

“Her-story”: contemporary female film directors in post-Yugoslav cinema^[1]

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The subject of this paper is a new generation of female directors in former Yugoslav (Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina) cinematography. It considers the stylistic, narrative and representational strategies in the films *Clip* (*Klip*, 2012) by Maja Miloš, *Sonja and the Bull* (*Sonja i bik*, 2012) by Vlatka Vorkapić, *Our Everyday Life* (*Naša svakodnevna priča*, 2015) by Ines Tanović, *Zagreb Cappuccino* (2014) by Vanja Sviličić, *Trampoline* (*Trampolin*, 2016) by Zrinka Katarina Matijević, *You Carry Me* (*Ti mene nosiš*, 2015) by Ivona Juka, and *Quit Staring at My Plate* (*Ne gledaj mi u pijat*, 2016) by Hana Jušić. The movies are related through conceptual, thematic and/or stylistic features. They examine the position of female protagonists in a patriarchal society and their daily experiences, wherein they dissect gender, economic and social problems that exist in countries in the territory of former Yugoslavia.

KEYWORDS: post-Yugoslav cinema, female directors, her story, posttransition, female subjectivity

The subject of this paper is the emergence of a new generation of young female directors in former Yugoslav (Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina) cinematography. It will consider the stylistic, narrative and representational strategies in the films *Clip* (*Klip*, 2012) by Maja Miloš, *Sonja and the Bull* (*Sonja i bik*, 2012) by Vlatka Vorkapić, *Our Everyday Life* (*Naša svakodnevna priča*, 2015) by Ines Tanović, *Zagreb Cappuccino* (2014) by Vanja Sviličić, *Trampoline* (*Trampolin*, 2016) by Zrinka Katarina Matijević, *You Carry Me* (*Ti mene nosiš*, 2015) by Ivona Juka and *Quit Staring at My Plate* (*Ne gledaj mi u pijat*, 2016) by Hana Jušić. It should be noted that the directors belong to different generations, and have often had a varied documentary or short film opus, but are linked through having realized their feature film debuts in the 2010s. The movies are related through certain conceptual, thematic and/or stylistic features. They examine the position of female protagonists in a patriarchal society through the prism of their daily experiences, wherein they dissect some of the core problems that exist in countries in the territory of former Yugoslavia. The term “post-Yugoslav” is used for the purpose of establishing a timeframe, but also to underline the common cultural and thematic touch points in the context of post-tran-

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sition, patriarchal culture, and the fact that several of the films were co-productions of countries formerly part of Yugoslavia. Some of these directors also collaborated on international projects such as the omnibus *Some Other Stories* (*Neke druge priče*, 2010).[2]

Under-representation of female filmmakers in feature film production is not a new phenomenon, but was also present in the time of Yugoslavia. Heidl states that in the former country, only Serbian author Sofija Soja Jovanović (1922-2002) was remembered for an opus of feature-length films and was also the first female filmmaker to direct a feature-length film, *Sumnjivo lice* (1954). The situation did not improve even after the 1990s. According to Heidl, from Croatia's independence up until 2008, a mere 3.5% of total movie production was directed by women. The only standout author is Snježana Tribuson, who regularly directs feature films and has created a distinct body of work.[3] Heidl refers to the words of filmmaker and filmologist Saša Vojković, who states that "in predominantly male Croatian cinematography, the characters of women are not invisible or even uninteresting, but their representation is, of course, predominantly male".[4] The situation is similar in other cinematographies that came about with the dissolution of Yugoslavia. What links the films analyzed in this paper is precisely a reversal in representation, which is now taking place from a female point of view.

As important features of Croatian cinematography in the 2010s, Gilić notes more prominent artistic growth and greater international presence, a more dynamic and rich production, networking in international productions and festivals, and transformation into a post-transitional society,[5] which is mostly true in other former republics as well. A new generation of female directors featuring specific poetic and issues is notable as a distinct phenomenon, but they do not gravitate towards commercial titles: "most women consider independent films as a means of expressing their personal visions of women's lives and experiences".[6] The exception is Vlatka Vorkapić, whose work *Sonja and the Bull* is a comedy intended for wide audiences and has enjoyed excellent ratings. Smelik's argument is very pertinent in our case: "Cinema is a cultural practice where myths about women and femininity,

[2] *Some Other Stories* is made up of five stories or five short feature films featuring motherhood and pregnancy: *Croatian Story*, *Bosnian-Herzegovinian Story*, *Serbian Story*, *Macedonian Story*, *Slovenian Story*. *Croatian Story* is authored by Ivona Juka and *Bosnian-Herzegovinian Story* by Ines Tanović.

[3] This figure was stated during the round-table discussion *Visibility of Women in Croatian Cinematography*, held on June 18th of 2008 during the Pula Film Festival and co-organized by the Government Office for Gender Equality and the Gender Equality Commission of the City of Pula. The core subject was the underrepresentation of female directors in contemporary Croatian film production, a flaw present in

all post-Yugoslav cinematography. J. Heidl, *Odredište poznato: Feljton Film i društvo – Kakav je položaj i opus redateljica u dominantno muškoj hrvatskoj kinematografiji*, <<http://www.filmovi.hr/index.php?p=article&id=2311>> [accessed on: 27.10.2017].

[4] Idem, *Osvajanje posljednje utvrde: Feljton Film i društvo – Kakav je položaj i opus redateljica u dominantno muškoj hrvatskoj kinematografiji*, <<http://www.filmovi.hr/index.php?p=article&id=2313>> [accessed on: 27.10.2017].

[5] N. Gilić, *Uvod u povijest hrvatskoga igranoga filma*, Zagreb 2011, p. 163.

[6] M.G. Hurd, *Women Directors and Their Films*, Wrestport-London 2007, p. VII.

and men and masculinity, in short, myths about sexual difference are produced, reproduced, and represented".[7] Therefore, the emergence of a new generation of female directors can be seen as an effort to assert "her" versus "his" story as a kind of counter-narrative in order to examine the particularities of women's experiences in the contemporary post-transitional context. The aforementioned can be viewed through the prism of the term 'cinematic apparatus', as used by Kaplan: "This concept refers to the cinema in its many dimensions – economic, technical, psychological, and ideological. Embedded in a particular social and institutional context, the cinema works to suppress discourse, to permit only certain 'speakers', only a certain 'speech'." [8]

Therefore, continuing with my analysis of the films in question, I will attempt to identify a number of issues present therein, which I have divided into several interconnected segments: female subjectivity in contemporary culture, changes in parent figures and relationship with one's parents, the complex of growing up, dissection of the urban environment, and post-transitional society, while examining separately the issue of style, directorial poetic and form.

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The films deal with the issue of female agency in the contemporary (post)transitional urban environment. They strive to re-examine the established models of femininity, the emergence of new forms of self-education and the relationship with traditional culture. The emphasis is on questioning the possibility of self-realization through personal choices, career, and in relation to the environment.

The main protagonist of *Clip*, Jasna (Isidora Simijonović), is sixteen years old and represents the average suburban girl in a transitional society, misunderstanding the concept of rebellion and resistance. She appears to rebel against her family and authority, as emphasized by the space of her room as a place of freedom and privacy, which comes into question when her grandparents are forced by financial reasons to move from their village to a small apartment in the suburbs of Belgrade. Jasna misperceives rebellion and does not succeed in avoiding the clichés of patriarchal culture. Although her body is her own, as a minor she continues to be financially dependent on her parents. Her provocative clothing and behavior is not a means of resistance, but a pandering to sexualized cultural scenarios. She dresses as a turbo-folk star because she sees it in the media and misinterprets it as being attractive to boys and her environment, ultimately reducing herself to a piece of meat on the market, even more so as the turbo-folk subculture is based on low passions. Her love interest, eighteen-year-old Đorđe (Vukašin Jasnić), is a typical macho neighborhood boy whom she lusts for because he is "dangerous" and "untouchable." Jasna is totally unresisting and sub-

[7] A. Smelik, *And The Mirror Cracked: Feminist Cinema and Film Theory*, London 1998, p. 7.

[8] E.A. Kaplan, *Women & Film: Both Sides of the Camera*, London-New York 1983, p. 12.

missive, ready to satisfy his every demand. Even though he physically attacks her, she stays with him, suggesting a problematic aspect of constructing a woman's identity. The film demonstrates how the media, popular culture and the patriarchal, fundamentally masculine-oriented society dictate what is desirable in femininity, but it also emphasizes the hopelessness of growing up in a post-transitional society in which rampant and forced capitalism dictates the dynamics of interpersonal relationships and the conceptualization of identity.

Marijana (Mia Petričević) of *Quit Staring at My Plate* is 24 and still lives with her parents, reflecting the unenviable reality in Croatia, where adult children cannot move away from their parents and start an independent life because of economic reasons. In this work by Hana Jušić, the problem is further exacerbated by a patriarchal mentality. Her parents, Lazo (Zlatko Burić) and Vera (Arijana Čulina), treat her like an immature child that needs taking care of. Even though she works in a hospital as a medical technician and is financially independent, she gives all of her money to her family. Her mother is overly possessive and relentlessly invades her privacy, while her patriarchal father is strict and her brother Zoran (Nikša Butijer) is intellectually challenged and disinclined to work. *Quit Staring at My Plate*, like *Clip*, focuses its attention on a female protagonist and her inner life, trying to present the world from her point of view. Marijana is a person who has never gone out or traveled (for example, she has never been to Zagreb), meaning that she has never left her strict family circle. The lack of one's own room as a private space necessary for independence is an important motif here, pointing to her submission to the family and the impossibility of realizing an independent self. The bourgeois, white-collar family lives in tight quarters: Marijana has shared a room with Zoran her entire life, and after her father's stroke, she shares a bed with her mother in the living room. The small apartment and absence of one's own space point to a lack of privacy, self-denial, constant surveillance, and control. Indicatively, the film's opening scene takes place in the toilet as the protagonist is changing her sanitary napkin, apparently the only time she can be alone, but even then, others, especially her mother, knock and bang on the door to get her out. In addition to dissecting the Dalmatian rigidly patriarchal mentality, the film also deals with unrealized sexuality, evoked by the androgynous appearance and dress style of the excellent actor Mia Petričević as the sexually inexperienced "heroine". We are introduced to the theme through the initial motif of menstruation, followed by the protagonist watching two people making love through the window, finally resulting in her participating in group sex and seducing elderly men in a provincial bar. Sexual curiosity and liberation is presented ambivalently: it simultaneously points to rebellion against parental authority (her mother states that her behavior has brought shame to the family), but yielding to men also emphasizes her passivity, which will culminate in the finale when she misses an opportunity to change her position.

Our Everyday Life brings a depiction of Bosnian transitional daily life in post-war Sarajevo, where echoes of the war are still felt. The story centers on the Sušić family, made up of father Muhamed (Emir Hadžihafizbegović), mother Marija (Jasna Beri), daughter Senada (Vedrana Seksan), and son Saša (Uliks Fehmiu). Each of the characters represents a modern type. In the context of exploring female agency, the characters of the mother Marija and daughter Senada are significant. The aim of the film is not to question societal and gender roles, but offer a glimpse of reality. However, the different dynamics of gender relations in still-traditional Bosnian society are shown, based on family relationships. The story opens in Tromostovlje in Ljubljana, ironically evoking cheap romance films, where Senada says goodbye to her Slovenian partner with a promise to return. Senada had left Sarajevo during the war and distanced herself from her patriarchal family, which is initially signaled by her appearance: short tousled blond hair, neck tattoos, and being pregnant with no desire to get married. This more liberal way of life is obviously only possible away from her family and conservative environment. The mother, Marija, is the center of the family, and represents a typical Bosnian woman, a retired teacher who takes care of her family and bridges the gap between her strict husband and her children, to whom he cannot relate. Amidst the dreariness of daily life, she optimistically believes that all will end well. Despite being a type, she is the strongest and most authentic character in this film, whose topics include the generation gap, changing values and concepts of femininity.

You Carry Me takes place in present-day Zagreb and introduces us to three female protagonists in the prologue. The first one is primary school student Dora (Helena Beljan), whose home gets raided by the police because her father deals drugs. Meanwhile, her mother wants to end her unsatisfying marriage. The girl is unusual: she likes football and evinces masculine forms of behavior. The second protagonist is Ives (Lana Barić), a director whose father suffers from dementia, while she has anger management issues. The third protagonist is Nataša (Nataša Dorčić), the producer of a successful television soap opera that both Ives and Dora's mother Lidija (Nataša Janjić) work on. The soap opera is an integrative factor because its set connects the characters, although their stories are largely independent from the television production. The focus is on the three protagonists, three generations, three concepts of femininity, and their everyday world and experience. Dora tries to balance between her alienated parents, lonely Ives tries to find her own space and emotional fulfillment, and Nataša faces future motherhood, a terminal illness, and a marriage she knows is a dead end. These stories are interwoven with the implicit analysis of Croatian social and cultural reality.

Zagreb Capuccino combines dramatic and humorous tones and focuses on two female protagonists, striving for a study of character. It rests on the opposition of two character types and representations

of femininity. Petra (Nela Kocis) is an affluent middle-aged woman in the middle of a divorce. She is bound to societal norms and embraces gender and social prejudices. She has not told her parents or friends that her husband has left her, because she fears their reaction and judgment. At the same time, she believes herself to be a failure as a woman and a wife. At one point she says that she did everything for her husband, and so she does not understand why he has left her. In this manner, director Vanja Sviličić refers to the context of Croatian patriarchal culture, that is, the expectations women face, the role they should play, and how they should behave. Opposite Petra is her friend Kristina (Mila Elegović), who lives in Germany, is free without a husband and children, and believes that one should enjoy life, which motivates her actions towards her prudish friend.

Trampolin features a much darker subject – physical and verbal abuse between mother and daughter, recurring through three generations. Seven-year-old Lina (Franka Mikolaci) is abused by her mother Helena (Lana Barić), who herself witnessed her father's abuse of her brother; teenager Nika lives under strict supervision of her controlling mother (Nina Violić); forty-year-old Nikolina (Marija Tadić) terminates her pregnancy because she is not willing to raise a child because of previous trauma. In this way, the film by Katarina Zrinka Matijević examines the catastrophic consequences of abuse on the development of identity and subjectivity. The three parallel narratives are interwoven through encounters between the three traumatized protagonists. The focal subject is the complex, often turbulent and ambivalent relationship between mothers and their daughters. The film examines female abuse, as well as the impact of violence on the feeling of self and the need for attention and emotions.

Sonja and the Bull is the most conventional of the films in the context of exploration of female agency and gender issues. The focal point is the main protagonist (Judita Franković): an urban, enlightened, liberal girl, an animal protection activist who goes on a mission to rescue a bull in the rural and traditional south, specifically the Dalmatian Hinterland, only to end up falling in love with a local young man, Ante (Goran Bogdan). The writer and director Vlatka Vorkapić constructs the space, situations and characters in an overtly binary way: there is a clash of urban and rural mentality, liberal and conservative, male and female. In the case of Sonja and Ante, the gender roles are seemingly non-traditional: she is an emancipated urban girl who lives alone and actively contemplates the flaws of the society in which she lives, and he is the black sheep of his family whose father is unhappy with his job in female cosmetics because it provokes the established masculine narrative of their rural community. The purpose of this work is not to analyze female agency, but rather to create comedic elements based on popular culture and regional stereotypes, so the author presents a scenario intended for a wide audience. Therefore, the apparently emancipated Sonja becomes a parody of herself because she allows Ante to gradually win her over, thereby “enlightening” her as to what real values are.

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Clip was titled after a video clip, which in the context of the film refers to short videos recorded on a cell phone camera, sent via text message, e-mail or social networks, and which the protagonists are constantly recording. It introduces us to the age and social group that the work deals with. The film takes place in a high school environment (medical school) and presents a portrayal of youths without prospects who spend their days on cell phones, social networks, and going out to folk music clubs or house parties where that kind of music is played. Therein, the subject of growing up is tied to the theme of identity formation and the influence of popular culture and the prevailing social discourse. When Jasna records herself with her phone, her movements, gestures and mimicry are similar to those of fake, scantily clad turbo-folk stars from their videos and performances. It is the same with clothes: bought at the flea market, they imitate the striking and sexualized clothes worn by such singers. In *Clip*, everything is imitation: movements, videos, clothes, as well as the unpalatable segments of a culture moving towards barbarism. This film by Maja Miloš presents a portrayal of growing up in a post-transitional society that has lost its moral compass and where reduced parental figures are replaced by societal agents. In *Quit Staring at My Plate*, Marijana goes through a belated and delayed maturation, emphasized by her androgyny, acquiring sexual experiences and attempting to make interpersonal connections outside of her family, which constantly holds her back. A similar influence of popular culture and societal discourse can also be noted in *You Carry Me*. Football-obsessed Dora is fascinated by Zlatko Mamić and devotedly follows and learns to imitate his vulgar media outbursts. Her growing up is a balancing act between her mother and her father. She cannot identify with her mother's traditional female role, so she is closer to her father, a macho tough guy with a heart of gold. The mother is emotionally unfulfilled in her marriage and yearns for a stable family that her husband cannot provide. In *Trampolin* we see growing up from the perspective of an elementary school student (Lina) and a high schooler (Nika), while in the case of Nikolina, we see past missteps influencing adult decisions. A lack of attention and physical abuse are essential aspects of the story, but the director sometimes naively suggests that patterns of behavior learned in the family can later be transferred through education and socialization (Lina attacks Nikolina using words she herself often hears from her mother, Nika slaps her mother like she was slapped before, and her boyfriend says they are the same). *Our Everyday Life* implicitly refers to the war and its influence on the formation of personality, so Senada remains unscathed by the tragedies, while her brother Saša suffers from PTSD, and their mother treats him like a child that she waits on and pampers, as evidenced by the morning ritual of waking him up and offering him a vitamin drink.

One has to wonder why the filmmakers are so concerned with the subject of growing up. The answer may be that this is a period or process in life when an individual becomes more involved in social relations and through these mechanisms they can describe the relationship between the familial and social, as well as the generational conflicts that support the creation of an independent self. However, in the examples given above, the situation is more complex and related to the concept of weakened parental figures.

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Parental figures are often guardians of the *status quo*, ill-prepared for the challenges of the modern age. These works analyze family contexts in which the parents firmly hold on to their traditional beliefs and attitudes and are unprepared to deal with changes in the social and cultural sphere. Given the context of post-transition and the diffusion of capitalist values, parental functions are also in flux and parental positions weakened.

In *Clip*, Jasna's father is ill, symbolizing his passivity and inability to provide for his family. The mother is the sole provider, but she is forced to sell her grandparents' house and use the money for medical treatment. Because of their economic situation, the parents do not have time for their children. This is particularly true of Đorđe, whose single mother is always at work and never present, except via mobile. Jasna's relationship with her parents is tense. The functions of parental figures are weakened; they can no longer be role models or figures of authority, and the job of bringing up their children is assumed by society and popular culture, symbolized by a hysterical fascination with social networks. The pathogenic results of patriarchy, the processes of its dissolution, and the cruelty of paternal authority, which earns and supports, and thus assumes unquestioned command of the wives' and children's lives, are shown in *Our Everyday Life* and *Quit Staring at My Plate*. In the former, we are introduced to the father, Muhamed, as the manager of a company in the process of transitional privatization, signaling the influx of a greedy, rampant capitalism. Muhamed's work position is superfluous and anachronistic, and like his paternal function of the patriarchal tyrant, the traditional Bosnian man, is no longer viable. This is particularly noticeable in the case of daughter Senada, and culminates in a wonderfully set fight between the father and the estranged and traumatized son over a tubful of *ajvar* peppers. In this movie by Ines Tanović, a middle-class family represents the micro-cosmos of Bosnian society, reflecting its worldview, economic and generational perturbations. Hana Jušić deals with the mentality of the small Dalmatian town of Šibenik through the prism of the Petković family, where father Lazo controls his son, daughter and wife and demands absolute servility and submission. The mother is a typical Dalmatian woman, having dedicated her life to her children, husband

and family and spending her days thinking about what to make for dinner. She is quite slow and not particularly smart, but is very outspoken and full of petty bourgeois pride. She is a woman totally dedicated to her household, who has given up on her own self and autonomy. An emblematic example of this are family gatherings, which come in two varieties: meals while the father is mobile, and watching trivial television shows like soap operas and reality shows afterward. The meals paint a good picture of patriarchy – everyone is quiet and afraid of the father, he is in charge, the mother serves him. Kristina's situation in *Zagreb Capuccino* implies a generation gap: she obviously moved to Germany because of her conservative Catholic parents. This can be seen when Petra and Kristina visit her parents. *Trampolin* and *You Carry Me* both examine father figures. They are absent in the former and weakened in the latter. In the film by Zrinka Katarina Matijević, the focus is on the mother-daughter relationship; however, patriarchal mothers often take on the paternal role. In the film by Ivona Juka, it can be noted that all three protagonists either have strong bonds with their fathers or, like Nataša, are trying to repair them. Mother-figures are noticeably absent: Dora is estranged from her mother and the mothers of Ives and Nataša have passed away.

In the case of Sonja (*Sonja and the Bull*), parental figures are absent, as the focus is not on the relationship of the protagonist and her family or the conflict of their values and expectations. The protagonist is young and emancipated, and is free from family ties and obligations, denoting a more impersonal urban way of life. Ante is her opposite – closer to his family and its traditions. He is his mother's pet, but his father does not understand why he sells cosmetics, contrary to traditional ideas of masculinity.

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In these works, the category of space is very important. They are largely set in a middle-class urban environment. The specific theme of urban iconography is related to subjectivity and identity and is often used for the purpose of metaphorically characterising the protagonist and the social context.

Clip is set in modern-day post-transitional Belgrad, and the setting is very striking: an urban ghetto on the city outskirts, a former socialist apartment bloc with crumbling facades and derelict streets. Grayness and depression are the prevailing tone, directly reflecting the existential situation of the shrinking middle-class. This is particularly evident in the building where Đorđe lives – a socialist behemoth in a state of total disrepair. This is a hopeless and grey life, marked by the struggle for survival. The apartments that Đorđe and Jasna's families live in are worn down, battered and anachronistic – an inheritance of socialist Yugoslavia and a signal of the ruined middle class. *Our Everyday Life* is set in the Sarajevo urban environment, which is experiencing the

same post-transitional struggles as Belgrad and Zagreb, but interwoven with humoristic touches and mythology typical of Sarajevo. The film by Ines Tanović takes place predominantly in indoor spaces. In *Quit Staring at My Plate*, space – both indoor and outdoor – is just as important as in *Clip*, and displays many similarities. The tight, rundown, confined space of the apartment reflects the familial relations and their nature: an intellectual, worldview, existential and social narrowness which suffocates the protagonists. The claustrophobic apartment is painted in dull colors and gives an impression of gloom and weight, just like in *Our Everyday Life*, where it seems to belong to another decade. Here once again is the socialist neighborhood: a decrepit façade, dilapidated building, a low-rise that makes it clear that everyone can see each other and knows everything (the protagonist's high school friend whom she has not seen in ages knows that her father is disabled), further exacerbated by gossipy meetings in front of the building. The protagonist is often framed in front of the building, with the usual crew in front of it. Šibenik's streets are narrow and tight, again giving the impression of weight and claustrophobia. This is also the case at work, because Marijana and three colleagues work in the same room, constantly chatting and gossiping, just like in her street, only the sterile whiteness of the hospital space reflects impersonal and hypocritical human relationships. In *You Carry Me*, the social aspect is also present through the evocation of the urban: a post-transitional modernity of the Croatian capital, where different class contexts are intertwined. Juka is not as interested in urban greyness, and wants to emphasize that her protagonists live in a globalized society like people everywhere, only occasionally troubled by some indigenous problems. Vedran is a small-time dealer with no permanent job; he is awkward and socially maladjusted, while his lavish apartment is at odds with his financial situation, obviously improved through alternative means. Ives does not have a settled life or a steady job and wants to buy an apartment, showing her willingness to settle down, but she is not financially solvent. She lives with her father in an old-fashioned apartment where time is as frozen as her Alzheimer-stricken father's life. One of the most striking scenes in the movie is her outburst at the bank when she tries to apply for a housing loan, which underscores the existential situation of many young people in Croatia. Nataša, on the other hand, is a member of the new Croatian elite, living in a luxurious and elegant urban villa that resembles her life: perfect on the surface, but rotten on the inside.

Zagreb Capuccino offers a somewhat different post-transitional reality – that of a fake bourgeoisie. Petra lives in a new building in a good neighborhood, surrounded by nice neighbors, and has a steady job at the hospital, but she is living on credit and everything is false, realizing the film's social dimension. Space is significant in Petra's portrayal. Her apartment is modern, somewhat sterile, exceptionally clean and carefully appointed, mirroring her pedantry, primness, and need to control things. Compulsions are a defense mechanism that Kristina

invokes as soon as she arrives: she is late for her plane, and then creates little unintended diversions all around the apartment. Living space is a metonym of Petra's life, because beneath the perfectly arranged surface, many things are broken, just like Petra's life.

Trampolin is also an urban story that takes a look at the ills of bourgeoisie, especially domestic violence and the silence that surrounds it, emphasized in the film through the exchange of closed and open spaces. Protesting against parental discipline, as evidenced by Lina's running away and wandering the streets of Zagreb and Nika's diversions of her mother's limits on her trampoline time, always takes place in open spaces, while discipline is carried out inside. In Nika's case, her room is not a space of privacy and freedom, but a prison. The bourgeois apartments of Lina and Nika's families indicate that appearances are of the utmost importance, and one must care about what the neighbors will think. All negative things should remain hidden, which implicitly reflects some aspects of Croatian mentality.

Sonja and the Bull explores the relationship between the urban and rural, which has a long tradition in Croatian culture and literature and can be traced back to proto-realism in the nineteenth century. It represents a clash between two cultural dimensions and worldviews. The Dalmatian Hinterland region is depicted through typical stereotypes: manners, opinions, food, communication, contrasting it with urban Zagreb and the protagonist's trendy apartment. On the whole, it suggests that Sonja should denounce trendy urban fetishes and embrace the part of tradition represented by her love interest because these are indigenous values.

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As a whole, the analyzed films do not have a dominant style nor poetic, as the directors' styles are quite different, although there are some similarities. In these works, the focus is not on the plot, with the exception of *Sonja and the Bull*, but on the portrayal of characters, their lifestyle and environment, with the aim of examining the clash between their personal yearnings and personalities and their social environment. We can denote three approaches: the first one in *Clip, Quit Staring at My Plate* and somewhat *Our Everyday Life*; the second in *You Carry Me*; and the third in *Sonja and the Bull, Zagreb Capuccino* and *Trampolin*.

Although the narrative structure of *Clip* is chronological, it is fairly fragmented and the film does not contain much of a plot. It is a series of vignettes from the everyday life of adolescents – school, sex, drinking and partying, family situations and conflicts – playfully intertwined with fake amateur mobile footage, which is an important method of portraying the characters and their culture. The director's style follows the plot and is very YouTube-like and lively: the hand-held camera is dynamic, following the subjects almost voyeuristically, which creates a sense of discomfort, and strives for realism and immediacy;

moreover, since the director's attitude is deprived of moralization. There are two layers of narration: one is related to the depiction of everyday life, while the other one can be called the meta-layer, consisting of video clips that point to the digital barbarism of contemporary culture and underline the narcissistic and destructive dependence on social networks that assume the role of socialization and education, but ultimately lead to detachment and emotional numbness. The frenetic pace of contemporary culture is emphasized by expressive and dynamic editing, jumpy camera movements, mostly short shots and overwhelming grayness. In *Quit Staring at My Plate*, the narrative structure is unobtrusively linear without any complex plot twists, in order to portray the protagonist's monotonous, crude and hopeless work, private and family life. The slow pace of the film evokes the existence of a young person in a stale environment who has not been allowed to grow. Stylistically, the work blends the realistic and naturalistic with the lyrical. The evocation of space and mentality, as well as the summer heat, is achieved through a hand-held camera that is largely dynamic and follows the protagonists to convey immediacy. As the focus is on the protagonist, who does not speak much, shots of her, especially close-ups, are essential for conveying her psychology and inner state. The frequency of panoramic shots is aimed at emphasizing the spatial dimension, its characteristics and atmosphere, which is essential for portraying the surroundings. *Clip* and *Quit Staring at My Plate* have a number of stylistic and formal commonalities and could be also loosely tied with *Our Everyday Life*, which is somewhat more static and places more emphasis on silence, what remains unsaid between the characters but looms in the air. It is also narratively linear, but features four parallel stories, as all four characters are equally important. There are also no plot twists because the linear structure and the simplistic, immediate style are meant to convey a realistic approach to the subject matter. The film is dominated by somber and muted colors, naturalistic lightning and long static shots, meant to underline that the protagonists are trapped in unenviable life situations and time. The action mostly takes place inside, underlying the theme of isolation, while the absence of music further stresses the unspoken. These three films are very reminiscent of the 'Romanian New Wave' (Christian Mugi, Radu Jude, Cristi Puiu...)

You Carry Me is a movie with unusually high production values and an atypical narrative structure for a Croatian film. It features numerous plot flourishes and is reminiscent of mosaic films by Robert Altman or Alejandro González Iñárritu. The film contains three simultaneous narratives that intertwine, suggesting they are parallel. Although it leans towards a mosaic structure, the narration is surprisingly conventional as the narratives develop successively: first Nives, then Dora and finally Nataša. The connections between them are implied through subtle details that indicate they are intertwined, but also the symbolic level of the narrative, which moves from the local to the universal. It is the context of the television soap opera that links the

female characters, as well at the details of their individual stories where we can note protagonists from other narratives. Juka's directorial style is refined and different from the realism of the previously discussed directors. *You Carry Me* features more symbolism, associative editing and *leitmotifs*, which imbue the urban environment and life stories with poetry and symbolism. Particular emphasis is placed on the evocation of the Zagreb winter atmosphere, which intertwines with the protagonists' experiences and the nature of their inter-personal relationships.

Zagreb Capuccino, *Trampolin* and *Sonja and the Bull* feature more conventional styles, and one would not be able point to a specific directorial style. All three have a neat, linear plot. As a character comedy, *Sonja and the Bull* is the most focused on the plot and the obstacles its protagonists have to deal with, while the plots of *Trampolin* and *Zagreb Capuccino* are reduced. The directors tell their stories neatly and plainly and more originality and expressiveness would be welcome.

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The generation of the directors in question, irrespective of the quality, commercial or festival success of their films, is linked by certain conceptual and thematic, as well as stylistic complexes, along with a number of marked differences. For now, we can only speak of a generational phenomenon, and not yet of a strongly profiled and recognizable poetic or movement. The aforementioned will most likely not develop, so we can explain the similarities through similarities in economic, ideological, social and technical contexts.

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