Deterritorializing The Self: Becoming-Child in the Characters of Reha Erdem's *What's A Human Anyway?* (2004)

Suphi Keskin, Ulster University, keskin-s@ulster.ac.uk

Abstract

Reha Erdem's third feature-length movie, *What's a Human, Anyway?* (2004) deals with the problems of male characters regarding gender roles. This movie also connotes that these problems occur from the views of female characters and parents. Although Erdem's films primarily concentrate on toxic masculinity, What's a Human, Anyway? is the mere film in Erdem's oeuvre, representing women negatively. This research mainly focuses on the young male characters in this movie and their attitude against gender-oriented expectations and parental pressure by analyzing it through Deleuze-Guattarian concepts, including deterritorialization, Oedipalization, and particularly, becomings, including becoming-minoritarian, -woman, and -child.
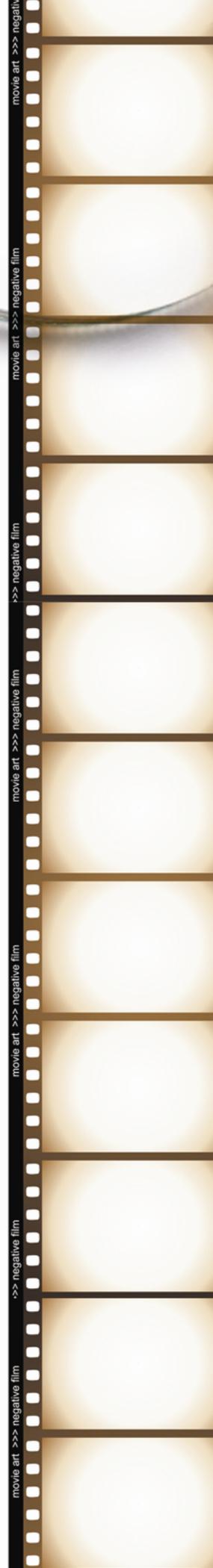
Keywords: gender roles; Oedipalization; becoming-minoritarian; becoming-woman; becoming-child

Deterritorializing The Self:Becoming-Child in the Characters of Reha Erdem's *What's A Human Anyway?* (2004)

Suphi Keskin

Introduction

Reha Erdem has been interested in gender problems since the beginning of his cinematic career. He depicts his male characters as malevolent, ne'er-do-well, grumpy, vulgar, and abusive in almost all his movies, most notably in *What's a Human, Anyway?, Times and Winds* (2006), *My Only Sunshine* (2008), *Jîn* (2013), *Singing Women* (2013), and *Big Big World* (2016). The characters of these movies are overwhelmed with the roles of masculinity. One of the narrative fortes of Erdem is the method of depicting male characters castrated by their parents or suffering from their gender roles. These characters mainly overcome the obstacles by becoming-woman, -child, and the liberating role of these processes against sedentary codifications, such as Ali in *What's a Human, Anyway?* is one of these characters.

Ali is a 39-year-old taxi driver (Ali Düşenkalkar), staying with his father at an apartment wherein his neighbors, friends, and family live closely. He has an accident at the beginning of the movie and loses most of his memory. Meanwhile, İpek (Şenay Gürler), who is a neighbor of Ali and a pregnant widow, needs some money and sells her precious and beloved ring to a piece of jewelry. Keten (Turgay Aydın), who displays an interest in İpek, buys the ring to give as a gift to her. Similar to Ali, the dominance of Keten's parents has vanquished him, and he cannot gain his freedom. He lives with his mother, Neriman (Işıl Yücesoy), and works as her apprentice. While the stories of Keten and Ali form the basis of the plot,

Aytekin (Aydoğan Oflu), who is looking for a way to obtain a medical report demonstrating his

unsuitability for military service, enters the story. On the other hand, little Çetin (Ozan Uygun) has been

trying to escape circumcision. When Neriman notices that her money is stolen, Keten and Ali react

against their parents.

The young male characters of the movie suffer from the expectations of their families and gender

roles. Ali's father, Rasih, is a medical assistant who wants to be a physician, and his repressed

unconscious drives are reflected in the form of hypochondriasis. He is critical of Ali since Ali does not

conform to actualizing Rasih's ambitions on him; he often repeats: "I've always told you that you should

have been a medical doctor." (Erdem, 2004) Neriman does not confer any responsibilities to Keten within

the scope of the profession. Consequently, Ali and Keten portray an escapist attitude against the demands

of life. Furthermore, they do not respond to any expectations within the context of the adult and

masculine roles, mainly demanded by the female characters. Even 7- or 8-year-old Çetin is depicted with

his dread of male formulations by his fear of circumcision. His fear of circumcision can also be

interpreted as an escape from the codifications of maturity since circumcision corresponds with being a

grown-up in Turkish culture. Concordantly, the relationship between Oedipalisation and masculinity,

which freeze the processual flux of identity, is a major problem of the movie.

Throughout the movie, Erdem narrativizes young male characters reactive against masculinity and

Oedipalisation. The concept of Oedipalisation is represented by derogatory and judgmental parental

figures, such as Rasih and Neriman. Ali, Keten, and Aytekin are depicted as men who suffer under the pressure of male codes. Aytekin vacillates between decodification and recodification. Women are displayed with positive as well as negative characteristics due to their expectations from the male characters in accordance with sedentary codes, even though femininity is promoted throughout Erdem's oeuvre. However, the evolution of Ali influences other young male characters against masculine and parental pressures.

The transformation of Ali due to the amnesia influences Keten and Ali, who begin to undergo emancipation from codification, mainly observed through his reaction against sedentary codes and his new friendships. This article posits that the processual change of Ali and his influence on his milieu is grounded on becoming-child, beginning with the deterritorializing impact of amnesia. Ali's processual changes recall the concept of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's "becoming" (Deleuze, & Guattari, 2005). In this context, this article discusses the becoming-minoritarian, becoming-woman, and becoming-child in the narrative of Erdem's *What's a Human Anyway?*. In order to achieve its aims, this research begins with the introduction of some Deleuze-Guattarian concepts that the study utilizes throughout the analysis.

A Review of Deleuze and Guattari's Lexicon as a Toolbox for the Analysis: Deterritorialization, Becoming-Minoritarian, Becoming-Child, Becoming-Animal, Oedipalisation

Deterritorialization is the emancipation of codifications, surpassing the boundaries drawn by the identities. As Deleuze and Guattari (2005, p. 372) underline, deterritorialization "constitutes and extends the territory itself by transgression" of it. Deterritorialization is an immanent movement at a slow or fast pace, and the movement which occurs when one leaves the territory. In the social context, deterritorialization is the process of emancipation from the sedentary codifications and fixed identities through "the lines of flight". Nevertheless, deterritorialization is followed by reterritorialization since the social apparatus is on the alert for the re-codification of multiplicities according to the prevailing social norms. However, the molecular is always in a movement—strictly tied with becoming— different from molar entities.

Deleuze and Guattari (2005) define molar entities as completed and stable; thus, these entities are not able to enter in the process of becoming. Becoming is at the heart of Deleuze-Guattarian process-oriented ontology developed with Guattari, and as a node, it gives birth to new concepts. When Deleuze depicts the frame of becoming, he uses many of his concepts in its definition: becoming is an irreducible dynamism, movement, deterritorialization, the process of desire, and flow (Dexter, 2015, p. 83). Becoming is the central node that is endlessly decentered with a continuous flow. It is the creative movement of multiplicities that are rhizomatically on the quest for linkages and assemblages. Becoming

is the interconnection of heterogeneous entities, assemblages of durational processes "differing in rhythm and speed (Deleuze and Guattari, 2005, p. 4)". Becoming-child is one of the parts of the mobile processes generally coming after becoming-woman.

Anupa Batra (2012, p. 2) underlines that "becoming-woman is … set apart from other becomings" because becoming-woman "entails those molecular becomings that escape the dualistic economy of gender". Correspondingly, Elizabeth Grosz (1994, p. 117) suggests that becoming-woman is not about "inherent qualities of women per se or their metaphoric resonances", but about the minoritarian status of women in patriarchal power relations. Deleuze and Guattari destabilize the dominant power of hierarchies and "make differences different" and abolish the prejudiced systems of identity politics, such as gender, sex, or race (Sutton and Martin-Jones, 2008, p.47). The process-oriented philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari confronts fixed essences, including the representations of identitarian structures. Hence, becoming-woman is neither a representation nor an imitation of femininity, but a catalyst as a threshold for other becomings, like becoming-child.

Becoming-child is a creative and productive way of becoming with its flow against socially-constructed roles such as gender and subjectification. However, children's liminality is always threatened by molar parental figures. As Anna Hickey-Moody (2013, p. 273) states, children "live on an affective level that is lost to most adults". Deleuze and Guattari (2005) believe that children are molecular beings

subordinated to and territorialized by their parents. The nuclear family is the first group that the child is exposed to hierarchy, along with fixed sexual roles. Among the members of the nuclear family, children are in the transformative process of becoming. Deleuze and Guattari (2005, p.294) remind us that the "child coexists with us, in a zone of proximity, or a block of becoming, on a line of deterritorialization that carries us both". Within this scope, an adult is a molar child; concordantly, asubjectification and reaction against Oedipalisation encapsulate the playful molecularity of becoming-child as a reaction against Oedipalisation.

Oedipalisation is the process of individuals to conform and internalize the sedentary codification. Deleuze and Guattari define desire as a productive machine working like a factory (Deleuze and Guattari, 2010. According to their definitions, a human is an assemblage of machines reproducing desire (Deleuze, 2000). The "desiring-machine" is productive in the social system since "there are no desiring-machines that exist outside the social machines" (Deleuze, 2001). In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (2000), Deleuze and Guattari claim that desire is mutilated by psychoanalysis since it condemns the desire in the nuclear family schema (mother, father, and child) by separating it from its social aspect. The Oedipus complex yields a schema of the plane of absence for desire. Thus, psychoanalysis is the apparatus to compel desiring-machines to conform to the sedentary codifications of molar aggregates. Succinctly, this apparatus creates a process of subjectification in line with the social apparatus, and like a production line, produces fixed identities. Deleuzian philosophy promotes the decentralization of fixed

identities and essences. The subject is not given, but "it is always under construction" (Boundas, 2008, p.

190). Against the fluidity and flow of the subject, Oedipalisation functions as a molarization, stabilization,

and codification machine. In other words, subjectification is the process of absorbing and conforming to

the sedentary codes of the social apparatus that produce fixed identities. Also, this is one of the main

blocks against the process of becomings.

Becoming-Minoritarian, Becoming-Woman, and Becoming-Child of the Young Male Characters

Deleuze and Guattari define becoming as "being in no man's land" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2005, p.

293). Within this scope, Erdem's usage of amnesia parallels with Deleuzian thought on

deterritorialization: "Becoming is anti-memory. Memories always have a reterritorialization

function"(Deleuze and Guattari, 2005, p. 293). Ali breaks through the pressure of his environment

through the protection and emancipation that amnesia provides for him. He helps his friends to move

from molar to molecular and emancipate from masculine codifications to a certain extent. Ali experiences

a deterritorialization, and enters a state of becoming-child against the codes and expectations of

masculinity.

What's a Human, Anyway? deals with the masculinity of oedipalized identities, and displays the

various problematic issues related to the blocking aspect of the Oedipalisation of desire since the process

of subjectification is grounded upon the Oedipal complex, and constitutes fixed, molar subjectivities

(Deleuze and Guattari, 2000). Accordingly, all the male characters in *What's a Human, Anyway?* are

depicted as people with missing dreams or in a state of escapism under the pressure of social demand for

masculine roles. As of this point, the scoffing attitude of Neriman and Rasih toward their children

becomes conspicuous. In *What's a Human, Anyway?*, Erdem depicts Ali, Keten, and Aytekin as

personalities indifferent to male roles. The pressure of masculinity converts them into blocked and

handicapped people who cannot find congruence between their ideal self and actual self; however, they

can also be thought of as being on the verge of becoming-minoritarian because of their reaction to the

expected masculine roles. Their passive and escapist attitude toward masculinity is processed with the

opening sequence of the movie.

In the introductory sequence, Erdem edits a montage sequence, including cuts derived from the

question, "what's a human, anyway?". First, Erdem demonstrates the radiography of a skeleton of a man.

After that, the voice-over of Rasih—stating that "men are divided into two—is replied by Çetin, Aytekin,

and Ali respectively as such: "the men who are circumcised and those who aren't", "the man who did the

military service, and who hasn't, yet", and "the men who lost their mother, and the ones who don't

remember their dad" (Erdem, 2004). During the sequence, shots of the running legs of Aytekin and Çetin

are displayed as if they ran away from something. The representations of masculinity, such as

circumcision and military service, are so crucial in Turkish society that the former is appraised as the

initiation ceremony to manliness and is celebrated almost the same way as weddings. The latter is

considered a man's last duty, which should be done before marriage. As demonstrated in the beginning,

through their escape from masculine initiation ceremonies, Çetin, Aytekin, and Ali do not follow the roles

of the social apparatus. Within this scope, they are minoritarians, according to Deleuze-Guattarian

thought.

Becoming-Minoritarian and Becoming-Woman

Deleuze and Guattari assess man as the majority par excellence, whereas the other social groups

refuse the roles of masculinity, and animals are on the side of the minoritarians (Deleuze and Guattari,

2005, p. 191). The majority represents the stability, hegemony, and immutableness in the Deleuzian

lexicon. Within this scope, Ali can be positioned in the passage between being minoritarian and

becoming-minoritarian after his accident. The amnesia, which represents the absolute deterritorialization

from codifications, shakes his stable identity.

Ali is in the process of becoming-minoritarian by rejecting the male roles of society and empowers

this attitude after his amnesia. Ali does not display a masculine, assertive character; instead, he depicts a

profoundly emotional, sensitive, and cooperative portrayal. Despite his soft personality, Ali begins to

oppose the pressure of Rasih vigorously after the onset of amnesia. Moreover, his avoidance of masculine narrative results in collating with the other minoritarians, such as Keten and Aytekin, Ali's avoidance of the molar masculine codes underlines that he deliberately wants to remain in the nonconformist and minoritarian lines. In the deterritorialized plane of amnesia, Ali continues to transgress the thresholds of becomings by becoming-woman and child.

The way to becoming-child passes through becoming-minoritarian and becoming-woman. Concordantly, becoming-minoritarian and becoming-woman are conjoined since "becoming-woman inevitably affects men as much as women." (Deleuze and Guattari, 2005, p. 291) In a way, the subject in the process of becoming is always 'man,' but only when he enters a becoming-minoritarian, he leaves his primary identity. Furthermore, becoming-minoritarian is "a process of ever-changing identities" and a state of "nomadism", which "functions by way of destabilizing" and decentralizing the identity (Krebs, 2005, p.45). In other words, masculine codes must be deterritorialized to initialize the becomings. The minoritarianism of Ali toward the social apparatus triggers his mobility along with amnesia.

After the accident, Ali becomes capable of displaying both passive and active reactions to the pressure and expectations of his father. For instance, he does not react to him when Rasih wants his medications in one of his high blood pressure crises. Furthermore, his new friendships with Aytekin and Ümit signify his new linkages. Within this scope, his incongruence with the masculine norms destabilizes his identity and milieu codified by patriarchal values. He passes from molarity to molecularity and from

being to becoming by the deterritorialization that amnesia provides to him, as discussed in the following part.

Ali begins to react against his father's pressure and look for new lines of flight after the accident, and Keten accompanies Ali at the end of the movie. Rasih is competitive against his son in ruling the home. His aggression toward Ali, even in simple, daily life issues, is a result of the attempt to compete with him. Ali does not respond to these calls. Keten must tackle a worse situation. He works for his mother as a tailor and has been exposed to humiliation and mobbing by Neriman. She oppresses Keten to keep him as her servant. The pressure of Rasih upon Ali is not only an intrafamilial problem; it is a reflection of the social foundations of masculinity and the ideology behind it. Accordingly, not only Rasih but also the female characters of the movie are aligned with the social apparatus. For instance, İpek (Şenay Gürler) suggests to Ali that a woman desires a man with a better profession when she notices his love for Ümit (Arzu Bazman). Nevertheless, Ali's reaction against masculinity should not be considered as escaping to his childhood or nostalgia, but his passivity acts as a form of resistance, being in the states of becoming-minoritarian and becoming-woman after the car accident. He utilizes amnesia as an apparatus to achieve new linkages and becomings. Minoritarianism of Ali supports him in releasing his desire in the form of becoming-child.

Becoming-Minoritarian and Becoming-Woman

Deleuze and Guattari assess man as the majority par excellence, whereas the other social groups refusing the roles of masculinity, and animals are on the side of the minoritarians[1]. The majority represents the stability, hegemony, and immutableness in the Deleuzian lexicon. Within this scope, Ali can be positioned in the passage between being minoritarian and becoming-minoritarian after his accident. The amnesia, which represents the absolute deterritorialization from codifications, shakes his stable identity.

Ali is in the process of becoming-minoritarian by rejecting the male roles of society and empowers this attitude after his amnesia. Ali does not display a masculine, assertive character; instead, he depicts a profoundly emotional, sensitive, and cooperative portrayal. Despite his soft personality, Ali begins to oppose the pressure of Rasih vigorously after the onset of the amnesia. Moreover, his avoidance of masculine narrative results in collating with the other minoritarians, such as Keten and Aytekin, Ali's avoidance of the molar masculine codes underlines that he deliberately wants to remain in the nonconformist and minoritarian lines. In the deterritorialized plane of amnesia, Ali continues to transgress the thresholds of becomings by becoming-woman and child.

The way to becoming-child passes through becoming-minoritarian and becoming-woman. Concordantly, becoming-minoritarian and becoming-woman are conjoined, since "becoming-woman inevitably affects men as much as women"[2]. In a way, the subject in the process of becoming is always

'man,' but only when he enters a becoming-minoritarian, he leaves his primary identity. Furthermore, becoming-minoritarian is "a process of ever-changing identities" and a state of "nomadicism", which "functions by way of destabilizing" and decentralizing the identity[3]. In other words, masculine codes must be deterritorialized to initialize the becomings.

The minoritarianism of Ali toward the social apparatus triggers his mobility along with amnesia. After the accident, Ali becomes capable of displaying both passive and active reactions to the pressure and expectations of his father. For instance, he does not react to him when Rasih wants his medications in one of his high blood pressure crises. Furthermore, his new friendships with Aytekin and Ümit signify his new linkages. Within this scope, his incongruence with the masculine norms destabilizes his identity and his milieu codified by patriarchal values. He passes from molarity to molecularity and from being to becoming by the deterritorialization that amnesia provides to him as discussed in the following part.

Ali begins to react against his father's pressure and look for new lines of flight after the accident, and Keten accompanies Ali at the end of the movie. Rasih is competitive against his son in ruling the home. His aggression to Ali, even in simple, daily life issues, is a result of the attempt to compete with him. Ali does not respond to these calls. Keten must tackle a worse situation. He works for his mother as a tailor, and has been exposed to humiliations and mobbing of Neriman. She oppresses Keten to keep as her servant. The pressure of Rasih upon Ali is not only an intrafamilial problem; it is a reflection of the

social foundations of masculinity and the ideology behind it. Accordingly, not only Rasih but also the female characters of the movie are aligned with the social apparatus. For instance, İpek (Şenay Gürler) suggests to Ali that a woman desires a man with a better profession when she notices his love for Ümit (Arzu Bazman). Nevertheless, Ali's reaction against masculinity should not be considered as escaping to the childhood or nostalgia, but his passivity acts as a form of resistance, being in the states of becoming-minoritarian and becoming-woman after the car accident. He utilizes the amnesia as an apparatus to achieve new linkages and becomings. The minoritarianism of Ali supports him to release his desire in the form of becoming-child.

Becoming-Child in *What's a Human, Anyway?*

Becoming-child is a productive way of becoming with its flow against socially-constructed roles such as gender and subjectification. However, the liminality of children is always under the threat of molar parental figures. Deleuze and Guattari (2005) believe that children are molecular beings who are subordinated to and territorialized by their parents. The nuclear family is the first group that the child is exposed to the hierarchy, along with fixed sexual roles. Among the members of the nuclear family, children are in the transformative process of becoming. Deleuze and Guattari remind us that the "child coexists with us, in a zone of proximity, or a block of becoming, on a line of deterritorialization that

carries us both" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2005, p. 294). Within this scope, an adult is a molar child; concordantly, asubjectification encapsulates the playful molecularity of becoming-child.

Ali's situation is the complete annihilation of memories, which embodies the deterritorialization of Ali, to the extent of not being able to remember his father. Concerning childishness of Ali, Erdem writes a scene wherein Ali does not even know how to button his shirt, and İpek accentuates this situation: "You've become like a baby" (Erdem, 2004). Ali's mind becomes a *tabula rasa* where everything is new for him. Furthermore, Ali is in a transformation in the direction of the outsiders of society. It is his line of flight for making connections with several groups of society, such as taxi drivers in the coffee shop and students, and Ümit. Ali is not demonstrated with any friends until his becomings later strike up a friendship with Aytekin, and becomes active in his relationships, such as by displaying his love for Ümit. His growing relationships with segments of society dovetail with a deterritorialization that prompts his becoming-child.

The most explicit becoming of Ali undergoes is becoming-child, and Erdem demonstrates it through Ali's yearning for childhood and his playful attitude. This yearning displayed mainly at the beginning of the movie signifies his later state of becoming-child. The plot unfolds the reason for Ali's accident as his distraction; he sees a red ball in a tree, which is the same color as the one he played with during his childhood, and loses control of his car. As aforementioned, in the initial montage sequence, Ali defines

himself as being in the group of "people whose mother passed away." (Erdem, 2004) Thus, it is

unsurprising that the person he remembers first is İpek as an expectant mother. Moreover, the pressure of

Rasih on him increases his yearning for his childhood.

However, becoming-child is not the situation of imitating a child or regression to this period;

however, these signs can be taken into consideration as Erdem's messages for Ali's mental state.

Although Erdem uses explicit references to the childhood period, Ali's processual changes implicitly infer

the state of becoming-child. The playfulness and joy of Ali for life are about the contemplation of his

childhood. Analogous to a child, he tries to understand the world from the beginning; everything around

him arouses a surprising curiosity. He reflects this frisky joy in his relationships. Above all, he

emancipates from the role conceived for a 39-year-old man. Becoming-child in Ali is the inversion of the

subjectification of maturity by connection with childhood; in other words, a payoff within the impasse of

Oedipalizing mutilation.

The capacity of children in transformation is integral since they are not castrated by the pressure of

molar entities and have the productive power of fluidity to the broadest extent. Ali prevails over the

parental stress through his jubilant playfulness and curiosity of becoming-child. Even his hand becomes a

toy for him, which is displayed in the montage sequence in which he discovers his body parts. When Ali

first sees the crowd on a ferry after the onset of amnesia, he is astonished by the number of people and

their body parts. Most importantly, he is emancipated from the expectations of masculinity, his

subjectivity is destabilized, and he begins to overcome the parental and masculine pressure. In another scene, his father requests him to bring his medication during an exaggerated hypochondriac crisis—which can be interpreted as a test to understand whether Ali still loves him and obeys some of Rasih's orders; however, Ali continues to play with his hands. He is relieved from paternal anxiety. In addition to social fluidity, joy, and playfulness, his transformative influence on Keten displays the revolutionary power of becoming-child.

The Emancipation of Keten through Ali and Love

Becomings are anti-hierarchical constellations that search for the "intermezzo"'s within a trajectory which endlessly mobilizes nomads[4]. They have a revolutionary stand against sedentary codes and molarities as in the reaction of Ali and Keten against masculinity. Their behaviour is pertinent to nomadic thinking after emancipation from masculine codifications, since they inaugurate to transgress the stable and institutionalized entities illustrated by their families throughout the movie. Their autonomous attitude against the problems beginning with Ali's amnesia yields transformation in their milieus.

Through the influence of Ali, Keten displays the creative potentiality of becoming-child by releasing his desire, and by reacting against Oedipalisation. Ketenis depicted as a dependent personality on his mother in most of the movie. Neriman is the employer of the Keten, but he has no rights, including

receiving a wage. When a client says that Keten is a good tailor like his mother, Neriman objects by

saying, "for him, it will take a long time to be a good tailor"[5]. Keten begins to display rebellious

behaviour, particularly on the issues about İpek, his love, and masculine codifications. Love becomes

Keten's nomadic war machine that explores an exterior territory indifferent to the parental limitation.

Throughout the sequence where all the main characters are having dinner together, the conversation

comes to the point of persuading Çetin to undergo circumcision. The butcher, Neriman, and İpek repeat

the everyday discourse that relates circumcision with manliness: "you will be a man". When İpek claims

that circumcision is a simple and easy operation, Keten objects to the impositions of masculinity.

The most potent line of flight for Keten is love, and he does not care about its reciprocity. In other

words, his desire is only for desiring but not to be loved by İpek. As traces from Deleuze and Guattari,

love "is a becoming only one" who is "no longer … be anybody", an overwhelming of subjectivity and

personality[6]. Love provides for giving the opportunity of deterritorializing the subjectivity, making it

imperceptible as in the case of Kosmos; however, Keten focuses on the desire in its own right, and do not

care about the interchange. Keten buys an expensive ring for İpek, and Ümit asks him whether the ring

belongs to his girlfriend; he replies to her with "my beloved"[7]. For him, love is an apparatus of

mobilization, joy, rebellion, and fluidity against oedipal subjectification, as well as his mother. It is a way

of turning back to a childhood in which his desire is not mutilated by the molar entities. Within this scope,

Keten's contemplation of the childhood period is not the demonstration of the attitude of a child, but a return to the flow of a desiring-machine by releasing from molar codifications.

As he influences Keten with his reactive attitude, Ali also becomes the catalyst for becoming-child of Keten by the confiscation of the ring. First, he takes the ring and claims that it is an heirloom of his mother. Ali pushes the limits of Keten, which results in his rebellion against the molar blocks represented in the personality of his mother. Keten pursues his love; he takes the money which Neriman hides, and buys the ring with which İpek is obsessed. Followingly, the last sequence summarizes the creative resistance of Keten and Ali against the Oedipal schema. Keten displays his reaction most harshly throughout the plot asserting that he has his share of that money because of his labor. Then, he begins to climb to the tower of a water cistern while yelling, "Mommy, I'm scared!". Ali accompanies him: He also climbs to the top, and starts to shout the same words. It is a way of overwhelming the fear and condemnation, a movement away from sedentary codes, those of which provide them with the dare in an environment where their mother and father are together along with the other characters of the movie.

Reterritorialization of the Process of Becoming-Child: Aytekin's Case

Becoming-child is a double-edged way of becomings. With reference to Spinoza, Deleuze states that children are the group that depends on the highest degree of external causes; hence, they have

underlying amenability (Deleuze, 2001, pp. 162-163). From the Deleuze-Guattarian point of view,

becoming-child has "two poles: those of capacity and vulnerability." (Fancy, 2019, pp. 560) Owing to the

idea that deterritorialization toward childish aspects works against the reterritorialization of the molar,

adult codifications. *What's a Human, Anyway?* portrays this oscillating movement by Aytekin's

character. Whereas Keten displays reluctance toward masculinity and adult personification, Aytekin

conforms to the male roles at the end. Aytekin is depicted as a man compelled to conform to the norms;

nevertheless, Ali helps his alteration. Aytekin works in an amusement park, most probably an intentional

reminder of childhood by the auteur, and his biggest ambition is to receive a report officially accepting his

unsuitability for military service. His effort is as childish as his general attitude during the movie.

Although Aytekin is eager to embrace the codes of childhood, his environment expects male roles

from him. For instance, when he talks about his fear of military service, his girlfriend supports him:

"Don't scare. You will become a man." (Erdem, 2004) It cannot be asserted that Aytekin experiences a

child becoming; however, even his escapism to childhood is pervasively attempted to be reterritorialized.

As the movie progresses, he fails to receive an exonerator report and is enlisted for military service. He

begins to serve the army; thereupon, he sends photos that indicate how he is a fearless, self-assured, and

outstanding soldier. In this respect, Erdem underlines the vulnerability of becomings—essentially

becoming-child—against the reterritorialization of codification by Aytekin—an oxymoron to the

portrayal of Keten. The territorialization of Aytekin in the limitations of masculinity also corresponds to the positioning of corporeality within masculinity.

Conclusion

This article intends to study *What's a Human, Anyway?* from the perspectives of Oedipalisation, masculinity, and transformation against parental authority. This chapter makes use of becomings, particularly becoming-child, as an apparatus to understand the narrative and editing approaches of *What's a Human, Anyway?*. As is common throughout Erdem's oeuvre, the movie depicts the male characters as problematic and frustrated personalities overwhelmed by masculine roles. However, unlike his general approach, Erdem, for the first time, displays the female characters as responsible for the problems due to their conformist expectations towards male characters. The Turkish auteur characterizes young male characters as dependent and bewildered with their lives due to the results of Oedipalisation and masculine codifications. This article makes use of the concept of becoming-child in order to demonstrate the way of de-codification of Erdem's characters against masculinity.

This research argues that Erdem introduces the amnesia of Ali as an initializer for the transformative process of himself and Keten; however, his milieu's potentiality of deterritorialization is limited. Although the desiring-machine of Ali fails to display a considerable influence on the characters he makes

connections with, there is an observable alteration in Keten's attitude. Ali and Keten owe their

mobilization to deterritorialization and its enactor, love. Love provides them with the desire or

emancipation of their desire from codifications. It is the catalyst for their paralyzed bodies devastated by

male roles. Concordantly, Erdem writes Aytekin character as an antithesis to them by his conformation to

the masculine roles. After he enters the military, Erdem demonstrates him as internalizing the process of

reterritorialization. Through the characters of Keten and Aytekin, Erdem compares being versus

becoming, molarity versus molecularity, stability versus fluidity, and the double-edged characteristics of

becoming-child: vulnerability and capacity.

Editor's Notes

This is an updated and expanded version of the author's MA thesis titled " Coherence Between Narrative

and Montage: Diversified Becomings In Reha Erdem's Cinema " at MA in Media and Visual Studies

Bilkent University in 2019. There have been other studies on Reha Erdem's cinema from different

perspectives for those who would like to access other studies such as Yücel (2009), Çakirlar and Guclu

(2012), Çiçekoğlu (2015), Raw (2017) Treske (2017), Aracagök (2019), Baykan and Keskin (2020)

[M.A.].

REFERENCES

Aracagök, Zafer. "Reha Erdem/Koca Dünya:"Crypt"+"Affect"." *Sinecine: Sinema Araştırmaları Dergisi* 8.2: 171-182, 2019.

Batra, A. (2012). Women and Becoming-Woman: Deleuze and Feminism. In: C. Lawrence and N. Chum, eds., *Movements in Time: Revolution, Social Justice and Times of Change*. UK: Cambridge Scholars Press.

Boundas, C. (2008). Subjectivity. In A. Parr (Ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary* (pp. 189–191). UK: Edinburgh University.

Çakırlar, C., & Guclu, O. (2012). Gender, family and home(land) in contemporary Turkish cinema: a comparative analysis of films by Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Reha Erdem and Ümit Ünal. In K. Laachir & S. R. Talajooy (Eds.), *Resistance in contemporary Middle Eastern cultures: literature, cinema and music* (pp. 167–183). Routledge.

Çiçekoğlu, F. (2015). *Boats of İstanbul Heterotopia in Reha Erdem Films*. 209.

Deleuze, G. (2001). *Difference and Repetition* (P. Patton, Trans.; 3rd ed.). UK: Continuum.

Deleuze, G. (1992). What Is a Dispositif. In T. J. Armstrong (Ed.), *Michel Foucault: Philosopher* (pp. 159–168). Prentice-Hall.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (2005). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (B. Massumi, Ed.; 11th ed.). University of Minnesota.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (2000). *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (10th ed.). USA: University of Minnesota.

Dexter, J. (2015). *Becoming and Destiny in Deleuze and Guattari* [Master thesis]. http://digitalcollections.trentu.ca/objects/etd-389

Fancy, D. (2018). Deleuze and Guattari's "becoming-child" in Zacada Circus. World Features:

Journal of New Paradigm Research, 74(7), 559–571. http://sci-
hub.tw/10.1080/02604027.2018.1485441

Grosz, E. (1994). Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism. Indiana University.

Hickey-Moody, A. (2013). Deleuze and the Pedagogy of Gender: Masculinity and Methodology
(1st ed.). Palgrave MacMillan.

Keskin, S., & Baykan, B. (2020). Becoming-Animal in the Narrative and the Form of Reha
Erdem's Kosmos. *CINEJ Cinema Journal*, *8*(1), 249–285.

Krebs, A. (2005). Minority and Becoming: Deleuze, Guattari, and the Case of Apuleius'
Metamorphoses. In Society for Classical Studies. https://classicalstudies.org/annual-
meeting/149/abstract/minority-and-becoming-deleuze-guattari-and-case-apuleius'-metamorphoses.

Stark, H. (2012). Deleuze and Love. Journal of Theoretical Humanities, 17(1), 99–113.
10.1080/0969725X.2012.67166

Sutton, D., & Martin-Jones, D. (2008). Deleuze Reframed: A Guide for the Arts Student (1st
ed.). I:B Tauris.

Treske, A. (2017). The Big World–Reha Erdem and the magic of cinema. *Market, Globalization
& Development Review*, *2*(2). YOKSIS Bilkent. https://doi.org/1-7

FILMOGRAPHY

Erdem, R. (Director). (2016). *Big Big World* [DVD]. Atlantik Film.

Erdem, R. (Director). (2013). *Jîn* [DVD]. Atlantik Film.

Erdem, R. (Director). (2008). *My Only Sunshine* [DVD]. Turkey: Atlantik Film.

Erdem, R. (Director). (2013b). *Singing Women* [DVD]. Atlantik Film.

Erdem, R. (Director). (2006). *Times and Winds* [DVD]. Atlantik Film.

Erdem, R. (Director). (2004). *What's a Human, Anyway?* [DVD]. Atlantik Film.

ENDNOTES:

[1] Deleuze and Guattari, 2005, p. 191.

[2] Deleuze and Guattari, 2005, p. 291.

[3] Assaf Krebs. "Minority and Becoming: Deleuze, Guattari, and the Case of Apuleius'

Metamorphoses." *In Society for Classical Studies*, 2005, p. 45. https://classicalstudies.org/annual-meeting/149/abstract/minority-and-becoming-

deleuze-guattari-and-case-apuleius'-metamorphoses.

[4] Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 380.

[5] Erdem, 2004.

[6] Hannah Stark. "Deleuze and Love." *Journal of Theoretical Humanities* 17, no. 1 (2012): 99-113.

Accessed April/May, 2019. 10.1080/0969725X.2012.67166, p. 101.

[7] Erdem, 2004.