

Loss of Innocence and Revenge in *From the World of John Wick: Ballerina* (2025)

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis representasi hilangnya kepolosan (loss of innocence) Eve Macarro dan bagaimana pengalaman traumatis memotivasi balas dendamnya dalam *From the World of John Wick: Ballerina* (2025). Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan menganalisis adegan, dialog, interaksi antartokoh, representasi visual, dan unsur sinematik dalam film. Analisis dilakukan menggunakan teori trauma Cathy Caruth dan kerangka Bildungsroman untuk menjelaskan hubungan antara trauma, perkembangan psikologis, dan pembentukan identitas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa transformasi Eve berkembang melalui empat lapisan luka psikologis, yaitu menyaksikan kematian ayahnya, menjalani pelatihan di Ruska Roma, menemukan kebenaran tentang kelompok yang bertanggung jawab atas kematian ayahnya, dan mengungkap sejarah keluarganya. Akumulasi pengalaman traumatis tersebut secara bertahap membentuk identitas Eve serta memotivasi transformasinya dari kehilangan kepolosan menuju balas dendam.

Kata kunci: trauma, hilangnya kepolosan, balas dendam, Bildungsroman, Cathy Caruth

Abstract

This study examines how Eve Macarro's loss of innocence is represented through Layers of Psychological Wounds and motivates her pursuit of revenge in *From the World of John Wick: Ballerina* (2025). Using a qualitative descriptive method, the study analyzes selected scenes and dialogues through Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory and the Bildungsroman framework. The findings show that Eve's transformation develops through four successive psychological wounds: witnessing her father's death, training as transformation, discovering the truth about her enemy, and deception about her family. These cumulative traumatic experiences gradually shape her identity and transform revenge from an emotional response into a life goal. The concept of layers of psychological wounds offers an alternative perspective for understanding trauma, loss of innocence, identity formation, and revenge in contemporary action cinema.

Keywords: trauma, loss of innocence, revenge, Bildungsroman, Cathy Caruth

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary action films increasingly portray revenge not merely as an act of retaliation but as a psychological process shaped by trauma, identity formation, and personal transformation. Rather than presenting revenge as an immediate emotional response, many recent films depict it as the culmination of unresolved psychological wounds that develop over time. This shift reflects a growing interest in exploring the emotional and psychological dimensions of action protagonists, particularly female characters whose developmental journeys are driven by violence, loss, and self-discovery. *From the World of John Wick: Ballerina* (2025), directed by Len Wiseman, exemplifies this trend through the story of Eve Macarro, a young woman who witnesses her father's murder,

undergoes rigorous training within the Ruska Roma organization, and embarks on a quest for revenge against those responsible for her family's destruction. Her journey demonstrates that revenge is not an isolated act but the result of a long process of psychological transformation initiated by traumatic experiences.

Although revenge has long been recognized as a dominant convention in action cinema, recent films increasingly shift their attention from physical confrontation to the protagonist's internal psychological development. Contemporary revenge narratives no longer portray violence merely as a spectacular form of retaliation but as a consequence of prolonged emotional suffering and unresolved psychological conflict. In these narratives,

revenge emerges through an extended process in which traumatic experiences reshape the protagonist's perception of the self, influence personal choices, and redefine life goals. Consequently, the psychological dimension of revenge has become an essential aspect of contemporary action films, encouraging audiences to understand violent actions not simply as acts of retribution but also as responses to deeply rooted emotional wounds.

The notion of loss of innocence plays a crucial role in explaining this psychological transformation. Traditionally associated with coming-of-age narratives, loss of innocence refers to the irreversible transition from childhood security toward an awareness of violence, suffering, and moral complexity. Rather than occurring through ordinary maturation, this transition is frequently triggered by traumatic experiences that disrupt the protagonist's emotional stability and alter their understanding of reality. Within contemporary action cinema, the destruction of innocence often functions as the initial stage of character development, providing the psychological foundation from which identity, motivation, and personal agency gradually emerge. Therefore, the protagonist's revenge should be understood not merely as an emotional response to a single event but as the culmination of a long developmental process initiated by trauma.

This perspective closely corresponds with Cathy Caruth's understanding of trauma as an experience that exceeds immediate comprehension and continues to shape the survivor's life through delayed understanding and repetition. According to Caruth, trauma is not confined to the original catastrophic event because its psychological effects repeatedly return through memory, emotion, and behaviour. The survivor therefore experiences trauma as an ongoing process rather than a completed past event. This theoretical perspective is particularly relevant for analyzing Eve Macarro because the traumatic loss she experiences during childhood does not remain isolated within the past. Instead, it continues to influence her psychological development as she encounters subsequent experiences that reactivate and reinforce the original wound. As a result, each new traumatic event contributes to the gradual reconstruction of her identity and strengthens her determination to pursue revenge.

The developmental journey represented in *From the World of John Wick: Ballerina* (2025) also reflects the characteristics of the contemporary Bildungsroman. Unlike the classical Bildungsroman, which generally emphasizes education, moral maturation, and social integration, the contemporary form frequently portrays psychological growth through conflict, violence, and emotional suffering. Eve's transformation illustrates this development because her maturity is achieved not through

conventional educational experiences but through repeated encounters with trauma, institutional discipline, and painful discoveries concerning her past. Consequently, the film demonstrates that identity formation is a dynamic psychological process in which suffering functions as a catalyst for self-discovery and personal transformation.

For these reasons, *From the World of John Wick: Ballerina* (2025) provides a valuable object for examining the relationship between trauma, identity formation, and revenge in contemporary action cinema. Rather than presenting revenge as an isolated narrative objective, the film portrays it as the outcome of cumulative psychological experiences that progressively shape the protagonist's worldview. By examining Eve Macarro's transformation through Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory and the contemporary Bildungsroman framework, this study argues that revenge should be understood as the culmination of successive psychological wounds that gradually reconstruct identity following the loss of innocence.

Trauma has become one of the most significant themes in contemporary literary and film studies because it explains how catastrophic experiences continue to influence memory, identity, and behaviour long after the original event has occurred. According to Cathy Caruth, trauma is characterized by delayed understanding, repetition, and unresolved memories that repeatedly return to shape the survivor's present life. Consequently, trauma should not be understood as a single psychological event but as an ongoing process that influences emotional development and identity formation. In Eve Macarro's case, the murder of her father represents the beginning of a series of interconnected traumatic experiences that gradually reshape her worldview, personal identity, and motivation for revenge.

The protagonist's psychological development can also be understood through the contemporary Bildungsroman framework, which examines the process of identity formation through conflict, suffering, and self-discovery. Unlike the traditional Bildungsroman, which emphasizes education and social integration, the contemporary Bildungsroman portrays maturity as the result of traumatic experiences and psychological struggle. Within this perspective, Eve's journey reflects a coming-of-age process in which cumulative trauma replaces conventional education as the primary force shaping her identity. Her transformation from an innocent child into an autonomous woman seeking justice illustrates how trauma functions as a catalyst for psychological growth and identity reconstruction.

Previous studies have extensively discussed trauma, identity formation, revenge, and the Bildungsroman

tradition from various perspectives. Monaco (2021) demonstrates that trauma initiates the protagonist's developmental journey in the contemporary Bildungsroman, while Neimneh (2024) and Jain and Jha (2023) explain how emotional conflict and personal suffering shape identity formation within modern coming-of-age narratives. Arbués (2024) examines the relationship between trauma and revenge through literary metafiction, whereas Rouabhia and Makhlof (2025) investigate the interaction between trauma, memory, and identity formation in a contemporary dystopian novel. Collectively, these studies confirm that trauma plays a crucial role in shaping personal identity and psychological development.

Nevertheless, several research gaps remain. Existing studies generally examine trauma, revenge, memory, and the Bildungsroman as separate analytical concerns rather than exploring how these elements interact within a single developmental process. Furthermore, most previous research focuses on literary texts, while contemporary action films remain comparatively underexplored. More importantly, no previous study has analyzed *From the World of John Wick: Ballerina* (2025) by integrating Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory with the Bildungsroman framework. In addition, previous scholarship has not conceptualized the protagonist's transformation through the notion of Layers of Psychological Wounds, which explains how successive traumatic experiences accumulate to construct identity and ultimately motivate revenge.

Therefore, this study proposes Layers of Psychological Wounds as its central analytical concept to explain Eve Macarro's transformation from loss of innocence to revenge. By integrating Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory and the contemporary Bildungsroman framework, this study aims to analyze how Eve's loss of innocence is represented through successive psychological wounds and to examine how these cumulative traumatic experiences motivate her pursuit of revenge in *From the World of John Wick: Ballerina* (2025). The findings are expected to contribute to trauma studies, Bildungsroman scholarship, and contemporary film studies by offering a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between trauma, identity formation, and revenge in contemporary action cinema.

METHOD

This study examines Eve Macarro's transformation from loss of innocence to revenge in *From the World of John Wick: Ballerina* (2025). The primary data consist of selected scenes, dialogues, character interactions, visual representations, and cinematic elements that portray Eve's experiences of trauma, identity formation, and revenge

throughout the narrative. These data were selected because they directly address the research questions concerning the representation of Eve's loss of innocence and the way her traumatic experiences motivate her pursuit of revenge.

The data were collected by watching the film repeatedly to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the narrative and character development. Relevant scenes and dialogues were then identified and classified according to the research questions before being analyzed using Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory and the Bildungsroman framework. Caruth's theory was employed to examine how traumatic experiences shape Eve's psychological wounds through delayed understanding, repetition, and unresolved memories, while the Bildungsroman framework was used to explain Eve's developmental journey from childhood innocence to self-determination through a series of life-changing experiences.

From the World of John Wick: Ballerina (2025), directed by Len Wiseman, serves as the primary data source of this research. The data consist of selected scenes featuring the main character, Eve Macarro, as the focus of the analysis. To answer the research questions, the study applies Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory and the contemporary Bildungsroman framework to examine how Eve's loss of innocence is represented through Layers of Psychological Wounds and how these cumulative traumatic experiences motivate her pursuit of revenge.

The analysis focuses on Eve's dialogues, actions, and cinematic elements, including visual composition, lighting, framing, and performance. The data were collected from relevant scenes supported by screenshots and dialogue transcripts. The analysis involved identifying scenes representing Eve's traumatic experiences, classifying them into successive layers of psychological wounds, interpreting them through Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory and the Bildungsroman framework, and explaining how these experiences contribute to Eve's psychological development, identity formation, and motivation for revenge.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that Eve Macarro's transformation in *From the World of John Wick: Ballerina* (2025) is represented through the gradual accumulation of traumatic experiences that reshape her identity and motivate her pursuit of revenge. By integrating Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory and the contemporary Bildungsroman framework, this study demonstrates that Eve's loss of innocence is not caused by a single traumatic incident but by successive psychological wounds that develop throughout the narrative. These findings are discussed in two sections. The first examines how Eve's loss of innocence is represented through Layers of Psychological Wounds,

while the second explains how these cumulative traumatic experiences motivate her pursuit of revenge.

Layers of Psychological Wounds

The analysis indicates that Eve's loss of innocence is represented through four interconnected layers of psychological wounds. Rather than portraying trauma as a single event, the film presents psychological suffering as a cumulative process in which each traumatic experience reinforces previous emotional wounds. This representation reflects Cathy Caruth's argument that trauma is characterized by delayed understanding, repetition, and unresolved memories that continue to influence the survivor's identity and behaviour. Simultaneously, Eve's transformation illustrates the contemporary *Bildungsroman*, in which personal growth is achieved through suffering, conflict, and self-discovery rather than through conventional education or social integration.

Witnessing Her Father's Death

The first layer of psychological wounds is established when Eve witnesses the murder of her father, Javier. This moment marks the destruction of her childhood innocence and emotional security, forcing her to confront violence before she is psychologically capable of understanding its meaning. The film emphasizes Eve's silence, frightened expression, and isolation beside her father's body, highlighting the emotional impact of the event rather than the act of violence itself. According to Caruth, traumatic experiences often exceed an individual's capacity for immediate comprehension and therefore remain psychologically unresolved. Consequently, Javier's death becomes an unclaimed experience that continues to shape Eve's memories and later decisions.

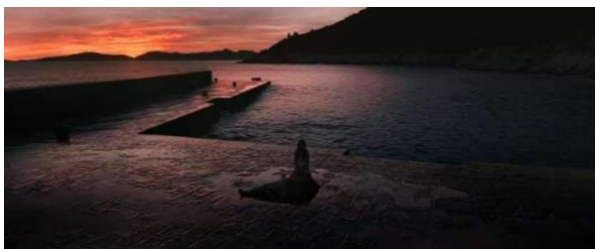


Figure 1: Eve is sitting alone beside her father's dead body
(00:11:00–00:11:20)

This finding supports Monaco's (2021) argument that trauma functions as the starting point of the protagonist's developmental journey within the contemporary *Bildungsroman*. However, while Monaco focuses on literary narratives, this study demonstrates how cinematic elements—including framing, silence, and visual

composition—effectively represent the emergence of psychological trauma. Therefore, witnessing her father's death constitutes the first and most fundamental layer of Eve's psychological wounds, establishing the traumatic foundation for her subsequent identity formation and desire for revenge.

Beyond functioning as the narrative's opening conflict, this scene establishes the psychological foundation for Eve's subsequent transformation throughout the film. The visual composition emphasizes her vulnerability by positioning her as a powerless child who witnesses an event beyond her control. The contrast between the violent attack and Eve's inability to intervene reinforces the destruction of her emotional security, marking the irreversible end of her childhood innocence. Rather than presenting the murder solely as a tragic incident, the film frames it as the beginning of a prolonged psychological journey in which the memory of loss continues to influence Eve's perception of herself and her future.

From Cathy Caruth's perspective, the traumatic event cannot be understood as a complete experience at the moment it occurs because it exceeds Eve's capacity for immediate comprehension. Instead, the experience remains psychologically unresolved and gradually acquires meaning through later events that repeatedly reactivate the original memory. This delayed understanding illustrates Caruth's concept of belatedness, in which trauma returns through subsequent experiences rather than remaining confined to the past. As Eve grows older, the memory of her father's death becomes increasingly significant because it shapes her emotional responses, decisions, and determination to uncover the truth behind the incident.

This scene also introduces the first layer of psychological wounds that becomes the basis for Eve's identity formation. The traumatic loss does not simply create grief but fundamentally changes the direction of her life. Every important decision she makes afterwards—including accepting the Ruska Roma's training and pursuing those responsible for her father's death—can be traced back to this initial experience. Therefore, the film represents the murder not merely as the cause of revenge but as the starting point of Eve's developmental journey, where trauma continuously interacts with memory and identity until it ultimately motivates her pursuit of revenge.

Training as Transformation

The second layer develops through Eve's rigorous training within the Ruska Roma organization. Instead of recovering from childhood trauma, Eve grows up in an environment dominated by discipline, violence, and emotional restraint. Ballet lessons, combat training, and weapons instruction function not only as physical

preparation but also as mechanisms through which unresolved trauma is transformed into resilience and violence. The institution replaces childhood security with survival, gradually reconstructing Eve's identity as an assassin.

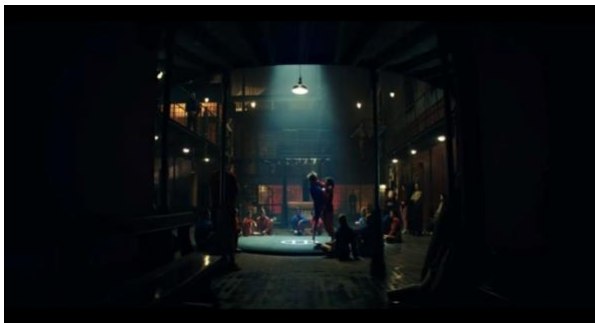


Figure 3: Combat training sessions
(00:21:00- 00:21.30)

From Caruth's perspective, trauma does not disappear after the original event but continues to influence later experiences through repetition. Eve's continuous physical and emotional training demonstrates how unresolved trauma becomes embedded in everyday life. This finding also corresponds with Neimneh (2024) and Jain and Jha (2023), who argue that contemporary Bildungsroman narratives portray identity formation through suffering and emotional conflict rather than conventional education. Nevertheless, Eve's development differs because institutional violence itself becomes the primary educational force shaping her maturity. Thus, the Ruska Roma functions not only as a training institution but also as the second layer of Eve's psychological wounds.

The training sequences also illustrate that Eve's transformation is not an instantaneous response to her father's death but a gradual process shaped by continuous discipline and repeated exposure to violence. Every exercise imposed by the Ruska Roma demands not only physical endurance but also emotional restraint, requiring Eve to suppress fear, grief, and vulnerability in order to survive within the organization's rigid system. As a result, the training functions as a formative experience that

reconstructs her identity by replacing the emotional security of childhood with the discipline and resilience expected of a professional assassin.

From the perspective of Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory, this stage represents the continuation of Eve's unresolved psychological wounds rather than a recovery from trauma. The violent environment of the Ruska Roma repeatedly confronts Eve with experiences that reinforce the emotional impact of her father's death, preventing the traumatic memory from fading. Instead of allowing her to leave the past behind, the institution continually shapes her behaviour and emotional responses through repetitive practices that normalize violence as part of everyday life. Consequently, the trauma becomes integrated into Eve's developing identity and influences the way she understands herself and the world around her.

The training period can also be interpreted through the contemporary Bildungsroman framework as a stage of education and personal formation. Unlike the traditional Bildungsroman, in which education prepares the protagonist to integrate into society, Eve's education prepares her to survive within a violent environment governed by strict rules and constant danger. Her development therefore reflects a modern form of coming-of-age in which maturity is achieved through adversity, sacrifice, and psychological struggle rather than through ordinary social experiences. This process demonstrates that Eve's identity is constructed through the accumulation of difficult experiences that gradually transform her from an innocent child into an individual capable of determining her own course of action.

Accordingly, the Ruska Roma functions as more than a training institution; it becomes the environment in which Eve's second layer of psychological wounds is established. The combination of rigorous discipline, emotional suppression, and continuous exposure to violence reinforces the trauma initiated by her father's death while simultaneously equipping her with the skills necessary to pursue revenge. This stage therefore serves as an essential bridge between Eve's childhood trauma and her later decision to confront those responsible for her suffering.

Discovering the Truth About Her Enemy

The third layer emerges when Eve discovers the identity of the organization responsible for her father's murder. This revelation transforms fragmented childhood memories into a clearer understanding of her traumatic past. Rather than providing emotional closure, the discovery intensifies her psychological conflict because it forces her to relive experiences that had remained unresolved for many years. Caruth's concept of belatedness explains that trauma is often understood only after new experiences reactivate the original event.

Accordingly, Eve's search for truth becomes a process of confronting memories that continue to shape her identity and future actions.



Figure 4: Winston said to Eve that her enemy is a Cult.
(00:46:05–00:46:25).

The revelation also marks an important stage in Eve's developmental journey. Instead of remaining a passive survivor, she actively reconstructs her identity by confronting the source of her trauma. Consequently, the discovery of her enemy strengthens the cumulative psychological wounds that have developed since childhood and reinforces her determination to seek revenge.

The revelation concerning the organization responsible for her father's death represents a decisive turning point in Eve's psychological development. For many years, the traumatic memory of witnessing her father's murder remained incomplete because she lacked the knowledge necessary to understand the circumstances behind the event. When she finally discovers the identity of those responsible, the information does not simply answer a long-standing question but fundamentally changes the way she interprets her past. The traumatic experience, which had remained unresolved since childhood, acquires a new meaning that reshapes both her emotional responses and her future decisions.

This moment closely reflects Cathy Caruth's concept of belatedness, which explains that trauma is often understood only after the original event has passed. Rather than being fully comprehended at the moment of violence, the experience continues to exist in an unresolved form until later events enable the survivor to reinterpret it. Eve's discovery therefore demonstrates that trauma develops through an ongoing process of recognition rather than through immediate understanding. The newly acquired knowledge does not lessen her suffering; instead, it intensifies the psychological impact of the original event by connecting her childhood memories with the reality she faces in the present.

The film further suggests that memory is not static but continuously reconstructed through new experiences. As Eve uncovers the truth about the cult, memories that

previously appeared fragmented become increasingly coherent, allowing her to recognize the broader consequences of her father's death. This reconstruction transforms her emotional state from uncertainty into determination. Her desire to confront those responsible is no longer driven solely by grief but also by a clearer understanding of the injustice that has shaped her entire life. Consequently, the discovery functions as a catalyst that redirects her identity toward a more purposeful pursuit of revenge.

Within the contemporary Bildungsroman framework, this stage also represents an important phase of self-discovery. Personal growth is achieved not only through acquiring practical skills but also through gaining knowledge that transforms the protagonist's understanding of herself and her past. By confronting the truth, Eve moves beyond the passive position of a survivor and begins to act as an individual capable of making independent choices. Accordingly, this revelation establishes the third layer of psychological wounds while simultaneously marking the transition from emotional uncertainty to deliberate action, bringing Eve closer to the final stage of her transformation.

Deception About Her Family

The final layer of psychological wounds is represented through Eve's discovery of hidden truths concerning her family. This revelation challenges her previous understanding of herself and fundamentally reshapes her perception of her past. The emotional impact of this discovery extends beyond personal loss because it forces Eve to reconsider the meaning of family, belonging, and identity. Rather than functioning as an isolated narrative twist, this experience completes the accumulation of psychological wounds that have gradually transformed her throughout the film.

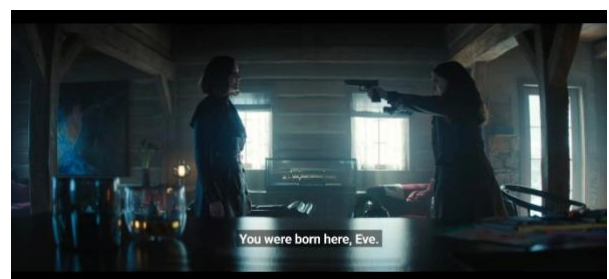


Figure 5: The truth about her the family roots.
(01:23:00- 01: 23: 30)

From the perspective of the contemporary Bildungsroman, this final revelation represents the culmination of Eve's identity formation. Her psychological development is no longer defined by childhood innocence but by her ability to confront painful truths and determine her own course of action. Therefore, the four successive

layers of psychological wounds collectively demonstrate that Eve's transformation is constructed through cumulative trauma, ultimately preparing her for the pursuit of revenge discussed in the following section.

The revelation concerning Eve's family history constitutes the final stage in the accumulation of her psychological wounds. Unlike the earlier traumatic experiences, which primarily exposed her to violence and loss, this revelation directly challenges her understanding of her own identity. The discovery forces Eve to reconsider the assumptions she has held since childhood and to recognize that her personal history is inseparable from the conflict she has spent years trying to understand. Consequently, the emotional impact of this moment extends beyond the acquisition of new information, as it fundamentally reshapes her perception of herself and the origins of her suffering.

From Cathy Caruth's perspective, this scene demonstrates that trauma continues to evolve as survivors encounter experiences that reactivate and reinterpret earlier memories. The revelation does not replace Eve's childhood trauma but instead deepens its significance by providing a broader context for the events that have shaped her life. Memories that were once fragmented become interconnected, allowing Eve to recognize that her father's death was not an isolated tragedy but part of a larger sequence of events influencing her family's past. This process illustrates how trauma is continually reconstructed through new understanding, reinforcing Caruth's argument that traumatic experiences acquire meaning gradually rather than immediately.

The scene also highlights the relationship between memory and identity. As Eve gains a more complete understanding of her family background, she is compelled to redefine her position within the narrative of violence that has surrounded her since childhood. Rather than remaining a victim of circumstances beyond her control, she begins to understand herself as an individual capable of confronting that history and determining its outcome. This transformation reflects a significant shift in her psychological development because her actions are no longer motivated solely by emotional pain but also by a conscious awareness of who she is and what she must accomplish.

Viewed through the contemporary Bildungsroman framework, this moment represents the culmination of Eve's journey of self-discovery. The process of maturation is completed not only through physical training or emotional endurance but also through the acquisition of knowledge that enables the protagonist to construct a coherent sense of identity. By confronting the truth about her family, Eve achieves a greater level of self-awareness that prepares her for independent action. Accordingly, this

revelation functions as the fourth layer of psychological wounds, completing the developmental process initiated by the loss of innocence and establishing the psychological foundation for her final pursuit of revenge.

Trauma as the Motivation for Revenge

The second finding of this study demonstrates that Eve Macarro's pursuit of revenge is not portrayed as an impulsive emotional reaction but as the culmination of a prolonged process of psychological transformation. Through the integration of Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory and the contemporary Bildungsroman framework, the film presents revenge as the outcome of cumulative traumatic experiences that gradually reshape Eve's identity and worldview. The four layers of psychological wounds discussed in the previous section function as interconnected experiences that motivate Eve to seek justice for her father's death. Consequently, revenge becomes the final stage of her developmental journey, reflecting not only emotional retaliation but also her struggle to reclaim agency, identity, and control over her life. The transition from psychological suffering to purposeful action demonstrates that Eve's loss of innocence functions as the primary motivation behind her pursuit of revenge. The traumatic experiences she endures do not remain passive memories but gradually influence the decisions she makes throughout the narrative. Each layer of psychological wounds contributes to the formation of a stronger sense of purpose, allowing Eve to transform emotional pain into determination. Rather than responding impulsively to the violence she experienced as a child, she develops a clear objective that guides her actions and gives direction to her personal journey.

This transformation reflects the developmental pattern of the contemporary Bildungsroman, in which personal growth emerges through continuous confrontation with adversity. Eve's experiences of loss, discipline, and repeated emotional conflict gradually reshape her understanding of herself and the world around her. Instead of remaining trapped by grief, she begins to recognize that her future depends upon her willingness to confront the source of her trauma. Consequently, revenge is presented not merely as an emotional reaction but as the result of a long process of psychological development through which Eve reconstructs her identity and establishes her own agency.

The film also emphasizes that revenge is inseparable from Eve's search for meaning. Her determination to confront those responsible for her father's death is closely connected to her attempt to restore coherence to a life that was disrupted by violence during childhood. Every step she takes toward her enemies therefore represents not only physical movement but also psychological progression. As

she approaches the truth, she simultaneously gains a deeper understanding of herself, illustrating that the pursuit of revenge becomes an essential stage in her process of self-discovery.

Accordingly, Eve's loss of innocence should be understood as the foundation of her transformation rather than simply the cause of her anger. The traumatic events that initially destroy her emotional security gradually become the experiences through which she develops resilience, independence, and determination. This developmental process demonstrates that revenge is portrayed as the culmination of Eve's psychological journey, in which the accumulation of traumatic experiences ultimately motivates her to reclaim control over her own life.

Childhood Trauma

Eve's motivation for revenge originates from the traumatic experience of witnessing her father's murder during childhood. The loss of her father destroys her sense of security and leaves an unresolved psychological wound that continues to influence her emotional development. Rather than understanding the event immediately, Eve carries the memory throughout her life until it gradually shapes her identity and personal goals. This finding reflects Caruth's concept of unclaimed experience, which argues that traumatic events often remain psychologically unresolved because they cannot be fully comprehended when they occur. As a result, trauma repeatedly returns and influences the survivor's present life.

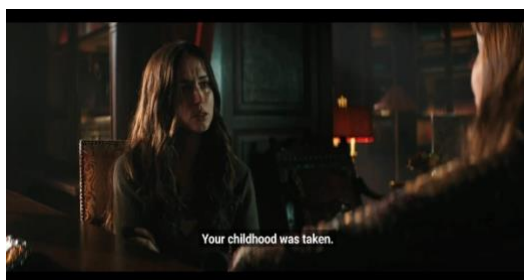


Figure 6: The reason behind Eve's revenge
(00:25:08- 00:25:25)

From the perspective of the contemporary Bildungsroman, childhood trauma functions as the beginning of Eve's coming-of-age journey. Unlike protagonists who mature through education or ordinary social experiences, Eve's development is initiated by violence and loss. Therefore, revenge emerges not simply from anger but from a lifelong attempt to respond to a traumatic event that has never been emotionally resolved.

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Repetition of Trauma

The film further demonstrates that Eve's desire for revenge intensifies as traumatic experiences continue to recur throughout her life. Her years within the Ruska Roma, repeated exposure to violence, and subsequent discoveries regarding the organization responsible for her father's death reactivate memories of her childhood trauma. Instead of allowing psychological recovery, each new

experience reinforces the emotional impact of the previous one, illustrating the cumulative nature of trauma proposed in this study.



Figure 7 : Eve remembers that she ever kill person when she tries to save her father from a killer. (00: 26:50– 00:27:00).

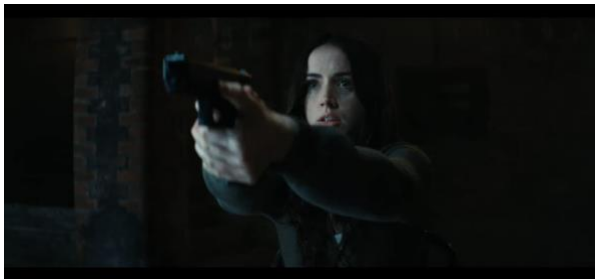


Figure 8 :Eve kill person to pass the test before become the agent of Ruska Roma (00: 27:00– 00:27:05).

Caruth argues that trauma is characterized by repetition because unresolved experiences repeatedly return through memories, emotions, and behaviours. Eve's continuous exposure to violence therefore represents more than physical conflict; it symbolizes the persistence of psychological suffering that cannot be separated from her identity. These repeated encounters gradually transform trauma into determination, making revenge appear as the only meaningful response to her unresolved past.

As the narrative progresses, Eve's traumatic memories gradually evolve into a clear sense of purpose that directs every decision she makes. Rather than allowing the pain of her childhood to remain an unresolved emotional burden, she transforms it into a personal commitment to uncover the truth and confront those responsible for her suffering. This transformation demonstrates that trauma does not merely generate emotional distress but also shapes the protagonist's future actions by providing a meaningful objective. Consequently, Eve's determination is represented as the product of continuous psychological development rather than an impulsive desire for retaliation.

The continuity between trauma and purpose becomes increasingly evident through Eve's persistence despite the

physical and emotional obstacles she encounters. Every confrontation, investigation, and dangerous mission reinforces her commitment to the goal that originated from her childhood experience. Instead of weakening her determination, these challenges strengthen her resolve by repeatedly reminding her of the injustice that disrupted her life. The film therefore portrays revenge as a long-term psychological commitment sustained by memory rather than as a temporary emotional reaction.

Within the Bildungsroman framework, this stage represents the protagonist's movement toward self-determination. Eve no longer acts solely according to the expectations of the Ruska Roma or the influence of other characters. Instead, she begins making independent decisions based on her own understanding of justice and personal responsibility. This shift is significant because it illustrates that her development is no longer controlled by external authority but by an internally constructed purpose. The experiences that once caused fear and uncertainty now become the foundation upon which she establishes her own agency.

Accordingly, the film presents trauma as the force that transforms personal suffering into purposeful action. Eve's commitment to revenge is not depicted as an irrational response to violence but as the culmination of years of psychological development in which every traumatic experience contributes to the formation of a stronger and more independent identity. This progression demonstrates that the motivation for revenge is inseparable from the protagonist's process of personal growth and identity reconstruction.

Search for Identity

The findings also reveal that Eve's pursuit of revenge is closely connected to her search for identity. Throughout the film, her investigation into the people responsible for her father's murder becomes a process of discovering her own past and understanding her place within a world dominated by violence. Each revelation not only provides new information but also reshapes her perception of herself and her family.



Figure 9: Eve looking for who have the symbol that identify to her enemy who is murder her father.
(01:00:03 - 01:00:30)

This process reflects the contemporary Bildungsroman, in which identity is constructed through conflict, suffering, and self-discovery. Rather than portraying maturity as successful integration into society, the film presents identity formation as the ability to confront painful truths and make independent decisions. Eve gradually transforms from a powerless child into an autonomous individual who consciously determines her own path. Consequently, revenge represents not only the pursuit of justice but also the completion of her psychological and personal development.

The confrontation scenes further demonstrate that revenge is portrayed as the external expression of Eve's internal psychological transformation. Although the action sequences emphasize physical combat, they simultaneously reveal the emotional consequences of the traumatic experiences that have shaped her development since childhood. Every encounter with her enemies represents more than a battle for survival; it symbolizes Eve's determination to confront the memories and unresolved pain that have influenced her identity for many years. As a result, violence functions as a narrative representation of her psychological struggle rather than merely as an element of action spectacle.

Throughout these confrontations, the film consistently portrays Eve as acting with calculation and purpose instead of uncontrolled anger. Her decisions reflect the discipline acquired during her years of training as well as the maturity developed through repeated exposure to traumatic experiences. This portrayal distinguishes her actions from impulsive revenge narratives in which violence is motivated solely by emotion. Instead, the film suggests that Eve's actions are guided by a conscious understanding of the injustice she has experienced and by her determination to resolve the conflict that has defined her life since childhood.

From the perspective of the contemporary Bildungsroman, these confrontations signify the protagonist's transition from preparation to action. Earlier stages of education, suffering, and self-discovery now

culminate in independent decision-making, allowing Eve to exercise the agency she has gradually developed throughout the narrative. Her willingness to confront overwhelming danger demonstrates that she has progressed beyond the vulnerable child introduced at the beginning of the film. Consequently, the revenge narrative simultaneously functions as the final stage of her psychological maturation, illustrating that her identity has been reconstructed through the accumulation of traumatic experiences.

Revenge as Psychological Resolution

The final stage of Eve's transformation is represented through her decision to confront those responsible for her father's death. The analysis indicates that revenge functions as an attempt to reclaim agency after years of psychological suffering rather than as a simple act of retaliation. By confronting the source of her trauma, Eve seeks to regain control over a life that has long been defined by violence, loss, and unresolved memories.



Figure 10: Eve speaks to her enemy that it will be over until he dies.
(01:27:05- 01:27:21)

Unlike conventional revenge narratives that emphasize physical victory, *From the World of John Wick: Ballerina* portrays revenge as the culmination of a prolonged psychological journey. This finding extends the arguments of Arbués (2024), who interprets revenge as a process of reconstructing identity after trauma. However, while Arbués focuses on literary narratives, the present study demonstrates that contemporary action cinema represents this process through the interaction of narrative development and cinematic techniques. Furthermore, by integrating Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory with the contemporary Bildungsroman framework, this study proposes *Layers of Psychological Wounds* as a comprehensive perspective for understanding how cumulative trauma shapes identity and ultimately motivates revenge. Accordingly, Eve's revenge should be understood not merely as an emotional response but as the

final outcome of a continuous process of psychological transformation and identity formation.

The final confrontation represents the culmination of Eve's psychological journey rather than merely the completion of her revenge mission. Throughout the narrative, each traumatic experience progressively shapes her identity, enabling her to confront the individuals responsible for disrupting her childhood. By facing her enemies directly, Eve symbolically confronts the source of the psychological wounds that have influenced her development for many years. The confrontation therefore serves not only as the resolution of the external conflict but also as the climax of her internal transformation from a traumatized survivor into an individual capable of making independent choices.

Importantly, the film does not suggest that revenge completely erases trauma or restores the innocence that Eve lost during childhood. Instead, it portrays revenge as a significant stage in her effort to reclaim personal agency after years of living under the influence of unresolved memories and institutional control. Although the emotional consequences of trauma remain part of her identity, Eve is no longer defined solely by the suffering she experienced. Rather, she demonstrates the ability to determine her own future by acting according to her own decisions and values instead of being controlled by the traumatic past.

This outcome closely reflects the contemporary Bildungsroman framework, in which maturity is achieved through self-awareness and self-determination rather than through social integration alone. Eve's development reaches its completion because she has progressed through successive stages of disruption, education, self-discovery, and independent action. The knowledge she gains throughout her journey enables her to understand both the origins of her trauma and the person she has become. Consequently, her revenge functions as the culmination of a developmental process that transforms psychological suffering into personal agency.

Therefore, Eve's achievement of revenge should be interpreted as the final stage of her transformation from loss of innocence to self-determination. The accumulation of psychological wounds does not simply motivate acts of retaliation but gradually reconstructs her identity through continuous experiences of trauma, discipline, and self-discovery. By the end of the film, Eve emerges as a protagonist who is able to define her own path despite the traumatic experiences that shaped her life. This conclusion reinforces the argument that revenge in *From the World of John Wick: Ballerina* (2025) is portrayed as the result of a long process of psychological development rather than as an isolated act of violence.

This study extends previous scholarship on trauma narratives by demonstrating that Eve Macarro's transformation cannot be explained by a single traumatic event. Instead, her psychological development is constructed through successive and interconnected experiences conceptualized as Layers of Psychological Wounds. By integrating Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory with the contemporary Bildungsroman framework, this study offers a broader understanding of how cumulative trauma shapes identity and motivates revenge in contemporary action cinema.

CONCLUSION

This study examined Eve Macarro's transformation from loss of innocence to revenge in *From the World of John Wick: Ballerina* (2025) by employing Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory and the contemporary Bildungsroman framework. The findings demonstrate that Eve's transformation is not triggered by a single traumatic incident but by the accumulation of successive psychological wounds that gradually shape her identity throughout the narrative. Witnessing her father's death marks the destruction of her childhood innocence, while her experiences within the Ruska Roma, the discovery of the organization responsible for her father's death, and the revelation of her family history progressively deepen her psychological trauma. These interconnected experiences illustrate that trauma develops as a continuous psychological process that influences the protagonist's understanding of herself and the world around her.

Furthermore, the study reveals that Eve's traumatic experiences function not only as psychological consequences of violence but also as the primary motivation for her pursuit of revenge. Rather than portraying revenge as an immediate emotional reaction, the film presents it as the culmination of a long developmental journey in which grief, memory, discipline, and self-discovery collectively contribute to the formation of a more independent identity. Through the perspective of the contemporary Bildungsroman, Eve's journey demonstrates that personal growth emerges through adversity and continuous psychological struggle, enabling her to achieve self-determination despite the traumatic experiences that shape her life.

The integration of Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory and the Bildungsroman framework also provides a comprehensive perspective for understanding the relationship between trauma, identity formation, and revenge in contemporary action cinema. By introducing the concept of layers of psychological wounds as the central analytical perspective, this study explains how successive traumatic experiences progressively construct Eve's psychological development and motivate her

transformation from loss of innocence to revenge. This perspective contributes to the discussion of trauma narratives by emphasizing that identity is formed through the cumulative impact of unresolved experiences rather than through a single life-changing event.

Finally, this study contributes to the growing body of research on trauma and character development in contemporary cinema by demonstrating that action films can represent complex psychological processes in addition to physical conflict. The findings may serve as a reference for future studies investigating trauma, identity formation, revenge narratives, or contemporary adaptations of the Bildungsroman in films and other cultural texts. Future researchers are encouraged to examine similar themes using different theoretical perspectives or by exploring other contemporary films that portray trauma as a significant factor in shaping personal transformation.

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