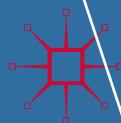


THE CULTURAL LIFE OF CAPITALISM IN YUGOSLAVIA

(POST)SOCIALISM AND ITS OTHER

Edited by Dijana Jelača,
Maša Kolanović and Danijela Lugarić



The Cultural Life of Capitalism in Yugoslavia

Dijana Jelača · Maša Kolanović
Danijela Lugarić
Editors

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(Post)Socialism and Its Other

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To the last Yugoslav generation

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The book is dedicated to the “lost Yugoslav generation,” which we see ourselves a part of. All three of us were born in 1979, and consequently only experienced Yugoslavia as children. The country’s disintegration simultaneously marked the end of our childhoods. As a result, we belong to a generation that is neither here nor there, neither last nor first, but rather “lost.” But lost to whom, or to what, remains an open question. Thinking of “being lost” as a site of opportunity rather than deficit is something that influences our scholarship and intellectual allegiances.

This book is a result of our myriad conversations across distances in time and space. More than anything, we want to thank our families for providing emotional safety nets and logistical support structures that make it possible for us to do what we love. Our daughters, Nika, Sava, Ema and Neva, continue to be the source of our greatest inspiration.

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Introduction: Cultural Capitalism the (Post)Yugoslav Way

Dijana Jelača, Maša Kolanović and Danijela Lugarić

CAPITALISM: A RESTRUCTURED FEELING

In recent years, capitalism has increasingly become a “bad object” of ever more critical academic scrutiny. As the neoliberal reality of late capitalism becomes a growingly urgent concern post-2008 global economic crisis, it is worth rethinking what we mean by capitalism, in order to avoid stabilizing its meaning into a singular transhistorical constant, or to avoid “the tendency to constitute ‘the’ economy as a singular capitalist system or space rather than as a zone of cohabitation and contestation among multiple economic forms” (Gibson-Graham 2006a: xxi). This is where the (post)socialist experience comes to play a very significant role, as a way to avoid thinking about capitalism as a transhistorical or economic given, by attempting to understand it through the prism of its seemingly opposite, or antagonistic “Other.” Because “cohabitation and contestation among multiple economic forms” is contingent on locality and context, we converge in this volume on the (post-)Yugoslav experience as one worth exploring in further depth, in order to uncover the intersections (cultural, social, economic, and political) where malleable forms of socialism and capitalism exist on a seemingly fluid scale, rather than as the polar, or mirror opposites of one another.

The volume at hand therefore offers a collection of essays that explore the shifting cultural life of capitalism in socialist and postsocialist times in the geopolitical context of the former Yugoslavia. Troubling standard understandings of both capitalism and socialism, our guiding premise is that, in this context, different cultural practices nowadays firmly associated with capitalism were always already embedded as “a structure of feelings” (Williams 1977) in various cultural forms and material practices during socialism, thereby rendering both socialism and capitalism as heterogeneous systems rather than singular entities. In capitalism’s currently dominant neoliberal form, the tropes of individualism, meritocracy, success and failure serve to mask the ruthlessness of the free market and the growing material gap between the privileged and underprivileged. Thus, another reason for putting this volume together is a perceived lack of political willingness to avoid the all too easy naturalization of capitalism as inevitability, which has been the dominant discourse around the fall of socialism in Eastern Europe. As Stipe Grgas notes, “if the reality of capitalism was once camouflaged by different ideologies, and if for most of the twentieth century there was restraint in directly naming it, then in the post-Cold War era we are witnessing a glorious enthronement of capitalism as a seemingly natural production of life” (2014: 128).

We aim in what follows to offer a deeper, interdisciplinary and comparative analysis of different spheres of everyday life and cultural production in the context of Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav times in order to offer a case study with wider-reaching implications.¹ Namely, we seek to illuminate how capitalism—as a mode of production and consumption, but also as a particular affective economy that informs a society’s outlook about its own present and future—has been present in socialist Yugoslavia’s cultural field long before the socialist system collapsed and the country disintegrated into war. This is due to Yugoslavia’s peculiar position as a fairly open socialist country that introduced a market economy early on, which made it an anomaly with respect to the rest of the Eastern Bloc. “The Yugoslav model of socialism,” writes Susan Woodward, “was an attempt to combine socialist ideals and policies at home with openness to the world economy—above all to foreign trade, aid, and supplements to the capital needs of their strategy for industrialization and national sovereignty” (2003: 74). Yugoslavia’s self-management, developed after Tito’s break from Stalin and initially implemented in the early 1950s, sought to differentiate Yugoslav socialism from its more rigid counterparts primarily embodied by the Soviet Union. The

implementation of the socialist workers' self-management gave rise to a socialist market economy, and produced a curious economic and political hybrid—the “Third Way” of socialism (Kanzleiter 2011; see also Verdery 1996)—whose cultural and material reverberations extend into the present and are the subject of the volume at hand. And while the Yugoslav workers' self-management was closely studied and frequently praised from the outside, within Yugoslav borders it was an ambivalent experience that failed to decentralize and redistribute power. Quite the contrary, it deepened socioeconomic divides, and contributed to the 1968 political dissent (Kanzleiter 2011). Subsequently, material factors played a crucial, if often overlooked role in the violent disintegration of the country (Woodward 1995).² The criticism leveled by the Yugoslav New Left in the 1960s—whose most notable intellectual branch was the Praxis group of philosophers—was largely focused on the failure of the self-management system to truly make the working class into social agents in charge of their own path. Nowadays, some Marxist analyses of Yugoslav self-management claim that Yugoslavia was without a doubt a capitalist country (Katalenec 2013), or, as Darko Suvin insightfully observes, a country of “capitalism without capitalists” (2015). However, to make claims about capitalist Yugoslavia entirely unambiguous is to also elide the ways in which the supposed Yugoslav version of “capitalism” presented a curious amalgamation of socialist traditions, ideas and structures, and therefore was an inherently hybrid system that could not firmly and categorically be placed only under the capitalist tradition either.

Igor Duda (2010, 2014) argues that the rise of mass consumerism in Yugoslavia began in 1958, after the Communist Party officially requested easier accessibility of commodities for Yugoslav citizens, and only a few years after the official introduction of the socialist workers' self-management. Moreover, in his study of neofolk and turbo-folk music in Yugoslavia and its aftermath, Uroš Čvoro observes that: “self-management introduced a shift to market-based economy, which enabled the growth of the entertainment industry and development of popular culture in Yugoslavia” (2014: 5). We can perceive here a seemingly clear correlation between self-management and the rise of consumer culture, but one that often uncritically assumes the classical Marxist base–superstructure relationship. In this volume, we seek to trouble that one-directional relationship by positing culture as one of the determining factors of social and economic processes, rather than a mere reflection

of the economic means of production. Culture and economy are here understood as by no means autonomous entities, with a relationship that is neither essentially oppositional, nor essentially deterministic (Du Gay 1997: 2).³

Nowadays, the former socialist system is alternatively viewed as emancipatory, oppressive, and everything in between—a contested object of memory subject to political manipulation. In the context of the omnipresent politico-historical revisionism, it is important to remember that socialism is not a singular occurrence. Suvin argues that it is a useful concept “only if understood as *a field of forces* polarised between a congeries of class society alienations and communist disalienation, connoting dynamic and fierce contradictions on all levels” (2016: 17, emphasis ours). The urgency of the project at hand rests in the growing precarity of life under currently dominant neoliberal capitalist conditions, where former state factories are largely shuttered or privatized under questionable circumstances, and where workers’ rights and worker’s culture are ever diminishing, if not rendered entirely non-existent. In the post-Yugoslav cultural context, capitalism becomes *a restructured feeling*: from an optimistic, if ambivalent “love affair” with it during Yugoslav times, it becomes recalibrated into a harsh reality whose promise of material security appears increasingly unattainable (except for a select few). In the process, socialism itself now becomes a renewed object of yearning for some, whether through the well-documented practices of cultural nostalgia (see Todorova and Gille 2010; Luthar and Pušnik 2010), or through the intellectual leftist efforts at rehabilitating the belief that socialism is the only viable alternative to neoliberal capitalist exploitation.

But, as Gibson-Graham insightfully note, “If we want to cultivate new habits of thinking for a postcapitalist politics, it seems there is work to be done to loosen the structures of feeling that cannot live with uncertainty or move beyond hopelessness” (2006a: 4). To that end, some questions that this volume tackles are as follows: How have different capitalist tropes informed socialist and postsocialist life well before the capitalist social, political and economic order officially entered the region’s material reality? How do different cultural forms (re)articulate class relations in a (post)socialist society? What hybrid structures of feelings do the two seemingly oppositional systems evoke when they are put in a hybrid and symbiotic relationship, as they have been in Yugoslavia and its successor states? How have the meanings associated with capitalist culture(s) been (re)produced, (re)distributed and consumed in

socialist societies? What counter-meanings circulate simultaneously—and to what ends? It is our hope that, by utilizing critical cultural theories as much needed interventions towards rethinking capitalism and social class from the perspective of its (dis)location in socialism, Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav cultural tendencies will uncover their transformative power to reshape not only the cultural future in the region, but also its economies and politics. At the same time, by bringing these tendencies into visibility as practices that reside at the complex intersections between socialist and capitalist cultural traditions, it is our hope that “the binary hierarchies of market/nonmarket and capitalism/noncapitalism” (Gibson-Graham 2006b: 15) will be displaced, and that both capitalism and socialism will lose their abstract singularity as a result.

CULTURAL HYBRIDITY AND THE YUGOSLAV STATE OF (NON-) EXCEPTION

In a coda to her insightful documentary *From the East* (1993)—about everyday life in Eastern Europe in the years immediately following the collapse of communism—iconic feminist director Chantal Akerman observes that Eastern Europe had always had a “love/hate relationship with the West (...), especially with America, that object of troubled desire.” Noting the seemingly increasing “perversion” of Eastern Europe with the markers of Western capitalist power such as McDonald’s in Moscow’s Pushkin Square, Akerman eschews the standard lament about the loss of a pure non-capitalist state by adding the following: “But, of course, there is no pure ‘before’ that would now be perverted or contaminated. Perversion was already there in the existence of these two blocs *that were not as contradictory as they seemed at first sight*” (emphasis ours).⁴ This evokes Deleuze and Guattari’s proposition that, “There is no universal capitalism, there is no capitalism in itself; capitalism is at the crossroads of all kinds of formations, it is neocapitalism by nature. It invents its eastern face and western face, and reshapes them both—all for the worst” (1987: 20). Many cultural practices, structured through an interplay between capitalist and socialist values, illuminate irrevocable hybridity of categories of “economic” and “cultural”—and this is where Yugoslavia’s exception in some ways becomes a state of non-exception. Although cultural articulations of capitalism and socialism are nearly always discursively formed by the seeming exclusion, or implicit

negation of the other, that tension often carries traces of desire *for* that particular Other, *as an inevitable, if often invisible point of reference*.

Yugoslav cultural hybridity, located on the tectonic and thoroughly established (if worn-out) symbolic borderlands between the East and the West, has been described by numerous historiographical metaphors. Tvrtko Jakovina (2002) chooses the phrase “socialism on American wheat” as the title of his book about Yugoslav foreign policy between 1948 and 1963, while Branislav Dimitrijević (2005) illustrates the cultural condition of borderlands with a metaphor of Srđan Karanović’s film *Nešto između* (*Something in Between*, 1983).⁵ In this film, one of the protagonists, Marko, describes Yugoslavia to an American woman, Eva, precisely as an amalgamation of the capitalist West and the exoticized East. Marko says that Yugoslavia is “No East, no West. In the middle”—it has “open culture, different influences... Yugoslavia is Turkey, Vienna and Venice... Budapest.” Marko’s borderline self-exoticizing, but decidedly transnational depiction of Yugoslavia’s socialism as something that resides at the intersection of competing influences concludes with an observation about inauthenticity: “Everything here is like somewhere else.” But at the end of the film, this seductive in-betweenness stands for the crisis caused by the undecidability on both the political and intimate planes. The film has a bitter ending: in the chaotic atmosphere of Belgrade under power saving restrictions and war drills, Marko lucidly and prophetically declares that “there is no peace ‘in between.’”

If we contextualize Marko’s final prophetic words with one of the insightful Gibson-Graham claims in their pivotal study *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It)*, we could contend that representations of capitalist tendencies in Yugoslav culture give way to an array of capitalist differences, and, consequently, “its noncapitalist other is released from singularity and subjection, becoming potentially visible as a differentiated multiplicity” (2006b: 16). As our understanding of capitalism is influenced by the ongoing relevance of the cultural Marxism of Stuart Hall and the Birmingham school, we particularly converge on the notion that there are “no guarantees” of the ways in which the economic base influences cultural superstructures. That absence of guarantees is here reflected in the dialectical presence of cultural capitalism within socialist systems, and vice versa. Since they simultaneously represent and *create* Yugoslav cultural hybridity between socialism and capitalism, one could argue that the disintegration of Yugoslavia should not be seen as an abrupt transition from state socialism towards capitalism. Rather,

capitalist practices had been taking place not only during the socialist period, but were—as essays in this volume aim to show—*its very premise*.⁶ Social class, and its socialist and postsocialist cultural life, emerges as a major concept where these hybrid tendencies converge and take shape. Contrary to the simplified understandings of socialism as a classless society, where class hierarchies emerge only in the capitalist aftermath, this volume takes as its point of departure an understanding that socialist Yugoslavia was a classed society in its own right, albeit one whose complexities have to be unpacked with close attention to local specificities.⁷

Another major focus of research presented here is the cultural life of capitalism in the region's postsocialist afterlife, which is often (all too) easily cut off from its continuity with socialism. As Caroline Humphrey (2002) has argued, there is never a sudden and complete emptying of social phenomena followed by their replacement with new ones. This insight is especially true when speaking of the post-Yugoslav “limbo” of the unfinished past (Jelača and Lugarić, forthcoming), which is comprised of a unique set of circumstances: neoliberalism, war, ethnonationalism, and the ongoing political struggle over cultural memory, to name just a few. Post-Yugoslav spaces are postsocialist, transitional regions like many others, but also a post-conflict zone still reeling from the aftermath of violent wars. At the same time, it is a region partially integrated into the capitalist (and slowly crumbling) alliance of the European Union. Under these complicated political and ideological circumstances, cultural memory of socialism—although stubbornly present in artistic and everyday cultural practices in the region (see Kolanović, forthcoming)—is often all too easily reduced to a caricature in the postsocialist public discourse and politics. In post-Yugoslav times, we are witnessing a schizophrenic situation where the memory of socialism not only exists parallel to the “cultural logic of late capitalism” (Jameson 1991), but also significantly shapes the future in the region in profoundly complex ways. As essays in this volume show, the spectre of socialism haunts the future of the region, reflecting and producing disillusionment with the neoliberal present, and an active rethinking of the shared past.

NOTES TOWARDS CULTURAL CAPITALISM

In developing the theoretical framing for this volume, we found it particularly engaging to think along the lines of scholars such as J.K. Gibson-Graham, and their “determination to represent capitalism as a set

of economic practices scattered over a landscape, rather than a systemic concentration of power” (2006a: 2). In the (post)Yugoslav context, that landscape is overdetermined by the aforementioned hybrid and uneasy amalgamation of two seemingly opposing economic systems. Having the potential for emptying the categories of both socialism and capitalism, and for filling them up differently (Gibson-Graham 2006b: 22), that overdetermination can also become a fruitful methodological tool and a practice of rereading in order to discover that which might be hidden at first sight:

Thinking overdetermination can be seen not only as a technique of ontological reframing, but also as a technique of rereading—uncovering what is possible but obscured from view. Rather than attending to the regularities of discourse, overt or covert as these may be, an overdeterminist reading fractures and disperses the object of attention, dislocating it from essentialist structures of determination. Reading for contingency rather than necessity situates essentialized and universalized forms of being like “the market” or the “the self-interested subject” in specific geographical and historical locations, releasing them from an ontology of structure or essence. (Gibson-Graham 2006a: xxxi)

In that vein, we introduce the concept of *cultural capitalism* as a framework within which locally specific class relations are always already overdetermined by the hybrid (post)Yugoslav cultures oscillating between, and melding together capitalism and socialism in particular ways. In the concept of cultural capitalism, culture is seen as the determining location of heterogeneous, malleable capitalism in locally specific, yet transnationally reverberating ways. As a concept, cultural capitalism is not applicable to the former Yugoslav region only, but in this particular case, it reveals cultural contradictions to be deeply reflective and determining of the specific economic complexities that underlie its existence. It is important to note that cultural capitalism is never fixated, homogeneous or static—rather, it is a dialectic that is constituted by many moving parts, a process rather than a state.

Cultural capitalism is approached here through an interdisciplinary methodological framework of critical cultural studies, which makes possible an exploration of multiple processes involved in the construction of meaning of capitalism in socialist and postsocialist times as a structure of feelings that ranges from paranoia to nostalgia, and from cruel optimism

(Berlant 2006) to pleasurable fetishism. Moreover, since our aim is to challenge the uniform concept of “the Yugoslav successor states” by releasing it from the neocolonial view that homogenizes the differences within, we gathered scholars whose work is located both “inside” and “outside” of this particular postsocialist locality in hope of inciting a dialogue from interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives that illuminate new forms of situated knowledge attuned to the politics of concrete geopolitical location rather than generalization.

The first part of this volume, “Capital(ism) and Class Cultures,” focuses on rethinking social class and the role of capital(ism) in Yugoslavia and its aftermath. In his insightful challenge to the omnipresent convergence between capital and capitalism, Stipe Grgas turns to the prominent Yugoslav philosopher Vanja Sutlić and notes that “[t]he necessity to differentiate between capital and capitalism is the most pressing methodological issue in the now intensive discussions of a world in which capital has unconcealed its universalizing thrust. In Sutlić, that difference is implied in the contention that capital persists in socialism and that it has a tendency to permanently expand and grow.” Tatjana Jukić’s chapter on “Fictions of Crime in a State of Exception” stays analytically sensitive to Yugoslav exceptionalism, especially when it comes to the workers’ self-management. She probes the often-overlooked symbiosis between capitalism and socialism by arguing that “socialism contributes a kind of autoimmune response to capitalism, in critical terms.” Moreover, Jukić highlights the role of Yugoslavia in the Non-Aligned Movement as an analytical shift that orients politics towards the world rather than towards a single state (of exception). Tanja Petrović and Ana Hofman’s chapter argues that the notion of class is, in part, an outcome of cultural representations and social imaginations, and of the moral and affective economies alike. In this context, they analyze the hypercorporeality of two iconic Yugoslav subjects—the miner and the female *kafana* singer. Their analysis speaks not only to the inseparability of gender and class relations, but also to the social fantasies which inform representational practices of the working class in socialist Yugoslavia. Moreover, reflecting on the particularities of post-Yugoslav geographical and historical locations, Luthar and Pušnik, in their chapter on the role of cultural capital and social class in postsocialist neoliberal times, claim that: “culture is here not understood as a product of already existing class relations, but as a field where class relations operate and cultural battles are recursively

involved in class formation.” Importantly, this formation is further influenced by the complicating factors of gender, ethnicity and age. In his chapter, Sven Cvek writes about the Yugoslav factory newspapers and finds that “the factory press was part of a class culture, and *it was a cultural form shaping a class*. This does not mean it was in any simple way an outgrowth or a reflection of some predetermined ‘class consciousness,’ but rather the cultural articulation of social relations in which it emerged” (emphasis ours). Cvek traces the roots of Yugoslav factory print to both the pre-socialist, Fordist factory newspapers, but also to the activist underground press that aimed to unionize workers and inform them of their rights. Primož Krašovec’s theoretical insight in “Post-Yugoslav Notes on Marx’s Class Theory and Middle Class Classism” complicates standard understandings of class and interrogates the state of the middle class in neoliberal capitalism from the post-Yugoslav, Marxist perspective. He does so by showing how the materiality of class in late capitalism is obscured by an ideological misrecognition of class relations as cultural difference, which in turn derives its effectiveness precisely by concealing the structuring class relations as such.

The mutually constitutive relationship between culture, economy, and politics is at the core of the second part of the volume, “Trajectories of Capitalism: Culture and Everyday Life,” where controversies around Yugoslav self-management are brought into visibility in various cultural patterns. Gal Kirn analyzes Živojin Pavlović’s *When I Am Dead and Pale* (1967) as the first film to make an explicit display of the internal contradictions of socialist industrialization after the market reform in 1965. Kirn claims that Pavlović’s film was not only “working through and understanding major socialist contradictions,” but was also recognizing signs of postsocialism in socialist times by exposing the liminal spaces which the system often concealed. Ivan Velisavljević’s analysis of the iconic play and film *The Balkan Spy* (1982, 1984) focuses on its protagonist’s prophetic paranoia about the devastating consequences that the introduction of capitalism through the small backdoor would have for the Yugoslav state. Velisavljević’s chapter invites us to think about emotions as cultural practices, and as a particular form of capital—since they can be (and often are) used for political purposes.

The complex and multilayered relationship between consumer practices and the ways they articulate class relations and participate in the processes of class and social stratifications are analyzed in Brigitte Le Normand’s chapter on urban planning and single family housing in

socialist Yugoslavia, and also in the contribution that follows, Francesca Rolandi's chapter about the rise of Yugoslav consumer society through the lenses of transnational contacts with Italy. Le Normand observes that, "[w]hile it is true that socialist consumer culture was not merely a 'failed' version of its capitalist counterpart, but rather, the outcome of a distinctive economic and technological system, expressing values that were compatible with the socialist ideological framework, it is equally true that this very framework was constantly being negotiated. Nowhere was this truer than in Yugoslavia, the land of perpetual socialist re-invention." Rolandi examines how an illegal, self-organizing practice of travelling across the border in order to purchase commodities became a part of the ever developing politics of class differentiation and class transformation in 1960s Yugoslavia. This popular form of grey economy (in)formed social and labor relations in Yugoslavia, and echoed in various cultural practices of the time. Reana Senjković's chapter on "Tina," the only Yugoslav girls' magazine, approaches the magazine through utilizing Angela McRobbie's (1978) insight into the British "Jackie," pointing out the different layers of cultural exchange, as well as modification of capitalist cultural patterns in the Yugoslav context.

Within the framework of the tumultuous and shifting life of cultural capitalism in the region, various mainstream tendencies and infrapolitics amount to a richly diverse set of practices that perpetually reflect heterogeneity and cultural plurality of both socialism and capitalism. And oftentimes, the infrapolitics (or politics from below) gradually amount to wider-ranging social and cultural movements, which are the organizing subject of the third part, "Cultural Struggles and Social Movements." Cultural activities "from below," that work against repressive state practices (for instance, through street art and graffiti or in the proliferation of *plenums* in the wake of the Zagreb student protests in 2009, or after the widespread Bosnian workers' protests in 2014) are analyzed in this section alongside chapters that address politics "from above" (such as the legislative documents regulating and financing culture in socialist and postsocialist times, or the neoliberal reform of higher education). Each cultural and intellectual tendency analyzed in this section leads to a renewed understanding of the importance, as well as the political potential, of local self-organizing and self-management. To that end, Damir Arsenijević, Jasmina Husanović and Vanessa Vasić Janeković take on the fascinating case of the Bosnian factory Dita, where the workers' "protest for production" have taken over the management over the factory,

appointed it as their “home” and (re)enacted a curious amalgamation of capitalist/socialist practices that represent an active resistance to the local ethno-capitalist elites. Piro Rexhepi’s chapter on the incorporation and instrumentalization of LGBT rights as a US foreign policy in postsocialist Southeastern Europe, and particularly in the former Yugoslavia, illustrates the role of identity politics as a form of cultural capitalism that purports to reflect tolerance but, in actuality, merely reinstates the US and the West as the “beacons” of civilizational progress. In her analysis of the development of Yugoslav women’s movements, Adriana Zaharijević probes the question of whether feminism arose from socialist politics and cultural practices, or whether it remained perceived as something foreign, or, more accurately, “Western”. Zaharijević poses intriguing questions that lead to an insightful conclusion that “political volatility of the concepts we use often curbs political imagery and negates portions of history—turning them into spurious ‘common knowledge.’”

In their contribution, Maciej Falski and Tomasz Rawski discuss the role of cultural politics during and after Yugoslav socialism, focusing on the Croatian example as a laboratory of post-Yugoslav specificity, due to the country’s political, economic and cultural dynamics in the transition from socialist Yugoslavia to the capitalist European Union. By analyzing the cultural politics “from above,” the authors show how culture after socialism remained a privileged field, an object of particular concern for the state, and how it was excluded from market competition and taken under state protection particularly in areas where it could serve the reconstruction of Croatian ethnonational identity in the 1990s. Similarly addressing the politics “from above,” Anera Ryznar’s analysis offers a critique of postsocialist cultural politics through the lens of neoliberal discourse in higher education. Her analysis aims to illuminate how economic crises shape the body of knowledge in capitalism. Moreover, the neoliberal discourse in postsocialist Croatia is pitted against the discourses that framed the 1958 and 1974 education reforms in socialist Yugoslavia. This comparison highlights the similarities between the two educational policies (both were economy-driven), but also profound differences. In his chapter on graffiti and street art after Yugoslavia, Mitja Velikonja lucidly observes—on the basis of Fredric Jameson’s critique—that, in post-Yugoslav times, ethno-nationalism acts as the political logic of neoliberal capitalism. He shows how Yugoslavia’s political and social trajectories inform the post-Yugoslav street art and graffiti in rich, and utterly provocative, ways. These modes of expression for the

underrepresented social classes in postsocialist Yugoslavia illuminate both a temporal and a spatial dislocation within the precariously transitional, neoliberal times. Finally, in his Afterword, Boris Buden reminds us of the critical importance of historicizing the particularities of past, present and future. Buden also reiterates the centrality of the historical moment in which this volume is assembled—namely, the global rule of neoliberal capitalism that is ideologically, and troublingly, positioned as the only “viable” option in postsocialism and beyond. Our volume perpetually challenges that assumption of inevitability.

Through a diverse set of methodologies and scholarly approaches, all chapters in this volume engage in what Gibson-Graham have elsewhere described as “actively retheorizing capitalism and reclaiming the economy here and now in myriad projects of alternative economic activism” (2006a: xxi), here carried out with rooted attention to the specificities of the socioeconomic and geopolitical context of the former Yugoslavia. To that end, we want to emphasize that the analytical focus of this volume is both transnational and local—transnational because it refuses to completely disengage the case of the (post)Yugoslav region from the broader contemporary flows of cultural and intellectual meanings and practices, and local because it situates the project within the hybrid specificities of local histories, their unique cultural and intellectual traditions, and lived experiences.

And where the personal and the scholarly meet, it is of no lesser intellectual importance to mention that the socialist Yugoslavia was a lived experience to the editors of this volume. Around the time we were born in socialist Yugoslavia dates the publishing of a poster that visually inspired the cover of the volume at hand. The poster was originally the cover of a Youth work action periodical from 1981, designed by Branko Gavrić.⁸ The original image shows a socialist working hero cast as a Superman—where “S” could also stand for socialism (perhaps even self-management)—wearing a corporate suit and proudly standing in front of a cosmopolitan cityscape (Fig. 1.1).

In the original image, the shovel is a seemingly incongruous but important detail—the ground is tiled but the shovel manages to curiously remain grounded, as if being a reminder of the socialist hero’s improbable working-class roots amid this shiny modernist cityscape. The graphic suggests that a socialist modernist utopia—curiously similar to a capitalist one, and coopting a capitalist superhero at that—is achieved, if satirically so. The state of euphoric utopia is perhaps why our



Fig. 1.1 Vlada Divljan as a socialist superhero (courtesy of artist Branko Gavrić)

socialist hero is framed by the psychedelic rays of light, in which pop art and soc art comprise a harmonized totality. It is also important to note that this socialist superhero is embodied by the New Wave icon Vlada Divljan, of the Yugoslav band Idoli. One of the band's most famous songs, "Maljčiki" (Russ. *boys*), is about workers who enthusiastically labor in the factory, celebrating the values of hard work and solidarity in the spirit of socialist realism, but in the hybrid musical style of the punk rock/New Wave generation of the 1980s. As noted by Dalibor Mišina, "Maljčiki" is primarily a stylistic experiment through a symbiosis of a particular Slavic non-rock music idiom (i.e. *kosachok*) and a particular socialist-realist aesthetic in the context of a rock song" (2013: 145). The stylistic experimentation of the hybrid song, along with Gavrić's graphic "pop art experiment" (Krištofić 2016), provide a fitting metaphor for the "Yugoslav experiment" (Rusinow 1977) in which socialism and capitalism came together through a curious hybridity in the field of culture.

Echoing further transnational reverberations, Polish punk rock artist Kazik recently covered "Maljčiki" in the context of the capitalist present: the postsocialist, or rather capitalist *maljčiki* in Kazik's interpretation are now working hard for the exploitative firm, solidarity is replaced by competition, while the accompanying video mixes socialist realist scenes of the workers with those of capitalist aesthetics such as the stock exchange and gym workouts. Kazik's criticism of the capitalist condition, inspired by the Yugoslav New Wave, distills Yugoslav hybridity from its historical context and replaces it with bitter disillusionment—a growing postsocialist emotion about capitalism in our times.

This volume is an attempt to interpret such transformations and cultural reverberations in order to understand, to paraphrase Katherine Verdery, *what Yugoslavia was and what comes next*. We conclude by evoking Fredric Jameson's lucid thought that "it seems to be easier for us today to imagine the thoroughgoing deterioration of the earth and of nature than the breakdown of late capitalism; perhaps that is due to some weakness in our imagination" (1994: xii). More recently, Jameson (2016) has asserted that Yugoslavia has much to say about both capitalism and socialism alike. It is our hope that this book will open up discursive spaces in which economic, political, and cultural legacies of Yugoslav socialism will be seen as a mutually intertwined registers within which many contradictions converged in ways that blur fixed dichotomies and systemic boundaries. Our aim has been to critically re-read uneasy and complex contingencies of cultural life under dynamic and

often experimental economic and political circumstances: after all, we are direct descendants of Yugoslavia's aberrations, passions and errors (to evoke Nietzsche). And since socialist/capitalist displacements could be applied to other economic, political, and cultural formations,⁹ this volume will hopefully be approached as an important chapter of transnational cultural history. To that end, by rethinking the past and (re) theorizing the present, this book aims to provoke our readers' imagination, and—most importantly—offer possible alternative imaginaries for a global post-capitalist future. In New Orleans, May 2017.

NOTES

1. In recent years, there has been an increase of scholarly interest in rethinking socialist experience from a consumerist culture point of view. See, for instance, Reid and Crowley 2000; Bartlet 2010; Crowley and Reid 2010; Duda 2010, 2014; Janjetović 2011; Patterson 2011; Bren and Neuburger 2012; Erdei 2012; Vučetić 2012. For broader-ranging philosophical perspectives on Yugoslavia, (post)socialism, capitalism and leftist movements, see Horvat, Štik's edited volume *Welcome to the Desert of Post-Socialism: Radical Politics after Yugoslavia* (2015).
2. P.H. Liotta notes that: "The failure of the Yugoslav state to provide such necessary order during a time of variously attempted economic and democratic reforms was a factor that allowed ultra-'nationalist' forces to take hold, forces that opposed the continuation of a 'Yugoslav' state" (2001: 2). On comparative aspects of the self-management legacy see Grdešić 2015.
3. In that vein, Branislav Jakovljević's recent *Alienation Effects: Performance and Self-Management in Yugoslavia 1945–91* (2016) refreshingly looks at artistic, political and economic performance in Yugoslavia as inseparable and mutually constitutive rather than hierarchically positioned.
4. From the film's DVD notes (Icarus Films).
5. Metaphors of this sort are continuously being coined—see *Coca Cola Socialism* by Radina Vučetić (2012), on the Americanization of Yugoslav culture in the sixties.
6. In this vein, see an insightful analysis of Dušan Makavejev's *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism* by Buden (2008).
7. For a recent discussion of class divisions as a deeply ingrained phenomenon in Yugoslav socialist culture, see also Archer, Duda, Stubbs (2016).
8. Design was, according to Dejan Kršić (2012), an important agent in developing the Yugoslav modernist agenda in the field of everyday culture,

where self-management and design were not just chronologically congruent but also deeply interconnected.

9. See, for instance, McCormack and Barclay (2013).

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