Chapter 15

Deleuzian Feminism:
Becoming Woman in New Turkey Cinema

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ABSTRACT

Minority refers to a distinct deviation from something of which standards and norms are clear. In this direction, “becoming-woman,” which is revealed by Deleuze as the first becoming type is quite impressive for feminist theory. Women can enter into becoming-woman by disturbing the dichotomic order with their line of flight instead of acting according to the identities imposed on them. This study is based upon the concept of becoming-woman in the context of Deleuzian feminism tries to approach the issue of “becoming-woman” in the new Turkey cinema based on the film Zephyr (2011) by Belma Baş. The film is evaluated according to the three basic elements of minor cinema.

INTRODUCTION

Western philosophy has entered a new intellectual period that began with Descartes’ conceptualization of ‘cogito’ and continued for a long time. In this period which is called Modernism, Descartes’ successors followed in his footsteps and almost all contemporary philosophers placed different forms of ‘cogito’ on the basis of their thoughts although they have different names such as one, monad, blank slate, transcendental subject, self, absolute spirit and ego. Modern philosophy points out a way of thinking that values the human mind above everything else and put the subject in the centre. The significative and preferential position of the subject against object was subjected to Nietzsche’s criticism and after this criticism; great narrative

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-1774-1.ch015
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of modernism began to fall into a decline. The great narrative or major structure generates dichotomic contradictions by making a distinction between private and public spheres. In these contradictions, the power of the strong is blessed and the powerless or the different is excluded and marginalized. As a matter of fact, the small/minor which comes to the forefront with the collapse of the great narrative allows for plurality and allows the possibility of negotiation between different thoughts.

Deleuze and Guattari explain the concept of minor through literature with their text on Kafka. These two intellectuals explained the minor or minority based upon the concept of “becoming”. In the study titled ‘Capitelisme et Schizophrénie: Mille Plateaux’, they discussed the concept of becoming from a wide perspective. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the first of all the becoming is “becoming-woman”. All becoming such as becoming-animal, becoming-child or becoming black depends on becoming-woman. Deleuze and Guattari argue that the fact that becoming-woman is the starting point of all beings is based on two reasons. The first of these reasons is the fact that women are always of secondary importance in the face of men who are positioned as determinant or major in Western society. The other reason is that desire has been considered as a gap that the subject fills through obtaining from an object and treated as a deficiency since Plato. However, Deleuze and Guattari argue that desire is not a thing which is derived or obtained from the object but it is a production or desire-production. Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of “becoming-woman” which opposes the established perception of women has been adopted by many feminists and developed through criticism. This study which is based upon the concept of becoming-woman in the context of Deleuzian feminism tries to approach the issue of “becoming-woman” in the new Turkey cinema based on the film “Zephyr” (2011) by Belma Baş. The film is evaluated according to the three basic elements of minor cinema which Deleuze has listed as “deterritorialisation of the existing identities, eliminating its private-public line, and duplicating the identities.”

BACKGROUND

Conceptualization of Sex and Gender

Simone de Beauvoir revealed the distinction between sex and gender with the phrase “One is not born, but rather becomes woman” (Beauvoir, 1956: 273). According to Beauvoir; Neither biological nor genetic nor physiological characteristics determine the male and female figures in the society. The most basic factors determining these figures are the structure of society, power relations and cultural codes. In other words, the gender that determines whether a person is a girl or a boy is biological.
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