BRIDE: COMES WITH A PRICE
A VISUAL NARRATIVE OF BRIDE EXCHANGE AND CHILD MARRIAGE

by
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ABSTRACT

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The main goal of this study is to analyze child marriage and bride exchange that may apply to all women and girls regardless of their age from an artistic perspective according to the generally accepted human rights standards of the 21st century. These issues were addressed as “disturbing” elements of the society in this thesis. Therefore, artists who have experienced social problems and reflected them in their artworks are examined. Also, it is explained in this thesis that at which stage child marriages and bride exchanges have become a tradition. While human morality contradicts social realities, this study seeks to provide awareness on the public opinion and on the decision makers. Within the scope of this thesis, an animated graphics “Berdel” is composed by using the advantages of animation technique in order to raise awareness of the society and to draw attention to this tradition, in other words, this problem.

ÖZET

GELİNİN BEDELİ
BERDEL VE ÇOCUK EVLİLİKLERİNİN GÖRSEL ANLATIMI

ECEM KÖKLÜKAYA

Görsel Sanatlar ve Görsel İletişim Tasarımı Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Temmuz 2019

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Anahtar Kelimeler: çocuk gelin, berdel, başlık parası, çocuk evlilikleri

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, yaş sınırına bakılmaksızın tüm kadın ve kız çocuklarına uygulanabilen çocuk evliliğini ve berdeli (gelin takası), 21. yüzyılın genel kabul görmüş insan hakları standartlarına göre, sanatsal bir bakış açısıyla analiz etmektir. Bu konular, bu tezde toplumun "rahatsız edici" unsurları olarak ele alınmıştır. Bu nedenle, toplumsal sorunları yaşayan ve bunları sanat çalışmalarına yansıtan sanatçılar incelenmiştir. Ayrıca, bu tezde çocuk evliliğinin ve berdelin hangi aşamada gelenek haline geldiği açıklanmıştır. İnsan ahlakı toplumsal gerçeklerle çelişirken, bu çalışma kamuoyu ve karar vericiler hakkında farkındalık sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu tez kapsamında bir animasyonlu grafik olan “Berdel", animasyon tekniğinin avantajları kullanılarak toplumun farkındalığını arttırmak ve bu geleneğe, başka bir deyişle, bu soruna dikkat çekmek için oluşturulmuştur.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Child marriage and the bride exchange are problems that maintain their negative positions as issues all around the world and particularly in Turkey. Although there are various reasons for these practices, reported by the International Center for Research on Women the main reason is stated as poverty (2017). This problem is most commonly encountered in underdeveloped or developing countries where poverty is widespread. (Şen, 2014). In addition, the lack of education is also one of the major factors that play a role in child marriage and bride exchange. As the lack of education increases, the ratio of child marriage and bride exchange also increases (Calp, 2014). In other words, there is an inverse relationship between education level and child marriage. Socio-economic factors, socio-cultural factors, religious beliefs, and social gender inequalities are further causes of it.

Although child marriages also occur with underage boys, the ratio of girls who marry underage is approximately 5 times higher on a worldwide scale (Anık & Barlin, 2017). As reported by UNICEF, currently there are 650 million women who have been married before the age of 18. On the other hand, the number of men who were married before 18 is 115 million. Boys that get married at an early age do not encounter the consequences that girls face due to biological and social differences. Although the boys do not face the same costs, their education and lives are negatively impacted. After the marriage, girls are expected to be loyal to their husbands, bear their children, and perform household duties. This imposes a major psychological effect on them because they are restricted from making their own decisions. These young girls can also be subjected to physical abuse by their husbands. Considering the statistics mentioned above, it can be said that girls are exposed to more abuse.

The source of this abuse against young girls and women is male domination, which can be seen in many parts of the world. It is said that women are judged more mercilessly than men by the society due to the concepts of morality and honor imposed on women. The belief that women have always been inferior to men may stem from the belief that the contemporary male dominated social organization have existed in the primitive society as well. On the contrary, in primitive society, women had a very different and a much more superior position than they do in today's world. In matriarchal communal structure, the woman was productive and efficient, social life was based on the main law that assured the lineage passed from the mother to child.

While trying to reawaken existing women's rights in male-dominated society, this thesis aims to provide awareness among women who keep quiet when they witness or experience abuse by ignorant men who are content with their situations. In addition, the goal of this thesis is to educate the unaware youth about the importance of this issue. Since there is minimal artwork on bride exchange and child marriages in Turkey, this study is important in terms of setting an example and raising public awareness about this problem. *Berdel* is a video I composed to convey women's emotions when they are forced into marriage at a young age. For this reason, the video of Berdel, which was created as a result of this research, will be donated to the foundations that same mission along with this thesis. Berdel is the Kurdish word for bride exchange. As it is watched by more people, it will participate in the protection and education of children and women. Their goal is to help them develop a constructive and productive personality in the society of the future, as well as to help solve their problems while protecting them. They also take on the responsibility for raising awareness and helping uneducated women complete their education. These foundations work on gender equality, with particular emphasis on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Sharing the video, *Berdel,* with these foundations as a social responsibility project is an important step in contributing to the development of enhancing the awareness and social welfare of the target audience of the mentioned foundations above and this thesis; uninformed parents and specifically, people in rural areas of Turkey where the ratio of education is relatively low.

At the same time, it is believed that with academic and scientific studies on this issue the development and spread of visual arts in Turkey would be possible and the study could contribute to the people involved in both communication and artistic works.

In chapter 2, I discuss at which stage the matriarchal social structure in primitive societies changed its shape as well as the consequences of the patriarchal social structure. Foods accumulated as a result of the development of agriculture and animal husbandry produced a new kind of wealth. Cannibalism came to an end and the first steps leading to civilization had begun. Thus, the state social structure was held on, and the concept of private property emerged. With the emergence of private property, gifting ceremonies held in primitive clans transformed into what is known as shopping in today's world over time. The gifts given to clans were transformed into sales bargains used to purchase women who were set to be married. This remained a tradition that still affects the present day.

In Chapter 3, I attempt to explain that, the globally widespread bride exchange and abuse associated with it was most often applied to children. After explaining what child marriages and berdel are, I added the views of men and women who have experienced it all over the world and pointed out that this tradition actually had a lot of negative consequences. I shared the reasons and negative consequences of bride exchange and accompanying child marriages in Chapter 4.

Since this is a social problem, I have examined in Chapter 5 how other artists deal with social problems and how they reflect these disturbing realities to their audience. At this point, artists such as Francisco de Goya, Théodore Géricault, and Şükran Moral who have art works in the theme of "disturbing" was related to my own practical outcome *Berdel*, and the movie *The Stoning of the Soraya M.* from Iran, which provides very close examples of the persecution of women are discussed.

In chapter 6, firstly, I touched on why I chose animated graphics as a medium when I put this video out. I discussed the content of the video *Berdel* I composed and what I intended and what I tried to avoid while producing this video. At the same time, with the guidance of my knowledge of art history, I explained the digital paintings I created, their meanings and their contribution to the video.

2. GENERAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Matriarchy to Patriarchy

As specified by Reed (2014), it was over a hundred years ago that matriarchy was discovered for the first time and there is no precise information about when this order was first applied in history (p. 131). But it is clear that; in these primitive communities, there is no trace of the oppression of women. The oppression of women emerges with the development of private property and the division of society into classes (Markowitz, 2012).

> "…Social labor is the prime feature distinguishing humans from animals. In the beginning this was largely in the hands of the women. They were, so to speak, the first farmers and industrialists; the first scientists, doctors. nurses, architects, and engineers; the first teachers, artists, linguists, and historians. The households they managed were not merely kitchens and nurseries; they were the first factories, laboratories, clinics, schools, and social centers. Far from being drudgery, woman's work was supremely creative; it created nothing less than the human species…"
>
> Evelyn Reed

Also, according to the idea adopted by Engels, the very first societies were matrilineal. In these societies there was no monogamy, thus the identity of the mother was obvious even if the father's was not. As a result, the lineage had to be determined by the mother. "In that case it is clear that," says Engels, "as long as the group marriage prevails, the lineage can only be determined on the basis of the mother, and therefore only the lineage of woman could be accepted. And in fact, this is the situation of all people in the period of atrocity or in the lower stages of barbarism." (2000, p.23). The emergence of the notion of patrilineality was not due to the increase in knowledge about the biological aspect of parenting. According to Engels, the concept of patrilineality occurred because of the

emergence of private property and the necessity of the law of inheritance. The concept of patrilineality had taken its present place when the government legalized laws such as the line of origin, inheritance rights, and the passing of property and titles from father to son. However, Engels' discourse does not explain why the inheritance must pass from father to son, and not from mother to daughter. The abundance of food, which arose with the advancement of agriculture and animal husbandry, provided a basis for the increase of the population and steps to civilization. The intensification of the population and developments such as more complicated division of labor, mining, wheel, and writing, have led barbarism to give its place to civilization. The increase in the accumulation of food resulted in the propagation of animals, also the increase of gifts among the clans and individual enrichment. The development of personal properties brought an end to cannibalism and the victimization of humans. The first steps of the transition to the state-owned society were taken with the formation of private property and individual wealth. When the fact of private property appeared, people and animals became remarkably valuable to be randomly sacrificed. Individuals could use the labor force of people and animals, and could obtain an ever-increasing capital. A man in a matrilineal society could thus have made his wife's child of his child in exchange for his property. Therefore, as Engels states, “group marriages” are replaced by monogamy. Thus, both of the spouses would benefit from the laws; in fact, the basis of patrilineality would be created in this way.

However, the role of monogamy in a male-dominated society should not be underestimated. Reed remarks that pregnancy of women and the practice of bringing a child to the world was a miraculous event in primitive societies (2014, p.341). Since it is not possible for them to know the notion of “father” in a biological sense, they believed that the woman was getting pregnant by eating something herself, or by a man have her eating something. It was a success for a man who thinks he can get a woman pregnant by having her eat something, it could not be expected to find it odd. Therefore, there were no concepts such as morality, jealousy or honor. Because of the awareness, the man, who wanted to get a woman under control, have reached the sovereignty on women by the monogamy.

2.2. Bride Price and Purchase Marriage

As Freud argued, the laws of the patriarchal system did not limit the marriage of men. Until the patriarchal family system took its present form, women were pushed out of social production in different periods and geographies with various laws or religious systems. Thus, the role of the female which provides the continuation of the paternal line was awarded to him. With the evolution of slavery, women were completely isolated from society and confined to their houses. Their social functions were diminished; also, they were attended to domestic affairs. Engels, indeed, agrees with Freud concerning the fact that men's wishes were infinite.

> "One may suppose that the founding of families was connected with the fact that a moment came when the need for genital satisfaction no longer made its appearance like a guest who drops suddenly, and, after his departure, is heard of no more for a long time, but instead took up its quarters as a permanent lodger. When this happened, the male acquired a motive for keeping the female, or, speaking more generally, his sexual objects, near him; while the female, who did not want to be separated them her helpless young, was obliged, in their interests, to remain with the stronger male. In this primitive family one essential feature of civilization still lacking. The arbitrary will of its head, the father, was unrestricted."
>
> Sigmund Freud (1962, p.47*)*

In reality, however, this marriage only targeted women: women were despised and excluded. "Thus", says Engels "the absolute power that men establish on women is once again declared as one of the basic laws of society (2000, p.35). It is out of the question that monogamy emerged as a result of the reconciliation of women and men in history, on the contrary, the result of an invisible conflict between the sexes as genus subjugation to the other.

Food exchange to bring families together in primitive societies played an important role in establishing marriage relations. But, the exchange of food conducted by the men of clans turned out to be a different situation and they began to exchange their properties instead of food items. In this way, customary marriage gifts changed direction and started to transform into "bride price". The fact that this gift exchange was made between men

led to the development of the bride price in the male monopoly.

Therefore, this situation was the first factor in the progress of private property in male hands. Small gifts started to become an inadequate price for marriage, and as a result, people began to renounce their precious property. When farming just began to be developed, cattle suddenly became valuable for society. People could utilize the advantages of animals such as support for the workforce and as a nutritional source. Once these creatures began reproducing and growing in numbers, people were able to profit several times. Therefore, these fertile animals were the first choice in order to get a woman, besides, it was the first value used to transform a marriage gift to the bride price. Although the absolute property of this new value, according to its conjuncture seems to be innocent, women lost their sovereignty as a result of the transformation of gifts into the bride price and the consolidation of it with "purchase marriage" as Reich states (2013, p.70). Consequently, bargains were carried out among men, regardless of what women thought and wanted. Women who have been seen as a goddess, their bodies and sexuality, were brought under control by the dominance of men.

3. BRIDE EXCHANGE AND CHILD MARRIAGE

3.1. Berdel (Bride Exchange): Ordered Bodies

Bride price, which has become more widespread via "purchase marriage", has preserved its position in cultures until the present day. This continues to be implemented in many parts of the world, as well as in many rural areas in Turkey. According to the data of the Turkish Statistical Institute (2011), in rural areas such as Northeast Anatolia, Middle East Anatolia, and Southeast Anatolia, the rate of marriage with the bride price is 27.1%, and this is not a figure to be underestimated. The quality and quantity of the bride price vary legally and culturally from society to society. However, in some cultures, these purchases were not made solely on money or properties.

To exemplify, there is an existing tradition, which occurrence is unknown, being applied in Turkey known as "Berdel". Berdel is an idea which involves exchanging girls for a marriage between families. In other words, while the son of a family takes the daughter of the other family, the same family gives their daughter to the other family's son. Berdel is claimed to mean "instead of" or "honor bribe" in Kurdish (Yücel, 2007). In the English-Kurdish dictionary published by the Kurdish Institute of Paris, it is possible to see the meaning of berdel as "accommodation". (2000, p.16) According to the Turkish Language Society, the term berdel is defined as " Equal marriage of the son or the daughter of the family with the son or the daughter of the other family at the same time" (TDK, 2019) In other words, rather than exchanging any properties, they pay the price by giving each other a girl.

Briefly, berdel is a price that is an equivalent of human life. It can be said that families who have an unsatisfactory financial status see it as a way out. Moreover, they could

regenerate the lost workforce of the family with a future bride. Here, of course, although the agreement is made, the woman's choice or marriage preference is not important nor considered. With all things accounted for, the probability of getting married to someone they want is very unlikely. Whether it is the means of reconciliation, the economy of the families or the cost of blood, the burden of the laws of patriarchal societies is mostly felt by women. An instance which Akyüz indicates from the interviewee (woman) who is married by berdel is as follows;

> "I was sixteen. Strangers came to here (from another village she meant 'people from another village when she says 'strangers'). They saw me, liked me. They said, "They'd come to want you". I didn't ask for marriage at that time. My father said, my daughter is beautiful, hard working. Fifteen thousand pounds, gold bracelets, and I'll give my daughter, he said. I saw the boy, I like it. How do I lie now? But nobody asked me. At that time my brother wanted a girl, we had no money, he could not marry. My brother said they give you the bride price so I'm gonna get married with that money. My father used to argue with my brother… "Won't give you any money", he said, "earn your own bride price." My brother was angry. We were very afraid of him. Someday, he said to my dad, so you have to give M (interviewee). "A. (the girl he wants to get married) has a brother, he's fine, he's nice, we'll make a berdel." My uncle was always involved. My mother, my aunt said yes to the marriage, they decided. They gave me to V. I couldn't tell anyone what I actually thought about it, that I would not be the subject of the 'berdel' just because I wanted the other boy. I said to my mom I didn't want V. My mom said, you will like it when you get married, your brother went and talked, he is a nice guy. And we did berdel." (2018, p.24).

It is straightforward in this example, the brother sought out a suitor for his sister, not allowing for her to make her own decision for his own benefit. There is no need for the girl to express her thoughts and it is not acceptable. In such societies, women do not have a right to resist or a right to oppose to the situation. The opinion of a woman, who is not considered an individual, may not be significant even for the decisions that would change her life. This situation has intensified day by day and transformed into a process approved by women in these societies where "berdel" is a custom. The female gender has been suppressed by society from the beginning of the social organization to the present time. At this point, it may be argued that women accepted the role of gender inequality imposed on them and were adhered to a kind of psychology of learned helplessness. In another research example, the interviewee (male) from the rural area of Turkey expresses:

> "1-2 years after getting married, there was unpleasantness. I felt restless. The

> next day my wife went away in anger, and they (the other family) sent my sister away the next day. My sister is peaceful on the opposite side, with her child, and gets along well with her husband on the opposite side. What is my sister's fault? I want everyone to hear that this berdel thing is bad. We knew Berdel wasn't good, but we were obliged to doing it because of the bride price. I want the bride price to be banned. When it's banned there is no need to berdel, or other similar things. You get what you want, then you can't tie up four people. This is all happening because of the bride price." (Tacoğlu, 2011)

As it can be observed in the two examples, women are passive participants in their marriage and are obliged to abide by the decisions taken by men. It is possible to say that this tradition makes lives more difficult and this is an ongoing complex due to existing conditions within. Anyhow, from the perspective of Eraş, people who were trying to survive in poverty and terrible circumstances due to other reasons didn't have time to fall in love or find someone after their hearts (2009, p.22). In this case, Berdel was the best way to establish a family and was the formula of reconciliation, and a balance between families. Although a successful and happy berdel marriage is still possible, the percentage is very low.

Marriage through exchange like the bride price can be seen in African, Indonesian, Malaysian and Islamic societies (Tezcan, 1993). Jacoby and Mansuri address that the average of all three marriages in Pakistan was made by the exchange method. These marriages are also common in South India and China (Jacoby and Mansuri, 2007). Two examples of a survey within Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian communities conducted by Gangoli and others as follows:

> *Example 1:* "It never occurred to me to have an opinion or a wish in the matter...My parents met his parents and decided everything. No one consulted me…" (W1) [1]
>
> *Example 2:* "I was given a choice [about my marriage], my father did sit down with me and discuss it but I could see the pressure that he was under and I agreed. So is this a forced marriage then?" (W2)
>
> Interviewer: How do you see it?
>
> "Well I was given the choice but if I look at why I said yes then I could say it was forced." (W2)

[1] Letter W represents "Woman".

As seen in both examples, the exchange marriage process is done in the same way in other cultures. Because of the pressure on them, most women cannot understand why they say yes. Furthermore, when they say no, they realize that the result will not be a positive one. In such matters, the woman's objection or rejection usually results in violence until the man obtains what he wants (Altın, 2008). The main point here is the victimization of the woman once again; it is again the woman who might be damaged in any circumstances. From a study carried out by Jacoby and Mansuri in Pakistan, an interviewee (woman) declares that:

> "Yes, my marriage involves bride exchange agreement…When my husband beats me, I go and tell my mother and sister. My brother feels bad about this and then he beats his wife to take revenge… There are many fights in our family because of this… I do feel that it is the women who are being beaten in both families." (2007, p.7)

The example seen in this marriage is the principle of equality in exchange marriages. To illustrate; if the brides have been exchanged between families and one of the women who are married by berdel gets divorced by her spouse, the other bride married by berdel must also get a divorce. Either, when the bride decides to commit suicide or run away from home, the husband's family takes their daughter from the bride's family or takes another girl from them in addition to prevent inequality or a destroyed friendship (Altın, 2008, p.51).

Marriages are covered by both sides, it is a fact, however, those who are negatively affected are usually women. It appears that women have been neglected, while men who were entitling themselves with male domination survived from a patriarchal society. As a summary, the concept of marriage is only to look after a man's benefits.

In previous examples, in order for a father to get a girl to marry his son, he gives away his daughter for his son's pleasure. In this way, he may restore the lost workforce and protect his daughter's honor. The mode of operation of these marriages supports the patriarchal conception, although it is not desired, to maintain its existence.

3.2. The Geographical Dilemmas of Child Marriage

The bride exchange mentioned above is usually applied to children. The reason is, the fact that children are more easily abused due to the decision-making authority their families have on them. The norms and social problems of each age are distinctive. Along with that, the concepts of freedom, human rights, and equality in the twenty-first ultimately a western type of modernization spreads all over the world. Just as the social structure of the society has changed, so has the concept of marriage from primitive societies to the present day Thus, kinship or domestic marriages in the first ages have also been somewhat stripped from their traditional aspects. It is considered as a fundamental right that each individual is to establish his own family, without any distinction of sex, race, language, and religion by marriage (UN, 2015).

And for this, it is expected to have acceptable adulthood before marriage, which is the age of *eighteen* according to Article 1 of the Declaration of Children's Rights published by the United Nations. Marriages made before this age are considered child marriages. According to Article 124 of the Turkish Civil Code, the age requirement of the marriage license is as follows:

> "A man or woman cannot marry unless they are seventeen years old. However, the judge may allow the marriage of men or women who have reached the age of sixteen in exceptional circumstances and for a very important reason. Parent and father or guardian shall be heard before the decision is made"

According to this article, any individual who has reached the age of seventeen may get married, and individuals over the age of sixteen can get married with the consent of the family and the approval of the judge. In some cases, it is possible that the number of marriages carried out without the consent of the woman before the age of eighteen is above the current predictions. As reported by UNICEF, 650 million women are currently married before the age of 18. Also, in a worldwide view, child marriage is most common in Nigeria by 76%. This is followed by the Central African Republic at 68%, 67% Chad, and Bangladesh at 59%. In Turkey, the early marriage percentage is 17.9% as reported in the latest data of the Turkish Statistical Institute. However, in Turkey and other countries,

the consistency of official data could debate for those the child marriages which are not formal and implementing with religious ceremonies because of the norms of the society. It is commonly agreed that the main reason for religious marriage is not the underage people. There are several reasons why. Nevertheless, the fact that the marriage age is less than 18 years old, would not hinder religious marriages. It is to be feared that newborn babies would be allowed to marry on account the fact that has been mentioned above (Akıntürk, p.40)

Child marriages may threaten children's fundamental rights such as education and freedom of expression. Moreover, these marriages may lead to physical and permanent psychological problems on children. Children are likely regarded as low-cost labor and are employed under adverse conditions. Early marriages are also both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality. It should be acknowledged that this abuse carried out under the name of culture, faith or tradition in the world is a violation of human rights. Hence, a solution should be found against these uncivilized behaviors.

4. CAUSES AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF CHILD MARRIAGE

4.1. Causes of Child Marriage

> "You need only to look at the way in which she is formed to see that woman is not meant to undergo great labour, whether of the mind or of the body. She pays the debt of life not by what she does but by what she suffers; by the pains of childbearing and care for the child, and by submission to her husband, to whom she should be a patient and cheering companion. The keenest sorrows and joys are not for her, nor is she called upon to display a great deal of strength. The current of her life should be more gentle, peaceful and trivial than man's without being essentially happier or unhappier."

Arthur Schopenhauer (1851, p.1)

The occurrence of child marriage in the world has reasons such as poverty, lack of education, socio-cultural and religious factors (CALP, p.9). The reasons vary from country to country. The most invariable reason of this is gender discrimination against women and the structure of patriarchal society and its social norms that consider girls less valuable than boys (Selby and Singer, 2018). The number of early marriages is increasing in societies where patriarchal structure predominates with low economic level. In some societies, the birth of a baby boy is met with greater joy than a girl's due to the patriarchal structure (Şen, 2014). In this structure, as Engels emphasizes, the continuation of the property and the lineage is provided by the boy (2000, p.49). Therefore, while the boy is the owner of all these dignities, the girl is seen as an "being" who maintains more insignificant works. Thus, the girls, who are in a lower position than the boys, are less regarded. This situation, which is ultimately the result of the patriarchy, contributes to the continuation of the existing patriarchal structure once again by the early marriage of women.

At the same time, the roles assigned to men and women in society conduce to this inequality. While women are expected to do housework, look after children, and to meet the needs of men, a primitive mindset occurs that men only need to earn money and protect their home. All of these roles are imposed on woman, as a task, “to be mother and wife”. For this predetermined purpose of life for a woman, a man is required. In this regard, indeed, it is possible to say that the idea of underage marriage is applied to prevent girls from having difficulty in their future social life and to adapt more quickly to their homes. The warnings such as “you will become an old maid”, “nobody will want you after this age”, “you will not be able to have a baby” to children as mentioned earlier accelerate the adoption of early marriages.

In some cultures, men have to fulfill certain prerequisites such as circumcision and joining the army before marriage. These are considered the factors that will make men a “man” in the traditional sense. While these factors for men are sources of pride in a society, on the other hand, it is an adequate reason for a woman to be a “female” to get married. The origin of this thought may be the perception of honor and the concern of controlling the sexual life of the girl at an early age. Some parents conduct a ceremony while having their son circumcised. In a sense, they actually celebrate their son growing into a “man”. Simultaneously, from an early age, the son has a perception that the virility is superior in a social sense with sentences such as “show your wienie to your uncles”. The same parents pretend to be a guard of honor of their daughter’s dignity. While the behaviors and attitudes of men who have been raised in this way are tolerated with the thought of “he is a man, he can”, however, the women who are the basis of the concept of morality have been pre-shaped with the concepts of chastity and honor since their birth.

4.2. Poverty

Looking at the regions where child marriages are practiced, it can be said that this is most common in economically underdeveloped and developing countries. The contribution of poverty to child marriages can be presented in three ways: Firstly, poor families often have many children due to lack of birth control and may want to marry their children in order to financially comfort themselves. Another reason is the bride price. Their return

by marrying their daughters would indubitably be a factor that can relieve them. The price they get can be cash or even a few cattle. Or a girl in exchange for another girl. Thus, families who lose their workforce at home can compensate for this gap with the labor force of the substitute. As a continuation of a tradition, it can be effective for girls who grow up with the knowledge imposed on them and raised by suppressed women, to see marriage as a solution because of the economic difficulties in their families. From this point of view, most girls agree to marry at an early age with the idea that marriage is actually a salvation and that they can lead a different life after marriage.

> "I wanted to study a lot, but our economic situation was not good. Dad didn't want me to study. I already had to get married. (…) I was 13. Our economic situation was really bad. They came to ask for me and in exchange for money, they married me to a person I never knew. So I had to get married for the money." (Anık and Barlin, 2017)

In societies with primitive traditions, girls are born grown to become the wife of the house from birth. The daughter receives her education by the mother and learns the household chores. No investment is made for her education or career. On the contrary, she is pressured to fear that she cannot be a good wife if she cannot do household chores. In fact, this attitude leads to the commoditization of girls along with bride price (Calp, 2014). Poverty is often observed in families where early marriages are seen. Poor families consider early marriage as a chance of removing a dish from the table, so to speak, and aim to get rid of the economic burden partially. The same families endeavor to marry their daughter who becomes a "commodity", for the bride price as a revenue stream. This situation is the result of a primitive perspective; whose origins are quite old. These children who are married at an early age cannot usually continue their education, participate in public production and stand on their own feet: as a result, they become absolutely dependent on the husband and his family (Şen, 2014).

4.2.1. Lack of Education

The lack of education of parents plays a significant role in early marriages. In uneducated communities, in addition to the high rate of child marriages, the education of girls is also prevented (Calp, p.20). For most girls in primitive societies, the foundations of marriage have been laid during school age or pre-school. Thus, in the research carried out by Anık and Barlin in Turkey, what this interviewee is expressing is quintessential:

> "(…) My family said the girl never studies and didn't allow me. They gave me to someone immediately. Otherwise, I was going to continue school. My marriage developed between my husband's family and my own family. I was taken from my school, I was engaged at the age of 11, and I was married when I was 13. When I was 11, I had a ring." (2017, p.8).

Education is one of the basic facts for the individual to be able to improve herself and to maintain her life. According to the data of Turkish Statistical Institute dated 2016, the youth who married with bride price, 39% of them have not completed any school, 15.6% were graduated elementary school, while only 1,7% have completed higher education. A good education makes it possible for the individual to gain economic freedom. Therefore, education is the most effective way to deal with poverty. The educated individual could distinguish the truth from wrong and could find the chance to live in humane conditions. It can be said that the uneducated individual is more susceptible to dogmatic ideas and more tightly embraced traditions (Bolat, 2013, p.142). It is also possible to raise awareness of individuals through education: as a result, it is possible to increase their cultural level. This is a factor that might be effective in decreasing the application of social norms and traditions. Through education, individuals can foresee the consequences of early marriages and have a more rational attitude to the implementation of customs. In addition, they contribute to the family budget by getting into business life in different fields as a result of their education. They can have a voice and become a productive individual in society or at least a predominant factor in the family.

Education is also one of the most significant steps for an individual to live a quality life. Through education, individuals who develop themselves and their vision stand on their own feet, striving to reach higher standards that can lead to more prosperous lives. According to data of 2017 shared by Turkish Statistical Institute, while the poverty rate of married individuals who are illiterate and do not have any school graduation is 66%,

that of higher education graduates is 3.3%. According to this result, it is possible to say that the lack of education also triggers poverty, which is the most common cause of child marriages, as stated in the *Poverty* chapter. It can be said that it is possible to prevent child marriages, albeit with a slow process, with the increase of education, awareness of the individual and therefore the society.

4.2.2. Socio-cultural Factors

The cultural structure, traditions, and practices of the society, which develop in line with the religion, are important factors in the emergence of early marriages. These marriages mentioned above are not seen as problems in tradition-bound societies, however, they continue to be reinforced as the "best decisions" for girls. As a result of these traditions and stereotypes, child marriages have been normalized (Göksel, 2018, p.19). These traditions of the patriarchal mindset that come from primitive societies to the present day are primarily applied to suppress the sexuality of a woman, and to prevent her becoming aware. In addition, some families aim to put their children under pressure with discourses such as "you will become an old maid" to marry them immediately.

> "Now, in our country, if she's a little old, she's thought to become a spinster. They say if she was a good thing she could get married. In here, most of them prefer sixteen. Seventeen, eighteen is difficult. Men prefer nineteen, twenty. When he returns from the military he marries immediately. Man has, let me describe, man and wife are aged, man has a son and they marry him off at sixteen-seventeen. The bride is thought to serve them." (Yiğit, 2016)

From primitive societies to the present day, these traditions belonging to patriarchal mentality aim to constraint the sexuality of women, prevent awareness and to marry them off with the pressure of the discourse "you are going to become a sprinter". Otherwise, the honor and dignity of the family would be stained. Aside from the inequality established by the patriarchal norms, the underlying reason is the distrust of the family to their daughters (Şen and Gümüş, 2013, p.86). For instance, in some parts of Turkey, during the wedding ceremony, a red ribbon is tied over the bride's waist over the wedding dress. This represents her virginity. By this method, the family could reveal the virginity of their daughter and demonstrate to their community how "decent" their own family is. Another example; some families hang bloody bed sheets after the wedding night as a

tradition, this symbolizes that the daughter was a virgin until the wedding night. Societies with a primitive mentality, normalize and idealize early marriages with the concepts of morality and honor that are imposed on women.

4.3. Negative Impacts of Child Marriage on Children

Children who have not reached their physical and mental maturity, are brought into certain roles by marrying at an early age. These children are expected to overcome the heavy responsibilities of marriage. This leads a non-adult individual to be overwhelmed by normalized responsibilities such as meeting his demands, engaging in hard work at home, having children although she is underage and being obligated to take care for her family. Such responsibilities negatively affect girls physically and mentally. In addition to physical health problems such as "not being ready for birth", "early pregnancies", "stillbirth" and "miscarriage" etc. psychologically, these children make an effort to cope with emotions such as "inability to socialize", "loneliness" and "regret" (Şen, 2014). Besides, one of the major problems of early marriages is the violence that girls encounter (Gangoli and Others, 2006). It is clear that women, who got married at an early age are exposed to physical and psychological violence, generally expected to assume the role assigned to them without questioning what they want (Bolat, 2013, p.221). An example can demonstrate for the violence experienced by the interviewee, in a survey conducted in Bangladesh, 2019:

> "He used to abuse me the whole night and beat me up almost every day," said Mary, now 20. "I became pregnant, but he didn't stop the abuse. One day he kicked me in my abdomen and two days later I had a miscarriage. My in-laws blamed me for it."

The reasons and consequences of child marriage vary according to countries and cultures. However, in many countries, these marriages are not viewed as a social problem but are considered acceptable due to traditional norms. As a result, communities and children who are involved in marriage game are confronted with economic, educational and health problems that are the common consequences of early marriages.

5. VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF "DISTURBANCE"

Since I am addressing the social problem of child marriage and bride exchange, within the framework of the notion "disturbance", in this chapter, artists such as Francisco de Goya and Théodore Géricault who experienced problems and discomforts and reflected them in their artworks will be examined. Also, the movie *The Stoning of Soraya* directed by Cyrus Nowrasteh and in a similar context the performance named "*Zina"* by Şükran Moral will be analyzed.

Francisco de Goya (1746-1828) was the painter of the Spanish Royal Palace at the period of the Enlightenment, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars (Felisati and Sperati, 2010). He was also known for making portraits of the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. However, what differentiated him from other palace painters was that he distanced himself from the traditional art. Goya starkly revealed the ugliness, worthlessness and stupidity of the when the inquisitions were established, the Spanish people who became impoverished and whose towns were occupied left their dark traces on Goya's paintings. As a result of the unrest of the period and the fatal disease he struggled for months, he became almost deaf. All of this obviously affected his artworks (Ravin and Ravin, 1999). Goya began to live in panic and frustration due to these experiences and he produced his artworks with dark themes revealing the ugliness in a distinct and disturbing way.

With *The Third of May 1808* which he painted in 1814, Goya depicted the execution of people by gunfire who resisted the Napoleonic troops in Madrid. In the painting, he depicted the violence of war from the perspective of victims by reflecting the facts in the most striking form, avoiding the artificiality of the familiar and spectacular battle scenes. In addition to the Neoclassical paintings emphasizing the heroism of the rebels, Goya's

portrayal of the pain and brutality of the execution of people at the hill of Principe Pio was not accepted and exhibited. This was the first example of how Goya revolutionized art history. The biographer Robert Hughes advocates him by the discourse of “the first modernist”. (Lacayo, 2014)

Figure 5.1 The Third of May 1808, Francisco de Goya, 1814, Oil on Canvas, 266 cm x 345 cm

Figure 5.2 Stigmata Detail of The Third of May 1808

When looking at *The Third of May 1808*, the viewer's eye is first caught by the man in

the white shirt with his arms raised. The effect of the bright light on this figure, in contrast to the pale colors of the people next to him, draws attention to the man in white. Goya depicts this figure in a superhuman dimension, on his knees. If he had painted the man standing, this figure would have appeared above all the other figures in the painting. This pose of the central figure with his arms spread evidently suggests the crucifixion of Jesus. Indeed, one can observe one of Jesus' stigmata[2] in the hands of the figure. This approach is considered as a genius metaphor by Goya taking the viewer deep into the history of art.

The dark tones of the painting make this depressing scene even more shocking. The unreal close distance between French soldiers and victims increases the tense atmosphere in the painting. None of the French soldiers are shown as individuals. Their heads are bent forward as if they are about to fire mechanically without looking at the victim. Unlike the adjoined mechanical soldiers, the crowd shows different emotional reactions. At this point, it can be said that the soldiers represented the dictation. The only thing that adds motion to the painting is *color*. The canvas is empty and gloomy, free of unnecessary objects. The carelessly painted buildings give the stage an uncanny background.

The realistic painting of the weather conditions reveals the realistic aspect of the painting. The victims have thin and transparent summer fabrics on them (Licht, 1983). As observed from the darkness, the victims are cold in this event which took place at night (Dixon, 2018). The victims are also cold as they prepare to meet the death that awaits them. The priest in the painting has his hands crossed and stares at the ground. Flickering brush strokes portray this feeling quite well. The general light in the painting is agreed to be caused by the light coming out of the soldiers' rifles. It gives the effect of a light from a hell rising up from the ground. The arms of the body lying on the ground, like the figure in the center, are spread out on both sides. It tells the viewer that the man in the white shirt will die the same way in seconds. Therefore, the expression of this figure is very strong. He can easily make the viewer feel and empathize the fear of. death waiting for him. Corpses lying on the ground also create the familiar fear of death in the viewer. This concept of death is not limited with the dead bodies lying on the ground, but also reminds the viewer of his own death. Because one day everyone will live that last moment begging

[2] Stigmata: The name given to the wounds on Jesus' body when he was crucified.

for another minute. From this horrifying event, Goya has managed to create a masterpiece. The greatest paradox of art is to create beauty inspired by horror, misery, and suffering.

In 1819, Goya began to struggle with his illness again. Between 1821 and 1822, he painted the walls of his house in black and produced 14 paintings called Black Paintings (Carr-Gomm, 2011). *Saturn Devouring His Son* is one of the visuals he produced here, and is the latest example of Goya's depressive mood with wild and tragic figures (Felisati and Sperati, 2010). This work takes its subject from Greek mythology. Gaia, who wants to take revenge on Uranus, who has covered some of his children in the depths of the earth, provokes his son Kronos (Saturn) to defeat his father. When Uranus ended his rule, Kronos was afraid of the same fate and began to swallow his children as soon as they were born. Rheia becomes cunning when Zeus is born and gives Kronos a stone instead of her baby. Kronos swallows the stone with ambition without even looking. When Zeus grew up, he took action against his father and vomited his brothers. After a decade of war between his father, he declared his reign (Cömert, 2010).

In this painting, Goya depicts Saturn eating one of his sons. Saturn, represented in the body of an old man, is illuminated by an oncoming light. His hands, arms, and legs are more simply illustrated than his face. His eyes grew with trepidation and horror, and his mouth opened wide. Saturn appears to be in a hurry when eating his son, as his hair is portrayed as streaming. This is one of the main elements that gives this dark painting a tense and depressive atmosphere. In the center of the painting, there is the figure eaten by Saturn. Saturn who has already chopped his son's head and one arm is depicted as eating the other arm. Goya demonstrates all the brutality of a father who ate his child in a realistic style above his era, with the sharp chiaroscuro[3] and the depiction of ugliness. Indeed, the fact that Goya did not refer to iconographic elements, which would reveal the divine identity of Saturn, may create uncertainties about the subject matter of this artwork. Goya actually describes savagery, destruction and death with this scene. Despite this uncertainty, the painting is thought to be influenced by an artwork of the same name by the Flemish painter Peter Paul Rubens (Bozal, 2005). Yet, unlike Rubens, Goya deforms the figures. Rubens, on the other hand, paints his figures in a much clearer and more

[3] Chiaroscuro: The term describing the use of strong light and shadow in art.

romantic method than Goya's. Saturn is conscious and bites his son's skin gently and politely. However, Goya's Saturn is more savage, because he seems to have lost himself and went crazy while eating his son. It is thought that Goya identified the reality of this horrific event with his hysteria in his inner world and the cruel events of his country and reflected them all on the canvas.

Figure 5.3 Saturn Devouring His Son, Francisco de Goya, 1819-1823, oil mural transferred to canvas 143cm x 81 cm

Figure 5.4 Saturn Devouring His Son, Peter Paul Rubens, 1636, oil on canvas

In the same period, *The Raft of the Medusa* (1818-1819), depicting another tragic event, was painted by the French painter Théodore Géricault. Medusa, a French battleship, was stranded around Senegal in 1816, and since the lifeboats did not take crews, a raft was built out of Medusa's parts for 149 people (Krausse, 1995). 149 people who were left behind to death in the midst of the sea by the governor, captain and officers of the ship, had struggled with hunger, thirst and cannibalism for 27 days. They were finally rescued by the ship Argus, with only 15 survivors. (McKee, 2000).

This painting of Géricault has a huge dimension at 491 cm x 716 cm. Describing the moment when the survivors see their rescuers and try to send a sign led to this painting scandalize. This painting of a horrific moment like this tragedy has never been so realistic (Krausse, p.60). The Argus ship, described as small as a dot in the picture, created excitement among the passengers. They go over the barrels and each other trying to send a signal to the ship. The makeshift raft that swings between the big waves, the bent mast and the corpses on it, describes how hardly the passengers are trying to survive. On the other hand, other passengers appear to be exhausted, pale and dying just like the bodies next to them. It can be assumed that there is a diagonal line from the figure on the left

bottom, the painting to the figure waving the red fabric in its hand. It can be said that this line represents hope and happiness by climbing up into the living bodies from the bodies below the left in the pyramid.

This true story constituted a deep feeling of sadness and pity on people. For Géricault, one of the pioneers of the romantic movement, this emotionally charged event invoked feelings of despair, deprivation, and fear of death which had to be represented. However, in this painting Géricault displayed an idealistic approach rather than a romantic perspective. He was criticized for depicting a tragic event rather than telling a story of heroism in his giant painting. Historian Marcus Rediker describes as follows:

> "…What a lot of these art critics were actually saying is, how is a proper bourgeois gentleman like me supposed to identify with this painting? I don't see myself in this painting. Gericault said, You're right. That's not you in that painting. That's the motley crew of workers who are in fact, our greatest hope." (Tanigawa, 2019)

Géricault chose to work on a large canvas to reflect the horror of the event more realistically. He gave his figures a three-dimensional effect in order to establish the formidable reality effect. Some critics have argued that Géricault went too far with frightening details in his depiction of the bodies. Géricault went above norms such as making the drawings of the moribund people and the bodies in the autopsy room in order to paint the corpses so realistically. Instead of the red undertone blue that appears on real corpses, Géricault idealizes them and gives them more livid colors. Although this event takes place in an ocean, there are very few areas where water appears in the picture. Géricault wants to draw attention to the survivors. The pyramid structure on the painting aims to establish a flamboyant monumentality rather than realism. The composition and the figures described with an approach of classicism make this painting stand between Neoclassicism and Romanticism. Although it seems to be under the influence of the Baroque painting with its dark structure and strong chiaroscuro, it does not coincide with the Baroque style in terms of its subject matter since Baroque paintings often included religious and mythological subjects and heroic stories. In other words, Baroque would not address present day events; however, Géricault brought up a real and new event that would suspend the judgments of society. For example, in *Calling of St. Matthew*, although the clothes of the figures are not described in that period, Caravaggio, one of the greatest

pioneers of the Baroque, does not depict a contemporary event, but a religious event.

Figure 5.5 The Raft of the Medusa, Théodore Géricault, 1819

Figure 5.6 Four Studies of a Severed Head, Théodore Géricault

Figure 5.7 The Calling of St Matthew, Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio

Many painters, such as Géricault and Goya, portrayed the social problems of their period along with their own personal pain and deep sorrow on their paintings. However, Goya and Géricault, who preferred to do so in the most disturbing way, were able to directly convey this horror to the viewer. It is possible to describe the current events that are experienced today by using different fields of art such as painting, music and literature. Also as mentioned within this thesis, it is possible to see many artworks about the persecution of women and girls through child marriages and bride exchange.

Cyrus Nowrasteh, with his movie *The Stoning of Soraya M. in 2008*, preferred to narrate such an event with real people rather than paintings. Performers are made up of real people, so the characters and story could be directly transmitted to the audience. Even though the audience may like to experience the process of creation and the result movies may have the same pleasure. Because, as Eisner asserts, the performers in the film are more real than the "created" characters (2008, p.23). Therefore, the practice of real life is transferred directly to the audience, and as a result, the audience can empathize with less

effort, and can more easily absorb the character/ event. The film is adapted from a real story; the story of Soraya, who was stoned to death in 1986 because of her husband's slander. Throughout the film, we witness the psychological and physical violence Soraya receives from her husband, her sons and even other men of their village. Her husband Ghorban Ali, who set his eyes on a 14- year-old girl, seeks for a divorce and slanders Soraya to get rid of the burden of alimony. Soraya cannot convince anyone that she is innocent, and consequently, she is condemned to rajm (stoning as punishment) by the sharia laws.

Figure 5.8 Soraya, whilst stoning, The Stoning of Soraya M.

In the film, the confliction between the vicious men and the good women who fight against them is truly demonstrated. The fact that such a dark element as the rajm penalty is narrate would be an adequate reason to make this movie disturbing. The rajm penalty was abolished in 2012 after Iran's new legislation. However, due to the sharia laws, this penalty theoretically could be applied according to the judge's decision and with four witnesses. . According to the data by The Guardian's provided in April 2019, Rajm has been made applicable to gays in Brunei. Based on this report, the same sharia law is recognized in some Middle East countries such as Saudi Arabia. Although this fact is not revealed, the victims of these primitive punishment methods are mostly women. Even though it does not bring tears to the eyes of the audience, with all its realism, both the story (and the fact that it is based on a true story) and its narrative style are more than enough to agitate the audiences. As mentioned above both the practice of real life and the real event are conveyed directly to the audience. At the same time, the fact that the characters are real people remarkably contributes to the empathy of the audience. The most disturbing section of the film - as it varies from audience to audience and from experience to experience - possibly takes place when the stoning occurs.

Figure 5.9 Stoning scene in The Stoning of Soraya M.

Figure 5.10 Stoning scene in The Stoning of Soraya

Also, the Turkish performing artist Şükran Moral has probably been disturbed by similar issues as this is reflected on her art detailed below. Making the criticism of the position of women in society and violence against women a frequent subject for her work, Moral criticizes the punishment of rajm under the theme of "stoning of a woman who is accused of infidelity" in her performance called *Adultery* (originally *Zina*) in 2003. According to Moral, the number of people struggling against violence to women in Turkey is very minimal. She attributes this to the fear and to the fact that society is increasingly getting used to pressure. In fact, she argues that women internalize the patriarchal mentality. In this piece of art, Moral buries herself in the ground halfway. Once her head is covered with a white tulle, the men start to bury her in the pit. Moral waiting half buried in the ground, but no stone is thrown. With this in mind, or even just being there, she makes an exposition of this disturbing event to both herself and audience. Whereas *The Stoning of*

Soraya film uses its own fictional space, the spectator and the “art piece” share the same physical space during the performance art; their actual practice is conveyed directly to the audience. Therefore, the experience of the audience here would be completely different. It is an experience which makes the audience think, question and feel troubled, more than an artwork that one can observe with an admiration. This example, demonstrating a critical attitude rather than the blues of a sense of worthlessness creates an aesthetic discourse that intensifies the disturbance (Ümer, 2017).

Figure 5.11 “Zina”, Şükran Moral, Perform art, 2003

Also, with her solo exhibition called Welcome to Turkey in 2014, Moral aims to uncover and discuss the untold and unspoken realities of Turkey. Moral, however, had already addressed this issue in her exhibition *Love and Violence,* in 2009. Nevertheless, in this exhibition, Moral problematizes this issue more since she thinks that the developments in the country since 2009 are getting worse. According to Moral, the situation of women in Turkey has become worse. The excitement and frustration led by all this, pushed Moral to prepare an exhibition. Greeted with the sentence "Welcome to Turkey" before entering the hall, the viewer actually faces the very sad and tragical facts. The viewers first enter the hall and then encounter a cube. There is a video installation inside the cube and the viewer can watch the one-minute video here only by kneeling. Moral aims to punish the viewer in this way because Moral believes that we are guilty of the persecution of these women and children, of the death of children, of taking away their future, and she invites us to apologize. Moral asserts that we do not know the value of freedom given to us

women in Turkey. Due to the disturbance of the sanctions and restrictions against women in Turkey, Moral has reflected this disturbance on her works and is able to protest this issue and make herself heard. Thus, Moral exhibited a bloody bed in the form of Turkish map and a mannequin representing a child bride. In other words, Moral indeed invites the viewer to see the brutal facts of Turkey, while saying "Welcome to Turkey".

Figure 5.12 "Love and Violance", Şükran Moral, Perform art, 2009

Figure 5.13 "Child Bride", Şükran Moral, Installation, 2014

Figure 5.14 “Tales to a Young Girl”, Şükran Moral, Video Installation, 2014

6. BERDEL AND REPRESENTATION OF CHILD MARRIAGE AND BRIDE EXCHANGE

The first humans have felt the need of expressing their thoughts or incidents they had experienced, with sounds, visuals, and letters. These narratives are the major vehicles of the expression of human memory and they constitute communication. No matter what media is used as a tool, the narrative would never be less interested in attracting human beings. Because as long as the means of self-expression is narrative, human beings would not have difficulty in interacting (Altman, 2008). But when it comes to storytelling, Eisner states that the most viable mediums are considered as words and images. He then emphasizes his argument as follows:

> "There are different ways of telling a story. Technology provides many vehicles of transmission, but fundamentally there are only two major ways: words (oral or written) and images. Sometimes the two are combined."
>
> (Eisner, 2008)

Animation is one of the most convenient ways to tell the story because the only limit in animation is the animator and her/his imagination. Many elements that can be used to strengthen the narration of the story, even if they do not exist in real life, can be transferred to the audience through the animation technique. Animation, which is seen as an important medium for creating the desired effect with its persistence in mind, is an important factor in exaggerating the narrative and taking part in the visual perception of the audience (Türkmenoğlu, 2015).

Berdel is basically an animated graphics that has a critical approach against the ongoing bride exchange and child marriage in order of male domination. The persistence of this violence is represented in such a mercilessly way, as mentioned in chapter *General*

Background, and the fact that the subject was treated in few artworks led me to interrogate it. One of the reasons could be the fact that these events occurring in Eastern countries has a lack of education - *especially art education.* Since photography and painting are still images, I preferred animation as a way to represent a disturbance within this thesis. I think that I could reflect my discomfort, imagination, and abstractions as efficacious as possible to the audience by making use of the animation.

When creating this project, the first thing I avoided was producing a cliché, *kitsch*. Because a cliché would not make the viewer think the way I wanted, and it would cause the resulting work to be ridiculous. Therefore, while creating the concept, I elaborated the development of scenes that made the audience think and question. Moreover, I wanted to reflect on the dark aspect of the child marriages and bride exchange with the advantages of the animation technique.

In the video, there was not a single character but were groups of females, male and even baby characters. Since this happened to many women and girls, the animation intended to reveal their experiences not through a main character but instead, it included a multiplicity of experiences. In other words, the practice of real life encompassed the whole animation with a critical approach rather than expressing the events that happened in a single character. *Berdel* generally proceeds with camera movements. In the beginning, one can see a woman looking dead. The camera zooms in and it goes from the woman's eyes to the other scene and stops in front of the house. This house is only one of the examples of women who becomes a “commodity” of this system. When the camera zooms into the house on the same scene, one can enter the room through the window of the house. It is seen here that the feet of a woman give the impression of someone having hanged themselves, and then upwards, in fact, the rope is held by one hand. This hand symbolizes male domination that has become a part of the system that commodifies the females.

Figure 6.1 The woman, startup screen of Berdel

To emphasize that the number of women who have become a commodity other woman appear in different ages and appearances behind the hanging woman. Then a conveyor band from a factory, which appears under their feet, begins to move forward. While I was drawing these women and the men who appeared in other scenes, in terms of their formal characteristics, I observed women who experienced it more and the men around them. In doing so, the photographs taken in different countries like India, Bangladesh and Afghanistan etc. on this issue inspired me quite a bit (figure 15, 16). I considered the following factors while making these drawings such as the clothes of these people, who live in rural areas, their experiences in bad living conditions and movements of them, facial expressions and gestures, the beauty and the innocence of girls, and their old, ugly future husbands who contrast with them. Also, I endeavored to draw women in various appearances as much as possible without limiting myself.

Male characters are depicted more distracted and distorted, since they are the major dark elements. Most of them depicted with beard and traditional clothes (Figure 16). In the same way, I was inspired by these photos, as in women, when creating male characters. In the animation that developed into the concept of a production factory, cold and pale colors were preferred. At the same time red and shades with a rusty effect were used to represent the violence against women and the blood on them. The overall ambiance of the theme was dark, and it played a major role in the fact that the video was stylistically dark and depressive.

Figure 6.2 A scene from the documentary The Bride Price: Consequences of Child Marriage Worldwide by Stephanie Sinclair

Figure 6.3 Children, and male characters in Berdel

Animation, in general, is proceeding through the exploitation of women. In the story, fathers leave their daughters to the factory which houses a system that forces the kids into becoming a member of a mass production. Some of them give birth and some are negotiated for cattle. After birth, babies are divided into groups as boys and girls. Then the girl is tagged, her red ribbon is tied, given her bride flowers, and finally released to the market. Thus, one more girl keeps the path of her life projected from her birth as a "commodity". In another scene, the grave was considered to emphasize the fact that babies were born into a dead life. Here, while male babies are being taken, females are actually turned into a product and put into a "grave".

Figure 6.4 Baby girl preparing for coffining in Berdel

In another scene, it is aimed to provide an interactive experience to the audience. At this point, a QR code is stamped on a girl's forehead. After the camera zooms in to the forehead, the viewer is given some time to scan it with the mobile phone. When the viewer scans the QR code, it brings up the news of Sinem Ç., who escaped at the age of 18 because she was forced to get married and murdered under the pretext of honor in 2017. This and lots of other babies, perhaps in the future would be the woman mentioned in this and similar news. Again in a different scene, a girl is seen in a wedding dress and her father who counts on his daughter's bites at the dinner table. The father, by marrying her, is concerned in reducing a person from the table and makes plans for the future bride price to feel relieved. However, she has dreams and nothing is consulted. While the dreams of the girl are depicted with the bubbles, in the back it appears an old man sneaking around to destroy them. Comprised of many disturbing digital paintings, such as hanging bloody sheets, negotiating men, fathers going to the factory to leave their girls, and etc. this animation aims to egregiously demonstrate this disturbing reality to the audience. At the same time, while demonstrating the concealed aspects of society, it was also aimed to stimulate a disgusted feeling to the viewer by revealing the abuse of children and women.

Figure 6.5 Child bride in Berdel

An animation telling the story of a little girl *Wicked Girl* (2017) from Ayçe Kartal, also a good inspiration for me. This short movie is about 12 men raping an 8-year-old girl named S. in Turkey in 2016. The 12 defendants were brought to the court and released after the prosecutor's decision saying “she wanted her own.“ Kartal, who was very affected by this incident, has created this artwork by observing the inner world of raped children, how they behave and how their body language is affected by this trauma according to the information he received from doctors in the pediatric psychology departments of hospitals.

The animation begins with the window of a hospital room and generally proceeds with the thinking processes of the little girl and the images in her mind. At first, it moves with vivid colors and beautiful images, then the disturbing images enter the stage. The little girl who tells her memories lives in a village with her grandparents. The audience first watches the life of the little girl there. They view the games she plays and the animals she loves. But then the close-up male body, the horned monsters, and the mice eating the little girl's nails darken the atmosphere of the animation. The animation, which does not give the audience any clue about its subject with its naivety at first, breaks the expectations and allows the audience to witness a terrible event. The little girl has been raped and tries to repress her trauma with her memories. Kartal tells the viewer that the little girl is different from other children in that she was raped by depicting the men as monsters who chase after and kidnap her. This depiction changes the direction of the story.

Kartal choses to tell the story from the perspective of the little girl, not the society. He used soft drawings instead of hard drawings to describe this tragedy. As viewers quickly switch between the little girl's good memories and her traumatic memories, they can see that lines and colors change a lot. Her happy memories are depicted with soft lines and vivid colors, while her bad memories are depicted with black, complex and hard lines. Kartal also includes religious elements in his animation to tell the viewers that the little girl who went to the Qur'an reading course tries to make sense of the tragedy with the concept of God. She tries to comprehend the events in his own inner world. In fact, there is no way that the little girl can make sense of rape in any other way. She is unaware that they have raped her because a child at that age does not have sexual knowledge. So the horrible creatures described in the animation actually represent sexual abuse.

Figure 6.6 One of the good memories of little girl in Wicked Girl

Figure 6.7 One of the bad memories of little girl in Wicked Girl

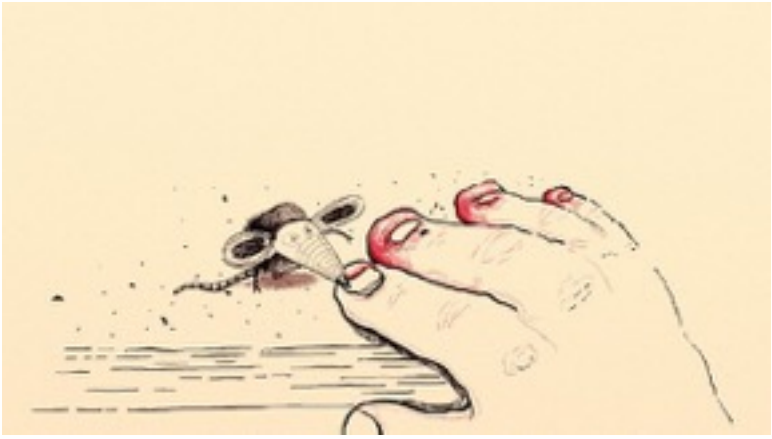

Figure 6.8 Twelve men depicted as horrific creatures in Wicked Girl

The childlike narrative and innocence in the animation are quite contradictory to the violent story he tries to tell. However, Kartal choses to explain this terrible event in this way and achieves his goal. It conveys the tragedy of the incident to the audience in an unexpected, unusual way. This leaves a stronger impact on the audience who is surprised at what they have observed.

Kartal described the little girl in a very simple way. In this animation proceeding with digital drawings, the story is told from the perspective of a single character. While each character has a certain order in the story, Berdel tells how women and girls in undeveloped societies become the commodities of mass-production instead of a single character unlike in Wicked Girl. Berdel, which criticized distortions in the traditions of society adopted an exaggerated form of expression in contrast to the plain and innocent narrative language of Wicked Girl. While Kartal, in general, brings the characters to the foreground with his plain backgrounds in the animation, in Berdel, the environment is also included in the story through background images. Thus, it is aimed to give the audience a different experience by involving them in the space.

Wicked Girl portrays this tragedy in a softer language which is diametrically opposite to the story it encompasses. While doing this, Kartal adds motion to the animation by describing the concept of disturbance with hard lines only when the event is occurring. However, Berdel aims to maintain the tension in the audience from the beginning to the end with a general dark perspective while adhering to this disturbing social problem. At the same time, with its vivid colors and soft line, Wicked Girl adopts an illustrative

narrative style associated with the linear drawings and arouses a sense of uncanny in the audience. This animation, based on a real story, does not have a concern of realism for its narrative language. Nevertheless, it is still successful in conveying this traumatic event to the audience.

Berdel, on the other hand, criticizes immoral social problems such as child marriage and bride exchange with semi-realistic and semi-illustrative digital paintings without arousing any naive feeling in the audience. Just as Şükran Moral applies in the exhibition "Welcome to Turkey" (in chapter 5), Berdel aims to drag the audience directly to the tension and awaken them with a sense of discomfort. Like Moral intended in her exhibition, Berdel, in fact, also blames society for being silent. Therefore, it explains why this animation can be considered as a social responsibility project. In this context, red and its shades such as claret red have been used extensively at the background and on most male characters to represent blood smeared into the hands of society. Also, some shades of blue, which symbolize depression and loneliness in psychology, are used as contrast colors in order to redress the balance of the paintings. (Riley, 1996). For the purpose of emphasizing these primitive traditions of the patriarchal society as explained in the General Background chapter, attention has been paid to the use of red and cyan shades, which are primary colors. With these colors, it is also aimed to capture a dull atmosphere while avoiding pleasant emotions.

Moreover, it is endeavored to emphasize the third dimensions like Géricault's *The Raft of the Medusa* for a more realistic transference rather than the linear illustrative language of Wicked Girl with both camera movements and drawings. In addition, it is aimed to create a "mass production" atmosphere with production lines in some scenes, dilapidated elements and machine parts in the background of the characters which evoke the factory concept. The notion of “disturbance" tackled in animation has been applied by creating a concept with rusty effects spread across the animation.

There are many animations created to raise the awareness of the society about immoral issues. For example, the animation *Happiness*, which is also composed from a dark perspective, sharply criticizes the capitalist aspect of post-modern society by using humorous language. In Berdel, I purposefully avoided humorous language in order to emphasize the seriousness of the issue.

In this animation made by Steve Cutts in 2017, people are represented as rats. Cutts emphasizes the impact and consequences of changing the popular culture on society in contemporary life. Since it contains so many details, it becomes almost impossible to follow everything in the animation. However, rats addicted to their phones, manipulative billboards, drugs, are among the most memorable scenes as they are often repeated. All the billboards Cutts emphasizes are generally based on consumption, alcohol, and money. He has critically reflected all of these as a way of achieving happiness in our contemporary world.

Figure 6.9 The animation Happiness by Steve Cutts, 2017

The animation starts with an underground scene; The rats are trying to get on a crowded subway at the subway station. The information on the signs demonstrates that the subway goes “nowhere" but the rats get on and off the subway, perhaps without any purpose. Their faces are described as angry, sad, confused, and far from happiness. Cutts changes the name of the well-known brands such as Starbucks, Nike and Coca Cola with happiness, however, it is not difficult to understand them because he keeps their designs the same. Unlike Berdel, Cutts criticizes society from the perspective of a single character like Kartal does. A happy rat appears in the scene because he just some shopping. However, then the rat coincides with the discount day called “Black Friday”, and because he wants to buy more as the ads impose on him, he leaves everything he has just taken and mingles with the crowd. The crowd that Cutts portrays here is not far from

reality. Cutts describes the dark side of the consumer society in a humorous, yet pathetic language.

Figure 6.10 Black Friday scene from Happiness

Figure 6.11 Black Friday in Sao Paulo, Brazil, 2018

Figure 6.12 People on Black Friday, 2018

The rat, who thinks he is happy to consume but is actually even more unhappy, then encounters a billboard saying "Drink, forget, smile.”. This is an alcohol ad and there are two more billboards next to it; A whiskey with a message "Drink The Blues Away" and a vodka with the message "The Purest Happiness There". Those messages briefly promise happiness and lead the individual to alcohol consumption for absolute happiness. The rat drinks it all as suggested and finds itself suddenly falling into a gap, and nobody cares about him. Then, again with the information imposed on him, he receives an overdose of the drug of “Happiness" to be treated. The rat, who lives the world he has dreamed for a short time, returns to its bad and dark world. It is the smell of money that triggers his sobriety. Following the money under his nose, the rat finds himself trapped in a workplace including millions of rats. Cutts, who conveys the problem of money to the audience in this way, has rigorously criticized the society which depends happiness on other things. According to him, individuals try to achieve happiness and then attempt to cope with the unhappiness caused by that happiness. Naturally, the solution to the unhappiness that follows is the same thing and thus, this cycle never ends. Cutts conspicuously reveals this cycle with his animation *Happiness*.

When establishing the concept of the animation, it can be seen that Cutts portrays this world in grayscale, while depicting ads and consumption objects in glamorous vibrant

colors. The mess in the community is represented in the video by adding a lot of details and intense animations. Berdel, on the other hand, was not meant to tell the story of a single character. Instead it was intended to be as simple and uncomplicated as possible so that the overall story could be adequately focused. Therefore, rather than an intense character animation moment, attention was paid to creating transitions between scenes with camera movements. Cutts blends animation with humorous criticism by depicting people like rats. Preparing the animation Berdel in the same humorous language might be enough to disturb people, but I doubt that it could capture the effect of the depressive and dark atmosphere it has.

One of the artworks I was inspired by while I was painting the drawings in Berdel is the animation of *In Shadow: A Modern Odyssey* (2017) by Lubomir Arsov which can be considered as a dystopian., Although this animation does not dwell on a specific topic like Berdel does, it reveals the distortions in society in its darkest perspective. In general, I tried to adopt a dystopic narrative in *Berdel*, which is similar to In shadow, dealing with the repercussion of the civilization with westernization. In fact, this language, which was applied to make today's realities more striking and conspicuous, aims to make a strict criticism that describes social problems. Also, it is intended to take off the rose-tinted glasses of society because this pathetic situation of society is tried to be ignored by hiding it from the society itself.

In Shadow, which contains highly symbolic elements, focuses more on socio-politic realities such as capitalism. Arsov addresses issues such as capitalism, colonialism, media manipulation, social media, the pharmaceutical and drug industries on a wide scale, He often emphasizes the depressed and alienated faces behind people's happy masks. In the animation, people are under deep mind control. Their minds are empty, and they have become slaves. These people, who have become mental slaves of the system, are portrayed as puppets. And most of them blind in their senses because to acknowledge the facts will cause the individual to leave their comfort zone and lead to unhappiness. But in fact, these people are already unhappy and alone. For example, Arsov criticizes the situation of the people who try to produce something in the workplace are trying in order to maintain their lives and achieve the happiness imposed on them by the system.

This is a depiction of very dark, terrible and unimaginable conditions. According to Arsov, in fact, the burden that people undertake to obtain homes, cars, luxury foods or clothes imposed by popular culture makes them unhappy.

Figure 6.13 People in a workplace, In Shadow: A Modern Odyssey

Figure 6.14 Scene from In Shadow: A Modern Odyssey

Figure 6.15 Mental Slavery, In Shadow: A Modern Odyssey

In another scene, Arsov criticizes the education system. According to the video, the education system limits children's imagination and prepares them as mental slaves of the future. This education system creates societies that are easier to manipulate. While society and individuals pay the price for this manipulation, it is the people in the ruling class who benefit from such devastation. Like these examples, this animation can be highly associated with Berdel as a form of practice, criticizing the distortions in society with depressive and dark narrative language. In general, Arsov keeps his scenes focused on characters and uses camera movements in this direction particularly, giving depth from front to back or from back to front by zooming. Berdel was produced using the same camera techniques with In Shadow techniques to give a 3D effect to the scenes. Additionally, like Arsow does, in the animation of Berdel, characters were caricatured to a certain point without being too far from the natural proportions of humans.

Figure 6.16 Bloody Sheets in Berdel

In Berdel, which is considered an ugly parody approach of reality, it was aimed to provide the viewer with a more realistic experience together with interactivity. The feeling of uncanny and disturbance, rather than realistic visuals, comes from the practice of real life. The uglier characters depicted are intended to prevent this animation from confronting itself. Because the notion of "pleasant" with a stylistic layout has become a "thing" of popular culture in the current situations (Ümer 2017,). Therefore, the aesthetics of this animation is seen only as an observation situation, this animation contradicts what it is aimed to reveal and causes it to confront itself.

For this reason, this animation offers insightful perspectives on understanding such aesthetics. The destructive and constructive role of its disturbing impact will help to create cooperation between the viewer's ability to comprehend and imagine. On the other hand, it is aimed at the viewer to attribute a meaning to the piece and is endeavoring to change the pleasure of the viewer into the disturbance by preventing the aesthetic pleasure from being restricted by spectating. At this point, the disturbing elements will also provoke a sense of disgust, which is strong enough to make the viewer feel disturbed. This is valuable in providing an effort to confront the viewer with the realities.

As this artwork presents the ugliness and it damages the perception of the viewer, it offers a representation that does not conform to the beauty judgments of the society. Indeed, the artwork exists with the experience of the viewer. As distinguished from the subject matter

of the artwork, the experience it offers becomes crucial. The uncertainty here is unique, and the tool is the form. These forms become different in every viewer, in other words, in every experience.

Simultaneously, the viewer would like to give his experience meaning. Once the viewer cannot do this, the thing he experienced would not change into an aesthetic pleasure. Therefore, there comes a disturbing feeling with the depiction of a non- beautiful object. This deliberately applied disturbance, so-called creepy piece of work, is concerned with disrupting the rules of daily reality and the dominant perception of aesthetic. At this point, the disruptive forms and elements presenting to the viewer instead of aesthetic pleasure would be out of expectations; therefore, the viewer would find this artwork unpleasant and disturbing. However, one cannot prevent oneself from watching against this unpleasantness.

At the same time, the final scene and the starting scene are the same, indicating an ongoing event in a continuous cycle. Here also the story goes out of expectations and gives the viewer an experience that needs to go beyond the comfort zone. As a result, this animation may emphasize the possibility of the fact that unlimited narratives could be transmitted with unlimited techniques of animation. In this way, not only the imaginary boundaries of the artists who use this medium of expression, but also the audience's, are discovered.

7. CONCLUSION

As a woman in a male-dominated society, I found a way to raise my voice somehow while trying to struggle with the cases I have heard, witnessed, and experienced. In this way, I decided to make this subject my thesis topic with a sense of pride of doing my duty even if it is small in overall scale. While I was doing my thesis work, I realized that in fact, the issue did not remain unspoken as much as I thought. However, as a result of my research, I also noticed that there were not many animations made as artwork on this issue. Hence, the fact that the works I have been inspired and have referenced from are in different mediums led both this research to deeper depths and revealed more results.

I made an effort to choose the right style to convey my feelings directly to the viewer while mentioning bride exchange and child marriage which continue in Turkey and in other regions. Also, these were the inspiration for my self-expression on this thesis as I wanted to provoke the disturbance. Within this context, I aimed to develop an approach to the aesthetics of ugliness that is often used in contemporary art, whilst avoiding my work to become a cliché or a documentary.

In today's technology, motionless media are not sufficient for the transmission of information considering the needs of individuals. Briefly, it is more remarkable and memorable for the audience when the motionless forms of art such as painting, sculpture, etc. produced by traditional methods have movement. Therefore, it has become necessary to transfer the movement feature of the dynamic media, which has become the main communication tool of our age, to art. In this context, the animation technique was preferred in this study for a stronger information transfer and it is estimated that this study will be a guide for future research specifically within the scope of child marriages and bride exchange analysis from an artistic perspective.

In this study, one of the reasons why animation was chosen as the communication language for the transmission of this issue to the audience was the dynamism of animation and its accessibility. In this study, it is believed that preferring another medium could not provide all the opportunities provided by animation for bringing this problem to the attention of the society. The fact that the world created in animation is different from the real world was an important factor in preventing stereotypes that might arise. With the animation, I tried not to limit the audience's experience to a single space and a single frame but aimed to make the experience more memorable with the excitement of the unexpected because in animation, the audience is more likely to relate themselves to the video and to have the idea that "I could be one of them" when they are not bound to a single frame, a single place and time.

I believe that *Berdel* could express the pessimistic aspect of the ongoing exploitation entirely and could create disturbance, sadness, and thoughtfulness in the viewer. Also, I hope many more people get disturbed by this issue and find a way to express their discomfort.

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APPENDIX

Images from the storyboard of Berdel