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Editing analysis of the film *God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya*

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DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

Analýza střihu ve filmech *Bůh existuje, její jméno je Petrunija*

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Editing analysis of the film *God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya*

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Prague, August 7th, 2023   Paola Lada Franulovic
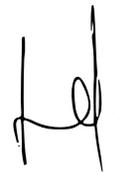
Abstract

The pool of authentic representations of women in films is growing and breaking the artistic canon's depiction of women as either wives, mothers, maids, or mistresses. This text provides a comparative analysis between the 2019 North Macedonian film *God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya* and the tenth and final draft of its script. Its aim is to uncover, through Karen Pearlman's cognitive approach to editing, the tools and devices used by Helene-Marie Dozo to reshape the film's rhythm. *God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya* exposes gender patriarchies within the Orthodox Catholic church, the state (police) and, the labour market in the context of North Macedonia and the Balkans. However, it does not manage to subvert or push the envelope of gender hierarchies because its narrative propagates a 'salvation through romance' resolution. Moreover, it builds its protagonist on the archetype of a virgin heroine, such as Joan of Arc, whose heroism is directly linked to their innocence.

Abstract

Počet autentických obrazů žen ve filmech roste a porušuje umělecký kánon zobrazování žen jako manželek, matek, služebnic nebo milenek. Tento text poskytuje srovnávací analýzu mezi severomakedonským filmem *Bůh existuje, její jméno je* Petrunija z roku 2019 a desátým a posledním návrhem jeho scénáře. Jeho cílem je odhalit prostřednictvím kognitivního přístupu Karen Pearlmanové k editaci nástroje a přístroje, které Helene-Marie Dozo použila k přetváření rytmu filmu. *Bůh existuje, její jméno je* Petrunija odhaluje genderové patriarchy v rámci pravoslavné katolické církve, státu (policie) a na trhu práce v kontextu Severní Makedonie a na Balkáně. Nicméně se mu nepodaří podkopat nebo posunout obálku genderových hierarchií, protože jeho vyprávění propaguje "záchranu prostřednictvím romance". Navíc staví svého hrdinu na archetypě panenské hrdinky, jako je Johanka z Arku, jejíž hrdinství je přímo spojeno s jejich nevinností.

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Introduction

In the fall of 2019, I happened to be back in my hometown at the time of Zagreb Film Festival. I had just finished a bachelor's degree in Theatre and Film Studies at the University of Glasgow. My dissertation took the form of a video-essay[1] in which I analysed editing and camera techniques of contemporary hip-hop music videos as 'embodied expressions of attitudes'[2] enabled by the editor and director of photography. The topic was the rise of hypersexualised representation of women in hip-hop music videos to which I applied the lens of feminist film theory (Laura Mulvey, Linda Williams, Laura Marks, and Jennifer Barker). My supervisor, Dr. Lizelle Bisschoff, asked to explain my *positionality* and to think about it in terms of *where I come from* and *how is my background different or alike to the women whose representations I chose to analyse*. This notion of *positionality* guided me into a territory of thinking about my own identity and guided my interest towards the representation of Balkan women in film. Therefore, at Zagreb Film Festival, I sought contemporary films that go beyond representation of women as objects of desire and what is more, give an authentic portrayal of women.

The motivation to choose the theme of women's representations in cinema also appeared through personal experiences on the Montage course, where feminist themes were barely mentioned, and even if they were, they only scratched the surface and only made a fraction of the program that was considerably extensive. The film canon taught in our program's curriculum included a miserable percentage of films made by women, either in class or as an independent study, and there was no mention of feminist film theory. According to Leopold Rupnik, art canon is considered the finest selection of key works that every person ought to know because they were selected by the "experts" of the profession who understand which works have a unique aesthetic or cultural importance[3]. Griselda Pollok points out that those group of "experts" make up white, heterosexual, privileged western men who, from the context of their lives, based on their own experiences and opinions, pick the works that fit into *their* worldview[4]. This applies to the film canon too. The under-representation of women artists and theoreticians in our program's curriculum triggered my research into films that expose, subvert, and push the envelope of societal gender hierarchies.

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[1] https://vimeo.com/402472224

[2] Barker, Jennifer M.. The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience. Italy: University of California Press, 2009,14.

[3] Rupnik, Leopold. „Analysis and interpretation of Croatian visual arts curricula and textbooks from the perspective of gender equality." Master thesis, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Philosophy, 2020, 57. https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:131:491016

[4] Pollock, Griselda. Differencing the Canon: Feminism and the Writing of Art's Histories (1st ed.). London: Routledge, 1999, 17. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203397190

At the Zagreb Film Festival, there were two films in the program that promised that; *Ivana the Terrible* (2019) directed by Ivana Mladenović, a Serbo-Romanian director and the other *God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya* (2019) by Teona Strugar Mitevska from North Macedonia. They were both made by Balkan women: directed, written, shot, and edited. They were about women – Ivana and Petrunya, and their stories took place in the Balkans. These elements of production indicated authenticity, and for that reason I was curious to see how these directors portrayed the identities of Balkan women on screen.

The titles of the films play on either intertextuality or subversion of gender. Mladenović's title works on a level of intertextuality as it is a reference to Sergei M. Eisenstein's 1944 and 1958 epics *Ivan the Terrible*. Even though Mitevska's title is not intertextual, both titles follow the principle of subverting gender power structures, the notorious political leader Ivan IV to Ivana and the Orthodox God himself to Petrunya. Both films deal with the themes of tradition, gender, and power, but I chose to focus on *GEHNIP* over *Ivana the Terrible* for two reasons. First, because it also implicates religion into the structures of gendered power, and second, because *GEHNIP* creates stronger expectations of courage, empowerment, and change to expose, disrupt, and shatter systemic misogyny. Nonetheless, as much as it sets out strong it falls under the same forces that it tries to challenge, and my work here is to unpick those errors by analysing the script and bring to light the choices made in the editing room which altered the story and Petrunya's character. Therefore, the questions are: how does *GEHNIP* expose, subvert, and push the envelope of gender hierarchies (patriarchies, in fact) within the context of the Balkans; how are these themes, its story and characters built through the montage and to what extent does *GEHNIP* break the art canon's representation of women as „either wives, mothers, maids or mistresses"?[56]

Before setting out to analyse film's editing, the film's socio-political context will be explained. The framework of the socio-political context will be based on essays and books of feminist theorists and activists for gender equality: Marina Blagojević Hughson's essay "Undoing Gender, Undoing Balkans: Towards Ethnic and Gender Reconciliation" (2012), Laura Sjoberg's study of war in her book "Gendering Global Conflict: Toward a Feminist Theory of War" (2013), a chapter on North Macedonia's film named "North Macedonia: A Nation and Cinema in Transition", written by Vesela S.Warner and found in the book "Contemporary Balkan Cinema: Transnational Exchanges and Global Circuits", edited by Lydia Papadimitriou and Ana Grgić

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[5] O'Kelly, C.G. Gender role stereotypes in fine art: A content analysis of art history books. *Qual Sociol* **6**, 136–148 (1983). https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00987084
[6] Alzahrani, Fahad A.. "The portrayal of Women and Gender Roles in Films." (2016).

(2020), Maria Todorova's book "Imagining the Balkans" (2009), three chapters from the book "Minorities under Attack: Othering and Right-Wing Extremism in Southeast European Societies" (2016) , edited by Sebastian Goll, Martin Mlinarić, and Johannes Gold, the first chapter carries the same name as the book, second is written by Zhidas Daskalovski "Skopje 2014: Construction of a Nation and its Exclusionary Effects" and last by Đorđe Tomić "Post-Yugoslavia's "Political Wasteland" and the Radical Right: Between State Sponsored Nationalism and Neoliberal pro-European Reform Course".

The second chapter will focus on how the themes of the film were built through the editing. Its analysis will use Karen Pearlman's ideas from her book "Cutting Rhythms" (2015). First part of the chapter will focus on the set-up of rhythmic patterns in the first couple of scenes, second part on the choice of opening and closing shot while the third point will detect and analyse the film's low point, which is, according to Karen Pearlman, the point that breaks the rhythmic pattern of tension and release. By comparing the film to its script, I will detect what was cut out and changed and what effect it had on the film's narrative.

The third chapter will focus on how the character of the film, Petrunya, was built through the film's editing. By comparing the film to its script, I will detect what was cut out or changed and what effect it had on the formation of the character.

ON REPRESENTATION

It was Allison Bechdel who asked the questions about representation of women in film in the Bechdel-Wallace test from 1985. These were the requirements that ought to be satisfied to pass the test:

- The movie has to have at least two women in it,
- Who talk to each other,
- About something other than a man[7]

Passing or failing the test is not necessarily indicative of how well women are represented in any specific work. Rather, the test is used as an indicator for the active presence of women in the entire field of film and other fiction, and to call attention to gender inequality in fiction. Media

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[7] Bechdel, Alison. 2020. *Essential Dykes to Watch out For.* New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

industry studies indicate that films that pass the test perform better financially than those that do not.

GEHNIP passes the most basic test of gender portrayal, the Bechdel-Wallace test, but how much further from it does it go?

According to Marguerite Weller,

> "A major struggle confronting transnational feminist filmmakers, wherever in the world they work, is the challenge presented by their own media and by the frameworks that potential spectators bring with them to screenings. No less than the political, economic, and military situations that motivate them, the habits of their viewers, their own perceptual and conceptual habits, and conventional understandings (academic, journalistic, masculinist, and even feminist) of contemporary forms of power and domination need to be engaged in order for the film or video to act as something other than a polemic. If it is to present an epistemological challenge that "unsettles, shatters, and disrupts domination" (Arrizón 2006, 2) and shifts the spectator's world view, the film/video maker must wrestle with what artist/theorist Ursula Biemann calls not only the "secondary, descriptive function" of images, but "a productive one as well" (2007, 133)." [8]

Even though, descriptively, *GEHNIP* narrative briefly exposes and disrupts the status quo of dominant order, Petrunya's character perpetuates the same ideologies which it tries to dismantle. Teona Strugar Mitevska states,

> "The only way we can move forward is (to) redefine the rules and question the status quo…I just really hope that in the next twenty years the head of Catholic church will be a woman. This is a good start…I think we live in exciting times, and I think openness, and real discussion, about issues that concern us all, justice, equality, equity for all, is something essential to all of us and that it puts us together on a human level. Let's just

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[8] V Laviosa, Flavia, and Laura Mulvey. 2010. *Visions of Struggle in Women's Filmmaking in the Mediterranean*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

discuss and let's provoke, let's be brave in what we try to say and what we do. Maybe this film contributes, a little bit, to something better."[9]

The film's title is already polemical *God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya* because it offsets religious ideology which fosters the image of the one Christian god as a man. It also posits Petrunya as the protagonist because the name appears in the title of the film and it is the 'new, female' name of the god i.e., Christian god in female form. From the film's title only, we can learn the film's theme and film's protagonist. To learn so much from the title could be seen as on-the-nose provocation from the side of the author. But it also promises a film that unsettles, disrupts, and shatters domination of religious patriarchy. I argue that *GEHNIP* does not manage to do that because it builds Petrunya's character as that of a virgin heroine, and thus perpetuates a "Joan of Arc" archetype. To correlate virginity with heroism reinforces systemic and institutional sexism over women's bodies.

Kate Manne claims,

> "Patriarchy and sexism are the social context in which we continue to live, and, misogyny is contempt, sometimes hatred, for women. Misogyny is how patriarchy and sexism are performed within our relationships. Sexism is the ideology that supports patriarchal social relations and misogyny re- enforces its assumptions."[10]

Instead of building an authentically empowered protagonist to represent 'god' as a woman, the film's name is a disguise and Petrunya's character is built on the archetype of a virgin heroine. Not only does *GEHNIP* build Petrunya's character as a virgin heroine, but it also reinforces, symbolically and bluntly, gender stereotypes where women are weak and emotional, whilst men are strong and rational. The film, however, is different to the script, and even though it does not eradicate the virgin heroine completely, it does so substantially, for example by removing the journalist's (Labina Mitevska) interview with Petrunya (Zorica Nusheva). Also, the film has a

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[9] Berlinale. 2019. "Gospod Postoi, Imeto I' E Petrunija | Press Conference Highlights | Berlinale 2019" Interview by Berlinale - Berlin International Film Festival. HD. *Berlinale - Berlin Intenational Film Festival*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1ZYhVpdXbQ.
[10] Manne, Kate. 2020. *Entitled: How Male Privilege Hurts Women*. New York: Crown.

different beginning and the end to the script, and it omits the script emphasis on the symbolism of the painting with the deer. The editing helps to reduce Petrunya's "heroism".

According to Winnicott,

> „There is no such thing as a person apart from the social context into which that person's both conscious and unconscious is born and raised. When people come together so do all these many aspects. Thus, there are many shakes to the kaleidoscope of past and present, of individuals penetrated by the social, of current ideas challenging a status quo that often seeks to change but *so that nothing fundamental will change.* "[11]

This is the case with *GEHNIP*, the director's idea to challenge the status quo was ambitious but fundamentally it did not change anything. The function of the images was descriptive and the final message disappointing.

To analyse editing, I will rely on Karen Pearlman's ideas on editing in her book "Cutting Rhythms: Intuitive Film Editing" from 2015. Pearlman's postulates that film editing is an art of shaping movement.

> "The edits may be 'invisible', but the movement of story, the movement of emotion, and the movement of images and sounds are not, and what the editors do, which no one else can do as well, is organize the flow of these three kinds of movement."[12]

Pearlman's research is supported by the ideas of cognitive psychology that is the scientific study of mental processes. Cognitive psychologist Connie Shears along with screenwriter Paul Joseph Gulino investigated how understanding of the neuroscience in filmmaking and screenwriting can help make better, more engaging films. What we see on screen, the way images are composed within a shot as well as in relation to each other, influences our cognitive

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[11] Einhorn, Sue. 2021. "From a Woman's Point of View. How Internalized Misogyny Affects Relationships between Women." *Group Analysis* 54 (4): 483. https://doi.org/10.1177/05333164211038310.
[12] Pearlman, Karen. 2009. "Cutting Rhythms in Chicago and Cabaret." *Cineaste* 34 (2): 28–32.

processes such as attention and perception. The information that flows between the viewer and film is based on certain schemas, or organized sets of knowledge.

> "Because our brains rely on clues – that is, incomplete information – we can be fooled into creating false or flawed schemas, which are then violated when more complete information is revealed to us…Because screenwriters are in control over which clues are given to the viewer and when critical information is revealed, they can manipulate audience expectations by creating violations. Such violations generate tension in the reader or viewer that keeps them on the edge of their seats rather than dozing or thinking about dessert'."[13]

Sometimes the strategy employed by the screenwriter does not work in such a way as to keep the audience's attention and that is why the editor looks for a better placing of the information. Karen Pearlman understands the placing of the shot as the *timing* of the shot, which is one of the tools editors use to shape rhythm, along with *pacing* and *trajectory phrasing.* According to Pearlman *timing* is composed of three aspects when discussing "the rhythm in film editing:

1. Choosing a frame:
2. Choosing duration
3. Choosing the placement of the shot."[14]

The one I will focus on in the following analyses is the third aspect, *choosing the placement of the shot*. To place shots in succession creates a sequence of movements which reveal something of the character. The placing of the shot of the deer is significantly different to its placing in the script. In the script it is in thirty-five whilst in the film it is in the very last shot. The shot of the deer is the film's ending shot. More in-depth analysis of this editing choice will follow in the final chapter.

According to Gulino and Shears, our frontal lobes have evolved in such a way that they are bigger than other mammals because human babies need adult care for a much longer time, in

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[13] Paul Joseph Gulino, and Connie Shears. 2018. *The Science of Screenwriting : The Neuroscience behind Storytelling Strategies*. New York ; London ; Oxford ; New Delhi ; Sydney Bloomsbury Academic , 33.
[14] Pearlman, Karen. 2016. *Cutting Rhythms : Intuitive Film Editing*. New York ; Abingdon (Oxon): Focal Press, 51.

comparison to other herd mammals, to survive their infancy.[15] Due to this, our film audiences are also able to connect to the protagonists to the film, if the protagonist is, preferably in the exposition, shown to have good traits. Blake Ryder coined the term to describe it and it is 'save the cat'.

> "It's the scene where we meet the hero/ine and the hero/ine *does* something – like saving a cat – that defines who s/he is and what makes us, the audience, like them."[16]

Shears theorizes that because of our brains' evolution, we can connect with the person on screen and experience what they are experiencing[17]. This realization goes as far back as Aristotle.

> "Aristotle's idea that we have our emotions purged by witnessing those emotions in characters finds basis in neuroscience expressed in the "thought experiment" that blurs emotions between an individual and another, by which we can experience in our imagination what another person is experiencing. Which is a lot more comfortable than physical co-embodiment."[18]

Another theory comes from psychoanalysts Jacques Lacan's, who inspired psychoanalytic feminist film theorists such as Laura Mulvey. Lacan theorizes that the mirror stage allows the infant to see its fragmentary self as an imaginary whole, and film theorists would see the cinema functioning as a mirror for spectators in precisely the same way.[19]

Weather it is supported by the ancient Greek philosophy, psychoanalytic film theory or cognitive psychology the idea is clear: human beings have the ability of relating to the characters on screen and, we can have a rich experience of what situations depicted on screen feel like in real life.

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[15] Gulino and Shears, "The Science of Screenwriting", 41.
[16] "Blake Snyder, Save the Cat (Studio City, CA: Michael Weise Productions 2005), p. xv."
[17] Gulino and Shears, "The Science of Screenwriting", 55.
[18] Gulino and Shears, "The Science of Screenwriting", 58.
[19] McGowan, Todd "Psychoanalytic Film Theory". In *obo* in Cinema and Media Studies, https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199791286/obo-9780199791286-0052.xml (accessed 6 Aug. 2023).

> "Just as flight simulators allow pilots to train safely, stories safely train us for the big challenges in the social world … and like a flight simulator, the main virtue of fiction is that we have a rich experience and don't die at the end."[20]

Karen Pearlman also touches upon fiction's virtue to attain abstract co-embodiment between the screen or, to use Jennifer Barkers affect terminology, the film's *body*, and the viewer's body.

According to Pearlman,

> "Our own bodies' history of movement allows us to imagine what movement feels like when we see or hear movement of other bodies"[21].

Pearlman refers to Modell's phrase "corporeal imagination" to explain that the body not only thinks, but it imagines how another body feels.

> "…it imagines in relation to its own experience, drawing on remembered sensations to recognize feeling in movement."[22]

Finally, all the above are aspects of what is known in dance as 'kinaesthetic empathy' which suggests that,

> "What we are doing when we watch dance is empathizing with the movement we see. We are experiencing a feeling for the dance in our own bodies, a kind of "inner mimesis."[23]

Cognitive Psychology is a large field of study, and this brief explanation is here to serve as a basis to understanding the source of Karen Pearlman's thought on editing.

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[20] Gottschall, Jonathan. The Storytelling Animal, 58, citing Keith Oatley, "The Mind's Flight Simulator," Psychologist 21 (2008): 1030–2.
[21] Pearlman, "Cutting Rhythms: Intuitive Film Editing, 19.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Pearlman, "Cutting Rhythms: Intuitive Film Editing, 18.

Film and its Context

A film by Teona Strugar Mitevska, with Zorica Nusheva, Labina Mitevska, Simeon Moni Damevski, Suad Begovski, Stefan Vujisić. It is a co-production between Macedonia's *Sisters and Brother Mitevski*, Belgium's *Entre Chien et Loup*, Slovenia's *Vertigo*, Croatia's *Spiritus Movens* and France's *Deuxieme Ligne Films* and *EZ Films*. *Pyramide International* handles the international rights. It was released in 2019.

1.1 About the author

Teona Strugar Mitevska is a director from Skopje, which was at the time a part of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. She was born on March 14, 1974. Mitevska studied filmmaking at New York University, and is best known for *I am from Titov Veles* (2007), *The Happiest Man on the Planet* (2022), and the film which is the topic of my thesis *God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya* (2019). Mitevska is a director and producer. Her sister, Labina Mitevska is an actress and producer. Labina Mitevska is known for her roles in films such as *Before The Rain* (Milcho Manchevski, 1994), *Welcome To Sarajevo* (Michael Winterbottom, 1996) and *Loners* (David Ondricek, 2000). Their brother Vuk is a sculptor, painter, and graphic designer. In 2001. Teona, together with her brother and sister, Vuk and Labina, founded a family production company *Sisters and Brother Mitveski.*

Teona Strugar Mitevska appeared on Macedonian Television from the age of six to twelve. Mitevska studied painting and graphic design and worked as an art director. Mitevska moved to New York where she completed a master's degree in film at Tisch School of the Arts at the University of New York.

Mitevska is dedicated to feminist activism through the medium of the arts and film. In effect to better equality between men and women in film, and as her references Mitevska discloses Lucrecia Martel, Claire Denis, Maya Deren, Kira Muratova, Athina Rachel Tsangari and Ursula Mayer.

In 2001, Teona Strugar Mitevska had her directorial debut with *Veta,* which won the Special Jury award at Berlinale. *How I Killed a Saint,* her first feature, premiered at the International Film Festival in Rotterdam in 2004. Film portrays a part of Macedonian life in 2001, when the former Yugoslav Republic evaded civil war with their Albanian citizens. The story is built on the love between brother and a sister who are frustrated by various political ideas. It was filmed in an occult and voyeuristic style, practically without close-ups. The director Mitevska realistically communicates the all-encompassing state of worry in North Macedonia on the edge of civil war.

In 2008, Teona Strugar Mitevska returns to Berlinale with *I am from Titov Veles.* The film was shown in more than eighty festivals around the world, and it won twenty international awards. In the biographical town of Veles, three sisters in mourning try to escape their communities' suffocating atmosphere.

In *The Woman Who Brushed Off Her Tears,* released in 2012, Spanish actress Victoria Abril and Labina Mitevska play two mothers whose personal and parallel stories intertwine despite their geographical distance.

Mitevska directs *When the Day Had No Name* in 2017. This time Mitevska uses a true event as the starting point, an unsolved murder case of four teenagers. The goal of the film is to research deep-rooted machoism, aggression, and cultural tension which harm her country. Film is shown in the Panorama selection at the sixty seventh Berlinale International Film Festival.

Film from 2019, *God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya*, was also inspired by a true event. It is a story of an audacious woman upset by the lack of job opportunities, motivation, who jumps for the cross that an Orthodox priest threw in the river during a traditional annual competition that should be reserved only for men. The film was awarded the Lux Prize of the European Parliament at the Zagreb Film Festival in 2019.

1.2 About the editor

Marie-Hélène Dozo is an editor from Namur, Belgium. Dozo worked on over forty films, including the last fifteen years of feature films by the Dardenne Brothers. Dozo is known for *Two Days, One Night* (Dardenne brothers, 2014), *The Kid with a Bike* (Dardenne brothers, 2011) Marielle Heller's *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* (2015) and *Kinshasa Kids* (Marc-Henri Wajnberg, 2012) for which she won the Magritte Award for Best Editing.

For over thirty years, Marie-Hélène Dozo has handled images, sounds and the silences[24]. Dozo became the chief editor for brothers Dardenne after their collaboration on *The Promise* in 1996. She also worked on many American films such as *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* (Marielle Heller, 2015) and *Gimme Shelter* (Ronald Krauss, 2013), and is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) which is the professional organisation in charge of the Oscar awards. Dozo mentions her eclectic choice of films, *Tess* (Roman Polanski, 1979) with Nastassja Kinski, *Le Bal* (Ettore Scola, 1983), *Paris, Texas* (Wim Wenders, 1984), *Maria's Lovers* (Andreï Konchalovsky, 1984). From *Some like it Hot* (Billy Wilder, 1959) until *Wanda* (Barbara Loden, 1970); through John Cassavetes—movies like *A Woman under the Influence* (1974), *Shadows* (1959), *Opening Night* (1977); the Italian neo-realism; *Mama Roma* (1962) from Pasolini, and for sure, Asiatic style like *Naked Island* (1960) from Kaneto Shindo; *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone* (2006) from Tsai Ming-Liang and *The Isle* (2000) from Kim Ki-Duk. And recently *Sweet Bean* (2015) from Naomi Kawase, and the incredible and specific *Wild Tales*, (2014) from Damian Szifron.

Dozo believes that art and cinema is a way to open our minds to others and note that the same connects humans' stories whatever their culture and history.[25]

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[24] Crittenden, Roger. 2012. *Fine Cuts: The Art of European Film Editing*. Taylor & Francis.
[25] ibid.

1.3 The Context of the Film

GEHNIP was made in North Macedonia, by a North Macedonian director, and fifty one percent of the production belongs to North Macedonia. North Macedonian history is eventful. From the ancient Kingdom of Macedon, to the Empire of Alexander the Great. Through the Roman Byzantine, Bulgarian, Serbian and Ottoman empires. Between the states of Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece during the Balkan wars and the two World Wars (1913,1914). The Republic of Macedonia within communist Yugoslavia (1945-91), and with Yugoslavia's collapse the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Finally,

> "after almost three decades of conservative nation-building, the 2018 agreement with Greece on the official name – North Macedonia – marked a victory for the country's international recognition, regional integration and economic stabilization."[26]

Which also became, according to Zeneli, a victory for NATO [and] the European Union.[27]

Following the federation's breakup, the independent Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, started to assert a sovereign nation-state, which entailed the construction of

> "a monolithic cultural identity often conflicted with the the histories it shared with neighboring Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia, as well as with its inherent ethnic and religious heterogeneity."[28]

After the fall of socialism, most post-Yugoslav countries experienced a revival of 19th century thought, its Catholicism and nationalism[29]. Even though Macedonia was the only country to gain independence without a war, it was nonetheless influenced by the identity politics which were put in place in the lead up to the Yugoslav war, and which were 'as much produced and

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[26] Papadimitriou, Lydia, and Ana Grgić. 2022. *Contemporary Balkan Cinema*. Traditions in World Cinema, 154.
[27] Zeneli, Valbona (2019) 'North Macedonia: A Name Agreement in the Age of Nationalism?' National Interest, 14 February <https://nationalinterest.org> (last accessed 7 June 2019), 20.
[28] Papadimitriou, Lydia, and Ana Grgić. 2022. *Contemporary Balkan Cinema*. Traditions in World Cinema, 154.
[29] Goll, Sebastian, Mlinarić Martin, and Johannes Friedrich, Gold. 2016. *Minorities under Attack : Othering and Right-Wing Extremism in Southeast European Societies*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 175.

constructed within as without.'[30] But why talk about war when *GEHNIP* was made almost three decades after the war?

According to Laura Sjoberg,

> "War is a process or continuum without a clear start or end point. The security concerns discussed above are features of life before, during, and after the event that war usually describes."[31]

The continuum is enabled by the decades of enforcing identity politics, leading up to, during and after the war.[32]

According to Blagojević Hughson,

> "Identity politics leading to the wars was mainly channeled through media and well supported by 'scholarly' knowledge; in fact, intellectual elites were highly mobilized for national projects (POPOV 2000)."[33]

Identity politics are strategies of *othering* and *othering* is the dominant discourse and practice of marginalization and suppression of groups based on their difference to the dominant or ruling group.

According to Johannes Gold,

> "othering encompasses processes of structured and structuring demarcations, hierarchizations and differentiations of the 'Self' towards the 'Other'."[34]

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[30] Roswitha Kersten-Pejanić, Simone Rajilić, and Christian Voss. 2012. *Doing Gender - Doing the Balkans*. Verlag Otto Sagner. https://download.e-bookshelf.de/download/0000/7539/31/L-G-0000753931-0002328529.pdf, 18.
[31] Sjoberg, Laura. 2013. *Gendering Global Conflict : Toward a Feminist Theory of War*. New York (N.Y.): Columbia, Cop, 506.
[32] Sjoberg, Laura. 2013. *Gendering Global Conflict : Toward a Feminist Theory of War*. New York (N.Y.): Columbia, Cop, 507.
[33] Roswitha Kersten-Pejanić, Simone Rajilić, and Christian Voss. 2012. *Doing Gender - Doing the Balkans*. Verlag Otto Sagner. https://download.e-bookshelf.de/download/0000/7539/31/L-G-0000753931-0002328529.pdf, 23.
[34] Goll, Sebastian, Mlinarić Martin, and Johannes Friedrich Gold. 2016. *Minorities under Attack : Othering and Right-Wing Extremism in Southeast European Societies*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 20.

Laura Sjoberg maintains,

> "a growing literature on ontological security characterizes state identity in terms of "sense of self," a language that has long been used in feminist accounts of nation and nationalism. Feminists who have worked on nationalism have argued that national identity and gender are inextricably linked and that "all nationalism are gendered, all nationalisms are invented, and all are dangerous." Feminists have shown gendered imagery is salient in the construction of national identities particularly when, often, women are the essence of, the symbols of, and the reproduction of state and/or national identity."[35]

State identity is built through identity politics and the identity politics in the lead up to the civil war were, according to Blagojević Hughson, enforced by the practices of *gendering* and *balkanization.* The latter being that of the region (west/east, west/Balkan) and, the former being that of gender (men/women).

The first level of *othering* – that of the region – is understood through the notion of semiperiphery.

> "To fully grasp the relevance of identity politics in former Yugoslavia it is important to situate it within the wider social context, that one of the semiperiphery. Semiperiphery as a concept which originated in the world-system theory (WALLERSTEIN 1979) is quite a useful tool to be applied to countries 'in transition', and the Balkans in particular."[36]

Blagojević Hughson highlights two characteristics of semipheriphery: lagging behind and de-development. The semiperiphery is 'lagging behind' the core,

> "because the core is not only more developed, but it is also setting up the norms, it serves as a model and it has the power to shape the semiperiphery. The semiperiphery

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[35] Sjoberg, „Gendering Global Conflict: Toward a Feminist Theory of War, 167-168.
[36] Roswitha Kersten-Pejanić, Simone Rajilić, and Christian Voss. 2012. *Doing Gender - Doing the Balkans.* Verlag Otto Sagner. https://download.e-bookshelf.de/download/0000/7539/31/L-G-0000753931-0002328529.pdf, 20.

is trying to 'catch up', and it is being molded both by the core (i.e., politics of conditionality of the EU) and through its own effort to match the core."[37]

This might seem as a characteristic that encourages the countries on the semipheriphery to grow and reach the same level of development as the core. But,

"simultaneously, the semiperiphery is always also in strong resistance to the core, swinging politically from one extreme to another. Since it is reactive in relation to the core, it is also necessarily 'lagging behind', and since it is 'lagging behind', it is never in a position to actually 'reach' the core, although it is constantly reaching out, because the core is always, by definition, a moving target. The relationship with the core, to the 'West' or 'Europe', is having a crucial impact on ideological wars within the *semiperipheral* countries, and accordingly it infuses enormous energy into identity politics."[38]

Moreover,

"the *semiperipheral* condition of Eastern and Southeastern Europe is profoundly the one of de-development in many dimensions, in terms of socio-economic development and worsening conditions of everyday life. In the economic domain de-development refers to structural change related to depreciation of human, institutional and infrastructural capital (MEURS/ RANASINGHE 2003). This depreciation has become a precondition for the exploitation of those resources within the framework of global neoliberal capitalism. In the social domain semi-peripheriality is related to *increased poverty*, *increased social insecurity, decreased social protection and stability, institutional destruction, anomie, increased crime and violence, population crises, high inclination to migration, increased mortality and even 'barbarization' through the violent conflicts* (BLAGOJEVIĆ 2009a)... There is a profound difference between poverty and impoverishment, between absence of development (as in some remote areas of the world), slowed down development (as

[37] Roswitha Kersten-Pejanić, Simone Rajilić, and Christian Voss. 2012. *Doing Gender - Doing the Balkans*. Verlag Otto Sagner. https://download.e-bookshelf.de/download/0000/7539/31/L-G-0000753931-0002328529.pdf, 20.
[38] Roswitha Kersten-Pejanić, Simone Rajilić, and Christian Voss. 2012. *Doing Gender - Doing the Balkans*. Verlag Otto Sagner. https://download.e-bookshelf.de/download/0000/7539/31/L-G-0000753931-0002328529.pdf, 21.

in some European countries faced with economic crises) and regressive trends of development in combination with some aspects of technological modernization (as in many post-communist countries)."[39]

Post-Yugoslav countries are experiencing *semiperipherality* characterized by lagging-behind and de-development. North Macedonia belongs to those countries, and within the context of European Union it is posited along the west/Balkan separation. According to Vessela S. Warner, it is only in Bulgarian and Turkish language that 'Balkan' carries a neutral or positive connotation, while the rest of the world uses it 'with an emotional ingredient varying from neutral to derogative'[40]. That is also true for its adjective form 'balkanic' or the noun 'balkanism'. It maintains a pejorative meaning across the world. While the term *balkanization* had come to refer to "the breaking up of a geographic area into small and often hostile units" as well as it had become 'a synonym for a reversion to the tribal, the backward, the primitive, the barbarian'.[41] European Union is therefore the transition to which Balkan countries should aim towards to enter the "civilized, forward thinking high society", but even if they do enter and their statutes changes it nevertheless remains inferior in relation to the west. Instead of reading Balkanism as being 'organized around the sense of binaries (rational/irrational, center/periphery, civilization/barbarism)', which is true for Orientalism, Blagojević Hughson understands Balkanism as a discourse most often defined by 'its liminality, in-betweeness, something being 'neither-nor'[42]. Therefore, Balkan is in the semiperiphery that is characterized by "lagging behind" and de-development.

The second aspect of identity politics is the *othering* through gender or *gendering*.

"Identity politics in former Yugoslavia had a shift from 'unity and brotherhood' and 'equality of sexes' until the 90s to nationalism and sexism from the 90s on. In many ways what was happening in the space of former Yugoslavia was typical for other post-communist societies, which only proves the point about the relevance of the

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[39] Roswitha Kersten-Pejanić, Simone Rajilić, and Christian Voss. 2012. *Doing Gender - Doing the Balkans*. Verlag Otto Sagner. https://download.e-bookshelf.de/download/0000/7539/31/L-G-0000753931-0002328529.pdf, 22.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Mariia Nikolaeva Todorova. 2009. *Imagining the Balkans*. New York: Oxford University Press, 47.

[42] Roswitha Kersten-Pejanić, Simone Rajilić, and Christian Voss. 2012. *Doing Gender - Doing the Balkans*. Verlag Otto Sagner. https://download.e-bookshelf.de/download/0000/7539/31/L-G-0000753931-0002328529.pdf, 24.

semiperipheral analytical perspective. Classical postulates of the 'scapegoat theory' could easily be connected to the Yugoslav situation in the 90s – economic crisis and search for somebody to blame. 'Somebody' had to be invented, through the process of intense differentiation of 'we-ness' versus 'they-ness', which easily turned into the opposition to Otherness and hate towards the Other. There was a gradual process of distancing, from the 'discovery' of difference within the entity of 'brotherhood and unity' within Yugoslavia, to emphasizing difference and claiming that they are more relevant than the similarities, and that they are almost eternal and essential. At the end of that process of distancing stood the claims about 'nonnegotiable differences' and 'unavoidable' war as a necessary 'defense'. The final step in the distancing process was de-humanization of the Other, where the Other was portrayed as an essential threat to survival. As it has been widely documented in a vast number of feminist publications the very logic of gender and nation construction is the same – differences are interpreted as inequalities and serve as a ground for social hierarchy (IVEKOVIĆ 1993)."[43]

Distancing based on religious belief was another strategy of othering and was emphasized in the process of intense differentiation in the lead up to the war as well as in the politics of independent post-Yugoslav nation-states. Sanja Đurin states that national identity was articulated through religious identity and uses the example of Croatia where „being Croat meant being a practicing Catholic" Christian.[44] In this vein, being Macedonian meant being a practicing Orthodox Christian.

"… the underlined presence of VMRO-DPMNE[45] as a leader of four coalition governments from 1998 to 2002 and from 2006 to 2016 has decisively shaped the country's political life. The party's most pronounced nationalistic (that is ethnic Macedonian) exclusionism materialised in an artistic 'renaissance', which embraced the ideas of ethnic purity and classical and Christian Europeanness and became affirmative of the country's cultural branding."[46]

[43] Roswitha Kersten-Pejanić, Simone Rajilić, and Christian Voss. 2012. *Doing Gender - Doing the Balkans*. Verlag Otto Sagner. https://download.e-bookshelf.de/download/0000/7539/31/L-G-0000753931-0002328529.pdf, 25.
[44] Goll, Sebastian, Mlinarić Martin, and Johannes Friedrich Gold. 2016. *Minorities under Attack : Othering and Right-Wing Extremism in Southeast European Societies*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 165.
[45] The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity
[46] Papadimitriou, Lydia, and Ana Grgić. 2022. *Contemporary Balkan Cinema*. Traditions in World Cinema, 156.

Even though North Macedonia gained independence without a war, there had been a conflict on the verge of war with the Albanian minority. The problematic treatment of Albanian minority was camouflaged under the guise of VMRO-DPMNE's coalition with Albanian-based democratic party the (DUI).

> "VMRO-DPMNE formed several coalition governments with the most prominent Albanian-based Democratic Unity for Integration (DUI), while at the same time it continued to employ populism and promote uni-ethnic policies…VMRO-DPMNE's conflicting treatment of the Albanian minority[7] has bolstered the confidence of the Macedonian nationalist electorate and its tolerance of stereotypical representations of Albanians in mass media and TV production (Alagjozovski 2012: 175–6). As a result of these neo-totalitarian contradictions, and the ensuing 2016 political crisis, a SDSM- led government came in power in 2017 and immediately began to repair the damage to the country's diplomatic relations and international image."[47]

This "pronounced nationalistic exclusionism" under the radical right groups was present in all post-Yugoslav countries and part of their politics was an underlying religious narrative which propagated gendered values.

> "The respective religion is not merely framed as some national historical heritage that has to be protected: A whole value system, derived from some religious views, is adopted and proposed in terms of a political program, based on religious morals and ethics. One prominent example of such use of religion is the installation or reinstallation of patriarchal structures of society throughout the post-Yugoslav area. As the nation is seen as a living organism, gender roles change completely: Women are regarded only in their reproductive function – they should give birth to new Serbs/Croats/Macedonians/etc. (cf. LER SOFRONIC 2008). In view of the new right, the structure of power in society should follow the divine triad of God–king– pater familias

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[47] Papadimitriou, Lydia, and Ana Grgić. 2022. *Contemporary Balkan Cinema*. Traditions in World Cinema, 168.

(SUNDHAUSSEN 2008: 48; KULJIC 1999: 430). Thus, as good wives, women should obey their husbands."[48]

Such ideology was implemented in schools where young women were prepared to become wives and mothers and, in this way, young women were indoctrinated into discovering their purpose in motherhood and servitude to their husbands.

When institutions of power intervene into the private sphere of citizens to govern the population and to shape identities tied to the body, they are forming a politic which Michel Foucault called *biopolitics* or *biopower*[49]. It is the ideology of *biopolitics* in which women's offspring are considered to continue the paternal lineage and are "inheriting" paternal ethnicity, not maternal. This sort of discourse supported war strategy of ethnic cleansing. Rape was a strategy to eliminate the undesirable ethnicity and women's bodies served as vehicles of ethnic cleansing. Women's bodies became a weapon of war strategies to defeat the enemy. After the war, in the construction on sovereign independent nations, the *biopolitics* enforced by religious and nationalist ideologies propagated, by means of media, education (schoolbooks) and church, women's roles as mothers and men's as fathers to encourage an increase in Croat/Serb/Macedonian population.

Blagojević Hughson ideas on identity politics help understand how difference and hierarchisation of identities were constructed before the civil war, they were in part responsible for the war in Yugoslavia and shape the contemporary lives of post-Yugoslav nation-states. Laura Sjoberg also highlights the importance of religious doctrine in the construction of post-Yugoslav nation states and how their ideology perpetuates gendered power. Therefore, the construction of a nation on Catholic foundation implies that nationalism is built on religious doctrine. Does not the foundation of Catholic religious philosophy propagate gendered power dynamics (man is god, woman is man's servant and man's possession), whether it is Orthodox Catholic or Roman Catholic? The decalogue states

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[48] Goll, Sebastian, Mlinarić Martin, and Johannes Friedrich Gold. 2016. *Minorities under Attack : Othering and Right-Wing Extremism in Southeast European Societies*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 243.
[49] Goll, Sebastian, Mlinarić Martin, and Johannes Friedrich Gold. 2016. *Minorities under Attack : Othering and Right-Wing Extremism in Southeast European Societies*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 172.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, wife, servants, animals, or anything else" (Ex 20:17).[50]

That commandment places wife in the same category as house, servant, animal, and anything else thereby reducing women to men's possession.

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[50] *Holy Bible : Containing the Old and New Testaments : King James Version.* n.d. New York: American Bible Society. (Ex: 20:17)

1.4 Plot

Petrunya (Nusheva) lives in Štip, a small Macedonian town; she is 32, graduated historian but cannot find a job, she lives with her parents, is stout and a little untidy. Mother, Vaska (Violeta Sapkovska), wakes her up because she ought to go to an appointment for an office job in a garment factory; she replies to her rudely (between the two there is a difficult relationship), gets ready in a rush and leaves. Her friend Blagica (Andrijana Kolevska) has a relationship without future with a married man and manages his mini boutique, she lends her a dress for the interview. At the destination, the boss (Mario Knezović) starts off by ridiculing her useless history degree and work experience, then lifts her skirt, caresses her thigh, but when she turns away, he says, 'I wouldn't even fuck you.'

On the way home, Petrunya finds herself in the centre of a local annual procession, Epiphany, at the end of which a crucifix is thrown into the river. It is believed that the crucifix brings year-round luck to the man who catches it. When the cross lands in water and men dive in, she instinctively jumps in the water, clothed, and grabs it. Arriving ashore, she resists the solicitations of the priest (Begovski) and the assaults of the most frantic (Ilija Volcheski, Igor Todorov, Nenad Angelković) and takes the cross home, while the priest consigns the local police chief (Damevski) with the case. At home, she has a scuffle with her mother who wishes Petrunya returns the cross, while her father, Stoyan (Petar Mircevski), tries to defend her. Petrunya's father Stoyan is passive but kind. Blagica arrives and she too tries to convince her and, warned by her, the police also arrive and take her to the police station.

Meanwhile, the television correspondent Slavica (Mitevska), who is there with a cameraman (Xhevdet Jashari) for a report on the procession, decides to make an extensive report on that story of patriarchal backwardness and, after doing a few interviews, stands outside the police station; shortly after, she receives a phone call from the network director who instructs her and the technician to return under penalty of firing them, but she – after letting go of the camera – decides to stay. Petrunya resists the solicitations by the police chief, the priest, and the coroner (Bajrush Mjaku), as well as the attacks of the swimmers who would like to lynch her, tacitly supported by the young agent Darko (Vujisic), with whom an affectionate understanding grows. Eventually the authorities are forced to release her and return the crucifix, but Petrunya gives it back to the priest, in front of the police station.

2 Setting up rhythmic patterns of tension and release

The important point for editors to consider, or rather to tune to, is the rhythmic pattern suggested by the first scene. Will its qualities of time and movement become a motif in the film? Will this motif form a rhythmic structure repeating and developing throughout the film? First scenes are surprisingly malleable and there are examples of first scenes being altered by editors

1. to clarify stakes sooner and set up a pattern of tension and release more effectively;
2. to alter the time structures of films and give them more complexity;
3. to introduce characters differently and align audiences more clearly;
4. or to set up visual style with shots that may have originally been intended to go elsewhere but which have the qualities the editor wants to use to paint the whole experience to come.[51]

2.1 Frist Scenes

According to Pearlman,

> "First scenes set up the event rhythm of films, create expectations, and set the pulses of audiences to synchronize with the movement of the story."[52]

GEHNIP's story shape starts by mixing two worlds – the archaic and traditional church procession and the innocent and bleak Petrunya. They are intermingled in a contrasting parallel pattern of indoor and outdoor. Each scene - up to the inciting incident is a – is different to the previous one. For example, the first scene is outdoor, the second indoor, the third outdoor, the fourth indoor and so on. In between the opening and closing, the strength of the shaping of the story in GEHNIP comes through the soft cuts between the scenes that link together, for example the procession, the church and Petrunya's bedroom. Moreover, the regular outdoor/indoor pattern also creates a contrast in light that retains audience attention.

According to Gulino and Shears,

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[51] Pearlman, Karen. 2016b. *Cutting Rhythms: Intuitive Film Editing*. Taylor And Francis, 138.
[52] Pearlman, Karen. 2009. "Cutting Rhythms in Chicago and Cabaret." *Cineaste* 34 (2): 28.

> Contrast via light, sound, or action causes brain activity to adapt and synchronize firing; without it, viewers become bored as neuronal patterns cease processing. [53]

The light changes between indoor (dark) and outdoor (light) which creates a contrast that keeps the viewer attentive. However, this changes once Petrunya is taken to the police station and the night falls. This visual stimulus is lost, and the film's rhythm drops.

GEHNIP opens with a high angle wide shot of a woman in the centre of an empty pool (Fig.1a). The slow zoom-in is contrasted with a punk-rock song and the combination creates a sense of claustrophobia and uneasiness. The song bursts the edges with its energy whilst the zoom – in limits Petrunya's space. The choice to start the film with this shot highlights Petrunya's importance in the story. Her importance is emphasised through the composition too. Petrunya stand in the middle of the frame. What is more, Petrunya does not move, the zoom-in on her limits her space and movement.

The choice of an empty pool as a location for the opening shot points out to the desolate nature of the town and the process of de-development in post-soviet countries. The location resembles the empty pool that can be found in the National Park Sutjeska which was built during the socialist regime on the grounds where Partisans fought the Nazi's and won. Once a place of youth gatherings with a camping site and a pool, but after the civil war and to this day, only an abandoned artifact provoking Yugonostalgia and evidence of de-development. Similarly, the empty outdoor pool Petrunya stands in and signifies a better past, a lack of future and opportunities for the youth of Štip.

Thus, this long, and slow zoom-in on Petrunya, along with a gushing soundtrack, exposes a theme of agitation in a desolate place (Fig.1a and 1b).

Fig.1a

Fig.1b

According to Jay Weissberg from Variety,

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[53] Gulino and Shears, „The Science of Screenwriting", 87.

> …though the excellent opening scene of Petrunya on a blue-painted field, accompanied by an amusingly foul-mouthed punk rock song, has no corresponding moment and feels like a detached teaser.[54]

Even though Weissberg misses to recognise the blue-painted field as the empty pool through which Petrunya walks in scene four, the opening scene does feel detached from the rest in terms of film's montage style. It is formed of only one shot that is slowly zooming in on, what seems like, our protagonist. The presumption is, *that* is the protagonist, because we are at the very beginning of the film and the character is placed in the middle of the shot. The shot lasts thirty seconds and is accompanied by an intense punk rock soundtrack. It serves as a punch in the audiences' face right at the start. Even though Jay Weissberg is right to state that there is no corresponding moment to the opening scene, it still has an important role in sparking the interest and of grabbing the attention of the viewer at the very beginning.

The title shows up on a black background, supporting the theme of rebellion and provoking the monotheistic patriarchal ideology: GOD EXISTS, HER NAME IS PETRUNYA. In this way, confirming the theme of protest and bringing to light the system it is targeting, the one of religion. But as previously explained, religion is not isolated but embedded within the power structures of a nation. The location, zoom-in and the symmetry, are clues to our audience that this is our protagonist – Petrunya, who lives in a desolate place and is under its pressure. It is the music and the title through which we are given clues that Pertunya will challenge the status quo of the religious gender hierarchy.

The pattern starts with tension on Petrunya, and its release happens in the next shot which is a wide still shot of a landscape. The second scene happens after the title and is formed out of seven shots. It begins with a wide shot of an Orthodox procession for the Epiphany.

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[54] Weissberg, Jay. 2019. "Berlin Film Review: 'God Exists, Her Name Is Petrunya.'" Https://Variety.com/. Variety. 2019. https://variety.com/2019/film/reviews/god-exists-her-name-is-petrunya-review-1203134497/.

2.a   2.b

2.c   2.d

The second shot is asymmetrical in composition (fig.2) in comparison to the shot of Petrunya in the pool, which is symmetrical. According to Pearlman, the choice of breaking the symmetry is also important in building the patterns of tension and release:

> "The tension between symmetry and asymmetry can be manipulated by an editor to create or disrupt style. A smooth, classical style will tend to emphasize symmetry in the composition of frames and the evenness of pulse. Disruption of symmetry then becomes an important dramatic break."[55]

This being the beginning of the film, the style is only becoming established, so to have it broken immediately in the next shot is disrupting. As the film continues its style retains the qualities of the second and third scene and the disruption, in fact, is the opening scene.

For an editor, when thinking about symmetry and asymmetry, it is also a question if the rhythm should emphasize balance or imbalance? It is evident from the first two scenes that the rhythm is emphasizing imbalance. This imbalance is created by the number of bodies within the shots and by the placement of these bodies within the shot (its composition). There is only one character, in the middle of the shot (symmetrical), in the opening scene, whereas there is a group of people, filling the right half of the frame (asymmetrical), in the second scene. These

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[55] Pearlman, „Cutting Rhythms", 42.

visual disruptions of symmetry between the scenes give hints to the theme of the film. One individual, a woman, in conflict with a group of religious men lead by the priest.
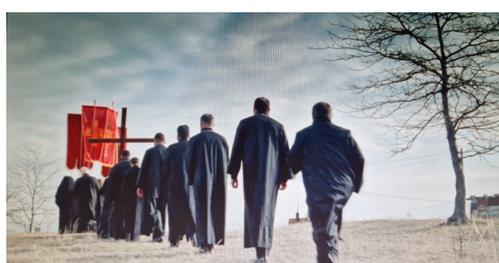
3.a

3.b

3.c

3.d

3.e

3.f

3.g

3.h

The second scene combines seven static shots of different angle's (on the horizontal plane) and sizes. It begins with wide shot of the procession (fig. 2), cuts to a close-up of a religious painting of a saint (fig. 3a) which cuts back to the procession (fig.3b) but from a different angle, in this shot the procession is moving towards the camera, in the wide shot the procession was moving from frame right to frame left, cut to a close-up of another religious painting with a devil depiction (3.c), cuts to a wide close up of procession passing by (3.d), another close up of the

painting (3.e), there are depictions of people with red tongues and a word that says heretics; cut to a wide shot of the procession from the back (3.f) cut to a shot of a religious painting of a saint (3.g) cut to a close up of someone sleeping under the covers (3.h), the face is not visible until later. A new scene begins with that last shot.

The cutting between outdoor procession in plain daylight to dark indoor shots of religious paintings is created as a thematic montage. The shots are, even though they are in different spaces, linked by the element of Orthodox church symbolism therefore – theme, and by the progressive rhythm of shot sizes, but they collide in terms of cutting between light and dark settings. All the painting shots feel like they were shot indoor, in a church perhaps, they are dark and warm, while the procession shots are in plain daylight. Even though all the painting shots belong to a category of what in filmic terms is a close-up, there the contents of the paintings are a different shot size.

This sequence is linked through the aural element of an orthodox song, and the progressive rhythm of shot sizes. The editing style fits Vsevolod Pudovkin's ideas by which the filmmaker could 'see through the confusion of history and psychology and create a smooth train of images which would lead toward an overall event.'[56]

The wide shot cuts to an insert of a medium-shot sized painting of a saint, to medium shot of the procession to a medium-shot sized painting of a devil (the devil can be seen from hips up) to close-up of the procession to a wide-shot sized painting with five or more people drawn and the writing "heretics" to a wide shot of the procession from the back to a close-up of a painting with a Saint to a close-up of Petrunya under the covers. Thus, the smoothness in this scene is created by the shared orthodox symbolic both visual and aural, the editing choice of movement between the same procession shot sizes and the shot-sized paintings. Moreover, the shots of the paintings are hand-help which gives them some movement that helps connect with the shots of the procession where there is movement within the shot. What breaks the smoothness of movement is the difference in light which points to a difference in space and the rhythm of movement is broken by juxtaposing shots of paintings – a non-moving image with the shot of a group *walking* in the Epiphany procession. These points of breaking the rhythm are signifiers to a presence of a theme within the cutting pattern of the scene. An editing pattern that links the images of devil and heretics with the procession and the image of a saint with Petrunya is problematic because it links Petrunya with the archetype of a saint. Women saints already exist, but they are simply female saints and not *she* god. Women saints are characterized by

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[56] Pudovkin, V.I., *On Film Technique and Film Acting*, p.31.

martyrdom and virginity. The connection between Petrunya lying under the covers and the church is also done through light, both settings are dimly lit with warm tones.

This carefully edited sequence between the three locations was created in the edit, i.e., it was not written in the script. The painting shots from the church interior were not scripted for the opening procession scene but were shot for a scene in the church that happens later in the film.

If we imagine the same scene without the paintings that are intercut between the priest, followers of the procession and Petrunya, there would be a harsh cut between the procession and the shot of Petrunya under the cover, colliding them and creating a sense of discrepancy. Instead of creating a sense of disagreement or distance through editing, the intercutting of procession (daylight, outdoors) with church paintings (dark, indoors) serves as a bridge between the Orthodox procession and Petrunya, smoothly connecting the three spaces and creating a sense of the three belonging to one. The linkage of Petrunya to the painting of a saint perpetuates the idea of Petrunya's sainthood.

According to Shears and Collins,

> '…saying more with less is key to keeping audience's attention. Information that is withheld or supplied teasingly will keep readers guessing; or as constructionist psychology suggests, allows your audience to rely on their schemas. Providing true information in clues, instead of stating the facts, provokes audience participation—we want to verify our schematic assumptions—are we right? It is thus best to begin your screenplay with a puzzle, not a story."[57]

The opening scene is formed of one shot and is different in its style to the rest of the film, it is an energy-infused visual metaphor for the overall theme of the film. The second scene is that of the procession and the third scene begins under Petrunya's covers, as she lies in her bed in a tight medium shot. The first two scenes do not have any dialogue. The dialogue starts in the third scene, and it is spoken by Petrunya's mother off screen. This editing choice to introduce mother off screen will be elaborated on in the last chapter. The first two scenes in the film are not the same as the first two scenes in the script. The most significant change is that of introducing the procession for Epiphany in the second scene. In the script, this would have been a shot of Petrunya walking home late at night. By placing the procession in between the two scenes with

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[57] Gulino & Shears, "The Science of Screenwriting", 106.

Petrunya the film's structure is given more complexity. The film ceases being chronological and instead becomes parallel between Petrunya's life and the church/procession. Moreover, through the editing technique of linkage (of three different locations, outdoor procession, church inserts and Petrunya's bedroom) it introduces the character differently and aligns the audience more clearly with the film's themes. For the reasons outlined above, the editing of the first scenes, in comparison to the narrative in the script, provides true information in clues, instead of stating the facts and in such a way provokes audience participation.

2.2 First and Last Shot

The Beginning, figures 4.a, b, c (from left to right)

The End, figures 5.a, b, c (from left to right)
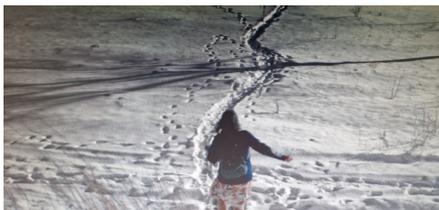
The opening shot is unusual as it forms the whole scene i.e., the scene is formed of that shot. It is placed before the title, and it is of a different style to the scenes after the title. As mentioned before, Jay Weissberg from Variety criticizes the opening shot because it 'has no corresponding moment and feels like a detached teaser'.[58] In the script, there is no sign of this shot being the opening shot. However, there *is* a corresponding moment at the very end of the movie. It is the

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[58] Weissberg, Jay. 2019. "Berlin Film Review: 'God Exists, Her Name Is Petrunya.'" Https://Variety.com/. Variety. 2019. https://variety.com/2019/film/reviews/god-exists-her-name-is-petrunya-review-1203134497/.

shot of a deer. A deer that has only been mentioned once in the dialogue but never shown. The shot of the deer is introduced in the end and thus also feel detached. Nonetheless it serves a metaphorical purpose. In the script, the deer is mentioned more often and the placing of the shot of the deer is different to the script. In the script, the deer is mentioned for the first time in scene twenty (Excerpt 1 from the script).

Excerpt 1.

```
INT. LIVING ROOM – DAY

        Petrunya enters the living room, there is a television, and
        both of her parents sit in front of it. On the wall between
        them hangs a painting of hunter, who hunts a roe deer.

        Father is covered with a blanked and has a pillow behind
        his head. Mother smiles as she enters the room. She sits
        between them with the picture hanging above her head.[59]
```

The second time it appears is in scene twenty - nine. In this moment in the plot, Petrunya is held in the police station and in this scene the journalist Slavica interviews Petrunya's parents at home. The deer is mentioned after Slavica's explanations and instructions on what they should say and how they should behave, in other words, just before the interview starts.

Excerpt 2.

```
        SLAVICA
    I trust you, and that is obvious, so I ask you to repeat
    that on the camera. Do not look directly at the camera, but
    at me, don't be afraid, behave as if camera wasn't here.
    Show your feelings freely, people are on your side, they
    understand the injustice which was brought upon your
    daughter. (pause) Let's start!
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[59] Tataragić, Elma., Strugar, M. Teona. 2019. Script. „God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya", 35.

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Vaska and her husband nod. They sit next to each other. Typical
painting of paysage of a hunter hunting a deer hangs between
them, but the deer is not there.[60]
```

It appears that the scriptwriter and director intended to create a symbolic connection between the deer and Petrunya. This is evident because they emphasise that the deer is in the painting when Petruyna is sitting with her parents and the deer is out of the painting when Petrunya is no longer with her parents but held in the police station. The two shots mirror each other, one with Petrunya and the deer, the other without Petruyna and without the deer are both same angle and same size (eye- level, wide shot). Therefore, the connection between Petrunya and deer imply their metaphorical feature. However, this painting is only seen in a wide shot with the parents, and it is too small to be noticed, there is no insert of the painting and during the screening at Zagreb Film Festival, I did not notice it and neither did I notice it on the second or third viewing. This comparison of Petrunya to the deer is more evident in script and can be noticed much earlier in comparison to the film.

The third time that the deer is mentioned in the script is at the very end of scene thirty-five. In this scene, Petrunya is released from the police station, but the cross has been confiscated from her. She leaves but gets ambushed by the group of men who demand that the cross is theirs and it is the character from the angry mob who claims he caught it. Petrunya leaves the station. Eventually the crowd push her and throw a bucket of water on her, then policeman Darko pushes them away and pulls Petrunya back into the station. At the end of this scene, as per script, there should be a shot of a deer. In the film, however, the shot appears at the very end of the film.
In the following scene, thirty – six, deer is mentioned for the last time.

Excerpt 3.

```
Scene 36. INT. POLICE STATION. NIGHT.

              PETRUNIJA
         Have I seen a deer?
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[60] Tataragić, Elma., Strugar, M. Teona. 2019. Script. „God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya", 63.

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                    Slavica looks her in surprise.


                              SLAVICA
                         Which deer?


            Darko addresses Slavica.


                              DARKO
                    I think you should go.⁶¹
```

The motive of the deer is planted in the script and connected to Pertunya in a similar manner to a literary simile. Therefore, just drawing from the script, Petrunya is compared to a roe deer, in the animation world also known as the character of Bambi, thus she is compared to something innocent and fragile. This idea of Petruyna's innocence is embedded in her character on multiple layers and early on but is not problematized to challenge the notion of womanhood and innocence. Instead, it supports the construct that likens female heroism to innocence whereby it also supports the larger scheme of patriarchal patterns of power that are harmful to all.

        The decision that was made in the edit to change the timing of the shot of the deer and to introduce the shot of Petrunya standing in the empty swimming altered the message of Petrunya's heroism and innocence that the film intended to get across. Marie-Hélène Dozo did that by framing the character, at the beginning, as a rebellious woman, standing in the abandoned swimming pool, the rebellion element to her character is added mostly through the choice of music. And by changing the ending shot to the deer shot, i.e., by changing the placing of the deer shot. By placing it at the very end of the film it creates a different signification. One that when compared to the first shot says: Petrunya might have had some rebellious tendencies at the start, but she turned from a rebel into a deer at the end of the film. This editing decision brought a certain self-awareness of the film's flaw regarding the intention for Petrunya's character and the character that is observed on screen. Not only that, if the deer was placed in the scene where Petrunya is attacked it would only amplify the binary whereby Petrunya is a deer, therefore week and fragile, while Darko is a strong man because he manages to fight the mob and save Petrunya from them by returning her back to the police station. Ultimately, when the first and final shot are compared, it is evident that Petrunya goes from the need to rebel to a deer simile.

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⁶¹ Tataragić, Elma., S. Mitevska, Teona. 2019. Script. „God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya", 77.

2.3 Low point or a drop in tension/release pattern

Here I will describe the low point, which is scene forty. It is the scene after Petrunya gets attacked by the rabid mob in front of the police station, is rescued by policemen Darko, and brought back to the police station.

There is a drop in the tension/release pattern because it is the first scene, with dialogue, made of only one long take. At this point, Darko finds Petrunya alone in the staircase of the police station. Petrunya is soaked because the rabid mob threw a bucket of water on her in front of the police station. Darko offers Petrunya his jacket and they have a conversation between the glass doors.
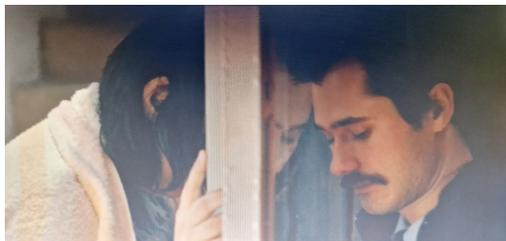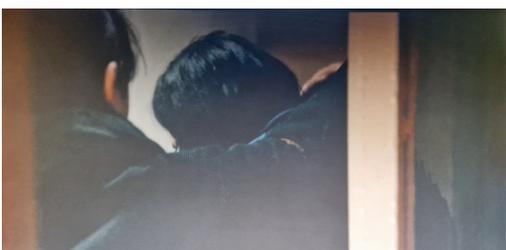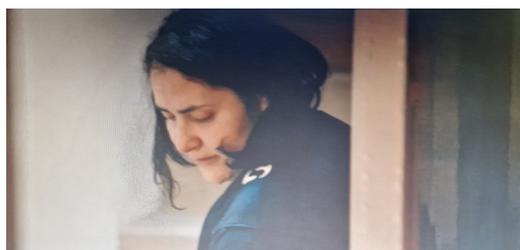
5.a

5.b

5.c

5.d

5.e

5.f

5.g

5.h

In the dialogue, Petrunya asks Darko if she should make a statement for the news, and when Darko says "I don't know, everyone likes watching TV so it might help", she replies "you think I need help?" (Excerpt 4). The next part of the dialogue depicts Petrunya and her motivation to jump for the cross as irrational.

Excerpt 4.

                    DARKO
        Frankly, I don't know.

    He looks around.

                    PETRUNYA
        I never meant to cause trouble.

    Darko is confused.
                    DARKO
        That doesn't matter. It's none of my
        business.

                    PETRUNIJA
        You are lucky. You've got a job and all.

                    DARKO
        Jackpot. Have you seen who I work with? I
        wish I had your courage.

                    PETRUNIJA
        There was no courage. I jumped without
        thinking.[62]

What Weissberg describes as 'reducing Petrunya to a love-starved-woman thrilled to have a supportive man say "we'll stay in touch"[63] is called the 'prince charming syndrome', meaning our protagonist can only be happy once she has a potential partner and a romantic relationship. However, the film's editing creates a self-reflexive dramaturgy whereby the editing choice to place this romantic one long-take scene just after the scene where Darko's police colleagues call him

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[62] Tataragić, Elma., S. Mitevska, Teona. 2019. Script. „God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya", 82.
[63] Weissberg, Jay. 2019. "Berlin Film Review: 'God Exists, Her Name Is Petrunya.'" Https://Variety.com/. Variety. 2019. https://variety.com/2019/film/reviews/god-exists-her-name-is-petrunya-review-1203134497/.

'prince warming' because he looks for a blanket to give to Petrunya. The 'prince warming' phrase does not appear in the script, nor does it appear in the dialogue between the policemen. It is placed in the subtitles as a take on the translation.

According to Laura Sjoberg,

> "Feminist poststructuralism focuses on how gendered linguistic manifestations of meaning, particularly strong/weak, rational/emotional, and public/private dichotomies, serve to empower the masculine and marginalize the feminine."[64]

The strong, rational, and public are seen as masculine whilst the weak, emotional and private are seen as feminine.

Petrunya's lines 'do you think I need help'? 'I never meant to cause trouble', and 'I jumped without thinking' perpetrate the gendered manifestations of meaning which Sjoberg writes about. Petrunya's weakness is encoded in her insecurity (do you think I need help?), her irrationality is read in her statement 'I jumped without thinking' and her good girl programming is visible in 'I never meant to cause trouble'.

Petrunya is thrilled because Darko, a young policeman, lets her keep his police jacket and hints that they'll stay in touch. Petrunya then exits the police station and returns the cross to the priest saying that she does not need it, that she does not need the luck and that he needs it more and that they need it more (referring to the police and the angry mob). Through this, the writers are underlining that she feels lucky because of the cause-and-effect chain whereby her happiness and 'feeling lucky' is the consequence of the previous interaction with Darko, the policeman.

Margaret Miles argues that 'a religion of romantic love has replaced religion as the force that creates and attracts commitment,' and that 'salvation through romance has replaced Christian salvation and occupies its place in the film's cultural psyche.'[65]

Even though Strugar Mitevska and co-writer Elma Tataragić approach the themes in a straightforward manner, best elaborated by Jay Weissberg of Variety.

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[64] Sjoberg, „Gendering Global Conflict", 20.
[65] Margaret Ruth Miles. 1996. *Seeing and Believing : Religion and Values in the Movies*. Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 150.

Patriarchy, which punishes women for daring to step out of line; Religion, which cowardly condones virulent misogyny; and Tradition, which blindly conforms to the strictures imposed by the first two[66].

The narrative condones to the same principles of patriarchal power – by making our heroine – "innocent" and by offering her salvation through romance.

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[66] Weissberg, Jay. 2019. "Berlin Film Review: 'God Exists, Her Name Is Petrunya.'" Https://Variety.com/. Variety. 2019. https://variety.com/2019/film/reviews/god-exists-her-name-is-petrunya-review-1203134497/.

3 Analysis of Petrunya's Character

The name, Petrunya, is significant to the plot and the creation of the protagonist's character. The subtext of Petrunya's innocence, set up by telling a story of virgin Petrunya to her friend Blagica is problematic at a level of character development whereby Petrunya's heroic personality is only approved by her innocence.

Excerpt 5.

                         PETRUNYA
          Once upon a time, in Rome, there live a
          virgin. It was time for her to be
          married. Actually, a guy wanted to
          marry her, but her father refused. He
          wanted her to remain a virgin. He
          decided to make her ill, and when she
          got better, he made her ill again. This
          went on and on until she died a virgin
          and became a saint.

                         BLAGICA
          So, the father was a dickhead?

                         PETRUNYA
          Totally. Want to know her name?

     Silence.

                         PETRUNYA
          Petrunya!

                         BLAGICA
          Are you a virgin too?

     Petrunya smiles. [67]

However, Petrunya's heroism is reduced in the film in comparison to the script. In the script Petrunya decides to follow Darko's advice and she gives a statement to the journalist.

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[67] Tataragić, Elma., S. Mitevska, Teona. 2019. Script. „God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya", 15.

<pre>
                            PETRUNYA

        I won because I am a better swimmer than the
        rest…I am unemployed at thirty-two. I have a
        right to be happy. I expect to find
        employment. Also, I hope I will be an
        example to other women in Macedonia to jump
        for the cross more. [68]
</pre>

By removing this scene where Petrunya gives a statement for the TV journalist, which is then broadcast on the North Macedonian news, shows that she did not follow Darko's advice, but her own intuition and that she does want to be an idol or an icon to be followed by others.

Clarissa W. Atkinson divides the approaches of early Christian writers to virginity into roughly two categories: on the one hand there is those (such as St. Jerome) who see virginity 'as a physiological state,' the virgin being someone 'who has never had sexual intercourse"; on the other, there are those (like St. Augustine) by whom 'virginity is defined as a moral or a spiritual state – as purity, or humility. Petrunya as a character succumbing to both cases.

> In other words, virginity fluctuates on the boundaries of a model that founds itself on two regulating categories that are seen (and constructed) as separate: the physical body and social performance.[69]

Petrunya's character is built on the story of Petrunya the virgin from Rome. However, Petrunya's father is supportive[70] and he does not try to make her ill so she cannot marry. Nonetheless, the hints of our protagonist Petrunya getting ill are there. She jumps in the cold river and walks back home in the cold. The angry mob splash a bucket of water at Petrunya in front of the police station. Like Joan of Arc, Petrunya is a martyr.

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[68] Tataragić, Elma., S. Mitevska, Teona. 2019. Script. „God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya", 107.
[69] Atkinson, Clarissa W, Constance H Buchanan, and Margaret R Miles. 1987. *Immaculate & Powerful : The Female in Sacred Image and Social Reality*. Boston, Mass.: Crucible, 54.
[70] Tataragić, Elma., S. Mitevska, Teona. 2019. Script. „God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya", 60.

RELATIONSHIP WITH MOTHER (VASKA)

Sue Einhorn claims that 'women keep renewing the power relations of patriarchy and the contempt of misogyny through policing each other'. [71] Petrunya's mother is the one that calls the police on her when she finds out that Petrunya caught the cross. Her mother says that the cross does not belong to her. Einhorn explains that mothers need to protect and keep their daughters safe by teaching them to conform to the mother's experience of this patriarchal world. Moreover,

> "Women police each other to protect themselves from the risks attached to male violence but also to police each against the risks of not conforming. Women often feel freer to express their own aggression and even violence, painful as it is, but safer when directed to sisters, children, and friends. Thus, women also fear each other."[72]

In 'The Pervert's Guide to Cinema', Slavoj Žižek maintains that voice is one possible realization of *autonomous partial objects*, in the sense of, partial objects being 'organs without bodies, they embody what Freud called death drive which is not a Buddhist striving of annihilation.

> "Death drives is the opposite, it is the dimension of the undead, of living dead, of something which remains alive even after it is death and is in a way immortal in its deadness itself, goes on, insists, you cannot destroy, the more you cut it, the more it goes on. This kind of diabolical deadness is what partial object is about."[73]

Žižek goes on to say that the only way for me to get rid of 'autonomous partial object' is to become this object. The straightforward examples of the autonomous partial objects on screen are, the red ballerina shoes, the fist/hand of Edward Norton in fight club, the puppet hand, playback "singing" scene in Mulholland drive, but that the most truthful realization of the autonomous partial object is voice in The Exorcist (1973).

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[71] Einhorn, "From a Woman's Point of View. How Internalized Misogyny Affects Relationships between Women", 489.

[72] Einhorn, "From a Woman's Point of View. How Internalized Misogyny Affects Relationships between Women", 490.

[73] Fiennes, Sophie , dir. 2012. *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology*. Film. United Kingdom: P Guide Productions, Zeitgeist Films.

"…Remember that this was a young beautiful girl at the beginning of the film, but what happened? Something possessed her, but who possessed her? Voice, in its obscene dimensions. The first big film about this traumatic dimension of the voice, the voice which really floats around, and it is a traumatic presence feared until the ultimate moment, object of anxiety, which distorts reality, was Fritz Lang's *The Testament of Doctor Mabuse (1933),* another example is Charlie Chaplin's *The Dictator (1940).*[74]"

Vaska, Petruyna's mother is, a number of times, introduced only with her voice and only later seen. The first example is in scene three, right after the procession, for which I already described the first shot of Petrunya under the covers (fig. 3h). In this opening of a new scene, or rather the first shot of the new scene, which is linked, in such an effective way described earlier, through the paintings to the scene of the procession, her mother exists only as a voice and as a hand, both mentioned as having the undead nature of partial objects explained by Žižek[75]. Petrunya's mother says 'get up!'[76]. The second example of Vaska being introduced with voice first is in scene five. Scene four starts when Petrunya leaves the house, knowing that she has one hour until the job interview, and walks through Štip, we see a medium shot of her closing the door, wide shot of her walking across the rail tracks, with an Orthodox church in the top right corner of the frame, a residential building and a couple of other sparse houses. Then we see Petrunya walking on the side of the road close to petrol station through the empty pool, both in a tracking close up with instrumental music that fades in on the first shot and ends on a close up of Petrunya, after she climbs out of the pool. In the same close up, we hear her mother say 'stop!'[77], 'wait, let me tell you something', to Petrunya's disbelief she replies, 'what the hell are you doing?'. The lines by mother Vaska are all said off screen. Another example is when Petrunya comes back home after she caught the cross and hides in her room. Vaska's voice is heard from behind the closed doors, 'open the doors!'[78]. Vaska in these three examples is heard first and later seen. Vaska's lines are 'get up!', 'stop!', 'open the doors!' which are all exclamations and orders. The editing decision to introduce Vaska with voice first and to have that as a pattern along with the lines that were chosen

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[74] Fiennes, Sophie , dir. 2012. *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology*. Film. United Kingdom: P Guide Productions, Zeitgeist Films.
[75] Fiennes, Sophie , dir. 2012. *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology*. Film. United Kingdom: P Guide Productions, Zeitgeist Films.
[76] Tataragić, Elma., S. Mitevska, Teona. 2019. Script. „God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya", 10.
[77] Tataragić, Elma., S. Mitevska, Teona. 2019. Script. „God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya", 107.
[78] Tataragić, Elma., S. Mitevska, Teona. 2019. Script. „God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya", 39.

'get up!', 'stop!' 'open the doors!' gave Vaska's voice the quality of being a partial object that floats around and polices Petrunya.

Conclusion

The three main questions which were the foundation of the thesis were how does *GEHNIP* expose, subvert, and push the envelope of gender hierarchies (patriarchies, in fact) within the context of the Balkans; how are these themes, its story and characters built through the montage and to what extent does *GEHNIP* break the art canon's representation of women as „either wives, mothers, maids or mistresses"?[79][80]

GEHNIP exposes gender patriarchies within the Orthodox Catholic church, the state (police) and, the labour market in the context of North Macedonia and the Balkans. However, it does not manage to subvert or push the envelope of gender hierarchies because its narrative propagates a 'salvation through romance' resolution without any job prospects in sight for Petrunya. Moreover, it builds its protagonist on the archetype of a virgin heroine.

The second chapter offers a comparative analysis between certain moments in the script and in the film. The editing choices made there created a more complex time structure, provided a different introduction to the character and in doing so aligned the audience with what is to come. Furthermore, the placing of certain shots was analysed, especially the choice to change the timing of the shot of the deer from scene thirty – five (just after Darko rescues Petrunya from the angry mob standing in front of the police station) to the very last shot. In the script, the last shot describes Petrunya standing next to the river and feeling 'free'. This ending would further reinforce the 'salvation through romance' and symbolic and descriptive representation of freedom rather than a productive one. The script's ending gives a false sense that something has changed but fundamentally nothing has changed. Petrunya is still unemployed in a North Macedonian town which is facing de-development after the fall of communism.

The decision to leave out Petrunya's statement for the TV news lessened Petrunya's heroic representation and thus helped reduce the emphasis on the virgin heroine archetype on which Petrunya's character was built. The choice to introduce Petrunya's mother Vaska, on many occasions, solely as a voice was built up in its signification.

Finally, the ways the script was altered through the edit created a more compelling narrative structure and in doing so improved the film's rhythm. It helped align the audience with the character and make her more relatable by reducing Petrunya's 'heroism'.

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[79] O'Kelly, C.G. Gender role stereotypes in fine art: A content analysis of art history books. *Qual Sociol* **6**, 136–148 (1983). https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00987084
[80] Alzahrani, Fahad A.. "The portrayal of Women and Gender Roles in Films." (2016).

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