

AUDIENCE RECEPTION OF TEEN TV DRAMAS: EXPERIENCE OF  
ROMANCE AND PLEASURE

A Master's Thesis

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Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences  
of  
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

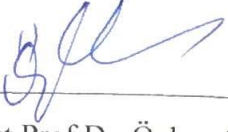
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
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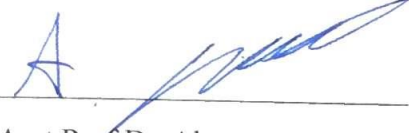
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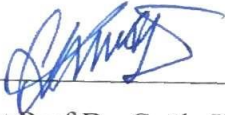
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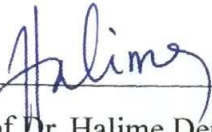
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## ABSTRACT

### AUDIENCE RECEPTION OF TEEN TV DRAMAS: EXPERIENCE OF ROMANCE AND PLEASURE

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Teen TV dramas are one of the mediums that provide people with conventional, socially constructed ideals about love which are culturally related to and presented with gender and morality. This thesis mainly discusses how teenager girls who are the target audience of the shows, interpret the concepts of love, gender and morality as illustrated in teenage tv dramas. It also asks how they experience the romance that is constructed by the moralities conveyed through TV series. The general structure of the study is composed of the relationship between the love discourse, which is developed by both teen TV dramas and cultural environment, and the teenage girls who are the viewers of these dramas in the patriarchal society.

Keywords: Audience, Gender, Love, Pleasure, Teen TV Dramas

## ÖZET

### GENÇLİK DİZİLERİNİN İZLEYİCİ ALIMLAMASI: ROMANS VE HAZ DENEYİMLERİ

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Ağustos, 2016

Gençlik dizileri insanların aşk üzerine kurulan idealler hakkında fikir edinmelerini sağlayan birçok kanaldan sadece birisidir. Bu idealler ise kültürel olarak toplumsal cinsiyetle ve ahlak ile ilişkilendirilmiştir ve bu şekilde sunulur. Bu tez, gençlik dizilerinin hedef kitlesi olan genç kızların, aşk, toplumsal cinsiyet ve ahlak yorumlamalarını, aynı zamanda hem diziler hem de ahlak üzerinde kurulan romantik ilişkileri nasıl deneyimlediklerini ele alıyor. Bir yandan dizilerden diğer yandan kültürel çevreden edinilen aşk söylemi ile izleyicisi olan genç kızların arasındaki ilişkinin egemen ataerkil toplum içerisindeki yeri tezin genel yapısını oluşturuyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aşk, Gençlik Dizileri, Haz, İzleyici, Toplumsal Cinsiyet

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In the last year, especially in the summer of the 2015, there has been a great rise in the number of TV serials about romantic relationships that especially target teen girls, produced in Turkey. Only in the summer of the 2015, approximately seven serials, which can be called teen TV dramas, were released: *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love), *Çilek Kokusu* (Strawberry Smell), *Güneşin Kızları* (Daughters of Sun), *İlişki Durumu: Karışık* (Relationship Status: Complicated), *İnadına Aşk* (Love Out-of-spite), *Aşk Yeniden* (Love Again), *Adı Mutluluk* (Its Name is Happiness) and *Kırgın Çiçekler* (Hurt Flowers). One distinctive serial, *Kiraz Mevsimi* (Cherry Season), is different from the others, in respect of the first broadcast date which is summer 2014, and another similar serial was released in summer 2013, *Güneşi Beklerken* (Waiting for Sun).<sup>1</sup> All these referred serials were released nearly on the same month and their script is more or less based on the same recipe: a pinch of love, a tea spoon full of heartbreak and a cup of miracle.

The aim of this study is to understand of what kind of a moral discourse is presented to teenage girls through teen TV dramas, and furthermore, to explore how the teenagers perceive, appropriate and challenge this discourse. For this purpose,

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<sup>1</sup> They are both adaptations of Korean TV series, as well as more recent ones are either Korean adaptations or there are rumors about they may be. Moreover, while I am searching the serials, I have found out that most of TV series of today in Turkey are Korean adaptations.



discourses, practices, and experiences of teenager audience girls are taken as the unit of analysis. It is a curious inquiry because, as it is stated, in the last years of Turkish broadcasting, an increasing number of series with the themes of romance, love etc. is witnessed. Moreover, their ratings are very high. Since their themes are all related to the subject of love, a love discourse has been generated through these series. As the teenage female audience is newly understanding and experiencing their sexuality, those series are rather intriguing for them. However, an approach that victimizes the viewers is not one that is adopted by this thesis. In that, not only media texts but also social, economic, politic and cultural forces of the society they live in play a role. That is why this thesis will examine if the dominant discourse coincides with the discourses in the TV dramas. Also, it is important to find out when there are discrepancies, do viewers receive what they watch passively, negotiate and adapt them to their own lifestyles or directly reject it. In other words, as it is argued by Stuart Hall, do viewers decode the texts through the dominant-hegemonic position (which is a decoding position wherein viewers perceive the text as it is supposed by the dominant discourse), or through the negotiated position (which suggests viewers either accept some of the parts of the text that is applicable to their ideology or deny others if not suitable) or through the oppositional position (which states the viewers' positions as a critic and describes viewers oppositional attitude toward text)? (Hall, 1980: 136-137)

There are some other subjects that are discussed around the main argument. This thesis addresses how the content of the serial is comprehended and what kind of emotions does it create. Moreover, audience's experience of watching romance and fantasising about love are connected with the created world of series and identification of the viewers. In doing so, the pleasure taken from the series linked

with the imagery world of the narrative that is fed by emotions and fantasy. Additionally, this thesis addresses how audiences perceive trivialization of cultural forms attributed to femininity by patriarchy.

In Turkey, reception studies of Turkish TV series are mostly examined in terms of representation. Furthermore, it is often studied how social roles of woman are represented and how the representation of the gender is perceived by women (Günseli Pişkin, Aysun Yüksel, Aybike Serttaş, Hasan Gürkan, Seçkin Özmen). Besides, Turkish TV dramas have an important amount of viewers in Arab countries. That's why the importance of Turkish TV series in Arabic societies is another studied subject (Muhammed Yusuf). Moreover, there is a study about Arab women reception of Turkish TV series (Şirin Dilli). However, all of these studies mostly aimed at housewives. For the teen audience, hegemonic masculinity through TV series (Cenk Özbay), the effects of television series on role modeling behaviors of teenagers (Yaşar Erjem, Mustafa Çağlayandereli) and television viewing habits among teenagers are also some of the studies (Özlem Kavalcı Göktepe). Yet, the love discourse of the teen TV series in Turkey is not a common study.

TV serials are just one of the many other mediums by which teenage girls (as well as any other individual) acquire notions on idea of love, romance or relationships, gender, sexuality or moral etc. Though, for the purpose of not leading to any misunderstandings or confusion, it must be stated that, this is not a fixed statement and it does not mean that these serials have a straightforward effect on its viewers. However, for Gauntlett, since the media involves many images of man and woman and contains so many information about being man or woman, it is implausible to think that these messages overwhelm on our sense of identity (Gauntlett, 2002:1).

Yet, again, it is even more unlikely to assert that this impact causes a direct copy of identity. Additionally, Morley suggests more than a single act of reading of a text by referring to decoding. On this topic Morley states the following: “Perhaps what is involved is a set of processes—of attentiveness, recognition of relevance, of comprehension, and of interpretation and response—all of which may be involved for a single audience member in front of the screen.”(1992:113). However, this set of process is again, filtered through previously learned codes. Even though, girls do not copy what they have seen on TV directly to their own lives, their fantasizing imageries are based on the TV series. Even if there may be some contrasts between everyday life and fiction, learned images settle in mind or reinforce its place. In this sense, this thesis charts teenager girls’ experiences in a heteronormative and patriarchal world by accepting that, as in any other abstract notion, love affair relationships are also learned -that idea of love is abstract in itself- even though the feeling is so self-induced. Since these dramas are placed in their everyday lives as a domestic leisure, at this stage, it is an important point to look at how young girls, who are followers of TV series, form their experiences in relation to love discourse in teen TV series.

There are various studies about the subject of the relationship between ‘feminine’ text and their audience. Most of them are not about teen TV dramas and their audience but rather on romances (Janice Radway, Tania Modleski), soap operas (Ien Ang, Charlotte Brunson) melodramas (Christine Gledhill) and their audiences. The well-known study named *Reading the Romance* by Janice Radway is one of them. Radway attempts to discover in this book why many women are fascinated by romance novels. She conducts interviews with the women who live in a town located in U.S. and asks them their motives to read those romances. What she gets from the

interviews is that while reading, readers mostly feel that they are liberated from the limited world assigned for them within the patriarchy.

On the other hand, the conventional roles assigned for them are reiterated in those romances. Moreover, the readers get pleasure from the romance even though it is full of the conventional roles which they escape from. However, the created world of the narrative includes characters and events that are desired and fantasized by the audience, and the roles attributed to the heroines in the texts, first, make readers/viewers feel more close to the character and second, keep the conventional roles invisible within the world of the story.

Other than this, Radway (1984) writes about the identification that reading romance makes identification grow whereby the audience reacts to the heroines' lives in the story. (pp.87). However she also adds that this is not the only audience response, and that the process of receiving the text includes receiving the text's structure of the world. So the viewer/reader accepts the world of the narrative as her own world (1984: 87). In this thesis, in addition to identification, teenager girls' involvement into the world of the narrative is discussed through the experiences of pleasure, fantasy and emotion.

As for the subject of experiencing pleasure, the book by Ien Ang, *Watching Dallas*, is a distinctive study. Throughout her study, she asks the audience the reason why they enjoy watching the popular soap opera, Dallas. She put an advertisement in a newspaper that she asks for letters from the viewers in order to learn the viewer's opinions and reactions for the show. So the study is originated based on these received letters (She gets 42 letters: 3 replies from male and 39 replies from female viewers) (pp. 10). In the letters, viewers explain why they get pleasure, why they

like it or why they hate it. Yet, Ang writes that even though they tried to interpret the reason of the pleasure they find, most of them also accept that they do not know why they like, since the pleasure is not driven by logic (pp.86). She asserts that “experiencing pleasure is not a conscious, directed activity (although one can strive for it), but something that ‘happens’, something which comes over the viewer according to his or her feelings” (pp. 83). This approach leads me to the path of emotions and fantasies.

These TV shows are very effective in the sense of providing fantasies and imageries which are fed by the emotions (also emotions that are fed by fantasies and imagination). So in this context, pleasure is generated from the emotionality mixed with imagination. However, as the feminine texts are belittled by the hegemonic masculinity since they are produced with culturally constructed facets of femininity; fantasizing over romance and emotionality (that are mostly attributed to femininity conventionally) are also regarded as something to be ashamed.

There are some specific TV serials throughout my thesis elected among the ones mentioned earlier, according to the meetings that I have held with the participants. I tried to choose the most recent, the most popular and the most appropriate ones for the subject of the thesis, which are namely *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love), *Güneşin Kızları* (Daughters of Sun), *Kiraz Mevsimi* (Cherry Season) and *Aşk Yeniden* (Love Again). However, I referred to some other TV serials, again, considering to what participants told me during our conversations. Even though there are other serials I found important and followed by many people, I wanted to narrow them to teen TV dramas, i.e. serials whose target audience are teen girls and that are mostly watched by them. I watched the serials I have pointed out here in order to understand the

relationship between participants' opinions and what the discourse implied by those series about romantic affairs, gender roles, and other related themes. In this respect, analysing the narrative and narration of these series with the consideration of mentioned themes above is a crucial stage of this thesis. Furthermore, it is also important to see how they are experienced and consumed by target audience, teenager girls in this context, and their relationship with audience's everyday life. For this reason, I used ethnographic methods both by making interviews and being a participant observer in my media research.

First and foremost, I have not referred to other television series whose target audience is not teenagers, even if they have a considerable amount of teenager audience per se. Likewise, teenage boys and adults who also constitute the followers of the teen TV series are not taken into account throughout the thesis since I wanted to focus on the series' target audiences, and since the idea that teenage girls watch teen TV drama more, got stronger, during my search. Besides, because of the fact that the teen dramas were more about friendship between teenagers in the earlier years, it was easily determined which one is for the teen audience or not. However, their themes has changed. Today, teen TV series presents soap opera-like stories, but by using the codes we already acknowledged from the teen dramas. In these series there are many characters who are funny, the romance relations that couples have are represented through the titillation in a faux-innocence, and heroes and heroines are relatively young. Additionally, their promotions on TV are rather entertaining with full of high saturated colors and motion.

Some of the teen TV dramas named before, have already showed their series finale and stopped producing new episodes. For instance, *Güneşin Kızları* (Daughters of

Sun) became one of the series, broadcasted last episode in March 2015 because of the flopping ratings, even though its fans –who are more likely to be able to follow TV series regularly in summers instead of winters when school is open- protested the decision of finale and started to a campaign on the web by opening various hash-tags with each one tweeted more than one million times (Turhan, 2016). It was actually an unexpected end, since, after *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love), this show was the most popular one of its kind. However, the names of the TV serials are not that critical; even if the names change, what remains essential is their stories and structures, so the arguments that will be discussed throughout the thesis, would provide a functional analysis for the shows that might be broadcasted on TV later on. In this sense I do not think the names of serials are that important since their structures are this similar.

So far, for the purpose of, at least, being familiar with the shows, I have watched dozens of episodes, which each one of them lasts minimum two hours. I wrote down the resemblances and repetitions in their plot and features of characters. I even went to a shopping mall to watch the interview made with actors of *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love) and of course, to watch the audience's reaction and questions. I searched for the blogs about the TV series. I have made interviews with girls who are in high school, aging between 15-19, from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, nevertheless, all living in Ankara. Participants were recruited by using the snowball technique, starting with my personal circle of acquaintances. Some of them are sisters or relatives of my friends and some of them are high school interns in the companies where my friends work. They are all living in different neighborhoods in Ankara.

Hilal is 18 years old. She studies in a private high school and lives in Söğütözü. Her mother does not work, her father is a general contractor. She has an older brother who is an engineer, living in İstanbul. She is preparing for university exams and she does not have enough time for meeting with people since she has courses in every day of the week. Ela is 16 years old and she is studying in a high school in Eryaman and also living there. She has a boyfriend; they constantly break up and then get back together. She has problems with her parents and her parents do not want her to be with her boyfriend. Ekin is 16 years old; she is in 10<sup>th</sup> class and studies in a school that is transformed into a high school from a private training center for students to prepare university exams in Kızılay. At the same time she is preparing for the drama school to be an actress. Her mother is a banker and her father is a public servant in the municipality. She has an older sister who is a lawyer. They live in Çankaya, in a public housing for municipality employees near Atakule. Büşra is Ekin's cousin. She is 15 years old and goes to a public high school in Eryaman (and she also lives in the same neighborhood). Her mother does not work and her father is a retired police officer. She has an older sister who studies interior architecture in Eskişehir. Ceren is an extroverted and a cheerful girl. She is studying in a vocational high school in Sıhhiye (this is her last year in high school) and living in Şentepe (in Yenimahalle). She has a sister who is married and has a child, and she lives with her sister as well. (Her sister did not go to a university). She has a boyfriend who is older than her, and he is working in the office where Ceren makes her internship (However, they broke up afterwards and it was a secret affair). She has a very close friend who is Pınar. They are living in the same neighborhood and are at the same school. Hande (19) has an interesting life story. She is from Van and after the earthquake in Van she moves to Ankara and starts to live with her brother (who is 40 years old) and with his



family. She has twelve siblings and one of her sisters is living with them in Ankara, taking Islamic education in the mosque. When I record our conversations, she feels uncomfortable because of her accent. Her native language is Kurdish and she thinks that her Turkish accent is ridiculous (which is not). Both her mother and father are older than 70 years old. She thinks that she has to take education, that it is her only choice (she wants to be a teacher) and her mother encourages her about it even though her brother is not very sure that she needs to go to the school or not. Duygu (17) is a shy person and does not talk very much but when she speaks she speaks up to the point and says something effective. Her mother does not work; her father is an automobile painter. She lives somewhere near Ostim and goes a vocational high school in Batıkent. Ezgi is a good humored person. She is 18 years old, has a younger brother. Her mother does not work and after school she watches Indian TV dramas with her mother. Merve (18) has some kind of a speech disorder and sometimes it gets hard to understand what she says. She goes to a vocational high school in İvedik. She is more interested in Korean TV dramas than the TV dramas in Turkey. Nehir is living in Çiğdem. She likes to watch series and talk about them with her sister who is a doctor. She has a boyfriend who came from Germany, and whose family had migrated there from Turkey decades ago.

Meetings continued about four months. Even though I could only meet privately with some of them, sometimes I was able to be with their friends in their groups. Additionally, it was too often that their parents did not let them to go out, and that is why I met with some of them in their workplace during lunchtimes. Our meetings did not proceed with only questions and answers. I asked some questions about series they watch or their idea of romances however, it always changed according to the flow of the conversation. I also added them on Instagram and Snapchat. We

sometimes talked via those social media platforms and I observed their self-representations. I draw a picture of similarities and the differences of what they say, what they think about the characters and the narrative of TV dramas and their idea of romance and gender.

In the second chapter the main aim is to discuss the similar characteristics of the teen TV dramas referred. Core structures of their narrations will be discussed through the styles of the narrational elements, narratives and features of the characters. It will be explained that the use of music is for increasing the dramatization and intensifying the emotions of the viewers. Music, which is the main characteristic of melodramas, has an important place within the TV series as a trigger of the feelings. Among other features of the TV series, stereotypical characteristics of the hero and heroine will be highlighted in order to stick by the meetings with participants. Especially this part will be around the discussion how the reform of the bad boy is being romanticized.

In the third chapter, titled “Conventional Codes Within the Patriarchal Hegemony”, there is a broad discussion on the comprehensions of the teenager girls about love, gender and morality. Idealized conventions will be clarified through participants’ experiences and notions on the subject. For the purpose the chapter is prepared to examine what are the concepts such as womanhood, manhood, family or morality mean for the teenage girls who watch the teen TV dramas. Furthermore, it will be in account what it means to be viewer of one of those teen TV series for the participants, since the series referred are all scorned culturally.

Fourth chapter mainly deals with the idea of pleasure. Apart from experience of viewing and the negotiation with the world of the narrative, pleasure will be argued also by way of fantasies and emotions. Since the imagery world which is conveyed

via those narratives represents a kind of ideal world for the audience, the teen TV series are also able to give pleasure by feeding the fantasies of the viewers. Thus the world of the teen TV series will be presented with fantasy world of the audience which is full of intense feelings.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **FEATURES OF TEEN TV DRAMAS**

Romance and love, for a teenager, are relatively new subjects that are waiting to be discovered. An unfamiliar feeling which feels good but is complicated is now going to be explored through the young years of a lifetime. While the feeling is pretty pleasant itself, exploration of it through various channels and mediums gives another pleasure, meaning that this exploration is also related to exploration of romance besides experiencing romance itself. Fortunately, from the beginning of human history until today, the world is full of love stories and there is so much to explore. Moreover, nowadays, there are numerous genres that address teenage girls which narrate love affairs. Although it is not easy to strictly frame these love affair narratives, one genre form which can be highlighted in the scope of this thesis is teen TV dramas. That's why the form of the structure and features of these serials are studied by benefiting from many other forms like romances, fotonovelas, gothic romances, soap operas, chick flicks, teen chick flicks, melodramas etc., and obviously, all of these are interrelated on the subject of narrative and emotion raising, as well.

As of the early stages of my study, I have heard, viewers are complaining about the repetitions and similar kind of narratives in series and about their easily predictable story lines. This claim, automatically, led me to look at the aspects of teen TV

dramas, and in the end, I saw that the forms that have been used for years, maybe for decades (and maybe for centuries) are used by reproducing in accordance with today's practices and conditions, and environment. As for during reproduction, it has come into focus that the alterations are arranged according to the designated implied audience. Besides the structure, montage and camera movements of teen TV series; personal lives that 'in fact' need to be kept hidden, conflicts, the resemblances of hero, heroine and villain between different dramas, signs of wealth and ordinariness, miracles and fortune, and even the use of word "love", are created for its teen female audience. According to Brunsdon, audiences' relations with the text are designated not only by the text but also by audiences' positionalities that are connected with various discourses such as discourses of motherhood, romance and sexuality (Brunsdon, 1981: 32). Similarly, McCabe discusses that genres such as soap operas and the woman's films target female audiences. For the purpose of corroborating her argument, she benefits from Brunsdon's article "Crossroads: Notes on Soap Opera" wherein writes, that these series are "constituted primarily through the culturally constructed skills of femininity - sensitivity, perception, intuition and the necessary privileging of the concerns of the personal life" (1981: 36). So McCabe benefits from the words of Brunsdon to strengthen her statement about the objective of increasing the intimacy with the spectator in order to address its target audience (McCabe, 2004: 45).

Without digressing from the adolescent female audience topic, it would be wise to state certain distinct characteristics that can be observed in teen TV dramas. For instance comedy elements are pretty significant in these shows, even evil characters are humoristic and sometimes it is hard to draw a strict line between the good and the evil, because evil characters (villains) are not always "radical" evil, they can change

as good people do likewise. Also, characters are usually students, some of them has entered into professional life, some are new graduates or studying and working part time. However, even if they own a company, they live their love affairs like a teenage lover in the sense that is shown in various kinds of mediums. Relationships do not turn around skullduggery and are not lived with a great sedateness, instead, they are lived around dalliance, flirting, sweet conflicts and bantering. Miracles are very important more than disasters in characters' life. There is no scene for tycoons make meetings and give speeches with severity. And needless to say, especially heroine behaves childishly and their love is, accordingly, a 'puppy love'. Nevertheless, it is possible to say without hesitation, that there is always emotionality and melodrama.

## **2.1. Melodramatic Mode**

Belton discusses melodrama as an emotionalized way of telling stories. For him "melodrama has power to address human feelings and move audiences" (2005: 148). Sure this definition is quite broad, so is the field of melodrama. Even though the word melodrama contains an extensive scope, articles on it and on its way of creating emotion, is rather implementable to TV series for us to understand teen TV drama's dramatic styles. Etymology of melodrama is related to the use of music, it is derived from Greek 'melos', i.e. music and 'drama' (Sadie, 1980: 116), and it literally indicates a drama followed by music (Belton, 2005: 131). Again by benefiting from film studies on melodrama, Steve Neale's account of Elsaesser brings forward a wider description:

In the dictionary sense,' Elsaesser writes, 'melodrama is a dramatic narrative in which musical accompaniment marks the emotional effects.' 'This is', he

continues, 'still perhaps the most useful definition, because it allows melodramatic elements to be seen as constituents of a system of punctuation, giving expressive colour and chromatic contrast to the story-line, by orchestrating the emotional ups and downs of the intrigue. (2000: 172).

And as Bresson states, (even though he may be referring sound for this statement more than music), "the eye (in general) superficial, the ear profound and inventive. A locomotive's whistle imprints on us a whole railroad station" (1977: 39). So how do they create this effect? What is it that constitutes drama? Why do we cry when we're watching it? Is it only music or where else is this effect coming from? Belton, after writing on popular plots in melodramas shortly, touches on how these formulaic plots are given in a melodramatic way, and besides camera movements and mise-en-scene he mentions music and images: "affective power of images and music render the emotional dimensions of experience. That is, it attempts to depict those emotions that cannot be rendered in words" ( 2005: ). The style of camera movements and mise-en-scene he referred is more valid for Hollywood melodramas and not applicable to the series mentioned, however, the use of music is rendered in the same way. In many teen TV drama, especially, when couples are having emotional moments or a romantic escape, or, when hero or heroine, is alone and sad, they remember past with short sections of flashbacks (but which really lasts so long when they are all together and sequential), or those flashbacks with music are also used when characters are just wandering around, living their pain accompanied with a non-diegetic music with lyrics. About the use of music in films Bresson (1977) mentions the surplus number of films that is compiled with music (p. 71). He stresses that the overuse of music prevents the audience from apprehending the image. These scenes' power lies in 'musical delectation', "music isolates film from the life of film (musical delectation). It is a powerful modifier and even destroyer of the real, like

alcohol or dope” (1977: 41).<sup>2</sup> However, he has already acknowledged “the real is not dramatic. Drama is born of a certain march of non-dramatic elements” (1977: 46).

In an episode of *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love), Ömer, hero of the serial goes to a poplar forest, which is built in memory of his deceased mother, as he does every 15th of March, her death anniversary. There, Ömer is alone, remembers his mother and her words with grief (we see him and forest from diverse camera angles), crouched down near a tree, crying, crumbling a dry poplar leaf, and a song by Sezen Aksu goes along with images. At the same time with music and the voice of leaves of poplar trees shivering in the wind, viewers hear the words of his mother, says with a gentle voice “Stop the car Ahmet, stop. Look, there is a poplar forest there. Ömer, come with me. Do you hear? The voice of poplars... Listen... Like a bell sound, it’s clinking... I think this is the most beautiful sound in nature.” And her words of small talk with little Ömer in various different occasions continues like a poem along with Sezen Aksu’s voice singing ‘Kavaklar’<sup>3</sup> on background. This scene was just an example among many other significant ones, but was an influential one, maybe because of the touching song. Apart from that, in almost every kissing scenes or couples’ argument scenes, it is always given with a song. However, these designated parts of series with music are just very significant ones for viewers, maybe because of the songs with lyrics. In other scenes that include everyday dialogues between family, friends and co-workers or a situation with high tension etc., use of music is very pervasive and permeated within narration that audience does not even notice.

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<sup>2</sup> In addition, I want to specify, that in this book of Bresson, he indicates that a cinematographer has to leave the habit of using resources of theatre, and he writes his advices for cinematographers and, sure, for himself. In the case of his book, there is no doubt that he would consider the TV serials mentioned in this study within a conservative style of making film that uses means of theatre.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Kavaklar’ means poplars in Turkish. This touching song’s lyrics are actually from a poem written by Metin Altıok, who is died after Sivas Massacre and its music is by Onno Tunç.



Other than music, camera movements and angles show that, the use of camera does not walk out of conventional practices. Establishing shot which is usually used in comedies or rom-coms is pretty common, especially at the beginning of each episode,<sup>4</sup> but also between scenes in order to switch to another scene which might be in another venue and to link these two venues. Moreover, when it comes to the use of camera in soap operas, set-ups are very stable, and the camera can not move freely. It is mostly used medium shots or medium close ups in the scenes (This feature is also valid for conventional melodramas) (Brunsdon, 1981: 35). Besides, over the shoulder shot (OSS) is abundantly used, since these kinds of TV narratives are mostly installed over dialogues and during dialogues or response of a character, it is also common to show faces in focus and making others out of focus. Furthermore, when it comes to what is shown in the scene, viewer is given a series of tableau-like views which are again according to Brunsdon ‘more theatrical than cinematic’ and the sets are seen from the same perspectives, which is so familiar and usual as the places of viewers’ furnitures in the room (Brunsdon, 1981: 35). However, exceptional usages are also employed in some parts of some of these teen TV dramas. In order to set an example, again from *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love), when there is a flashforward of the preparation of wedding of Ömer and Defne, camera movements act in a self-reflexive way while camera is climbing up the stairs. However, at the same time, it makes viewer feel that they are also attending to the preparation of wedding of Ömer and Defne who are very well known by them as if both are their friends. Apart from that, flashforward is, as well, not a usual way of storytelling.

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<sup>4</sup> Series broadcasted in FOX TV are, for some reason, out of this generalization.

So, how do these applications work? How do they create emotion? According to Grodal, it is not of importance whether it is used a long shot, a close up, or an ultra-close, detail shot, as he indicates “they would all be ‘realistic’ in an objective sense, but would probably have quite different emotional impacts, because our mental and emotional life is linked to certain formats” (1997: 264). It is verified through Bazin’s word which is a proof-like example for Grodal’s argument. Bazin states that depth of focus provides an intense relationship between the spectator and the image and it also impacts the interpretation of the viewers (1967: 35). In doing so, you can achieve isolation of spectator with the character and character’s mimics and can get closer to create emotional action by producing mental abstraction out of cliched ways of representing prototypes. “Melodrama achieves its emotional effects by abstraction-by representation of prototypes- and by representations of passive experiences, situations which make voluntary response impossible and evoke autonomic response” (Grodal, 1997: 264). When it comes to the response to the representation on the screen, it appears to be a bodily response for Williams while watching a ‘Body Genre’ like melodramas (In film studies, body genre refers to the genre that is able to affect the body of the viewers and that provides viewers to have physical reactions. Other body genres for Williams are horror and porn). This bodily response that can be shown by ecstatic woe, sobbing or crying, arises within the emotion inside of the narrative and narration. Williams writes that this creates a sense of over involvement in sensation and emotion (Williams, 1991: 5). Other than this, usage of camera is just one of the means that decides how to represent image, which actually is more qualitative than verbal representation of emotions. Furthermore according to Grodal, camera is very successful at stimulating automatic reactions like crying (1997: 260).

However, Neale asserts in his book ‘Genre and Hollywood’ that “all elements of melodrama—its themes, technical principles, construction, and style—are subordinate to one overriding aesthetic goal: the calling forth of ‘pure,’ ‘vivid’ emotions”(Neale, 2000: 18), and in order to keep in mind also casting is one of these elements since plot, dialogues, characters have a rhythm when they are together in order to reveal the viewers’ most intense and vivid feelings (Neale, 2000: 187). Then, we need to get closer to the narrative elements of teen TV dramas which are also very familiar for its audience.

## **2.2. Heroine and Hero**

Pişkin (2008) asserts that domestic TV series of today are a composition of Yeşilçam movies and soap operas produced in the west (pp.43). (Yeşilçam refers to Turkish film industry and especially to the movies shot until 1980s, which has basic characteristics). Likewise, if youth series are regarded through a perspective which draws near to women dramas, notion of composition of Yeşilçam movies and soap operas becomes clear, since until a few years ago youth series had a different style than today, which was more related to friendship rather than romance (but which, of course, included romantic relationships as well)<sup>5</sup>. This new style for youth series (but pretty familiar for all Turkish audience) which can be regarded as a mixture of Yeşilçam movies and soap operas (but actually a mixture of also many other genres) came into life of our televisions (by means of adapting Korean TV series) for the audience in Turkey. In the first episodes of *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love), Neriman, Ömer’s uncle’s wife, finds Defne and wants to remake her image, so as to make

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<sup>5</sup> For the series mentioned see ‘Hayat Bilgisi’ (Life Science), ‘Kavak Yelleri (Daydreaming), ‘Koçum Benim’ (My Coach), ‘Lise Defteri (High School Notebook)’, ‘Yedi Numara’ (Number Seven), ‘Pis Yedili’ (Sevens) and ‘Kampüsistan’ (Campusland)

Ömer in love with her. Defne is beautiful but an ordinary girl living in a poor neighbourhood, working in a luxurious restaurant as a waitress. She wears casual clothes with sneakers and her natural hair is very unnatural looking crimped hair made by a wag iron in order to make it look curly and messy. She straightens them after she starts her job as an assistant of Ömer, where she arranges all of his daily plans, appointments and also prepares his breakfast before work in his house.

Neriman, while she was thinking about the makeover of Defne and the plot planned to trick Ömer to get married with Defne calls out with excitement “Forget all about the Yeşilçam clichés, we’re writing a new story.” However, very similar to Yeşilçam movies, Neriman begins her mission of transforming Defne a classy girl within high society but also a servant for Ömer’s needs and pleasures. This storyline is so popular in Yeşilçam that in Ekşisözlük, (Ekşisözlük is a collaborative dictionary that provides its users to open up a headline and write about any subject under a headline which can be a concept, subject, term or a word) there is an admirable number of headings and many entries about this topic such as “türk sinemasında modern kadın olma dersleri” (lessons of being a modern woman in Turkish cinema) , “filiz akın dönüşümü” (transformation of Filiz Akın), “ben dünyanın en güzel garısıyam” (this is a phrase from a film and means ‘I am the most beautiful woman in the world’, but it is said by a peasant woman who comes from countryside and that’s why pronounced with a different accent), “o açılacak sen kapatacaksın” (This phrase again from a lesson of how to be a modern lady and means ‘it will pull up, you will pull it down’ by referring the skirt). Namely, similar narrative forms to *Kiralık Aşk*’s (Rental Love’s) story were exploited in Yeşilçam frequently.

Moreover, also in other series, when the social status of hero and heroine is at stake, heroine is always from a family whose economic and cultural capital is lower than hero's, and hero is always a successful, rich and handsome businessman. However, forming of characters in this manner is widely distributed. Modleski writes for romances, "the formula rarely varies: a young, inexperienced, poor to moderately well-to-do woman encounters and becomes involved with a handsome, strong, experienced, wealthy man" (2008: 28). In a conversation with my participants, when we are talking about appearance of male characters in teen TV dramas, one of them, Ezgi changed the subject suddenly and said: "Rich men are usually with more than one girl, one girl for each night but then they fell for a poor girl."

Hero of *Kiraz Mevsimi* (Cherry Season), Ayaz, is working as executive in a business firm and is also an engineer. He achieves to be successful in his work also through impressing women working in other companies by virtue of his handsomeness and elegant look. Additionally, even though he does not display the typical behaviour of a womanizer his friends constantly refer to him as one. In order to strengthen the image of him as a womanizer the plot is supported with some scenes where a random girl on the garden of a university stops him and asks him why he never called back. Whereas Öykü, whom he is in love with, is a college girl who is innocent and childish but with enthusiasm, contrary to the girls who are with Ayaz before. She comes from a middle class family, she has friends from the neighbourhood where she lives (as in *Kiralık Aşk*), she lives with her mother who is a tailor, and little brother. She has a very simple life when it is compared to Ayaz's lifestyle. Ayaz in comparison is amply rich and driving very luxurious sport cars, also his mother is a very famous fashion designer. (Likewise in *Aşk Yeniden* (Love Again) and *Güneşin Kızları* (Daughters of Sun) families of heroes are way too richer and more educated

according to heroines' environment and family.) A similar structure is also employed ever since 18th 19th century sentimental novels as a classical formula:

“In the classic formula, the heroine, who is often of lower social status than the hero, holds out against his attacks on her “virtue” until he sees no other recourse than to marry her. Of course, by this time he wants to marry her, having become smitten with her sheer goodness” (Modleski, 2008: 7).

While Modleski, here, refers to social classes slightly, she rather mentions how a female character achieves to come into hero's heart. As for the series in account, it is not quite possible for hero to verbalize a wish like this unless they are married, and so reform of rake follows a different path. Hence, privilege of heroine does not directly derive from her refusal to have sex without marriage, but by using a more indirect narration, it derives mainly from her innocence. Besides, this innocence always has to include beauty and cuteness even when she is in a rage, because she cannot be a rebel, at the utmost she may be spoiled or capricious, and even so her anger has to turn into an amusement for the men and cheer him up. So her rebellion comes to be cute and lovely, if not effective. Heroine has to be beautiful and charming all the time (Modleski, 2008: 39). In *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love), Defne wants to quit job in an episode but she learns that her resignation will come into force after two months according to the labour contract and gets mad and disappointed, she starts to adopt a harsh attitude against Ömer. As for Ömer tries to establish superiority first by declaring that she is not doing her job well enough, and then, with his scornful gaze. Their rooms are separated just by a glass anyway, and they can see each other easily while they are working in their rooms. Ömer calls Defne on phone while watching her, commands her to get there, to his room: “Defne, come to my room!”, while he is looking at Defne through window and making a sign of ‘come here’ with his fingers. Defne grits her teeth with anger, looks at Ömer and

says “I’m coming Mr. Ömer.”. She turns off the phone, tries to soothe herself, “Stay calm, don’t be angry!”. Ömer is sitting loose on the chair, when she get into the room, ogles at her slowly but quite some time. After Defne says “Mr. Ömer, I guess, you wanted something”, he begins to call her to account for the things he thought she did not manage.

In *İnadına Aşk* (Love Out-of-spite), similar scenes where heroine is pretty angry at hero, are dalliance scenes which is put to use often. Heroine of series , Defne (As in *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love), this drama’s heroine’s name is Defne and likewise, her hair is red and skin is quite light<sup>6</sup>) is newly graduate from computer engineering in Boğaziçi University and it begins a relationship between her and Ayaz who is her boss in the company where she started to work after graduation. Because of a conflict they have, Defne locks herself to the restroom and Yalın enters ladies restroom in order to convince her but she gets mad when he says idiot to her, goes out, comes closer to Yalın and screams at him: “Idiot? You’re idiot.” Yalın watches her by smiling, walks up to her, and drives her to the wall. At the same time, Yalın keeps smiling, soundtrack plays at the background and Defne gets excited. This scene shows the sexual tension between two main characters. Yalın gets closer to Defne by leaning his arm to the wall which is at Defne’s back and says while looking into her eyes: “You make me mad, I go insane because of you.” To add more, their first acquaintance happens in the car park of the company where Defne tries to change her clothes because her older brother did not let her to wear mini skirt and make her wear like a nun. At the end of a long altercation scene between Defne and

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<sup>6</sup> Although not yet certain, I think image of girls with light skin is originated from Korean TV series. In Far East, there is a perception of beauty directly proportional with lighter skin. In Turkey, it was not that popular a few years ago on television series however today, heroines are chosen mostly from actresses who has light skin as snow. For instance, in an earlier episode of *Kiraz Mevsimi* (Cherry Season), heroine’s light skin was a mentioned subject within narrative in order to indicate her beauty.

Yalın in the carpark while she was wearing her mini skirt back, Defne, furiously, throws a sharp glance at Yalın and walks toward the building. Yalın, with a loose body language and with a smile watches after her. Indeed, the storyline which dispels the reason of anger of angry woman and produces beauty out of it, was used also in Yeşilçam. There is a catchword, only about this subject which is pretty popular also today and used in daily jokes: “You are prettier when you’re angry.”

However, still, there is a teen TV drama, *Aşk Yeniden* (Love Again) in which there is not a relationship as stated here between hero and heroine. Moreover in this drama, it is encountered a really different hero when it is compared to heroes in other series. Fatih Şekercizade<sup>7</sup> is, as usual, born into an affluent family but different from others in respect to manhood and for this reason, we do not encounter a behavior as Ömer or Yalın did with heroines. Maybe that’s why, i.e. because of the fact that Zeynep is not exposed to a similar attitude by Fatih, audience can perceive the image of heroin as hero perceives. In a photo sharing website, there is a screenshot of Zeynep, when she is in rage and it is written in caption “If we say ‘You look very pretty when you’re angry’, even Fatih would laugh at us. Zeynep don’t get angry, we are scared.”<sup>8</sup> (However, anger of heroine can still be perceived as cute and beautiful by viewers even if not by male characters in the series. It is completely related to how the narrative is created and how it is interpreted by viewers).

Nevertheless, within the story of the series, impolite behaviors of hero, mostly seen before flirting, namely in first episodes, become a kind of sign of his interest and,

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<sup>7</sup> Surnames end with the suffix of “-zade” is used as an evidence of the families’ wealth and nobility in TV series and movies in Turkey. This suffix ‘-zade’ is not used today’s Turkish but was used in Ottoman Turkish and it was a sign of that those families’ are from Ottoman palace dynasty or from one of the old well-established families of Istanbul.

<sup>8</sup> Retrieved from [http://www.imgrum.net/media/1123292571863681047\\_649104417](http://www.imgrum.net/media/1123292571863681047_649104417)



therefore, love for heroine. In addition to his scornful attitudes, he is necessarily given as a person who is ‘hard, angular and dark’, in order not to create a picture of him with weakness. Into the overall picture, viewer must be told that, “the ideal romantic hero, the terrorizing effect of his exemplary masculinity is always tempered by the presence of a small feature that introduces an important element of softness” (Radway, 1984:128). He has to be “strong but gentle, masculine but caring, protective of her and tender, a he-man but a lover-boy, too.” (Radway, 1984: 130). For this reason, roughness of male character undergoes a transformation in the advancing episodes, and he turns into a romantic, tender prince charming. Later on, former mean attitude of hero connects to performing of love in the eye of the viewer writes Modleski:

“...Knowing the hero will eventually imply or state that he has loved the heroine from the beginning, the reader can attribute the hero’s expressions of hostility and derision to his inability to admit, perhaps even to himself, how much the sight of the woman ‘sprawled at the side of the road looking like a collapsed puppet’ inflames his passion and rouses his admiration. Male brutality comes to be seen as a manifestation not of contempt, but of love.” (2008: 32)

Besides, it is another fact that, there are mediums in which rude heroes are represented as ‘bad boy’, but with a positive connotation. In an application named Wattpad, users, who are mostly teenagers, are creating their books by sending stories as series, with each one constitutes a chapter. Novels in this application (or website) has very similar forms and ‘bad boy’ image is one of those forms (Additionally, Wattpad is frequently used by fandom writers.). During my interviews, a participant, Hilal, puts out that ‘bad boy image’ is also used in TV series. Besides, she, indicates that, she, herself likes bad, tough, smart and cool boys within narratives and she harped on the fact that cool, bad guys are smarter. Furthermore, she said that she gets

more pleasure when these boys became romantic and tender.<sup>9</sup> However, in the series, former behaviors and personalities of characters, can be forgotten by viewers because of the fluidity and continuity of series. For Büşra, “Ömer is already a harsh person, he is cool-looking, but then he fell in love... Defne used to say, anyway, Ömer has two sides and one is more tender”, however for Nehir, Ömer is the only hero who is not one those men who have transformed according to previous episodes of the show. Nevertheless it is obvious Ömer also has transformed since first episodes, especially if his attitudes toward Defne is at stake. He now expresses his feelings tenderly compared to his previous cold and reticent behaviors. Except his sexism and rudeness was never presenting in a macho way. In the first episode, viewer almost only hears his words when he coins aphorisms about womanhood like “woman is not the one who is chosen, she is the one who chooses”. However, for Nehir “he is what he used to be. Besides he is not sexist, he is highly graceful and sophisticated. He is the one. But others are appearing like a churl and then they change, they always stand out with their wealth, live off their parents’ money. I mean, I haven’t seen any of them reading a book, except Ömer.”<sup>10</sup> But she still added for those heroes, “They are always rude but kind inside” then she paused, “Though my boyfriend is also like that... I mean, he looks tough but he is also so romantic. For example my friends surprise when I told them something he did for me.” In addition to that, another participant, Ela, referred to bad boy images and she confessed that she likes them, further, she added, they are good people inside and real lovers. At this point, we can turn back to the reason of heroes’ bad attitudes

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<sup>9</sup> Here, I want to express that I do not discuss novels in Wattpad and TV series together, but also that there are participants who mentions them together.

<sup>10</sup> There are some series Nehir reject to follow because of their sexist stories and characters, such as, *İnadına Aşk* (Love Out-of-spite) and *Eşkiya Dünyaya Hükümdar Olmaz* (Bandit Cannot Be Emperor to the World).

towards heroines which is in this case, only dependent to their inner romance and love. After all, “For the reader, acquainted with the formula and hence in possession of ... ‘advance retrospection,’ is always able to interpret the hero’s actions as the result of his increasingly intense love for the heroine.” (Modleski, 2008: 32). For the alteration of heroes’ bad-tempered behavior, Radway who has a distinctive study of romance readers, asserts:

“This crucial transformation in the romance clearly derives from writers' and readers' desires to believe in the possibility of such an ideal partner, the manner in which it is effected implies once again that the transfiguration is accomplished largely by a shift in the heroine's perceptual gestalt. Of course, the ideal hero does become more expressive in the course of the story, but because the early descriptions of him emphasized that this tender side was always part of his true character even though it was suppressed, the narrative structure places ultimate responsibility for its nurturance and flowering on the heroine herself. In reassuring him about the purity of her motives, it is she who frees him to respond warmly to her. This structure covertly suggests, then, that male reticence and distance cannot be transmuted into something else entirely” (1984: 216)

Nevertheless, within the narrative of series, heroine could not understand if these behaviors like mocking, being cynical and hostile, are called forth by a romantic interest or by a real hostility and dislike. Until he reveals his love, she gets confused due to hero’s behaviors and this confusion creates an image of mysterious hero. Besides, realizing his inner tenderness and romance is also what makes him mysterious.

Mystery of hero processes in various ways throughout serials. In *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love), Ömer is pretty popular with his mysterious stance and Defne, is constantly trying to find out his inner world. In an episode, Defne stops by Ömer’s house without him in order to take one of his suits for an invitation at night. While she is looking for a jacket, at the same time speaks with a friend from neighborhood on the

phone, her friend suggest her to rummage through his drawers and accuses her not to be curious but then Defne remembers there is a study room which is always locked. First, she hesitates to get in there but then opens the door and enters into Ömer's enigmatic world with a slow non diegetic music background. The room is full of memories with wooden furnitures; old sewing machine, records, old cameras, enframed photographs of his mother and him and posters of his favorite book: *Pride and Prejudice*<sup>11</sup>. Defne's friend calls back and ask what is it there, Defne answers: "In fact, there is real life of Mr. Ömer here", by looking at the poster, "Do you know the movie, *Pride and Prejudice*. Apparently, Ömer Bey likes it very much. There are posters and books of it everywhere. Ömer has two sides anyway, one is workaholic, serious, disciplined and the other is, I guess, romantic, a man who cares for feelings. Indeed, I think, no one knows real Ömer." and camera cuts to Ömer by muting his voice and putting a music background instead. This scene is Defne's first entrance to Ömer's inner world, an entrance to his enigma that no one even knows if it exists and that tells Ömer. However it is really so hard to get together and know each other in teen TV series. Even in the late episodes, mystery of Ömer continues. After a business meeting, Defne tries to understand Ömer's words he had said at the meeting, "You can know a woman by looking at her shoes.", asks Ömer what does he mean by that and Ömer answers with a question "Are you asking this to understand me, or to understand women?"

Whereas in *Güneşin Kızları* (Daughters of Sun), a completely different situation is in question, mystery is everywhere throughout the story but mostly in the father, Haluk. It is not given much information about his life, experiences and even his madness but

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<sup>11</sup> *Pride and Prejudice* is translated in Turkish as "Aşk ve Gurur" which means love and pride.

they came to light slowly. However this mystery is not presented as an element of attractiveness, it is built and edited to make it a puzzle-like enigma which has to be solved. Additionally, the fact remains that, there are still mysterious young attractive heroes in the series: Ali and Savaş. Savaş is already, a hero waiting to be discovered who is living outside the house which family lives in and spend his days and night in an outbuilding with a doomy mood, and he cannot get on well with his family, either. When it's comes to Ali, he is a child boy for his girlfriend Selin. Their relationship started with huge ups and downs, they both behave each other really mean, but then Selin saw that little fragile child inside Ali that no one ever realizes, and she also does not avoid emphasizing the child she saw inside him, frequently.

All these representations of mystery, lead us again to hero's alteration of personality which is firstly considered as transformation of his rudeness but then assumed as romantic quality and sensuality of his inner, unshown and reticent feelings. At first stage, this harsh, rich, successful man's transmutation into sensitive, romantic, tender lover for an ordinary girl is representing as one of the miracle in the story that happen to heroine.

### **2.3. Miracles**

“Unlike tragedy, melodrama is totally devoid of fatality and inevitability”, says Belton (2005: 138). Instead, “it has predictable plot elements such as improbable reveals of fortune, accidents and last minute rescues” (Belton, 2005: 134). Nevertheless, according to Cawelti, “melodrama sometimes comes close to tragedy”, in the sense, that the “point of view continually shifts in order to involve us in a complex of destinies. Through this complex of characters and plots, we see not so much the working of individual fates but the underlying moral process of the world.”

Even so, the gap between human beings' desires and the restraints of the world bricked over in melodrama (2014: 45-46), and fate (or destiny) processes as miracle. Likewise in teen TV dramas, there is no inevitable fatality and is always hope, and if is not, we have miracles, instead. Once again investigating in *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love), it can be seen that the existence of miracle is often emphasized: when Defne's older brother is kidnapped by mafia because of his debt, and she is given only twenty four hour to find 200,000 TL and rescue her brother, she asks for a miracle since there is no way to find that amount. In these hardest times Neriman İplikçi appears to rescue her by offering the needed amount of money in exchange for her to make Ömer in love with herself. Besides, Neriman says to Defne, in the beginning of her speech "You can't create your own miracles, this is all a lie. They create miracles for you. It is up to you if you will choose to live that miracle or not." In news written on web about the show, miracle is again stated: "At the very time when she didn't know what to do, a miracle pops out. Defne who couldn't resist the miracle which pops out when she realized that everything is over, accepted a six months love game."<sup>12</sup> But before anything else, two of the soundtracks of the show include the subject of miracle; one says, "When everything is over, my luck turns around suddenly, love is such a miracle", and the other song's name is 'miracle' itself, by Zeynep Alasya.

Besides that, *Kiraz Mevsimi* (Cherry Season) defines love as a 'magical touch' in your life when you were hurt, disappointed and thought you cannot be in love again. In this manner, miracles appears into heroines lives as love, and love, for sure, as a prince charming and it would count as miracle only if a prince comes into an ordinary girl's heart and saves her. Even our modest hero Fatih, from *Aşk Yeniden*

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<sup>12</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.mynet.com/magazin/detay/guncel/kiralik-ask-1-bolumu-nefesleri-kesti/58329>

(Love Again) is a savior for Zeynep by reason of the fact that she was abandoned by his boyfriend for whom she rebelled against her family and was returning to Turkey from US, helplessly, with her infant son when they meet by chance on the plane. However, these storylines are sometimes belittled by some of the teen viewers, a participant, Ceren, thinks that all the good things cannot happen to one person, for her, series that tell calamities are more realistic. For example, she mentions a show which is about life of a girl who is orphaned, and indicates that people think what is in that story is not realistic, however for her, what is actually realistic is that show's story. She says, "Such things happen in life."

Additionally, for miracle to be a genuine miracle, heroine has to pay no mind for or be unaware of hero's highborn family and wealth. In brief, she should not be a gold-digger. Series "must be careful to show that the girl never set out to get him and his goods"(Modleski, 2008: 40). In these series where, while class discrimination is so significant, interaction between these classes is so abundant and lack of communication is obscure, image of wealthiness is representing with expensive clothes, beautiful people, carefree life, make up, hairdos, splendid house, cars and, of course, with high art taste. As Lea Jacobs asserts,

"The interiors are so artistic and in such good taste that none could possibly live in them outside a film studio, and everybody's manners are polished beyond perfection. But the costuming undeniably beautiful and the photography excellent.... Rich settings, lots of clothes and all players adopting drawing room mannerism. ... Another case of a pretty weak story nicely dressed up with good looking settings, lavish display and society atmosphere." (2008: 218)

Despite all, our heroine, contrary to her friends or to villain woman who wants to get hero, is so uninterested for any of these. In an episode of *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love),

there is a scene of Neriman and Defne's phone talk and Neriman is vexed with her for her indifference for money and position, asking her, why she is so satisfied with her position she is in. In a similar manner, participants express their gratitude for what they have. Ceren, puts it on the affluence in the series, "It is as if, it has to be felt like you need to think why you're not like them while watching it. But it does not occur to me like that, I usually say 'how absurd it is'. This is my life because I know my life and this is my conditions. Our conditions are not equal with them, why do I try to equalize, or why do I do something in order to be in their places? If I were in their places, I would still have many problems. So does it make any difference? No."

Lifestyles of rich and famous people or incidents they experienced in TV series which are associated with the argument of reality by participants are going to be mentioned later, yet lastingness and lack of end of all of these events and problems within narrative will be discussed in this chapter as an aspect of teen TV dramas.

#### **2.4. Permanence and Perpetuity**

According to Ceren, *Güneşin Kızları* (Daughters of the Sun) which is broadcasted its last episode in March 2016, ended in a very silly way. She is not satisfied with the final of the TV show because of the open end. For her, there are something that Güneş (mother of Selin and Nazlı, and new wife of Haluk) should learn and many secrets that has to be revealed, "There has to be a few more episodes for those to come to light." However, *Güneşin Kızları* (Daughters of Sun) is a kind of TV show that triggers new problems and mysteries yet without solving previous ones. In other words, it will appear other problems that have to be solved after a few episodes later, since the storyline of the TV show, simply, processes only in this way. And this flow advances forever, in one episode after another. When one problem is still



obscure, another emerges (Ang, 1985: 9). Deficiency of one climax that actually is set in a conventional storyline is a treated subject via soap operas in many articles. While Ang, designates this as ‘longwindedness’ (1985: 57), Modleski uses the phrase, ‘infinitely expandable middle’ (2008: 82). As for Porter, it has a ‘process without progression’:

“...the solutions to the problems posed are of such a kind that they are themselves generative of further problems. ... Unlike all traditionally end-oriented fiction and drama, soap opera offers process without progression, not a climax and a resolution, but mini-climaxes and provisional denouements that must never be presented in such a way as to eclipse the suspense experienced for associated plot lines. Thus soap opera is the drama of *perepetia* without *anagnorisis*” (1977: 783-784).

This permanence has such a penetration within the TV show, that “it is not only that successful soap operas do not end, it is also that they cannot end.” writes Modleski (2008: 82). It only ends, if it is an unsuccessful show (Porter, 1977: 783). In this case, we can regard *Güneşin Kızları* as a successful TV drama, since, as well as that its fans started campaigns on web in order the series not to end, even if the fact that the show has ended by reason of low ratings.

## **2.5. The Word ‘love’**

The starting point which is romance and love is another important subject that attracts attention in the name of situation of the word ‘love’ within the names of the teen TV series. As I have referred some of the names before, these series are some examples for the case: *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love), *İnadına Aşk* (Love Out-of-spite),

*Aşk Yeniden* (Love Again), *Acil Aşk Aranıyor* (Emergency Love), *Başrolde Aşk* (Love is the Protagonist) etc.<sup>13</sup>

First and foremost, this word signifies that the given TV show is a love story, it is for to indicate that it supplies conventional expectations about a love story. Further, as I have mentioned before, the disposition and scope of love is relatively a new region to be discovered for a teenager and these TV series are one of a medium to be benefited from. Even though I did not hear anything about the word ‘love’ in the title of the series from my participants, as far as I have observed myself in my high school years and my friends when they are first in love, I know that the usage of the word ‘love’ in the title is pretty important for audience to decide which TV show will be given a chance. I saw that it has worked differently for different people; some choose to read love stories, poems or articles, some choose music, some choose to watch movies or TV shows that indicate the word and, sure, mostly they choose more than one medium but the intersection point was, nevertheless, ‘love’.

Brown, Steele and Walsh-Childers write with an account of Bachen and Illouz’s article about young people’s cultural models of love and romance, that media is a significant source of data with its unnecessary and customary characters. They write that the characters on screen can influence both teens and adults, however, “the intentional and ‘larger-than-life’ saliency of the characters may have a bigger impact on adolescents who are still forming their worldviews” (Brown, Steele, Walsh-Childers, 2001: 212). Then, ‘love’ will be the first stop within the pursuit of romance for teenagers who are maybe at the beginning of the creation of their

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<sup>13</sup> Within a year of this study was written, other teen TV series started broadcasting which includes the the word love in their name, such as, “Hayatımın Aşkım” (The Love of My Life), “Aşk Laftan Anlamaz” (Love Knows No Rules). “Seviyor Sevmiyor” (Loves Me, Loves Me Not).

worldviews. And I will try to learn and narrate in the following chapters, what teenage female audience acquires during this pursuit and interpretation, by looking at teen TV dramas which is also a mean for this interpretation.

**CHAPTER 3**

**CONVENTIONAL CODES WITHIN THE PATRIARCHAL**

**HEGEMONY**

After explaining the common determinants of hero, heroine and their relationship dynamics, I will look for the traces of similarities in the stories and the reason of why they are all named after 'love'. What is it that provides and maintains the determined aspects of the stories? What do viewers (female teen audience) see inside a good number of set, settled and standardized conventions and how do they interpret stereotypes? How all these stereotyped love, romance, gender or moral are leading within everyday life? In this chapter, besides the questions mentioned here, I will contemplate on how much it is possible for all these settled conventions to intervene the audience's overall point of view about the outputs which are again produced by conventions, and how do people reflect the interest they have on TV dramas.

With the questions posed above, in this chapter, I will be evaluating romance, more precisely, romantic text, perception of romance and romantic affection within text as feminine forms that grown out of patriarchy. To start with, it may feel as if I am constructing certain barriers such as 'romance texts are feminine' or "war movies are masculine" etc. but this is mainly caused by the targeted audience of the referred texts. Although this raises many question marks, it is not possible to deny that definitions of 'feminine' and 'masculine' are socially constructed which will be the main subject of this chapter. For Mary Allen Brown,

“the term ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ are used to define social constructions of woman and man as opposed to biological, essential, and/or natural, inherited properties of men and women. This is not to ignore completely biological differences between women and men, but to see the influence of biological differences and indeed sexuality itself, as constructed over time through discourse.” (1990:15)

In consequence, it gets apparent, that the differentiation is set through given roles, given habits and ways of behaviors within society, other than biologic difference. In the same way, the teen TV dramas I have addressed in my thesis, are produced over this femininity and they form its target audience in this manner. So what is it that appeals to the female audience? As it is stated before they are formed over culturally constructed skills of femininity. So personal lives and personal relationships can be understood as they are experienced through romance, families and connected rituals like births, engagements, marriages etc. (Brunsdon, 1981: 34), since it is assumed that the imagined female viewer has a cultural understanding that is relevant to these subjects.

As a matter of fact, even if the cultural understandings may differ from viewer to viewer or series to series; personal lives, rituals and most ‘culturally constructed skills’ attributed to femininity, keeps their taken for grantedness within society. The application of various activities or ordinary daily works and relationships, in texts, that are experienced throughout everyday life comes to a state of invisibility. In consequence, already accepted judgments in daily life, which are absorbed within narration, do not constitute a problem. In addition to that, also TV dramas reproduce these accepted judgments. For Barthes, this is, in a sense, inoculation, one of the principal figures of contemporary myth that takes hold of everything (1972: 150). He writes, “one immunizes the contents of the collective imagination by means of a small inoculation of acknowledged evil; one thus protects it against the risk of a

generalized subversion” (1972: 151-152). However, it has to be distinguished from ‘false consciousnesses as in Marxist terms. For hegemonic theory, mass media has power to direct the ideology of the culture. Its role in the society is to strengthen the common notions and beliefs which maintain the security of the powerful groups (Press, 1990: 158). In this one way relationship with one powerful side, it is assumed that as Eyerman writes “false consciousness affects everyone's perception and construction of reality in capitalist society” (1981: 49-50). However, here, I mention how already existed conventions became invisible inside series. As Brown puts it, “the work of ideology, however, is rendered invisible because it is so over determined or comes from so many different sources that it seems like common sense. It seems ‘natural’ ” (1990: 18). In that vein, Radway writes,

“Reading the romantic novel is an event that is dominated by the typical reader's unconscious but nonetheless active recall of learned cultural conventions, but because the reader herself does not recognize those conventions, she continues to view that event as a simple matter of receiving that which is already fully there in the text” (1984: p.197).

Likewise, those conventions Radway refers for romances, obtain their existence also by means of teen TV dramas. In any case, the language television speaks, is rather like the language we speak. As an example, Fiske and Hartley thinks for the language on TV that it is taken for granted for its viewers. Its complexity and vitality is shaped in a way human beings shape their own world (Fiske and Hartley, 1978: 16). Besides, all these familiar conventions located in narrational factors in series causes an ‘aimless glance’ in Umberto Eco’s terms (1979). In brief, all the conventions, are very well situated, that viewers do not even notice them, let alone be disturbed by them.

However, one cannot deny that there are also some scenes or shows that draw the attention of its viewers. I usually hear audience's complaints about sexism against women in series, and if they realize humiliation, they respond by not watching them and sometimes asking family members to change the channel. However they generally complain about different shows, while one show is accused of being sexist by a viewer, by another viewer it would be acceptable, or at least it would count as an unproblematic show. Differences in their social environments make differences on what to see and how to decode. One of the participants, Nehir, started our conversation by indicating that she refuses to watch some of the series because of their sexist manners. *İnadına Aşk* (Love Out-of-spite) is one of them, she says. In the first episode (which she didn't watch but read about), both Defne and Yeşim wear miniskirts and both are reprehended by their older brothers because of that skirt, and Yeşim's older brother implies that his one night stand relationships are one night because of girls' miniskirts. Ekin, after reminding me that scene, states that it is not comprehensible for the woman actresses to play in that roles for her. Besides she also refuses to watch 'Eşkiya Dünyaya Hükümdar Olmaz' (Bandit Cannot Be Emperor to the World) because of the polygynous hero of the drama. I ask if there are any other sexist TV series, and she answers, "Sure there must be, but we are so accustomed to it that we don't even notice but these are the most distinguished ones." Nehir's observations on her own life and spectatorship corroborate with what Radway or Brown assert, at first hand. It comes from the aimless glance in consideration to familiarity that makes these fictitious narratives contribute to a socio-cultural background that standardizes the images of women and men as unequal. However, as it is mentioned in the previous chapter, she finds only Ömer's arguments and behaviors among other characters in series, not sexist, even though he actually is but

in a way of a ‘gentleman’ does with a benevolent sexism as called in psychology. Still, I can say that Ömer is desirable for and appreciated by every participant I have met without exception (and also by some of my friends who are tracking the show). Benevolent sexism (as opposed to hostile sexism), is shown in the TV series just as an ‘old fashioned gentleman’ has. It comprises positive (sexist) manners toward women that offer them to sustain their ‘accepted’ roles within the culture that presents possessive paternalism and idealization of women and also men (Glick, Fiske, 1996: 119). For Glick and Fiske,

“Hostile sexism seeks to justify male power, traditional gender roles, and men’s exploitation of women as sexual objects through derogatory characterizations of women. Benevolent sexism, in contrast, relies on kinder and gentler justifications of male dominance and prescribed gender roles; it recognizes men’s dependence on women (i.e., women’s dyadic power) and embraces a romanticized view of sexual relationships with women.” (Glick and Fiske, 1996: 121)

Among teenage viewers I have interviewed and met, I have observed that, a kind of sexism that is called ‘benevolent’ in psychological studies, tend to be accepted and even desired by viewers. So what do viewers expect from a boy in their romantic relationships? How do teenage female viewers define ‘manhood’ (or ‘womanhood’)?<sup>14</sup>

### **3.1. Gender Representations**

Büşra, has shared a sentence just a day before I wrote these words, on her Snapchat story and it says: “Perfect boys only exist in books”. As it is stated in the previous chapter, hero only comes into woman’s life as a prince charming and as miracle and, of course, this only possible in the world of fiction narratives. Modleski writes that

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<sup>14</sup> Despite that I am asking a generalized question, my answers will not be generalized. During my interviews, I saw that each participant has different notions and tastes on different subjects.



there is “a corresponding tendency in women to divide men into two classes: the omnipotent, domineering, aloof male and the gentle, but passive and fairly ineffectual male” (2008: 71). Nevertheless, in TV dramas, only by means of heroes, it gets possible for male characters to be also gentle besides their dominant and omnipotent personalities. In addition to all these, when I ask their ideal lover<sup>15</sup>, ‘protective’ and ‘polite’ was one of the frequent answers I have encountered. That is to say, these wishes are pretty simple so that we do not need to look for its traces in fairy tales, books or TV dramas. When Büşra complained about the slushy loves in TV series and states that she is sided with real love, I asked her what is real love for her. Sure it was a hard question. After a while thinking, she answered by explaining her ideal man as a lover: “I would like him to be a little gentleman, and appropriate to me. Then, I want him to have a sense of humour and be sympathetic.” Likewise, when I ask Duygu about her ideal love affair, she tells her ideal man in a relationship, “I think it feels right that he has to be a little protective. I mean, when I say protective I don’t mean macho, but he has to cherish human beings.” As for Nehir, while we’re talking about Fatih in *Aşk Yeniden* (Love Again), she started to talk about how much she likes Buğra Gürsoy, the actor who plays Fatih character in the show. For her he is nothing less than perfect. She “would even marry him, he is just a family man<sup>16</sup>, he is also self-sacrificing and not rude at all” and she added by referring TV shows like *İnadına Aşk* (Love Out-of-spite) which she refused to watch, that “he wouldn’t take part in a role in a show like that.” After speaking of her boyfriend for a while, she turned back to Buğra Gürsoy and confessed that if she had

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<sup>15</sup> During my study, even though I have tried to abstain from the notion that manhood, womanhood or sexuality has originality as the way that heterosexuality wants us to believe, I succumbed to approach like that, especially while interviewing. My questions directed to all the participants as if all their sexual orientations are to males or as if they have to have sexual drives, are self-evident signs.

<sup>16</sup> She used the word “aile babası” which means with a direct translation, father of the family.

a boyfriend like him, she would be quite delighted, “I would like him to be like Buğra Gürsoy from *Aşk Yeniden* (Love Again). I aspire for men who have a broad perspective, who are open minded.” and she added the reason why she finds that character as open minded, “He accepted heroine’s baby that is not biologically his, as his own child and he made sacrifices for both the baby and heroine.

However, when those possessive attitudes are portrayed around violence, not around romance, over TV dramas, it could be found irritating. Relevant to this issue, Ekin says she does not like the TV show *Adı Mutluluk* (Its Name is Happiness) at all, described it as disgrace and started to tell the scene she is disturbed. “That show is such disrespect to women. I don’t forget that scene, I hated it. A group of men enters, makes a girl on the seaside stand and throw her each one another like in the *Yeşilçam* while asking her ‘Do you have an owner?’, and girl says ‘Yes I have’ while showing an another boy in the shore. What does ‘I have an owner’ means anyway, look at the situation! I asked myself what kind of a scene is it. But girls like to be oppressed. They are doing it this way. What does it mean?! Don’t you have a personality? Turkish girls like this.” Even though the scene really was an extreme example and even though Ekin indicated her feelings against the show with, maybe, extreme reactions, it is also possible for couples to tolerate possessive attitudes within daily relationships. While Ceren’s break-up speech with her boyfriend (additionally, the one who wants to break up is her boyfriend, not herself), when it comes to the subject of finding another lover, she says “No, sure I will find someone else” and her ex-boyfriend answers “I’d kill you”. This response, for Ceren, is just an innocent flirt as I have understood on her smile while she’s telling that.

About the subject of possessiveness, another important factor is their families. Ceren, talking about a TV competition show wherein couples compete, states on the show's presenter's (his name is İlker) pert behaviours towards competitors. Actually she did not explain the problem explicitly but immediately afterwards she added, "how can a man be able to resign himself to hear those? If it were my father, he would destroy İlker. Okey, I'm not making discrimination between man and girl but at some point, the man should know his manhood. Ezgi who is with us during our conversation, approved her "Precisely, I agree." About the fact if they want a man like this or not Ceren says, "I wouldn't want him to be that macho. I'm a liberal person. I don't relish people who restrains and bother me." and Ezgi adds again, "Just like me". What Ceren says, may look pretty contradictory, ironic and funny, however, she is really sincere about all. Even if she makes statements about how manhood supposed to be related to toughness all the time, she is a person who does not let other people to limit herself. She is her family's little girl and she does not have a brother which could be really an important factor in a traditional family in Turkey. Whereas Ezgi has a younger brother who is in his first year in high school and is pretty independent. She states that he does not come home after school until late hours, while she has to be at home just right after school and she hardly gets permission from her mother to go out. But she finds it typical and says, "You can't restrain boys".

When it comes to older brothers, I heard from Ela that she has friends who have difficulties in their relationships because of their older brothers. When one of her friends has a boyfriend, her brothers learn it in some way and beat them up so hard. She also stated that they do not know how her brothers learn it. Likely in serials, for example, in *İnadına Aşk* (Love Out-of-spite), which is tracking also by Ela, there is a

similar situation. In first episodes, big brothers of girls are seen as authoritarian figures, they do not let them wear miniskirts or they do not let them have a relationship. In response to this, girls set themselves against that patriarch rigidly. Also in *Aşk Yeniden* (Love Again) we watch families and parents as authoritarian patriarchal figures, even if the hero is not that authoritarian. However when the restraint with lack of tenderness and romance is that obvious, “nearly all of the heroines in these female-sponsored fantasies, in fact, explicitly refuse to be silenced by the male desire to control women through the eradication of their individual voices” (Radway, 1984: 124). Likewise, the annoyance to the dependency which is kept by loved ones (but not by older brothers) is as I have written, tolerated only by tenderness and conventionalized romance idea. According to Greer, these codes are created by women in return for accepting the established bondage,

“This is the hero that women have chosen for themselves. The traits invented for him have been invented by women cherishing the chains of their bondage. It is a male commonplace that women love rotters but in fact women are hypnotized by the successful man who appears to master his fate; they long to give their responsibility for themselves into the keeping of one who can administer it in their best interests. Such creatures do not exist, but very young women in the astigmatism of sexual fantasy are apt to recognize them where they do not exist. Opening car doors, manoeuvring headwaiters, choosing gifts, and earning money, are often valued as romantic attainments: in search of romance many women would gladly sacrifice their own moral judgement of their champion.” (1971: 202)

However for Modleski, Greer should not be that certain, she writes, “...this places too much blame on women, and assumes a freedom of choice which is not often in evidence—not in their lives and therefore certainly not in their popular arts” (2008: 30). Whereas Illouz accounts this kind of a dependency as an aestheticized form of the male power over woman:

“why do romantic practices strongly coded by gender - such as ‘opening door to a lady’, kneeling to declare one’s love, sending large bouquets of flowers-

‘feel’ more erotic than asking permission to touch a woman’s breasts? This is because strongly coded gender practices achieve several things at once: they aestheticise the power man have over woman; they subsume domination under sentiment and deference - that is, they make power veiled and implicit; they enable the ritualization of relationships between the sexes - that is, they are organized in clear patterns of meaning; and they enable play with meanings, since deference (opening the door) can be erotically alluring only if it is a mock deference- that is,, played by the powerful party (the deference of a slave is not erotically enticing, while that of a powerful man is.)

Even if I have addressed to the stereotypical romantic rituals (especially that creates an idealized manhood) till now, representations established over womanhood are far better remarkable.

Viewers usually tend to point out the beauty of women characters, and if the women characters’ habits and personalities or appearance are not in line to their self-presentation, they do not refer to them<sup>17</sup>. Besides, it is been stated frequently that they are watched because of the pretty hero and heroine. When I ask Duygu “Why are people watching these TV series, she exemplifies from *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love): “For example in *Kiralık Aşk*, there is a handsome boy and a beautiful girl. That’s why people watch it, youth likes that kind of things. And Hande who is with us during our conversation agrees with Duygu and adds, “or maybe because they’re hollow.” Likely, Nehir connects TV series high ratings to good looks of the protagonists, both of male and female, referring to *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love). She adds *Güneşin Kızları* (Daughters of the Sun) as an example of pretty boys and girls, and she also gave Emre Kınay credit for his acting in the show as father. As for *Kiraz Mevsimi* (Cherry Season), she finds acting very artificial even if the main characters are pretty and handsome. On the other hand, she may be the only participant who criticizes the representation of villain women in TV series. She has a complaint

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<sup>17</sup> I am going to argue this subject in the next chapter.

about the portrayal of successful woman as malicious character in series. She says, “In TV series, men always love innocent ones. Girls are always so innocent and naive, they haven’t experienced anything and men are impressed by their innocence. This is the new trend. They always represent self-sustained and independent women as huzzy and malicious. I don’t get that, too. But we are watching it, because there is no other alternative.”

This observation leads us to look at the representations of women. Van Zoonen writes that women are viewed as wife, mother, daughter or girlfriend who works as secretary, nurse or receptionist. She also writes that "moreover they are usually young and beautiful, but not very well educated." (1991, p.33-34). Besides she sees the stereotype of 'superwoman' , who is self-sufficient, a decisive professional woman, an outstanding wife and mother, who has succeeded in keeping her body in perfect shape as the reflection of commercial culture to the dictated by liberal feminism. Even though this image causes women to feel pain from critical burn-out syndromes (Van Zoonen, 1991:36), in Turkey successful women are not always 'super' in TV series. As participant indicated, they are malicious and not able to get the man they want (the hero is always snatched from the innocent heroine), so they are alone and not a mother, too. In the first episodes of *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love), this villain woman was Yasemin. She had her eyes on the hero, Ömer and she was playing dirty, she was scamming people in the company, but also was good at her job and career.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> However, after a relationship with a man who is also Defne’s friend from neighbourhood, she changed and became a good person.

As I have stated before by quoting Modleski that it is applied for male characters as well, the distinction revealed for women characters, comes from the male tendency to segregate women into two opposite and incompatible sides: first one is the ‘spiritualized’ mother and the other is the whore” (Modleski, 2008: 71). By means of this distinction which is criticized by feminist, and handled maybe a lot more by psychoanalytic literature<sup>19</sup> and is also pretty popular in film studies, it becomes clear that where are the personality traits attributed to female characters in TV series from. Thanks to heroine’s innocent characteristic features, hero falls in love with her. (As it is stated before, in the same way, hero’s features make heroine to falls in love with him.) For the subject, Douglas, who qualifies soap operas as soft porn for woman, writes that heroines in the soap operas are wholly ‘old-fashioned’, they usually cook very well, they are eager to learn masculine sports and interest but are all so stranger to it and they long for a traditional home with children around. When their (heroines’ i.e. women’s) dependency and purity meet with all these characteristics, and supported by problems and small conversations with hero, they deserve to be loved and a proposal of marriage (Douglas, 1980: 27). Even though the idea that the use of innocent, naive and inexperienced heroine is really so well-suited for the teen female audience as a target group, Douglas presents another point of view: the women are

“enjoying the titillation of seeing themselves, not necessarily as they are, but as some men would like to see them: illogical, innocent, magnetized by male sexuality and brutality. It is a frightening measure of the still patriarchal quality of our culture that many women of all ages co-sponsor male fantasies about themselves” (1980: 28).

And if we are to remind of the point where we started with familiarity and cultural codes (and their prevalence), Radway’s response to Douglas’s argument would be

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<sup>19</sup> See madonna whore complex.

more meaningful: “There is good reason to believe that male brutality is a concern in recent romances, not because women are magnetized or drawn to it, but because they find it increasingly prevalent and horribly frightening” (1984: 71).

After all these, the wish or rather need of discovering the tenderness inside bad boys by some of the viewers I have interviewed, comes from the emotions of to be able to find a place within patriarch’s rigid, hard, rough and even with Radway’s phrase brutal and therefore frightening world. In addition to searching for a place in this foreign world, the viewer hopes to be loved and valued by their lovers. So, this makes protection of conservativity to proceed in society and therefore in just one part of its elements; in fictional media. Radway who examines the subject through romances, writes about the obvious power of the romance's conservative counter-messages:

“It is tempting to suggest that romantic fiction must be an active agent in the maintenance of the ideological status quo because it ultimately reconciles women to patriarchal society and reintegrates them with its institutions. It appears that it might do so by deflecting and recontaining real protest and by supplying vicariously certain needs that, if presented as demands in the real world, might otherwise lead to the reordering of heterosexual relationships. If true, romances would do all of this within the already fenced-off realm of leisure and the imaginary and thereby protect the more important arenas of the culture from women's collective elaboration of their dissatisfaction with patriarchy's effects on their lives.” (1984: 217)

A cul-de-sac like this, in fact comes from the stereotypical way of gender, romance and love. In that vein, it moves along towards the same road and again maintains the protection of standardization. Because desires that came into being within the dominant culture that is constituted by the ‘system’ as in the Butlerian sense, direct also fantasies of woman. For instance, not only man but also woman prefers to see the heroine whom she identified with her own sex to be someone a masculine and strong man lusts, needs and loves but also desires this man to be able to demonstrate



kindness, gentleness and be concerned for her pleasure. (Radway, 1984: 81). The state of being passive of women<sup>20</sup>; to be loved, to be desired etc., is induced by patriarchy, however, because of the fact that the patriarchy in Turkey almost goes hand in hand with Islam, I think I can refer to the idea of women in romantic relationships in religion at some point.

Illouz asserts that “love is a complex emotion interweaving stories, images, metaphors, material goods, and folk theories and that people make sense of their romantic experiences by drawing on collective symbols and meanings” (Illouz, 1997: 6). Therefore, it would not be irrational to have a look at Adam and Hawwa in the creation stories to start with, especially if the story fits well for the subject. Perception or representation of passive, loved woman is ingrained also in other versions of the story in other cultures. For the story that is narrated almost the same way both in Islam and in Christianity, Greer writes, “when Adam saw Eve in the Garden of Eden he loved her because she was of himself, bone of his bone, and more like him than any of the other animals created for his delectation. His movement of desire towards her was an act of love for his own kind.” (1971: 159). Likely, when we look at the book, ‘Aşkın Diyalektiği’ written by Rasim Özdenören, who is an author known with his islamist identity, there is a similar narrative about that the women is the loved one in the love affairs.

“As things narrated, Adam, wanted to establish intimacy, by finding someone one of his kind. While thinking about it, he fell asleep. When he woke up, he saw Hawwa at his side. According what they allege, he recognized her immediately and said smiling: “You’re Hawwa!” According to another narration, when he saw Hawwa, he asked “Who are you? Why did you come here?”, and Hawwa answered: “I am created as a wife to you. Allah send me

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<sup>20</sup> As an example from Ottoman literature, besides lover, ‘aşık’, who reads poems for his beloved one and who has to overcome difficulties in order to reach her, there is also beloved called ‘maşuk’ who is passive and possessed. Veysel writes for the relationship between ‘aşık’ and ‘maşuk’, it is the mystification of the relationship of owage and possessing (2010: 57).

to be your friend and partner.” Adam asked to God: “What is this kind that I loved and attached to?” Allah uttered: “You are my serf. I have created you by earth. I named you Adam. She is also my serf. I named her Hawwa.” Adam said: “My heart inclined to her, she is like a part of my heart.” (2003: 103)<sup>21</sup>

Here, it is explicitly seen that the hegemonic structure of both love and gender relations can also be found in the oldest narratives known. However I will not evaluate these structures separated from other existing types of cultural codes, so as to preserve the integrity of this thesis. Because the main point is that, not only hegemonic limitations but all kinds of structural conventions cause limitations and create boundaries on what is good or not, or what is love or not. From now on, the idea of love and romance will be expressed over conventional forms within narratives and its female teenage audience.

### **3.2. Idea of Love and Romance**

Even if the fact that, to define love is quite hard for anyone, it is equally easy, or may be so much easier to find definitions on love everywhere. However, when one scans definitions about love, s/he would see that the most of the definitions are installed over romantic experiences, love practices. As I have stated before, when I ask participants of my study to define ideal love affair<sup>22</sup>, they could not give a direct answer and started to explain love through their ideal lover ideas. Except one participant, Hande, explained her idea of love at length. For her “love is to love without rejoining”. “Like ‘Layla and Majnun’, if they’d come together, it wouldn’t be love. I believe so. I think love on TV is all a lie. I mean, when they couldn’t

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<sup>21</sup> In Islamic faith, likely to what Greer told, Hawwa is born from Adam’s rib of his left side, however Özdenören prefers to skip this part.

<sup>22</sup> I did not directly asked the definition of love, since it would be so hard to describe it for participants and to take an available answer for me, instead I preferred to ask ideal love affairs.

reunite, and when they overcome the difficulties... It is good for me. I like those parts very much.” Then she tried exemplifying with a TV serial that she forgot the name. “In that show, previously lovers couldn’t come together, but after rejoining... I don’t know... The more you have difficulties, the more it gets tough and advanced, according to me.” When I asked her about after rejoining, she told me about her life as a person who attaches so much importance to not to be able to come together: “Well, they say, love lasts three years. I mean, I exemplify it from the things I have experienced, not from other things. I loved someone very very very much but, we couldn’t reunite. What I felt for him is still there in my heart. In TV series, it should be like this, they shouldn’t come together.” When I asked if he knows her love for him she said: “He doesn’t. I don’t want to touch him. How can I say? A flower blooms and you don’t touch it to let it grow, to let it beautify environment. Why do you take it for yourself? If you take it, after a while it dies. Indeed.” This highly romanticized description of love, is actually there in the TV series and also in viewers’ mind, but in a more naive way. In addition, Hilal said that she does not like to watch when Defne and Ömer (from *Kiralık Aşk*) rejoin. (However she only accept this separation if it happens in fictional world, she does not want anyone in her school to break up. “Because, it’s real life.”) As Hilal expects, and as viewers of the show acknowledge, hero and heroine cannot rejoin in *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love) for a long time, because a different problem shows up every time. Other than that, even though they often complain about that couples are constantly breaking up and coming together again, they also state that if it would not be like this, it would be boring and people do not watch.

The word ‘vuslat’ means to reunite with one’s beloved and this is in fact a discussed subject in the culture where we live in, for centuries. More precisely, love comes into

being by means of the impossibility of ‘*vuslat*’. Popular narratives and folktales like ‘Layla and Majnun’, ‘Kerem and Aslı’ or ‘Ferhat and Şirin’ that tells the stories of lovers who could not rejoin are apparent instances. As for the series, more weakened ways of not to be able to rejoin with the loved one, re-exhibit the codes that comes from centuries before, at the same time they present a secure story around the codes that audience is accustomed to. Again, when examining the same book by Rasim Özdenören, we would see again how not being able to come together is romanticized culturally, historically and also within islam.

“Love is born from passion of ‘*vuslat*’ and the impossible conditions of ‘*vuslat*’. This is love’s aura of birth: passion of ‘*vuslat*’ and at the same time, experience of despair arose from the impossibility of it... Thus, in almost every certain love stories, there is presented factors that prevents the ‘*vuslat*’ between lover and the loved one .... In case of actualization of ‘*vuslat*’, human has an instinction about that the love will disappear” (2003:41).

Özdenören who exemplifies the stories like Layla and Majnun or Romeo and Juliet for the sentences above, writes at the same time that Adam and Hawwa looked for each other for two hundred years after they fell from heaven. After those years they barely rejoined. Even though they were friends in heaven, they fell in love because of the fire of ‘*vuslat*’ in earth. (2003: 104). So, how does love appear after rejoining?

During my meetings with participants, I realized that love is mostly defined over personal experiences or practices. As it is mentioned before, manners of boyfriends are one of that experiences. Apart from that, there are various practices that can strengthen the romantic moments between couples. During the meetings, when we talk about these practices, Büşra reminded me of a particular scene in *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love) where Defne and Ömer escape from the busy business life to a kind of chalet in the forest in order to spend some time together. She said that in that scene it

was very nice to watch Ömer to teach French to Defne. (However, actually, Ömer was not teaching French, he was teaching Italian. This is just a tiny misremembering or lack of education, but because of the fact that French is accepted as the language of romance universally, it is a pretty suitable misremembering.) Besides, she mentioned the scene where Fatih proposed to Zeynep in the airplane in *Aşk Yeniden* (Love Again).

Besides, Nehir, indicated that when couples in series go somewhere like a forest, she suggests to her boyfriend to go there. As to Ceren, she says about the love in series: “Right, there is love in series but which one of us lived that love? They show it in an aspect that, for example, you suppose you live your love as in series... We don’t live it that much. A guy comes at night to surprise girl. My boyfriend can’t take me from my home at night. He does not even know my address. If he comes to near my house, my father would beat him. I mean, he kill him.” Hande adds, who is with us during the conversation: “Like in *Kiraz Mevsimi* (Cherry Season). Man takes her to her house, take her from her house. I don’t understand what kind of a lifestyle it is.” Again Hande, complains about the places where couples first meet and love each other. “It is always the same thing. There is a party in any case, they fall in love there. Always a party.” Likely to these, places and behaviors of hero are frequent given examples for the existence of romance. In fact, Illouz writes that “romantic love is notionally presented as irrational rather than rational, gratuitous rather than profit-oriented, organic rather than utilitarian, private rather than public. In short, romantic love seems to evade the conventional categories within which capitalism has been conceived” (Illouz, 1997: 2). However for Illouz theme of romance is used for the promotion of a diverse range of products, a process she called the ‘romanticization of commodities’. Both the advertised product and the experiences

couple has together which are usually contained in the consumption of leisure time are impregnations of ‘the aura of romance’ (1997: 37). As for Greer, what Illouz refers are the total definition of “commerce of romanticism” and she explains this thought through romances:

“The hero of romance knows how to treat women. Flowers, little gifts, love-letters, maybe poems to her eyes and hair, candlelit meals on moonlit terraces and muted strings. Nothing hasty, physical. Some heavy breathing. Searing lips pressed against the thin stuff of her bodice. Endearments muttered into her luxuriant hair. ‘Little things mean a lot.’ Her favourite chocolates, his pet names for her, remembering her birthday, anniversaries, silly games. And then the foolish things that remind him of her, her perfume, her scarf, her frilly underthings and absurd lace hankies, kittens in her lap. Mystery, magic, champagne, ceremony, tenderness, excitement, adoration, reverence—women never have enough of it. Most men know nothing about this female fantasy world because they are not exposed to this kind of literature and the commerce of romanticism.” (1971: 194)

Here, Greer refers to the emotional world of women and female fantasy world in some extent. Even, this topic will be scrutinized in the next chapter, it is not very easy to separate romance from emotionality. Yet, it would seem that the thing that provide the arousal of emotion of romance and also the arousal of love occurs via practices (besides fantasies which is sure also be defined as practice later), and these practices are constituted by already established forms. Then, existing love idea creates a form of love which has its shaped rules and regulations like an institute (which is, sure, heterosexual).

### **3.3. Morality**

Discourses of morality in TV series are usually shaped around the definitions of womanhood and manhood through making the discrimination towards women visible. The boundaries of gender in the series are related to family, especially for the participants I have met. So the emphasis of sacred family construction in the TV

series creates an idealized family which has its rules about the status of woman and man.

Even though, in teen TV series, characters are faithful to their families and overall stories are reliant to the moral order, some of the participants are disturbed by the things that are not “appropriate” for the society’s moral values. In *Güneşin Kızları* (Daughters of Sun), one of the heroines, Selin, and one of the heroes, Ali fell in love with each other. Ali is Selin’s stepbrother and they live in the same house. Even if the fact that, they are not blood relatives and I have never noticed a tiny problem when I watch the show, I have heard about the matter from three different people. In one of my early meetings, Nehir, referred to the point, when she expresses that she wants to see passion between hero and heroine, and she saw the passion she wants a little between Ömer and Defne and between Selin and Ali, however she adds: “For example they are step siblings but still I think it is beautiful.” As a matter of fact, while we were at our meeting I did not notice that and also when I transcribed the record, I did not notice, too. However, during a meeting with Ceren and her friend, Pınar, the subject was explicitly mentioned by Pınar and after that, I turned back to the first conversation. However in the show, even Ali is firstly introduced as the son of Haluk (Güneş’s new husband), viewer (and also the characters in the show) learnt after all, that he is someone else’s son as biologically. By referring the topic, Pınar said: “So the obstacle between lovers is destroyed.” Additionally, from one of my daily conversations in the school bus, a woman in her forties who works at the school, told me about the show and said about the subject even if I did not ask: “I mean, sure, they are young, living in the same house but still it is not approved.” In short, even if they are not born from the same father or the same mother and do not have a blood relation, simply just because one’s mother is married to other’s father,

viewer had difficulty to approve their relationship. For this reason, producers of the series, are in need of finding a motivation for lover's secret affair.

Other than this, since producers of the shows are mostly producing the series with a secular point of view, most of the viewers are having contradictions between the world of the series and the world they live in. The discourse about love which is given in these series are mimicking the norms of the western societies, on the contrary, most of the families of the audience are traditional. Therefore, the TV series, also, go between the western-style modernity and the traditionality. In addition to traditional families, the state is also an important effect by reason of the censorship. Thus the show that creates imagery, is itself established through this tension of the society. Abu-Lughod claims that tv dramas in Egypt convey a modernity imagery. For the purpose of advancing this modernist project they give moral messages inflected by the hegemonic ideologies (2002: 116). The TV series in Turkey has a similar function respecting to those moral messages. However, the traditionality of the audience and the secularism of the producers of the shows are conflicted. Thus, as the conflict merges with the concern for rating system and for the possible censorship, a complicated and inconsistent moral discourse appears in the TV series.

Since having a boyfriend is not conceivable for their families and dating freely or even meeting with friends freely is not possible, they are disturbed for the reason that they could not fit the easiness of the life of girls in series to their life. When I ask if there is something in these shows that are not appropriate for the society we live in, Ceren moans about the easygoing life of the girls with respect to how they easily go out at night in the teen TV dramas and says: "My mother does not let me, her mother



did not neither. My mother says ‘Don’t go out’. In my opinion, a girl must be educated in this manner. Right, she should also go out but a girl doesn’t walk around till four or five in the morning.” and after these words a highly charged but one-sided discussion begins. Hande exemplifies *Güneşin Kızları* (Daughters of Sun): “Girls in that series can go anywhere they want. To create the perception that we wish we were like that...” and Ezgi adds: “You know, they go out at night... When they go out at night, they do everything improper. For example, it plants in us that you can do whatever you want when you go out. It is not right for me.” Ceren: “They take her out and take her”, Ezgi: “I mean, instead of that, they can plant in us other things.” Ceren: “ Sure, people can have fun. You can go drinking with your friends when you go out at night and no one tells you not to drink or not to do something but there is a way of doing the things you do. You need to know where to stop. They are pretending to be Muslim, look what kind of a show he made.” Hande: “I definitely agree.” The discussion continues this way and finally the conversation ends with a reacting comment by Ceren about the lies in the story of a TV show: “What you need to do to save yourself: Just tell lies. Let the kids be ruder, loosely tied to home. Let the new generation grow up bad. And let Turkey stink in the end. It’s that easy.”

Participants’ comments on moral in the series are mostly told through the frame of family life and the perception of womanhood. This actually occurs in consequence of the TV series’ construction of viewers’ identifications over family and domesticity. That’s why, if the things in series do not fit their and their family’s perspective of womanhood, they think what is on screen is problematic. Duygu verbalizes that plainly: “They represent that as if people in our ages have a boyfriend, families would think it is very normal. But it is not like that.”

When I ask Hande if there is something she did not like to see in those teen TV series, she said that she is uncomfortable with the exaggeration of kissing scenes, as in *İnadına Aşk* (Love Out-of-spite). Having said that, because of the scene Hande mentioned, TV channel that broadcasts the show is fined with 130,000 Turkish Liras by RTÜK (Radio and Television Supreme Council) on account of the fact that the scene is immoral, has sexual content and not innocent.<sup>23</sup> Besides, every child in Turkey is witnessed that their parents to change the channel, when a kissing scene appears on TV. That's why to watch kissing scenes with parents bother teenager female audience. During a gathering, participants told me how they feel nervous when they coincided a scene like this, when they are with their parents and especially when a guest is in their home. Despite, Ceren feel the same, she added: "Kissing is now banal. Everyone is kissing. Everyone is promiscuous in the television." Additionally Nehir, informed me about a kissing scene on *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love) which is not ran on TV with the fear of being fined by the Radio and Television Supreme Council. But she added that she watched the deleted scene on web.

Consequently, the conventional codes of gender, love or moral, are already accepted and institutionalized. While audience encodes what they watch over those codes, what they watch also produced similarly, via those idealized conventions. However, patriarchy that has a contribution for constitution of all these, adopts a scornful attitude to these TV series (which contains its own creations and products) and to the viewers' of the series.

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<sup>23</sup>Retrieved from <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/diziye-masum-ceza-gundem-2140910/> 01.11.2015

### **3.4. Scornful Attitudes Against Discourse of Femininity**

Virginia Woolf, in her book “A Room of One’s Own” which is rather popular, writes,

“Since a novel has this correspondence to real life, its values are to some extent those of real life . But it is obvious that the values of women differ very often from the values which have been made by the other sex ; naturally , this is so. Yet it is the masculine values that prevail . Speaking crudely, football and sport are ‘important’; the worship of fashion, the, buying of clothes ‘trivial’. And these values are inevitably transferred from life to fiction” (2004: 85-86).

In this sense, when the series referred is at stake, these products named as women’s films are scorned by the dominant discourse in the same way. The perception is set over a notion like the narrative must be more masculine and has to address to male gaze in order to be more realistic and rational, and it is very clear that dominant discourse’s scornful attitude over feminine forms is embraced by the audience of the series.

When I first met with Ceren, she said that she find watching TV drama as an activity that is done by idle people. She frequently stated that it is all nonsense and silly, even though she is following them. Additionally sister of a friend of mine, who watches the referred series, abstained from meeting with me, by the reason of that she is afraid of being ridiculed by me as her brother told me. Even though they get pleasure of watching it, they at the same time afraid of being scorned.

Since teen TV series, in account, are counted as one of a women’s genre, which also carry melodramatic features, Gledhill’s argument would be useful. She asserts that melodrama is described as a woman’s genre. However this arguable description has been causing to delegitimize melodramas by realism. In that, emotional sensibility in and created by the melodrama produces discrepancies for the ideology of masculinity

by means of the dominance of emotion that is attributed to women (1987: 33-34).

Besides, during some parts of the book,

“she has also sought to argue that the status of the woman’s film was a low one, and that this can be related both to the lowly status of melodrama as a form, and to the lowly status of women, female discourse, and female concerns. And she has sought to argue too that melodrama and the woman’s film were marked by an absence of ‘realism’—a term, a category, and an (historically varying) set of aesthetic modes and practices valued much more highly by ‘elite’—and usually male—critics and theorists” (Neale, 2000: 173).

In order to see the existence of that hegemonic notion decades ago, the article on *Variety* about the movie ‘The Big House’ directed by George W. Hill, would serve the purpose. In an issue of *Variety*, printed in 1930, an article describes this film as ‘virile realist melodrama’. This definition emphasizes explicitly that it has to be virile to be able to be realist. I heard all the time from participants that they find those teen TV series quite silly. When I ask the ones that are not silly, they usually mention the ones they watch with the whole family. Pinar speaks of one of a family TV series, ‘Kocamın Ailesi’ (My Husband’s Family), which is adapted from a Korean TV show named ‘My Husband Got a Family’. She states that this show tells earthly stories and does not deceive people. Duygu who frequently states that she does not watch series and finds them all silly, refers to ‘Yeşil Deniz’ (Green Sea). She states that this show tells ‘normal life’ and that she watches it with the whole family and adds that it tells village life and it is funny. However, as a more striking example for the topic, again when Duygu, said she find those TV series irrational, I ask her if there is a rational show and I get the answer that ‘Diriliş: Ertuğrul’ (Resurrection: Ertuğrul) is rational. This TV show, is a historical TV serial, proceeds with rigid nationalism. It tells the years of foundation of Ottoman Empire through the fights of Kayı tribe that is tightly coupled with Islam and Turkishness in the show

and the founder of the Ottoman with Christian knights Templar. In brief, a TV show like this which is watched mostly by their fathers of family, is a rational show for Duygu, and this situation renders, dominant discourse's scorn over feminine discourse visible.

Additionally, the number of people who expresses that they have fun when they watch those series by laughing at the silliness of them and that they watch it just because of this reason is very high that it cannot be underestimated. Even though I did not hear an approach like this from the teenage female audience, this is something I hear around me. Likely, Ien Ang, who puts an announcement on a newspaper and asks Dallas viewers to send her a letter about the show, points out that some of the letter writers indicated that they watch it just to ridicule and have fun. She writes for the subject, "...an important element of this ironical viewing attitude is the supplying of commentary. According to Michel Foucault, commentary is a type of discourse that has the aim of dominating the object: by supplying commentary to something one affirms a superior relation to that object" (1985: 97).

However, despite all the conventional and also institutionalized notions on ideal romance and gender, despite because of what is on screen may have a force over teenager audience in their everyday experiences, despite the fact that they also adopted the idea that simply, feminine discourse is ridiculous and nonsense, they still watch those teen TV series. Then, the reason must be pleasure and even fantasy of idealized conventions. That's why I will try to discuss experiencing pleasure via those stories where emotionality is available at its best in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

### EXPERIENCE, PLEASURE AND SPECTATORSHIP

The idea that the necessity of refusal of the representation of women within the dramatic structures of TV shows and of the refusal of pleasure that is taken from a narrative which accommodates such representations, is quite common. By means of the representation in media, the life of women is defined in a quite limited way and as Tuchman writes the “images of women in the mass media have some sort of detrimental impact upon both individual consciousness and collective social life” (1979: 530). Along with this notion about media’s negative influences on masses, and against production of hegemonic representations, women from among a large number of feminists are irritated by what is on screen. During a media workshop organized by Kaos GL (Kaos GL is an association founded in 1994 in Ankara that works against human rights violations of LGBTs) in Ankara University, participants of the workshop stated how disturbed they are by the screening of women as weak. they indicated they find it a very weakening discourse, and one of them, even, said that “Why are we producing if it will not be a restorative story?”, but, sure, this was not actually a question. Throughout this unilateral discussion, it is harshly defended that there has to be solidarity between women characters in the films. And in the end they all shared the notion that cinema is a creative field with its use of camera, with its editing etc. so this creativity should not be used the way we witness.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The discussion took place in an organization named “Kadın Medya Okulu” (Women Media School) in 24th of April, 2016.

Furthermore, Van Zoonen admits that the feminist media studies diminish its potential by means of the notion which denies the pleasure that women get from watching soap operas in order to find moral justifications for the critics to the hegemony of conventional gender identities (1991: 33). Due to these instances, there is a common tendency to deny the pleasure and the representations from the root. Instead of discussing on viewer's practices of watching, an patronizing notion has been developing that presents viewers as people who has false consciousness.

Besides, scholars who study audience dwell on an important topic, which is pleasure. With an attempt to understand the reason of people to watch those shows, they try to find the origin of pleasure. Therefore, they start off by asking similar questions about the viewers' reading of the texts. Modleski writes in her book, "Loving with a Vengeance: Mass-produced Fantasies for Women" that develops a relationship between reader and popular romance fiction,

"It is time to begin a feminist reading of women's reading, for it is possible that even those men whose livelihood depends on deciphering women's responses have remained largely ignorant of the "evils" lurking behind the most orthodox plots. The price women pay for their popular entertainment is high, but they may still be getting more than anyone bargained for." (2008: 25)

Or Ien Ang asks the question "Why do people watch Dallas? Clearly, because they find it enjoyable. Nobody is forced to watch television; at most, people can be led to it by effective advertising. What then are the determining factors of this enjoyment, this pleasure" (1985: 9).<sup>25</sup> Likewise, Radway writes, "...one might also want to ask what competencies prepare certain women to recognize romances as relevant to their

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<sup>25</sup> As a result of the letters she got from the viewers of Dallas, she found out that "experience of pleasure is not rationally motivated" and "pleasure is one of the things in life regarded as self-evident and which as a rule people do not think about it" (1985: 86).

experience and as potential routes to pleasure” (1984: 10). Scholars, referred here, try to find a way by means of the origins of pleasure, in order to extend their feminist ideas, (contrary to the ones at the beginning of this chapter); as Barrett discusses, “We need to know why the ‘women’s weepies have an apparently enduring appeal (...) we need to examine much more open-mindedly and sympathetically their basis in our consciousness and subjectivity”(1982: 57). With Stacey’s account of Modleski, she claims that Modleski analyzes the forms of pleasures in these texts by asking, “can any of these pleasures be seen as resistant to patriarchal authority, and what are the contradictory forms of feminine subjectivity constructed within these texts” (Stacey, 2013: 43).

Throughout the thesis I look for the experiences they had by asking similar questions to myself. My main aim is to study on the romance experiences of teenage female viewers of teen TV dramas broadcasted in last few years in Turkey. And when I say ‘experience’, it is not only watching it or adjusting it to own lives, but it is also about how do they decode the TV series, what do they see in them as it is mentioned before. But it is at the same time, about imagining, fantasy and emotions during or after watching them. That is to say, the experience that amuses viewers is provided through imagination and what is on mind, actually does not have to be performed corporeally. As Stern states, “gratification is to be achieved not through acting out the fantasies, but through the activity of fantasising itself” (Stern, 1982: 56). Similarly, Ang has a notion about that “it is not primarily a matter of the content of the fantasy, but mainly of the fact that fantasizing itself: producing and consuming fantasies allows for a play with reality, which can be felt as ‘liberating’ because it is fictional, not real” (1985: 134). However, put aside the liberating part provided from fictionality for the case I have studied, fantasizing, day-dreaming or imagining -or



whatever we call- through dramatization or romanticization is only free within these fantasies. Both those series (or any other similar narratives), and fantasies are the only places where its audience and owner is not blamed because of their emotions. Emotionality is again, as it is stated before in the previous chapter, being scorned by the hegemonic masculinity by using the word 'dramatization' as a pejorative term.

#### **4.1. Experience of Viewing and Pleasure**

The reception of TV series among the audience is a total process that gives a kind of pleasure, with its background informations, with its narration and story, with its decoding, with its consideration afterwards and first and foremost, with the emotions that it arouses during all the levels of this reception. Additionally, watching TV itself is another route to take pleasure as a relaxation tool especially after work or school within the huge part of domestic leisure. Television viewing is identified with entertainment, which contains relaxing, resting, and that belongs to the territory of leisure. Leisure is regarded in the everyday experiential word as 'time for yourself', it is liberation from the irritating bonds of the official world of factory, school or office (Ang, 1985: 21). However, as far as I have seen from participants lives, even if they watch series freely in the summer holidays -because of that they have so much time that they can be bored-, in winters because they spend most of their times in schools, it gets harder to watch all the shows they watch in summers and they need to prefer to choose some of them. Their leisure time, at home, is still spent by watching television after school, however this time what they watch are daytime television programs or series other than teen TV dramas, and those daytime television shows are mostly chosen by their mothers. Since the series referred, anyway, lasts till late at

night, it gets difficult to watch those teen TV series because of the necessity to wake up early in the morning for the school. (Still, I can say that they never miss a trailer, even if they cannot follow the whole.) On the other hand, this situation is actually, related to watching television more than series, nevertheless it is still important on account of the fact that the pleasure taken from the teen TV series is also caused by the activity itself. When I ask Ceren how she can enjoy it when she knows what will happen in the serial or when she rewatch it, she answered that she became wholly absorbed in it while she is watching television that she do not even hear when someone calls her name. So, to know or guess what will happen in the story is not an obstacle for her to take pleasure, as she added.

At this stage, not just act of watching or not just the process after watching is at stake, but it is also about what the texts bring about while reading (Eagleton, 1979: 66). According to Oatley, during reading (but he also states that it can also applied to plays and films),

“an emotion is triggered by a noticeable event, and at its core is a change of readiness for action as the significance of this event is evaluated in relation to the person's concerns. The process typically includes a conscious feeling such as happiness, sadness, anger, fear, or disgust. Often there are physiological accompaniments like the heart beating faster, expressions like smiling or tears, and emotional thoughts that come involuntarily to mind.” (1995: 54)

Yet, same feelings may both bother or entertain viewer in different occasions and while one serial that arouses sadness, may make viewer to continue to watch, other may make the same viewer to get annoyed. Nehir watches a TV serial named *Paramparça* (All in Pieces) with her mother. This show is not one of those shot for the teen audience and therefore not a teen TV drama. She must be watching it while her mother is watching. She tells me that such bad things happen in the show, she asks her mother not watch it anymore. She states that they really get unhappy while

and after watching it. But still, her mother likes to watch it, because pleasure or meaning in this case lies not in the text itself but in how it is reconstituted through the process of the reading (McCabe, 2004: 46). As for Gledhill, “meaning is neither imposed, nor passively imbibed, but arises out of a struggle or negotiation between competing frames of reference, motivation and experience” (1999: 169). So based on this argument, the reason of Nehir’s mother’s insist on watching it despite her daughter’s negative feelings becomes more clear. In this case, “the value of 'negotiation', as an analytical concept, is that it allows space to the subjectivities, identities and pleasures of audiences” (Gledhill, 1999: 173). The ability to intersect of the text and the viewer culturally and maintaining social negotiations of meanings and identities is also called forth by motivations and experiences of text’s reader. For this reason, I can say one of the things that provide to attain pleasure is to negotiate with the identities imposed by the characters within the world of narrative.

#### **4.2. Identification, Narrative and Pleasure**

The compatibility between the lifestyle and the characters that viewers watch on the screen is undoubtedly a component which binds the individual to the narrative. The empathy that is showed towards both characters and the narrative, is pretty important with regards to provide this compatibility. If I firstly take the relationship established with the protagonist, I have seen that even a tiny similarity they have with the heroine is quite pleasurable for the viewer. Even though, they actually do not resemble each other, it is so easy to find a resemblance in their imaginary mind.<sup>26</sup> And also I can say easily that they also feel satisfied and brighten when they are

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<sup>26</sup> The reason of that I am speaking out about this subject so confidently is that also I am the one who has similar relationships between the narratives and the characters in it.

compared with the heroines they like. And, what is more attractive is that they sometimes like to watch heroes of the series with a thought that he is similar to their boyfriends. In a meeting Fatma once told me that one of her relatives thinks that Fatma looks like Defne from *İnadına Aşk* (Love Out-of-spite) and her boyfriend looks like Ömer from *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love), and needless to say, she was really proud of hearing this from someone else as it is self-evidently seen from her way of telling. Besides, during a meeting with Pınar and Ceren, Pınar told me about her admiration with sympathy she feels towards Nazlı and to her boyfriend, in the show, Savaş, from *Güneşin Kızları* (Daughters of Sun), and she also stated that Nazlı's personality is just like herself and her best friend Ceren approved, "Exactly, she is aggressive, like Pınar." After a while Pınar's boyfriend came, and joined our conversation. Even though he did not say anything about Savaş, it was really interesting to hear from him that he finds Nazlı very attractive. Apart from that, Büşra shows a kind of identification based on her practices' alikeness with Defne from *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love). She says that Defne is just like her on the subject of her helplessness about ability to wake up early.

It is a quite common belief that viewer establish identification with the characters and especially with the heroine who lives her fantasies. However, it is really distinguishing that the viewer instantiates it with tiny details from their life. The bond with the characters and with the narrative of series - along with the importance of the similarities of daily lives except features of the characters - is motivated by memories, experience and practices. But what is more, is that identification can, anyway, be established without a concrete instance of practice.

As it is stated before, in teen TV dramas, heroines are commonly, portrayed innocent and inexperienced clumsy women, and viewers are enjoying to see themselves as a man would like to see them: such a pure, innocent woman (Douglas, 1980:28). This is a pleasurable way of looking to the heroine and this way, seeing herself as the heroine in the ‘narrative’ of her own world. Depending on the subject, according to de Lauretis, female viewer has ‘double identification’:

“We could say that the female spectator identifies with both the subject and the space of the narrative movement, with the figure of movement and the figure of its closure, the narrative image. Both are figural identifications, and both are possible at once; more, they are concurrently borne and mutually implicated by the process of narrativity. This manner of identification would uphold both positionalities of desire, both active and passive aims: desire for the other, and desire to be desired by the other.” (1984: 143).

Thus, she asserts that viewers create a surplus of pleasures by means of this double identification (1984: 143). As it is written here before, that girls I have met for the thesis, mentioned frequently about the beauty of the heroines in the series. Even, male protagonists has a great mark on the subject of characters during our conversations with guidance of participants, female protagonists are mostly referred when it comes to the subject of beauty and the similarity to themselves. Duygu’s ritual of watching TV series is built around the series which she watches with her family. She always prefers to say “we are watching” with a reference to her family, instead of “I am” and she states that how much she loves Efsun from *O Hayat Benim* (That Life is Mine) which is also watched by the whole family according to what she indicates. When I ask what kind of a person Efsun is, she tells “She is cracky, entertaining. Just like us. You see? I love her, she speaks different. Just like me. For example she spoils English.” However, besides identification, when viewers look at what they watch from a distance, it is also possible that they see some characters as

stranger and unfamiliar in order to identify with, because of the fact that their lives do not suit. And also as Radway wrote, because of that “the characters are ‘better’ than real people and because events resolve themselves unambiguously” (Radway, 1984: 188), the serial also may make viewers feel that the characters are not from their world, such as in the clarifications of Duygu about Efsun because, in spite of that she likes her very much and identifies herself with her, she also says “But she is rich and I’m not”. In addition to that, Modleski brings criticism from a different perspective on identification:

“It is easy to assume, and most popular culture critics have assumed, a large degree of identification between reader and protagonist, but the matter is not so simple. Since the reader knows the formula, she is superior in wisdom to the heroine and thus detached from her. The reader, then, achieves a very close emotional identification with the heroine partly because she is intellectually distanced from her and does not have to suffer the heroine’s confusion.” (Modleski 2008: 33)

Besides, the involvement of viewers to the narrative of TV series lies in the created world of the story, and in the ability to live in their world while and even after watching. And the world created in the story can both make viewer put themselves in a distance from the characters and also provide them identification. A participant, Ela, told me that she learns how to react when she experiences a situation like characters do from TV series, and that she likes to watch series more if the story is similar to her life. Recreation of viewers’ world through the similarities with TV shows becomes really clear by means of Ela’s words, in that, when she lives a similar situation, she feels similar, she feels that she needs to do what the character does. While Ela identifies herself with the character who has a similar problem she also forms her world into the show's world. About the topic, Radway, again over romances, writes:

“Although it is true that romance reading evokes a process of identification whereby the reader responds to events lived through by the heroine, this is not the only level at which the reader reacts. The act of romance reading must first involve any reader in a complex process of world construction through which the reader actively attributes sense to the words on a page. In doing so, that reader adopts the text's language as her own and appears to gesture toward a world she in fact creates.” (Radway, 1984: 187)

For examining a similar situation, it would be useful to hear from another participant, Ekin. As a prior knowledge I want to indicate that she watches series even though she does not like them, she is not a constant tracker however she knows the stories and characters of almost all the shows of today. She thinks that people around her want relationships as in teen TV series, they want attraction and action (she actually uses the word attraction but in Turkish it is used for describing also action), they want drama in their life but the only drama they experience is not to be followed back on Instagram or to see their boyfriends with someone else. "Sure these are also important but I'm sure they want really bad situations what we see on the series" she says. Then she gives an example from *Güneşin Kızları* (Daughters of Sun) where one of the protagonists, Selin, is filmed naked and thereupon many cases followed by another which includes taking revenge from the girl who trapped her. Ekin told this episode, with amazement and with a little frustration, and added that she believes her peers at the school could even want to experience what that character lived. According to the example she gave, for viewers, more than identifying themselves with the characters, to live in the world narrated is more charming than the one they live. Since the life in series are mostly more affluent and comfortable and almost all the elements of narration functions for showing this comfort directly to the audience, it becomes harder to eschew from feeling that way for the audience.

Moreover, what Duygu and Hande told about the world of the series, assures the argument. Duygu says for the lives in the series: “I mean I think about it, for example when I’m on the road. This kind of things happen in their lives but why not in our lives?” I ask what kind of things that she mentions and she says, “There is always an action, always something happens to somebody.” I ask if she wants an exciting life like them, she answers, “Not that much. What would we do if something happens to one of us every day? But I love my life, it’s normal. Normal life is the best. I don’t say to myself ‘I wish I was rich like them’ when I see their wealthy lifestyles. Hande adds: “I agree, definitely” and Duygu continues, “Yes, we like their furnitures, it’s another story. You can say it would be nice if this or that was ours but that kind of a lifestyle is a little odd. It’s not so nice to be that much rich.” Hande who is with us during this conversation, once told me that she like the lifestyles in the TV series during another meeting: “I like their lifestyle... their styles, their lives... Be it love or clothing, speaking, culture or travelling...” She said that she envies their lives a little. “Both their characters, appearances and culture... But I am grateful for what we have.” Additionally, she once said that her sister who is studying Koran and receiving Islamic religious education in the mosque instead of studying in a high school or university, is telling her that the lives in the series are like the lives they have and that when they watch it they actually watch their own lives.

In the circumstances, whether viewers keep their distance from the serial or not, the involvement to the world of the narrative is quite dense. According to Oatley, performances of a text are simulations, and simulations run on minds of audiences or readers (1995: 66), and he calls the core of the simulation as identification with one or more characters, ie. ‘adopting the goals of a protagonist’ is the basic modality of simulation. As the second aspect of simulation, he defines ‘imaginary world’. The



world of the series, or the simulation, creates a mental model of an imagined world (1995: 70). So, in any case - whether it is actually similar to viewers' lives or not- , the world of the narrative would be freely adopted by its audience. Audience freely digests the world of the narrative in their own lives. They assume that the imaginary world of the narrative is spontaneously coincide the world that they all know very well (Radway, 1984: 191).

### **4.3. Fantasy and Pleasure**

Then, what provides involvement with the characters and narrative, and what assumes created world as a copy of the world that is lived in, is imagination. Through the pleasure that is created by imagination, viewer involves into the world of the narrative as much as involvement to the world of the narrative provides pleasure through imagination. For Oatley, in the text "we can start to explain the pleasure of reading in terms of the Aristotelian idea that happiness is the result of being wholeheartedly engaged in an activity" (1995: 60). In fact, the way of participants' look at the text as they are real-unreal or we-they is derived from the wish to be wholeheartedly engaged to the show while watching it by finding the traces of own life. Sure, the trace may sometimes be found and brought out among the unfamiliar eccentric ones or the unfamiliarities can reach a state where it is something to desire by augmenting its place. However, for both occasions, imagination, fantasy or daydreaming draws the attention. In doing so, a world whose relationship with reality is already established -in viewers' perception where they feel and perceive the world of the narrative in addition to fantasies that was already built,- but which is imagined, appears. But, it should not be forgotten that, that world is fed by the world of the fantasy and that, pleasure is still exist and it continues.

Whereas, emotions and romance are intensely located in the structure of the world of the narrative. Thus, pleasurable fantasy would inevitably, leads the audience to the ways of emotions and romance. Additionally, imagination and fantasy which is deeply intertwined with fiction is for Illouz, is also so central to socialization. She wrote, “the fictionality shapes the self, the ways in which it employs itself, lives through stories, the conceives of the emotions that make up one’s life project”(Illouz, 2012: 209). Imagination which also shapes the daily life, is generated from ‘fictional emotions’ which links the emotions to real life and forms ‘fictional imagination’. So, ‘fictional imagination’, in turn, generates emotions while reading or connecting with fictional text (Illouz, 2012: 209-210). At this stage, the interrelation between emotional life and imagination become more visible around the scope of reading fiction.

If it is asserted that the fantasies, which is established through emotions and through the world of the narrative in series, contain romance because of the theme of the series, the arguments I have discussed in the previous chapter - idea of love and all kinds of stereotypes of womanhood or manhood set over romance and also within the culture- should examined within fantasy. Sure it is not that easy for viewers, especially for a group of teenage girl between 15-19, to mention their dreams. However, still, because of their wishes that they stated during our conversations such as, “I wish I had a boyfriend like him, a motorbiker, but it will never happen.” or “I would like to go places where lovers went in the TV series.” are installed over imagined world which helps the formation of the structure of the fictions, I discussed the imagined world of the narrative as the world of the fantasy. In doing so, I accepted the thing provides fantasy as both the world of the fantasy and act of

fantasising. Namely, most of the codes or conventional ways of romance that is told through love affairs by participants, is in a sense, a sign of what could be within the fantasy, but what is more to the point, it is the sign of the existence of the fantasy.

As it is stated before, there is a common tendency among participants, for discovering tenderness in boys whom they have a romantic relationship with. In doing so, the main aim is, not to be devalued by them as it is actually made by culture. Romantic fantasy or dreaming of romance both in this situation and generally, is pretty functional in terms of individuals' enhancement of self-esteem, as love itself does. Imagined pleasures that are caused by love, are the pleasures which are also easily achieved by fantasies. The fantasies, generally, are the ones which embody idealized conventions mentioned, and the pleasure which exist by this means, is the pleasure of the imagined world settled over those idealized conventions. On the other hand, ideal romance and the idea of lover which are established in company with desired codes, are seen as traces of something lost which actually is never existed. These fantasies of ideal which do not exist in an absolute manner and the mourning for the thing that is not actually exist but that is assumed as lost, may, somehow, create romantic or emotional pleasure. In sum, longing for the thing which is not exist (which only exists in fantasies) and emotionality that brings into connection with fantasies are the things that generates pleasure. Similarly, McCabe writes that "fantasy is more a setting out of lack, of what is absent, than a presentation of a having, a being present" (2004: 96). When it is considered that the promises of ideology of love according to popular mediums that tell love stories, is to achieve the state of self-transcendence and self-forgetfulness (Modleski, 2008: 29), it can be said that fantasising about love is more successful than the practices of love and romance or 'love' itself. The desire to have

or assuming that you have what is in fantasies which actually is an output of imagination, could be more satisfying, i.e. it could be more satisfying to fantasize what is absent but what is lived in the world imagined. However, for certain, this does not simply mean that the audience is living in an imagined world, since the distinction they put into their lives is pretty obvious from their statements that I wrote here directly. Nevertheless, as Illouz asserted, “imagination is a social and cultural practice which constitutes a significant, part of what we call subjectivity - desire and volition. It shapes emotional life, and impacts on one’s perceptions of daily life” (2012: 209). Even though, firstly, pleasure that is taken from these series are related to the audience’s fantasy life more than their ‘real’ social lives (Brown: 1990: 20), they, also, play an important role in helping teenagers to mentally envision and estimate future behavior through day-dreaming according to Bachen and Illouz (1996: 282).

When these are all considered, there is a common sense about audience watches series in order to achieve pleasure in various ways. Therefore Radway counts as the reason of the maintaining of pleasure and dramatization, that liven the pleasure up, by audience, not contentment but dissatisfaction, longing and protest (1984:215), and she states that the romantic fantasy which is not satisfied, prompts the imaginative activity by means of romances (Radway, 1984: 50). She even finds these romances are emotionally necessary for its audience (pp. 10). However, after all, Ang states that we should abstain from ‘an overpoliticizing of pleasure’ (1985: 132). In addition to this as Jackie Stacey writes about the subject, audience is, as a matter of course being as conservative as the forms they relish under their subordination within patriarchy (2013: 93), and the codes in TV series which is experienced and learned since their birth, provides a safe environment to its audience. However, these ideas

suggested lead us again to the strict idea that this enjoyment is bad for women and pleasure must be ignored. So it brings along a never ending deadlock.

#### **4.4. Emotionality and Pleasure**

So far, I have explained that the fantasies in the imagined worlds that is set through the negotiation of characters and the created world of the narrative by the audience and, that this fantasy gains strength by the help of and by means of emotionality. Besides, I think that it is required to contemplate the subject over emotions. A text, be it intellectual or aesthetic etc. is able to give pleasure to the one who decodes it, in different ways, however, the texts in account, as a teen TV dramas, offer emotional pleasures to its audience, and in doing so, they usually show events, reactions of characters and concepts with their most excessive faces by dramatizing them. So this carries viewer to a state of emotionality that is not allowed in their daily life and sure, the excessiveness of emotionality make viewers touched by it or even cry because of it. According to Williams, “melodramas are excessive for their gender- and sex-linked pathos, for their naked displays of emotion” (1991: 3) which is sure related to imagination and therefore, to fantasy. In these narratives where dramatisation is at its utmost, because of the naked emotions that is given bodily, supplied to viewers and consequently because of they may make people cry, they can also called as ‘weepies’. These sentimental stories, which makes viewers elicit their tears, construct a kind of realism which is emotional. This realism as it is stated before, is all imagined and rises from the negotiation of the world created and the identification, and it blends with the emotionality in fantasies. The place where the process of viewing and the emotionality meet is where the viewer watch the anguish of the character as herself’s.

On the subject, Haskell asserts that women spectators are moved while watching weepies, not by pity and scare but by self-pity and tears to acquire, rather than deny, their destiny (Haskell, 1973: 155). Although this feeling is a melancholic pleasure, it is, at the same time, a signification for the pursuit of emotions of the audience. And no wonder, this pursuit is for the emotionality which comes from the romance since the ordeals of love is beautiful and its melancholy warm people inside. That heat will be obtained from the romances within TV series which has contributions for the daily emotions and from the imagination which can grow by means of these romances. Illouz qualifies this imagination as institutionalized and writes about the institutionalization of imagination that “it can be characterized by its being increasingly shaped by technologies and cultural genres that generate desire, longing, and anticipatory emotions, emotions about emotions to come, and cognitive scripts about how they should feel and be enacted” (2012: 206). She is talking about a narrated world and a structure that generates even emotions’ way of being. However, at the same time, emotions inserted inside the form are called and desired by its viewer because there is nothing known that is constituted except that safe form in the idea.

One of the participants of my study, Merve, indicates that she really likes to watch series when something sad happens. She actually follows very strictly Korean TV dramas, but she also likes to watch their Turkish adaptations. While she was telling a Korean actor she said that she likes him because he is always heartbroken and always sad. When I ask if she likes him to be sad and emotional she said “Very much! His emotionality impresses me.” Besides, she stated that she likes emotional series that make her cry, and she said “I like them to warm me up inside”. Another participant,

Ela, once said that she do not cry for the things happen in TV series but that she feels a pang of sorrow in her heart by indicating that it's a good feeling.

As it is stated, in fact, the pleasure of those feelings arises from an ideal emotionality that generates an expectation to create an ideal romance and idea of love. However, audience is not allowed to live those feelings as in when they are watching the shows, both by environment and by the fact that their auto control. Excessive emotionality or dramatization of the events may be perceived as weakness, that is not allowed, and in most cases people's sadness and 'dramatization' is not tolerated. However, things which are scorned and ignored by asserting that it is a dramatization, are in fact, the things which builds the general structure of these series. Namely, these series presents emotionality and dramatization to the viewer without disparaging them. Sure, besides that, inside the story of the series (since the story takes place in a hegemonic patriarch), this kind of belittling is included. In *Kiralık Aşk* (Rental Love), as represented in any other TV series in Turkey, there is a homosexual man who is the biggest factor of comedy in the show. This character is really popular and loved by the series' viewer because of his fun and entertaining personality and he is a character who lives the cases 'excessively' and reacts 'excessively', with his 'feminine' acts. In an episode of the show, staid hero of the show, Ömer is crossed with him about his reactions for his woe and shouts at him: "Do not dramatize everything, do not dramatize!" In any case, because of the fact that this character is presented as an element of comedy, his feelings have no value<sup>27</sup> and this is just a small instantiation.

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<sup>27</sup> Additionally, his sexual identity is, of course, never ever mentioned in the show. He does not have a boyfriend or a girlfriend. But he is represented as an element of comedy with his feminine acts, in accordance with the homosexual male representation in TV series in Turkey.

That is to say, while the emotions dramatized (that is actually scorned and refused by the hegemonic masculinity) are penetrated within the structure of the series, they at the same time are scorned within the story. But, still, dramatizations that are not allowed in the viewers' daily life, can be provided by the series and by the fantasies that are created by these series. Steiner writes for the romantic mode that "it is neither an ordering nor a criticism of life; it is a dramatization." However, Brooks writes that he uses the word dramatization as a pejorative term (1976: 81). Additionally, in Brook's book, "The Melodramatic Imagination", he also states that the word 'melodrama' has been used pejoratively, in general. The connotations of the word carries leniency of strong emotionality, it carries extreme states of being, situations, actions (1976: 11). For better or worse, teen TV series produces emotional effects in the viewer that is pretty pleasurable within their safe areas and safe fantasies. Viewers also long for those emotional scenarios which shapes the longing for an emotion and for the good life attendant to it (Illouz, 2012: 205).



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

What this thesis has aimed is to determine the romance, gender and morality ideals among teenage girls who watch teen TV dramas. Throughout the study it was given that how teenage girls interpret the discourse of love, gender in the narratives and how do they apply it to their everyday lives. For the purpose I organized two basic methods. The first was analyzing the content of some of the teen TV series broadcasted in the year of 2015; their narratives and their narrational elements such as music, camera movement etc. To show that their stories are actually supported by the stories that are known for decades and maybe for centuries, I also referred to the older narratives in Yeşilçam cinema or in folk tales. Secondly, I wrote down the instances from the meetings I have done with teenage girls who are in high school, to survey their interaction with the shows and their everyday lives.

Based on the results of the study, I have reached some basic conclusions. First, the templates of the series are all very alike in the subject of both the story, characters, narrational elements etc. and conveying ideal romances to audience by means of these features. Due to the fact that it is always more important to proceed by means of the speeches of the girls for the thesis, I put emphasis mostly on the similar aspects of the series that participants highlighted. One of them was the basic characteristics of the hero. Masculine, hard, ruthless heroes are somehow desired by

the audience, especially when they are mystified and if it is represented as if there is something to discover within the unknown world of the hero. Also it was so strange to see that they think their boyfriends (if there is), are one of those hard boys who is ruthless outside but so romantic and emotional inside. This 'bad boy' image (as named in the popular teenage fan fictions) becomes acceptable and even desired when the tenderness inside them emerges for the loved ones. In such a way, girls feel that they are accepted and valued by their 'masculine' and 'hard' lovers who are identified (by way of the features mentioned) with the main characteristics of the patriarchal culture they live in. Thus the feeling of being devalued by the culture becomes trivial, or maybe concealed.

Secondly, the idea of ideal moral conveyed through stereotypical idealized romance that is provided with stereotypical gender roles, constitutes the basic frame of the TV dramas. The given conventions are clearly based on discriminatory gender representations and those representations are all so familiar from everyday life, that viewers do not even notice while watching. However it is also likely for audience to be disturbed by some of the representations and still not to notice the thing which is disturbed, in the daily life practices, because of the fact that we are all so accustomed to it culturally that it becomes invisible. Other than this, the ideal comprehension of morality (again that is defined mostly through gender representations and that is conveyed with the discourse of idealized western-style modernity) is pictured in a complicated way. Since the families of the viewers whom I have met with are rather traditional, girls have a conflict with the world of the teen TV series. They desire a lifestyle that characters live in the teen TV dramas but also despise it. As the audience is more traditional than the producers of the show and the state has strict rules about censorship, the TV series try to produce the shows without exceeding

these limitations (limitations of rating and censorship) and within their comprehension of moral. For that reason, what is shaped becomes the production of a dilemma which includes a story of lovers who can go vacation together and even sleep in the same bed at night but cannot have sexual intercourse.

In any case, these conventions of idealized romance and moral discourse in the teen TV series are products of patriarchal hegemony. Furthermore, they all benefit from the stereotypical gender codes that are attached to femininity by the patriarchy. Still, the series are culturally scorned (i.e. by the patriarchal culture). However, since, in the social context, girls and women are subordinated within the culture, this scornful attitude is very familiar for the teenage girls from their daily lives (Brown, 1990:13). Besides, because of that girls are tend to accept the judgments of the hegemonic masculinity that is generated by patriarchy, in order to be accepted by the culture, they feel that it is a requirement to think that the teen TV dramas are for idle and uneducated people, even though they get pleasure from watching them.

Lastly, of course, pleasure is the main reason to watch the TV series referred. However the root of the pleasure is not that certain. Nonetheless, throughout the study pleasure is discussed over the emotions and the fantasy world which comes true also by means of the negotiation of the world of the series. Since fantasising (or daydreaming) is an important part of experiencing romance, the teen TV dramas fulfill the need of emotionality by way of their 'dramatized' worlds. Emotions and fantasy are used in the study as experiences that feed each other. The provided emotions (by the teen TV dramas) that lead viewer to fantasize about the narrated world are also generated by means of the fantasies. Moreover, while fantasies and emotions provide the imaginary word of the narrative to get more intense, they are

also nourished by that world. However, all the conventions mentioned before, are reproduced not only by means of the narratives but also by means of these fantasies, due to the fact that the fantasies also include the idealized and learned love affairs with stereotypical gender roles. Nevertheless, it has to be remembered that the emotions and drama that is mostly attributed to femininity by the culture is again belittled by it.

Consequently, audience criticizes the teen TV series in order not to be out of the hegemonic masculine norms of the patriarchal culture but also they watch them with pleasure. Representation of the shows are very problematic for them but as well as desired. In the same vein, the intense emotions or ‘dramatizations’ created by the TV series have to be avoided since they have no place in the culture however those are the feelings that keep audience to watch the show.

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