

**What's Goin' on in the Back Streets?
Patriarchal and Authoritarian Mentality in Contemporary Turkish Cinema**

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Abstract

This article analyses the popular contemporary Turkish films *Çakal*, *Ejder Kapani*, *Kara Köpekler Havlarken* and *Bornova Bornova*. These works build representations that reconstruct the patriarchal and authoritarian mentality – arguably deeply embedded in Turkish history, culture and society – in an unmitigated way. In each film, the streets are noticeably prominent and men are firmly at the centre of the plot. All of the main characters, victims and perpetrators alike, are representative of a certain kind of Turkish male – policemen, taxi drivers, the unemployed, carpenters, private security guards, car park attendants, pigeon breeders and imams. They are all heterosexual, Sunni Muslims and Turkish from the lower or middle classes. In spite of the fact that the back streets of Turkish cities are the site of violence, confrontation and punishment, and that the male protagonists are themselves victims of other men's brutality, it is still good to be a male in Turkey. The films analysed can thus be shown to simultaneously celebrate and condemn the patriarchal and authoritarian mentality.

Keywords: Patriarchy, authoritarian mentality, contemporary Turkish cinema, gender.

Film as social practice is a medium in which patriarchal and authoritarian mentality is often reconstructed. In order to understand precisely how this is achieved in contemporary Turkish cinema, I have chosen several crime films where the streets give a meaning to the story and where men are at the central protagonists. As Sualp (2004) and Gutting (2005) argue, the city space is intrinsically an area of power struggle, a 'battle field,' so-to-speak. This is particularly true of streets, which belong first and foremost to men. Moreover, the relationship between men and streets is analogous to the relationship between men and the family, and to men and the state (Connel 1987: 183).

In some contemporary Turkish films, ships, brothels, headquarters, caves, hotel rooms, casinos, and streets are 'new spaces' (Ulusay 2004: 160) – the site of conflict where the patriarchal and authoritarian mentality is shaped and mapped. In my analyses, I will first define patriarchal and authoritarian mentality in the particular context of Turkish culture. I will briefly emphasise the significance of streets in the cinematic cities of Turkish film. I will then proceed to my analyses of the films I have selected: *Çakal* (Erhan Kozan 2010), *Ejder Kapanı* (Ugur Yucel 2010), *Kara Köpekler Havlarken* (Mehmet Bahadır Er & Maryna Gorbach 2009) and *Bornova Bornova* (Inan Temelkuran 2009).

Patriarchal and Authoritarian Mentality

The relative domination of the authoritarian mentality in the West and the patriarchal mentality in the East can be observed in an area extending from Western Europe to India. Each Eurasian society integrates these two mentalities in its own way and differentiates them by creating ideological structures that maintain and perpetuate themselves (Lloyd 1993).

When we look at Anatolian geography at around the time period in which cinema came into being – in the Ottoman Empire and then in the Republic of Turkey – the most evident characteristic of patriarchal discourse is its dependence on its conceptualisation of an eternal, everlasting and perfect system. In this system, change is only legitimate if it happens from within, and any kind of change brought about from outside is seen as a form of corruption and degeneration. Indeed, any kind of change is only approved of if it reinforces patriarchy; otherwise it is categorically false and harmful.

The system is a heterogeneous and homogenous structure in which every element occupies the place it 'deserves.' This structure implies a balanced unity composed of elements which are adjusted to each other around a vertical axis. It is believed that the 'balances' that exist among elements of the system must be preserved and defended at all costs, and that every act devoted to the violation of the balance is a 'sinful' aberration. The maintenance of harmony and balance also requires the existence of an authority; conversely, the legitimacy of the authority depends on the maintenance of this order. The authority also maintains a harmonious unity by ensuring that individuals and social groups are integrated with each other and with the state (Bruzzi 2005; Ryan & Kellner 1988).

The most distinctive aspect of the authoritarian mentality is the predication of the relation between action and the legitimacy that is based on the success of the action. While one of the areas of

domination is the establishment of the rule, the other is the nature of the relationship between state and society. In other words, in such a system, an absolute obedience to the state is required. Action is given ontological priority, meaning that questions regarding which attitudes and behaviours are morally 'right' are subsumed and considered *after* the action. While the purpose of coming to power is determined within the relations of interest, everyone around the power lives in a state of doubt; contrivance thus becomes the most natural means of politics. Given that allocating power among different individuals and groups is seen as a sign of impotence, power is centralised. Moreover, in the ideal state-society relationship, the rulers are separated from the ruled. In order to govern, a communication system exists for the purpose of maintaining the flow of information from the periphery to the centre. The state is the arbiter among individuals and groups, and it also audits them. In this system, even though the ruler and the ruled are separated from each other with a definite hierarchy, the two categories nevertheless have homogenous structures to the extent possible.

While patriarchy implies a heterogeneous social structure based on a multiple hierarchy, authoritativeness implies a homogenous structure based on a single hierarchy (Mahcupyan 1998). Within the state-society duality, these two mentalities ultimately merge, becoming a single harmonious unity. The authoritarian mentality furnishes state and society with homogenous characteristics with respect to each other; hence society surrenders to the illusion of considering itself within the state by being accepted by the state agencies (Sennett 1993). The patriarchal mentality legitimises the inner differentiation of the ruler-ruled groups, rationalises the existence of communities and paves the way for every kind of differentiation, unless the state-society division is violated.

While the authoritarian statist mentality is associated with the Turkish secular tradition, it is the Sunni and Hanafi Islamic traditions that have advocated a form of patriarchy that is most inclined to sanctify the state. The patriarchal and authoritarian mentalities have, therefore, been integrated in this way too. Historically, this situation brought stability and peace for a while, although it ultimately delayed the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and thus prevented Turkey from undergoing a real 'modern' transformation. Modernity came to be defined, not as a modernising process, but as the implementation of conservative reforms, and politics came to be defined as the means for making society embrace them. As the patriarchal mentality is based on religion – its practitioners claiming to have access to unknowable and 'un-measurable' divine wisdom – it remains somewhat abstract. However, its impact on the administration of justice is tangible. Justice in Turkey does not imply the resolution of conflict among individuals and groups, but first and foremost the protection of Turkish Islamism and its property.¹

The popular films analysed in this paper – 'texts' born of Turkish society – also read patriarchy from within the Turkish and Sunni version of Islam. They also reinforce the authoritarian mentality in their representations of masculinity. Before proceeding to a consideration of these films, I will first provide a brief account of Turkish cinema from the 1950s to the present.

¹ Turkish society considers that 'property is the basis of justice' and that this is the basis upon which the Republic 'will live for all eternity' (Mahcupyan 1998: 45).

How Patriarchal and Authoritarian Mentalities Are Reconstructed in the Back Streets of Turkish Cinema

The relationship between cities and cinema, and in particular between the city streets and cinema, is a rich field of inquiry. Cinematic images of the city lie at the intersection between film as ‘culture’ and film as a sociological tool, and representations of the city street in particular can be seen to be at the forefront of cinema’s relationship with modernity. Furthermore, representations of city streets have contributed to a reevaluation in the way that we see the city. Large cities that have turned into metropolises, in particular, offer a rich backdrop for films whose fictions are shaped on the basis of the new, urban landscapes depicted on film (Ozturk 2008a). The city streets capture the essence of the continuum of life and the constant comings and goings that play out within a relentless and unyielding ‘competition’ (Ozturk 2008b).

In the 1950s and 1960s, films often opened with gorgeous cityscapes of Istanbul. Generally the viewer was invited to walk through the ‘cinematographic’ streets of Yeşilçam. The film then showed idyllic images of the Galata Bridge, Süleymaniye and Tarabya, depicting a sweet dream without ever showing the true colours of Istanbul. However, towards the late 1960s, against the backdrop of the relatively liberal atmosphere of the Constitution of 1961, films such as *Üç Arkadaş* (*Three Friends*, Memduh Ün) and *Umut* (*Hope*, Yılmaz Güney) turned their attention to social problems, thus coming closer to representing the true colours of the city. In the early 1970s, there was an increased sense of social consciousness. The films *Gelin* (*The Bride*), *Düğün* (*The Wedding*) and *Diyet* (*Blood Money*) by Lütfi Akad display the city streets transformed by migration from rural to urban areas. In the 1980s, the problems of the individual, and especially the female, are tackled in films such as *Dağınık Yatak* (*The Messy Bed*, Atif Yılmaz) and *Kadının Adı Yok* (*Woman Has No Name*, Atif Yılmaz). One particularity of films in the 1980s is to depict the city back streets as strange, surreal and cruel. This is seen in films such as *Beyoğlu’nun Arka Yakası* (*Back Streets of Beyoğlu*, Şerif Gören) and *At* (*The Horse*, Ali Özgentürk 1982). The 1980s also saw a period of arabesque films: a genre that became widespread in conjunction with the rapid rise in slums. In the works of Küçük Emrah, Küçük Ceylan and Gökhan Güney, the debauched suburbs of the city are a frequent presence.

In 1990s, the agenda shifts to questions of identity and provincialism, as can be seen in *Eşkıya* (*The Bandit*, Yavuz Turgul) and *Güneşe Yolculuk* (*Journey to the Sun*, Yeşim Ustaoglu). Ethnic and sexual minority groups now join the struggle on the streets, as seen in such as *Dönersen Isık Çal* (*Whistle If You Come Back*, Orhan Oğuz 1992). In the 2000s, with the advent of globalization, the paradigm shift from ‘representation to performance,’ as defined by Brunsdon (2012: 219) becomes increasingly apparent. Despite being a modern city, Istanbul is still full of people who are disenfranchised and underprivileged. The life experienced by the lower classes living in the urban slums and that of the upper classes living in luxurious houses bears no comparison, and makes it

difficult for different groups to live together. Being a ‘global city’ does not mean that the whole city is modernised, and this is reflected in the cinematic experience.²

In the 2000s, Istanbul is no longer represented as a saintly city, but an ugly and charmless metropolis. Although it has a historical and authentic appearance, its spirituality has been commercialised. In its new appearance in contemporary Turkish cinema, Istanbul is not what is represented but what is analysed and performed. Contemporary films explore, therefore, the problems and questions of a city that is falling apart. However, while the films are imbued with a sense of anxiety as a result of this on-going process (Aymaz 2008: 351-363), they nevertheless uphold the authoritarian and patriarchal ideal. Indeed, while the relationship between city and cinema is a modernizing paradigm, traces of the authoritarian and patriarchal structure inherent in Turkish modernization persist in the modern day.

The aim of my analyses is to expose how patriarchal and authoritarian mentalities are reconstructed in contemporary Turkish cinema. For each film, I will first present a summary of the plot and provide descriptions of the back street setting, followed by a consideration of how this mentality is construed.

Çakal (*The Jackal*, Erhan Kozan 2010)

Akın’s (Ismail Hacıoğlu) life changes upon the death of his mother, who lived in the suburbs of Istanbul. He plans to make a new life for himself with the money he steals from Master Nuran (Cüneyt Türel), his employer in a carpentry shop, but his girlfriend, Deniz (Damla Sönmez), finds this plan ridiculous and leaves him. Akın therefore accepts his friend, İdris’ (Çetin Altay) offer to become the errand boy for a mafia group operated by Fahrettin (Ugur Polat) and Celayir (Erkan Can). While Akın wins his bosses’ favour, he quickly makes enemies, in particular a certain Mecit (Naci Tasdögen). Akın starts to work in the mafia bosses’ billiard hall, where he asks if can buy and install a large aquarium. In time, Akın is ordered to murder a rival gangster, who turns out to be Mecit. Akın undertakes this duty as he has done previously, although the task is more meaningful to him given that he has a personal account to settle with Mecit. This marks the beginning of the end for Akın.

The street first occurs when Akın meets with his ‘dirty’ street friends and smokes marijuana after the death of his mother. He questions his existence through an inner voice on his way back home. The next day, we see a perspective view of the street. It is a hazy morning in Istanbul – the building’s balcony is full of antennas and the street is jammed with parked cars on the left and right sides of the road. In the opposite direction, a Turkish flag is flying. After stealing his employer’s money, Akın strolls around the streets. It is cold and hazy and the streets are crowded and suffocating. He tries to settle accounts with his inner voice – he is not a thief; he has been swallowing sawdust since his earliest childhood. He goes to a café and buys something to drink.

² Even the cinema halls in Turkey separate the upper and lower classes. Although the Turkish model of modernization is thought to be more comprehensive and democratic than elsewhere, film festivals, for instance, are organised with the sponsorship of global financial circles and reach only the elite.

In the fourth street scene, Akin meets his girlfriend Deniz at the seaside. He asks her to leave Istanbul with him, but she does not accept his offer. Akin gets furious and screams at her. When Deniz gets scared and walks away, he makes fun of her saying, 'Bitch, you have slim jeans on your ass and a headscarf on your head.' Leaving the crowd and the human traffic behind, Akin meets a drug dealer on the corner of the street. With an inner voice, he questions his life, friends and family.

Accompanied by one of his street friends, Akin goes to see İdris in the mafia bosses' billiard hall, where he is given a job. In the next street scene, we see him walking ostentatiously in his new black suit and white shirt together with İdris. The camera then follows Akin's friends from a bird's-eye perspective. At a junction, each of the three friends takes a different street. The night will be full of surprises, and we sense that something dangerous is about to happen. Akin is in the beer house, drunk, and plagued by his usual inner self-criticisms. However, he is granted his wish to build an aquarium in the billiard hall, so he goes to the aquarium shop. Afterwards, he encounters his father, who has a long beard and wears a cap, on the street. We observe their war of words from a close perspective. Akin says, 'You seem to have wrapped up well. Will you be in your tomb soon?' His father replies, 'I am not a thief like you.' Akin says he will pay back Master Nuran's money, but his father retorts that he will never be his father, no matter what he does. Akin brushes past him and disappears into the night.

Later that night, Akin kills Mecit on the street in the car park. Before dying, however, Mecit shoots Akin. İdris is now under orders by Fahrettin to kill his wounded friend in a forest. However, he does not do so, but instead returns to the billard hall and shoots the mafia bosses, Fahrettin and Celahir. Akin waits in the car, dying. He looks behind at his wounded friend, Akin. The camera moves in the direction of İdris's gaze. Akin's last words are, 'Where are we going? We need to take the aquarium with us.' In his delirium, Akin recalls the first time they walked down the street together in their black suits. The streets he is walking through are as imposing as his beloved aquarium. Like the aquarium, the streets also have tightly defined borders controlled by an outside authority. If an act breaches the rules, its perpetrator will be thrown out and will 'die,' like a fish thrown out of water.

Ejder Kapani (*Dragon Trap*, Ugur Yücel 2010)

This film questions the concept of justice in contemporary Turkey. It is the story of two experienced detectives, 'Çerkez' Abbas (Ugur Yücel) and 'Akrep' Celal (Kenan İmirzalıoğlu), a Kurd, as well as a trainee female police officer named Ezo (Berrak Tüzünataç), who are pursuing a serial killer that is targeting paedophiles who have been released early in an amnesty. The clues point to Ensar (Nejat İşler), a killing machine who discovers on return from the army that his twelve-year old sister has been raped and has hanged herself. Abbas, who has worked the night shift for many years, is on his last case before retiring to spend more time with his beloved girlfriend, Cavidan (Ceyda Düvenci).

The first street scene occurs when Abbas is waiting in his car in the cobbled back streets of Istanbul for his girlfriend, a cabaret singer. The back streets are unsafe – full of danger and filth. A drug dealer crosses their path and three men start bothering Cavidan. She manages to climb into Abbas's car, but Abbas, furious, gets out of the car and starts a fight with the men. The scene is stylised in the

manner of a Tarantino or Guy Richie movie – when Abbas throws a punch at one of the men, the image is frozen and the blood hangs in the air. One of the other men is capitulated into the air with a single blow of Abbas' fist, and remains frozen there before falling onto a trolley. The camera is extremely mobile and active in this sequence, drawing the viewer into the action.

In the second street scene, Abbas and Celal go to the latter's house on a rainy night. The camera films the men from above, following them as they walk in a parallel line to the rooftops down the narrow and wet street. Then Abbas is seen leaving Celal's house to go to his hotel room with his umbrella. The streets appear once again during a chase sequence of a suspect named Selçuk Demirci. It is dark and the rain strikes the ground like a whip. The camera follows the suspect through the back streets and closed markets, with Abbas in pursuit. However, the sequence ends when Selçuk is suddenly and mysteriously killed. The streets are foregrounded yet again when a special team invades the main suspect's house and a chase ensues. At night, the suburban streets are narrower, dirtier and more dangerous than those of the old town.

In a news bulletin, Abbas watches interviews with people conducted on the streets about the paedophile-murderer. The streets are therefore present on a meta-level. People thank the murderer, who dares to do what everyone else merely says they would do. Just then, Abbas gets a call and the detectives dive into the back streets once again. The murderer has struck again. They see the murderer in the house of the murdered man and chase after him in another, Tarantino-style chase down gloomy streets. Abbas captures the murderer in the yard of a mosque and informs his team via a transmitter. However, he is exhausted by the chase and has a heart attack, and so has to be rushed to hospital by ambulance.

Abbas eventually realises that the murderer is none other than his colleague, Celal. We observe the streets for a sixth time when Abbas is driving his car recklessly en route to Celal's house. A series of frenzied camera shots show how the traffic is disrupted. Although Ezo is with Celal, the latter manages to escape and Abbas must begin a chase. However, he has an accident and his car is turned over. Fearlessly, he stands up, gets in a taxi and continues his pursuit. Abbas is as determined to catch the murderer as Celal is to kill paedophiles. They travel through the streets, bridges and subways of Istanbul. Eventually, he tracks down Celal in an abandoned factory: a site that, incidentally, is symbolic of Turkey's fractured modernity and by extension, the castrated authoritarian and patriarchal mentality.

Celal believes he is administering justice in a fair and legitimate way, especially given that his own sister was raped when she was a child. He leaves behind some clues so that Abbas would discover his secret and arrest him. Abbas sees this as a story in which a father must apprehend his own son. The only possible outcome for the 'son,' Celal, is to commit suicide. At the end of the film, the lonely father, Abbas, dives into the streets of Istanbul for the last time. The Islamic call to prayer is being recited. The camera whirls around Abbas as he makes his way to the mosque. The streets are multi-cultural places of performance where Kurds and Circassians mingle and clash with one another. The fact that the streets and Abbas' journey end in the mosque can be seen as an allusion to the unitary nature of Islam. In this respect, the film is extremely patriarchal.

Kara Köpekler Havlarken (*Black Dogs Barking*, Mehmet Bahadır Er & Maryna Gorbach 2009)

Guvercinci Selim (Cemal Toktaş) and Çaçı Celal (Volga Sorgu) are two ambitious youngsters in a working-class neighbourhood. A naive young man without much education, Selim likes to feed and breed pigeons on the rooftop of the building where he lives. They operate a car park belonging to a local mafia boss known as Master (Erkan Can) who lives in the upper-middle class neighbourhood just on the other side of the road. Selim is planning to marry his beloved fiancée Ayşe (Ayfer Dönmez). Selim and Çaçı's biggest dream is to run their own car park. In a pigeon club that Selim frequents, he meets Mehmet (Murat Daltaban), who offers the youths the chance to go behind Master's back and to enter into a bidding war for a small car park contract belonging to a shopping mall, against a hard-nosed security contractor named Sait.

We first encounter the streets when Selim goes back into his house after feeding the pigeons. Dealers, poor kids riding bikes and playing football, women wearing headscarves, dilapidated buildings and brick houses underscore that this is a lower-class neighbourhood. The roads are neglected and the electricity pylons are dangerous. A funeral coach goes past a child who is trying to fly a kite. The coffin is covered with a Turkish flag, indicating that it is the casket of a local citizen of a certain standing, such as an official or a war veteran, etc. The camera observes the streets as seen from the hearse leading to the graveyard. Celal comes to the graveyard by his car, late to the burial. Selim brings his fiancée, Ayşe, and then they return to the impoverished streets.

Images of the poor back streets are seen against the backdrop of modern skyscrapers, giving the impression of a somewhat chaotic cityscape. Selim drops Ayşe at the kindergarten school where she works. Before she says goodbye, Ayşe reminds Selim that it is the last day to pay the mortgage. Selim, who is positioned in front of the garden door on the street, tells her not to worry and that the payment is ready. He leaves and Ayşe returns to the school. The camera then follows Selim as he dives into the streets, where he meets Celal. They share jokes with friends, and Celal gives advice regarding Selim's upcoming interview. Selim then leaves his friend on the street, gets into a car and goes to the shopping mall.

In the next street scene, Selim and Celal go to the pigeon club to see Mehmet. Just as they enter the club, which is on a narrow street, they get stuck in the middle of a farewell convoy for soldiers. The drivers whose cars are covered with Turkish flags scream, 'Ours is the biggest soldier,' and toot their horns loudly. In the third street scene, Selim waits for Ayşe in the back street behind the kindergarten. Selim gives her the money he had promised, and also presents her with a solitaire ring. Afterwards, he goes to meet Celal and they go to see the mafia boss for whom they work. The summer sun connotes a feeling of hope, although images of a garden suggests that more complicated times are ahead. When they arrive, Master is punishing a worker who had taken drugs by squeezing his hand between car doors. They talk about work and a fight that happened at the pigeon club. Master tells them to be careful and not to argue with anyone. The camera is mobile and held at eye level during this sequence, and focusses on some of the men working on the nearby street: men who are undoubtedly nasty heterosexual, Turkish bullies. Master then gets into his car, accompanied by a

bodyguard and a driver. The camera focuses on the sticker of the Turkish flag on the car. Finally, Selim leaves Celal on the street and drives away.

While preparing their bid to operate the shopping mall car park, Selim and Celal are threatened by Sait. The streets, and their attendant danger, threat and masculinity, are omnipresent throughout all these proceedings. The friends argue with each other, buy bird food and get back into their car parked beside the feed shop on the street. The car – an orange Doğan with ‘my orange angel’ written on the side – is a sort of ‘room’ in the ‘street house’ where they live. The sequence features Selim’s voice singing an arabesque song about the boys playing on the street.³ ‘Think, life resembles a dream just for once. I know those hard times, I know them very well. Realities cannot be hidden. On the last day of my life, I will still love life.’ The sound emanates from the rooftops where there are pigeons, reinforcing the idea that the streets and the city roofs are the only places for Selim.

Selim and Celal return to the streets once again as their friend, Taylan, is about to join the army. The men see off the future soldier by wrapping him in a Turkish flag, throwing him up and down and dancing to the tune of trumpets. The camera strolls among them and joins in with the festivities. While this is going on, Celal examines a luxury car – another sign of masculinity. The convoy begins the farewell procession and the cars are covered with Turkish flags. The frenzy and noise of ‘Ours is the biggest soldier’ dominate the streets of Istanbul. In this film, the streets thus become a place where patriotic Turkish men are sent off to do their military service.

Next, the men play street-ball, but the game gets a little out of hand and the police are called. While Celal tries to get rid of the gun in his back, it gets fired, but he escapes from the police through the narrow streets lined with tall walls segregating the rich villas from the slums. In the meantime, however, the police arrest Master and Ayşe disappears. Later than night, Selim and Celal locate Master on the roof of a squatter building to ask if he can help them locate Ayşe. It turns out Ayşe has been abducted by the security mafia boss, Sait, and that they have been lured into a trap. They are savagely set upon by Sait’s doberman dogs and die from their injuries.

The film, which starts with a burial scene, ends with the protagonists’ funeral. Their coffins lie in the mosque and a prayer is recited in the courtyard. Two pigeons are released, but in the very final image of the film, a pigeon is shown being eaten by a seagull. The bidding war is won by Mehmet who collaborates with Sait. In this film, the dark, blind back streets are paradoxically ruled by a secular patriarchy, and in spite of the religious funerals, the authoritarian mentality is largely fictionalised from a secular perspective.

Bornova Bornova (Inan Temelkuran 2009)

The film depicts a day in the lives of young men from the same neighbourhood in İzmir’s Bornova district. Salih (Kadir Çermic) and Hakan (Öner Erkan) are like brothers, and spend their days in front

³ ‘Arabesque’ is an Arabic style of Turkish music genre that was very popular in Turkey in the 1960s through the 1990s. The common theme is an embellished and agonizing depiction of love and yearning. This theme has undertones of class difference. It is also called ‘slum music.’

of a local grocery store waiting for a chance to do something with their lives. Hakan has recently returned from the army and his career plans to become a footballer have come to nothing, so he is unemployed and idle. He hopes to become a taxi driver. Salih is from a good, well-educated family, but has got involved in a number of illegal activities and is considered to be a hoodlum. Everybody in the neighborhood is scared of him, including highschool student Özlem (Damla Sönmez), with whom Hakan is madly in love. The third protagonist is Murat (Erkan Bektaş), Salih's childhood friend and a doctoral student in philosophy who makes a living by writing erotic fantasies.

The film opens with two boys riding a bicycle fast down a street. The camera captures the excited amusement of the children in close-up. We see a mature man, smoking and pushing his motorbike and staring at the street as the boys go by. Salih drops Hakan at the corner of the road next to a graveyard. In the following street scene, we see Salih and Hakan as young men, repairing a motorbike in front of the local store at the corner of the street. Hakan catches sight of Özlem among the parked minibuses, private cars and taxis, and talks to Salih excitedly. Salih chases and shouts after Özlem, which makes Hakan agitated. His only hope of wooing Özlem is to start earning money as a taxi driver, although this is a doubtful prospect. The camera monitors them from far away and surveys what goes on the street. It is a hot summer day and customers go in and out of the local store as cars pass down the street. The camera approaches Hakan and Salih, who are sitting on a wall talking about a football match. We learn that Hakan has not been selected to play for the Altay football club because of a reoccurring injury, even though he played in the team for five years.

Hakan is a good-hearted man, which is essentially why he faces so many ordeals. He recounts what happened to him the previous day. He was buying a sunflower, but got into a fight when the vendor refused to serve him. As he is very animated in his descriptions, a policeman comes to ask what is going on, but Salih reassures him that they are just having a friendly conversation. They start to talk again about Özlem. Salih tries to ride his broken motorbike, but they end up pushing it. Then Hakan gets off the wall to go into the store. In the store, two friends of Hakan start refer to Salih as a 'stupid' neighbourhood thug, and while they are talking, the viewer is shown a series of images of Salih swinging a knife on his motorbike.

In another street scene, Hakan is seen on the wall beside the store reading a newspaper. Murat comes over and they chat. Salih and Murat have fallen out, but Hakan doesn't get involved in the quarrel. Murat is happy that Hakan plans to become a taxi driver and they talk about this and his plans to marry Özlem. Murat adds that he should not listen to Salih about matters of the heart. Hakan defends Salih, but Murat tells Hakan about an incident that occurred between Salih and Özlem in her house which inspired one of his erotic fantasies. Hakan gets extremely angry and upset on hearing this, and then leaves to wander through parks, streets and bazaars.

In the sixth street scene, we see Özlem walking furiously with a boy just behind her. The boy teases her, but she is too angry to listen. The subjective camera follows them both, underlining the tension between them. In a later scene, Salih bullies this boy in a billiard hall, which provokes a fight between him and Özlem. Özlem complains that the boys that are her age only talk to the girls in Bornova to amuse themselves. She kicks the boy in his private parts and walks away. In the next

street scene, Hakan is pictured strolling around the streets. He has tracked down Özlem, who has told him what really happened between her and Salih. Salih tried to rape her, but could not manage to do so because he is sexually impotent. Now, Özlem asks Hakan to kill Salih. Hakan is then once again pictured on the streets – in abandoned houses, fields and parks, struggling with his internal dilemma.

In the final street scene, Murat and Salih are sitting on the wall, chatting and drinking beer. The camera films them from waist level. Salih comes up with a fantasy for one of Murat's stories. He then begins talking about how he lives off his parents' money and how he has been in jail for as many years as he has lived. He talks at length about his ambition to get to Holland or Germany, where his friends tell him that life is much better. Everybody wears leather jacket there and if you are a Turk, you are 'different' as opposed to being a 'nobody.'

Meanwhile, Hakan approaches them from behind. It is twilight and getting dark. Salih makes fun of Hakan's ambition to become a taxi driver, but Murat argues that having an honest job is a good thing. Salih then gives Hakan a knife, saying that driving a taxi is dangerous. He tells them about an event that took place two years ago – while driving a taxi, he was assaulted by two drunken Kurdish men who refused to pay the correct fare. Salih stabbed one of the drunkards in the back of his neck and chased after him, possibly killing him. The knife he used that night is the one he gives Hakan, in case he finds himself in a similar situation.

Just as Murat is about to leave, Hakan says that he has a fantasy he wants to recount to them. Murat refuses, but Salih insists that they stay and listen to Hakan's tale. His fantasy is about a forty-five year old woman who seduces him under the guise of asking for help at the market. The woman tells him that she has a sexual relationship with her son, although he can no longer stand it and has run away. Murat notes that this is very Oedipal. Hakan then reveals that the woman is Salih's mother, provoking Salih into attacking him. Hakan kills Salih with his knife and disappears into the night. In the final image, he runs, limping, towards the camera and smiles.

In *Bornova Bornova*, even though women only play a minor role in the film, the streets are profoundly shaken by events set in motion by the sexual desire for women. In this sense, female dominance can arguably be construed as a performance that takes place within male authority. Conversely, one could state that the 'non-Muslim' and 'feminine' streets of Izmir are a place of conflict for secular and authoritarian men.

Conclusion

The films analysed in this study – *Çakal*, *Ejder Kapani*, *Kara Köpekler Havlarken* and *Bornova Bornova* – build representations that reconstruct the patriarchal and authoritarian mentality in an unmitigated way. The authoritarian mentality is seen in those who judge others, those who impart fear and those who discipline and punish others, while the patriarchal mentality is seen in those who enforce traditional gender roles. Muslim Turks, in particular, are bound to each other through blood ties, and this manifests itself through patriarchal social structures. Each of the main characters, victims and perpetrators alike, are representative of a certain kind of Turkish male – policemen, taxi

drivers, the unemployed, carpenters, private security guards, car park attendants, pigeon breeders and imams. They are all heterosexual, Sunni Muslims and Turkish from the lower or middle classes. In spite of the fact that the back streets of Turkish cities are the site of violence, confrontation and punishment, and that the male protagonists are themselves victims of other men's brutality, it is still good to be a male in Turkey. The films analysed can thus be shown to simultaneously celebrate and condemn the patriarchal and authoritarian mentality in modern-day Turkey.

In each work, the one having authority attempts to convert patriarchal hegemony into a display of power. In *Ejder Kapani*, the Kurdish police officer Celal tries to settle his account with the government, which he perceives to be powerless. Ultimately, however, this turns out to be a childish endeavour and his superior, Abbas, assumes the role of the father. It is highly symbolic that at the end of the film, after Celal commits suicide, Abbas goes to the mosque. In *Kara Köpekler Havlarken*, the protagonists' passion for cars and farewell ceremonies for soldiers are coded images of patriarchal power. In *Çakal*, Akın unceasingly questions himself while walking through the streets filled with Turkish flags. Moreover, he has a problematic relation with paternal dominance, manifested by the conflict with his religiously conservative father. In *Bornova Bornova*, the power afforded to the Turkish male abroad is also discussed.

In conclusion, the patriarchal and authoritarian mentality in Turkey, as seen in contemporary film drama, unfolds on the narrow, dangerous back streets of Istanbul and in the filthy, cramped suburban streets, full of abandoned buildings and wasteland. It is manifested and 'performed' by dealers, prostitutes, imams, boys playing with balls and girls playing hopscotch, soldiers leaving for tours of duty, by men who commit murder and men who question their existence.

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Filmography

- Bahadır Er, Mehmet & Maryna Gorbach (motion picture) (2009), Kara Köpekler Havlarken (Black Dogs Barking), Karakirmizi Film, Turkey, 88 min.
- Kozan, Erhan (motion picture) (2010), Çakal (The Jackal), Cinefilm, Turkey, 90 min.
- Temelkuran, Inan (motion picture) (2009), Bornova Bornova, TurkishFilmChannel, 92 min.
- Yücel, Ugur (motion picture) (2010), Ejder Kapanı (Dragon Trap), United International Pictures, 105 min.