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Woman Depiction in Turkish Horror Films:
A Semiotic Analysis as Part of the Concept of "Alterity"

Türk Korku Filmlerinde Kadının Sunumu:
"Ötekilik" Kavramı Bağlamında Göstergebilimsel Bir Analiz

Mustafa Özer ÖZKANTAR[1] ⓘD

ABSTRACT: Cinema is a field of struggle that focuses on individual and mass experiences as a branch of art at the center of social memory. Thus, almost every cultural, economic, and social change and transformation are naturally evaluated within the spectrum of cinematic experience. At this point, the change of gender, that is, the roles of men and women have also been added to the film culture as a part of the complex cinematic experience and has even turned into codes repeated for years through some genres. In this context, horror cinema can be indicated as one of the strongest carriers of these ongoing cinematic experiences in the context of gender as it is often the result of a heteronormative perspective created in the accompaniment of male-dominated codes. Accordingly, it can be asserted that this cinematic point of view forms its own victims. In line with this argument, the main concern of this study is to discuss 4 different Turkish horror movie posters released in 2021 in the context of the marginalization of women's identity. In this direction, the movie posters have been analyzed with semiotics, and as a result, it has been observed that despite all feminist struggles in cinema and the art world, the mentality about women is still portrayed with a negative approach.

Key Words: Cinema, Horror Films, Turkish Cinema, Woman, Semiotics

[1] Assist. Prof. Dr., Gaziantep University, Faculty of Fine Art, Department of Radio, Television and Cinema
e-mail: ozerozkantar@gmail.com **ORCID:** 0000-0001-9364-5606

Öz: Sinema, toplumsal belleğin merkezinde bir sanat dalı olarak bireysel ve kitlesel deneyimlere odaklanan bir mücadele alanıdır. Bu nedenle hemen her kültürel, ekonomik, toplumsal değişim ve dönüşüm doğal olarak sinema deneyiminin spektrumu içinde değerlendirilir. Bu noktada toplumsal cinsiyet değişimi, yani kadın ve erkek rolleri de karmaşık sinema deneyiminin bir parçası olarak film kültürüne eklenmiş ve hatta bazı türler üzerinden yıllarca tekrarlanan kodlara dönüşmüştür. Bu bağlamda korku sineması, çoğunlukla erkek egemen kodların eşliğinde oluşturulan heteronormatif bir bakış açısının sonucu olması nedeniyle toplumsal cinsiyet bağlamında süregiden bu sinematik deneyimlerin en güçlü taşıyıcılarından biri olarak gösterilebilir. Buna göre bu sinemasal bakış açısının kendi kurbanlarını yarattığı söylenebilir. Bu argüman doğrultusunda, bu çalışmanın temel kaygısı, 2021 yılında yayınlanan 4 farklı Türk korku filmi afişini kadın kimliğinin ötekileştirilmesi bağlamında ele almaktır. Bu doğrultuda film afişleri göstergebilimsel olarak analiz edilmiş ve sonuç olarak sinema ve sanat dünyasındaki tüm feminist mücadelelere rağmen kadına olan bakış açısının hala olumsuz bir yaklaşımla resmedildiği gözlemlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Sinema, Korku Filmleri, Türk Sineması, Kadın, Göstergebilim*

INTRODUCTION

Cinema and cinematic experience have a profound effect on our lives even if we do not know it at first. Since they involve real codes buried in our subconscious, they constantly touch our senses, produce meanings about life, and create awareness, yet it sometimes imposes the artificial reality formed by the dominant ideology. Therefore, understanding the extensions, possibilities, and implications of cinema is crucial, especially when the topic is about gender. As cinema is a huge industry controlled by powerful companies, the ideological connotations of films are usually determined by them. Naturally, it may be possible to assert that cinematic productions have been mostly shaped one-sidedly creating blurry images that mostly discriminate against women (Denzin, 2005, p. 469).

In the art world, being a woman is a harsh experience as the social and cultural codes or values have been formed by the masculine point of view. This situation often beclouds or constraints feminity (Denzin, 2005, p. 470). Namely, many artistic works are made up of masculine culture, underestimating the potential of women. When it comes to cinema, the situation is deteriorating due to the fact that womanity has usually been depicted as a victim in film genres though lots of efforts have been done to halt it with feminist movements. As a genre, horror cinema makes everything much more than worse. Women's bodies, faces, sounds, behaviours, and even screams all have been represented by victimizing them within this genre (McGillvray, 2019, p. 7).

Horror is defined as "a very strong feeling of fear, dread and shock" and thereby horror films occasionally arouse labyrinthic feelings containing the deepest desires of humanity and they are compositions of the darkest nightmares with reality and fiction. Horror films are indirect outcomes of actions by humanity. Wars, economic depressions, social conflicts, and revolutions have been carried to the cinema as a source of dread (Carrol, 2005). As a result, most people usually are not enthusiastic about watching their demerits while others love facing and discovering all dreadful actions of human beings (Kawin, 2012, p. 4-5). In spite of these abstainers, this genre has millions of fans and this makes it possible to diversify the themes.

Horror films have several cliches recurring most of the time and in this way, they create certain stereotypes. A gypsy telling the unlucky future, a fat boy killed first by a serial killer, a young couple destroyed by a brutal neighbour, a sexy girl depicted as the source of the evilness or the satanistic powers attacking a newly married couple are just some well-known elements noticed easily in many productions (Kawin, 2012, p. 16). Furthermore, horror productions build their heroes, anti-heroes, or cult characters. To illustrate, an audience might observe idiosyncratic monsters such as King Kong or Frankenstein, has a chance to watch peculiar creatures like zombies, vampires, demons, mummies, werewolves, or may see deathless slashers, mad scientists, or torturers (Kawin, 2012, p. 1-3). Despite changing culturally, they are fed by bloody scenes, dark places, disturbing sounds, complex color compositions, sudden camera movements, and angles. All these elements make horror a unique genre.

Moreover, these films make up old-hat roles and they mirror the social and cultural tendencies of communities engendering the reproduction of common roles pertaining to women and men. Besides, these widespread cliches, subordinating women, have been generated for decades on behalf of manhood. On the other hand, women are the most significant part of this genre as they function so as to attract the attention of audiences. Someone ought to be killed, raped, misused, and cried and the main sufferers of these unfortunate events

are surely women in horror films. This approach is closely related to expectations and notions of the industry as it is directed by huge companies, having affluent and powerful ideologies managed by misogyny. Like glass ceiling syndrome in the business world, women in horror films are mostly confined in a cage and it may be asserted that ideological impacts or references never seem to vanish in this spectrum as they continuously circulate in the film universe as a determinant structure (Denzin, 2005, p. 470). Hence, the ill fate of women in the horror genre can not be altered remarkably, creating clear crystal stereotypes, repeating over and over in nearly all cultures, viewing women as mediocre, diabolic, victim, and even monster-like in raunch culture (Grant, 2015, p. 2-4).

As mentioned before, horror films are the intense carriers of the ideologies supported by the patriarchy, and naturally, they need to be shaped according to heteronormative and male-dominated systems to maintain the current system. In line with this objective, sexuality, nudeness, helplessness, and impotency of feminity are occasionally covered in horror cinema and demonstrating woman as the devil, threat, danger, or other is a prevalent theme, providing a sort of possibility to legitimate male-based codes in the patriarchal order (Harrington, 2018, p. 48).

Horror cinema has a broad spectrum and loads of examples can be seen in different countries. Hollywood, Japan, and European Cinema have produced various kinds of works, including local or universal fears. In this way, the horror genre gained much popularity in view of the fact it succeeded in unearthing personal fears hidden in our subconscious. However, interest in the Turkish Cinema industry for this genre is not as intense as the other cultures and thus horror film examples could not be improved considerably in Turkey until the 2000s while melodrama and comedy were profitable and popular during the Yeşilçam era, referring to the years between 1950 and 1980 (Koçer, 2019, p. 151-152).

With the increasing technological devices and new media tools, producing a horror film with a limited budget became possible in the country as it did not have a huge economical risk in terms of the box office (Koçer, 2019, p. 155). Thus, some Turkish directors such as Hasan Karacadağ, eager to follow modern inclinations and try new possibilities, have begun to produce horror films, and nowadays it is very possible to see many films in Turkey. Turkish ones, however, are not able to create variety in their habitat and they generally reiterate each other by focusing on the same topics such as Jinns, religious attributions, evils, and so on. This has a negative impact on the improvement of this genre in our country.

Besides, these examples encapsulate lots of cliches related to gender. That is, the Turkish perspective on woman or womanhood is derogatory and one-sided and in order to demonstrate the problematic depiction of women in the horror genre in Turkey, 4 different movie posters have been chosen with random sampling and reviewed with the semiotic point of view in this study. The movie posters are only limited to films shot in 2021. The films are Enna: *Karabüyü, Azamet, Lübbey'in Laneti: İfritler* and finally *Defin Ecin* respectively. Nonetheless, prior to film analysis, the paper informs some paramount themes with regard to the history of horror cinema, the issue of gender within this genre concerning the concept of other, and lastly, it accentuates Turkish examples in terms of womanity and marginalization of feminity by the hegemonic powers controlled by patriarchy.

1. Brief Overview of History of Horror Cinema

Horror cinema as a genre dates back to old periods when the cinema first began and it has had a rooted structure as it nourished several different perspectives, fears, and expectations. Although it is a controversial issue when the horror film exactly began, it can be said that silent films with the impact of German Expressionism comprised some specific qualifications of horror cinema. For example, *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* (1920) and *Nosferatu* (1922) were the productions most of the critics argued that they were the first leading examples within this genre. However, *Dracula* (1931), based on the novel by Bram Stoker, can be counted as the first example of the Vampire subgenre and at the same time, it was the first genuine example containing almost all elements in horror cinema (Paszylk, 2009, p. 6). In the same year, Frankenstein which was a novel by Mary Shelly (1931) came out as a cinema film and in 1932, *White Zombie* by Halperin Brothers was also one of the most important pioneers of horror cinema (Uğuroğlu, 2017). All these examples changed the perspective towards horror films and they were considered as milestones that shaped the subgenres of horror cinema (Özpay, 2019). Indeed, all these productions built the fundamental framework regarding what a horror film must have or not.

After the First World War, the themes covered in horror began to change and aliens or monsters were the new motifs forming the feeling of horror and some eroticism and mysticism could be seen in this genre during the 1960s. Actually, it can be asserted that the 1960s and 70s were the times when serial killers and slasher films such as *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) or *Halloween* (1978) became popular in the film industry. The direction turned into humans, not invisible creatures or supernatural powers any more thanks to the rousing influence of Alfred Hitchcock on this genre. Therefore, horror films transformed into a journey of discovering the human mind with all extensions. Naturally, portraying various kinds of mental illnesses concerning human beings combined with the theme of horror for a long time. Nonetheless, the technological facilities were progressed in the movie-making process and the special effects improved in the 1980s. As a result of this, subgenres intertwined with each other engendering productions of new types of horror films such as the combinations of horror and comedy or horror and action (Uğuroğlu, 2017).

The 1990s and 2000s were the times horror cinema strengthened its power considerably. *The Blair Witch* (1999), Scream series, *The Ring* (1999), and *Saw* (2004) climbed the interest in this genre owing to the fact that they combined mystic fears with humanistic beliefs. Besides these famous examples produced in Hollywood, Asian and European directors were also interested in this genre and created their own styles combining their local myths and stories (Şimşek, 2016, p. 84-85). Thus, the horror film industry has turned into a hybrid genre getting motifs, topics, stories, or local characters from lots of different cultures. As time goes by, the subgenres of horror films have been enhanced and audiences have had chances to observe loads of different horror examples from various cultures.

2. Gender Roles in Horror Cinema and The Concept of Other

Horror cinema has strong codes including crystal clear implications or attributions in terms of gender roles. Almost all horror films, even original ones have iterant elements and it can be claimed that this genre is a unique precedent exhibiting masculine fears emanated from women and their possible actions. Concerning this argument, most horror films draw a frame for womanhood without taking into account the countries and the subgenres. Within this frame, womanity or femininity has been built by male-based desires, fears, or escapes. Thus, it is highly doable to watch horror films that describe females as weak, helpless, naked, or complicated although male characters are often portrayed as heroes, killers, or destroyers (Brannon, 2019, p. 170). When a woman figure is strong in a horror film, then they are often characterized by their bodies, sexual potency, sexual choices, or virginity which is a way to sustain the patriarchal point of view on women. Also, pregnancy and motherhood are considered as two sacred concepts related to women, but even they are interpreted negatively in this genre. Pregnant women give birth to extraordinary creatures such as aliens or jinns and in this way, womanhood is reflected as seizable (Harrington, 2018, p. 185-186).

When analyzed horror films tangentially, even a standard movie audience might recognize the stereotypes created by the horror genre. For instance, vampires symbolize power and potency in most horror films, but when the main character becomes Vampirella, then she is usually defined as a lesbian to generate a cliche about women. Namely, when a woman gets the power, she is supposed to be condemned in a different way to depict her in a disabled way (Amiri, 2007, p. 92). Another point that needs to be underscored is sexuality. The horror genre and its subgenres such as slasher, psychological or comedic limn bodies of women with the help of cinematic facilities like camera angles or zoom-in or zoom-out containing much of the male gaze. This stirs up a kind of visual porn satisfying the egos of male audiences while it humiliates women. In other words, masculine desires combining subconscious misgiving are reflected on the cinema screen by subordinating the woman characters which can be also affiliated with hegemonic ideologies bolstered by male powers.

Horror cinema and its instruments carve out some roles and this leads to othering in cinema. According to the Oxford Online Dictionary (2022), other is defined as "view or treat (a person or group of people) as intrinsically different from and alien to oneself". This definition itself says lots of things to what extent this word has. Once a group of people does not obey the rules of the dominant ideology, then it is pretty probable to be discriminated against the society, resulting in alienation and marginalization. At this juncture, horror films carry the reflections of this system, and any possibility posing a threat to the order is segregated with certain cliches or stereotypes, involving sexuality, eroticism, nudeness, or religious attributions related to feminity. Notwithstand-

ing it shifts from one culture to another, gender roles and their meanings appointed to women and men are not equivalent to each other.

2.1. Horror Cinema in Turkey and Gender
Horror has been a genre underestimated in Turkey on account of economical, political, and social concerns and it is not simple to claim that Turkish Cinema has an old tradition of horror productions. Yeşilçam strongly depended upon stars and melodrama and most of the actors and actresses were not willing to play in a horror film including murder, blood, death, and violence (Tutar, 2015, p. 249). As stated previously, demand for this genre was not powerful till the beginning of the 2000s, but there were some up-front examples shot during the Yeşilçam period. The first known horror film in Turkey was *Çığlık* (1979) (Koçer, 2019, p. 153). Nonetheless, *Dracula İstanbul'da* (1953) by Mehmet Muhtar, was accepted as the first real horror film example in Turkey in lots of various resources related to Turkish Cinema History (Scognamillo and Demirhan, 2005, p. 71-72). It was an inspiration from the novel by Bram Stoker. Another outstanding example was *Ölüler Konuşamaz Ki* (1970) by Yavuz Yalınkılıç, was a production having religious references (Özkaracalar, 2012, p. 252).

Apart from them, Şeytan (1974) by Metin Erksan was an adaptation of the famous American film Exorcist (1973) was one of the most well-known Turkish horror films during the Yeşilçam era (Tutar, 2015, p. 254). Gulyabani (1976) by Ertel Eğilmez was an interesting example of horror-comedy as a subgenre, but it is not accepted as a pure horror film on account of its entertaining plot. Karanlık Sular (1994) by Kutluğ Ataman was also a horror film mentioning vampires had drawn attention from the film festivals, yet distribution problems thwarted the popularity of this production (Özpay, 2019, p. 559). As one can see, the horror films shot in the Yeşilçam age mostly are adaptations of occidental cultures or topics giving rise to the unpopularity of Turkish horror films even though Turkish conventions date back to very old, rooted, and mystic belief systems. Because the Turkish audiences could not find her/his own cultural background, religious fears, or beliefs in the films, they abstained from the productions and this has retarded the advancement of the horror genre in the Turkish film industry. Apart from these social or cultural reasons, technical incompetences and commercial concerns urged film producers to shoot adaptation horror films (Scognamillo and Demirhan, 2005, p. 65). Finally, foreign horror films, particularly American ones reached back to horror literature, however, Turkish examples were not able to be progressed by getting inspiration from myths, tales, or works of literature inducing less improvements in Turkish horror films (Türkel and Kasap, 2014, p. 716).

Even though some thrillers were made before the 2000s, the real affinity for horror cinema in Turkey started at the beginning of the millennium. Some developments, transformations, or facilities such as new pursuits for art, technological innovations, and the young generation of directors in Turkey enabled to make a horror film with a low budget simpler. In addition to these factors, the political atmosphere in the country has had a massive change with the effects of conservative politics, and social practices and this profoundly had an impact on what people believe or not in their daily lives. The country, becoming more conservative and religious, has gained a new understanding in terms of Islam and its possible references. As a result of this, forming a horror film involving solemn themes began to seem more logical for Turkish directors (Özpay, 2019, p. 569).

From this point of view, what the Islamic stance means is to be enlightened so as to make analysis more accurate and scrutable. In Hollywood or European horror films, it is very likely to recognize the impacts of the Bible, which contains a number of parts about Satan or the exorcism process. What's more, the Church and its teachings have been highly efficient in what a Christian believes or fears. Therefore, many horror films shot in America focus on Satan as it is the most dominant fear symbol in Christianity (Koçak, 2016, p. 96-97). However,in Islam, jinns are accepted as superior to humans as they are created from fire and they are explained in Quran in both ways. Some parts mention them as evil jinns while other parts express them as healers or good jinns. However, people who believe in Islam regard Jinns as a threat or dangerous element creating a real horror instinct as they are the creatures that object to obeying the rules of God and they have a limitless potential to harm any human being they desire (Laughlin, 2015, p. 2-3). This situation indirectly may influence cinematic approaches in modern Turkish horror films and jinns have transformed into the biggest horror factor for the audiences owing to the fact that Turkish audiences believe in the Quran firmly and what they fear or not almost utterly depends upon the teachings or rules of Islam.

Espeacially *Okul* (2004) by Taylan Brothers and *Büyü* (2004) by Orhan Oğuz may be demonstrated as the starting points of horror films in Turkey because they emboldened other directors and producers. Right after *Okul* (2004), *Dabbe* series by Hasan Karacadağ (2005, 2007), *Araf* (2006), Gen (2006), and *Semum* (2007) had an enormous effect on the industry since they had lots of local and religious content (Tutar, 2015, p. 256). The truth of the matter is that these films have determined the general tendencies in Turkish horror movies and the framework within these examples has been copied by lots of different film directors leading to a lack of originality in new ones.

Low-quality films with unpopular actors or actresses and productions with low budgets became the new reality of Turkish horror films and they have incessantly reduplicated their subjects. These inclinations have brought certain cliches or stereotypes over into the film preferences. Many films shot recently only cover religious dreads and this repetition naturally builds recurring stereotypes in relation to characters. In the latest Turkish horror productions, the identity of women is occasionally coded with negative approaches like in old Yeşilçam films which often portray women with some limited roles as a mother, or wife, not a significant identity having power or a symbol fighting against the system. On the other hand, loads of American examples stress the woman's body to increase the sexuality of a woman in horror genres, yet Turkish ones do not prefer it all the time. Instead of this, Islamic depiction which describes women with a headscarf is more outstanding and nudity is not always the first thing to be highlighted. Namely, women in Turkish horror films are not the symbol of sexuality as the foreign ones due to the fact that conservative Turkish horror films generally have religious connotations. That is to say, they differ from other countries' horror examples with regard to social or cultural expectations from the community. Turkey which is strictly attached to Islam determines its values or codes according to the religious rules. Turkish horror films indeed illustrate feminity in two basic ways. Either women are like the devils having the potential to attack the tradition formed by the patriarchy or the ones who are fragile and vulnerable and conquered by supernatural powers. Hence, it is possible to allege that womanity is not connected to positive references in these films.

3. Research Method
In this study, semiotics has been selected intentionally to point out all possibilities of ideological attributions hidden in the film posters. According to Britannica (2022), semiotics or also known as semiology is "the life of signs within society" as one of the most prominent founders Ferdinand de Saussure claims. Semiotics is able to be employed in most texts; however, it is not limited to written language and it can be seen in any sorts of advertisements, films, and pictures owning verbal or non-verbal implications (Kılıç and Sarıkartal, 2016). Semiotics usually do not focus on the articulation of the meaning. Instead of this, it attempts to make out or explore how the meaning process is created and what kind of ideological, cultural, or social references are betoken. Indeed, it functions as an agent aiming at revealing structures involving the potential realities or implications. (Batu, 2012).

Since semiotics is a tool having the potential to assist us to create an intense awareness regarding the signs and their probable references, it performs not only as a research method uncovering what people are not able to see, but also operates as an awakening factor. With reference to this impact, semiology is one of the most ideal ways to comprehend the visuals, icons, signs, and their allusions.

4. Semiotic Analysis of Film Posters
In this section, the posters related to recent Turkish horror films have been assessed through the instrument of visuals and all pictures have been reviewed meticulously to reveal the position of woman identity on the film posters.

4.1. Semiotic Analysis of Enna: Karabüyü Film Poster
Director: Burak Çelik
Actor/Actress: Sevil Akdağ, Vedi İzzi, Erhan Tursun
Production: BMS Film

Picture 1

4.1.1. Iconic Analysis

The film has a telestic topic and is based upon a group of friends visiting a village to take some photos. The village they have gone to is an uncanny, mysterious, and jeopardous place as some mystic and paranormal events have occurred there. During the film, the main characters are to struggle with the hidden and paranormal powers striving to slay them which is a cliche topic in the recent Turkish horror genre. When looking over picture 1, it is simple to recognize the monster-like woman figure, which has no eye is screaming. The woman figure is like a damned one and is used as the dismay and terror figure, widespread in lots of film posters ranging from American ones to Turkish examples. In this example, the woman has a bloody face, providing fear, anxiety, and threat to the audience. At the top of the poster, there is some Arabic writing implying an Islamic point of view that is used as a horror theme due to the fact that mystic and paranormal details are forcible drivers. Actually, even though the Arabic words are not understood by the audiences in the poster, the implications or correlations related to Quran and Islam create a sort of fearful atmosphere since Turkish people have a spiritual connection and indulgence to Quran. Thus, the director has had an opportunity to exploit the fears of audiences.

Nevertheless, the solely figure generating the ghastness and terror theme is women. There is no man-like figure in the picture. This preference is not a coincidence. The film director and the producer utilize feminity as a hazard and reflects it on the film poster. This threat does not include any sign of power or authority. On the contrary, it is just a figure to be possessed by evils which means that woman's identity is not only a kind of re-source for dread but also is fragile and not powerful to fight against outside forces. This representation illustrates a sort of otherness since no man figure has been used to create this atmosphere. In this film poster, the mere figure forming horror is a monster-like woman.

Table 1: Semiotic chart

Signs	Signifier	Signified
Person	A Woman with no eye	Evil-Like, Monster-Like, Threat
Place	Dark	Paranormal Activity
Object	Not Clear	Mystery
Nature/Background	Some Arabic Writing	Religion, Islam.

According to the chart above, a woman with no eye indicates a kind of threat to the world because it represents jinns. The dreadful depiction of women in the posters backs up this argument. The place is not clear enough to predict what happens there demonstrating paranormal activities. In addition to this, there is no clear objective in the picture which forms a mystery and erraticism. As mentioned before, Arabic text is a sign of religious fear used lots of times in the horror genre as people are afraid of godly themes containing metaphysical references. Herein, the fear of Jinns is closely related to ascriptions on Jinns related to not obeying the rules of God and

4.1.2. Denotation/Connotation:
The poster itself used as an advertisement is a part of the movie and tries to increase the attention of the audience, yet it refers to different perspectives as a connotation such as inferiority of woman as a demon and threat to the real world dominated by the paternalistic system. Thus, the movie poster is not only a commercial part of the film, but also functions as the carrier of male-dominated order, stigmatizing women as a hazard once they are powerful and for this reason, they are depicted as monsters, satans, or possessed by paranormal spirits to make them show weaker and helpless.

4.1.3. Binary Oppositions:
The poster accorporates some binary oppositions making it possible to notice ideological and patriarchal perspectives in the movie poster. For instance, woman-man, darkness-light, religion-atheism, death-life, and evil-angel are some striking points procuring a purposeful perspective to address what the poster implicates.

4.1.4. Metaphor and Metonymy:
The female figure in the movie poster is the metaphor for malignancy and the concept of feminity has been associated with evils. The Arabic inscription can be pointed out as the metonymy of awe and religious beliefs. Despite not understanding what it means if you do not know the Arabic language, it seems possible to infer that there is an attribution to Quran or Islam in the poster, for they are the real source of horror for Turkish people.

4.1.5. Code(s) and Slogan(s):
As a code in the horror genre, rendering feminity under a threat or threat itself is a prevalent issue that is easy to realize in several productions. In the poster, this code has been repeated and womanhood as a concept has been undermined with the demonic portrayal.

4.2. Semiotic Analysis of Azamet Film Poster
Director: Cengiz Kaplan
Actor/Actress: Nurseli Aksoy, Furkan İnci, Cengiz Kaplan
Production: Chantier Films

Picture 2
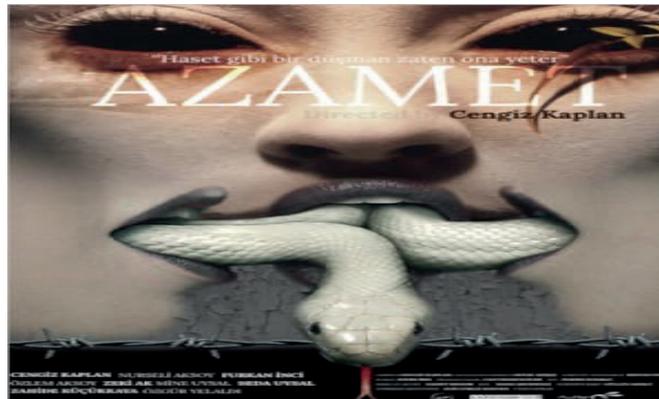
Source: https://www.beyazperde.com/filmler/film-298749/fotolar/
(Access Date: 04.02.2022)

4.2.1. Iconic Analysis

The film describes a girl's jealousy and how sorcery terrorizes other people's lives. During the film, a village girl falls in love with a young and handsome guy, but when the man becomes together with another woman, the village girl declares war with her style by bewitching and getting help from some paranormal creatures which form the horror factor during the film. In the poster, it is clear that there is a woman face having three silhouettes, and there is a big snake in their mouth. In Turkish Shamanism, the snake is associated with Satan and the snake symbolizes Erlik, known as the underworld god that is believed to be responsible for sins (Sivri and Akbaba, 2018, p. 60). In this picture, snakes are the reflections or shadows of Satan on a woman face. The eyes of the woman figure are dark ones and it is out of the question to make out which colors they have. The snake is about the bite something as it is ready to attack its target. Hence, the snake is symbolizing the evil soul in the woman and feminity has been delineated here as a dread figure. It is worth bearing in mind that there is no man figure in the poster even though one of the main characters in the film is a man and it demonstrates indirectly that the approach to the gender of the film is a patriarchal one, claiming womanhood is a danger for the society.

Table 2: Semiotic chart

Signs	Signifier	Signified
Person	A woman having 3 faces	Magic
Place	Not clear	Obscurity
Object	Snake/Wire Cloth	Fear and Satan
Nature/Background	White and Dark	Oppositions

4.2.2. Denotation/Connotation

Once analyzed at first glance, the poster is a standard horror movie affiche that includes three faces of a woman, yet on a deeper level, it implies much more than this. The face is multiple-sided and it alludes to the negative features of women. Namely, it poses a threat having a limitless potential to harm anyone against her desires. This argument is compatible with the topic of the film closely related to envy and its all possible outcomes.

4.2.3. Binary Oppositions

In the picture, there are some binary oppositions propounding the masculine point of view. To demonstrate, woman-man, white-dark- freedom-captive, and death-life are the themes giving meaning to the poster.

4.2.4. Metaphor and Metonymy

Snake is the metaphor for satan and its impacts on the real world in the poster and it is parallel to film themes. In the lower part of the poster, there is an iron fence and it symbolizes danger, death, and no way out from ill luck.

4.2.5. Code(s) and Slogan(s)

The name of the film Azamet means pride and arrogance and the code is hidden here. One of the 7 mortal sins is arrogance and the other one is envy are the basic themes of this film. These sins accompany bewitching which is also accepted as a mortal sin within Christian myths and norms. These sins are also accepted as two of the biggest sins in the Quran, too. Hence, the film comprises religious codes repeated in most films around the world. Apart from this, the slogan says in Turkish "Haset gibi bir düşman zaten ona yeter" means grudge as an enemy is already enough for him/her. Jealousy is the main leitmotif of the film and the poster emphasizes it in a certain way. Owing to the fact that grunge can be interpreted as a sort of negative feeling or emotion in Islam, the word haset might be a reference to its possible impacts and reflections of it in Islamic point of view.

4.3. Semiotic Analysis of Lübbey'in Laneti: İfritler Film Poster
Director: Metin Yücel
Actor/Actress: Firengiz Orucova, Metin Yücel, Tevfik İnceoğlu
Production: MC Film

Picture 3
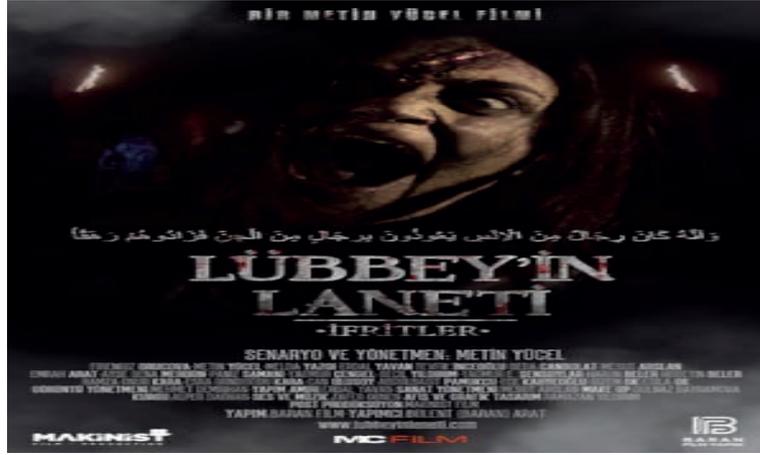
4.3.1. Iconic Analysis

Lübbey'in Laneti İfritler is one of the most outstanding examples in recent Turkish horror films as it conveys lots of local messages related to village life in Anatolia, and it does not have an original plot, it has attracted remarkable attention, though. The village Lübbey is close to İzmir, Ödemiş and known as the place where the jinns invaded in the media and the name İfrit is explained in the Islamic resources as one of the most brutal jinns. On account of this, the place Lübbey and the word İfrit are almost definitely related to each other. In the film, the story takes place in an Agean village called Lübbey, known as a ghost village and the protagonist Metin discovers an age-old map descriving the place of a charming treasure box and he reaches a spiritualist woman to aid him to get the treasure, but when they find the box, a curse appears on account of jinns. To protect his family, Metin flees the village; however, the curse follows him and he commits suicide. Then, his daughter, Dilek returns to the village where the curse begins and she wants to get rid of this tarnation.

As can be noticed in the plot, the women figures in the film are either a spiritualist called as a witch in European communities or the victim vulnerable to the impacts of paranormal powers. The image above supports the argument here. The female figure is screaming with horror and she owns a scary face. The Arabic words above the title also form some mysterious messages in spite of the fact that making out it is not easy providing you do not know the Arabic language well, it engenders a horror factor as it evokes the Quran or Islam. Within all these complicated descriptions, the concept of religion is used as the carrier of the horror theme and all these spiritual references are against women which proves that these preferences are also highly patriarchal since they factionalize feminity with the help of a masculine ideology.

Table 3: Semiotic chart

Signs	Signifier	Signified
Person	A woman having blood and a scar on her face	Death, Terror, Concern
Place	Lübbey	Away from city life/Village
Object	Fire/Smoke	Religious Rituals
Nature/Background	Darkness	Mystery

In the chart, the woman figure is not only the symbol of death and terror, but also it conjures up some subconscious fears relevant to the fright of religious beliefs. Thus, the poster touches on our deep-seated worries which makes it more gruesome. In the same way, the fire suggests antique rites and rituals closely related to summoning a jinn or exorcising which are common topos observed in horror films in Turkey recently. Besides, the dark color of the background of the poster increases the mysterious structure of the film.

4.3.2. Denotation/Connotation
The woman face in the poster is not a general female figure frightened of someone or something, and it includes some connotational attributions. As it is obvious in the visual, only one human being depictured with fear and anxiety bringing to mind that women are vulnerable to presumptive evil forces.

4.3.3. Binary Oppositions
The poster has some specific binary oppositions that construct clear-cut meanings. To illustrate, woman-man, darkness-light, death-life, city-village, local-universal, and terror-peace are the ones that adminiculate the idea in the film.

4.3.4. Metaphor and Metonymy
The most obvious metaphor in the film poster is firebrands indicating some mystic rituals or ceremonies in a local area. The metonymy in the film is the cantrip correlated with the mere woman figure, Mine in the film.

4.3.5. Code(s) and Slogan(s)
The film involves two pivotal codes worth mentioning. The first one is the ghost village which is a universal issue seen in lots of horror films, yet this film deals with it locally and thus points out the Turkish approach to supernatural powers, religious dogmas, and gender. The second code is directly related to women. In the film, the reason for the malison is connected with the deeds of women and this evokes the story of Pandora which associates all evilness in the universe with women.

4.4. Semiotic Analysis of Defin-Ecin Zulman Film Poster
Director: Cengiz Kaplan
Actor/Actress: Melih Çardak, Sefa Zengin, Cengiz Kaplan
Production: CKM

Picture 4

Source: https://www.beyazperde.com/filmler/film-286344/
(Access Date: 05.02.2022)

4.4.1. Iconic Analysis

Defin- Ecin Zulman is a familiar jinn story evoking their contemporaries and it focuses on a story of a couple having some financial problems. Due to this, one of the protagonists Zeynep, wanting to support his husband, discovers a map inherited from his dad, and finally, the couple finds a treasure protected by the jinn tribe called as Zulman. However, this discovery is the beginning of a curse, and the tribe hunts down the couple and reprobates them. The movie poster supports the plot of the film. The female figure with no eye is a sort of symbol generating the atmosphere of the story and the title has been written in red color saying that the story is a bloody one containing death, violence, and horror. In addition, the silhouettes in the poster make the audience think about sacraments appertaining to a local community. Like the other film posters analyzed in this study, the woman figure here is the only character creating the fear or the sole person who has the potential to be attacked or captured by the supernatural powers. This intentional illustration has a tremendous capacity to bring about the marginalization of womanity and results in otherness in the community.

Table 4: Semiotic chart

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Person	A Woman/ 3 Religious Characters	Danger, Death, Rituals, Curse
Place	Dark Forest	Mystery
Object	A hand that has an eye on coming out from underground	Death and Grave
Nature/Background	Dark	Darkness, Anxiety, Obscurity

According to table 4, the woman figure and the other characters wearing robes are the factors helping the formation of the theme of death and danger. Nevertheless, the concept of religion or rituals generally works for the interests of men, not women and on account of this, the illustration above is partly androcentric. What's more, the hand and the background of the poster make it possible to notice obscurity in the film.

4.4.2. Denotation/Connotation

The film expresses a horrifying story of a couple escaping a hazardous and blood-lust jinn tribe which might be accepted as a cliche in this genre. On the other hand, the presentation in the poster just portrays a woman. The woman figure here can be interpreted as either a member of a jinn tribe or a female possessed by evils. At this point, the poster brings womanity to the forefront negatively.

4.4.3. Binary Oppositions

The posters are major parts of a film inasmuch as audiences generally look at them before watching the film. That's why creating a strong meaning containing the main idea of a production by getting aid from oppositeness is a prevalent way to advertise a newly released movie. Therefore, woman-man, darkness-light, death-life, rural life-city life, and human-supernatural are prominent oppositions in the poster, and they function as empowering parts of this film.

4.4.4. Metaphor and Metonymy

The hand having an open eye is the metaphor for the evil eye in Turkish culture (Sevim, 2019, p. 1846). The title written in a bloody way is the metonymy of murder and terror.

4.4.5. Code(s) and Slogan(s)

The code in the film is indirectly about gender. One of the main characters Zeynep in the film finds a map and once she makes out it is a key to reach a treasury, she opens up a symbolic box full of evilness and a limitless curse. This story is very akin to Pandora's mythological tale and this code has been repeated here from a Turkish point of view by asserting that any danger or risk in the world stems from the wrong deeds by females, not males.

"Has the fear ever become never-ending for you?" is the slogan of the film and the director desires to make up an intense, complex, piquant, and terrorful message with this question. Asking a question like this almost always works efficiently in the cinematic expression because it often awakens universal emotions, muted trepidations, or beliefs human beings experience all the time.

CONCLUSION

Horror is an emotion that people feel almost all the time and it surrounds our deeper feelings, anxieties, beliefs, and so on, but these fears are occasionally shaped by a system or an order and they are upheld, produced, reproduced, rejuvenated, and maintained by the current ideology. States, governments, and some media companies sometimes feed these fears to control the communities. Apart from this, these fears are mostly determined by the patriarchal perspective and consolidated by hegemonic masculinity which creates otherness for women.

Cinema and cinematic expression are much more than watching and observing, and they include fear, hope, peace, romance, etc. Also, cinema is an art that contains nearly all ideologies even if it alters from one culture to another. Thus, cinematic understanding is ideological and it has been configured by male-dominated systems for decades. When it comes to the horror genre, this point of view is much more clear than other film types as horror productions reflect masculine fears, most of which stem from the fear of losing power and control over women. According to this psychoanalytic perspective, horror films are generally produced to mask masculine fears or unearth them by showing feminity in an inferior way. Film trials, movie posters, film soundtracks, and almost all visual effects conduce it ceaselessly.

Accordingly, in this study, four Turkish horror film posters, produced in 2021, have been monitored to check whether a patriarchal view is dominant or not in the film atmosphere from a Turkish perspective. During the analysis, semiotics has shed a light on the arguments claimed above since it has a big potential to reveal the hidden ideologies and connotations buried in the visuals. The movie posters have proven that all visuals have some extensive features depicting feminity as other, marginal, monster-like, or demon-like. To give an example, the first film poster belonging to *Enna: Karabüyü* conveys the meaning with the aid of Islamic inscriptions and the fear theme has been shaped by attributing to religious beliefs. These fears have been born in a patriarchal way, though. The woman figure has been portrayed as a semi-woman and semi-monster captured by the supernatural powers.

The second film poster Azamet has also ideological codes containing a masculine aspect. The woman figure with a snake on her mouth is a formidable one in the poster and the fences symbolize the impossibility of escaping the ill fate. Nonetheless, all these dreadful descriptions have been only constituted with a woman silhouette, not a man tells us lots of things in relation to feminity, looked down on by hegemonic masculinity for ages. That is, fears related to destiny, magic, and bewitching are correlated with womanity.

The third movie poster belonging to Lübbey'in Laneti İfritler involves some Arabic inscriptions like the first film poster. This figuration epitomizes that women are against Islamic or religious rituals and are sinful creatures triggering that manhood commits a sin. Thus, the poster comprises a negative perspective for women. The final visual, Defin-Ecin Zulman matches up with the previous examples in terms of the portrayal of females as a victim or menace. The figure is an ugly, grisly and dangerous one conquered by metaphysical powers.

In this study, it has been observed that recent Turkish horror films address women with the aid of spiritual values in Turkish traditions, Islamic or religious attributions and patriarchal references. Naturally, it leads to indirect discrimination against womanhood since these concepts mostly involve inequal approaches against women. At this point, these films indicate women as a danger or fragile to any jeopardy coming from jinns or other supernatural creatures used as the most remarkable horror element in the Turkish horror genre. All in all, the Turkish horror genre involves patriarchalism and ultramasculinity made up of subconscious fears towards women and subliminal codes containing fear of losing control over society. As a result, lots of films have been produced with this hidden and deep fear. Even the movie posters demonstrate these possible anxieties and the struggles trying to depict the woman as a threat, danger, inferior, nefarious, or monster which are all negative allusions related to feminity, are apparent in the films made in 2021 in Turkey.

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