Chapter 13
Labelling Directors as “Women”

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ABSTRACT

The subject of this chapter is the conditions of the film industry in Turkey and the effects of the invisible pressures of the male-dominated system have on female directors and their productions. The basic question to be analysed is whether the problems they face are related to their gender and patriarchal system. Interviews will be conducted with female directors in order to understand the processes of production they undergo within the industry, the factors which influence their narrative choices, as well as to unpack the meaning of what it entails to be a “woman”/“female” director.

INTRODUCTION

While the representation of female characters in films has been a major subject in feminist film theory, the production conditions of the films and the male-dominated structure of the industry has only recently been taken into consideration. Since production cannot be independent of the socio-cultural conditions, the problems experienced by women directors in producing their films should also be discussed in order to shed light on the industry’s dynamics. The issue to be investigated will be whether the difficulties faced by female directors in the industry are related to gender or if there is a more the systemic problem involved.

There are directors who do not want to use the word “woman” in front of the title “director”, as they believe this emphasis on being women is a kind of sexism. On the other hand, there are some directors who use the word “woman” intentionally.
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before their director’s identity. In this context, the investigation was taken up by this chapter will bring us to understand the choice directors make in putting emphasis on their gendered identity as directors or not and what it means to them to do so.

While the representation of women in cinema has been a controversial issue, it is possible today to talk about diversification within the narrow conventions attributed to them. While reflecting on the differentiated female representations that many theorists draw attention upon, it is also important to look at who holds the means of representation of these characters.

BACKGROUND

The history of filmmaking is full of hidden women actors as history was biasedly written. There are many major women figures in the history of filmmaking. One of them is Alice Guy Blaché, a filmmaker, is considered to have never existed in the traditional male-dominated sources of film university, or passed on by footnotes. Whereas in 1896 she directed La Fée aux Choux’s that is the first fiction film only a year after Georges Méliès, Auguste and Louis Lumière who were considered to be the pioneers of cinema (Mcmahan, 2003:5)

The history is full of these kinds of examples of women. That is one of the reasons that studies should be done to reveal these hidden figures for rewriting art history. Although there is a discrepancy in leading roles and representations of women in films, this research focuses on women worked behind the scenes especially directors and the difficulties that they face while making films.

It is presented that there is an extreme discrepancy between male and female industry professionals in the film industry in the report “The Celluloid Ceiling: Behind-the-Scenes Employment of Women on the Top 100, 250, and 500 Films of 2018” by Martha M. Lauzen. Following this report, in 2018, from the top 250 domestic movies, only 20% of directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors, and cinematographers were women. Although there is an increase in the percentages, only 1% of films employed 10 or more women in these roles in 2018. The percentage of women directors was 8% on the top 250 films (Lauzen,2015).

Jane Campion the one female director has ever won the Palme d’Or, described the situation as ‘insane’. Oneone, the woman has ever won an Oscar for the best director, Kathryn Bigelow for The Hurt Locker in 2009. There is that it is not only a problematic issue in the film industry as it is closely related to social conditions reflected in different fields. Although film festivals such as Cannes tried to build a gender-balanced jury, right is different for films. Only three, out of 21 directors in the running for the 2018 Palme d’Or is female. The data shows that it is a male-dominated industry as 12% of the directors, 8% of cinematographers, 6% of film
Full Circle Moments: The Navigation of an Education Journey
Nicole A. Taylor (2015). Supporting Multiculturalism and Gender Diversity in University Settings (pp. 23-36).
www.igi-global.com/chapter/full-circle-moments/128186?camid=4v1a