

# CINEMA AND GENDER:

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Different Examples of  
Turkish Cinema

Edited by  
Yıldız Derya BİRİNCİOĞLU & Gizem PARLAYANDEMİR

**EĞİTİM**  
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## **CINEMA AND GENDER: DIFFERENT EXAMPLES OF TURKISH CINEMA**

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## Introduction

Cinema's view of women and women's view of cinema have been significant research areas in terms of social sciences. In this study, academicians working in the field of Turkish cinema discussed the existence and representation of women in Turkish cinema on various examples.

Mehmet Özbek, in the section titled "REVIEWING CAHİDE SONKU MOVIES ON THE AXIS OF GENDER", examines the representation of women in Cahide Sonku films. The author states that the female image in these films is the victim of a silent, passive, and scopophilic gaze. In addition, Özbek emphasizes that the image of a woman is an object that serves the masculine structure.

Murat İri, in the section titled "I NAMED HER KEZBAN": THE WOMAN IN THE FILM 'KEZBAN IN PARIS' AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CONTRADICTIONARY NATURE OF TURKISH MODERNIZATION", focuses on the contradictions of Turkish modernization using the film 'Kezban in Paris'. In the first part, İri explains those contradictions that are an unresolved problematic of Turkish modernization, while in the second part, he analyzes how these contradictions were reproduced.

Özgü Yolcu, in the section titled "ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERS IN THE FILM *RETURN (DÖNÜŞ)*, 1972) WITHIN A FEMINIST FILM CRITIQUE", analyzes the characters in the film *Dönüş (The Return)* using a feminist film critique. The film is directed by Türkan Şoray, who is one of the most important female stars in Turkish cinema. When evaluated in terms of feminist film theory, *The Return* sends the message that the notion that women need a "rescuer" is a cultural fiction and that women should stop waiting to be rescued and switch from being passive to being active. In addition to showing the effects of emigration on those who leave and those who stay, *The Return* also takes a critical look at the socio-economic structure of the village where the story takes place.

Güliden Damla Türkmen and Gizem Parlayandemir's "WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN ADAPTATION FILMS" focuses on the representation of women in adapted films as a genre rather than reflections of film reception. A hermeneutical method was used in the study, which brings together adaptation and women's representation works that can be handled in many interdisciplinary ways; six adapted films selected from Turkish cinema are discussed. One of the main problems of the study is the debates on defining the woman with her relationship with the man and treating the man as a dangerous factor.

Yıldız Derya Birincioğlu, in the section titled "GETTING OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE IN TURKISH CINEMA: UNSEEN IMAGES OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN", states that the dual exclusion aspect of migrant female representation within gender studies. The author focuses on the representation practices of fragile groups in the films shot after the 2011 Syrian migrant crisis. Birincioğlu underlines

that the images of women in these films are positioned as negatively established subjects and victims and created with patriarchal and melodramatic codes.

Seçkin Özmen ve Özlem Çağlan Bilsel, in the section titled “SMARTPHONE USE, GENDER AND ATTACHMENT STYLES: THE FILM OF THE “*CEBİMDEKİ YABANCI (STRANGER IN MY POCKET)*”, focuses on the relations between male and female characters in the context of smartphone usage practices and gender phenomenon, how individuals are connected, and which attachment styles can be read from different behaviors. Within the framework of this purpose, how gender is represented, attachment styles in relationships and how the use of smartphones reveals these will be analyzed. In the study, the film will be subjected to qualitative content analysis. While reading the text, semiotic interpretation will be used with the qualitative content analysis method.

Belkıs Ciğirim and Özlem Arda, in the section titled “WOMAN AT WAR AND HIVE: WOMEN STRUGGLE IN NATURE A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FILMS *WOMAN AT WAR* AND *HIVE (KOVAN)* THROUGH ECOFEMINIST APPROACH” evaluates the relationship between films and ecological problems from an ecofeminist perspective. Ciğirim and Arda comparatively discuss the ecological approach and the representation of women in the cinemas of two different countries. The authors emphasize the struggle of the female image for nature and various forms of domination in these two films.

Deniz Oğuzcan, in the section titled “A STORY OF BECOMING WOMAN: *GHOSTS (HAYALETLER, 2020)*”, evaluates the image of a woman in terms of Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of becoming a woman. The author focuses on women’s change in the context of the philosophy of becoming and discusses multiple identities and representatives of patriarchy from a feminist perspective.

Gizem Parlayandemir, Betül Yüncüoğlu ve Şirin Şefii, in the section “GENDER REPRODUCTION IN TALES AND FANTASTIC FILMS: *TELLING TALES (BANA MASAL ANLATMA)*” focuses on *Telling Tales* as a fantastic Turkish movie, and they examine the film in the context of gender. The reason for choosing this movie is that the narrative can be analyzed both as a fairy tale and as a movie within the framework of the relationship between fantasy movies and fairy tales. In addition, the film, which has an opposing discourse in terms of urban transformation and globalization, repeats the dominant discourse in terms of gender equality.

**Yıldız Derya Birincioğlu & Gizem Parlayandemir**  
**Istanbul, 2022**

## REVIEWING CAHİDE SONKU MOVIES ON THE AXIS OF GENDER

Mehmet Özbek<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

We cannot deny that the portrayal of ‘woman’ in Turkish cinema is formed from a masculine viewpoint considering the melodrama genre. Since the 1930s, we can see this hegemonic cultural dissemination in Turkish cinema through examples of adaptation of European and American cinema. The movies featured in the study are among the ones in which Cahide Sonku, the theater artist, who has been in the spotlight since Turkish cinema began to develop, was involved in production and execution. These are namely *Aysel: Bataklı Damın Kızı* (1934), *Şehvet Kurbanı* (1940) and *Beklenen Şarkı* (1953). Besides, the study assesses movies descriptively in light of feminist theory and the current literature on the gender concept.

### Feminist Film Theory

Keith F. Punch (2014) states that it is difficult to define a methodology for feminist theory, which has risen in popularity among social research methods since the 1960s. The basic pain point of this constructed complex meaning, as stated by Punch, who uses the word ‘changeable’ for the definition by Olesen (1994) as a basis, is to examine all kinds of circumstances that concentrate on women and all the factors affecting women in a theoretical context and make them an area of action. Punch (1993), quoting Blaiki (1993), claims that the core of feminist critique is that all sciences address the world from a masculine viewpoint (Punch, 2014: 134).

Looking at the art of cinema in the name of feminist philosophy, it is possible to discuss a vital area of action. Butler (2011) associates feminism, which is thinking beneath the theory, with philosophy and politics. By defining a general rule, she reduces this rule to women’s portrayal, the representation of gender inequality between men and women, the audience’s sexist viewpoint and the likelihood of women’s cinema in general (Butler A. M., 2011: 85). Feminism, in contrast to male

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hegemony's dominant identity, argues that patriarchal supremacy is a recreated reality. "Feminist inquiry is wholly a method of reading what is against the texture of patriarchal institutions," argues Judith Mayne. It's the process of exposing inconsistencies and discrepancies that aren't visible to the human eye at first.' (Cited from Mayne. Dirse, 2013). When it comes to cinema, the process of revealing the uncertainties addressed here centers on how patriarchal structures can transform an art environment pertaining to mass communication into a manipulative area. Özden (2004) seeks to separate the main starting points of feminist film criticism. The primary theoretical role of film critics, according to Özden, is to decode the patriarchal systems that are the root of gender disparity and segregation against women. By looking at how cinema establishes patriarchal narrative structures and the female character within these patterns, he claims that they employ alternative production processes from a feminist perspective and promote this effort (Özden, 2004: 193-194). Smelik (2008) argues that film theory focuses on the means that produce cinematic meaning rather than ideological content and hence, affirms Özden (2004) and also demonstrates that the films recreate the meaning rather than reflecting it and that this structuring process is continually built through femininity (Smelik, 2008: 3-4). In this artistic production stage, the superior masculine discourse re-expresses the woman within her subjective domain. This style of expression is shaped by a strictly masculine viewpoint, which is far from impartial. From a male viewpoint, the audience absorbs the gender representation of women in society. Stevenson (2002) emphasizes feminist studies' efforts to liberate women's entertainment perception and satisfaction from hierarchical structures and definitions. On the other hand, he argues that a feminist critical attitude will critically decide women's exclusion from media careers and that women play an important role in deciding how patriarchy is promoted by being depicted with stereotypical representations of sexual content in media studies (Stevenson, 2002: 102). In this regard, it would be reasonable to investigate the phenomenon of gender in order to understand how the art of cinema depicts women's images and is evaluated from a patriarchal ground with a male-dominated viewpoint.

### **The Gender Phenomenon**

Gender stereotypes refer to many of the traits that society expects men and women to demonstrate in groups (Dökmen, 2018: 32 cited from Franzoi (1996)). Gender, on the other hand, encompasses all of the definitions and standards that society attributes to being a male or a woman (Dökmen, 2018: 20). All of these meanings and expectations also carry the danger of turning into a society's pressure on the individual. On the other hand, Bora, who does not see the concept of gender as a purely biological element between genders (2010) yet, mentions a pattern based on this biology and calls it gender (Bora, 2010: 37). Participating in such a social arrangement acts as a 'regulator,' enabling people to interpret their gender and

gender and oneself as a subject (Butler J. , 2014: 74). Thus, we cannot segregate the relationship between the ideas of sex and gender. The cultural phenomenon's perceptions of men and women consist of observations of both men's and women's bodies. (Dökmen, 2018: 20 cited from Lips.). While culture exhibits a hegemonic expectation, it creates a close relationship with tradition. According to Connell (1998), the power dimension created by gender is synthesized with the theme of domination of females, as emphasized by De Beauvoir, while Mead and Parsons' gender definition is synthesized around the field of tradition and social stability (Connell, 1998: 58). As the power element is synthesized in various ways, it is shown that 'this concept also regulates the definition of 'sexuality 'in terms of discourse - including the historicity of the body.' (Butler J., 2014: 71). While the power structure here sees men and women as intertwined social blocks, it defines gender-related roles through masculine and feminine role expressions (Connell, 1998: 61-78). Thus, the dominant structure embraces a masculine role through patriarchal ideology, leaving the feminine one with the body, nature images and irrationality, and trying to centralize and secure the masculine one more rationally with consciousness, spirit, and civilization (Berktaş, 2010: 152-153). It is undeniably intentional at this stage that the masculine point of view occupies such a dominant field. To this end, Connell (1998) states that choosing to protect the male gaze ideologically turns into a practice that institutionalizes the domination of men over women, and at the same time, women also find this hegemonic approach bearable and adapt to this situation (Connell, 1998: 248-249). On the other hand, the idea of a phallus, which needs to be examined in this adaptation, is cast aside as a subtext. To confirm his own existence, the man relies on the image of a castrated woman. The absence of the phallus component in women is the circumstance that presents it as a symbolic entity (Mulvey, 2014: 278). System and hegemonic approach cannot exist and maintain its presence without the image of women. The prevalent method of masculine thought when practicing this existence method is constructing an identity by marginalizing women through the lack of phallus. While Butler (2014) cites this method of marginalization through Luce Irigaray's opposing views to Simon de Beauvoir. She states that women are the exact opposite of men. This result is attributable to a phallogocentric economy of imaging built on masculine foundations and excludes the feminine. (cited by Butler, 2014: 56). The hegemonic masculine structure is given a higher position in the system than the feminine structure. While the system projects the masculine side as a more active and success-oriented image through mass media, the feminine is reflected via an attention giver and more passive image. Advertisements, children's books, clips, and films have a great role in this projection's cultural terms (Dökmen, 2018: 32). In this regard, it's important to consider how cinema, as a cultural element, affirms the masculine hegemonic approach within the context of the gender phenomenon.

## Cinema And Gender

Although cultural systems identify the masculine and feminine over the phenomena of gender, they also decide how both genders are perceived through society by revealing manipulative codes of behavior via the current hegemonic power structure. When we look from the representation perspective, Berktaş (2010) expresses that culture defines ideology and fictionalizes and transforms it through certain codes. According to Berktaş (2010), sexuality has been fully established within power relations since the mid-nineteenth century (Berktaş, 2010: 136 cited from Nead). Therefore, the feminine's freedom of movement is determined by masculine ideology, which describes power relations as superior. While quoting from Öztürk (2000), Saygılıgil (2013) raised the question of Rosalind Coward states that "several sexual fantasies are formed not by what women want, but by men's dreams and expectations of how female sexuality should be." (Saygılıgil, 2013: 145).

Smelik (2008) describes the art of cinema as a cultural phenomenon represented by myths founded upon masculine and feminine gender differences (Smelik, 2008: 1). We can see how cinema, which has a century of history, has been reinterpreted through the eyes of hegemonic masculine thinking and has shaped femininity. Thornham (1999) claims that the male viewpoint in the historical process has influenced female identity within film productions through media, resulting in women being assigned to culturally stereotypical roles (Thornham, 1999: 14). The fact that female identity is subjected to male-dominated manipulation affects how the art of cinema generates a sense of reality. Based on Smelik's (2008) view, which is associated with sociology, movies host a representation of woman image, which is purely ideologically, instead of focusing on 'real' women. The act of 'alienation' is placed between the 'woman' and the act of 'emancipation.' (Smelik, 2008: 2-3) The sexist ideology and fundamental opposition that positions men within history and women eternally outside history are tied to women's presence in cinema's history. The prevailing ideology portrays the woman in an everlasting and irreversible form (Thornham, 1999: 32). One of the only ways the dominant masculine ideology can legitimately express itself in the cinema is by portraying women with stereotypical roles. As Saygılıgil (2013) quoted from Johnston, "the woman symbol reflects the ideological significance it has for men, but it has no meaning in and of itself" (Saygılıgil, 2013: 150). Because of men, women are utterly deprived of the ability to perceive the world within the context of rationalism (Öztürk, 2011: 661).

When it comes to Turkish cinema, the situation is similar in terms of the dominant masculine ideology's legitimate position. Melodrama presents the woman, who is the dominant ideology, in various models (Akbulut, 2008: 15 cited from Gledhill (1996)). Saygılıgil (2013) states this legitimization by citing from Akbulut (2008) women are portrayed in films as passive, weak, powerless individuals who do not

pose a threat to the patriarchal order. This situation assigns women to a symbol for the male subconscious rather than a symbol for real women in movies (Saygılıgil, 2013: 155).

In the productions in which Cahide Sonku starred, we also experience the hegemonic masculine viewpoint, which is also prevalent in Turkish cinema. This study focuses on the movie named *Beklenen Şarkı*, which is directed, produced, and starred by Cahide Sonku, and also the movies of *Aysel Bataklı Damın Kızı* and *Şehvet Kurbanı*, which are directed by Muhsin Ertuğrul and starring Cahide Sonku within the context of the positioning of woman's identity in Turkish cinema and gender roles.

### ***Aysel Bataklı Damın Kızı* and The Image of Passified Women**

Considering the history of Turkish cinema, *Aysel Bataklı Damın Kızı* is the first Turkish movie of melodrama, and with a woman protagonist. It is the story of a poor girl abused by a malevolent man and a good-hearted young man who defends her against the villagers' social pressure (Akbulut, 2008: 96). Tösen Fran Stormyrtorpet was based on a 1908 novel by Selma Lagerlöf and was adapted to the silver screen in 1917 as a Swedish film directed by Viktor Sjöström. The work was adapted to Turkish cinema in 1934 by Nazım Hikmet Ran based on Selma Lagerlöf's novel (*Aysel: Bataklı Damın Kızı* (1934)).

#### ***Cast and Crew:***

**Director:** Muhsin Ertugrul

**Work:** Selma Lagerlöf

**Adapted by:** Nazim Hikmet Ran

**Music:** Cemal Resit Rey

**Production:** Sonku Film

**Producer:** Muhsin Ertugrul

**Co-Producers:** İhsan İpekçi, Kani İpekçi

**Year of Production:** 1934

**Cast:** Cahide Sonku, Talat Artemel, Sami Ayanoğlu, Hazım Körmükçü, Hadi Hün, Müfit Kiper, Nafia Arcan, Galip Arcan, Mahmut Moralı, Behzat Butak, Sait Köknar, Feriha Tevfik, Ergün Köknar



**Visual-1:** *Aysel Bataklı Damın Kızı* Film Poster - Published with permission from BİSAV TSA Archive.

**Source:** Online- <https://www.tsa.org.tr/tr/film/filmgoster/5372/ayssel-batakli-damin-kizi> Access Date: 23.03.2021

Ali's father asks him to stop by Madenli Farm and see Gülsüm on the way to town. He aims to marry his son Ali and Gülsüm, a member of Madenli's richest family. A patriarchal social structure exists in the village. Hence, the father's request is critical. Ali is aware of the situation and tells his father that he may find it difficult to get along with Gülsüm, who has experienced city life before he is used to village life. But his father says that it will be determined by financial interest, not by love. If we relate this situation with Kandiyoti's (2013) discourse, The movie's settled peasant life invites us as a peasant life controlled by a hierarchical structure centered on age, kinship, and financial status, and where the gender difference is sharpened (Kandiyoti, 2013: 28). In the next scene, Ali sees Aysel when she is on her way to the court in town and takes her to his carriage. He learns that Aysel is from the village of Bataklı Dam, that she goes to the family known as Satılmışzadeler in İncirli for home cleaning, and her name is Aysel. He does not like it. Aysel realizes that she is not welcomed and gets out of the carriage and continues on foot. Aysel realizes that she is not welcomed and gets out of the carriage and continues on foot. Birincioğlu's (2018) discourse of 'unnecessary lynching' (Birincioğlu, 2018: 44) can be associated with Ali's prejudice against her after taking Aysel into his car on the way to town. Meanwhile, Ali visits Madenli's farm, sees Gülsüm, and then heads back to town.



**Visual-1:** *Aysel Bataklı Damın Kızı* A Scene From The Movie

**Source:** Online-<http://www.almanaktr.com/index.php/turkiye-den-olaylar/turkiye-1930-1939/82-turkiye-1934/297-1934-ilk-koy-filmi-aysel-batakli-damin-kizi> Access Date: 21.03.2021

Aysel arrives at the town, and her hearing starts at the County Court. The judge asks the person who works with the Satılmışzadeler to pledge that he has not had any sexual relations with Aysel. While the man is going to taking the pledge, Aysel withdraws the case. She told the judge that she does not want her child's father to be identified as a perjurer. We can see a clear relation between Aysel's 'acquittal' and Birincioğlu's (2018) masculine power's association of women with honor and pure emphasis on female sexuality (Birincioğlu, 2018: 36) statement.

Aysel leaves the court after the hearing. Aysel's timid attitude at the court is relatable to Akbulut's (2008) views on melodramas established upon gender stereotypes. The representations of women in the films, according to Akbulut, were produced in a desperate and docile way without posing a threat to the hegemonic male order. Thus they are portrayed as representing the masculine subconsciousness (Akbulut, 2008: 356). According to Thornham (1999), even though any woman is starring in any movie, she is often portrayed as confused, endangered, pacified, desperate, or purely sexual (Thornham, 1999: 14). It's worth noting that Aysel's purpose for being in court and her attitude in court are consistent with these viewpoints.

Ali, who was in the courtroom, invites Aysel back to the carriage. He tells Aysel that he will return to the village. In the next sequence, there are images of village life. Sheep, cows and goats are herded. People are going to their fields. Ali comes to the old village house where Aysel's family lives and sneaks up on her. Meanwhile, Aysel's father tells his wife that today, his daughter defended herself bravely in court.

Ali suddenly hears someone is crying and heads towards the barn. Aysel is crying alone in the barn. She tells Ali that she cannot face her family because she cannot get alimony. Aysel's emotional state, which could lead to suicide in the swamp, is still present here. Butler (2011) stresses that the feminine, like the masculine, is a social institution, which can be analogous to this case, and that feminine characteristics such as delicacy, motherhood, and sensuality are female characteristics (Butler A. M., 2011: 89). Then we see that Ali takes Aysel to the edge of the river. He tells her what Aysel's father was talking about her mother at home. He also tells Aysel that he mentioned to her sick mother what happened in the court and allowed Aysel to work in their home. In the next scene, Aysel is seen plowing in the field. If we aim to relate this situation to social reality while citing from Kandiyoti (2013) it is relevant to emphasize that women in village life work alongside men during the farming season and promote domestic production following economic and geographical conditions (Kandiyoti, 2013: 30).

Gülsüm and her mother pay a visit to Emete Hatun in the rest of the story. Gülsüm says that she won't prefer village life to city life. Aysel enters the room at that moment. Emete Hatun asks Aysel to make coffee for the guests. Gülsüm's mother whispers to Emete Hatun's ear and gossips about Aysel. In another scene, while Aysel is filling the barrel with water, the Landlord of Satılmışzadeler approaches her and teases her. Ali is looking for Aysel at that time. He sees Aysel at the water fountain. He gets into a quarrel with the landlord of Satılmışzadeler.

In the next scene, we see Ali and Gülsüm are talking at home. Gülsüm says she doesn't want to see Aysel at home. Ali also agrees with this decision. Upon this, Ali's father takes Aysel back to Bataklı. In the next scene, we see Ali following Aysel in Bataklı and talks to her.

In the next sequence, on the evening of the conversation, Ali goes to the tavern. The landlord of Satılmış, who was in the tavern at that time, teases Ali. They have a fight. The next day, Ali returns home from the town drunk. He beats up the young man working with them in the field. He scatters around the house and then falls asleep.

The next day is the wedding day. When Ali wakes up in the morning, he tries to remember what happened last night. He comes into the room. His mother and father are in the room. While he is making himself a coffee, his father is reading the newspaper. His father reads the newspaper and tells Ali that someone committed murder last night with a switchblade. Satılmışzade was dead. While Ali puts his handkerchief in his pocket, he sees the switchblade. He thinks he committed the murder. He hides the switchblade in the wetland in front of their house. His father watches Ali from above and sees what he has done. After Ali leaves, he comes to the wetland, finds the switchblade, and puts it in his pocket.

In the next scene, Ali comes to the wetland in front of the house again. He

searches for the switchblade but cannot find it. His father sneaks upon him from above. Morning comes. His father awakens Ali. Ali kisses his mother's hand, and he and his father headed to the girl's house. They see Aysel on the way. Aysel wants to congratulate Ali. Ali confesses the incident to his father on his way. After a long journey, his father and Ali come to Hacı Efendi's house, Gülsüm's father. Ali tells what happened in the town to Hacı Efendi and Gülsüm. Hacı Efendi then says that it would be more appropriate for them to break up. Ali and his father also leave the house.

The next day, Aysel comes to see Gülsüm. She explains to Gülsüm that she broke the switchblade's edge. She says that Ali did not kill anyone. Aysel and Gülsüm headed to the road to inform Ali about this situation. Gülsüm comes to Ali's house. She tells Ali that Aysel sent her here and that she loves him. Then she takes Ali by carriage to Bataklı to see Aysel. Just then, they accidentally see Aysel on the road. Ali gets out of the car. Gülsüm goes on the road. Ali and Aysel finally get together. The film ends with the frame they are sowing plants together in the field.

### **On *Şehvet Kurbanı* and Scopophilia**

After adapted from the 1930 movie 'Der blaue Engel' which Josef von Sternberg directs, the movie of *Şehvet Kurbanı* directed by Muhsin Ertuğrul had Muhsin Ertuğrul and Cahide Sonku together in the lead roles. The original story belongs to Perley Poore Sheehan as 'The Way of All Flesh' (*Şehvet Kurbanı* (1940)).

#### ***Cast and Crew:***

**Director:** Muhsin Ertugrul

**Scriptwriter:** Nazim Hikmet Ran

**Genre:** Drama

**Music:** Muhittin Sadak

**Production:** Sonku Film

**Cinematography:** Cezmi Ar

**Producers:** İhsan İpekçi, Kani İpekçi

**Year of Production:** 1940

**Cast:** Cahide Sonku, Muhsin Ertuğrul, Necla Sertel, Nevin Akkaya, Gülseren Sadak, Ferdi Tayfur, Sait Köknar, Suavi Tedü, Emin Belig Belli, Cahit Irgat, Hadi Hün, Saim Bilge, Necdet Mahfi Ayral, Kadri Ögelman, Kani Kıpçak, Muhip Arciman, Müfit Kiper



**Visual-2:** *Şehvet Kurbani* Film Poster - Published with permission from BİSAV TSA Archive.

**Source:** Online- <https://www.tsa.org.tr/tr/film/filmgoster/5382/sehvet-kurbani> Access Date: 23.03.2021

Ahmet, who works as a cashier at the Foreign Trade Bank, leaves the bank in the evening. He will go home by ferry. Ahmet is a very punctual guy. Meanwhile, his little daughter, son and wife are waiting for him at home. Ahmet's wife was depicted as a housewife with a maternal personality who was involved in house chores. Here we see the concept of an 'angelic mother' figure emphasized by Butler (2011). The film depicts a mother figure who stays at home and spends much of her time taking care of her children, similar to Butler's perspective. On the other hand, the film depicts a father figure who goes out and faces significant adventures and problems (Butler A. M., 2011: 89).

We see the family as having dinner. After dinner, Ahmet helps his daughter with her homework. He does not expect his daughter to make a mistake in the calculation. When her daughter says that she does not like calculations, his answer is as follows: "However, each thing in the world, every happiness is based on accurate calculations. The calculation is the basis of order and stability..." At that time, his son starts playing the violin, and then Ahmet and his daughter and his wife listen to him enthralled. The next morning, Ahmet leaves home to go to the bank. He arrives

at the bank just on time. He starts to work. Meanwhile, one of his friends informs that the bank manager has asked for Ahmet. In his conversation with the manager, he learns that he has been assigned to another bank branch for a week.

In the next scene, we see Ahmet's wife, son, and daughter watching him as he tries to settle into his train compartment. The train leaves the station. Ahmet is alone in his compartment. When the train stops to pick up passengers at the next station, a female passenger comes near him.

Ahmet is taking care of the calculations, and the woman is watching Ahmet. In Smelik's (2008) words, the character played by Cahide Sonku, who is very attractive in the film, is depicted with the rule of resemblance to the fact, which belongs to the classical cinema, and is seen in the audience in such a way to highlight the beauty of the picture of "woman." In this regard, the art of cinema, which converts the female image into a spectatorial image and performs it in the contexts of camera, character, and audience. Smelik here puts forward the concept of 'gaze' and calls the female figure 'the one to be looked at.' (Smelik, 2008: 4-5). Mulvey (2014), however, expresses this concept as a voyeuristic - scopophilia male gaze. Like Smelik's (2008) point of view, she describes this perspective as the point of view of the captured camera, the viewpoint of the audience who witnessed the artistic production that has developed, and the viewpoint of the characters in the film. According to Mulvey, cinema offers the audience pleasures such as scopophilia (Mulvey, 2014: 281-288). The male 'gaze' shapes the film's female protagonist's hateful conduct. The male gaze here is functionalized through the concepts of active/passive, voyeurism/exhibitionism, subject/object, in Pollock's (2014) words, as required by the sexual policy of gazing (Pollock, 2014: 243). Being active and exposing oneself can be expressed by the woman dropping her bag and attracting Ahmet's attention and how the woman sits while on the train. But the gaze here is the result of a purely male positioning. We can also evaluate that cinema is a manipulative art that manipulates masculine hegemonic understanding through gazing. Kaplan (2001) states that the cinema, unlike theater and painting, uses sexual pleasure in the act of gazing in a more illusion-centered way towards the spectator, and the camera is in control of this situation. (Kaplan, 2001: 14).

Later in the scene, Ahmet lights a cigarette. She asks the woman if the smoke is bothering her. On the contrary, the woman states that she also smokes. Ahmet hands the cigarette to the woman. The woman waits for her cigarette to be lit, but Ahmet does not make a move. Here the image of women cannot be depicted more alluringly. Ögüt (2013) states that the concept of pleasure, which is called scopophilia and is based on gaze, is presented as voyeuristic and narcissistic pleasure through association with sexuality by men. As the object of a male gaze, women are symbolized as the element of exhibitionism (Ögüt, 2013: 204). As Mulvey (2014) expresses, in the cinematic context, the voyeuristic and narcissistic gazes both

express the detachment of the subject's erotic identity from the object on the screen (active scopophilia), while the other allows the ego to identify with the alike object on the screen by mesmerizing and recognizing (Mulvey, 2014: 284).

Later on, the woman asks Ahmet for his lighter. After realizing that Ahmet is constantly dealing with numbers for a while, the woman asks him if he is an accounting professor. Ahmet replies that he is a bank cashier. The woman is surprised. After learning that Ahmet was a cashier, her desire to impress him increased even more. Ahmet also is got caught in this trap of impressing and was attracted to the woman. Genevieve (1996) suggests that "One of the sexes has almost always been the one who looks, which is a privileged position, while the other has always been in the role of being looked at" to explain De Beauvoir's understanding of the 'other woman'" (Genevieve, 1996: 124). The female character is portrayed as an object to be looked at in the movie, and the man's sense of pleasure is reinforced from a male perspective. As a result, a fetish object substitutes the woman as the object or is entirely transformed into a fetish object (Öztürk, 2011: 660 cited from Mulvey).

In the next train scene, Ahmet eats something while chatting with the woman. The woman learns that Ahmet will return immediately after collecting money from Selimzadeler. Meanwhile, she continues to impress Ahmet with her looks and attitude. The train arrives at the station where both will get off. Before the woman gets off, she learns where Ahmet will be staying. In the next scene, the venue is a restaurant. The woman talks with two men in one of the restaurant's back rooms about the money Ahmet will receive from the Selimzadeler.



**Visual-3:** *Şehvet Kurbanı* A Scene From The Movie

**Source:** Online- <http://media.sinematurk.com/film/7/34/9d97fcfd4b/sehvet-kurbani-1940-film.jpg> - Access Date: 21.03.2021

She tells the men that Ahmet will be collecting money from other places, and they make a plan about it. Later, the woman leaves the tavern. At the same time, we see that Ahmet left Selimzade and the partners' office. At that moment, he runs into the woman. This encounter is not a coincidence but an incident planned by the woman. She says she wants to host Ahmet that evening and even talked about Ahmet to her brother. The woman calls a taxi. They set off to go to the restaurant. In the next scene, we see the woman, her brother and Ahmet drinking, listening to songs, and chatting at the restaurant's same table. We also witness that the woman constantly forced Ahmet to drink after her brother left the table. On the other hand, she continues to try to impress Ahmet. Muhsin Ertuğrul's attempt as a male director to represent the female character played by Cahide Sonku is entirely from a male hegemonic perspective. Saygılıgil (2013) mentions that the most significant difference between male and female directors is seen in gender representation. With anatomical parts such as legs, hips, breasts, mouth, and close-up shots, the woman is presented as a male gaze object (Saygılıgil, 2013: 143 cited from Kabadayı (2013)).

Meanwhile, one of the men describes what happened to the woman's hypothetical elder brother and the person next to him that things are going well in the restaurant's room. The woman's brother tells the men about the plan. The woman mutters to Ahmet the song that his son played with the violin, and he listens with pleasure.



**Visual-4:** *Şehvet Kurbanı* A Scene From The Movie

**Source:** Online-<http://media.sinematurk.com/film/7/34/9d97fcfd4b/sehvet-kurbani-1940-cahide-sonku-film.jpg> - Date of Access: 21.03.2021

In the next scene, the woman persuades Ahmet to leave the restaurant. She offers to walk along the trackside. Meanwhile, the woman's brother and the other man

next to him are making a plan. Ahmet and the woman are walking on the rails. Ahmet wants to go back. The woman says that the house is close to them and tries to persuade him to walk. The man in the ambush hits Ahmet in the head with a stick as they continue walking. Ahmet falls in the middle of the rails. He is blacked out. The woman takes Ahmet's bag. The woman's brother runs from behind and takes the bag from the woman's hand. He says the bag will be safer with him. The woman walks away. Then his brother leaves the scene. The other man takes off Ahmet's jacket and puts it on. Ahmet wakes up and fights the man searching through his wallet inside his jacket. During the fight, the man was hit by the train.

The next day, newspapers published Ahmet's death news about the accident. One of the two people reading the newspaper wrinkles it up and throws it away from the train. At that moment, Ahmet, who is waiting under the rails, finds the newspaper and reads the news. He then goes back to the restaurant, sees the woman and tells her that she is a murderer. He is still blind to the trap that has been set for him. The woman tells Ahmet to shave his beard so that no one recognizes him and to work with them in the restaurant. Meanwhile, unaware of the events, Ahmet's wife is seen crying, looking at Ahmet's photo in Istanbul.

In the next scene, the restaurant personnel tries to wake Ahmet. Ahmet is now an alcoholic. He was passed out while the photograph of the woman is next to him. In another scene, we see that Ahmet is crying, looking at her wife and daughter's family photo. Birincioğlu (2016) stresses that the feeling of pain is deeply elevated and underlined in melodrama, while the ideal of happiness is continually deferred by separations or lies (Birincioğlu, 2016: 87). The tragic situation of Ahmet's family and he overlap with this statement.

His son stops the clock of the house at 18:00 when Ahmet always comes home. After a while, Ahmet starts to perceive what is really going on. The woman's attitude towards him has changed. One evening he sees the woman telling the lies she had told him back in time to another customer at the restaurant, and he shouts, "Lie!". The "hypothetical" brother and his friend hurries and takes Ahmet out of there and took him to the back room, and they assault him. They tell him to leave the restaurant or continue living without causing problems. Ahmet leaves their place and continues to his life. He lives exhausted for exactly thirteen years. As he arrives in town, he sees the photos he took of his son and daughter at a photography studio. All at the same, he discovers from a photograph that his son is now a world-renowned violin virtuoso. Meanwhile, he hears someone saying the cemetery's name where his presumable grave is by showing his photo. In the next scene, we see Ahmet visiting his own grave. Here he comes across two gravediggers. One of the gravediggers tells him that this person's son has a very important concert that week. He is Ahmet's own son, Suavi. Ahmet buys tickets to the concert. Suavi plays Ahmet's favorite song on stage. He sneaks to the door of their home on a night

of Eid al-Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice). The dog is barking outside, and his wife, daughter and son are at the dinner table. His son goes out and welcomes Ahmet home. He joins them at the dinner. Ahmet looks at them, surprised to see his family after so many years. They finish their dinner. His sibling brings the violin to Suavi. When Ahmet discovers that Suavi plays the song he loves every night, he expresses his desire to leave and walk out of the house while watching him. He disappears while walking away in the cold.

### **Active/Passive Woman Image and *Beklenen Şarkı***

Cahide Sonku acted as producer, director and actor in one of the most significant early Turkish cinema melodramas. In this film, Sonku raises hegemonic masculine discourse but she sometimes falls into the trap of melodrama's dominant passive approach to the 'woman' image.

#### ***Cast and Crew:***

**Director:** Orhon Murat Arıburnu, Sami Ayanoglu, Cahide Sonku

**Work:** Sadık Şendil

**Music:** Sadi İşılay

**Operator:** Kriton Iliadis

**Editing:** Turgut Inangiray

**Set Decoration - Makeup:** Mufit Kiper

**Production:** Sonku Film

**Producer:** Cahide Sonku

**Year of Production:** 1953

**Cast:** Zeki Müren, Cahide Sonku, Bedia Muvahhit, Hadi Hün, Jeyan Mahfi Tözüm, Abdurrahman Palay, Muhip Arcıman, Refik Kemal Arduman, Sami Ayanoglu, Talat Artemel, Melahat İçli, Necmi Oy, Sevki Artun, İbrahim Delideniz, Kemal Tözem, Rıza Tüzün

**Time:** 87 min, Black & White, 35mm,

**Production Company:** Sonku Film

**Film Laboratory:** Ses Film

**Voice Over:** Ses Film



**Visual-5:** *Beklenen Şarkı* Film Poster - Published with permission from BİSAV TSA Archive.

**Source:** Online-<https://www.tsa.org.tr/haber/film/filmgoster/5566/beklenen-sarki> Access Date: 23.03.2021

The conservatory choir sings in the opening scene, and Zeki Müren murmurs the work while observing the chorists from afar in the conservatory, where he works as a janitor. Although the other male students in the choir do not take Müren seriously, female students praise him for his accomplishments. Türkan, who is also in the choir, admires Zeki's musical abilities and wishes for him to be included in the choir, despite being a janitor. Türkan has a cousin named Güngör. Güngör and Türkan's interests are completely different. Returning to the mansion from the conservatory, Türkan notices the sounds of the piano coming from downstairs. Seniha, Türkan's mother, is conducting the unfinished composition by the man she loves. Curious why she did not complete the composition, Türkan asks her mother, Seniha, to tell what she has been through. Seniha says the composition was written by a man she used to love. In flashbacks, we see that the young man Seniha was in love with came to their mansion to teach her music, and the two slowly fell in love with each other.

Meanwhile, the employees of the mansion gossip about their relationship. It is possible to establish a connection between the fact that women are related to marriage, sexuality and family patterns that transcend traditional and historical categories beyond a specific historical context. They are reduced to absence,

silence, marginality and thus outside the real historical discourse (Dirse, 2013: 16-17 cited from Kaplan) and the given situation of Seniha. Within the context of marriage and sexuality, Seniha is separated by her father and domestic workers through alienation. On the other hand, Akbulut (2008) claims that there are systemic differences between men and women when it comes to language and that these discrepancies are reflected by depicting the “woman” as a subordinate, a listener, and the man as talking and lecturing (Akbulut, 2008: 246 cited from Tannen). Suppose we embark on this point of view in the movie. In that case, Seniha’s desire to marry the teacher triggers the father figure to become a lecturer and speaker, and Seniha remains oblivious to the situation and becomes the listener. Seniha’s father and mother entered the hall where the music lesson was being conducted another evening during the lesson. They noticed how close the young teacher and Seniha were becoming. Seniha’s father feels suspicious and gets angry with the teacher. The teacher claims he was mistaken and that he and her mother will be visiting the family soon to ask for Seniha’s hand in marriage. The father, believing that the young man’s occupation will not be enough to take care of his daughter, stops speaking and kicks the young man out of the house.

The couple continues to meet secretly in the following days. But the music teacher, leaving an unfinished composition for Seniha, says that he is going to war. We understand from Zeki’s conversations with his father and mother that Seniha has the beginning part of the composition while Zeki and his mother have the rest of the notes. During the conversation, it is seen that Makbule comes to Zeki and his mother’s house with her little daughter. She will leave the little girl to them and go to work as a dancer. While Makbule is going to work, her husband waits for her behind the wall. He suddenly holds up her way and asks for money from her. Makbule resists. Meanwhile, hearing the whistle of the watchman, he disappears, leaving Makbule alone. Makbule also quickly gets away from the scene. The next day, we see that Türkan comes to the conservatory for choral work and witnessed Zeki singing while playing the piano. Thereupon, she asks Zeki for the notes of the composition he played. Zeki comes to Türkan’s mansion the next day with the notes. Umut Tümay Arslan (2015), in her article evaluating Zeki Müren’s image in the cinema, states that the mansion in which the movie takes place does not only connect the past and the future.



**Visual-6:** *Beklenen Şarkı* Movie, Behind the Scenes - Director Cahide Sonku and Zeki Müren

**Source:** <http://media.sinematurk.com/film/8/8b/72695cae52bf/beklenen-sarki-1953-film.jpg> Access Date: 21.03.2021

According to Arslan, the mansion is a temple where two young people live their love and have a lost memory (Arslan, 2015: 195). Going back to the plot, while the two are talking, Zeki tells Türkan that he lost his father for the first time. The friendships that they formed here continue to grow day by day. Gürkan sees these two, who meet regularly in the park one day and walks away without saying anything. The next day, Türkan invites Zeki back to their home to introduce him to her father. Zeki also meets Türkan's mother here. Meanwhile, Gürkan also arrives home. He meets Zeki and accuses him of being opportunistic, considering what he saw in the park the other day. Zeki leaves the room, expressing that he is working as a janitor in the conservatory. Türkan's father opposes her daughter's friendship with a janitor and insists on Türkan to come to Europe with him. After a short while, Türkan's father asks Zeki to come to his workplace. He writes a check for Zeki so that he will not see his daughter again. Zeki refuses the check and leaves the room. Türkan comes to the house where Zeki lives to see him. Makkule introduces herself to Türkan as the wife of Zeki. She causes Türkan to leave there. This incident is a setup planned by Zeki that will keep Türkan away from him.

After a while, Türkan and her father go on a trip to Europe. Zeki starts performing at the place where Makkule works. By signing a blank contract, Zeki was prevented

from taking an extra show in another place. During this contract issue, Makbule's husband comes to the venue and hurts her. A few days later, Makbule's letter reaches Seniha since she is the Mutual Aid Society president. Seniha arrives at Makbule's home, stating that she will be interested in learning more about the incident. Makbule's daughter welcomes Seniha. Seniha notices a photograph of the young man she loved but had to leave behind on the wall and starts to play the unfinished piece that the young man left as a gift with the piano in the room. Zeki's mother, who is in the room at that time, hears the melodies. She continues the song where Seniha left unfinished. Zeki's mother and Seniha meet on this occasion. Both women agree that Zeki's future will be better as they have a shared memory. A few days later, Seniha hears the news of Türkan and her father's return from Europe travel by telegram. After a while, Seniha calls the radio directorate to find out Zeki's test results. Seniha's meeting with the radio director brings Zeki to the director's mind as they discuss which program will replace Münevver Çınar's program, whose program on the radio has been postponed, so he decides to include him in the program.

Seniha's character reminds Ryan & Lenos (2012) analysis of the woman figure, which is seen in *Ömre Bedel Kadın*. As per the movie, women who deviate from the domestic female figure are depicted with a more masculine identity. This condition is aggravated by the supremacy of masculine power and gender perception based on the female figure in idealized domestic life (Ryan & Lenos, 2012: 235). Unlike the domestic woman figure, Seniha is seen as a relatively dominant woman in business life. As one of the film directors, Sonku may have tried to distinguish her female identity from the domestic figures at this point. According to Öğüt (2013), it would be accurate to say that she deconstructed masculine discourse, opposed sexist ideology, and attempted to demonstrate that women could function as bosses in 1950s business life in an era when women were neglected. In line with Direk's (2013) view, working in the public sphere liberates women, and when women are respected for their work, men are compelled to show acceptance. Therefore, labor freedom is the only thing that can liberate women from their dependence on men (Direk, 2013, p. 31). In the movie, we observe that Seniha is free in her decisions, confident, socially respected job. As a female director, Sonku here disrupts the memorized stereotypes of the female image by showing the "real" life of a "real" woman, in Smelik's (2008) words.

A few days after deciding to include Zeki in the radio program, the owner of the place where Makbule works comes to the Mutual Aid Society in order to see Seniha over there. He threatens Seniha to take thirty thousand liras for Zeki's contract. She shows you the microphone hidden in the vase and states that the man's words were heard by the officers inside. When the officers who are not actually the police but working for the association enter the room, the man swallows the letter of

undertaking. When Zeki returns home that evening, he informs his mother that the man swamped the payout.

One evening, Seniha, Türkan and his father listen to Zeki's radio program Zeki. Seniha informs Türkan that Zeki will have a concert soon. The concert day comes. Seniha and Türkan want to visit Zeki the backstage. Backstage, Zeki hears from Makbule that Seniha helped him in canceling his contract and organizing the concert. He wants to leave the concert halfway through. Makbule calls Seniha. Zeki informs Seniha that he wishes to go somewhere on his efforts and is enraged by her unwanted assistance. According to Birincioğlu (2018), it is possible to discuss more feminine, sensitive, and emotional male characters rather than the masculine model often seen in melodramas (Birincioğlu, 2018: 100). In this regard, we should emphasize the similarity between Zeki's resistance to Seniha and Birincioğlu's proposed emotional transformation.

After seeing how sad Zeki is, Seniha reveals the whole truth to him. He gives the missing part of his father's composition to Zeki. Zeki returns to the stage after asking forgiveness from Seniha and completes the concert with the song of *Beklenen Şarkı*.



**Visual-7:** *Beklenen Şarkı* Film - Left to Right: Melahat İçli, Cahide Sonku, Zeki Müren 'Cahide Sonku was Commemorated on Her 101. Birthday ', News: Mehmet Çalışkan

**Source:** <https://www.haberturk.com/cahide-sonku-101-inci-dogum-gununde-aniliyor-2916768>

Access Date: 21.03.2021

### Conclusion

In the study, the movie of *Şehvet Kurbanı* was analyzed over the concept of scopophilia, the movie named *Beklenen Şarkı* was examined based on female figure construction within an active/passive pattern of the masculine discourse, while

*Aysel Bataklı Damın Kızı* movie been examined through woman image reflected as 'Passive' and 'The other.'

The portrayal of women in the movies of *Aysel Bataklı Damın Kızı* and *Şehvet Kurbanı* in which Cahide Sonku was starring, is left to silence and passivity in the light of gender by the male hegemonic structure. And it appears that the woman is being portrayed as the victim of scopophilia with her exclusively sexual identity as the target of the manipulative gaze that serves the masculine construct. The business life dimension, in which the female point of view is actively involved in the movie *Beklenen Şarkı* which Sonku personally produced, directed, and acted in, makes a significant difference. And, amid the film's deep-seated male-dominated rhetoric, the position in which Sonku places women appears to be stronger. However, considering the father figure and servants' attitudes toward the Seniha and teacher's relationship is far from acceptable within social norms, as they are judgmental and punitive. Nonetheless, Sonku's urge to assert her female identity as an independent power in the face of memorized norms should be emphasized.

It is necessary to set a precedent for early Turkish cinema studies when the research is addressed with inferences based on the literature on the gender axis. For a starting point, it is necessary to concentrate on other films from the early era of Turkish cinema in which female identity is represented as the 'other' in the male-dominated and patriarchal system, as well as to continue the critique of masculine domination.

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# “I NAMED HER KEZBAN”: THE WOMAN IN THE FILM ‘KEZBAN IN PARIS’ AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CONTRADICTIONARY NATURE OF TURKISH MODERNIZATION

Murat İri<sup>1</sup>

My intent in writing this article is to illustrate the contradictions of Turkish modernization using the film ‘Kezban in Paris’ (Orhan Aksoy<sup>2</sup>, 1971). I have divided the article into two parts. In the first part, I explain those contradictions that are an unresolved problematic of Turkish modernization while in the second part I attempt to analyze how it was these contradictions were reproduced<sup>3</sup>.

Kezban, a poor peasant girl, goes to Istanbul. In other words, she migrates from the country to the city. Here, she is treated with contempt and mocked. Moreover, she falls in love with a spoilt, rich kid. But fortune smiles on Kezban and she is sent to Paris. Naturally, she returns a lady and now the roles are reversed. The spoilt, rich kid is going to chase after the poor peasant girl<sup>4</sup>.

## The Contradictions of Turkish Modernization

The start of Turkish modernization, which manifested as the contradiction between the people and the intellectuals, dates back the Constitutional Reform era. How this duality takes on a cultural form is particularly evident in Istanbul life (Sözen, 1989: 159).

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2 Orhan Aksoy wrote screenplays for İpek Film Studios between 1950 and 1962. His first film as a director was Şıpevdi [Quick to Love] (1963). Aksoy directed productions with star actors and wrote most of the screenplays himself. He became a major director of colorful melodramas with such films as *Samanyolu* [Milky Way] (1967), *Kezban* (1968), *Kezban Romada* [Kezban in Rome] (1970), and *Kezban Paris’te* [Kezban in Paris] (1971). He shot the remake of *Vurun Kahpeye* [Hit the Bitch] (1964) and occasionally shot films that touched on reality issues: *Almanyalı Yarım* [My German Lover] (1974), *Altın Şehir* [City of Gold] (1978), *İsyan* [Rebellion] (1979), and *İstanbul 79* (1979) (Scognamillo, 1998, p. 350).

3 See İri, M. (2015) for a similar study.

4 Turkish cinema generally places rural issues in one of two categories: Yeşilçam [A street in Istanbul that was once the home of all the film production companies, Turkey’s Hollywood/Bollywood] molds and social reality cinema. The former tells melodramatic tales centered on a village and peasant from “western” Anatolia, particularly influenced by the formation of the Democrat Party and its rise to power and the wave of migration from the countryside to the cities in the 1950s (Kezban comes from a village near Bolu while Ömer comes from a village near Bursa); the latter tells realistic stories set in the relatively laissez-faire climate of the 1960s and are mainly based on land ownership in “eastern” Anatolia (for a more detailed work on this subject, see Scognamillo, G. (1973)). Films with a rural theme waned in the mid-1970s when the “village question” lost its currency and stopped being made altogether in time. Page 4 of the Monday supplement of the *Hürriyet* [Freedom] newspaper dated Monday 29 February 1974 carries an important item of news: “With the large fall seen in the box-office revenues generated by rural films, film makers have returned to salon [urban, luxury residences, wealthy elite] films. Hülya Koçyiğit and Fatma Girik were the first to take on these films, which portray events in the lives of city-dwellers. Türkan Şoray is also not going to make rural films for a time. Emel Sayın is the same as always while Filiz Akin is preparing to play in a film just like in her popular film ‘Karate Girl’ [directed by Orhan Aksoy].”

It would be useful to take a look at the contradictory nature of Turkish nationalism as a modern phenomenon to better understand these impasses. The problems unique to Turkish nationalism are underpinned by the obligation this nationalism has to create and build a nation. When examining this situation, which could be read in reverse as the contradictory nature of Turkish modernization, and its extensions as they relate to a modern identity, one needs to take look at nationalist literature. German nationalism is described as “abnormal” and “evil” and the antithesis of the more “normal,” lesser-of-two-evils Western nationalism. The basic characteristic of Western nationalism, the most classic example of which is French nationalism, is that it is a cosmopolitan and universal modernity based on the philosophy of Enlightenment. The modern French state emerged simultaneously with French nationalism in 1789. German nationalism, on the other hand, emerged almost half a century before the creation of the modern German state, meaning that ethnic and cultural elements take precedence within it. German nationalism is driven not by the philosophy of Enlightenment, but by Romanticism, which criticizes by Enlightenment. There are two main reasons why these types of nationalism, described as pro-Western and anti-Western, are fundamental to deciphering Turkish modernization. The first is that Turkish modernism houses the basic features of both types of nationalism at its core, meaning it is inherently contradictory; the second is the historical timeline for the emergence of these state/nation phenomena (Kadioğlu, 1998).

German nationalism develops along culturalist lines to the same extent that French nationalism emphasizes civilization. When we examine Turkish nationalism in terms of the dilemma between civilization and culture, we can see that it contains the features of both as explained in the examples of French and German nationalism. Turkish nationalism contains the fundamental principles of both Enlightenment philosophy and Romanticism. It is both civilization and culture driven. Looking at it in reverse, Turkish modernization both includes and criticizes classical modernization.

When Turkish modernization synthesizes culture and civilization, it distinguishes between the good (material/technological) and bad (immaterial/traditional) aspects of the West and considers it appropriate to emulate the good aspects and criticize the bad. It also champions native cultural values when emulating Western science and technology and will never compromise these values. It will infuse its desire for civilization with a native culturalist approach. What matters here is the role that the task of synthesis imposes on the state elite and thus the contribution it makes to the powerful state tradition in Turkey, meaning the people-intellectual duality.

The intellectuals in Ottoman society at the end of the 19th century argued over what the limits of Westernization should be. The significance of this is that it portends the tendency of the people, who make up the social base, and the intellectuals to

break from one another. The lines delineating this break became more pronounced during the Republic era. The intellectuals of the time start to break away from their selves with a local Orientalist attitude. They start not to like themselves and to adopt attitudes that do not much like Islamic culture.

Chatterjee (1996) suggests that this friction between civilization and culture is characteristic of all Eastern modernizations. This characteristic is why the modernization question remains an unsolved problem in these contexts. Therefore, nationalism regards the East as the subject and active whereas it is seen as the object and passive in Orientalism. The “other,” defined as a reference for “I,” gains subjectivity. Thus, a contradiction emerges between the subject of non-Western modernization and its problematic, resulting in the impasses of modernization because the first order of Turkish modernization in practice is nation-building and this modernization is a development geared toward founding a nation-state (Sancar, 2004: 6). Pathological rifts and schizophrenic fragments are unavoidable in the relationship that all late-nationalizing nationalist trends have with the West.

### **The Rural-Urban, Center-Periphery, or People-Intellectual Duality**

The separation of rural and urban cultures essentially took place during the formation of the Ottoman Empire’s centralized bureaucracy. This bureaucracy tried to propagate urban culture from the top out to the periphery. On the other hand, the village/rural culture survived to the extent that it strived to maintain its continuity in the face of the centralized bureaucracy and later began to have an effect on the oppressed segments of society. This development teaches us why the understanding of justice in Turkey is dependent on an egalitarian discourse. The center-periphery, rural-urban dilemma in Turkey also shows how just and unjust discourses separated from one another and took shape. The central or urban culture is shaped as an unjust discourse because it is a culture that is spread from the top, is taught by force, and is “drummed in” whereas the village or rural culture, which is oppressed and trying to maintain its purity, is the source of the discourse of justice.

The attitudes of the elite in the Republic’s founding era who do not like Islam and whose preferences lie in synthesizing Westernism and Turkishness reinforce the rift between the center and the rural areas. While the differences between central and rural culture before the Republic were masked by Islam, the references of the Republic era elite regarding Islam remain at the semantic level. This rift between the center and the rural areas and the centrist, drumming-in attitude lead to a consolidation of Islamic culture within rural culture as a counter-thesis.

### **The Peasant is the Master of the Nation**

During the founding days of the Republic, the state elite adopt radical approaches, encouraging Western behavior and attire while regarding the rural areas as a constant threat to unity and an element that needs to be sculpted. The phrase “The peasant is the master of the nation” is adopted (Kadioğlu, 1998).

The central state's influence over the rural areas in Turkey is effective in forming a political culture. In cultures in which a centrist state is this dominant, the modern identity is also formed on an absolutist path. Turkish modernization emerges more as a social engineering project than the spontaneous discovery of the national will of the Turkish nation. This social engineering without a doubt gains functionality and visibility mostly through women's issues. The role imposed on women is the mission of raising the next generations. The actual transformation here would be from the patriarchal Islamic order to the patriarchal secular order. Consequently, the conflict between Islamists and secularists forms the main axis of conflict for Turkish modernization.

### **Women's Status**

The Reform period sees schools open for girls and changes to land law to give daughters a share of their late father's property (Altındal, 1994: 181). The status of women is, however, built within the constraints of patriarchal Western society mentality. Although women are designed as a modern social object, they become a "meta" of modernization at the hands of the state. The characteristic of this modernization is its top-down nature at the hands of the military-civilian bureaucracy. This characteristic peaks during the Republic era. Sancar summarizes it as "men form the state, women form families" (2012).

The pro-Western elite advocate the need for women to break from Islamic tradition and be liberated to achieve Western civilization. Conservatives, on the other hand, regard the deformation of traditions regarding women with suspicion. Turkish modernization is the struggle between the Islamist-Secularist (or the French vs. German nationalism) duality. A tense line is drawn between preserving local culture so it will not be destroyed by the West and being pro-Western to defend against the West. As a result, modern Turkish women are given the mission of representing the difference from the West (Sancar, 2004: 9). They are the representatives of the national culture and the nation's honor and the bearers of the anti-Istanbul "pro-Anatolia" discourse. The conflict between the traditional and modern women's identities turns into awareness of the Islamist and secularist women's identities. Modernity excludes tradition and religious identity as a strategy of power. This exclusion is established using the woman's body, sexuality, fertility, language, and cultural speaking styles. With her compassion, sacrifice, and loyalty to her family, this ideal Anatolian woman is opposed to upper-class excessiveness but at the same time she is educated, knows her rights, and has publicly visible features, thus setting her apart from lower-class traditionalism. Modernization, which can also be read as a capitalist process, transforms men into patriotic soldiers and women into fertile mothers and loyal wives.

So far, I have explained the contradictions of Turkish modernization. What I intend to do now is return to the film 'Kezban in Paris' to concretize them through examples of daily life practices.

### “Kezban in Paris in Terms of its Sociopolitical Reflections”

A critic going by the username “a lifetime of type-ii errors” writing about Kezban in Paris for *Eksisözlük* [Bitter Dictionary] suffices by summarizing how Turkish modernization is recreated in the film.

“...I am not a moviemaker and I have no right to talk about it from an artistic perspective but I can comfortably claim that it is a treasure trove of sociopolitical reflections. Kezban’s transformation is effectively the Republic’s desire to turn a peasant woman into a European woman put into practice. Kezban becomes modernized enough to conquer Paris without losing her village purity. Pay particular attention to Kezban’s hair throughout the film. She throws off her headscarf, lets down her braids, cuts her hair short, and in the end, sports an entirely European blonde hairstyle...” (<https://eksisozluk.com/kezban-pariste--211181>)

The film begins with a shot of a wooded area panning right to left that ends with a signpost reading T.R. Ministry of Forestry BOLU Forest Management. These generic images are accompanied by a French song, which also accompanies scenes of the peasant girl Kezban milking a cow, feeding chickens, kneading dough, and making bread, preparing soup, and cleaning her house. Kezban works constantly wearing a headscarf, with her braids falling on either side, and a printed dress that conceals as much of her physical features as possible. She is happy. The credits are also superimposed over these scenes (naming the actors Hülya Koçyiğit, İzzet Günay, Hulusi Kentmen; screenplay writer, producer, director, and other crew).

To read the film through its space settings and characters will leave more understandable clues for tracking Turkish modernization because when the space setting is being reproduced in movies for social practicality, it is 1) the product of the dialectic between the location where the events take place and the characteristics of what the social actors are aiming for; 2) remade through the actions of the social actors; 3) consequently, the objective and subjective experiences of the social actors ascribe meaning to the setting and redefine it; 4) special forms have a specific impact on the actors’ behavioral patterns and all these processes take place under specific structural and historic conditions. I shall discuss the wedding and masquerade ball scenes in the film because they are good examples of the policy of having the camera address the audience.

### Settings

**Kezban’s Village House:** From the outside, it appears neglected, dilapidated, and in need of repair. The images shown by the camera are an Islamic prayer in Arabic, a rifle, and a tapestry of a mosque, each hanging on a wall. The gas lamp and the decorations with their Islamic motifs catch the eye. There is a wood-stove. It is a simple, austere, poor household. The film begins and ends in this house. The societal source is this village house.

**The city house:** A rich person's house in Istanbul. Servants, a chauffeur, and a cook are chatting in the kitchen downstairs. There are lampshades, three-piece suites, a telephone, trinkets, liquor cabinets, and a gramophone. Only the rich Grandpa's room is decorated with Islamic and traditional motifs like the village house, almost as if it is in dialog with Kezban's village house. Objects such as a pearl inlaid pill box and the Islamic prayer on the wall are details that squarely place the room on the side of the people in the people vs. intellectual conflict.

**Club on the Bosphorus:** The place where the rich get together and spend time, socialize, and swim in the sea. A Westerner's club. The men and the women swim wearing the latest fashion swimwear. They drive speedboats, flirt with one another, and show off. The rich boys get into an fight over a girl. The relationships are degenerate. The club's disco is also the place where people meet up but spoiled rich girl Sevda criticizes the club claiming that it has turned into a place where every peasant from Anatolia can come and go as they please. The people-intellectual duality is embodied right here in the form of the modest Anatolian peasant girl and the spoiled rich blonde city woman...

**Paris:** The Eiffel Tower. Historic, tourist attractions. Views from the Champs-Élysées. The River Seine. Cafes. Sevda and Ayhan argue in the hotel, they have fun, and they dine out. While at the restaurant they see Kezban dancing the tango with a man unknown to them. The rivalry between spoiled rich urbanite Sevda and Kezban, the determined and headstrong peasant girl. Scenes and incidents...

**Ömer's Village House:** Ömer is the chauffeur for Ayhan's Grandpa. Ömer's wife is sick and Kezban arrives at the house in the village bringing medicine she ordered from Germany. Ömer's wife has died but the baby lives on. *As the baby is a girl, he has named her Kezban.* The village house is the setting for being trapped, a place of deprivation. Ömer, Kezban, baby Kezban, and Ömer's mother are trapped there due to bad weather. It is house with Islamic motifs and where poverty prevails. It is lit by gaslight but the people living there are proud and hardy. This house is also in a state of dialog with Grandpa's room and Kezban's village house. This village house is the special place where engineer Ömer, the symbol of positivism, and Kezban, the ideal Anatolian Turkish woman, are and will always be reproduced...

### **The Characters**

**Rich city men:** Ayhan and his grandfather. Ayhan is as modern as Grandpa is traditional but Grandpa is, at the same time, the first symbol of modernization. He wants his grandson to take a wife as soon as possible. Grandpa's favorite meal is the traditional plate of dried beans and rice. He dances to traditional Turkish dancing music on the gramophone. He is also fiercely loyal to the memory of his late wife. Although the doctor and nurse who strive for Grandpa's health throughout the film represent positivism, they are helpless and inadequate in the face of traditionalism within the elements of comedy.

**Rich city women:** The singer Sevda, who wants Ayhan all to herself, and her friends who are like her. They are criminal and evil. These women are “tramps.” They are usually blonde, wear skimpy clothes, love partying, and are gold-diggers. Sevda is determined not to lose Ayhan to that peasant girl. She loves to have fun at discos.

**Poor peasant girl Kezban:** Always the subject of slander, her dreams are continually being shattered. She is pious. She misunderstands or is misunderstood. She is often humiliated. At the start of the film, her light brown hair is covered by a loose headscarf with braids falling on either side but it becomes shorter as she becomes (is made) modern. It takes on a European appearance and becomes blonde. She is introduced to the rich Grandpa as Ayhan’s bride but she is a poor, common peasant girl. Nevertheless, she is courageous, honest, and conscientious enough to confess to Grandpa that her relationship with Ayhan is a ruse but Grandpa has long accepted her as the bride. He is going to use his weight to influence events and even send Kezban to Paris to bring Ayhan to his knees and make him fall in love with Kezban.

**Poor city men:** They work as servants to the rich. They never deny their peasant roots but they are not the servants of the house. Like the “plebeian” Grandpa says, “these men are not servants; they are each a part of this house and my dear comrades.” They call Ömer, one of their number, “professor” because he goes to college. Not only does he work to bring home money to look after his wife in the village but he also studies at the faculty of agriculture. When he finishes his studies he is going to return to his village, his wife, his family. Kezban is his elder sister. College student Ömer’s idea in the plan to capture Ayhan for Kezban is accepted. It is not Ayhan who should be transformed, but Kezban. The first step in that transformation will be taken at the masquerade ball.

The two pivotal scenes in the film are the wedding and the masquerade ball.

### **The Wedding Scene**

Grandpa wants his son to take a wife as soon as possible but his urgency results in Kezban being introduced to him as the bride because Ayhan’s actual girlfriend, Sevda, is in Athens. Under pressure from Grandpa, they arrange a traditional drum-and-trumpet wedding that is far from being a yuppie affair. Classic Turkish dancing tunes are played. The group of girls dancing together all have dark or light brown hair, look quite modern, and wear mini-skirts. The household staff and the guests alike really enjoy the occasion. Grandpa forces the bride and groom to dance. The camera is fixed and relays the images to the audience as if watching a stage play. Cinema’s function as entertainer is in full swing.

### **The Masquerade Ball Scene**

Grandpa tasks Kezban and Ayhan to represent him at the masquerade ball that he organizes at the club, which he founded. He gifts Kezban with the frock that his wife

wore 40 years ago as a ball gown. The household staff also goes to the ball to protect Kezban from Sevda. They have a mission to humiliate Kezban with various tricks and games and to elevate Kezban in the eyes of Ayhan's social group, and this they do successfully. The household staff stand by Kezban, who represents Anatolia, like Grandpa's soldiers because Grandpa has given the order to "begin the attack." This is an "operation." The camera watches from outside but definitely "gives the sense" that it is positioned next to the household staff.

### **Knot and Solution**

Ayhan explains everything, admitting that he had to present to his Grandpa a girl he was never going to marry. He asks her to forgive him but Ayhan is head over heels in love with Kezban. But, thinking that Kezban does not feel the same way about him, he decides that he should commit himself to his work and so goes to Izmir on business for a while.

The knot of the film is made by Sevda, the blonde singer from Istanbul, in a final move using all her wickedness to snatch Ayhan for herself while Ayhan is away in Izmir. Sevda takes the letter that Ömer wrote to Kezban saying that he needs medicine. Keeping the envelope intact, she turns the letter inside into a confession of love and ensures that Ayhan reads it in the hope that Ayhan will hate Kezban and want to break up with her.

Grandpa, who believes none of this, acts for solution. He has gotten up from his sickbed, gone to Ömer's village, and seen the facts for himself.

### **Conclusion, or modernization as the burden on the shoulders of Kezban**

Films as social practice, are medias that reproduce the characteristics of the dominant ideology and social structure. Therefore, the ideology of (Turkish) modernization is constructed in this film as an attitude in which men establish, design, and make visible their social power over women. The film 'Kezban in Paris' is one of hundreds of Yesilçam films through which one can trace the contradictions of Turkish modernization (local vs. Western or Islamic vs. secular).

Kezban is a woman caught between the "plebeian" Grandpa, who represents authoritarian Turkish modernization, his grandson Ayhan, who is a yuppie and car enthusiast, and Ömer, who is a positivist but university student who does not deny his village roots. The film addresses the audience from a position of absolute approval of Grandpa and Ömer's stance and that occasionally criticizes Ayhan. With her compassion, selflessness, and family loyalty, Kezban is not a part of upper-class (spoilt/Istanbulite) excessiveness. But at the same time, she is a person who can be educated, knows her rights, and has publicly visible features, thus setting her apart from lower-class traditionalism. Carrying these burdens on her shoulders, Kezban is the ideal middle-class Turkish woman.

Furthermore, there will always be new generations of Kezbans who will maintain the balance between local (peasant) and Western cultures because as “Professor” Ömer says of his daughter, newly born in the village, “I named her Kezban.”

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## **ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERS IN THE FILM RETURN [DÖNÜŞ] (1972) WITHIN A FEMINIST FILM CRITIQUE**

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This study aims to analyze the characters in the film *Dönüş* [The Return] (Türkan Şoray, 1972) using a feminist film critique. *The Return* is the first film directed by Türkan Şoray, one of Turkish cinema's most prominent female actors, known as "the Sultan of Turkish Cinema." She directed this film and played the leading role. She came up with the story after being moved by a report in a newspaper. Safa Önal wrote the screenplay (Şoray, 2017: 163).

Türkan Şoray's career in cinema began with a role in the film *Köyde Bir Kız Sevdim* (Türker İnanoğlu, 1960) and after 12 years working in front of the cameras, she made her directing debut with *The Return* in 1972. During those 12 years, Şoray made roughly 160 films, including some directed by master directors such as Metin Erksan and Ömer Lütfi Akad (Scognamillo, 2003: 292) (İlhan, 2014: 284). In addition to being screened in Turkey, *The Return* was shown at the Moscow Film Festival (1973), the Tehran Film Festival (1974), and the Second International Women Directors Festival held in Brussels (Şoray, 2017: 174-183). Şoray has directed five films in all and is Turkey's eighth woman director after Cahide Sonku, Nuran Şener, Feyturiye Esen, Bilge Olgaç, Birsen Kaya, Ayten Kuyulu, and Lale Oraloğlu. After *The Return*, Türkan Şoray directed *Azap* (1973), *Bodrum Hakimi* (1976), *Yılanı Öldürseler* (1981), and *Uzaklarda Arama* (2015) (Sekmeç, 2015: 7, 72).

### **What "The Return" Is About and The Film's Narrative Structure**

*The Return* focuses on those left behind by the people who went from Turkey to work in Germany as "Gastarbeiter" starting in 1961 (ntv.com.tr). The film tells the story of a peasant woman whose husband has gone to Germany and her struggle with the power relations, the patriarchal order, and ignorance that prevail inside the existing socio-economic system. İbrahim purchases a field on credit but decides

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to go to Germany when he can no longer pay his debt. His wife, Gülcan, stays behind in the village with their newborn baby. Now that her husband has gone to Germany, Gülcan is harassed by the feudal land-owner, Reşit Bey. After a while, her husband stops contacting her. This is when Gülcan understands that she has to fight her battles alone.

When we examine the screenplay for the film, which lasts 94 minutes, we can see that it is divided into three parts, each lasting roughly half an hour: Gülcan's life before her husband goes to Germany (00.00-28.30); Ibrahim's first trip to Germany and his return (28.30-59.00); Ibrahim's second trip to Germany and his return (59.00-1.34.00). This allows the transformation in Gülcan's life to be told in the film step by step. *The Return* (1972) has been discussed in many academic studies on the subject of "migration." Tamer (1978), Yüksel (2001), Gümüş (2013), Selen (2015), Çağlak (2017), Yüksel (2017), Kalpaklı (2018), Gürdaş (2021) all tried to show how the subject of migration was treated in *The Return* (1972).

*The Return* is also reviewed in academic texts among films that deal with village life (Pöstecki, 2012: 153). Although *Aysel, Bataklı Damın Kızı* (Muhsin Ertuğrul, 1934) is regarded as the first example of village films in Turkish cinema (Scognamillo, 2003: 59-61), it is said that village films began to rise in the 1950s (Yüksel ve Çam, 2019: 296). Even though some of these films are criticized for not touching on the real problems faced by villages and for using the village as nothing more than a folkloric element, they also include films that take a realistic look at village life and are ranked among the most important films in Turkish cinema village life. *The Return* is also considered among those films that take a realistic look at village life (Pöstecki, 2012: 153). İri (2009: 54) explains how those films defined as village films peaked in the 1960s and fell into decline in the mid-1970s when the "village problem" lost its currency.

French anthropologist Levi-Strauss said that "Making conceptual categories within a system was, for him, the essence of sense-making, and at the heart of this process was the structure that he called a binary opposition. A binary opposition is a system of two related categories that, in its purest form, comprises the universe" (Fiske, 1990: 156).

*The Return* can also be read in terms of binary opposites. In the film, we can see how (in order of their emergence in the screenplay) strong-weak, rich-poor, ignorance-education (knowledge), masculinity-femininity, good-bad, primitive-civilized, village-town, subject-object, life-death, and light-darkness are revealed.

**Table 1.** Binary Oppositions in the Film “The Return”

<b>Binary Oppositions</b>	
Strong	Weak
Rich	Poor
Educated (knowledge)	Uneducated
Masculine	Feminine
Bad	Good
Primitive	Civilized
Village/Rural	Town/Urban
Being Active	Being Passive
Death	Life
Darkness	Light
Nature	Man

1. The power relationships in the existing socio-economic order in Paşaköy village are evident at the start of the film. Who is strong and who is weak, who is rich and who is poor, who is educated and who is uneducated within the current order is made clear. The binary oppositions of educated and uneducated are emphasized again when Gülcan starts learning to read and write in the later scenes.

2. The dominant male perspective in Paşaköy and the place of women in the existing order make the binary opposition of masculine-feminine clear after Gülcan starts talking in the film’s opening scene.

3. The binary opposition of good-bad comes into play after Gülcan marries Ibrahim. Reşit Bey who cannot accept Gülcan’s rejection, uses his wealth and violence. The villagers become a party to this evil by helping Reşit Bey or by staying silent even though they know what he is doing is bad. Ibrahim, too, by leaving Gülcan on her own.

4. The binary opposition of civilized-primitive comes to the fore after Ibrahim goes to Germany. This binary opposition is intertwined with the village/rural-town/urban binary opposition throughout the film.

5. The binary opposition of being active and being passive comes to the fore in the film when Gülcan starts to transform after she waits a long time for her “savior” Ibrahim to come home and loses hope in him. Gülcan decides to learn how to read and write and in doing so becomes her own savior.

6. The binary oppositions of birth-death and life-death emerge with the death of Gülcan’s baby.

7. The presence of the teacher represents light (enlightenment) in the film while his absence (departure) represents darkness. In the scene where Gülcan goes to school and starts to learn, the school is depicted as bright and a place where children play in the school grounds.

8. The nature-man binary opposition emerges particularly in the scene where Gülcan's child gets caught up in the river's strong current and drowns.

### **Analysis of The Characters In The Film Return (1972) Within A Feminist Film Critique**

**Table 2.** Analysis of the signs Used in Depicting the Characters in “The Return”

<b>Character</b>	<b>Signifiers</b>	<b>Signifieds</b>
Reşit Bey	Cigarette	Comfort, Wealth
	Whip, rifle, bullets	Power
	Horse and cart	Wealth
	People trying to kiss his hand	Respect
	Leather jacket, boots, watch, foulard	Wealth, civilization
Gülcan	Hoe	Courage
	Watching from behind the wooden shed	Questioning
	Headscarf	Traditional values
İlyas	Seen up to his neck in official paperwork	Lost
	Thumbprint	Illiteracy
	Handshaking	Fear
Pious villager	Sits outside the mosque	Islamic faith
	Prayer beads	Islamic faith
	White beard	Wizened
İbrahim	Amphora	Peasant
	Cloth cap	Peasant, traditional lifestyle
Village records officer	Cloth cap	Peasant, traditional lifestyle
Müslim	Tries to kiss Reşit Bey's hand	Subordinate to Reşit Bey in the hierarchy
	Cloth cap	Peasant, traditional lifestyle
Village teacher	Suit, shirt, tie	Modern, formal attire

### **The Villagers**

The film begins with scenes of peasant men and women working the land and also waiting in troubled anticipation. There are four characters in the first scene actively seizing a field. They are Reşit Bey, Reşit Bey's assistant Müslim, the debt enforcement officer, and Ilyas Dereli, the villager whose field is being seized. All four of these characters are male. The women in the scene play the roles of farm laborer, mother, wife, or young woman and not one of them has a say when the land is changing hands. They see everything but can only look on in silence. It is the men that make the key decisions. Women are not allowed to speak. Women that want to speak are forcibly wanted to silenced. The film displays the male-dominated social order in Paşaköy and criticizes it.

### **Reşit Bey**

The dialogs used at the start of the film and the position of the camera show that Reşit Bey is superior to the other villagers in the village hierarchy. John Fiske (1990: 69) says, “When, how often, and for how long we meet other people’s eyes is a way of sending very important messages about relationships, particularly how dominant or affiliative we wish the relationship to be. Staring someone out is a simple challenge of dominance...” In the film’s opening scene, Gülcan stares right into Reşit Bey’s eyes and challenges him in front of everybody. Reşit Bey’s assistant, Müslim, first tries to silence her. When Gülcan answers back again, Müslim raises his hand to hit her. This scene emphasizes that women who object are humiliated, intimidated, and subjected to violence if necessary.

The film also emphasizes that for Reşit Bey, owning the fields means owning everything on them, including the people living on that land. His assistant and the other villagers consent Reşit Bey’s thought. This may be why none of the villagers objects when Reşit Bey demolishes Gülcan’s house, slaughters her chickens, destroys the crops in her field, and causes the death of her child, and why nobody helps here. They only look on from afar.

### **Müslim**

One of the key characters in the village is Reşit Bey’s assistant, Müslim. He appears to be the “guardian of honor” but knowingly ignores the struggle Gülcan is waging for her own honor. It is obvious that he uses his “honor” rhetoric only as a means to serve his personal interests.

### **İlyas Dereli**

The film’s opening scene explains how İlyas Dereli has lost his field because of his debts. His story reveals the plight and the socio-economic order of the villagers in Paşaköy. The fact that he does not object when his field is seized in exchange for his debts shows he is resigned to his plight; his trembling hands show his fear; that he uses his thumbprint to sign the papers shows he is not educated enough to know how to read and write. His worried face, seen from between the pages of the debt enforcement ledger, visually emphasizes how lost peasant İlyas feels amid all the official paperwork. The main reason underpinning İlyas’ unjust treatment is his lack of education. It is because he has no education that he has suffered economically, lost his field, and become nothing more than a worker on his own land. İlyas’ economic woes have made his wife and children victims, too. What befalls İlyas and his family in this condition indicates what could happen to İbrahim and his family in the future.

### **Gülcan**

Gülcan watches the field being seized from afar in the first scene and what we see on screen is her eyes from behind the wooden slats of a shed. The viewer thus sees Gülcan’s eyes firstly. Remarkably, in this scene in which we see Gülcan for

the first time, the woman is written as a person who “watches” and not one who “is watched.” Gülcan is portrayed as a character who questions what she sees and is disturbed by what she witnessed. Gülcan cannot stand what is being done to İlyas and her conscience is disturbed by it, so hoe in hand, she emerges and objects to what is being said. Gülcan’s strong character is highlighted first by her eyes seen from behind the slats and her inquiring gaze, then the hoe in her hand and the way she speaks. By reacting to something that everyone else is witnessing in silence, she shows that she is at least as clever, aware, and brave as the men in the male-dominated village. Despite this, we understand from the lines spoken in this scene and the choice of music that Müslim regards Gülcan only as “a peasant woman to be forcibly silenced” while Reşit Bey sees her only as “a beautiful woman.” It is clear that no matter how clever, aware, and brave the woman is, she is nothing more than those identities in the eyes of the men who dominate the village order.

“According to feminist film theory, although she is a central element of the spectacle and thus the narrative, a woman is not its core subject. The woman is simply an image. Feminist film theory makes the representation of women in cinema the topic of both political (for women, on behalf of women, and about women) and esthetic (the sexual representation of the body) analysis (Timisi, 2011: 158).

The content of films and how women are represented in them are key topics for feminist film critiques. Research here reveals the problems in how women are represented in films. In his article called ‘How Yeşilçam Used Violence in Representing Women,’ Abisel states that the 103 films he analyzed in his study portrayed women in one of two categories: ‘Those that comply with the gender role that society expects of them and those who do not. The principal quality of the woman who complies with this role is that she embraces love, marriage, raising a child, and building a home and existing only to serve this as her *raison d’être*. The woman who does not comply with this role comes across as the type who is not content with her lot, desires a different or more comfortable life, and therefore enters the man’s world, calls people out, does as she pleases, and has a plan to get what she wants’” (Saygılıgil, 2016: 162-163).

The films’ form and content can be created with a patriarchal perspective. Berger says: “Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus, she turns herself into an object — and most particularly an object of vision: a sight” (Berger, 1995: 47). Mulvey says: “In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/ female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness.

Woman displayed as sexual object is the leitmotif” (Mulvey, 2010: 218). Mulvey emphasizes that the man is active as the subject of the look whereas the woman is passive as its object. The “gaze” makes women the object of the look (Saygılıgil, 2016: 152). According to Mulvey, “The spectator’s gaze is male. The spectator/camera is male whereas the object, that which is watched is female. As the spectator identifies with the main male protagonist, he projects his look onto that of his like, his screen surrogate, so that the power of the male protagonist as he controls events coincides with the active power of the erotic look, both giving a satisfying sense of omnipotence” (Timisi, 2011: 170-171).

Mulvey states “There are three different looks associated with cinema: that of the camera as it records the pro-filmic event, that of the audience as it watches the final product, and that of the characters at each other within the screen illusion. The conventions of narrative film deny the first two and subordinate them to the third, the conscious aim being always to eliminate intrusive camera presence and prevent a distancing awareness in the audience. Without these two absences (the material existence of the recording process, the critical reading of the spectator), fictional drama cannot achieve reality, obviousness, and truth” (Mulvey, 2010: 228). “Mulvey recommends destroying the pleasure in dominant cinema for feminist film practice” (Timisi, 2011: 171). “The first blow against the monolithic accumulation of traditional film conventions (already undertaken by radical filmmakers) is to free the look of the camera into its materiality in time and space and the look of the audience into dialectics, passionate attachment. There is no doubt that this destroys the satisfaction, pleasure and privilege of the “invisible guest,” and highlights how film has depended on voyeuristic active/passive mechanisms” (Mulvey, 2010: 229).

Gülcan’s “point of view” in *The Return* is used specifically in two different scenes by framing them in the same way. Gülcan’s character in the first scene of the film is positioned in an active role, that of the person watching, not a passive role as the person being watched. Gülcan’s eyes and gaze as well as the subjective use of the camera show the audience her “point of view.” “Point of view” has an important function in narrative-based arts and can be defined as “the mindset with which events, the environment, and people are watched” (Sözen, 2008: 594). “The terms ‘objective camera’ and ‘subjective camera’ are used frequently in cinema terminology and are directly related to the concept of perspective” (Sözen, 2008: 584). “The use of the subjective viewpoint in cinema is based on merging the audience’s and the hero’s perspective into one. It is generally thought that the subjective perspective is a conscious choice designed to make the audience identify with the hero and to increase the audience’s emotional involvement by allowing viewers to see people and events through the eyes of the hero” (Süar, 2017: 123). By using the subjective camera angle, the director was able to emphasize that Gülcan’s point of view differed from that of the other people. The gulf between the points of view held by Gülcan, who objected to what was going on, and the other villagers, who consented to it, is

explained easily in the language of the cinema. When showing Gülcan's point of view, the upper and/or lower parts of the image are kept dark to stress that the act of watching is done from behind the wooden slats. Gülcan's point of view is given in one more scene in the film with the similar framing. (See: pages 66)

### **Ibrahim**

Ibrahim marries Gülcan and builds a happy home. Ibrahim's cry of joy saying, "It's a boy" when he sees his newborn child for the first time highlights the male-dominated order. Ibrahim has to go to Germany as a "Gastarbeiter" to pay off his debts for the field, which he bought on credit. He makes his decision to go to Germany without asking his wife. Neither Gülcan's objections nor the fact that their baby is newborn can stop it. Even though he has made enough money in Germany to buy the field when he comes home on leave, he goes back to Germany. Again, he ignores Gülcan's objections. For Ibrahim, his wife is not someone who needs to be persuaded. Not caring one iota about the problems Gülcan is experiencing within the village's socio-economic structure, he returns to Germany leaving responsibility for the child solely in Gülcan's hands. Ibrahim builds a new family in Germany and only returns to the village "to cleanse his honor."

### **Village Chief**

An overall assessment of the village chief places him as a well-intentioned character who cannot prevent the bad that is happening. It is clear that he regards Gülcan's illiteracy as natural and not a problem. He reads and writes letters for Gülcan but does not even consider showing her how to learn to read and write or assist her.

### **Village teacher**

The state's central administration is never once represented at the level of any senior official throughout the film. Civil servants do appear in the film, They are the two soldiers and the bailiff in the scene where the field is seized and the postman who delivers Ibrahim's letter to Gülcan. The civil servant seen the most in the film is the village teacher. The village teacher is the only person in the village not afraid of Reşit Bey. The teacher is also the only person with the courage to come and repair Gülcan's house after Reşit Bey tears it down. Furthermore, he comes to help accompanied by his students showing that he has raised the future generations with the spirit of solidarity. The villagers see the teacher and students and come to help after a while. This shows that while the feudal land-owner rules over the poor and uneducated peasants and their consciences, one teacher can change this indifference. The teacher teaches Gülcan to read and write and thus helps her prepare for her future. He tries to assist her by giving her hope for the future, not by intimidating her. The teacher symbolizes the future, hope, action, and solidarity in the face of adversity, knowledge, and enlightenment in contrast to the past, despair, looking on helplessly, ignorance, and darkness.

### **The pious villager**

Another character of importance in the village's current order is an old man with a white beard who uses religious expressions when he talks. At no time in the film is he referred to by name, nickname, or profession and just who he might be is left unclear. The white-bearded man and the village chief are seen to speak in the same manner in the scene where Müslim has the letter to Ibrahim written. The film makes it obvious that both the village chief and the white-bearded man share the same point of view, they do not object to women being punished when "honor" is at stake, but they also believe they should act with restraint because they are not sure if Gülcan has committed any "crime" or not.

### **The Use of Field, Crops, Crows, The Rescuer Who Chases Off The Crows, And Soil in Describing The Characters in "The Return"**

The field, the crops, the crows, the rescuer (who chases off the crows), and soil play key roles in portraying the characters in the film from beginning to end. The film uses Ibrahim's voice to explain what these concepts mean in Paşaköy but at the same time, it criticizes this point of view.

#### **Field and crops**

Gülcan and Ibrahim excitedly go to their field when their first crops begin to show. Gülcan is pregnant. She and Ibrahim speak excitedly about the crops as if their first baby was about to come into the world:

*Ibrahim: "This will be our first crop."*

*Gülcan: "We shall sow again. Harvest again. Then again."*

*Ibrahim: "Same as you. You'll have another baby after this one, then another."*

As expressed clearly in this scene, "field" and "woman" are likened to one another in the film. *The Return* treats the field in two different senses:

1. Bounteous. Natural means of production.
2. A commodity to be bought and sold.

The resemblance between a field and a woman according to the mindset in Paşaköy is stressed like this in the film's narrative structure:

1. When Ibrahim excitedly takes Gülcan to the field when their first crop begins to show, he likens Gülcan to the field and their soon-to-be-born baby as the crop. The making of this resemblance is accompanied by other resemblances being made. Gülcan's story and that of the field advance in parallel in the film. Gülcan experiences a relationship with her baby, the ill-intentioned people who wish to exploit her, and her husband Ibrahim similar to the one the field has with the soil, the crop, the crows, and the guardian.

This resemblance says that just as the field yields crops, so the woman gives birth and brings babies into the world. Accordingly, the crop symbolizes a newborn baby. When the field catches fire, Gülcan fights with all her might to save it but fails. The

scene in which Gülcan tries to save the crop shows the field burning and the baby crying. It is as if the field is crying as it loses its crop. Gülcan also fights to save her child when Reşit Bey's men attack but cannot save it. Reşit Bey has not only had Gülcan's crop in the field put to flame but also caused the death of her baby. For a large part of the film, Gülcan awaits her husband's return to stop those who want to do her harm just like her chasing off the crows that came to the field.

2. The field as a commodity to be bought and sold among the men in Paşaköy is portrayed in the film in the form of Gülcan's body being reduced to an object that a man can possess (with or without the woman's consent) within the socio-economic network of relations in Paşaköy. The film explains that in Paşaköy, the concept of "honor" is used as the justification for a man owning his wife's body.

The dominant male viewpoint in Paşaköy regards women and fields alike as objects to be owned. Ibrahim wants to marry Gülcan and own the field. He marries Gülcan. After going to Germany, he gains enough money to buy the field. Yet, after seeing Germany, the field starts to appear to him as an insignificant goal and is not enough for him. Similarly, after seeing the women in Germany, he starts to see Gülcan with different eyes. After some time he leaves both Gülcan and the field. Despite leaving her, he still thinks that he owns Gülcan (just as he is still the owner of the field). Likewise, Reşit Bay also wants to own Gülcan and the field. He tries through various ruses to take both from Ibrahim. A power struggle begins between Reşit Bey and Ibrahim that Ibrahim is not even aware of. The actors in the current order do not regard Gülcan as a subject in this power struggle. Just like a field, they regard Gülcan only as an object.

The concepts of "field and crop" and "woman and baby/child" have a relationship that goes much deeper than their resemblance. The emphasis in the film on the idea that "man comes from the soil and to the soil he shall return" also means that it presents the concepts of field, crop, woman, and baby/child as an existential whole. On the one hand, the film likens the baby to the crop and on the other, it turns the field and man into each other by recalling that the field's soil and the man are extensions of one another.

### **The Crows**

The film establishes a resemblance between the crows flying over the field and Reşit Bey and his men hovering around Gülcan waiting for the right opportunity. The crows are flying around the perimeter of the field while Gülcan anxiously watches them and tries to chase them off. Reşit Bey goes up to Gülcan working in the field and claims that Ibrahim is not coming back. He uses his wealth to try and persuade her to join him but is unsuccessful in this. Reşit Bey threatens Gülcan saying "You turned me down, right. I'll be damned for eternity if I don't make you a whore in these peasant's eyes." In Paşaköy, the greatest threat for a woman is not to lose her life or property, but to lose "her honor." The mindset that sees Gülcan only

in terms of her sexual identity is trying to mete out the greatest punishment it can, again through her sexual identity. This is indicative of the dominant male mindset that belittles women.

### The Rescuer

Even though the dominant male mindset in Paşaköy sees Gülcan as an “object,” Gülcan does not accept this role. She stands up to her husband and to Reşit Bey. On the one hand, she stands apart with her objections to the injustices she sees and her courage from the very first scene of the film, but on the other, she is a character that “awaits” her husband’s return for a long time “thinking that her husband is going to come back one day and protect her.” As a result of Ibrahim failing to return and Reşit Bey’s attacks, Gülcan stops being the “waiting” woman who “only defends herself.” Realizing that only she can protect herself, she undergoes a huge transformation. Gülcan learns to read and write. When she loses hope in Ibrahim, she burns all that remains of him there. She kills Reşit Bey, who caused the death of her child and never gave up his plans for her body.

**Table 3.** Similarities in the “Field’s” and “Gülcan’s” Stories in “The Return” According to the Dominant Male Viewpoint.

The Field’s Story	Gülcan’s Story
Field	Gülcan
Crop	Gülcan and İbrahim’s baby boy İsmail Hasan
Crows	Reşit Bey and his Men
Rescuer	İbrahim / Gülcan
Earth	Nature

### Soil

“Signifieds are made by people, determined by the culture or subculture to which they belong. They are part of the linguistic or semiotic system that members of that culture use to communicate with each other” (Fiske, 1990, 45). *The Return* uses the image of the soil both denotatively and connotatively. Denotatively, the soil is the natural resource in which seeds are planted and grow. It is a key part of the field and cannot be considered separately from the field. Connotatively, it is used to represent tradition and culture in Paşaköy.

From the dialog that takes place between Gülcan and Ibrahim when they first go to the field they have bought it is evident that the field and its soil mean more to them than just a basic means of production in an economic sense.

*Gülcan: “Beautiful. Soft and warm, like silk.”*

*Ibrahim: “And what color! I haven’t seen such a fine shade of brown in any other field.”*

*Gülcan: “It smells just like a newborn baby. That sweet smell of milk.”*

*Gülcan takes a handful of soil. Ibrahim then holds the soil in Gülcan's hand to his cheek and lips as if kissing a baby.*

The way Gülcan holds the soil in her hands like a newborn baby when they first go to the field and the way Ibrahim holds the soil in her hand to his cheek as if kissing a newborn baby catch the viewer's attention. The soil in this scene represents the idea of "we come from the soil and to the soil we shall return" and emphasizes the preparations for the baby that is soon to be born. The scene in which Ibrahim holds his baby to his cheek and kisses it when he names it is visually similar to the scene in which he holds the soil in Gülcan's hand to his cheek and kisses it. Cinematography and the lines spoken are both used to compare the baby to the soil of the newly purchased field

Gülcan's refusal to bury her child in the land later on in the film could again be related to this point of view. Agreeing to bury her child in the land would mean accepting that the child is dead, that she is no longer a mother, and that she will not be able to be a mother again. For Gülcan, a mother cannot be separated from her child and left childless any more than a field can be separated from its soil and crop. It is unthinkable. The dead must be buried but Gülcan tries to stop this from happening even if it means turning all the other villagers against her. Before leaving the village, the teacher comes in front of Gülcan's house and calls her. No longer listening to anyone, Gülcan does listen to the teacher who tells her: "No need to torment the child's soul further with your suffering. If my teaching you anything has earned me the right to speak, listen to my words..." The teacher's words show that he is also acting according to the world of traditional beliefs. Thus, she learns that education and tradition are not two distinct and separate paths and that they can meet. This also shows to her that Gülcan does not have to choose one path over another. Gülcan buries her child in the morning. Just like the dawning of a new day, a new period begins for Gülcan. The notion of "man comes from the soil and to the soil he shall return" is emphasized once again by Gülcan burying her child. Taking strength not only from her education but also from traditional values, Gülcan continues to make big changes in her life.

## **Ibrahim And Gülcan's Transformation**

### **Ibrahim's transformation**

We see Ibrahim return home after all the difficulties Gülcan has been put through but he looks different now. Wearing a suit and tie and a hat with a feather in it and carrying a photo camera over his shoulder and a radio, it is a different person who stands before Gülcan. Gülcan examines every piece of Ibrahim's clothing and his accessories in wonder. The way she covers her face with both hands then slowly opens her fingers and looks visually emphasizes her surprise at Ibrahim's transformation.

The conversation that takes place between Ibrahim and Gülcan on his first day back shows that it is not only Ibrahim's appearance that has changed but the way he regards the village, too. Ibrahim appears unfazed by the fact the fields burned, even though it greatly upset Gülcan. Ibrahim experienced her pain when she was in labor but he no longer shares the same feelings as her. It is now hard for Ibrahim to live in a house that has no electricity or hot water and in a village with muddy roads. The more he notices the lack of amenities in the village, the more the comforts in Germany grow before his eyes.

Although she notices the changes in Ibrahim's attire and point of view, she cannot fully understand Ibrahim when he talks of things she has never seen in her life and so she cannot fully comprehend the scale of the change that has taken place in him. Nothing at all has changed in Gülcan's daily attire, her thoughts, and her plans for the future.

The night before he goes to Germany a second time, Ibrahim watches his wife as she lights a gas lamp in the house. The expression on Ibrahim's face is one of dejection, pessimism, and thought. Their baby is asleep in a gently rocking crib hanging from the ceiling. The baby's rhythm makes the viewer sense the heightened tension and the progress of time. Ibrahim's glum face is filmed together with the rickling of the baby's crib left and right. The way the baby, oblivious to what is going on, swings back and forth between Ibrahim and Gülcan visually and audibly highlights Ibrahim's boredom and stress. The swaying baby sometimes passes in front of Ibrahim's image on the screen, sometimes in front of Gülcan's, obscuring their faces and making the audience feel uncomfortable. The sleeping baby is part of their dialogue and, without being aware of it, reminds Gülcan, Ibrahim, and the audience that it exists. The swinging of their baby left and right between Gülcan and Ibrahim's physical and emotional separation is like a harbinger of the bad things that are to befall the baby in the scenes to come.

Ibrahim's eye is not on Gülcan or the baby but the gas lamp. The more he looks at it, the more he recalls the electric lamps he has seen in houses in Germany. The electric lamp symbolizes modern life in Germany whereas the gas lamp symbolizes the primitive rural conditions in the village. Similar to the baby's physical swing back and forth, Ibrahim is also moving back and forth in his mind between modern urban life and traditional rural life. In their dialog, Ibrahim explains that all this poverty, which began to bother him on his return from Germany, is affecting him psychologically, but Gülcan does not understand him.

Ibrahim longs for the freedom he experienced in Germany, the clothing, the things used there, the cars, and the comfortable homes. Great changes have begun to take place in life to own these things. The place occupied by women in German society has not changed the way he regards women, however. Gülcan had no say in his decision to leave for Germany the first time, and this time is no different.

The harsh way in which Ibrahim treats his Germany wife in later scenes shows us that Ibrahim's treatment of Gülcan has nothing to do with her being an uneducated peasant woman and that he can treat a modern German in the same way. In the dialog in this scene, Ibrahim explains what he thinks of the person he was before he went to Germany. The field, once his greatest dream, is a simple and easily reached goal for him now.

The difference between the Ibrahim who first went to Germany and the Ibrahim going there a second time is both a concrete and metaphoric transformation of the contrast between the primitive and the civilized (or someone who considers himself civilized). Ibrahim grew up in a village where the houses had no electricity or water and is now caught in a dilemma after comparing that life with the "civilized" world in Germany. Now seeing his wife and his village through different eyes, Ibrahim finally chooses Germany. The scene in which Gülcan looks at the photograph on the wall and talks to it after hearing no news from Ibrahim is one of the dialogs that emphasize the binary opposition of "primitive and civilized." But the path Gülcan chooses to reach the "civilized world" will be quite different from Ibrahim's.

We see extensive use of symbols to depict the "primitive-civilized" binary opposition in *The Return*. This binary opposition is reflected visually and audibly throughout the film in the contrasts between the gas lamp and the electric lamp, water carried in buckets and water running from a faucet, tractor and car, Ibrahim's clothes and Gülcan's clothes, and high-heeled shoes and muddy rubber shoes.

**Table 4.** Signs Used to Depict the Binary Opposition of "Civilized Life and Primitive Life" in "The Return"

Civilized Life	Primitive Life
Ibrahim's suit, shirt, tie, feathered hat	Gülcan's dark-colored, loose-fitting and long dress, headscarf
Ibrahim's wristwatch and clock	The rising and setting sun
Ibrahim's framed photograph	No photograph of Gülcan at any time in the film
Radio, Tape recorder, Photograph camera	Letter, postman on horseback, having to go into town to send a telegram
Electric lamp	Gaslamp
Water from a faucet	Water in buckets
Showerhead	Using a pitcher to pour water over one's head
Garments bought from a shop according to body size	Handmade clothes
High-heeled shoes	Muddy, rubber shoes
Car	Tractor

### **Gülcan's Transformation**

Gülcan begins to suspect that Ibrahim has left her and sees "civilization," which she does not fully understand the nature of, as the reason why he left her. Not having heard from Ibrahim, Gülcan talks to his photograph on the wall.

The photograph of Ibrahim on the wall is used cinematographically to explain Gülcan's plight and why she is not in Ibrahim's photograph. Real-life Ibrahim is as deaf to his wife's words as his photograph on the wall is. Gülcan's message to Ibrahim does not reach him. Her inability to make herself heard by Ibrahim is reflected in the film by her talking to his photograph. Gülcan's reflection can vaguely be seen in the glass covering the photograph. "Gülcan," "the photograph," and "Gülcan's reflection in the glass covering the photograph" are all shown in the same frame. The photograph is in black and white emphasizing that Ibrahim is a dream that remains only in an old photograph. Gülcan and Ibrahim are hundreds of miles apart in real life but her reflection and his image meet inside the same frame. Both Ibrahim and Gülcan are stuck in the same frame.

Wishing to break out of the frame she is stuck in, Gülcan decides to learn how to read and write. In doing so, Gülcan stops being the person waiting for something to happen and takes action. Gülcan decides to change, but unlike Ibrahim, her transformation begins with education and not with outward appearance.

Both Ibrahim and Gülcan are seen throughout the film to be undergoing a big transformation. When Ibrahim changes he is confronted only by Gülcan. All she can say to him is "Don't go." Despite Gülcan, Ibrahim can continue living the life he wants. When Gülcan changes she is confronted not only by Ibrahim but also by all the people of the village. They are not content with telling her "Don't do this." They try to catch her as if they were police officers. They judge her like a court, decide on her penalty, and order its execution. Not only does everyone try as one to stop Gülcan's transformation they also want to punish her for it.

The villagers are uneasy with a woman learning to read and write within the village's socio-economic relations. They do not react to the injustices she suffers but do react to Gülcan when she wants to learn how to read and write. Again, the criticism is built on the concept of "honor." Gülcan's going to school to be taught by the village teacher how to read and write leads to gossip among the villagers. Brandishing sticks and stones, the men of the village begin to chase Gülcan inside the village. Despite everything she has experienced, Gülcan is determined to survive and she puts up a brave front.

Even though they have been aware of all the difficulties experienced by Gülcan since the beginning, the villagers not once wrote to Ibrahim to tell him what was going on but when "honor" is at stake, they band together and get a letter written to Ibrahim. Although some villagers object, they cannot stop Müslim.

One scene at the village coffeehouse is reminiscent of a courtroom. Acting as if they have all the power of a court judge, the villagers judge Gülcan and decide on her punishment.

Gülcan's return to her house after burying her dead child and her setting fire to all that Ibrahim has left behind shows how resolute she is. Gülcan stops being a person

who only defends herself when she is attacked. She will be the one to punish the wrong done to her and her child.

The film uses images of the sun rising and setting to depict the natural passage of time. After burying her child, Gülcan is seen lying on the ground with one cheek touching the soil. Her cheek which once touched her child now touches the soil. This scene recalls the cycle expressed as “we come from the soil and to the soil we shall return.” The next scenes show Gülcan killing Reşit Bey. At precisely this time, Ibrahim’s car veers off the road. He and his German wife die at the scene of the accident. It is clear that Ibrahim’s car veering off the road and going over a cliff, crashing below, is symbolic of Ibrahim’s story. Gülcan’s killing Reşit Bey and Ibrahim’s death in a car going over a cliff are shown by parallel editing. The raging waters in which Gülcan’s child was carried away and drowned are shown in this scene, sometimes up close, sometimes in the background. The raging waters are an expression not only of Gülcan’s anger but also of nature’s. Gülcan and nature manifest their anger as if they were one and together they punish the wrongdoers. This scene is shown by parallel editing and brings to mind the “nature” part of the expression “mother nature.”

For Gülcan, both Ibrahim and Reşit Bey possess similar qualities. For Gülcan, Ibrahim symbolizes authority in the home while Reşit bey symbolizes authority in the village. Both Ibrahim and Reşit Bey lay claim to Gülcan’s body. Both use their power by treating Gülcan as if she were nothing and not giving her the right to speak. Neither care one bit about Gülcan’s wants and needs. They want Gülcan to act only in accordance with their wants and needs. Completely ignoring all of Gülcan’s rights, neither Ibrahim nor Reşit Bey cares that she is also a “mother.” Yet, for Gülcan, being a “mother” is a crucial part of her identity. This attitude brings to mind the “mother” part of the expression “mother nature.”

The end of the film does reunite Gülcan and Ibrahim in a sense. After the accident, Gülcan picks up the baby that is crawling toward her and holds it to her cheek. The baby is dressed in white. White represents cleanliness, purity, innocence, and a fresh start. When Gülcan holds the white-clad baby to her cheek, the baby sinlessly replaces her dead child. When she holds the baby in her arms, Gülcan in effect regains her “mother” identity. The baby in her arms, Gülcan stands up and continues her walk with the baby. With nobody in their lives, Gülcan and the baby’s paths have crossed. The end of the film carries the message that a woman does not necessarily have to give birth to be a mother.

Gülcan becomes a mother twice in the film. Similarities are present between both events in the film. In the first, Gülcan gives birth in a field, in nature, where there is no hospital infrastructure, no doctors or nurses. A woman’s strength and nature’s power combine and bring a healthy child into the world. Experiencing labor pains, Gülcan suffers greatly in giving birth to her child. With the child’s birth, a great

sense of relief washed over Gülcan. The sound of the baby crying makes everyone happy as they understand that the child has been born with no complications. To bring a healthy child into the world under these conditions is an event that is both “natural” and “miraculous.” Gülcan becomes a mother a second time at the end of the film. This time, Gülcan is not the person who gave birth to the child but it still appears after Gülcan has suffered greatly. The image of the rapidly glowing river appearing between the images of Gülcan killing Reşit Bey and Ibrahim’s car going over a cliff show the viewer both nature’s power and nature’s anger. Gülcan is very upset at the news of Ibrahim’s death and hears the sound of the baby crying as she leaves the scene of the accident. The baby’s crying tells us that it survived the crash and is healthy. For a baby to survive a car going over a cliff is just as miraculous as a healthy baby coming into the world. Under normal circumstances, a crying baby would make a person think that something is wrong, but in this case, just as when a baby is born, it is a sign that the baby is alive and well. This is why the baby’s cries make both Gülcan and the audience happy.

### **Conclusion**

In *The Return*, Gülcan’s husband leaves her even though she plays the gender role that society has given her. Left alone with her child, Gülcan decides to transform herself so she can survive in the existing order. No longer waiting for a rescuer to protect her from evil, Gülcan starts her transformation by learning to read and write. This time, however, the male-dominated mindset pronounce her guilty on the pretext of “honor” and decide that she should be killed.

Simone de Beauvoir said: “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine” (Timisi, 2011: 180). What de Beauvoir means here is that the inequality of the relationship between the sexes is not ‘natural’ and that the domineering relationship is one that has been established culturally (Saygılıgil, 2016: 146). In *The Return*, the dominant male viewpoint likens women to fields. They bear crops (babies). Since Gülcan thinks the same way as Ibrahim, by extension she believes that only her husband is going to protect her from the people who threaten her. A woman’s biologically given ability to be a mother hides the fact that the notion of a need for a “guardian” as an extension of the analogy of woman and field is an ideological point of view. The culturally established notion of a woman needing a guardian” introduces the idea that this is a “natural” need. At first, Gülcan adopts the analogy of woman and field that her husband expressed and waited a long time for him to come and rescue her, but after everything that happens to her, she decides to become a person who protects herself rather than a person who is protected. This decision marks the start of Gülcan’s transition from being passive to being active.

Gülcan, whose life is portrayed as being spent mainly between the house and the field, and occasionally at the village well, the shop, the street, and the coffeehouse, begins her transformation by learning how to read and write, and so the facsimile of Gülcan's character comes into play in the place of education. This is the point where the similarity between Gülcan and the field ends. The start point chosen by Gülcan for her transformation shows that she lives completely differently from her husband, Ibrahim. Ibrahim, who goes to Germany as a worker, starts his transformation by changing his outward appearance with consumer items such as his clothing and accessories, his car, and electricity and water. For all his civilized outward appearance, it is clear that the Ibrahim who sets out to kill Gülcan for the sake of honor does not have a civilized mindset and still holds on to the pretext of "honor" in Paşaköy. Even though he has left Gülcan, he still thinks that he has ownership over her body just like the field and that he is entitled to kill her. Gülcan, who started her transformation differently from her husband, stops being on the defensive.

*The Return* stands out as a film that strives to depict a woman's emotions by playing particular emphasis on her eyes, her gaze, and her point of view. A subjective camera gives us Gülcan's point of view when Ilyas, his hands trembling, puts his thumbprint on the official documents in the film's opening scene. In this scene, Ilyas is depicted as a "guilty" who has lost his field, his most important means of production, because of his lack of education and is now a casual worker for Reşit Bey, the feudal land-owner. His wife and children are similarly guilty with him and they accept their lot in timid expectation. Gülcan witnesses the land being seized, Ilyas using his thumbprint because he cannot read or write, and how his hand trembles in fear when he makes his thumbprint. While Ilyas stands as the guilty party, Reşit Bey, who had the land seized appears "justified," "proud," "powerful," and "at ease" as he smokes his cigarette. Even though he assisted Reşit Bey, Müslim talks as if he did his level best to help Ilyas. The bailiff and soldiers sent to conduct the official procedures are only doing their duty. The film tells us that the reason why Ilyas had field seized was his lack of education. He was unable to calculate his debt properly or follow up the necessary legal procedures. Reşit Bey saw an opportunity here and turned Ilyas' lack of education to his advantage, taking legal action and seizing the land. Reşit Bey's "opportunist" nature is symbolized several times throughout the film by "crows picking at the field."

Gülcan's point of view is shown using the same kind of shot in one more crucial scene later in the film. The audience experiences Gülcan's questioning point of view that assesses events through the eyes of her conscience one more during the film. This scene is the one in the village coffeehouse when Müslim has a letter written about Gülcan to send to Ibrahim.

Gülcan is not in the scene where the villagers get a letter written to Ibrahim. The framing of the scene when Müslim says: "All the villagers have seen and can attest to this. If you do not make haste and cleanse her honor, we will have to bear this sin

ourselves” and the villagers in one voice express their approval saying, “It is true” is the same as that used for the scene in which Gülcan watches what is being done to Ilyas from behind the wooden slats at the start of the film. We see the villagers bearing false witness, their call to Ibrahim to come and kill Gülcan, saying they will take matters into their own hands if he does not from the point of view of an outside eye looking in. This outside eye tells us there is “another eye watching them bear false witness” and appeals to our conscience, reminding us of the injustice in what they are doing.

As mentioned above, only Gülcan sees what is being done to Ilyas in the first scene through the eyes of her conscience. Only she objects. Unfortunately, there is no one in the village who can look at what is done to her through those same questioning eyes or object to it as she objected to what was being done to Ilyas. Therefore, the director uses the subjective camera to give Gülcan’s point of view to the audience. The intent here is for the audience to see events from Gülcan’s point of view, “share her point of view and experience” (Monaco, 2020: 205) and maybe even stop watching in silence and act as Gülcan did, for them to question events and call others to account. Yet, Gülcan’s story says that those who stop watching in silence and question events have a tough fight ahead of them. This difficult path is the path of transition from being passive to being active.

When evaluated in terms of feminist film theory, *The Return* sends the message that the notion that women need a “rescuer” is a cultural fiction and that women should stop waiting to be rescued and switch from being passive to being active. The use of the subjective camera aligns the audience’s point of view with Gülcan’s. The director makes an effort to make the audience share Gülcan’s perspective and experience, thus calling on the audience to be active like Gülcan.

The film also shows that there is no solidarity among the women in Paşaköy and that the women go along with the “honor” pretext that is imposed on them and is such an important part of the male-dominated rhetoric. The village women are the first to accuse Gülcan on the pretext of “honor” when she goes off to learn how to read and write.

In addition to showing the effects of emigration on those who leave and those who stay, *The Return* also takes a critical look at the socio-economic structure of the village where the story takes place. Three topics come to the fore when the film takes a critical approach to the village’s socio-economic structure. These are: 1) The power relationships in the economic and social structure; 2) The place of women in the male-dominated social structure; 3) Society is silent in the face of the injustices it sees and there is no solidarity among the people. The film not only identifies the problem but also exposes the reasons for it and offers suggestions for a solution. According to the film, the main reasons for the injustices experienced are lack of education, passively waiting to be rescued, and lack of solidarity. The solutions suggested by the film are education, taking action, and solidarity.

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## **WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN ADAPTATION FILMS<sup>1</sup>**

**Gülden Damla Türkmen, Gizem Parlayandemir<sup>2</sup>**

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### **Introduction**

The transfer of literary adaptations to the cinema dates back to the early years of cinema. The adaptation technique was first used by Georges Méliès in the years the art of cinema started to develop. It was preferred in almost every period of the history of cinema. Throughout the history of cinema, it has been complicated to come across a period without adaptations. The world of literature has always been a source of inspiration for motion pictures.

Theater adaptations took place effectively in the first years of the development of Turkish cinema. In Turkish cinema, where adaptations of local novels are very prevalent, the first adaptation was Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar's novel, *Mürebbiye*, adapted by Ahmet Fehim in 1919. Among 3100 films shot between 1919 and 1972, there are more than 230 local adaptations (Scognamillo, 1973: 62).

In the early years, all genres from vaudeville to adventure novels, regardless of their artistic value, were adapted in a way that did not fit the cinematic language. Theater plays were filmed using plain decorations as if they were on the stage. Novels have been illustrated with cinema to the details (Aytaç, 2005: 15).

All-inclusive novels in the 19th century were branched into more genres in the 20th century. The innovations in the post-war period also affected literature when there was a greater tendency in the people's inner world and spiritual structures. Rather than depictions of the environment, people's states of consciousness and internal speech have started to come to the fore. The reflection of the human subconscious and mind, that is, the inner world, is taken with the emergence of the stream of consciousness technique in novels (Çetin, 2001: 144).

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<sup>1</sup> This study is derived from the Master Thesis named 'Women representation in movie adaptations' (Türkmen, G.D. 2020).

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## Cinema and Literature Adaptations

Cinema occurred at the intersection of innovations in many fields. It is possible to say that the most significant contribution to the development of cinema in terms of inspiration is the literature products. During the early days, cinema took its expression power from novels. The novels are affected by the cinema as well as the cinema is by the novels. With this interaction, some writers have avoided long scenes in their novels and have turned more towards scriptwriting. It seems that many authors try to write their book in this way, hoping to be adapted to the cinema.

Generally, filmmakers read the original sources and come out with a new interpretation; each adaptation results from individual creativity. Adaptations are now being considered as products of artistic creativity. According to James Cisneros, “the adaptation of literature to the silver screen has long been considered a privileged topos for comparing different media” (Mahato, 2015: 8-9).

There is not always a correct way to come up with an adaptation that satisfies readers. The adapted films take place in a different creation process on their own. Linda Serger states the stages of the adaptation from novel to cinema: to find the main story in the novel, to select the characters, to discover the theme, and to create the style and atmosphere of the work (Çetin, 2000: 48).

Adapted cinema, where words are transformed into images, contributes to legitimizing dominant views as in other genres. Since reality is socially produced, films that are a part of it are social products. Popular films are neither reflective materials of a permeable reality; what a personal worldview, nor can they be taken as a truth about the human condition.

Language and signifying systems in general as part of a socially produced reality are similarly conceived as social products. Language, fiction and film are no longer treated as expressive tools reflecting a transparent reality, or a personal worldview, or truths about the *human* condition; they are seen instead as socially-produced systems for signifying and organising reality, with their own specific histories and structures and so with their own capacity to produce the effects of meaning and values (Gledhill, 2000: 68).

Mass media has a significant effect on socialization. It is efficient in determining the opinions of individuals about the society that they live in. Cinema is one of the essential mass media in this sense. According to Carlos Cortes,

“First, whether intentionally or unintentionally, both the news and the entertainment media ‘teach’ the public about minorities, other ethnic groups and societal groups, such as women, gays, and the elderly. Second, this mass media curriculum has a particularly powerful educational impact on people who have little or no direct contact with members of the groups being treated.” “Minorities realize—supported by research—that the media influence not only how others view them, but even how they view themselves” (Cited from Cortes. Lawson, 2018).

Their way of seeing shapes individuals' perception of identity. Graeme Burton argues that the representations in the media affect the perception of the identity of individuals. According to him, the groups of people represented in various media fields and the forms of representation also help to create the idea that certain people belong to specific groups. Consequently, the media regulates our understanding of categories of people and why certain people should fall into particular categories (Burton, 1995: 111). The effect of these categories is also essentially reflected in our social life. Prejudices about the representation of people in the media cause the specific patterns to be built and maintained by becoming a part of our thinking system (Varol, 2014: 309). In popular film narratives, the class and sexist ideologies of the period might effectively explain and interpret the world and reproduce it through mediation (Abisel, 1994: 187).

Pressure and restrictions in male-dominated societies restrict women's life. Socially, women have been treated as second class (Ryan, 2012: 117). Feminist theorists and critics dealing with this subject have criticized the overly positive or overly negative representation of the image of women in the fields of literature and culture. Although women are generally seen as a threat to power and male power, they have also been responsible for men. Eliminating the imbalances of the literary and cultural tradition created on women has been the aim of women who touched on this issue (Ryan, 2012: 118).

The transformation that started with the emergence of the feminist movement in the 1960s made gender an important area of interest in literature and cultural studies. Cultural representations are essential to social reality. If the cultural images show women as necessary to be kept under control, they justify men's exercise of power to keep them under control. Today, these views have started to develop, albeit slowly. Women show the courage to raise their voices more to attain their rights in social life. Literary works depicting women and written by women increased, thus helping to understand the processes through which women were historically oppressed (Ryan, 2012: 122).

According to The Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, the face of youth in movies is also male. Their research shows that the young male characters are represented more than young female characters. The tendency to tell stories begins early, and the lack of stories that they can identify with for young female audiences may lead them to think that they are less valuable than men.

The picture of the youth is male. Younger female characters are outnumbered by their male peers, though the most recent year had more parity. It is clear from this research; however, that younger characters — like their adult counterparts — tend to be males. The storytelling bias starts early, and for young female audiences may be a sign that the stories of girls and women carry little value compared to those of boys and men (Smith, 2017: 13).

## Gender and Women's Representation in Cinema

The representation of gender roles through cinema is crucial for the construction of social and cultural roles. Cinema, in which dominant views are legitimized, has a vital role in determining our perspective on the world in socialization.

Stuart Hall's view of constructivist representation suggests that the most personal terms that 'man' and 'woman' are cultural indicators that construct them rather than reflect their fundamental and gender definitions, meanings, and identities (Hall, 2017: 15).

Simone de Beauvoir's explanation of why the woman is defined as the 'other' is the basis of the political and theoretical studies conducted in the early 1970s. While reshaping these ideas, De Beauvoir argues that the state of being can only be determined in comparison with what it is not and states that the man positions the woman as the other to define himself as the subject (McCabe, 2004: 3). According to McCabe,

"Early feminist initiatives into film theory in the 1970s were framed by two other feminist interventions: the history of second-wave feminism and theoretical accounts that deal with images of women created and circulated within our dominant culture defined by patriarchy and heterosexuality. It is to these antecedents - what Laura Mulvey called the 'wider explosive meeting between feminism and patriarchal culture' (Mulvey, 1979: 3).

The woman is 'defined only in her relationship with the man' emerges as doomed to her dependent role. 'The female emerges as condemned to her subordinate role, 'defined exclusively in her relation to man' (de Beauvoir, 1984: 174). The threatening "other" position of women has been made "mysteriously dark, deadly dangerous - but also irresistibly attractive" in popular culture products (Berktaş, 2018: 143). Mass media create the perception that the problems women experience are generally romantic in origin.' Women's interactions were very often concerned with romance or family problems' (Gauntlett, 2008: 47).

It also commodifies women as consumers. Together with the commodities (fashion, hairstyles) associated with the images of the female stars, it invites the female audience to consume and be consumed: 'The cinematic images for the woman are both a window and a mirror; the mirror/showcase then turns into a direction in which its subjectivity becomes synonymous with its objectification (Doane, 1987: 32-33).

In mainstream cinema, the woman who violates gender rules is usually represented as a seductive dangerous woman (*femme fatale*) or a person who has gone astray and needs to be restrained and behave according to the system (Hovardaoğlu, 2010: 327). *Femme Fatale* is one of the elements used in cinema to mobilize fiction and create conflicts. According to Sezer, *Femme Fatales* are killed physically or spiritually after they make their contribution to the story - that is, getting rid

of uncompromising desires, satisfaction with pleasure and passion, and finally transforming the man who rushed to them into regret so he can go back to the good woman (Sezer, 2017: 125). These characters can put the protagonist into all kinds of danger or drag the people around him into trouble with their presence. In this way, the perception is created that solving the events in the film will find a solution by removing the threat posed by the dangerous female character (Hovardaoğlu, 2010: 330). It is complicated for men to escape the attraction of such women because it appeals to the sensual side of men, but *Femme Fatale* must be taken under control to save the man and the patriarchal social order (Berktaş, 2018: 162). As a woman who uses sexuality for her ambitions, *Femme Fatale* has been fictionalized and injected, primarily through cinema (Sezer, 2017: 125).

The roles that are given to women in movies mostly consist of stereotypes such as angelic mothers, old women, victims, lovers, prostitutes, and seducers (Butler, 2011: 88). However, when independent female figures get married, they instantly change and become domesticated (Sezer, 2017: 123).

In her article “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”, Laura Mulvey argues that women are educated to tend to watch movies from a male perspective (Butler, 2011: 92). Mulvey studied Freudian / Lacan in a psychoanalytic context. According to her, there are two types of gaze, those that identify with the hero and desire women. Butler criticizes this view as constituting a universal audience assumption (Butler, 2011: 115). Mulvey’s article represents a major theoretical breakthrough for feminist film theory in particular and film studies in general.

Mulvey’s essay represented an enormous theoretical leap forward for feminist film theory in particular and film studies in general: ‘a jump from the ungendered and formalistic analyses of semiotics to the understanding that film viewing always involves gendered identities (Humm, 1997: 17).

Mulvey shows how the imaginative woman becomes a fetish (as opposed to the cinematic setup described by Metz) conceals the anxiety of castration. Rather than the missing ones, the woman in the image is fully idealized.

The flawless female body, or parts of it at least, are given an importance to compensate for the lack that she originally signified, hence the excessive over-valuation of the female star-image so that she no longer represents a menacing figure but an idealised spectacle of beauty and perfection. (McCabe, 2004: 31).

In Mulvey’s words, male heroes in the movies are “the bearer of the viewer’s gaze.” The exposed woman functions as an erotic object for the audience and for the characters in the film (Mulvey, 2008: 287).

Despite the production of new realistic representations by women, the industry’s constant depiction of women as gender objects or victims suggests that driven by patriarchal concerns about the loss of men’s socio-economic and sexual power (McCabe, 2004: 8).

### **Women's Representation in Turkish Cinema**

Cinema plays an essential role in the reproduction of gender codes within the patriarchal discourse. In Turkish cinema, women are usually passively reflected, whether the main characters or the supporting characters. In need of protection, they are represented in a secondary position with their innocent or seductive features. "As though in social life, in films, women have been made dependent on a protector such as father, lover, and husband both economically and emotionally" (Gedik & Kadayıfci 2016: 131).

Although Turkish cinema carries a masculine prejudice from past to present, women's representations can be mystical, manipulative, objectifying, and disempowering following the trends of the period. In Muhsin Ertuğrul's films, there are equal and liberated characters in love and life with the effect of the social reforms envisaged by Atatürk (Peñçe / The Claw, 1917; Mürebbiye / The Governess, 1919; İstanbul'da Bir Facia-i Aşk / A Love Tragedy in Istanbul, 1922; Şehvet Kurbanı / Victim of Lust, 1939) (Dönmez-Colin, 2014: 143).

These features are overlapping and interchangeable from one epoch to the next, but cinema's masculine nature remains constant. The movie industry, dominated by men, conveys women not as they mean but as they are represented to men. The discourse created by the patriarchal order again offers connotations that serve the needs of men (Kaplan 1983: 18).

The representation of women, which is commonly encountered in movies, women can be happy when the man who desires herself learns to desire, reproduces the patriarchal ideology (Akbulut, 2008: 216). The roles of women in Turkish cinema can be explained with three basic types. The first is the image of a woman who complies with the patriarchal norms of "pure," "honest," "altruistic." The goodness of female characters is limited by being dependent on her husband. In this way, the woman remained within the boundaries of the house. Fosforlu Cevriye (Aydın Arakon, 1959) and Şoför Nebahat (Süreyya Duru, 1970) are examples of the second type, which is the tomboy model. Many of the tomboy model women "become a woman" with the love of the main boy (Gedik & Kadayıfci 2016: 130).

One of the contradictions of commercial cinema in the representation of women was the 'lumpen woman,' who displayed macho muscle strength, vulgar gestures, imitation and laughter, swearing language, and the dress code of the male subculture in social, cultural, and religious aspects. This type of movie was popular in the 1960s. Similar films were produced due to the unprecedented success of the Şoför Nebahat (Metin Erksan, 1959/60). "In the social structure of the gender difference, such films create schizophrenic characters and/or false images, creating a perception that women can only become heroes if they act like men" (Dönmez-Colin 2004: 35).

The third female model is the *femme fatal* type woman representing “lust” and “desire.” These women often take a side role alongside the woman in the lead role. According to Alin Taşçıyan, the bad women of Yeşilçam films “are not smart women who make plans like the ‘*femme fatal*’ women in Hollywood or European cinema” (Cited from Özman, Gedik & Kadayıfci 2016: 132).

In the melodramas of the 60s and 70s, women are generally represented as singers. A woman should be the singer, the woman of her house, and the mother of her children at the same time (Elmacı, 2017: 511). The woman’s responsibility is to protect the private space against external pollution. Cinema has invented a new identity for women with migration to cities and a search for a unique identity in an unlimited area in the countryside. Although in melodramas between 1965 and 1975, obedient characters who accept the suffering and humiliation stemming from customs and traditions, strong female characters created under the influence of socialist ideologies, and who can challenge the status quo and find individual voices in women can be found (Dönmez-Colin, 2014: 145).

In the following years, “Women’s films,” in which educated and professional representations were seen, led to the formation of an unrealistic representation by showing these characteristics of women as causing them to become lonely and unhappy (Elmacı, 2017: 512).

Women’s happiness is linked to marriage in melodramatic narratives. A single woman needs protection. In such melodramas, the ultimate unhappiness that a woman can face is shown as negativity on her way to marriage (Akbulut, 2008: 349). The patriarchal order in the films, suggests for women to feel safe, it is necessary to establish a happy home (Hıdıroğlu & Kotan, 2015: 69).

With the women’s movement that started to show its effect in the 1980s, issues such as motherhood, violence, honor, and sexuality have also begun to be discussed in Turkish cinema. With the beginning of the working life of women, their position in the family has also changed, and this situation is depicted in the movies. “Women’s films,” which became popular in Turkish cinema after 1980, deal with the differentiating role of women in private and public spheres, family and business life” (Ekici, 2007: 67).

The stereotypical and sexually biased films of Yeşilçam appear not only in commercials but also in movies considered as art house films. In films like *Gemide/ On Board*, *Laleli’de Bir Azize / A Madonna in Laleli* (Sabancı, 1998) and *Barda / In the Bar* (Akar, 2006), women are constructed as ‘silenced’ characters, ‘strangers’ or inanimate objects that do not react even when they are raped (Dönmez-Colin, 2014: 147).

In the films shot in the 2000s, with the influence of American popular war movies, male heroes are at the forefront, and there is justified violence. On the other hand, there are also examples where women’s visuals stand out and are transformed

into sexual images. In general, women were represented in a passive position as beings in need of protection (Pişkin, 2010: 76). The woman is only the person on whom power is exercised and dominated. In this way, although women are restricted in the social sphere, the formation of female identity is also prevented to ensure patriarchal order (Şengül, 2015: 53). Again in this period, problems regarding women's freedom and equality (honor killings, child marriages, forced suicides) have increased significantly in terms of traditional and retrospective concepts of gender and sexuality. Araf (Purgatory/2012, Yeşim Ustaoglu) and Gözetleme Kulesi (The Watchtower/2012, Pelin Esmer) highlight the issue of unwanted pregnancy. The safety/survival issue is overcome by a benevolent man taking care of her. Adapted from Zülfü Livaneli's novel Mutluluk (Happiness), which allows its heroine to build her own life, the film's ending is different from the novel's ending. In the movie, directed by Abdullah Oğuz, a happy ending is possible for the female character together with the man who came to kill her. In this sense, it seems that the new Turkish cinema has not moved away from Yeşilçam melodramas (Dönmez-Colin, 2014: 148).

The passive position of women remaining in the background has been accepted within the general discussion. We hardly see the women we see in the movies learn about their own life experiences and how to live their lives. One of the essential requirements of solving the existing problem is to determine and reveal the current situation in terms of the representation of women in cinema will contribute to the solution of the problems in this sense.

### **Comparison of Novels and Movies**

Throughout history, humanity has tried to make sense of the world in which it lives with certain expressions. Cinema, one of the most influential expression tools of the twentieth century, offers characters that women cannot identify with in terms of female representation. In this study, derived from the master's thesis with the same name as the article, the representation of women in the literary adaptations in cinema was investigated. 6 novels were determined for this purpose, and cinema adaptations of these novels are discussed. Due to the limitations of this study, a meta-analysis was conducted so that the findings obtained by making discourse analysis in the thesis are presented in the article with content analysis.

The aim of the adaptations selected through maximum diversity sampling is to reveal common and shared themes in women's representations that vary rather than any generalization. Thus, it is possible to see the different dimensions of the problem.

Questions	Hıçkırık (Hiccup)	Çalkuşu (Firecrest)	Vurun Kahpeye (Strike the Whore)	Yayla Kızı (The Girl from the Plateau)	Kadının Adı Yok (Woman Has No Name)	Bizim Büyük Çaresizliğimiz (Our Great Despair)
Is a female character a professional?	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Is there parental loss and growing up outside the family environment?	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Do you see that female characters suffer from financial difficulties?	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Is women's honor equated with homeland honor?	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Were women portrayed as fragile and sickly?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Did the female character resort to writing to express herself?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Is the emancipated woman shown as a lonely woman?	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Was the evil stepmother stereotype used?	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
Is a working woman seen as a threat to society?	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Is it possible to exclude women who do not comply with social norms?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Is there any idea that is harmonic with the female character should be protected?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
At the end of the movie, is the woman tame?	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N

The novel *Vurun Kahpeye* is one of the most striking examples of the love for the country and the image of a woman who sacrificed herself for the sake. In the novel's first adaptation, Aliye came to Anatolia as a teacher, was marginalized as a woman, and taken away from her life by being seen as equally dangerous with the enemy. It was tried to bring national values to the forefront so that the society stuck between modernity and tradition could come together again. Aliye, who puts national unity above all else and is willing to give her a ring left by her mother to buy the flag fabric, is sacrificed for this cause.

Women writers also wrote stories influenced by the political perceptions of the period. In Kerime Nadir's novel *Hıçkırık*, the narrator side of the events is the male character. The fact that the authors are women does not indicate that these works were written from a feminist perspective. In the samples written by women writers, it is not seen that women can speak for themselves. Female characters, who are generally considered and emphasized as role models, cannot go beyond being exemplary images. Hiding her love and sacrificing herself, Nalân becomes a tragic hero after falling ill and dying.

Regardless of when they were written, the nation narratives could be a source for adaptation in Yeşilçam films. Aka Gündüz's novel *Yayla Kızı*, which tells about the foundation years of the Republic, was adapted to the melodramas of the 70s and turned into a national political adaptation during the Cyprus Peace Operation.

In the version of the *Çalığışu*, the myth that the woman was created for romantic love is repeated. Throughout the story, Feride, who escaped from her fiancée, suffers from situations because she was a lonely woman. In the adaptation where the subject of honor is based on women, Feride gets tired of resisting the difficulties of being a lonely woman despite her free disposition. At the end of the novel, she is happy to reunite with her ex-fiancee, with who she fell in love, who cheated on her.

Considering the literary adaptations in different periods in Turkish cinema in the research, the female representations in the analyzed samples maintain similar political concerns. Emphasizing the sexuality of women and the domination they establish on men, this female representation, which the man constructs, cannot go beyond being the representation of 'the representation of the woman' in essence. It seems that the narrative of the nation is not very overcome. The seductive female figure, the nationalist female figure, and the institution of marriage are frequently sanctified. Emphasis is placed on the strong women being alone in society. Ironically, while giving a name to the unnamed woman in the novel *Kadının Adı Yok*, it contrasts with the fact that the character of the novel is a strong, self-sufficient woman. The emphasis is on the desperation of the heroine; she lost her home and her job at the end of the movie.

In the process of recreating women in the modernizing society, it would not be correct to say the same thing for the movie adaptation, as the novel *Kadının Adı Yok* is an essential step for the representation of women. The story of a female character who questions gender acceptance and the patriarchal system and prefers to live by standing against these inequalities in the book is about self-improvement and reaching the place she wants in society despite her difficulties. On the other hand, the fact that the film is set up as a woman who desperately lost everything she had and is left alone indicates that there are problems in terms of female representation in the adapted cinema.

Adapted from Barış Bıçakçı's novel *Bizim Büyük Çaresizliğimiz* has a similar concept to the movies seen in recent Turkish cinema in which primarily male characters stand out, focusing on male individuality or friendships are prominent. In contrast, female characters serve no purpose other than to remain in the background. Throughout the film, Nihal's character is not discussed except for her relationship with male characters.

### **The portrayal of Women from Novel to Screen and General Evaluation of Female Characters**

In this section, the common points of the film and novel characters examined as samples will be tried to be determined. The ideologies of the dominant groups in society are reflected in the texts. The nationalist discourse in literature continued until the 1950s. The masculine discourse tried to determine the nation's unity through women's identities (Birinciöglü, 2018: 77). Road maps on how to act in the way of protecting the integrity of the homeland were conveyed to the reader through female heroes. Especially, as seen in the examples of *Vurun Kahpeye*, *Çalkıuşu*, and *Yayla Kızı* from the samples included in this study, the ability of women is considered as an essential factor for the integrity of the country. In these novels, the characters of Aliye, Feride, and Petek suffered losses during the war, made great sacrifices, and adapted to social change after the war. The novel's characters are generally proud of the fathers they lost in the war and try to serve their homeland in a way worthy of their memory.

In the post-war period, women had an important place, especially in establishing a family home. The heroines who lost their fathers in the war also lost their mothers as a result of illness. While Aliye's mother died of tuberculosis, Feride's mother is described as a very sick woman; Feride lost her mother when she was very young because of her illness. Petek also loses her mother because of lung cancer. The representation of women who are susceptible to being sick affects other female characters and mothers in these novels. Munise, an orphan character whose childhood was difficult, dies from pleurisy. Petek suffers from meningitis due to sorrow when she receives the news of her mother's death, while Feride suffers from a severe illness after the death of her stepdaughter Munise. The classic stepmother figure in these novels appears as an element of melodrama.

Although stepmothers look good at first glance, they do not hesitate to show their evil faces in the future. In *Hıçkırık*, Kenan's stepmother was nice to him at first and then asked him to leave the house. In the novel, when Petek's stepmother Nefise escapes from her husband Nuri Efendi, she is taken to the house of her neighbor Perihan Hanım, but after a while, she is subjected to ill-treatment. Perihan made her eat a hot pepper when trying to punish Petek, then Petek's lips, mouth, tongue, and throat swelled for a week. She faints twice because of her pain. Although she is taken care of by the wife of the doctor, who is expected to be her stepmother in

the film, the doctor and his wife die in a car accident before they can adopt her. Another example is Feride adopts Munise, and they are so happy living together, but unfortunately, Munise dies because of her illness in the novel. In this way, good stepmother and child relationships are also short-lived as a result of misfortune. Parent loss can be shown as one of the essential elements that bring the main characters together (Aliye, Nalan, Feride, Petek, Işık, Nihal). Jale Parla states that almost all of the heroes in the first local novels were fatherless. These heroes lacked a reliable example of defending themselves against the new social, moral, and cultural norms admired by the West. The absence of a father brings a situation of being vulnerable to huge losses and dangers, not as a positive opportunity to gain freedom and individual responsibility (Saraçgil, 2005: 118). It comes across as an inevitable common point that arises with the state of the orphanage.

However, contrary to the situation seen in men, it can be said that the loss of parents provides an opportunity for emancipation in a sense for women. Although it cannot be said that it is valid for all female characters, the fact that women are away from their families as protagonists in early novels was effective. The female protagonists, who could not take place in the public sphere much as of the period, could find a place in the domestic space rather than the home environment; they could leave the home environment (especially when they were single) because they did not have a nuclear family. These characters, who stay with the boarding school or relatives, leave their place and somehow move out of the house into the public space. Unfortunately, since this situation is not accepted in society, all the problems they face are caused by the absence of a man in a patriarchal society. It emerges as an inevitable common point that emerges with the state of being an orphan. This situation, which stands out as one of the common points in the samples, is also critical in contributing to the female characters' take on their journeys. Although the female characters had the chance to embark on different adventures in the absence of their parents, at the end of the story, they somehow became dependent on another man (Petek, Feride, Nihal), were alienated from society by being alone (Işık), or were killed by being labeled as disrespectful (Nalân) (Aliye). When looking at women's education, it is seen that girls take lessons home in early novels. In most of the samples, female characters are educated. Nalân takes lessons at home. Feride and Aliye become teachers, Petek learns how to read and write at home. In the novel *Yayla Kızı*, when her mother said, "In our time, such pashas and gentlemen daughters always went to girls' schools," Benzigül told her mother, "What should we do, mom, in our time, everyone should go. Let the poor like us educated" (Gündüz, 1940: 78). Işık's father, an authoritarian character, does not let them play with the boys in the neighborhood. He hires a private service for school and enrolls them in all girls' high school to prevent them from contacting boys while going to school. Nihal is a university student, and in a sense, she takes general culture lessons from Ender at home. Feride, who is known as the "Çalığışu (Firecrest)" because of her

mischievous behavior at school, had a very active childhood. Nalân becomes a less courageous girl when she grows up and becomes a docile woman, especially after marriage. Constructing the female characters as “the other” can also be considered as one of the common points. Aliye’s perception as a threat to society’s future and disrupting society’s integrity is due to her modernity. The townspeople judge Aliye for being different from them. Similarly, in the Anatolian towns where she worked as a teacher in Feride, she is a misfit because she is a single young woman. As a single woman, Feride causes great troubles “in a social environment that cannot trust the honor of a woman without a man.” When we start to believe that Feride can stand on her own feet despite all these difficulties and can lead a “free like a bird” life, the first thing that Doctor Hayrullah does, who appears before her as a “father figure,” is to decide on behalf of Feride. Hayrullah marries her and puts an end to her loneliness, and her desperation in the eyes of society then leaves Feride a will to return to her family. In this way, in the author’s eyes, Feride’s happiness can be achieved by returning to the situation in which she rebelled (Saraçgil, 2005: 267). Women’s sexuality is an important tension point in national discourses as an indicator of fear and desire. The free expression and living of women’s sexuality become a threat to the nation. Because it is symbolized as the national equivalent, within the heterosexual man construct, the woman is defined as asexual (Sancar, 2012: 63). In the novel *Vurun Kahpe*, “the power of a woman arising from her sexuality is portrayed as a double-edged sword.” While the attraction used on the male character is presented as a negative power because it keeps the man from his duty, this attraction is softened when it comes to the future of the homeland, as in the novel, it becomes an element that has great potential with its qualities such as compassion and sincerity (Saraçgil, 2005: 193). Aliye will use her femininity and charm to make the Greek commander betray his homeland. However, again, her femininity will be the reason for Aliye’s sacrifice in the eyes of the nation’s misogynistic reactionary opponents. For Tosun, when he returned to the town at the end of the war, the most important fact about Aliye’s death, that she made this “great sacrifice by staying pure” (Saraçgil, 2005: 218). In *Vurun Kahpeye*, Aliye’s teacher friend, Hatice, and in *Çalığışu*, Feride’s teacher friend Nazmiye were positioned as opposed to exemplary representations. The setup of female side characters as opposing representations of the main female character can be seen in Aliye - Hatice and Feride - Nazmiye teacher examples. Those women can confess their love by writing. In *Hıçkırık Nalan* confesses her love to Kenan in the letters she left after her death, Feride’s reunion with the receipt of her diary by Kamuran can be given as an example of this situation. For Petek, learning to read and write is very important in terms of sending a letter to his mother. Işık chose to write a book to describe her experiences as a woman. It is seen that the women in the house are generally affectionate towards the main character under all circumstances. Gülsüm Aunt, where Aliye stays at her home, is described as a maternal, benevolent, Anatolian

woman devoted to religious and national values. Vesime, who is Nalân's caretaker in *Hıçkırık*, is described as "despite over thirty, not married." She ensures that the letters are delivered to Kenan after the death of Nalân. The most dramatic example of these women is the relationship of their neighbors in the novel *Kadının Adı Yok* with the father of the protagonist. After catching her neighbor Gülriz, whom she referred to as "sister," with her father, Işık hesitates to tell her mother about this situation, and even if she does, she thinks that her mother cannot do anything about it. By saying, "If she had the power to leave my father, I would tell my mother that," in fact, this way, she decides herself instead of her mother. The analysis of the era includes covering little girls' heads and child bride situations. In the novel *Hıçkırık*, Nalân's friend was married when she was sixteen. They covered Nalân's head when she was fourteen years old. In *Çalığışu*, Feride covers Munise's head when she is fourteen. Feride's twelve-year-old student becomes a child bride. Feride has some concerns about this, but another teacher says that girls who reach the age of fourteen and are still single are regarded as not being able to get married. When Benzigül reaches the age of marriage, marriage plans are made by her sister without asking her. Benzigül wants to marry one of these candidates and leave home because she is overwhelmed. When her candidates are sent without being liked somehow, she escapes with one of them she likes. Işık's friend is also married to an older man.

### **Conclusion**

This study focuses on the representation of women in adapted films as a genre rather than reflections of film reception. One of the main problems of this study is the debates on defining the woman with her relationship with the man and treating the man as a dangerous factor. A hermeneutical method was used in the study. In this study, which brings together adaptation and women representation works that can be handled in many interdisciplinary ways, six adapted films selected from Turkish cinema are discussed. Movies were chosen randomly according to the specified periods.

Transformations that take place during the adaptation of a novel to a film are carried out according to the rules of a different medium. With this change in media, the ideology of the product in the current environment may change. However, some political and economic restrictions may be applied, or changes can be made in the text in line with the director's preference. Each media uses different areas to come up with the story. These studies are essential in seeing how a technique in the book produces the same effect on the film but with a different technique. The general tone of the novel characters is revealed by the types of material used in the movie or the costumes of the characters, even their hair and make-up. However, different techniques can be used to deliberately influence different results. The techniques used in the novel to reveal specific aspects of the narrative or story differ from those used in the film to indicate some elements of the story. The purpose for which the

techniques used to achieve similar effects in each set differ is essential. Also, the perspectives of the techniques used in both the novel and the film can be a topic of discussion, among others.

It must show which ideologies the meanings reproduced with adaptation contribute and shed light on how the encoded messages are shaped through the classical narrative. Representation in cinema should be handled in conjunction with gender roles and not independent from political discourse. As stated by Stuart Hall in his representation view, the representation of women in cinema, which appears as a constructive process rather than a reflective approach, is a subject that can be addressed from many angles.

Although adaptation in cinema studies has been included in the discussion in terms of staying loyal to the original text, adaptation has become a workable academic field in many aspects with the interdisciplinary developments in film studies. While looking at cinema and literature from the perspective of women's representation is the primary purpose of this study, the choices in the recreation process gain importance. Differences between cinematic techniques and texts offer input on the adapted text. These preferences help us have an idea of what has been put forward for the representation of women and provide feedback.

Gender roles that are determined in the society we live in and impact our perceptions are repeatedly produced by cultural products and used for a political purpose when appropriate. The norms created with these repetitions become pressure on individuals, and the normalized representation forms are accepted without question. Fictional representation forms that are tried to be made through fictional characters realize the "other" representations for women. The domestic female symbol, which is the cornerstone of a happy family, tries to make the woman believe that the main thing and goal is family life by keeping the woman away from public life. Many feminist theorists have expressed the connection of gender with culture. As a cultural carrier, cinema and literature works are of great importance in this sense. While considering novels and movies as fictional works, it should not be forgotten that these popular culture entertainments have a significant impact on the cultures of societies. Judith Butler, Kate Millett, Simone de Beauvoir, and Fatmagül Berktaş seem to agree in their work that gender is constructed with the hegemonic thought of society. For the transformation of this dictator, looking at the social order from a different perspective and revealing the current situation with the feminist eye can be considered a vital transformation method. In this sense, raising awareness is essential in transforming existing stereotypes. These studies gain importance in providing equal opportunities for women in social, political, educational, and business fields.

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academic field in many ways with the interdisciplinary developments in film studies. While looking at cinema and literature from the perspective of women's representation is the primary purpose of this study, the choices in the recreation process gain importance. These preferences help us to have an idea of what has been put forward for the representation and representation of women and provide feedback. Differences between cinema techniques and texts offer feedback on the adapted text.

Literature and cinema, as two different media forms, affect their target audience differently. However, when comments are made on the films examined, it is seen that the representations of women caught in Turkish cinema take shape over social and political concerns.

It is not possible to mention a single female representation in movies. This study focuses mainly on female representation in terms of adapted movies; it is seen that the authentic representation of women cannot find a place in the storytelling sufficiently realistic. Images of women are generally shown in the ideal woman/fetish woman dilemma. Their internal conflicts against these roles are not given enough space, or the message is given that they need to comply with social roles to end these conflicts.

In this study, the representation of women is examined through novel texts and film dialogues. The question of how the images of women were interpreted in the literary works of the period and during the transfer of these works to the cinema sought to answer the question of how cinema techniques were used in the construction of female representation due to limitations.

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# Getting Out of the Comfort Zone in Turkish Cinema: Unseen Images of Immigrant Women

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## Introduction

The roles of femininity and masculinity that need to be undertaken in the social order are one of the most basic discussions today. In every society throughout the world, the definitions of femininity that have been determined within the framework of cultural norms are limited to the male-dominated private sphere. Gender roles, which have been categorized within the socialization process from the early ages, are effective in determining male and female relationships and especially in the positioning of women among the society. Due to their gender, women have historically been classified as subjects of marginalization and have been subjected to discrimination. Although this approach is tried to be transformed today, women are more disadvantaged in the stories of migration where identity controversy comes to the fore, compared to men. Immigrant women are considered assailable just because of their gender, and men think that being passive since birth is their destiny. These states of femininity produced by the male-dominated structure are one of the most important indicators of gender discrimination.

Smelik (1998) defines cinema as a cultural practice where the discourses on femininity and masculinity are produced, reproduced, and represented. Images that have been built through consensus codes in cinema enable gender roles to become prominent or reverse these roles determined by traditional norms. However, women's representations in mainstream cinema outside the feminist cinema have been a problematic area throughout history. Even though counter-cinema perspectives created based on feminist approaches carry an attempt to overcome this problematic area, representation politics continues to be the minefield for most women who position themselves by masculine perspective in patriarchal life. The problem of gender-based representation in cinema builds different structures especially in the

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context of migration narratives while questioning the masculine view on the one hand and creating a handicap that reproduces the dominant discourse on the other.

As in the past, cinema and representation policies have very effective power in revealing immigrant's stories and in questioning or reinforcing gender roles. Cinema takes on the mission of transforming daily life as well as providing stories that reflect it. In fact, cinema is effective in positioning gender identities outside cultural and conservative values in a multi-centered world. Herewith, ideological approaches among representation policies enable the interpretation of the environment and the world by functionalizing mechanisms of prejudice and stereotypical judgment. Representations that are built through language and manifestation produce meaning not by objective reality or by the reality of the person producing the message/narrative, but by the representation systems within the language itself. For this reason, as the audience analyzes the meanings of representational systems, the first position their own identity and then the identity of the community to which they belong. At this very point, two questions that center the study seek the answer: Which representation policy in films that narrate the situations of people who prefer to migrate or who are forced to exile and who are not able to return home is used to position women moving around different geographies? What individual or social identity do these positionings build?

Within the framework of masculine hegemonic discourse, women, who are at the center of migration and gender studies, have so far been able to make their voices heard only within the dimensions of the authentic woman image which is the representation of marginalization, or the image of the victim or subordinate woman dependent on men. Women make up half of the international migration. In fact, according to recent studies, women make up 70 percent of 25 million people who are forced to be displaced all over the world (UNCHR-Turkey, 2017). This significant increase in the migration process of women has provided diversity among the studies on migration, and then on gender roles produced in cinema. It is seen that the studies conducted in the field of migration are mainly associated with men and this relationship is placed at the center of migration studies as the main actor. However, it can be said that with the initiation of gender-focused studies in the field of migration, the labor of immigrant women and gender inequality has become more prominent, and thus, researches on the feminization of migration have started to gather pace.

The films that have been shaped within the framework of the representation policies of the patriarchal world are influenced by the gender and migration policies of the period and they change and transform their image repertoires accordingly. It can be said that the feature that distinguishes this research from other field studies in the field today is that it reveals the relationship between the reasons, conditions, experiences, and gender inequalities that immigrants are exposed to by using the

image repertoires produced within the cinema due to neo-liberal policies, cultural identity problems, social differentiation, and immigrant crises. In other words, this study attempts to explain the dimensions of change or reproduction of the feminization of migration by interpreting the images of women in the films that use the reasons, conditions, or experiences of migration that started with the Syrian civil war in their narratives. After the great migration movement that emerged in Syria in 2011, an increase has been observed in the production of films regarding the refugee problem in Turkish cinema. It can be thought that the increase in those films is an effort to raise awareness on women and children most affected by the migration process which is a psycho-social trauma. Especially after 2016, the immigrant crises and the concretization processes in mass or individual migration movements caused refugees to encounter problems in different aspects, such as economic, social, and political. Most of the illegal immigrants were at risk such as human trafficking, organ mafia or sex workers. On the other hand, it has been observed that the limitations of interaction during the host culture and refugee integration phase had aroused new problems. Cinema has played a very effective role in making these problems visible and in conveying individual stories. It can be said that the marginalizing, victimizing, and stigmatizing dimensions of the phenomenon of migration have been tried to be emphasized in films that mainly focus on the image of women. Immigrant women representation is important as it enables the double exclusion process within gender studies. Since women participate in the migration experience with the responsibilities, they are forced to have due to their gender roles, they experience the victimization of both migration and being a woman altogether, and in this respect, they are a double disadvantaged and sensitive group (Sam, 2006: 408). In other words, images of women are discriminated against by the dominant ideologies of the host country, both because they do not possess the characteristics of that culture and because of their gender. They cannot be seen in public space as much as other women or as their same-sex fellows as they are not legally protected enough, as they hold fugitive status, or are not citizens of the host country.

Feminist film criticism calls the problematic areas of the representation of female characters into question. At the same time, it tries to explain why women are not represented in their real form in cinema narratives and how they are presented within men's discourses (Gledhill, 1999: 251). For this reason, feminist film criticism becomes an essential component in the analysis of immigrant women's representation and interpretation of male-dominated codes. The aim of the study in the context of feminist film criticism is to examine the perspective of the forward or backward nomadic movements explicitly or implicitly, and the image of women constructed among marginalized representational politics. At the same time, in the context of the open-door policy implemented after 2015, the research focuses on the feminization of migration in cinema centering on the images covered and excluded by gender roles and migration policies.

In the study, films shot especially after the Syrian immigrant crisis such as *Altruist* (*Fedakâr*, Hüseyin Eleman, 2011), *Quitted* (*Terkedilmiş*, Korhan Uğur, 2015), *Lifeline: Syria* (*Hayat Çizgisi: Suriye*, Caner Erzincan, 2016), *Guest* (*Misafir*, Andaç Haznedaroğlu, 2017) and *More* (*Daha*, Onur Saylak, 2017) are interpreted using the purposeful sampling method. The representation analysis method of Ryan and Kellner is used in the study. Ryan and Kellner state that cultural representations in the films and the constructive representation approach that enables qualitative analysis to construe how social reality is interpreted can be taken advantage of. With this approach, a relationship can be established between the ways of dealing with social, economic, and political events in a historical process and the interpretation of social reality. (Ryan and Kellner, 2010: 35-38). Thus, the critical analysis of films can be assessed by revealing the socio-political approaches of a period and by reversing the dominant ideologies. To make this assessment, it may be meaningful to start with mentioning the migration policies in Turkey and the relationship of these policies with gender.

### **A Brief Overview on Gender-Based Migration**

Considering the studies conducted in the field of social sciences to understand the traces of migration and define the migration process, it is seen that it dates back to the 19th century (Öner Şirin, 2018). When the studies of this period are examined, it can be said that the multidimensional and dynamic nature of intercontinental mobility is limited by the efforts to understand as well as to classify the phenomenon of migration into certain categories. As stated before, it is seen that the center of migration studies carried out in the past had a male-oriented perspective and the policies that emerged as a result of these studies also had a patriarchal character. Mirjana Morokvasić's article *Birds of Passage Are Also Women* has an important place in terms of being a pioneer among gender-focused immigrant studies. This study has been effective in immigrant females standing out in labor amongst men and making the voices of the female gender, which is the unspoken gender of migration, heard. Morokvasić states that in migration studies, women are mentioned as dependent on men or as invisible (as cited in Biehl and Daniş, 2020: 9). However, as Susan Martin stated, migration research is a gender-based phenomenon because it is shaped by cultural, social, familial, and economic experiences and hierarchical relationships (Martin, 2007: 3). With the forced migration that took place after the Syrian civil war in 2011, gender-based migration studies in Turkey started to increase. In Turkey, which has turned into one of the intermediate stops of transit migration, the process defined as step-by-step migration is experienced as the arrivals of Syrian refugees to the targeted point prolong (Düvell, 2006: 4). At this point, studies such as *Migration and Social Exclusion* (2011), *Migration In The Era Of Globalization* (2018), *Transcultural Images: Discussions on Migration, Exile, Identity and Accent in Transnational European Cinema* (2020), *Migration Studies*

*in Turkey from a Gender Perspective* (2020) and *Migration and Women* (2021) continue to discuss the meaning, scope and contents of migration feminization by bringing field studies including different experiences and concepts into migration literature. Collaborating Migration Research Associations and Women's Studies Research and Application Centers of universities present different perspectives to develop public awareness in this field. Studies that include these perspectives involve hierarchical representations of femininity formed within the moral values or exclusionary attitudes defined over the female body, practices of resisting violence, and inequalities that are fed by the patriarchal order and generated from it. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that there are studies that have been distant and critical of the gender perspective within the scope of migration studies. It can be said that this perspective, which tries to carry out migration studies with a masculine memory, is fed by a conservative and patriarchal approach. The gender perspective is important for questioning the language of victimization and transforming and strengthening gender-based inequalities.

The fact that the host country imposes the assimilation process on the people of the immigrant countries, which is what has been done so far, creates an area that is open to negotiation (Öner Şirin, 2018). This oppressive nation-state attitude causes immigrants to experience problems in their processes of cultural attachment to the host country, as well as contradicting the multicultural policies that express the public recognition of cultural differences. For this reason, the marginalization, subordination as well as discriminatory discourses and practices towards women immigrants built in both daily life practices and cultural representation mechanisms becoming visible can enable the revision of devaluation processes with legal regulations. The concept of feminization of migration which serves as an umbrella concept in achieving this change points out to the tendency of women to migrate individually, the increase in demand for jobs identified with women in the host countries (nursing, caregiving, cleaning, sex work), the mobility of women being more than men, and the women being more vulnerable to migration processes especially such as family reunification, marriage, human trafficking, worker migration, and asylum (Piper, 2006: 24-25). With the feminization of migration, especially women who migrate alone, who have previously been victims of sexual violence, who have a history of trauma, who are detained as well as gay women encounter more risky situations than some of their fellows (UNCHR-Turkey, 2017).

External restrictions, war, economic and political reasons are the leading causes of female-specific migration. Secondly are the restrictions imposed by the patriarchal society on gender roles. Women consider migration as an opportunity to escape or resist the oppression in their living places (Kofmal et al. 2000:143). It is not possible to fade the migration of women back to a single reason because it includes economic and non-economic factors. However, whatever the reason is, the physical and

mental traces of female-specific migration are much more evident. For this reason, women are less mobile than men (Newland, 2004:5). Geographical mobility shapes gender roles, identity, and perception, as well as the experiences of migration and immigrant life (Parrado & Flippen, 2005). In international law, women's migration status is considered as a secondary situation that is shaped by the spouse. Women generally prefer this situation to benefit from the right to asylum (Newland, 2004:6). In this case, which is called migration associated with family reunification, women are considered as secondary and dependent elements of the migration process as spouses, brides, or children following the man, their family, and relatives. Women are also defined depending on the status they gain through marriage in migration law (Sam, 2006: 409). Women often come into conflict with the patriarchal nature of migration policies, which they do not participate in deciding of, but which have to bear its consequences. It is seen that patriarchal bargaining processes are effective in overcoming this conflict. Women exist in a field of action that forces the patriarchal power to change by questioning it as much as reinforcing it. With patriarchal bargains, the boundaries of private and public spaces can be redefined. At this point, it can be said that women who have gained new opportunities by spatial movement and economic freedom in the migration process have gained momentum in terms of changing their traditional roles. While men maintain their patriarchal power in the home, women gain the right to protection and security in return for protecting the dignity of men by obedience and compliance (Kandiyoti, 2013: 139). On the other hand, women who cannot acquire the freedom they want from patriarchal bargains face psychological violence (Sam, 2006: 412). Women are exposed to psychological violence in the family, and sexual violence in human trafficking and smuggling attempts.

### **Cinematographic Impressions of Feminized Migration**

Cinema had started to criticize the power with women's movements that started to gain strength since the 1960s. Women narratives, which increase especially with counter-cinema examples and feminist film theories, give the image of women a subject identity among representation politics. 68 movements' ideas to rebel, emancipate and change the system deeply affected female directors and screenwriters in Hollywood. At the same time, the idea of women's solidarity, that is "sisterhood", which emerged from feminism in this period, meant the fraternity of women in the face of oppression and inequality and enabled women to be strong opposition to male domination in all areas by defending their common interests in being women (Berkday, 2013: 6). In fact, as of this period, the image of women has changed by being built as female characters who rebelled against the system and who do this by resorting to violence such as terrorists, bank robbers, murderers, mothers fighting with the mafia and (Smelik, 2008: 105). Although feminist narratives make room for women in the cinema industry, it can be said that cultural phenomena, gender

politics, and social prejudices are effective in film production processes and that masculine narrative are still at the center of many industries of the world, especially of Turkish cinema.

It is seen that the representation mechanisms on women and femininity in Turkish cinema have a de facto quality (İnceoğlu, 2015: 87). Considering the directors of the films that constitute the sample of the research, it can be stated that the representation policies towards the immigrant woman images, in general, are determined with a masculine perspective. When focusing on gender debates, evaluating directors only by their gender would be a very reductive attitude. However, in this study, a reductive attitude is not aimed with the emphasis on masculinity, which is especially expressed, and on the contrary, it is aimed to emphasize the directors who do not give the female characters the freedom to determine their own destiny. On the other hand, it is not denied that female directors produce patriarchal codes and create narratives with subordinating image structures just because they are women.

Images of women who do not have the freedom to determine their own destiny are represented within the framework of practices of violence, marriage, and punishment in the migration stories in cinema. Based on Elin Diamond's (1997) claim that the dramatic reality of sexual violence and harassment fictions not only reflecting the reality but producing it, it can be said that the types of violence used against the image of women in films have an effect that legitimizes and normalizes gender inequality rather than making it visible. In most of these narratives, there is no importance ascribed to the wills, wishes, desires of the other person or to their mutual consent. On the contrary, in the films, inequality develops within the framework of the actions that men determine. The man is the part who wants, desires, and uses violence. Women are expected to respond to these actions that lead to the establishment of dominance and power relations, to support masculine performances, and to endorse masculine violence. The difficulties of social life and the sexist norms of the host country in migration narratives are constructed through women, and those who reject these norms are perceived as "others" or as "foreigners". Considering the structure of the images of women in the films, it is seen that the characters are positioned to support and approve these performances.

Name of The Film	Director	Woman Character	Image Structure/ Representation
<i>Altruist (Fedakâr, 2011)</i> <sup>2</sup>	Hüseyin Eleman	Immigrant Zeynep	Negatively Constructed Subject (disabled/victim of abuse)
<i>Altruist (Fedakâr, 2011)</i>	Hüseyin Eleman	Zeynep's Mother	Negatively Constructed Subject (committed suicide)
<i>Quitted (Terkedilmiş, 2016)</i> <sup>3</sup>	Korhan Uğur	Immigrant Woman	Negatively Constructed Subject (Desperate woman who sells her kidney)
<i>Quitted (Terkedilmiş, 2016)</i>	Korhan Uğur	Nurse	Negatively Constructed Subject (Greedy/Money hungry)
<i>Life-line: Syria (Hayat Çizgisi: Suriye, 2016)</i> <sup>4</sup>	Caner Erzincan	Interpreter Ayşe	Negatively Constructed Subject (Traumatic woman who lost a part of her family to war)
<i>Life-line: Syria (Hayat Çizgisi: Suriye, 2016)</i>	Caner Erzincan	Little immigrant girl	Negatively Constructed Subject
<i>Hayat Çizgisi: Suriye (2016)</i>	Caner Erzincan	Ministry of Internal Affairs Officer Ayla	Nationalist-militarist woman image
<i>Guest (Misafir, 2017)</i> <sup>5</sup>	Andaç Haznedaroğlu	Meryem	Negatively Constructed Subject (cheap labor/illicit work)
<i>Guest (Misafir, 2017)</i>	Andaç Haznedaroğlu	Lena	Negatively Constructed Subject (Traumatic woman who lost a part of her family to war)
<i>Guest (Misafir, 2017)</i>	Andaç Haznedaroğlu	Hacer	Married for money (meta)
<i>More (Daha, 2017)</i> <sup>6</sup>	Onur Saylak	Ahra	Forced to prostitution
<i>More (Daha, 2017)</i>	Onur Saylak	Immigrant woman	Raped

**Table 1:** Images of women in the films held within the study

In her article *Rethink Women's Cinema: Aesthetics and Feminist Theory* (1985), Teresa De Lauretis emphasizes the creation of the concept of women. The concept of woman built on male discourses in the social order is reproduced through texts, films, and representation practices. Referring to a similar point of view, Laura Mulvey, in her article titled *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema Summary* (1975) states that men are constructed as powerful and active characters in traditional cinema and that the dramatic structure is knitted around these characters. Frames formed by the perspective constructed by masculine cinematographic codes determine the man as the subject of the perspective and the woman as the victim/sufferer to be saved by this subject or as a theatrical object. In all of the films in the study, it is seen that the female character is positioned within the framework of heteronormative masculine

2 The film depicts Zeynep, who is disabled and who lost her parents during the civil war, brought to Turkey from Syria by a journalist and her experiences in this process.

3 The film depicts the decision of a refugee woman from Syria to Turkey to sell her kidney to the organ mafia and the events that followed.

4 The film tells the story of Turkish Doctor Doğan helping sick Syrian refugees and the difficulties the refugees face.

5 The film tells about the experiences of a group of refugees consisting of a child trying to save his sick brother, and a woman during their time in Turkey as they are headed to Europe. The grievances of the refugees who have to flee, wait or hide during this period are emphasized.

6 The film narrates the stories of refugees who were transported illegally from Turkey to Europe. The film highlights the violence and xenophobia of the human smuggler father and son against refugee women and children.

values. At the same time, when the female characters in the film are examined, it can be stated that they are represented in the center of gender inequality as emphasized by Susan Martin (2007). Accordingly, it is seen that Ayşe in the film *Life-line: Syria (Hayat Çizgisi: Suriye)* and Lena in the film *Guest (Misafir)* are employed in jobs identified based on gender roles or in low-wage labor markets. Although female characters are positioned in the same labor market as male characters, they do not benefit from the same economic wage policies. In this case, it can be stated that in the representation mechanisms in films, attention is drawn to the discrimination that women experience due to their gender.

Images of women are always at the center of representation policies in cinema. For this reason, it is presented in different strategies ranging from fetishization to marginalization, from flaneurs to addicts. However, women's representations in migration narratives use and continue to use similar stereotypes to produce traditional gender roles. The theme often used in the production of these stereotypes is female sexuality and its control.

For many conservative societies, gender roles and women's sexual behavior are important situations that need to be controlled. Especially the relationship established between female sexuality and the representation of moral values of a family makes the collective control system effective (Espin, 2003: 242). Deniz Kandiyoti explains this idea of control that exists in the layers of conservative society as: "Parents, siblings, close and distant relatives, and even neighbors closely follow the behavior of girls after adolescence and the idea of having control on their own sexuality not belonging to the girls themselves is well placed in their minds." (Kandiyoti, 2013: 80). The connection established between the phenomena such as family, sexuality, and honor are maintained through control and pressure. The rules determined by the family change into the rules determined by the husband with the marriage. Thus, the patriarchal order is reproduced by changing motifs every day.

The representation mechanism that reveals female sexuality being shaped by family control and family's decisions is observed in the scene in the film *The Guest*, where Hacer is married to a man older than her for money. Making use of the migration process through family reunification, Hacer turns into a dependent subject who is dependent on her husband. Migration's subordination and marginalization of women and girls are built over and over again in the life practices of different characters.

A different representation practice for the control of female sexuality is observed in the film *More (Daha)* as well. In this film, Ahra being used by human traffickers for prostitution can be assessed within the concept of Kandiyoti's patriarchal bargaining. In the film, a relationship can be correlated between the commodification of the female body and Kandiyoti's statement that women provide protection for themselves as

well as creating a safe space after bargaining with men. Ahra, who wants to go to Greece, commodifies her body after bargaining with Azad. In return for the female body, which men could use whichever way they wanted to, she demanded freedom in a new country. The female immigrant in the film *More (Daha)* (Ahra) resigns herself to sexual harassment and assault to reach the country/culture she dreams of. On the other hand, the mobility of the immigrant characters in the context of transit migration in this film can also be assessed within a theoretical framework. According to this theory that is used to explain the continuity of migration, it is assumed that institutions and voluntary organizations begin supporting the relocation of these people during the migration process which then no longer is individual mobility and became a part of the household, family, friends, environment and global economy. Transportation providers and human traffickers working in both legal and illegal ways create their own industries by operating beyond the borders of the state (Senol Sert, 2018: 14 as cited in Tsegai). It is very difficult for the state to control these activities. This situation which lays the groundwork for the formation of individual and collective grievances is frequently used in film narratives to emphasize transit migration passages, to explain the culture of migration, and to represent women immigrants in the context of a victimized, deprived, and an excluded language.

Another control and repression mechanism for sexuality is observed through the systematic rape phenomenon in the research. In the films, *Altruist (Fedakar)*, *Guest (Misafir)* and *More (Daha)*, the phenomenon of rape is used to build masculinity. Scully (2013: 103) in her book *Understanding Sexual Violence* refers to the concepts of hypermasculinity and hegemonic masculinity. These concepts refer to men's actions involving aggressive behavior to become more of a man. According to Scully, the origin of sexual violence is sociocultural, and rape is learned (2013: 178). In other words, this type of masculinity which is shaped by violence, rape, sexual aggression, and hostile attitudes and behaviors is socially constructed. Men use sexual violence against women to punish, impute, humiliate, fulfill their fantasies, and take revenge. Men who show sexual violence do not think that women/victims have any real or symbolic meanings or values other than sexual commodity and worthlessness (Scully, 2013:179). For this reason, they produce hierarchical gender relations and corresponding values that reduce women to commodities.

It is possible to say that with this masculine sexual violence in the films, both hypermasculinity is produced and a nationalist-militarist identity is built. The systematic phenomenon of rape which is used as a national security tool in wartime becomes one of the most effective tools of migration processes.

In the construction of nationalist militarist identity, the homeland is identified with feminine qualities and represented by the female body, even though it seems to be genderless (Najmabadi, 2011:129). As Thongchai Winichahul stated, nation/nationalism does not have a genderless and neutral geographical body (cited in

Najmabadi, 2011:131). The subject of desire or the love for the homeland which is turned into a romantic and erotic object for the man with such a perception finds itself a place among nation projects by taking the form of the female body (mother) (Saigol, 2011: 232). When the desire for women is turned over to the nation, or when the female body begins to express the nation, violent struggles await the female body. From this period on, the female body not only carries the meaning of national identity but also turns into a political space where the enemy will write its victory on as well as realizing its desire to add its collective identity to it (Saigol, 2011: 242-251). Afsaneh Najmabadi draws attention to the concept of honor that connects the concepts of a masculine nation and a feminine homeland. According to her, the meaning of the concept of honor which roots from Islamic thought transforms and acquires a national trait with the transformation of the “nation” from a religious community (namus-i Islam) to a national community (namus-i Iran) (Najmabadi, 2011: 131). The concept of honor expresses both the chastity of women and national chastity with its dual meaning structure. In this context, the concept of honor which is directly associated with the female body appears under the responsibility of the man/nation. The importance and value attributed to the biological reproduction of women as the honorable mothers of the nation require the containment of female sexuality which poses a threat to the reputation of the nation (Nagel, 2011: 87). Female sexuality is not only a threat among third-world countries. In Europe, women represent men’s honor as well. At this point, all images determined by hegemonic masculinity that are outside of acceptable female sexuality are expressed as prostitutes or lesbians who are not patriotic, who weaken the nation, and tarnish the honor of the men of the nation (Nagel, 2011: 87). Especially in the nationalist militarist discourse used in migration policies, the sexuality of the woman who is the signifier of fear and desire is one of the important points of tension. Women cannot determine their own sexual preferences and roles which should be an area of personal immunity, and sexuality is perceived as a threat to the symbol of the nation. In other words, the female / female body, which forms the discourse of the social power becomes the new indicator of the areas where men can easily practice their aggressive behavior on. For this reason, it can be said that the men of the host country, who try to gain political and sexual superiority in the rape scenes in all three films in the study [*Altruist (Fedakar)*, *Guest (Misafir)* and *More (Daha)*], victimized immigrant women with sexual assaults and they act with the projections of their nationalist-militarist memory.

The image of immigrant women in *Altruist (Fedakar) Quitted (Terkedilmiş)*, *Life-line: Syria (Hayat Çizgisi: Suriye)*, and *More (Daha)* is positioned in a structure that deserves maltreatment, exclusion, and marginalization. These positioning in films can be interpreted within the context of Julia Kristeva’s conceptualization of abject. As Kristeva puts it, the abject is expressed as a boundary that lies opposite the subject-self and threatens its existence. The concept of the abject is used to

describe the dilemma the woman faces with what is symbolic. This concept highlights the transition between the social body versus the female body or the symbolic body versus the political body. This transition is fed by the patriarchal order and the female body is transformed into a commodity (Kristeva, 2004: 14-23). Accordingly, it can be argued that the men of the host country are trying to create their own pristine spaces by excluding the immigrant women they abject. Images of immigrant women now mean disease, impureness, otherness, and infection for the males of the host country. For this reason, for men, these bodies must be tamed, that is, they must be controlled and oppressed by violence. In the films, the pressure of men on immigrant women is shared with the audience using melodramatic codes. Especially by using the Negatively Constructed Subject structure, the woman is transformed into a dependent and powerless being. Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto explains the Negatively Constructed Subject structure which has a characteristic feature among melodramatic codes as follows:

Because the Japanese believe that in the West the self is asserted and the subject as the agency is firmly established, the parallel is established between two binaries, melodramatic-nonmelodramatic and Japan-the West. The word “melodramatic” in turn signifies for the Japanese their inferiority complex toward the West. To the extent that it feeds on their awareness of the lack of a Western-style subjectivity in Japan, the melodramatic constantly remind the Japanese that Japan is trapped in the geopolitical space of Western hegemony. It is partly to facilitate the escape from this position of the “slave” that melodrama clears the space for the subject who does not act but only acted upon; that is, the Japanese have negatively constructed a subject position from which they can fall into a delusion of being innocent victims of evil doings by others. This victim consciousness of the Japanese is a specific type of the so-called resentment articulating the colonial mentality of the Japanese, which has never been overcome for almost a century and a half (Yoshimoto, 1993: 108).

The negatively constructed subject structure that Yoshimoto explains over the Japanese cinema and its melodramatic structure is a frequently used code in Turkish cinema to represent women who are innocent victims of evil. In its use in Turkish cinema, there is no stance of the woman against exploitation. However, it can be said that it has the quality of setting the master-slave dialectic forth among describing the relationship between man and woman. In the use of this code, the woman character has a strong temperament at the beginning of the story, but as the narrative progresses, she loses her power and becomes dependent, and is victimized. Women get helpless in the face of evil, commit suicide, or get killed. This code system is used for the representation of women in films that describe migration experiences. In these films, women remain silent in the face of male violence and sexual assaults, lose the positive qualities they had at the beginning of the narrative, and are punished, get sick, or killed within the narrative. These melodramatic codes

enable women to be positioned as “abject” and cause them to be coded as worthless and subordinated.

### **Conclusion**

Phenomena such as war and migration are presented in cinema to emphasize the hegemonic values of masculinity within the framework of elements such as heroism, protectiveness, and courage. Women cannot go beyond being the background in the narratives in which these two phenomena are built. Although women are one of the most affected genders during the war and migration processes, the lack of a women concept in the narrative structure can be interpreted as an important indicator of the women’s lack of social value. Positioned as opposed to the male world in social life, the world of women creates an antagonistic/contradictory/opposing space on the narrative plane. In a sense, it can be said that women’s representations in the cinema can serve as a mirror for gender politics that constitute a problematic place among social life, but also build the perception of reality and ensure that this cycle is socially internalized.

Women who experience migration get mobilized because of reasons which they have little control over - poverty, war, and other external constraints -. Most of the reasons for female-specific migration emerge from the restrictions on the gender roles determined by the patriarchal society. The pressure and economic difficulties being added to these restrictions cause women to see different geographies as an opportunity and thus, increase their mobility. However, it is possible to state that women are at a disadvantage compared to men in their migration experiences that they create for different purposes. Women are intensely faced with the constraints of the patriarchal system in terms of both economic and gender policies.

At this point, when looked at the general representation mechanisms in the films in the population are examined, it is seen that the codes for the production of the patriarchal order are used in the films. Women are represented as victims with a negatively constructed subject structure. This code turns men into heroes and pushes immigrant women to a subordinate position. In the films in the research, male characters are represented as heroes, saviors, or power holders while female characters, whether as a little girl or as an adult woman, are built in a victimized, dependent, harassed, devalued, and marginalized structure who can be bought and sold for money.

In the films, female characters are represented as images whose sexualities are taken under pressure and controlled. Coercion and control are presented by marriage for money, forced prostitution, or rape. In these films that depict forward and backward migration movements, it is seen that refugees have limited representation areas, that the struggle for power of the host country’s men is intensely explained, and that xenophobia and national identity, exclusion, and marginalization practices are predominantly constructed through images of women.

Images of men who are constantly trapping women in various ways and methods are encountered in the traditional cinema narrative. Male images resort to the physical and psychological assault on women's bodies to construct hegemonic masculinity values. Apart from violence, the element of marginalization is based on the discourses of homogenization, the monist national identity perspective, and the elimination of foreigners. Women are harassed or raped by the men of the host country with a nationalist perspective, thereby trying to humiliate their national identity.

In summary, it can be said that the films in Turkish cinema that describe the experiences of immigrants after the Syrian civil war in 2011 were created within the framework of patriarchal and melodramatic codes. It may be useful to conclude the research with a suggestion for transforming these negative representation policies. To bowdlerize films produced for migration narratives from masculine codes, representation policies towards feminine migration can be deconstructed with the point of view of female directors or a feminine point of view. Especially the deconstructive cinema formula, which is the structure proposed by Annette Kuhn can be used for the representation of women.

Kuhn expresses deconstructive cinema as follows:

“At one stage of the goals of the deconstruction process, dominant cinematic features indicated by textual movements and styles are targeted. The aim is to provoke the audience to be aware of the existence and effectiveness of dominant codes and therefore to initiate a critical attitude towards these codes. Motivation, awareness, and critical attitude suggest the transformation of the relationship between the audience and the text. Therefore, deconstructive cinema aims to disturb the audience.” (Kuhn, 1994: 155).

Kuhn states that in deconstructive cinema, the audience plays an active role and interrogates the representation mechanism within the fragmented narrative, thus ensures the destruction of masculine codes. With deconstructive cinema, the woman who becomes the object of the perception can become a subject who adopts her own activism. In this way, apart from being positioned as worthless, authentic, or as a victim, alternative representation mechanisms can be developed, and female characters can be transferred to a point where they can determine their own destinies within the narrative.

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**SMARTPHONE USE, GENDER AND ATTACHMENT STYLES:  
THE FILM OF THE “CEBİMDEKİ YABANCI” (STRANGER IN MY POCKET)**  
Seçkin Özmen<sup>1</sup>, Özlem Çağlan Bilsel<sup>2</sup>

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**Introduction**

The rapid development of digital technologies day by day shapes social life seriously. With the development of digital technologies, communication tools have entered our lives more with their added functions, and their frequency of use has increased. Widespread and intensive use of new communication technologies has started to be used frequently in the process of establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships. Messages that can be easily accessed at any time via smart phones have started to occupy an important place in the formation of relationships. The different functions of smartphones have revealed some changes along with the differentiations in the socio-economic structures of individuals. Some studies have shown that the use of mobile technology differs depending on gender. The possibility of using digital technologies, the duration and form of use differ depending on gender. The study conducted by Delevi, Sökmez, Avcı (2018) with university students, it was determined that 40 percent of the students experienced a separation from their mates over the internet, and a significant relationship was found between the avoidant attachment model and the factors of acceptance of technology use in relationship termination. In another study, it was seen that men are in a more advantageous position than women in using Internet technologies, especially in almost all developing countries (Akça, Kaya 2017). The study carried on Instagram showed that there was no significant difference in the levels of instagram usage motives with gender but there was a bound between instagram escape and surveillance motives and age (Saatçioğlu, İnanç 2020). Another study on women’s internet addiction revealed some findings that digital environments increase clothing shopping of women (Sancar 2017, Sancar 2021).

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Children learn how to behave a man or a woman from their parents and shape their relationships on this learning from adults, on the other hand, they continue their childhood attachment styles during their adulthood as well. Starting from this point, within the film called *Cebimdeki Yabancı (Stranger In My Pocket)*, the relationships between male and female characters will be analyzed with attachment styles in the context of smart phone usage practices and gender phenomenon. For this purpose, attachment styles in relationship will be revealed with representation of gender and smartphone use.

### **Gender and Attachment Relationship**

Gender; it is the “gender position” or “gender identity”, which is determined socially and culturally, unlike biological sex, and therefore its content can change historically as well as from society to society. In this sense, gender not only determines gender differences, but also indicates unequal power relations between the sexes. From the moment they are born, the biological sex of children begins to be determined socially, and their gender identities are formed according to the roles that the society they live in for men and women. Our biological gender, which is determined as male and female, is also socially shaped by the culture, norms and mentality of the society we live in.

According to Ann Oakley (1985), ‘sex’ refers to the biological male-female distinction, while ‘gender’ refers to the parallel and socially unequal division between masculinity and femininity. It states that the difference between men and women is created socially and culturally as well as biological factors. Gender roles, which are shaped according to the roles that men and women assume in the maintenance of the lineage, are conceptualized in line with a perspective that sees the differences and relations between women and men as the product of socialization, not their biology. Gender roles, which differ from society to society in the context of time and space, are shaped according to the reproduction and creation of the culture in question.

Gender which means that an individual perceives his/her identity as a woman or a man and shows the behavior required by his/her gender, is taught in accordance to the rules of the society in which the individual lives, and the individual is expected to behave within these gender role patterns. Accordingly, if women have all the feminine characteristics accepted by the society, they will be feminine; Men, on the other hand, are defined as masculine if they have all the characteristics accepted by the society as appropriate for the gender role (Aydın and Kavuncu, 1991: 53).

The learning of stereotypes about gender role by individuals occurs in a process and by interacting with other people in the environment. As Ann Kaplan (2013) states, parents’ attitudes towards their own gender roles and the way they interact with each other affect children’s adoption of gender roles, that is, the roles that parents see from the moment the child was born are learned by the child.

Attachment refers to an emotionally positive and helpful relationship between infants and their parents or caregivers. The mother usually meets the needs of the

newborn baby. The mother can be called the “other” who meets the child’s attachment need. This bond has established with the mother in the first years and constitutes an important part of the child’s personality and these characteristics show resistance to lifelong change (Tüzün and Sayar, 2006: 24-25).

Attachment is a phenomenon that is determined at birth and is thought to be continuous and shapes the way an individual relates to other people. According to attachment theorists, attachment that is established as secure or insecure in infancy shows little variation in later periods (Kesebir et al., 2011:322-323). Since individuals first observe their parents in the socialization process and styles them, it is assumed that attachment behaviors may be related to gender role. A psychological bond has been established between the individual and his/her parent or caregiver since infancy, and the foundations of gender roles are laid through this relationship through the later stages of life (Büyükoşahin and Kızıldağ, 2018: 240). Individuals learn both gender roles and attachment behaviors from their parents. Bowlby states that attachment begins to occur in the mother-infant relationship with birth and affects environmental and emotional relationships in the following years of life. Children learn to be a man and a woman from their parents, and their relationships with adults shape this learning (Büyükoşahin and Kızıldağ 2018: 240).

### **Attachment Theory and Adult Attachment Styles**

Child psychoanalyst John Bowlby examined the attachment relationship between the child and his mother in more depth and introduced the “Attachment Theory” to establish its connection with the psychopathological pictures seen in both children and adults. Attachment theory is an approach that explains the lifetime effect of the deep emotional bond established with other important people, especially parents, that is functional for survival (Sümer et al., 2015: 193). Bowlby’s aim is to explain the reasons for the tendency to establish strong emotional bonds with other people who are important to them (as cited in Bowlby, Sümer and Güngör, 1999: 72). Attachment theory generally suggests that the quality of relationships established with caregivers in the early period and profoundly affects the individual’s ability to manage emotions, expectations and behaviors in close relationships. According to the theory, all kinds of experiences in the early period, especially traumas, separations, losing a family member or other problems caused by close relationships, are closely related to future anxiety, anger, depression, emotional disconnection, and the capacity level to control oneself and emotions (Sümer et al., 2015: 193).

While attachment theory focused on infancy and childhood periods and the relationship between the child and the one who meets the basic care needs of the child in this period, it is also an approach used to explain the reasons for the emotional, cognitive and behavioral tendencies experienced by adults in their social and romantic relationships (Çalışır, 2009: 241). Attachment is a phenomenon that continues from the cradle to the grave. Early interactions between the infant and the

caregiver caused individuals to adopt different attachment styles throughout their lives.

According to Bowlby (1969), attachment experiences transform into cognitive structures (working styles) that express the quality of self, other and close emotional relationships over time. Thus, early life experiences are transferred to adult life through schemas including interpersonal expectations and maintain their continuity. Hazan and Shaver (1987), who stated that attachment in infancy will also affect attachment in romantic relationships, examined the relationship between attachment styles and certain aspects of childhood and adult relationships. In this context, it is stated that the secure, anxious and avoidant attachment style suggested by Ainsworth is also seen in the relationships of adults and that the attachment differences of individuals are based on the past attachment figure and internal styles developed against the environment. According to Hazan and Shaver (1987), there are three different attachment styles in adult relationships: secure, anxious and avoidant.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) emphasize that attachment patterns in childhood and adults' attachment patterns in romantic relationships show significant similarities, and accordingly, people's relationship experiences can differ. Securely attached individuals have high self-esteem and can easily establish close and intimate relationships. These people are emotionally open and can commit to long-term close relationships. Appropriate partner with responsive communication reduces concerns about rejection, criticism, and abuse. Securely attached individuals are not afraid, shy and balanced. It is stated that those with secure attachment express their feelings and thoughts better and more clearly in a relationship, while those with insecure attachment are less sensitive to signals from their spouses and have difficulty in reflecting their feelings to the other party (Feeney 2004). It is claimed that people with a secure attachment pattern have a belief that their spouses are supportive and reliable, and they maintain these beliefs during the discussions in the relationship, so they have a close and satisfying relationship with each other (Mikulincer & Shaver 2007).

However, it is thought that while individuals with secure attachment deal constructively with uncertainty and anxiety-inducing situations, those with anxious attachment focus on their own worries and are alert to possible exclusion or rejection signals from their spouses. In anxious attachment, individuals have strong desires for intimacy and protection in their romantic relationships. In addition, people cannot be sure of the value of love because they are more alert in their romantic relationships and more obsessed with their spouses. They are afraid of losing love and being abandoned, so they do everything not to lose love and not to be abandoned, they are very giving, they cry a lot and laugh a lot, they do not like conflict, they cannot leave and they are jealous (Hazan, Shaver 1987). It is stated that those with avoidant attachment experience more incompatibility in their

marriage (Pollard et al. 2014). Therefore, it is suggested that people with insecure attachment pattern will have lower marital adjustment (Özen 2012; Pollard et al. 2014; Young et al. 2017). Individuals with an avoidant attachment style avoid close relationships because they are afraid of rejection, they do not demand, they are afraid of being discovered. They want the love of many people, they do not admire, they are control-oriented and they do not have emotional memories (Hazan, Shaver, 1987).

Securely attached people believe that they will receive friendly response and help from others in times of need, because they think they are loved and that other people are reliable. Insecurely attached people believe that they will receive hostile reactions or no help from those around them when they need it, and that they will not be allowed when they want to dominate (Bartholomew & Horowitz 1991; Baldwin 1992). In this case, the interpersonal problems that people will experience in their relationships will be different according to the attachment styles they have (Horowitz et al. 1993; Uluç 2005; Tüzün 2006). And movies provide tools for a better understanding of these different attachment styles (Parlayandemir, 2021).

### **The Reading of the film**

In the film called *Cebimdeki Yabancı*; we will reveal the relations between male and female characters in the context of smartphone usage practices and gender phenomenon, how individuals are connected, and which attachment styles can be read from different behaviors. Within the framework of this purpose, how gender is represented, attachment styles in relationships and how these are revealed by the use of smartphones will be analyzed.

In the study, the film will be subjected to qualitative content analysis. While reading the text semiotic interpretation will be used with the qualitative content analysis method.

### **The Story of the Film**

*Cebimdeki Yabancı* was shot in the comedy and thriller genre and was released on February 2, 2018. It was directed by Serra Yılmaz, scripted by Murat Dişli, and produced by Ferzan Özpetek and Necati Akpınar.

The film is about the meeting of seven old friends at a dinner and playing game during the meal. The events are shaped around everyone leaving their mobile phones at the dinner table and reading the incoming messages and notifications aloud. The entire film takes place in the home environment.

### **Visual Style**

Natural light was used throughout the film in accordance with the reality of daily life. Dim lighting is generally used in the film which tells the story of friends who come together for dinner. Unhappiness, sadness or work-related problems in the inner world of the characters were conveyed using dim light. Natural colors

of interior and exterior spaces are used throughout the film. No special lighting or coloring was used. The preparations were described in detail using close-up plans in the film, which started with meal preparations. Close-ups are generally used to emphasize the close relationship between the characters. In the scenes where the food preparations are given in detail at the beginning of the film, the natural sounds of the food are used in harmony with the sound used at background. The music used in the tense and sad scenes of the film makes the sadness and tension feel in their naturalness.

The house, which is used in the film is one of the interior elements to produce meaning suitable for daily life. The house represents the symbolic space of hosting guests, within context of social and cultural values. Home is a place of happiness and peace as well as the center of fear and inner distress. When the whole film is examined, it is observed that the characters' fear, unhappiness, sadness and problems related to business life are conveyed in the house. In the film, the living room and the kitchen are the indoor spaces where all the characters are seen the most. Almost the entire film took place in the living room and at the dinner table. There is only very little outside space in the film. In this context, the scene where Tuğba and Sinan are in the car at the beginning of the film and the characters other than Banu and Metin are displayed on the street after leaving the house at the end of the film can be evaluated as an outdoor space. The film tells the events that take place today.

### **Gender Representation of Characters:**

Gender is a phenomenon that expresses the roles and responsibilities that society expects from women and men. In media texts, the roles assigned to women are clear and they are represented in a secondary position in the male-centered narrative in the patriarchal system.

Within the scope of the film, the female characters were discussed under the images of mother, victim (deceived), seductive dangerous woman, business woman, educated, young woman, happy and sad woman, modern-traditional woman.

In the film, Banu and Esra are portrayed as mothers, and Tuğba is portrayed as a mother-to-be. Banu, Metin's wife and Defne's mother, is a character caught between modernity and tradition. Although she is modern in appearance and professional life, she has a traditional attitude about her daughter going out and spending time with her boyfriend. Again, in his relationship with his daughter Defne, he acts authoritarian and rule maker. He is of the opinion that it is not necessary to have a child in every relationship, with the statement "Sometimes it can be selfish in giving birth to children, a lot of couples who want to save their marriages are having children". Banu is positively represented as an educated, stylish, well-groomed, modern and business woman. However, Banu is cheating on her husband with Sinan, the wife of her friend Tuğba, and in this respect, she is imagined as a seductive and dangerous

woman. At the same time, Banu is an unhappy woman who has problems with her husband and cheats on her husband.

As Kerem's wife and mother of a girl and a boy, Esra is portrayed as a modern and business woman character. Esra sanctifies motherhood with her motto "I want to raise a glass to the children at the dinner table", "the only meaning of my life". The saying "child is a very sacred thing, I won't even discuss it with you" shows that it sanctifies having children and motherhood. Watching her children while they sleep is conveyed to the audience as Esra's favorite thing. Although Esra is also perceived as an asexual mother, the revelation of her texting about sex with another man later on may emphasize her closed, shy or insecure nature about sexuality. As a result of an accident she has made, invisible walls have been built between her and her husband, and she is an unhappy and inclined to drink alcohol. Esra character can be considered as an example of the anxious attachment style.

Sinan's wife Tuğba is portrayed as a well-groomed, educated, happy, modern and business woman. Tuğba, who wants to be a mother, conditions being a family with having children with her motto "I want to have children to be a family". She is symbolized as an angelic, happy and loyal woman. When we look at Tuğba's behaviors, her self-confident and self-confident state can be explained by the secure attachment style.

In the patriarchal social order, the male-centered narrative continues and comes to the fore in media texts. Within the scope of the film, male characters were handled under the images of father, modern-traditional, educated, happy-sad male. In the film, Metin and Kerem are portrayed as fathers, Sinan as father candidates, and Suavi as gay characters. Banu's wife, Defne's father Metin is a modern plastic surgeon. Metin is imagined as a character who carefully prepares for the guests in the kitchen, greets the guests with a kitchen apron, is understanding towards his daughter, and is even closer to his daughter than Banu. In most media texts and in daily life, preparing and cooking in the kitchen is presented as "a woman's duty", while in the film it is presented through the character of Metin. Metin described being a father as his primary duty with the rhetoric that "the thing I did best in this life was to be a father". Kerem, who is Esra's wife and has two children, is a more traditional character. It is more traditional both in terms of wanting to live with her mother and outwardly. He assumed the role of a devoted father taking the responsibility of the accident that his wife did.

Tuğba's husband, Sinan is a modern-looking professional sports trainer who is willing to have a baby. He explains his thoughts with these words, 'you bring a life into the world, isn't it a very sacred thing? Think about yourself, so she sanctified motherhood. At the same time, he is cheating on his wife both with the assistant working at the workplace and with his best friend Banu.

While Suavi is a character closer to modernity as an academic, he is a traditional character who hides his sexual orientation even from his friends and says that his girlfriend is a girl even though he is in a relationship with a boy. He is also imaged as a traditional man in appearance. The sexual orientation of the character is supported by the rhetoric of “I got married, I have a child. I don’t need to run after anything to make sense of my life because I became a mother. Except for Tuğba and Suavi, the characters are portrayed as polygamous because they cheat on their wives, either virtually or in real terms.

### **Adult Attachment Styles**

In the film, friends who come together for a meal decide to play a game at this meeting. Based on their closeness with each other, they decide to play a game with their smartphones. During the meal, everyone will put their phone on the table, and everyone will hear and see incoming messages, conversations and all notifications. Through this game, the attachment styles of the characters are revealed through their behaviors in gender and phone usage. Tuğba and Suavi immediately left their phones on the table and agreed to play. For this reason, Tuğba and Suavi exhibited behaviors in accordance with the secure attachment style. Since individuals with a secure attachment pattern believe that their spouses are reliable and supportive, they can participate in such a game without any doubt, as in Tuğba style. The character of Banu also showed secure attachment behavior as a character who offered to play the game and tried to persuade other characters, including her husband. However, it is revealed that Banu is a woman who cheats on her husband in the following scenes. Other characters, on the other hand, are anxiously attached to the fear of losing love and abandonment, not willing to play the game.

Metin, Sinan and Kerem are also cheating on their wives. We can say that they are anxiously attached to the thought that this game will reveal themselves. Based on the argument that anxious attachments focus on their own worries and watch out for signs of exclusion or rejection from their spouses. Although the character of Suavi explains in the later scenes of the film that he is not heterosexual, his desire to hide it from his closest friends for years and the fear of being rejected by his friends show that he is avoidant.

Looking at the behavior of the characters in the film; when it is revealed that Sinan bought earrings for another woman, his attempt for rejecting it shows that Sinan is anxiously attached to the fear of losing love and being abandoned. Sinan’s relationship with both his friend at work and Banu shows that he lacks a sense of trust. We have stated that insecurely attached people are less sensitive to the signals coming from their spouses and have difficulty in expressing their feelings to the other side, and we can say that Sinan’s behavior is in this direction.

Tuğba is securely attached to her ex-girlfriend Sarp (Sarpışko), not afraid to continue her friendship and establish closeness. At the end of the night, Metin may

seem to be connected securely as he hands his phone to Banu and shows that he is not afraid of hiding his phone from his wife, but the fact that he has another secret phone, actually hides himself and is connected with an avoidant attitude, fearing that his relationship will be discovered.

While Suavi shows that he is anxiously attached to hiding his sexual identity for years, he confesses that because of his sexual identity, he actually quit his job at the university where he worked as an academician. For this reason, he has been objecting to the insistence of his friends that he should seek his rights for years. Suavi's fear of being rejected and discovered by his environment because he hides his sexual orientation from his friends and introduces his lover Faruk as Sevtap is an avoidant attachment. The jealousy of the other characters, except Suavi and Metin, towards their spouses and lovers indicates anxious attachment. Except for Tuğba and Suavi, the characters are avoidant because they want the love of more than one person by cheating on their spouses.

Esra's overreaction (laughing/crying) in the face of events indicates that she is anxiously attached. Kerem showed that he was anxiously attached to Suavi's phone by replacing it with his own phone so that it would not be revealed that he was texting with another woman and he would not be abandoned. The problems Kerem and Esra experience in their marriage surface when Esra reminds Kerem that they have not been together for a very long time. If we remember that avoidant attachments experience more disharmony in their marriages and that their relationship quality is evaluated negatively, it will be revealed that Kerem and Esra are avoidant attachments. Since Esra secretly researches a nursing home for Kerem's mother, she is shunned. As an indicator of avoidant attachment, she repressed her feelings and avoided expressing them.

In the patriarchal social order, the phenomenon of masculinity is reproduced by continuing in the media texts. Within the scope of the film, it has been observed that male characters are also represented by father, modern-traditional, educated, happy-sad male images. Metin, who is characterized as a businessman and a father in the film, is imagined as a modern person who "makes preparations for the guests in the kitchen and greets them with a kitchen apron". While preparing and cooking in the kitchen is presented as a "women's duty" in most media texts and in daily life, it is possible to interpret the presentation of it through the character of Metin in the film as different and remarkable in terms of gender roles. We can say that Metin is securely attached to this gender role he has assumed. The character of Metin, who is modern and challenging gender roles, represents the traditional with his sanctification of fatherhood. In addition, his good communication with her daughter Defne than his wife's distrust of their daughter is an indication of Metin's secure attachment by taking on a role outside the dominant gender roles. The close, sincere relationship that Metin establishes with his daughter, shows his balanced state, not confined to dominant gender stereotypes are indicators of secure attachment.

When we look at the text, the attitude that approves the equality of men and women in society seems to be an example of a secure attachment style with good and balanced relationships, but at the end of the film, we understand that he also cheated on his wife. show that the avoidant attachment style. Banu became another example of avoidant attachment by displaying a control-oriented behavior in her relationship with her daughter Defne and her friends. All male characters cheat on their wives. This shows that they could not achieve secure attachment in their childhood.

### **Discussion And Conclusion**

Smartphones, which have become a part of daily life, can significantly affect and transform daily practices, conversations and forms of relationships. While gender roles, which are a social phenomenon and learned from childhood on the one hand, direct personal relationships, on the other hand, attachment styles developed in childhood can shape personal relationships in adulthood.

The attachment styles of the characters in the film are revealed by their reactions to calls and messages from their smartphones. Attachment styles were also analyzed in the context of their gender positioning. The relationship between the use of smartphones, the positioning of the gender phenomenon and adult attachment styles has been analyzed in a multi-faceted manner with discourse analysis and semiotic interpretation.

When the attachment styles of the characters in *Cebimdeki Yabancı* were analyzed, it was revealed that the male and female characters had secure, anxious, and avoidant attachments, while the characters presenting indications of secure attachment were predominantly avoidant and anxious.

We can understand that Esra's character is anxiously attached to her feelings, experiencing ups and downs and expressing them exaggeratedly, from time to time suppressing them and not being able to express them. In addition, it is possible to say that she is avoidant because she cannot suppress and express her feelings. In the past, children who received a distant response to their psychological needs and requests for help from the attachment person, over time suppress these requests and the feelings they reveal, and avoid expressing themselves (Sümer et al.2015). Esra's inability to resist alcohol addiction is because she does not have a secure attachment style. A person's ability to control himself and his emotions and resist addiction can be achieved with secure attachment (Sümer et al.2015). Esra's wife, Kerem, is attached to avoidant. This shows that he avoids discussing his feelings, refuses or tries to divert attention. All of the characters in the film, except Tuğba, have an avoidant attachment (Sümer et al.2015).

The character of Banu is in the role of an overly controlling and punishing parent to her daughter, who has the attitude of insecurely attached adults, despite her seeming to look at the events from afar. The low level of harmony in his seemingly

balanced marriage with his wife, Metin is an indication of their insecure attachment. When the text is evaluated in terms of gender roles, we can say that it is securely attached to its position outside the dominant structure (his relationship with his daughter, preparing food). He is securely attached because of his clear expression of his feelings and thoughts and his constructive role in the relationship between his wife and daughter.

In the context of *Cebimdeki Yabancı*, it has been observed that female characters are represented in various ways such as victim (deceived), seductive dangerous woman, angelic woman, business woman, educated, young woman, happy and sad woman, modern-traditional woman. Banu, as a seductive dangerous woman, a problematic mother with her daughter, and a woman who cheats on her husband, is insecure with her controlling nature and avoidant due to the lack of harmony in her marriage.

Another phenomenon observed is that a female character is represented by more than one gender role. In other words; Although the character of Banu represents modernity in terms of appearance and professionalism, it represents traditionalism in terms of not being modern about her daughter going out and meeting with her boyfriend. The character of Banu is portrayed positively with the features of an educated, well-dressed, well-groomed, modern business woman, and negatively with the seductive dangerous woman who cheats on her husband with her close friend Sinan.

Esra is portrayed as a modern business woman while representing the traditional with her roles as a sad, traditional woman who is addicted to alcohol. Although the character of Esra is imagined as a mother free from sexuality at the beginning of the film, it is possible to observe the opposite at the end of the film. When we look at the gender roles that Esra represents, it can be said that she is insecurely attached since her addiction is the role that comes to the fore and affects her life.

The character of Tuğba, who is portrayed as a modern and well-groomed business woman, also imagines traditionalism while associating being a real family with having children. In addition to the intertwining of modernity and tradition in female characters, their good and bad aspects are also intertwined. Tuğba's friendship with her ex-boyfriend Sarp and her attitude when called by her, despite her jealousy of her husband Sinan, are indicators of a secure attachment. The fact that her relationship with Sarp is clearly a friendly one is an indication that the gender role has turned from a lover to a friend.

The character of Tuğba's wife, Sinan, on the other hand, can be interpreted as modern in terms of her appearance and work, and traditionally due to her discourse that sanctifies "having a child". Having two girlfriends indicates avoidant attachment, assuming that many want their love. Being jealous of his wife Tuğba, he is also suitable for the anxious attachment style.

Kerem character, who is imagined more traditionally because of his mustache and because he wants to live with his mother, also represents the devoted father. Kerem appears to be afraid of losing Esra because he has undertaken the accident that his wife made. He changes his phone to Suavi's so that Esra does not understand his relationship. However, Suavi's lover whom he calls Sevtap is Faruk. Kerem falls into this trap because his friends do not know that Suavi is not heterosexual. Kerem tries to explain that Faruk's colleague, rather than his wife Esra's learning of the affair, shows interest in him but does not accept it. This attitude of Faruk continues until Suavi explains the truth. It is understood that Kerem is attached to him anxiously and avoidantly, fear of loss, avoidance of expressing his feelings and lack of harmony in his marriage show these attachments (Sümer et al.2015).

Although Suavi represents modernity with his academic identity, he tries to comply with the dominant gender norms. In addition to male and female characters, the representation of Suavi as an LGBTI individual is outside the dominant gender stereotypes. Suavi is attached to anxiety because he is afraid of being rejected because of his sexual orientation.

Characters other than Tuğba and Suavi were represented as polygamous because they cheated on their spouses in virtual or real environment. Within the scope of the study, with the emergence of attachment styles with the use of smartphones, the gender roles of the characters also reveal their attachment styles. Individuals attachment styles are revealed through smartphones (technology).

The relationships established between babies and their parents (caregivers) affect the emotional bonds that individuals establish in adulthood and even throughout life. In the study, it was determined that a character exhibited more than one attachment style from his reactions to calls and messages on his smartphone. Attachment styles were also analyzed in the context of their gender positioning. It has been revealed that each character has more than one attachment style depending on their gender roles.

Technological advances and internet technology have transformed the telephone, which is a communication tool, into a mass communication tool. As emphasized in the uses and gratifications theory, when individuals cannot meet some of their needs in society, they resort to mass media to meet these needs. Esra confronts with a relationship she established via a smartphone to overcome her unhappiness in her marriage. He meets his emotional need that he could not find in his marriage with the relationship he maintains only by texting on a smartphone. Technological advances add more features to phones day by day and the emergence of smartphones has offered a wide range of uses to phones. In the study, the satisfaction created by the different uses of smartphones has also been found.

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## **Woman at War and Hive: Women Struggle in Nature**

### **A Comparative Analysis of the Films *Woman at War* and *Hive* Through Ecofeminist Approach**

Belkıs Cığırım<sup>3</sup>, Özlem Arda<sup>4</sup>

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#### **Introduction**

Cinema is an audio-visual field of art in which we see representations of social structures. Some films place gender issues in their center and they are suitable for analyzing social structures in terms of gender. Thus, the films *Woman at War* (*Dağ Kadını*) and *Hive* (Kovan) can be considered as progressive and they provide an approach to local or global ecological problems or thinking about nature with struggling female characters.

A divergence of approach, whether intentional or unintentional, lies beneath the denomination of the issue as environmental or ecological by various circles. As human beings considered the nature as an asset created for and to be dominated by them, they named it as environment, and when they were considered as a part of nature, which is a system per se, another concept was required, and the concept of ecology emerged consequently. Environment reflects an outward perspective, and the word ‘environment’ implies the significance of the center. Therefore, the environmental action is qualified as ‘shallow’, because instead of recognizing the core issue and resolving it, actions that are not sustainable and ensuring a temporary relief for humans are performed (İğit, 2017).

Actions for environment that can be qualified as ‘shallow’ are defined as ‘shallow environmentalism’ by Arna Naess. As regards to the concept of nature, it refers to everything outside of human beings; however, when it comes to ecology, it refers to a system and human beings as a part of it, like other living beings. When the issues are addressed with this consciousness, Naess’ concept of ‘deep ecology’ comes out

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(İgit, 2017). According to deep ecology, instead of introducing temporary solutions to the problems on the surface in favor of humans, it is required, by getting to the bottom-line, to offer permanent and radical solutions, make policies accordingly and regulate the existence of humans as well as their lifestyles in that direction. The main principle of deep ecology for Naess is self-actualization. According to him, all living beings in the biosphere equally have the right to self-actualization. Expansion of the self happens through identifying the self with the whole universe. Self-actualization happens to the extent of how much one can identify themselves with the world around them. For a thorough self-actualization, one should be able to see the whole universe as the extension of themselves and thus protect it because the universe is the limit of this identification (Naess, 1973, as cited in Çüçen, 2011).

Although David Ingram, in his work *Green Screen: Environmentalism and Hollywood Cinema*, has adopted various definitions related to the matter, he describes two approaches similar to those of Naess': 'conservationism' and 'preservationism' or mainstream and radical environmentalism. 'Conservationism' or mainstream environmentalism takes on a more pragmatist attitude to non-human nature; approaches it as a resource required to be managed and improved to obtain economic profit or benefits. Preservationism, on the other hand, rather than considering the wilderness as a resource, emphasizes the importance of preserving and upholding it as a domain of spirituality or aesthetic thought. Conservationism, along with the ascending of modern environmentalism in the 1960s, started to be denominated as mainstream, moderate or shallow environmentalism. Mainstream environmentalism addresses the environmental issues within the requirements of the capitalist economy. Accordingly, nature is a resource for commercial goods, and scientists, engineers and economists are required to be consulted for the resolution of environmental problems, which are deemed technical instead of political and it is held that such issues are required to be resolved by the states or private enterprises within the capitalist, bureaucratic-technocratic system. The advocates of this approach allege that their solutions are practical, pragmatist and realistic. Radical environmentalism includes a number of different approaches such as deep ecology, social ecology and ecofeminism. The common ground of those is the eventuation of the mainstream environmentalism actions with loss instead of benefits. According to radical environmentalists, by depoliticizing the environmental matters, mainstream environmentalist actions are taking precedence over the revolutionary actions that might provide more radical solutions, and the underlying causes of the issues are covered up by 'greenwashing' (2004: 13-14)<sup>5</sup>.

Deep ecology concept of Naess has also influenced cultural studies and an ecocritical approach, which was first initiated in literature, has emerged. Following the shallow and deep ecology discussions in literary texts, it has also been extended

5 Ingram, in his work in question, preferred the word 'environmentalism' instead of ecology, and we have remained loyal to this term in this study. In fact, this situation further reveals the controversy with respect to the subject.

to the area of communication and cinema. Accordingly, it has started to be examined whether the language used in any study has a shallow or deep ecological discourse (Şen, 2018).

Graziano emphasizes the importance of the ecosystem and asserts that all our lives depend on the continuum of its cycles. Also, as he says below, it is vital to draw attention to ecological problems:

If nature is no longer sacred, and even if all sacredness is leached from life, commodity splits the continuum and halts life's cyclic nature. Beyond religious importance, it is imperative that humanity respects and preserves ecological systems not only for their intrinsic worth, but out of recognition that the continuance of human life depends on intact ecosystems. Ignoring the importance of all life becomes both blasphemous and biological suicide. It is hard to project, but many scientists have proposed that the earth's systems are at a critical point. Our planet is at a position in the spiral where we are about to miss the link, break the circle and begin the irreversible downward spiral into cascading species extinction -what is called a major extinction event. (Graziano, 2005: 38-39).

Ecofeminism is a relatively new concept and the analysis of the visual and audio products with this concept is limited in number. Studies analyzing films with the ecofeminism approach are similarly limited in number and it is a developing area, to which we aim to contribute with this study. After providing an ecofeminist conceptual framework, we will share the two directors', Benedict Erlingsson and Eylem Kaftan, short biographies, mainly the parts related to the work, and their viewpoints on ecological matters so that we can better understand the motivations behind the films, *Woman at War* (2018) and *Hive* (2019). We have adopted a descriptive analysis method, in which the common points and the differences will be highlighted and presented systematically.

### **Ecofeminism, the Struggle of Women in Nature**

Academics, willing to be more effective against increasing environmental problems, preferred to integrate those into their works instead of dealing with the issues only as leisure activities. Ultimately, environmental problems result from human actions rather than the natural structure of the ecosystem, and they are a byproduct of culture. Historians rather than viewing nature as a place or space upon which historical events occur, started to count it as an agent playing an active role in shaping these events. Psychologists have started to study the relationship between the human mind and the nature. In philosophy, the underlying causes of environmental issues with sub-branches such as environmental ethics, deep ecology, ecofeminism and social ecology have endeavored to be apprehended accordingly (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996: xxi).

Ecofeminism has developed since the 1970s and was an aspect greatly and profoundly discussed in the 1980s. In her book, *Feminism or Death*, published

in 1974, Françoise d'Eaubonne introduces the term 'ecofeminisme' and claims that all the ecological problems are the consequences of a male culture. Thus, she invites all women to work in collaboration to save the planet (Merchant, 2005: 194). Ecofeminism claims that the male-dominated understanding is giving rise to ecological issues by acting with the desire to keep the nature under control and transform it in accordance with its intentions. At this point, it asserts that once the problems of women and nature are addressed together and the male-dominated perception is eliminated, the problems related to women and ecology shall be solved accordingly. Ecofeminists demand egalitarianism, justice and elimination of any oppression by combining feminist ideology and ecological elements. Their primary goal is a world without domination over nature and women (Özdemir & Aydemir, 2019: 267-274). Ecofeminism offers a perspective and framework that have emerged very recently.

The concept of gender is commonly used to theorize on the relationship between humans and the natural world. Ecofeminism uses the parallels between the oppression of nature and the oppression of women as a way to highlight the idea that both must be understood in order to properly recognize how they are connected. These parallels include but are not limited to seeing women and nature as property, seeing men as the curators of culture and women as the curators of nature, and how men dominate women and humans dominate nature. Ecofeminism uses the basis tenants of equality between genders, a revealing of patriarchal structures and a view of the world that respects organic processes, holistic connections and the merits of intuition and collaboration. To these notions, ecofeminism adds both a commitment to the environment and an awareness of the associations made between woman and nature. It also examines the effect of gender categories in order to demonstrate the ways in which social norms exert unjust dominance over women and nature (Georgy, 2019:68).

Neo-capitalist world order imposes a consumerist culture worldwide and women from either the First World or the Third World try to reverse the impacts of that on their daily lives. First World women look for a more sustainable way of life while the Third World women fight against multinational corporations to maintain their traditional way of living (Merchant, 2005: 193-194).

When it comes to ecofeminist ideology, three fundamental developmental paths can be taken into account. As the first path, history and political theory examining the ideas about sovereignty come to the fore. Examining the Marxist theories, feminists rejected the claims of theories examining the sovereignty merely in the context of accumulation of capital and relations of production and call attention to the shortcomings and deficiencies of such theories overlooking both nature and women. The second path is about the arguments that feminists put forward as a result of their historical research, that women are not subject to men, and that the

world and women are liberated. The third path is the environmentalism (Özdemir & Aydemir, 2019: 268). All these paths provide researchers with a framework to analyze films, as we do in this study.

The resemblances between women's bodily experiences of ovulation, menstruation, pregnancy, giving birth and breast-feeding, and the reproduction of nature led some ecofeminists to draw the conclusion that women by nature are more closely connected to nature. Another approach to this women-nature closeness suggests that as women are oppressed and isolated in social life, they develop a bond with nature (Archambault, 1993: 19). These assertions based on the idea that women are caring, loving and nurturing by nature, however, strengthens the oppression of women in patriarchal society. Despite being erroneous, the 'mother nature' rhetoric has been used by women to voice their protests against policies damaging the nature (Merchant, 2005: 196). "Furthermore, if child-bearing or breastfeeding is what attunes women to nature, are women who do not experience these biological processes any less connected to nature?" (Archambault, 1993: 20). Emphasizing the lack of such insight towards nature in men creates only a new imbalance by putting women in a superior position than men.

Ingram (2004), as a general criticism of the Hollywood films he has reviewed, states that these films, particularly the melodramas, depict the culprits of environmental problems as 'they' or 'we' ambiguously. In this case, the issues become superficial and simplified and are detracted from its principal complexity. In Hollywood environment-themed melodramas, instead of profound and realistic characters, we see stereotypes mostly. For instance; the characters and protagonists of the nature-themed films of the 1980s consisted of primitive and authentic persons, native Americans, Aborigines and Neanderthals, the ecological-sensitive tribe persons, women, children and individuals with psychic aspects. The villains are typically hunters or owners of a conglomerate (such as oil corporation and directors of a nuclear power plant). When depicting the damages inflicted on the environment by the capitalist greed, industrial technology is often portrayed as the subject of that particular process. For instance, the ones destroying or harming the nature with a loud, bright bulldozer are generally depersonalized. Thus, the target is not a person or people, but a corporate great power, a corporation (Ingram, 2004: 1-10).

In the Western film genre, typically a narrative is dominant justifying the violence exerted by white male protagonists and depicting the heroism of pioneers transforming the savage and wild lands into agricultural lands and farms in accordance with the Manifest Destiny. However, there is also duality in this genre. For instance, while the unification of the American people with the railway is celebrated in John Ford's *The Iron Horse* (1924), yearning for the unspoiled wilderness is depicted in the film *Stagecoach* (1938) of the same director (Ingram, 2004: 15).

There is a conception that when the nature is disentangled from the human intervention it can heal itself. Every living creature in the nature has a functionality and their extinction shall disrupt the balance of nature and therefore, every single thing in the nature is interconnected. In the theorem of the ‘balance of the nature’, there is an implication suggesting that the nature is static, timeless and in harmony. However, this conception is pondered recently by ecologists dealing with science and environmental historians. Now, it is quite difficult to talk about a pristine nature. Human intervention can be seen in many of the formations on earth, and the nature to be relinquished has actually been created by human beings to a greater extent. Most of the ancient forests that can be qualified as ‘natural’ are a creation of human beings. Modern science suggests that nature is not in a stable harmony, but highly dynamic and chaotic. It may be required to accurately involve human beings instead of their withdrawal for the purpose of preserving the biodiversity (Ingram, 2004: 18-19).

While the nature in Disney’s *Bambi* (1942) film is pristine and in harmony, a message is delivered to the audience implying that the actions of human beings disrupt this harmony. Only the feet of the hunters who killed Bambi’s mother and set the forest on fire are visible in the film. Humans brought only destruction and death to the forest. The fact that it portrays people as those who harm nature and disturb the balance seems to add a ‘preservationist’ attitude to the film. However, the film also reflects the official forest policies of the period in which it was made, and accordingly, forest fires are not natural and destroy valuable resources. The film *Bambi* was subsequently used in publicities on fighting forest fires. It has been revealed by the studies conducted later on that the forest fires that were long thought to be unnatural at that time actually existed in the ecosystem. Forest fires ensure regeneration and introduction of certain minerals to the soil. The film with this aspect serves commercial concerns and exhibits a more mainstream or ‘conversationist’ attitude as defined by Ingram (2004: 19-20).

Ingram puts ‘environmentalist films’ with a female protagonist in two categories: the female as an action heroine, as in *The River Wild* (1994) or to evoke the spiritual aspects of ecofeminism, as in *FernGully: The Last Rainforest* (1992) and *Pocahontas* (1995). His analysis of the film *The River Wild* shows that the underlying discourse still reinforces men’s superiority over women although at first sight it might seem just the opposite. The protagonist, Gail (Meryl Streep) is an action heroine who saves her kidnapped family from a gang of robbers. She is skillful and knowledgeable about nature and mostly in control of the boat while rafting. With the help of her husband, she defeats the gang and kills their leader. However, despite all her efforts, in the view of their son, it was his father who saved them. In the end, the male character is praised for developing skills related to wilderness and recovering his position in the family’s hierarchy. Consequently, the film cannot be identified as ecofeminist.

In the other two films, *FernGully: The Last Rainforest* and *Pocahontas*, which have a more cultural ecofeminist approach, the female protagonists are portrayed as nurturing and caring, emphasizing their spirituality. As mentioned above, in such kind of an attitude lies the idea that the feminine values, ‘nurturing, empathy and pacifism’, render women closer to nature. Concepts regarded more as masculine, for example ‘mastery, domination and hierarchy’, on the other hand, are criticized by cultural feminists (Ingram, 2004: 39-41).

The main objective of the ecofeminist studies is to reveal the connection established between women and the nature within the historical process and weaken the patriarchal domination by the criticism of such connections revealed. Ecofeminist activists, in the subsequent processes, have urged women and environmentalists to collaborate in order to terminate the hierarchical structures established on both women and nature, and cease the unequal relationships based on domination. Following the emergence of such opinions, certain criticisms have arisen between the environmentalist groups and feminist groups and among themselves. The environmentalists have criticized others within their own group for not questioning the patriarchal factors in environmentalist struggle and the feminists have criticized others for not questioning the relation between the nature and women (Özdemir & Aydemir, 2019: 269).

### **Benedikt Erlingsson and His Perspective Towards Ecological Issues**

Born to a family engaged in theatrics, his mother was a director and father was an actor in theater, Benedikt Erlingsson has been involved in nature and environmental issues since his early youth. His interest was not solely limited to intellectual aspects and his films, he was also such an activist to chain himself to the boats of the whalers when he was 18. He did not want to follow the same path as his parents at first and preferred to go to a farming school to engage in farming and horse-breeding. However, he did not continue attending the farming school and decided to be an actor as it was feasible and easier under the conditions in those days. *OfHorses and Men* (2013) was the first production of his interest towards nature and animals, and it was his first feature-length fiction film (Hasted, 2019).

Erlingsson emphasized in Karlovy Vary International Film Festival that the motion picture industry as well as the film festivals cause excessively high levels of carbon emission and thus, are required to undergo a change in order to be more sustainable. He said, “When the archaeologists in the future dig back to our layer, they will call this period from World War Two to the climate catastrophe ‘the age of entertainment’, when homo sapien put its head in the sand for entertainment and was unable to react against the immediate threat.” Erlingsson made certain suggestions to decrease the carbon footprint of the festivals. He stated that the unnecessary use of air travel could be avoided, the interviews could be conducted online, and the festivals are required to be decreased in number and the existing ones could invite

less foreign guests. His suggestions include the participants of the festivals planting trees for the purpose of forestation (Dalton, 2019).

In his statements, Benedikt Erlingsson, has emphasized the importance of ecology and addressed certain points regarding the requirement of ecological struggle. He likens the environmental movement to the fight of the working class or any other struggle to obtain civil rights. The director says he himself was involved in that environmental movement and he believes that to make progress and earn certain rights, it is essential to put pressure on those organizations or mechanisms causing the trouble (Scandinavia House, 2020). His spiritual side and advanced sense of humor are reflected in the film *Woman at War* and it was structured by ecological struggle from the beginning to the end.

Benedikt Erlingsson has a systematic and inclusive understanding of nature. In the field of ecology, it has a unity of thought that can deal with all actions of human beings in a cause-effect relationship. Erlingsson takes into account today's ecological crises. He can draw a frame for an international aspect of nature. It is understood that he believes that the problems experienced today can be solved by human hands and human determination. This perspective is reflected in Erlingsson's film.

### **Eylem Kaftan, in the Context of Returning to Nature and the Journey of Searching for Roots in Nature**

Eylem Kaftan had a B.A. in Philosophy at Bosphorus University in Istanbul but she preferred to pursue a career in cinema and completed her M.A in film and video at York University (Canada) in 2002. Her filmography is quite varied and includes award winning feature films and documentaries (Hive, Press Kit, 2019).

With regards to the human-nature relationship and the approach of the film towards the subject, Kaftan says: "I can only smile at the process of seeing oneself as the master of nature. We, bipeds, are actually unaware that many of our behaviors are motivated by our quadrupedal side. The human is first and foremost a stranger to themselves. Their own nature, senses, feelings, the impulses they have had since the lizard. The human-nature relationship begins with the questioning of one's own nature. In fact, when we follow the cycles of nature, we begin to understand it better. When Ayşe confronts the destructiveness of nature, her path begins to change" (Salkaya, 2020).

When asked about 'human view of nature' and 'human' through the eyes of animals, Kaftan says "I would be out of line if I said I have an answer to this question. I tried to ask exactly this question, I am still thinking about the answer. I think I will think about it for the rest of my life. While trying to understand the way animals view us, we try to understand it as a human being. But if we reconnect with our inner animal, learn to feel, maybe we can get a little closer to that. I just tried to remind you how much we marginalize animals. I invited us to look at ourselves

through the eyes of the other. How they see us, I don't know that either. But they may be secretly laughing at us, at this ambitious, constantly striving, self-important state of ours. There were those who likened the goat scene to an animal court. They may have set up a court for us about nature and the damage we have done to them" (Salkaya, 2020).

We can define Eylem Kaftan mostly with minimal storytelling. She tends to draw a bigger picture by starting from more individual problems in human stories. She provides an insight of ordinary people's problems in their daily routines in human relations. Thus, it builds a bridge from a small structure to a larger structure. Kaftan depicts a more individualistic side of the matter; however, Erlingsson aims to draw the attention of his audience to bigger scale issues. As he says in his interview (Scandinavia House, 2020) the ecological threats are imminent and there is need for more than just individual actions. States or international organizations should take initiative and responsibility in regulating how humans live to prevent disastrous consequences or a very likely 'crush', as he calls it.

The most important similarity between Benedikt Erlingsson and Eylem Kaftan is that they both believe in the integrity and continuity of the universe or the planet earth and they suggest that human beings must always be conscious of the fact that they constitute only a part of that entity along with all other living beings and things. In their films, both directors emphasize the importance of changing people's lifestyles, policies in accordance with the laws of nature instead of seeing it as something that needs to be exploited and controlled.

### **AIM AND METHODOLOGY**

The objective of this study is to present a comparative analysis of the films *Woman at War* and *Hive* using an ecofeminist approach. In this study, a descriptive analysis method is applied by using an ecofeminist approach. In ecofeminism, women and nature are considered identical to each other within the historical process, and the patriarchal capitalist system is held responsible for the issues of women and nature. These two fundamental axes enable the evaluation of the protagonists Halla's (in *Woman At War*) and Ayşe's (in *Hive*) perspectives of nature, their way of ecological struggle and their actions against different oppressions. The films are analyzed in the context of Halla's and Ayşe's perspectives towards struggles and actions thereof against the oppression in nature.

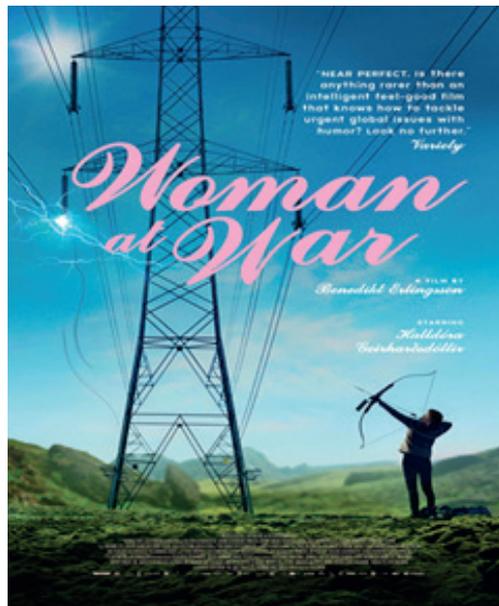
Also, the basic dynamics of ecofeminism constitute the basic components of this study. These dynamics include, but are not limited to; priorities such as the relationship between women and nature, women's struggle in nature or for nature, the struggle with a masculine view, the effort to build equality against male domination, various forms of domination and the labor-intensive struggle of women against them.

## FINDINGS

### *Woman at War*

*Woman at War* is a film by Benedikt Erlingsson and it is 100 minutes long in total. It is a co-production of Iceland-France-Ukraine. It was officially selected for 2018 Cannes Film Festival – World Premiere and 2018 Toronto International Film Festival. Its story starts with a series of actions by Halla.

Halla (Halldóra Geirharðsdóttir) is a middle-aged woman who is dedicated to saving the planet and wants to become a mother by adopting a child at the same time. On the surface she seems to lead an ordinary life as a choir leader, but behind this routine life of hers, she is a warrior, a passionate environmental activist. For her allies, she is ‘The Woman of the Mountain’ who has launched a battle against the local aluminum industry. Her actions grow bolder to such an extent that eventually negotiations between the Icelandic government and the corporation building the new aluminum smelter pause. However, right before her biggest sabotage act, she receives a notification that her application has been accepted and a four-year-old Ukrainian girl is waiting to be adopted by her. Though hesitant at first, upon hearing the trauma that the little girl went through, she makes up her mind and decides to go to Ukraine to adopt her. Disappointed by the result of her manifesto, she plots one final but major attack on the corporation and the aluminum industry before she leaves for Ukraine (*Woman at War Story*, 2021). The film poster shows an impressive shot that represents Halla and her struggle with an arrow (**Image 1**).



**Image 1:** Film Poster (<http://www.magpictures.com/womanatwar/press-kit/>, April 2, 2021)

### **The Incidents Which the Film Was Based On**

The plot of the film is based on the actual incidents that took place due to the Karahnjúkar Hydroelectric Project. Siv Fríðleifsdóttir, the Minister for the Environment of Iceland, rescinded the resolution rejected by the National Planning Agency due to damages to be inflicted on the nature by the project. The project consisted of one main power plant and 8 auxiliary power plants and was funded by Landsvirkjun, Iceland's national energy corporation and particularly was going to provide services to Alcoa, a multinational US corporation. The agreement to be concluded with Alcoa, engaged in the business of aluminum smelting, would be operational for 50 years.

Costing more than 1 billion US dollars, the project would establish a reservoir of approx. 97 m<sup>2</sup>, with the power plants to be constructed on two major glacier rivers, originated from Vatnajökull, the biggest glacier of Europe. The dams would damage the majority of the highlands of Iceland, mainly consisting of the canyon of Dimmugljúfu, certain areas under conservation, as well as the nesting sites of reindeers and pink-footed geese. In addition to those, the habitat around the lakes and the surroundings would sustain damage, the temperature of the waters would change, erosion incidents would increase, and the migration and the breeding sites of the animals would be destroyed accordingly. The project, which was first rejected, remained on the agenda because of the reasons given above and certain justification such as the economic benefits of the energy corporation Landsvirkjun and the advocates of the project, job opportunities for the local community, and agreements to be concluded with multinational companies. Moreover, Alcoa and Landsvirkjun also propounded that the project was quite substantial in combating climate change because they would employ the most environmentally-friendly practices possible and that the energy to be produced would be renewable.

The ones objecting to the project argued that the wilderness and the natural beauties of Iceland would be sacrificed merely to attract and encourage multinational corporations to the country. A political party in the parliament advocating for the environment argued against the project during the assembly discussions and executed endeavors for the cessation of the project through legal means. Non-violent actions were initiated in 2000 and the opposed parties collected 45,000 signatures against the project prior to its submission before the Minister of Industry and Prime Minister. Subsequently, the campaign continued for long years with the participation of various NGOs and famous characters of the world such as Björk. However, despite all this struggling, the project was operationalized, power plants were constructed, and the project started to produce electricity in April 2007 for the first time. Both Alcoa and Landsvirkjun are still criticized today (Schills, 2011).

Erlingsson mentions in his interview that the farmer character was also inspired by a real incident, when some farmers sabotaged a dam and somehow got away with

their act. He further tells how he was influenced by the prominent women characters all around the world fighting for nature (Scandinavia House, 2020).

### **Halla's Struggle for Nature, *Woman at War***

The film starts with one of the sabotage acts of the protagonist Halla's. She causes a power cut in a nearby factory by creating an electric current with a wire that she throws with her arrow in the highlands of Iceland. The factory is actually a reference to the aluminum smelter Alcoa. A Latin American tourist wandering around the incident scene is detained as a suspect. Throughout the film we see him getting detained several times, which adds some humor and rhythm to the film.

The arrow held by Halla both makes a reference to Greek goddess Artemis and reflects a consistent stance of the protagonist acting with the capacity of an eco-warrior. Just like the radical ecologists, Halla exercises the most environmentally-friendly methods possible, with the idea that high technology is inflicting damages to the ecology. The outfit of Halla, who takes out her arrow with the musicians standing behind her, is also compatible with the surrounding surrounding where she makes an appearance. She is just like a part of the nature, in unity with it. The color and the pattern of her clothes and the grass seem quite alike. This further helps her to hide from the helicopters searching for her. A neighboring farmer helps her to hide and lends her his car. He says in a humorous way that they are deemed to be cousins as Halla's grandmother is from the same region (**Image 2 and Image 3**).



**Image 2:** Halla's struggle against drones (<http://www.magpictures.com/womanatwar/press-kit/>, April 2, 2021).



**Image 3:** Halla's struggle against helicopter (<http://www.magpictures.com/womanatwar/press-kit/>, April 2, 2021).

Halla's actions receive a widespread media coverage. Directing a choir, Halla goes to her class and sees her students watching the news on the action. Choir singer/governmental worker Baldvin enters the picture as dubious 'partner in crime'. Halla asks Baldvin why the helicopter arrived and when the satellite would be put into operation. We comprehend from this dialog that Baldvin is an insider, leaking information to Halla. Baldvin further states that Americans would start monitoring the land through thermal cameras. This is also making a reference to Alcoa stated hereinabove. Again, the name of Rio Tinto, a mining corporation, is explicitly mentioned in this dialog. Baldvin tells Halla to stop her actions. Because they have achieved their goals by drawing the attention of the entire world to their sabotage acts and the measures and precautions taken by the corporation and the government are getting tightened accordingly. He requests Halla to disclose her manifest. She only says that she would think about that.

Halla prefers bicycle as a means of transport. This is compatible with her sustainable lifestyle as a First World woman, as we cited from Merchant (2005) above. She checks her mail box when she arrives home and turns on the TV. On the wall behind her are two frames of Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela. She surfs the channels where authorities and officials are harshly criticizing the sabotage act for targeting the country's industry and they say it will drive the foreign investors away. Their attention and focus are on the economic benefits, not on the ecological concerns. Apparently, she is inspired by these two revolutionists and tries to follow a similar path, which might also be called prosocial disobedience, as theirs. As Morselli and Passini said (2010): "When the status quo is not accepted as the sole interpretation of reality, then authority's legitimacy is constantly undermined. This means that, in the case of 'harmful' demands issued by authority, individuals may recognize their illegitimacy and disobey them." When the farmer who helped her asks what she did and implies that by hiding her, he will be her accomplice, she says she is not a criminal and on the contrary, she is trying to stop the crimes against them. She has a similar rebellious attitude towards the unjust situations around her

caused by the established system as Gandhi and Mandela. She also aimed to leave damage on the economy with her sabotage acts, just as Gandhi and Mandela did (Lux Audience Award, 2018).

Halla continues to zap the channels and there is a talk of the climate change on a channel in English. She stops watching this channel and moves backward towards Mandela and Gandhi. In **Image 4**, Halla can be seen with the posters. It appears that she has now clarified what she meant by telling Baldvin that she would think. As none of the authorities has disclosed any statement on the ecology, their main concern is merely economy. On the other hand, the ecosystem faces certain issues such as climate change, and this threat is imminent. When Halla goes to pick up the ringing phone, images of storms and floods in different countries appear on screen. As Halla speaks, the viewers continue to watch these images in the background. When Halla appears in and exits the screen, the camera remains steady and the viewers are exposed to the screen.



**Image 4:** Halla with the posters (<http://www.magpictures.com/womanatwar/press-kit/>, April 2, 2021).

Halla is a very powerful character and she carries out a critical struggle against the officials and she also wants to adopt a child. After years, she is informed that the outcome of her adoption application is positive. Halla and the girl can be seen in **Image 5**.



**Image 5:** Halla with the girl (<http://www.magpictures.com/womanatwar/press-kit/>, April 2, 2021)

Adopting a child is such a recent development that she has not been thinking about and expecting it for a long time. We learn at the adoption office that Halla has a twin sister. She is quite surprised when she is told by the official that her sister also filed an application for adoption. The official tells her that she does not have more time to decide. The little girl lost her parents in the war, and she was found along with her grandmother who had also passed away a couple of days before. Therefore, she already had certain major traumas. Halla wants to adopt this child, even though she did not give birth to the girl herself. This situation affirms the argument that 'there is no need to be a mother to do these things, to struggle for the ecology'. Women's biological characteristics do not necessarily render them any closer to nature than men. Halla is a refutation of the 'mother nature' rhetoric. Her actions do not result from her maternal or feminine merits. Her desire to be a mother does not hinder her fight as an eco-warrior. She does not give up her struggle for the child, she continues her struggle 'with the child'.

When asked if Halla was trying to fill in a gap in her soul and hiding a more serious problem in her life by taking on this role of saving the planet and if she left this mission when she adopted the little girl, Erlingsson says it is actually the essence of the film, she is trying to be useful to others and this can be the little girl or the nature. Therefore, what she is actually doing is self-actualization, which Naess considers as the main principle of deep ecology (Lux Audience Award, 2018).

The twin sister of Halla is a yoga instructor and she has been conducting a meditation session when Halla arrives. Halla gives the good news about the adoption to her, but she also has some news for Halla: she had the chance to receive training from a guru in India. Halla was not quite happy when she heard that her 'spare' guardian would go far away from her because she still has actions in her minds she would want to accomplish.

When Halla declares her manifesto, the president and the prime minister are on a tour with the Chinese. 'The driving force behind these hellish acts are not democratic' reads Baldvin on his phone while approaching the group. Meanwhile, the prime minister is introducing a spot to their guests, which he calls 'the cradle of our democracy'. The president proceeds by telling how law-making process was in ancient times of the Vikings. He says they exchanged ideas, met new people and made laws while standing in a circle. In the following part of the scene, we see the prime minister and those in his assistance standing in a circle and deciding how to solve the problem that Halla caused by her manifesto. This is a criticism again towards those who claim to be advocates of democracy and law-making process, which is also stated in Halla's manifesto. If their premise is unrighteous, laws might be misleading.

Halla announces her pending adoption process to the choir. Baldvin is rather concerned about the outcomes of her manifesto, especially what she said about law.

She wrote “There are laws above human laws, ancestral laws which will not be stricken out tomorrow”. She naively believes that people will believe her and her manifesto will raise awareness but Baldwin warns her about how the government and the companies can control the situation by manipulating people. They are both at risk now and Baldwin tells her to leave. All her utterances about the law and the content of the manifesto clearly displays the extent of Gandhi and Mandela’s influence on Halla.

On the way back home, Halla overhears news reports on TVs through the open windows of houses. It was a shock for her to see that she failed to create the impact she aimed. The media present how much damage the acts of the Mountain Woman will give to the economy of the country and to the citizens’ budgets consequently. On one channel, we hear an authority talking about how eco-friendly hydroelectric energy is. He says “We will emit less greenhouse gases.”, which is a reference to the greenwashing discourse of the companies Alcoa and Landsvirkjun.

Enjoying the swimming pool with her sister, Halla has some disagreements with her sister over the actions of the Woman of the Mountain. Her sister, who perceives these actions as extreme, is unaware of the fact that Halla lies behind all those. Her sister says that issues cannot be resolved by resorting to violence. Halla then asks her in a criticizing tone whether those issues can be resolved by secluding oneself like her. When her sister tells Halla that first she would change and then perhaps the entire world would too, Halla replies to her that this would be a very selfish way of acting.

Halla and her sister Asa represent the two common female protagonists in ecofeminist films according to Ingram’s categorization. Halla is an action heroine who believes in actual battle in the field and Asa, on the other hand, is more spiritual and in favor of nonviolent resistance or protests. The audience does not choose between them but throughout the film they see how the two sisters compromise and collaborate eventually.

When she gets back home, again the television is broadcasting the sabotage acts. When a reporter asks the Prime Minister regarding the actions, they are planning to take on the global warming, the Prime Minister replies to him that those sabotage acts have the priority to be resolved, and the global warming is not on the agenda yet. Stating that the sabotages can be eliminated by means of technological advancements and the power outages can be avoided, the Prime Minister holds and raises the hands of those standing next to him and shows the partnership with other nations to the entire world. Halla gets furious and launches her new act. She steals the explosives utilized for road construction. She buys great amounts of flowers and fertilizers and gets around the police by camouflaging those and she performs her final and biggest act with these explosives.

Wearing the Mandela facemask, Halla seizes the drone following her with her arrow and deactivates it. However, this time helicopters equipped with thermal cameras start to chase her. She hides herself in a cavern not to be detected by the thermal camera, covers herself with a hide of a dead animal, dives into the river, welters in a sheep herd, in other words, she mostly exercises the facilities of the nature. The farmer that previously helped her finds Halla on the road and hides her among the sheep on his pickup truck. He takes the shivering woman to a hot spring and helps her to get warm. The farmer is quite familiar with his land as expressed in his words and how to survive in the nature. Halla hides behind the rocks and caverns in the introduction scene of the film. The nature is protecting and watching over her in a sense (Lux Audience Award, 2018). Therefore, the characters do not contend with the nature and its challenges thereof. There is not the duality of human-pristine nature but the human-nature unity, harmony.

By the end of the film, her sister, perceiving the sabotage acts as excessively violent and criticizing the violence, is now the ‘partner in crime’. She disguises herself as Halla and acts like her and makes a self-sacrifice to adopt Kika, the Ukrainian girl. Besides, the farmer offering his help to Halla is also Halla’s ‘partner in crime’. He helps the sisters to change sides by causing the power outage. We see an industrial facility, a hydroelectric power plant maybe, on the first scene of Ukraine. When asked during the interview why he chose Ukraine, Erlingsson tells that one of the reasons is that Ukraine is an industrialized country and hydroelectric power plants in great numbers are located in it. This implies the fact that his country would become like Ukraine in a not-too-distant future (Lux Audience Award, 2018).

Upon the arrival of Halla, there is a downpour. The orphanage where she is going to take Kika is flooded. On her way back to Iceland, her bus gets stuck due to the flood and Halla hugs Kika and starts walking in the water. This downpour and flood again indicate the deteriorating balance of nature. The damage inflicted by global multinational corporation on the nature and the ecosystem is not only within their own borders and affects the entire world. Despite all this, there is still hope and the orphan girl, Kika, is saved by the ecological warrior, Halla. Kika represents hope and future.

### **Hive**

*Hive*, directed by Eylem Kaftan lasts 93 minutes in total. Before its screening, it won awards in international festivals in stages such as Mojo Postproduction Awards in the Antalya film forum and Medianboard German-Turkish coproduction support and was one of the finalists at Cinelink at the Sarajevo film festival. *Hive* continued to receive national and international awards after its screening and among those are Malatya International Festival, Asia Pacific Screen Awards, the Fribourg International Film Festival and the Zurich International Film Festival (Hive, Press Kit, 2019).

Ayşe travels from Germany, where she has lived for a long time now, to Artvin, in the Northeastern Region of Turkey, where she was born and raised, to see her dying mother, whose last wish is that Ayşe continues their family tradition and business and take care of the hive. Ayşe has never been enthusiastic about the life in the country or beekeeping. However, her promise to her mother makes her stay there despite her hesitations or fears. Without any background in the business, she sets out to work with the assistance of their former employee Ahmet. She rejects Ahmet's and her mother's traditional methods and tries to adopt new ones to revive the hive which has been infertile for quite a long time. She also has to find a way to keep bears that are protected and observed by authorities away from the hive. To her disappointment, her modern methods do not work out so well for her. Her struggle with the nature teaches her a costly lesson.

### **The 'Urban Farmer' That Inspired Eylem Kaftan**

Similar to *Woman at War*, *Hive* was based on real life incidents. In her interview with Tapan, Eylem Kaftan told how she was inspired by the experiences of a female beekeeper while shooting her documentary series, *Urban Farmers*. Some well-educated, white-collar people had moved to the countryside hoping to start a new and more natural life, but they first needed to learn how to lead a harmonious life with nature instead of trying to control and adapt it to their own plans. The locals, on the other hand, pass down their wisdom about nature from one generation to the other and know their way around. The female beekeeper told Kaftan how she killed a bear trying to protect her hive and the regret she felt afterwards, how she lost all her bees because of a swarm and eventually how a queen bee formed a new hive, which all came together in the director's head and evolved into the story of the film. Kaftan says "Mother nature can give you gifts and miracles but also destroy everything you have. You just have to surrender to the process and take your life lessons" (Tapan, 2021).

Kaftan invites the audience to change their perspective and see everything, including ourselves, through the eyes of animals. She explains how much she was influenced by the incident of the female beekeeper shooting the bear and how its moaning sound haunted her for so long. The beekeeper told her it felt as if she had killed a human being (Asian World Film Festival, 2021). That is possibly the reason of the idea of placing a camera on the bear and making Ayşe watch it so that she can see how violent her action actually was. In the film, Kaftan's ideas are expressed by İlker, the wildlife officer. He says: "I wanted people to see through the eyes of animals.". He also adds that "Nature is a big teacher for me. When you look at nature, you don't actually see beginnings or ends. You always see cycles and you see transformations. Everything is constantly transforming in nature from one place to another." Kaftan says the gist of the film is about karma and you reap what you sow. She thinks we have to surrender to nature which we cannot control (Asian World Film Festival, 2021).

### **Ayşe's Struggle with Nature, *Hive***

In the opening scene, Ayşe is blocked by a herd of goats on her way to her village. The goats and the shepherd take their time and do not hurry to empty the road. Ayşe sighs impatiently looking at the goats moving among the fog. From this very first scene, the director tries to depict the contradict between Ayşe and nature. Ayşe feels like nature sets obstacles, difficulties that she needs to overcome to achieve her goals. The elements of the main theme and Ayşe in her beekeeping costume are seen in **Image 6**.



**Image 6:** Hive, Film Poster (<https://boxofficeturkiye.com/film/kovan--2015100/foto-galeri>, February 20, 2022)

Upon hearing her mother's last wish, we see Ayşe outside gazing at the mountains and their immensity, the unknown and unpredictability of the nature seems to scare her. She sees bees in her nightmares. Unlike Ayşe, her mother had such affection for her animals that she hung their photos on the wall next to her children. "Animals meant almost as much to her as we did." says Ayşe looking at the framed pictures of her mother's donkey, dog and cow. Throughout the film, Cemile, Ayşe's mother is portrayed as nurturing, caring and affectionate mother. The director underlines the concept of 'mother nature' in her interviews. She also says "There are three mothers in the story. Ayşe's mother, mother bear and queen bee. We can also add motherland and mother nature to these three mothers. Ultimately Ayşe realizes that she returned to something she escaped from, which will also be the cure to her despair: her childhood and her motherland" (Tapan, 2021). Thus, Ayşe needs to

face what she ran away from: her mother and her village. Her memories with her mother in the film displays her loose connection to rural life and to her mother as well. In the memory scene, they have a fight and they part apart and move away in different directions. The idea that the mother and the daughter took different paths is visualized here. Unlike Ayşe, Cemile had always been in harmony with her surroundings. This is what we understand from her neighbors' comments in addition to Ayşe's memories with her. Cemile knew how to produce good quality honey, for instance, while at the same time being so gentle with the bees. She was passionate about her bees and that is the reason Ayşe is trying so hard to make it work. She sees it as a way to rebuild a bond with her mother and her motherland. Despite her hesitations at some points, Ayşe is determined to finally achieve something and realize her mother's wish, which constitute her main motivation to stay and struggle (Image 7).



**Image 7:** *Hive*, Meryem Uzerli as Ayşe (<https://boxofficeturkiye.com/film/kovan--2015100/foto-galeri>, February 10, 2022)

Her mother is not the only person Ayşe contradicts with. The locals, her mother's assistant Ahmet and even her sister see her as an outsider, an outcast, as the director says. Kaftan shows us this division in several scenes such as the one where Ayşe sits with her sister on her side after their mother's funeral. There is a wooden pole in between separating them. In the scene where she overhears her sister's plans about selling the bees, Ayşe sits alone, away from her sister talking with their neighbors. All the locals, except for Ayşe, know how to live a more sustainable and harmonious life in the country, in nature. They obey the rules of nature. She tells her sister "Everything is under control." She will soon learn that she actually cannot

keep anything under control. The new hives and the queen bee from a different breed which she ordered thinking that now rain will not be an obstacle to produce honey will be the reasons that terminate the whole colony. Her electric fence will be incapable of stopping the bear from eating their honey and damaging the hives. It is the nature that controls everything and she has to learn not to fight with it but harmonize with it (**Image 8 and 9**).



**Image 8:** Ayşe and the hives (The Zurich Film Festival, <https://zff.com/en/archive/26308/>, February 22, 2022)



**Image 9:** Ayşe and her 'challenging' struggle (The Zurich Film Festival, <https://zff.com/en/archive/26308/>, February 22, 2022)

Ahmet is Ayşe's guide in her new profession. He is quite comfortable with the bees and hardly wears protective jumpsuits. He pursues what he has learned from his predecessors and loyal to the traditions in his profession. Thus, he rejects to put an English queen bee in a Caucasian hive, trying to protect the breed.

İri (2021), draws attention to the contrast between the local and the global, modern and postmodern identity. He attributes a meaning to Ayşe's searching for the scientific knowledge of bees: The nature-culture conflict in the film parallels the tension between traditional-modern-postmodern or local-national-global conflicts.

Ayşe, who received a modern western education in Germany with the money her mother sent by earning from beekeeping with traditional methods, learns the business by doing beekeeping research on the internet and reading books. Every science is at the same time an attempt to organize, to simplify, to make the indigestible digestible for the mind. The task of the youth is not to justify and approve of the old, but to prove themselves, to free themselves from all the objects and habits that hinder the global world. While the modern identity is defined according to the other, the post-modern identity cooperates with the traditional and provides the acceptance of the other, so it is more progressive. Although the “other” bee, the ‘Queen of England – as Ayşe’s statement’, who can make honey in instant climatic conditions because she can see it in the rain, is accused of disrupting the existing gene, she eventually clings to nature together with the Caucasian bees and this new life form is welcomed and accepted by the local community (İri, 2021).

When her sister, Mine, leaves home to stay at her mother-in-law’s for a week, Ayşe is left alone. While leaving, Mine tells her to stop feeding the cats with packaged food as they would stop hunting mice. Everything Ayşe does to change the life there turns into a mistake with negative consequences.



**Image 10:** Ayşe in nature (<https://boxofficeturkiye.com/film/kovan--2015100/foto-galeri>, February 10, 2022)

Ayşe is left without a mother and does not have a good relationship with her sister. She apparently does not have a husband or boyfriend. She envies Ahmet’s happy marriage and looks for consolation in nature. Her long walks in the wilderness help her build a bond with nature and gradually she becomes amazed by it (**Image 10**).

The breaking point in the film is the killing of the bear. Ayşe again eavesdrops the neighbors chattering about the dead bear and the dreadful consequences of killing animals. They exchange tales and prayers about it. This is one of the scenes where we see that locals are knowledgeable about their surroundings and the laws of nature in contrast to Ayşe, who insists on doing things in her way. Ayşe is both physically

and mentally away from them. We never see her as part of the local community. She is always an outsider although she was born and raised there.

In an interview, Ayşe says she learnt beekeeping from her mother and that women are, contrary to common belief, more skillful in this job than men as they are more meticulous about details and organized just like bees. She also adds her concerns about the decrease in bee population across the globe, an ecological problem. However, as the audience we are not fully convinced about her being sincere in her concerns unlike Halla in *Woman at War*. Both of the protagonists' actions somehow help protect nature or ecology but Ayşe has more personal reasons and her methods are not parallel to her discourse. Halla is a strong, well-equipped and knowledgeable warrior and a heroine, whereas Ayşe is more like an anti-heroine with whom the audience cannot easily empathize as the director states (Asian World Film Festival, 2021).

As mentioned above, the director makes references to motherhood and mother nature concept. Ayşe killed two mothers, the queen bee and the bear Kestane, leaving their children unprotected and vulnerable. She or the night watches she forced Ahmet to do were also the reasons why Ahmet's wife went through a miscarriage. When she faced all this reality, as a person who has recently lost her mother, Ayşe felt regretful and sorry.

Nature teaches Ayşe a hard lesson. She tries to make up for her mistakes but she fails each and every time and decides to return to Germany. On her way, she receives a call from her nephew that the queen bee formed a new swarm. The child is the one to deliver the good news. He represents hope and future, just like Kika in *Woman at War*.

In the finale of the film Ayşe makes peace with nature. She finally realizes that she has to submit to nature and obey its laws. İlker advises her that it's the bees that choose their keepers not the vice versa when she asks whether she should continue or not. She holds a bee in her hand as if she is listening to what it says. In the next shot, she is in the hive without her protective jumpsuit and she sees one of the baby bears.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

It would be appropriate to make our comparative analysis in the context of two basic structural features. Putting the 'woman' in the center in the characterization and shaping the struggle in the story construction as a women's struggle and being nature-oriented are the most basic determining criteria. *Woman at War* and *Hive* show great similarity in terms of these two basic criteria.

Erlingsson states that the film is originated on true stories, and he cites real-life environmentalists such as Berta Cáceres and Yolanda Maturana as inspirational figures. Also, the use of music makes a reference to Artemis, the Greek Mythical

Goddess of wilderness (Kermode, 2021). Kaftan also states that the film is originated on a true story, and she cites real-life problems in the village and confronting them as a woman.

Moreover, many aspects that Ingram criticizes in Hollywood films do not take place in *Woman at War*. For instance, the protagonist of the story is not a man, and nature is neither portrayed as a living entity helplessly requiring a man's salvation nor associated with a woman. On the contrary, in every act of Halla, we see how united she is with the nature. She endeavors to put an end to the damage self-inflicted by humankind and protect humankind from itself. Halla fights against those trying to control, oppress and use nature for their benefits regardless of the damage they give to it. The floods and downpours in the last scenes that take place in Ukraine are results of similar actions such as non-sustainable electric powerplants, which were also shown in some shots. In humans' fight with nature, they will be the ones losing in all scenarios. In conclusion, the film explicitly and clearly criticizes the economy-oriented approaches of governments and therefore, employs a deep ecological approach. On the other hand, *Hive* does not cover the problem at a major scale, but rather focuses on a more personal story. Ayşe tries to control nature by employing more 'modern' and 'urban' methods or techniques. She discovers her true self and her dreams only after submitting to nature. She starts to act as a part of nature. Both films suggest that there is not a human-nature duality or nature is not a separate entity that humankind needs to fight. Instead, they are united. Unlike Ayşe, Halla knows all this from the very beginning and leads a more sustainable and harmonious life with nature. Ayşe's mother, Cemile or any other local has more similarities with Halla than Ayşe does. Throughout the film Cemile is praised for her success with the bees and how much she loved and cared about them or other animals. Cemile is an independent, strong female character respected by all the villagers, especially by her assistant Ahmet. *Hive* tells a women's story with Ayşe, her sister and her mother in the center. Ayşe's father or Mine's husband are not even mentioned in the film. Although their relationship is different from that of Halla and her sister, it can still be put forward that there is some kind of collaboration among these three women. Her sister and her mother become Ayşe's guide in her efforts to readapt to rural life.

Throughout the history of the humankind, women and the nature have been exploited by being taken under control and commoditized by the male dominancy and sovereignty. Women and nature have been associated with each other since Ancient Greece. The woman's body and its reproduction functionality have been considered similar to the reproduction functionality of nature and have become means of exploitation. The interconnected nature and women have always been positioned at the heart of the same issues and become the parties adversely affected by these issues in terms of the conditions being exposed to within the process. The relevant issues emerged due to the perception based on the dominance of patriarchal society mindset over women and nature (Özdemir & Aydemir, 2019: 273).

As cited from Archambault (1993) above, women's and nature's reproductivity are deemed similar, which is claimed to be one of the reasons why women have stronger bonds with nature. This rhetoric has been criticized by feminists for excluding women who do not want to or cannot have children and for creating an imbalance by putting women in a superior position in their relationship with nature. In both *Woman at War* and *Hive*, the main characters realize themselves, achieve their goals without being a mother. Halla adopts Kika only after accomplishing her plans. Ayşe is not even close to being a mother at the end of the film. She harms all the mothers in the film, the queen bee, mother bear, Ahmet's wife and eventually mother nature. For Halla, nature is like a mother that embraces and protects her. Ayşe finds peace in the forest during her walks and is amazed by nature, with which she actually wants to make peace. She seems to be trying to understand it, looking for answers in the arms of mother nature.

In both films, children represent hope. Kika, in a country fighting natural disasters and wars, is finally saved by Halla and Ayşe receives the good news about a new swarm from her nephew.

*Woman at War* explicitly and clearly criticizes the economy-oriented approaches of governments and therefore, employs a deep ecological approach. Also, in *Hive*, Ayşe adopts some innovative techniques in her new profession, beekeeping and instructs her employee Ahmet in this direction.

The struggle of a woman for the future of the wilderness is depicted in the film *Woman at War* and also a woman's struggle with the nature in *Hive*. The clash, stripped off the social roles, exercised by compelling the physical force of strong women and under highly challenging conditions impress the viewers.

It is hoped in this study, which introduces a framework for film analysis within the context of ecofeminism, to facilitate further profound studies to be conducted in the future and to provide filmmakers wishing to work on similar themes with an ecofeminist perspective.

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## **A STORY OF BECOMING WOMAN: GHOST [HAYALETLER] (2020)**

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### **Introduction**

One of the ideas of feminism is not just about difference; is to overturn the oppressive and degrading perspective that is an integral part of the dialectic of self and otherness. This desire for change can enable the positivity of difference to gain value again by making the singularity of each subject come to the fore collectively in its own complexity. In other words, the subject of feminism is not woman as the complement and other of men; it is a multi-layered and complex subject that distances itself from the institution of femininity. She is now a subject in process, a mutant, the other of the other, a reshaped embodied post-woman subject (Braidotti, 2019: 50).

Deleuze and Guattari prefer to use the verb ‘to be’ differently. Because a movement with a beginning and an end is not enough for them. Using the concept of ‘becoming’, they accept that all things in nature are in a state of being and none of them exist. This is not only for humans, but also for every substance. Every minute and every second, it affects the way things happen, adds or subtracts differences to things, becoming is a never-ending process. It is continuous; in the past, present, and future. Therefore, becoming- woman, becoming-animal and all other becomings occur when the individual suddenly finds himself in this process (Erdoğan Tuğran, 2016: 41). Therefore, becoming-woman; It is possible to say that it is an unfinished state of being, a constantly developing and changing subject that is not dependent on the other.

Feminism in cinema is an act of thought in the field of film theory and film criticism. From the point of view of cinema, it is the source of movements that criticize the position of patriarchal power’s point of view on womanhood and women in cinema (Midilli, 2016: 217-219). Thinking about being a woman through cinema, on the other hand, adds another dimension to feminism by focusing on

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being outside the perspective of women, change and renewal. From this point of view, *Hayaletler* (2020), Azra Deniz Okyay's first feature film, can be interpreted as a story of becoming- woman.

The director's short films *Sulukule Mon Amour* (2016) and *Little Black Fishes* (2013) and the film *Ghosts* attract attention with their women-oriented narratives. During a power outage that lasted for hours in Turkey, Didem, who wants to win a competition with her friends and become a hip-hop dancer, urgently needs her son, who works as a cleaner in the municipality, and who is in prison. The paths of İffet, who wants to send money, and Ela, who gives voluntary cinema lessons to the children of the neighborhood, cross on this 'dark' day. All of them are trying to survive in a domino-effect chaos by drawing their own paths (baskasinema.com, 2021). In this study, the film "Hayaletler" was examined by considering the theory of becoming woman. The idea that the film interprets femininity in terms of the plurality of being, unlike a male-female opposition, is emphasized.

### **The Theory of Becoming Woman**

According to Deleuze and Guattari, the theory of becoming is that as a result of the deterritorialization of a multiplicity by another multiplicity, the multiplicity becomes a process without a subject or a goal (Goodchild, 2005: 338). According to Deleuze and Guattari, becoming is in the form of fluid subjects (Deleuze and Guattari, 2005: 249). First of all, becoming is not a generality, and there is no such thing as 'becoming in general'. Secondly, it is not a dream or an image of becoming, but the durability of what is real (Zourabichvili, 2011: 119- 120). Becomings are always specific movements, indicators of motion and stillness, speed and slowness, intensity, and specific forms of their flows. It is a movement or transformation from a 'thing' to something that does not resemble it in any way (citing from Grosz, Cingöz, 2013: 59).

Boundas states that in order to better understand Deleuze and Guattari's theory of becoming, it is necessary to understand it as a serial phenomenon by keeping it separate from the dualist scheme of transcendental philosophy, which connects the process of becoming to self, individual or ego elements (Boundas, 1994: 100-102).

Becoming is a content specific to desire. The one who desires has to go through becomings. Each occurrence creates a block. In other words, it constitutes the encounter or relationship of two terms that deterritorialize each other. What one is to be something else is not abandoned. On the contrary, another way of living and feeling is mixed with the way of living and feeling of human. The relationship therefore includes not only two terms, but four interlocking terms:  $x$  wraps  $y$  to form  $x'$ ; when  $y$  is mixed with  $x$ ,  $y'$  is formed. Deleuze and Guattari state that encountering terms pass through each other and create expressiveness with new contents (Zourabichvili, 2011: 119- 120). Deleuze and Guattari's thoughts on becomings are a state of subjectivity. It defines the subject in the variants and plurality of difference.

Subjectivity is a dynamic process with density and combinations, rather than being a static state with an end. Beings are difference itself. So the difference is reproduced over and over again. Occurrences take place over a wide period of time. Every event is singular. Therefore, singularities are in the flow of transformation in the universe and the subject is in this flow. Beings are therefore creative. It is the future as more than the human imaginary universe, and it is also the future experience.

Becoming is not an evolution, imitation, identification or transformation. Becomings replace animal becoming, molecular becoming, history, individual and general (Deleuze and Guattari, 2005: 162). Being considered as the most prioritized of these becomings is becoming woman, regardless of male or female distinction. All other categories of becoming pass first through becoming woman. The reason for this is that men have power and plurality, and the formation is in a minor structure. Becoming male, form a molar; however, becoming woman, child, animal and plant are molecular formations. Deleuze and Guattari indicate that women's efforts to deal with their own organism and their own history as a subject are inevitable. The women's movement is an example of defining women's desire; but with the discourse of 'we women', they advise not to be subject to this subjectivity and say that they should not build an oppressive structure within themselves and should not interrupt the flow (Deleuze and Guattari, 2005: 276).

According to Deleuze and Guattari, as long as the oedipal triangle, castration and narcissism exist, no liberation movement related to sexual representation and oppression can achieve its goal. The problem is not freedom of the feminine essence or the opposition of men and women; it is the stolen body to produce the opposite organisms that create this contrast (Deleuze and Guattari, 2005: 277).

According to Deleuze and Guattari, the first body stolen is the girl's body. The society first intervenes through the girl's body and creates the opposition. She then establishes the boy as opposed to the girl who is shaped as the object of desire. Being a resistance figure, the girl begins with becoming woman and being a girl, as she is the person society most wants to shape. Being a girl is not expressed in virginity, but in movement and stillness. The place of the girl, depicted as a point of escape and in-between, is located between femininity and masculinity, adulthood and childhood. Becoming woman does not show identity and subjectivity. It shows plurality and escape points and defines becoming.. Becoming woman divides masculinity and identity. Becoming child divides adulthood, while becoming animal divides human-centered philosophical thinking into parts (Grosz, 1994: 179).

All societies and individuals tend simultaneously to the molar and the molecular. The lines formed by molar and molecular formations are separated from each other because their concepts, relations, types of multiplicity differ. But they are also whole because they coexist and move through each other. Molar singularities, that is, distinctions such as class, race, gender, shape fixed and stable identities and

orders. Beings exist molecularly. They leak energy by moving through and above molar singularities, disrupting their stability and bringing order again (citing from Grosz, Cingöz, 2013: 62).

All formations are molecular. The human being as an animal, plant or object is unique as molecular collectivity. Molar subjects, objects, or the known and true from experience are not the form known through science. Becoming woman and becoming child is different from being a woman or a child, which is the discrete molar quality. It is also possible for a woman or child to have a privileged place in relation to these occurrences. To exemplify the concept of molar quality, it is a woman who is defined by her form, has organs and functions, and is determined as a subject. Becoming woman does not imitate this quality, nor does she desire to transform herself into it. The traits that make up being a woman must be regarded as a function of something else. Becoming woman should not be seen as imitating or assuming women. The relation of becoming, transformation and stillness to woman, or kinship, should be seen as the expression of particles in a micro-femininity region, in other words, producing the molecular woman or creating the molecular woman within the human being. It cannot be said that this creation event is under the monopoly of man; on the contrary, as a molar quality, it is necessary to be a woman and a man (Deleuze and Guattari, 2005: 275).

Becoming woman is in a different position from being a woman as a molecular becoming. Because the state of being a woman belongs to the molar category. However, becoming woman contains relationships and adjustments that have a virtual potential in a molecular way. According to Deleuze and Guattari, what is necessary for a nomadic subjectivity is not male becoming; is the phenomenon of becoming woman. All occurrences are initially and basically molecular formations. In other words, all becomings start from becoming woman and pass through there. Becoming woman is a being at the center of all becomings (becoming animal, becoming plant, becoming child or becoming man) (Aydınlı, 2020: 55).

According to Braidotti, Deleuze, as a poststructuralist, opposes the ‘majority, sedentary, molar’ woman, who is the operator of the phallogocentric system, to becoming woman, which he defines as affirmative or transformative, defined as ‘minority, nomadic, molecular’ (Braidotti, 2019: 147).

Feminist thinkers such as Rosi Braidotti and Luce Irigaray criticize Deleuze’s concept of becoming woman as the ‘other of the other’ or the ‘other of the same’. Although Braidotti approaches Deleuze positively on many issues, she argues that becoming woman is a phenomenon that excludes gender. Alice Jardine, on the other hand, opposes the characterization of woman as an abstract concept in becoming woman. In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari argue that “becoming” has no subject except that it is a deterritorialized variable of the majority; she defends being a woman by saying that she has no mediator except the deterritorialized variant of a

minority” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2005: 292). In other words, Deleuze and Guattari oppose all these generalizations, not because of genderlessness or gender difference; they talk about the transition of differences from becoming woman, the process of deterritorialization and the multiplicity of becomings (becoming woman, becoming plant, becoming animal, etc.). They envision an existential and creative process, wanting to save feminism from the body and subject discussions.

### **Hayaletler (2020) As A Story Of Becoming Woman**

In the opening sequence of the movie, news of a power outage affecting all of Turkey is heard. After the information is given that it causes chaos and violence, a house sale advertisement begins with the slogan “New Turkey”. The moving vehicle stops in front of Didem, the heroine of the movie. The first criticism of *Ghosts* is against the urban transformation that pervades Istanbul, which is reflected as modern.

Didem (Dilayda Güneş) is a young girl living on the outskirts of the city. The story of her becoming begins in the broken down streets of Istanbul. İffet (Nalan Kuruçim) in the vehicle has engaged in an illegal business in order to send money to her son in prison. Didem will also earn money by helping him. It is remarkable that İffet wears a scarf and gives Didem a scarf to wear as well. The scarf is a necessary tool for the society in which they live to not look down on women who are out at night. According to Grosz (1994: 179), the being that society wants to shape most is the girl child, hence the woman. İffet and Didem used this desire of the society, they found an excuse to be out at night.

In the next scene, Didem and her friends are seen dancing in front of a ruined building. They work for a dance competition, which they see as an escape from the neighborhood they live in. Didem is caught dancing in the hotel where she works and is fired by her boss. The power outage happens exactly in this scene. However, despite everything, Didem continues to dance. The moments when Didem puts on her headphones and dances to the music can be interpreted as her getting away from the world she lives in. It is possible to see that Didem enters a different world while dancing in every dance scene throughout the movie.

The other female character of the movie, İffet, is looking for money for her son in prison. She asks Didem’s mother for a loan, but he returns empty-handed. It is seen that Didem is listening to this conversation from behind the door. The scene reflects the desperation of women who want to support each other.

In the next scene, Didem is sitting with her boyfriend Kaan and his dog. While Kaan caresses Didem and they talk to each other, they are kicked out of their seats by a man because they “make love in the street, engage in prostitution in the neighborhood”. The fact that the stimulus is a man and his accusations are a reflection of the patriarchal order’s view of women. The patriarchal order describes Didem and her boyfriend sitting side by side on the street as prostitution. This

situation is the work of masculine thought, which associates woman only with body and emotions and reduces her to object and body (Berktaş, 2013: 10). When they get up and start to walk away, Kaan gives drugs to his dog. Didem does not welcome this, but does not completely oppose it. Later, when it is revealed that he cheated on Didem, Didem goes to her boyfriend's house. She destroys the house and wants to save his dog, which he used in dog fights, by kidnapping him. Because he witnessed that he gave drugs to the dog to fight. Based on these events, it is possible to see the domination of men over women and animals. Deleuze and Guattari state that concepts such as becoming woman and becoming animal are molecular entities, but there is no such thing as becoming a male. The so-called female form is formed by the male stealing the "becoming" from the female child. Therefore, the masculine who establishes himself as a man with the "becoming" he steals becomes the principle of organizing. Man has established a standard in the universe and has an inevitable analytical majority (Aracagök, 2010: 8-9). It is possible to see Didem's lover Kaan as the majority of men who accept to be a man.

In many scenes of the movie, there are encounters between Didem, a girl, and the majority of men. In a scene where Didem enters the grocery store, while her back is turned, a man's saying "Mashallah, how beautiful she has grown" is heard. When Didem hears these words, she is shocked, she cannot turn back immediately. The non-linear editing of the film blends the events that take place in a single day. For this reason, as it will be understood later, that voice belongs to Raşit.

On the other hand, İffet continues her search for money after talking to her son Asil on the phone. She tells her boss about her situation and asks for money, but is rejected. As a last resort, she asks for money from her big brother, who is dealing with drugs. However, instead of money, she gets an offer to become a drug courier. She meets Raşit, who is said to be doing illegal work in the neighborhood. Raşit offers help on his own, but is not accepted by İffet. İffet is against Raşit. Raşit's statement "I have money, I work with the state" is remarkable. As a matter of fact, Raşit, who is known to do illegal business in the neighborhood, is seen renting beds to illegal immigrants in the next scene.

Recording a group of women who are preparing a protest against sexual harassment, Raşit and his friend Hamdi use the words "Their job is to provoke the country" for women. It is seen that Ela (Beril Kayar) is also in this group. Raşit says that he has taken such a video before and forwarded it to the police teams fighting against terrorism. The existence of the majority of men against becoming woman is seen once again. The molecularity of becoming woman is fluid; it is related to change, movement and reorganization (Cingöz, 2013: 61). Protest as an event where women come together with a "sisterhood" motive and support women who are alone and vulnerable to harassment is one of their most basic rights. It is seen that the majority of men, like Raşit, gathered and videotaped women. Sisterhood theory

is one of the keywords of second wave feminism. Since the 1960s, second-wave feminism thought has been on the rise. Its difference from the previous feminist ideas is to act with fraternity against the oppression of women and to oppose male domination by defending the common interests of women as women (Berktaş, 2013: 6). After Ela and her friends make a press release, they distribute leaflets. After the announcement, supported by many women with applause, Raşit is heard saying “Come on okay okay”. While Ela and her friends are talking about the destruction of historical buildings, Raşit and Hamdi are seen entering a historical building. It is forbidden to demolish the building because it is historical, but Raşit will ensure that the building is demolished by cutting the columns. He warns Hamdi Raşit to be careful and not to be seen by anyone. The reason why Raşit describes what he is doing as a state job is because Hamdi is a municipal employee. After talking about the building, Raşit happily recounts the dream he had last night:

“Bro, I had a dream last night. I’m promoting the new building on TV. I’m wearing a tie, microphone in my hand. I go from room to room. I say 2+1, I say 3+1. I say new Turkey. I call it new life. We are building a new residence. We are building the new Turkey. We are building the new nature. Bro, it was so beautiful, I swear to God!”

Raşit’s dream is the product of the most popular thought in today’s male-dominated world. The most valuable thing in this world, where history, nature, women and animals are ignored, is the capitalist order. Raşit’s dream of a residence, Didem’s boyfriend Kaan’s ambition to earn money through his pet, and men’s reactions to women who read statements against sexual harassment are examples of this. Patriarchal practices spread economic exploitation by influencing social relations, ideologies and ways of thinking (Berktaş, 2013: 11). The phrase “We are building the New Turkey” used by Raşit, who was driving in the neighborhood with his vehicle, is a remarkable detail. As he speaks, the residences built are seen in the frame. A neighbor called by Raşit to his car criticizes Raşit’s renting rooms for Syrian immigrants at exorbitant prices and gets out of his car. In the lower volume, noises from the residence construction can be heard. Raşit’s dream Turkey continues to be built.

İffet continues to look for money for her son, but cannot find it. Then she goes to her brother and accepts the job of transporting drugs. In the evening, in a city where there is no electricity, İffet borrows his car from Raşit for the illegal work they will do with Didem. On the other hand, Didem meets with her girlfriends to participate in the dance competition. They gather to practice dance on an empty lot in the neighborhood with demolished buildings. They also give dance training to little girls. It is seen that all the girls are united around the dance and are interested in each other’s problems. According to Grosz (1994: 179), the place of the girl, which is defined as the point of escape and in-between, is located between femininity and

masculinity, adulthood and childhood. Becoming woman shows plurality, not identity and subjectivity. It is possible to see the plurality and non-subjectivity of becoming woman in Ela's teaching cinema to children, including Didem, and Didem's dance training to younger girls. These small steps, affirming and transforming, contain the intensity and movement that underlies becoming woman.

While Didem and her friends talk about the abuse they have experienced, a group of men watch the dance practices of the little girls. Even though the girls are uncomfortable with these prying eyes, they continue to dance. However, a shout is heard from an apartment that sees the land. The woman in the window tells the girls that she will call the police, saying that they are collecting the boys, drinking and playing. While they were dancing, the police warned the girls with a harsh language on the grounds that there was a complaint. While they are watching a movie in the warehouse-style house where Ela teaches the children, the landlord suddenly comes and says that they are making a lot of noise and that they are not paying the rent, shouting and asking them to vacate the house. Ela tries to take lessons outside with the children. She hands one of the boys a phone and tells him to interview his friend. The questions asked by the child in the interview are significant:

"Which animals do you like more, Muhammed?"

"The cat."

"What features does the cat have?"

"Very smart."

"Some of people are good, some are bad, aren't they?"

"Yeah."

This dialogue of the children brings to mind Grosz's idea of becoming child. Grosz (1994: 179) states that being a child breaks up adulthood. The children decide that only some of the people are bad, as an indication of the problem they had with the man who just owned the house. The molar majority, which is adult and male, is divided into parts by children.

Didem, who goes to participate in the dance competition, first receives the news that her friend Sena will not be able to participate in the competition. Then she gets the news that her boyfriend is cheating on her. Although she searches everywhere for Kaan, she cannot find him. Then she goes to Kaan's house and scatters the house and takes his dog and goes to meet İffet. There are lootings and explosions on the road due to a power outage. The police are constantly checking the vehicles.

On the other hand, Raşit goes to the building where he will cut and demolish the columns. While trying to break the column, he dies by staying under the building. While Raşit's body was pulled from under the demolished building, the residents of the neighborhood say that the building was deliberately demolished by the construction company. Hamdi, on the other hand, gets a reaction from the women

of the neighborhood when he wants to make statements that protect the company at the scene. Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 291) say that the man with the molar majority oppresses the woman analytically or statistically in the universe and steals the “becoming” from her. Raşit’s death can be seen metaphorically as the fall of man and the liberation of woman from oppression and reaching ‘becoming woman’.

It is seen that Ela is at a party held in the dark. LGBT individuals at the party said, “They will not shut up, they will not shut up. Whores won’t shut up” they sing. The police come to warn them about the noise, but then the party continues. It is possible to say that the scene contains ‘becoming’. Braidotti (2019: 174) states that the Deleuzian approach invites the abandonment of the identity formed on the basis of the molar/established subject and the activation of multiple becomings beyond identity. Considering that becoming has no end and no fixed subject, it is possible to say that LGBT individuals are in a state of becoming. As a matter of fact, her songs that continue despite the ‘darkness’ show the affirmative quality of becoming woman.

In the last scene, it is revealed that the person supplying drugs from İffet is Ela’s friend. Ela gets angry that Didem is involved in this. At that time, Kaan, who found Didem because he had his dog implanted a chip, begins to argue with Didem. After this scene where all parties come together, Didem is seen dancing in the dark with the light of her phone. The absence of electricity did not stop life.

### **Conclusion**

The theory of becoming woman is beyond the identities of men and women. Every becoming goes through becoming woman. In this study, which is based on Azra Deniz Okyay’s film “Ghosts”, the film’s discourses on becoming woman are examined. Becoming woman focusing on change and multiple identities adds a different dimension to feminism. From this point of view, the film can be seen as a story of becoming woman.

The paths of Didem, İffet, Ela and Raşit, who are the leading roles in the movie, intersect on different planes, and the paths of men and women come together side by side and face to face. The film takes place on a day when there is a power outage in Istanbul. It is seen that there is a male-dominated order in the city, which has been transformed into a giant construction site by the urban transformation. The movie, which starts with Didem being fired by her male boss at the hotel where she works, shows Didem’s passion for dance despite everything. While practicing dance in their neighborhood for a dance competition, Didem and her friends are exposed to the voyeuristic glances of men. The little girls they teach dance lessons can’t escape these looks either. Afterwards, a woman from the neighborhood complained to the police, accusing the girls. The girls are forced to leave the land they are working on. The girls’ focus on dance despite all the bad conditions brings to mind the positive and change-oriented qualities of becoming woman.

On the other hand, Raşit, who symbolizes Deleuze and Guattari's theory "male majority", causes the demolition of historical buildings and rents rooms to illegal immigrants at exorbitant prices. Raşit, whose sole aim is to gain more power, dies under the building he tried to demolish. Raşit's death can be read as meaning that the male majority will be disintegrated.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, the reason why women cannot reach 'becoming woman' is the stolen body of the girl child. The society first creates the opposition by intervening on the girl's body. It is tried to be prevented by the male majority that the women who are the subject of the film can reach 'becoming woman'. The person who considers Didem's sitting on the street with Kaan as prostitution and the person who considers the girls' dancing as perversion appear as representatives of patriarchal thought. The view of the characters Raşit and Hamdi to the group of women protesting against rape, including Ela, is the result of the same thought. Women are described as terrorists by them.

Ela's behaviors such as giving cinema education to children, seeking solutions for buildings that are mysteriously destroyed and participating in the protest against sexual harassment contain the characteristics of "becoming woman". It can be said that the LGBT individuals in the party Ela attended, singing brightly despite the darkness, exemplify becoming woman. As a result, the patriarchal order in which the country is located is symbolized as darkness in the film. Despite all the negative conditions, it is possible to say that the characters in the movie shine in every place, a reference to the transformative and affirmative power of becoming woman.

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## **GENDER REPRODUCTION IN TALES AND FANTASTIC FILMS: TELLING TALES (BANA MASAL ANLATMA)**

Gizem Parlayandemir<sup>1</sup>, Betül Yüncüoğlu<sup>2</sup>, Şirin Şefii<sup>3</sup>

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### **Introduction**

Humankind has been evolving scientifically and technologically, and evolutions in these areas also provide economic progress that is not satisfactory for human development. Human development concerns that the existing resources grow, but more notably, all individuals have access to those resources. There are mixed criteria for human development, and when these criteria are examined the inequality is better comprehended (Human Development Index, 2021).

One of the phenomena that impedes human development is gender inequality. Although women and men worldwide have taken critical steps to solve this problem, it is not possible to say that gender equality has been achieved yet. Another striking example of such a situation and rape cases against women in the world to explain with concrete examples is that Nobel Prize-winning scientists have made statements about why women should not be in the lab.

Although Hunt saying “Let me tell you about my trouble with girls ... three things happen when they are in the lab ... You fall in love with them, they fall in love with you and when you criticize them, they cry” is criticized, even if this kind of explanations can be made, it proves that there is such a thought (BBC Turkish, 2015).

Another evidence of this situation is the decisions taken by YÖK (Higher Education Ins.) at the “Gender Equality Sensitive University Workshop” such a workshop as a necessity also reveals that gender inequality can be even in universities. This workshop can be accepted as a step towards a solution in terms of being aware of the problem, and it is hopeful in this regard (Bianet, 2015). These situations

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indicate that gender equality is not provided even for women with education and work opportunities.

In addition to these, the essential source of gender inequality is the disadvantages faced by women in areas such as health, education, political representation, the labor market, and their negative reflections on freedom of choice and development of skills (Gender Inequality Index, 2015).

These have led to the gaining importance of gender studies. The history of women's rights is economical as equal pay for equal work; the struggles for political gains, such as the right to be elected and elected, are based on the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Studies of gender appear to have drawn attention in the 1970s when body sociology and identity studies became important. Researchers such as Kristeva, de Beauvoir, Irigaray, Foucault, Wittig, and Butler have also been the basis for writing about gender with the influence of psychoanalysts such as Freud and Lacan (Butler, 1990/2010).

Gender has been an essential factor in the construction of identity that has also been influenced by other social institutions and structures, which are also influential in constructing identity (Butler, 1990/2010: 23).

Gender is important because it deals with inequality between men and women. Knowing the concept of gender is also important in terms of knowing the reason why women are oppressed in social institutions (Kaçar, 2007:7). For this reason, gender became an important issue. In the study, master's and doctoral theses made about this issue in Turkey were selected as bibliography as well as essential resources were selected. There are two main reasons for this situation. The primary reason is to emphasize the prevalence of studies conducted in this field at the master and doctorate levels in the scientific area in Turkey. The second reason is the conventions regarding gender show commonality in various aspects, and the participation of women in the workforce is different from the participation of women in the workforce in studies conducted in 'Western' countries. For example, Butler (1990/2010: 199) stated that women have to meet conflicting and different expectations sometimes: to be a good mother, to be a heterosexual desired object, to be a productive employee in business life, etc.<sup>4</sup> However, female employment in Turkey is dramatically low compared to European Union countries (Human Development Index, 2021). The discourses on situations such as whether a woman works, whether she is a mother, and how she will dress are determined according to the needs of the society and the system.<sup>5</sup>

As will be emphasized in the study, conventions regarding gender are reproduced in the collective subconscious, in myths, fairy tales, and contemporary arts. Cinema,

4 Butler (2004: 6) also mentioned this situation and stated that studies on gender discrimination have changed in the last twenty years for developed countries and that while gender discrimination continues for different women who are under conditions such as color, sociological and economic, transgender identities gain importance in studies for developed countries.

5 When world history is examined, it is seen that the demand for labor has increased with the industrial revolution, and women are also provided to work to meet this demand; It is seen that women's work is open to discussion as a result of the contraction in demand for labor with the periodic structural crises or the technology revolution.

both as a branch of art and as a mass media product, provides an opportunity to discuss gender, like other phenomena that concern society. Referring to Berger (2005: 46), who states that “To be born a woman has been to be born, within an allotted and confined space, into the keeping of men.” It is possible to say that even in innovative and oppositional films, gender conventions are reproduced.

In this study, *Telling Tales* which reached the highest number of viewers in 2015, the year it was released, (boxofficeturkiye.com, 2015) as a fantastic Turkish movie, is examined in the context of gender. The reason for choosing this movie is that the narrative can be analyzed both as a fairy tale and as a movie within the framework of the relationship between fantasy movies and fairy tales. In addition, the film, which has an opposing discourse in terms of urban transformation and globalization, repeats the dominant discourse in terms of gender equality. One of the reasons for the study is that ‘*Leyla ile Mecnun*’ (imdb.com, 2015), the script of which Burak Aksak, the writer and director of the film, wrote between 2011 and 2013, has an impact on the production of absurd comedies in terms of television series as one of the leading series in the recent period.

*Telling Tales* also allows for various readings such as absurd movies, comedy, and fantastic movies. Due to the limitations of this study, the film was analyzed as a fairy tale film, which is a sub-film of the fantasy film genre.

The assumption in the study is that gender conventions sometimes impose a heavy burden on women and sometimes on men while describing women as overly passive and men as more active than they can handle. These conventions, reproduced in the myths, the tales they originate, and in the cinema, impose on the men who are not like the heroes in the narratives and the women who cannot be saved by the men who look like those heroes, while imposing what their lives should be like within the imaginary limits they offer, and also show the possible responses/punishments of a refusal. In this study, the film is examined with text analysis and critical discourse analysis. For this review, the concept of gender and its reproduction, fairy tales and gender, fantastic cinema, and gender relations are also discussed.

### **The Concept of Gender and Reproduction of Gender Conventions**

Gender, which deals with the inequality of women and men, is concerned with the general stereotyping of identities by biological differences. The content of gender roles consists of the scope of related concepts of masculinity and femininity (Ataman, 2002: 8). However, it would not be wrong to think that gender, like other concepts related to the superstructure, is affected by changes in society. While establishing gender statuses in a dialectical relationship with the superstructure and infrastructure, it produces a variety of physical and psychological acceptable patterns, boundaries, and binary oppositions. In contrast to weak/strong, active/passive, tough/soft-headed identity features, women are assumed to be as needed

to be controlled and controllable by casting roles such as passive, weak, and mild-mannered (Varol, 2013: 66).

Moreover, while the first thing that comes to mind since gender inequality is the case, the negative discrimination against women, this inequality against women is not in favor of men either (ibid: 8-11; 24-26). As long as the woman is the symptom of the man (narrated from Lacan by Zizek, 2010: 47), the shadow<sup>6</sup> of the man, there are other forbidden areas-feelings and actions for men as well as for women: While feelings such as being emotional and not loving fight forbidden feelings for men. It has also become a necessity for men to pay for the meal eaten together, to leave the woman home after a meeting. Although men have been overwhelmed by these obligations in some cases, perhaps the main burden comes from trying to achieve the idea of male rather than these obligations.

Atay (as cited in Renkmén, 2012:19), who says that masculinity oppresses men the most, states that beyond considering masculinity as an object of strength and power, it is based on Foucault's definition of power, stressed that there is a phenomenon other than the man who also dominates over himself. Thus, the man who tries to converge to the ideal man without questioning fulfills the economic, psychological, and social duties imposed on him by the woman and the system that promises the woman as a reward. As emphasized by Atay (2012: 37), being a man is not a completed process. A man is not done with manhood even after he deserves to be a man once by enduring unbearable pain. Like a kind of barrel with a needle, it is expected from him to always implement and reproduce the power that he bears. In particular, masculinity and gender, in general, can be interpreted as the sum of cultural practices rather than biological (Atay, 2012).

Since it is a cultural element, gender, which is shaped by infrastructure – production relations and form – and superstructure, is reproduced in every medium that concerns society. Van Djik, the researcher whose work will be helpful in the construction of discourse analysis for this study, also stated that social spaces shape discourses and relations in various contexts through both the identities and feelings of the people in those spaces (Van Djik, 2009: 53):

“The same is true for the way we define social places and their associated activities: apart from personal differences, people of the same group and the same culture in general know what to do, and how to use such places/institutions as stations, police stations or post offices, among other places. People as a group typically have stereotypes and prejudices about “other” places, both within the city, within the country or within the world. In other words, this Place subcategory of the Setting of context models is at the same time controlled by social representations of various kinds, and we see that various kinds of places are used by language users as members of groups, communities and cultures for the ways they conduct their interactions and speak to and about others.”

6 Henderson (1964:118) refers to the concept of 'shadow' of Jung. Beyond being the opposite of the conscious ego, the shadow is what the consciousness represses, hides, and finds inappropriate.

As the channels where gender reproduced, private spaces such as home, family, and public spaces such as school and street can be specified as physical channels where people interact with each other. These channels assume the function of determining how women and men should behave in public and private spheres and are not equally open to both genders. The woman is at home, the man is on the street. Identity characteristics are foreseen for men and women in the gender order lead women to limit themselves to domestic life and private relations, and men to work outside the home (Varol, 2013: 66). Referring to Varol, it is possible to say that the media plays an important role in the construction process of not only identities but also gender conventions.

The common part of all these determinations, as stated at the beginning of the study, is that the important reason for gender inequality is the disadvantages that women face in social, cultural, and economic fields. This discourse suggests an external restriction. However, in some cases, this restriction may be accepted internally and voluntarily by the woman, who is restricted. In some cases, women desire or admit to being dependent and limited for various reasons. Şora (2011: 51) explains this situation through dependence on the power and states one of the reasons for being dependent on or subject to that power is that there are demands or expectations from this relationship. The woman accepts power to the extent that she internalizes things like love, affection, care, attention, and being cared for, which she expects or is forced to wait for concerning the dominant consciousness. The woman reproduced in such a cultural understanding is innately dependent on power.

While the innate dependence on power is reproduced in cultural understanding, as can be seen when the plots and discourses of fairy tales are analyzed, collective consciousness and its products have an essential place in maintaining and reproducing the assumptions about gender (Campbell, 2010; Sezer, 2014).

According to Jung (1964: 67), who has important determinations about the collective consciousness, a similar historical process can be mentioned for the human mind, just as the human body is the historical museum of organs, beyond its own existence, within the evolutionary process. When Jung speaks of the historical process, he means a prehistoric legacy of the unconscious, beyond the physical being. According to him, there is an analogy between the images in the dreams of modern people and the productions of primitive minds, collective images, and mythological motifs.<sup>7</sup>

When it comes to the collective consciousness, it is necessary to mention the archetypes. While Jung (1964: 67, 69) defines archaic remains as archetypes, he

<sup>7</sup> In order to understand the prehistoric heritage that Jung talked about, the transformation of fears can be given as an example. Jung (1964: 47) states that the fears of people in pre-modern societies and the fears of people in modern societies differ from each other in form, but they continue to resemble each other in terms of being obsessive. For example, a person in pre-modern society is afraid of ghosts; to a person in modern society this fear may seem like a ridiculous fantasy, but he is also afraid of other things. The basis of the obsession has not disappeared, the obsession has changed form. On the other hand, in some cases, for example, in dreams, there are links between man in modern society and the consciousness of people in non-modern society in the form of basic ideas, myths and rituals. Jung states that Freud describes these dream images as archaic remnants. These images remain in human memory for ages, and this perspective is based on the idea that the unconscious collects remnants of consciousness.

underlines that archetypes are mixed with mythological motifs; archetypes are the tendency that enables the mentioned motifs to be formed in various forms without losing their basic patterns. Thus, although the representation of a motif changes, the motif itself remains unchanged because archetypes are rootless; they can reproduce themselves anywhere in the world, at any time.

“The archetype is a tendency to form such representations of a motif—representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern. There are, for instance, many representations of the motif of the hostile brethren, but the motif itself remains the same. My critics have incorrectly assumed that I am dealing with ‘inherited representations,’ and on that ground they have dismissed the idea of the archetype as mere superstition.”

For archetypes dating back to antiquity, we can talk about reproduction as well as rediscovery. Henderson (1964: 106) also states that the ancient history of man was rediscovered in symbolic images and myths of ancient man. From this point of view, it can be thought that myths are important in terms of reproduction or rediscovery.

According to Campbell (2010: 13), who mentions the importance of myths in human actions:

“Throughout the inhabited world, in all times and under every circumstance, the myths of man have flourished; and they have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind.”

One of how people and societies produce discourse and transfer that to each other is the fairy tale, in which its relationship with myths can be visible.

### **Tales, Fantastic Cinema and Gender**

Tale is a kind of oral narrative that originates centuries ago, carries the traces of the culture in which it was born, whose heroes and events usually have extraordinary characteristics. It starts, ends with stereotyped words, formed independently of time and place, and the narrators usually transmit the tale (Akar, 2006: 4). Although they are mostly anonymous and based on a fantastic plot, have emerged in different periods and geographies, some studies underline the common traits of the tales. Sezer (2014: 19) states that Vladamir Propp points to similarities in tale engineering in *Morphology of the Fable*. As a result of his studies, Propp (1997: 82) states that the characters of the tales essentially perform the same actions as they progress, being free from the differences in the physical characteristics, age, gender, occupation, terminology, and other static qualities of the characters. According to Propp, this determines the relationship between fixed and variable factors. In summary<sup>8</sup> character functions are stable; everything else somewhat varies.

Tales are oral and written narratives handed down from generation to generation; narrative structures are often based on similar archetypes that make

<sup>8</sup> According to Propp, tales contain thirty-one functions, not all of them in the same tale. However, the absence of some functions does not affect the presence of others. These functions together form a single system, a single composition (Propp, 1997:83).

up the collective unconscious. They are influenced by and or affect the collective unconscious (Campbell, 2010). The relationship of the tale with the subconscious is also remarkable. According to Sezer (2014: 19), tales operate with a mechanism subconsciously that is not noticed and therefore not dealt with them. The real danger lies in this invisibility. Thus, the imagination of the modern woman leads a much sharper double life than it is thought by clashing with its dependent part. Fairy tale claims have lost their validity as beauty brings good luck, and the costs of this fortune have become much more complex. The fairy tale offers its rewards only to addicted women. She gives place to independent female types by pulling them to the limits of the extraordinary: Sorcerers, giant mothers, demons, fairy girls, etc. Their main feature is that they dominate nature, either not interested in a sexual affair or using their sexuality as a strategy to destroy men.

According to Sezer (2014: 19), it operates the tale teaching subconsciously, with a mechanism that is not noticed and therefore not dealt with. The real danger lies in this invisibility. Thus, the imagination of the modern woman actually leads a much sharper double life than it is thought by clashing with its dependent part. Fairy tale claims have lost their validity as beauty brings good luck, and the costs of this fortune have become much more complex. The fairy tale offers its rewards only to addicted women. He gives place to independent female types by pulling them to the limits of the extraordinary: Sorcerers, giant mothers, demons, fairy girls... Their main feature is that they dominate nature, either not interested in sexuality or using their sexuality as a strategy to destroy men.

Tales that depict women being rewarded and punished and convey them to their listeners and readers can be classified as sexist tales. The sexist fairy tales that do not question the power but support it and that do not go beyond reinforcing a pattern in love and family relationships, no matter how fantastic the fund is, have become more widespread and ossified (Sezer, 2014: 15).

When the heroes of the tales are analyzed as myths, they can be explained with the hero myth. Henderson states that the hero myth is the most common and well-known myth. That myth exists in various periods and societies, in Greek and Roman mythologies, in the Middle Ages, and in the Far East. Although the details of the hero myth are varied when examined carefully, it is visible that they are structurally similar (Henderson, 1964: 110). The primary function of the heroic myth is the development of the individual's ego consciousness. The hero, who discovers his strengths and weaknesses thanks to the difficult tasks he faces, passes his initial test and matures, while the hero myth loses its relevance, and thanks to this maturity reached, the hero's figurative death takes place (Henderson, 1964: 112). One of the main duties of a typical hero is to save the beautiful woman from trouble. There is a woman who needs to be rescued by a hero, a man. The main girl in trouble is one of the favorite myths of Medieval Europe (Henderson, 1964: 123)

As Sezer states, the hero who saves the main girl in trouble is rewarded with the main girl. Heroism, the main criterion of man's worthiness, has two main benefits: award-women and the rise of social status (Sezer, 2014: 20).

Gender codes are reproduced in various media as well as products of collective consciousness such as fairy tales. Berger (2005) explained the position of women for works of art in his study. Gender codes are also reproduced in mass media (İncekul, 2010: 33). Although not within the limitations of this study, this phenomenon can also be observed in daily life. Daytime programs that advise women on how to live; aesthetics, clothing, diet, sports programs that reproduce women and femininity not only psychologically but also physically; marriage programs in which the definition of the ideal wife is conveyed to women by participants and guests; while the narratives in pop-songs and video-clips describing how women should feel and behave in a relationship are examples on television; even on the internet pages of opinion newspapers, interviews with famous women are given in photo galleries, out of the context of sentences, accompanied by photographs where women are objectified are various examples and situations that should be underlined for further research.

In addition to the mentioned media, cinema also affects the concept of gender as a superstructure element, and it is affected by gender, like other branches of art and mass media with which it interacts. The fact that cinema is essential in terms of mass communication and can simultaneously penetrate broader masses makes it essential to study the relationship between cinema and gender (Ataman, 2002: 4). Cinema becomes functional for the internalization of gender codes. According to Tan (2012: 71), stereotypes used extensively in genre films in popular cinema serve as a template for conforming to women's social and moral behavior patterns in real life.

While fairy tales affect all genres in terms of plot, fairy tale movies are subgenres of fantasy movies. Fantasy cinema is also directly related to fantasy. Fantasy is based on previous generations' literary and oral traditions and myths (Sobchack, 2008: 367). According to Sobchack (2008: 365), fantastic narratives start from the act of wishing; magic and magical event are their fuel, and wish-fulfillment is both a temporary problem and a happy solution.

According to Hayward, fantasy film covers science fiction, horror, fairy tales, and certain types of adventure films that go to impossible places and encounter unbelievable creatures. Fantasy movies are about situations we do not fully know, and therefore are movies that we do not accept as reality. As the other film genres of mainstream cinema, this genre is the signifier of social myths and dominant ideology, too; it should also be noted that it reproduces the heterosexist discourse (Hayward, 2010: 129).

While Hayward touches upon the relationship between fantasy and desire, regarding Lacan, desire is inherent in the imaginary – the unconscious; thus, he states that fantasy is the articulation of desire to consciousness through images, stories or *mise-en-scène*. For cinema, he talks about dialectical rather than a linear relationship between desire and fantasy. These relationships are; between the film industry, the film producer and the screen; between the screen, the heroine, and the hero; protagonists, diversifying between the audience and the screen, transform the desire into fantasy by being transferred from the producer of the industry and the film to the screen (ibid.: 129-130).

While Zizek explains fantasy in Lacanian theory he states “(...) the paradox stages the relation of the subject to the object-cause of its desire, which can never be attained.” (Zizek, 2010: 19). According to Zizek (2010: 20);

“The fundamental point of psychoanalysis is that desire is not something given in advance, but something that has to be constructed-and it is precisely the role of fantasy to give the coordinates of the subject’s desire, to specify its object, to locate the position the subject assumes in it. It is only through fantasy that the subject is constituted as desiring: through fantasy, we learn how to desire.”

He also mentions the relationship between the subject fantasy objects thought an inner void: “The subject is the void, the hole in the Other, and the object the inert content filling up this void; the subject’s entire ‘being’ thus consists in the fantasy-object filling out his void.” (Zizek, 2011: 210).

When the genre is examined, it is seen that the heterosexist and male-dominated view is reproduced through films, as in other genres in mainstream cinema. This situation can be accepted as the absence or symptomatic.<sup>9</sup>The woman’s presence is being associated with the psychoanalytic theory (Zizek, 2010: 47). When examined in the context of the culture industry, it is seen that fantasy, as a popular culture element, provides “to alleviate the shock created by the new or the unexpected in the current period” (Oskay, 1994: 57).

Without completely ignoring the situations mentioned about the relationship between gender and cinema, it is possible to say that the dominant view about the positioning of the female character in Hollywood cinema, some fantasy films and cartoons have started to break in the recent period. For example, in the movie *Maleficent* (Dir. Robert Stromberg, 2014), the Sleeping Beauty tale is told in another version from the witch’s eye and the hero of the story is an evil woman, in two versions of the Snow White tale – *Snow White and the Huntsman* (Dir. Rupert Sanders, 2012) and *Mirror Mirror* (Dir. In Tarsem Singh, 2012) it is seen that Snow Whites are warriors, they learn to fight from men, but they play an active role in their own liberation, unlike the traditional emphasis in fairy tales.

<sup>9</sup> “In his “Epilogue” to *The Problem of Amateur Psychoanalysis*, Freud reproduced the same “not-all” paradox regarding women, recalling a dialogue in the humorous Viennese newspaper *Simpli-cissimus*: “One man did not blame another man for the vulnerabilities and fastidiousness of sexual attraction. ‘Still,’ he replied, ‘women are the best of their kind.’ Hence the woman’s logic as a man’s symptom: she is intolerable—that is, she dislikes her; it is impossible to live with it; so it’s even harder to live with it” (Zizek, 2010: 47).

## Method

In the analysis, the film text is interpreted as a fairy tale text and the film is analyzed in the form of text analysis. While making this analysis, the film's discourse is examined through the classification in Ekinci's study (2014), one of the researchers who used Van Dijk's discourse analysis for film analysis by interpreting Van Dijk's.

Although it is hard to define discourse analysis, there are different approaches. There are two main approaches to discourse analysis. While the quantitative approach converges to content analysis and emphasizes numerical data, the qualitative approach examines the discourse through critical reading and is similar to text analysis (McQuail, 2010: 349-350).

It can be mentioned that Foucault and Lyotard are important names as researchers who prioritize language in discourse analysis for critical discourse analysis (Sedgwick, 2007: 114-116). Van Dijk, whose approach to discourse analysis will be used in this study, also tries to make the relationship between discourse and language visible.

While discussing discourse in relation to language, Van Dijk underlines the context. Context as a concept is essential in language, discourse, and cognitive studies, and in these studies, the text stands out. Linguistics, discourse studies, speech analysis, psychology, and social sciences have given importance to the characteristics of argument and text for years (Van Dijk, 2009: 1).

Micro and macro structures gain importance while defining the context in Van Dijk's analysis. Context emerges with the interaction of society at micro and macro levels. Contextual definitions are also constantly produced and updated by those participating in the communication situation. For this to happen, a group or community with which the same information is shared is required. However, contextual interactions also produce or reproduce groups, communities, or institutions. In any part of speech and text, there is a combination of the micro (unit) and the macro (structure, system) and cognitive interaction aspects of society (Van Dijk, 2009: 116-117).

Several perspectives can be put forward in adapting this analysis to film analysis. Firstly, it is possible to define the film as a microstructure and the society in which the film is a macrostructure. Secondly, to define the relationship of the main character of the film with other people in the film universe as a microstructure, and his relationship with society as a macrostructure might be another way of analysis. Another approach is the model put forward by Ekinci (2014) for the movie *Argo* (Dir. Ben Affleck, 2012) for discourse analysis. In the mentioned study, microstructures: intro sequence and credits of the movie; macro structures: the plot of the film, places and representation, main characters and representation, sub-characters and representation are examined under sub-titles.

### **Analysis of the Film *Telling Tales***

The film begins with the words “Once upon a time, in a land far away the other side of Mount Qaf” just like the fairy tale that forms the basic pattern of its narrative and prepares the audience for the story with the introduction of fairy tales. The movie’s opening is described as a cartoon, so the story of Ayperi, who is also the girl protagonist of the film, is told as a cartoon, while the beauty of Ayperi is emphasized with the words “her beauty makes the sun jealous”. It is known that beauty is a physical feature privileged for women in terms of gender and is even perceived as necessary for the definition of an ideal woman. While it is told that Ayperi is an ordinary girl, the daughter of a bricklayer, Ayperi is described through her father. The establishment of Ayperi’s identity concerning her father is a necessity of the patriarchal social structure. The emphasis on the details of Ayperi’s physical features, such as her hair and skin, is an example in terms of norming the ideal of the woman’s body. As in daily life, in narratives such as fairy tales, the concept of beauty for women is not only mentioned but the definition of beauty is also stated in detail. The beauty of Ayperi, for which other men fight, causes competition between women. Due to her beauty, Ayperi becomes the rival of another woman, who is described as the “daughter of the sultan of the sultans” over her father. The norm-determining nature of Ayperi’s beauty causes the daughter of the sultan of sultans to be disliked and not preferred. Not being preferred by other men was a source of great sadness for the daughter of the sultan of the sultans, her father, who could not stand her daughter’s despair, decides to have Ayperi killed as a solution instead of telling her that such a situation would not be a source of sadness. Ayperi’s father sacrifices himself to save the warriors who have entered their house, and Ayperi’s mother is also killed in the process. It is her father’s heroism that first ensures Ayperi’s survival. The second event is that the soldier who attacked Ayperi, swung his sword toward Ayperi’s face to kill her but saw flowers grew where the blood spilled on the ground after he injured Ayperi’s face. What saves Ayperi’s life is the fall of the soldier’s sword in the front of beauty. Thus, thanks to Ayperi’s miraculous beauty, another man allows Ayperi to survive. Ayperi learns what happened to her and the way of her salvation from a wizard: “Only your hero can save you from captivity... This hero will sacrifice everything for you. He has a scar on his cheek just like yours.”

The curse caused by the beauty told in the fairy tale at the beginning of the movie and the hero male protagonist who will remove this curse are the common features of fairy tales such as Snow White, Cinderella and Rapunzel. Güzel (2013: 173), who discusses beauty regarding Sezer’s work on fairy tales, also mentioned this situation. According to Sezer (2014: 109): “Beauty causes problems related to jealousy and intolerance; but as with stepmothers and sisters who take a stand against the power of the strong man, every problem is settled with marriage.”

At the end of the introductory part of the movie, which is a fairy tale, the conversation between Rıza and his father, who tells the tale to his son Rıza, who is lying on the sofa in the living room, is remarkable. The main idea of the tale is, "If she'd studied, she'd have a job and not depend on anyone." According to the boy, who explained to his father that there would be no such tales and that he did not want to hear from him, such a point of view is ridiculous and is only possible when "telling jokes". From the conversation between father and son, the audience also learns that the father drinks alcohol, and the mother punishes him by not taking him to bed. But Rıza, who does not like the end of the tale and says, "I'll be a hero one day, won't I", has another role model: Jilet, a young man who has his own minibus. However, it should be kept in mind, as stated by Henderson, hero image in the psychological sense is related to archetypes that separates itself from the ego in early childhood, not directly related to the ego (Henderson, 1964: 128).

In the next scene, the audience sees the same house years later, and there is an old television like the house in it. There is a man and a woman on the television screen. While the man is talking and presenting the competition/program, the beautiful woman who is the hostess keeps silent and smiles. The mother, who will be emphasized in the later part of the story that she is a television addict, has taped the coke on the table so that the brand is not visible, similar to the blurring of the brand of the products on television channels so that the brand is not visible.

She gets angry by saying to his son, when he does not like breakfast, "Your mom's your slave, huh?" after his son asks, "Is there no tea?" she replies, "Could you have done this if your dad was here?". The audience learns that his father has passed away, and the son asks his mother whether she wants to marry because the day is Friday.

The son, who learned that his father is no longer in the audience, asks the mother if that day is Friday, whether she wants to get married or not for Friday prayers. This question is the testament of his father to his son. Thus, it is underlined that he thinks about the mother's happiness even in the absence of the father. He asks if she wants him to look for husband candidates in the Friday prayer.

The first public space seen in the movie is the street of an old neighborhood in Suriçi, the historical settlement of Istanbul. All the children playing football in the street are boys. The two actions mentioned - being on the street and doing sports - belong to men culturally, although not biologically. Rıza, the protagonist of the movie, gets angry at the children for making noise in front of the house of an old woman, Madam, and thus defends the rights of the woman who does not express her discomfort about this issue in the movie. One of the characters in the neighborhood, whom the audience knows by accompanying Rıza, is Uncle Haşmet, who offers the cologne he drank. Uncle Haşmet will guide Rıza in accordance with his wise

archetype, saying that this story belongs to him, when the story progresses and Rıza is destitute of the help of other people. The neighborhood, which is both the location of the film and an important place in the story, is male-dominated as a public space. Except for the mother and two passers-by, who are seen in the first nine minutes of the movie, everyone is male.

Rıza's childhood dream of becoming a minibuses driver has come true. In the scene where Rıza is waiting in front of a university campus with his minibuses with passengers - it is later revealed that Rıza is waiting for the beautiful girl he fell in love with in that part of the story - the women in the minibuses gossip. Although the minibuses is more egalitarian than the street in terms of both genders, there is no heterogeneity in distribution; women sit next to women. When Rıza makes them wait, the women reproach; the reason why women in the minibuses have trouble being late is because they are late for their gathering with other women and miss the gossip.

Throughout the movie, the fact that most of the female characters gossip plays a vital role in the depiction of the female characters, and it is reported that women see gossip as a way of life. One of those who are disturbed by the fact that Rıza is waiting by the minibuses is an old uncle who goes to attend the marriage program on a television show with a flower in his hand. When the beautiful girl Rıza is in love with gets into the minibuses without realizing that she is waiting for him, Rıza starts playing the song "We, both of us, are a branch of a sapling which blooms roses on it" with the tape player in the minibuses. It should be underlined that the minibuses has a function in Turkish cinema. Minibuses, which emerged due to the problematic urbanization and the inability to meet the transportation needs, are the transportation vehicles preferred by the lower and middle classes sociologically. They provide transportation between the environment and the center in the stories of the films. In addition to this, drivers of minibuses as well as minibuses passengers have become stereotyped in Turkish cinema. Although the stories change in films such as *Sultan* (Dir. Kartal Tibet, 1978), *Çiçek Abbas* (Dir. Sinan Çetin, 1982), the places where the story takes place are similar, and the minibuses are the main boys of the story.

It is possible to say that the minibuses served as a bridge between three love stories - Rıza and Ezgi, Rıza and Ayperi, Jilet and Neriman - in the movie. Returning to his neighborhood in Suriçi by minibuses, Rıza was asked by his friends "Didn't you talk to her?" in front of the car repair shop where they work. With his friends saying, "If you can't open up to this girl either...",<sup>10</sup> it is understood that this situation is a general situation for Rıza rather than being specific to the girl mentioned. Rıza tells his friends about his efforts to communicate with the girl, one of which is giving the girl too much change, but the girl did not realize that the change was too much.

10 "Don't complain to us if you can't even talk to her." This is the official subtitle of the movie. The official translation of this line does not fully convey the meaning. Therefore, our own translation is used in this line.

According to her friends who learned about this situation, the girl is a “jackal”. While Rıza is talking with his friends, the beautiful girl Ezgi, whom he talked about, comes to them and says “Hi”. It is surprising that women take the first step to meet according to gender conventions in which women are passive, and men are active, and Rıza and her friends are also very surprised by this situation. Ezgi says she wants to interview Rıza for the school newspaper because his van is different. Rıza takes Ezgi to the coffee house in the neighborhood, which is considered as the socializing area for men; when everyone in the coffee house found this situation strange. When Rıza realized that Ezgi is surprised by the attention of all these men yelled at the men in the coffee house, “Get back to what you were doing!” he says. This brings to mind what Berger said about the monitoring of women. “Men survey women before treating them. Consequently, how a woman appears to a man can determine how she will be treated” (Berger, 2005: 46).

While Rıza is going to talk about himself, the people in the coffee shop emphasize details about Rıza that can be found ridiculous. Rıza, who talks about himself as a man with his superior qualities, gets angry when others tell him that he is uneducated and incompetent; he is ashamed when his circumcision is told. While Rıza introduces the person who tells the story of circumcision to Ezgi as a family friend, his family friend objects and states that he is Rıza’s is a ‘kirve’, that is, the person who “witnessed the most important event (circumcision feast) closely”.

The story of the minibus is also told in the interview held at the coffee shop. Jilet, the previous owner of the minibus is Rıza’s brother whom Rıza wanted to be when he grew up as a child. Rıza is in love with Neriman. Neriman visually featured with her femininity; it is a fantasy item with off-the-shoulder blouse. An old incident between Jilet and Neriman is shown in the movie. Jilet gives Neriman a heart necklace as a gift and says they will leave together in a year. His minibus is the biggest hope for Jilet towards Neriman’s sarcastic attitude about not believing Jilet’s plans. While Jilet says that he named the minibus Neriman as an expression of his love, Neriman said, “Are you saying every guy going to Taksim from Suriçi is going to ride me?” she opposes. This statement shows that Neriman also accepts the male-dominated and sexist discourse. Jilet, while opposing this statement, “I’d burn anyone who tried” he says. This expression is a threat to potential opponents who want to get Neriman. Neriman replies, “Good, burn them then. But don’t get burned yourself.” This discourse also shows that Neriman is aware that she is a femme fatale. As the story goes back to the present, the people in the coffee shop – who is the steward of the minibus stop in the present time of the story – said, “Jilet took it hard.” They make statements such as “Now that Neriman left...” As the villain of the story, Neriman causes the destruction of the man who falls in love with her, emphasizing the shadow side of the female motif in the tale.

The girl and Rıza, who continue to talk among themselves when it gets dark near the walls, share their feelings about urban transformation. When Ezgi states that she

is impressed by Rıza's phrase "My dad died. Why wouldn't cities die?", Rıza repeats this statement over and over, and Ezgi gets bored after a while. After Ezgi's rejection of Rıza's offer of "It's late. I can drop you off", saying, "Thanks. There's no need, Umm, my fiancé's gonna come and pick me up. He'll take me home", Rıza said, "Fiancé? I hope you're happy together" says. Since Ezgi is engaged, she belongs to another man, according to Rıza, and Rıza respects this situation even though he is upset. Thus, it turns out that the girl Rıza waits in front of his school every day with his minibus is not the main girl of the story; but thanks to the relationship between them, the stories of Rıza and Jilet are transferred to the audience.

In the following scene, while Rıza is trying to light his cigarette alone on the historical walls of İstanbul, Ayperi appears, who will later realize that he is the hero of the fairy tale Rıza listened to as a child. When Ayperi first saw Rıza, "Who are you? Did you come to save me?" she asks, "Help me" she faints after saying it. Thus, she repeats the motif of the female fairy tale hero waiting for the savior and in need of help.

In the next scene, Neriman is seen in a luxury restaurant in the present time, at a business dinner, a foreign-partnered urban renewal project, where everyone is male except for her while displaying behaviors that will annoy her husband. In response to these attitudes, which can be read as being against urban transformation as well as being bored with women at the business dinner, her husband says, "You better watch your step." According to him, she is "Now you're Timur Aslan's wife". With this expression, the identity of the woman is defined depending on the man.

Unlike Neriman, who is a *femme fatale*, Ayperi, who is an *ideal woman*, is like Locke's expression of *tabula rasa*. Unlike idealist philosophers, according to Locke, the human mind is like a table rasa- a blank slate at birth; ideas are obtained as a result of experiences and observations through senses and thinking (Weber, 1998, 262). - Ayperi's attempt to eat the cigarette that Rıza held out because she did not know that it was being smoked is an example of this situation. But, the only important issue for Ayperi is finding her savior. "You're him, aren't you? The hero who will save me. Who will dash through flames" asks questions.

It is seen that the mother, who usually does not prepare breakfast for her son, prepares breakfast the next day with a variety of dishes and puts the special dinnerware to make the table look elegant. She does not even cook the eggs on the table the previous day. Three different interpretations can be made about her behavior different from her daily behavior. First of all, she is no longer Rıza's mother, but Ayperi's mother-in-law, and there is competition between women; secondly, although her identity turns into mother-in-law again, she is pleased that Rıza will marry and she wants to win the bride's love; thirdly, she respects the guest who comes to her house. When she asked the girl what her parents do for a living, Rıza's mother, who heard that they had died, says that her "Bey" (sir/master) died

too and the other ones who left behind live a miserable life worse than death: “the rest neither eat nor drink.” Preferring the use of the expression “Sir” (Bey) instead of “husband” indicates that the woman has a traditional point of view. The mother character, who thinks that she is not mentally stable from what the girl tells, uses the phrase “kidnapping a girl” while talking to her son alone, and her main drawback is that the whole neighborhood hears it. However, while the whole neighborhood interprets the incident as Rıza’s kidnapping when Rıza tells the girl’s story, suddenly everyone disappears; surprised by this situation, the answer Rıza seeks is in Uncle Haşmet, his father’s friend. Uncle Haşmet says, “This is your story” pointing out that the hero is Rıza himself.

This incident is also the material of gossip for the neighboring women who were seen gossiping in the minibus before and came to Rıza’s house. For the neighbors who summarizes the situation with the phrase “finding a girl”, the absence of the girl’s parents is a favourable situation; this situation to Rıza’s mother, “You’ll never have to worry about family holidays. They’re here every holiday morning. Relax.” they say.

While the villain of the tale is the sultan of sultans and his soldiers, the villains of the present time, where Rıza is, are rich people in suits who want to buy Madam’s house and bring the urban transformation project to life. The richness of the villains underlined in the film is not a class criticism but rather to emphasize the poor but self-sacrificing side of the hero.

Rıza, who says that his father told Ayperi’s story in the past, Ayperi replied, “But my story’s half-finished”. Rıza replied, “Stay with us”; for Ayperi, Rıza decided to teach her everything, took the risk of making enough sacrifices, such as accepting to sleep on the balcony in winter. Ayperi, whom Rıza took to the neighborhood with her, is waiting outside the coffee house this time. While the locals in the coffee house are watching the girl, one of them says, “Do you think I’d fancy my friend’s sweetheart?”. Rıza tells that he is Ayperi’s hero and asks for help from the coffee shop like buying second-hand items for her house and teaching her everything. Thinking of teaching everything he knows, Rıza brings to mind the myth of Pygmalion. Pygmalion, a Cypriot sculptor, does not fall in love with any woman on earth; he makes a sculpture that he designed as the ideal woman, and eventually falls in love with the woman he made himself (Erhat, 2011: 259). -The myth of Pygmalion, who fell in love with the sculpture he made, influenced cinema as well as other arts, and various films were created under the name of Pygmalion and inspired by this myth.

Returning to the story, when he sees Ayperi, the little apprentice working in the repair shop across from the coffee shop, the cult song of Cem Karaca, “The Mechanic’s Apprentice”, is playing in the background. (This song describes the impossible love of a poor mechanic’s apprentice who falls in love with a rich and

beautiful girl.) The master, disturbed by the fact that his little apprentice watches Ayperi admiring, tells his apprentice that “the woman of the neighborhood” should not be looked at. Thus, women acquire an identity and develop a sense of belonging through their neighborhoods as well as their fathers, fiancées and wives. Rıza teaches Ayperi to read and write, and the women in the neighborhood teach the duties attributed to women, such as making sarma (a traditional Turkish food wrapping grape leaves filled with rice) and offering tea. While Ayperi is talking to Uncle Haşmet, he offers her cologne and explains why he drank cologne; because he wanted his deceased wife not to smell alcohol during their marriage. When Rıza saw Ayperi using a hammer and displaying masculine attitudes in the repair shop, “What fairytale princess walks around with a greasy rag?” he revolts. While they were chatting in the evening, Ayperi asks Rıza how the plane flies even though she knows, and then she explains to him, who cannot answer, in a scientific language. Not having a birth certificate or identity is a cause for fear for Ayperi, who says that “You still feel like you belong somewhere.” In order to overcome her fear, Rıza tells her that when he was a child, he counted numbers so that his father would come, and one day, no matter how much he counted, his father did not come - he died. Listening to the childhood story told by Rıza – the man –, Ayperi – the woman – cries; thus, the emotional side of the woman is emphasized. Afterwards, to Ayperi, who says she does not know how to count, Rıza says: “You were bragging about how planes fly. Well?” referring to Ayperi’s scientific explanation of how the plane flew.

Ayperi talks to her host, Madam, about Rıza. According to Madam, Rıza’s father died not from the heart, but from woman’s nagging.

Seeing the son of Timur Arslan, who is carrying out the urban transformation project in Suriçi, Ayperi believes that the hero has come; according to him, his father’s skyscrapers or the scar on the man’s face confirm the prophecy. Jilet’s woman he is in love, marries Timur Arslan. Jilet tells Rıza a “Some brotherly advice” that Rıza should not trust women by saying “It cost me heavily.”, “They all push off one day.”

While Rıza is upset about this situation, he claims on Ayperi by saying “I saw the girl first”. Ayperi, when she sees Rıza sitting on the bench and talking to the girl who had previously interviewed Rıza, thinks that they are lovers as if a relationship between a man and a woman is not possible. Her friends thought that Rıza had told Ayperi about her feelings and she was rejected, saying, “Forget women. They’re all the same.”, “These girls wouldn’t touch us” and recommend cliché behaviours in order to tell Ayperi that he loves her, such as Rıza should wear suits, buy a small diamond ring even though he has no money.

Rıza’s mother goes to the gathering with other women in the neighborhood, even though she is uninvited, and answers the women who gossip about her son over their own lives. For example, to one of the women, she says “They say your hubby has a mistress. She’s Russian or something.”

When Timur Arslan's son -the bad guy- takes the girl from her house with his top model car, Rıza's friends get upset, his brother Jilet is worried, and his other acquaintances are having fun with Rıza's situation. When Rıza thinks he has lost Ayperi and gives up, his father's silhouette wearing an undershirt appears in the clouds and angrily leads him: "Strangers are about to walk off with the girl and the neighborhood." Responding to what his father told him, Rıza says, "No one can take the neighborhood or my girl away from me" he says and decides to fight. This event is when the hero is plunged into darkness and returns to the light to pass his final test. In order to save the neighborhood, he meets with the people of the neighborhood at the coffee house, a public space belonging to men. However, things do not happen as Rıza wants, everyone is happy that the neighborhood will be bought, even the tenants are in favor of urban transformation. Unlike women, who gossip and gossip all day long, men have debts, relations with the economy, and they think that they can pay off their debts with the money to be obtained from the sale of the neighborhood.

Hearing that the only obstacle for urban transformation and therefore for the sale of their neighborhoods is that Madam does not sell her house, the neighborhood residents beat a path to Madam's door to sell her house. This time, Rıza's mother, not Rıza saves her. She shouts, "A crowd this big outside a house means either a funeral or a wedding" and threatens the locals not to disturb Madam, emphasizing that she is "the woman who hospitalized her own child in slippers." The absence of her husband forced Rıza's mother to become mannish.

While the meeting at the coffeehouse is falling apart, it is only his close friends who support Rıza; Jilet, even, does not want to get involved in the situation, and the fact that the interlocutor is the wife of his ex-girlfriend may have been effective as well as the weakening of his relationship with life. When Jilet leaves, others in the coffeehouse say: "The woman thing's finished him" and add the reason as a "Always the woman thing." Rıza sells his minibus in order to pay the debts of the shopkeepers who supported him in his decision not to sell the neighborhood. "I'll exaggerate if I love" behind the minibus, his writing also coincides with the seriousness of his struggle for his love. But then, it was up to their Far Eastern fighters to fight Rıza and his friends, not Timur Arslan and his foreign partners, just as the sultans did not come himself and sent his soldiers to kill Ayperi. (The statement of Rıza and the others that the fighters are the "The Shanghai Five" has been excluded from the analysis because it can be read in the context of macroeconomics and politics instead of gender.) One of the shopkeepers, who decided to fight for the neighborhood together with Rıza, gets angry with his own son, who does not want to fight and he says, "A grudge against his uncles" to emphasize that this feature of his son does not descend from him. It moves away from nature and turns into an element of comedy. His son emphasizes "dialogue" by saying, "Violence solves

nothing”, while he moves away from “being a young man” and turns into an element of comedy. Thus, avoiding a fight when necessary is negative for the film. Another of those who decide to fight for the neighborhood with Rıza, fights by saying that he is Pehlivan Ahmet’s grandson. However, while Rıza fights for the neighborhood, the prophecy comes true, Rıza’s face is injured and has a scar. Thus Rıza becomes a hero. When one of the fighters who fight together with Rıza faints, another gives him artificial respiration, and when the fainted man regains consciousness, he is uncomfortable with the presence of a man on him, emphasizing that he is a “family men.”

Ayperı wants to get rid of captivity and she thinks that Rıza was not the hero of her own story because she thought that while Rıza was trying to save the neighborhood he also prevents her and her hero’s union she asks asked Rıza, “Why come between me and my hero?” she resents. Rıza also told Ayperı, “But I’d never make a hero, right? A hero has to have money, a fancy car, tower blocks... She’s learning about life. Money is sweeter” he replies. On top of that, Ayperı slaps Rıza. According to Rıza, Ayperı preferred a rich man. This representation is the repetition of the relationship between Neriman and Jilet.

Neriman still wears the necklace that Jilet bought for her years ago; to Timur Arslan, “I’m leaving. Don’t ask where. You already know”<sup>11</sup> she says and takes off her wedding ring. Timur Arslan also breaks the glass of the model of the urban transformation project when Neriman leaves, and many things lost their meaning when he lost his woman in terms of his own story. When Neriman goes to the minibus stop and calls out “Jilet”, Jilet does not look back because Jilet is the nickname of the hero, whereas he is no longer a hero. Neriman is also “The great flame of Suriçi”, according to Jilet. “Jilet is no more. They call me Gimpy now. Because I limp. Some things don’t work out. But I gave it my best shot. Suriçi’s great flame.. And in that flame... I lost a leg and my name” he says. Neriman was punished because she left the man she loved and married a rich man, and Jilet was punished because he loved a woman he could not be with or because he did not fight for that woman.

When Madame dies, Rıza’s mother is confronted again with the death of her own husband. Rıza’s mother still hasn’t taken off her ring. She tells Rıza that his father bought television because he was happy when Rıza was born. It is a symbolic event deciding to return to life for Rıza’s mother that after Madame dies, she gets rid of the television. Rıza leaves the television in front of the children she chased in front of Madam’s house so that they can break the television with a soccer ball.

While Timur Arslan’s men burn Madam’s house, Ayperı, who turned away from her real hero, is also inside the house; when Timur Arslan’s son sees that the house is on fire, he runs away even though he knows that Ayperı is inside. Hearing the fire

11 “I’m leaving. Don’t ask why. You already know.” This is the official subtitle of the movie. The official translation of this line does not fully convey the meaning. Therefore, our own translation is used in this line.

and that Ayperi is inside, Rıza rushes into the burning house without even thinking that he is a hero since he is already an existential hero. Ayperi, who deserves to be punished by rejecting her hero, is stuck in the burning house; however, she waits for Rıza to save herself by counting as Rıza waits for his father. From this point of view, whoever is Rıza's father to Rıza, to Ayperi Rıza is that person. Positioning the man she loves like a father can be associated with the Electra complex. The female character, who is portrayed as passive throughout the entire narrative, actively expresses her love for the hero who saves her from the fire by kissing him on the lips. One of the neighbors who fought with Rıza while watching their kiss, the other one warns him not to watch, but he says, "He's kissing her on the lips. I haven't kissed my wife of 30 years like that." In Madam's chest, which Ayperi saved from the fire, there is a deed that shows Madam left the house to Rıza. When Rıza learns about this situation, although he is sad that his house is on fire, he accepts that the house is on fire and wants to light his cigarette in the fire of his house, which he could not light because of the lighter that did not burn from time to time throughout the movie.

### ***Analysis of Telling Tales with Critical Discourse Analysis***

#### ***Micro Structures:***

##### **Film's Introduction Sequence and Credits:**

In the introductory sequence of the movie, while fairy tales are told with a voice over, the images are realized with cartoons, which is one of the popular genres for the transfer of fairy tales in the cinema. The film begins with the words "Once upon a time in a land far away the other side of Mount Qaf" just like the fairy tale that forms the basic pattern of its narrative and prepares the audience for the story with the introduction of fairy tales. In the tale, the entire plot of the film is told to the audience beforehand. Thus, just as those who listen to the tales can predict the end.<sup>12</sup> the audience also anticipates that the main and beautiful girl Ayperi will be saved by her hero. The credits of the movie, Ayperi's blood and the flowers sprouting from that blood are red; other details are black and white. The credits of the movie take place above the storytelling.

#### ***Macro Structures:***

##### **Plot:**

Although the plot is explained in the previous section, to be summarized, the film is the story of Rıza, who becomes a hero while saving the main girl who needs to be saved from a curse. On the contrary, the love between Neriman and Jilet, which is the side story of the movie, remained unfinished. As a result of the symbolization of love with fire for both stories, Rıza emerged from the fire as a hero, while Jilet lost his name and leg.

<sup>12</sup> Electra complex is a term coined by Carl Gustav Jung to explain a girl's interest in her father, based on the Oedipus complex that Sigmund Freud revealed while explaining the boy's interest in his mother (Great Larousse, 1993: 3609).

**Venues and Representation:**

The fairy tale universe of the movie is the time Ayperi lives, and its place and time are unknown. Public spaces in the movie: Neighborhood, coffee shop, minibus stop, repair shop, places of worship (mosque and church), Timur's office and they are all belong to men, it is exceptional in the movie that women enter those areas. Another exceptional case is the femme fatale of the film, Neriman, attending the business dinner as Timur Arslan's wife. In this scene, the boredom of Neriman and the quarrel between she and Timur describes that this situation should not happen.

The minibus is the vehicle used by the women in the neighborhood to reach the gathering with other women that they go to gossip. Private areas in the movie: The house where Rıza lived with her mother, the house where Madam later started to live with Ayperi, and the houses where the women in the neighborhood gathered. These areas are predominantly reserved for women.

There are also spatial descriptions in terms of center-periphery and urban transformation in the film. The film uses an international urban transformation project that will enable the center to transform the environment as one of the plots. The center is the wealth and comfort that will entice the main girls, and the environment (Suriçi) is patterned with the sincerity that the main girl will endure and live happily with her heroine forever.

**Main characters and Representation:**

Rıza: Not aware of the fact that the hero of the tale told by her father when he was a child is himself, Rıza is not willing to be a hero at first, but he cannot escape from being a hero in the process and tries to fulfill the requirements of being a hero. As stated earlier, Rıza tells that he is the hero of Ayperi and he has to buy second-hand items to her and teach her whatever he knows. The hero in the story is predefined: The person who will save Ayperi from this captivity is her hero. The person with a scar like her, ready to sacrifice everything for her, is the hero. While Rıza fights to save Ayperi and the neighborhood, the prophecy comes true, Rıza's face is injured, so Rıza becomes a hero. Ayperi asked Rıza, who she thought was not her hero, "Why come between me and my hero?" She gets angry because she wants to get rid of captivity and thinks that Rıza is preventing her by trying to save the neighborhood. Rıza also told Ayperi, "But I'd never make a hero, right? A hero has to have money, a fancy car, tower blocks. She's learning about life. Money is sweeter" he replies. Hearing the fire and that Ayperi is inside, Rıza rushes into the burning house to save Ayperi, without even thinking that he is hero, since he is already an existential hero and saves Ayperi.

Ayperi: Ayperi is beautiful, and her beauty is depicted in detail at the beginning of the movie. Apart from qualities such as being beautiful, pure and good-hearted as a fairy tale hero, personal details such as what she likes and dislikes are not told in the story. As stated earlier, the first time Ayperi saw Rıza, she asked, "You're

him, aren't you? Did you come to save me?", "Help me", she faints after saying that. Throughout the entire narrative, she waits for her hero and her hero to save her. Everyone in the neighborhood is teaching Ayperi, who has no knowledge of the time she lived in. When Rıza saw Ayperi using a hammer and displaying masculine attitudes in the repair shop, "What fairytale princess walks around with a greasy rag?" he revolts. Ayperi, as a beautiful girl and fairy tale protagonist, should be within appropriate limits for women. Ayperi wants to get rid of captivity, and she thinks that Rıza was not the hero of her own story because she thought that while Rıza was trying to save the neighborhood he also prevents her and her hero's union. She asks Rıza, "Why do you step into me and my hero?" she resents. While Timur Arslan's men burn Madam's house, Ayperi, who turned away from her real hero, is also inside the house; When Timur Arslan's son sees that the house is on fire, he runs away even though he knows that Ayperi is inside. Ayperi, who is portrayed as passive throughout the entire narrative, effectively shows her love for Rıza, the hero who saved her from the fire, by kissing her on the lips.

#### **Side characters and Representation:**

**Jilet (Razor):** He is the hero that Rıza adopted as a role model when he was little. As the shadow of Rıza, it shows that the hero who does not fight for the woman he loves will lose both the woman he loves and his social status. As stated earlier, Jilet, whose woman he loves married to Timur Arslan, gives Rıza "brotherly advice; I loved her. It cost me heavily. They just go" and says that Rıza should not trust women. Although Neriman regrets and comes back to him, she has lost her own identity. When the woman he loves calls out "Jilet", he does not look back because Jilet is the nickname of the hero, whereas he is no longer a hero. Jilet was punished because he loved a woman he couldn't be with or because he did not actually fight for that woman.

**Neriman:** She is in the foreground with her feminine image in the movie. Neriman accepts the male-dominated and sexist discourse. "Neriman, The great flame of Suriçi" is also aware that she is a femme fatale. As the bad woman of the story, she causes the destruction of the man who is in love with her and emphasizes the shadow side of the woman motif in the tale. She was punished with unhappiness because she left the man she loved and married a rich man she did not love, preferring to move from the periphery to the center.

**Rıza's Father:** Although he plays one of the founding roles in the story, he is a character far from the 'male idea', which cannot be considered as an idol for a child who wants to be an ordinary and hero. He proposes an alternative ending to the tale with the words "If she'd studied, she'd have a job and not depend on anyone." When Rıza gave up fighting for Ayperi, "Strangers are about to walk off with the girl and the neighborhood" he gets angry and persuades her son to fight again.

**Rıza's Mother:** After the death of Rıza's father, she did not take off her ring and remained faithful to her husband. It is seen that her reaction to gossiping women in the neighborhood or the attitude towards the crowd gathered in front of Madam's house, as well as everyday details such as the breakfast that she did not prepare properly, destroyed the definition of the ideal mother. As stated earlier, Rıza's mother is a mother of a man, a woman like a man, rather than a woman. The absence of her husband forced Rıza's mother to become a man.

**Madam:** She is a woman who is devoted to her husband and her memories, against the renewal of the neighborhood with urban transformation. She embraces Ayperi and gives advice about her relations with Rıza. Even if she doesn't tell Rıza that she left her own house to Rıza, she does her good deeds in secret. In addition to being a hero and gaining Ayperi and her social status, Rıza's other award is this house.

**Ezgi:** Since Ezgi is engaged and belongs to another man according to Rıza, he respects this situation even though he is upset. Thus, it turns out that Ezgi, whom Rıza waits every day in front of his school with his minibus, is not the main girl of the story; but thanks to the relationship between them, the stories of Rıza and Jilet are transferred to the audience.

**Rıza's friends and Rıza's father's friends:** While they support and reproduce the dominant male discourses with their sentences and looks, they are in solidarity with Rıza so that he can be a hero.

**Other men in the neighborhood:** They are in favor of urban transformation. In this situation, men's relationship with the economy is decisive: unlike women who go out and gossip all day, men have debts, relations with the economy, and they think that they can pay off their debts with the money to be obtained from the sale of the neighborhood.

**Other women in the neighborhood:** Throughout the film, the fact that most of the female characters gossip plays an important role in the depiction. Women who lead a life free from economic activities and production in the private sphere see gossip as a way of life.

**Sultan of Sultans:** Due to her beauty, Ayperi becomes the rival of another woman, who is defined by her father as the daughter of the sultan of sultans. The norm-determining nature of Ayperi's beauty causes the daughter of the sultan of sultans to be disliked and not preferred. Not being preferred by other men has been a source of great sadness for the daughter of the sultan of the sultans; her father, who cannot stand the sadness of his daughter, decides to have Ayperi killed. While the villain of the tale is the sultan of sultans and his soldiers, the villains of the present time, where Rıza is, are rich people in suits who want to buy Madam's house and bring the urban transformation project to life. The richness of the villains underlined in

the film is not a class criticism but rather to emphasize the poor but self-sacrificing side of the hero.

Timur Arslan: He is the evil character in the relations between Jilet and Neriman directly and is the evil character between Rıza and Ayperi not directly but through his son. In addition to separating the lovers, it can be associated with both male-dominated discourse and profit-oriented economic understanding with all its words and actions.

### **Conclusion And Discussion**

In this study, it is stated that the conventions about gender are reproduced in the collective subconscious, in myths, fairy tales and contemporary arts. It has been stated that since cinema is both an art form and a mass media product, it provides an opportunity to conduct research on gender, like other phenomena that concern the society. In this context, the fantastic Turkish movie, *Telling Tales*, which reached the highest number of viewers in 2015, was analyzed in the context of gender.

The assumption in the study is that gender conventions sometimes impose a heavy burden on women and sometimes on men, describing women as overly passive and men as more active than they can handle. These conventions, reproduced in the myths, the tales they originate from, and in the cinema, impose the possible responses of a refusal, while imposing what their lives should be like within the imaginary limits they offer to men who cannot be like the heroes in the narratives and to women who cannot be saved by the men who look like those heroes.

In this context, what should be underlined in the readings of the film is that, in addition to including the motifs of gender in the film, it also contains a binary opposition regarding gender as mentioned above. In the film, Neriman can be read as Ayperi's shadow and Jilet as Rıza's shadow. Although Ayperi rejected her real hero and was interested in the rich man, this situation did not last long; as a punishment, she was content with staying in a burning house; Neriman could not escape from eternal unhappiness and captivity. Rıza, was rewarded with "award-women and the rise of social status" (Sezer, 2014: 20), unlike Jilet, who did not shy away from the duty of "heroism, which is the main criterion of man's worthiness" (Sezer, 2014: 20) and refused to fight for his love. On the other hand, unlike Ayperi, who can be reached the character of Neriman, who cannot be reached, is a fantasy element according to Zizek, who explains fantasy in Lacanian theory, states that "the subject (...) corresponds to the 'impossible' relationship that the subject (...) establishes with the object-cause" (Zizek, 2010: 19).

Although the fairytale-like narrative of the movie states that the beautiful woman can only be saved by her hero, it is undeniable that the sentence interpreted as "anecdote" in the film gives hope in real life, if it is ignored that educated people who are mobbing to their colleagues in terms of gender: "If she'd studied, she'd have a job and not depend on anyone."

The text analysis part of the study seems to be producing a more structuralist perspective, whereas the discourse analysis part is post-structuralist. Additionally, while the text analysis is sufficient to underline the relations and similarities between the tales and film, the adapted discourse analysis uncovers the relations between gender and spaces. However, in the study, although the text analysis part includes a more traditional reading, it is observed that the classification used by Ekinci (2014) for film analysis, adapted from Van Dijk's discourse analysis, is also coherent.

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