Chapter 13
Thinking About the Concept of Social Gender With a Film: The Analysis of the Film Tersine Dünya With Judith Butler’s Concept of Subject – Discussing the Fact of Social Gender That Is Presented in the Narrative of the Film

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ABSTRACT

The concept of social gender is an interdisciplinary matter of debate and is still questioned today. Making sense of this concept is understood by the ongoing codes in the social order. However, the fact that men are still positioned as dominating women in the contrast of the public sphere/private sphere prevents the making sense of the concept of gender. This study questions the concept of social gender through the female characters and male characters presented in the film Tersine Dünya (1993) within the framework of Judith Butler’s thoughts regarding the notion of the subject. The thoughts of feminist film theorists also bring the strategies of representation of female characters up for discussion. Butler’s thoughts and the discourses of feminist film theorists will enable both making sense of social gender and a more concrete understanding of the concept of the subject. The possibility of deconstruction of patriarchal codes by using classical narrative cinema conventions is also brought up for discussion in the examined film.

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INTRODUCTION

Everything presented in the cinema has the power to change the world of spectators. The worldwide spectator prefers to watch mainstream movies. The number of spectators of art films is less than the number of spectators of mainstream films because art films put their audience in an intense process of thinking and do not approve the existing codes. Although the film Tersine Dünya is a mainstream film in Turkish Cinema, it raises many questions that the spectator will query because the film is important in terms of discussing the concept of social gender in Turkish Cinema. For centuries, feminist theorists have discussed the position of women and men in the differentiation of the public sphere and private sphere, and they offer strategies for the change of the male-dominated order. The public space without equality of opportunity also causes inequality of social order. In the public sphere where the discourse of men is considered more important, women are secondary. That is why they are the subordinate ones. These realities are presented to spectators through films. However, the presentation of realities reinforces the continuation of existing rules. It is also necessary to present a world where female characters and male characters are equal in terms of representation strategies in the films and understanding of gender codes in the social order. The spectators are trying to understand life through the films they watch continuously. However, if the films that provide the unknown facts about social gender are produced and if the possibility of a world, where there is equality of opportunity between women and men, is shown then the points of view of individuals on the codes in life will change.

BACKGROUND

In the film examined in the study, female characters and male characters act outside the rules and discourses of social order. Women replace men in the public sphere and men do their jobs by replacing women in the private sphere. The position of women and men in public and private spheres changes in this film. The roles attributed to women and the roles attributed to men are reversed. Likewise, the name of the film Tersine Dünya also embodies this perception. The issues ‘what would life be like in a world inside out?’ and ‘how would the patriarchal realities that have been learned in terms of social gender show changes?’ are shown in the film. Female characters are presented as strong ones in the public sphere, while male characters are the ones who live in the private space. In the study, the representation mechanism of the characters presented in the film narrative will be discussed in the context of the concept of social gender. The framework of this discussion will be examined in the context of feminist theorist Judith Butler’s interpretation of the concept of...
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