Chapter 7

Space as a Means of Stigma for Women in Turkish Cinema After 2000: The Case of the Film *Mutluluk*

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**ABSTRACT**

Today, when the Turkish cinema is checked in detail, it is seen that numerous issues are addressed suggesting that when a woman leaves her home where she spends her life with her husband, father, or son, there is a risk of encountering events that will “ruin” her honor. Therefore, when something bad happens to her—raped, lost her way, etc.—she cannot escape from stigma. In fact, the woman in the film transform to a representation that many women who leave the house in real life can be stigmatized. Thus, “honor-woman” connection in the eyes of Turkish society is reproduced through the “space-man” relationship. In order to introduce the purpose of the study, firstly, some information on the relationship among woman, space and stigma was given, then we made explanations on how the stigmatization issue of women in Turkish cinema from the beginning to the 2000s became effective. In the final part of the study which is the application phase, thoughts on women, place and stigma were presented through the film *Mutluluk* (2007) with the help of feminist criticism.

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INTRODUCTION

The journey of the representation that started on the walls of caves continued until the end of the 19th century in art through drawings, sculpture, architecture, music, literature, opera, theater, and dance or in mass media through newspapers and magazines. As a result of the introduction of cinema, radio, television and internet, respectively since the end of the 19th century, it is observed that the journey of representation has been continuing over a much wider area, today. It can be said that cinema has a special place among all these representation fields. By moving by being fed with many art branches, society, technology and ideology, cinema makes the representation magical with the help of giant curtains, visual shows, heroes, stories and sounds. Therefore, cinema may constitute an effective field of representation that no art branch or mass media can achieve.

Since the beginning of the 1900s when cinema began to function as a true narrative art, the importance of what it represented has increased. Today, films can have great effects on people with the things they represent. Anything that is included, is thought to be included or assumed to be included in the past, present and future can be articulated in the representation area of cinema. The thing that needs to be considered is that representations somehow contain cultural values as in views of Ryan and Kellner (2010: 37-38). Therefore, representations are also highly important in political aspect. They do not only affect people’s psychological stand but they also serve to reproduce the existing realities or provide realities as to which one of the individuals and institutions in social life is more important. For this reason, it is inevitable to see that those who are in charge in the production of representations will make moves in line with their own desires and interests. From this point of view, it can be an object of interest how men who have a say in cinema represent women. Moreover, how female directors whose numbers are very few present women in their films has become an important research area.

It is understood that pioneering studies on the representation of women in cinema came to the fore after the second wave of feminist movements in the 1960s. Especially, Laura Mulvey’s work, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, had a great effect in this sense. In her study, Mulvey (1975) concludes that women are objectified since the view towards female characters in the cinema is realized through the male gaze. In other words, while the camera is peeping at the woman in the films shot mostly by men, it also includes the audience into this act. Similarly, the way men look at women in films is basically based on peeping. Therefore, looking at women in cinema is realized in three ways: male-reflective view of the camera, the view of the male characters towards the female characters in the move and the audience’s view on the women represented on the screen. Through these views, the cinema was able to present the practices of how women should be seen basically. As
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