

Age as a Token: Representation of Elderness and Youth in Paradise (2023)

Bir Takas Aracı Olarak Yaş: Cennet (2023) Filminde Gençliğin ve Yaşlılığın Temsili

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Abstract

Just elderness cannot be thought of as a single factor, the body is also a concept that cannot be considered from a single perspective. The body, being a biological and sociological organism has been interpreted differently by thinkers and scientists; it has gained significance with phenomena such as Enlightenment, modernism etc. Thus, the body has become the locus of many phenomena that surround human life; illness, death, old age, physical disability, etc., becoming images that need correction, cessation, or prevention. The aim of the study is to examine the transformation of the concepts related to aging within the framework of the body through the film *Paradise* (Kunz, 2023) and to examine the processes of body control, discipline, transformation into commodity, transhumanism/posthumanism in the context of the discussion of the right to life. As it is known, studies on old age/elderness and the body have also been of interest in cinema and this subject has been presented to the audience in many films with different messages. The science fiction film *Paradise* which shows that old age is an undesirable phenomenon and youth can be turned into a commodity that can be bought with money, is a German-made film that discusses the debates on change on the body, the problems of humanity related to aging and the decision of which bodies should live. In the research conducted, in film, it has been observed that the right to life is perceived as the privilege of wealthy individuals or scientists contributing to civilization.

Keywords: *Elderness, Body, Body Sociology, Transhumanism, Paradise*

Öz

Biyologlar yaşlılığı doğurganlığın azalması, vücut fonksiyonlarının gerilemesi olarak tanımlarken; Dünya Sağlık Örgütü fiziksel, zihinsel kapasitede düşüş olarak tanımlamaktadır. Burada yaş faktörü önemlidir; ancak yaşlılığın belirlenmesi için tek koşul kronolojik zaman değildir. Örneğin; 65 yaş üstü bir birey çevresel, ekonomik vb. faktörlere bağlı olarak hayatını idame ettirebilirken; aynı yaşta başka bir birey yatağa bağlı veya başka birine bağımlı yaşamaktadır. Buradan yola çıkarak, yaşlılık çok yönlü düşünülmesi gereken bir kavramdır. Yaşlılık tek bir faktörle düşünülmemesi gibi beden de tek açıdan düşünülmemesi gereken bir kavramdır. Biyolojik olduğu kadar sosyolojik bir organizma olan beden düşünceleri, bilim insanları tarafından farklı yorumlanmıştır; Aydınlanma, modernizm, teknolojik gelişmeler vb. olgularla önem kazanmıştır. Böylece beden, bilimin ve kültürün merkezi haline gelerek insan yaşamını dolaylı olarak birçok olgunun mekânı; hastalık, ölüm, yaşlılık, fiziksel engellilik vb. birçok konuda düzeltilmesi, durdurulması veya önlenmesi gereken birer imge olmuştur. Çalışmanın amacı yaşlanma ile ilgili kavramların beden çerçevesinde dönüşümlerini *Paradise* (Boris Kunz, 2023) filmi üzerinden okuyarak bedeninin denetimi, disipline edilmesi, meta haline dönüşümü, transhumanizm/posthumanizm süreçlerini yaşam hakkı olgusu tartışması bağlamında incelenmiştir. Bilindiği üzere yaşlılık/yaşlılık ve beden üzerine yapılan çalışmalar sinemanın da ilgi alanına girmiş ve bu konu birçok filmde farklı mesajlarla izleyiciye sunulmuştur. Yaşlılığın istenmeyen bir olgu olduğunu ve gençliğin para ile satın alınabilen bir metaya dönüştürülebileceğini gösteren bilim kurgu filmi *Paradise* beden üzerindeki değişim tartışmalarını, insanlığın yaşlanma ile ilgili sorunlarını ve hangi bedenlerin yaşaması gerektiği kararını tartışan Alman yapımı bir filmidir. Yapılan araştırmada, filmde yaşam hakkının zengin kişilerin ya da uygarlığa katkı sağlayan bilim insanlarının hakkı olduğu gözlemlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Yaşlılık, Beden, Beden Sosyolojisi, Transhumanizm, Paradise*

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Introduction

The concept of old age is a concept that is difficult to define and varies in different societies, cultures, time and geography, and according to economic, psychological or physiological conditions. Despite these changes and conditions, the World Health Organization defines people over the age of 65 as elderly (Demirel & Sütçü, 2021). Old age is evaluated differently in societies and there is no homogeneous group of elderly people. Factors such as the individual's gaining uniqueness compared to other individuals in terms of sociological and psychological characteristics in the socialization process, whether he/she has qualifications or opportunities in terms of economic conditions, and the values represented by the individual affect his/her attitudes and behaviors towards what is happening around him/her (Kalaycı, 2021). For example, older individuals who have knowledge and experience and have a respected place in traditional society and the extended family have not found the same respect in modern society or the nuclear family. It is thought that technological tools play a major role in the transfer of knowledge and culture, and that these tools take the function of transferring information from older individuals in the process.

Factors such as the increase in technological developments and the advancement of medical facilities have led to an increase in the average life expectancy, as well as an increase in studies on delaying or even stopping aging. The concern to look young, vigorous and beautiful, the humanity's struggle to defy death, etc. have brought countless applications on the body (beauty promises of the cosmetics industry, reproduction of the body through medical and aesthetic operations, companies offering healthy nutrition and vitamin supplements, sectors claiming to give the body a healthy appearance through sports and exercise) and the body has undoubtedly become a commodity in this process. This change and transformation of the body has been the subject of study in the field of body sociology, a sub-branch of sociology, and the body has been analyzed with concepts such as body-spirit, body-consumer culture, transhuman and posthuman transformation of the body from past to present.

As it is known, studies on old age and the body have also been a part of the issue of representation in mass media, and the issue of old age has been examined in media such as television, news, advertisements, newspapers, etc. Looking briefly at the analyses, it was concluded that the elderly are underrepresented in media tools (Kuruoğlu & Salman, 2017) television strengthens ageist attitudes with stereotypical representations of the elderly (Zengin, 2015) the elderly are included in internet news with positive and negative representations (Göksun, 2023) the elderly appear less in advertisements (Durdubaş, 2022) the group represented in the most disadvantaged position in TV series is elderly women (Koç, 2021), and they are shown negatively in newspaper news (Sivritepe, 2021). This situation may have many economic, cultural, and political consequences. For example, the low or negative representation of the elderly population in mass media may lead to the neglect of this group as consumers and the low quality of services and products for the elderly in the field of marketing. In addition, the low visibility or negative representation of the elderly in the media may also bring along the danger of low social visibility. On the other hand, the media's negative perspective on the elderly may increase age-based discrimination by changing the society's perspective or may lead to the formation of negative attitudes, behaviours or perceptions towards the elderly in the context of social values and norms. This situation is diametrically opposed to the culture of valuing and respecting the elderly. From a political perspective, representations of the elderly in the media can be used to review the pros, cons, and shortcomings of public policies and social services for the elderly and to develop new

policies and projects for state and private sector initiatives. It can also help to accelerate political efforts in the fight against age discrimination, health and care services, economic supports, practices for active aging, the formation of age-appropriate housing models, etc. The fact that the economic, cultural, or political status of the elderly, who are the memory and cultural identity of society, is in the position they deserve in society will pave the way for the formation of a generation that has not lost its moral and cultural values and will contribute positively to the level of development of civilizations.

The issue of the representation of old age has also entered the field of interest of cinema, which is one of the mass media. In the studies conducted in this field, it has been concluded that the representation of the elderly in cinema is inadequate and the ways of representation are limited (Aytaç, 2020), and that the representation of the elderly is represented as a type rather than a character (Ertaylan, 2016). In addition to the studies, the science fiction film *Paradise* (2023) (Director, Boris Kunz), which shows that old age is an undesirable phenomenon and youth can turn into a commodity that can be bought with money, is a German-made film that discusses the discussions on change in the body, the problems of humanity about aging, and the decision of which bodies should live. Beyond the problematic issue of not seeing or negatively representing the elderly in the film, the problematic issue lies in the fact that aging is a phenomenon that is not wanted to be seen and that only people who are successful in different branches should have the right to life. Before examining the film in terms of body sociology and transhumanism, it is important to give information about these concepts in order to understand the subject.

1. Building and Thinking the Borders of Body

The concept of the body is an important topic of discussion in different disciplines. While this concept is examined within the framework of philosophy, religion or different doctrines within the framework of the soul-body relationship; in sociology, medicine, communication, health or different fields, it has been tried to be explained in relation to concepts such as beautiful-ugly, young-older, ideal body, body as an object of desire, healthy body, etc.

The discussion at the first step of the subject, that is, the relationship between soul and body, dates back to the philosophers of Antiquity. For example, according to Plato, the soul is the ruler and active in every aspect. The body is the opposite. It is governed, passive and introduces objects to the soul through the senses. Considering the unity of the soul with the body as a humiliating situation for the soul, the thinker states that the body is a prison for the soul and that the soul cannot reach the truth as long as it is in the body. Plato, who says that the soul is given mastery and the body is given slavery or submission as creation, says that the soul has reason and the body does not have such a thing (Kaya, 2013). The body prevents the functions that the soul must fulfill through elements such as eating and drinking, sexuality or disease, and the relationship it establishes with the soul contaminates it. From this perspective, the only way for the soul to be liberated is to return to the universe of ideas (Cluzeau, 2013). This distinction between the body and the soul positions the soul in a sacred and unique place, while the body is positioned in a lower place that hinders the activities of the soul. In this context, the body was portrayed as a negative object without any distinction between young and old, and it was emphasized that it was the soul that was or should be valuable. When we look at the concept of soul and body from the point of view of different thinkers, regardless of East or West, it is seen that the soul has a ruling function and is sacred, while the body is a tool that enables the soul to move.

In general terms, both Ancient Greece, Islam and Christianity emphasized the sanctity of the soul and that the body is an obstacle to the purification of the soul. At the same time, religions have constructed the body as a structure that is abandoned with death. The relationship between life and the body is mostly seen as life after death. As such, the body is a materialist construction and belongs to this materialist universe. "Generally, the toleration of death is the province of religion and philosophy. Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, for example, take the meaning of existence to be found in what happens after death. Still, according to these perspectives, dying is a sacred time in which one might take stock of their life balanced by the mystery of death" (Rossi, 2020). The soul that leaves the body is valuable for the afterlife. Discussions about the body have later moved out of the body-soul relationship and with the birth of the capitalist system, an individualistic body perception has taken its place in the system (Sennett, 2008).

The increase in the interaction of people, societies or states living in different parts of the world through developing technologies has brought about globalization; the problem of completing/regulating the body has emerged. The process of regulating the body started as disciplining the body in line with social and cultural expectations and the process continued by creating its own cultural codes. This new system, which we can call consumption culture, has turned the body into a commodity in different areas. With the process, not only the patterns of bodily appearance have changed, but there have also been changes that have turned the body into a cultural subject. The body, which ceased to be a subject of production and became an object of consumption, was recreated in the consumer society through prosthetics, surgical interventions, transsexual operations, plastic surgery, transplants or amputations. In addition to the changes in plastic surgery, the new concepts attributed to old age, diet, sports, fashion, etc. and the increase in interest in appearance also support the process of body re-creation (Esgin, 2011).

Starting from the 17th century, it is said that all the anatomical and functional characteristics of the body were defined as an object that could be understood by general scientific rules, as science attributed to it. The most important example of this is René Descartes, one of the most important thinkers of the Enlightenment. Descartes points out that the truth of the proposition "I exist" is true only when perceived by reason. The body is defined here as something that has a definable position, an organizable shape and occupies room in space. In this context, the body is defined as the mechanical structure of legs, hands, face and limbs, and is regarded as an object that is fundamentally no different from other physical objects. According to the Cartesian understanding, the body is part of the external world. The mind is the thinking thing. In Descartes' discussion, a mechanical body is defined, and the body is considered as a machine. For this reason, from a Cartesian perspective, the body is only a tool (Işık, 1998). Descartes believes that the mind is the source of the self and likens the body to the machine that houses the mind. For this reason, while he values the mind as a subject worthy of philosophy, he relegates the body to the background. Descartes made a clear distinction between the mind and the body, severed the relationship between them, saw the body as a place where the mind is located, and considered the body as an obstacle (Le Breton, 2014).

The Cartesian understanding rejected the religion-based view of medieval philosophy and resorted to experiments on the road to reason and scientificity. Events such as the collapse of the oppressive order of medieval Europe and the expansion of areas of freedom due to the shaken authority of the church led to social and individual developments and helped these

developments gain momentum. Afterward, historical events such as industrial developments, the increase in the number of factories and production, technological breakthroughs, etc. constituted the first steps towards the reproduction of the social status of the body. In Featherstone's words, metaphors about the body were created in modern society and the body became an important element of consumer culture (Işık, 1998). The body has now become an object of pleasure that is reproduced and shaped by classical communication tools such as advertisements, television, street billboards, cinema, fashion magazines, newspapers, or today, social media; at the same time, it has become a main source on which cosmetics, health, clothing, aesthetics, sports, medicine and many other fields can constantly play and make changes. From this point of view, apart from being a physical and biological phenomenon, issues such as how the body is positioned in the social sphere and the functions it has in the functioning of institutions have led to the emergence of the sociology of the body and constituted its fields of study. In addition, feminism studies that discuss gender, the problem of old age that emerged with the increase in the level of welfare in modern countries, the increase in the physical problems of the body with old age, the body becoming an object of consumption, technological developments in the fields of health, sports, etc. can be listed as factors that triggered the formation of the sociology of the body (Abercrombie, 2006). In short, the concept of sociology of the body is a sub-branch of sociology that examines the issues of controlling or directing the body by addressing the cultural codes imposed on bodies within the concepts of gender and social space (Marshall, 2005).

2. Human Enhancement: Posthumanism/ Transhumanism

Thinkers like Nick Bostrom and Julian Huxley argue that the human species will transform into transhuman and then posthuman species in the distant future and discussions on the body are carried out through these concepts. In positivist science, it is known that living things exist from an evolutionary point of view, meaning that living things have evolved and metamorphosed in the process. Human beings also metamorphosed through this evolutionary process and became Homo Sapiens. In the 20th century, the idea was put forward that Homo Sapiens was not the last link in the metamorphosis chain and that it could also take different forms. From this point of view, it is an inevitable fact that science and technology played a major role in the emergence of this idea. Through these ideas, the concept of Posthuman emerged, and the concept has gained meaning as the state in which the physical and mental limits of Homo Sapiens have disappeared (Yetkiner & Özdemir, 2022). According to the authors discussing the concept, *Posthuman* is a technologically advanced species that may have superpowers compared to the human of our age. "Transhumanists talk about transcendence, overcoming nature, and fulfilling human potentials. We will take the reins of our own evolution to the point we will become "better than human". Some believe that posthumanity itself is the goal of the transhumanist project, while others claim that it will be the natural outcome of pursuing values that we already hold dear" (Vaccari, 2015). This species will rapidly change and surpass the capacity of the current human being and will have artificial intelligence far beyond current human standards. This should not mean the end of the human race. On the contrary, the world will contain different, incomparable species (Bostrom, 2003b). It is seen that humanity still has a long way to go to reach the posthuman species. At this stage, the concept of *Transhuman* enters the discussion. Transhuman can be seen as an intermediate form that will serve as a bridge for humanity to reach Posthuman. The term Transhumanism was first used by the evolutionary theorist Julian Huxley, and the aim of Transhumanism was expressed as equipping human beings with advanced technologies

and thus transforming them into a more advanced being, in short, increasing human capacity (Dağ, 2019). The premises and the main concepts of transhumanism can be easily identified: human nature is the subject of innovation and transformations. Technology is seen as a continuation of human evolution. By way of consequence, a deep symbiosis between human and machine up to the emergence of post-human entities will occur (Iuga, 2016).

While Bostrom defines Transhumanism as the desire to fundamentally improve the human condition through intellectual, cultural movements and applied methods; the elimination of aging, especially through the development and widespread use of technological movements, and the increase of intellectual, physical and psychological capacity, he sees Transhumanism as a partial extension of humanism. Emphasizing that the individual is important for humanists, the author argues that concepts such as freedom, tolerance and democracy can be improved with Transhumanism (Bostrom, 2003b). Likewise, Nicholas Agar thinks that the concept is a movement that advocates delaying or eliminating aging and increasing one's intellectual, physical or psychological potential, improving the person and his/her position through different means (Agar, 2007)

Transhumanism actually gives today's people a chance to make up for the time that they do not appreciate or have no chance of appreciating while living. It can enable people, who try to survive in the capitalist consumer society by constantly getting used to and consuming, to focus on the things they lack in education, culture, art, sports, etc. related to life. By extending your life span, it will become possible to achieve most of the things you need.

A person can significantly enhance life expectancy, intelligence, health, memory, and emotional sensitivity without losing their identity. Radical changes, like education or a cure from a lethal disease, don't end the original person. Modifications that add to a person's capacities, preserving core memories and feelings, are more substantial than those that subtract. Thus, increasing capacities wouldn't easily cause a person to cease to exist (Bostrom, 2003a).

In their article "*Trans-Human and Post-Human: A Challenge for the Human and Philosophical Sciences*", Marta Toraldo and Domenico Maurizio Toraldo define the concept of "transhumanism" or "posthuman" as the expression of cultural movements arising from the crisis of certainty in medicine and science. However, the authors consider this concept as a perspective that aims to increase people's physical-cognitive abilities, encourages the use of the most advanced scientific and technological discoveries, and aims to improve conditions such as disease and old age, which are considered undesirable for humanity (Toraldo & Toraldo, 2018). In short, the concept of Transhumanism is defined as the development of the human race, preventing old age and diseases, and increasing the level of welfare. Whether human beings will be fair in the transition to this species is a matter of debate.

Transhumanism envisions itself as a movement built out of Enlightenment Humanism with a focus both on the intrinsic value of the individual and the right of that individual to enhance him or herself through science and technology, called morphological freedom (Hogue, 2016). In addition to the views that the emergence of transhumanism will be beneficial for humanity, there are also critical views stating that the emergence of this species will divide races into inferior and superior, and that new technologies may be used to harm humanity instead of improving the human condition (Terec-Vlad & Terec-Vlad, 2014). However, the debates also focus on the concepts of justice and freedom, with critics arguing that these technologies will reduce individual autonomy and increase injustice in the world, while those who support transhumanism think that humanity will evolve into a more just and free society (Dağ, 2018). The issues discussed in such a society will mostly be new interspecies relations and concepts

arising from the hybrid relationship between human beings and technology. Transhumanism proposes the use of advanced technologies in the human organism to improve its functionality. What is understood as "better" will be established by the ethical system to which the group that proposes human enhancement goals is attached. This can be so flexible that it varies between utilitarian ethics (Cyborgism), Secular Humanist ethics (Humanity Plus, Techno-Progressivism), some pre-modern ethical systems (Archeofutourism), heroic or Nietzschean ethics (Suprahumanism), Hacker ethics (Body Hacking / Grinder), religious ethics (Transfigurism, Supermuslim) or ethical individualism (Extropianism) (Gayozzo, 2021).

In order to find an answer to the question of how the above terms are represented in cinema, the film **Paradise** was analysed within the scope of the study. The main subject of the movie is concepts/themes such as old age, body, youth and beauty. These concepts will be classified as themes and how these themes constructed in the film are filled will be analyzed. In particular, the metaphorical representations inherent in themes such as old age, youth, being healthy will be analyzed and the dystopian universe of the film will be tried to be understood.

3. Paradise (2023): Can I Borrow Your Life Span?

In a utopian universe, the biotechnology company Aeon buys the youth of poor individuals in exchange for money if their DNA is compatible. Max, a donation manager at Aeon, is married to Elana, a young doctor. When their newly purchased house is deliberately burned down by Aeon's owner, Sofie Theissen, the couple incurs a huge debt. The bank forecloses on 40 years of Elana's life due to their inability to pay. Sofie, who lost her daughter Lucy to Progeria, plans to extend her life using Elana's youth, as their DNA matches. Max, realizing Sofie's plan, attempts to save Elana by kidnapping Sofie but instead abducts her younger daughter, Marie, to use her youth for Elana. After a series of confrontations, Max changes his mind, siding with the resistance group, the Adam Group, and decides not to take Marie's youth. Elana, however, forcibly takes it through another doctor, and later leaves Max to start a new life. Meanwhile, Sofie continues her search for another donor.

Method: The aim of the study is to examine the transformation of concepts related to aging within the framework of the body through the film **Paradise** (2023) and to examine the processes of body control, discipline, transformation into commodity, transhumanism/posthumanism in the context of the discussion of the right to life. Most of the studies on age focus on gender, culture and body. However, the aim of this study is to focus on the representation of age in cinema as a dystopian commodity that can be sold/purchased.

The study has limitations such as focusing on only one film and the film being a dystopian film. Thematic Analysis was used in the study as one of the qualitative research methods. The themes determined by content analysis were classified according to the usage areas of themes in communication studies and the indicators in the film were determined. The determined indicators were analysed in the light of the body sociology literature, which is frequently referred to in both health sciences and social sciences, such as old age, aging, transhumanism and medical and scientific interventions to extend human life. The effects of filmic narrative language and cinematography on the reinforcement of the subject with signs were taken into consideration in both the collection and evaluation of the data.

The research question was determined as how age and aging as a biological and cultural phenomenon are represented in cinema in the film Paradise. In addition, the question of how the body is constructed with cinematic representation codes on issues such as aging, aging, old age, transhumanism was also focused on.

In other words, it is quite utopian for humanity that human life can be extended, that life can become something that can be transferred. On the other hand, the fact that the technology produced by human beings has advanced so much is surprising and dizzying to say the least. However, the point where the transfer of life as a technological development becomes dystopian in the film is who decides on this transfer, for what reason and when. In other words, is the transfer of your life the result of your free will, or is it a transaction that can be exchanged like a token or a currency and will result in your death?

In the film, the transformation of the body and the issue of old age in the events that take place in the utopian world are handled within the framework of concepts such as the discipline of the body by institutions - the control of the body, lower class - upper class conflicts, transhumanism, equality, justice - injustice.

4. Aging

In the discussions and explanations on body and soul in ancient philosophy or Abrahamic religions, the idea that the soul belongs to the essence or is the image of the Creator has evolved into the idea of achieving immortality with the body in the movie. This is an indication of the idea that the sanctity of the soul has been taken away and that the body is what matters. Although the issue of the sanctity of the soul turns into the issue of the body being important with the Industrial Revolution in the real world we live in, this situation is taken one step further in the movie. "The Enlightenment thinkers attempted to move past the idea of human nature as being defined by God-given immortal souls inhabiting flesh, to the view that we are rational minds emerging out of and transforming nature" (Hughes, 2013).

Globalized old age is a huge social problem, especially when many older people, from 80 or 90 years old, lose their autonomy. Many have suffered falls and lost mobility, others face Alzheimer's. When old age enters this stage, the elderly depend on geriatric nurses and other types of caregivers. Therefore, most of the time, they are taken to specialized institutions. (de Fernandes Teixeira, 2020). The reproduction of the body against old age has now gone beyond the stage of making efforts with sectors such as aesthetics, fashion, cosmetics, etc. and has reached the stage of directly regaining the youth it had in the past with a very short-term transfer process. Contrary to the imprisonment of the soul in the body cage or the soul's desire to reach the essence/truth in philosophy, this is the way to discover immortality through the body and to challenge the creative power. It is also a way to regain lost youth without the need for any aesthetic-cosmetic, surgical-medical operations, healthy nutrition, diet products or vitamin supplements, without worrying about how much of the lost youth can be regained, in short, without spending a great effort and time.

In consumer culture, the expenditures on aging and the body are focused on the correction of the body. For example; trying to remove wrinkles on the face with an operation can give results in a short time, as this stretching process does not carry the naturalness of a young face and the skin can return to its old form over time. Again, the procedures performed to cover white hair cannot resist time, and the hair may return to its old state in the future. In other words, at the end of the energy and financial expenditure, the individual cannot be guaranteed to regain the perfect youth he or she desires. In the movie, this is the opposite. If the DNAs are compatible, the body can return to its youth through the youth transfer process. This process returns youth to the body in a perfect and guaranteed way. In this way, not only the beauty of youth is restored, but also the disabilities of old age (inability to walk, move quickly, etc.) are overcome. Paradoxically, the liberating force of technology, derived from the

instrumentalization of things, ends up shackling this very liberation, that is to say, instrumentalizing men (Llano-Alonso, 2019). One of the finest examples of this could be illustrated by the rejuvenation of a professor or the owner of a company, Sophie, at the *Aeon* clinic as a result of the youth transfer process. Sophie is willing to steal, murder and kill in order not to grow old and stay young. For Sophie, age is a threat and an enemy. While age is eliminated, science becomes Sophie's strongest shield. At the same time, age becomes the most important commodity of the others, the poor and the unlucky. Age as an exchangeable object and capital is the most important investment of the *Aeon* clinic.

5. Health and Beauty (Inner and Outer Body)

Health is a very different type of good. It has intrinsic benefits. If we become healthier, we are personally better off and others are not any worse off. There may even be a positive externality of enhancing our own health. If we are less likely to contract a contagious disease, others benefit by being less likely to get infected by us. Being healthier, you may also contribute more to society and consume less of publicly funded healthcare (Bostrom, 2003b). In the movie, in the *Aeon* clinic, when the professor who received youth from a time donor says *"I can walk again, it's amazing"* (09.02 min.) after returning to his youth, it is an indication that both the return to youth is perfect, and the problems related to old age are eliminated. The transhuman project is based on the idea of enhancement of the contemporary individual, to the point of transcending its limits. Thus, in practice, it is a matter of "repairing" the organism when it malfunctions and, on the other hand, of "processing" it in such a way as to increase its performance capacity (Benvenga, 2023).

In general terms, the film defines old age with processes such as headaches, rapid fatigue, wrinkles, fear of death, graying hair, ugly body image, emotional tension. The discourse *"Your age makes you more beautiful"* (1.02 min.) refers to youth; the dialog *"You are so beautiful that I feel very uncomfortable undressing in front of you"* (9.02 min.), which takes place in the conversation of two people, one old and one young, in the clinic. Dialog emphasizes the idea that the old body image is ugly; Sophie's statement *"We are selling a product that is unique in the whole world"* (22.28 min.) in the meeting emphasizes the importance of youth; *"Stop Aging"* (33.20) billboards emphasize that old age is a negative process in human life.

6. Regulation of Body and Power

Michel Foucault, by reading the issues of disciplining and controlling the body through the concept of power, does not associate power only with the state. He states that there are more micro-level power mechanisms outside the state and that this power mechanism penetrates identities from the daily life of the person to his/her body. Again, according to Foucault, power is not only a negative structure that operates through acts of censorship, exclusion or suppression, but it also exists through positive influence at the level of knowledge and desire. By producing knowledge, power does much more than punish through repression or prevention. In this way, it activates the body, penetrates behaviors, intertwines with desire and pleasure, and can exist itself (Erdoğan, 2014)

When the subject of the body in the movie is analyzed through Foucault's definition of power, it is seen that the power in the movie is processed through the *Aeon* biotechnology company. This power is not the state, but an example of the micropower mentioned by Foucault. The company enables people in certain segments of society (scientists, artists, etc.) to produce through their bodies again by giving them their youth, and it does this with a positive effect, that is, without using pressure or power. On the other hand, by fulfilling the desire of the

privileged to be young, and by fulfilling the material desires of the young people who donate their time at the end of the donation, it exists itself with desire and pleasure, in Foucault's words. The point to be noted here is that both body owners consent to the procedure. Where there is consent, it is not possible to speak of domination. This can be seen as the positive domination of power over the discipline or control of the body. In addition, the company invests heavily in R&D studies and endeavors to produce knowledge in order to solve the problem of donor-DNA matching, which poses a problem on the road to rejuvenation. If the aforementioned problem is solved, more scientists or artists who will contribute to the world will benefit from this technology and selected bodies will be able to work immortally. This work is also an indication of the penetration of power into behavior.

Foucault writes that the body is always under siege, destroyed by the terms of history (Butler, 1989). The author, who thinks that the birth of prisons or mental hospitals emerged with the so-called "great confinement" that took place in Europe in the 17th century, states that a large part of the Parisian population was taken under surveillance in a short time in the institution named general hospital established in Paris in 1656. According to Foucault, the functioning of this hospital has no medical idea or purpose. On the contrary, this hospital is a part of the monarchy and bourgeois order of the period. Those who are kept under surveillance in the hospital are the insane, homosexuals, the poor and the sick. These people were initially locked in the same place without any discrimination and this situation laid the foundation of prisons (Akgündüz 2013, cited in Erdoğan, 2014). The power Foucault is trying to express here is an oppressive power different from the positive power mentioned earlier. In the movie, this power model manifests itself through the police, which is the hand of the state, even though the movie takes place in a utopian universe in terms of place, time and space. Creating the new mankind, or the new human race or species, through executing the laws of nature or history displays and implies the general features that Foucault ascribes to biopolitics: it targets collective and serial, temporal phenomena. Put differently, it operates on the level of the species and employs the sequence of generations, thereby transgressing, utilizing, and mobilizing individual life (Braun, 2007).

7. The Commodification of Life

The writ of execution issued in exchange for Elana's life placed her in the position of a criminal with the potential to escape and Elana faced the intervention of the police. Similarly, Elana's 40 years of life is forcibly taken away from her by the *Aeon* company in the presence of the police, indicating the dominance of Foucault's oppressive power over the body. In this context, both types of power are present in the movie, and the body can be controlled through power, whether through positive power or oppressive power. Foucault also tried to explain the control mechanism of power over the body through the concept of biopolitics. Saying that the political pole that emerged in the 18th century centered on the body, the thinker called the power that aims to make life quality by focusing on factors such as health level, birth-death rates, life span, the Bio-politics of the population (Erdoğan, 2014). In recent decades, the expectation to live longer has increased dramatically, but this has not been accompanied by quality of life. This fact has not gone unnoticed by transhumanists. The world population is becoming increasingly long-lived. The average global life expectancy has increased from 65 to 72 years in the last two decades. Europe is a vast continent of older people. In the United States, many people already live more than 100 years. Soon there will be more than 100 million elderly people in China. Old age will become an epidemic in developing countries (Macey, 2009). The increasing importance of problems such as housing, migration, public

health, fertility, and longevity that come with increasing population has led to intervention and control in these areas (Koç, 2018). Bio-politics has invested in living bodies and ensured their utilization, and the power, which has transformed from discipline to control, has assumed the responsibility for the life of bodies on behalf of bodies by developing the techniques of exploitation of the population (Erdoğan, 2014). When this situation is analyzed in terms of the film, *it reveals the discussion of bodies that are deemed worthy of life and those that are not*. In the movie, the bodies invested with bio-politics are not ordinary people, but people who have achieved significant success in science, art, politics, etc. On the other hand, time donors' right to benefit from this world is restricted and marginalized as the uninvested body. From this point of view, biopower decides who should live for a long time and can take away the most fundamental right of human beings, the right to live, in exchange for money in a consensual way. The marginalization in the film not only laid the foundation for discrimination, but also brought about conflict between people. The main reason for the conflict is the problem of who can transform into the human body, which is thought to transform into another form (transhuman, posthuman) as a result of rejuvenation procedures or the discovery of immortality, or who can and cannot find a place on the planet we live on. From this point of view, the inspection or transformation in question is not the last inspection or the last transformation of the human body.

8. Deserving Longevity

In the movie, time donors donate their youth, and it is known that the recipients of these donations are professors, researchers, etc. in short, scientists. In the first scenes of the movie, Sofie, speaking at the award ceremony of the Aeon company, says: *"As I speak, the first fifteen scientists have received their donations. They are currently recovering in our Berlin Koronoclinic. Our best doctors and therapists there are preparing them for their new life. This will enable them to continue their research work for many years to come"* (8.23 min.) provides information about the professions of the recipients of the youth donation. It also shows the sense of justice of those who have this knowledge and technology. The process that has evolved into transhuman aspires to achieve immortality. Those who dream of a universe where aging is eliminated, where intellectual, psychological and cultural values reach the highest level, where art, artists and scientists can produce without the problem of death, where the concepts of freedom and democracy develop, where diseases are eliminated, cannot act justly in the film. At the company's award ceremony, Sofie says, *"We can turn back time, but we can't make it stop forever. So we will continue until it is not age and death that are responsible for us, but the opposite. The last big step towards absolute freedom will be not just for 10,000 people, but for all the people on this planet"* (9.29 min.). At the company meeting, she criticizes the employees, *"There is no solution to the fact that donors and recipients are DNA compatible"* (23 min.), they use the technology they have for a certain group of people, not for humanity. In the film, access to the technology that provides youth seems to be possible only for those who have money, are highly educated, have received awards in their field or have carried out important research. People with no education and inadequate financial means do not have access to youth transfer, and young people aged 18 and over who have had their education interrupted and have limited financial means have their life span taken away. Here is the fact that poor adults cannot use the technology that gives back youth, and that the lives of poor young people, who have nothing but their youth, are being bought. This situation can be considered as another form of killing people. In addition, the reason why Sofie spends a lot of resources to eliminate the problem of DNA

compatibility between donors and recipients is not an effort to protect humanity from aging, diseases or to transform it into a transhuman species, but the desire that rare DNA types, including herself, can benefit from this technology. Because he himself has entered old age, the last stage of life, and the work he wants to do is not yet finished. From this point of view, the quest for immortality or the transition to the transhuman species is designed only for a certain group of people.

The unequal access to technology in the film is also reflected in the discourse of the Adam Group, which tries to prevent the use of this technology and engages in armed attacks. In a press release after members of the group killed a professor who had received a youth grant, the group said, "*Time grants create a system that suspends the principle of equality. Those who turn life into a commodity also turn people into commodities*" (10.44 min.), emphasizing both the upper and lower class conflicts and the unjust system.

According to the Cartesian understanding, the body is a part of the external world and a machine that contains the mind. In classical sociology, it is a tool that enables the individual to connect with the social environment. Accordingly, in the analyzed movie, the body is an element that triggers conflicts and injustice and creates "discrimination". The bodies that are deemed worthy of immortality and deserve youth are shown as Nobel prize-winning scientists, researchers, famous thinkers, physicists, politicians, artists and writers. Sofie's statement at the company meeting in the first scenes of the movie is the best example of this situation. "*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart died when he was only 35 years old. Because of his early death, who knows what unique musical treasures we have lost forever. Let's imagine for a moment that he lived to be 80, 120 or even 150 years old. Let us think of Friedrich Schiller, Frida Kahlo, Nelson Mandela, Marie Curie. What more could they all have achieved?*"

Sofie's statement says that those who deserve to live forever are people who have the potential to contribute to the planet we live on. The reward for their work is shown as the idea that they should have a longer lifespan by giving them back their youth. For this reason, the body is an object that sharply defines the life, research, socialization, work, class, rights, family, beauty, etc. of poor or elite people in the film.

Conclusion

Old age is a period that is seen in all living things except for early death (accidents, diseases, etc.) and is the last stage of life. During this period, health problems, movement restrictions, etc. are experienced, and it is known that these are part of the natural process. The body also undergoes changes in this natural process and struggles to survive against time.

Throughout history, the body has been taken under control by many institutions such as religion, politics, economy or health institutions; these processes that the body has undergone have always led to its reproduction. While this production has been carried out using elements such as cosmetics, plastic surgery, fashion design, etc. with modernism, the discussion in question has been handled in terms of the posthuman, transhuman type and the "class" that should have them (who deserves to become this type) in cultural tools such as cinema or literature. From this point of view, the body is a tool that needs to be constantly corrected, which brings with it the discussion of concepts such as justice, equality and the right to life, which will lead to the emergence of the understanding of speciesism. This concept is not defined as a concept that foments discrimination because of characteristics such as religion, language, gender or skin color. On the contrary, it is a concept that shows that without these factors, people would be discriminated against according to the quality of their contribution

to the world (their achievements in art, politics, literature, etc.). As a matter of fact, the movie tries to explain the body, aging and transhumance from this perspective.

As a result, humanity is taking steps to overcome the hereditary deficiencies of human beings with developments such as artificial intelligence, biotechnologies, genetic engineering studies, anti-aging medicine, wearable computers, memory enhancing drugs, etc. Today, societies have accelerated and focused on R&D studies in order to eliminate undesirable conditions such as old age, death, feeling of inadequacy or disease. Is a species subject to such technological interventions still the same species? "Posthuman condition may signify 'the end of the human' as we know it" (Ağın, 2020). In terms of the technological improvement of the body, the issue of aging has the feature of being a long-term study subject that will be investigated within the framework of factors such as control and transformation, and will be examined with the accompanying discussions in the future as it is today. Longevity and the desire to live a quality life are perhaps the most important motivations of human beings; however, dying is also one of the biggest contexts of the collective memory of the human race. Battle-Fisher questions the meaning of a technologically enhanced lifespan: *Will they let us die? Or will it still be living?* (Battle-Fisher, 2020).

In the context of transhumanism and posthumanism, phenomena such as suicide and euthanasia bring some problems in terms of ethics and moral codes. Should people have the right to end their own lives, regardless of whether they are young or old? Transferring the life of someone with a known incurable disease to another person may eventually replace organ transplantation. In particular, the taking of young lives by rich, successful people, scientists, business people, etc. can also be interpreted as a form of human trafficking. The commodification of the lives of economically weak people who have no chance of getting an education, when it comes to starting their own business or going to university can also become an area of commercial slavery/dependence. On the one hand, this is a phenomenon that opens up the concepts of ethical and moral problems for human beings for discussion, conversely, it also demonstrates the complex nature and possible consequences of the interaction between technology and human life. In short, those with material wealth and technological power will be the ones who deserve to live. At the end of the intervening centuries, human beings seem to techno culturally return to the inter-class economic positions of centuries ago in the adventure of aging and controlling the body. The situation of rich master and poor slave now appears in the movie **Paradise** as a dystopian construction of rich old master and young poor slave.

Declarations

* **Ethics Committee Approval:** Since the study does not involve human factors, ethics committee approval is not required.

* **Publication Ethics:** This study has been prepared in accordance with the rules outlined in the "Guidelines for Scientific Research and Publication Ethics of Higher Education Institutions." Additionally, the article has been scanned using the Turnitin plagiarism detection software, and no instances of plagiarism have been detected.

* **Author Contribution Rate:** The authors' contributions to the study are 50% and 50%.

* **Author Competing Interests:** There is no direct or indirect financial, commercial, legal, or professional relationship or conflict of interest involved in the study.

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