Hollywood in Vernacular

Translation and Cross-cultural Reception of American Films in Turkey

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To write the international history of classical American cinema … is a matter of tracing not just its mechanisms of standardization and hegemony but also the diversity of ways in which this cinema was translated and reconfigured in both local and translocal contexts of reception.[1]

Cinema as 'Vernacular Modernism'

THE world-wide success of classical Hollywood cinema is usually attributed to a combination of its universal intelligibility, derived from its popular and hybrid nature, and the cultural imperialism that resulted from the enormous economic power of the U.S culture industry. According to the first argument, Hollywood films developed a narrative style that different audiences throughout the world found easy to comprehend. As Will Hays, President of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc. (MPPDA), recalled in his *Memoirs*, 'American films of the earliest silent picture era had to be designed to appeal to the less educated groups and to the large foreign-language sections of our own population. It was essential that the viewer should be able to follow the story whether understanding English or not. Hence our silent pictures early developed a style and form that commended them to all races and groups of people, without the aid of words.'[2] The popularity of Hollywood films in the sound era has also often been explained by reference to a comparable universalism,

in which American cinema's repetition and quotation of its own images and genres proved more responsive to consumer desires than did the products of other cinemas.[3] Most accounts of Hollywood's strong global presence, however, also attribute its success to political and economic factors such as its significant mode of production, large economies of scale and the US. government's support and aggressive policies.[4]

Beyond these narrative templates and industrial strategies, however, more localised processes by which these products were adapted to suit the cultural preferences of the target audiences contributed significantly to their success, as did the specific ways in which they were exhibited. As Jacques Malthête's study of Georges Méliès' films shows, the adaptation of films into specific contexts of reception started almost with the introduction of the *cinématagrophe*. The English and French versions of Méliès' films sometimes differ significantly, and from 1900, Méliès' catalogues included a twenty-metre film aiming to thank respective spectators of his films: *Vue de remerciements au public*. In this short film, different people display the same banner, reading 'thanks' in French, English, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian and finally in Arabic and Greek. The latter, addressing Ottoman audiences, was presented by two women and a men in Oriental dress.[5]

17.1 *Vue de remerciements au public* (Méliès catalogue no. 292, 1900). The banner reads 'Thanks' in Arabic and Greek (From Malthête, 'Méliès et le conférencier,' *Iris*, p. 128).

Interpreted by lecturers or inter-titles and accompanied by music or sound effects, silent movies were adapted for different culturally specific audiences. Although the introduction of sound made these kinds of modification more difficult and expensive, similar strategies were used by producers, distributors and exhibitors alike during the sound era. Altering foreign films, especially Hollywood products, helped to increase movies' popularity among local audiences. As Miriam Hansen observes:

If classical Hollywood cinema succeeded as an international modernist idiom on a mass basis, it did so not because of its presumably universal narrative form but because it meant different things to different people and publics, both at home and abroad. We must not forget that these films, along with other mass-cultural exports, were consumed in locally quite specific, and unequally developed, contexts and conditions of *reception*; that they not only had a levelling impact on indigenous cultures but also challenged prevailing social and sexual arrangements and advanced new possibilities of social identity and cultural styles; and that the films were also changed in that process.[6]

In this chapter, I would like to focus on the processes of cultural adaptation by which Hollywood films were modified and translated into the local context in Turkey between 1930 and 1970. In some cases, the movies were significantly altered for particular export markets.[7] More importantly, local distributors, exhibitors and censorship bodies modified these movies to facilitate their reception by their culturally specific audiences. Sometimes scenes were removed, or performances featuring local stars were inserted into the original prints. These transformations particularly affected the local context of reception in relation to the experience of modernisation and modernity. In her essay on the transnational currency of classical Hollywood cinema, Miriam Hansen, describes the promiscuity and translatability of this cinema as a form of 'vernacular modernism.'[8] She suggests that the American movies of the classical period played a key role in mediating competing cultural discourses on modernity and modernisation.[9] Appropriating Hansen's theoretical framework, I would like to discuss the role of marketing, programming and exhibition practices, as well as dubbing and censorship, as strategies of translation in effecting the cross-cultural reception of Hollywood cinema.

Marketing, Programming and Exhibition

Hollywood films have been an integral and naturalised part of Turkish movie culture, spreading from Istanbul's highly Westernised Pera district to the whole country. Starting in 1913 with the opening of Istanbul's *Cinéma Americain* theatre promoting Vitagraph films, American films become highly popular, outnumbering continental brands by the mid-1920s. As the movie theatre's name itself indicated, French was used extensively amongst the Ottoman elite.[10] In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, French symbolised all European—or Western—networks and values. Until the mid-1940s, American films were either dubbed into French or screened in the original with French subtitles in Istanbul's Pera district.[11] As late as 1948, the U.S Department of Commerce was reporting that 'from a foreign language point of view with regard to films, French could be rated next to Turkish.'[12] This trend changed only in the 1950s, with the impact of the Marshall Plan and Turkey's growing relations with the US. Before then, American culture made its entry, if not in Turkish then in French.

American film titles were translated into Turkish, in the process often being either adapted to the local context for easy comprehension, or stripped of any offending phrases, in order to attract larger audiences. *Cheaper by the Dozen* (1950), a movie about a couple who try to conduct their lives efficiently as they have a dozen children, was translated as *Demokrat Aile* (*Democratic Family*), referring to the just and equal care given by the parents, but also connoting the Democratic Party, which was then enjoying its first years in power after the end of single party rule in 1950. Cecil B. de Mille's *The Crusades* (1935) was screened under the title *Selahattin Eyyübi ve Haçlı Seferleri* (*Salahaddin-i Ayyubi and the Crusades*), emphasising the role of the Abbasid Sultan fighting against the Crusades.[13] The movie's dialogue was probably also modified to justify this emphasis. In a practice that Robert Stam has called 'parasitical translation,' movies were sometimes also re-titled to refer to earlier box-office hits for obvious commercial reasons.[14] For example, after the success of Rudolph Valentino's *The Sheik* (Turkish title *Şeyh Ahmet*) and *The Son of Sheik* a number of movies screened under similar titles. Roman Novarro's *The Sheik Steps Out* (Irving Pichel, 1937) was screened under the familiar title *Şeyh Ahmet*, while *The Barbarian* (1933) was titled as *Þeyhin Apký* (*The Lover of the Sheik*) probably because the word barbarian, a term commonly used to describe Turks in the West, was conceived as insulting.

The movies were also exhibited in locally specific ways. Movie program formats varied. The program of Istanbul's *Türk* movie theatre in 1935 included a Turkish short, a Fox Movietone newsreel and a feature film.

Other Istanbul theatres showed double-bills, programming two films, each approximately sixty minutes long, for the price of one.[15] Generally, however, the two-hour program of American movie theatres was standard in Turkey, although exhibitors were reluctant to go beyond this limit. If a film did not fit into this program together with the shorts and newsreels, it was automatically shortened. For example, 20 minutes out of 140 minutes of *The Story of Dr Wassell* (Cecil B. de Mille, 1944) was removed by its Turkish distributors. This type of trimming caused misapprehensions and was strongly criticised by film journals in the 1940s.[16]

Distributors also removed songs and dance scenes from some musicals. Spectacular Hollywood productions such as *Kismet* (Vincente Minnelli, 1955) and *South Pacific* (Joshua Logan, 1958) were exhibited in much shorter versions, without their songs.[17] 1940s Turkish audiences disliked musicals, despite their being the third most popular genre (after action and drama) among audiences worldwide according to a survey conducted by MGM into the relative popularity of different genres, Turkey was listed with India, Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon as being among the countries with tastes almost diametrically opposed to those of American audiences.[18] These films were further modified by inserting locally produced scenes featuring local singers or dancers into the original film. Although this method was widely used in adapting Egyptian and European films, some Hollywood movies were also altered in this fashion. As Alim Şerif Onaran, a film scholar and former member of the Turkish censorship body, explains, international films were 'not just retitled, but altered in order to give the impression that the movie was set in Turkey.' As a result, 'the movies were presented as almost like a Turkish movie.'[19]

Indigenisation of this kind was a cheap way of catering to local tastes, since film production in Turkey was limited at the time. The modification of movies gained a new momentum in 1948, when local taxes on film admissions were reduced in favour of Turkish products. As a result, the number of films produced in Turkey increased from six in 1946 to eighteen in 1948. In response, foreign film distributors released nearly twice as many dubbed and modified films in 1948 as they had in the previous year.[20] Most of these dubbed versions included inserted indigenous performances, and new film studios were established to produce them. Faruk Kenç, who started his career by shooting inserts of local dancers, singers, comedians and magicians described this process as the 'Turkification' of a movie.[21] While these inserts often replaced song and dance scenes in the original prints of musicals, dramas and other genres of films also included such performances Here, the aim was to offer something like the variety form of programming that had been highly popular among Turkish audiences during and after

the silent period. As late as the mid-1930s, some Turkish movie theatres were not equipped with sound projectors, and most of these continued to use a variety programming format. For example, before the exhibition of a Turkish film, musicians performed a classical Turkish music concert in Konya's Belediye movie theatre.[22] Inserting locally produced performances or significant modification of films can be considered as an extension of this type of variety programming.

This suggests that even in the sound period the relationship between film and viewer in Turkey was 'presentational' rather than 'representational.' According to Hansen, early modes of presentation, alternating short films with live performances, borrowed their disjunctive style from other commercial forms of entertainment. 'Presentational' films address the viewer directly, with frequent asides to the camera and a frontal organisation of space. According to Hansen, 'early cinema's dispersal of meaning across filmic and nonfilmic sources, such as the alternation of films and numbers, lent the exhibition the character of a live event, that is, a performance that varied from place to place and time to time depending on theater type and location, audience composition, and musical accompaniment.'[23] Some of these practices remained quite common in Turkey in the sound era, and distributors and exhibitors transformed classical films into 'presentational' ones, by cutting different scenes into original copies or programming them together with musical numbers.

Dubbing

During the early sound years, Hollywood companies mostly dubbed their own movies into different languages, but before long they received protests from several countries about the use of unsuitable accents and intonation. This method also left little room to modify any inappropriate scenes. During the early 1930s, eleven countries introduced regulations requiring dubbing to be carried out on their home soil.[24] After the success of the first Turkish talking picture, İstanbul Sokaklarında (On the Streets of Istanbul) (Muhsin Ertuğrul, 1931), which was dubbed at Epinay Studios in France, Turkey's sole production company İpek Film decided to build a new sound film studio in Istanbul. In 1933, with equipment from Tobis-Klangfilm and under the supervision of a German engineer, İpek Film's dubbing studio was launched.[25] In its first year, the studio dubbed four movies.[26] Soon other dubbing studios were launched and, by the late 1940s, Turkish studios were dubbing more than a hundred movies a year.

The cultural adaptation and familiarisation provided by dubbing might best be exemplified by the case of voice actor Ferdi Tayfur (1904–58), who

worked for the İpek Studio. He was a man of many trades, translating and dubbing films as well as acting and directing. As fellow dubbing actor Mücap Ofluoğlu recalls, he could simultaneously translate films from French and English: 'in some cases, he would just listen to the original dialogue and then translate it into Turkish. German was his mother-tongue. He had a vast knowledge of Ottoman-Turkish and was proficient in Istanbul dialect. He could imitate the dialects of [non-Muslim] minorities and Anatolian people very well. He had an appealing and natural voice.'[27] Tayfur dubbed a number of Hollywood stars, such as Roman Novarro, Spencer Tracy, Clark Gable and Gary Cooper.[28] He is, however, best known for his successful dubbing of a number of comedians, including Groucho Marx, Eddie Cantor and both Laurel and Hardy.

Comedy was one of the most popular genres of 1930s and 1940s in Turkey, and the films of Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy were highly successful. Both characters were dubbed speaking broken Turkish with an American accent. İpek Film's studio manager, the famous poet Nazım Hikmet (1902–63), together with dubbing actor Ferdi Tayfur, thought Laurel and Hardy's gags and puns were 'too American' and did not make much sense in Turkish. The idea of Americans speaking Turkish with an accent did the trick, although the locale and the topics also had to be altered to fit into the context.[29] As Tayfur, who dubbed both characters, explained in a 1938 interview:

Question: Why did you decide to dub Laurel and Hardy in an American accent?

Tayfur: We wanted to add some extra comic elements via the characters' voice and accent. Don't you like it?

Q: On the contrary, I quite like it. But do you translate literally or do you improvise?

Tayfur: Well, at the beginning I tried to translate word by word, but later I thought it was more appropriate to lip synchronise my very own gags. For example, in one of the movies Laurel and Hardy bought the shadow (!) of the famous Galata Tower. In another one, Hardy sings a traditional folk song, while Laurel compares him to a local singer. Of course, there are similar adaptations in their movies.[30]

Similar strategies of adaptation were quite widespread. In Spain, Laurel and Hardy were dubbed as speaking in 'trick pigeon Spanish.' MGM modelled this for the French version of *The Night Owls* (James Parrott,

1930). Later, they were dubbed in French speaking with a strong English accent. Although 'poor accent and bad grammar were no hindrance to foreign success,' improper French 'reinforced the slapstick and burlesque character of comedies which were based on physical gags, incongruous behaviour, or loss of dignity.'[31] In a similar fashion, Tayfur added specific qualities to his characters' voice, such as pronunciation and accent, and used vernacular idioms. As Tim Bergfelder suggests, idioms based on class, generational or sub-cultural variations, create a nationally recognisable correspondence between language, social status, and character.[32] Through these modifications, comedy films were also assimilated into different generic traditions. In the end, these films were promoted almost like a local product, emphasising the significant role of their voice actor, as exemplified in this advertisement.

17.2 In this flyer Ferdi Tayfur is seen while dubbing a Laurel-Hardy film. The caption reads, 'Tayfur, both Laurel and Hardy' (*Perde ve Sahne* 4, 1941).

Tayfur also changed protagonists' names and transferred them into familiar locations. The Marx Brothers, who were renamed *Üç Ahbap Çavuşlar* (Three Buddies), lived in Istanbul in their films' Turkish versions. Groucho Marx, dubbed by Tayfur, was renamed as Arşak Palabıyıkyan, an Armenian from Istanbul (Palabıyık: bushy-moustache, with the suffix -yan meaning 'from the family of' in Armenian). According to Tayfur, 'this character was so well-liked that some Armenians living in Istanbul even claimed to be relatives of Arşak Palabıyıkyan.'[33] Chico was called Torik (Bonito), and Harpo was Kıvırcık (Curly) in the Turkish versions. Tayfur also transformed Eddie Cantor into a *nouveau-riche* merchant from Turkey's Kayseri region called Yani Babanoğlu, who is unscrupulously savvy —conforming to the stereotype of this region's inhabitants.

These were successful adaptations of the films' original 'ethnic role-playing' into another context. As Charles Musser notes, by the 1920s in Hollywood, 'the daily conditions of role-playing are reversed. Instead of immigrants seeking to lose their ethnic markings and assimilate, native-born performers assume ethnic identities—and yet do so without simulating specific qualities that would associate them with that group.'[34] Among the early sound comedians, the Marx Brothers and Eddie Cantor, both originating from the polyglot city of New York, used a humour that was verbal and ethnic. Cantor's *Whoopee* (1930) and Marx Brothers' *Animal Crackers* (1930) were 'quintessential New York comedies that take the city's ethnic, social, and cultural milieu as their subject and ridicule.'[35] These characters' comic appeal depended on their performances as highly adept role-players. In moving the original setting from New York to another cosmopolitan city, Istanbul, Tayfur managed to preserve the basic comic contradictions of the Marx Brothers. While Jewish Groucho Marx and WASP Margaret Dumont (Mrs. Rittenhouse in the original) are given Armenian names, Italian immigrant Chico is turned into a tough Turkish guy. In the case of Eddie Cantor, references to his Jewishness are replaced with local stereotypes. Similarly, in the 1950s, Italian comic Antonio de Curtis's popular character Toto was dubbed in a Turkish-Jewish accent in his movies' Turkish versions (by dubbing actor Necdet Mahfi Ayral).[36] Rubber-faced French comedian Fernandel (Fernand Contandin), who starred in the Don Camillo series, was also dubbed in a Kayseri accent, like Eddie Cantor (dubbed by actor Mücap Ofluoğlu).[37] The table below, adapted from Ian Jarvie's work on stars and ethnicity, shows the perceived ethnicities of these comedians both in the original and Turkish versions:[38]

Table 17.1   Comedy and ethnic role-playing in dubbed movies

Star name	Name on screen	Name in Turkish version	Where born	Ethnicity 'real'/ perceived	Ethnicity on screen	Ethnicity in Turkish version
Stan Laurel	Same	Same	Britain	British	WASP	American
Oliver Hardy	Same	Same	US	WASP	WASP	American
Julius Marx	Groucho	Arşak Palabıyıkyan	US	Jewish	Jewish	Armenian-Turkish
Adolph Marx	Harpo	Kıvırcık (Curly)	US	Jewish	—	—
Leonard Marx	Chico	Torik (Bonito) Necmi	US	Jewish	Italian	Turkish
Margaret Dumont (Margaret Baker)	Mrs. Rittenhouse	Madam Hayganuş	US	WASP	WASP	Armenian-Turkish
Eddie Cantor		Yani Babanoğlu	USA	Jewish	Jewish	Turkish (Kayseri)
Fernand Contandin	Fernandel	—	France	French	French	Turkish (Kayseri)
Antonio de Curtis	Toto	Toto	Italy	Italian	Italian	Jewish-Turkish
Ali al-Kassar	Ali Baba	Balıkçı Osman (Osman the Fisherman)	Egypt	Arab	Arab	Turkish (Black Sea)

Although accents were an asset in comedy, standardised dialect was a general requirement for other genres. Voice actors, mostly from Istanbul's Municipality Theatre, were trained to speak in an Istanbul accent, and both international and Turkish films were dubbed in this accent. In many films where accent was used to emphasise social and cultural differences, this produced an effect of cultural levelling. In this sense, dubbing functions as the effacement of the national signifier, as Mark Betz suggests. At the intra-national level, it creates the 'synthetic unity' of a shared national language. At the international level, on the other hand, dubbing may be regarded as a form of national protectionism and a different kind of nation building, since the dubbed film becomes a new, often local product once it is re-contextualised through this process.[39]

Dubbing was an important tool for cultural adaptation and familiarisation, especially in the case of comedy. Through dubbing, a film's foreign origin was at least partially effaced, giving its Turkish audience 'the chance to disavow what they really know, hence opening an avenue for cultural

ventriloquism through voice post-synchronization. In doing so, the dubbed film appears as a radically new product rather than a transformed old one, a single text rather than a double one.'[40]

Censorship

It was not only local distributors and exhibitors who omitted certain scenes from movies and replaced them with new ones; censors also decided how the movies should be modified, and Turkey's extremely strict censorship rules served as a straitjacket that all movies had to wear. Although there were virtually no rules on film censorship in the early days of cinema, the 1934 Law on the Obligation and Authority of the Police entrusted the duty of censorship to local governors. Under their authority, films were reviewed and censored by two police officers in each city where they were to be screened. The Regulation on the Control of Films and Screenplays was introduced in 1939. This regulation, based on an Italian model, stayed largely intact until 1985. It established two control commissions, one based in Istanbul reviewing foreign films, and the other in Ankara for Turkish films.[41] The membership of these boards comprised representatives of the governor (head), the chief of Metropolitan Police, the Interior Ministry (controlling the police force), the Ministry of Education and the Directorate of the Press (part of the Tourism Ministry). Depending on the nature of the film, representatives of the army or other ministries were also to join the commissions, and eventually army officers became *de facto* members.[42] The commissions not only reviewed all movies to be screened in Turkey, but also the scripts for movies that were to be shot. The rules of censorship were comprehensive and strict. Article 7 has been defined as the 'ten commandments of censorship' by film scholar Oğuz Makal.[43] This article prohibited movies deemed guilty of the following offences:

1) political propaganda in favour of a particular state;
2) degrading a race or a nation;
3) humiliating allied states and nations;
4) propagating religion;
5) propagating political, economic and social ideologies hostile to the national regime;
6) contradicting general decency and morals, and national sentiments;
7) debasing the honour and dignity of the armed forces, and propagating anti-militarism;
8) undermining the order and security of the country;

9) provoking people to commit crimes;
10) including scenes that are propaganda against Turkey.

Out of these 'ten commandments' the most controversial were numbers one and five. According to a survey by critic Nijat Özön, 30 per cent of banned foreign films fell under these clauses.[44] In the 1950s, the foreign film commission banned almost all Soviet productions, citing the two clauses. Another common basis for rejection was the fourth clause, under which a number of Hollywood epics, including *King of Kings* (Cecil B. de Mille, 1927), *The Ten Commandments* (Cecil B. de Mille, 1956), *The Bible* (John Huston, 1966), and *The Devil at Four o'Clock* (Melvyn Le Roy, 1961), were banned.[45] Decency and moral considerations were the other great concerns of the censors. Almost 25 per cent of movies were banned under clause six, according to Özön. Hollywood movies tamed by the Hays Code were not much affected by this rule, however, and the French 'New Wave' troubled the censors most in the 1960s.

The army was also sensitive about the portrayal of the military in films, whether indigenous or foreign productions. Clause seven affected a number of war movies such as *The Men* (Fred Zinnemann, 1950), *The Attack* (Robert Aldrich, 1956) and *The Victors* (Carl Foreman, 1963). Ironically, *Francis* (Arthur Lubin, 1950), the first of the series about the talking mule Francis, was also banned in 1951 because Francis befriended an army private. Scenes of revolt, riot or crime were also unacceptable under clause eight: *El Cid* (Anthony Mann, 1961), *Ben Hur* (William Wyler, 1959), *Doctor Zhivago* (David Lean, 1965), *Riot in Cell Block Eleven* (Don Siegel, 1954), and *Crisis* (Richard Brooks, 1950) were all banned under this clause. Finally, most of the international movies set in Turkey or related to Turkey, such as *Lawrence of Arabia* (David Lean, 1962), *America, America* (Elia Kazan, 1963)[46] and *Topkapı* (Jules Dassin, 1964) were banned from screening in accordance with clause ten.

The censors were also equipped with other rules that authorised them to ban movies that conformed to the 'ten commandments.' Article 8 of the Regulation permitted censors to prevent 'the screening of over-used and damaged films that might threaten spectators' eyesight.' Old classics with damaged prints and even some films with atmospheric lighting were banned under this article, which was used, controversially, to prohibit Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941) and *Macbeth* (1948), and *Long Voyage Home* (John Ford, 1940).[47]

The commission would approve the release of some previously rejected movies if certain conditions were met. These conditions, or in the terms used by the Regulation 'revision requests,' normally involved the removal

of certain scenes, re-titling or dubbing. The revisions could only be carried out after the approval of the film's distributor. In most cases, distributors consented to the revisions in order to avoid financial loss. Between 1940 and 1967 the censors banned 4.5 per cent of the foreign movies they reviewed (a total of 9,097), while approving the release of some 7.9 per cent of movies with certain revisions.[48] For example, the censorship committee authorised the release of Anatole Litvak's *The Journey* (1959) with two cuts. The film was set in the 1956 Hungarian uprising, and told the story of a bus-load of passengers who were detained by a Russian major. The censorship committee requested the removal of two sentences: 'Russians are good people' and 'Men are bastards, but after 10 p.m. they become irresistible.'[49] In another instance, the censors requested the removal of blessing scenes during the war between Spanish and Arab soldiers, as well as King Ferdinand's death, in *El Cid* (Anthony Mann, 1961).[50] Similarly, all the love scenes were removed from *Love Story* (Arthur Hiller, 1970) at the censors' request, turning it into an entirely platonic affair.[51]

It would be interesting to evaluate which countries' films had most problems with censorship. According to a survey by Özcan Tikveş, only 18.9 per cent of the films imported from the USSR could be screened in Turkey without any revisions. 41.3 per cent of USSR films were banned, while 39.8 per cent of them could only be released with some revisions. French and Italian films were also most likely to be censored. 17 per cent of French films and 13.1 per cent of Italian films—mostly on the grounds of general decency and morals—were subject to modification. Censors viewed US. films quite favourably, and banned only 2.6 per cent of these between 1951 and 1966.[52]

Table 17.2   Films reviewed by Istanbul Controlling Commission from 1951 and 1966

Country of origin	Conditionally accepted (%)	Rejected (%)
US	2.2	2.6
Britain	5.6	3.5
Italy	13.1	3.8
Germany	7	6.4
France	17	7.8
USSR	39.8	41.3
Total	8.1	5.3

(From Tikveş, *Mukayeseli Hukukta ve Türk Hukukunda Sinema Filmlerinin Sansürü*, p. 154).

We should also note that, even before they sent their films to the censorship body, the distributors might have modified them while dubbing or subtitling. As seen from these examples, what is left out from these films is quite significant. As Annette Kuhn has argued, film censorship 'is not reducible to a circumscribed and predefined set of institutions and institutional activities,' and should be understood as a process.[53] In this sense, the unwritten rules of prohibition have changed with time and context. In the relatively liberal atmosphere of the early 1960s and mid-1970s, the discourses and practices about film censorship shifted, allowing some former banning decisions to be lifted. One can explore the nature of these discourses and practices by examining the individual examples that are cited here.

Conclusion: The grocer and the chief

> America is the original version of modernity. We are the dubbed or subtitled version.
>
> Jean Baudrillard, *America*

Daniel Lerner, in his classic 1964 text on Turkish modernisation, *The Passing of Traditional Society*, explains the function of movies in this process. When he first visited Turkey in 1950, Lerner's first stop was Balgat, then a village eight kilometres outside Ankara. There he met a village chief (*muhtar*) who, for him, represented the traditional, and a grocer who was much more forward-looking. Lerner used the story of these characters as a parable of modern Turkey. One of the questions Lerner asked was: 'If for some reason, you could not live in your country, what other country would you choose to live in?' The chief's answer was 'nowhere,' while the grocer wanted to live in America, because he heard that 'it is a nice country, and with possibilities to be rich even for the simplest person.'[54] In Lerner's survey, which was carried out in the mid-1950s, the answers to this question form what he calls the 'empathy index.' According to the survey, a large majority of people who could imagine living outside Turkey chose the U.S. as their preferred imagined residence.

Table 17.3   Empathy index

Ability to imagine	Moderns	Transitionals	Traditionals
Living outside Turkey	94	74	49
Living in U.S.	100	98	74

Source: Lerner, 1964, 144.

Lerner was also interested in the 'influence' of movies, commenting that they became a 'commodity to which the ordinary Turk gained access on the terms of closest equality with the ordinary American' in the 1950s.[55] Ticket prices were, however relatively more expensive than in the US at the time. An ordinary Turkish worker was working at least an hour for a single admission to a cinema, whereas his American counterpart need to work for half that time.[56] Lerner believed that the growth of media—movies, theatres, radio and newspaper circulation—along with the parallel growth of literacy, would bring the Enlightenment to Turkey. He asked a number of questions, such as 'What sort of movies do you like best?,' 'Which country makes this kind of movies best?' and 'What is it about their movies that is better than others?' The grocer thought that Turkish movies were gloomy and ordinary, commenting that: 'I can guess at the start of the film how it will end … The American ones are exciting. You know, it makes people ask what will happen next.'[57] The chief did not have much of an opinion about them, and only stressed that his sons were always impressed by the movies they saw.

Table 17.4   Movie attendance

	Moderns	*Transitionals*	*Traditionals*
Attend movies	88	63	27
Prefer American movies*	68	48	23

* Among moviegoers

Source: Lerner, 1964, 139.

The most important deficiency in Daniel Lerner's study was that he conceived the modernisation process as a struggle between 'modernists,' who provided Turkey's elite with a model for the country's future, and the 'traditionalists,' who 'neither have nor seek a shaping influence over the Turkish future.' This approach has long been discarded as oversimplified in studies of modernisation.[58] Rather than merely providing a modern alternative to traditional forms, as Lerner would have claimed, Hollywood's products were appropriated and transformed in different contexts. These films were received and interpreted in ways that were bound to their local historical context, 'naturalising' them as part of Turkish cinema. Once the films entered local distribution they were subject to translations, cultural adaptations and significant modifications, which not only made them intelligible to a different language market, but also offered a vernacular version of the modern.

35. Quoted in ibid., pp. 130–31.

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American Films in Turkey

1. Miriam Hansen, 'The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular
Modernism,' *Modernism/Modernity* (1999) 6:2, p. 60.
2. Will H. Hays cited by Ruth Vasey, *The World According to Hollywood 1918–39* (Exeter:
University of Exeter Press, 1997), p. 21.
3. Victoria de Grazia, 'Mass Culture and Sovereignty: The American Challenge to
European Cinema, 1920–1960,' *Journal of Modern History* (1989), pp. 61, 79–81; Armand
Mattelart, C.X. Delcourt and M. Mattelart, *International Image Markets: In Search of an
Alternative Perspective* (London: Comedia, 1984), pp. 94–98.
4. See Thomas Guback, *The International Film Industry: Western Europe and America Since
1945* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1969); David Bordwell, Janet Staiger
and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production
to 1960* (London: Routledge, 1985); Kristin Thompson, *Exporting Entertainment: America
in the World Film Market 1907–34* (London: BFI, 1985); de Grazia, 'Mass Culture and
Sovereignty'; Mattelart *et al.*, *International Image Markets*.
5. Jacques Malthête, 'Méliès et le conférencier,' *Iris* (1996), pp. 122–23.
6. Hansen, 'Mass Production of the Senses,' p. 68.
7. The Production Code of 1930 stated that 'the history, institutions, prominent people,
and citizenry of other nations shall be represented fairly.' Donald Crafton, *The Talkies:
American Cinema's Transition to Sound 1926–1931* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons,
1997), p. 437.
8. For a wider conception of cinema as vernacular modernism see Kaveh Askari and Joshua
Yumibe, 'Cinema as 'Vernacular Modernism' Conference, University of Chicago, 18 May
2002,' *Screen* (2002) 43:4 pp. 432–37.
9. Hansen, 'Mass Production of the Senses,' p. 68.
10. Ironically, after the First World War, the movie theatre was renamed the *Russo-
Americain* in 1920. Mustafa Gökmen, *Eski İstanbul Sinemaları* (Istanbul: İstanbul
Kitaplığı Yayınları, 1991), p. 221.
11. Attila İlhan, 'Seyirci'yi "Yüceltmek" mi, "Kullanmak" mı?,' *Cumhuriyet* 1 January
2001.
12. *World Trade In Commodities*, VI:4, no. 21, p. 2.
13. Even before its release the movie was promoted as an epic on 'Turkish' (!) heroism.
Paramount invited a journalist from Turkish film magazine *Holivut* [sic] to the
filming. The conversation between journalist İsmet Sırrı and director Cecil de Mille is
revealing:.

    Sırrı: 'This is a film made for Christian audiences; I hope you do not misrepresent
    the heroism of Turkish leader Salahaddin.

    de Mille: 'I want to assure you that the real hero of this film is Salahaddin. I did
    not hesitate to represent Richard Coeur de Lion's inferior position.'

    See Ismet Sırrı, 'Atatürk'ün ünü Hollywood stüdyolarında,' *Holivut* 5:26 (1935), pp. 8–9;
    idem., 'Salahattin-i Eyyubinin Kılıncı,' *Holivut* 5:27 (1935), p. 7.
14. Robert Stam, *Subversive Pleasures: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism, and Film* (Baltimore, MD:
Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. 74.
15. For more information on movie programmes see Behzat Üsdiken, 'Beyoğlu'nun
Eski Sinemaları-I,' *Toplumsal Tarih* (1995) 4:22 pp. 12–18; idem, 'Beyoğlu'nun Eski

Sinemaları-II,' *Toplumsal Tarih* (1995) 4:23 pp. 12–18; Atilla Dorsay, *Benim Beyoğlum* (Istanbul: Çağdaş Yayıncılık, 1991); and Giovanni Scognamillo, Cadde-i Kebir'de Sinema (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1991).

16. See *Yıldız*, 15 October 1946 (16:185), pp. 8–9.
17. Dorsay, *Benim Beyoğlum*, p. 84.
18. Kerry Segrave, *American Films Abroad: Hollywood Domination of the World's Movie Screens from the 1890s to the Present* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1997), p. 197.
19. Alim Şerif Onaran, *Sinematoğrafik Hürriyet* (Ankara: İçişleri Bakanlığı Tetkik Kurulu Yayınları, 1968), p. 179.
20. According to the Istanbul Film Censorship Commission, 68 dubbed foreign films were released in 1947, and 116 in 1948. Onaran, *Sinematoğrafik Hürriyet*, p. 176.
21. Hülya Arslanbay, 'Faruk Kenç,' *Antrakt* 24 (1993), p. 25; Mediha Sağlık, 'Sinemamızın İlk Yılları: Faruk Kenç İle Söyleşi,' *Kurgu* 14 (1996), p. 100.
22. *Holivut* 4:49 (1934), p. 5.
23. Miriam Bratu Hansen, 'Early Cinema, Late Cinema: Transformations of the Public Sphere,' in Linda Williams (ed.), *Viewing Positions: Ways of Seeing Film* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press), p. 139.
24. Segrave, *American Films Abroad*, pp. 202–203.
25. Gökhan Akçura, *Aile Boyu Sinema* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1995), pp. 59–60.
26. Gökmen, *Eski İstanbul Sinemaları*, p. 61.
27. Mücap Ofluoğlu, *Bir Avuç Alkış* (Istanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları, 1985), p. 65.
28. Gökhan Akçura, 'Dublaj Tarihimizde Yeri Doldurulamayan Bir Efsane: Ferdi Tayfur-1,' *Antrakt* 5 (1992), p. 43.
29. Memet Fuad, *Gölgede Kalan Yıllar* (Istanbul: Adam Yayınları, 1997), p. 298.
30. Cited by Gökhan Akçura, *Aile Boyu Sinema* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1995), p. 170.
31. Martine Danan, 'Hollywood's Hegemonic Strategies: Overcoming French Nationalism with the Advent of Sound,' in Andrew Higson and Richard Maltby (eds) *'Film Europe' and 'Film Americ': Cinema, Commerce and Cultural Exchange 1920–1939* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), p. 231.
32. Tim Bergfelder, 'Reframing European Cinema—Concepts and Agendas for the Historiography of European Film,' *Lähikuva* 4 (1998), p. 13.
33. Agah Özgüç, *Başlangıcından Bugüne Türk Sinemasında İlk'ler* (Istanbul: Yılmaz Yayınları, 1990), p. 46.
34. Charles Musser, 'Ethnicity, Role-playing, and American Film Comedy: From *Chinese Laundry Scene* to *Whoopee* (1894–1930),' in Lester D. Friedman (ed.), *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema* (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p. 56.
35. Musser, 'Ethnicity,' p. 62.
36. E.g. *Il medico dei pazzi* (Eduarda Scarpetta, 1954, Turkish title: *Toto Tımarhanede*) (Scognamillo, *Cadde-i Kebir'de Sinema*, p. 74).
37. Ofluoğlu, *Bir Avuç Alkış*, p. 140.
38. Ian C. Jarvie, 'Stars and Ethnicity: Hollywood and the United States, 1932–51,' in Lester D. Friedman (ed.), *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema* (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1991), pp. 82–111.
39. Mark Betz, 'The Name above the (Sub)Title: Internationalism, Coproduction, and Polyglot European Art Cinema,' *Camera Obscura*, 16:1 (2001), p. 34.
40. Antje Ascheid, 'Speaking Tongues: Voice Dubbing in the Cinema as Cultural Ventriloquism,' *The Velvet Light Trap* 40 (1997), pp. 39–40.
41. Instead of censorship the officials preferred the more 'neutral' term of control.
42. A former member of the commissions reports that, an officer from the Army's First

Division permanently joined the commission in Istanbul which censors foreign films. Onaran, *Sinematoğrafik Hürriyet*, p. 153.

43. Oğuz Makal, 'Le cinema et la vie politique: le jeu s'appelle "vivre avec la censure,"' in Mehmet Basutçu (ed.), *Le Cinema Turc* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1996), p. 134.

44. Nijat Özön, *Karagözden Sinemaya: Türk Sineması ve Sorunları*, vol. 2 (Ankara: Kitle Yayınları, 1995), p. 316.

45. The films were banned in 1953, 1962, 1966 and 1962 respectively. The decision on *The Ten Commandments* was overturned by the Court of Appeals and the film was later released. Özkan Tikveş, *Mukayeseli Hukukta ve Türk Hukukunda Sinema Filmlerinin Sansürü* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1968), p. 177.

46. These two movies could only be screened during the 1990s on television.

47. Özön, *Karagözden Sinemaya* and Tikveş, *Mukayeseli Hukukta ve Türk Hukukunda Sinema Filmlerinin Sansürü*.

48. Onaran, *Sinematoğrafik Hürriyet*, p. 174.

49. 25.1.1962, File: 91123/901.

50. 11.3.1966.

51. 8.10.1971, File no: 91123/983. I would like to thank Dilek Kaya Mutln for letting me use the censorship committee's reports. For a thorough analysis of these reports see Nezih Erdoğan and Dilek Kaya, 'Institutional Intervention in the Distribution and Exhibition of Hollywood Films in Turkey,' *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 22:1 (2002), pp. 47–59.

52. Özkan Tikveş, *Mukayeseli Hukukta ve Türk Hukukunda Sinema Filmlerinin Sansürü* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1968).

53. Annette Kuhn, *Cinema, Censorship and Sexuality, 1909–1925* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 127.

54. Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (New York: The Free Press, 1964), p. 25.

55. Lerner, *Passing of Traditional Society*, p. 119.

56. R.D. Robinson, cited by Lerner, *Passing of Traditional Society*, p. 120.

57. Lerner, *Passing of Traditional Society*, p. 28.

58. For an insightful critic of Lerner's study see Reşat Kasaba, 'Kemalist Certainties and Modern Ambiguities,' in Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (eds), *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997).

Chapter 18: Cowboy Modern: African Audiences, Hollywood Films, and Visions of the West

1. J.M. Burns, *Flickering Shadows: Cinema and Identity in Colonial Zimbabwe* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2002), pp. 53–54.

2. A.R. Baeta, 'The Two Worlds,' *Sight and Sound* 17 (1948), pp. 5–8.

3. Baeta, 'The Two Worlds', p. 5.

4. Baeta, 'The Two Worlds', p. 5.

5. Burns, *Flickering Shadows*, esp. pp. 37–59.

6. I developed this argument in 'Popular Films and Colonial Audiences: The Movies in Northern Rhodesia,' *American Historical Review* 106 (2001), pp. 81–105.

7. Baeta, 'The Two Worlds', p. 7.

8. Richard Maltby, 'Introduction,' in Melvyn Stokes and Richard Maltby (eds), *Identifying Hollywood's Audience: Cultural Identity and the Movies* (London: British Film Institute, 1999), p. 3.