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## **Yeşilçam Film Posters of the 60s and 70s: Representing Romance**

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### **Abstract**

Cinema and movie poster have the most powerful potential of establishing the ethos and mythology of people, and both assume an audience on the premises of a cultural context within which they are produced. So a movie poster contributing to mass communication through designed visual means contains a lot of information about film industry, evolution of design, craftsmanship, and the taste of the artists and society as well as standing for a strong evidence of its time.

The decade 1965-1975 is important for Turkish cinema for being the golden years of this industry. Besides all the good memories associated with these posters, they indeed involve the history of Turkish cinema, graphic design as well as Turkish society. The great deal of labour involved, resulting from the poor resources of the period; design elements, typography, composition, the mistakes; all reflect the characteristics of then-Yeşilçam. Going over an archive of posters and with the help of interviews with designers, cinema historians and labourers, the article focuses on the relationship of design with the industry, technology and society.

The Yeşilçam movie posters are analyzed through the methods of iconography as well as reception theory. And therefore as well as exploring their graphic and visual characteristics they would be placed in the context of the social life, the conditions of the movie industry in Turkey, the character of Yeşilçam Melodrama and evolution of Turkish movie poster.

After a detailed research and observation, four categories are revealed as the most frequently seen types among the Turkish melodrama posters, according to the kind of images in relation to specific themes and concepts and the design schemas they use. These are "star posters", "beefcake posters", "phallic woman posters", and "posters of movement". The paper goes in detail how these categories are formed and their significance and their relation to the creation of the concept of romance.

### **Keywords**

Yeşilçam melodrama; film poster; graphic design; romance

Film poster is the most tangible proof of "owning" a film. It's the essence of the film rendered in a single image by graphic means. It's "an attempt to visualize a visual text" (Sayar, 1987, p. 44). According to Saul Bass, the designer of many film credits and posters "designing film credit is like designing a film poster: you take the situation and turn it into one concept, one metaphor or into a background story that needs to be told or a character to be introduced". Or it may be defined as a commercial instrument which mainly reflects the

financial expectation that the distributor places in the film and also "what 'one' regards as an effective appeal to the test of the masses" (Hanssman, 1973, p. 24).

Cinema like other entertainment forms is one of the important parts of our social and cultural life and relies on the participation of the audience for its existence and continuity just like the film poster. In other words cinema and movie poster, while standing for a strong evidence of its time, have the most powerful potential of establishing the ethos and mythology of people, and both assume an audience on the premises of a cultural context within which they are produced. In a film poster, we see not only the film itself, but also the film industry, the conditions and the taste of the production period, design conceptions, processes and evolution, craftsmanship, technology as well as culture.

In this article, I will focus on film posters of the 60s and the 70s in Turkish cinema, a period known as "Golden" referring to the highest number of film production and audience. Also the main subject of the article would be a specific and most popular genre of films, melodramas within a specific production system namely "Yeşilçam" of this period. Since there was a little amount of written material on this topic, the research material for the paper was gathered from personal interviews with designers, cinema historians and labourers and from an extensive archive of posters. These posters are analyzed through the methods of iconography. After a detailed research, observation, and analyze four categories are revealed as the most frequently seen types among the Turkish melodrama posters, according to the kind of images in relation to specific themes and concepts and the design schemas they use. These are "star posters", "beefcake posters", "phallic woman posters", and "posters of movement". The paper goes in detail how these categories are formed and their significance and their relation to the creation of the concept of romance.

## Method

If communication is the means of transmitting ideas from sender to receiver, is graphic design a neutral carrier or a transparent medium? The relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary as well as being a product of cultural choice and agreement. Communication theory, which has its roots in telecommunication, classifies graphic designer as engineer and sees communication as the transmission of messages, is not a satisfactory method to explain visual communication that produces meaning and exchanges it. Therefore, the method for analysing the meanings constructed and interpreted during the process of communication in this paper would benefit from iconological analyses stemming from the works of Aby Warburg, later followed and improved by Erwin Panofsky in order to analyze art works.

In her presentation called "The Image is the Message: A Model for Applying Iconology in Mass Media Research"<sup>1</sup>, visual communication researcher Marion Mueller, points out visual analysis in mass communication and mass media research has in the past mainly been drawing on concepts originating either in the social sciences or in psychology; and the copious tradition of art

<sup>1</sup> International Communication Association Conference, Dresden, 2006

history has not crossed the disciplinary line yet. Whereas, T. Van Leeuwen (2001) elaborates on the examples of applying iconography to contemporary images.

Art historian Hadjinicolaou (1998, p. 52-56) points at the fact that art work and art history can not be separated from the history of ideologies. In this respect he believes iconography is a relevant method for analysing art but he's deliberate about its concern on historical conditions and social ideological connections. Cinema, named as the seventh art is unquestionably a commercial industry. Within the context of film poster there's an undeniable relation between art and economy; therefore it can't be analyzed without taking into consideration labour, consumption and anything related to this ideological structure.

The phases of iconography and iconology reformulated by Van Straten (1994, p.16):

1. Pre-iconographic description (primary subject matter): the work's pure form devoid of any added cultural knowledge; what has been credited, written or shown, composition, visual materials, motives, colours, textures, technology used, etc.
2. Iconographic analysis (conventional subject matter): The relationship of visual elements with each other, theme, figure-ground, scale, hierarchy, visual language, typography, style, etc.
3. Iconographic interpretation (intrinsic Meaning or Content): Synthesis: personal, technical, and cultural understanding of a work, symbolic meaning, context, motivations for design, the possible intended meaning of each design element.
4. Iconological interpretation, content: Deeper contents and meanings not explicitly intended by the artist or designer.

An obvious companion method to the iconographic approach taken would be reception theory to allow for opening the cultural aspects that keep emerging in the analysis. Reception theory is a version of reader response literary theory that emphasizes the reader's reception of a literary text. In this paper's context this means that a film poster is not simply passively accepted by the audience, but that the viewers interpret the meanings of the text based on contextual factors which include elements of the viewer's identity, their individual cultural background as well as circumstances of exhibition, the spectator's preconceived notions concerning the film's genre and production, and even broad social, historical, and political issues and life experiences (Wagner, 2008). Following the story about six blind men who perceived the elephant as something different: a rope, a wall, tree trunks, a fan, a snake, a spear; Harold Marcuse (2008), says reception theory traces the different ways in which participants, observers, historians and other retrospective interpreters have attempted to make sense of events both as they unfolded and over time since then, to make those events meaningful for the present in which they lived and live. A basic acceptance of the meaning of a specific text tends to occur when a group of readers have a shared cultural background and interpret the text in similar ways. It is likely that the less shared heritage a reader has with the artist, the less he/she will be able to recognise the artist's

intended meaning, and it follows that if two readers have vastly different cultural and personal experiences, their reading of a text will vary greatly.

### **Yeşilçam Melodrama**

In the 50s the existence of the middle class, the equality of income distribution, production and consumption of local things in 60s left their place to inequalities between higher and lower classes, an ever consuming character of the society, and hence an orientation towards capitalism. In 1960, a military intervention took place which changed the political climate as well as social life. The military intervention and the 1961 constitution are interpreted by some as being good and revolutionary for intellectual life because of bringing an air of hope and freedom to the social and political lives. But after a while, the movement within the cultural and social life transformed into a negative formation for the westernization movement within the country because of the on-going restrictions in some respect. This change in era of 60s and 70s can be best understood by looking at the process and results of urbanisation and migration from the small villages, especially from the east, to bigger cities, especially to Istanbul. In addition, there was also a big migration from Turkey to European countries like Germany. The changes in everyday life and popular culture are the most obvious results of mobilisation and personal cars; radio, tapes, records, newspapers, magazines, photo-novels; new home appliances, margarine, canned foods, night-club culture that came with urbanization and migration (Kirel, 2005, p. 14-26). Also the impact of American culture through cinema and magazines, the growing number of working women in cities, outside their homes; the division of working time and leisure time and the occurrence of the concept of entertainment time caused big changes. The social movement in the 60s and society's addiction to the cheap and collective entertainment seem to be the reason of the vitalization of Turkish cinema, through 60s and 70s. Nevertheless, although the films and film production companies were great in number, there can be noticed a non-industrialization of Turkish cinema.

In 1965, the change of the government stood for the starting point of the "restoration period" (Özön, 1985, p. 366) which involved strict inspections, tensions between the opposite thoughts, and the improvement of variations of political tendencies. In such an environment where there was a constant change and clash, trying to keep the family values strong ended in such a conservatism and ideology that can also be felt in films and film posters.

Turkish melodrama was produced in close relation to American, Indian, Egyptian, Iranian movies. The hybrid but unique characteristic of Turkish melodrama conveyed both the entertaining but conservative aspects of these foreign cinemas in terms of being loyal to social values since the target audience through the 60s was the middle and the lower class families and mostly women. These films had the already existing social norms, values, relations in themselves with the component of tears and music. This narrative structure was gathered from the popular Turkish novels of M. Berkant and K. Nadir, historical love stories and also American films with overloaded melodramatic, ornamented, attractive structure which get along well with Turkish social norms (Abisel, 1994, p. 69). Melodramas involved the very simple images of life with superficially and non-psychologically but emotionally

depicted love relations and characters, as well as the central role of the accident and coincidence.

## Film Poster in Turkey

It can be stated that the development of posters started in Turkey as a result of the economic and social vibrancy which emerged with the Declaration of Republic. As a result of the absence of an advanced printing technology and the tradition of commercial posters in the Ottoman Empire, typographical posters (fig 1) were more commonly used which belonged to the charity organizations or were prepared for social and cultural issues like theatre plays (Altıntaş, 1992, p. 6). These typographical designs were supported with clip-art illustrations and decorative borders. The number of posters having social, cultural and commercial content and that could be defined as modern increased with the establishment of Turkish Republic in 1923; with the law on the adoption and implementation of Turkish alphabet with Latin letters with the addition of new letters in 1928, replacing the previously used version of the Arabic alphabet; the return of the art students from Europe especially Germany and France, who started teaching and producing graphic design in Turkey. Nevertheless, there were problems in the adoption to Latin letters and Western understanding at the beginning, although towards the end of the Ottoman Empire, we can see the handbills for film screenings in 5 and sometimes in 6 different languages (Romaic, Armenian, old Turkish, Hebrew, French and sometimes English) to be distributed in Beyoğlu, the cultural centre of Istanbul (Evren, 1998).



Fig 1. Flyer for the film *The Mystery of Bosphorus (Boğaziçi Esrarı)* (M. Ertuğrul, 1922) Evkat Printhouse.

When we examine the history of Turkish film posters, we can talk about several stages in accordance with technical facilities of the period in question, the

methods and graphical elements which were frequently preferred in the production of the posters: calligraphic posters, monochromatic posters, illustrative posters, photographic posters and caricature-based illustration posters. Mithat Ağakay, Erol Ağakay, Firuz Aşkın, Mehmet Bal, Kemal Börteçin, Cemal DüNDAR, İbrahim Enez, Münif Fehim, Karlotti, Bedri Koraman, Mimcim Mithat, Oral Orhon, Çetin Özkırım, Mehmet Tekdal and Remzi Türemen can be listed among the veterans, film poster designers and illustrators of this history. These designers were painters and graphic designers experienced in advertisement graphics and illustration although they did not largely graduate from design schools, and they were mainly inspired by foreign illustrators. The identity of some designers and illustrators can be easily identified from the signatures they use in the posters.

Like Yeşilçam melodrama's hybrid character, melodrama posters were also under the influence of German, French film posters at the beginning and in the later periods of Hollywood, Italian, Mexican, Indian and Egyptian film posters. The poster of *In the Streets of Istanbul (Istanbul Sokaklarında)* (Muhsin Ertuğrul, 1931) (fig 2), which is the first sound film of the Turkish cinema, clearly bears the geometrical and plain style of Art Deco, and it can be stated that it is visually more impressive than the film posters most of which were prepared by hand using primitive techniques even in the following years.



Fig 2. *In the Streets of Istanbul (Istanbul Sokaklarında)* (Muhsin Ertuğrul, 1931)

The film posters of 1960s and 1970s were designed in accordance with the envisaged expectations of studio owners, producers, film stars, directors and the audiences related to the composition (the choice of the photographs, the size of the names, etc.). Some directors such as H. Saner, M. Erksan, M. Arslan, and N. Keser would directly participate in the poster design process. However, "the final say on the 'poster design' still belonged to the uneducated but genuine Yeşilçam cinema audience, namely the common man" (Böke, 1997). Directors, theatre owners and film stars would sometimes add to the signed contract as an article the details such as the poster designer, the design itself,

and the printing house in which the poster would be printed. Since the producer and the theatre owner were directly interested in the marketing, promotion held a great importance for them. For promotion, apart from the posters, massive sized illustrated boards in various forms built in front of the cinema theatres, which give information on the film, leaflets, brochures and lobby cards for the festivals and contests were printed.

In the design process of the poster, film synopsis would firstly be given to the designer. Producer or director would explain what they want from the designer by taking into account the popularity of the film stars, target audience and censorship. Then, the required photographs would be taken or the appropriate ones would be found from the old photographs, or an illustration would be prepared. The posters which would be considered as erotic and ideological were banned. However, as stated by E. Ağakay (1997), he was put on trial for one of his posters which was considered to contain a political ideology, but his erotic film posters did not cause a serious problem. Due to the lack of mass production and the existence of technical deficiencies in Yeşilçam, the texts were written by hand at the last stage in the printing house. Therefore, easily written Helvetica font, san-serif fonts were usually preferred, and easy writing factor was taken into account rather than the appropriateness of the typeface to the film (Altıntaş, 2006). However, some interesting exceptions can still be observed in typographical solutions; a connection was formed between the content of the film and the typography of the film title, and font types used in the film posters served as a function like corporate identity. In other words, the expression was created with the selection of typeface (Wellington, 1934, p. 100). We see such kind of an approach in the poster of *Wounded Heart (Yaralı Kalp)* (Remzi Jöntürk, 1969). In this poster, font types are in old style and they are figurative as though pointing to an overdramatic love story. In the poster of *Meliksah (Melikşah)* (İsmail Koushan, 1969) which is a Turkish-Iranian co-production, the typography of the film title evokes the traditional eastern calligraphy.

İnanoğlu (2004, p. 9) thinks that film posters reveal not only the evolution of the Turkish cinema industry and stardom system, but also the historical development of Turkish graphic design and printing technologies such as litho, typo, and offset (fig 3). One of the oldest printing techniques implemented for the posters in Turkey is the kalke system in which the original copy of the poster was prepared for each of the four colours (red, yellow, blue and black) separately by hand. Zinc plates would be pressed on one another in the same paper plane. Illustrators would form the plates with paint gun, crayon and manually prepared writings without using film. This condition would sometimes cause deficient yet almost visionary posters. Even after the photographs started to be used in the posters, illustrations continued to be used for their surrealistic effects just like in the covers of romance novels of our time. According to Cemal Dündar, the illustrator of many film posters, book covers and album covers, "the photograph only captures what is there and the reality, but unreal occurrences, abstract environments and feelings can be highlighted with the illustration." Ömer Muz, a designer of film posters and book covers, states: "There are times when the photograph remains helpless no matter whichever light it is exposed to: To present the natural texture of a woman's skin to the audience in the most impressive manner. When a tiny sable brush is sometimes supported with a paint gun, the word "impossible"



disappears. Isn't that what must be fulfilled by the poster? To bewitch the eyes of the beholder" (Karakurt, 1997, p. 1). In these posters which are illustrated by the photograph or photographed by the illustration, the border between the photograph and the figurative and the realist illustration usually disappears. John Berger has emphasized that the photograph creates an effect on the audience with which they can easily identify whereas the illustration forms a surreal, idealized and exaggerated effect. The best example for this condition is the posters of *Milky Way (Samanyolu)* (Nevzat Pesen, 1959) and *I Am So Lonely (Çok Yalnızım)* (Mehmet Dinler, 1973) (fig 4). Illustrative representation / star illustration of the star image used in these posters create an idealized, supernatural and even divine effect. This condition may explain the usage of the same subject in the same plane in both photograph and illustration forms as seen in some posters and lobby cards.

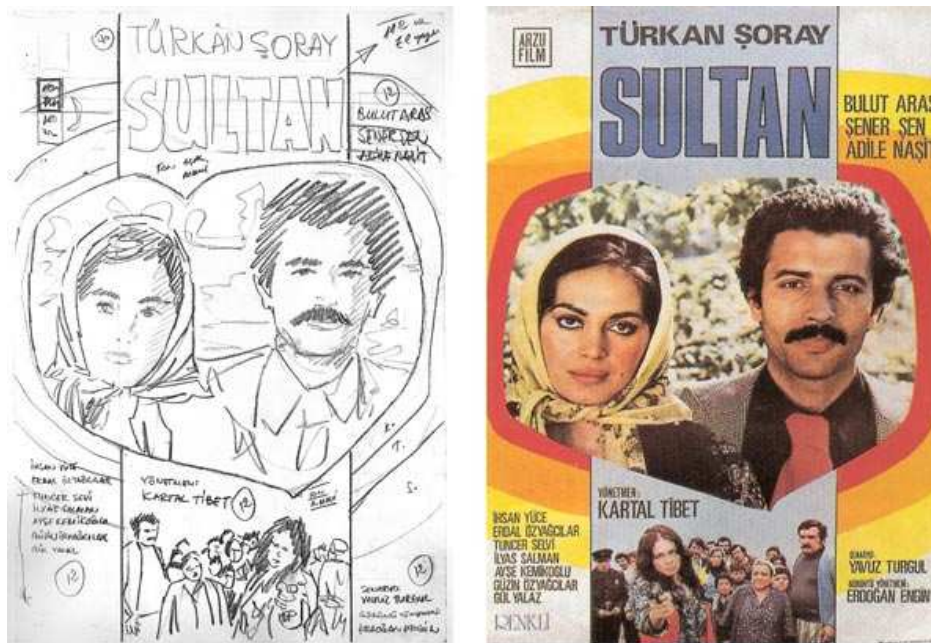


Fig 3. The sketch and original film poster for Sultan (Kartal Tibet, 1978) by Erol Ağakay. The colours and typefaces are mentioned as numbers on the sketch, the size and number of copies for each theatre is also mentioned.



Fig 4. *I Am So Lonely* (*Çok Yalnızım*) (Mehmet Dinler, 1973)

With the development of techniques like photography, photo offset, and colour separation towards the end of 1950s, photographic posters (fig 5) became more popular thanks to printing houses such as Apa, Can, Emel, Eray, Mimeray, Kral, Pulhan, Renk, and Yılmaz. According to Dündar, materiality had an important role in this development: in the beginning of the 1960s, five thousand Turkish liras covered the costs of a month whereas the illustration which cost almost a thousand Turkish liras per unit was a great amount of money. However, when there was a need for a poster before the end of the film's shooting to persuade the theatre owners in different regions, or when the photographs were not adequately appropriate for the preparation of the poster, illustrations would be drawn using the photographs of the film in question or the photographs belonging to old films. In the 1970s and 1980s when the humour magazines and caricaturists such as Oğuz Aral, Tekin Aral, and Bedri Koraman were popular, caricature-based illustrations were preferred to convince the audience on the comical content of the film. The identity, physical appearance and acting style of the comedians determined the design of these posters. The crowded cast consisting of many actors which was observed in these movies was also reflected on the posters.



Fig 5. "Super-imposed" photographs of a film poster before the type added (Erol Ağakay)

Shocking and surprising designs were not required in the Yeşilçam posters due to the fact that the films with famous stars did not need astonishing posters. The hierarchy formed with the proportions of the figures to each other by taking into account the looking direction and mimics of the figures in the poster who were facing the audience and the subject of the film would give clues about these figures while preserving the mystery of the relationships in the film. According to E. Ağakay, except for the red which was the popular colour of the posters that represented the love and passion in the utmost sense, there was no approach to attribute a meaning to colours. According to Agah Özgüç (1997), some symbolism and artistic approach can be observed if there are no stars in the film, or the film appeals to an intellectual audience. What was done for the "common man" was commercial and erotic posters. In the posters of the Yeşilçam melodramas which were named by Fatih Özgüven (1989) as "the faithful travesty of the real one" (p. 40); in which the content is achieved on the two dimensional image and illustration plane; and which were said to have acted "pretentiously" by "wrapping themselves in costumes", it seems that more attention is given to what is to be told than how it is to be told. It can be stated that simple and easily comprehensible representation of the content is preferred in these movies instead of symbolical and complicated design solutions. As stated by Gregory J. Edwards (1985, p. 72), "if the star of the film was a Harlow, Dietrich, Lake or Monroe, it mattered less to portray what the story was about when it comes to designing a poster.". Accordingly, when there was no interesting and new material in the content of the film, different and surprise designs were not observed in the poster in accordance with the connection between the form and content. According to Altıntaş (2006), the most significant difference between the theatre posters and film posters is that "the film poster relies on its star, theatre poster means emotion. There is no tout". However, it is possible to see extraordinary examples of film posters in line with interesting content.

Yeşilçam posters give information to the audience about the social structure and the conditions of the film industry of their period. Even the existence of a mistake such as writing the name of a director differently in his/her two

different films can give clues about the conditions of the cinema sector. When the quality of the poster prepared by Kenan Temizan for the UFA, biggest film studios in Germany of the time, and the quality of the cinema posters produced in Turkey in the same period are compared, the following reality is revealed: The expressional power of the design integrated with technical facilities and knowledge is much more effective.

It would not be inaccurate to say that Yeşilçam film posters were designed in accordance with the values and expectations of the society. As a matter of fact, as the society and standards changed, differences emerged in the films, on the concept of love and also on the posters. The sexploitation in the years 1975-1980 defined by Özgüç as the "wall literature" and viewed by Hiçyılmaz as the "batterer of the agitation and the social system like the painting art of Hitler era" is an example for this. As stated by Böke, a film and its poster differ in Turkey from region to region in terms of content and marketing techniques (1997). Sometimes a film may have more than one ending and poster. For instance, when the film was going to be shown in Adana, a film poster would be used with an Adanian star being highlighted or the end of the film would be dramatized, and erotic scenes would also be included in the film and in the poster since the audience of then Adana, in other words, of southern region consists mostly of men. As Özgüç notes (1985), "the theatre owners of Anatolian cities warned the producers that they would reject their films unless they had belly dance in them" (p.30). Since there were families and highly cultural target audience in Ankara which is the central region, and mostly female and conservative audiences in Samsun, Black Sea Region and Zonguldak, Northern region, these facts would be taken into account and the films and posters were designed accordingly. While in Izmir, Aegean Region, happy endings were preferred, the film endings and the posters would differ from district to district in Istanbul, Marmara region. For example, if both of the film stars were very popular or capricious at that time, then with the aim of pleasing them and the audiences, different poster versions would be prepared in which both of the stars are separately highlighted. If the poster was to be shown abroad, it would be re-evaluated.

In these posters, it was possible to see the fashion of that period and the traces of the popular culture: scarf in *Aysel*, *The Girl of the Swampy Roof* (*Bataklı Damın Kızı*) by Cahide Sonku (Musin Ertuğrul, 1935) and the strikers of *Goal* (*Goal*) by Şenol Birol (Nejat Saydam, 1965) are highlighted on the posters of these films, whereas in *Memiş* (its director and date is not known) (fig 6) the popular comedian of the period was stressed with bold letters, photographs or with such a slogan as " a phenomenally joyful comedy of song and dance featuring Dümbüllü İsmail and Komik Şevki". In order to attract the attention of the audiences who do not have the facilities to watch a theatre play, a football match or a musical, the posters were transformed almost into a show or an official parade of stars, and as a total solution for the question of "who should be included in the poster to attract attention", certain posters were prepared where almost all the cast and the entertainment were collectively depicted. In the poster of *Immortal Woman* (*Ölümsüz Kadın*) (Mehmet Dinler), Türkan Şoray is portrayed as both a blonde and a brunette. According to Kirel, the good woman in black and white films is always a brunette (2005, 87). Also Akbulut mentions the blondes symbolize the rich and the corrupted whereas the brunettes stand for the lower class, love and good character (2008, p.107-

108). The blondes are mostly associated with the western world and values, whereas the brunettes are mostly associated with the rural Turkey and traditional, uncorrupted values. Exaggerations were mostly common in these kinds of applications. For example, a person with a short appearance in the film would cover the largest part of the poster. The greatness of romance within the film would be described with the slogans such as “a great masterpiece”, “most sorrowful love story ever”. Even the number of extras used in the film would be given as ten-thousands. The dubbing, technical qualities like colour or even the budget details were mentioned: “This film has been made with money paid in advance”.



Fig 6. *Memiş* (its director and date is not known)

## Four Types

After observing and studying thousands of film posters, I've seen that some design schemas, compositions, images, motives and the way of presenting certain contents have been constantly repeated. Despite these films' genres, directors or stars, certain characteristics have created types of their own within these film posters. This unique classification of film posters was made according to their subjects, the visual materials and design schemas they contain. Some of the most frequently seen types within this classification that would be discussed in this paper are “star posters”, “beefcake posters”, “phallic woman posters”, and “posters of movement”. Two or more types may also be seen together in a single film poster.

### **Star Posters**

The most common type of these posters are the “Star / Satar” (Star / Sells) posters which were frequently underlined with imagery, film title or the star oriented slogans as a reflection of the conditions that created the Yeşilçam Cinema. What promoted here as merchandize was not the film itself but a parade of great stars. The reason of the understanding that was frequently observed in the composition of the Yeşilçam posters as in the posters of the

foreign films is the star system upon which the industry rises. The names of the stars which were graphically highlighted on the posters more than the title of the film reflects the content of the film to a large extent thanks to the expectations created with the influence of the stars' previous films and their representations within the media. These predictions and expectations are defined as the "star text" which is the career of the star image (Cullingworth, 1989, p.13) (fig 7). Türkan Şoray namely the sultan of Turkish cinema, the most popular female film star, is a good example of these definitions. Her talent in acting was supported by her off screen life. In 60s and 70s, Şoray played honourable and loyal wife roles and had principles known as the "Şoray Rules" which included the rejection of the kissing scenes or extreme eroticism. According to Kahraman (2001; Qtd. in Akbulut, 2008, p. 102), Şoray's image represented the integrity and morals of the people from the rural areas. Therefore, the posters of her films would be meticulously designed so as to receive approval from the public, whereas the posters of actors who could be considered as having a secondary status or of those who played in sex films were prepared by a different approach.



Fig 7. *Farewell Kiss* (Veda Buses) (Ülkü Erakalın, 1965). The "holy" characteristic of the star is mentioned by the exaggerated size of the head. The display of the star's body, especially the close-ups, is very important in the creation of the star's image. The close-up of a star's face is institutionalised as "the window opening to the soul" in (Akbulut, 2008, p. 103).

Another interesting example for the star posters is the *Wedding Night* (Düğün Gecesi) (Osman F. Seden, 1966) (fig. 8) which stands out with a typographical design of the star names. The names of Zeki Müren and Türkan Şoray was written in a simple form yet with big fonts without serif causing a strong effect, being almost the same size with the title of the film. These letters are highlighted with the illustration of light beams taking the form of stars. Typographical placement was almost designed so as to please the fans of both stars that supposedly had equal popularity. (Şoray's name is longer, whereas Müren's name is bigger). Moreover, the combination of the names by co-using the same letter points to a common sharing such as love, destiny and success.



Fig. 8. *Wedding Night* (Düğün Gecesi) (Osman F. Seden, 1966)

As Yeşilçam is established upon the mythical identities of the stars, sometimes the title of the films would emerge in the form of idealization of the stars: *The Most Beautiful Woman in the World* (*Dünyanın En Güzel Kadını*) (Nejat Saydam, 1968), *Woman to be Worshipped* (*Tapılacak Kadın*) (N. Saydam, 1967), *Goddess of Love* (N. Saydam, 1969), *Immortal Woman, God Bless She is Like a Baby* (*Ölümsüz Kadın, Bebek Gibi Maşallah*) (Mehmet Dinler, 1971). These slogan-like titles were highlighted with beautifications that is reminiscent of the beauty of the star, and with various typographical features such as colour choices and font types and size. Due to the "trade" and "mass production" that lie within the basis of the Yeşilçam industry, the films would sometimes be directed by the assistants instead of the real directors and thus the name of the star remained even bigger than the film title, whereas the director's name was written in a smaller form than the logo of the film production company. However, in some cases a slogan such as "A Metin Erksan Film" would be used containing the name of the director and the director names were written as big as the actor names or the film title. While this could be perceived as an imitation of the foreign film posters, yet in some exceptional cases, it could be explained with the fact that the audience really attaches importance to the names of the directors such as Metin Erksan, Lütfi Akad, Memduh Ün. However, sometimes being a star was not sufficient to be highlighted on the poster; for instance in a poster of the film in which Öztürk Sengil takes place, the primary highlight is given to a female dancer figure. According to Böke, this poster was first designed as to highlight Serengil; however it was changed with the pressure of the producer and the theatre owners.

The most common example that we can come across in the star posters are the posters formed with the framed image of the star as seen in the poster of the film *Even Superior to Love* (*Aştan da Üstün*) (Atıf Yılmaz, 1970) (fig 9). Here the star is presented as an object of art, "object d'art" (Rabello ve Allen, 1988, p.301). A frame is used in order to preserve or highlight a valuable or "worth-

looking” object. While the images of the stars are inside the frame as if they have fetishistic or imaginative values, star names were placed outside the frame due to the importance they had in reflecting the star identity. This “self-reflexive” attitude underlines the image of the star not as a character within the story of the film but as famous and popular singer-actor Zeki Müren (his name is even written by the use of star symbols in letter “ı” and “ü”). Yeşilçam melodrama itself periodically stresses its own artifice or makes obvious that it is a fictional work by its variety show manner, the star text, or other connotations of being “fiction” that destroys its verisimilitude.



Fig 9. Even Superior to Love (Aşktan da Üstün) (Atıf Yılmaz, 1970)

According to Özgüç (1965; 8; Qtd. in Kirel, 2005, 83) the measure of stardom in Turkish cinema was firstly the sympathy of the audience towards the actor and then the investment of the film distributors and owners; and it wasn't only about being a good actor. In order to keep the interest of the audience alive, the stars insisted to play the innocent young girl or the brave hero (Gökmen, 1973; 42; Qtd. in Kirel, 2005, 83). The producers did not take risks; therefore, similar stories with more or less the same characters were repeated. After the 60s were over in 70s and 80s with the change in the film industry the stories and so the stars' images began to change and geared more towards to films about social realities and characters from real life (Kirel, 2005, 84-85).

### **Beefcake Posters**

In his book *Ways of Seeing*, J. Berger (1972; p. 55-56) says visual languages give promise of poverty and happiness by representing women as “cheesecakes”. Berger argues a woman is depicted to feed the hunger of others. But in terms of Turkish melodrama posters like that of Hollywood there is also the “beefcake” case which is the display of the male flesh. This poster type has some variations within itself: poster with the sensitive, maternal, emotional image of man; poster with the partly naked image of man as the object of



sexual desire and masculine, warrior identity as well as image to imitate; and poster with the image of man as the object, and image of woman as the bearer of the look of the spectator. But no matter how the male is displayed the male image always represents the "ideal".

Like Richard Dyer (1996, p. 36) mentions, a woman looking away takes her eyes from the spectator in a modest manner, she doesn't seem to be interested in something else. But the man looking away is seems to be gazing directly at something else that interests him. In melodrama posters, the male object to-be-looked-at, just like in the poster of *The Unforgiven* (Affedilmeyen) (Turker Inanoglu, 1966), looks towards outside the poster without engaging the eyes of the female and the spectator, but with confidence, passion, seeming to care about more important things than both. In the beefcake posters the direction of the look is oriented from the female towards the male with fear, respect, adornment, jealousy and prayer for mercy.

Since the movie goers of those times were mostly women, and there was even the display of the flesh of men on the posters, then there seems to be an erotic intention within the design of these posters. In some of the beefcake posters shirtless male bodies are used to sell male sex appeal in a less direct approach and the threatening sexuality of the male figure locking his thumbs in his belt right above the pockets, and his fingers will point down to his genitals may be observed like in the posters of *Mustafa from Galata* (Galatalı Mustafa) (A. Gülyüz, 1967) and *My Best Friend* (Kral Arkadaşım) (Osman F. Seden, 1964) (fig 10). Also after remembering Freud's argument that the gun stands for the phallus, the beefcake posters dominated by the men with guns and raised fists protecting women from danger, coded with action and patriarchal iconography seem to have erotic implications within themselves.



Fig 10. *My Best Friend* (Kral Arkadaşım) (Osman F. Seden, 1964)

The eroticization of the body of the male, in terms of melodrama and movie posters, involves to a certain extent the figuring of the male like the depiction of women. According to Doane (1987, 97), "in the love story, the male undergoes a kind of feminization by contamination- he's to a certain degree emasculated by his very presence in a feminised genre". In Turkish Melodrama posters we can observe the man with emotional facial gestures, holding babies with a mother's care or laying their heads on the knees of their lovers

like in the posters of *Ruined Home* (Yıkılan Yuva) (Orhan Aksoy, 1967). While romance is experienced between female audience and the idealized image, they happen to be in the position of fetishists (Doane, 1987, p.118), dreaming of the perfect but living with the ordinary.

### **Phallic Woman Posters**

These posters may be interpreted as the reflection of woman's envy towards man while "holding a mirror" in one hand. The "split" images of the masculine woman and the feminine one exist in this type of poster as a couple. This duality within the gender of woman as well as their common feature, which is being the object of sexual desire, is emphasized. The characteristic of this "split identity" is seen in the films and posters also like the opposition between the conservative, the good and the immoral, the bad. In Yeşilçam melodrama poster of the phallic woman, the female has the active role of advancing the story and stands for the controlling figure that the spectator can identify. But even if the female is depicted as masculine femme fatale; the preferred gender is emphasized by the beautiful, feminine image of the same or another woman. The gender differentiation within the woman herself as the "lady" and the "active femme fatale subjectivity" is expressed by the clothes, the posture and the gestures like that of smoking in the phallic woman posters.

In the poster of *Her Eyes Worth a Life* (Gözleri Ömre Bedel) (Ülkü Erakalın, 1964) (fig. 11) the emphasized figure in black dress, holding a cigarette, looking directly in the eyes of the spectator in a rather masculine femme fatal way seems to be the same woman in white wedding dress with the cute smile. Her presence makes manifest the male's impotence and there is a threat posed by her sexuality. But the allowable representation of femininity seems to rest and wait aside as "to drive the figure of excessive female sexuality into the ocean" (Doane, 1987, p. 99). The two men in the poster are differentiated as the male being held and made happy by the bride and "the man in crisis" being destroyed, castrated under the knees of the phallic woman. And this underlines the statement that "the best woman is the lady of her house" and romance is safer and more rewarding with her. Like Doane (1987, p. 118) mentions, "in a patriarchal society, the myth of romantic love is always there to act as an outlet for any excess energy the woman may possess, to, somewhat paradoxically, domesticate her".



Fig 11. *Her Eyes Worth a Life* (Gözleri Ömre Bedel) (Ülkü Erakalın, 1964)

In Turkish cinema the films representing the tomboyish, masculine female characters aside with the contrasting feminine characters was very common between the years 1959-1965 (Biryıldız E., 1993; p. 13-14; Qtd. in Kirel, 2005, p. 281-283). These years were the times of industrialization, capital, the spread of consumerism and migration. Women could not continue to be themselves if they wanted to have man's jobs; in order to be equal and have the same rights with men; women had to wear their clothes. In all these moves the masculine character transforms into a lady, leaves her job and be the woman of her home next to her husband. Although these kind of films (and so the posters) seems liberating and going against the patriarchal rules of the society, in between the lines it was empowering the patriarchal ideology.

### **Posters of Movement**

During the creation of the new character of the nation, both conservatives and liberals defined themselves and "the other" in terms of the local culture, Islamic religion and modernization through the expression of gender and specifically through the image of the woman's body (Yaşın, 2000, p.78). G. Pollock in her article "What's wrong with the images of women?" (1992, p. 136) mentions that, "rather than compare different images of women one needs to study the meanings signified by woman in images with reference to, for instance, man in images". When the bodily schemas of the male and female figures are observed within the poster as the elements of design, an interesting difference might be seen. The accepted characteristics of men and women seem to be influential on their images: Danesi (1993, p.55) states that the female body chart denotes sexuality (sensitive, passionate, hot) and remains in its shell, yet that the male body chart reflects the masculine sexuality (hard, rude). According to Barthes, "woman is stationary and faithful and waits. Man on the other hand is "indecisive, desultorious and travels and hunts" (Qtd. In Doane, 1987, p.109). Due to the active-passive contrast of the beholder and

the one beheld, man as if rejecting the passivism is mostly depicted as active or even if he does not show any activity, he gives that kind of an impression with his posture and look. Another interesting aspect on these posters is the outward (active) movement seen in the representation of the male bodies: Pointing a gun, raising a fist, leaning back, strong looks, etc. On the other hand, the female body movements are contrarily depicted as being inward (passive): closed arms, leaning towards the men, gestures of fear, eyes looking down. According to Fast, the closed body chart might be interpreted as "I am confused, I can not find what I need, I am trapped, I am stuck, save me" and "I can approach and I am already ready" (Danesi, 1993, p. 100) and this is the passive, acceptable and moral way of communication for the women. The representation of female bodies change according to the characters they symbolize: innocent women have the submissive inside movement while vamps and bad, provocative women characters have nearly the same outside movement like men. Also mostly the eyes of those, the direction of the looks have the same kind of movement.

According to V. Atayman (1998, p. 44) melodrama is a reality of a life full of contradictions. All the imaginary dualities in the melodrama posters are in fact the synthesis of the social and cultural conflicts arising from the fact that Turkey is during that period stuck between the traditional east and the modern west. In Yeşilçam melodrama posters, the contrasts frequently emerges on the images of the characters as vamp versus the innocent and bad versus the good. "Mean" women always play secondary roles and they are also included in the posters as secondary figures. They mostly cover small sections on the posters or just the corners. Despite this, even though such a character does not exist in the film, the "mean" woman image is usually used on the poster as an eye-catching factor. The representation of the female body changes according to the characters of the film: while the innocent women obediently and compliantly moves inward, vamps and provocative "mean" women almost have the body movement chart of the men which are mentioned above.

In the poster of the *Brawl of the Brothers* (Kardeş Kavgası) (Türker İnanoğlu, 1967) (fig 12-13) the duality between the female characters is ensured with their clothing styles, colours and the direction of their body movements. The woman in white holds her hands in her pockets. She slightly turns her head and eyes towards the point where the man stands. The arm and the eyes of the woman in black low-cut dress are clearly directed towards the man. Her body in fact has an outward movement. On the other hand, the man in red reflects the passion and activeness. He turns his hands and eyes towards the girl in white. Thus, just like every "real" man in Yeşilçam melodramas he prefers to love the one who is "pure, untouched and preserved".



Fig 12-13. *Brawl of the Brothers* (Kardeş Kavgası) (Türker İnanoğlu, 1967) and its body schemas concerning movement.

## Conclusion

It might be concluded that Yeşilçam posters through their attempt to represent romance spoke the language of Turkish society and film industry as well as helping the social values to last by the help of the formulas attempting to revitalize the traditions by expressing them in more modern terms. In melodrama these formulas of traditional moral order even in the "clothes" of the modern cause a conservative way of representing and expressing heterosexual love as well as the repression of sexual act. These posters are the synthesis of the realities, conflicts and fantasies of Turkey in a unique time of cultural transition and transformation.

Yeşilçam posters were prepared as "patchwork" by the labour and input of many participators including the illustrators, printing houses, producers, distributors, directors, actors and the audience. Although some of the characteristics of the Yeşilçam posters of the 60s and 70s still continue in today's film posters, it seems that perceiving the posters as a combination of visual and written material or a "verbal picture" has been replaced by a conscious design understanding; a belief in the power and significance of design; the need for a more coherent and mindful design decisions; and working with design professionals. Cinema and design have integrated even more when compared to former periods. Today's Turkish film industry and so the film posters still carry on certain ideological aspects of Yeşilçam mentioned through out this paper, nevertheless the cinema industry seem to be working more towards the creation of a cooperate identity for films with the film titles, trailers, flyers, merchandise and so on.

It's open to argument if the impact of Yeşilçam film posters had been harmful or advantageous for graphic design and culture in Turkey. But it's a fact that most of their designers are gone and replaced by others. And the "educated" designers who had been much more involved in theatre plays than those of films have become the authorities of graphic design in Turkey.

Besides all the messages or meanings associated with these posters, there's a great number of good memories living bound to Yeşilçam in the minds and hearts of their audience. Yeşilçam posters still have the power to make their beholders smile and carry them away to nostalgia. As stated by Ferit Edgü (Qtd. In Altıntaş, 1992, p.11), posters are "the language spoken by walls, their human language, and their living language, comprehensible to all". And because the colourful face of the past reflects from them, they are loved.

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