

## Realism, Wittgenstein, and the Formative Years of the Croatian Analytic Tradition

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### Abstract

This paper discusses the character and development of philosophy in Croatia over the past hundred and fifty years. The emphasis is on the beginning and early development of the Croatian analytic philosophy tradition as well as on its domestic predecessors (from the late 19th century onwards). In the proposed reconstruction of the development of that tradition (its proponents, themes of interest, and institutional support), the emphasis is on women philosophers' role in its early phase. In particular, the emphasis is on their role during the 1960s and 1970s and the philosophical background that helped shape their interests. The conclusion is that the general realist position, a particular philosophy of science, and an interest in Wittgenstein and Wittgenstein-related themes played an important role in the formative period of the Croatian analytic philosophy tradition. Given its motivation and direction, this tradition opposed the then-dominant philosophical orientation in Croatia, namely, Marxism combined with German continental thought.

### 1. Introduction

Exploring the work of women involved in the paths of early analytic philosophy primarily leads one to philosophers of the second half of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th – the formative years of the analytic tradition. It leads one to women philosophers such as Victoria Welby (1837–1912), E. E. Constance Jones (1848–1922), and Susan Stebbing (1885–1943). Women philosophers who began working at the end of that period but continued their engagement afterwards also come to mind: Susanne Langer (1895–1985), Alice Ambrose (1906–2001), G. Elizabeth M. Anscombe (1919–2001), or Ruth Barcan Marcus (1921–2012). All these are just a few recently noted in the literature (e.g. van der Schaar and Schliesser 2017; Verhaegh and Peijnenburg 2022). Besides the mentioned British and American analytically minded women philosophers, there are those from that period coming from the continental part of Europe that should also be added to the tradition. Most notably, those involved in the analytically oriented groups at the continent (the Vienna Circle and the Lvov-Warsaw School), with representatives such as Olga Hahn-Neurath (1882–1937), Rozalia Rand (1903–1980), Maria Kokoszyńska-Lutmanowa (1905–1981), and Maria Ossowska (1896–1974) (cf. Brożek 2017; 2022; Verhaegh and Peijnenburg 2022). Unsurprisingly, women philosophers of the time adopted the analytic mindset primarily in places where analytic

philosophy had strong representation, such as Cambridge, Oxford, Vienna, Warsaw, and some American universities.

The outlined framework allows one to rethink, supplement, and reconstruct the history of analytic philosophy, particularly its early (or earlier) period, roughly until the middle of the 20th century, acknowledging the place and contributions of the above-mentioned (as well as other) women philosophers in it. Subsequent developments in these places and among associated groups and their representatives are less plausibly categorised as *early* analytic philosophy. In that later period, with the already established framework and support, more and more women became engaged in the field and adopted the analytic mindset. But, in a sense, such a reconstruction, with its unrestricted understanding of the phrase “early analytic philosophy”, might leave out some elements important for telling a more complete story. And that is particularly true if one focuses on the continental part of Europe.

The “early” of the “early analytic philosophy” phrase is a context-sensitive term whose content changes with parameter changes, including geographic location. Therefore, what is early relative to one geographic location may not be early relative to another, and if placed at a single timeline, the distance between the two agents or events might be significant. The phrase “analytic philosophy” itself may thus also signal different things in different contexts. The phrase might mean analytic philosophy *simpliciter* (no matter how one may characterise it conceptually or frame it geographically and chronologically), or its meaning might be more restricted. And one restrictive parameter is a particular location that one has in mind when considering representatives of early analytic philosophy. In many places across the globe, where analytic philosophy is nowadays well-present (if not the dominant orientation), it was the latecomer at the local philosophical scene, surely a later arrival compared to the places mentioned above. Or latecomer compared to other philosophical orientations represented there, such as phenomenology, existentialism, Hegelianism, or Marxism, many of which one typically and loosely subsumes under the heading “continental”.

Building on the above-outlined conception, in this paper, I present a particular tradition of analytic philosophy that began to develop later than in many other places, such as those mentioned above. Nonetheless, it also had its early

period, and women philosophers played a significant role in it. In the following section, I will briefly reflect on some predecessors of analytic philosophy in Croatia. Then, I will explore the role of women philosophers in shaping analytic philosophy in Croatia during its formative years (1960s–1980s) when Croatia was part of socialist Yugoslavia and other philosophical trends dominated its scene.

## 2. A hundred years of philosophy, Zagreb 1874–1974

It would be incorrect to say that Croatia had no traces of analytic philosophy until the second half of the 20th century. It would be equally incorrect to say that there was no interest in the style and themes particularly close to the analytic orientation in Croatia even before a more general awareness of the orientation characterised and perceived as *analytic* philosophy. However, what was missing in that period was that until the end of the 1960s and the early 1970s, there were no *systematic* engagements with analytic philosophy and no *systematic* attempts to do philosophy in an analytic fashion. Before that time, no one identified themselves as an *analytic* philosopher.

The Zagreb University was re-established in 1874, and in the next ninety years or so, one can recognise several philosophical attempts that were close in style and content to the analytic tradition. For example, Franjo Marković (1845–1914), the first philosophy professor at the re-established Zagreb University, adopted a Herbartian line of doing philosophy. He was strongly anti-idealistically oriented, promoting a realist and antipsychologistic empiricist view, often based on conceptual and linguistic analyses, a clear argumentative style, and a problem- rather than history-based approach, with a high appreciation of logic, mathematics, and natural sciences. Marković was also influenced by a Bolzanian line of thought, as well as by several Neo-Kantians. Thus, unsurprisingly, he developed a style of philosophy easily related to Frege, who worked in the same period and was often stimulated by the same 19th-century philosophers, such as J. S. Mill, H. Lotze, and F. A. Trendelenburg (for details concerning Frege, see Gabriel 2013; concerning Marković, Kovač 1996 and Marotti 2020: 13–27; and for Herbart's relation to analytic philosophy, Beiser 2022).

Although Marković made a significant contribution to the development of modern Croatian philosophy in several respects (cf. Kovač 1996), his way of

conceiving and doing philosophy was considered outdated and thus never adopted by his successors in the period before World War II, such as Gjuro Arnold (1853–1941), Albert Bazala (1877–1947), and Pavao Vuk-Pavlović (1894–1976). They all formed their philosophical conceptions by relying on (primarily) German-speaking philosophers of different orientations, more distant from the analytic tradition (Lazović and Pavković 1998: 51; Mišćević 1995: 172). Thus, until the end of World War II, various philosophical traditions dominated Croatia, aligning more with phenomenology, idealism, anti-scientism, or anti-intellectualism than with analytic philosophy. Realistically minded Neo-Scholastic philosophers of the period, such as Stjepan Zimmermann (1884–1963), were closest in style and orientation to the analytic tradition but without any engagements with it, focused mainly on Kant's theoretic philosophy and the Scholastic tradition. An exception was a group of philosophically minded natural scientists, particularly Zvonimir Richtmann (1901–1941) and Rikard Podhorsky (1902–1994), who, in the 1930s, adopted and promoted doctrines of logical positivism and confronted the orthodox Marxist line of thought (for details, see Kovačević 1989; cf. also Lazović and Pavković 1998: 53; Pavković 1988: 6–7).

After the War, being ideologically and politically close to the Eastern Communist Block, the Marxist line of thought prevailed in Croatia (and the rest of Yugoslavia), just as in other countries of the Block. During the 1950s, after Yugoslavia's 1948 parting with the USSR, the prevailing orthodox form of Marxism loosened gradually, allowing for (primarily) the German continental philosophical influence to interfere, first of all its Hegelian and Heideggerian orientation. The prospects for the analytic orientation in the period were clearly dim (for elaboration, see Lazović and Pavković 1998: 53; Mišćević 1995: 172; Pavković 1988). That is, for example, reflected in the institutional undermining of the plans of the leading Croatian Marxist philosopher of the subsequent period, Gajo Petrović (1927–1993), to engage with analytic philosophy and continue in the late 1950s his PhD study with Alfred J. Ayer in London (Dožudić 2024a: 819). Despite that, Petrović did continue his engagements with the analytic tradition and in 1960, he made one of the first-ever translations of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. He was (allegedly) also the first in the former Yugoslavia to use the term “analytic philosophy” (Pavković 1988: 10; cf. Petrović 1964).

In close connection to Petrović, at least as far as their academic positions are concerned, in the 1970s, two teaching assistants at the Zagreb philosophy department, Goran Švob (1947–2013) and Neven Sesardić (b. 1949), started to promote analytic philosophy. The former of them was primarily oriented on Frege's work and themes in the philosophy of logic in general, and the latter on the philosophy of science, of mind, and epistemology (cf. Dožudić 2024a: 802; Lazović and Pavković 1998: 53; Mišćević 1995: 172; Pavković 1988: 20–21; Sesardić 1978). But as far as the Zagreb department was concerned, despite the well-recorded later influence of the two, analytic philosophy remained at the academic margins, apparently more so than at other Yugoslav departments in Belgrade, Ljubljana, and – Zadar.

### 3. A women-managed philosophy department and its analytic turn

By the time logical positivism became hard to overlook in the European philosophy scene, Croatian philosophers employed at the Zagreb University had already adopted different orientations. For almost ninety years (from 1874 onwards), the Zagreb philosophy department was the only one in Croatia. Several women philosophers graduated with a PhD in that period, all of them before World War II. After the War, the first woman completed her PhD program in philosophy in 1965, and the first woman became a member of the philosophy department (as an assistant) in 1976 (the first with a higher academic rank, an associate professor, was employed in 1984). For over a century, the Zagreb philosophy department (for years, the only philosophy department in Croatia) was exclusively male-employed. However, in the early 1960s, another philosophy department was established in Croatia at the Zadar Faculty of Philosophy.

The first head of the Zadar philosophy department was Marija Brida (1912–1993). She graduated with a PhD in 1935 and worked within a realist phenomenological tradition, different from Husserl's. The position was primarily developed by her mentor, Pavao Vuk-Pavlović, who adopted the orientation in the 1920s, influenced significantly by Meinong's theory of objects (e.g., Vuk-Pavlović 1928; 1930; for details, see Lazović and Pavković 1998: 51; Mađarević 2005: 96–98; Mišćević 1995; 1999). Brida had no direct interest in analytic philosophy; her writings were anything but analytic. Nevertheless, as a long-term head of the department (until her retirement), she did play a role in establishing the analytic tradition in Zadar in the 1970s and



1980s. Before turning to philosophy, Brida studied mathematics and physics, eventually adopting a science-oriented anti-Heideggerian perspective with which the analytic orientation matched well (Dožudić 2024a: 809–812; 2024b: 912–913). Brida was the only professor permanently employed at the Zadar philosophy department for seven years. In 1967, another woman philosopher, Heda Festini (1928–2018), permanently joined the department as an associate professor, and for the next eight years, Brida and Festini were the department's core. Brida retired in 1982, and for the following ten years, Festini served as the head of the department.

By 1971, Festini adopted the analytic orientation, prompting a departmental reorganisation according to it. In 1971, the department's initial, more traditional arrangement was replaced by its sub-departmental arrangement. Now, there was one sub-department for the history of philosophy and the other for logic and methodology of science. The latter subdepartment consisted of analytically oriented courses, such as logic, philosophy of science, epistemology, and philosophy of language. In 1975, Nenad Mišćević (1950–2024) joined the department as a teaching assistant and was permanently employed as an associate professor in the early 1980s. In the meantime, he abandoned his early anti-realistically oriented continental philosophical approach and preoccupation with contemporary French philosophy, embracing an analytic, realistically oriented approach (Dožudić 2024a: 788–792; 2024b: 896–900). Soon after, in 1979, another woman philosopher joined the department, Vanda Božičević (b. 1952), whose first book was on Susanne Langer's aesthetics (Božičević 1983). Thus, for some fifteen or twenty years, the Zadar philosophy department was exclusively a centre managed by women philosophers and, by the 1980s, primarily analytically oriented.

According to Festini, her first interest in analytic philosophy concerned the philosophy of science. Next, in 1971, she was enrolled as a researcher at the Institute of Philosophy in Zagreb, and for several years, she worked on the logical writings of the Croatian philosopher Albino Nagy (1866–1901). She placed Nagy's work in a broader context, associating it with the authors working on the foundations of mathematics (e.g., Peano, Frege, Dedekind, Hilbert, Brouwer, and Gödel) and a number of analytic authors (e.g., Russell, Popper, Reichenbach, Quine, Strawson, and Sellars). In that period, her interests changed, and for the next fifteen years, Wittgenstein and the themes

related to his philosophy preoccupied her research (e.g., Festini 1978; 1982; 1985; 1988; 1992; for discussion, see Dožudić 2024a: 793–796, 800–806).

Philosophers generally adopted the analytic mindset in institutions where analytic philosophy already had established proponents, but this was not the case for Festini. During her student and graduate years (the mid-1940s to mid-1960s), her academic environment in Zagreb was all but analytic. So, why had she adopted the analytic orientation and started promoting it? Festini wrote her PhD thesis on Nicola Abbagnano's positive existentialism. Abbagnano was an atypical existentialist who, with time, distanced himself from German and French existentialists, transforming his position into a "scientific methodology", declaring "his affinities with the neo-positivistic and neo-naturalistic movements in the Anglo-American world" (Romanell 1967: 2). Thus, during the 1960s, Festini dived deeper into the analytic tradition and started to incorporate it in her subsequent work.

Interestingly, in addition to Abbagnano's writings directing Festini's interest towards analytic philosophy, they also defined, as it seems, her interests within it. Initially, she developed an interest in the philosophy of science, promoting it when the Heideggerian anti-science perspective still dominated the region. Then she took seriously Abbagnano's view that later Wittgenstein's idea of a use-dependent meaning is plausible, but that Wittgenstein failed to provide an adequate analysis of the concept of use (Romanell 1967: 2). As a consequence, most of Festini's Wittgenstein-related writings in the period 1977–1992 are concerned with the problem of use, particularly in connection to linguistic meaning and (anti)realist positions. After her 1992 book on Wittgenstein, Festini's writings moved away from the Wittgenstein themes (Dožudić 2024a: 812–816). Nevertheless, Wittgenstein continued to be of interest to prominent members of the Zadar department from the 1980s in the following period (cf. Božičević 1995; Mišćević 1996), relocated in the meantime from Zadar elsewhere. Festini continued to write on analytic themes, now preoccupied with the Croatian philosophical heritage, especially the Renaissance and 19th-century Dalmatian philosophers.

#### 4. Concluding remarks

In the 1961–1991 period, the Zadar philosophy department was an interesting phenomenon. In the 1980s, it was almost exclusively an analytically oriented

philosophy department; before that, it was predominantly analytic. – A unique phenomenon in Croatia during that period, probably unmatched by other similar departments in the former Yugoslavia and surely by many philosophy departments across Continental Europe. In addition, for over a decade, the department was run solely by two women philosophers who jointly, even if at times unintentionally, contributed to the department's subsequent analytic turn. And even after Mišćević became its leading analytic representative, Festini continued to occupy her vital role as the head of the department until her retirement in 1991, and after that, she remained supportive of the Croatian now-rearranged analytic scene (Dožudić 2024a; 2024b; Festini 1991; 1998; Jutrović 1994).

In his overview of the Yugoslav analytic tradition, Aleksandar Pavković posed an interesting question: “Why in the early seventies did the Marxists both in the academia and outside it, condone the appointment of analytic philosophers to a series of academic and research posts in Beograd, Zagreb, Zadar and Ljubljana?” (1988: 5). He does not provide an answer but suggest it would go beyond “the scope of history of philosophy proper”. As far as Croatia of the period is concerned, part of the reason is that some then-prominent and influential philosophers at the university, such as Festini's mentor Vladimir Filipović (1906–1984), (the already mentioned) Gajo Petrović and a member of Festini's doctorate committee Danilo Pejović (1928–2007), developed an interest (or at least a tolerance) for the analytic and other non-Marxist orientations (cf. Pejović 1967; Petrović 1964). Pavković also observes that, without the appointments, “only a few philosophers in Yugoslavia would [in the late 1980s] consider themselves analytic philosophers”. Looking from today's perspective, it is probably more likely that, without the appointments, more and more philosophers in the region would eventually consider themselves to be analytic, only that would be noticeable after 1991, in the period defined by deep social, cultural, and political changes in ex-Yugoslav republics.

In his overview, Zadar is mentioned once, and Pavković apparently associates it only with Mišćević (and Zagreb primarily with Sesardić). That is partly expected since, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the two became the leading representatives of the analytic tradition in Croatia (cf. Lazović and Pavković 1998: 53; Mišćević 1995: 172; Pavković 1988: 20–22; Dožudić 2024a: 788–792).



However, neglecting the rest of the Zadar philosophy department, including the period before Miščević's arrival and his subsequent analytic turn, would be wrong. Although less influential than Miščević and not as widely recognised as him, Festini played a vital role in the Zadar analytic story. Indeed, reconstructing the introduction, promotion, and development of analytic philosophy in Croatia in general without taking Festini into account would be flawed. Miščević's remark that Festini "stands at the beginning of the only institutionalized home analytic tradition; if the tradition goes on successfully, her name will be written on it in golden letters" (2019: 585) supports that. And now, one might add to the earlier question the following one: How come that over a decade, a Croatian philosophy department was dominantly, at times even exclusively, a women-manged department (unlike other similar departments in Croatia and across the rest of former Yugoslavia)? That question is also worth untangling, and the answer to it would also likely go beyond the scope of the history of philosophy proper.

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