**TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ
ANKARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
MEDYA VE İLETİŞİM ÇALIŞMALARI
ANABİLİM DALI**

METİN ERKSAN'IN FİLMLERİNDE UYARLAMA VE KÜLTÜREL ADAPTASYON

ADAPTATION AND CULTURAL APPROPRIATION IN METIN ERKSAN'S FILMS

Tezli Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Başak Günbay

Ankara, 2022

TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ
ANKARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
MEDYA VE İLETİŞİM ÇALIŞMALARI
ANABİLİM DALI

ADAPTATION AND CULTURAL APPROPRIATION IN METIN ERKSAN'S FILMS

Tezli Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Başak Günbay

Prof. Dr. Özgür Yaren

Ankara, 2022

TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ
ANKARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
MEDYA VE İLETİŞİM ÇALIŞMALARI
ANABİLİM DALI

ADAPTATION AND CULTURAL APPROPRIATION IN METIN ERKSAN'S FILMS

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

Tez Danışmanı
Prof. Dr. Özgür Yaren

TEZ JÜRİSİ ÜYELERİ

Adı ve Soyadı	**İmzası**
1- Dr. Murat Çelik	
2- Dr. Canan Balan	
3- Prof. Dr. Özgür Yaren	

Tez Savunması Tarihi
29.06.2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On this path, I have many people to thank. For his invaluable guidance and patience throughout this process, I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Özgür Yaren. Also, I appreciate the scholarship provided by TUBITAK, which eased the pressure of working and studying at the same time.

I am also beyond grateful to Prof. Dr. Ahmet Gürata for offering his book to me when I had difficulty finding it. It helped me a lot to find my way in my study.

My dear friend, Şeyda I am so grateful for your presence in my life, especially in important parts like this one. Güliz, I cannot thank you enough for always being there for me, even when you had so much on your plate.

I am forever indebted to Eda, who was my study buddy during the process and Nurcan for being an inspiration for me.

I cannot express my gratitude to my sister, Sinem, who has backed me not only in this thesis but through life. Thanks for your infinite support.

I am thankful to my cat, Yoda for offering his companionship and giving me his love at late hours when I was working on my thesis.

Finally, I should give credit to my boyfriend, Egemen, for his support and for offering his shoulder for me to cry on during the challenging parts of this process.

Table Of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Cinema in Turkey found itself a space to flourish within the Yeşilçam Cinema, which took its name from a street in Istanbul where the producer offices were located. Yeşilçam dominated the period between the late 1950s and 1980s, offering a screen that met with the public. Films became more popular among the Turkish public, and this led to the occurrence of an aspect in which going to films was a part of the culture. This escalated the industry with the increasing number of films and movie theatres. In fact, many producers whose backgrounds were not related to the film industry in any way entered the film industry for financial reasons as this, overall, was an industry, as well. This industry, the Yeşilçam industry, thus, relied on several factors, two of which are the financial conditions and public's demands. These were related to each other in a way that caused the emergence of a system in which the producers sold the films to the managements in some districts of Turkey. Through this, these managements could demand some points from producers regarding films, involving choosing the stars and the topics of the films which were most likely to sell. Thus, the elements of films were chosen based on their potentiality to be viewed. Since there used to be a great deal of competition in the industry, producers and district managements wanted to produce as many films as they could. This type of system allowed adaptations, remakes and rip offs to be prevalent in the film industry as they offered great ease related to time and effort of filmmaking since there would not be any need for writing scripts at all.

On the other hand, while the Yeşilçam system provided a suitable area for the film industry to advance, the films could not find their own "voice" since they carried the burden of meeting the demands mentioned above. The aim was mostly to obtain commercial gain

(Scognamillo, 1998:163). The industry became full of copies of Western films or films involving the same themes and plots that were repeatedly screened. The 1960s were a productive term as a reaction to Western domination on Yeşilçam, which was constituted of remakes. A number of directors, who were in the pursuit of National Cinema, a cinema that owns a unique language reflecting Turkish culture, can be counted in this context; for example, Lütfi Akad, Halit Refiğ, Atıf Yılmaz and Metin Erksan. Apart from his involvement in the National Cinema Movement, Metin Erksan occupied a significant position for the era as he was known as a director who enjoyed adapting from literature to cinema in his own unique style. What makes him even more appealing for this study is his tendency to go beyond Turkish Literature and to adapt from foreign literary texts. His intentions, however, were never to reflect the literary source on the screen as it was or screening Western culture and cinematic approach for the audience. He aimed at adapting and appropriating it in a way that the audience could be familiarized with the work. The text, therefore, was only a source of inspiration for the film plot and the rest of the film was placed in the creative hands of the director. According to Metin Erksan, it was very difficult for the directors to leave out their own interpretations of the work while adapting a book on screen. Moreover, he revealed that he used the tragedy of humans as an inspiration for his own works while adopting a realistic approach during his filmmaking process (Erksan, 1977). Therefore, these interpretations in the process of the adaptation carry great importance in terms of what they uncover about the society, culture and the humans they are exposed to.

This study, based on the brief explanation of the study field, aims to analyze Metin Erksan's adaptations from other literary texts under the theory of cultural appropriation. The specific films to be discussed are *Ölmeyen Aşk/The Love That does not die*, (1966) *Kadın Hamlet/Female Hamlet* (1977) and *Mahalle Arkadaşları/The Quarter Friends* (1961)

adapted from *Wuthering Heights* (1847) by Emily Bronte, *Hamlet* (1603) by William Shakespeare and *Cannery Row* by John Steinbeck (1945) respectively. The study will seek to understand how Metin Erksan interpreted these works on screen through an examination of his style and stance regarding Turkish Cinema. Ultimately, Metin Erksan's reading of these adaptations will be discussed within the frame of cultural appropriation along with the alterations and adjustments he made, which suited the historical, political and cultural context of Turkey in the 1950s and 1960s.

The method to be used in this study is thematic analysis through these three literary adaptations. The common themes in the aforementioned films will be the main focus of this study, which will be discussed in the following chapters in this thesis. It will be seen that the adaptations bear some similarities regarding the issues they are dealing with. Even though the study mostly examines the film adaptations and how they reflect Turkish Cinema, audience, society and culture, a comparison of the books and the films will be briefly mentioned as to comprehend how they are appropriated to Turkish cinema. Furthermore, the cultural, historical and political situation of the specific period in Turkey will be related to recurring patterns, which are class difference, social relationships within class difference, the relation between wealth and corruption and the issue of good and evil characters. The first category will examine how the director handled the class division in each film. In order to understand the films, it is highly essential that the readers understand the certain way the director approached matters in terms of class division as the central theme. The second category, on the other hand, analyses the social relationship in the films with regard to understanding the social structures within the given plot. A certain connection between the display of the wealth and corruption will be analyzed as the third section of thematic analysis. This heading will prompt us to scrutinize the themes of good and evil in the book adaptations,

which is the last section of the analysis. This part will discuss this issue as a complex and complicated matter since Erksan offers more complex main characters, inclined to be evil, and even to commit crime, despite the fact that they are fundamentally good, which is very unlike to many Yeşilçam stereotype films.

In order to understand the patterns in the adaptations, it is of utmost importance to examine the historical, political and cultural scene of Turkey and the reflection of these on the Turkish screen. The following chapter will briefly reveal the situation of Turkey in the 1950s and 1960s along with the context of cinema in the same years as to comprehend the relationship between cinema and flow of the historical context of Turkey.

CHAPTER I. FILM AND ADAPTATION IN THE TURKISH CONTEXT

1.1 Historical, political and cultural context in the 1950s and 1960s in Turkey

To understand the significance of this section, as to why films should be considered in relation to the historical and political conditions of a country, we must initially recognize their explicit relationship with each other. Cinema as a form of art, naturally, has been attracted by the rich products the historical events and the politics surrounding the historical flow have to offer. Atilla Dorsay (1984) depicts this involvement of two fields as an ordinary and expected case. According to him, art aims to change humans while politics aspires to alter society. In fact, their alikeness stems from the fact that cinema is itself a political event having a political structure and effect (Dorsay, 1984:27). Uçakan (1977) had also remarked about the same relationship between the politics and cinema by stating that "in order to determine ideological characteristics of cinema, first, we have to shape the country's (Turkey's) general ideological structure briefly as this form (cinema) is also inextricably linked with this structure, the same as the other art forms." (Uçakan, 1977:7). It is; thus, vital to address these historical incidents and the politics subjected to the period as they will lead us on a better path for understanding the context of the Turkish Cinema at that time.

As for the historical flow and the politics applied in the time periods, Dorsay (1984) relates the politics in the history and the development of cinema as a formation in which the latter was affected by the former in a crossing relationship. For example, only one name could be mentioned in the "Atatürk period" for cinema, showing the same similarity with the period itself which was ruled by one party. The film industry obviously demonstrated the same

qualities in the early Republic era in Turkey, predominated by one director (Muhsin Ertuğrul) without sufficient and proper staff. On the other hand, the 1950s, which influenced the later periods, was a time where cinema flourished with a diversity of directors appearing on the scene. This period overlaps with a new era in the politics of Turkey: the multiple party system (Dorsay, 1984:45). However, Dorsay (1984) adds that political advancement of the 1950s, an unplanned and uncontrolled capitalization, impacted the cinema sector in the same manner. Expectedly, the content and the structure of the films were likewise affected by this.

The incidents and events which occurred in the 1960s were cumulative results of the courses and actions that happened in the 1950s. Briefly, 1950 was a turning point for Turkey's politics as it was the very first time Turkey was ruled by a different party, demonstrating that the country was ready for a multiple-party system. The Democrat Party (DP) was elected as the party in power with the leadership of Adnan Menderes. The DP ruled the country until the 1960s, winning the 1954 elections again. The first years of the DP rule created an economically uplifting picture overall with the government's liberal economy policies. They supported agricultural growth by offering inexpensive credits to farmers, which allowed a massive improvement in the cultivated area and led the farmers' income to soar. With the utilization of American methods and economic aid, the roads were expanded by linking village roads for the first time. They also supported foreign investments in Turkey with the hope that investors in Turkey would also start investing. This would, automatically, causing the economy to soar. However, the outcome was not as brilliant as expected because Turkish investors did not venture to invest as much as Americans, by which the idea was heavily influenced (Zürcher, 1993:224-225).

Despite these improvements and attempts to boost the economy, what Democrats did only worked for a short time, as they did not aim for long-term solutions. Also, Menderes, the

Prime Minister, was strongly opposed to arranging economic plans to develop the economy. Instead, they acted quickly, and the actions taken were mostly unorganized. In addition, the imports were mostly made from a budget that was inadequate, as a result of which created a trade deficit. Not being able to meet this deficit, the economy in Turkey, inevitably, faced an influx (Zürcher, 1993:225-229).

Regarding the societal aspect of the situation, Menderes adopted and imposed the notion and the target of being a "little America" and "raising millionaires in every neighborhood" in the society (Esen, 2002:54). Even though he supposedly dreamed of a country on the edge of economic rise, the results were quite the opposite of what he claimed. He, initially, made some individuals from some professions happy, such as farmers. However, the influx of deterioration in 1955 caused the wages and salaries to become worse affecting the citizens more and more. Moreover, the improvement in agriculture did not prevent the migration to the urban areas. The population in the cities increased massively. Nevertheless, the cities were not equipped to meet the increasing population's needs, such as accommodation. As a result, they had to construct their own houses which eventually caused the occurrence of shanty houses (built at night), which had no electricity, water or proper infrastructure (Zürcher, 1993:256-257). In addition, most of the migrants were unemployed and had to find temporary jobs. It was very common to have all the members of the family working in jobs in order to contribute the budget. Even the women worked in the houses of the bourgeois people helping with the household chores. This; however, did not prevent the migrants from going back to their countryside homes permanently (Zürcher, 1993:270). Thus, the social structure of the cities changed with the increasing number of people in working class.

Apart from the worsening economy and the changes in the social structure, the DP noticed that populations support was decreasing. The decreasing votes from the intellectuals and the

armed forces were especially concerning. Despite this, Menderes managed to be reelected in the 1954 and 1957 elections. However, Menderes became more of an authoritarian because of his awareness towards the loss of support. He applied some of these authoritarian steps in the fields regarding civil servants, judges and professors, ensuring his dominance over bureaucracy, judicial services and universities (Zürcher, 1993:229-230)

As a result of the government's authoritarian attitude, the riots and protests held by students and journalists occurred in the country (Zürcher, 1993:230). With the increasing tension, the military took over the government with the coup in 1960. After taking control, they formed a council constituted of universities, political parties, judges and representatives of a variety of groups with the intent of returning to a more civil ruling as soon as possible (Esen, 2002:66). Meanwhile, they executed the previous Prime Minister, Menderes, the Minister of Finance, Polatkan and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zorlu. They declared the new Constitution in 1961 and decided to hold elections. However, none of the parties won the elections and this initiated the "coalition" period (Esen, 2002:68-69).

1.2   Context of Cinema

This turbulent atmosphere within the constantly changing politics and ongoing incidents surely affected cinema from the aspects of both politics followed and historical background. From a government which was overambitious about economic rise to a very complex period starting with a coup, Turkey already exhibited a structure that was divided and complicated. Filmmakers therefore reacted to these contradictions and complexity. Eventually films evolved into an art form flourishing with a diversity of directors and films. Yet, it cannot be totally claimed that all these challenging background events were to be only beneficial for

cinema. Financial difficulties and disorganization in the country also affected cinema negatively.

Along with Turkey's transition to a multiple party system, the cinema had also been transformed into a new era with the emergence of a great number of directors. However, as it can be seen in the previous paragraph, the films of 1950s lacked social consciousness and did not exactly project the real conditions of the country. This period was a time the film industry turned to American culture, and this was not surprising in an environment where consumption culture and American discourse prevailed. Films mostly revolved around some themes related to dreams, lifestyles with abundant consumption. For example, a millionaire appeared suddenly in every neighborhood or characters with young and elite women. Moreover, films carrying ideological messages or having criticism either could not pass the censorship or were pruned. Thus, the ideology of the term and the cinema fit perfectly each other (Esen, 2002:60-62). It is evident that the period was flawed in that the films lacked the complete sense of conveying social messages or reflecting the true self of Turkish society on screen. Nevertheless, it would be unfair to claim that this decade had no effect on the future of Turkish Cinema. Özön (1985) describes that time as years when moviemakers attempted to tell their stories with cinematic terms and cinematic language even though they were insufficient. Also, it should be marked that, for the first time, criticism of cinema appeared in the field and a relationship among directors, critics and spectators was constructed (Özön, 1985:361). The sector began to adopt a perception in which the films were more closely addressed to the audience as well as connecting with viewers and presenting them with a relatively similar materials as they could find or desire in their lives.

While the 1950s prepared the decade for an even more fruitful stage for the cinema, the 1960s' cinematic approach definitely used this as an advantage in relation to growing and

improving. Even though the 1960s involved some common features as in the 1950s, such as the intensity of the interest in "public-cinema" and producing more films which the audience was familiar with, it is essential to divide these two time periods as there are significant differences to mention as well (Esen, 2002:71-72). Bearing the influence of the prevailing leftist point of view in the world and the simultaneously evolving cinema with new movements including social realism, the Turkish Film industry, considering inconsistent social life with the military coup and the executions, also matured during the 1960s (Şen, 2010, p19). Kaplan (2004) states that the period continued to carry the burden of economic concerns leading films to handle popular topics. However, while these films met the demands of the audience's interests and needs, they could not exclude the social and cultural shifts in the society. Thus, these films were intellectually unique productions (Kaplan, 2004, p. 76).

Savaş Arslan (2005) remarks on another aspect of the characteristics of Turkish Cinema which has been continuing since the 1940s. Directors continued to translate other films from other countries; however, as Scognomilla (as cited in Arslan, 2005) pointed out, they did not convey the whole translation as it was impossible to translate the same films on the Turkish screen. Turkish films, on the other hand, were formed within the melodramatic mode including the same patterns such as love between rich man and poor girl. This is called *Turkification*, in which the films were moderated by several melodramatic aspects within the changes and modifications in accordance with Turkish culture along with Western borrowings. Arslan (2005) states that *Turkification* had not always been successful even though all of the films followed themes that were similar to each other. They only achieved this when they succeeded in exhibiting accurate and realistic materials on screen. Thus, Western realism must have been appropriated and adopted accordingly. The stories taken from other countries, such as *Pygmalion* (1913), failed to be adapted to Turkish Cinema as

they excluded one of the most crucial factors in *Turkification*: to be realistic to the culture they have been adapted to (Scognamillo, 1973b:70-71, as cited in Arslan, 2005)

One of the most significant impacts leading the formation of the 1960s cinema was the need of constituting a unique cinematic language. Discussions and criticisms towards films and cinema were held on cinema and films. According to Şen, social realism, which was introduced thanks to Metin Erksan's film *Gecelerin Ötesi/Beyond the Nights* (1960), played a main role among these debates. Besides Erksan, Osman Seden, Atıf Yılmaz and Halit Refiğ also produced films in accordance with the view of social realism. These films adopted an opposing position towards religion and those representing it. The films sometimes displayed religious people working in cooperation with evil and bullying people. Moreover, when the films started to reflect the "society" and "realism", there were certain reactions towards materializing the issues, such as workers and the problems with unions and poverty (Şen, 2010:19-20). Although these films were not many in number to form a movement, they were notable in terms of conveying that cinema was not only a means of entertainment, but also a platform on which to share social ideas on (Esen, 2002:73). *Susuz Yaz/Dry Summer* by Metin Erksan (1963), awarded in the Berlin Film Festival, *Karanlıkta Uyananlar/The Ones Who Wake Up in the Dark* by Ertem Göreç (1964), which strike-union-exploitation was pointed out for the first time and *Toprağın Kan/Blood of the Earth* by Atıf Yılmaz (1966), handling the issue of localizing petrol can be given examples for this kind (Esen, 2000, p. 166).

In pursuit of building a cinematic language, "the National Cinema" movement was formed with the contribution of several directors. Led by Halit Refiğ, who was influenced by Kemal Tahir, the movement was followed by many prominent directors of the time including Metin Erksan, Lütfi Akad and Atıf Yılmaz (Şen, 2010, p. 20), which will be explored in detail in the following section.

1.3   Turning to Adaptations

To expand the concept of the National Cinema Movement, we must consult Halit Refiğ's words about the term, and it is substantial to begin with the new title, adaptations, since Refiğ's statements and explanations concern this issue very closely. When the National Cinema was debated, Turkish Cinema was divided into two school of thoughts, one of which had been suggesting turning towards the West. Refiğ (1971), strongly opposed to the idea of merely adopting Western style and language to Turkish Cinema, stated that adopting the Western cinematic approach to our own cinema was nothing but cultural imperialism causing us to lose our freedom of thought (Refiğ, 1971:60-61). He was referring to the foreign films that had been adapted to Turkish Cinema without any or with little or np changes and also the attempts of films consisting of clear "western" thoughts and lives in. All in all, Halit Refiğ (1971) defined Turkish Cinema under this movement with these words: "Turkish Cinema is a window opening the public's thoughts, interests and excitements. It is a rich treasure for those intellectuals who want to become closer to the public and want to know the people." (Refiğ, 1971, p. 78). What Refiğ put forward with his book, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası/The Struggle for National Cinema*, was a milestone in comprehending the stance of adaptations on the Turkish screen.

Obviously, the major problem with the Turkish Cinema, adopting Western culture and cinematic approach, and the adaptations overlaps in Turkish Cinema. The issue with debate on adaptations, universally, has been nearly similar, whether being faithful to the source or making some alterations for the sake of the book or the film, which will be explained in the next chapter as a whole. Turning to Turkish Cinema, there were many adaptations from Turkish Literature on cinema. Giovanni Scognamillo (1998) points to 1949-1959 when a number of Turkish authors appeared in directors' repertoire, such as Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar

(*Efsuncu Baba/The Magician,* 1949), Halide Edip Adıvar (*Vurun Kahpeye/Strike the Whore,* 1949; *Ateşten Gömlek,* 1950; *Yol Palas Cinayeti,* 1955) and Reşat Nuri Güntekin (*Bir Dağ Masalı/The Story of a Mountain* 1946/47; *Dudaktan Kalbe/From Lip to Heart*, 1951; *Yaprak Dökümü/Leaf Cast* 1958). The interest in Turkish Literature was obvious for some reasons: benefiting well known, best-selling books, being freed of the distress of looking for an authentic subject and drawing some authors to cinema for some directors. Scognamillo marks this intensity of adaptation in cinema as a starting point for a relationship between cinema and literature (Scognamillo, 1998:117-120).

"The true identity of a film, any film, does not occur from the source that it used, or it is based on. On the other hand, benefiting from a local source does not measure the value of the film, either. This situation does merely add attribution to the film." (Scognamillo, 1998:117). Giovanni Scognamillo (1998) concludes his ideas on adaptations while stating the foreign adaptations during the period between 1949-1959. Many adaptations from other cinemas appeared, including *Papatya* (1958) from Erich Von Stroheims' book *Paprica, Yaşamak Hakkımdır* (1958) from the film *You Only Live Once*, and *Sevdiğim Sendin* (1955) from Andre Gide's book and Jean Delannoy's film *Pastoral Symphony* (1946). He adds that these adaptations certainly brought certain material to our cinema and the audience despite the fact that these were the mere results of a search of new kinds and the continuing concern for commercial success (Scognamillo, 1998:123).

1.4 Metin Erksan's Attitude towards Adaptations in Turkish Cinema

The 1960s' Turkish Cinema highlighted one of the most prominent and authentic directors of the time for understanding adaptations and remakes. Erksan certainly brought a new perspective to cinema in Turkey by producing socially realistic films and participating in the

National Film Movement. He was also a substantial figure for adaptations because his style differed greatly from his contemporaries and predecessors. Metin Erksan, born in 1929 in Çanakkale, graduated from the department of Art History at the Faculty of Literature, which may be one of the motives of his relatively intense interest in literature adaptations. He did not lead the exact same career path as his contemporary colleagues such as Lütfi Akad and Atıf Yılmaz. His motive for entering the film industry was mostly based on his passion for cinema, being both a critic and script writer. He did not work as an assistant director; therefore, he did not go through the master-apprentice structure (Scognamillo, 1998:143-144).

Erksan began his film career as a scriptwriter by creating his first work *Binnaz* in 1950. This scenario; however, was to be shot nine years later by Mümtaz Yener. He took over directing *Karanlık Dünya/The Dark World* in 1952. This was a rural film about Ashik (bard) Veysel's life, who was a prominent folk poet and singer, in his own village. Erksan did not abstain from showing the challenges the poet had encountered in his life. Likewise, the film also encountered some difficulties during and after the shooting process, one of which was censorship. As a result of this, some scenes were cut and added making his work very meaningless (Scognamillo, 1998:144).

After this experience, he started to shoot his initial literary adaptations including Peyami Safa's *Beyaz Cehennem* as Cingöz Recai/*The White Hell* (1954), Halide Edip Adıvar's *Yol Palas Cinayeti* (1955) and Güzide Sabri Aygün's *Ölmüş Bir Kadın'ın Evrakı/The Document of a Dead Woman* (1956-57). He also had opportunities to produce other works apart from these adaptations. One of his most important works was *Dokuz Dağın Efesi/The Hero of Nine Mountains* (1958), which was also a production that could not pass censorship. However, Esen (2002) states that the film was very unique in terms of the cinematic language and the

way Erksan handled the topic and the visuals. *Dokuz Dağın Efesi* was based on a real-life story of a bandit, in which Erksan conveyed the real behaviors and attitudes of Turkish people through cinema with successful language (Esen, 2002, p. 116).

During the 1960s, his career peaked with films such as *Gecelerin Ötesi* (1960), with which he criticized the ruling Democrat Party. Following that year, he adapted a foreign book, John Steinbeck's *Cannery Row* as *Mahalle Arkadaşları* (1961). He adapted O.Henry's *The Ransom of Red Chief* as *Çifte Kumrular/Lovebirds* in 1962. In the same year, he made a very bald move by adapting *Yılanların Öcü/Revenge of the Snakes* (1962) by Fakir Baykurt, highlighting the themes such as courage, opposition, resistance and passion. *Yılanların Öcü* (1962), *Acı Hayat/Bitter Life* (1962), and *Susuz Yaz/Dry Summer* (1963) were eminent and significant films in that they unearthed the attitude of the director towards cinema and his cinematic style. *Susuz Yaz,* awarded a Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival in 1964, is about an obsessed man who does not want to share the water located in his own land and a woman who suffers just because she is not guarded by his husband. As he did with *Yılanların Öcü*, Erksan explored an important topic regarding possession which leads to an obsession in a man's life. *Acı Hayat*, on the other hand, relates to a very familiar subject in cinema, climbing the social ladder, with a very differing point of view in terms of demonstrating the main characters' behaviors as a result of this social change (Scognamillo, 1998:217-218). The subject is very similar to the *Wuthering Heights* adaptation as *Ölmeyen Aşk* (1966), which will be discussed in detail in next pages.

When he was asked to explain what he wanted to convey with his film *Sevmek Zamanı/Time to Love* (1965), by which he utilized a very different style and subject, Metin Erksan also talked about his own views about art and cinema: "All art forms concern people. As art will not exist without people, only people can experience art. Thus, art is for the sake of people.

17

… Thus, *Sevmek Zamanı* tells only the human tragedy." (Erksan, 1956, as cited in Scognamillo, 1998). Erksan's films could not better be summarized than this in the sense of the frame of this work. Erksan, as an important figure for literary adaptations in Turkish Cinema, did not aim for anything but to express Turkish people with its most indigenous and realistic structure and soul (Erksan, 1956, as cited in Scognamillo, 1998). While adapting from other cultures' literary works, he did not attempt to imitate the book and the culture on screen. He borrowed the parts that coincided with our culture and people and/or appropriated some parts in a way that would fit on the Turkish screen at that time with his style. Therefore, the foreign adaptations revealed much about 1960s complex and controversial political and social life, which were the core elements constituting Turkish people and their own tragedy.

The next chapter will provide the theoretical framework through a literature review for this thesis. The aim is to explore the adaptations from a general point of view along with regarding theories behind the adaptations. Besides investigating the theoretical framework of the study, the chapter will also specifically present the appropriation aspect of adaptations as well as Yeşilçam adaptations in Turkish Cinema in order to clarify the purpose of the study through literature research.

CHAPTER II. THEORETICAL FRAMING OF ADAPTATION

2.1 Film vs Literature in the Context of Adaptation Studies

When the adaptation becomes a matter of discussion, it is difficult to overlook the great battle between the screen adaptations and its source, which is usually the literature as a form of art. Although the adaptation has recently been a subject of many academic discussions and critiques, it took its place near the literary art forms, as a merely subsidiary form. As a reaction to these old-fashioned critiques on adaptations on cinema, which were expressed by many prominent critics and novelists such as Virginia Woolf, the adaptation studies have been defined, explained, categorized and most importantly, liberalized from the other art forms. Thus, it has been of utmost importance that the field should be grasped clearly and find itself a better place than the past prejudices and assumptions.

In the *Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies*, Carrigan (2017) points out that adaptation has always been a part of life, even though it is now mainly discussed in the context of literature and film. The primary ancient sources can also be an example of adaptations since every version, such as Roman and Greek which resemble each other, is the outcome of the same issues and turning points humans experienced in the past. Thus, they are the representation of these moments, and they have been clearly adapted to a logical context that would be suitable in that particular culture and for that group of people. That is why, it is not surprising that the literary forms are known for using the same stories in mythology and religious sources, such as the Bible, only to adjust it to the contemporary time and conditions in which the work was created. (Carrigan, 2017:2-3) It is substantial to acknowledge this

notion before moving on to the core subjects regarding this area, as it invites us to explore a very controversial and famous discussion: Are screen adaptations not as valuable and solid of a field as the sources they are adapted from?

On the other hand, *In Theory of Adaptation*, Hutcheon (2006) scrutinizes the subject by correcting a misconception about adaptations regarding the areas they concern, and the value given to them. The conventional assumptions are made in accordance with the idea that the adaptation theory only includes the screen adaptations from books. She invites readers to question and examine every aspect of life and see adapted productions including everyday activities along with art forms, rather than reducing the field to an attempt of transit from one source to another. The main point of her argument is based on the very neglected fact that adaptation was and still is a major part of life despite the fact that they are the results of a work that has already been created. At that point, she indicates the major error stemming from the initial source and how this source is conceived. It does not make sense to value the "original" work above the adapted work, especially in a postmodern time that has flourished from many recreations and inspirations from the existing material (Hutcheon, 2006:3-5).

Along with the mentioned justifications that had been put forward in the name of adaptations, film adaptations are greatly in need for an acknowledgement and acceptance over literature as Bluestone (1957) states. The adaptations are considered as the imitations of the texts that are highly appraised and appreciated as original works. (Aragay, 2005: 13) Having these in the center of the discussion, fidelity rises as the core standard for adaptation studies. Even though the fidelity matter has dominated the field for such a long time, some scholars challenge this everlasting element of adaptation studies. Bluestone (1957) shares his view on the fidelity debate pointing out the hypocrisy over financial success, in which case fidelity is not questioned as a criterion. He remarks on the significance of recognizing the difference

existing between the two mediums and thereby, they have to be evaluated differently and by their own standards. He also draws attention to the unavoidable alterations that have to be made during the transition from literature to the cinema even though he does not deny that literature reigns over the cinematic medium in which adaptations take place (Bluestone, 1957).

In *Books in Motion*, Aragay (2005:13-18) sketches a historical context over the debate. Despite favoring literature more, with Bluestone's statements about cinema, films gain prestige participating in the cultural context rather than staying as a leisure activity in the 1950s. Following the decade became a flourishing era with the development of TV, helping movies to obtain a larger audience and relating the film industry to a more elite group. However, this changed the direction of discussion in French Cinema with the concerns over the high culture with the arrival of a massive audience in the cinema industry. Aragay (2005) refers to Truffaut's disagreement with the perception of conventional French cinema. According to him, an adaptation should include the directors' own perception and interpretation which creates a unique work in the end. These developments in France accelerated the progress of the adaptation studies in the academy even though its English counterparts have still been debating the issue in consideration of fidelity (Aragay, 2005:14-15).

The adaptation films have begun to be addressed and recognized by the academic world with the questions arising as a result of a "fidelity" crisis even though these questions have remained unanswered. The famous belief on the supremacy of literature has started to break down as more critiques have queried the matter, where they dispute the "original and supreme" position of literature by investigating the "faithfulness" aspect of adaptations studies or whether they should or can stay loyal to the original sources (Aragay, 2005).

Adaptations are not only composed of reiterations of the original work, and it is incorrect to label the adaptations as reproductions of the original source (Orr, 1984). Even though certain aspects are repeated, the purpose of the adaptations cannot be squeezed into a simple "copy" issue.

The subject is also convenient for a comparison between the act of reading and watching a work. Cognitive activities of receivers, whether they are readers or viewers, vary when the action is reading or watching. In *What We See When We Read*, Mendelsund (2014) explains the process of imagining the events and describing the characters in a book. Unlike the common assumption, the act of reading a book is more different than that of watching a film. Firstly, readers put everything together as they continue to read. The characters become fuller and sometimes they change since every line, word or a dialog has the power to change and develop the pictures and events on one's mind. Moreover, characters are not always clearly and obviously portrayed in books as it is not possible for writers to give every detail and focus on their appearance. Thus, readers can imagine the things that are not described in books (Mendelsund, 2014:27-29). In fact, it is very common to draw an imaginary picture which resembles someone who is familiar to readers when they imagine a character in a book. Mendelsund (2014) even says that it is disadvantageous to watch a film adaptation of a book since the actors and actresses playing the roles may stick on our minds. Eventually, when we imagine the characters in books, we only think of these actors or actresses (Mendelsund, 2014:46). Another distinct feature that may be different from watching while reading is the issue of time. The flow of time including past, present and future are intertwined within the action of reading as well as maintaining the flow of the story. For example, the images of characters do not emerge on readers' mind right away in a single moment. Characters, thus,

become completed only when readers proceed to read (Mendelsund, 2014:114-116). Films, on the other hand, must reveal, at least the appearances of characters, right away.

Adaptation studies have surely tackled many obstacles so far, except for the fidelity criterion, which has a great influence over the reactions against adaptation films. However, paradoxically, it has been the discussions over the fidelity that has made it possible for the adaptations to be recognized in academic discussions. After the historical progress of adaptation films and eliminating fidelity as a main standard to define and comprehend the adaptation, Hutcheon (2006) explores a second era for theorizing the adaptation studies where it has been divided into three standpoints which differ and somehow are related with each other. In the first position, which is called formal entity or product, the products simply involve the transfer of the specific compositions by switching the medium, gender or context. In the second one, a process of creation, the adaptations are situated in the process of interpretation and creation (once again in the second work). The third stance in this issue is the process of reception. This view presents that the adaptations are comprised of the recollections of the human experiences driven from the previous products. Thus, the adaptations are rewritten works that emerge from the repeated works with differences (Hutcheon, 2006:21). With this structure, Hutcheon (2006) locates the adaptations in a spot where works are varied and multiplied with new perspectives and created again. She; therefore, justifies the case of adaptations from the crime of being secondary, inferior, or copied from the original works, mostly literature (Hutcheon, 2006:9-31).

2.2 Intertextuality and Adaptations

According to Hutcheon (2006), the third process refers to the adaptations in which several previous works have been recalled. When the audience has recollected the familiar work by

the adaptation, we need to touch upon the "intertextuality", which is inevitable for any adaptation. However, one should not be deluded to think this means adaptations are imitated by those works (Hutcheon, 2006:8), as was explained clearly above.

Julia Kristeva (1986) raises questions regarding the structure of literary texts and provides answers for these issues. It is important to understand her explanations for the creation of text in order to comprehend the same topic in terms of cinema. First, she tries to explain how the texts are formed, from which she refers to intertextuality. The significant part she mentions in her essay is where she gives place to cultural factors that are involved in the process of intertextuality. To be clearer, she suggests that the linguistic elements operate at its usual levels (subject, addressee and context) while the words, or the texts, emerge and find a spatial place in a historical context (Kristeva, 1986).

Even though intertextuality has been related to film adaptations, as a natural outcome as Hutcheon (2006:9:22) revealed, it is not only unique to film adaptations. Therefore, what she primarily focuses on about the issue is the intertextual characteristics of adaptations, rather than intertextuality alone. The approach that she adopts allows the audience to experience different modes of engagement. In the case of literature and cinema, both of which are active modes for the receiver, the transition from the written to the screen causes receivers to be active in an unusual way. The audience can now associate what they once imagined in the mode of reading in the sphere of screening (Hutcheon, 2006:22-23). At this point, the property of intertextuality has been examined from the perspective of receivers and engagement modes as the audience recalls the familiar and repeated works in a different mode and stage.

Intertextuality is approached and discussed from many perspectives as an indispensable part of adaptations. Intertextuality has mostly become a topic of discussion as a result of an effort to categorize and identify the film adaptations free from the burdens of the originality and superiority of the original source. Imelda Whelehan (1999) indicated the intertextual quality of the adaptations in *Adaptations from the Text to Screen, Screen to Text*. She has given a specific part for intertextuality in the introduction part connecting it to the audience and pleasure. She references the research that is done to evaluate fandom reaction to certain films and adds that it is very common to encounter such examples where the audience changes certain characters and sometimes, even writes different endings for films when they do not enjoy the original one (Whelehan, 1999:15-17). This contributes to the subject of 'intertextuality' and answers the questions related to the adaptations. Recreating, changing or in other words, 'adapting' originates from the 'pleasure'. Hutcheon (2006) also touches upon the 'pleasure', which stems from seeing the remade works and the element of 'surprise' that comes with the different creations (Hutcheon, 2006:4).

Inevitably, the intertextuality matter has been involved in the criticism of "fidelity" criterion. Since this criterion requires handling original text as the original one and the adaptation as the bare copy of it, Orr (1984) claims that this obviously harms the "intertextuality" of the films (Orr, 1984, as cited in Aragay, 2005: 19-20). He thinks that intertextuality, comprising of previous sources and cultural and cinematic codes, is significant in terms of the "reproductive" aspects of adaptations and thus, fidelity restraints adaptation studies to be freed of the supreme text. Aragay (2005) also addresses the topic from the same angle by connecting it to the "Author-God" dimension of the work by referring to the essay named *The Death of the Author* (1967) by Roland Barthes, as Orr (1984) did. What she emphasizes in her perspective is intertextuality, within the cinematic dimension and in terms of putting

"adaptations" in a fair and considerable place, leads to splitting up from the certain and exact borders of the previous belief that one and only work exists (Aragay, 2005:21). As Barthes (1967) himself clarified in his essay, completed and autonomous works do not dominate the period anymore. Those works which are inspired by another and inclined to have variations take over the period (Barthes, 1967:142-149).

2.3   Cultural Appropriation

2.3.1   Definition and the Problems

The connection between intertextuality and adaptations regarding the nature of adaptations creates another page in the academic discussions about adaptations: appropriation. As is in the case of intertextuality, appropriation is itself a study case just like adaptations. However, appropriation is most certainly one of the issues that have arisen regarding discussions on adaptations.

While there is no doubt that adaptation and appropriation are closely linked to each other, the latter one concerns a more distinct feature (Sanders, 2016). The theory of adaptation has been interpreted and located in a unique place as explained above. According to Sanders (2016), adaptation studies contain more extensive levels than naming the study field as a shift from generic modes. The adaptation can find new meanings by altering the original source in the cultural, spatial and temporal context (Sanders, 2016:25). While attempting to explore the adaptations in terms of defining and finding some important qualities, Sanders (2016) already refers to the features regarding appropriation. The author touches upon familiarity which is an important quality of adaptations. The adaptations certainly draw special attention from the audience by utilizing this "familiar" sense that the spectator holds onto while watching a film adaptation. That, of course, also brings the fidelity issue to the table, again. However, Sanders

(2016) remarks on this matter by alluding to Cartmell's structure of categorizing adaptations. In the second section of this structure, Cartmell (1999) mentions commentary aspects of adaptations, in which the adapted work points out the politics of the original work by making changes or combining it with new aspects. By this example, it is proven that the pleasure or the enjoyment the audience feels with the adapted work cannot only be related to the association made with the original source. In this case, the participation of the audience in the process can be deepened and developed by the new positions blended together with the delight that comes with the familiar work (Sanders, 2016:27-29).

Sander (2016), in the way of figuring out the answers related to audience acquaintance with the original source, addresses the works whose languages have also been altered besides a shift in terms of mode as a result of a globalized world. This is where the topic has become a more complicated and complex occasion for which to provide definitions. Sanders (2016) presents a clear difference between adaptation and appropriation in the second chapter after deepening the topic of adaptation with cultural aspects with the new mode and language. The author summarizes her opinion with Cartmell and Whelan's ideas (1999), which reveal that appropriation contains a process transforming the original text into a work that is a brand-new cultural text. This definition; however, differs from the adaptation in that appropriations require a relatively more tangled and integrated kinship with the texts (Sanders, 2016:35-36).

In order to apply to Hutcheon's ideas on appropriation, we must revisit Hutcheon's own interpretation of the specifying characteristics of adaptations. In her second description, she mentions a quality that involves appropriation, which is defined as a 'creative and interpretive act (Hutcheon, 2006:8). She investigates this process as not simply adding new attributes or cutting some parts in mise-en-scene, but she stresses that this is an essential step for contributing to the value of the work, deepening the enjoyment of the spectator and saving

the adaptations from becoming unsuccessful imitators of the original source, which results from the author's choice of not being faithful to the source (Hutcheon, 2006).

Obviously, Hutcheon (2006) offers a valuable work in terms of attaining meaning from adaptations and redeeming it from the chains of literature or saving them from being the repeated works. She does not give a wide range of places for the appropriation, but she merely refers to it as a specialty of adaptations. However, through the end of her book, she mentions appropriation revealing its wider extension and its association to other coverages. She unearths in the end that the adaptation itself is full of contradictions as it contains the specifics of repetition and diversity. In addition to this, adaptation can be 'the self and the other' at the same time using the faculties of sustained 'sameness' within otherhood. Even though the author only touches on the issue of 'self and other', she broaches the subject by explaining the power relations between the original source and the adapted work; in other words, the self and other or vice versa since this relationship is not very dynamic. The reason of the changing power relation is that the adapted work can make use of the original story and appropriate it in accordance with the related culture, or the politics that the author assigns to the work. This, on the other hand, damages crucial factors including "authority" and "priority". The question that Hutcheon (2006) asks here is if building on the original work and changing the agenda or essential parts of the adaptation, while keeping its adaptive features and maintaining the fact that it is still an adaptation, can allure the creators and spectators of the adaptations more (Hutcheon, 2006:174). We can easily infer, from the examples composed of post-colonial adapters, that the answer to this question is simply 'yes'. Moreover, Dollimore and Sinfield (1985) also comment on the concept in the adaptation studies in terms of undynamic power relations, mentioned above. They believe that

appropriation has the power to shift the subsidiary factors and prior components relationships during the course of appropriating (Dollimore & Sinfield 1985:10-12).

Having covered two important figures in making sense of adaptations (Hutcheon (2006) and Sanders (2016)), it is important to bring up the reactions and criticism towards these two basic, but slightly different opinions. Nicklas and Lindner (2017) mentions Hutcheon (2006) and Sanders (2016) in their essay named *Adaptation and Cultural Studies*. Firstly, they refer to Hutcheon's own categorization and definition on adaptations and infer a study area for the adaptations which comprises of wider disciplines including studies on culture, gender, economics, and history. After a discussion on Hutcheon's theory, they conclude that the concept and ideas have changed in the favor of adaptations, which are now considered as recreated and enhanced versions of the prior texts. This leads to a necessity in obtaining a fresh notion of the work as the receivers revisit the previous text. After explaining the adaptations, a criticism towards Sanders' opinions on adaptation and appropriation, which declares a difference between the two even though she admits the fact that they are related. They argue that this distinction causes a limited area for the adaptation studies and this notion only recalls the fidelity theory, which composes the old foundation of adaptation studies. They; however, approve the ideas of Hutcheon (2006), who does not disengage the two interrelated concepts. On the contrary, she handles appropriation as a component of adaptation. They believe that engaging these two theories will create a study area for adaptations in which a variety of positions, such as gender, power, class and ethnicity, will find a place as a subject matter (Nicklas & Lindner, 2017).

The cultural aspect of the adaptations, on the other hand, shared the same fate as the fidelity criteria in terms of being a subject of an everlasting discussion. The scholars eventually started to discuss this matter not only because of the adaptations' aspect, but also the fact that

cinema is explored as a medium bearing an essential role as to cross the frontiers of countries and barriers such as languages (O'Regan, 2004:262). As many films have begun to be consumed by the spectators of different countries, film studies and the film industry have the chance to be scrutinized from the cultural aspect. O'Regan (2004) specifically focuses on cultural exchange in the fifteenth chapter of *A Companion to Film Theory*. What he propounds in this chapter is that cultural exchange is an inseparable part of cinema from every aspect including all the processes in filmmaking and film studies overall. Moreover, this kind of interaction, through cinema, between different cultures allows it to play a vital role in creating cultural identity and cultural development (O'Reagan, 2004:262).

To grasp the cultural appropriation as a general concept before specifying it into cinematic context, we should accept the inextricable quality of the appropriation in all art forms. Young (2008) remarks on the topic from the perspectives of art works which have inevitably been involved in cultural appropriation. He defends that it is of the nature of art and artwork, not only the creator of the artwork, to benefit from cultural transition. Although there have been different discussions against this kind of inspiration taken from other cultures which assert that they are unethical or they fail from the aesthetic perspective, Young (2008) takes a stance in favor of cultural appropriation and suggests that there is usually a specific reason why a certain artwork has been exposed to cultural appropriation (Young, 2008:1-3). This specific cause that provokes the creation of art to go through a cultural process is very crucial for this thesis as it will reveal the underlying motives behind certain works' adaptation and appropriation processes, and this will uncover the cultural specificity belonging to the particular culture.

Visiting the fidelity issue in the discussions of adaptation, a specific section is given to put forward an explanation in *Adaptation in Contemporary Culture, Textual Infidelities*. Rachel

Carrol (2009) writes these words in her introduction that is very critical for the appropriation as well as adaptations: "All adaptations express or address a desire to return to an 'original', textual encounter; as such, adaptations are perhaps symptomatic of a cultural compulsion to repeat." (Carrol, 2009:1). This repetition, of course, is not performed through a plagiarized fashion. A process of remaking and interpreting is seen in the product, and it does not matter if the intention is to follow the original work faithfully, it is not possible to escape from infidelity as all texts have been created with the touch of new interpretations (Carrol, 2009:1-2). As has been commented upon, adaptation in nature is creating and appropriation comes along with this process as a result of a cultural interaction. The relationship among these three is a habitual development that ascertains a diversity of works that bear cultural appropriations.

So far, the debate seems to favor the appropriation however, the case is not as simple as to propose that appropriation in nature brings out culturally rich materials and provides a diverse environment for a variety of art works. As given in the first paragraph of this section, Young (2008) believes appropriation encourages hope for arts even though there might be some issues that act in a damaging way for the appropriation's case. Plagiarism, resulting from the inattentiveness of the creator and the offensive part where the work of art offends the culture that is appropriated, is also a part of cultural appropriation. Another issue to be considered in cultural appropriation is the power relations between the cultures. Desment and Iyengar (2015) touch upon this potential threat on cultural appropriation. As Hutcheon argued briefly, appropriation may allow an operation that builds a 'self' with the appropriated material. That automatically, however, forms an 'other' towards the 'appropriated' matter and sort of 'possess' culture creating 'self'. Thus, a relationship occurs between the two parties engaging

them in the 'subject' and 'object' interaction. To summarize, appropriation may allow exerting power on the appropriated culture.

This brings us to the center issue in cultural appropriation: post-colonial studies. English Literature gives a significantly large place for post-colonial studies, especially the cultural appropriation angle. However, the concept has not always carried a positive connation for itself. For a long time, the definition of appropriation has found a place as the other parties plagiarize works from different cultures and make significant alterations as to change the original essence of the work. This has created problems in terms of the original and authentic qualities of the work (Schneider, 2003:216). On the other hand, what Schneider (2003) wants to stress that this kind of copying or changing has always been a part of art history by looking back at the Romans who appropriated Greek arts. Nevertheless, this type of appropriation cannot be claimed to be a sole copy-paste situation. They appropriated the art with new touches for a new sense, which made a new identity for their culture (Schneider, 2003:217). Hence, finding the 'original' in terms of both culture and art is not possible (Schneider, 2003:217).

However, the problem with the postcolonial aspect of cultural appropriation does not simplify the situation as writing or producing an artwork from a privileged perspective is the real issue to be discussed or whether cultural appropriation should be practiced or not (Morton, 2020). Morton (2020) mentions this kind of misrepresentation of cultural appropriation through literary mistakes he had encountered before, in which the African American culture had been identified with many stereotypes. White writers tend to write about African American people with their own assumptions as they are privileged. This, of course, damages cultural appropriation. Waldron and Newton (2012) give a similar example for this kind of wrong appropriation. When New Age practitioners arrived in Australia, they attained a romanticist

approach through Aboriginal culture, sacred rituals and places. Their insisting attitudes mingled with curiosity to practice and experience their culture disturbed the natives as their attempt to perform the rituals themselves harm Aborigines' own identity of culture and the link they feel as a community. The scholars argued that this act and attempt to acquire their cultural and sacramental symbols and rites is another form of oppression resulting from colonialism. Moreover, it is also culturally stealing from Aborigines as this act does not leave any room but to occupy Aborigines' own cultural identification (Waldron and Newton, 2012: 65).

As Waldron and Newton (2012) stated, and it is true that these types of appropriation and representation of native cultures in the form of 'Western' interpretation make the colonized culture, such as Aborigines and Africans, 'other' in their own culture. But it would be wrong and a pity to blame appropriation for wrongdoings and bad examples of the incognizant. Does appropriation provide another element for oppressing and marginalizing colonial cultures? Could it be that the only thing appropriation brings is robbing and plagiarizing works of minority groups culturally? These only assume that cultural interaction operates only one way and with the aims specified above. In the introduction of the section named 'Hybridity' in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, the author points out this debatable issue in post-colonial literature. Rather, this 'hybridity' nature of post-colonial texts should be viewed from a different perspective instead of being a negative quality of the culture and the literature itself. In short, it is indicated that the cultural interaction occurs in a mutual context. It means that the affair between the colonists and the oppressed culture cannot be considered as a proceeding where the colonialists eradicate the natives' culture, or they emasculate them thoroughly in the process. In fact, this interaction awakens more powerful qualities causing them to endure under pressure and adding new attributes to their own culture. Thus, hybridity

permits a more fruitful area building a bridge between the tradition and the new subjects of cultural development and exchange (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2003:183).

Regardless of the form of art, the formulations given above are applicable to any kind of art involving cultural exchange and thus, cultural appropriation. Homi K. Bhabha (2003) also remarks on the subject by stressing cultural differences and cultural diversity. He also attains a positive angle to the issue, especially concerning the cultures exposed to oppression. With his own interpretation of the definition of culture, he asserts that culture, essentially, does not exist to be exclusive or merely to be placed in a binary position related to the "other".

All in all, despite the potentially negative associations and operations towards cultural appropriation, many critics have now reached a consensus that cultural appropriation is a part of the postmodern world. The concept, additionally; contributes to the cultures to grow and reflect themselves better as they interact and become inspired. The colonialist complexion of the area complicates this standpoint due to misdoings and offenses of some works. However, as Morton (2020:84-94) emphasized (in terms of literature) saying no one from other cultures or nationalities should not write about the oppressed would harm the art form and it would be unfair to those whose stories are not constructed. Any art form should not be restricted by such dictations demanding the freedom of the artist be limited. Appropriating a work to another cultural setting creates other works, multiplying the meaning and messages conveyed through the original source.

It has always been assumed that the appropriation is operated by the oppressing party and therefore, possibly degrades the oppressed culture. As given above, cultural appropriation requires a cultural interaction and transaction, which provides a potential area equipped with a mutual process. Thus, cultural appropriation does not necessarily work where the

oppressing or dominant culture actively borrows from the minor or oppressed (Desmend and Iyengar, 2015). In this case, what arises and occurs in this process carries valuable material for the culture as this cultural transfer holds a potentially rich material in the way of development of the culture itself and also the artwork.

The discussion of cultural appropriation in Turkish Cinema cannot directly relate to post-colonialist criticism in the matter. However, the relation between West and East can be considered as a part of cultural appropriation. According to Ahishka (1996), Western people feel sympathy, even a desire towards Eastern cultures even though they seem to be terrified of East. According to West, East represent everything they could not name or understand. Nevertheless, they cannot help but desire and long for this untamed and uncontrolled nature of the culture, people and feelings of East. Similar to the examples given above, they describe East by eroticizing it and as if they were perceiving it as an attractive and erotic woman (Ahishka, 1996:22-23). This example is very similar to the unfortunate instances that native people experienced. That is why East has always resisted against West in terms of taking over their identity.

Moreover, as it will be explained in the next subheading, the effect of the West on Turkey in the 1960s surely constructs a dominance in Turkey's culture and cinema industry. The adapted and appropriated works construct a space that reveals the cultural material reflecting the setting of which the particular film is produced in. As a result, rich material is constituted a within the adapted work, which also forms the identity of the new adapted film and the approach of the director.

2.3.2   Remakes and Adaptations in Yeşilçam

The 1950s, the DP Government period, were the years when Turkey began to become politically closer to the USA adopting policies transiting from state economy to private enterprise. Capitalist market laws started to be applied and as a result, insufficient capital occurred in every field. This was also seen in the cinema industry, and in fact, the Yeşilçam period concurred with both the DP rule and the prevailing capitalist system in the country (Çelik, 2011).

The changes accompanying the DP Government also functioned as a source and a factor providing improvement for the Yeşilçam Cinema. With increasing demand for the films, the number of film theaters also showed a rise. This led to a sort of motivation for film producers to shoot more and more films. Yet, there was not enough staff and scenario for the industry, nor the time to raise staff and create films as the expanding industry strived for more films. The friends and the relatives, mostly acquaintances of the producers, were made directors, scenarists and staff needed to shoot films. They learned how to make films by imitation. They took examples of the previous films brought to Turkey and tried to find a trend enjoyed by the audience. Their main sources were Western films including mostly American films, Egyptian and Indian films and Muhsin Ertuğrul's earlier films. The films of the USA, however, proved to prevail within the audience (Ayça, 1992:120).

This shift and developments in the country and the film industry had surely some outcomes regarding the cinematic approach in Turkey. The widespread foreign films required some operations before being exhibited on the screen to gain the spectators' attention. Some American films: for instance, were altered with the additions of some scenes shot with Turkish actors and built with stories adapted in accordance with Turkish audiences. The

music placed in Egyptian movies was sung by Turkish singers and composed again with new lyrics along with changing the characters' names in the films. The plot was transformed, and the films were turned into Turkish materials with dubbing. Some films were dubbed with made up scenarios as some of them came to Turkey without script and no one knew the language of the films to translate them. Dubbing, in that sense, played a large role in nationalization of the films apart from having the ease of attracting people who were illiterate (Ayça, 1992:121).

In the following years, the underlying motives mentioned above in the film productions, caused a problem as the films were repeating themselves over and over. The main reason for this was that the cinema industry mostly depended on producers only aiming to shoot films that would make money. They applied a star system in Yeşilçam and the bono system, allowing them to produce films in compliance with the demand of the districts; in other words, demands of the public, with the actors and actresses they wanted. Thus, the plots and the sources used in films inevitably stayed in constant repetition. This created an issue of searching for a new source for films. As a reaction to this search, directors were inclined to adapt literary sources and translate foreign films into Turkish.

Scognamillo (1998) refers to the period in which the national films were initiated. He investigates the concept of 'national cinema' and the situation of foreign sources in Turkish cinema. The period can be described as making cinema in terms of cinematic expression. The main aim was to affiliate with the audience and build a relationship with them, even at the exploitation level, in order to reach a supply-demand balance (Scognamillo, 1998:116). The Yeşilçam mode relied on financial purposes with a star and district system which turns the films as products consumed more than an art form enjoyed by the public. Therefore, the adapted films, utilized as a practical way to meet the increasing demand for films, were either

repeatedly used or projected on screen with few changes. Some directors, differing from those, embarked on a quest for a 'National Cinema' that presented their own image to Turkish audiences. In other words, they agreed unanimously that the cinema in Turkey should be enhanced towards the direction where the 'voice' and 'image' of Turkish society, culture, political and sociological situations were reflected on the screen rather than a path where Westernized context was exercised recurrently.

2.3.3   National Cinema Struggle & Social Realism

The National Cinema Struggle occurred between Sinematek Organization, whose principles were based on following the structure and language of Western Cinema and Halit Refiğ (1971) and his friends, who were opposed to these ideas and suggested that Turkish Cinema would find its own language with the condition of turning to the Turkish public, society and culture. Sinematek basically suggested that making proper films could only succeed through adopting the Western style films. On the contrary, Refiğ declared that Turkish Cinema was bound to fail under such cultural imperialism dictated on Turkish films (Refiğ, 1971). [1]

Halit Refiğ (1971), starting his cinema career as a scriptwriter, was one of the few directors and filmmakers that pursued the idea that cinematic language in Turkey was insufficient to grow as an art form. Amidst of the changes in social life and the disarray continuing in the sector because of the financial burden on it, Turkish cinema, despite demonstrating improvements, was still far from finding its own language and producing films that would project the Turkish identity in it. In order to talk about the financial difficulties for finding producers of quality films, he gathered with important directors of the period including Metin

---

[1] Westernization in Turkey is excluded from this section since it is a very broad subject to be discussed in depth in this thesis.

Erksan, Lütfü Akad, and Ertem Göreç. Nevertheless, the meeting did not end with tangible and substantial results due to the incoherency between the realities of the Turkish cinema industry and the proposal they prepared. However, an unexpected development took place when *Susuz Yaz* (1963) was awarded in Berlin. It was unexpected since the film did not follow or meet the features of the films that obtained commercial success. Metin Erksan succeeded in reflecting the accumulation of his experiences in cinema since *Karanlık Dünya* (1953), as well as touching upon the social realities and issues of Turkey. *Susuz Yaz* was the best answer for those who questioned whether it was even an issue of identity of Turkish Cinema (Refiğ, 1971:33-37).

Metin Erksan actually stood out in the industry long before the premiere of *Susuz Yaz*. His style attracted attention especially due to his films that engaged the social environment and events reflecting Turkish society. In addition, not being involved in any formation other than his own ideas while also being closely interested in politics, Erksan did also differ from other directors in terms of his films that did not directly include 'propagator' messages in his film even though he was a side of various polemics. Films, which consist of stories fictionalized in the background of a socio-political problem, always carried the intention of reaching a specific level of maturity (Daldal, 2005, 93-94). A particular film of Erksan's, *Gecelerin Ötesi* (1960) was a significant film depicting the transformation of the society/individuals with a simple and realist language. The film is about the results of the dream of 'making a quick buck', which corresponds with the Adnan Menderes's expressions of raising millioners in every neighborhood, which hints at the discourse of doing anything on the road to success (Çilingir, 2012).

So, why do social realist films hold a very important place in terms of National Cinema? What the followers of this movement simply defended was that Turkish films must go beyond

imitating Western Cinema and aiming only for commercial success. Cinema should be treated as it deserves to be treated: as an art form that grows organically with the politics, culture and society in which it was born. Hence, films featuring social realism were groundbreaking in a timeline when the same topics and plots were repeatedly screened. According to Halit Refiğ (1971:39-42), social realism in Turkish Cinema coincided with the military coup on May 27th. He adds that the coup was not a civil commotion but an intelligentsia doing, just as the notion of social realism in cinema. Social realism was also an outcome of westernization and enlightenment. However, the ground it was based on was far away from the Western examples as art films were ten times cheaper than commercial films, unlike Turkey, where art films cost relatively more and there was neither a guarantee for these films by private operators nor protection by the state. On the other hand, the intelligentsia in Turkey asked for more private and individual films with the influence of the "nouvelle-vague" movement in France. That is why, the social realist films did not have the chance to meet with the Turkish nation adequately. According to Refiğ (1971), this banal westernization dream did only advance our own inferiority towards being an underdeveloped nation, art and society. Social realist films, on the other hand, were the attempt of attending the battle Turkey had against its own underdeveloped art and politics. Daldal (2005:58) explains the social realist films, which functioned as a mirror of the new, progressive middle class on cinema in the years between 1960-1965, were reflections of the search for national identity that was constructed on the line between modernism and traditionalism. Thus, the Social Realist Movement had two missions: conveying the existing social order on the screen from an objective and revolutionary perspective and creating a unique and modern cinematic language.

2.3.4   Cultural Modifications in Remakes and Adaptations of Yeşilçam

Since cinema was never supported by the government of Turkey, it is impossible to say that it was a state cinema. Even though the cinema sector in Turkey had always been shaped by political, social and cultural incidents, it had never been a mere subject of imperialism even though it had financial concerns which resulted in a bono and star system. The former concept is a system in which the types of films were determined by the local film distributors who demanded films the audience would be most likely to watch. The budget of the films was covered by these distributors and therefore, the producers and directors had to meet these demands. The latter in structure was in line with the bono system as the distributors had the right to choose the actors and actresses to star in the films, which was again decided by the desires of the public. The system built, therefore, relied on public taste thanks to the bono system. As a result, Yeşilçam, having unique roots and features, became a way to find a particular cinema language that was the public itself. Therefore, Turkish films had to be able to connect with the Turkish audience and, in return, they should have been able to relate to the films (Refiğ, 1971:77). National Cinema; therefore, is pertinent to cultural appropriation. Connecting with the public, reaching them and relating to them culturally are the key points in both concepts.

In relation to conceiving how adaptations and remakes operated in Yeşilçam, there have been several studies conducted. Gürata (2020) also ranks the causes of the prevalence of remakes in Turkey. Absence of legal barriers in Turkey (plagiarism), economic ease they provided and the lack of equipped staff in the industry are the elements he includes in his book. However, regarding cultural atmosphere he asserts that the function and operation of remakes were beyond these considering the modifications done to the original script. The occurrence of remakes in Turkish Cinema was the propelling effect of modernity and culturally made

alterations were the attempt of interpreting this modernity. Moreover, what is conveyed through the remakes was not the mere demonstration of admiration and enthrallment felt towards the original source. Rather, remakes corresponded to the resistance against the cinema as a form of culture, which is perceived as dominant and menacing. Everything that is uncovered through cultural transformations indicate this resistance more evidently (Gürata, 2020:130-140). In the context of national cinema, these transformations expose significant information about the country, such as the problems and the distress they go through. For Arslan (2011), the process of these alterations through Western products, including films, is called "Turkification", which is formed by low culture starting from a lower level. In addition, these translations built a bridge between the East and West by processing the technological advancements brought by the West, as in colonial possession, or the operation of westernization and modernization (Arslan, 2011:63-97). Just as Gürata (2020) calls, he also recognized the resisting quality of Yeşilçam in transforming and translating the modernity, in other words the West. In addition, this Turkification process was never in the possession of the 'high' elite, but rather the public's own procedure.

As can be seen, film adaptations and remakes were interpreted and explained by looking at the terms and conditions of the 1950 and 1960s, when Yeşilçam dominated the film industry, through the cultural alterations applied in the films. It is true that adaptations and remakes entered the film industry in Turkey due to the ease they provided in terms of economic and technical aspects. Even though some of the films were exposed to a mere translation without appropriation or they were shot in accordance with a Western approach and language, remakes and film adaptations also evolved and improved within the influence of a developing identity in Turkish Cinema. In this sense, the screen adaptations were affected by the developments occurring in film industry, for example, the emergence of the National Cinema

movement, as well as the historical incidents compromising the social, economic and political occasions. The reflection of these developments on the screen and the cultural modifications employed in the films produced whole new films for a whole new audience, film industry and culture even though the foreign films chosen to be adapted to Turkish screen were usually from popular films or literary sources which had already proven to be loved by audiences. However, in order to adapt these films from other cultures, translation would be inadequate to reach the Turkish public. The famous *Pygmalion* (1913) and its many Turkish film adaptations are examples for this as the films could not reach success as expected due to their failure to be culturally appropriated. Thus, it is ensured that film adaptations and remakes require cultural alterations and modifications to find relevance with the public and the film industry of the country, where adaptation occurred.

With Metin Erksan's film adaptations from literary sources, we can evidently observe films that were recreated with whole new aspects. What Erksan did was not only to appropriate the sources for Turkish culture, but also, he succeeded to frame the films with the conditions of the period between 1950 and1960. With two very known and prominent novels and a play, he managed to create new films, through which the audience could easily familiarize themselves. Nevertheless, these three sources also differed from each other in terms of the period and places in which each of them was written. It became somewhat possible to see similar problems and factors handled in films in Turkey in the 1950s and the 1960s, especially with the characters and the plots. Thus, Erksan adapted and culturally appropriated the literary sources to the Turkish screen with a new and original approach and language only to be understood and related by Turkish audience and culture.

Under the light of this framework, the next chapter will investigate Metin Erksan's *Ölmeyen Aşk*, *Kadın Hamlet* and *Mahalle Arkadaşları* from this unique approach Erksan provided in

the films. As well as depicting the historical, social and cultural scene of the 1950-1960s period, these films also unveil the director's approach to the issues and concerns of the period, which created different films almost independent from the original sources. In addition, Erksan's style and approach are seen in each film with the recurring themes in each film. The next chapter will provide an analysis of the repeated issues and elements from the perspective of the director's own approach towards the cultural, social and political flow of the mentioned period.

2.4 Adaptations in Turkish Cinema

Turkish Cinema has also enjoyed the benefits literature has to offer and the adaptations that have been recognized in the cinema. It is acknowledged that cinema has benefited from traditional narration techniques since its first occurrence. Such transitions and interactions between the art forms have existed throughout history (Sakallı, 2011:7). It is not surprising; therefore, literature has accompanied cinema because they share common features. Based on their similarities, the tendency of cinema to borrow from literary sources stems from their main shared aim, which is to produce works that address mankind's sense of enjoyment. Cinema and literature both own the freedom to knead and rearrange the materials offered by reality (Çıra, 2011).

In the early years when cinema arrived in Turkey, the techniques of scriptwriting were not known and those who were able to write proper scripts were not much interested in the field. Even though this problem would be overcome in later years, the first examples were adapted by transiting the source directly to the screen. However, this caused the adapted works to remain superficial and deviate from the original (Erus, 2005:22).

Scognamillo (1998) mentions the percpective of literature brought by Tanzimat that was a literary approach based on Western adaptations. The beginning of theater including Şinasi's *Şair Evlenmesi* (1860) was also rooted in Western patterns; therefore, the first themed cinema examples would expectedly depend on the adaptations determined by theater (Scognamillo, 1998: 27). He also adds that the first themed films in the silent film era in Turkey, which were *Pençe* (1917), *Casus* (1917) directed by Sedat Simavi, were accordingly theatre plays. The first novel adaptation, on the other hand, was *Mürebbiye* (1919) by Ahmet Fehim. Even though he wanted to reach the wider angle of the novel and get rid of the narrow frames of theatre, he could not succeed to quit a specific elementariness due to his inexperience (Scognamillo, 1998: 29-30).

Literary sources were not the only sources for Turkish Cinema as many films were also adapted to the Turkish screen. After the silent cinema period, Muhsin Ertuğrul became highlighted in the cinema sector, and he would continue to dominate the sector by himself for a long time. Scognamillo (1998:40) points out that he either borrowed from foreign sources or conveyed the influence of Western cinema with at least two third of 30 films he directed. Spending a lot of time abroad, Ertuğrul was influenced by Western Cinema. He was criticized for monopolizing the sector and due to his background in theatre. However, the most important flaw about his cinema was that he relied on Western Cinema in terms of cinematography, he was too loyal to the Western patterns, and finally he inculcated the adaptation technique to Turkish Cinema, which would be an outbreak in the later years in the film industry (Scognamillo, 1998: 42).

Between 1940 and 1948, 50 films were shot, 8 of which were Muhsin Ertuğrul films. The other 42 consisted of melodramas, plays or novel adaptations. Most of them were the only practices of what Muhsin Ertuğrul already tried. After 1949, the cinema sector accelerated in

Turkey and the number of films produced increased. However, especially between 1949 and 1959, the focus was on being closer to the audience, to the point of exploitation. Thus, local adaptations (novels, stories and plays) became more popular. The period was available for any kind of relationship for cinema, and it would become a starting point for the relationship between cinema, literature, and screen adaptations to continue and increase in popularity (Scognamillo, 1998: 117-120).

On adaptations, Scognamillo (1998) argues that the true identity of films, any film, is not only revealed by its source. Moreover, just because a film benefits from a local source, this does not measure the film's value. It only provides a qualification for the film. Gürata (2004), on the other hand, points out the borrowed films go through certain stages with translation and cultural adaptation processes. The processes include interventions that change the original meaning of the original sources, and they can be seen as legitimate content production and reception styles (Gürata, 2004:35-47).

CHAPTER III. ERKSAN'S ADAPTATIONS: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS

3.1 Understanding and Grasping Metin Erksan's Films

Metin Erksan is often described as a representative of Auteur Cinema in Turkey. The term began to be used by the French *Cahiers du Cinéma* journal. It is used to name the artists who make films in their own style. The director, then, is not dependent on another writer; thus, the source is merely a means-an instrument. Birsen Altıner (2005:11) refers to auteur as the directors who are able to insert meaning rooting in their own personality into the films. By these definitions and explanations, Erksan is usually mentioned as one of the few auteur directors in Turkey because he tells the stories of those who are obsessive and alone. He uses visual elements such as big pictures and mannequins and he employs a common cinematic language especially in the films he made after 1960 (Altıner, 2005:11). As Güngör (2014) pointed out Erksan's perception on cinema was in line with Andre Bazin's views on cinema in presenting the value of the work as a cultural production, who propounds that not every film is made under the same conditions as many variables affect the films such as historical, societal, economic and productional variables. Erksan, supporting that cinema cannot be handled separately from political, historical, cultural, economic, artistic and technological contexts, was seen to have produced films being affected by the political, societal and cultural context between 1952-1977 in Turkey (Güngör, 2014:85).

The filmmakers in Turkey were not ordinarily classified as auteurs; Erksan differed, and the reason why is, according to Kurtuluş Kayalı (2004:23) was Erksan's being educated in art history-aesthetics. He conceived cinema within the frame of art history and aesthetics. He

was convinced that cinema itself was a reality rather than conveying or presenting the reality. Thus, even his approach to cinema and filmmaking was rather unusual in Turkish Cinema.

In order to understand his approach and style, it is necessary to give brief sequences of his life before looking into the films that he shot. He started to write film critiques, scripts and directed films at a relatively young age. Writing critiques for daily news paved the way for thinking on the issue (cinema) in a more detailed fashion. However, the education of art history at this phase definitely provided him with a significant background in the field. The scholars from whom he took classes led him to obtain a universal accumulation both in art history and the historical background of Turkey. Thus, he became receptive to the issues of universal art history and connected to the matters of national art history. His interest in Turkey's history and worldwide developments, of course, was also a result of his own choices. Yet, the impact of his studies on art history should not be underestimated in the role of making these very choices. It was not a coincidence that he filmed *Wuthering Heights* and *Hamlet*. The lectures he attended at the university were not only related to art history. He was a student of Halide Edip Adıvar, from whom Erksan is known to have asked for Shakespeare lessons. Accordingly, with this kind of tendency and education, it can be seen that Erksan went beyond the limited disciplinary mentality of art history and examined the issues and subjects from a wider and general perspective (Kayalı, 200:58-60).

In the adaptation and appropriation context, Metin Erksan was given the Peyami Safa's book (*Beyaz Cehennem* (1955)) by his film producer. Even though Peyami Safa and Erksan differed in terms of the political stance (Safa being an anticommunist), they agreed on working together upon Peyami Safa's demand. However, Erksan also asked for his consent for adapting the book in any way he wanted. For example, Erksan wanted the setting to be the same timeline in which they were living at that time even though the plot took place in

the 19ᵗʰ century. Safa gave his permission and even asked not to see the script at all until the film was shot (Altıner, 2005:24-25). As this instance demonstrates, Erksan did not have concerns about being faithful to the source while adapting it to the screen. He had his own vision and ideas about any book that was to be implemented in the adaptation and appropriation process. His style neutralized the power of the source as filmmaking is another process of creating. Source is just another inspiration for the creator, or director in this context. Keeping the same vision and attitude in his career, his *Susuz Yaz* was awarded and loved. It was Erksan's *Susuz Yaz* because Necati Cumalı, as the author of the novel, indicated the film and the novel differed and Cumalı was not happy about it. A scene, for instance, where Osman hugs and kisses the scarecrow or the end where the dead body of Osman floating in the water were not originally written in the novel. The author, not very content about this addition, denied the film saying that it was not *Susuz Yaz* he wrote (Altıner, 2005: 63-64). As having the features of an auteur director, Erksan did not care about the author's comment and in fact, confirmed that the film was his own creation, not Cumalı's. These additions essentially made *Susuz Yaz* popular and valuable.

So, what was the basis for his inspiration? What did he make use of while filming: adapting or appropriating? It is given above that Erksan's interest and his academic study attracted him to make films in his own extraordinary style and led him to adopt a specific attention on adaptations from literary sources. Being a social realist film, *Gecelerin Ötesi* (1960) tells the story of seven young men living in the same neighborhood. Even though each has different ideals and lives, the only common desire they have is to have a lot of money, which they believe is the key to happiness. In pursuit of this aim, they arrange a heist. The success of the film, firstly, stems from the characters and the incidents reflected very realistically. The inspiration of the plot, accordingly, is derived from the popular political vision of the prime

minister of the time, Adnan Menderes: "We will raise a millionaire in every neighborhood", the consequences of which are given in the film (Altıner, 2005: 37). The film criticizes the existing order and narrates the people who are affected by the white lies of popular politics and look for easy ways to become rich. In the end, the bitter realities of life hit them, and their lives are ruined (Altıner, 2005:39).

Upon the examples and arguments given above, Erksan's approach in general and in this particular film is very substantial for analyzing his adaptations since Erksan's appropriation style is also in line with this approach. Such details and elements in the films will be given in the next subheading with the intended films, in comparison with the politics and the cultural qualities of Turkey with the intent of apprehending his approach.

3.2   Drawing the Lines: Class Division

Figure 1: A scene from Ölmeyen Aşk, where the couple confronts each other (1966)

A woman and a man are standing on the two edges of a thin bridge. One can only assume they are a couple on the verge of a breakup. Thus, the bridge represents the reason for the

separation. In a Yeşilçam film, it is highly likely that they belong to different social classes and that they cannot be together. In this very scene, the conversation; in fact, is built on this issue: class difference. The scene starts with them standing and talking on the two opposite edges of this bridge. Their stance also alters with the flow of their conversation. For example, when they express their love to each other, they meet in the middle. However, the way they stand reveals the issue better. As can be seen in the Figure 2, the woman stays standing up in the middle of the bridge while the man is sitting and hugging her legs. This image demonstrates the hierarchy between the couple. The woman ranking higher than the man shows that she belongs to a higher class while the man is a member of the lower class. Moreover, using a very visible but small wooden bridge indicates the extent of the problem and the inability of the couple to stand at the same place and rank.

Figure 2: A moment when Ali hugs Yıldız and shows his love for a short time (1966)

Class division was seen in Yeşilçam films where the theme was given through romantic relationships. Influencing the reader deeply, issues and problems reflecting reality, even though sometimes not intended, were also given in the films. On the other hand, some social

realist directors, including Metin Erksan, chose to use class differences to reflect on screen on purpose. Therefore, the theme was not only referred to by love affairs, but by every detail that could mirror Turkish society. Since Erksan's focus was to be apprehended by the audience, he also operated the theme under the motif of love, but with significant differences. These differences admittedly were ignited by his own interpretations of life, namely: Turkish society. However, love was only a reality of life, through which the class difference was felt and seen in real life. What matters and what was conveyed was the class difference in the society.

The impossible love affair between two people from different classes has always attracted the audience and the readers and that is why *Wuthering Heights* renders hearts. The reason for the popularity of such novels or the films is possibly the sharp lines existing in the relationship of the couple in terms of class difference, specifically in the Victorian era when the novel was published. It would be a genuinely real situation, if it had happened since the mobility between the classes was not much possible. It is a true tragedy, what happens between Heathcliff and Catherine and how they cannot meet. It is not actually a love story, but it is a story of two people in love who cannot be together.

As mentioned in the introduction part of this thesis, Erksan aimed at reflecting the tragedy of humans in his films, to be realistic as to relate to them. Thus, it is not surprising that Erksan was inspired by the story of this impossible love. Through love, one of the most significant tragedies of the mankind was conveyed: not having the same social status as one's lover; in other words, class difference. Building his own cinematic style and approach under the realistic elements and conditions, Erksan must have easily imagined this story in the Turkish context.

It is evident that the novel itself carries a class consciousness in the Victorian Era with the widening gap between the classes due to the rise of the Industrial Revolution. Borrowing a 19th century novel and a British setting and adapting it to Turkey in 1960s, Erksan surely was bound to apply changes in the source. The class difference and the struggle resulting from this throughout the plot both in the novel and the film perfectly fit with Erksan's desire to reflect the reality in the country. Turkey underwent drastic changes with mobility from the rural areas to the urban areas, which caused the alterations in class structure. As given before in the study, a class that consisted of laborers who worked day to day or as seasonal workers migrated to the cities and they started a new culture with their housing structure called 'shanty house'. This, eventually, created a low class consisting of laborers in the cities.

The original source involves a story line from the childhood of the couple and how life is maintained in Wuthering Heights. The class hatred of Heathcliff (the main character, seen as Ali in the adapted film); therefore, comes from his childhood with the developing events and conflicts. Erksan reflected the issue from the adulthood of Ali. Not surprisingly, he changed the timeline as the British historical timeline differs from Turkish and it would be difficult for the audience to relate to. What was appropriated, however, was the presentation of the male main character: Heathcliff; in the adapted version: Ali. Heathcliff is depicted as a dark colored boy whose look is not as pleasant to look at. Heathcliff is created by the author to fit the realities of Victorian Era. Moreover, his tragedy causes him to turn out to be a man full of loathe who is also despised by others. He is a disturbed and wild character with whom it is hard to communicate since his childhood. On the other hand, the actor chosen to star as Ali perfectly fits the taste of the Turkish audience, but with considerable differences. He is a handsome and charismatic man, which makes the story even more worth watching as both the girl and the boy fit so well in their appearance for both are beautiful and handsome. Part

of the tragedy comes from this unlucky class difference they have had. Other than this flaw in their relationship, they make a great couple. Ali, from this perspective, is also similar to Jorge Mistral as Heathcliff in *Abismos de Pación* (*Wuthering Heights*) (1954) directed by Mexican director Luis Buñuel. Buñuel's choice of actor to play the role of Heathcliff also differed from the novel's description of Heathcliff since Jorge Mistral was a handsome and charismatic actor unlike the novel version of Heathcliff. However, his version was as fierce and rough as Turkish Heathcliff, Ali. Thus, Erksan might have also been influenced by this portrayal of the character even though Ali, in terms of appearance, was appropriate for the Yeşilçam's standards.

Another appropriation made to the source can be sensed through the implications made by the existence of the "cottage house" in the film. Ali, who lives as an orphan with Yıldız and Ethem, is thrown out of the house by Ethem after the death of his father. Just as Heathcliff, Ali is only known as an orphan as the film does not indicate anything about his origin. The only thing the audience can assume is that Ali does not come from a wealthy background as the family that adopted Ali is rich living in a mansion. Ali; therefore, is a stranger to the land he is currently living in. Until this point, the plot of the film follows that of the novel. However, the conflict sustained through the existence of a "cottage" signals an appropriation in Turkish context as the Heathcliff originally keeps living in the mansion with the servants. The cottage in the film; thus, is added by the director and it is the reason that the couple's conflict started and peaked. With this change, the implication given is a person accommodating with a land owning and wealthy family and his story of not fitting in and being accepted there. This can remind the audience of the real example of what happened to the migrants moving to the cities. They could not actually find what they exactly hoped for: no proper jobs or place to live in. Moreover, after Ali is exiled from the mansion, he begins

to sustain his life in an old, rambling cottage, which again alludes to the settlement of the newcomers in the cities with 'shanty' houses. The inequality between Ali and the siblings (Ethem and Yıldız) becomes very clear and apparent with this incident signaling the sharp line that makes Ali and the siblings different. Thus, the plot of the film reminds us of the changes that occurred in 1950's Turkey through the character Ali, who feels the class difference deeply.

As mentioned at the beginning, the class division is felt very strongly through the romantic relationship between Yıldız and Ali, which seems challenging after the revelation of Ali's social status. As stated earlier, this is a very common and popular topic for the Turkish audience. Usually, the films involve a detail where the lovers cannot get together because of this difference. The realities of life, how they differ and the impossibility of their love, are given. However, the audience is usually under the effect of the factor of 'destiny'. The issue of belonging to different classes does not bother them as much as it bothers other people, usually their parents. That is why, the separation is never the fault of the lovers. Sometimes a misunderstanding occurs, or they are tricked by evil people, eventually leading them to be separated. Erksan; however, did not put these two lovers' relationship into the hands of fate. He indeed hit them with the bitter realities of life. Yıldız, showing the same characteristics of her inspiration in this particular scene, Catherine, declines to live with Ali in the old cottage because she belongs in the big and luxurious mansion. This is a very realistic image compared to Yeşilçam films as it does not follow the usual codes of faithful lovers who accept each other unconditionally. It, instead, demonstrates the realities in which class mobility, even in romantic relationships, is not as easy and possible. Ali, after his proposition to Yıldız to live in the cottage together is refused, emphasizes how Yıldız draws the line between Ali and herself:

"That is correct. You won't come to the cottage. Why would you live

here when there is that big house over there? This is my place. You

live in the big house. How could I not understand this unchangeable

law?... Now, that is the whole issue. You separated our places like

they have been cut with a knife. You explained my personality very

well and finished what your brother started. Yet, that is the most

bitter one."

Ali here indicates the fact that it is not what Ethem says that hurts him the most and makes him feel the class distinction very clearly. He obviously believes that the love between Yıldız and Ali would not be affected by this difference. However, Yıldız, not accepting to live in an old house with Ali, draws the distinction between them clearly. It is not Ethem who separates them. It is Yıldız who causes the relationship to fall apart because she cannot give up her privileges provided by her own class. These privileges are more significant than the love they feel for each other.

In *Kadın Hamlet*, the class division is not mainly revolving around a love story even though a romantic relationship between Hamlet and Orhan becomes an issue in the film. Hamlet, growing up in the royal family and being educated well, is in a socially higher status than Orhan, whose father works for Hamlet's family. On the other hand, in the original source, Ophelia, whom Orhan is inspired from, is a noble, whose status is only lower due to his gender which causes her to be dependent and subservient, as expected. Thus, Erkan here created a couple whose relationship is shadowed by the class difference. This can lead us to think of the major alteration made by the director in creating a female Hamlet. Even though there was an example of Hamlet played by a woman before, Svend Gade's *Hamlet*:*The Drama of Revenge* (1921) which was a silent film, Hamlet in this version was demonstrated

as a female character disguised as a male. Compared to Gade's Hamlet, Turkish Hamlet (Fatma Girik) is seen to perform as dramatic as the Hamlet in the silent version. Girik's theatral performance could be inspired by the Danish actress Asta Nielsen's acting performance in the silent film. Moreover, a female Hamlet in Turkish Cinema with the consideration of Orhan and an impossible love between the two makes a great adjustment for the Yeşilçam taste, following the pattern where the woman ranks socially higher than the man in the relationship although female Hamlet's personality differs greatly from Yeşilçam female characters. The emphasis on the class difference between the couple is also marked by the specific scenes in the film. During the first parts of the film, the same signature of the director is easily noticed when Orhan and Hamlet are talking about their relationship. In the scene, there is an obvious gap between the couple while Hamlet is explaining to Orhan why they should not be together. The conversation is about how Hamlet is now focusing on investigating her father's death as well as being bitterly in pain about her mother's marriage to her uncle. Even though the gap is obviously representing the different states of minds and psychological conditions of the two, the repeatedly shown images in the scene signal the class difference as Hamlet stands at least two steps ahead from Orhan, which is an allusion to the upcoming scenes revealing the different classes each belongs to (Figure 3).

Figure 3: A scene from Kadın Hamlet, where Hamlet breaks up with Orhan (1977)

On the other hand, Kasım marries Hamlet's mother after the death of the king and strengthens his position as the king. This insinuates that the desire to marry his brother's wife can be another motivation for killing the king. Besides, in addition to taking his kingdom, the act of stealing his wife is the uncle's victory of his social elevation and an indication of power over his brother as he robbed him of his possessions (kingdom) and wife at the same time. Love, in this case, is just another item of possession for the usurper brother.

Turning to *Cannery Row* and its film adaptation *Mahalle Arkadaşları*, the most noticeable change observed is the love story added in the film which the original source does not include. The film is a melodrama about a love affair between two people belonging to different classes. The story thus, is familiar as Erksan did not surpass the usual melodramatic structure of such films. The girl (Türkan) is in a better social status than the boy (Selim), who is only a captain gaining a comparably modest wage. Without this considerable appropriation, the Turkish audience would not find it an interesting and exciting storyline since the novel only presents the lives of a group of friends and residents of a town, who are from the low class.

Without such conflict given with the love story in the film, the film would lack the excitement the Turkish audience looks for.

The class difference between the couple and in the general atmosphere of what the novel offers with narration is adapted to the screen with certain scenes and images. In the original book, the neighborhood and the town are explicitly described revealing the features of the lives led by the low class. Using Istanbul as the setting, the director appropriated the description of the town with a series of images and views of different parts of Istanbul in order to make the class difference more visible. The scenery of Haliç (Golder Horn), Istanbul, presented in *Mahalle Arkadaşları* clearly accompanies the plot with the images of a big, industrialized city (Figure 4). The image provides a foreshadowing effect for the conflict that is to happen between the friends and for the hardships of surviving in city life.

Figure 4: A scenery of Haliç (1961)

Haliç is also displayed from the steep heights of Istanbul where the rest of the friends mostly live and meet (Figure 5). Thus, there are two types of Haliç images in the film, one of which is described above as a city of industry. The other image is more of a landscape mostly

enjoyed by these idle friends. They do not conceive Istanbul as the first description. They refuse to work and waste their lives by contributing to the system dominated by the high and elite class as they believe working to survive only benefits them to gain more money. Therefore, they prefer to be homeless and broke than being a slave for this capitalist industrialized city. They appear in scenes integrated with either beautiful Haliç scenery or the ruins of old houses in hidden depths of Istanbul. They are neither related nor equipped with any possessions or property. Therefore, the images of Istanbul also differ with their existence in the scenes: purer and simpler views, which is the opposite of other Haliç views, in which the setting is surrounded by commercial ships and the smoke coming out of the industrial factories. The two opposite images of the same city refer to the same class difference. The industrialized city view represents the existence of the modern, urban and therefore, high class while a more simple and sincere image stands for the low class who is not fully integrated to the industrialized city.

Figure 5: A landscape of Istanbul from the heights with friends (1961)

There are scenes including the wild waves of the sea, especially at the beginning where Türkan waves at Selim, from the land above to the ship on sea below. This can be interpreted

as a sign of the class difference between the couple since Türkan is waving from above to Selim (Figure 6&7). Moreover, land is mainly an owned area where the private properties (such as houses and plantations) are located, while sea is more of a district free of privatization. In addition, when Selim steps on the land, he is made more conscious of the class difference.

Figure 6: An image of Türkan waiting above to welcome Selim (1961)

Figure 7: An image of Selim looking at Türkan from the sea to the land (1961)

The stories in these adaptations give place class differences directly or indirectly related to romantic, love relationships. Even though Erksan was an auteur director, he was never indifferent to what the audience thinks. His cinematic approach included reaching the Turkish society through his films. Love, being a popular subject and a reality of life, is a rich material for emphasizing the class gap. With his own changes and appropriations, he succeeded in reflecting the Turkish context, within politics, culture and society while reflecting this very significant reality that has been both given place in these universal literary sources and Turkish Cinema.

3.3 The Operation of Class Gap in Social Life

The previous title handles the class difference as a main issue for each film. As it is explained above, love, where the problem stemming class differences is most obviously seen or closely related, becomes a conflict that needs solving in the film. Thus, the relationship between the lovers is influenced by the class gap. This kind of instance through which class difference is perceived shows that class conflict is presented through its operation in social life. The films carry, for that reason, many realistic images of life as they reveal the issue with real instances from social life. Apart from romantic relationships, the class difference is also presented with the same patterns in friendships made and presented in the films.

Whereas love presents the main conflict, friendships existing or constructed throughout the films stress the fact that the members of each class exclusively constitute rapport. In *Ölmeyen Aşk*, Ali is seen to have been friends with the servants and the helpers of the mansion. They feel sad for what happens to Ali and try to support him during his alienation. Similarly, Ali feels the same anticipation and he accepts them and behaves well only towards them even when he comes back from his mysterious journey of becoming rich. However, Heathcliff, in

the original source remains a lonely and wild human being from the beginning to the end, unlike Ali who does not turn his back to the people of his own class. Heathcliff's situation differs from Ali's because Heathcliff was treated poorly during his childhood, even by most of the servants. Thus, he becomes the aggressive and unhappy human who treats everyone equally bad. The change in the characteristics of this particular character can be said to serve for a specific reason for reaching out to the audience. This detail can make the audience feel the connection and the ties created by the low class. Even though Ali is a character whose pain and anger are on the focus of the film, Ali's attitude towards the other servants attracts the attention as to point out the cooperation of the low class. This, in fact, also reflects a reality in life where people from lower class could find acceptance only in their own class.

While Ali and the other people from the working class feel connection and kinship, the situation does not differ with the high-class families. As the original source indicated, Ethem being a member of respectable family endeavors to contact Lütfü to merge their families. Despite his ill-tempered behaviors towards Ali and the other servants, he is extremely kind and affectionate to Lütfü and his sister. His real intention behind this is not for the sake of friendship, but for expanding his wealth through this friendship and the planned marriage between Yıldız and Lütfü. Thus, the aim here is to form a friendship which turns out to be a contract between the families that results in a marriage. The scenes screening the relationship between these two families are far from sincerity and warmth unlike Ali and his friends. A scene where Lütfü and Ethem have a conversation about Yıldız takes place at a gambling table, reviving negative connotations of the nature of their friendship (Figure 8).

Figure 8: The image of the gambling table where Lütfü and Ethem discuss Yıldız (1966)

This is a very common image for Turkish films as bad habits such as gambling are seen as ordinary for rich people, which signals the evil nature of the character.

Moreover, when Lütfü asks Yıldız to marry him, they are seen in a bare and lonely land where Yıldız's unhappiness is felt (Figure 9). These scenes are particularly important for the sake of appropriation as the original source does not indicate or focus on such details. In fact, Catherine, unlike Yıldız, is narrated as becoming accustomed to being with Edgar and even enjoy his friendship. While Catherine is grown up as a spoiled girl who only aspires to be loved by everyone, Yıldız only marries Lütfü due to her proud and stubborn characteristics, which are appreciated by the Turkish audience who expects such virtues from main characters.

Figure 9: A scene where Yıldız and Lütfü talk about marriage (1966)

Turning to *Cannery Row* and *Mahalle Arkadaşları*, the director is seen to have made significant changes in the plot. First of all, the original source does not explicitly include a comparison or a conflict between high and low class. The novel only portrays the residence of a neighborhood consisting of low class people that try to preserve their lives. The focus, as in the adaptation, is on this group of friends leading a relatively idle life by not holding stable jobs. However, in *Mahalle Arkadaşları*, an explicit and clear demonstration of the two classes is easily observed as the two classes interacting with each other. That is why, unlike the original source, there is a conflict between two classes. The same social exchange in terms of friendship is founded in the same pattern in *Mahalle Arkadaşları*. Selim and his gang gather and collaborate in order to help their friend, Selim. Similarly, Selim tries to aid them by offering to share his house with them. Again, their friendship is restored through cooperation, and they act together to support each other. The scenes involving their friendship are shown with a funner and warmer atmosphere (Figure 10). The friendship constituted by the high class, on the other hand, serves only for a mutual benefit. Türkan's father and Osman (the evil man in the film) make an agreement to separate Türkan and Selim. In return,

65

Türkan's father would get rid of Selim and the man would have Türkan to marry him. Again, a relationship is constructed for mutual interest rather than the friendly instincts such as protecting or supporting. As the picture shows, the agreement made by these two is conveyed in an environment where they clearly plot against each other for an evil purpose (Figure 11). The cigarette detail on Osman's hand, like gambling, indicates the evil nature of the friendship they constituted.

Figure 10: A moment in which the friends make jokes and have fun (1961)

Figure 11: A scene where Türkan's father and Osman plot against Selim (1961)

In *Kadın Hamlet*, Hamlet is a person who is detached from her own class. Even though she is portrayed as a lone and isolated person, she is seen with people from the low-class, firstly in the scene where Hamlet first sees her father's ghost and then, around the tomb of her late father where she discusses the situation with the people of the low class (Figure 12). The first reason for Hamlet to build rapport with the servants is the loyalty of these servants to their previous king. Besides Hamlet, they are the only ones seeing the ghost. Likewise, they assist Hamlet in her path to avenge her father's death because of their loyalty. In this story, the low-class people are almost as true and loyal as Hamlet. Hamlet in the original *Hamlet*; however, only befriends Horatio, with whom he studied. He does not build the same rapport as female Hamlet does with servants. In *Kadın Hamlet*, her old friends from university betray her by believing her uncle and not seeing Hamlet's true intentions and mind. Therefore, Hamlet detaches from her own class through her consciousness of seeing their real personality despite the lies. She, then, effortlessly finds herself in a union founded within loyalty.

Figure 12: An image of Hamlet and the servants in the graveyard (1977)

With these depictions, Erksan provides two types of friendship in these films. The first one is the friendship developed through the feeling of anticipation and cooperation in the working class. They want to protect, look after and support each other. The second example is the one flourishing as a result of personal and financial interest. This is mainly born out of the desire to keep the existing order and status. The high class builds relationships not out of love or affection but out of the benefits required for their own class. Each friendship, then, is a reflection of what their class represents. Being in a constant struggle, the low class attempts to protect and preserve one another in this class struggle. The personal interests are not their aims in friendship. However, the members of the high-class act on the desire of keeping their own personal interest, or to preserve their own existence in the class: to improve and upgrade financially. The social life presented in the films holds a mirror to Turkish society as they find a representation of the widening gap between the classes in cities. Therefore, the friendship formed in each class serves for different purposes, showing the qualities of the classes. It shows that the classes preserve their exclusiveness.

3.4 The Relationship Between Wealth and Corruption

Wealth is an important factor in these films as the characters mainly struggle or have conflict related to wealth. The films have specific details that connect this matter with corruption. It is possible to observe the characters' corruption as a result of pursuing wealth. They give the issue of wealth within a criticism directed to the politics of the time. It is clear that it is closely related to power, especially for the benefit of the upper class. The obsession of this power, in other words wealth, is accompanied with tendencies of evil and greedy that arise in characters, as also seen in the previous films mentioned above. These three films; therefore, display people with wealth who have a corruption or inclination to commit crimes. The analysis of these characters and their behaviors can be linked to the politics and approach of the government at that time. Apart from this, the description of this relationship can be observed in some distinct scenes, which will be linked to the director's style and approach to the original sources.

In each film, wealth is, as expected, a characteristic of the high-class. The main representatives of the class are related to the potentiality of being evil and are corrupted in the films. Ethem in *Ölmeyen Aşk* develops hatred for Ali, whom he considers as a threat to the family wealth. He is shown as an evil character along with his tendency to gamble which causes him to lose all his money and more importantly, his mansion. Moreover, when Ali comes back to the mansion as a rich man, he transforms into an evil and cruel man. The first scene after his return to the mansion foreshadows his transformation into an evil person with his clothes and car coming behind him. He announces his return with a car behind him and with the fancy clothes he is wearing. His face with a cigarette in his mouth declares this transformation to the audience (Figure 13). This scene is an artistic demonstration of Erksan's interpretation of Ali's transformation to a rich gentleman. The first glimpse of Heathcliff

after his grand return is based upon his physical appearance and his civilized manner in Wuthering Heights. Nevertheless, Ali's civilization and increasing status are shown through wealth (for instance, his car, cigarette and clothes) in the film.

Figure 13: An image of Ali returning to the mansion after becoming rich (1966)

The uncle, Kasım, in *Kadın Hamlet*, murders his own brother in order to raise his status and own the kingdom of his brother. He commits murder all for the wealth and his corruption continues even after this. He marries his brother's wife. He tries to kill Hamlet several times because she is suspicious of him. The way Erksan portrayed this character is quite interesting as one can infer that the whole description of the feud between Kasım and Hamlet is compared to a fight between two animals. The use of outdoors is often utilized in the film. Moreover, Kasım is seen while preying on his brother to kill like a predator at the beginning of the film (Figure 14). His end, similarly; takes place in the woods with a gunfight while he is being chased by Hamlet. In a particular scene, he is captured in a position where he stands like an animal in front of the corpse of his wife (Figure 15). In this very scene, Hamlet confronts him about his sins and the crimes he committed, which correlates with the image

displaying Kasım's situation. Thus, the audience has a chance to see the fall of Kasım from the predator to the prey in the film. He is corrupted by the desire to possess more wealth, which is the motivation of killing his brother and in the end, it also causes him to die. The metaphoric and unique portrayal of the character's situation reveals the auteur side of Erksan.

It also helps, at some point, for the audience to be accustomed to certain scenes, such as Kasım shooting his brother in the back as it is common for Turkish films to screen betrayals with the similar scenes as in Hamlet which includes shooting the innocent person in the back who is unaware of the situation. By appropriating the original scene of murder, which is performed with poison, Erksan made sure to convey Kasım's evilness. His corruption into being even more evil is Erksan's individual interpretation with the descriptions shown here.

Figure 14: The scene where Kasım shoots his brother from behind in the woods (1977)

Figure 15: The scene in which Hamlet confronts Kasım to kill him (1977)

Cannery Row, in general, presents the issue of 'wealth' from the perspective of people belonging to the low class. The problem exists with the lack of wealth and how people deal with this for their survival. They do not own much, and their only aim regarding earning money is to try to find money or food for the party they will organize to honor Doc (a nickname for one of the main characters). What they do for it only involves simple tasks, for example, catching frogs for Doc in exchange for money. Thus, wealth is not a direct issue in the novel. However, *Mahalle Arkadaşları* handles this subject directly by putting it at the center of the relationship presented in the film. For the sake of wealth, many events take place. To begin with, Osman gains his wealth through illegal actions such as arms trafficking. Also, Türkan's father and Osman make a deal in order to separate the couple; all for preventing his daughter from marrying a rich person. When the scenes involving this agreement are examined, the evil atmosphere can be sensed through the characters' faces in the room where the father and Osman talk about it. This conflict provided in the film causes other chains of events in the film. Being inspired by the friends of *Cannery Row*, Erksan adapts the plot into a more realistic story with this conflict affecting the flow of the film.

What is presented here is two different sets of minds existing in two different classes. One is affected and shadowed by the element of 'wealth', which causes a father to, unknowingly, give consent to Osman, who gains money illegally, to marry his daughter. His motivation is to make sure his daughter has a better life with a richer man and this decision is made and judged by the existence or lack of 'wealth'. Friends, on the other hand; do not care much for money but they have confidence in Selim to be the best person in the world and that he deserves to be happy with the person he is in love with.

The misdeeds given place in the films are not basic ones and they carry an important criticism with similar patterns. As mentioned in the first chapter of the study, the political decisions applied by the DP ruling aimed to prosper in a short time. As indicated several times in the study, Menderes even encouraged people with his famous slogan which promised he would make millionaires in every neighborhood. This promoted the idea of gaining easy and fast wealth in the society. Erksan, through these films, criticizes these irregular and unplanned politics of the government, the consequences of which are shown within the characters. The characters are corrupted by the greed brought by wealth and property. The criticism behind this is to demonstrate the severe effects of encouraging a society to use every way to become rich. The crimes and the level of corruption of the characters reveal the results of such politics.

3.5   The Blurred Line Between Being a Good and an Evil Character

Metin Erksan's approach, as revealed at the beginning of this chapter, differed from the stereotypes created by Yeşilçam even though he aimed at reflecting some Yeşilçam culture in the films. Another distinct detail about his films is that the characters do not follow the good and evil patterns. Even though the characters on the good side are wronged by the evil,

high class, they do not accept their destiny or do not always display the good deeds in the end. Erksan wanted to feature characters that are not flat following the same patterns till the end. Instead, he chose to give complex characters that can change and display complicated and irregular characteristics in order to construct reality in the films. The characters, then, were designed more in accordance with real life; moreover, with Turkish society.

The best example for this argument is Ali from *Ölmeyen Aşk.* We cannot say that he, from the beginning to the end, differs too much from other Yeşilçam characters. He is a proud man and he, at first, does not behave very badly to the family even though he is misbehaved. When he is rejected, he is offended and leaves. Normally, the audience expects some arrogance and cruelty from Ali, since his aim is to avenge Ethem and Yıldız, as well. Through the end, the expectation would be that he softens towards Yıldız because he is still in love with her. Love is more important than revenge and class hatred. However, Ali comes back with a total transformation, which exceeds the expectations. Ali cannot forget what is done to him, especially by Yıldız. He already is full of contempt for Ethem, but for Yıldız, he cannot forgive her no matter what. The most appalling part of his transformation is his implacable ruthlessness for Yıldız. Throughout the film, he keeps telling her he does not love her, and, in fact, he hates her. When Yıldız is on the verge of death due to the pain caused by Ali, Ali forces her to get up and makes her walk till the cliffs, which becomes a symbolic place for their love. He barely helps her along the way, and he refuses to tell her that he loves her even when she repeatedly asks him to say so. In the end, Yıldız dies, and he only finds himself saying: "I don't love you!". Originally, Erksan wanted Ali to beat Yıldız's corpse after she dies. With this request, Erksan received opposition from his friends working on the script together, Ertem Eğilmez and Sadık Şendil, and Kartal Tibet starring as Ali. After a series of events, Erksan left the film without completing it. They cut out scenes saying that the Turkish

audience would react to these scenes (Saydam, 2012). It was probably not only the audience's reaction to the specific scene, but also since Kartal Tibet's hero image in the eyes of the audience would break down since the personalities of actors were not conceived differently whether they were on or off screen (Gürata, 2020). The way Tibet was screened was of utmost importance for the Yeşilçam tradition as the audience would not want to see Tibet beating up a dead woman since it would leave a quiet impression that was not easy to forget for an average Yeşilçam audience.

With this character, Erksan intended two substantial aspects. The first one is the surpassing the dominance of class conflict and hatred over love. They cannot lead a happy love in the end because of Ali's unending grudge against Yıldız who once looked down on him, and the class he belongs to. The message is not vaguely given in the film, as expected with Yeşilçam's stereotyped phrase: "We belong to different worlds". This difference actually causes a tremendous alteration in Ali's attitude and finally, ends their love. However, Erksan proposed another angle to Ali, whom he planned very carefully and became very insistent on devising the character by himself. Ali, obviously, fits the characteristics of Turkish men in real life, who cannot handle this kind of humiliation, even for a second. His arrogance turns him into almost an evil man in the end, who behaves brutally towards his lover and would beat her dead body if such a scene had been allowed. Especially when he confronts Ethem, the image of Ali changes to this well-dressed person with a cigarette in his mouth demonstrating a richer and superior person (Figure 16). His face seems colder and indifferent to any type of emotion.

Figure 16: A portrait of Ali while confronting Ethem after his return (1966)

That is why, as a character, Ali significantly differs from Heathcliff as the former's anger and hatred do not only and wholly stem from class hatred. It is also the burden of being a proud male character in Yeşilçam who has been humiliated by his lover. The transformation of Ali is relatively quicker than Heathcliff because it is possible to observe Heathcliff's exposure to discrimination due to his class from childhood to adulthood. In addition, Heathcliff does not let himself grow love to anyone, even for his own class. Ali, on the other hand, clearly feels and shows affection for people from his class as can be seen in the character's changing behaviors in the scene where he even takes his hat off to show his respect to Yusuf, the butler of the house (Figure 17). This is another appropriation the character is exposed to because respecting an innocent and older person, despite the character's evil transformation, is considered to be a good deed in Turkish culture, which Ali owns as Figure 17 demonstrates. Ali stands out as a character that is more complex than Heathcliff, who is portrayed as a person that does not abstain from himself behaving badly to everyone around him. Ali, on the other hand, directs his anger to Yıldız and her family while being kind and nice to the servants, which must be appreciated by the audience.

Figure 17: The image of Ali and Yusuf greeting each other happily (1966)

Hamlet also stands out as a complex and complicated character. She seeks revenge and justice; however, she seeks her own definition of justice. The original Hamlet is as philosophical and introverted as Erksan's Hamlet. Nonetheless, Erksan's Hamlet becomes more ruthless and indifferent to other innocent people only focusing on orchestrating her own revenge. She does not show any affection towards Orhan, and she does not display any sign of crying when he dies. Unlike Shakespeare's Hamlet, female Hamlet shows her guilt which exposes her anger even at Orhan's funeral (Figure 18). Hamlet in the original source cries and feels guilty over Ophelia's death, showing more sensitive emotions than Turkish Hamlet. In the film, similarly, her mother's death leaves little effect on her and she develops a feeling of hatred since she weds with her father's murderer soon after his death. On the way to revenge, she commits homicide without blinking an eye. She feels little guilt and sorrow for Orhan, who may have died because of her. From a female leading character, it is usual to watch an over dramatic and agonized woman crying for her late father. In the film, Hamlet is never shown crying and her only dramatic behavior comes from her delusional state of mind, which she pretends in order to trick others. Presenting a female Hamlet, for sure, is the

signature Erksan provided with this adaptation from the universal perspective. Turning female Hamlet to a vengeance angel is the groundbreaking move for the Yeşilçam context as this woman does not pursue a similar path of characterization as those of other female characters in Yeşilçam. This certainly increases the realistic angle of the film and demonstrates a very brave woman character to the audience. Her cause is right leading her to avenge the death of her father which makes her a heroine. However, she is hardly a good character as a whole due to the reasons given above.

Figure 18: Hamlet during Orhan's funeral showing aggressive behaviors (1977)

Selim, in *Mahalle Arkadaşları*, displays very decent features, which is probably praised by the audience as his counterpart does in the original source. The general assumption is that members of the low class who struggle with poverty or have enough money just to make ends meet should have proper and honorable deeds when rich people demonstrate attributes, such as being cruel and evil. However, both the film and the novel do not carry such a burden to shape their characters to fit the standard view. They all have flaws. In the novel, Mack and his friends usually commit petty crimes such as stealing beer from where one of them works

or stealing chicken to feed themselves. This draws a realistic picture for narrating a small inclusive neighborhood and its residents. Turning to Yeşilçam, the heroes or heroines, usually from the low class, have good deeds in their nature whereas other characters from the high class tend to become more evil and inconsiderate. Selim and Türkan's father constitute this balance in the film at first sight; nevertheless, the director did not exclude the details existing in the original source and given above. For example, Selim's friends are excluded from this balance. They are good people in nature; however, they are not as proud and honorable as Selim. They steal to feed themselves as was originally done in the novel. However, small appropriations regarding the plot can be seen in conveying their round characteristics. The part where Mack and friends throw a party for their friend Doc and mistakenly destroy his house is not included in the film for the flow of the story, mentioned earlier, which goes differently from the novel. Instead of this, a scene where Selim's friends try to do a favor for him by disguising as Selim's friends and talking to Türkan's father and making the situation worse is added to the film (Figure 19). Just as Mack and friends, they cause terrible chains of events even though their intention is good, but their method of dealing with problems is quite tricky and lacks honesty. As well as adding humor to the film, this appropriation, instead of putting the party scene, suits the plot well and the Turkish audience as disguising as a woman to trick people is considered humorous on Turkish screen and this can be seen in many famous comedy films in Yeşilçam such as *Şekerpare* (1983) by Atıf Yılmaz and *Şabanoğlu Şaban* (1977) Ertem Eğilmez.

Figure 19: The scene where Selim's friends are disguised as women to trick Türkan's family (1961)

Offering more round characters in the films instead of providing sharp distinctions between evil and good in the films reflects Erksan's realist approach to the cinema. He obviously did not feel the urge to be fully faithful to the original sources and considered his audience and the Turkish mindset while deciding what type of alterations he applied as seen in *Mahalle Arkadaşları*. However, he also followed his own approach as an auteur director while constructing his heroes or heroines. With Ali, he succeeded in creating a character whose anger is directed to class difference, from which his own class is exempted. He also carries the characteristics of a Yeşilçam man with his pride that causes him to behave cruelly to Yıldız. Hamlet, the vengeance angel, on the other hand, is a character purposely shaped into a different type of woman that is not very familiar for Yeşilçam stereotypes and his original counterpart. Erksan's characters, therefore; are a mixture of an appropriation and his own creative directing approach, which displays unique characters on Turkish screen.

CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

Without room for doubt, Metin Erksan provided a versality to Turkish Cinema with his unique approach to filmmaking. His education and interests surely made him the artist he was and drove him to the film industry with this unusual style. He was influenced by the agenda of Turkey besides observing Turkish society successfully. From what he examined and what he was affected by, his understanding of filmmaking leaned towards a process of reflecting the Turkish context in the films. He aimed to understand the audience, people, as well as to be understood himself. These components led him to be called many names, such as auteur and social realist. He supported the growth of the identity of Turkish Cinema with the movement of the National Cinema. Most importantly, he never abandoned his philosophy, approach or style, which made him stand out with remarkable films.

Thus, grasping Metin Erksan's cinematic vision alone requires learning many terms and conditions about both Metin Erksan himself and Turkey since he was never indifferent to the flow outside cinema and acted with the belief that cinema is an art form which is available to be influenced by the outer world just as any other art form. At a time when Turkish Cinema was on the verge of improving and growing, for the first time, with the hope of finding an identity, he shot films with which he reflected his extraordinary style even though they differed from other popular films. For a director living in the 1950s and 1960s, this was a risk as the film industry only survived with the films that were sold and viewed. Some of his films were not understood, such as *Sevmek Zamanı* (1965) when it was viewed. Erksan was never a director who would change his style for the sake of being appreciated by the audience. However, he also did not claim that the audience did not understand him or his style because

they were unable to. He did want to be understood and he saw these experiences as something to work on.

At this point, adaptations bear a critical gravity in understanding Metin Erksan. Adaptations presented great ease for the Yeşilçam cinema which was built on a financial chain requiring easy and fast productions with uneducated staff. They took and applied plays, novels or other films on Turkish screen with appropriate changes. Erksan also benefited from adaptations; nonetheless, as an auteur and social realist director, the changes he applied in the films turned out to be worth examining for both Erksan's style as a director and analyzing the cultural appropriations modified in accordance with 1950s and 1960s Turkey. They are also substantial in understanding the National Cinema Movement at a time when films were mostly produced for financial expectations. His films, especially the mentioned films in this thesis, involved some appropriations and changes that could only be meaningful to Turkish audience, and they were designed to convey criticism appropriate for Turkish viewers as well.

As noted before, Erksan's only aspiration was not to produce his own approach in films. He desired to reach the audience. The films analyzed show that he did not abstain from using popular subjects or themes that are most likely to be appreciated. The impossible love between Yıldız and Ali, intriguing and vengeful plot of Hamlet and the humorous moments with the friends of Selim's are the elements that would attract the attention of the audience. However, he could not help himself from putting his own style to reflect his own approach in the films, with the exact details regarding the appropriations he made and the cinematic approaches he applied in the films. This way, he succeeded in appealing the taste of the audience as well as conveying his own interpretations and criticism about the politics, culture and the society of Turkey. He utilized universal literary sources, which had already proven

their success, and altered them in accordance with the Turkish Cinema contributing the construction of the identity of cinema in Turkey.

What can be observed and inferred from the interpretations provided for these adaptations is that Erksan adapted and appropriated the "class" handled in these literary sources, all of which was written in a different time and different cultural environment. The recurring themes founded all revolve around the issue of "class division" which is closely related to the political and cultural atmosphere of the 1950s and 1960s. While being adapted to the Turkish context, the themes given above regarding class division were constructed under several motives that would be appropriate for the Yeşilçam culture. The impossible love caused by class difference was a definitely culturally appropriated element for *Ölmeyen Aşk*, especially with the character Ali or Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*. While bearing the characteristics of Heathcliff, the director aimed at revealing typical Turkish men with the additions or alterations made, as mentioned in the second subheading of the last section. Even though the original source does not involve such a relationship, *Mahalle Arkadaşları* covers the 'class' problem from the most common story in Yeşilçam films: love. Supplying the problem with following events and incidents, the argument is given through this culturally adopted element that was common in Yeşilçam Cinema. Similarly, he adapted the relationship of Hamlet and Ophelia into a sub story about a love affair between two people of different social status.

The other examples of adaptation and appropriation found in the films are given above in detail. However, they all hinge on the subject of class difference. Focusing on how these adaptations and appropriations are conveyed, it would be unfair to say that Erksan only appropriated for the sake of finding a correspondence for that of the Turkish context. The analysis given in the previous section demonstrates that Erksan definitely created the

characters or the scenes regarding the themes in a tailored way only to suit his own taste and directing style. It was Metin Erksan's Ali, not Brontë's Heatchliff even though the character also managed to be appropriate for the taste of the Yeşilçam audience. Moreover, his relationship with Yıldız was conveyed in a unique fashion where the difference between them is felt and seen. The display of Haliç was Erksan's style of showing the two different sides of Istanbul where the atmosphere changes with each type of scenery given in *Mahalle Arkadaşları*. He created his own Hamlet; in fact, female Hamlet, whose behaviors and feelings differ from the original one in the critical scenes. These can sum up what should be said on Erksan's auteur qualities as a director although the analysis in the previous section provides more details.

To conclude, these literary adaptations should be considered as milestones of Turkish Cinema in terms of exercising cultural appropriation as Erksan managed to create whole new films with the exact alterations and appropriations of films, which could engage the Turkish audience. They are successful examples of cultural appropriation, as referred to the first chapter, because an original and independent work was achieved from literary sources from the West, in other words, a dominant culture of that time. Erksan; therefore, resisted Western art and transformed it to make it a type of Turkish material with the mentioned alterations related to Turkish society, culture and politics, which was made it accessible to the Turkish audience. During this process, the changes and additions were furnished with the details and scenes only unique to Metin Erksan. Thus, the films offer rich material in terms of understanding the society, politics and culture of the Turkish context as well as grasping Metin Erksan's Cinema.

WORKS CITED

Ahıska, M., (1996), **Kimlik Kavramı Üstüne Fragmanlar,** Defter, Sayı:27, ss:11-35, İstanbul.

Aragay, M., (2005), **Books in Motion Adaptation, Intertextuality, Authorship**, Rodopi, New York

Arslan, S., (2011), **Cinema in Turkey A New Critical History**, Oxford University Press

Arslan, S., (2005), **Hollywood Alla Turca: A History of Popular Cinema in Turkey**, The Ohio State University

Ashcroft, B. & Griffith, G. & Tiffin, H., (Eds). (2003), **The Post-Colonial Studies Reader**, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, New York and London

Ayça, E., (1992), **Türk Sineması Seyirci İlişkileri,** Kurgu Dergisi, Sayı: 11, 117-133

Barthes, R., (1967), **The Death of the Author**. In Heath, S. (Trans.) (1977), Image, Music, Text pp.141-149, Fontana Press

Bluestone, G., (1957), **Novels into Films**, University of California Press, California

Carrol, R., (2009), **Adaptation in Contemporary Culture Textual Infedilities**, Continuum International Publishing Group

Cartmell, D., Whelehan, I., (Eds.). (1999), **Adaptations From text to screen, screen to text,** Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York

Güngör, Can A., (2014), **Auteur Kuramı ve Metin Erksan Sineması,** International Journal of Science, Number:30, p. 79-100

Çelik, F., (2011), **Modernleşme Serüvenimiz ve Yeşilçam, Sanat Dergisi** , 0 (17) , 31-37 . Retrieved from https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/ataunigsfd/issue/2605/33530

Çetin Erus, Z., (2005), **Amerikan ve Türk Sinemalarında Uyarlamalar Karşılaştırmalı Bir Bakış,** Es Yayınları İstanbul

Çıra, E., (2011), **Roman-Sinema Etkileşimi ve Sinekli Bakkal**, Sakallı, F., (ed.) Edebiyat ve Sinema 475-491, Hat Yayınları, İstanbul

Daldal, A., (2005), **1960 Darbesi ve Türk Sinemasında Toplumsal Gerçekçilik,** İstanbul: Homer Kitabevi.

Desmet C. & Iyengar S., (2015), **Adaptation, appropriation, or what you will, Shakespeare**, 11:1, 10-19, DOI: 10.1080/17450918.2015.1012550

Dollimore, J., Sinfield, A., (1985), **Political Shakespeare Essays in Cultural Materialism**, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London

Dorsay, A., (1984), **Sinema ve Çağımız**, Remzi Kitabevi, İstanbul, 2003

Erksan, M., (1976), **Metin Erksan**, Burçak Evren. Milliyet Sanat Dergisi 167 (1976): 3.

Erksan, M. (1977), **Metin Erksan'ın Açıklaması,** Milliyet Sanat Dergisi, Sayı:215: 22-23

Esen, Ş., (2010), **Türk Sinemasının Kilometre Taşları**, Agora Kitaplığı, İstanbul

Esen, Ş., (2000), **80'ler Türkiye'sinde Sinema**, Beta Yayınları, İstanbul

Gürata, A., (2004), **Türkiye'de Uluslarası Film Gösterimi ve Kültürlerarası Alımlama**, Bayrakdar, D., (ed.) Türk Film Araştırmalarında Yeni Yönelimler-4 (Istanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 2004): 35-47.

Gürata, A., (2020), **Imitation of Life Cross Cultural Reception and Remakes in Turkish Cinema**, Seidelmen & Company

Hutcheon, L., (2006), **A Theory of Adaptation**, Routledge Taylor &Francis Group, New York

Kaplan, N., (2004), **Aile Sineması Yılları 1960'lar**, Es Yayınları, İstanbul

Kara, M., (2012), **Toplumsal Gerçekçi Sinema Metin Erksan'la Başlar,** Sadibey.com

Kristeva, J., (1986), **Word, Dialogue and Novel,** The Kristeva Reader, Columbia University Press, New York

Leitch, T., (2017), **The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies**, Oxford University Press, New York

Mendelsund, P., (2014), **What We See When We Read**, First Vintage Books Edition, August 2014

Morton, B., (2020), **All Shook Up: The Politics of Cultural Appropriation.** Dissent 67(4), 84-94. doi:10.1353/dss.2020.0075.

Nicklas, P. & Lindner, O., (2012), **Adaptation and Cultural Appropriation**. In P. Nicklas & O. Lindner (Ed.), Adaptation and Cultural Appropriation: Literature, Film, and the Arts (pp. 1-13). Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110272239.1

O'Regan, T., (1999), Cultural Exchange. In Miller, T. & Stam R. (Eds.), **A Companion to Film Theory,** Blackwell Publishing

Özdemir, H., (1995), **Siyasal Tarih 1960-1980**, Türkiye Tarihi, Cem Yayınları, İstanbul

Özön, N., (1985), **Sinema Uygulayımı Sanatı Tarihi**, Hil Yayınları, İstanbul

Refiğ, H., (1971), **Ulusal Sinema Kavgası,** Dergah Yayınları, İstanbul

Sakallı, F., (2011), **Edebiyat ve Sinema Edebi Eserden Beyaz Perdeye**, Hat Yayınevi, İstanbul

Sanders, J., (2016), **Adaptation and Appropriation**, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York

Saydam, B., (2012), **Agah Özgüç "Erksan Çok Özel Durumu Olan ve Kimseye Benzemeyen Bir Yönetmen"**. Türk Sineması Araştırmaları: Metin Erksan, Hayal Perdesi 30, Eylül-Ekim, p.82

Scognamillo, G., (1998), **Türk Sinema Tarihi**, Kabalcı Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2003

Schneider, A., (2003), **On 'appropriation'. A critical reappraisal of the concept and its application in global art practices**. Social Anthropology, 11, pp 215-229 doi:10.1017/S0964028203000156

Şen, A., (2010), **Türk Sinemasında Yerli Arayışlar**, Ankara:Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı

Uçakan, M., (1977), **Türk Sinemasında İdeoloji**, Düşünce Yayınları, İstanbul

Waldron D. & Newton, J., (2012). **Rethinking Appropriation of the Indigenous: A Critique of the Romanticist Approach**. Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions, 16(2), 64–85. https://doi.org/10.1525/nr.2012.16.2.64

Young, J., (2008), **Cultural Appropriation and the Arts**, Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Zürcher, E. J., (1993), **Turkey A Modern History**, I.B. Tauris

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to analyze Metin Erksan's specific adaptations from other literary sources in order to examine the changes and modifications that the director exposed the films. The films are analyzed under the framework of adaptation and cultural appropriation. With the thematic analysis method used in the study, the certain patterns indicate the alterations and are related to the cultural, historical and political scene of Turkey between the 1950s and 1960s. The particular scenes following the recurring patterns are investigated to grasp Erksan's style and approach to cinema as an auteur director who also adopted social realism.

Key words: Adaptation, Cultural Appropriation, Turkish Films, Metin Erksan

ÖZET

Bu tez Metin Erksan'ın başka edebiyat kaynaklarından alınma uyarlamalarını analiz ederek yönetmenin uyarlama ve kültürel adaptasyon çerçevesinde filmlerde yaptığı değişiklikler ve uyarlamaları incelemeyi amaçlar. Çalışmada kullanılan tematik analiz metodu ile, filmlerdeki tekrar eden motifler ile 1950 ve 1960'lardaki Türkiye'nin kültürel, tarihsel ve siyasal durumu ilişkilendirilmiştir. Bu tekrar eden motiflerin görüldüğü belirli sahneler ile Erksan'ın auteur ve toplumsal gerçekçi bir yönetmen olarak sinemaya yaklaşımı ve sinema stili araştırılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Uyarlama, Kültürel Uyarlama, Türk Sineması, Metin Erksan