

Does Love Forgive Everything? Sexual Assault as an Attack Which Is Normalized in Turkish Television Series

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Encroachment, which can generally be defined as appropriation of the other's right, comes first as one of the most traumatic incidents among sexual crimes. When the statistical data about rape are examined in Turkey, it is seen that the ratios of rape incidents are at an extent that cannot be underestimated. The problem of rape is covered in some series which are broadcast on TV and popular among wide range of audience in Turkey. *Fatmagül'ün Suçu Ne?*, *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki* and *İffet*, which are among these series, are chosen as the sample in this study. Since it is certainly one of the important functions of media to raise awareness of the public, dealing with rape in series and films as a social problem is usual and even crucial. However, the basic issue here is how this incident is handled and what kind of message is given to the audience, who takes the main characters as model. The aim of this study is to explore how the rape incidents are covered and how the solution is reached in these aforementioned series. In this study, these three television series are examined through purposeful sampling method and also, the answers to the questions mentioned as the aims of this study are analyzed through a feminist perspective. As a result of this analysis, it has been found out that even though rape incident is one of the worst events a woman can experience in these series, it is turned into a crime that can be forgiven and the reason of forgiving is love.

Keywords: rape, Turkish TV series, gender, *Fatmagül'ün Suçu Ne?*, *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki*, *İffet*

Introduction

Violence is a devastating action which includes using force and giving harm to the other. Wars, genocides, inconceivable tortures which have occurred all through human history are the most apparent evidences of violence. When the topic is the relationship between women and men, violence appears as one of the most controversial concepts. Women, who are given a secondary position as a result of patriarchy, have been turned into an entity that is oppressed, whose body and labor are gotten under control by men and used as an exchange object. In spite of all the struggle exerted in order to change this situation, the traces of this tendency which have been transferred historically have not vanished completely. When the prevalence of physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence towards women is considered, it is seen that the judgment which has been put forth is appropriate.

A General Perspective/Evaluation on Sexual Violence

Sexual violence in broad sense, specifically, rape appears as one of the most traumatic and devastating kind of violence among the other kinds of violence practised on women. Without doubt, rape is not the

violence only men exerted on women. However, because of the sample chosen in this study, the sexual assault of men against women will be elaborated. Rape is one of the ways in which sex is used as a vehicle of threat, suppression and governance (Solmuş, 2010, p. 21) and can be defined as a crime committed by men through exerting dominance over women (Kahlor & Eastin, 2011, p. 216). Brownmiller's (1984) evaluation on rape is also striking:

In accordance with anatomy, due to the inevitable structure of the genitals, male of human kind was a natural predatory and female of human kind played the role of his natural prey. Woman, not only becomes the target of a totally disgusting physical invasion in which she cannot retaliate when it is required (that is to say; to rape someone in return for being raped), but also she can be exposed to death or injury as a result of such a merciless conflict without mentioning the condition of becoming pregnant and giving birth to a child that needs to be cared for. (p.16)

Although the invasive attitude which Brownmiller has mentioned represents the primitive ages, rape still appears as a basic problem both throughout the world and in Turkey nowadays. In USA, according to the data of Ministry of Justice, 55% of women in the country have been exposed to violence in some periods of their lives. Twenty-five percent of women in Germany, 27% in Denmark, 22% in Norway, and 71% in Ethiopia have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in some period in their lives. One in every two women in Thailand is the victim of physical and/or sexual violence (Karal & Aydemir, 2012, pp. 44-46). In the report titled *State of Women in Turkey*, which was published in April 2012 by Ministry of Family and Social Politics, Head Office of Status of Women, essential findings and statistical data of the research regarded as official data as part of Official Statistics Program of TÜİK (TUSF-Turkey Statistic Foundation) have been mentioned. The findings obtained from this study are considerably striking. According to the research, the ratio of women throughout Turkey who are exposed to physical violence by their husband or ex-husband is 39%. The ratio of women who have experienced emotional violence in any period of their lives is 43.9%. The ratio of women who have been exposed to only sexual violence is 15.3%. The ratio which indicates the physical and sexual violence which have been experienced together is 41.9%. While the ratio of physical violence is 38% in urban areas, it is 43% in rural areas. The ratio of women who have got hurt as a result of the physical violence they have experienced is 25%. The ratio of women who have been exposed to physical or sexual violence at least once and who haven't had any formal education is 55.7% and who have had high school and upper level of education is 27%. The possibility of having health problems, thinking about committing, or trying suicide for women who have experienced violence doubles at least. One in every 10 women has been exposed to physical violence during her pregnancy. Sexual violence is experienced together with physical violence in many cases; 42% of women have stated that they have been exposed to physical or sexual violence¹. Seven percent of women have indicated that they have been exposed to sexual abuse during their childhood (before the age 15). Not only women who have had low level of education are exposed to violence, but also among women who have had a higher level of education, three in every 10 women have been exposed to physical or sexual violence by their husbands. Married women are exposed to violence most commonly by their husbands. The ratio of women who

¹ Brownmiller (1984, p. 252) claimed that there have not been any reliable national statistical data about the crimes of rape and murder for a certain period in United States of America; because, the cases in which both of these crimes have been committed have been recorded as only murder. Similarly, Krebs, Breiding, Browne, and Warner (2011, p. 488) stated that 1069 women have been murdered according to the FBI data dated 2008. However, just as Brownmiller has put forth, these researchers have indicated that the connection between these assaults have not always been set adequately when there were more than one violence assaults towards victims. This possibility should be kept in mind not only for United States of America, but also for general situations as a case which should be considered.

cannot tell to anybody about the violence they have experienced is 48.5%. Karal and Aydemir (2012, p. 28) asserted from an appropriate perspective that sexual violence cannot be mentioned as easily as physical violence; therefore, there might be lack of data in this subject. In our opinion, it is not possible to mention easily about being raped in any country or culture.

According to the report of TUIK (TUSF) (2011, p. 34), the ratios related with experiencing any violence among physical or sexual violence in any period of life decrease with the increase of education level of women. However, being educated does not provide disappearance of violence totally. 55.7% of women, who have not had formal education or have not finished primary school, have experienced one kind of violence among physical or sexual violence in any period of their lives. The ratio of exposure to physical and sexual violence among women who have had high school or upper level of education is 27%. When we consider the recent period, 17.4% of women who have not had any education and 10% of women who have had high school and upper level of education have experienced one kind of violence among physical or sexual violence.

In Turkey, among many rape incidents, a one and a half year old baby's being raped by the lover of her mother, young girls' being collectively raped, rape incidents towards handicapped children and women; moreover, animals' such as dog, dug, and donkey being raped emerge as unforgettable cases which have been publicized by media. All of these incidents prove that in Turkey, the devastating and invasive feature of these rape incidents still continue just like in the primitive societies. At this point, the striking issue of these rape incidents is that the attackers have mostly close relationship with the victim. For instance, in the incident that has become a current issue in September 2012, after it has been realized that a 14-year-old hearing-impaired young girl living in Edirne was pregnant, it has turned up in the investigations that she has been raped by a group of men whose ages are between 42 and 72 and totally 13 people have been taken into custody as suspects. There is also the brother of the young girl among these suspects. According to the data that have become current issue in the General Meeting for Seeking Solution to the Problems of Women organized by KADER (SWCA-Supporting Women Candidates Association), 55% of children between ages of 5-10 and 40% of children between ages of 10-16 are victims of incest in Turkey. Fifty percent of subjects in incest incidents are the victims' own father and the others are uncles (fathers' brother), brother-in-laws, brothers, grandfathers, and uncles (mothers' brother) respectively. Seventy-five percent of sexual attackers are familiar people (2004, p. 57). The prominent issue in most of the studies carried out in this subject is that the rape of the husband or a familiar person cannot be mostly made subject of complaint; it has rather been kept secret. When it is remembered that the ratio of women who cannot tell anybody about the violence they have experienced is 48.5%, it can be inferred that the number of women who are victims of people close to them is far more than it appears. It is even claimed that 90% of rape incidents have not been reported (*AMARGI*, September 14th, 2008). Without doubt, this situation is not only peculiar to Turkey. Godenzi (1992, pp. 85-86, 88) stated that, in the year 1989 in which she has carried out her study, in many European countries, rape inside marriages was not defined as crime legally. Five in 49 women interviewed in the study have been exposed to their husbands' sexual attack, one has been exposed to rape, the other 43 women have been exposed to sexual abuse². Thirty women among 49 women, who have participated in the study, have appealed to the police

² The concepts are used as sexual attack (*cinsel saldırı*) and sexual abuse (*cinsel tecavüz*) in the translation of the book. Since the original book cannot be obtained, the difference between these two concepts is inexplicit. Hypothetically, it can be thought that there is physical violence together with rape in a sexual attack and there is only sexual intercourse without consent in sexual abuse. However, without any doubt, there is an act of violence in each case.

because of sexual abuse; only three among them have complained about their husbands. Although there has been a complaint, there has been no legal action related with these aforementioned three incidents. Moreover, two of these three women have been exposed to offensive treatment by the police. The dominant feeling among women is not horror or guilt; but being humiliated. In spite of that, the moment they have been exposed to violence, they haven't thought of escaping or asking for help. The idea that hinders them is that nobody would believe in them. Therefore, they have chosen to give in the rape they have experienced with the hope that their husbands would take pity on and behave fairly towards them. This situation has solidified the power of their husbands. Hence, almost all of the women have been victims of systematic rape incidents that have continued for years. McHugh and Frieze (2006, p. 127) stated that the main reason why women suffer is women themselves; the opinion that they would not get a beating if they left their husbands is very common. Feminist studies strive a lot to destroy the wrong judgment about these women who have been abused by their husbands. Women who have been abused by their husbands cannot leave their houses and husbands due to the fact that they do not have enough money or safe places to take shelter in, they do not want to lose their social status or be isolated by their families and friends, they cannot cope with the feeling of being guilty or unsuccessful. Krebs, Breiding, Browne, and Warner (2011, p. 487) had mentioned that one in every four women (26%) has experienced one of the incidents which include attempt of being attacked by her life partner, being threatened, being exposed to physical violence, or being forced to sexual intercourse without consent at least once as a result of the study carried out in 18 states in United States of America with 70,156 adults³. Godenzi (1992, p. 153) pointed out that attackers' choosing a woman that they have already known in these rape incidents is not a coincidence. When the attacker knows how much the victim could defend herself during the attack and then, what she could do, he could decrease the possibility of risk and have an advantageous position. Therefore, familiar women, friends, and especially wives are the most convenient people as victims. The data which have been handled indicate that variables of country and time and cultural differences do not lead to the change of violence incidents exerted on women.

Prejudices Towards Rape

Although rape is a trauma which is almost impossible to cope with for the victim, general and conventional judgments towards the rapist make the rapist have a rightful position over the victim. Scully (1994) indicated that the reasons of rape for the rapist are degraded to irresistible stimulation, sickness, and participation of the victim and all these lead to the rapist's being forgiven by suggesting that the attacker has not been responsible from his own deeds. The belief that the attacker is actually sick and there is a psychopathological case is considerably common. Without doubt, there are also some attackers who fit this definition. However, it would be wrong to acknowledge this case as a generalization. Such a generalization would put forward the assumption that offensive sexual behaviors of men are unconventional and exceptional. Thus, sexual violence would be excluded from daily, "normal" world and accepted as a "specific" kind of behavior by locating it as a state that could be experienced in an extraordinary or extreme position. As a result of this, men who have a tendency towards sexual violence would be regarded as "exceptional" and the possibility that they share any common qualities or similarities with the "normal" men is eliminated. However, the researches indicate that great number of men who could be defined as "normal" have exerted sexual

³ In the same research, one in seven men (16%) has stated that he has been exposed to the same situation.

violence extensively towards women in their lives, especially towards their wives. When the above-mentioned ratios of incest victims or women having experienced both physical and sexual violence by their husbands are considered, it could be seen that the attackers are not sporadic people; on the contrary, they are among men whom we have seen around, we have been living together, we define as “normal”, and we want to trust the most. Another striking example on this topic is the result of a questionnaire which has been applied to young men in United States of America, most of whom belong to middle class and have been getting psychology education. The ratio of the men who have answered “Yes” to the question: “If you were sure that you wouldn’t get harmed, would you compel a woman to sexual intercourse?” is 50%. The research has been repeated more than one time worrying about a possibility of a deviation. In any case, the ratio has never decreased below 50%; it has even reached to 75% (Godenzi, 1992, pp. 150-151). If we evaluate this case in a sarcastic manner; if men who rape are individuals having extraordinary impulses and qualities and suffering from psychopathologic illness, then, in most of the societies, majority of men are psychologically ill. Therefore, the attacker who has exerted sexual violence does not have to have a specific state in most cases. Scully’s (1994) words on this topic are considerably impressive:

When it is assumed that behaviors including sexual violence are limited with a few “sick” men, the cure will be sought in medication, operation, shock therapy or psychotherapy in order to “cure” these few individuals. As for women, they would be able to find a remedy “for their own problems” by keeping away from these “several mentally ill people”. As it is seen, the psychopathological model towards rape eliminates the requirement of examining and transforming the factors which could trigger sexual violence towards women in society. Another result of defining responsibility in this way is that saving men from confronting rape as their own problems... In addition to this, the psychopathological model doesn’t explain why women are the “target” of the illness affecting only men in some societies. (p. 61)

Apart from this, another common and wrong conviction about rape is the myth that the woman who has been exposed to rape has in fact deserved this or prepared the suitable atmosphere for this event. One of the widespread rape myths is that the woman who has refused a sexual intercourse based on consent has produced or caused rape. The other myth is that frivolous and infamous women or women wearing in a seductive way invite rape (Kahlor & Eastin, 2011, p. 216). The state of being exposed to rape when sexual intercourse based on consent is refused has also been mentioned by the women who have participated in Godenzi’s (1992) above-mentioned study. When women give up the ritual in sexual intercourse and refuse the intercourse, they have been forced by their husbands to perform their roles. This enforcement firstly has been in the form of verbal threat and moral warning, and then in the form of causing psychological terror. When all these have not worked, the resistance of women resulted in sexual violence; in other words, rape (Godenzi, 1992, p. 87).

The opinion that women with “certain” characteristics invite rape is quite a common conviction. This judgment is not new. It has been thought throughout history that women have “deserved” rape due to various reasons. During the Renaissance, in Italy, warriors called *condottieri* made up of noble men and known for their heroism acquired fame by raping women mercilessly at their leisure time (Brownmiller, 1984, p. 373). The Roman poet Ovid stated that he would enlist immediately on the condition that he were promised to have an opportunity to rape women from Sabine (as cited in Brownmiller, 1984, p. 374). According to researchers studying on England in Medieval period, the poems and romances written in that period put forward the idea that the first thought of every knight who saw a woman alone and defenceless was attacking her (Brownmiller, 1984, p. 376). Among lowland Indians, a woman who was not protected by a man, who had been divorced, or who was ribald and belligerent, or a woman who approached to the instruments which were kept in special

association and represented the power of manhood for the men of Munduruku people in the middle Brazil deserved to be raped collectively (Brownmiller, 1984, pp. 368-369). Without doubt, the idea that women deserve rape cannot only be explained by limiting the subject to ethnic qualities or ancient times. For example, between the years 1962-1964, when the Boston Strangler Albert DeSalvo, who was the subject of many murders involving rape and among whose victims were old women, was traced, a study group consisting of psychiatrists was formed to construct his profile. This group reached this common conviction about the victims first being killed and then, being raped: "Old women are innocent victims; yet, young women might have prepared the events they would experience" (Brownmiller, 1984, p. 260). At this point, the judgment that has come into prominence as a subtext is the possibility that young victims behaved in manner to seduce the attacker. This conviction leads inevitably to remission of the guilt of the attacker and even to the conclusion that the main guilty ones are the young victims causing the attacker to lose his control because of their attraction. Italian Supreme Court found the attacker not guilty considering the fact that the 16-year-old rape victim was wearing tight blue jean on the day of the incident and the conclusion that it was not possible for the attacker to take off the blue jean without the consent of the victim on July 10, 2008. According to the judge, if a woman wears blue jean on the moment of the incident, it is impossible to rape this woman⁴. The judgment that the woman has deserved rape is also one of the common thoughts in our country. One of the studies covered in the General Meeting for Seeking Solution to the Problems of Women organized by KADER is the study which has been carried out by Ege University Forensic Medicine Institute in 1997. According to this study, 12.5% of 50 forensic medicine experts, 6% of 85 psychologists, 10% of 100 lawyers, 17% of 80 judges and prosecutors, and 33% of 100 policemen have said that "Some women deserve being raped". In the same study, 18% of 85 psychologists, 40% of 305 judges, prosecutors and lawyers, and 66% of 100 policemen have said that "The appearance and behavior of a woman cause rape" (2004, p. 58). The statement of Professor Orhan Çeker, who is a lecturer in Theology Faculty in Selçuk University, has become a current issue and been discussed a lot via media on 16 February, 2011. His statement includes a similar conviction. According to Çeker's opinion, there is woman in the center of the problem. When a woman wears low-cut dress, it will not be a surprise for her to encounter such offensiveness. Çeker (2011) continued his words like that:

After seducing someone, it is not reasonable to complain about the result. It shouldn't be understood that I support the criminals in this topic. Certainly, the crime which has been committed is extremely disgusting. However, the impact of the woman wearing low-cut and seducing dress is so great that it shouldn't be underestimated in the man's committing this crime. The man is definitely guilty about this subject; yet, if the guilt of woman is ignored, we can take a wrong step in the solution of the issue. Both sides are guilty in this incident. (as cited in Samancı, 2011)

On the official Internet site of *AMARGI*, in the article which was published on September 14, 2008 and title of which was "Wrong Convictions and Truths About Rape", existing prejudices and facts were covered. Among the prejudices mentioned, the following expressions are quite thought-provoking: (1) Every woman has a rape fantasy; (2) If the woman did not resist, this would not actually be a rape. Moreover, sexual assault is impossible without the collaboration of the victim; (3) If the victim were not virgin, the incident would not actually be considered as rape; (4) Rape would not cause trauma to the prostitutes; nevertheless, it is their job; (5) Sexual attack happens to the people who are not aware of where and how they should dress and how they

⁴ Another point in this case is that the attacker has a relation with the mother of the victim. In other words, the attacker is again a familiar person.

should behave; and (6) Rape only happens to women who are outside late at night. Women are safe in their workplaces and houses.

Among the wide range of people including also the educated people, the prejudices that involve the idea that the guilt of the rape belongs to the woman as much as the attacker; even more than the attacker; that the incident would not be defined as a rape if the woman were prostitute or not virgin which damage the general and right judgment towards rape which should actually be acquired and drive the victims to the wall. Furthermore, the fact that majority of people who have direct relation with the subjects, and the victims of this crime such as prosecutors, judges, lawyers, and policemen approve the opinions about woman's deserving rape or woman can be the cause of rape, under some conditions, including wearing low-cut reminds us how much the social system could in fact protect rape victims and shakes our confidence.

Representation of Rape in Fiction

Rape frequently appears in plenty of fiction sometimes as the main theme, sometimes as the subtheme of the story. According to the studies carried out on this topic, soap operas and crime series stand out as genres that include the theme of rape among the television shows (Kahlor & Eastin, 2011, p. 219). For instance, it has been found out that in the detective series called *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* broadcast in many countries including Turkey and especially United States of America, 183 episodes have been on rape since 1999 (Kahlor & Eastin, 2011, p. 220). Without doubt, police department which the aforementioned series have focused on is intended for special victims and such a ratio is not surprising. On the other hand, it has been observed that in many other series, the rape of theme is frequently handled. In the search engine of Imdb (International Movie Data Base), when all the series, films, and documentaries which include theme of rape in their stories have been researched, names of 2014 series, films, and documentaries have been found out⁵. Some of them are detective series with the theme of crime such as *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*. In almost every genre of *CSI* series (*CSI: New York*, *CSI: UK*, *CSI: Miami* etc.), *The Closer*, *Cold Case*, *NCIS*, *Bones*, *Criminal Minds*, and *Dexter* stand out as series which are suitable to the aforementioned genre including rape cases. In addition to this, it has been observed that rape is a used as a subject in some series which can be defined as horror, fantastic, or drama for the young. Some of these series are *True Blood*, *The Walking Dead*, *Game of Thrones*, *American Horror Story*, *Spartacus: Vengeance*, *Heroes*, *One Tree Hill*, and *The O.C.* As it is seen, rape is encountered as a theme in many of the popular television series. It could firstly be thought that representation of rape, which is a devastating and common crime exerted towards woman, provides criticism on the issue. However, woman is mostly represented as a victim who is alive or murdered, and who does not have a chance of surviving in these representations. Kahlor and Eastin (2011, p. 217) suggested that in the stories of these series, the victim is represented as a character who wants to be raped with the ratio of 42%, who tells a lie about the attack with the ratio of 38%, and who is responsible for the rape with the ratio of 46%. In addition to this, Kahlor and Eastin (2011, p. 217) put forward that some of the rape myths including the idea that rape charges are wrong or made up of lies; victim of rape is the cause of the rape by her dressing and behaviors stand out in the shows broadcast in prime time. On the other hand, in the studies carried out to find out how these series are perceived by the audience, it has been discovered that there is an apparent and positive relation between exposure to television shows dealing with sexual attack, accepting the violence towards women, and

⁵ This result was obtained in the research made on September 22, 2012. This result will naturally change in accordance with the updating of the data base as time goes by.

expressing the possibility of men's attempting to rape (as cited in Kohlar & Eastin, 2011, p. 217). Therefore, it can be stated that the series on the theme of rape do not have plots which could serve as guidance for women; on the contrary, they tend to produce again existing wrong rape myths. In the films as well, we can frequently encounter rape as a theme. *Last Tango in Paris* directed by Bernardo Bertolucci in 1972, *Frenzy* directed by Alfred Hitchcock in the same year, *Thelma and Louise* which is directed by Ridley Scott in 1991, or *Volver* directed by Pedro Almodovar in 2006 are only a few of the films using rape as a theme in their stories. *Irréversible*, which is directed by Gaspar Noé in 2002, stands out as an extremely shocking film which is completely centered on rape. *Boy's Don't Cry*, which was shot in 1999 by Kimberly Peirce impressed by the real life story of a homosexual woman, is one of the films remembered firstly with its shocking rape scene. It is possible to increase the number of examples. In all of these films, unjust treatment, state of being defenceless and victimization of woman attract attention as an unchanging state. The characters murdering the attacker after the attempt of rape or assault (like in *Thelma and Louise* and *Volver*) create an illusion of having a powerful position. However, they deserve death or punishment by becoming criminals. Therefore, the chance of winning of a woman exposed to rape is degraded to the lowest degree.

Three Television Series Broadcast in Turkey and Three Rape Incidents

Turkey stands out as a country with its extensive ratios of television watching. According to the results of a research carried out in 2001 on 10 thousand people, 64% of whom come from cities and 36% of whom come from rural areas, 96% of women and 97% of men watch television (Noyan, 2003, p. 22)⁶. According to *Research on Television Watching Tendencies* (2007, p. 53) carried out by Radio and Television Supreme Board covering the years 2005-2006, the ratio of people throughout Turkey who watch television between 18:00-21:00 is 60.2%. The ratio of people who watch television between 21:00-24:00 is 59.5%. These data indicate that Turkish television viewer mostly watch television during the time period called prime time which has been translated to Turkish as *golden hours* (*altın saatler*) by Foundation of Turkish Language. Among the broadcasting of mainstream media, the type of television show standing out during this prime time is predominantly series. In contrast to the episodes lasting about 45 minutes in Europe and United States of America, almost all the episodes of series in Turkey last about 90 minutes. Together with the commercials and summary of the previous episode, watching time for a series reaches to 195 minutes. This implies that the viewer spends his/her time on watching series during this prime time. Although the series such as *Behzat Ç.*, *Kurtlar Vadisi*, and *Ustura Kemal* appealing to male viewers are broadcast during this prime time, majority of the series broadcast generally on mainstream television channels are aimed at female viewers. The point that attracts attention in these series is that melodramatic narrative, which Yeşilçam⁷ familiarized the viewer in 1960's stands out. The main theme in these narratives in which various intrigues and unfortunate events occur is mostly love and family. In these narratives created in accordance with female viewers' fantasies, virtuous women and men earning money in a honorable way cannot come together easily due to various misfortunes,

⁶ The data on this topic differ. According to a study called *Research About Perception of Society on Culture Policies and Impact of Media on Cultural Process* carried out by Ministry of Culture and Tourism in collaboration with research organization on public opinion called SETA, 78.9% of Turkish people watch television. According to another research realized by Ministry of Family and Social Politics on 12 thousand families, 92% of families watch television. Although there are considerable differences between these researches, the inference that could be reached no matter which data are considered is that Turkish people watch television intensely.

⁷ Yeşilçam is the name of Turkish film industry like Hollywood, Bollywood.

villains who interfere, lost opportunities and regrets. The only place in which they could find love and happiness is home and family (Abisel, 2005; Özsoy, 2004). “Although these films are aimed at women’s wishes and draw a frame for women, these are constructed within the discourse for men and created by men just like in soap operas” (Özsoy, 2004, p. 286). Even the series called *Muhteşem Yüzyıl*, which is a period series and centers on the palace during the reign of Kanuni Sultan Süleyman, is based on love relationships and romance; especially the love between Kanuni Sultan Süleyman and Hürrem Sultan, struggles between women living in harem and the intrigues despite the historical period which is inspired.

On the other hand, the striking point in these series is that they create again and again the conventional judgments in terms of gender. These conventional judgments involve the idea that woman is limited with house, family, and private space and certain stereotypes such as holy mother and femme fatale, woman as a supporter of man and frivolous woman (Dursun, 2008; Tanrıöver, 2003). On the other hand, the act of television viewing, especially soap operas and dramas bring color and fantasy to the private life of women (Tanrıöver, 2003; Modleski, 1995). Dursun (2008, p. 69) stated that in the series which are broadcast in Turkey, men are depicted as cool-headed, successful, and brave individuals, whereas, women are depicted as emotional, elegant, loyal, socially dependent, quickly disappointed, inclined to compromise, and easily convinced individuals. It is implied in a few independent woman representations that these women also wish for marriage institution inwardly. Violence is experienced mostly among spouses and close friend/relative circle. Not fulfilling a request, jealousy, rage, and anger stand out as reasons for violence.

In this study, among the series which have been broadcast since recent period, three of them have been chosen related with rape theme by judgmental sampling. These series are *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki*, *Fatmagül’ün Suçu Ne?* and *Iffet*. Among these series, *Fatmagül’ün Suçu Ne?* ended in June 2011. The broadcasting of the other two series still continues. *Fatmagül’ün Suçu Ne?* narrates a rape and the events that follow this rape entirely. This production is the series version of a film which was directed by SüreyyaDuru in 1986. However, the series have been adapted to present day, elaborated because it continued for a long time and changed so much although the general theme is similar to the original work. *Iffet* tells the experiences of a young girl after being raped by her lover. The girl who comes from sub-middle class lives with her oppressive father and sister and has taken the responsibility of the house after her mother has left the house. *Iffet* is also the series of the film with the same name made in 1982. Similarly, as *Iffet* is also adapted to present day, it has become different from the original production with many changes and details. *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki* tells the melodramatic story of a middle class family. Every character in the series has problems based on sorrowful and unpleasant coincidences. One of these “unpleasant” events is that main character Cemile has been raped by her ex-husband Ali and become pregnant. The series are based on the original script of Coşkun Irmak (2011).

The rape incidents in these series conform with the data mentioned so far. In these three incidents, the attackers are men whom women could trust, are even the men whom women love, are in love with, and who could be defined as “normal”. In *Fatmagül’ün Suçu Ne?* Fatmagül, who comes from a rural place, is an engaged young girl, is raped by the son of an urban and wealthy family whose house she works in and also by her relatives and friends.

In *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki*, Cemile is raped by her husband that she has divorced; *Iffet* is raped by her lover, Cemile. In each of these incidents, it has been implied as a subtext that the reason of rape is women’s beauty that attract the men around them. The young men who see Fatmagül for the first time tell that she will be more beautiful than the girls in the city if she wears nice clothes and takes care of herself a little. Cemile’s

husband, Ali the Captain, just before the rape, tells her that his second wife Caroline has gone; it is fate and he loves Cemile so much, he desires her, and he has missed her. In *Iffet*, Iffet is disturbed by sexual insistence of Cemil whom she meets secretly in a remote spot and she gets off Cemil's commercial vehicle. The reason for Cemil's insistence is that they will get married any way and he cannot stop himself when he comes across Iffet's beauty. Cemil manages to make Iffet come closer to the automobile by mentioning that he will tell something to her and he rapes her by pressing her head in the window of the vehicle. Again conforming with the data, in these three events, women hesitate about telling what has happened to them. Both Fatmagül and Iffet are raped when they are away from their houses and when they are alone. Therefore, the message that a woman is defenceless when she is away from home is implied to the viewer as a subtext. Fatmagül cannot talk about the subjects of the incident and what has happened to her for a long time because of the serious trauma she has experienced. Cemile cannot tell the event because of shame; Iffet cannot tell the event to the police, the prosecutor or another person around her because she is afraid of her father and she is in love with him. Cemile tells the event to the prosecutor after two months with the insistence of her elder daughter Berrin who is having law education. A woman who is called Ebe Nine (Midwife Grandma) finds Fatmagül after the rape incident. Ebe Nine is the elder sister of Kerim, who has not attempted to rape her; yet, he has not prevented it either, although he has been together with the young men having committed rape. After a long time, Fatmagül can tell the incident with the support of Ebe Nine. By the way, Ebe Nine doesn't know the relation of his brother, Kerim with the incident for a long time. When she learns about it, she gives a very severe reaction towards Kerim. She cannot accept the situation.

After the rape, Cemile and Iffet become pregnant. Cemile tries to get rid of the baby in primitive conditions but Ali, the Captain, having learnt that she is pregnant to his own child, manages to prevent her in each case. Later, Cemile doesn't want to have abortion either. Both Cemile and Iffet lose their babies because of exterior factors. It has been seen that losing her baby has caused trauma for Iffet. Both Iffet and Cemile escape from the condition they are in thanks to the wealthy men taking care of them. Therefore, the possibility of viewing a character who finds a way out by her own struggle and who can be a model and a plot on this character disappears. By the way, Cemile stands out as a character who is asexual. Before having a sexual intercourse with Hikmet Karcı nicknamed Fisherman, she witnesses his death by Karcı Ali on the day of their wedding. Although it is not shown directly in the series, it is implied that Cemile has lost her baby during this commotion. Cemile becomes a rich businesswoman through the inheritance left by Hikmet Karcı, who dies after they get married officially. In spite of her beauty, wealth, and independence, she doesn't have any relation or even intimacy with any men. The attraction between Ali and her is constantly implied to the viewers. However, it is not also possible to go back to everything again with him. Therefore, Cemile appears as almost an asexual woman devoting herself to her home and children. This aspect of the series conforms also with Yeşilçam melodramas. The myth "Woman should sacrifice herself" is created again.

Among the three series, only in *Fatmagül'ün Suçu Ne?* Selim, son of a wealthy family and his cousin, Erdoğan get a punishment and are sent into prison. Although Cemile has made a criminal complaint to the prosecution office, no legal action has been brought against Ali since there is no evidence or witness and Ali refuses the blame as well. Cemil also has escaped getting into the prison because of the intense love Iffet feels for him. Cemil often expresses that he is an evil man, gives harm to the people around him, and feels remorse because he has raped Iffet and caused all the other problems. He also repeats that there is great love he feels for Iffet underlying all these. Similarly, Ali the Captain frequently says that he has made many mistakes and

upsetted Cemile so much without mentioning especially the rape incident. Kerim also feels remorse who has not prevented Fatmagül's rape and then been made to marry Fatmagül to cover up the incident. In this way, also as a subtext, it has been implied that these aforementioned men are not in fact evil people, in a moment of forgetting their manners or due to an exterior factor such as alcohol and drug causing them to lose their control, they have committed this crime. Forgiving them becomes commonplace. As a matter of fact, during the season 2011-2012, the relation between Cemile and Ali is good although they haven't married. It has been observed that Cemile loves Ali inwardly; Ali becomes aware of his mistakes and realizes that he still loves Cemile. İffet gets married to Cemil happily after all the obstacles they have had at the end of the first season and unhappy marriages they have experienced. In any case, İffet suffers all through the season not because of being raped by the man whom she is in love with; but because of not coming together with him in one way or another. Fatmagül, first, has to get married to Kerim as a mere formality. In exchange for this, she and her sister-in-law are given so much money. Therefore, there is no real love or love relationship between each other. However, as time goes by, Kerim first falls in love with Fatmagül with the effect of remorse. After the therapy sessions which both of them have entered, Fatmagül also starts to love Kerim and in the end, they really get married. At the first night of their marriage, there has been no sexual intercourse because the remorse Kerim has not forgotten. They need time to reach this point in their relation. Unfortunately, in each of the three series, it has been implied with a message that love is enough to forget about a traumatic incident such as rape. Among these three series, *Fatmagül'ün Suçu Ne?* has a narrative which can be model in some points when compared with the two other series because of its being more reasonable, believable, and realistic in representing the period after the rape incident, its emphasis on not giving up struggle, cooperation among women even though she has received therapy and felt intimidated if we could leave out the melodramatic elements in the story and love between Fatmagül and Kerim who has been involved in the crime by not preventing it although he has not raped her and their marriage. The series have reached an impressive and relieving ending for the viewer through the legal punishment of the rapists and everybody who wants to cover up the event in the final. Without doubt, the last scene in which Fatmagül and Kerim walk on the road happily hand in hand serves to the romance expectation of the female viewer.

Conclusions

One of the kinds of violence exerted towards women which is sexual violence in general aspect; specifically rape appears as a significant problem throughout the world. The studies indicate that the subjects in the rape incidents are mostly familiar people. Women prefer to keep silent because of many reasons. Women are seen as real criminals preparing the atmosphere of rape in most of the cases due to the prejudices towards women or myths about rape. The idea that the attackers are sick or the victims of their impulses they cannot stop is one of the wrong convictions adopted generally.

In many of the series broadcast on television channels, we come across rape as a theme. It is usual that a widespread crime is handled in series and films. However, these fictional narratives mostly create the existing prejudices and wrong beliefs again and again. In each of the three series which have been broadcast since recent period in Turkey, theme of rape has been covered. Through judgmental sampling, it is examined how these series named: *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki*, *Fatmagül'ün Suçu Ne?*, and *İffet* have handled the rape incident, how the characters who are victims of rape overcome the trauma experienced after the rape, myths about rape, and whether these myths conform with real situations. As it is discussed previously in detail, rapists' being

familiar and trustworthy people in these series conforms with the rape incidents in real life. In other words, these reflect the reality. However, it has been observed that some of the rape myths that we have dealt with are produced again in these series. Apart from this, the idea that victims are beautiful and therefore, men lose their control is also used. In addition to this, the characters' being far away from their homes and being raped in remote spots in *Iffet* and *Fatmagül'ün Suçu Ne?* create again the prejudice including the idea that there are great dangers for women outside of their homes. Among these series, *Fatmagül'ün Suçu Ne?* has a more realistic plot; though not totally. The events which are in the theme of the series such as the court process which Fatmagül has experienced, her requirement of psychiatric treatment, and the support from women's movement make the series more realistic in spite of all the melodramatic obstacles. However, as it is mentioned, love stands out as a factor which makes the rape be forgotten in each of these series. Therefore, it can be asserted that all of these series, but especially *Iffet* have wrong stances. It can be suggested that education on media literacy aimed at not only making the viewer conscious, but also raising the awareness of script writers, directors, and producers working in the sector are almost mandatory. Otherwise, these series which feed their fantasies and bring "color" to the houses of women in which they stay closed will continue to present wrong models in managing their real life problems and postpone the definition of women's problems.

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