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Active male protagonists versus passive female supporting characters: A study on the portrayal of women in the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix

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Citation

Klercq, R. (2022). *Active male protagonists versus passive female supporting characters: A study on the portrayal of women in the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix.*

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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Thesis MA Middle Eastern Studies, Leiden University

Active male protagonists versus passive female supporting characters:

A study on the portrayal of women in the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix

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August 13, 2021

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Word count: 19838



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Abstract

This study analyses the portrayal of women in Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix. With the help of three concepts from feminist film theory, namely male gaze, male voice and female subjectivity, and with the help from earlier studies on the portrayal of women in Turkish films, it finds that women in the Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix are overall portrayed in more passive ways than men, that the female characters often play a supporting role as compared to the male characters and that the concepts from feminist film theorists can still be applied to recently released films. Some films in the corpus however also contain feminist themes and elements, such as female protagonists and female characters that are not occupied with a search for love, but focus on their own personal development. This study concludes that while women are overall not portrayed in a positive way in the corpus, these feminist themes show a promising development that will hopefully continue in the future.

Keywords: Turkey, film analysis, Netflix, male gaze, male voice, female subjectivity

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Introduction

In Yılmaz Erdoğan's film *Jolly Life* [Neşeli Hayat] (Erdoğan, 2009), which can be seen on the Dutch Netflix, we follow Riza, a troubled working-class man who is trying to navigate through society and who tries his best to provide for his family. Riza is married to Ayla, who plays a much smaller role than Riza. Riza is the male protagonist; we follow him on his journey and we know what his thoughts and feelings are. This is not the same for Ayla; she plays a supporting role. The only times when we see Ayla throughout the film, she is inside the house, either cooking, doing the household or consolidating her husband when he shares his problems with her. We however never hear about her own problems and we do not learn what is going in her own life.

Turkish films and television series often portray and reproduce political and societal developments, as well as prevailing values, norms and challenges within society (De Bruijn, 2019). In the case of *Jolly Life*, the prevailing norm that men take on a more active role in society as opposed to women is portrayed and reproduced. This is problematic, according to Suner (2010), because this reinforces the existence of the patriarchal culture in Turkish society. Suner has found that the passive presence of female characters as opposed to a more active presence of male characters is a common element in Turkish films, and *Jolly Life* is thus not a unique example (2010, p. 163).

As I was searching through the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix, this led me to wonder whether we can recognise this difference in the portrayal of men and females in other Turkish films on Netflix as well, or whether the female characters in other films that can be found on the platform are portrayed in alternate ways. Because Netflix has grown into a serious competitor for cinema and the TV in the last few years,¹ and because it is especially an important platform for younger people who now watch Netflix more than the TV (Matrix, 2014), it is interesting to find out what image of women is portrayed to the audience of the Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix. If women only play passive and supporting roles in these films, while the men play the role of the active protagonist, this can portray the message to the audience of these films that women take on a more passive role in society, which, as Suner has argued, is highly problematic.

¹ As of the end of 2020, Netflix has 204 million subscribers in total, and in the Netherlands it has over 3 million subscribers (Netflix, 2020).

Even though Netflix has grown into such an important actor, and we thus can expect that it is an important source for people in the Netherlands who want to watch Turkish films, very little research has been done on the content of Netflix and the implications of its content, which I will show in the section on the *State of the art*. Through analysing how women are portrayed in the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix, we can get an idea of the image of women the audience of the Dutch Netflix receives when watching the Turkish films that are on the platform, and this will thus be the subject of this study.

State of the art

Before discussing the theoretical framework and methodology that will form the basis of this study, it is important to first describe what has been published before specifically on this topic. If we search for publications on the portrayal of women in the Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix, we only find a small article about *Clair Obscur* [Tereddüt] (Ustaoğlu, 2016), a film that portrays the oppression of women in the modern Turkish society, as VPRO Cinema (n.d.) describes.

If we make our search scope a bit more broad and look for publications that discuss Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix, we only find some articles that announce the arrival of new films on the platform, but there is no discussion on the content of these films. This differs when we would search for Turkish series on the Dutch Netflix; the content of the recently released shows *Ethos* [Bir Başkadır] and *Fatma* has been addressed in for example newspaper articles and on websites (Beemsterboer, 2021; Schudel, 2021).

When searching for the portrayal of women in Turkish films on Netflix in general, we again do not find any noteworthy publications. There are however some publications that discuss Netflix and Turkish, or other international, content on the platform, and Netflix its policies towards releasing content. This will be discussed more in depth in chapter 2, but it is already interesting to mention that the release of Turkish Netflix Originals is likely to increase in the upcoming years, as Netflix has declared its goal to start more projects in Turkey in the near future, and to open up a Netflix office in Istanbul (Vivarelli, 2021).

If we again take a broader focus and search for publications that address the portrayal of women in Turkish films, and thus leave Netflix out of the picture, we find numerous studies. Suner (2010) her discussion has already been mentioned in the earlier part of the introduction, but we can also find studies by Dönmez-Colin (2004, 2010), Atakav (2013) and Güçlü (2016). I will explain the content of these studies and their most important findings regarding the portrayal of women in Turkish films in the first chapter.

If we search for publications on the general portrayal of women in films, we find many studies, especially from feminist film theorists. Examples are the essays by Mulvey (1975), De Lauretis (1984), Silverman (1988) and Smelik (1995). The studies of these feminists film theorists will form the theoretical framework in this study, and these studies will be elaborated on later on in the Introduction.

Research question

The state of the art has shown that not much has been written about the portrayal of women in the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix. Taking a broader scope, we do find that a lot has been written about the portrayal of women in Turkish films and series, and more generally about the portrayal of women in films, from a feminist film theory perspective. As mentioned in the earlier part of the introduction, it is however interesting to combine the study of women in (Turkish) films with an analysis of the Turkish films that are on Netflix, because Netflix has grown into such an important streaming service, especially for younger people. The following research question will therefore be central in this study:

How are women portrayed in the corpus of Turkish films, as of 1 May 2021, on the Dutch Netflix?

I have included the date of 1 May 2021 in the research question because Netflix continuously makes changes to its content by removing titles or by announcing new films. In this study, the corpus of Turkish films as of 1 May 2021 has been analysed, and films that were part of the corpus but were removed before that date, or films that were added later, are not included in this study.

Theoretical and conceptual framework

To analyse the portrayal of women in the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix, this study builds upon multiple concepts from feminist film theory, as was previously mentioned. This theoretical branch developed in the 1970s in the United States and was influenced by the Second Feminist Movement. In its early years the field mainly took a semiotic and historical approach, based on sociological methods. Rosen (1973) and Haskell (1987) for example analysed the historical position of women in the Hollywood films of the 1940s and 1950s. Through analysing the narratives in these films, these works argue that Hollywood films do not accurately reflect reality and that they do not show ‘real’ women, but only the stereotypical

images of what was perceived to be “femininity”. The female audience therefore is not able to relate to the characters on screen (Smelik, 1995). Meanwhile, feminist film analysis in Europe were influenced by a combination of Marxism and psychoanalysis. From a Marxist point of view, feminist film analysts started to pay attention to films as consumer items to be sold, and from psychoanalysis feminist film analysts learned to analyse the way desire and subjectivity are conveyed through films (Smelik, 1995).

The single most well-known concept from feminist film theory is Laura Mulvey’s concept of male gaze (Mulvey, 1975; 1989; Mulvey & Rogers, 2015). This concept was introduced by John Berger in 1972 to analyse the treatment of nudity in European paintings, but later feminist film theorists adopted the term. In her seminal work ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’ (1975), Mulvey argues that the asymmetry of power between men and women in the world also influences the way men and women are portrayed in films. Women often have passive roles in films, and they are sexual objects to be enjoyed by the male viewer. The concept of male gaze draws attention to how we often come to learn of the woman in films through a masculine perspective, as the camera follows her every movement when she enters a scene. We do not know what her feelings, thoughts and own sexual drives are, and we do not know who she is as a person; we only know what her body looks like. In some cases, the camera fixates on the shapes and the individual body parts of the female character, reinforcing the idea even more that she is not a subject, but an object to be enjoyed by men. The woman thus is passive and subordinate, while the man is active and holds power. Women in cinema are characterized by their “to-be-looked-at-ness”, according to Mulvey, and men are the “bearers of the look”. Mulvey argues that there are three different “bearers of the look” that view the woman as an erotic object of desire in film: the male character, whose eyes are fixated on the woman, the camera, which films and looks at the woman from the point of view of the male character, and thirdly, the audience, as they often automatically and unconsciously identify with the male character who does the looking (Smelik, 1995). The male characters and the audience participate in behaviours of voyeurism, fetishism and scopophilia (which denotes the pleasure we get from looking at objects of persons) by objectifying and eroticizing the female character, and by enjoying the gazing.

The concept of male gaze has received a lot of critique over the years. The concept for example treats sexuality in a heteronormative way; it assumes that only sexual relationships exist between heterosexual men and heterosexual women, and it furthermore sees a binary distinction between men and women. Mulvey also ignores that there can be a ‘female gaze’ or a female spectator (Doane, 1982), and the concept is Western-based and only used by Mulvey

to explain the 'to-be-looked-at-ness' of white female film characters in Hollywood films (Benson-Allott, 2017). It is important to take this critique on the concept of male gaze in account when applying it, especially the Western bias of the concept, as this study focuses on the portrayal of women in films in a non-Western country. Despite the limitations of the concept and the fact that it has been applied frequently in the analysis of women in films, I argue that it is still a relevant theory. Previous studies on the portrayal of women in Turkish films have found that the female characters in these films are often objects of male desire, and that rape scenes are a recurrent theme (Dönmez-Colin, 2004). The male gaze is inherently connected to this, and it is thus relevant to use the concept in this study.

Kaja Silverman (1988) has extended Mulvey's concept of male gaze. Silverman argues that not only are women in films subjected to the gaze, they are also subjected to the male voice, which means that she is under "double surveillance" (Silverman, 1990, p. 312). The female voice is often used to reaffirm the dominance of the male characters over the narrative, which further erases the subjectivity and agency of female characters. Güçlü (2016, p. 80) for example argues that the female voice in films is often "unreliable, thwarted or acquiescent", and that women often make themselves heard through crying, screaming or mumbling, while the male voice on the contrary is corrective and informing, and thus holds authority. The concept of female voice thus draws our attention to the discursive power in cinema, which, like the visual power, belongs to the male and not to the female. Silverman's theory about male and female voice is especially relevant for this study on the portrayal of women in recently published Turkish films, because silent female characters are a recurrent theme in Turkish films (Güçlü, 2016). It is interesting to see whether these silent female characters can also be recognised in the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix, considering that most of these films are commercial films, and these silent women have mainly been present in arthouse films, as we can see in Güçlü her study.

Related to both the theories of male gaze and male voice is the concept of female subjectivity. Because the male is in control of both the visual and discursive power, female subjectivity is completely erased from the narrative. One of the key authors that has written about female subjectivity is Teresa de Lauretis (1984, 1987). De Lauretis argues that 'woman' is often represented as the 'other', as being different from man. This 'woman' is not a representation of actual 'women', but merely an understanding of 'woman' from a male perspective, or a male desire about what a woman should be (Smelik, 1995). The concept of female subjectivity thus shows that a woman in a film can never be a subject, but merely a subject of male desire, and women in films can thus not represent actual women, but only the

male understanding of what it means to be a woman. The specific types of women that have been prevalent in Turkish films are also male, or patriarchal, understandings of what it means to be woman, and this concept is therefore also relevant in this study (Dönmez-Colin, 2004; Atakav, 2013).

Methodology

To be able to provide an answer to the research question, and to analyse to what extent we can recognise the concepts of male gaze, male voice and female subjectivity in the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix, I will watch and analyse the 57 films that are part of the corpus as of 1 May 2021. To systematically analyse the portrayal of women in these films, I will use a template, which can be found in Appendix 1. As can be seen in the template, I will analyse how many male and female characters a film contains, the roles that the male and female characters play in the film, how passive or active the characters are, what is said about the female characters by male characters, whether the concepts from feminist film theory are present in the film and whether the findings from previous studies on the portrayal of women in Turkish films, which will be discussed in Chapter 1, can be found as well.

Hence, in my analysis I mainly focus on the roles of the characters, the things that are said about and between the male and the female characters and the narrative within the film. Bordwell et al. (2019, p. 73) define the narrative as the “chain of events linked by cause and effect and occurring in time and space”, or, with other words, the story that is told by the filmmaker. Filmmakers can also tell a story, or influence how their story is perceived by the audience, through the mise-en-scene. This is the way in which the stage is designed or the way actors are arranged (Bordwell et al., p. 113), and I will also consider this in my analysis of the films. Lastly, the cinematography of the film is important to take into account. Cinematography has everything to do with the camerawork and how the film is captured, such as the length of shots, the lighting, the colours and the adding of contrast (Bordwell et al., 2019, p. 159). Because the cinematography also influences how the story is told and perceived by the audience, and thus can influence how the female characters are portrayed, I will also take this with me in the analysis.

The corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix consists of 57 films as of 1 May 2021, and to make the analysis of the portrayal of women in the corpus more insightful, I will make a categorisation of the films according to genre, with the help from data from IMDB. I will elaborate on this process of categorisation more in Chapter 2. In the same chapter I will also provide information about the release years, revenues and ratings of the films, for which I have

also used the numbers that can be found on the IMDB-pages of these films, and which anyone can thus access.

In my analysis of the portrayal of women in these films, I will make use of examples from various films. These films will be selected on the basis of their IMDB-ratings and their gross world-wide revenue according to IMDB, and thus their popularity. For a film to be used as an example in the analysis, it must have either a high rating or a high revenue, or both. I will also select some films as an example that do not have a high rating or high revenues, but because these films portray women in a particular interesting way that yields some interesting points for discussion, it is also relevant to use them in the analysis.

I use the open source data from IMDB, because numbers from Netflix about the popularity of the films on their platform are not openly accessible. I have tried to contact Netflix by calling them, through the chat function on their website and through Instagram and Facebook, in an attempt to get access to their viewing numbers, but unfortunately I have not been able to reach them. I also tried to contact Netflix to receive more information about the reasons why the platform chooses to release certain films and not others, as this decision-making process is also of importance in this study. Unfortunately, I have also not received a response from the platform about this. Therefore, for the discussion of Netflix's content policies, which will be elaborated on in chapter 2, I will mainly use the openly accessible information that can be found on Netflix's website.

Chapter outline

In Chapter 1 I will give a historical background on Turkish cinema and I will describe how cinema in Turkey has developed over the years. The Yeşilçam-period, which was the heyday of Turkish cinema, will be explained more in depth. I will furthermore pay attention to the New Cinema of Turkey which emerged after the Yeşilçam-period, and to developments that occurred more recently. I will lastly discuss how women have been portrayed throughout the history of Turkish cinema.

Chapter 2 will first of all describe what the policies of Netflix are regarding releasing new content. Knowing the reasons why Netflix decides to release certain films on their platform and not others, in which women may be portrayed differently for example, will be relevant information for the conclusion of this study. After that, I will give a descriptive analysis of the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix. The films will be categorised according to genre, and information about the release dates, the revenues, the ratings and the directors of these films will be given.

In Chapter 3 I will analyse how women are portrayed in the corpus of Turkish films. I will discuss the portrayal of women in each of the three genres separately by giving examples from some of the films. I will discuss to what extent we can recognise the concepts from feminist film theory in these films, and whether we can recognise the findings from earlier studies on the portrayal of women in Turkish films, which will be discussed in Chapter 1. I will also discuss feminist themes and elements that can be found within the corpus.

Finally, in the Conclusion I will answer the research question, and I will point to some interesting directions for future research.

Limitations

Before we move on to Chapter 1, it is important to pay attention to some of the limitations of this study. First of all, because I do not speak Turkish, I had to rely on the English subtitles of the Turkish films. While there is no doubt about it that the subtitles on Netflix are of high quality, some of the deeper meanings, symbolism and nuances of the narratives may have been lost in translation. I furthermore could only rely on works on Turkish cinema and women in Turkish cinema that were written in English, and even though the works that this study cites are very valuable, some interesting literature may thus have been missed because it was only available in Turkish. Nevertheless, because the sources that were used in this study as background information on the portrayal of women in Turkish films and the history of Turkish cinema are of such a wide variety, there is no doubt that the most important developments and debates are covered.

Chapter 1: The history of cinema in Turkey

Before I begin with my analysis of the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix, it is important first to give a historical background on how cinema in Turkey has developed over time, and how women have been portrayed so far in Turkish films. This chapter will follow Arslan's (2011, p. xi) division of Turkish cinema into three eras, namely, first of all, the pre-Yeşilçam era, which lasted until the late 1940s, secondly, the Yeşilçam era, which lasted from the 1950s until the 1980s, and thirdly, the post-Yeşilçam era, or the new cinema of Turkey, which began in the early 1990s. This chapter will end with a discussion of the gender roles, gender roles and gender stereotypes in the cinema of Turkey.

Pre-Yeşilçam era

The early beginnings of cinema in Turkey date back to the 1890s, when private screenings were held in the palace for the sultan's court. The first movie theatre was opened in 1908 in Istanbul, and this one was quickly followed by several others. By the 1910s, the first Turkish films had been produced; a documentary and some feature films. Cinema slowly started to proliferate from the 1920s to the 1940s, which is also seen as the period of "theatre-makers" in Turkish film history (Suner, 2010, p. 2). Cinema during these years was almost exclusively dominated by the theatre actor and director Muhsin Ertuğrul, who considered theatre to be a superior performing art to film. According to him, films were mainly a means through which filmed versions of plays could be produced (Arslan, 2011, p. 9).

Not only the most prominent filmmaker of that time had a disinterest towards the art of cinema; the state itself also did not consider filmmaking to be an art. When the Ottoman Empire was dissolved and the Turkish Republic was founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, a process of westernization and modernization started. The republican elite attempted to create a modern, civilized nation with a new national and homogenized 'Turkish' culture that disregarded Ottoman and Islamic culture. Traditional Ottoman-style clothing was exchanged for Western-style clothing, the Arabic script was replaced with Latin script and Western conceptions of art were adopted (Arslan, 2009, p. 8). Cinema did however not play a role in this creation of a new national culture, as it was not considered to be a form of high art, unlike for example theatre and literature.

Because of this disinterest of the republican elite in cinema, cinema was not subjected to the strong regulations and guidelines that the other forms of art had to adhere to, and unlike the high arts, cinema was not centrally managed and mediated. During the early years of the

Republic, cinema consequently became a private enterprise, and film-makers remained relatively independent. Besides the adaptations from theatre plays, other popular genres during this period were action-adventure films, family melodramas, comedies and urban and village dramas, and films were often adapted from films made in the West (Arslan, 2011, p. 9).

The period of “theatre-makers” came to an end in the 1940s. These years were a transition period during which the theatre-oriented approach was replaced by a more cinematic style, which marks the commencement of the era of “cinema-makers”. New directors who had no prior experience in theatre and who were educated abroad entered the scene and a few production companies were established during these years, and this denotes the beginning of the Yeşilçam-era in the cinema of Turkey (Suner, 2010, p. 3).

Yeşilçam era

By the 1950s, cinema in Turkey had finally become a truly popular form of entertainment. New directors and production houses entered the scene, but the audience of domestic cinema also increased. Because of the urbanization, industrialization and economic growth that the post-Second World War period brought forth, cinema became available to a larger public, and as a result of this, cinema started to flourish (Erdoğan & Göktürk, 2001). The political climate also changed during this period: the Democratic Party won the 1950 elections, which meant an end to the power of the Republican People’s Party. The Democratic Party emphasized populism and rule of the people, and Turkey changed from a single-party regime to a multi-party democracy (Zürcher, 2017, p. 223), which also made cinema accessible to everyone.

Another important development during this period is the 1948 municipal entertainment tax reform, which reduced the tax on the ticket price for domestic films to 25 percent, while the tax on the ticket price for foreign films remained 70 percent. Because film production now became much more profitable, and because the audience for domestic films increased drastically, the Turkish film industry got an immense boost during the 1950s. In 1952, only four years after the tax reform, fifty-six films were made, while only eighteen films were produced in 1948. This number of annually produced films slowly increased during the 1950s: between 1958 and 1961 approximately 100 films were produced each year, by 1966 more than 200 films were produced, and in 1972 this number increased to over 300. After that, the number of annually produced films stabilized at 200, until the 1980 military coup (Arslan, 2011, p. 10).

The height of popular Turkish cinema is also referred to as Yeşilçam (literally: Green Pine), which was the street in Istanbul where many of the production houses were located. Yeşilçam also refers to the mode of filmmaking and the specific narrative and stylistic formulae

that were dominant during these years, comparable to the use of the term ‘Hollywood’ (Güçlü, 2016, p. 31). Most of the Yeşilçam films were low budget, and there were various ways through which production costs were kept low. Very often handheld cameras were used instead of more professional filming equipment, films were shot in a very fast pace, in periods ranging from a few days to a few months, and films were dubbed in order to save money on audio equipment. The editing of films was often amateurish and most of the star actors did not receive formal education, but were recruited through star contests. Actors even frequently had to bring their own costumes to set, in order to save costs on costume design (Arslan, 2011, p. 16).

Popular genres during the Yeşilçam period were melodrama, comedy, historical action and gangster films. A new genre that emerged in the 1970s is the politicized, social-realist film, which was mostly brought forth by Yılmaz Güney (Suner, 2010, pp. 5-6). As an actor, Güney became known as the “ugly king” of action films. His rough looks and anti-hero image in Yeşilçam action films was a stark contrast to the handsome and polished men that dominated Turkish melodrama and romantic comedies, and this made Güney one of the most popular star actors of the Yeşilçam era. Güney started directing in the 1970s, and he mainly made political films that addressed the everyday problems of common people in Turkish society. He was sentenced to prison in 1972 for seven years because he had sheltered anarchist students, but he was pardoned in 1974. In the same year however he was imprisoned again, this time for murder. Güney wrote several film scripts during his years in prison, and these were filmed by his assistants Zeki Ökten and Şerif Gören.

One of the scripts that Güney wrote in prison was the script of the film *The Way* [Yol] (Güney & Gören, 1982), which was awarded the Palme d’Or at the 1982 Cannes Film Festival. *The Way* is one of the most legendary and internationally acclaimed Turkish films to date, partly because of the way in which it was created: the film was shot in 1980 by Gören, but because Güney escaped prison in 1981 and fled to France, he himself could edit the film and finalize the production process. Because *The Way* presents a critique on the 1980 military coup, it was banned in Turkey during the 1980s. The film finally appeared in cinemas and on television in the 1990s (Suner, 2010, p. 6).

In the late 1970s, Yeşilçam cinema slowly started to decline (Arslan, 2011, p. 100). The audience for Yeşilçam films diminished because of the earlier mentioned low quality of the domestic films as compared to Hollywood films, and also because of the expansion of television broadcasting. The political turmoil of the period also impacted the decline of the Yeşilçam cinema; members of the far-left and far-right political organizations, Islamist militant groups and the state were fighting each other in the late 1970s, and because of the political violence, it

was no longer safe for people to attend public events. This especially prevented families from going to the cinema, which were the main audience of Yeşilçam cinema. At the same time, the production of films also decreased because production houses could not keep up with the increasing costs of filmmaking. As a result of the shrunken audience and the increasing costs of filmmaking, Yeşilçam started to focus on the production of soft-core pornographic films in the late 1970s (Suner, 2010, pp. 6-7).

The decline of the Yeşilçam-era was further strengthened by the military coup of 12 September 1980. On this day, the armed forces took over political power to restore order and save democracy, because the military no longer believed that the state institutions were able to make an end to the political turmoil that commenced in the 1970s. The military therefore dissolved parliament, all political parties, all mayors and all the municipal councils. Power thus became concentrated in the hands of the armed forces. The military furthermore started to hunt down suspected terrorists, but also politicians, journalists and university professors who had expressed even the vaguest leftist or Islamist ideas prior to September 1980². The military government also introduced a series of neo-liberal economic reforms, in particular privatization and deregulation, in order to unite the Turkish economy with the global economy and to prevent the Turkish economy from collapsing.

The armed forces effectively ruled the country until 1983, when new elections were held. While the political sphere remained repressed in the mid-1980s in an attempt to silence and annihilate the military coup and bring back national unity, there was increased freedom of expression on the personal and cultural front (Güçlü, 2016, p. 40). New societal movements emerged in the public sphere, of which those of Kurdish people, the LGBT communities, the lower classes and women and feminists. The 1980s was thus a very complex period during which political voices were suppressed on the one hand, sometimes even through torture and imprisonment, while social movements could express themselves more freely (Gürbilek, 2011).

As a result of the military coup, 937 film were banned (Güçlü, 2016, p. 40), of which *The Way* is one example. Filmmakers had to find new ways through which they could address the developments in society in the 1980s, because they had to prevent themselves from being overtly political. A new sub-genre that became for example popular during this period is that of ‘social comedies’ (Güçlü, 2016, p. 41). These films tell funny stories about people who try to adapt to the changing conditions in society after 1980, and most of the time they fail. The

² As a result of the coup, 650,000 people were arrested, 230,000 people were tried in court and 517 people were sentenced to death, of which 50 people were eventually executed (Zürcher, 2017. p. 284-285).

films of this genre however stay away from directly criticizing the political reasons for the societal changes.

Another genre that became popular during this period is that of women's films, which was influenced by the Second-Wave feminist movement of the 1980s. These films portray the struggles of women and they often poke fun at the double standards of men (Dönmez-Colin, 2004, p. 139; Suner, 2010, p. 164). Most of these women's films were directed by men, of which Atif Yılmaz is one of the most important names. Yılmaz has made many films with female protagonists, and he often approaches the sexuality of women in a positive way. One of his films, *Her Name is Vasfiye* [Adı Vasfiye] (1985), is often analysed by scholars who study the portrayal of women in Turkish films (Dönmez-Colin, 2004; Suner, 2010; Güçlü, 2016). In this film, we learn the story of Vasfiye, not because she herself tells it, but because it is told by five different men who have all been part of her life at some point, and who all claim to know her real story. However, the stories of the different men partly contradict each other, and we do not learn which parts are true, also because Vasfiye herself does not speak in the film. The film is nonetheless not an example of how the male perspective is prioritized in Turkish films, on the contrary, it instead makes fun of how men and women in Turkish films are portrayed in stereotypical ways, and it is a self-conscious critique on the dominant patriarchal values in Turkish cinema. Another important person to mention here is Bilge Olgaç, who is one of the few female filmmakers that shows the realities of women in a patriarchal society, and how both men and women are oppressed by the prevailing customs and traditions of the Islam and Turkish society (Dönmez-Colin, 2004, p. 145).

Despite the new film themes that were introduced after the coup of 1980, the distribution and production systems that were part of the reason of the decline of the Yeşilçam-era were not altered, and the new genres recycled Yeşilçam's melodramatic storylines, typecasting, and low-budget filmmaking. Consequently, the decline in the number of viewers and films that were produced that started in the late 1970s, continued in the 1980s. By the early 1990s, the gradual decline of Turkish cinema had become a crisis. During its ultimate low point, only around ten films were produced annually (Dorsay, 2004, p. 12, as cited in Suner, 2010, p. 8). This crisis in the Turkish filmmaking scene demarcates the end of the Yeşilçam-era, and indicates the start of a new one: the New Cinema of Turkey, which will be discussed in the next section.

New Cinema of Turkey

There are a few factors that contributed to the crisis in Turkish cinema in the early 1990s. First of all, the Turkish economy was facing difficulties and unemployment rates and bankruptcies

were high (Suner, 2010, p. 9). At the same time, as a result of the neo-liberal reforms that had been introduced a few years earlier, foreign investments had increased and foreign companies had started to open branches in Turkey in the late 1980s. Two examples of this are Warner Bros-Turkey and United International Pictures, the latter one is a joint venture of Paramount Pictures and Universal Pictures. Because of the arrival of these distribution companies, cinemas in Turkey soon started to primarily show American films. These companies also modernized the theatres, so that they now conformed to Western standards. As a result of this, ticket prices became more expensive, which consequently meant that cinema was no longer an affordable form of entertainment for the lower middle classes, which formed a large part of the audience during the Yeşilçam-era (Güçlü, 2016, p. 42). The new moviegoers instead were young urbanites from the middle- and upper-classes. Another factor that contributed to the crisis in the cinema of Turkey is the commencement of private channel broadcasting. Television series became a popular form of entertainment, which people could now watch in their homes for free, and this further decreased the demand for domestic film productions (Maktav, 2002, as cited in Suner, 2010, p. 10).

Besides the financial crisis, the 1990s were also a tumultuous period for various other reasons. Throughout these years, we can see three different clashes in Turkish society, namely between Turks and the Kurds, between Turkey and the West (in particular the European Union) and between secularists and the political Islam (Zürcher, 2017). The continuous conflict between Turkey and the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), the demands that the EU put on Turkey in order to be eligible for EU membership, and the Islamification of Turkish society, which was institutionalized when the AKP came to power in 2002 (Rabasa & Larrabee, 2008), all contributed to polarization, antagonism and 'win or lose' logic in Turkish society, but also to an increased national discourse (Altınay, 2007, p. 22).

It was under these complex societal developments that the New Cinema of Turkey was born (Akser et al., 2014). After the crisis in Turkish cinema in the early 1990s, the mid-1990s knew a remarkable revival largely due to a new generation of directors and the withdrawal of established Yeşilçam-producers. Big companies and the Ministry of Culture stepped in as new sources for funding, and this, together with the innovating ideas of the new generation of directors, increased both the quantity and the quality of films that were produced (Güçlü, 2016, p. 44). Two main categories of films emerged: commercial films with great box office successes, which, due to the use of new technologies, came close to the quality of Hollywood films, and secondly arthouse films, which started to receive critical acclaim in national and international film festivals (Suner, 2010, p. 15).

The New Cinema of Turkey to a great extent reflects the changed dynamics and the multitude of voices in Turkish society. The new cinema produced new genres, styles, themes, storylines, narrative forms and filmmaking modes, and different voices and opinions were heard in the films. One new genre is for example that of films that mock famous Hollywood blockbusters, such as the alien science fiction film *G.O.R.A.* (Sorak, 2004). These mock-films reveal the anxieties within Turkish society about the sharpened division between the East and the West, partly due to the negotiations with the EU (Güçlü, 2016, p. 46). The new cinema also introduced horror as a genre. Arslan (2011, p. 259) argues that this new genre can be related to the metaphorical horror or fear that lived in Turkish society for the Islamification of the country and the rise of the political Islam. Nationalist action films are a third emergent genre in the new cinema, which is related to the strengthened nationalist discourse within Turkish society. Fourthly, the new cinema also produces a lot of films with the themes of ‘home’ and ‘belonging’, which is also related to the growing anxiety in society because of the political, economic and social changes (Suner, 2004).

The new genres, themes and filmmaking modes that are introduced by the New Cinema of Turkey are a clear break from the Yeşilçam era, which produced films in a coherent style, with recognizable narrative and production modes. Yeşilçam was Turkey’s national cinema; made by Turks, watched by Turks and depicting Turks, and the Yeşilçam films thus failed to reflect the diversity within Turkish society. The fact that Yeşilçam films were shot without sound and dubbed in the post-production phase for example reflects the assumption that a single nation must have a single language, and that there is no room for diversity in the form of dialects or accents.

The New Cinema of Turkey is no longer a nationalist cinema, it instead portrays the multitude of voices that exist within Turkish society (Güçlü, 2016, p. 54). This is also why I use the term New Cinema of Turkey instead of the term New Turkish Cinema, which Suner (2010) for example adopts. As Arslan (2009, p. 83) and Güçlü (2016, p. 32) argue, by de-emphasizing the word ‘Turkish’, we release the new cinema from any nationalist boundaries, and from the idea that there is unity and coherence. As was argued before, the heterogeneity and diversity of the stories that are told and the voices that are heard in the New Cinema of Turkey portray the different viewpoints in Turkish society, but by using the term ‘New Turkish Cinema’, we wrongly get the idea that there is the films are made in a uniform way, while this is precisely where the new era of filmmaking differs from the Yeşilçam period (Güçlü, 2016, p. 35).

The ‘newness’ of New Cinema in Turkey must however not be understood as being completely new: some Yeşilçam themes are for example recycled and merged with the techniques of the new cinema (Akser et al., 2014). The 1996 film *The Bandit* [Eşkîya] (Turgul, 1996), is a good example of this, as it combines classical Yeşilçam themes such as redemption, sacrifice and having to choose between money and love with great special effects, cinematography, editing and a soundtrack that were of comparable quality to big Hollywood productions (Erdoğan & Göktürk, 2001). *The Bandit* is furthermore important because it was one of the earliest successes in the New Cinema of Turkey, 2.5 million people viewed the film in a movie theatre, which is a very high number compared to the viewing numbers of the early 1990s.

Also congruent with the Yeşilçam-era is the popularity of comedies in the New Cinema of Turkey. As was shown before, the new cinema of Turkey introduces a few new genres, but comedy films, for example in the form of action comedies or romantic comedies, remain the most popular. In 2001, the comedy *Vizontele*, which was the directorial debut of Yılmaz Erdoğan, surpassed the *Bandit*’s record. Erdoğan has produced many comedy films ever since, of which *Organize İşler* (2005) is a well-known example, and this makes him one of the most prominent directors within the genre. Another important director within the New Cinema of Turkey is Nuri Bilge Ceylan, who is arguable the most internationally acclaimed Turkish director in the present day (Güçlü, 2016, p. 48). While Erdoğan has been one of the most important director within mainstream cinema, Ceylan is a director within the arthouse cinema. Ceylan has won a Palm d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 2014 for his film *Winter Sleep* [Kış Uykusu], and another highly acclaimed film by Ceylan is, among others, *Once Upon A Time in Anatolia* [Bir Zamanlar Anadolu’da] (2011) (Suner, 2010, p. 77).

Following the initial surge in the mid 1990s, cinema in Turkey has continued to grow extensively throughout the 2000s and 2010s. The quality of the films that are produced is still comparable to that of Hollywood productions, and the demand for domestic films is therefore still very high. Also contributing to the high demand are the low prices of theatre tickets and the increased incomes of the audience. As a consequence, films have become an affordable and popular form of entertainment again, especially among young people and students, who now make up a large part of the audience for domestic films. The commercial blockbusters are furthermore very popular among the Turkish diaspora living in the West, and the Turkish arthouse films directed by Ceylan and others are well received during international film festivals (Cetin-Erus & Erus, 2020, p. 568).

The portrayal of women in Turkish films

Now that the history of cinema in Turkey has been outlined, it is important for the analysis to look at the ways in which women have been portrayed in Turkish films throughout history. The study of the portrayal of women in Turkish films goes back to the Turkish cinema of the early 20th century. Until the start of the New Cinema of Turkey, there were two types of female characters in Turkish films.

The first type of character, which has been the most popular since the early years of Turkish cinema at the beginning of the 20th century, is the ‘bad’ girl, or the prostitute, vamp, or femme fatale. Her goal is to seduce men and lead them on the wrong path, she is vicious and experiments freely with her sexuality. This type of woman is responsible for the destruction of man and she furthermore poses a threat to marriage and family life. The choices that are left to women like these are either to accept their fate or to change their lives and embrace the values of Islam. Most often, however, this type of woman in the end is punished by death, or she is raped and later commits suicide. Dönmez-Colin (2004, p. 14) for example shows how rape scenes have been popular, especially in commercial films. The popularity of rape scenes shows that women are merely objects to be enjoyed by the male audience, and it reinforces the idea in Turkish society that women who are raped are no longer ‘pure’, and that they no longer have honour (Dönmez-Colin, 2004, p. 14; 2010; Suner, 2010, p. 165).

The second type of woman, which was created during the Yeşilçam-era, is the ‘good’ girl, often in the role of the virgin, the faithful housewife, the devoted mother and the obedient daughter (Dönmez-Colin, 2004; 2010). She is presented as submissive, innocent, chaste, loyal and, most of all, quiet. She is often oppressed by the male members of the family and she is denied agency, and we rarely learn how she sees the world from her perspective. As opposed to the ‘bad’ woman, the ‘good’ woman is accepting of the prevailing customs and traditions and she does not rebel. This second type of woman thus conveys the message to the public that it is important to be a good mother and a good wife, and that the family is sacred. As a result of this binary construction of what it means to be a ‘woman’, actual women could not identify with the one-dimensional and stereotypical characters they saw on the screen (Dönmez-Colin, 2004, p. 34).

This binary construction started to change in the 1980s through the women’s films that emerged during these years (Atakav, 2013). The enforced de-politicization that was introduced after the military coup in 1980 was paradoxically responsible for uniting feminism and film in Turkey. Because the feminist movement is not perceived as politically significant during the 1980s, it was left alone and allowed to flourish. The films that were created as a result of this

focused on women's issues while avoiding being overtly political. Women started to play more multi-dimensional roles in these films, and they became identifiable people with everyday problems who tried to navigate their lives within a patriarchal society (Akser, 2014, p. 117). Atakav (2013) argues that we can recognize four types of women in the films of the 1980s. The first type is the career woman, who faces the dilemma of having to choose her job or to quit her work and become a housewife. The second type is that of the rural woman, who is trying to escape oppression and searches for independence. The third type is the prostitute. In these newer films she is no longer always represented as evil, or as a victim to be pitied; her sexuality is instead portrayed in a more positive way, as we for example have seen in the films of Atif Yılmaz. The final type is that of the widow, who is trying to find her life back after the death of her husband. Atakav however argues that the male is still dominant in most of the films that were produced after the 1980s, and that women are still objects to be enjoyed by the male characters and the male audience. The honour of women is furthermore still something that must be protected at all costs, and rape scenes and gender-based violence are still recurrent themes.

Atakav (2013) also discusses a new representation of women which started to emerge in the 1990s with the advent of the New Cinema of Turkey, namely that of the silent, inaudible woman. Another study that also analyses this development is the study conducted by Güçlü (2016). The silent woman started to appear in many different films, and was not specific to a director, a genre or to either arthouse or commercial films. The women in these films did not speak, either because they did not want to, or because they were unable to, and the males in these films were thus in control of the narrative. Güçlü argues that the silent women in these films can have multiple functions. First of all, from a gender perspective, the silent women allowed for the prioritization of the experiences, feelings and sufferings of the male characters, and because the women could not talk back, they could be used as scapegoats that were responsible for the destroyed lives of the males (Güçlü, 2016, p. 107). Silent women also served as vehicles to make the fears, anxieties and guilty consciences of the male characters visible. It is no coincidence that this development occurred in the 1990s; this was a direct answer to the women's films that were produced in the 1980s, in which the oppression and suffering of women was shown for the first time. By making women silent in the newer films, the males could take back discursive power and make up for their lost voices (Güçlü, 2016, pp. 81-83).

Secondly, the silent women also symbolize the search for a national identity in a country that was in crisis during the 1990s. In quite a few cases, the silent women are of non-Turkish descent, and they are positioned as the outsider that threatens the national unity. By giving

discursive authority to the Turkish male characters, the national Turkish identity is thus prioritized (Güçlü, 2016, p. 180, Akser, 2018).

Finally, the silent women are also used as instruments to make the traumatic pasts of the male characters visible and audible. The silence of the female characters symbolizes how unspeakable the traumas of the male characters are, and how shameful and guilty they feel about their pasts (Güçlü, 2016, p. 176). The silent women that emerged from the mid-1990s thus all play an instrumental role; by not speaking, they make the feelings and experiences of other characters known. The perspective of the woman in these films is thus literally silenced, for the benefit of the male perspective.

Conclusion

To summarise and conclude this chapter, the history of the cinema of Turkey can be divided up into three eras, namely the pre-Yeşilçam era, the Yeşilçam-era, or the heyday of Turkish cinema, and the New Cinema of Turkey, which lasts until the present day. Throughout these different eras, we can see that women have been portrayed in very stereotypical ways, and that there are a few dominant gender roles and gender norms that are dominant. In the remainder of this thesis I will analyse whether these gender roles and gender norms can also be recognized in the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix.

Chapter 2: The corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix

In this chapter I will give a description of the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix. I will first of all describe the process through which Netflix decides which content to publish on their platform, as this can help us understand why the corpus of Turkish films looks the way as it is. Then I will categorise the corpus according to genre. Three dominant genres can be found on Netflix, namely drama films, comedies, which can further be subdivided into ‘general’ comedies, adventure comedies and romantic comedies, and horror films. I will furthermore give descriptive statistics on the ratings of the films, their revenues and their publication years. I will also pay attention to the predominant directors.

Netflix’s decision-making procedures

As was mentioned in the Methodology, the help desk of Netflix has been contacted through the chat function on their website, through Instagram, Facebook and by phone, but the help desk employees were not able to provide any information about how Netflix’s content team decides to licence or create films, and they also were not able to refer me to people that would be able to provide information on this. Luckily, the Netflix Help Center does provide a description of how Netflix’s content team conducts their work, albeit it is a short and limited one (Netflix, n.d.). Before we go more into depth, it is important to distinguish two types of content that the platform releases: licensed content, or films and series that are created by other content providers, and which Netflix then licenses, and Netflix Originals. The latter category can furthermore be subdivided into films and series that are created by Netflix itself, or films and series that are created by a different content provider, but of which Netflix exclusively owns the rights (Spangler, 2018).

According to the Netflix Help Center, “Netflix works with content providers, distributors, producers, and creators to acquire licensing for TV shows and movies to stream on [their] service” (Netflix, n.d.). The website names various reasons for why certain shows or films are not available: the content rights are exclusively owned by a different company, the streaming rights are not available for purchase, or because of “popularity, cost, seasonal or other localized factors”. The website however does not explain what is exactly meant by these “seasonal or other localized factors”. The website does try to answer the question of why a TV show or film is available in one country but not another, and this may be because the selling right for a show or film is not available in a particular region, or because regional tastes may differ. As the website explains, some shows and films that are popular in the United States, are

not expected to be popular in Europe, and Netflix therefore decides not to release the series or film in Europe (Netflix, n.d.).

For Netflix Originals Netflix is less dependent on external actors, as Netflix exclusively owns the rights to the titles. To decide which series and films to license in the future and which Netflix Originals to create, Netflix uses “a wide variety of methods”. The platform for example uses metrics about viewing and searching activity to determine which kind of content to create; they for example analyse how much of an episode or film you watch, what types of genres you watch the most, which languages you prefer and at which time of the day you are watching. These metrics are also used for the recommendations that Netflix makes; the homepage of Netflix therefore looks entirely different for every single Netflix member (Netflix, n.d.).

How the Netflix algorithms exactly work, and how Netflix for example decides which regions may enjoy a certain series or film more than other regions, is not explained on the website, and we therefore have to turn to secondary sources. Charidemou (2020) for example explains, based on an interview with Todd Yellin, Netflix’s VP of product, that Netflix makes use of over 2000 ‘taste clusters’ that each Netflix user falls into. Rather than grouping people along demographic characteristics, such as age, location and race, Netflix users are grouped along their specific viewing activity, and enormous amounts of data are thus used to place people with similar tastes in the same microcluster. Netflix then knows that users in for example Cluster 290 like *Black Mirror*, and also *Lost* and *Groundhog Day* (Adalian, 2018). Netflix is more interested in targeting these taste clusters rather than broad demographic groups, and based on the characteristics of these taste clusters Netflix decides which Netflix Originals to create and which series and films to license, but also which content to recommend (Alexander, 2016, p. 84).

Based on the information that is given on the website of the Netflix Help Center and the information that is provided by secondary literature, we can conclude that which Turkish films are licensed by the Dutch Netflix and which Netflix Originals are created depends on the specific regional preferences and the interests of the taste clusters, which Netflix finds through analysing huge quantities of data about viewer activity. Through analysing this data, Netflix for example can find that there is a certain taste cluster in which users who watch *Bygones be Bygones* [*Olanlar Oldu*] (Algül, 2017) also watch *The Galloping Vet* [Niyazi Gül Dörtına] (Algül, 2015), and that licensing more films that are directed by Hakan Algül or films that starr Ata Demirer would thus be profitable.

Descriptive analysis of the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix

Now that I have outlined how Netflix decides which series and films to license and which Netflix Originals to create, I will analyse what the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix looks like. As of 1 May 2020, there are 57 Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix. The entire list of films, their release dates, directors, writers, revenues, genres and IMDB-ratings can be found in Appendix 1. The main characteristics of the corpus are highlighted in the remainder of this chapter, starting with a categorisation according to genre, followed by statistics on the release years, gross worldwide revenues and IMDB-ratings and a discussion of the predominant directors in the corpus.

Genres

The three genres that the corpus consists of are drama, comedy, which can further be subdivided into general comedies, adventure comedies and romantic comedies, and finally horror. I have

Drama	Comedy: general	Comedy: adventure	Comedy: romantic	Horror
Clair Obscur	Among Family	Alibaba and the 7 dwarfs	A Chaster Marriage	Dabbe 4
Have you ever seen fireflies?	Bygones be Bygones	Bir Baba Hindu	Deliha	Dabbe 5
Jolly Life	Çarsi Pazar	G.O.R.A.	Hayat Öpücüğü	
Hot, Sweet, Sour	Coming Soon	Keep a lid on it	Husband Factor	
Keeping the Bees	Dedemin Fişi	Magic Carpet Ride	Husband Factor 2	
Miracle in Cell no. 7	Deliha 2	Money Trap	Kill me if you dare	
Müslüm: voice of pain	Düğün Dernek	My Travel Buddy	Love, Surreal and Odd	
My Mother's Wound	Düğün Dernek 2	My Travel Buddy 2	Romantic Comedy	
One Way to Tomorrow	Görümce	The Galloping Vet	Romantic Comedy 2	
Paper Lives	Leyla Everlasting	Trouble on Wheels		
Red Istanbul	Locked on You	Vendor's Meeting		
Sour Apples	Locksmith's Debt			
Stuck Apart	My Stepdad: the Hippie			
The Butterfly's Dream	Overnight Republic			
The International	Stunt School			
The Miracle	Turkish Dance School			
The Plane Tree	Vizontele			
You're Everything to Me				

Table 1. Categorisation according to genre

used IMDB and the genres that this website ascribed to the film as a basis for this categorisation. I did slightly alter and simplify the genres that are given by IMDB, so that I could put the films in the five larger categories that I mentioned earlier. IMDB for example categorises some films as ‘comedy’ and ‘family’, or ‘drama’ and ‘family’, but in these cases I left the genre ‘family’ out and categorised these films as ‘comedy’ or ‘drama’. Furthermore, IMDB sometimes categorises a film as both a comedy and drama film, but if the comedic elements played a dominant role in the film, I categorised it as comedy and not as drama. I do not want to claim that this categorisation is perfect, as it is of course based on my subjective decision-making and on IMDB’s subjective decision-making, but I have tried to be as rigorous as possible. An overview of the films that fall within each of these categories can be found in Table 1. For reasons of clarity only the English titles of the films are mentioned in Table 1, when they are available.

18 of the 55 films can be categorised as drama. The films in this category cover a broad variety of themes, such as the relationship between a parent and a child (*You’re Everything to Me* [*Sen Benim HerSeyimsin*] (Örnek, 2016)), a romantic relationship between a man and a woman (*Hot, Sweet, Sour* [*Acı Tatlı Eksi*] (Haznedaroglu, 2017)), biographies (*Müslüm: voice of pain* [*Müslüm*] (Ketcher & Ulkay, 2018)) and traumatic pasts (*My Mother’s Wound* [*Annemin Yarası*] (Açıktan, 2016)). Also included in this category are the only two arthouse film that are part of the corpus; *Clair Obscur* [*Tereddüt*] (Ustaoğlu, 2016) and *Keeping the Bees* [*Kovan*] (Kaftan, 2020).

The second genre that we can recognise is that of comedies; 17 films within the corpus have been categorised as ‘regular’ comedies, 11 films have been categorised as adventure comedies and 9 films have been categorised as romantic comedies. I have chosen to divide the comedy genre into these subcategories, because of the predominant themes of the adventure comedies and romantic comedies. The category of adventure comedies mainly portrays adventurous stories, and a lot of these films are about mobsters from Istanbul which find themselves in all kinds of violent situations, but always in a humorous way. What each of these films thus have in common is that action and adventure are prominently present. The category of romantic comedies consists of films in which the dominant theme is love or the search for love, or these films are about weddings and the troubles of being married. These films thus have in common that they are entirely about romance. The rest of the humorous films were categorised as ‘regular’ comedies. It is not the case that these films do not also portray adventures, violence, romance or weddings, on the contrary, it is just that these themes were not dominantly present in these films; they were one of the many themes in the film. As such

they were not categorised as adventure comedy or romantic comedy. As a result of this the category of ‘regular’ comedies is also very broad, consisting of films that for example portray family life (*Among Family* [*Aile Arasında*] (Açıktan, 2017)) and work life and careers (*Stunt School* [*Aslı Gibidir*] (Yorgancıoğlu, 2019)).

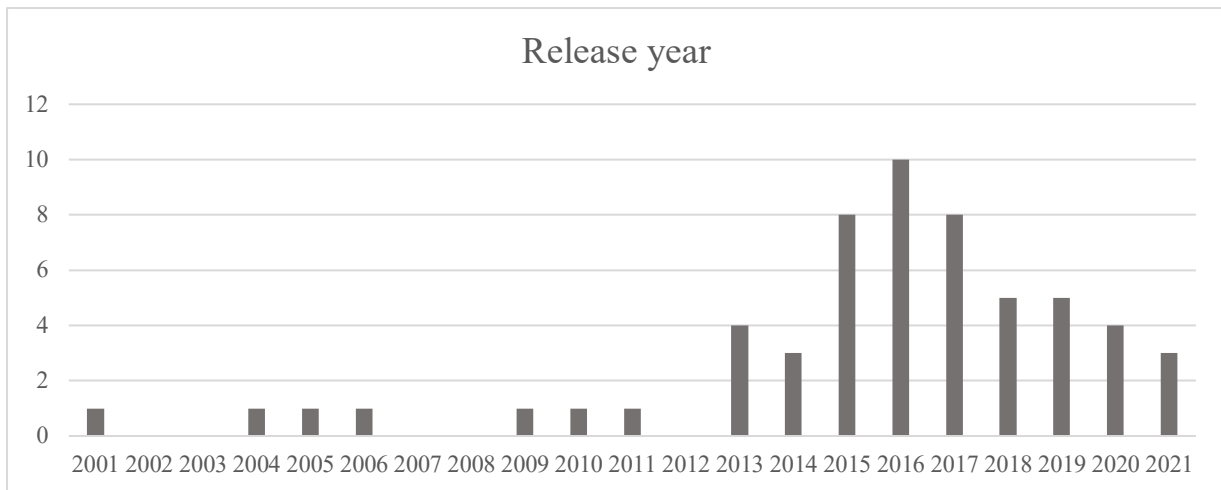
The final category is that of horror films. Only two films fall within this category: *Dabbe 4: The Possession* [*Dabbe 4: Cin Çarpması*] (Karacadağ, 2013) and *Dabbe 5: Curse of the Jinn* [*Dabbe 5: Zehr-i Cin*] (Karacadağ, 2014), which both portray the possessions of a female character. It is surprising that only two horror films are part of the corpus, as scholars have shown that horror films are a popular genre in contemporary Turkish cinema (Aytekin & Sari, 2016).

When looking at this categorisation, it furthermore stands out that there only a few films that do not entail any comedic elements, as some of the drama films within the corpus also entail some sort of comedy. This is surprising, because melodramatic films have been a prominent genre ever since the early years of Turkish cinema, throughout the Yeşilçam-era and in the New Cinema of Turkey (Arslan, 2011). It is also surprising that the corpus consists of only two arthouse films. Arthouse films play an important part in the New Cinema of Turkey, and these films are often well received during international film festivals (Suner, 2010, p. 15).

Based on the description of Netflix’s decision-making process on which content to licence and create in the beginning of this chapter, Netflix seems to think that the Dutch audience of Turkish films enjoys lighter comedy films instead of more serious melodramas or horror films. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to study the tastes of the audience of Turkish films in the Netherlands, but it is still an important implication of this study that the comedy genre is so prominently present, and that the distribution of genres on the Dutch Netflix is not necessarily representative of the entire Turkish cinema.

Release years

Now that the categorisation according to genre has been given, we will turn to the descriptive statistics of the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix. Graph 1 first of all shows the release years of the films. We can see that most of the films were produced later than 2015 and that there are only 6 films from the 2010s. The oldest films on the platform are *Vizontele* (Erdoğan 2001), *G.O.R.A.* (Sorak, 2004) and *Magic Carpet Ride* [*Organize İşler*] (Erdoğan, 2005). It is also interesting to denote that the five Turkish Netflix Original films that are part of the corpus were all released in 2020 and 2021, which shows that Netflix has recently started to invest more in Turkish films.

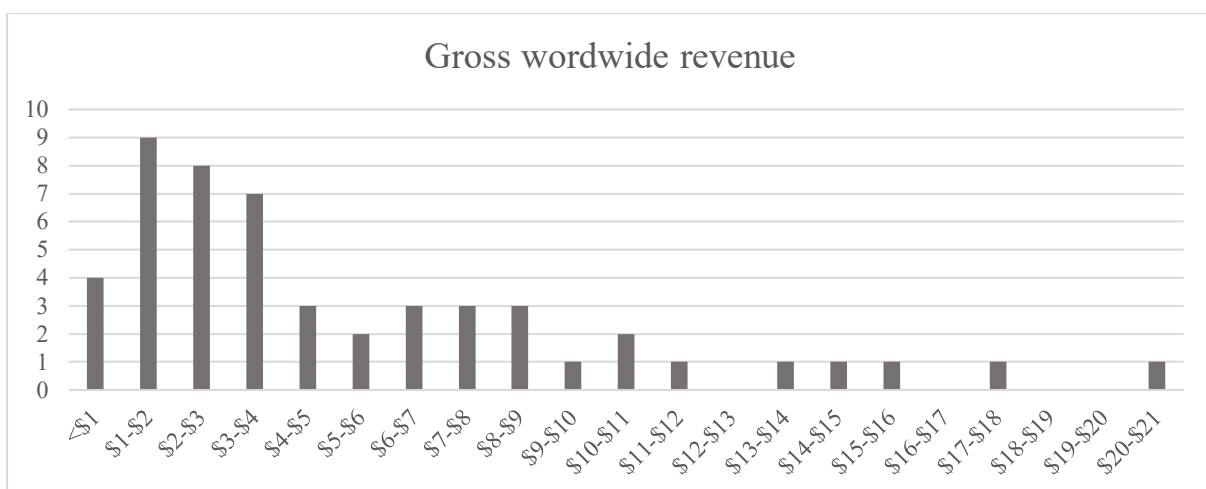


Graph 1. Release years

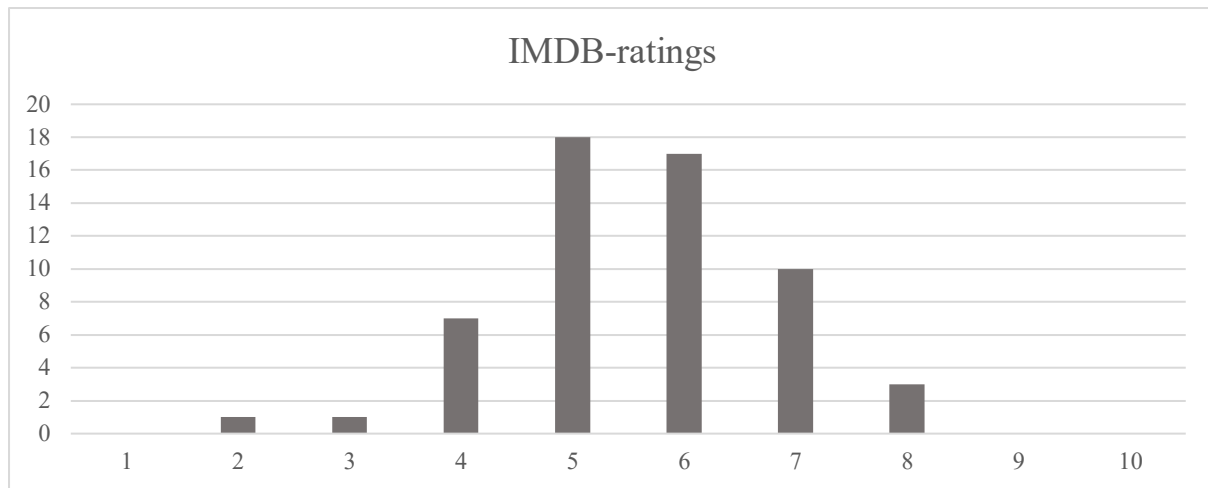
The production of Turkish Netflix Originals is likely to increase more in the upcoming years, as Netflix has declared its goal to start more projects in Turkey in the near future, and it will also open an office in Istanbul in the second half of 2021 (Netflix, 2020; Vivarelli, 2021).

Gross worldwide revenues

Graph 2 shows the gross worldwide revenues of the films in millions of dollars, according to IMDB. We can see that most films have earned between one million and four million dollars. The highest earning films are *G.O.R.A.*, *Miracle in cell no. 7* [7. Koğuştaki Mucize] (Öztekin, 2019), *The Miracle* [Mucize] (Kırmızıgül, 2015) and *Magic Carpet Ride*. The graph is however not complete, as there is no revenue number available for *Vizontele*, and there are also no numbers available for the Netflix Original films, because they were not released in the cinema.



Graph 2. Gross worldwide revenue in millions of dollars



Graph 3. IMDB-ratings

IMDB-ratings

Graph 3 shows the IMDB-ratings for the films. We can see that most films have received a grade of 5 or 6, and the majority of the films in the corpus is thus of mediocre quality according to the IMDB-audience. The highest rated films are *Miracle in cell no. 7* (8,2), *Vizontele* (8,0) and *G.O.R.A.* (8,0), and the lowest rated films are *Bir Baba Hindu* (Midyat, 2016) (2,7) and *Leyla Everlasting [9 Kere Leyla]* (Akay, 2020) (3,8). The three films that are the highest rated are also the films with the biggest gross worldwide revenues, but the same does not count for the films with the lowest IMDB-ratings.

Predominant directors

Now that the most interesting descriptive statistics of the corpus have been given, it is also interesting to see whether some directors are more present than others in the corpus. This is certainly the case; seven of Yılmaz Erdoğan's films are part of the corpus. This is not surprising, as Yılmaz Erdoğan is one of the most important directors in the New Cinema of Turkey, whose films are often well received by both critics and the audience (Vivarelli, 2013). Erdoğan his films are light and humorous, and as was shown before, it is these films that are very much present in the corpus, because Netflix seems to think that it is these films that the Dutch audience of Turkish films is interested in. This also makes it unsurprising that seven of Erdoğan's films are part of the corpus.

Other directors that are represented more than once in the corpus are Kivanç Baruönü, Bedran Güzel and Burak Aksak, who also make comedy films. It is furthermore interesting to denote that five of the films within the corpus are directed by females: Meltem Bozoflu

(*Dedemin Fişisi*) Gupse Özay (*Deliha 2*), Eylem Kaftan (*Keeping the Bees* [Kovan]), Handan İpekçi (*The Plane Tree* [Çınar Ağacı]) and Yeşim Ustaoglu (*Clair Obscur* [Tereddüt]).

Conclusion

To summarize and conclude this chapter, the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix consists of drama films, regular comedies, adventure comedies, romantic comedies and horror films. Most of the films are not older than 2015, most of the films have smaller audiences, in the sense that their gross worldwide revenues are not very high, and most of the films score around a five or six according to IMDB. There are only a few notable contemporary Turkish films on the platform, the most important ones being *Vizontele*, *G.O.R.A.*, *The International* [Beynelmilel] (Önder & Gülmez, 2006), *Magic Carpet Ride* and *Coming Soon* [Pek Yakında] (Yılmaz, 2014).

As was shown in the beginning of this chapter, Netflix bases its decision on which films to release or create on their algorithms; the algorithms place Netflix users into specific taste clusters, and through the algorithm Netflix also knows what the taste of a region may be. An important finding of this chapter is that Netflix seems to assume that the Dutch audience of Turkish films wants to see lighter, humorous films, as there are only a few films in the corpus that do not contain any comedic elements. This is not necessarily representative of the entirety of Turkish cinema, in which melodramas and horror films are very much present.

Chapter 3: Analysing the portrayal of women

Now that I have described the characteristics of the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix, I will analyse the portrayal of women in the entire corpus. I will first of all point out how women are portrayed in each of the three genres by using examples from a few films, then I will discuss the theoretical concepts of male gaze, male voice and female subjectivity more in depth, and finally I will point out some feminist themes and elements that we can recognise in the corpus.

The portrayal of women in drama films

As was shown in the previous chapter, the corpus of Turkish drama films on the Dutch Netflix is a very diverse one. Many different themes are addressed and women are also portrayed in very diverse ways in these films. In most of the films there is a male protagonist, and besides him and the other male characters the female characters only play a minor, supporting role. In *The Butterfly's Dream* [Kelebeğin Rüyası] (Erdoğan, 2013) we for example follow the story of Muzaffer and Rustu, two young poets who lived during the Second World War, and who both suffer from tuberculosis. Suzan, the love interest of both men in the beginning of the film, and Mediha, who eventually marries Rustu, play smaller, more supporting roles compared to the two men, about who the story revolves. In other films the men and women play equal roles, such as in the romance films *Hot, Sweet, Sour* [Acı Tatlı Eksi] (Haznedaroğlu, 2017) and *One Way to Tomorrow* [Yarına Tek Bilet] (Açıktan, 2020), which both have a male and female protagonist. Besides these examples, there are three films that I will highlight in this chapter, because the way women are portrayed in these films is particularly interesting.

The first film that will be analysed more in depth is *Clair Obscur* [Tereddüt] (Ustaoğlu, 2016). In this film we follow Sehnaz and Elmas, two women who seem completely different at first, but in reality have a lot in common. Sehnaz is a young psychiatrist from Istanbul and she is a successful and modern woman with a seemingly happy marriage. Elmas on the other hand was married off when she was only a child. She is treated as a slave by her husband and ill mother-in-law and she is clearly very unhappy. Out of pure despair, she eventually kills her husband and mother-in-law and completely traumatized, Elmas is then treated by Sehnaz. Throughout the film, Sehnaz realizes that she is also unhappy in her marriage and that she feels trapped, just like Elmas. In the end of the film Elmas is finally doing better because of her treatment and Sehnaz finally finds the courage to run away from her husband, so both women eventually find the courage to successfully escape their difficult lives.

The film portrays two women who seem to be each other opposites, Sehnaz is modern, secular, wealthy, smart and has an attractive husband, while Elmas is traditional, religious, poor, uneducated and was married off at a very young age to a much older man. The film thus portrays the social divide within Turkish society, the modern one versus the traditional one. The film however makes clear that both these sides of Turkish society repress women, and that women from both sides suffer from the patriarchal, male-dominated society in which they live in, and in which men are in control of marriage and sex (The Hollywood Reporter, 2016). Both Sehnaz and Elmas are stuck in unhappy marriages and must learn throughout the film what it is that they want for themselves, and both protagonists find the courage throughout the film to take matters into their own hands and escape their unhappy lives. The two women are thus not passive female characters which are so often described by feminist film theorists; the two women in the film instead take action and have agency. We learn a lot about the thoughts, emotions and sexual drives of Sehnaz and Elmas throughout the film, and the two characters thus become recognizable women with who a female audience can identify. De Lauretis (1984) her theory that women in films are not subjects in themselves but merely subjects of male desire is partly applicable here, as this is the case in the beginning of the film when both female characters are trapped in an unhappy marriage. Later on in the film however, Sehnaz and Elmas become subjects on their own, who do not settle for the emotional and sexual discomfort they are experiencing in their lives.

A second example of a drama film that portrays women in an interesting way is *The Miracle* [Mucize] (Kırmızıgül, 2015). The film takes place in the 1960s and it shows how a teacher, Mahir, is sent away to a remote village in the mountains, where he helps the villagers build their first school. One of the villagers is Aziz, the handicapped son of the villager's chief, who Mahir also admits to his school so that Aziz can learn how to write. The film furthermore shows the lives and culture of the villagers, and it for example shows how men and women get married, when the soon-to-be husband is selected, the process of finding a suitable wife starts. The women of the town are responsible for this; the soon-to-be wife is questioned by the women of the town about her cooking skills and about her knowledge of the Quran. Her looks are also rated; she must have nice teeth and wide hips, because this shows that she will be able to birth many children.

Despite his severe handicap Aziz also gets married, and the women from the village have selected a beautiful girl for him; Mizgin. When Mizgin learns who her new husband is, she is shocked and cries. One of the elder women tries to comfort her and tells her that this is her faith and that she should simply accept it. Throughout the rest of the film we see that Mizgin

learns to be a good, loving and faithful wife to Aziz, that she stands by him and that she stands up to the other villagers when they mock him.

The first element from the film that I want to highlight is the way prospected brides are selected; they are chosen based on their looks, their cooking skills and their knowledge of the Quran. The women furthermore do not have anything to say about who they are married to; they simply have to accept their faith, as one of the elder women explains to Mizgin when Mizgin panics about marrying Aziz. Just like in *Clair Obscur*, the women in this film are subjected to the patriarchal norms of society, but the women in *The Miracle* do accept their faith, unlike Sehnaz and Elmas from *Clair Obscur*. This is however not remarkable, considering that *The Miracle* takes place in the Turkish countryside in the 1960s, but it is still interesting to mention the difference between the two films.

Another element from the film I want to highlight is how Mizgin, despite her initial sadness when she learns that she has to marry a severely handicapped man, eventually turns into a loving, supporting and faithful wife. She is the typical ‘good’, innocent and loyal girl, who is accepting of the local customs and does not rebel, which scholars who analyse the portrayal of women in Turkish films have previously found to be very much present in Turkish cinema (Dönmez-Colin, 2004; 2010, Atakav, 2013). Stills 3.1 and 3.2 illustrate this: in still 1 we see Aziz, who has come back to the village after a long absence. He is trying to address the



Still 3.1: *The Miracle* (Kırmızıgül, 2015)



Still 3.2: *The Miracle* (Kırmızıgül, 2015)

villagers and explain to them how he is doing much better. In the background we see Mizgin with one of their children. The fact that she is out of focus and stands behind him shows how the scene revolves around Aziz, who is trying to tell his story, and that she is there to support him.

In still 3.2 we see that the camera now focuses on Mizgin, who nods and smiles reassuringly to Aziz, who is looking for her support. Throughout the scene she does not say anything, here role is simply to be there for him. Here we can thus also recognize Silverman's (1988) concept of male voice; Aziz speaks, Mizgin remains silent, and the male character is thus in control of the storyline.

The third drama film that I want to address more in depth is *Red Istanbul* [İstanbul Kırmızısı] (Özpetek, 2017). In this film we follow writer Orhan who has returned to Istanbul to help director Deniz with writing his first novel. Deniz however disappears in the beginning of the film, and the story shows Orhan's search for Deniz, together with the friends and family of Deniz, but most of all it shows how Orhan relives his past life and his past relationships.

The film contains various female characters. The most important one is Neval, who is the archetypal 'good' girl, just like Mizgin; she is friendly, beautiful, smart, understanding and innocent, and it is therefore not surprising that she becomes the love interest of Orhan. Other female characters are Deniz' mother Süreyya, who is a strong character, nurturing, and who the

male characters respect greatly, Deniz his aunts Güzin and Betül, who make sexual remarks, who are flirtatious and who are therefore the opposite of Neval, and two housekeepers, one who has a strong personality, while the other one is very quiet.

One scene towards the end of the film that I want to pay more attention to is when Orhan, who we can see standing in the middle in still 3.3, expresses his love for Neval. He however does not express his feelings to Neval herself, but to Neval her husband Ömer. In still 3.3 we see Neval standing in the background, and she does not play a role in the conversation, even though the two men are talking about her and the topic that is discussed certainly revolves around her. The fact that she is out of focus makes it even more clear that she does not play a role in the conversation. In still 3.4 we see Ömer talking to Orhan, expressing to him that he understands Orhan, but that he saw Neval first, and that she therefore *belongs* to him. This also makes it clear that Neval does not have a say in any of this, and Ömer's choice for words makes it clear that she is not a subject, but an object to which he has the sole right. In still 3.5 we see Orhan's facial response to Ömer's words, and we still see Neval out of focus. We still do not learn what her thoughts and feelings are and she does not have any agency in the scene.

This scene is a very clear example of how the concept of male voice is again applied in Turkish films; the two male characters are in control of the narrative, and the female character



Still 3.3: *Red Istanbul* (Özpetek, 2017)



Still 3.4: *Red Istanbul* (Özpetek, 2017)



Still 3.5: *Red Istanbul* (Özpetek, 2017)

is not, even though the conversation revolves around her. This scene is furthermore an example of how the mise-en-scene, or the staging, can influence the story. By placing Neval in the background and the two men in the foreground, it is clear that Neval plays an inferior role in the story (Bordwell et al., 2019, p. 113). The cinematography, as the camera focuses on the two men, while Neval is out of focus, also contributes to this, and shows that Neval does not have the ability to say anything about her own love life (Bordwell et al., 2019, p. 168).

The portrayal of women in comedies

The role of the female characters in the Turkish comedies that are part of the corpus is comparable to the role of the female characters in Turkish drama films, namely that their function is often to support the male protagonist. Some examples of this will be shown in the remainder of this chapter. Besides this common trend that the drama films and comedies show, the Turkish comedies that are part of the corpus however also show us some alternate ways in which women are portrayed compared to the drama films, and we can furthermore recognise some slight differences in the way women are portrayed between the three different types of comedies (regular comedies, adventure comedies and romantic comedies) that are part of the corpus.

I first want to highlight one of the regular comedies here, namely *Dedemin Fişi* (Bozoflu, 2016). In this film the members of the Çirci family, who all have moved to Germany and the more urbanised parts of Turkey, all return to their hometown Malatya. It has been decided to pull the plug on the patriarch, because he has become brain dead. The family members must now together decide what happens with his inheritance, but this results in comical fights over who gets what. In the end, the family members finally reach an agreement and they all make up. Before we go more into depth into the portrayal of women in *Dedemin Fişi*, I first want to highlight an important lesson that the film wants us to learn, namely that your family, despite the struggles that it brings forth, is one of the most important things in life. In this film, but also in the other family comedies that are part of the corpus, we can recognise the sacred role that the family takes up in Turkish society, and that you should always be there for your family members (Dönmez-Colin, 2004, p. 13).

We can clearly recognise the different roles that men and women take on within the Turkish family in the film: we see the male characters quarrel over the inheritance and the distribution of the real-estate, while we mainly see the women around the house and in the kitchen preparing food, gossiping with each other and again taking on the supporting roles. It is clear that the male characters are more important; they are the ones who are discussing

business and go on all kinds of adventures, while the women mostly stay home. The men thus have a more active role in the film, while the women have a more passive role.

The characters in the film, especially the women, furthermore have very stereotypical characteristics. This makes it difficult for a female audience to identify with the women in the film, as feminist film theorists have argued before (Smelik, 1995). The nurse of the grandfather for example, Pervin, is the typical innocent, clumsy, sweet and beautiful ‘good’ girl that we also saw in the examples in the previous section. She is the love interest of Bora, who is the grandson of the patriarch, and the male audience watching the film would also see her as the ideal girl (Suner, 2010, p. 165). Another female character, Nurgul, who is the daughter-in-law of the patriarch, is portrayed in a hysterical way when she learns that her husband does not want to return to their home in Germany. When she finds out about this, we see her hysterically yell her husband’s name. While all the male characters in the film are able to communicate in a normal way with each other, this does not apply for the female characters; they more often communicate in an emotional or excessive way through screaming or talking in silly voices. Here we can thus recognise again that the males in the film are in control of the narrative, because their communication is more rational than the communication of the female characters (Silverman, 1988, Güçlü, 2016, p. 80).

One particular character that is interesting is Üzerlik, another daughter-in-law of the patriarch. She is a very quiet character, and she mainly communicates by giving evil looks to others. When she does speak, she does so in a strange, high-pitched voice. The other characters are therefore scared of her and they think that she possesses the evil eye, which means that the others think that she possesses the power to do others harm by simply looking at them.

That Üzerlik possesses the evil eye is confirmed in still 3.6; in the few seconds before this frame we see Üzerlik secretly overhearing a conversation in the kitchen between Kader, another daughter-in-law of the patriarch, and Nurgul. The camera then turns to Üzerlik, who we see staring in the mirror, angrily. She raises her eyebrow and the mirror shatters, and then we see her slowly fade away into the darkness. Üzerlik thus plays the role of the mysterious, evil and dangerous woman, which is strengthened by her silence, and she is the opposite of the innocent ‘good’ girl (Dönmez-Colin, 2004, p. 13; Güçlü, 2016, p. 76). In this film we can thus see the difference between what is considered to be a ‘good’ woman and what is considered to be an ‘evil’ woman, but both types of women are difficult for a female audience to identify with.



Still 3.6 *Dedemin Fişi* (Bozoflu, 2016)

Dedemin Fişi, but also most of the other regular comedies that are part of the corpus, contain quite a lot female characters. They are often portrayed in stereotypical ways, they barely leave the house and their role is mainly to support the male protagonists. The same cannot be said about the second type of comedies that are prevalent in the corpus, namely the adventure comedies. These films often contain only a few female characters who play a noteworthy role, and sometimes only one or two. Just like in the regular comedies, the male characters are the ones who go on all kinds of adventures, while the female characters are excluded from this. These films also sometimes contain female characters who do not have any lines and are mainly present to fill up the screen, which, as I will show later on, can be seen in for example *Magic Carpet Ride* (Erdoğan, 2005). Another common element in these adventure films is the helpless woman that needs to be saved by the man from danger, which can for example be seen in *Alibaba and the 7 Dwarfs* [Alibaba ve 7 Cüceler] (Yılmaz, 2015) and *Bir Baba Hindu* (Midvat, 2016).

Magic Carpet Ride is one of the most popular adventure films that is part of the corpus, and I will therefore analyse the portrayal of women in this film more in depth. In this film we follow Asim and his gang, who commit all kinds of criminal activities such as car theft and fraud. When Asim recruits the unsuccessful comedian and Superman impersonator Samet multiple things start going wrong, such as the start of a conflict with a rivalling gang.

The film has two important female characters: Umut, who Samet tries to sell a stolen car to but fails to do so because he feels guilty about it, and Umut her mother Nuran, who is a professor. Umut and Nuran are both feminist characters; they are smart, they figure out themselves that Samet has tried to sell a stolen car to them and they then take revenge on Samet and the gang. They are thus not helpless and they have agency. Still, Umut is portrayed as the typical 'good' girl, she is sweet, attractive, innocent and she is the love interest of Samet, and here we can again recognise the findings of previous studies on the portrayal of women in Turkish films (Dönmez-Colin, 2004). Like in the films that have been discussed before in the analysis, the male characters are furthermore much more dominantly present than the female characters. Despite the importance of Umut and Nuran, it is the male characters, the members of the two rivalling gangs, that perform most of the action, especially during the final scenes.

The active role of men and the passive role of women that we can recognize in most of the films that are part of the corpus is especially made clear in the scenes around the headquarters of the gang; in the headquarters there are always numerous women present, besides the male members of the gang. While we hear the members of the gang talk business, these women do not have any lines, and we mainly see them in the background talking with each other or taking care of the household, and they are thus mainly there to fill up the screen.

The romantic comedies that are part of the corpus, like the regular comedies, contain more female characters than the adventure comedies. The romantic comedies all revolve around the protagonist and his or her search for love. They are stories about weddings, or they are stories about the struggles of married couples. One example is the film *Husband Factor* [Kocan Kadar Konuş] (Baruönü, 2016), in which 30-year old Efsun goes on a search for true love. She is pressured by the women of her family, who fear that it may be getting too late for Efsun to find a suitable partner.

Efsun her female family members show a predominant idea in Turkish society, namely that marriage is something that every woman should desire, because without marriage life is worthless (Savan-Cengiz, 2020). In the beginning of the film Efsun herself delivers critique on this idea. She breaks the fourth wall and directly tells the audience the following: "*Obsession with marriage is in the DNA of Turkish women, (...) if you have a husband, that is fine. If not, you are in trouble. You are only worth the husband you have*". The film thus holds up a feminist mirror to society, and it delivers a critique on society's obsession with marriage. However, for someone who does not want to go along with her family's obsession with marriage, Efsun is still very much obsessed with finding true love, and the entire film revolves around this search.

Another romantic comedy that is interesting to analyse more in depth, and which again shows how women in Turkish films are often portrayed as ‘good’ versus ‘bad’, is *A Chaster Marriage* [El Değmemiş Aşk] (Kırca, 2016). In this film Zafer is forced by his family to marry his childhood friend Feryal, but he secretly has a relationship with Feryal’s best friend Duygu. Feryal and Duygu are portrayed in very different ways: Feryal is the ‘good’, innocent, sweet and clumsy girl, and therefore she is the ideal wife. Duygu on the other hand is portrayed as ‘evil’, she behaves in seductive ways towards Zafer, and we see her making mean and jealous looks throughout the film. Because of the different ways in which these two women are portrayed, the audience starts to root for Feryal. As a spectator you want Feryal and Zafer to end up together, and you start to see Duygu as the temptress and the home-wrecker that stands in the way of this.

Just when Zafer starts to grow feelings for Feryal, Duygu commits the evil act of telling everyone about their affair. Feryal is of course angry with Zafer, but she, and other friends and family members as well, put more blame on Duygu for the entire situation, even though Zafer is the one who has cheated on Feryal. Zafer and Feryal end up together, and Duygu in the end is punished for being the evil woman; she stays left behind, alone.

This is very similar to what earlier studies on the portrayal of women in Turkish films have found; Güçlü (2016, p. 76) for example shows how a good and virtuous woman like Feryal eventually forgives her husband if he is unfaithful, and that these female characters by virtue of their good and innocent nature are rewarded with a happy ending, like Feryal is when Zafer finally falls in love with her. Güçlü (2016, p. 76) and Dönmez-Colin (2004, p. 25) furthermore have found that evil and seductive women like Duygu always receive the punishment they deserve. This is however not always applicable, as we can for example see with Üzerlik, the evil and mysterious character from *Dedemin Fişi*. Üzerlik does not receive any punishment for her evil nature. Still, it is interesting to see that the findings of earlier scholars who have studied the portrayal of women in Turkish films can also be recognised in quite a few of the films within the corpus.

The portrayal of women in horror films

The two horror films that are part of the corpus, *Dabbe 4: The Possession* and *Dabbe 5: Curse of the Jinn*, portray women in comparable and very specific ways, and even though the horror films make up such a small part of the corpus, it is very interesting to analyse these films more in depth. While the portrayal of women in drama and comedies is sometimes more overtly sexist through the use of male voice, or by giving female characters more supporting roles as opposed

to the main roles that are played by male characters, the way women are portrayed in the two horror films is more symbolic.

Both *Dabbe 4* and *Dabbe 5* contain references to the Islam. Both films are namely about evil jinns that have possessed the characters, which are supernatural and demonic spirits in Arabic mythology. The word ‘Dabbe’ itself furthermore refers to “Beast of the Earth” in verse 27:82 of chapter 27 *sūrat l-naml*. In the Islam the Beast of the Earth is one of the signs that the Last Day is coming, and it is therefore a creature that people are afraid of (Erkan, 2015). We also hear characters recite Quran verses themselves, which furthermore shows that religion takes an important role in the films.

What is however most interesting for the analysis is that both films portray the possession of a *female* character by evil spirits. In *Dabbe 4*, Kübra gets possessed by a jinn on her henna night prior to her wedding, and Ebru, a psychiatrist who is sceptical that possessions are real, and Faruk, a jinn exorcist, try to help her. In *Dabbe 5*, Dilek is possessed with a jinn because she has been cursed ever since she was a baby.

In his book, Arslan (2011) shows that it is most often the female characters in Turkish horror films that are possessed by jinns or take up other monstrous or evil characteristics. The reason for this, he argues, is that Turkish horror films reveal the anxiety of the nation towards rising Islamisation, which posits a threat to the secular Turkish nation-state. This is also relevant for the analysis of the *Dabbe* films, because as was mentioned before these films contain many references to the Islam. According to Arslan, the female characters in these films “directly bearing the evil or becoming the victims of evil forces ... [indicate] an ensuing threat to the male-dominated, secularist ‘white’ Turk world (Arslan, 2011, p. 258). As Güçlü (2016, p. 122) furthermore explains, “these possessed female characters represent both the association between religion and evil, and the struggle between secularism and Islam”. The female characters thus become the vehicle through which the anxiety of the nation for Islamisation is portrayed. The female character is not just a character in itself; it is a means through which a deeper message, or a deeper seated fear for the Islam, is conveyed.

The women in the *Dabbe*-films mainly communicate through crying and screaming, while the male characters are often more rational, informing, corrective and less emotional, such as Faruk in *Dabbe 4* and Dilek’s husband Ömer in *Dabbe 5*, who refuses to believe Dilek when she claims that she feels an unknown presence in the house. This takes us back to Silverman and her concept of male voice (1988); Silverman argues that the male voice often holds authority, by being more rational for example, over the female voice in films, and thus erases the subjectivity and agency of female characters. By communicating in a less rational

way than the male characters, the female characters in the film are thus less powerful than the men, and their agency is reduced. The agency of the women that are possessed by the jinns is furthermore directly reduced, because a demonic creature takes control of their bodies, and their bodies thus no longer belong to Kübra and Dilek, but to the evil spirit that possesses them.

Theoretical discussion of male gaze, male voice and female subjectivity

In the previous analyses of the portrayal of women in drama films, comedies and horror films, I have already touched upon the concept of male voice, which was formulated by Silverman in 1988. I have shown that the storyline is very often controlled by the male characters, as they are more dominantly present and because they often communicate in more rational ways than the female characters. I have paid less attention to the concepts of male gaze and female subjectivity so far, but these concepts can also be recognised within the corpus.

17 films within the corpus contain a moment during which a male character, or a group of male characters, gazes at a female character. Mulvey's concept of male gaze can thus be recognized in some of the films within the corpus. *Red Istanbul* for example introduces Neval to us through the gaze of Orhan: the camera focuses on Orhan, who is standing together with Deniz in a street, and we see that something or someone has caught his attention. In the following shot we see Neval walking towards the men, the camera looks at her from Orhan his position, and we see her smiling sweetly at the Orhan and Deniz. The camera then focuses on Orhan again, and he is seemingly impressed.

Dedemin Fisi contains a moment during which Bora gazes at Pervin; Bora is playing in the garden with his cousins when Pervin enters the scene and the camera follows her around as she walks towards the house in slow motion. The slow motion gives us, the audience, but also Bora more time to gaze at Pervin. The camera then focuses on Bora his face, zooming in to emphasise that it is his opinion of her that matters a lot. In the following shot Pervin trips, and we see Bora smiling at her. Bora then asks his cousins who she is, and he then finds out that Pervin is his grandfather's nurse. Pervin does not talk throughout this scene, she is only talked about and gazed at.

In *Magic Carpet Ride* an entire group of male characters, the gang members, gaze at a woman who rides past them on a horse. "Get a look at that!", says Asim, seemingly impressed by her, and *Overnight Republic* [Kolonya Cumhuriyeti] (Kepez, 2017) also shows an entire group of both male and female characters gazing, some of them even with their mouths wide open, at a female character. They are seemingly impressed by her beauty.

All these examples, but also the other instances of male gaze in the corpus, happen when a female character is introduced in the film and we do not know anything about her yet. We do not know her name or what her thoughts and feelings are; we come to know of her first through her looks, as the camera, and the gaze of the male characters, follow her movement as she enters the scene. In some cases the female character is introduced after this moment, and we find out who she is. In other cases the female character is only an extra in the film, and we thus learn nothing about her, except for the way she looks.

As Mulvey (1975, 1989) argues, women in films are often characterized by their “to-be-looked-at-ness”, and men are the “bearers of the look”. Through their gaze, the male character introduces us to the female character, so she is not an independent subject, but an object that is enjoyed by men and the male characters. Orhan, Bora and Asim all clearly enjoy gazing at Neval, Pervin and the woman riding the horse, as we can see by the smiles on their faces. In *Magic Carpet Ride*, Asim’s line “Get a look at *that!*” makes it even more clear that the woman riding the horse in this case is a sexual object, or a “sexualized spectacle”, in the words of Suner (2010, p. 174), whose main purpose is to entertain the male characters and the audience with her looks.

Not only the male characters in the film enjoy the gazing, we, the audience, also get the chance to do so. As Mulvey argues, there are three different “bearers of the look” that view the woman as an erotic object of desire in film: the male character, the camera, and the audience. The fact that Pervin for example enters the scene in slow motion, gives the audience also sufficient time to take a look at her appearance, and thus it is not only Bora who gets to be impressed by her looks (Smelik, 1995).

Most of these female characters are silent while they are being gazed at, and this brings us again to Silverman her concept of male voice and her argument that women in films are under “double surveillance” (Silverman, 1990, p. 312). Most of these women do not introduce themselves after the gaze, but they are introduced by a male character. They do not talk, they are talked *about*, and they are thus not only subjected to the male gaze, but also to the male voice. The male characters in these scenes are not only in control of the visual power, but also of the discursive power (Güçlü, 2016, p. 20).

De Lauretis her argument that female subjectivity is completely erased from films through this double surveillance can also be recognized in these examples; these female characters are not independent subjects in themselves, because we barely learn anything about how they see the world from their perspective. What we do know about them, is that the male characters enjoy their appearance. This makes it very difficult for actual women to identify with

these female characters; something that is even made harder through the stereotypical characteristics that female characters more often have than male characters.

Atakav (2013, p. 3) argues that this objectification of women in Turkish films through instances of male gaze, male voice and the limited choices for women in Turkish films and the lack of agency that female characters have, continue to keep the patriarchal Turkish society alive, and this is highly problematic. However, not all films in the corpus contain instances of male gaze or male voice, and some films make an attempt to grant female characters more agency, as I will show in the next section.

Feminist themes and elements

Having painted a rather pessimistic picture so far, I want to end this chapter by focusing on some feminist themes and elements that can be recognised within the corpus, and which can especially be seen in the newer films. *Görümce* (Baruönü, 2016), *Deliha* (Algül, 2014), *Stunt School* (Yorgancıoğlu, 2019), *Leyla Everlasting* (Akay, 2020), *Have you ever seen fireflies* [Sen Hiç Ateşböceği Gördün mü?] (Haznedaroğlu, 2021) and *Romantic Comedy* [Romantik Komedi] (Ketche, 2010) for example all have a strong female who does not act in a passive way but takes control, who is not thinking about marriage all the time but focuses on her career instead, or who develops herself personally throughout the film. As was shown before in this chapter, most films have male protagonists, or the male characters are more active and dominantly present than the female characters. Sometimes a film both has a male and a female lead, in which case the male lead often overshadows the female lead. This is for example the case in *A Chaster Marriage*, in which we learn more about Zafer his story and his thoughts and feelings than we learn about Feryal.

This is not the case in for example *Stunt School*, in which we see Aslı follow her childhood dream to become an actress and ignore the wishes of her parents, who rather see her do something with her degree in agricultural engineering. Aslı is a likeable character; she is funny and clumsy, and in the end she saves the company she works for from going bankrupt. Overall she is someone that a female spectator can sympathise and identify with, which are important characteristics of protagonists (Bordwell et al., 2019, p. 78). *Deliha* and *Deliha 2* are two other films that have a strong female lead, but *Zeliha* is less identifiable than Aslı, because *Zeliha* is much crazier, sillier and clumsier, and very stereotypical. Still, *Zeliha* takes control of her own happiness, and she is therefore different than most of the passive female characters we can see in the rest of the corpus. *Deliha 2* furthermore incorporates more feminist themes than *Deliha*, because the first one mainly focuses on *Zeliha*'s search for love, while the second one

focuses on Zeliha's search for a career. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, *Deliha 2* was written and directed by Gupse Özay, and this makes this film one of the few that is directed by a woman.

When a film has a strong female lead, it does not automatically mean that it can be called 'feminist'. Nor would it be enough for a film to pass the Bechdel test – a criterion that was created by Alison Bechdel in 1985 - which a film would pass if it had at least two female characters that talked to each other in at least one scene about something other than a man (O'Meara, 2016). It is also possible for a character to be feminist without the entire film being feminist, which can for example be determined by the Mako Mori test – a test that asks whether a film has “at least one female character who gets her own narrative arc that is not about supporting a man's story” (Derr, 2013), and thus whether a female character is a subject or an object. *Stunt School*, *Deliha* and *Deliha 2* certainly pass these two tests, but that does not necessarily make them feminist. For a film to be feminist, filmmaker Anna Biller for example argues in an essay that “it has to have the express purpose of educating its audience about social inequality about men and women” (Biller, 2018), and it is thus not enough to portray women in a non-sexist way through the absence of male gaze, or to include a strong female lead (Budowski, 2018).

If we apply Biller her criterion, *Görümce* is a better example of a feminist film. The film revolves around Yeliz, a strong female lead who wants to prevent her brother Ahmet from marrying Deniz. In the first part of the film Yeliz is not portrayed in a positive way: she is selfish, emotional, mean, hysterical and very possessive over her brother. She is furthermore very occupied with the way she looks, and she stands in stark contrast with Deniz who is sweet, caring, successful in her career and who not as self-obsessed as Yeliz, and Deniz thus seems to be the ideal wife for Ahmet. Here we can again recognise the common binary portrayal of the 'good' woman versus the 'evil' woman.

Towards the end of the film however, the portrayal of Yeliz starts to change. We learn that Yeliz acts this way towards Deniz because she is very insecure about herself. Unlike Ahmet and Deniz, she never received the opportunity to study, and she feels bad about herself that she does not have a successful job. Because the parents of Yeliz and Ahmet are gone, all Yeliz has is Ahmet, and the reason that she is she overprotective of him is that she is afraid to lose him.

It is rather unique in the Turkish films that are part of the corpus that we learn so much about the personal story of a female character; during the final moments of the film we learn why Yeliz has become the person that she is and we learn about her pain and insecurities. In most of the films, we only learn these things about the male characters, and this is therefore a

feminist element within the film. It makes Yeliz a real person, someone that an audience can identify with and recognise themselves in, because they may have encountered the same struggles in life. Towards the end of the film, we no longer see Yeliz as evil and crazy, and she no longer is the stereotypical evil and crazy woman; she instead becomes a likeable character.

Another feminist element in the film is related to Deniz her work. In the beginning of the film, Deniz meets a little girl wearing a princess dress, and when Deniz asks the little girl what she wants to do when she is older, the little girl replies that she wants to “get married”. Deniz then asks the girl what kind of work she wants to do, and the girl replies: “I’ll make a baby and I’ll cook”. Deniz feels that this is wrong, and when she has to pitch a new idea for a campaign to her bosses in the end of the film, she uses her conversation with the little girl as inspiration to deliver a feminist message. In the campaign film, we see all the female characters from the film, such as the housekeeper and Yeliz her friends, dressed up in princess dresses, but also in laboratory coats, an astronaut helmet and construction helmets. When Deniz practices her pitch by giving it to Ahmet, we learn what the idea behind her campaign is:

“We raise our daughters like princesses. They were being raised isolated from any danger and reality. We give them rules, limits. We say “Don’t do this! Don’t do that.” So they end up caring only about beauty and glamour. And then they wait for a prince. We need to redefine being a princess. They can achieve anything if they want to. A princess can be a doctor, architect, or even an astronaut. We have to tell them that.”

The film thus not only shows strong female characters like Yeliz and Deniz, who become identifiable characters for a female audience, the film also delivers a feminist critique on how girls are raised in Turkey and how women and men are not treated in an equal way. The film delivers the message that we should not program women to become good wives and mothers, but that we should encourage women to follow their own dreams. Compared to the other films in the corpus, this take on gender is refreshing, as it is one of the few films that actually criticises the social inequality between men and women.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that there are some slight differences between the three genres in the way that women are portrayed, but that we can also recognise some general trends. Very often we can see that the male characters play a more active role; they work, go out with friends, or they go on adventures. The female characters on the other hand play a more passive role, they are mainly portrayed around the house, they rarely have their own storyline and an

important task for them is to listen to the struggles of their husband. We can furthermore recognise the 'good' woman versus 'evil' woman binary. The good women are the ideal marriage candidates and they often are rewarded for their behaviour, while the bad women are sometimes, but not always, punished. Male gaze and male voice can furthermore be recognised in the corpus, and the males are very often in control of the narrative.

This paints a very negative picture, but this picture is of course not the case in every film. A few films, most of the time these are the more recent films, even make an attempt to change these trends, by incorporating a clear feminist message in their film, and this is a positive development.

Conclusion

This study has analysed the portrayal of women in the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix. In Chapter 1, I have given some background information and described the history of cinema of Turkey. I have furthermore discussed the main findings from other scholars who have analysed women in Turkish films, the most important ones being that women are often portrayed as either good, kind, innocent and loyal as opposed to bad, mean, evil and seductive, and that women are often more quiet in films than men. Together with the findings from feminist film theorists, these findings formed the basis of the analysis.

In Chapter 2, I have discussed how Netflix decides which content to release on their platform, and that this depends on regional tastes and on the tastes of micro-clusters. In this chapter I have also given a descriptive analysis of the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix. I have found that most of the films that are part of the corpus receive mediocre ratings, have not yielded very high revenues and that most of the films are from the middle part of the 2010s. I have also found that many films in the corpus contain some sort of comedic element, even some of the drama films, and that there are also only two arthouse and two horror films on the platform. This is surprising, because melodrama has always been a popular genre in Turkish cinema, and arthouse films and horror films have been very important ever since the New Cinema of Turkey emerged. Netflix seems to assume, based on their algorithms, that the Dutch audience of Turkish films is interested in lighter films with a lot of humour.

Finally, in Chapter 3 I have analysed how women are portrayed in the three genres that can be found in the corpus, by providing examples from various films. I have discussed the presence of male gaze, male voice and female subjectivity in the corpus, and I have pointed at a promising development, namely the presence of feminist themes and elements in recently released films.

While there is no unambiguous or clear answer to the research question as there are differences in the way that women are portrayed in drama films, comedies and horror films, and that we can also recognise differences among the subgenres of general comedies, adventure comedies and romantic comedies, we can recognise some general trends in the corpus regarding the portrayal of women. In many of the films there is a male protagonist, or multiple male protagonists, and the female characters play a subordinate role compared to these male characters. Female characters are overall more passive, they talk less, we know less about their thoughts, feelings and problems compared to the male characters, and they are very often mainly portrayed around the house, doing the household. The male characters on the contrary

are more active; they are more occupied with going on adventures, working and conducting other sorts of business.

Female characters are also more often portrayed in stereotypical ways. In some of the films we can recognise the typical good girl, who is often the love interest of the male protagonist, and also the typical bad girl. We can furthermore recognise the male gaze in 17 of the films, and the concept of male voice is also present. This concept is present in the way that female characters are sometimes more quiet than the male character, but also in the way that the male characters more often speak in a rational way, while the female characters more often communicate in irrational ways, through crying or yelling for example.

This negative picture can however not be recognised in every film. Overall, female characters have less agency and less subjectivity than the male characters, and the men are most often in control of the narrative. However, some films entail male characters that communicate just as irrationally as female characters, some films both have a female and male protagonist that are equal to each other and some films entail strong and smart female characters that take control of their own lives. The presence of feminist themes and elements that can especially be found in the newer films is a very promising development.

What the implications are of this portrayal of women as overall being more passive was beyond the scope of this study. How the audience perceives this, and whether this portrayal of women reinforces the existence of the patriarchal culture (Suner, 2010, p. 163), may however be an interesting direction for future research.

It is furthermore interesting to ask whether the presence of feminist themes and elements will increase in the upcoming years, and whether Netflix will also have an influence on this. Netflix originals very often contain feminist themes and elements, such as the presence of a strong female lead, and Netflix originals are often quite progressive (Özkan & Hardt, 2020, p. 166). As Netflix is planning on creating more Turkish originals in the future (Vivarelli, 2021), it is interesting to see whether the corpus of Turkish films on Netflix will soon entail more feminist elements, which would be a promising development.

To conclude this study, the corpus of Turkish films on the Dutch Netflix does not always portray women in a positive way, but the feminist themes and elements that some of the films in the corpus already contain, and the prospect of more Turkish Netflix originals in the near future, leave us hopeful for a better portrayal of women in Turkish films.

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Appendix 1: Template for analysis

Film title	
Plot	
Notes on the female characters and their characteristics	
Notes on the male characters and their characteristics	
Presence of male gaze	Yes/No Elaboration:
Notes on male voice	
Notes on female subjectivity	
Notes on how active versus passive the male and female characters are	
Do we recognise the 'good' girl versus 'evil' girl binary?	

Notes on how the mise-en-scene influences the portrayal of women	
Notes on how the cinematography influences the portrayal of women	
Other notes about the portrayal of women	

Appendix 2: Overview of films

	English Title	Turkish Title	Year	Director	Screenwriter	Box office	Genre	IMDB-rating
1.	A Chaster Marriage	El Değmemiş Aşk	2016	Umut Kırca	Yasar Arak, Ömer Pınar	\$1,096,103	Comedy, Romance	5,5
2.	Alibaba and the 7 dwarfs	Alibaba ve 7 Cüceler	2015	Cem Yılmaz	Cem Yılmaz	\$7,816,034	Comedy, Adventure	5,7
3.	Among Family	Aile Arasında	2017	Ozan Açıktan	Gülse Birsnel	\$10,081,222	Comedy	7,7
4.	Bir Baba Hindu	Bir Baba Hindu	2016	Sermiyan Midyat	Sermiyan Midyat	\$2,483,680	Comedy, Adventure	2,7
5.	Bygones be Bygones	Olanlar Oldu	2017	Hakan Algül	Ata Demirer	\$6,076,337	Comedy	6,2
6.	Çarsi Pazar	Çarsi Pazar	2015	Muharrem Gülmez	Eray Akyamaner, Sıla Çetindağ, Uğur Gövercin	\$2,346,973	Comedy	5,2
7.	Clair Obscur	Tereddüt	2016	Yeşim Ustaoglu	Yeşim Ustaoglu	\$49,667	Drama	6,5
8.	Coming Soon	Pek Yakında	2014	Cem Yılmaz	Cem Yılmaz	\$10,769,798	Comedy	7,4
9.	Dabbe 4: The Possession	Dabbe 4: Cin Çarpması	2013	Hasan Karacadağ	Hasan Karacadağ	\$2,005,958	Horror	6,8
10.	Dabbe 5: Curse of the Jinn	Dabbe 5: Zehri Cin	2014	Hasan Karacadağ	Hasan Karacadağ	\$3,853,240	Horror	6,0
11.	Dedemin Fişi	Dedemin Fişi	2016	Meltem Bozoflu	Eray Akyamaner, Sıla Çetindağ, Yılmaz Erdoğan	\$8,573,963	Comedy	5,5
12.	Deliha	Deliha	2014	Hakan Algül	Gupse Özay	\$7,384,858	Comedy, Romance	4,5
13.	Deliha 2	Deliha 2	2018	Gupse Özay	Gupse Özay	\$5,129,480	Comedy	4,5
14.	Düğün Dernek	Düğün Dernek	2013	Selçuk Aydermir, Birkan Pusa	Selçuk Aydemir	\$3,618,574	Comedy	7,0
15.	Düğün Dernek 2	Düğün Dernek 2: Sünnet	2015	Selçuk Aydemir	Selçuk Aydemir	\$2,583,666	Comedy	6,4
16.	G.O.R.A.	G.O.R.A.	2004	Ömer Faruk Sorak	Cem Yılmaz	\$20,839,049	Comedy, Adventure	8,0
17.	Görümce	Görümce	2016	Kivanç Baruönü	Gupse Ozay	\$6,225,902	Comedy	5,0
18.	Have you ever seen fireflies?	Sen Hiç Ateşböceği Gördün mü?	2021	Andaç Haznedaroğlu	Yılmaz Erdoğan	N/A	Drama	6,2
19.	Jolly Life	Neşeli Hayat	2009	Yılmaz Erdoğan	Yılmaz Erdoğan	\$7,314,040	Drama	6,1
20.	Hayat Öpücüğü	Hayat Öpücüğü	2015	Şenol Sönmez	Saygin Delibas, Fethi Kantarcı	\$874,769	Comedy, Romance	5,9
21.	Hot, Sweet, Sour	Acı Tatlı Eksi	2017	Andaç Haznedaroglu	Bugra Gülsoy	\$1,556,617	Drama	6,0
22.	Husband Factor	Kocan Kadar Konuş	2015	Kivanç Baruönü	Kivanç Baruönü	\$8,674,655	Comedy, Romance	6,2
23.	Husband Factor 2	Kocan Kadar Konuş: Diriliş	2016	Kivanç Baruönü	Kivanç Baruönü	\$6,155,274	Comedy, Romance	5,7
24.	Keep a lid on it	Aman Reis Duymasın	2019	Onur Tan	Berna Aruz, Bahadır Özdenir	\$1,123,818	Comedy, Adventure	4,4
25.	Keeping the Bees	Kovan	2020	Eylem Kaftan	Eylem Kaftan	N/A	Arthouse, Drama	5,8

26.	Kill me if you dare	Öldür Beni Sevgilim	2019	Senol Sönmez	Murat Disli	\$1,767,858	Comedy	4,4
27.	Leyla Everlasting	9 Kere Leyla	2020	Ezel Akay	Ezel Akay, Özlem Hale	N/A	Comedy	3,8
28.	Locked on You	Hedefim Sensin	2018	Kivanç Baruönü	Ata Demirer	\$4,394,284	Comedy	6,2
29.	Locksmith's Debt	Küçük Esnaf	2016	Bedran Güzel	Ufuk Bayram, İbrahim Büyükkak, Zeynep Kocak	\$3,140,566	Comedy	5,6
30.	Love, Surreal and Odd	Tatlım Tatlım	2017	Yılmaz Erdoğan	Yılmaz Erdoğan	\$2,467,470	Comedy, Romance	5,6
31.	Magic Carpet Ride	Organize İşler	2005	Yılmaz Erdoğan	Yılmaz Erdoğan	\$14,188,490	Comedy, Adventure	7,4
32.	Miracle in cell no. 7	7. Koğuştaki Mucize	2019	Mehmet Ada Öztekin	Özge Efendioglu, Kubilay Tat	\$17,163,660	Drama	8,2
33.	Money Trap	Organize İşler: Sazan Sarmalı	2019	Yılmaz Erdoğan	Yılmaz Erdoğan	\$9,831,515	Comedy, Adventure	6,0
34.	Müslüm: voice of pain	Müslüm	2018	Ketche, Can Ulkay	Hakan Gunday, Gürhan Özçiftçi	\$13,700,403	Drama, Biography	7,7
35.	My Mother's Wound	Annemin Yarası	2016	Ozan Açıktan	Ozan Açıktan, Ozan Güven, Fethi Kantarci	\$1,749,704	Drama	7,4
36.	My Stepdad: the Hippie	Cici Babam	2018	Meltem Bozoflu	Eray Akyamaner, Sila Cetindag, Ugur Güvercin	\$1,068,128	Comedy	5,1
37.	My Travel Buddy	Yol Arkadaşım	2017	Bedran Güzel	İbrahim Büyükkak	\$2,459,261	Comedy, Adventure	6,1
38.	My Travel Buddy 2	Yol Arkadaşım 2	2018	Bedran Güzel	İbrahim Büyükkak	\$5,278,470	Comedy, Adventure	5,9
39.	One Way to Tomorrow	Yarına Tek Bilet	2020	Ozan Açıktan	Faruk Ozerten	N/A	Drama	5,6
40.	Overnight Republic	Kolonya Cumhuriyeti	2017	Murat Kepez	Eray Akyamaner, Sila Cetindag, Ugur Güvercin	\$3,540,420	Comedy	5,8
41.	Paper Lives	Kağıttan Hayatlar	2021	Can Ulkay	Ercan Mehmet Erdem	N/A	Drama	6,7
42.	Red Istanbul	İstanbul Kırmızısı	2017	Ferzan Özpetek	Ferzan Özpetek	\$3,429,587	Drama	5,5
43.	Romantic Comedy	Romantik Komedi	2010	Ketche	Ceren Arslan, Aslı Zengin	\$4,155,173	Comedy, Romance	5,3
44.	Romantic Comedy 2	Romantik Komedi 2	2013	Erol Özlevi	Ceren Arslan, Aslı Zengin	\$8,601,745	Comedy, Romance	5,2
45.	Sour Apples	Ekşi Elmalar	2016	Yılmaz Erdoğan	Yılmaz Erdoğan	\$4,009,596	Drama	7,2
46.	Stuck Apart	Azizler	2021	Durul Taylan, Yağmur Taylan	Durul Taylan, Yağmur Teylan, Berkun Oya	N/A	Drama	6,1
47.	Stunt School	Aslı Gibidir	2019	Ali Yorgancıoğlu	Evren Erdoğan	\$251,312	Comedy	4,4
48.	The Butterfly's Dream	Kelebeğin Rüyası	2013	Yılmaz Erdoğan	Yılmaz Erdoğan	\$11,028,096	Drama	7,7
49.	The Galloping Vet	Niyazi Gül Dörtnala	2015	Hakan Algül	Cihan Ceylan, Ata Demirer, Ögünç Ersöz	\$3,858,492	Comedy, Adventure	4,5
50.	The International	Beynelmilel	2006	Sırrı Süreyya Önder,	Sırrı Süreyya Önder	\$2,410,542	Drama	7,2

				Muharrem Gülmez				
51.	The Miracle	Mucize	2015	Mahsun Kırmızıgül	Mahsun Kırmızıgül	\$15,584,520	Drama	7,6
52.	The Plane Tree	Çınar Ağacı	2011	Handan İpekçi	Handan İpekçi	\$1,538,316	Drama	6,2
53.	Trouble on Wheels	Kara Bela	2015	Burak Aksak	Burak Aksak	\$3,479,667	Comedy, Adventure	6,8
54.	Turkish Dance School	Sen Kiminle Dans Ediyorsun	2017	Burak Aksak	Burak Aksak	\$1,010,493	Comedy	5,8
55.	Vendors' Meeting	Bayi Toplantisi	2020	Bedran Güzel	Ibrahim Büyükak	\$2,560,632	Comedy, Adventure	4,6
56.	Vizontele	Vizontele	2001	Yılmaz Erdoğan, Ömer Faruk Sorak	Yılmaz Erdoğan	\$968,318	Comedy	8
57.	You're everything to me	Sen Benim HerŞeyimsin	2016	Tolga Örnek	Tolga Örnek	\$1,085,674	Drama	6,3