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“FOOTBALL IS NEVER ONLY FOOTBALL”: SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE FILM ‘LOOKING FOR ERIC’

Abstract:

Football, which is an important part of daily life in almost every society in our day, has progressed in similar periods with the cinema. These two fields, which were among the important actors of the 20th century, existed in daily life through their various intersecting aspects, and these similarities provided a ground for the cinema to be nourished by football. Football has functioned far beyond just being a game within social life and turned into a highly important area at both cultural and economic levels through the bond it has formed with the symbolic values of daily life. The influence of football on masses is too big to be ignored. Offering a hero to individuals isolated by modern life with whom they can identify themselves, great joys experienced when the ball meets the net, and a sense of belonging to the team they support and to people they do not know, football is an activity that has achieved goals far beyond being a game. Together with the Second World War, football gradually became more professional, more commercialized, and the football spectator alienated from football, which was an important part of his life. With the development of the phenomenon of being a supporter, football followers regained their existence in football and managed to exist within a collectivity.

In the present study, the relationship between football and social life, and the phenomenon of being a supporter are examined through the film *Looking for Eric*, which is among the important films of Ken Loach’s cinema. The film narrates how the life of a postman who has strong feelings of support for his team and who looks for hope for his bad life changes for the better when his most favorite footballer comes into his life and how the experiences in a football field can be put into practice in real life. Playfields in which a reproduction in the public sense springs to life, especially the stadiums, once again appear in front of us with this film as the proof of that “football is never only football”. What makes the film different from other football-themed films is the use of a real football star, and that the film constructs a narrative through the relationship between life and football presenting true slices of the footballer’s life and achievements in the football field.

Keywords:

Cinema, Football, Social Life