# THESIS EXTRACT

# Emese Biró

## The Representation of Women in Films Winning the Oscar Best Picture Award from 1970 to 2005

titled Ph.D. dissertation

## Supervisor:

## Dr. Miklós Hadas
professor

Budapest, 2008

**Institute for Sociology and Social Policy**

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# CONTENTS

# I. RESEARCH ANTECEDENTS AND JUSTIFICATION OF RESEARCH TOPIC

## I.1. Theoretical considerations

The research considering women's representation in film can be dated back to the 1970's, connected mainly to the fields of film theory and film sociology, as well as to British cultural studies. The main research hypothesis was that women and man are differently represented and in accordance to man's perspective, in mainstream films. Two distinctive theoretic traditions developed parallelly: the reflectionist, early sociological and the representational tradition. According to the former, films reflect society's main values, ideas and beliefs; the female film characters display the definitions and stereotypes of gender social roles (Haskell [1975], Smith [1999], Rosen [1975]). The main virtue of reflectionist theories is that they connect the depiction of genders and their alterations in time to certain social changes and movements.

According to representational theories, films can not be considered simple reflections of social reality. In turn, they are thought to produce their own meanings as complex texts determined by specific codes, conventions, narrative and generic attributes. Psychoanalytic and cultural studies theories agree on those mentioned above, but each of them define the film-society relationship differently. According to psychoanalytic feminist film theories (Mulvey [1975], [1989], Doane [1999], Lauretis [2000]), the representations of women and men produced in films are in correspondence to universal psychological categories, for example: desire, fear, anxiety, complexes; they often do not even consider the relationship between psyche and society. In contrast to this, cultural studies consider the interrelations of film and social context an important issue. According to its representational view, cultural studies consider film meanings as specific constructions, but assume the role of film texts as well as the socially defined production and reception in the production of meaning (Hall [1997], Gledhill [1997], [1999], Stacey [1999]). On all three levels mentioned above, the role of the „dominant social meaning systems" (Belinszki [2000]) is presupposed. In the experience of cultural studies, analysts of film as cultural product concentrate on one or

two levels of the three-levelled model, mentioning the remaining level(s) only in certain respects (for example Staiger [1999], Walkerdine [1999]).

The analysis of the representation of women in films presupposes the utilization of concepts and viewpoints of women's studies and men's studies. Gender inequalities have a crucial role in the constitution of social inequalities. Some experts of the field remind us of the fact that gender inequalities should be analyzed in their interconnectedness with social class, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual identity and age (Bradley [1996]). The idea of a single female and male gender is abandoned for the thought of plural femininities and masculinities, latter being studied mainly by man's studies (Connell et al [1985], Kimmel [2001]). Relational perspective, the study of women-men subordination-domination and power relations is a main preoccupation in certain works (Connell et al [2005], Walby [1997]). Gender inequalities and women's subordination to men can be interpreted in the framework of men's domination theory (Bourdieu [1994]), hegemonic masculinity theory (Connell et al [1985], Connell et al [2005]); in the framework of feminist theory, for example the theory of patriarchy (Walby [1990]), or the more general perspective of feminist movement's efforts.

**I.2. Immediate research antecedents**

The main antecedent of my research was the research project of Miklós Hadas, entitled 'Modernity and Masculinity: the Representation of Men in Mass Culture', project based on film analysis I participated in as research assistant during 2002-2003. The research compared men's image in award-winner and popular European and American movies. The research result announced the predominance of the hegemonic masculinity behavioural patterns in mainstream and popular American movies and the surplus of deconstructed, vulnerable male characters in European films. For the construction of theoretical framework, Miklós Hadas relied mainly on Pierre Bourdieu's [1994] work theorizing male dominance, as well as on man's studies essays (for example: Brod [2001], Kimmel [2001], Connell et al [1985], Connell et al [2005]). The analysis of movies was made according to the qualitative analysis schema composed during previous seminars and developed during the research. The analysis schema applied a structured system of aspects to the representation of men and women and the man-women relationships of the given films.

Some of the gradual students, participant in the research, conducted their graduate thesis under the supervision of Miklós Hadas (Fiala [2004], Viszlai [2004], Boros [2004]). Formulating different research goals, the students analyzed certain, esthetically successful and highly marketable films. They applied the analysis schema of their supervisor's research. Their graduate thesis was theoretically based mainly on Pierre Bourdieu's work, 'Masculine domination' [1994], and methodologically on Clifford Geertz's 'Thick description' [1994] and the analysis schema. The main conclusion of the graduate papers was that the thesis of masculine domination is in certain ways sustainable concerning the Hungarian films analyzed.

**I.3. Aim of research and situatedness in relation to antecedents**

My paper is concerned with the analysis of female characters, and their relatedness to gender inequalities and feminist efforts. I approach the theme from the feminist film studies and gender-sensitive cultural studies theories. Likewise most of the feminist situated analysts, I try to go beyond pointing to the subordination of the female to male characters and the male narrative activity in most of the films studied. I intend to outline the cases where women's activity, goal-seeking and realization can be observed. My paper focuses mainly on the analysis of such cases, trying to uncover the similarities and coherencies of these, apparently unique situations. Although in these films can also happen that the dominant, preferred reading suggested by the film text and constructed from the position of the (leading) male character may emphasize the significance, power and "victory" of male characters, from the position of the female character(s)' alternative, even subversive readings can be constructed.

While focusing on the above mentioned, I set the feminist efforts connected to the representation of women in films against the efforts of hegemonic masculinity (Connell et al [1985], Connell et al [2005]) expressed also in these filmic representations. Compared to Pierre Bourdieu's [1994] theory, that presupposes the long-standing male dominance over women, the application of Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity makes possible a more flexible interpretation. Latter assumes that masculinity tries to sustain its privileged position by persistently negotiating with the efforts against it, among which feminist efforts hold an important share. In order to reach consensus, hegemonic masculinity is willing to integrate some of the feminism's

efforts. These negotiation procedures' privileged place is the terrain of popular culture, including popular films. The model of Connell doesn't exclude the possibility for me to interpret hegemonic masculinity as dominant ideology, against which feminist efforts can be perceived as oppressed counter-ideology. Concerning this interpretation, I was inspired by the theories of cultural studies.

## I.4. Structure of dissertation

The dissertation consists of four main parts. In the first one I discuss the theoretical framework of the representation of women in films. In the second, methodological part I confer the antecedents, hypothesis and methods. The third part comprises the analysis of film's female characters' representation, structured according to given principles, and the results of this analysis. The fourth part summarizes the results of the study of female character's representations, including the evaluation of hypothesis.

The first, theoretical part contains four chapters. In the first chapter, I present the feminist film theories concerning the representation of genders in movies. In the second chapter I discuss theories of general film studies that may be useful for my research. The third chapter is concerned with the feminist movement and the themes of gender inequality. In the fourth chapter I emphasize the principally used theories for my research.

In the second part, the first chapter presents the immediate antecedents of my research, the second one establishes the position and innovations of my study compared to its antecedents, the third one presents the hypothesis and the last chapter deals with methodological issues.

The third part of the dissertation displays the empirical analysis of women's representation in the given films. The first chapter examines the significance of social class, age, ethnicity and race to the women's representation. The second chapter evaluates the filmic representation of women in public sphere, and the third chapter does this pointing to the private sphere. The fourth chapter handles the issues of women's body's filmic representations. The fifth chapter discusses the narrator's role. The sixth chapter deals with the significance of the films' ending to the reinforcement of the dominant readings.

The fourth, summarizing part's first chapter resumes the strategic efforts of feminism that can be discovered in the films analyzed. In the second chapter I formulate my conclusions concerning the strategies of hegemonic masculinity which are positioned in contrast to feminist efforts. The third chapter concludes the interrelations of feminist efforts and women's filmic representations. Finally, in the fourth chapter I discuss the possible future enlargements of the study.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The representation of women in films is analyzed in the dissertation in line with the following dimensions: women's activity, women-men and women-women relationship, women's goals and strategic realizations in the public sphere, as well as in the private sphere, the representation of the women's body. For the evaluation of women's filmic representations I used those parts of the qualitative analysis schema developed in the research of Miklós Hadas, which were in accordance with the aim of my research, and I made the necessary supplementations to it[1]. However, the analysis schema only shortly considers the dimensions of women's representation, in adition to that more developed interpretations of certain films were necessary. These interpretations were presented in synthesized form in my paper. For the reading of representations I utilized the feminist film studies' methods concerning the positions of identification and the role of narrator as well as the aspects for the study of the female body.

The cultural studies paradigm showed to be the most sociologic in the field of the study of representations, and was also fit to my research aim. Cultural studies intend to approach the studied themes from the point of view of the subordinated, marginally positioned groups, taking into consideration the joint effect of social class, age, ethnicity and race in the analysis of representations. Cultural studies bibliography offers several

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[1] The original analysis schema and the schema utilized for my research, latter illustrated with analyzed films, can be found in the appendix of my dissertation (in Hungarian).

examples for the analyses of oppositional positions striving to hegemony, represented in different kinds of cultural products.

Cultural studies researchers (for example Turner [1996]) consider the oppositions that play a crucial role in films' narrative structure as products of competing ideological positions that manifest themselves in films. Researchers observed that certain films make efforts for the reconciliation of oppositions. In my thesis I studied the negotiations between hegemonic masculinity and feminism by means of tracing the reconciliation attempts of the main oppositions in films and of comparing the dominant and competing readings that are connected to these oppositions.

The basic opposition in the research frame I developed is the *female-male* dichotomy that is strongly interconnected with the *subordination-domination* relation, as power relation. The *public-private sphere* dichotomy is a relevant opposition both for the positions of hegemonic masculinity and of feminism. The research is structured mainly by these three oppositions. In a few of the analyzed films the *white-non white* opposition, related to race (*Out of Africa* (1985), *Driving Miss Daisy* (1989)) and the *wealthy-poor* opposition, related to social class, could also be considered. The attention paid to the films' oppositions can also be motivated by the fact that analogies and parallelisms can be discovered between the filmic strategies for the reconciliation of these oppositions and the consensus-aiming strategies of hegemonic masculinity.

My paper uses textual analysis, analyzing women's representation in film text - taking into consideration its attributes – according to the dimensions established for this analysis. On a more comprehensive level, I study the positions and strategies of hegemonic masculinity and feminism in film texts. Films can be interpreted in various ways, but I aim to reconstruct the dominant or preferred reading among the possible ones. I mostly study the above mentioned oppositions connected to ideological positions in the textually dominant reading. In some sections of my study, I also consider the possible alternative readings constituted from the position of feminism.

Although applying a structured system of aspects to the representation of men and women and aspiring to objectivity, film analysis is considered to be an interpretive task. In this respect I am aware of the fact that I, as socially predetermined and situated analyst have a certain role in the construction of film readings.

# III. RESEARCH RESULTS

## III.1. Significance of social class, ethnicity, race and age in the representation of women

Sociologists preoccupied with social inequalities advise us to take into consideration the effects of social class, ethnicity, race, age and sexual orientation for the study of gender inequalities. In relation to the characters of the films analyzed in the paper can be stated that white, Anglo-Saxon, middle-class existence is naturalized in many films. However, naturalization of the above factors is questioned in some films. Middle-class existence is questioned in *Annie Hall* (1977), *American Beauty* (1999), *Terms of Endearment* (1983), in first two films interrogated from the position of the man character intimately related to the leading female character. In the second and third mentioned film, expectations for and difficulties of sustaining the middle-class wealth are underlined.

In my view, the representation of female characters, who are defined by attributes not corresponding to the naturalized „average" and accentuated in relation to certain dimensions (for example women's goals, woman-man, woman-woman relation), works against naturalization. The lower-class existence is problematized in the case of the leading female character, related to her age, in *Million Dollar Baby* (2004), the upper-class, related to differences of social class between the characters in *Titanic* (1997), *Shakespeare in Love* (1998). The notable female characters in the analyzed films are white and heterosexual, and this is also true to the male characters, with some exceptions concerning race and ethnicity. Racial and ethnical aspects, as well as social class differences between the characters are problematized in *Driving Miss Daisy* (1989); ethnical aspects in *Annie Hall* (1977), racial aspects are visible in *Out of Africa* (1985).

According to the film analysis can be stated that the „whiteness" and heterosexuality of female characters persists during the studied period. Social class that is different from the middle class tends to play a role in the representation of women characters beginning with the mid 1980' – although in the representation of men this tendency can be observed much earlier. The importance of age, connected to that of

social class and/or ethnicity, becomes visible even later, and only in few of the films studied. As a conclusion, it can be stated that from the mid 1980', the representation of women becomes more varied concerning social class, ethnicity and age. This is coherent with the efforts made by feminism form the 1980' to replace the vision of the single womanhood with the concept of socially determined plural femininities.

**III.2. Representation of feminist efforts in relation to the dimension of women's goals**

The hypothesis that the feminist efforts are represented in the dimensions of the representation of women in films, proved to be sustainable for my research. I mainly assumed that these efforts are visible in the dimension of women's goals, more intensely in the public sphere than in the private sphere. I studied women's goals and the other dimensions - except for the woman body – separately in the public and the private sphere. I interpreted the public/private dichotomy as the main opposition of the representation of women. However, in the thesis extract I draw the conclusions comparing the results for the two spheres.

The feminist efforts indeed became visible in the female character's goals, referring mainly to the public sphere. A minority of the female characters is active only in the public sphere, mostly working: head-of-department nurse Mildred Ratched (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, 1975), detective Clarice Starling (*The Silence of the Lambs*, 1991), *boxer* Maggie Fitzgerald (*Million Dollar Baby*, 2004). They perform „manly" jobs or activities, consciously formulating their goals concerning these activities. Maggie Fitzgerald wants to make a carrier as a professional boxer, meanwhile she has to earn a living as a waitress. She communicates her goal with the trainer Frankie Dunn, convincing him to collaborate by making very hard efforts for this. Mildred Ratched also makes visible efforts to sustain the „order" of her psychiatric department, and to make all the hospitalized persons to agree to the rules. Clarice Starling is investigating the case of a psychopath killer. The above mentioned female characters don't have a private life; at least we don't see them in mentionable private life situations. The latter two characters are seen to be aiming at dominance over male characters. Maggie Fitzgerald is characterized by fighting against subordinated position and for autonomy and equality.

A more significant part of the female characters is active and goal seeking in the public and the private sphere as well. Annie Hall (*Annie Hall*, 1977) aspires to become a photographer, then to make a career as a singer, while she also tells his boyfriend she would like to marry and have children. Joanna Kramer (*Kramer versus Kramer*, 1978) tells in front of the court of law that she tried to take up work after the birth of her child, but her husband told her not to, because she wouldn't earn enough money to pay the babysitter. We also find out that she has reached her goal only after she separated from her husband. Karen Blixen (*Out of Africa*, 1985) makes a marriage proposal to a friend, in order to come to hand of her marriage portion and to buy a farm in Africa. After the separation from her husband, she tries to persuade her lover to greater involvement with her. Viola de Lesseps (*Shakespeare in Love*, 1998) makes efforts to act on stage, in spite of the historical period's and time's prohibitions for women. In the same time, she gets secretly and passionately involved with the young Shakespeare. Carolyn Burnham (*American Beauty*, 1999) wants hard to be successful with her real-estate agent work, meanwhile she would like to sustain the image of her family. Roxie Hart and Velma Kelly (*Chicago*, 2002) wish to perform as revue stars – the latter woman used to be successful in this, but her carrier has been interrupted by her imprisonment. Their private life is mentioned in relation to harnessing, revenge and passion crime.

The female characters mentioned above are aware of the importance of participating, setting and attaining goals in public life besides private life activity. This attitude of mind corresponds to feminist efforts made for the participation in jobs previously considered the monopoly of men, the attainment and sustaining of power positions, the equilibrium of public and private life, and the equality in both spheres. Some of the female characters mentioned above: Annie Hall, Viola de Lesseps, Roxie Hart and Velma Kelly, whish to assert themselves on fields like stage acting and singing that necessitate traditionally feminine patterns of behavior. However, their goal attainment process is often characterized by wishes and acts of independence, self-fulfillment and autonomy that can be associated by us with feminist efforts. Nevertheless, it can be generally stated that female characters very rarely make the connection among their goals and feminist efforts – we might infer this connection in the case of Karen Blixen or Carolyn Burnham.

The part of the hypothesis inferring that women's goals referring to private life are less related with feminist efforts, than those referring to the public sphere, could

only be accepted under reserve. Those women characters, who were active in the public, as well as in the private life, tended to set themselves aims in the private sphere that could be associated with feminist efforts, for example equality in private relationships (Annie Hall), leadership and dominance in some cases (Karen Blixen, Carolyn Burnham), fighting for the child's custody while initiating divorce (Joanna Kramer).

Compared to this, in the case of women active only in private life these kinds of pursuits are indeed rarer. These female characters make efforts mostly to sustain their marriage or partnership, for the sake of which they subordinate themselves to their husband or partner in the long term. However, when everything they do, proves not to be enough, some of them initiate the divorce. In one case, the abortion made by one of them (Kay Corleone in Godfather II. (1972)), and announced posteriorly to his husband while initiating divorce, can be associated by us with the feminist problematic of reproductive rights.

## III.3. Connections of feminist efforts to relations between women and men, and to relations between women

The part of the hypothesis inferring that feminist efforts can be made visible in the rest of the dimensions: woman-woman and woman-man relations in the public as well as in the private sphere, proved to be acceptable. Woman-man relationship, as I have mentioned previously, is seen by feminism most of all as a power relation. Feminism aims at changing the women's subordinated, defenceless position for equality. It doesn't exclude the possibility for women to achieve more power in their relationships, although imagines this to be the effect of autonomy, independence and active behavior. Although women are encouraged to come in for and take hold of more positions vested with authority, this is not conceived as a simple reversal of power positions, when women „occupy" the power positions of men.

Certain female characters with privileged social positions and strong personalities, like Karen Blixen (*Out of Africa*, 1985), Carolyn Burnham (*American Beauty*, 1999) make efforts to impose their own will and demands – this can be interpreted as dominance - on their relations with men, both in the private and public sphere. In addition, I should mentioned the female character, (Mildred Ratched in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, 1975) who is situated by her job and workplace position

as dominant over many of the male characters in this film, and who is working hard to maintain her own authority position against the attacks.

Compared to the above example of dominant or authority positions, most woman characters are striving to change their dependent and subordinated positions, in concordance to feminist efforts, although this concordance is neither discovered by these characters, nor manifest or discursive in film texts. The pursuit of equality and autonomy is manifest in the relations with men in the public sphere, in the case of Clarice Starling (*The Silence of the Lambs*, 1991) and Maggie Fitzgerald (*Million Dollar Baby,* 2004), and in the private sphere in the case of Joanna Kramer (*Kramer versus Kramer*, 1978), Rose DeWitt Bukater (*Titanic,* 1997). Some of the female characters indeed succeed to have a more equal relationship with men, if only for a short time. Rose DeWitt Bukater, Viola de Lesseps, Annie Hall, and Adrianna Pennino (latter in *Rocky,* 1976) live this more equal relationship in the form of a love affair or cohabitation, which in films prove to be more proper frames for woman-man equal relationship than traditional marriage. Rose DeWitt Bukater and Viola de Lesseps accomplish these short-lived relationships characterized by more balanced powers, with men who are situated below their social class positions.

Those woman characters, who are not only active in private life, but also in public life, however, attributing lesser importance to the latter, in favour of their private life responsibilities, like Alicia Nash (*A Beautiful Mind*, 2001), Kasturba Gandhi (*Gandhi*, 1982), are in a better situation, compared to the only-housewives, from the point of their power-position and success of their marriage or relationship. Although in their case male dominance can be felt, they emphasize that they voluntarily and consciously subordinate themselves to their husband's will, and they seem less defenceless.

The results of the research are coherent with the feminist viewpoint that those women, whose activity is limited to the private sphere, are more likely to become defenceless and subordinated in their private relations to men. In the studied films, women who are active only in the private sphere, as housewives and mothers, like Kay Corleone (*Godfather II.*, 1974), Beth Jarrett (*Ordinary People*, 1980), Emma Greenway Horton (*Terms of Endearment*, 1983), Wan Jung Elizabeth (*The Last Emperor,* 1987), are presented as subordinated and defenceless in their relations to their husbands. When trying to vindicate their demands, they have to face resistance. Moreover, their efforts

made to save their marriages prove to be unsuccessful. They come out of their marriage based on male dominance, as the losers of divorce, demented or even dead.

The fact, that in the analyzed films we can only find few examples of woman-woman relationship, makes it difficult to establish connections among woman-woman relations and feminism. Latter emphasizes the importance of solidarity among women, although it also points out that there are important inequalities between women that need to be reduced, parallel to inequalities between women and men. The coequal relationship between women, in the form of friendship in the private sphere is twice present in the films. The film *American Beauty* (1999) presents a very contradictory friendship of two teenage girls, Jane Burnham and Angela Hayes. Their friendship is unsettled by Angela Hays' seductive behavior towards Jane Burnham's father, which is very embarrassing for Jane. We can see a more superficially presented case of a friendship between two women in *Out of Africa* (1985), between the leading female character, Karen Blixen and a minor character, Felicity. Their relation is interesting because it can be more surely associated with feminist aspects: Felicity is asking for Karen Blixen's advice related to the matters of independent and self-assured behavior.

Women-women relationship in the private sphere appears in the form of mother-daughter relationship in the rest of the cases. The relationship of Aurora Greenway and her mature daughter, Emma Greenway Horton (*Terms of Endearment*, 1983) is characterized by the efforts of dominance of the mother and the counter-efforts for independence and rebellion of the daughter. Aurora Greenway is an anxious, stubborn, dominant person, who is trying to impose her will on her daughter. Immediately after becoming major, Emma Greenway escapes into an early marriage. Moreover, she establishes physical distance from her mother, moving into a distant town. In spite of these, this mother-daughter relationship is also emotionally supportive. The relationship of a mother and her adolescent daughter in *American Beauty* (1999) is also characterized by efforts of dominance from the part of the mother, Carolyn Burnham and rebellion of the daughter, Jane Burnham. Contrary to the case of Aurora Greenway and Emma Greenway Horton, they can not develop a positive emotional relationship. Their relation is interrupted when Jane runs away from home with her boyfriend.

In the private sphere we can only see few women-women relationships in the films studied; these cases have in common the aspect of dominance. An „unproblematic" dominance-subordination relation exists between head nurse Mildred

Ratched and her immediate employee, nurse Itsu, in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975). The relationship of the aristocrat Viola de Lesseps and Queen Elisabeth in *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) is roughly presented, but important for the fate of the former, the leading female character of the film. The Queen is in position to decide that Viola de Lesseps is not punished for her stage acting, but after the performance she has to join her husband in an arranged marriage, traveling aboard. Besides the above presented, we can find one more important woman-woman relationship that takes place in the public sphere, between Roxie Hart and Velma Kelly in *Chicago* (2002), both arrested for murder. The two women are rivaling for the attention of the popular attorney, Billy Flynn. Roxie Hart is seen to be a winner of this rivalry. Then Velma Kelly is ready to openly and voluntarily subordinate herself to Roxie Hart, for the sake of a potential alliance. When this is rejected by latter, Velma Kelly testifies against her at the trial. The relationship of the two women is shaped dynamically according to their interests, beginning with their competition for the attorney, to their joint number on stage, which can be seen as an alliance, after their release from prison.

As a concluding remark, it can be stated, that the woman-woman relations, likewise the woman-man relations, can be interpreted mainly in terms of subordination-dominance; in these relations, the efforts of subordinated parts may in some cases be associated by us with feminist efforts.

### III.4. Representation of woman's body and the feminist perspective

Connections of the representation of the female body and the feminist perspective can only be discovered in the films made after the mid 1990's. In relation to the films made earlier it can be stated that the outfit and appearance of the women is mainly oriented by the realist regime of Hollywood filmmaking, in most cases representing the social class position. Two cases can be outlined as exceptions to this. Annie Hall is paying conscious attention to her special outfit, which represents her adherence to the world of artists. Karen Blixen, the leading female character of *Out of Africa* (1985) is more and more active in agricultural labor and in „manly" struggle. Her outfit and body usage changes from the more feminine to the more practical. These two cases of the outer representation of women can be considered as early representations of the feminist position in this respect.

Beginning with the 1990's, woman character's outfit shows more emphasized correspondence to their actions and physical activity. It is aligned to their work, way of life, or physical training, in accordance to feminist efforts. Moreover, a new tendency of the 1990's can be discovered in the association of the woman's body to physical force in films like *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), *Million Dollar Baby* (2004). Parallel to this tendency, female characters with emphasized feminine outfit also emerge in this period, mostly in costume dramas or the musical. The latter tendency may be interpreted in relation to the efforts of hegemonic masculinity; however, these female characters with emphasized feminine outfit (for example, Viola de Lesseps in *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), or Roxie Hart and Velma Kelly in *Chicago*, (2002)), are very active in public and/or private sphere. The outfit orientated by activity, showing to be more pragmatic, more masculine or unisex, as well as the emphasized feminine appearance may be associated with the new focus of feminism on the female body.

## III.5. Strategies of consensus and integration of hegemonic masculinity in relation to films

A novelty of my paper is the study of feminist efforts vis-a-vis the negotiating and consensus-aiming strategies of hegemonic masculinity while studying women's representation in film texts. Hegemonic masculinity intends to maintain its own privileged position challenged by feminist efforts by means of constant „conversations” with the latter, as a result of which judges, neutralizes or integrates them.

Through the analysis of the women's representation in films can be traced the way hegemonic masculinity integrates feminist efforts oriented to the public and private sphere. Filmic resolutions may be interpreted as the strategies for consensus. On the grounds of analyzed films I stated that hegemonic masculinity integrates the positions of power attained by women in the public sphere mainly by the *strategy of presenting this as exceptionality, uniqueness*. The hegemony of masculinity subsists while accepting that certain woman with privileged positions and/or exceptional capabilities attain certain power and agency within it. Mildred Ratched (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, 1975), Karen Blixen (*Out of Africa,* 1985), Carolyn Burnham (*American Beauty*, 1999), Maggie Fitzgerald *(Million Dollar Baby,* 2004), are exceptionally ambitious, determined, persevering, highly insistent. Velma Kelly (*Chicago*, 2002) and

Clarice Starling (*The Silence of the Lambs*, 1991), besides the above mentioned characteristics are also highly intelligent. Some women, like Mildred Ratched or Carolyn Burnham, who attribute a power position to their work activity, are presented as negative characters.

Hegemonic masculinity, in several cases, integrates women's activity in public sphere by the momentum of *sacrifice*. It presupposes the pressure to make sacrifices and to choose between the public and the private sphere that can be perceived as a *strategy that potentially discourages* women from public life involvement. Women characters mostly have to sacrifice – or lack - private life for success in work, the latter making possible for them the access to power. A form of sacrificing private life is the „unmentioned" one, which is not discursively thematised, but it is manifested in the lack of private life, in the case of Clarice Starling, Mildred Ratched and Maggie Fitzgerald. In those cases, when women's public sphere activity is mainly a self-realization, and is not connected to power positions to occupy – Annie Hall, Viola de Lesseps - , hegemonic masculinity integrates the women's effort by their relations to supportive male characters.

**III.6. Efforts of equality and resistance, manifestations of feminist strategies**

On the ground of the analyzed films it can be inferred that feminist efforts do manifest themselves mainly in female character's goal setout and realization process. In the course of this, women meet the support or resistance of the men and women related to them. It is discernible from the analysis that a strategy of feminism for the better goal attainment is *communicating and making public the goals* and their realization process. Another strategy is noticeable in this respect: women *seek for allies*, both in the public and in the private sphere. In the feminist movement, except for the radical feminism, which relies exclusively on the solidarity among women, the other wings aspire for a social consensus concerning the equality for women and the issue of women's aims. In this respect, especially liberal feminism attributes a significant role to the possible alliances with men. In the analyzed films, there are several examples for woman-man alliances, but the alliances between women are very few.

The ideology of hegemonic masculinity carries on negotiating procedures with feminism, latter perceived as an oppressed counter-ideology; these procedures become

visible in film texts. In some cases the attitude of the former is in consent with the feminist strategy for seeking alliances with man or women. It „ideally" integrates those representations of women, which are characterized by the subordination of women's paid work to private life, securing the material support for the latter. However, female characters, who make significant efforts for their success both in the public and private sphere, considering both spheres as equally important, are shown to be more difficult to be integrated by hegemonic masculinity.

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## V. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE TOPIC OF DISSERTATION

### Publications in Hungarian language:

### Book chapter:

Biró Emese [2007]: *Collisions of Value Systems in the film „American Beauty".* (Hungarian title: Értékhierarchiák ütközése az Amerikai szépség című filmben.) In: S. Nagy Katalin, Orbán Annamária (ed.): Értékek és normák - Interdiszciplináris megközelítésben. Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest

### Reviews in scientific journals:

Biró Emese [2007]: *The Struggle for the Institutionalization of Gender Studies in Hungarian Higher Education.* (Hungarian title: A társadalmi nemek tudományának küzdelmes intézményesülése a magyar felsőoktatásban.) (Book reviewed: Pető Andrea [2006] (szerk.): A társadalmi nemek oktatása Magyarországon. Ifjúsági, Családügyi, Szociális és Esélyegyenlőségi Minisztérium, Budapest.) In: Iskolakultúra, 2007. 11-12., 187-193.

Biró Emese [2007]: *The „Traditional" Way to Reconcile Work and Private Life.* (Hungarian title: A munka és a magánélet összehangolásának „hagyományos" módja.) (Issue reviewed: Plantenga, J.-Remery, Ch. [2005]: Reconciliation of Work and Private Life. A Comparative Review of Thirty European Countries. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.) In: Szociológiai Szemle, 2008. 1. (Accepted for publication)

Biró Emese [2007]: *Gender in Film: The Representation of Women in the Light of Feminist Film Studies.* (Hungarian title: Gender a filmben: a nők filmbeli ábrázolása a feminista filmkritika értelmezésében) (Book reviewed: Sue Thornham (ed.) [1999]: Feminist Film Theory: A Reader. New York University Press, New York.) In: Educatio (Accepted for publication)

### Lectures at scientific conference:

Biró Emese [2006]*: Collisions of Value Systems in the film „American Beauty"* (Hungarian title: Értékhierarchiák ütközése az Amerikai szépség című filmben.) Conference titled: Értékek és normák interdiszciplináris megközelítésben. BME, Budapest, 8-9. September, 2006.

Biró Emese [2007]: *Textual Identification Positions for Male and Female Spectators in the Film „Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban"* (Hungarian title: A férfi és női nézők számára a filmszöveg által megalkotott azonosulási pozíciók a Harry Potter és az azkabani fogoly című filmben.) Conference: X. Erdélyi Film- és Médiatudományi Konferencia, Kolozsvár, 19-20. May, 2006.