



CP, 2022, Vol.11 – No22, pp. 61/81 - ISSN 2014-6752. Girona (Catalunya). Universitat de Girona. Aybike Serttaş: The Woman Has No Name? Female characters in Turkish cinema through the eyes of female directors. Recibido: 04/07/22 - Aceptado: 15/07/2022

The Woman Has No Name? Female characters in Turkish cinema through the eyes of female directors

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Abstract

It can be observed that there was a quantitative increase in the films of female directors in Turkey in 2000s and these directors started to create their own cinematic language. These directors produce films by being influenced by the patriarchal society they live in and deal with the problems women experience in that society. In this study, it will be discussed how female directors who continue their lives in a patriarchal society reflect female characters in their films. The reason for including the year 2010 and later in the study is that the female directors in the study both dealt with the problems related to women in their films. At the same time, there are similarities in the problems of the female characters in the films of these directors too. In the research, women's problems, and the places of characters in private and public spaces are examined in the context of feminist theory and four films of four female directors in Turkey were discussed. These films⁽¹⁾ are Yeşim Ustaoglu's *Purgatory* (2012), Pelin Esmer's *Watchtower* (2012), Emine Emel Balci's *Until I Lose My Breath* (2015) and Ahu Öztürk's *Dust Cloth* (2015). As a result, it has been determined that female directors in Turkey go beyond the classical narrative cinema and deal with the main problems of women.

Keywords: *Gender, Women's Issues, Feminist Theory, Women Directors in Turkey*

Introduction and Objectives

The representation of women in the cinema appears as a reflection of the society. The first representations of women in classical narrative cinema have been discussed for many years as a reflection of the stereotypes imposed on women by society. However, feminism aims to create a freer woman image in society by opposing all forms. The feminist approach also criticizes the movies that affect the society in the context of women's representation. In particular, the idea that the representations of women in the films in which the classical narrative takes place are the representations of the male-dominated society comes to the fore.

The purpose of choosing these female directors in this paper is that they have worked on similar themes and characters in close periods. On the other hand, changing socio-cultural phenomena are also reflected in the representation of women by society. For this reason, the purpose of addressing the post-2010 period is to examine how recent women's representations are handled. Thus, the relationship between cinematic representations and society, and therefore the individual, shows both the position of the idea and myth creativity of cinema and its feature of being a mirror of society.

The research questions of the study were determined as follows:

- (i) How does sexism affect the representation of women in cinema?
- (ii) How does feminist film theory examine the representation of women in films?
- (iii) What changes have occurred in the representation of female characters in the past years?
- (iv) What are the common and different representations of female characters in the context of selected directors and their films?

Method

This study is based on Feminist Theory. The method to be applied in the study covers the films made after 2010 by female directors in Turkey. The contents of the films discussed in this context, integrated with Feminist Theory, are in four main themes; (i) patriarchy, (ii) women's place in the public sphere, (iii) women's class problems and (iv) women's mother image will be resolved. It will be discussed how the patriarchal structure affects and directs the lives of female characters, how the class problems of women are reflected in the movies, the image of women as mothers and how women exist in the public sphere.

Gender and Representation Theory

Global representations do not only shape psychological formations, but they also include the relationship in the construction of social norms and play an important role in representation. The capitalism provides a libertarian approach in determining representations and sees that the strong defeat the weak (Ryan and Kellner, 1997, 38).

Adler (1994,30) in his book *The Definition of Human Nature*, states that there are two types of children in the society and when they grow up, they will enter the society as either brave or weak individuals, and attributes this to the influence of the environment. Each type becomes meaningful when we understand its relationship with the environment. It is often possible to find echoes of the environment in a child's behavior. Sexism developed with the strengthening and proliferation of feminist movements and started to be discussed. Theorists think

that sexism is a product of culture. Accordingly, culture constructs gender, the roles that individuals have to fulfill are defined and this becomes their destiny. As Beauvoir says, culture imposes gender roles on people (2016, 54).

In other words, gender roles assign specific roles to men and women. For example, a man works and brings bread to his house, a woman takes care of her children at home. Civil engineering is a profession suitable for men, as teaching is ideal for women. Thus, behavioral patterns for men and women were determined (Loot & Maluso, 2002, 537). These attitudes continued to be effective in areas such as family, business life, social life, and school. The roles imposed on women by society appear in their future lives.

Stuart Hall defines the concept of representation as a language that is used to make meaningful sentences about things, to transfer them and to facilitate narration to other people. Symbolization of things facilitates description, and this includes the use of language, signs, and images. Likewise, *Hall* bases representation on two basic items;

- 1- To represent something is to describe, to picture, or to visualize it through imagination.
- 2- To represent also means to symbolize, to mean, to set an example, to take its place (Hall, 2017, 23-24).

Creating representation is somewhat illusory. First, the representation is filtered through the mind, and then the other party thinks about the represented thing (in its own inner world). The most important aspect of being in the same geography and culture is language. In this way, we can communicate more easily with people we speak the same language within the framework of common representations. However, as geography and culture change, the concept of representation can also change. "*The meaning will constantly change from one culture and period to the next. It is not certain that every object in one culture will have a corresponding meaning in another culture*" (Hall, 2017, 81). Sexism, which is related to the changing geographical location and culture mentioned above, is evaluated within the concept of representation. The concept of representation, which has been in the life of human being since ancient times, evolved over time, and artistic activities that started with sculpture and painting, as well as daily life, were reflected in photography and cinema. The influence of the media on the widespread use of the concept of representation and the frequency of its use in daily life is undeniable. However, media representations are not neutral or objective. Representations, which are built with an ideological approach and play an important role in shaping daily and long-term intellectual practices, are tools to strengthen certain values and beliefs on a mass scale (Serttaş, 2020).

Representation of Women in Cinema

In this adventure that started in ancient times, women were generally portrayed as helpless, needy, not given the right to speak much, and as a mother, and housewife. At the same time, women are presented in patterns that men will like. Films with a high level of eroticism are given by the society in forms where women conform to social norms as a structure, and their body, hair, lips and face are attractive. However, women's representations have not changed

much in recent periods. In a world ruled by sexual imbalance, women play for and make sense of male desire. The mainstream films meticulously bring together the spectacle and the narrative (Mulvey, 1997, 80).

With the emergence of female directors, female representations will finally find a place for themselves, and by this means, directors will be able to represent female characters in their own way and forms. Women have reflected themselves by means of communication in a very different way than men have declared. Thus, what is considered positive by women crosses the border of male-dominated boundaries and the public sphere. All these problems are a political problem of how women are represented (Ryan and Kellner, 1997, 219-220). The representation of women in the cinema is divided into two as 'popular cinema' and 'alternative cinema'.

The argument that popular cinema is far from real life, artificial, and that movies have no depth, also reflects the people, subjects and characters of these movies shot for entertainment and commercial purposes. It keeps the audience away from the bad and boring things they don't want to see in real life. While popular cinema deals with entertaining, cheerful and happy subjects, it actually gives the audience what they want to see. *Pezzella* says that popular cinema first of all perfects the fascinating power of representation (Pezzella, 2006, 19). Likewise, representations of women in popular cinema comply with the patriarchal order of world societies. According to the rules of patriarchy and its auxiliary structures, the male character does not bear the burden of sexual objectification. Man is reluctant to look at his like (Mulvey, 1997, 83). It is inevitable that women's representations in films are portrayed as pure, sexual objects and blindfolded characters who need to be educated. Williams (1992, 561-563) uses the following examples on this subject: little girls and women close their eyes when they lean on the shoulders of the man they are dating, but boys and adult men still have the freedom to look at the woman.

In the 1970s, feminist critics criticized the representations of women in the cinema, and in this context, they drew attention to the emotional, domestic, mother, wife, and housewife representations. Some feminist critics also focus on men's sanctions on women, their confinement to their homes after giving birth, and their feelings of spiritual inadequacy. With the 1980s, women were able to take their place in the public sphere, albeit to a lesser extent. Women directors working in this period focused on social problems that they had longed for, such as domestic violence and freedom, in their films. The representation of women in the cinema in this period is more subjective and their efforts to stand on their own feet rather than needing someone are reflected in the films. Rowe (1995) draws attention to the fact that women disrupted the order for this period and the male-dominated society's struggle with rebellious women. It is emphasized that women oppose some social stereotypes and try to eliminate aesthetic concerns (weight, make-up, desire to be perfect).

Women's Cinema as Alternative Cinema and Representation of Women

Alternative, also known as 'independent' cinema, is a revolt against Hollywood films. Art movements such as impressionism, futurism, cubism, abstract art, surrealism and expressionism have an impact on the emergence of alternative cinema. All art movements have

affected the cinema as well as painting, sculpture and photography and shed light on Alternative Cinema. As the quality of the cameras increased with the advancement of technology, high-budget plateaus were replaced by lower costs in natural environments. Films shot from the point of view of women's cinema, that is, women directors, emerged as a response to the patriarchal film language. The directors' handling of women's issues in films, their approach to women's representations differently from the classical narrative, draws attention to women in the private and public spheres. Although women's cinema does not have any rules, frameworks or paths, its way of expressing itself is different from the classical narrative. The directors do not worry about being watched, they push the audience to think beyond getting lost in the movie. While no geography, culture or event related to the birth of women's cinema can be determined, it is clear that its purpose is to discuss criticism, social movements, culture and traditions. Alison Butler states that women's cinema is a difficult concept to define, lacks clarity and is directed towards women. She emphasizes that women's cinema does not have a genre, a movement, or a historical process (2002, 1-2). The representation of women in the context of patriarchy in the classical narrative has been conveyed in different ways in women's cinema, which can be called Alternative Cinema. These representations are the reflection of women who are subjected to domestic violence, who are married at a young age, who are abused and who are not educated. The patriarchal order in classical cinema is being demolished in women's cinema, and female directors rebel against the classical narrative with the representations they use. De Lauretis thinks that being a woman is a construction process. According to him, it is about what we experience, read, write and try. At the same time, he touches on the point of considering women as a subject and considers this as objectification, restriction, and exclusion of women (1984, 184-187).

In alternative cinema, directors and screenwriters perform their art without being subject to the compulsions of outside influences and producers. These directors, who make films with lower costs in terms of economy, stand out with their understanding of free art. The film subjects they chose and their lack of success at the box office, the screenings they made in smaller venues instead of big theaters are their most distinctive features. Alternative Cinema, unlike Hollywood, reflects reality without putting the audience into a rosy world. There are no box office and audience concerns. The important thing in these films is that the directors can perform their art on the streets, in real houses, and in natural environments.

Representation of Women in Turkish Cinema

Turkish Cinema, as in other world cinemas, has continued in the background and patriarchal structure from the beginning. In the cinemas of countries, there have been forms of representation shaped according to gender roles. In Turkish Cinema, women are most clearly represented within the framework of the concept of honor. A woman should protect her honor until she gets married and should not engage in any sexual relationship. Being a virgin has become one of the social roles of women in Turkish society. The idea that a woman who is not a virgin cannot marry, is accepted by the society has been widely used in old Turkish films. Other forms of representation of women are a housewife, mother, daughter who must obey the rules of the house, wife and passive woman for many years. In other words, stereotyped representations have emerged, and, in these movies, women could not even be full characters.

On the other hand, women's issues have never been dealt with in Turkish Cinema for many years, and with the star system female actors have always played the same female character in order not to lose their popularity.

With the arrival of television in homes, the interest in cinema decreased in the 1970s. Directors and producers have sought ways to direct people to the cinema, and the sex frenzy has emerged with Yeşilçam. The protagonists of women's films started to be troubled women. It is as if they are in a different world from the women living in this country. The woman is presented as the focal point of eroticism. All his problems are related to her sexuality (Pösteği, 2004, 57). In this way, women are presented as sexual objects in movies. The active target audience that provides consumption in the cinema is generally men. The woman, on the other hand, is presented passively only as an erotic object. As Berger mentioned that's why movies are built on the female body, and men are made happy. While the woman experiences the pleasure of being watched, the man gets this pleasure by watching her (2005, 47). With the political events that took place in the 80s Turkey, cinema started to deal with individual problems. Both male and female representations undergo changes. In the 80s, especially with the emergence of feminist movements, issues such as gender issues, harassment, violence, the right to abortion, domestic unrest were emphasized. Every day, new restrictions are added to the restrictions on the rights and freedoms of women.

Along with individuation, changes have also occurred in women's problems and women's inner depressions and loneliness have been included in the films. All this mobility has brought women to the center of the cultural field with an intensity like never before. "Women" became controversial in all areas of cultural life, from academic research to news magazines, from humor programs to literature (Suner, 2006, 293). By the 90s, the film market had gone way back. There was a budget problem for the release of the films and for the screenings in the cinemas. In these years, changes began to be seen in the representations of women in art films that went beyond the classical narrative structure. In this period, although the representations of women were seen as an object of sexuality in the same patriarchal order, they were now a little further away from a freer and moralist point of view. As a difference, the beginning of women's working life, their right to speak in the society, their education levels are reflected in the films.

In the 2000s, quality images had great repercussions in the viewing rates of cinema and television. Taking technological steps has been a ray of hope in cinema. In this period, films suitable for all segments of society began to be produced. It has been a productive period, from box office hit popular films to low box office art films. The number of directors who put forward their own understanding of cinema and transfer a social problem to the big screen has increased. In these films, the problems of migration, adaptation to the city and the problems of modern people and women are handled. In these years, representations of women who were victims of sexual abuse and abused, remained in the background in the family. In the 2000s, representations such as the silent representation of women, who submit to the patriarchal structure and are more accepted by the society because they do not speak, representations of hostile women who do business behind each other's back and make women offended by women, and women who fall victim to tradition are handled.

After 2010, with the increase of female directors, it is seen that women's problems are handled much more in cinema. In these films, women took place as main characters, not as secondary characters. However, in these films, themes such as the woman's need for solidarity, the existence of psychological violence that she feels under the patriarchal structure, the child brides, marriage with people they do not want, wrong decisions made with the desire to trust someone because they are helpless are handled. The female directors who process these representations have shaped their films entirely within the framework of the main woman character.

Feminist cinema era is a period in which women's hopes bloom, their visibility increases, and positive developments occur for women. Ruby Rich (1998) provides a class definition of this golden age:

1. Confirmatory (films that legitimize women's movements).
2. Corresponding (avant-garde films that embroider their author into the text)
3. Reconstructive (old experimental films that reintroduced conventional genres)
4. Medusavari (films like Nelly Kaplan's *A Very Curious Girl*, which praises the potential of feminist texts to "blow up the law")
5. Corrective reality (feminist features such as in Von Trott's *The Second Awakening of Christa Klages* are aimed at a wider audience)

Psychoanalytic Feminist Theory, on the other hand, deals with femininity and masculinity, the structure of their culture, and the separation processes of men and women. Examination of sexual differences also reveals that differences between women come to the fore.

Studlar (1998) suggested that the cinematic apparatus and masochistic aesthetic propose identifying positions for male and female audiences that reintegrate spiritual bisexuality, present the emotional pleasures of polymorphic sexuality, and unite male and female in their identification with and desire for the pre-oedipal mother (1988, 192).

In psychoanalysis and feminism, it is argued that while Freud reflected the patriarchal attitudes of his own time, patriarchy also offered the theoretical tools to overcome these attitudes by showing how patriarchy affected his patients" (Stam, 2014, 184). Laura Mulvey, with her article *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* written in 1975, was one of the first theorists of Psychoanalysis Feminist Theory and explained how patriarchal society shaped cinema. Mulvey stated in his narrative that Hollywood classic cinema is in accordance with the patriarchal view and the male characters in the mainstream cinema are generally in the middle of the narrative and that the woman is positioned as a visual effect, sexual object, an object of pleasure, and that the audience likes it' (Gürkan, 2015, 26).

Mulvey also says that psychoanalysis is the use of theory as a political weapon; how the unconscious of patriarchal society structures the film form (Mulvey, 2010, 277). Mulvey sees cinema as an advanced representation, thinks that the things that the patriarchal order wants to see are given by the cinema, and stated that the pleasure in looking is built in relation to this. (Mulvey, 2010, 179). She emphasizes that cinema is an action enjoyed by the audience and the satisfaction of the feeling of looking. The pleasures of looking have two aspects: The first is to see the other party as an object of sexual stimulation while looking, which is called

pleasure-born scopophilia. The second is self-identification with the visible image. Thus, while one of the spectators captures the one who resembles himself in the films, the other separates the object from its erotic identity. Looking at the things that give pleasure in the cinema can cause the content to be distorted. This situation paves the way for the representation and symbolization of women.

According to Smelik, for a film to be accepted as a feminist film, it must conform to the idea of “films that present sexual difference from a woman’s perspective and display a critical awareness of the asymmetrical power relationship between the sexes” (2008, 12). Gender codes can be broken through extremism and imitation. Unlike other theorists, Smelik pays attention to the increase of female directors in the sector and thus the increase of female films rather than the presence and awareness of female audiences or female actors.

Smelik also mentions that the woman is in the position of the shower in the film. She shows something by sticking to the man, and if there is no man, the woman is nothing. At the same time, Smelik criticizes the concept of *Autuer* in cinema since this concept ignores female directors.

Mary Ann Doane thinks that femininity is something that is forgotten and left out and argues that where women can be active, they can only do so with powerlessness. (Williams, 1992). The forgotten roles of women, who cannot be dominated by men in films, are oppressed and victimized, overlap with the dominant ideology. However, the situation is different in women’s films. The aim of women’s films is to change the course of women’s representations and to raise awareness of the society by showing what they go through (Stam, 2014, 185).

According to Sociological Feminist Film Theorists, the way women are represented in films symbolize how society treats women. What women are in real life is a distortion of their aspirations and trajectories. The screenwriters represent the female characters with their femininity existing in the historical process (White, 2000, 116).

The American Sociological Feminist Film Theory, on the other hand, criticizes how concepts such as light, sound and fiction leave the actor in the background without making an in-depth analysis of the character and the story. As Coward and Elis highlighted, Levi-Straussure draws attention to the importance of structures in the construction of care: the self-explanatoryness of the human subject can no longer be defended; the subject is the object of the structure and its transformations (1985, 41).

Women are constantly watched in the cinema, but that this is only an eye-pleasing, far from femininity fact. In the movies, women could not go beyond appealing to the eye and directing the course of the male-dominated ideology (Johnston, 1973, 214). Johnston thinks that women are marginalized as non-men in a male-dominated society. If it is not a male, it is thought to be in the background and incomplete.

Changing the representation of women in alternative feminist films may strengthen their common fantasy foundations. Female figures appear as abstract beings of the timeless world of myths (Stam, 2014, 184). With these thoughts, Johnston opposes the sociological

dimension of women in cinema. And emphasizes that women's representations are detached from reality, and that woman is a representation offered for men.

Annette Kuhn draws attention to two points: first, all forms of representation are discussed ideologically, while the second focuses on men's enjoyment of male-dominated films in Hollywood cinema. With the representations and images in the movies, it seems that the dominant ideology is sexist as well as capitalist. Sexism, as a concept that is discussed and developed within feminism; representations of women created by men are taking the form of universal representations. Feminist cultural critics both oppose and analyze the use of women in male art (Buikema, 1995, 6).

Women Directors in Turkey

Although female directors have existed in Turkish Cinema for a long time, it took time for them to announce their films. With the 2000s, women directors increased, and they had an important place in the history of cinema, especially after 2010, by addressing similar women's issues. The aim of revealing the problems of women's real lives, which Feminist Film Theory emphasizes, has made it visible in Turkish Cinema as well, with the increase of female directors in Turkey and the fact that they built their films on this structure.

The female directors, who started to increase with the 2000s, started to be quite productive after 2010. Women directors in Turkey focus on female characters in their films and deal with their real lives. Here, female directors create female representations, despite the female representations that are criticized by the Feminist Film Theory and directed by the male audience. Thus, women's issues take their place in movies in a contemporary way. The main characters are usually women, and the story is written about women. It is believed that there will be important and permanent changes in the representation of female characters with the entry of female directors into the cinema. Because it is thought that the male audience gives direction to the female characters from the past to the near future in cinema. Women directors, on the other hand, include real female characters and real stories in films without worrying about the box office.

With the 1990s, the number of directors producing their own films has been increasing in Turkey. After the political events and pressures, the directors relaxed a lot in the 1990s and started shooting the movies they wanted. However, female directors have increased in number and started to produce films. In Turkish Cinema with the 1990s, Women directors such as Canan Gerede, Biket İlhan, Füzün Karamustafa, Tomris Giritlioğlu, Seçkin Yaşar, Işıl Özgentürk, Handan İpekçi, Sunar Kural Aytuna, Necef Uğurlu, Yeşim Ustaoglu, Canan Evcimen Obay, Jülide Övür, Fide Motan have started to produce films. This emancipation in cinema is also reflected in the films made by the directors.

In the 2000s, women directors are freer than ever before. They made important attempts to make their own films. Among these female directors, directors such as Senem Tüzen, Ela Alyamaç, Gülten Taranç, Berrin Dağçınar, İlksen Çağrır, Pelin Esmer, Belma Baş, Ceyda Torun, Selma Köksal Çekiç, Yeşim Sezgin, Selda Çiçek, Aslı Özge (provided the first film screening in Germany) have contributed to important films. In the 2000s, while some directors focused only on women's films, some directors also deal with

different subjects. There are important and positive changes in the representations of female characters, not only in art films, but also in box office films with classical narrative structures. Women directors have come a little closer to their efforts to change the way women are represented in cinema. Thus, the 2000s are also known as a new era for cinema.

In 2010 and today, the names of female directors in Turkey are increasing day by day and new films are produced. While new names are emerging, female directors who started production in previous years continue to produce non-stop after 2010. Çiğdem Vitri nel, Ahu Öztürk, Ceyda Özgün, Deniz Akçay, Emine Emel Balcı, Esra Saydam and Nisa Dağ, Melisa Önel, Zeynep Dadak, Vuslat Saraçoğlu, Çiğdem Sezgin are among the female directors in Turkey. Women directors are increasing every year, and with this, they both make their presence felt in the sector and are now more accepted. More women’s issues are dealt with than in the 2000s, and women are starting to be the main protagonists of the story. Throughout this period, women appear before us with representations that are completely open to the public sphere, standing more on their own feet, standing upright on the contrary. We see representations of women who work and have economic freedom. One of the reasons why women directors change their representations of women in their films is associated with the change in social memory.

Discussion and Analysis

In this part of the study, the previous analyzes will be converted into tables. The first table shows the common aspects of the examined concepts in the films, and the second table shows how the same concepts are included in the film in different ways. After all these, detailed descriptions are made.

Table 1. Similar features

Patriarchy	The Place of Women in the Public Space	Woman’s Class Problems	Woman’s Mother Image
<p>Purgatory</p> <p>The only way for Zehra to escape from her environment is to find a man in Mahur.</p> <p>Derya tells Zehra that she needs to find a husband while giving advice.</p> <p>Although Derya is single and has a lover, Olgun treats her like a simple woman.</p>	<p>Although Zehra lives in the country, she can work.</p> <p>He constantly gets scolded by his male boss.</p> <p>Derya is a woman who lives alone and does not hide this from anyone.</p>	<p>The state of asylum.</p> <p>Mahur is never seen while he is being blamed on Zehra’s pregnancy.</p> <p>Gender inequality.</p> <p>Class differences of Derya and Zehra.</p>	<p>The distant relationship of Zehra and her mother.</p> <p>Taking her child from Derya.</p> <p>Zehra’s unintentional pregnancy.</p> <p>Zehra and Derya’s sister-sister relationship.</p>

<p>Watchtower</p> <p>The patriarchal structure is described both on Seher and on her mother.</p> <p>Seher being raped by her uncle.</p> <p>Nihat's attempt to claim her as a man.</p> <p>Her mother's inability to take care of Seher because of her father's fear.</p>	<p>Watchtower</p> <p>Seher is a university student. Once she is pregnant, she cannot go again.</p> <p>His mother, on the other hand, does not appear in the public domain.</p>	<p>Watchtower</p> <p>Class difference between Seher and her mother.</p> <p>Class difference between Seher and Nihat.</p> <p>After Seher's whole life changes, her uncle does not appear in the movie again.</p>	<p>Watchtower</p> <p>Seher and her mother's relationship.</p> <p>Seher doesn't want to take care of her baby.</p>
<p>Until I'm out of breath</p> <p>Taking their money by Serap's brother-in-law.</p> <p>Her sister's inability to say anything to her husband about it.</p> <p>The lies her father tells Serap all the time.</p>	<p>Serap works as an intermediary in ready-made garments.</p> <p>He goes to work in the back of a truck with no windows and no seats.</p> <p>Her older sister does not appear in public.</p> <p>The rights of the workers are defeated throughout the movie.</p>	<p>The difference between Serap, her brother-in-law who takes her money, her older sister Susan, and her father who always lies.</p> <p>Class difference from woman to woman.</p> <p>The girl who was fired due to the complaint and the man who kept his job.</p>	<p>Serap's efforts to create a family atmosphere after her mother's absence.</p> <p>Her sister not treating her well.</p>
<p>Duster</p> <p>Masculine discourses of Hatun's husband.</p> <p>After Nesrin's husband left her, Nesrin finds herself guilty.</p> <p>Both doing housework and working outside.</p>	<p>It is seen in the public sphere, on the streets, at school, in the market and in the community.</p> <p>No matter how hard Nesrin tries, she cannot find an insured job in the public sphere.</p>	<p>The struggle of the lower and middle class.</p> <p>Class struggle between men and women.</p> <p>Nesrin and Hatun fighting.</p>	<p>Although Nesrin treats her daughter badly because of her husband, it is towards the middle of the movie.</p> <p>Is improving.</p> <p>There is a mother-daughter relationship between Hatun and Asmin.</p> <p>Nesrin leaving her daughter to Hatun.</p> <p>Hatun's Owning Asmine.</p>

Table 2. Different features

Patriarchy	The Place of Women in the Public Space	Woman's Class Problems	Woman's Mother Image
<p><i>Purgatory</i> Father characters not appearing throughout the movie.</p> <p>The marriage of Olgun to Zehra no matter what.</p>	<p>Zehra's working environment is calmer than the others.</p>	<p>Mahur not appearing again after leaving Zehra.</p>	<p>The mother's unresponsiveness to Zehra after learning that Zehra is pregnant.</p>
<p><i>Watchtower</i></p> <p>The fact that Seher's father is rarely seen throughout the movie and never speaks to Seher.</p>	<p>The fact that Seher's mother never appears in the public arena and only appears at home, which is a private space.</p>	<p>Seher wants to get rid of Nihat and the baby.</p>	<p>Unlike her mother, Seher wants to handle everything herself in life.</p>
<p><i>Until I'm out of breath</i></p> <p>Serap always does what she wants regardless of social pressures.</p>	<p>Serap's dominance in the public sphere compared to the characters in other movies.</p>	<p>Serap and her sister are completely opposite characters.</p>	<p>The character Serap does not have a mother.</p>
<p><i>Duster</i></p> <p>The fact that Hatun does not ignore herself. Standing straighter, telling her husband everything she did throughout the movie.</p>	<p>The characters Hatun and Nesrin work at home, which is a private space, not a public space.</p>	<p>Throughout the film, class struggle is seen between both lower middle-class men and women and lower-class women.</p>	<p>Hatun taking Nesrin's daughter.</p>

After these tables, we can move on to the detailed analysis.

Yeşim Ustaoglu's "Purgatory" Movie

Purgatory is about the lives of three young people and their work in a begging facility on the intercity road. The main characters are Zehra and Olgun, and the side characters are Derya, Mahur, Zehra's mother. Zehra is trying to live her life by experiencing contradictions in her village life, looking for a place for herself and stuck in limbo. Derya, on the other hand, had a child out of wedlock at a young age. However, in the face of this event, which the society did not approve, she had to give her child up for adoption.

Patriarchy

From past to present, patriarchy has become a system in which women are ignored and this is seen in every branch of every profession. Women directors focused heavily on the phenomenon of patriarchy in their films and tried to reflect the effects of this approach on women to society. Yeşim Ustaoglu presents the patriarchal structure to the audience in the film *Purgatory*. One of the most prominent points in the movie *Purgatory* is that women believe that they must rely on a man to escape from the life they are in. Just like Zehra did to Mahur to get out of town. Zehra tells the man she loves to take her and leave from here. This situation causes that person to be put in the second or third plan, such as being good or bad, loving

and respecting him. Mahur, whom he does not know yet, is someone who never speaks. Mahur, who is a long-distance driver, sometimes goes to the place where Zehra works, and they see each other there. Mahur picks her up from work and leaves her at home, but they have nothing else to share. Despite this, they were together one day and Zehra cannot see this man again. In their conversation with Zehra's older colleague Derya, while they were talking about a profile to be opened on the internet for Zehra to look for a job, Derya's advice to Zehra is "Quit your job, find a husband so you can get rid of it". Here, too, the belief is shown that the only salvation can be found in finding a husband. In fact, here is the system of punishment of women who act in ways that will not be accepted by the society in classical narrative cinema, but the director says that she conveys this in a very different language.

Film that opposes the patriarchal structure is that the fathers are left in the background. We hardly see Zehra's father in the movie because her mother is more prominent in the family. Ustaoglu is trying to break the patriarchal structure by leaving the useless and bad behavior father figure in the background.

The Place of Women in the Public Space

Zehra is a young woman who works and takes money to her house. Women's work is not welcomed in patriarchal societies. Working female characters is a phenomenon that directors in Turkey often include in their films. Yeşim Ustaoglu also represents the main characters Zehra and Derya as working women in the movie.

The director tries to convey the sensitivity of being an individual and tries to normalize it. Unlike Zehra, Derya is older and lives in a more central place. Ustaoglu aims to tell the real-life stories of women in the film. It conveys with all its reality what kind of problems women face in their public and private lives.

Woman's Class Problems

Women are trying to struggle with class problems in Turkey as well as in the rest of the world. We can see this class problem in the movie *Purgatory* as well. If the character of Zehra was a man, she would be able to escape from the society she was in more easily, or if Zehra was the daughter of a wealthy family, she would not have to take shelter with a man to escape from the country and go through difficult things. If there was a man in Zehra's position, maybe she wouldn't be stigmatized by the society, or her psychology would not be broken because she got someone pregnant.

Another class problem of the film *Purgatory* is that it is given as an example of the victim role of the woman in the position of the showman, as opposed to being shown in classical narrative cinema. Even though women exist as side characters in the shadow of men in the classical narrative structure, Ustaoglu puts women in the main character both in *Purgatory* and in other films and does not show them as helpless and excluded by the society, even if something happens to them.

Woman's Mother Image

When we look at the movie *Purgatory*, we can see three different mother images. First,

when we look at Zehra's communication with her mother, it is possible to understand that they have a very distant relationship. It is a side and complementary character rather than a mother-daughter relationship. The other mother figure is Derya. Even though her child was taken from her, she mentions this incident very little throughout the movie. She works as a single woman and takes care of herself. Finally, Zehra gets pregnant from the man she loves and trusts, although she does not want to be a mother. Throughout the movie, other mother characters are also handled in depth.

Pelin Esmer's "Watchtower" Movie

Nihat takes a job at a fire watchtower in a deserted forest. Seher is a university student. To study, she works as a hostess in an intercity bus company. The intersection of the two characters is Nihat's bus journey and Seher's workspace as a hostess. Nihat lost his wife in a traffic accident, and he blames himself for this incident. Therefore, he decides to cut off all connection with the city and flee to the top of the forest. Seher is raped by her uncle, and because she has nothing to do, she never goes to her house or to her uncle and decides to continue her life.

Patriarchy

It is possible to deal with patriarchy in depth in Pelin Esmer's film *The Watchtower*. From the main character to the side characters, we can see the prints of the patriarchal structure in almost all of them. For example, it is seen that the character of Seher was uneasy when she was a bus hostess, she was raped by her uncle and became pregnant, and Nihat sharply stated that she should take care of the baby after Seher's birth. Seher's inability to tell anyone about her pregnancy is because she will not be accepted by the society. Whether the woman consents or not is disabled here. The fact that a woman is forced to be a mother and must take care of her baby is a result of masculine discourses.

It is associated with Seher being raped by her uncle and getting pregnant. Seher's telling about the situation to her mother and covering up the situation is also an indication of masculinity. Seher's father, on the other hand, is a character who does not even communicate with his daughter, does not send her to university alone, and lives on the concept of "honor". He is trying to use harsh, authoritarian, and social norms on his daughter quite intensely. Seher does not accept these as a rebellion and tries to draw her own path.

As another example of the effects of masculine language on women: The bus driver with whom Seher started as a stewardess. The driver is his uncle's friend, and he is trying to take care of Seher. He sees her under his protection and acts as if she needs his protection. This situation is frequently encountered in masculine communities. Because women need protection compared to men and cannot sustain their lives alone.

The Place of Women in the Public Space

There are very few female characters in the *Watchtower* movie. In fact, throughout the film, a woman's communication with several different men and the events she experienced in the male-dominated community are seen. It is of great importance that female directors start to change this course with their own films and change the positioning of women in their films. Pelin Esmer presents the effects of the crowd and men with different characters on a woman

in the movie *The Watchtower*. Looking at the female characters in the movie, Seher and her mother are seen in the foreground.

On the other hand, Seher's mother is seen throughout the movie not in the public space, but at home, which is her private space. The mother character is a housewife and is not seen in the public space outside the home.

Woman's Class Problems

The Watchtower film also intensely conveys the class problems of women. Like Seher having nowhere to go, trying to earn money by being a hostess, staying in the warehouse of the restaurant. Class problems have always existed in patriarchal societies and continue to exist even in the 21st century. The fact that in a small location, everyone knows each other, the working places are certain, and the living spaces are more visible are among the factors that bring the class struggle to the fore. The class problems of women do not only cover the places where they work, affect their whole life deeply. Pelin Esmer describes the class struggle in her movie through Seher and her mother.

Women are entrusted to a man if there is a man where they are, because the woman needs protection and cannot face bad things alone. Men, on the other hand, are not entrusted to anyone when they start working in a place or in a community because they can protect themselves.

Woman's Mother Image

From the classic narrative to today's independent films, female characters often play the role of mother and housewife in films. The woman is faithful to her home, takes care of her husband and children, and therefore seems quite happy. Women directors, on the other hand, reflect that this does not happen in real life, and those women actually deal with very different problems. We meet two mothers in the movie *Watchtower*. One is our main character, Seher, and the other is Seher's mother.

The dominance of the masculine language about motherhood is due to the norms of the society. Motherhood is sacred. Pressure on women is dominant. Nihat's rhetoric is also on this throughout the movie that he speaks harshly and imperatively in his communication with Seher.

Her mother generally tries to solve Seher's problems, but it is an unexpected reaction for Seher when her mother asks Seher why she has not come before. Maybe she believes in Seher, maybe she wants to save her, but the pressure of society and husband pushes her to leave her daughter alone.

Emine Emel Balcı's Movie "Until I Take My Breath"

The movie deals with the life struggle of the character of Serap. Serap works in a textile workshop under difficult conditions. He stays with his sister and brother-in-law because he must. Her father is a long-distance driver and Serap's only dream is to live in a separate house with her father. He has no mother. Serap is a young woman who wants to start a new life with her father who is trying to stand on her own feet.

Patriarchy

Patriarchy continues throughout the movie for the main character. Garment worker Serap has a broken family, and her only concern is having a house with her father because living with her older sister and brother-in-law has become difficult for her. The character of brother-in-law is trying to get the money of Serap, but the sister does not oppose it. When discussing women's labor, it has an important place to deal with both patriarchy and capitalism. Both are structures that surround women and lead to the double exploitation of women.

On the other hand, Serap's older sister remains silent against her husband's actions. This is seen as an acceptance of the masculine language.

Emine Emel Balcı positions the character of Serap outside of the classical narrative cinema in her movie *Until My Breath is Lost*. These differences give the audience the impression of an anti-hero. In this case, Serap sometimes lies and sometimes acts that society will not accept. Throughout the film, the director ignores the rumors of the masculine gaze and deals with the real women's issues.

The Place of Women in the Public Space

Looking at the place of the woman in the public sphere throughout the film, Serap works under harsh conditions as a dressmaker. She is exposed to harsh language by her manager. Even when Serap cannot come to work half a day, he deducts half a day from her salary. Beyond that, working in apparel means a heavy load and getting involved in a lot of gossip. Even though she is in university age, she cannot have education. She must work and help herself and even the people she stays with. Women still appear as representations in the public sphere that are often taken less seriously, less prominently, and distrusted.

Woman's Class Problems

The movie not only deals with class problems between men and women, but also deals with class problems among women.

Director Emine Emel Balcı connects the stages that Serap went through to the events she experienced throughout the movie. In the face of bad events, life turns her into someone she is not and sometimes pushes her to do bad things. In fact, she goes beyond the well-behaved girl character that the audience is not accustomed to and makes one think about what would happen if this happened. Going beyond the ethical norms of society without being in the shadow of a man and without a side character creates the character of Serap. When the issue of women and men is examined as class problems, it is seen that women are always kept behind men. This situation, which continues throughout the film, does not only take place in the public sphere, but also in the home which is the private sphere.

Woman's Motherhood Image

In this movie there is a ruined family consisting of elder sister, father, and brother-in-law. When the movie *Until I Lose My Breath* is examined, a feature that distinguishes it from other movies is that there is no mother character in the movie. In this case, Serap goes after creating her own family. A reference by the director is also included here. Thus, social norms are coded on women as building a home, establishing a home, and family life.

Ahu Öztürk's "Dust Cloth" Movie

Dust Cloth is a film of a struggle between classes, conveying the realities of life in Istanbul. The scenario is based on the lives and dreams of two women, who work as daily workers and become friends.

Patriarchy

Almost only one man is seen throughout the movie, and he is Hatun's husband. Hatun's son has almost no dialogue. Hatun and her husband are constantly arguing. Considering the social roles, while the woman stays at home and the man works and brings money to the house, here Hatun's husband directs his child who wants money from his mother. However, in other scenes, it is him who says that Hatun does nothing. The masculine language is perpetrating psychological violence against women.

Spousal conflicts are intense throughout the film. Hatun is a self-confident woman and does not submit to men. This is one of the points where they parted with Nesrin. The self-confident part is also related to the roles that society imposes on women.

The Place of Women in the Public Space

Nesrin and Hatun are domestic workers. They go home and do housework. Work environments are spaces that other people consider private. For them, it is in the category of workspace. The workspace is, in general terms, public space. No one working in the public space is seen throughout the film. All the film, including the women and the people they go to, are in their homes, which is considered as private space. Throughout the film, these people belonging to the public sphere are not seen in the work areas. Director Ahu Öztürk distorts the concept of public space throughout the film.

Woman's Class Problems

Nesrin and Hatun maintain a sister relationship from the beginning to the middle of the movie. In addition to this, Nesrin complains about her husband and when she complains to Hatun that Nesrin says "If I had done to Cefo what you did to Şero, he would have gone long ago", Hatun says "Take Şero to be your husband Nesrin ". Nesrin and Hatun unexpectedly fall apart. Hatun does not help Nesrin, who asks for a loan for her rent. With these scenes, the director gives examples of people from the same class clashing with each other. The fact that low-class women do the cleaning work in the homes of middle-class women brings along the problems of lower and middle-class women.

Woman's Mother Image

Apart from the conflicts in the film, it is possible to see family examples. It is shown that you do not need to have blood ties to be a family, that the people you have witnessed growing up and you are deeply attached to can be your family and cannot leave. The fact that Nesrin left her daughter, beyond the discussion of whether it is a choice or a necessity, shows how much she trusts Hatun. She is sure that Hatun will take care of her daughter like a daughter. Hatun and Nesrin are characters from the same class who have sister bonds in the movie.

Conclusion

The representation of women has taken its place on the big screen since the birth of cinema. In classical narrative cinema, the representation of women is determined by gender roles. In male-dominated societies, women always take place next to men as characters who do housework, take care of children, cook, and clean the house. Women who could not be the main characters in films for many years were then represented according to the perception of beauty with the influence of popular cinema. The fact that a woman is beautiful, thin, blonde, and sexy has become the main point of female representations in popular cinema. On the other hand, in classical cinema, woman is always represented as needing a man. Representations of women in the context of powerless, victim characters are constructed with masculine language. However, with the emergence of alternative cinema, directors have started to make films that deal with their own problems rather than making box office films. Women directors in Turkey deal with women's issues in their films. Intensively after 2010, in alternative cinema, female directors in Turkey shape female characters within the framework of patriarchy, public space, class problems and the concepts of family and motherhood. In the context of these problems, the women have become the main characters. In other words, with the emergence of feminism and the spread of feminist ideas, the struggles of women for their freedom and the awareness that gained momentum at this point were also reflected in Turkish cinema by Turkish woman directors.

In Alternative Cinema, female directors in Turkey represent women as they do in their daily lives, addressing their real-life problems. It is possible to find common themes and similar characters in the films of the directors within the scope of the study. The shaping of individuals in society and their gaining gender roles depend on the society, geography, and culture in which they grew up. The fact that the directors deal with common subjects is an indication that women have common problems in Turkey and in the rest of the world.

Considering the common features of the characters, the characters are seen with an oppressive masculine language, sometimes by the husband, sometimes by the same sex, and sometimes by the family. Another subject dealt with in the films is the struggle of women to exist in the public sphere. In this context, another problem that the directors want to emphasize is the class problem.

It is seen that the characters do not accept the roles that genderism imposes on women. In line with the films examined, it is understood that the issues that female directors in Turkey touch on the issue of women are related to the real problems existing in society. As a result of a detailed analysis of women's place in the public sphere, class problems, patriarchy, and the image of motherhood, it has been determined that female directors in Turkey go beyond the classical narrative cinema and deal with the main problems of women.

Women in films until 1980; represented in the roles of victim, helpless, silent, submissive and victim. The social problems of the dominant ideology are also reflected in the representation of female characters in Turkish Cinema. However, after the 1980s, the situation changed with female characters becoming more vocal, at least having a word in society, and being turned into female representations that stand on their feet in films and can show them-

selves in the public arena. Along with the feminist developments in the world, the situation in Turkey is also reflected in the cinema politically, socially, and culturally. The development of feminist movements both causes changes in social roles and this situation is naturally reflected in films.

Regardless of whether it is a woman or a man, it is difficult to develop a point of view against the dominant thinking in terms of graduations, socializing and adopting the codes of the society in which they grew up, turning it into a product and sharing it with the masses / audience. From the perspective of a female director (and a female film producer), making an opposite analysis in the male-dominated system requires courageously using a self-reflective vision. Although female directors are not in the majority in Turkish cinema, it is hopeful that women's production is increasing, and alternative cinema narratives find a realistic place in these productions.

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NOTAS

(1) Although it is translated in the main text, the original names of the films are as follows: Yeşim Ustaoglu's *Araf* (2012), Pelin Esmer's *Gözetleme Kulesi* (2012), Emine Emel Balcı's *Nefesim Kesilene Kadar* (2015) and Ahu Öztürk's *Toz Bezi* (2015).

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