A transboundary cinema : Tunç Okan’s trilogy of im/migration

Luxembourgeus, T.T.E.

Chapter III

A "Bastard Film"

After a relatively long break, Okan completed his second film *Drôle de samedi* (Funny Saturday) in 1985, some eleven years after his debut film. *Funny Saturday* is the least known and least studied film in Okan's filmography. It follows several short and interconnected stories that take place on an ordinary Saturday in a small Swiss town, Neuchâtel. These stories are woven together around a young heterosexual couple, who either take part in these events or witness them as they unfold. *Funny Saturday* has two different versions, each in a different language and with slightly different editing. Originally made in Swiss French, it was quickly dubbed into Turkish, and curiously enough, was screened in Turkey as a Turkish film under a new name, *Cumartesi Cumartesi* (Saturday Saturday), with a slightly different editing before it was screened in its country of origin, Switzerland. There is nothing unusual about dubbing a film into another language; after all, dubbing is "one of the two dominant forms of film translation, the other being the interlingual subtitling".[170] Although not as usual as the dubbing, the release of a dubbed version of a film in another country even before the screening of the original version, though rare, is not unprecedented. What is unusual, however, is the strategy Okan employed during the dubbing process, which exceeds the conventional limits of linguistic film translation practices. Okan not only translates the dialogue of the film from one

language to another, but completely rewrites some of these dialogues in a way that some of the characters gain qualities which they do not possess in the original version of the film. In this way, Okan does not merely translate the film into Turkish, but *Turkifies* it.

Given this unorthodox experiment, my main aim in this chapter is to find answers to the following questions: How do these two different versions of the same film compare to one another, and, if any, what is the significance of this Turkification experiment for Okan's cinema? In order to find answers to these questions, I will discuss how the film can be read differently from the angles of different national cinemas, as well as from the transnational cinema perspective. To achieve this, after providing general background information about the film, I will first approach *Funny Saturday* as a Swiss film. By considering *Funny Saturday* as a French-language Swiss film, in dialogue with international comedies such as American and French slapstick films made by directors like Agnes Varda and Jacques Tati, Czech New Wave films, and sociopolitical satires by Claude Goretta and Luis Buñuel, my first aim is to read Okan's film as a critique of the Western sociopolitical system, society, and its bourgeoisie. My second objective in this chapter is to discuss if and how the deliberately Turkified version of the film can be read as a commentary upon Turkish society. And finally, as a third step, I will focus on the differences between the two versions, arguing that the Turkified version of the film sheds another light on the original French version.

A Saturday Observation

Funny Saturday is a single-director episode film: a feature-length film, which is composed of more than one autonomous segment that share thematic and stylistic elements.[171] It follows several short and interconnected events that develop around a young heterosexual couple. These short stories are designed and constructed in a way that, if any of them were to be taken out of the film's context, they could function independently as short

films themselves. In other words, *Funny Saturday* is an intertwined collage of short films. In his book *Omnibus Films: Theorizing Transauthorial Cinema*, David Scott Diffrient classifies films like *Funny Saturday* as anthology films. An anthology film is an episode film "made up of many stories yet helmed by a single director", and as such, anthology film is different from an *omnibus* film that is also an episode film but "made up of many directors".[172] Okan's film is one of the rare examples of anthology films in the cinema history of Turkey. In the only available source focusing explicitly on the subject, without mentioning Okan's film, Orhan Ünser traces only six other single-director anthology films in the country's cinema history, which he refers to as "films with more than one story".[173] The anthology film is a rare type of film also in Swiss cinema. Aside from *Funny Saturday* itself, I could only find four other feature anthology fictions in Swiss cinema catalogues: *Traumland* (2013), *A Quintet* (2014), *Les Ponts de Sarajevo* (2014), and *Heimatland* (2015). Given that all of these films were made much later than Okan's film, there is a reasonable possibility that *Funny Saturday* might be Switzerland's first anthology film. Obviously, verifying this possibility requires a more in-depth study, which falls outside of this study's scope and interest.

Funny Saturday has strong ties to literature; in addition to Friedrich Dürrenmatt's short story "Die Wurst" (The Sausage), it makes generous use of prominent Turkish writer and humorist Aziz Nesin's short story "Mu ni?" (What is This?), albeit without permission of the author or recognition of his work. The incorporation of Nesin's work was an unrecognised feature of the film until recently, as Okan consistently denied the fact since the question was raised by Nesin himself immediately after the film's release in Turkey.[174]

Okan explains his motivation behind the decision to use Dürrenmatt's short story in his film as follows:

> The thing that attracted my attention the most in Dürrenmatt's *Die Wurst* was the fact that the

> sausage in the story, which is made from the man's wife's dead body, is eaten by the prosecutor of the court. This is the black comedy in its finest. It gives chills to the reader. This is an attitude that questions everything. This is anarchism. Dürrenmatt questions the entire social and political order. This was the most interesting part of the story for me. Of course, the story needed to be further developed for the film. While thinking about it, this butcher incident happened in Switzerland. A butcher, for real, goes nuts, like in the film, and stabs some people but the charcuterie continues to stay open that day as if nothing has happened. This was shocking to me. It was like a Dürrenmatt story. That is why I decided to develop the original story in this direction.[175]

Like Dürrenmatt, Nesin is known for his critical, dark, and satirical works, and he is considered to be one of the greatest dark humorists of Turkish language literature. In his works, which are overwhelmingly concerned with small glitches in daily life, Nesin uses these seemingly insignificant occurrences to generate sharp social and political critique and commentary. Okan acknowledged that although Nesin is one of the authors he adores the most, he made a mistake by not asking his permission or giving him credit, because he mistakenly deemed the author's work's contribution to the film as not significant enough to be noticed. Noticing his work's unauthorised use in the film, Nesin threatened Okan with legal action. Alarmed by this unexpected threat, Okan chose to deny Nesin's accusation for practical reasons, thinking that such a position would provide a better case of defence in court, in case they end up there.[176]

> I had read the story and I, of course, knew it was Nesin's, but I was not expecting such a reaction [threat of legal action] from him. I needed an acceptable defence argument in case I was sued, since Nesin threatened me with one. If we were to end

> up in court, there is a huge difference between saying "I knew it was Nesin's story, and I used it on purpose", and "I heard this story from someone, but I did not know it was Nesin's". It was such a thought that made me deny Nesin's claim. This is an incident that I am very much ashamed of, and I will always be.[177]

In a recently published book, Okan states that he is going to add an acknowledgement of Nesin and his work to the credits of the film, which he is preparing for a new DVD release.[178]

A Comedy *In-Between*

Like his debut film, Okan's *Funny Saturday* is a fluid film that oscillates between the genre conventions of absurd, dark, slapstick comedy, and thriller. As the title of the film, *Funny Saturday*, and its playful soundtrack give away, the film's dominant mode is comedy. The film's soundtrack is dominated by piano piece and is reminiscent of the kind of music typically used in the vaudevilles and slapstick films of the 1920s and 30s. Given that, just like vaudevilles, *Funny Saturday* has a fragmented structure, the soundtrack gives the impression that it is a deliberately chosen one. The soundtrack, which was composed specifically for the film by prominent composer Vladimir Cosma, who is known for music he made for comedy films, serves at least two different functions in the film. While, on one hand, it defines the mood and sets the tone of the film, on the other hand, the soundtrack establishes continuity in the anthology film, which moves back and forth between the independent episodes.

Dark comedy and slapstick are two distinct sub-genres of comedy which *Funny Saturday* utilises to achieve its humorous effect. One can observe dark comedy elements especially in the episode revolving around the adventures of a butcher. The episode opens with a scene in court during a trial. The scene is the part of the film that is admittedly adapted from Dürrenmatt's short story. Dürrenmatt's extremely short work centres around a brief moment in a courtroom during a trial of a man

who is accused of murdering his wife and making a sausage of her dead body. Okan integrates the story into the film as one of its episodes, both by adding new components to the story, and by placing the story into a new network of events. He reimagines Dürrenmatt's vaguely defined character as a butcher. Neither this nor most other features seen in the episode exist in Dürrenmatt's original work.

In the opening scene of the episode, the butcher is seen sitting on the defendant's seat in a courtroom. In a serious manner, but with exaggerated gestures and movements, the prosecutor explains the crime to the audience that is present in the room. The audience is made up of locals, who will later reappear in the film in different roles. Observing the prosecutor's request, an usher brings a giant sausage to the room, which is supposedly made of the butcher's wife's remains, and places it on the prosecutor's desk. A tension building music accompanies the usher's delivery of the sausage.

The scene has a dark and depressive atmosphere; the mise-en-scène of the room in which the hearing takes place greatly contributes to this feeling. It is a room with a high ceiling and dark walls, and it is decorated with dark, heavy-looking wooden furniture. A short clip inserted into the scene, however, unexpectedly interrupts the development of this depressive atmosphere, and disorients the audience. In the insert, the butcher and his overweight wife are seen walking through parks, riding a pedal boat, and spending time together outdoors. Judging from the wife's changing outfits, the insert suggests that it is a collection of footages taken at different times and places. In addition to the interruption it causes in the dramatic development, the insert also upsets the temporal and spatial continuity of the episode. This fact adds a level of uncertainty and dreamy feeling to the insert. In the clip, the butcher always seems to be thoughtful and serious, while his wife is childish and joyful. She is constantly depicted while eating something, and there is something unpleasant in the way that the eating is portrayed, it evokes a feeling of disgust. She is shown several times insistently offering

whatever she eats to the butcher; the butcher, however, never accepts. The couple never talks; they communicate through exaggerated gestures and facial expressions, and this gives the footage a funny, almost caricature-like atmosphere. This atmosphere is underlined, and, to some degree, created by playful non-diegetic music accompanying the insert in the background. The mood of the insert constitutes a stark opposition to the atmosphere of the courtroom. Okan does not allow the playful mood of the insert to take over the episode; he immediately returns to the dark and depressive courtroom. However, after the insert, the courtroom does not seem to hold the same depressive atmosphere. This is made clear by the reactions of the butcher to the accusations of the prosecutor. After listing his accusations, the prosecutor asks the butcher if there is anything that he wishes to say or add. The butcher hesitantly stands up and utters: "I am sorry, I will not do it again". This answer adds an absurd layer to the scene.

The courtroom scene is one of the scenes of the film in which dark comedy features are clearly visible. First of all, the scene takes place in a setting that is an unusual place for comedy. A courtroom, especially during a trial of a murder case, offers nothing comic in its nature. Like the location, death or murder, especially the one referred to in the scene, which suggests excessive violence and elements of torture, are considered among the least suitable subjects for comedy. Okan succeeds in transforming this seemingly unsuitable subject into a dark comedy. The butcher's absurd reactions, hesitant movements, and the footage inserted into the scene enable him to achieve this. Okan's treatment of the subject, due to its confusing signals, disorients the viewer more than it shocks them. On one hand, the scene revolves around a violent murder case; yet on the other, it presents this matter in a manner that is incompatible with the seriousness of the crime. The scene goes even further and disorients the viewer about the very plausibility of the events unfolding on the screen. This is because in one of the shots following the court scene, the butcher is seen waking up from a dream in his bed

with his wife sleeping beside him. The inclusion of such a shot makes it uncertain whether the court scene was one of the butcher's dreams or real.

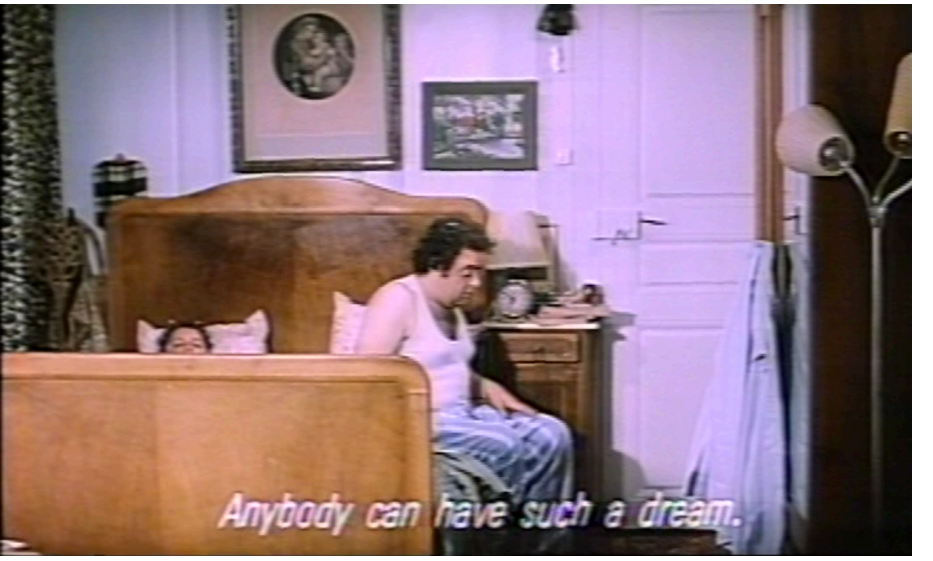
Due to this uncertainty, and the disharmony it contains, the court scene, at first sight, gives the impression of the grotesque, especially if one takes Andrew Stott's definition of the grotesque into account.

> The grotesque is a form of exaggerated and ambivalent social commentary produced by the violent clash of opposites, especially those that are comic and terrifying, existing in a state of unresolved tension. The site of the grotesque clash is the human body, resulting in deeply ambiguous and divided reactions to the horror of corporeality and oneself as an organism. (…) The grotesque (…) is a humorous mode that aims to produce an ambiguous feeling pitched somewhere between pleasure and disgust.[179]

Although the uncertainty and the disharmony provide reasonable ground to look for the grotesque in the film, as both Thomson and Stott point out, these elements are not enough to identify the grotesque in a narration, but the unresolved conflict/tension is.

Obviously, neither the episode nor the film, in general, contains any unresolved conflicts. On the contrary, they clearly and quickly evolve into comedy. In this respect, *Funny Saturday* distinguishes itself from Okan's previous film, as the debut film does not provide any clear resolution of conflicts, and, though it features comic elements, does not evolve into a comedy.

André Breton observes that dark comedy is "hemmed in by too many things, including stupidity, sceptical sarcasm, lighthearted jokes", but it is above all "the mortal enemy of sentimentality".[180] In this understanding, a terrible situation can be turned into a dark comedy with an inappropriate response—or total lack thereof (deadpan)—from the character. The discrep-



ancy between the expected response to the given situation and the actual response, or lack thereof, is what is considered funny in dark comedy. In the case of the grotesque, the central concern is the deliberately inconclusive exploration of the relationship between horror and humour. The principal aim of this exploration, as is the case in the above-described scene, is to disorient the viewer regarding the viewing attitude s/he should adopt. It can be said that, while dark humour is concerned with the response of the characters to a tragic situation, the grotesque is rather concerned with the viewing attitude of the audience.

Wes D. Gehring observes that the dark comedy, like the grotesque, was influenced by the post-World War II philosophy of existentialism. Influential figures of the movement like Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Heidegger "posit that man is alone in a godless irrational world".[181] Similar to existentialist influences, another school of thought, absurdism, which shares a common theoretical template and concepts with existentialism, has also influenced dark comedy. According to Albert Camus, who brought absurdism into prominence, the absurd is a result of the

realisation that the world is not a rational place. "Man stands face to face with the irrational. He feels within him his longing for happiness and for reason. The absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world", Camus writes.[182] According to Gehring, this irrational and "absurd world, where the individual counts for very little" is one of the main themes of the dark comedy along with the themes of the "awful finality of death", and "man as beast".[183] Gehring observes that the absurd in dark humour "is usually presented in two ways—through the chaos of an unordered universe and through the flaws of mortal man. The first and most fundamental simply has man being victimised for merely trying to exist".[184]

In the later scenes of the episode revolving around the butcher, Okan increases the dosage of visible violence while managing to keep his dark comedy attitude intact. In one of these, the butcher arrives at his workplace, which he shares with several other unhappy, robot-like colleagues. He joins his workmates in their alienating, repetitive tasks, as they cut big chunks of meat into smaller pieces. Even though they all stand and work around the same desk, none of them talks. The butcher looks unhappy and thoughtful. After a while, the workers, except one worker and the butcher, leave the desk to fulfil some other tasks in the workplace. The colleague with whom the butcher is left is big and fat, just like the butcher's wife. The butcher and his colleague continue to cut big chunks of meat. They still do not talk. At one point, the butcher accidentally touches his colleague's arm with his sharp knife. His overweight colleague startles and starts to yell at him. The butcher does not say anything; he just looks at his colleague with an expressionless face. The fat man keeps yelling at him but nothing changes in the butcher's face. This goes on for some time, until the butcher suddenly and unexpectedly stabs his colleague with the big knife. The stabbed worker, screaming in pain, slowly falls on his knees and disappears from the unmoving frame. The butcher, showing no emo-

tions, stabs his colleague several more times. Another worker, a woman, runs to the help of the stabbed worker after hearing the screams, and he quickly stabs her, too. She too utters a scream before falling on the ground. The woman's scream reaches other parts of the workplace, where customers wait in a queue to purchase products. Hearing the scream, everybody in the shop freezes for a short moment until one of the workers behind the counter leaves his position and walks into the part of the workshop where the scream came from. He slowly walks down the stairs, only to find the bodies of his colleagues lying on the floor, covered in blood. The murderous butcher is nowhere to be seen. At that moment, a door slowly opens behind the man. The worker turns towards the door but cannot see anybody. He slowly walks towards the door. His steps echo in the narrow walkway surrounded with tile-covered walls. The echoing sound of the worker's footsteps and his slow, hesitant movements build up the tension. This part of the scene gives the impression of a horror movie. The worker hears a sudden noise coming from behind

and quickly turns around. As soon as he does so, the butcher stabs him, too. The worker slowly falls on his knees, then to the floor. The murderous butcher is seen standing motionless. He looks at the camera and utters the same words, those he uttered in the court scene: "I am sorry".

Unlike the court scene, in this later scene, the murder and the violence is not left to the imagination of the viewer; on the contrary, they are visualised in detail. This visualisation makes it even harder to generate comedy from the situation. Nonetheless, Okan manages to achieve comedy in this situation by making the butcher repeat the same absurd reaction that he gave in the court scene. The clear discrepancy between the gruesome violence displayed in the scene, and the deliberate display of a lack of emotion in the butcher's excuse, creates the absurd humour in the scene. Interestingly, by making the butcher repeat his excuse, and thus establishing a connection to the court scene, Okan disorients the audience even further regarding the plausibility of the events unfolding on the screen. The court scene was signalled to be a dream of the butcher by the shots that followed. In this scene too, the viewer is left uncertain in determining whether this murder scene is yet another dream of the butcher.

Exaggerated acting by an all-amateur cast is another feature of the film that helps the scene, and the film in general, to establish its dark comedy feeling. Exaggerated acting is the polar opposite of a deadpan reaction, which the butcher shows in his excuse, but it creates a similar humorous effect due to the discrepancy it creates to the expected reaction. There are two reasons that enable one to conclude that these exaggerated acting performances are the result of a deliberate choice rather than incompetent directing. The first reason is the near-flawless acting performances in the director's debut film, which also features nearly all amateur actors. This clearly shows that Okan is perfectly capable of working with amateur actors. The second reason is that these exaggerated acting performances open the way for the film to employ conventional slapstick elements, which will appear in later parts of the film. A similar observation

concerning the exaggerated acting performances can be made for the filmmaker's previous film, *The Bus*, especially regarding the episode that follows the driver in Hamburg.

In *Funny Saturday*, Okan uses some of the oldest and, arguably, by far the most recognisable and distinct elements of early slapstick cinema, namely running and chasing, which, for instance, were utilised persistently by filmmakers like George Nichols, Mack Sennett, and Henry Lehrman in the 1910s in films revolving around fictional characters called The Keystone Cops. Running and chasing are two of the earliest slapstick elements featured in film, which are not adopted from theatre or other performance forms that predate cinema. This is because, as physical performances, running and chasing are not suitable for the limited physical space of the theatre stage. Given this fact, it can be argued that slapstick achieved through running and chasing is uniquely cinematic because it could come into existence only after the invention of the film camera that is able to follow the characters in larger spaces than a theatre stage. Okan not only uses these characteristically cinematic elements, but does so in a way that the film's approach to slapstick recalls the slapstick films of the early periods of cinema history. This is most obvious in the scene in which the murderous butcher chases his boss in the street of Neuchâtel with a knife in his hand.

The scene opens with the butcher's entry into the part of the charcuterie where the customers wait, after killing three of his co-workers, with a big bloody knife in his hand. The customers panic and flee the place upon seeing the knife-wielding butcher in his blood-covered work gear. The butcher approaches the counter behind which only his boss is standing. He walks toward his boss, directing the knife at him. Trying to keep distance, the boss first slowly backs away, then unexpectedly turns around and starts running. After fleeing the shop, he continues to run in the streets. The butcher runs after him. After chasing his boss through several public squares and crowded streets, the butcher gets tired and stops. Seeing him stop, his boss stops as

well, and starts watching him from a safe distance. After a little rest, the butcher starts running again, so does the boss. The chasing scene is projected at a higher speed than the rest of the film, so that the actions appear much faster than they would be in normal life. This manipulation in the projection speed creates a chasing scene that is clearly reminiscent of the slapstick comedies of early film history. The slapstick feeling in the scene is also supported by the non-diegetic music played in piano accompanying the scene.


Higher projection speed and background music played in piano, along with black-and-white images, were some of the standard features of the early slapstick comedies. Almost all of these components came into existence out of necessity rather than a deliberate aesthetic or artistic choice. In the early days of cinema, neither recording nor projection devices had a standardised frame rate. Different device manufacturers had been using different frame rates. In addition to this, these recording and projection devices were operated not with electric motors, or any other technology that would provide a constant frame rate in their operations, but with hand cranks. This reality made it an almost impossible task to achieve the frame rates that were designated as the standard by manufacturers. This lack of frame rate standard gave birth to a particular film aesthetic, which is associated with the comedy films of the early film history. These comedy films were often projected in higher frame rates than

their intended rates used during the recording, causing the characters and objects appear to be moving faster than they would do in normal life.

In the early days of cinema, or more precisely, until Alan Crosland's 1927 film *The Jazz Singer*, films were recorded without sound. This was due to the lack of technology that would provide synchronised sound in film recordings. However, these 'silent' films were very rarely silent in their projections. Since the very early days of cinema, films were screened almost always with accompanying music either played live during the projection, or played from sound recording devices such as a gramophone. Violin, piano, and organ were among the most common instruments played during the screenings. Due to this very fact, the background music played on a piano has been strongly associated with these early comedy films.

In his article "Pie and Chase: Gag, Spectacle and Narrative in Slapstick Comedy", Donald Crafton observes that the slapstick gag—whether it is in the form of pie-throwing, stepping on a banana peel, or chasing—refuses to integrate into the narrative of the film.[185]

> One way to look at narrative is to see it as a system for providing the spectator with sufficient knowledge to make causal links between represented events. According to this view, the gag's status as an irreconcilable difference becomes clear. Rather than providing knowledge, slapstick misdirects the viewer's attention, and obfuscates the linearity of cause-effect relations. Gags provide the opposite of epistemological comprehension by the spectator.[186]

Crafton also observes that the slapstick gag, due to its refusal to integrate into the narrative context of the film, turns what is shown on the screen into a "pure spectacle".[187] The slapstick chasing in Okan's film offers a perfect example for Crafton's argument, as the scene being projected at a higher speed misdirects the viewer's attention and obfuscates the linearity of cause-

effect relations of the episode, thus transforming the slapstick chasing into a pure spectacle without the requirement of narrative causality.

In their book *Slapstick Comedy*, Tom Paulus and Rob King observe two orientations, two "ideological stances", in slapstick's cultural image: iconoclasm—"slapstick as 'alternative', opposed to established values and hierarchies of taste"—and nostalgia.[188] Although Paulus and King make their observations based on American slapstick films, these two orientations can be observed in Okan's employment of slapstick, as well. Okan's use of slapstick is both iconoclastic and nostalgic at the same time. It is iconoclastic for two reasons: firstly, the slapstick in the film plays with the assumed incompatibility between slapstick and the elements of thriller and crime films, and creates disorientation in the viewer. This becomes quite obvious in the chasing scene when, at one point, the main female character of the film, who happens to be part of the crowd through which the butcher chases his boss, suddenly ends up in front of the butcher and comes face to face with the murderer. At this particular point, the high tempo music in the background immediately stops and the high projection frame rate drops to the industry standard. The disappearance of the background music and the sudden drop in frame rate create a drastic change in the mood of the scene, and establish a tension. Following the disappearance of the background music, natural background sounds surrounding the public space fill the scene. These natural sounds underline the tension even more. The butcher looks at the female character directly in the eyes, while directing his knife at her; frozen by fear, she breathes heavily. They look at each other for some time without moving. Okan shows the characters with close-up shots, which raises the tension even higher. The stand-off scene clearly recalls the classical tension building duel scenes of western films. However, the tension does not last long, as the butcher leaves the woman untouched and continues to pursue his boss. With the chase, the piano in the background starts, and the projection

speed is again increased. In this particular scene alone, the film switches between the conventions of multiple genres: slapstick, crime, horror, and even western. With this, Okan proves that although the slapstick seems to be incompatible with elements of crime and thriller, this is not the case. A similar kind of utilisation of slapstick can be found in some of the early slapstick films; this particular approach is sometimes called "thrill comedies".[189] Harold Lloyd's 1923 slapstick *Safety Last!* is one of the iconic examples of such comedies.

The second reason that Okan's employment of slapstick is iconoclastic is found in the sudden and unexpected appearance of slapstick elements in the film, which until then swings only between the conventions of dark comedy and thriller. The slapstick elements create an opposition to the expected conventions of dark comedy and thriller, and trigger continued disorientation in the viewer. The sudden and unexpected appearance of slapstick also creates an opposition to the modern comedy elements of the film, and evokes feelings of nostalgia due to the

allusion these elements make to an old comedy form.

Okan's use of slapstick elements, in addition to establishing a strong connection to the early slapstick films, thus evoking nostalgia, recalls also some of the relatively new films' approach to slapstick, such as Agnes Varda's 1962 film *Cleo de 5 à 7*. In her film, Varda inserts one of her own short films *Les Fiancés du Pont Mac Donald (ou Méfiez-vous des Lunettes noires)*, which was originally released as a separate film in 1961, into the feature film. The inserted short film, featuring Jean-Luc Godard and Anna Karina, has a different, much higher projection rate than the rest of the film. In his article "Accelerated Gestures: Play Time in Agnès Varda's *Cléo de 5 à 7*", Peter Verstraten points out that the inserted short slapstick film, through its higher projection rate, "belies the conception of temporal continuity" of the *Cleo de 5 à 7*.

> If I were to consider the original release of this short film, I would be inclined to regard this replay of a slapstick short as a nostalgic reference to the silent era of comic actors, when such accelerated movements were not uncommon. As part of the feature film, however, the projection of a short film at a speed of sixteen frames per second alerts us to the fact that cinema is founded upon "false movements", to cite Alain Badiou's phrase.[190]

A similar observation can be made concerning the effect of the slapstick chasing scene on the rest of Okan's film. One can assert that the higher projection speed disturbs the temporal flow of the scene and alerts the viewer to the mechanism behind the seemingly "natural" process and development. At this particular point, giving extra attention to Okan's particular use of the film's soundtrack reveals that when the film makes a sharp transition on the temporal plane, the soundtrack steps in and dominates the film, attempting to retain temporal continuity. A perfect example of this can be found in the court scene, where Okan inserts the short clip depicting the butcher and his wife wandering

in a park. After the insert, the episode makes a sharp transition, not only on the temporal plane, but simultaneously also on the spatial plane. The insert itself is, in fact, home to several temporal and spatial discontinuities. Through his particular use of the soundtrack, Okan establishes continuity between the court scene, in which the soundtrack starts, and the insert through which the same soundtrack is constantly present. Interestingly, in the slapstick chasing scene, Okan does not follow the same strategy; instead, the soundtrack starts only after the projection speed is increased, and more importantly, it solely accompanies the chasing part of the scene that is projected at a higher speed. This particular use of the soundtrack establishes continuity only between the segments of the scene that are projected at higher speed, and disturbs the temporal continuity of the scene even more.

Even though similarities between Varda's *Cléo de 5 à 7* and Okan's *Funny Saturday* may seem like a coincidence, when observed carefully, it becomes clear that these similarities are the reflections of a fundamental quality that both filmmakers share, namely the persistent search for new ways of storytelling. Anges Varda is often referred to as "the mother of French New Wave". The French New Wave was an influential cinema movement, which, according to Chris Wiegand, is characterised by the importance it gave to "the manner in which the movie's story was told" more than "the story itself".[191] In support of Wiegand's observation, it can be added that the French New Wave films were low (or limited) budget films that were almost always shot in location using natural sound, with highly experimental narrative and editing features, revolving around marginalised, often immoral antihero characters, and operating through often improvised plots and dialogues. Even though almost all of these features, in one form or another, can be found in Okan's film, given its concern with how it tells, as much as what it tells, it is more suitable to study the film in context of another new wave movement, the Czechoslovak New Wave, which was clearly in-

fluenced by the French New Wave. In addition to features they share with the French New Wave films such as experimental editing, low budget off-studio filmmaking, and improvised dialogues, the Czechoslovak New Wave films distinguish themselves from the French New Wave films with strong narratives, non-professional actors, and absurd humour. *Funny Saturday* shows a stronger affinity with Czechoslovak New Wave films than with the French ones. For this reason, I will now discuss the film in relation to some of the Czechoslovak New Wave films.

Inspirations From Czechoslovak New Wave

Being an immigrant filmmaker, living and making films in Europe, Okan had the opportunity to access a wider selection of films that were very difficult, if not impossible, to access in Turkey. This privilege enriched his cinema. Traces of this can be found in *Funny Saturday*, especially in the film's employment of dark comedy. Okan's approach to black comedy is markedly different from that of his contemporaries in Turkey. In an interview he gave relatively recently, Okan acknowledges this fact by stating the following: "I am a person of Bosniak origin. I have a Slavic approach to humour. The humour in Turkey has thick lines, it is rougher. Slavic humour is much more refined. I look at issues dialectically, I see the good in the bad, and the bad in the good".[192] Especially in his second film, he shows many affinities with the dark comedy films from Slavic countries, especially films from the Czechoslovak New Wave.

The Czechoslovak New Wave was a cinema movement that emerged in the early 1960s in now-defunct Czechoslovakia, and included films made by a diverse group of filmmakers over a relatively long period. Dina Iordanova observes several distinct identifying features of the Czechoslovak New Wave films:

> These include interest in contemporary topics (often tackled with documentary authenticity), the subtle humour (often bordering on the absurd), the use of avant-garde narrative and editing techniques

> (often deployed with astonishing persistence), and the attention to psychological detail (often better revealed in explorations of interactions within a group rather than in studies of individual protagonists).[193]

Some of Miloš Forman's films offer the best combinations of the trademark features of the Czechoslovak New Wave. His 1967 satirical film *Hoří, má panenko* (The Firemen's Ball) is one of these. In the film Forman follows the birthday party of an elderly head of a provincial fire department taking place in a small town hall. Members of the fire department, along with a big crowd of guests, are present at the venue. In addition to the usual traditional dances and fundraising raffle, the firemen want to organise a beauty competition. However, things do not go as planned. The participants of the beauty competition, handpicked by the firemen, are hesitant to appear before the crowd; prizes that are prepared for the raffle keep disappearing; and finally, a disastrous fire breaks out in a nearby building. After overcoming the initial shock, the guests prefer to watch the building being consumed by fire and sip from their drinks while the firemen hopelessly try to extinguish it. Featuring funny, dark, and, at times, outright absurd incidents surrounding the ball, the film generates a satirical critique directed at society, and at the so-called socialist state of Czechoslovakia. In this context, the disappearing prizes can be read as the signifier of widespread corruption inherent in the system, while the incompetence the firemen show in organising the ball—not even speaking of their professions yet—can be read as political commentary on the incompetence of the ruling elite.

Another important filmmaker of the Czechoslovak New Wave, Jiří Menzel, takes the social and political critique—subtly and somewhat indirectly offered by Forman—into a darker and more direct form in his 1969 film *Skřivánci na niti* (Larks on a String). The film follows the inmates of a forced labour camp, who are locked up in a junkyard as part of the "socialist rehabili-

tation" they have to undergo due to their supposed bourgeois and dissident lifestyles, and their attempts to defect the country. Featuring a diverse group of characters, including a barber, a dairyman, a prosecutor, and a philosopher, the film depicts the socialist country as an industrial junkyard, and its citizens as inmates who are under the constant watch of the state. In addition to its distinct dark and Kafkaesque tone, *Larks on a String* also utilises satire to deliver its critique.

Jan Němec's 1966 film *O slavnosti a hostech* (A Report on the Party and Guests) is another Kafkaesque film from the Czechoslovak New Wave film. In distinction to the previously named films, Němec's film not only uses dark, absurd, and satirical elements, but also surreal ones. The film follows a small group of friends, who appear to be upper-class intellectuals, during their picnic in a forest on a sunny day. After the picnic, the group, which consists of both men and women, goes for a walk in the forest. On the way, a suspicious-looking man with a mysterious entourage encircles the group. The man, Rudolf, asks the group puzzling questions, intimidating them with an unspecified guilt, and making the group insecure about the way in which they should react to the situation. Shortly after, the group learns that Rudolf was sent to invite them to a party taking place by a nearby lake, organised by an unknown host. Much like Rudolf, the host of the party continues to manipulate the group, forcing them to become even more insecure. Němec's film immediately brings to mind Franz Kafka's novel *The Trial*, in which the main character Josef K. is unexpectedly arrested in a strange manner by two unidentified agents sent by an unspecified authority over an unspecified crime, who do not take him away. This reference, along with its persistent pessimism, makes the film truly Kafkaesque. In addition to these qualities, Peter Hames draws parallels between Němec's film and Luis Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel* (1962) and *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* (1972) because of Němec's use of surreal elements.[194]

The Czechoslovak New Wave films are polemical in

essence. The polemical method operates on three different levels in these films, as they are oppositional, anti-traditional, and critical.[195] The oppositional and critical components of the New Wave are found in the films' ideological criticisms directed at society and the totalitarian socialist regime, while the anti-traditional component is found in the films' form, as they very often employ avant-garde narrative and editing techniques.

Funny Saturday is a product of a different country, period, context and socioeconomic condition. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to observe pronounced similarities between the New Wave films and *Funny Saturday*. Indeed, the film demonstrates all the distinct characteristic features of the Czechoslovak New Wave pointed out by Iordanova. Like many New Wave films, it deals with contemporary topics, and it tackles these with a detached style that is reminiscent of a documentary approach to filmmaking. This approach finds its most concrete form in the film's employment of guerrilla filmmaking practices, the most obvious of which is to be found in the chasing scene, where the knife-wielding butcher runs after his boss through crowds of people on the streets. Many of the people on the street appear to be unaware of the fact that the chase unfolding before their eyes is part of a film, and that they are being filmed. Okan confirms this observation:

> The mise-en-scène in this particular scene is not something we planned and controlled in every small detail. We simply made the actors run in the streets. Many of the people on the street were not aware of what was going on. (…) I do not remember the shots in this particular scene in detail, but I can say for sure that this scene was not fully staged. In fact, in that scene, I wanted to show people's apathy for each other.[196]

Another feature that makes Okan's film very similar to those from the Czechoslovak New Wave is its use of avant-garde narrative and editing techniques. As pointed out earlier, Okan's film

is a collection of interconnected short stories. The film does not follow common continuity editing principles; instead, it utilises a complex mixture of parallel editing, jump cuts, flashbacks, and flash-forwards to create a unity between the independent short episodes that take place on different temporal and/or spatial planes.

Okan pays great attention to the psychological details of his characters. However, he does this not through the studies of individual characters, but rather through their group interactions. This is another significant feature which makes *Funny Saturday* similar to New Wave films.

Beyond these important, yet rather obvious, similarities between Okan's film and the films of the Czechoslovak New Wave, the most important aspect in Okan's film is perhaps the particular way in which the film adopts a dry-comic humour, achieved through the combination of both deadpan and slapstick humour.

Like the New Wave films, Okan's film is a polemical one. However, its polemical method operates on a different level, and with different objectives in mind. *Funny Saturday* is a critical film, as well; however, it has a completely different context. The Czechoslovak New Wave films were critical toward the totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia, even though they could be made thanks to a brief period of relatively "liberal" climate, which ceased after the Warsaw Pact invasion in 1968. Being a filmmaker who made his films in Western Europe, and later in Turkey, Okan never had to deal with a totalitarian regime. Despite this fact, Okan follows a strategy that is very comparable to that of the New Wave films, and questions the sociopolitical system of the countries in which he lives and makes his films. Like the New Wave filmmakers, Okan focuses on contemporary issues and daily realities. He finds small and seemingly insignificant moments and events in daily life and uses them like loose threads to deconstruct the sociopolitical fabric. Okan is very critical toward the sociopolitical systems of the countries in which he lives, and in many ways, he likens capitalist market economy to all-encom-

passing totalitarian system. While the characters in the New Wave films are pressured by a totalitarian regime, Okan's characters are pressured by the speed, efficiency, and consumption dogmas of market capitalism.

Beyond providing the film with a surreal and absurd tone, the episode revolving around the butcher is especially geared towards generating a powerful critique of capitalism and consumer society. The butcher's workplace, the charcuterie, is exemplary in this criticism. As a workplace that transforms animals into objects of consumption, it underlines the particular production and consumption logic of capitalism. The charcuterie is a *factory* which objectifies animals, denying their dignity. It is also a workplace, where the division of labour in the capitalist mode of production is clearly visible. Every individual worker in the charcuterie performs clearly defined, simple, and repetitive tasks. The repetitive nature of the tasks illustrates the reduction of the workers to mechanical parts in a big machine, a machine that is designed to deliver certain products to achieve only one goal: the generation of maximum possible profit. As is made clear through the behaviour and expressions of the butcher-turned-murderer and his co-workers, the repetitive labour does not provide the workers with any kind of satisfaction, besides their wages. In the Marxist sense of the term, the workers are alienated from their labour, and from the commodity to whose production they contribute. The work in the charcuterie is degrading, both for the workers and the animals. The animals are objectified and turned into a mere commodity to be bought and sold. Although this particular issue is not directly addressed in the film, it is still within the critical scope of the film. One of the most stereotypical images traditionally associated with Switzerland, along with cheese, chocolate, and watches, is the free-strolling cows with their big bells in the Alps. None of these idealised images are shown in the film; instead, Okan is concerned with the brute daily reality. As he states, he "look[s] at the issues in an opposite way" and sees "good in the bad, and the bad in

the good".[197] Okan is an iconoclast who is interested in both the insignificant routines of daily life, and idealised images, as he unearths the less charming sides these routines and images hide.

The work in the charcuterie is degrading for the workers, because it normalises killing, and alienates them from their labour. In this context, the butcher's unexpected decision to kill another kind of animal, human, can be interpreted as a revolt against the system. On the other hand, this unexpected behaviour can also be seen as a temporary glitch in the machinery. Indeed, proceeding developments in the scene make this later reading more plausible. The fact that the owner wants to keep the charcuterie open despite the murder of three of his workers, and his own narrow escape from the same destiny, underlines this reading. Returning to the analogy, the owner's attempt to keep the charcuterie open can be read as an attempt to keep the machinery running despite the fact that it is missing several parts. The machine analogy is also useful to stress the replaceable nature of the worker in a capitalist industrial mode of production. They might die, but the machine must keep running. The missing parts can and will be replaced with new parts, namely new, obedient, robot-like workers.

Although it takes up considerable space in the film, Okan is not only concerned with production in advanced capitalist societies; he also addresses consumption and the consumers' relationship with the goods and services that they themselves contribute to produce, directly or indirectly, in the first place. There are several scenes in the film that directly address this issue. The film's title, both the French-language original and the Turkified version, can be seen as a reference, which establishes a contextual framework for the film's approach to consumption. *Drôle de samedi*, which translates to "Funny Saturday", and *Cumartesi Cumartesi*, which translates to "Saturday Saturday", signal a contextual framework for the film by limiting its temporal plane to a particular day of the week, the Saturday. In many parts of the world, Saturday is one of the days of the weekend,

and as such, it is associated more with consumption and recreation than production. Interestingly, *samedi* (Saturday for French) is derived from Latin *Sabbati diēs*, meaning literally the "day of the Sabbath". Sabbath is the day that is set aside for worship and rest in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. In the film, no worship is taking place, at least not in the biblical sense of the term. However, if one adopts Walter Benjamin's view, one can still conceptualise the Saturday in the film as a day of Sabbath, though not that of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, but of the *religion of capitalism*. In his short text "Capitalism as Religion", Benjamin observes several fundamental similarities between capitalism and religion: "One can behold in capitalism a religion, that is to say, capitalism essentially serves to satisfy the same worries, anguish, and disquiet formerly answered by so-called religion".[198] For Benjamin "capitalism is a pure religious cult, perhaps the most extreme there ever was. Within it everything only has meaning in direct relation to the cult".[199] What Benjamin refers to as the *cult* of capitalism is, obviously the capital. "Capitalism is the celebration of the cult [the capital] (…) Here there is no "weekday", no day that would not be a holiday in the awful sense of exhibiting all sacred pomp—the extreme exertion of worship".[200] In the same vein as Benjamin, Andrew Targowski writes that "capitalism is religion, of which the first commandment is profit (…) by any means".[201] Okan seems to share a similar position regarding the religious undertones of capitalism, as becomes clear in the scene where the boss wants to keep the charcuterie open, despite the murder of three of his workers.

While the issue of consumption is addressed on several occasions in the film, it finds its most concentrated form in the scene in which the couple visits a supermarket just before it closes. The supermarket is full of consumers who run around and compete against time, and each other, to finish their shopping before the goods run out and the supermarket closes. More than a routine weekly shopping scene, it resembles a plunder scene. Consumers appear to be ignorant of one another as they drive

their shopping carts very aggressively and crash them into other carts and consumers carelessly. The main character, Pierre, gets irritated by this unreasonably aggressive tempo, but still carries on with the weekly *ritual*. He finds a long queue when he arrives at the cashiers, and reluctantly joins it. Shortly after, a woman, driving carelessly, crashes her shopping cart to his, causing several bottles to fall and break. Pierre does not seem to be bothered much. His partner, Véronique, however, gets very irritated and quickly tries to clean up the mess. Looking emotionless, Pierre watches Véronique trying to clean the floor. She is very angry. Pierre moves his attention from his partner to a cashier woman and starts observing her. After watching the cashier for a while with empty eyes, he suddenly abandons his cart in the queue, grabs Véronique by the arm, and drags her out of the supermarket. Portraying post-industrial Western citizens as mere consumers, who are extremely individualised, and caring about nothing else but consuming, the scene provides an open and direct commentary on the craze of consumption.

In the supermarket scene, Okan questions not only consumerism, but also the relationship between commodities and individuals. An obvious marker of this is found in the internal monologue of Pierre—who is called Sümer in the Turkish version—that the viewer hears while he is in the queue watching the cashier's fingers quickly typing in the prices of the products. In the French version of the film, the character asks himself, "In the midst of this whole organisation, were we up to all this perfection?"[202] In the Turkified version, the monologue is translated as "Was humankind as perfect as the technique it created?"[203] In both versions of the film, the monologue underlines the alienation of the individual from the commodities, which s/he created.

The question of alienation is one of the reappearing themes in the film. Apart from the episode that follows the adventures of the butcher, another episode, the one which revolves around a driving school student, can be read as further com-

mentary on the question. According to the dialogues in the episode, the student has been taking driving lessons for quite some time, yet he is still not able to drive as well as required. He has failed his previous three driving exams and has only one last chance left to try. After narrowly avoiding a collision multiple times on the country road, he hits several cars in the city while trying to park. The episode can be read as an answer to Pierre's question: No, we humans are not as perfect or as flawless as the technique we have created. The automobile has "not only [been] the symbol of modernity, of modern industrial capitalism and urbanisation, of power and freedom; it [has been] also the symbol (…) of a cultural aesthetic in the service of modernity" for much of the twentieth century.[204] Furthermore, the automobile, due to its production process, the assembly line, has acquired the status of "the classic symbol of the subjection of man to the machine [and of his alienation] in our industrial age".[205] The automobile, automobile ownership, driving, and the alienating effects of driving on the driver and passengers have also been a "constant theme of much exploration, both sociological and cinematic, over the last century".[206] Okan's driving school scene is one of these cinematic explorations.

A Carnivalesque Film

Funny Saturday also recalls Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the *carnivalesque*. The carnivalesque is a literary mode which Bakhtin traces back and defines in reference to medieval carnivals. The medieval carnivals were special and time-limited periods during which the law, prohibitions, and any sort of restrictions that determine the socio-hierarchical structure and the order of ordinary life are suspended.[207] Bakhtin distinguishes four interconnected categories of the carnival and the carnivalistic sense of the world: free and familiar contact among people, eccentricity, carnivalistic mésalliances, and profanation. According to Bakhtin, "a new mode of interrelationship between individuals", which leads to "free and familiar contact among people" is established during the carnival.[208] This new interrelationship

counterposes "all-powerful socio-hierarchical relationship of noncarnival life", and allows "eccentric and inappropriate" behaviours and expressions to surface. During the carnival, a:

> free and familiar attitude spreads over everything: over all values, thoughts, phenomena, and things. All things that were once self-enclosed, disunified, distanced from one another by a noncarnivalistic worldview are drawn into carnivalistic contacts and combinations. Carnival brings together, unifies, weds, and combines the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the low, the great with the insignificant, the wise with the stupid.[209]

The carnival debases sacred texts and narrations and brings them "down to earth".[210] In connection with this act of bringing things down to earth, Bakhtin writes that "the primary carnivalistic act is the mock crowning and subsequent decrowning of the carnival king", and notes that this ritual, in one form or another, is encountered in all carnivals.[211] Even though the carnival was an event that was "limited in time only and not in space", the town square and streets adjoining it were "the main area for carnival" where this primary act almost always took place.[212]

Bakhtin defines the carnivalesque mode as a part of "the realm of serio-comical", and observes three characteristic features that are common to all genres of the serio-comical: they are concerned with "the living present, often even the very day", they consciously rely on "experience and free invention" instead of relying on legend and/or satisfying themselves through it, and these genres are deliberately "multi-styled and hetero-voiced" as they "reject the stylistic unity of epic, the tragedy, high rhetoric, the lyric".[213]

Keeping these qualities in mind, it is not difficult to detect the carnivalesque in *Funny Saturday.* First of all, like other carnivalesque works, *Funny Saturday* is a serio-comical film because it oscillates between grotesque dark comedy and slapstick that is bordering on the absurd; it is concerned with the living

present and the very day it is made, and it is multi-styled and hetero-voiced. Like a carnival, *Funny Saturday* takes place in the town square and adjoining streets, depicting the world as a place that is upside down and in chaos during a time-limited period, the Saturday. Furthermore, the film's mockery and criticism of modern capitalist consumer society can be seen as the most central act of the carnival, namely a symbolic decrowning.

Although carnival was sanctioned by the ruling authorities, and this very fact testifies to their control over it, as well as their presumption of restoration of the initial order by underlining the temporary nature of the carnival, as Bakhtin sees it, "carnival had a subversive effect, since it showed that social hierarchies were not unquestionable".[214] After all, whether it was a god, or the highest earthly authority, the carnivalistic "laughter was always directed toward something higher (…) to force them to renew themselves" by shaming and ridiculing them.[215] Perhaps, not many things offer an example to Bakhtin's point as concretely as the Czechoslovak New Wave films. The Czechoslovak New Wave films were critical films that made a mockery of the existing totalitarian system, even though they were perfectly aware that the films' mockery was not enough to take the system down. However, they also knew that their efforts were nonetheless important because, if nothing else, it proved that the system can be questioned/mocked/ridiculed using the instruments, infrastructure, and limited freedom of speech provided by the very system. In this regard, given its references to the Czechoslovak New Wave films, and its emulation of these films' approach to dark comedy, an echoing observation can be made concerning *Funny Saturday*, as well. For although it does not offer any concrete alternative to the system it criticises, and for this reason it can even be accused of being escapist, by making a mockery of capitalist market society, *Funny Saturday* nonetheless demonstrates that the existing order is neither unquestionable nor irreplaceable.

Funny Saturday and the National Cinemas of Switzerland and France

Dark comedy is a relatively common genre in Swiss cinema. One of the most well-known and most popular Swiss films ever made, Rolf Lyssy's 1978 film *Die Schweizermacher* (The Swissmakers), and Claude Goretta's 1973 film *L'Invitation* (The Invitation), are two such films, both of which predate Okan's 1985 film. *The Swissmakers* follows funny, and at times, outright absurd interactions between foreign nationals who have applied for Swiss citizenship and two cantonal policemen who are tasked to investigate these foreign applicants. Swinging between absurd and dark comedy, Lyssy's film offers a critique of Swiss society, and questions Swiss identity.

The Invitation revolves around the events taking place during a garden party organised by middle-aged insurance employee Remy (Michel Robin). After buying a new country home with the money he unexpectedly inherits from his recently deceased mother, Remy invites all his office colleagues to a garden party. Aided by alcohol, served liberally by the experienced butler hired for the party, the guests gradually start losing all their inhibitions and reveal their real personality traits, which they successfully mask during the office hours. Goretta's film, which offers a critique of the Swiss bourgeoisie, shares several traits with *Funny Saturday,* including some of its actors, such as Jean-Luc Bideau and Michel Robin. Like *Funny Saturday*, *The Invitation* creates a carnivalesque atmosphere to deliver its social criticism. Much like Okan's film, it swings between absurd and black comedy, but, unlike *Funny Saturday*, it does not feature slapstick elements. This should not come as a surprise, because slapstick is not a type of comedy that Swiss cinema is fond of. Scanning the Swiss film catalogues covering the period between the end of World War II and the production year of *Funny Saturday*, 1985, as well as English language sources on Swiss cinema, I could only find two films that feature slapstick elements. These are Franz Schnyder's 1958 film *Die Käserei in der Vehfreude* (The Cheese Fac-

tory in the Hamlet), and Karl Suter's 1959 film *Der Mustergatte* (The Model Husband). However, none of these films is really comparable to *Funny Saturday* in their employment of slapstick for at least two reasons. First of all, the slapstick elements are neither dominant nor central to the narrations of these films; and second, slapstick is not employed to generate a social critique in these films.

The dark comedy has a much stronger vein in French cinema than it does in Switzerland. Claude Faraldo's 1972 film *Themroc*, Marco Ferreri's 1973 film *La Grande Bouffe* (Blow-Out), Luis Buñuel's 1974 film *Le Fantôme de la liberté* (The Phantom of Liberty), Bertrand Blier's 1979 film *Buffet froid*, and Jean-Marie Poiré's 1982 film *Le père Noël est une ordure* (Santa Claus Is a Stinker) are some of the most distinguished examples of the genre, which are contemporaries of *Funny Saturday.* Of these films, Faraldo's *Themroc*, Buñuel's *The Phantom of Liberty*, and Poiré's *Santa Claus Is a Stinker* show certain similarities to Okan's film.

Themroc follows the reversion of a blue-collar worker, who rebels against modern society, into an urban caveman. Faraldo's low budget film features no intelligible language as the characters communicate with each other in gibberish, roaring and growling. *Funny Saturday* is comparable to *Themroc* in several aspects, both in content and in form. Like *Themroc*, Okan's film revolves around male characters (the butcher and Pierre) who revolt against the modern capitalist system of production and consumption, though the extent to which these characters go in their rebellion is substantially different. Like *Themroc*, *Funny Saturday* is a satirical film that utilises dark comedy elements. Furthermore, both films rely mostly on situational physical comedy rather than cultural or national specific humour, making both of these films transcultural narratives. Given the lack of any intelligible language in *Themroc*, this transcultural quality is much bolder.

Buñuel's *The Phantom of Liberty* is a single-director episode film consisting of several unrelated episodes that are

linked by certain characters that move from one episode to the next. *The Phantom of Liberty* is an iconoclastic film that ridicules and challenges the preconceived social norms, as well as the very notion of reality, in modern bourgeois society with the help of satirical humour featuring absurd, surreal, and dark comedy elements. Given these qualities, *Funny Saturday* is comparable to Buñuel's film in several aspects. First of all, like *The Phantom of Liberty*, *Funny Saturday* is a single-director episode film, which is composed of more than one autonomous segment that share thematic and stylistic elements. Second, like Buñuel's film, *Funny Saturday* is a fluid film which features absurd, surreal, and dark comedy elements. And, third, like Buñuel's, Okan's film is concerned with the critique of modern society and its norms, which both films achieve through the deconstruction of daily routines.

Jean-Marie Poiré's *Santa Claus Is a Stinker* is a substantially different film than these two French films. Though also a dark comedy, unlike the previous films, Poiré's work features verbal and non-verbal slapstick elements, as well. The film follows a series of bizarre events, such as an accidental murder of a man and the feeding of his dismembered body to zoo animals, revolving around volunteers who work at the Paris office of a telephone helpline for depressed people during Christmas Eve. Due to its violent and gruesome elements, along with its use of verbal and non-verbal slapstick, *Santa Claus Is a Stinker* shows other similarities with *Funny Saturday.* Poiré's film is the only one among these three French dark comedies that explicitly combines dark comedy elements with slapstick. However, unlike Okan's film, its employment of slapstick is not geared to generate, or support, sociopolitical commentary. In this regard, another French film made around the same period, Jacques Tati's 1971 film *Trafic* (Traffic), shines as a more suitable example of comparison to Okan's film in terms of its use of slapstick. *Traffic* follows Tati's famous fictional character Monsieur Hulot, this time a car designer, on a road trip from Paris to an auto show in Amsterdam. On their way, Monsieur Hulot and his entourage encounter various bizarre situations and obstacles. The episode in *Funny Satur-*

day, which revolves around the driving school student and his uneasy, and to some degree, absurd relationship with his car and the traffic, recalls Monsieur Hulot's relation to cars and traffic. This is not surprising, given that Jacques Tati is one of Okan's favourite filmmakers, whom he knew and had followed since he was an actor in Yeşilçam, long before his own directing career began.[216]

Given the similarities *Funny Saturday* shares with the films of diverse European filmmakers and cinemas, it can be observed that through this film, the immigrant filmmaker with a background in Turkey and its commercial cinema, Okan developed a cinema that is influenced and nourished by diverse filmic aesthetics and ideological attitudes. This places Okan within the context of European arthouse cinema along with a diverse group of filmmakers, ranging from Varda to Forman, Goretta to Tati. These diverse influences enable Okan to articulate a particular critique of Western European society, a critique that is informed by the realism of Italian Neorealism, the philosophical sensitivity of existentialism, the sharp political tongue of the Czechoslovak New Wave, the experimental attitude of the French New Wave, and the critical humorous playfulness of Forman, Tati, and Buñuel. This eclectic yet well-balanced articulation is also a clear proof of Okan's transboundary cinema.

Beyond Film Translation

Each in a different language, and with slightly different editing, *Funny Saturday* has two different versions: the original French-language version and the Turkified version. *Funny Saturday* was Turkified as *Cumartesi Cumartesi* (Saturday Saturday) by Okan in the post-production by a complete rewriting of some of the dialogues of the couple around whom the film revolves, and by representing the couple, along with another character, with Turkish names and im/migrant backgrounds. These seemingly small changes have significant consequences for the film, since these newly acquired im/migrant identities, especially that of the cou-

ple, alter the context of the film entirely.

Turkification of foreign films is not a new phenomenon in Turkey's cinema history; it was one of the trademarks of the Yeşilçam era. In this era, which stretched roughly from the early 1950s to the late 1980s, many commercially successful Hollywood films, such as *Superman*, *Batman, Star Wars*, and many others, were Turkified through their local remakes. This was possible thanks to the lack of comprehensive copyright laws in Turkey at the time. Thanks to this fact, there exists an arsenal of absurd film characters, such as a Turkish Superman whose headscarf-wearing mother prepares lunch bags for him before he heads to work at a newspaper office.[217]

Although what Okan does in his film is technically also a Turkification of a foreign film, Okan's method is fundamentally different from the Yeşilçam era practices. Okan's modifications of *Funny Saturday* into *Saturday Saturday* more closely resembles the Turkification practices of the pre-Yeşilçam era, which were applied especially to films that were imported from Egypt during the Second World War. During this period, because of the devastating war, film production in Europe almost completely stopped. Turkey stayed neutral and did not participate in the war, but the collapse of the European film industry affected the country's cinema directly, since the majority of the films shown in the country were either European productions, or North American ones that arrived through European distribution channels.

The North American cinema industry was not affected by the war as much as the European industry was, yet the war made the distribution of Hollywood films almost impossible. Under these circumstances, film distribution companies in Turkey were forced to find alternative ways to survive. While some of these companies started their own film productions to supply the ever-increasing demand, some others started to import films from countries with which Turkey previously had very little or no cinematographic relations, such as India and Egypt. Of those

newly imported films, the Egyptian ones gained immediate popularity in Turkey thanks to cultural similarities between the two countries. However, the Arabic language spoken in these films posed a serious obstacle for the films' access to the Turkish speaking public. Aware of the problem, film companies immediately got involved in, and successfully mastered, dubbing and overcame the obstacle in a short time. Dubbing was a much more suitable option than subtitling given the strong oral culture in Turkey, and the low rate of literacy, especially common in rural areas at the time. Moreover, in the dubbing process, Egyptian films were not only translated into Turkish but, more interestingly, often Turkified through alterations in plots, characters, and replacement of soundtracks with the local ones. Bearing these practices in mind, Okan's Turkification strategy can be said to share significant similarities with the Turkification practices of the pre-Yeşilçam era. However, it should be stressed that Okan's Turkification strategy constitutes a unique example because, unlike the filmmakers of the pre-Yeşilçam era, Okan Turkified his own film.

Given this unusual treatment and its results, I think it would be more productive to approach Okan's second film as two different films: *Funny Saturday* and *Saturday Saturday.* Conceptualising these two versions of the same film as different films is to a certain degree necessary, because the changes that Okan made in the characters alter the very context and essence of the film. As pointed out earlier, in the Turkified version, the couple around which the film revolves is re-imagined as an immigrant couple with Turkish names and backgrounds. These new identities give new meanings to the characters' relationship with the world. I will return to this shortly.

Saturday Saturday and the National Cinema of Turkey

Although comedy, along with melodrama, has been one of the most popular genres in Turkey's popular commercial cinema, dark comedy has occupied a marginal place in the industry's

output. These films are extremely limited in number, and they are mostly the product of the mid-1970s and later periods. Interestingly, Okan's own film, *The Bus* (1974), provides one of the earliest examples of the genre in the country's cinema. Apart from Okan, several other filmmakers stand out with films containing dark comedy elements. Zeki Ökten, Atıf Yılmaz, and Kartal Tibet are among the most noticeable of these filmmakers. Despite the fact that they contain some elements of dark comedy, films of these directors are typical Yeşilçam films. Dark comedy elements do not occupy a central position in these films; they are only found in the sidelines. Kartal Tibet's 1981 film *Davaro* is one such example. It is a comedy that revolves around the heterosexual love story of a villager, Memo, and his childhood sweetheart, Cano. Memo and Cano want to marry, but the lovers are not permitted to do so by Cano's parents, who demand an astronomical sum from Memo for giving their permission. Upon his return from Germany, where he temporarily worked to gather the necessary sum, Memo learns that he has to face a bigger problem than gathering the money before he can marry Cano: a long-lasting blood feud. Memo has to kill a fellow villager, Sülo, according to the rules of the blood feud. Memo rejects the idea, and instead, he masterminds a plot with Sülo according to which Memo shoots Sülo in the village square with tampered ammunition, and Sülo pretends to be shot and dead. After the duel, Memo, along with other villagers, bury Sülo in a grave in which Memo and Sülo previously installed a piping system, to allow Sülo to breathe while in the coffin buried underground. As expected in a comedy film, things quickly get out of control when Memo and Sülo come to notice that they failed to take the religious practices governing the burial ceremony into account. After a series of funny and absurd events Memo realises his dream and marries Cano without murdering Sülo at the end of the film. The film addresses the very serious issues of blood feud, death, and religious rituals with a comic treatment, using dark comedy elements.

Although Tibet's and several other filmmakers' films

make it possible to assert the existence of a dark comedy vein in Turkey's popular commercial cinema, these films differ from *Saturday Saturday* significantly in their approach to cinema in general, and dark comedy in particular. These films carry all the standard features of the typical Yeşilçam film of that period. Like many other Yeşilçam productions of the time, they centre around heterosexual love stories and have happy endings after following classical, often linear, narrations. Like other Yeşilçam films, these films are products of the unique financing and distribution system of *Regional Enterprise System.* As explained in the previous chapters, this unique system gave the audience almost total control over the content of films. This financial reality, in combination with the strict censorship regime, which was in force until 1986, limited these films in their approach to taboo subjects, and forced them to be shy in their use of black comedy. In this context, one can mark 1986 as the year that brought a visible change to popular commercial cinema's approach to dark comedy in Turkey. In that year, the strict censorship regime, which was in force since 1939 without significant change, was abolished. This important development immediately found its reflection in cinema. Zeki Ökten's 1986 film *Davacı* (The Plaintiff) is an early manifestation of this. Ökten's film focuses on the story of a villager and his neighbour in their endless struggle with the justice system and bureaucracy after one of them sues the other over a rather small dispute. *The Plaintiff* offers a very direct and sharp critique of until-then taboo subjects, like the state and its slow, corrupt, and overblown bureaucratic justice apparatus. It combines comedy with Kafkaesque elements. Such a film, featuring sharp critique directed at the political and bureaucratic establishment, was inconceivable before the abolishment of the censorship.

As much as dark comedy, slapstick occupies a considerable space in *Saturday Saturday*. Okan's approach to slapstick is markedly different than those of other Turkish filmmakers who employed slapstick in their films. Like in many other national cinemas, slapstick was one of the earliest comedy forms to

emerge in the cinema of Turkey. Semih Evin's 1950 film *Sihirli Define* (The Magical Treasure) is one of the earliest feature films made in the country featuring slapstick elements. It is a comedy that follows the story of two friends in their search for a hidden treasure. İsmail Hakkı Dümbüllü, the legendary actor of the traditional Tulûat theatre—a kind of improvisational theatre with national roots—is one of the main actors in the film. On several occasions, Dümbüllü and his friend perform theatrical acts that heavily rely on exaggerated physical movements and gestures. Like in many other slapstick comedy films, running, chasing, falling, and fights are the central instruments generating comedy in the film. One must note, however, that the slapstick in the film is more the result of the application of Tulûat theatre's classical features to cinema than the imitation of European or American slapstick films. Given the fact that the traditional Tulûat theatre in its core relies heavily on exaggerated gestures and facial expressions, performing these kinds of acts in front of a film camera creates a unique kind of slapstick with national connections.

Apart from Dümbüllü films—there are more than twenty-five of them—which, in essence, are an extension of the Tulûat theatre into cinema, there are other films in Turkey's cinema history that employ slapstick elements in a comparable fashion to European and American slapstick films. Nuri Ergün's *Cilalı İbo Casuslar Arasında* (Ibo the Polished Amongst the Spies, 1959) is one such film. It follows the funny story of fictional character Cilalı İbo, who tries to stop the operations of foreign secret agents in Turkey. Cilalı İbo (Ibo the Polished) is an awkward, childish, and clumsy shoe polisher with a lisp, who always wears a funny baseball cap with his name written on the front. His clumsiness and curiosity often land him in troublesome situations, but he always manages to save himself with some luck and craftiness. Cilalı İbo ends up in several fights and chases. The film relies heavily on the character's exaggerated gestures and facial expressions, along with his lisping speech and mispronunciations, to generate its comedy. *Ibo the Polished Amongst the*

Spies was a commercial success. Noticing this, the film's producer Osman Fahir Seden went on to produce a total of sixteen different Cilalı İbo films between 1959 and 1986, directed by various directors.

Following the commercial success of the Cilalı İbo series, another film series that relies on slapstick comedy features started in 1963 with the film *Helal Olsun Ali Abi* (Good To You Big Brother Ali) directed by Hulki Saner. The series follows the adventures of a fictional character, Turist Ömer (Ömer the Tourist). Turist Ömer is a very similar character to Cilalı İbo in his childishness, curiosity, clumsiness, and craftiness. Like Cilalı İbo, Turist Ömer often ends up in troublesome situations because of these qualities. The acting style is very similar, as well, as the actor who plays Turist Ömer uses vivid and exaggerated gestures and facial expressions to create comedy. The verbal slapstick in the film is achieved through the use of colourful slang and outrageous metaphors. Unlike Cilalı İbo, Turist Ömer does not have a speech disorder, and he makes no pronunciation mistakes. Like Cilalı İbo, Turist Ömer wears headgear; however, unlike Cilalı İbo's, it is a hat, not a baseball cap. This is interesting because, with his Western-style hat, Turist Ömer is reminiscent of Jacques Tati's fictional character Monsieur Hulot. Like the Cilalı İbo series, the Turist Ömer films were very successful commercially, and a total of ten Turist Ömer films were made between 1963 and 1973, all directed by the same director. In these later films, Turist Ömer, as expected from a character carrying the title "tourist", visits countries as diverse as Spain, Germany, and Saudi Arabia. In the last film of the series, *Turist Ömer Uzay Yolunda* (Ömer the Tourist in Star Trek, 1973), he even travels to outer space, as the film is in part an unapologetic knock-off of the then-popular television series *Star Trek*.

Both Cilalı İbo and Turist Ömer films are quite different from films such as *The Magical Treasure* in their approach to slapstick. These films are not cinema extensions of theatre performances; on the contrary, they use slapstick elements more suitable for cinema, which are often adapted from American and

European slapstick films. One of the most interesting examples of such an approach can be found in another comedy film made in 1963, *Tosun'la Yosun'un Maceraları* (The Adventures of Tosun and Yosun) by Nuri Ergün. The film is an unapologetic *Laurel and Hardy* knock-off. In the film, a Turkified Laurel and Hardy, Yosun and Tosun, operate within a Turkified collection of gags taken from various films of some of the most popular Hollywood slapsticks of the 30s and 40s. *The Adventures of Tosun and Yosun* and *The Magical Treasure* represent two extreme poles of Turkey's popular commercial cinema's approach to slapstick. While *The Magical Treasure* uses elements rooted in the traditional national culture to produce slapstick comedy, the other prefers to copy Hollywood directly to achieve the same.

Given these examples, it is obvious that Okan's approach to slapstick is significantly different from that of his fellow filmmakers in Turkey, as he uses neither theatrical nor culturally specific national elements nor gags taken from Hollywood slapsticks. Okan's film also distinguishes itself from other slapstick films made in Turkey with its absence of any kind of verbal slapstick. This makes the film's reference to silent slapstick films of early film history even more pronounced. The utilisation of slapstick as a tool to generate social critique is another feature that distinguishes Okan's film from the films mentioned earlier, as they lack such a feature.

Differences Between *Funny Saturday* and *Saturday Saturday*, and Their Significance

Funny Saturday, the original French-language version of the film, and its Turkified version, *Saturday Saturday*, feature identical visual material. In the Turkified version, these identical images and episodes are presented with slightly different arrangements and in a different order. Though noticeable, this is not the only difference between these two versions of the same film. Both films feature voice-over narration. The most noticeable difference between these two versions is that the voice-over in *Saturday Saturday*

is more dominant in comparison to the voice-over in *Funny Saturday*. Furthermore, unlike in *Funny Saturday*, the voice-over in *Saturday Saturday* is used to explain situations appearing on the screen to the viewer. Okan states that even though it was Turkified, the film has nothing to do with Turkey or Turks: "I Turkified the film forcibly. (…) These things appearing in the film are foreign to Turkey. They are foreign to the reality of the country".[218] Okan's excessive use of voice-over and heavy reliance on the soundtrack in *Saturday Saturday* should be seen in this light, as it suggests that Okan was unsure about the film's accessibility for Turkish viewers, and he used the voice-over to clarify certain aspects of his film. Besides these features, it should be mentioned that the overly dominant soundtrack, which strengthens the continuity in the film, at times gives the film the appearance of a music video in its Turkified version.

As touched upon at the beginning of the chapter, apart from these important but rather technical differences, the most significant differences between these two versions lie in the alterations made to the characters. In the Turkified version, the couple around whom the film revolves is re-imagined as an immigrant couple with Turkish names and backgrounds. Pierre, one of the main characters of *Funny Saturday*, becomes a Turkish immigrant, Sümer, and his partner, Véronique, becomes Turkish immigrant, Ayşegül. Given these alterations, it should be noted that Okan has not only Turkified the film, but also *immigrantised* it. These new Turkified and immigrantised identities introduce new meanings to the characters' relationship with the world. Sümer and Ayşegül have a very different relationship with the world than do Pierre and Véronique. This difference can be observed in several scenes, but most obviously in the scene in which they visit a shopping centre.

In the scene, the couple, while window-shopping, is stopped by the security guard of the shopping centre with the suspicion of shoplifting. They are escorted into a room, after being forced to pass in front of the curious eyes of other con-

sumers. In the room, the security guard demands to search the couple's pockets and bags. Sümer, or Pierre, angrily rejects the guard's demand and insists that the guard must call the police if he wants to perform a search. After leaving the room for a while to discuss the matter with one of his colleagues, the guard returns and allows the couple to leave without being searched. In the original French-language version of the film, the scene generates a completely different meaning than it does in the Turkified version. In *Saturday Saturday*, the scene suggests a racist or xenophobic motive behind the security guard's ungrounded suspicion, while the same thing cannot be said for the scene in the French version of the film. In *Funny Saturday*, the scene suggests nothing more than a glitch in the chaotic marketplace on a busy Saturday.

Besides the couple, there is another character, Alex, in *Funny Saturday*, who is given an immigrant identity in the Turkification process. Alex is Turkified as immigrant Erol in *Saturday Saturday.* Alex/Erol is a philanderer who engages in relations with numerous women both sexually and non-sexually during the film. The character is performed by Okan himself. Just like the couple, Alex's Turkification gives a new and special significance to his behaviours. For instance, Erol's relationships with women, unlike Alex's, can be seen as a commentary on the deeply embedded perception of foreign, non-Muslim women common among the first generation of Turkish migrant workers. Zülfü Livaneli refers to this perception as "the myth of the infidel woman waiting for Turkish men".[219] According to Livaneli, who lived in Western Europe for a long time as a political refugee and had the chance to observe Turkish migrant workers, many of these male guest workers were led to believe that they would be welcomed and picked up upon their arrival to Germany by an imaginary "blonde German woman who would jump into the strong arms of the Turkish man".[220] Although many of these guest workers were supposedly expecting to be welcomed by these imaginary blonde, non-Muslim, European women, para-

doxically, these women were also considered to be immoral by the same migrant workers due to their liberal attitudes towards their own bodies, sexuality, and men. Ian Buruma observes that this kind of perception is not unique to the Turkish guest worker community in Europe. Occidentalists, especially fundamentalist Islamists and ultra-orthodox Jews, share a very similar perception of Western women. According to Buruma, the perception of Western women plays a very central role in the formation of the Occidentalist narration, "the dehumanizing picture of the West painted by its enemies".[221] Noting that Western women "are regarded by devout Muslims, or indeed ultra-orthodox Jews, as whores and their men as pimps", Buruma writes that "the issue of women is not [a] marginal" one, and "it lies at the heart of (…) Occidentalism".[222]

The episode that follows the adventures of Erol in *Saturday Saturday* presents a peculiar image of women and daily life in the West that is reminiscent of the view of the Occidentalists. In one scene, Erol secretly follows one of Ayşegül's friends during her visit to the town centre and the market. The woman becomes aware of the fact that she is being followed by an unknown man, but does not react. Sometime later, Erol approaches the woman and invites her for a drink. She accepts the invitation and they sit at a cafe in the town square. After a while, Erol invites the woman to his nearby apartment. She accepts again, and the couple has sex in the apartment. Later, they leave the apartment and return to the square. While they are chatting, the woman sees her husband kissing another woman on the square. She is shocked and angry to see her husband cheating, and turning to Erol, she slaps him in the face and leaves.

Occidentalism can be defined as the asymmetric sibling of Orientalism. Like the Orientalist one, the Occidentalist imagination of *the other* is coloured by sexual fantasies. In his influential book *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, Edward Said observes that, in the minds of the Orientalists, the Orient is associated with "the freedom of licentious sex" and is imagined as

"a place where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe".[223] In the film, Okan seems to mirror this very image and uses it to represent the Occident, the imaginary West, in an identical way. In Okan's filmic imagination, Europe, not the Orient, is the place where one can look for sexual experience unobtainable in Turkey, a country which is traditionally considered as part of the Orient. The episode portrays Western women and their husbands as unfaithful. This representation is reminiscent of Buruma's observations regarding the perception of Western individuals by Occidentalists.

The woman who cheats on her husband with Erol, meets her friend, Ayşegül, before meeting Erol. This meeting with Ayşegül is a well-calculated move by the director. It serves at least two different purposes: firstly, meeting Ayşegül gives an insight into her social context. This enables the director to integrate the story of her and Erol into the film's fragmented corpus. Second, the woman's meeting with Ayşegül inevitably provides a comparison between the two women: Ayşegül is an immigrant, and the other woman is not. The local woman is cheating on her husband with a foreign man, while Ayşegül loves her husband and is faithful to him. The meeting establishes an opposition between the Orient and the Occident. As a representative of the Orient, Ayşegül embodies more "traditional" values, while the other woman, as a representative of the Occident, is made to stand for the imaginary West, embodying the perception of Occidentalists. Obviously, such readings can only be done for *Saturday Saturday*. They are not applicable to the original French version of the film.

Okan stated that:

> *Funny Saturday* has no connection to Turkey. The film is a bastard film. It has nothing to do with Turkey or Turks. It has nothing to do with im/migration or im/migrants either. I did not have any such intentions. I began the film with the intention of

> making a French film. (…) I Turkified the film later, forcibly. I Turkified the main characters in order for the film to become more accessible and commercially successful in Turkey. Turkifiying the characters was my idea. I asked myself: 'What would change if the characters were Turkish, French or something else? After all, it is just a couple who lives there.[224]

When asked about the significant changes that the Turkification of the film caused, such as the racist, xenophobic, and Occidentalist undertones previously discussed, Okan expressed surprise, and admitted that he did not foresee these problematic aspects when he decided to Turkify the film.[225]

Even though he prefers to downplay the significance of the Turkification process and the marketing of *Funny Saturday* as a Turkish film under the name *Cumartesi Cumartesi*, Okan's manipulation of the characters and dialogues, as well as the timing of these manipulations, are significant. In fact, given its timing and subject matter, *Saturday Saturday* as a whole can be read as a critical commentary on the rapid political and social changes that Turkey has undergone following the military coup d'état on 12 September 1980.

On Friday, 12 September 1980, Turkey woke up to the third military coup d'état in its relatively short modern history. Citing the political chaos, economic instability, and politically motivated violence ongoing between extremist right- and left-wing factions for years as the pretext, the military overthrew the democratically elected civilian government and took over the rule of the country in a hierarchical coup. After the military takeover, the constitution and the parliament were abolished. Political parties, labour unions, and all political organisations were shut down. Thousands of citizens were arrested, tortured, and some —many of them extra-judicially— were murdered. The entire country was turned into an open-air prison. After ruling the country with an iron fist and violently suppressing all

labour movements and left-leaning oppositions, the military handed the rule of the country over to the "democratically" elected right-wing neo-liberal *Anavatan Partisi* (Motherland Party) government, under the leadership of Turgut Özal, in 1983 following an election held under the watchful eyes—and the shadow of weapons—of the military. Similar to the CIA-backed military coups that took place in Latin American countries around the same period, the military takeover brought with it a rapid and unregulated neo-liberalisation of the economy. The military rulers, and the right-wing government that succeeded it, deregulated almost all branches of the economy while privatising most public institutions. The coup d'état also had a significant impact on the social, cultural, ideological, and individual domain. As Pelin Başcı observes:

> [i]t is possible to view the cultural impact of the 1980 takeover as a backlash against mid-twentieth-century pluralism and reform-minded utopianism. Coming on the heels of the January 24 (1980) austerity measures, the coup initiated a breakdown in existing socio-economic practices through the swift introduction of neo-liberal policies. As a violent social engineering project, the takeover cleared away organized labor and social opposition in favor of capitalist relationships. It augmented one kind of competition based on rugged individualism, while suppressing another based on communal solidarity. The shift from protectionist "statism" (devletçilik) to market economy took place under the watchful eyes of the generals. This process advocated a new ethos, which combined political authoritarianism with "competitive individualism".[226]

Aiming to create a new type of human, the military junta reformulated the relation between the state and its citizens, and set the groundwork to transform the individual citizen, who had rights and responsibilities, into an apolitical competitive consumer. Sociologist Enver Aysever observes that, after this refor-

mulation, a new code of morality and immorality, which promoted being rich by any means, was created.[227] Interestingly, all these reformulations and changes have not been made in secrecy; on the contrary, they were proudly announced and defended by Prime Minister Özal on many occasions, with now-sloganised statements. At one of these occasions, when asked about corruption allegations concerning the state officials, Özal, in defence of these officials, famously declared "Benim memurum işini bilir!" (My public servant knows what is best for him/her, or My public workers know how to survive well).[228] Özal's expression can be seen as the manifestation of "state-sponsored bribes and embezzlement", and indeed, it has been perceived as a green light for wild and lawless competition in the pursuit of individual financial enrichment, at the expense of society.[229] In another of his speeches, Özal declared that "Anayasayı bir kere delmekle bir şey olmaz" (Nothing happens if the constitutional law is broken once), legitimising and promoting this lawlessness even further. The quote can also be read as a manifestation of the political and moral degeneration of the period. It should be noted that this neo-liberal transition was not unique to Turkey. This was very much the zeitgeist of the period during which the Conservative Prime Minister of Britain, Margaret Thatcher, famously declared "[t]here is no such thing as society; there are individual men and women".[230] It was also the height of the Cold War, and for that reason, neo-liberal policies were often presented with a nationalist and religious flavour. A clear manifestation of this can be found in another famous speech by Özal, in which, after announcing that he himself loves the wealthy, Özal declared that the "religion of Islam emphasises wealth, not poverty, and Allah loves those who are wealthy".[231]

Given the timing of its release, which was about five years after the military takeover, and two years into Özal's wild neo-liberal policies, Okan's film can be read as a commentary on the post-coup reality and rapidly changing society in Turkey. Interestingly, 12 September 1980 was a Friday. It can be argued

that Okan's film is concerned with what came after that particular Friday, Saturday, and the new life and relations it brought. In this context, the couple can be seen as a symbolic representation of Turkish society, lost in the neo-liberal reality, new relations of the post-coup market economy, and its chaotic and competitive daily life.

Interestingly, though the couple has a rough time in this new reality, Okan does not seem to be hopeless about the future. This is a significant change from the dystopian tone and hopeless ending of *The Bus*. This hopeful projection finds its embodiment particularly in the episode revolving around a dentist and a teenager. The episode exists both in the original and in the Turkified version of the film. The teenager is afraid of dental treatment and injection. In order to distract the dentist and avoid the injection, he asks the dentist difficult questions, for example, the chemical components of the medicine that the dentist is preparing to inject. The dentist, not expecting such a challenging question, is unable to answer. Exploiting the dentist's inability, the teenager manages to escape from the clinic without receiving the injection and treatment. The teenager first appears in the episode while awaiting his turn in the clinic's waiting room. He is seen reading a book about computers. After leaving the clinic, the same teenager is seen sitting on a public bench. An old man (played by Michel Robin) tries to understand and solve a Rubik's cube he found on the bench. After seeing the cube, the teenager asks for permission to look at it. After expressing his doubts about the teenager's ability to solve the puzzle, and stating that he himself has been trying to solve it for some time without success, the old man hands the cube over to the teenager. The teenager, under the surprised watch of the old man, solves the puzzle very quickly and gives it back. The old man cannot believe what he just saw. All these events take place before the witnessing eyes of Pierre/Sümer, who sits beside the old man the entire time. The interactions between the teenager, the dentist, and the old man, as well as details such as computer magazine and the Rubik's cube, can be read as Okan's perception of the

relation between generations and the question of progress. Based on this reading, it can be argued that Okan believes in progress and new generations, and that he is hopeful for the future.

Given the features discussed so far, one can state that *Funny Saturday* is an unusual experiment in cinema history. It is a rare film, perhaps the only one, in cinema history that was produced in one particular national context (Switzerland) using a particular language (French) before it was adapted into another national context (Turkey) and language (Turkish) by the film's director himself. This adaptation was not just a linguistic translation of dialogues, but also a significant change in characters, dialogues, and editing. This interesting adaptation experiment multiplies the film, and, in practice, creates two different films from a single one. One of these films (*Funny Saturday*) speaks to (at least, intends to) an international audience by addressing, and commenting upon, a condition that is experienced by many individuals in post-industrial consumer societies, while the other film (*Cumartesi Cumartesi*), by re-contextualising the same condition and slightly rephrasing its commentary, speaks more directly to an audience in Turkey (not yet a post-industrial consumer society at the time) about a new issue (immigration) that is not even hinted in the original version of the film. *Funny Saturday* is a non-Czechoslovak New Wave film, which contains many of the distinguishing features of the movement, even though it was made in a different country and period. It is also a carnivalesque film that adopts a serio-comical tone to deliver a social commentary.

Notes

[170] Baker, Mona, and Gabriela Saldanha, "Lip-Synchronised Dubbing", 17.
[171] Diffrient, David Scott. *Omnibus Films: Theorizing Transauthorial Cinema.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014. 7.
[172] Ibid. 14.
[173] "Birden fazla öykülü filmler". Translation mine.
Ünser, Orhan. "Birden fazla öykülü filmler"
[174] In my book based on a series of interviews with him, Okan for the first time ever recognised the fact that he had used Nesin's work in his film without the author's permission by stating the following: "Yes, this part of the film was taken from Aziz Nesin's work. First, I denied this fact because I did not pay enough attention to it. Surely, this is not the most important work of Aziz Nesin. Frankly, I did not have enough time to deal with it either". Translation mine.
Luxembourgeus. 127.
[175] "Dürrenmatt'ın hikayesinde beni en çok çeken şey o sosisin mahkeme reisi tarafından ve yahut da savcı tarafından yenmiş olması. Bu korkunç bir kara mizah. İnsanın tüyleri diken diken oluyor. Her şeyi sorgulayan bir yaklaşım bu. Anarşizm diyoruz ya, bu işte. Dürrenmatt bütün siyasal, toplumsal düzeni sorguluyor. Hikayenin beni çarpan kısmı bu oldu. Tabi ki hikayeyi geliştirmek gerekliydi. Derken Neuchâtel'de bu kasap olayı oldu. Bir kasap deliriyor ve gerçekten birilerini bıçaklıyor. Ben Neuchâtel'de yaşarken oldu bu olay. Aynen filmdeki gibi kasap birilerini bıçakladıktan sonra kasap dükkanı o gün hiç kapanmadan çalışmaya devem etti. Ben bunu hem kendim gidip gördüm, hem de daha sonra gazetede okudum. Bu beni çok çarptı. Aynen bir Dürrenmatt hikayesi gibiydi. O yüzden filmde Dürrenmatt'ın hikayesini bu şekilde geliştirdim". Translation mine.
Ibid. 108.
[176] Ibid. 127-128.
[177] "Hikayeyi okumuştum ve tabii ki de onun Aziz Nesin'in hikayesi olduğunu biliyordum ama açıkçası Aziz Nesin'den öyle bir tepki gelmesini de pek beklemiyordum. Bir de Aziz Nesin'in beni mahkemeye vermesi durumunda, ki bu yönde bir açıklaması oldu, bir savunmamın olması gerekiyordu. O cümle bu amaçla söylenmiş bir yalandır. Mahkemeye gitsek mahkemede "Aziz Nesin'in hikayesini bilerek, isteyerek aldım". demek başka "Ben bu hikayeyi bir yerden duydum ama hikayenin Aziz Nesin'in hikayesi olduğunu bilmiyordum". demek başka. O an öyle bir yalan söylememin arkasında böyle bir düşünce, refleks yatıyor olmalı. Ama dediğim gibi, bu çok utandığım ve hep de utanacağım bir olaydır". Translation mine.
Ibid. 127-128.
[178] Ibid. 128.
[179] Stott, Andrew. *Comedy*. Routledge, 2005. 83
[180] Breton, André. *Anthology Of Black Humor*. City Lights Books, 1997. xix.
[181] Gehring, Wes D. *American Dark Comedy: Beyond Satire*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996. 12.

[182] Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays.* Vintage International, 1991. 10.
[183] Gehring. 36.
[184] Ibid. 36.
[185] Crafton, Donald. "Pie and Chase: Gag, Spectacle and Narrative in Slapstick Comedy", 107.
[186] Ibid. 119.
[187] Ibid. 110.
[188] Paulus, Tom, and Rob King. *Slapstick Comedy*. Routledge, 2010. 3.
[189] Ibid. 13.
[190] Verstraten, Peter, "Accelerated Gestures: Play Time in Agnès Varda's Cléo de 5 à 7", 42.
[191] Wiegand, Chris. *French New Wave*. Pocket Essentials, 2005. 21.
[192] "Ben Boşnak kökenliyim, benimki Slav bakış açısı. Türkiye'nin mizahının çizgisi kalın, daha kaba. Slavlar'da daha ince. Ben ise olaylara tersten bakarım, iyiye kötü, kötüye iyi…" Translation mine.
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[194] Hames, Peter. *Czech and Slovak Cinema: Theme and Tradition*. Edinburgh UP, 2009. 170.
[195] De Cuir, Greg. "The Yugoslav Black Wave: The History and Poetics of Polemical Cinema in the 1960s and 1970s in Yugoslavia". 407.
[196] "O sahnedeki her şey tamamen kurgulanmış, en ince ayrıntısına kadar planlanmış bir mizansen değil. O sahnede oyuncuları koşturduk, sokaktaki insanların çoğunun olup bitenden haberi yoktu. Ama İsviçreliler böyle. Bize kıyasla daha soğuk insanlar. Birisi birisini bıçakla kovalıyorsa bir İsviçreli olaya sadece ilginç bir şekilde bakmakla yetinebilir. Bu sahnedeki planları şu an tam olarak hatırlamıyorum ama o sahne benim hazırladığım bir mizansen değil, bunu söyleyebilirim. Bu sahnede insanlar arasında birbirine karşı bir ilgisizlik olduğunu göstermek istedim". Translation mine.
Luxembourgeus. 119.
[197] "Ben ise olaylara tersten bakarım, iyiye kötü, kötüye iyi…" Translation mine.
Cumhuriyet Pazar. 28 April 2013. 1.
[198] Benjamin, Walter. "Capitalism as Religion", 259.
[199] Ibid. 259.
[200] Ibid. 259.
[201] Targowski, Andrew. *Cognitive Informatics and Wisdom Development: Interdisciplinary Approaches.* United States: IGI Global, 2010. 162.
[202] "Au milieu de toute cette organisation, est-ce que, nous, nous étions à la hauteur de toute cette perfection?" Translation mine.
[203] "Acaba insanoğlu kendi yarattığı teknik kadar kusursuz muydu?" Translation mine.
[204] Giblett, R. *Sublime Communication Technologies*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. 99.

[205] Walker, Charles R. and Robert Guest. *Man on the Assembly Line*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Uni. Press, 1952. 9.
[206] Borden, Iain. *Drive: Automobile Journeys Through Film, Cities and Landscapes*. London: Reaktion. 2012. 32.
[207] Bakhtin, Michail M. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2009. 122–123.
[208] Ibid. 123.
[209] Ibid. 123.
[210] Ibid. 123.
[211] Ibid. 124.
[212] Ibid. 128.
[213] Ibid. 108–109.
[214] Nikolajeva, Maria. *Power, Voice And Subjectivity In Literature For Young Readers.* Routledge, 2010. 10.
[215] Bakhtin. 126–127.
[216] Luxembourgeus. 103.
[217] *Süpermen Dönüyor* (The Return of Superman, 1979) by Kunt Tulgar
[218] "Film zorla Türkleştirdim. (…) Film yabancı bir film. Ülkenin gerçeklerine son derece yabancı." Translation mine.
Luxembourgeus. 113,130.
[219] Livaneli, Zülfü. *Sevdalım Hayat*. Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2007. 157.
[220] Ibid. 158.
[221] Buruma, Ian, and Avishai Margalit. *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies*. New York: Penguin Books, 2005. epub.
[222] Ibid.
[223] Said, Edward W. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. London: Penguin Classics, 2003. 190.
[224] "Filmin Türkiye ile hiçbir bağlantısı yok. *Cumartesi Cumartesi* piç bir filmdir. O filmin Türkiye ile Türklerle hiçbir alakası yok. Zaten böyle bir film yapmak için de yola çıkılmadı. Tamamen bir Fransız filmi yapmak üzere yola çıkıldı. (…) Ben ikinci filmimi zorla Türkleştirdim. Filmin Türkiye'de iş yapması için ana karakterleri Türkleştirdim. Karakterleri Türk yapmak fikri benim fikrimdi. Kendi kendime dedim ki, 'karakterler ha Türk olmuş, ha Fransız olmuş, ha başka bir şey olmuş, ne değişir ki? Nihayetinde orada yaşayan bir çift bunlar.'" Translation mine.
Luxembourgeus. 112.
[225] "Bu karakterleri Tükleştirirken o kadar da detaylı düşünmedim. O kadar da kasıt aramamak lazım". Translation mine.
Ibid. 112.
[226] Başcı, Pelin. *Social Trauma and Telecinematic Memory: Imagining the Turkish Nation since the 1980 Coup*. Springer International Publishing, 2017. 74–75.
[227] "Yeni bir ahlak/ahlaksızlık yaratıldı. Zengin ol da, nasıl olursan ol! Kartvizitlerde ne meslek yazar oldu, ne de unvan. Sadece zengin ya da yoksul yazması yetiyordu". Translation mine.
Aysever, Enver. "Vicdandan vazgeçince yaşamak kolay!". *Birgün*, 19.11.2014.

[228] Translation Davide Torsello in *Corruption in Public Administration: an Ethnographic Approach*. Edward Elgar Pub., 2016.
[229] Baran, Z. "Corruption: The Turkish challenge" 135.
[230] Outhwaite, William. *The Future of Society*. Blackwell, 2006. 17.
[231] "İslam dini fakirliği değil, zenginliği öne çıkartır, Allah zengini sever". Translation mine.