

# **SIMPLY MORE BEAUTIFUL: AGENTS OF PLASTIC SURGERY IN CONTEMPORARY SERBIAN SOCIETY**

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Submitted to  
Central European University  
Department of Gender Studies

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Budapest, Hungary  
2008

## **Abstract**

Women as cultural dupes or women as agents in control of their lives are the two most obvious choices when issue of plastic surgery is discussed. It is the issue to be raised in this research. Within Serbian society, plastic surgery is becoming recognized as a legitimate part of beauty regiment. To what extent are women in contemporary Serbia willing to go, and encouraged to go in order to fulfill the requirements of contemporary beauty standards are the questions raised here. The uniqueness of the practice, as well as practitioners, of plastic surgery in Serbia will be presented through the analysis of a popular beauty magazine “Lepota & Zdravlje” (“Beauty & Health”).

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank all the people in the department of Gender Studies for enabling all of us to spend a pleasurable and productive time at the Central European University. Most of all I would like to thank my thesis supervisor for her patients and dedication in working with me. Of course, to those who have been my colleagues and friends during the studies goes my gratitude, most of all to Salome with whom I have shared my most grueling and best times at Budapest.

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## Introduction

In the wide range of topics that are of interest to feminist scholarship, one topic seems to be in the background at almost all times. It is the female body. The issues surrounding the female body range from the right to abortion to the right to alter the body by using medicine. The issue that will be addressed in this paper is the issue of medical uses in altering the body.

Feminist scholarship has taken great interest in questions surrounding the body image, but one question stands out in the last thirty years. Over the years, plastic surgery has become accessible to greater number of people, and is accepted as a legitimate practice for both men and women. However, the primary beneficiaries of the services provided by plastic surgery are still women. Due to the fact that undergoing plastic surgery presents undergoing extremely serious surgical procedure, with serious side-effects, among which is even death, the decision is rarely reached lightly. In many studies in which women who have undergone procedures were interviewed, they discuss the grueling process of decision-making. That does not present the end of the pre-surgical process women go through. Once the decision is made, the proper justification for that decision has to be presented. The primary justification used by women who have undergone any of the numerous procedures offered, that is also one of the used by feminist scholars that support the practice, is that it is their right to choose what happens to their bodies.

That need to justify the procedure, which the women chose to undergo, is in the core of this paper. Not only that, but also where that justification is offered. Media are the obvious choice for that subject matter, and with the topic of plastic surgery in mind, women's beauty magazines present most representable data for analysis. The main issue to be addressed in this

paper is in what way are plastic surgery procedures validated in women's magazines, and how might they produce the desired plastic surgery candidates.

The first part of the paper will be dedicated to the closer examination of feminist theory, and its interest in plastic surgery. In the second part, methodology that will be used will be explained, and the third part will comprise of gathered data and analysis of that data, which will be followed by a segment with conclusions reached from the analysis.

## Chapter I

Plastic surgery, as a part of medical profession, and as a social phenomenon, can have multiple meanings. To a person recovering after a disfiguring injury it might present an important means in the struggle to preserve employment or undisturbed social connections. To a woman looking to boost her self-esteem by enlarging her breasts it might have a completely different set of meanings than to a woman undergoing breast reduction in order to relieve chronic back pain. Undeniably, within a vast field of plastic surgery, gender plays an important role, and without considering that aspect, all the dimensions of this spreading phenomenon would be lost. Since the plastic surgery literally transforms the body in order to fix it, in order to offer a gendered reading of it, feminist theories on body will have to be examined.

Female body has taken up an important place within feminist scholarship. The control exercised by patriarchal society over women's bodies has been addressed in different ways in recent feminist thought. Most notably, certain feminist scholars have adapted Foucault's notion of "docile body"<sup>1</sup> and internalization of control in order to read the influence of society on women's bodies. Some of those scholars include Sandra Lee Bartky<sup>2</sup>, Kathryn Pauly Morgan<sup>3</sup>, Susan Bordo<sup>4</sup>, Jana Sawicki<sup>5</sup>, and others. The idea of popularization of particular practices in certain times as a form of backlash against forms of women's liberation has also been presented.

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<sup>1</sup> Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. London : Penguin Books, 1991, 135

<sup>2</sup> Bartky, Sandra Lee. "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power" in *The Politics of Women's Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance and Behavior*, edited by R. Weitz. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Pauly Morgan, Katherine. "Women and the Knife: Cosmetic Surgery and The Colonization of Women's Bodies" in *The Politics of Women's Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance and Behavior*, edited by R. Weitz. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Bordo, Susan. "Feminism, Foucault and the Politics of the Body" in *Feminist Theory and the Body*, edited by J. Price and M. Shildrick. New York: Routledge, 1999.

<sup>5</sup> Sawicki, Jane. *Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, Power, and the Body*. New York: Routledge, 1991

Among scholars sustaining that idea are Naomi Wolf<sup>6</sup> and Susan Faludi<sup>7</sup>. The duality of the mind as an inhabitant, the entity in control, and the body, the controlled one is one of the issues addressed by these scholars.

Historically, until the eighteenth century women's bodies did not exist in their own right. A woman's body was believed to be the inverted, less perfect, or underdeveloped male body<sup>8</sup>. The subordinate position of women in society was understood to be God-given, with biology playing insignificant part in every-day lives. With the development of medical science, and sciences in general, biology gained importance. Anatomy was even used to explain differences in social position<sup>9</sup>.

However viewed, or understood, women's bodies were always subjected to the male gaze. It is the approval of that gaze which is sought. In her article "Breasted Experience" Iris Marion Young, examines the influence of that gaze, and the liberating experience felt when that gaze is eliminated. "...In a phallogentric culture..." in which "...[s]exuality is oriented to the man and modeled on male desire..."<sup>10</sup>, women find themselves not possessing their own breasts, "...[h]er breasts belong to others – her husband, her lover, her baby..."<sup>11</sup>. Their breast thus lose individuality and become the universal symbol of female sexuality. Once the status of breasts as sexual symbols is established, they retain a single goal - pleasing the male viewer. Such a stance is followed by a single standard imposed on every woman. Marion Young has realized the importance of the protruding male gaze on objectification of women's breasts when confronted with a womanspace, a space void of male gaze. Speaking in the context of American society,

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<sup>6</sup> Wolf, Naomi. *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women*. New York: Doubleday, c1992

<sup>7</sup> Faludi, Susan. *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women*. New York: Crown Publishers, c1991

<sup>8</sup> Lorber, Judith. "Believing is Seeing: Biology as ideology" in *The Politics of Women's Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance and Behavior*, edited by R. Weitz. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998., 12

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

<sup>10</sup> Young, Iris Marion. "Breasted Experience: The Look and the Feeling" in *The Politics of Women's Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance and Behavior*, edited by R. Weitz. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998., 126

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*, 127



Marion Young talks about "...[l]esbian-dominated women's spaces where women can be confident that the male gaze will not invade..."<sup>12</sup>. In such spaces women have completely different notions of their bodies, most noticeable in the way they "wear" their breasts. In that space, Marion Young informs us, women usually go about their daily duties "...naked from the waist up..."<sup>13</sup>. Within that context breasts do not represent objects present for the pleasure of a viewer, they become a part of a woman's body, a part of her identity. They become hers to that extent that drives Marion Young to "...say that in a womanspace, without the male gaze, a woman's breasts become almost like part of her face..."<sup>14</sup>.

The male gaze has been identified as a driving force behind many questionable or even potentially harmful decisions women make. In her analysis of cosmetic surgery practices Kathryn Pauly Morgan denies the possibility of achieving agency when it comes to opting for cosmetic surgery procedures, because in the end women are doing it to please the male viewer<sup>15</sup>. In her analysis of women's participation in cosmetic surgery practices, and more specifically the possibility of choice that they are presented with, Pauly Morgan uses the Foucauldian framework. Here I will turn to another author who appropriates the same framework in her analysis of patriarchal power directed towards controlling women's bodies.

Sandra Lee Bartky applies Foucault's notion of modernization of state power in the wake of expansion of people's political liberties. According to Foucault, as the state loses control due to the development of parliamentary institutions, a sort of a backlash ensues.<sup>16</sup> More and more disciplinary practices are directed towards the body, which produce a "docile body". Foucault's insightful analysis does not take into consideration the difference in experiences of men and

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<sup>12</sup> Young in Weitz, 129

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*, 130

<sup>15</sup> Pauly Morgan in Weitz, 155

<sup>16</sup> Foucault, 135

women. It is here that Bartky offers her reading. Starting from the Butlerian notion of gender as an artifice<sup>17</sup>, "...[w]e are born male or female, but not masculine or feminine..."<sup>18</sup>, Bartky attempts to read the transformation of a body from female into feminine as a body subjected to a series of (Foucauldian) disciplinary practices. Bartky does this by analyzing three distinct features that characterize a feminine body: size/shape, posture, and body as an ornamented surface. The main disciplinarian, just as with Foucault's soldier or a schoolboy<sup>19</sup>, is the one being disciplined, in this case a woman. Foucault terms this "micro-power", or internalization.

However, the examples based on which Foucault develops his theory are all institutionally based practices. There is no such institution for producing feminine bodies. This may lead to, as Bartky warns, the conclusion that the process of transforming female body into feminine is either voluntary or natural.<sup>20</sup> The absence of one individual institution, however, does not indicate the absence of disciplinary power. Bartky explains, "...insofar as the disciplinary practices of femininity produce a "subjected and practiced", an inferiorized, body, they must be understood as aspects of a far larger discipline, an oppressive and inegalitarian system of sexual subordination..."<sup>21</sup> Thus, even though there is not a single institution for "producing women", there is a sort of a supra-institution, an all-inclusive system of subordination.

Since in this model of power distribution a subject is expected to supervise him/herself, a certain amount of mastery is expected. A woman does not simply become feminine, she masters the skill of being feminine.

The possibility of the existence of a single, or even multiple, institution(s) for the production of women is, in fact, conceivable. One of the possible "women-producing

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<sup>17</sup> Bartky in Weitz, 27

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*

<sup>19</sup> Foucault, 137

<sup>20</sup> Bartky in Weitz, 37

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

institutions” which is not addressed in Bartky’s work could be located in the media. Women’s magazines relentlessly offer advice on becoming the true woman, on being the woman of the period. The significance of women’s magazines and their role in producing women will be later tackled in the methodology part of the paper.

As already mentioned, Bartky analyzes three distinct features that render a body feminine. Third of those features is body as an ornamented surface. Myriad of rules and regulations has to be followed in order to achieve femininity. “...The normalizing discourse of modern medicine is enlisted by the cosmetics industry to gain credibility for its claims...”<sup>22</sup>

It is at the intersection of cosmetic industry and medicine that plastic surgery is located. Without any modesty, cosmetic surgery offers us the possibility to look the way we have always wanted, no matter how impossible it may seem at the beginning of the process.<sup>23</sup> More than that, it offers us the opportunity to achieve it without investing too much time. Why change your nutrition, start exercising, and then wait for months, when you can have that firm stomach with just one visit to the doctor? In the world where time is money, that makes a significant difference. Just like the majority of the beauty practices, cosmetic surgery is targeted at, and mostly used by women.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Bartky in Weitz, 32

<sup>23</sup> In order to understand this phenomenon, cosmetic surgery advertisements would be an interesting study. As it is not my interest here, I will limit myself to presenting the content of just one advertisement available on-line. The advertisement is done for television, advertising breast enlargement, and is called “The Little Voice”. A woman in a pink cardigan sweater, with a friendly voice announces: “Way down deep inside there is a little voice that says your figure isn’t what you really want it to be”. Once a viewer hears this, she does identify that voice, because as the announcer continues, she is told that: “You can ignore it (the voice) but it always comes back”. Once the viewers realize that, they are ready to be told that they can do something about it. They can have their breasts enlarged. <[http://www.netaff.com/med/port02\\_02.html](http://www.netaff.com/med/port02_02.html)> (28 December 2007)

<sup>24</sup> The statistics for the year 2006, presented by **The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery** (ASAPS): out of nearly 11.5 million surgical and nonsurgical cosmetic procedures preformed in the USA, 10.5 million, that is 92 percent of the total, were preformed on women. <<http://www.surgery.org/download/2006QFacts.pdf>> (28 December 2007)

## A Brief History of Cosmetic Surgery

The practice of cosmetic, or as it is sometimes referred to aesthetic, surgery is not the achievement of our time. The procedures first developed on the Asian continent, coming to Europe significantly later. The reports of cosmetic surgical procedures date back as far as 1000 B.C., and are related to the territory of modern India.<sup>25</sup> When it finally reached the European soil, the primary interest was not in developing cosmetic procedures. Reconstructive procedures were the main interest. Slowly, stemming from the reconstructive surgery, cosmetic surgery developed.<sup>26</sup> It was in the aftermath of great epidemics of disfiguring diseases (syphilis for example) and wars that reconstructive procedures merged with the cosmetic ones. Surgical procedures were performed, for no other reason, but to “repair” the appearance.

Since there was a strong distinction between the two procedures, it comes as no surprise that the differentiation between reconstructive and aesthetic surgery appeared as early as the Renaissance.<sup>27</sup> In addition, just like with any developing science, at the same time as the procedures changed and became more sophisticated, so too the terminology changed. Nowadays, the term most likely to be associated both with the reconstructive and cosmetic surgery is plastic surgery. Pierre Joseph Desault first used that term in 1798.<sup>28</sup> That term first appeared in the nineteenth century, becoming widely used in the twentieth.<sup>29</sup> In this research paper, I will use both the term cosmetic surgery and plastic surgery.

In the starting years, adversities experienced by surgeons (all fields of surgery) were numerous. The most serious problem was that surgeons were rarely trusted, and often had bad

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<sup>25</sup> Davis, Kathy, *Reshaping the Female Body: The Dilemma of Cosmetic Surgery*, New York: Routledge, 1995, 14

<sup>26</sup> Gilman, Sander L., *Making the Body Beautiful: A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery*, Princeton University Press, 1999, 10

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*

<sup>29</sup> *ibid*, 13

reputations. That is understandable. Namely, until the seventeenth century barbers performed surgical operations. Medical training was not mandatory for them in order to perform surgical procedures. That contributed to the poor status of the whole profession.<sup>30</sup> Once medical education became obligatory, the status of surgeons changed. That, however, was not true of the status of the “cosmetic” surgeons.<sup>31</sup> They still had to account for the fact the ultimate goal of their profession was merely beauty, and especially in times when, due to poor conditions, a great number of patients died during surgeries. It seemed irresponsible to subject a patient to a possibly fatal procedure for the sake of a beautiful face/body. Moreover, the patients who did decide to undergo cosmetic surgery procedures, also, did not enjoy a favorable status. Those who would be ready to be subjected to it would be regarded simply as a vain person.

The second half of the nineteenth century brought great changes, with the discoveries of both anesthesia, in 1846, and antisepsis, in 1867.<sup>32</sup> That opened the doors for greater acceptability of cosmetic surgery. What brought it respectability was the necessity for it that presented itself after the Crimean and the two world wars. The primary patients seeking cosmetic (reconstructive) surgery became war heroes, not vain persons in search of the everlasting youth.<sup>33</sup> With cosmetic surgery gaining respect, came a greater interest in developing it further, and with each new technological breakthrough the scope of potential patients expanded.

By the eighties, the procedures were so safe that celebrities fully embraced them. Soon after the celebrities, the richer class of the society followed. For them, cosmetic procedures

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<sup>30</sup> Davis, 15

<sup>31</sup> I feel the need to use emphasis because of the historical context. The term most likely used in the seventeenth and eighteenth century would be “beauty surgeons”, maybe even “aesthetic surgeons” (Gilman). Even though I did mention the differentiation between the terms, I did not want to, after deciding on one term, bring in another one with no particular reason.

<sup>32</sup> Gilman, 16-17

<sup>33</sup> Davis, 16

represented a status symbol. As cosmetic surgery developed further, the prices became lower, thus making surgical procedures even more accessible. A decade later, things were looking up for the cosmetic branch of surgery.<sup>34</sup>

## **Feminist interest in the plastic surgery**

When it comes to cosmetic surgery and feminism, there are two main viewpoints. Needless to say, one is in favor of the practice, whereas the other is opposed to it. However clear the lines between the two streams of feminism might be, it would be an oversimplification to state that the third-wave feminism is necessarily in favor of it, while second-wave is opposed. As representatives of these two standpoints, I will examine the works of contemporary feminists, Kathy Davis and Susan Bordo.

### **Kathy Davis**

In her 1995 book “Reshaping the Female Body: The Dilemma of Cosmetic Surgery” Kathy Davis’ attempt is, first and foremost, to understand the patients’, mostly women’s, reasons for undergoing cosmetic surgery. Not necessarily reasons given to their family members, friends or surgeons, but reasons with which they justify their decision to themselves. Davis focuses on three themes: identity, agency and morality. Under the theme of identity, she examines the negotiations that take place. The agency tackles the issue of empowerment, whereas in the theme

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<sup>34</sup> Davis, 20-21

of morality she analyzes the circumstances presented as valid enough for a person to undergo cosmetic surgery.

Unlike, what she calls “...politically correct feminist response to cosmetic surgery...”<sup>35</sup>, she tries to take on an “...approach which takes ambivalence, empathy, and unease as its starting point...”<sup>36</sup> The chosen method by which she attempts to achieve her goal is the in-depth interview. Davis conducted interviews both with the women who have had surgeries and with those who are in the process of considering it. She also conducted many follow up interviews, usually one year after the surgery. Being that the main interest of her research is reasons and reasoning, the choice of method is not surprising. It is in a way how her interest in the subject began. As she explains in the introduction, on several occasions, women, her friends and acquaintances, approached her and with great excitement talked about undergoing cosmetic surgery. They expressed enthusiasm in spite of knowing all the risks of their desired procedures. When confronted with such strong emotions, Davis found it hard to dismiss their experiences.

What is significantly different in this book, when compared to most of the work in the field of cosmetic surgery, and to the Susan Bordo’s book, which I will address later in the paper, is the location. Kathy Davis’ study is conducted in the Netherlands, whereas the other studies are primarily located in the USA. This is important to mention because of the special conditions in the Dutch health-care system. Namely, as Davis explains, in the Netherlands they have “...included cosmetic surgery in the basic health care package...”<sup>37</sup> thus making it available to everyone regardless of the financial status. There are other limitations, but I will mention that later in the text. Apart from that, Davis continues to explain, the Dutch case is also very different from the USA model in the terms of acceptance. While in the USA cosmetic surgery is widely

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<sup>35</sup> Davis, 13

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*

<sup>37</sup> *ibid*, 6

accepted as a means of improving one's appearances in the Netherlands that still is not the case. From the brief comparison Davis presents it can be concluded that the Netherlands presents a better case because of the two mentioned reasons. With the financial aspect of the problem ruled out, class difference no longer plays a major part if any at all. As far as the acceptability is concerned, the fact that in the Netherlands the practice of cosmetic surgery is less accepted makes it a more interesting subject, meaning that the reasons the persons who have chose it give, have to be much more compelling. As Davis states

While women in the U.S. will presumably have similar experiences and struggles, economic forces and a media-constructed image of cosmetic surgery as acceptable and unproblematic may obscure our view of them. The contrasting Dutch context allows the cultural dimension of women's involvement with the surgery to come to the fore – both in terms of what makes it desirable and of what makes it problematic.<sup>38</sup>

Due to the fact that cosmetic procedures are covered by the state,<sup>39</sup> certain limitations were imposed. Three categories were devised, and in order for the procedure to be covered by the state, a person would have to fall within one of the categories.<sup>40</sup>

Even with all these restrictions, and with knowledge that the beauty industry, of which cosmetic surgery has become a significant part, is for the most part working to “normalize” women, throughout her whole book Kathy Davis argues that women can gain confidence and self-respect simply by choosing to change what they dislike about their bodies.

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<sup>38</sup> Davis, 6

<sup>39</sup> Cosmetic surgery is no longer part of the national health care system in the Netherlands. *ibid*, 175

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*, 35



## Susan Bordo

Not quite an opposite viewpoint, but definitely opposed, is Susan Bordo in her collection of essays titled “Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body”, first published in 1992. Even though Bordo in the introduction of her book clearly states her negative attitude towards cosmetic surgery,<sup>41</sup> in one of her essays she defends women who decide to stay at home, and claims that it is possible for them to feel empowered by their choice.<sup>42</sup> The emphasis is on the choice that these women have made, which is similar to Davis’ claims in the case of cosmetic surgery. The only (?) difference between the two practices is the health risk experienced by women. In her new preface for the tenth edition, Bordo again stresses the dangers of cosmetic surgery. She does acknowledge that it has become considerably safer, nonetheless still not justifiable. The readers, in this case me, could only read that the problem is not the health risk but the practice itself. I will not get into that.

When discussing cosmetic surgery, Bordo assumes a completely different starting position from Kathy Davis, and she explains it:

It seems to me that that feminist theory has taken a very strange turn indeed when plastic surgery can be described, as it has been by Kathy Davis, as “*first and foremost* ... about taking one’s life into one’s own hands.” I agree with Davis that as an individual choice that seeks to make life as livable and enjoyable as possible within certain cultural constraints and directives, of course such surgery can be experienced as liberating. But since when has the feminist critique of normalizing beauty practice ever been directed against individuals and their choices? Unlike Davis, I do not view

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<sup>41</sup> Bordo, Susan. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. London: University of California Press, 2003, 20

<sup>42</sup> *ibid*, 124

cosmetic surgery as being first and foremost “about” self-determination *or* self-deception. Rather, my focus is on the complexly and densely institutionalized *system* of values and practices within which girls and women – and, increasingly, men and boys as well – come to believe that they are nothing ... unless they are trim, tight,...<sup>43</sup>

It is obvious that the two authors have a different focus. However, they are addressing similar issues. Most of the essays in Bordo’s book are focused on the issues of eating disorders. What makes this collection important and essential for understanding the phenomenon of cosmetic surgery is the parallel that can be drawn between the persons suffering from an eating disorder and those who are adamant about undergoing cosmetic surgery. Namely, in both cases, the body is no longer seen as a whole, it is seen as a combination of individual parts. With cosmetic surgery, the illusion persists that having bigger/smaller breasts, tighter stomach, or thinner legs (as a result of liposuction), will solve all the problems an individual experiences with her appearance. In the case of eating disorders, the situation is similar. In her book, Susan Bordo quotes an anorexic. The anorexic explains how she is aware of the fact that she is thin, and that she does not see a fat person when she looks herself in the mirror. On the other hand, whenever she eats, she feels her stomach swelling up.<sup>44</sup> Her problem area is located. Both the anorexic and the cosmetic surgery patient are doing something to alleviate their discomfort. In a way, they are taking their life into their own hands.

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<sup>43</sup> All the italics by author. Bordo 31-32

<sup>44</sup> Bordo, 188-189

## The Problem of Agency

When addressing the issue of understanding women's involvement in, moreover excitement and pride about, dangerous beauty practices, the issue of agency has to be addressed. What acts constitute as acts of achieving agency? Is it as simple as making a choice?

The model for understanding the concept of female agency within the beauty system, which Kathy Davis has accepted, is the model developed by Dorothy Smith. It is the model of the so-called "secret agent".<sup>45</sup> Smith, reading femininity as a text, analyzes the opportunities that women have in the current conditions of gender relations. After concluding that "...Appearance constructs the woman who is desirable, not the woman who desires..."<sup>46</sup>, Smith tries to locate the sites where (desired) women are allowed to assume agency. Davis, from Smith's account, takes the notion that the complexities of the texts women have to analyze in an everyday life in order to achieve femininity, produces a kind of an agency.<sup>47</sup> That is not the only kind of agency out there to be grabbed. Once the first layer of a rather limited agency is peeled away, we confront another type of an agent. Secret maybe, but very much in charge. That agent exists behind the curtains, and pulls the strings. It is that agent that negotiates "its/her" place in the society. That agent decides when to attract attention, and when to avoid it.<sup>48</sup> Smith is giving us the model in which, a skilled agent controls her involvement in heterosexual social context.

In the essays of Susan Bordo, it is somewhat difficult to distinguish her position regarding the concept of agency. As I have already mentioned, she recognizes the possibility of empowerment for women by choosing a practice normally considered demeaning for women. However, it is not clear whether she is in support of those women, or is she merely being

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<sup>45</sup> Smith, Dorothy, "Femininity as Discourse", in *Texts, Facts, and Femininity*, New York: Routledge, 1995, 202

<sup>46</sup> *ibid*, 175

<sup>47</sup> Davis, 61

<sup>48</sup> Smith, 198; Davis, 61

politically correct. Since the primary interest of this research is the practice of cosmetic surgery and the justification process that is associated with it, and for the sake of the argument, we will acknowledge her attitude towards cosmetic surgery presented in the introduction of her book. That is, in a society which has normalized women through normalizing their bodies, it is impossible for a woman to be truly empowered by assuming the beauty practices. In addition, here again we, the readers, are confused. In the preface to the tenth edition, Susan Bordo states that she personally, uses myriads of products, all for the purpose of sustaining the youthful appearance.<sup>49</sup> Without going any deeper in the contradictions present in the work of Susan Bordo (but accepting her viewpoint regarding cosmetic surgery), I will try to examine which of the two arguments is more compelling when it come to the practice.

Let me first locate the strong points of each of them. The first argument, upheld by Davis, states that the practice of cosmetic surgery enables women to achieve greater self-respect. It enables them to become agents, to take life into their own hands. Davis listens to the women and is interested in what they have to say about their choices. Her research is significant for that reason. Cosmetic surgery patients are not taken as passive recipients of messages sent by the beauty industry. Their actions are analyzed with the notion that they are aware of all the consequences, and are willing to take the responsibility. Therein lays the strength of the argument given by Davis. Without listening to the people whose actions are being analyzed, the analysis runs the risk of coming up with patronizing solutions, or worse yet, with a concept of powerless persons with no defense mechanisms.

The second argument, presented by Bordo, is concentrated around the social structure. Bordo takes into account all the pressures women find themselves under to satisfy the requirements of the beauty industry. The strength of this argument is in that. In order to

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<sup>49</sup> Bordo, xxvi

understand the practice of cosmetic surgery, as well as the workings of the beauty industry, it is necessary to understand the system that supports those practices. It is necessary to understand, when a practice that is focused on normalizing female bodies, who is deciding on what the norm is. If these issues are not taken into account, conclusions that lack depth may be reached.

However, when talking about weaknesses, the strengths of both arguments come forward once again. With the first argument, the danger is that, while listening to the women who are choosing to undergo cosmetic surgery, nothing else is taken into account. Moreover, it is felt quite strongly in Davis' book. After a while, the impression is that the author is seeking for evidence to support her initial assumption. Once that impression sets in, it becomes difficult to take Davis' arguments seriously. The reader becomes suspicious, both of the book, and the whole practice.

The second argument is presented in such a way that the human factor is diminished. It is not negated, but it is represented as the factor with the least influence. The danger here is that, with individuality annulled, women have no place where to achieve agency. If that is taken away, very little is left to discuss.

Both arguments have strengths and weaknesses. If taken separately, none of the two can explain the problematic relationship between women and cosmetic surgery (as well as the other challenging practices of the beauty industry). However, if an effort would be made to observe the normative system within which women operate, and listen to those women's accounts, a breakthrough might be made. Until these two viewpoints are brought together, it may be impossible to understand the true possibilities that the beauty industry is offering. It is always a mistake to assume a strong starting position.

In this research, an attempt will be made to take into account both arguments presented above. The messages from the media, more specifically women's magazines, will be analyzed for the sake of gathering information on the pressures women are put under. However, it will not be taken as the decisive element in the decision-making process women go through when electing for cosmetic surgery. It will be taken as one of the elements, and through that prism, the question of agency will be re-examined.

## Chapter II

After locating the issue of plastic surgery within feminist scholarship in the first chapter, I will now precede with identifying other levels of interest in this research. In view of the fact that the data used in the research will be gathered from print media in Serbia at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the two remaining levels of research are the position of women in Serbian society at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and the media situation in Serbia.

As this research is concentrated on beauty practices performed on female bodies, it will be important to identify the position of women in that particular community, at that time. Not only the position of women, but also specifically, how female bodies are regarded. In order to do so, preceding period will have to be examined. The political changes that ensued during the last ten years of the twentieth century have influenced dramatic social changes, one of which was the position of women in society.

In order to form an opinion about the representation of women in Serbian media during the 2000s, preceding period will provide valuable information on how that opinion was formed. Media representation of women has experienced great changes during that period. The social changes, which led to them, had an everlasting effect on public representation of women.

One of the most significant phenomena present in that period was the emergence of ‘neo-folk’. The effects of this phenomenon extend to greater lengths than that of its immediate influences, the performers and listeners. It has introduced a new type of socially accepted behavior for women. It has, for the first time, presented a woman openly using her sexuality as means of promoting herself as a role model for young women and girls. That has greatly contributed to the change in regard for female body.

However, before this phenomenon is explored in more detail political situation in Serbia, and changes to it will be addressed.

## **The 1990s in Serbia**

The last ten years of the twentieth century, for the Eastern part of Europe, have been characterized by great political changes which brought with them increased social violence. Nowhere has that violence been played out quite as aggressively as in the case of former Yugoslavia. However, the civil war, which ensued, will not be examined in more detail in this paper. The focus will be put on the change in the politics towards women's bodies, especially focusing on the case of Serbia. This change will be traced through the change in, for example, abortion law, and the dominant state discourse, as to what the role of women is in the budding nation-state.

Similarly to the rest of the Eastern Europe former Yugoslavia was going through a process of nation-state building, which was dominated by the ideology of nationalism. Within the nationalistic organizational framework in politics, which directly stems from patriarchal system, women have strictly set out roles. Those roles are confined to the private sphere. For women, the shock of the transition from the communist political organization was not in fact that immense. This was brought about by several reasons. The visibility women experienced during communist regime was mostly token visibility. Women who were politically active or who held high administrative or office positions did not in fact wield any real power. This is most noticeable when decision-making positions are more closely examined. The contradiction of this



statement can be established if legal system that dealt with issues of female participation in public sphere is examined, and how it was carried out in reality.

Legally, women were equal to men in all aspects, but paradoxically, this was achieved while at the same time traditional gender roles were maintained.<sup>50</sup> Women were encouraged to hold jobs and participate in politics, but the actual presence of women in the public sphere was less than satisfactory. The most obvious absence of women is noticeable in decision making positions, both in politics and economy. The discrepancy between the proclaimed women's emancipation and the reality of the situation did not go unnoticed by everyone. "...[S]ocialist feminists were the first to criticize and dismiss socialist concepts of emancipation as false and utilitarian. However, they did not have much success in spreading their ideas among most Yugoslavian women."<sup>51</sup>

The second fact that led to the transition from one social and political organization of the country to the other being less noticeable is that during the period of transition, in Serbia, women had to take on the role of family saviors. Namely, as Zarana Papic puts it "...they took on the Big Mother role..."<sup>52</sup>. Within the private sphere they became stronger than ever. The communist legacy of token emancipation while retaining patriarchal organization of society, with women predominantly remaining in the private sphere, led to this effect. Women felt obligated to do whatever it takes to preserve their families. Even though war was never waged on Serbian territory, Serbian soldiers participated in all conflicts in former Yugoslavia, either as members of Yugoslav National Army, or as members of one of many paramilitary organizations. Taken from

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<sup>50</sup> Sandfort, Theo and Aleksandar Stulhofer, eds. *Sexuality and Gender in Postcommunist Eastern Europe and Russia*, Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press, 2005, 36-7

<sup>51</sup> *ibid*, 37

<sup>52</sup> Papic, Zarana. "Europe after 1989: Ethnic Wars, the Fascistization of Civil Society and Body Politics in Serbia" in *Thinking Differently: a Reader in European Women's Studies*, edited by G. Griffin and R. Braidotti. London: Zed Books, 2002, 137

that angle, the atmosphere of war was present in Serbian society, and women, as already stated, felt obligated to do their part. By preserving the family, they could preserve the nation.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, women stood in lines for cooking oil and flour during the years of UN sanctions against Serbia, which in fact served in favor of the regime that brought on the war.

## Media and Women in Serbia during 1990s

Along with the change of women's position in society, their representation in media has also changed. The two main female figures in Serbian media in the 1990s became Serbian, "our women", and "other women" i.e. Muslim, Croatian, Slovenian. Within the order that dominated former Yugoslavian countries post-1989, both "our" and "other" women were subdued.

"...1. As *insiders* they are colonized and instrumentalist in their 'natural' function as the nation's sacred 'essence' and as 'birth-machines'.

2. As *outsiders* they are reified into the target of destruction, as mediated instruments of violence against other men's national and cultural identity..."<sup>54</sup>

Both roles of insiders and outsiders were played out on women's bodies. As insiders women were to donate their services for breeding purposes, for production of new soldiers. Most significantly, the Church, which after the fall of communist regime was regaining popularity in the society, was propagating the need for "young blood". Patriarch Pavle, the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church, in 1995, in his Christmas address, which was usually directed towards the

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<sup>53</sup> Papic in Griffin and Braidotti, 131

<sup>54</sup> *ibid*, 128

whole Nation, for that year, however, decided to speak to women exclusively. Patriarch Pavle stressed out the low birthrates in Serbia as one of the biggest, if not the biggest, problems at that time. "...[T]his 'disease', as the patriarch chose to see it, can only be cured in one way, which is by making Serbian women want to bear more children, the patriarch advised. And this, he advised, could be achieved if they were told that not doing so constituted a threefold sin: toward themselves, toward the Serbian nation, and, of course toward God himself..."<sup>55</sup> The sins that patriarch Pavle is mentioning were committed by women who decided to have only one child, and in the final year of Bosnian war (Dayton peace Treaty will be signed in November 1995) that statement put the blame not only on those mothers who had already lost their children, but also on those who were loosing their children as the speech was delivered. Beside this message, a constant bombardment of government-sponsored commercials that warned against "white plague", put the spotlight on women's bodies.

The role of the outsider was linked to both destruction and procreation. The other women, or rather their bodies, became symbols of their nations and territories to be conquered. One of the most vicious war crimes committed were the systematic rapes, particularly of Muslim women by Serbian army and paramilitary soldiers. As Mladjenovic and Hughes write "...[s]exual abuse and violence against women was central in the planned policy of "ethnic cleansing"..."<sup>56</sup> Rape is a means of ethnic cleansing on several levels. By installing fear of rape in women of Muslim and Croat nationalities, Serbian soldiers have forced many women to flee. However, not even women of the same nationality were "safe". As a state constituted of six republics, former Yugoslavia was home to many mixed marriages. With the breakout of war this became a very significant

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<sup>55</sup> Papic, Zarana. "Women in Serbia: Post-Communism, War, Nationalist mutations" in *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans: Women and Society in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Successor States*. edited by S. P. Ramet. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999, 160-1

<sup>56</sup> Mladjenovic, Lepa and Donna M. Hughes, "Feminist Resistance to War and Violence in Serbia", <  
<http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/warviol.htm> > (19 August 2008)

fact. Families were broken up for the sake of saving lives, and “each would return to their own”. But women married to men of different nationality “...[w]ere potential victims of rape by men of their own nationality, their husbands nationality or men of some other (third) nationality.”<sup>57</sup> This made them universal victims. As far as their own nationality is concerned, they had to be punished for betrayal of their nationality, while at the same time by raping them, their husbands were humiliated. The other two cases do not need to be explained any further. Another mode by which rape was used as means of ethnic cleansing were forced pregnancies. Forced pregnancies not only produced babies of the rapists’ nationality they also destroyed the family structure i.e. the very foundation of society in patriarchal terms, of the enemy’s nationality.<sup>58</sup>

Women both as insiders and outsiders received media attention as passive participants of ongoing conflicts. Moreover, in both cases the attention was on their bodies. In every sense, women were again brought down to merely being bodies.

A theory supported by Zarana Papic, deals with yet another important role assumed by women, more precisely women’s bodies, in Serbian media during the 1990s. That role was to serve as a reminder of finer things in life, and to please the “male gaze”<sup>59</sup>. These beautifully packaged female bodies received unprecedented coverage by the media, thus eventually turning their playing out of luxury and enjoyment of life into reality. They were members of the Serbian “neo-folk” music scene. Within that scene women were extremely sexual, and it was the only space in Serbian society where women were encouraged to express their sexuality. Papic views this trend as an organized attempt to present a certain way of life as a dominant one, as a way of soothing the masses. And those masses are masses of men, with the ‘neo-folk’ singers presented

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<sup>57</sup> Nikolic-Ristanovic, Vesna, ed. *Women, Violence and War: Wartime Victimization of Refugees in the Balkans*. New York: Central European Press, 2000., 64

<sup>58</sup> *ibid*, 67

<sup>59</sup> Papic in Griffin and Braidotti

in order to sexually arouse “the brave Serbian soldiers” who might have several hours prior to being subjected to that kind of arousal been involved in mass rapes of “other” women. A message is being related that “...life was beautiful, like music...”<sup>60</sup>. In close relation to that message another message was being conveyed, a message that “...these Serbian Women, ‘our women’, were undoubtedly the most beautiful women in the whole world; and that sex was great and functioning in these difficult times in Serbia...”<sup>61</sup>.

‘Neo-folk’ singers had great following among, not only rural, and semi-rural audiences. Their appeal was universal. In the years when due to UN sanctions Serbia was closed to the influences from the outside (wherever that outside might be) these women presented the role models that young women and girls looked up to. They were the occupants of fantasies of Serbian young men.

The biggest star of them all was, and still is, Svetlana Ceca Raznatovic. Ceca’s career started when she was very young, only 14 years of age, and her fame grew rapidly. Her whole musical career, as well as personal life, have been nothing if not picture perfect when it comes to playing the role of an ideal Serbian woman of the period. She has been a role model as a sister, as a mother, as a wife. In Papic’s article, in order to compare the difference in representation of women in different periods of Yugoslavia, and later Serbia, she compares the careers of two most famous music stars of the two periods. The first one is Lepa Brena, the symbol of Yugoslavianism, and the second one of course Ceca. Papic examines the Ceca phenomenon through the prism of symbolic representations that Ceca resorted to. The most interesting is the transformation of Ceca’s body. As Papic writes “...She followed the globalized Western process of shaping women’s bodies. Initially plump, she presented an increasingly muscular body in line

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<sup>60</sup> Papic in Griffin and Braidotti, 138

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*

with Western body fashions...”<sup>62</sup>. As a part of westernization of her body Ceca has undergone several plastic surgery procedures, which has never been publicly confirmed by her or any of her publicists. That remains as an air of mystery around her. In an article on “highs and lows of cosmetic surgery”<sup>63</sup>, in a magazine I will be analyzing, Ceca is mentioned as one of the examples of “correct” use of plastic surgery. However, the caption which follows her picture reads “Maybe she was born that way?”. It is implied, as it is in the whole article, that unlike their role models from the West, ‘our women’ have discovered the true technique for using beauty apparatus.

The Serbian situation paints a picture of a country in which women have, in a short period of time, gone from emancipation under communism, through return to family values during the nineties to the exaggerated femininity of the twenty first century. The media have embraced these changes and started focusing on women’s bodies. This state of affairs provides a fertile ground for the development of plastic surgery.

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<sup>62</sup> Papic in Griffin and Braidotti, 142

<sup>63</sup> “Usponi i padovi kozmetičke hirurgije” <<http://www.svet.co.yu/?state=3&izdanje=13&broj=38&clanak=3470>> (19 August 2008)

## Chapter III

### The Importance of “Lepota & Zdravlje” magazine

In the sea of magazines that target female audiences, magazines can be divided into several groups, those that focus on family issues and those that focus on appearances. In Serbia it is no different. Among the second group, subgroups that can be identified are those that focus on fashion and style, on health, and on beauty. Of course, most of the magazines that target female audiences have a mixture of fashion, family, health and beauty issues; however, each of them has at least one of those issues that predominate.

Due to the fact that in this research the interest is put on the appearance and the lengths women are willing to go to in order to satisfy the demands put on them, as well as the society's take on more extreme beauty practices, such as plastic surgery, the focal point will be on magazines that predominantly deal with the appearance. For the purpose of getting the most representable data to be analyzed, the most prominent of the magazines will be analyzed. Criteria that have to be satisfied by the magazine in order to provide a valuable data were satisfied by the magazine “Lepota & Zdravlje”, and they will be listed bellow.

The magazine that will be analyzed is called “Lepota & Zdravlje”, which translates as “Beauty & Health”. It is a beauty magazine, or a “glossie”, as Joke Hermes refers to the magazines of such type in her book “Reading Women's Magazines”. The target readership of the magazine is comprised of women 20 to 50 years of age, as can be read in the magazine itself. That age range is significant for this research due to the fact that it targets women who are at the beginning of their beauty maintenance career as well as women who are faced with the pressure

of remaining forever young. That target readership is apparently comprised of women who are already interested in beauty treatments, whether they are already using them or are considering them. This does not reduce the influence of the magazine on society on issue such as plastic surgery. Moreover, the magazine serves as a filter through which general opinions on plastic surgery are conveyed to the women who are most likely to consider undergoing the procedure. As far as the age range of the readership and plastic surgery is concerned, the view of an influential beauty magazine can greatly influence both age groups, as well as those in between. For young women in the beginning of the beauty maintenance career plastic surgery might become a legitimate part of beauty regime, for the older women it might be presented as the only means for achieving eternal youth.

The influence of an individual magazine is most easily measured by the circulation. It is not a precise method of measuring the influence; it is, however, the most precise indicator thereof. The increase of the circulation throughout the years is yet another positive indicator as far as influence of the magazine is concerned. The first issue of “Lepota & Zdravlje” magazine was published in February 2001, as can be read on the internet site of their publishing house<sup>64</sup>. Up to date eighty-six issues have been published. The circulation of the magazine was 24 000 copies in the beginning. The highest circulation was reached in December 2002, 140 000 copies. Currently, circulation is estimated at 75 000.

The magazine has both print edition and internet edition. The two editions have certain, though slight, differences. For the purposes of this research I have decided against using print edition due to several of those differences. One of the primary differences between the two editions is the visual – textual ratio. The print edition is more oriented towards presenting a picture with text serving as a commentary to the visual aspect of the article. The internet edition

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<sup>64</sup> “Lepota & Zdravlje” <<http://www.color.co.yu/colorprint/magazini.htm>> (19 August 2008)



is much more textual, with text as the primary ingredient. The articles do not differ between the two editions. The only difference is the amount of visual follow-up to the article. Since it is in the interest of this research to establish the patterns of justification provided by the magazine as far as plastic surgery is concerned, data will be primarily gathered from articles. Visual aspect of the article will not present the focus of the research. As that is the case, the internet edition will present a more valuable source.

Another criterion is the fact that the magazine is an original Serbian issue. By style, the magazine, emulates world famous women's magazines such as Elle, Cosmopolitan and the like. The significance of this detail is that due to the local production of the magazine the content has been adapted to the demands of the domestic audiences. With all these information in mind the magazine "Lepota & Zdravlje" stands out from all others.

The period which I will be focusing on is between 2003 and 2007. I have decided on this particular period due to the fact that first of all, the issues between those years are available online, and it covers four full years. Four years will include forty-eight issues of the magazine. Not all issues will be included in the analysis. The focus will be put on the issues, and the articles, that explicitly deal with the subject of plastic surgery. Issues in which competitions offering plastic surgery procedures as prizes will also be analyzed more deeply. Other issues will be analyzed with the intention of establishing reoccurring patterns when it comes to beauty practices.

## Methodology

For the purposes of gathering and analyzing data in this research I have decided on employing qualitative methods of research. The suitability of qualitative research method for this particular research may be found in the nature of qualitative research. In a book “Qualitative research practice” by Jane Ritchie and Jane Lewis, the two authors highlight characteristics that make qualitative research distinctive. Some of these characteristics are:

“...-aims which are directed at providing an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants...

- samples that are small in scale and purposively selected...

...

- analysis which is open to emergent concepts and ideas and which may produce detailed description and classification, identify patterns of association, or develop typologies and explanations...”<sup>65</sup>

Since it is in the interest of this research to identify justification samples offered to women by a beauty magazine the qualitative method of research suits that aim entirely. The qualitative method of research also offers the opportunity of using naturally occurring data, which is what is

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<sup>65</sup> Ritchie, Jane and Jane Lewis eds. *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students And Researchers*. London: Sage Publications, 2005, 3-5

to be used in this research (magazine articles)<sup>66</sup>. For the analysis of articles, discourse analysis will be employed.

## Analysis

Articles that will be analyzed can be divided in several categories. The first category is comprised of the articles that explicitly deal with the issues of plastic surgery, whereas the second category of articles indirectly deals with the issue by offering alternatives to the plastic surgery procedures. Another category will be that of cautionary tales, tragic life stories, either of famous plastic surgery consumers, or of ordinary women who have had bad experiences with plastic surgery procedures. The third category can be recognized in the first two categories, thus it is more a subcategory to the previous two categories than a category in its own right.

Since the interest of my research is plastic surgery and its place in contemporary Serbian society, and justification processes offered to women who are willing to undergo the procedures, I will start the analysis by identifying the frequency of articles that explicitly deal with the issues of plastic surgery. I will also identify the types of surgical procedures which are discussed, as well as the specific readership targeted. The overall pro or con attitude will also be discovered.

Within the four years, in the forty-eight issues, the articles that directly address the subject matter of cosmetic surgery have appeared ten times. In addition to that, there are five articles that promoted, or reported on the competition organized by the magazine itself, in which the main prize was plastic surgery treatment. There is no apparent trend when it comes to the procedures discussed in those articles. Two of the articles deal with liposuction. Three of the

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<sup>66</sup> *ibid*, 34

articles are cautionary tales, one of them is about a breast augmentation, the second one is a presentation of celebrities who have had too many plastic surgeries and have damaged their appearance beyond repair, and one is an interview with a Brazilian plastic surgeon who is urging women not to opt for plastic surgery. One is a recommendation of an eye-lid tightening procedure, and the rest are general articles covering nearly all procedures.

The articles that offer alternatives to plastic surgery procedures have appeared three times. Two of those articles dealt with procedures on breasts, and one with the face.

Alongside these articles, the articles that promoted the competition in which the main prize was a plastic surgery procedure appeared five times. All of them, apart from promoting the competition, have presented previous winners who are, in all cases presented, more than content with the results.

The articles I will be analyzing are chosen for the fact that they, alongside the number of articles (the content analysis part of the analysis) offer a clear insight into the topic of justification process expected of women. Discourse analysis will be applied to representative articles. I will analyze them using the method described by Norman Fairclough, in his book “Analyzing Discourse”.<sup>67</sup>

Significant fraction of the magazine, especially the beauty part of it, is dedicated to the correct display of “the most subtle of all female bodily attributes”<sup>68</sup>, as the magazine’s writer described breasts in one of the articles. Women are advised on the proper bras to best suit the shape of their breasts, treatments and creams they should use. All these articles have one thing in common. In all of the articles, an unmentioned agreement can be found, an opinion that there is a single acceptable look for the beautiful breasts. The notion of women’s breasts as an ornament is

<sup>67</sup> Fairclough, Norman. *Analyzing Discourse*. New York: Routledge, 2003

<sup>68</sup> “Grudi na testu: Rec imaju estetski hirurg, stilista, modni creator, fitness trener...”  
<<http://www.svet.co.yu/?state=3&izdanje=13&broj=38&clanak=3472>> (19 August 2008)

not new within feminist scholars. Iris Marion Young addressed that issue in her article entitled “Breasted Experience”. Based on her own experience she reached a conclusion that void of male gaze women’s breasts achieve a high level of individuality.<sup>69</sup> This means that void of male gaze, women’s breasts are not under pressure to conform to the single beauty standard. That single beauty standard imposed on women is the defining character of multiple articles in “Lepota & Zdravlje”.

Since the interest of this research is plastic surgery and justification processes offered to women who are willing to undergo the procedure, I will focus on several of the articles. The articles that will be analyzed will be chosen for their representability. Articles that openly deal with plastic surgery will be considered representable as well as those that offer alternatives. The second group of the articles will be considered because of the reasons they will present for offering the alternatives to plastic surgery. Before the analysis, I will represent, in short, each of the articles to be analyzed.

The first article I will be analyzing offers alternatives to breast augmentation surgery and is titled “Breasts: Round and Firm, yet without Silicone”<sup>70</sup>. The second article is a cautionary tale, a true story told by an American actress who had breast augmentation surgery and later suffered grave medical problems due to the surgery<sup>71</sup>. The third article which will be mentioned in the analysis is titled “Breasts like You Want: But without Surgery”<sup>72</sup>. It is quite similar to the first article. It offers advise on employing various tricks in order to achieve fuller and firmer breasts, without undergoing plastic surgery. The fourth article is titled “Breasts Tested: What do

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<sup>69</sup> Young in Weitz, 125

<sup>70</sup> “Grudi: Oble i cvrste, a bez silikona” <<http://www.svet.co.yu/?state=3&izdanje=13&broj=25&clanak=973>> (19 August 2008)

<sup>71</sup> “Zbogom silikoni!” <<http://www.svet.co.yu/?state=3&izdanje=13&broj=27&clanak=1420>> (19 August 2008)

<sup>72</sup> “Uvećajte ih, podignite, utegnite... grudi kakve zelite, ali bez operacije!” <<http://www.svet.co.yu/?state=3&izdanje=13&broj=32&clanak=2169>> (19 August 2008)

plastic surgeon, stylist, fashion designer, fitness trainer ... have to say”<sup>73</sup>. Just as the title states, it is an article in which the appearance of the breasts is judged. Pictures of sixteen women’s bare breasts that are commented on by five women and five men illustrate the article. The women who posed for the pictures also participated by listing what they like or do not like about their breasts. In the same issue is the fifth article to be analyzed, titled “Highs and Lows of Cosmetic Surgery”<sup>74</sup>. This article, even though it is very short in length, in particular will present a special insight into the differences between cosmetic surgery in Serbia as opposed to the rest of the world.

First four of the five articles are concentrated on the appearance of the breasts. The first article<sup>75</sup>, titled “Breasts: Round and Firm, yet without Silicone” is published in the March 2003 issue. At first glance, it appears to be an article on trends in the beauty industry regarding breasts. Not only as far as appearance is concerned, but also the trends in the care area. By the end of the article it becomes obvious that it is an endorsement article for a specific product. However, before we get to that point, the content of the article will be analyzed.

The opening statement of the article serves as justification for putting such pressure on women to preserve their breasts. It reads, “...[B]reasts are symbols of youth, beauty, erotica...” With so many diverse and significant meanings attached to them, a woman cannot afford to let them grow old at their own pace, thus ending her “...[y]outh, beauty, erotica...” In the article, women are reminded, in the continuation of that same sentence, of the fact that their breasts will

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<sup>73</sup> “Grudi na testu: Rec imaju estetski hirurg, stilista, modni creator, fitness trener...”  
<<http://www.svet.co.yu/?state=3&izdanje=13&broj=38&clanak=3472>> (19 August 2008)

<sup>74</sup> “Usponi i padovi kozmeticke hirurgije” <<http://www.svet.co.yu/?state=3&izdanje=13&broj=38&clanak=3470>> (19 August 2008)

<sup>75</sup> “Grudi: Oble i cvrste, a bez silikona” <<http://www.svet.co.yu/?state=3&izdanje=13&broj=25&clanak=973>> (19 August 2008)

inevitably age “...and unfortunately they are very susceptible to changes over time.” The implication of this statement that breasts might age more rapidly than some other body part is clear. In the continuation of the article, more reasons are given for extensive care that should be given to breasts. “Whether breasts are small or big, we watch them, love them, compare them, adore them and sometimes, we are ashamed of them or hate them.” Coupled with the first sentence this one also puts great pressure, but another important thing is suggested. A suggestion is that breasts can be a source of pride regardless of the size. However, that suggestion will not be simply left like that. Had that been the case, women with smaller breasts would have completed reading the article with belief that their breast too can offer joy and pleasure. That was not the case. The next sentence reads “...[I]t all depends on their size and shape...”. Apparently, not all sizes will suffice. The choice of the language used does leave some room for hope, so to say, for it might suggest that with certain size certain shape is required. That again brings the reader to the starting position of questioning one’s “attributes”. Are they the right size, if they are, are they the right shape for that size and so on. At that point, a reader has no choice but to consider her breasts unsuitable in some way, and she is willing to undergo any treatment in order to improve them. The article progresses with an account of breast development in puberty, which is followed by subtitle “Are they as they should be?”. Once again it is suggested that there is a single acceptable appearance for breasts. Moreover, the only reliable criterion for that analysis is size.

The next subtitle “Voluptuousness or Femininity” leads the article towards the real intent behind it. It is a short account on the fact that “...[t]here are more and more women with large breasts...”, “...[a]nd with their size, the amount of care they need also grew...”. It is at this point that the product that is endorsed is introduced. The details of the product placement will not be

analyzed, as that is not the issue raised by this research. Other issues will be raised. The insinuation that larger breasts denote larger responsibility might be considered from several standpoints. From the point of plastic surgery, it might even be considered a strong anti-plastic surgery statement. However, that statement is not entirely true. In the article, the care process is described as the same for smaller and larger breasts. The only definitive conclusion offered in the article is that there is a clearly distinguished appearance for beautiful breasts.

The second article<sup>76</sup>, published in the May 2003 issue, is a cautionary tale of what happens when appearance becomes more important than health. It is an intimate diary of a woman who had her breast implants removed due to severe health problems. The title “Goodbye Silicones!” is illustrated by a before and after type photograph of the woman whose intimate diary is presented. The before photograph of her with implants shows her in a seductive pose, pushing her breast forward, putting them on display in a way. The after photograph shows her smiling, friendly, beautiful, but not seductive. Where in the before photograph her bust was the focus of the photograph, in the after photograph the focus is on her face.

Introduction to the article, or rather diary excerpt, reads “...[I]f you have never read about the other side of silicone implants, then read the intimate diary of actress Kari Wuhrer where she explains why she had her silicone implants removed, thanks to which she had voluptuous bust for thirteen years...”. In the introduction, thus, it is suggested that a special explanation is expected of a woman who was willing to give up the attribute most respected in women. By referring to her diary, which spans over three months (March to April 2002), readers get the impression that a full explanation should be provided by a woman deciding to have her silicone implants removed. A simple explanation, that she had them removed for health related

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<sup>76</sup> “Zbogom silikonu!” <<http://www.svet.co.yu/?state=3&izdanje=13&broj=27&clanak=1420>> (19 August 2008)



problems would not suffice, since a voluptuous bust was at stake. Every woman ready to give that up should provide a detailed explanation for her decision.

A diary referred to, paints a picture of an ashamed woman. A woman ashamed of her health problems with silicone implants. In a first entry, she talks about the embarrassment she felt when she realized that she would have to inform people she was working with on a film about her problem. In that first entry, she remembers the reasons for having breast enlargement surgery. After she moved from New York to Los Angeles in order to pursue a singing career she faced a subtle ultimatum. "...[O]ne of the then leading producers offered me a job, and casually added that I should enlarge my breasts because he likes to watch breasts sway while a woman dances. I listened to him..." The bulk of the guilt later displayed by Kari Wuhrer might come from the realization that she had her breasts enlarged in order to please a man who could help her with her career. Because of the fact that her large breasts typified her as an actress she had never grown accustomed to them. "...I had grown tired of my voluptuous bust that entered the room five minutes before I did..." She refers to her breasts as being separate from her body, as a separate entity, one that exists on its own. It is exactly this point, the loss of individuality of breasts when subjected to male gaze, that is discussed in Iris Marion Young's article "Breasted Experience".<sup>77</sup>

In her entry two weeks before the procedure Kari explains how she does not care how her breasts will look after the procedure or how her future partners will regard her, her only concern is to feel better. It had taken her thirteen years to realize that she need not rely on her attributes in order to improve her career, or her personal life. Life story of this actress is presented in the magazine as a cautionary tale, to serve to all women who may be considering undergoing plastic surgery. Not surprisingly, the next article in the magazine that deals with the question of plastic

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<sup>77</sup> Young in Weitz, 125

surgery, four months later, offers alternatives to plastic surgery. So far, the stand presented in the magazine is negative when it comes to plastic surgery.

The third article<sup>78</sup>, published in the September 2003 issue, implies in the title, “Breasts like You Want: But without Surgery”, that the topic will be appearance of breasts. It does not explicitly state that the breasts YOU would want are necessarily bigger, firmer or perkier, but the second part of the title resolves that dilemma. It offers tips to achieving post-breast augmentation appearance, without actually undergoing the procedure, and the fact remains that surgically augmented breasts are big, firm and perky. What lacks in the article is a clear explanation for the presentation of alternatives to breast augmentation. The procedure is not discussed and it is not rejected in any way.

The theory, which would be most appropriate to be applied to the reading of this article, is Foucault’s theory on docile bodies. Foucault in his study analyzes the discipline practiced on the bodies, specifically the bodies of soldiers, prisoners, schoolchildren, factory-workers and medical patients. In that way, the government remained in control of their subjects even as the citizens became more politically empowered.<sup>79</sup> The level of compliance expected of them, the level of mastery over body required for the proper behavior could be compared to the instructions given to women in this article. The opening paragraph of the article reads “...[D]etailed instruction will teach you how to wrap, package and display your curves in the sexiest way regardless of their shape or size...”. Discipline is to be practiced despite the starting point. All women can and must follow the disciplinary routine.

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<sup>78</sup> “Uvećajte ih, podignite, utegnite... grudi kakve želite, ali bez operacije!” <  
<http://www.svet.co.yu/?state=3&izdanje=13&broj=32&clanak=2169>> (19 August 2008)

<sup>79</sup> Foucault, 138

It is also a comforting text, with the opening lines "...[Y]ou want super-sexy breasts that turn men's heads? You already have them!..." The reader is not to feel deficient in any way; she is reassured from the beginning. She does possess what it takes; she just needs to put it on display properly. Another indication read in the opening of the article, is that women display their breasts for attracting men. The writer of the article presupposes that those women who will read this article are heterosexual and are all in need of attention from men. That attention may come from whichever direction, either from a man that a woman is in a relationship with, or from a stranger. The main thing is to achieve desirability.

The article is divided into five categories: About Bras, For Fuller Breasts, For Visually Enlarging Breasts, For Reducing Breasts, and For Drooping Breasts. Each segment is filled with advice on exercise, diet, as well as clothing tips for achieving the desired result. The level of mastery, which a woman must achieve, is extremely high and it is not attainable by everyone. In the first segment, for example, the justification for giving advice such as "...[T]he basic rule for buying a bra is that you get the right size...", which is both banal and repeated many times is that despite the repetition "...[t]hree out of four women wear the unsuitable bra size...". Apparently, disciplining female body into feminine is not an easy task that can be achieved by anyone. Following Foucault's argument, mentioned above, Sandra Lee Bartky applied it to the practices of femininity. The same disciplinary practices are used, and even though it might appear that every woman has an individual style of practicing femininity that is not necessarily the case. As Bartky has noticed "...[w]hile cosmetic styles change every decade or so, and while some variations in makeup is permitted depending on the occasion, making up the face is, in fact, a highly stylized activity that gives little rein to self-expression. Painting the face is not like painting a picture; at best, it might be described as painting the same picture over and over again

with minor variations...”<sup>80</sup> The same might be said for the breasts. Whatever the current fashion, they are always to be on display.

The second segment offers tips for fuller breasts for the purposes of “[l]eaving him breathless...”. However, even that task is not a simple one achieved with ease. A woman must be a master in that field as well, so as not to over-expose herself because then “...she will look vulgar rather than sexy...” The third segment is dedicated to revealing several helpful tips for visually enlarging small breasts starts off by offering comfort “...Do not despair if you have small breasts...” the implication being that every woman who has small breasts does (or should) desire larger breasts. Because the whole purpose of the article is to give advice which will lead to “leaving men breathless” it also implies that men can be left breathless only by large breasts. The most interesting segment is the one about visual reduction of breasts. As stated in the first segment of the article too exposed breasts can make a woman look vulgar rather than sexy.

Following the same logic, the article suggests that too large breasts have negative rather than positive effects. It is stated “...If you have large breasts it does not mean that you should always flaunt them...”. However, the next sentence reveals why large breasts should not always be flaunted. “...Here are several tips for slimmer appearance...”. It is not the heaviness of the breasts that is the issue; it is the heaviness of the woman that is the problem. Various dieting tips are supplied in this segment. The usual problems that might be expected to be the issue for women with large breasts, for example, chronic back pain or trouble with sleeping positions are not mentioned. The discomfort experienced before the menstruation is mentioned. However, the placement of this issue is curious because women regardless of the size of their breasts may suffer from discomfort in breasts prior to menstruation.

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<sup>80</sup> Bartky in Weitz, 33

The last segment of the article is dedicated to droopy breasts and it opens with "...OK, there are no means to fight the force of gravity..." thus presenting the droopiness of the breasts as an inevitable result of ageing. It might be expected that plastic surgery will be mentioned here but it is not. Instead, other methods are suggested, such as specific clothing and so on. Therefore, even if there is a consensus that ageing cannot be stopped, and that certain effects of it are unavoidable, those effects are to be concealed. Could it be claimed that from choosing a particular sweater or dress to seeking surgical treatment there is not much to go? Following Bartky's argument that conclusion would be reached.

The fourth article<sup>81</sup> that will be analyzed, published in the March 2004 issue, could be considered a direct follow-up to the previous article and it is dedicated to the reaction of people to different "types" of breasts. The photographs, which are commented on, represent sixteen women. Those women have also contributed to the article with their own comments.

Even though the title of the article "Breasts Tested: What do plastic surgeon, stylist, fashion designer, fitness trainer ... have to say" might suggest that the professions of commentators are the primary reason for their choice to participate, it soon becomes obvious that the profession of the commentator is not of vital importance. Gender appears to be a much more important criterion. The introduction of the article starts rather similarly to the article previously analyzed. It reads: "In honor of the most subtle female attribute, we reveal to you all you need to know in order to make your breasts look well – how to take care of them, how to hide the flaws and emphasize the beautiful elements by using underwear and clothing..." with one slight difference. Unlike the previously mentioned article which offers alternatives to plastic surgery,

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<sup>81</sup> "Grudi na testu: Rec imaju estetski hirurg, stilista, modni creator, fitness trener..."  
<<http://www.svet.co.yu/?state=3&izdanje=13&broj=38&clanak=3472>> (19 August 2008)

here, apart from practically the same advice about clothing or make-up it reads "...but also how aesthetic surgery can help you...". The suggestion is of course that plastic surgery should not be resorted to in any and every case, it is there to offer help to those who did not experience satisfactory benefits from all the other advice given. The importance which is bestowed on breasts is immense due to the fact that, as can be read "...there is always a man who thinks that you have a perfect bust..."

The claim from the previous article is repeated, breasts serve no other purpose than to attract a man. And because diversity in tastes is evident the magazines has taken upon itself to "...examine the public opinion and reach a conclusion on breasts..." The only possible explanation for the need to have a singular opinion when it comes to breasts is that a unique regime of care (discipline) can be prescribed to all women. A curious statement follows this one "...That is why we have (not without resistance!) persuaded sixteen women to uncover and show their attributes...". The bracketed statement could support several presuppositions. The most obvious reason for the need to persuade women to expose their breasts is that they do not feel comfortable displaying them publicly. Fear of the most feminine attribute being judged and found that it does not measure up, with the importance bestowed on them, might for an average woman bear the meaning that she, as a person, does not quite measure up, as well.

What the readers are to find out in this article is listed in a separate segment titled "The Naked Truth" as follows "...What types of breasts could be a great "source of income"? Who has undergone plastic surgery? Which breasts do men find most attractive? Which are objects of women's envy?...".

The first word was given to women, five of them, who have not been featured in the photographs. Their age ranges from 21 to 34, and their professions range from a student to a

lawyer. Since the comments are related to the photographs, I will not go into detail. The conclusion reached at the end of a segment that featured comments by women was that "...men are attracted to all types of breasts..." At this point, this conclusion sounds contradictory to the introductory part of the article. Namely, if the main goal of having and displaying breasts is to attract men, as the article suggested in the beginning, and the conclusion that women reached is that men are attracted to all types of breasts, as can also be read in the introduction of the article, the advice that is to be given for improving breasts sounds unnecessary.

When it comes to men, almost all of them declared, at a certain point, that they prefer natural to surgically enhanced breasts. Women did not comment on whether they would ever elect to undergo plastic surgery in order to enlarge their breasts. Comments of women when it comes to plastic surgery were that certain breasts looked "too beautiful to be natural". The belief voiced by women that surgically enhanced breasts are superior to natural breasts offers some insight into the influence that objectification of breasts has had. Breasts as attributes can always be improved, they can always be better, and only breasts that have been worked on can truly be beautiful. "Those breasts are artificial therefore beautiful" displays the level to which women do not regard their breasts as parts of their bodies.

The conclusion when it comes to men's answers was not presented, instead a statistic was offered. "...During the day, only 12% of women use clothes to emphasize their curves. During the evening this number rises to 36%, and for special, night-time outings, 55% of women emphasize their attributes...". The need for this statistic is unclear at this stage of the article, especially because there is no indication what data this statistic is based upon. It does, however, point to the fact that women regard their breasts as accessories used for attracting men.

The next segment is dedicated to the account of women who posed for photographs. They are encouraged to talk about “how they feel and what they really think about their breasts”. Fifteen out of sixteen women talked about the size of their breasts and/or their appearance. Only one woman stated that she does not think about them in the terms of size and shape, because they are simply a part of her body. Three women declared that they were proud of their breasts because, in two cases their partners like their breasts, and in one case because they attract glances, both of men and women. Only one woman had undergone plastic surgery, and she had done so in order to regain youthful look after massive weight loss. Their attitude supports the belief that women regard their breasts as a foreign, separate body part, not a part of their body.

Article continues with pieces of advice. The advice is similar to the advice given in the first article. It is also suggested that ageing will inevitably produce certain results that are not necessarily remediable by plastic surgery. “...Be aware of the fact that even plastic surgery won’t help you if you do not take care of your breasts and bust in the right way...” The need to apply disciplinary practices is of the utmost importance it would seem, an all stages of a woman’s life.

After this, various professionals gave their judgment on breasts. All of them gave opinion based on their profession. The most obvious difference is noticeable between the answers of an aesthetic surgeon and a vice-president of a modeling agency, both of them women. Whereas the surgeon said that bigger breasts are always “in”, and she even stated, regarding two women in the photograph with small breasts, “...they should urgently contact aesthetic surgeons because they don’t have breasts at all...”, the vice-president of a modeling agency stated that within the modeling community smaller breasts are preferred, except in lingerie campaigns. Nevertheless,



even in that field of modeling, breasts are to be of a middle size. Fashion designer acknowledged that men like all types of breasts, but that aesthetically not all types of breasts are pleasing.

The overall conclusion gathered from this article is similar to the conclusion from the first article. Both articles suggest that women use, and are expected to use their breasts to attract men. The language of both articles treats women's breasts as separate from women's bodies, as a separate entity, as an attribute. Women also appropriate this way of discussing their breasts. The biggest difference in the two articles is that the second one openly discusses plastic surgery, and it presents a possibility of using it as a way of improving the attributes.

Article titled "Highs and Lows of Cosmetic Surgery"<sup>82</sup> offers a broader perspective on the topic of interest in this research. It is the only article, out of all the articles dealing with cosmetic surgery, from which typically Serbian attitude towards cosmetic surgery might be discerned. The title of the article does not suggest that, however, when closer look is cast it becomes clear that all successful cosmetic surgery stories are Serbian celebrities, whereas all the bad examples are from United States of America.

The whole article is divided in two segments, photographs of represented celebrities with short commentary bellow each photograph, and a short text of the article. In the text it is unapologetically stated that "...[I]n the world, some people are, guided by their deep pockets, willing to give great amounts of money to prevent the signs of aging on their face and body...". Two important implications can be read in the opening sentence. The first one is that the desire to undergo surgery for "people in the world with deep pockets" is guided simply by their ability to pay for those treatments. The second important implication is that those misguided desires to

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<sup>82</sup> "Usponi i padovi kozmeticke hirurgije" <<http://www.svet.co.yu/?state=3&izdanje=13&broj=38&clanak=3470>> (19 August 2008)

undergo cosmetic surgery are limited to “the world”. With this, the whole article gets a new perspective than the one suggested by the title. It becomes obvious that it is to serve as praise to Serbian modesty in terms of cosmetic surgery. Moreover, the second paragraph confirms this. The paragraph opens with a statement that sometimes, natural aging is best. However, it continues, “...our surgeons achieve excellent results, that have helped our famous women be satisfied with themselves, and accomplish great results in their careers...”. The article ends with that statement.

More than any other article, this one offers a glimpse into the attitude towards plastic surgery in Serbia. It is not dismissed at first glance. On the other hand, it is not a supported practice, and not suggested to everyone. Cosmetic surgery, if judging by this article, is a practice reserved for celebrities. This is at first glance. The suggestion offered in the article that aging naturally is sometimes better, opens a space for those times when it is not, in fact, better to age naturally. It brings about one of the categories in the groups of eligible cosmetic surgery users. Older women.

These five articles put forward a picture of the state of affairs when it comes to plastic surgery in Serbia. The practice is not presented as widespread, nor is it often suggested as means of ensuring competitiveness in the fields where women’s looks might be considered an asset, such as the search for a partner or perhaps even a job, as can be read in the articles of the same magazine that deal with makeup or clothing. On the other hand, plastic surgery procedures are offered as prizes in the competitions organized by the magazine itself. However, in the articles in which the winners of those competitions give account of their experience, they discuss their new appearance through the prism of their newly gained self-confidence. This fits with the theory

developed by Kathy Davis.<sup>83</sup> These women present themselves as agents, they regard the experience as taking charge of their lives, and deny that they decided to enter the competition in order to please anyone but themselves.

The other articles on plastic surgery give a more detailed account. Most of the articles dealt with the issue of breast augmentation surgery. As stated, plastic surgery is rarely recommended, however, when it is a recommended course of action, it is presented as an inevitable next step. The specificity of plastic surgery in Serbia can clearly be read in two articles. The second and the fifth analyzed articles. The second article with the tragic story of a young American actress so relentlessly pursuing her career that she endangered her health, reaches the conclusion that austerity is always a better course of action. In compliance with that, in the fifth analyzed article the conclusion is reached that plastic surgery is used in United States of America indiscriminately, with catastrophic results, whereas in Serbia, people (women) resort to plastic surgery only in the cases where plastic surgery is the only option left. Moreover, even in those cases, it is used in moderation. However, the language used in the articles is extremely strong, leaving little room for women's own initiatives. Plastic surgery is presented as an inevitable course of action for certain categories of women, thus giving them perfect validation for opting for plastic surgery. In three of the analyzed articles, a perfect shape of breasts is discussed. In some cases, plastic surgery is presented as a legitimate option.

Women reading the magazine "Lepota & Zdravlje" are given well-defined situations in which plastic surgery, even though not supported, is presented as a genuine choice. The problem of achieving female empowerment and agency through the practice of plastic surgery can be located in that fact. The readership of "Lepota & Zdravlje" is constantly encouraged to examine their body and measure it against the ideal presented in the same magazine. Moreover, they are

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<sup>83</sup> Davis

told at which point to employ which method for maintaining youthful appearance. The categories of women that are encouraged to consider plastic surgery are older women, women whose proportions do not match the ideal, or as it is presented in the magazine normal, female body, as well as women with extremely low self-esteem. For each of them advice, and ultimately support for their decision, is offered. With so many suggestions, justifying plastic surgery becomes easier for women who are considering it. Providing they fall within the right category.

## Conclusion

The beauty industry, in its unstoppable advancement, has employed the services of medicine. Those services have been extremely diverse, from simple medical advice concerning weight loss diet to complicated medical procedures of cosmetic surgery. This, especially the later, has opened numerous questions, questions concerning doctors' ethics, rights of the patients with regard to electoral surgical procedures and the justification for the existence of such practices. The questions posed are much graver than those posed by feminists in various, earlier, eras due to the fact that cosmetic surgery represents a serious health-risk, and even might cause death.

The central issue of this research paper was the matter of justification patterns offered to Serbian women in a beauty magazine when it comes to cosmetic surgery. In order to remain within the context a Serbian beauty magazine was analyzed. After discourse analysis of articles that dealt with the issue of cosmetic surgery several patterns started to emerge. The most predominant one was in accordance with the findings offered by Debra L. Gimlin. One of the conclusions that she reached was that women themselves justify undergoing cosmetic surgery procedures by previously attempting to lose weight or tighten the wished body part by exercise or diet without reaching the desired results. For them cosmetic surgery is the final resort.<sup>84</sup> This is also suggested by the magazine.

Justification for undergoing plastic surgery is also offered to women of certain age, or at least resembling certain age (usually, women after the age of fifty are encouraged to consider

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<sup>84</sup> Gimlin, Debra L *Body Work: Beauty and Self-Image in American Culture*. London: University of California Press, 2002, 105

undergoing plastic surgery). Women who fall out of the scale of “normal” are presented as potential patients for plastic surgeons.

The overall impression is that plastic surgery is only suggested as the final resort. Women who are entitled to pursue plastic surgery are either older women, women who relentlessly work on themselves (i.e. their bodies) or women whose looks is considered abnormal for whatever reason.

With this in mind, the theory suggested by Kathy Davis that women can and do use plastic surgery as means of achieving agency<sup>85</sup>, does not stand denied. It does, however, leave an open window for a suggestion that women are encouraged, by means of beauty magazines, and the beauty industry in whole, to believe that agency or empowerment is achievable by a specific type of appearance.

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<sup>85</sup> Davis

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