

A CRITICAL APPROACH TOWARDS WOMAN IDENTITY CREATED IN TELEVISION AND IN VIRTUAL WORLD

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INTRODUCTION

It will be tried to understand what kind of culture had been produced in media in general and especially in television and in the virtual world with regards to the representation of identity of the woman and fundamentally in terms of “discourse” in this study, in which the modern cultural environment as it is defined by Baudrillard as “consumption culture” within the framework of the globalization process will be discussed in critical context. The purpose of the study is to find answers for these two questions:

Does the identity of the woman produced itself once more “within the dominant discourse” within communication tools and in the virtual world in terms of the representation?

Or, is it the issue, whether “an opposed identity” has been produced or not through an perception that is outside of the “individual of the population” and the “consumer identity” where we think it has been produced as an meta discourse and hence through an critical perspective?

Key Words: television, social media, woman identity, consumption.

LOSING OF THE PRIVACY AND PUBLICITY POLICY OF THE MEDIA

“What is cultural and historic for the love is for the service of womanhood: man has been designed to be the slave of the woman” (Derrida, Grammatology, 2010: 266)

The life has been surrounded by the publicity within the cultural environment of the modern society especially as the communication technology had developed. The privacy, on the other hand, which provides opportunity of “independence” for

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individuals, has been collapsed within this culture that is based on the publicity especially through the television and the internet and it has transformed in to a subject of a show that is disputed in the public domain as it has been removed from being the area of independence. Reference of television programs aimed for the woman, for the issues such as “love, loyalty, sympathy, family” has made the notions, which has primarily been the woman, as the production channels again. Reducement of the privacy down to the public domain can also be continued through “social media” networks again. This situation is simply the use of the technology, which is the product of the will of the human being, against himself/herself again by the human being (but by masses).

It is not possible to find anything else but objectivised love in television programs, where “objectivised womanhood, that is to say seduction” through the definition of Baudrillard (Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, 2002: 68) and where enticement are in excess amounts. The appearance of the identity of woman within the virtual world is already not much different from the identity of woman that is objectivised in the television. The general discourse that is structured on “aesthetics and love” on television programs that are intended for the woman and on the internet sites would regress the woman down to a statue, where she produces the consumption culture and who transforms her own body over to the consumption object as well by being also fed by sub discourses such as “family, children, health and decoration.” We should remember this question that Baudrillard had asked: “...which one of the miracles of the will, which divine power, which one of the plays can force human beings to love each other; which kind of lunatic imagination can push human beings to love, to love each one of us, can push one to say ‘I love you?’” (Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, 2002: 96).

The tendency of people to reveal their natural lives and their intimacies in a manner that not to involve secrets, this “peeping and exhibitionism” act; is the relationship of common man who is suffering from the lost his own reality between “himself and the culture created him” based on the “violence”. In fact according to Baudrillard the confessions of people on their own lives are pornographic since they are presented as reproduction of reality (Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, 2002: 55). In fact, this, as a result, is an obscenity encompassing everything. TV programs such as “Big Brother”, “Would you be my bride”, “We’re getting married”, “Wedlock”, “Dinner Time” are the indicators of civi-lization of peepers that Eco mentions about. Because these programs supposedly based on the themes of “love, family, friendship” and claiming reality, are actually directing the contestants in a determined format. While Television is searching for ways to create synthetic reality by pushing the boundaries of its own language; the individuals are also able to simulate/manipulate their own realities.

Actually this dramatic transformation of love which is transformed as a publicity strategy in media and virtual world, is not more than a presentation of private live to the public service.

In that case, this dramatic existence (game) of common man; is an indicative of a fictional (fake) identity performed in a play in the form of “secrets/lives dedicated to universal culture, that is mass culture, in a culture where partiality is lost”. Private

lives have become the cheapest consumption product of “history consuming (eroding) fragmented time”. Family relationships, problems and secrets got into circulation by being commoditized. The circulation of private lives spreading in media market is rapid and short-lived. TV programs made in order to find so called solution to everyday problems of common man function as an arena in which “secrets, crimes and the most immoral person are confessed”. The problems (privacies, love, secret etc.) materialized in this arena are becoming consumption objects giving pleasure to the masses for a short period of time rather than being solved and the expiration date (operating time) of these problems is valid in the course of program. The mass almost represents a “new human form” who is eroding himself and pleased with this and who is relieving in a society where crime and immorality became widespread with the emotion of guilt like everybody else. As long as mass people who need to be interactive in a manner not to involve privacy in order to reproduce the mass culture, feel pleased with being exhibitionist, they will be peeped and under surveillance. In that case the cheapest and most common meta entering into circulation in the market is the privacy of common man. This culture could degrade the love to the status of “cheapest meta”. In a world where the notions lose their symbolic meanings and detached from their contexts; the love, tears, anger of common man confessed through screens provide a short-lived information that does not correspond sentimentally; in other words provide “an embodiment which is substitute for emotion”. The emotions are transformed into short lived information and consumed in media market through being materialized. Privacy enter into or was put into circulation through being commoditized. The cheap loves of the history consuming frag-mented time tell the masses: “ you are not guilty, nobody is guilty, you have a sustainable life despite everything. The real crime is; to know and question, to look back past experiences and criticize today. There-fore forget about the past, questioning and thinking. Thinking and solving the actual problems are more difficult than you could ever think”. Here, maybe with the pain of this, in the mass culture, television and virtual world are in the status of “arena” of common man who does not control his/her will.

According to Derrida; “the order in the modern society was reversed by woman and it is the shape of extortion. This “substitution” is not an ordinary abuse like others. It is the paradigm of violence and political abnormality.” (Derrida, *Grammatology*, 2010: 268).

In a culture where artificiality is produced the look of the things has a fetishistic character and the communication is within a fetishistic language. The fetishistic look of the things produces a sense pointing the value of the purchasing the goods and here, the symbolic meanings-brands which are indicator of its place in the market, are important. The idea of consumption uses its symbolic language in a way that it will establish its ideological discourse and reiterate it endlessly. The common discourse produced by the symbols brought to us through civilization is the market and Exchange value of meta; history, art, information dream and fantasies could take place in the market as long as they produce a sense legalizing the now. Because the mass culture uses its symbolic language in a manner that it will produce a single sense which is consumption, and

transformed or degraded the prosperity of language to the indication pointing a single sense; the freedom could be perceived as being in love, making a confession in TV shows. Since this culture survives as long as it produces the artificiality through its institutions, the reality has been lost. The “exhibitionism and peeping” culture produced by all institutions of society including the media and television, is the look of this artificial world, “democratization, trans-parency, cultural prosperity and universal language”. The exhibitionism in these programs where reality has been lost through dramatization, and the privacy is publicized creates its own peeper. Therefore the real lives become fictional. The problem here, is not fiction as a form of narration. Hence, film theorist Metz explains the fictional structure of cinema as follows; the masses going to watch movie are aware of that the thing they watch is not real. The narration in TV, however, is misleading since it claims reality. It present fictional as a fact. The real art is; unique and product of creation, it screens the dreams and secret world of its creator; the real art provides the opportunity of image to the person reading it. The art does not claim reality, it clearly demonstrates that it is a fiction claiming the sense of reality and criticizing. Because the art does not hide that it is fictional it is closer to the life and it could transform the culture by interfering.

The real art uses its symbol language to serve a goal enriching the idea generation which gains a dynamic awareness pushing us to search for the potential of existence, dreaming and realizing these dreams. In that case the original function of cinema or art can not be compared to the function in the fictional world of television. The place where the art and science are party to is, in the final analysis, humanity. Improving life through goal, emotion and idea generation is to understand “human”.

COMMODIFICATION OF THE BODY

“Now that there is only virtual strategy, the virtuality can no longer have a strategy.” (Baudrillard, Total Screen, 2002: 54)

Bauman suggests that the connection of computer terminals to each other affects people differently. According to him, even today people could be separated from each other by “physical and temporal” obstacles. However this separation is now far more ruthless and deeper in terms of psychological effects compared to earlier (Bauman, Globalization, 2006: 26).

Baudrillard, states that today’s modern human is in an “artificial destiny” and defines him in a “transsexual” identity which results from a mutation in the symbolic order of sexual differences and represents everyone. Here, transsexuality is related to artificial that is there is a sexual apathy game and this game is performed on two levels: differentiation game of sexual polarities from each other and the game of being indifferent to pleasure. Because even the pleasure replaced a “substitute emotion” detached from the context and pointing the consumption of signs. Transsexuality has become a stimulating model for today’s modern people acting as opposite sex and carrying uncertainty in terms of appearance. Baudrillard means that “ we are all

transsexual as symbolic while” he states “the fate of body is to become replacement”. The representations of sexuality in the extreme (together with all signs) are actually the game of escaping from sexual body and hence the strategy to escape from desire. Since this strategy whose benefit for anyone is obscure, is performed by everyone; reveals itself within all institutions of society such as politics, architecture, theory and even science. Now everybody has an immediate memory and identities for advertising purposes. It is neither beauty nor health searched for the body. Because people “show their own appearance” in today’s time where the appearance is more important, they have become their own impresario (Baudrillard, *Total Screen*, 2002: 17-19).

According to Baudrillard mass media throws every power off the track –good or bad- and this is the fate of virtuality. There are lords of virtuality instead of the world. While the products of these lords of transparency (virtuality) are circulating freely in the market bowing before the rule of these is a form of voluntary slavery (Baudrillard, *Total Screen*, 2002:54).

Woman should not be a tool of a manipulation or eversion culture and shouldn’t invent this culture in itself. As a result of the pressure on woman by masculine culture, today woman is much more problematic in terms of representing an identity slaving the man and showing hostility to man instead of love. Because today, woman has been alienated to its features such as “loyalty, love, tolerance, creativity” bestowed by the nature and history in other word its own nature. Woman cannot avoid from being “consumer and producer “ of everything circulating in the market unless it has mercy on its own body. The role of man is also important in solving the problems of women. The main point is the need to question the information culture which is based on a fetishism producing a discourse “degrading the man and woman to the status of meta” by desubjectifying them and therefore “disidentificating” them by similarizing them, in a critical attitude.

Today, television and social media offer a production line appearance of dominant policies based on the ideology of consumption and they function as an arena in which everybody could take both active and theatrical role. This doesn’t point to a democratic culture on the contrary since it serves to the continuous reproduction and presentation of temporary information that doesn’t have historicity it points to manipulation culture. Thus a policy which is a substitute for democracy is produced. In fact the current results of pro-democracy movements in the Middle East in which social media Networks have important function and known as Arab Spring, constitute an example for this substitute policy. The permission of Democratic Western world to view the savaging of a dead body (Libyan Leader Gaddafi) and the execution of this attitude by so called democracy supporters; “are neither democratization nor progressivism, but primitivization and reactionism”. In the last instance, the transformation of a dead body into a “pleasure object” serving the satisfaction of revenge was viewed on TV collectively and shared on social media Networks. Therefore the main problem; is the violence policy of consumption ideology commercializing and transforming the human body into a sign.

On the one hand, while people view and share the events (the struggle for democracy of authoritarian regime opponents-2011) in the Middle East (Egypt, Libya, Syria); and on the other hand they consume entertainment programs, strive to exist in virtual world with their “appearances” and discuss their “loves and family affairs” in front of millions. This situation sets forth the following reality: the ones who show mercy actually need mercy and they substitute the death. Who will show mercy “on commodified body of woman” in an era where compassion became a show?

The mass culture serving the idea of consumption will see the mirror of his body through the museums pointing out the dead that is it will define itself through the opposite. The media networks in the view of channel judging the democracy opponents are actually transforming the all discourses against their own discourse into a “image of enemy”. Then the mass media is a museum of dead in which the opponents are mummified. The existence of this culture hiding in the dead body of the enemy it created that is defining itself as the opponent of the enemy it created, is the sign of all opponents and critical thoughts are killed. This state of being dead; is not identical with being in a grave, entombed saint, tomb and in an ancient city. Because the identity of museum defines a theatrical space in which mummified bodies left their spirit behind are examined. In that case modern culture in the view of museum is like a prison limited with the feature of embalming (mummification) and restraint (limitation). The language in consumption culture is in a string comprising of immediate pleasures taken by the consumption of everything transformed into a sign. This situation almost resembles this; “opposite totem is eaten in the world of primitives”. In this case the commodified body of woman is the reflection of both man and body of modern j-human who lost its spirituality.

CONCLUSION

The petty crimes and obscenity in the air look harmless since they are turned into an entertainment through the media; therefore they lost the meaning of “being crime” and “being “unethical-immoral”. While the current cultural environment allows the immoral actions; the dangerous one became critical discourse protecting the seriousness whose presence is in the arts and science. Since the moral attitude of art and science in an existence alienated to dominant discourse is to “raise human”; it shall recognize that woman is a spiritual subject instead of a vision of object. Then relieving woman of the meta status could be possible by breaking the dominant discourse of media. Science and art should guide transforming the technology in favor of human.

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