

ACADEMY OF THE PERFORMING ARTS IN PRAGUE

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Department of FAMU International Cinema and Digital Media
Screenwriting

MASTER'S THESIS

Intertextuality in Jim Jarmusch's
Only lovers left alive and Paterson

Rovshan Gambarov

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THEATRE FACULTY

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Thesis advisor: Neil Andrew Taylor

Examiner:

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**Intertextuality in Jim Jarmusch's
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The undersigned have examined the thesis entitled **Intertextuality in Jim Jarmusch's Only lovers left alive and Paterson** (presented by *Rovshan Gambarov*, a candidate for the degree of Master of Fine Arts – Cinema and Digital Media - Screenwriting) and hereby certify that it is worthy of acceptance.

Date

Advisor's name

Date

Committee member's name

Date

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DECLARATION

I declare that I have prepared my master's thesis independently on the following topic:

**Intertextuality in Jim Jarmusch's
Only lovers left alive and Paterson**

under the expert guidance of my thesis advisor and with the use of the cited literature and sources.

Prague, date:

Signature of the candidate

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Abstract

The thesis is a study of intertextual relations between Jim Jarmusch's films and other works of cinema and literature. The aim of the thesis is to analyze referential and typological intertextuality in two of Jarmusch's movies, *Only lovers left alive* (2013) and *Paterson* (2016), by exploring direct and indirect connections to other texts. Jarmusch's films are very dense with intertextuality, including allusions, quotations, calque and parody of genre clichés, which is done intentionally in order to influence and enrich an audience's interpretation of the ideas expressed in his films. I argue that exploring intertextuality in Jarmusch's movies can contribute to better understanding of his messages to audience, especially his social commentaries, expressed in deep layers of the films.

Abstrakt

Diplomová práce se zabývá zkoumáním intertextuálních vztahů mezi filmy Jima Jarmusche a jinými díly kinematografie a literatury. Cílem této diplomové práce je analyzovat referenční a typologickou intertextualitu dvou Jarmuschových filmů: *Přežijí jen milenci* (2013) a *Paterson* (2016) na základě prozkoumání přímých a nepřímých souvislostí s jinými texty. Jarmuschovy filmy jsou nabitý intertextualitou, počítaje v to narážky, citace, kalky a parodie na žánrová klišé, což je děláno záměrně s cílem ovlivnit a obohatit interpretaci myšlenek, které jsou vyjádřeny ve filmu, publikem. Tvrdím, že zkoumání intertextuality v Jarmuschových filmech může přispět k hlubšímu porozumění jeho poselství publiku, obzvláště pokud jde o jeho komentáře společnosti, které jsou vyjádřeny v hlubších vrstvách filmu.

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I. Introduction

This thesis is motivated by my fascination with Jim Jarmusch's complex storytelling. His movies are usually dense with intertextual connections to other works of cinema and literature and require putting his ideas into context of other texts. The aim of the thesis is to analyze intertextuality in Jarmusch's movies, which can contribute to a better understanding of his messages to audience, especially his social commentaries, expressed in the films. In this regard, I will look at two of Jarmusch's recent works: *Only lovers left alive* (2013) and *Paterson* (2016), which have two layers of storytelling. On the surface both films depict relationship between husband and wife, but once put into the context of referred sources the films become social commentaries on problems of modern society, such as consumerism, corporate greed, commercialized art, etc.

Wide use of intertextuality in Jarmusch's movies reflects complexity of his sources of inspiration. In his 2004 interview to *Moviemaker* magazine, Jarmusch expressed his opinion on notion of originality:

Nothing is original. Steal from anywhere that resonates with inspiration or fuels your imagination. Devour old films, new films, music, books, paintings, photographs, poems, dreams, random conversations, architecture, bridges, street signs, trees, clouds, bodies of water, light and shadows. Select only things to steal from that speak

directly to your soul. If you do this, your work (and theft) will be authentic.¹

Before analyzing intertextuality in Jarmusch's films in next chapters, I will give an overview of studies on intertextual relations, forms of intertextuality, their use in cinema and themes explored in Jarmusch's body of work.

Intertextuality: studies, forms, history

Although the term "intertextuality" was first used in 1967 by Bulgarian-French philosopher, literary critic Julia Kristeva, history of development of an idea of intertextual dialogue starts with Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), Russian philosopher and literary critic, who in his studies drew attention to nature of human speech, spoken word. In his opinion, every utterance of a human being about certain objects also contains other people's views and comments on the same object. According to Bakhtin, this is because a human being is not an isolated individual, he or she is in everyday communication with other people, using words in certain contexts. Bakhtin calls it "heteroglossia". He uses the same theory in analyzing works of literature. In his opinion, originality of a novel doesn't come from unique elements invented by an author, it comes from

¹ Jarmusch, J. Things I've Learned: Jim Jarmusch. MovieMaker, June 5, 2013. Accessed July 11, 2020 <https://www.moviemaker.com/jim-jarmusch-5-golden-rules-of-moviemaking/>

his or her ability to create texts, which expresses a new perspective within the context of discourses appeared in other writers' texts.

Kristeva further developed Bakhtin's ideas, with focus on a written text. In her view, no text is authentic, every text is a transformation of other texts. According to her, writers are not creators of original texts, they are mediators between a text and a reader. In Kristeva's opinion, when a writer creates a text, he or she voluntarily, or involuntarily refers to other texts created before, thus, every text absorbs social, cultural codes of previously created texts, those codes interact with each other in a newly created text and are passed farther to other texts. Kristeva thinks, that any text is a mosaic of quotations. By reading a text created by a writer, a reader enters a world of allusions, quotations, other intertextual relations, interpreting the text in a unique way. According to Kristeva, there are as many meanings of the text as the number of the readers. In her view, good texts are those which encourage readers to think, interpret the text and come up with their own meaning.

French literary theorist Roland Barthes (1915-1980) also rejected idea of originality of texts. According to him, a writer has no role in understanding of a text by a reader, a writer just passes to a reader a text full of intentional or unintentional references to other texts. In this respect, Barthes announced that "the author is dead" and considered a reader an only creator of a text's meaning. According to him, since readers can represent different social classes, have different ideological views, educational, cultural background, texts can be interpreted in

various ways by them. Barthes even rejected possibility of interpreting the meaning of literary work based on the author's biographic elements found in it. For him a writer and a reader are unrelated. Barthes attached huge importance to the works of modernists, such as James Joyce, Marcel Proust, Franz Kafka, since their works contained a great number of intertextual elements. Most modernists challenged moral values of the society, breaking free from old-fashioned conventions, opening a debate, inviting the readers to actively participate in interpretation of the text.

Modernist writers and later post-modernist authors made intertextuality a building block of their craft. Allusion, reference, quotation, pastiche and parody became powerful artistic devices in their hands in creating innovative works.

Reference is a direct referral to other texts, when, for example, names of certain books openly mentioned, or posters of certain movies are shown on the screen.

Allusion refers to other works of literature, cinema indirectly, by naming some characters, hinting at some details of their life, etc. Both allusion and reference encourage the readers or viewers to make comparisons by going into other texts. It relies on their prior knowledge.

Quotation is using fragments from other texts. It can be explicit, or incorporated into a new text, without revealing the source. Quotation in literature and cinema can serve several purposes. For example, by quoting religious, political, or poetic texts, a writer can try ideologically

influence the readers, or simply show his or her respect to authors of cited sources.

Pastiche is an imitation of other texts, films, musical works, etc. Film directors can imitate other film's style, camera angles, lighting, specific shots, even entire sequences. It is usually done out of respect to other filmmakers. But some post-modernists can use pastiche as a compositional technique as well. Some writers, filmmakers can tell their stories, through combining, mixing elements from different genres.

Parody, in most cases, ridicules the source it refers. Unlike pastiche, parody doesn't imitate, but reinvents, transforms other texts. Parody is very popular in cinema. By the end of twentieth century, most of the popular film genres went through a parody stage, including westerns, film noirs, horror films, thrillers, science fiction films, etc. Need for parody becomes inevitable when certain genres are overexploited for commercial purposes and their plots, character types become very predictable and banal.

Intertextuality was widely used by French New Wave directors. The movement was a reaction to film traditions of their times. Jean-Luc Godard's 1960's films contained a great number of references, reflecting his anti-Hollywood sentiments, his rejection of idea of commercialized film industry, expensive film production. In *Breathless* Patricia, an American girl gives a copy of a New York Herald Tribune she sells to Michel, a Frenchman, who hands it back, saying that there is no a horoscope in it.

He likes horoscopes, because “they are about future”.² With this allusion Godard conveys to audience his anti-American, leftist ideological views. Also it is a hint at inevitable outcome of Michel and Patricia’s relationship: American girl betrays French man at the end.

Movies of Jarmusch’s contemporaries, such as, David Lynch’s and Quentin Tarantino’s are also very rich in intertextuality. But they usually refer to movies. Opening scene of Lynch’s *Mullholand Drive* reminds opening scene of *Sunset Boulevard*, both showing the real locations and using real name plates as film titles. In Lynch’s *Wild at heart* the lovers drive on desert highway, which is reference to a Yellow Brick Road in Victor Fleming’s *The Wizard of Oz*, one of the Lynch’s favourite films. In Lynch’s movie the lovers Lula and Sailor are after American dream, while in Fleming’s film the main character searches for Emerald City. In *Wild at heart* lighting of the road scenes together with blond hair of a Lula and yellow coat of Sailor makes the scene even more yellowish.³ Tarantino is famous for his post-modernist pastiches. Sometimes he just replicates shots or even scenes from other movies. He was even accused of plagiarizing entire ending of 1997 Hong Kong film *City on Fire* in his *Reservoir Dogs*.

Jim Jarmusch:

² (FilmStruck). “Breathless, Jean-Luc Godard, 1960” On-line video clip. YouTube. September 25, 2017. Accessed on July 11, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqOJaGM-wQg>

³ (TLogsdon07). “Wild at Heart- Nic Cage/ Laura Dern Desert Mosh Scene” On-line video clip. YouTube. September 4, 2010. Accessed on July 11, 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZ8ar_wuHfI

Jarmusch has been using intertextuality since he made his first feature film. *Permanent Vacation* (1980) reflected also the young director's literary background and films he watched: A poster of *The Savage Innocents* (1960), a film made by American director Nicholas Ray is shown on the screen, passages from French novel *Les Chants du Maldoror* (1868) are recited.

Born in 1953, in Ohio, Jarmusch was greatly influenced by his grandmother, who would encourage him to read books. His mother, a film and theatre reviewer would take him to cinema when he was a child. Later his views were shaped by his personal choices: he studied American and British literature in Columbia University and lived in Paris for several months, getting familiar with works of prominent French directors. He studied filmmaking in Tisch School of the Arts of New York University and worked as an assistant to Nicholas Ray.

Permanent Vacation is a film about a young hipster, a creative person who tries to find his own way in life. The film was very personal and reflected Jarmusch's own first steps in filmmaking. Later Jarmusch would create similar characters, like an accountant in *Dead man* (1995), hitman-booklover in *Ghost dog* (1999), a poet in *Paterson*, a vampire-rock musician in *Only lovers left alive*.

True popularity came to Jarmusch with *Stranger than Paradise* (1984), his second feature. The film tells a story of young people with Hungarian origin, whose identities are affected in different ways after living in America for a certain period of time. As Willie rejects his origins

and identifies himself as American, his cousin Eva preserves her origins and is proud of them. The film has an open ending. For some reason Eva, who wants to fly back to Hungary stays in America, while Willie who rushes to the airport, trying to find and persuade Eva not to go back to her home country, ends up flying to Hungary. In fact, it was deliberate choice of Jarmusch, taking a side and "sending" the person who rejects his origins to a place he came from.

In Jarmusch's films there are a lot of references to famous songs, television shows, TV series. A protagonist of *Permanent Vacation* is a big fan of Charlie Parker, a famous American jazz saxophonist and composer. In *Mystery Train* (1989), Jarmusch tells three stories which are related to Elvis Presley cult. These are stories of a Japanese couple, making a pilgrimage to Memphis, Italian widow and a young man, who looks like Elvis. The film is actually about "three stages" of so called American dream. "First stage" is fascination with it. Japanese teenage couple admires Elvis, visits his birthplace, makes love in romantic atmosphere there. "Second stage" is about an Italian immigrant, who are fooled with fake stories about Elvis. And the "final stage" is about disillusioned Elvis lookalike, who commits a crime and flees the town.

After making *Mystery Train*, *Dead Man* Jarmusch was recognized as a master of an independent cinema. *Dead man* had strong intertextual relations with English literature. The name of the protagonist is William Blake. William Blake (1757 – 1827) is considered one of the greatest poets of English literature. Jim Jarmusch's choice for the name of a young

American accountant is intentional, as he compares poet Blake's Europe to protagonist Blake's America. Looking at America from European perspective is one of the notable features of Jarmusch's films, who is an American with European roots himself. Poet Blake's views and works were very progressive and rebellious. He was against slavery, dogmatic religion, abuse of power. In *Dead man* we encounter complete opposite of those values. Protagonist Blake faces harsh reality of Wild West: gun mentality, authoritarian, greedy businessmen, wide-spread racism, blood thirsty missionaries. This is a place which turns peace loving person like protagonist Blake into a murderer.

Jarmusch continues using intertextuality. In *The Dead Don't Die* (2019), his latest film he refers to *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), a horror film by American director George Andrew Romero. Jarmusch watched the film several times before making his horror parody. But the choice was not accidental. Romero's film is about a problem of racism in America. Ben, a black protagonist was killed by local militia, who confront zombies. Ben is not a zombie, in fact, he fights zombies and tries to save his white acquaintances, but he is also killed, just because he is not a normal looking citizen in the eyes of white militia members. For them an black person, holding a gun is a target, regardless of his intentions. *The Dead Don't Die* is all about latest changes in modern American society and politics, where Afro-Americans and immigrants are considered potential threat by white supremacists and people influenced by them.

Starting from his first feature film, Jim Jarmusch has been awarded various prizes for his movies. In 1984 *Stranger than Paradise* was awarded in Cannes Film Festival (Golden Camera). In 2005 Jarmusch won Cannes' Grand Prix for *Broken Flowers*.

In the next chapters of the Thesis I will analyze intertextuality in *Only lovers left alive* and *Paterson*. Since there are a few academic papers, books on intertextuality in Jarmusch's latest movies, I will mostly refer to film reviews and his interviews published in American and European media. The main body of the thesis comprises mostly analysis and conclusions by the author.

II. PATERSON

Written and directed by Jarmusch, *Paterson* (2016) premiered in Cannes Film Festival. Jarmusch revealed in his interview with Time magazine, that he had nurtured an idea of making a film about a poet for twenty-five years⁴. The idea was born during his visit to Paterson, New Jersey. Although the film and the director weren't awarded top prizes in major international festivals, the movie got very positive reviews in the media. In this chapter, after giving an overview of the film, I will analyze intertextual connections between Jarmusch's film and other texts. Apart being a story of a poet, *Paterson* is also a homage to world poetry, which has always been source of inspiration for Jarmusch's films. Throughout *Paterson* he frequently uses poems of his favorite poets and cites great works of literature.

Overview

Paterson is a minimalistic film, which tells a story of Paterson, a bus driver and Laura, his wife. Living in Paterson, New Jersey, they love each other and doesn't have any argument between them. The characters are described throughout their everyday routines. Every working day Paterson wakes up early in the morning, kisses Laura in bed and has his breakfast

⁴ Zacharek, S. (2016) Jim Jarmusch Talks About His New Movie, *Paterson*, and the Exuberance of Great Poetry. Accessed on July 11, 2020 <https://time.com/4605637/jim-jarmusch-paterson-interview/>

before going to work. After finishing his eight-hour shift he returns home, enjoys family time together with Laura and takes their dog Marvin for walk, while visiting a local bar to have beer in late evening. Laura's routine is different. She stays at home, but tries to find her calling, constantly experimenting. Unlike most romantic dramas, where lovers encounter big obstacles, or evil forces, *Paterson* has undramatized narrative. The bus driver doesn't have any argument with his colleagues at work. He has good relations with a bar owner and the visitors. The viewers follow a week in the life of the couple. While Paterson is an introvert person, who focuses on his internal feelings and enjoys writing poems in his spare time, Laura is an extravert person, whose dream is to become popular. For Paterson routines and repetitions are signs of stability in life. He doesn't want to change anything. But Laura is not satisfied with status-quo, she makes attempts to become a successful businesswoman and a country singer. Despite having different personalities Paterson and Laura also have a lot of similarities, which keep their relations strong and healthy. They both can find happiness in small details of everyday routines. For them nothing is more important than mutual respect. The routine of their life is briefly broken at the end of the movie, when Marvin tears apart Paterson's notebook, which he left on the table before going to cinema together with Laura. Losing his personal poetry notebook is very traumatic for Paterson, this is because he has never made a copy of it. But even this dramatic event doesn't affect his

relationship with Laura, who feels guilty for inviting him to cinema and hurrying him. Everyday routines of their life continue.

Paterson's aesthetic choice

The real author of the poems, which Paterson writes in the movie is Ron Padgett (1942), an American poet, a prominent member of New York School. He collaborated with Jim Jarmusch in *Paterson*. Jarmusch used seven poems by him in the movie. *Love, Glow, Pumpkin* and *Poem* were taken from Padgett's book, three more poems were written exclusively for the film. Jarmusch chose Padgett's poetry for a reason, as poets of New York School were a source of inspiration for Jarmusch.

Poets of New York School had similar style, aesthetics and approach to reality and were popular during 1950-1960s. Poets like John Ashbery, Ted Berrigan, James Schuyler, Kenneth Koch, Bill Berkson, Barbara Guest, Frank O'Hara and others can be mentioned as well-known figures of the School. Their works were not overloaded with references to classical poetry. They wouldn't preach, they would write about everyday life of cities they lived. Poets of New York School wouldn't talk about politics, religion, about heavy topics like wars, political corruption, etc. in their works much. It was all about emotions. Their mostly minimalistic works reflected the moments of their urban life. Their works were like *cinema-verité*. They captured the reality as it was. Poetry of Ron Padgett who belongs to the second generation of New York School has the same characteristics. Paterson has very deep intertextual relationship with his

poetry. The seven poems allow the viewers to understand the idea behind Jarmusch's movie.

Paterson is not a lonely person, but he likes to write his poems in solitude: in a basement of his house, in a bus, before his work day starts, or near waterfall. Nobody, except Laura knows that he is a poet. He doesn't admit it even to poets he has conversation with. Laura is the only person who knows about his poetry notebook. For Paterson writing poems is a very personal activity. Simple objects can be inspiration for his poems. When Paterson has his breakfast in a kitchen on Monday, he sees a box of matches on the desk. It's *Ohio Blue Tip* matches. It inspires the poem, which Paterson starts to write later that day at work. The poem is called *Love*.

In first glance the matches cannot be considered romantic objects, like flowers, or stars which have been inspiration for thousands of poems. But Paterson finds love even in most mundane objects of everyday life. The matches gain special meaning for him when they light the cigarette of the woman he loves. Paterson writes: "*That is what you gave me, / I become the cigarette and you the match, / or I the match and you the cigarette, / blazing with kisses that smoulder toward heaven.*"⁵

The streets of Paterson are sometimes dirty, the passages are sometime messy, some of the buildings are very old, but it doesn't bother Paterson, this is because they represent his small happy world. His world

⁵ (Dante Andrés). 'Paterson - Love Poem' On-line video clip. YouTube. August 2, 2017. Accessed on July 11, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWa-jHTE-y8>

is not materialistic, he doesn't look at objects like a member of consumerist society, for him the meaning and the value of the object are not based on their price, beautiful shape.

In *Paterson*, there is a direct reference to a poetry book of Frank O'Hara (1926 – 1966) a central figure of the first generation of New York School. He is one of the Paterson's favorite poets. O'Hara also mentions matches in a similar way in his poem, called *As planned*:

*After the first glass of vodka
you can accept just about anything
of life even your own mysteriousness
you think it is nice that a box
of matches is purple and brown and is called
La Petite and comes from Sweden
for they are words that you know and that
is all you know words not their feelings
or what they mean and you write because
you know them not because you understand them
because you don't you are stupid and lazy
and will never be great but you do
what you know because what else is there?⁶*

⁶ O'Hara F, *As planned*. Retrieved from <https://allpoetry.com/As-Planned>

For O'Hara writing poems was very personal, autobiographical. He would usually write about his friends, about people he encountered, or about simple objects around him. O'Hara would compare a poem to a telephone conversation between two people. O'Hara even declared himself as a founder of a new movement, called Personism, which was against any poetry based on abstract notions. Here is what he wrote in his Manifesto on Personism in 1959:

Personism has nothing to do with philosophy, it's all art. It does not have to do with personality or intimacy, far from it! But to give you a vague idea, one of its minimal aspects is to address itself to one person (other than the poet himself), thus evoking overtones of love without destroying love's life-giving vulgarity and sustaining the poet's feelings towards the poem while preventing love from distracting him into feeling about the person.⁷

In this regard *Paterson's Love* can be called a conversation between Paterson and Laura, he addresses his lover. Paterson doesn't talk about love, as an abstract notion, the word is not detached from reality,

⁷ O'Hara F, Personism A Manifesto. Retrieved from <https://opencourses.uoa.gr/modules/document/file.php/ENL9/Instructional%20Package/Texts//Readings/Week%203%3A%20Pop%20art%3A%20breaking%20down%20the%20boundaries%20between%20high%20and%20low/Frank%20O%27Hara%20Personism-2.pdf>

Paterson's love is very much alive, but the conversation itself is silent, this is a communication between two hearts.

Paterson questions everything, which is not related to real life. For example, when Laura tells Paterson her dream, he looks skeptical. She tells him that in the dream they were in ancient Persia. He was riding a big silver elephant. He looked very beautiful. Paterson asks her if there were elephants in ancient Persia. She replies that probably not. The scene is very symbolic. When Paterson writes a poem in a garage the same day, we see a portrait of William Carlos Williams (1883 – 1963) on the wall. Williams was an American modernist poet and a doctor, who lived in Paterson and influenced members of New York School very much. His poems are different from works of other modernist poets of his time, like Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot. One of the main characteristics of modernist literature was its relationship with literature which existed before it. Most modernists would have a lot of allusions to ancient text, references to European, Japanese and other cultures. For example, while maintaining his modernist approach to reality Williams chose a simplistic way of writing his poems. The poems weren't philosophical, there were mostly about people, objects surrounding the poet and everyday events happening around him. Language of most modernist writers was very intellectual, only people with specific education would fully understand their works and the philosophy behind their poems. Williams was trying to find a way of talking to ordinary people, while preserving essence of modernism in his works. Williams' most popular poem was dedicated to

Paterson and was called *Paterson*. It was a poem about the city, its history, its residents. Jarmusch's film is also about the city, its history and residents. Later in the movie we listen to one of Williams' poems, called *This is just to say*, which Paterson reads to Laura. The poem is Laura's favorite one from Williams.

I have eaten

the plums

that were in

the icebox

and which

you were probably

saving

for breakfast

Forgive me

they were delicious

so sweet

and so cold⁸

⁸ (amel amel) "Paterson (2016) - This Is Just To Say (William Carlos Williams)" On-line video clip. YouTube. February 6, 2017. Accessed on July 11, 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJIzjKv_7rc

It is like an ordinary conversation we have every day. But at the same time, it reflects a beautiful moment between lovers, two real people, not imaginary lovers. It differs from classical love poems, deliberately rejecting their metaphor-rich language. It is a piece of modernist poetry, but at the same time it is very easy to understand.

Another poet, who is referenced in the film is an American poet Emily Dickinson (1830 – 1886). She is one of Paterson's favorite poets. When Paterson meets ten-year-old girl, waiting for her mom and twin sister, she is surprised to know that Paterson, a bus driver is also interested in poetry and knows Emily Dickinson. Paterson discovers that she also writes her poems in her Secret notebook. Like Paterson, her poems also don't have rhymes. She reads to him her poem called *Water falls*. Paterson likes it very much. It is a riddle poem, like some of Emily Dickinson's puzzle poems. Later, when Paterson tells about the teenage girl to Laura, she mentions that *Water falls* resembles Paterson's poems. The teenage girl can be considered as modern incarnation of Emily Dickinson and "double" of Paterson in the film. Emily Dickinson was also known for her secretive writings. Only handful of her poems were published during her lifetime. She was a reclusive person, largely withdrawn from social life.

'Paterson' can be considered an autobiographic work as well. It is an ode to poetry by Jarmusch, at the same time reflection of his internal world. In one of his interviews he admitted that he mostly writes poems for himself:

I write poetry now and then. I don't really show it to people. I've shown a few over the years to David Shapiro. He was my teacher. But yeah, I just love those guys. And as far as *Paterson*, somebody said it's like a poem in the form of cinema, but I think it's more like cinema in a poetic form.⁹

Paterson's social views, rejection of consumerism

Another American poet, referenced in Jarmusch's *Paterson* is Allen Ginsberg, a prominent member of Beat generation. Paterson looks at his picture on a wall in a local bar he visits at evenings. Ginsberg lived in Paterson and later wrote a poem named *Paterson*. Being a great fan of William Carlos Williams, young Ginsberg was influenced by him. Ginsberg's name is also mentioned in conversation between Paterson and Japanese poet at the end of the film. Reference to Ginsberg goes beyond mentioning people who once lived in Paterson. It tells us more about the main characters of the movie. For example, Laura tells Paterson that she has ordered Harlequin guitar from Esteban, a popular guitar player who also sells his instructional DVDs and guitars. Laura's dream is to become a well-known country singer. Although she has never played a guitar, she is sure that one day she can become very popular and earn a lot of money.

⁹ Taubin A, Common Sense: American indie axiom Jim Jarmusch talks about the art of routine in Paterson. Filmcomment, November-December 2016 Issue. Accessed on July 11
<https://www.filmcomment.com/article/jim-jarmusch-paterson-gimme-danger-interview/>

It can be seen something normal. Paterson doesn't oppose it, he even supports Laura, by paying for the guitar. But at the same time, he doesn't look thrilled by the Laura's idea. Paterson is not a person whose goal in the life is to earn millions. He doesn't see earning money a way to have happiness in life. He is not hooked by a consumerist society. He doesn't have a mobile phone, which has become must have thing for most people in modern world. We don't see a TV set in their home as well. TV ads are the tools for big corporations and other companies to aggressively promote their products and push people to spend more and more money. There is no TV in a bar, where Paterson likes to go. The bar owner refuses to buy it. even though some visitors urge him to do so. The bar looks old-fashioned. People play chess, arcade games. In this regard Paterson's attitude towards economic materialism is very similar with Ginsberg and Beat generation. In his poem, called Paterson, Ginsberg criticizes people of power and money:

*What do I want in these rooms papered with
visions of money?
How much can I make by cutting my hair? If I
put new heels on my shoes,
bathe my body reeking of masturbation and
sweat, layer upon layer of excrement
dried in employment bureaus, magazine
hallways, statistical cubicles, factory stairways,*

*cloakrooms of the smiling gods of psychiatry;
if in antechambers I face the presumption of
department store supervisory employees,
old clerks in their asylums of fat, the slobs and
dumbbells of the ego with money and power
to hire and fire and make and break and fart
and justify their reality of wrath and rumor of wrath
to wrath-weary man,
what war I enter and for what a prize! the dead
prick of commonplace obsession,
harridan vision of electricity at night and
daylight misery of thumb-sucking rage¹⁰.*

Laura is obsessed with earning a lot of money. She also tries to have cupcake business. It can be seen completely normal desire, especially in America, but it comes with the price for Paterson. At the end of the week his secret notebook with his poems will be torn apart by the dog. It happens when Laura invites Paterson to cinema in order to celebrate her success of selling her cupcakes in a farmer's market. Losing the notebook is a big loss for Paterson and a main drama of the film. Unlike Paterson, Laura has an i-Phone and i-Pad. She is influenced by adds on Internet and buys a guitar without knowing if she has musical talent.

¹⁰ Ginsberg A, Paterson. Accessed on July 11 <https://genius.com/Allen-ginsberg-paterson-annotated>

Although Paterson doesn't openly argue with Laura about her ambitions to become a musician, his irony indicates about his true feelings. The name of the guitar is very symbolic. Harlequin was a comic servant character in Italian commedia dell'arte. Paterson even jokes, calling it "a jester". By buying Harlequin guitar, Laura is hooked by people ruling consumerist society. Mentioning a jester can be considered ironic, but Paterson is a person who never attempts to hurt Laura deliberately. But it is obvious that Paterson has some doubts about Laura's actions.

Another poet who is mentioned in conversations between Paterson and Laura is Francesco Petrarca (1304 – 1374), an Italian poet of the Renaissance. He is mentioned by Laura, stressing the fact that he was also writing his poems to a girl named Laura and he also had a secret notebook like Paterson. Paterson knows about Petrarch, but not about his secret notebook. In fact, Petrarch wrote a *Secretum*, a trilogy of imaginary dialogues with Saint Augustine. *Secretum* was self-examination, which was published after the death of the poet. Petrarch expresses his doubts about his goals in life, tries to find out about a source of his unhappiness and Saint Augustine tells him that, obsession with Laura and his pursuit of fame through poetry can be a reason for his unhappiness. *Secretum* was an internal struggle for Petrarch who admitted in the trilogy that it was beyond his power to resist those two things. Paterson also has this kind of internal struggle: Is he obsessed with Laura, is he right by endorsing all the Laura's actions?

His internal struggle results in writing a poem, called *Pumpkin*. In a poem Paterson writes on Saturday we see for the first time him thinking about possibility of breaking up with his lover.

*My little pumpkin,
I like to think about other girls sometimes,
but the truth is
if you ever left me
I'd tear my heart out
and never put it back.
There'll never be anyone like you.
How embarrassing.¹¹*

In cinema, after watching *Island of Lost Souls*, a 1932 American horror film by Erle C. Kenton, Paterson compares Laura to Lota, a female character of the film. Lota is a Panther Woman, product of a scientific experiment, which turned her from Panther to a woman. Reference to the film is very symbolic, because it explains Paterson's doubts. In a film a scientist conducts experiments in a remote island, turning animals into human beings through complicated surgeries. All creature, living in an island are animal-turned-humans. The scientist has imposed a law, forcing the inhabitants to obey his rules. He is also a ruler of the island.

¹¹ (kinobscura) "Paterson (2016) - Pumpkin Poem" On-line video clip. YouTube. November 18, 2019. Accessed on July 11, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=97YrSHVbXHQ>

The Panther Woman falls in love with a man who ended up accidentally in the island. She hurts the man with her claw like fingers, but at the same time she shows signs of human feelings, like compassion, crying. The question is why Paterson compares Laura to Lota? Throughout the week, Paterson witnesses a transformation of Laura. At the beginning of the week she is just a housewife. Then she starts learning playing guitar with the goal to become a popular country singer and prepares to go to a farmer's market to sell her cupcakes with the hope she will have a successful business. Paterson supports her aspirations, even though he doesn't seem taking them seriously. He constantly forgets about the guitar and cakes and Laura reminds about them several times. Laura manages to sell all the cakes she took to the farmer's market and earns about three hundred dollars. Paterson is happy with her success, but what happens in the evening plants doubts into his heart. Is it really success? Or is it beginning of the end in their relationship? His notebook is torn apart by the dog while they were celebrating Laura's success by having a dinner in a restaurant, then watching a film together in a cinema. When they come back and see the pieces of notebook on the ground, Paterson is devastated, although he doesn't show his anger, he doesn't blame Laura. Laura is angry at the dog, feeling devastated as well. It seems that her transformation hasn't changed her character, she is the same person, she wants to be rich, but doesn't allow her goals to change her feelings, compassion, characteristics which Paterson loves her for. Resemblance between Laura to Lota is in duality of their transformation. Also, Paterson

sees Laura as a victim of consumerism, a sort of social experiment with the brains of the people, making them easy to manipulate with. When Laura and Paterson go to cinema, we see a poster of *Abbott and Costello meet Frankenstein*, a 1948 American horror comedy film. It stars Lou Costello, an actor who was born in Paterson. Interestingly, it is also about a surgeon, who conducts brain surgeries in a laboratory-island. Watching vintage horror films is not a scene of secondary importance in *Paterson*, for Jarmusch it is an opportunity to put a film into broader context and underline its social metaphor.

Although Paterson is against consumerism, he is not a person, who would choose social activism, attend demonstrations to fight it. His attitude is different from Beat generation poets. Activism is not his path. In *Paterson* Jarmusch refers to *Moonrise Kingdom*, American director Wes Anderson's 2012 film in an interesting way. Jared Gilman and Kara Hayward, who starred in *Moonrise Kingdom* appear in a short scene in *Paterson*, where they talk to each other as self-proclaimed anarchist students in a bus. They talk about Gaetano Bresci, an anarchist, who once lived in Paterson, later travelling to Italy and killing the king. As Paterson listens to them, the students wonder if "such anarchists are still living beside us" in the city. On the one hand it can be considered just background information about a small city for viewers, but on another hand by having two famous teenage actors in his film, Jarmusch refers to Sam and Suzy, rebel characters of *Moonrise Kingdom*, who try to escape from a scout camp and live independently in their own solitary world.

Story of Bresci shows what kind of people young generation admire and consider a hero. They like supermen. They cannot even imagine that there are heroes among ordinary people, like Paterson. For them bus driver is just a bus driver. Paterson never tries to be a hero, he understands his social responsibility and just does his work properly. When his bus breaks later, he acts very calmly. He stops the bus safely and the passengers get off without being harmed.

People like Paterson maybe are not heroes for young generation in the film, but in fact, they are the people who reject being turned into servants of consumerist society and continue living in their own way. At the end of the film, Paterson writes a poem, called *The Line*:

*There's an old song
my grandfather used to sing
that has the question,
"Or would you rather be a fish?"
In the same song
is the same question
but with a mule and a pig,
but the one I hear sometimes
in my head is the fish one.
Just that one line.
Would you rather be a fish?
As if the rest of the song*

*didn't have to be there.*¹²

What does "being a fish" mean? Devastated by losing his poems, Paterson wants to be alone. He goes to his favorite place in the city - to waterfalls. Sitting on a bench, he is approached by a Japanese tourist, a poet. Like Paterson his favorite poet is William Carlos Williams, he likes Allen Ginsberg. Again, we see Paterson, meeting his "double". They have conversation about beauty of poetry. We see Paterson smiling. After conversation with a Japanese poet, Paterson's mood is changed, because he understands that he is not alone in the world, there are other people in the world like him, who can travel from Japan to Paterson, New Jersey, just to be in a place, where his favorite poet was born. Japanese poet thinks that it is impossible to translate poetry, because it is so personal. But appearance of Japanese poet at the end of the film has symbolic meaning as well. A fish symbolizes success, power and strength in Japanese culture. Although Paterson can be considered a loser by some people, but for a filmmaker he is a symbol of success. In Japanese culture a fish represents people who can "swim upstream", going against all odds in achieving their goals. There is a well-known legend about fish in Japan: in order to continue their journey upstream the fish attempt to reach the top of the waterfall. the demons try to stop them, heightening the waterfall, most of the fish turn back, letting the stream take them back.

¹² (videobiker) "Paterson — A Fish". On-line video clip. YouTube. July 15, 2017. Accessed on July 11, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uvr-6OICxHk>

But one them persist, finally achieving its goal. Resisting all the forces of modern consumerist society, Paterson doesn't give up, he starts everything from zero, opening the notebook the Japanese poet gave him, he writes a poem. The poem is about being a fish, not about being a "mule and a pig", the animals who are not free and domesticated by human beings and serve their society.

Both Paterson and Japanese poet know about French painter Jean Dubuffet (1901 – 1985). Reference to Dubuffet in the movie can tell us more about "being a fish". Dubuffet was known for his childish style. His paintings were like kid drawings. He thought that the artist can be inspired by ordinary objects in the life more than reading classic literature, or learning from classic art. He even launched brut ('raw art') movement, which was like swimming upstream, against the norm of mainstream art. Paterson's poems are also very simplistic, as if they have been written by an amateur. Perspective of a child is a perspective of a sinless creature. Being sinless like a child and strong like a fish, Paterson goes back to his lover and his daily weekly routine resumes. As usual, he gets up at around 6 15 on Monday, kisses Laura and goes to work.

III. ONLY LOVERS LEFT ALIVE

Like *Paterson*, *Only lovers left alive* (2013) also had its world premiere in Cannes Film Festival, where it won Best soundtrack award. Written and directed by Jarmusch, the movie is not a usual vampire drama, offering to viewers a minimalistic plot. Considered by some critics as the best film by Jarmusch, *Only lovers left alive* was also included to the BBC's list of The 21st Century's 100 greatest films, which was based on poll of critics and published in 2016. The movie not only refers to a great number of books, but also has intertextual dialogue with structural elements of horror film genre. In this chapter I will also focus on typological intertextuality, as *Only lovers left alive* ridicules vampire film clichés, by using parody.

Overview

Only lovers left alive is a story of Adam and Eve, vampire couple, who are several centuries old. They are living in different parts of the world, Adam has settled in Detroit, USA, Eve lives in Tangier, Morocco. One day Eve decides to visit Adam. Although they love each other and share common interests like reading books, enjoying music, dance, Adam and Eve have different personalities. In this regard, they resemble

Paterson and Laura of *Paterson*. Adam is a reclusive rock guitarist, who after finishing his career is hiding from his fans in a dilapidated house. Unlike egocentric Adam, Eve likes going out, meeting friends, enjoying nature. Eve is also a muse of Adam. Adam and Eve are not usual vampires. They don't kill humans, they buy human blood from hospitals. They don't do it out of compassion, they just think that blood of modern human beings is contaminated. Their main ritual is drinking blood from a glass. They call humans "Zombies" and think that their society is corrupt. There is no drama in the first hour of the film. It shows mostly conversations between Adam and Eve, their night drive through Detroit. At the beginning of the film two more characters are introduced to viewers: Marlowe, a vampire and Ian, a human being, who helps Adam with buying vintage guitars. Although Adam is frustrated with the world of "Zombies" and have suicidal thoughts, he enjoys his time with Eve. Everything changes, when Ava, a sister of Eve visits them without invitation. She kills Ian in Adam's house, by sucking his blood. Adam and Eve have no choice but to get rid of Ian's body and flee Detroit. But when they arrive in Tangier, it turns out that it is not possible to buy clean blood from a hospital anymore. With no other choice left, Adam and Eve decide to kill young lovers who they encounter on the streets of the city. Film ends without showing if they manage to commit murder.

Sources of inspiration for *Only lovers left alive*

The name of Jarmusch's *Only lovers left alive* refers to a 1964 novel by English author Dave Wallis. Despite having the same title with the novel, Jarmusch's movie is not an adaptation. During the 1960s the novel was considered to be made into a movie. But the adaptation project was never realized. Although Jarmusch's movie is not based on Wallis' novel, it is influenced by his novel's apocalyptic plot, which tells a story of teenagers who try to survive in a society where all the adults have committed suicide. Jarmusch's film tells a survival story of the last vampires in a world of human beings. Wallis himself borrowed the name of the novel from Jack Lindsay (1900-1990), an Australian-born British poet. As an epigraph, Wallis used a poem called *Earth reborn* by J.Lindsay.

If all men died at forty-five
Save poets and musicians.
And only lovers were left alive
To throng their exhibitions...¹³

Lindsay's poem was probably one of the sources of inspiration, which helped Jarmusch in developing the idea of the film. The main characters of Jarmusch's film are also writers, musicians and book lovers. As an allegory the movie tells a story of true artists, independent auteurs who are being suffocated in the world of commercialized mass culture.

¹³ Wallis, D. *Only lovers left alive*. Valancourt Books, 2015

In his 2014 interview with *Hollywood reporter*, Jarmusch said that, his main inspiration for the film was Mark Twain's *The diaries of Adam and Eve*¹⁴. Despite being published as a comic book about relationship between Biblical characters, Mark Twain wrote *The diaries* as a deeply personal love letter to Olivia, his late wife. Like Twain's book, Jarmusch's *Only lovers left alive* is a masterful combination of humor and beautiful love story. It is not only the name of the characters and humoristic style which Jarmusch borrowed from Twain's book, the movie is also about the evolution of the protagonists over a long period of time. In Twain's book it is forty years, in Jarmusch's film it is centuries.

There are a lot of allusions and references to other works of literature in *Only lovers left alive*. In his 2014 interview to *Vulture*, the director refused to comment on the ideas expressed in the film.

I don't want to demystify the film and I don't want to explain it. This film is very laden with references. Not that I don't put references to things in all my films — just hoping that maybe if one kid in Kansas gets turned onto William Blake or something then I did my job. But I feel like I put a lot in there this time for people to

¹⁴ Trakin, R. (May 7, 2014) Jim Jarmusch: From Vampires to Stooges (Q&A). *Hollywood reporter*. Retrieved from <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/q-a-jim-jarmusch-vampires-701996>

absorb. Maybe I overdid it. It's hard to know. I'm too close to the film.¹⁵

References in *Only lovers left alive* really do seem too much. Some of the references immediately draw the viewer's attention, but they don't lead the viewers anywhere and can be confusing. For example, a hospital doctor who sells clean blood to Adam has a name tag on his uniform, showing Dr. Watson. Doctor Watson is a morally positive character in the Sherlock Holmes stories by British author Arthur Conan Doyle. Doctor Watson doesn't have anything in common with a corrupt doctor in Jarmusch's film. The same doctor calls Adam Doctor Strangelove, or Dr. Caligari. Adam doesn't have any similarities with a secondary character within American director Stanley Kubrick's famous political satire film, or evil character in German filmmaker Robert Wiene's 1920 silent horror film. A tag, which the viewers see on Adam's uniform, when he visits the hospital shows the name Dr. Faust. Adam has nothing in common with the protagonist of famous German legend, except the fact that, both are scientists. Unlike Faust, Adam doesn't make any deal with the Devil, he doesn't trade his soul, or betray his ideals. *Doctor Faustus* is also the name of a play by Christopher Marlowe (1564 – 1593), an English playwright. Jarmusch made him one of the main characters of *Only lovers left alive*. Marlowe's play based on the German legend. Jarmusch's

¹⁵ Ebiri B. (April 11, 2014) Jim Jarmusch on Only Lovers Left Alive, Vampires, and the Shakespeare Conspiracy. Vulture. Retrieved from <https://www.vulture.com/2014/04/jim-jarmusch-only-lovers-left-alive-interview.html>

reference to the play doesn't add any meaning to the scene. The only reason behind making the reference so obvious could be Jarmusch's intention to show close bonds between two vampires, as they share similar ideas, although they don't meet often. Adam doesn't seem neither Marlowe's admirer, nor a follower. In conversation with Eve, Marlowe describes Adam as a 'suicidally romantic scoundrel' and says, he wishes he met him before he wrote Hamlet, because Adam would have provided the most perfect role model imaginable. Reference to Hamlet can be misleading, as there is little similarity between Adam and Hamlet, who seeks revenge for his father's killing. Probably reference to Hamlet serves Jarmusch's intention for gradually establishing Marlowe's character, giving a first hint to the viewers that he is a true author of William Shakespeare's plays. Jarmusch himself is a proponent of a theory which claims that Marlowe was a true author of the plays attributed to William Shakespeare. Although most of the Shakespeare scholars rejects this theory, Jarmusch used it in his film. Like Adam, Marlowe lives in hiding, it is revealed that after faking his murder he wrote his plays under the name William Shakespeare. He doesn't want to reveal his true identity, because he thinks it will cause a chaos in the world.

Eve and Marlowe mention Shelley and Byron in their conversation, who Adam used to hang around with. They blame the English Romantic Poets for badly influencing Adam and making him too romantic as well. The reference to Shelley and Byron doesn't require going into their texts, it is used for describing Adam's romantic character.

The same can be said about references in the scene when Eve looks at portraits of famous people on Adam's wall. There are up to sixty portraits on the wall, including musicians, such as Johann Sebastian Bach, Henry Purcell, writers, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Edgar Allen Poe, Franz Kafka, filmmakers, such as Luis Bunuel, Fritz Lang, Claire Denis, scientists, such as Nikola Tesla, Isaac Newton. There are even portraits of native American leaders, such as Sitting Bull, Geronimo. Jarmusch has similar scene with wall of fame in Paterson. Portraits and newspaper cuts on the bar's wall show people related to the Paterson city, famous actors, musicians, sportsmen who were born, lived for some time, or studied there. It can be assumed that in *Only lovers left alive* Jarmusch uses the wall of fame for expressing his gratitude to people, he worked with, he inspired from throughout his filmmaker career, or he just likes. For example, French filmmaker Claire Denis worked as an assistant director with Jim Jarmusch on *Down by Law*. As for American filmmaker Nicholas Ray was Jarmusch's mentor when he was studying in New York University. American rapper RZA appeared in Jarmusch's movies, such as *Coffee and Cigarettes*. American composer Tom Waits wrote music for Jim Jarmusch's *Night on Earth*. In this regard, the references in Wall scene cannot be used in analyzing *Only lovers left alive*.

But the scene, where Eve packs her suitcases and a lot of books are shown on the screen has to be treated differently. Before putting the books into the suitcases, Eve opens some of them, reading some parts. Some of those books don't have anything in common with Jarmusch's

film, such as *Bastard of Istanbul* by Turkish novelist Elif Shafak, *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert. It can be assumed that these books are just the director's favorite ones. But some of the books were probably sources of inspiration for Jarmusch in making *Only lovers left alive*. These are books Jarmusch wants his audience to 'turn onto' in their journey of watching the film. They are therefore very important in understanding the film's message, as they put the Jarmusch's vampire film parody in broader context.

Jarmusch used a similar scene with books in *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai* (1999) as well. There is a scene in the film, where a hitman talks to a teenage girl in a park. She shows him her books: *The Souls of Black People*, *Frankenstein*, *Wind in the Willows*, *Night nurse*, etc. They have a brief conversation about those books. These are books which are very important in understanding ideas of the film. The scene depicts the conversation between representatives of two generations of black people: a young man and a teenage girl. One of them is a part of a criminal world, the other is a teenager who wants to go the other way, to read, to learn, to have an education and to be a normal member of society. For example, *The Souls of Black People* was written by W. E. B. Du Bois (1868 - 1963), an American sociologist, historian and civil rights activist. He was the first African American to earn a doctorate and saw high education as a crucial step towards the integration of black people into American society after the abolition of slavery. English author Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is about struggles of an abnormal creature to connect with human beings,

to be part of their society. His efforts fail and he dies. The protagonist in *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai* is a big Afro-American guy, who also dies at the end. Because, in Jarmusch's opinion, a black person without education and with a pistol in his pocket, earning his bread by killing people cannot be a part of civilized society. He will continue to be a Ghost dog, somebody who lives in the shadows of his white master and serves him. Similarly, some of the books shown by Eve to the viewers are not just sources of the director's inspiration for the film, they also give the audience opportunity to interpret the ideas expressed in the film, by putting them in the context of other books, such as *Don Quixote*, *Endgame*, *Ulysses*.

Jarmusch's views on commercialized art

Only lovers left alive can be watched and enjoyed as a funny vampire story, but Jarmusch also uses the vampire characters as tools to convey his social commentary and views on modern culture. Adam is a central character to the film. He is a musician, who admires classic music, great rock guitarists of twenties century, classic poets and writers, as well as great scientists. He tries to avoid any kind of entertainment, watching TV, going to night clubs, etc. He is obsessed with collecting old musical instruments. The references to some books, especially to *Don Quixote*, which Eve takes with her when she flies to Detroit can be helpful for understanding Adam's character and the themes of the movie. Like Don Quixote, Adam has an aid. Ian, a human being helps Adam to buy a

bullet, old guitars, other objects for money. Don Quixote is a big fan of chivalric romances. After reading a lot of romances he loses his mind, starting his journey as a knight himself. Adam's love for pure art looks like an obsession as well. He is fascinated with the glorious past. He rejects modern technology, doesn't use a mobile phone, sees outside world as a hostile environment, considers suicide. Jarmusch treats his main character like Cervantes treated Don Quixote. Adam is not depicted like an idiot. Adam is a vampire who the viewers sympathize with, but at the same time the viewer feels the filmmaker's irony in describing Adam's strange behavior from a perspective of human beings. As Don Quixote's fight with the windmills looks ridiculous, Adam's reclusiveness, rejection of the world, intention to kill himself with a wooden bullet looks weird.

In the modern world of the entertainment industry for artists like Adam it is hard to survive. Even though he lives in hiding his personal space is targeted by hostile forces. Ava, sister of Eve suddenly invades Adam's house without invitation. She comes from Los Angeles. It alludes to the Mecca of the entertainment industry, Hollywood. Adam is not happy with her behavior and loathes Los Angeles, sarcastically calling the city "Zombie place". She depletes Adam's clean blood reserves with her large appetite. Her appearance is delusive. Behind her beauty and playful character hides a brutality of ruthless vampire. She is eventually kicked out of the Adam's house, having killed Ian, and she turns Adam and Eve into creatures like herself. At the end of the film Adam and Eve have no choice but to kill humans. Through the conflict between Ava and

Adam, Jarmusch expresses his social commentary: The entertainment industry is so powerful that it can reach anybody in any place and transform them into its lookalike. One of the books Eve takes with her to Detroit is *Infinite Jest* (1996) by American novelist David Foster Wallace. The book describes the future of North America, where everything is controlled by big corporations and world powers are trying to get a copy of a film, which is so entertaining that, the viewers watch it repeatedly, until they die. The film is so powerful that people lose interest in anything else.

As a vampire film comedy *Only lovers left alive* ridicules clichés of the horror genre. But Jarmusch's approach to the clichés is different from most horror comedies and parodies. Usually, horror comedies use exaggeration as a tool to show absurdity of the clichés. For example, in the 2004 comedy drama *Shaun of the Dead*, English filmmaker Edgar Wright ridicules very long suspense, one of the main characteristics of the genre. Shaun and his friend are so busy with their daily problems that, they don't notice zombies on the streets, they take the zombies for beggars, junkies, etc. Even TV reports on mass killings don't grab their attention. When one of the female zombies enters Shaun's and his friend's yard, they think, she is drunken. They make fun of her, even taking her picture. When two zombies try to approach Shaun and his friend, who are two meters away from them, it takes several minutes to cross such a short distance. During this time Shaun and his friend discuss how to get rid of the zombies, they try to hit the zombies in the head by

throwing old music albums. *The Cabin in the Woods*, a 2011 American horror comedy directed by Drew Goddard, ridicules another horror genre cliché – a complicated plot by making it even more sophisticated. It is an apocalyptic story, where the actions of the main characters are controlled by a secret laboratory. The scientists direct a group of young people to a hut in a forest and use previously installed equipment in the hut to spray various chemicals on them, which affects their brain. At the same time, the main characters survive traps which look impossible to escape from. They also accidentally get help in situations, where they seem doomed. At the end of the film it is revealed that fate of the entire world depends on a decision which the main characters should make in a minute. In contrast, Jarmusch uses a modernist approach in *Only lovers left alive* to ridicule the genre clichés. He doesn't exaggerate them, he oversimplifies them. There is practically no suspense in Jarmusch's film. The film starts very peacefully by introducing the main characters. The only element which can be called suspense is the action of Adam, who collects strange objects and attempts to hide himself from the fans. But this kind of strange actions doesn't cause any significant event in the film. Even the murder of Ian, a human being who is killed by Ava looks accidental. The plot of the film is also very simplistic. There is no drama in the relationship between Adam and Eve. They just meet and discuss various things. Even the ending of the film is open, since the viewers don't see if Adam and Eve manage to kill young lovers, they attack. As is mentioned in previous chapter Jarmusch is a great fan of modernist writers and poets. *In Only*

lovers left alive when Adam flies to Tangier he uses the fake name Stephen Dedalus, which is the main character of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*. The allusion is self-explanatory, as Adam is also a young artist who is not satisfied with stereotypes in the society. But at the same time, the allusion is key for understanding of Jarmusch's approach to the plot. In *Ulysses*, Joyce parodied the plot of Homer's *Odyssey* by oversimplifying it. Where as in a journey of *Odyssey*, where a war hero going back to his home takes ten years, all the events of *Ulysses* happen in just one day. There is also no drama between Stephan and Leopold Bloom, another main character in the novel. The reader follows their lives separately and wonder what will happen to them at the end. They just meet in a backyard, urinate and go into different directions. Joyce ridicules classic plot structure, which usually ends based on the logic of the character's actions. As a modernist, Joyce' approach to the plot reflected his vision of the world, it's irrational and chaotic nature. In this context, the reference to *Endgame (1957)*, a play by another modernist, Irish writer Samuel Beckett is not accidental. *Endgame* is a play, without a traditional plot. It tells the story of four disabled characters who constantly argue, threatening to leave each other, but they don't do it at the end. Beckett sees the world as absurd repetitions. Like Joyce and Beckett, Jarmusch's plot also differs from classic horror film structure. *Only lovers left alive*, which has just one killing in it can be very boring for viewers, who are used to bloody events of classic vampire films. Even the process of killing is not shown on the screen in Jarmusch's

film. The viewer sees only outcome: the motionless body of Ian, lying on the sofa. The film tells is a story of two vampires who meet every 50-100 years, very few things change in their lives.

Vampires in horror films are mostly evil characters who are one-dimensional and animalistic. Jarmusch not only name his vampires as Adam and Eve, but also makes them look like humans, with their own weaknesses and strong sides. Although it should be mentioned that Jarmusch is not the first filmmaker who does this. Depicting vampires as multifaceted characters were key for new generation of gothic writer's success in 1970s-80s. The trend still continues. Novels by American writers, such as Anne Rice and Stephenie Meyer and movies based on their novels revitalized the horror genre. There are no direct references to those novels or films in *Only lovers left alive*, but in his 2014 interview with *Village voice*, Jarmusch talked about Anne Rice while being interviewed on *Only lovers left alive*:

I did see the movie 'Interview with the Vampire' years ago when it came out. What I liked about Anne Rice's work was this move toward making the vampires complex characters and not just undead monster figures.¹⁶

¹⁶ Kang, I. (March 26, 2014) Jarmusch's Vampire Film Only Lovers Left Alive Doesn't Bother with the Genre's Rules. Retrieved from <https://www.villagevoice.com/2014/03/26/jim-jarmuschs-vampire-film-only-lovers-left-alive-doesnt-bother-with-the-genres-rules/>

Interview with the Vampire (1994) and *Queen of the Damned* (2002), another film, based on Anne Rice's novel can be considered as inspiration sources for Jarmusch. The main character of *Queen of the Damned* is Lestat, a vampire, who is a well-known rock musician as Adam. Lestat is a rebel character, who goes against the vampire lifestyle, rejecting to live in hiding and wants to have a concert. Unlike Lestat, Adam has already finished his career as a rock musician and lives in hiding. As it mentioned before, he is also a rebel character who is fascinated by pure art and rejects anything related to the entertainment industry. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Louis, a human turned vampire refuses to kill people and drinks blood of animals instead. Films tells a story of his internal struggles. But it should be mentioned that, the films based on Anne Rice's novels are full of all sorts of classical genre clichés, which Jarmusch ridicules in his movie. Jarmusch only borrowed this approach to creating multi-dimensional vampire characters from those film.

Being very speculative, the horror genre is an integral part of the entertainment industry and as an independent auteur, Jarmusch's approach to the genre reflects his attitude towards mass culture. Adam's story can be therefore considered autobiographical as well. Not only because Jarmusch is a rock musician himself and his rock band SQÜRL performs most of the soundtracks for the film, but also because, like *Paterson*, *Only lovers left alive* reflects the filmmaker's his own internal world and personal opinion on the themes of the film.

IV. CONCLUSION

Jim Jarmusch's films are very rich in intertextual references.

Intertextuality in Jarmusch's works is more complex than his contemporaries'. Jarmusch's movies have intertextual connections not only to movies, but also to novels, short stories, non-fiction books, TV shows, music, science. It doesn't only reflect the fact that Jarmusch himself is a filmmaker, producer, composer, actor, poet. In broad context, intertextuality in Jarmusch's films is a part of modernist approach to filmmaking, self-conscious break with traditional techniques of making movies. Revising past knowledge requires presenting it to audience in new light, in this regard, especially parody is an important tool for Jarmusch.

Although Jarmusch's films are dense with references, not all of them can be helpful in analyzing the films. Most of the names from other movies, novels are simple allusions, with the purpose of likening the Jarmusch's characters to well-known characters of other works of literature and cinema, or just giving background information about specific places.

But some of the references are crucial for understanding Jarmusch's ideas expressed in his films. These are usually intertextual connections to works of literature which shaped Jarmusch's own views, such as poems, novels, plays by famous modernists writers. World vision and aesthetic principles of Jarmusch reflect views of modernists, such as James Joyce,

William Carlos Williams, Samuel Beckett, who rebelled against established religious, political, social doctrines. As described in the preceding analyses, both *Only lovers left alive* and *Paterson* don't have characteristics of a traditional plot, such as protagonists, facing difficult dilemmas, usage of suspense for keeping spectators in turmoil, or life-changing dramatic events. This is because for modernist Jarmusch the world is a chaotic place, the life is unordered. He intentionally shows break with tradition.

Another group of poets, widely referenced in Jarmusch's movies are representatives of New York School. This is because Jarmusch shares similar aesthetic principles with them, adores their simplistic, diary-type writings about everyday life.

Jarmusch also uses direct and indirect quotations in his films. In *Paterson* Adam reads a poem by William Carlos Williams. In *Only lovers left alive* opening a book, Eve shows a part of a dialogue from Beckett's play to viewers. The real author of poems Paterson writes throughout the film is representative of New York School Ron Padgett. Jarmusch also indirectly quotes himself in *Paterson*. The real author of a poem which a teenage girl reads to Paterson is Jarmusch himself. Some of the books, which Jarmusch referenced have little similarity with his movies in terms of a plot. For example, *The diaries of Adam and Eve* by Mark Twain, or *Only lovers left alive*, a novel by Dave Wallis. Apparently, Jarmusch inspired by subtle humor of *The Diaries* and borrowed the idea for

creating the post-apocalyptic world of his *Only lovers left alive* from the novel. In this case direct reference is a homage to those authors.

Apart from wide range of references to texts Jarmusch also uses visual intertextuality.

Direct visual allusions. In *Only lovers left alive* footage from French television of 1970s is shown. In *Paterson* Adam and Laura watch *Island of Lost Souls* in a cinema.

Indirect visual allusions. Jarmusch refers to popular films, without naming them. In *Only lovers left alive* Adam presses the gun against his chest and mimes shooting himself, in a clear reference to a famous scene in *Taxi driver* by Martin Scorsese, where Travis, the protagonist mimes shooting himself in the head with his index finger.

Visual self-quotation. In *Paterson* uses similar scene from *Ghost dog*, where a protagonist talks a girl about books.

Visual allusions with cameo appearance. In *Paterson* Jarmusch casted child actors from *Moonrise kingdom*, a film by Wes Anderson. The viewers see Sam and Suzy in their teenage years.

Visual pastiche. Opening scene of the *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai* with a lonely hitman and his pigeons is a clear reference to a hitman Jef Costello and his bird at the beginning of *Le Samurai*, a film neo-noir by Jean-Pierre Melville. In both films quotes about Samurais are shown on the screen.

Parody of film cliches. In *Only lovers left alive* Jarmusch ridicules horror genre cliches, such as suspense, extreme violence, complicated plot.

Jarmusch's films usually have two-layered structure. The outer layer fits traditional genre film characteristics, such as romantic drama, western, vampire film, criminal drama, etc. It is possible to ignore most of the references to other texts in his films, while watching and enjoying them as an entertainment. But the inner layer requires certain level of preparedness from the viewers. The audience needs to be familiar with the texts the director references to. The inner layer contains the director's views on politics, social, cultural issues. It is the most important layer of Jarmusch's films, because it is what has made him one of the big names of independent cinema.

Finally, analyzing intertextuality in Jarmusch's films was also an interesting personal journey for myself. After watching *Paterson* in Pavel Marek's class during my last year in FAMU International, I decided to change topic of my Thesis, which was about a Russian filmmaker before that. At the end of the class most of the students who watched the film in a large auditorium found it boring and monotonous. I had the same feeling as well and even argued with the teacher, trying to prove my point. But when I watched the film for the second time at home, I understood that watching films in a traditional way, following the plot, looking for conflict, resolution, etc. is just one type of visual experience. Just like some works of literature, which challenge a reader, making him reread certain parts of

the books, movies can also require more involvement from a viewer.

Jarmusch's films make the viewers to think deeply, reject stereotypes and broaden their perspective. It is what has always kept art of moviemaking alive.

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VI. FILMOGRAPHY

Only lovers left alive (2013)

Written and Directed by Jim Jarmusch
Produced by Jeremy Thomas, Reinhard Brundig
Cinematography by Yorick Le Saux
Edited by Affonso Gonçalves

Paterson (2016)

Written and Directed by Jim Jarmusch
Produced by Joshua Astrachan, Carter Logan
Cinematography by Frederick Elmes
Edited by Affonso Gonçalves

VII. APPENDIX: FILM AWARDS

Only lovers left alive (2013)

Nominee, Cannes Film Festival, Palme d'Or
Winner, Cannes Film Festival, Soundtrack Award
Winner, Sitges Film Festival, Special Jury Prize
Nominee, Independent Spirit Awards (Best Female Lead)
Nominee, Independent Spirit Awards (Best Screenplay)
Nominee, Saturn Awards (Best Horror Film)
Winner, Vancouver Film Critics Circle (Best Actress)

Paterson (2016)

Nominee, Cannes Film Festival, Palme d'Or
Winner, Cannes Film Festival, Palm Dog Award
Runner-up, Boston Society of Film Critics Awards (Best Screenplay)
Nominee, Belgian Film Critics Association, Grand Prix
Nominee, Chicago Film Critics Association (Best actor)
Winner, Los Angeles Film Critics Association (Best Actor)
Nominee, San Diego Film Critics Society (Best actor)
Winner, Toronto Film Critics Association (Best actor)