

## **Bir Başkadır: An Accurate Reflection or Another Stereotypical Approach?**

**By İdil Çakmut**

*Bir Başkadır*, one of the latest productions of Netflix Turkey, written and directed by Berkun Oya, had created great controversy among the audience. While some praised the series for its unique camera work, acting, and scenario, some badly criticized it for being incapable of displaying the Turkish society with all of its aspects and putting certain people under a specific mold.

Currently, we see that Turkish psych-dramas are on the rise. Since the very first day of their streaming, series such as *Kırmızı Oda*, *Masumlar Apartmanı*, and lately *Bir Başkadır*, has gained a huge number of admirers from various different strata of the Turkish society. When we dig deep into the roots of this admiration, there are a couple of reasons we can list. Firstly, all of these productions are away from Turkish TV clichés. For many years, there was just a single portrait of a certain part of the society and one specific view of Istanbul that was shown. We watched the actors residing in luxurious villas, driving brand new cars, partying day after day, and living in astounding prosperity. However, as we all knew, this did not reflect the overall truth of the everyday streets we walk or the stories of our people which we usually witness. This was the truth of television. It was a dreamland that helped people escape from their daily struggles. However today, this dreamland is not functioning anymore. People are bored of watching the exact same unrealistic stories. They no longer want to ignore the real issues of the community as a great majority is now aware that we have serious problems that need to be conveyed to the media and talked about. That's the reason why psych-dramas are in demand at the moment. They cover up a distinct storyline, bring up traumas to screens, show the life of the other side of the community which has been disregarded by Turkish TV for so long. These series' share a common cause that aims to confront society with its own reality and raise awareness of its significant issues.

Varying from the others, *Bir Başkadır* as a series gives us a taste like a festival movie from its very beginning. Production is mainly focused on giving a realistic reflection of society. We watch the lives of entirely different people with totally distinct backgrounds. Unlike the other series, we see both faces of Istanbul, both the city and the suburbs. We do not see a single part of our community, but various groups from different socio-economic levels, ethnicities, and beliefs. However, are these portrayals accurately reflect Turkish society? Well, the answer is quite simple: *Bir Başkadır* is not a documentary. There can not be an "accurate" or "inaccurate" reflection in a fictional work as everything is a product of the writer's imagination. Of course, our society is not solely consisted of these characters, but the production can not be blamed because of it since the series does not have a claim to fully express the community with all of its aspects. Thus, it would be inappropriate to question the series' (in)accuracy. As it's fiction, it only portrays what the writer creates. There are no (un)truths that can be discussed.

Well, we watch created worlds on TVs. Sometimes these worlds are far away from reality, but some are very close to it. *Bir Başkadır*, differing from the others, provided us with a world more similar to ours. We watched the lives that are not so difficult to come across in our daily lives but more importantly, once again it helped us to face various taboos that are still present in our people's minds. It reminded us how biases polarized us throughout all these years but in the end, made everyone realize that various colors form our society. We might look different at the first glance, but actually, we all share the same feeling. Congratulations once again to Berkun Oya and the entire cast for all their efforts.