

SİNEMA - İDEOLOJİ EKSENİNDE “THE SWALLOWS OF KABUL” FİLMİNDE BEDEN POLİTİKALARI BODY POLITICS IN THE FILM “THE SWALLOWS OF KABUL” WITHIN THE AXIS OF CINEMA AND IDEOLOGY

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ÖZ

Sinema, estetik bir dışavurum aracı olmanın ötesinde, egemen ideolojilerin üretildiği, doğallaştırıldığı ve toplumsal rızanın inşa edildiği dinamik bir kültürel pratik alanıdır. İdeolojinin günümüzde sadece soyut bir söylem düzleminde kalmadığı, bireylerin fiziksel varlığı üzerine geliştirilen beden politikaları ile somutlaştığı bir alana dönüşmüştür. Özellikle bu hususta baskıcı totaliter rejimlerin bedeni adeta bir disiplin ve tahakküm aracına dönüştürdüğü coğrafyalardaki insani dramlar, bu konuda duyarlı birçok film sanatçısı tarafından sinematografik düzlemde filmlere dönüştürülerek seyirciye aktarılmaya çalışılmaktadır. Bu problem konusu bağlamında film analizi sürecinde değerlendirilmesi için, “The Swallows of Kabul” (2019) adlı film örnekleme dâhil edilmiştir. Çalışmada filme ilişkin bulguların elde edilerek detaylı bir şekilde analizin gerçekleştirilmesi için öncelikle nitel veri toplama yöntemlerinden doküman incelemesi tekniğine başvurulmuştur. Filmde Taliban rejiminin ideolojik tahakkümüne ilişkin detaylarda özellikle beden üzerine geliştirmiş olduğu politikalar analiz sürecine dâhil edilerek çalışma sınırlandırılmıştır. Verilerin analiz edilip yorumlanmasında Christian Metz’in geliştirmiş olduğu "Grand Syntagmatique" olarak ifade edilen teorik yaklaşım tercih edilmiştir. Yapılan analiz sonucunda; filmdeki recm sahnesiyle rejimin bedensel imha pratiği somutlanırken, kamusal alanın baskısına karşı ev içi mahrem alanda müzik dinleme ve resim yapma eylemleriyle estetik bir direniş alanı inşa edildiği saptanmıştır. Ayrıca iki boyutlu animasyon tekniği ve suluboya estetiğiyle, bir baskı aracı olan burkanın filmin sonunda bir özgürleşme kalkanına evrilerek totaliter rejimin beden politikalarını etkisiz kıldığı bulgulanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sinema, İdeoloji, Beden Politikaları, Film Eleştirisi

ABSTRACT

Cinema, beyond being a means of aesthetic expression, is a dynamic cultural practice area where dominant ideologies are produced, naturalized, and social consensus is constructed. In contemporary times, ideology does not merely remain at an abstract level of discourse, but manifests through body politics developed over the physical existence of individuals. The human tragedies in geographies where oppressive totalitarian regimes turn the body into an instrument of discipline and domination are frequently transferred to the audience on a cinematographic level by sensitive filmmakers. Within the context of this problem, the film “The Swallows of Kabul” (2019) is included in the sample to be evaluated in the film analysis process. In the study, the document analysis technique, one of the qualitative data collection methods, was primarily utilized to obtain findings regarding the film and to carry out a detailed analysis. The study was limited by including the policies developed especially on the body into the analysis process, regarding the details of the ideological domination of the Taliban regime. In analyzing and interpreting the data, the theoretical approach expressed as "Grand Syntagmatique" developed by Christian Metz was preferred. As a result of the analysis; while the regime's practice of bodily destruction is substantiated through the stoning scene in the film, it is determined that an aesthetic space of resistance is constructed through the acts of listening to music and painting in the private domestic sphere against the oppression of the public sphere. Furthermore, through the two-dimensional animation technique and watercolor aesthetics, it is found that the burqa, an instrument of oppression, evolves into a shield of liberation at the end of the film, thereby neutralizing the body politics of the totalitarian regime.

Keywords: Cinema, Ideology, Body Politics, Film Criticism

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Gönderilme / Submitted: 28.04.2026 **Kabul / Accepted:** 15.06.2026

1. INTRODUCTION

Cinema stands as a powerful communication tool that conveys many different elements of life to people, acting as a cultural sphere where ancient values carried by humanity from the past to the present are blended. Many subjects, ranging from the stories of ordinary people to the fantastic tales of beings with extraordinary powers, can become the subject of cinema, and people can find fragments of their own lives in these films. In the light of current political developments, the radical changes experienced in the cultural lives of people have always played a decisive role as one of the primary subject areas of cinema. In this regard, intellectuals who interpret the accumulations of modern times with intellectual perspectives and provide meaningful viewpoints have guided society by expressing their opinions in the field of cinema. Particularly, the "Cultural Studies" school, which gained strength in British academia after the 1950s and made an impact worldwide, has voiced deep criticisms regarding the field of cinema under the headings of culture and ideology. According to this view, cinema emerges as an important cultural practice area where ideological discourses are produced and re-circulated, beyond being merely an aesthetic means of expression. Indeed, Stuart Hall (1997), one of the pioneers of this school, pointed out that a cinematic text reconstructs social reality in line with certain ideological frameworks rather than reflecting it directly, and expressed his ideas regarding the reconstruction of meaning in films.

This approach identified towards the cinema-ideology relationship not only explains the effects of a reality imposed by dominant political powers in cinema but also offers a holistic perspective that includes the processes of constructing identities and social relations and their practices in daily life. In this regard, the works of

Antonio Gramsci, who criticized the functioning of the ideological infrastructure carried out by the dominant powers in society through the concept of hegemony, are significant. In these works (1971), he pointed out that in making the ideological thought produced by the dominant powers functional on a hegemonic level, the method of producing consent by the people is preferred. Drawing attention to the fact that the existing dominant order can make itself legitimate through the production of consent, Gramsci emphasized the functional importance of effective communication tools with a high representational dimension, such as cinema. In this axis, it has been realized that the subject of cinema does not have a functional use as a mere area of representation, but is simultaneously conceived as a field of struggle for ideological perspectives.

Today, one of the areas where ideology finds its place in the most visible form is "body politics." According to Foucault (1979), the dominant forms of power in modern times do not address each individual constituting society merely on a legal or political level, but also develop policies aimed at disciplining them directly through their bodies. Based on this political perspective, the meaning attributed to the human body is transformed into a kind of surface where the control mechanisms of power are applied, and problematic perspectives on two different genders are put into operation here, especially in a cultural sense. By hiding the inequalities in social and cultural life created between two different genders as male and female, it is ensured that hegemony can be established over the masses more easily. The concept of "gender," developed to explain the values underlying body politics and their reflections in social life, maintains its currency as a problem subject that many different disciplines dwell upon and discuss.

According to the concept of gender, the female body stands as one of the problematic areas where ideological discourses are produced most intensely and where dominant powers try to take control through various policies. Indeed, Butler's approach to the performativity of gender (1990) demonstrates this situation by revealing that female identity is not a fixed subject but a constantly reproduced process. In today's popular culture environment, this perspective can be mediated many times through media channels and presented to the consumer. In this regard, Mulvey (1975), centering on film studies, pointed out that the female body presented in motion pictures is mostly positioned as a kind of object of the male gaze. She also drew attention to the fact that this situation is repeatedly processed in film narratives with different modes of use, and the secondary social position attributed to women is produced and maintained. However, contrary to this general ideological trend in popular films, the problems regarding the female body and its position in social life find representation in independent cinema films through a dramatic narrative language, playing a supportive role for the audience to develop a kind of empathy and not remain indifferent to the problems.

Animated films produced since the beginning of cinema history have been treated as a strong part of this ideological production process, and it has been witnessed that they have been tried to be transformed into a propaganda tool rather than being driven by purely aesthetic concerns. Indeed, the fact that the animation genre presents reality to the audience by stylizing it rather than representing it directly has allowed ideological discourses to be conveyed at a more indirect and metaphorical level through symbolic narration (Wells, 2002). In this sense, when the historical process is carefully examined, it is possible to

come across many film examples where animation was used specifically for propaganda purposes. The Cold War period was effectively evaluated in this regard by the main actors of the bipolar world, the USA and the USSR, who intensely preferred animation for the transmission of their ideological messages (Taylor, 1999). This situation is important in terms of revealing that animation is not only an aesthetic form of narrative but also functions as a political and ideological tool. However, in contrast to this active role of animated films in the point where official policies are accepted ideologically in a society, namely the production of consent, it is possible to find important productions in cinema history that approach the subject from a critical perspective, questioning the policies of domination especially built upon the female body.

The film *The Swallows of Kabul*, directed by Zabou Breitman and Eléa Gobbé-Mévellec, which is examined within the scope of our study, takes its place in cinema history as a remarkable example in terms of questioning the representation of ideology and body politics in animated cinema. In this film, selected as a sample in our study aimed at explaining how the representation of ideology and body politics is constructed in animated cinema, the tragic situation of women living in Afghanistan under Taliban rule is depicted. The film offers powerful details on how the Taliban, as an oppressive regime, tries to establish domination over women, how it develops a monitoring mechanism over their bodies, and how it transforms them into a certain position within social life. In particular, this film makes it possible to perform powerful analyses on the dimension of representation by providing details on how female identity is shaped by political and cultural discourses in the Middle Eastern context. Furthermore, the fact that the film

consists of stylized shots with the unique aesthetic patterns of animated cinema has been effective in moving the film away from a harsh political discourse and gaining visual depth through symbolic narration by not showing violence directly.

A review of film literature reveals a vast academic body of work addressing the relationship between ideology, totalitarian regimes, and body politics through fictional films. The reflections of oppressive regimes and hegemonic policies on women's identity, particularly in the Middle East, are frequently the subject of research (Göle, 2019; Dönmez-Colin, 2004). However, this study differs in that it intersects the body politics of totalitarian regimes through the language of animation, offering an interdisciplinary perspective on the political representations of the female body within the Middle East context. To conduct a detailed analysis of the film's findings, the document analysis technique, a qualitative data collection method, was employed. The relevant video document regarding the film was watched carefully during the research process, taking notes scene by scene. In the study, the details regarding the ideological domination of the Taliban regime were limited by including the policies it developed specifically on the body into the analysis process. In the analysis and interpretation of the data, the theoretical approach expressed as "Grand Syntagma-tique" developed by Christian Metz was preferred. Within the framework of this theoretical approach, the body politics constructed by the dominant ideology on Afghan women in the film have been deciphered, and it has been mentioned that the control mechanisms established by the regime in this regard and the functioning of the system created a chaotic environment in society.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ideology is a comprehensive system of symbols that provides meaning to human existence within time and space, establishing a conceptual foundation for forms of feeling, thought, and action. By imbuing the actions of individuals in social life with meaning and providing them with a sense of life satisfaction, ideology also functions as a kind of intellectual "cement" that establishes a cognitive affinity among social actors and legitimizes the existing way of life. Unlike science, these structures do not carry the industry of questioning reality; instead, they present themselves as the most accurate and absolute truth, demanding a religious-like devotion. In this process, they utilize transcendental values of law, morality, and religion alongside reason and logic to claim a universal reality beyond science. As a social phenomenon, ideology emerges as a collective product rather than an individual one, proving that it has a history as old as humanity by addressing the world in its interpreted form (Sayın, 1999, p.1).

The term ideology was first proposed at the end of the 18th century by Antoine Destutt de Tracy as a "science of ideas" to examine the origin and structure of ideas on a scientific basis. Initially aiming to investigate how thoughts and mental representations are formed and shaped in the human brain, this field evolved over the following centuries, gaining much broader and diversified meanings. Today, the concept of ideology is seen as a complex structure interpreted in different ways across various thinkers and disciplines rather than fitting into a single definition (Sayın, 1999, p. 3). However, it is known that ideology was addressed by significant thinkers who contributed to sociology, notably Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach. While the discussions of these thinkers found limited resonance on a philosophical level, Karl Marx's views on ideology

proved more explanatory regarding the social norms people experience in real life and the functioning of the system (Kazancı, 2006, p. 70).

According to Marx's approach, ideology is defined as an "imaginary design" and a state of "false consciousness" that distorts reality rather than reflecting it as it is. For Marx, ideology presents an inverted image of real-life conditions rather than being a set of abstract ideas detached from them. Although people's ideas and mental representations are a result of their own material activities and concrete production relations, ideology masks this relationship, identifying ideas as the primary determining power. Consequently, ideology does not provide an objective depiction of social reality; on the contrary, it creates an illusory framework that masks reality and ensures the continuity of the existing order (Simon, 1978, p. 16). From a Marxist perspective, the way lower classes perceive the world is shaped by foreign ideas imposed by the dominant classes rather than their own authentic experiences. As John Fiske (2003, p. 221) states, these ideas obscure the fundamental economic and political interests of the dominant powers, making it difficult for the proletariat to see their own conditions of exploitation. As a result, the working class continues its existence within a "false consciousness," which is an illusion regarding the actual functioning of the system.

Departing from the "false consciousness" paradigm produced by the classical Marxist understanding of ideology, Louis Althusser (2014) preferred to express ideology as a "representation of the imaginary relationship" that individuals establish with their real conditions of existence. In this perspective, the concept of ideology is not merely a subjective illusion but manifests as a structural necessity embodied within the "Ideological State Apparatuses" and reproduced through material practices. According to Althusser,

the primary function of ideology is to constitute individuals as "subjects" and to interpolate them into the functioning of the social structure. In this process, ideology stands as an ahistorical and eternal structure, becoming an effective element in the future continuity of social formation. Furthermore, according to the thinker, Marxist theory must separate itself from ideology through a definitive "epistemological break," and science should not be seen as a simple reflection of the historical process but as an autonomous structure awaiting discovery with its internal procedures and methodological aspects. At the same time, according to Althusser, the validity of social theories developed about ideology—much like mathematics—should not be evaluated as testable by external practices; it should be explained based on its internal logical consistency (Eagleton, 2013, p. 320).

Antonio Gramsci's theory of ideology forms one of the cornerstones of this study by surpassing the classical Marxist critique of political economy and introducing the concept of "hegemony" to the field. Gramsci differs from Marx by arguing that social power is maintained not only through instruments of coercion but also through the construction of ideological consent. In modern capitalist systems, hegemony is established when all civil society organizations located between the state and the economy undertake an ideological function. In this context, power achieves its purpose by winning the consent of social subjects through ideology without the need for physical coercion (Eagleton, 1996, p. 164). While ideology rationalizes and legitimizes existing power structures in the social and political arena on one hand, it also highlights the capacity to produce utopian visions for social transformation on the other. By donning the symbolic values of society and becoming a constituent element of identity, ideology, according

to Peter McLaren (1988, p. 183), is made functional as the main determinant of social belonging and collective representation.

Raymond Williams liberates ideology from the rigid boundaries created by the classical Marxist "base-superstructure" model and defines it as a material production process that spreads across all layers of social life. In contrast to the "epistemological break" Althusser placed between science and ideology, Williams argues that ideology operates through "structures of feeling" embodied in individuals' daily practices, language, and emotional worlds rather than being an abstract doctrine. Taking ideology beyond the phenomenon of simple false consciousness, he defines it as a relatively formalized and articulated "system of meanings, values, and beliefs" (p. 109). This approach positions ideology not just as a tool of manipulation but as a holistic "perspective" through which a specific social class perceives the world (Williams, 1977). Similarly, Karl Mannheim views ideology not as an individual error but as a structure encompassing a group's entire mode of thinking. He evaluates ideology not just as the distortion of specific claims of an opponent (particular ideology), but rather as the entirety of the thinking system, conceptual framework, and way of perceiving the world held by a specific social group (total ideology) (Mannheim, 1936).

Modern discussions on the nature of ideologies reveal that these structures are not just abstract belief systems; on the contrary, they are externalized through concrete phenomena such as discourses, rituals, and various social practices. Although ideology is accepted as an integral part of social practices and systems, it is a methodological necessity in a scientific analysis process to distinguish between "theoretical ideology," which is a mental construct, and the "forms of

expression and representation" (discourse, ritual, etc.) of these beliefs on a social level. According to Van Dijk, while ideologies form the fundamental belief structures shared collectively by social groups, tools such as discourse, media, and cinema are the primary channels through which these internal structures gain visibility, are reproduced, and represented in the social arena. Therefore, analyzing an ideology requires meticulously analyzing not only its theoretical essence but also how this essence transforms into a "representation" within social practices (Van Dijk, 2019, p. 52).

Today, ideology is not just a mental vision or a discursive structure; it carries out a "body politics" that can establish direct control over the individual's physical existence, continuously shaping it by those who hold power. The body is now far beyond being a biological element; it is being turned into a political structure where the dominant ideology's disciplinary practices, beauty standards, and gender roles are legitimized. In the reality that Foucault attempted to conceptualize with the terms "docile bodies" and "bio-power" in his works *Discipline and Punish* (1975/1992) and *The History of Sexuality* (1976/2003), the striking point is how powers in modern societies transform the body into an object of surveillance through medical and legal discourses rather than punishing it directly. In this context, ideology attempts to establish social consent as if it were a biological necessity by using the individual's most intimate existence, the body, as a production site. It is observed that the female body is chosen as the primary subject of these implemented policies. It is noticed that a political language is developed and attempted to be legitimized over the female body under constant self-surveillance. This situation, expressed in the works of Sandra Bartky

(1990, p. 65), can go as far as mediating the individual to transform their own body into a field of ideological imprisonment by producing a "panoptic" control mechanism where the individual is a kind of guardian of themselves.

Another critical dimension of body politics is the construction of the body as an area of "performance" on a social level and its problematic relationship with consumption culture. Judith Butler (2008) points out that gender is not an internal essence but is being continuously repeated through ideological imposition and is seen as a set of performances exhibited through the body. When this performance is combined with the discourse that Naomi Wolf (1991, p. 12) defines as the "beauty myth," it causes the body to be trapped in a cycle of economic control and an unending feeling of inadequacy through mass media and especially cinema. As Susan Bordo (1993) also emphasizes, in this process where cultural norms turn into a bodily necessity, the individual develops a form of relationship by alienating themselves from their own body and is condemned to the search for the ideal type prescribed by the system. Therefore, it is an undeniable fact that analyzing the reflections of ideology on the body means deciphering which power relations each represented figure and each constructed bodily image serves.

Studies on ideology based on body politics and the diversity of in-depth theoretical approaches are important in terms of proving that the concept is an inevitable part of social reality. Indeed, every field, from daily material practices to mass media and especially cinema, emerges as channels where dominant ideologies are reproduced. The deep relationship between cinema and ideology began to gain prominence in the academic literature with the global wave of politicization at the end of the 1960s. Youth movements,

which were the subjects of opposition to the Vietnam War and resistance to traditional structures, caused social ruptures and added a new and political dimension to the field of cinema. Film theories developing during this period began to take an interest not only in the aesthetic construction of meaning but also in the ideological effects of these meanings on the audience, the reproduction processes, and the strategic position of cinema within the cinema-politics axis (Güçhan, 1999, pp. 168-169).

The fact that cinema is produced within an autonomous world free from the direct intervention apparatuses of the state at this intersection of the public and private spheres has created depth in terms of laying the foundation for an ideological illusion. This state of so-called autonomy has paved the way for a widespread "false consciousness" that cinematic products are outside of control and can exhibit a structure independent of the dominant ideology. However, this situation constitutes a strategic advantage that allows ideology to hide behind the aesthetic armor of art, rather than being a sign of cinema's neutrality. Cinematic products, which gain legitimacy and trust in the social imagination with the label of "artistic freedom," have a much deeper capacity for "ideological concealment" compared to media content that is openly controlled and coded as a propaganda tool. This ability to hide bypasses the viewer's defense mechanisms and ensures that dominant values are internalized as "common sense." Therefore, cinema becomes the most effective medium for the production of voluntary social consent rather than direct imposition. Ultimately, cinema can produce reality not just as an entertainment or art form, but as a vital carrier layer where ideology is both hidden and reproduced on a mass scale and put into circulation (Shoemaker & Reese, 1997).

In the historical process, cinema has become one of the most effective propaganda tools that states resort to in order to make the masses adopt their ideological messages. However, in response to this direct and dominant discourse of power, opposing groups could not use the same direct language due to the obstacle of censorship. This asymmetric situation made it mandatory for dissident cinema to transform its narrative language and hide its messages behind symbols and indirect narrations. Thus, while cinema was an open propaganda field for power, it turned into a closed and strategic area of resistance for the opposition (Kıraç, 2008, p. 60). To understand how ideology works through cinema, Althusser's "Ideological State Apparatuses" approach provides an important framework. Particularly his emphasis in his works on ideology (2014, p. 62) as a system that "interpellates" individuals as subjects can be explanatory in the acceptance of cinema as an effective ideological tool. In this regard, films can make it possible to produce a process of ideological subjectification by placing the viewer in a specific perspective.

Cinema is accepted as one of the most effective cultural tools in terms of the production, circulation, and reproduction of ideology in modern societies. Reaching large masses thanks to its audio-visual structure, cinema is not only a narrative form but also a representative field where social reality is reconstructed within certain ideological frameworks. Within the cultural studies tradition, cinema is evaluated as a practice where ideology is embodied and becomes visible. According to Stuart Hall (1997), representation systems signify reality rather than reflecting it and produce ideological codes in the process. In this context, cinema functions not only as a reflection tool but also as a mechanism for producing meaning and ideological positioning. Hall emphasizes that this meaning is not fixed

and singular; on the contrary, it is constantly produced and reinterpreted within cultural contexts. This approach details that film texts can produce ideological meanings not only at the content level but also through discursive and cultural codes.

Stuart Hall's (1980) "encoding/decoding" model offers important contributions to explaining the relationship between cinema and ideology. According to this model, the majority of media texts are encoded with certain ideological codes by dominant powers during the production phase. However, audiences can experience a process of decoding these texts in different ways. This process does not mean that the audience is completely free; the audience's ways of reading also develop as shaped by ideological and cultural contexts. Hall states that the audience can perform three basic types of reading in this process. First, in "dominant reading," the viewer accepts the message exactly as it was encoded; in "negotiated reading," the ideological framework regarding the message is generally accepted, but objections can be voiced on specific points. However, in "oppositional reading," it is noticed that the hegemonic code carried by the message is completely rejected and an alternative meaning is attributed to it.

Jean-Louis Baudry (2009) defines the cinematographic experience not just as a set of images watched on the screen, but as a holistic "apparatus" that includes the camera, projector, dark hall, and the fixed viewer. According to this "apparatus theory" framed by Baudry, the functioning of the technical mechanism isolates the viewer from physical movement and puts them into a state of artificial dream, including them in a universe of illusion reminiscent of Plato's allegory of the cave. The most fundamental ideological function of the cinematographic apparatus is to present the gaze of the camera as if it

were the viewer's own authentic gaze, thus giving the individual a false sense of "centrality" and "unity." This situation symbolizes a return to the "mirror stage" in Lacanian psychoanalysis, where the individual forgets their own fragmentation and merges with the image itself. Therefore, ideology is not a layer within the script narrative of cinema but is hidden in the "reality effect" created by this technical equipment and the way the viewer is positioned as a passive, transcendental subject. The internalization by the viewer of this imaginary world produced on the screen as an absolute reality seen by their own free will paves the way for ideology to realize the production of consent at the most fundamental level, namely at the stage of the subject's constitution, making cinema an "unconscious machine" where social reality is reproduced.

Looking at the period when the relationship between cinema and ideology first manifested in the historical process, it is possible to notice that this relationship gained a more visible and direct form in the first half of the 20th century. Soviet cinema provided one of the earliest and most systematic examples of ideological cinema practice in this regard. The montage theory developed by Sergei Eisenstein functioned not only as an aesthetic technical innovation but also as an ideological tool. According to Eisenstein, montage is a method that directs the intellectual processes of the viewer and makes the production of a specific ideological meaning possible (Eisenstein, 1949). In Soviet cinema, themes such as collectivism, class struggle, and revolutionary consciousness were placed at the center of the cinematic narrative, and cinema was used directly as a propaganda tool. In contrast, Hollywood cinema pursued a policy of reaching the masses by performing its ideological func-

tion in a more indirect and implicit way. Especially based on capitalist ideology, it produced a hegemonic discourse by presenting values such as individualism, freedom, and success to the audience as if they were natural and universal acceptances for all constructions (Ryan & Kellner, 1990). As Gramsci pointed out (1971), this concept of hegemony was able to make the ideological messages of Hollywood cinema more internalizable by the masses, not in the form of direct propaganda, but by using popular themes and the rich narrative patterns brought by genre cinema.

The Cold War period is noteworthy as a time when the ideological struggle between the USA and the Soviet Union was also reflected in the field of cinema. During this period, both blocs used cinema and especially animated films as a propaganda tool (Taylor, 1999). Animations produced in the USA idealized the American way of life, while Soviet animation was consciously preferred for conveying collectivist values and socialist ideology to societies. This contrast is important in terms of showing that the ideological function of cinema differs not only at the content level but also at the aesthetic and narrative levels. Particularly directors Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, who developed a strong critical approach to the relationship between cinema and ideology from the 1960s onwards, started the "Third Cinema" movement with the manifesto they published titled "Hacia Un Tercer Cine" (1969). The manifesto advocates for cinema to cease being a tool serving imperialist and capitalist ideologies; it developed a political language by differentiating itself from commercially focused Hollywood cinema and art-oriented European cinema. Solanas and Getino read cinematic art as a field of resistance and political struggle, especially for societies that are exploited and whose freedoms are taken away. In this

respect, it enabled the development of a revolutionary anti-colonial cinematic language in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

The impact of the harsh political side of ideologies on countries building their own national cinemas remains an undeniable reality in the history of cinema. However, each country's unique historical, cultural, and political context has led to the emergence of its own unique cinematic narratives. For example, the weight of the religious-political and cultural norms experienced by Iran after the Islamic Revolution led to the development of a unique cinematographic narrative language in the country's cinema within a limited framework. Likewise, the awards received by Iranian films from international film festivals and the support provided by cinema authorities have been supportive in the emergence of this reality. Similarly, Turkish cinema has developed a unique cinematic language by addressing themes such as modernization, identity, and social change within an ideological framework. Ultimately, this situation was able to create an impact by being strengthened by the fact that cinema is not only a universal narrative language but also a kind of carrier of local ideological structures.

In recent times, witnessing the development of a new narrative language regarding the cinema-ideology relationship, an increase has been observed in the number of film examples developing a critical stance under the headings of gender themes and body politics. The dominant role of sexist policies developed by modern powers over the bodies of individuals, as pointed out by Foucault (1992), can be effective in bringing these issues to the fore. Particularly, the problems created by sexist discourse directed towards women in motion pictures remain a hot topic of current criticism. Indeed, Laura Mulvey (1975), who performs feminist media theories in

this regard, voiced her criticisms by stating that in cinema in the classical sense, the female body is mostly objectified by the male point of view. While Mulvey stated that this situation is effective in relegating the reality of women's representation in cinema to the background, she also pointed out that it can be transformed into an effective ideological tool in ignoring their fundamental human rights.

The discussions in the literature on this ideological function of cinema extend from Soviet cinema, which discovered the power of montage to mobilize the masses, to totalitarian regimes that turned cinema into a propaganda machine. For example, *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), where Sergei Eisenstein shaped class consciousness with editing techniques, and *Triumph of the Will* (1935), where Leni Riefenstahl sanctified Nazi ideology with aesthetic glorification, prove how cinematographic language can be bent for political purposes. Hollywood cinema, on the other hand, established cultural hegemony by presenting the "American Dream" as a universal truth through its classical narrative structure; the most prominent examples of this can be traced in the national identity construction seen in John Ford's *Stagecoach* (1939). In the Third Cinema movement, which emerged as a center of resistance against this hegemonic language, Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino aimed to transform the viewer into an active political subject by framing cinema as an anti-colonial field of struggle with *The Hour of the Furnaces* (1968).

The ideological power of cinema has a much deeper operation through the construction and control of the female body, as feminist film theorists have pointed out. The female body represented on the screen has frequently been positioned as an object of the dominant "male gaze"; however, feminist directors have broken this

ideological siege by transforming the body into a field of resistance. For example, Chantal Akerman, in her film *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975), emphasizes how this domestic area turns into an ideological prison by showing the woman's mechanized routines and bodily labor in the house in all its nakedness. Similarly, Margarethe von Trotta, in her film *Marianne and Juliane* (*Die bleierne Zeit*, 1981), includes how the bodies of women in political struggle are attempted to be made docile by state violence and order mechanisms, in line with Foucault's (1992) "docile bodies" approach.

In descriptions of oppressive and theocratic regimes, the female body can become a symbol that ideology directly intervenes in, erases from the public sphere, or anonymizes through the "veil." Regarding this reality, the dimension of domination in bodily property relations is underlined in the film *The Handmaid's Tale* (1990), adapted from the work of the same name by Canadian feminist writer Margaret Atwood, while in the film *Persepolis* (2007), adapted from Marjane Satrapi's autobiographical comic book study, the suppression of individual identity construction through bodily control is addressed. Particularly in Middle Eastern cinema, this bodily siege offers important details in terms of revealing the biopolitical intention developed by the power through gender. For example, while Jafar Panahi documents the prohibition of the female body in the public sphere and how these prohibitions were established with physical barriers in the film *Offside* (2006), Haifaa al-Mansour, as the first female director of Saudi Arabia, tells the ideological tension between a young girl's desires and the bodily restrictions produced by gender norms in the film *Wadjda* (2012). These productions include a strong objection to seeing the female body not only as a biological

being but as a surface on which the dominant ideology inscribes its own sacreds and prohibitions.

3. THE RESEARCH STUDY (ANALYSIS)

The dialectical relationship between cinema and ideology remains one of the most dynamic areas of debate in visual culture since the inception of the seventh art. With the advancement of technological possibilities and the evolution of narrative structures, the representation of ideology on the cinematographic level has not remained limited to direct political messages; it has maintained its currency by diversifying its themes to include gender, identity construction, and geographical domination. When focusing on modern cinema studies, it is observed that ideology is no longer just a process of mental persuasion, but is made functional through "body politics" as a biopolitical strategy that intervenes in the physical existence of the individual. In this regard, revealing and clarifying the new patterns of ideology shaped within the axis of body politics in motion pictures stands as a current scientific research topic. Especially in the shadow of recent political developments in the Middle East, ideologically conducted body politics directed towards women attract the attention of researchers. In this study, the film *The Swallows of Kabul* (2019), adapted from the famous novel of the same name by Algerian writer Yasmina Khadra, which sheds light on the dimensions of the ideological domination carried out by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan through the female body, has been included in the analysis process.

In the analysis process of the study, Christian Metz's semiotic approach was utilized to critique the film. In Metz's semiotic approach (2012), each image constituting the cinematographic narrative is not merely a coincidental film frame;

on the contrary, they function as strategic arrangements that produce meaning. According to the approach expressed as "Grand Syntagmatique" which Metz introduced to cinema semiotics, sequences, each forming a different universe of meaning, play an effective role in determining the main structure of a film on a syntagmatic dimension. In this approach, we witness the functional role of eight different types of syntagmas, classified as temporal (descriptive syntagma, alternating syntagma, episodic syntagma, scene, and ordinary sequence) and non-temporal (parallel syntagma, bracket design, autonomous shot). As Metz stated, this analysis method offers an effective solution for the deep analysis of narratives that convey an ideological conflict within temporal and spatial continuity in the film *The Swallows of Kabul*. Particularly when the details processed in the story of the film are examined, it is possible to observe the negative impact that the ideological conflict creates in society through two different lives.

Looking at the story of the film, it focuses on the tragic effects of the chaotic and oppressive atmosphere on individuals in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, where the Taliban administration prevailed in the summer of 1998. The narrative in the film progresses through the dramatic intersection of the stories of two couples with different lifestyles. On one side are Zunaira and her husband Mohsen, who are university-educated and try to resist the prohibitions of the regime with their love for art and each other; on the other side are Atiq, a war-weary prison guard who has lost his faith in the system, and his wife Mussarat, who is struggling with cancer and is about to die. Zunaira questions Mohsen's indifference to the Taliban regime and its inhumane practices and accuses her husband in this regard. One day, while arguing with Mohsen again, Zunaira accidentally causes her husband's death. After this

tragic event, she is captured by Taliban forces and held in a women's prison. At this turning point of the story, Zunaira encounters Atiq, the guard of the prison. Atiq witnesses Zunaira's struggle to protect her own identity while in prison and her resistance against the regime. This witnessing simultaneously pushes him to question his own life and the experiences imposed by the regime. Mussarat, noticing Atiq's interest in this woman and his conscientious burden, shows sacrifice and makes a decision that will cause her own death instead of Zunaira's. On the day of the execution, Mussarat wears a burqa, posing as Zunaira, and enables her to escape secretly from the prison. She, however, is executed and killed by the regime forces.

The opening of the film begins with the stoning (recm) scene of a woman accused of adultery. This scene presents a typical narrative syntagma where temporal and spatial continuity is preserved, and meaning is constructed through the chronological flow of the action itself, as specified in Metz's classification of cinema semiotics. In this syntagma, the camera initially presents the dusty Kabul square where the execution takes place with wide-angle descriptive shots, placing the viewer in the position of a passive witness surrounded by an ideological blockade. The bodily presence, which we see as an anonymous female figure inside a blue burqa at the level of "denotation" in Metz's terms, transforms into a cinematographic sign through which the regime declares its absolute power at the "connotation" level via the camera's perspective and dynamic editing. The acceleration of the editing when the stones begin to be thrown adds depth to the film by materializing the direct, physical, and destructive intervention of power on the body—from Foucault's perspective—with elements of syntagmatic tension.

Figure 1. *The Scene Regarding the Stoning of an Accused Woman at the Opening of the Film*



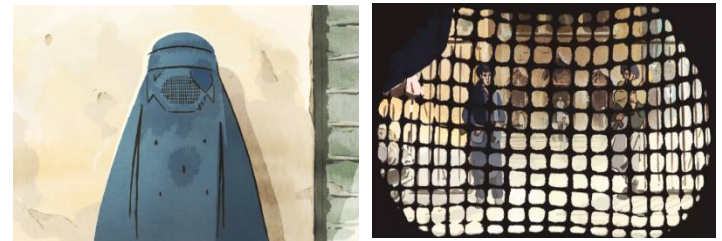
Source: Breitman & Gobbé-Mévellec, 2019.

In the film, the female body, as in the stoning scene, loses its characteristic of being an individual and is transformed into a merely punishable physical mass, an "object lesson" exhibited in the public sphere. The rapid movement of camera angles between the anger of the crowd throwing stones and the helplessness of the stoned woman reveals the organization of the cinematographic "gaze" as an ideological apparatus, following Metz's approach. An impression is created that the audience is included in the destruction process of this identity-erased body through an aesthetic complicity. Furthermore, through this opening scene, how ideology makes the body docile, renders it invisible, and ultimately legitimizes its own existence through this bodily destruction is strikingly presented. Especially in this scene, Mohsen's participation in the stoning action as a practice of being in harmony with the existing regime is shown, underlining his attempt to protect his own position over the murdered female body.

Another important point drawing attention in the narrative structure of the film is the scenes based on what Metz defines as "parallel syntagma," which relies on the sequential presentation of two different phenomena to establish a symbolic link. Indeed, a cinematographic contrast is created in the film between the "outdoor" scenes representing Kabul's public sphere and the "indoor"

scenes representing Mohsen and Zunaira's private sphere, and the boundaries determined by this ideological domination over the body are depicted. While the female body in the street scenes is portrayed under the absolute dominance of the blue burqa, as indicated in Metz's "descriptive syntagma" elements, the film emphasizes how time and the subject are frozen, and the body is made part of a spatial isolation element. Here, the burqa is not limited to physically isolating a woman's body from her environment, but also sheds light on the effort to transform the body into an ideological curtain condemned to nonexistence under the burqa.

Figure 2. *The Scene Where Zunaira Waits Inside a Burqa in the Film*



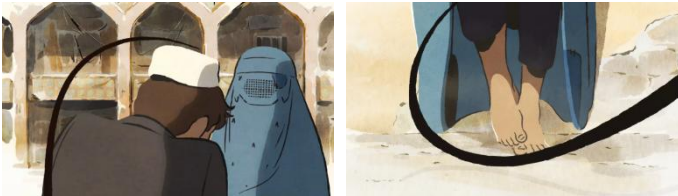
Source: Breitman & Gobbé-Mévellec, 2019.

Looking at the marketplace sequence where Zunaira and Mohsen walk together outside, it is significant in terms of documenting how ideology monitors the policy it carries out over the female body down to the smallest detail within Metz's "ordinary sequence" structure. In these scenes, while Zunaira's white shoes visible under the burqa are prohibited by the regime forces, leading to the punishment of her bare feet with a whip, it is seen that a connotation is attempted to be produced as an expression of resistance and an involuntary effort of visibility displayed by the body against the existing ideological domination. Parallel to this scene, another important detail presented regarding the restriction of the body is supported by the physical difficulties Zunaira experiences while trying to drink water from a bottle, sweltering under the

burqa. It is underlined that Mohsen helps her drink in the face of these bodily difficulties Zunaira experiences under the burqa.

With this scene in the film, by showing Mohsen's need to help as a man in the face of the actions of the restricted female body, the asymmetric situation created by the regime's body politics between the two different genders in daily life is noticed. Furthermore, it is shown that the regime forces do not even allow the couple to establish intimacy as a married couple and punish them. Indeed, in the film, the laughter of this couple trying to help each other is noticed by the regime forces on the street and they are severely warned, leading to Mohsen being whipped. The fact that the events experienced by the couple end with their bodies being whipped is portrayed as evidence of how ideological domination transforms bodily pleasure and vital needs into a criminal element and tries to discipline people with violence.

Figure 3. The Scene Where Zunaira and Mohsen are Punished with a Whip in the Film

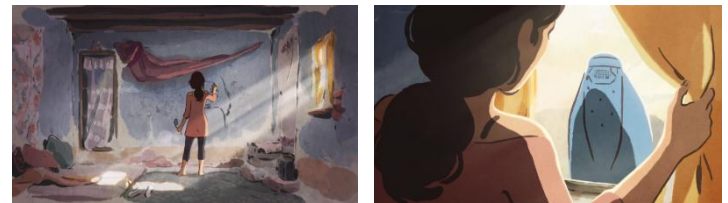


Source: Breitman & Gobbé-Mévellec, 2019.

When the camera's lens is turned from these restricted actions of individuals in the outdoor public sphere to the private sphere inside the house, we witness a radical change in the syntagmatic structures specified by Metz. With the removal of the burqa in the indoor private sphere, the activation of Metz's "close-up" emphasis makes the internal state of the individuals more realistic. For example, in the scenes at home where Zunaira's face and part of her body are seen, the inclusion of the movements of her body, which

is elated by the music she listens to, indicates that she chooses to be a living being despite everything. Another important detail in this scene is that while Zunaira is secretly painting to music in her house, she is warned by her neighbor because of the sound of the music coming from the tape recorder. It is underlined that her neighbor expresses concern about the possible danger since listening to music is an act prohibited by the regime forces. Through the scenes where these two people talk to each other from the window, the contrast and tension between the image of the woman forced to cover herself in a burqa under the pressure of the regime outside and the environment of freedom where Zunaira can move in comfortable clothes inside the house is emphasized.

Figure 4. The Scene Regarding Zunaira, Who is Painting to Music in the Film, Being Warned by Her Neighbor



Source: Breitman & Gobbé-Mévellec, 2019.

Along with the syntagma of these scenes constructed in accordance with the dialectical narrative in the film, it is noticed that a contrasting visual composition is attempted to be maintained in the color palette preferred in the film from a cinematographic perspective. While dull and pastel-toned colors are encountered in outdoor scenes to depict the suffocating, boring atmosphere of Kabul at that time, it has been determined that more vivid and warm color tones are used in indoor scenes. With these contrasting scene depictions constructed cinematographically, it is intended to underline that the Taliban regime not only restricts women's bodies but also imprisons individuals' sensory worlds and

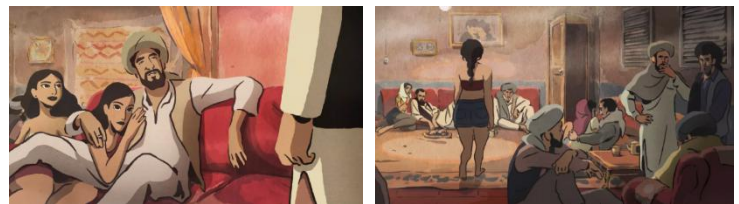
bodily freedom behind walls. Similarly, the use of watercolor technique in creating visual images against this ideological domination, where painting is attempted to be accepted as a sin, has strengthened the emphasis on resistance. The specific preference for the watercolor technique, which is identified with the art of painting, can be read as a functional part of the directors' strategy to present the message they want to give as an area of aesthetic resistance to the audience by softening it.

In the world of Atiq, who has a more conservative lifestyle oriented towards the positioning of male-female relationships, details regarding his emotional relationship with his wife Mussarat, who has cancer, are included. In these scenes where Atiq's struggle to reach a doctor in a geography where health services are very limited is emphasized, dialogues are included where his close friends find it meaningless for him to care for his wife. Indeed, in the dialogues taking place in a restaurant with his childhood friend Mirza, it is seen that Mirza tells Atiq that he should get rid of his cancerous wife Mussarat by leaving her, and that it is his right as a man to be with a healthier, younger virgin woman instead of his wife. In these scenes, which point to the dominant position of a male gaze in male-female relationships, it is expressed that women's bodies can be made valuable to the extent that they can fulfill their functional roles towards men. In this environment where unequal relations between genders prevail, even Atiq pointing out his own bodily imperfection by showing his limping leg to Mirza could not dissuade Mirza from the idea that Atiq should be with another woman.

Scenes documenting that the inconsistency of the Taliban regime's ideological domination is again constructed over the female body are included in the film. Regarding this, in a scene in

the film, it is shown that Quassim, one of the important leaders of the regime, and the men around him can have fun with women collectively at night and establish sexual intimacy with them. In these scenes exposed through Metz's "parallel syntagma" logic, it is pointed out that while the regime imprisons the female body in a burqa during the day and makes it invisible in social life, it transforms this "prohibited body" into an object of sexual pleasure at night. What is intended to be emphasized with these scenes is the connotation that the dominant ideology's claim to protect and discipline the female body consists merely of a class-based and sexist property relationship. Indeed, while the female body hidden under the burqa by Quassim and the regime forces around him is presented as an indicator of "chastity" in the public sphere, this situation is completely reversed when it comes to Quassim's private sphere, evolving into a pleasure object that he can consume boundlessly in a sexual sense. In other words, it is underlined that the Taliban regime's body politics should be read as a result of the desire for absolute dominance over the female body rather than the following of a sacred belief.

Figure 5. *The Scene Where Quassim and His Friends Have Fun with Women in the Film*



Source: Breitman & Gobbé-Mévellec, 2019.

Another important scene regarding the inconsistencies in these body politics developed by the regime forces in the name of ideological domination occurs at the end of the film during the execution of Mussarat, who wears her burqa in

place of Zunaira as she escapes from prison. During this escape process, the fact that the person going to be executed with the Taliban forces was Mussarat instead of Zunaira could be camouflaged due to the burqa. Likewise, the discovery by the regime forces, by uncovering her face during the execution organized in a stadium, that the person they killed was Mussarat and not Zunaira, is determined to be constructed as a blow to the policies of erasing the female body from the public sphere by anonymizing it. The burqa, which the regime tried to symbolize as a tool of oppression, this time turned into a masking tool blinding the system established by the regime forces, opening the door to questioning absolute power.

The evolution of the burqa, constructed by the existing power for its control mechanism, out of its own control and towards a shield of liberation in the story of the film, created a security threat for the male gaze, and it is included that they resorted to some lethal actions to overcome this immediately. In this regard, the first reaction of Quassim, who realizes that the person executed was not Zunaira, is to kill Atiq, whom he sees as an accomplice, with a gun. Again, it is shown that he struggles to find Zunaira, whom he thinks is hidden among the women in burqas, to make them forget their helplessness in this moment of crisis. Meanwhile, Quassim tries to forcibly open the women's burqas, causing them to flee. At the end of this scene, where the unraveling of the policies produced by the ideological domination regarding the female body is presented, the women fleeing in burqas are shown to transform into swallows flying in the sky of Kabul. By using this swallow detail representing freedom in the film, it is intended to emphasize through a cinematographic narrative that Afghan women will regain their freedom.

Figure 5. *The Scene of Women Fleeing and Turning into Swallows after Quassim Forcibly Opens Their Burqas*



Source: Breitman & Gobbé-Mévellec, 2019.

The meeting of watercolor aesthetics with the two-dimensional animation technique in the visual composition of the film was found to soften the ideological harshness in the narrative and provide a more balancing aesthetic image. The fluidity inherent in the nature of watercolor, the blending of colors, and the harmony of lines that become blurred in places allowed for a deconstruction on the cinematographic level by challenging the rigid, black-and-white, and sharp ideological boundaries imposed by the Taliban regime. Behind this aesthetic preference, it is noticed that the aim is to present reality to the audience by passing it through a memory filter rather than imitating it directly. Within this axis, the preferred animation technique also bypassed the limitations of live-action, visualising the suffocating atmosphere of ideological domination with a metaphorical language and opening the door for the narrative to evolve towards an emotional reality. Giving the scorching heat and dust of Kabul in the film with a watercolor texture emphasized the claustrophobic effect created by ideological entrapment in the inner worlds of individuals, rather than creating a perception of physical space for the viewer. In this regard, the harmonious use of the visual aesthetic elements preferred in the film strengthened the audience's

ability to focus more easily on the fragile lives of the characters in the story.

4. CONCLUSION

The study was prepared with the aim of materializing the dialectical relationship between cinema and ideology through the analysis of the film *The Swallows of Kabul* (2019) within the axis of the fundamental approaches detailed in the theoretical framework. In this regard, first of all, at the point of drawing the theoretical framework, it was concluded that ideology is not merely a process of defining a worldview as Mannheim (1936) stated or the legitimization of social power relations as Eagleton (1996) underlined. On the contrary, it includes a representation of the imaginary relationship formed by the individual's real conditions of existence as Althusser (2014) conceptualized, and a practice of signification where these representations are naturalized through cultural codes as Hall (1997) expressed. In this study, the film was addressed in the light of Foucault's concepts of "docile bodies" and "biopower" through "body politics," one of the areas where ideology is most concrete and visible; it was intended to reveal how bodies are transformed into controllable surfaces through the disciplinary practices of powers.

With the thought of understanding the dimensions of this ideological structure grounded in the theoretical framework in the film *The Swallows of Kabul*, Metz's semiotic approach, which he called "Grand Syntagmatique," was preferred in the analysis part. Parallel to Metz's approach, which was preferred to determine that the Taliban regime's form of domination over the body is not a coincidentally developing situation but, on the contrary, contains a consciously constructed

control mechanism, attempts were made to put forward meaningful findings. At this point, when the findings identified during the film analysis process are examined; first, it is seen that the stoning scene of a woman was included at the beginning of the film. In this scene, an effective cinematographic narrative of how the regime transforms the body into a tool for establishing the power of its own authority by destroying it, as pointed out by Foucault, is presented. In this scene where the stoned woman was stripped of her individual identity inside the burqa and attempted to be rendered invisible, it was noticed that the female body was reduced to a physical mass presented to society as an object lesson.

In the scenes in the film constructed with Metz's "parallel syntagma" structure, it was determined that the contrast between the suffocating pressure of the Taliban in the outside world and the aesthetic resistance inside the house was intended to be emphasized. As an example in this regard, Zunaira's body, which is hidden under a burqa on the street and where every human need (drinking water, laughing, etc.) is seen as a criminal element, is shown to transform into a living subject when she comes to the private sphere, namely the house, to listen to music, paint, and spend a pleasant time. In these scenes constructed with an aesthetic expression, attention was drawn to the wall paintings depicting Zunaira's own naked body in defiance of the existing power's policies of making the body docile. In this system where the female body is ignored in every way, it is pointed out that painting itself is the secret refuge where individuals can stay alone with themselves and symbolically express their freedom.

In the study, in one of the most important scenes in the film regarding how ideology can

be used inconsistently by power apparatuses, it was observed that scenes where Quassim and the soldiers around him have fun with women at night were included. In these scenes, it is pointed out that Quassim, who is shown as an important leader of the Taliban forces, transforms the women he forces to wear burqas with a mask of "chastity" in the public sphere during the day into objects of sexual pleasure in his own protected private sphere at night. In these scenes regarding the inconsistencies in the regime's ideological domination, it is also underlined how the male gaze can transform the female body into a tool of exploitation. Furthermore, while Quassim performs the act of adultery, which is religiously forbidden, in the film; the fact that Atiq, who enters the environment, does not experience any surprise and can adapt, emerges as an important detail in terms of shedding light on the fact that the hypocrisy of the regime is internalized by society.

One of the most striking findings of the study is the preference for the watercolor aesthetics and two-dimensional animation technique, which provides the film with a unique narrative style. When considering the dimensions of this preference, which creates a space of visual fluidity against the rigid and uncompromising ideological boundaries of the Taliban regime; the fact that the facial features of the characters can occasionally dissolve within watercolor stains symbolizes the loss of identity of the individual under a totalitarian oppressive regime, while the movements of the characters containing momentary changes emphasized how fragile their lives are. Furthermore, this cinematographic preference resorted to in the film, apart from the harsh and direct transmission of a political reality with live-action; made it possible for the audience to establish an aesthetic distance between

themselves and the story. Just as Bertolt Brecht (1964) expressed as the "alienation effect" (*verfremdungseffekt*), it ensured that the viewer could mentally question the ideological criticism emphasized in the work without getting emotionally caught up in the flow of the story.

When the findings obtained from the film *The Swallows of Kabul* (2019) are evaluated alongside the fundamental theoretical arguments of ideology, hegemony, and cultural studies within the literature, the political function of animation cinema becomes clearer. Viewed through Louis Althusser's (2014) conceptualization of "Ideological State Apparatuses," the Taliban regime in the film embodies ideology not merely through repressive apparatuses (weapons, physical violence), but on an institutional and religious discursive level that entirely controls the public sphere. However, the most unique finding of this study is that, despite this absolute imposition of ideology, individuals retain the potential to resist this ideological subjectification within their micro-spaces.

This resistance mechanism involves a direct engagement with Antonio Gramsci's (1971) theory of "hegemony" and the "production of consent." In *The Swallows of Kabul*, the hegemony that the Taliban attempts to establish in the public sphere is institutionalized through forcing women to wear burqas and suppressing their voices. Yet, as the cultural studies school—particularly Stuart Hall's (1980) "decoding" theory—posits, the masses do not always submissively accept dominant messages; instead, they develop "negotiated" or "oppositional" readings. The female characters in the film transforming the burqa from an object of submission into a shield of escape and liberation at the end constitutes a concrete example of this oppositional decoding practice

and the dynamics of "cultural resistance" emphasized by cultural studies.

As a result, when the fundamental findings reached in this study are considered, it has been determined that the ancient bond between cinema and ideology also creates strong effects in the film *The Swallows of Kabul*. Particularly, it was noticed that the strategy of biopolitical domination developed by dominant powers over the body and the creation of docile bodies, as underlined by Foucault, was also attempted to be imposed on society by the regime forces in the examined film. Furthermore, in this study deepened in various aspects with Metz's semiotic approach, findings were included regarding the meeting of the deep traces created by the body politics conducted by the regime on the lives of Afghan women with watercolor aesthetics in the film. The meeting of this visual aesthetic preference with the two-dimensional animation technique in the film made it possible to establish a relationship between the social reality told in the story and the audience. The audience had the opportunity to evaluate the ideological criticism in question more comfortably in the work in this stylized animated film genre, rather than the shocking effect of real images. In the light of these realities, the film has created a unique ground for discussion for studies on the relationships between ideology, body, and power in the literature of the cinema field.

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