

## PICTURING A MODERNIST FUTURE:

### Women Illustrators and Childhood Conceptions in Socialist Yugoslavia

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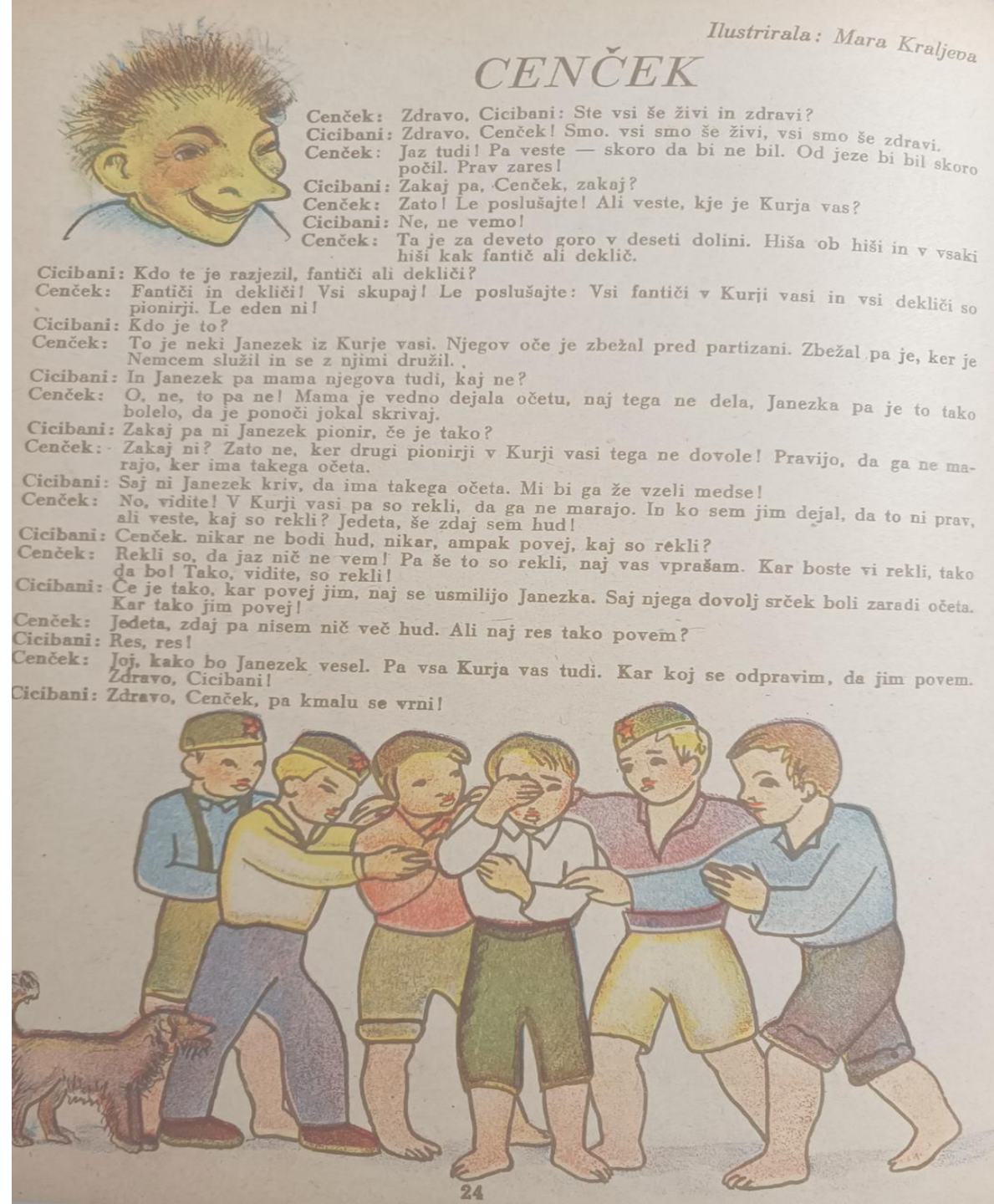
Project acronym: SOC-ILL

**Research fields:** cultural studies, Slavonic, socialist and Yugoslav studies

**Free keywords:** illustration and literature for children, childhood, gender, socialism, Yugoslavia, aesthetic education

#### Descriptors:

- 1 Cultural studies, cultural diversity
- 2 Visual arts, performing arts, film, design
- 3 Cultural memory, intangible cultural heritage





## WHAT? ( ... is the problem ... and how to solve it?)

The SOC-ILL action introduces the first systematic comparative interdisciplinary **investigation into women illustrators** in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY, 1945–1991), paying attention to all former Yugoslav contexts and combining art and literary historical and theoretical approaches with cultural studies for novel critical insights into socialist aesthetic education and subjectivation of children, especially in relation to gender. Through the examination of multiple archives and interviews with older generations of professionals working within the feminized sector of publishing for minors, the action works against their disappearance before any academic documentation can take place. The action entails 3 main objectives:

- (i) To explore and contextually interpret distinctive childhood- and gender conceptions within Yugoslav publishing for minors;
- (ii) To map the practice of women illustrators for minors within the production context of the Yugoslav socialist publishing for children;
- (iii) To intervene into academic “archiving” by supporting a more complex understanding of socialist modernist aesthetic education and subjectivation.

Thus the action contributes to redefinition of the relation between communicative and cultural memory of the European socialist past in the broader fields of Yugoslav, Slavonic, and socialist studies and the disciplines of art, literary and cultural history.



## WHAT? ( ... is the problem ... and how to solve it?)

### Deficiency vs. (promising) good (practice) or remedy - contextualized in life & science

- Women artists, who worked as illustrators for children are not or insufficiently historicized.
- While in contemporary times, children and youth represent an ordinary age group “which has no particular or significant social/societal importance”, in the socialist modernist teleology, children and youth were seen as “a symbolic representative of societal change” and as such embody a radically different and better future.

### Solution of the deficiency : Exploring the soc Yu production!

Research question in regard to:

*Professional field publishing for children:*

*Childhood:*

Who were the illustrators for children?

How the ideas of childhood changed through the history of socialist Yugoslavia

What did they work on?

How is to be a child? What does a child need? What a child can do?

How and why did they work?

Encountering war trauma; changing gender (motherhood, fatherhood, girls, boys, professions, social roles,

How did literary and art production

consumption, body, etc.

(in this context illustration) try to reach children?

With whom did they work?

What were the editorial, literary and visual foci (themes, forms, genres)?

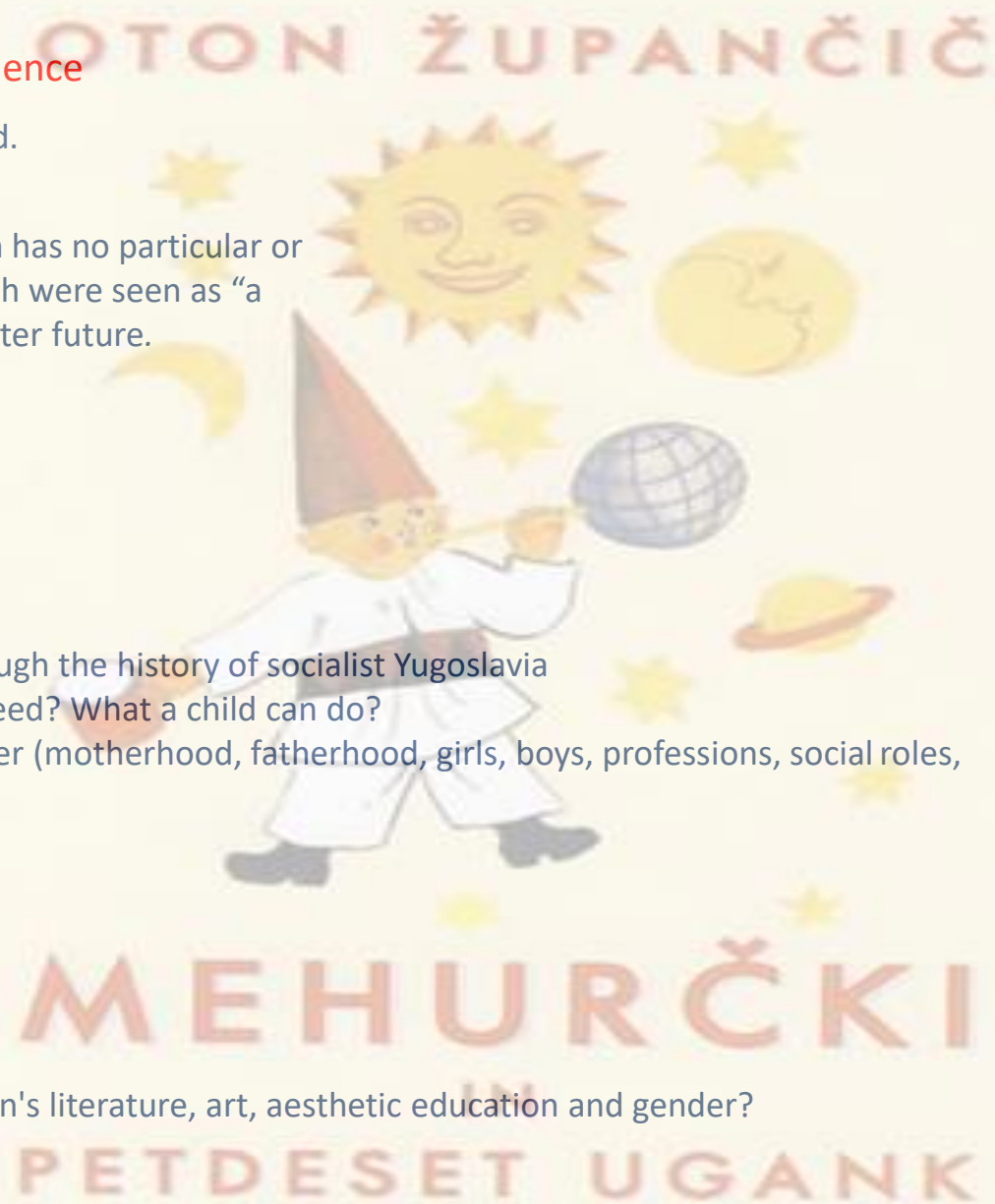
In what conditions did they work?

### What we can learn out of all of it?

About artistic work of illustration in relation to children's literature, art, aesthetic education and gender?

About and from past societies?

WHAT WAS FUTURE BEFORE?



**HOW? Ways to come to the solution** (focus gender dimension)

**1 Corpus and data collection methods:** Research oriented to the **feminized** publishing sector for children in soc. Yugoslavia

**2 Key analytical foci:**

The research and selection criteria for the primary sources to be analysed will be set interdisciplinarily:

(a) **Temporal criteria:** The primary focus will lie on the SFRY (1941/45–1991) period.

(b) **Conceptual criteria:** Grounded on the theoretical base informed by the secondary sources, illustrations for minors by women artists, who **introduced or** importantly added to the **specific traits of childhood and gender** within Yugoslav book illustration for minors and of its artistic, formal and thematic articulation, will be analysed.

**The production framework and conditions:** how was the sector established, how it was structured;

**Reproductive work – artistic production for children as reproductive work; women artists negotiating their artistic work with reproductive work;**

**Participatory structures in publishing (tenders, open calls by magazines for children)**

**3 Data presentation - outputs** (digital archive of illustrations, interviews, articles, exhibition, talks, teaching), dissemination, communication, knowledge transfer, career prospects

**WHY NOW? Temporospacial context** (science & life)

The artists and professionals, who worked in the field are in old age, the archives are somewhere almost to disappear.

**WHY ME? Researcher, supervision, institution** – grounding in the field;

me - expertise women's authorship and production contexts & Yugoslav studies (supervisor)

Institution (leading in Yugoslav studies)

**SO WHAT? What will the research change? Advancement in terms of life & science**

Historization of the artists, diversifying the canon – cultural history & knowledge on historical models of aesthetic education

(digital archive – a tool for further research)

Diversifying (the conceptions of) children

Boosting researchers professional career

Diversifying the expertise in the institution (art related knowledge, soft skills, networks)

