GHOSTLY BORROWINGS:
TRANSNATIONAL HORROR REMAKES IN EGYPT, IRAN AND TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

GHOSTLY BORROWINGS: TRANSNATIONAL HORROR REMAKES IN EGYPT, IRAN AND TURKEY

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This thesis examines horror film remakes in the three most fertile film industries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region—Egypt, Iran, and Turkey—to address transnational filmmaking practices. The analysis engages in case studies of three horror film remakes to demonstrate the strategies of Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish popular and genre cinemas to recontextualize cultural products to mediate their own cultures' desires, hopes, anxieties, and fears. While theorising the cultural phenomenon of genre filmmaking in the MENA region, especially horror, that is underrepresented in contemporary scholarship, this thesis also reveals the transtextual multiplicities. It is argued that transnational influences operate at multiple levels in line with sociocultural, political, or ideological factors (due to their constant displacement, change, and transformation). This thesis also reveals how horror film remakes have contributed to the evolution and generic shifts of the horror genre in Egypt, Iran, and Turkey. Horror films are profitable and appeal to a guaranteed audience. They are produced for commercial reasons, yet they also take a crucial part in representing the fearful, especially in relation to the heightened extreme conservative policies in the region over the last two decades. Therefore, this

thesis goes beyond the understanding of horror film remakes as "derivative copies" and focuses on the remaking processes within the transnational filmmaking practices. It examines Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish horror film remakes in their own right and situates them within their peculiar histories of horror cinema, as well as their broader sociocultural, economic, political, and ideological contexts.

Keywords: horror cinema, film remake, transnational cinema, transtextuality

ÖZ

HAYALET ALINTILAR: MISIR, İRAN VE TÜRK SİNEMALARINDA
ULUSÖTESİ YENİDEN ÇEVRİM KORKU FİLMLERİ

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Bu tez, ulusötesi film yapımı pratiklerini ele almak amacıyla Orta Doğu ve Kuzey Afrika (ODKA) bölgesinin en verimli üç film endüstrisindeki-Mısır, İran ve Türkiye-yeniden çevrim korku filmlerini incelemektedir. Mısır, İran ve Türkiye'de popüler ve tür sinemalarının, kendi kültürlerinin arzu, umut, endişe ve korkularını yansıtacak şekilde kültürel ürünleri yeniden bağlamsallaştırma stratejilerini göstermek için yeniden çevrim olan üç korku filmine ilişkin örnek olay incelemelerini ele almaktadır. Çağdaş literatürde yeterince temsil edilmeyen ODKA bölgesindeki tür film yapımcılığı, özellikle de korku türü kuramlaştırılırken, aynı zamanda metinötesi çokluklar da ortaya konmaktadır. Ulusötesi etkilerin (sürekli yer değiştirme, değişim ve dönüşüm nedeniyle) sosyokültürel, politik veya ideolojik faktörler doğrultusunda çoklu düzeylerde işlediği ileri sürülmektedir. Bu tez aynı zamanda korku filmi yeniden yapımlarının Mısır, İran ve Türkiye'de korku türünün evrimine ve türsel değişimlere nasıl katkıda bulunduğunu da incelemektedir. Korku filmleri kârlıdır ve garantili bir izleyici kitlesine hitap etmektedir. Ticari nedenlerle üretilseler bile, bu filmler özellikle son yirmi yılda bölgede yükselen aşırı muhafazakâr politikalarla bağlantılı olarak korkulanı temsil etmede önemli bir rol oynamaktadırlar. Dolayısıyla

bu tez, korku filmi yeniden yapımlarına "çalıntı" veya "kopya" anlayışlarının ötesinden bakarak, ulusötesi film yapım pratikleri içindeki yeniden çevrim süreçlerine odaklanmaktadır. Mısır, İran ve Türk sinemalarındaki yeniden çevrim korku filmleri, başlı başına birer metin olarak incelenmekte ve ülkelerin özgün korku sineması tarihleriyle birlikte daha geniş boyutta sosyokültürel, ekonomik, politik ve ideolojik bağlamlarına da yerleştirmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: korku sineması, yeniden çevrim, ulusötesi sinema, metin ötesilik

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On 18 October 2002, DreamWorks released Gore Verbinski's *The Ring* in the US theatres. The film was a remake of Hideo Nakata's *Ringu* (1998), and ironically, the production began after producer Mark Sourian saw the film from a bootleg copy (DreamWorks, 2002). Many scholars and film critics praised Verbinski's version for being faithful to its "original". Yet, some of them were quick to note that, with its "oversimplified plot", *The Ring* did not have the same nuance that *Ringu* had (Flowers, 2020). Nakata's version, after all, was a complex story woven with Japan's specific storytelling conventions and the country's long-standing "aesthetic traditions and perceptions of the supernatural" (Wee, 2011, p. 42). The appearance of Sadako, the antagonist of *Ringu*, on-screen denotes something inherently Japanese. With her long raven hair obscuring her disfigured face, and her white burial gown, Sadako is reminiscent of a *yūrei*, a spirit of a woman who died of unnatural causes in Japanese folklore. Because of her unjust death, *yūrei* can be filled with rage, jealousy, and sorrow. That is when she becomes an *onryō*, a tormented spirit that comes back to seek revenge. Verbinski's version, therefore, effaces this "Japaneseness" from the imagery of Sadako's character to *recontextualize* her as Samara in an American Christian setting. While we need to acknowledge that *Ringu*'s sources of horror are Japanese, the film's cinematic lineage is rather transnational. German Expressionist cinema of the 1920s influenced early Japanese cinema with its emphasis on dark, disjointed visuals and vigorous bodily performances. French Impressionism and its extensive use of rhythmic montage and flashbacks also left an impression (Gardner, 2004, p. 66). These developments in the early days of Japanese cinema "indicate the long history of cross-cultural exchange and ideological negotiation that characterises Japan's relationship with the rest of the world" (Wee, 2011, p. 44). Moreover, Nakata's film has a considerable influence from Hollywood films such as *Poltergeist* (Tobe Hooper, 1982), *Videodrome* (David Cronenberg, 1983), and *Lost Highway*

(David Lynch, 1997). *Ringu* is therefore situated between its inherent Japanese context and transnational exchange. What is fascinating about this ambivalent nature of the transnational film remake is that it reveals the broader social and cultural issues. Film remakes draw the displeasure of film scholars, critics, and fans, often dismissed as being easy cash-ins, unoriginal, or formulaic. Yet, the phenomenon attains deeper layers of meaning when films enter the transnational production cycles. The horror genre has received a similar backlash within critical discourse, although its potential to engage with socio-cultural contexts has been regularly acknowledged. Consequently, this work suggests that the transnational horror remake is a prevalent phenomenon because the genre (horror) and the production practice (remake) complement each other, as they both have the "capacity for change [. . .] and openness to new combinations of meaning" (Hand and McRoy, 2007, pp. 2-3).

Therefore, I aim to explore the relationship between horror remakes and the culturally specific context in which they were produced. My approach is more concerned with the issues of representation, mimicry, and transtextuality raised by the varying strategies that transnational horror remakes employ. Horror films or remakes may lack dazzling technicality and narrativity, still, these two forms create considerable cultural immediacy. In light of this, my goal is to analyse horror films and their remakes together, as a single functioning unit, within the transnational context. This approach helps to investigate the convergences and divergences and emphasises the mediation and remediation of cultural discourses through the transnational horror remake.

To investigate this, we need a critical scholarship to pursue these phenomena comprehensively. Considering remakes have been present since the very beginning of film history, it is surprising that remake studies is a comparatively young discipline. Despite the modest steps in the 1970s and 1980s, methodical works have only appeared since around the turn of the millennium. Today, there has been a growing body of research that deals with the film remake from the perspective of transtextuality, intramediality, representation, and transcultural multiplicities (Mazdon, 2000; Forrest and Koos, 2002; Quaresima, 2002; Verevis, 2006; Zhang, 2006; Zanger, 2007; Loock and Verevis, 2012; Wang, 2013; Klein and Palmer, 2016;

Smith and Verevis, 2017). Still, a large part of the research tends to revolve around comparative analysis of individual film couples, which are based on and reinforce descriptive explanations. Likewise, despite several exceptions (Gürata, 2006 & 2021; Raw, 2016; Smith, 2016), there is a geographic overlook in the existing literature that tends to focus only on the film remake within the context of North America, Western Europe, or East Asia.

In an attempt to partially cure this gap, this work intends to build on the existing readings within remake studies by exploring the film cultures and their remaking strategies of several countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. By doing so, we can develop a more inclusive discourse for the transnational film remake. While much scholarship in film studies tends to shift their focus from national cinemas to investigate the transnational multiplicities, we cannot simply dismiss the presence of the "national" in transnational filmic practices. Consequently, three MENA countries—Egypt, Iran, and Turkey—that have deeply rooted and intertwined film histories/cultures have been selected for the study.

The film remake has found a strong ground for itself since the beginning of Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish cinemas. For instance, Egyptian director Issa Karama's horror-comedy *Haram ealayk* ("Shame on You", also known as "Ismail Yassin Meets Frankenstein", 1953), which follows the adventures of Ismail and Abdo in an antiquities shop, was a *disguised* remake of *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (Charles Barton, 1948). Turkish director İlhan Engin's *Kadın Düşmanı* ("Woman Despiser"; 1967), which is about a necrophiliac serial killer, bore significant similarities with Mario Bava's *Sei donne per l'assassino* ("Blood and Black Lace", 1964) and the conventions of the *giallo* genre in general. In these three countries, remakes of each other's films were also produced along with American or other foreign film remakes. For instance, the renowned Iranian thriller *Qeysar* (1969) by Masoud Kimiai, which depicts the quest of a young man named Qeysar to avenge the deaths of his sister and brother, was remade by Orhan Aksoy as *Alın Yazısı* ("Destiny", 1972). Filmmakers in each of these countries have remade, translated, and rewritten films to reflect their peculiar cultures for their local audiences. For this reason, the horror remake in Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish cinemas are important in the context of cultural proximity and affinity.

Next, investigating the filmic iterations within the same genre requires a consideration of how the horror is depicted. Filmic depictions of horror are situated beyond the film's narrative, and closely related to the socio-cultural contexts. As briefly stated above, horror is once perceived as one of the most disreputable genres within the scholarship. However, such perceptions are gradually becoming outdated, and horror studies has been growing exponentially. In contemporary horror studies, reading horror films as expressions of cultural taboos and fears is a common approach (Biskind, 1983; Brophy, 1986; Wood, 1986; Carroll, 1990; Dika, 1990; Jancovich, 1992; Tudor, 1989 & 1997; Lowenstein, 2005; Dendle, 2007). Surely, horror is not the only genre that expresses cultural taboos and fears. However, it has an advantage over other genres in doing so, as evoking emotions like fear, terror, or horror by transgressing social or cultural boundaries lies in its heart. This allows us to compare horror films in terms of recurrent cultural motifs across transnational cinemas. Since the film remake is the iteration and transformation of existing material, the horror remake offers a strong starting point for such research. Still, the intersection of two phenomena is not yet a well-explored subject, with a few notable exceptions (Özkaracalar, 2003; Hand and McRoy, 2007; Lukas and Marmysz, 2009; Roche, 2014; Wee, 2014; Knöppler, 2017). I target this gap in the literature by developing a more comprehensive approach that aims to integrate marginalised national cinemas, the horror genre, and the film remake. Thus, this approach will provide us with an insight into cultural idiosyncrasies through filmic depictions of horror as well as transtextual exchange.

1.1. Context, Approach, and Methodology

The basic framework for my approach comprises established theories of horror and film remake. To understand the horror and its function within the socio-cultural context, I draw on Andrew Tudor and Stephen Prince's texts, and other scholars like Noël Carroll, Adam Lowenstein, and Mark Jancovich. In *Monsters and Mad Scientists: A Cultural History of the Horror Movie,* Tudor argues that the horror film is one aspect of the construction of what is fearful in society (1989, p. 5). Instead of investigating fear in purely psychoanalytic terms, Tudor traces the representations of the fearful and the changes that occur in such representations depending on time and

place. Influenced by Anthony Giddens, Tudor explains human agency on a threefold level. Accordingly, there is *discursive consciousness* at one end of the continuum, *unconscious motivation* at the other, and *practical consciousness* right in the middle. It is *practical consciousness*, an "'embedded' feature of social life, as simultaneously both symptom *and* cause, reflection *and* articulation", that helps us understand the historico-cultural function of the horror film (Tudor, 1989, pp. 4-5, emphases in original). Stephen Prince's model presented in *Dread, Taboo, and The Thing: Toward a Social Theory of the Horror Film* (2004) proposes to read horror films as visualisations of the dialectic between culturally constructed social systems of order and the disruption of these systems (pp. 120-122). Both texts seek to fill an important hiatus in the psychoanalytic model prevalent in horror studies.

Epitomised by Robin Wood's work on the American horror film (1986), the psychoanalytic model proposes that horror films portray the return of the repressed, embodied in the imagery of the Monster, i.e., the Other. Wood employs Herbert Marcuse's notions of *basic repression* and *surplus repression* to analyse the horror film. Accordingly, *basic repression* is the regulation of human impulses and is an inherent part of the human psyche. No social order can come together without a certain level of *basic repression*. *Surplus repression*, on the other hand, is entailed by culturally specific social orders and is used to subjugate the Other (Wood, 2003 [1986], pp. 63-64). Such psychoanalytic essentialism would obscure our reading of the horror film as a manifestation of historically and culturally specific fears. Committing the existence of the social order primarily to *basic repression* is problematic as it transforms phenomena into something that transcends time and culture, and ultimately situates them beyond the reach of the humanities. Likewise, identifying culture as *surplus repression* is to regard it as epiphenomenal and of secondary interest (Prince, 2004, p. 120). However, from a sociological perspective, a human outside of society and culture is no human. This is to say, what it means to be human is inextricably linked to the social order. The sociological framework, therefore, emphasises the cultural in the formation of human identity and the never-ending self-definition process. Here, what is meant by the cultural is rituals, taboos, beliefs, and traditions, that is, principles embedded in a certain time and place, embraced by a certain group of people, and practised for different reasons (Prince,

2004, p. 129). The persistence, transgression and denial of these are inevitable aspects of social order and thus of human existence.

As for the phenomenon of the film remake, I mainly draw on the framework offered by Leonardo Quaresima in *Loving Texts Two at a Time: The Film Remake* (2002), and other scholars such as Robert Eberwein, Andrew Horton, and Constantine Verevis. The fundamental aspect of the film remake is to put the pre-existing text "in a different network of meaning and different cultural systems" (Quaresima, 2002, p. 81). The act of remaking, then, is the act of *recontextualization*, which moves the phenomenon away from merely copying and makes it an original practice. "This *reproposal* of the work, understood as a creative act and not as a copying or re-issuing, alters the work even if it remains identical to itself" (ibid, emphasis in original). Deriving its legitimacy from a pre-existing text, the film remake is paradoxically born from the refusal of novelty. The film remake challenges the progressive chronology of film history by extracting a text from it, while also transforming the resulting film into a canonical text with its own semantic and syntactic elements (ibid). Quaresima employs a model of possible worlds to analyse the film remake drawing on Lubomír Dolezel. There are three types of rewriting according to Dolezel's model, the first one being *parallel worlds*, in which the original world and the main story are preserved but placed in a different setting. The second one, *complementary worlds*, fills the gaps in the original world and main story by constructing a pre- or post-history. Lastly, *polemic worlds* construct a different version by redesigning the original world and the main story (Quaresima, 2002, p. 82). In the constant dialectic between repetition and originality that characterises the film remake, the *complementary* and *polemic worlds* proposed by Quaresima put the emphasis on difference to preserve the position of rewriting. It is important, especially in cases where the *hypertext* does not show its debt to the source text. Precisely this aspect of *disguised* (Druxman, 1975; Greenberg, 1991; Verevis, 2006) or *uncredited* (Brashinsky, 1998) remake, which underpins the specificity of the phenomenon, is subject to exploration in this work.

Using textual analysis is the appropriate method for this work, as I aim to "understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make

sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live" (McKee, 2003, p. 1). Since this method is about the close reading of socio-cultural artefacts, a small number of texts are sufficient to gain understanding (Lockyer, 2008, p. 865). This also means that it necessitates the analysis of the cultural, socio-political, and historical context in which the text was produced. Therefore, to reach the most reasonable interpretation of the selected horror remakes, I draw on Alan McKee's (2003) four categories of relevant intertexts: "(1) other texts in the series, (2) the genre of the text, (3) intertexts about the text itself, and (4) the wider public context in which a text is circulated" (McKee, 2003, p. 93). Lastly, since textual analysis is a relatively open framework, it has no one true procedure. The procedure largely depends on the research questions. In this work, through the means of textual analysis, the main research questions to be addressed are:

i) What are the common and distinct elements of Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish horror films?

ii) To what extent have the Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish remakes of Asian or Western horror films been altered in terms of key elements (characters, locations, language and culture)? Which discernible elements have been retained from the originals?

iii) What new do these remakes introduce to the horror genre or cinema in general?

Now that we have established a basic framework for both the horror film and the remake, it is also necessary to identify the analytical axis that enables the two phenomena to function as a meaningful unit. Since I try to ground my analysis on socio-cultural conceptions and cultural manifestations, I will subject the films selected for the study to textual analysis along two paths. The first step is to define how the fearful is represented in horror films within their cultural, socio-political, and historical contexts. The second step is to trace how the original world built in a different national/cultural setting was rewritten to suit another national/cultural setting. The latter might be deemed as challenging to pin down, as the similarities indicating the act of remaking are often unacknowledged, and sometimes even denied by the filmmakers. However, it is obvious that the *disguised* remake is not *ex*

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nihilo, and the existing scholarship has already traced this type of unacknowledged dialogism between films, some have attempted to develop concepts or models to aid their analysis. The analysis of the *disguised* horror remake "permits the discovery, under the unique aspect of a trait or a concept, of the myriad events through which—thanks to which, against which—they were formed" (Foucault, 1984 [1971], p. 81). With the leverage this axis provides us, we can understand, *inter alia*, complex concepts of representation, mimicry, and transtextuality. While these concepts will heave into view in subsequent chapters, I shall introduce them briefly here.

Representation

Culture should be understood as a set of shared values and meanings (Hall, 2000, p. 1). Through its different manifestations and instruments, these give rise to social practices. The production, circulation, consumption, and representation of cultural meanings bear an explicit relationship to human identity. In other words, cultural meanings are produced and circulated through different social practices, which shape and regulate our identity.

The meanings we attribute can be produced in various ways, from beliefs, rituals, or traditions to emotions and attachments. This implies that, since meanings are constructed by humans, they have no fixity. There is a wide network of cultural meanings, as well as countless ways to interpret and represent them (Hall, 2000, pp. 2-3).

Horror is a ubiquitous phenomenon in every human culture. The representations of the horror and the fearful exist in much older forms of meaning-making than film and literature. Mythology, folklore, legends, folktales, fairy tales, and fables are full of different interpretations of the fearful. Surely, many of these representations have found their way into contemporary horror films and their remakes. The horror film, like any other representation of horror, functions in a complex way to manifest, reflect, and iterate a society/nation's historically and culturally specific anxieties, taboos, and fears. An attempt at remaking the horror film, therefore, entails a negotiation between these cultural meanings, in which they are reinterpreted, translated, switched, or effaced.

Mimicry, Ambivalence, and Hybridity

Although two of the three countries—Iran and Turkey—that are the subjects of this work do not have a direct colonial past, we can still draw from the postcolonial discourse to understand their socio-cultural idiosyncrasies. The reason behind is that, unlike the Western-centric and essentialist readings of culture, the postcolonial discourse provides the Global South with the liberty to speak about their own cultures and cultural representations, through their very own knowledge and understanding.

Considering this, mimicry can be understood as an erratic state of colonial authority, constructed dependent on the ambivalence between difference and desire, and subject to repetitious slippage (Bhabha, 1994, p. 90). Although the Other is encouraged to resemble the coloniser by mimicking their habits, customs, or institutions, the Other can never succeed in perfectly reproducing this cultural model presented to them. That's when they become the "reformed, recognizable Other", which is "almost the same, but not quite" as the colonisers (Bhabha, 1984, p. 126). Thus, the Other is permanently divided between not being completely the same and not being completely different. It is from this ambivalence that mimicry emerges, and to be effective, it "must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86). However, this ambivalent nature of mimicry also threatens and disrupts the coloniser's power in its ability to mark the colonised as inferior. Mimicry is therefore "at once resemblance and menace" (Bhabha, 1984, p. 127). These undermining paves the way for hybridity.

For Homi Bhabha, hybridity is a space where sites of domination are deformed and values are displaced (1994, pp. 112-113). As mimicry only allows an imperfect copy, this opens a space for hybridity and the emergence of novelty through the processes of iteration and translation, where the new is created by both cultures (Bhabha, 1994, p. 58). Still, hybridity is not the mixture of two cultures, but a new negotiated terrain. This negotiation occurs in a historical continuum, woven by cultural borrowings that are constantly being re-enunciated. The hybridity discourse, then, displaces the stereotype of "the passive colonised, who lacks imagination" and empowers the colonised as a creative being capable of sublimating their cultural heritages.

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This also implies that there is no such thing as purity of culture, as "all cultural statements and systems are· constructed in [. . .] contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37). This is what Bhabha calls the "Third Space". Since culture is a construction, it is not pre-given and must be produced performatively (Bhabha, 1994, p. 2). It is through enunciation that cultures and cultural differences are discovered and recognized.

Third Space creates the discursive conditions of enunciation, while also ensuring that the cultural meanings or symbols have no fixity so that they can be "appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew" repeatedly (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37). This means that any hierarchical claims between cultures, as to their innate originality or purity, are untenable (ibid).

As for the horror film, it is infamously known as a site where transgressive and subversive cultural discourse is produced and circulated. A society/nation's fears lurk beneath the thin veneer of the horror film's narrative and shocking visuals. This means that the horror film creates the necessary excess and slippage that allows us to recognize and interrogate the different socio-cultural elements in different cultures. Likewise, since the horror remake tends to reveal its transnational influences, it produces an excess of meaning that exposes the difference in the mimicry—even if it unwittingly does so.

Transtextuality

All remaking practices are essentially acts of semiotic manipulation. They presuppose the substitution of signs and meanings, as well as omission and addition. The five types of transtextual relationships proposed by Gérard Genette in *Palimpsestes* (1982) allow us to explore the theoretical realm of the horror remake from a broader perspective. Genette defines transtextuality (or textual transcendence) as "all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts" (Genette, 1997 [1982], p. 1). He then goes on to describe the said five types of textual transcendence, in increasing order of abstraction, implication, and comprehensiveness: (1) intertextuality, (2) paratextuality, (3) metatextuality, (4) architextuality, and (5) hypertextuality (ibid, pp. 2-5).

Intertextuality can be understood as a relationship of co-presence between or among several texts, and it appears either explicitly or implicitly (Genette, 1997 [1982], pp. 1-2). For example, *a quotation* would be a case of intertextuality that is less implicit, while *plagiarism* is less explicit and less canonical than a *quotation*. Likewise, *allusion* is less explicit than a quotation and less literal than plagiarism (ibid). Our case of the *disguised* horror remake is similar to the practices of *plagiarism* and *allusion*—it remains implicit unless the relationship between it and other texts is perceived.

Paratextuality is characterised by the less explicit and more distant relationship between the body of the text and the "secondary signals" that provide a "variable" setting to it (Genette, 1997 [1982], p. 3). Titles, subtitles, intertitles, film posters, trailers, deleted scenes, and DVD extras are all *paratexts* that contribute to the process of meaning-making.

Metatextuality is defined as a relationship of critical commentary between one text and the other. In other words, the first text comments on the second, "without necessarily citing it (without summoning it), in fact sometimes without naming it" (Genette, 1997 [1982], p. 4). The prototypical example of this type of relationship in horror cinema is Wes Craven's *Scream* (1996), which is explicitly self-aware of its sub-genre (i.e., the slasher film) conventions and criticises the horror genre in general.

Architextuality, in turn, is "the completely silent, articulated at most only by a paratextual mention, [. . .] which remains in any case of a purely taxonomic nature" (Genette, 1997 [1982], p. 4). Or, to put it simply, this type of transtextual relationship determines the nature of the individual text. In the cinematic field, attributing the text within a genre is a recurrent and prevalent practice. There are some cases in which the self-statement of the genre is verified in the title of the work itself, as in *The Last Horror Film* (David Winters, 1982) or *House III: The Horror Show* (James Isaac and David Blyth, 1989).

Genette, finally, defines *hypertextuality* as "any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*),

upon which is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary" (1997 [1982], p. 5; emphases in original). Here, Genette distinguishes *metatextuality* and *hypertextuality*, since both arise from the derivation of a text from another text(s). While the former is characterised by a commentary or criticism of a text, the latter results from changes in form and/or content on the *hypotext*, or even points to the administration of a different model for the construction of a new text.

1.2. Introducing the Films

Although the film remake contradicts the chronology and continuum of film history by extracting texts from different periods of time, it still tends to be close in time to its original(s) to capitalise on their success and impact of them. Bearing that in mind, I chose three transnational horror remakes, one for each country, for a textual analysis in relation to their anterior texts: *Dabbe* (Turkey; Hasan Karacadağ, 2006), *Harim* (Iran; Reza Khatibi, 2009), and *Warda* (Egypt; Hadi El Bagoury, 2014). These films serve to illuminate the representations and iterations of the fearful within the huge surge of horror film production in Egypt, Iran, and Turkey since around the turn of the millennium. By a systematic rewriting of the earlier horror films, these *disguised* remakes constantly create significant divergences, excess, and hybridity, thus, bringing out the fearful in the context of their own peculiar cultures.

In 2006, Hasan Karacadağ released *Dabbe*, which soon became a turning point for Turkish horror cinema. This film is a *disguised* remake of Kiyoshi Kurosawa's *Kairo*, which was released five years prior to it. *Dabbe* closely follows the plot of *Kairo*, while drawing inspiration from Islamic lore. But instead of *Kairo*'s narrative of lonely ghosts trying to infiltrate the human world through the internet, this film incorporates the narratives of the *Dābbat al-Arḍ*—or the Beast of the Earth—and *jinn* possession to represent the fear of technology.

Harim ("Zone"), directed by Reza Khatibi and released in 2009, is the story of Major Mohebbi, who investigates the mysterious tourist murders in a secluded village near Northern Iran. This film bears considerable similarities with *The Village* (M. Night Shyamalan, 2004). The narrative about a secluded village deep in the woods, where

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its inhabitants keep a terrifying secret is considerably close to Shyamalan's film. However, *Harim* also incorporates the Zoroastrian beliefs into its story.

Released in 2014 and directed by Hadi El Bagoury, *Warda* is Egypt's first *found-footage* horror film. The film is a *disguised* remake of *Paranormal Activity* (Oren Peli, 2007). After her father's death, the titular character Warda suffers from sleep deprivation and her health deteriorates day by day. So, her eldest brother Walid decides to put cameras in their home to investigate the mysterious events occurring. *Warda*, for the most part, follows the narrative structure of *Paranormal Activity*. However, it sets the story in a rural village, rather than a suburban neighbourhood, and again, incorporates the narrative of *jinn* possession.

1.3. Structure

Chapters 1 and 2 review the literature briefly discussed in the Introduction, which underpins and guides this work. In light of this, Chapter 1 first shows how discussions on the horror genre emerged from the larger corpus of genre studies. Like any other genre, horror also changes depending on socio-cultural transformations and time. The audience enjoys repeating familiar conventions but also feels satisfaction in discovering creativity and originality in them. This chapter, therefore, concludes with a summary of the horror genre conventions and the effective approaches, which are used to analyse the transnational horror remake and situate them within a generic context.

Chapter 2 focuses on the phenomenon of the remake. It surveys the key developments and theorisations to show the horror remake situates itself within this framework. This chapter first shows how the remake studies has moved away from the comparative analysis of literary adaptations and debates on fidelity, towards a more inclusive approach that takes into account transtextuality, intramediality, and transcultural multiplicities.

Moving on to a closer analysis of the representations of horror, Chapter 3 gives detailed histories of the national horror cinemas of Egypt, Iran, and Turkey. It

specifically surveys the development and popularity of the horror genre in Egypt, Iran, and Turkey that collide and correlate with the rising conservative political Islam since the turn of the millennium.

This work concludes in Chapter 4 with textual analyses of the transnational horror remakes of each country. The parts on individual films start by outlining the relevant historico-cultural contexts, as well as the genre influences and production conditions for providing a strong background to the subsequent analysis. Finally, I conclude by reiterating the answers developed throughout my work to a set of questions raised in the Introduction, and ultimately defining the function of the transnational horror remake and their relationship both with each other and other foreign horror films.

CHAPTER 2

GENRE THEORY AND HORROR AS A GENRE

A film genre is a collective knowledge constituted both by filmic patterns that are reproduced, reiterated and re-recognised, and individual specificities. The more strikingly a film genre appears in an individual filmic text, the more it produces similarity, and forms generic and cultural conventions. In the appearance of genres therefore semantic exchange, socio-cultural values, and historical and spatial contexts intervene and interfere—so do the expectations and reception of the audience. All these factors at play prove that the film genre is a complex phenomenon.

On the level of genre reproduction and reiteration, horror films are extremely multi-faceted and discursive. The horror genre has a long history of discourse, which witnessed several paradigm and generic shifts within itself. The horror film emerges as a "generic text" in the Derridean sense and forms a semantic unit. By identifying and creating references, the (historically, socially, and culturally) specific discourses construct a dynamic reference field of semantics that characterise the horror genre at the level of genre re-recognition.

In the following pages, I attempt to explore how this collective knowledge further developed and theorised within the genre and film studies, as well as how the film genre is formed in its generic conventions and specificities. Providing an overview of film genre studies enables me to clarify which aspects of film genre theory I draw on to address the specific issues relating to representations of the fearful. The second section of this chapter aims to take a closer look at the history and theorisations of the horror genre within contemporary scholarship. While I oppose the pitfalls of genre studies that assume fixed, permanent, and universal boundaries and functions of the horror film, I mainly draw on Andrew Tudor's approach. To describe how

particular transnational horror films operate within the horror genre, I embrace an approach that balances historical contexts with socio-cultural values and beliefs. As Tudor suggests (1997), instead of asking the overgeneralised question of "why horror?", I prefer to look into the question of "why is this horror to represent these fears of these people at this time?". To do so, first, we need to discuss the various ways in which the horror genre is theorised and conceptualised. It then becomes possible to consider the horror genre within the historically, socially, and culturally specific anxieties and fears as represented by the transnational horror film.

2.1. The Question of Film Genre

2.1.1. Development of Film Genre Theorisations

The phenomenon of the film genre seems to be inextricably linked to popular cinema and the discourses formed around it. The form of generic classification used by scholars, critics, and fans alike, proceeds to be, for a good part, a form of empiricism. Indeed, the "film genres are always easier to recognise than to define" (Moine, 2008, p. xv). Still, an absolute determination is untenable, as "[f]ilms may range over multiple genres by mixing together different generic qualities" (Grindon, 2012, p. 43). To approach a phenomenon canonically characterised by its hybridity and instability, it is reasonable to give a simple definition as a starting point for further discussion: a film genre is a specific corpus of films united by thematic, iconographic, and narrative resemblance (Doane, 1987, p. 34; as cited in Altman, 1999, p. 75). "[T]hrough repetition and variation, [they] tell familiar stories with familiar characters in familiar situations" (Grant, 2012, p. xvii). Abstract categories or labels lexicalised in language help to group and designate filmic corpi. Films attributed to a genre must offer a certain level of homogeneity to "encourage expectations and experiences similar to those of similar films we have already seen" (ibid), but also that a community that will identify such similarities. A film genre is therefore a phenomenon arising from the intrinsic features of films as well as the extrinsic affiliations like the discourses in the field of film. Whether as an abstract category or an empirical case, the film genre always remains related to history, and it cannot be detached from the socio-cultural practices of cinema. While one can argue

that every film culture tends to conform to generic classifications, each generic film typology is closely linked to its own historical, geographical, cultural, and enunciative contexts in which they are produced.

The early film genres were often derived from older forms of art and media. Early films in Asian and MENA countries, for instance, often adapted traditional storytelling, folk performances, and other theatrical content to the screen. Early Japanese court life dramas incorporate the visual and narrative features of *kabuki* and *nō* theatre, while early Chinese dramas embody the features of Peking opera. *Shree Pundalik* (Dadasaheb Torne, 1912), known as the first *devotional film* and India's first film ever, is a recording of a stage play depicting the legend of the saint Pundalik. The first silent comedies in Iran, such as *Abi and Rabi* (Ovanes Ohanian, 1930), are influenced by *ru-howzi* performance, an improvised comical routine. From the mid-1920s to well into the 1960s, Egypt produced Bedouin adventures that incorporate sung poetry.

In Hollywood, on the other hand, early films were often influenced by dime novels, pulp magazines, vaudeville acts, freak shows, or Wild West shows. Despite the variety in the formation of different genres in different contexts, up until the mid-1970s, theories about film genre tended to have a structuralist basis, primarily rooted in Aristotle's *Poetics* and Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928), which assume genre as something given *a priori* and restricted to a set of components.

The position Aristotle's *Poetics* established is more interested in a work's structure and contents. It therefore bound genre theory to the inquiry of the intrinsic criteria. Much later, Vladimir Propp's *Morphology* on European "wondertales" (folktales) presented a set of components corresponding to fundamental characters (*dramatis personae*) and their functions. Propp's work became a point of reference in structuralist genre theories. Although a few scholars note that in the works of Aristotle or Propp, the emphasis on the historical and cultural is prevalent, it is the later practices that took their work out of context. That is the sole reason that Aristotelian or Proppian approaches to the genre theory have become a "dead end" (Bordwell, 1988; Caraher, 2006).

In *Theory of Literature* (1949), René Wellek and Austin Warren also criticise the rigidity of such taxonomical or morphological approaches. They emphasise the vitality of the literary work of art and its dynamic nature due to extrinsic factors such as ever-changing language, ongoing history, or different ideologies: "[The literary work of art] is dynamic: it changes throughout the process of history while passing through the minds of its readers, critics, and fellow artists" (1949, pp. 157-158). Northrop Frye, on the other hand, goes in a different direction from Wellek and Warren when explaining the use of literary genres. Despite Wellek and Warren's emphasis on historicity, Frye argues that "pure literature, like pure mathematics, contains its own meaning" (2000 [1957], p. 351). Considering literature as an autonomous language, Frye defines genres as organisations of myths and archetypal symbols (2000 [1957], p. 139). The opposing approaches of Frye and Wellek and Warren in the literary genre debate resonated in scholarship about the film genre for a long time.

André Bazin worked on genre mythology concerning the Western genre. In *The Western: Or the American Film Par Excellence*, he argues that the attributes of the Western mean more than just their conventional components. "Those formal attributes by which one normally recognizes the western are simply signs or symbols of its profound reality, namely the myth" (Bazin, 2004 [1971], p. 142). For Bazin, myths are universal and timeless. And what defines the Western is the presentation of such myths in the Manichaean battle between good and evil (2004 [1971], p. 145).

Robert Warshow's work on the Western and gangster genres stresses the historical and cultural specificity, which situates his approach opposite of Bazin's. Warshow was more concerned with the aesthetic implementations of the ideology than the dualism of good and evil. Warshow does not consider the film genre as a mirror to social realities, but as aesthetic images that represent it. He, therefore, emphasises that the Western genre evokes the historical era around 1870 without reconstructing a real picture of that time (Warshow, 1974, p. 141). The Western genre goes back to the mythical image of a time to create a hero that is no longer imaginable in contemporary America. In contrast to the gangster, the Westerner is a man of control and honour. He fights for justice, thereby violence becomes a legitimate form of self-

expression and masculinity (Warshow, 1974, p. 140). Ultimately Warshow sees the progression of the genre not towards realism, but toward apotheosis (1970, p. 151).

The 1970s brought more differentiated genre theories and historiographies. A multifaceted examination of film genres based on narratology, ideology, psychoanalysis, reception, and structuralism began in, mostly, English-language film scholarship. From this period onwards, film genre theories became increasingly concerned with exploring possible different contexts and understanding genre structures and categories in terms of their relation to these contexts. The *genericity* (Collins, 1993, p. 243) became the operational concept, rather than the genre itself. Since then, it is an inquiry into what relation a film has with one or more genres, what generic identities we can attribute to the film, and what we see in them when they are grouped under a generic label. At around the same time, criticism towards early theories also began to emerge. The semantic-syntactic film genre theory developed by Rick Altman (1984) was a breakthrough in overcoming the ingrained essentialism and ahistoricity of early accounts. By "[t]reating genres as neutral constructs", Altman contends, "semioticians of the sixties and early seventies blinded us to the discursive power of generic formation" (1984, p. 8). Altman clearly shows his distaste for the ahistorical approach in favour of the ideological and ritualistic ideals of the genre practice. He links the ritual approach with giving the ultimate authorship to the audience, and the ideological approach with manipulating the audience for the business or political interest of the film industry (1984, p. 9). Instead, he favours a new approach to film genre scholarship that borrows from both opposing viewpoints to reconcile them by incorporating the discursiveness of the syntactic elements acquired through a semantic process.

In *Film/Genre* (1999), Altman develops his theory further by adding the third pragmatic dimension, while also increasingly losing his position as a conciliator in genre scholarship. He continues to oppose the synchronic and ritualistic approach used by Frye and Bazin, arguing that:

[The] tendency to figure genres transhistorically simply extends Aristotle's intention to note the essential quality of each poetic kind. It is precisely the notion that genres

have essential qualities that makes it possible to align them with archetypes and myths and to treat them as expressive of broad and perdurable human concerns. (1999, p. 20)

Altman rather situates his theory closer to Wellek and Warren's historical approach, as well as Andrew Tudor's pragmatic approach, as he writes that genre is not the "permanent *product* of a singular origin, but the temporary *byproduct* of an ongoing *process*" (1999, p. 54; emphases in original). However, Altman also acknowledges that the genre is not entirely specific to the filmic text, and is not situated only in semiotics, which is why he added the pragmatic dimension *a posteriori* to his theory. Since cinema as a social institution is inseparable from signifying processes, the power to construct meaning or ideological and economic practices, the pragmatic branch of genre theory appears to be better suited for a multidimensional discussion of the film genre. Altman also points to this, as pragmatics "assumes a constant (if sometimes extremely slow) cross-fertilization process whereby the interests of one group may appear in the actions of another" (1999, p. 211).

Another problem with early film genre theories is that they often had aporic tendencies, and implied certain genre films or certain periods of their production—the notion of the classic period[1], for instance—can be prescriptive and demonstrate the true "essence" of the genre. This also entailed a level of *biologism* (Stam, 2000, p. 128), where developments of a genre are understood as the "evolution" towards an ideal form, while aberrations signal a decline (Gledhill, 1985, p. 59). In the pioneering works of André Bazin, Robert Warshow, and Jim Kitses such an approach is prevalent. All three scholars did significant studies on the Western genre. The only issue is that all of them hailed different "classic" Westerns from different periods as the reflection of the true "essence" of the genre (Kitses, 1969; Warshow, 1974; Bazin, 1971). Likewise, following Propp's work, Noël Carroll breaks down the

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[1] Thomas Schatz presents a model for generic evolution consisting of four stages. First is the *experimental* stage whereby conventions are established. Second is the *classic* stage, and during this period filmic conventions reach a balance and harmony. Third, the *refinement* stage witnesses a period of integration of new stylistic and formal conventions. Lastly, during the *baroque* (or self-reflexive) stage, these new conventions are accented to the point where they become the substance of the work (1981, pp. 37-38). Schatz's genre model follows the classical biological analogy of birth, maturity, and decline.

horror genre into four essential functions: "onset, discovery, confirmation, and confrontation" (1990, p. 99). Yet, since horror has countless variations, Carroll's narrative structure cannot be applied to many horror films, not even to *The Thing* (also known as *The Thing from Another World*; Christian Nyby, 1951) which he alludes to as an example to develop his argument (ibid). In that sense, Barry Keith Grant's definition of the film genre cited at the beginning also cannot be considered exhaustive, as it ultimately leads to "categorising [films'] ideal form" (Williams, 2005, p. 16). This is what Andrew Tudor calls the "empiricist dilemma" (1974, p. 138):

> To take a genre such as a 'Western', analyse it, and list its principle characteristics, is to beg the question that we must first isolate the body of films which are 'Westerns'. But they can only be isolated on the basis of the 'principal characteristics' which can only be discovered *from the films themselves* after they have been isolated. That is, we are caught in a circle which first requires that the films are isolated, for which purposes a criterion is necessary, but the criterion is, in turn, meant to emerge from the empirically established common characteristics of the films. (1974, pp. 135-138; emphasis in original)

Since all films attributed to a genre show the criteria by which they were selected, the analysis becomes tautological. It cannot be refuted either, since other implicit criteria can always be applied in the selection. Surely, this does not necessitate throwing the baby (genre analysis) with the bathwater (the empiricist dilemma) and embracing nominalism. As early as 1974, Tudor stresses the need to lean on the "common cultural consensus" (p. 138), which he means the set of meanings created by filmmakers, critics, scholars, and fans. While this pragmatic solution does not fully explain why and how relevant groups can reach a consensus, Tudor underlines the discursiveness of his approach: "*Genre* notions [. . .] are sets of cultural conventions. *Genre* is what we collectively believe it to be" (Tudor, 1974, p. 139; emphases in original). There is a construction of meanings that is to be located in the socio-cultural and historical contexts, and the circulation of meaning in these contexts also contributes to changes in meanings. Considering the film genre within its cultural and social embedding does not mean abandoning the analysis of filmic corpi but requires doing so by being aware of the presuppositions and shortcomings of previous accounts. Not that the constitution or analysis of the film genre by

scholarship is a matter of pure subjectivity—any approach to the film genre or any definition of the film genre is backed by a theoretical model.

However, as Christine Gledhill points out, "we need a concept of genre capable of exploring the wider contextual culture in relationship to, rather than as an originating source of, aesthetic mutations and textual complications" (2000, p. 221). If we want to truly understand the development of a genre, it is therefore not enough to analyse and classify the individual films, we must work out the potential readings of the films that consider their historical and cultural specificity.

> Because a genre is not one thing serving one purpose, but multiple things serving multiple purposes for multiple groups, it remains a permanently contested site. In fact, it is precisely the continued contestation among producers, exhibitors, viewers, critics, politicians, moralists, and their diverse interests, that keeps genres ever in process, constantly subject to reconfiguration, recombination and reformulation. (Altman, 1999, p. 195)

The understanding of the film genre as "contested sites of reconfiguration, recombination and reformulation" therefore holds true for the transnational horror genre, especially within their complex and ever-changing inter- and intramedial contexts, as well as inter- and transcultural affiliations. In film cultures based on tensions between globalising processes and national/regional traditions, transnational horror films play a significant role in the construction and commodification of cultural imaginaries of Egypt, Iran, and Turkey. These are merged with a reservoir of generic iconography, motifs, and narratives stemming from different contexts, particularly Hollywood film, in which they are subjected to discourses such as Christianity and Gothicism.

As such, transnational horror films in Egypt, Iran, and Turkey often abound with ambivalent representations of cultural differences. These often construct an eclectic familiarity for domestic audiences, and at the same time, serve as a product of differentiation in a genre strongly dominated by Hollywood productions. Examining Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish cinemas through the lens of the genre concept raises a crucial question: what is the relationship between film genre and national cinema?

2.1.2. Rethinking Film Genre and Nation

While discussing film genres in French cinema, Raphaëlle Moine presents a situation that also applies to Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish contexts. Although the presence of popular film genres is evident in such national cinemas, there is a certain negligence towards genre analysis in the scholarship. Preferring to study auteurs or engaging in the more aesthetic activity of identifying movements, schools, styles, or tendencies gives the impression that Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish cinemas are "genre-less", even though they have many "'popular' and 'commercial' films as [they do] auteur films" (Moine, 2008, p. xiii & xv). This impression ultimately contradicts the Derridean assertion that "there is a generic aspect to all texts; all texts 'participate [. . .] in one or several genres'" (Derrida, 1992, p. 230; as cited in Neale, 2000, p. 2). Nevertheless, it is necessary to inquire about the national qualities and the extent of the popular film genres in Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish cinemas.

As Andrew Higson points out, there is a "criticism-led" approach to national cinema, which is essentially prescriptive and tends to reduce national cinemas to "the terms of a quality art cinema, a culturally worthy cinema steeped in the high-cultural and/or modernist heritage of a particular nation state, rather than one which appeals to the desires and fantasies of the popular audiences" (Higson, 1989, p. 37). Egyptian scholar Viola Shafik points out a similar situation, as the film studies in MENA countries often "neglect the influence of popular culture in the form and content of commercial cinema" and deal with politically engaged cinema, as they seem like the guarantors of cultural authenticity (1998, p. 3). Noting that "national cinema" is a concept situated opposite of Hollywood and thus genre film (Crofts, 2006, p. 44; as cited in Teo, 2012, p. 285), such an arbitrary separation between national and genre cinema is precariously vague, as well as fixed and hierarchical.

In this light, the similarity of the problems in the approaches to the film genre and national cinema becomes evident. Evaluating filmic corpus specific to a national cinema in terms of its ability to share a common style and worldview (Higson, 1989, p. 36) raises problems that are also prevalent in discussions of film genre. Identifying national cinema foregrounds proclaiming a unique identity and fixed set of meanings

to maintain the borders, asserts doing so as a hegemonizing and mythologising way of control, particularly for resisting Hollywood's international domination (Higson, 1989, p. 37). Likewise, the film genre is traditionally identified by myths exhibited through the repetition of generic conventions. Ultimately, these myths construct universal narratives as a means of ideological control, particularly by Hollywood to dominate international markets. Such formulations both in national cinema and film genre debates reduce these two concepts to their most essentialist and monolithic basis, and assume their limitations and borders are fully formed and fixed, whereas national identity and film genre are almost invariably contested and in flux. The situation in the MENA region serves as evidence of this: "The history of the region is one of polyglot empires, mixing together peoples, cultures, religions, and languages" (Zubaida, 1987, p. 155; as cited in Shafik, 1998, p. 6).

Chris Berry, while discussing Chinese cinema, proposes a "performative model of collective agency" that is constructed through "socially, politically, and historically specific projects contesting each other" (1998, pp. 132 & 149). This model opposes the idea of the nation as "merely an imagined textual object" (1998, p. 132), and distinguishes it from the "existing nation-states", as it foregrounds collectivity (1998, p. 149). Analysing *City of Sadness* (Hou Hsiao-hsien, 1989) as an example to illustrate his performative model in action, Berry argues that collective agency may be a part of the "cultural consciousness resistant to state projects and politics" (ibid). Stephen Teo takes on this model to elaborate on how the film genre can play the role of "collective agency" in relation to the national cinema while objecting to the idealistic disposition of Berry's claims. According to Teo, any performative model of a collective agency will serve in practice to assist exactly what Berry is against—the nation-state (2012, p. 287).

As David Desser points out "basic genre theory arose to account for nationally specific genres" (Desser, 2012, p. 628), the generic qualities and typologies, therefore, are an indispensable part of national cinemas. They also always contain elements of democracy and hope so that the film genre is not associated with a "putative collective consciousness" that serves as a kind of fascist absolutist national collective agency (Berry, 1998, p. 130; as cited in Teo, 2012, p. 287).

The cinema, it seems to me, is the very kind of space where the politics of hope can be given expression as a vague notion of democracy, and as I have brought up genre in connection with collective agency, genre itself contains this very element of wish-fulfilment. (Ibid)

Turkish costume adventure cycle[2] of the 1970s, which are "fantastic and idealistic [. . .] but often regarded at the same time as nationalistic", exemplifies Teo's proposition (2012, p. 288). The costume adventure genre in Turkish cinema was a "semantic cluster" (Altman, 1987, p.117) in its graphic novel days with borrowed semantics from adventure, fantasy, and violence. In the early 1970s, it developed its characteristic syntax where a daring hero is opposed both to foreign enemies, corrupt administrations, and immoral bandits. The hero goes on a quest to seek revenge, usually right after experiencing a tragedy such as the loss of loved ones. In the end, he helps to re-establish order and becomes the true representative of righteousness, chivalry, and honour. The syntax of the costume adventure genre only makes fully sense with the knowledge of the socio-political turbulence of the times. Problems between Turkey and the US—President Johnson's letter regarding the Cyprus issue, the military presence of the US in Turkey, and the resumption of poppy cultivation— have led to the cycle of costume adventure films in Turkish cinema, which are the "tales of chivalry and adventure, with a certain historicist–political slant stressing the need to rebel against despots or the oppressor whenever the circumstances present themselves" (Teo, 2012, p. 288). The victories of a hero that is no longer imaginable in contemporary Turkey became the preferable form of "wish-fulfilment". Daring heroes of the costume adventure genre provided "the enjoyment of vicarious victories where real-life victories were impossible" (Perry Link Jr., 1981, p. 20; as cited in Teo, 2015, p. 30). That is why the idea of "nation" is crucial for the Turkish costume adventure genre. The hero—just like Warshow's Westerner—needs a reason to justify his act of violence, and "nation" is one of the biggest reasons that can enable this. Due to the genre's tendency to convey a sense of nationalism and justice, costume adventure films have become a popular cycle in Turkish cinema

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[2] The term "cycle" refers to a more focused and distinctive category that predominantly uses the conventions of a film genre and is often produced within a limited time. A film cycle often begins with a prototypical hit, which its successors imitate and/or refine (Neale, 1990, p. 7). In the case of the Turkish costume adventure cycle, many others were made in the wake of *Malkoçoğlu* (Süreyya Duru, 1966).

during the 1970s. In this light, the film genre serves to define certain ideals, traditions, and values of a nation. However, the costume adventure genre is not unique to Turkish cinema. Since the semantics of the film genre are borrowed and applied to a nation within a particular context, its instability must be taken into account when considering the film genre as a part of national cinema.

The relationship between the horror genre and national cinema is a question that remains to be addressed. If the horror film posits as an "allegory of modernity", it offers a terrain where the anxieties of modern life and "the ideological imperatives of progress and order" can come across and be negotiated (Standish, 2005, p. 328). From this point of view, horror film is universal, to some extent, as it surpasses cultural or national boundaries. However, at the same time, representations of the fearful almost invariably refer back to the historically, culturally, and nationally specific facets. Although the position and history of the horror genre within the national cinemas of Egypt, Iran, and Turkey will be discussed at length in Chapter 3, it is necessary to briefly mention it here as well. In the context of national cinemas of MENA countries, or more generally Muslim-majority nations, religious, quasi-religious traditions and local folklore are employed in the horror genre to accentuate the dichotomies between modernity and tradition, rational thought and metaphysics. By linking the Islamic themes, narratives, and iconography to a more traditional spatio-temporality, the horror films reconfirm and reinforce scriptural Islam's validity on the social order.

In this light, it can be said that the concepts of film genre and national cinema put emphasis on the borders as sites of interaction and contestation, crossing and intersection, convergence and divergence. Contrary to certain postmodernist claims therefore the academic scrutiny around these two concepts and the shift towards genericity and transnationalism does not entail the absolute dissolution of the borders. Disregarding the complex histories of border-crossings of the film genre among different nations and regions tends to overemphasise transnationalism, which ultimately would lead to trivialising historical and cultural specificity and defining transnationalism in relation to a limited temporality.

Rather, borders are sites for analytical and creative activity informed by concepts such as hybridity and syncretism (terms that do not dissolve difference, but retain traces of that difference), which are constructed through processes such as translation, transformation and adaption—often grouped under the label of intertextuality, although Gerard Genette proposed the more encompassing term of transtextuality. (Van der Heide, 2002, p. 29)

The analyses of filmic corpus and film genres need to be situated in the context of what Arjun Appadurai calls "global cultural flow", which are "perspectival constructs, inflected very much by the historical, linguistic and political situatedness of different sorts of actors" (1990, p. 296).

2.2. Horror as a Genre

As asserted above, defining a film genre is a complex task, as it is far from the supposed homogeneity that the term can infer. Altman defines the film genre as a set of aspects such as "blueprint, structure, label and contract" (1999, p. 17). The horror genre, however, does not respond duly to any of these in an unequivocal way. It is a genre full of subgenres—containing blockbusters, low-budgets, and critically recognised *auteur* films—without an immutable formal structure. Additionally, genre films can be relabelled through time. German Expressionist films of the 1920s, such as *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* ("The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari"; Robert Wiene, 1920) and *Nosferatu* (F.W. Murnau, 1922), were considered art films, not horror (Hutchings, 2004, p.3). This also holds true for the classic Universal films of the 1930s, like *Frankenstein* (James Whale, 1931) and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1931), as they were labelled as science fiction, which were then considered an extension of the larger fantasy genre. Defining what is horror or not and what it consists of would always be contested, especially because of the genre's variety in content and its borders intermingling with other genres such as science fiction and thriller.

Still, as for Tzvetan Todorov, it is impossible to think of texts outside of genres, since even the transgression of the generic classifications implies their very existence. Genres always come from others, as the process of their transformation is ever going (1990, pp. 14-15).

> Genres are thus entities that can be described from two different viewpoints, that of empirical observation and that of abstract analysis. In a given society, the recurrence of certain discursive properties is institutionalised, and individual texts are produced and perceived in relation to the norm constituted by that codification. A genre, whether literary or not, is nothing other than the codification of discursive properties. (Todorov, 1990, pp. 17-18)

These "discursive properties" are culturally and historically conditioned, which is why certain genres like fantasy, horror, or science fiction are determined differently in different societies depending on presuppositions (Todorov, 1990, p. 43). Horror and science fiction films are strongly influenced by the fantastic, which can be described as an occurrence "[i]n a world which is indeed our world, the one we know, a world without devils, sylphides, or vampires" and it "cannot be explained by the laws of this same familiar world" (Todorov, 1975, p. 25). The fantastic is also a "hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event" (ibid). The inherently supernatural characteristic of the fantastic is mainly inspired by myths, folklore, religious, and quasi-religious traditions of the cultures that they are current in. The supernatural content also invariably presents characteristics of social transgression, precisely because it addresses taboos: "the function of the supernatural is to exempt the text from the action of the law, I and thereby to transgress that law" (Todorov, 1975, p. 159).

The discourses, the law, the codes, the rituals, the myths, the political ideologies, and the labels that organise and transmit the meanings are meant here with the social. Just as these, their transgressions are also historically and socially contextualised. All of them constitute the structuring elements of societies. The transgression of the social assists to control, protect, or discipline societies. By piercing through the laws of our world and gaining access to the supernatural, the fantastic represents the extreme and the ambiguous and thus reinforces the need to reestablish the laws of human morality and order. As a consequence, the existence of the fantastic on the plane of reality is not perceived as a contradiction, but rather a concrete presence that assists to determine the daily dynamics. The transgression linked to these folkloric, religious, and quasi-religious configurations forms a type of fantastic horror, as it is anchored in a being that generates a hiatus in normality.

The horror film carries out this function through the embodiment of the Monster, or the Other. The Monster (with a capital "M"), because of its border-crossing and transgressive nature, is not an entity that can be understood with the rules of the world as we know it. As Noël Carroll puts it:

> They are un-natural relative to a culture's conceptual scheme of nature. They do not fit the scheme; they violate it. Thus, monsters are not only physically threatening; they are cognitively threatening. They are threats to common knowledge [. . .] For such monsters are in a certain sense challenges to the foundations of a culture's way of thinking. (Carroll, 1990, p. 34)

Carroll's definition is crucial to distinguish the difference between the "fearful" and the "monstrous". Because not every transgression of cultural norms and values is monstrous. A culture can identify and define the transgression of its norms and values within the limits of its system. Acts of theft or murder are fearful, for instance, but they do not necessarily entail being defined as monstrous, as we know where they belong within our cultural system and the value structure. In other words, we may be afraid of and morally disgusted by a murderer, but it is still possible to define what a murderer is within the laws of our world.

This is where the distinction between *natural horror* and *art-horror* comes into play. As Caroll asserts, *natural horror* would be something expressed through "I am horrified by the prospect of ecological disaster", or "What the Nazis did was horrible" (1990, p. 12). *Art-horror*, on the other hand, transcends different artistic and media forms. Such type of horror carries the power to create in its audience a fear born of threatening, impure, and repulsive elements, or the Monster like a ghost, vampire, or zombie. In *art-horror*, the object of fear is considered impure if it is interstitial, incomplete, or formless, that is, a creature contradictory in nature: living and dead, animate and inanimate, or that brings together different species (ibid). The Monster, a category that encompasses several types of antagonists, is considered unnatural. Since it does not fit in or outright transgresses the cultural and natural order, it horrifies us. The point to be emphasised here is that the Monster threatens the entire system itself, not only specific cultural and social norms, values, or ideals. Malicious or evil are not outside of the cultural, they find a place in a wide range of values. The Monster, however, is fearful as it cannot be placed even within this structure.

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Surely, since Carroll does not attempt to define natural horror in his seminal work, *The Philosophy of Horror, or Paradoxes of the Heart* (1990), his definition of the Monster carries certain limitations. According to Carroll's definition, *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960), *The Last House on the Left* (Wes Craven, 1972), *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Tobe Hooper, 1974), *Silence of the Lambs* (Jonathan Demme, 1991), and many others could not be considered genre films, as they do not feature an unnatural Monster. Asserting that the focus of the horror film is more on the issues with the evil rather than the plot itself, Freeland expands the definition of the Monster as being who evokes the spectre of evil and claims that what makes it fearful is its ability to overturn the ordinary cultural and social values, as well as the natural order (Freeland, 2000, p. 8).

> [M]onsters are usually (though not always) evil in horror movies, and the loss of control, too, is often attributed to something evil or adds up to an overall existential condition of evil [. . .] They challenge, puzzle, and stimulate us as we see or feel horrific things happening to people—often to good people— and we ponder whether we also might be fated to confront or succumb to such evil. There may be key formulas or scenarios (vampires), prominent directors (Hitchcock, Cronenberg), or distinct social contexts (*Them!* versus *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer*) that affect meaning and impact in this genre. Similar factors operate in other genres, such as the Western, where themes of good and evil are also paramount. (Freeland, 1999, pp. 10-11)

Freeland does not intend to present a theory of horror per se but seeks to expand the definition of the Monster, as she finds Carroll's theory inadequate to explain films where the Monster is not a supernatural being. Her definition encompasses Caroll's account, since for Freeland the Monster overturns the order of the ordinary, such as moral values. This definition also enables films attributed to sub-genres like slasher to be considered within the larger body of the horror genre. Still, it is hard to claim that these accounts offer sufficient conditions to explain, let alone provide a rigour, the definition of the Monster. The reason is that, as Carroll points out, horror cannot be definable that way:

> They [readers] might feel that art-horror is not the sort of thing that can be captured by definitions in terms of sets of necessary and sufficient conditions. Insofar as art-horror is a constructed kind, not a natural kind—an artistic genre rather than a natural phenomenon—it may be argued that it is not

susceptible of the type of tight definition I propose. Rather it is a concept with fuzzy and perhaps developing boundaries. It supports myriad border cases that cannot be ruled in or out of the genre except by fiat. (Carroll, 1990, p. 38)

Although Carroll seems intent on providing necessary and sufficient conditions, it is possible to say that even an insufficient attempt can provide substantial insight into the horror genre and border cases. Carroll is right that the Monster and horror are "fuzzy" concepts, so it is necessary to emphasise that the Monster is a being that is constantly on the move, border-crossing, changing, and transforming, as well as the genre itself.

Another way to gain insight into a "fuzzy" concept with "developing boundaries" like horror would be to overview both the history of the genre and the history of the theories developed about the genre. Doing so will provide us with substantial tools and models to understand the operation of the horror genre on different levels.

2.2.1. A Brief History of the Literary Precursors to the Horror Genre

In *Dreadful Pleasures*, James Twitchell remarks that the antecedents of horror can be observed in the habits of our ancestors, as they were horrified by the flickering lights on the cave walls as if the lights were the monsters attacking them (Twitchell, 1985, p. 4). As many other theorists do, Twitchell also claims that horror is a primordial and pre-essentialist episteme of human nature. While it holds true that the antecedents of horror can be traced back to antiquity, it is in our best interest to look for the precursors of the modern horror genre in literature and film history.

Myths—whether Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek, Scandinavian, Persian, Hindu, or Turkic—often depict creatures that can be described as monstrous, such as the undead (Ghoul, Vrykolakas, or Jiangshi), human-animal hybrids (Minotaur, Sphinx, or Manticore), giants, fairies, serpents, and seraphs. Surely, the function of these monsters in classic myths is drastically different from that in the modern horror narrative. Rather than being horrifying per se, these monsters often function in the mythic narrative as formidable obstacles that enable the heroes to prove themselves. Over the course of time, these myths evolved into folkloric, paganistic, quasi-

religious, or superstitious narratives. These allegedly true stories from exotic and unknown corners of the world began to be translated and circulated and soon became a craze in Western Europe so much so that they laid the groundwork for the subsequent literary traditions, such as the English Gothic novel.

The umbilical link between the Gothic novel, which is considered one of the sources of the modern horror genre along with German *Schauer-roman* and French *roman noir* (Carroll, 1990, p. 4), and mythology is indisputable. It is not simply a coincidence that Mary Shelley termed her seminal work, *Frankenstein* (1818), the "Modern Prometheus". Just like Prometheus, who steals the sacred fire from the gods to spark life in his own creations, Victor Frankenstein also creates life in a non-sacred way. Shelley and other authors in the Gothic canon were engaged with myths as they were primarily interested in evil. They considered evil, however, as a part of the human psyche and wrote about the inner drives or pathological manifestations. These characteristics of their work were based on the understanding of morality during the turn of the century when the important changes in the image of man and nature took place.

The emergence of the Gothic novel overlaps with the period of the Enlightenment, and the Gothic novel aims to explore all the behaviour patterns, passion and desires that were deemed irrational by the Enlightenment project. The Gothic work of art, therefore, challenges the ideals of the Enlightenment through its embrace of the supernatural and becomes a form of celebration of the outlaws, the socially and culturally excluded. In other words, the Enlightenment project paved the way for its own opposites, or as Carroll succinctly points out, "[t]he scientific world view of the Enlightenment [. . .] supplies a norm of nature that affords the conceptual space necessary for the supernatural, even if it also regards that space as one of superstition" (1990, p. 57).

There is a widespread consensus among the scholarship about the first appearance of the Gothic novel: in the year 1764, Horace Walpole published *The Castle of Otranto*, which then laid the groundwork for its successors. *The Castle of Otranto* employs some of the key conventions of the Gothic novel: the supernatural events, the eerie

romantic setting, and finally, the Gothic villain. Surely, supernatural elements are not inherent only to the Gothic novel, but to horror fiction in a broader sense. However, from the walking statue of Alfonso in *The Castle of Otranto* to the mysterious spirits in *The Romance of the Forest* (Ann Radcliffe, 1791), or the Bleeding Nun in *The Monk* (Matthew Lewis, 1796), they function as vehicles that forward the cautionary tale. Their functions therefore in the Gothic novel are different—Alfonso's statue functions as a force in the service of good and right in Walpole's novel, while the nun in Lewis's novel functions as a warning against the perils of giving in to sexual passion.

Following this eerie path that the Gothic novel paved, several authors created a far greater impact on horror and its evil twin, science fiction, by depicting the terrors of everyday life through Gothic fiction. It was the summer of 1816 when a group of people decided to hold an unofficial ghost story competition to spend their spare time at the Villa Diodati near Lake Geneva, which led to two of the most enduring works of horror fiction. Villa Diodati was Lord Byron's residence, which was hosting Byron's friend Percy Bysshe Shelley, Shelley's soon wife-to-be Mary Goodwin, Mary's half-sister (and Byron's lover) Claire Clairmont, and Byron's personal physician John William Polidori for a summer retreat. They used to get together on rainy nights and spent their time reading horror stories from a French anthology book called *Fantasmagoriana*, which was translated from German, and at Byron's suggestion, they decided to write their own ghost stories (Tropp, 1990, pp. 28-29). After this unofficial competition, only two works were completed, and both belonged to two non-authors: nineteen-year-old Mary Godwin, soon to be known as Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, and physician John Williams Polidori. Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819) was essentially built on Lord Byron's unfinished horror story, *Fragment of a Novel*. The antagonist of the story, Lord Ruthven, was also modelled after Byron himself and his scandalous life. Perhaps for this reason, the authorship of the work was wrongly attributed to Byron for a long time. Regardless of the controversy surrounding the story, Polidori's *The Vampyre* was highly influential, as it replaced the monstrous, ravenous vampire image in mythology and folklore with the image of a charming, yet vicious aristocrat. This image was reiterated and refined in subsequent horror stories and other horror fiction. Years after *The Vampyre*, Bram

Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) would likewise employ the image of a bloodsucking aristocrat, which then become one of the most everlasting artefacts within the horror genre. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which would become a centrepiece in the Gothic canon right after its publication, is also considered the precursor of the science fiction genre, as it employs the image of a mad scientist who abuses science. Additionally, the publication of Frankenstein coincided with the Industrial Revolution in England, so Shelley's Monster embodied the blurring of the distinction between nature and science, man and machine, and "gave a new and fearful face to the future" (Tropp, 1990, p. 8).

During the Industrial Revolution, Victorian cities started to grow exponentially as a result of industrialisation and thus rural-urban migration. The need for entertainment of new industrial workers in these rapidly expanding urban spaces ultimately led to the commercialisation of their leisure time. The spread of the printing press and the abolition of the taxes on paper emerged as cheap publishing, which then transformed the popular culture experience. In such a period, the horror fiction that progressed with the Gothic novel continued with mass-produced and serialised *penny blood*[3] stories.

In Victorian London of the time, Fleet Street, home to many publishers, achieved its notorious connotation of today when Edward Lloyd popularised the phenomenon of penny bloods. From the 1830s onward, Lloyd published hundreds of penny blood stories. The most famous among them were *Varney the Vampyre; or, the Feast of Blood* (1845–47) and *The String of Pearls: A Domestic Romance* (1846–47). *The String of Pearls* was the literary work in which the demon barber of Fleet Street, Sweeney Todd first appeared. While the authorship of both penny bloods remains open to discussion, the consensus is that both are written by James Malcolm Rymer. The reason is that many penny bloods published by Lloyd were often written "episodically and in a hurry" by several authors (Twitchell, 1981, p. 123).

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[3] Although the term "penny dreadful" is predominantly used among scholarship to describe such sensational Victorian fiction, and thus the terms "penny blood" and "penny dreadful" are perceived as interchangeable, these two refer to different types of publications. *Penny blood* is often used to describe horror publications of the 1830s and the 1840s that blend crime melodramas and Gothic tradition, published in weekly or monthly parts. Additionally, *penny bloods* were mainly aimed at the adult reader. *Penny dreadful*, on the other hand, describes adventure melodramas of the 1850s to the 1870s, targeting mostly young boys (Mandal, 2020, p. 151).

Varney the Vampyre was the first popular publication that resurrected the vampire phenomenon twenty-six years after Polidori's *The Vampyre*. In more than 230 chapters and 868 double-columned pages, *Varney the Vampyre* marks the transition from the Byronic vampire to an image of a crueller and bloodier vampire, which heralds the coming of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, along with Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872) (Twitchell, 1981, p. 124).

> *Varney* is really unparalleled even in vampire lore [. . .] it is proof, if any really be needed, of the popular acceptance of the myth, for *Varney* deals with all the clichés in the most unselfconscious manner. There is no pretense, no purpose, no art; just a rollicking story. As opposed to its earlier, more sombre treatments, the vampire myth in *Varney* is not the means of telling the story, but the story itself; and *Varney*, for all its vulgarity, established the vampire solidly in the culture of the most common reader, where he has still continued to thrive. (Ibid)

Meanwhile, in America, Gothic literature begins with Charles Brockden Brown. He led the monsters out of their majestic castles in Europe and into the American wilderness, by writing four Gothic novels in only two years: *Wieland: or, the Transformation: An American Tale* (1798); *Ormond: or, the Secret Witness* (1799); *Edgar Huntly: or, Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker* (1799); and *Arthur Mervyn: or, Memoirs of the Year* (1800). All four novels were written amidst the American Revolutionary War (1775–1783), whereby the Enlightenment and a newfound nationalistic sentiment led to sectarianism, suspicion, and paranoia. In *Wieland*, Brown focuses on the perils of both religious fanaticism and extreme rationalism by chronicling Theodore Wieland's fall into madness that eventually led him to commit murder. Charles Brockden Brown was keen to emphasise the inherent American-ness of his writings, and thus engaging with larger social and cultural issues raised by that nature. In his epistolary work *Edgar Huntly*, his statement of "the field of investigation, opened to us by our own country, should differ essentially from those which exist in Europe" (2001 [1799], p. 2), in fact, confirms this. By the mid-1800s, Brown's attempt to create a Gothic fiction distinctive from that of Europe culminated in the work of authors such as Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Edgar Allan Poe depicts characters driven to madness right from his early stories such as *Ligeia* (1838) and *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839), just as in Brown's

Wieland. However, Brown embraces Ann Radcliffe's "explained supernatural" narrative technique, according to which seemingly supernatural occurrences are eventually revealed to have rational explanations. Poe's stories, on the other hand, remain enigmatic, since they deal with implied yet unexplained occurrences. Thus, while the uncanny human psyche is central to Poe's stories as well as to Brown's, it is important to note the influence of older European literary forms in Poe's work, especially the German *Schauerroman*. Such an enigma is also present in Nathaniel Hawthorne's early stories such as *Young Goodman Brown* (1835) and *The Minister's Black Veil* (1836). Unlike Poe, however, Hawthorne depicts highly American settings and characters. Hawthorne, whose lineage dates to Puritan colonies and magistrates of the Salem Witch Trials (1692–3), integrates Gothicism into his narratives placed in these settings to criticise religious extremism.

By the late 1800s, a flow of cheap publications called *pulp magazines*, or *pulp fiction*, became highly popular among American readers, up until the late 1950s. Pulp was a "new and vital outlet for storytelling" that helped to develop genres such as horror, science fiction, detective or mystery fiction, and fantasy (DeForest, 2004, p. 11). Many authors like Robert Bloch, Isaac Asimov, and H.P. Lovecraft wrote stories exclusively for pulp magazines and thus contributed greatly to the popularisation of such genres. While Lovecraft is arguably "the most memorable and important American writer in the surprisingly enduring pulp terror genre" (Tyree, 2008, p. 143), his influence has managed to permeate virtually every component of modern popular culture going well beyond the boundaries of literature. What binds together all of Lovecraft's narratives, myths, and invented gods is the theme of *cosmic horror*, which we also refer to today as *Lovecraftian horror*. The central idea behind his literary philosophy is that humanity's quest for knowledge is futile to understand and dominate what lies in the deep cosmos. At the heart of all horror lies this obscurity and incomprehensibility.

However, it is crucial to stress that recognising this canon of Gothic and horror fiction does not change the fact that there are examples of Gothic and horror fiction in this period–and even in much earlier periods–in other geographies, even if they were not primarily defined as "Gothic". Approaching the Gothic as a concept with a

clearly defined birth of origin and borders would obscure our understanding of a mode encompassing a variety of cultures, nations, identities, and media.

> Not only has Western gothic travelled but one of the effects of the increasing mobility and fluidity of people and products in the globalised world has been a growing awareness that the tropes and strategies Western critics have associated with the gothic, such as the ghost, the vampire and the zombie, have their counterparts in other cultures, however differently these may be inflected by specific histories and belief systems. Consequently, the flows have by no means been one-directional. (Byron, 2013, p. 3)

The *globalgothic* approach, offered by Glennis Byron, moves away from analysing the Gothic narrative solely on a psychoanalytical level and enables to investigate the emergence of fear in historical contexts in specific periods. *Globalgothic* describes the reemergence of the Gothic narratives in moments of cultural crisis to reflect and negotiate the political and social concerns of the age. When we look at the three countries subject of this work, it is possible to say that the Gothic narratives emerged at precisely such moments. For instance, self-proclaimed "Egyptian Maupassant" Mahmoud Taymour's short stories like *Ragab afandi; qissah misriyyah* ("Ragab Efendi: an Egyptian Story"; 1928) were written during the period when the early modernisation began in the Arab world, also known as the *nahda* movement or the Arab Enlightenment, began. These stories depict the secularly educated, past-obsessed *efendi* class, who struggle with Pan-Arab nationalism and identity. The anti-Enlightenment narratives and tropes of the Anglo-Gothic canon were, therefore, used to question such liminal identities in Egyptian Gothic narratives.

In Iran, Sadeq Hedayat, perhaps the most conspicuous example, wrote his stories in a simple and concise language borrowed from Western literature, in contrast to the pompous language of traditional Persian literature. He fashioned his writing style to deal with philosophical and metaphysical matters or to create surrealist chaos narratives. He thought that it was inevitable that the world would change under the influence of modernity, and thus, problematised the complexities and uncertainties this liminal period brings, especially in *Boof-e koor* ("The Blind Owl"; 1936). Hedayat was also an avid folklore researcher, so his modernist narratives often draw on Persian and Zoroastrian cultural heritage, taking a multi-layered structure.

Through his stories, he tried to stimulate the Persian psyche to find answers to their questions about modern Iranian identity by looking into their cultural past.

In Turkey, Ali Rıza Seyfi's *Kazıklı Voyvoda* ("The Voivode with the Stakes"; 1928)—which is discussed in more detail within in relation with its screen adaptation in the third chapter—takes Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) as a source material and localises the story. The Turkish Republic, which had been established only five years ago at the time, was in a period of transformation into a modern nation state and leaving behind the Ottoman past. In a mostly conservative society, literature and other cultural products undertook the task of educating and enlightening people as a part of the secularisation process. In this regard, Seyfi's story took anti-Western imperialism and anti-Ottoman stance by describing Dracula as a brutal voivode who fought against the Turks. In addition, Turkish Gothic narrative appears in Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar's work as well. In his stories such as *Muhabbet Tılsımı* ("Talisman of Love"; 1928), *Ölüler Yaşıyorlar mı?* ("Are the Dead Alive?"; 1932) or *Dirilen İskelet* ("The Living Skeleton"; 1946), he reveals the insignificance of superstitious beliefs against rational values by employing Gothic tropes like "explained supernatural" in a sarcastic/humorous tone.

In conclusion, the MENA region thus has a rich corpus of works employing themes, topoi, aesthetics, and philosophies seen in Gothic and horror fiction, though different cultural, geographical, and national contexts are at play compared to English or American Gothic.

2.2.2. A Brief History of the Cinematic Precursors to the Horror Genre

The interest in cinematic horror is a mass phenomenon based on basic universal fears, but also decisively shaped by historical, geographical, social, and cultural factors. Relatedly, the authors of the Anglo-Saxon Gothic canon took up the fears of their respective times and developed stories mixing them with myths, folktales, and legends from all over the world. In doing so, they laid the groundwork for certain themes, motifs, and narrative patterns of the horror film. Perhaps for this reason, just like horror fiction, horror film was thought of as a stronghold of the Western world for a long time.

Cinema and horror fiction always had a strong connection—often mediated through intermedial adaptations—as they both were the novelties of the 19th century. Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) was adapted to the screen three times between the years 1908 and 1913, Herbert Brenon's version (1913) being the most notable one (Morgart, 2014, p. 378). J. Searle Dawley adapted Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* into a 13-minute film in 1910. Four years later, D.W. Griffith, the father of film, shot a 78-minute silent feature based on Edgar Allan Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1843) and *Annabelle Lee* (1849), called *The Avenging Conscience*.

Still, it is possible to trace back much further the precedents of the horror film. Enthusiastic about the possibilities of the new film medium, Georges Méliès produced numerous fantastic films, in which the devil or other supernatural entities wreak havoc. Méliès, an illusionist and a pioneer of filmmaking, is considered the director of the very first horror film, *Le Manoir du diable* ("The House of the Devil", 1896). The fantastic films of Méliès (*L'auberge ensorcelée/The Bewitched Inn*, 1897; *Le Diable au Couvent/The Devil in a Convent*, 1899) have demonstrated the film's aptitude for exploring the macabre, as well as cementing the Manichean narrative in horror films. In a similar vein, Alice Guy-Blaché, one of the women pioneers of filmmaking, produced key films employing macabre materials. Some works of Guy-Blaché (*Turn of the Century Surgery*, 1900) and Méliés reflected the aesthetics of French horror theatre *Grand Guignol*[4]. Also notably, Guy-Blaché directed an adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Pit and the Pendulum* in 1913, and other horror titles such as *The Monster and the Girl* (1914) and *The Vampire* (1915).

At around the same time, *Shinin no sosei* ("Resurrection of a Corpse"; Shiro Asano, 1898) and *Bake Jizo* ("Jizo the Ghost"; Shiro Asano, 1898) were produced in Japan. While the former is a horror-comedy showing a dead man coming back to life after falling from his coffin, the latter is based on *Jizo* statues that protect the spirits of children who passed away before their parents. American director Edwin S. Porter's

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[4] At *fin de siècle*, *Grand Guignol* earned the notoriety of staging gory and gruesome plays, often mixing the elements of horror, humour, and eroticism to exploit the deepest fears and desires of the audience.

horror-comedies such as *Uncle Josh's Nightmare* (1900) and *Uncle Josh in a Spooky Hotel* (1900), or Spanish director Segundo de Chomón's fantastic films such as *La maison ensorcelée* ("The House of Ghosts"; 1906), *Le spectre rouge* ("The Red Specter", 1907), and *Hôtel électrique* ("The Electric Hotel"; 1908) are also among the important horror titles of this period. However, since none of these films aims to evoke horror or terror per se, it would be more accurate to define them as *proto-horror* films. Although they carry the potential to terrify, they primarily aim to dazzle their audience and explore the limits of the macabre and the marvellous by using novel techniques like trick photography.

In Weimar Germany during the 1920s, the Expressionist movement spread from painting and literature to film. The social upheaval and political unrest brought by the loss of the First World War and the collapse of the German Empire corresponded with the gloomy and eerie appearance of Expressionist films. While it is widely considered that Expressionist film has achieved its full form with *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Robert Wiene, 1920), it is necessary to mention the early examples of the movement, as they influenced certain motifs for the subsequent horror cinema. Paul Wegener's *Der Golem* (*The Golem*, 1915) is based on old Jewish folktales, in which the golem represents an unfinished human without a soul, and in some variants, they collapse and kill their makers—similar to, yet way earlier, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (Barzilai, 2016, pp. 2-3). Wegener's *Der Golem* is actually a trilogy, followed by two other instalments: *Der Golem und die Tänzerin* ("The Golem and the Dancing Girl"; 1917) and *Der Golem, wie er in die Welt kam* ("The Golem: How He Came into the World"; 1920). Otto Rippert's six-part *Homunculus* (1916) likewise tells the story of an artificial human created by a scientist and takes its inspiration from Paracelsus's 16th-century writings about the alchemical creation of a "little man".

By the year 1920, Robert Wiene's *the Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* triggered a cycle of stylistically similar films all around the world. Going well beyond Weimar Germany, it became one of the most everlasting sources of influence for the horror genre. The Expressionist aesthetic quickly found practitioners. In Weimar Germany and Austria films like *Der Müde Tod* ("Destiny"; Fritz Lang, 1921), *Nosferatu – Eine Symphonie*

des Grauens ("Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror"; F.W. Murnau, 1922), *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler* ("Dr. Mabuse the Gambler"; Fritz Lang, 1922), *Das Wachsfigurenkabinett* ("Waxworks"; Paul Leni, 1924), *Orlacs Hände* ("The Hands of Orlac"; Robert Wiene, 1924) primarily employed an over-stylised form, bold angles, jagged backdrops, artificial lighting, and unnaturally ecstatic performances. Taken together, they created an atmosphere that was always threatening, never reassuring. During the same period, the influence of German Expressionism crossed many borders. Fantastic-horror films such as the Swedish *Häxan* ("Häxan: Witchcraft Through the Ages"; Benjamin Christensen, 1922), Japanese *Kurutta Ichipeiji* ("A Page of Madness"; Teinosuke Kinugasa, 1926), and Danish *Vampyr – Der Traum des Allan Gray* ("Vampyr: The Dream of Allan Gray"; Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1932) were heavily influenced by German Expressionist cinema. However, brief this movement's heyday was, film history has had a decisive influence by it. Although open to discussion, the shadow tricks and the chiaroscuro lighting that characterised classic Hollywood gangster and horror films of the 1930s, and film noir of the 1940s, would have not been this prevalent without such an exemplar.

From the 1920s onward, Universal Studios of Hollywood began to take the first steps to create the horror legacy it has today with important silent horror titles, such as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Wallace Worsley, 1923), *The Phantom of the Opera* (Rupert Julian, 1925), *The Cat and the Canary* (Paul Leni, 1927), *The Man Who Laughs* (Paul Leni, 1928), and *The Last Warning* (Paul Leni, 1929). Actors like Conrad Veidt (*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *The Man Who Laughs*) and Lon Chaney (*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *The Phantom of the Opera*) were among the first stars of horror with their impressive macabre performances.

Surely, the horror genre did not arise *ex nihilo* with the advent of sound, yet the "golden age" of horror started with it, despite the Great Depression. By the end of the 1920s, the hard blow of the Depression hit Universal hard, as it did to other studios. Universal had to step back from the prestige films, Carl Laemmle Jr. conjured a plan to mitigate the crisis: producing low-budget genre pieces. Universal was forced to operate within its means and exploit its resources, and it is precisely how the strengths of the studio were revealed. The studio counted on standard cinematic

formulas such as gangster films or women's films, but the characteristic genre of the 1930s was horror (Neale, 2000, p. 87-88). Universal had many horror titles under its name, above all due to its European crew, especially German. Key figures like Paul Leni and Karl Freund carried Expressionist influences of the 1920s when they moved to Hollywood.

The golden age of horror came with the release of *Dracula* (Tod Browning, 1931). The film was based on the hit Broadway play of the same name, which is also adapted from Bram Stoker's 1897 novel. Laemmle Jr. brought in outside talents for the film: MGM director Tod Browning and Bela Lugosi, who plays Count Dracula in the stage version (Nowell, 2014, p. 17). Although the film's budget was reduced to cope with the Depression, it was the most ambitious production of 1930. The film was produced with way less budget than All *Quiet on the Western Front* (Lewis Milestone, 1930) in half the time, and was a great hit (Nowell, 2014, p. 16). So, without wasting much time, Laemmle Jr. had put in place the next horror production, *Frankenstein* (James Whale, 1931). *Frankenstein* was much cheaper, yet technically more refined than *Dracula*. With its resounding commercial success, it confirmed Universal's aptitude for horror films (Nowell, 2014, p. 20). Karl Freund was a director of photography, who worked in the productions of *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*. In 1933, he made the switch to directing with *The Mummy*. This film also achieved great success and assured Freund of the position in the ranks of directors at Universal.

Murders in the Rue Morgue (Robert Florey, 1932) was another significant film of the period, which is an adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's short story of the same name (1841). Compared to other horror titles of the period the film did poorly both commercially and critically, yet Bela Lugosi's performance as Dr. Mirakle was deemed thrilling. Bela Lugosi and Boris Karloff were the household names of Universal, as well as the whole horror genre at the time. Their collaboration on *The Old Dark Horse* (James Whale, 1932) was thus highly anticipated, even though the film's later reception was rather poor. Still, *The Old Dark Horse* is considered a testament to the flexibility of the horror genre, being open to many different facets. Lugosi - Karloff collaboration continued in other films, such as *The Black Cat*

(Edgar G. Ulmer, 1934) and *The Raven* (Lew Landers, 1935), which both adapted from Edgar Allan Poe's short stories.

In 1933, James Whale directed an adaptation of H.G. Wells's science fiction novel, *The Invisible Man* (1897), and "introduced the fourth key figure in Universal Horror's gallery of monsters", along with Dracula, Frankenstein, and The Mummy (Jarvis, 2020, p. 684). By the year 1941, Universal introduced the fifth key figure in its horror line-up. *The Wolf Man* (George Waggner, 1941), as the title suggests, was dealing with the theme of lycanthropy and drew its inspiration from werewolf folklore around the world (ibid). Continuing his father's legacy of horror, Lon Chaney Jr. starred as Larry Talbot, who was transformed into a tortured werewolf after a terrifying curse, while Bela Lugosi cemented the folkloric connotations of the film with his role as a gipsy who curses Talbot.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Universal exploited the popularity of each of these iconic monsters with sequels and spin-offs, such as *Dracula's Daughter* (Lambert Hillyer, 1936), *Bride of Frankenstein* (James Whale, 1935), *The Mummy's Hand* (Christy Cabanne, 1940), *The Invisible Man Returns* (Joe May, 1940), and others. In addition to sequels and spin-offs, "Universal pioneered the concept of the crossover in 'monster rally', or 'monster mash' features" (Jarvis, 2020, p. 685). "Monster mashes" such as *Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman* (Roy William Neill, 1943), *House of Frankenstein* (Erle C. Kenton, 1944), and *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (Charles Barton, 1948) presented an ensemble of fan favourite monsters and characters.

However, one of the films that caused several shifts in the genre along the historical and cultural dynamics is Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). Initially rejected by critics, *Psycho* has gradually come to be known as one of Hitchcock's most successful films. It is regarded as one of the most renowned examples of horror, and thus exponentially increased the interest of scholarly circles towards the genre. Andrew Tudor considers *Psycho* as a turning point in the horror genre, in which, instead of a monster coming from afar, the danger now emanates from the sexually repressive, psychotic nature of man (1989, p. 47).

> In earlier horror movies, most 'mad' characters were glossed as simply evil, their madness (if it was even given the name) an autonomous feature of a constantly malevolent world. After 1960, however, and most particularly in the seventies, madness becomes psychosis: a secular, dependent and internally articulated threat. Of course, many of the 'explanations' of psychosis offered in these films are no more sophisticated than the psychoanalyst's account tagged onto the end of Psycho — pop-Freud at best. What is important is not the explanations themselves but the fact that these films conceptualize insanity as caused at all, and that they increasingly do so in terms of a specific cluster of ideas. (Tudor, 1989, p. 57)

In 1960, a systematic understanding of genre theory was not yet available. The cinematic horror also lacked theoretical discourse, such as Robert Warshow's Western and gangster film theorisations, so films like *Psycho* or *Peeping Tom* (Michael Powell, 1960) could not be registered to a discursive space. The evolution of these films within the horror genre from a marginal position to classic horror films is decisively affected by *auteur* theory, film criticism, and genre theory. Their status as genre productions is particularly noteworthy within the discourse, as they offer insight into the status of genres within the *auteur* theory, as has been inquired in horror genre theorisations.

2.2.3. Theorising the Horror Film: Psychoanalytic Approach

Considering its inherent focus on the rejection of norms, erasure of taboos, and subversion of the social order, the horror film seems to appeal to the psychoanalytic paradigm within film theory.

> [T]he genre itself invokes psychoanalytic considerations, at times borrowing its imagery from the symbolic apparatus of dream interpretation as well as allowing fictional characters to advance pseudo-Freudian accounts of their own and others' motivations. Thus, where its typical monsters have been compulsive murderers, as so often in the past thirty years, the genre's common presumption has been of a psychopathology rooted in the psycho-sexual dynamics of childhood. In this respect, at least, Norman Bates long ago escaped the confines of *Psycho* to leave his distinctive imprint on modern horror. (Tudor, 1997, p. 446)

Christian Metz developed a Freudian-Lacanian framework to apply the psychoanalytic practice in the interpretation of films in the late 1970s. His

psychoanalytic model is based on three objects: cinematic fiction as a semi-dreamlike instance, the spectator-screen relationship as a mirror identification, and the cinematic dream in terms of a code to this dream (Metz, 1982 [1977], p. 6). Freudian interpretation of dreams and Lacanian identification through the mirror stage is reconciled in Metz's semiological model. Accordingly, traces of a person's identification with the world and with different forms of art can be discovered in the works the person produces. In other words, "certain phenomena that psychoanalysis has illuminated or can illuminate occur in the cinema" (Metz, 1982 [1977], p. 22). Metz's semiology played a primary role in canonising psychoanalysis as the dominant paradigm within film theory. In a similar vein, Laura Mulvey draws on the Freudian pleasure principle for interrogation of scopophilic pleasure, as well as the Lacanian mirror stage. In her essay, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, Mulvey contends that "as an advanced representation system, the cinema poses questions of the ways the unconscious (formed by the dominant order) structures ways of seeing and pleasure in looking" (1975, p. 7). Her essay has influenced horror scholars like Carol J. Clover, whose theory will be discussed shortly, in terms of exploration of attraction to horror. The horror film thus has consistently been subjected to psychoanalytic readings for over forty years, despite the harsh criticism within the scholarship.

In his seminal work within the horror scholarship, Robin Wood positions his model to a Freudian-Marxist framework. In *An Introduction to the American Horror Film* (1979), Wood asserts that the horror film emerges from the attraction to the Monster, who is the embodiment of everything that is oppressed by society and repressed within the psyche of an individual.

> In psychoanalytic terms, what is *re*pressed is not accessible to the conscious mind (except through analysis or, if one can penetrate their disguises, in dreams). We may also not be conscious of ways in which we are *op*pressed, but it is much easier to become so: we are oppressed by something 'out there'. One might perhaps define repression as fully internalized oppression (while reminding ourselves that all the groundwork of repression is laid in infancy), thereby suggesting both the difference and the connection. [. . .] What escapes *re*pression has to be dealt with by *op*pression. (Wood, 1979, p. 8; emphases in original)

The concept of *repression*, therefore, is applied to explore the tropes and conventions of the horror film, which are used to create "monogamous, heterosexual, bourgeois, patriarchal capitalists", and to regulate society accordingly (Wood, 1979, p. 8). Non-hegemonic sexual energy such as bisexuality, female sexuality/creativity, and the sexuality of children will be repressed to maintain the desired patriarchal heteronormativity (ibid, p. 9). In this everlasting process, however, the sexual energy will always cause the surplus and the repressed will always return (Wood, 1979, p. 15). The return of the repressed is vital to the basic formula of the horror film. According to Wood's model, the horror film narrative consists of three variables: normality, the Monster, and the relationship between the two (ibid, p. 16). Here, the term "normality" should be understood at its simplest as the highest level of conformity with hegemonic social norms. In the same sense, the Monster refers to the empty slot ready to form any representation of the evil that threatens to disrupt normalcy. The Monster is a figure who does not conform to the hegemonic norms of society, on the contrary, it threatens to transgress and subvert them. Such villainous figures can appear on screen as foreigners (Puerto Ricans in *The Possession of John Delaney*), women (murderous twins, Dominique and Danielle, in *Sisters*), homo- and bi-sexualities (Dr. Frank-n-Furter in *Rocky Horror Picture Show*), children (Damien in *The Omen*), or proletariat (the slaughterhouse workers in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*) (Wood, 1979, p. 11). The Monster in the horror film narrative, then, is an obvious example of a potentially destructive social categories, namely the Other. Since the Monster, or the Other, represents everything repressed by societal agents like the family or the Church, they are portrayed as evil in the filmic narrative and must be eventually annihilated to reinforce the patriarchal heteronormativity.

However, Wood also mentions some cases in which the horror film might have a "happy ending". For instance, during the final scene of *The Omen* (Richard Donner, 1976) we see Damien, the Antichrist, smiling at his adoptive parents' funeral. Wood considers such constructions as a reflection of the ideological fragmentation and crisis of trust created by events such as Vietnam and Watergate. Other hits of the same period, like *Halloween* (John Carpenter, 1978) and *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979) also evoke "maximum terror and panic, [yet] variously seal it over again" (Wood, 1979, p. 28).

Wood's works in the field, such as *Hitchcock's Films* (1965) and *American Nightmare* (1979) spurred critical and scholarly discussions that furthered the in-depth analysis of the horror film. Carol J. Clover, for instance, draws from a Freudian and gender-centred approach to contend that the gender politics of horror film functions to shape the threat. In *Men, Women and Chain Saws* (1992), Clover initiates a dialogue at the intersection of feminist film theory and horror film theory. According to Clover, in the horror film, "gender is less a wall than a permeable membrane" (1992, p. 46), with the fluid categories of man and woman. Rather than simply reinforcing male dominance, the horror film interrogates gender by blurring the fixed gender categories. Final Girls, from Laurie Strode in *Halloween* to Sidney Prescott in *Scream* (Wes Craven, 1996) are boyish and not fully feminine; just as the killer is never fully masculine, as he always falters at the end and brought down by the Final Girl (Clover, 1992, p. 40). Often involving the erasure of female sexuality and the victory over the Monster with her wit and practicality, the Final Girl navigates the boundaries of gender roles and, apparently, fuses them within her character. Linda Williams, just like Clover, draws on Freudian psychoanalysis and the notion of castration anxiety. In *Film Bodies: Gender, Genre and Excess* (1991), she argues that the image of a female victim in the horror film, especially in the slasher sub-genre, evokes voyeuristic and sado-masochistic feelings in the audience (Williams, 2012, p. 165). While the spectator projects their desires onto the suffering female victim's body, they simultaneously take pleasure in the killer's unexpected attacks. Additionally, Williams asserts that the horror film is one of the agents in constructing, reproducing, and transforming gender, while at the same time, the narrative of the horror film is subject to change as gender constructions change (Williams, 2012, p. 175).

Within the feminist horror film theory, another important work in terms of the representation of women is Barbara Creed's *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (1993). Creed draws on both Freudian psychoanalysis and Julia Kristeva's notion of the *abject*. According to Kristeva, the abject disrupts identity by making clear separation of boundaries impossible. The abject is in-between, ambiguous and hybrid, as it is a mixture of judgement and emotion, condemnation and longing, taste and impulse, and reveals both disgust and

fascination (Kristeva, 1982, pp. 9-10). Accordingly, Creed argues that the modern horror film bases its narrative on the forms of the abject to construct the monstrous feminine:

> [T]he modern horror text are grounded in ancient religious and historical notions of abjection - particularly in relation to the following religious 'abominations': sexual immorality and perversion; corporeal alteration, decay and death; human sacrifice; murder; the corpse; bodily wastes; the feminine body and incest. These forms of abjection are also central to the construction of the monstrous in the modern horror film. (Creed, 1993, p. 9)

Focusing on the psyche alone, without acknowledging the cultural impact on the attraction to create and experience the horror film, is to ignore a large body of textual reading. Psychoanalysis is undeniably apt to interrogate and critique the fearful that lies deep within the psyche. However, the representation of the fearful through the film is inextricably linked with the social and cultural. While I refrain to imply that the above-mentioned theorists who analyse the horror film from a psychoanalytic standpoint are reductionists, the psychoanalytic approach in the broader sense has produced a corpus of work that tend to ignore the socio-cultural, historical, and political contexts in which the horror film is produced.

Therefore, drawing on the standpoints of Andrew Tudor, Mark Jancovich, Jonathan Lake Crane, or Stephen Prince, it would be more appropriate to propose that the representations of the fearful and the Monster change according to time, society, and ideology. The reason is that, to ignore these contexts while analysing a cultural artefact would entirely obscure our understanding of the horror film.

2.2.4. Theorising the Horror Film: Cultural Approach

The psychoanalytic interrogation of the horror film tends to analyse what the horror film evokes in the spectator. Creed, for instance, deals with the notions of voyeurism and sado-masochism to do so. Surely, as Wood does, notions such as "the return of the repressed" or "the uncanny" are frequently used as well to explain the seemingly inexplicable appeal of the horror film. Stephen Prince, on the other hand, is in favour of restricting the psychoanalytic approach to a more anthropological one:

The aim here is not to remove psychological accounts from the terrain of the horror film, but merely to restrict the scope of their explanatory sweep. Freud tended to move too quickly from the individual to the social, attempting explanations of such collective phenomena as group dynamics, art, or religion in relation to the operation of laws of the psyche, writ large. By collapsing the social into the psychic life of the individual, Freud risked losing the social, and a similar problem exists with regard to our theoretical understanding of horror films. These films, after all, are the mass-produced products of popular culture. Unlocking the nature of their appeal entails using theories that preserve the category of the social without reducing it exclusively to the realm of psychology. (Prince, 2004, p. 119)

Jonathan Lake Crane also contends that Freudian or Lacanian approaches are reductionist, as well as ahistorical. Agreeing with Prince, he also states that group dynamics are reduced to the individual psyche in such accounts:

Whatever the new terrors mean, they can only be understood in conjunction with a much larger world than that of the solitary misfit coming to grips with his or her own discomfiting sexuality. By consistently reading the audience as an individual psyche, horror films have been turned into tokens of universal, unchanging, and, ultimately, undifferentiable archetypes or psychic black holes with no historical relation to the times of the people who made and understood them. (Crane, 1994, p. 39)

The claim that psychoanalytic approaches tend to be ahistorical holds true. While Freudian, Lacanian or Mulveyian theories characterise the horror film as a reflection of scopophilic, sado-masochist desire, they reduce all filmic texts to the inevitable repetitive loop of unresolved traumas and infantile fantasies. These archetypal and ahistorical tendencies confine the psychoanalytic theory of the horror film to a straitjacket. Because to ignore the social, cultural and historical contexts that condition the representation of the fearful in the horror film is not only to complicate the understanding of the genre with its function or aesthetics but to marginalise it. What needs to be done, instead, while contextualising the representation, reproduction, reiteration, and translation of the fearful is to extend the scope towards the individual as a founder and representative of the social and cultural whole. What is meant by the term "social whole" here is a coherent social structure defined by historical, geographical, political, ideological, gender-related and moral terms. Surely, the individual psyche is considered one of many facets of this whole, as it is conditioned by these terms and changes over time. The neuroses that the Gothic

protagonist suffers from at the turn of the century, for instance, are partly a product of the time and the place.

Andrew Tudor's *Monsters and Mad Scientists: A Cultural History of the Horror Movie* (1989) is a seminal work in sociological horror film theory. For Tudor, a film genre is not a fixed repertoire of myths, but a social construction that is anchored in the films, as well as in the imagination of the recipients. If one wants to understand a genre, it is therefore not enough to analyse individual films or fixed archetypes but must work out the potential readings of the films that make them historically conditioned cultural artefacts. "A genre is flexible, open to variable understanding by different users at different times and in different contexts. [. . .] A genre is, after all, a social construction, and as such it is subject to constant negotiation and re-formulation" (Tudor, 1989, p. 6). Tudor's work focuses on the analysis of a total of 990 films shown in Britain between 1931 and 1984. Since the analysis is intended to be a reconstruction of the genre from the perspective of the recipients, Tudors centres it around the threat characteristic of all horror films. To be able to define the horror film's various forms, he uses a set of categories, which results in a phenomenological analysis of the genre: supernatural/secular, external/internal, and autonomous/dependent (Tudor, 1989, p. 8). The Monster can be classified using these categories. For instance, Dracula is supernatural, autonomous and poses an external form of threat, while Norman Bates is dependent on his illness, which comes from within, turning him into a murderer—he is also a worldly character.

Tudor also examines the narrative structure of the horror film and its generic shifts in history. According to him, all horror films are variations of the "seek and destroy" pattern: The Monster enters a stable situation and subverts it. An attempt of battle occurs, where the Monster rampages around and defends itself fiercely. Eventually the Monster will be destroyed and order will be restored (Tudor, 1989, p. 81). In the 1960s, however, decisive changes took place (Tudor, 1989, p. 102). In the horror film before 1960, the threat mostly came from the intentional activities of scientists. Yet the narrative reassures the trust in institutions and authorities in their ability to restore and maintain the social order. Because the closed narrative guarantees a resolution, the audience knows the Monster cannot live enough to prosper and

become a serious threat to humanity. This is what Tudor calls the "secure horror" (1989, p. 103). Since *Psycho* and *Peeping Tom*, however, an even more significant shift has occurred in the narrative structure of the horror film. Eliminating the threat and restoring stability is no longer an option. The closed world of "secure horror" has turned into the open world of "paranoid horror" (ibid). Tudor describes the narrative structure of "paranoid horror" as an "open metamorphosis narrative" (1989, p. 216), as anyone can turn into the Monster. Such films often end before the destruction of the human order.

Since Tudor contends that a genre evolves and transforms with cinematic texts, as well as the constructions of the recipients, he questions what "secure horror" and "paranoid horror" correspond to in the everyday world. He concludes that the former thrives in a world where the society is confident in its ability to overcome potential threats, meaning the social and cultural values are not wholly disrupted. "Secure horror" films, therefore, form a part of the social and cultural order that is maintained depending on the hegemonic ideology of the state. On the other hand, chaos reigns in the world of "paranoid horror". It is not possible to talk about a stable social order worth defending anymore. "Paranoid horror" films thrive in a world that is subject to cultural and social change that is yet incomplete, as well as undefined. While the hegemonic discourses in the field of politics or media suppress the fearful in everyday life, these discourses are subverted and the fearful is expressed in the horror film.

In a similar vein, Mark Jancovich asserts that in the early 1950s, a clear distinction was made between the rational and the irrational. In the horror or science fiction films of the period, desires and emotions pose a threat to rationality and science. On a larger level, however, desires and emotions have begun to be conditioned by the consumption culture, and therefore the irrational is now under the control of the rational. The points of resistance have begun to blur, the human psyche might be under the rational's complete control, while resisting it. This creates an environment whereby it is impossible to trust either the conscious or the unconscious mind (Jancovich, 1996, pp. 231-232).

This is why both Tudor and Jancovich point out the distinction between *madness* and *psychosis*. While the former is closely related to "secure horror", the latter is to "paranoid horror". Madness is "an autonomous feature of a constantly malevolent world" (Tudor, 1989, p. 57), yet psychosis is what erupts *within* us (Jancovich, 1996, p. 228). The terrifying aspect of psychosis is the fact that it is "potentially present within all of us" (Tudor, 1989, p. 45), and just like Norman Bates in *Psycho* or *Mark Lewis* in Peeping Tom, we may not be aware of it. Whether the explanations that the horror film offers against madness or psychosis are convincing is not that important, since it is essentially a matter of representation (Jancovich, 1996, pp. 228-229). *Psycho* is "framed within an essentially melodramatic context" (Tudor, 1989, p. 187), and the depiction of the serial killer in contemporary culture defies rational explanation. As Jancovich himself points out, portrayals of the villain in the horror film, like Michael Myers in *Halloween* or Hannibal Lecter in *The Silence of the Lambs* (Jonathan Demme, 1991), cannot be explained by psychiatric assessments (1996, p. 229). Indeed, in *Scream* (1996) Billy Loomis and Stu Macher openly mock Sidney Prescott, who is trying to figure out why they made elaborate plans to murder people:

> *Billy:* Did you hear that Stu? I think she wants a motive. I don't really believe in motives, Sid. I mean, did Norman Bates have a motive?
>
> *Stu:* No!
>
> *Billy:* Did they ever really decide why Hannibal Lecter liked to eat people? Don't think so! See, it's a lot scarier when there's no motive, Sid. (Craven, 1996, 1:32:16-1:32:30)

Nevertheless, however important the analysis of horror films, which plays on "the fear of one's own body", as well as one's mind (Brophy, 1986, p. 8) is, we also need to question *supernatural horror* within broader social and cultural contexts. Even though we may not be what we usually perceive ourselves to be or the presence of the uncanny in our world, everyday life does not follow an unusual path than we are used to. In *supernatural horror*, on the other hand, we are transported from this mundane, everyday life to a fictional world filled with inexplicable horrors and the unknown. The social and cultural boundaries (identity, rationality, coherence, meaning, etc.) that perpetuate the reality we are used to have all been transgressed

and violated one by one. Supernatural horror plays on the unreliability of the conceptual categories we embrace to interpret our phenomenological world. Unlike the fundamental cultural institutions (religion, the Church, or the State) that form and maintain reality as a coherent whole, supernatural horror is grandiloquently unknown, chaotic, and terrifying.

The traditional Monster of the horror film may appear as a being that is way beyond our grasp. As in the case of *jinn*, often featured in horror films in the MENA region, it is a radical variation of the traditional Monster. The philosopher Eugene Thacker defines such entities in the horror film as "aberrations of thought", and distinguishes them from the "abominations of nature", such as vampires, werewolves, mummies, or zombies:

> These films represent a subtle subversion of the classic creature-feature by shifting the criteria by which a monster is made. Whereas the creature-feature films define the monster as an aberration (and abomination) of nature, the unnameable creature is an aberration of thought. The classical creature-features still retain an element of familiarity, despite the impure mixture of categories (plant, animal, human) or differences in scale (giant reptiles, ants, leeches, etc.). Films featuring unnameable creatures, by contrast, contextualize the monster in terms of ontology (form-without-matter, matter-without-form) or in terms of onto-theology (the spiritual abject, the oozing abstraction). They point towards a form of life-after-life that highlights conceptual aberrations. (Thacker, 2011, p. 130)

Abominations of nature, then, serve as a means of testing the resilience of human agency and its aptitude to overcome challenges, thus reinforcing the dominant cultural structures and ideas in their respective society. Abominations of nature enable the audience to accept its own reality by functioning as an external threat that must be defeated. The existence of this Monster is partly to offer an explanation for the uncanny organisations of our life by dissecting and decontextualising it from reality itself. Thus the "natural" Monster fits into Tudor's definition of secure horror. In contrast, aberrations of thought question and ridicule the human agency's ability to construct, organise, and make sense of its world with pure logic and reason. They are not terrifying because they imply the existence of an unnatural world, on the contrary, they imply that our world and reality are indeterminable and incomprehensible, as our frameworks or conceptual categories are insufficient.

Closer to Tudor's definition of paranoid horror or Lovecraftian cosmic horror, aberrations of thought are therefore irrational and unstable, as they subvert our ordinary reality, as well as terrifying.

CHAPTER 3

REMAKE, ADAPTATION, AND APPROPRIATION

The film remake tends to be perceived as a result of the shameless pragmatism of commercial cinema. As James Monaco wrote in 1979, "The straight remakes [. . .] are *invariably lesser films* than their ancient models, although they occasionally come up with interesting twists" (p. 280; my emphasis). This could be the sole reason why film scholars did not reconcile with the phenomenon of remaking up until the 1990s, while popular film criticism still considers the film remake cheap copies of the "originals", and the embodiment of the greed for money as well as the unimaginative nature of film industries all around. This approach, while not completely wrong, is problematic since in the history of popular film creativity, expression, and representation has always been tied to a profit-oriented production culture. So, instead of pursuing the question of which version of the film is better in individual cases, I understand the film remake as rereading, reiterating, and rewriting of a cultural text, as a new version that enters a contested space with the anterior text.

In its most basic terms, a remake transposes a story to changed historical and cultural circumstances and contexts. This re-addressing can take place at the spatial level, for example when a Hollywood film is being remade in Egypt, or at the temporal level, when there is a long period between the two versions. Surely, these levels are not mutually exclusive. A good example of this is the 2009 Iranian horror/thriller film *Khiabane Bisto Chaharom* ("24th Street"; Saeed Asadi), which is the direct remake of *The Stepfather* (Joseph Ruben, 1987). As a cinematic transposing process, therefore, a remake is inextricably linked with cultural appropriation, mediation and remediation, and can be understood in a broader sense as a translation.

The relationship between the film remake and the earlier film is contradictory since a remake simultaneously affirms and challenges the earlier film. The remake bestows

the status of "originality" on the earlier film by preserving some semantic-syntactic elements, while at the same time, it destabilises the earlier film by recontextualization and rewriting. Through the interplay of convergence and divergence between the remake and the earlier film, representation strategies can be specified and traced, and the process of meaning-making in different circumstances and contexts gains a more precise understanding through the film remake. Here, I avoid using the term "original", instead I use the terms "the earlier film" or "the anterior text" in an effort to sidestep from hierarchizing the relationship between the two film versions and to focus on the mutual interplay of them. I assume that the production of the film remake is not merely due to economic concerns, but rather that the film remake embraces and negotiates compatible and incompatible parts of the earlier version, for example, the rewriting of the religious manifestations. The film remake opens new perspectives on their predecessors—it creates a juxtaposition whereby the culturally or historically specific elements of the earlier film can be precisely traced and vice versa. In this light, the films that are subject to analysis in this work are understood as historico-cultural artefacts embedded in the network of socio-cultural discourses. Yet, popular or mainstream horror films and their transnational remakes are not considered passive reflectors of cultural circumstances, movements, or trends, but as cultural units in action and dialogue with each other.

3.1. Adaptation Studies and the Issue of Fidelity

Until recent times, studies within the field of Adaptation Studies tended to focus on the adaptation of literary works to other media, often in a negative light. This approach is used to evaluate an adaptation on the basis of fidelity, or lack thereof, to its "original". In his 1954 article, *A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema*, François Truffaut criticises French screenwriters Jean Aurenche and Pierre Bost for omitting unfilmable parts of the novels they are adapting to the script and deviating from the original by substituting new elements and thus making new, but a formless film (2014 [1954], pp. 135-138). American film theorist Lester Asheim, in a similar vein, asserts that a film adaptation alters the style and thus trivialises its "original" (1952, p. 259). Accordingly, a film adaptation "loses the wider range of interests, the complexities of motivation, the depth of analysis, the richness of illustrative and

background detail, and the touches of verisimilitude which the novelist can supply" (1952, p. 271). George Bluestone, considered a pioneer of Adaptation Studies, also contends that a film adaptation abandons many elements of the source text, so much so that "the new creation has little resemblance to the original" (p. viii) in his book *Novels Into Film* (1957). This essentialist approach of Bluestone to understanding the relationship between novels and film was largely decisive for the subsequent debates in the field. Still, he does not completely dismiss the film adaptation in favour of the novel, and admits that the filmmaker is more than a mere translator:

> In film criticism, it has always been easy to recognize how a poor film "destroys" a superior novel. What has not been sufficiently recognized is that such destruction is inevitable. In the fullest sense of the word, the filmist becomes not a translator for an established author, but a new author in his own right. (Bluestone, 1957, p. 62)

Siegfried Kracauer, in his famous *Theory of Film* (1965), proposes the second biggest understanding that would dominate Adaptation Studies in years to come, namely that these two media are inherently open to completely different means of communication (p. 3). "The novel [. . .] is not a cinematic literary form", writes Kracauer since he firmly asserts that "[t]here are no genuinely cinematic literary forms" (1965, pp. 239 & 245).

By the 1970s, new developments in cinema theory and semiotics brought about a re-discussion of the relationship between literature and cinema. However, these two forms were treated as two entirely different languages, and the unfruitful debate of fidelity initiated by early scholars became an unwavering methodology in the field for years. Jean Mitry, while analysing two Charles Dickens adaptations directed by David Lean—*Great Expectations* (1946) and *Oliver Twist* (1948)—in *Remarks on the Problem of Cinematic Adaptation* (1971) states that faithfulness to the source text is not possible, and what Lean does is just the reproduction of what the words on the novels signify, rather than the translation of the meaning: "[S]crupulous fidelity to the original work is equally impossible as in the reproduction of the things signified as in the translation of significations" (p. 5).

Geoffrey Wagner developed a tripartite taxonomy to evaluate the film adaptation according to its fidelity to the source text. The most direct mode with little to no

interference, *transposition*, is the worst form of film adaptation since it tends to reduce the literary text to its basic components (1975, pp. 222 - 223). Whereas the freest mode, *analogy*, was the most valuable form, even though it marks a certain departure from the source text (1975, p. 230). Wagner never fully defines *analogy*; however, it appears that it is favoured because in this form of film adaptation the source text functions as a mere inspiration. The last mode, *commentary*, is when the filmmaker adapts a literary work for a purpose other than infidelity or violation, such as re-emphasis or re-structure (1975, p. 224).

Five years after Wagner, Dudley Andrew proposed his own tripartite taxonomy, noting that he finds the notions of fidelity and transformation surrounding the adaptation debate "tiresome" (1980, p. 12). Giving equal importance to both the literary text and the film adaptation he determined three modes of adaptation: *borrowing*, *intersecting*, and *transforming* (1980, pp. 10 - 13). Accordingly, *borrowing* is the most common mode of adaptation and seeks to capitalise on the "fertility" of the source text, that is, its success and prestige. The opposite of this mode is *intersecting*, whereby the source text is intentionally preserved as it is, without being subjected to any assimilation. The most championed example of this mode, both by Andrew and other scholars, is Robert Bresson's *Diary of a Country Priest* (1951), which is adapted from Georges Bernanos's book of the same name. Lastly, *transforming* refers to a mode in which the essential elements of the source text are preserved but the work takes on a new form (ibid). Although Andrew claimed that he was tired of the fidelity debate that drives Adaptation Studies, paradoxically enough, forced to circle back right into this discussion. It would take another five years to truly step forward from the fidelity debate in the field.

In 1985, Ella Shohat and Robert Stam published a rather subversive article named *The Cinema after Babel: Language, Difference and Power*, whereby they interrogated why scholars did not focus on the difference between languages and cultures or the power relations in which films were embedded in, while extensively treating the film as a language. Although this work did not directly address the phenomenon of adaptation, it was a significant step in film studies, which drew on Mikhail Bakhtin and his concept of *dialogism*, and these two scholars continued to develop their approach by utilising it to discuss adaptation in their later work.

Brian McFarlane's *Novel to Film: Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* (1996) is also one of the works that mark the shift in the theoretical debate surrounding Adaptation Studies. McFarlane claims that the trend towards the fidelity discourse is "ascribable in part to the novel's coming first, in part to the ingrained sense of literature's greater respectability in traditional critical circles" (1996, p. 7). However, he prefers to look beyond it and adopt an intertextual approach that recognises the literary work as a source among other aspects (industrial or socio-cultural factors, the style of the director, star system or generic traditions etc.) that influence and shape any film. McFarlane suggests that Adaptation Studies should focus on exploring "the transposition process, just what is it *possible* to transfer or adapt from novel to film" and "what key factors other than the source novel have exercised an influence on the film version of the novel" (1996, pp. 21-22; emphasis in original). James Naremore's collection, *Film Adaptation* (2000), brought together scholars such as Dudley Andrew, Robert B. Ray, and Robert Stam on adaptation within this new understanding. In his article, *In the Field of "Literature and Film"*, Robert B. Ray proposes a highly theoretical insight with citations from Mikhail Bakhtin, Roland Barthes, Bertolt Brecht, and Jacques Derrida. He also criticises old works within the field for their literature-centric approach, as well as their reliance on individual case studies or comparisons.

> The sheer number of these articles, their dogged resort to the individual case study, the lack of any evidence of cumulative knowledge development or heuristic potential—all these factors suggest that, as a discipline, film and literature largely remained in what Thomas Kuhn called a "pre-paradigmatic state". (Ray, 2000, p. 41)

Robert Stam's *Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation* (2000) has been a turning point for the field. Stam once again suggests that it would be more fruitful to apply the theorisations of narratology and intertextuality when dealing with the phenomenon of the film adaptation. After asserting that Gérard Genette's notion of transtextuality is highly useful in the analysis of the film adaptations, the source text, and of course, the process and contexts of adaptation, he concludes that "[f]ilm adaptations, then, are caught up in the ongoing whirl of intertextual reference and transformation, of texts generating other texts in an endless process of recycling, transformation, and transmutation, with no clear point of origin" (2000, p. 66).

Stam's later works reiterate the understanding that the film adaptation as a text is the product of its time—as well as its space and complex contexts in which it is embedded:

> Since adaptations engage the discursive energies of their time, they become a barometer of the ideological trends circulating during the moment of production. Each re-creation of a novel for the cinema unmasks facets not only of the novel and its period and culture of origin, but also of the time and culture of the adaption. (Stam, 2005, p. 45)

The adaptation is a "work of reaccentuation whereby a source work is reinterpreted through new grids and discourses", contends Stam, and each grid "in revealing aspects of the source text in question also reveals something about the ambient discourses in the moment of reaccentuation" (ibid). This extends the theory to the circumstances, discourses and contexts of the period in which the film adaptation is produced. Therefore, the approach put forward by Stam is path-breaking, as it emphasises the discursive realities of the film adaptation, and observes the adaptation as a production process, as well as its relationship with the historico- and socio-cultural.

3.2. On the Film Remake and the Remaking Process

In the case of an adaptation, the film essentially refers to another medium, most of the time, a literary work. In the case of a remake, on the other hand, a film intensively refers to and borrows individual motifs, characters, or situations, and also adopts relevant, fundamental structures from another film. The remake is, therefore, a term that can only be applied to films, because the remaking process can only take place within the medium of film. This also holds for other remake-related phenomena, such as the sequel, prequel, reboot, series, or spin-off.

No text can be read without the knowledge of other texts, whereas no new text can be created without referring to existing texts. Whether the author or the recipient is aware of it or not, structures, conventions, tropes, allusions or other information from existing texts flow into the new text, and this constant dialogue between texts forms a large transtextual network. Surely, this applies to filmic texts as well. After more

than a century of film production, it is not possible for a film not to bear any traces of motifs, aesthetics, and other artistic means seen in other films. When we saw the chiaroscuro lighting in a horror film, can we only recall *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* or *Nosferatu*? Both Robert Wiene and F.W. Murnau certainly employ chiaroscuro to create an uncanny atmosphere with a figure lurking in shadows, however, it is also a known fact that this technique of lighting dates to Renaissance paintings and wood prints. German Expressionist directors appropriated this technique for their gloomy pictures and influenced many others who came after them.

Yet, to be able to describe a film as a remake, we need to consider the degree of attachment to the earlier film. Surely, the remake is an extreme case of intertextuality, still, it reiterates a similar story of the earlier film under different conditions. A remake of an earlier film differs from it due to technical, political, geographical, social, or cultural changes. Because in addition to transtextuality, the phenomenon of the remake entails another essential feature: rewriting. Taxonomies and categorisations were developed to map out these differences and structure the richness in materials. However, certain taxonomies present the risk of being deficient in showing hybridity and ambiguity of the remake, and/or designating a useless multitude of categories. Robert Eberwein, for instance, distinguishes 15 major categories with 20 sub-categories, with a total of 25 types of remakes. Here, Eberwein attempts to develop a comprehensive schema, but some categories are bogged down in their absurdity, such as: "(4c) a foreign film remade in another foreign country and remade a second time in the United States" and "11. A remake of a sequel to a film that is itself the subject of multiple remakes" (1998, pp. 28-29). On the other hand, some categories are way too broad to initiate a fruitful discussion: "3. A film made by a director consciously drawing on elements and movies of another director" (ibid). Eberwein's taxonomy, nevertheless, marks a significant attempt to explain the essence of the film remake by inscribing it into a structure that refers to broad historical, geographical, and cultural contexts, as well as reception practices.

Play It Again, Sam: Retakes on Remakes (1998), an edited collection containing Eberwein's article, is also significant to show the lack of systematic understanding of

the scholarship and the specious attempts to theorise the film remake, to find a universal conceptualisation to explain this phenomenon. What is cognitively interesting about *Play It Again, Sam* is the variety of topics and research perspectives, but also the fallacies in interpretation, the absolutization of the remake and, at the same time, the absence of it. Many textual analyses are devoted to screen adaptations of well-known tales like *Robin Hood* or *Dracula*, comic books like *Superman* and *Batman*, or classic works of auteurs like Alfred Hitchcock or Ingmar Bergman. In *Afterword: Rethinking Remakes*, Leo Braudy concludes that:

> [O]nce again originality is at issue. The oedipal format, whether invoked literally or metaphorically, can hardly remain neutral. The central issue seems to be whether it implies either the superiority of the original—or its necessary supersession. Greenberg for one, as perhaps befits a practicing analyst, explicitly says that remakes are invariably inferior to their originals. (1998, p. 329)

Such reductionist claims reminisce the overall approach in early Adaptation Studies. Although Andrew Horton and Stuart McDougal's collection serves as an introduction to Remake Studies, it remains problematic for the reasons mentioned above, as well as its over-reliance on individual case studies.

In *Twice-Told Tales: The Rhetoric of the Remake* (1990), Thomas Leitch clearly distinguishes the difference between remake and adaptation. "[R]emakes differ from other adaptations to a new medium because of the triangular relationship they establish among themselves, the original film they remake, and the property on which both films are based" (2002 [1990], p. 39). Based on this triangular relationship, Leitch also opts for taxonomy with more manageable categories or, as he puts it, "exhaustive, albeit severely simplified", which are: readaptations, updates, homages, and true remakes (2002 [1990], p. 54). *Readaptations* repudiate the earlier film and acknowledge the source/original text; *updates* readdress or rewrite the source text to fix its flawed discourse; *homages* subordinate their own textual claims while valorising their source text; and *true remakes* attempt to ascribe their own value and seek to replace the source text (2002 [1990], p. 53-54). However, his taxonomy remains largely deficient, because of his presupposition that:

[T]he producers of a remake typically pay no adaptation fees to the makers of the original film, but rather purchase adaptation rights from the authors of the property on which that film was based, even though the remake is competing much more directly with the original film than with the story or play or novel on which both of them are based. (2002 [1990], p. 39)

In other words, Leitch assumes that all remakes are based on adaptations of literary works and that the text from which a remake takes its source cannot be an original film. This is why it seems somewhat contradictory that this article—originally published in *Film Quarterly* in 1990—is included in *Dead Ringers: The Remake in Theory and Practice* (2002) by Jennifer Forrest and Leonard R. Koos, which is a progressive example within the field of Remake Studies.

Forrest and Koos point out that the film remake accentuates the double nature of filmmaking—film as a commercial product and as a work of art (2002, p. 3). Against those who consider that the film remake is an inferior product lacking in originality, they argue that the amount of "uninspired" remakes is "probably in proportion to the amount of uninspired 'original' films produced annually" (ibid). This emphasis on the double nature of cinema paves the way for understanding the practice of the film remake within its economic context, as well as its cultural, aesthetic or ideological ones.

Whatever the case, while some remakes are demonstrably failures, others are undeniably superb, and almost all interesting for what they reveal, either about different cultures, about different directorial styles and aesthetic orientations, about class or gender perceptions, about different social-historical periods and changing audience expectations, about the dynamics of the genre film, or simply about the evolution of economic practices in the industry. (Forrest and Koos, 2002, pp. 4-5)

In a similar vein, Leonardo Quaresima contends that "the text is put in a different network of meaning and different cultural systems. Every remake, then, is a *recontextualisation*, an insertion of the text into a new network of circumstances" (2002, p. 81; emphasis in original). This "recontextualisation" develops an ambiguous relationship between time and the film remake as the recovery or "reproposal" (ibid) of a story, characters, and even the style and aesthetics of an earlier film, and calls into question the linear development and the chronological

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order of the history of cinema. In effect, the film remake removes the earlier film from its original position in chronological order and places it in the present. Quaresima qualifies the earlier film as marked by its "temporal extraterritoriality" (2002, p. 82). This idea of the film remake's timelessness posits its reception above all temporal circumstances. The film remake, by removing the earlier film from its original position in the cinematic timeline, or at least, partly giving it a classic status, grants it a timeless value. At the same time, however, the film remake seeks to deconstruct the earlier film and construct a film anew with new readings and rewriting. In this sense, then, the film remake is an act of both *restoration* and *audacity* (Quaresima, 2002, p. 75). The remake appears as an act of audacity, as it defies the imperatives of originality and novelty, challenges the notion of the author, and encourages disembodiment. On the other hand, it is an act of restoration, as it interrogates such notions, but does not annihilate them, only recomposes them in a different way. The film remake takes some concepts and rearranges them under its mode of operation. How does a film remake do such a rearrangement? Inspired by Genette, Quaresima reads the film remake as "palimpsestuous" (2002, p. 83). Accordingly, drawing on Dolezel's theory of possible worlds of fiction, he identifies three modes of superimposition or rewriting of the film remake. *Parallel* rewriting, or *transposition*, as Dolezel terms it, relocates the design, structure and/or main story of the anterior text, or protoworld, in a different spatiotemporal setting, and of course a different cultural, social, and political context (1998, p. 206). *Complementary* rewriting, or *expansion*, constructs a pre- or post-history to fill in the gaps in the anterior text (Dolezel, 1998, p. 207). Lastly, *polemic* rewriting, or *displacement*, deconstructs the design, structure and/or main story of the anterior text to construct a fundamentally different version (ibid). As Quaresima points out, however, the film remake does not seek to delegitimize itself or the earlier film (2002, p. 76). The relationship with the earlier film is neither merely acknowledging its superiority nor desecrating it altogether. Especially in the case of the transnational film remake, the desire for remaking points out to a contested state, to being in between praising/valorising the earlier film and challenging/subverting it.

Both previous theorisations, models or taxonomies and the argument that the film remake is inferior to its "original" are discussed thoroughly by Constantine Verevis

in his epochal *Film Remakes* (2006). Verevis defines the film remake as "both an elastic concept and a complex situation, one enabled and limited by the interrelated roles and practices of industry, critics and audiences" (2006, p. vii). Thus, he avoids comparative case studies that foreground the hierarchy between the film remake and the earlier film. Instead, Verevis explores the dynamics of the film remake at play on three levels: industrial, textual, and critical. He also improves Michael B. Druxman's earlier tripartite taxonomy and identifies three modes of the film remake. The first is *the acknowledged, close remake*, which replicates the earlier film with little to no alterations. The second is *the acknowledged, transformed remake*, and unlike the first one, the remake makes significant alterations to characters, time, and setting. In addition, such remakes often give screen credit to the earlier film or use it for promotion. Third and last is *the unacknowledged, disguised remake*, which makes minor or major alterations to the earlier film, and transposes it to another time or setting, but its relation to the earlier film is never disclosed to the audience (Verevis, 2006, p. 9).

Similar to the arguments of Forrest and Koos, he does not oppose that film remakes are "commercial products that repeat successful formulas in order to minimise risk and secure profits in the marketplace" (Verevis, 2006, p. 37). Industrial factors such as the development of technologies that were not available during the production of the early film or copyright laws enable, initiate, stabilise, or limit the remaking process (Verevis, 2006, p. 38). Approached in this way, Verevis acknowledges the inevitability of the film remake and the remake-related phenomena such as series or franchises, while also emphasising the intertextuality of such commercial practices. Citing Lucy Mazdon, he contends that all films within the dialogic process, whether they are remakes or not, can be regarded as copies to some extent. Therefore, the film remake and the remake-related phenomena cannot be degraded simply as cash-ins (Verevis, 2006, p. 59). Verevis's selection of Gus Van Sant's shot-by-shot "copy" of Hitchcock's *Psycho* as an example for this section of the book provides a side-by-side insight into both commercial and intertextual discourses. While critics and audiences tend to complain of the lack of fidelity when watching a remake, their biggest problem with Gus Van Sant's *Psycho*, on the contrary, was that the film is an exact copy that did not add anything new or original to the Hitchcock's version. The

reception of Van Sant's version shows the contradictory nature of the expectation that the film remake should recall the earlier film while also bearing differences. This expectation stems from prioritising the earlier film and positioning the remake as a connotative imitation. Yet, as Verevis points out, examples of film remakes such as Van Sant's *Psycho* can help us gain a better understanding in broader, ongoing discussions about auteurship, popular film - art film, or (horror) genre (2006, p. 76). In the second part of his book, Verevis deals with the film remake as a textual category and reviews the discourses of fidelity that have long dominated Adaptation and Remake Studies. While Verevis acknowledges that the status or legacy of the earlier film may affect the reception of the remake, ultimately,

> the similarity to, or difference from, the text being translated ultimately serves to affirm the identity and integrity of the (presumed) original. More than this, a highly canonised text (film *or* novel) is not only considered more worthy of translation, but generates more concern over the accuracy of the translation. (Verevis, 2006, p. 82; emphasis in original)

Considering the film remake as a textual category seeks to interrogate, through extratextual as well as intramedial contexts, how the remaking process redefines, reiterates, transforms, or challenges its source through ever-changing factors such as ongoing history and changes within, different ideologies and political standpoints, and industrial and technological developments. "[T]extual accounts of remaking need to be placed in a *contextual history*, in 'a sociology [of remaking] that takes into account the commercial apparatus, the audience, and the . . . [broader] culture industry'" (Naremore, 2000, p. 10, as cited in Verevis, 2006, p. 101; emphasis in original).

In a similar vein, Zanger's *Film Remakes as Ritual and Disguise: From Carmen to Ripley* (2006) draws on Translation Studies scholar Itamar Even-Zohar's *polysystem* theory to develop a theory on the film remake. Accordingly, the film remake is defined by "cultural and aesthetic *instrumentalities*", which can be located "as part of the cinematic institution that has shaped and reshaped collective imagination through the sites of its pleasures, fears and traumas" (Zanger, 2006, p. 9; emphasis in original). After all, "[t]he constant repetition of the same tale keeps it alive in social

memory, continually transmitting its meaning and relevance" (ibid). Zanger, in her succinct explanation of Even-Zohar's theory, states that there are "[t]hree sets of oppositions constitute the necessary components that reflect this interactive 'polysystem': (a) dynamic versus static (or variable versus constant), (b) center versus periphery (or canonic versus non-canonic), and (c) diachronic versus synchronic" (Zanger, 2006, pp. 122-123). Polysystem theory, in its broadest terms, proposes that there is always a polysystem in a given socio-cultural context that occupies the centre by marginalising other polysystems and pushing them to the periphery. This ongoing contention to occupy the centre between different polysystems is what gives them their dynamism. In this light, the film remake is a polysystem and positioned within broader polysystems, for example, a national cinema. The film remake's function as a polysystem is determined by its relationship to other broader polysystems, as well as the smaller ones. Additionally, national cinema is also one of the elements that make up the broader socio-cultural polysystem. In this broad socio-cultural context, neither the national cinema nor the film remake can be considered simply as a collection of texts. On the contrary, they are the factors that enable, initiate, and maintain the production and reception of these texts.

CHAPTER 4

PECULIAR HISTORIES OF THE HORROR FILM IN EGYPT, IRAN AND TURKEY

Tracing horror film narratives in the Middle East and North Africa may at first seem like a futile effort, since, in the region, the genre is characterised by its absence rather than its presence. But how is this possible? How can a genre that has been around for over a hundred years and, arguably, remains ever-popular be completely ignored in this region? Or what is meant by absence here is that the national cinemas in the region are incapable of producing a culturally specific horror film? Considering these questions, this chapter explores unfamiliar histories of a highly familiar genre. Beginning in the 1940s and 1950s, Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish vampires, the living dead, werewolves, or ghosts began to appear on screens. Because of their apparent amateurism, and often use of narrative and stylistic conventions established and popularised by companies like American Universal or the British Hammer, these horror films were long dismissed or ignored by film critics and scholars as "bad copies". However, instead of seeing these horror films or the ones that use the generic conventions of the horror genre as derivative, plagiarised or downright rip-offs, focusing on the reasons for the differences and similarities, cultural specificities or their significance within their national cinemas will lead us to a more fruitful discourse.

The key aim of this chapter, therefore, is to explore the representations of the fearful in Egypt, Iran, and Turkey within their social, cultural, and political contexts. Since the ever-evolving nature of the generic conventions of horror, definitions of horror are open to interpretation. That is why, I argue how we can retrospectively interpret films which were not formerly considered encoded with narrative, formal or stylistic features of the horror genre. By reconfirming the flexibility and hybridity of genres

once again, I demonstrate the prevalent presence of the horror genre and its generic conventions in each peculiar cinema histories of Egypt, Iran, and Turkey.

4.1. The Representations of the Fearful in Egyptian Popular Cinema

Classifying and defining the horror genre in Egyptian cinema is a seemingly challenging task. There is a wealth of Egyptian films that integrate fantasy, thriller, horror, and science fiction into their narratives. These films exploit recognisable and repeated conventions, tropes, and iconography to the point of being available to a generic approach. At the same time, since the horror genre has been assigned to Western contexts more, locating it in the Egyptian context proves challenging. Work by scholars like Viola Shafik provides some accounts of genre studies like musicals and horror, which are predominantly identified as Western or more specifically American genres, to open a discussion for more systematic studies within the field. Still, the idea of the absence of horror in the Middle Eastern or North African contexts is prevalent. Even Shafik opens her article, *Egypt: A Cinema Without Horror?*, contending that "the most striking characteristic of Egyptian cinema" is the absence of horror (2005, p. 273). While the scarcity of horror genre films in Egyptian popular cinema is an undeniable fact, as opposed to the overabundance of melodramas, comedies, action and crime films, it is untenable to suggest the complete absence of horror genre and genre-related conventions, tropes, themes, and motifs.

As I discussed in the first chapter, genres do not have fixed or permanent boundaries, and most films considered within the history of the horror genre today—like Méliès' macabre films or German Expressionist fantasy films—were not originally produced as horror but were later relabelled as such. As Andrew Tudor points out, deciding which films belong to which genre or whether a film carries the basic principles of a genre, which we can only discover from the films themselves, leads us to a vicious circle. The most sensible approach, therefore, would be to pragmatically examine the consensual notions of the genre, which are the set of meanings created by filmmakers, critics, scholars, and the audience, while also paying attention to the construction and change of these meanings within their socio-cultural and historical contexts.

Therefore, in this section, I provide a basic argument to explain how it is possible to read horror-genre-related conventions and traditions of Egyptian films that are not necessarily labelled as horror. However, Egyptian horror cinema, with its own formal and narrative features, started to rise in the 1980s. Although Egyptian horror cinema has had its ups and downs, it has always reflected the sign of the times. The most recent evidence of this is the surge in Egyptian horror films after the Arab Spring in 2011, related to the rising pressures exerted on Egyptian society (Waked, 2021).

Egypt's oldest fantasy films are a pair of adaptations of *One Thousand and One Nights* by Togo Mizrahi, one of the key figures in the transformation of the early Egyptian film industry into a regional monopoly. Mizrahi's *Alf Layla wa-Layla* ("One Thousand and One Nights", 1941) and *Ali Baba wa-al-Arba'in Harami* ("Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves", 1942) do not have bona fide horror sequences, yet they are remarkable in that they include elements of a combination of fantasy and macabre, like the genie coming out of a lamp. Ironically, while Mizrahi's adaptations are full of Middle Eastern sources, flavours, and iconography; the great success of the Hollywood musical, *Alibaba Goes to Town* (David Butler, 1937) and the British remake of the classic Hollywood silent, *The Thief of Bagdad* (Ludwig Berger, Michael Powell and Tim Whelan, 1940), inspired their production.

John P. Fulton, the cinematographer of Universal's *The Invisible Man* series (1933 - 1951), published an article in the September 1934 issue of *American Cinematographer* magazine describing how he achieved the films' special effects. The famous Egyptian director Niazi Mostafa, who is likely to have studied Fulton's techniques in this way, produced his own invisibility-themed fantasy and science fiction films in the 1940s and 1950s. Mostafa's first film was *Taqiyat Al ikhfa* ("The Vanishing Cap", 1944), which is frequently discussed among Egypt's *proto-horror* films. The film revolves around a scientist father, an elder son trying to commit suicide, and a little boy who wears a *taqiyah* ("skullcap") and makes mischief around his father's laboratory. The title of the film is slightly misleading because the power of invisibility is not granted by the skullcap the little boy wears, but by an emerging genie and the magic powder he gives. While the film is no longer available today, its great success paved the way for the production company, Nahas Film, to produce a

sequel called *Awdat Taqiyat Al ikhfa* ("Return of the Vanishing Cap"; Mohamed Abdel Gawad, 1946). In 1959, Niazi Mostafa remade his first film as *Serr Taqiyat Al ikhfa* ("The Secret of the Vanishing Cap"), which is widely circulated in the world today. All three *Vanishing Cap* films present science fiction elements combined with fantasy and employ the genie figure inspired by *One Thousand and One Nights*. Mostafa's other invisibility-themed films in the 1950s (see *Min aina laka haza?*; "Where Did You Get This?", 1952), on the other hand, are more straightforward in terms of their science fiction premise.

The genie figure has an important place and influence in the *proto-horror* films of this period. This is an important point to recognise, as the very figure of the genie in fairy tales, fables, and later, films is derived from the Islamic concept of *jinn*. *Afrita Hanem* ("Little Miss Genie"; Henry Barakat, 1949) is often considered a musical, in which Barakat has a stronghold, but is also discussed among *proto-horror* films by film scholars like Viola Shafik (2005, p. 277). The main reason for this is the genie played by the famous belly dancer Samia Gamal. In the film, Asfour, a poor music hall singer dreams of marrying rich Aleya. Her father, however, demands a high dowry for his daughter's hand in marriage. Unable to find that kind of money, Asfour sings a sad song, when a mysterious old man appears and leads him into a cave. Here Asfour finds a lamp and after rubbing it, a charming genie named Kharamana appears. Kharamana believes Asfour is the reincarnation of her lover from a thousand years ago and begins to manipulate him in order not to grant his wishes about marrying Aleya.

With its seductive and mischievous female genie figure, *Little Miss Genie* also inspired *Afritet Ismail Yassin* ("Ismail Yassin's Ghost"; Hasan El-Saifi, 1954), produced five years later. Ismail Yassin is the most sought-after comedic star of early popular Egyptian cinema and starred in some of Egypt's best-known horror comedies throughout the 1950s. *Beit al ashbah* ("The Haunted House"; Fatin Abdulwahhab, 1951), for instance, combines the African jungle adventure and the-sudden-heir-to-the-will plot. The film, about a man who must spend a month in a seemingly haunted house to get a big share of an inheritance, is enriched by horrors such as a man standing on a ceiling, a headless ghost, and a killer gorilla. *Haram ealayk*

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("Shame on You", also known as "Ismail Yassin Meets Frankenstein"; Issa Karama, 1953) is a remake of another Universal production, *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (Charles Barton, 1948). Additionally, it is indeed one of the few films that is frequently discussed as a representative of Egyptian horror cinema, albeit mostly to back claims on how unoriginal and derivative Egyptian horror cinema is. Yet, while *Shame on You* features ersatz Universal monsters like Frankenstein, Dracula, and the Wolf Man, it adds its own cultural appeal to them. For instance, Dracula is frequently referred to as *afrit* (a type of malevolent *jinn*), Frankenstein is an undead *ghoul*, and the Wolf Man's lycanthropy is explained as a form of epilepsy. Moreover, *Shame on You* is longer than its source material, as it features a ten-minute belly dancing sequence. *Ismail Yassin fil madhaf el shami* ("Ismail Yassin at the Wax Museum"; Issa Karama, 1956), is partially inspired by Paul Leni's *proto-horror* anthology *Das Wachsfigurenkabinett* ("Waxworks"; 1924), but the similarity between these two films pretty much ends in the settings.

From the very beginning, the Egyptian film industry shunned films of the fantasy, horror, and science fiction genres, or only tolerated generic sequences within "acceptable" genres like comedy, melodrama or musicals. This was mainly due to an understanding of the purpose of cinema in Egypt. Before 1952, the film was seen in Egypt as a flashy novelty and a way to make a profit. With the Nasser regime, it also became a way to reinforce national Egyptian identity, mostly through "quality" mainstream productions of directors like Youssef Chahine or Henry Barakat (Shafik, 2007, pp. 107-109). Yet, mainstream Egyptian cinema continued to be a structure that drew on popular tastes and aimed to make the audience laugh, cry or entertain, rather than enlighten or educate them. The reason behind this was that, despite Nasserian nationalism, the film industry was never a fully state-supported institution, and the desire of private investors to make money. Therefore, from the private investors' point of view, horror and science fiction genres, even though they carry the potential to become hits, did not guarantee to attract audiences to the cinema the way melodramas or musicals did; so investing in these genres remained to be a bit of a gamble (Gaffney, 1987, pp. 59-60). On the other hand, from the point of view of the state, elites, and intellectuals, these genres were irreconcilable with ideological missions because of their anti-realist traditions, conventions, and narratives; their

production values were relatively much lower than "quality" films; and they subverted or downright violated nationalist and religious mythologies.

Considering these socio-political and economic circumstances, Egyptian film scholars or the ones interested in Egyptian cinema often conclude that Egyptian horror cinema is virtually non-existent. Viola Shafik proposes that although there were 2,500 feature-length Egyptian films as of 2005, only three could be classified as horror films (2005, p. 273). Shafik claims that she chose three films based on the function of the Monster and whether a film is a serious attempt to establish generic codes of horror, while she also acknowledges that her assertion might be wrong (2005, pp. 274 & 278). The three films that Shafik discusses as bona fide horror films are *Anyab* ("Fangs"; Mohammed Shebl, 1981), *Al Ens Wa Al Jinn* ("Humans and Jinn"; Mohamed Radi, 1985), and *Al Ta'awitha* ("The Talisman"; Mohammed Shebl, 1987). I will discuss all three shortly here as well, but what is interesting here is the selection of two of Mohammed Shebl's *four* films, who is considered Egypt's very first horror *auteur*. Moreover, the late 1980s and 1990s witnessed a wave of supernatural horror films—which fit Shafik's criteria perfectly—occurred with the rise of the home video market. Therefore, overlooking certain waves, movements, and trends to claim that no "true" horror films have been produced before or after this decade is misleading. Elements related to the horror genre found a place in Egyptian popular cinema. Especially in the early period, such films were highly influenced by German Expressionism, the macabre tales of Georges Méliès, and the psychological horrors and twists of the American director Val Lewton.

In this light, one of the earliest films to employ generic codes of horror is *Safeer gohannam* ("The Ambassador of Hell"; Youssef Wahbi, 1945), an adaptation of Goethe's *Faust* (1808). Youssef Wahbi, the director and the star, takes on a Lugosian look and delivery as the Devil appearing to a poor family and offering them a big fortune. The wealthy lifestyle eventually spoils and tears apart the family. The Devil appears once again to drag the family to hell with him, where the film employs a Lewtonesque Expressionist style and design. Just like *The Ambassador of Hell*, *Saut min el madi* ("Voice from the Past"; Atef Salem, 1956) is a Lewtonesque psychological horror, partially inspired by *The Curse of the Cat People* (Gunther von

Fritsch and Robert Wise, 1944). The film tells the story of a young man who lives with his father and his stepmother after the death of his mother. On a dark and stormy night, he runs away from home and hides in a cabin in the forest, just like little Amy Reed does in *The Curse of the Cat People*. Here, the young man comes face to face with his late mother's ghost. The apparition of his mother continues to haunt and talk to him even into his adulthood.

One of the lesser-known but notable horror films of this period was Hassan Reda's *El-Qasr el-Maloon* ("The Cursed Place"; 1962). Hasan is a lawyer who goes to the luxurious mansion of Fahmi Al-Maghory to handle his will. Once Hasan's colleagues find out that he needs to travel to the Maghory manor, they warn Hasan that the place is haunted. Alas, Hasan does not believe those local rumours and takes a coach to the mansion. Fahmi, the owner of the mansion, is a wheelchair-bound elderly man who does not have long to live. That is why, he is determined to leave all his wealth to his adopted daughter Yousriah, regardless of his blood sister's objections. Soon enough strange events and murders begin to occur in the mansion, and the main target of these events seems to be Yousriah. The horrible events she witnesses and the ghost of her late father, who shows up at night and calls out her name, slowly drive her into madness. The film manages to evoke an eerie atmosphere by successfully employing tropes of a classic Gothic story (stormy weather, windows opening and curtains blowing in the wind, doors creaking open by themselves, candlelit rooms, etc.). Moreover, considering the presence of the mysterious killer with black gloves, unexpected psychological twists and the overall plot, it is possible to say that *The Cursed Place* operates almost like a *proto-giallo*[5] film.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, horror films in the *giallo* style were produced in Egypt. For instance, *Ath-Thalab Wal-Hirba* ("The Fox and the Chameleon"; Ahmad El-Sabawi, 1970) is about a man who has affairs with five women and is killed by one of them after a jewellery store robbery. *Az-Zair Ul-Gharib* ("Strange Visitor";

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[5] The *giallo* genre emerged in Italy in the 1960s. The genre was named after the detective-mystery novels called *Il Giallo Mondadori*, with yellow hardbacks. Although the question of what the first "true" *giallo* film was is still up for debate, many agree that it is Mario Bava's *La ragazza che sapeva troppo* ("The Girl Who Knew Too Much"; 1963).

Mohamed Kamel, 1975) tells the story of a man in flashbacks, who returns to his home village after a decade and is driven to madness by a murder he committed in the past. The most vulgar example of this trend is *Ayna Al-Mafar?* ("Where Will You Run?"; Husayn Imara, 1977). In this film, Mohamed Sobhi plays a hunchback, who has been rejected by women for years. This causes him to turn into a seriously deranged misogynist, and amidst the severe psychosis he experiences, he kills women. Before *Where Will You Run?*, the exploration of physical disabilities in popular Egyptian cinema often resulted in tear-jerking melodramas, rendering their characters as figures of pity (see *Aghla min aynaya*; "Dearer Than My Eyes", 1955). In this film, however, the representation of disability is directly linked with the monstrous. The mentally impaired hunchback turns into a sex-driven murderer, only because women reject him; ergo, here the disability becomes a taboo and the fearful. A similar plot is reiterated in the 1993 film *Dairat Ul-Mawt* ("Circle of Death"; Sayid Sayf). The only difference is that the mentally impaired hunchback, despised and ostracised, becomes a powerful figure when he assumes the identity of a killer.

Around the same period, Egypt began to take steps towards liberalisation of its public with Anwar Sadat coming to power. Prices of consumer goods were reduced and import restrictions were lifted. With the *infitah* ("open door") policy introduced by Sadat in 1974, the country was opened to foreign investors. Private investments were made mainly in luxury construction or tourism (Richards, 1984, p. 326). Such an unbalanced growth with a decline in industrial activities and constantly increased consumption brought the economy to a halt. The atmosphere of civil unrest caused by Sadat's policies also manifested itself in the representation of the fearful. *Ithnayn-wahid-sifr* ("Two-One-Zero"; Mohamed Fadel and Nagi Anglo, 1974) is, perhaps, the most unusual and striking film that exemplifies this. While this anthology film is more of an experimental fantasy, rather than a bona fide horror film; it also employs the generic codes of horror and science fiction to criticise the sign of the times. The film opens with archival footage of houses in ruins, civilians being tortured by soldiers, severely injured, frozen, or dead soldiers. This footage is intertwined with hand-drawn animations of mushroom clouds and multiplying roads or cars, as well as close-up shots of Picasso's *Guernica*. The film deals with the crises experienced by modern Egyptians whose memories of the 1967 and 1973 Israeli wars are still fresh.

It consists of sections where issues such as capitalism, poverty, false religiosity, population growth, and abuse of psychoactive substances are at the forefront. Essentially, the film is structured into three sections. Alas, it became a target of Egyptian censors because of its subject matter, and the third section directed by Nagi Anglo, *Sifr* ("Zero"), was completely removed from the film. *Zero* only made its premiere in 2012, when a satellite channel broadcasted a copy of the full film. However, this section is still not included in the widely circulated copy.

The horror films of Mohammed Shebl also address the problems of housing, poverty, unemployment, or the distress caused by the desire for upward social mobility brought by the *infitah* policy. His first film *Anyab* ("Fangs"; 1981) is a remake of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (Jim Sharman, 1975). Based on the British play with the same name, *Rocky Horror* opens with Brad and Janet, a young couple who decide to see their mutual friend after getting engaged. On a dark and rainy night, the couple's car gets stranded due to a flat tire, and they must go to the nearby mansion to use the phone. Soon they learn that this mansion belongs to the mad scientist Dr. Frank-n-Furter. *Rocky Horror* is ostensibly a homage to mad scientist or Frankenstein-inspired B-films, yet it is a social satire deep down. The film ridicules society's perception of "normality" and the fear that different sexual orientations will disrupt "normal" life and values. In the Egyptian version, none of these strong themes of sexuality take place, yet it is a social critique just like its source material. *Fangs* replaces the "Transylvanian transvestite" Dr. Frank-n-Furter with his fellow countryman, Dracula. Just like its source material, *Fangs* features a Narrator and, at one point, Dracula gets into an argument with him. Dracula yells that there is no such thing as a vampire, which the Narrator simply asks "Then what do you call these?". The following sequence shows the young couple facing different challenges in their daily lives. Here, it is implied that a plumber who asks for a ridiculous amount of money to repair the faucet, a butcher who sells unknown meat, or a journalist who reports that meat is harmful to the human body are just bloodsucking vampires. In addition, the "lower class culture" that swamped Egypt, which causes distress in elite groups, is discussed and mocked through the figure of Dracula. Within the first years of the *infitah* policy, agricultural workers settled in cities and started working in construction (Richards, 1984, p. 328). Ahmed Adawiyya, who plays Dracula, was an

important singer of the period but he was better known for his *Shaabi* ("locally popular") music. Thus, it is mockingly implied that the young middle-class couple is not only threatened by crises like inflation or housing shortage but also "low-brow" art and culture. The *infitah* policy that opened doors to foreign investors also ignited a large wave of immigration to the Gulf states. Because while the Egyptian economy was becoming increasingly unstable, conditions in the Gulf states were significantly better. The fact that presence of investors from Gulf states in Egypt and the Egyptian workforce in these countries ultimately led to the formation of a more conservative society and the re-emergence of fundamentalist religious organisations such as the Muslim Brotherhood (Elyas, 2012, p. 4). All of these led to a strong negative reaction to Shebl's film, which, in the end, censored and withdrawn from exhibition (Fahmy, 2021, p. 9).

How the new ideology emerged with the *infitah* policy affected the middle class is also explored in Shebl's second film, *Al Ta'awitha* ("The Talisman"; 1987). Due to the housing crisis, Mahmud and Rawya have to live with Mahmud's mother and siblings in an old house inherited from his late father. A broker tries to persuade Mahmud to sell the house, but he refuses. The broker then casts a spell and an *iblis* ("demon") possesses the house, moves the furniture around or destroys them and starts fires in the house. The *iblis*'s journey from the *Shaitan*-worshipping neighbour's house to Mahmoud's and the havoc it wreaks are delivered in travelling shots that continue across floors and corridors, paying homage to Sam Raimi's *The Evil Dead* (1981). Finally, Rawya and Mahmud's mother manages to get rid of the *iblis* by reciting verses from the Quran. However, supernatural forces are employed in the film only as intermediaries of the true "demons", such as brokers who live off the backs of the middle class and become rich in this way. Therefore, what is frequently dealt with in Shebl's horror films is social change and class dynamics. The strive for sudden upward mobility and modernisation, which has been explored many times since the beginning of Egyptian cinema, also finds its place here. *Talisman* explores modernisation from a point that has become a classic in Middle Eastern horror narratives today, that is, from the point of conflict between metaphysics and rational thought. While Rawya and Mahmoud's mother go to the *hodjas* they think can break the spell of the *iblis* that has possessed the house,

Mahmud and his brother-in-law initiates a police investigation. At the end of the film false religiosity is also criticised by showing that the most powerful thing against an *iblis* is the Quran. The last frame of the film consists of a low angle shot of a mosque and the non-diegetic sound of the call to prayer.

In a similar vein, *Al Ens Wa Al Jinn* ("Humans and Jinn"; Mohamed Radi, 1985) rejects false religiosity and extols orthodox scriptural practices and beliefs. Comedian-turned-serious-actor Adel Emam plays a *jinni*, and the film follows his desire to marry a human. On a deeper level, the film focuses more on the female psyche and idealises the religious identity and sexual morality of the modern Egyptian woman. While returning from a trip abroad, scientist Dr. Fatima meets a mysterious stranger named Galal on the plane. Fatima, who soon starts to think that Galal is a *jinni* haunting her, seeks psychological treatment at first. Over time, however, she realises that she is faced with a powerful *jinni* who wants to marry her. Fatima goes to a *hodja*, who advises her to walk through the cemetery at night and step on corpses, to get rid of Galal. Her mentor and colleague, Dr. Usama also wants to marry Fatima, so at the end of the film, he fights and defeats Galal by reciting verses from the Quran. The fact that Fatima and Usama are scientists emphasises that the Islamic faith is in fact in reconciliation with modern science, rather than conflicting. However, false religiosity and quasi-religious rituals are not a part of this. The modernist image of Islam and its associated cultural values regard only practices based on orthodox scriptures as reliable. This is essentially one of the main reasons why dark spells, spell casting, and supernatural forces cannot be employed in Egyptian cinema as motifs that subvert or violate the world we know, as in Western cinemas. Because including the spell-casting motif in the narrative in this direction entails violating and denying the fundamental beliefs of Islam. Therefore, to a certain extent, the very existence of horror cinema in Egypt depends on the connection of such motifs to negative discourses from the very beginning. The existence of *jinn* or *iblis* is never denied in these films, because they are also mentioned in the scriptures. However, the methods of dealing with or getting rid of them preached by false clergy are shown as a part of backwardness and ignorance. In other words, rather than demonising supernatural forces, Egyptian horror cinema attempts to use them as a metaphor for man-made evils and rational horrors and to depict social reality.

The social reality of Sadat's Egypt was economic crises, unemployment, and poverty. The Egyptian film industry also had its fair share of this economic crisis. First of all, there was a serious shortage of film theatres in the country. Film theatres, which were opened to investors with the *infitah* policy, were turned into parking lots, luxurious entertainment centres, and shopping malls. A feature film sometimes had to wait years for its theatrical release and generate revenue (Amin and Boyd, 1993, p. 18). Another aspect of the film industry's economic crisis is the increase in the cost of film production, and thus the price of tickets, due to Egyptian stars' increasing wage demands as they become known in the Arab film market. While it was becoming economically difficult for a middle-class family to attend a cinema, the physical condition of film theatres and the film quality were gradually decreasing due to loss of income (ibid). However, with the *infitah* policy, skilled and unskilled labour from Egypt was drawn to the Gulf states. The returning Egyptians brought radios, television, and video cassette recorders (VCRs), which could be found at very low prices in the Gulf states. Thus, there was a huge home video boom throughout the 1980s and 1990s in Egypt. Before the advent of VCRs, Sadat's government had absolute control over what Egyptians watched (Amin and Boyd, 1993, pp. 82-83). The situation completely changed after VCRs and many banned films became available for circulation, albeit illegally. This also led to an increased demand for "homemade" Cairene Arabic horror films, especially supernatural horror than ever before. After a limited theatrical release, films such as Mohammed Shebl's *Talisman* and *Kaboos* ("Nightmare"; 1989)—which uses *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (Wes Craven, 1984) as its loose source material—began circulating on cassette and gained a cult following.

In the same period, films combining supernatural elements, minimal gore, violence, and thriller were circulated as cassettes, *Istighatha Min Al-Alam Il-Akhr* ("A Cry from Beyond"; Muhammad Hasib, 1985) and *Bostan el dam* ("Blood Orchard"; Ashraf Fahmy, 1987) being the most notable examples. As for the bona fide horror films of the home video boom, *Al-Beit Al-Malhoun* ("The Cursed House"; Ahmed El Khatib, 1987), *Aad liyantaqim* ("He Returned for Vengeance"; Yassin Ismail Yassin, 1988), *Al-Aqrab* ("The Scorpion"; Adil Awad, 1990), and *Gharam Wa-Intiqam… Bis-Satur* ("Love and Revenge… With a Meat Cleaver"; Mohammed Shebl, 1992)

can be shown as notable examples. *The Cursed House* uses *Poltergeist* (Tobe Hooper, 1982) as its source material and features eerie touches like the little girl burying her dolls or people appearing only in Polaroids. Eventually, a rational explanation is offered for such occurrences, just like Ann Radcliffe novels with "explained supernatural".

He Returned for Vengeance is directed by Yassin Ismail Yassin, who is the son of the "king of comedy" Ismail Yassin. This film is a *disguised remake* of *The Changeling* (Peter Medak, 1980). Just like the earlier film, a man who recently lost his wife and daughter begins to hear strange noises in his house at night. At first, he thinks that his daughter's spirit may be trying to reach out to him beyond her grave. However, after a while, these nocturnal visits turn nightmarishly violent. The man tries to communicate with the spirit through a seance and learns that this apparition in the house belongs to a boy who drowned in the bathtub years ago.

The Scorpion is based on an original screenplay and the events are shown through the eyes of Heba, a young woman adopted and raised by a childless couple. The plot revolves around Heba's father cheating on her mother with a friend's wife, and her mother's efforts to divorce. Set design is rather peculiar with busts of a panther and a veiled woman, or taxidermized foxes, to enunciate the mental state Heba is in. Since she is an uncanny narrator, the question remains whether the eerie occurrences like Satanic sacrifices or gory murders are real or not. Although the film did not do well commercially, it has enough grotesque and bizarre imagery to occupy a significant place in Egyptian horror cinema. Lastly, *Love and Revenge... With a Meat Cleaver* was the last film that Mohammed Shebl directed before he died of cirrhosis of the liver in 1996. The film depicts the story of a man who marries a woman just to seize her late father's inheritance. After receiving the money, he kills his wife and buries her remains in a shallow grave. He makes plans to start a new life with the woman he loves, but everything turns upside down when his wife comes back to life seeking revenge. Shebl's horror-comedy saw a limited theatrical release before circulating on cassette and becoming a hit.

Until the second half of the 2000s, only a few horror films were produced in Egypt. In a country like Egypt, where every socio-political crisis directly affects the film

industry, certain periods are marked by certain film genres. Therefore, the 2000s were mostly a decade of comedy films. In the late 1990s, President Hosni Mubarak declared a state of emergency in which he took control of all political and social life under the name of stabilising democracy. During the same period, Kosheh massacres against Coptic Christians and the worsening economy and unemployment (Brownlee, 2013, pp. 11-12) led the film industry to turn to simple comedy films to offer an escape from the current chaotic state of affairs. This cheap comedy film craze, identified with the El Sobky production company, started with the release of *El-Limby* (Wael Ehsan) in 2002. After the success of *El-Limby*, other production companies began to produce comedy films one after another, with the same cast and almost identical plots.

Since the second half of the 2000s, Egyptian horror cinema has gained momentum again, especially with *Ouija* (Khaled Youssef, 2006), *Wingrave* (Ahmed Khalifa, 2007), *Camp* (Abed El Aziz Hashad, 2008), and other horror films that followed them. Both *Oujia* and *Wingrave* are supernatural horrors that revolve around past secrets and dark events that are revealed during a séance.

Camp, which is Egypt's first *slasher* film, did not achieve significant success commercially or critically. The film uses *I Know What You Did Last Summer* (Jim Gillespie, 1997) as its source material to such an extent that it could be claimed to be a *disguised remake*. *Camp* begins with a brief flashback sequence to a party and then cuts to a group of friends heading to a beach camp for a weekend getaway. Their short trip soon turns into a nightmare when a masked killer wants to kill them one by one in connection with an incident that happened years ago at the party. Haitham Waheed, the screenwriter of the film, admits that one of the biggest reasons for the failure of the film was the censors, as some scenes of the film had to be removed because they were too violent. Another problem was the cost of film production, as in shoestring budgets the quality of special effects decreases significantly, and thus disrupts the immersive experience.

However, the Egyptian film industry found itself in the middle of a major crisis with the political and social turmoil of the 2011 revolution. Mubarak's government

imposed a 10-week curfew to prevent demonstrations, and many films released during this period suffered major losses. Aftershocks came with the election of the Muslim Brotherhood government in 2012 and in 2013, when the head of the army Abdel Fattah el-Sisi deposed President Mohamed Morsi with a coup d'état. This led to mass Muslim Brotherhood demonstrations and the killing of nearly a thousand protesters by the army and police. All these upheavals in the country brought moviegoing and film production to a halt (Ghazal, 2018, p. 75). In an attempt to overcome this problem, some filmmakers stopped getting theatrical releases for their films or even producing feature films and turned to television. Others continued to produce films with the help of Western production companies and streaming services. For instance, *Al Fil Az Azraq* ("The Blue Elephant"; Marvan Hamed, 2014), adapted from Ahmed Mourad's novel of the same name, was produced by Arabia Cinema Production & Distribution (ACPD) and the American production company Lighthouse Films. The film was theatrically released during Eid along with other countries like the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Kuwait.

The adaptation of *The Blue Elephant* and its success at the box office is highly crucial, as both the novel and the film criticise the corrupt political structure after the 2011 revolution and the oppressive patriarchal culture in Egypt. The film tells the story of Dr. Yahiya Rashid, who is assigned to *8 Gharb* ("8 West"), a department dedicated to the criminally insane at Abbasiya Psychiatric Hospital. Yahiya must make a tough decision whether to deny criminal responsibility for his former psychiatrist friend Sherif Al Kordy, who is accused of murdering his wife. Sherif Al Kordy and his wife Basma cannot conceive. Sherif, who was raised in the patriarchal Egyptian culture, blames Basma and denies seeking treatment. He also regularly beats and rapes his wife. Basma, an educated middle-class woman, turns to superstitions and quasi-religious practices to escape her husband's violence and meet gender role expectations. Basma uses a talisman and a tattoo from the time of Solomon. A *jinni*, which is the guardian or server of the talisman, has intercourse with Basma by possessing Sherif. However, in the end, allegedly possessed Sherif kills Basma and dismembers her corpse. Oppressive political and social systems in Egypt give rise to a culture of subjugation and fatalism. Therefore, people begin to see the way out of the oppression in their daily lives in superstitions, quasi-religious

practices, and fundamentalism. In *The Blue Elephant*, educated individuals with rational thinking capabilities like Yahiya, Sherif, or Basma are portrayed as complicit in maintaining the authoritarian oppressive regime, as they willingly gave up this way of thinking and turned to superstition.

The sequel, *Al Fil Az Azraq 2* ("The Blue Elephant 2"; Marvan Hamed), was released in 2019 and became Egypt's highest-grossing film to date with 100 million Egyptian pounds. It is extremely remarkable that a horror-thriller holds this title in a country where it is often claimed that the said genre does not exist. Plotwise, *The Blue Elephant 2* is similar to the first film. A woman named Farida is brought to the special section of the 8 West ward, reserved for female criminally insane patients. Farida is submitted to the hospital and accused of killing her husband and daughter. Yet, she claims that she was not conscious at the time of the crime. Dr Yahiya discovers that what pushed her to commit this crime is a *jinni* possessing her. However, this time Dr. Yahiya and his family face the threat of revenge from the *jinn*.

In addition to the success of *The Blue Elephant 2*, Egyptian horror cinema witnessed many firsts in the period following the second half of the 2010s. For instance, *Warda* (Hadi El Bagoury, 2014), which was released on Netflix, is Egypt's first found-footage horror film. *Warda*, which I analyse as a case study in the fourth chapter, is a *disguised remake* of *Paranormal Activity* (Oren Peli, 2007). *122* (Yasir Alyasiri, 2019), the first Arabic-language film to be released in theatres with sign language translation, is another successful example. *122* takes its name from the Egyptian emergency number and revolves around the story of Nasr and Umnia. The couple got married and Umnia got pregnant, but they are keeping it a secret from everyone until they save up enough money for a wedding reception. Nasr, who was a drug courier before meeting Umnia, now works in a shoe store but the money is tight. So, in a desperate attempt to earn more money, he accepts a drug delivery job in another town. Umnia insists on coming along with Nasr, and on the way, their car collides with a bus. Umnia finds herself in a hospital in the middle of nowhere, estranged from her husband and lost her hearing aid. Dr. Nabil, a mysterious dark man, suggests that Nasr may simply have returned home or died in the accident. Yet, Nasr

is on an operating table at an unknown location. We soon learn that Dr. Nabil is in the organ-selling business and his next victim is Nasr.

Released on Netflix in 2020, *Khatt Damm* ("Bloodline"; Rami Yasin) is the first horror film that explicitly deals with the theme of vampirism since Shebl's *Fangs*. However, it did not even come close to the success of *Fangs* and was a major flop. The premise of the film, which employs only classic Western vampire tropes, is simple. A middle-class couple's twin sons get into an accident. While one recovers, the other is left in a coma. To bring him back to life, they inject him with vampire blood, and where they get it is part of the mystery. The couple do everything to keep their son's vampiric urges under control, but the boy gradually turns into a bloodsucking non-human. The same year another flop, Mahmoud Kamel's *Ammar* was released. The film takes its name from a type of *jinn* called *ummar* (also known as "ammar") in Islamic lore, who live in houses with people. *Ammar* is a *disguised remake* of *The Amityville Horror* (Stuart Rosenberg, 1979), while also drawing on other canonical films in the *Amityville* franchise[6]. Farid, his wife Dina and their three children (Maged, Noor and Talia) move to Al-Gharib Castle after Farid loses his job. Talia makes an imaginary friend named Ammar in their new home, while her father becomes inattentive towards them and spends the nights painting in his room. After a while, Dina discovers strange symbols on one of the rooms' walls. She looks for these symbols on the internet and finds out they are occult symbols used for worshipping *Shaitan*. Dina wants to leave the house with her children, but Farid prevents her. Scared, Dina enters the room where Farid has been spending his time and finds out his paintings are all about death and murder. She realises Farid is possessed by an *iblis*. In the end, Farid fights the *iblis* that possesses him with the loving memories of his family.

Lastly, although it is not possible to talk about contemporary diaspora cinema in Egypt as visible as in Iran, there are some examples. *The Judgment* (2023), directed by Marwan Mokbel Elessawi, is a recent and remarkable example. The film tells the

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[6] The canonical films that can be called the Amityville franchise are nearly a dozen. The first Amityville film, which was based on true events that occurred in 1974, was a huge success. Since the events and the setting (Amityville, New York) are in the public domain, there has been a flood of non-canonical Amityville films seeking to capitalise on the recognition and success of the first film. Today, there are more than 50 films with Amityville in their titles.

story of a gay Egyptian-American couple, who return to Egypt due to a family emergency and experience a terrifying supernatural experience. Mo, who spent most of his life in America and had little contact with his family, has to pretend like his partner is his close friend in order not to "out" themselves while in Egypt. However, despite all his efforts to keep a low profile, Mo soon realises that some know about his "sinful" secret and seek to harm him through spellcasting. Due to his deep-seated fear and shame around his sexuality, Mo begins to consider his relationship sinful. The film incorporates spellcasting into the narrative as a metaphor for extremist fundamentalism and narrow-mindedness. While the film showcases spell casting and other quasi-religious practices in detail, it also offers great insight into the religious and cultural superstitions embedded in Egyptian society through Mo's inner turmoil.

In conclusion, there is no lack of interest in the Egyptian film industry towards the horror genre and its semantic-syntactic elements. Yet, it can be argued that the genre and its materials are suppressed by external factors like economy and politics. Thematically speaking, Egyptian horror films, especially the ones produced after 1980, largely represented the fears of the conservative yet modern urban middle-class. Since the desired image of normality was precisely this group of people, traditional cultural expressions, practices, rituals, or superstitions were shown as the source of imminent danger.

4.2. The Representations of the Fearful in Iranian Popular Cinema

Today, we are more often coming across academic and systematic studies on the history and theorisation of the genre filmmaking in Iranian cinema, albeit they are still rare. The hiatus of such studies becomes more apparent in Iranian horror films. Just as in the case of Egypt, the so-called absence of the horror genre in Iran is mentioned among scholars alike as well. Hamid Naficy argues that this underdevelopment is due to culturally specific schemas of Iran:

> It seems the case also that the absence of certain film genres in a culture may be explained by the unacceptable violation of cultural schemas that these genres produce. One reason for the underdevelopment of the horror genre in Iranian cinema, for example, may be sought in this genre's violation of the etiquette of formal relationships between strangers dictated by the system of

ritual courtesy, which requires control of emotions and display of ritual politeness. This system authorizes, even encourages, the display of certain emotions such as sadness but it prohibits behaviours such as frightening someone, rage, and graphic violence against women and children—which are the staples of the horror genre. (Naficy, 1993, p. 237)

It partly holds true that Naficy attributes the scarcity of horror films to the violation of certain schemas in Iranian culture since horror films as social and cultural productions inscribe the beliefs, rituals, and values of a society. The fundamental element of the horror film is the subversion or violation of these schemas that are embedded within itself. However, the underdevelopment of Iranian horror may be sought in Iranian people's religious and moral sensitivities associated with the fearful, rather than the system of ritual courtesy. For instance, practices and rituals like witchcraft and spell casting are deemed un-Islamic and major sins. Any horror film using Islamic teachings as its source will turn to such practices and rituals to challenge, subvert, and violate these teachings according to their nature. One of the reasons for the condemnation of supernatural horror films is the concern that the explicit depiction of witchcraft and spell casting might encourage the viewer to engage in similar practices. As I will discuss shortly, the censorship of such horror films has been the preferred way, as Iranian authorities or elites tend to regard ordinary Iranian filmgoers as too immature to distinguish between film and reality.

Additionally, what Naficy's theorisation ignores is that none of the tropes he mentioned are specific to horror films. These have been heavily used in crime, action, and thriller films that have populated Iranian cinema and have been mostly met with great acclaim. For instance, *Qeysar* (1969), which is considered a landmark in Iranian cinema, features an explicit rape and beating scene given in flashbacks while the mother and uncle are reading the suicide letter of Qeysar's sister Fati. Qeysar then decides to kill all three Ab-Manqol brothers, who caused the suicide of his sister and killed his older brother Farman. He then stalks one of the Ab-Manqol brothers to a bathhouse. In the shower sequence reminiscent of Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), Qeysar catches the man alone in a shower stall and murders him with a straight razor. In the last close-up shot, we see the man's bloody hand sliding down the bathroom tiles, just like Marion Crane's, as she dies.

Therefore, I further my argument by explaining how it is possible to read horror-genre-related conventions and traditions of *filmfarsi* (popular Iranian films) that are not necessarily labelled as horror. However, for a relatively solid periodisation, we may associate the beginning of what we can clearly call Iranian horror cinema with the end of the Khatami administration in 2005. The rising socio-political and religious pressures exerted on Iranian society from this period on found a place in the representations of the fearful, and especially after Admadinejad's dubious re-election in 2009, there has been a huge surge in Iranian horror films, including the exilic/diasporic ones (Bledstein, 2021, p. 115).

The pre-revolutionary period in Iran can be divided into two: the first Pahlavi era covering 1925 and 1941, and the second Pahlavi era between 1941 and 1979. 1925 was the year when the modernisation movement began in Iran. While the Iranian cinema was still in its infancy, it was seen as a means of transformation of Iranian society. However, domestic film production would not begin until 1930, and during this time foreign films, predominantly American, would dominate the Iranian screens. Although American and other foreign horror films were among the ones screened during this period, there was great opposition from the state and the nascent modernist intellectual elite. Because even though there was a law forbidding parents to bring their children and babies to such films, regulations were loose and people continued to attend horror films with their children (Naficy, 2011a, p. 246). This, in turn, has raised primary concerns that these horror films would have a bad influence on Iranian youth and could cause psychological harm to them. Additionally, the modernist intellectual elite strongly believed that these horror films were produced only for the entertainment of the American and foreign lower classes, so they could not answer Iran's need for progress. On the contrary, they were a threat to the reformation, as they had the potential to morally corrupt Iranian society (Devos, 2014, p. 276). This prejudice against horror films eventually limited the number of horror films imported, but at the same time, it also delayed the development of Iranian horror cinema.

Ebrahim Moradi was an important figure for both early Iranian films and Iranian *proto-horror* cinema. He founded the short-lived Jahan Nama Studio in 1929 in

Bandar-e Anzali, a small port town on the Caspian coast. Here, Moradi started on his first project, *Enteqam-e baradar ya Jesm va Ruh* ("A Brother's Revenge; or, Body and Soul"; 1931). The film depicts the story of two brothers who fall in love with the same woman. One of the brothers steals the woman and his brother's property and kills him. The soul of the deceased brother remains roaming on earth, seeking revenge from both his killer and his former love. In a way reminiscent of Méliès' trick photography methods, Moradi used magical trickery of the medium to show the ghost-like presence of the deceased brother. Moradi had shot about 1500 metres of film, or roughly 55 minutes before he ran out of money. He managed to do a rough screening of the existing footage, but the film was never completed.

However, since Iranian cinema was still in early development, film production was low. Between Iran's first feature film *Abi va Rabi* ("Abi and Rabi"; Ohanes Ovanian, 1930) and the first Farsi talkie *Dokhtar-e Lor, ya Iran-e Diruz va Iran-e Emruz* ("The Lor Girl; or The Iran of Yesterday and the Iran of Today"; Abdolhossein Sepanta, 1932), only four silent films were produced, including *A Brother's Revenge*. Following the release of *The Lor Girl*, no talkies were produced inside Iran, as Sepanta was producing his talkies in India. Sepanta's last talkie was an adaptation of a classic Persian love story, *Leila va Majnun* ("Layla and Majnun"; 1937), which he directed for East India Company in Calcutta. It would take sixteen years to produce a Farsi talkie inside the borders of Iran, as the years between 1937 and 1948 were a period of stagnation, no film was produced due to socio-political factors brought about by the Second World War.

During the war, despite the declaration of neutrality, Iran was invaded by the "Big Three"—the United States, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom—in 1941. Reza Shah abdicated and allowed his son and heir Mohammad Reza Pahlavi to succeed to the throne. The second Pahlavi period, which lasted until the Iranian revolution in 1979, witnessed a large and rapid population increase, urbanisation due to migration from rural to urban areas, and thus the birth of the new middle-class. After the CIA instigated a coup in 1953, democratically elected prime minister Mohammad Mosaddegh was overthrown. The secular and modernist leftist movements were suppressed, which paved the way for the emergence of radical

Islamist groups throughout the 1960s and 1970s. All these events were reflected in the cinema, and as mentioned above, caused the birth of two opposite cinemas. While *filmfarsi* consisted mostly of films with escapist or wish-fulfilment motives, the Iranian New Wave critiqued the overwhelming socio-economic problems brought about by the second Pahlavi era.

The ideological apparatuses of national pedagogy in Iran were still expressing early concerns about certain film genres like horror, action, and romance. In 1958, Mohammad Ali Samii, the head of the Ministry of Interior's Exhibition Committee, justified the strict censorship by claiming that Iranians were still too immature to discern cinematic subtleties, and could easily gravitate towards harmful influences when they see scenes of horror, violence, sex, or nudity (Sadr, 2006, p. 69). For instance, the scene in George Marshall's *Monsieur Beaucaire* (1946), in which the titular character attempts to kill King Louis XV was cut to avoid giving a similar idea to the Iranian audience (Naficy, 2011b, p. 186).

Iranian film scholars, therefore, state that Iranian horror cinema never garnered attraction it can flourish as a result of such socio-cultural and political climates. Yet, horror-genre-related elements in Iranian popular cinema have often appeared on the screen since the second Pahlavi period and gained a lot of attention and acclaim. The most important director of this period for the genre is Samuel Khachikian. His dark films, influenced by German Expressionism, elevated the crime thriller genre with Iranian national and cultural flavours. Khachikian's aptitude for evoking feelings of mystery, suspense, and terror made him be compared with Alfred Hitchcock, and even often referred to as the "Iranian Hitchcock", although he did not quite like the nickname. Khachikian's auteurist techniques and motifs also helped to develop formal and narrative conventions of the horror genre that accompanied crime thrillers and film noir.

In this sense, Khachikian's *Shab-neshini dar Jahannam* ("A Party in Hell"; 1956) is his first film to employ generic codes of horror. The film blends macabre elements, costumes, and set pieces reminiscent of Méliès' films, and Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* (1843). It follows the wealthy and stingy Haji Jabbar, a loan shark.

He is against his daughter Parvin marrying his cousin Hamid, whom she is in love with, just because Hamid is poor. He intends to marry his daughter off to an old and wealthy merchant instead. Jabbar also has an assistant named Ahmad, who constantly advises Jabbar to change his old ways. One night, Jabbar falls terribly ill and sees *Azrael* ("the angel of death"). In the dream sequence that makes up the third act of the film, Jabbar and Ahmad try to cross *as-Sirat*, the bridge between heaven and hell, according to Islamic belief. They fail miserably and find themselves in hell, where they see Genghis Khan, Napoleon, and Hitler, and witness all sorts of elaborate tortures. After Jabbar wakes up from his dream, he decides to become a better and kinder person.

Azhir Film, which Khachikian co-founded with Joseph Vaezian, made a huge profit with the success of Khachikian's next film, *Toofan dar shahre ma* ("Storm in Our Town"; 1958). Yet, his partners decided to spend that money for setting up a dubbing studio and to import foreign films, instead of supporting new local projects. Frustrated, Khachikian left Azhir Film and signed with Misaqiyeh Studio to produce *Faryad-e Nimeh Shab* ("The Midnight Terror", also known as "Midnight Cry"; 1961). The film was a *disguised remake* of Charles Vidor's *Gilda* (1946), in which Amir, a young man, must earn money to marry his lover, Mariam. As a last resort, he joins a gang that prints counterfeit money. The boss's fiancée falls for Amir, but he turns down her advances, as he is in love with Mariam. One day, while Amir is alone with her, the boss sees them and suspects that something is going on between them. A serious fight takes place between the three, which then leads to a gunfight. During the fight, the boss and his fiancée die, and Amir goes back to Mariam.

Khachikian left the studio soon after and returned to Azhir Film, as Mehdi Misaqiyeh used his monopolistic powers to prevent him from becoming an independent household name and sabotaged the production, distribution, and exhibition of the film (Khoshbakht, 2017). Three consecutive films he made for Azhir Film became instant hits: *Delhoreh* ("Anxiety", also known as "Horror"; 1962), *Zarbat* ("Strike"; 1964), and *Sarsam* ("Delirium"; 1965). Although Khachikian predominantly adopted the formal and narrative features of crime thrillers and film noir, his films are also heavily coded with Gothic horror motifs and iconography in terms of the use of

chiaroscuro lighting, dark and rainy roads, and uncanny interiors. In *Anxiety*, Behrooz is a criminal story writer and a wealthy industrialist, who is married to seductive and intelligent Roshanak. He runs the factory that belongs to Roshanak's cousin, who died in a freak accident. One day, a man named Babak comes to the couple's luxurious house disguised as a reporter. He has love letters written by Roshanak and begins to blackmail her into giving the first five letters in exchange for 50 thousand tomans and the sixth letter in exchange for sleeping with him. It is possible to relabel *Anxiety*, which was highly inspired by *Les Diaboliques* (Henri-Georges Clouzot, 1955), as psychological horror. Because, as Roshanak is deceived and blackmailed, she plunges into madness and tilts toward a murderous solution for her salvation.

Khachikian's style and techniques were being imitated by other commercial film directors, and many were successful at the box office. Esmail Koushan's *Enteghame rouh* ("The Revenge of the Ghost"; 1962), for instance, resembles Moradi's *A Brother's Revenge* plot-wise and combines this with Gothic and Expressionistic elements in Khachikian's style. The film is about a wealthy man, who is killed by his brother to inherit his riches. The wealthy man's young son is thrown into the streets by his uncle. The man's ghost haunts the mansion and his ruthless brother for his and his son's revenge. Likewise, Siamak Yasemi's *Vahshat* ("Terror"; 1962), which he directed for Misaqiyeh Studio, creates suspense with a dash of psychological horror, while its treatment of the subject matter is similar to Khachikian's oeuvre.

However, the most important example of Iranian horror cinema of this period is Mostafa Oskooyi's *Vampir, Zan-e khoon-asham* ("The Female Vampire"; 1967), which is also the first vampire film in the history of Iranian cinema. The film opens with a man named Jahangir being taken into police custody. He claims that he is innocent and begs the police to let him stay in his office, rather than the cell. Jahangir's pleas are ignored, and he gets locked in the cell. In a dark corner, we see a chador-clad woman, who we soon learn is a vampire. Flashing back, we see Jahangir going to Neyshabur to visit his friend Bahram. He takes Jahangir to his home, where he meets the servant Mashti and his daughter Golnar. Jahangir and Bahram sleep and drink under the trees in the garden all day. While chatting, Bahram warns him about

Golnar, as she is, apparently, haunted by the *jinn*, and even Golnar's younger brother died because of it. Although Jahangir does not believe in such things, he jokingly suggests that Golnar may be a vampire. Surprised, Bahram asks Jahangir what a vampire is. Interestingly, Jahangir references *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1845) to explain vampires, perhaps confused as it has "Count" in the title. He says that vampires and Dracula (he uses it as a vampiric category, rather than a character?) are beings like the ghoul and suggests that they can possess people's bodies and come out at night to drink blood. The vampire is defined here as a being that can possess humans just like the *jinn*, but it is also an undead being just like the ghoul. Hence, vampire, *jinn*, and ghoul are used interchangeably in the diegetic lore of the film.

When Golnar comes to check on them, Jahangir tells her that he wants to move his bed to a place where he can watch the moon. Golnar says the only place he can do so is Omar Khayyam's grave. The next night, the two go to visit Khayyam's grave together. Golnar says that whatever one wishes from Khayyam will be granted, and she wished Jahangir to fall in love with her years ago. Then the two have intercourse by the grave. In the next scene, Jahangir leaves to return to Tehran, telling Golnar that he will be back soon to get married. He ignores Golnar's wish to come with him, as well as her concerns about being pregnant. In Tehran, Jahangir becomes an almost Byronic debauchee, seducing the new bride of one of his employees. After some time, he receives a letter from Bahram in which he accuses him of causing Golnar's death. He writes that she disappeared in the winter, and her body was found a few days later with marks on her neck. Golnar reappears in Tehran, saying that she is from the world of ghouls and threatening Jahangir that she will kill him and every woman he ever loved. However, the film, like Ann Raddcliffe's "explained supernatural", explains Golnar's vampirism as a scheme she and Bahram had planned to teach Jahangir a lesson.

While films with generic codes of horror were produced, imitated, and acclaimed, they were also harshly criticised by film critics like Houshang Kavoosi and Karim Emami. They accused such films of not representing Iranian-ness, adopting forms and narrative styles of Western cinemas, especially Hollywood, and just like those, glorifying violence (Naficy, 2011b, pp. 325-326). Just like the intellectual elite

during the first Pahlavi era, film critics were striving for a "pure" Iranian cinema with its own forms and narratives that could manifest an Iranian worldview. Iranian arts have a long history of patronage system, whereby the royal family, the religious elite, and the wealthy and influential alike commission artworks as private patrons. Therefore, as ironic as it sounds, the independent Iranian cinema sought after by film critics has also been shaped with governmental support. In 1968, Prime Minister Amir Abbas Hoveyda announced that ten million tomans would be invested in the Iranian film industry, while he emphasised that filmmakers should prioritise original stories inspired by Iranian history (Naficy, 2011b, pp. 327-328). This was a successful attempt to spur the production of both *filmfarsi* and New Wave films. However, the state censorship that gripped commercial cinema was stricter, which inevitably led to the development of auteur cinema over genre cinema. Nevertheless, there are some films made within the Iranian New Wave that employ the generic codes of horror.

In 1975, for instance, Kioumars Derambakhsh adapted Sadeq Hedayat's *Boof-e koor* ("The Blind Owl"; 1936), Iran's first modernist novel, to the screen. Hedayat published his magnum opus while in exile in Calcutta and offered a veiled critique of life in the first Pahlavi era. He aimed to avoid legal and religious backlash by doing so, especially since he constantly got in trouble with the censors. The narrator, an unnamed painter, is an alienated person who talks to his shadow and is slowly driven to madness because of the burden sitting off his chest. He is constantly haunted by nightmares because of a crime he has committed. The narrator tries to remember and give his account of the night of the crime. Unfortunately, the narrator is uncanny, and his accounts are full of psychoses in a Poe-esque manner. As he describes his obsessive love for a woman, the boundaries between reality and dream become blurred. While his lover, wife, and mother are basically doppelgängers of each other, his father and uncle, who are biological twins, also act like doppelgängers of the narrator himself. The fragmentation and instability brought by modernity are embodied in the multiple personalities.

Hedayat's suicide by gas inhalation in 1951 bolstered his legend among Iranian intellectuals and artists. Young writers began to publish stories with Hedayatesque

themes and motifs, and filmmakers began to adapt his stories to the screen. Masoud Kimiai, adapted Hedayat's short story, *Dash Akol* in 1971 as a *jahel* ("tough guy") film. Prior to Derambakhsh, Bozorgmehr Rafia adapted *The Blind Owl* to a student film for his UCLA graduation in 1973. Hedayat's works offered haunting and multilayered accounts of the social and individual fears, mainly brought on by modern life. For this reason, the film adaptations of Hedayat's stories were not successful commercially or critically, because, in the eyes of the audience, none of them could come close to his nuanced style.

Unlike *filmfarsi*, New Wave films used the generic codes of horror to construct narratives about the characters' psyches and inner impulses. *Sayehaye bolande bad* ("Tall Shadows of the Wind"; Bahman Farmanara, 1979), produced right before the Islamic revolution is significant in this respect. Adapted from Houshang Golshiri's short story, *Masoome Aval* ("First Innocent"), the film employs psychological and folk horror codes to criticise both the religious authority of the Shi'ite clergy and the monarchical authority of Reza Shah. In an unnamed village, a group of people erect a scarecrow on a field for protection. After a while, bad things start to happen to people who approach the scarecrow—a young man goes insane, and a pregnant woman miscarries her baby. Superstitious villagers begin to believe that the scarecrow has supernatural powers and worship it.

The only person in the village who does not believe this is the bus driver Abdullah, but he also falls ill while trying to destroy the scarecrow after a bet he made with the villagers. In the dream sequence that Abdullah sees in his sickbed, there are twelve black-robed scarecrows erected on a field. This number is highly significant, as it evokes the concept of the Twelve Imams in the Shi'ite belief. Then, the people of the village, dressed in all red, set the scarecrows on fire. The attack of the villagers under the leadership of Abdullah, who represents the working class in the film, evokes the vision of the proletarian revolution. Surely, the film takes a revolutionary and anti-clergic stance, considering Houshang Golshiri was a member of the communist Tudeh Party, for which he was incarcerated for six months, and deprived of social rights for five years (Encyclopaedia Iranica, 2012). Because of such scenes and connotations, the film was banned by the Pahlavi and the Khomeini administrations.

After the 1979 revolution, horror films, both commercial and more "elevated" ones, increasingly featured occult symbols, Islamic motifs, and Iranian folklore to represent the fearful. Dariush Farhang's *Telesm* ("The Spell"; 1988) and Hamid Rakshani's *Shab-e bist o nohom* ("The 29th Night"; 1989) were among the few notable horror films of the post-revolutionary period. *The Spell* takes place in 19th century, Qajar-era Iran, and shows typical Gothic fiction: on a dark and rainy night, a newlywed couple has to take shelter in a nearby haunted mansion, after their carriage overturns. Through the image of the cruel aristocrat, who owns the mansion, and the ghost from the past that haunts him, atrocities happening in then-today's Islamic Republic are criticised. In the end, the newlyweds manage to escape the mansion, while the aristocrat is consumed by the fire started by the ghost. Thus, a hopeful window towards the future is opened, albeit ambiguously. While *The Spell* is mostly an example of "elevated" horror of this period, *The 29th Night* is among the horror films produced for commercial purposes. The film features the figure of *Al* (also known as "Albastı" or "Alkarısı") from Persian and Turkic folklore, a demon who abducts children and causes puerperal fever in women. The demon usually takes the form of an old and ugly woman according to folkloric accounts, while it is portrayed as a chador-clad silhouette in the film. This portrayal has become quite popular as it is the easiest way to show the invisible *jinn* in the later Iranian horror films (see Babak Anvari's *Under the Shadow*).

Advanced with Islamic motifs, occult, and folk narratives, supernatural horror has become the primary source of horror cinema in Iran. The forerunner of this new Iranian horror was Mohammad Hossein Latifi's *Khabgah-e dokhtaran* ("Girls' Dormitory"; 2004). *Girls' Dormitory* produced a form of representation similar to the slasher films of Hollywood in the late 1970s and 1980s. The film is about a young girl who goes to Tehran to study at university and becomes the target of a deranged murderer who is under the influence of the *jinn*. On the one hand, therefore, the film suggests that women are vulnerable to all kinds of evil influences directed against them. On the other hand, it "represents its young female hero engaging with the visible and invisible barriers to individual and familial prosperity in today's Iran" (Partovi, 2009, p. 187), and thus, attracts the young female audience.

Ahmadinejad's re-election in 2009 sparked mass protests, also known as the Green Movement. Protestors demanded a democratic change, yet they faced a state crackdown, in which dozens of people were killed, hundreds were injured, and thousands were arrested. The government cut off the internet to prevent the situation in Iran from being heard from the outside world. Iranians with access to satellite communication or the ones that can circumvent the government filters, shared tweets, images, and videos of events that took place with the Iranian diaspora and other activist groups (Moghanizadeh, 2013, p. 6). The post-2009 Iranian horror films also began to reflect this paranoid, claustrophobic, and bleak atmosphere. Due to strict censorship imposed on films, the filmmakers had to come up with creative methods rather than explicit depictions of gore and violence. Instead, films in which the uncanny were depicted (including exilic/diasporic ones) began to appear. Taboo topics such as gender, sexuality, religion, and superstition were explored, with the supernatural and occult beings (mainly *jinn* and demons) as the Monster. What these films have in common in terms of codes, conventions, and iconography are the sense of impending doom; nightmarish dreamscapes; and the uncanny, eerie, and sinister atmospheres, mainly created by an invisible threat.

Commercial horror films such as *Harim* ("Zone"; Reza Khatibi, 2009), *Khab-e Leila* ("Leila's Dream"; Mehrdad Mir Fallah, 2010), and *Sayeh Vahshat* ("Shadow of Horror"; Emad Assadi, 2011) reproduce narratives that associate exposure to *jinn* and demons as the province of the women and children, or so to say, "weak" body and minds. On the other hand, films with more artistic concerns such as *Mahi Va Gorbeh* ("Fish & Cat"; Shahram Mokri, 2013), *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* (Ana Lily Amirpour, 2014), and *Under the Shadow* (Babak Anvari, 2016) deploy the generic codes, motifs, and iconography of horror to critique the haunting and stifling socio-political atmosphere.

Mokri's *Fish & Cat* is the forebear of the surge of such films and brings a great technical novelty to Iranian horror cinema. It is labelled as a slasher film, although no acts of violence take place in front of the screen. Shot in one single unbroken take, the film depicts the classic story of a group of young people who come to the Caspian region to participate in a kite-flying competition. Near their campground,

there is a small restaurant, and the three chefs there apparently use human flesh for their meals. Giving this information upfront heightens the sense of impending doom throughout the film, and the audience begins to wonder when (or whether) the characters will be killed off. No acts of killing take place on screen, yet there are some implications like traces of blood on a shirt. The invisible but persistent presence of violence and fear parallels the threat of violence that Iranian society feels in daily life.

As I mentioned above, such "elevated" horror films are produced not only within the borders of Iran but also found a place in exilic/diasporic Iranian cinema. The most striking example, perhaps, is *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*. The film is often labelled as "the first Iranian vampire Western" in the general discourse, and depicts the story of a chador-clad, skateboarding vampire girl, who hunts on men in "Bad City". The film completely subverts the "weak" woman narrative, contrary to what its title suggests. On the one hand, *A Girl* challenges the phallic masculinity and the power and ascendancy associated with it, depicted through the humanised vampire subjects like the Byronic vampire or Dracula in Anglo fiction. On the other hand, the chador-clad vampire "feeds" on the codes of the being—today simply known as the nightmare or sleep paralysis—which is referred to by different names in different cultures, and known as *bakhtak* in Persian folklore. Both *A Girl* and *Under the Shadow* (2016) use chador as a motif to shed light on society's view of the feminine. *A Girl* deploys the chador imagery to reject the stereotypes associated with Muslim women, while *Under the Shadow*, set during the Iran-Iraq War, comments on the policies towards the feminine bodies right after the revolution. The chador-clad *jinni*, which haunts *Under the Shadow*'s protagonist Shideh and her daughter Dorsa, is deployed to criticise the Islamic regime's intrusion into Shideh's private sphere and the say over her body.

The trend of making horror films within the Iranian diaspora continued with films such as Kourosh Ahari's *The Night* (2019) and Ali Abbasi's *Ankabut-e moqaddas* ("Holy Spider"; 2022). Filmed in the United States and featuring a cast of Iranian-Americans, *The Night* deploys the conventions of psychological horror, while its haunted hotel premise taps into *The Shining* (Stanley Kubrick, 1980). The film

depicts the story of a family whose car breaks down on the way home and decide to spend the night in a nearby hotel. The film takes on an eerie atmosphere with mysterious events, unexpected twists, secrets, betrayal, and intrigue. Towards the end of the film, we see Babak, the father of the family, looking in the mirror, and his reflection moving on his own. This evokes the doppelgänger motif that has been used frequently since Hedayat's stories. The dual personality that Iranians suffer from sheds light on the double life of people trying to lead a modern life in an oppressive society. In the case of *The Night*, the doppelgänger motif also creates an extra layer that is related to the identity crisis stemming from being Iranian-American. This motif has recently been explored in Mani Haghighi's *Tafrigh* ("Subtraction"; 2022) through a married couple who believe they have met their own doppelgängers.

Holy Spider, on the other hand, is based on the true story of a serial killer who murdered sixteen sex workers in Mashhad between 2000 and 2001. The film frequently shows the killer's point of view and features explicit scenes of sex and violence, which probably could not be shown if the film was made in Iran. The murderer is an Iran-Iraq War veteran named Saeed, who lives a seemingly normal life, but picks up sex workers with his motorbike and kills them at night. The second part of the film turns almost into a court thriller. During Saeed's trial, people start to support him for killing sex workers on the grounds of religious beliefs. The protection of Saeed by the regime turns into a criticism of the system that gave birth to such a murderer.

In conclusion, Iranian horror films continue to be produced exponentially both within the Iranian borders and in the Iranian diaspora. While it remains to be seen whether the new socio-political circumstances or state censorship will slow down the pace of the production of new horror films, Iranian horror cinema is already established and requires scholarly attention.

4.3. The Representations of the Fearful in Turkish Popular Cinema

Turkish film scholars or the ones researching Turkish cinema have a consensus that fantasy, horror or science fiction themes and motifs are never lacking in Turkish

popular cinema, especially in films of Yeşilçam. However, it is a fact that there are only a few examples that can be identified as horror films in early Turkish cinema. The question that needs to be addressed here is why Yeşilçam, which heavily employed basic conventions, tropes, and motifs of the genre, shy away from producing horror genre films. Searching for the reason for this in the Turkish audiences' high demand for musical melodramas or comedies would lead us in the wrong direction. Because, starting from the classic Universal horror films with Dracula, Frankenstein and so on in the 1930s and 1940s, foreign horror films have always succeeded in attracting audiences to Turkish theatres. Likewise, it is not plausible to suggest that the reason is the absence of Monsters like vampires, werewolves, and ghosts, or settings like gothic mansions in Turkish culture. This type of essentialist thinking would fail to explain the fact that in the 1970s Yeşilçam produced a bunch of Western films with cowboys, which are completely foreign to Turkish culture. Most importantly, the folk belief in vampires originated in this very region and was later appropriated by storytellers in the West. Thus, what might be suggested here is that the horror motifs originating from regional culture were neglected or not embraced enough.

Giovanni Scognamillo and Metin Demirhan put forward two reasons why Yeşilçam did not experiment in the horror genre: the first is technical inadequacies such as special effects, make-up, or lack of screenwriters and directors prone to the genre, and the second is the lack of interest of major production companies towards the horror genre due to commercial concerns (2005 [1999], p. 63). Kaya Özkaracalar also states that some horror films that are considered masterpieces in the West were produced on a shoestring budget, yet they are the works of independent auteurs who are prone to the genre. Therefore, he agrees that the lack of technical assets and "know-how" of commercially driven Turkish filmmakers might be a deterrent to exploring the horror genre (2012, p. 250).

Up until the mid-2000s, horror films were virtually an exception in Turkish popular cinema. However, the Turkish film industry witnessed a horror film craze beginning in 2004. Initially, these horror films seemingly aimed to explore and adopt the

cultural heritage of horror. The ideological and political atmosphere of the post-2002 period is suitable to do so. Because with the AKP government in power, the vision of a "new Turkey" embracing conservative Islamic values, traditions, culture, and identity that had been neglected or "marginalised" by the Kemalist tradition was gradually imposed on Turkish society, popularised, and disseminated. However, Turkish horror cinema today is more about the exploitation of the said cultural horror heritage rather than its embracement. Because the number of horror films released in Turkey in 2022 is 62 and 54 in 2023 (Kaya, 2023). The majority of these films do not show any mastery in terms of narrative or technique and are more or less similar in terms of their plot. Therefore, what we witness today is the huge surge of what I prefer to call "*jinn*sploitation" films.

There does not seem to be a film that we can identify as *a proto-horror* in Turkish cinema, as in Egypt or Iran. Perhaps a partial reason for this can be that early cinema took on the task of educating the public in parallel with the nationalist pedagogical approach of the new Republic, and therefore mainly produced historical films or literary adaptations with nationalist themes. A more entertainment-oriented and commercially driven cinema began to emerge in the 1950s, and from this period onwards, albeit rare, bona fide horror films were produced. The very first Turkish horror film is considered to be Aydın Arakon's *Çığlık* ("Scream"; 1949). The film, which is considered lost today, tells the story of a doctor who goes to a mysterious and dark mansion. Here, a young woman is driven to madness by her uncle to seize the inheritance. The mansion is filled with the horrifying screams of the woman, and amidst this chaos, someone attempts to kill the doctor. However, the young woman dies instead. The film takes place in one location and apparently falls flat to convey the eerie atmosphere (Scognamillo and Demirhan, 2005 [1999], p. 63).

The first Turkish horror film still in circulation and available to watch today is *Drakula İstanbul'da* ("Dracula in Istanbul"; Mehmet Muhtar, 1953). The film was produced by Turgut Demirağ, one of the most innovative names in Turkish cinema. Demirağ is not particularly a fan of horror films and even states that he had not watched Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1931) prior to commissioning *Dracula in Istanbul*. He was only in favour of giving a chance to experiment in every film genre,

and for this reason, he allocated a rather high budget for this film, considering the economic conditions of the period (Scognamillo and Demirhan, 2005 [1999], p. 64). This confirms that despite the technical inadequacies and unfamiliarity with the genre, maverick filmmakers who are open to experimenting can produce remarkable work. Sohban Koloğlu, creator of the film's sets and special effects, explains the practical solutions he found to overcome technical difficulties: for instance, in the cemetery scene there is supposed to be a foggy atmosphere, but there is no fog machine to achieve this. To create a fog effect, the set crew of 30-40 people smoked cigarettes simultaneously and blew the smoke outside the frame (Scognamillo and Demirhan, 2005 [1999], p. 66).

As for the story, one might assume that this is an adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). However, *Dracula in Istanbul* uses Ali Rıza Seyfi's *Kazıklı Voyvoda* ("The Voivode with the Stakes"; 1928) as its source material. *The Voivode with the Stakes* is essentially a shortened and adapted version of *Dracula*. Screenwriters of *Dracula in Istanbul*, Ümit Deniz, and Turgut Demirağ made alterations to Ali Rıza Seyfi's novel, to make it more suitable for the period. Both the novel and the film broke new ground in many respects. For instance, the connection between Count Dracula and the Voivode of Wallachia, Vlad Dracula (meaning "son of the dragon" in Romanian), was established for the first time. In Stoker's novel, Count Dracula is described as a Voivode who fought with the Turks (1986 [1897], p. 259). The American screenwriters who adapted the novel to the screen must have considered this reference trivial. However, Vlad Dracula has a place in Turkish history due to the cruelty he inflicted on his Turkish enemies, hence being referred to as "Vlad the Impaler" among Turks. For this reason, it is almost impossible for Ali Rıza Seyfi nor for Turkish screenwriters to overlook this connection. Additionally, Stoker also mentions that Count Dracula has "long, sharp, canine teeth" (1986 [1897], p. 24), and in line with this description, he shows his sharp fangs on screen for the very first time in *Dracula in Istanbul*. Alas, the film was strongly criticised following its release and did not receive much attention in scholarly work done on Turkish cinema history. Only in the recent period the importance of the film has been realised, especially when studies on film genres or the history of horror have increased.

In 1960, Feridun Karakaya starred in a horror comedy with his famous persona, Cilalı İbo. *Cilalı İbo Perili Köşkte* ("Cilalı İbo in the Haunted Mansion"; Nuri Ergün) tells the story of a naive and clumsy character who owns a shoeshine salon and receives a large inheritance from his late grandfather. He soon learns that his grandfather's great treasure is hidden somewhere in his mansion, and Cilalı İbo is determined to find it. However, a drug gang produces heroin in the basement of the said mansion, so they convince everyone in the vicinity that the mansion is haunted by using elaborate mechanisms, masks, make-up, and costumes. In the end, Cilalı İbo not only brings down the gang but also reunites with his lover, whom he thought had committed suicide, working as a belly dancer in the mansion. The audience, who had watched the previous Cilalı İbo comedies, left this film disappointed. The reason for this, however, was not the horror elements, but simply the illogical nature of the plot. On the contrary, the parts that the audience liked the most were the scenes with horror elements such as talking skeletons or winged "*jinn*" with strange masks, and of course, the scenes where belly dancers dance in their revealing costumes (Öteki Sinema, 2014).

Kilink, a character inspired by the skeleton-costumed criminal mastermind of the Italian photo novel Killing, appeared in a series of crime and action films in Turkish cinema in 1967. One of them is an adventure-horror film named *Kilink Frankeştayn ve Dr. No'ya Karşı* ("Kilink vs. Frankenstein and Dr. No"; Nuri Akıncı). The film was considered lost until last year when a 35mm copy of the film was found in an abandoned archive. Alas, some parts of the film are forever lost due to improper storage conditions for more than fifty years (J3ikar, 2022). Today, a digitised portion of approximately 48 minutes of the film is circulating on the Internet. The film revolves around Kilink's journey to Istanbul to steal "Buddha's most precious ruby stone". Here, he has to battle against the mad scientist Dr. No, who we are familiar with from the first *James Bond* film (1962), and his henchman Fu Manchu. At some point in the film, Fu Manchu resurrects Frankenstein and orders him to kill Kilink. In the end, to both distract the attention off of himself and defeat his enemies, Kilink reports them to the police.

After *Dracula in Istanbul*, it would take seventeen years before a bona fide horror film was made. *Ölüler Konuşmaz ki* ("The Dead Can't Talk"; Yavuz Yalınkılıç,

1970) is a black and white horror film made on a shoestring budget, and that was considered lost for many years. Cinema researcher Sadi Konuralp found a copy of the film by chance in the warehouse of Lale Film Studios and made the film available for viewing (İbrikçi Baran, 2013). The film opens with a young couple who have just arrived in a town, driving a carriage towards an ill-famed mansion. The coachman keeps saying that the day is the 15th of the month, and he has to return without staying around the mansion for long. Upon the will of its owner, the mansion was converted into a guesthouse, which everyone in the vicinity thinks is haunted. During nighttime, the young couple is killed by a mysterious man wearing a hat and overcoat, who has an unnerving laugh. This man is a *hortlak* who rises from his grave on the 15th of every month and commits murders. Sema, who has newly been appointed as a teacher, settles in the same mansion as a guest and soon becomes the target of the *hortlak*. In the end, *hortlak* is defeated by a group of people reciting verses from the Quran. Therefore, *The Dead Can't Talk* is the first Turkish horror film to employ Islamic motifs in its narrative. The film is also notable for the Monster it features. Because *hortlak* is an entity, specific to Turkic mythology and folklore and resembles the zombie in terms of most of its characteristics. The entity takes its name from the word "hortlamak", which means rising from the dead in Turkic languages. In addition, the film certainly deserves appreciation for its technical mastery. Especially the use of wall mirrors to add depth to the scenes or the frames where the *hortlak* appears outside the window are striking. Therefore, despite some problems in terms of plot development, *The Dead Can't Talk* is a crucial early attempt at Turkish horror cinema.

The second Turkish horror film of the 1970s is *Şeytan* ("Satan"; Metin Erksan, 1974), a remake of *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin, 1973). Producer Hulki Saner wanted to capitalise on the success of *The Exorcist* after the film garnered both commercial and critical acclaim all over the world. *The Exorcist* was released belatedly in Turkey in 1980. Therefore, Saner thought that making a remake before the film's release and working with a director like Metin Erksan, who has a great reputation both at home and abroad, would guarantee box office success. Before starting shooting, Metin Erksan went to London to watch *The Exorcist*. After watching the film and reading articles on the techniques and special effects used, he

told Hulki Saner that it was impossible to make a remake of this film under the economic and technical conditions of Turkish cinema at that time (Kirişçi, 2015). The shooting began nevertheless, due to Hulki Saner's insistence, and perhaps Erksan's temptation to the idea of making the third Turkish horror film ever made. However, there is a common misconception that *Satan* is a shot-by-shot copy of *The Exorcist*. The film is rather a localised remake with its own commentary and twists. The differences between these two films do not end with the fact that the Bible is replaced by the Quran, or the holy water is replaced by Zamzam water. There are also differences in the main characters and scenes. While Father Karras in *The Exorcist* is a clergyman who questions his faith, Tuğrul in *Satan* is an atheist doctor who devoted himself to researching exorcism beliefs and practices. While Regan's mother, Chris is a film star; Gül's mother, Ayten, is a socialite who has recently divorced from her husband. That is why the scene where Ayten plays tennis does not exist in the anterior text. Chris' film set scene was replaced with Gül's tennis scene. In addition to this, the fact that Gül takes ballet training emphasises the upper-class status of mother and daughter, under the influence of Western culture. The scene where Gül plays with a Ouija board also unfolds differently. Her mother finds the Ouija board and asks Gül if she is playing with it by herself. Gül jokingly replies that she plays with the Ouija board with Captain Larsen, who is the cruel, swearing, and sometimes demonic antagonist in Jack London's *The Sea-Wolf* (1941). With the mention of Captain Larsen, the film foreshadows the nature of the demon possessing Gül. As for the possession theme in the film, it is not dealt with only within the framework of scriptural Islam. Because in Islam, there is no such thing as a demon possessing a human. The closest thing to this might be malevolent *jinn*[7], but whether *jinn* can possess humans or not is open to debate in Islamic lore. We encounter such narratives in superstitious belief. A partial reason for this is that the idea of an evil spirit possessing a person can be found in ancient Turkic beliefs. Shamans even held rituals to keep evil spirits away from people. Even after Turks accepted Islam, they still carried some elements of pagan beliefs. Therefore, the way the demon is portrayed in *Satan* includes ancient Turkic beliefs on evil spirits, as well as the

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[7] In Islam, malevolent *jinn* are also called *shayāṭīn*. Over time the concept of *shayāṭīn* became closer in meaning to the demons in other Abrahamic religions. They are said to incite humans to sin by devilishly whispering (*waswasa*) into their hearts, yet this has nothing to do with possessing humans.

description of demons in scriptural Islam. In fact, the subtitle of the book written by Tuğrul, "Demon Possession and Exorcism in Universal Religions in the Light of Contemporary Views on Mental Illnesses", shows that the film also considers the definitions of the demon in Abrahamic religions and other beliefs.

The military coup of 1980 heightened the religious atmosphere in Turkey. As a matter of fact, during that period, there was an increase in Islamic movements in the region, such as the Iranian revolution of 1979 or the assassination of Anwar Sadat by the militant Islamist group Al-Jihad in 1981. As for Turkey, after the military coup, conservative right-wing structures were motivated, and religion was gradually brought to the centre. This religious atmosphere of the period is also reflected in the only Turkish horror film of the 1980s, *Vahşet Fırtınası* ("Brutal Storm"; Kadir Akgün, 1985). The film is a remake of the Spanish horror film, *Una vela para el diablo* ("A Candle for the Devil"; Eugenio Martín, 1973) and depicts the story of two sisters who run a hostel in a small town. The sisters are extremely religious and claim to live a decent life. However, the "indecency" of the tourists staying at their hostel begins to bother them and soon the guests start disappearing. A single mother and her baby come to the hostel as tourists and become the new targets of the older sister. She believes that since the woman is a single mother, she must be immoral and indecent, and thus, the baby needs to be saved. *Brutal Storm* aims to show the consequences of extreme religiosity, as the older sister claims that she committed all the murders in the name of Allah.

As of 1989, three major American companies—United International Pictures (UIP), Warner Bros., and Özen Film as Twentieth Century Fox's Turkey distributor—entered the Turkish film market, and Hollywood films dominated Turkish theatres (Çetin Erus, 2007, p. 6). This brought the domestic film industry to the brink of crisis. In the 1990s, the Turkish cinema industry found new financing sources as a solution, including independent producers, directors, sponsorship and Eurimages support. With the new generation of directors that emerged during this period, the subjects and narratives of Turkish films changed drastically, and the separation between concepts of popular and art-house cinema gradually began to become more visible.

The last Turkish horror film of the century was *Karanlık Sular* ("Dark Waters", also known as *The Serpent's Tale*; 1993), the debut of Kutluğ Ataman from the Turkish art-house cinema circuit. The film is notable for its mysterious and dark atmosphere, as well as its nonlinear and complex narrative. There are two parallel storylines: one with vampires, false prophets, and an ancient manuscript that everyone is after, and the other one is about how Istanbul's locales, public spaces, or culture are disappearing because of big corporations. Ataman states that "vampire films" can reflect socio-cultural crises, alienation or other problems much better than social realist films (Öğüt, 2010 [1994]). In *Dark Waters*, for instance, Lamia, who has an aristocratic background, symbolises the Ottoman heritage. Richie, who is in Istanbul for a multinational corporation and deals with shady business, symbolises American imperialism. Lastly, Lamia's son Haldun, who was thought to be dead but is actually a vampire, symbolises the troubled Turkish identity and psyche, in limbo between the past and the future. *Dark Waters* was released in Turkey after being screened at international film festivals. Although it garnered critical acclaim, the film performed poorly at the box office.

While the year 2000 marked the beginning of a new century, Turkey witnessed a period in which haunting social and economic events took place. The Izmit earthquake of 1999 and the financial crisis of 2000-2001 inflicted hopelessness and misery on people. The film industry also found itself in another crisis. In 2004, right after the AKP came to power, the law on Evaluation, Classification and Promotion of Motion Pictures (No. 5224) came into force. Thus, for the first time in its history Turkish cinema has a law that regulates the evaluation and classification of cinema films and the state support to the cinema industry (Genç, 2020, pp. 51-52). During this period, Turkish popular cinema started to rise again. As of 2004-2005, Turkish films managed to attract audiences to theatres, and many of them achieved high box office success.

Post-crisis popular cinema of Turkey also witnessed a horror film craze (Özkaracalar, 2012, p. 254). The first example of this was the horror comedy *Okul* ("The School"; Yağmur and Durul Taylan, 2004). The film was an adaptation of the

novel *Hayalet Kitap* ("Ghost Book") by Doğu Yücel and revolves around the story of high schooler Gökalp, the editor of the school paper. He is in love with the most beautiful girl in the school, Güldem, and tries to win her heart by writing stories for her. One day, he commits suicide leaving a mysterious letter behind. A year later, mysterious events begin to occur in the school. Soon we learn that these are caused by Gökalp, who came back as a ghost and now seeking revenge on everyone who caused him to commit suicide.

The Taylan Brothers presented Yücel's project to producer Sinan Çetin, who was already thinking of commissioning a horror film at the time. Çetin bought the project and the shooting started without any budget limitation. *The School* was the first Turkish film to use Super 35mm film stock and chroma key special effects. While the original score of the film was composed by Kevin Moore from Dream Theater, the monster figures were designed by fantasy comic book artist Galip Tekin (Özkaracalar, 2012, p. 254). Although the film was released with only 65 copies, it became the sixth most successful film of 2004. *The School* was a transitional film that employs a horror narrative interspersed with comedic relief.

At the end of 2004, a bona fide horror film, *Büyü* ("Spell"; Orhan Oğuz) was released. The film came to the fore with supernatural events that occurred on the set throughout its shooting, and the fire that broke out at its premiere. Of course, all this enforced the legacy of the film. *Spell* depicts the story of a group of archaeologists going to Dengizhan village in Mardin for an excavation. They ignore the residents' warnings about the area, and soon enough terrifying events begin to occur. We learn the reason for these events with a flashback scene. Accordingly, 700 years ago a witch came to the region where Artuqids lived. The witch deceives people to bury their daughters alive, but one father does not want to kill his daughter. The father marries another woman after his wife's death. However, the stepmother does not want the daughter and goes to the witch to cast a spell on the daughter. The father then kills his daughter under the influence of this dark spell. Spell was released with 140 copies and managed to become one of the top ten highest-grossing films of 2005 (Box Office Türkiye). Despite this, it received poor reviews from critics due to reasons such as the poorly written script and the poor acting of the whole cast.

The true turning point for Turkish horror cinema came in 2006, with the release of four films: *Dabbe* (Hasan Karacadağ), *Gen* ("Gene"; Togan Gökbakar), *Araf* ("Purgatory" also known as *The Abortion*; Biray Dalkıran), ve *Küçük Kıyamet* ("The Little Apocalypse"; Yağmur and Durul Taylan). *Dabbe*, which I analyse as a case study in the fourth chapter, is the first installation of one of Turkey's longest-running horror film franchises. It is a *disguised remake* of Kiyoshi Kurosawa's *Kairo* ("Circuit", also known as *Pulse*; 2001). Both the first *Dabbe* film and the others in the franchise are the best-known examples with the highest viewing numbers of the *jinn*-themed horror films that emerged in the 2000s. Hasan Karacadağ, one of the horror film auteurs regularly producing films during the Turkish horror film craze, employs motifs of the Manichean battle between good and evil and the dichotomy between science and metaphysics. He also brings a rather theological perspective on extreme horror themes, as opposed to movements like Asia Extreme or New French Extremity. Apart from the *Dabbe* franchise with six installations so far, he has three more *jinn*-themed films: *Semum* (2008), *El-Cin* (2013), and *Magi* (2016). The last one is the director's English-language debut, with actors like Michael Madsen, Stephen Baldwin, and Brianne Davis starring.

Gene, the directorial debut of Togan Gökbakar, stands out among all the *jinn*-themed Turkish horror films with its relatively different plot and twists. The film takes place in a single location, that is, a mental hospital in a remote mountainous region. On her first day on the job at the hospital, psychiatrist Dr. Deniz witnesses the suicide of a patient. Here, the mentally ill are exposed to bad conditions. Supposedly to prevent them from harming themselves or others, some of them are put to sleep with sedatives, kept in day-long baths for hydrotherapy, or given severe electroshock treatment. Soon the conditions become even worse with brutal murders committed. Since the film is a low-budget effort, there are not many gore scenes requiring the use of special effects. Scenes like dismemberment, eye gouging, or stabbing with a scalpel are not explicitly displayed on the screen. Instead, a terrifying atmosphere is tried to be established by heavily employing the shot of blood splattered on walls.

Purgatory, another low-budget production, differs from other horror films of the period in terms of its subject. Eda, a young dancer, becomes pregnant from an affair

with a married doctor and finds out about this only after 16 weeks. That is why she goes to an illegal abortion clinic to abort the baby. Three years pass, Eda is now married to her photographer friend Cenk and lives a happy life. But the apparition of a little girl begins to visit her. This apparition, turns out, is the baby that Eda aborted and now she seeks revenge on her mother. Apart from its technical problems, the film operates like a religious anti-abortion morality tale. The film was released with 116 copies and received poor reviews from the audience and critics. Although *Purgatory* became a franchise with *jinn*-themed sequels beginning in 2019, other instalments of the franchise also failed both at the box office and critically.

The Taylan Brothers made a striking example of Turkish horror cinema with *The Little Apocalypse*. The reason why this psychological horror film holds up that well is that it conveys one of the greatest fears of the Turkish people since the 1999 Izmit earthquake. The film is based on the possible Istanbul earthquake that has been rumoured to occur for many years. Bilge, who lost her mother in the Izmit earthquake, suffers from severe trauma and is triggered by successive earthquakes in Istanbul. She leaves the city with her family to escape from this "little apocalypse". Yet, they must face their fears due to the mysterious events that happened to them in the small southern town they went to. Unlike the "Americanised" teenagers in *The School*, the audience can identify with most characters in *The Little Apocalypse*, as they are the type of people that we encounter every day in Turkey.

Since 2006, hundreds of *jinn*-themed horror films such as the *Dabbe* franchise (Hasan Karacadağ, 2006-2015), *Musallat* ("Haunted"; Alper Mestçi, 2007), *Cehennem 3D* ("Hell 3D"; Biray Dalkıran, 2010), the *Siccin* franchise (Alper Mestçi, 2014-2019), *Cinni: Uyanış* ("Jinni: The Awakening"; Emre Aydın, 2016) have been produced in Turkey. These films usually unite around a few basic common characteristics and features. First, all these films build their narrative around Islamic lore and quasi-religious practices like spell casting. Demonic entities such as *ummar*, *shayāṭīn*, and *iblis* in Islamic belief constitute the Monster. The presence of these entities is enriched with superstitions that take up a wide place in Turkish folk culture like *jinn* possession, exorcism, or *jinn* wedding. Sometimes *jinn* might seek revenge on humans for various reasons as well. All these elements are employed to create the basic structure of the horror narrative.

As a matter of fact, many of these films are forged along the lines of Adam Scovell's *Folk Horror Chain*[8] According to this model, folk horror has four links: (1) landscape, (2) isolation, (3) skewed belief systems and morality, and (4) happening/summoning (2017, pp. 17-18). The landscape may be rural, or, in some cases, it may be related to psychogeography. For instance, *Karadedeler Olayı* ("The Karadedeler Incident"; Erdoğan and Erkan Bağbakan, 2011), a found footage horror film, is set in 1989 and takes place in the Davutlu village of the city Kırklareli. On the other hand, *Haunted* carries the supernatural events that started in a small village in urban settings like Istanbul and Germany. Therefore, the landscape does not always have to be rural, as it means a setting that has "adverse effects on the social and moral identity of its inhabitants" (2017, p. 17). Landscape is also key to the second link, isolation. The landscape should isolate a group of characters. However, in some cases, this can also mean being alienated from another group, whose moral/religious beliefs and practices are foreign. For instance, *Azem: Cin Karası* (Volkan Akbaş, 2014) is set in 1954 and takes place in a mountainous village of the city of Düzce. A young couple goes to the village to see the house they inherited, yet they realise that it is old and tumbledown. They still decide to spend the night there, and since it is winter, there is almost no one else in the village. *Dabbe 4: Cin Çarpması* ("Dabbe: The Possession"; Hasan Karacadağ, 2013) takes place in the "cursed" Kıbledere village of the city Muğla. A young woman, Kübra is attacked and possessed by *jinn* shortly before her wedding. An old friend of hers, psychiatrist Ebru, sets out for the village to treat Kübra. Now, Ebru has to stay in a village, whose history, culture, and beliefs are unfamiliar to her. Films like the latter premise employ the factor of a protagonist (or multiple characters) becoming isolated among people who do not think or act like they do, which often leads to bad consequences for the character(s). What is meant with the "skewed belief systems and morality" in the third link is that the threat actually comes from the folk's quasi-religious practices, traditions, rituals, or their actions based on the superstitions they have,

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[8] What needs to be remembered is that, like all (sub)genre categorisation models, *the Folk Horror Chain* is not fixed and permanent. Some of these elements mentioned above may also be found in (horror) films that have nothing to do with folk horror, or not every film that can be identified as folk horror may contain all the elements of the chain. From a pragmatic perspective, however, Scovell's model is still a useful tool to better understand the functioning of commonalities of *jinn*-themed Turkish horror films.

rather than the presence of an external—and necessarily—supernatural entity. For instance, the first *Siccin* film (2014) tells the story of Öznur, who has been in love with her cousin Kudret since childhood. She has an affair with Kudret, but he decides to end this relationship because, after all, he is a married man. Öznur wants to bind him to her no matter what it takes, so she goes to a *hodja* to cast a spell on Kudret's wife, Nisa. *Hodja* asks Öznur to bring something belonging to Nisa like strands of hair, nail clippings, or blood. Öznur brings a used pad, and *hodja* tells that *jinn* will kill Nisa and everyone from her bloodline in five days. The twist in the film is, that Öznur accidentally takes the used pad of Ceyda, Kudret and Nisa's daughter. Now, the *jinn* set out to kill everyone, including Öznur herself. Finally, the last link in the chain is a direct consequence of folks' skewed beliefs and practices: the happening/summoning of something supernatural and demonic. In *jinn*-themed Turkish horror films, this indicates the arrival of malevolent *jinn* who will attack, possess, harm, and kill the characters.

Certainly, although relatively few, Turkish horror films that do not build their narratives around religious elements are produced as well. First Turkish zombie film, *Ada: Zombilerin Düğünü* ("Island: Wedding of the Zombies"; Murat Emir Eren and Talip Ertürk, 2010); first "home invasion" themed horror film, *Htr2b: Dönüşüm* ("Htr2b: Transformation"; Osman Evre Tolga, 2012); a slasher film set in a single location, *Naciye* (Lütfü Ömer Çiçek, 2015) are among the notable examples. Just like *The Little Apocalypse*, Ümit Ünal's *Ses* ("The Voice"; 2010) is remarkable in that it confronts the audience with the harsh realities of Turkey. The film revolves around Derya, a young woman who works in a call centre and lives with her mother. One day, she starts hearing voices and having nightmares. Her nightmares seem to be related to her past. But as she tries to find the connection, she gradually drifts into a depression. The film tells the stories of four different women. What they have in common is that they all lost their lives or identities due to male violence. Derya's mother was killed by her father. Her grandmother took over her mother's place and raised Derya by hiding this secret from her. As a result, both the grandmother and Derya had to give up a part of their identities. Onur, whom Derya has known since childhood and grew up with, also beats and kills his wife. The reason why Derya starts hearing voices is all these events happening around her. *The Voice*, therefore,

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aims to be the "voice" of women whose voices are unheard. The film is striking as it reflects the reality of being a woman in Turkey, where the amount of violence against women increases exponentially each day.

Finally, *Baskın: Karabasan* ("Baskin"; Can Evrenol, 2015) is notable, as it garnered global attention and acclaim. The film was screened in many international film festivals before being released in Turkey and is the first Turkish film to be released in America. *Baskin* depicts the terrifying night of Arda, a young police officer, and his police officer colleagues. Following a tip-off, they set out towards an old Ottoman police station in a secluded area. On their way, they hit someone covered in blood (who we later learn is Arda) and fall into a river. On the riverbank, they encounter a group of Romani people and interrogate them. One of them forces the officers to go to the police station. After entering this ruined Ottoman building, the officers are captured by a demonic cult and tortured to death. Arda is the only survivor of the cult's bloody ritual. Yet, he soon finds himself in a vicious cycle when the police officers hit him with their car. Furthermore, the film's opening scene shows Arda's nightmarish childhood memories, and throughout the film, the editing deliberately blurs the line between actual events and Arda's psychotic visions resulting from his trauma.

In conclusion, Turkish horror cinema today relies on *jinn* narratives more than any other subjects, themes, or motifs. The reasons for this can be observed on two levels. The first is the authoritarian, conservative and fundamentalist policies that started with the AKP coming to power in 2002 and grew especially after the 2013 Gezi Park resistance. In this respect, it can be argued that the horror genre serves the dominant political ideology by rendering cultural and religious beliefs visible. Exorcism scenes are the culmination of the conflict between good and evil, religion and rationality, order and disorder. These possession narratives often end with the triumph of religion over evil, as well as over modernity. The second reason is the filmmakers' desire to make easy money by turning the sociopolitical climate into opportunity and exploiting cultural/religious beliefs and practices, while not necessarily holding the same religious or political stance they render in their films. Most *jinn*-themed films are modelled on other high-grossing *jinn*-themed films and written without even

doing proper research on the cultural/religious beliefs and practices they benefit from. They are shot in short periods of time on an extremely low budget, often with non-actors or no-name actors. Today, it is possible to come across a horror film that is released only after its rough cut is completed. While *Araf 5: Aile* ("Purgatory 5: Family"; Uğur Kaplan, 2022) forgets to cut the clapperboard off in editing, *El-Hemraz: Cinlerin Büyüsü* ("El-Hemraz: The Spell of the Jinn"; Massimo Manjjed, 2022) contains a one-minute-long error code frame (Kaya, 2023). Therefore, since these productions try to make money in a short time by simply exploiting the audience's interest in such narratives, without spending money on vital parts of the horror genre like décor, make-up, lighting, and special effects, it is more suitable to redefine them as "*jinn*sploitation" films.

CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDIES FROM EGYPT, IRAN, AND TURKEY

The following chapter entails textual analyses of transnational horror remakes from Egypt (*Warda*, 2014), Iran (*Harim*, 2009), and Turkey (*Dabbe*, 2006). In an attempt to understand different considerations in these films' remaking processes from one culture to another, I first juxtapose the important aspects of plot, narrative, themes, and motifs of the transnational horror remakes and the earlier films, which are, respectively, *Paranormal Activity* (2007), *The Village* (2004), and *Kairo* (2001).

The juxtaposition of films' plots and the textual analyses of the transnational horror remakes set forth that the choices made by the filmmakers result in films that stand apart from their anterior texts, and each transnational horror remake translates cultural specificity. The resulting transnational horror films are inherently imbued with their peculiar social, cultural, and political visions and identities.

5.1. Warda

5.1.1. Plot Outline of Paranormal Activity

Paranormal Activity takes place in suburban San Diego, set in 2006. The main characters are Katie (Katie Featherstone), Micah (Micah Sloat), and Dr. Fredrichs (Mark Fredrichs). The film opens with Micah recording inside their house with his new camera. He gets out of the house and stops on the driveway to greet and surprise his girlfriend, Katie. Micah explains that he bought the camera to record whether the paranormal phenomena that Katie mentions are happening in their house. When evening falls, the young couple puts the camera on a tripod right across from their bed and goes to sleep. On the first night, the camera only picks up footsteps.

The next day, Katie invites the psychic Dr Fredrichs to their house. Katie tells him that these hauntings have been happening to her since she was eight years old. She gives the doctor a house tour and tells him about the strange events happening around there. There are banging sounds coming from the walls, taps turning on and off by themselves, and Katie hears whispers in the bedroom at night. Dr Fredrichs is an expert on communicating with ghosts, but what is after Katie is a demon. The demon feeds on the negative energy around the house. Micah suggests contacting the demon with an Ouija board and getting rid of it. But Dr Fredrichs warns them not to mock the demon or to attempt to communicate with it and gives them the contact information of his colleague, demonologist Dr. Johann Averies for help. While Katie seems to be taking this situation extremely seriously, Micah does not.

On the third night, the camera records the bedroom door moving on its own. Micah starts reading a book called *Devils, Demons, and Witchcraft*. He explains to Katie that, according to the book, demons are malevolent evil spirits that haunt people for decades just for the sake of evil or for the sake of amusement. On the fifth night, the camera records Katie jumping awake from a nightmare. A loud thud is heard from downstairs, Micah goes to check it, taking the camera with him. When he returns to the bedroom, he starts taunting the demon. The next morning, Micah checks the digital audio recorder. It recorded a whisper last night, but they cannot decipher what it is saying. Micah says the demon is trying to communicate, and he will do so by getting an Ouija board. Katie is completely against the idea, saying that doing so would be inviting the demon. At night, Micah continues to taunt the demon before going to bed. On the thirteenth night, they are awakened by a loud thud and demonic screeching. They go downstairs to investigate the source of the sound and see that the chandelier is moving by itself. The next morning, Micah grabs the digital audio recorder's microphone and tries to communicate with the demon.

On the fifteenth night, Katie wakes up and stands at the end of the bed for several hours, watching Micah sleeping. Micah wakes up and when does not see Katie lying next to him, he goes downstairs with the camera to look for her. Katie is sitting on the swing in the backyard. Micah tries to convince her to come inside, but she is in a dreamlike state and refuses to go inside. When Micah enters the house to bring her a

blanket, he sees that the television in the bedroom has turned on by itself. Katie does not remember anything the next day. Micah buys an Ouija board despite Katie's protests. The two go out that evening and leave the Ouija board on the coffee table in the living room. The leaves of the plants and the curtains begin to flutter around, and the planchette of the Ouija board moves by itself. A small fire starts on the board, but it goes out on its own before the couple return home. Micah picks up the board and begins examining it, apparently, the demon left a message on the board, but he cannot decipher it. Micah apologises to Katie and, with her permission, conducts an experiment by sprinkling talcum powder in the hallway. On the seventeenth night, the couple is awakened by thuds. They see non-human footprints leading from the bedroom to the attic. While Micah checks the attic, he finds a photo of Katie, which was lost in a fire in her childhood home when she was eight years old.

Katie says setting up a camera and getting an Ouija board made things only worse. She decides to call Dr Johann Averies, but he is abroad. She then calls Dr Fredrichs again and he agrees to visit them. On the eighteenth night, a downstairs light turns on and off and the bedroom door slams shut. The next day, while the couple is having dinner, they hear the sound of glass breaking. They discover that the glass on a frame in the hallway has exploded and Micah's image has been scratched out. As soon as Dr. Fredrichs arrives, he is overcome with a feeling of dread. Despite the couple's plea for help, he leaves immediately, as his presence is merely aggravating the demon. On the nineteenth night, a shadow appears at the bedroom door. On the twentieth night, Katie is dragged from her bed by an invisible force. The next morning, Micah looks at the wounds on Katie's body and sees that there are bite marks. The couple decides to stay in a hotel. Before leaving the house, Katie clutches a crucifix so tight that her palm begins to bleed. Micah gets angry at losing control of the situation and throws the cross and the photo he found in the attic into the fireplace, setting them on fire. As they are about to leave, Katie suddenly becomes calm. She insists with a smiling expression that they will be fine now and refuses to leave.

On the twenty-first night, Katie wakes up and stands up once again to watch Micah as he sleeps. She then leaves the room and goes downstairs. After a moment of

silence, Katie begins screaming, calling out Micah's name. Micah wakes up and runs downstairs. The camera records Katie's screams and Micah's attempts to talk to her. After another moment of silence, Micah's body is violently thrown at the camera. The camera pans sideways to reveal Katie standing in the doorway. We see Katie with a large kitchen knife in her hand, her pyjamas covered in blood. She squats over Micah's body, sniffs him, and then looks at the camera with a smile. Just before the screen fades to black, Katie's face takes on a demonic look as she lunges toward the camera. An epilogue text is seen, stating that Micah's body was found by police on October 11, 2006, and Katie's whereabouts are still unknown.

5.1.2. Plot Outline of Warda

Warda takes place in the village of Kafr al Batanun, in the city of Al Minufiyah. The main characters are Warda (Nada El Alfy), Walid (Farouk Hashem), Amna (Samira Magroun), the Mother (Abeer Mansour), and Youcief (Basil Al-Qadi). The film opens with mockumentary footage of Egyptians. People talk about a woman possessed by *jinn* or *iblis*. In the next scene, Walid and his girlfriend Amna are seen sitting in the car, waiting for someone. Amna is filming with her handheld camera. Walid takes the camera and starts interviewing her. He asks how she found Egypt and when was the last time she went to her hometown, Tunisia. A car parks in front of them. Walid gets out of his car and gets into the car in front. Shortly after, he gets back into his car with a black plastic bag in his hand. He opens the bag and takes out a gun. Amna asks why he bought a gun, to which he answers for precaution. They go to the bus terminal and get on the bus to head towards the Kafr al Batanun village, where Walid grew up.

They go to the house where Walid grew up. Walid's mother meets them at the door and hugs her son. In the next scene, we see Amna filming the inside of the house. The walls of the living room are filled with religious calligraphy and the Quran. Everyone addresses the mother as "Hajji". Thus, it is emphasised that the mother is extremely religious, and went on *Hajj* ("pilgrimage"). The mother asks why they are filming, and Walid says he is shooting a documentary for his blog. While Amna is filming the photos on the living room wall, Walid and his mother's conversations can

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be heard in the distance. The mother is not happy that Amna is a foreigner, but Walid defends his girlfriend by saying that she speaks better Arabic than the two of them. Walid and Amna go upstairs to say hello to his sister Warda. They cannot find Warda in her room. While Walid shows Amna the room she will stay in, Warda appears at the door. She looks extremely exhausted and is annoyed that Amna will be staying in their younger sister Faten's room. Amna then goes out to the garden to film Youcief playing football. When Youcief wants to use the camera, Amna asks him what he wants to film. Confidently, he says he wants to film the *jinn*. He has not seen them yet, but they appear to Warda, he claims.

In the next scene, we see Walid interviewing Warda. When Warda learns that Walid will upload this to the internet, she is disturbed that everyone will see the inside of their house. Walid tries to reassure her by saying that very few people follow his blog. Warda looks tired and gives curt answers to Walid's questions. Walid went to the Netherlands four years ago and did not check in on his family during their father's illness. He last saw Warda six months ago, at their father's funeral. That is why Warda is angry with him. "My father was right about you," says Warda, "living in the West changes people". Shortly after, she gets sorry for snapping at Walid and apologises.

Walid goes out with Amna to tour and film the village. He encounters his cousin and uncle on the street. When he tells his uncle that he did not come here to sell the farmland, a small argument breaks out between them. In the evening, while they are eating dinner as a family, a loud thud is heard outside. Walid goes out with the camera to investigate. There is no one outside, so he returns to the table. He thinks that his uncle is trying to convince them to sell the farmland by scaring them. His mother and Walid begin to talk about the farmland issue that caused a rift between their father and uncle. This gets interrupted by Warda's vomiting onto the table. In the next scene, we see Warda lying unconscious in her bed. Her mother and baby brother are sitting on the edge of her bed, worriedly. Walid goes to the terrace and sees Amna pouring drinks for them. He is worried because he knows she will be very angry if she finds out they are drinking. While the couple secretly drinks and smokes weed, Amna asks questions about his younger sister, Faten. He says that Faten got ill

about five years ago, but the doctors could not diagnose what the illness was. Rumours began to circulate that Faten had been possessed, and she died shortly after. Amna wants to talk more about these rumours, but Walid drops the subject and returns to his room. A gunshot from outside is heard. Walid grabs his gun and goes out to investigate. He then hears Amna's scream from inside the house and runs to her. She says that Warda appeared in the corridor and startled her. The next morning, they find a dead rabbit in the garden.

Amna and the mother are cooking in the kitchen and Walid is filming them. A sound of glass breaking comes from Warda's room. Warda lies on her bed, but the mirror on the wall is broken and has blood stains on it. Warda's wrist has been cut. They try to wake Warda, but she is not conscious. Walid immediately gets in the car and goes to fetch the doctor. The mother tells the doctor that Warda has not been feeling well and cannot sleep since her father died six months ago. The doctor prescribes her some medicine, as her fever is high. While Walid is filming Warda, the mother calls him to go and get Warda's medicine from the pharmacy. Walid leaves his camera at Warda's nightstand for a moment. We see the glass on the nightstand shaking, and the lamp next to her bed flickering.

The mother carries Warda to the shower, as her fever is rising. She sees the scars on Warda's back and wants to take a closer look at them. Warda gets angry and pushes her to the ground, and the mother's ankle gets sprained. She starts to think that Warda is being haunted by evil spirits. "What I saw in the bathroom was not my daughter," she claims. Walid, on the other hand, thinks she is just sick. She needs proper treatment, so he is planning to take Warda to Cairo. His mother says if he wants to help her, he should bring a sheikh. Walid gets frustrated at this idea. He goes to smoke weed with Amna on the balcony. A gunshot and animal screams are heard again. While they are investigating the source of the noises, Warda suddenly appears and once again startles them. Walid decides to talk to Warda about what happened today since she is awake, but she does not seem to remember anything. Walid is suspicious of their cousin Hamada. He thinks he did something to Warda, which is why she has wounds on her back. However, Warda claims she has not seen Hamada since their father's funeral. We learn that Hamada was once engaged to Warda, but

they broke it off because of the farmland issue. Warda then flatly tells him that she does not know what is happening to her. Walid says that she convinced herself that she was sick because she thought what happened to Faten would happen to her as well. If she changes her way of thinking, she will get better.

The mother asks Walid if he has prayed yet. He says he stopped praying a long time ago. The mother says that Warda had never missed a prayer before, but she stopped a few weeks ago. That is when the mother became sure that something was wrong with her daughter. Before going to bed, Amna and Walid look at photo albums. A noise is heard from downstairs. When they go to investigate, a light bulb on the wall explodes loudly. Pans and pots in the kitchen also fall to the floor. The next morning, Walid calls a friend to borrow some cameras. By installing these cameras in various parts of the house, he will find a logical explanation for what happened last night. Amna watches videos on possession and exorcism on YouTube. In all videos' possessed people have the same expression on their faces and the same bodily movements. Amna thinks this is not a coincidence, but Walid is still sceptical. On the third day, the Quran under Warda's pillow goes missing. While Amna is walking around the garden, she finds the Quran right under the window of Warda's room. Warda threw it out the window when she was unconscious. However, while the mother is still searching the house for the Quran, she finds the alcohol bottle in Amna's room. She goes crazy and kicks Amna out of the house. Walid tries to reason with his mother but eventually drives Amna to the bus terminal. On the third night, while Walid is going through some papers in the basement, the lights begin to flicker. He goes to investigate, and the lampshade in the living room falls to the floor. Walid checks the camera footage and sees that while he is fixing the lampshade, Warda appears behind him, watches him for a while and then leaves. In the next scene, Warda wakes up and gets out of her bed. She comes in front of Faten's room and waits there for a few minutes. She opens the door and takes the gold necklace that belongs to Faten. Then she comes back to her room and stares directly into the camera for several minutes.

On the fourth day, Walid invites a sheikh to the house. The sheikh asks some questions about Warda's psychological state, because sometimes what is thought to

be possession can have a psychological explanation. Walid asks him "Are you a psychiatrist?", sarcastically. Science and faith complement each other, says the sheikh. Just faith is sometimes better at explaining what science cannot explain. The sheikh goes to Warda's room and starts reciting verses from the Quran. Meanwhile, he wipes Warda's forehead with cotton dipped in blessed water. Warda breathes heavily. While the sheikh continues to recite verses from the Quran, Warda's nose begins to bleed. Sheikh tries to make Warda drink the blessed water. This ritual lasts for hours. The sheikh leaves the room and tells the mother that he did his best but it was not enough. He promises to get in touch with his mentor, a more experienced sheikh and leaves. On the fourth night, the doors of the cabinets in the house are slammed open and the windows are broken. Warda wakes up and gets out of her bed once again. She stops to stare directly into the camera in her room, then heads to Faten's room. Then she goes downstairs and leaves the house.

On the fifth day, an invisible force drags Youcief and throws him down the stairs. Walid hurriedly takes him to the hospital. The mother starts having a panic attack, so she sits down. Warda returns home and sees her mother sitting on the couch. They hug each other and Warda says that all this happened because of "Warda", to which her mother replies "You are Warda". She kills her mother by breaking her neck and says, "I am Faten, mom". Then heads to Faten's (her) room. Some time passes, and when Walid returns home, he cannot find anyone. He opens the door of Faten's room. Suddenly, Walid's body is violently hurled at the camera. An epilogue text is seen, stating that after finding the bodies of Walid and his mother, the police seized all cameras in the house, and Warda was committed to a mental hospital.

5.1.3. Analysis of Warda

Warda, directed by Hadi El Bagoury, was released on November 13, 2014, with 27 copies in 9 governorates. The film screened for ten weeks, with a total revenue of 1,141,447 EGP (elCinema).

The found-footage horror sub-genre consists of films that feature images produced using digital hand-held cameras, smartphones, surveillance or other *sous*veillance

systems. These images are often presented as if they were found or discovered. The narrative of a found-footage horror film revolves around characters' attempts at uncovering the truth or re-creating reality through the use of cameras. This simple motive is also what justifies the whole narrative. Alexandra Heller-Nicholas contends that the supernatural possibilities on which found-footage horror films are based highlight the relationship to how we culturally engage with new media technologies (2014, p. 21). While supernatural possibilities often manifest themselves as social anxieties towards the new technology, it is possible to come across exceptions, as I will discuss shortly.

Warda is Egypt's very first *found-footage* horror film. To find a plausible answer to the question of why a horror film with the premise of uncovering the truth coincided with this period, we must first look at the political and social turmoil in Egypt since the late 2000s. At the end of 2010, mass protests took place in Tunisia in response to unemployment, stagnation, corruption, and human rights violations of the Zine El Abidine Ben Ali government. These protests soon spread to countries such as Libya, Syria, and Egypt, and what we know today as the Arab Spring was ignited. However, in the period leading up to the Arab Spring, there was virtual activism that started much earlier in Egypt, like in other countries. First, in the spring of 2008, Mahalla workers created a Facebook group to call for a general strike of all workers to protest in response to low wages and poor working conditions (Baron, 2012, p. 88). Thousands of people joined the strike on April 6, and the success of the use of social media for mobilising people gave rise to a political opposition movement known as A6YM (April 6th Youth Movement). From that point on, people started using blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to organise mass demonstrations (ibid). Three events triggered the mass protests in Tahrir Square in January 2011: the Tunisian revolution, increased police brutality, and the results of the second round of the parliamentary elections. Youth organisations, including A6YM, called for a national protest in Tahrir Square on January 25, which is National Police Day (Cook, 2011, p. 281). Riot police intervened violently to disperse the crowd. People recorded the events taking place in Tahrir Square using their smartphones or cameras. In the videos that soon started circulating on the Internet, riot police were seen beating unarmed protesters to death, and mobs tearing the clothes of female protesters and

sexually assaulting them (Derrichs and Fennert, 2014, p. 39). Therefore, the reality of what happened in Tahrir Square was revealed and shared with the world. In 2013, Egypt's short-lived political opening came to a close with the military coup led by Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. The ultimate goal of the Sisi regime was to return Egypt to the pre-Arab Spring conditions and re-establish state control. To this end, the pressure on virtual activism, press freedom, and civil society was increased. Various regulations have facilitated state-controlled surveillance by restricting online anonymity and banning the use of encryption (Shea, 2019). Dissident bloggers, virtual activists, and internet journalists became the main targets of the Sisi regime.

The "belief that the camera is endowed with a revelatory power" (Lefait, 2012, p. 114) is what drives *Warda*'s narrative. In the film, a sense of credibility is evoked in the audience by the signs of an invisible presence being captured by cameras, rather than directly by Walid or Amna. The credibility of the supernatural is achieved not only by capturing it on various cameras but also by presenting this footage as real, taken directly from Walid's camera.

This is essentially a trope used in Gothic novels, since Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764). The author warns that they either took the story the reader is about to read from someone's diary or found a document during one of their travels. In the Gothic novel tradition, this is used to create the illusion of credibility and to intensify the reader's desire to find answers. *Found-footage* horror sub-genre appropriates this trope for the very same reason. Hadi El Bagoury obscures his identity as the director and brings the "found" nature of the footage to the fore, thus creating an illusion of the objectivity of the images. Objective traces of the existence of an invisible force are presented, like the scene where the glass on Warda's nightstand starts moving by itself, throughout the film, and it is only perceptible for the audience. The invisible force gradually leaves behind more clues about its existence, as if it wants to play a game with both diegetic and extradiegetic audiences. More specifically, it uses the surveillance cameras Walid installed to "realise" itself. In many scenes of the film, we see a possessed Warda staring directly at the surveillance camera in her room. The entity directly communicates with the extradiegetic audience, thus confirming that it wants to be seen and noticed by someone.

Throughout the film, it is implied that the invisible force is a *jinni* or *iblis*. In the end, however, we learn that it is the ghost of Warda's little sister, Faten, that has taken over her body. This means that what the family must confront is the literal ghost of their own past, rather than supernatural entities. Considering that Natasha Zaretsky argues that the family serves as "the symbol for the nation itself", we can trace the "origins of national decline" in this portrayal of a broken family (2010, p. 4). Warda's derogatory statement to her brother, 'Living in the West does change a person', and the mother's dislike of Amna before she learned that Amna can speak Arabic show their anti-Western sentiments. In addition, the mother's pressure on her son not to miss a prayer and hiding the Quran all over the house for protection is a way to emphasise her intense religious beliefs. On the other hand, Walid's praise of Dutch weed or buying an Iron Man mask as a gift for his baby brother are casual expressions of his admiration for the West. Likewise, his efforts to find a rational explanation, or his distrust of *hodja*s or sheikhs is a way to emphasise his rationality and secularism. Since there are common ideas and images between the family and the sense of national identity (Zaretsky, 2010, p. 4), these conflicts within the family reveal the contested nature of Egyptian identity.

On the other hand, *Paranormal Activity* shot in 2007 on a shoestring budget, is strikingly prophetic. Shortly after the shooting of the film (it did not get a release until 2009), in 2008, predatory lending practices devastated the American economy and led to the housing bubble burst, driving many homeowners onto the streets. The lives of Katie and Micah, who live in a large San Diego suburban house equipped with consumer-grade electronics, are turned upside down by the presence of a "creditor" demon with a claim on Katie's life. This housing crisis in fact inspired a boom of the haunted house narratives, in which young couples move into a new house and encounter an evil threat. In addition to the *Paranormal Activity* franchise (2007-2021), other haunted house narratives like the *Insidious* franchise (2010-2023) or the entire *The Conjuring* universe (2013-2023), showed how precarious the everyday American families are, and how little control they have over the possession of their homes.

In conclusion, *Warda* borrows certain elements from the earlier film, *Paranormal Activity*, to problematize the use of new media technologies, as well as the Arab-

Egyptian psyche after the Arab Spring. As Antoine Waked contends, young Arab directors like Hadi El Bagoury employ the generic conventions of horror to reflect the Arab psyche, which is in a crisis after the Arab Spring, and the dystopian reality they are in. Therefore, by exploring the narrative possibilities of the horror genre, this new wave of Arab directors also "dare to stare without flinching at the ghosts of [their] past" (2015). However, it can be argued that the film ends on a rather conservative note. The killing of Walid, who uses the camera to reveal the events taking place in their house, by the supernatural is a way of reinforcing traditional authority. The mother, an authority figure, warns Walid on several occasions not to film inside the house. Even as the footage reveals the truth as the narrative progresses, Walid is punished for violating traditional authority.

5.2. Harim ("Zone")

5.2.1. Plot Outline of The Village

The Village takes place in an unnamed village in Pennsylvania, set in 1897. The main characters are Ivy Walker (Bryce Dallas Howard), Edward Walker (William Hurt), Lucius Hunt (Joaquin Phoenix), Alice Hunt (Sigourney Weaver), Noah Percy (Adrien Brody), and August Nicholson (Brendan Gleeson). The film opens with a community gathered for the funeral of Father August Nicholson's son. After the funeral, they all eat together. Little girls do the dishes afterwards, a woman feeds the sheep, men and women plant plants in a greenhouse, and the close-knit nature of the community is emphasised. At night, fires are lit around the village and a lookout stands guard. Then a figure in red appears in the reflection of a puddle.

Edward Walker, the leader of the village, asks what the children are looking at in front of the school. In the middle of them lies a maimed and killed rabbit. In the classroom, Edward asks the kids what killed the rabbit and gets the answer "Those We Don't Speak of". That way, he teaches the children the rules and traditions of the village. He says that it is forbidden to go to the forests near the village due to the presence of dangerous creatures. While the village elders form a circle to talk about the rules of the village, a young man comes in to see the village elders. Lucius asks

permission to cross the forest to the nearest town. In the next scene, he visits his friend Finton (Michael Pitt) on the watchtower. Lucius asks if he is thinking about other towns but gets the answer that other towns are just "wicked places where wicked people live". The next morning, women picking apples find a fox that maimed and killed. The village elders reassure their community by saying that it must be a coyote that killed the animals in such a gruesome way and that if "Those We Don't Speak of" had come to the village, they would have known about it. Edward and his eldest daughter Kitty (Judy Greer) walk out of the church. Kitty tells him that she is in love with Lucius and asks his blessings to start talking with him. Edward seems hesitant at first but eventually agrees. Kitty goes to Lucius and tells him how she feels about him. In the next scene, we see Kitty crying her lungs out—Lucius has rejected her advances. The one who calms Kitty down is her younger sister, Ivy, who is blind.

Noah, a disabled young man, playfully wrestles with the young men of the village. Hearing their brawling, Ivy goes to stop them. As a punishment, Ivy takes Noah to the "quiet room". Ivy tells him that if he does not hit anyone again, he does not need to stay in the "quiet room". Noah promises to never hit anyone again, and the two of them race to the "resting rock". When they get there, they see Lucius sitting thoughtfully. Noah brings Ivy red berries. Lucius warns her that berries are in a "bad colour". Supposedly the colour red attracts "Those We Don't Speak of", so they must bury the berries immediately. Lucius reports this incident to the village elders. He states that when he asked Noah where he found these red berries, Noah showed the drawing and runes on the resting rock. Lucius believes that Noah has entered the forest many times before, and once again asks permission to go through the forest. Lucius' mother Alice, one of the village elders, warns him not to bring up this subject again. The next day, while Lucius is painting fences on the village border, he takes a few steps into the forest and sees a bush with red berries. A mysterious cloaked figure appears in a split second on the screen. Lucius picks a branch of red berry and returns to the village borders.

While Finton is on guard duty in the watchtower, he hears some sounds. At first, he thinks that these voices are coming from Lucius, so he lifts the cover on the tower

and looks down. A red-cloaked figure with thorns growing from its back rushes by. Finton rings the bell and warns the villagers that "Those We Don't Speak of" has arrived. People start running towards their homes in panic. Lucius walks around and helps people close their windows and doors. Everyone locks themselves in their homes, but Lucius wants to stay outside and see these dangerous creatures. Ivy senses that Lucius is outside and reaches her hand out her door. As the red-cloaked creature comes towards Ivy, Lucius grabs her hand, and they enter the house. Edward and the village elders claim that "Those We Don't Speak of" came to the village as a warning. These creatures have never attacked without a reason before, now there must be a reason for their arrival. Lucius confesses that he went into the forest the other day and encountered one of the creatures. At night, Ivy wakes up and senses the presence of Lucius, who is sitting on her porch and goes over to him. Lucius confesses his love for her. The next morning, the two tell their elders that they intend to marry, and the whole village hears about this. Noah goes to Lucius' house and stabs him multiple times out of jealousy.

To save Lucius, Ivy asks permission to go through the forest and to get medicine from "the towns". Edward asks the village doctor about Lucius' condition. He says his wounds are infected and they can only pray for him. Edward asks what could have been done if there were no restrictions. If the infection is contained, says the doctor, Lucius has a chance to survive. Edward takes Ivy to a cabin and tells her that he will show her something, but that she should not be afraid, and then gives her permission to go get the medicine. Ivy begins her journey to cross the forest. In a flashback, we see Edward showing Ivy one of the creatures in the cabin. He says there is no need to be afraid, all of these are just farce. He confesses to Ivy that the village elders fabricated everything about "Those We Don't Speak of". He says everyone in the town has lost loved ones, but he does not want her daughter to experience this either. While heading towards town, Ivy loses her way in the woods. One of the creatures in a red cloak appears before her. Ivy knows it is not a real creature, but whoever is in the costume is running towards her. Ivy runs away and comes to the very edge of a sinkhole. She steps aside as the creature runs towards him, and it falls into the sinkhole. Back in the village, Noah's parents realise that Noah found the costume his parents hid under the floorboards. It was Noah who was

chasing Ivy. We see Noah at the bottom of the sinkhole, dying. Ivy finds the secret path that will take her to the nearest town and climbs up the wall, holding on to the vines. With parallel editing, we see Edward opening a locked safe in his house. Inside the safe are photographs from the 21st century. The film actually takes place in the present day, not in 1897. The village elders are members of a grief counselling group. Edward Walker is a history professor at the University of Pennsylvania whose billionaire father was murdered over money matters. Meanwhile, a security guard on patrol sees Ivy jumping from high walls. The guard's car has "Walker Wildlife Preserve" written on it. With the money he inherited from his father, Edward founded a secluded village in rural Pennsylvania. In this way, grief counselling group members who lost their loved ones due to societal violence will be able to escape from this. The security guard asks Ivy where she came from, to which she replies, "The woods". Ivy asks him for help finding the medicine she needs. The guard is bemused by the idea that someone lives in the woods. He eventually agrees to help her, and Ivy gives him a gold pocket watch as payment. The security guard takes the first aid medicines in the security booth and takes them to Ivy. He also takes a ladder so Ivy can climb the walls again. One of the young men in the village tells the village elders that Ivy returned with the medicines, and that she encountered a creature on the way, but killed it. Noah's mother begins to cry. Edward promises her that he will find Noah's body and arrange a proper burial. The elders decide that they will tell the people in the village that the creatures killed Noah. Everything in the village will continue as before.

5.2.2. Plot Outline of Harim ("Zone")

Harim ("Zone") takes place in an unnamed Northern Iranian city. The main characters are Major Mohebbi (Hamid Farrokhnejad), Major Esmaeili (Enayatollah Shafiei), Mohebbi's wife (Shirin Bina) and the Guardian Angel (Chakameh Chamanmah). The film opens with the scene of two tourists in a forest. One of the tourists died and the other had his leg torn off. The tourist whose leg was torn off holds an antique box, seeming extremely shaken and afraid. High angle tracking shot shows inside the forest. The entrance of a cave is seen through the fog, branches, and leaves. The screen goes dark with the tracking shot into the cave. The intertitle "May

1966" appears on the screen. In images resembling a slide show, an archaeologist is seen excavating inside the cave. He finds a scroll with Persian writings on it. He takes it out and shows it to the other archaeologists who are camping in the forest. In the next shot, archaeologists find a little boy in the forest. The head of the archaeologists embraces the child to hands him over to the police. The child looks into the forest and cries his lungs out. The archaeologist excavating inside the cave looks towards the entrance with horror. A tall, scary figure with long hair and a beard is approaching him.

Major Mohebbi wakes up. He is alone in bed, he caresses the empty pillow next to him, and then his hand goes to his wedding ring. He gets up and goes to the living room, where he looks at his wife's photographs. The phone rings, but he does not pick up and it goes to voicemail. An important case has occurred, so they call Mohebbi to work. The Captain tells him that two electricians disappeared in a forested area three months ago. Their bodies were found without any traces, and the case was closed, ruling their deaths as electrocution. But a few days ago, four British tourists disappeared in the same area. Two are still missing, and one's body has been found. The other tourist was taken to intensive care in the hospital because his leg was torn off. The Captain says he knows Mohebbi is still grieving over his wife's death, but he is the only one who can solve this case.

Mohebbi and Esmaeili go to the coroner's office. The coroner says that there are no signs of battery or strangling on the body, only his nails are broken. The three are seen talking in a shot from inside the air duct. Deep breathing is heard as if someone is watching them. They go to Esmaeili's office to look at the crime scene photos and the antique box found at the scene. Mohebbi notices that although the photos were taken from different angles, the body was looking at the camera in all of them. They head off to the hospital to talk to the tourist in intensive care. There is a humming sound coming from the air duct opposite the tourist's bed. A doctor takes Mohebbi and Esmaeili to the tourist, this is again shown by the shot inside the air duct. The tourist is unable to talk, as he is in a state of shock. Mohebbi asks the doctor if his foot could have been torn off by a wild animal. The doctor says there are no bite marks. After the hospital visit, they go to investigate the hotel room where the

tourists were staying. The hotel owner says that he introduced a guy from the nearby village because the tourists needed a guide to tour the forest. Mohebbi and Esmaeili go to the village to talk to the tour guide. He says that the tourists wanted to go to a village, but since he had to return before sunset, he left them in the forest and returned. When asked why, he replies that there are weird sounds in the forest and that the locals of the village know about the strange occurrences. Meanwhile, the tourists' car was found crashed into a tree in the forest nearby. Mohebbi goes to the scene and finds negatives and tapes in the trunk of the car. He orders the photographs to be sent for printing and the tapes to be taken as evidence to be viewed later.

As they drive, Esmaeili tells Mohebbi that he was assigned to this case because he could see what they could not see. Strange events have been happening in this area for a long time, and the locals always come up with a story to cover them up. For this reason, Esmaeili warns him not to get too carried away or get too close. When they arrive at the village, they see all the locals standing in a row in the village square in the fog, watching them. Mohebbi sees an old man sitting in the middle and goes next to him. When the old man touches his arm, Mohebbi sees a vision. This vision seems to be about what will happen in the future. Mohebbi pulls himself together and starts asking the old man questions about the tourists. The old man says that the tourists deserve whatever happened to them. He adds that he once warned the British archaeologists who came to the region, but they did not listen to him as well. What happened to British tourists and archaeologists was caused because of their own actions. The old man says that he last saw the tourists going to the mountain. As they pass through the forest to return to their car, they find one of the missing tourists. The tourist stands motionless. When Mohebbi gently touches his shoulder, he collapses—he is long dead. Mohebbi notices movement in the bushes. He takes out his gun and starts running. A man in black runs away into the forest. The future vision he saw is now coming true. After chasing the man for a while, Mohebbi loses the man's track in an open field.

They take the body they found to the coroner's office. The coroner tells them his hair must have fallen out from stress or shock. While Mohebbi is walking down the hall, he sees a nurse passing by. Mohebbi looks at the woman's face carefully and asks if

they have met before, to which the nurse replies "I do not think so". Mohebbi turns around, confused, and continues walking. The nurse disappears in the background.

The negatives found in the tourists' car were printed. Mohebbi and Esmaeili examine the photos in the office. Tourists have a photograph taken with the locals in the village they visited. Mohebbi examines it carefully and asks Esmaeili if he sees anything. But neither of them can see anything strange. Esmaeili changes the subject, and Mohebbi starts to say that about three months ago, he and his wife set out north to visit his wife's parents. While they stopped at a restaurant, a fortune teller came up to them and asked if they wanted a reading. When Mohebbi's wife says that she does not believe in such things, the fortune teller tells her that they waited nine years to have a child and that she is going north to give birth to her baby. The wife likes the fortune teller so much that she wants to take a photo with her. Mohebbi asks a passerby to take their photo and gives him the camera. While Mohebbi, his wife and the fortune teller are posing, a woman in white passes behind them and disappears. His wife gets in the car and Mohebbi helps the fortune teller cross the street. The fortune teller tells him that everyone has a purpose in this life, so he should find his own. She then says that he will have an accident on the road and lose his wife and the baby in her womb. Mohebbi will survive this accident because his guardian angel is protecting him. Meanwhile, the woman in white appears again in the background. She is loosening the cap of one of the engine oil bottles.

Mohebbi is asleep after spending long hours examining demonology books by tourists at his home. He sees the accident again in his dream. When he opens his eyes, he sees the old man from the village in the corridor. He stands up in panic and goes to check it, there is no one there. He goes to the bathroom to wash his face. When he leans over the sink, the long-haired, bearded man who was in the cave at the beginning of the film appears in the mirror. The next morning, they go into the forest again to investigate the crime scene. Esmaeili's phone rings. He picks up the phone and takes a step or two forward to talk, the signal is lost. This is repeated a few more times. They notice that the phone and radio signal are cut off within a certain area. Esmaeili and Mohebbi pass through some trees and bushes and stop in a small area. Esmaeili fires his gun into the air, but no sounds are heard, like the birds

frightened by the gunshot. Esmaeili says that when they went to the village, they did not see a single animal as well. Esmaeili is sure that the old man in the village knows something and wants to talk to him again. So they go to the village, but there is no one around. In the evening, Mohebbi continues to read demonology books and take notes at his home. A book says that the residents of a village are responsible for protecting the scroll in the cave. The cave is a gateway to another world. No people are not allowed in, and if they do, they deserve to die. Mohebbi takes a break from reading the book, and he notices a detail in the photo he and Esmaeili checked earlier. This photo was the one taken by tourists with the locals of the village, and among the locals is the fortune teller.

The next morning, Mohebbi and Esmaeili go to talk to the tour guide again. Mohebbi asks him to tell him the location of the cave. He says that no one should enter "the zone" and that no harm will come to them if they stay away. In the next scene, Mohebbi and Esmaeili are eating at a restaurant. A tribute is paid to the famous dolly zoom scene from *Goodfellas* (Martin Scorsese, 1990). This shot is used to indicate Mohebbi's descent into paranoia. All these events and everyone he sees seem very familiar to him as if he has experienced the same things before. He shares with Esmaeili the details he noticed in the photo last night. The fortune teller he told him about is one of the locals.

In the next scene, Mohebbi, Esmaeili, Daneshvar, and two police officers are seen resting before heading towards the cave. As they sit down, Esmaeili asks Mohebbi why he accepted this case. Mohebbi says he thought it might be a good idea since the Captain insisted. He also expresses his doubts by adding that he also thought visiting his wife's family seemed like a good idea too. He says his wife was from this area, Northern Iran. Esmaeili asks where he is from, but Mohebbi does not know, as he was adopted at a young age. Esmaeili pauses for a moment and timidly asks what caused the accident that killed his wife. When Mohebbi says that the road was slippery that day and that there was oil on the road, Esmaeili gets agitated but tries not to show it.

They continue walking towards the cave. Mohebbi then notices a movement in the trees. He takes out his gun and starts walking towards that direction. The man in

black starts running and Mohebbi starts chasing him. They go through the forest and come to another village. In this village, there are chickens and cars around, and the mooing of a cow can be heard in the distance. Once you leave the zone, life starts to flow, it seems. Mohebbi loses the trace of the man in black again. He asks the old men sitting in front of a shop if they have seen him. One of them says that the man in black is Ali's son Karim and shows him their house. Mohebbi goes to Karim's house and knocks on the door. His father Ali opens the door, and Mohebbi tells him that he needs to talk to Karim. He comes to the door; it turns out Karim is a young boy with Down syndrome. He is used as a red herring in the narrative, just like Noah.

Back in the office, the file of the archaeologists' case Mohebbi asked for from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage has arrived. A group of archaeologists led by British archaeologist John Wilkinson came to Northern Iran to conduct excavations in 1966. The Ministry of Cultural Heritage gave them permission to excavate and transport antiquities. On September 17, 1966, John Wilkinson found a four-year-old boy in the woods and notified the police. Mohebbi realises that John Wilkinson is also the author of the demonology book he has been reading. He re-reads the part of the book that says that the residents of the village are incapable of contacting the scroll and that they are only in charge of protecting it. He also re-reads a note in the margin of the book. The note states that both parts of the scroll are needed to gain entrance to the other world. A piece of the scroll was already found at the crime scene and is now in Mohebbi's office. Mohebbi runs back to the hotel room where the tourists are staying. He starts looking around and finds the other piece of the scroll hidden in the mini

Mohebbi gets into a car and heads into the forest. Esmaeili and two other police officers spent the night in the forest and now he cannot reach them. Shortly after arriving in the forest, he finds the bodies of both police officers. He begins wandering through the woods to find Esmaeili when he suddenly stops and turns around as if someone is following him—no one is there. He continues walking and walks out of the frame. The long-haired, bearded man appears on the screen. Mohebbi eventually finds Esmaeili and tries to take him out of the forest. As they walk, the locals of the village follow them. There is no way out of the forest, they

just go in circles. Mohebbi gives up and lets Esmaeili sit under a tree near the entrance of the cave. Esmaeili has very little time left. Before he dies, he confesses that he caused the accident that killed his wife. In a flashback, we see Esmaeili buying a bottle of engine oil. The cap of the bottle does not close properly. While riding his motorcycle, the oil spills onto the road. Mohebbi realises that it was his guardian angel who caused this. Everyone has a purpose in life, and Mohebbi's purpose is to protect the scroll. Because Mohebbi is that child that John Wilkinson found in the forest years ago. He takes out both parts of the scroll from his coat pocket. He realises that he is also a resident of the village. Other residents come to the entrance of the cave, and one of them says "Welcome home son" to Mohebbi.

5.2.3. Analysis of Harim ("Zone")

Harim ("Zone"), directed by Reza Khatibi, was screened out of competition at Amiens International Film Festival in France on November 14, 2009. The film was later released on DVD with English subtitles, however, there is no information on its total revenue.

The film reinterprets Zoroastrian beliefs by employing a border narrative. A zone deep in the forest is home to a group of people entrusted with guarding the gateway to hell. In the narrative, the notion of a border between nature and civilization constructs a safe and rigid boundary between good and evil, as well as the Self and the Other. Thus, such a geographical marker of the ontological seems inextricably linked with the socio-political construction of identity. The border also functions as a cultural delimitation, framing the differences between space and people. The "enclosed" nature of this zone implies that the social and cultural tradition (or the past) is sealed and needs to be protected. Relatedly, terror and violence in the film are caused by the transgression or violation of the said territory.

In Zoroastrianism, *Vāyu* ("wind" or "space") appears as the god of the wind. In Pahlavi Texts, it is mentioned as the wind blowing through the intermediate space, which the dead must travel to reach the Chinvat Bridge ("bridge of judgement"). In association with one's destiny, it can be *wāy ī weh* ("good wind") or *wāy ī wattar*

("evil wind") (Malandra, 1983, p. 111). In *Zone*, the constant use of point-of-view shots inside the air ducts, accompanied by the sound of wind, evokes the omnipresence of *Vāyu*. Those whose souls are not righteous or who commit sins beyond redemption will be dragged to *drujo-demana* ("house of falsehood", which is the word for hell) for eternal damnation. In Zoroastrian sources, hell is geographically located in the north and is described as a narrow and dark abyss. Known as the gate of hell, "the ridge of Arzur" is thought to be located near the Alborz mountains (Encyclopaedia Iranica, 2011). While *Zone* takes place in an unnamed village, it is given that this mountainous village is also located in the north. Here, the gateway to hell guarded by the villagers is depicted as a dark cave. The souls of the tourists and archaeologists are deemed not righteous, so *Vāyu* detaches their souls from their bodies or, in other words, kills them.

Death and pollution, in Zoroastrianism, are the equivalent. Once the soul is detached from its physical form, *druj-e-nasu* ("the force of evil") begins to emanate from the body. Even when a person is alive, shedding hair strands or nail clippings becomes *nasu* ("putrid matter"). In Zoroastrian belief, there is also a demoness named *Nasu*, often depicted as a fly. She emerges from the abyss of hell as soon as someone dies and attempts to defile the body before the proper burial rituals are completed. She can penetrate a body from orifices like the nose or mouth and can affect the body up to the fingertips (Kryukova, 2010, p. 82). It is also possible for *Nasu* to attack the living, especially if they contact the dead and thus, emanating *druj-e-nasu*. Traces of the *Nasu* belief are also seen in *Zone*. The figure of *Nasu*, however, seems to be depicted here as a tall, long-haired and bearded man. During the autopsies of the British tourists, it was revealed that their nails were broken, or their hair fell out due to shock. Moreover, they all died with their eyes and mouths open. All of these are placed to foreshadow that *druj-e-nasu* in their bodies are getting stronger. At some point, this destructive force becomes unstoppable and *Nasu* "possesses" one of the tourists' bodies lying on the autopsy table. *Nasu* takes full control of the body, starts floating in the air and sets out to kill the last remaining tourist, who is in intensive care. Major Mohebbi frequently contacts the dead during his investigation. The reason why Nasu could not attack him, however, is the presence of the *fravashi* ("guardian angel") who protected and guided him throughout his life. *Fravashis*

descend from heaven to earth to protect the righteous dead or righteous ancestors from evil (Encyclopaedia Iranica, 2012). Since Major Mohebbi is a descendant of the guardians of the gateway to hell, he is protected from all sorts of evil.

While the conflict between good and evil is explored through Zoroastrianism, the narrative adds an intertwining second layer and takes on the conflict between the Self and the Other through the problematization of Iranian identity. The mainstays of the modern Iranian identity can be identified as a bounded territory, the Zoroastrian cultural heritage, and a "national" religion (Shi'ism). Additionally, in the modern Iranian psyche, Britain still epitomises the Other against Iran's sense of Self. Anglo-Iranian relations, whose roots date back to the sixteenth century, have always been contested and conflicted. Throughout their commercial, cultural, or diplomatic encounters, there was in the Iranian psyche a grudging admiration for Britain's power of conquest and control, as well as its industrial and scientific advancements, in line with the modernisation discourse. On the other hand, this perception of superiority also led to suspicion, fear, and hatred of Britain. "The English thus acquired in popular imagination almost supernatural powers to influence and intrigue, promote and depose, and manipulate the elite and the masses alike" (Amanat, 2012, p. 148).

In the film's diegetic universe, a group of archaeologists led by John Wilkinson came to Iran in 1966. They received permission from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage to excavate in a region located in the north of Iran and transport the antiquities they found. Disguised as an ordinary excavation, the main purpose of this journey is to find the gateway to hell and the scroll that will open it. By opening the gateway to hell, all *daevas* ("evil spirits") will step into the world. Although it is not entirely clear what their motive behind all these, the British are portrayed as deceitful and evil.

During the excavation, they also find a four-year-old boy (we eventually learn that he is Mohebbi) in the forest, and hand him over to the police for adoption. By taking Mohebbi out of borders, British archaeologists also bereft him of constructing his identity. The order is only restored when Mohebbi returns where he belongs—within

the borders. Through Mohebbi's nostalgic "return to home", the sense of community is nurtured. As Zygmunt Bauman said, in the community "we can relax—we are safe, there are no dangers looming in dark corners" (2001, p. 2).

This notion is also what drives *The Village*. However, in *The Village*, unlike *Zone*, this idea of a "safe haven" is identified as unsound. The film criticises the exaggeration of the measures taken to create an almost mythic sense of community. Shyamalan argues that the village elders dehumanise the evil with the expression, "Those We Don't Speak of", while at the same time, the evil itself is actually created by those in positions of authority. The purpose of founding a village deep in the woods, which is actually a simulacrum, is to provide a sense of security and a utopian sense of community by simulating terror. The village elders, who lost their loved ones due to societal violence, think that they can isolate themselves from this violence if they find a community from scratch and monitor their every action. This takes on a different meaning when considering the political context of post-9/11 American society. After the 9/11 attacks, the climate of fear and paranoia was nurtured in the name of protecting society. The narrative "enemies can now appear from every corner" instigated fear, even more so than the evil the authority figures claim to protect. This becomes apparent when Edward confesses that the village elders have been fabricating the evil with "silly lies". It is not about creating a society where only good can exist, it is about keeping people under control.

In 2009, Ahmadinejad was re-elected for a second term after dubious elections in Iran. In response, mass protests took place, but were suppressed by the violence of paramilitary groups. Dozens of people died, hundreds were injured, and thousands were arrested (France 24, 2009). During the protests, hospitals were prevented from registering the injured or dead (iReport, 2009), and people detained were tortured and raped (Amnesty International, 2010). Given this context, it is understandable why the director Reza Khatibi does not single out the sense of community as unsound. Especially considering his diasporic status, it can be said that he expresses solidarity with Iranians within the borders by emphasising the sense of community and unity. That is why he constructs the threat not only as external through the British but also as internal through Esmaeili causing the death of Mohebbi's wife.

However, as long as the community stands together for a cause, they will overcome all threats.

5.3. Dabbe

5.3.1. Plot Outline of Kairo ("Pulse")

Kairo takes place in Tokyo, Japan. The main characters are Michi Kudo (Kumiko Asô), Junko Sasano (Kurume Arisaka), Toshio Yabe (Masatoshi Matsuo), Taguchi (Kenji Mizuhashi), Ryosuke Kawashima (Haruhiko Katô), and Harue Karasawa (Koyuki). The film begins with dial-up internet sound intertwining with the sound of sea waves. There is a ship on a rough sea, and the weather is dark and grey. As a young woman looks towards the sea from the ship, the voice-over says, "It all began one day, without warning, like this", and a phone starts to ring. A distorted, sepia frame of multiple computers on a desk appears on the screen. The image starts to flicker and distort accompanied by a buzzing sound.

Kairo revolves around two stories, and at one point they collide. The first story is that of Taguchi, Michi Kudo, Junko Sasano, and Toshio Yabe, who work at a plant nursery. Michi Kudo is worried that Taguchi has not come to work for a few days, and his not answering his phone increases her concerns. She decides to go to his house to make sure he is okay. She knocks on the door, but no one answers. She searches for a spare key and finds one under the flowerpot. Michi walks in and starts looking around. A silhouette moves in the background—it is Taguchi, he is at home. They start talking; Michi asks if he's done with the computer disc he's been working on for days, and where it is. As Taguchi tells her where the disc is, he casually grabs some cables on top of a stack of newspapers and heads to another room. Michi keeps talking to Taguchi, but he does not respond. She heads to the room Taguchi went to and screams in terror. Taguchi committed suicide by hanging himself with the cables he had just grabbed. After Michi recovers from the initial shock of her friend dying in front of her eyes, she reunites with her other friends at the plant nursery. They wonder why Taguchi might have committed suicide and decide to look at the computer disc he was working on. Inside the disc is an image of Taguchi looking at

one of the computer screens. When they enlarge a reflection on one of the other computer screens, they see a blurry but terrifying face staring. In the next scene, we see Michi eating dinner at home and watching the news on TV. She finishes her meal and as she turns around to take the plates to the kitchen, the image on the television screen begins to flicker and the sound becomes distorted with an accompanying buzzing sound. Michi gets scared and turns off the TV.

The second story begins with Ryosuke in a messy apartment. He tries to set up his internet service provider, but he does not seem to have much of a clue how to do it. Just as he is about to give up, he presses a random key on the keyboard and the dial-up starts to work. However, as soon as he manages to connect to the Internet, a series of strange live feeds appear on his screen. Ryosuke sees several distressed people sitting or lying in their dark and messy rooms. Finally, the following question appears on the screen: "Would you like to meet a ghost?"

This scares Ryosuke, so he turns off the computer. After smoking a cigarette, he falls asleep. But the computer turns on by itself and the dial-up connection restarts. When Ryosuke lifts his head from his pillow and looks at the screen, he sees another live feed on the screen. In the live feed, a person is sitting in the middle of his room with a black plastic bag over his head, and an animal-like, distressed moaning can be heard. The next day, he goes to his university's Computer Science department, where he asks questions to a few computer students about whether dial-up internet can start on its own (and also about the ghost website). Harue, a computer science grad student, becomes very interested in his problem, wondering what this strange website could be about. She gives Ryosuke information on things like how to add a website to bookmarks and so on. Since Ryosuke does not know anything about computers, he takes detailed notes of everything Harue says.

Back at the plant nursery, Toshio Yabe is working when he receives a phone call. The voice on the phone says "help" over and over. When he asks who is calling, an image is sent to his phone—the same image he saw on the computer disc before, of Taguchi looking at his computer screen. Toshio gets on a bus and goes to Taguchi's apartment. While searching around, he finds a paper that says, "The Forbidden

Room". He sees a black, ash-like stain on the wall where Taguchi hanged himself. He walks away, and when he comes back, he sees Taguchi himself standing at the spot. He asks what happened to him, but Taguchi turns back into black ash. Toshio thinks his mind is playing tricks on him and leaves the apartment. As he walks into the neighbourhood, he notices an apartment whose door is sealed shut with red tape. He removes the red tape from the door, enters and goes down the stairs of this shelter-like apartment. There is a leather sofa downstairs, and the walls are covered in red graffiti. When Toshio turns around, he sees the ghost of a woman coming towards him. The scene is the epitome of sheer dread—this blurred and distorted apparition sprints towards Toshio, but in extreme slow-motion. The next day, Toshio comes to work late, still alive. But he is not in the mood for a chat, so he passes the girls and heads into his office.

Ryosuke leaves an arcade and returns home. He cannot find anything to do and goes to pour himself a drink. Meanwhile, the computer starts working on its own again. Another strange live feed appears on the screen, he tries to bookmark the website, but the error window appears. In the live feed, a man in a red shirt is sitting on a chair. Despite being scared, Ryosuke reads his notes, and this time tries to take a screenshot as Harue said. The next day, he goes to the Computer Science department again. He sees a monitor with many different-sized dots rotating. He sees Harue and asks what it is, she replies that it is supposed to be a model of human interaction. She then adds only the grad student who designed it understands and he should not stare at it for too long. She also asks how things are going with the ghost website and after realising Ryosuke has no idea, she says that she wants to come to his house and look at it herself.

While Michi is checking stock at the plant nursery, she encounters Toshio sitting on the floor. Toshio tells him that he has seen a scary face unlike anything he has seen before and warns her about "the forbidden room". In the next scene, in front of a gloomy cityscape, Michi stops in front of a door sealed shut with red tape, just like the one Toshio saw. When she turns around, she witnesses a woman jumping from the tower.

Ryosuke sees Harue, who is browsing through books on phantoms, at the library. Then they go back to the simulation designed by the grad student. Dots flicker, appear and disappear like ghosts. Although Harue does not understand why this is happening, she is sure that the live feeds Ryosuke sees, and this problem are somehow connected. Another grad student shows up, and Harue goes back to her work. As Ryosuke is about to walk away, Harue runs up to him and gives him her phone number. Ryosuke returns to the library and begins reading books on phantoms. The grad student Harue works with, Yoshizaki follows him to the library. He dares Ryosuke to follow a silhouette that appears in the library to see if it is a ghost. Seeing Ryosuke in a terrified state, Yoshizaki apologises and invites him for some tea. While drinking tea, they start talking about the eerie events that are taking place. Yoshizaki thinks that spirits exist in a realm with a limited capacity. Once this capacity is filled, the spirits will overflow into another realm. He says that the existence of modern technology makes it easier for spirits to infiltrate the human realm.

The boss at the plant nursery is also seen taping the windows in his house. Michi and Junko go to work, but their boss is missing, so they start calling around to find him. Junko has become afraid of people disappearing and goes to find the boss. As Michi is about to go after her, the phone rings and the voice on the phone says "Help". Thinking that the caller is Toshio, she goes to his office. Toshio is standing in front of a wall. Michi is happy to see him and takes a few steps towards him, but only a black stain of his outline remains on the wall. Meanwhile, Junko removes the red tape on the door of her boss's house and enters inside. Michi runs to the boss's house to find Junko and tries to get her out of the "forbidden room". However, Junko is blocked by a ghost with long black hair. Michi manages to get her out of the room. In the next scene, we see Junko sleeping in bed, Michi sits exhausted in the armchair next to the bed. This scene is cut to Junko sitting on the floor of Michi's living room repeating "Help me". Michi tries to calm her down. Then she goes to a convenience store to buy something to eat. The store is empty and there is no one at the counter. Michi notices a shadowy figure in the back and runs out of the store.

Ryosuke calls Harue but no one picks up. Ryosuke goes to Harue's apartment and knocks on the door, but no one opens it. Meanwhile, in the back of the frame, a

soaking wet figure is seen walking up the stairs—that is Harue. Harue says everyone has disappeared, and Ryosuke calms her down. He takes her back to her apartment and prepares tea for her. Although she regains her composure, she speaks strangely. She turns on a bunch of monitor screens showing live feeds of desperate figures. She tells him that humans and ghosts are the same.

Exhausted, Michi falls asleep. When she wakes up, she sees Junko looking out the window. While Michi is making coffee, Junko starts standing in front of a wall. Michi turns around and sees a black, ash-like stain on the wall.

Ryosuke is playing games at the arcade, but there is no one else around. He rings the bell for an assistant. When he turns around, he notices a ghost walking through the arcade. He starts to follow the ghost, but it turns and starts coming towards him. Ryosuke runs off the arcade. While running towards his house, he encounters Harue. She wants to come with him wherever he is going because she is afraid of being alone. They start running together and go to the train station. When they get on the train, they realise that it is empty. The train stops in the middle of nowhere and all the doors open. Terrified, Harue wants to go back because she thinks this is the "end of the road". While Ryosuke goes to check on the train operator, Harue disappears.

She returns to her apartment and starts watching live feeds of helpless lonely figures. She stumbles upon the same live feed that Ryosuke saw earlier, that is, the man sitting on the chair in the red shirt. While printing out a screenshot of the feed, the man can be seen holding a gun under his chin. The paper coming out of the printer just says, "Construction Materials - Red Tape". Harue turns off the monitor, but the monitor turns on by itself and starts showing Harue as a live feed. Ryosuke comes to her door and offers to live together. This way, neither of them will have to be alone and nothing bad will happen to them. There's no one to answer the door, so he breaks it down with a fire extinguisher. He looks for Harue in the apartment, she is nowhere to be found but there is no black stain either. On television, a news anchor reads a list of people missing in Japan. Ryosuke goes out, there is not a single person around. Then he notices a yellow car stuck on the road. He approaches and sees Michi in the car.

While Ryosuke tries to fix Michi's car, the two have a brief but heartfelt conversation. Michi wonders about Ryosuke's friends, but he says he only has one friend. Michi suggests that they should look for Harue, she might still be alive. Michi notices the factory nearby and suggests looking there. Here Harue appears, standing on a gantry with a black plastic bag on her head and a gun in her hand. Ryosuke tries to convince her and begs her to leave together. Harue puts the gun to her head and shoots herself. Ryosuke and Michi get back to the car, but it's out of gas. Ryosuke returns to the factory to find fuel. He finds some a fuel can. Meanwhile, a "forbidden room" sealed with red tape enters the frame. The door is not completely sealed. Ryosuke drops the gas can lid from his hand, and it rolls into the "forbidden room". Even though Ryosuke knows what will happen, he walks right in, because he wants to find an answer to all this. A ghost approaches Ryosuke. Dial-up internet sounds are heard. Ryosuke looks into the ghost's eyes, mesmerised. After endless isolation and loneliness, the ghosts' desire is contact and communication. The phrase "Help me" that ring throughout the movie gains more meaning. The dead seek salvation in the living; but as a result, the living evaporate and join them. Waiting in the car, Michi realises something is wrong and runs to the factory. She finds Ryosuke sitting outside the "forbidden room". He takes the fuel can, and they leave the factory. The roads are full of burning cars, crashed motorcycles and dead bodies. Michi drives keenly, but Ryosuke now has a desperate attitude, as he looked loneliness deep in the eyes. They arrive at the docks, and Michi looks at the sleeping Ryosuke with agonised eyes. Since Ryosuke has entered the "forbidden room", they both know very well what will happen next. Michi and Ryosuke get on a small boat, Ryosuke is out of all his strength but tries to carry on. We then see Michi on the ship in the opening scene, looking out to sea. The captain of the ship says that they will go to Latin America as they are getting signals from there. Michi returns to the cabin, Ryosuke is sitting on the floor with his back against the wall. Michi watches as Ryosuke disappears, leaving an ash-like stain on the wall.

5.3.2. Plot Outline of Dabbe

Dabbe takes place in Selçuk, İzmir. The main characters are Hande (Ebru Aykaç), Sema (Fulya Candemir), Cem (Serdar Özer), Tarık (Serhat Yiğit), and Inspector

Süleyman (Ümit Acar). The film begins with a voice saying, "You are dreaming, Tarık, wake up". A sepia-tinted frame of a room covered with newspapers and black tape appears on the screen. There are two people in the frame, one standing and the other lying down. Their image starts to flicker and distort accompanied by a distorted scream repeating "wake up". In the next frame, the figure lying down starts flickering and running in a tunnel.

Dabbe revolves around the story of Tarık, Hande, Sema, and Cem—they all work at an antique shop. Sema is worried that Tarık has not come to work for a few days and is not picking up calls. Hande decides to go to Tarık's apartment to make sure he is okay. She knocks on the door, but no one answers. Hande calls a locksmith to open the door. She gets in and starts looking around. A smokey, jittering figure appears next to an armchair, accompanied by a static sound. Another silhouette appears behind Hande—it is Tarık, he is at home. They start talking, and Hande asks if she can take her camera back if he's done with it. Tarık tells her where the camera is, as he casually grabs a piece of cloth from a cupboard and heads upstairs. Hande keeps talking to Tarık, but he does not respond. She climbs the stairs, and her face turns pale. Tarık committed suicide by stabbing himself in the neck with a large kitchen knife.

In the next scene, we see Inspector Süleyman taking a bubble bath. He gets out, shaves and starts having breakfast. On the table, there is a photo of his wife. In a flashback, we see Süleyman going to work, while his wife is waving him goodbye on the balcony. Süleyman receives a phone call about Tarık's suicide case and goes to the police station. Süleyman goes to talk to Hande. Hande is shaken and not in the mood to talk. Süleyman gives a wise speech about suicides, so we learn that his wife committed suicide by slitting her wrists in the bathtub. Hande finally tells Süleyman how the incident happened. In the flashback, we see Tarık wrap the large kitchen knife in the cloth he took from the cupboard and then go upstairs. Tarık kneels in his room and puts the knife in front of him. There is a mirror in the room covered with newspaper and black tape. He keeps saying to himself, "Wake up now". As he pushes the knife into his throat, the frame cuts to a tunnel. It turns out the figure running in the tunnel at the beginning of the film is Tarık. Hande wakes up

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screaming, and Sema comes running and calms her down. Hande and Sema meet Cem by the ancient ruins. Cem asks Hande what she told the police. She remembers the conversation with Inspector Süleyman in a flashback. Süleyman knows that Tarık used to spend most of his time on the internet, so he asks Hande whether he could be brainwashed by "new religions and cults that have become trendy on the internet lately". She replies that such a thing cannot happen, that Tarık only spent time online to make money in the stock market. The three friends then start pondering why Tarık might have committed suicide. Hande goes home, sits on the couch and lights a cigarette. The camera she got back from Tarık catches her attention. She realises that there is a tape inside the camera and decides to watch it. In the tape, Tarık is seen frantically covering the walls and windows of his house with newspaper and black tape. He screams, slaps himself and crawls on the ground. Then the screen goes black, and a pair of red eyes stares back at Hande. She screams and turns off the TV. She goes to work. Cem worriedly comes in and says that he came across something interesting while checking his emails. They go to Cem's office. Cem opens his inbox and shows the email titled "388@0" that he just received from Tarık, who committed suicide three days ago. There is a photo attached to the email. In the photo, Tarık is standing in a tunnel with his arms open. There are other faces behind him, but they are blurred.

Süleyman goes to Tarık's house to investigate the crime scene. He goes upstairs and sees a black stain on the wall where Tarık committed suicide. His phone rings and his subordinate inform him that the report on Tarık's computer data has been finished. Süleyman returns to the police station, only to find that Tarık's computer data consists of strange letters, numbers and symbols. The police department's computer experts could not decipher what these cryptic data were. Süleyman's attention is drawn to a page that repeatedly reads "388@0" and he asks his subordinates if they have any idea what it means.

When evening falls, Hande turns on the TV to watch the news. The news anchor is talking about the increasing number of suicide cases in America in recent days. As Hande heads to the kitchen to prepare dinner, the image on the television screen begins to distort, screams and buzzing sounds can be heard in the background. Hande

gets scared and turns off the TV. A black smoky figure standing outside the house is visible through the window. Meanwhile, Cem is sitting in his living room and browsing through a magazine. Then he gets up and reopens the email from Tarık and looks at the image again. The image suddenly turns into a live feed. There is a house that looks like a shelter, its windows are covered with newspapers and black tape. "388@0" was written on a wall with black tape as well. A smoky, flickering figure stands crouching on the ground. It suddenly stands up and starts walking quickly around the room. Human screams can be heard in the background. Cem turns off the computer with fear and lights a cigarette. A black smoke rising behind Cem is reflected from the closed television screen. Cem falls asleep. Dial-up internet sounds are heard, and the computer turns on by itself. Cem wakes up and walks slowly towards the computer. There is the same live feed on the screen. The screen fades to black and the following question appears on the screen: "Are you ready to turn the truth upside down?" The question is written in Arabic-style Latin letters. The image of Cem appears on the live feed. Cem shouts "no" and turns off the computer. His phone starts ringing, and the number "388@0" is calling. Cem picks up the phone, and at first, animal-like wailing is heard from the other end. Then a voice shouts, "My veins are bursting!" The next day, Cem tells Hande and Sema what he experienced last night. Hande also talks about the tape she found on her camera. She decides to give the photo Cem received by mail, and the tape she found to Inspector Süleyman.

In his office, Süleyman tries to decipher the meaning of "388@0". His subordinate comes in and says there is something on TV that concerns them and turns on the TV. In a news program, a psychiatrist is talking about the increasing number of suicide cases in Istanbul after America. The psychiatrist says that when it comes to science, the first country that comes to mind is America, but even their scientific advancements are inadequate in the face of these events. Because, he claims, what they are faced with is a metaphysical phenomenon. After watching the program, Süleyman orders his subordinate to investigate whether the "388@0" symbol is also connected to the suicides in America and Istanbul, and what the number 388 means in different religions. Hande comes to the police station to meet with Inspector Süleyman, she shows him the tape. He confiscates the tape as evidence. Süleyman

gives her the card with his email address, so Hande can also send the photo that Cem received. Hande adds that the email title to which the photo was attached was "388@0". Cem sits thoughtfully at the ancient ruins and smokes a cigarette. He picks up his ringing phone and hears a voice saying, "Get me out of here". The calling number is again "388@0". Cem gets on a bus and goes to Tarık's house. He starts looking around and finds a piece of paper with the words "I am dreaming right now". Cem goes upstairs and sees the black stain where Tarık committed suicide. Tarık's distorted voice shouts, "Get me out of here" and the stain is replaced by the distorted image of Tarık with a knife in his throat. Tarık jumps towards Cem through the stain and attacks him. Cem manages to get out of the house and starts running. An abandoned house with its windows and doors covered with black tape attracts his attention. He removes the tapes and goes inside. This is what he saw in the live feed. He turns around and sees a black smoke coming towards him. He crawls under a table to hide and calls someone for help. When he shouts "My veins are bursting" on the phone, we realise that the phone call Cem received that night was from himself.

At his home at night, Süleyman examines Tarık's photo in the tunnel. Blurred faces in the background are shown in extreme close-ups. Süleyman falls asleep. He wakes up to the humming coming from the kitchen. His wife is washing dishes in the kitchen. He turns to Süleyman and tells him that he should take care of his health. Süleyman's eyes are filled with tears. His wife turns away to continue washing the dishes. Süleyman touches her shoulder, and the woman's face takes on a demonic look. She strangles Süleyman as she shouts, "Why did you cheat on me?". With a flashback, we see the continuation of the scene at the beginning of the film. Süleyman leaves the house to go to work, his wife waves goodbye from the balcony. She then follows Süleyman and sees him with another woman in the lobby of a hotel. She confronts Süleyman, and then commits suicide in the bathtub, cutting her wrists. Morning comes, the phone rings and Süleyman wakes up in panic. He receives news that Cem has died. Hande and Sema are also at the crime scene. Cem's body turned purple, and his hands are wrapped around his throat—this does not look like a suicide. Outside the abandoned house, a man holding a Quran emerges from the worried crowd and starts shouting. He says that the Day of Judgment has come and that the one who kills people is *Dābbat al-Arḍ*. It uses *jinn* to kill people. After all

this, Sema is shaken and decides to return to Istanbul. Hande bids her farewell, and Sema gets into a taxi and drives away. Hande goes home and starts researching *Dābbat al-Arḍ* on the Internet. It says that "Dabbe" means cobwebs in ancient Hindi (which is not true) and that *Dābbat al-Arḍ* (also known as *Beast of the Earth*) will appear close to the Day of Judgment. On the Internet, it is also written that the *jinn* live in a mirrored realm to ours. She then opens her pocket mirror to look at the wound on her lip and notices that the letters of the *Scarface* poster on the wall appear backwards. She puts a mirror in front of the computer screen and realises that "388@0" means "Dabbe" when read backwards. She runs to the police station to share this information with Süleyman.

Hande and Süleyman go to Şirince village to find the man they saw outside the abandoned house. They find the man in a state of extreme distress. They ask how he knew that all these events were connected to *Dābbat al-Arḍ*. He says they will harm him and his wife. His wife is nowhere to be seen, so Süleyman thinks he is just a crazy person talking nonsense. The man reveals that his wife is a *jinni*. That is how he knows that *Dābbat al-Arḍ* uses *jinn* to kill people. However, the *jinn* are now angry with him and his wife. Then he starts shaking as if he is having a seizure, white foam comes out of his mouth. His body turns purple and he dies with a terrified expression on his face. Hande returns to the antique shop, and Süleyman returns home. While he is in the bathroom, his phone starts to ring. When he answers, he first hears dial-up internet sounds on the other end, and then his wife's humming. A black figure emerges from the bathtub and presses Süleyman's head into the water, drowning and killing him. Hande calls Sema to find out whether she has arrived in Istanbul, but no one answers the phone. We see that the taxi could not get very far because the taxi driver and Sema were killed. In the back of the taxi, there is a black figure above Sema. The boss of the antique shop is placing boxes in the warehouse. The computer in his office turns on by itself and the boss appears in a live feed. The boss goes to his office to look at the computer screen. He finds himself in an image that goes off into infinity. A black smoke rises from the monitor, killing the boss. Hande heads towards the office to see what is happening. Two black figures stand behind the office door. When Hande enters the office, the figures close the door and attack her. She manages to escape at the last minute. Meanwhile, his subordinate

calls Süleyman to inform him that he found the tunnel seen in Tarık's photo. A *jinni* shapeshifted into Süleyman answers the phone. Then it texts Hande to come to the tunnel. Hande enters a convenience store to escape from the black figures, but there is no one inside. She sees another black figure behind the counter and runs out. There is no one on the streets, but the number of smokey black figures is increasing. Hande receives Süleyman's text and starts running to go to the tunnel. Two *jinn* shapeshifted into Süleyman and Hande appear in front of the tunnel. They look at each other, smile and enter the tunnel. Hande arrives at the front of the tunnel, but Süleyman is nowhere to be seen. Süleyman's voice is heard from inside the tunnel, calling Hande inside. Even though Hande hesitates, she enters the tunnel. She sees *jinn* shapeshifted into Süleyman and her friends and cries in horror. Then she comes face to face with the *jinni* shapeshifted into her. At the end of the film, Tarık enters the screen from the right side, with his friends and Süleyman standing behind him with their backs turned. Tarık opens his arms, and the others turn to face the camera. The photograph seen at the beginning of the film is being recreated. It is revealed that the blurred faces in the background belong to Hande, Cem, Sema, and Süleyman.

5.3.3. Analysis of Dabbe

Dabbe, Hasan Karacadağ's first feature film, was released on February 10, 2006, with 80 copies. It became the tenth most-watched film of 2006 with a total revenue of ₺3,308,372 (Box Office Turkiye).

The film reinterprets *Dābbat al-Arḍ* (also known as the Beast of the Earth), as the Internet. According to the Quran, the Beast of the Earth will appear before the Day of Judgment to mark and separate the believers and non-believers. By comparing Dabbe to a spider web in the diegetic lore of the film, an affinity is established between Dabbe and the "world wide web". Thus, the film adds a metaphysical dimension to technological objects to reinforce the religious narrative.

Dabbe does not attempt to reconcile science and religion. On the contrary, we see that scientists are helpless in the face of such terrible events. The rationality and

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reliability of science are questioned, while the irrational is legitimised. At the end of the film, the events are not resolved and no hope of salvation is offered. Because every action of humans to save themselves would be futile on the Day of Judgment. Humans are helpless against a greater power. This understanding is reiterated and (re-)emphasised by employing horror genre conventions. The ultimate aim is to incite religious belief in the audience. *Dabbe* deliberately uses paranoia, and conspiracy to achieve this. According to Fredric Jameson, the ideology of conspiracy serves a kind of political and pedagogical function (2009, pp. 601-602). Conspiracy narratives in popular film, therefore, serve to represent the totality of social order. Popular horror films or thrillers often construct a crisis narrative, in which an omnipotent dark force is unleashed, as an allegory for the distorted multinational neo-liberal capitalism. In *Dabbe*, the reinterpretation of technology, the internet, or the stock market as signs of doomsday is the epitome of this. The tunnel where the souls of the characters are trapped serves as a gateway between the *jinn* realm and the earth. This tunnel is also an intersection point between the virtual and the real world, as *jinn* and the internet are treated as the same in the narrative equation. By doing so, it is implied that leaving the path of Allah will cause the end of life on earth.

Jameson and other post-Marxist cultural theorists argue that although conspiracy narratives often aim to simplify complex political and social events, they also retain the power to challenge the existing order. As has been argued from the very beginning, the horror genre inherently subverts and violates the existing order. But *Dabbe* and the subsequent *jinn*-themed films hinder the progressive possibilities of both. Drawing on Noël Carroll, Cynthia Freeland makes a distinction between *event*-based and *entity*-based art-horror. *Dabbe* and similar films appear to be *entity*-based at first glance since *jinn* are the source of terror. However, Freeland defines *event*-based fear as "Monstrous entities will not be effectively horrific or threatening unless they *do* things" (2004, p. 196; emphasis in original). In such films, *jinn* are not necessarily a threat as long as people do not commit immoral or un-Islamic actions. This is what disrupts the subverting or challenging capabilities of the narrative. They function like a cautionary tale—even if the conservative order is not restored at the end of the film, it is inculcated in the audience that it should be preserved.

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A similar apocalyptic vision can be seen in *Dabbe*'s anterior text, *Kairo*. Instead of connecting people, the internet and other communication technologies act as conduits for spectral forms of disconnection. The themes of the end of tradition and the loss of the sense of community, along with the community itself, predominate in *Kairo*. However, Kiyoshi Kurosawa does not attempt to construct a moralistic vision of Japanese society. Nor does he harbour a nostalgic sentiment for the traditional, Imperial Japanese past. Kurosawa uses the trope of repetition—be it the repetition of death, the black ash, or ghosts' plea for help—to push the limits of the genre. While *Dabbe*'s narrative is driven by malevolent *jinn*, the monstrous in *Kairo* is more ambiguous. Because the source of terror is communicative, social, anthropomorphised spectres. They do not kill people, as Harue theorises, they trap them in their own "loneliness", and grant them eternity. Although it seems like destruction lies at the core of *Kairo*'s narrative, this is more about the destruction of delimitations to question human existence, rather than annihilating it.

Hasan Karacadağ also employs the trope of repetition from the first instalment of the franchise. The feeling of horror in the audience is often evoked through the repetition of distorted images and sounds. Perhaps the most telling example of this in *Dabbe* occurs in the opening scene where Tarık's face gets distorted, while the screams, buzzing and dial-up internet sounds are heard at high volume. This type of loud and intense jump scares has become an integral part of the *Dabbe* franchise and the like. Karacadağ's formal style often reaches extreme and tedious levels that make the narrative irrelevant. Just like a typical *event*-based horror film, *Dabbe*'s plot is driven by mystery and narrates the characters' encounter and reaction to the evil threat (Freeland, 2004, p. 196). Characters such as Hande, Cem, or Inspector Süleyman "go places, discover things, ask questions, suffer problems" and die (ibid). The heavy use of such jump scares, however, also distorts and gets in the way of the narrative and withholds it from establishing itself on a solid ground. Considering what is ultimately expected to awaken in the audience is the moralistic paranoia—which cannot be achieved with the simplistic mystery narrative—the formal style of *the Dabbe* franchise and the like seems more fitting.

Here lies the main difference between *Dabbe* and *Kairo*. *Dabbe* is conservative, paranoid, and extreme. *Kairo*, on the other hand, is pessimistic, sombre, and calm.

Dabbe problematizes extinction, while *Kairo* problematizes existence. In *Kairo*, the spectres are depicted as echoes of people. They are echoing the terrifying realisation they had that there is nothing in the afterlife, except for the perpetual loneliness. No connection, no interaction, just existing in a never-ending nothingness. When they come close to the living, that gets passed on like a malady to those whom they contact. Because the realms of the dead and the living were never meant to collide. It is just like the computer simulation that the grad student modelled—if the two dots get too close, they will destroy each other, but if they get too far apart, they will be drawn closer. On the other hand, nothingness after death contradicts Islamic thought. That is why this is rejected from the beginning in *Dabbe* and replaced with the doomsday narrative. According to Islamic eschatology, *Dābbat al-Arḍ* will emerge at a time when there is religious and moral corruption at high, and when people uproot religious faith from their lives. On the day *Dābbat al-Arḍ* emerges, infidels will be punished for their sins. In *Dabbe*, themes such as the false religions on the internet, the investment in interest (*riba*) charged stock market, or adultery are used to emphasise the moral and religious collapse of modern people. So, as a punishment, malevolent *jinn* possess, harm, and even kill people who deviate from the path of Allah.

Such a narrative was produced at a time when Islamic values came to the fore once again in Turkish political life. Therefore, it is possible to relate *Dabbe*'s cautionary tale imbued with paranoia to a broader ideological imaginary. Resentment towards the Kemalist legacy for embracing a more rationalist, secular discourses in daily life and culture, and taking Islamic practices out of the picture give room to this narrative. This is, of course, accompanied by the repudiation of Western conceptions of modernisation and advancement. This is in fact confirmed by the scientist in *Dabbe* speaking in a smirking manner at the West's helplessness in the face of these dire metaphysical events, no matter how scientifically advanced they are. While emphasising the failure of rational and secular discourses, *Dabbe* celebrates Islam as the sole saviour that can prevent the evil threat in the world.

Narratives that see the secular world as a source of threat often feel the need to re-establish and reaffirm the power and validity of Islam. Kaya Özkaracalar states that

in the context of Turkey, "this is by no means a cosmetic issue [. . .] but on the contrary, one of the major causes of social unrest in this country" (2003, p. 214). It is possible to trace the conflict between modernisation/tradition or rationality/religion even before the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. The modernization efforts gained momentum in the Ottoman Empire, especially during the 19th century. One of the main effects of this on the Ottoman elite was the thought that modernity and religious beliefs/practices or faith and rationality were incompatible. With the establishment of the Republic, a definitive break from the Islamic past in all areas of life was initiated, as a result of the modernisation and secularisation processes. "Today this tension remains not only at the forefront of the Turkish political scene, but deeply embedded within the Turkish socio-cultural psyche as well" (ibid).

In conclusion, as can be clearly seen, Hasan Karacadağ's *Dabbe* is far from being an attempt to imitate or plagiarise Kiyoshi Kurosawa's *Kairo*. Even though both films stem from a common fear—the ramifications of rapidly developing technology—they put forward different interpretations in line with their own social, cultural, and political contexts. To reaffirm the power and validity of Islam in today's world, *Dabbe* borrows certain elements from the earlier film.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This work began with an interest in exploring the transnationality and hybridity of MENA horror films, and thus addressing a critical gap in the scholarship. By drawing on existing theoretical works on genre studies and remake studies, I examine and interrogate Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish horror remakes with an emphasis on their twofold border-crossing nature in terms of challenging the boundaries of the horror genre and their transnational status. In doing so, I also situate the national film industries of Egypt, Iran, and Turkey in a transnational setting taking a crucial role in providing and taking cultural, spiritual, or aesthetic source materials for transnational horror remakes. Unlike earlier scholarship that predominantly dismissed the popular cinemas or genre films of the region as derivative and unoriginal, this work moves beyond the binary that focuses on the "original" and "copy", and complicates the remaking process by closely examining social, historical, and political upheavals of each nation.

Moreover, I have argued that the development of horror cinemas in Egypt, Iran, and Turkey witnessed a boom after the 2000s due to the revival of extreme conservative politics in the region. It can be claimed that in the 1940s and 1950s when the first attempts were made in the horror genre in the region, they borrowed relatively more from foreign films that dominated local screens, especially Hollywood. However, over time, popular cinemas have developed their own narratives, forms, and styles, often in response to the political, economic, and social fears of their nations. Certainly, Western influence has always remained, in terms of the inevitable use of genre-specific conventions and tropes.

Foregrounding how each horror tradition responds to developments in its own social, cultural, and ideological environment allows me to sidestep arguments about the

cultural "superiority" of Western films and read horror films through a view that emphasises transnational exchange and multidirectional influence. By doing so, as Andrew Tudor (1997) suggests, I avoid the overgeneralised question of "why horror?" and examine the complex ways in which texts and contexts relate to and shape each other. According to Tudor, a deeper understanding of these interactions can emerge by examining them in three dimensions. The first is to examine apparent thematic aspects of horror films of particular periods and treat them as manifestations of the social anxieties of the time, thus revealing underlying fears specific to that particular place and time (1997, p. 458). The second is to examine shifts and changes in the horror genre over a long-term period to situate them in the broader social and cultural currents (ibid). Finally, the third is to examine the whole horror genre discourse as a system in itself, specifically to identify the discursive change, and to relate them to socio-cultural environments (1997, p. 459).

Guided by these three dimensions set forth by Tudor, key horror tropes, themes, and motifs that characterise Egyptian, Iranian and Turkish horror films were identified, including conflict between conservative religious values and modernist, secular understanding, dysfunctions at the familial and societal level, fears heightening with the presence of authoritarian, oppressive and invasive governments, and, relatedly the themes of malevolent jinn that possess people. In examining these horror films, the focus was on tracing the historical, social, cultural and religious foundations from which these tropes, themes, motifs and iconographies evolved. It emphasised how Egyptian, Iranian and Turkish horror films refashioned and transformed the traditional features and conventions of the hundred-year-old horror genre, and how they represented the fearful. Thus, it was demonstrated how changing and conflicting ideological values and beliefs in cultural and social structures are confronted, negotiated, destroyed or preserved through horror films.

One of the distinctive aspects of Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish horror films is the tension between the pre-modern and the (post-)modern that still causes unrest in each nation. Although they have made significant progress technologically, economically, or diplomatically, fears remain from the transformative years of rapid change towards the (post-)modern and drifting away from traditional roots and identities.

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Today, it seems that a significant part of Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish society retains their traditional conservative values and beliefs, and the extreme conservative politics nurture them as a form of control (Albertsen and de Soysa, 2017, pp. 25-26). Therefore, contemporary Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish horror films respond to this tension with two different narratives. While the first one re-establishes and reaffirms the validity and power of traditional values and beliefs and equates the modern with either evil or simply inferiority—which is more apparent in contemporary Turkish *jinn*sploitation films—the second emphasises the inevitability of progress and development without looking at traditional values and beliefs from a "nostalgic" lens. In both cases, pre-modern is reflected through *jinn*, *iblis*, demons, or ghosts. These supernatural entities threaten and destroy normality, while also demanding recognition and validation. Surely, the pitfall that should be avoided here is to read MENA horror films from a completely generalising point of view. Although contemporary Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish horror films are manifestations of social upheavals and anxieties, these emerge in different political, ideological, and cultural contexts. For instance, the source of the evil threat that creates the horror is the presence of the external Other in *Zone*, while it is internal to the society and their actions in *Dabbe*.

The relentless conflict between pre-modern and (post-)modern is also evident in *Dabbe*'s anterior film *Kairo*. Characters such as Michi and Ryosuke are psychologically threatened after their encounters with ghosts. However, the real purpose of these ghosts is to bond with someone to escape the loneliness of the afterlife. When we look at the emergence of evil in contemporary Japanese horror films, we see social threat, violence and destruction coming full circle. In *Kairo*, ghosts communicate with the living due to their loneliness, yet in turn, trapping them in their loneliness and causing their deaths. In *Ringu* ("The Ring"; Hideo Nakata, 1998), Sadako's mother accuses her of murder, and she gets killed by her father as a result. The ghost of Sadako seeks revenge against the society that condemned, ostracised, and killed her. In *Ju-on* ("The Grudge"; Takashi Shimizu, 2000), Takeo kills his wife Kayako and son Toshio out of jealousy, causing a curse to emerge in their home. Anyone who enters this house or is connected to someone who does so finds themselves caught in a terrible cycle of violence and murder. Finally, in

Chakushin ari ("One Missed Call"; Takashi Miike, 2003), Mimiko, the child ghost who used to torment her sister and died of an asthma attack, haunts and possesses a child abuse victim, causing many deaths and torments along the way. Thus, rather than the threat of an external Other, Japanese horror films reflect the internal collapse of society in the (post-)modern experience.

On the other hand, the social anxieties reflected by contemporary American horror films arise from the presence of an unpredictable and uncontrollable external threat. A previously safe and familiar world becomes unstable with the invasion of unfamiliar evil strangers. In the 2000s and beyond, narratives that shook the American psyche, and clarified the distinction between the Self and the Other or the precariousness of daily life under neoliberalism, became evident after 9/11 and the 2008 financial crisis. However, distrust of the American government also comes to the fore in some narratives. *The Village* suggests that the Monster was created by authority to keep the people under control and surveillance. Similarly, *Cloverfield* (Matt Reeves, 2008) depicts a giant monster attacking New York City, and six friends' efforts to survive. However, during the attack, the government orders to shut down all local news stations, preventing reports about the monster attack and sends teams to confiscate all footage or any other physical evidence of the monster's existence, covering up the whole incident.

Ultimately, the contemporary cycle of transnational horror films also deliberately undermines any attempt to assign the statuses of "original" and "copy"/"remake", by drawing on both unique socio-cultural, political and ideological contexts and more universal anxieties like the collapse and instability of (post-)modern life. As I demonstrate in my study, Egyptian, Iranian and Turkish horror remakes are by no means clear "copies". Tracing the conventions, tropes, themes, and motifs seen in these contemporary horror films across historical, cultural, and ideological contexts refutes any argument that the American and Asian versions are the "originals". As I have shown, the figure of *jinn* in Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish horror films and quasi-religious practices such as spell casting to summon or keep them away are based on the Islamic-cultural heritage of the region. Additionally, influences of Western/Hollywood or Asian/Japanese cinemas are also evident in terms of narrative

structures or aesthetics. Therefore, all of the films included in this study are essentially transnational hybrids. Their border-crossings reveal the flexibility and transformative nature of historical, temporal, or spatial boundaries.

To investigate the wide-ranging sources of horror films and transcultural interaction, both Egyptian, Iranian and Turkish horror film histories, as well as the Western sources that influenced them were explored and analysed. As clearly stated at the beginning of the study, it is not intended to compare "original" films and their "remakes" to evaluate which horror cinema is "better" or "more culturally specific". Rather, the aim is to develop a deep understanding of how a particular group of films represents contemporary anxieties, and how they take films shaped in other contexts and recontextualize them to do so, as well as the complexities between similarity and differentiation that this engenders. I hope that this study, which serves as an early attempt to contextualise the horror cinema in the MENA region, will contribute to the increasing interest in the scholarship towards researching genre films of the MENA region that were formerly dismissed as "derivative" or assumed non-existent.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Ulusötesi yeniden çevrim filmler, doğaları gereği ikircikli yapıya sahiptir. Bir yandan, içinde şekillendikleri ulusal bağlama sıkı sıkıya bağlıdırlar. Öte yandan ise çok yönlü ulusötesi alışverişin bir parçası olarak hem etkileyen hem de etkilenen konumda yer alırlar. Dolayısıyla bu ikircikli yapı, esasında daha geniş sosyal ve kültürel meseleleri görünür kılmaya elverişlidir. Yeniden çevrim olgusu, bilhassa ulusötesi üretim döngüleri bağlamında ele alındığında çok katmanlı anlamlara kapı açmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, yeniden çevrim olgusunun bu potansiyelinin akademik ve eleştirel ilgiden uzak kalmasının nedeni, yeniden çevrim filmlerin bugün daha hala "orijinallerine" benzerlik, uygunluk ve sadakat kapsamında ele alınıyor olması olarak gösterilebilir.

Bir tür olarak korku sineması, başlangıçta ele aldığı tabu konular ve sürekli olarak normların ve var olan sınırların ihlaline işaret etmesi sebebiyle "düşük kültür" ürünleri olarak kabul edilmiş ve görmezden gelinmişse de, özellikle 1970'ler itibarıyla, sahip olduğu kötü şöhreti üzerinden atmış ve günümüze kadar sistematik araştırmalar bütününden oluşan çok geniş kapsamlı bir literatüre sahip olabilmiştir. Ne var ki, yeniden çevrim korku filmlerine yönelik görüşün hala daha bu yönde olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Bunun bir nedeni, özellikle Küresel Güney[9] sinemaları bağlamında, yeniden çevrim korku filmlerinin, onlara kaynaklık eden önceki filmlerle[10] kıyaslandığında çoğu zaman daha düşük prodüksiyon değeri ve

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[9] "Üçüncü Dünya" veya "gelişmekte olan ülke" gibi hegemonik ve hiyerarşik tanımlamalar, bu çalışmaya konu olan ülke sinemalarının yalnız pasif bir biçimde Hollywood gibi güçlü film endüstrilerinin ürünlerini yeniden bağlamsallaştırdığını veya taklit ettiğini ima etme tehlikesi taşımaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışmada, "Küresel Güney" teriminin kullanılması tercih edilmektedir.

[10] Bu çalışmada, iki film versiyonu arasındaki ilişkiyi hiyerarşik çağrışımlardan kaçınmak adına "yeniden çevrim" teriminin karşısına "orijinal film" terimi konumlandırılmamıştır. Bunun yerine, iki film versiyonu arasındaki karşılıklı etkileşime odaklanmak amacıyla "yeniden çevrim" teriminin kaynak olarak kullandığı filmlere atıfta bulunmak amacıyla "önceki film/metin" (earlier film/anterior text) terimleri tercih edilmiştir.

teknik veya anlatısal aksaklıklar ile işaretlenmiş olmasında yatmaktadır. Bu durum, yeniden çevrim filmlerin hakim söylemde "orijinaline" uygunluğu açısından değerlendirme eğilimiyle birleştiğinde bu görmezden görme halinin nedenleri anlaşılmaktadır.

Bu çalışma, bir tür olarak korku sineması ve bir yapım pratiği olarak yeniden çevrimi birbirini tamamlayan olgular olarak ele almaktadır. Her ikisi de sürekli olarak değişimi ve yeni anlam üretimlerini teşvik etmektedir. Korku filmleri bunu, sürekli olarak sosyal veya kültürel sınırları aşarak, tersine çevirerek veya ihlal ederek yapmaktadır. Yeniden çevrim filmler ise bunu, var olan önceki bir film metnini alıp onu kendi bağlamı içerisinde yeniden yorumlayarak ve yeniden şekillendirerek yapar. Dolayısıyla iki olgunun bir bütün olarak ele alınması, ulusötesi sinema bağlamında yinelenen, değiştirilen ve dönüştürülen kültürel motiflerin keşfedilmesine olanak tanır. Ulusötesi bağlamda yeniden çevrim korku filmleri, yalnızca önceki filmin başarısını lehe çevirerek ekonomik kazanç sağlama kaygılarıyla üretilmemektedir. Bunun yanı sıra yeniden çevrim korku filmleri, önceki filmin kendi bağlamına uyumlu ve uyumsuz kısımlarını tekrarlayarak veya yeniden yorumlayarak kültürel açıdan spesifik unsurlarının tam olarak izlenebildiği bir müzakere alanı doğurmaktadır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, bu çalışmada ele alınan yeniden çevrim korku filmleri, sosyo-kültürel söylemler ağına gömülü tarihsel-kültürel eserler olarak anlaşılmaktadır. Burada dikkat edilmesi gereken nokta, popüler veya ana akım korku filmlerinin ve bunların ulusötesi yeniden çevrimlerinin, kültürel koşulların, hareketlerin veya eğilimlerin pasif yansıtıcıları olarak değil, birbirleriyle eylem ve diyalog içinde olan kültürel birimler olarak kabul edildiğidir.

Elbette, bu kültürel açıdan spesifik unsurların izlenebilmesi için hem bir tür olarak korku sineması hem de bir yapım pratiği olarak yeniden çevrim olgularını kapsamlı bir şekilde takip edecek bir literatüre ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Yeniden çevrimlerin sinema tarihinin en başından bu yana var olduğu göz önüne alındığında, Yeniden Çevrim Çalışmalarının nispeten genç bir disiplin olması, yukarıda açıklanan sebeplere bağlanabilmektedir. 1980'li yıllardaki mütevazı adımlara rağmen, Yeniden Çevrim Çalışmaları bağlamındaki metodik çalışmalar ancak 2000'li yıllardan sonra çoğalmıştır. Günümüzde filmlerin yeniden çevrimlerini metinlerarasılık,

metinüstülük, temsil ve kültürlerarası çeşitlilik perspektifinden ele alan araştırmalar artmaya başlamıştır (bkz. Mazdon, 2000; Forrest ve Koos, 2002; Quaresima, 2002; Verevis, 2006; Zhang, 2006; Zanger, 2007; Loock ve Verevis, 2012; Wang, 2013; Klein ve Palmer, 2016; Smith ve Verevis, 2017). Ne var ki, kimi istisnalar haricinde (Gürata, 2006 & 2021; Raw, 2016; Smith, 2016), mevcut Yeniden Çevrim Çalışmaları literatürü yalnız Kuzey Amerika, Batı Avrupa ve Doğu Asya ile sınırlı kalmakta, Küresel Güney ülkelerinin sinemaları bu denkleme nadiren dahil edilmektedir. Bu çalışma, tam da literatürdeki bu boşluğu gidermeyi hedeflemektedir. Orta Doğu ve Kuzey Afrika (ODKA) bölgesindeki, film endüstrileri açısından en güçlü üç ülkesinin (İran, Mısır ve Türkiye) film kültürlerini ve yeniden çevrim stratejilerini keşfederek Yeniden Çevrim Çalışmaları kapsamındaki mevcut literatürün üzerine ekleme yapmayı ve bu sayede, ulusötesi yeniden çevrim filmler için daha kapsamlı bir söylem geliştirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Diğer yandan, korkunun sinematik temsilleri, film anlatısının ötesine geçer ve sosyo-kültürel bağlam içine konumlanır. Korku filmleri üzerine yapılan çağdaş araştırmalarda da bir tür olarak korku sinemasını toplumsal anksiyetelerin, kültürel tabuların ve korkuların ifadesi olarak okumak yaygın bir yaklaşımdır (bkz. Biskind, 1983; Brophy, 1986; Wood, 1986; Carroll, 1990; Dika, 1990; Jancovich, 1992; Tudor, 1989 & 1997; Lowenstein, 2005; Dendle, 2007). Bu tür çalışmalar, "Neden korku filmlerini izleriz?" gibi aşırı genelleştirilmiş soruların ötesine geçer ve korkunun sinematik temsillerine yönelik psikanalitik, sosyolojik veya antropolojik tahlillerini sunar. Korku Çalışmaları alanındaki bu son derece kapsamlı literatürden faydalanan bu çalışma, odak noktasını bir tür olarak korku sinemasının belirli korkuların neden belirli zamanlarda ortaya çıktığını ve bu korkuların belirli yerlerde sinematik olarak nasıl temsil edildiğine çevirmektedir. Bu yaklaşım, yeniden çevrim korku filmlerini ve önceki filmleri ulusötesi bağlamda benzeşen ve ayrışan kültürel motifler açısından karşılaştırmamıza olanak tanımaktadır. Yeniden çevrim pratiğinin özünde de kültürel motiflerin yinelenmesi ve dönüştürülmesi yattığından—yukarıda da tartışıldığı üzere—korkunun sinematik temsillerinin incelenmesinde güçlü bir dayanak noktası sunmaktadır. Yine de iki olgunun kesişimi birkaç önemli istisna dışında (bkz. Özkaracalar, 2003; Hand ve McRoy, 2007; Lukas ve Marmysz, 2009; Roche, 2014; Wee, 2014; Knöppler, 2017) henüz yeterince araştırılmış bir konu

değildir. Özetle bu çalışma literatürdeki bu boşluğu, ötekileştirilmiş ulusal sinemaları, bir tür olarak korku sinemasını ve yeniden çevrim pratiklerini bütünleştiren daha kapsamlı bir yaklaşım geliştirmektedir. Bu yaklaşım bize korkunun sinematik temsilleri ve metinötesi alışveriş yoluyla kültürel açıdan spesifik anlatılara ilişkin bir içgörü de sağlamaktadır.

Yeniden çevrim pratikleri, İran, Mısır ve Türk film endüstrilerinin oluşum aşamasından bu yana kendine güçlü bir yer edinmiştir. İran'da, gerilim ve psikolojik korku türünde *auteur* olarak tanımlanabilecek Samuel Khachikian'ın *Faryad-e Nimeh Shab* ("Gece Yarısı Çığlığı", 1961) filmi, *film noir* türündeki *Gilda* ("Şeytanın Kızı Gilda"; Charles Vidor, 1946) filmi ile anlatısal ve ikonografik birçok benzerlik taşımaktadır. Mısır'ın bugün belki de en bilinen korku-komedi filmlerinden biri olan Issa Karama imzalı *Haram ealayk* ("İsmail Yassin Frankenstein'a Karşı", 1953), esasında Universal imzalı bir korku-komedi olan *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* ("İki Açıkgöz Frankenstein'a Karşı"; Charles Barton, 1948) filminin yeniden çevrimidir. Son olarak Yeşilçam'a baktığımızda, İlhan Engin'in tartışmalı *Kadın Düşmanı* (1967) filmi, Mario Bava'nın *giallo* türündeki *Sei donne per l'assassino* ("Kan ve Siyah Dantel", 1964) filmiyle dikkate değer benzerlikler taşımaktadır. Amerikan ve diğer yabancı filmlerinin yeniden çevrimlerine ek olarak, bu üç ülke kendi içinde de yeniden çevrimlere sahne olmuştur. Örneğin, İran'da döneminin en ses getiren *filmfarsi* (popüler sinema) ürünlerinden biri olan ve bir intikam hikayesini konu alan *Qeysar* (Masoud Kimiai, 1969), 1972 yılında Orhan Aksoy tarafından *Alın Yazısı* adıyla yeniden çevrilmiştir. Dolayısıyla denebilir ki bu çalışmaya konu olan üç ülkenin her birinde film yapımcıları, bahsi geçen önceki filmleri yerel izleyici kitleleri için kendi ülkelerinin özgün kültürlerini yansıtacak şekilde yeniden yorumlamış, yeniden yazmış ve tercüme etmiştir. Kuşkusuz bu, kültürel olarak yeniden bağlamsallaştırılan yeniden çevrim korku filmlerinin bu bağlamın dışında kalan izleyiciye anlaşılmaz ya da uzak geldiği anlamını taşımamaktadır. Zira metinötesi etkileşim, kültürel sınırların aşılmasına ve daha tarafsız bir bağlamın müzakere edilmesine olanak tanımaktadır. Yeniden çevrim olgusunu karakterize eden yineleme ve yeniden yazma arasında diyalektikte, hiper veya bağlantılı metnin (yeniden çevrim) kaynak metne (önceki film) olan bağını gizlemeyi tercih ettiği durumlar—yine, özellikle ekonomik koşullarla ilintili olarak

Küresel Güney sinemaları bağlamında—sıklıkla görülebilmektedir. Bu çalışma, tam da yeniden yazma eylemini ön plana koyarak *gizlenmiş* (Druxman, 1975; Greenberg, 1991; Verevis, 2006) yeniden çevrim (korku) filmleri inceleme ve analize tabi tutmaktadır. Zira bu *gizlenmiş yeniden çevrim* filmler, kaynak metnin sistematik bir şekilde yeniden yazılması yoluyla sürekli olarak önemli farklılıklar, aşırılıklar ve melezlik durumları yaratarak, korkulanı kendi özgün kültürleri bağlamında temsil etmektedir.

Bu çerçevede, her üç ülkeden de birer yeniden çevrim korku filmi ve her birine karşılık gelen önceki filmler örnek vaka olarak araştırma konusu edilmiştir. İran örneğinde, 2009 tarihli *Harim* ("Bölge"; Reza Khatibi) filmi seçilmiştir. *Harim*, M. Night Shyamalan imzalı *The Village* ("Köy"; 2004) filminin *gizlenmiş yeniden çevrimidir.* Mısır örneğinde, Mısır'ın ilk *buluntu görüntü* (*found-footage*) korku filmi olma özelliği taşıyan *Warda* (Hadi El Bagoury, 2014) seçilmiştir. *Warda*, 2009 yılında nihayet gösterime girdiğinde büyük ses getiren ve *buluntu görüntü* korku filmleri dalgası yaratan *Paranormal Activity* ("Paranormal Aktivite"; Oren Peli, 2007) filminin *gizlenmiş yeniden çevrimidir.* Son olarak Türkiye örneğinde, gösterime girdiği ilk günden dikkatleri üzerine çeken ve "cin temalı" filmler dalgası yaratan *Dabbe* (Hasan Karacadağ, 2006) filmi seçilmiştir. *Dabbe*, teknolojinin gelişmesiyle birlikte Japon toplumunun yalnızlaşması üzerine incelikli bir anlatı sunan *Kairo* ("Nabız"; Kiyoshi Kurosawa, 2001) filminin *gizlenmiş yeniden çevrimidir.*

Bölge, önceki filmin sınır anlatısını almakta ve Zerdüşt inanışları çerçevesinde İranlı kimliğinin yeniden inşasını önermektedir. Film, Kuzey İran'da bir köyde dört İngiliz turistin gizemli bir şekilde ölmesi olayını araştıran Komiser Mohebbi'nin hikayesine odaklanmaktadır. Komiser Mohebbi'nin soruşturması, onu ormanın derinliklerinde yer alan bir mağaraya ve mağaranın içindeki iki parçalı kil tablete yönlendirir ve sırların açığa çıkmasına neden olur. Kuzey İran'daki bu köyün sakinleri, cehennemin kapısı olan mağarayı diğerlerinden korumakla görevlendirilmiştir. Anlatıdaki doğa ile medeniyet arasındaki sınır kavramı, iyi ile kötünün yanı sıra Benlik ile Öteki arasında da katı bir sınır inşa eder. Dolayısıyla, böylesi ontolojik bir coğrafi işaretleyici, kimliğin sosyo-politik inşasıyla ayrılmaz bir şekilde bağlantılı

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görünmektedir. Bu alan, aynı zamanda mekan ve insanlar arasındaki farklılıkları çerçeveleyen kültürel bir sınırlama işlevi de görüyor. Bu alanın "kapalı" doğası, sosyal ve kültürel geleneğin (veya geçmişin) mühürlendiğini ve korunması gerektiğini ima etmektedir. Buna bağlı olarak filmdeki vahşet ve şiddet, söz konusu alanın ihlalinden doğmaktadır. Zerdüşt inanışına göre cehennem İran'ın kuzeyinde yer almakta; dar ve karanlık bir uçurum olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Cehennemin kapısı olarak bilinen "Arzur sırtının" Alborz dağlarının yakınında yer aldığı düşünülmektedir (Encyclopaedia Iranica, 2011).

Bölge ismi açıklanmayan bir köyde geçerken, bu dağlık köyün de kuzeyde yer aldığı belirtilmektedir. Filmde, köylülerin koruduğu cehenneme açılan kapı karanlık bir mağara olarak tasvir edilmiştir. Cehennemin kapısını açmak isteyen yabancılar ile onu koruyan köylüler teması üzerinden temellenen iyi ile kötü, Benlik ile Öteki arasındaki çatışma İran kimliğini sorunsallaştırmaktadır. Filmin anlatısına göre, 1966 yılında John Wilkinson liderliğindeki bir grup arkeolog İran'a gelmiştir. İran'ın kuzeyinde bulunan bir bölgede kazı yapmak gibi sıradan görünen bu gezinin asıl amacı, cehenneme açılan kapıyı ve onu açacak kil tableti bulmaktır. Yıllar sonra aynı bölgede gizemli şekilde öldürülen dört İngiliz turistin de kil tableti çaldığı filmin sonunda ortaya çıkmaktadır. Cehennemin kapısını açmaktaki amaçlarının ne olduğu filmde hiçbir zaman tam olarak ifade edilmese de İngilizler hem arkeologlar hem de kil tableti çalmaya çalan turistler üzerinden kötücül Öteki olarak işaretlenmektedir. Arkeologların kazı sırasında ormanda buldukları erkek çocuğunun esasında Komiser Mohebbi olduğunun öğrenilmesi, Benlik inşasının son aşamasıdır. Kötücül Öteki, Mohebbi'yi sınırın, bölgenin dışına çıkararak onu kendi kimliğini inşa etmekten mahrum bırakmıştır. Düzen ancak Mohebbi ait olduğu yere, yani sınırlara geri döndüğünde yeniden sağlanmaktadır. Mohebbi'nin nostaljik "eve dönüşü" aracılığıyla ütopik topluluk duygusu beslenmektedir.

Öte yandan Shyamalan imzalı *Köy* filmi, görünürde 1897 yılında isimsiz bir Pennsylvania köyünde geçmektedir. Ormanın derinliklerinde yaşayan köylüler, korkunç canavarlardan korunmak için köyün sınırları dışına hiç çıkmamaktadır. Köyün gençleri arasında zamanla doğan merak, köyün gizli gerçeklerinin açığa çıkmasına da neden olur. Bu sözde korkunç canavarlar, köydekileri sınırların içinde

tutmak adına köyün yaşlıları tarafından uydurulmuştur. Ormanın derinliklerinde aslında bir simülakr olan köy kurmanın amacı, terör duygusunu sürekli olarak simüle ederek sözde güvenlik duygusu ve ütopik bir topluluk duygusu sağlamaktır. Köyün yaşlılarının, yani köydeki tek otorite figürlerinin kontrol adına attığı bu adımlar, 11 Eylül sonrası Amerikan toplumunun siyasi atmosferine bir eleştiri niteliğindedir. 11 Eylül saldırıları ardından, siyasilerin "düşman her yerde olabilir" retoriği yalnızca korku ve paranoya ortamını beslemiştir. *Köy* filminde, köyün kurucusu Edward'ın kızına, insanların iyiliği için "aptalca yalanlar" uydurduklarını itirafında, bu durumun yankıları görülmektedir. Otoritenin esas gayesi insanların iyi olabileceği, güvende olabileceği bir toplum yaratmak değil, onları kontrol altında tutmaktır.

Warda, önceki filmin anlatısını büyük ölçüde takip ederek yeni medya teknolojilerinin kullanımını ve Arap Baharı sonrası Arap-Mısırlı ruh halini sorunsallaştırmaktadır. Film, Al Minufiyah şehrinin Kafr al Batanun köyünde "cinlerin ele geçirdiği" düşünülen Warda'yı konu almaktadır. Kız kardeşinin ve babasının ölümünden sonra, Warda'nın sağlığı giderek gerilemiş ve ruh halinde ciddi değişimler baş göstermiştir. Büyük ağabeyi Walid Hollanda'dan dönerek evin çeşitli noktalarına kamera kurar ve Warda'daki sorunu çözmeye çalışır. Film boyunca, Warda'ya bir cin veya iblisin musallat olduğu düşündürülmektedir. Ancak filmin sonunda, Warda'nın vücudunu ele geçirenin ölen küçük kız kardeşi olduğunu öğreniriz. Kelimenin tam anlamıyla, geçmişin hayaletleri bugüne musallat olmakta ve aileyi bir yüzleşmeye mahkum etmektedir. Natasha Zaretsky'nin ailenin "ulusun simgesi" olarak işlev gördüğünü öne sürmektedir. Bu göz önüne alındığında, *Warda* filmindeki parçalanmış aile tasvirinde "ulusal gerilemenin kökenlerinin" izini sürmek mümkün hale gelmektedir (2010, s. 4). Aile ile ulusal kimlik duygusu arasında ortak fikir ve imgeler bulunduğundan (age, s. 4), aile içindeki bu çatışmalar Mısır kimliğinin tartışmalı doğasını da ortaya koymaktadır.

Buna ek olarak, *Warda*'nın biçimsel olarak bir *buluntu görüntü* filmi olması, Arap Baharı sonrası Mısır gerçekliğini de gözler önüne sermektedir. Charles Austin McDonald'a göre, *buluntu görüntü* korku filmleri, gelişen yeni medya teknolojileri yanı sıra "yurttaş gazeteciliği" olgusuyla yeni bir boyut kazanmıştır (2014, s. 101). Yakın dönem tarihimizin en aktif protestolarına sahne olmuş Wall Street'i İşgal Et ve

Arap Baharı gibi olayların yerelleştirilmiş ve kişiselleştirilmiş anlatıları gün ışığına çıkardığı öne sürülmektedir (age, s. 101). Antoine Waked de bunu doğrulamakta, Hadi El Bagoury gibi genç Arap yönetmenlerin, Arap Baharı sonrasında krize giren Arap ruh halini ve içinde bulundukları distopik gerçekliği yansıtmak için korku geleneklerini kullandıklarını öne sürmektedir (2015).

Öte yandan, 2007 yılında kısıtlı bir bütçeyle çekilen ve ancak 2009 yılında gösterime giren *Paranormal Aktivite*, birkaç yıl sonra Amerika'da yaşanacak konut kredisi krizi ve ekonomik krizin habercisi niteliğindedir. 2008 yılında, Amerika'daki konut kredisi uygulamalarında ortaya çıkan kriz, Amerikan ekonomisini ters yüz etmiş ve konut balonunun patlamasına yol açarak birçok insanı evsiz bırakmıştır. San Diego banliyölerinde, son derece büyük ve lüks bir evde yaşayan Katie ve Micah'ın hayatları, Katie'yi ele geçirmek isteyen bir şeytanın ortaya çıkışıyla altüst olur. Genç çift, kendilerini evlerinde bile güvende hissedemez hale gelirler. "Evin güvensizliği" duygusu, esasında konut kriziyle birlikte *Paranormal Aktivite*'den sonra gelen "perili ev" anlatılarının çoğalmasına ilham kaynağı olmuştur *Paranormal Aktivite* serisine (2007-2021) ek olarak, *Insidious* serisi ("Ruhlar Bölgesi"; 2010-2023) veya *The Conjuring* evreninin tamamı ("Korku Seansı"; 2013-2023) gibi diğer perili ev anlatıları, sıradan Amerikan ailelerinin ne kadar güvencesiz olduğunu ve kendi güvenli bölgeleri üzerindeki kontrollerinin esasında ne kadar az olduğunu da ortaya koymaktadır.

Dabbe, gösterime girdiği ilk günden itibaren büyük ilgi toplamış ve kendisinden sonra gelen, biçimsel ve anlatısal olarak çok benzer ucuz bütçeli cin temalı filmlerin veya "*jinn*sploitation"[11] filmlerinin arka arkaya üretilmesine ön ayak olmuştur. Filmin anlatısı, Kuran'a göre kıyamet günü ortaya çıkacağına inanılan Dâbbetü'l-arz'ı bir örümcek ağına benzeterek ve İnternet, yani "Dünya çapında ağ" ile karşılaştırarak dini anlatısını güçlendirmektedir. *Dabbe*, modern dünyada dini değerlerin geçerliliğini ve üstünlüğünü yeniden tesis etme amacı taşımaktadır. Bu nedenle filmde dünyanın dört bir yanında görülen intihar vakalarını çözmekte bilim

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[11] Türkiye'de bugün çok ucuz bütçelerle, çok kısa zamanlarda çekilen cin temalı korku filmleri, bu sayede karlarını maksimize etmeyi amaçladıklarından daha çok *istismar sinemasının* (exploitation cinema) yapım pratiklerine uygun hareket etmektedirler. Bu nedenle, bu tür filmleri tanımlamak adına "*jinn*sploitation" teriminin kullanılması önerilmektedir.

ve teknolojinin yetersiz kaldığı sıklıkla vurgulanmaktadır. Dahası filmin içerisinde yer alan haber programı kesitinde konuşan bilim insanı karakteri, Amerika'nın gelişmişliğine veya bilimdeki ilerlemesine rağmen metafizik olaylarla ilintili olduğuna inandığı intihar vakalarını çözmekte yetersiz kalışıyla neredeyse alay etmektedir. Bilimin rasyonelliğinin metafizik olanı çözmekteki çaresizliğinin karşısında dinin üstün gelişi konumlandırılmaktadır. Filmin sonunda hiçbir olayın çözülmemesi ve karakterlerin tümünün ölmesi, kıyamet günü karşısında kurtuluş umudu olmadığı mesajını vermektedir. Neredeyse Lovecraftçı bu motif, insanlığın kendisinden daha büyük bir güç karşısındaki direniş çabasının fuzuli olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Çünkü *Dabbe*, neredeyse paranoya boyutuna varan göz korkutma stratejileriyle toplumsal düzeni ve dinin üstünlüğünü yeniden tesis etmeyi arzulamaktadır. Fredric Jameson'a göre bu tür komplocu ideolojiler bir tür politik ve pedagojik işleve hizmet etmektedir (2009, s. 601-602). Popüler korku filmleri sıklıkla, çokuluslu çarpık kapitalist düzenin bir alegorisi olarak, her şeye kadir bir karanlık gücün açığa çıktığı bir kriz anlatısı inşa etme eğilimindedir. *Dabbe*'de yeni teknolojilerin, internetin, internet aracılığıyla çoğalan tarikat ve sahte dinlerin, borsadan para kazanmanın (bkz. faiz veya *riba*) kıyamet alametleri olarak yeniden yorumlanması bunun somut örneğidir.

Dinin gücünü ve geçerliliğini yeniden tesis ihtiyacını hisseden anlatılar modern, seküler dünyayı da bir tehdit kaynağı olarak göstermektedir. Kaya Özkaracalar, Türkiye bağlamında "bunun hiçbir şekilde ufak bir mesele olmadığını", tam tersine "bu ülkedeki toplumsal huzursuzluğun en önemli nedenlerinden biri" olduğunu belirtmektedir (2003, s. 214). Zira modernleşme/gelenek ya da rasyonellik/din çatışmasının izini Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuruluşundan önce bile sürmek mümkündür. Osmanlı Devleti'nde modernleşme çabaları özellikle 19. yüzyılda ivme kazanmıştır. Bunun Osmanlı seçkinleri üzerindeki temel etkilerinden biri, modernite ile dini inanç/uygulamaların veya inanç ile akılcılığın uyumsuz olduğu düşünce
siydi. Cumhuriyetin kuruluşuyla birlikte modernleşme ve laikleşme süreçlerinin bir sonucu olarak hayatın her alanında İslami geçmişten kesin bir kopuş başlatıldı. "Bugün bu gerilim yalnızca Türk siyasi sahnesinin ön saflarında yer almakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda Türk sosyo-kültürel ruhunun da derinlerine işlemiş durumdadır" (age, s. 214).

Öte yandan *Nabız*, paranoyak veya komplocu anlatıların aksine daha sakin ve kasvetli bir resim çizmektedir. *Nabız* filminde, internet aracılığıyla yaşayanların dünyasına sızmaya başlayan hayaletler, insanların "yankıları" olarak tasvir edilmektedir. Bu hayaletler, sürekli attıkları yardım çığlıklarıyla esasen ölümden sonraki hayatta sonsuz yalnızlık harici hiçbir şeyin olmadığına dair korkunç bir farkındalığa vardıklarını göstermektedirler. Hiçbir temas, yakınlık, etkileşim yoktur; ölümden sonraki hayatta tek var olan sonsuz yalnızlık ve sonsuz hiçliktir. Bu nedenle, hayaletler yaşayanlarla etkileşime girdiklerinde bunalımları onlara bir hastalık gibi bulaşır. İnternet ve diğer iletişim teknolojileri, insanları birbirine bağlamak yerine, kopukluğun simgesi haline gelmiştir. *Nabız* filmine geleneğin sonu ve topluluk duygusunun kaybı ile birlikte topluluğun da tümüyle yok oluşu teması hakimdir. Ancak yönetmen Kiyoshi Kurosawa—Hasan Karacadağ'ın aksine— topluma dair ahlakçı bir vizyon oluşturmaya çalışmamakta, geleneksel Japon İmparatorluk geçmişine yönelik nostaljik bir özlem de beslememektedir.

Özetlemek gerekirse, İran, Mısır ve Türk yeniden çevrim korku filmlerinde temsil edilen korkular muhafazakar dini değerler ile modernist, seküler bakış açıları arasındaki çatışma, toplumsal işlev bozuklukları ve otoriter yönetim sistemleri temaları etrafında şekillenmektedir. Tezin ilgili bölümlerinde de detaylı olarak tartışıldığı üzere, bu üç ülkenin de moderniteye yaptığı hızlı geçiş ve ani dönüşüm, toplumun geleneksel değer, inanç, ritüel ve kimliklerinden uzaklaşmasına neden olmuş ve bir anksiyete hali yaratmıştır. Dolayısıyla, korkuların sinematik temsillerinde de bu gerilimin ön planda olması pek de şaşırtıcı değildir.

Vaka çalışmalarının da ortaya koyduğu üzere, ulusötesi melezler olduğunu iddia edebileceğimiz yeniden çevrim korku filmleri, "orijinal" ve "yeniden çevrim" gibi geleneksel ve hiyerarşik kategorilere meydan okumaktadır. Yeniden çevrim pratikleri, önceki filmi yeniden bağlamsallaştırdığı ve bu süreçte yeniden yazma, değiştirme ve dönüştürme süreçlerine tabi tuttuğu için bu filmler de pekala birer "orijinaldir". Bir başka deyişle, çalışmanın en başında da açıkça ifade edildiği gibi, hangi korku sinemasının "daha iyi" ya da "kültürel açıdan daha değerli" olduğunu değerlendirmek için "orijinal" filmler ile onların "yeniden yapımlarını" karşılaştırmak gibi bir amaç söz konusu değildir. Daha ziyade amaç, belirli bir film

grubunun güncel toplumsal kaygı ve korkuları nasıl temsil ettiği; başka bağlamlarda şekillenen filmleri alıp nasıl yeniden bağlamsallaştırdıkları ve bunun ortaya çıkardığı benzeşme ve ayrışmalara yönelik karmaşıklıklar hakkında derinlemesine bir anlayış geliştirmektir. ODKA bölgesindeki korku sinemalarını bağlamsallaştırmaya yönelik erken bir girişim bu çalışmanın, daha önce türe dahil edilmeyen veya "orijinallik" çerçevesi kapsamında göz ardı edilen (yeniden çevrim) korku filmlerini araştırmaya yönelik akademik ilgiye katkıda bulunacağı umulmaktadır.

B. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ / INSTITUTE

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TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (**İngilizce** / English) : GHOSTLY BORROWINGS: TRANSNATIONAL HORROR REMAKES IN EGYPT, IRAN AND TURKEY

TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE: **Yüksek Lisans** / Master   ☒   **Doktora** / PhD   ☐

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