

The Making of a Male: Narrative Analysis of the Protagonist in Cholera District

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Abstract : Cinema is a reflection of the society, as much as it captures the social codes. These codes are learned within the society; and through movies these practices of the gender order are reproduced as well. One of the best examples engendering these codes is a modern classic of Turkish cinema, Cholera District (1997), originally Ağır Roman in Turkish. It is a coming of age movie of a teenage boy in an old neighborhood of Istanbul, where he learns to be a 'man' through the hegemonic masculinity codes of the society. The corporal and verbal practices that are used in the representation of the male protagonist's portrayal is based on his performativity. This paper, through narrative analysis of the aforementioned movie, reviews how gender and narrative are intertwined within the context of queer theory. The methodology follows the protagonist's object of desire while evaluating his heterosexuality which requires affirmative performances. The framework of the study firstly focuses on the protagonist's own life and his interactions with the males of his kinship. Later, the focus gravitates towards his interactions with the female object of desire while evaluating how this relationship shapes his status in society. Lastly, the study focuses on the relationship between the protagonist and non-relative males of the neighborhood. The journey of a young male becoming a man by copying the other males delivers a clear representation of how heterosexuality is favored in terms of gender order.

Keywords : hegemonic masculinity, performativity, queer theory, Turkish cinema

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