

Gender and Class in Interwar Photography: An Interdisciplinary View



**Rod i klasa u međuratnoj
fotografiji:
interdisciplinarni pogled**

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SAŽETAK

U ovom će se radu, na korpusu fotografija reproduciranih na stranicama specijaliziranih časopisa posvećenih fotografiji koji su izlazili tijekom međuraća, razmotriti uobičajene prakse prikazivanja s problemskim fokusom na rodne i klasne pozicije fotografa i fotografiranog/fotografirane te na odnose društvenosti i moći. Interdisciplinarnim povezivanjem perspektiva, spoznaja i pristupa povijesti umjetnosti te etnologije i kulturne antropologije, ovim će se radom doprinijeti propitivanju „prirodnosti” rodnog i klasnoga mjesta u društvu.

Iz cjeline fotografija objavljenih u fotografskim časopisima odabrane su one—njih oko 350 objavljenih između 1927. i 1941.—na kojima je prikazan ljudski lik, a razmatranje podrazumijeva napuštanje klasičnoga interpretativnog aparata, estetskih vrednovanja i oslanjanja na uobičajene povijesnoumjetničke interpretacije tih i sličnih slika te se nije obraćala pažnja na stilske preferencije autora ni na formalne značajke fotografije. Metoda kojom se provodila analiza prikazanih likova i situacija oslanja se na analizu sadržaja, preciznije inventara slike, i to prema učestalosti pojavljivanja pojedinih motiva, a glavni aspekti prema kojima su razmatrane odabrane fotografije uključile su reprezentaciju prema zanimanju (profesiji kojom se bavi prikazani lik), prema načinu provođenja slobodnog vremena i prema emociji koju lik iskazuje, a uzeti su u obzir i predmeti koji ga okružuju, poza koju zauzima, radnja kojom je zaokupljen, prostor u kojem je smješten, dobna struktura i dr. Takva metoda rezultirala je kompleksnim razumijevanjem dominantnih prikazivačkih praksi i obrazaca, ali i pretpostavljenih društvenih asimetrija te nas dovela do spoznaja na koji način onovremene fotografije izražavaju, odražavaju, ohrabruju i perpetuiraju stereotipiziranje određenih društvenih skupina.

→

ABSTRACT

This paper will use a corpus of photographs that were reproduced on the pages of specialized photography magazines published during the interwar period to examine common display practices with a problem focus on gender and class positions of the photographers and the photographed, and the relation between sociability and power. By making interdisciplinary connections between perspectives, insights and approaches from art history, ethnology and cultural anthropology, the paper will contribute to the reappraisal of the “naturalness” of gender and class positions in a society. Out of all the photographs published in photography magazines, we chose those—about 350 photographs published between 1927 and 1941—that show the human figure, and our examination implied the abandoning the classical interpretive apparatus, aesthetic evaluations and reliance on the usual historical and artistic interpretations of these and similar images. The method used to analyse the depicted characters and situations relied on the analysis of the content, or more precisely on the image inventory, according to the frequency of individual motifs. The main aspects considered in selecting the photographs include representation according to occupation, ways of spending leisure time and emotions exhibited by characters, as well as the objects that surround them, their posture, actions they are engaged in, space in which they are located, age structure, etc. This method resulted in a complex understanding of dominant representation practices and patterns, as well as the presumed social asymmetries, and revealed how photography of that time expressed, reflected, encouraged and perpetuated stereotyping of certain social groups.

KEYWORDS

Croatian photography, interwar period, gender, class, photography magazines

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Analizirani prikazi pokazuju da su na fotografijama neke uobičajene situacije ispuštane na račun drugih koje su pak forsirane. Na temelju tih znatnih asimetrija zaključujemo da slika društva koju nam pruža međuratna fotografija nije sušti odraz društva, već posljedica jednog određenog sustava vrijednosti, koji možemo obuhvatiti terminom građanski svjetonazor. Analiza reprezentacijskih obrazaca pokazala je kako su na fotografijama društvene skupine konstruirane po principu rodni i klasni binarni opozicija, uvriježenih u građanskoj imaginaciji. Pa su tako opoziciji muško–žensko pridružene analogne opozicije pamet–ljepota, um–emocije, rad–odmor, ozbiljnost–zabava, duhovnost–erotičnost, dok opoziciju građanstvo–puk prate analogni pojmovi: mozak–trbuh, individualnost–društvenost, duhovnost–pobožnost. Fotografije time potvrđuju kako su žene u društvenom prostoru odvojene negativnim simboličkim koeficijentom od muškaraca, a jednako tako da je puk shvaćen kao negativna referentna točka građanskog načina života. Ovdje je riječ o uspostavljanju matrice predodžbi koje nisu povijesna istina, već konstrukt stvoren na mnijenju, a njihova učestalost i prisutnost u fotografiji i umjetnosti općenito pridonosi naturalizaciji rodni i klasni razlika te posljedičnom učvršćivanju i perpetuiranju društvenih asimetrija i nejednakosti.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

hrvatska fotografija, međuraće, rod, klasa, fotografski časopisi

ON THE SOCIO- POLITICAL CONTEXT

And the people eat and drink, and the people rejoice and weep, and the people believe, think and know some things—and all of that we see in the gentlemen as well; but how the people behave when they eat, how they rejoice,—that the gentlemen find funny; what the people believe and think, the gentlemen find foolish; the gentlemen pity the people and say, that they should be enlightened, i.e. made to act, believe and think as the gentlemen do. This is known, the difference is obvious.

Antun Radić. Osnova za sabiranje. Zagreb, 1936 [1897], 4

1
Tonković, "Oris povijesti fotografije", 113–114; Eadem, "Pregled postanka i razvoja", 391.

2
A step in this direction was presented by the exhibition *Selo u reportažnoj fotografiji Toše Dabca* [Village in Tošo Dabac's Reportage Photography] (held in November 2020 at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb), which drew attention to the ambivalence of depictions of peasants in Tošo Dabac's photographs—in some photographs they are shown as poor, hungry and barefoot, but in others, taken at folklore festivals, they are idealized and viewed "through the lens" of the promoter of "authentic Croatian culture". Laszlo Klemar and Blasin, *Selo u reportažnoj fotografiji Toše Dabca*.

3
We were guided by the idea that our different expertise and areas of engagement can dynamize the "reading" of materials and topics. We thus used an interdisciplinary approach in a targeted way, so that when we were going through the material, we questioned not only the characteristics of the material itself, but also the premises we based our reading on. These different premises stemmed from the various scientific areas we have been working in, and were related to the methodological, theoretical, epistemological and other emphases we had inherited, on the one hand, from Croatian art history and, on the other, from Croatian ethnology and cultural anthropology. By interdisciplinarity, we mean confronting and raising awareness of these characteristics and different approaches to the material and its "reading", followed by, in our case through a text, cooperation and compromises in the terminology, analysis and interpretation. For both of us, interdisciplinarity has brought new insights into different emphases in "reading" the material or in the literature used, but has also shed light on the compatibility in "reading" gender and class categories and constructions that we both recognized in a given corpus of photographs. See more about the problems and challenges of interdisciplinarity in: Toš, "Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity".

4
Important changes were brought about in 1848, when social relations in the countryside were profoundly changed with the gradual disintegration of peasant family cooperatives and the introduction of new market principles. According to: Supek, "Transformacija patrijarhalnih odnosa".

5
More in: Kodrnja, "Patrijarhalnost u hrvatskoj obitelji".

6
According to: Kus–Nikolajev, *Građani kod nas*; Supek, "Transformacija patrijarhalnih odnosa".

7
Research on the history of social work in Croatia confirms that the first professional forms of social work and social welfare did not appear before the interwar period.

Although *Prosjak* [Beggar], a photograph taken in the late 19th century by count Karlo Drašković, is a prime example of the "miserabilization" of the class Other, the fact that the Croatian history of art / photography has never read it in a class key points to a considerable apolitical attitude on the part of that discipline that analyses and interprets older Croatian photography. Its representational aspect, based on the fact that a count was photographing a beggar, eluded previous interpreters who focused primarily on the description and stylistic and formal analysis. Such interpretations, which proclaimed this photograph to be a precursor of the Zagreb School's social tendency, pointing out the author's veristic position and emphasizing the beggar's "toilworn physiognomy", with "his direct gaze and enervated hand potentiating his expression",¹ undoubtedly contributed to its placement in course of historical artistic styles as well as to our understanding of that image "in and of itself", and thus helped us find aesthetic enjoyment in it. However, we believe that these valuable interpretations should be complemented by a representational—in this case class—but also a gender perspective, in order to open up the possibility of understanding photography and its role in a socio-cultural context.² Following this line of reasoning, this paper will use a corpus of photographs that were reproduced on the pages of specialized photography magazines published during the interwar period to consider common display practices (content, motifs, themes and protagonists), with a problem-oriented focus on gender and class positions of the photographers and the photographed, and the relations of sociability and power. By making interdisciplinary connections between perspectives, knowledge and approaches from art history, ethnology and cultural anthropology, this paper intends to contribute to the reappraisal of the "naturalness" of gender and class positions in a society.³

The interwar period in this region was marked by significant political turmoil, national and social problems.⁴ Following the assassination of Stjepan Radić in the Belgrade Parliament and the introduction of the so called 6th January dictatorship, the growing global economic crisis was matched by strengthening national aspirations and workers' and peasants' movements, while the women's rights movement, primarily oriented towards the demand for political suffrage and legal equality, was smouldering in the background.⁵ In terms of the population's social structure, a smaller part that lived in city centres made up the upper and middle classes (former nobility, grand bourgeoisie, and petty bourgeoisie consisting of craftsmen, merchants, small entrepreneurs, officials, employees and intellectuals),⁶ while the majority (about 75%) of the population was agricultural and lived in the countryside. Most of them were illiterate, economically deprived, and lacking any social or health care.⁷ Due to the inadequately implemented agrarian reform, peasants lived on family farms, the vast majority of which (about 80%) were small and very small, insufficient for profitability in the conditions of new capitalist production or even

for the survival of the families: “The wheels of the capitalist machine roll over villages and tear into flesh”.⁸ Due to the falling prices of agricultural products, the drying up of additional incomes due to the economic crisis, and the excessive tax burden that peasants were obliged to give to the state and the church, the population lived in great poverty:⁹ “The spectre of hunger always hovers over these parts!”.¹⁰ In other words, their work did not leave the peasants enough to satisfy their own needs: “The poor ate the land”.¹¹ At the beginning of the 20th century, within the newly established capitalist system that “drags all economic goods into market circulation”,¹² not only was the land beginning to be bought and sold,¹³ but the peasants entered the labour market and industrial production, and started working for wages. There was increased industrialization, followed by a wave of urbanization: a good part of impoverished peasantry moved to the cities and were employed in factories, working between 12 and 16 hours a day: “Necessity forced peasants to become industrial workers”.¹⁴ Thus, for example, the population of Zagreb tripled between 1900 and 1930, with workers making up a third of the city's total population.¹⁵ Just like the literary works of early realism spoke about difficult living conditions of the urban poor at the turn of the century,¹⁶ the contemporary urban infrastructure and living conditions of immigrants were illustrated by photographs of the Zagreb slums in the first decades of the 20th century, which were marked by a high mortality rate caused by tuberculosis.¹⁷ Within the dominant patriarchal worldview, and due to pervasive poverty, women from the poorer strata became participants in the formal labour market, where the feminization of the labour force influenced the deepening of gender and class segregation and inequality. Since the capitalist employers prefer lower paid work, it is not surprising that women's work (with 30% lower wages than male workers) accounted for 36% of the economically active population of Zagreb in 1930. Specifically, women were the most numerous in the textile industry, and were also significantly represented as clerks (postmen, teachers, etc.), maids, and workers in the theatre, financial and medical institutions.¹⁸

Such social structure was beginning to gain visibility in sciences, culture and arts. In 1936, the interwar Croatian intellectual and social justice lawyer Rudolf Bičanić undertook an extensive research of the Croatian peasantry that shifted away from the then common romantic perspective, and moved in the direction of critical, socially aware and enlightenment work.¹⁹ Bičanić was not alone in his interest in the rural, peasant life because it was precisely the interwar period in history and ethnology that was specifically oriented towards the documentary, collecting and scientifically-engaged work related to the idea of learning about and maintaining peasant culture as a national culture. This was preceded by organized scientific and cultural activities of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts, and numerous politically

8
Sremec, *Nismo mi krive*, 115.
9
Data on the peasantry according to: Leček, "Živjeti u diktaturi", 109–111.
10
Bičanić, *Kako živi narod*, 8.
11
Ibid., 29.
12
Ibid., 27.
13
According to: *Idem*. Up to that time, land was acquired through inheritance, forceful occupation or entering into serfdom.
14
Ibid., 114.
15
Data on workers according to: Vukobratović, "Radni narode varoši i sela, ujedini se!", 29–30.
16
For example: Novak, *Iz velegradskog podzemlja*.
17
More in: Fatović–Ferenčić i Brkić Midžić, "Tuberkuloza i naličje grada".
18
Data on employed women according to: Ograjšek Gorenjak, *Opasne iluzije*, 74–87.
19
This research resulted in a three-volume edition in which Bičanić and his colleagues presented a detailed picture of the everyday life of the Croatian countryside. Bičanić, *Kako živi narod*, 1–2; Sremec, *Nismo mi krive*.
20
For several years at the turn of the century, Antun Radić was the editor of the *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje Južnih Slavena* [Anthology of the Folk Life and Customs of the Southern Slavs], the first Croatian ethnological and folklore journal published by the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts (JAZU), and designed a questionnaire entitled *Osnova za sabiranje i proučavanje građe o narodnom životu* [Basis for collecting and studying material on folk life] (1897). Radić is considered to be the father of Croatian ethnology as an independent science.
21
Tonković, "Oris povijesti fotografije", 154–155.
22
Frajtić, "Izbor motiva kod nas"; *Idem*, "Na selo!"; *Idem*, "Evropa in mi"; Singer, "Snimanje na selu".
23
Hrazdira, "Poglavje—zares stvarno"; *Idem*, "Naša fotografija"; Freund, "Rad".
24
Analysed magazines: *Fotografski pregled* (Belgrade, 1925–1927), *Fotografski vjesnik* (Zagreb, 1926–1927), *Fotograf* (Zagreb, 1928–1936), *Jugoslovenska fotografija* (Vršac, 1930–1931), *Foto revija* (Zagreb, 1932–1941), *Foto-amater* (Ljubljana, 1932–1935), *Galerija* (Ivanec, 1933–1934), *Fotoamater / Fotoamater* (Subotica, 1936), *Savremena fotografija* (Zagreb, 1940–1941), and *Foto pregled svjetske fotoštampe* (Zagreb, 1941). We also included the *Fotoamater*, a supplement dedicated to photography that was published between 1931–1934 in the magazine *Kulisa*, dedicated to theatre and film.
25
Photo magazines often published reproductions of photographs by foreign authors, most often those that had been exhibited at contemporary international photography exhibitions held in Croatia. Those photographs, along with photographs by Serbian authors, make up about a third of the total corpus, while the other two thirds are comprised of photographs by Slovenian and Croatian authors.
26
Although photographs reproduced in Croatian, Serbian and Slovenian photo magazines do not form an absolute whole of all photographs that could be seen in the public space (not all photographs featured in exhibitions were included, but only those that were selected for magazines), we still believe that the selected sample can be taken as representative because images that were considered valuable were selected for publication in magazines.

and culturally engaged intellectuals, Bičanić's predecessors, such as Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, Baltazar Bogišić and Antun Radić, who designed questionnaires and guides for collecting material on folk life, past and present, and thus (indirectly) laid the foundations for ethnographic field work.²⁰ In the arts, the answer to the accumulated social problems but also the unresolved national question was the idea of "our expression" as an authentic artistic idiom that would express Croatian national specificities through art (Ljubo Babić, Krsto Hegedušić). At this time, artistic motifs were found in the poorest strata of the society, especially in the work of the *Udruženje umjetnika Zemlja* [Association of Artists Earth] and *Grupa Trojice* [Group of Three]. Socially-oriented art became a global phenomenon that, in photographic arts, was most obviously expressed in the photographs of the New Deal (1935–1943), which were an important part of the American government's project to document an impoverished American countryside. The ideas of "our expression" and social photography were also reflected in the Croatian photography, with the main bearers of the national and social current being August Frajtić and Otokar Hrazdira.²¹ While Frajtić and Ernest Singer advocated the photographing of idealized rural motifs and customs, in line with the idea of the village as the basis for building a national identity (close to politics of the Croatian Peasant Party, HSS, and the peasant movement),²² Otokar Hrazdira and Milan Freund called for recording the motifs of difficult work in factories, where photography was one element of the struggle for social justice (close to the ideas that were advocated by the Communist Party and the labour movement).²³

ON THE CORPUS OF MATERIAL AND METHODS

Magazines dedicated to photography were an important medium in which the discourse on photography was formed through words (articles by professional and amateur photographers) and images (reproductions of photographs that were considered to be of high technical quality and aesthetically valuable). Focusing on photographs that were reproduced in photographic magazines, we noticed certain representational patterns that reflect the structure of social relations and thus form a sociocultural construct. The majority of Yugoslav magazines dedicated to photography were published in Croatia, three in Serbia and one in Ljubljana;²⁴ and featured reproductions of photographs by Croatian, Slovenian, Serbian and international authors,²⁵ which is why the corpus examined in this paper has the same composition.²⁶ It is worth noting that some photographs were published as an illustrative material for articles with tips on how to shoot certain motifs or under certain conditions (weather, atmosphere, time of day), but most were presented separately from the text in special photo-sections with reproductions of photos that had often been exhibited (or awarded) at contemporary exhibitions. Out of all the photographs from photo

magazines, we selected those—about 350 of them, published between 1927 and 1941²⁷—that show a human figure (landscapes and vedute were not considered), while the size of the corpus led us to also disregard photographs depicting children.²⁸ From the thus selected photographs, we performed an analysis of the depicted characters according to the frequency of individual motifs and determined the dominant representation patterns; the conclusions drawn from this analysis sometimes also relied on texts that were published in the magazines. Here it should also be noted that the authors of the photographs were members of the middle class (craftsmen, merchants, accountants, journalists, clerks, intellectuals),²⁹ that the bourgeoisie was also the implied audience to which these photographs were addressed and which could fund the photographers' service and follow the developments of this newly established medium.

When looking at the entirety of the included photographs, one notices the association of certain spaces (exteriors, interiors, ambiances), situations, objects and jobs with certain social groups. Even emotions expressed by the protagonists, which are mediated by the photographs, are determined and differentiated by class and gender. In order to better focus only on the representational aspect, our consideration abandoned the classic interpretive apparatus, i.e. it was freed from aesthetic evaluations and the reliance on common historical and artistic interpretations of these and similar images, and did not pay attention to stylistic preferences of authors nor to the formal features of the photographs. The method by which the analysis of the depicted characters and situations was performed relied on the analysis of the content, more precisely the inventory of the image; we looked at the figures, the activity they were performing, the objects that surrounded them, the poses they struck, the actions they were occupied with, the space in which they were located and the emotions they mediated. Such a method led us to establish several aspects that we considered according to social groups, i.e. class (the bourgeoisie and the folk)³⁰ and gender (men and women), especially with regard to the frequency of their occurrence. The first aspect we considered was work, i.e. the examination of social groups with regard to the occupation or profession which the photographed protagonists were engaged in. Secondly, we singled out the depictions of leisure, or rather the ways in which certain social groups spent their free time. Finally, and this mainly relates to the genre of portraits, we analysed the emotions and moods that were associated with particular social groups, while also following the age structure of selected models. Such a method resulted in a complex understanding of the dominant representation practices and patterns, but also of the presumed social asymmetries, and lead us to understand how contemporary photographs expressed, reflected, encouraged and perpetuated the stereotyping of certain social groups that arose from the bourgeois worldview.³¹

27

The years of the photographs were not mentioned in the legends, but it can be assumed that most of the photographs were taken at the same time or a few years before their publication.

28

Children, a very common motif in interwar photography, are almost devoid of any representational patterns or any distinction when it comes to portrayal procedures. Boys and girls from towns and villages equally participate in dynamic and passive play, in nature and in interiors, in running, swimming, leafing through picture books, reading books and the like.

29

It should be emphasized that we did not notice any differences in representation between Croatian, Slovenian and foreign authors, or between female and male authors. When it comes to women photographers, there are about 15 of them in the corpus under consideration: most of them are foreign authors (Leni Junghans, Hedda Walther, Erna Lendvai-Dirksen, Lala Aufsberg, Dora Head, etc.), while Croatia is represented by Blanka Ivanac, Greta Šurina, Gemma Prister and Antonija Kulčar (Foto Tonka). Also, two female authors contributed with their texts: Ivka Katušić ("Snimanje životinja" [Animal Photography], *Foto revija*, 1932, no. 5) and Greta Hristić ("Fotografiranje malom kamerom" [Small Camera Photography], *Foto revija*, 1934, no. 4)

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By 'folk' we mean peasants and workers.

31

When we talk about a bourgeois worldview, we are not referring to a coherent ideological system, but a worldview position that functions on the level of opinion and has its own characteristics. A very layered description was given by Franco Moretti in his book *Gradanin* [The Bourgeois], where he used semantic and linguistic analysis of novels to derive a bourgeois doxa as a certain set of ideals, relying on key words as indications of bourgeois values. Cf. Moretti, *Gradanin—između povijesti i književnosti*.

32

Through their clothes and ambience—the features of the interior in which they are located—the protagonists of photographs reveal their belonging to the bourgeois or the lower class/folk (working class or peasants).

33

In a lecture that accompanied the first group exhibition of female artists in Croatia in 1916, art critic Kosta Strajnić points out that women do not really belong in the arts in the creative sense, but that their real role is that of inspiration and motivation. He grants them a place in folk art and decoration, and says that a woman is "a true master in the art of dance. As dance is an elemental expression of instinct and the emotional life, a good dancer unconsciously, through her body, produces spatiality, picturesqueness and architectonics. Since it enables the expression of harmony and versatility, it is understandable that dance is closest to a woman's nature. It becomes 'a means for expressing her Dionysian feelings'". Strajnić, *Umjetnost i žena*, 12.

34

"The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness." Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", 70.

35

According to: Pollock, "Feministička) socijalna povijest umjetnosti", 252–253. On the mythical origins of the connection between genius and the male gender in: Kodrnja, "Pristup temi", 19.

REPRESENTATION BY OCCUPATION



Fig. 1 Vlado Cizelj, *Kiparev atelje* [Sculptor's studio].
Savremena fotografija, 1941, br./no. 3.

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Looking at photographs that portray the bourgeoisie,³² we can see that, almost without exception, men are portrayed as protagonists of mental and creative activities: in play (Max Thorek: *Njegov veliki trenutak* [His Big Moment]), painting or sculpting (Vlado Cizelj: *Kiparev atelje* [Sculptor's Studio], fig. 1), public lecture (Roberto Nigoevič: *Predavač* [Lecturer]), working on a microscope, studying books, acting, etc. Apart from the fact that, traditionally, female characters very often appear together with a child/children, in close and caring interaction, which undoubtedly alludes to motherhood as something immanent to women (Franjo Mosinger: *Prvi pogledi u svijet* [First Look at the World]; Rudolf Koppitz: *Mlada majka* [Young Mother]; Janez Marenčič: *Njeno veselje* [Her Joy]), we also find women engaged in some occupations. Those include playing an instrument (Donald S. Herbert: *Inspiracija* [Inspiration]) or acting (Leni Junghans: *Ita Rina*), and here we note that these are creative professions that are also found in photographs of men. What we perceived as distinctive—because we did not find men depicted in this activity—is dance (Tošo Dabac: *Vježbe* [Practice]; Ljubo Vidmajer: *Plesačica* [Dancer], fig. 2). Here we also notice the first significant asymmetry. As dance is considered an intuitive art in which reason has no influence, and the person surrenders to feelings and instincts, the patriarchal matrix associates dance with female characteristics.³³ Dance also implies the existence of a stage, i.e. a performance in which a person is exposed to the gaze, aware of it, and subordinate to that (male) gaze.³⁴ The ways of presenting figures in photographs are undoubtedly a reflection and expression of an understanding of creativity and genius as an ideological component of masculinity,³⁵ but also of an understanding of femininity as a male negative. While the men in the photographs are associated with creative expressions, mostly intellectual and scientific work, and their commitment is further emphasized by the titles (such as *Njegova strast* [His Passion]), women are shown as preoccupied with occupations that involve exposure to the gaze, or a pronounced sensitivity and intuition.

Though we distinguish two social worlds within the context of the folk—peasants' and workers', their representational patterns are similar. The men's work in the countryside shown in the photographs involves physical activity, most often hard manual work, which takes place outside: leading a horse or ox-cart (Otokar Hrazdira: *V cestnem blatu* [On the Muddy Road]), fishing (Ljudevit Vidas: *Ribari* [Fishermen]; Peter Kocjančič: *Ribari* [Fishermen]), cutting grass (Maks Gliha: *Kosec* [Grass Cutter]; Milan Füzy: *Kosci* [Grass Cutters], fig. 3), burning weeds, cutting wood, driving a raft and engaging in a corvée. Male workers are portrayed as miners (Ignjat Habermüller: *Simfonija rada* [Symphony of Labour], fig. 4; O. Hrazdira: *Rudari* [Miners]), construction workers (Ante Kornič: *Pesem dela* [Work Song]), railway workers (Cveto Švigelj: *Prije odlaska* [Before Departure]), road workers (Janko Ravnik: *Pri asfaltiranju* [Laying Asphalt]), port and



Fig. 2 Ljubo Vidmajer, *Plesačica* [Dancer]. *Foto revija*, 1940, br./no. 8.

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Sl. 3 Milan Füzy, *Kosci* [Reapers]. *Foto revija*, 1934, br./no. 9.

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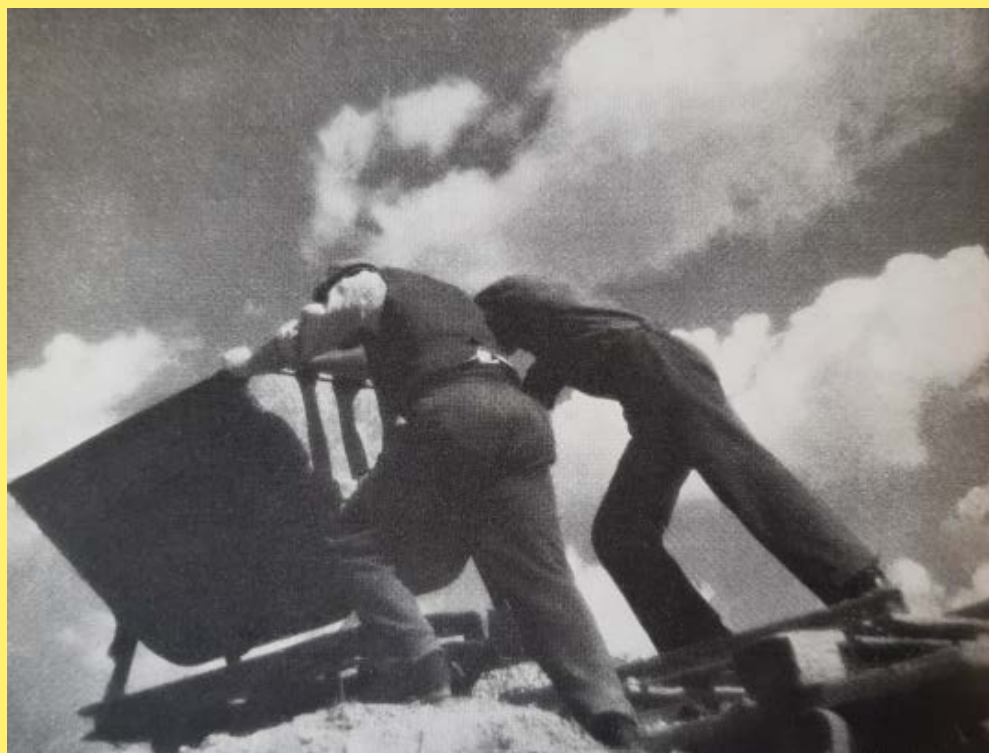


Fig. 4 Ignjat Habermüller, *Simfonija rada* [Symphony of work]. *Foto revija*, 1934, br./no. 10.

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ship workers, ironworkers (Slavko Smolej: *Puši se* [Steaming]; Marijan Szabo: *Radnici* [Workers]; F. Mosinger: *Ložaci* [Stokers]) and others. As both peasants and workers are most often “caught” on camera from a distance, in the vast majority of photographs their faces are not discernible, i.e. they are hidden by the distant perspective or the position of the body (the figure is bent or has their head down, or is shown from behind), and this depersonalisation makes them foreign, distant, Other. At the same time, the photographic emphasis is on the whole body and the movement that suggests physical strength and hard work (bending, strong swing, hunched under the weight of the load, kneeling), while the wider frame captures the exterior that often indicates danger or inhumane conditions (e.g. smoke suggests high temperatures or the angle of the shot indicates the possibility of falling from a height). While the faces of the bourgeoisie are mostly recognizable and their emotions and moods can be easily “read”, the faces of peasants and workers are often not visible, which we believe deprives them of mediating their own individuality and emotions, and reduces them solely to the action they are performing.

Women from the peasant and working class who are featured in the photographs, in addition to being mothers (T. Dabac: *Majka i dijete* [Mother and Child]), are often depicted in manual activities, physical work in the interior and exterior: washing laundry on the river (M. Gliha: *Perica* [Washerwoman]; Đuro Griesbach: *Studení posao* [Cold Work], fig. 5), carrying water (C. Švigelj: *Poldne* [Noon]; Đ. Janeković: *U podnevnom suncu* [In the Midday Sun]), spinning, weaving, sewing and knitting (R. Koppitz: *Marljive ruke* [Hard-working Hands]), housework (A. Kornič: *Uspomene* [Memories]), going for groceries (A. Kornič: *Za kruhom* [Daily Bread]; Milan Freund: *U krivudavoj ulici* [On a Winding Street]), working in the fields, collecting wood, keeping livestock and poultry, selling produce in a market, etc. Just like in the images of the male workers and peasants, their faces are generally not visible, so here too we have depersonalization and reduction to the work they do, with one difference, which is a high representation of women who do hard physical labour in old age. Regarding the overlap of male and female spheres of work, i.e. the appearance of men and women in the same photographs doing the same work, the thing that is missing from the photographs taken in a bourgeois context is that the corpus of photographs depicting workers and peasants shows a joint participation of men and women in the (field) work (Đ. Janeković: *Seljaci* [Peasants]), or in going to the market (V. Cizelj: *Povratak sa sajmišta* [Returning from the Market]).

REPRESENTATION
OF FREE TIME: LEISURE AND
THE DAILY BREAK

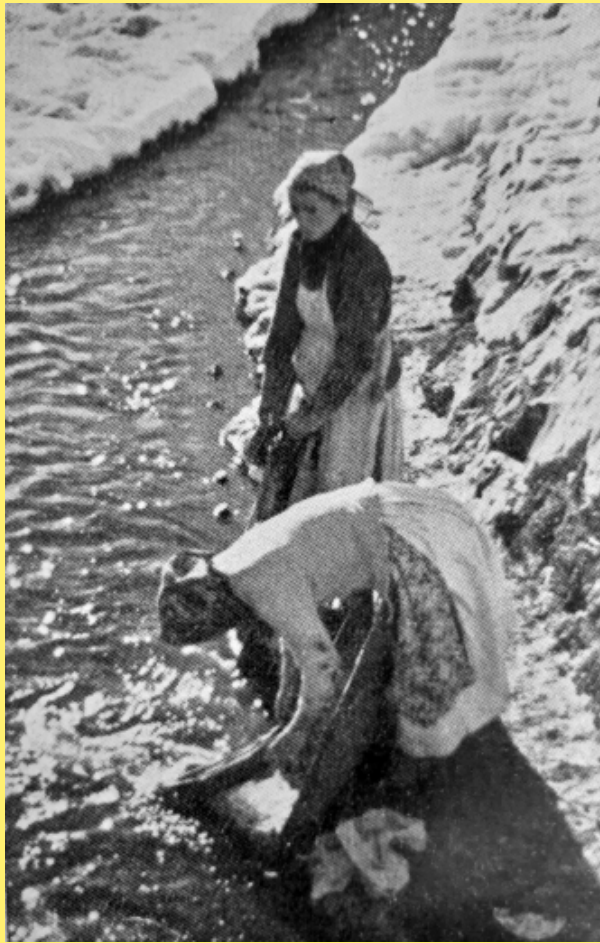


Fig. 5 Đuro Griesbach, *Studení posao* [Frozen labor].
Foto revija, 1941, br./no. 2.

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Male protagonists from the bourgeois society shown in photographs spend their free time almost exclusively reading, after lunch, in a garden or park, and even during walks (Andrija Ercegović: *Jutro u parku* [Morning in the Park]; T. Dabac: *Jutro* [Morning], fig. 6), and they are serious and preoccupied with their reading. While the scenes of men spending their free time emphasize their mental activity—reading, photographs that show how women from the bourgeois society spend their free time are dominated by scenes of leisure. Women in the photos are resting, having fun (Lala Aufsberg: *Na zelenoj travi* [On the Green Grass]; Jenő Dulovits: *Igra u vodi* [Water Games]), sunbathing, walking (C. Švigelj: *Sunce u zenitu* [Sun at the Zenith], fig. 7), chatting and eavesdropping (Vladimir Guteša: *Malogradski razgovori* [Small-town Conversations]; J. Dulovits: *Radost* [Curiosity]), and picking or growing flowers (Franjo Ernst: *Macice* [Pussy Willows]). Almost all of them are smiling, which implies emotions of contentment and carefreeness. Unlike men who spend their free time indoors or in urban areas (squares, streets or city parks), the women are mostly located in nature that is not marked by any feature of urbanity: in meadows, surrounded by flowers, by the sea, often in water. They are often undressed, in bathing suits, shorts or fluttering dresses that show the outline of the body. The representation thus undoubtedly follows the polarity by which men are identified with culture and mental activities (reading, city) and women with nature and emotions (rest, nature), based on the idea that women are driven by a natural determinism; according to Griselda Pollock, bourgeois culture brands nature with a strong mark of primordiality and free sexuality.³⁶ Mirjana Adamović points out that women are “symbolically placed in the ‘dark’ area, more suitable for delights and bodily pleasures, more susceptible to natural forces”.³⁷ According to Gordana Bosanac, the foundations of antifeminism rest on the “nature argument”, which is an understanding of women primarily through their gender and ability to give birth. And while men are entitled to individuality and are commonly thought of as bearers of thoughtfulness, spirituality and a sense of justice, which is why they are constructed as destined to act in the public sphere, women are defined within their own gender, physicality, instinct and impulses.³⁸

A large number of photographs show recreational sports activities, which is why we can conclude that sports occupied a significant place in the free time of the bourgeoisie. Since it was not possible to separate photographs of professional, amateur and recreational sports with complete certainty—and thus also the occupation from the hobbies—we included sports under the consideration of free time. The sports that men play in photographs include skiing (Vladimir Susić: *Prečni skok* [Jump Turn]; Branibor Debelković: *U spustu* [Going Downhill]), tennis (V. Susić: *Cramm servira* [Cramm’s Serve]), motorcycling (Đ. Griesbach:

³⁶ Pollock, *Differencing the Canon*, 50–51.

³⁷ According to: Adamović, *Žene i društvena moć*, 13, 15, 23, 24.

³⁸ More in: Bosanac, *Visoko čelo*, 56–63.



Fig. 6 Tošo Dabac, *Jutro* [Morning]. *Foto revija*, 1935, br./no. 5.

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Fig. 7 Cveto Švigelj, *Sunce u zenitu* [Sun at zenith]. *Foto revija*, 1935, br./no. 4.

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Fig. 6 Tošo Dabac, *Jutro* [Morning]. *Foto revija*, 1935, br./no. 5.

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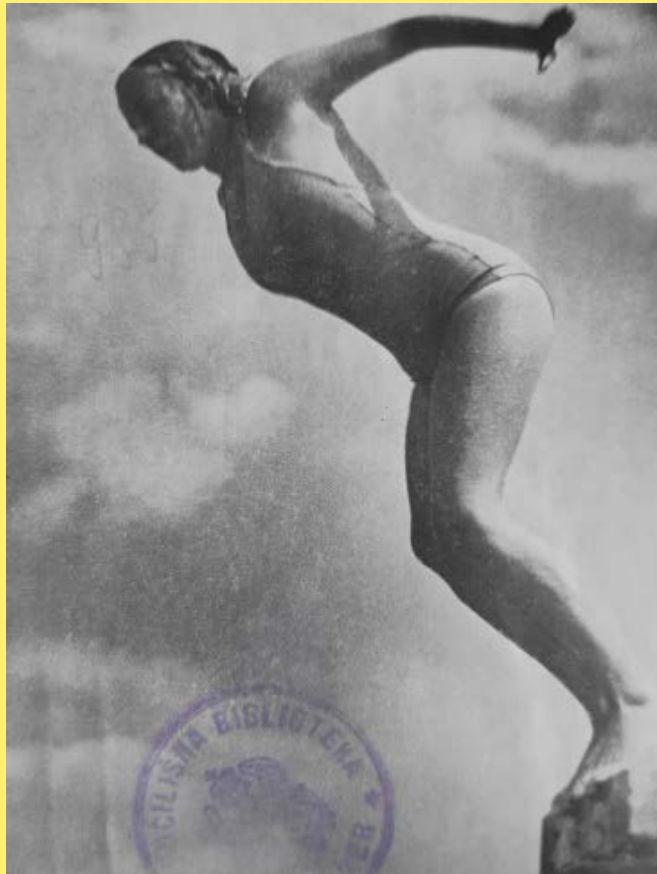


Fig. 9 Đuro Janeković, *Skakačica* [Jumper]. *Foto revija*, 1935, br./no. 8.

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Sportska snimka [Sports Image]; Lj. Vidmajer: *Rekorder* [Record-breaker]), running, swimming and rowing (V. Susić: *Na cilju* [At the Finish Line]; F. Ernst: *Veslač* [Oarsman]; Lj. Vidmajer: *Butterfly* [Butterfly], fig. 8) and hiking. Women are less frequently shown doing sports: those include skiing (Ernst Baumann: *Skijašica* [Skier]), diving (Đ. Janeković: *Skakačica* [Jumper], fig. 9), swimming and running (Max Schirner: *U borbi za rekord* [Fighting for the Record] and *Na preponi* [At the Hurdle]), hiking and long jump. Male protagonists of sports scenes are portrayed in the tension of physical strength, in movement, with prominent muscles, and their facial expressions reveal effort and bursts of energy, as well as fulfilment and satisfaction with movement and the achieved success. A lower angle is often used to emphasize strength, power, size, and determination of athletes, who are often caught in the most dynamic or dangerous moment—during the jump, in the air. Their ability, strength and power are often emphasized by the title of the photograph: *Winner, Record-maker, A Hit...* Though sportswomen too are often shown in a dynamic body swing and at the height of strength and endurance, when compared to their male counterparts, some photographs show them looking passively into the distance, posing or laughing, as if caught in a moment of rest from playing sports.

If we look at the ways of showing how workers and peasants spend their free time—they carry groceries (A. Kornič: *Dežmanove stube* [Dežman's Stairway]), smoke (P. Kocjančič: *Megla in sonce* [Fog and Sunlight]; Nikola Szege: *Vsjo ravno* [Everything is Flat]; I. Habermüller: *Počinak* [Rest]), read newspaper (Oskar Grünwald: *Nezaposleni* [Unemployed]), and are also frequently shown resting from work and talking (F. Ernst: *U razgovoru* [In Conversation], fig. 10), playing cards (I. Habermüller: *Kartaši* [Card Players]), drinking and eating (I. Habermüller: *Bosnanc* [A Bosnian]). It is impossible not to notice that most of the activities that peasants and workers do in their free time are actually related to the physiology and primary existential needs of the body—eating, drinking, smoking. Facial expressions or body positions often reflect hopelessness, melancholy, worry, indifference, which is emphasized by some titles (*Everything is Flat*). However, unlike the bourgeois context, the lower classes are often portrayed in a community, which suggests their need for sociability, connection and togetherness, so that the protagonists of the photographs are often shown in interaction or a group (talking, playing cards or indulging in some pleasures (smoking, alcohol). It is just this emphasis on existential needs and vices and sociability that marks a strong asymmetry when compared to the bourgeois context in which the photographers' emphasis is on the intellectual, the creative and the individual. While peasants and workers eat and drink, members of the bourgeoisie are never shown and displayed consuming food and drinks, or even in their vicinity. This directedness towards thinking, reading and intellectual work (for example, writing at a desk)

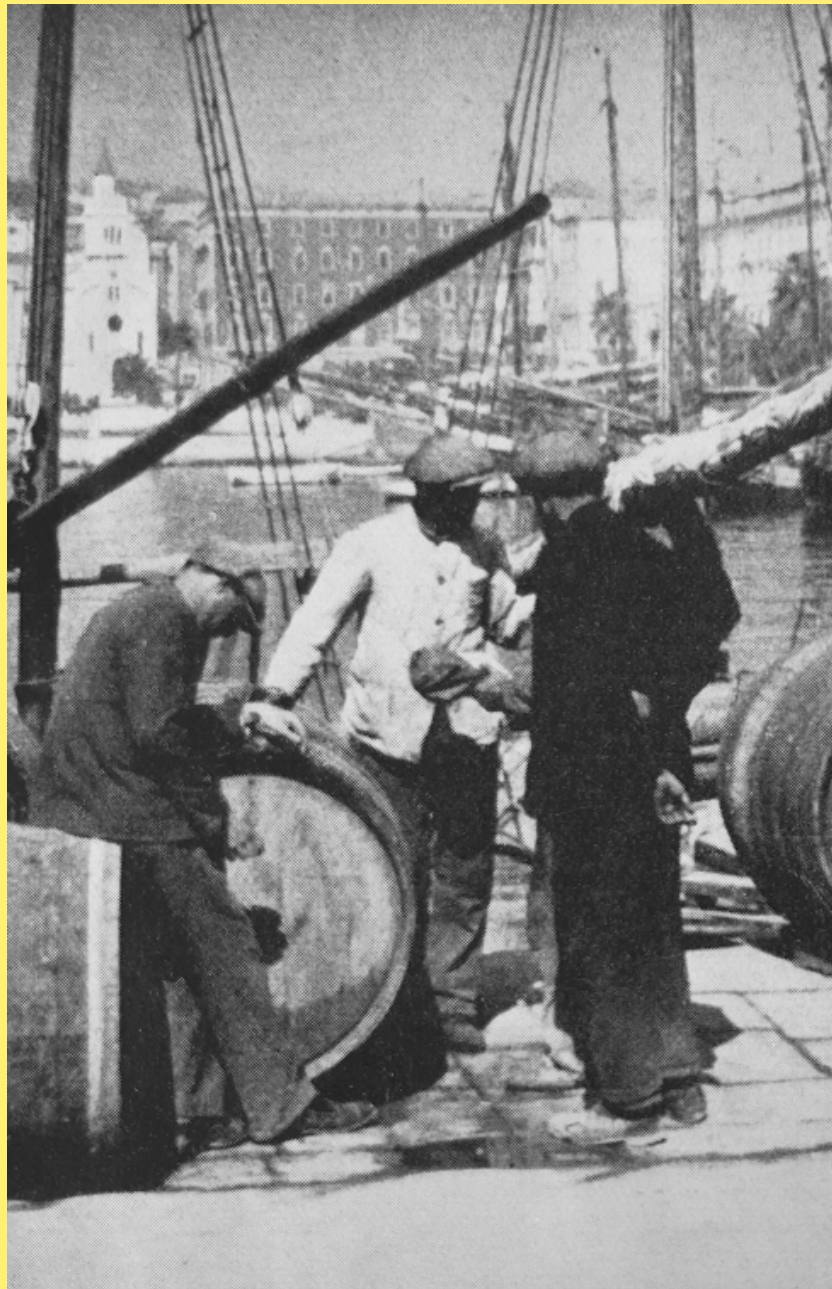


Fig. 10 Franjo Ernst, *U razgovoru* [In conversation].
Foto revija, 1934, br./no. 3.

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39

Pierre Bourdieu explains the bourgeois understanding of the relationship to the populace as the relationship between the soul and body within the "organism" of the society: "For a bourgeois world which conceives its relation to the populace in terms of the relationship of the soul to the body, 'insensitivity to music' doubtless represents a particularly unavowable form of materialist coarseness". Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 19.

40

Radić, *Osnova za sabiranje*, 13; cf. Vince-Pallua, *Kultura srca, kultura uma*.

41

According to: Muraj, "Teorijsko-metodološke zamisli Antuna Radića".

when it comes to the bourgeoisie and men, and, on the other hand, to the existential needs (eating and drinking) in the representation of peasants and workers, both men and women, is conditioned by the protagonists' class positions and the photographers' attitude to their subjects. This is a worldview-conditioned hierarchy of social groups, in which bourgeois intellectuals represent the operative and thinking social group, while workers and peasants are tied to food, hygiene and reproduction. By the latter we especially mean those images that depict some dominant scenes of social life, such as motherhood, which appear as motifs of photographs of both peasant and working-class women, as well as in the depiction of female members of the bourgeoisie. The class and gender binary oppositions and contradictions we see in the photographs reflect the idea that the bourgeoisie is the "brain" of the society, while the folk represent its "belly".³⁹ Similar dichotomies can be found in the academic and professional literature of that time, so for example Antun Radić believed that the bourgeoisie represents the "culture of the mind" and the folk the "culture of the heart".⁴⁰ Although Radić formed this dichotomy of understanding culture and its bearers with the intention of emphasizing the importance of peasant culture as exceptional and valuable, equal to the bourgeois one that does not give it enough recognition, it is a reflection of the paradigm of difference and bipolar positions, of the dual socio-cultural structure of the (Croatian) people: "the people" (peasants) and "gentlemen" (the bourgeoisie), which, in Radić's case, neglects the workers.⁴¹

The photographs occasionally include a humorous component, but it is exclusively related to the depictions of peasants and workers. While the portrayals of the bourgeoisie reading suggests seriousness, dedication and focus, the portrayal of peasants who read are given titles such as *Šta ima nova?* [What's New?] (Zoltán Kassai), which intimate the humorousness and contradiction of the scene. Furthermore, in Đ. Janeković's photograph *Putujuća košara* [Walking Basket], a person carrying a huge basket full of produce on his back is shown from the back, so that only the basket with legs is visible. In M. Füzy's painting: *Ne ide, pa ne ide...* [It Won't Budge], four workers are shown pushing a truck. Such scenes with tendentiously chosen titles use hard work as a basis for humour, which could be viewed as a trivialization of suffering.

The photographed folk women spend their free time talking, at folk festivals (Mario Medeotti: *Pred crkvom* [In Front of the Church]), having fun (Milan Popović: *Mala šala* [A Little Joke]) and relaxing in nature (Saša Šantel: *Metliški cvet* [A Flower from Metlika]). Although older women's body language might suggest seriousness and concern, the dominant mood is still one of cheerfulness and laughter, which suggests a (female) desire for fun and relaxation, but also frivolity and superficiality. It should be noted here that, similarly to the already mentioned depictions of work, the depictions of folk leisure time include scenes that show both men and women, such as fairs, *village fêtes* and parties

(A. Frajtič: *Poslije večernjice* [After the Evening Service]; P. Kocjančič: *3/4 takta* [3/4 Time Signature]), resting after work (F. Mosinger: *Podnevni odmor* [Afternoon Rest]), prayer or attending mass, family life on city outskirts (I. Habermüller: *Periferija* [The Outskirts], fig. 11), and courtship (P. Kocjančič: *Valcer za tebe* [A Waltz for You]), so one can conclude that the intertwining of traditional gender spheres is represented in the workers' and peasants' context, in the context of rural sociability, especially leisure and entertainment. The bourgeois context lacks this sociability, subjects of photographs are individuals who are independently preoccupied with traditional gender preoccupations, and these "male" and "female" spheres of public and private life are completely separate in photographs. Rare photographs that do show a man and a woman together depict situations with a romantic subtext (Gottthard Schuh: *Njih dvoje* [The Two of Them]; Oskar Grünwald: *Slikar K. i njegova žena* [Painter K. and his Wife]).

Another segment of everyday life that is well represented, and takes place in the free time of the folk, mostly on Sundays, is going to a mass or prayer. Although scenes of folk religiosity also include group scenes of men and women of all ages, in prayer or on the way to or from church (F. Mosinger: *Molitva* [Prayer]), somewhat more numerous are depictions of women, who are often older. They are praying, going to church or sitting in front of it (Bogomil Hrovat: *...Zgodi se Tvoja volja...* [...Be Thy will...], A. Kornič: *Na svečnico* [On Candlemas]; C. Švigelj: *K molitvi* [In Prayer] and *U crkvu* [To the Church]; Marjan Pfeifer: *U božjem skloništu* [In God's Sanctuary], fig. 12; D. Janeković: *Studija starice* [Study of an Old Woman]). There are no analogous scenes in the bourgeois context, and the only examples that carry some sort of religious connotation are reduced to scenes with Christmas decorations—mostly still lifes, interiors or vedutas with Christmas trees (Eugen Hauber: *Božić u velegradu* [Christmas in a Big City]; J. Dulovits: *Opet se pale svijeće* [It's Time for Lighting Candles Once Again] and *Božićno drveće* [Christmas Tree]; Lj. Vidmajer: *Kod božićnog drvca* [By the Christmas Tree]).

REPRESENTATION BY EMOTIONS, MOOD AND AGE

When we covered the representation by occupation, we already pointed out that the moods associated with male members of the bourgeois were mostly reduced to seriousness and focus, while most of the women were smiling. In scenes with the male members of the bourgeoisie who are engaged in their respective professions, facial expressions (the tension of facial muscles, frowning) as well as postures (hunched over) suggest a focus on work, maximum commitment, strong mental and spiritual process, dedication and identification with the work they are performing, which is in some cases also implied by the title of the photographs (*Njegova strast* [His Passion], *Njegov*

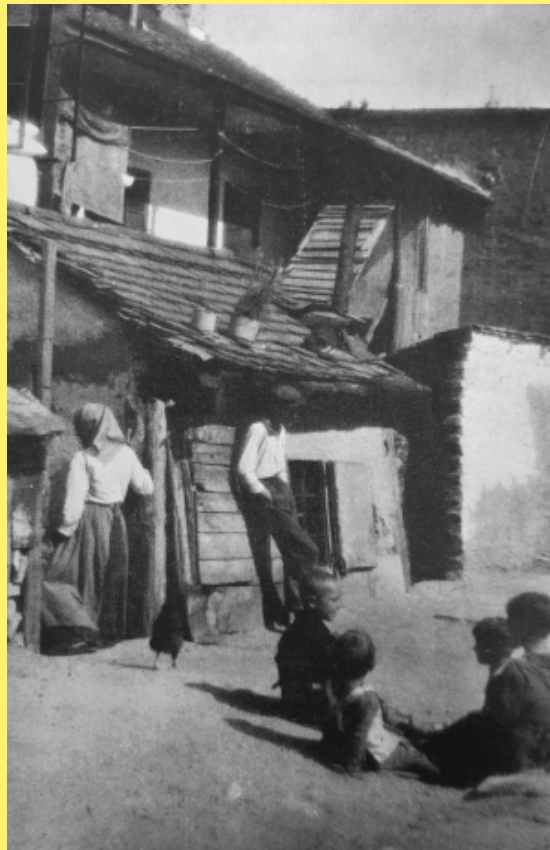
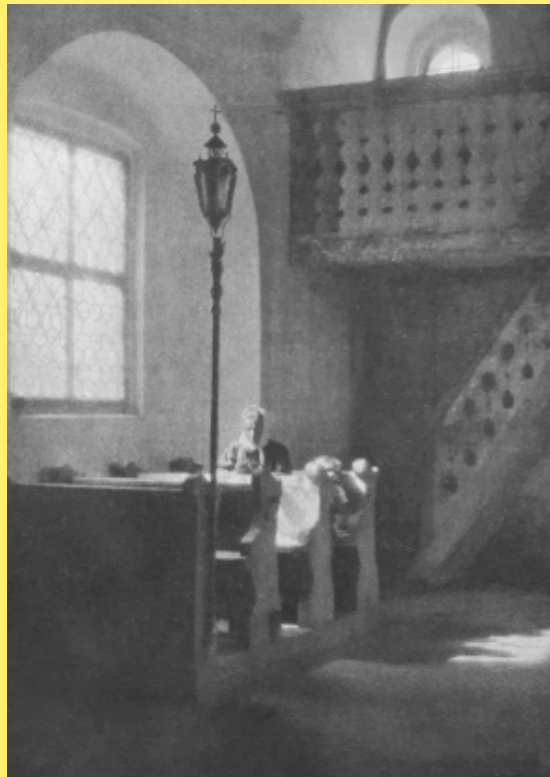


Fig. 11 Ignjat Habermüller, *Periferija* [Outskirts].
Foto revija, 1934, br./no. 3.



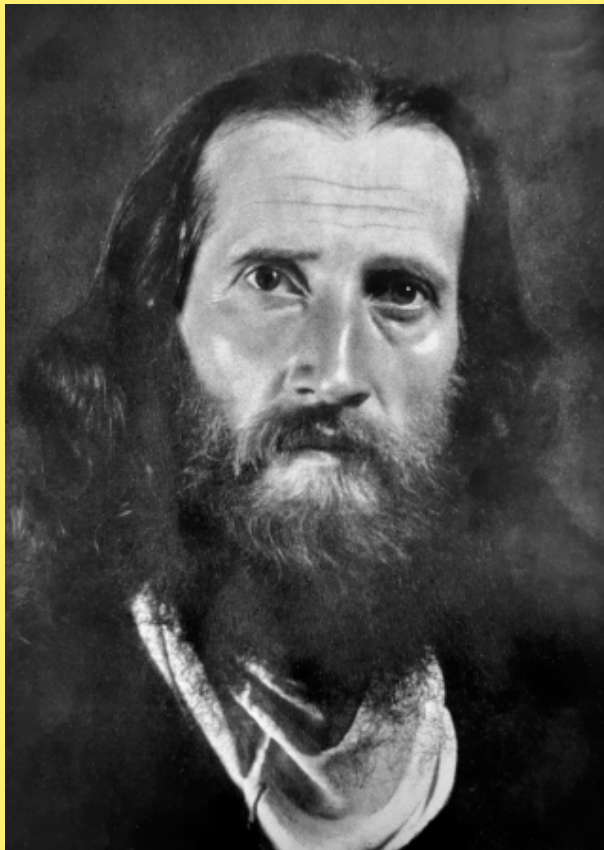


Fig. 13 Stjepan Putar, *Prorok* [Prophet], *Savremena fotografija*, 1941, br./no. 2.

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veliki trenutak [His Big Moment]). Unlike men, the women (mothers) are almost always smiling, suggesting emotions of fulfilment and satisfaction, especially with motherhood, which is often emphasized by the title of a photograph (*Majčina sreća* [Mother's Joy], *Njeno veselje* [Her Joy]). Smiling, i.e. an expression of happiness, is found in female musicians and dancers much more than seriousness that would suggest a mental and spiritual focus on performing the activities. We can interpret this as an expression of satisfaction with engaging in an artistic endeavour, but also as a trivialization or a suggestion of a frivolous approach to this activity. Also, most photographs of female dancers could be classified under the genre of nudes: corporeality is visible and pronounced, the naked or partially undressed body is outlined under a light fabric, and the sensual movement in which the body is photographically "captured" is unequivocally erotic.

This dichotomy is confirmed by the analysed photographs that can be classified under the genre of portraits. On them, men are shown looking aside, which suggests a focus on something outside the photographic frame (Franjo Sulke: *Portrait* [Portrait]; S. Smolej: *Autoportret* [Self-portrait]; M. Pfeifer: *Portrait* [Portrait]; V. Cizelj: *Autoportret* [Self-portrait]; Erna Lendvai-Dirksen: *Planinski vodič* [Mountain Guide]; Mladen Grčević: *Mladić* [Young Man]; V. Susić: *Sportas* [Sportsman]) or contemplation (N. Szege: *Upravnik Konjović* [Administrator Konjović]), and their hands are sometimes on their foreheads, thus signifying a though process (F. Mosinger: *Portrait* [Portrait] and *Zagrebački nadbiskup g. dr. Ante Bauer* [Zagreb Archbishop dr. Ante Bauer]; T. Dabac: *Portrait* [Portrait]). This is unambiguously used to imply spirituality, thoughtfulness and insusceptibility to emotions, or rather control over feelings. Looking into the distance suggests visionary thinking about the future, a tendency towards abstract thinking and an understanding of the transcendence, which is traditionally and stereotypically associated with men. As for the age structure—the photographs show men of all ages and different physical characteristics that do not depend on the canon of beauty. Among the depictions of men, a special group consists of portraits that, following the iconographic motif of the prophet, depict "Jesus-like" men with long hair and/or beards whose expression and posture intimate life wisdom and calmness (Drago Gorjan: *Studija* [Study]; T. Dabac: *Starac* [Old Man]), which is sometimes emphasized by the title itself (Stjepan Putar: *Prorok* [Prophet], fig. 13). As for the awareness of the presence of the camera, i.e. posing, it is present in only one portrait (F. Sulke: *Autoportret*), while all other portraits imply a state of being "captured" by the camera and the model's unawareness of being photographed.

Bourgeois women in portraits often have their eyes fixed directly on the observer/camera, which suggests posing, i.e. adjusting their stance and expression to the image (Atelije Tonka: *Portrait* [Portrait]; T. Dabac: *Gospodica A. Funk* [Miss A. Funk]). In the majority of examples, the women are laughing or smiling (T. Dabac: *Gospodica Julija Grill*

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Fig. 12 Marjan Pfeifer, *U božjem skloništu* [In God's shelter], *Foto revija*, 1936, br./no. 2.

[Miss Julija Grill] and *Erika* [Erika]; Hedda Walther: *Portret* [Portrait]; V. Susić: *Portret* [Portrait]; F. Mosinger: *Portret gospođice Marković* [Portrait of Miss Marković], which is an indication of female accessibility and goodwill, but also of superficiality, frivolousness, and a penchant for pastimes and delights. Even if they are not looking straight at the camera, this is not a sign of thoughtfulness or focus on something, as is the case with the portrayed men, but of emotionality, daydreaming or sadness, which is often indicated by closed or half-closed eyes (T. Dabac: *Studija* [Study]; M. Grčević: *Anna* [Anna], fig. 14; Dora Head: *Portre* [Portrait]). The melancholic atmosphere in the photographs is also enhanced by a hand on the chest, i.e. the heart as the emotional centre (Atelijer Tonka: *Portret* [Portrait]) or on the cheek, which suggests a “desire” to be touched (T. Dabac: *Studija izražaja* [Study of an Expression]). The clothing in these photographs is often texturally luxurious, for example with feathers or lots of folds, very shiny and smooth (Atelijer Tonka: *Portret* [Portrait]; Georgij Skrygin: *Studija u bijelom* [Study in White]), which seems to invite touch. The titles of the photographs sometime denote female characteristics that the patriarchal matrix deems desirable (Fred P. Peel: *Nežni obraz* [Gentle Face]), which is consistent with subsequent photographic interventions and processes of blurring the figures in order to emphasize delicate transitions and lose sharp contours. That such differences in the depiction of male and female portraits are targeted, i.e. that gender stereotypes are tendentiously achieved not only by cultural notions of photographers, but also by photographic techniques, is confirmed by an article in which Mladen Grčević compares his two photographs, *Anna* and *Mladić* [Young Man]. For the portrait *Anna* (fig. 14) he says that “all the effect obtained by the whiteness, which gives the portrait its femininity and tenderness, she seems like she was drawn with a pencil, but it loses something of its plasticity through special lighting”, while for the *Mladić* he states that it “represents a young man with black hair and eyes, full of strength and determination, accentuated by brilliant lighting and magnification. This portrait is illuminated in such a way as to emphasize as much as possible the plasticity, the details of the facial features, and the reflections in the eyes that give a special expression”.⁴²

Moreover, it should be emphasized that in all examples of photographs, women who were chosen as models were those whose physical characteristics were fully consistent with the canon of youth and beauty, with deviations from mainstream patterns being rare and mainly including women whose occupation or age deviate from stereotypes. Though this is rare, they are sometimes depicted as contemplative or lost in thought (T. Dabac: *Intelektualka* [Intellectual] and *Dama u crnom* [Lady in Black]), while older women are the only ones shown to be reading (V. Novak: *Moja majka* [My Mother]) or writing (Branimir Zimmermann: *Studija* [Study]). Unlike male maturity that is seen as the embodiment of wisdom and experience, the life of women past their reproductive age seems to be



Fig. 14 Mladen Grčević, *Anna*. *Foto revija*, 1940, br./no. 11.
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non-existent, irrelevant, at least not so much as to be immortalized in photographs. If, by some chance, they are still photographed, then a relationship is established with their fertile function or position within the family group—they are shown as mothers and grandmothers (which is emphasized by the photograph title).

While male nudes simply do not exist, the number of female nudes as well as the position of female models' bodies unequivocally suggest that sexuality forms an important part of female personality, and thus represents a pattern of photographing women in the observed period. The positions of the nudes unambiguously imply the free and direct expression of sexuality, that is, erotic titillation or pleasure, such as raised hands or head thrown back (Karel Hájek: *Akt* [Nude]; Zofia Stelmachówna: *Polet* [Elation]; V. Cizelj: *Akt* [Nude], fig. 15; A. Kornič: *Sončenje* [Sunbathing]), which is sometimes camouflaged in oriental themes (M. Thorek: *Odaliska* [Odalisque]), because bourgeois fantasy sees the Orient as a space of free sexuality.⁴³ Also, poses and titles often point to love pains, disappointment, abandonment, betrayal and despair (Karlo Kocjančič: *Ponižena* [Humiliated], N. Szege: *Razočaranje* [Disappointment], fig. 16; Albert Staržik: *Akt* [Nude]; G. Skrygin: *Akt* [Nude]), and one gets the impression that the female body is sometimes used as an abstract material to achieve the desired composition (K. Kocjančič: *Diagonala* [Diagonal]) or light effects (A. Kornič: *Sva u draguljima* [Covered in Jewels]). In the genre of nudes, the imperative of youth and beauty is brought to the extreme in gender differentiation, which we want to emphasize: all represented nudes show women whose physical characteristics are fully consistent with the canon of youth, beauty and attractiveness, and all other bodies—old, pregnant, mature, bigger—are simply not a motif for photographers. From this it follows that the category of bodily beauty and its attractiveness to the male eye was, as a rule, a crucial criterion by which artists were guided in choosing a model,⁴⁴ which they explicitly stated. In the instructions on how to photograph nudes, O. Hrazdira writes that a photographer must “choose a model of perfect beauty, and the artificial display, lighting, background and environment must be utilised to avoid distaste and unaesthetic impressions”,⁴⁵ so that a “model of perfect beauty” is imposed as a self-evident imperative. Also, it seems that a positive judgment or high evaluation of a photograph depended on the exceptional beauty of the naked body, as evidenced by Hrazdira's writing on the *Sunčana kupelj* [Sun Bath] by Aimé Lemmens: “A young woman, with her hands under her head, succumbs to the warm sun whose rays sculpt the beauty of the female body in soft lines of rounded surfaces”,⁴⁶ and an unsigned author's thoughts on Alois Zycha's *Akt* [Nude]: “The softness of the contours and shadows modelled a beautiful body, alive and enticing. All this, together with the draped velvet and silk, reveals the refined taste of the author.”⁴⁷ The connection between a positive judgment and eroticism and attractiveness of the body itself is also indicated by the language, i.e. the choice of words (“succumb”, “enticing”). The absolute dominance of

42

Grčević, “Što kažu autori”.

43

According to: Said, *Orijentalizam*, 367.

44

According to Laura Mulvey's thesis that is based on psychoanalytic interpretations, one of the ways in which the male subconscious resolves the fear of castration is to deny castration through substitution, i.e. by turning women into a fetish that is not threatening but soothing. That avenue, “*fetishistic scopophilia*”, builds up the physical beauty of the object, transforming it into something satisfying in itself”. Mulvey, “Vizualni užitek i narativni film”, 72.

45

Hrazdira, “Nekoliko riječi o našem fotoamaterstvu”.

46

Hrazdira, “Komentar slikama”, 32.

47

“Komentar slikama”.

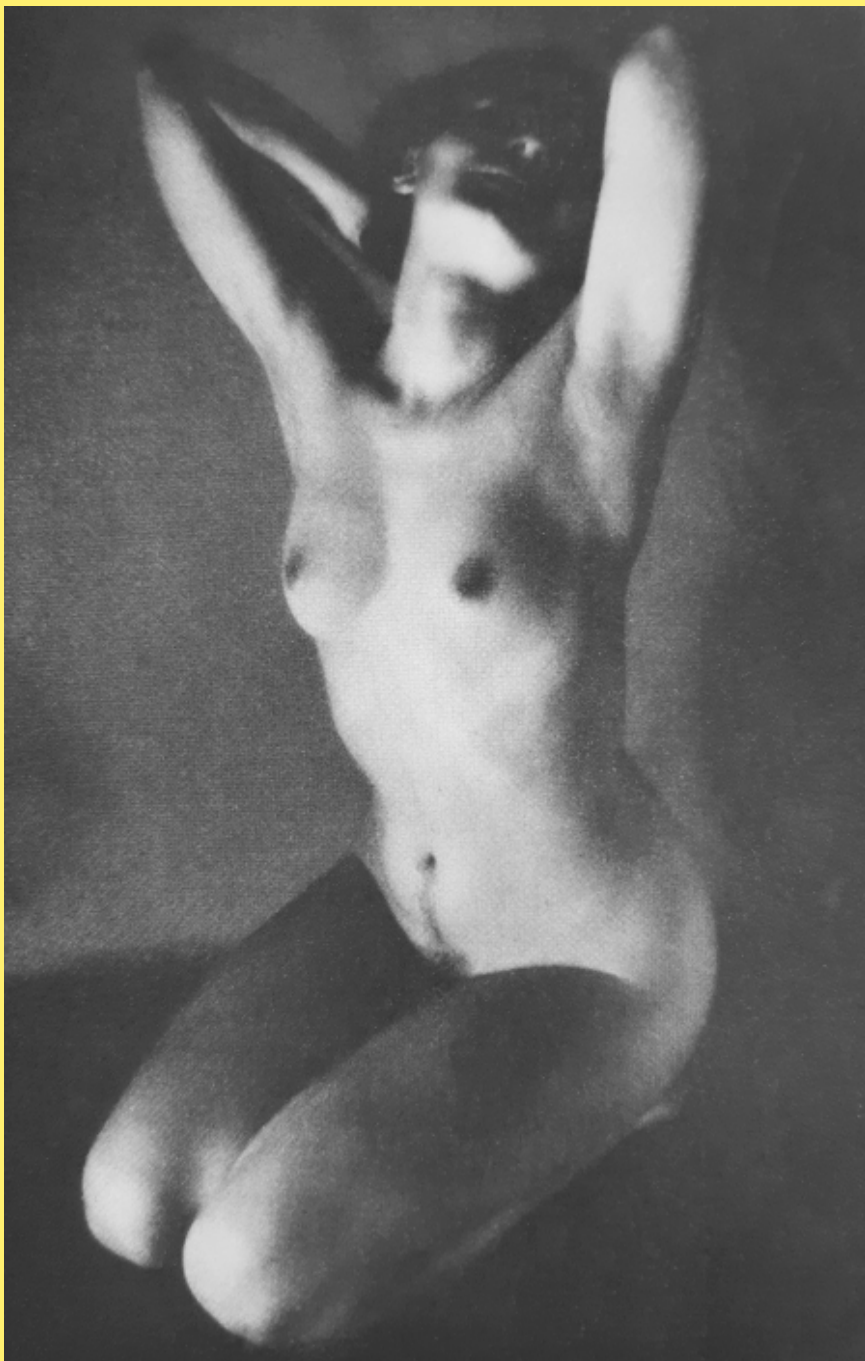


Fig. 15 Vlado Cizelj, *Akt [Nude]*. *Foto revija*, 1936, br./no. 11.

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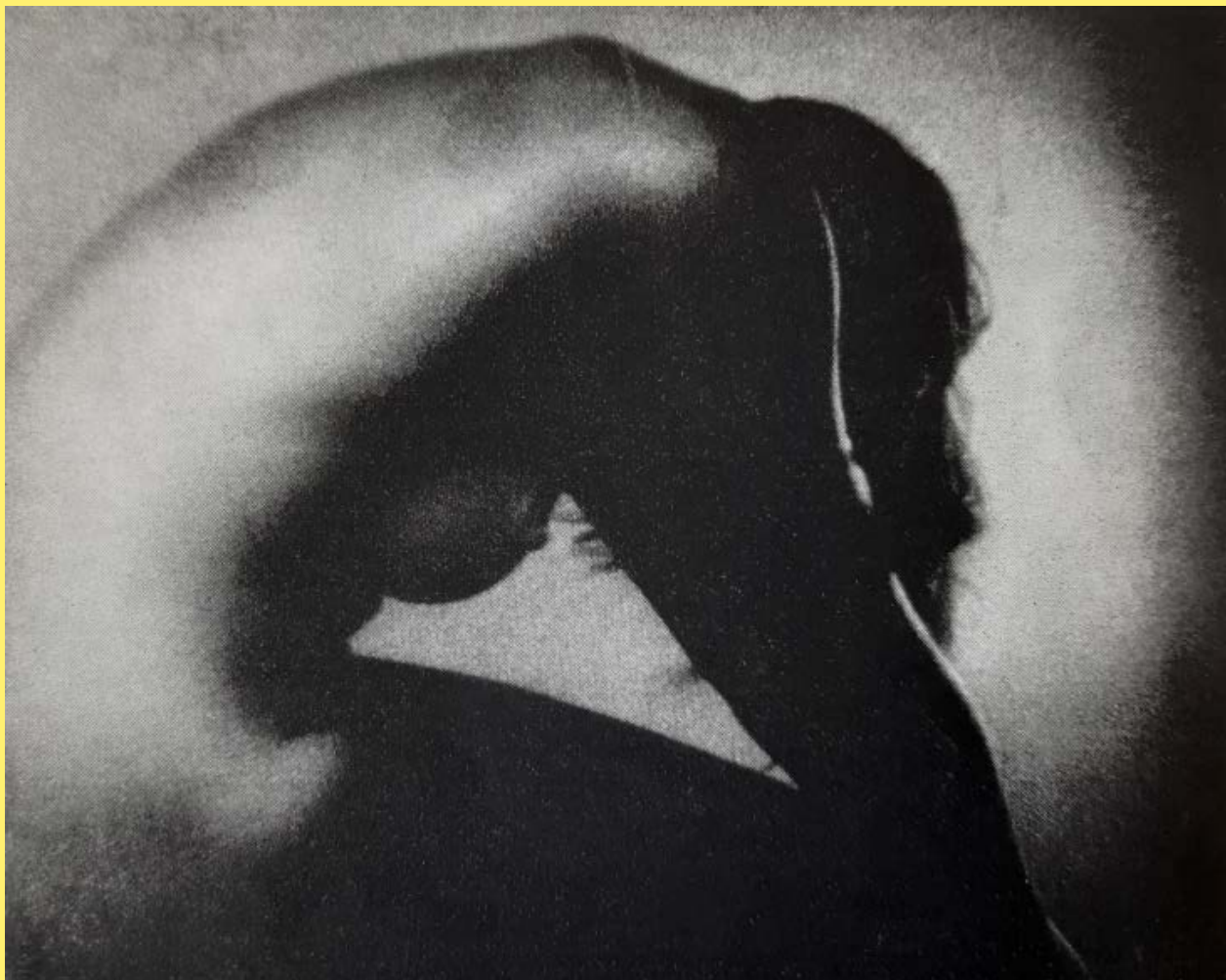


Fig. 16 Nikola Szege, *Razočaranje* [Disappointment]. *Foto revija*, 1934, br./no. 10.

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youth and beauty in the choice of female models, compared to the depictions of men in which age and physical characteristics do not play a role in choosing models, points to a phenomenon that Gordana Bosanac calls *aesthetic antifeminism*. It is an imperative that a woman must be beautiful, or rather pleasing to a man in an “aesthetic way”, by nurturing her femininity and beauty and taking it into account. According to this view, a woman is understood as an *ornament of the world*, and women who deviate from the canon of beauty and youth are unimportant, inconspicuous, out of sight and interest and, consequently, existence itself. It is a kind of a racist exclusion of women who cannot meet the dominant aesthetic criteria.⁴⁸

Male characters are not shown posing, but are “captured” and seem completely unaware of the proximity of the photographer and the camera.⁴⁹ On the other hand, women are undoubtedly posed, which strengthens the “perception of women as (passive) raw materials for the (active) male gaze”, or rather the idea of the female body as a “body for others” that is constantly exposed to remarks made by gaze and discourse of others. “Masculine domination, which constitutes women as symbolic objects whose being (...) is a being-perceived (...), has the effect of keeping them in a permanent state of bodily insecurity, or more precisely of symbolic dependence. They exist first through and for the gaze of others, that is as welcoming, attractive and available *objects*.”⁵⁰

The portraits of male peasants and workers display similar representation policies as the portraits of the bourgeoisie, with some minor deviations. In most cases, men don't look at the camera, and are usually serious, thoughtful or focused on something they're observing. They belong to all age groups (Franc Bazelj: *Bosanec* [Bosnian]; F. Mosinger: *Bosna* [Bosnia]; T. Dabac: *Studija* [Study]; Erna Lendvai-Dircksen: *Drvosječa* [Woodcutter]; T. Dabac: *Mladi seljak* [Young Peasant] and *Čovjek iz naroda* [Man of the People]; A. Kornič: *Zadovoljnost* [Satisfaction]). A special group is comprised of photographs of very old peasants whose wrinkles metaphorically highlight the land, or rather region, as their essence (A. Frajtić: *Dalmatinec* [Dalmatian]), which is often emphasised by their titles (Đ. Griesbach: *Brazde života* [Furrows of Life], fig. 17). Thus Mosinger's photograph *Bosanski seljak* [Bosnian Peasant] is accompanied by the description “Deep furrows on his face have been ploughed by time and the struggle for a daily bread”,⁵¹ and the portrait *Joško Piškor iz Vrapča* [Joško Piškor from Vrapče] is thus described “Time has ploughed furrows on those hands that are surely just as characteristic as the wrinkles on the face of our peasant”.⁵² The politics of representation in portraits of peasant women are similar to those of the female members of the bourgeoisie: they are young and beautiful, and most of them are laughing (A. Kornič: *Lepa Črnomeljka* [A Beauty from Črnomelj]; Mario Medeotti: *Zadovoljna* [Satisfied]; Adolf Katscher: *Seljanka* [Peasant Woman]; Emilio Fecia Cossato:

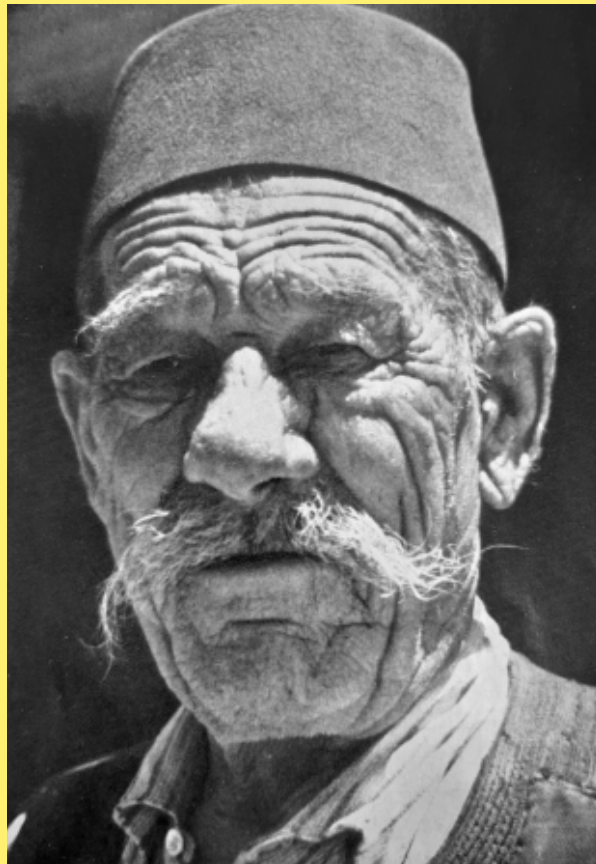


Fig. 17 Đuro Griesbach, *Brazde života* [Grooves of life].
Foto revija, 1940, br./no. 2.

↑



Fig. 18 Tošo Dabac, *Seljakinja* [Peasant girl]. *Savremena fotografija*, 1940, br./no. 1.

↑

48

Bosanac, *Visoko čelo*, 75.

49

"According to the principles of the ruling ideology and the psychical structures that back it up, the male figure cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification. Man is reluctant to gaze at his exhibitionist like." All according to: Mulvey, "Vizualni užitek i narativni film", 71, 75.

50

Bourdieu, *Vladavina muškaraca*, 89, 93.

51

"K našim slikama".

52

Mosinger, "Ruka kao samostalni motiv".

53

Bourdieu, *Distinkcija*, 343.

54

Cf: Wallach Scott, "The Problem of Invisibility", 28–29.

55

According to Ida Ograjšek Gorenjak, stereotypes and prejudices are a type of prior knowledge that is not based on experience but on a "general belief", and the problem arises when these previously created judgments are treated as indisputable knowledge. They, in turn, play an important role in the context of identity building, which makes them "cultural elements of extraordinary social power" that "have a great impact on the society that has accepted them." Ograjšek Gorenjak, *Opasne iluzije*, 40–41.

56

According to: Bourdieu, *Vladavina muškaraca*, 14–34.

Pijemont [Piedmont]). A serious facial expression is much rarer and suggests daydreaming or emotionality, which is amplified by the closed eyes (T. Dabac: *Seljakinja* [Peasant Woman], fig. 18), or is a mark of an advanced age (T. Dabac: *Žena iz naroda* [Woman from the People]).

THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION AS A REFLECTION OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF POWER

If we summarize the prevailing depictions, we notice that some common situations are omitted from the photographs at the expense of others, which in turn are forced. Based on these significant asymmetries, we can conclude that the image of society provided by interwar photography is not a true reflection of society, but a consequence of a particular value system, which we can encompass under the term bourgeois worldview. Since the authors of the photographs are men from the middle class, it can be said that they used their motifs and stylistic choices to build an image of the deprived Others from the position of a privileged social group. Here it is worth drawing attention to Bourdieu's thesis that the image of the working-class world produced by an intellectual is necessarily distorted, because he projects his own attitude towards the lower classes into the description, and the problem lies in the fact that this false identification has a semblance of legitimacy.⁵³

Based on the analysis of representational patterns, we have concluded that social groups in the photographs were constructed according to the principle of binary oppositions that were ingrained in the bourgeois imagination. Thus, the male–female opposition is joined by analogous oppositions of mind–beauty, intellect–emotions, work–rest, seriousness–fun, spirituality–eroticism, which is a consequence of long-standing patriarchal notions.⁵⁴ Bourdieu speaks of these oppositions as schemes of thought that, by reversing causes and effects, are naturalized and inscribed in the system of differences between men and women, which is why the socially constructed division between the sexes is understood as natural and obvious. In today's vocabulary, one can speak of gender stereotypes that include sexism, ageism and lookism, and all of them can be subsumed under the idea of antifeminism as a system formed on opinion and social stereotypes.⁵⁵ Just like women in the social space are separated by a negative symbolic coefficient from men,⁵⁶ the analysis of photographs showed that the folk were understood as a negative reference point of the bourgeois way of life, and pointed to the existence of class binary oppositions. According to them, the folk are constructed as a bourgeois negative, so that the opposition bourgeoisie–folk is accompanied by associated analogous concepts: brain–belly, individuality–sociability, spirituality–piety.

Representational patterns and asymmetries, based on both gender and class, which dominate in photographs published in specialized photographic magazines unequivocally reflect the social structure of power, bringing a vision of

the world from a privileged position, and thus representing the vision and interests of the ruling social paradigm: patriarchal, bourgeois, capitalist. This is a matter of establishing a matrix of ideas that are not historical truth but a construct based on opinion, and their frequency and presence in art (which implies something universal, valuable and something that deals with the truth) contributes to the naturalization of gender and class differences and consequent consolidation and perpetuation of social asymmetry and inequalities. This is one of the ways in which culture contributes to the dominance and the process of social reproduction—the reproduction of power relations, so it can be said that culture and education often strengthen, rather than abolish, social differences.⁵⁷ Following the idea of Joep Leerssen, we will say that, since art operates on the principle of a “suspension of disbelief” and the establishment of trust between artists and audiences, it is a very convenient way for shaping public opinion, but also spreading stereotypes.⁵⁸ This strengthens the vision of a society in which a privileged elite, that is, the culturally and economically superior minority, expands its value system to the entire society. Following in the footsteps of Fredric Jameson, in this paper we sought to shed light on the illusion of self-evidentness and objectivity of a cultural text, as the official culture that makes up the artistic canon perpetuates the voice of only one social group, the hegemonic class.⁵⁹ Heeding Griselda Pollock's call to deconstruct cultural patterns that support the current power structures,⁶⁰ we hold that just the act of raising awareness can already contribute to their neutralization.*

•

57

Ibid., p. 117.

58

According to: Ograjšek Gorenjak, *Opasne iluzije*, 33, 45.

59

Jameson, *Političko nesvesno*, 100–102.

60

Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, 28.

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