

-Research Article-

Desire And Decadence In The Film *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* (1979) As An Aesthetic Modernist Reaction

Onur Keşaplı*

Abstract

Aesthetic modernism parts from modernization which is characterised by westernization and progress. Aesthetic modernism, which prefers stability over improvement, primitivity over contemporary, imagination over mind, play over work and subconscious over consciousness is, with the enforcement of modern process, the other modern choice alongside the dominant version of modernization. It is difficult to say that the aesthetic modernism, which is interpreted as the stakeholder theme of 19th century romanticism and 20th century avant-garde, is treated sufficiently cinema.

*In spite of this, the filmography of Ulrike Ottinger as a feminist and surrealist director, provides a spectrum through which viewing of aesthetic modernism in cinema is possible). *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin*, which the director shot in 1979 while in pursuit of visual pleasure in the company of satire and fantasy, conveys the arrival of a woman in Berlin with one-way ticket and no other motivation than to get drunk and how she realizes her desire. The obscurity of the past and future of the main character provides an absolute focus to the actions and appearances that takes place in films timeline. The character who does not speak throughout the film becomes a feminine dandy with her costume repertoire and a flâneuse with her movements that knows no limit. Through the behaviours of the main character who, together with the side characters almost becomes part of a travelling circus, the film assumes an identification as an aesthetic modernist reaction.*

In regards to how the film achieves this, within the scope of conceptual frame, desire and decadence comes to the fore. Desire, which is determinant with regards to triggering of the absurdity in the film, is in harmony with productivity and sociability that Deleuze and Guattari incorporated while conceptualizing the term. Whereas the outcomes of the act of drinking of the main character point to decadence. Decadence, which includes the denotations of addiction and downfall is in harmony with Paglia's conceptualization of the term within the axis of art and sexuality. Aesthetic modernism's opposition to bourgeois and capitalism, which are the common ground of desire and decadence, bestows the film with an exceptional importance.

Key Words: *Aesthetic Modernism, Ulrike Ottinger, *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin*, Desire, Decadence*

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-Araştırma Makalesi-

Bildnis Einer Trinkerin (1979) Filminde Estetik Modernist Bir Tepki Olarak Arzu ve Dekadans

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Özet

Estetik modernizm, Batılılaşma ve ilerlemeyle karakterize edilen modernleşmeden ayrılmaktadır. Gelişme yerine durağanlığı, çağdaşlık yerine ilkselliği, akıl yerine hayal gücünü, çalışma yerine oyunu ve bilinç yerine bilinçaltını yeğleyen estetik modernizm, modern işleyişin yürürlüğüyle beraber modernleşmenin egemen sürümünün yanında bir diğer modern seçenek halindedir. 19. yüzyıl romantizmiyle 20. yüzyıl avangardının paydaş izleği olarak yorumlanan estetik modernizmin sinemada yeterince işlendiğini söylemek güçtür.

Buna karşın feminist ve gerçeküstücü bir yönetmen olarak Ulrike Ottinger'in filmografisi, sinemada estetik modernizm izlenebileceği bir yelpaze sağlamaktadır. Satir ve fantezi eşliğinde görsel haz arayışındaki yönetmenin 1979'da çektiği Bildnis Einer Trinkerin, bir kadının, içki içmekten başka bir güdülenmeye sahip olmaksızın, tek yön biletle Berlin'e gelişini ve arzusunu gerçekleştirmesini aktarmaktadır. Ana karakterin geçmişi ve geleceğinin bilinmezliği, filmlik zamandaki eylemlere ve görünümlere mutlak bir odak sağlamaktadır. Film boyunca hiç konuşmayan karakter, kostüm repertuarıyla dişil bir dandy, dur durak bilmeyen devinimiylese bir flanöz halini almaktadır. Yan karakterlerle beraber adeta gezici bir sirkin parçasına dönüşen ana karakterin davranışları, filmi estetik modernist bir tepki hüviyetine büründürmektedir.

Filmin bunu sağlamasında, kavramsal çerçeve babında arzu ve dekadans öne çıkmaktadır. Filmdeki absürtlüğü tetiklenmesi açısından belirleyici olan arzu, Deleuze ve Guattari'nin sözcüğü kavramsallaştırırken dâhil ettikleri üretkenlik ve toplumsallıkla uyum göstermektedir. Ana karakterin içki içme eyleminin yol açtıklarıysa dekadansa işaret etmektedir. Düşünleşmek ve çöküş anlamlarını içeren dekadans, Paglia'nın sözcüğü sanat ve cinsellik ekseninde kavramsallaştırmasıyla uyum göstermektedir. Estetik modernizmin, arzusunun ve dekadansın ortak paydası olan burjuvazi ve kapitalizm karşıtlığı, filme sıra dışı bir önem kazandırmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Estetik Modernizm, Ulrike Ottinger, Bildnis Einer Trinkerin, Arzu, Dekadans

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Introduction

Aesthetic modernism is in a state of reaction to modernism which is one great narration and it parts from modernization which is characterised by westernization and progress. This parting however, on the contrary to attitudes that lead to overall rejection of modernism, is building of an antithesis for aesthetic modernism whose existence is first and foremost dependent to this process and who embraces the modern life with a dialectic passion. Aesthetic modernism, which prefers stability over development, primitivity over contemporary, imagination over mind, play over work and subconscious over consciousness is, with the enforcement of modern process, the other modern choice alongside the dominant version of modernization. Interpreted as the stakeholder theme of 19th century romanticism and 20th century avant-garde, aesthetic modernism is more visible in movements like dadaism and surrealism where transcending of mind, design and consciousness is achieved in a radical fashion although it disseminates to each and every contemporary art movement. In spite of this, it is difficult to say that aesthetic modernism is treated sufficiently in cinema. The emergence of surrealism as a modern movement in cinema too, but the failure of maintaining the surrealist acceleration reached in other disciplines coupled with it's preference of only dream and unconsciousness from within the aesthetic codes, resulted in thinning of aesthetic modernism even in a movement which it could be the most visible.

In spite of this, the filmography of Ulrike Ottinger as a feminist and surrealist director, provides a spectrum through which viewing of aesthetic modernism in cinema is possible. In provocative narrations of Ottinger, who transferred her accumulations in photography and painting to cinema, the ignored or rejected situations and characters comes to the fore. As for style, the conventional tendencies of both classic and contemporary narratives are defeated in Ottinger's stylized films. *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin*, which the director shot in 1979 while in pursuit of visual pleasure in the company of satire and fantasy, tells the arrival of a woman in Berlin with one-way ticket and no other motivation than to get drunk and how she actualises her desire. The obscurity of the past and future of the main character provides an absolute focus to the actions and appearances that takes place in films timeline. The character who does not speak throughout the film becomes a feminine dandy with her costume repertoire and a flâneuse with her movements that knows no limit. Through inappropriate and unsupervised behaviours of the main character who, together with the side characters almost become part of a travelling circus, the film assumes an identification as an aesthetic modernist reaction.

In regards to how the film achieves this, within the scope of conceptual frame, desire and decadence comes to the fore. Desire, which is determinant with regards to triggering of the absurdity in the film, is in harmony with productivity and sociability that Deleuze and Guattari incorporated while conceptualizing the term. Whereas the outcomes of the act of drinking of the main character point to decadence. Decadence, which includes the denotations of addiction and downfall is in harmony with Paglia's conceptualization of the term within the axis of art and sexuality. Within this context, it is possible to say that shedding light on Ottinger's relatively ignored oeuvre, which might be regarded as one of the emissary of aesthetic modernism which one comes across less frequently in 7th art compared to other art branches, is of pioneer importance.

Ulrike Ottinger And *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin*

Ulrike Ottinger was born in Germany in 1942 to a journalist mother and a painter father. Before transition to cinema, she for many years worked in plastic arts in Paris as an independent artist and received education from intellectuals among which was thinkers and philosophers such as Claude Lévi-Strauss, Louis Althusser and Pierre Bourdieu. She employed collage and installment techniques in photography and painting and upon her return to Germany in

1969 she became acquainted with independent films, particularly with New German Cinema and took the first step in directing in 1973, with a *happening* documentary called *Berlinfieber – Wolf Vastell* (Ulrike Ottinger, 1973)(2010). Shooting her first fictions *Laokoon & Söhne* (*Laocoon & Sons*, Tabea Blumenschein & Ulrike Ottinger, 1975) and *Die Betörung der Blauen Matrosen* (*The Enchantment of the Blue Sailors*, Tabea Blumenschein & Ulrike Ottinger, 1975) both of which are medium length in 1975, Ottinger drew attention with her first feature length *Madame X – Eine absolute Herrscherin* (*Madame X: An Absolute Ruler*, Tabea Blumenschein & Ulrike Ottinger, 1978) which she directed in 1978. The film which tells the adventures of a lesbian pirate ship which was created by a group of women who rejected and left their daily lives which was banalized under masculine siege, not only became the debut film of Ottinger's in national and international cinema world but also constituted the first field of application for motives and themes that will become common in the director's filmography.

Following the Berlin trilogy which started with *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* that she shot a year later and which ended with *Dorian Gray im Spiegel der Boulevardpresse* (*Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press*, Ulrike Ottinger, 1984) which she shot in 1984, Ottinger produced short and feature works in documentary genre. To date, aside from her films, she has done art exhibitions on photography, collage and installment while producing some works in theatre and opera for which she carried out the stage arrangement and directing. The director who brought to stage, through unrealistic performances, the encounters of different geography, culture and mindsets in a way that brings to mind the research and finding methodologies of anthropology, has constructed narrations that shook, abraded, rejected and transcended the social rules under the headings of gender and sexuality. The constructions in question, which pay no attention to linear flow, are reflections of Ottinger's cinematographic understanding which lies outside of conventional cinema. However the sole style in cinema which the director places herself outside of, is not mainstream classic narration.

According to Andrea Weiss (1993, p. 128), while searching for new ways to build visual pleasures, Ottinger rejects or produces the parody of the style referred to as "art cinema" or "independent cinema" via creating and positioning the viewpoints that are mostly ignored or marginalised in cinema. Through the use of scenes that are disconnected from the whole or that are theatrical and at times resemble television sketches, which are more like passages, paths rather than episodes and thus are independent from one another, the director blends the state of being grotesque and deformed with the idealized beauty. According to Amy L. Uttenburger, who compiled the encyclopedia of women filmmakers (1999, pp. 319-320), films of Ulrike Ottinger harbors ethnographical discoveries too, while incorporating strong motives related to stylized satire and fantasy. However, those ethnographic installments in question and the presentations of different cultures in Ottinger's filmography have been characterized as imperialist, orientalist and exotic and criticised by some authors (Makary, 2020). According to Adina Glickstein (2020) this has to do with in accordance with the director's bearing of the European centralist viewpoint within the frame of ethnocentrism. Ottinger's resort to stereotypical representations of appearances and actions of different culture and races, primarily of East, seems problematic when considers nearly half century ago with views of today's political correctness, but the artistic interest and tendency of the director moves forward in other paths (Makary, 2020). Whether the associations are erotic or absurd, reality and correctness are not among the foundational motivations and goals of Ottinger's provocative, partly amusing and aggressive films.

Bildnis Einer Trinkerin, first of Ulrike Ottinger's works that later will be referred to as Berlin Trilogy puts on stage the adventure of a woman, whose only wish is to drink nonstop in different localities, come to Berlin with a one-way ticket as the English name of the film *The Ticket of No Return* implies. The sole donnée which approximates the film to a narration is those that the voice of a narrator, who is never again heard, tell as a prelüd in the beginning of the

film. The things verbalized by off-screen voice does not include anything other than what will be seen in the film. That the character is “anyone/no one”, how she looks, where she arrives, what she’ll do is explained. From the very beginning the film reduces the weight of what’ll happen by providing “spoiler” and arousing interest as to how things will happen.

Bildnis Einer Trinkerin, which is a knitwork of scenes some of which follow a certain flow while rest are sections on their own being completely detached from the whole, identifies as a piece of work that has a storyline but not a script and where series of happenings are recorded. According to Ottinger’s own description (1979) the film travels in exactly opposite direction from that of gay fantasy *Madame X*. It’s the discovery of own edges of an anonymous woman, along with destruction and death, as she embarks on a more or less predictable adventure and her eventual shelter seeking in own ego in a totally narcissistic way. It can be seen that the main character, who in the prelüd is depicted with striking beauty, classical highness, in harmony with Raphaelesque proportions and in an appearance comparable to Medea, Madonna, Beatrice, Iphigenia and Aspasia, is not alone in “what goes on” which sways between reality and dream.

Three women who nearly at the same time exit a plane that lands in Berlin Tegel Airport where the main character arrived with one-way ticket, accompanies her at irregular intervals. However in the film, instead of gaining character depth, these people become examples of typage or stock character due to repeating of themselves and watching developments from a distance. As put by Angela Waters (2020) these three figures resemble the chorus of antique period theatre and from another viewpoint they bring to mind Shakespeare’s witches that especially found a place for themselves in *Macbeth*. In the film they are known by tags Common Sense, Social Question, Exact Statistics. These three figures discuss harms of drinking -primarily that of the main character and the other typages who accompany her either from time to time or always-in every occasion and location with regards to their own tags and evaluate the problem in the light of donnée from social sciences and life sciences and within dichotomy of right-wrong and useful-harmful. With this and similar parodies, *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* brings frivility to the seriousness of stern rationality. Banal and cliché nature of the bars, hotels, taxi and ferry as choices of locality also dilutes the film’s holistic seriousness. The film’s inclusion in aesthetic modernist reaction within the criticism of modernization is possible via this and similar preferences.

The Dissemination Of Aesthetic Modernism To *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin*

As mentioned in the introduction, aesthetic modernism is commemorated by the historical progressive perspective of the eurocentrists point of view of post Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution. It is a criticism to the modernization which is shown to the rest of the world as an example of progress, that stems from the borders of modernity. Aesthetic modernism is in a state of reaction to surrounding of the mind, which was predicted to liberate as the hegemony of the faiths that suppressed it loosen, with new borders via being made systematical by modern ideologies. According to Habermas, aesthetic modernism was first crystallized in the art of Charles Baudelaire and it’s spirit and manners were also clarified with Baudelaire (as cited in Artun, 2004). The generation in question, which included intellectuals like Balzac and Rimbaud of the same period who has permeated the French and the world literature, brought an aesthetic texture to modernism with their work that they treated and interpreted under the influence of romanticism.

According to Firat Mollaer (2015) who defines aesthetic modernism by summarizing it based on Ali Artun’s work on Baudelaire, states that the concept which has been carried to twentieth century by avant-garde movements, parts from the modernization which is characterised by westernization and nationalism. Aesthetic modernism is a theme which prefers primitivism over modernization, imagination over mind, East over West, dream over reality, play over work and subconscious over consciousness. Within a viewpoint in which

modernization involves the capitalist and socialist industrialization processes, aesthetic modernism takes into consideration the other choices and possibilities of the development which is considered equal with progress while embracing the modern life with a dialectic passion. And according to Michel Foucault (as cited in Çelik, 2020, p. 437) for whom the process of aesthetic modernism in the art of painting starts with Manet, the view which has liberalized upon replacement of content by form in art, and the spaces that got exempt from illusion, added an aesthetic depth to modernism.

It can be seen that aesthetic modernism disseminates into the formalist filmography of Ottinger with its many motives, and *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* is not an exception. Relative liberation of women from daily chores via modern life but the abstract confinement of societal norms accompanied by new borders and judgements, are among the rejected facts of the film and the main character. The fact that the woman, who dresses up strikingly and who is at times alone wants to drink at every location not taking account whether it is day or night, does not care about the unaccustomed stares and comments can be seen throughout the film. In modernized West a woman has the right to drink wherever she wants but she is expected to deal with epithets given due to this act. There's a share of this modernized conservatism in her being deported from Moby Dick boat tour and from some bars. The film depicts this in a natural and ordinary spectacle without treating it as a conscious reaction and discourse. The actions of the character and ones who accompany her are more like play than work. Such that although the main character gives impression in some scenes of the film that she works, she turns that workplaces to playgrounds with her indifference, drinking and sarcasm. The bond of the film with the reality is loosened by scenes like this and some parts that resemble performing arts, while the sections which cannot be ascribed a beginning and end and which do not offer any aim or meaning regarding the whole of the film, evoke imagination and dream. Although repeats of some parts with different camera angles hint possibility of a cyclist narration, this does not go beyond the embodiment of a repeating segment or a closed abstraction that is pushed outside of consciousness. When repeating motives of mirror, reflection, breakage and water in the film is considered, one can see that Ottinger is included, with a surrealist work, in a style of aesthetic modernism that becomes playful through imagination and daydream. The detail of aesthetic modernism regarding its preference of East over West, is fulfilled in the film with the section, which could be interpreted as a dream, where the main character drinks and inspects the flowers in Far East costume and landscape.

Feminist moves of the director and the film are also in harmony with aesthetic modernism. Hande Ögüt (2019, p. 106) states that within modernization, the woman body is described with concepts of nature, beauty and sexuality while on the contrary, the male body is constructed with concepts such as culture, language, mind, strength and consequently superiority. In this equation, where the mind is paired with the male, the emotions and behaviours of the woman that spill over to irrationality are embraced and executed in *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin*. It is meaningful that the main character of the film never speaks as opposed to association of language and speech to the male body. As put forward by Ögüt again (2019, p. 111), making sense of female agency, autonomy notion and lesbian desire via exaggerated imagery and parody is a frequently repeated preference in Ottinger's cinema. Making female sexuality visible and making female desire and pleasure presentable via different means in a way that they'll break the boundary of sexuality is amply felt in *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin*. Therefore it comes without surprise that there's a significant place of those scenes of the film, that bring homosexuality to mind, in aesthetic modernism.

Artun (2004) elaborates on Benjamin's interpretation of the lesbian, who came to light as a poetical imagination in Baudelaire's literature, as a hero of modernism and states that the positioning of woman in modernization by industrialization is rejected by the lesbian character. The character who is glorified by a sexual emphasis is the imagery of neither nature, nor industry; it can only be the creation of modernist aesthetic and by this means it challenges the

industrial modernization. The lesbian character of aesthetic modernism exposes the classical moralism that is associated with God and nature as well by immorality and impropriety that she takes to extremes. Although it can be said that the viewpoint in question is more pronounced in other films of Ottinger it still breathes in *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin*, in fewness of males and their existence which accounts to no more than extras, and the moments and scenes that unfurl in the dominance of women, in particular the main character, which can be interpreted as homosexuality. It is not surprising that the woman who the main character sleeps, baths and drinks with in most of the scenes is another Baudelaire character; the ragpicker. This character digs through the garbage, sorts and collects with her strolley and no answer is provided as to what she is looking for. Baudelaire states that she is collecting, among the teeth of goddess of industry, the ones that'll be reshaped about the dissemination of art to modern city Artun (2004) puts forward the ragpicker with an aesthetic modernist viewpoint.

While *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* passes in Berlin, one of modernity's prominent capitals, it can be seen that in this film and in entirety of Berlin Trilogy, when framing the city, the director prefers industrial ruins, abandoned sites and empty urban lots, sceneries and natural landscapes that develop on their own accord, became unfamiliar, which are also referred to as "brachen" in Berlin. The modernist project which Dan Handel (2020) refers to as a goal of progressive understanding of society which lives in a linear timeline and constantly aims a better future, fails with the locality choices of the film. The nature, forest and environment on the other hand, to the contrary of progressiveness, has become autonomous of time and space as it is impossible to show their beginning and the end. This situation brings to mind the surrealist timelessness and, despite the absoluteness of Berlin, the spacelessness of the film. Mollaer's (2015) inclusion of elements of reign and capture of the city with an acute attention to aesthetic modernism, along with a specific time perception, makes it possible to underline *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin's* aesthetic modern attitude.

Evaluating Ottinger's main character's relationship with Berlin necessitates to once again look at the character constructions of aesthetic modernism since in the acting of Tabea Blumenschein, with whom the director worked with in many films, the dandy and flâneur typages which are at the forefront in Baudelaire and aesthetic modernist art, comes together. According to Artun (2004) dandy, represents the elegance, grandness and willpower of aristocracy which is long gone as opposed to the pleasures that are made ordinary by bourgeois's reasoning and making sense of everything. For dandy, achieving a vivid ego cult by a desire that helped create a unique personality, bears the pride of not getting surprised in return of pleasure she gets when surprising others. While the pompous, gaudy and elitist attire of the main character in *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin*, which are designed by Blumenschein herself result in surprise and excess in the shabby and ordinary localities she goes, the loose acts that contradict with the weight of her attire does not invoke any reaction in the character, contrary to those who witness them. Artun also proceeds to differentiate dandy and bohem which is inevitable for more pronounced aesthetic attitude. According to him (Artun, 2004) while bohem expresses himself/herself, dandy is after building of self. Both despise bourgeois but while bohem criticises bourgeois for not keeping it's promises, dandy satirizes it (bourgeois) for it's unconditional fidelity regarding these promises. While the first wishes to demolish the old and classical, the other aims to build the new and traditionalise the modern. Artun claims that the dandy character protects art both from commonplace morality and speech of beauty as well as the domination of speech of reality. This is what lies beneath dandy's mocking of science, industry and progress by reality speech while bickering with bourgeois. By this means dandy is announcing that it is not possible to accomodate the modernization that institutionalizes the establishment and the aesthetic modernizm that institutionalizes art.

The drunk dandy of *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* generates an aesthetic modernist reaction while turning the reality, rationality and the order of institutions upside down. The traveller she becomes while actualising these unrealities, makes her one with the other aesthetic

modernist character, the flâneur. Pragmatist and modern viewpoint, on claims that she/he does not produce anything tangible, ascribes descriptions of loafer and wanderer to the flâneur who in Baudelaire's Paris nonstop traverses the city accompanied by daydreams and becomes a traveller who combines imagination and play. In aesthetic modernism however, flâneur turns into a producer through the power of imagination. Ottinger's flâneur reflects her dreams onto the city in which she travels nonstop no matter day or night. It can be seen more clearly in statement of Mollaer that, the point achieved by flâneur's specific and subjective creation of time is an aesthetic interference;

Aesthetic modernity reveals itself in attitudes that find it's focal point in a different time perception. This time perception, manifests itself by means of pioneer and avant-garde metaphors. Envisions itself embarking on an expedition in an unknown region, conquering not yet known future via venturing dangers of avant-garde, sudden encounters, (2015).

This description is in harmony with Ottinger's filmography and points to the invention of flâneur in *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin*, according to the unforeseeable storyline. The general editing of the film which is like a surrealist montage, breaks up the film's time and space both visually and feelingwise by means of within-scene jumps and the sharp, radical transitions between scenes and turns it into a spectacle of sections. This preference that at times brings to mind the montage of French New Wave, is a cinematographic style that is in harmony with the content of the film which rests on, within the frame of an aesthetic modernist criticism, overall parodies of modernized West and it's industrialized bourgeois.

Despite it's scatteredness which is fragmented and at times evoke an eclectic feel, *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* acquires integrity with regards to aesthetic modernism. Similar to replies that surrealist artist Leonora Carrington gives to Andre Breton in a interview (2020), the film is aware that lives of "people who are caught in a substance hypnosis which is no different that an oasis", while supposing they are "practical", "conscious", "willful" as if they are always enchanted, is not free. The film reveals, through the chaos, disorder and uproar it creates that the miracle of progress, which Baudelaire (as cited in Artun, 2004) criticizes as having the pragmatism, simplicity, tastelessness and materialism of bourgeois and where science and industry is crowned, is a deception or uproar or hypocrisy.

Desire In Bildnis Einer Trinkerin

It is possible to say that *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin*, which starts and advances with a woman's wish to drink and which in a way do not arrive to any other place than that, is completely derived from a desire or is a film of desire. Desire is among the concepts that are handled by many philosophers and disciplines, primarily psychoanalysis, but the ways the main character, who behaves as her sole motive dictates in Ottinger's film, reflects and expresses her desire, makes reciprocation of approaching the topic of desire with viewpoints of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari more obvious in this example.

In their book *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari (2000, p. 26) stratifies desire by combining it with the terms production and machine and according to them desire is not deficient of anything, not even it's own object, to the contrary of mainstream psychoanalysis which is founded on deficiencies and needs. To them, if one is looking for a deficient in the concept, it can at most be the deficiency of subject, and desire, as a productive machine in the production of a product that was snatched from the production process, unravels gaining mobility with a nomad and wanderer subject. Those that scatter around in *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* through the adventures of the flâneur and nonstopping main character which is embarked in order to fill the place of the subject that is missing, not in herself but in desire, completes view. Besides one cannot get any impression from the appearance and general attitude of the main character as to whether she comes to Berlin since she could not fulfill her desire to drink. Despite all the disorder she triggers, the character fulfills her desire in a calm manner with solemn face mimics and an acting compromised of gestures.

Breton (2020) brings desire together with natural forces and places it in the foundation of a magical art concept as an expression of a necessity which science cannot fulfill. He then questions whether this can be accommodated with a return to the primary disorder. An indirect reply to him comes from Eugene W. Holland who has a work on *Anti-Oedipus*. According to Holland (2007, p. 123) desire is not sourced from necessities just as it is not based on primary deficiency. Rather desire is an societal anti-production mechanism which places necessities and deficiencies on top of productive desire. And according to Deleuze and Guattari (2000, p. 27) "Desire is not bolstered by needs, but rather the contrary; needs are derived from desire: they are counterproducts within the real that desire produces". It can be said that counterproduct and anti-product are alternative products which are reactive to pragmatic and utilitarian productions of capitalist modernization. It is apparent that the playful and dreamy products of *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* are useless for modernization and at this point, the place reached by desire in the film nourishes aesthetic modernism.

Although the desire in the film steps out of the accepted reality, the emphasis made by Deleuze and Guattari that the production of desire is the production of reality (2000, p. 27) points to the strength and possibilities of desire in terms of creation of more natural and essential reality compared to the alienating reality of modernization. At this point Holland (2007, pp. 56) states that even the fantasies of desire cannot be evaluated differently and apart from reality, and that what is produced by desire is simply the real world. Here it can be thought that what is emphasized by reality is life since Deleuze and Guattari (2000, p. 28) states that desire embraces life with its productive power and reproduces it in much more intense way. The fact that desire needs very few things loosens its productive bonds with so called external reality which are demands of rationalism (2000, p. 29). At this point it is important of desire to move towards fantasies and just as Holland (2007, p. 62) underlines the connection provider power of productive version of desire, "fantasy is never individual: it is group fantasy -as institutional analysis has successfully demonstrated" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 30). According to this approach, in state of pioneering and fictionalising necessities, desire is a productive expansion and comes into contact with other desires through interrelated transivity and enriches and diversifies itself. Doing so it attains a pluralist identity. When, by this means, the bodies interact with other bodies accompanied by desire, the societies start to shape accordingly.

We maintain that the social field is immediately invested by desire, that it is the historically determined product of desire, and that libido has no need of any mediation or sublimation, any psychic operation, any transformation, in order to invade and invest the productive forces and the relations of production. *There is only desire and the social, and nothing else* (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 38).

While desire becomes a spectacle in the film as a motive and move of just one character, participation of many side characters and typages in main character's desire not just make them parts of desire for drinking but also help the desire in question, gain diversity and pluralism. The nature of desire which takes pleasure from diversity, ramification and above all spontaneity (Holland, 2007, p. 66), when commemorated with the vagrant essence of desire as production (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 336), the treatment of desire in *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* takes the form of an experimental and uncontrolled montage, and is staged through spontaneousness of a crowd which is an informal team that appear consecutively in unrelated places. It can be seen that in these sections, which at times take the form of installments, the pluralist and conductive desire in the movements which are cumulative reciprocation of the film, erodes "social" norms, structures and the value judgements of capitalism which infiltrated psychoanalysis. Holland explains the aspect of the matter that also touches gender and sexuality as follows;

Compared to the specific mechanisms that operate in nuclear family and compared to the mechanisms which includes illegitimate use of bonding, separation and combining synthesis

such as Oedipus complex, capitalism psychologically reproduces patriarchy by producing subjects that are hierarchically gendered. Three poled opposition constitutes the matrix of nuclear subjectiveness: woman opposed to man, identity opposed to choosing of object and homosexual opposed to heterosexual. When handled as exclusionary partings, these polarities define the standardized molar subjectiveness styles which capture, and ruin the desire-production. By giving birth to the outcome where sexual identity and gender identity is indeed multifunctional and multilayered, the desire-production definitely handles these contrasts as final points of a time where desire freely wanders (2007, p. 211).

Starting from here, it can well be said that the positive and fertile state of not being able to frame desire with deficiency and absolute sexuality may liberate desire just as it may liberate society and thereby go beyond the individual phantasm and spearhead a crowded and endless scatter. Deleuze and Gattari (2000, p. 365) too, states that desire need not be different than sexuality but that rather than the narration of sexuality which is fictionalised with Oedipus in mainstream psychoanalysis, it dreams of open spaces and concludes following the spread of strange movements that does not allow for accumulating in a permanent settlement. It can be observed that according to reception and with regards to costume and actions the behaviours of the film's character spectrum that includes homosexuals might be interpreted to be sexual but at the same time not necessarily. The film's being nearly silent and neutral on this matter creates a feminine look that sets back masculinity.

Deleuze and Gattari's definitions of desire which erode the organizations of modernization approaches – perhaps unwillingly or unconsciously- the revolutionary attitude attributed to the concept by thinkers by the way it is concretized in *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin*. According to this desire “is explosive; there is no desiring-machine capable of being assembled without demolishing entire social sectors... desire is revolutionary in its essence” (Deleuze & Gattari, 2000, p. 116). Desire is revolutionary but more than the provocativeness it can bear through revolutionary willpower, liberated sexuality or etc., this is because it can alter the society's established order. According to Holland (2007, p. 220) the unconscious syntheses of desire production are as much a criticism of bad psychic organizations like Oedipus and psychoanalysis as they are criticism of malicious social organizations such as capitalism and nuclear family. Beyond all these, the aesthetic modernist criticism that appears as a result of overlap of the desire in *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* and desire in Anti-Oedipus strengthens when Deleuze and Gattari (2000, p. 107), note that the question of desire is not “What does this mean?” but that rather desire is a concept that took the stage with the general collapse of the question “What does this mean?” (2000, p. 108). The circumstance which the film makes visible via spontaneity that renders meaning and significance invalid, and presentations in form of plays, about those pushed out of consciousness and those veiled while liberating the mind, brings side to side the criticism of modernization by aesthetic modernism and the capitalist anti-establishment of this version of desire. The desire in Deleuze and Gattari reveals the free and real subjects by means of distance to performance and transformative power and by shaking the ground of capitalist subject which is opposed to movement and sway. The subject that is also revealed in Ottinger's film and the characters that turn into subjects via the interaction, produce new realities that are sourced by life and are knitted with imagination and dreampower by going beyond the borders of meaning and society.

Decadance In Bildnis Einer Trinkerin

Decadence, which is described by downfall, lowly, lowness and corruption as lexical meanings emerged in 19th century as a criticism directed at the symbolists and afterwards, within the same century, took the form of an aesthetic preference and a narration style. Camille Paglia, who in her cult book *Sexual Personae* placed the word in the foundation of Western mindset by historicizing it and revealed that, in a way, the drives and expressions of primeval and pagan periods continue to day without interruption. Paglia codes decadence within

romanticism movement just like aesthetic modernism and describes it within the themes of sexuality, gender and art. She states that the concept, which rises from pagan performance style and ground dramatises the Western image via rituals full of sexual personas and places hostile demands on the spectators (2004, pp. 517-518). Regarding of the portrait of a drunk as odd through the lowly behaviours of the main character, and above all the fact that a lonely woman wants to get drunk by nonstop drinking, renders Ottinger's *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* decadent. With Paglia's further note that decadence is about blind streets (2004, p. 523), main character's coverage of dead ends in her own atmosphere, makes sense in this context.

Gizem Ayşe Weber (2011, p. 15) who studied the reciprocates of the concept in French literature in her work called *Women and Decadence*, states that while swapping the place of banal reality with imagery, the decadent places the dream of reality in the very place of reality. This situation is in harmony with the dreamy reality choice that the film renders possible, and the reality that the desire is said to be in pursuit of in the previous section. Artun states that aesthetic modernism that he positions against the understanding of art which is based on simile and imitation, enables art to build it's own reality based on the imagery in the mind rather than the nature (as cited in Çelik, 2020, p. 437). This view integrates with reality analysis of both desire and decadence. According to Weber (2011, p. 16) while the decadent renders the reality grotesque and transforms and exaggerates it by twists and overflows into atemporal, it brings forth a reality that is novel and discomforting. The decadent who focuses on the ugly and hideous rather than the traditional beauty, transforms into the flow of fantasies and dreams without sustaining consistency and logic and therefore threatens reality while sabotaging the flow of the ordinary. What Ottinger executes in the film is exactly this. The film which twists both the linear and logical time shifts and ruins the ordinary and usual daily flow via acts and visions that are grotesque from time to time, presents an uncontrolled reality that is liberalized through the spectacle of fantasies.

That the main character and nearly all of the side characters are women in *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* seems like a contradiction, given that the most of the artists and artworks in 19th century literature who was described as decadent were male and masculine, but according to Paglia (2004, p. 531) the main objective of decadent art is to record the forms of feminine power. Likewise in the eyes of decadents, who await the rejection of cultural burden and desertion of public obligation, masculinity is devoid of aesthetics (Paglia, 2004, p. 436) and decadent is a plane of comprehensive disgust towards the female nature which is a Western design. At this point it is seen that the lesbian, which is one of the dominant characters of aesthetic modernism, finds herself a place in decadent aesthetics as well. According to Weber (2011, p. 23) in decadent imagination, which sees art as denial of nature and the victory of the artificial, the female homosexuality brings with itself a loosening that is competible with decadent via femininity that contradicts with principle of creation, and nourishes the nature contrast of the concept. The homosexuality associations of the film, when considered along with the female characters who have an interventionist attitude towards natural and ordinary makes one feel that this aspect of decadent too, might have been used by Ottinger. The veiled eroticism in the film despite the sexually arousing costumes and contacts overlaps with Paglia's view which marks decadent's sexuality in perception and in brain (2004, p. 458). Nevertheless, impressions of sexuality even as it is, is sufficient for the decadent to be described as low by the bourgeois which he is positioned opposite of. For according to Weber (2011, p. 18) egzoticism, mysticism and especially eroticism and snobbishness stands out among the words that bourgeois class considers to be inherent to decadent. Dandyism that is mentioned here is 19th century dandy of aesthetic modernism and according to Susan Sontag the term morphed into camp in 20th century.

In her article of 1964, titled *Notes on Camp*, Susan Sontag (2009, p. 1) expands on the concept of camp which is not much discussed as to what it is although being mentioned often, and states that bearing reminiscences to banality, lowness and ridiculousness, it is characterised

primarily by the unnatural, cunning and exaggerated. Decadence, when handled in a manner that is based on exaggeration and excess which nearly mocks itself (Paglia, 2004, p. 282), the exaggerated attire and excessive drinking of the main character in *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* adds camp features to film's decadence. The acting of the characters as well, that are as grand and as exaggerated as performing arts in many sections, lean to camp's attitude of theaterizing of daily life via "acting as if" and overtly "acting" features (Sontag, 2009, p. 3). The 18th century wigs and powders that Paglia mentions while giving examples to excess in appearance and behaviour of the decadent which resemble theater stage (2004, p. 292) found exact use in the film, in performances of male figures who do not go beyond typages. The main character does not lose her seriousness despite all this amusing and inappropriate attitudes and this can be observed in naive camp, which Sontag places opposite of conscious camp as real camp. Sontag (2009, pp. 5-6) states that the pure examples of camp are insensible but very serious, and that seriousness that fails to succeed is the essence of camp. Accordingly the splendid excesses of camp who falls in the situation of not being taken seriously while taking itself seriously, concretizes decadence. While interpreting this seriousness as coldhearted production of sexuality or violence in decadence, Paglia (2004, p. 279) carries the concept to sharpness of modern cinema with regards to the eye's and object's neutral and distanced position. And the notion that the artwork, which becomes decadent within the seriousness of camp, might move away from emotions would be wrong, since the acting of camp makes bonds with extreme states of emotions while theatricalizing the experience (Sontag, 2009, p. 8) and finds itself a place in decadent who has attained a state of intense happiness through the informality of its seriousness (Paglia, 2004, p. 511).

The other factor which integrates the two concepts is that they are executed in pieces. Sontag (2009, pp. 7-8) notes that underneath camp's indifference of speech and proposition lies the glorification of character, and states that the sole possible concreteness in the concept is sections. While in decadence, there is the domination and victory of the piece over the whole (Paglia, 2004, p. 451). In *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin*, although the act of drinking as a general theme and desire seem complete, the sequences in the form of sections and the pieces which are made up by the within the act preferences of the editing, rises above the whole and perceives it as a foundation to build upon instead of a border. This fragmented state is functional in dividing and surpassing the unidirectional progressivism of modernity and the absolute realism which annihilates the doubts by observation and experiment (Weber, 2011, p. 98). Paglia (2004, p. 445) states that decadence is an eye sickness and claims that the sins it has committed, as a cinematic style which can only be seen from a certain distance, are sexual intensification of a peeper nature. When the topic is dealt with Paglia's viewpoint, the fragmented state of the glance and the whole makes it understandable that the observer's and certainly the peeper's stare have to be in sections. However, there are criticisms about peeper approaches in Ottinger's cinema.

Amy Sherlock (2019) criticises the use of travesties, homosexuals, dwarves, deformed bodies, characters and typages from different race and cultures in a state of show in films of Ottinger and in *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* as relentless and evil peep. According to Glickstein (2020) director's approach about *absolute others* might at best be evaluated as embracement of discrepancies through the rejection of conventional and masculine gaze in cinema by a feminist intention but that the Western ethnographic and anthropologic tendency that is veiled in the same gaze cannot be ignored. On the other hand, as to Makary (2020) Ottinger's use of nonwestern cultures in her films in their real versions compared to western cultural codes result in problematic presentations, and lead to a circuslike cinematic texture which views ethnical differences through the eyes of hegemony of western culture. The circus metaphor which is in the focus of arguments is of importance because in *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin*, like in many other films of Ottinger, groups that involve dwarves and deformed bodies enacts presentations that resemble circus shows. The section where wire walkers display their skill in the unattended

urban nature, and the the drunk speeds with a car in an empty lot where odd characters becomes spectators and flies off crashing into barriers, are the foremost reciprocates of circuslike state in the film. In spite of this, according to Anneke Smelik (2008, p. 48) Ottinger's passion for freaks and grotesk appearances and behaviours delivers itself as a method the director uses to shatter and go beyond the statements of film critics who treat all women directors as one – often times with an average feminist label – and the prejudice which states that the film characters are reflections of directors. Camp that gets built in the film via unseriousness in drunk's seriousness supports this as well. In Sontag's words (2009, p. 10) generosity, sharing, affirmation of passionate defeats and camp which is in state of approval instead of judgement is embracement of possibilities of life and human nature with a mischievous and mocking attitude. From this point, it is possible to say that the interrelationships of the characters in *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* are used as a constructive pattern in the decadence of the film.

According to Paglia (2004, p. 153) decadence is unison of primitiveness and sophistication, and in nearly all headings it is a rejection of nature and culture and those which are usual, ordinary, common, natural. Furthermore it is a revolt against values that are assigned divinity and the norms that are dictated by bourgeois and capitalism. According to Weber (2011, p. 29) this attitude brings a revolutionary attribute to decadence and the fact that the conservative reaction to decadence, who in this endeavour actualizes those that is not possible to come together by blending the contrasts and differences, is the rejection of hybrid, takes the concept to a positive point. For in Ottinger's films and the way it is used in *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin*, decadence allows for togetherness of aliens and others by replacing what it rejects with unusual and hybrid appearances that it builds with imagination. The cinematographic structure of the film is not in harmony with classical expectations of modernization and cinema, and decadence strengthens it's course of inclusion within aesthetic modernism.

Conclusion

To the contrary of most modernism criticism which leads to opposition and rejection of modernity, aesthetic modernism reacts to unilaterality of modernity with the values inherent to modernity and forecasts that the potential of modernism might be made to meet other horizons and possibilities. It (aesthetic modernism) is an aesthetic criticism practice which might easily be overlooked or might be easily disregarded in the popularity of altogether vilification of modernity. Other than notable modernist and avant-garde movements, aesthetic modernism does not have a holistic and historical track, and compared to the other disciplines, the marks of it in cinema is much less. Nevertheless it can be seen that in the films of feminist and surrealist Ulrike Ottinger, there are many themes and motives that align with the codes of aesthetic modernism.

Ottinger's narrations form a circular path via transfer of primitive and primordial to the present continuous and simple present tense rather than modernity which is coded as a linear progress. As a surrealist who can replace mind with imagination and reality with dreams, Ottinger gives space to characters who apply freedom of play instead of work discipline and who are driven by subconscious instead of conscious in her narrations. With an alternative modernization path which encompass others and East, instead of westernization which is paired with modernization, the director deserves attention with her filmography which contain diversity although she is criticised for stereotypical representations (on this matter).

Bildnis Einer Trinkerin, which strikes attention with it's content that resembles the characters of 19th century French literature and romanticism movement, and the actions of destructive and constructive Dadaism movement of 20th century, is one of the main films in Ottinger's cinema in which aesthetic modernism is concretized. The film's camp – modern dandy – lesbian whose sole purpose is to drink in Berlin, one of modernization's capitals, disturbs the modern functioning, brings forth problems and explodes the reality with her

exuberancies which attain pluralism via the characters with whom she interacts with or whom she does not interact with but are present with her in same places or dreams. The concepts that comes forth in the aesthetic modernist fabric of the film is desire and decadence.

It is difficult to say that each version of desire or decadence will allow for an aesthetic modernist mediation. However Deleuze and Guattari's definition of desire and the expansions that Paglia brings to decadence, not just contain stakeholders within themselves but also are in harmony with the codes of aesthetic modernism and the conclusion it reaches. Oppositions of all three, to bourgeois morality and functioning of capitalism overlap and *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* allows for a spectacle which can be defined by desire and decadence within the frame of aesthetic modernism. The decadent lowness and grotesqueness that a woman finds herself in because of her desire to drink, gets concretized by the philosophical touches of Deleuze and Guattari and Paglia. Desire's attaining of a productive and social identity rather than being founded on some deficiency is compensated in the film both by main character's becoming productive via actualising her desire without sign of any deficiency or addiction and internalization of her productivity by those around her who turned into a community. And the fact that reality is produced by desire comes together with imagination and play of decadence that opens up paths reaching very reality instead of illusion of reality. The film achieves this by presentations which remove the borders between reality and dream.

The violation of borders of modernization by decadence with the sake of free oscillation in *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* benefits the scatter of a desire upon meeting with it's subject via a drunk woman. Such presentation of desire which has no bonds with deficiency and which suffers from lack of subject instead of lack of object also serve for positioning of the film against mainstream, both ideologically and cinematographically. Ottinger shys away from presenting the audience with a fiction that would answer to cause-effect relation according to storyline. Instead, with a film that does not allow for identification and catharsis she invites the spectators, to the happenings which are open to associations, in observer status. This expectation might seem passive but together with the aesthetic modernism criticism that opposes modernization, which disseminates to whole of the film and which is strengthened with desire and decadence, apparently it allows for freedom of reception of very effective salvos.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author of the article declared that there is no conflict of interest.

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