

BESIEGED AND LIBERATED WOMEN IN 'ART' FILMS: The Problem of Private Sphere

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Sanat Filmlerinde Kuşatılmış ve Özgürleşmiş Kadınlar: Özel Alan Sorunu

Özet

Bu makalenin amacı, sanat filmlerindeki kadın temsilleri bağlamında kadın ve erkek arasındaki farklılığı göstermektir. Bu nedenle üç erkek ve üç kadın yönetmenin filmleri seçilmiştir: Truffaut'dan, *Jules and Jim*/*Jules ve Jim*, Antonioni'den *Eclipse/Günbatımı*, Bergman'dan *Cries and Whispers/Çığıltıklar ve Fısıltılar*, Campion'dan *The Piano/Piyano*, Gorris'den *Antonia* ve Goldbacher'den *The Governess/Mürebbiye*. Filmlerdeki kadın karakterler erkek yönetmenler eliyle özel alanlarında kuşatılırken, kadın yönetmenler tarafından özgürleştirilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadın, sanat, film, feminizm, eleştiri.

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to examine the representations of women -especially the private sphere of women- in 'art' movies. To attain this aim, first what the art cinema is was determined and the issue of private sphere is explained. Then, as a case study, three male and three female directors' films have been chosen and analyzed in accordance with semiotics. These films are as follows: Truffaut's *Jules and Jim*, Antonioni's *Eclipse*, Bergman's *Cries and Whispers*, and the most recent films, Campion's *The Piano*, Gorris' *Antonia*, and Goldbacher's *The Governess*. This article reveals the male gaze in the films of three authors (male filmmakers). However, there are also three creative female filmmakers whose films have a non-sexist gaze. Briefly, there is a serious difference between the female directors who can be dealt with in art cinema and the male directors who are authors in the real sense of the word.

Key Words: Woman, art, film, feminism, criticism.

Besieged and Liberated Women in 'Art' Films: The Problem of Private Sphere*

Introduction

The ideological discourse of traditional / popular cinema is sexist.¹ If this is the case, how about 'art' cinema? Art cinema has generally been considered different from popular / traditional cinema, especially on women's issues. I argue, though, that there is not much difference between art films and popular / traditional films in the context of women's issues, and that feminist women filmmakers are more sensitive to the issues at hand than the male ones. Taking this point into consideration, I suggest that the feminist women directors create a different discourse conscious of the long political struggles in the past. In this frame, comparisons between feminist and male filmmakers who make art films will guide us.

The general aim of this study is to reveal the view of the private sphere of women in art films which have a significant place in world cinema. This study is limited to the mostly European and non-American films from 1960 till today. Since the issue of women first appeared in cinema especially after the 1960s and a new narration language developed in cinema almost at the same time (particularly New Wave), two art films from the 1960s (Italian Antonioni and French Truffaut) and one art film from the 1970s (Swedish Bergman) are chosen. While determining the films to be analyzed, I focused on the films which are assumed to be the ones in which the most important directors of art cinema questioned and discussed the issue of women thoroughly as well as taking the national differences into consideration. The reason why I have not

* I would like to thank Derek K. Baker (Ph.D) for helping me correct my expressions in this article.

¹ Annette Kuhn writes: 'The ideological discourse of dominant cinema, certainly at the level of the film image, is therefore seen as sexist as well as capitalist' (1990: 252).

chosen the female directors from the years before the 1980s is that women got their voices heard more and gained a stronger position after the 1980s. Both directors (Campion from New Zealand/Australia and Gorris from Holland) of the two films chosen in this frame have made films since 1982. As a more recent example, a director from a different country has also been chosen (English Goldbacher). In the frame of the issues discussed, each of these 6 movies has, as a case study, been analyzed through textual analysis method which is mainly about semiotics.

The designated films should not be considered to represent the whole of art cinema. If they are considered so, we will be betraying the rich nature of art cinema. The purpose is to take a look close at the representations of women in the female and male directors' films in the context of different films and to reveal and interpret the differences between them.

To attain this aim, first, what art cinema is will be determined by comparing it to Hollywood cinema, the representations of women in Hollywood cinema will be summarized and woman's representations in art cinema will be revealed by analyzing six art films chosen after the short sections which explain the distinction between private and public spheres.

'Art' Cinema vs Hollywood

To begin with, the meaning of the art film will try to be depicted even though it would be difficult to define it clearly. Since the term 'art' film is under debate and ambiguous, it will always be used in quotation marks.

In the literature of cinema, in addition to the term 'art' cinema, modern / European / contemporary narrative cinema is generally mentioned; meanwhile, some theorists mention counter-cinema (WOLLEN, 1986)², auteur cinema (SARRIS, 1974/1992)³ and deconstruction cinema (KUHN, 1990)⁴. As opposed to these terms, the cinema category which is represented by

2 Wollen, in a context of Godard's *Vent d'Est*, writes these as the main features of counter-cinema (seven cardinal virtues): Narrative intransitivity, estrangement, foregrounding, multiple diegesis, aperture, un-pleasure, reality, 120.

3 According to Sarris, the first premise of the auteur theory is the technical competence of a director and the second is the distinguishable personality of the director as a criterion of value. The third and ultimate premise of the auteur theory is concerned with interior meaning, the ultimate glory of the cinema as an art. Interior meaning is extrapolated from the tension between a director's personality and his material. 586.

4 As Kuhn indicates, deconstructive cinema departs from dominant cinema in its content as well as in its form and it may be defined by its articulation of oppositional forms with oppositional contents, 254.

Hollywood is called mainstream / dominant / traditional / classic / commercial or popular and in this context, the genre films (melodrama, western, musical, horror...) are also mentioned.

When the writers, such as Wollen, Sarris, Kuhn and Bordwell, are read together, it will be seen that each of the writers makes a piece of 'art' cinema and more or less refers to the similar qualities. For example, we notice that Bordwell emphasizes 'character' as a quality which distinguishes 'art' cinema from popular cinema. According to him, an 'art' film aims to exhibit character and art cinema counters Hollywood's interest in 'plot' by an interest in 'character'. Moreover, he talks about the loose cause-effect relation in narrative, the gaps in plot and solution and the 'expressive' or subjective realism (BORDWELL, 1979 and 1985).

However, the beginning and ending of popular films (like the tragedies which Aristoteles determined) are obvious. Events are tied together with the cause and effect relation. In short, (although there are some exceptions) popular / traditional films are the texts which have commercial worries, which have a classic language (beginning-development-conclusion and casual relations), which are generally based on identification, closed-end (especially happy ending), romantic dreams, entertainment, plot and stars, which demand passive audience because they do not create any meaning gaps in order to relax the audience and which defend the existing values. In fact, these arguments indicate that the high art / low art category in general corresponds to 'art' film / popular film category in the context of the cinema.

The determination of certain or concrete criteria for 'art' films, of course, is not suited to art because of its own unlimited nature. However, this does not mean that there are not some clues which could take us to 'art' films at this point and that these will not be discussed here. Using Wollen, Sarris, Kuhn and Bordwell's writings as a starting point, it might be best to think of these characteristics as a common frame as I shortly and schematically show below.⁵

<u>'Art' Cinema</u>	<u>Traditional / Popular Cinema</u>
European	American
Auteur	Star
Aesthetic aims	Commercial interests
Character	Plot

⁵ Certainly, realization in a film of these all attributes are too few probability and each attributes that also could find in traditional films can be appeared as counter-examples and counter arguments.

Alienation of spectator	Identification of spectator
Meaning gaps and ambiguity in story	Linear narration and definiteness
Depthless penetration of social/psychological/ philosophical or political matters	Surfaces
Innovation in form	Classic form
Resisting and criticizing established values	Re-production of established values
Open end	Close end

As David Bordwell rightly expresses, films like *L'Eclisse*, *Repulsion* and *Rome Open City* form a class that filmmakers and film viewers distinguish from the others (1985: 205). When Truffaut's *Jules and Jim*, Antonioni's *Eclipse* and Bergman's *Cries and Whispers* were chosen, it was known that the 'art' film category contains these films smoothly and without dispute. However, the films of the female directors (*The Piano*, *Antonia*, *The Governess*) do not have such a definite place in this category. Claire Johnston recommends: 'a strategy should be developed which embraces both the notion of films as a political tool and film as entertainment' (1976: 217). Actually, these films are not like the pure 'art' films of the 1960s; they stay somewhere between 'art' films and traditional narratives. For example, according to Crofts (2000: 136)

The Piano indeed exemplifies what international tradespeak calls 'crossover' films: low-budget films (...) often expressing a 'personal vision', that move from art-house openings to embrace much larger audiences than most art movies... From the outset, Campion was concerned that *The Piano* be positioned as a 'crossover' film... As a result, 'crossover' films occupy an intermediate box-office and textual space between 'art' and 'entertainment' sectors (emphases are original).

For this reason (being between art and entertainment) *The Piano* and *Antonia* are at the same time very popular and these three women directors' films (*The Piano*, *Antonia*, and *The Governess*) have a classic plot. Nevertheless, the quality which draws these films near 'art' films and which distinguishes these films from traditional Hollywood narratives is the opposing content, just as Kuhn says. Concerning *The Piano*, we can also add, as Margolis indicated (2000: 27): '*The Piano* subverts mainstream practices by

inverting them' and according to Hardy (2000: 62) 'its effectiveness in communicating with international audiences has been demonstrated by its candidacy for both the Palme d'or at Cannes and the mainstream American Academy Awards'. As Pierre Sorlin points out, the classic cinema does not conceal the fact that it is only an 'imitation of life' –a close, faithful imitation, *but not life* (1991: 138, italics are mine). However, *The Piano*, *Antonia* and *The Governess*, instead of being an artificial, superficial imitation, focus on female characters (Ada, Antonia, Rosina) and make the audience sensitive to the problems of these characters and do not cause any feeling of 'being a reliable imitation of life'. In every frame and scene, it is seen that the aesthetic intentions, rather than commercial worries, come to the fore (the reviews of these films support this opinion). If Gorris had wanted, for example, she could have used Hollywood stars and she could have made this film in English, but she did not. For such reasons, each of the women's films should be evaluated in the 'art' films category.

Below, under the title public-private dichotomy, six non-American films will be analyzed. How does Hollywood cinema view women? We best understand it from Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner's *Camera Politica* (1988): in Hollywood, the feminist movement received more opposition than support. The first reaction of a film industry dominated by men was to avoid and deny feminism. Hollywood did not like feminism; however, its hesitation and utter hostility towards feminism showed in such films as *Such Good Friends* (1971), *The Happy Ending* (1969) and *The Rain People* (1969) that present women who try to be independent and fail whereas *Up the Sandbox* (1972) is an open attack on feminism. Women, whose fight for freedom had received some sensitive attention, received a delayed, intense and wild reaction in horror films like *The Exorcist* (1973). Peckinpah's *Straw Dogs* (1971) establishes the general attitude toward the antifeminist counterrevolution of the seventies. In *Kramer vs. Kramer* (1979), which shows father does really know best (even about mothering), feminism is given its place. Men's films are inclined in general to force mythic or dichotomous plans of representation (between career and marriage or love) on women's lives. The problem of career vs. love or marriage was very important during the seventies because women were getting into the work force in ever increasing numbers.

According to Robin Wood, even the end of the classic narrative – especially the happy ending- helps the patriarchal order to turn to its former state (1990: 343). Hollywood has always continued defending the family. Women with careers are ambitious and selfish (*Working Girl*, 1988; *Disclosure*, 1994) and single women are unbelievably dangerous (*Fatal Attraction*, 1987). However these examples do not mean that Hollywood has

not been influenced by feminism at all. For example, Wood, Ryan and Kellner, in this context, refer to Martin Scorsese (*Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, 1974) and Paul Mazursky (*An Unmarried Woman*, 1978). The success of such films as *Thelma and Louise* (1991) can also be mentioned.

Moreover, today, various heroines can be found in action movies. Yvonne Tasker, who has studied action heroines, has some things to add to these findings. In 70s 'producers often sought to allay, if not resolve, the uncertainties posed by the action heroine through either the sexualization of her persona or the use of comedy, or both'. While action heroines are very common in Hong Kong today, Hollywood have just started using them. 'Cinematic images of women who wield guns, and who take control of cars, computers and the other technologies that have symbolized both power and freedom within Hollywood's world, mobilise a symbolically transgressive iconography. At the most fundamental level, images of the active heroine disrupt the conventional notion –often significantly present as an assumption within feminist film criticism- that women either are, or should be, represented exclusively through the codes of femininity' (Tasker, 1993: 20 and 132).

Ryan and Kellner express the difference between male and female directors in Hollywood as follows:

Male representations of women, even well-intentioned ones, must necessarily look on women's lives from outside, and they often conceive of women's liberation as consisting of gaining (or deciding against) access to the traditional male realm of work and public endeavor. If early seventies male films suggested that women couldn't make it in the big world without male patronage, mid-seventies films began to permit women a bit more independence and power, although these films generally concentrate on upper-class women, ignoring the issues of daycare, abortion, and subsistence that faced many other, especially, poor and black, women. Films directed or scripted by women do touch on such issues as domestic violence, and they also tend to show women more subjectively, less as objects of conquest and more as agents of life struggles (RYAN / KELLNER, 1988: 143).

That this conclusion about female directors or scriptwriters is also true for 'art' cinema is understood from the following films.

Public-Private Dichotomy

After the concept of 'art' cinema, the second point of this paper is the public and private separation in feminist movement and theories.⁶ Surprisingly, the growth of the language of new narrative in the cinema –in a sense, 'art' cinema- coincides with the feminist movement of the sixties. Laura Mulvey precisely shows the two sides of the feminist movement on art (1989: 111-112) :

On the one hand, there is a desire to explore the suppressed meaning of femininity, to assert a women's language as a slap in the face for patriarchy, a polemic and pleasure in self-discovery combined. On the other hand, there is a drive to forge an aesthetic that attacks language and representation, not as something naturally linked with the male, but rather as something that soaks up dominant ideology, as a sponge soaks up water.

As the following analysis of this essay show, on the one hand, there are the female directors' films which try to discover the suppressed feminine language and on the other hand, there are the male directors' films which absorb the dominant ideology just as a sponge absorbs water. The practices of socialization, when united with the things which have accumulated in human's subconscious throughout the history, reflect in human's intellect and soul –and thus in her/his pen, brush, camera. That's why the representations of women by male directors and those by female directors are different.

Dichotomies between the public and private spheres have been historically established in Western societies. This separation is a vital subject for investigation for the feminist movement. The private sphere is an area that describes family, close periphery, and personal matters while the public sphere is a life space of social concerns, worths and struggles. While women are besieged in their private realm, men live in the public realm freely.

Recent feminist theories challenge the public / private dichotomy, as Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell indicate: 'There is considerable consensus among Fraser, Young, Benhabib and Markus that the public / private dichotomy as a principle of social organization, and its ideological articulation

6 Here, I want to describe 'feminism' with Annette Kuhn's valuable words. She defines 'feminism' very broadly as a set of political practices founded in analyzed of the social/historical position of women as subordinated, oppressed or exploited either within dominant modes of production (such as capitalism) and/or by the social relations of patriarchy or male domination. See Kuhn, 1985: 4.

in various conceptions of reason and justice are *detrimental to women*' (1987: 9, italics are mine)

According to Louise Lamphere and other feminist theorists, in most societies the world of the domestic and familial is the world of women, and that of the public and political is the world of men (1993: 97). Judith Mayne adds: Traditionally and historically, women's sphere has been private, the realm of family, home, and personal relations while men's sphere has been the public sphere of official work and production. 'But women have always worked, and men have always had a private sphere, and 'private' and 'public' are the ideological divisions which mask profound links' (1990: 384). In Mayne's words: 'The relation between public and private spheres is an ideological relationship, through which Western middle-class societies are experienced, simultaneously, in the terms of commodity production and the patriarchal family' (1988:27).

Private spheres are always put in a worthless position among art forms associated with relatively underrated types. The private sphere is always placed at the lower levels in the art forms. Consider, for example, soap operas (see GERAGHTY, 1995: 222 and 231) on TV and comedies (see ROWE, 1995: 103) in the theatre or cinema. Women (as both a viewer and a heroine) are closely connected with soap operas and comedies.

Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément (1996: 64) rightly asked :

Where is she?

Activity / Passivity

Sun / Moon

Culture / Nature

Day / Night

The two worldly experiences, the one which is worthy and the other which is worthless, lie in the essence of pair sets: pairs such as mind/body are charged with gender and the first term of each pair assumes a masculine character. I claim here that both types of women directors (CAMPION/GORRIS), -like feminist theorists, challenge or deconstruct such hierarchical oppositions and the gendered binary system, particularly the binary opposition between public and private. But in the same context the big *auteurs*, Antonioni, Bergman and Truffaut shut woman in her private sphere.

Eclipse: Nature Fits Women

Eclipse, by Antonioni in 1962 and, which won the Special Jury Prize at the 1962 Cannes Film Festival, has been interpreted generally within a frame of

Marxism and/or psychoanalyzed or an existentialist perspective, and it has been emphasized how abstract and political it was.

Briefly, this invaluable film portrays Vittoria -a young, unmarried woman with blonde hair, working as a translator- who after breaking off her affair with Riccardo, meets a broker, Piero. While she tries to establish a relationship with this handsome, young man, she seeks her mother in a gigantic Rome stock house.

The culture / nature contradiction has been used to analyze this film. Ideologically, culture is considered as a thing that contains nature and surpasses it. Cultural products like art, religion, and law are equated with maleness. Nancy C. M. Hartsock clearly indicates that the duality between nature and culture takes the form of a devaluation of work or necessity (that is to say, re-production which is made by women), and the primacy instead of purely social interaction for the attainment of undying fame (1997: 228). Anthropologist Sherry B. Ortner has already answered the question, 'Why is woman seen as closer to nature?' in her famous paper published in 1974: Because body and its functions, and psychic structure are seen as being closer to nature; and social roles of women are considered to be at a lower order of the cultural process than men's (1993: 73-74).⁷

Not only is there nature against culture, but also as Sabri Büyükdüvenci asserts, there are 'subjective worlds', 'inner realms' which include emotions and sensations, the roots of valuation and the experience of choice (1996: 26).

Antonioni's film opens with a table lamp next to Riccardo and finishes with the cold light of a street lamp. One of the main dichotomies in the film is the natural light of day versus the light of an artificial lamp. Man-made light is naturally related to men (as a cultural object) while natural light and nature (in a concrete sense, trees, bushes and pictures with flowers) are associated with women. Vittoria always inclines toward daylight.

Antonioni, who is still a momentous filmmaker of alienation and lack of communication in our century, said in 1975 that *Eclipse* was still a modern film in that its protagonists are people who do not believe in feelings – that is, they limit them to certain things (AUTERA / MO, 1996: 277).

As Jerry Vermilye notes about this film: 'Existential despair and stylish ennui mark this characteristic excursion into Antonioni country, the closing

⁷ For Rosaldo, women's status is derived from their stage in a life cycle, from their biological functions, and in particular from their sexual or biological ties to particular men. See in the same book, 30.

entry in his trilogy about the lack of substantial emotion and communication in the world of the sixties' (1994: 133).

For Ian Wiblin, the unfinished and abandoned state of the buildings mirrors the state of the human relationship (1997: 106). The director says that this film is a story of imprisoned sentiments. William Arrowsmith shows a way to these words. According to him, the prison cage becomes a multiple image: a room of cell-like or cubicle proportions, like the various modern apartments-Riccardo's, or Piero's or even Marta's (ARROWSMITH, 1995: 70-71). Gilles Deleuze (1991: 5) points out further:

...starting with the *Eclipse*, a treatment of limit-situations which pushes them to the point of dehumanized landscapes, of emptied spaces that might be seen as having absorbed characters and actions, retaining only a geophysical description, an abstract inventory of them.

Carlo Salinari, the editor of the leftist journal *Il Contemporaneo* in 1962, acknowledged that *Eclipse* may be the 'most advanced' of Antonioni's films, 'ideologically...because this time he clearly indicates capitalist society as the society in which the dispersion of personality, the exhaustion of feelings, and the incapacity to communicate occur'. Enzo Paci, a professor of philosophy and the most prominent phenomenologist, emphasizes the notion of reification in the film. According to him, *Eclipse* teaches us to *return to the subject* (quoted by SITNEY, 1995: 155-156, italics are original).

It is possible to agree with all these views and conceptualizing the film in this way; namely alienation, dehumanized environment, exhaustion of feeling, lack of communication and meaning, and criticism of capitalism. According to Arrowsmith, Vittoria surrounds herself with objects of organic shape, as she always surrounds herself with flowers, vegetable textures and fibers while Riccardo and later Piero tend to inhabit a world of rational, geometric objects (1995: 69). In addition, Arrowsmith's perspective will be developed in this study. The pillars in the stock exchange and the poles in the streets are in the world of men, but the trees and bushes are in the women's. Boundaries of public / private spheres are not as easily determined as the sharp separation between home and workplace. Representations of private sphere (or public sphere) substitute for this; for instance, nature substitutes for home (is even home not like a nice hot nest in nature's arms?). Women are equal to nature due to their fecundity. The heroine in the film is in the private sphere because she is connected with nature and natural things in the film, and nature is proper only for women. (Nature is appropriate for men only in Westerns because this nature is severe, strong, and brutal just like a hero. Consider the Marlboro man as a powerful and harsh image in advertisements). In one scene, in Piero's

room with adolescent decorations, Vittoria holds a pen showing a woman in a bathing suit; upside down, she appears naked. As P. Adams Sitney observes, the sequence of the pen provides the clue that she precisely makes love to him because he is so immature (1995: 163-164). This explanation strengthens the above-mentioned arguments and interpretations because we assert that Vittoria also likes an immature man just like all natural things.

Actually '...there is a lack of essential rapport' (NOWELL-SMITH, 1976: 358). The matter is Vittoria's failure in the public life. Her favorite cue is 'I do not know' in a lot of scenes. As it has been tried to be suggested, it would appear that Vittoria is not able to cope with life or the external world. She does not communicate with her lovers or her mother. She is an alien, an uneasy person in hesitance, and she bears endless unhappiness. Thus the anima which has not changed for centuries is set up again by Antonioni.

The anima is a personification of all feminine psychological tendencies in a man's psyche, such as vague feelings and moods, prophetic hunches, receptiveness to the irrational, capacity for personal love, feeling for nature, and -last but not least- his relation to the unconscious (Von FRANZ, 1990: 177).

Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner (1988) claimed the clichés created by men showed women as beings who can not comprehend the world rationally. This indicated that women were incapable of establishing an objective relation with the exterior world. Ryan and Kellner said these to describe the Hollywood tradition, but they also define Vittoria in *Eclipse*.

Apart from these, there is an issue of fetishism in (the film's) initial scenes, Vittoria's legs and her high-heeled shoes reflect in the parquet and so the woman's body is divided and fetishized. The man's gaze is the cause of the division of Vittoria's body in the screen. At the same time, Riccardo's gaze is the cameraman's and director's gaze.

According to Freud, fetishism arises when 'the normal sexual object is replaced by another which bears some relation to it, but is entirely unsuited to serve the normal sexual aim'. He cites smell as one drive typically involved in *foot* and *hair* fetishism (quoted by COWIE, 1997: 197, italics are mine). In addition to her legs, Vittoria/Vitti's blondness is emphasized in close-ups.

In one of the later scenes, Vittoria's long and chain necklace draws our attention. It was consciously chosen as the object by Antonioni. She hangs a chain (with huge links) around her neck as a slave. What she wears represents the bondage of women.

***Cries and Whispers* Violence in the Women's Private Realm**

Ingmar Bergman made *Cries and Whispers* in 1972; in the same year, Sven Nykvist (cameraman) received an Oscar for his successful work and Liv Ullmann won a Best Actress prize from the New York Film Critics.

This film has been interpreted via theology for years (for detailed interpretations see Gibson, 1995). Bergman wrote in 1972: 'A dream, a longing or perhaps an expectation. A fear in which that to be feared is never put into words' (quoted by GIBSON, 1995: 111). But it was filmed.

The film narrates the inner worlds of three sisters and a maidservant, and their relationships. The sisters have been interwoven with pain, violence and hate in the big crimson house. Agnes suffers from womb cancer; her maidservant, Anna, is tender-hearted to her, like a sister or a mother. Agnes' sisters, Karin and Maria, are the opposite of each other. In one of the last scenes, Karin asks: 'Can't we keep our resolutions?... You touched me. Don't you remember?' and Maria answers: 'I can't possibly remember every silly thing'. They are merciless to each other. Maria tries to tempt the doctor (her ex-lover), and she seems lecherous and self-satisfied, to us too. Marilyn Johns Blackwell calls attention to Maria's blondness; she is the only blond woman in the film and is consistently associated with sexuality (1997: 175). Karin, contrary to Maria, is frigid toward her old husband and seems masochistic.

For Molly Haskell (1987: 315), Bergman controls his artists,

Like puppets, abusing them for being what he has made them: Thulin (Karin) -neurotic, intellectual and repressed; Ullmann (Maria)-beautiful, vain, sensual; and frustrating any attempts at interrelationships by silencing their conversation and aborting sensual overtures between them.

It is hard for Constance Penley to think of Bergman as a 'woman's director' when his heroines merely cover the usual range of types from neurotic to erotic (1976: 206).

According to Bergman, the colour red represents the interior of the soul (1994: 90). At the same time, red is the illness of women, the blood of disease.

Blackwell observes that Bergman emphasizes Agnes' innocence (linked to white roses) and ephemerality (it is underlined by clocks). Agnes, as a representative of a feminine cultural tradition, for Bergman, is destined to death (BLACKWELL, 1997: 169-170). Blackwell points out that *Cries and Whispers* expresses the repression of the sexual body and the reification of the maternal

through Bergman's heroines. Agnes, as an innocent character, is victimized by Bergman and her sexual feminine body is repressed for re-establishing motherhood.

We cannot learn about the women's jobs at all, except for the maidservant, Anna (because she is a maidservant, she is limited in her private sphere and she is naturally quiet, compliant and tender). Unlike the women, all the men have a profession in the exterior world. The women are sexually either frigid or always hungry. In this film, there are narcissistic women (like Maria), masochistic women (like Karin), victimized women (Agnes), archetype of good mother (Anna) and bad mother (sisters' mother), clumsy and exhausted femaleness (Anna) and sexually repressed female body (Agnes).

Using Blackwell's interpretations, it can be said that women's place is only in the biological area and in the house; in other words in the private sphere or in nature. Indeed, the crimson house is a huge womb and a violent field, and a big cage that has no way out for women.

As Blackwell quoted (1987: 179) and Joan Mellen rightly argues:

...his (Bergman's) women are ensnared at a much more elementary level of human development. Their lives lack meaning because they are rooted in biology and an inability to choose a style of life independent of the female sexual role...If (woman) refuses to be a woman as Bergman defines woman –instinctual, passive, submissive, and trapped within the odors and blood of her genitals– there is no place for her in the world.

Bergman uses only women to investigate and to express lack of communication, mercilessness and violence in the private sphere in *Cries and Whispers*. Women are in conflict in their own private areas and excluded from spaces or relations of the public world. Bergman condemns women to cries and whispers, and he restricts them to blood-red violence in this film.

Jules and Jim: Catherine The Dangerous

The famous cult film of François Truffaut, *Jules and Jim* (1961), in an existentialist style of its era, stresses the story of ménage à trois. As the main characters, there are two men and another character (Jules, Jim and Albert), a woman (Catherine) and the voice-over. In the film, all the men have a job; only Catherine has no profession although she speaks three languages. Moreover, the men work in intellectual jobs as a biologist writer (Jules), journalist-writer (Jim) and artist (Albert) and they always discuss the problems of art in public places (in a café). The film is simply on Catherine. She has unexpected behaviours; for example, she jumps into the Seine from the bridge, slaps Jules,

pulls out a weapon on Jim, but most importantly, she deceives her men with other men and then she clearly tells it to her men because she wants to punish them.

The men always meet frustration due to the women. Even at the beginning of the film, Jules is utterly bewildered by Therese's unfaithfulness. Catherine also takes pleasure in betraying her lovers, and cannot avoid 'the way she discovers the cosmos', which means that she makes love with men whom she does not know at all. Catherine cannot prevent her sexual instinct in her private life so she is like a potential whore. According to Molly Haskell, in the eyes of Jules and Jim, Catherine existed first as a work of art, a statue, an ideal vision to which there was, luckily, a true woman to confirm (1987: 7-8). Really, as Jules says, Catherine is not more beautiful, intellectual, and honest, but she is a true woman: 'A woman which we all loved...A woman which is desired by men.' Just like an anima.

Excessively independent women sexually threaten men, that is, if women want to live free, they will be a catastrophe for both themselves and their men. *Jules and Jim* is founded on Catherine. She has a harmful effect on each man in the film and transforms them into sacrifices. For example, we are saddened by Jules, when he says to Jim these words: 'If you love her, stop thinking of me as an obstacle.' She never acts in any public sphere and establishes her private life on values which are never accepted by society. Don Allen states that Catherine's gigantic ego is happy only at the centre of things (1985: 97).

Even private places are dangerous regions. Allen asserts: 'In general, the chance of happiness in *Jules et Jim* always seems most likely in an outdoor setting –on the beach, in the meadows and forests. It tends to recede in the more confining interiors –the chalet, the hotel room, the house near Paris' (1985: 101)

Finally, Truffaut discusses sexual freedom and polygamy using Catherine, that is, a negative side of female character.

***The Piano*: Ada Deconstructs the Binary Oppositions**

Ada, a determined and strong character in *The Piano* is just the opposite of the strange, indecisive and worried Vittoria in *Eclipse*, who is associated with nature and the private sphere.

Jane Campion, from New Zealand, won an important prize at the 1993 Cannes Film Festival with *The Piano* which was written and directed by her almost 30 years later than *Eclipse*. She is the first woman to receive the Palme

d'Or. She is not European, but the atmosphere in her film is more close to the European style than an American film.

Pam Cook sees *The Piano*, *Orlando*, *Daughters of the Dust*, all of which are women's films in terms of the boundaries they transgress, 'between national and international, home and abroad, art and entertainment, masculine and feminine' (quoted by MARGOLIS, 2000: 26)

Indeed, the story is quite simple. *The Piano* begins with Ada and her out-of-wedlock daughter, Flora, who are coming to New Zealand during the Victorian age. Ada, who chooses mutism, was married by means of a letter written by her father. But she eventually leaves her husband Stewart for her lover, Baines. In this sense, there is an ordinary affair between a woman and two men.

As Peter N. Chumo II says, 'Ultimately, though, Ada is not the victim of this but rather guides the relationship through her music' (1997: 174) and for Cyndy Hendershot, speaking through the piano, Ada controls communication and can maintain an image of herself as a complete person (1998: 103). She manipulates and controls everything. For many critics, Ada is described as an extremely independent woman who will stop at nothing to have her freedom (see DAPKUS, 1997: 178).

Ada has a great passion for music, love and freedom. She not only chooses love, but also objectifies and renders the man erotic. She seems to take pleasure in flirting with Baines. During this flirting, as Luce Irigaray points out (in another context), it appears that:

...*Woman has sex organs just about everywhere. She experiences pleasure almost everywhere. Even without speaking of the hysterization of her entire body, one can say that the geography of her pleasure is much more multiple in its differences, more complex, more subtle, than is imagined—in an imaginary centered a bit too much on one and the same* (1997: 326, italics are original).

Why is Campion's heroine silent throughout the film? That she has no voice is a very remarkable signal. As E. Ann Kaplan writes, for Marguerite Duras and many other French feminists, the main weapon for oppressing women has long been male-dominated language. Once women understand this oppression, they would rather stay silent as a strategy for resisting domination. For Duras, silence becomes a means of entering culture (KAPLAN, 1990: 102). In fact, Ada both joins the Western realm of culture and avoids its logocentric dominant order by staying silent and choosing music.

Ada does not look like Vittoria. She is always at home, but her life does not lack meaning. Sexual morals of all patriarchal societies have been

established on not showing the sexual desire of woman. Ada, however, shows her sexual desire, and she knows what she wants. As Harvey Greenberg states, she is the most daring of the three in her struggles with Eros (1994: 48). She both plays the piano and reads books. She has power and ventures to die. Thus she moves in the public sphere like a powerful man. However, her lover, Baines is ignorant. While he washes his clothes together with Maoris in a scene, he chats with native women in a private sphere. He is physically very strong, but he is like a woman, even like a child when he chats with women. Thus Hendershot also describes Baines as a 'non-phallic male subject' or 'nontraditional British male subject' (1998: 98-100). So he is clearly in nature and in the private sphere. Moreover, he separates himself from Phallic logic, Phallic power (ATTWOOD, 1998: 97). Gorbman has an interesting observation. According to him, we might see the two men's opposing, objective-subjective approaches to her from the beginning on the beach, when Stewart comes up with the word *small* to describe Ada, and Baines uses the adjective *tired* (GORBMAN, 2000: 56, italics are original). As Izod stated, Baines represents a distinct subtype of the settler, the white man who has 'gone native'. Seen from a Jungian perspective, the man who goes native becomes (no less than indigenous black male) the Other, the Object of shadow projection by the white community (IZOD, 2000: 91-92). In short, in the film, Ada is a 'different' woman and Baines is a 'different' man. While both Ada and non-phallic Baines violate opposite pairs (culture/nature, public/private), they question the white masculine order of the West.

As Greenberg abridges:

In a much cited study, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', Laura Mulvey asserts that classic Hollywood cinema treats woman as the object of male gaze; her disruptive sexuality must be neutralized by transforming her into a docile fetish, marrying her off, or killing her. Ada's two suitors attempt to 'objectify' her by all of these measures (Stewart stops just short of murder⁸). Yet Campion has her turn the tables and make Stewart and Baines helplessly enthralled objects of her gaze, her desire (1994: 48).⁹

8 According to Hardy, 'mutilation (psychological and/or physical) is a fitting end for a woman who has transgressed society' 'laws in such a determined fashion' (2000: 78).

9 Italics are original. As Hendershot quoted, Lacan's famous description of traditional heterosexual love- "*I love you, but, because inexplicably I love in you something more than you (the objet petit a) I mutilate you*"- literally materializes in this film (emphasis in original). See Hendershot, 98.

There are *her* gaze, desire, love, music, passion, courage and choices in the heart of the film. Thus the film shows us a different picture, Other man and woman characters, and Campion deconstructs the dichotomy between private-woman / public-man in this film.

Antonia: Liberated Women

Antonia (known as *Antonia's Line* in foreign countries), was written and directed by Dutch Marleen Gorris. In 1996 *Antonia* won the Oscar for Best Foreign-Language Film and other prizes, including the Audience Award at Toronto, Best Screenplay at Chicago and Best Director Award at the Hamptons International Film Festival.

As Agnus Finney writes, *Antonia* is a distinctly independent woman, and the film focuses on the cycle of birth, life and death and her surrounding family of mostly female relations (1996: 240).

There are many women characters: Antonia, Antonia's daughter, Danielle, Danielle's daughter, Therese, and Therese's daughter, Sarah. In the early scenes, Antonia plants the field (in the spring), and Danielle paints the home (in the winter). The full moon is often shown to use as a leitmotiv implying passing time. Lesbian Danielle wants a child but not a husband. The institution of marriage is refused by Antonia's line from the beginning to the end of the film. Significantly, the only couple which got married are idiots. Homosexual and heterosexual relationships are shown at equal levels in the film. Therese grows up as a genius in mathematics and music, and takes philosophy lessons from Crooked Finger. Then Sarah takes these lessons from him like her mother and narrates the story for us. The women show a tendency to love and to live, but the only good man character of the film, Crooked Finger suggests the pessimistic point of view concerning Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer, and then commits suicide. Pitte, who characterizes the negative male in the film, rapes his sister and then Therese. He bears masculinity in his military uniform. Punished with death by the men of the village and his brother, Pitte is both a typical example and a victim of authority and patriarchal brutality. For Maggie Humm, significantly, the murder of Pitte is triggered by Antonia's witch-like curses, and as Nancy Miller suggests, Gorris resolutely and gloriously subverts the masculine signature (quoted by HUMM, 1997: 104). As Karen Jaehne states, *Antonia* is a feminist, and her live-and-let-live philosophy restores the promise of humanist feminism (1996: 29). A feminist slogan (the personal is political) pervades the film. Even the question of having a baby is discussed in a philosopher's home as a philosophical issue. The sexist

division of labour is rejected, particularly in the birth scene, during which men serve food to the women.

Life is pictured in all colours: happiness at the garden table, endless grief of Crooked Finger, the reminder of the rape, joy in the birth, sorrow at somebody's death... Like the last words of the film: 'And as this long chronicle reaches its conclusion, nothing has come to an end'. These nonconformist women are situated everywhere: in the university, in the garden, in the bed, in the church, in the field, and in the pub...

Women are active people in this film. They all incline toward free and equal sexual relationships. They exist both in the private sphere and in the public sphere. No field is superior to another.

In any case, the voice-over (naturally a woman's voice and a voice that is in favour of women) says: 'The men's loud voices rode roughshod over the women's silence'. These words directly point to a sexual politics and draw attention to a male-dominated life that socio-economically and culturally exploits women. *Antonia* stands as a significant example of praxis of the feminist film.

The Governess: Choosing Public Sphere

Sandra Goldbacher made her feature film debut with *The Governess* (1998). *The Governess*, the last film that was written and directed by Goldbacher in the UK, focuses on 'gaze' as one of the main issues of feminist film theory. The heroine (Rosina/Mary played by Minnie Driver) is the owner of the gaze in the film. Seeing that her father was murdered in the London of the early 1840s and, rejecting an arranged marriage, Jewish Rosina da Silva changes her name to Mary Blackchurch, and begins to work as a governess for a rich weird Scottish family. The director says in the film's web site: '...the idea of the governess was a very potent figure in the 19th century. It was the only way you could present a strong central female character who could go out into the world. There was no other way women could --you were either a prostitute or a governess.' Fascinated with Charles Cavendish's studies of photography, Rosina convinces him to let her become his assistant. Goldbacher says again: 'Discovering fixation of photography worked as a metaphor for seeking love and trying to possess someone else'. The way Rosina and Charles approach their work is expressed as follows by the director:

His is very formal and obsessive, narrow and scientific, while hers is imaginative, artistic and emotional. He seeks to make an accurate record of reality. She seeks a new means of expression to create her own unreality.

The camera in this house is naturally in a male's hands, and means phallus. However, Rosina/Mary desires to have this camera, namely wants to have a phallus. Her lover, Charles, does not share his power. 'As he resists the relationship, his phrasing, fraught with verbs suggesting Lacanian post-mirror stage fragmentation, reveals the castration fear inherent when the male is seized by the female gaze' (FELBER, 2001: 32). One day, while he was in fast asleep, she secretly takes his nude photograph. She looks, whereas he is looked at. Again in Felber's expression 'Rosina appropriates the power of the conventionally masculine photographer-voyeur, contesting the determining male gaze and substituting her own' (2001:32). The loss of the camera implies the loss of man's power. As a consequence, he is so angry that he wants to abandon her.

Psychoanalytically, the Law of the Father resonates the man's utterance: 'Don't touch the lenses' or 'you don't take my photograph'. Initially, Charles is a lover; step by step he turns to a Father due to Rosina/Mary, who threatens him.

The career/love (or marriage) duality in the popular films is generally ended with the choice of love or family by women. But Rosina chooses her career. After all the griefs, she gets Charles' photographic supplies. She also hangs on the wall her own eyes' photograph because Charles says to her 'your eyes are so huge...you devour me', and these utterances express his fear indeed. She finally opens a working place for herself as a photographer in the 'mother'land. At the end of the film, she takes her own photograph. This scene is very symbolic in that she is not only an aesthetic object of herself, but also a subject who looks and takes photographs. 'The portrait and self portrait centrally address the issue(s) of identity, self and relationship to others' (EDHOLM, 1995: 159). 'Now Rosina is strong enough to reclaim her identity' (from the film's web site). Actually, the core of the film is also about finding self identity, that is to say, on becoming free women. In Felber's words 'Rosina frees herself from her previous need to see herself through Cavendish's (patriarchy's) gaze' (2001: 35).

In summary, the following points are characterized as the positive sides in the feminist film practice and in this film: This woman gains her independence, challenges the Law of the Father, chooses the public sphere and is seen in the struggle of life and men (both Charles and his son) are shown as nude.

Conclusion

According to Ryan and Kellner 'When women have had access to the power of representation they have often represented their lives in ways quite different from the ways promulgated by men. ... Thus, what seems for women to have been a positive crossing of patriarchal boundaries, especially the separation of private from public spheres, is for men seen negatively as a transgression of the law.' (1988: 138).

Consequently, as Ryan and Kellner state, female directors build a realm completely different from male directors'.

The sexuality of men and naked men as a figure are clearly portrayed in the films of women directors (in *The Piano*, *Antonia* and *The Governess*). At the same time, violence belongs to men, especially the problem of rape within family is presented in these three films; there is no division of labour against women, and women are always active. In *The Piano*, the juxtaposition of private (nature) / public (culture) and women / men is deconstructed. In *Antonia*, women are successful in each area, i.e. science (math), art (music) and philosophy. And in *The Governess* the heroine finally settles in the public sphere freely instead of for one sided love. In each of the three films, the stories are told from the heroines' mouths, which means that the female filmmakers are really enthusiastic to get their own women's voices heard by us. Even in the first scenes of the three films, we find ourselves in the experiences of a woman. De Lauretis lauds the voice-over as potentially feminist in her discussion of Yvonne Rainer's efforts to use narrative strategies in an 'explicitly feminist' film to 'represent the female protagonist not as narrative image but as the narrating voice' (quoted by FELBER, 2001: 34). We hear the strong voices of Ada in *The Piano*, Sarah in *Antonia* and Rosina in *The Governess*. On the contrary, the voice-overs in *Cries and Whispers* and *Jules and Jim* belong to men, that is, Bergman and Truffaut as an auteur.

Women in male directors' films are restricted, directly or indirectly, to nature (in *Eclipse*), to narrow and limited places (like the interior of a house in *Cries and Whispers*), to violence and hate (in *Cries and Whispers*), to being incomprehensible or being ambiguous (in *Eclipse* and *Jules and Jim*), and to being a threat (femme fatale in *Jules and Jim*). And women's bodies are visually fragmented in a lot of shots (especially Vittoria in *Eclipse* and Agnes in *Cries and Whispers*).

As Haskell indicated, women are the means of men's fantasies (for example Karin for Bergman), the 'anima' of the collective male unconscious (for instance, Catherine in *Jules and Jim* and Vittoria in *Eclipse*) and the scapegoat of men's fears (again Catherine) as the product of the system or an

auteur (Haskell, 1987: 39-40). E. Ann Kaplan marks that a critique of the commercial cinema is implied in the revelation of the camera as an apparatus that forces women to be a spectacle, the object of the gaze, reduced to the status of victim (1990: 167). The three films are not the commercial films, but for instance, Vittoria in *Eclipse* is placed as an object of the gaze, and Agnes in *Cries and Whispers* is reduced to the position of a victim, and Catherine in *Jules and Jim* is a spectacle object as a beautiful statue.

We have to see differences and the Other due to the fast changes in the world. The feminine, gay and ethnic gaze, as precisely written by Norman K. Denzin '...hears and sees things that escape the white masculine eye, the eye that is guided by its norms of objectivity and rationality' (1995: 217). The majority of works of art which re-produce patriarchal ideology are not perplexing to us. We believe in the naturalness of a male-dominated system and yet we accept this ideology as its own life style. Just out of habit, we are not aware of a sexist perspective in products of art, too.

Through my feminist approach in this essay, I have tried to reveal the sexist gaze in the films of the three important male filmmakers (auteurs), and I have wanted to show the positive sides in the films of the three female filmmakers by means of female representations.

Being a woman in 'art' films has a different meaning for female and male directors. Thus the images of women in 'art' cinema restricts or frees them, like traditional cinema. In sum, because female characters are besieged in their private sphere by the male directors while they are set free by the female directors, there is a close relationship between 'art' films and sexual policy in the context of representation of women in private sphere.

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