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Abstract

With the transformation of post-twentieth-century cities into metropoles, the city has become a complex structure that is hard to perceive. In this perception of the city, cinema stands in a different place than other arts by following a method (with camera) based on the recording in transferring reality. Making the city perceptible by its complex structure becomes possible with the films that present different images of the same city while telling a certain story, with its unique meaning, to the audience of each one. Istanbul was found worthy of being examined with its changing physical and social structure. In this study, the historical process of the Istanbul image has been examined through the films of Istanbul, which progressed rapidly along the path of metropolitanisation from the 1960s to post-2000. Haydarpasa Station was chosen as the most used common element in the films, and its changing images were figured out from different movies recorded between the 1960s and the post-2000s. These images provide the opportunity to summarise the historical process of the Istanbul image with different meanings of the same place (Haydarpasa Station). In the study, the meaning of films is read by bringing the selections captured from real places (form) and put together to produce a regular whole. In other words, the technique of cinema, which is transferring the real place (form) to meaning, is used as a method in the study while examining the films with the tableau concept of Roland Barthes. Additionally, qualitative methods are used, such as case studies and historical analysis of a single place in different time intervals.

Keywords: Istanbul, Haydarpasa Station, city image(s), film, historical process

1. Introduction – City, Cinema, Reality, Fiction

With the transformation of cities into metropoles in the twentieth century, the urban structure has become more complex and challenging to describe. In order to make sense of this uncontrolled and growing structure, it will not be enough only to read the city itself, but also the relation of the city with other arts and the way it is represented will gain importance.

Instead of being a direct reflection, every narrative (representation) of reality is a re-production (Benjamin, 2014, p. 50-86). The artist shapes the sections he chooses from life around a particular fiction. In cinema, on the other hand, the transmission of reality is much stronger than in other arts because cinema conveys the real spaces it uses from the city to the audience with the power of the "camera" to reflect the environment "as it is". Thus, with the camera's ability to record the "existence" (Barthes, 2014, p. 33,34), the relation between the exhibitor (film) and the exhibit (city) in cinema is not based on "transformation" but on "recording".

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As Firat Yucel says, in cinema, it is unlikely that the reality is just what we see in films: "Life is much more and every artistic creation presents not a part, less or much of it, but a shape it has sculpted" (2009, p. 9). Rather than being perceived as an incomplete expression of reality, this sculpture should be seen as an environment that presents brand new "images" to the viewer, especially of the city. Walter Benjamin, on the other hand, supports this view, saying that " .. by examining ordinary environments with the ingenious method of the camera not only increases our knowledge of the necessities that govern our lives but also provides us with a giant field of motion that has never been thought before" (2014, p. 72).

1.1. Meaning and Form in Cinema

The meaning in cinema is established by the sequence of the "images" produced by the form created with the real spaces recorded with the camera. While the form represents the elements created by the real environment, meaning is established by the sequence of the images created after the elements that make up the form, which are viewed with the camera. As it can be understood, real space, i.e., form, is not the only criterion in the context of reality fiction. The meaning created by the image comes with the form (real, physical environment) that exists as a representation of objectivity, and the structural unity of the two concepts ensures the reproduction of reality in a filmic sense.

Meaning in cinema, against the objectivity of the form, is the product of the director's point of view, which adds the real "art" value to the film and enables the director to stage a real-life event (on the screen) to create a "perception of reality" that is often stronger than the actual event itself (Kracauer, 2015). Thus, it is possible to say that the real urban spaces are more powerful than the studio fiction scenes, and the filmic narrative is more powerful than the real events themselves.

2. Methodology

This study is based on perceiving the complex urban structure of cities that turned into metropolises in the twentieth century, particularly Istanbul. In this sense, cinema enriches the experiences and knowledge of individuals by multiplying the image of the city in the mind of the audience. The important thing is that many realities exist in the imagination; in this study, the traces of these realities will be figured out through the films.

In the study, Istanbul films will be examined to reach multiple images of the city, and the analysis of these images will be based on the concept of tableau of Roland Barthes' in his book The Rhetoric of the Image (2014).

The director chooses what he wants to tell from the multi-material life. It is also possible to see this as a set of choices the director makes to achieve what he wants to convey. This bounded whole (commonly known as composition) is characterised by Barthes as a tableau. The "tableau" is a metaphor established with real images or a form equipped with meaning, and it provides the overlap between the physical section (form), the actual image and the meaning produced.

During the production of the image, the director constructs his own tableau by making choices from the city in order to reach the cross section in his own mind. Even though Jane Jacobs does not give a clear name like a tableau, she says that no matter what medium they use (such as cinema, theatre, or literature), they make choices from "the material of life that swarms around them "and arrange them in a way that creates" works under their control".

3. Changing Images of Istanbul in Turkish Cinema

Similar to the L'Arrivée d'un train à La Ciotat (Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat) (Lumiére, 1895), known as the first film in cinema history by Auguste and Louis Lumiere Brothers, Ayestafanos'taki Rus Abidesi'nin Yikilisi (The Destruction of the Russian Monument in Ayestafanos) (Uzkinay, 1914) is the first film of Turkish cinema which is also based on the documentation of a "real" phenomenon (Scognamillo, 2010, p. 24). The film shows the demolition of the monument built by Russians to commemorate the 93 War for propagandistic purposes. The film, which does not have a specific scenario, points to the environment of Kalitaria (today Senlikkoy) near Ayestafanos (today, Yesilkoy) in 1914 and has the feature of being propaganda. These years were followed by World War I documentaries for similar reasons in the 1914-1918 period, and thus, these filmmakers went

down in history as the first "realistic" Turkish filmmakers.

The next period is the Stage Actors Period, shaped by the famous actor Muhsin Ertugrul's return to Turkey from abroad. Theatrical adaptations are of great importance in the cinema of Ertugrul, who directed 30 films between 1922 and 1953 (Scognamillo, 2010, p. 40). As an inevitable result of this situation, with the choices of artists, actors and directors from the theatre stages, most of the films were captured in "fictional spaces" rather than real places. As a result, the films had a very weak spatial relation with the city. Most films with limited urban images were shot in studios in the period.

On the other hand, it is possible to talk about an image of Istanbul that is clearly read in the movie Sehvet Kurbani (Ertugrul, 1940), even if it does not fully carry the characteristics of the period between 1922 and 1950, which was shaped mainly by Ertugrul's theatrical roots. This image belongs to a sterile and beautiful modern Istanbul, where everything works orderly and gives urban scenes with high-rise buildings and wide streets. It is possible to read the movement and order of the city in all the Istanbul scenes in the movie. "Elegant people in modern suits, bow ties, hats, look at their watches, take fast steps along the wide streets and get on ships and trams" (Ozturk, 2003, p. 61). Shops, work areas or houses are always carried out meticulously, and life in the city runs smoothly.

In the 1950s, "in this period when freedom of thought was restricted in every layer of society from universities to the political life, cinema also had difficulties intending to the realities of the society." It is observed that an "optimistic" Istanbul is mostly depicted in the films of this period (Guchan, 1992, p. 80). Compared to the previous period, the city's beautiful silhouette, landscape images, Bosphorus shores, neighbourhoods or street life are featured rather than the modernising and changing structure of the city. Memduh Un's film Uc Arkadas (1958) became a typical example of the period with its well-known Istanbul images (such as Ortakoy Square and Galata Bridge) in an optimistic atmosphere, a city in the foreground with its beauty. Another cinematic example of the period was the novel adaptations due to the restriction of freedom of thought. Many novels such as Resat Nuri Guntekin's Dudaktan Kalbe (Kamil, 1951) and Yaprak Dokumu (Tedu, 1958), Halide Edip Adivar's Vurun Kahpeye (Akad, 1949) or Huseyin Rahmi Gurpinar's Efsuncu Baba (Arakon, 1949) were adapted to the cinema. The complicated story of the novel is in the foreground rather than the realistic life of the city. In these adaptations, the city (Istanbul) is used only as a background, similar to the theatre, and creates an optimistic atmosphere by carrying the characteristics of the period.

"Cinema, which developed mostly under the influence of theatre until the 1950s, tried to learn the language of cinema and create a new language in the 1950s, and by the 1960s, it started to speak the language it learned and at the same time developed closer relations with the society" (Senturk, 2016, p. 51). In the 1960s, this parallel relationship between cinema and society developed under the influence of the "socialist-realist" movement, and films that focused on the migration and the poor life in the city came to the fore together with the realistic rural films (p. 51). Halit Refig's Gurbet Kuslari (1964) and Duygu Sagiroglu's Bitmeyen Yol (1965) films present a different city image compared to previous periods by telling the internal migration phenomenon of the period through Istanbul. With the influence of the socialist-realist movement, the atmosphere described in the films of this period is quite different from the images that emphasise the homogeneous urban (modern Istanbul) structure of the films of the 1940s or the "optimistic" Istanbul of the 1950s. For the first time, in the films of this period, there is a dual structure of the city, which contains different populations and does not form a unity with each other (Guchan, 1992, p. 127). For example, in both Gurbet Kuslari and Bitmeyen Yol, there is "traditionality" against the "Westernised" side of the city, and the main emphasis in both films is the "modern and attractive landscapes of the city" rather than the poor aspects of the city. In Gurbet Kuslari, this meaning is constructed with modern neighbourhoods such as Nisantasi and Macka, which are shown against traditional old neighbourhoods such as Kurtulus, Tarlabasi or Suleymaniye while in Bitmeyen Yol, the regions which are lacking in the services of the municipality such as roads, water and electricity are shown against city's identity such as modern buildings, workplaces, furnished apartments, night clubs, museums and promenades (Guchan, 1992, p. .128,129).

Between 1965 and 1975 (in some sources, this date is between 1960 and 1975), "cinema became the cheapest activity for large audiences" (Ozon, 1974, p. 6). Considered by some to be the "golden years" in terms of the number of films produced, this period is the period in which the first examples of "Yesilcam cinema", the period in which the highest number of products are produced in the history of Turkish cinema, were produced. In such rapid production, stereotyped locations were also in use, along with repetitive scenarios, and almost all the films were shot in Istanbul, which has always been the centre of the Turkish cinema industry. Despite the fact that the rich-poor distinction is the backbone of the whole scenario, it is difficult to see such spatial segregation (rich-poor) in films of this period. In films shot with simple scenarios and familiar characters, Istanbul exists only as a strong setting with the places it offers, and these films do not have the concern of creating a realistic impression of the city and urban life or giving a social message. It is possible to obtain information from the melodramas about the form of the "selected" places of that period rather than the city. Thus, it is possible to say that the "tableau" created by making sense of the form has moved away from reality. It would be correct to define the location classification of the films, which are mostly shot in the house and/or in the garden, as "residential areas" and "non-residential areas". The areas outside the residences in Yesilcam screenings are the gardens, groves, docks, piers, ferries, cobblestones, tea gardens overlooking the city or the minarets of the city. When examined in the context of reality, the geographical ties of interior (housing) and exterior (urban) spaces are weak. In other words, the city is reconstructed with its locations chosen from geographically independent points, and the established image of Istanbul is only a "background" to the story rather than being a reflection of the city. In Suner's words, this is "a background that has become too familiar, domesticated, almost turned into a kind of interior" (2015, p. 218).

Even though the "social-realist" movement, which started in the 1960s, was pushed into the background during the film productions held by the entertainment industry between 1965 and 1975, they have always preserved their existence as examples of alternative cinema. By the early 1970s, the movement started by melodramas began to lose its power gradually, and the socio-realist cinema has continued since the first half of the 1970s. Compared to the 1960s, the biggest difference in spatial terms was the representation of the city and the feeling it created accordingly. Guchan describes the spatial distinction between 1960s and 1970s Istanbul in his book Social Change and Turkish Cinema as follows:

The 'attractive atmosphere of the big city' seen in the films of 1964 and 1965 is not seen in the films of the 1970s and 1980s. The big city Istanbul has a different appearance with its people, spatial texture and problems. What is missing is the 'cultural identity' of the city, which is surprising to people coming from the village. In the examples of the 1960s, 'urban culture' as a way of life, environment/human, human/human relations, spatial arrangements and refusing to integrate with the immigrants makes its presence and weight felt. In a sense, these dominant qualities of the 'urban culture' are the most difficult of the difficulties that the immigrants face in the city, and the reason why they are sometimes defeated and come back. 'Urban culture', which appears as an obstacle to adaptation and integration, is not present in the films of the 1970s and 1980s. In fact, there is no 'city' with Western places or people in these films (1992, p. 129).

In addition to the loss of Istanbul's "urban identity", migration from the village to the city increased in the 1970s, and "the gecekondu" population has acquired an indispensable place in the economy; it has become an actor in social and political events, and gecekondu's gain a seat in the city" (Senturk, 2016, p. 66). Accordingly, the gecekondu of the 1970s are no longer as primitive as they used to be. It benefits from the basic services of the city, such as roads, water, electricity or transportation (Picture 2.16). The distinctive spatial reflections of the characteristics of the period are seen in Omer Lutfi Akad's Gelin (1973), Dugun (1973) and Diyet (1974) and Kartal Tibet's Sultan (1978). The common feature of these films is that the "squatters" became the settled part of the city in the social process, and the "gecekondu" became dominant in the city, replacing the "traditional old neighbourhoods" of the 60s. Especially in the movie Gelin, it is seen that the majority of the city is composed of immigrants from Anatolia, and this situation is also reflected in the spatial representation: The appearance of districts such as Eminonu, Sirkeci, Aksaray resembles the lifestyle of gecekondu.

By the mid-1980s, the population of Istanbul as a big city started increasing daily, and it became difficult for newcomers to find housing. It is possible to say that this period was the period when Istanbul took its first steps towards metropolitanisation. Now, the conditions of even building a geceondu have become difficult, and the border between the living spaces of those from the villages and the city has become apparent. Muammer Ozer's Bir Avuc Cennet (Ozer, 1985) movie summarises Istanbul's housing problem in 1985: The family who migrated from the village to Istanbul uses the scrap bus located outside the city, surrounded by high-rise apartments on an empty garbage dump by the sea as a house. In the film, "we cannot see the districts of the city belonging to different income groups, or the places that serve functions such as shopping, resting and having fun" (Guchan, 1992, p. 131). The first observations on the metropolitanisation of Istanbul can be seen in the films shot in this period, with urban life becoming crowded with internal migration, the increasing construction of apartments and the increasing traffic. Films that are the continuation of the social-realist movement that started in the 1960s, such as Zugurt Aga (Colgecen, 1985) and Muhsin Bey (Turgul, Muhsin Bey, 1987), both presented traces of the metropolitanisation of Istanbul with the urban images they presented, as well as the individual struggle with the city. In these films, as in Bir Avuc Cennet, high-rise apartments, undesigned and unused spaces in the city, the traffic problem, social images such as crowded coffee houses, the increase in the number of cars in the neighbourhoods or the construction of wide paved streets and avenues with apartments point to the growing structure of Istanbul.

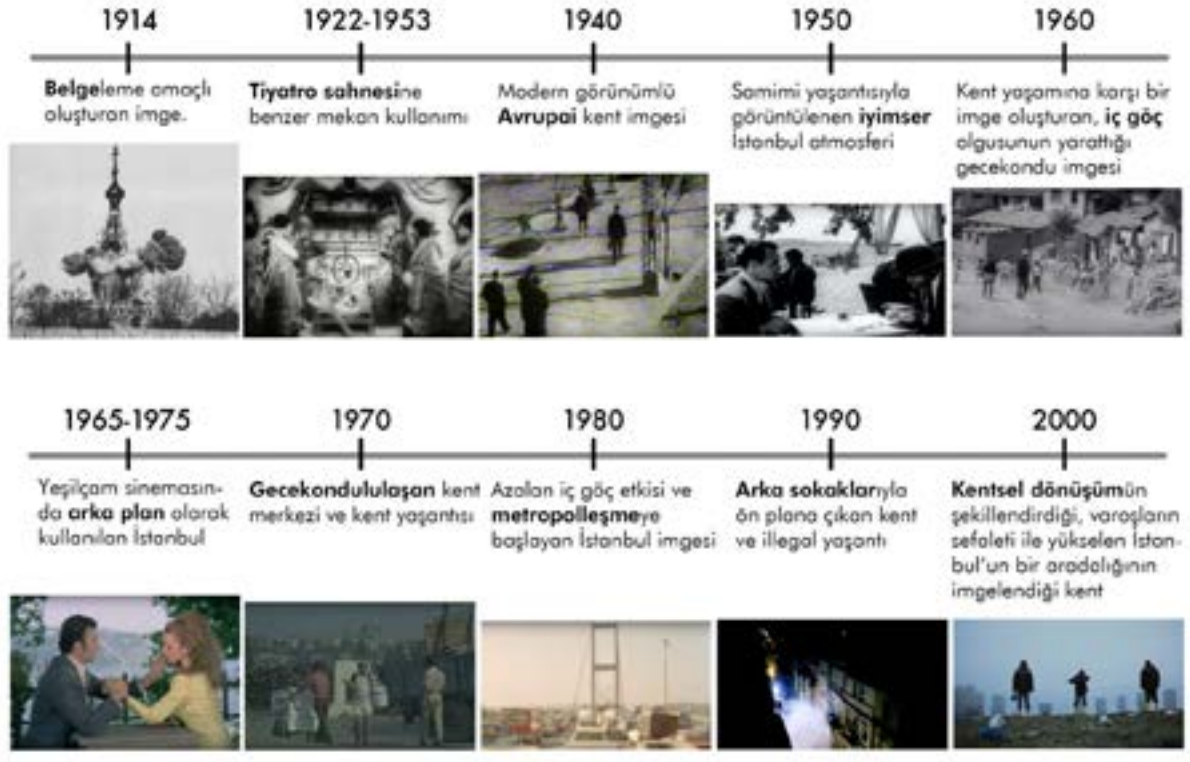

Figure 1. Changing images of Istanbul in Turkish Cinema

In the 1990s, Istanbul, for the first time, moved away from its "traditional-romantic" image and started to appear as a modern metropolis. As a result of this new situation, the problems of the city differ from previous periods. In these years, when the migration from the village to the city lost its old pace, it was seen that the immigrants became integrated with the city, and the problems of the villagers were now forgotten. With the growth of the city, the problems of the complex city have arisen. (Posteki, 2012, p. 85). While these problems appear as "alienation", which is seen as a result of the modern city in the social sense, the feeling found its place in the cinema with the stories of individuals who "stayed on the edge of society, committing violence and exposed to violence" (Posteki, 2012, p. 185). As a result, the narrow back streets of the city, illegal neighbourhoods, formless apartments and the shops underneath, high-rise buildings lost among the lights, debris gaps between apartments, unidentified taverns, pavilions, and bars featured

the marginal places of Istanbul. Therefore, Istanbul, with its Bosphorus shore, domes (Ortakoy, Blue Mosques), bridges (Bosphorus and Galata Bridges), historical structures, natural beauties or familiar elements that are the symbols of the city (Galata and Maiden's Tower), were erased from the images. These elements were replaced by the city's underground spaces and the back streets of the complex city structure where the illegal lives were shaped. As in every period, a different image of Istanbul is read in this period as well; this time, Istanbul exists with its marginal spaces and hybrid structure. Films such as Eskiya (Turgul, 1996), Masumiyet (Demirkubuz, 1997), Agir Roman (Altioklar, 1997), Laleli'de Bir Azize (Sabanci, 1999), which were shot during this period, were the productions that described the Istanbul of the period with its illegal back streets.

In the mid-2000s, the city changed with the gentrification law in 2004 under the influence of urban transformation processes, which can be considered as a continuation of metropolitanisation. Goksel Aymaz, who reads the image of Istanbul of the period through Nuri Bilge Ceylan's film Uzak (2002), describes the spatial meaning of this image as the "dialectic" of two sides: gentrification areas on one side and the newly built luxury areas on the other side. This "dialectic", along with the transforming districts of Istanbul, made the "magnificent Istanbul" appear "again" on the screen, and the general attitude of the films of the 2000s was to convey the contrast created by this dilemma to the audience. The impressiveness of this conflicting structure comes from the fact that "gecekondu" and "skyscrapers" are only one street away from each other (Aymaz, 2014, p. 279).

4. Conclusion – Haydarpasa Station

When viewed within the historical process, the images of Haydarpasa Train Station, mostly used as a common element in the movies, offer the opportunity to summarise the process of Istanbul image with different meanings of the same place. In the 1940 film Sehvet Kurbani (Ertugrul, 1940), the passengers, displaying a modern appearance with a sterile, orderly atmosphere and clean clothes, are seen in the image taken from the train departing from Haydarpasa Train Station, where everything works regularly in a way that reflects the image of Istanbul of the period. When we look at the movie Sihirli Define (Evin, 1950), in this period in which the focus is on the buildings with the identity of the city, in a scenario (comedy film) suitable for the optimistic atmosphere of the 1950s, a hopeful image of Haydarpasa is observed, again without chaos. On the other hand, the movie Gurbet Kuslari (Refig), shot in 1964, shows images of the city shaped by the first rural-urban migration phenomenon, with images taken at Haydarpasa Train Station. The images of a family in Haydarpasa, who came to Istanbul from the village with their whole family, reflect the migration atmosphere of the period. The break with Yesilcam cinema between 1965 and 1975, when the influence of the social-realist cinema of the 1960s and 1970s diminished, is also read in the representation of Haydarpasa Train Station. The train station creates a studio-like space with no physical relationship with the city for the narrative established with intrigues, similar to the use of Istanbul as a decor, which is a characteristic of the period. The lack of an effort to create a realistic impression of urban life in the period cinema is understood from the fact that Haydarpasa is a physical element independent of the city, which remains in the background of the narrative. In the 1973 film Gelin (Akad), the most distinctive feature of the period is the diminishing cultural identity of the big city, and the disappearing attractive atmosphere becomes visible in the migration scenes to Istanbul, which are also made at the station. In the images taken from the film, it is seen that those who came from the village to the city did not experience problems of adaptation to the city or the barrier of integration with the city, as in the 1960s, and that the station, which was a symbol of "western space" for a period, has completely lost this sterile and orderly image of the station with the chaos and confusion created by internal migration. In the image taken from the 1996 movie Eskiya (Turgul), it is seen that one of the main protagonists was taken into custody by the police as he got off the train. Haydarpasa, again reflecting the characteristics of the period, has assumed a marginal identity as a place where illegal activities and a dark atmosphere are experienced. Unlike the previous periods, the night view of the station also supports the "uncanny city" image created. Finally, with a night view, it is possible to read the characteristics of the period from the reflection on Haydarpasa Train Station from the 2004 movie Anlat İstanbul (Demirdelen, Yolcu, Atay, Sabanci, & Unal). In the movie, although the station shows the cinematic view of Istanbul with its long-range shot, it is used for the first time

not for coming to the city but as a door for "escape from the city", emphasising the "unliveable city" image of Istanbul with this feature.

In conclusion, throughout the history of Turkish cinema, the "social process" has been shaped by "spatial form", and different images of Istanbul have been created in each period. While this image may be "modern city Istanbul" (1940s) at one time, it may be "Istanbul with slums" (1970s) at another time; or while it draws an "optimistic" (1950s) atmosphere in one period, contradictions emerge with the structure of the "uncanny and complex city" (1990s) in another period.

Figure 2. The meanings attributed to Haydarpasa station in the historical process

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Endnotes

1. This article is prepared from a chapter of the master's thesis titled "Images of Istanbul in Post-2000 Turkish Cinema: Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul, Istanbul Tales and My Only Sunshine.

2. This paper has been presented at the SPACE International Conference 2021 on Cities, Architecture and Cinema.

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