

WARRIOR MEETS MOTHER. THE VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF FEMALE FIGURES IN THE 1990S IN CROATIA

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Abstract: *This paper deals primarily with visual representations of women, and in particular the representation of the mother and the female warrior during the 1990s in Croatia. To what extent do these representations stand in the tradition of representations of women during the Second World War? What is the purpose of the representations, and how do these figures change in different political and temporal contexts? To address these questions, various visual sources are consulted, ranging from posters to film.*

Keywords: women representation, propaganda, female partisans, Croatia, allegory

THE MINOR ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE NATION-BUILDING PROCESS

The collapse of Yugoslavia led to a political rethinking. The former socialist aesthetic traditions and symbols no longer sufficed after the collapse of national aspirations. New national symbolic images were needed to replace the picture of the former heroic partisan and political leader Josip Broz Tito (1892–1980, president 1953–1980). A large number of male visual representations of new heroic figures were to assume an identity-forming function – whereas female figures, however, were less present.¹ Cynthia Enloe points out that in nationalist movements and conflicts “(w)omen are relegated to minor, often symbolic roles. In doing so they appear either as icons of nationhood to be elevated and defended, or as the booty or spoils of war, to be denigrated and disgraced.”² During the 1990s two dominant female figures appeared in Croatia in visual artistic productions: the mother and

- 1 Klaudija Sabo, *Ikonen der Nationen. Heldendarstellungen im post-sozialistischen Kroatien und Serbien* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017).
- 2 Joane Nagel, “Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21/2 (1998): 244. Nagel refers in her investigation to the essay of Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 45.

the warrior. Those two female figures are on the one hand a national icon, and on the other, the woman as a victim of abuse by the enemy.

The use of the woman as a national icon in the form of a mother or a warrior in artistic productions is not something extraordinary in the history of the region and in Europe. In Yugoslavia after the Second World War the female partisan was often portrayed as both a warrior and a mother. She played a crucial role in the resistance movement during the attack of the National Socialists, making it possible for state authorities to employ her figure for propaganda purposes as a national icon. The women's figures in the 1990s differ significantly from those of the World War II period. Within the visual and narrative design, ancient as well as religious representations are drawn upon. In contrast to the female partisan figures, the woman is pushed into the role of a victim rather than one of self-defensive agency. On the basis of the case studies selected, in this paper I examine the developments the female figures underwent in the 1990s and how these figures differ from those of partisan female portrayals.

ALLEGORICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE NATIONAL WARRIOR WOMAN

During the so-called Homeland War (*Domovinski rat*, 1991-1995) and also afterwards, there were several instances in which the woman was represented as a warrior. These female figures were linked to the attributes of the country and thus became a specifically *national* warrior. This amalgam of national symbols and femininity often has the function of allegorical representations of the state – especially in times of war or crisis. Silke Wenk declared that in modernity allegories had been discredited and considered outdated. Nevertheless, according to Wenk, they are still present in image production and image politics, especially in the form of female allegories.³ On the official Medal for Bravery (*Spomenica Domovinskog rata*) introduced shortly after the war in 1995, for example, one can find such an allegorical depiction. It was awarded to the members of the Croatian Army for special deeds. A woman in Greek garb is stamped on the medal. In her right hand she holds a sword pointing towards the ground; in her raised left hand she holds the Croatian coat of arms. Olive and oak leaves frame the image on the coin like a wreath. Such leaves are often associated with victory but also with peace. The ancient custom of placing a crown of green olive branches on the head of the winner comes for example from Greece. In the Bible the olive tree was considered a sign of hope and of life. The

3 Silke Wenk, *Versteinerte Weiblichkeit. Allegorien in der Skulptur der Moderne* (Köln/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau, 1996), 3.



Illustration 1: *Spomenica Domovinskog Rata*, 1995

white dove that Noah sent out from the ark eventually brought back an olive branch as a sign of hope that the flood waters were receding. The military use of the oak to symbolize victory, courage, and heroism remains in use today.

Similar iconographic attributes can be found in the female figure drawn by Zlatko Prica entitled *Hrvatska – za mir i slobodu* (Croatia – for Peace and Freedom), painted during the war for the exhibition *Za obranu i obnovu* (For Defense and Renewal). The exhibition took place at the beginning of the war in September 1991 and was financed by the Commission for Fine Arts of the Municipal Fund for Culture in Zagreb. What is remarkable in the drawing by Zlatko Prica is the clothing of the female figure. The garment is inspired by Greek robes and alludes to Roman and Greek goddesses. Both figures can be traced back to representations of the goddesses Victoria and Minerva and form a hybrid figure of these two. In the image of Prica, just as on the medal, the Croatian flag with the coat of arms, the sword, and the olive leaves are used, communicating the idea of defense and victory but also of hope and life.



Illustration 2: Zlatko Prica Croatia – for Peace and and Freedom, Zagreb 1991, 100×70 cm



Illustration 3: Medal of the House of Habsburg

The nation is depicted as a female figure holding out the branch of peace, while holding a sword in the other hand. The weapon symbolizes not only the ability to defend oneself, but also in a broader sense, the entire nation. These depictions of women go back to other models in Europe. The House of Habsburg also produced medals with Roman goddesses in order to emphasize their continuity with the Roman Empire. In 1758 medals were awarded to mark the victory of Austrian troops over the Prussians at Hochkirchen in Saxony. The figure of Victoria (the goddess of victory) is shown on the medal, with a laurel wreath as a symbol of victory in her right hand and an olive branch in her left. On the other side of the medal is the profile of Maria Theresa. Another medal motif is Minerva (medal from 1767): the ancient Italian goddess Minerva is often equated with the Greek Athena (the goddess of tactical warfare). The appropriation of traditional (Western) European symbolism communicates the desire to be part of the imagined “western countries” and an attempt to distance themselves from the Balkans.

A more playful form of the presentation of iconic figures can be found in the caricature by the graphic artist Nenad Orešković. The French Marianne of the famous painting *La Liberté guidant le peuple* (Liberty Leading the People, 1830) by Eugène Delacroix is misappropriated and shown as a modern armed Croatian freedom fighter.⁴ She is holding the Croatian flag with her right hand, expressing thereby her ethnic belonging. Next to her, the male fighter with beret walks in the direction of the observer. He in turn executes the V-sign, which was a very important symbol among Croatian soldiers as well as in the media for national

4 Alojz Ševčik, ed., *Warikatura Croatica* (Zagreb: Hrvatski informativni centar, 1992), 45.



Illustration 4: Nenad Orešković: The French Marianne as a Croatian Freedom Fighter, Zagreb, 1992.

identity purposes.⁵ Due to the cropping, one cannot discern whether he carries a weapon. Instead of a bayonet, in her left hand the Croatian version of the French Marianne carries a Kalashnikov, which was still in use during the conflict in the 1990s in Yugoslavia.

5 Sabo, *Ikonen der Nationen*, 146.

PARTISAN WOMAN AS WARRIOR

The essential difference between the representations of the partisan woman and the fighting women of the 1990s is that the former were not exclusively allegorical representations. They represented woman of flesh and blood who were politically active and sacrificed their lives for the antifascist struggle.⁶ Since women played a decisive role in the antifascist struggle, they could be used as an emancipatory “symbol of socialist Yugoslavia.” Statues and films as well as factories were named after them, some of which are still present in Croatian cityscapes.⁷ But this female role was very controversial in matters of everyday life. Women who took part in the armed resistance broke with the traditional gender and social order. Their social gender was seen as incompatible with military functions. This order had been weakened during the war, but was still present among the partisans and in pre-World War II society, as Barbara Wiesinger argues.⁸ Traditionally the use of weapons and violence was and is linked to male gender identity. Most female combatants were confronted with this problem. Either they were rejected by the partisan units or were not given weapons, or had poorer chances of advancement in the army. The propaganda images tried to cover up this conflict, stylizing the female fighters of the People’s Liberation Army as recognized heroines who are ready to sacrifice their lives for freedom and fatherland.⁹ The representation of the female warriors created in the 1990s have little in common with the female partisan. They are based on ancient models as well as biblical figures and their attributes. In addition, the female figures remained an artistic execution, not based on any real female figures.

REPRESENTATION OF THE MOTHER IN THE 1990S: *VRIJEME ZA...* FROM OJA KODAR

Besides the allegorical figure of the warrior, the motif of motherhood is also found in artistic productions. Especially the early Croatian films such as *Vrijeme za...* or *Bogorodica*, which will be the focus in the following, separately emphasize the role

6 Barbara N. Wiesinger, *Partisaninnen. Widerstand in Jugoslawien (1941–1945)*. L’homme Schriften 17. Reihe zur feministischen Geschichtswissenschaft (Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau, 2008); Miranda Jakiša and Nikica Gilić, *Partisans in Yugoslavia. Literature, Film and Visual Culture* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015).

7 In the small thoroughfare “Prolaz Sestre Baković” for example you can still find the bust of the Baković sisters. Rajka and Zdenka Baković used their family newsstand at Nikolićeva Street No. 7 in Zagreb as a central exchange location for the connection of members of the resistance at the beginning of World War II. They were later declared Yugoslav heroines.

8 Barbara N. Wiesinger, *Partisaninnen*, 91.

9 Ibid., 84

of specifically Catholic motherhood, the symbolic function of which is particularly strong in nation-building processes. "The best known and most widespread image of the nation represents itself as an allegorical female figure, generally a mother which has its basis in animistic notions of Mother Earth (Terra Mater)."¹⁰ She not only represents the nation, but is also in its service by sacrificing her children for the war or giving birth to a new generation of border guardians. The sculpture in Slavonski Brod "Monument to the Fallen Soldiers in the Homeland War" (*Spomenik poginulim braniteljima u Domovinskom ratu*) by Ante Brkić from 2004 represents this aspect quite clearly. The bronze figure of a woman holds her child with outstretched arms towards the Croatian coat of arms. She kneels before the coat of arms and sacrifices her most precious possession: her child. With this gesture she puts not only herself at the service of the nation, but also her offspring.

The film *Vrijeme za...* deals with a similar subject in which the child goes to war to defend the nation. But the child in this case is hardly grown up and decided on its own to go to war. The director Oja Kodar depicts the mother, Maria, living with her son Darko in a Croatian village which was attacked by Serbian četniks.¹¹ The two manage to escape and find a hideout in a nearby town. Maria finds a job in a laundry, while Darko joins the Croatian Defenders. After discovering that her son was killed in a military attack, Maria sets off to the front so she can bury his body in the region where he grew up and the site of his former home. Darko's mother, who keeps the lifeless and disfigured body in a coffin, wants to bury it at any cost in the village cemetery, which at that time is in the enemy zone or no man's land. Even the Croatian war profiteer, who earlier had agreed to drive her there in return for a television as payment, turns back before they even enter the enemy zone. The mother is left with the choice of continuing alone by foot, pulling the coffin behind her on a cart, or giving up and turning back.

She chooses to continue with her task. According to Mate Ćurić's review of the film, "[the mother] resembles an Antigone. She wants to bury her son at all costs and regardless of the circumstances. A Mother Courage dragging the fate of the homeland behind her on her wooden cart."¹² On the way to the cemetery, this modern-day Mother Courage meets the Serbian deserter Nikola, who has found

10 Ivan Čolović, *Politics of Symbol in Serbia. Essays in Political Anthropology*, transl. Celia Hawkesworth (London: Hurst & Company, 2002; 1st edition in Serbian as *Politika simbola*, 1997), 32.

11 Četniks were in favor of the re-establishment of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia during World War II and the re-establishment of Greater Yugoslavia with an ethnically pure Serbia. (Holm Sundhaussen, *Geschichte Serbiens: 19.-20. Jahrhundert*, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 321) The term *četnik* was used in Croatia in the 1990s often generally for Serbs; it can designate Serbian nationalists.

12 Mate Ćurić, "Oprostiti ali ne zaboraviti," *Novi List*, 26 Juli 1993: "Ona je istovremeno Antigona, pokopat će sina bez obzira na sve i usprkos svemu. Majka Courage koja na svojim kolicima vuče sudbinu domovine."



Illustration 5: Ante Brkić: Monument to the fallen soldiers in the Homeland War, Slavonski Brod, 2004.

shelter in the mother's family grave. When local Serb soldiers intend to rape her, the Serb deserter Nikola intervenes and shoots the soldiers, allowing the mother to escape. He himself is shot in action. Nikola is the only Serb here who is depicted positively or humanely, switching sides in the ethnic community to save the Croatian mother. At the same time, he has a negative image as a drunkard and a day laborer. The mother, in turn, pushes the cart, with the wounded Nikola in it, out of the enemy territory. On the way she meets her son Darko, alive after all, and looking for his mother to tell her that he did not perish and that there is someone else in the coffin which she has been carrying the entire time.

At the end of the film, an extra-diegetic narrator's voice speaks from off-screen, reading an excerpt from Ecclesiastes: "To everything there is a season, a time to every purpose under the heaven," which refers to the title of the film: "The Time For." In the end there are no male hero figures. Even though Darko is portrayed as a charismatic young boy with ideological activism, and Nikola aids Darko's mother in her greatest need, both lack the necessary initiative to become active on their own. Darko is basically excluded from any "active" action in the film. He

is a victim of circumstances and at the end of the film, when he tries to rescue his mother from the hostile region, he reaches his goal too late. As a result, the women – or rather Darko's mother, Maria – fulfills the central role of the film. Her only epic effort, however, is not motivated by resisting the enemy, but by burying her son in her home village and in her family grave.

BOGORODICA (MADONNA) BY NEVEN HITREC

Unlike in *Vrijeme za...*, the figure of the mother in the 1999 film *Bogorodica* (Madonna) by Neven Hitrec takes on the status of a saint. She is declared to be the Mother of God herself, and thus symbolizes Christianity or in this special case, Catholicism. The film was made at the end of the Tuđman era, and was made in cooperation with Maxima Film, Croatian television HRTV, and the film production company Jadran Film. Alongside the motif of motherhood it puts self-victimization in the center of the narrative. Biblical stories serve as the basis for the film, as is also the case in *Vrijeme za...*

Kuzma, a Croatian-born sculptor and carpenter, is to carve a wooden holy virgin for the Roman Catholic church in an ethnically mixed village. He models the Madonna figure after his wife, as she was shortly before she gave birth to his first child. This image of the canonized mother goes hand-in-hand with the social development that the country underwent in the 1990s and which, in the period of post-socialist Croatia, provided national identity and the concepts of motherhood and masculinity with new foundations of meaning. The concept of motherhood was an important theme in the national discourse of the time, because the mother was seen as underpinning the ethnic Croatian community through the birth of her children, who in turn would be responsible for defending the country in the future. The social scientist Dubravka Žarković examined the representation of Croatian and Serbian bodies in the media. She concludes that in dramatic times of violent conflicts and wars, when the nation is perceived as threatened and its existence seems endangered, the female body as well as the fertility of a mother undergo a rewriting of meaning.¹³ According to Nira Yuval Davis and Floya Anthias, in such times of crisis the nation, like its territories, is seen as something feminine which, according to Davis and Anthias, goes hand-in-hand with the territorialization of the female body. Further, they posit that the female body ultimately becomes a social territory through the burden of reproduction.¹⁴ According to Robert

13 Dubravka Žarković, *The Body of War. Media Ethnicity and Gender in Break-up of Yugoslavia* (London: Duke University Press, 2007), 69.

14 Nira Yuval Davis and Floya Anthias, *Racialized Boundaries. Race, Nation, Gender, Colour and Class*

Hayden, the bodies of women at peril during the war are construed as “[...] ethnic territories themselves.”¹⁵ Dubravka Žarković summarizes the amalgamation of the female body with the nation accordingly: “In other words, the maternal body is not only the symbol of national territory through the gendered images of fertility or gentle landscapes: the maternal body is the marker, as well as the maker, of national territory. As new, maternal cartographies of the nation are delivered, motherhood ceases to be merely a metaphor, and becomes a site of discursive struggle as well as identity politics.”¹⁶

In the film the hostile tendencies escalate and turn into the first warlike confrontations. The accountant Rade, a Serb and a temporary worker for Kuzma, rapes the latter’s wife, Ana. The rape of women becomes a central theme in the violent conflict, not only because of the violence itself, but also because of its symbolic value. It represents a symbolic attack on the Croatian community and thus also on the body of the people. At the same time, it thus enables the regulation of the community.¹⁷ When the national community and its soil are embodied in the figures of mother, sister, or sweetheart, then the problem of national integrity and the problem of defending or altering borders becomes extremely traumatic, acquiring the sense of defending one’s mother’s honor and the honor of women in general, as explained by Ivan Čolović.¹⁸ Rade ties up Kuzma’s wife after the act of rape together with her child on the altar of the Catholic village church for which Rade made the Madonna figure. He binds Ana and her child in such a way that they assume the role of the wooden figure of Mary and her baby Jesus; he equips the figure group with a bomb. They become a living sacred figure group, thus the living Madonna with her child is not only killed but destroyed entirely. The Serb Rade becomes not only a murderer of the Virgin Mary but also a danger to the Catholic faith. In both cases, the Madonna and Mother Ana are figures representing the Catholic community and the Croatian people.¹⁹ The violent act is a figurative attack on the Catholic faith and on the country itself. At the same time, the film touches the sensitive issue of the destruction of numerous churches during the war. These churches were directly linked to their respective ethnic groups due to

and the Anti-Racist Struggle (London: Routledge, 1989), 45.

15 Robert M. Hayden, “Rape and Rape Avoidance in Ethno-National Conflicts: Sexual Violence in Liminalized States,” *American Anthropologist* 10/1 (2000): 27–41, 32.

16 Žarković, *The Body of War*, 69

17 Anette Dietrich, *Weisse Weiblichkeiten. Konstruktion von Rasse und Geschlecht im deutschen Kolonialismus* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2007), 77.

18 Čolović, *Politics of Symbol in Serbia*, 33.

19 Kathrin Hoffmann Curtius, “Opfermodelle am Altar des Vaterlandes seit der französischen Revolution,” in: *Schrift der Flammen. Opfermythen und Weiblichkeitsentwürfe*, ed. Gudrun Kohn-Waechter (Berlin: Orlanda-Frauenverlag, 1991), 60–71.

the religious heterogeneity in the region. Afterwards, Kuzma decides to go back to Serbia, hoping to find the accountant Rade and take revenge on him for what he did to his wife, his child, and ultimately to him. After finding Rade he binds him and intends to saw him to pieces on the former workbench. At the last second he lets him go and pardons him, as a good Christian should do according to the New Testament. He acts according to the Biblical dogma: if someone slaps you on one cheek, offer the other cheek also.²⁰ Kuzma adheres to prescribed Christian virtues in an exemplary manner: He does not take revenge and thus does not let the situation escalate further.

As in *Vrijeme za...* the characters are drawn in black and white. The film critic Nenad Polimac criticizes *Bogorodica* for failing to show a multi-faceted picture of the Homeland War.²¹ In the film Croats are portrayed as gentle, tolerant, good-natured and forgiving of their enemies. Even the only problematic Croat, a violent drunk named Duka, experiences a moral catharsis and fraternizes with his previous enemy Kuzma, whose wife had previously been Duka's girlfriend. Their enmity transformed into friendship represents the state's desire to unite all Croats. Tudman's agenda was to bring about the fraternization of all ethnic Croats in order to unify them.²² At the same time, the Serbs are portrayed as the ethnic and religious Other and therefore evil. Only the significant dramaturgical moments in the film determine when their malice is revealed. Thus, Rade is a loyal worker in the beginning, and later a rapist and murderer of the wife of his employer. When analyzing the film *Bogorodica*, it also becomes clear that the content of the film does not differ significantly from the notorious productions of folk art of the early nineties. All the ideologically filled motifs of Kodarice, Žižića, and Radića are present here: "The Serbs are usually all bad. There are those who seem good and collegial at first glance, but when things get dicey, they ally with their own and even become the worst of their ethnic community," according to Jurica Pavičić.²³ He also claims that "the Serbs are depicted, on the one hand, as fat, unkempt, unshaven and with bloodshot eyes, much like in *Vrijeme za*. The Croats, on the other hand, are cultured and [...] dressed as if they were going to mass."²⁴ This black and white representation is all the more surprising because *Bogorodica* was filmed after the end of the war, when the question of the propaganda effect no longer played such

20 Bible, Matthew 5:39.

21 Nenad Polimac, "Kako je počeo rat u mom selu: Nije točno da je *Bogorodica* prvi hrvatski ratni film bez crno-bijelih junaka: i u očajnom *Vrijeme za...* likovi Srba su slojevitiji," in: *Nacional*, 17 March 1999, 35.

22 From the interview I had with Tihomir Cipek, Zagreb University, 15 April 2013.

23 Jurica Pavičić, "Kao figa u džepu," in *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 26 March 1999, 23.

24 Ibid.

a major role. Only the necessity of positioning or clarifying the perpetrators of the war is less strongly emphasized in the center of the film, as compared to, for example, films by Oja Kodar (*Vrijeme za...*) or Tomislav Radić (*Anđele moj dragi*).

PARTISAN WOMEN AS MOTHERS AND WARRIORS

There are also representations of the mother in the Yugoslav struggle for freedom; some of them are even related to the warrior, and in this specific case, the partisan. Here, a unification of warrior with mother is suggested. The cover of the first issue of the Croatian AFŽ-Antifašističke Fronte Žena Hrvatske (the women's anti-fascist front in Croatia)²⁵ magazine *Žena u borbi* (A woman in the war, est. 1942) shows an armed civilian woman. She wears a worn dress and no shoes. In her right hand she holds a gun and her left arm bears a little girl. The girl turns her face away from the observer. The woman has a determined look, gazing out of the frame. She can be considered as "any woman," since she cannot be assigned to any group due to the lack of military symbols. According to Wiesinger, the extreme situation of war forces women to make an unusual step and take up arms in order to protect their children. By depicting combativeness as a component of the mother's role, the illustration constructs alleged evidence of female armed resistance. The second female partisan image shows a woman from the magazine *Makedonka* (A Macedonian Woman). In contrast to the other woman, she is clothed in a military suit and is equipped with an ammunition belt and a weapon. She also carries a child, who wraps its legs around the woman's waist. This child's face is also turned away from the observer and represents all children threatened during the war by violence and devastation. Both women / mothers protect their children with military weapons. The following text, reproduced in the magazine *Makedonka* published in North Macedonia, explicitly states this interpretation: "The woman rises to defend the life of her children [...] in the concentration camps, with the rifle in her hand, in the Macedonian mountains, as a hinterland activist, with a feverish gaze the Macedonian mother fights; for a beautiful, light and pure life the young women fly to their deaths."²⁶ Here, on a visual and textual level, the warrior and the mother merge; and rather than a contradiction, quite the opposite is suggested – indeed, the message is used for propaganda purposes. Women are not presented here as

25 Antifašistička Fronta Žena (The Women's Antifascist Front) was a Yugoslav feminist and anti-fascist organization. It was involved in organizing and training the partisans, the communist and multi-ethnic resistance to Nazi occupation of Yugoslavia during the World War II. It was formed by volunteers on the 6 December 1942 in Bosanski Petrovac at the First National Conference of Women.

26 Veselinka Malinska, ed., *Makedonka* 1/1 (1944): 4.



Illustration 6: Hubert Kruljac: A woman in the war, 1943

producers of warriors, but as protectors of their offspring. They are not shown as victims but as actors with agency – from the simply dressed woman to the one in uniform.

SECOND-CLASS HEROINES

In the 1990s, two female figures can be found within visual culture in Croatia: the figure of the mother and that of the warrior woman. The depiction of the heroic warriors remains within the realm of allegorical representations. They are static and not included in any narrative. In her publication Silke Wenk poses the question of whether these women still function as women at all, or merely take on a shell in order to attain symbolic significance.²⁷ These representations of female figures rather symbolize an idea – the idea of an independent Croatia. Aesthetically, these depictions of women borrow from ancient figures or imitate religious models. The former socialist depictions of partisan women are no longer recognizable here. The other dominant female figure is to be found in the portrayal of the mother. She is primarily placed in the 1990s in religious contexts and stylized as a person who must be defended or cannot achieve her goals without the help of men. Moreover, she must sacrifice her children in order to uphold the nation.

The figures can be called second-class heroines, since they are deprived of agency by remaining in the corset of a very traditional world view. They stand in contrast to the visual testimonies of the Partisans, which combined the role of the heroic warrior with the figure of the mother. The narrative of the mother taking up arms in order to defend her offspring was well embedded in the state ideology of the time. Representations of the partisan were actively involved in the nation-building process and were employed in negotiations to establish a state ideology. The role of women in the so-called Homeland War however was strictly divided between a Catholic mother and fighter and did not allow any form of intermingling. Women in the Homeland War were accorded only a subordinate role, listed as supporting actors with the responsibility of providing offspring rather than being actively involved. Although they can take an active role in the narrative, they are always shown as dependent on the man.

27 Wenk, *Versteinerte Weiblichkeit*, 10.