


Chapter 6

Rethinking Dogtooth (2009) and The Lobster (2015) in the Context of Post-Truth

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines Yorgos Lanthimos's films Dogtooth (2009) and The Lobster (2015) in the context of post-truth, focusing on how family and intimate relationships function as a mechanisms of power and symbolic domination. Rather than approaching intimacy as a natural or autonomous domain, the study conceptualizes family and romantic bonds as socially constructed fields in which truth and legitimacy are produced through narrative repetition and emotional manipulation. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, symbolic violence, and marriage strategies, this chapter analyzes how authority reconstructs reality within social systems. Using qualitative content analysis, the study demonstrates that post-truth operates not only in political discourse but also within the most intimate relationships, revealing cinema's capacity to expose the erosion of truth in every aspects of life.

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Films constitute a form of narrative cultural text and serve as significant instruments for conveying emotions, ideas, and values to wide audiences. The modes of

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thought transmitted through cinema often reflect the value systems of dominant power structures, and these ideological frameworks are disseminated through film. As a medium of communication, cinema not only represents social structures but also produces meanings related to them and generates various discourses (Atay, 2020: 137). The cinema of Yorgos Lanthimos is generally situated within the movement known as the Greek Weird Wave, and his works are characterized by critical inquiries into social norms, power relations within structures of authority, and the position of the individual within these systems. Lanthimos is widely regarded as one of the most distinctive and provocative figures in contemporary cinema. His films are shaped around unsettling and unconventional themes that reveal the darker and more absurd dimensions of human nature. The director's cinematic universe frequently centers on themes that question individuals' inner conflicts, social norms, and existential issues. In particular, power relations operating within various social institutions, most notably symbolic and biological family structures, constitute a central focus of his films (Akşit, 2024: 1077).

Absurd situations, open-ended and ambiguous conclusions, sudden eruptions of violence, and emotionally restrained performances are among the most striking features of Lanthimos's films. These elements are often combined with narrative structures in which one character attempts to establish absolute control over the bodies and minds of others. Such narratives do not merely stage domestic spaces such as the home, but also extend to institutional settings including schools, factories, gyms, hospitals, and, as in *The Lobster* (2015), dystopian hotel environment. In this respect, Lanthimos's use of space reflects institutional mechanisms of control that seek to discipline individuals into conformity with social norms (Akşit, 2024). As a representative of the new generation of filmmakers, Yorgos Lanthimos is frequently described as an auteur¹ director. Constructing predominantly dystopian worlds in his films, Lanthimos engages audiences with a range of representations articulated through his characters. This cinematic movement, which generally rejects conventional narrative structures, emerged particularly in response to the new social conditions shaped by the economic crisis that struck Greece in 2008. Following the economic collapse, this cinematic movement has addressed not only economic crises but also profound crises of identity. The Greek New Wave has developed a critical stance toward authoritarian structures within Greek society. This cinematic style does more than merely foreground social issues. It also enables audiences to engage with these issues from alternative perspectives. Positioning itself in opposition to Hollywood's conventional narrative structures, Greek New Wave Cinema has sought to establish an independent cinematic language by rejecting the codes of mainstream cinema. Within this movement, institutions such as the family, authority, and patriarchal structures are examined through a distinctly critical lens. Lanthimos's works similarly aim to render visible the state of crisis within society

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