchy and literature itself. These concepts help us clarify the poetics of literary text of BiH female authors, realise to what extent they question the existing patterns of power,

595 Ugrešić, D. (2001) *Život je bajka*, Zagreb: Konzor

596 See Grosz, E. (1995) *Space, Time, Perversion*, New York & London: Routledge

power of knowledge in the text or in society, and to what extent they agree to these patterns.

It should certainly be borne in mind that the division cannot always be understood in this way, since interpretations of the literary text do not always necessarily match these categorisations, or the clearly defined borders between them, which makes this categorisation just one of many possible categorisations, rather than a definitive or exclusive one, as literature as a form of expression or simply a *text* in a Barthian sense surpasses characteristics that can be exclusively reduced to sex, gender, nation, sexual orientation, etc. Literature seen as a text is separable from its female/male author and all her/his characteristics, as such characteristics are irrelevant to scholarly interpretation, whereas analyses perceiving literary texts from angles – whether national or other – do not actually enrich knowledge but rather reduce it and epistemologically impoverish literature. On the other hand, literature must sometimes be seen in the context in which it appear; failing to acknowledge the conditions of their creation, many literary works would be dismissed as worthless, particularly with regard to mapping some sort of a creative beginning, or, in this particular context, women's creative work.

Theatre

Contemporary BiH women directors disrupt the historical continuity within which the profession of theatre director is a male job, by striving to win positions that have been ideologically denied to women. Women directors create personal dramatic experiences, deconstruct the self-evident conception of theatrical tradition, and create new poetics and emancipatory politics within theatrical expression. With the appearance of female directors on the theatre stage of post-Yugoslav BiH and with their subverting engagement, theatre direction ceases to be understood as a solely male profession.

Tanja Miletić Oručević, university professor and theatre director, born in 1970 in Sarajevo. Miletić Oručević was educated in Sarajevo, Mostar and Poland. She is engaged in theatre and radio direction, lecturing and pedagogical work in the field of acting, and in translating scholarly papers in the field of theatre studies. She writes and publishes theatre studies on contemporary BiH and South Slavic drama. Her most important plays are: Jean Genet: *The Maids* (BNP Zenica), Mark Ravenhill: *Shopping & F***ing* (MESS Sarajevo), Nikolaj Koljada: *The Hen* (NP Tuzla), Gina Moxley: *Danti-Dan* (Pozorište mladih Sarajevo), Džemaludin Latić / Hasan Džafić: *Srebrenica Inferno* (BNP Zenica), Sarah Kane: *Cleansed* (MESS Sarajevo), Maksim Gorky: *The Lower Depths* (BNP Zenica), Ibrahim Kajan: *Katarina Kosača* (MTM Mostar) Irfan Horozović: *Priče iz šadrvanskog vrta* (Festival Dionysia Rome) Bertolt Brecht: *Baal* (Faculty of Humanist Sciences Mostar), Almir Imširević: *Kad bi ovo bila*

predstava (Fakultet humanističkih nauka Mostar). She worked on seven radio-novellas produced by the Federation Radio. She won the first award in the BH Radio 1 competition for her drama *Ćamil i ja* based on prose by Šejla Šehabović.

Selma Spahić, theatre director, born in Foča in 1985. Spahić's plays have been staged in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, and the United Kingdom. Her theatre work includes staging drama classics, contemporary international and BiH drama texts, as well as documentary performances. Her performances have won awards at festivals in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the post-Yugoslav region, and participated in some of the most important European festivals, such as *Neue Theater Stücke aus Europa* in Wiesbaden, Germany. Since 2010, she has been the selector of the Future MESS programme for young female and male directors, and since 2012 she has been the head of the artistic programme of the MESS International Theatre Festival in Sarajevo. She lives in Sarajevo. Her plays are characterised by social engagement, questioning policies and patterns of creating subjectivity and experience from the position of post-Yugoslav generations. Spahić attempts to represent and examine the experience of a generation that could do nothing in the heat of collective nationalist paranoia when the former FRY collapsed and ethnically clean regions were created. She examines relationships and relations, trying to bridge a traumatic gap created by the collapse of a joint cultural space – a space of which this generation was deprived.

Another woman director active today, whose work has strong emancipatory potential, is **Lajla Kaikčija** (1976). Having graduated from the Sarajevo Academy of Performing Arts, Kaikčija began to work with the Bosnian National Theatre in Zenica, where she was also the Art Director in 2008/09. She directed a number of plays, with particularly interesting texts and staging related to the dramas *Play* by S. Beckett, and *Zatvorenih očiju*, by feminist writer April de Angelis.

Kaća Dorić, actress and writer, is yet another important figure whose work is significant.⁵⁹⁷

Sevdah as an Art Form

The fascination with Sevdah, traditional Bosnian love song, with renewed popularity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, began with **Farah Tahirbegović**, a literary author and theoretician. Her work on Sevdah was theoretical and explorative – she published a monograph of Zaim Imamović – but also artistic – together with Emina Džinić, Ćerol Hadžimušović and Benjamin Begović, in 1995 she founded a band called Dertum, through which they explored various possibilities and rearranged Sevdah songs, adding jazz

⁵⁹⁷ We recommend the interview with Kaća Dorić, source: <http://www.gracija.ba/novo-st/10616/vazno-je-znati-da-te-tijelo-nece-izdati-> (July 2, 2014)

variation. Notwithstanding her premature death, Farah Tahirbegović made an incredible impact in her field as well as in literature. It is impossible to talk about Tahirbegović without mentioning her engagement in literature – she was an executive editor and editor for public relations in the Buybook publishing company, as well as a writer and literary critic. In Buybook, she edited a number of books, launched new editions, such as *Sufistan*, collecting titles related to Sufism, as well as *BuyFeminaBook* within which the book entitled *Zaboravljene vladarice u svijetu Islama* (Forgotten Rulers in the World of Islam) was published.

Other artist continued to adapt Sevdah songs to the “modern ear”, primarily in jazz tones, which resulted in the reanimation of Sevdah as a very popular form. One very important author and performer is **Amira Medunjanin**, who expanded her interest in *sevdah* to the field of theory and research. Nowadays, Medunjanin is one of the most important performers, credited with *sevdah* being performed on the most popular music stages in the world.

This chapter lists only some women of importance in BiH art. Each evidently has an exceptional artistic career, and many managed to change the international perception of BiH artistic discourse through their work. Yet, regardless of their exquisite work, these women still have not solved the major problems – partly because they are engaged in this *unprofitable profession* and partly because they are women.

*Example: no women-artist since the war has managed to solve the problem of working or accommodation premises (insurmountable bureaucratic and administrative obstacles to obtaining construction or remodelling permits), not even through lists for assigning studios within professional associations.*⁵⁹⁸

Although the situation with regard to art production is very favourable, most women artists, unfortunately, are still trying to secure basic working conditions. Sadly, in the current system it is hardly possible to earn a living being engaged in art that does not correspond to official policies but, rather, analyses and questions these policies. Therefore, most artists also attempt to build careers beyond Bosnia and Herzegovina – given the current absolute lack of interest in art, they can find neither the audience nor the minimum profit to sustain themselves.

On Women Who Died to Achieve Something for the Rest of Us

In November 2004, on the 27th night of the month of Ramadan, twenty-one-year old Olena Popik, Ukrainian, mother of a three-year old child, was

⁵⁹⁸ Blažević, D. (2011) *Da li žensko pitanje još postoji*, in: Dolje ti je rijeka, dolje ti je pruga, Buybook, Sarajevo, p. 20-21

brought to and left outside the Mostar Hospital. She was left outside the hospital by men who earned money off her till her last breath. She died of AIDS, syphilis, pneumonia, overdose and tuberculosis.

Ferida Duraković

Olena Popik, Ukrainian national, is one of the most horrifying cases of people trafficking in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She was brought to BiH, where she was kept in several towns, forced to offer sexual services. In 2004, she was admitted to the Mostar Hospital in a severe condition, where she died a few days later. The official cause of death was tuberculosis, syphilis, hepatitis C and AIDS. The brutality of this case shook the entire region and received enormous media attention. At the end of the proceedings, out of four suspects only two persons were sentenced – one to two years and the other to one and a half years of imprisonment. The responsibility of the state is analysed in various reports, evaluations, etc. On the other hand, women's non-governmental organisations used this case to initiate the process of changing legislation – women's organisations were mobilised and primarily working on raising awareness of trafficking in people, trying to remove the stigma around the victim. The organisations were also opening service centres and safe houses for victims of trafficking, lobbying for them to become the first place where victims are taken after being arrested (or, in rare occasions, when victims managed to reach the police themselves). Thus, a safe place would be provided for victims and, unlike in previous practice, they would not be escorted for interviews to the very same persons who often use their services. Enormous lobbying and efforts on the part of women's non-governmental organisations as well as pressure from international institutions have helped break the chain of trafficking in people. From the country of destination, Bosnia and Herzegovina has soon become a country of origin for people trafficking. Although this problem is yet to be solved, it is far less prominent nowadays than it was in November 2004.

Sanela Redžepagić, an opera singer from Bosnia and Herzegovina, is a woman who achieved significant success on the international music scene. Redžepagić was originally from Zenica but built her career in Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. During 2007, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. A few months later, in 2008, Redžepagić died aged 37. On the webpage of the Sanela Redžepagić Foundation, established by her family after her death, features the following:

*Young opera singer Sanela Redžepagić lost her life due to an inadequate diagnosis and late treatment at the Sarajevo hospital. With the help of the Salvatore Maugeri Foundation, she was transferred to a hospital in Pavia, Italy, whose staff was incapable and uninformed. She was referred to Pavia for surgery, after a round of chemotherapy administered in Sarajevo.*⁵⁹⁹

599 Source: <http://www.fondacijasanelaredzepagic.org.ba/index.php/ciljevi-i-zadaci> (July 12,

Today, the Foundation educates women on the problem of breast cancer, raising awareness and encouraging women to undergo screenings, as well as financially supporting women who need treatment. It also helps women during diagnosis and treatment in order to reduce the possibility of misdiagnosis.

Both these women are only some of those who died due to certain mistakes and omissions within the system. Despite the fact that certain rights of all women are nominally advocated for, these two examples demonstrate that new space is open on a daily basis, which requires awareness raising and efforts towards women's human rights. The issue of trafficking in people had overlooked by the media before the Popik case. Even after this, an analysis of the media presentation of Olena Popik shows that she is often depicted as a woman of low morals who fell ill owing to her lewd life, unlike honest users of her services, who are now suffering due to illnesses that the evil woman transferred to them. The Popik case is still an example of the stereotypical and patriarchal nature of BiH public discourse towards women; the very media headings relating to the case are a clear indicator of this: *A Ukrainian woman infected dozens of persons in BiH with HIV; While police officers arrest and release prostitutes and foreign thieves, the state has no money to build a collective centre for foreign nationals...*

Whether it concerns victims of trafficking in people, misdiagnosis or inadequate treatment, it is clear that even today, just as one hundred years ago, women are still unable to exercise all their rights and face discrimination with regard to access to services. It is a fact that many women die waiting for a number of these services to improve – Popik while she was waiting for the state to recognise the fact that there is trafficking in people in BiH, Redžepagić owing to an inadequate and slow system of health-care, as well as many other women not mentioned here, who truly are victims of this system. This chapter had no intention to refer to death in order to talk about a disastrous condition regarding the rights of women in BiH, since this is not the case today – we are witnesses to the fact that things are moving ahead. But, unfortunately, while writing about many such women, one comes to realise that many had died prematurely and it was impossible not to dwell on this fact.

General Remark on the Time in which we Live

The sensory perception of women as a disruptive noise or murmur, as something that cannot exist outside the national discourse, places the discursive context in which Bosnian society develops only in the early stages of emancipation, in a progressive and evolutionary time. While these activities – and many feminist activists – strive to provide hope for women's re-emancipation, in the current climate of nationalist politics, femininity

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is pushed to the margins. The social conditions in which struggle for equality is taking place are far from ideal, despite the context in which emancipation should be inevitable. Unfortunately, nowadays emancipation takes place only in the areas that are essential for the development of the state or meeting the requirements imposed on citizens by neoliberal order. Emancipation is interpreted in line with the definition offered by Rosi Braidotti, who says that full emancipation is a shift that questions existing social settings, and not one that simply involves women in pre-set patriarchal values.

If emancipation is about adapting to the standards, measures and values of a society, which was for centuries dominated by men, the acceptance of the same material and symbolic values of the dominant group, then emancipation is not enough. We must reject a simplified idea that we can compensate for centuries of exclusion and disqualification of women by a sudden state-sponsored integration of women into labour force, the symbolic institutions and symbols of representation. Allowing women in, giving them a few seats in the previously segregated clubs is not enough. What the newcomers need is to be authorised to redefine the rules of the game, not only to make a difference but also to make that difference significant.⁶⁰⁰

We must not forget Olena Popik, whose death rescued Bosnia and Herzegovina from the jaws of human traffickers and ultimately opened the discussion in Bosnia and Herzegovina about this problem. We should not forget Žarana Papić, Nirman Moranjak – Bamburać, Farah Tahirbegović and all other women who are no longer with us and who launched emancipation and contributed significantly to the development of culture, rights and improvement of women's conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Following the Dayton Agreement, politically, Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to develop deep nationalist ideologies, whereas socially, it developed extreme trash. Therefore, this publication mainly deals with women who stood outside that culture, women who tried through their contributions, even from the periphery, to change the patriarchal state of mind. Exercising rights, lobbying for changes in the law, articulating the women's movement, peace activism, progressing gender studies, fighting against trafficking, etc. are all processes that women in Bosnia and Herzegovina have initiated (and many of them completed) in only twenty years. There is a lot of room for emancipation and there are many things that need to be changed. However, it is clear that women today are slowly conquering that space and we can only hope that their struggle will be clearly documented in the history of the Women's Movement.

600 Braidotti, R. (1991) *The Subject in Feminism in Hypatia* 6.2, YSTOR, p. 155-172

Finally, writing about the modern age brings along a certain discomfort. I thought about this text for days – how to shape it without forgetting all those women who over the past two decades or so did something important for emancipation. Now, at the end of this text I know that I left out the majority of these women – because in every small community, in every city there were hundreds of women who did extraordinary things and who managed to push the boundaries, at least for a while. Any activist who operated in any of the organisations did a great deal, and there are an estimated 150 active women's organisations in the country. My conscious decision was not to talk about individual women activists because there is no official database, and therefore I would have to make a selection. I was not willing to take that responsibility. Consequently, I opted for mentioning those that were already mentioned in some of the existing publications and focusing on women in other segments of society. I deliberately wrote about women who are well known and recognised today, who, you might think, need not be written about. However, based on lessons learned from the past, I realised that it is better to write things down, because the next generation might already think that there was not a single woman theoretician, artist or indeed any significant women's movement in our time. For that reason, this text is methodologically different from other texts and instead of revealing memories, it tries to rescue these memories from oblivion.