

YILMAZ GÜNEY'S MOVIE YOL WITHIN THE KURDISH CONTEXT OF TURKEY

A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT VERSIONS
OF YOL

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ABSTRACT

Yılmaz Güney's movie *Yol* reveals the situation in Turkey during the 1980s military putsch and raises awareness of the marginalization of Kurdish citizens and women. By analyzing the different versions of *Yol*, which chronologically came out in 1982, 1993 and 2017, the social and political issues within the Kurdish context of Turkey can be discussed. *Yol* is a road movie where the characters look for freedom as they realize that the prison is omnipresent because of the controlling society, making the characters prisoners of their own traditions and the supervising authorities, who fight the Kurdish resistance. The original version of *Yol* is banned in Turkey because of its political message, but in 1993 a censored version of *Yol* was approved, here some Kurdish references were left out. This censorship, which reduces the visibility of the Kurds, is partially adopted in the 2017 version called *Yol - The Full Version*. This version aimed to improve the quality of the film and restore Güney's original script with six characters instead of five, highlighting the women issue, but it encountered objections for erasing many scenes and following Turkish censorship. These different versions highlight the relevance of *Yol*'s main themes in Turkey today, where the citizens still face social and political problems.

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INTRODUCTION

The filmmaker Yılmaz Güney escaped from prison, in the same way as some of the characters from his movie *Yol* wish (Hubschmid, 2017). This movie about prisoners with a short-term leave permit, visiting their families, brings a lot of controversies in Turkey to the surface. One prisoner is forced to an honor killing, another's brother is killed making him the widow's new husband. Güney had a love-hate relationship with Turkey. Even though he showed his home country of Turkey in all its beauty, he also exposes political and social issues, such as the oppression of women, violence as an answer to social conflicts and the ubiquity of military control. *Yol* makes one think about Turkey's political context and about the Kurdish citizens of Turkey, as it was produced during the times of the 1980s military putsch in Turkey. The first version of *Yol* premiered at the Festival of Cannes in 1982 and won the Golden Palm (Festival de Cannes, 2018). After the big success there was a lack of time and money to reedit the movie. In its original state, there is a 4-second long vignette with the writing "Kürdistan". This caused controversy, since Kurdistan ("Kürdistan" in Turkish) is not officially a recognized state, even though 19% of the Turkish population is Kurdish (Statista, 2019). Because of this and other political issues, *Yol* was banned in Turkey and only in the 1990s was a censored version approved in Turkey (Sengul, 2013, p. 240-246). The Kurdistan-vignette had been erased and even now the original version hasn't been broadcasted in Turkey, making *Yol*'s story about repressive Turkey still valid today (Jungen, 2017, 11 May). One year after the failed military putsch of 2016, a restored version of *Yol* premiered in Cannes, called *Yol - The Full Version*. This movie was less successful and caused negative critiques: "The structure has been changed, and with new voiceovers, it's almost like the film edited by Yılmaz Güney in 1982 has been tampered with. Especially the removal of the "Kurdistan" vignette [...] is surprising and suspicious" (Güler, 2017, 23 May).

To show today's relevance of this subject, I asked on my social media if somebody knows both Kurdish and Turkish. Soon this private message came: "I know only Turkish, I am Turk. But let me ask something. Why do you spend your life with Kurdish and about this nonsense movies? [...] So, do you like and support Kurdish people as I see." An old acquaintance of mine also wrote me: "Why Kurdish? I don't understand the fascination of Kurds by Europeans, what you did is really heartbreaking." Still today Kurds cannot be seen as welcome in society. The Turkish and Kurdish political context have to be understood to comprehend the different versions of *Yol*. In Turkey, Kurdish is not recognized as an official language and face a lot of restrictions. Furthermore, Turkey's anti-terrorism operations can be seen as anti-Kurdish, portraying Kurds as terrorists (Casier, Jongerden & Walker, 2011, p. 103–127). Within Turkish media Kurds don't receive a voice either, but their voice grows through cultural productions such as film (Koçer, 2014, p. 482). The Kurdish focus on their visibility and express this through the Kurdish language or political subjects.

How are the different versions of the movie *Yol* related to the social and political issues within the Kurdish and Turkish context? Therefore, I pay particular attention to the production, text and reception of *Yol*. This paper, first, gives an overview of the Kurdish social and political context in Turkey; after that, an introduction of the Turkish cinema scene, with a closer look on censorship and thereafter, the Kurdish cinema is discussed and a review of the *Yol*'s playwright Yılmaz Güney is given. In addition to the background information, I discuss my research methodology for the three different versions *Yol*, which came out in 1982, 1993 and 2017. Firstly, the production context is discussed, then the reception and textual analysis which are linked to the main themes: the Kurdish question of Turkey, the representation of women and the omnipresent prison. Lastly, the results are compared and critically analyzed to find a solution to the research question.

THE KURDISH CONTEXT OF TURKEY

“The nation has united as individuals
instead of being united by religion and as adherents of sects [religious orders];
now they are held together only by the bond of Turkish nationality”¹

This is a statement by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the *founding father* of the Republic of Turkey (Mutlu & Koçer, 2012, p. 71-72). Atatürk and his party CHP, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (English: The Republican People's Party), strived for a Turkish identity separate from Islam with the foundation of the Republic of Turkey on October 29th, 1923 (Koçer, 2012, p. 7)². The Republic of Turkey would be a secular and western country, opposing itself to the Ottoman Empire with its oriental identity and religion (Mutlu & Koçer, 2012, p. 71-72). Turkish identity would consist of people with the same ethnical origin, culture and language.

The issue of Kurdistan in Turkey plays around nationalism (van Bruinessen, 1992, p. 267-275). Kurdish nationalism only developed in the end of the 20th century, even though Kurds never completely united against a foreign enemy and fought each other. During the Ottoman Empire, multiple ethnic groups were represented in different states and could inhabit the same territory, however many different ethnicities were given a de facto autonomic position (Ozfidan, Burlbaw & Aydin, 2018, p. 5). The end of the Ottoman Empire changed this setting (van Bruinessen, 1992, p. 267-275). After the Turkish War of Independence against European colonialism, a peace conference in Lausanne resulted in a treaty that recognized the Republic of Turkey. The redrawing of the political map divided Kurdistan, “the land of the Kurds”, over 4 countries: Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey (Jongerden, 2018, p. 723-724). This mainly happened as a result of the Kurdish political and military power which was relatively weak in comparison to the surrounding countries. First, Atatürk viewed the territorial and religious identity, which had the Islam as a unifying factor, as Turkish nationalism against the Christian invaders (Koçer, 2012, p. 7). But soon after the treaty of Lausanne was signed, a shift in the Kemalist discourse started by pushing religion from the public to the private life. In this new Turkish nation concept, Kurdish citizens were left out. Kurds could not freely express their religion anymore, they were seen as Turks and their separate culture was denied (van Bruinessen, 1992, p. 267-275).

¹ Mutlu and Koçer (2012) found this quote in a text of Kili (2003, p. 249). This quote explains how Atatürk thought about the Turkish revolution, where he wanted to keep the Turkish identity independent from belief.

Kili S (2003). *The Atatürk Revolution: A Paradigm of Modernization* (Trans. Zeybekoğlu S). Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.

² Koçer (2012) based her statement on Yavuz (2001, p. 7).

Yavuz, H. (2001). Five Stages of the Construction of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 7(3), 1-24.

In the first years of the Republic of Turkey, Atatürk implemented a lot of reformations.³ The Latin alphabet would be used, men and women received equal rights (such as the right to vote), Islam was no longer a state religion, prayers would be read in Turkish instead of Arabic... The ideology of Atatürk and his compatriots considered Kurds as a degenerate form of higher Turkish civilization and led to restrictions on the use of their language. The Kurdish language is a part of the Iranian's arm of Indo-European language group (Ozfidan e.a., 2018, p. 9). The new born Turkey strived for equal rights for all citizens, but expressed itself within a homogenized Turkish population (Koçer, 2012, p. 7). Solidarity within the own ethnic group and marginalization of the other groups is typical for a nation (Anderson, 1985). Within the Turkish context the feeling of solidarity between Turks, with the same ethnic origin, culture and language, expressed itself by marginalizing other groups, such as the Kurds (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 133). Kurds got frustrated and as the Kurdish rebellions started, the Turks responded with violent repressions (van Bruinessen, 1992, p. 25-26). Merely ten years after Turkey's founding, a deportation law was put on the Kurdish citizens of Turkey which was thought to be a solution for rebellions and would make place for Turkish migrants to settle in their own country⁴ (Koçer, 2012, p. 12). As a result, Kurdish consciousness with leftism, multiculturalism and human rights gained popularity and many Kurds became aware of the economic and cultural differences between them and Turks (van Bruinessen, 1992, p. 11-45). Kurdish organizations demanded recognition of cultural rights, like Kurdish literacy. This first wave of migration started in the 1940s and in the mid 80s-90s, a second wave of internal migration of the Kurdish citizens followed (Çelik, 2005, p. 137-139). Kurds were forced to migrate from the southeast to Turkey's big cities, such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. During the 1980s military coup the military tortured whoever resisted the assimilation rules (Zeydanlıoğlu, p. 109). This military putsch was an attack on the left liberals and Kurdish nationalists, this brutal intervention caused the Kurdish issue to radicalize. Kurdish national movements gained more attraction and, in response, extreme Turkish nationalism rose (Bora, 2013).

The PKK founded its movement by the end of the 1970s and soon started an armed resistance with guerilla activities for equal rights (Ozfidan e.a., 2018, p. 8). They are equal rights for men and women as well as for different ethnicities. The PKK activities gave a sign to the world that the Kurds needed recognition, even if not all Kurds approve their working manners (Tezcür, 2009, p. 6). It was only at the end of the 1980s that Turkey's attitude towards Kurds changed, as a result the ban on the use of Kurdish language was lifted (van Bruinessen, 1992, p. 11-45). This could also be explained by Turkey's desire to be a member of the European Union. However, the forced migration and hard politics shifted the situation back quickly. In the 1990s Islam was reintegrated

³ Atatürk introduceerde zijn hervormingen met de wet van 3 Maart 1924, *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*,

⁴ Koçer (2012) based her statement on Beşekçi (1991, p. 100).

Beşekçi, I. (1991). *International Colony Kurdistan*. London: Parvana

within Turkey and some of Atatürk's reforms were abolished (Yılmazok, 2012, p. 158). This time, the Sunni Islam were unofficially seen as the new state religion. Within this view, the Turkish prime minister of today, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and his party AKP stand opposite to Atatürk's regime. AKP is the Turkish abbreviation for *Adelet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (English: Justice and Development Party) and it governs Turkey since 2002 (Yıldırım & Kuyucu, 2017, p. 890). The AKP is Islam-inspired and follows a neo-populistic ideology. The authoritarianism rose significantly since Erdoğan's governance: *"In Turkey there is still a need to find the consensus between Kemalist⁵ vision and it's rigidly secular and single-track Western project and AKP's remake of Turkey with its image of harsh social conservatism and Islamic identity"* (Wójcik, 2011, p. 145). The reintegration of the Islam is no reintegration of the Kurds, as they still have a different ethnic identity and language. Today's Turkish state institutions generally respond towards the Kurdish issue with anti-terrorism operations, as if the Kurdish issue is only a terrorism problem (Casier e.a., 2011, p. 103–127). The Freedom House (2018) declined Turkey's status from "partly free" to "not free", because of its corruption, the lack of freedom of speech, civil and political freedom and more. Journalists speaking out about the Kurdish issue or the political and military use of Islam often end in prison (Arsan, 2013, p. 447-462). Turkey still marginalizes the Kurds, who are almost a fifth of the Turkish population (Statista, 2019). It can be concluded that from the early years on, Kurdish citizens were disadvantaged in Turkey, as Kurds could not express their religious nor ethnic identity or even freely speak their language. The migration waves awakened the Kurdish national feeling and they started fighting against the restrictions, meaning some of the restrictions changed, but that Kurdish identity remained repressed.

Is there a visible difference between Kurds and Turks? Yeşim Ustaoglu is the filmmaker of *"Güneşe Yolculuk"* (English: Journey to the Sun), a movie about the friendship between a Turk and a Kurd. She explains: *"They are darker than Turkish people, according to the official ideology. [...] Discrimination is not only related to skin color, but also to the way we treat people when we know they are Kurdish"* (Monceau, 2001, p. 29). The next chapter will dive deeper into the Turkish and Kurdish cinema.

⁵ Kemalists follow an ideology (Kemalism) based on Turkey's founding father Atatürk's reforms.

TURKISH AND KURDISH CINEMA

Turkish cinema

In early Turkish cinema, the state controlled this medium with censorship (Mutlu, 2013, p. 131-132). The censorship commissions held vague restrictions and were under control of the state, the army and the police. Scenes that could be used as propaganda against Turkey were forbidden, but through the years the medium expanded itself and censorship decreased (Mutlu & Koçer, 2012, p. 73-74). With a law⁶ in 1986, the film regulation would come in hands of the Turkish film sector, such as cinema owners and artists, instead of the state, and more films were produced. As long as the censorship lasted, filmmakers tried to trick the Commissions by using pseudonyms or by showing them a self-censored script while filming the original script (Yılmazok, 2012, p. 34). In 2005 new laws and regulations ended the censorship; from then on, Turkey's cinema censorship unofficial developed and self-censorship would be applied (Arsan, 2013, p. 447-462). Content-wise, Turkish movies have a national character, accepting social norms and values of love, family, friendship and sacrifices (Yılmazok, 2012, p. 38-39). As a reference to banal nationalism, the Turkish flag hangs discreetly in the background of Turkish movies (Billig, 1995, p. 6-8). Banal nationalism refers to daily ideological habits that are constantly repeated. This contains discrete symbols such as a flag hanging inconspicuously from buildings, as well as language use (for example: "our country"), creating a sense of belonging. Other symbols can be images of the star and the moon, the portrait of Atatürk and also his statement "*Ne mutlu Türküm diyene!*" (English: How happy is the person who can say I am Turk) (Dönmez-Colin, 2008, p. 90). Islam, especially Sunni, is also implicitly present in Turkish movies. When these implicit nationalistic signs are pushed to the foreground, a movie can be called explicit nationalistic, here the national anthem, patriotism, ethnicity and military are glorified. Thus, "implicit nationalism" in Turkish movies occurs when the national identity stays in the background and "explicit nationalism" gives the viewer a pronounced pro-Turkish ideology. In the 1950s, *Yeşilçam*, the Turkish Hollywood in Istanbul, became the center for film production where big mass narrative style, of a modern love story with strong characters, and the Turkish star system developed (Yılmazok, 2012, p. 25 & 99). Within *Yeşilçam* Güney started his acting career and gained fame. Later, he made movies portraying Kurdish identities and his movies could be seen as a milestone in Kurdish cinema (Koçer, 2012, p. 77).

⁶ Law of 23 Januari 1986, *Sinema, video ve müzik eserleri kanunu*, 7 February 1986.

Kurdish cinema

Kurds try to find visibility and freedom through visual media. Kurdish cinema has risen in a transnational space, as Kurdistan spreads over multiple countries (Koçer, 2014, p. 485). There is a gap between the 20s and the 90s, when there was no room for Kurdish representation in visual media. Only since the 2000s has Kurdish cinema gained recognition and it is in these years of fighting for visibility that Kurdish cinema was born. Kurdish themed films accoutered some difficulties, because of their language and the PKK's armed resistance (Gorvett & Cengiz, 2002, p. 49-50). The Kurdish cinema is characterized by this Kurdish visibility with its language is a significant manifestation, it is inextricably linked to the political and cultural history (Koçer, 2014, p. 481-482). Kurdish cinema is a genre of political and "revolutionary" filmmaking which raises the political agency of Kurds. Some say the main problem of Kurdish cinema is they don't find support in Kurdistan, e.g. there appears to be no cinema playing Kurdish movies for a bigger public (The Kurdish Globe, 2010). Another characteristic of Kurdish cinema is that it doesn't have film stars, which would be helpful for reaching wider audiences. Kurdish films still face the cancellation or prohibition of their screenings at the last minute (Çiçek, 2016). None of these problems are spoken about in the Turkish nor Kurdish media. Kurdish cinema takes over this responsibility by documenting the oral and subjective histories of the Kurds, which are not included in the state archives (Çiçek, 2016). Kurdish films problematize the Kurdish people's patriarchal structure, the pressures of traditions and customs and the social status of women. Most of the films concerning the Kurdish cinema first were reclaimed as Kurdish abroad (Koçer, 2012, p. 71-89). It is only in 1999 that the first full Kurdish language film was produced in Turkey: *Ax*, by Kazim Öz. Festivals also help the Kurdish scene, for example the London Kurdish Film Festival that started in 2001. Kurdish transnational cinema thus struggles way more with its identity than Turkish cinema. Kurdish cinema suffers from unofficial censorship and it is less renowned in Turkey. The Kurdish themes, characters, filmmakers and its language bring visibility. According to Erbay V., previous writer for the closed-down Kurdish magazine *Yedinci Gündem*, the Kurdish identity issue was missing in the Turkish cinema for years (Gorvett & Cengiz, 2002, p. 49-50). Erbay claims that the filmmaker Yılmaz Güney changed this. Çiçek (2016) also considers Yılmaz Güney as a key figure for the formation of the Kurdish cinema. He defines the Kurdish cinema as a cinema of imprisonment, where the Kurdish representation is prisoner of patriarchal structures and traditions. Güney wrote scripts and directed movies in prison, the movie *Yol*'s story is likewise about prisoners. Just as Güney did not allow the physical boundaries of prison to impede him.

Yılmaz Güney

Yılmaz Güney remains popular till today; in 2011 a festival was grounded with his name: “Yılmaz Güney Film Festival” in Batman, a small town in southeast Turkey (Koçer, 2012, p. 109). He was an actor, director, editor and producer who raised his critical political voice in his movies. Originally born as Yılmaz Pütün in 1937, he descended from Kurdish parents who fled their Kurdish and Zaza hometown to start a life together in Adana (Ciment, 1982, p. 34-37). He openly spoke about Marx as his inspiration and claimed to never have had any beliefs. He understood that forcing the Turkish citizens to adapt to a modernized and secular Turkey only radicalized the religious situation, claiming that the repression of religion will only work when welfare brings a change of mentality (Deutsche Kinemathek, 1982). Because of his political thoughts, he was condemned for communism propaganda (Ciment, 1982, p. 34-41). After this condemnation, he decided to use the pseudonym surname Güney instead of Pütün. With his artist name, he started a career in the cinema distribution sector while he was studying Law at university until he got fired, because of his condemnation. Luckily some filmmakers still believed in him and so in his 20s he started working as an actor in *Yeşilçam*, receiving many different roles and gaining fame. Güney’s profile defending the poor and the weak was an exception in the *Yeşilçam* star system (Yılmazok, 2012, p. 25). He named himself the Ugly King, after the name of a movie in which he acted, as he wanted to represent the underdogs of society in his movies (Akser, 2009, p. 143). In 1963 he started directing movies, in 1970 he married his last wife, Fatoş Güney, and some years later he was accused of murdering a lawyer (Tabak, 2013). He was sentenced to a lifetime in prison, although he pleaded innocence. The trial raised doubts in legality: the identity of the murder weapon remained unverified, testimonies were said to be manipulated... (Deutsche Kinemathek, 1982). Some claimed was an excuse to lock up Güney (Kazan, 1980, p. 41-44). Thanks to his popularity he had a safe environment in prison, he was allowed to watch movies and read scripts. “*I am more secure here. [...] Outside, an assassin could kill me and then run away easily,*”⁷ Güney said in an interview. Imprisoned, Yılmaz wrote three scripts, two novels and various articles for Turkish and international media. He directed scripts for multiple movies (*Umut*, *Sürü* and *Yol*), giving concrete instructions to the director on set (Ciment, 1982, p. 40).

Güney’s movies document his own life and experiences (Deutsche Kinemathek, 1982). He saw the world as one big prison, therefore this was an important theme in his movies. His movies tell stories about the social, national and sexual marginality in Turkey (Bozarlan, 1990, p. 27-40). The social aspect touches on the lives of those living in slums as well as the condemned, whereas the national aspect focusses on the representation of the Kurds. Women are the third marginalized group, despite his movies taking place in a male orientated universe. Güney represented women

⁷ Quote translated from French to English. Original text: “Je suis plus en sécurité ici. [...] à l’extérieur, un assassin pourrait me tuer puis s’enfuir aisément.”

as repressed by the strict society or as victim of moral decadence. Only his penultimate movie, *Yol* had a more nuanced view on the position of women. This movie, on which I focus in my thesis, follows prisoners with a leave permit visiting their family members and beloved ones. The story sets off with a positive vibe, but the tragic lifestyle emerges as the prisoners' hit the road. Topics such as honor killings, violence, and the subordination of women are discussed. After *Yol* had been filmed, Güney received a permit to leave prison during the holiday period in October 1981 (Hubschmid, 2017, p. 65-90). He escaped from prison permanently due to the international team organized by Cactus film, the Swiss production house of *Yol*. Güney's Turkish nationality was withdrawn and only France gave the Güney family asylum. In France he openly spoke out about portraiture of Kurdish identities in his movies (Koçer, 2012, p. 77). *Yol* won the Golden Palm at the Festival of Cannes and became a great success. Meanwhile in Turkey his movies remained banned until the late 1990s. Güney hoped to see Turkey once again, but died in 1984, before he was able to. He thus never experienced the censored release of his films in Turkey.

METHODOLOGY

To fully understand the political and social questions within the Kurdish context of Turkey, I focus on Yılmaz Güney's movie *Yol*. How are the different versions of *Yol* related to these issues? My method consists of a film analysis of the three versions of *Yol*, chronologically released in 1982, 1993 and 2017. First, I focus on the production context of *Yol*. How did Güney's story come alive? Who are the most important actors involved in this production? How was the social Kurdish context in Turkey like during the production? What was *Yol* banned and later censored in Turkey? Why was *Yol* restored 35 years after it won the Golden Palm? These questions are answered with a literature study, complemented with press releases and press interviews. In the film analysis I chose to dynamically mix the textual analysis with the reception of the different versions. I used printed and online press, opinion articles, and testimonials of reactions of the public to explain the reception of *Yol*. This analysis is structured per theme. First, I analyze the main theme, namely the Kurdish issue within Turkey. I begin first with the original reception of *Yol* and then analyze the later version with censorship. The second theme consists of the representation of women. The reception of *Yol - The Full Version* is analyzed under this theme as the added story focuses on the suffering of Süleyman's wife. The third and most obvious theme is that of the omnipresent prison. Here I focus on the restrictions in society and the influence of the military power. This method aims for a complete and up to date critical analysis of the text and its reception.

The three versions of *Yol* have been found on different platforms. I watched *Yol* (1982) on a rented DVD from the library “De Krook” in Ghent, Belgium. This movie had Dutch subtitles. *Yol* (1993) was watched online under “Video” on the illegal streaming platform PolitikSinema.net⁸. Here, no subtitles were included. *Yol - The Full Version* (2017) was downloaded on the website Vimeo.com⁹. This version had English subtitles indicating that Kurdish is spoken. The analysis started large and the research method began only after watching the movies and taking notes. To fully understand the characters, I made character descriptions and mapped their journeys. This made it easier to track the mental and physical developments of the characters. Based on this information and on the literature study, a code sheet has been made to analyze the 3 different versions through Excel-documents. A scene by scene analysis allowed me to see the differences between *Yol*'s versions more clearly. After the analysis of *Yol* (1982), these results were used as the template for the other versions. With this information I distinguished general indicators that explain more about the Güney's message and the Turkish social and political situation. In Appendix 1 an explanation of the different codes can be found.

YOL'S PRODUCTION CONTEXT

In 1982, the movie “*Yol*” (English: The Road) showed the mentality and living conditions during the 1980s military putsch in Turkey. It is situated in the period of the forced migration of the Kurds, when capitalism and fascism ruled (Koçer, 2012). Turkish filmmakers were financially dependent of the distributors, who received loans from the banks (Deutsche Kinemathek, 1982). Subsidies were hard to obtain because of the bank's power over the productions and because of the poor interest of the state in film. Yılmaz Güney and other young intellectuals made movies raising awareness on the social and political conditions. Yılmaz Güney would have said, that by the time *Yol* is shown in the Turkish movie theaters, Turkey will have turned into a true democracy (Monceau, 1999b, p. 353). This still didn't happen. He wrote the script of *Yol*, called “*Bayram*” (English: holiday), in prison where he was allowed to do more than an ordinary prisoner. The script is inspired by Güney's own friends and life experiences: “In this film I have tried through some close friends of mine to relate sorrow, love and regret even if at times certain people may find them incomprehensible or incredible.”¹⁰ Originally there would have been eleven characters, but it was reduced to five (Ciment, 1982, p. 40). This reduction in characters was needed because of financial considerations of the production house and to make the narrative simpler (Keusch, 2017a).

⁸ the following link was used: www.politiksinema.net/film/597-yol-1982-Yilmaz-guney-filmi-izle.html

⁹ the following link was used: vimeo.com/286780208

¹⁰ Yılmaz Güney's text is written on the screen before *Yol* starts (version of 1999) and is also written on Güney's death note (Hubschmid, 2017, p. 164).

The film was produced in both Turkey as Switzerland under the co-production of Güney Film (Istanbul) and Cactus Film (Zürich), as well as Maran Film (München) and the Swiss broadcaster SRG. During the production of *Yol*, from January until August 1981, Güney was imprisoned, however this wasn't an issue. The Turkish cameras were so loud that direction during the shooting wasn't possible anyway and *Yol* was shot as a silent film. Above that, *Yol's* script was very extensive and had about 150 pages (Deutsche Kinemathek, 1982). Güney emphasized that the movie was not created by him, but by the actors and the film director Serif Gören. Originally Güney appointed Erden Kıral, a young Turkish film director, for his movie (Hubschmid, 2017, p. 54-56; Balikdjian, 2017). Kıral wanted to change certain aspects, so Güney dismissed him three weeks into shooting. Güney looked for a director that spoke the same film language as his own and found this in Gören. Gören and Güney had already worked together before, he knew the expected approach to the images and Güney trusted him (Ciment, 1982, p. 40; Deutsche Kinemathek, 1982). Güney explained to him the elements he wanted to appear in the movie and gave him clear directions. Gören spent three days with Güney to discuss questions, afterwards they kept in contact through post. Only once, Güney received permission to sightsee a film location, namely the snowed set of Seyit Ali. Güney also received cooperation of the authorities for *Yol's* realization, convincing them of the opportunity to positively represent their policies and interestingly, the soldiers in *Yol* are real military men (Ebiri, 2005).

The movie aimed for a European audience by using European techniques and studios with a good quality film (Deutsche Kinemathek, 1982). This "Europeanization" started only after the shooting in Turkey, because European film technicians wouldn't have been able to work under the Turkish conditions (Hubschmid, p. 55-57). Güney had a more direct saying in this post-production, because he had escaped prison (Thonon, 1982, p. 142-143). From October 1981 to May 1982 he was able to edit the movie in Switzerland and make the dubbing synchronization in France, everything of which happened in secret (Hubschmid, 2017, p. 91-112). The Turkish voice actors were found in the *Institut Kurde de Paris*, but Güney also used his own voice for some roles. Originally the movie lasted 150 minutes, but it had to be shortened for the Festival de Cannes, because the festival leader Gilles Jacobs found *Yol* too ambiguous and long. Güney decided to shorten the movie by cutting out the sixth character and making some small cuts. This version of *Yol* was shown in the 1982 Cannes Film Festival and won the Golden Palm ex aequo with "Missing" from Costa-Gavras. After the success of the film, there was no time or money to reedit *Yol* following the original script (Thonon, 1982, p. 142-143). Thus, the movie was published without further changes.

Güney's wife secretly smuggled his movies abroad, *Yol* amongst them (Akser, 2009, p. 142-152). In the 1990s, the ban on Güney's movies was lifted, but it took a long time to screen the movie in theaters (Gottschlich, 15 February 1999). Güney's wife started a foundation to raise money, which is how *Yol*'s restoration was financed, but Gören no longer had a say in these changes and protested. The restoration became a censored version leaving out some forbidden Kurdish references (Akser, 2009, p. 142-152). Özen Film was the distribution house and E. Salman supervised the movie's restoration. The Film Control Commission authorized *Yol* to be shown for a first time in Istanbul in 1993, but it only came out in the cinema in 1999 (A.F.P., 4 October 1993; Monceau, 1999b, p. 351). In this same year the Kurdish PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan was imprisoned which made the Kurdish issue very current again. Keusch, producer in Cactus Film, started a process against Fatoş Güney through the Swiss court, which determined that she didn't own *Yol*'s production and screening rights (Keusch, 2017b). He wrote that "she generated illegally a 35mm negative and exploited the film in Turkey without license." In Turkey the original version still isn't broadcasted. It remains difficult to find the movie without censorship, even the website "politiksinema.net", which is known for political films, only streams the censored version.

In 2016 the original version of *Yol* was restored by Donat Keusch under the production house DFK Films (n.d.), which partially arose from Cactus Film court and inherited the rights of *Yol*. In this same year, a failed military putsch took place in Turkey. The restoration was completed in 2017, on the fitting occasion of Güney's 80th birthday. It premiered in Cannes Classics 2017. Keusch found the movie still relevant, saying it's "a timeless portrait of an archaic society". For this new edit, renamed *Yol - The Full Version*, the original film material was digitalized and a new English translation of the script was made (Keusch, 2017a). Güney's original edit and script with six prisoners was implemented. Along with the story adaptation, some other changes were made concerning the colors, framing, voice overs and editing. Keusch is satisfied with the movie's technical aspect which reaches the quality of European movies of those times (Balikdjian, 2017). The aim was to restore the full story to how Yılmaz Güney would have wanted it, which isn't the case according to Hubschmid, Fatoş Güney and Elizabeth Wealchli, who edited the original movie together with Yılmaz Güney. It shouldn't be called the *full version* because many scenes were also shortened or removed (Kardozi, 2017, 4 June). Güney's family disputes Keusch's ownership of the copyrights (Kardozi, 2017, 4 June). Hubschmid (2017, p. 161, 193) points out that this director's cut would have required a detailed written instruction of Güney to take place to be correct in copyright terms. This difficult production context shows that every version encountered difficulties and that the changes in narrative, editing, rhythm and tempo depend of many different actors.

YOL'S TEXTUAL AND RECEPTION ANALYSIS

Yol starts with a broader narrative and narrows itself to shorter and harder hitting scenes throughout the movie (Schmidt-Mühlisch, 1982, 8 December). The quickening rhythm highlights the long road ahead of the prisoners. Güney describes his movies as stories about nomads that also mirror the mass migration in Turkey (Ciment, 1982, 40-41). As the name of the movie *Yol* says itself, “the road” is an omnipresent theme above all others, the road is a metaphorical and narrative choice. *Yol* shows the physical as well as mental journey of the characters in their search for freedom. Güney claimed: “*Under the yoke of social, economic and moral constraints, they remain mere puppets of an unalterable destiny*”¹¹ (Deutsche Kinemathek, 1982). The long road and time limit force the characters into uncomfortable situations. In *Yol - The Full Version*, many road scenes were deleted: the bus driver shouting that passengers for Konya need to get off the bus, Seyit eating a sandwich on the train, the bus arriving in Gaziantep, characters looking through the window of the bus... The average length of the scenes is shorter too, increasing the narrative tempo. Hence, the new version leaves less breathing space for the road itself. Even more than in the original version, the stories follow on from each other very fast, so it results in one big story about the Turkish society during the 1980 putsch. Here, the prison theme is omnipresent and also the marginalization of Kurds and women.

The Kurdish question of Turkey

Yılmaz Güney's movie is a portrait of the Kurdish situation of Turkey under the military putsch of 1980. *Yol* represents Turkey in its full beauty by showing the beautiful countryside, the food and drink culture with the tea and rakı... But Güney also delves deeper into the society by representing the downside of the control and the marginalization of Kurds and women. The Turkish flags, Atatürk's picture and folkloric music aren't amiss either. This appears as a form of banal nationalism, because these symbols are discreet but everywhere (Billig, 1995, p. 6-8). The Kurdish references aren't as straightforward as the Turkish are, they are hidden in conversations about the resistance, folkloric music, language, guerilla cheering... Two characters in the movie are Kurdish: Ömer and Seyit, both come across difficulties with their traditions (Güney, 1981). Ömer wants to flee prison and when his brother dies, he inherits his brother's widow. Seyit's wife worked in a brothel, and to save the family's honor by killing her. *Yol* won the Golden Palm at Cannes Film Festival and received a 15 minutes long standing ovation (Festival de Cannes, 2018). There were roughly 400 protesters on the streets standing up for a free Kurdistan and as Güney took the Golden Palm award in his one hand, he raised his fist with the other (Hubschmid, 2017, p. 134-135, 147). This was Yılmaz' protest against the Turkish military dictatorship (Gottschlich,

¹¹ Quote translated from German to English. Original text: “Unter dem Joch sozialer, wirtschaftlicher und moralischer Zwänge bleiben sie bloss Marionetten eines unbeeinflussbaren Schicksals.”

15 Feb 1999). Güney became an icon for the left. Some contemporary film critics claim that Güney's narrative and editing style were ahead of his time, as the film was able to reach the filmic and political experts as well as less experienced audiences (Hubschmid, 2017, p. 184; Ewert, n.d.).

Yol was banned in Turkey, but very well received in Europe, even with long waiting queues in France (Ben Jelloun, 14 May 1982). In the theaters, *Yol* left its audience speechless and was awarded a big applause. Maschuff (1982, 9 December) wrote that the movie should be watched in western countries for a better understanding of the Turkish families living there. If in 1982 *Yol* had such a big impact on the West, then one can imagine what impact it would have had in Turkey. The movie is critical and suggests that the people suppress themselves by highlighting their patriarchal and religious traditions. Güney showed the Kurdish identities in his movies through clothing, music, symbolism, character names and shooting location (Kardozi, 2017, 4 Juni). He was able to use Kurdish voiceovers because he had no Turkish censorship rules to follow during the editing process. This had never before appeared in a Turkish movie (Monceau, 1999b, p. 352). He also wrote "*Kürdistan*" on a vignette as a geographical location, as the added inserts of geographical places made for a better understanding (Keusch, 2017b). Güney originally thought the geographical place was clear thanks to the music, dress style and language spoken. But to reach a wider audience, the vignettes were added, particularly the Kurdistan-vignette (image 1) (Sengul, 2013, p. 240-246). Partially because of this, this edition of *Yol* would never have been shown in Turkey.



*image 1: Kurdistan vignette
(screenshot from the original movie Yol)*

The censored version has this vignette cut out and directly shows the next scene of the blossoming fields, which instills an image of Turkey's richness and beauty (Mashuff, 9 Dec 1982). Turkey banned the word Kurdistan and some Kurdish references to further deny their existence. The Turkish state linked the shots of the Kurdish mountains to PKK-Propaganda (Gottschlich, 15 February 1999). The background music with Kurdish folkloric music has in some places been

changed to other Turkish music (Monceau, 1999a, p. 16). Some other background sounds are erased or changed, for instance the off-screen sound screaming to fight back is during a battle at the Syrian border. Only the words saying to stop firing and surrender are left. Later in *Yol*, when the dead body of Ömer's brother is brought back by the Turkish army, the soldiers say: "This country is home to us all. We are all equal. [...] We feel sorry, but the law is the law." Ömer tells his brother's widow that this makes him her new husband. The following off-screen discussion in Kurdish is deleted: "One day God show us the way [...] The oppressed will not stay hidden." This discussion explains the disappointment and the will to fight back Kurdish villagers. The censored version is shortened to remove this last conversation, the message of the resistance shouldn't be propagated in Turkey. The 2017 version also adopted this censorship, possibly because of the producers wish for distribution on the Turkish market (yol-the-full-version.com/media/).

In Istanbul the censored movie was shown for the first time in 1993 to a broad audience of 5000 people (A.F.P., 4 October 1993). Kurdish phrases were yelled during this premiere. Before it was brought to the cinemas, *Yol* also played in a Film Festival in Ankara (Gottschlich, 15 February 1999; Monceau, 1999a, p. 16). The reviews were quite positive, saying some voice-offs and the Kurdistan-vignette had been erased, however the film remained convincing. The topics of repressed women, military repression, political and economic problems were preserved. The movie only lost its subversive political discourse. Some Kurdish dialogues and songs were retained in the censored version, provided by Turkish subtitles, which proves that the Kurdish reference ban was becoming less strict. In 1999 *Yol* finally came out in one cinema in Istanbul, Kadıköy. Only a small group of people were discussing about *Yol* and most of the visitors were just a little older than the movie. In an interview these visitors said they didn't know a lot about Yılmaz Güney, but they were curious. In the lobby there was no note about the movie's history. The Turkish public reacted the same way as the European public acted 17 years before (Koydl, 15 February 1999). The visitors first stayed quietly seated, but soon a wild applause filled the room. However, because of the political situation, in Kadıköy the cinema was left in a calm way and some had an embarrassed look on their face (Gottschlich, 15 February 1999). *Yol's* movie themes were still as relevant as when the film first came out in 1982; Turkey still didn't accept the message for more freedom for Kurds. For the Turkish citizens, it was more important to see the movie under censorship than not to see the movie at all.



*image 2: Firat-Birecik vignette, image 3: Birecik Kürdistan vignette
(screenshot from the original movie Yol), (screenshot from the Yol - The Full Version)*

Yol - The Full Version, which premiered on Cannes Classics in 2017, encountered a lot of controversy regarding the Kurdistan-vignette (image 1). Just like the word “Kürdistan” had been censored in the version of 1993, this version didn’t use the insert either, which was found suspicious (Güler, 2017, 23 May). Today’s political context still doesn’t allow the original Kurdistan vignette, but *Yol - The Full Version* is compatible for the Turkish market because of its changes. The original movie *Yol* showed two different vignettes for “Kürdistan” (image 1) and “Firat-Birecik” (image 2). Nevertheless, new Kürdistan vignette of 2017 describes a more exact geographical location, writing “Birecik, Kürdistan, 912 km southeast of Imrali” (image 3) on the vignette. This could also be interpreted as a confirmation of Kurdistan’s existence, rather than as denial or censorship.

This extra information on the vignette implies that the storyline is complicated to follow. Another example of this occurs in the opening credits, where all main characters are drawn next to their name, offering more guidance to the viewer. Nevertheless, *Yol - The Full Version* adopted more of the Turkish censorship. The conversation between Ömer and a friend, when they look upon the Syrian border and talk about the political situation, has been edited. Some parts have been added and some deleted. The deleted conversation talked about the farmers dying because of mines and about Ömer’s family. These topics would refer to the division of the Kurdish people and is seen as an important subject in the movie (Kardozi, 2017, 4 Juni). Nevertheless, the added scene is interesting because Ömer admits he’s scared to end up in a close prison and screams out that he wants to be free. Since Turkey’s political situation and national marginality was very important to Güney, the representation of Kurds stood central in the original version of *Yol*. The censored version and the 2017 version reduced the visibility of the Kurds, consenting to the wishes of the Turkish state. *Yol - The Full Version* moved away from its focus on the Kurdish minority towards sexual minority of women.

Representation of women

Premiering on the Festival of Cannes in the Cannes Classics, *Yol - The Full Version* was well received (2018, 13 February). The producer Keusch finds this version better in quality and suspense in comparison with the version of 1982, which he called unfinished (20 June 2017). He highlighted that *Yol* received a Golden Palme because of political reasons, which implies that it still could to be improved. In the opening speech of the first screening at the Gezici Festival in December 2017, he explained his promise to Güney saying his movie would one day be restored (yol-the-full-version.com/media/). He planned to release the movie on DVD and Blu-Ray and in the cinema, however today, I could only find the movie available on Vimeo. This could explain why only a few critics wrote about this new version, and were not as positive as Keusch hoped. Gürsoy (2017, 21 May), journalist for the Turkish newspaper Bir Gün, wrote it's only two minutes longer than the original movie and only the quality and color have improved, but she believes it's more important that *Yol* was shown in Cannes again. Buyurgan (n.d.) follows this idea, in the hope the movie reveals Güney's desire for an honest democracy which would open conversations about the difficult movie themes. With respect for Güney it does remain a question if the original version should have been "improved" (Girod, 2017, p. 61).



image 4: Süleyman at the brothel, image 5: Süleyman's wife waiting
(screenshots from the *Yol - The Full Version*)

The most notable difference between the original and the restored version is the addition of the sixth character Süleyman. He doesn't seem to care about his family, he drinks, gambles, goes to brothels. A remarkable scene in the brothel is when he swears on God's book that he doesn't have a wife, because the sex worker won't sleep with married men. This produces agency for the sex worker, but still Süleyman lies to her (image 4). While he and the sex worker have intercourse, a parallel montage shows his wife who prepared dinner and waits for him to come home (image 5). Güney chose to cut this character out for the Festival in Cannes (Hubschmid, 2017, p. 108-112). This story was less convincing to him and gave no new content to the story. Cutting this story would make the movie more understandable, like the festival leader wanted. In an interview with Ciment (1982, p. 40), Güney said the sixth character highlighted his waiting wife. Güney claimed that *Yol* looks like a man's story, but actually tells the story about their women. *Yol* criticizes that

women are left with misery and pain, Güney said they are linked to their man through their half-feudal relationships. Süleyman's story thus has more meaning than just showing the gambling, alcoholic character and highlights the dimension of the sexual marginality.

The female characters in *Yol* encounter prostitution, verbal and physical violence and love. In *Yol*, even if the prostitutes have a certain agency, they are considered stupid by the men. Not only the sixth added character goes to prostitutes. The original *Yol* already showed Mevlüt who found his liberation from the controlling society in a brothel. Physical violence against women happens as well as verbal. Süleyman hits his wife when she tells him he shouldn't go to other women to be pleased. Another lady is hit by two men and called a whore for telling Mehmet's wife's family that his wife had left town with him. Verbal violence against women appears frequently throughout. Seyit's wife, who dishonored her family by working in a brothel, must be punished by death. Seyit says "she succumbed to the devil", but her father takes it a step further saying that "she is the devil". Seyit's wife has been locked up in the stable of her family's house for eight months, with her feet tied up and still wearing their wedding ring. Seyit feels both pity and hatred for her, he says: "I shall not touch you. Allah will punish you." They leave through a big snowstorm with their son, but she isn't wearing any warm clothes. This road through the expansive snow mountains can be read as signal for threat and death (Mashuff, 9 Dec 1982). She freezes and Seyit carries her when she's unable to walk anymore. As she loses her strength she asks for forgiveness: "I'm so sorry. Forgive me. I'll be your faithful dog" (image 7). His help comes too late and she freezes to death. This scene mirrors the outward journey of Seyit towards his wife, where his horse couldn't walk anymore because of the cold and Seyit killed the horse to release it from the pain (image 6). Seyit had warmed up his hands and feet in the stomach of the horse, but the scene wasn't used in the original version. This scene was very traumatizing for the actor of Seyit and made the story even darker, so Güney didn't want to use it (Taşçıyan, n.d.). This scene has been used in the new version of *Yol* and increases the tragedy, although this wasn't necessary for a better understanding of the situation.



*image 6: Seyit kills his horse, image 7: Seyit's wife freezes to death
(screenshots from the original movie Yol)*

Seyit and Mehmet are overcome by the opposing feelings of love and hate. The family honor has been shamed by Seyit's wife. Mehmet left behind his wife's brother during a bank robbery, so the police shot him. Mehmet acted dishonorable and cowardly, he asks for forgiveness from his wife and family. In contrast, Seyit is asked for forgiveness by his wife. Both stories end fatal. Mehmet and his wife are killed on the train by a young family member. The other love stories also end miserably, e.g. Ömer falls in love with a girl but inherits his brother's widow. The new version extended the story of Yusuf and showed how much he cares about his wife. What he doesn't know, and the viewer doesn't discover until the 2017 version, is that his wife dies. Every reference to her death had been cut out of the original movie for Cannes. This was a choice made while shortening *Yol* for Cannes. The new version also shows an insert of Yusuf looking at his wife's picture hanging next to his bed. In an interview, Güney claimed that a man shouldn't hang his wife's picture in prison (Kazan, 1980, p. 41). The content of this scene could thus carry a negative message, even if it could be read positively. The looks at this picture show Yusuf's love for his wife. The position of women in *Yol* is highlighted by focusing on the main male characters, who suffer from honor, morality and family problems (Akan, 1982, p. 63-64). Even if *Yol* creates a certain nuanced view on the positing of women by giving them agency, women can also be viewed as prisoners. They are prisoners of a conservative society, tradition and strict family bounds. Concluding, what Güney would have wanted to tell his compatriots is that they have to take care of their women: "Turks, my brothers, see what you are: a feudal herd of backwards, morons, sexists, stubborn, and consensual. To deserve your human rights, see how you respect those of your women..." (Tholin, 1982).

The omnipresent prison

Control is very present in *Yol* as the characters are constantly observed. Güney explains the fight for freedom is appearing, "the walls in his civilian prison world are not made of stone, but paved with stuck traditions and hypocritical morality"¹² (Deutsche Kinemathek, 1982). For Çiçek (2016), *Yol* is an example of a Kurdish movie in his "cinema of imprisonment" definition. The control within the movie insinuates that imprisonment also exists outside of the prison. This control comes from the society and authority, the prison is thus omnipresent (Baer, 1982, 2 December). The authorities' work manner is showed in an almost documentary style, as most soldiers in the movie are real military men (Ebiri, 2005). The military helped Güney in order to show the success of the temporary leave permit. This insinuates that Turkish authorities normalized the brutal actions at the Syrian border, referring to the PKK. They didn't think this movie would have a negative international impact. Güney thought differently and exposed them within the negative message of repression. In the beginning and at the end of the movie the off-

¹² Quote translated from German to English. Original tekst: "Doch die Mauern in seiner zivilen Gefängniswelt sind nicht aus Stein, sondern gepflastert mit festgefahrenen Traditionen und heuchlerischer Moral."

screen voice from the prison loudspeakers, dubbed by Güney, warn about the consequences of nonobedience and not returning to prison. Upon leaving, the prisoners soon run into military controls, which is frequently repeated throughout the movie. When the military orders Seyit to stay inside, they say he shouldn't try to resist the military orders. This scene hasn't been used in the 2017 version. Some other military opposing references have also been erased (cf. the Kurdish issue of Turkey). This way, Turkey isn't criticized as much as in the original version. The military troops are generally portrayed as rational bureaucrats, but at the Syrian border their savageness is shown (Gottschlich, 15 February 1999). Ömer and Yusuf faced this direct state's repression, restraining their freedom: Ömer at the Syrian border, Yusuf at the passport control.

Yusuf lost his leave permit and got arrested. He gave his little bird in a cage to his prison companion Mevlüt to give to his wife. The bird in the cage contrasts with the birds flying freely, just like the prisoners want to be free. Yet outside of prison the characters are still prisoners of themselves, their honor, traditions, fate... For example, Mevlüt appoints rules to his fiancé. He tells his fiancé that once married "you'll obey me. If I say something is black, it's black. [...] I'll decide what you wear or do." The fiancé seems happy with his strong words. Meanwhile, two chaperones in a black khimar follow them, which annoys Mevlüt (image 8). He doesn't want anybody to interfere with his business. He wants the control over his wife, but contradictor, he wants to be free himself.



*image 8: Mevlüt, his fiancé and the chaperones
(screenshot from the original movie Yol)*

The other characters confront the social, cultural and traditional constraints, which can also be linked with religion, since Güney said he never believed in a god. In *Yol* a lot of women are represented wearing a hijab, men wearing a taqiyah and Muslims washing themselves before mosque. The characters would ask Allah for help and say Allah is their witness, but it doesn't seem like Allah could help them into a better situation. They owe their difficulties to themselves and their traditions. What the religion does give, is hope. There are also other symbols of hope, like flowers, letters, flying birds and horses. The movie holds onto stereotypes about the Turkish

society, with traditions such as drinking tea and cigarettes (Akan, 1982, p. 63-64). There even are children smoking and laughing while imitating adults (image 9). No critical comments have been written about this. Within its Turkish context in the 1980s smoking children were thus probably not problematized. In contrast to what I thought, there was no discussion around bad parenting, as no critic of the 2017 version quoted this. No critic analyzed the reaction to Mehmet and his wife having intercourse in the train's toilet. They try to hit them and shout: "What shameless creatures [...] they are shameless animals." The new theme of addiction to alcohol and gambling, Süleyman's escape of the controlling society in the 2017-version, isn't discussed either. Güler (23 2017, 23 May) wrote that this addition is the only difference with the original movie, insinuating this new version isn't needed.



*image 9: smoking children
(screenshot from the original movie Yol)*

The prison is thus everywhere and there is no way to escape it fully. The (social) control punishes disobedience, dishonor and infidelity, it creates secrets, shame and resistance. The movie's ending leaves room for interpretation as it's unclear if all characters go back to prison or not, certainly not the Kurds Ömer and Seyit. Ömer said in the beginning of the movie that he wouldn't go back and rides away on the back of a horse at the end. In Güney's script it was written that Seyit will return to prison after saying goodbye to his son (Güney, 1981). *Yol* brings up many conflicts by opposing free movement to military control and warm to cold. Each version highlights a different issue. The original movie focuses on the Kurdish issue and carries the message of resistance. This disappeared into the background because of Turkish censorship, but the social issues remained strong. In 2017 the "full version" focused especially on the input of all the unused scenes, but the sixth character highlighted the woman issue. For many, a new version wasn't necessary, it seems like the new edit mainly focused on presenting the non-used footage. On the other hand, it's interesting to finally see which story Yılmaz himself took out of the edit, certainly keeping in mind the role of the sixth character's wife.

CONCLUSION

The different versions of the movie *Yol* are related to the social and political questions within the Kurdish and Turkish context with a slightly different focus. This was explained with a look into the production, text and reception of the different versions. There isn't only one possible conclusion to draw from this analysis. *Yol's* complex story explains to us that the Kurds remain marginalized in Turkey, but their voice and visibility grow through film (Koçer, 2012, p. 71). The history of mass migration and military putsches have a big effect on the Kurdish issue of Turkey (Çelik, 2005, p. 137). The Kurds fight for recognition as they face problems on the level of language, ethnicity, belief and culture (Hobsbawn, 1990, p. 133). With regards to cinema, Güney played a big role for the Kurds (Yılmazok, 2012, p. 25). He was a famous actor before he became a director. In his movies, he focusses on the marginality of those who are weaker within a social, national and sexual aspect (Bozarslan, 1990, p. 27-40). He thus respectively wrote stories about the poor, the Kurds and the women.

Yol (1982) is set during the times of the 1980s military putsch. The movie is mainly produced in Turkey, with Serif Gören as director on set, while Güney was imprisoned. The postproduction took place after Güney escaped to France (Thonon, 1982, p. 142-143). The first version followed five characters instead of six like originally was planned, because Cannes festival leader thought the narrative was too ambiguous. The opposition of the Turkish regime has been a big fan of this movie, but the movie itself was forbidden in Turkey (Festival de Cannes, 2018). In 1993 a censored version was approved in Turkey. The authorities banned, among other things, the insert of "Kürdistan". This version lost some of its political references, but stayed emotionally convincing (Monceau, 1999a, p. 16). Because of the lack of time and money in 1982, Güney didn't reedit the movie with its sixth character, but in 2017, a "Full Version" was made public. *Yol - The Full Version* is a director cut which is edited following the original script. This was poorly received as it adopted some censorship like the deleted "Kürdistan" vignette. An "improvement" of the original *Yol* would be disrespectful towards Güney (Girod, 2017, p. 61). It is also thought suspicious that has been changed. On the contrary, the Festival of Cannes was very happy with this version. They highlighted that the version has been completed with the sixth character and that the sound has been cleaned.

In this road movie the characters look for physical and mental freedom. *Yol* has three main themes, namely the Kurdish issue of Turkey, the representation of women and the omnipresent prison. Güney clearly politized his movie through the Kurdish resistance messages and by showing its repression. The women are also repressed within a feudal society. *Yol* focusses on the men to expose how their women suffer, the added character in *Yol - The Full Version* is a good example

of this. The most obvious theme is the omnipresent prison. Both the society and authority practice control; the characters are also prisoners of their own conservative society and traditions (Deutsche Kinemathek, 1982). This paper is a good start for further research and analysis about the Kurdish issue of Turkey. A larger project could include analyses of the Kurdish language in *Yol* and more engagement of the Kurds and Turks, as there seems to be a need for this. The Kurdish issue of Turkey is still a hot topic and *Yol*'s story remains current.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: code sheet for analysis

- [1] [duration of the scenes]
The duration of the scenes is written, so I can compare the length of the scenes. This is important, because *Yol - The Full Version* aims to restore the full story, but only lasts 2 minutes longer than the original movie.
- [2] [Writings (1) or visuals (2)]
The second code shows the [Writings (1) or visuals (2)] whether something is written on the movie screen or whether there is not. This is important to recognize which words (e.g. Kürdistan) might have been censored, changed or added.
- [3] [Chapter]
The third code refers to the name of the movie's chapter. These chapters are based on the original chapters added to the DVD of *Yol* (1982). This gives an overview of the different versions.
- [4] [General Theme]
Under the fourth code I wrote the general theme of the scene in just a few words. This tracks the themes that are discussed more often than others.
- [5] [Place]
Under the fifth code I wrote the places where the scenes take place; this helps keeping track on how and where the characters are traveling.
- [6] [Scene description]
The sixth code is where I wrote down the most. The manifested themes and the representation of the society is explained within this scene description.
- [7-10] [Subcode]
The seventh until the tenth code look for more specific subcodes within the scenes. These relate to national references, symbols, expression of faith, gender representation and such.
- [11] [What is written on the screen?]
This code is used to transcribe the words written on the screen. These are mostly the character's location right followed by a scene on that location.

[12] [translated Turkish to English]

This code is used to translate Turkish written texts to English.

[13] [Deleted scene]

This code is only part of the second and third version of Yol. Here an indication is made with ** in red if a particular scene has been deleted from the first version. The whole row of this scene is then colored red.

[14] [Added scene]

This code is only part of the second and third version of Yol. Here an indication is made with ** in green if a particular scene has been added in comparison to the first version. The whole row of this scene is then colored green.

Appendix 2: textual analysis

Shared link with the textual analysis of the three different versions of *Yol*:

drive.google.com/open?id=1Txfwz32AqFGA0s3WMCZ4W1SgZ7HrHzgR

- The version of 1982 is called Codesheet-Yol1(original)
- The version of 1993 is called Codesheet-Yol2(censored)
- The version of 2017 is called Codesheet-Yol3(restored)

The sequences equivalent to the chapters based on the original *Yol*:

S1 = in prison

S2 = short time leave permit

S3 = heart breaking homecoming

S4 = on the way to adversity

S5 = the Kurdish resistance fighters

S6 = on the way

S7 = facing the scandal

S8 = the plan

S9 = failed marriage plans

S10 = wash the shame away

S11 = drama in the train

S12 = the trip

S13 = dead without honor

S14 = the road goes on