

**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
BAHÇEŞEHİR UNIVERSITY**

**THE NARRATIVE AND FORMAL ELEMENTS OF
FILM NOIR IN TURKISH CINEMA IN THE
FILMMAKERS PERIOD (1952-1962)**

Ph.D. Thesis

ALİ HALİL KOCATÜRK

İSTANBUL, 2019

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**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
CINEMA AND MEDIA RESEARCH (PH.D.)**

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Supervisor: ASSISTANT PROFESSOR ELENİ VARMAZI

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ABSTRACT

THE NARRATIVE AND FORMAL ELEMENTS OF FILM NOIR IN TURKISH CINEMA IN THE FILMMAKERS PERIOD (1952-1962)

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This study aims to examine the influence of classic film noir in Turkish cinema by studying seven Turkish films produced in the filmmakers period between 1952 and 1962. Starting with *Kanun Namına*, directed by Lütfi Akad, in 1952, film noir becomes visible in certain Turkish films with a story that includes crime, people in the grey area, and the city as the setting, and film noir style including noticeable stylistic devices deviating from traditional narration of the period in terms of cinematography, mise-en-scene, and editing. Providing the historical background and information on Turkish cinema, the industry, and the conditions for filmmaking in Turkey, and classic film noir, this study examines the seven cases from a formalist approach to analyse the narrative and stylistic elements of the films in detail, and reaches separate conclusions for each case to understand the extent of film noir influence in each film. The findings and conclusions are further discussed comparatively to determine how Turkish noir is constructed within a decade. Ultimately, by determining the characteristics of Turkish examples of film noir, this study situates Turkish noir in Turkish cinema and in an international context. Being among the first studies to explore the period in detail and scrutinise the relationship between classic film noir and Turkish cinema, this study offers a new perspective to revise the history of Turkish cinema from a formalist approach.

Key words: Film noir, Turkish cinema, filmmakers period, neo-formalism

ÖZET

TÜRK SİNEMASINDA SİNEMACILAR DÖNEMİNDE ANLATI VE BİÇİM BAKIMINDAN KARA FİLM ÖĞELERİ (1952-1962)

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Bu çalışma, Türk sinemasında sinemacılar döneminde, 1952-1962 arasında yapılmış yedi Türk filmi inceleyerek, Türk sinemasında klasik dönem kara film etkisini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Lütfi Akad'ın yönettiği, 1952 yapımı *Kanun Namına* ile başlayarak kara film, şehirde geçen, suçu ve gri bölgede kalmış insanları anlatan hikayeleriyle ve sinematografi, mizansen ve kurgu bakımından geleneksel anlatılardan ayrılan ve kolaylıkla farkedilebilen biçimsel araçlarıyla kara film öğelerini içeren bazı Türk filmlerinde görünür hale gelmiştir. Türk sineması ile ilgili tarihsel arkaplan ve sektör ve dönemin film yapım koşulları ve klasik dönem kara film hakkında bilgi veren mevcut çalışma, sözü edilen yedi filmi, anlatı ve biçimsel öğeleri bakımından ayrıntılı bir şekilde analiz etmek amacıyla biçimci bir yaklaşımla incelemekte ve her bir filmdeki kara film etkisini anlamak amacıyla her film için ayrı ayrı sonuçlara ulaşmaktadır. Daha sonra, bulgular ve ulaşılan sonuçlar, karşılaştırmalı olarak yeniden ele alınarak, on yıllık süreçte Türk kara filminin nasıl inşa edildiği saptanmaktadır. Nihayetinde, tartışma, Türk kara film örneklerinin ayırt edici özelliklerini belirleyerek, Türk kara filmi Türk sineması bağlamında ve uluslararası bağlamda konumlandırmaktadır. Söz konusu dönemi ve klasik dönem kara film ile Türk sineması arasındaki ilişkiyi ayrıntılı olarak inceleyen ilk çalışmalardan biri olarak mevcut çalışma, Türk sineması tarihini biçimci bir yaklaşımla yeniden ele almak için yeni bir bakış açısı sunmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Kara film, Türk sineması, sinemacılar dönemi, yeni biçimcilik

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1. INTRODUCTION

Being roughly a combination of various art forms such as painting, drama, literature, and photography, cinema with the integration of sound has always been a product of a shared effort of diverse cultures, periods, and geographies. Any study on the advent of cinema and the first instances of fiction film would probably mention French, German, Russian, or American contributions which might later extend to Italian, British, Japanese, Indian, and perhaps Egyptian influences, and would continue with Mexican, Spanish, Hungarian, Polish, Australian and Korean cinemas. The list could be expanded to include more countries and cultures with films ranging from ‘art house’ to commercial ‘popular’ productions. However, be it Hollywood or Bollywood, *Cinecittà* or *Yeşilçam*, none of them could be studied without referring to another tradition. The practice of film making is also a practice of combining a range of personal, cultural, social, national and international influences. The story of Turkish cinema also calls a wide variety of cinematographic influences all around the world including mainly American, Egyptian, French, German, Indian, Italian, and Russian cinemas.

Although the advent of cinema in Turkey is relatively early, that is not the case for film making and the development of a productive and profitable film industry. As discussed in the chapter on Turkish cinema, the flourishing of cinema in Turkey coincides with the emergence of a new generation of filmmakers in the 1950s who started to experiment on new genres and styles mainly due to the lack of a rich legacy after the one-man era dominated by Muhsin Ertuğrul and the ‘transition period’. The filmmakers period, which is usually summarized as an introduction to *Yeşilçam*¹, and is underestimated and academically neglected in many ways, is in itself a phenomenon offering a diverse and rich content. The period, which roughly covers the 1950s and the mid-1960s just before the film industry and the market fully flourish as *Yeşilçam*, has a key role due to the experiments on genres and film language. A large number of directors of the period have become prominent figures in the history of Turkish cinema. The lack of a Turkish school in cinema enables and encourages influences from countries with a degree of cultural

¹ See ‘Turkish Cinema until the 1960s’ for different descriptions and periodisation attempts.

affinity and connection such as Egyptian cinema during the 1940s, Indian cinema during the 1950s, and American cinema during the 1950s and the 1960s among other influences mentioned above. The directors start to experiment on filmmaking in order to shape their film language, which eventually creates a considerable impact on the next generation of directors who are to appear towards the end of the 1950s and in the 1960s, and dominate the most productive era of Turkish cinema until the 1980s. Therefore, the filmmakers period can be considered the genesis of modern filmmaking in Turkey in terms of film form and narrative variety.

1.1 THE SCOPE AND AIM OF THE THESIS

This study focuses on one of the international influences on Turkish cinema in the filmmakers period: the influence of classic film noir, which has flourished in the USA during the 1940s, and became popular in Turkey after the Second World War following the growing economic, political and cultural interest of the USA in Europe in the post-war era. The aim of this study is to determine to what extent film noir has played a part for the directors in their efforts to create their film language, and the effects of film noir on Turkish cinema during the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s. To that end, seven films from seven different directors are selected as the cases for analysis. The films are as follows:

1. *Kanun Namına* (In the Name of Law², 1952) by Lütfi Akad
2. *Cingöz Recai* (Vigilant Recai, 1954) by Metin Erksan
3. *Kanlarıyla Ödediler* (They Paid in Blood, 1955) by Osman F. Seden
4. *Ölüm Peşimizde* (Death is Chasing Us, 1960) by Memduh Ün
5. *Kanlı Firar* (Bloody Escape, 1960) by Orhan Elmas
6. *Ölüm Film Çekiyor* (Death is Shooting a Film, 1961) by Aydın Arakon
7. *Rıfat Diye Biri* (Someone Called Rıfat, 1962) by Ertem Göreç

² The translation of film titles follows the established use in various sources available as much as possible. However, some titles are translated differently to keep the meaning as in Turkish or to correct grammar mistakes, and a footnote is inserted in such cases.

The reason for selecting these films and directors is mainly to reveal the wide variety of the application of film noir form and content, which signifies the popularity of film noir throughout the filmmakers period for almost a decade. Except Aydın Arakon and Lütü Akad, all the directors started filmmaking during the filmmakers period, and all of them continued their careers in the *Yeşilçam* era. Arakon and Akad started directing films in 1949, however, the majority of their films are made during and after the filmmakers period, and therefore, they can be considered a specimen of that period. The selection aims to create a balance between significance and variety, and does not aim to compile similar films. *Kanun Namına* is selected mainly because the film is considered the first example of its kind in Turkish cinema, and therefore, it creates a starting point for any study that aims to explore the relationship between film noir and Turkish cinema. Since Lütü Akad is a major figure of the period, his films are expected to be influential on other emerging directors of the period, and therefore, the analysis of the film is also significant to understand the following cases. *Cingöz Recai* is not a significant film in Metin Erksan's filmography, however the film is necessary to understand how young directors make use of film noir tradition and conventions while establishing their own style at the beginning of their career. Erksan merges the adaptation of a classic detective fiction and film noir, so the analysis of the film gives an idea about whether an adaptation of a detective story reminds the adaptations of hard-boiled detective fiction in classic film noir. *Kanlarıyla Ödediler* is selected as it emphasizes continuity of film noir influence, and the film is the debut of the director. The film is also important to understand how Seden reconfigures the weight of melodramatic elements, and modifies the way film noir elements are used in his film. *Ölüm Peşimizde* reveals the close connection between transgressing genres, realism, melodrama and film noir. *Kanlı Firar* is similarly significant to understand the fusion of multiple styles and narrative elements, mainly poetic realism and film noir. The film provides a different narrative structure based on psychological depth and existential motifs, and therefore, the way style is employed is significant to see how the narrative is presented, and the role of film noir in differentiating the film from any other case in this study. *Ölüm Film Çekiyor* is selected to include a self-reflexive film embodying noir characteristics in a traditionally structured but modernized version of a detective story, and to show the popularity of noir style even for experienced directors at the beginning of the 1960s. Finally, *Rıfat Diye Biri* is significant to display the transformation of film

noir influence over a decade just before the industry grows to become *Yeşilçam*, and the legacy that is passed to the new generation of directors precisely after a decade since the first film. The case also provides insight about the relationship between film noir and melodrama.

These films do not comprise the whole range of films with film noir elements of the filmmakers period. Films with similar characteristics are found in these or other directors' filmography in later years. The selection here could be arranged differently if the study focused on single instances individually rather than a decade. In short, the current selection of the cases covering a decade provides a comprehensive analysis available to measure and understand how film language has been formed and evolved by the prominent directors of the period who passed on their legacy to the next generation and continued to be influential in the decades to follow the 1950s and the 1960s.

The first premise of this study is that film noir has played a major role in the formation of the film language of the prominent directors of the filmmakers period, who have been influential over decades in Turkish film industry. The second premise of the study is that film noir elements are not seen as copies or appropriation of classic film noir examples. On the contrary, the directors transform and mould the narrative and formal elements of film noir individually or in combination with different genres and styles in such a way to integrate in their works and create authentic products based on a combination of diverse local and international elements, which eventually provide them with a transnational quality. Finally, the third and final premise as the outcome of the first two is that the collection of films should be differentiated from other films as they form a different category in Turkish cinema, Turkish noir.

1.2 THE DISCIPLINARY CONTRIBUTION

The main contribution of the study is to examine the filmmakers period from a formal perspective for the first time in terms of film noir influence. The formalist study can provide a sound basis to explore the formation of film language in Turkey. The filmmakers period has been rarely studied in detail so far, and hardly ever studied from a formalist approach. Therefore, this study will be among the first to explore the period through seven cases with an almost exhaustive formal analysis by studying the form and content of each film to shed light on the selected films and the directors of the period to

reach a broader insight regarding film noir influence in Turkey. Moreover, although the relationship between film noir and Turkish cinema is mentioned previously (Özön 2013; Scognamiglio 2010), neither the extent of the connection nor the interpretation of the influence in the context of film history is discussed in detail. This study is beneficial to illuminate how the interaction takes place, how that interaction has contributed to the filmmaking process, and the conclusions to be drawn from that relationship in a comparative way.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

While analysing the cases in terms of form and content, I heavily rely on a combination of film theory, narratology and neo-formalism. Formalism in film studies can be traced back to the beginning of the 20th century in the works of Sergei Eisenstein and V. I. Pudovkin as they draw the attention to the relationship between form and meaning, in particular by means of editing and acting. Eisenstein (1923) underlines the power of editing, montage of attractions to be specific, in creating an action-reaction mechanism that creates certain effects on the audience. Similarly, Pudovkin (1960) underlines the importance of editing by stating that ‘the film is not shot, but built, built up from the separate strips of celluloid that are its raw material’ (p. 24), and distinguishes photographic quality from cinematic quality by emphasising motion in cinema. He also shows how the language of a film is constructed on the shooting script in the light of the scenario and the treatment for the actors, and how the formal aspects of the film during pre-production, production, and post-production stages determine the ways in which the film is produced. The total sum of these elements is arranged after the fragments are completed and they form the film language. Perceiving films as having a language paves the way for structuralist approaches, and Russian formalists such as Viktor Shklovsky and Boris Eikhenbaum focus on narratives as semantic constructions. Shklovsky (1990) differentiates between the *syuzhet*, the way the events are ordered in the narrative, and the *fabula*, the way the events actually happen, and this approach strengthens the arguments stating that formal aspects determine the ways in which the content is provided, and eventually the way they might be perceived by the audience. Shklovsky is also significant in his emphasis on style as a means of creating ‘defamiliarization’, which can be translated to understand film noir style as an inherent technique that presents the ordinary in an unusual way. Eikhenbaum (1927) puts forth the idea of ‘*cine phrases*’, a

structuralist effort to determine the smallest meaningful unit of film language, to understand the syntax of films, and interpret the meaning.

The initial efforts to understand the narrative structures by focusing on the elements that comprise the form and content continue in the later decades in different geographies. Rudolf Arnheim (1957) focuses on the formal elements that create a distinction between the representation of reality in films and everyday reality highlighting the role of cinematic devices related to technical developments enabling more options in film making such as the 'mobility of camera'. In a similar vein, Bela Balazs and Noel Burch also focuses on formal devices that create a film, and while Burch studies the relationship between formal devices, Balazs attempts to form a literature that encompasses cinematic devices in a historical, technological, and narrative context combining them with the conditions of cinema industry. The perspective that focuses on cinematic tools to create meaning is countered by Bazin in his discussion about the representation of reality. Bazin (1967) argues that formal devices are used as tools for tricks obstructing the reality, and 'cuts' are interfering in the reality presented in films. Almost in the same period, Christian Metz (1991) revitalizes the structuralist approach that cinema is a language, and identifies the 'shot' as the smallest unit of film language which can be used to understand the entire structure. His argument is that linguistic methods are applicable to film analysis, and filmic language can be studied traceable by means of the basic figures of the semiotics such as montage, camera movements, scales, speech, sequences and so on.

Such intense structuralism combining linguistics, literary studies and film theory to create formalist theory loses ground in parallel with the rise of post-structuralist approaches. the rise of cultural studies in combination with gender studies, post-colonial studies, and psychoanalysis. The premise of formalist theories is mainly to identify an absolute conclusion about the deep structure and deep meaning of narratives. The change affects formalism and its premises, and formalist approach also transforms into neo-formalism, which proposes to identify the ways in which films differ from each other, convey their message, and are perceived by the audience. So, by minimising the reductionism inherent in structuralism, neo-formalist approach does not claim to set governing principles for the totality of films. For instance, Noel Carroll (2003) diversifies style in film form, and distinguishes the approaches to individual films as 'style', a group of films such as films in a period as 'general style', and films of a single director as 'personal style'. He further

creates subcategories, universal style, period style, genre style, and school or movement style. Needless to say, the list can be even more detailed to refer to the ever-increasing large variety of film style. As a result, rather than reaching universal conclusions, neo-formalist approaches take a humbler stance to analyse piece by piece without making sweeping generalizations and disregarding so-called irrelevant data in order not to stain the governing principle that dares to fit for all. What Kristin Thompson (1981) refers to as the 'cinematic excess' implies the shift in the way in which films are analysed. The elements in films are not unified, and excessive material can be detected which goes against the current making it difficult to reach absolute conclusions. To provide a wider range of scope in film analysis, neo-formalist approach uses both the existing classic formalist cinematic devices and other approaches such as narratology to study narrative elements in films. Mainly literary critics and researchers like Gerard Genette (1983), Seymour Chatman (1990), and Mieke Bal (1999) are among the contributors to film studies directly or indirectly in the ways in which they problematize concepts such as narrator, point of view, flashback, fabula, story, focalization and so on. However, the differences between literary and visual texts reveal discrepancies to be sorted, and to that end, theoretical adjustments are needed. David Bordwell (1985) attempts to combine neo-formalist literature in *Narration in Fiction Film*, and David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson (2008) formal elements in *Film Art: An Introduction*. Bordwell tries to form a narrative poetics for cinema which combines the narrative elements and style as well as the excess, non-narrative quality, and the spectator. Hence, differing from the old school formalism, neo-formalism offers a more flexible and customized approach in film studies.

To analyse the cases from 1952 to 1962, and to understand whether the narrative and formal elements have a connection with film noir, the method chosen to be employed is predominantly the neo-formalist approach, in particular a combination of different approaches developed by the abovementioned critics, academics and authors, formalist or neo-formalist. However, the backbone of the analysis in this study is built on David Bordwell's basic structure on visual narratives, which is partly connected to literary studies in terms of the evaluation of the story, and summarized in the chapter on film noir. Narrative elements are analysed in three separate parts as events, characters, space and time (combined); and formal elements are analysed in terms of cinematography, mise-en-scene, and editing without any subdivision. In the analysis of narrative elements, the main

focus is the film noir elements of the narratives, however, when necessary, elements of different genres are also included. Events, character formation, the use of space and time vary from one film to another, therefore, in the film noir chapter, an outline of the basic characteristics of classic film noir are provided by combining a range of perspectives of different writers, critics, academics, and researchers, and these characteristics are further elaborated in the analysis of the cases. Film form is analysed in detail: ‘cinematography’ is composed of the image both as a single frame and as a single shot, and mainly includes, but is not limited to, the qualities of the shot such as depth of field, frame composition and camera movement (including camera angle, distance, and pattern), and shot duration. ‘Mise-en-scene’ mainly includes, but is not limited to, setting, costume, visual effects, props, lighting, and acting and performance, and the relationship between cinematography and mise-en-scene. Finally, ‘editing’ includes, but is not limited to, the temporal, spatial, graphic relationships of shots together with the duration of shots. All these elements are taken into consideration, where applicable, to understand how they operate to form the meaning when they form a ‘meaningful pattern’ in the narrative. As the main aim of this study is to understand film noir influence, the style employed in each film is analysed mainly in terms of film noir style, and when necessary in terms of other stylistic elements of film narration and genres such as realism and/or melodrama. The collected data are checked to see whether they constitute sporadic arbitrary semblance of noir elements or they form a reliable body of evidence in connection with other narrative or formal devices. Therefore, repetitive elements are significant to come to a conclusion about the extent and function of certain film noir elements. So, rather than testing the validity or applicability of existing theories, the study forms its own conclusion by collecting data, classifying and analysing the findings.

1.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The second chapter, after the introduction as the first chapter, focuses on Turkish cinema until the 1960s beginning from the advent of cinema in Turkey to the filmmakers period. The chapter provides a summary of the important events in Turkish cinema starting with the controversies about the first film in Turkey. Then, the chapter continues with the periodisation problem with a summary of alternative perspectives, and the reasons for using the rather classic periodisation of Nijat Özön. After that, the one-man period is summarized together with the discussion about the role of Muhsin Ertuğrul’s dominance

in Turkish cinema. Then, the transition period is summarized as the new generation of directors, producers and actors appear to revitalize filmmaking in Turkey. In this part, the effect of imported films from Egypt is explored in connection with the shared cultural elements between Egypt and Turkey. Similarly, western influence due to imported films from Hollywood coincides the same period, and that is touched upon along with the importance of dubbing through the localization of films to reach more audience. Then, the filmmakers period is introduced referring to the new generation of young directors that dominate the period by experimenting on new genres and styles. In that period, the significance of the US and Indian films as elements of competition and influence on film production is also mentioned to provide a thorough picture of the period. Finally, the role of the structure of the film industry, technology, and censorship in shaping the conditions for filmmaking of the period is also stated as a separate part. This chapter ends with a brief informative introduction to the directors of the cases in this study.

The third chapter concentrates on classic film noir in order to summarize the ongoing debates about the origins of the ‘genre’, historical background and the main elements that distinguishes film noir from other movements and/or genres. In this part, different perspectives on film noir are given, which range from defining it as a genre to rejecting the existence of film noir claiming it to be an extension of existing genres. All the same, a certain common ground is achieved in all the efforts to understand the phenomenon, and these basic qualities are given under separate headings. The division reflects the ways in which the analysis of the cases is handled, and consists of narrative elements, which includes ‘events’, ‘characters’, and ‘space & time’, and ‘formal elements’ without a subheading. In each of these sections, particular elements of film noir are discussed with reference to a range of academics, researchers, and critics to be able to present an all-encompassing account of classic film noir that flourished in the USA during the 1940s until the 1960s. Finally, the last part focuses on international noir to understand the influences of classic film noir around the world.

After these two chapters that mainly provide the literature review and the route of the analysis, the seven cases to be studied are given in a chronological order between 1952 and 1962 from chapter four to chapter ten. All the cases include the same subdivision for analysis: an introductory part, narrative elements with events, characters, space and time; formal elements and conclusion. I try to sort the narrative and formal elements to judge

the intensity of film noir elements to see whether it is possible to mention film noir influence or not. Sporadic elements would not yield meaningful results and therefore, would not be taken into consideration. So, all the cases are analysed in depth and as exhaustively as possible within the scope of the study to see whether there is a pattern or not.

Chapter eleven is the discussion chapter, and it combines the findings of the seven cases, and attempts to draw conclusions in the light of the premises of this study. The main concern of the chapter is to understand how film noir influence can be interpreted in a decade long period over seven diverse cases, and the significance of the said influence for Turkish cinema. The chapter ends with the positioning of some of the selected cases and similar films of the period, by offering a new category as Turkish noir, and draws the characteristics of these films to distinguish them mainly from melodramas with a brief discussion on melodrama as a mode and genre.

Finally, the conclusion, chapter twelve, states the overall conclusions reached in this study with a summary of the analysis of the cases and the discussion part, and offers suggestions for further studies.

2. TURKISH CINEMA UNTIL THE 1960s

The history of Turkish cinema is also a history of controversies from the very beginning because of the lack of documentation on the one hand, and diverse influences from different parts of the world and cultural backgrounds on the other. The first film exhibition in Turkey is reported to be in 1896 or 1897, only a short while after the Lumière brothers' exhibition in Paris in December 1895³. The researchers rely on the account of the daughter of the Sultan Abdülhamid II, Ayşe Osmanoğlu, and while describing the life in the palace, she mentions an entertainer called Bertrand who was supposed to bring the first cinematograph from France to Turkey⁴. After that, as for the first public exhibition, it has been argued that it was conducted by Sigmund Weinberg as the representative of Pathé in 1896 or 1897 including the famous shot of a train arriving at the station (*L'arrivée d'un train en gare de la Ciotat*, 1895), and short pieces presenting scenes from everyday life (Özön 2013, pp. 33-38; Scognamillo 2010, pp. 15-17). However, the studies on Greek press in Istanbul reveals that, a certain D. Henri is mentioned as the person who held the first public exhibition in a beer house called *Sponek* in Istanbul (Bozis and Bozis 2013, p. 23).

As for the first film made in Turkey (the Ottoman era), the footage about the demolition of a monument, which was built by the Russians in memory of their victory after the war between Russian and Ottoman Empires in 1877-1878, has been considered to be the first film in Turkey. The footage is called *Ayastefanos Abidesinin Yıkılışı* (The Demolition of

³ The film exhibition in Paris in 1895 by Lumière brothers has been the most widespread event mentioned about the first film exhibition. However, Roberta Pearson states that Thomas Edison in 1893 and Max Skladanowsky two months before the Lumière brothers in 1895 in Berlin did similar exhibitions, the latter being a demonstration to the paying viewers (1997, p. 14).

⁴ Scognamillo (2010) mentions that there have been other opinions about the first film exhibition that, according to Rakım Çapala, it was a French painter called Didon who first introduced the cinematograph; and according to Nurullah Tilgen, it was Sigmund Weinberg who conducted the first exhibition. However, due to lack of evidence and clarity, it is not possible to understand whether they mean the first public exhibition, or the first exhibition in Ottoman territory (p. 15). Another example of that is given by Rauf Beyru (2000) as he mentions film exhibitions in İzmir by means of Edison's cinematograph even before the exhibitions in the palace (pp. 257-259).

Russian *San Stefano* Monument, 1914), and is reportedly shot by Fuat Uzkinay⁵, who was as a soldier at that time after enlisting (Özön 2010, p. 51). However, later on, discussions on the film escalated to a point of suspecting the existence of the first Turkish film since the film could not be found. Besides, there are also claims that that first film, even if it existed, was indeed an appropriation of a foreign footage, and Uzkinay could only be the camera operator of that film, and that would not be enough to make him the first filmmaker as the so-called film was claimed to be made by an Austrian-Hungarian company⁶ (Mutlu 2007, p. 81). Özön (2010) states that Uzkinay was the maker of the film as the authorities insisted that the film had to be shot by a Turkish filmmaker, who turned out to be Uzkinay who was the only person familiar with film projection, yet not the cinematograph (p. 51). In addition to that controversy, it has been revealed that Manaki brothers, Milton and Yannaki Manaki, who were of Macedon origin by birth, but Ottoman citizen by law, had shot the first film in Ottoman territory in 1911⁷. Manaki brothers filmed Sultan Mehmet Reşat's visit to Monastir and Thessaloniki in 1911 (Evren 1995, p. 123). Macedonia was annexed by Serbia after the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, and probably due to that and the entailing questions related to the national identity and the origin of Manaki brothers, the film shot by them was not taken into consideration in the discussions about the first film in Turkish cinema for a long time.

As seen above, even pinpointing the film that practically starts history of filmmaking in Turkey is not easy, neither is determining the historical perspective to evaluate. Hence, periodisation has also been a delicate subject, and Turkish cinema history is no less complicated than other world cinemas when it comes to categorisation. However, a consensus can be more or less observed with reference to Nijat Özön's initial suggestion until 1960, which was amended later on by himself and forthcoming contributors.

⁵ Fuat Uzkinay later on became the helper to Sigmund Weinberg when Weinberg was appointed as the head of film centre of the army (Özön 2010, 51-52).

⁶ *Sacha Mester Film Gesellschaft* (Scognamillo 2010, p. 24).

⁷ The first film shot by Manaki brothers is also a matter of discussion. It was discovered that in 1905, Manaki brothers purchased a Bioscope 300 camera, and filmed peasant weavers including their grandmother in Thessaloniki (Cowan 2008, p. 338). Therefore, if a film were to be accepted as the first film in Ottoman territory, it would have been the one in 1905, not the one in 1911.

According to Nijat Özön's initial periodisation in 1962, Turkish cinema until 1960 can be divided in following periods:

1. 1914-1922: The advent of cinema, the first steps towards film making
2. 1923-1939: The theatre-film makers
3. 1939-1950: The transition period
4. 1950-1960: The filmmakers period (Özön 2013, pp. 7-9, 153)

Later on, in 1985, he expands the filmmakers period to 1970 indicating that the period was called the filmmakers period to reflect the reaction against one of the preceding periods dominated by theatre-film makers, mainly by Muhsin Ertuğrul (Özön 1985, pp. 337-338)⁸.

Other critics and researchers prefer different categorisations: Atilla Dorsay combines the transition period and the film makers period of Özön referring to it as "the period of transition and the generation of the 'true film producers'" (1989, p. 25). Alim Şerif Onaran, on the other hand, accepts Özön's periodisation except for the fact that he extends the filmmakers period until 1963, and calling the following period New Turkish Cinema until the 1980s (1994, pp. 10, 103). Nezi̇h Erdoğan replaces the phrase 'true film producers' or 'filmmakers' with 'the first cinematographers' (2007, p. 534). Murat Akser keeps Özön's classification as is (2014, p. 50). Scognamillo mentions the difficulties of categorisation, and simply divides the Turkish film history into two as the preparation period until the 1960s, and the maturation period in which it is possible to talk about a sense of awareness in film production (2010, pp. 10-11); however, he later on refers to the year 1949 as the beginning of the filmmakers period (2010, p. 113). Finally, Savaş Arslan proposes a new periodisation and labels the 1950s as pre-*Yeşilçam*, and the period from the 1950s to the 1980s as a whole as *Yeşilçam* (2011, p. 24). In a similar fashion, based on genre characteristics of films, Tunç Yıldırım calls the period between 1948 and 1959 as 'the Formation of *Yeşilçam*' claiming that what defines the period is actually films based on genre (2015a, p. 27).

⁸ The study at hand extends to 1962 including the second part of the filmmakers period as per Özön's periodisation in 1985.

Although researchers and film historians approach periodisation from different perspectives offering different terms and reasons for separating one period from another, almost all of them acknowledge that the 1950s display characteristics that distinguish the period from the preceding and succeeding periods. Therefore, for practical reasons, within the scope of this study, the period covering 1952-1962 from which the case studies are selected will be referred to as the ‘filmmakers period’ as the majority of the researchers and critics agree that cinematographic quality comprises the main characteristic of the period.

2.1 THE ADVENT OF CINEMA IN TURKEY

The beginning of the First World War entails the military efforts to make use of the new medium to inform people and produce wartime propaganda. Following the foundation of *Merkezi Ordu Sinema Dairesi* (the Central Army Cinema Office) in 1915, Weinberg (until he was discharged due to his Romanian origins after waging war against Romania) and Uzkinay served for the army to shoot documentaries and footage about the war (Özön 1970, pp. 10-16). In 1916, *Müdafaa-ı Milliye Cemiyeti* (the National Defence Organization), which was an organization maintaining the connection between the army and the society, also started to shoot footage to screen them publicly (Şener 1970, pp. 15-16).

As for the first feature film, although there have been attempts to make films by Weinberg and Uzkinay, they could not complete them because of the First World War. Weinberg started to shoot *Leblebici Horhor* (*Horhor* the Chickpea Seller) and *Himmet Ağa'nın İzdivacı*⁹ (*The Marriage of Himmet Ağa*) in 1916, but could not finish either of them. The latter was completed by Uzkinay in 1918 (Scognamillo 2010, p. 25). As a result, the first feature films were made by Sedat Simavi¹⁰, one of the former members of the National Defence Organization. In 1917, he made *Pençe* (*Claw*), an adaptation of a play written by Mehmet Rauf, and *Casus* (*Spy*) about which very little is known (Özön 2010, pp. 55-57). When the war ended, and Istanbul was occupied, both the Central Army Cinema

⁹ It should be noted that contrary to others, Alim Şerif Onaran claims that *Himmet Ağa'nın İzdivacı* (*The Marriage of Himmet Ağa*) was finished, and is the first feature film (1994, p. 14).

¹⁰ Sedat Simavi is described as a young cinema enthusiast by Özön (2010, p. 72), and the word choice to describe him implies that the foundation of Turkish cinema did not have a sound basis.

Office and the National Defence Organization were closed, and their equipment was transferred to a civil organization, *Malül Gaziler Cemiyeti* (the War Veteran's Organization) so that the military authority would not seize it. Uzkınay became the head of the film productions, and the organization started working with directors with drama background. In 1919, Ahmet Fehim Efendi adapted a theatre play *Mürebbiye* (Governess), and again in 1919, together with Fazlı Necip, they made *Binnaz*¹¹, (Özön 2010, pp. 60-69). Two years later, in 1921, *Bican Efendi Vekilharç* (Mr. Bican the Butler), a short comedy based on a play¹², was made by Şadi Fikret Karagözoğlu, and after its success it was followed by its sequels¹³ (ibid., p. 69). These films build the core of Turkish cinema at its infancy, and they were either adaptations of plays or novels, which indicate the lack of authenticity in writing original scripts. The actors and the crew were provided by the *Darülbedayi* (City Theatre in the Ottoman era), and therefore, people with a theatre background dominated cinema. Also, it should be noted that the military plays the most significant role in terms of the production of documentary and fiction films by providing equipment and a chance for cinema enthusiasts to improve themselves. After the foundation of the republic, the influence of people with theatrical background continued when Muhsin Ertuğrul became the dominant figure in Turkish cinema for 17 years.

2.2 THE ONE-MAN ERA

Muhsin Ertuğrul, who was originally a theatre director, and the director of Istanbul Municipal Theatre, is a central, yet very controversial figure in Turkish cinema history for the duration his dominance and his long-lasting influence on cinema in Turkey. He is seen to hold the reigns of Turkish cinema, and have monopoly on filmmaking (Özön 2013, p. 75). He was the solitary man: 'the cinema of the Republic was entrusted for 17 years to the care of one man' (Dorsay 1989, p. 22). The period was called the one-director

¹¹ Both Özön and Scognamillo mention that *Binnaz*, which was considered to be an original play written by Yusuf Ziya Ortaç, might be an adaptation of Victor Hugo's *Marion Delorme* (1828) (Özön 2010, p. 66; Scognamillo 2010, p. 32).

¹² The play was adapted by İbnürrefik Ahmet Nuri from Daniel Riche's play called *Le Prétexte* (1905) (Özön 2010, p. 68).

¹³ Scognamillo states that there is a discrepancy between Özön and Nurullah Tilgen about the number of sequels. Özön mentions two more films whereas Tilgen mentions four films (2010, p. 33). Similar to Özön, Onaran mentions three films in total (1994, p. 17).

cinema, and Ertuğrul acted as a representative of the official ideology to form an ‘imagined community’ which was based on the values of the West. The fact that he merely reproduced western elements in terms of form and content in his films is seen as an indicator of the frame of mind of the one-party state (Kaplan 1997, p. 657). In short, he represented the ‘cinema’ of the Republic (Erdoğan and Göktürk 2001, p. 534), and that impression is probably due to the fact that his career in cinema largely overlaps the first decades of the newly found Republic.

Leaving the ideological and political implications aside, he is seen as the founder figure of cinema in Turkey on the one hand, and on the other hand, he is regarded as the reason why Turkish cinema could not flourish at all during his dominance. As summarized by Onaran (2013), Muhsin Ertuğrul was mainly criticized for being a man of theatre from the very beginning to the end of his career, for producing films under theatrical influence, and preventing others from making films or discouraging them, and for merely copying or adapting western productions ignoring local and national subjects. On the whole, he was thought to have done more damage than good to the soon-to-be emerging film industry by using all the means available to make films, but not raising the future directors to replace himself, and not establishing the pillars of a national cinema (p. 270). Özön calls the years under Ertuğrul’s dominations as ‘wasted years’, and out of 29 films directed by Ertuğrul between 1922-1938, he mentions only three of them¹⁴ as noteworthy. The main criticism lies in the lack of cinematographic awareness in Ertuğrul as he was a man of theatre relying on adaptations of stage plays of pre-war period, the value of which is also debatable. Moreover, in the films, the setting, make-up, acting and so on remind a theatre stage and performance rather than a specific filmic design or an understanding of cinematography. Finally, lack of technical background in terms of cinematography, lighting continue to be a problem during and after the one-man era since technicians were lacking in cinema, and Özön blames Ertuğrul for not focusing on technical matters related to the production and post-production stages (2013, pp. 118-123). Similarly, Dorsay also argues that Ertuğrul was satisfied with his theatre career, and did not bother to acquire a ‘cinematographic language’ of his own, and referred to theatrical aesthetics. Yet, he also

¹⁴ *Ateşten Gömlek* (The Shirt of Flame, 1923), *Bir Millet Uyanıyor* (A Nation is Awakening, 1932), and *Aysel Bataklı Damın Kızı* (Aysel, the Girl from Bataklı Dam, 1935).

states that Ertuğrul's lack of cinematographic awareness was part of a bigger problem since visual arts were in general ignored for cultural reasons for centuries, and Ertuğrul was a product of that society. So, although he is a very significant man from a historical perspective, he proves to be inadequate as a film director (1989, pp. 22-23). Kıvanç Esen (2012) examines one of the prominent magazines of the period on theatre and cinema called *Perde ve Sahne* (Curtain and Stage), the lead writer of which was Muhsin Ertuğrul. Esen concludes that cinema was of secondary importance, or even worse, to Ertuğrul, and the most obvious proof for that was the fact that he never wrote about cinema in that periodical, but wrote only about theatre and its problems (p. 85). Finally, Ersan İlal summarizes the era as one in which apart from a couple of films depicting the War of Independence, Ertuğrul's films are adaptations of European plays. In so doing, he not only neglected cinematographic style, but also remained indifferent to social problems of the period to a large extent (1987, pp. 121-122). However, Onaran does not agree with criticism based on Ertuğrul's tendency towards theatrical productions in cinema. He argues that Ertuğrul made films in a period when filmmaking was still under the influence of theatrical style, and therefore his theatrical style should not be surprising under such circumstances (1994, p. 39). Moreover, although Onaran admits that Ertuğrul gave priority to theatre over cinema, he nevertheless highlights the importance of Muhsin Ertuğrul by referring to him as the 'father' of his profession. To him, even if his films were below expectations, it was because of the inadequate equipment and lack of experienced film crew. Therefore, for a fair treatment, Ertuğrul should be considered with regards to the conditions that surrounded and limited him. Onaran suggests that the state, intelligentsia, and the audience share the responsibility for the cinema industry to remain underdeveloped in that period, and not solely Muhsin Ertuğrul himself (2013, pp. 270-278). Önder and Baydemir similarly argue that Muhsin Ertuğrul's filmmaking activities were to the best of his abilities. Considering the political instability of the period, lack of state support in the form of subsidies, lack of education facilities, and skilled workers for the film industry, Ertuğrul should not be targeted at all (2005, p. 130). Seçkin Sevim (2016) summarizes the polarized opinions about Ertuğrul, and underlines the efforts to produce films which at least enabled cinema to exist in Turkey, and initiated the efforts to create an industry. Sevim concludes that he has been a significant figure as 'a man of culture', an idealist laying the foundations of theatre and cinema of a young republic (p.

81). Rekin Teksoy (2005), in a similar way, highlights the fact that Ertuğrul convinced private enterprises¹⁵ to produce films, and that is enough to give credit to him as the person who kept cinema in Turkey alive. Although Teksoy admits that the outcome is far from being satisfactory, Muhsin Ertuğrul tried his best with limited aptitude for cinema in an environment with no one else eager to make films (pp. 475-476).

Muhsin Ertuğrul, who visited, stayed and even worked for a while in Germany, France, Sweden, and Soviet Russia, is claimed to have been influenced by French theatre, German theatre and commercial cinema, and Russian cinema after the revolution, and that creates the mixed attitude lacking a film language of his own. As an actor, he is seen to be under the influence of actors such as Werner Krauss and Emil Jennings, and as a director, it is argued that he applied chunks from Sergei Einstein and Vsevolod Pudovkin's theoretical approaches in a rather superficial way (Scognamillo 2010, pp. 41-43). Esen (2012) claims that during his visits abroad in Germany, cinema was only a means for Ertuğrul to survive, and therefore, it was secondary to theatre, and relevant as long as it served for his aim to improve his skills as a theatre director rather than a filmmaker (pp. 76-77). Özön states that only one out of four films directed by Muhsin Ertuğrul is based on an original script, and the rest are either adaptations of plays and novels, or remakes of foreign films (2013, p. 120). Interestingly enough, the first film made by Ertuğrul, *İstanbul'da Bir Facia-i Aşk* (A Love Disaster in Istanbul, 1922), was based on a true story, and the script was original (ibid., p. 87). Rather than trying to find original scripts, his dependence on adaptations and remakes has been the central argument for criticism about his contribution to Turkish cinema. Özön even argues that making adaptations rather than finding original scripts became a practical source and a habit in filmmaking because of Ertuğrul's attitude (ibid., p. 119). Onaran (2013) concludes that as a man of theatre he was inclined towards cinema under the influence of theatre, and naturally he displayed that in terms of the subject matters he chose, his direction, and acting (pp. 111-112).

Overall, Muhsin Ertuğrul is mainly situated as an important figure in Turkish cinema history for being almost the only director to make films for 17 years, which on the whole kept local filmmaking alive, and led the way to post-war period. On the other hand, his

¹⁵ *Kemal Film* and *İpek Film* until the 1940s, and *Yapı Kredi Bank* for one film, *Halıcı Kız* (The Carpetmaker Girl, 1953).

contribution to Turkish cinema is considered to be too limited, and even detrimental, when the significantly long span of his dominance is taken into consideration. Although Ertuğrul is responsible for many novelties such as making the first sound film in Turkey¹⁶, the first film made in colour¹⁷, different films from different genres, the film featuring a Muslim actress for the first time¹⁸, he is seen responsible for not trying to create a film language of his own, for establishing theatrical films almost an industry standard, and putting Turkish cinema at a standstill. The dichotomy in the way Muhsin Ertuğrul is received is likely to continue due to the two different perspectives from which he has been evaluated.

2.3 THE TRANSITION PERIOD

The one-man era comes to a halt when new directors started appearing after the foundation of a new production company, *Ha-Ka Film*, in 1939, and a new director, Faruk Kenç who studied photography in Germany, was introduced in the industry. The first film directed by Kenç¹⁹ was *Taş Parçası* (A Piece of Stone, 1939), an adaptation of a play written by Reşat Nuri Güntekin, and was therefore regarded as the continuum of Muhsin Ertuğrul's filmic approach (Özön 2013, pp. 128-129; Scognamillo 2010, p. 83). However, the second film directed by Kenç, *Yılmaz Ali* (The Indomitable Ali, 1940) is regarded as a digression from the theatrical cinema. Scognamillo considers the film to be a detective

¹⁶ *İstanbul Sokaklarında* (In the Streets of Istanbul, 1931).

¹⁷ *Halıcı Kız* (Carpet Weaver Girl, 1953). However, it should be noted that the first film that includes a scene shot in colour is *Çıldırın Kadın* (The Woman Gone Crazy) made by Baha Gelenbevi in 1948. Another film shot in colour is *Salgın* (Epidemic) which was also made in 1953 even before Ertuğrul's film, but was featured one month later (Özgüç 1990, pp. 69-70).

¹⁸ Bedia Muvahhit and Neyyire Neyyir in *Ateşten Gömlek* (The Shirt of Flame, 1923) (Özön 2010, pp. 89-90). However, Ali Özuyar (2008) states that one of the periodicals, *Opera-Sine*, published in 18 December 1924, mentions a Turkish film called *Esrarengiz Şark* (The Mysterious East) directed by a French engineer Monsieur Andres in 1922. In this film, the leading role seems to be played by a certain Nermin Hanım appearing on screen one year before Bedia Muvahhit and Neyyire Neyyir. However, Özuyar underlines that although Nermin Hanım could be the first Muslim or Turkish female actress, there is no substantial information about the actress to confirm that (pp. 134-136).

¹⁹ In an interview, Kenç remembers his first experience in film industry around 1933. He reports that he used to insert locally shot footage about belly dancers, comedians or any relevant scene in Russian films imported by Halil Kamil, who was the owner of the company *Ha-Ka Film* (Sağlık 1996, p. 100).

film in American style, and, to him, the film even bears traces of film noir²⁰ (2010, p. 83). In an interview by Mediha Sağlık with Kenç, he claims that he himself wrote the scenario from Vala Nurettin's story (1996, p. 101). In any case, the film is seen as the film breaking the theatrical tradition due to its formal aspects. Özön (2013), with a derogatory look, criticises the story of the film for being full of clichés, and likens the detective character to Mike Hammer. However, he states that the differentiating aspects are dynamic use of the camera, lively editing, and naturalistic acting when compared with the previous films (p. 130). Teksoy (2005) compares Kenç and Ertuğrul, and concludes that although Kenç can also be considered theatrical to some extent, he differentiates himself by means of his settings and scenes shot on location, and as a result Kenç seems to be less theatrical (p. 478). Hence, Özön calls the period which blends a new generation of directors such as Faruk Kenç, Baha Gelenbevi, Şadan Kamil Turgut Demirağ, Şakir Sırmalı, Çetin Karamanbey, Aydın Arakon, and Orhon M. Arıburnu²¹ with those who are said to be the followers of Muhsin Ertuğrul's style such as Ferdi Tayfur, Talat Artemel, Hadi Hün, Kani Kıpçak, Sami Ayanoglu, Suavi Tedü, and Cahide Sonku. He also adds Vedat Örfi Bengü²², Seyfi Havaeri, and Adolf Körner to the latter group on the basis of their film style (ibid., pp. 128-131). The division between traditional theatrical directors and new directors is important, as Scognamillo claims, not in terms of quality, but in the way in which they try to produce novelties (2010, p. 85).

Both Özön and Scognamillo argue that during the transition period, even the new directors cannot be considered to be successful enough in terms of the films they

²⁰ It is not clear what is meant by film noir in this context, however it was too early for classic US film noir. So, Scognamillo either refers to French poetic realism or German expressionism, or the allusion is actually directed at 'detective fiction' in a more general sense as *Yılmaz Ali* was actually a character in Vala Nurettin's detective story (Arslantepe 2009, p.132).

²¹ Orhon M. Arıburnu makes his first film *Yüzbaşı Tahsin* (Captain *Tahsin*) in 1950, so he is not one of the directors of the transition period. Özön includes him in the list stating that he receives his formation during that period as an actor (2013, p. 140). He could also be included in the filmmakers period that follows.

²² One should note that Vedat Örfi Bengü started in theatre, but shifted to cinema first in France, and then in Egypt when he became a producer there. He produced several films in Egypt, and continued as a director in *Ha-Ka Film* upon his return to Turkey (Scognamillo 2010, p. 103)

produced. Although some of them were educated people²³ in photography or cinema, they were nevertheless artisans without a tradition to follow that involved the film culture and art because the majority had been in Germany during the Nazi period, and it was ‘the primeval era of cinema’ in Germany. Also, the conditions they faced with when they returned to the country or started working in film productions were not fit for proper filmmaking, and, to Özön, the established order was based on the theatre tradition controlled by those who sustained the legacy of the one-man era (Özön 2013, pp. 149-150). Scognamillo (2010) acquires a similar look when he inserts that during the transition era different influences, desires, tastes found an outlet, but the outcome was not purely cinematographic (p. 98). Also, Onaran (1994) reaches a similar conclusion by underlining similar reasons for the unsatisfactory results of the transitions period. He describes the directors as ‘enthusiastic’ amateurs as they neither had cinema education nor a profound sense of film culture to produce quality films. However, the transition period is significant in the ways in which it produced a generation of technicians for the following decade (p. 51).

In addition to war time conditions, the need to compete with imported films also posed another challenge for the local filmmakers. Films imported from Egypt seems to have set the dominant tone in the industry due to the popularity of musical melodrama they presented. Between 1938-1948, until the limitations on the import of Egyptian films, 130 films were screened in Turkey, and were received with pleasure by the audience. In the same period, 53 films were made in Turkey, and 20 of them belonged to 1947-1948 (Gürata 2004, p. 56). Özön states that between 1938-1944, 17 films were produced in Turkey whereas the number of Egyptian films screened in Turkey was 16 in that period. In addition, the majority of the productions were directed by the old school directors²⁴, and films by new directors amounted to only five (2013, p. 127). Ahmet Gürata claims that the localization of the Egyptian films contributed to their success in Turkey when the music scores were replaced with music composed by Turkish composers. Also, the films were dubbed, yet with an Arabic accent probably to maintain the authenticity of the

²³ Faruk Kenç studied photography in Germany, Baha Gelenbevi worked in film studios in Nice in France, Şadan Kamil studied photography and sound in Germany, and Turgut Demirağ studied film in the USA (Özön 2013, pp. 129-134).

²⁴ Nine films out of 17 were directed by Muhsin Ertuğrul (Özön 2013, pp. 115-117).

dialogues (2004, pp. 60-61). Ataa Elnaccash describes such Egyptian films as films depending on dialogue and songs for the sake of commercial success. They lack variety in camera movement resulting in a static and illustrative display rather than interplay of stylistic qualities (1968, p. 54). With respect to local success, Esin Berktaş (2013) points to the cultural affinity between Egypt and Turkey, which resulted in the popularity of Egyptian films particularly in some parts of Istanbul, such as the Old Peninsula where the residents were among the last to watch the traditional performance arts such as shadow plays, *ortaoyunu* (folk drama), *tuluat* (improvisational theatre), *meddahlık* (storytelling) on one hand, and cantos and cabarets on the other hand (p. 387). The former are inherently eastern, and are in part based on improvisation whereas the latter are more western oriented. In addition to that, as Canan Balan (2008) underlines, to some extent shadow plays had a resemblance with the cinema as the shadows of the characters were projected by means of a light source from behind onto a flat surface, usually made of cloth (p. 173). The plays were two dimensional on the flat surface, and included entertaining, witty dialogues and songs, which foreshadow some aspects of later popular films in Turkey. As a result, from the beginning to the end, Egyptian films screened in theatres surpassed local productions in number and in the box-office, and that heated the competition putting even more pressure on production companies which prioritized profit and commercial success to incline towards melodramas with musical performances, or to localize the foreign productions.

Although, in terms of influence, Egyptian films play a very significant role, films imported from other countries also seem to explain the difficulties in drawing the audience's attention. Noting that official figures are not available about the exact and reliable number of imported films, counting on the newspapers of the period, Berktaş (2013) estimates that between 1939-1945 the number of imported films was more than five thousand, and 80 percent of them were from the USA while others were mainly from France, Germany, Austria, England and Egypt (pp. 385-386). Comparing this figure with 50 local films from 14 production companies (Scognamillo 2013, p. 106), it is not difficult to infer the pressure on filmmakers from the productions companies. The lack of funds and equipment seems to be the chief complaint of both directors and producers (Berktaş 2013, p. 384; Sağlık 1996, p. 104), and film companies find it more profitable to import films and dub them than to produce a new one from scratch (Özön 2013, pp. 234, 248).

An important aspect of the transition period lies in the way in which Hollywood productions are transformed so as to render them more appealing for the Turkish audience. Gürata (2007) displays the efforts of US production companies and distributors so as to maintain and increase their market share in Turkey. With reference to Kerry Segrave, Gürata mentions an MGM survey that listed Turkey among the countries where public taste differed from that of American audience. As a result, a solution was devised, which focused on localization of films by modifying them through cropping films and inserting footage that was made locally as a way to serve the local audience (p. 337). Teksoy (2005) mentions dubbing as a novelty in filmmaking which was very quickly integrated in Turkish cinema, and points to Faruk Kenç as the initiator of that time-saving technique in *Dertli Pınar* (The Troubled Spring) made in 1943. Contrary to Muhsin Ertuğrul who shot films with sound, Kenç shot the film as a silent film, and the dialogues were added later by means of dubbing (p. 478). Gürata (2007) states that dubbing was already a developed business thanks to *İpek Film*, and in sound studios, more than one hundred films were dubbed by the end of the 1940s, which means that experienced and skilled local people were available. As a popular example, Ferdi Tayfur established a cultural affinity between American characters and Turkish audience by dubbing them with a certain familiar accent different than the original, and even by adding improvisations related to the local culture which were not in the original script. Gürata concludes that such dubbing and adding aspects of local culture in the films served well to cultural adaptation and familiarization (pp. 337-339, 342). Later, the dubbing artists, which were already familiar to the audience in foreign films, also dubbed the actors in Turkish films; for example, in many films, Reşit Gürzap dubbed both Raj Kapoor²⁵ and Ayhan Işık²⁶, who were among the local and international prominent actors of the time. Upon its success, dubbing continued to be a significant part of the industry in the following periods as well.

All in all, Scognamillo considers the transition period as an ‘experimental period’ due to the efforts of those who started to deviate from the mainstream theatrical period (2013, p.106), Berktaş offers an alternative, ‘the period of cinematographic consciousness’ to

²⁵ E.g. *Awaara* (Raj Kapoor, 1951).

²⁶ E.g. *Kanun Namına* (In the Name of Law, Lütfi Akad, 1952).

the same end (2013, p. 388), and Özön calls the period ‘the transition period’ to indicate the phase in which the influence of theatrical cinema was challenged and eliminated to some extent by the new directors without a theatre background (2013, p. 124). However, the new generation of directors during the transition period were inexperienced in filmmaking, and they lacked a substantial tradition to follow. They were either under the influence of cinematographic culture as part of their formative background that they received abroad, the imported films screened in Turkey, or Ertuğrul’s ‘theatrical’ style which they internalized over time. In addition to that, in this period, the habit of using adaptations rather than original scripts continued, and Turkish novels seem to have been the most popular source for films (Arslantepe 2009, pp. 131-132). Although both Ertuğrul and Kenç used original scripts from time to time, and were able to make successful films, overall the adaptations from films, novels, and plays either local or foreign dominated the market. As a result, both the stylistic and narrative elements of Turkish cinema at its infancy were to some extent determined by foreign influence, which later on triggered discussions about the need to create a national cinema.

2.4 THE FILMMAKERS PERIOD

The first substantial steps to make a difference and create a distinguishable film language coincide with the emergence of another generation of young directors who appeared after one of the turning points in Turkish cinema history, the tax regulation of 1948, which reduced the municipality entertainment tax percentage from a maximum of 70 percent to a maximum of 25 percent for domestic productions screened in cinema halls whereas a maximum of 70 percent tax remained the same for foreign productions (Özön 2013, p. 230; Kalemci and Özen 2011, p. 84; Berktaş 2013, p. 385). There seems to be a consensus that that change increased the popularity of domestic productions although the change actually directly affected the cinemas and the tax revenue of the municipality. Admitting that this regulation increased the number of films made afterwards, Özön (2013) criticizes the regulation on grounds that it did not provide some sort of subsidy for filmmakers or companies to produce better films in a better environment, and did not distinguish the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’, but increased the profit of the cinema halls, and in some instances provided cheaper films for the audience. It was even possible to reduce the price of the tickets of imported films as well due to the misconception of the change in the law. So, the regulation did not aim to encourage filmmaking or to improve the overall quality of

the industry (pp. 230-231). However, the demand for domestic productions created a chain reaction, and eventually the number of production companies increased (Kalemci and Özen 2011, p. 84), and new directors appeared alongside the existing ones.

Özön (2013) announces that the distinction between the filmmakers with theatrical background and filmmakers with cinematographic aspirations becomes clear after Ömer Lütfi Akad directed his first film²⁷ *Vurun Kahpeye* (Strike the Whore, 1949), which is an adaptation of a novel written by Halide Edip Adıvar on the War of Independence and unknown heroes of the war including an idealist teacher (p. 156). Scognamillo highlights the year 1949 calling it the beginning of the filmmakers period due to the appearance of Ömer Lütfi Akad as a director. In the years that follow, historical films with costumes related to both the Ottoman era and the War of Independence as well as the then contemporary Korean War depicting heroic stories were made one after another by directors with different backgrounds (2010, pp. 111-113). Yıldırım discusses the appearance of historical films in that period, and argues that the reason for that was related to competition. The production companies of the era were trying to compete with glamorous historical American films, and therefore were led to making historical films with famous actors, décor, and costume to match the visual demands of the audience (2015b, pp. 216-217). Onaran (1994) suggests that 1952, the year *Kanun Namına* (In the Name of Law) was made by Lütfi Akad, marks the beginning of the new period (p. 53) whereas Özön (2013) proposes the year 1950 without any apparent and specific reason in terms of cinematography, but he mentions the transition to a multi-party system, and the change in the government after the elections in 1950 replacing the *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Republican People's Party) with *Demokrat Parti* (Democrat Party) (p. 152). Basically, new directors, actors, and even more production companies in the film industry together with the political changes in the country, and the post-war world including the Marshall Plan and its cultural effects necessitate a separation. In this milieu, following Akad, a new generation of directors start to appear while the existing ones start to cease making films except for the few including Muhsin Ertuğrul, Faruk Kenç, Şadan Kamil, Baha Gelenbevi, Şakir Sırmalı, Turgut Demirağ, Çetin Karamanbey, Sami Ayanoğlu and

²⁷ It should be noted that Akad shot a couple of scenes of an incomplete film, *Damga* (Stamp) directed by Seyfi Havaeri in 1948 (Scognamillo 2013, p. 131).

so on. The young directors including Lütü Akad, Orhon M. Arıburnu, Metin Erksan, Atıf Yılmaz, Osman F. Seden, Muharrem Gürses, Memduh Ün, Orhan Elmas, Mehmet Muhtar, Nedim Otyam and approximately 50 other new directors dominated the industry yet to be developed (Özön 2013, p. 167).

Overall, the filmmakers period is characterized by both foreign and local influences, which affected the industry and film production to varied degrees. In terms of local influences, filmmakers used local sources to a great extent, especially at the beginning of the period. Scognamillo, who marks 1949 as the beginning of the filmmakers period, points to a fact that the films made at the beginning of the period, especially in 1951, are based on subjects on local issues from literature, history, daily events, and not predominantly on adaptation of foreign sources. He lists around 140 films produced between 1949-1959 that are either based on local sources such as plays, novels, folk tales or historical events (2010, pp. 113, 118-121). So, in that period, there had been efforts to create a national cinema to some extent. However, in parallel with the changes in the industry and the world, especially after the execution of Marshall Plan, despite the tax regulation favouring domestic films, the domination of imported films continues. While discussing national cinema, Akser (2013) claims that US films ‘invaded’ the Turkish market, which had an effect in shaping the audience’s taste and expectations, and filmmakers tried to appeal to that kind of audience in their films as well (p. 166). Özön states that between 1950-1959, the number of films produced in Turkey was 565 (2013, p. 232). However, only in 1957, for example, the number of foreign films screened in Turkey is 403, and the average number of foreign films for each year after the war is 350-400²⁸ (ibid., p. 229). Among these imported films, as stated in a popular weekly magazine, *Akis* (1958), 90 percent of imported films were US films (p. 32).

Other than the US films, Indian films also entered the competition, as Gürata (2010) states, with 101 films screened between 1952-1962 (p. 70), and that means Turkish films needed to cope with films from different parts of the world, and at the same time maintain the interest they created on the local audience, which makes the competition even harder

²⁸ Figures differ to some extent in different sources. Gürata uses statistics provided by Tikveş (1968) based on the number of foreign films approved by the censorship board, which states that the number of films imported during the 1950s is roughly between 200-300 per year (2010, p. 70).

by bringing in diverse elements from different world cinemas. Taking Hollywood and Indian cinemas as a point of departure, the difficulty of creating a balance between these approaches is obvious. As David Bordwell (1985) indicates classical Hollywood narration includes a central problem and side quests with a strict causality principle with a sense of structural sophistication manifested through seamless editing and continuity (pp. 157-166). However, Indian films screened in Turkey in the 1950s are musical melodramas sharing certain characteristics: Ravi Vasudevan explores the melodramatic modality in early Indian cinema, and concludes that key popular Indian films the 1950s onwards essentially display stylistic codes resembling popular Hollywood film style incorporating continuity editing and point-of-view techniques. However, he also describes such films as displaying frontal and iconic mode. One can distinguish them by means of the emphasis in the way in which they capture facial expressions and the looks through close-ups and static position of the players in the scene (2000, pp. 388-390), which is usually in contrast with the former due to its dominant presentational quality rather than representational quality dominant in the US films. The example stated by Gürata (2010) confirms that Indian films screened in Turkey in that period made a great impact on the audience. In 1955, *Awaara* (1951) by Raj Kapoor was elected the best film of the year by the readers of a daily newspaper (p. 69). So, it is not surprising to see Turkish films resembling Hollywood films in many ways, but at the same time including extradiegetic elements similar to both Egyptian films screened in the 1940s and Indian films in the 1950s.

The influx of diverse films also led to an eagerness to try new genres including horror, fantasy and science fiction and so on, which is one of the most significant aspect of the filmmaker period. Scognamillo (2010) underlines the variety of films made by the new directors this time including both local and foreign sources, some of which include *Tarzan İstanbul'da* (Tarzan in Istanbul, Orhan Atadeniz, 1952), *Drakula İstanbul'da* (Dracula in Istanbul, Mehmet Muhtar, 1953), and *Uçan Daireler İstanbul'da* (UFOs in Istanbul, Orhan Erçin, 1955) (2010, p. 122). *Tarzan İstanbul'da* is significant in the ways in which Orhan Atadeniz experimented on editing by using film footage from previous Tarzan films displaying authentic Tarzan in motion, animals and places, and using it to enrich the scenes he shot in Turkey (Arslan 2011, p. 83). Atadeniz maintained continuity editing

by matching eyes, action, places, and action. As for the horror genre²⁹, Kaya Özkaracalar (2003) argues that although to a large extent *Drakula İstanbul'da* is based on foreign sources, and may not be classified among the prominent examples of Turkish cinema, it nevertheless provides novelties in terms of both narrative and stylistic elements. Being based on an altered translation of the original novel, the film included elements that had not been included in any other films about fictional Dracula of that time; for example, the relationship between the fictional Dracula and the historical Dracula known as Vlad the Impaler of Wallachia in Romania. Besides, in terms of cinematography, the film displays outstanding photography in some scenes (pp. 206-209).

In addition to genre experiments, there were films imitating popular films of the time, such as *Şarlo İstanbul'da* (The Tramp in Istanbul, Muharrem Gürses, 1954) or *Dümbüllü Tarzan* (Muharrem Gürses, 1954), a mock-Tarzan film; remakes, such as *Sahildeki Kadın* (The Woman at the Beach, Aydın Arakon, 1954); adaptations, such as *Kaldırım Çiçeği* (Sidewalk Flower, Baha Gelenbevi, 1953); or fantasy films, such as *Görünmeyen Adam İstanbul'da* (The Invisible Man in Istanbul, Lütfi Akad, 1955), adapted from 'The Invisible Man' (1897) by H. G. Wells, and many others (Scognamillo 2010, pp. 122-123). The directors listed above are not specifically famous for making the kind of films mentioned here. For example, Lütfi Akad has been considered to be a director of social realism and drama in Turkish cinema, and *Görünmeyen Adam İstanbul'da* with such a fantastic story is an exception in his filmography, and similarly, Muharrem Gürses is a master of melodrama (Özön 2013, p. 172). Scognamillo interprets these examples as indicators of the enthusiasm to explore cinema, and at the same time to secure commercial success by utilizing the popularity of such productions (Scognamillo 2010, p. 123). However, despite all such genre experiments, the period has ultimately been defined through its connection to melodrama. Yıldırım states that the melodramas of 1948-1959 were remade during the golden age of *Yeşilçam* between 1960-1971 due to their box office success (2015c, p. 33), which implicitly hints that the filmmakers period has

²⁹ It should be noted that the first horror film is reportedly *Çığlık* (Scream) directed by Aydın Arakon in 1949. Özön mentions the film to be an 'attempt' of a horror film due to the lack of horror in it (2013, p. 139).

actually been the determining aspect in Turkish film history that, from one perspective, the *Yeşilçam* era is partly a reproduction of its antecedent.

2.5 TURKISH FILM INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE FILMMAKERS PERIOD

Cinema and technology are inextricable as the very medium for the production and exhibition of films requires technology. Technological developments or lack of state-of-the-art equipment may determine the quality of production to a considerable extent, and they definitely affect the production on the whole when imagination and reality clash with each other. Turkish cinema has suffered considerably from scarcity and lack of funds in filmmaking in parallel with the overall economic panorama of the country that determines the financial capabilities of the producers. Although the 1950s witnessed an economic growth following the 1948 Marshall Plan by the USA to aid European countries to tackle problems in the post-war era, and Turkey received aid effective in 1948, that did not solve the problems in the film industry, especially considering the equipment imported from abroad. So, the production and post-production processes continued to be the major areas of concern for the producers and the directors of the period. Motion picture cameras, motion picture film stock, lighting and sound equipment, and processing and editing equipment were not easy to access all the time, or they were not among the best equipment to utilize. In addition, the lack of a clockwork industry due to the relatively ignored practice of filmmaking for decades and the weak structure of the existing profit-driven business model led to a sense of amateurism rather than a sense of professionalism determining the overall quality of production.

In terms of the structure of the industry the relationship between the producers, distributors and cinema owners became the key factor determining the future of cinema in Turkey. The *pursantaj* system³⁰, which became popular during the 1950s, eventually evolved into a business model favouring mainly the investors, who were not necessarily concerned with the future condition or well-being of the industry. The first film of *Erman Film* called *Damga* (Stamp, 1948) is directed by Seyfi Havaeri (and few scenes are completed by Lütfi Akad), and produced by Hürrem Erman. Erman claims that *Damga* is the first example of *pursantaj* system in Anatolia (Dorsay, Coş and Ayça 1973, pp. 23-

³⁰ *Pursantaj* refers to ‘pourcentage’ in French, which refers to percentage in English.

24). The *pursantaj* system is basically sharing the profit between the producer and the owner of the cinema without any middle man or distributor. The production company sends an employee to the cinema owners to negotiate and collect the money. That system evolves to a system called ‘regional management’, which includes regional distributors that act as agents between the production companies and cinema owners, and which later evolved into a system in which regional distributors and cinema owners came to have a say about the production of the films before the production stage (Erkılıç 2003, pp. 93-97). That system eventually supports a purely commercial approach by means of repeating the successful existing formulas drawn out of previous productions, and discourages risk-taking, creativity and novelty. For instance, to portray how the system evolved in the 1960s, Memduh Ün claims that as a producer he was able to make films even though he had only 20 percent of the budget because he could finance the film by means of the upfront payments and/or bonds provided by the regional managers as entities in the form of companies or persons. In this system, the production company announces the leading stars and the films to be shot with a schedule in advance for the regional connections to decide and make preparations for the screening, and in return, the regional managers have their demands from the company about the content of the film (as cited in Erkılıç 2003, pp. 95-96). As a result, the relationship between the production companies and third parties become completely commercial and interactive in making decisions about the film project. The district managers, distributors, and cinema owners have the power to dictate their preferences about the narrative elements to secure the ticket sales trying to stay away from the possible risks by controlling the supply and the production stage so that the system would remain the same.

At the core of the problems lays the fragile economy and the business model of the production companies in accordance with the economic trends of the country in general. The business model created by the powers that govern the industry and the structure upon which the whole market is built is ultimately based on more profit and less cost. Eventually, financial problems manifest themselves in film budgets, and accordingly in the quality and quantity of equipment available for the filmmakers. From the 1930s to the 1950s, in parallel with the increase in the number of production companies, the quality decreases in terms of the facilities offered by the companies. Companies such as *Atlas*

*Film*³¹ and *İpek Film*³² are reportedly the most developed ones in the market offering a film studio, modern equipment and post-production facilities. However, the box office falls short to cover the expenses, and the new and smaller production companies competing with the existing ones lead to a decrease in the quality of the conditions. For instance, in 1937, *İpek Film*, known as a company that pays attention to quality, announces the suspension of filmmaking activities for three years due to the financial loss after the making of five films without even recovering the production cost (Özön 2013, p. 110). However, in the later years, the production companies continue to make financial issues the main point of departure by far, but they change their priority. One of the biggest companies of the 1950s is *Erman Film*, and the owner of the company, Hürrem Erman, admits as a businessman that rather than artistic quality of the production, they have targeted the box office, and taken it as the sole indicator of people's aesthetic demand due to the harsh conditions of competition. Erman reminds that there has been no incentive in the form of separate awards or official support to make high quality films as cultural products rather than commercial, and companies with high or low budgets have been experiencing the same fate in the end, it would not be wise to invest in high quality only (Dorsay et al. 1973, pp. 33-34, 37). Hence, the competition between high profile and low-profile companies has resulted in favour of the low-profile companies, and such companies in the 1950s have deemed it a solution to concentrate on low budget productions with narrative elements that could be easily consumed by the audience such as melodrama and/or slapstick comedy including dancing and singing for a quick financial return. Özön explains the severity of the situation by drawing attention to co-productions, which would under normal circumstances add to the strength of the industry. Özön claims that 176 partnerships existed between 1945-1959. However, the cooperation between the companies last only for one or two productions (2013, pp. 232-234). Such companies usually aim short term financial gain, and disregard improvement in the industry in creativity, infrastructure, and sustainability. A popular magazine of the 1950s, *Akis*, summarizes the opinions of a variety of figures in the industry including critics,

³¹ The company split into two at the beginning of the 1950s after the disagreements between the partners peaked.

³² The company decreased film production at the beginning of the 1950s coinciding with the increase in the number of smaller companies with lower budgets.

producers, directors, and viewers. With reference to Halit Refiğ, Lütfi Akad, and Osman F. Seden, who have been among the prominent directors and producers of the period, the article raises criticism about the profile of the existing producers in the 1950s. One part of the criticism in the article is about the producers who are merely men of trade³³ who are not even remotely connected to cinema, and they are merely interested in the financial return with the lowest possible investment (1958, pp. 30-31). Although it is understandable that a producer tries to cut down the costs, the problem here is the fact that the profit does not circulate in the industry, and Özön claims that the money is utilized at best to make another film to convert the new production to more money without making any significant improvement in the conditions for filmmaking (2013, pp. 225-226). The comprised sustainability of the industry by trying to repeat existing formulas or maintaining poor production conditions had a negative impact on the quality of productions, and mainly the quantity has increases in the long run at the expense of risking the well-being of the whole industry.

Financial ambitions for profit in film industry usually hit the film budget. A cut in the film budget triggers a chain reaction in all departments of production, and as a result, the producer, the director and the film crew face problems that they would be forced to solve by means other than finances. In Turkish film industry, the majority of the production companies did not invest in technology at all, and those who tried to provide proper equipment purchased out-of-date equipment. To begin with, in terms of motion picture cameras, the lack of local production caused the producers to import the devices, which led to diverse conditions for filmmaking. For instance, Nazif Duru, the partner of *Atlas Film*, introduces the foundation of the production company as of 1946 claiming that they have imported the state-of-the-art equipment from companies in Europe and the USA: cameras are from France, editing equipment from Italy, and projectors are from the USA (Akçura 2004, p. 134). About the state-of-the-art motion picture cameras, İlhan Arakon, the director of photography in the same company, provides some details stating that the cameras were not that modern. The company owned ‘Super Pervo Debric’³⁴ cameras that were very heavy, around 90 kilograms in total (as cited in Erkılıç 2003, p. 54). Although

³³ Herbal oil traders, carpet merchants, supermarket owners, nuts merchants etc.

³⁴ Probably a typographical error: Debric Super ‘Parvo’.

the company boasts of the equipment, according to Raimondo-Souto, Super Parvo was launched in 1932 as a silent studio camera that gained popularity in many countries (2007, pp. 146-147). On the other hand, Seyfi Havaeri, as the director of *Damga* (1948) made by *Erman Film*, describes the work conditions by comparing the present state and the past. He claims that the companies were capable of making sound films already in 1934; however, the camera he used in his film during the production stage of *Damga* in 1946-1947 was a hand-cranked Ernemann (as cited in Erkılıç 2003, p. 55). The hand-cranked Ernemann belongs to the 1920s, and Raimondo-Souto states that the camera was used mainly for low budget films and short films as well as for news coverage as a studio camera in the industry (2007, pp. 66). When the two companies, *Atlas Film* and *Erman Film* are compared, interestingly, both companies used cameras that belonged mainly to the previous era, the silent era, and the cameras were fit for a studio environment rather than on-location shooting as they were cumbersome, and these cameras were still in use during the 1950s as well. So, the film crew would have to choose either the old equipment or the older equipment. Another company that decided to enter film production while importing and distributing films was *İpek Film*. Similar to *Atlas Film*, the company could not compete in the new environment due to high costs, and decided at the beginning of the 1950s to withdraw from filmmaking until the end of the 1950s. Seyfi Havaeri relates how the company has sold off the idle equipment to other companies in 1950. He claims to have found brand new and used Askania cameras resting almost intact in their boxes. He mentions the Askania model with the sound recording equipment on, and their first job is to dismantle the sound device to be used for dubbing in the studio, and the camera with its remaining parts is used for recording the images (as cited in Erkılıç 2003, pp. 72-73). So, although the camera is capable of recording sound, the industry has already accepted shooting a silent film to be dubbed afterwards as the standard. When İlhan Arakon describes the conditions in 1953, he also emphasizes the main function of the camera is to shoot silent films. He mentions an Arriflex camera with a reflex mirror viewfinder that can be used to shoot silent films, and finds the equipment handy due to its light weight and the reflex mirror viewfinder (ibid., p. 78). Norris Pope describes Arriflex 35 model, which was launched in 1937 in Germany, as the first to enable the director of photography to view the frame almost exactly the way the camera records. He

calls the camera ‘a thirteen-pound³⁵ wonder’ for being a lightweight, handheld, portable camera fit for on location shooting, low-budget films as well as independent productions (2013, pp. 3-6). Akad mentions that he has first seen an Arriflex camera to be used as a hand-held device when he made *Beyaz Mendil* (White Handkerchief) in 1955, almost two decades after the model was launched (2004, p. 221). Even for one of the most productive and popular directors of the period, the potential of technological developments was belated, and accordingly, the options to improve or modify the director’s style was limited to a great extent. During the 1950s, a variety of motion picture cameras were available, yet they were mainly older models. Surely, the age or model of a camera would not be a matter of great concern as long as it worked properly, and no doubt, it is not a prerequisite to make ‘quality’ films. However, the technical capability limits the options and creativity of the director, and it is an indicator to understand the attitude and approach of the production companies in parallel with the overall economic conditions of the country. Once again, Akad provides a good example to understand the conditions towards the end of the 1950s to see that there has not been much improvement: he remembers that while he is directing *Zümrüt* (Emerald, 1959), produced by *İpek Film*, he has for the first time seen a zoom lens brought by İlhan Arakon, the director of photography, and describes it, as if defining an unknown object, to be unusual in shape with its thick and elongated body. Although he does not want to utilize it in his films extensively as it is not fit for his style, he nevertheless praises the device for the convenience it offers in filmmaking especially because zoom lenses mark the end of the shaky unreliable wooden camera carts³⁶ used to approach the object in focus, which he defines to be a torture (ibid., p. 274). Considering that zoom lenses in filmmaking has a long history going back to the 1930s after experimental lenses, and then, modern lenses in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s in the USA and major film industries in Europe (Salt 2009, pp. 228, 257, 271), the introduction and widespread of the zoom lens in Turkey is significantly late just like the modern versions of cameras, which were already in use and almost obsolete in developed film industries. In addition, the account of Erol Batıbeki about the *Yeşilçam* era, who started his career during the 1950s as an assistant in lighting crew, also gives clues about the lighting department of production companies. He states that they did not

³⁵ Approximately 5.9 kilograms.

³⁶ He is describing a handmade ‘camera dolly’.

have proper equipment such as 85 filters (blue etc.) or a diffuser to soften the light, so in order to create lighting effects, for instance, they invented their solutions by finding gelatine from candy wholesalers, and using household net curtains to make a diffuser (Remix, Remake, Rip-off 2014, 31:09-31:42). As a result, the director of photography and the director had to hope for the best for the footage to be as good as possible after processing the negative, which left very little room for experimentation, as the perfect conditions for filmmaking were very rare. For the high-profile companies, upgrading the inventory would mean even higher costs and failure due to harsh competition, and for low-profile companies it would be an unnecessary expenditure since films shot in existing conditions would yield sufficient profit, and spending money on infrastructure meant financial loss. Therefore, camera equipment was far from being satisfactory for directors who would try themselves in new stylistic approaches not only delimiting their opportunity to improve but also hindering the improvement of introducing films with more stylistic diversity to attract more spectators.

Similar to camera equipment, the film productions suffered from another essential component of filmmaking: film stock, which potentially limits the options for the entire production stage. The problem was related to both the policies of the political authority and the production companies. Companies could import as many feature films as possible, but negative and positive film stock was not available all the time, and it was even rationed³⁷. For instance, Lütü Akad explains how he suffered from the lack of film stock throughout his career, the most active and productive part of which lasted more than 25 years after 1948. He remembers the measurement for film stock consumption as *metre*, and he claims that he used the largest amount of film stock in his first film, *Vurun Kahpeye* (Strike the Whore, 1949), consuming 9000-12000 metres of orthochromatic negative film. During the making of other films, the consumption slowly decreased until it hit 6000 metres as the new standard in the industry per film, even dropping to 4000 metres when austerity measures were called. Akad explains that the problem was both related to the overall economy, limitations in importing film stocks, and producers' decision to cut the

³⁷ With reference to Özön, Erkılıç notes that the Ministry of Commerce in the 1950s slapped quota on films: for a 3000-metre feature film, the quota for negative film stock was 6100 metres which considerably limited the number of takes (2003, p. 76).

costs. The idea behind cutting the costs is quite obvious: when the film stock is limited, there would be no extra takes, which would eventually decrease both the production and the post-production costs by saving money for the production company at the expense of limiting the creativity of the filmmakers (2004, p. 38). The problems about film stock had a substantial background in terms of costs, especially due to the instability in the economy with increasing inflation in Turkey accompanied by the devaluation of Turkish lira. Öztürk examines the cost of imported film stock during the 1950s and its relation to currency changes. For instance, in 1950, the amount of film stock increased 13 percent per kilogram, but the cost increased 29 percent. In 1951, film stock increased 22 percent due to more activity in filmmaking, yet the cost increased 46 percent despite the fixed exchange rate system. In 1961, the increase in the film stock purchase was 18 percent whereas the cost increased 188 percent per kilogram in Turkish liras. Due to the number of films made in each year, and the currency rates, the prices fluctuated until the 1960s, but the trend was upwards as Turkish lira suffered from high inflation in a steady way (1995, pp. 52-58). The changes in the market price of film stock naturally create problems in estimating films' cost during pre-production stage, and for future planning. As seen in Özön's comparison of production costs of an average film, film stock, both negative and positive (print stock), comprises 10 percent of the budget in 1953, and almost 12 percent in 1958 in Turkey whereas the figures are below 4 percent in France and the USA³⁸ that underlines the significance of foreign equipment (2013, p. 235). Therefore, the cost of film in the budget is both an unpredictable item and an alarming expense for the company. The constraint on film stock leads the companies to limit the number of takes, increases rehearsal time, and, more severely, limits the creativity of all departments eventually. That would, for instance, lead the directors to accept certain formulas in style to apply for certain scenes.

Regarding the problems about the relationship between finances and equipment, Özön, in his discussion about the technical capability of production companies during the 1950s, argues that almost all the companies owned either a film studio or sound/film laboratory facilities (2013, pp. 226-228). In terms of post-production facilities, the conditions were not any better, and the industry survived using old equipment for a long time. An

³⁸ The comparison also includes Italy with 10 percent, and England with 5.5 percent.

interesting example is given by Hürrem Erman portraying both the economic troubles of the companies and the attitude of the state about these problems. Upon a question to compare the past (the 1940s and the 1950s) and the present (the 1970s) in terms of technical capabilities, Erman claims that equipment has not changed at all hindering improvement in the quality of the films. For instance, he states that film editing tables of the post-war era are still in use during the 1970s, and these tables are already obsolete. Although he could afford to purchase a new one, he explains that the main obstacle preventing him from upgrading the equipment has been the heavy tax duty for importing the table for film-editing and synchronization (Dorsay et al. 1973, p. 25). When it comes to printing, Erman draws a similar picture as well. He mentions a Debie Matipo film printer that was approximately 30 years old when he purchased the device around 1947. He claims that the same device was still in use in another studio in 1973 after 45 years of heavy duty. Erman mentions his efforts since 1948 to convince the political authority about a more flexible policy regarding the import of production equipment to no avail, and points to the political authority as a significant part of the problem for what they have ignored to do (ibid., pp. 24-26). To provide relatively modern equipment and work environment Necip Erses tries to establish a post-production studio with a laboratory for film processing, dubbing, editing and printing. However, he fails to complete his project due to financial problems, and Akad, describing the conditions as humane, claims that the failure returns the industry to primitive conditions again during the 1950s (2004, pp. 38-39). So, private initiatives have either been unsuccessful or cautious about the modernization of the industry, and the indifference of the governments for decades left all the burden on producers, which eventually maintained the existing conditions of the silent film era for decades.

When it comes to sound, sound was not recorded on set while shooting scenes, neither interior nor exterior, and films were dubbed during the post-production stage usually by more or less the same core group of dubbing artists (Özön 2013, p. 228). Dubbing might be a convenient solution to decrease shooting days and takes, and create an efficient shooting schedule³⁹, however, Özön claims that the shooting days for an average film,

³⁹ Faruk Kenç, who claims to have made the first fully dubbed feature film in 1943, concludes that dubbing as a solution to production costs led to the development of Turkish cinema when others followed

which roughly amount to 20-30 days, were actually wasted as there was usually no detailed and finalized shooting schedule for the crew, and a complete shooting script was very rarely available. The production stage is usually fuzzy for the crew, and solutions were invented on-site rather than sorted out during the pre-production stage (ibid., pp. 236-237). Therefore, the outcome of the production process, the feature film was actually determined by too many chance elements combined with inadequate equipment, limited film stock, a busy but actually loose schedule, and the pressure by the production companies to complete the shooting as quickly as possible.

Considering the production companies, distributors, cinema owners and the relationship between them, from top to bottom, the organization of the industry inclined towards accelerated and cheap production processes completed in a short period with minimal equipment. The lack of proper studios led to on location shooting of all the exterior scenes, and for the interior scenes usually houses were used, or studios made of garages at the beginning of the 1950s. One of the factors for film noir style to be conceived is considered to be related to the economic restrictions in Hollywood by the War Production Board that limits film budgets for certain items differentiating between A-films and B-films, which eventually caused the filmmakers to experiment on style using lesser equipment (Krutnik 1991, p. 21). Nieland and Fay describe the solution that the filmmakers found during war time scarcity as ‘aesthetic of scarcity’ because of the inventiveness of the film crew to compensate for the lack of production facilities (2010, pp. 185-186). Moreover, Sheri Chinen Biesen argues that film stock, equipment and electricity were restricted in rations, and since it was banned to shoot outside studios during daytime in Los Angeles for security reasons due to the war, studios worked outside at night with fear of blackouts. Besides, studios lost a considerable part of the skilled manpower as the workers were enlisted causing the studios to make films with fewer crew as well as less budget as production costs increased. Therefore, Biesen concludes, with reference to the actors of the period, people were trying to make their best by being inventive in such constraints eventually improving film noir style as it is called today (2005, pp. 63-72). Although Turkey did not experience the Second World War refusing

his example to shoot silent films to be dubbed completely during the post-production stage (Sağlık 1996, p. 101).

to enter the war, the wartime conditions that surrounded the emergence of film noir can be traced in Turkey as well, but during the 1950s, in terms of financial constraints and the need to utilize the material at hand as efficiently as possible. The conditions related to poor equipment, low budgets, lack of proper facilities and studios, the need to shoot on location rather than studio, film stock rationing imposed by institutions, and time constraints to start and finish the production as quickly as possible might have played a significant role in urging the directors to embrace film noir style or at least experiment on the noir style as a cheaper field for production. Moreover, the success of noir films all over the world and in Turkey justifies the success of the noir style as a practical and powerful way of making meaning through formal elements that would appeal to the audience who were more or less familiar with the form and content due to the hegemony of Hollywood productions in the Turkish market. The noir style creates a balance between aesthetic aspirations to create a film language with a distinct style and the demands of production companies and the competition in the industry.

2.6 CENSORSHIP IN TURKISH CINEMA UNTIL THE 1960S

In addition to the problematic business model, lack of equipment, funds, skilled workers, and cultural background in cinema, another point to consider is characterised by the censorship code effective as of 1939 issued to control films and film scripts. Serdar Öztürk (2006) claims that the censorship on Turkish cinema has a history rooted in the Ottoman period, and the traces of ‘institutionalized’ censorship date back to 1909, which is debatable⁴⁰, and more obviously to 1915. The document, dated 1915, which is an order from the Ministry of the Interior to the police department, states that the police are responsible for controlling the film strips and theatre plays to be performed, and the centre for censorship is no longer needed. So, according to Öztürk, although specific dates are not available, the annulment of the centre for censorship hints that censorship on films had been practiced and institutionalized during the Ottoman era long before laws were made in Turkish Republic mentioned above (p. 67).

⁴⁰ Öztürk states that the document may indicate that the governors of the period were in charge to control film screening in the cinema halls, and were working in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, however the document does not state that clearly (2006, p. 67).

The 1939 code refers to two legislations: the first one is ‘Law on the Duty and Authority of the Police’ dated 14 June 1934, and the other is ‘Law on the Organization of the General Management of the Press and Its Duties’ dated 26 May 1934 (Özön 2013, p. 240). Ali Özuyar (2008), in his book focusing on the first decades of cinema in the Ottoman era and Turkish Republic, displays an article from *Sinema Yıldızı*, a periodical on cinema. In the article, published in 1924, lack of standards in censorship was pointed out by revealing a double standard about the same film. *La Garçonne* (1923) directed by Armand du Plessy is reported to be banned in Istanbul, but was given permission in Ankara, and when the copies were returned to Istanbul, the film was eventually screened. The main objection about the film centred around the inconsistency in the way censorship board functions in terms of obscenity, and it was stated that the film in question remained quite innocent when compared to other films, and therefore, the board’s decision remained a mystery (p. 120). Özön summarizes the broad scope of censorship regarding the film scripts: the main principles are based on preventing the practice of political propaganda of any state, insult based on racial background or nationality including neighbouring and friendly countries, religious propaganda, deeds against the moral principles established in the society, propaganda against military service and the military, deeds harmful for the safety and security of the country, deeds encouraging criminal acts, and propaganda against Turkey (2013, p. 242). When the items are read in parallel with the political climate of the period, i.e., the emerging world war in 1939, censorship seems to be seen as a handy tool to be applied when necessary to take swift action against any film without providing a specific cause or limitation. However, similar to the pre-war era, as reported by Sağlık (1996), Kenç states that the board was not consistent in the practice of censorship after the war as well. Without a specific reason, one item in one film could be censored whereas it could be permitted in another one. So, he points to the fact that the code did not have a clear definition of acceptable and unacceptable narrative elements, and the ultimate result usually rested in the officer in charge, and it was possible to obtain a pass by means of an influential contact (pp. 105-106). In that system, the board requires the companies to send the scenario during the pre-production stage, and the company can start shooting when the text passes the board. After the post-production stage, the printed copy of the film is submitted again for the final check, after that, the film could either be screened, be sent back for corrections, or forbidden.

Among many instances during the filmmakers period in the 1950s, Metin Erksan's case is a popular example about how the board functions. Yıldırım, with reference to the writers of the period, summarizes the power of censorship in the case of Erksan's *Karanlık Dünya/Aşık Veysel'in Hayatı* (The Dark World/The Life of *Aşık Veysel*, 1952) underlining the fact that the board made so extensive alterations that the film no longer had a unity, and was almost made of fragments (2015c, pp. 54-55). Moreover, Nejat Ulusay claims that the censorship committee offers Metin Erksan a solution to use footage of state-of-the-art tractors and fertile soil that could be borrowed from the United States Information Service (USIS) rather than using the actual footage of arid lands and undergrown plants in Turkey (as cited in Balcı 2012, p. 179). So, the official concern of the board was the representation of the country at the expense of bending the truth. The officials were eager to use censorship to manipulate the way the country is perceived by others who are not able to do fact check, which is an attempt to transform cinema into a propaganda apparatus for the government.

Studying censorship in Turkish cinema in detail, Afif Ataman gives concrete examples about the extent and main concern of the censorship board during the 1950s. The board includes members from the General Staff, the General Directorate of Police, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Directorate of Press and Tourism, and the then Ministry of National Education, and the number of members changes between four to six. In 25 instances examined in the study until 1960, coinciding with the Democrat Party rule, the censorship board pays attention to the proper representation of the Turkish army, the Turkish police, and the members of these institutions; the representation of criminals as prominent people; sexually explicit scenes; the representation of historical figures and events; the representation of peasants, their land and living conditions; the representation of friendly nations; the audience that the film can be screened; content and scenes with ideological manifestations, references or connotations, especially about leftist ideologies; the representation of religion and religious items; the representation of family; ethnic references; morality in general; certain writers and directors who are regarded as suspicious due to their ideological mindset in the eye of the authorities. Imported feature films are also subjected to similar limitations and rejections (2013, pp. 103-110). The board not only decides about the eligibility of scenarios and films, but also issues orders to 'add' and/or remove certain

shots and scenes, and decides about the quality of the audience that the films can be seen in and outside the country, and eligibility of the Turkish films to compete or be screened abroad.

After the coup d'état in 1960, the 1961 constitution did not include a better legal regulation for the film industry although the new constitution has been considered to be freedom-oriented when compared with the previous one. Akad summarizes the new era by underlining that the new constitution has led to positive changes especially in terms of freedom of expression signalling that the dark days are over, and censorship board has become more flexible after the coup d'état. However, in the film industry, nothing has changed, and the police in a hierarchy from bottom to top continued to know everything about cinema better than everyone else (2004, p. 336). One of the board members during the 1950s was Alim Şerif Onaran, who has become a prominent academic in the following years, and, in his discussion of the problems of Turkish cinema during the 1950s, he considers censorship to be a necessary controlling device against films that could possibly have a harmful impact on the society; and he does not regard censorship as a source of pressure on art, and it should not be regarded as the most important problem of the industry (1994, p. 97). However, more than a decade long censorship experience has clearly left deep wounds in the industry as summarized by one of the producers of the 1960s. Şeref Gür started producing films in 1959 and immediately met with the censorship board in his first film *Alageyik* (Fallow Deer, 1959) because the writer of the scenario was Yaşar Kemal whose works were likely to be rejected by the authorities due to his political views, and they tricked the board by putting another name on the file. Gür states that the most adverse effect of institutionalized censorship has been 'self-censorship', the internalized feeling of defeat in the writers and directors of the period that prevents productivity and creativity (Remix, Remake, Rip-off 2014, 1:18:45-1:19:25). Similarly, Akad, for instance, claims that some scenarios were sent by the company to the board without mentioning his name during the 1950s so that the project could pass easily for his name was associated with communist ideas even though the film project was merely a melodrama, and he felt like a captive due to that oppression (2004, pp. 252, 257-258). The very existence of the board breeds self-censorship and urges creative people to revise their work as if they were a board member who would cross out certain parts of the scenario or film, and apply censorship even before the work is

submitted to the board. Özön concludes that the broad control over the industry has been one of the reasons why the industry could not flourish to the best of its capacity (2013, p. 245). So, censorship is an undercurrent moulding the intellectual production by forming ‘proper’ writers and directors in the eye of the political authority that tries to control the ideological framework in the country.

During the filmmakers period, the pressure of the board can be taken as a major factor in the preparation and execution of the projects. Although it seems that censorship has been loosely applied in different cases to different films, the oppressive conditions caused by the officials that impede creativity, novelty and courage have also forced producers, directors, and writers to remain in the safe zone, and refrain from drawing attention of the authority. No wonder films with a critical eye are rare, and in many films the criticism or portrayal of national, regional, cultural, sociological problems or new approaches to society are either implied or avoided. The popularity of the theme of crime, melodramatic structure of events without referring to the conditions of the era, in short, the relatively ‘harmless’ content can be linked to the condescending presence of the censorship carved on the minds of people. As a result, all narratives need to be approached taking the impact of censorship into consideration.

Overall, the brief historical background of Turkish cinema, beginning from the advent of cinema in Turkey until the beginning of the 1960s, points to an undeveloped industry that does not have a strong undercurrent from the 1920s, 30s and 40s to set a direction for the young generation, and to boost creativity and production during the 1950s. The lack of legacy in form and style renders the young industry in the 1950s to become open to influences from all around the world, and the consumption tendencies of the film audience become an indicator to adjust the productions for their taste. In an industry mainly based on film import, the hegemony of Hollywood productions in cinemas, especially in Istanbul inevitably influences writers, directors, and producers of the period to varying degrees among other foreign influences. Given the conditions of filmmaking as discussed above in terms of the financial structure, production facilities and equipment, noir films are likely to match the conditions of Turkish filmmakers to embrace as a point of departure to experiment on form and ‘original’ content which requires a relatively low budget rather than glamorous Hollywood productions. Therefore, it is not coincidental that especially at the beginning of their careers many young directors and producers try

themselves in films with obvious film noir influence, which offers an easily noticeable and uncultured style in parallel with a series of appealing events and striking characters. However, to what extent film noir has become influential, how it has been utilized, and its significance have yet to be studied, and the coming chapters aim to understand film noir phenomenon in Turkish cinema in terms of form and content.

2.7 A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE SELECTED DIRECTORS

Among the major historians of Turkish cinema, who focus on specific directors of the filmmakers period, Özön underlines Lütü Akad, Muharrem Gürses, Metin Erksan, Atıf Yılmaz Batıbeki, Osman F. Seden, and Memduh Ün until 1960, and Aydın Arakon as a director of the transition period⁴¹; Scognamillo, in addition to Özön's list, mentions Orhan M. Arıburnu; Onaran adds to the list Nevzat Pesen, Orhan Elmas and Ertem Göreç as filmmakers, and also mentions Muharrem Gürses separately as a director with a theatre background; and finally, Teksoy claiming that Akad has started a new period in Turkish cinema notes Nevzat Pesen as another director worth mentioning in that period among the ones Özön listed. Among those names, Lütü Akad, Metin Erksan, Osman F. Seden, Memduh Ün, Orhan Elmas, Aydın Arakon, and Ertem Göreç are the directors whose films are going to be subjects of analysis. In this list, Aydın Arakon and Lütü Akad started their career in 1949 during the transition period whereas the rest of the directors started in the 1950s during the filmmakers period.

Lütü Akad is attributed a distinct place in Turkish cinema history as well as the filmmakers period. Özön argues that the films directed by Akad between 1952 and 1955 have been influential over the succeeding directors, and pronounces him the first cinematographer of Turkey on the grounds related to his film language, technique, setting, the way he approaches the actors, the subject matter. By 'technique' he refers to the foreign influences including the US gangster films, French noir films and poetics realism blended and presented in a completely native style (2013, pp. 165-166). Scognamillo

⁴¹ Özön later on divides the filmmakers period into three as part one (1950-1960), part two (1960-1965), and part three (1965-1970). In part two, he mentions Halit Refiğ, Ertem Göreç, and Duygu Sağıroğlu as new names worth mentioning; and in part three, Yücel Çakmaklı and Yılmaz Güney as directors who started in that period but mainly belonged to the young / new cinema period of the 1970s (1985, pp. 365-388).

points to the fact that Akad focused on stories of ordinary people in the big city in both *Kanun Namına* (In the Name of Law, 1952) and *Öldüren Şehir* (The City that Kills, 1953), which were made during his first period under the influence of foreign films. These films reflect Akad in search of his style (2010, pp. 134-135): camera is used in a dynamic way with a variety of angles becoming part of the events rather than an onlooker, editing is used as an integral part of film language, and locations become part of the story rather than a background or décor for the action to take place (ibid., p. 116). Onaran claims that in the first decade of the filmmakers period, Akad's masterpiece is *Kanun Namına* (In the Name of Law, 1952), and proposes that it is a realistic film as the story was based on a true story, and was taken from a newspaper⁴². Moreover, Akad took the camera on the streets for on location shooting, and used actors who were not actors of the theatre company. As a result, in terms of both cinematography, mise-en-scene, and editing, the film proves to be the first prominent film in Turkish cinema history (1994, pp. 55-56). Teksoy acknowledges that Akad employed a neat film language in *Kanun Namına*, and the narrative based on a true story is an indication of the director's inclination towards social realism. However, his film language changed later on in parallel with the subject matter he focused on, and for example, contrary to his first films, his later films exhibited a more stationary camera (2005, p. 479).

Metin Erksan, who started his career in 1952, has been a prominent figure during and after the filmmakers period in Turkish cinema history. Özön describes the first years of Erksan claiming that he had been under the influence of Akad at first, and later on foreign productions, in particular the US cinema, and due to that, he could not find his own style until the end of the 1950s, and *Gecelerin Ötesi* (Beyond the Nights, 1960) can be regarded as the beginning of his maturation as a director (2013, pp. 175-176). Scognamillo

⁴² Özön claims that although the story is real, there are similarities between *Kanun Namına* (In the Name of Law, 1952) and *Le Jour Se Lève* (Daybreak, 1939) by Marcel Carné and its US version *The Long Night* (1947) by Anatole Litvak in terms of form and content (2013, p. 161). However, in an interview, Akad refused the implication that he was influenced directly by these films by stating that he had not seen these films before he made *Kanun Namına*. He admitted watching *The Long Night*, but sometime after the making of *Kanun Namına*. He also admitted that there had been an American influence overall rather than French poetic realism on his style since at that time American cinema was seen to be the most advanced cinema (Onaran 1990, pp. 41-44).

underlines the fact that unlike Akad and Yılmaz, Erksan started directing films without a prior master-apprentice relationship when he made *Karanlık Dünya/Aşık Veysel'in Hayatı* (The Dark World/The Life of *Aşık Veysel*, 1952), a film censored in 1952 for portraying the village life in a negative way. After that, Scognamillo notes, Erksan started to make adaptations of novels including a crime novel by Peyami Safa with a hero called Cingöz Recai, yet he could not find his style until the 1960s (2010, pp.143-145). Onaran finds Erksan's films lacking in quality at the beginning of his career during the 1950s after *Karanlık Dünya/Aşık Veysel'in Hayatı* (The Dark World/The Life of *Aşık Veysel*, 1952), and marks *Gecelerin Ötesi* (Beyond the Nights, 1960) as the turning point in his filmography as he foregrounded the social problems of the period (1994, pp. 61-62). Yıldırım claims that Erksan achieves an auteur quality by acquiring a critical look at history including the social, economic and political aspects in his film called *Dokuz Dağın Efesi* (The *Efe* of Nine Mountains) in 1958 (2015a, p. 220), and by pursuing the same line afterwards in *Gecelerin Ötesi* (Beyond the Nights, 1960) and other films, he was able to modernize the genres in terms of form and content (2015c, p. 62).

Osman F. Seden is first and foremost a producer in *Kemal Film*, which is the first private production company in Turkey, and also the script writer of many films produced by the company. Özön defines the cinematographic approach of Seden as one under the influence of Akad, the US gangster films, and noir films which were imported by *Kemal Film*. He criticizes Seden for applying the clichés of such films to appeal to the audience favouring such films. Similar to his criticism about Erksan, Özön suggests that Seden found his style towards the end of the 1950s when he made *Namus Uğruna* (For Honour, 1960) after eliminating the emphasis on action sequences and violence, and acquiring a plainer and lucid narration (2013, pp. 185-186). Scognamillo mentions city, action, and violence to define Seden's cinema, which was open to diverse influences. The main characteristics of his style was to create ambiance, and to mobilize the characters by creating conflicts in fast-paced stories resembling Akad's style in his first period, and western films until *Düşman Yolları Kesti* (The Enemy Blocked the Roads, 1959), which signalled his mature period as a director (2010, pp. 145-148). Onaran also states the influence of the US films and Lütfi Akad on Seden, which guided him eventually to devise his formal approach to cinema especially after *Namus Uğruna* (For Honour, 1960) (1994, pp. 69-71). Teksoy argues that films by Seden were ordinary in terms of content,

yet vivid in terms of form due to the emphasis the director put in editing and cinematography which was largely under foreign influence in certain films (2005, p. 480). Yıldırım reminds that Osman F. Seden was also a producer in *Kemal Film*, and a writer of a lot of scripts including *Kanlarıyla Ödediler* (They Paid in Blood, 1955). He differentiates between two major production companies, *Kemal Film* and *Erman Film*, in terms of their approach to melodramas, and concludes that *Kemal Film*'s melodramas were based on the dialectical conflict between the East and the West in the form of a conflict between the modern and the traditional (2015c, p. 47), which also formed the basis of many of Seden's films.

Memduh Ün, on the other hand, is described as a director who was not under Akad's influence at the beginning, and who found his own style, themes, and a particular cinematic world. Concentrating mainly on melodramas, his films include themes such as cheated young girls, fallen women, orphans, murder due to love, jealousy or revenge, and people of constant sorrow. Özön argues that between 1955, the year Ün started directing, and 1958, he made insignificant films for commercial purposes, and only in 1958, he made a significant film called *Üç Arkadaş* (Three Friends) that revealed his true style in terms of mise-en-scene, editing, audio-visual harmony, setting, location, props and so on (2013, pp. 187-188). Scognamillo and Onaran also mention that Ün had an inclination for melodrama placing him side by side with Muharrem Gürses, who had been influential over Ün, and claim that he mainly headed for commercial films to secure box office success, which eventually helped him learn how to make films, and avoid excessive violence in films and excessive melodramas (Scognamillo 2010, pp. 150-151; Onaran 1994, pp. 74-75). Teksoy, by evaluating the content of his films, acknowledges that although melodramatic elements, such as a blind girl in need, are widely used melodramatic clichés, Ün distinguished himself from other directors in the way in which he approached melodrama. However, he concludes that during the filmmakers period and after that period Ün preferred to make films for commercial success, and did not pay enough attention to the way he used narrative elements the way he did during the filmmakers period (2005, p. 480).

Orhan Elmas, who started his career as a director in 1954, is claimed to make his first significant film, *Kanlı Firar* (Bloody Escape) in 1960. Özön describes the film as milder and more emotionally charged than 'noir films' directed by Akad at the beginning of his

career, and, when compared to Akad, Elmas had a better application of ‘poetic realism’ that can be found in pre-war Carné-Prévert axis (2013, p. 169). Onaran, similar to Özön, sees *Kanlı Firar* (Bloody Escape, 1960) as Elmas’ biggest achievement in his career, and again concludes that Elmas followed Akad’s line under the influence of ‘film noir’ and French ‘poetic realism’ (1994, p. 79).

Aydın Arakon became a director in 1949, and his films in his first years mainly depict historical stories. Özön views him with regards to his subject matter, and, in a disapproving tone, criticizes his later films due to colloquial language and slang in them, which triggered a trend in later films due to the audience’s positive reaction (2013, p. 139). Scognamillo describes Arakon’s style as plain, and, similar to Onaran, places him to the beginning of the 1950s as a director for not being able to maintain his quality cinematic approach after one of his first films called *Vatan İçin* (For the Motherland, 1951) (Scognamillo 2010, p. 100; Onaran 1994, p. 45).

Finally, Ertem Göreç started making films in 1959 with *Kanlı Sevda* (Bloody Love) (Sekmeç, 2010, p. 126), and in 1961, his second film, *Otobüs Yolcuları* (The Bus Passengers) became a success story as one of the first and finest examples of social realist films. He received even more applause in 1964 with *Karanlıkta Uyananlar* (Awakening in the Dark) as another example of social realist films, and the first film to focus on themes like strike and unionization (Dönmez-Colin 2014, p. 157). In between these two films, Göreç directs melodramatic films and *Rıfat Diye Biri*, which points to the fact that he has not established a specific genre and style as a young director. Onaran translates that situation as submitting to the industry and its commercial ambitions although he has maintained a certain quality in film making (1994, p. 81). Similarly, Scognamillo (2010) underlines the large variety of films in Göreç’s filmography, and classifies him as a ‘technician’ director referring to his compromise to embrace the demands of the market and the industry rather than pursuing his career in the direction of quality films as seen at the beginning of his career (p. 300). In general, Göreç as a director at the beginning of the 1960s has been considered to be a promising young director who could not resist the emerging industry that mainly concentrates on the box office, and encourages and employs directors to comply with this basic expectation.

In conclusion, Turkish cinema had already been mingled with foreign influence through adaptations of plays, remakes, imitation of style, appropriated footage, education, imported films, market conditions and so on until the filmmakers period. The prominent directors of the filmmakers period underwent a period of self-discovery, cinematographic exploration, and exposition to a range of cultural and cinematographic influences in and out of the country during the 1950s to devise their own style throughout their ‘formative years’ as Kaplan puts it (1997, p. 657), and tried to merge different influences and their own ways of seeing with each other. Although some critics such as Erdoğan and Göktürk (2007) call the films of the period mainly a ‘cinema of attraction’, they nevertheless admit that prominent directors of the period started to form a film language and ‘a unity in narrative structure’ (p. 535), which shows that the main characteristic of the period is related to forming a film language. While doing that, one of the main sources of influence on the directors of the period who are also the subject of this study seems to be the US films, and, as pronounced by many critics and historians, especially *film noir* plays a significant role in terms of both form and content until the beginning of the 1960s when directors of the filmmakers period started to establish their own style. It is noteworthy that such an influence can be traced in Lütfi Akad at the beginning of the period, in 1952, as well as in Aydın Arakon at the beginning of the 1960s towards the end of his career, and then, as if forming a cycle, in Ertem Göreç in 1962 once again at the beginning of his career. That indicates the long and significant range of foreign influence on one of the most important periods of Turkish cinema, and therefore, that period is worth studying and analysing from that perspective in order to understand the succeeding periods all the way to the present day.

3. FILM NOIR

The term 'noir' is generally accepted to be coined by Nino Frank in 1946 in 'A New Kind of Police Drama: The Criminal Adventure' to differentiate four noir films⁴³ out of seven US films featured⁴⁴. He further elaborates the novelties that render these films worthy of attention on grounds that these films involve some aspects differentiating them from mainstream police dramas, such as plots with psychological elements, actions and characters with unusual treatment in the plot, and formal elements in the way in which the story is delivered in fragments referring to flashbacks and voiceovers (1999, pp. 17-19). To the point though Frank's account was, it was nevertheless far from defining the reasons why these films looked so different and 'noir'. Borde and Chaumeton, on the other hand, dived into the bulk of films in *A Panorama of American Film Noir 1941-1953*, originally published in French in 1955, tried to make a clear definition of the films between 1941 and 1953, provided background information with reference to literature, history, psychology, international influences and crime genre in the USA, and divided films in four periods of 2-3 years. Borde and Chaumeton assert that the essence of film noir is the presence of crime, and that 'a noir film is a film of death' (2002, p. 5). Although there are other films including these aspects, noir films differ since they present the perspective of the 'criminal' and the 'victim', and the characters are rather ambivalent in terms of morality as stereotypes of the good and the bad no longer exist or overlap. Their stories are presented more or less in a realistic fashion by providing tension, uncertainty, alienation, and disorientation (ibid., pp. 7-13). Their attempt to define film noir as a separate entity seems to be centred on the audience's reception of the films, and the effect created by the content of the films on the spectator as well as their themes and stylistics.

⁴³ These films are, in the order in the article, *Double Indemnity* (Billy Wilder, 1944), *Laura* (Otto Preminger, 1944), *The Maltese Falcon* (John Huston, 1941), and *Murder, My Sweet* (Edward Dmytryk, 1944). The other three films are *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941), *The Little Foxes* (William Wyler, 1941), and *How Green Was My Valley* (John Ford, 1941) (Frank 1999, p. 15).

⁴⁴ Charles O'Brien claims that the term 'film noir' first appeared mainly in right-wing publications devoted to economics and politics rather than in the major film weeklies of the 1930s (O'Brien 1996, p. 8).

The classic US film noir is usually considered to have started in 1941 with *Maltese Falcon* (John Huston), and ended in 1958 with *Touch of Evil* (Orson Welles) (Schrader 1972, p. 9)⁴⁵. Therefore, these initial views on film noir especially were rather retrospective of the era although it was still in effect in terms of production. Following these rather broad lines, first Raymond Durgnat, in his 1970 article, and then Paul Schrader, in his 1972 article, deny film noir an exclusive position among film genres (Durgnat 1996, p. 38; Schrader 1972, p. 8). Durgnat briefly explores films that he classifies as noir films in Europe, and draws the boundaries for US noir films by categorizing them in eleven groups, all of which are designated under the umbrella term 'crime genre' (ibid, p. 39). Durgnat's approach is rather all-encompassing as he includes films merely by their themes, and narrative elements such as the attributes of the main characters, which eventually leads the way to call films even from the 1910s as films with noir elements. As the title of his article, 'Paint it Black: The Family Tree of Film Noir', suggests, Durgnat tries to relate films to one another to create a family tree of films which have something in common, but fails to identify the ways in which that single similarity is presented, and misses the entirety of individual films. However, relating crime films to social criticism, and situating noir films in a social, cultural, and economic context, he initiates a broader interpretation of such films. Schrader shares Durgnat's rough sketch of film noir to some extent as he echoes that film noir is a product of a period characterized by its 'tone' or 'mood' portraying a dark world full of crime and decadence, although the latter two are not the essence of that period. However, as stated above, unlike Durgnat, he rather narrows the period to 1941-1958 giving credit to previous crime films and European influence on US films (Schrader 1972, pp. 8-9). Both Durgnat and Schrader wrote these texts at a time when the classic period of film noir already came to an end, and both concluded their retrospection with the idea that noir films were part of the crime genre. Reviewing the same stock, by comparing film noir with the crime dramas of the 1930s, Hirsh argues the opposite, and calls film noir a genre on the basis that there is sufficient evidence referring to genre requirements which separate film noir from other genres: 'conventions of narrative structure, characterization, theme, and visual design'

⁴⁵ William Luhr (2012) states that there are other options to mark the end of film noir: one might consider *The Wrong Man* (1956), *Experiment in Terror* (1962), *Psycho* (1960) or some other film (pp. 41-42).

(1981, p. 69). Hirsh mainly asserts that narrative elements of film noir provide the spectator with a maze-like, chronologically fragmented story taking place in an unstable perilous crime-ridden world (usually the city) full of deception, and with clues piling up for the spectator to rebuild the story; unusual, mysterious and ambiguous characters who can also be the narrators of their own story. Likewise, according to Hirsh, stylistic elements also differentiate *noir films* from other crime films: locations, camera angles, framing, lighting, décor, editing are all specifically designed in parallel with the narrative elements (ibid., pp. 70-90). The association of these specific narrative and formal elements with film noir is common in the abovementioned critics and researchers. Along similar lines, they acknowledge that film noir has a distinctive place within the cinema, yet the way they interpret these elements, and the conclusion they reach eventually differ to a great extent, and more recent arguments do not fall far from the initial point of departure. Elizabeth Cowie (1993) tries to disentangle the issue by rejecting the genre attribution to film noir, but acknowledging that film noir is ‘recognizable’ as it consists of noticeable visual and narrative elements of different genres preceding film noir (p. 129). On the other hand, referring to previous arguments, William Park attempts to give a more condensed definition again by using the recognizable narrative and formal elements of film noir. To him, what basically defines film noir as a genre is the existence of three elements at the same time in a film: the subject (crime), space (contemporary world, usually the city), and the character (a tarnished or fallible men or women). Certain stylistic devices such as low-key lighting, camera work, setting etc. accompany these elements, and the outcome is a new genre (2011, pp. 25-26). In the case of film noir, the controversy over genre, the definition of it, and the interpretation of its narrative and formal elements continue more or less in that fashion without an agreement. Therefore, within the scope of this thesis, for clarity’s sake, film noir will not be labelled as a genre, a movement or period, but rather ‘a phenomenon’ so as to avoid becoming part of the discussions trying to best position film noir in the history of film since this thesis tries to utilize the narrative and formal aspects of film noir whether it is a genre or not.

3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The factors that led to the formation of film noir are also largely controversial, multi-faceted, and multi-national. The narrative roots of film noir in terms of story are usually sought in hard-boiled fiction of the 1930s written by, for example, Dashiell Hammett,

Raymond Chandler, and James M. Cain whose stories conveyed content for films of the 1940s, and inspired other film noir screenplays (Krutnik 1991, p. 15; Fay and Nieland 2010, pp. 2-3; Park 2011, pp. 20-21). However, it is noteworthy that films based on hard-boiled tradition were shot in the 1930s as well, but the most successful ones happened to be those adapted during the 1940s, *The Maltese Falcon* (John Huston, 1941) being historically among the most significant ones (Krutnik 1991, pp. 34-35). So, the popular fiction of the 1930s is not the main driving force for the birth of film noir, but is a part of a bigger picture. The crime films of the 1930s, the Gothic women's films, melodramas, social problem films, horror films also seem to be other elements forming the basis of film noir to varying degrees (Borde and Chaumeton 2002, pp. 15-25; Vernet 1993, pp. 11-17; Neale 2000, pp. 154-156). On top of that, especially in terms of stylistics, critics and researchers take European influence into consideration to speculate on the reasons why film noir appeared in the 1940s, and not immediately in the 1930s when hard-boiled fiction was already popular. Borde and Chaumeton (2002), differentiating between French realistic films and American noir films, reject the idea that French realism might directly be influential on film noir on grounds that noir directors were probably unaware of these films, but producers could have access to them, so a circuitous route between French realist films and film noir can be a plausible way of connecting these two different types of film (p. 23). However, James Naremore marks that film noir might be regarded as a concept discovered (even created), introduced, and speculated on by critics, especially French critics, rather than the filmmakers of the period, (2002, p. 13). That idea asserts that first noir films were actually made in France borrowing the style from German expressionism (ibid., p. 279). On the other hand, Hirsh highlights the role of French critics in their contribution to the emerging film noir stating that film noir was 'discovered' by the French, and learning how to read these films, American critics started to acknowledge film noir during the 1960s when the classic period already came to an end (1981, p. 9). After that, film noir became influential in French cinema (ibid., p. 207). So, the involvement of French critics, the influence of French cinema, poetic realism, in particular, diverts the focus of critics to opposing directions rendering the genesis of film noir even more controversial.

Schrader (1972), using a broader approach, summarizes the milieu surrounding the emergence of film noir in the USA in four categories: first, he refers to the Second World

War, and the disillusionment it brought about in opposition to the war time propaganda; second, he refers to the post-war realism trend replacing melodrama; third, the German or rather European influence rooted in the European émigrés who started to work in Hollywood, and who were familiar with expressionism and realism; and fourth, hard-boiled tradition created by American writers of the 1930s (pp. 9-10). Due to the diversity of elements involved, and irreconcilably different viewpoints sometimes derived from the same point of departure⁴⁶, it seems more plausible to acknowledge that film noir started in the 1940s due to the convergence of all the historical, cultural, and cinematographic elements mentioned above. To this framework, one might add Naremore's perspective to the historical background of film noir in the way in which he points to the relationship between the formation of film noir and cinematic modernism in the 20th century. According to Naremore (2002), the modernist art matured until around the 1940s, and European art cinema grew fascinated by what Graham Greene called 'blood melodrama', that is, 'popular stories about violence and sexual love'. He connects the hard-boiled literature's modernist transformation into cinema to the birth of the 1940s' film noir, if not directly, then indirectly (pp. 41-45). So, one might infer that the beginning of the 1940s has provided the suitable conditions as a saturation point for film noir elements to blend with each other to form a rather separate body which nevertheless incorporates diverse aspects from different genres and different eras, but which mainly focuses on the contemporary time, space and subject matter.

However, fiction and films of the previous decades were not merely transformed into film noir. As indicated by Krutnik (1991), due to the popularity of Freudian psychoanalysis in the USA during the 1940s, film noir incorporated a different perspective by adding the psychology of crime and criminals, their motives, inner worlds, sexual identities, and impulses beyond their control (pp. 45-46). In addition to psychoanalysis, the popular philosophical wave of the post-war period, existentialism was also influential in film noir. Steven Sanders (2006) argues that existentialism and film noir are not directly connected in terms of the works of philosophers, however there are existential themes in films of the

⁴⁶ Andrew Spicer claims that film noir refers to a cycle of films 'that share a similar iconography, visual style, narrative strategies, subject matter and characterization' (2002, p. 4). For these very reasons, as stated above, Hirsh (1981) argues that film noir is a separate genre (p. 69), which shows the difficulty in reaching a consensus on many aspects of film noir.

period. These themes include meaninglessness of life, pessimism, the human condition which points to the corrupt system full of criminals, frustrated people, and corrupt officials, and freedom and fatalism (pp. 92-97). Hence, the patchwork structure of film noir includes fictional and cinematographic works from the past and present of the period, and the modern movements, ideas, and events.

3.2 NARRATIVE ELEMENTS

The relationship between literature and film noir determines the narrative elements as well, especially during the first phase of film noir in the 1940s⁴⁷. The essential narrative elements such as events, character formation, time and space are transferred from the story, novel or play to the motion picture, and eventually the verbal text is transformed into a visual text. David Bordwell offers a narrative approach for film studies in *Narration in Fiction Film*. Summarizing the basic theories of narration as mimetic and diegetic, and with reference to literary theories of narrative, he proposes a schema to concretize narration in films. Bordwell borrows terms like fabula and syuzhet to divide the narrative into two: syuzhet (or plot) stands for the way events are presented in the film, and fabula (or story) stands for the events in the constructed form. So, fabula is the outcome of the viewer's construction of syuzhet, which is treated by means of filmic devices called style. Bordwell gives equal weight to syuzhet and style as they complement each other to form the fabula, and this cycle forms narration (Bordwell 1985, pp. 48-50). The constituent parts of syuzhet, namely causality (the relationships between events), time and space, are used in parallel with the needs, and the information provided for the audience, the way time and space are used determines the essence of the film, and filmic experience of the spectator. Hence, Bordwell defines narration, as 'the process whereby the film's syuzhet and style interact in the course of cueing and channelling the spectator's construction of the fabula' (ibid., p. 53). Fabula contains all the narrative elements of a specific film: events, characters, time and space.

⁴⁷ David Bordwell asserts that one out of five noir films is based on hard-boiled novels (1998, p. 79).

3.2.1 Events

By definition, events in a narrative create the story⁴⁸, and the events are connected to each other in terms of time, space, and the relationship between the events, such as a cause-effect relationship (Bordwell and Thompson 2008, pp. 75-77). In the case of film noir, the events provide a common characteristic: As William Park asserts while attempting to make a definition, film noir is characterized by its subject matter: crime. The story is built around ‘a protagonist, a contemporary setting, (...) an investigation by someone or some agency’ (2011, pp. 25-26). So, the events are used to depict a criminal act or a series of criminal acts, covertly or overtly, and how they are approached by agents in the narrative. Schrader (1972) offers to divide film noir productions into three phases: The first phase is between 1941-1946, and the common ground is the ‘private eye and the lone wolf’ protagonists characterized by their talking than action. The second phase includes films between 1945-1949, and they usually focus on police procedures, crime as a social problem, and political corruption. The third phase covers 1949-1953 leaving the films after that period out of categorization although he acknowledges them as noir films. In this phase, the tendency to focus on psychology stands out in the form of ‘psychotic action and suicidal impulses’ (pp. 11-12). The narrative centres on a protagonist, and depicts the character taking part in the past and/or present events with an opportunity for the spectator to form a projection to the probable events taking place in the narrative’s future. Therefore, the main trait of the story is the fact that it is fragmented, for example, moving to-and-fro between the past and present (as seen in *The Killers*, 1946). Moreover, the linearity is disrupted by means of voiceovers, intradiegetic narrators, flashbacks, and dreams. The events revolving around a murder, violence, a robbery scheme, or any other *noir* criminal activity resemble a *puzzle* that unfolds gradually (Spicer 2010, pp. 212-214). So, it is safe to suggest that the central narrative quality is events revolving around the theme of crime. Park (2011) distinguishes three categories related to crime to further differentiate noir films in terms of the narrative quality: those that have a plot of tragedy, the plot of irony, and plots of romance (pp. 126-127). All these diverse elements create

⁴⁸ Bordwell uses *fabula* and *story* in the same meaning: ‘the fabula embodies the action as a chronological, cause-and-effect chain of events occurring within a given duration and a spatial field’ (1985, p. 49).

what some critics refer to as ‘tone’ or ‘mood’, a mysterious world full of blank points where darkness prevails in the form of danger, death, crime, decay, and eroticism.

3.2.2 Characters

As is the case with almost all film noir elements, the noir protagonist is also quite a controversial topic. However, some critics were able to draw sketches of the most prominent aspects of noir characters. Park (2011), with reference to Chandler, states that noir protagonists are ‘tarnished’ people, male or female, meaning that they are at least stepping on the grey area between legal and illegal, criminal and innocent, moral and immoral. They are not flawless even if they have done nothing wrong, and they in one way or another are fallen into crime (p. 23). So, there is actually no distinction between the male and female protagonists from a moral perspective.

Hirsh (1981) divides main male noir protagonists into three: the detective, the criminal, and the middle-class victim/scapegoat (pp. 10-12). The male protagonist, especially those of the 1940s, is usually a hard-boiled, macho male as described in hard-boiled fiction, sometimes a private detective/investigator, sometimes a greedy businessman, or a veteran; however, Park displays that noir protagonists practice a larger variety of professions (2011, pp. 23-24), and they equally end up in corruption, death and despair. Wager (2005) makes a broader definition, and differentiate the noir protagonists on the basis of their potency as ‘homme fatal’ and ‘homme attrapé’, the former referring to men who strive to get more in life, and initiate dangerous and criminal events and seduce women whereas the latter is the domesticated type in the society ready to participate in the desires of the public, negotiate, and survive unlike homme fatal (pp. 4, 20). Contrary to the first impression of hard-boiled private eye detective characterization stereotype suggests, male noir protagonists are revealed to be emasculated, fallible, fatally doomed, and in many cases beaten unstable entities. William Luhr (2012) summarizes examples that go against the masculine hero concept in some canonical films connoting horror films due to the qualities of the main characters. He describes male noir characters as ‘lost souls’ with ‘zombie-like existences’ rushing headlong towards their doom. In the meanwhile, they try to bring together the pieces of the puzzle that leads them to their destruction. The narrator of *Double Indemnity* (1944), the narrator of *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) as a dead man, the main protagonist in *The Killers* (1946) are among some examples. Luhr claims that these men have undergone a process of emasculation that they

no longer have the power to lead women and their own path as opposed to the traditional view of male protagonists who are in charge in all situations (pp. 29-30). The masculinity of noir men is a controversial topic as various noir characters are charged with implied homosexuality, some examples of which are provided by Park in *Double Indemnity* (1944) and *Gilda* (1946) (2011, p. 124), and by Hirsh in *Laura* (1944) (1981, p. 120).

Female noir protagonists received far more attention than male protagonists in terms of character formation. Following Wager's categorization, two types are identified as *femme fatale* and *femme attrapée* (2005, pp. 19-20). This split characterization is previously portrayed by Janey Place (1998) as 'the spider woman' and 'the nurturing woman' from a perspective including the visual representation of women. The spider woman refers to the *femme fatale* who is highly stylized, destructive, dangerous and sexually charged. She is depicted in visual motifs which include long hair, make-up, jewellery, cigarettes, and 'the iconography of violence' referring mainly to guns. According to Place, the *femme fatale* yearns for independence, but is usually presented in the form of 'self-absorbed narcissism'. On the other hand, 'the nurturing woman' (also known as *femme attrapée*) is the giver, the affectionate, sacrificing, passive and static opposing the spider woman. She usually connotes safety due to her connection with either nature or the past, and represents what *femme fatale* lacks (pp. 53-63). So, Place is of the opinion that, considering the established social order, the *femme fatale* is provided with negative aspects and self-justified evil motives because they seek independence in a male-centred world, and are probably for that reason denied a female perspective, and structured from a male perspective. However, she also underlines that women had never been presented that active, intelligent, destructive yet powerful figure who also were not afraid of their sexuality (ibid., p. 49). So, the place of woman in film noir creates an ambiguity in terms of its relationship with the social and individual norms and traditions which are products of male-dominated societies. A similar vein can be traced in Elizabeth Cowie's critical essay on the place of women both in film noir and the male critics' perception of it⁴⁹. She

⁴⁹ Since the scope of this chapter is limited to the introduction of the main aspects of film noir from different perspectives, criticism of critics is not relevant here, and therefore, although very insightful and beneficial, Cowie's arguments centred on the distorted male perspective of critics situating female protagonists as part of their fantasy will be left out, and her opinions of film noir phenomenon will be stated.

claims that film noir has been perceived essentially as a masculine film form which slights the existence of women by portraying them as lacking individuals in need of male assistance at the very best, obsessed or psychotic characters usually connected to issues related to sexuality, and/or duplicitous figures due to their ability to utilize their beauty and cunning to trap men and prove how deceitful and dangerous they are as females. However, she discusses that that panorama is not entirely accurate, and is usually a matter of imbalanced focus on the critics' side as, in many films, there is more or less an equivalent treatment of male and female protagonists, and males are not essentially better than females or vice versa (1993, pp. 133-136).

On the other hand, some critics find the very categorization itself problematic. Yvonne Tasker (2013) argues that the term 'femme fatale' might be inadequate to deliver the ways in which female protagonists are actually presented in noir films; the term is used like an umbrella term for all women who are active, sexually charged, and strong (pp. 361-362). Julie Grossman (2009) also points to a similar drawback about the term femme fatale. She mentions few canonical noir films to claim that the term femme fatale was constructed by critics with reference to the female characters in these canonical films, and then project that image to all female protagonists with no accuracy or consistency at all (pp. 21-22). A similar perspective about the variety of female characters that is mishandled can be traced in other critics. Helen Hanson (2007) focuses on films in which women are part of the workforce as a secretary, and undertaking the role of a sleuth. She concludes that the female protagonist in many film noir examples, although small in number, proves that the arguments focus on the negative representation of women as femme fatales and/or passive domestic types only are actually false as women in certain films match whatever a male hero is capable of, even if the film's perspective follows masculine lines (pp. 18-32). Park also underlines the significance of the shift in the way in which women were presented in film noir, which was radically different from previous eras as female film noir protagonists, femmes fatales in particular, were no longer representatives of conventional roles and norms. However, in addition to that, he also points out the fact that some aspects of film noir are taken for granted regarding the female protagonist, and gives specific canonical films as evidence. Contrary to the impression shared by many people, many noir films do not even have a femme fatale character, and in a similar fashion, in many noir films, the main character is not a man, but a woman

as the investigator, as the fallible persona, a ‘tarnished’ female character who eventually faces within the plot structure what a male protagonist would do (2011, pp. 118-120). From that perspective, film noir seems to handle issues related to gender in a fair fashion, and the placement of women as part of crime, murder, and immorality is not necessarily just a matter of gender bias or outright misogyny, but in a way also a reflection of the universe which the films describe. On the other hand, by taking similar aspects of film noir’s look on women protagonists similar to other critics, Hirsh concludes that film noir reflects a negative image about the new woman of the era, who enters the workforce, serves the country during war time, and acquires a new status. According to Hirsh, the perception of reality is distorted in noir films as a reaction to power grasped by women in the society by turning them into monsters, temptresses, fire-breathing dragon ladies; in short, attributes all of which connote negative attributes (1981, pp. 19-20). Regarding the female protagonist, it seems there is an agreement on the narrative construction of the character in the story, and personality traits in relation to the social and historical milieu, however the disagreement stems from the reception of this portray which is by no means stereotypical at all due to the variety of female protagonists traced in film noir.

Finally, when the female and male protagonists form a family union, as stated by Sylvia Harvey, they do not represent the traditional idea of happy and satisfied heterosexual institutionalized concept of unity, family and relationship as in film noir such families are usually formed of ‘desexualized mothers, plotting adulterers, impotent, crippled husband’ living in a loveless environment (1998, p. 42). So, although film noir seems to include diverse ‘tarnished’ characters possessing both positive and negative qualities to varying degrees not necessarily evil, together they are by no means appropriate to be seen as a ‘decent’ couple in an orderly society.

3.2.3 Space and Time

By its basic definition, space is where the events in the narrative take place, and where the actors act in time. Probably city would be the absolute word that describes the main space of film noir, and usually at night. When talking about film noir in particular, there is more or less a consensus about the specifics of locations in film noir. Vivian Sobchack (1998), in her seminal article, examines these places to understand the relationship between film noir spaces and the culture of the era. She mentions ‘cocktail lounge, the nightclub, the bar, the hotel room, the boarding house, the diner, the dance hall, the

roadside café, the bus and train station, and the way side motel' as major locations⁵⁰ where events take place in noir films during and after the war (p. 130). All the places being outside 'home', she points to the fact that noir films very rarely present 'ordinary houses' that is conventionally referred to as homes. That lack is linked to fragmented domesticity, instability, disintegration, economic hardships and post-war anxieties with specific reference to actual housing problem in the USA (ibid., pp. 130-138). When there is home, it is either a part of the past reminiscent of what is associated with nostalgia and longing, or it is a 'home', for example, of the rich devoid of the characteristics of 'home' which usually connotes a sense of 'security' and 'intimacy' (ibid., pp. 144-146). These places transform actions associated with domesticity and privacy into actions associated with anonymity and the public domain. Moreover, people occupying these places are restless, static, unproductive while devising a scheme, and smoking and/or drinking with little or no interaction with others inhabiting and sharing the same places (ibid. pp. 157-159). The weight of space in film noir, together with the abovementioned style to present it, makes space more than places holding actors to perform. Thomas Schatz (1999) sees the roots of film noir in the 19th century Gothic romances, popular fiction of the 1930s about women, hardboiled fiction of the 1930s, horror and gangster pictures, German émigrés, European cinema, German expressionism, and prominent European directors (p. 233), and Murray Pomerance (2013) interprets Schatz's description by underlining that all these works, movements, periods, and figures are essentially 'urban', and therefore, spaces reflect the cultural environment in which film noir was born (p. 406). These places are usually presented as part of a dark world, and dark refers to the literal meaning due to the chiaroscuro technique, and to the crime ridden, dangerous world which challenges the so-called cosiness of middle-class American life. Pomerance concludes the effect of noir space as one that constantly shifts as 'every spot light is an impending spot of darkness' (ibid., p. 417). On the other hand, Krutnik notes that the way modern city is presented (dark, threatening, dangerous, unstable space) does not entail that countryside or small town is favoured or juxtaposed as the opposite of the city. Both spaces are equally

⁵⁰ William Park adds more places that have become typical, and some of them are dark city streets, amusement parks, piers, stores, shabby apartments and buildings, tunnels, basements, and sewers (2011, p. 57).

troubling, and one cannot find comfort when running away from the other as he or she is haunted by what he/she has been running away either in the city or the countryside (1997, p. 92).

The events of the narrative take place in the contemporary world; however, time span may cover many years, and the overall use of time is out of the ordinary as flashbacks are at the heart of the story as in *Mildred Pierce* (Michael Curtiz, 1945) or *The Killers* (Robert Siodmak, 1946); or the whole story is almost a flashback as in *Sunset Boulevard* (Billy Wilder, 1950). Paul Schrader argues that the chronological order firstly contributes to a sense of hopelessness, and lost time, and secondly, underlines the narrative aspect that the films with such an order give priority to how events happened rather than what happened (1972, p. 11). What William Luhr claims while discussing retrospective structure of *Out of the Past* (Jacques Tourneur, 1947) summarizes many noir films employing a complex chronological structure with fragmented intervals unwinding the puzzle. The past with all its secrets, desires, failures, hopes, and betrayals determines the future which almost all the time works against the protagonist's desire to reach satisfaction, security, and happiness (2012, pp. 109-111). Because of the way chronology is manipulated usually by means of an intradiegetic narrator, the spectator is called to reconstruct the events presented in fragments with a peculiar time order. Therefore, time as part of the narrative is a central element that includes the spectator in the reconstruction of the fragments and form the fabula, which eventually makes it not only an element of narration but also an element of reception.

3.3 FORMAL ELEMENTS

To a great extent, critics and researchers agree on certain formal elements that draw the characteristics of film noir. The patchwork structure of film noir is displayed by Janey Place and Lowell Peterson in their 1974 article. The form and content serve each other, and therefore style in film noir functions to create certain effects such as 'claustrophobia, paranoia, despair, and nihilism' (p. 65), which is in accordance with the subject matter centred around crime and fallible protagonists who almost always face a downfall at the end.

Perhaps the first element that strikes the viewer is lighting, and chiaroscuro, noir lighting is defined as 'low-key', which creates contrast; faces, spaces partially hidden, and

eventually may imply mystery, suspicion etc. on the spectator while determining the atmosphere or nature of a character or a scene in general. To that end, night scenes are widely used rather than day-for-night scenes (ibid., p. 66). However, especially about low-key lighting, there are different ideas about the origin of that stylistic element. Marc Vernet (1993) claims that low-key lighting in the way it was used for expressionism was used previously both in the USA, Russia, and many European countries at the beginning of the 20th century. What is more, gothic and detective films prior to film noir also had an effect on noir lighting (pp. 10-12). Moreover, Edward Dimendberg (2003) claims that German expressionism had little to do with noir lighting or style in general for two reasons: first, a small portion of directors were of German or Austro-Hungarian origin, and because these directors started their career in the USA at different times, they had developed their style in the USA as well to some degree; and second, some of the so-called German émigrés such as Siodmak, Lang, or Wilder were making films in Paris before they started to work in the USA, and they did not apply noir elements in their films at all, which might reinforce the previous idea that these prominent film noir directors acquired their noir style in the USA (pp. 115-117).

Another item highlighted by Place and Peterson is the use of depth of field which enables a larger area to view for the spectator. To achieve that effect wide angle lenses were used. The same equipment also helped create visual effects when the image is distorted especially in close-ups. Apart from photography, mise-en-scene is composed in a different fashion than classic style. Frame compositions with unbalanced composition, accompanied by unusual camera angles and movements (such as short tracking shots to depict a runaway character to involve the audience in the excitement of the chase scene), also contribute to the effects created by previous items above. Sequencing the images in an order that would also disorient the spectator, for example, by ordering close-ups and long shots one after another, or focusing on the facial expression in the middle of an action scene (1974, pp. 66-69).

James Naremore also dwells on film noir style to mark the importance of existing stylistic conventions in shaping formal aspect attributed to film noir. Referring to Place and Peterson, he discusses that the examination of a few number of films would not yield reliable results, and claims that '[a]ll the stylistic features they describe can be found in pictures that have never been classified as noir' (2008, p. 167). Naremore argues that

different 'noir' films by different 'noir' directors, such as Orson Welles and John Farrow; Edward Dmytryk and John Huston; and Howard Hawks, display different stylistics as some of them rely on camera movements while others apply to editing more often to create dynamism, or some others prefer classic seamless style. He, moreover, asserts that black and white compositions were mainly products of modern art and, in a broader sense, the aesthetics of the period which focused on both artistic and realistic quality of works (ibid., pp. 168-172). Hence, Naremore places film noir style as a reflection of its milieu from an artistic vantage point, as a product of historical and artistic circumstances rather than an innovation or a result of creative effort. The diminishing remarks on film noir style is apparent in others as well. Bordwell maintains that film noir does not produce a unique style of its own, that it is a collection of existing filmic devices and crime literature style combined together and reacting against the dominant classical Hollywood style of the period (1998, pp. 78-80). Following this line of argument, Krutnik (1991) argues that film noir does not have a style that is characteristic of a certain set of films, that can immediately be associated with them, and eventually differentiate them from other films (p. 19). He, moreover, projects a different perspective about the formation of film noir style relating it with the war economy which entailed restrictions in production budgets. As a result of that, the directors were expected to be more creative and innovative to overcome the austerity in filmmaking using 'fixed equipment', and that led to a style reminiscent of German Expressionism (ibid., pp. 20-21). Taken as part of views on film noir as a manufactured concept, a mood and tone, or a brief period or movement in film history, such interpretations are consistent in themselves, however it should be marked that Naremore, Bordwell, Krutnik, or others such as Copjec or Dimendberg above, try to explain the roots of film noir style, yet even those critics do and could list the trademark formal aspects of film noir phenomenon instantly as seen in Bordwell (1998, pp. 78-79), Krutnik (1991, pp. 19-20), and Naremore (2008, p. 167) just before attempting to overturn the established understanding of qualities associated with film noir.

Other stylistic elements that characterizes film noir, as Park (2011) summarizes, with reference to Place and Peterson, are shadows cast on objects, for example, projecting the shapes of bars; wide angle focal length, dissolves, and unusual camera angles (pp. 55-56). In addition to that, Brian McDonnell (2007) in *Encyclopedia of Film Noir* mentions mirror reflections, 'choker' close-ups, subjective use of camera to distort objects are

characteristic of film noir. He argues that film noir style helps to create distinct figures such as femme fatales, bleak spaces, and cities at night, all of which are iconic film noir images (pp. 73-74). However, these elements may not be present in a single film, and that creates controversy in identifying specific films as film noir.

As for acting, which is portrayed by means of the abovementioned stylistic elements, Donna Pederby (2013) argues that in film noir the performance is predominantly determined by the style, not by the actor, which means that cinematography, as in the use of camera and lighting, for example, shadows acting (p. 319). Accordingly, it is too difficult to evaluate the performance of the actors without style. Pederby divides acting and performance of film noir actors into two: screen and diegetic performance (ibid., p. 321). From a broader perspective, she defines screen performance as what the actor does to animate the script character, and she claims that in film noir 'minimalist' acting is dominant in terms of the movement, mimics, and gestures although at times it can become very expressive and mannerist. The actors are usually still and motionless devoid of emotional expression. However, there are also performances that display the restlessness, fear, uneasiness, extreme emotionalism etc. which counterbalances the former (ibid., pp. 322-323). As for diegetic performance, which refers to the ways in which acting functions with respect to the narrative, Pederby argues that the story dynamics affect the ways in which performance is received by the audience, and helps the story to be constructed by means of the characters. They can act like a narrator through voiceovers, and help underline certain aspects of the narrative, such as gender identity or specific events (pp. 321, 328). There is also a third mode: the social historical context, which refers to identities of the actors in parallel with the current affairs such as war veterans, working mothers, housewives etc. that reflect contemporary social condition of the period (p. 321).

In addition to the abovementioned elements, mingled with the narrative devices, film noir is also associated with the voiceover and extensive use of flashbacks that establish the relationship between different shots, and create temporal relations to selectively narrate the story by putting it in fragments rather than a linear narration.

In terms of noir style, Foster Hirsh (1981) argues that *Citizen Kane* (1941) by Orson Wells might be considered the first American film noir as it shaped the noir style to a great extent matching the foreign influence. He identifies the investigating detective role in the

journalist, the whodunit motif in the presence of 'rosebud', diverse perspectives, narrative labyrinth, flashbacks, the use of lighting, unusual camera angles distorting the way actors and places are presented, and low-angle shots (pp. 121-122). Park (2011) agrees with the pivotal place *Citizen Kane* occupies in film history, and argues that many of these elements were not unfamiliar to the industry of the period, however, many of these stylistic elements were compiled in a single film and led the way to what is called 'noir style' by influencing the film grammar of film noir, and causing them to be separated from the classical Hollywood films of the period (pp. 59-60).

3.4 INTERNATIONAL NOIR

Naremore argues that film noir is essentially a product of postmodernism as it flourished not within the industry, but outside of it mainly due to the efforts of film reviewers, critics, and academics whose approach was merely intellectual. His central argument about the birth of film noir is that it is a French invention to describe certain American films which can under no circumstances be categorized as such due to their diversity (2002, pp. 9-15). Designating a certain set of films long after they start to form a category of their own, as Naremore claims the French did, does not necessarily mean that film noir was non-existent as an American genre during the 1940s and the 1950s as defined by critics. However, the persistent reference to the international influence and effect on film noir from/in different countries might be a strong point to attend to, but from a cinematographic perspective rather than academic.

To begin with, Fay and Nieland propose three periods to discuss the international film noir: the interwar period covering the late 1930s, war and immediate early post-war period for the globalization of noir, and post-war period heading to neo-noir (2010, p. 1). What is termed as the 'interwar period' mainly refers to French poetic realism and Italian neorealism. Fay and Nieland underline that Cain's novel *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1934) was adapted by Pierre Chenal as *Le Dernier Tournant* in 1939, and by Visconti as *Ossessione* in 1943 before Tay Garnett adapted it in 1946 in the USA. The implication here is that these films possess film noir characteristics not because of academic efforts to build a phenomenon as Naremore hints at, but because there are similarities between French and American films. However, Borde and Chaumeton (2002) claim that these two films are mere adaptations of the original novel (p. 68), and mark 1949 for the first 'noir series' to appear in France, some of which are mere parodies

whereas others provide a certain noir quality (pp. 127-128). Although the French try to differentiate French and the US films of the period, Paul Duncan finds a middle way, and after mentioning pre-noir US films, he places French films under the influence of poetic realism with a tinge of film noir in the noir filmography, and that list not only includes French films such as *La Chienne* (Jean Renoir, 1931), *La Bête Humaine* (Jean Renoir, 1938), or *Le Jour Se Lève* (Marcel Carné, 1939) from the 1930s, but also German expressionist films including *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (Robert Wiene, 1920), *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler* (Fritz Lang, 1922), or *Sunrise* (F. W. Murnau, 1927), which are even earlier films than the former. He also includes US films from 1940 in the list as film noir examples unlike most critics and academics who would rather classify them differently (2006, pp. 63-65). Duncan includes these films as part of the legacy film noir took over and transformed into a new character. Here, once again, the implication is that film noir is an international phenomenon rather than a strictly American one. Mark Bould, who, similar to Duncan, explores the European influence, emphasizes the large number of émigré directors, some of which were essential in the development of film noir (2005, pp. 24-25). This historical perspective is more about the roots of film noir, and the international aspects of its identity; and, once again, it is quite controversial, and has not presented an agreement so far.

Leaving such disagreements aside, the main international facet of film noir can be traced especially along with political advancements of the USA over the war weary countries of the era. It is clear that, due to the war, European countries did not have access to the US films at all, which was perhaps one reason for the French critics to immediately detect the changes in the US cinema propelled by the unusual series of films they labelled as noir. Another implication is that the late arrival, and relatively late consumption of these works, delayed the influence of film noir on different countries' markets. As Victoria de Grazia (2005) summarizes, the Marshall Plan, effective as of 1948, has five 'features': assuming 'limited sovereignty' for other nations on their own 'public space'; sending the US 'civil society' as an integral part of exports; setting the US practices as the norm; presenting democracy in the form of consumption culture; and promising peace as an alternative to European militarism (pp. 6-9). When the trade barriers were lifted as part of the plan, the US films started to flow in the major European countries amounting to a large proportion of screening time which necessitated protective measures such as allocating quota for

local films so that they could compete with Hollywood productions. Bordwell points to the Hollywood dominance in Europe claiming that by 1953 half of the screening time was reserved for Hollywood films in many European countries, which triggered reactions in countries such as France, Britain, Germany, Italy, and Denmark either in the form of securing quota for local productions or raising taxes on imported films to support local productions (Bordwell and Thompson 2002, pp. 354-356). In this milieu, film noir influenced other cinemas mainly in two ways: first, by means of films that were made under the US led occupied areas as in Japan and Germany, or by means of films that were made under the influence of film noir productions screened in countries where imported Hollywood films including noir films infested the theatres.

Fay and Nieland (2010) argue that the first films shot in post-war occupied Germany, which were called *Trümmerfilme* (rubble films), utilized some of the aspects associated with film noir: low-key lighting, on location shooting, flashbacks, psychological depth of characters, plots based on detection and discovery. As an example of films bearing noir elements, *Die Mörder sind unter uns* (The Murderers Are among Us, Wolfgang Staudte 1946) is given embodying both narrative and stylistic qualities resembling a film noir although the film was shot in the Soviet zone. In the same fashion, *Zwischen Gestern und Morgen* (Between Yesterday and Tomorrow, Harald Braun 1947), which was shot in the US zone, shared similar narrative and stylistic qualities with film noir (pp. 44-47). In a similar fashion, in Japan, films were made under the USA control, and the first films with noir elements were produced during the occupation period. Akira Kurosawa's *Yoidore Tenshi* (Drunken Angel, 1948) and *Nora Inu* (Stray Dog, 1949) are considered to be examples of that due to its subject matter, stories involving crime and criminals' world, and style (ibid., pp. 53-57).

The cultural interaction between the occupier and the occupied, and control of the occupier over the cultural products as carried out by the USA was not the sole facilitator for the US films, in particular film noir, to gain grounds in major European film centres. In the post-war era in France, noir elements could be traced mainly in 'social noir' films and gangster films ranging from H.G. Clouzot's *Les Diaboliques* (Diabolique, 1955) to Jean-Pierre Melville's *Le Samourai* (1967) (Vincendeau 2007, pp. 32-39). Vincendeau concludes that the extent of that influence particularly intensified in narrative elements and in the ways in which women are placed in these narratives: more powerful yet evil

characters (ibid., pp. 44-45). The effect of film noir in Italy has a similar story as in France in that the idea of film noir was not altogether blurry due to Visconti's awareness of noir fiction in the USA, and his *Ossessione* (1943), which was another early adaptation of *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1934). Following that, films with noir elements continued in Giuseppe De Santis' *Caccia Tragica* (Tragic Hunt, 1946) and *Riso Amaro* (Bitter Rice, 1948). However, Italian neorealism after the war became the most effective mode of production for local production companies, and dominated the post-war period for a while. On the other hand, as Dennis Broe (2014) suggests, the American film industry was also very effective in Italy doubling the number films featured yearly in theatres up to 368 between 1946 and 1949 securing more than 70 percent of the screening time as part of the economic and cultural rush into European territory, and that shifted the focus from films with a critical social approach to films for pure entertainment that produce more revenue by the help of the Italian government and the church. The reaction to that repositioning appeared in the form of another phase of films with noir elements again with critical overtones against fascism. Michelangelo Antonioni's *Cronaca Di Un Amore* (Story of a Love Affair, 1950), Fernando Cerchio's *Il Bivio* (Flying Brigades, 1951), Pietro Germi's *La Città Si Difende* (The City Defends Itself, 1951), and Francesco Rosi's *La Sfida* (The Challenge, 1958) are among prominent examples of films including film noir elements although they are blended with Italian neorealism (pp. 121-126). The period between 1943 and 1958, and even beyond, signals the extent of the effect of film noir, however that should not be translated into the impression that Italian productions copied Hollywood productions. On the contrary, it seems that film noir made it possible to express post-war emotions of fear, desperation, anger, and contempt for pre-war Italian society, and politics.

In Britain, the overall picture was similar to that of other post-war countries. On the whole, film noir's popularity in Britain probably exceeds all countries outside the USA when the number of films produced is taken into consideration. As Broe (2014) states, for the period including the pre-war and post-war market, more than three hundred films were listed as *noir films* (p. 95). Some of these films may not fully comply with the aspects of classic American film noir, but they focus on crime as the central issue, and the social problem concerning ordinary people, including class issues which was a central element after the war in Britain although the dominant political forces tried to undermine it. Broe

states that the cultural environment in post-war Britain was woven with harsh political intervention in the form of censorship and support for the US post-war policies, which include the omnipresent American film industry to dominate the market both by means of Hollywood films, and by trying to establish the idea that films are merely for entertainment, yet nonetheless films with noir elements emerged although they were not exactly in accordance with the entertaining film type (ibid., pp. 84-93). In this milieu, Carol Reed's *The Fallen Idol* (1948) and *The Third Man* (1949), Lewis Gilbert's *The Good Die Young* (1954), and Cy Endfield's *Hell Drivers* (1957) were among notable examples of British films with noir elements that also focused on class issues (Bould 2005, pp. 93-94).

All these major film markets in Europe face with a similar post-war period of cultural transformation in cinema industry. In almost all major countries with an effective film market before the war, local governments are seen to impose strict regulations in the form of censorship on cinema industry during the production and post-production stages following the US-led economic and cultural dominance in the continent and the UK. Local productions cannot cope with American films which are imported as part of the Marshall Plan. However, it is noteworthy that film noir, which also enters the European market in large quantities after the war, operates in a different fashion. Almost in all countries, the influence of film noir is not in the way it was thought to be, that is, to reshape the way cinema is perceived to become mainly a source of entertainment. On the contrary, in all the countries above, it seems, film noir elements are utilized to make films resist the desired filmmaking style, acquire a critical look at the social condition, and offer solutions for local productions to be made under stark conditions by using film noir stylistics.

The American film industry did not only target major markets. On the contrary, the initial steps were taken simultaneously in countries with newly emerging markets. The Marshall Plan as an economic assistance program started in 1948 for both Turkey and Greece since they were treated alike from the beginning to the end of the plan as two countries to be protected from the Soviet threat (Satterthwaite 1972, pp. 75-81). As part of the plan, they received financial aid in many forms, and, as was the case in other countries, American cinema industry also entered the two countries, and secured the screening time more than any other productions for a while. Both in Greece and Turkey, the inflow of films

coincided with the newly emerging cinema industry yet to be developed so as to compete with foreign films despite censorship and political control. In Greece, eight films were made in 1948 (the year the plan came in effect), seven in 1949, and seven in 1950 (Karalis 2012, pp. 44-50) whereas in Turkey the number is 23 in 1950 (Özön 2013, p. 232). In Greece, among many foreign influences, film noir also had a prominent role while new directors started to make films. As Karalis suggests, a film noir tradition can be said to exist starting by Dinos Dimopoulos' film called *O Anthropos tou Trainou* (The Man of the Train, 1958), and continuing in the 1960s (ibid., pp. 57, 73, 84).

Turkish cinema industry walked a similar path while trying to establish a national cinema industry that can survive despite the overwhelming presence of international films, and, as will be explored in the coming chapters, classic film noir played a significant role in terms of stylistics and the possibilities it provided for the filmmakers to localize the narrative elements, as seen in other major European film industries, so as to address local issues rather than merely reproduce copies of classic noir films.

4. THE ANALYSIS OF *KANUN NAMINA*

Kanun Namina (In the Name of Law, 1952), directed by Lütfi Ö. Akad, and written by Lütfi Ö. Akad and Osman F. Seden⁵¹, is a milestone in Turkish cinema marking the beginning of the maturation period in filmmaking. Some historians even daringly consider the film as the first true cinematic film in Turkish cinema differentiating itself from previous films, or a film that has started a new phase in the history of Turkish cinema due to its style providing a novel approach to cinematography, mise-en-scene and editing (Özön 2013, pp. 165-166; Onaran 1994, pp. 55-56; Franko 1987, p. 551). The film is also important due to the effect it created abroad as well. The film was reportedly invited to Venice Film Festival although Akad refused to send it finding the film technically lacking for such a festival (Akad 2004, pp. 179, 187). Both historically and cinematographically, *Kanun Namina* is highly acclaimed, but oddly enough inherent qualities of the film have hardly been studied in detail in terms of its inherent qualities, and it remained in obscurity in terms of narrative and formal elements that supposedly differentiate the film from others, and the film's relation to certain foreign influences, in particular film noir, has been explained with rash remarks. This chapter explores the extent and nature of film noir elements in *Kanun Namina* to be able to situate it better in a narrative and formal context, and indirectly in the history of Turkish cinema.

4.1 NARRATIVE ELEMENTS IN *KANUN NAMINA*

The narrative elements of *Kanun Namina* are going to be analysed to determine its affinity with film noir in terms of the events including the narrator, the character formation, space and time in the light of the major narrative aspects of film noir as noted earlier.

⁵¹ According to Onaran, Akad claims that he wrote the screenplay after forming the story and the treatment with Seden (1990, p. 37). However, Akad implies in his memoirs that they were co-writers (Akad 2004, p. 163); therefore, there is no conclusive evidence to credit either of them as the sole writer.

4.1.1 Events

To begin with, the events of the story in *Kanun Namına* can be grouped in three parts which are fairly proportionate in terms of duration: the film lasts 93 minutes, and the parts last roughly 27 to 30 minutes each⁵².

The first part is the introduction with background information about a love quadrangle: Nazım and Ayten are in love with each other advancing to marriage, Ayten's step sister Nezahat is also in love with Nazım; and finally, Halil, a family friend, is in love with Ayten, but Nezahat and Halil's love is unreturned. This first part starts with scenes in the countryside portraying the passionate love of Nazım and Ayten. Everyone except Nezahat enjoys the scenery, the refreshing natural surroundings, music and friendship. At the end of the pleasure trip sequence, Nezahat confesses her love to Nazım, and is rejected. Ayten and Nazım marry leaving Halil and Nezahat in frustration. This part ends when Nezahat approaches Halil to join forces to devise a plan to defame Ayten, separate the couple, and eventually conquer Nazım. In the first part, the events portray first the romance between Nazım and Ayten, then, due to the stroke the father (name not known) has, the split in the family. Without the father's authority, Ayten is alone against the assaults and insults of Nezahat and her mother (name not known).

The second part includes the execution of the conspiracy by Nezahat and Halil encompassing the downfall of Nazım and Ayten: Nazım is approached by a heroin addict called Perihan at a party held by Halil to set up a trap for Nazım. Perihan the seductress leads Nazım to their decadent life style, and Nazım spends more time with Perihan than Ayten, and frequents clubs more than his home and the automobile repair shop he owns. Nezahat anonymously communicates Nazım's affair to Ayten, which torments her to the point of suffering from nightmares and falling ill in the form of nervous breakdowns causing her to lose consciousness⁵³. This part ends when Nazım extracts the conspiracy from Perihan after reading a note that reveals the role played by Perihan to seduce Nazım and ruin his marriage.

⁵² When the first six minutes of the film are added to the last part of the film, the last part is roughly 36 minutes.

⁵³ The reason for Ayten's occasional faint is not clear. It might be due to stress or her pregnancy, but there is not enough evidence to argue.

The third part is the conclusion with Nazım's revenge: This part starts with Nazım's solitary strolls in the city leading to an urge to revenge on people whom he concludes to have taken part in the conspiracy, and among them Halil is the foremost. In parallel, Nezahat and Halil form their plan this time to set a trap for Ayten by convincing her to come to Halil's place so that Halil can commit sexual assault. By chance, Nazım arrives in time and shoots Halil, Perihan, and then, after returning home, Nezahat. Ayten also appears to be wounded, but it is not clear whether she was shot by Nazım or was injured for any other reason⁵⁴. The third and the last part concludes when Nazım runs away to his repair shop after a long police chase sequence. He exchanges gunshots with the police and surrenders after Ayten convinces him to do so by revealing the news that she is expecting a baby.

The main characteristic of the fabula is that chronologically the events start when the characters are in their prime in life, and then the events portray their fall to eventual destruction. Overall, the events are fairly linearly presented except for the fact that all the aforementioned events actually form a 'flashback' as the film starts at present when Nazım is in his repair shop surrounded by the police. He is given five minutes to surrender, and being one of the narrators of the story, he starts telling the story from the beginning to the present time in 'five minutes'. Each part of the narrative centres around a main story line and a secondary story line closely connected to the main story. In the first part, events concentrating on Nazım and Ayten's passionate love story building towards marriage is the main vein, which forms the climax in their life. In parallel, from the very beginning, Nezahat's obsessive and possessive love is portrayed and that sets the stage for the upcoming intrigue which involves almost all characters in the fabula. In the second part, Nazım is led astray and disappoints Ayten by cheating on her, which triggers his downfall until the end of the story. Again, in parallel, Nezahat and Halil operate on both Nazım and Ayten to manipulate them by executing their plan. In the third part, Nazım seeks revenge, runs away from the police, and in the meanwhile the police procedure to chase and arrest Nazım is portrayed. Ayten is also at the police station to

⁵⁴ At the end of the film, Ayten is brought to the repair shop to talk to Nazım, and he is not surprised at all when she calls his name. That might be an indication that Nazım never targeted Ayten in the first place, and the wound on her arm was accidental. The cause and manner of injury might be important to clarify discussions about the Nazım's motivation as a male character in a patriarchal world.

help them and save Nazım from being killed in action. The secondary story line is about Halil's plan to abuse Ayten. Therefore, the events expand over a larger area from the family circle to the police in different parts of the story by means of secondary story lines.

When the events surpass Nazım's knowledge of them, multiple narration is employed. For instance, the viewer learns at the end that the five-minute period given to Nazım to surrender is actually the inspector's call to take Ayten to the location to talk to Nazım to drop his gun. This incident and other events⁵⁵ that Nazım is unaware of imply that there are multiple narrators: extradiegetic and intradiegetic. Keeping in mind Seymour Chatman's claim that all narratives are by definition narrated or presented by an agent which may and/or may not display qualities of a human being (1990, p. 115), the visible and instantly noticeable narrator in *Kanun Namına* is Nazım. However, the voiceover of Nazım at the beginning and end of the film is deceptive for the viewer, and it successfully gives the impression that the viewer is given an account of the story through the eyes of Nazım, but the events are narrated from more than one point of view. The parallel structure and multiple perspectives shifting from objective to subjective and vice versa throughout the film create a dynamic narrative built around love, passion, ambition, intrigue, decadence, violence, infidelity and revenge.

Considering the root of the conflict in the story, the unreturned love, the events refer to a plot of romance, and given the ungrounded intensity of Nezahat and Halil, and their exaggerated motivation to ruin the married couple's life, they signal a melodramatic plot. Although it is not easy to pinpoint traits of melodrama without stirring a controversy, the framework presented by Susan Hayward is helpful to understand the concept of melodrama. She claims that the main focus of melodrama is the victim, which is usually a product of the conflict between the good and the evil from a moral and psychological perspective blending nostalgia, masochism, hysteria, repressed desires, forbidden longings, feminine or masculine pressures on characters and so on (2000, pp. 217-220). More specifically in terms of melodramatic films, Singer (2001) describes a good Hollywood melodrama as one that causes the viewers to cry by arousing strong and

⁵⁵ E.g. Nezahat's visit to the post office to send anonymous letters to Ayten, or simply because Nezahat was killed and unable to reveal the details Nazım cannot know the fact that Ayten was at home when Nezahat said the opposite just to provoke Nazım.

overwhelming feelings in reaction to the stimulants, ‘the situations’ based on human crises presented in the film in the form of suspense, thrill, and agitation (pp. 39-43). These situations to appeal to the viewer’s emotions are usually given, as Elsaesser points out, from the view point of the victim as melodramas manage to create victims out of characters (1991, p. 86). In *Kanun Namına*, the events point to a realistically staged melodrama in the ways in which the story creates multiple victims, a conflict between the good and the evil, a moral interpretation of petty incidents in ordinary people’s life. Although the story is based on real life events (Özön 2010, pp. 190-161), the way this story is adapted, transformed and presented display melodramatic qualities including the stereotypical romantic pattern such as ‘A loves B who is interested in C who is connected to D who desires A’.

Considering that the binding characteristic of film noir is ‘crime’ (Borde and Chaumeton 2002, p. 5; Park 2011, pp. 25-26) around which the events of the fabula are clustered in a certain connection (usually a cause-effect relationship) with each other in a melodramatic manner or not, *Kanun Namına* may not be classified as an example of film noir in terms of its subject matter as the events do not essentially point to a crime or a criminal scheme; and criminal activity is subordinate to the main scheme of an ambitious lover to snare the man and a womanizer to have the woman. Also, neither Nazım nor Ayten undertakes the role of the investigator to solve the mystery about their marriage. On the contrary, a chance element helps Nazım to uncover the conspiracy without the need to investigate. He simply puts pressure on Perihan to talk, and then without further investigation or doublecheck he starts punishing people by shooting them. However, the way the events are first presented by means of the intradiegetic narrator with a voiceover, the parallel structure forming a scheme for the viewer if not for the characters, the fact that all events are narrated in a flashback which causes the narrative to be somewhat fragmented, and the dream sequence touching upon the psychology of Ayten benefit noir narratives as defined by Spicer (2010, pp. 212-214). The voiceover at the beginning and end of the film, and the presentation of events in the form a flashback indicate that the viewer is going to watch and has watched the downfall of a man who has started a new happy period in his life, but who could not curb his desires, which ironically leads to his destruction. Combined with the linear presentation of events in quite an orderly fashion, the film gives the answer to the question of ‘how’ as the end is already implied at the beginning to a

large extent. Overall, it might be concluded that the events nevertheless form a melodrama including many elements of film noir that add a specific 'dark mood'.

4.1.2 Characters

In terms of narrative elements, probably, film noir elements are visible the most in character formation in *Kanun Namına*. The main characters are Nazım, Ayten, Nezahat, and Halil, and side characters are Perihan, the mother and the father.

Nazım (32), a middle-class man who owns his automobile repair shop, is good looking, well-built, and attractive. At the beginning, he is seen as a man of romantic love dedicated to his future wife, Ayten, and his loyalty is proven when he rejects Nezahat when she confesses her love for Nazım. He has no parents visible to the viewer, and after marriage, he moves to Ayten's family house. After a while, the head of the family, Ayten's father has a stroke, is partly paralysed, and becomes a bedridden invalid. Contrary to *a priori* reasoning, although he seems to possess all necessary 'manly' qualities (e.g. masculinity, financial means, marital status, being the only potent male figure in the house), he does not become the head of the family. Instead, he rather becomes a 'gullible' man who walks into a trap set by mainly two female characters, Nezahat as the mastermind, and Perihan as the seductress. So, Nazım, the middle class, respectable, devoted husband becomes the 'tarnished' male protagonist who steps in the grey area where moral and immoral acts coexist befitting the idea of male noir characters (Park 2011, p. 23). Before marriage, Nazım and Ayten are first seen flirting and kissing secretly. After becoming a legally bound couple, Nazım flirts with Perihan, and enjoys his lust for her who is portrayed as a promiscuous woman addicted to heroin: the exact opposite of Ayten and the traditional matrimonial qualities she represents. Once noticing that he has been trapped, he turns into a judge, jury, and executioner, which does not fit the characteristics he displays at the beginning as a romantic partner enjoying the sunset while reciting words of love. Hence, Nazım displays a dual personality that involves qualities from both 'homme fatal' and 'homme attrapé', as defined by Wager (2005, pp. 4, 20), in different parts of the film. Eventually, Nazım loses the power he had at the beginning, becomes emasculated as he cannot control the flow of events, but becomes a prey of first Nezahat, then Halil, and in practice Perihan. When he faces the bitter end, confessing that he sinned he asks for forgiveness, which is both an honourable act and an acknowledgement of the lack of power to control the flow of events. Verstraten (2009) underlines that a recurrent element

in film noir is the presence of a character who narrates the story by means of a flashback, and that narration possesses an apologetic nature that the character explains how he has ended in a certain situation (p. 185). In *Kanun Namına*, Nazım exactly displays that quality by appearing as a character who repents all his actions that have caused trouble from the beginning to the end of the film. As a result, he loses on all sides, ruins his marriage, kills perpetrators, becomes a criminal himself, and loses everything he has in life. Therefore, Nazım mirrors, beyond coincidence, the fallible doomed male ‘noir protagonist’ who brings death and corruption to himself and others around.

Ayten, on the other hand, is the persevering, resilient, affectionate woman and wife befitting the idea of ‘the nurturing woman’ or ‘femme attrapée’ as proposed by Place (1998, pp. 53-63) and Wager (2005, pp. 19-20). She has light coloured hair, fair complexion, fleshy lips, somewhat big eyes, in short, a beautiful look that might be stereotypically appealing for men. However, unlike the first sequence that introduce the flirtatious Ayten, when she acquires the role of the wife, she becomes devoid of her sexuality and attractiveness in the eyes of Nazım, which is indicated by the fact that Nazım loses his interest in her, and chases the sexually charged seductress Perihan who is quite the opposite of Ayten both in manners and appearance. The immediate connotation of Ayten’s appearance and manner is the housewife type whose priority is always her home and husband rather than herself. Even when she falls ill due to the strain she has been subjected to by Nazım, she does not rebel. She is so naïve that she believes in Halil when he lies that he invites her so that she can make peace with Nazım. She is so forgiving and affectionate that she is ready to forgive, wait for and embrace Nazım even when it is understood that he has been unfaithful, and has murdered three people, and caused Ayten’s injury. At that time, Nazım seems to be ready to abandon his wife, home, marriage, business, and die in action as if he commits until he learns that Ayten is expecting a baby. None of these factors matter for Ayten as she seems to have focused on maintaining the matrimony in ‘form’ disregarding the events that might ruin it as if it is a holy task to undertake. The scene that portrays Ayten’s idealized domestic nature is a dream sequence: She is clad in a white wedding gown, which is traditionally the highest status a woman is supposed to achieve, and is desperately looking for Nazım in a cemetery, the place for the ultimate end for human beings. She hears both Nazım’s voice calling her name and a hysterical laughter of a woman while she is following his voice

both calling her name and uttering that she cannot escape from the disaster. Despite these threatening signals she struggles to find him in horror. Then, she wakes up calling Nazım and is frightened. This sequence is the essence of Ayten's presence throughout the film as 'the femme attrapée', a domestic woman in need of her 'man' that lacks a self of her own. However, as is the case with Nazım, Ayten cannot be reduced to a portrayal of a passive character as she is also resilient, determined, and unyielding when it comes to fighting for her a cause. She is courageous enough to try to prevent Nazım from leaving home, search for him in Halil's house, and interfere in a gun fight to save his life. Such a female portrayal is also consistent in the way in which film noir characters are presented: they are rather in the grey area at an ambiguous position without a black and white certainty in their response to the world.

Nezahat, on the other hand, is an example of 'the spider woman' or 'femme fatale' described by Place (1998, pp. 53-63) and Wager (2005, pp. 19-20) respectively to a great extent. She is destructive, calculating, self-centred, ambitious, and dangerous. Her character is sharply drawn in the first sequence she is seen when she confesses her love for Nazım comparing it to that of Ayten's to convince Nazım that her love is unparalleled. Her disappointment following the wedding reveals the intensity of her uncontrollable and destructive passion: she would rather die if Nazım marries Ayten. A point to take into consideration is that she explicitly states that unlike her mother she is not craving for a marriage. In a society in which marriage is seen as an essential achievement and a must for a young woman, she underlines that she is not the ordinary domestic type who is satisfied with what is offered by men or the impositions of the society: a femme fatale quality highlighted by Cowie (1993, pp. 133-136). On the contrary, she is not ashamed of expressing her feelings to a person who is attached to her step-sister, and even more she is obsessively committed to her goal to have the person she loves. She plans to destroy the marriage to eliminate Ayten, who seems to be the only real obstacle before her. She can even stand the idea that Nazım has an affair with Perihan as that affair does not involve emotional attachment at all (a point in common with Ayten). So, Nezahat is far from being the nurturing woman since she is independent, dominant, obsessed, deceitful, has self-justified motives for her own satisfaction, and brings death and destruction to herself and others around. Yet again, although her plan to ruin a marriage and cooperating with Halil may not be justified on moral grounds, she is targeting someone (Nazım) who

is already inclined towards moral decay, impurity, and loss of innocence. So, she also functions as a person who brings to the surface and preys on other's weaknesses. Therefore, when specifically juxtaposed with Nazım, she is not a cardboard melodramatic character representing the black against the white. In Nazım's case, she is not creating a victim out of an innocent person, she merely reveals the worst traits residing in Nazım.

Halil seems to be a cardboard character functioning to create complications in the story. Being in the medical sector, he is a merciless trader underlined heavily in his dealings in public health. He shows no mercy to the poor, and has no hesitation to sell harmful medicine deliberately. Thus, he is presented as a purely evil character to the spectator, the only purely evil character among others. His main function is simply to be an ambitious womanizer merely seeking another conquest, and Ayten is his last victim. He becomes a significant character not because of the depth of his character, but because of the central position he holds for being a family friend, and hence contacting Nezahat and becoming an important agent in her plan to separate Nazım and Ayten. He employs Perihan to seduce Nazım, and eventually sexually harasses Ayten just to satisfy his sense of achievement. His contribution to the story is limited to the way in which he helps Nezahat carry out her plan, and try to make advances to Ayten.

Perihan, being a side character, also has a limited part in the story, mainly to lure Nazım into an affair so that they can be photographed. The photographs will be sent Ayten to inform her about the relationship to make her abandon Nazım. Acting like a seductress, she seems to be a femme fatale, however, she lacks the depth of character, and becomes a handy tool serving Halil's purpose just for the sake of maintaining her life style and obtain drugs. She cannot manipulate or change the course of action, for example, the way Nezahat does. But all the same, the way she looks fits in the stereotypical depiction of a femme fatale in that she can be distinguished easily from the rest of the female characters in the way she looks and behaves: in her limited number of scenes, she puts on and then refreshes make-up, dresses up with high heels even when alone at home, smokes cigarettes, drinks a lot, does drugs, and is not afraid to dance by herself in front of other customers in nightclubs while Nazım is sitting at the table. She acts and seems to be an independent woman who refuses to be part of the traditional society, however, the fact that she is an addict and Halil's accomplice denies her the profound formation of a femme fatale.

As for the mother and the father, they do not have a significant role in the way events flow, and therefore, only their relationship with the main characters is significant. The mother backs Nezahat unconditionally, and acts like an agent for the viewer to uncover Nezahat's frame of mind, feelings, and intentions by means of the conversations between them. On the other hand, the father is significant first with his presence and then absence. Being a traditional authority figure and the head of the house, the father is the person who holds the power and makes the ultimate decision for Ayten to marry Nazım. Due to the stroke, he becomes an invalid, a paralyzed man who cannot speak, express himself, and exercise his power in his domain. Towards the end of the first part of the narrative, he hears Halil's attempt to kiss Ayten by force, and the initial conversation between Halil and Nezahat to cooperate to separate Nazım and Ayten. He merely adopts the role of the spectator to watch and hear in his bed what is going to happen next. He is emasculated, stripped of his authority over others, and has no role to play as a male figure to intervene in the course of events. At the end, he witnesses Nazım shooting Nezahat in the father's room, and therefore, in a way, he witnesses Nazım trying to restore the traditional male-dominant order instead of him. Overall, the absence of the father figure is indirectly at the core of the events of the story as it leads to the dominance of Nezahat in the household to execute her plan without any intervention.

These characters also point to another element recurrent in noir films as suggested by Harvey: matrimony and the idea of family do not provide the characters with a peaceful serene and secure environment where one might ideally expect mutual affection, domestic comfort, sharing and so on (1998, p. 42). For Nazım and Ayten, matrimony does not produce a happy marriage for the male and female protagonists. The relationship between them is presented as a happy, romantic and passionate one before the marriage, and in a short time after the wedding the downfall begins, and the reason is another woman who offers carnal love outside the institutionalized marriage. Upon marriage, they are distanced from each other physically and emotionally leading to unhappiness and dissatisfaction. One might infer that the relationship between Nazım and Perihan offers Nazım the chance to experience pre-marriage thrill once again. Hence, the couple cannot form a 'decent' marriage fulfilling the expectations of an orderly ideal society where marriage is regarded as sacred. Similarly, the father is in a sense desexualised, and becomes an object of ridicule for Nezahat. In the absence of the father figure, Nezahat

acquires the power at home and becomes the destructive member of the family plotting against the only 'intact' and 'proper' family in the house: the newlyweds.

Overall, the characters embody elements of film noir characters to a great extent not only in terms of personality traits (*femme fatale/atrapée* or *homme fatal/atrapé*) by plotting, seducing, ruining others, seeking self-interests and so on, but also as part of a group or community as in a family. Nazım cannot maintain his devotion to Ayten, and ends up cheating on her and becomes a murderer leaving his pregnant wife behind. He is not a decent businessman, a lover, or a husband anymore, but a murderer. Ayten cannot experience a happy marriage, becomes subjected to abuse and deception, loses her health, and is left alone. She is not a successful housewife in a society in which wives are expected to maintain their husbands' loyalty by offering them a reason to be home. Having no career aspirations and being obsessively in love, Nezahat cannot achieve her goal to separate Nazım and Ayten to have Nazım for herself, cannot succeed in love to satisfy her needs, and is killed by the man she loves. Halil cannot conquer Ayten, is rejected, and even cannot have her by force, and is killed eventually by his main rival Nazım. Besides, interestingly enough, all main male characters are subordinate to main female characters. For instance, in terms of perseverance, Ayten relentlessly fights to sustain a marriage while Nazım merely cheats on her and then waits for the police to come and kill him in a desperate and passive manner hiding in an enclosed space until Ayten comes and saves his life. In terms of cunning and deception, Nezahat outruns all characters in the film by being the mastermind manipulating Nazım, Halil and Ayten. Perihan easily tricks Nazım to stay away from Ayten, home and the repair shop, and cuts her ties with him when she needs to. Finally, the father is unable to rule the house, and figuratively speaking, physically becomes incapacitated mirroring his incapacity to keep pace with the new order. Therefore, all characters are to varying degrees 'tarnished' in that they are not decent or proper examples to represent ideals promoted in the society. From that perspective, although the events portray a melodramatic quality rather than film noir, the character formation is strictly projecting film noir elements rather than melodrama.

4.1.3 Space and Time

4.1.3.1 Space

The events in *Kanun Namına* take place in a variety of locations including the family house, the repair shop, Halil's house and office, nightclubs, Perihan's house, the countryside, and the city. None of these locations are merely a setting for the actors to act. On the contrary each place is meaningfully contributing to the story. Half of the film takes place in private space, i.e. houses, and the rest in public space, i.e. different parts of the city, workplace, the countryside, nightclubs. The weight given to specific locations is approximately as follows:

The family house: 28-29 minutes

The city: 19 minutes

The automobile repair shop: 17-18 minutes

Halil's house and office: 12 minutes

The countryside: 5-6 minutes

Nightclubs: 5 minutes

Perihan's house: 2-3 minutes

To begin with, the family house reflects a transition from the old to the modern⁵⁶. At the beginning of the film, when the family house is first seen, the spectator sees a group of people with musical instruments performing a slow paced classical music piece in the

⁵⁶ This transformation might be explained and interpreted in parallel with the post-war American cultural, financial and military domination in Europe and in particular Turkey. The old cultural practices, e.g. traditional family structure, taste, relationships etc., are at odds with a new wave of westernization, this time in the form of Americanization after WW2. Marım and Sam explore the cultural projection of that new cultural influence in the media mainly in Istanbul during the 1950s. Local counterparts of American lifestyle magazines and newspapers are printed with translated articles from the originals. Besides new publications, local Turkish newspapers are seen to advertise American lifestyle after the execution of the Marshall plan (2013, pp. 349-355). Therefore, studies focusing on culture, ideology, economy, sociology and so on to examine the conflict between the old and the new or the modern might include these lines as well. Since the current study employs a formalist approach, such a discussion is beyond its scope.

form of *ilahi*, a religious song, which reflects the father's musical taste as well as the period he belongs to from a cultural perspective. He represents the old-fashioned structure which is subject to change in a dynamic space, in this particular example, obviously for the worst. The father is stuck in one of the rooms of the house doomed to witness the change but cannot do anything to intervene. Although the house is first presented as a place to gather together to have a nice time, the mother and Nezahat complain about such gatherings, they do not want the father's friends to come to recite such songs. Even the marriage that follows does not change the upsetting mood dominating the house. After the stroke the father has, the house is run by Nezahat who brings a new order of deception. The silent oud that the father has once played and his proud picture in the frame reflecting his youth become elements of nostalgia. The death of the old order is highlighted the next morning by the *sala* which is typically recited to announce the death of a person, or a very important occasion. The final action in the family house brings death to Nezahat by Nazım in front of the father in the very room that he is in a way imprisoned. In parallel with the events, the house becomes physically darker than it first appears in many scenes which portray Nazım's betrayals, Nezahat's schemes, Ayten's sorrows usually in the dead of the night. In the end, the house is not a place that harbours love, affection, security, hopes and dreams, but a place offering restlessness, sorrow, conflict, unhappiness, disappointment, dissatisfaction, deception and death. Therefore, the family house in *Kanun Namına* functions in many ways in the way Sobchack (1998) describes the home in noir films as devoid of its traditional and expected characteristics of a family space, which lacks 'security' and 'intimacy' it is supposed to provide (pp. 144-146).

As for the other houses, namely Halil and Perihan's houses, the overall mood is similar to the family house with a difference: these places never reflect any trace of positive mood. When Halil's house is first presented in the morning right after the father has a stroke, it resembles an underground club or den where people secretly gather to have wild parties. The house is full of people, but almost all of them are snoring, unconscious or having a hangover. The house includes a bar and gambling tables; therefore, it is not a traditional home, but a wealthy bachelor's pleasure house. When compared to the family house, it is decorated in a modern fashion with no sign of nostalgia. The modernist nude paintings on the wall, the radio set, furniture, even the servants in the house project a western decadent life style that manifests itself in pleasure seeking by means of drugs,

alcohol, gambling, and sexual gratification. Halil uses his house to set traps for Ayten to force her into sexual intercourse as well, and as a result, Halil is killed by Nazım in the very room he tried to abuse Ayten, and Perihan is killed where they first met in the house. In addition, Perihan's house is not different than Halil's house in the way it emits decay, sorrow and trouble rather than security, joy or happiness. Being a place for deception where Nazım cheats on Ayten, it is also the place where Nazım learns about the conspiracy about him by coincidence. He cuts Perihan's face to remove her beauty and attractiveness away from her as a punishment. So, both places host people who are not honest, peaceful, and productive in a meaningful way for the society or people around them.

The repair shop is a small place in the docks district, and it is significant as the *syuzhet* begins and ends there. Being the owner and one of the workers of the shop, the place is associated with production and labour. At the beginning of the film, Nazım is seen hiding in the shop, and the flashback starts when he turns the lathe machine. Under normal circumstances, the machine would stand for work, however, in that instance, the machine is turned on to suppress the voice of the officer calling Nazım to surrender. Actually, it serves to isolate the bitter truth echoing that Nazım has lost everything in life. Therefore, the place loses its main function and similar to the family house, it transforms and becomes a hideout. The whole story is told while Nazım is hiding, wounded, and lying unconscious on the ground. His face is covered with oily dirt, his hair and clothes are dishevelled that actually resembles that of a worker's look, however it is not related to labour and production. The shop is the only place that Nazım truly owns, but as seen in other spaces, he cannot find peace and security there. The repair shop is the only place where Nazım is warned in vain against the coming danger by a character in the story, one of the senior mechanics Kamil. The place is neither home nor a shop now, but a coffin with a hole to let a faint light in. Similar to other places, the shop also transforms into a space of instability, insecurity and estrangement.

As for the city, the locations are urban spaces with streets, squares, marketplaces, bridges, mosques, gardens, docks, shipyards, ships, trams and so on. It is possible to include nightclubs that Nazım and Perihan frequent in urban spaces in the city. The common ground for these locations is that none of them provide the characters with a sense of security, peace, happiness or satisfaction. Ayten as a newlywed is first harassed when she

was on Halil's car on the street, and runs away in the middle of the street. On the other hand, Nazım first cheats on his wife when Perihan visits him by car, and they drive away to enjoy each other's company in her car. Similarly, nightclubs are annoyance for Ayten as she is constantly disturbed by the presence of Halil whereas Nazım welcomes Perihan, and the idea of spending time with her in clubs, which entails destruction and death. Even minor locations maintain the same dark mood. For example, Nezahat makes her calls and sends anonymous letters including photographs to Ayten to inform her about Nazım's infidelity in the post office. Other locations listed above are places where Nazım makes use of to escape the police, and therefore they are transitory and for that very reason cannot provide him with safety he is desperately seeking. All the places are hardly what could be termed as modern since they belong to the historical districts of Istanbul, which are old, worn-out and populated by common people rather than well-off people like Halil. But all the same, none of these places offer permanent relief for the runaway Nazım in the crowds until he locks himself in his repair shop. The urban spaces also maintain the same dark tone as other spaces mentioned so far. The only exception is the countryside at the beginning where Ayten and Nazım are happy and passionately in love with each other although Nazım's moment of happiness is quickly spoiled by Nezahat. Therefore, the urban locations, or specifically public spaces in the city, are associated with events including menace and destruction, and the way they are used resemble film noir elements especially in the way in which they do not offer any kind of shelter, relief, a sense of belonging, or satisfaction.

Overall, the way space is used in *Kanun Namına* resembles the idea of space in film noir to a large extent. Whether private or public, interior or exterior, home or away from home, space provides the characters and the viewer with a sense of instability, guilt, danger, deception and death. The majority of these places being urban, there is no comfort for the characters in the city, and the only place where there is a trace of relative peace, passion, love and affection is the countryside, which resembles a fairy tale setting with young adults singing and playing guitar while enjoying nature.

4.1.3.2 Time

The whole narrative takes place at present, and although there are no printed or verbal time stamps to follow, time span can be assumed to be couple of weeks to months. The events are presented in a fairly linear fashion with gaps in the chronology which indicate

a selective narration. The time span includes the introduction of the love affair between Nazım and Ayten leading to marriage, Nezahat's plan and Nazım's infidelity, and then Nazım's execution of people involved in the conspiracy. Therefore, the time span points to a brief period in people's life: a slice of life, which indicates narratives of ordinary people rather than a grand narrative covering a longer period and affecting larger groups of people or societies.

By means of the voiceover at the beginning of the film, the audience is informed that they are going to watch the downfall of Nazım, 'how' he ruined his life, and 'how' his story will end. After that, the flashback starts at 05:55 and ends at 1:30:40, covering the story almost in its entirety only leaving out the ending, and all the events are reported in the five-minute period that covers the time when Nazım passes out, and then regains his consciousness. Since the viewer is given a glimpse of an unhappy end, the answer to the question 'how' is more important than 'what happened'.

The linear chronologic order serves a retrospective look to the events which has already happened in the past, and causes the viewer to witness the downfall of a group of people partly from the point of view of one of them. Therefore, the passing of time here denotes a countdown to the inevitable catastrophe which is about the experienced by the characters on the screen. Since the end of the film is implied by the voiceover of the main character (he states that this is his story), the slightly manipulated chronology (the flashback and somewhat episodic structure with crosscutting) asks the viewer to reconstruct the events by filling in the gaps to create the story in time and space. For instance, after the sequence when Nazım rejects Nezahat in the countryside, there is a time lapse between that and the coming sequence at the end of which Nazım asks the father's permission to marry. The gap here raises questions about a possible conflict and reconciliation between Nazım and Nezahat, and that entails suspense and expectation when these characters appear again. This part is completely left to the viewer's imagination. Eventually, Nezahat discloses to her mother her suppressed passion for Nazım, which brings about new questions about the further events as Nezahat vows to ruin the couple's life. This sequence is followed by the wedding scene skipping the interval in between. This scene ends on an ambiguous note when Nezahat approaches Halil in a meaningful way praising the beauty of Ayten. From that scene on, except the scene in which Ayten and Nezahat are seen in shadows reminding traditional shadow

plays, the same pattern dominates: there are usually gaps between events. All events including sequential ones contribute to the presentation of the downfall of the characters, and presented in a flashback in a retrospective look. Schrader claims that such a chronology signifies the lost time for the irretrievably hopeless characters (1972, p. 11) as it is too late for a change now. Hence, the way time is used in *Kanun Namına* also bears similarities to the way time is used in film noir.

In conclusion, although the subject matter, that is crime, is not the central element in *Kanun Namına*, and subordinate to the theme of love quadrangle, the narrative elements in *Kanun Namına* display the qualities of film noir to a great extent. Nazım and Ayten are seen in the prime of their life as a couple whereas Nezahat is seen in the worst period of her life at the beginning, and when Nezahat decides to make the couple's life miserable, the events become the stones paving the way for all characters to their destruction. Therefore, the selection of the events is significant as they provide the viewer with the dark mood associated with noir films. Moreover, the character formation mirrors that of film noir displaying the now stereotypical femme fatale/atrapée and homme fatal/atrapé variations, tarnished characters, embodied by Nazım, Halil, the father on the one hand, and Nezahat, Perihan and Ayten on the other hand. On top these elements, the use of urban locations in the form of both private and public space and the contemporary time portray the intimidating modern world that threatens the wellbeing of the characters. Neither home nor streets or any other place offers relief or security for those who are deceitful such as Nazım, Nezahat or Halil, or those who do not belong to that part of the world such as Ayten and the father. Time only works against all these characters who are destined to perish either due to their own mistakes or to fall victims to others' actions. Hence, all narrative elements are in harmony to present a noir story although arguably they do not render the narrative to be a typical example of film noir.

4.2 FORMAL ELEMENTS IN KANUN NAMINA

What has been broadly called 'noir style' basically includes a range of formal elements which are to varying degrees associated with classic film noir. These elements are related to cinematography, mise-en-scene, and editing, and in the case of film noir they can be simplified as such: *chiaroscuro* lighting, depth of field, shot variety including close-ups, unusual frame compositions, the order of shots by means of editing (e.g. flashbacks, distance variety, transitions), acting ranging from one extreme to another in terms of the

expression of emotions (Place and Peterson 1996, pp. 65-66; Park 2011, pp. 55-58). Overall, the way these elements are utilized in classic film noir differentiates noir films from other productions. The form or rather the grammar of such films blend with the narrative elements to create the ultimate meaning, and to give films the noir quality. Therefore, the absence of these elements and/or arbitrary use of them does not lead to a noir mood. In the case of *Kanun Namına*, in terms of stylistics, film noir elements abound in many ways, and are used in a complementary way with respect to each other. Noir style is used selectively in certain scenes, which portray the turning points leading to the downfall of the characters, and therefore, creates specific effects when juxtaposed with the scenes that antecede or succeed.

To explain how formal noir elements are used to create contrasts, it is necessary to compare the opening sequence, which takes place in the docks area, and the following sequence, which is the beginning of the flashback taking place in the countryside. When these two sequences are compared, the significance and deliberate use of film noir elements for a specific purpose is obvious due to the formal differences in handling two different parts of the story.

The opening sequence lasts over four and a half minutes⁵⁷, and can be broken into below parts:

1. Panoramic view of the docks area: An extreme long shot with a slow pan left with a bird's eye view that ends at the shabby repair shop. Cut to an establishing long shot at eye level. (Fig. 1-3)⁵⁸
2. Quick cuts to the curious bystanders, police officers shooting at an indefinite target, and the repair shop: Medium-long shots at eye level. Cut to a close-up to the small opening on the shutter of the shop. Natural bright midday light causing sharp contrasts. (Fig. 4-7)
3. Dissolve to the interior with a slow pan right inside the shop scanning the objects (a bulb, a doll on the wall) shot by the police fire. The pan also presents the objects in the

⁵⁷ Since this is the opening scene of the film, the time for the credits is excluded as they appear on a still picture for approximately 1: 17 minutes.

⁵⁸ See 'APPENDIX 1: Figures for *Kanun Namına*' for all the figures in this chapter.

shop, and creates a kind of Kuleshov effect as the viewer combines the pieces to infer that the place is a repair shop. Dark space lit by a bulb (broken by the shots) and the daylight comes from the small hole creating a low key light effect. (Fig. 8-9)

4. Cut to Nazım: A close-up to distressed Nazım panting. A trick shot as the reflection of Nazım on the mirror is presented. The mirror is hit and broken: an unusual frame composition. He is seen for the first time, and his face is sculpted by the dark background. Shallow depth creating a claustrophobic effect. (Fig. 10-11)

5. Nazım is wounded: a medium shot portraying Nazım from a further distance for the first time. The white shirt glows in contrast with the dark space. Nazım falls on the ground. (Fig. 12-13)

6. Cut to the exterior: A medium shot presenting the police taking action.

7. Cut to the interior: A medium shot from a high angle belittling wounded Nazım. He wraps his arm. The contrast between his white shirt and the surrounding darkness is sharp. With a pan right, the medium shot becomes a medium close-up when Nazım moves to the hole on the shutter getting closer to the camera slightly with a low angle. The light through the hole creates contrast again. (Fig. 14-15)

8. Crosscutting between Nazım inside and the approaching police officer and others outside: A variety of close-up, medium and long shots. A character (Nazım) other than the voiceover of Nazım speaks for the first time in the film. In his dialogue with the police, the shop is presented with a long shot from outside, and resembles a tin can. (Fig. 16-18)

9. Cut to wounded Nazım: He falls over the camera. Cut to a medium shot: Nazım falls on the ground, turns on the lathe machine. Cut to a close-up, Nazım passes out. A pan left to the working lathe machine. Fade-out to start the flashback. (Fig. 19-21)

The countryside sequence is also over four and a half minutes, and can be broken into below parts:

1. Fade-in: A medium close-up at a high angle to a guitar played by a hand. A pan right changes the shot to a long shot to show the environment. A romantic slow-paced song is heard. (Fig. 22-23)

2. Various quick cuts in medium shots to show young people standing, sitting and lying on the grass, chatting. Nezahat deliberately looks at a faraway point. (Fig. 24)
3. Cut to Nazım and Ayten: A long shot. The couple walks away. Cut to Nezahat and others. Three planes can be seen: Nezahat and her friend at the front, three people in the middle, trees at the background. (Fig. 25-27)
4. Cut to Nazım and Ayten: A medium shot. Romantic couple kissing and exchanging romantic words. Daylight, clear background with the sky, the sea and the land. In this sequence, they are the first characters to speak. (Fig. 28)
5. Cut to people: A long shot presenting young people sitting, playing guitar, and standing. Again, multiple planes provide a greater depth in the background. (Fig. 29)
6. Cut to Nezahat: A long shot followed by a medium shot portrays Nezahat hiding in the bushes. (Fig. 30)
7. Cut to Nazım and Ayten kissing: A medium shot followed by a long shot. Angles match the previous shots of the couple. Cut to Nezahat in the bushes, a similar angle as before.
8. Cut to the group in the open in medium shots. Everyone gathers. (Fig. 31)
9. Cut to a pullover on the ground: High angle. A tilt up to show Nezahat standing and checking others. (Fig. 32-33)
10. A long shot shows the group singing and walking, well-lit by the sunlight. A jump cut to focus on Nezahat, Ayten and Nazım. Nezahat tricks Nazım to go and get the pullover. (Fig. 34)
11. Cut to the group singing and walking: A long shot. Characters walk off the screen. Nezahat enters on the right side, and waits. Nazım finds the item, and returns. The place of the camera and hence the shot sizes are almost identical throughout the scene placing the characters as part of the idyllic setting. (Fig. 35-38)
12. Nezahat and Nazım appear together in the frame: All shots are medium-long shots consistently maintaining depth. A cut to a medium shot when Nezahat confesses her love for Nazım presented from different angles. (Fig. 39-40)

The two sequences follow each other and create contrasts in many ways in terms of cinematography, mise-en-scene, and editing. The dominant shot distance in the opening sequence is close-ups alternating with medium close-ups in the interior space, and provides a sense of claustrophobia. The shots also contrast with the shots in the exterior space that are usually long and medium-long shots. So, the characteristic of the interior shots is short distance shots. On the other hand, in the countryside sequence, all shots alternate between long and medium shots with a greater depth of field presenting the pleasant environment on several planes. The lighting in the opening scene is *chiaroscuro*, and creates contrasts in the greyscale presenting Nazım in a dimly lit place. The main source of light for the interior space appears to come from outside through a hole creating sharp shadows that mould the setting as well as the character physically. Overall, the dominant mood of the sequence is dark and gloomy emitting a sense of insecurity, danger, despair and death with relation to the events, that is, the gun fight between Nazım and the police. Nazım is portrayed at his lowest in life in terms of the conditions that surround him and his psychology as a runaway who is covered in dirt and trapped in a small repair shop which resembles a ‘cage’. On the other hand, the countryside sequence, which portrays the beginning of the story in the past, provides a totally different approach when juxtaposed with the opening sequence. Here, the dominant mood is that of joy, love, hope, leisure, regeneration. All the elements augment that mood by means of the open space with multiple planes, nature in lighter tones in pictures lit by a natural light source. The frames resemble pastoral still pictures, and when compared, the countryside sequence has longer takes than the opening sequence, and unlike the first sequence, the camera is usually static leaving the stage to the character action again setting the viewer free to dwell on the images for a longer time than the opening sequence. On the other hand, in the opening scene, quick cuts and pans create an unstable rhythm leaving little space and time for the viewer to examine the frame. In addition to that, acting is minimal, photography, setting, lighting and editing portray the psychological condition of the character by means of shorter shot distance, focusing on details in the enclosed space. Hence, the countryside sequence, which portrays life before Nezahat is rejected and frustrated, is presented in a traditional narration⁵⁹ whereas the opening sequence, which

⁵⁹ Here ‘traditional narration’ refers mainly to theatrical narration which was dominant in Turkish cinema at its infancy, hence the term ‘theatre-film makers’ to describe the period between 1923-1939, and

actually follows the former chronologically makes extensive use of film noir style to create the visual language and determine the overall mood.

A similar deliberate use of that dual pattern can be observed in the rest of the film as well: When the family house is first introduced, it is seen as a place for vitality, joy, entertainment, and sharing. Musicians gather in the house, and play a classical music song, Nazım asks the father's consent to marry Ayten, and the wedding takes place. The places are well-lit, the shots are medium and long shots, the duration of shots is relatively long and follow the characters' movement in the space (fig. 41-49). Once again, the style does not imply any sign of film noir.

On the other hand, when the father has a stroke, which coincides after Nezahat's explicit frustration and threats to ruin the couple's life, and Halil's confession of his love for Ayten and rejection, the same house is portrayed under a different light signalling the transformation. In a series of shots at night, the change is portrayed in a dramatic way through formal elements. First, Ayten and Nazım's bedroom is seen: the room is lit by a visible source, the lamp. Nazım smokes a cigarette and is barely visible in the dark. The light illuminates Ayten lying in the bed. Everything else is in darkness (fig. 50). Then, the living room is seen in a long shot. The camera is canted, the objects are half lit, shadows dominate the picture (fig. 51). Another cut shows Nezahat in her bedroom: she smokes a cigarette, but unlike others she seems triumphant and contemplative. The source of light is the lamp right beside her which illuminates three quarters of her face, but leaving the room partly in shade (fig. 52). Then, the father is seen in his bed. Although

the term 'transition period' from the influence of theatre to cinematographic awareness roughly between 1939-1950. In Pudovkin's terms, 'theatrical' refers to the conception of cinema as a means to record performance of the artist in a durable way so as to project it before the audience over and over. The idea behind planning and arrangement of the scenes is to follow the way the text imposes the space and time 'just as a play is formed from scenes' (1960, pp. 80-81). Similarly, yet in a more condensed way, Arnheim refers to the theatrical quality as a combination of image and speech (1957, p. 200) which is presented to the audience from a relatively fixed distance compared to the endless means of adjusting distance in the cinema by means of a variety of shot lengths, spaces, focal distance, and editing (ibid, p. 28). Such theatrical style, mainly employed by Muhsin Ertuğrul, had been an object of criticism (Özön 2013, pp. 118-123; Onaran 2013, p. 270; Dorsay 1989, pp. 22-23). Therefore, the application of film noir style may also be interpreted as an attempt to break away from the traditional theatrical style.

not as dark as other shots, his room is partly in shadows with shadows cast on his weak and paralyzed body (fig. 53). After a pan left to the wife sleeping on the sofa, another cut to the living room shows the picture of the father portraying his younger days. The camera angle is unbalanced, and the photograph frame is seen as if broken by the shadows surrounding the once proud man's face underlining the change in time and the loss of power (fig. 54). Another cut shows the now silent oud lying on the sofa again surrounded by darkness (fig. 55). All these shots are accompanied and connected by an eerie music which is eventually connected to the *sala*, the recital announcing the death of a person, or a significant event such as the holy Friday and salat. Hence, once again, film noir elements such as low-key lighting, a variety of long, medium and close-up shots, unusual camera angles, and music are used to portray the change in the house differentiating two phases in the same space.

Such film noir elements are not traced in the scenes that follow the abovementioned until another significant breaking point is reached:

In the second part of the film, Nazım and Perihan are implied to have sexual intercourse, and Nazım comes home late at night. Starting from that scene between Nazım and Perihan in the car, once again, style changes to film noir. Shadows surround the environment, and the objects are shaped by darkness. Nazım enters the house, and moves towards the bedroom door cautiously while the invalid father is awake and silently alert in the dark. Similar to the previous scene in their bedroom, the source of light is the lamp on the drawer, putting light on Ayten while Nazım remains in the shadow as if signalling the separation from each other due to Nazım's affair (fig. 56-57).

A similar treatment is seen in the sequence in which Nazım enters the house at night to find Halil discrediting Nazım in front of Ayten and others. When Halil notices that Nazım is at the door listening to him, the camera, which has been static until that moment, moves forward to create a quick zoom-in effect. Then, a long shot with a low angle presents Nazım standing threateningly and moving towards the camera. When the fight begins the camera shoots at knee level, which is also unusual as none of the characters assumes that position to watch the fight. The shot angle intensifies the realistic fight sequence and the bystanders' reaction in medium shots and medium close-ups (fig. 58-63). Then, the following sequences after the fight maintain a similar approach in terms of the shot

distance and frame composition. Close-ups and short takes dominate the sequences in which Ayten receives anonymous letters, and is informed about Nazım's affair with photographs of Nazım and Perihan attached as evidence (fig. 64-67). Throughout these shots, the camera maintains the eye level of Ayten when she is seated, and when she stands up the angle remains low, and highlights her turbulent psychological state that she tries to hide from Nezahat (fig. 68). In these takes, the focus is consistently on the objects and the characters, and then, the reaction of the characters to the unpleasant situations they find themselves in, and the camera distance is always short as in a medium close-up or a medium shot that enables the viewer to see the reactions and expressions clearly.

In another turning point in the story, which concludes the second part, Nazım visits Perihan, and by chance he learns about the conspiracy against him. The sequence starts with a close-up to a hand, the owner of which is not shown, although it can be guessed. Similarly, the door opens in a medium shot, but still the person is not fully revealed (fig. 69-70). The maid's nervousness is at the focus, and his face is not seen until he forces himself in the house. In the shots to follow, it will be revealed that Nazım is actually being avoided by Perihan, and these shots prepare the viewer for a dramatic change in the story that will build up the tension to a climax. The entrance of Nazım is presented in a long shot that includes Perihan lying on the sofa and drinking liquor (fig. 71). There are multiple sources of light: one is behind Nazım while entering, and that casts a threatening shadow over the floor, the other one is right above Perihan next to the sofa, and finally there is a neon light outside the house flashing regularly and changing the tone of light from darker tones to lighter ones throughout the scene. While at the beginning the lighting highlights Perihan brightly in the middle, Nazım is subjected to a constant change from dark to light, which implies the upcoming transformation he is about to experience when he learns that Perihan has been a tool to ruin his marriage (fig. 72-73). Then, when Perihan stands up, both characters become brighter and then darker as she admits that she has never really cared about Nazım (fig. 74-75). This shot lasts more than one minute from the same angle with slight adjustments to reframe the moving characters while the tension is increasing as Nazım puts pressure on Perihan both verbally and physically. When he is left alone in the room the opposite angle reveals the neon light illuminating everything but Nazım (fig. 76). When he notices the letter addressed to Perihan, and learns about the conspiracy, his face is lit brightly by the neon light (fig. 77-79). When Perihan enters the

room again, the frustration and anger is portrayed again by means of the low-key lighting creating sharp shadows on Nazım's face. The camera is at a slightly low angle, when Perihan falls down on the ground, and is beaten by Nazım, the reflection on the wall creates an atmosphere that the viewer might see in horror films (fig. 80-86). Neither Perihan nor Nazım is appealing in these shots; especially when he cuts Perihan's face, the brutal side of Nazım is highlighted while Perihan is horrified and in panic without any trace of her magnificence and charm. Once again, medium close-ups and close-ups dominate the sequence when Nazım confronts Perihan highlighting their psychological state and reaction to the situation, and both characters are stripped of any physically appealing quality that might encourage the viewer to identify with either of them.

Film noir elements continue in the sequence to follow as well. The sequence includes a deeper 'psychological' perspective in a dream sequence, which portrays Ayten's nightmare. The scene starts in Ayten's bedroom in a long medium shot presenting feverish Ayten illuminated by the lamp by the side of the bed accompanied by Nezahat who is clad in a dark gown, and the rest of the room is darkened. Ayten is seen in a cemetery with her white wedding gown contrasting the dark environment in a day-for-night shooting. Ayten wanders aimlessly to find Nazım who is first heard calling Ayten, and then is seen faraway waving at Ayten, and then walking away from her. The sequence includes extreme close-ups, close-ups, medium and long shots alternating with one after another in a relatively fast editing. Some frames are unbalanced due to canted camera assuming a POV angle, which contributes to the eerie atmosphere intensified by hysterical female laughter, Nazım's whispers, and the mood music accompanying the nightmarish scene. When the sequence is over, Ayten springs towards the camera covering the lens with her body, and falls back to the bed panting and raving in a state of delirium (fig. 87-94). Overall, that sequence reflects the psychological state of Ayten, her fear of losing Nazım who is unlike her calm and playful, and the sequence is presented by applying unusual camera angles, distance and level, creating contrasts by means of editing and frame composition, and mood music. All elements are in harmony pointing to the character's inner self and mental troubles related to Nazım's infidelity and absence as a husband, and all elements create the dark tone and mood that film noir creates.

The sequences after the nightmare sequence include the narration of how Nazım is tricked by Nezahat and Halil to convince him that Ayten has an affair with Halil. Nazım takes

his gun and heads towards Halil's house to find Ayten. Other than crosscutting and quick cuts, the narration is fairly standard until he shoots people and runs away.

In this third part of the narrative, when the police get involved, the style resembles noir films with police procedures displaying a kind of documentary quality. When the chief inspector calls the headquarters, a police officer is seen on the phone in a medium shot. On the walls behind the officer, cast shadow is seen resembling bars of a prison structure (fig. 95). Since Nazım is a runaway, the man hunt is started, and the shot of the claustrophobic interior implies the probable end for Nazım that the hunt will end in a cage, which might be interpreted as a foreshadowing.

When Nazım shoots Nezahat, and the police arrive at the house, the chase sequence starts and ends when Nazım is arrested. It lasts approximately 16 minutes making approximately 17 % of the duration of the film. Throughout the chase sequence, Nazım is seen as 'someone' in the city mainly in extreme long and long shots, which not only function as establishing shots, but also create a sense of insignificance while placing Nazım as a little man in a giant city (fig. 96) befitting Place and Peterson's argument that such extreme high-angle long shots are archetypal noir shots as they present characters like rats in a maze to imply the state of being helpless victims (1996, p. 68). Although the sequence is shot on location mainly in broad daylight, the light is so strong that it creates natural contrast, which contributes to the dark tone. Starting from the family house, Nazım passes the streets in the neighbourhood, stops for a while in the cemetery to exchange gun shots with the police, seizes a taxi and heads to the city centre. In the meanwhile, the communication among the police, the supporting forces, and the chase are portrayed with almost a documentary quality from time to time by simply shooting the action from a distance in extreme long, long and medium long shots without any diegetic element in it regarding the events of the story (fig. 96-120). Crosscutting between the police moving according to reports and Nazım trying to become lost in the city, footage of the prominent parts of Istanbul dominates rather than the characters. In rare shots that portray Nazım at a relatively close distance, he is no more the desirable, good looking man who attracts women around, but a worn-out man hiding in shadows or, in the character's own words, a man 'trapped like a wild animal'.

After a series of shots presenting the attraction while Nazım runs away from the police, he arrives at the repair shop where the film starts. Nazım lowers the shutters to hide in the shop, and keeps the light off. The gaps in the story as to the positive attitude of the police are filled: the police grant him a respite for five minutes because Ayten insists on talking to him to convince him to surrender. Then, a close-up to a wrist watch marks the end of the five-minute break, and a cut to another close-up resumes the narrative where it first paused after Nazım has passed out (fig. 121-123). At the beginning, the flashback started with a pan left, and this time, in a close-up, it ends with a pan right from the lathe machine in progress to Nazım. Nazım is seen at his lowest both physically and mentally. Ayten talks to Nazım in a medium shot with a high angle while she is fallen on the ground. In return, Nazım is presented in a close-up, which turns into an extreme close-up in which only one third of his face is illuminated underlining the total exhaustion and despair (fig. 124-126). Nazım has no hope to survive, and is in a way committing suicide as he is surrounded and shoots at the police with no chance to escape. The camera distance, lighting, minimalist acting and make-up (e.g. the close-up to the half-lit dirty face, hollow looks and almost no mimics) all work in harmony to portray these psychological and physical conditions in effect for Nazım. However, when Ayten informs that she is expecting a baby, the shutter is raised by Nazım, and moves to daylight out of darkness to surrender. In the shot that he surrenders, the camera remains at belly level in a medium shot without including Nazım's upper body in the picture, but his repentant voice and final words are heard off-screen (fig. 127-130). Then, the voiceover begins again repeating the opening words creating a loop.

Overall, almost all prominent formal elements of film noir that distinguish film noir from other films and 'genres' are used in *Kanun Namına*. What is more, the style determines the meaning in the majority of scenes as there is relatively little dialogue and the narrative is presented by means of lighting, shot distance, angles, frame composition, acting, and editing together to present the narrative elements in a specific treatment that produce film noir effects. The specific shots and sequences discussed above display specific noir qualities in terms of style, which is called untraditional by Place and Peterson (1996, pp. 66-69). The scenes above display such untraditional treatment. They are formed by means of a different lighting called *chiaroscuro* which concentrates on creating a specific mood when combined with camera angles, shot distance and acting. The dominant shots are

close-ups and medium shots which give priority to the facial expression of the characters to explore their psychology. The composition of some frames is also unusual, at least not traditional due to canted camera, extreme close-ups, high/low camera angles, light source placed below eye-level to create unusual shadows or a dark and dim environment that calls the viewer's attention to make sense of the shapes in the frame. Hence, it can be well argued that whenever the scenes indicate a dramatic turn of events or depict the transformation of the main characters or space, film noir elements dominate these scenes and form a specific noir mood for these scenes although that style does not expand over the whole film. Therefore, specifically in terms of style, it might be argued that *Kanun Namina* can be classified as a Turkish example of film noir.

4.3 CONCLUSION

Both narrative and formal elements in *Kanun Namina* include film noir elements, and the way they are employed indicates that they are not copies of the original, but a means to create a film language for a specific story to meet the needs of the narrative. The events are based on a local newspaper story, the characters reflect traits of local people, they are not idealized glamorous characters seen in classic film noir, the locations are of urban nature, but reflect the historical Istanbul as a blend of the old and the new. Therefore, the film is endowed with authenticity blending the local and the global in form and content.

The downfall of the characters is not presented merely verbally or by means of a series of events, but by means of specific formal elements such as a variety of camera distance from extreme close-ups to extreme long shots, shot angles and camera movement, *chiaroscuro* lighting, unusual frame compositions, make-up that at times distorts the physically attractive sides of the characters, acting and so on, all of which reflect film noir style as discussed previously in the relevant chapter. Similarly, space is not just a functional element, the way it is used also contributes to the meaning making process. The transformation of the family house into a place of dissatisfaction, death and destruction is presented by means of formal elements such as the change in lighting from lighter tones to darker ones, from the day and well-lit nights to dark and dim nights, shot angles, camera distance and movement when characters act in the space. Time is fragmented in terms of narration to create a sense of curiosity to see 'how' the characters have fallen down as well as what happens, which is also a noir element. Finally, the events that encompass action performed by the characters in time and space include elements of

film noir although only to some extent since the story is based on the relationship between a group of people around themes such as passion, deceit, lust and revenge. Crime as one of the most significant unifying element of film noir is not the unifying element, but is subordinate in a melodramatic context built around Nezahat's obsessive love for Nazım. Therefore, due to that missing unifying element, *Kanun Namına* may not be labelled as a classic example of US film noir, however, in terms of extensive narrative and formal elements, *Kanun Namına*, as a turning point in the history of Turkish cinema, is characterised by film noir elements, and is the first example of film noir in Turkey.



5. THE ANALYSIS OF *CİNGÖZ RECAİ*

Cingöz Recai ⁶⁰ (Vigilant Recai, 1954), directed by Metin Erksan, is an adaptation of one of the volumes of a detective fiction series written by Peyami Safa (pen name Server Bedi). Some critics claim that Peyami Safa was mainly inspired by Maurice Leblanc's fictional character Arsène Lupin, who is a thief and a gentleman hiding himself in disguise to avoid being noticed and caught: a description which also fits *Cingöz Recai* (Özön, 2013, p. 175; Şahin, 2011, p. 17). The adaptation of the novel focuses on the Turkish branch of an international criminal organization dealing with drug smuggling that starts to untangle when one of the members of the organization is killed, and five hundred thousand dollars are lost. Overall, the film is not a significant part of Erksan's filmography, and critics like Özön do not have a high opinion of the film. However, the film is the second film of the director who was 25 years old at that time, and therefore, it is significant mainly to trace how the director's style is shaped.

The adaptation of the story of a self-proclaimed⁶¹ detective solving a case and restoring the order while competing with the police invokes an impression of film noir. The film is shot two years after *Kanun Namına*, which clearly embodies both narrative and formal elements of film noir. So, it would not be surprising to see a film noir example since the story is suitable for a film noir. However, that is not the case, and in many ways, especially in terms of the narrative elements, the film follows a classical line of an action film. Yet, elements of film noir can still be found, and in occasional sequences, the noir influence on style is very obvious, which might indicate that Erksan was aware of the style, and applied it whenever possible. Ultimately, Metin Erksan, a very influential figure in Turkish cinema, seems to experiment on different styles in his works, one of which seems

⁶⁰ The title of the film in the opening credits is *Cingöz Recai*. However, in some sources it is written as *Cingöz Recai/Beyaz Cehennem* (Vigilant Recai/White Hell). For the sake of consistency, it seems more reliable to call the film the way it is written in the opening credits.

⁶¹ In Turkey, the laws did not permit individuals to become private detectives to investigate criminal activity during the 1950s or before. In 1994, a new bill was passed in the parliament enabling private detectives to work, however, it was returned by the president, and the law was neither brought into review nor invalidated, but was definitely not in effect.

(<https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d19/c052/tbmm19052068.pdf>)

to be film noir, and even in his later works such as *Gecelerin Ötesi* (1960, Beyond the Nights) such effects are visible.

5.1 NARRATIVE ELEMENTS IN *CİNGÖZ RECAİ*

The narrative elements in *Cingöz Recai* have limited affinity with film noir narratives. The film is approximately 90 minutes, and strictly tells a crime story blended with police procedural. Krutnik, compares classical detective fiction with ‘hard-boiled’ detective fiction, and reaches the conclusion that unlike classical fiction, hard-boiled fiction includes action and not deduction, and mystery is replaced by suspense. Moreover, hard-boiled fiction displays ‘gunplay, illicit or exotic sexuality, and the corruption of the social forces of law, and personal danger to the hero’ (1991, p. 39). *Cingöz Recai* does not fit in this portrayal as the detective relies on deduction rather than action involving gunfight, the puzzle points to a mystery to be solved, grey areas are not highlighted, and the conflict is clearly between the good and the bad, and the main character is a hero possessing excellent skills. Having said that, although the narrative includes some film noir elements, overall the ways events are structured, characters are formed, and the way time and space are used do not reflect a dominant influence in contrast with *Kanun Namına*. However, it is necessary to give a sketch of the narrative to understand the extent of film noir influence or connection, and that constitutes the aim of this chapter.

5.1.1 Events

The events in *Cingöz Recai* provide the basic formula of a detective film genre: introduction, inspection, and resolution of a criminal activity. The first part introduces the murder case, the death of a wealthy man called Hüseyin Faik; introduces the main characters involved in the story; and informs the viewer about the immediate action to be taken by the police and the self-proclaimed detective Cingöz Recai. The film starts with an action sequence out of the blue: two women are saved from being abducted by two gentlemen by chance. When they arrive at home, they discover that one of the woman’s husband, Hüseyin Faik, is killed. The police arrive, the chief inspector Rıza and his deputy Hamdi interrogate people in the house, and look for evidence and clues. In the meantime, Recai is seen in disguise of a journalist called Nevzat sneaking in the house to inspect the crime scene himself and receive information about the murder.

The second part starts in Recai's house where he discusses with Jale, his female assistant, the ways to gather information about the murder, and Recai decides to send her as his agent in disguise of a servant in the house. She eavesdrops on the widow's communication with others, and learns about a large sum of money (five hundred thousand dollars) that is also searched by another woman called Persia who turns out to be a dancer and a member of a gang. Recai also continues his investigation in a nightclub in disguise of a rich Arab called Seyit Haşim. He happens to eavesdrop on Persia while she interrogates a singer called Aynur, who was the mistress of the dead man. Recai talks to Aynur to gather information while the chief inspector and his deputy are also present at the club observing the environment including Recai, Aynur and Persia. Recai learns a riddle about the lost money and leaves the club to meet Aynur later in her flat. Aynur is killed in her flat by the killer with a scarf. While the police officers are misled due to misinterpretation of the information, Recai claims to solve the riddle and the way to find the money: the answer is hidden in the wig of the dead man. He shares this information with the inspectors in order to make a deal to keep some of the money for himself, but the offer is declined. The grave of the man is opened by the police but to find a note from Recai, and this ends the second part.

The third part starts when Recai reveals his further plans to solve the case to capture the smugglers including Persia that are linked to the murder case. He traces the members of the gang in disguise of an old man in a tavern. Recai follows one of the men to the laboratory where they produce drugs, in particular heroin, and informs the chief inspector about the place. In the meantime, the international connection of the organization, a man called Mr. Rainfold arrives at the tavern, and the gang heads to Hüseyin Faik's house to meet Persia and the widow to discuss business and the threat Cingöz Recai poses to the gang. Persia reveals her plan to set a trap for him by seducing him. On the other hand, the police forces raid the laboratory, and after a long chase, kills one of the prominent gang members, and that ends the third part.

The fourth and the final part includes the resolution of the whole case. Recai in disguise of the journalist accompanies Hamdi the inspector to the club to talk to the manager about the deceased gang member to no end. Then, Recai meets Persia in a restaurant where they flirt with each other. After that, they go to Persia's home, and Recai discovers a man hiding in the closet, and he locks him in while Persia is in the bathroom. He, then, reveals

all the information he knows so far about the murders and the trap. Persia first attempts to stop him with her gun, but unable to resist his charm, she sides with Recai and betrays her mates, and Recai and Persia defeat the gang together. Then, Recai in disguise of the journalist invites the chief inspector to the press office, and reveals his true identity as Recai, and escapes from the place trapping the inspector inside using a tricky mechanism.

Considering the events of the narrative, it is not easy to determine whether the story includes film noir elements or not. So, the broad scope provided by Park might be useful to see the differentiating narrative aspects of film noir as a start: crime in the contemporary world, a morally unstable main character, and an investigation (2011, pp. 25-26). *Cingöz Recai* seems to comply with some of these qualities while being at odds with others. Almost all the events are about criminal activities in the contemporary world, which are parts of a larger criminal scheme, but the events have a linear structure. Although there is a puzzle to be solved, it is not in the form of flashbacks that connect the past and the present in a labyrinth structure as seen in film noir. The main character is a self-proclaimed detective, but he is far from being unstable or tarnished. The narrator is extradiegetic, and the point of view is more or less objective when compared to an intradiegetic narrator's subjectivity. Without a narrator narrating past events from a retrospective perspective by means of flashbacks, the narrative focuses on the present and the future only.

In parallel with the crime case, the plot also focuses on the rivalry between the chief inspector and Recai. Overall, the narrative focuses on 'the good guys' rather than crime and criminals, and neither the investigation nor the rivalry is narrated from a realistic perspective, and overall, the plot is based on a typical detective fiction which includes 'a problem, a procedure, and an achievement' presented in two main storylines: crime and investigation. In the end, the crime that happened in the past is reconstructed and solved after the investigation (Hühn, 1987, pp. 451-452). That plot structure can be traced in *Cingöz Recai*, and the film shows no effort to deviate from that conventional structure. In addition, the whole film reflects how Recai as an investigator succeeds in solving the case and beating the police investigators, and does not concentrate at all on crime by examining the sources, reasons, characters and effects of it.

Moreover, although the main character is also a criminal by definition and in the eye of the police, he faces almost no difficulty in the course of the events. Except for the long police chase sequence, he is active almost in all events, but little action is seen in these scenes, and all the events head towards stabilizing the current situation almost without wavering. So, step by step, uncertainty only decreases as Recai reaches the conclusion, which shows a one-way movement in the plot. The plot structure fits neither a hard-boiled detective fiction nor a police procedural or a psychological analysis. So, the viewer is provided with a smooth experience to watch the adventures of a ‘sympathetic’ character who never fails. Hence, although the events have the potential to conceive a film noir fabula, they form a classical detective narrative structure.

5.1.2 Characters

The character formation in *Cingöz Recai* hardly resembles film noir conventions as well although some characters individually possess some film noir elements. Interestingly enough, the film does not include main characters that are presented in depth other than Recai. They are usually merely functional as members of the gang, the wife of the deceased, the helper of the protagonist, the authority, the victim and so on.

Recai is a macho character in his dealings with women, and a gentlemanly thief who enjoys solving criminal cases for pleasure and money that might be involved in it. He is not exactly the hardboiled detective as seen in noir films, especially in the first phase of film noir in the 1940s that is inspired by detective fiction of the previous era written by writers such as Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler and James M. Cain (Krutnik, 1991, p. 15). Indeed, he acts like a womanizer, a genius, an investigator, a thief, and a vigilante, who outwits and outruns everyone else, particularly the police. Disguise is his favourite method to gather information, and he is seen as a journalist, a tourist, and an ordinary old man with a beard in the film in addition to the detective. Overall, he is far from representing the ‘tarnished’ male protagonist who is morally in the grey area. Unlike noir characters, he is almost flawless, and never gives the impression that he might step in a difficult situation that he may not handle. Almost all female characters are attracted to him instantly even if he does not intend to seduce them. He is not unstable or emasculated, and hence, although he seems to be wandering on the border between the legal and the illegal while investigating crimes and criminals, that does not provide him with a noir quality. Thus, he neither fits in the *homme fatal* type nor *homme attrapé*, and all these

elements indeed indicate almost a superhero quality, which is hardly a film noir characteristic for a protagonist.

Recal's assistant Jale is both his helper in the investigations and one of his lovers. Initially, she collects information for Recal, and in the rest of the story, she asks questions to make him clarify and summarize the case for the viewer. She yearns for stability and dreams of running away from trouble with Recal and living happily ever after. She acts as part of a male fantasy in which women are completely submissive and obedient, and provide their partners with unconditional and abundant love. Seeing Persia as a rival, she states her discontent about the presence of Persia, but Recal does not care, and he makes plans to go abroad with both Persia and Jale. She is not a femme fatale, yet she may not be classified as a femme attrapée either since the film does not reveal to what extent she fits in the domestic and caring type. Considering Place's description of femme fatale, it can be seen that female characters with many noir qualities in the film do not necessarily display film noir quality.

Persia seems to be the closest character to display noir characteristics, particularly femme fatale. She is a member of the gang and a dancer in the nightclub. When Recal finds the money and ruins their business, she decides to utilize her charm to set a trap for Recal by using her femininity as a weapon. However, when Recal notices her plan, she surrenders and confesses her love for Recal instantly on the spot, and sides with him to capture the rest of the gang. She very well fits in the destructive and dangerous woman pattern who makes use of her femininity to take advantage of men (Place 1998, pp. 53-63), however it is not possible to determine whether her love for Recal is genuine or fake as it is in the last part of the film towards the resolution, and Persia shifts from one condition to another very quickly without any narrative or formal development to indicate the true nature of her feelings. Before exhibiting her true potential as a femme fatale, she is 'tamed' in the narrative by the male character almost instantly.

The two police inspectors are rather cardboard characters who are excessively gullible and perfect men of duty. Most of the time, they serve to highlight the brilliance of Recal whom they never keep up with.

As for the gangsters, apart from Persia, the main body of the gang consists of three male members including the killer with the scarf, the provincial, and the head of the small

group. In addition to that, a foreigner called Rainfold is the accomplice, and the main connection of the gang in the international smuggling organization.

Among this group, only the provincial male character Şevki is worth noting as other members are merely portrayed as ‘the bad guys’ whereas Şevki has his own short story, which creates a tarnished character in a crime ridden world. He is fierce and daring when it comes to dealing with dangerous situations and the police, yet at the same time, he is naïve and has romantic tendencies as he dreams of his village and the girl waiting for him there. He wavers between the underground crime world in the city and the idyllic countryside that offers him the role of a family man. Pursuing a cliché, he claims to leave the gang after the next successful massive job with a large sum of money to buy a white wedding gown, and head to the girl he loves. Eventually, he dies in action in front of the shop window where a white wedding gown is exhibited, and the last object he sees is that gown before he dies. He is one of the lost souls of noir films that Luhr defines as heading towards their doom (2012, p. 29). Şevki’s story is common, but the way he is formed bears local traces unlike other characters, and he is incongruous with the rest of the characters as a villager, an immigrant, a man who also deals with the local traditions as well as the city and the world of crime. However, Şevki is a side character and is not fully developed, and therefore, he may not be enough to indicate that overall character formation in the film possesses noir characteristics, but Şevki does possess a large chunk of them. His traits are complemented by the formal elements used in the sequences that mainly focus on him to reveal his motivation to be in the gang (easy money in a short time) and his plans about the future (returning home and getting married), and his end (being killed in a police shootout).

Finally, although not directly linked to film noir characteristics, no one in the film has family connections visible to the viewer, and overall, families do not exist in the film. Recai is not married, and, at the end of the film, he has an affair with Persia although his assistant Jale is already his lover. Besides, he plans to go on holiday with both women, which implies his non-monogamous tendencies, and among women at least Persia does not show any signs of objection to that situation. In addition to that, neither the police investigators nor the gang members are revealed to have families. The only exception is Şevki, who wants to be a family man, and he dies before he has a chance to become one. Even the film starts with the death of a husband leaving a widow after him, an event that

happened outside the story time. So, the whole story takes place in a community where traditional life style and conventional values about family are completely ignored. The lack of family ties is therefore noteworthy, and remotely connotes the way film noir handles the concept of family that it either does not exist or when it exists, it does not promise happiness, security or comfort at all.

In conclusion, among the characters, only Şevki the gangster and Persia the dancer display resemblance to film noir characters, and they are indeed side characters, and neither of them are developed enough to mention a connection with film noir. The only main character who is developed fully is Recai, and he resembles classical detective fiction characters who do not fail, are successful at solving mysteries and defeating their enemies or rivals, and possess superhero qualities.

5.1.3 Space and Time

5.1.3.1 Space

The story takes place in Istanbul, yet the locations are somewhat limited in variety. The interior scenes of the film are shot to a great extent under studio conditions as indicated at the beginning of the film. In return, the sense of authenticity and realism is somewhat distorted in studio conditions. For instance, when Jale acts like a servant in the mansion, in a tracking long shot, the camera follows Jale after she eavesdrops, and then, sneaks to the telephone in the other room. The camera moves past the wall that separates the rooms and hence, the illusion of the fourth wall is destroyed. Also, the weight is given to interior scenes as approximately more than two thirds of the 90-minute film are shot indoors, and that emphasizes the fictional quality when compared to the realistic effect created by on-location shooting. The weight given to major specific locations is approximately as follows:

The mansion: 14-15 minutes

The nightclub: 15 minutes

Recai's house: 5-6 minutes

Police headquarters: 5 minutes

The laboratory: 5-6 minutes

Persia's flat: 5 minutes

The beach/seaside: 6 minutes

Aynur's flat: 2-3 minutes

Cemetery: 2-3 minutes

The tavern: 3-4 minutes

The restaurant: 2 minutes

The sea/ship: 2 minutes

The grand bazaar (*Kapalıçarşı*): 5 minutes

The office: 3-4 minutes

Streets/taxis: 5 minutes

To begin with, the urban locations possess a certain film noir quality as a selection that is used to depict the world of crime. The mansion, the tavern, nightclub, Aynur's flat, the grand bazaar, dark streets, tunnels, the ship cemetery and so on fit the way Park (2011) lists noir spaces with an emphasis on their underground quality (p. 57). An interesting quality for many places in the film is that either they are not what they seem to be, or they do not correspond to their conventional function. To begin with, the mansion does not provide any domestic qualities; on the contrary, it turns out to host people related to a criminal organization. Sobchack observes that 'home' in film noir does not possess the immediate connotations of security and intimacy, especially when inhabited by rich people (1998, pp. 144-146). From the very first scene onwards, the mansion that belongs to a wealthy couple displays that quality. The husband and wife are not in love, but rather partners in crime. The place does not bring marital happiness, emotion or carnal satisfaction, but death and deception when Hüseyin Faik is found dead in the first scene when the mansion first appears. Similarly, the nightclub, which is supposed to bring entertainment and pleasure, turns out to be actually the headquarters of the gang. The performances in the place throughout the film are watched both by Recai in disguise and the police inspectors to search for clues. Persia interrogates Aynur the singer there, and meets other gangsters. Even when Persia performs her dance, she continuously checks

the table at which Recai questions Aynur to find out about the lost money. In addition, Recai's office is not a real press office; it serves as a cover-up for Recai while communicating with the police as Nevzat the journalist. He has also transformed the interior of the office by adding an emergency exit mechanism so as to escape from the place while trapping others inside. Another place with mixed identity is the historical old city where the grand bazaar resides. The underground tunnels are used as places for laboratories to produce drugs by the gang. Moreover, the ship in the sea is used as a laboratory to produce drugs rather than for transportation. Instead of creating specific places for their needs, they are converting the existing ones, which emits a sense of destabilization and transformation of the city space. Hence, the places, including the flats and houses, do not reflect the domestic lifestyle or 'home' even when they are literally homes, and other places are not what they seem to be, and do not fulfil what they promise under normal circumstances. On the contrary, they are associated with crime, criminals, insecurity and death. All the places challenge the positive expectations from a city life, and point to a crime-ridden and dangerous world which city dwellers may not be aware. It is as if all locations are in disguise just like Recai. Therefore, the way space is used actually shares a lot in common with film noir spaces, however since other narrative elements do not create an affinity, it would not be reasonable to mention film noir influence here.

5.1.3.2 Time

Cingöz Recai does not employ the prominent film noir elements in terms of time. The events happen at present leading the story to the future, and the chronology is linear most of the time except for few events narrated in parallel with the main event in a particular sequence. Time is only of essence when Recai or Jale are in action. For instance, while the inspectors question the widow in the house, Recai tries to sneak in the house outside, and by means of editing, the timeline is broken into fragments. Schrader asserts the basics of film noir narratives, and claims that the widespread chronological inclination in film noir is that the narrative progresses towards a sense of hopelessness for the protagonists, and the order of events raises questions about how events ended that way rather than what is going to happen in the narrative (1972, p. 11). However, in *Cingöz Recai*, the narration is always at present, and the chronological order does not lead to a specific effect, for example a sense of hopelessness, restlessness or ambiguity due to the quality of the

events. On the contrary, the passing of time signals the immediate success of a single man against an international criminal organization while in competition with state authorities to restore the order. Even before the end of the film, in the course of the events, other agents such as the inspectors foreshadow the future by implying the potency of Recai in dealing with difficult situations although in an illegal way. As a result, the main concern of the viewer is to see what will happen next rather than to understand how events turned out to become like that and reconstruct the story. Therefore, even though the lack of flashbacks does not determine whether a film may be classified as film noir or not, the chronological aspects of *Cingöz Recai* is far beyond noir quality as time merely serves for the flow of the events.

In conclusion, the narrative elements of *Cingöz Recai* do not bear obvious and convincing connections to film noir despite the fact that the detective novel that the film is based on provides enough material for a film noir. The adaptation treats the events and the characters in a traditional way and in line with the work of fiction. The only main character Recai is drawn as an infallible omnipotent macho man without any weaknesses, and he dominates the events to a great extent by means of his wit, intelligence and skills, which eventually render him a traditional hero, not a noir character. As for space and time, although the locations in which the events take place belong to the world of crime in a city, they are more or less places for the events to be stages rather than a contributing factor to the meaning. The exception might be Aynur's flat and the grand bazaar as they are used in a specific way to create emotional reactions in the viewer. However, such occasional resemblances do not eventually form a structure to be designated as noir elements. Similarly, the use of time does not provide enough evidence to make a direct link to film noir.

5.2 FORMAL ELEMENTS IN *CİNGÖZ RECAİ*

The narrative elements of *Cingöz Recai* do not match film noir elements in many ways as seen in the previous part, however that is not the case in terms of formal elements. Even though the shot quality and the narrative elements are not in harmony, noir style is visible throughout the film. The shots may be separated into two as traditional shots and film noir due to the shot quality that differs from one another in different scenes. Place and Peterson underlines as part of film noir style distorted images, unusual compositions by means of camera angles and movements to disorient the viewer and provide a novel

approach especially with the help of *chiaroscuro* effect (1974, pp. 66-69). In the scenes that can be classified as film noir, the devices employed fit in the major characteristics of film noir style, and *Cingöz Recai* utilizes these devices the way Place and Peterson indicate.

The film starts at night, and the first event is an attempt to abduct two women in a taxi. That sequence until the women arrive at home with two gentlemen who helped them is shot on location in the streets and cars in the city. Such an opening sequence has all the potential to display film noir quality, however except the night and city lights, the camera distance (medium and long shots), editing, acting and even lighting follow classical lines that focus mainly on the suspense created by an action sequence when the two men take hold of the taxi (fig. 1-2)⁶². However, what is missing in the opening sequence can be observed in the following sequence when the widow enters the room to find her husband dead. To begin with, when she enters, the room is dim, and a beam of light sheds light on the woman, which instantly signals an approaching surprise or shock. Even when she turns on the light, the room is not completely lit unlike the other rooms in the house. The cut to the dead body on the floor is a medium close-up and the camera angle is not in accordance with the previous shots so far: the camera has a high angle, and is placed behind the body distorting the look of the head and creating an effect as if the man is upside down. *Chiaroscuro* lighting is seen creating unusual lines on the face, which is already in an unusual position due to the position of the camera (fig. 3-4). Hence, the style changes in the first event that triggers the main plot, the investigation of the murder case. After that scene, the narration returns to its classical form, and then, these two styles alternate in the shots that follow. That pattern, which can be observed throughout the film, is significant as it is the reason why the film is worth examining to weigh the film noir influence and its different manifestation in Turkish cinema.

Patrick Keating (2013) points to a similar case by comparing noir lighting to classical Hollywood style to state that such changes in lighting from one scene to another, from bright scenes to dark ones, are not uncommon in Hollywood films, and therefore shadows would not make sense all by themselves to determine noir style. Moreover, some noir films do not employ low-key lighting or use dark places extensively. So, he concludes

⁶² See 'APPENDIX 2: Figures for *Cingöz Recai*' for all the figures in this chapter.

that the contrast created by bright and dark scenes matter rather than the prevailing darkness itself (p. 267). When it comes to lighting, *Cingöz Recai* is a good example of that variety in composition as it shifts from one style to another repeatedly calling attention to the attributes that create the noir style, especially the congruity between form and content is the key factor here to determine the noir quality. In certain scenes, the difference is too obvious.

To begin with, the sequence in Recai's house starts in a long shot, a typical establishing shot of the setting displaying the living room and introducing the characters: Jale is on the sofa reading, and Recai is standing with a violin at hand (fig. 5). The room is well-lit, and there are multiple sources visible and invisible for the viewer. However, in the shot/reverse shot routine, the frame composition begins to change, first slightly and then significantly, which can be traced from figure 5 to 10 (see Appendix 2). Although the scene is shot in studio conditions, gradually the lighting resembles *chiaroscuro* (fig.10). In the following shots, the camera is placed at a position where unusual compositions can be achieved such as the one in which Recai is standing in front of the window blinds and Jale is seen in the background, but both characters are hardly recognizable due to the horizontal pattern of the blind (fig. 9). However, that shot does not have any special significance in that scene as they are talking about Recai's plan to place Jale as a servant in the mansion to gather information, and Jale praises Recai for being exceptionally smart. So, the style here seems to be utilized mostly for the decoration of the shots.

However, in the sequence about the second murder case, film noir influence is beyond doubt as both the form and content overlap here. Aynur the singer arrives at home to meet Recai later at night, but is killed by the killer who also murdered the man at the beginning of the film, and Recai arrives too late. This sequence is right after the sequence in the nightclub where the style is totally different with long and medium-long shots, well-lit space, and the camera just shows the action.

Aynur first appears outside the building getting off the taxi in a long shot at a high angle at night. She is illuminated mainly from right (fig. 11). She enters the building and the camera is always at a high angle belittling her body until she is on her floor. She approaches her door from the right-hand side, the dim hallway is seen in a long shot, and the wall is covered with the shadow of horizontal bars creating an oppressive feeling (fig.

12). After a cut to a medium shot, she is startled as if she hears a noise, which contributes to the tension created by the previous shot. Upon entering the flat, neon lights outside flash in the room, and she starts moving around the room, turning on the radio to find a lively American pop song⁶³, making herself comfortable, and finally combing her hair probably for the visit Recai is about to pay (fig. 13). All these shots without any dialogue and with contrasting lively music create an expectation that something unusual might happen. While she is combing her hair, in the background in the mirror, a shadow is seen moving, and soon after the careful viewer, she notices that move and turns back. The camera remains in the medium shot at eye level, then turns into a POV shot at a higher angle while the neon lights outside continue to flash alternating the effect of light, and finally, the killer partly enters the frame in a medium shot and starts strangling the victim (fig. 14-15). After a cut, in a shot that replicates the previous one with Aynur, Recai is seen in front of the building (fig. 16). Then, in a long shot with a long take, the victim is seen lying on the floor while the killer searches the flat. Due to lighting, the details are not clear, and the stillness of the environment including the dead body creates a gloomy atmosphere (fig. 17). In addition, the fact that Recai has arrived is known to the viewer but not to the killer, so the extra knowledge of the viewer contributes to the tension, which is maintained by pure noir style: the killer hears a sound, looks at the door, a medium shot with *chiaroscuro* hides his features, the camera acquires his point of view to a medium-close-up to the floor, where a pair of shadowy bars are seen through the opening of the door on the ground that is assumed to be Recai's shadow, but they do not involve themselves in a fight (fig. 18-19). From the beginning to the end, this sequence exploits many elements of noir style to increase tension, maintain suspense, and create a special effect. In the following scenes, which take place in the police headquarters, Recai's house, and the seaside where Recai tries to negotiate with the inspectors, that style vanishes again, and is replaced by classical narration.

In the third part, when Recai is in disguise of an old man to follow the gang member to the laboratory, the style shifts again. The sequence starts at night when Recai leaves the

⁶³ 'Come on-a my house' (1951, written by Ross Bagdasarian and William Saroyan, performed by Rosemary Clooney). The lyrics are ironic as the singer invites someone to her house and promises to give him everything.

tavern to follow the gangster. The long shot includes visible and off-screen sources of light from left creating sharp contrasts. A cut shows the gangster hurrying along the pavement in the dark, and the long shots enable the viewer to get a glimpse of the setting while the lighting creates the overall atmosphere. That sequence continues after a crosscut to other gangsters in the tavern and their foreign connection, Rainfold. The crosscutting works like an ellipsis, and Recai and the gangster are seen in a different place walking in another dark street. A single light source illuminates the characters excessively creating very sharp contrasts, and making everything else almost indistinguishable but the characters, and the whole picture is difficult to process for the viewer (fig. 20-21). This sequence is broken once again after Recai informs the police about the hideout, and then, with a cut to the meeting of the gang in the mansion. Both of these scenes are shot in classical style, and are in contrast with the preceding fragmented sequence. The final part of that sequence lasts approximately ten and a half minutes, and includes the police raid, the chase and death of the gangster once again shot in a style differing from the classical treatment.

The sequence starts in a long shot: the setting is the historical ruins, and is illuminated by a single strong light source similar to the previous shots creating sharp contrasts. Medium and medium-long shots continue until the police enter the ruins. The shadows are cast on the walls before the characters appear, long takes are used to slow down the action to increase the tension, and the medium shots are used to reflect the facial expressions and to focus on details (fig. 22-23), and that adds a completely different mood and atmosphere to the scenes when compared with the scenes with the same characters in plain classical shots.

From the very beginning, the narrative as an adaptation of a detective novel has maintained a non-realistic attitude in terms of the way in which it focuses on the society. The fictional aspects of the story and the characters are highlighted. However, in this sequence, a deeper sense of realism can be noticed, especially when the drug addicts are scanned by the camera in medium close-ups with a single light source, a flashlight held by the inspector. Interestingly enough, it takes approximately two minutes for the police to enter the tunnels and search for the drug smugglers' laboratory. In the meantime, the drug addicts lying on the ground are portrayed very realistically as the footage resembles that of a documentary, and hence, clearly and immediately distinguishes itself from the

previous scenes. Birsen Altiner relates that Erksan asked real heroin addicts to be brought to the set for that scene (2005, p. 25), which shows that, contrary to the dominant tendency, here the intention is to create a composition with stronger effects on the viewer by means of a realistic depiction of misery which is intensified by the tunnels with a low ceiling creating a gloomy, oppressive and claustrophobic effect (fig. 25-26). In such shots, the style becomes the main instrument to make meaning, and the formal elements point to a film noir effect.

After a cut to the hidden laboratory, film noir style is used in some of the shots, but not all of them. For instance, a man is shot by the police and enters the hideout to warn others. He falls on the table, and when the gangster listens to what he says, he starts giving orders to other men to escape. Until that part, the narration follows the classical lines, but after a cut from a slightly different point of view, the light sources, the frame composition, the camera angle and even acting in the shot completely change (fig. 27-28). The lighting becomes *chiaroscuro*, the camera angle is low intensifying the effect of the light, and as a result, although the figures are exactly the same in the previous shot, the way they are presented is completely different. Then, frame composition changes back to the classical style when the gunfight begins, and continues that way until the gangster appears alone. He is seen alone, pointing his pistol under his chin immediately connoting suicide or a determination to take the challenge to win or lose it all: a vivid portrayal of a side character by means of style with very little lines to utter (fig. 29). When he escapes, he runs in the street at night, and the police chase starts. Unlike other characters in the sequence, he is seen alone inside the grand bazaar in long and medium shots and medium close-ups to deliver his emotional condition as a rat in a cage. Then, in a long shot, while he is moving away from the camera, his relationship with the space is highlighted: a dark place with a very high ceiling, and the low angle highlights the weakness and desperation of the gangster (fig. 30-31). Such particular compositions distinguish him from other characters in the ways in which he is presented.

Throughout the film, that gangster is the only person whose story includes an emotional background which adds life and soul to the character unlike others: his sole purpose is to return to his village and marry the woman he loves. He chases illegal ways to collect the money he needs, which can be interpreted in a little bit speculative way: it is not easy to earn sufficient money to fulfil the traditional requirements to achieve a matrimonial

union, and a big city such as Istanbul promises such an opportunity in the crime world, hence the social structure, traditions and personality traits that are combined with poverty lead to crime. The way that character is drawn as seen in the previous part enables such suppositions, even if they are overextended, and creates a three-dimensional person as opposed to other side characters. The consistent application of noir style to depict events related to that character intensifies the dramatic story, and the tarnished man's flight towards death.

The noir style in this sequence continues in the action scenes as well, and the shots make good use of the space, acting, lighting, cinematography and events. The police are presented in long shots, and the camera distance is readjusted when they move towards the camera, however, the gangster remains at a relative distance, and cuts enable the viewer to inspect him when he is drawn closer, and he is in an overwhelming emotional state in all these instances (fig. 31-36). Unlike the police, he usually moves away from the camera underlining the fact that he is escaping from everything. While doing that, perspective is used to strengthen the contrast between a belittled man and the big space he is seen in through a greater depth of field in the shot such as fig. 31 and 36 (see Appendix 2). Finally, just before he is cornered, he happens to notice a white wedding gown in the window a shop, which obviously reminds him of the love he left in his home town, and moves closer to enjoy his dreams in a medium shot which switches to a POV shot intensifying the emotional atmosphere by enabling the viewer to identify with the character. Yet at the same time, the still mannequin's slight grin and hollow looks undercut the effect to some extent by stating the obvious that it is an artificial object signifying the loss of all hope. Once again, the gangster acts as if his mental state is degrading while rubbing his head with abrupt strokes (fig. 37-39). This last part is purely psychological and probably the only realistically portrayed psychological composition in the entire film. When he is seen in a medium shot after a tilt down, while panting heavily he points the pistol under his chin once again leaving the viewer in uncertainty about whether or not he will commit suicide (fig. 40). The chase ends in front of the dress shop where the wedding gown is exhibited. The medium shot from a low angle placing the mannequin and the gangster in the composition emphasizes that the whole sequence is more than just an action sequence with a police chase, but about psychological and sociological references to depict the brief story of a tarnished man of his times trying to

survive in the dark side of the city. He is surrounded by the police, but he desperately seeks a way out rather than surrendering, and is killed. That final part starts in a medium shot showing his calculating mind, and his desperate attempt is seen in long shots finally ending in a close-up to his dead body with a tilt up to the wedding gown in the window where his body is dropped (fig. 41-46). Were he the main character of the story and were the way he was portrayed the governing style of the narrative, the film could have been a film noir, and that scene could have been the final scene.

After that sequence, the classical style dominates the rest of the film. Although in terms of lighting and camera distance it is possible to trace some elements of the noir style, they do not form a unity and consistency throughout the sequences as regards the events and characters. Hence, in the remaining part of the film, the stylistic noir elements remain sporadic in scenes such as the fake romantic dinner night out with Recai and Persia, and the aftermath of the date in Persia's apartment where Recai discovers Persia's trap. Recai's presence and omnipotence to smell every tiny detail against him like a superhero makes the sequence a fantastic episode in the film. Similarly, in the last sequence in which witty Recai plays with the inspector, the witty foreseer Recai's tricky escape as a show-off creates a discrepancy between the form and the content rendering formal elements irrelevant of film noir.

Overall, from a formal perspective, *Cingöz Recai* definitely involves film noir style but to a limited extent, and the form and content may not consistently match throughout the film. However, the sequence about the gangster, which lasts more than 10 minutes, seems to be a film noir episode in a classical detective fiction film. It is almost a film within a film: the main character Recai is absent in the majority of the sequence after the beginning, and by means of film noir style, with very little and functional dialogue, the sequence tells a different and dramatic story of a man that has little to do with the main story, which is about the rivalry between a smart vigilante and an inspector of principles. That particular sequence and its incongruity with the rest of the film in terms of harmony between form and content reveal that formal consistency is not a priority, and different forms might be used for different sequences, scenes and perhaps surprisingly even successive shots. When the sequences and shots that bear traces of film noir style are taken into consideration, the style functions to create a certain mood usually maintained by lighting which helps to create sharp contrasts and shadows for a dark and gloomy

effect creating and maintaining tension and suspense. In the abovementioned exceptional sequence, however, the style creates the meaning and the mood, and similar to *Kanun Namına*, in such sequences, the combination of cinematography, mise-en-scene and editing create and convey the meaning rather than the dialogue, which is very little in the long police chase sequence. Hence, *Cingöz Recai* can be regarded as a film in which stylistic experiments can be traced in certain scenes at the expense of giving up the overall harmony in the scenes and even the film.

5.3 CONCLUSION

Cingöz Recai is not an example of film noir regarding the narrative and formal elements. However, this rather early 1950s' film is significant to understand how film noir has become influential in making films that do not directly manifest the connection to classic film noir. The film has all the necessary material to be a film noir with a detective with criminal tendencies, a murder case to be solved, a criminal organization as the big picture, the police, the city and the night. However, the story and character formation observe detective fiction conventions. The narration is traditional with the domination of medium and long shots, a widely used stage-like composition that encompasses characters in the setting from a distance, well-lit shots that mainly show rather than pushing the viewer to become active in meaning making process. Yet again, some sequences deviate in terms of form, and in particular, the sequence about the gangster's death both in terms of form and content.

Also, even within the same scene, shots may vary from one another formally, and for instance, scenes related to death and crime as in the case of Şevki are sometimes handled completely differently than the rest of the film. These instances should not just call conclusions about poor decoupage, which might indeed be the case considering the underdeveloped industry, and young and inexperienced director, Metin Erksan himself. In certain scenes and sequences, the director experiments on different film languages to convey different moments, scenes and stories within the same film at the expense of sacrificing formal unity, and one of the sources to experiment on is definitely film noir. Hence, film noir style is used to create a different experience for the viewer by including extreme or unusual devices to create stylized sequences, and as a result, a new approach to present otherwise familiar scenes for a detective film.

6. THE ANALYSIS OF *KANLARIYLA ÖDEDİLER*

*Kanlariyla Ödediler*⁶⁴ (They Paid in Blood, 1955) is written, produced and directed by Osman F. Seden. In 1955, Seden starts directing films, and *Kanlariyla Ödediler* is his directorial debut. Seden is the producer and co-writer of *Kanun Namına* (1952), and he works with Kriton İliadis, who also works in *Kanun Namına*, and probably because of that fact the two films bear some similarities in terms of narrative and formal elements and approach. However, Özön claims that, being the distributor of numerous American films, Seden was under the influence of American gangster films and film noir, but Özön describes Seden's first film as a melodrama blended with elements of the police film genre, and criticizes the film for relying on clichés to secure box-office success (2013, p. 185). Such criticism based on genre might be misleading since the weight of the police procedural is limited and subordinate to the main story, and melodramatic elements are abundant in the film. Yet, it is not easy to distinguish diverse influences at one glance. The aim of this chapter is to understand the diverse influences with regards to film noir and the ways in which these elements have been utilized.

6.1 NARRATIVE ELEMENTS IN *KANLARIYLA ÖDEDİLER*

The narrative elements display a hybrid quality as some elements, especially the events and the way complications arise, refer to a strict melodramatic modality whereas others such as character formation, space and time clearly display noir characteristics to a great extent. The film is 115 minutes long, and tells the story of a family which is torn apart as

⁶⁴ The title of the film in the opening credits is *Kanlar ile Ödediler* whereas the poster of the film reads *Kanlariyla Ödediler*. The difference between the two versions seems to be merely grammatical. However, there is a nuance to be taken into consideration. *Kanlariyla Ödediler* is preferred in this study since it is grammatically more correct as the word *kanlariyla* includes a possessive suffix (-i) which indicates that they paid in *their* blood meaning they suffered the consequences, and that suffix is absent in *Kanlar ile Ödediler*, so the title does not include any possessive determiner. Moreover, Agah Özgüç, in *A Chronological History of Turkish Cinema (1914-1988)*, translates titles of films to provide their meanings, and translates *Kanlariyla Ödediler* as 'They payed it with their blood' (sic) (1988, p. 66), which may not be a proper title among other options, so 'They Paid in Blood' is used to convey the meaning regardless of probable foreign variations that may change from one culture or film market to another.

a result of a love triangle which involves two brothers called Turgut and Nazmi, and a dancer called Gönül.

6.1.1 Events

The events in *Kanlarıyla Ödediler* are characterized by both extensive amount of talking in the first two parts and equally abundant action in the last two parts. Hence, the events can be divided into four uneven parts based on the turning points triggering a significant change in the plot.

The first part introduces the relationship between Turgut and Gönül, and its implications among the members of the family. Turgut takes Gönül from the nightclub that she works to the family house without prior notice, and that creates a stir in the household. That part includes Gönül's partly non-diegetic dance performance in the nightclub which lasts approximately two minutes, and ends in a fight about Gönül between Turgut and a customer, which indicates Turgut's attachment to Gönül. Then, Gönül meets the members of the family, but she is not received well especially by Nazmi and Kenan, the father, since her morality is questionable for them. Kenan asks his friend's advice to make the right decision, and eventually, decides to convince Nazmi to let Turgut marry Gönül to save her, and to offer her a chance of salvation. Here, Nazmi is presented as the real power in the family who makes the ultimate decisions. This part ends when Gönül makes her first move towards Nazmi in the nightclub by rubbing her foot against Nazmi's leg under the table making her inclination towards Nazmi clear. This part is all about situating the characters in specific positions, clarifying the relationship among them, and pointing to the possible main conflict: a love triangle.

The second part includes the cat-and-mouse game between Nazmi and Gönül: she continues to make advances towards Nazmi highlighting his masculinity as the main source of attraction for her, and in return, Nazmi seems to reject her on moral grounds, but then surrenders when Gönül dances for him in the bedroom upstairs. This part also presents ironical situations for the viewer: being unaware of the growing intimacy between Gönül and Nazmi, Kenan forms a positive impression about Gönül, and Turgut dreams about his union with her and his love intensifies while she is trying to seduce Nazmi. This part is important as it sets the overall tone of the story and the main conflict, the secret affair. On the one hand, Kenan as the narrator in prison calls the story as a

lesson for people, and on the other hand, the events display an ironic quality which is only visible to the viewer and for the time being Gönül. This part ends when Gönül kills Muazzez, the invalid sister of Nazmi, to prevent her from revealing their secret, and Nazmi ironically assumes that her death is due to his words and physical violence in the form of slapping.

The third part starts after the death of Muazzez. Here the narrative splits in two directions: Gönül and Nazmi start to enjoy their secret affair at the seaside on the beach, in the countryside, in the house or at the nightclub. In parallel, Kenan and Turgut individually suspect that Nazmi has an affair with another woman, and they individually try to find out her identity. Both Kenan and Turgut seem to act like an ‘investigator’, and Kenan succeeds in revealing the relationship whereas Turgut ironically fails and has to wait for Gönül to enlighten him. Kenan appears behind the curtain in the bedroom and catches Gönül and Nazmi while they are kissing on the bed, and then he is beaten and dismissed from home by Nazmi. This part ends when Turgut discovers by chance that Nazmi has rented a flat in the city. Because Kenan remains silent about the quarrel with Nazmi, Turgut decides to learn about the suspicious situation himself maintaining his role as an investigator.

The fourth part starts when Gönül breaks up with Turgut. When he begs and beats Gönül in a fit of rage, she decides to secretly let him know that her lover is Nazmi. So, Turgut ‘fails’ in his investigation to understand the true state of affairs by himself. From that moment on, he kills Gönül in the store where she merely enters to use the phone to talk to Nazmi, he escapes the police, and heads to the flat to revenge on Nazmi by shooting him. The journey from the store to the flat is a long police chase sequence that includes a lot of action and little dialogue. First Kenan arrives at the flat to warn Nazmi, then Turgut arrives, and a fight between the brothers starts ending at the rooftop. Nazmi kills Turgut by stabbing him in the back with an axe, and Kenan shoots Nazmi to prevent the murder, and kills him. Then, Kenan is arrested, and sentenced to more than eight years in prison where he tells his story. When the story is over, he is visited by Necla, Nazmi’s wife, and her son. In the end, Kenan delivers the moral of the story, and imagines that his sons are reconciled after death.

The events in the narrative are first told in the form of a flashback, and then, after the flashback ends, there is another ending in prison focusing on Kenan, who is the intradiegetic narrator from the perspective of whom many events are presented. As expected, there is multiple narration since many events may not possibly be known by Kenan, so his point of view serves merely the purpose of setting the tone of the narration to create specific effects on the audience, and to deliver the moral lesson of the narrative. All the events involving Nazmi, Turgut and Gönül happening in the absence of Kenan are told by the extradiegetic narrator since all these characters are dead, but the narration is in accordance with Kenan's perspective. The occasional interruption of the narration to return to Kenan in prison reinforces Kenan's point of view in order to mask the extradiegetic narrator possessing all knowledge of the narrative.

As hinted by the events, the narrative is based on a 'plot of irony' leading to a moral lesson mainly for the audience. Park describes such plots to be about characters who are wiser in the end (2011, p. 126). In the narrative, the wiser characters seem to be Kenan and Necla. However, all the main characters at least once fall in the trap of another character, or fail to notice the reality: Gönül chases wealth and comfort throughout the narrative, but ends up dead while she is enjoying her victory. Turgut is deeply in love with a woman who cheats on him with his brother while he is planning a marriage. Nazmi dies when he thinks that he is at the zenith of his power by redesigning his life all over after getting rid of Necla and his son, and killed by his father whom he dismissed from home. Kenan and Necla are the ones who try to convince Nazmi to keep Gönül at home, and ironically, they are the ones who are ousted and deceived. The plot of irony is mingled with romance, however that romance is not based on mutual love and affection. On the contrary, it is presented in different ways ranging from pure emotional love to carnal love: Turgut plays the role of the naïve lover, Nazmi follows his carnal instincts to spice up his dull life, Necla rejects the role of a deceived mother and wife, and terminates her marriage, and Gönül wavers between the desire to financially secure herself and become a semi-independent lover of Nazmi. Therefore, among all characters the plot of irony only saves Necla, who is the only person to react the deception the moment she notices it, and she is the only person who interprets signs of deception correctly. On the other hand, Kenan cannot react in a similar fashion, and becomes the object of irony finding himself as the victim and perpetrator at the same time.

Although the events of the plot are not structured around the theme of crime or a criminal scheme, which is considered to be the unifying element of film noir (Borde and Chaumeton 2002, p. 5; Park 2011, pp. 25-26), murder due to self-interest and revenge plays a central role in the narrative when Gönül smothers Muazzez with a pillow so as to prevent her from revealing the secret affair between Gönül and Nazmi. She also cold-bloodedly lets Nazmi feel guilty about the death of Muazzez for a short time. The murder committed by Gönül is not planned; she acts on the spot without foreseeing the consequences. So, the act is individual, and is not developed later on in the course of the story at all, however, it enables her to continue with her plans about Nazmi and his wealth, and therefore is significant for the plot, but not to the extent to emit the film noir quality. Other murders are merely driven by a sense of revenge, disappointment and rage, a face-off between two brothers to settle their escalating conflict throughout the narrative, and therefore can be associated more with melodramatic modality, and the events in *Kanlarıyla Ödediler* rather aim to agitate the viewer by creating situations with fatal consequences on a family in an outrageously violent way.

In short, although crime is visible throughout the narrative, it is not utilized in the way in which it endows the narrative a film noir quality. Once again, the narrative points to a melodrama structure around the centrality of 'family'. Hayward (2000) states that melodrama can be attributed certain characteristics that distinguish the genre from others, and one of them is the focus on the victim. The basic structure she draws includes a man who is detached from his family due to the presence of an attractive woman, a situation which identifies two clear-cut sides as the good (the family) and the bad (the temptress) (pp. 217-218). That structure fits the plot structure of *Kanlarıyla Ödediler* to some extent. Due to the plot of irony discussed above, the family portrayal does not reflect the impression of a group of 'good' people whose lives are turned upside down simply because of an 'evil' woman. The members of the family are not victimized by the intruding woman, but their own deficiency. Therefore, the narrative includes a hybrid quality containing melodramatic modality and film noir elements at the same time to varying degrees.

6.1.2 Characters

Similar to *Kanun Namına*, the character formation determines the narrative's overall affinity with film noir rather than the overall melodramatic quality of events. The main

characters are Turgut, Nazmi, Gönül and Kenan, and the side character that should be included in the analysis is Necla, Nazmi's wife.

Turgut is a middle-class man, who works in a gas station that is owned by his brother Nazmi. He is the perfect example of the 'gullible' melodramatic film noir character. He has a relationship with a dancer, Gönül, who works at a nightclub, and is seeking a man of status and wealth. Although the relationship is not received well by the family, Turgut resists the reaction, and brings Gönül home as his future wife. He is presented as a man of unconditional love, who disregards warnings against a 'gold-digger'. He is unable to connect the dots that might uncover Gönül's true intentions, and when he tries to assume the role of the investigator to search for the truth, he fails to do so until Gönül decides to reveal her affair with Nazmi. He is impulsive as his actions are driven by his instant reaction to events, usually emotionally. Hirsh divides male noir protagonists into three: the detective, the criminal and the middle-class victim or the scapegoat (1981, pp. 10-12), and according to that, Turgut is clearly the middle-class victim. Although he is presented as a macho man who does not refrain from physical demonstration of machismo by means of fighting with other men to defend his honour or exercising violence on women, e.g. Gönül, when he finds necessary, he is easily trapped by the femme fatale as long as necessary. When he is seen with Gönül for the first time at the beginning of the narrative, he enjoys the zenith of his life, and then, after the day he takes Gönül home his free fall starts. He initiates his own destruction by disregarding all signals and warnings against Gönül, and kills Gönül in the end. He himself is murdered by Nazmi intensifying the family tragedy even more. So, Turgut's existence as an instable male protagonist who is unable to analyse circumstances, to understand the true motives of people around him, and to perform actions to solve problems rather than intensify them proves that he is a 'tarnished macho man' who is indeed devoid of any power to control the flow of events, a lost soul befitting Luhr's description of emasculated male protagonist (2012, pp. 29-30). He actually begs Gönül not to desert him, but being left in frustration he revenges on her by killing her. He fails to 'conquer' her or 'achieve' his initial aim to marry her. Therefore, throughout the film, the viewer witnesses the ironic process of emasculation of Turgut.

Nazmi, the elder brother of Turgut and the owner of the business, displays specific characteristics of *homme fatal*, who is associated with dangerous situations or crime,

seduces women, is not domesticated, and yearns for more in life as described by Wager (2005, pp. 4, 20). Acting as the head of the family despite his father, he is dominant, authoritarian, dangerous, cruel, macho and prone to violence. What distinguishes Nazmi and Turgut is that Nazmi suspects Gönül from the very beginning, does not approve his brother's relationship with her, and even tells both parties that Gönül is not chasing love but financial security and a sponsor to exploit. Being a married man with a baby, Nazmi seemingly refuses Gönül's advances toward him, yet eventually he is enchanted by her sexually charged approach, and starts an affair with her creating a dual life split between Gönül and others. This portrayal matches, for example, the way in which Duncan describes 'the usual relationship in a Film Noir': the man finds himself in a situation in which he needs to make a decision between the domestic dutiful woman and a femme fatale, who is in search of someone who serves her interests (2006, p. 12). Although Nazmi is aware of Gönül's intentions, he prefers her over Necla, and he is comfortable having an affair with her and keeping her as a mistress. He deceives his brother Turgut, his father Kenan, his wife Necla, and torments and threatens his invalid sister Muazzez whom he considers to be a trouble with a terminal disease merely wasting his money. Emotionally, he is totally indifferent to others. The only instance when he shows signs of emotion is seen when he thinks he has killed his sister Muazzez, and regrets that for a short while. Nazmi is not a male protagonist who simply ruins everything for lust or love. He desires to be acknowledged and recognized as a powerful figure, and probably that constitutes his main weakness as he cannot stand anyone who crosses him and does not obey his wishes or orders: he beats Necla who wants to desert him because he cheats on her; he beats Muazzez who witnesses his affair with Gönül; he beats Kenan who catches him with Gönül; he kills Turgut whose beloved has become Nazmi's mistress. It should be kept in mind that Nazmi has never learned that Gönül killed Muazzez, and therefore, after the death of Muazzez, he continues his life with the belief that he is responsible for her death, and after the initial regret, he does not seem to care at all. So, although at the beginning he appears to be a family man who provides for the entire family, who cares about his brother, and who runs a successful business, he displays signs of psychopathy as indicated by Hare's Psychopathy Checklist in interpersonal, affective, lifestyle, and antisocial categories manifesting themselves by means of tendencies to be deceitful, grandiose, lacking empathy and responsibility, impulsive, lacking behavioural control,

criminal tendencies and so on (Hare et al 2013, p. 234). Durnat mentions specific motifs related to American film noir which focus on crime and criminals, and one of the categories is about film noir psychopaths (1970, pp. 49-50). Overall, Nazmi fits the description of the male noir protagonist both as an example of *homme fatal* and a psychopath.

Gönül is a very complex *femme fatale* character. She is a dancer in a nightclub, and at the beginning of the narrative she is introduced having an affair with Turgut. When Turgut leaves the club, Gönül talks to her colleague, and admits that she finds Turgut to be a gullible wealthy man, and therefore she cannot miss the opportunity. Duncan summarizes the motives and structure of a *femme fatal* character, and states that the woman meets a powerful man, and plans to benefit from his wealth, who should be smart but not smarter than herself so that she can get away easily in case problems arise (2006, p. 12). Gönül follows that line of action: she meets Turgut who gives the impression that he is a wealthy man. Gönül meets Nazmi, and understands that he is both more appealing, powerful and more importantly is the actual source of wealth. So, she denies her connection to Turgut, and decides to become Nazmi's mistress. She constantly provokes Nazmi by referring to his masculinity and by challenging him to prove his manliness and overcome obstacles preventing their union. She does not have traditional moral standards about relationships. When Nazmi reminds her in a surprised manner that he is married with a child, Gönül reacts equally surprised to indicate that it is not even a matter to mention, and calls him a fool for that. She does not mind lying to both brothers, and switching from one man to another until the right time comes to choose the best one for good. All she asks from Nazmi is a flat to dwell in and money to enjoy. Obviously, she is not the domestic type, whose sole purpose is to find the suitable husband and live happily ever after. She is extremely outspoken when it comes to clarifying her intentions in her dealings with Nazmi. Therefore, although she is presented as a calculating, sly, deceptive and immoral being, she is at the same time a very strong character as she challenges all values and the established order of the society in an outright manner. Place argues that *femme fatale* characters are presented in a negative way and from a male perspective because they seek independence and because they are not afraid of their sexuality (1998, p. 49). When Gönül talks about herself, she uses the word 'experienced in love' to define herself. Similarly, when Nazmi first expresses his negative impression about Gönül, he implies that she is

promiscuous, her presence at home is an insult to the family, and describes her as 'everyone's property'. However, soon after these words, he cannot resist her charm, dismisses his wife and his father from home, and kills his brother for Gönül, and that implies that Gönül is his type of woman after all, which is contradictory to his so-called moral standards. Once again, the femme fatale brings out the worst fears, hypocrisy, psychological problems, and biases in male characters who set and maintain the moral norms in the society. Moreover, men threaten women in the narrative with violence, and do not refrain from exercising it on both Necla and Gönül whenever they consider fit. Just as Cowie implies, male and female protagonists are not any better than each other in film noir (1993, pp. 133-136). When compared to Nazmi, Gönül shares similar attributes with him such as the urge to enjoy her sexual desires freely, live a comfortable life, deceive others when she deems necessary, and even commit murder. When compared to Turgut, she displays some similarities with him as well: Gönül kills Muazzez when she threatens to inform others about her secret affair with. She seems to protect both Turgut and Nazmi not to fight with each other. Turgut kills Gönül because she cheats on him with Nazmi, which turns out to be a matter of honour. So, both male and female protagonists are equally corrupt, prone to violence, deception, and likely to bring death and destruction to themselves and others. Ironically, the only person that shows affection and sincerity at the beginning is Necla whose marriage was ruined by Gönül. Overall, Gönül is a femme fatale embodying the vices of such women who are a threat to the idea of family and the social order, who seek easy means to achieve wealth in life by preying on gullible men, who can even kill innocent people for their self-interests, however at the same time who deal with men as morally corrupt as themselves.

Kenan is a character with religious overtones. He repeatedly appeals to god to ask for divine retribution for his elder son Nazmi for being such an evil character. He is also a gullible man similar to Turgut since he reassures himself that Gönül seeks happiness and matrimony with Turgut although at the beginning he receives Turgut's decision to marry Gönül as a huge blow to his moral worldview. Due to his friend's advice, Kenan changes his perspective taking the situation as an opportunity for Gönül to become a 'decent' person, and for Turgut and himself to do a good deed. However, lacking power, wisdom and foresight, he ends up losing one of his sons, and killing the other one himself. Kenan resembles a morality play character who has an allegorical significance: at the end of the

film, he is seen behind the bars repenting his sins and seeking forgiveness while the viewer sees the superimposed images of the two dead sons in white shirts embracing each other and making peace, a task which he has failed to succeed, and which can only be compensated by divine intervention. Ironically, Kenan blames Gönül for everything from the very beginning since she appears as an intruder into the family. He assumes the role of the investigator similar to Turgut at one point in the narrative, and uncovers the affair between Nazmi and Gönül, however he cannot blame his sons for the tragic end. His failure to evaluate the events from the beginning also contribute to the downfall of the family. He fits in Hirsh's categorisation as he plays the role of the investigator, the victim and the criminal at the same time (1981, pp. 10-12). Although not very good at it, he likes to repair clocks, frequent a coffee house to chat with other elderly people and smoke hookah, and play out in weekly gatherings in the neighbourhood, which on the whole indicate that he belongs to the good old simple days. The way he dresses probably implies his ties with the countryside or the periphery, which explains his conservative and religious frame of discourse. All these items and habits call a sense of nostalgia inherent in Kenan, who is also the narrator of the story and his moral scope is used to present the events. Therefore, a sense of nostalgia, failure to restore the order in the family, committing murder and a dedication to religious values are central to the narration and presentation of the story.

Necla, on the other hand, seems to possess many qualities of the *femme attrapée* or the nurturing woman whose priority is her husband and child. Wager (2005) defines such woman as trapped by the patriarchy (p. 4), and Necla lives in an environment where she does not have a say since the most dominant person holding power both financially and traditionally is her husband Nazmi. She is the only person in the house who welcomes Gönül, and tries to establish rapport, build trust, and promises to calm Nazmi so that Gönül can be accepted in the family. In return, she is cheated on by her husband with the *femme fatale*. Although she is naïve and artless, she is the only character who truly resists others, refuses to be part of the deception, and leaves the house for good for the sake of her baby. That reaction and willpower make her difficult to categorize simply as the domestic type due to her inner strength to take action when required. As a result, she is the only survivor who both saves her life and freedom without committing any crime;

however, just like others she ends up with a family tragedy by losing her family, peace, and security.

The family consists of three generations: Kenan, his sons Nazmi and Turgut, his daughter Muazzez, Necla and the baby who live in the same house. Their relationship with each other seems to deteriorate after the arrival of Gönül. However, Nazmi seems to be against providing for Muazzez's medical expenses as she is terminally ill, and the money spent for her is merely money wasted, which implies that he would rather have her dead. Therefore, it can be inferred that the family presented to the viewer is not producing happiness, affection, love, understanding or security, and is not united. Turgut brings Gönül home without conferring with his father or brother challenging their authority, which indicates a sense of competition or at best discordance. Gönül's presence brings all inner strain to the surface and becomes the object of rivalry propelling the family into degeneration and destruction. Similarly, the idea of marriage does not necessarily bring a peaceful and satisfactory life. On the contrary, Turgut idealizes marriage as the reward for his unconditional love for a dancer, and ironically faces deception, and Nazmi chooses the 'immoral' and attractive woman and dismisses his wife and baby whom he even calls a 'bastard'. Neither family life nor marriage is seen under a positive light throughout the film. The characters and their relationship with each other point to another noir element about the way marriage is presented, as stated by Harvey (1998) that neither of them offers any consolation, happiness, peace or security (p. 42). Both of them are constantly undermined and far from demonstrating attributes associated with them such as security, productiveness, satisfaction, happiness and comfort.

In conclusion, the main characters of *Kanlaryla Ödediler* are to a great extent designed as film noir characters possessing qualities of homme fatal, homme attrapé, femme fatale and femme attrapée. Except Kenan and Necla, the characters do not reflect clear-cut melodramatic character formation to categorise them as absolutely good or evil as they prey on each other's weaknesses and needs. Men see Gönül as a fallen woman who needs to be saved or a source for sexual gratification, but she does not act like one. She manages to follow her agenda to achieve comfort in life, and reveals her motivations very clearly. She exploits the way men perceive her: an attractive woman to be conquered. She controls the events in the narrative successfully until she is beaten by her own arrogance. As for men, they are unstable as they adjust themselves in reaction to Gönül's attitude. Turgut

turns into a self-justifying murderer from an altruistic lover, Nazmi becomes a womanizer who does not hesitate to desert and even destroy his family. They are dwelling in the grey area as characters who cannot be ideal representations of ‘proper’ individuals in the society, and hence display noir qualities blended with melodramatic modality.

6.1.3 Space and Time

6.1.3.1 Space

Although *Kanlıyla Ödediler* takes place in the city of Istanbul, the locations are predominantly in the periphery rather than at the heart of the city: the family house with a garden, the gas station, the prison, the coffee house, nightclubs, and the city with its streets, shipyard, marketplace, mosque, courthouse, police station and café. Despite the long police chase sequence, interior scenes dominate, and among interior scenes the house is significantly central to the narrative. The weight given to major specific locations is approximately as follows:

The family house: 39 minutes

The city: 17 minutes

Nightclubs: 17 minutes

The prison: 13-14 minutes

The flat and the rooftop: 7-8 minutes

The gas station: 7 minutes

The store: 4-5 minutes

The countryside and the beach: 4-5 minutes

The coffee house: 4 minutes

The family house is located at the periphery of the city in a neighbourhood where the locals visit each other weekly to enjoy each other’s company by singing songs, eating and drinking. The houses in the neighbourhood have a garden, which does not correspond to the immediate idea of a metropolitan area where urbanization flourishes. On the contrary, the house, which contains three generations, implies a traditional life style at a location far away from urbanisation. Therefore, the family house is in a safe location where the

modern urban environment cannot threaten the untainted order yet. However, once again what the house implies and what the members of the house desire in life do not correspond with each other. Unlike the conservative father, the two sons prefer to enjoy the pleasure the city offers them. When Gönül moves in the house, it may also be interpreted as the invasion of a new way of life that is incongruous with the way the traditional family is used to. That life style includes night life in nightclubs, adultery, deception jealousy, and eventually conflicts ending in death and destruction of the family. The apartment in the city centre rented by Nazmi for Gönül does not bring a sense of happiness, satisfaction or security as well. On the contrary, Gönül cannot even enjoy the house before she dies, Turgut assaults Nazmi in that house with a gun, Turgut is killed by Nazmi, and Nazmi is killed by Kenan at the rooftop. So, the struggle which begins in the traditional family house ends in the modern space reflecting the perils of the shift to modern urban lifestyle for traditional families at the cost of lives of people who are not fit for either space. As a result, neither the house in the periphery nor the one in the city centre can be associated with traditional qualities such as security, sharing, intimacy and so on, which is a recurrent theme in film noir as indicated by Sobchack (1998, pp. 144-146).

The gas station is the only means for the family to earn their living, and is significant in two ways. First, the family business is not actually based on a means of production, but the trade of a specific commodity, in particular oil, which provides cash flow without much labour. In the film, a customer complains about the oil price while handing over banknotes. It refers to a new trend in economy policies of the era which highlight agriculture over heavy industry, and all-weather roads over railroads as part of the economic assistance program as a result of the Truman doctrine⁶⁵, and the family business implies the newly emerging groups in the society who have conservative roots, but at the same time who try to adopt to the new life offered by the city. Secondly, the gas station is related to the source of the main conflict centred around Gönül and the brothers, which is essentially money: Nazmi informs Gönül that the station belongs to him, not his brother, and he can fire Turgut if he wants to do that. In return, Gönül, who also courts

⁶⁵ Joseph C. Satterthwaite summarizes the programme which underlines the significance of agricultural developments in post-war Turkey and the opinions of President Truman on Turkish example (1972, pp. 82-83).

Nazmi, completely changes her direction from Turgut to Nazmi, and soon after that dialogue, she manages to impress and seduce Nazmi. She visits Nazmi at the gas station and is amazed by the luxurious American car she sees there, and although the car belongs to a customer, she insists on taking a tour on that car. The presence of the gas station is the key element for Gönül to make a decision between two brothers to secure financial means for herself. The gas station as a business promises easy money by buying and selling, and gives opportunities for the new generation to climb the ladders easily without investing heavily in the industry. As seen in the case of Turgut, such wealth makes it possible to enjoy the night life and meet members of that part of the city, and as seen in the case of Nazmi, to ask more from life than what he already has. The workplace does not stand for production, contribution to the society, or financial security, but a place that provides opportunities for people who are not fit to make use of them and head towards death and destruction using the benefits of the workplace, which is money, and this quality is in tune with film noir spaces. Moreover, the station does not offer any kind of stability to the people working there. Nazmi is too cruel on the workers including his brother Turgut, and uses his ownership and power as a stick to tame the workers.

As for other notable spaces, they are significant in two main ways. First, even when they are ideally serene, peaceful places, such as the café where Gönül explicitly communicates her interest in Nazmi that he has become the reason for her to stay in the house, or the beach where they talk about their relationship and decide to enjoy it despite others, the events and dialogues serve for the disintegration of the present order for the family. Secondly, the places such as backstreets, the shipyard and the wholesale marketplace present lower-class people who might not have a chance to enjoy life the way Turgut usually does in the film. These places are where he tries to run away from the authority to find and kill Nazmi, who is in an apartment at the heart of the city waiting for his mistress. Turgut's route to reach Nazmi is significant: he departs from the 'family house' far away from the city centre, passes places at the periphery or underdeveloped parts of the city where people actually produce and sell goods, and where labour is important, and these people are not similar to Turgut. Finally, he ends his journey in the apartment at the city centre connoting modernity and urban space. This journey from the periphery to the centre is both physical and metaphorical indicating that Turgut and Nazmi are incongruous members of the society who are stuck between their traditional orientation

and its alternative presented by the urban spaces that they want to enjoy without reorienting themselves for the urban lifestyle. Therefore, both their journey from the family house to the flat ending in death and Kenan's journey from home and traditional coffee house to the prison signal the same danger lurking in the city for those who are not yet eligible for the modern city and what it might offer to ambitious people like Nazmi and Turgut.

In conclusion, the way space is used resembles film noir. The city does not offer any shelter or sense of security for those who are tarnished, who seek personal satisfaction and gratitude, who do not hesitate to handle conflicts by means of violence even if that means death. Since the narrative focuses on the lives of such ordinary people, the city and all the places in it reflect that mood. None of the places is productive, peaceful or comfortable for these people not because of their inherent quality per se but because of the nature of the events leading to a downfall and the attributes of the characters. Although the city is not presented as crime ridden or corrupt, the characters' world, which is mainly constructed around the contrast between the periphery and the centre, is corrupt, lacks harmony, and is full of vice, and therefore, on a microscale, space is in harmony with the core of narrative, which is structured around moral decay, emptiness, threats, deception, death and destruction.

6.1.3.2 Time

The events in *Kanlariyla Ödediler* happen in a couple of weeks in a fairly linear chronology in an episodic structure which enables the narration of events in a selective manner similar to the narration in *Kanun Namına*.

The events start at present in the story time: Kenan is in the courtroom listening to the verdict concerning himself, and then is taken to the prison to serve his sentence. This part including the introduction of the inmates in the ward and the beginning of his narration of the story lasts approximately seven and a half minutes, and in total, the time allocated for the prison sequences amount to 13.5 minutes, which is almost 12 % of the whole narrative. Therefore, the present time also bears importance, and the story continues even when the flashback ends (unlike *Kanun Namına*, which ends after the narration of the flashback). When Kenan is visited unexpectedly by Necla with her child, the story in *Kanlariyla Ödediler* has another end, a didactic end in which Kenan recites a soliloquy

about his mistakes with religious references, and imagines his sons to be reconciled with each other. So, time here has two functions: first, it covers the story told by Kenan, and second, it gives the opportunity to Kenan and the audience to contemplate and infer the best possible lesson to be taken from the story similar to morality plays. As a result, the past is connected to the present for the audience for didactic reasons which distorts the realistic effect in noir films.

The events are mainly told at present in the form of a flashback which is interrupted by returning to the present in the prison at irregular intervals. The interruptions serve as a punctuation mark during the narration to create an ellipsis smoothly, and perhaps more importantly, they reinforce the visible narrator's perspective by reminding his and the prisoners' presence and reaction to certain events in the narrative. Such guidance is connected to the prison sequence at the end that includes the lessons to be derived from the story. So, the flashbacks have two functions here: one of them is, as Luhr (2012) suggests, to create a complex chronological structure to bring together pieces of the past by the intradiegetic narrator (pp. 109-111), and the other is to create moments to remind the viewer the purpose of the flashbacks, which is to pay attention to the moral of the story not just the events on the surface. Fragmented chronology with flashbacks in film noir promises to answer questions related to how events happened that way as the narrative strictly talks about the past with a specific end usually revealed to the viewer. In *Kanlariyla Ödediler*, the answer to this question is accompanied explicitly by what might be the interpretation of these events, and it is linked by Kenan to a wish for a better future, and hence a link between the past, the present, and the future is created.

Overall, space and time bear both melodramatic and film noir elements in connection to the melodramatic modality dominating the events. While the use of space provides some characteristics associated with film noir in a clear way, the way time is used overshadows noir elements and moves closer to melodrama based on a moral perspective for the audience.

6.2 FORMAL ELEMENTS IN *KANLARIYLA ÖDEDİLER*

The prominent formal elements associated with film noir can also be traced extensively in *Kanlariyla Ödediler* in terms of cinematography, mise-en-scene, and editing. Once again, the key element that determines the film noir quality is not simply the formal

similarities between canonical noir films and *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, but the way in which formal elements are used in parallel with the narrative elements. Hence, it is safe to claim that *Kanlarıyla Ödediler* is another example of tracing film noir influence on Turkish cinema at its infancy during the 1950s. In *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, film noir quality is achieved mainly by means of a loose combination of frame composition, deep focus, shot distance, camera angle, lighting, editing and acting in accordance with the events.

The film starts at the courthouse where Kenan is sentenced to prison for murdering his son. He is then escorted to the prison where he starts telling his version of the story in a flashback. As a prisoner with some sort of integrity, he is presented from a high angle with *chiaroscuro* lighting illuminating two thirds of his face in a long take with a medium close-up that highlights the expression on his face and eyes, and leaves most of the background in dark tones to detach his expression (fig. 1)⁶⁶. As Bordwell suggests cinematographic elements are sometimes taken for granted, however a certain device, e.g. shot angle, may offer different interpretations, and their possible meaning may vary from one frame to another (2008, p. 192). For instance, a high angle is usually associated with a negative presentation of the character to belittle or weaken him, and here it seems to be used in a similar fashion to portray Kenan. However, the way the character looks (worn-out but proud, a prisoner with dignity) resists the initial interpretation of high angle shots especially when combined with the mystery created around his silence that implies he is not an ordinary convict (see fig. 2 to compare Kenan with a contemplative wise expression just before the flashback, and see fig. 60 as an example of a high angle shot with a threatening look on the character's face who will kill Gönül in few minutes). Throughout the film, the shot angles do not possess a traditional or fixed meaning as will be seen in the following parts. In this first sequence of the film, which also provides the introduction of the story, the abovementioned formal elements appear only when they are connected to the main events, and build up in parallel with the plot.

The first image of the flashback that follows the prison sequence is a textbook example of the frame composition under the influence of Hollywood cinema, and possibly and in particular film noir style (fig. 3). The unusual composition relies on pictorial quality on five planes: the hand of a waiter serving champagne, the tray on which glasses are placed,

⁶⁶ See 'APPENDIX 3: Figures for *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*' for all the figures in this chapter.

a couple (Turgut and Gönül on his lap) kissing each other, a woman watching the couple with her hand on her hip, and the spacious background with another woman with bare shoulders sitting on one of the chairs in a row. The opening frame and the ensuing sequence provide the audience with a lot of clues about the events to follow, and the main source of conflict. Until the camera is pulled back to create a zoom out effect, the couple's faces are in shadow while the space is well-lit. The emphasis is on the luxurious life style signalled with champagne, waiters, well-dressed pleasure-seeking people whose identity remains a mystery for the time being calling the viewer's participation to make sense of the props. After the zoom out, the location is set as a dressing room for dancers in a nightclub, and the woman in focus is a dancer. Her intentions about the man are made very clear instantly on the spot with an unusual frame composition again: the camera is static and at a high angle while Gönül admits that she finds his wealth attractive while the other dancer asks proper questions to fill in the audience (fig. 4). Although the main character is Gönül, she remains subordinate to the other dancer who is situated above on the left-hand side of the frame, and Gönül on the right-hand side and far away from the camera in a medium shot. Yet, when she stands up and continues to talk, the camera is at a lower angle which makes it difficult for the viewer to create a pattern to evaluate Gönül on the basis of the clues provided by camera angles and frame composition. Even when she performs her dance, as seen in fig. 5-9 (see Appendix 3), the way the angles change from a higher angle to eye-level and then to a lower angle in an uneven way, and the position of the camera, the depth of field, the emphasis due to medium close-ups and close-ups (e.g. details such as the face, the feet, the musical instruments) hint at the efforts to create an unusual presentation to show the sequence in a novel way, for example, unlike the way non-diegetic parts of films in Turkish cinema have been presented until that period, which consists of a static camera that merely records the performance for the audience with medium and long shots in long takes which are seldom diversified by close-ups.

Until the conflicts arise and the peace in the house is disturbed, the shots are usually medium-long and medium, the locations are well-lit, camera angles are at eye-level or, due to distance, do not have a significant effect. Hence, except frame composition and angles, the style does not reflect noir quality. However, when the second part of the narrative starts and Gönül starts to pay deliberate attention to Nazmi which leads to

complications, style changes as well. The fight sequence between few customers and Turgut reflects the dominant noir elements used in *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*: shadows and powerful light beams create contrast, the camera is placed to unusual spots to provide an unconventional look at the scene, and close-ups are used in such a way to create the effect that the characters are as if punching the audience (fig. 10-14). Especially the close-ups are noteworthy since acting as if punching the camera may lead to a defamiliarization effect on the viewer which might break the identification of the audience with the characters and the effect of reality. As Bordwell (1998) states classical Hollywood narration is built on concealed and unobtrusive style that renders all formal elements subordinated to the dramatic (pp. 23-24), but noir films do not necessarily pursue the same principle; on the contrary, they can employ suppressive narration. Here, by not observing the principles of invisible narration, Seden prefers the film noir approach about the ways in which the relationship between the film and the audience is established, that is, style is made obvious to the viewer, which indeed may lead to defamiliarization effect. Yet, this style is not dominant from the beginning to the end, it is rather selectively employed in certain sequences.

For instance, the sequence, in which Gönül seduces Nazmi, starts just before the family leaves the house to go to the neighbouring family to have some fun. Gönül stays at home and Nazmi joins the family but to leave the place early and return home just as Gönül wished him to do. That sequence takes place at night in the bedroom, and the style is different than the scenes shot under similar circumstances as can be compared in figures 15-17 (the shots in the same bedroom before that sequence) and figures 18-22 (the shots during the seduction sequence). The former mainly displays a mainstream style while the latter is endowed with noir characteristics in relation to the events and character formation. The change in style brings about suspense and clues about the later stage related to the upcoming seduction scene: deep focus and perspective from two different focal points reflecting the tension between Gönül and Nazmi, the grey scale which partly puts the character close to the viewer in partial obscurity whereas the other is put into focus while they are exchanging looks, minimalist acting that underlines the frame composition, distance and suspense created by juxtaposition of opposite angles and mood music (fig. 18-20). When Nazmi returns and finds Gönül waiting for him in the bedroom, the same style persists this time including more close-ups, shadow plays, and high angle

shots to relate the step-by-step conquest (fig. 21-22). At first, Nazmi seemingly rejects Gönül. Here, the mood is darkened by means of lighting, and gradually the eye-level angle turns into a high angle while Nazmi gradually melts and gives in to Gönül's charm (fig. 23-32). Until Muazzez enters after few crosscuts, cinematography and mise-en-scene remain the same, and Muazzez's intrusion gives a brief pause. Then, in the following sequence when Gönül smothers her, film noir elements again dominate in terms of close-ups, frame composition, lighting and faster editing with a faster rhythm for a short time focusing only on the brutality of the murder (fig. 33-39).

A similar approach can be traced in different scenes when the events are centred around deception. When Gönül puts on ointment to relieve her sunburnt skin after a day secretly spent with Nazmi on the beach, Turgut is mad at her absence all day and has a fit of jealousy. As seen in figures 40-45 (see Appendix 3), the portrayal of Gönül's cold-blooded deception is presented in medium shots in which facial expressions are emphasised, low key lighting which sheds light on Gönül's partly lit glamorous face while she is lying, and the frame composition which shows the viewer what the characters cannot see, that is, the look on each other's face while one of them is lying.

Another sequence involving Nazmi and Gönül also displays the same stylistic approach and makes it plausible to maintain the idea that film noir stylistics is used in a deliberate way when tarnished characters are involved in deceptive action. The living room is seen in a dim light in a long shot with a pan left that is connected to Gönül's bedroom where she is lying on the bed. There are two sources of light, one is visible at her right, and they illuminate her partly (fig. 46-47). A cut to Nazmi's partly lit bedroom shows him in the bed while eyes are open, he silently leaves the room without noticing that Necla is awake too. The crosscutting between Necla and Gönül and Nazmi ends when she enters the room to see the couple kissing (fig. 48-54). Again, *chiaroscuro*, low and high angles, medium and medium close-ups accompanied by mood music dominate the sequence. When the events are further complicated after involving Turgut, the scenes including him also display intense noir quality mainly to increase suspense and reflect the characters' psychology by means of lighting, medium shots and medium close-ups, deep focus, and shot angles. For instance, when Nazmi finally rents the flat and gives Gönül directions so that she can leave Turgut and move to the new place, Turgut arrives home unaware of Nazmi's presence there. Figures 55-60 portray the upcoming hide and seek game

involving these three main characters in a similar fashion to previous sequences charged with a similar tension. This sequence is connected to the revelation sequence in which Gönül breaks up with Turgut completely by secretly letting him know the fact that her new lover is Turgut's brother Nazmi, and Nazmi is unaware that Turgut now knows about the secret affair.

When Gönül is on the phone, the long shot with deep focus encompasses Gönül, Turgut and in the background Necla who happens to be in the store where Gönül calls Nazmi (fig. 61-62). Necla and Turgut are unaware of what is to come, but the viewer knows the intrigue, so the composition serves to boost suspense by the portrayal of the ironical situations connecting all these characters. While long shots deliver the irony throughout the sequence, medium close-ups reflect the psychology of the characters ranging from anxiety for Necla and doubt and frustration for Turgut to pride and arrogance for Gönül and Nazmi (fig. 63-68). The way lighting is used, that is illuminating Gönül fully while creating sharp contrasts on others and the interior, creates an overall dark mood in parallel with Turgut's apathetic acting throughout the sequence until he decides to shoot Gönül (fig. 68-71). After that, he starts his journey to the city centre to find Nazmi while trying to run away from the police, which entails elements of police procedures seen in noir films during and after the second phase of the classic period of film noir.

In this chase sequence, the relationship between Turgut and the city is established in terms of stylistics. In an extreme long shot, Turgut leaves the store while the crowd rushes in, and while he runs in the streets, due to that shot distance, he is presented as a small man in a giant city, and the places he runs to are lower working-class areas in and around the shipyard. The whole sequence aims to intensify the effect of the chase by means of such extreme-long and long shots from unusual angles (fig. 72-82). Throughout the sequence, natural grey scale contrasts are created under the midday sun. The contrast can also be traced by means of the incongruity of Turgut and the police officers in that part of the city. They are different from the people at work while the chase is on in terms of appearance especially at the beginning of the sequence. Therefore, the way space is utilized is important in highlighting lack of security, loneliness and estrangement. When the action dies down, close-ups are used to focus on Turgut's emotional condition as a trapped man trying to find a way out (fig. 83-88).

The whole sequence, including the shots under broad daylight, employs a wide variety of film noir elements in terms of form. Extreme-long and extreme shots are used for action sequences, and they can be differentiated from standard action sequences in the way in which the main character is not exalted or glorified. On the contrary, Turgut is belittled and presented like a mouse trying to escape from a labyrinth full of traps. When long shots are replaced with medium shots and close-ups. They reflect his emotional reactions which do not have grandeur or heroism, but apathy and distress. Moreover, as he runs away, his clothes are torn apart, his face becomes sweaty and dirty, his hair is messy, hence he is far from being a character to be identified with (fig. 89). Overall, one of the main characters, who is deceived both by his brother and lover, is not given the weight the way classic films would do by presenting the character as a hero on his personal crusade against the evil.

The same treatment is valid for both Kenan and Nazmi as well when Turgut arrives at the flat to find Nazmi, and they start fighting. The shot distance changes into medium shots and medium close-ups providing a closer look at the characters, the number of planes increase and shot distance provides deep focus with an imbalanced composition, and unusual camera angles continue to create defamiliarization effect during action sequences which present violence in an unappealing way. Such stylistic devices together with *chiaroscuro* effect due to contrasts created mainly by abundant daylight can be traced, for instance, when Kenan tries to convince Nazmi to run away before Turgut arrives (fig. 90-92), when Nazmi and Turgut fight (fig. 93-100), and Kenan tries to prevent their sons from killing each other, but fails and kills Nazmi to save Turgut (fig. 101-108).

Overall, in *Kanlariyla Ödediler*, film noir style is used in a very particular way. The stylistic devices are not consistently used in similar locations with similar characters in a similar way. The noir style accompanies the complications in the narrative which are exclusively related to violation of social values, ironic situations, twisted relationships, violent action, immorality, crime, revenge and destruction mainly from Kenan's perspective. Among many, the prominent tools employed in the films are cinematographic elements including depth of field, unusual camera angles both high and low, a combination of shot distance ranging from extreme-long shots especially for exterior scenes to close-ups especially for scenes focusing on the expressions and emotions of the character in focus.

6.3 CONCLUSION

Kanlariyla Ödediler seems to be a melodrama in terms of the moral context of the events, a blend of melodrama and film noir in terms of character formation, and likewise, displays a combination of elements of melodrama and film noir in the way in which space and time are used. Hence, in terms of narrative qualities, designating the film is not easy. The story is constructed on melodramatic conflicts among members of a family triggered by a morally questionable intruder, and the complications lead to a bloody resolution with a moral lesson for the audience. However, the main characters, especially Gönül, are drawn in such a way that they exceed melodramatic qualities since they remain in the grey area, and that prevents them to be presented as proper examples for the society in either way. The narrative is stuck in-between didactic purposes to depict the struggle between the good and the bad and the portrayal of human condition which under certain circumstances waver between socially acceptable and unacceptable patterns. Hence, the narrative deserves to be called ‘hybrid’ rather than film noir or melodrama mainly due to the apparent weight of the moral lesson and didacticism of the narrative. However, it should be noted that the melodramatic elements are not exploited completely to dominate the narrative, and the moral context is expressed in a dramatic fashion rather than melodramatic; therefore, further differentiation is required based on ‘genre’ characteristics⁶⁷.

Formal elements are given more weight than the narrative elements in the film when it comes to film noir characteristics. Seden uses a range of formal elements associated with film noir style, and among these elements frame composition, camera angle, shot distance, depth of field, lighting and acting are given weight as they are used extensively when compared with other formal devices. However, film noir style is used in a particular way throughout the film: traditional narration dominates at the beginning of the narrative, and alternates with film noir style until the resolution part of the narrative. Through this approach, for instance, film noir style implies an intrigue in the plot whereas traditional narration is used to narrate scenes without moral and criminal complications. Eventually, the style becomes a mode of articulation rather than the determiner of the film language.

⁶⁷ For a larger discussion to determine the dominant form in *Kanlariyla Ödediler*, see ‘Melodrama and Film Noir’ in chapter 11.

Hence, unlike canonical noir films, Seden does not create a noir world through narrative and formal elements, but takes a melodramatic world and describes specific parts of it in parallel with the governing theme by adjusting style to that specific theme. Taking *Kanun Namına* (1952) and the three-year period until the making of *Kanlarıyla Ödediler* (1955) into consideration, elements of film noir may well be said to exist in Turkish cinema, but not classic film noir examples as a separate genre by displaying basic characteristics in a consistent way. However, especially character formation in terms of narrative elements on the one hand and overall noir style on the other hand are internalized, adjusted and integrated in particular films of the period.



7. THE ANALYSIS OF *ÖLÜM PEŞİMİZDE*

Ölüm Peşimizde (Death Stalks Us, 1960) is directed by Memduh Ün, who has been among the most influential and productive directors and producers for almost three decades starting from the end of the 1950s. Although he started directing films in 1955, he was already an experienced director in 1960 with more than a dozen and a half films including *Üç Arkadaş* (Three Friends, 1958), which presents a touching melodramatic love story about a blind girl and three men who try to help her. As Scognamillo suggests melodrama has been present in Ün's works from the very beginning probably for commercial purposes, and he has been largely influenced by Muharrem Gürses, who is also famous for his melodramas (2010, pp. 150-151). *Ölüm Peşimizde* also includes melodrama to some extent, and interestingly enough, the film also manifests itself through a variety of cinematic means, such as social realism and film noir in addition to melodrama. While mentioning *Ölüm Peşimizde*, Scognamillo refers to the film as an effort to make film noir (ibid., p. 246), however this might be an overstatement for various reasons including the lack of some narrative and formal elements that create film noir. Ün makes use of different styles and approaches of his time, and film noir is one of them. This chapter aims to explore to what extent the film employs film noir elements among other influences, and understand the function of such elements to determine their significance.

7.1 NARRATIVE ELEMENTS IN *ÖLÜM PEŞİMİZDE*

Similar to the previous cases, *Ölüm Peşimizde* includes diverse narrative elements. The film is 91 minutes long, and is mainly about a robbery and its consequences that ruin the lives of people connected to the perpetrators directly and indirectly. The events mainly display a melodramatic quality, which functions to create and increase suspense. However, melodramatic modality is not determining the style. On the contrary, due to the changes in style, different parts of the fabula display different qualities depending on the characters involved, the places, and the quality of the events. The character formation also includes diverse elements including film noir to some extent when certain characters are the focus. As for space and time, it is not easy to reach a conclusion as once again the style determines the quality of these elements.

7.1.1 Events

The events can be grouped in four parts according to function: First, the introduction of the characters showing the motivation for a robbery and the planning stage; second, the execution of the plan with complications; third, the search for the truth; and finally, the resolution.

The first part starts by the presentation of the workers in a factory. A paymaster brings the money for workers' wages, and Namık the accountant receives the money, and attempts to take some of it, but fails. Burhan the truck driver and his fiancée Zehra are separately introduced in the same factory. The couple discuss their plans on getting married, and the children they might have. When Zehra arrives at home, she finds her brother Hüsnü stealing her money. He lectures her about marrying a rich guy rather than Burhan so as to get rid of poverty. Then, when Hüsnü complains about poverty, Namık mentions the money regularly brought at the factory, and they start to think about the robbery and probable accomplices. Later, Namık, Hüsnü, a worker in the factory called Zeynel, and an electrical technician gather to plan the robbery. The technician leaves the group unwilling to take part in the robbery while the rest agree to do it.

The second part starts on the day of the robbery. By the help of Zeynel, Hüsnü infiltrates into the building. He kills the paymaster and the electrical technician who happens to be around, and takes away the money. Burhan's father Nazif finds the dead bodies, and before leaving the area he touches the pistol dropped by Hüsnü after the robbery. In the basement, the three men meet and split the money. Hüsnü asks for more, and takes the larger sum of the money by threatening Namık. Namık visits Ayten, a dancer in a club, who is the main reason for Namık to steal the money from the safe. She steals some money from Namık. The next day, Namık restores the money he has previously borrowed into the safe, but the money is still missing. In the meantime, the police officers suspect Nazif, and when the finger prints on the pistol match, he is sent to prison to be tried for murder, which requires death penalty. Namık is also arrested because of the missing amount, and is sent to the same prison with Nazif. After the trial, Hüsnü beats Zehra for refusing to leave Burhan, and locks her up, but she runs away to Burhan. Although she wants to stay with Burhan, he walks her to his aunt's house to avoid rumours. Then, Burhan visits the coffee house in the neighbourhood, but being the son of a criminal now, people give him the cold shoulder. When Hüsnü enters the place, they fight. After that,

Burhan is fired from the factory, and then, he asks Zehra to leave him for her own sake, but Zehra refuses to do so.

The third part starts when Burhan becomes suspicious of Ayten. Namık asks Ayten to visit Hüsnü to ask for money, and she goes to the neighbourhood. Burhan escorts her to Hüsnü's house. Ayten delivers Namık's message, and later on, when they meet in the club, she flirts with Hüsnü. She dances for him in her house, and takes the money. However, she lies to Namık, and pretends as if Hüsnü has not given her any money. Later, Burhan approaches Ayten, and asks questions about her and Hüsnü, but fails. Hüsnü notices him leaving Ayten's house. Upon learning that Burhan has been investigating the case, Hüsnü decides to kill him with the help of Zeynel. Hüsnü and Zeynel ambush Burhan, knock him unconscious, and then drag him onto the railway track. Burhan escapes from the train, and Ayten, who has been following the other men all along, saves Burhan, takes him to his home, and treats his wounds. Zehra comes to see Burhan, but comes across Ayten. Supposing that they are having an affair, she leaves the place in disappointment, and takes refuge in Hüsnü's house. Namık sends a threatening note to Hüsnü to send the money, which Hüsnü has already given to Ayten. So, Hüsnü understands that Ayten has stolen the money, and beats her unconscious and takes her away to kill her, but she flees. Ayten goes to Burhan's house to save herself, but Hüsnü finds her there, stabs her to death, and calls the police to slander Burhan. After Burhan arrives at home, the police come and find Ayten's body, and try to arrest Burhan, but he runs away.

The final part starts when Burhan visits Zeynel in the docks to ask questions about the robbery and murder. Hüsnü is also there to convince Zeynel to set another trap for Burhan. When Hüsnü leaves, Burhan follows Zeynel, beats him, and learns that Hüsnü is responsible for the murder. Since Zeynel is already regretful of his past deeds, he agrees to join Burhan to get at Hüsnü so that Burhan can save his father from capital punishment. In a foundry where they decided to meet, Hüsnü is cornered by Burhan and Zeynel, but he kills Zeynel and runs away home to collect the money he hides. At home, Zehra witnesses that and is knocked unconscious, and put in the car by Hüsnü. Upon crashing the car, he runs on foot to another facility. Burhan slips in the place and beats Hüsnü. Zehra is shot during the fight, but she manages to open the locked door to let people

outside in. Burhan forces Hüsnü to confess his crimes in front of the people and the police. Hüsnü is arrested, and Burhan and Zehra unite.

All the events are narrated by an extradiegetic narrator without a voice over. As the large number of events suggests, the fabula is action driven rather than dialogues. Usually the viewer already has the visual knowledge about the events and the characters when they are verbally made explicit in the course of the narrative. The viewer is in a way forced to follow the fast pacing events to see what is going to happen next. So, the abundance of events function to arouse suspense, and gradually deepen the complications caused by a series of criminal acts and misfortunes. From the beginning to the end, the unifying element of the events is crime: the robbery and the murders that entail. However, the story not only focuses on crime, but also touches upon the social conditions and psychological motivations that might play a part in it. The conflict arises because of the gap between the desired lifestyle and the actual conditions the characters are trapped in. The robbery and the tragic consequences that entail force Burhan to try to solve the case. That alone is enough to mention a certain affinity with film noir as per Park's broad definition of film noir underlining the subject matter as crime, the contemporary world where there is an investigation carried out by an agency (2011, pp. 25-26). The story to some extent fits in this description. The events revolve around four lives: Burhan, Hüsnü, Namık, and Zeynel. Each man has a different path to follow, and therefore their motivations and conditions are different, but none of them are criminals by nature. While Hüsnü, Namık and Zeynel form a gang for the robbery, Burhan becomes the 'investigator' to solve the case and find the perpetrators. In addition to these basic lines, the presence and the weight of a femme fatale figure also plays a significant part in the flow of events. Ayten the dancer is the core reason for Namık to try to climb the social ladder easily so as to provide her with a luxurious life in return for her attention. She is not merely the spice of the film, she actively changes the direction of the events by interrupting Hüsnü more than once, especially when she steals the money Namık demanded from Hüsnü, and when she saves Burhan. Therefore, in some parts of the story, the femme fatale's domination also points to a noir quality in addition to the elements of crime and investigation in contemporary time and space.

However, the way the events are presented also calls the melodramatic quality. Durnat attempts to define melodrama in cinema by mainly distinguishing it from drama.

Melodrama, to him, is ‘an arbitrary extension of drama’, which refers to a crude and superficial approach to the events and the characters that are not developed at all (1991, p. 136). So, melodrama approaches the subject matter in a simplistic manner, and concentrates on showing what happens rather than how or why in a profound way. That rather broad definition can be narrowed down by listing basic characteristics of that superficiality as Neale suggests: the conflict between the good and the bad, which ends with the victory of the good; the basic character typology as the hero, the heroine and the villain; an expressive narrative tone which is built on larger than life aesthetics especially in terms of emotional expressions; and a formulaic plot usually episodic and is driven by the villain (2000, p. 185). From that perspective, *Ölüm Peşimizde* is a melodrama: the lack of main characters in the grey area; the presence of the triumphant hero (Burhan), who beats the evil character (Hüsnü), leading his fiancée, the heroine (Zehra), to a happy end. Besides, the fact that the events are shaped by the acts of Hüsnü, which also include a series of coincidences and unexpected turn of the events, points to melodramatic modality. Moreover, the superficiality of the fabula is evident as the causes of the events are not analysed deeply or situations are not elaborated, but rather the reactions to certain actions are in focus. So, emotional and physical intensity in expressions is used overwhelmingly especially in the scenes in which Hüsnü, Burhan, Zehra and Ayten take part. Therefore, melodramatic modality is the governing feature of the fabula rather than film noir.

The fabula blends elements of melodrama and film noir. To begin with, the robbery is the main source of complications, and the characters commit crime to find a solution to their problems, not because they are experienced criminals by profession. All the same, for instance, instead of making explicit the social reasons pushing the individual towards alternative and usually unlawful solutions to improve their social and financial standing in a social order which crushes the individual, fist fights, domestic violence, guns, setups, misunderstandings, coincidences dominate the story, hence melodramatic modality. Despite that, however, the events do not pose a didactic stance immediately unlike *Kanlarıyla Ödediler* because although the conflict takes place between the good and the evil, actions committed by other people (namely Hüsnü, Namık, Zeynel and Ayten) victimize innocent people (namely Burhan, Zehra and Nazif). Yet, except Zehra and Hüsnü, who remain more or less the same (strictly morally good and bad) from the

beginning to the end, the characters behave the way they do for a specific reason connected to social dynamics. They lack hope that the established system is capable of providing them their ideals, and the ambition to achieve their desires as quickly as possible drives their action. However, the social conditions and the political or economic root causes, such as the dissemination of American lifestyle and culture accompanied by the promises to create millionaires among the society, are ignored, and the narrative only focuses on petty individual conflicts without making connections between facts and fiction, and that also provides a base for melodramatic approach.

The social dimension which is lacking overall in the narrative might be found as a spoonful of social realism by means of Zeynel's character. From a historical perspective, the 1960s are considered to be the period when social realism in Turkish cinema started to appear. After summarizing the political conditions including the oppression caused by the Democrat Party when they were re-elected in 1957, Halit Refiğ states that some artists and thinkers of the period sought refuge in existentialism whereas others including Refiğ himself and Nijat Özön advocated social realism in cinema, and they mentioned neorealism, American realism and the like to prove their point, and Memduh Ün was reportedly among the directors who gathered to discuss specific films and problems of Turkish cinema (2013, pp. 24-25). Italian neorealism that Refiğ mentions appears as a possible source of influence in the post-war milieu. However, Turkey did not have post-war conditions that has a significant weight in Italian cinema to conceive a new realistic look at the society and the individual, so the influence might be relatively limited in Turkey. Mark Shiel describes Italian neorealism by underlining a new approach to the style used in filmmaking: the choice of locations, unprofessional actors, lack of stylized scenes, natural light, a documentary quality in filming that does not intervene in the action, and similarly the lack of complexity in editing. That style was used to present the lives of ordinary people in their own conditions rather than studios with developed technology and professional staff. The narrative structure included ideological, in particular Marxist leftist, motifs that touch upon the social problems from a critical perspective as well. The narratives did not strive to achieve a resolution to emotionally satisfy the viewer in their cinematic experience (2006, pp. 1-2, 12, 80). Perhaps ideology is not directly involved in the way scenes with Zeynel are filmed, but he is presented in a realistic setting in actual locations together with ordinary people as hands at the bottom

of the social ladder. He is associated with the harsh conditions he has been working and living in the city as a rural man who has a family in his village to look after. The migrating villagers to big cities have become a social issue aggravated in the later decades, and Zeynel is portrayed physically and mentally as one of them. For him working in the city is the solution to his problems about life conditions. His motivation to become a criminal is due to the fact that he may never save enough money to buy cattle and land for himself to provide for his family. Contrary to the scenes including Hüsnü, Ayten and Namık, the scenes mainly related to Zeynel as a working-class person achieve a sense of realism in terms of style as well due to the documentary quality by means of camera distance and movement, frame composition and longer takes that portray him in his environment. Such a clear and distinct approach to the motivations for crime is not visible in other parts of the narrative, and therefore the social realistic effect seems to be limited as an influence.

On the other hand, one should also keep in mind the relationship between melodrama and film noir. Elsaesser refers to film noir as the *série noire*, and gives the pattern about the relationship between the femme fatale and the gullible male protagonist to discuss the way melodramatic elements are used implying the inherent presence of melodrama in film noir (1991, pp. 78-79). In addition, Neale also points to a similar case that films which were categorised as melodrama previously are now being called noir films (2000, p. 169). Therefore, film noir and melodrama may not be easy to distinguish from each other in terms of narrative qualities. Both Elsaesser's example and Neale's discovery make it difficult to categorise *Ölüm Peşimizde* as the film incorporates elements that could be meaningful in either category. Hence, from that perspective, melodramatic elements seem to be more dominant than film noir in *Ölüm Peşimizde*.

In short, due to all the above-mentioned influences and approaches in the construction of the events, the story does not reflect a single means of expression, and displays a patchwork quality. Crime is definitely the unifying element; the gullible Namık's motivation to trigger and complicate the events leading to even deeper complications around his environment is the key to the events; the course of events is indirectly, and later on directly, affected by the femme fatale character; one of the characters starts to investigate the criminal activity; and all these elements point to film noir. But, the second half of the narrative actually focuses on the victims created due to the robbery and the misfortune that follows, which intensifies the melodramatic effect. Even the investigation

leads to highly emotional, psychological and physical confrontations between characters. All these elements are made clear by means of the style, so actually the events by themselves are rather inadequate to draw a conclusion about the extent of film noir effect on the events since realism, melodrama and film noir elements intertwine with each other. One may further draw the conclusion that the cinematic legacy of the 1950s created mainly by Akad and Seden is internalized and even integrated with the new current perspectives of the time such as social realism in film making, and hence film noir elements are not employed for experimental purposes anymore, but is used to some extent for specific purposes to build certain parts of the story.

7.1.2 Characters

The character formation in *Ölüm Peşimizde* bears significant traces of film noir elements although for a limited number of characters. The main characters are Burhan, Zehra, Hüsnü, and Namık; and the side characters worth mentioning are Ayten and Zeynel.

Burhan is a truck driver who is planning to get married with Zehra, who is a worker in the same factory. He is drawn as a romantic man who is also in line with the traditional expectations from a man as a protector, a provider and a proper responsible family man. He does not like the idea of a working wife, and defines his future wife's salary as 'woman's money' despite Zehra's proper reasoning about the necessity to have two salaries. His main reason to object a working wife is peer pressure and social rejection, yet ironically, he suffers from both in due course of the events. He also steps out of his neatly drawn ideal family man description when he approaches Ayten, the dancer, to gather information by pretending to desire her, and kissing her. Although by means of an ambush, he is beaten by another man, and ironically saved by Ayten whom he would never approve on moral grounds. He is left by Zehra when she mistakenly sees him lying half naked in the bed when Ayten is also around with her underwear. He is first presented as an ideal match for women, and then gradually, he loses ground by being despised by the public, being dismissed from the factory, feeling inadequate for Zehra, being beaten by Hüsnü and Zeynel, being saved by Ayten, and being left and rejected by Zehra. After that, he manages to fight the 'bad guys', and recovers from the wounds opened by others damaging his traditional mild machismo by the help of Zehra while fighting with Hüsnü. On the whole, however, he is not an ideal hero, he has psychologically challenging experiences, and he welcomes them humbly every time. Following Wager's description

of ‘homme attrapé’ that tries to find a middle ground in the society being unable to resist the society’s demands, and survives in his domestic area (2005, pp. 4, 20), or, following Park’s description of classical male flawed noir protagonist that steps in the grey area (2011, p. 23), Burhan may not be classified as a typical ‘homme attrapé’, but he is definitely not a ‘homme fatal’, but at the same time not completely a melodramatic subject. He is drawn, in a way realistically, as a male protagonist endowed with weaknesses and strengths of an average person. Although eventually he is the ‘good guy’ fighting for a good cause (saving his father from death sentence), his screen time is surprisingly short to be regarded as an action-hero or a melodramatic hero. The screen time for Burhan is around 43 minutes, and 15 minutes of that time is in the last part. That also indicates that he is not the usual action hero on which the story is constructed.

Hüsnü is a taxi driver and a macho man whose main concern is money. Appearing after the first ten minutes, he takes approximately 35 minutes of the screen time, which also makes him a prominent figure besides Burhan. Being Zehra’s brother, he tries to exercise full control over his sister including her money, and even attempts to manipulate her to marry a wealthy man instead of Burhan. He has sadistic tendencies, and violence is his immediate tool to solve problems. He is one of the planners of the robbery, but swindles his partner Namık by taking the money away with him. He kills three men and Ayten, attempts to kill Burhan and the Zehra, but only wounds her. He is completely soaked in crime and from the very first scene that he appears (stealing money from Zehra’s purse) to the last one (failing to kill Burhan and Zehra and confessing his crimes) he emits death and destruction without hesitation. ‘Grey area’ that is used to define film noir protagonists would be improper here as he is clearly the melodramatic evil character. From that perspective, he seems to be drawn as an evil character in a different way than, for example, Turgut in *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, who displayed his psychopathic side after an intrusion from outside in the course of events. Singer draws the established characteristics of the ‘villain’ in action melodramas, and states that the narrative function of a villain is to ‘victimize’ the protagonists by means of ‘abduction, torture, and every form of imperilment’, and the protagonists either fight back or suffer from the evil deeds of the villain (p. 55). The above summary of Hüsnü’s action in the narrative regarding almost all the characters in the narrative, it is obvious that he is very two dimensional, and he victimizes all the characters he comes across either giving them a chance to retaliate (e.g.

Burhan, Zehra) or to sacrifice themselves (e.g. Ayten). Therefore, Hüsnü resembles that of a melodramatic villain who is formed for functional purposes to create, trigger, lead and intensify certain emotions and reactions in the viewer through his evil deeds. He creates contrasts between good and bad from a moral perspective and complications for the story by posing a threat to almost all characters involved in the crime directly or indirectly.

Zehra, on the other hand, is a woman encircled by a traditional environment. She is a tender character believing in the motto 'love conquers all' in dealing with the hardships imposed upon by circumstances and Hüsnü. However, she proves that she is not a cardboard melodramatic character as she has considerable weight in the story by affecting the course of events. To begin with, she somewhat resists the established social role of woman as a housewife merely taking care of the house and the children. Her look is more realistic than Burhan when they plan the marriage, and her opinions rest on reason to conclude that she also needs to work and earn money to support the household. Secondly, she immediately leaves Burhan when she thinks he has been cheating on her, and does not trust or forgive him until she realizes that Hüsnü has been the source of evil, and Burhan has really been trying to solve the case to save his father. Yet, when she is on bad terms with Burhan, she unknowingly helps Hüsnü discover that Burhan questions Ayten to find the killer, that is Hüsnü. Thirdly, she is such a character that can resist the established conservative social norms as she proposes Burhan to stay and live with him in the same house before they are officially married. Finally, she tries to save Burhan by attacking Hüsnü in the final scene, and is wounded, and despite that, she manages to let the people in to take hold of Hüsnü. So, she displays a determined and strong character who can endure physical and emotional violence exercised by her brother Hüsnü, and who can risk her life when necessary. Therefore, Zehra is by no means a doll, not a purely melodramatic character who sits passively waiting to be rescued. She resembles that of strong film noir characters although she is not a textbook example to mention a film noir influence since she is flawless and definitely not in the grey area at all.

Namık is a typical middle-class victim/scapegoat that Hirsh (1981) categorises as one of three film noir protagonists. Although Hirsh mainly discusses the concept specifically in the context of American history and social culture, the description of the protagonist in the broader sense points to a more universal figure. His portrayal of the type fits perfectly

on Namık's character as well when he mentions the “‘innocent’ man momentarily and fatally tempted by luxury” as a popular type in film noir (p. 22). His desire to enjoy a lifestyle that he cannot afford is the main drive for him to devise a plan to rob his workplace, and the main deriving force is Ayten, who is a dancer in a club visiting the customers' table when she thinks it is profitable, so Namık wants money mainly to afford her company. He is only seen in a couple of places such as the office, the club, the den (basement), and Ayten's house. Being the planner of the robbery and hence a criminal, he is too naïve to handle Hüsnü properly. When he is arrested because of the missing money in the safe, he does not inform on his accomplices, yet he threatens Hüsnü after some time to help him be acquitted of the charges. Moreover, he is swindled by Ayten, who steals the money Hüsnü has given her for Namık. In the end, he is the only imprisoned person, he is cheated by more than one person, and loses his job, his freedom, his dreams and the lifestyle he has yearned for. The final blow comes when he learns about Ayten's death, and becomes psychologically deranged. Overall, he perfectly fits in the film noir protagonist who is ‘tarnished’, stuck in the grey area without a definite moral stance, prone to crime, and eventually falls victim of others and becomes a scapegoat.

Ayten is a specimen of femme fatale by the way she lives, looks, and behaves. She has blonde hair, make-up, and fancy clothes that underline her sexually charged femininity; she is flirtatious and seductive towards men with a fat wallet, uses her body to mesmerise gullible men like Namık, likes money even to the extent of stealing it; smokes, drinks, dances, and traces opportunities to maintain her life standards. She seems to fit in Place's ‘spider woman’ who poses a threat to men by her very existence (1998, pp. 55-60). She has influenced the course of events many times through Namık, Hüsnü and Burhan causing trouble for them while helping others and vice versa. She is different from the survivalist femmes fatales though as she is not seeking ultimate independence because she is almost always dependent on other people's money, mainly male customers who seek pleasure and entertainment in nightclubs. However, she also turns out to be an ambiguous femme fatale as she cares about Burhan in an unusual way: she follows Hüsnü when he sets a trap for Burhan to kill him, she takes Burhan home when he survives the oncoming train on the rail track, and treats his wounds. The characterization here may seem to be repeating a cliché: all women are attracted to the main ‘good’ protagonist, and sacrifice themselves when necessary. However, although she makes it obvious that she

likes him, she also does not mind ruining his relationship with Zehra. So, she has not transformed into an angel all of a sudden because of Burhan's influence on her, and that maintains the ambiguity about her in the viewer's mind as far as judging her character and motivation is concerned. Hanson (2007) provides a different look at the female noir characters that they do not have to split into two strict groups as the 'femme fatale' and 'femme attrapée' since the characters may exceed boundaries, and trespass into another's domain (p. 32). That perspective does not have to be at odds with the popular categorisation, it rather completes and deepens the character formation by highlighting subtleties in characterization marking that noir characters are not merely and necessarily two dimensional cardboard characters. Hence, although one may infer that both Zehra and Ayten serve the purpose of highlighting the significance and charm of the male character, actually both characters can act in a nonconforming manner that exceeds what might be expected of them in a traditional frame of mind; that is to be a domestic and passive housewife or be a completely destructive and seductive villain. Yet, the domestic type such as Zehra can be a strong character that resists the norms, endure psychological and physical attacks, and enter a physical fight as well marking that she is not the passive type. In a similar manner, Ayten can reveal the caring affectionate woman in her although she is ultimately an ambiguous femme fatale, and is in a way punished by Hüsnü in Burhan's house while Zehra survives a bullet essentially indicating the moral struggle between the good and the bad in the framework of the melodramatic quality blended in film noir codes in terms of character formation. Yet, regardless of the intentions of the story, Zehra punishes the bad character whereas Ayten is punished by him, which eventually serves the moral perspective of the story.

Finally, Zeynel is a significant character who complicates the character formation even more. He is a villager in the city working as a 'hand' who tries to earn money enough to buy cattle and land to cultivate, and return to his home to reunite with his family. Being a member of the lower-class migrants, he agrees to take part in the robbery for easy money just like others, but he is the only one who truly regrets his deeds. Considering that the migration movement started in the 1950s and escalated in the 1960s with an ever-increasing rate until the 1990s, Zeynel is mainly a functional character that touches upon contemporary social problems of the period in Turkey. He wears traditional rural outfit, and stays in a hut shared by workers like him living in dire conditions. He resembles the

fallible noir character that is fatally doomed; however, the character is drawn as a lower-class man who yearns to provide for his family by farming, but finds it impossible without a shortcut, that is stealing, and when considered along with the style, that portrayal might be related to neo-realism rather than film noir. Memduh Ün reports that the film was first adapted from a novel about two Italian anarchists, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti (2009, p. 97). The incident is about a robbery and death sentence that follows a trial. The two Italians were found guilty of murdering a paymaster and a guard who were carrying the payroll of a shoe factory that was seized (Musmanno, 1961, pp. 28-29). Memduh Ün claims that the final script hardly resembled the novel due to the extensive changes in the script to make it more appealing, it nevertheless keeps Zeynel as the representative of local social problems, which adds a touch of social realism. He is physically strong and sturdy, yet the psychological burden weakens him to the point of redemption. He almost lets Burhan beat him hard at the end of the chase scene, and does whatever is asked of him, and eventually killed by Hüsnü.

Overall, the characters in *Ölüm Peşimizde* are mixed type including diverse profiles with elements of film noir, melodrama, and social realism. Even single characters do not have a fixed set of traits, and are formed as a mixture of at least two diverse effects. Burhan, for example, is a melodramatic hero representing the antidote of Hüsnü as an evil character, yet is portrayed in a rather realistic fashion as well. He can be beaten, insulted, fired, and isolated in the community without any compensation in the course of the story; he lowers his moral standards to collect information from Ayten by courting her, and ends up abandoned by Zehra; he beats Zeynel, however it seems to be due to Zeynel's guilty conscience rather than Burhan's heroism; and finally, he cannot establish a complete control over Hüsnü in the final sequence without Ayten's help. Also, Hüsnü almost willingly confesses his crimes while Burhan is shouting at him to make him confess in front of the police. These details deny him the role of a hero who is capable of taking care of problems by himself. On the contrary, he is in need of others almost all the time including Zehra who opens the door to let the people and later the police in. On the other hand, Hüsnü is a melodramatic character whose main function is to upset the order in the community by bringing death and destruction, killing people, exercising violence, committing crimes, creating, intensifying and maintaining emotional reaction in the viewer. Zehra also includes melodramatic qualities as well as realistic details. She is not

a baby doll, and can endure great pains both physically and psychologically, and survive in the traditional world that does not allow a female individual to have her own path. Yet, she resists almost all predicaments imposed upon her by Burhan, Hüsnü and the society. Namık and Ayten embody film noir elements to a great extent. Namık is the gullible middle-class man who falls into crime, and becomes a victim of his own design, and Ayten is the femme fatale character whose mere presence is the core motivation for Namık to trigger the events in the film. Finally, Zeynel seems to be a local and contemporary figure directing the attention to social problems of the period, the hands who migrated from the periphery to big cities to survive and take their share from the wealth accumulated there. So, film noir elements are among a range of influences in the formation of the characters together with melodrama and realism.

7.1.3 Space and Time

7.1.3.1 Space

Ölüm Peşimizde employs a variety of places, and more than half of the screen time takes place in public spaces including the factory with its garden, offices, production areas; docks area, a club, a coffee house, streets, a tavern, a foundry, a prison, a mosque, a courtroom and so on. On the other hand, private spaces include Burhan's, Hüsnü's, Ayten's houses, the basement as the den, a cottage and an automobile. The weight of the prominent spaces are as follows:

The factory: 19.5 minutes

Burhan's house: 9 minutes

Hüsnü's house: 8.5 minutes

Ayten's house: 6.5 minutes

Docks area: 6.5 minutes

Streets: 6.5 minutes

The den (basement): 5.5 minutes

The club: 5 minutes

The prison: 4.5 minutes

The coffee house: 4.5 minutes

The foundry: 4 minutes

The rest of the story time is divided among the municipal building, the courtroom, the tavern, the railroad track, the cottage, the mosque, Hüsnü's car, the worker's house, Burhan's aunt's house, Kadir's house, and the fabric store.

All the spaces are in a relatively poorer district of the city where mainly the working-class people with relatively lower wages and migrants dwell. They do not merely function as a stage for the events to take place as the very existence of the factory with its management, production line, administrative office contributes to the reception of all the events and the characters. It is the sole reason for three different characters (Namık, Hüsnü and Zeynel) with different backgrounds and personality traits meet. Therefore, without surprise, in the first half of the film, the factory is the central space for all the action. Although it is supposed to be associated with production, wealth, and labour, at the end of the very first sequence, it turns into an opportunity by means of which people with different aims can climb the social ladder by stealing money, specifically the workers' wages. On top of that, two people are shot dead in the premises, Burhan is fired, his father Nazif is arrested for murder, and Namık is arrested for corruption. So, the place right away loses all positive traits associated with it, and becomes a crime ridden place producing mainly sorrow, death, and disappointment for the people involved. Hope and disappointment, production and unproductivity go together in the same place.

As for the houses, except Burhan's house, others do not undergo a change to lose their main function. The house in which Hüsnü and his sister dwell has never been a happy household for Zehra due to her cruel and evil brother. When he is seen for the first time, he is caught stealing Zehra's money, and that may be taken as a foreshadowing for the coming events as he keeps committing crimes, torments Zehra, deceives people, and hides the stolen money in the house, which eventually becomes like a headquarter for him. Similarly, Ayten's house is her base to further her conduct with men she meets in the club. Designed and furnished for the purpose of seduction, the house is not meant for a traditional family lifestyle anyway, and maintains that impression from the beginning to the end. Therefore, it might be inferred that these two houses reflect the deteriorating state of the life in the city either due to lack of affection and security, or moral decay in the

form of greed and promiscuity that lead to danger lurking around the ordinary and innocent people like Burhan, Zehra and Nazif, and ruin their life. On the other hand, Burhan's house deteriorates gradually in the course of the events, and starts to lose the traditional assumptions related to home when it is first visited by Ayten. Her presence interrupts Burhan's relationship with Zehra, and after that, she is killed there by Hüsnü who infiltrates the place, and then Burhan is accused of murder again in the same house. So, in a consistent manner, the houses in the film do not provide the inhabitants with physical or emotional needs that is associated with a house.

Other places such as the den of the gang, the club, tavern, prison, and the foundry in the dead of the night are all associated with crime already, and can be clearly categorised as film noir spaces if formal elements support that impression too, and indeed they do, and will be explored in the coming part. The club and the tavern in the film are frequented by Namık and Hüsnü, and mainly portrayed as places where people drink heavily, spend abundant money that might be earned illegally as Namık and Hüsnü do, and invest it on women working there to accompany men. Namık, for example, falls prey to his desires in such a place and feels the need to find financial means to satisfy his desire to be with Ayten. Sobchack calls such places as unproductive and restless where people do not actually communicate with each other at all pointing to a sense of estrangement and loneliness (1998, pp. 157-159). Similarly, although Namık communicates his feelings to Hüsnü about his financial condition, Ayten and her indifference, it is not in the mood of sharing of emotions. The conversation is linked to the plan for a robbery, and instantly, the place becomes a part of that crime ridden and dangerous world. Namık's loneliness and disappointment intensify rather than dilute in Hüsnü's presence, and following Hüsnü and Ayten's betrayal, he ends up in despair and madness when he is sent to prison. Similarly, almost all places that especially Namık and Hüsnü set foot in, such as the basement, the railroad, the foundry or even the coffee house, are bereft of their immediate function and transform into a place for instability, insecurity, and danger. So, these places may be called film noir spaces especially in the way in which the characters use them, and the way the function of these spaces transform.

Overall, almost one third of the events takes place in the private space and the rest in the public space inhabited by a variety of people of different social status who are directly and indirectly affected by these events. Especially when the ways in which these places

are presented are taken into account in terms of style which from time to time resembles a documentary quality, this adds to the film's social scope. Therefore, the style used for the places above usually contribute to the dark world created by greedy criminal people such as Hüsnü and Namık in the story. However, the social realism that is evident in and around the factory, the neighbourhood, and sporadic scenes in the city should also be kept in mind when the use of space is discussed. Here, the same space, for example the factory, is portrayed both from a social perspective and as a film noir setting, and these two perspectives do not blend with each other. Hence, film noir influence is not the main and the dominant factor in the narrative in terms of space, but one of the influences due to the complexity of the presentation.

7.1.3.2 Time

Ölüm Peşimizde covers a span of a couple of weeks in the present time in the story, which includes the orderly state of life in the factory, the planning of the robbery, the execution, the investigation, the resolution of the crime, and the confession. So, in a linear fashion, the narrative time serves the purpose of building suspense through the events to come rather than a retrospective structure encompassing the past and the present of a given world. Except the shot in which Burhan remembers Hüsnü and Zeynel dragging him to the railroad and leaving him there to die, the narrative lacks flashbacks, the presence of which is considered to be an important characteristic in many noir films, although not necessarily all of them.

However, gaps are used extensively so as to focus on certain events, and select the most riveting ones, and hence, the chronological structure is partly fragmented. For instance, right after the scene in the basement where the gang plans the robbery at night, the sequence about the execution of the plan follows without any delay the next morning. However, that is not a pattern in the film as scenes taking place in the factory (especially in the opening sequence and the first part of the narrative) have a different approach about time. The opening sequence introduces the characters and the place, the factory, which unites the characters, place and action. In that sequence, the characters are seen in their natural environment such as the production line and while doing their job. They are also seen among the workers populating the factory, and in interaction with them almost in real time. The details are not left out unlike the scenes that follow, and although they are still functional shots to provide information about the characters, space and so on, they

nevertheless create a sense of realism adding to the social realism present in chunks when the machines are the focus while operating, or characters are seen as if they are merely a detail in a larger life.

The events flowing in time in film noir usually connote a sense of decay, death and hopelessness as the events follow each other to a conclusion that indicates that the passing of time means a dead end for the tarnished noir characters (Schrader 1972, p. 11; Luhr 2012, pp. 109-111). That is not the case in *Ölüm Peşimizde* as time flows to rather a happy end although much has been lost, and people have been killed. So, the happy end is not that happy after all, and time is of essence for Burhan and Nazif to save Nazif from execution until the end of the narrative. Surely, Nazif is saved, and Burhan and Zehra are united, but the world has turned into a different place, and definitely not for the better. From that perspective, time does not bring happiness, but only a sense of consolation for the survivors. Similarly, the viewer experiences what the characters experience at present, and the linear structure enables the viewer to find answers to the ‘what’ questions about the events and the characters rather than ‘how’ questions. So, overall, the way time is used does not provide any significant difference that might distinguish the film from a melodrama or a traditional narrative.

In conclusion, in terms of space and time, although the places match some aspects of film noir space as they are real locations in the city and can be associated with the dark side of the city, they are presented in different ways for different ends throughout the narrative incorporating both a sense of social realism, melodrama and film noir effect depending on the events and the style employed for specific scenes and sequences. As for time, it does not reflect noir elements clearly, it rather serves moral purposes inherent in the melodramatic quality of the narrative.

7.2 FORMAL ELEMENTS IN *ÖLÜM PEŞİMİZDE*

As mentioned in the previous parts, the film includes diverse formal elements including social realism and film noir in its portrayal of the events, and especially noir style can be traced throughout the film. The most prominent elements are related to cinematography and mise-en-scene, and these elements are used for a specific purpose in specific sequences that are woven around the theme of crime and characters connected to it.

However, in the first part until the beginning of the scene in the club, the style is more or less traditional narration with minor significant shots to mention in noir style. The shot duration varies between 4 to 20 seconds, and the camera is placed at a distance where it merely witnesses the action in a space achieving almost a documentary quality. For instance, a car arrives at the factory, the workers are seen in a long shot, Zeynel is seen carrying a sack and arguing with his mates, and Nazif is seen calming people down and making jokes when the paymaster appears. The camera is mostly at eye-level shooting people in groups of two, three and more in daylight in medium and long shots (fig. 1-4)⁶⁸. The first meaningful close-up is seen after the paymaster delivers the money to Namık: the camera focuses on his hands grabbing the money on his desk and putting in the safe (fig. 5). Then, the traditional narration continues with workers, including Zehra in another section of the factory with mainly female workers, in their natural environment in large groups (fig. 6). After the factory scenes, Burhan and Zehra walk at the coast talking about their future plans, and the style is not any different than the previous scenes: a tracking medium shot in broad daylight in a long take which lasts a little less than one minute. Such scenes continue until the appearance of Hüsnü in his house and the club sequence, and then, continue in a classical fashion afterwards when the couple is seen again in the streets and the neighbourhood including the coffee house and the worker's home with an invalid. When the gang gathers in the den (fig. 7), the style turns to noir style and the interplay between the traditional narration and the noir style continues to an extent that the noir style can be associated with shots related to the crime and criminals as well as the characters affected by them. Here, the pattern is the shift from traditional narration to realism and to film noir style. Place and Peterson describe the photographic quality of noir style as mainly based on antitraditional lighting and camera, which manifests itself in *chiaroscuro*, depth of field, unusual angles and extreme close-ups (1974, pp. 66-69). *Ölüm Peşimizde* not only includes the majority of these formal devices, but also employs them deliberately in parallel with the themes of the narrative.

The first sequence to take into consideration to mention the noir style is the club sequence in which Ayten is seen for the first time in a dance performance, and that performance is shot in totally a different style than the shots until that sequence. Ayten smokes a cigarette

⁶⁸ See 'APPENDIX 4: Figures for *Ölüm Peşimizde*' for all the figures in this chapter.

under a lamp post vaguely illuminated by it. The low angle makes it even more difficult to see the composition clearly, so basically the shot is meant to appeal to the imagination of the viewer. Two men appear in the shadows, and money is thrown on the floor while the camera turns to a higher angle focusing that action, and Ayten steps on the money. A tilt up changes the angle again to a low angle while she looks down on the men and smokes. A cut to Namık in a medium close-up shows how thrilled and gratified he is by Ayten's very presence (fig. 8-13). The show might be interpreted as symbolic of the conflict between the west and the east due to the appearance of the two men: one is in rural outfits while the other looks like a French or a Western man. The latter takes hold of the money and makes the conquest in a medium long shot from a low angle from where Namık also watches. Here, the camera is placed to mimic a customer's point of view placing the film viewer in such a position due to the camera angle and distance (fig. 10). As the man on the platform throws money at Ayten she undresses taking off one article of clothing at a time ending up almost naked, and that routine is also significant as it portrays the current relationship between Namık and Ayten as well. While she undresses, Namık admits that he is addicted to Ayten. After Ayten's performance, she ridicules Namık when she turns down his offer to sit at the table, and then, Namık mentions his plans to rob the paymaster the next time, and hence the crime is introduced. The medium close-ups including Namık and Hüsnü, the way the show is presented, and the topic of conversation (the money Namık borrows from the safe, Ayten, poverty, and the robbery) are complementary of each other. In that sequence the notable formal devices are low camera angle, *chiaroscuro* lighting, unusual angles, and medium close-ups to depict the psychology of the men while conversing about the money and the robbery.

Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the first time Ayten is seen is also the first time the noir style is used. Similarly, the scenes including crime and mainly Hüsnü are filmed in the same fashion too. Further in the film, when the gang meet in the basement, the style continues in the noir fashion. While Namık tells the instructions for everyone about each step the shot distance is almost always medium close-up and close-up. The place is gloomy and depressing due to the low ceiling and slightly low camera angle that includes the ceiling contributes to that dark feeling. The low-key lighting creates a *chiaroscuro* effect and the faces are distorted revealing both the psychology of the characters and the intense overall psychological effect created by the situation and the place (fig. 7). That

specific use of the noir style continues when the gang meets after the robbery. The disagreements are expressed, Zeynel regrets the murder, Hüsnü snatches the money and leaves the place leaving Namık behind in disappointment and confusion. In this scene, low angle, *chiaroscuro* lighting, and medium shots dominate mainly in the form of bust shots which underline the facial expressions of the characters in a tense situation. So, the connection between form and content is evident in these scenes as well.

The repertory of the formal elements used in the film is to a large extent limited to camera angles, camera movement, lighting, shot distance and frame composition. As stated above, these devices are first used in the first sequence that has an affinity with the themes of crime, criminals, money, characters with evil intentions and the dark world. On the other hand, Burhan as the ‘good’ guy has been mostly presented by means of traditional narration (fig. 14). When he starts to have problems related to the robbery and murders (e.g. his father is sent to prison, sentenced to death, Zehra is beaten by Hüsnü to enforce a separation with Burhan, and so on), the noir style is seen in the scenes Burhan appears as well, and it might not be a farfetched conclusion that the change in style is deliberate. For instance, in the scene in which Burhan tries to convince Zehra to part with him for good, the close-ups with a *chiaroscuro* effect portray his distress and troubled state as a man of grim future without a job and professional or financial prospects (fig. 15). However, in the shot-reverse shot routine, Zehra’s face is seen well-lit creating a contrast with the way Burhan is presented. While Burhan is standing, in the background, the cast shadow on the wall with horizontal shades creates a confined space for Burhan whereas Zehra stands in front of a window with a curtain designed in light colours (fig. 15-16). When the two characters are shot in pairs in the same frame, Burhan is no longer seen as in the dark anymore, and his face is well-lit by the same setting with Zehra while she vows to be on Burhan’s side (fig. 17). Although one might take it as a coincidence, it is also probable that the shift between the noir style and the traditional style serves a change in the visual meaning as well as expressing the characters’ current emotional state, e. g. Burhan may only recover from his problems by the help of Zehra, and not alone.

The scenes involving Hüsnü continue to be shot mostly in noir style: Hüsnü convinces Zeynel to kill Burhan while Ayten eavesdrops. After an ellipsis, the ambush sequence starts at night near the railroad. The composition of the shot is in noir style considering the relationship between the action and the presentation of the action: the passing of the

train in the background while the two men are hiding and waiting like stone statues carved by the strong light source intensifies suspense (fig. 19). The two men in the dark almost do not move until they notice that Burhan approaches. The depth of field enables the viewer to see both parties in action in the frame. When Burhan is knocked unconscious, the light source on the ground illuminates the two men's face creating a deep contrast with the dark background and distorting the faces, almost making monsters of the two men (fig. 19-21). The railroad track with the train running fast, the desolate environment, the night, alternating long, medium shots and close-ups with low-key lighting and the theme of crime affecting the three men and Ayten who has been spying on them all contribute to the noir sequence (fig. 18, 22-25).

The last third of the film, from the scene in which Burhan in his bed remembers the other night and Hüsnü and Zeynel knocking him unconscious to the final scene, is dominated by the noir style except the scene in which Burhan tries to reconcile with Zehra, and the chase sequence in which Burhan catches Zeynel to question him. Other than these two sequences almost the entire last part is shot at night, in a variety of places including Burhan's home, which is now a setting for a setup, and displays characteristics of the noir style. To begin with, Burhan in bed remembers the day in a medium shot which becomes a close-up after a zoom in to introduce the superimposed shot of Hüsnü and Zeynel trying to kill him the other night. That shot is connected to the car scene, in which Hüsnü means to kill Ayten, but fails when she flees and takes refuge in Burhan's house. Medium shots with high angle and *chiaroscuro* lighting are used to depict the escape of Ayten who pretends to be unconscious to save herself. She, then, runs to Burhan's house to seek shelter but to no avail. That sequence is shot in the same manner as well: mostly low angle is used when Ayten is in focus in a variety of shot distances with a *chiaroscuro* effect. Especially Hüsnü is presented in close-ups in such a way that his face emits terror and horror when lit from below as is the case in many scenes in which Hüsnü either makes plans, threatens, beats, and/or kills people. In the murder scene, extreme close-ups to faces and the switchblade tell the story creating the Kuleshov effect through which the viewer can easily construct the scene (fig. 26-31). After that, Burhan falls in the trap set by Hüsnü, and is arrested for murder after Ayten's body is found in his house, and he runs away. In that sequence, similar formal devices are used with the previous sequences with the noir style, and the main difference is the addition of deep focus in the shots in which

suspense is maintained in the exterior shots and when the characters are not fully aware of their environment as in the police chase (fig. 32-37). Also, frame composition with unusual angles in specific scenes should be added as a distinguishing aspect in collaboration with other formal elements (fig. 33-34).

The style changes to the classical fashion when the scene in which Burhan meets Zehra in the garden of the mosque interrupts the highly dramatic action sequences. Then, the sequence in which Zeynel is first visited by Hüsnü, and then by Burhan who spies on Hüsnü is a mixture of styles. The scene starts in a realistic mode in which the workers in their environment are seen doing their job, and Zeynel is among them first shot in a long shot, and then, shot distance gradually gets closer to him finally portraying an exhausted honest worker rather than a criminal. The on-location shooting in the docks area with all the authentic objects and people in it adds to that realistic effect, and until the chase sequence starts, that style is maintained. Such shots let the viewer explore the frame in detail due to the longer shot duration as opposed to shorter duration and shot distance in the medium shots connoting the noir style. Then, the sequence turns into an action sequence in which fast editing, a variety of shot distance and angles befitting the cat and mouse play is employed to reflect the dynamism of the action until the end of the sequence including the fist fight between Burhan and Zeynel.

Immediately after the sequence in the docks area, the style shifts to noir style once again, and is maintained until the end of the film for almost ten minutes. Beginning with the prison scene in which Nazif paces the prison ward, suspense is created by means of lighting, a range camera distance, acting, and the mood music. Nazif is seen in a long take with a restless state awaiting his final destiny (fig. 38). That scene is connected to the final sequence that starts in the foundry while Burhan and Zeynel wait for Hüsnü to come. Immediately at the very beginning, portrait shots reveal the characters' psychology: Burhan is eager and alert whereas Zeynel is thoughtful. These shots are followed by a long shot with a deep focus that uses perspective pointing the entrance where Hüsnü is expected to arrive (fig. 39-42). The place looks shabby with old machines and junk objects partly in shade and partly lit. Mood music contributes to suspense all the while when Hüsnü enters the place in a long and then a medium long shot, which is replaced by a very dynamic zoom-in to his torso (fig. 42-44). The movement of the camera continues by a zoom in to Zeynel. The medium shots that focus on the characters' facial expressions

are edited successively to create that sense of a final life and death confrontation between two groups to settle the issue (fig. 45-47). When compared to the previous action sequence in the docks area, the difference in style is obvious, and the reason for that might be connected to the desired or intended effect: the previous sequence is more dramatic dealing with the emotions of a countryman who tries to run away from the crime ridden world and seek an honest way of life with hard work, his regret about the crimes he committed (fig. 48-51) whereas in that sequence the emphasis is on the fight between the good and the evil. Hence, the change in style makes it possible to create the atmosphere for such effects which eventually creates a different language for different sequences for different purposes. The action is usually presented in two ways: medium close-ups to emphasize emotional expressions (fig. 52), and medium long shots to emphasize the action itself, e.g. stabbing in the back, running away, relocating, shooting or tricking the opponent etc. (fig. 53, 58). Furthermore, the sequence in the foundry, in which Burhan fights and beats Hüsnü with the help of Zehra, displays the same style consistently: mainly the lighting determines the overall mood by creating a dim, gloomy atmosphere, the details of the environment are barely distinguishable for both the characters and the viewer. The camera angle is seldom straight-on, is usually a low angle just below the eye-level of the character, and at other times, a high angle, and these unusual angles create an unusual look at the characters, setting and the action, which produces an interplay among these formal elements. The shot distance is usually close to characters in medium shots, and close-ups focus on the faces of the characters, or directly on objects in a way directing the attention of the viewer to a specific point without offering a chance to explore the place in detail (fig. 54-57). Such shots take total control over the spectator by directing all the attention to a single point, and again as seen previously that is usually emotional expressions on characters' faces – another characteristic of classic film noir.

Overall, formal film noir elements are evident in *Ölüm Peşimizde*, but to a limited extent and for a specific purpose. The style is not homogeneous or consistent throughout the film, and that is noteworthy because of the social realism effect that is visible in the scenes related to spaces about production, workers, and the neighbourhood of ordinary lower/middle class people with ordinary lives. Besides, the scenes that do not include crime or perpetrators such as Hüsnü and Namık are shot in the traditional fashion. So, the noir style is used to distinguish circumstances, characters and action in different

sequences, to create a certain mood, which is usually dark and tense around the theme of crime and evil, and to create a specific language which visually delivers the message even when there is too little dialogue. To that end, the stylistic tools are usually the lighting, camera angles, frame compositions, camera movements (e.g. canted camera), deep focus, the use of perspective with deep and racking focus, and close-ups focusing on facial expressions that include larger than life intensity in hatred, spite or anger, which recall melodramatic modality interwoven with film noir.

7.3 CONCLUSION

Unlike the previous cases, *Ölüm Peşimizde* is made by an experienced director with relatively a richer legacy of the 1950s. Probably because of that, the film incorporates diverse influences in terms of both content and form including melodrama, social realism and film noir all in the same body to varying degrees. In terms of film noir, being influenced by true events to some extent, the events point to both social realism and film noir at the same time. The unifying element of the events is crime, the robbery, and the consequences of it on a range of people connected to each other, however, the main structure is posed as a battle between the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’, hence melodrama. Nevertheless, the melodramatic modality is constantly compromised because the story is action-driven, the complications arise due to the crime with an apparent social and individual background, and melodramatic elements are not dominant throughout the narrative to make it a melodrama as a ‘genre’. Therefore, the narrative elements are rather elusive, and resist rigid categorisations. As for the characters, a similar conflux can be observed: some characters including Namık, Ayten, and to some extent Burhan seem to bear film noir elements in their formation whereas Zeynel and Zehra are formed of different elements: social realism in the case of Zeynel, and at first sight melodrama in the case of Zehra, but she is more than a melodramatic character. Hüsnü also bears film noir traits, but he is more of a melodramatic villain. In a similar way, the locations are all urban places, and rather than being mainly a stage for the actors, they are part of the story contributing to the action by their very presence with sound and image. However, the ways in which they are presented, meaning the form, usually determine their quality, so determining the noir quality is not easy by merely looking at the places where events take

place. Hence, once again, narrative elements display diversity, and film noir is not the dominant factor, it is rather blended with other influences as one part of a whole⁶⁹.

The determinant which gives the noir quality to abovementioned elements is the style, and the film noir elements are used for a specific purpose. The change in style also changes the language, and the way events and characters are presented. In the shots in which a certain sense of realism prevails, long and medium shots with daylight or well-lit settings are seen, the settings are authentic places and the cinematography resembles a documentary approach recording production stages, the condition of workers and so on. The scenes that employ noir elements, on the other hand, utilize the *chiaroscuro* lighting, high or low angles, medium shots and close-ups, unusual frame compositions and the action that relies on emotional facial expressions which leaves little space for the viewer to contemplate on the action or the image. Hence, film noir seems to have evolved to create the mood, and is used to indicate a change in the tone, to introduce unlawful or troubled characters, and determine the quality of the action which focuses on criminal activities. Especially in the case of *Ölüm Peşimizde*, by shifting between different film languages, film noir has become a new means of expression by exploiting the dramatic power of film noir to deepen the melodramatic effect by blending social realism, melodramatic modality and film noir, and creating a transgeneric film. The way Burhan (in different parts of the story in different spaces), Zeynel (in his natural environment and then the crime world), and Zehra (throughout the film as a mildly melodramatic character) are presented in terms of style signifies that clear separation. The difference between scenes with a different formal approach reveals the fact that film noir has been absorbed as a visual means, and is seen as a medium to be utilized to enrich film language. The selective application of noir elements by Memduh Ün, who is actually famous for his melodramas, would mean that film noir has already become an integral part of mainstream Turkish cinema at the beginning of the 1960s after the introduction of noir elements in a rather experimental way during the first half of the 1950s.

⁶⁹ Similar to *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, *Ölüm Peşimizde* is also further discussed to determine the dominant form, and distinguish melodramatic and film noir elements by taking form and content as a whole into consideration. See 'Melodrama and Film Noir' in chapter 11.

8. THE ANALYSIS OF *KANLI FİRAR*

Kanlı Firar (Bloody Escape, 1960) is directed by Orhan Elmas, and he is also credited for the script based on the story written by Metin Erksan. Elmas started directing films in 1954⁷⁰, so he was already an experienced director having directed 10 films before he made *Kanlı Firar*. However, Özön describes his earlier films as each one worse than the other, and states that *Kanlı Firar* is unexpectedly mature of Elmas. He even compares the film with Akad's earlier 'noir' films, and concludes that *Kanlı Firar* is more proportioned, sentimental, and even better at achieving 'poetic realism' than Akad's early films (2013, pp. 168-169). The film definitely achieves a sense of realism especially in the way in which the main character is developed, and film noir elements are visible in certain episodes in the film. This chapter focuses on how *Kanlı Firar* blends diverse elements, and determines the ways in which film noir elements are employed.

8.1 NARRATIVE ELEMENTS IN *KANLI FİRAR*

Kanlı Firar is rather short for a feature film, and is approximately 78 minutes. Unlike the previous cases, the protagonist is the main focus of the narrative, and the narrative basically tells the dramatic story of a rural man who is released from prison, and starts a new life in Istanbul but fails to break the vicious circle, and ends up in prison. The dominant quality of the narrative is realism, however, rather than neorealist approach, poetic realism can be traced especially due to the style. On the other hand, the realist effect is rather in the way the psychological depth of the main characters is built, and therefore, the events gain more significance as long as they serve that psychological dimension. Film noir elements are blended in the realist narrative, and are visible only in two episodes of the narrative.

8.1.1 Events

The fabula can be divided into four parts on the basis of the turning points of the story. The first part provides the background of the main character, the second part is about a

⁷⁰ Giovanni Scognamiglio claims that Orhan Elmas directed his first film, *Üçüncü Kat Cinayeti* (Murder on the Third Floor), in 1957 (2010, p. 308). However, Nijat Özön states he started in 1954 (2013, p. 168). Also, the first film directed by Elmas is stated as *Yolculuk Var* (Journey) in 1954, and the poster of the film confirms the information (İnanoğlu, 2004, p. 71).

fake love story, the third part is about the robbery, and the last part is about the escape and resolution of the events.

The first part includes Tahir's background and his present state: Tahir kills a man who has seemingly raped a woman who is implied to be Tahir's wife. Tahir finds her motionless body in the bed. That event is presented in the form of a dream sequence, a flashback. Eight years have passed, and Tahir wakes up on the eve of the day he is to be released with two other inmates: Hakkı and Avni (the Istanbul⁷¹). After bidding each other farewell, the inmates go their separate ways. Tahir checks in at a hotel, and starts working as a welder in the shipyard. At the hotel, in a room, a promiscuous woman called 'sweet Nermin' quarrels with a man and dismisses the man, who seems to be a wicked man having an affair with that woman. Then, she visits Tahir, seduces him, and they copulate. After that, while wining and dining at a shabby tavern, the wicked man and his bully friend arrive in order to confront Tahir and Nermin. Although Tahir tries to avoid it, they fight, and Tahir beats the bully. Later on, the wicked man and the bully visit Tahir with three other men. They beat Tahir, but eventually Tahir wins the fight, and saves the woman. One evening, Tahir is on his way from work to home, and the bully and another man with a pistol ambush him. After the brawl, the bully is accidentally shot by his friend who aims at Tahir, and Tahir stabs that man in self-defence, and runs away.

The second part starts at the Ortaköy pier as Tahir is sitting at the bench contemplating. A sad looking woman (Türkan) walks past him, and stops at the edge of the platform looking away in a depressed state. Tahir walks away at first, but returns to talk to her. She bluntly admits that she wants to die, and sarcastically asks for help. Upon Tahir's offer, they sit at a café to talk about Türkan's problems. She mentions falling in love with the wrong man, who has deceived and left her: here the implication is about Türkan losing her virginity. Tahir offers to replace the man so that Türkan can go home without the risk of her father's insults. At Türkan's house, Tahir ensures her father that he means to marry her, and as a result, the father welcomes him while at the same time he asks for money. In the meanwhile, the police investigators start an investigation about the murder Tahir committed. Türkan and Tahir meet, and talk about their dreams by portraying their

⁷¹ The character is almost always called 'Istanbul' to refer to his hometown, Istanbul. That might be an implication for the rarity of convicts from Istanbul.

extremely idyllic ideal life style and marriage. In the hotel room, Tahir remembers the murder scene and the conversation with Türkan, and smashes the mirror in a fit of frustration. He hears about the police officers climbing up the stairs to visit him and runs away, calls Türkan, and meets her at the café. He proposes to her, and they decide to marry. First, they go shopping to buy a ring, and then, go home to talk to Türkan's parents to inform them that they are going to leave that night. Türkan's father wants money for bride price.

The third part starts when Tahir meets Hakkı to take the money he needs. Hakkı has a plan for a robbery, and includes Tahir and Avni (the Istanbuller) in his plans. The three men talk the plan over, and after eight hours, the three men start the robbery: they enter the building, climb up, and Avni picks the lock on the door. Tahir knocks out the first watchman while others try to open the safe inside the jeweller. The second watchman searches for the first man, and noticing Tahir, he shoots at him, but Tahir manages to knock the second man out, but a man in one of the office rooms hears the gun shot, and calls the police. Avni opens the safe, Hakkı puts all the valuables in the bag, and the three men rush out of the building, but the policemen arrive in time. Hakkı fires his gun, and is killed in return. Avni is arrested. Tahir is shot too, but runs away with the bag given by Hakkı. He arrives at a pharmacy and forces the pharmacist to treat his wound, and heads for Türkan's house. The pharmacist calls the police, and at the police station he identifies Tahir in a picture. Tahir arrives at the house, and hands the money to the father, who has read the newspaper and learned about Tahir's criminal record and sentence in the past, and uses that information to extract more money.

The final part starts in Türkan's house. Türkan sees the news about Tahir on the newspaper, and upon learning that he is a murderer, she turns against him. Tahir takes the entire family hostage. Despite Tahir's words of love, Türkan despises him. The father tries to escape, but is caught by Tahir. They run out of food, but Tahir does not let them out. Türkan regrets everything expressing her disappointment in Tahir. The father offers to help him run away for a sum of money. Türkan's friend visits the family, but Türkan does not betray Tahir. Then, while Tahir tries to take care of the wound himself, Türkan comes and dresses his wound. She asks him to leave, but their love revives, and Türkan agrees to go with Tahir in the morning. Tahir leaves money for the family, and leaves the house with Türkan. He buys tickets at the train station where the policemen also arrive to

find Tahir. Tahir and Türkan get on the train, and settle in a compartment. The police investigator sees him through the window. Tahir tries to run away leaving the bag with Türkan behind. Tahir is arrested, and put in the car with Türkan's father, who is also handcuffed. The train leaves the station.

The events are centred around the main character Tahir and the turning points in his life which lead him to a downfall. The episodic nature of the plot enables selective narration, and therefore the narrative jumps from one event to another. The narrator is extradiegetic, but the voiceover and the dream sequence cause a shift in narration providing a sense of intradiegetic narration since all the events are related to Tahir. Crime seems to be at the centre of the narrative at first glance due to the murder committed by Tahir, the imprisonment, the robbery, the police investigation, and the fugitive's effort to escape, however crime is subordinate to the dramatic story of an individual who might be perceived as a victim of powers beyond his control. At least, this is one of the possible interpretations of the film as the character tries hard in his own way to change the conditions surrounding him: after his release, he finds a job and works to save enough money to buy cattle and land, and return to his village. But, he is provoked by the bullies, and kills a man in self-defence, which entails more complications. From that perspective he is trapped in a vicious circle: as an ex-convict and a peasant, he would not be able to defend his case, and be imprisoned again. To break the chain, he agrees to commit another crime to be able to start a new life with Türkan. Therefore, the broad definition of film noir is not seen here. The initial crime is honour killing, and the robbery as crime covers only a small part of the fabula: the investigation is the police procedure, and is overshadowed by the dramatic course of the events. The police investigators are seen on duty in four very short scenes only, and their presence has no significance or weight except in the final scene. Therefore, the series of events might be considered to be dramatic in nature, yet blended with elements of film noir chiefly because of the way certain parts of the narrative are presented.

Rather than crime, the events are mainly about Tahir as an individual from the lower class, and his struggle to establish a new life for himself in the brief period of freedom after the initial murder which is given in a flashback in the form of a dream sequence: the scene is without dialogues, and is left in obscurity, and the reason why Tahir killed the

man is neither explained nor developed in the course of the events⁷². At a certain point in the narrative after he meets Türkan for the first time as a date, the spectator is able to hear the conflicts in Tahir's mind in the form of voiceovers: he remembers dialogues that have both positive and negative effects on him, which ends in his smashing the mirror upon remembering the voice of the murdered bully. He breaks his image into fragments similar to his identity broken into pieces. He thinks of Hakkı, who has promised him help; Türkan, who has promised love, affection and a happy future; his own voice articulating his dreams and misfortunes; and the bully, who threatens him and is killed. All these people have different influences upon Tahir as an individual in a society, which underlines the significance of outside forces as 'others' on the individual. The determining force is not the individual himself, but a combination of uncontrollable conditions that inevitably and explicitly -at least for the spectator- drags the character to his doom. Hence, the narrative makes extensive use of existential motifs to convey that sense of pessimism. Porfirio claims that as much as visual style and the theme of crime, the psychological depth of film noir is also one of the major defining elements of the noir films. He calls it 'the underlying mood of pessimism', and links that mood to existentialism (1996, p. 80). Such pessimism prevails in *Kanlı Firar* too: the sense of pessimism starts in prison, continues outside when Tahir finds himself in trouble due to Nermin and the bullies, intensifies when Türkan is introduced as a woman who wishes to die, and takes complete control after the robbery. Throughout the film, Tahir portrays his dream of saving money and returning to the village with money to buy land and cattle, an aspiration that is present in characters from the countryside in slightly different forms in *Cingöz Recai* and *Ölüm Peşimizde*. However, in *Kanlı Firar*, Türkan also pictures her ideal world which intersects Tahir's world in many ways. They are seen portraying their joint dream world with their kids, land, cattle, and hopes, however they both fail. Unlike other characters in the previous cases, the characters are already at the lowest point in

⁷² In the dream sequence, the spectator also watches the events that happen when Tahir is not present in the place. Therefore, the dream is constructed by his imagination and memory, which puts doubts about the whole event's authenticity and reliability mainly because the cause-effect relationship to understand the true nature of the events cannot be establish without the account of either parties, i.e. the woman in the bed and the man Tahir killed. Tahir's discomfort may be related to that lack of information as well.

their lives at the beginning of the narrative, and return to that level in the end when the events are put in chronological order:

Tahir kills a man (negative), is released (positive), finds a woman to start enjoying life (positive), is attacked and beaten twice (negative), kills a man (negative), meets Türkan (positive), joins the gang (negative), robs the jeweller (negative), takes the family hostage (negative), reunites with Türkan (positive), runs away with Türkan (positive), and is arrested (negative).

Türkan is deserted (negative), thinks of suicide (negative), meets Tahir (positive), learns that she is deceived (negative), turns against Tahir (negative), reunites with Tahir (positive), runs away with Tahir (positive), is left alone after Tahir is arrested (negative), and ‘probably’ will not get away with the bag full of valuables (negative)⁷³.

No matter how hard these characters try, they fail to create a world of their own, and the brief moments that promise hope and happiness for the future are immediately undercut by the successive events. Such pessimism is reinforced not theoretically, but practically as an outcome of a bitter life experienced by the characters. They return to where they have started once again similar to the myth of Sisyphus, which is the cornerstone of Albert Camus’ exploration of the absurdity of life and the temptation of suicide. Camus proposes revolt to defy the idea of suicide, which also overturns the false deduction that revolt leads to suicide. Similar to Sisyphus, who returns to his burden each time the stone falls back, perseverance is the key to see that life goes on (1979, pp. 52-54, 110-111). When Tahir and Türkan first meet, Türkan announces that she wishes to die, and ironically asks whether he could do something about that. Tahir objects to her without producing a profound counterargument, but describes death as ‘dirty’ and ‘disgusting’, and tries to make her refrain from suicidal tendencies. He makes use of the years ahead of Türkan as the central argument, so he places hope as the primary reason for perseverance. On the other hand, Türkan describes ‘being alive’ as a crime when living is not a pleasant experience echoing the argument Camus also cites as what constitutes the very idea for some people to terminate their existence: life is not worth living or not worth the trouble.

⁷³ The last item relies on probability because the film ends in obscurity about Türkan. However, the police investigator’s order to stop the train immediately or at the next station implies that Türkan will not run away.

The events throughout the film provide tests and obstacles for Tahir and Türkan to try their motivation to resist and survive, and eventually they fail. Although the voiceover at the end, which repeats the hopeful dialogue between Tahir and Türkan, implies that Türkan will wait for him until he is released, her initial reaction when Tahir is arrested is to take off the necklace he has bought for her for marriage, and to put it on the desk, which implies that she might cut her ties with Tahir. So, Tahir might begin to carry his burden once again in prison, and Türkan might be overwhelmed once again with her burden by being left alone the second time, and revert to her original position she has expressed at home while she is held hostage: she describes waiting for Tahir as wasting her years.

In terms of existential motifs, Porfirio also pays attention to the film noir hero: the hero is vulnerable and at a loss, and not a hero but a 'non-hero' being unable to control the course of events. He is lonely and alienated, and experiences events without a meaningful explanation and full of violence that might emerge from any corner, and seeks sanctuary and order to be able to make sense of the chaotic world and to renew himself (1996, pp. 85-93). Surprisingly, Porfirio's description fits perfectly in Tahir's experiences in *Kanlı Firar*. The character will be explored in more detail in due place, however in terms of the events, the existential undercurrent can be traced. Except the initial murder, Tahir tries to stay away from crime and danger, but he is attacked, provoked and tempted more than once. He does not even fight back until another person (sweet Nermin) is in danger, and simply takes the blows. He is lonely until he meets Türkan, and soon after their union, Türkan also leaves him when his identity is revealed, and in the end, he ends up as a lonely fugitive. The second murder he has committed happens in a brawl accidentally, so he is not in full control of the events. Tahir also seeks some sort of stability and order, and the sanctuary is Türkan's house where he actually creates another chaos for the family. The ultimate exit from chaos to a balanced state is in the countryside according to his reasoning, but fails to achieve it as well. From that perspective, existential motifs are abundant, and the style plays an important role in underlining the abovementioned qualities.

Besides existential motifs, 'fatalism' is also present in the narrative. Regarding film noir, Sanders refers to fatalism to explain the domination of the past on the present in the sense that the individual is not free to choose as the past deeds are overwhelmingly in effect (2006, pp. 97-98). Although the idea of fatalism is at odds with the existential stance that

‘being is choosing the self’, fatalism in *Kanlı Firar* goes hand in hand with existential motifs. Tahir has his own perspective to justify criminal acts, however he seems to be doomed by the initial murder he committed. He cannot recover from the domination of his past: he chooses to stay in the city, and similar to the past experience, when he is in trouble, he cannot make use of civic authorities such as the police or the justice system, and he continues to try to solve the problems himself. He is from the countryside where there is a different code to solve problems, and his criminal record is a threat for him. His past prevents him from becoming a member of the society, and he seeks another convict’s help that requires him to be involved in a robbery, become a fugitive, and eventually a prisoner. Moreover, in his relationship with Türkan, his past is a secret and when reaches the surface, it leads to his condemnation by Türkan. Hence, the past determines the present at every stage, and creates this line of events. If *Kanlı Firar* were to be a film noir in the classical sense, the events would form a plot of irony due to the inescapable unhappy end waiting for Tahir despite all his effort to build a better life for himself and Türkan.

So far, *Kanlı Firar* seems to have a limited connection with classic film noir tradition. There is a murder at the beginning of the story, yet crime is not the central element. The first murder is an act of revenge, the second one is self-defence at best, and only the robbery is clearly linked to crime. The robbery and the following events take place in the second half of the narrative, so the fabula is divided into two parts: the film is approximately 78 minutes, and Tahir talks to Hakkı triggering the robbery sequence after almost 40 minutes are gone in the film. In the first half, a dramatic story of an ex-convict is narrated as he tries to start a new life in a city to become a decent member of the society. Moreover, the story is fragmented to some extent, but it serves two purposes: to explain the psychological burden on Tahir, and to state the background of the character. Neither the dream sequence nor the voiceovers are part of the puzzle structure as there is no puzzle related to crime in the fabula. Therefore, although such elements are associated with film noir, they are not necessarily indicative of noir quality here.

Overall, *Kanlı Firar* remains elusive resisting the application of a formulaic approach. To take one for instance, Spicer provides a formula to determine noir films, and it mainly focuses on a fragmented fabula by means of voiceovers, flashbacks, dreams, and intradiegetic narrators. The narrative is built on murder, violence, a robbery scheme, or

other types of crime, and there is a puzzle structure that complicates the fabula, and creates a labyrinth to be solved (2010, pp. 212-214). *Kanlı Firar* includes a dream sequence, voiceovers, *noir* criminal activity in the form of murder, and even a robbery scheme and the application of it. However, eventually, the film continues to be more of ‘something else’ besides possessing a noir quality. The dramatic effect in the first half of the narrative is too overwhelming as it focuses on an ordinary man experiencing hardships which eventually prevent him from achieving his desire to have a peaceful, quiet life in the countryside shared with the person he loves. Therefore, the narrative cannot be categorised as a noir film despite displaying many elements of it.

8.1.2 Characters

The film has only two main characters: Tahir and Türkan. The side characters worth mentioning for analysis are the father (name unknown), Hakkı, Avni, and Nermin. None of the characters in the narrative are flawless, and each character produces an excuse to justify their action for themselves.

Tahir is not easy to define due to multiple dimensions he displays as a character. He is originally a peasant from the countryside, and he is in Istanbul to serve his eight-year sentence in a prison. He murders two men, takes part in a robbery, and takes an entire family hostage; however, despite being immersed in crime, surprisingly he is not similar to classic noir characters or the male protagonists in the previous cases. On the contrary, he is portrayed as a reserved, quiet, and somewhat retiring character, who is at times a dreamer, but at the same time, a tough person with a blank expression on his face most of the time. He does not even display machismo, he tries to stay away from trouble, and until another person is hurt, he does not even seem to care about being beaten by others. Tahir is a tarnished character, who is portrayed from an existentialist perspective in his dealing with the world. He is morally ambiguous as he justifies the crimes he commits, and tries to create his own set of values in a world in which he cannot penetrate the society. In rare instances in his dealing with others, Tahir is seen as an affectionate person showing signs of civility even in the middle of a crisis: he saves Nermin, he pretends to be Türkan’s lover to save her from humiliation, and he cares about the ill baby at the pharmacy, which eventually works against him as he frees the pharmacist. He is not the established film noir character, yet he is not also similar to the exceptional noir protagonists that contrast with the masculine hero described by Luhr. He calls them ‘lost souls’ who undergo

emasculation, and are led by others, especially by women (2012, pp. 29-30). In Tahir's case, he is in charge of the situations on individual level, and is not led by others, not by Nermin, Türkan, or any other character at all, but it is the conditions that trap him from the very beginning. Surely, Tahir is not a melodramatic character as well despite his cliché dream to return to the countryside, buy land and cattle to live a life of peace. However, Thompson and Bordwell's description of characters in 'Poetic Realism films' makes sense as the missing part of the puzzle: they point to characters 'living on the margins of society', 'unemployed members of the working class', 'criminals' with 'a life of disappointment' who end up with disillusionment (2002, pp. 289-290). As an ex-convict, Tahir has become a welder, a member of the working class, but cannot maintain that status, and becomes a criminal again. Instead of the countryside with a new beginning, his struggle ends in a police car. He is a man of contemplation as well as a man of action. His pensive attitude resembles the protagonists in 'Poetic Realism films' as well. The style is used in such a way that the pressure on Tahir may literally be seen through camera angles and acting. Despite his well-built body, his posture is almost always poor when he communicates with others, and his shoulders are down, which adds a belittling effect to the character, and the few shirts he wears are buttoned up tightly squeezing his neck giving him an uncomfortable air. On the other hand, his psychological condition breeds aggression which usually entails violent behaviour when he is, or he feels cornered. He grabs and rubs his head in a bewildered state, and that gesture is first seen before the fight sequence in the ruins when the two bullies attack him, and after that fight, when the attackers all die. He also hears sounds in his head, and remembers words uttered by other people. In the hotel room, he remembers the dead man's words and his own words to warn him, and then, smashes the mirror in a fit of rage. In such moments, the psychological burden is overwhelming, and he bursts out when he cannot take it anymore as if he is under the control of impulses beyond his command. The root cause of such instances might be connected to the initial murder as a traumatic experience, and the opening sequence of the film portrays that his past, the moment he has killed the man, haunts him over and over again, and he wakes in the middle of the night. Hakkı marks that Tahir has never had a comfortable sleep throughout the years in prison, which indicates a guilty conscience. The psychosomatic gestures, voices, and his retiring nature might also be linked to that sense of guilt, which determines Tahir's new life after his

release. Hence, the character portrays a complex personality among the cases studied so far, and Tahir is distinguished due to the psychological depth of his portrayal. As for the film noir influence, Tahir does not display the most essential elements of a classic noir protagonist as he is neither emasculated nor masculine, he does not have the qualities of a *homme fatal* or *homme attrapé*, he is neither the investigator type nor the ‘fall guy’ or a womanizer.

Türkan is not a specimen of noir protagonists as well. When she appears for the first time, she displays suicidal tendencies for being deceived by a man. So, when she meets Tahir, she is at the lowest point in her life. Similar to Tahir, she is far away from her ideal life, and dreams about a future with someone to love away from the house she lives with her family. She is ready to accept the traditional ‘domestic’ female role established in the society: she calls Tahir ‘my man’, and vows to wait for him until the day he is released. His perspective about the future is limited to the children she will have, quitting her job, getting rid of her drunkard father, and a new house: the vision mostly reflects her abhorrence of her current conditions. She seems to be a cardboard stereotypical character at first, however her submissive and domestic attitude surprisingly vanishes at certain moments: she pours out her feelings for her father when he sets obstacles for her marriage. She complains about his indifference, and shuns him. Another instance is Türkan’s reaction to Tahir when she reads the news about the murders committed by Tahir. She rejects him instantly, and turns against him at first. However, later on, she does not use a chance to inform on him, and in the end, she agrees to escape with him. Her wavering attitude might be related to the analysis she has made to change her conditions. Her ultimate aim is to achieve freedom from the father whom she blames to be the reason why her mother is an invalid. She has believed in another man’s promises for that reason, and this time she wants to believe in Tahir’s plan probably because all other options include the family house with the father she detests. As she has been ready to commit suicide rather than take her father’s blows, her decision to escape with the fugitive Tahir might not be related to emotional reasons in the first place: that point is also highlighted by Tahir that she has been ready to throw herself into the arms of anyone willing to take her away. As a result, Türkan displays a realistic portrayal of a person who has become an escapist dreamer as it is the only way to cope with the reality. She more likely portrays a trapped woman in an oppressive environment in which marriage is the only ticket to a relatively

free life. She is not directly involved in crime herself, and she even condemns it, yet she decides to make use of the opportunity Tahir presents when she realizes that she loves him. That might also put her in a morally ambiguous position, however not to the extent of making her a noir character. So, she is neither a femme fatale nor completely a femme attrapée.

Hakkı and Avni are rather functional characters: they are Tahir's acquaintances from prison, and appear in the narrative when Tahir is in need of money. Their presence is limited to the execution of the robbery, and Hakkı is killed by the police, and Avni is arrested. They are significant in the ways in which they justify their action. They are not portrayed as evil, or monstrous criminals: Hakkı is a family man, and he claims to be tired of pretending to be a businessman. Avni, on the other hand, is involved in crime for the woman he loves. He is a cowardly person and easily intimidated. So, none of the male figures, including Türkan's drunkard father, displays the stereotypical masculine tough guy qualities. Each one of them needs to express an excuse for their behaviour, and they seem to be the ill products of the society or psychologically defected, and that contributes to the realism inherent in the narrative. Finally, Nermin is not a significant character in the story although her presence initiates action in the first part. Nermin is portrayed merely as a promiscuous woman, a seductress, however she is not a femme fatale. In her brief appearance in a five-minute period in the first part of the narrative, she is active only when she seduces Tahir, and then, she no longer displays significance in the narrative as the enmity between Tahir and the other men develops as a matter of honour and revenge for the bullies. So, she is a functional character utilized to create a tragic conflict in the narrative.

So, the character formation does not signify film noir influence. The characters are drawn in such a way to create a realistic effect, and the classic noir protagonists are not represented in *Kanlı Firar*.

8.1.3 Space and Time

8.1.3.1 Space

The events in *Kanlı Firar* take place mostly in Istanbul except the opening sequence which takes place in an unknown location in the countryside near Istanbul. When combined with Türkan's family house, only one third of the screen time is in a house, and

the rest of the events happen in a large variety of places, all of which are mostly associated with the city. Given the fact that almost 15 minutes of the last part is continuously shot in the house as a block, the use of space is significant in the film. The weight of the places is roughly as follows:

Türkan's family house: 23 minutes

The hotel: 7 minutes

The jeweller: 6 minutes

Streets: 4.5 minutes

The café: 4 minutes

The train station and the train: 4 minutes

The pharmacy: 3.5 minutes

The park: 3.5 minutes

The pier: approximately 3 minutes

The prison: 2.5 minutes

The nightclub: 2.5 minutes

Other than these places, the police headquarters, the tavern, the shipyard, ruins, the factory, the jewel shop are among the places of the film. Such a large variety and weight of urban places indicate the fact that the relationship between the individual and the city is the main focus.

The traditional idea of home is never seen in the film including the opening sequence in the village house. The ownership of the village house remains obscure, and the spectator is forced to infer that the place is Tahir's home, and the man who has raped the woman and probably caused her death is somehow an invader spoiling the sense of security and belonging. Sobchack's account about noir spaces that the major locations in noir films are 'outside' home echoes in *Kanlı Firar* with a majority of the places that are not only outside home but also 'not home' even if they are home for the family as in the case of Tahir and Türkan in Türkan's family house. After Tahir locks people in the house, the

deteriorating nature of the relationship between the family members surface: Türkan blames her father for her discontent and for causing the mother to become a bedridden invalid; the father takes refuge in drinking, cannot function without drinks, and cannot communicate with his daughter; the mother tries to see the bright side of the events, and raise hope, however even Türkan's little brother wants to desert the house and run away with Tahir and Türkan. The household portrayed in the film matches the 'home' that only provides the inhabitants with restlessness, unhappiness, lack of communication, and disintegration as in film noir (Sobchack, 1998, pp. 157-159). The emotional deprivation and deeply rooted problems in the house also make the place unsafe for Tahir first as a future groom, and then as an invader. Although temporarily, he seeks a safe haven in the house, but lives in constant suspicion and doubt due to the fear of being informed by the father or even Türkan. So, the house resembles a prison for the inhabitants who have a different relationship with the house: Tahir and Türkan want to escape the place, the father needs to drink to bear his life at home, and the bed-ridden mother is doomed to live there.

Places other than home also reflect noir qualities in a significant manner: the hotel, the café, the park, the prison, the pharmacy, the streets etc. are all transitory places where people are expected to dwell for a specific period of time, and with the hope or idea to return home afterwards. These places are used as a source of threat, danger, disappointment, restlessness and instability. Krutnik points to the alienating nature of the modern city and how the protagonist is unable to find comfort in the city (1997, p. 92), and Tahir's experience as a countryman trying to survive in the city mirrors the relationship between space and film noir protagonist in that sense. First, his journey in the city starts in a prison on the day he is to be released, and ends in the same place off-screen. In between the beginning and the end, starting from the hotel, Tahir mainly visits places temporarily, and faces difficulties in all places. He finds a job at the shipyard, but then, he becomes a fugitive and abandons it. He stays at a hotel, but his room is raided by the bullies. Even on his way from work to home, he is ambushed by armed men. The café, the pier or the park are places he visited due to Türkan, and although these are public spaces, they seem to be desolate. He is either alone, in danger, or alienated except the brief moments he shared with Türkan. He almost has no private space: even when he is staying at the hotel, his room is occupied by Nermin and the bullies. In Türkan's house, he hardly finds time to doze due to the fear of arrest and distrust for the family members.

Finally, the train station is the place he is forced to visit in caution, and eventually is arrested, which also means separation from Türkan whom he has experienced brief moments of happiness with. So, all the places in the city point to the same instability, lack of security and disappointment for Tahir as well as crime and danger. In addition, all these urban places except the train station and the train are so desolate that Tahir's loneliness creates a contrast with the locations, and that contributes to the effect created by means of character formation and the events. The sense of alienation as part of existential motifs is the dominant mood in the places, which reflects the insignificance of the individual in the city due to the placement of the individual in rather large areas to belittle the individual.

Apart from the visible space, the invisible space is also significant in the narrative. The invisible space refers to the countryside that seems to be Tahir's construction. Throughout the film, more than once, Tahir shares his ideal perception of the countryside after he finds himself in trouble in the city. Luhr (2012), in his discussion about *Out of the Past* (1947), points to the opposition between the city and the countryside. The city is 'bad' as it is associated with 'corruption', and the countryside is 'good' as a place for 'innocence and revitalization' (p. 111). Similarly, Tahir dreams of the countryside as an exit to escape not just from the city but also the city life with its overwhelming problems. Türkan shares his vision, and agrees to move to the countryside, and start a new life from scratch with the cattle and land they will buy. Due to the crimes Tahir committed in the city, the couple have no future in the city, except to hide and live in suspicion and fear of getting caught by the police. Hirsh claims, with reference to a list of noir films to exemplify, that the idea to seek refuge by leaving the city for salvation in the countryside forms a repeated noir pattern. Here, the city is presented through deserted streets with tall buildings casting elongated shadows, or cheap hotels and bars where danger lurks around showing the brutal side of the city (1981, pp. 79-83), and that theme is used in a similar way in the narrative. For the couple, the countryside is a chance to escape and erase the past, and to provide the conditions for them to marry and live happily ever after. However, the past in the countryside is actually the root cause of all the troubles Tahir has experienced as he is sent to prison after he kills a man in the country. The countryside has not proven to be a safer place for both men and women since the possible rape and death of the unknown woman at the beginning of the narrative, and the murder committed by Tahir prove.

Therefore, the countryside dwells as a fantasy in Tahir's mind to make up for the displacement he has been suffering from, and similarly, a chance to have freedom for Türkan away from her life in the city which has become an imprisonment for her due to her father.

In conclusion, places contribute to the narrative as they produce meaning as well. However, places are used rather realistically and since the unifying element of the narrative is not crime, they do not reflect film noir elements on the whole except in specific shots related to the robbery.

8.1.3.2 Time

Kanlı Firar covers a span of eight years, and the past plays an important role in the narrative as it determines the present events to a large extent. The past and the present are linked by means of a flashback in the form of a dream sequence, which reportedly haunts Tahir from time to time. The flashback here stands for the subjective truth, reality or event that the protagonist is not willing to remember, but against his will, he keeps remembering the events, his own motivation and the instance of killing the man. While analysing the use of flashback in cinema, Maureen Turim distinguishes the function of flashbacks in different types of films. In film noir, flashback contributes to pessimism or fatalism whereas in psychological melodramas, flashbacks are used in a positive way as a means to resolve the problem (1989, p. 143). Tahir's dream is not soothing or diagnostic in nature, but limiting and upsetting. The rape and the murder that follows the rape incident at the very beginning of the narrative alienate Tahir from the rest of the society by distinguishing him from 'innocent' people. Later in the course of the narrative, Tahir is haunted by voices and dialogues of important encounters between him and other characters in his head. At such instances, he is paralysed, and frees himself from the voices that weakens his perception with a burst of anger. The only relatively positive instance of the remembrance is heard at the end of the narrative: the train with Türkan rides away while Tahir is put in the police car, and the previous dialogue between Tahir and Türkan is heard as a promise about the future. Tahir portrays a brighter future in the countryside after he serves his sentence, and Türkan promises to wait for him and write letters to him when he is in prison. Even that optimistic dialogue is ambiguous as it belongs to the previous night, and the ambiguity lies in the reaction of Türkan to Tahir's arrest: upon witnessing Tahir's arrest in the train, she takes off the necklace she has

received during their modest wedding shopping. That could be interpreted as a permanent separation contrary to her promise. Hence, the future may still be bleak for Tahir due to the burden on him from the past, which has eventually determined his present as an outcast in the city. Therefore, time is a significant element in connection to the events, characters and places highlighting a sense of disappointment, a sign of defeat before powers stronger than the individual, and rendering all the efforts futile mirroring the fatalism motif. So far, the way time serves the narrative is in parallel with film noir tradition: the contemporary world, a long time span giving clues about the past of the protagonist, which determines the present. However, the retrospective quality is not creating a fragmented structure that unfolds in the course of the events to shed light on the true colour of the events and characters. Here, the dream sequence and the voice overs from the past mainly create the dramatic background for the protagonist, and reveal the psychological cobweb he spins around himself. So, the narrative devices related to time here are used in such a way to create a realist effect, and not for the reconstruction of the events for the spectator.

Overall, space and time are significant elements of the narrative, yet they do not display film noir elements, or at least there is no definitive indication that the space and time are designed under such an influence.

8.2 FORMAL ELEMENTS IN *KANLI FİRAR*

Kanlı Firar distinguishes itself from other cases due to the psychological depth of the protagonists, and the psychological elements are mainly portrayed through stylistic devices rather than dialogues. Although the events suggest an action driven plot based on narrative elements, the core of the film is largely dramatic, and is built by means of cinematography and mise-en-scene, that is style. Therefore, examining the narrative merely by paying attention to the events would yield a confusing analysis for *Kanlı Firar*. Rather than the events such as murder, robbery, or captivity, the focus is on the main characters, Tahir and Türkan, and therefore, a sense of realism can be observed through the way the perspective of these characters is reflected. For instance, rather than the act of killing, the traumatic consequences of murder on the character is depicted in a realistic tone. Throughout the film, that effect is achieved mainly by means of long takes, long shots, a combination of static and moving camera, shot angles, lighting, camera distance,

frame composition and acting. However, in specific sequences amounting to almost a third of the screen time, that style changes to film noir when the focus shifts to crime.

The opening sequence, i.e. the dream sequence, gives clues about the importance of the way events are presented: Throughout the entire sequence the voice of the characters is not heard, and mood music accompanies the footage. The camera is at a fixed position at the eye level of the perpetrator. In a long shot, the action is tracked with a pan left. After a dissolve, the angle turns to a low angle with a relatively closer look at the victim lying in the bed, and in the background, Tahir is seen entering the room cautiously to find the woman. His rage builds up, he stands up, and the camera follows as he walks to the wall. In total, these two shots last one minute in two long takes. Then comes the first cut to change the distance to a medium close-up, and Tahir is staring at a double-barrelled gun on the wall (fig. 1)⁷⁴. Through another dissolve, that scene is connected to the murder scene. Tahir enters a place with the gun, approaches the man after alternating cuts, the man falls down, and Tahir is seen from a POV shot with a low angle (fig. 2). Similar to the previous scene, a defamiliarizing shot is used once again destroying the illusion of reality. He aims his gun at the camera, that is the viewer, and shoots (fig. 3). After the gun shot, Tahir wakes up in prison, and the dream sequence ends. Dream sequences have the potential to render all kinds of experimental shots plausible as they happen in a dream, and in that opening sequence, the weight is given to the facial expression of the character from a focal point that is not possible to give within the limits of traditional narration under normal circumstances for a realistic shot. The wall prevents the viewer to observe the frustration and determination of the character while he is inspecting the double-barrelled gun. Since the angle is a reverse angle, the way Tahir is portrayed eliminates the fourth wall illusion. In the second scene, the aim is to create the illusion that the viewer is taking the shot, which is more daring as the man Tahir shoots at is the perpetrator. Both looking into the camera and replacing the criminal character with the viewer might break the sense of identification of the viewer with the character or remind the viewer the fictional quality of the ongoing film experience. Since the film displays a realistic effect overall, that unconventional choice at the very beginning of the film is rather unusual, and could be an indication of the lack of one single stylistic approach consistently applied

⁷⁴ See 'APPENDIX 5: Figures for *Kanlı Firar*' for all the figures in this chapter.

throughout the film. Another interpretation could be that the portrait of Tahir from these angles is more important than the cinematographic illusion as he stares through the screen expressing his rage first at the moment when he decides to kill the man, and then, precisely at the moment when he kills him. In either case, the significance and the priority of style is obvious. Despite these defamiliarizing instances, a sense of realism is created through film noir elements as well as traditional narration.

The sequence following the dream sequence opens with Tahir on the bed in prison. The scene is important for two reasons. First, the past is connected to the present in the form of a nightmare, which signals that the act of honour killing is put under a negative light. The murder bothers Tahir, and makes him uncomfortable even after so many years. Secondly, Tahir is presented from a psychological perspective in an unusual way. Unlike conventional films with heroes who commit 'righteous' crimes, the protagonist is not presented as a confident assertive masculine 'hero'. Porfirio points to the relationship between form and content in noir films with existential motifs that lead to 'vulnerable' protagonists like Tahir. In the depiction of such characters, Porfirio claims that mise-en-scene contributes to the portrayal in the form of low-key lighting creating obscurity by means of shadows, and horizontal and vertical lines in parallel with the space creating the sense of entrapment for the viewer (1996, p. 85). In *Kanlı Firar*, in addition to these devices, camera angle is used in a significant way to create that vulnerable protagonist. Tahir is shot from a high angle when he wakes up with a start in the bed. He remains in an awkward position there for seconds and closes his face with his hands. When he stands up and walks to the iron bars, the angle does not change, and Tahir is seen behind the bars (fig. 4-5). In that sequence, first, the high contrast lighting prevents a clear picture of Tahir, and then the bars. His face is divided into fragments by the bars or the dark shadows. His brief dialogue with Hakkı makes clear that he could not forget the past for years even just before the day he is released. The same high angle continues in a long take when Tahir is wandering on the street aimlessly (fig. 6). The extreme long shot shows him as a little man among other people from almost a bird's eye view until he comes across a hotel sign, and enters. Such use of high angles in film noir, especially in extreme long shots like that, presents the character as a victim in the big city (Place and Peterson, 1996, p. 68). Being a rural ex-convict, Tahir is also presented as such through the consistent use of high angle together with low key lighting that obscures his image. So,

the introductory sequences do not present Tahir in a heroic way, but rather a character that evokes pity, sympathy or any other kind of sentimental reaction in the viewer, however the unusual shots prevent the viewer from identifying with the character, and keeps the viewer at a distance.

When Tahir is lodged in the hotel, the way he is presented changes to emphasize a shady aspect of his personality. Although he is not portrayed as the traditional macho hero, his masculine side is introduced through noir elements. Nermin enters the room while Tahir is lying in the bed. Deep focus, *chiaroscuro* effect, and acting are combined in a long take. Nermin seduces Tahir, and she is seen as the dominant promiscuous woman who appears with her lingerie (fig. 7-8). This time the angle is low, Tahir is seen upright and confident, but all the same his face is in the shade, and he is not the idealized womanizer protagonist who chases women. He does not know how to flirt or respond to Nermin who makes advances to Tahir. In a way, the roles are changed here, and Nermin is the dominant party who tries to initiate sexual intercourse. Her intimacy startles Tahir at first, and Nermin bursts into laughter, which might traditionally offend the stereotypically portrayed male character endangering his masculinity. For the first time, Tahir becomes assertive, and he grabs her arms and pushes her on the bed, and kisses vigorously. The long take to portray that action lasts more than one and a half minutes, and the camera is not mobile until the last part where they kiss. The characters are given equal weight at the centre of the frame, and only Tahir's face is seen partially from the profile, and is usually covered in shadows leaving the main character in obscurity in a consistent way almost from the beginning. Although the scene seems to project a male fantasy with an unknown woman who comes out of nowhere and seduces the man, it nevertheless does not elaborate on machismo or does not create a male icon out of Tahir when compared with previous portrayal of manhood in other cases. On the contrary, until the last move, he is seen as a nervous, timid and reserved man maintaining the impression formed at the beginning. Here noir elements surpass realism effect.

The second murder scene presents action in a different fashion, and focuses on the protagonist's psychological state as well rather than merely focusing on violence or heroic victory. Tahir is seen approaching the ruins in a long shot with deep focus at night, and the camera moves backwards to reveal that one of the bullies is hiding behind a wall to ambush him. Tahir walks in the ambush, and two men appear at both ends of the area.

Tahir is shot at a slightly low angle, he is nervous and anxious. When the first man approaches drawing his knife, Tahir warns him not to come closer, and grabs his head as if he is going to have a fit and retreats (fig. 9-12). The man fails to stab him, and the second man involves in the fight with his pistol (fig. 13-14). The whole fight is shot mainly in long and medium shots with few cuts (only 18 cuts in three and a half minutes), and at the end of the sequence, Tahir is seen in a medium close-up for the first time (fig. 15-16). After stabbing the second man, he stares at the off-screen man on the ground in horror, and once again grabs his head until he hears police whistles far away. The scene which would be called an action scene turns out to be about an agitated man who tries to avoid trouble but fails to do so, and finds himself in a difficult situation with two men lying dead. The whole scene is dominated by film noir style through low key lighting, occasional close-ups, stylish camera work to maintain suspense despite long takes and long and medium shots.

In the scene that follows the murder sequence, Tahir is seen at a desolate pier sitting on a bench in a contemplative mood, which reinforces the sense of alienation that is created through formal elements. The second part, which is about the love relationship, does not display noir elements intensively, however the style is not too realistic either. Especially the camera work is significant, and worth mentioning. When Tahir and Türkan meet they are portrayed from a high angle with a greater depth of field (fig. 17-20). The long shots enable the vastness and emptiness of the platform to be reflected, and rather than functioning merely as the establishing shot, the long shot maintains the theme of loneliness. Türkan enters the pier in a long take, which lasts until she approaches the camera to shift the focus from Tahir to herself, and the deep focus makes it possible to observe Tahir's reaction to the entrance of Türkan. The camera tilts down to see Türkan's face closer: she looks sad and unhappy. Then, the long shots are replaced by medium shots and medium close-ups to study the facial expressions closely (fig. 21-23). The two characters talk about life, suicide and death as Türkan is weary of life, and considers suicide, and befitting the theme of existentialism discussed above, Tahir tries to discourage her. Hence, the location, action, characters and the style are combined in such a way to create meaning which focuses on the two main characters in a rather realistic way. One of the devices to unite all the elements creating a realistic effect is the long take with deep focus, which is relatively made popular by Orson Wells who is one of the most

important contributors to film noir style, and is extensively used in *Kanlı Firar*. Bazin, with reference to Wells, claims that the power of the shot comes from the ease of creating more realistic images that enables the viewer to analyse the frame composition and become active (1967, pp. 34-36). From a relatively similar perspective, Thompson and Bordwell also draw attention to long takes as part of Jean Renoir's stylistic repertory while making examples of poetic realism in cinema. Thompson and Bordwell argue that Renoir pioneered the use of *long take*, which would become more popular afterwards during the 1940s, and point to the way Renoir used the technique together with deep focus to be able to present the actors and action in a single frame for a longer time (2002, pp. 291-292). In *Kanlı Firar*, the combination of long takes and deep focus is used extensively, and the function is not only to present uninterrupted action and the ease of following the characters, but also to reflect the relationship between the characters and space. Hence, the style has two distinct aspects: first, the sense of alienation and loneliness is developed in almost all shots outdoors, and second, due to the diverse camera angles, the shots become unusual and more effective to convey the emotions and the frame composition both to pursue the existentialism theme and elaborate the character construction. The camera angles are actually very stylish and not usual to create a realist effect. In some instances, including the current sequence in the pier, the film language is more dominant than all else. To illustrate more, at the end of the sequence in the pier, Tahir and Türkan are seen at the far end of the platform as Tahir convinces her to tell her story. The characters are heard in an extreme long shot with a high angle. The shot lasts a little less than one minute. It is not possible to distinguish the details as both characters are partly in the shade as the sun sets elongating the shadows. Türkan starts to leave the place, Tahir catches her to continue the talk, and eventually she hurriedly walks away before Tahir waits for a while and catches her again to offer a cup of coffee (fig. 24-27). The entire scene in terms of the dialogues is mainly about the grand decision to live or die, the essential existential question, and yet in terms of style, the theme of loneliness is developed by means of the way these two lonely and desperate characters are portrayed from a distance as dark spots creating shadows taller than their bodies. That scene and the previous ambush sequence are in contrast in terms of both narrative and stylistic elements. Both long take and deep focus are used in both sequences, therefore, they are used in different scenes for different purposes, and their mere presence is not enough to serve

poetic realism or film noir style without taking the narrative elements in consideration. Hence, while the shots at the pier create a stylish realism, similar devices serve noir quality in the ambush sequence.

The change in style due to the changes in the content continues in the rest of the film. Tahir runs away from the hotel room. He calls Hakkı to ask his help as one of the voices in his head in the hotel room is related to Hakkı's word to help him when in need. He first sets a meeting with Hakkı, and then goes to see Türkan to propose her, buy a ring and presents. That rather brief episode including the date with Türkan is shot in a realistic style. Türkan is first seen in a factory among other female workers. Then, they meet, and the couple are seen in the same café shot in an identical style with the previous café scene. Then, they go shopping, and that sequence consists of long takes and medium and medium long shots, and that fashion continues until Tahir meets Hakkı. At that point, the style changes radically, and turns to film noir even more significantly than the previous instance.

Tahir and Hakkı meet in Hakkı's nightclub, and the opening shot presents *chiaroscuro* while a belly dancer performs in the foreground, and the music band behind her. The transition from the previous shot in Türkan's house to the nightclub scene via dissolve underlines the contrast between the house and the nightclub through style (fig. 28-29): from a place where two young people make plans to marry to a place where morally questionable activities for a traditional society take place. The contrast is even deeper and more intensified with a cut to Tahir's portrait shot that is sculpted by the light out of darkness (fig. 30). The cut to the dancer from his point of view implies that he is staring nervously at the dancer, but he does not seem to be enjoying the entertainment at all as he is waiting for Hakkı to appear. When the two men sit and talk as Tahir asks help from Hakkı and he agrees to help, they are portrayed in a medium long shot with a deep focus including the customers having fun in the background, and the same mode of lighting (fig. 31). The sudden and radical change is significant beyond doubt. Naturally, a difference between a house and a nightclub is expected, but here the treatment is the key. As seen in figure 29, the frame composition does not highlight any object in particular, does not hint at the setting due to the lack of an establishing shot, and therefore the figures appear all of a sudden out of nowhere in the darkness. Similarly, Tahir is portrayed in the dark in total contrast with the lively mood surrounding him. So, the change in style

underlines the change in the overall mood, Tahir's inner world, and his entrance in the crime world through Hakkı, the owner of this dark place.

The entire sequence about the robbery until Tahir escapes the police and enters a pharmacy to treat his wound displays film noir style. The robbery sequence lasts approximately 10 minutes and includes the planning, the execution and the escape. From a formalist perspective, the opening shot of the sequence is iconic of film noir (fig. 32-33). A zoom out from a close-up of a plan on a table presents the three men smoking and drinking while talking about the robbery. The single visible light source is the lamp on top of the table creating sharp contrasts. After a long take, a cut to Avni (the Istanbuller) shows him in the shadow anxiously biting his nails. He has doubts about the pacing of the robbery, and Hakkı answers him in a portrait shot that presents his stern face. While he talks, Tahir is seen in a similar shot in a contemplative mood (fig. 34-36). Noticing Tahir's reluctance, Hakkı starts speaking in a softer manner to explain his reasons for planning this final robbery. When he finishes and leaves the room, Avni briefly mentions his reason to join the gang: a woman he loves. Throughout the scene, Tahir never speaks, silently stares at Hakkı or at a point outside the frame. That scene does not simply provide the viewer with the information about the robbery, the action to come, but creates a gloomy atmosphere and portrays the characters from a psychological perspective. All the characters are ex-convicts, yet at least two of them (Hakkı and Tahir) need this final job to start a new life: a cliché repeating itself in many crime films, but it still underlines the humane aspect of the characters in that they are not mere two dimensional 'bad guys', but people with worries and little hope for the conditions to be better than they are in the current state of affairs in life. Overall, in that scene, film noir style is used to create the mood, introduce the criminal sequence to come, and also to provide more about the characters and their motivations. The main instruments are *chiaroscuro* lighting, close-ups, and the frame composition in combination with the theme of crime and the characters in the grey area.

The second part is about the execution of the robbery, and the way the events are presented mainly builds on the tension and suspense. In addition to lighting, close-ups and composition, crosscutting and fast editing are introduced to display different sources of action taking place at the same time at different places. While Avni tries to open locked door to reach the safe, various cuts show Hakkı in the room with Avni, and Tahir outside

the room waiting for the watchman nervously and impatiently. Another cut shows the first watchman patrolling the building, and then, a man in his office to spend the night with his partner (fig. 37-41). The takes are rather longer, and as the action intensifies as they run out of time before the second watchman enters the scene, the length of shots start to decrease. Tahir knocks the first watchman unconscious, the man and his partner kiss, Hakkı and Avni work on the safe. When the second watchman appears, and is neutralized by Tahir, the man with a partner witnesses the fight. After that, he calls the police, and the crosscutting includes the police. So, shots including Tahir beating the watchman, Hakkı and Avni by the safe, the man with a partner in the room, and the police racing to the crime scene alternate with each other in a very fast pacing unmatched throughout the film, and perhaps other films of the era. The cuts follow each other in fractions of a second, and long and medium shots are replaced by medium close-ups and even choker close-ups until the safe is opened (fig. 42-48). The race against time, which is portrayed through unusual editing and cinematography, ends as the robbers take the valuables and the money, and head to the street. The extensive use of fast paced editing and extremely variable shot distance function to increase suspense, and together with greater field of depth, creates a sense of claustrophobia and restriction. The formal elements used in that 10-minute episode are radically incongruous when compared with the rest of the film. Similar to the previous examples, such as *Cingöz Recai*, the style changes to the extent that the episode seems to be a film within a film in terms of style. When Tahir escapes the police, gets treated in the pharmacy, and takes refuge in Türkan's house taking them hostages, the style more or less shifts again to a more conventional yet peculiar style with long takes, medium shots, and high angles, so the style resembles the previous part of the narrative except the occasional *chiaroscuro* effect in the scene in which Tahir and Türkan lie in the bed dreaming about the future after running away from the police (fig. 49-50). The couple are seen in their usual mood ironically dreaming about the better days ahead.

Overall, the style in *Kanlı Firar* changes in parallel with the changes in the narrative (i.e. criminal activities, violence, romance, dramatic encounters etc.), and hence, the film incorporates diverse elements including realism and film noir. Here, realism or rather poetic realism prevails over film noir. The realism in question here is different than the one in *Ölüm Peşimizde* as while the latter includes some elements of social realism, *Kanlı Firar* presents the story of an individual in a realist way. The realism effect is maintained

by means of long takes, long and medium shots, high and low camera angles, deep focus, daylight, minimal acting in actual locations to depict the relationship between the individual and the city. However, when it comes to the troubles he endures in the city, film noir elements such as *chiaroscuro* lighting, fast paced editing together with medium shots, close-ups and even choker close-ups are utilized. There is a close connection between the different parts of the narrative and the devices employed to present these parts, and similar to previous cases, *Cingöz Recai* and *Ölüm Peşimizde*, in *Kanlı Firar* as well formal unity does not exist, and film language is very flexible to supply the desired effect by setting the mood, pacing, and tone; and creating the atmosphere through the specific style that fits the specific parts of the narrative, which is mainly film noir style for crime, realistic style for dramatic action, and both styles for the psychological portrait of the main character.

8.3 CONCLUSION

Kanlı Firar is different from the previous cases mainly because the narrative is about the story of an individual, and his effort to change the course of his life in vain. The way the story is approached reminds poetic realism, however, the existential theme and the way it is handled can also be found in film noir. Besides, the style changes radically to varying degrees throughout the film in specific parts of the films: the parts about crime are shot in film noir style without doubt, and the parts related to the love theme, Türkan and Tahir's relationship, and the house are shot in a realistic approach, and at times, these two blend with each other. The events provide enough material for a film noir plot, but since the unifying theme is not crime but the struggle of an ex-convict, dramatic elements dominate the story. The characters do not match the classic film noir type at all: there are only two main characters, but none of them fits the categories for noir protagonists. Tahir seems to be a noir character as he is in the grey area as a tarnished character. He is soaked up in crime, but eventually, he is a tender man who tries to settle down with the woman he loves. He is outside the domain of the typical masculine hero, and he is not the noir protagonist who initiates danger or acts as a womanizer, or falls in the trap of a femme fatale. In addition to character formation, the use of time does not point to the way time is used in noir films, and except for the family house, the places can easily be categorised as noir spaces, but that would not be enough to label the film as film noir. Despite all these abovementioned elements, it is still not possible to talk about *Kanlı Firar* without

mentioning film noir due to the style and the combination of diverse elements. The reason for that is a decades old discussion about the elements that constitute film noir. Porfirio contemplates on the difficulty in marking film noir as a specific genre, and mentions the influence of poetic realism or an observable relationship between poetic realism and film noir together with other possible influences including German expressionism (2013, p. 36). Other critics also point to the similarities between films from two different continents. Alastair Phillips echoes similar remarks by underlining the connection between the continent and the USA to be able to understand the roots of film noir through the emigres from Europe enriching the US film industry. Among such influences, he puts emphasis on French poetic realism as one major influence on film noir, a name which is given by French critics upon noticing familiar patterns in French and American films. Phillips also draws attention to two films to elaborate on the affinity between poetic realism and film noir: *Le Jour se lève* (1939) by Marcel Carné, and the remake of the film *The Long Night* (1947) by Anatole Litvak. Due to the similarities in cinematography⁷⁵ as well, the relationship seems to be too strong to miss or overlook (2013, pp. 94-96). These two films are also significant as Özön mentions them to state that *Kanun Namına* (1952) shares some similarities with these two films especially in terms of narrative elements (2013, pp. 161-162). In addition to all these comments and arguments, Dudley Andrew's brief description about Marcel Carné's films is enlightening and insightful to steer the discussion towards the case at hand. 'Evocative locations', lower class characters, gloomy endings, and high quality acting are the instant phrases to catch the essence of poetic realism. The style is smooth, especially when compared to the American films of the 1930s. Yet again, poetic realism is also a mixture of diverse influences including beside others German and Russian aesthetics via the emigres from these countries (1995, pp. 3, 6, 50, 162). The reason for the difficulty of categorising films in the grey area lies in the fact that movements, genres, films, and people who make them are connected to each other creating a chain. In particular, poetic realism and film noir are considered to be akin. In the case of *Kanlı Firar*, to be able to differentiate the two from each other, the differences might help. The story of lower class people, the theme of existentialism

⁷⁵ Phillips states that the cinematographer of *Le Jour se lève* was Curt Courant from Germany who worked with Anatole Litvak, the director of *The Long Night* while making *Coeur de lilas* (1931), and establishes a stylistic connection between two films (2013, p. 101).

(although seen in film noir), unhappy ending, the way setting is used to transmit the theme of loneliness and depression, and stylish dialogues connote poetic realism in *Kanlı Firar*. However, in terms of style, certain episodes in *Kanlı Firar* has very little to do with poetic realism. The murder and the robbery sequences are far from being smooth, and therefore have nothing to do with any type of realism. On the contrary, cinematography, mise-en-scene and editing are blended in such a way to create both dramatic effect and a fast-paced action sequence related to criminal activity using noir style. Therefore, once again it is not possible to call *Kanlı Firar* a classic example of film noir, yet the film is not a poetic realist film either. In more than one instances, genre categorisation does not work, and that deserves a different look to come to a conclusion about these cases. Therefore, *Kanlı Firar* includes both poetic realist and film noir elements in the formation of the film, and while in terms of the story, poetic realism both in narrative and stylistic aspects dominates to a great extent in the parts connected to the romance and the problems of the individual in life and society; in terms of style, film noir is more obvious in the scenes related to crime and the presentation of both crime, criminals and their action because the film incorporates both qualities without blending them.

9. THE ANALYSIS OF *ÖLÜM FİLM ÇEKİYOR*

Ölüm Film Çekiyor (Death is Shooting a Film, 1961) is written and directed by Aydın Arakon towards the end of his long career which started in 1949. He was not as prolific as some other directors, however, his films always distinguish themselves for being innovative and pioneering, such as *Çığlık* (Scream, 1949) as the first horror film in Turkish cinema, *İstanbul'un Fethi* (the Conquest of Istanbul, 1951) as a historical film with period costumes and props, *Fosforlu Cevriye* (Luminous *Cevriye*, 1959) a film with a strong female protagonist and colloquial language. *Ölüm Film Çekiyor* is also significant as it is a self-reflexive film with a story related to film industry and film making. The film opens by introducing the major characters to the audience one by one in a film set. The characters either sit in or stand by a chair at the back of which their real names are written. Since some of these characters play themselves in the film, the names are also the names of the fictional characters. Each character or rather actor looks at the camera, and some of them even greet the audience through mimics or smile. The introduction takes place at the film set, and the viewer is repeatedly made aware of the fictionality of the film as that set is also used in the film, and hence the opening credits create the defamiliarizing effect that might put a distance between the narrative and the audience preventing the possible identification of the viewer and the characters. In a period that signals a growing tendency towards realistic cinema, a film underlining the fictionality of cinema stands out. The 86-minute-long film is implicitly about one of the consequences of rapid urbanization and the problems that entail; however, the narrative does not explore the conditions that bring about migration and one of its downsides, that is, the dark side of the film industry: women who are chasing fame and wealth, and people who seek to exploit them. This chapter aims to study how the film displays the almost a decade long influence of film noir, and how it is incorporated in Turkish cinema in a consistent way blending a range of diverse elements.

9.1 NARRATIVE ELEMENTS IN *ÖLÜM FİLM ÇEKİYOR*

The narrative elements of *Ölüm Film Çekiyor* prove to be a combination of detective fiction and film noir. The narrative is mainly about a murder case which is connected to a criminal organization that prey on women with hopes to become film stars.

9.1.1 Events

The events display the basic structure of a detective narrative: first, the introduction of a murder case; second, the criminal investigation carried out by an investigator; and finally, the resolution.

The first part, which lasts a little more than 20 minutes, starts at a film set, and the first scene is from the film being shot within the film. In a nightclub, while people are having fun, a woman begs two men to set her free, and is refused. The male hero called Orhan enters the scene, all the men draw their pistols, and shoot at each other. The woman is shot too, and falls on the ground. Off-screen, the director called Adnan shouts to stop, and the viewer understands that the scene is part of a film in progress. Soon, it is noticed that the woman on the ground is actually dead due to the secretly placed bullet in the pistols used as props. After that, Orhan, Adnan and one of the actors called Gönül gather and talk about the murder. A flower seller approaches Orhan to draw his attention to a photograph of a woman who looks like the murdered woman in the film studio. She shows him the house the woman resides, and Orhan goes to speak with that woman called Nur. Nur explains that the murdered woman is her sister, and she has been in search to find Nur. She tells her own story in a flashback: she applies to an agency (an agency for ‘wannabe’ actors) to become a film star, but the agency turns out to be a coverup for a criminal organization to recruit prostitutes, and force ordinary women to become one. When Nur resists the men, she is tortured, beaten and whipped. A fire starts in the house, and she takes advantage of the panic, and runs away. She is found by a rural couple, and the couple help her recover. Having lost her sister, Nur asks Orhan to help her find the perpetrators, and Orhan promises to help her.

The second part covers the investigation, and lasts about 48 minutes. Orhan visits the agency that Nur mentioned, talks to the man in charge, and asks questions about a tailoring shop. The conversation aggravates the man, and he asks Orhan out. Orhan pretends to leave, but stays and eavesdrops, and learns that the man receives directions on the phone from someone else to follow Orhan. He lets the man follow him, but tricks him and returns to the agency to search for a clue, and takes some notes. Later, in the bar, the flower seller brings a message to Orhan, but the man at the agency eavesdrops and tricks the flower seller to learn about Nur’s whereabouts. Orhan learns that Nur is exposed, and heads to the house to save Nur. The two men fight, Orhan beats the other

man, who runs away, and takes Nur to his own house to protect. Then, in the studio during the making of the film, he talks to Adnan and explains the case so far. Gönül is in charge to take of Nur, and they come to see Orhan upon an anonymous call pretending to be related to Orhan. Orhan sends the women away after secretly handing a note to Nur. Then, the news about the death of the man in the agency arrives. Soon after that, Orhan goes to visit the tailoring shop. While trying to save a woman there, the tailor is killed. The secretary called Refia accepts to meet and talk to Orhan outside the shop. They meet at night in a nightclub, and Refia lures him to a trap where three men take hold of Orhan to learn where Nur is hiding. Then, two men and Refia take him to a place outside the city to kill, but when they arrive there Refia hits the men by the car, and the men fall down the hill. She wipes the car clean, lets go of it down the hill as well, and frees Orhan in return for his fair treatment of her and to revenge on the ‘bad guys’ whom she has worked for in regret for years. Orhan calls Adnan to set a meeting the next day.

The last part is the resolution, and the entire part takes place in and around the last film set for about 15 minutes. Orhan takes Nur to the film set. As the set is not ready, Orhan and Nur go for a stroll in the park, and eventually, Nur recognizes the place: it is where she was locked in and tortured previously by the gang. When they return to the film set, they find the place deserted except for Şekip, the hitman of the criminal organization, waiting for them with a gun. Orhan tries to convince him to change sides implying that Şekip will be the fall guy in the end, but the man is shot dead by Adnan. Orhan explains how he has understood that the actual perpetrator is Adnan by listing the clues he has collected. When Adnan is about to shoot Orhan, Gönül and the police arrive. Adnan nevertheless shoots at Orhan, misses him⁷⁶, and he is shot dead by the police.

The plot covers a span of few days between the death of an actor and the revelation of the perpetrator, but the story covers a much longer period including the past experiences of Nur in connection with the agency. All the events in between are about a criminal case, the complications involved in it, and the effort to solve the puzzle. Following the classical lines of film noir, and taking Park’s definition of film noir with crime as the subject matter, a protagonist, a contemporary setting, and an investigation by someone or an

⁷⁶ At such a close range, it is difficult to miss the target. So, one thinks about the probability of Orhan replacing the bullets with fake ones, but there is no indication of that.

agency (2011, pp. 25-26), the events comply with the elements of film noir in many ways: crime is seen in the form of organized crime involving abduction, torture, prostitution and murder; the protagonist is also the investigator although he is not a sleuth by profession; and the action takes place in the city, Istanbul in a contemporary setting. In addition to that, the way Spicer describes the noir narrative as consisting of events centred around crime in a fragmented structure unfolding gradually while combining the past and the present alternately (2010, pp. 212-214) also makes some sense in *Ölüm Film Çekiyor*. The events that form the basis and the background of the murder case and the organized crime scheme are presented in a flashback with a voiceover of one of the characters connecting the past and the present although they do not alternate as there is only one flashback. The case is solved slowly as Orhan the investigator collects clues that lead to the resolution eventually. Despite these noir elements, the narrative also includes elements from the classical detective narratives, which complicates the analysis of the film. Orhan the investigator is not the noir type: he is rather stable, definitely not tarnished, and not morally in the grey area. He appears at the beginning of the narrative as a star actor, and ends in the same fashion as a star actor and also a smart detective per se. He is a typical hero who never fails, and especially as the investigator, he acts as an invincible super hero. Therefore, the narrative falls short of elaborating on the main protagonist, and his relationship with the world around him. He is on the other side of the fence, and never crosses the line to step on the darker unstable world of crime and criminals, which are an integral part of the film noir universe.

The events clearly separate the good from the bad, the morally acceptable from unacceptable, and as a result, the investigation as the battle between the good and the bad becomes the main focus, not the relationship between the characters, and their motivation for criminal schemes. Hühn draws a sketch of the narrative elements of classical detective fiction, and distinguishes the two main parts of the narrative: 'crime' and 'investigation' as two stories that intersect throughout the narrative. The order is destabilized, a crime is committed, and cannot be solved by the police. A detective steps forth to solve the case, collects evidence, and in the end, explains the solution step by step so that the second story that the reader needs is reconstructed. To that end, usually the essential elements of the story for the reconstruction are not revealed until the end (1987, pp. 451-452). This structure is present in *Ölüm Film Çekiyor* as Orhan promises to solve the case, collects

the evidence, and in the end, explains both to Adnan and the viewer how he has identified the criminal. The clues Orhan provides are mostly unavailable for the viewer: Orhan shares the location of Nur only with Adnan, so when Gönül and Nur unexpectedly come to visit him in the film set, Adnan becomes the only suspect, but the viewer is not given that piece of information. In addition, Orhan reveals that when Nur is shot, Adnan is the only person who has the knowledge of the aim of each gun in the film set as he has planned the mise-en-scene. Therefore, only Adnan can replace the real bullet in the magazine of the pistol. Although a weak assumption, that info is also unavailable for the viewer. Moreover, the death of the tailor is linked to Adnan due to the cord Adnan left at the crime scene and was found by Orhan. Adnan is seen wearing the cord in the scenes before the murder in the tailoring shop, and although the viewer might notice the missing cord, a closer view is not presented to the viewer to make sense of the evidence, and therefore, that piece of information is not serviceable to fill the gaps and reach a conclusion about the perpetrator as well. Hence, the series of events are built in such a way to keep the viewer in the dark, and in need of the eventual explanation of the investigator, who plays the role of the smart detective in classical detective fiction such as Sherlock Holmes. Gates (2006) contrasts the classical Hollywood detective film and film noir, and reveals the differences. As a summary of the most relevant part of his arguments for the current case, he argues that film noir investigation is about the hero's masculinity whereas classical detective film focuses on the investigation of a crime. The society in film noir is full of evil and the characters including the detective might be a part of it. The classical detective story presents a predominantly good society in which the order is disrupted, but can be restored. The noir detective goes through a test of masculinity and morality whereas the classical detective is infallible and morally intact (pp. 93-94). *Ölüm Film Çekiyor* mainly focuses on the crime and investigation, and the character is masculine, but that is not a hard-boiled tough masculinity, and the masculinity of Orhan is not in question. The society in the film is a small community of people in film industry, and crime and criminals are seen as an abnormality, so the fictional world of the film is not pervaded by evil. However, judging from the cobweb of the criminal organization, that community is not a text book example of a virtuous ideal 'good' community. Yet, except the villains, all the characters struggle to restore the order and expose the criminals. Finally, the detective, that is Orhan as the investigator, is virtuous

smart and infallible. Hence, the narrative presents a classical detective story to a large extent. Finally, the events progress towards a resolution and a happy end for all the main characters, which is not likely to happen in classic film noir. Therefore, the investigator is not the film noir investigator at all, and the process and the success of the investigation in combination with the character's traits (a successful attractive flawless actor) connotes a combination of film noir and classical detective film.

Overall, the events suggest a certain film noir influence, however, the way the events are presented is largely from the perspective of the 'good guys', and Orhan the investigator. The clear cut between the good and the bad is traced from the beginning to the end. The viewer is kept in the dark about the motivation of Adnan in establishing such an organization. Moreover, the reason why Adnan merely observes Orhan finding clues about Adnan's true identity is a mystery. Hence, the narrative evolves into a moral conflict due to the way the vents and characters are handled. As a result, the criminal investigation dominates the narrative without focusing much on the relationship between characters and their inner world, which leads to the victory of the good over the bad signalling a classical detective narrative.

9.1.2 Characters

The characters in *Ölüm Film Çekiyor* do not present the variety seen in film noir. The main characters are limited to Orhan, Adnan and Nur. Among these characters, what strikes immediately is the absence of the morally ambiguous main protagonist, and then, the lack of a femme fatale.

Orhan Günşiray is a famous actor, and he is seen as a character in the narrative played by Orhan Günşiray himself. When he first appears, he plays the macho hero with a gun who sets out to save the female victim from the 'bad guys'. That initial role he plays as an actor is almost identical with his part in the narrative as well, except he does not have a gun. He does not display the common noir characteristics, which are more or less agreed upon by researchers and critics. According to Park's summary, the male protagonist of film noir is between legal and illegal, moral and immoral, and criminal and innocent. The character has weaknesses, and in the course of the events, he finds himself soaked up by crime either by mistake or a wrong decision (2011, p. 23). From that perspective, Orhan as the male protagonist is rather a traditional hero without any flaw or ambiguity. He is

an exemplary innocent figure who acts morally, and definitely works to restore the order to make sure that the evil characters are legally punished. He acts in a chivalric way when he promises to solve the case and revenge on the criminals who have killed Nur's sister. He is strong and athletic enough to beat one of the villains, and smart enough to outwit all else. He does not carry a gun or shoot at anybody as he uses his intellect and observational powers. Even when he is captured and neutralized, he does not show any signs of nervousness or caution. He is always confident, self-assured and righteous. Gates explores the typology of male detective characters, and argues that the advent of sound film coincides with the classical detective type displaying a set of traits: interviewing the witnesses, consulting with the helper, collecting evidence, finding the clues about the case, and finally revealing the truth. Such detectives focus on gathering information rather than jumping into action. These detectives reinforce the impression that they are invincible, and rely on their intelligence to defeat the criminals (2006, pp. 60, 94). As the investigator, Orhan is formed in a similar fashion as he follows the pattern summarized by Gates, and displays the same superior qualities. Orhan almost has superhero qualities, and through his words, gestures and looks, he makes it obvious that he is in total control of the whole case, his environment and others involved in the case. He is definitely masculine, yet in his dealings with female characters (particularly Nur), he is sensitive, affectionate, and even sentimental to the point of deciding about an engagement with Nur in a short while. Besides, Nur's presence augments Orhan's masculinity granting him the position of a guardian and the protector of the weak. In all aspects, Orhan is somewhere in between a traditional hero with godlike qualities and a masculine tough investigator of classical detective narratives.

Nur, on the other hand, is a victim of rapid urbanization as part of modernization and cultural development. Although her motivations are unclear and remains in the shadows, she feels the urge to run away from home to become an actor, but falls prey to the dark side of the city. Although her story points to a social problem, i.e. runaway young people with the hope of thriving professionally in the city, the social problem is not explored at all to discuss the reasons why people choose the path to migrate to Istanbul to become a film star; and therefore, the narrative focuses on the investigation itself. Nur is targeted by the criminal organisation led by Adnan that who seeks women to force them into prostitution. Hoping to find the criminals, Nur triggers the investigation as she needs help.

Throughout the narrative she is rarely active, and appears from time to time without any initiating action on her behalf. As a result, she fits at least one category in film noir character formation. Place describes female noir protagonists that display softer qualities than femme fatale, and calls them ‘the nurturing woman’. Being passive, static, weak, affectionate and nourishing, these women are part of the established order in which male domination and perspective shape their world (1998, pp. 53-63). Nur is a nurturing woman in many ways: She is in need of a guardian who is capable of saving her and finding her sister’s murderer. She is portrayed as a naïve, needy, beautiful and attractive young woman. The only time she is active is when she decides to run away and execute the plan outside the narrative time. That decision brings about complications leading to her sister’s death, and implies that she is weak, is not able to make sound decisions. The idea to design her future and become a film star in the film industry is in a way punished by the villains. In many ways, she is presented to be the opposite of Orhan: she cannot fulfil her dream and cannot be a film star, she is too weak to solve the case, she is easily overwhelmed by people and events, and almost all her actions bring about more problems when she acts on her own accord. As a result, she turns into a subservient person merely acting according to Orhan’s directions. She begs for help, and is almost always scared even when there is no obvious threat. When she is taken by Orhan to his house, the way she dresses transforms her into a baby doll, and an eye candy for Orhan, and she is stripped of all the feminine qualities that are associated with femmes fatales of film noir.

Adnan is the director of the ongoing film which features Orhan, Nur’s sister, and Gönül. Adnan is first seen while directing the film, and in the last scene, his death ends both his film project and *Ölüm Film Çekiyor*. He is the mastermind of the criminal organization, which recruits and forces women who apply to his organization to become film stars to become prostitutes. Therefore, he is a central character, but his character is not developed at all: his motivation to establish a criminal organization (e.g. financial gain, criminal tendencies, sexually deviant personality, or any other reason) is not clear. Similarly, the reason for merely standing by while Orhan is collecting evidence and making inferences that lead him to Adnan is not revealed. Obviously, his action is hidden deliberately to create the surprise effect in the last sequence of the film as Adnan is always in the foreground, but is never seen in connection to any suspicious activity. Throughout the film, he mainly works in the film set, listens to Orhan about his progress in the murder

case, warns him kindly to take care of himself, acts off-screen, and these actions are disclosed in the final scene by Orhan and himself to reconstruct the story. Therefore, although he is the protagonist of the film, his absence is more significant than his presence mainly because his presence until the last scene functions to distract the viewer, and create plot twists to eliminate suspicions to repeat the cliché that the perpetrator is the least suspicious one.

Other characters such as Gönül and Refia are functional characters who are not developed at all. Gönül merely protects and accompanies Nur in the absence of Orhan, and Refia is used to create plot twists. She first lures Orhan to a trap, and then, saves his life by killing two men from the criminal organization as a result of her regret for taking part in crimes.

Overall, the character formation is not related to film noir as the limited number of characters do not reflect noir traits. In the film, the most important element of noir characters, the ambiguity, is missing. There are noir films without a femme fatale or homme fatale, but when both of them are missing, and all the characters are more or less similar to each other or not developed enough in detail in terms of their relationship with each other, the outer world, the city, the dangerous criminal world that they are involved by chance or deliberately, then it is not possible to mention film noir influence or connection.

9.1.3 Space and Time

9.1.3.1 Space

The places in *Ölüm Film Çekiyor* are limited in variety, and they are mainly public space in Istanbul, however since the main locations are film sets, they have limited access for the public. Film sets are mainly bar/restaurant (studio), a rural area outside the city (on location), a village (studio), and a hotel with a large garden (on location). Other than film sets, houses, a restaurant, a nightclub, a star agency, a tailoring shop, and a cellar are the main places that the narrative is based on, and they are usually places associated with the city. The weight of the prominent spaces are as follows:

Film sets (four locations): 32-33 minutes

Nur's house: 7-8 minutes

The restaurant/bar: 6-7 minutes

The nightclub: 5-6 minutes

The coverup star agency: 5-6 minutes

The tailoring shop: 5.5 minutes

Rahmi's house: 4.5 minutes

The cellar: 3.5 minutes

Orhan's house: 2.5 minutes

Other than these places, the scenes also involve the streets of the city, automobiles, a truck, a village house, and a phone booth.

The self-reflexivity of the film is evident in the way space is used as well. More than one third of the narrative takes place in film sets, mainly the bar, the top of a hill outdoors, the garden of a village house, and the hotel. These places immediately call forth ambiguity that accompanies the fictionality of film sets. Even the reality in the fiction film (*Ölüm Film Çekiyor*) is contested due to the film within a film structure, and the sense of realism is distorted throughout the film as the narrative transgresses the boundaries of the real and the fictional worlds in the film universe. So, the viewer is not able to trust what is on the screen as the representation of reality might turn out to be fictional at any time. Therefore, the viewer is prevented to establish an identification with the elements of the film from the very first scene on.

The events start in the first film set when Nur's sister is shot by one of the actors accidentally because someone has replaced a real bullet in the gun. The events end in another film set, and this time, Adnan is shot by the police with real pistols and bullets. Both places are meant to be fictional, and in the first case, because the killing takes place in the fictional world of a film, no one takes it seriously. So, the space directly manipulates the way events and places are perceived. In the second case, however, Adnan firstly rhetorically proposes Orhan to die together, and then, he is shot when he attempts to kill Orhan and Nur. Oddly enough, Orhan does not react to Adnan's death at all. He rather enjoys his time with Nur and kisses her, which indicates his indifference as if everything has been part of the fictional world, which creates doubts about the reality again. Both for the viewer and for the actors in the film, the places create ambiguity. Since the whole

crime scheme is connected to the film industry, all the places related to the industry display the same quality. The film sets (the bar, the hotel and the cellar nearby) hide Adnan and his men, and provide them with a legitimate platform to do business. The star agency hides the true nature of the service they are providing, and is used to recruit women promising them a bright and glamorous future. The cellar in connection with the agency also functions as a torture chamber where the women are treated roughly, threatened, and if they resist tortured to obey. The tailoring shop hides the prostitution organization, and serves to cover up the business by attaching to it the appearance of a legal front office. In a similar way, the people in these places also display the same ambiguity: the director is the mastermind of a criminal organization, the star actor becomes an investigator, the dead sister is actually another investigator to find her sister, the man at the agency is not an agent but a criminal, the tailor is also the member of the same organization, and Refia the secretary at the tailoring shop turns out to be repentant and against the organization. As a result, the places are also part of the puzzle for the viewer to reconstruct the story, but at the same time, they constantly reproduce doubts about the narrative. However, Orhan's incongruously perfect and precise methods to solve the case undercuts such intensifying effects produced in the places.

The bars, restaurant and the nightclub are common noir locations that are associated with leisure, entertainment, and relaxation, yet within film noir, they usually connote crime, insecurity, indifference (Sobchack 1998, pp. 144-146). In *Ölüm Film Çekiyor*, these places serve two functions. First, they are the gathering point for the characters to communicate, revise their knowledge of the case, and have small talk about the ongoing film, all of which fit the locations' purpose to create a haven for people to ease the daily burden. On the other hand, these places are both fictional and real in the film's universe, which creates further ambiguity. For instance, the opening scene takes place in a bar, and after that, another bar scene immediately makes the viewer think about the fictionality of the space. Both in the fictional world of the 'film within a film' and the real space of the film, these places also threaten the security of the characters, Orhan and Nur in particular. The man in the agency lurks around Orhan in the bar to learn information about Nur. The nightclub where Orhan meets Refia, the secretary working at the tailoring shop, becomes a trap for him, and he is caught by the members of the gang. As a result, the presence of

both the fictional quality and the ambiguity undercut the effects of crime, danger and suspense to some degree as the viewer is disoriented throughout the film.

Finally, the houses are the second largest group of places where the characters dwell, however they merely serve as a place for protection. In all the houses Nur visits, she is the weak woman in terror, and in each house, there is an agent to protect her. So, except the rural house with an old couple where Nur finds herself after she escapes the torture and faints, the houses do not reflect the traditionally associated functions. They do not provide Nur with a sense of security, and she moves from one place to another. Nur's house looks barren and cold, and Orhan's house is stuffy and stylish implying a change in her social status. Although Orhan gets engaged with Nur in the house, and they kiss, the houses do not contain families inside, and they are far from being domestic environments.

Overall, the events mainly take place in places associated with film industry rather than the city in general. Film sets, the hotel, the bar, the agency, the cellar, the tailoring shop, the cliff, cars etc. are either transitory places or coverup for the criminal organization. Hence, they remain in obscurity for both the characters of the film and the audience. The houses are also devoid of their domesticity, and cannot even provide a sense of security. The places in the form of film sets in the narrative are different than in the previous cases, and on the whole, since they are completely ambiguous, unstable and connote danger for the characters, together with bars and nights clubs, they have affinity with film noir space. However, the ambiguity remains for the viewer for another reason as well. When the locations' true identity in the fictional world is not clear (studio or actual location), the ambiguity shifts towards narrative and the film experience itself, not the story, characters or the fictional world. Therefore, the metafictional quality of the film is more dominant than film noir elements.

9.1.3.2 Time

The plot covers a span of few day starting with the murder, continuing with the investigation, and ending with the resolution. The events are mainly connected to the individuals' experiences rather than a period as a whole, and the short span indicates a limited scope. The story is much longer than the plot as it includes Nur's past experience

related verbally covering the time she decides to become a film star, yet the scope eventually remains limited to Nur's sorrows and Orhan's heroism to restore order.

The narration of Nur's story in the form of a flashback causes the narration to be fragmented. The flashback is accompanied by Nur's voiceover, which narrates from her own perspective her experience including deception, torture and her struggle for survival, and lasts about seven and a half minutes. The flashback has a larger scope than Nur, it also touches upon some other women who see the star agency, and as a result, prostitution as an opportunity for easy money; some women who are gradually convinced to serve men; and some women, such as Nur, who refuse it with a strict sense of morality as they are definitely repelled by the offer. However, after the flashback, the focus remains on Nur and her wish to find the murderer of her sister rather than the social problem as a whole. So, the flashback is used for three purposes: to relate the background story, to create an identification with the viewer through the sentimental and moral gist of the story, and to emotionally move Orhan to encourage him to solve the case without applying to the police. The personal appeal of the voiceover in narrating the touching story also helps establish the identification with the viewer. As a whole, the flashback also indicates that the past determines the nature of the events in the present, and sets the investigation going for the future. Hence, the function and the content of the flashback does not fit the classic noir conventions. Turim distinguishes flashbacks in melodramas and film noir in the way in which they are utilized in the narrative, and claims that flashbacks in film noir serves an overall sense of fatalism whereas in melodrama it is connected to the resolution in a much positive way as melodrama tends to lead to a happy ending (1989, p. 143). Judging the flashback mainly in terms of its function, in *Ölüm Film Çekiyor*, Nur's story in the form of a flashback leads the narrative and the character to a resolution and a happy ending although the flashback itself relates a story full of horror and terror. Turim further discusses the use of flashback in film noir designating one of the purposes of flashbacks as investigative structure. Such flashbacks are linked to clues and leads of an investigation, and the motives of the characters in committing their actions (ibid., p. 172). From that perspective, the flashback in the narrative is not part of the investigation, but one of the factors that triggers it. Also, the content of the flashback is not used for the investigation by Orhan as he managed to collect all the evidence and leads himself. Even when Nur visits the location later on, she instinctively recalls the scenery and connects

the dots without a flashback. Hence, the flashback and the voiceover do not function in the way they do in classic noir films.

During the investigation, the events are narrated in a linear fashion without further flashbacks, however the narrative includes gaps. As a result, information about the perpetrator is hidden from the viewer, and certain actions are not presented to maintain obscurity and suspense. The phone call by Adnan, the twist of Nur by changing her location after the secret note given by Orhan, and the arrival of the police are all in the time line, but are not revealed to the viewer. Only after such gaps, the flashback and the clues Orhan gathers, the story can be reconstructed to achieve a complete chronological explanation. So, the story is constructed within the film both by the viewer and the actors of the film. Schrader points to such complex chronological structures in film noir, and argues that they intensify the feelings of hopelessness and lost time. Such devices also highlight the question ‘how’ events have happened rather than ‘what’ happened (1972, p. 11). In *Ölüm Film Çekiyor*, however, the chronological structure does not provide the viewer with a fatalistic sense in the end. The flow of time is towards an orderly state as the order is restored by the hero in the end. Rather than a sense of hopelessness or decay, the narrative leads to a sense of justice and the dominance of ‘the good’ over ‘the bad’ through intelligence and perseverance. Therefore, the way time is used is not in parallel with the classic film noir.

Overall, the narrative includes some film noir elements in terms of events with a puzzle structure about a murder leading to a criminal organization. However, character formation is far from film noir due to the absence of protagonists in the grey area; devices such as flashback and voiceover are not used in parallel with film noir conventions; and the narrative is mainly about a traditional hero and his successful investigation leading to a happy end in a cliché way sealing it with a kiss. Therefore, the narrative resembles a classical detective fiction rather than film noir.

9.2 FORMAL ELEMENTS IN *ÖLÜM FİLM ÇEKİYOR*

Although narrative elements mainly include elements of classical detective fiction film in *Ölüm Film Çekiyor*, the style displays elements of film noir rather than traditional style in an uneven fashion.

The film starts with a ‘film within a film’ sequence: a woman dances in a nightclub, the camera tracks her, and switches to Nur’s sister, who is seen among the villains while begging them to set her free. Orhan as the hero enters the bar with a confident stance to take care of the villains in a gun fight, they exchange bullets, the woman falls down, and the director stops the action. This scene opens with a medium shot of the dancing woman in a long take (approximately one minute). While she dances, the distance to the camera changes making it a long shot until the camera stops on Nur’s sister in a medium shot. The way lighting is used produces *chiaroscuro* effect that creates shadows first on the dancer, then the background where cheering customers sit, yet finally gives in to a well-lit shot of Nur’s sister. The mood of the scene also changes from a lively cheerful and energetic mood to a sad static and intimidating mood (fig. 1-3)⁷⁷. Overall, that scene is almost the summary of the whole narrative except the death of the female protagonist and the lack of a pistol on Orhan’s side: in the frame narrative, Orhan saves the female protagonist from the villains and punishes them. The style in this opening sequence is also similar to the rest of the film, and therefore significant. Indeed, the opening scene is not exactly presented as the way it is shot. Under normal circumstances, until the point when the director stops shooting, there has to be one continuous shot. However, there are cuts in the scene before Adnan stops, which means that the shots are edited, so the viewer watches a metafictional scene that is deliberately created to manipulate the perception of the viewer. Here, the tricky nature of the film continues later in Orhan’s efforts to solve the case as well, and therefore, it is a trait of the film. Deliberately or not, the film draws an analogy between the fictional and the real by destabilizing the position of the viewer. While trying to make sense of the scenes, the viewer is unable to distinguish one from the other at once glance as the fictionality of a scene is revealed only after the scene is cut by the director at the end throughout the film. The similarities both in the style and the story enable the analogy between the fictional world of the film, and the real world of the film universe. On the narrative level, the analogy refers to the dangers awaiting those who naively try to climb the social ladder in the city full of traps and threats in a very similar way as described in fiction films with minor changes. When the dark side of the world is presented to that end, noir style is used.

⁷⁷ See ‘APPENDIX 6: Figures for *Ölüm Film Çekiyor*’ for all the figures in this chapter.

The noir style is mainly described as consisting of ‘antitraditional’ lighting, camera and mise-en-scene by Place and Peterson, and the most common application of lighting is ‘low-key’, which creates contrast in the frame producing facial expressions, uncertainty, mystery and so on. As for the camera work, depth of field and close-ups are to be mentioned. The combination of these elements with mise-en-scene, actors and space are used to disorient the viewer (1996, pp. 66-69). Such elements and more of them can be traced in *Ölüm Film Çekiyor*. Deep focus and low-key lighting is seen in the opening scene, and such devices are consistently used in the rest of the film together with other devices mentioned above.

The sequence in which Orhan visits Nur is an instance of the harmony between form and content. Led by the flower seller, Orhan drives to the neighbourhood to meet Nur at night. The flower seller runs away hurriedly leaving him alone in the street. Orhan is seen alone in the dark from a low angle while calling the woman back. The frame places Orhan on the right-hand side, leaving the larger part of the frame in darkness, and accompanied with the mood music, the scene intensifies suspense and mystery. Orhan checks the building that Nur resides as the establishing long shot places him in front of the house with his dark shadow cast on the building (fig. 4-5). The eerie atmosphere is further developed with a strange composition after a cut. The previous shot is cut to a closer one, but this time the shadow of a tree is seen to be cast on the walls and the doorway which does not exist in the previous shot (compare fig. 5, 6 and 8). The doorway is also half lit to enable the view of the door left ajar. The fact that the continuity is ignored shows, as well as carelessness perhaps, the deliberate effort to create a composition through *chiaroscuro* and camera work that leaves the way for the upcoming scene. The door is opened in a medium shot which only focuses on the corner of the door, and the cut to Orhan in a medium close-up shows his face in the dark, and in the background, swaying shadows of the leaves signal danger (fig. 7-8). Another cut to a long shot elongates the moment and maintains the atmosphere (it takes him more than one minute to enter the building), and once again, the suspense is created at the expense of continuity as the shadows of the leaves cannot be seen on the wall of the door way (fig. 9). When he enters the dark passage, he finds himself in a dark room. Nur turns on a flashlight, and hides herself behind the light while exposing and blinding the person across herself. Hence, the

mysterious atmosphere is maintained by medium close-ups to highlight details and the facial expressions (fig. 10-13).

That scene is connected to the long flashback that also uses similar devices extensively. The characters and the places are presented in sharp contrasts due to low key lighting; low and high camera angles and close-ups create a claustrophobic atmosphere in interior spaces, especially the cargo box of the truck that carry the women and the final destination the cellar (fig. 14-15). In the cellar, deep focus, 'canted' angle and cast shadows are added to the repertory of devices, especially the representation of the fire is created through light plays that stand for the light of the flames creating high contrast between the door to the upstairs and the dim cellar (fig. 16-19). Accompanied by the voiceover, the intensity of the devices amounts to the climax of Nur's story, that is, the escape from captivity. While escaping during the chaos caused by the fire, her tiny body is belittled from a low angle in a long shot while climbing the giant stairs to reach the light this time signalling freedom for her (fig. 19-20). She runs outside at night, and a tracking shot accompanies her in a medium shot to portray her panic and terror. Then, long shots locate her running in the trees in the dark until she faints first in a medium shot to display her expression, and then in a long shot to present the wilderness (fig. 21-23). The entire sequence is accompanied by mood music and the dramatic voiceover of Nur, which doubles the eerie atmosphere created by the setting (e.g. cellar and the woods). The flashback both uncovers the details of the criminal organization, and presents the protagonist who is the only one who has refused to be part of the organization and managed to escape. The personal appeal of voiceover narration on the viewer intensifies the emotional effect, and the flashback binds the style and the story to create that effect. As a result, the theme is crime in the form of victimization and suffering of an innocent woman, and the style portrays the content in an untraditional fashion through lighting, camera angles, shot distance and acting, all of which fit perfectly to the abovementioned description of film noir style by Place and Shrader.

Upon visiting the agency, Orhan plays a trick to secretly make sure that the agency is part of the murder. He eavesdrops on the man at the office, and makes sure that he follows him to the old town where he plays another trick to lose him and return to the office to extract information about the murder case. The cat-and-mouse sequence starts when Orhan leaves the agency, continues in the streets in automobiles, and then, on foot in and

around a passage towards a small pier full of fishermen's boats. The shots are on location, and Orhan is seen among men on the street in broad daylight. The shots in the sequence are usually from a high angle in long shots with deep focus as one automobile is followed by the other one in main streets of the city. A similar attitude is seen in the shots when the characters are on foot (fig. 24-28). Hence, the city becomes part of the narrative, and the characters blend in the city as a tiny portion of a massive body producing a sense of realism that contributes to the credibility of the story until another ambiguous moment appears to destabilize it.

After Orhan checks the documents in the agency and notes down his findings, which is not revealed to the viewer to maintain curiosity, he meets Adnan the director and Gönül the actor at the bar. The man at the agent follows Orhan in the bar, and the flower seller approaches Orhan once again. That sequence is later connected to Nur as she is hiding in her house. Throughout that sequence, film noir style is employed as well. The frame that brings Orhan, Adnan and Gönül together is formed in three planes. In the foreground, customers drinking and chatting create the ambience that implies fun, entertainment, and relaxation. The casually chatting three characters are seen in the second plane, and behind them is the flower seller across Orhan behind the counter. She triggers the action sequence when she nods to Orhan to meet her. In that scene, the camera with deep focus is placed at a low angle, which progresses to a conic narrowing down of the view towards the woman at the centre of the frame (fig. 29). *Chiaroscuro* lighting creates high contrast and shadows, and when combined with other elements, it also implies that after all the place is not really cosy at all unlike the first impression created by means of the initial long shot. Such composition enables contrasting moods to appear as in cheerful and threatening in an alternating order. The expectation created on the viewer about a potential threat is satisfied when Orhan meets the woman. The frame is imbalanced as the characters are gathered on the right-hand side, and soon enough, the camera pans left to present the shadow of a man on the wall with a horizontal cast shadow on the left-hand side of the frame completing the missing part of the previous composition (fig. 30-31). The shadow appears and disappears at once upon eavesdropping on the two characters and learning about Nur's message to see Orhan. The identity of the shadow is not difficult to guess by the viewer (the man at the agency), yet that needs to be verified. Hence, the element of doubt is formed through style, and further elaborated by the entailing scene in

which the flower seller reproaches Orhan for sending another man on his errand rather than taking care of the matter himself, and that triggers the action sequence as Orhan is not aware of such a person, so he races to reach Nur before the other man. After a cut to Nur, who is waiting for Orhan, the doorbell rings, and as before, she turns off the lights to act cautiously before opening the door. Accompanied by mood music, a dolly shot brings her closer with a troubled expression on her face. When she approaches the door, her face is lit from above creating shadows on the door and her face, and that distorts her look producing fear and doubt. Similarly, when she is about to open the door, she is illuminated by a diagonal beam of light which leaves almost all else in darkness preparing the viewer for the next move of the man (fig. 32). Nur opens the door, and moves aside in darkness to let the man in and turn on the flashlight to see the face. The man is seen in a medium shot, and Nur recognizes him and turns the flashlight off. The scene is based on high contrast not only in terms of lighting but also in terms of specific narrative elements such as the villain and the innocent (fig. 33). Then, Orhan is included in the sequence with a crosscutting to his car riding in the night in the street in a long shot alternating with the man trying to break into the room where Nur hides (fig. 34). After Orhan arrives, noticing that he cannot open the front door, the man targets Nur again, and Orhan tries to climb up through the window bars to save Nur, and manages to arrive there just in time before the man to the surprise of the viewer (fig. 35-36). They fight in the room which is lit from two sources that illuminate the fighting men and create sharp shadows around. Until the villain is exposed by the light, the innocent protagonist remains in the shadow for protection and security. When Orhan becomes active, the light prevails when compared with the previous shots implying in a way the triumph of the good over the bad (fig. 37-38). The whole story aims to arouse the curiosity of the viewer in that battle between the 'good guy' and the 'villains' (also light vs. darkness), and focus on 'what' will happen next until the final scene which will focus on 'how the events happened' that way. To that end, in this current sequence, crosscutting, long takes followed by quick cuts, lighting, a combination of long and medium shots, variable shot distance and frame composition are employed to deliver the effects, and they are, to a great extent, film noir elements.

Finally, the sequence after the trap is also worth noting to study the consistent use of film noir elements. Orhan is captured by three men when the women in the tailoring shop

called Refia lures him into a trap. He is taken to a desolate place at night by two men and Refia to be killed. The sequence starts with a long shot which presents two sets of headlights signalling two automobiles approaching in a long take (fig. 39). A cut to a lower angle shows the vehicles with powerful headlights parking at the edge of a cliff (fig. 40). The two men take Orhan out of the car in a long shot with a long take. The long distance enables the viewer to see the place as a whole, and the high angle combined with a pan places the viewer in a position of a hidden witness (fig. 41). There is a single source of light from the left-hand side, and creates very long shadows. In the meantime, Refia sits in the car giving orders to the men, and then, steps out to approach Orhan who is tied and lying on the ground. She lights a cigarette and helps him smoke it in a long shot. Then, the shot angle changes to a lower angle to include all characters and the cars in the frame as one of the men brings the car to the edge of the cliff as part of the plan to get rid of Orhan by creating an impression of an accident (fig. 42-43). The deep focus in a long take enables the viewer to follow the characters in the background as well as Orhan and Refia in the foreground. The movement of the characters creates dynamism as the change in the distance of the objects in the frame transforms the shot characteristics in a way similar to Orson Wells' use of depth of field. Here, the viewer has control over the characters in the background who are constantly in motion, and that creates an expectation of an unusual event, but since there is no specific area to focus in the frame, the long shot builds suspense. Then, the expectation is fulfilled when Refia drives the car towards the two men to hit and push them down the cliff. The shot characteristics change to a different set of stylistic devices. The action and tension are maintained through medium shots and medium close-ups with faster editing rather than long shots and long takes. The focus is rather on the facial expressions and details, and again *chiaroscuro* creates the dramatic effect (fig. 44-49). Then, Refia sends the empty automobile down the cliff⁷⁸, and sets Orhan free. From then on, the case is solved for Orhan completely, and it is time for the viewer to learn what is already discovered by Orhan. He goes to the film set with Nur, and he confronts first the fall guy, and then Adnan as the head of the organization. This final part in the film set is shot rather in the traditional style.

⁷⁸ The automobile is seen falling down the cliff in an inserted footage from another film. Probably at the expense of continuity, for financial reasons such a solution is devised (fig. 50).

The only element that is completely incongruous in the entire film is the male protagonist's acting. The character is drawn as an overconfident and smart actor assuming the role of the investigator due to a murder case. He makes his overwhelming heroism felt at every stage of his search for the truth, and that is more or less in parallel with the classical detective role with some modifications while at the same time at odds with film noir acting on the whole. Donna Peberdy discusses the traits of film noir acting, and divides into three categories: screen performance, diegetic performance and social performance. Leaving social performance (or the relationship between the historical context and the narrative) aside as it is not relevant in the case at hand, Orhan's screen performance and diegetic performance is worth studying. Peberdy claims that film noir acting is characterized by minimal acting with contrasting expressiveness in manners and gestures (p. 321). So, the stone-cold posture of a detective or femme fatale is matched with horrified facial expressions of victims or the fallen protagonists with the help of lighting and composition. Diegetic performance refers to the performance of the actor in relation with what the narrative demands to reveal the character traits, to deceive others by acting as another person (as in disguise), or simply performing the performance that might be limited to the viewer or limited or open to some or all characters as well as the viewer (ibid. pp. 321-329). In terms of screen performance, Orhan has a very limited repertory, and most of the time, he remains like a school master reprimanding naughty students, and expressiveness on Orhan's side is rarely seen unlike Nur for instance (compare Orhan and Nur in fig. 51-52). Nur reveals her emotions in accordance with the script and the character formation whereas Orhan bears a smile or rather a 'smirk', and even in the most difficult conditions threatening his life, he maintains in a similar attitude. He is quite the opposite of the remaining protagonists in other cases as other male protagonists are presented morally in the grey area; stumbling and falling as human beings; and physically, they are presented in a larger range from 'appealing' to 'unappealing' depending on the ups and downs in the course of events. They display and reflect these characteristics by means of their screen performance. However, in the case of Orhan, the gestures, mimics, the interaction between the protagonist and the environment, such as the setting and lighting, and the expression of affective register are not modified in parallel with the content and conditions of the narrative. That seems to be out of the ordinary as Orhan's main occupation is acting, and the situations he finds

himself in involve physical assaults with knives and pistols, which would naturally cause a sense of fear or intimidation on a person who has not dedicated his life to handling such situations like the security forces for instance. However, Orhan acts like an indifferent superhero. From that perspective, the male protagonist in *Ölüm Film Çekiyor* is similar to ‘Recai’ in *Cingöz Recai*, who is also an all-around investigator with qualities befitting the traditional hero. As for the diegetic performance, Orhan plays the role of a classical hero who is tough towards the villains, and soft towards the victims. In addition to that, he plays the role of another personality more than once. First, he acts in the film within the film as the tough hero; second, he pretends to be interested in the services that the star agency provides to find information about the murder case; and, finally, he tries to play himself as a film star in the tailoring shop to influence the workers and learn about the function of the place. In all these cases, he is always the same person, and there is little difference between the persona as the main protagonist of the film, and these diegetic side performances. Therefore, the complications in the story, and the mood and certain effects created through film noir style are undermined to a large extent due to uniform and limited acting and performance of the main figure of the film.

Overall, the style of *Ölüm Film Çekiyor* includes film noir elements beyond doubt. Such elements are mainly used in a similar way to the previous cases in certain scenes and sequences: action sequences, emotionally intense scenes, scenes to provide and maintain suspense and mood. The use of deep space enables a larger scope for the audience to study frames and the interaction of the characters with each other and the environment. Lighting is typical of film noir to create contrasts to disorient the viewer, and create emotional effects including horror, violence, danger, and doubt. The contrast created by means of editing long shots, medium shots, and close-ups successively functions to adjust rhythm through the action and reaction of the characters to that action. High and low camera angles (even canted angle) also help to distort the classical eye-level perception of the viewer, and force the viewer to interpret the scenes from different perspectives. However, the events due to the classical detective fiction structure, the character formation due to the lack of all the major film noir protagonist types, and the incongruous acting style of the male protagonist are not in harmony with the film noir style undercutting the effects.

9.3 CONCLUSION

Ölüm Film Çekiyor is not an instance of film noir in the classic sense although it includes noir elements in form and content. In terms of narrative elements, crime is the central element, however the narrative does not focus on the motivation of the range of characters in dealing with crime or the world of criminals at all, but only the investigation procedure from the perspective of the ‘good guy’. On the other hand, the investigation mainly polishes the hero’s intelligence and courage. The way the fictional material is handled reminds the classical detective fiction blended with noir elements. Character formation also leads to a similar conclusion as almost none of the prominent character types exists in the narrative, and a clear distinction between the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ figures signals a strict moral and social stance in terms of crime and criminals. The fact that even the motivation of the head of the criminal organization rests in oblivion implies the superficial approach to the subject matter at hand, and the significance of the incident-investigation-resolution formula. The classical structure requires suspense and curiosity to be maintained until the final revelation, and all the effort is invested in that final encounter between the investigator and the perpetrator to create a surprise effect. Hence, the narrative turns into a rather classical detective film despite film noir elements, which are visible especially in terms of space due to the locations related to the city, the dark side of the rapid urbanization and its consequences in the social structure, and in terms of time mainly in the form of flashback and gaps. As for formal elements, film noir influence evidently dominates the film language. The style mainly dictates the way the scenes are perceived by the viewer by creating the mood and the atmosphere in the scenes and sequences about the dangers awaiting the characters. However, film noir influence is limited to certain scenes and not the film thoroughly. Other sequences are shot in a mildly classical fashion, and that creates contrast between scenes shot in different styles. The long takes and long shots alternate with each other just like eye-level, low and high camera angles, and scenes in light and dark tones. Noir elements in terms of cinematography, mise-en-scene, and editing are visible in the film, yet acting is an exception just like character formation for narrative elements. Therefore, making a classic film noir does not seem to be the ultimate goal, and lack of some film noir elements while others exist should not be regarded as a flaw. Aydın Arakon is an experienced director, who started film making in the transition period, and some formal film noir elements,

especially *chiaroscuro*, can be traced even at the very beginning of his career, for instance, in his historical films dating back to 1951 in *Istanbul'un Fethi* (The Conquest of Istanbul), and 1952 in *Kızıltuğ Cengiz Han* (Genghis Khan the Red Banner). His consistent use of a large repertoire of noir elements, both narrative and formal, clearly show how deeply film noir has been integrated in film making in Turkey to communicate film language not to copy archetypal noir films, but to make use of them to blend them with the local elements to create a unique product. By doing so, he is able to present a rather traditional form through a relatively untraditional style, and offers a new film experience for the audience through that combination of form and content.



10. THE ANALYSIS OF *RİFAT DİYE BİRİ*

Rıfat Diye Biri (Someone Called Rıfat, 1962) is directed by Ertem Göreç who started making films in 1959, and this is his third film. Although the scenario is written by Attila İlhan (penname Ali Kaptanoğlu), Göreç claims that the scenario has been changed as the script has been designed to be verbal, resembling a novel, and not fit for a visual medium. The producer Memduh Ün and the director Ertem Göreç made radical changes in the script by modifying both the characters and the story⁷⁹ (Sekmeç 2010, p. 67). As a young director, Göreç's previous film is much appreciated *Otobüs Yolcuları* (Bus Travellers, 1961), which is a social realistic film befitting the new trend of realistic films together with a national cinema ideal. Despite his success, Göreç was still far from establishing a cinematographic style or vein, as the wide variety of his later films in terms of form and content indicates, and he has been wavering between different genres and approaches. Özön sees the year 1962 as the beginning of the depression after a standstill, and as the champion of social realism in cinema, he classifies *Rıfat Diye Biri* among the films signalling the depression in cinema industry in Turkey (1963, p. 156). However, *Rıfat Diye Biri* is significant not simply because it possesses classic film noir elements, but mainly because the film signifies the transformation film noir has undergone in Turkey within a decade dividing into many branches and moulding with other cinematographic substances to eventually form a local version of film noir in Turkey with a hybrid quality as the main defining aspect. Being the last case of this study, this chapter aims to understand the film noir influence, and how classic film noir is transformed while being integrated in Turkish film culture within a decade.

10.1 NARRATIVE ELEMENTS IN *RİFAT DİYE BİRİ*

Rıfat Diye Biri is a rather short film, approximately 76 minutes. The narrative tightly focuses on the story of a fugitive convict called Rıfat and his effort for revenge as a fall guy who has been betrayed by his ex-lover, and the narrative takes place in less than 48

⁷⁹ Göreç claims that the title of the original script was 'Zişan with a Bracelet', and told the story of a 'madam', a former prostitute who runs a brothel, and her arms are covered with bracelets as her differentiating trait. The male protagonist visits the brothel, and the madam falls in love with him, but her love is unreturned triggering the urge to attract him (Sekmeç 2010, p. 67).

hours, specifically in two nights and a day. The selection of the events on the screen implies film noir influence, however, the film ends on such a different note than the overall flow that the fabula takes a different turn to transform into a rather traditional crime film.

10.1.1 Events

The events can be grouped in three parts based on the quality of the events as the introduction of the characters and the main conflict, the investigation leading to the finale, and the ultimate encounter to restore order and serve justice.

The narrative starts in front of a nightclub at night when a car stops in front of the club. In the club, a stage show is performed by a man with a mask and a whip and a dancer woman called Zişan. The man whips the woman as part of the show. After the show, in the backstage, Zişan the dancer sees the newspaper brought by a man announcing that a murderer called Rıfat has escaped from prison. Zişan orders the men around to evacuate the nightclub, watch out for Rıfat, and kill him. After that, Rıfat is seen walking in the streets at night, and visits the nightclub to no avail. An automobile full of gunmen follows Rıfat, and when he enters a pharmacy to make a phone call, the men shoot at him wounding both Rıfat and the pharmacist. Rıfat runs away, and the police arrive at the crime scene. Before the pharmacist dies, he whispers Rıfat's name as he has heard it while Rıfat was on the phone. At the police station, the chief inspector Zekai and a detective called Kemal receive a call about the case at the pharmacy, and Rıfat becomes the main suspect. In the meanwhile, Rıfat hides from the police, and finally, he breaks in a house to escape the checkpoints. The owners of the house are seen in an automobile as they are stopped at the checkpoint. The man in the driver seat, Zeynel, displays his intention of getting engaged with the young woman called Lale, who is not willing at all. In the house, Lale is held by Rıfat with a pistol. She notices his wound, and agrees to treat him. Then, she sees the news about Rıfat on the newspaper, and is frightened. Rıfat points his gun at her to remain silent and obedient. She gets the medical material, lies to her mother about the fuss she has made, and dresses the wound. Rıfat tries to assure her of his innocence, however, to avoid the police, he takes her hostage when he sets out to visit a man called Aleko.

The second part starts as Aleko repairs a shoe in his repair shop. Two gunmen arrive at the shoe repair shop and one of them kills Aleko. After that, Rıfat and Lale arrive at the shop to find him dead. The gunmen report to Zişan in the mansion about the previous failed assassination attempt targeting Rıfat. The phone rings, and the head of the gang is heard reproaching everyone for the failure. The next morning, Rıfat and Lale wait for the Galata bridge to open, and Rıfat briefly talks about his past, unfulfilled hopes and the misfortunes he has endured ending in prison. Touched by his story, Lale helps him pass by a police officer on their way rather than turning him in. They arrive at a hotel the owner of which is Rıfat's fellow countryman and his father's acquaintance from Diyarbakır. In the hotel room, Lale talks about her past and hopes, and complains about the man (Zeynel) whom her parents deem a suitable candidate for marriage. Rıfat falls asleep, and Lale writes a note to reassure him to keep his secret and advise him to surrender, and leaves the hotel for good. However, when she returns home, she reads about the false allegations about the murdered shoe repairer blaming Rıfat. Being his alibi the previous night, she leaves home to find Rıfat to help him. In the meantime, the hotel owner called Binali wakes Rıfat. He advises Rıfat to communicate with the chief inspector Zekai who might be of some help due to his virtuous personality. Zekai is already doubtful about the new murder cases, and when Rıfat calls him, and denies all charges, Zekai agrees to meet him in person at the Galata bridge. When they meet, Rıfat asks him to grant three days to uncover the truth about the murders. Zekai tries to convince him to let the police do the investigation the way Rıfat would like them to do. However, Rıfat notices the police officers in the vicinity, feels betrayed, and runs away blending with the crowd. On his way, he comes across Lale returning from the hotel, and they go back to the hotel. When they arrive there, the bellboy called 'Sivri'⁸⁰ eavesdrop on them. Binali mentions an old member of the gang as a source of information about the whereabouts of Zişan whom Rıfat tries to find. The bellboy calls Zişan to give information about Rıfat. Zişan gives orders to capture Rıfat and Lale. The gunmen arrive at the hotel, but the police officers raid the hotel, so the gunmen hide, and Rıfat escapes using the backdoor. One of the gunmen notices Rıfat, and follows him. Lale stays at the hotel, and tricks the police officers in disguise of a sex worker. When Lale goes out, the bellboy points at her to

⁸⁰ A nickname meaning 'sharp'.

signal the gunman. The gunmen abduct Lale, and take her to the mansion to Zişan. Threatening with her whip, Zişan questions Lale, but fails to learn about Rıfat, and sends her downstairs to the basement. In the meanwhile, Rıfat finds the former gang member in the sea of boats to extract information, but the gunman acts first, and kills the man before he speaks. Rıfat cannot catch the gunman, and returns to the nightclub to check the place for a clue. He breaks in the place, and finds the secret door to the basement that serves to be a laboratory to produce heroine. After a long fight, he manages to learn where Zişan is hiding, the mansion, and calls the police, but one of the men cuts the wires before he finishes the sentence. In the meanwhile, Zişan wants Lale to be brought back. Lale is already beaten, and Zişan whips her to humiliate her to revenge on Rıfat. The head of the gang called Zeynel arrives, and he turns out to be the man who wants to marry Lale. Zeynel takes Lale upstairs to beat and abuse her.

The last part starts as Rıfat approaches the mansion for the final encounter. The driver of the taxi that carries Rıfat stops at a gas station to make a phone call, and Rıfat deserts the car deflating the tire. While Lale struggles against the advances of Zeynel, Rıfat calls the place to let them know he is coming for a final fight. Zeynel bids the gunmen to take position by the windows to get ready. The gunman who has followed Rıfat runs towards the house, but is mistaken for Rıfat and is shot dead by the gunmen. Then, having the psychological upper hand, Rıfat hunts the men in tricky ways one by one, and throws a stone with a note to count the losses each time he takes care of a gunman. Finally, Zişan, Zeynel and one gunman are left. Zişan makes Lale a human shield for herself, but Rıfat infiltrates the mansion, and saves Lale. Zişan gets sentimental and blames Rıfat for betraying her love, which turns out to be still alive. To prove that, she takes the bullet for Rıfat when Zeynel shoots at him. Lale takes the gun on the floor and shoots at Zeynel, and wounds him. Rıfat takes hold of Zeynel. The security forces arrive at the crime scene, and arrest Zeynel. Zekai, the chief inspector, reveals that they have let Rıfat to escape from prison so that they could follow him and collect evidence about the criminal organization led by Zeynel. Therefore, Rıfat, who has been sentenced to death, is free. Rıfat and Lale reunite. All the cars leave the place.

The most significant aspect of the narrative is the action driven structure, and the limited amount of dialogues. In many parts of the 76-minute narrative, dialogues either do not exist or are few lines in sequences that last couple of minutes. The major dramatic parts

in the narrative include the relationship between Rıfat and Lale, and they are composed of dialogues in a single space in relatively slow-paced scenes. The action concentrates on Rıfat as the main protagonist, and although the narrator is relatively neutral, the focal point from which the story is told mainly sides with Rıfat. The narration is linear in the way in which events are presented, however, the characters verbally go back in time to connect the past and the present acting as the intradiegetic narrator rather than an extradiegetic narrator, and therefore, the perspective about the past events is presented as personal and limited to the characters. Hence, the concentrated series of events available for the viewer starts in the past with a subjective look that makes it difficult to determine the reliability of the stories for the viewer, and that requires the viewer to re-evaluate the characters to determine their alignment.

According to Rıfat's account of the past, he has been chosen as the 'fall guy' about a murder committed by a criminal organization focusing on heroin production and smuggling. Rıfat falls in love with a dancer called Zişan who is a high ranked member in the organization, second to the 'boss'. Hirsch categorises male noir protagonists that drive the narrative into three, and they are the detective, the criminal, and the victim and/or the scapegoat (1981, pp. 10-12). In the narrative, Rıfat fits both the detective (the investigator) and the scapegoat type at the same time. Zişan, as the femme fatale, sacrifices Rıfat to divert the attention from the organization, and dooms him to legal punishment. As a result, Rıfat is sentenced to death, and to be able to survive, he escapes from prison to prove his innocence, and becomes an investigator of his own case.

The background and details about the characters' past are denied for the audience except small chunks in the form of characters' verbal account of the story. The selection of the events to be presented in the narrative is important as the story is built on the past without the visual representation of the past. Considering the story as a whole by combining the verbal and visual chunks, the portrayal of Rıfat can be analysed under a better light to determine to what extent the narrative positions the main protagonist as a classic noir character: Rıfat has fallen in love with the dancer soaked up in crime (not presented - a weakness for a traditional hero), Rıfat has involved in criminals (not presented - a weakness for a traditional hero), and he has become the 'fall guy' (not presented - a weakness for a traditional hero). He escapes from prison (presented - a strength for a traditional hero), he revenges on the gang (presented - a strength for a traditional hero),

he falls in love with a naïve but strong woman (presented - a strength for a traditional hero), and he serves justice (presented - a strength for a traditional hero). Therefore, the accessible part of the story is built on the potentially 'heroic' elements about the protagonist. However, on the whole, the protagonist is still a tarnished character in the grey area, and ready to defy law and the police although ironically. The narrative omits the 'weaknesses' and focuses on the 'strengths', which clearly manipulates the perception of the viewer about the character. Combining these elements, the story follows the classic film noir tradition, and fits the definition: the subject matter is crime, the events take place in the contemporary world, and there is an ongoing investigation by an agency (Park 2011, pp. 25-26). In the narrative, the unifying element is 'crime' first in the form of murder committed in the past but the agency is not the main protagonist, and second, in the form of organized crime again not committed by the main protagonist. Therefore, the main subject matter is the 'revenge' of the victim rather than the crime and the motivations of the criminals in the narrative. The investigation carried out by Rıfat dominates the film from the beginning to the end. However, the investigation aims to locate the perpetrators rather than to shed light on a specific case, and therefore, there is no puzzle structure in the narrative about the criminal activity or organization. Rıfat already knows what has already happened and who has been responsible for his suffering. Throughout the narrative, Rıfat tries to find Zişan, his ex-lover, and punish her as she has been the one who has betrayed Rıfat. Therefore, the main focus is on the relationship between the characters, and the action taking place during Rıfat's investigation. Once the relationships are established, the narrative turns into a battle between 'the good' and 'the bad', and yet, until that clarification, the characters remain in the grey area.

The events start with the escape of the fugitive convict who is sentenced to death, and ends when he manages to revenge on the members of the gang, and hand them over to the police. That interval indicates that the events are triggered when the character is at the lowest point in his life. In due course of the narrative, he progresses to a better state, and eventually, he turns out to become a free individual who has restored the order and also found his love. Noir narratives are expected to tend towards fatalism, however, in the character's life contrary to the pattern. Sanders states the element of fatalism in film noir as the past determines the present in such a way to restrict the individual's action (2006, pp. 97-98). However, the part that is selected for narration is contrary to such fatalism in

Rıfat Diye Biri simply because Rıfat manages to cleanse himself of the stain that tainted him in the past. Therefore, when the end of the film is taken into consideration, the film noir effect weakens.

Despite the lack of fatalism, another element does not fit the whole narrative until the surprise ending. The incongruous ending is connected to the plot twist about the role of the police forces in the whole story. Although there is no direct or obvious reference in the narrative, the implicit idea is that the police fail to solve the murder case, and the judicial system sentences the wrong man to death. So, the omitted part indicates the malfunctioning justice system in general. However, there is no reference to the failed system, and moreover, the representation of the police forces in the accessible part of the narrative is in direct contrast with the actual case. Zekai is presented as a smart, serious and fatherly figure who is in command of the case from the very beginning to the end. The viewer is given that information through the final revelation by Zekai that they let Rıfat escape on purpose. That creates a big irony as that piece of information indicates that the main protagonist is not in control of anything, and all his action has been supervised, which undercuts the whole plot, and hence, the character's effort to reach the perpetrators. Rıfat is reduced to a victimized and sympathetic character rather than a hero, which makes his ambiguous position as a tarnished character who is transformed into a traditional hero even more complicated than ever. Indeed, were all the parts about the police removed, the narrative would still prove to be meaningful and complete. As Luhr points out, some noir films, especially the early examples, have happy endings deliberately installed to satisfy the viewer by restoring the order although that might be to avoid censorship (2012, p. 195). Similarly, in *Rıfat Diye Biri*, the happy ending seems to be rather fabricated, and therefore, subverts the happy ending at least for the audience especially when the chief inspector enters the scene and gets all the credit for all Rıfat has done so far about the case. Both Rıfat and the audience, who sympathize with the protagonist, are tricked. Therefore, the integration of the police in the story seems to be artificial and serves a specific purpose: to remind and reinforce the idea that the security forces protect and serve the public. The aim could be to avoid censorship after a military

coup d'état in 1960⁸¹ as the censorship board pays specific attention to the way the security forces are presented.

Overall, the events are very basically constructed and linear, and the selection of the visually narrated part is significant. The second and more heroic part of the story is opted for narration rather than the first part which includes the story of the deceived male character by a female character of some power. The narrative is a film noir in the way it is constructed on crime, the relationship between the criminals and victims is explored in a modern setting, and the main protagonists are forced to cross the line between the legal and the illegal many times although they are not criminals per se. However, the massive role of the police revealed in end of the film calls for a reconstruction and reassessment of the whole narrative under a different light, and has the potential to reclassify the elements of the narrative. But all the same, the police officers have a very limited weight and significance in the way in which events happen, and the way the characters act, the incongruous ending can be overlooked as a piece installed for rather political and legal reasons.

10.1.2 Characters

The main characters are limited in number, and only three characters, Rıfat, Lale and Zışan, are worth analysing in detail. Other than the main characters, the head of the criminal organisation Zeynel and the chief inspector Zekai are significant in the course of the narrative due their function and the ability to influence the events. Except Zekai, all the characters possess noir quality to varying degrees.

Rıfat is a film noir protagonist due to the way his character is formed, and his relationship with the people around himself and the society in general. To understand the character formation fully, Rıfat's verbal account of himself should also be included in the analysis. He is a fugitive with a death sentence threatening his life, but actually he is not a criminal per se from his perspective. As stated in the 'events' section, Hirsh's definition of male film noir protagonist as the scapegoat/victim and the investigator is valid for Rıfat. In his conversation with Lale, he mentions that he has aimed to become a lawyer, but his affair

⁸¹ The insertion of the bust of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in the frame may also be related to the urge to underline the compliance with the demands of the authority to present the police force under a positive light.

with Zişan has prevented him from achieving his ideals when he has become the ‘fall guy’ for the gang. So, he has transformed from an idealist young man with a desire to practice law to an unlawful fugitive who has no trust in law or the security forces enforcing law. As Park (2011) indicates noir protagonists are fallen into crime even if they have not done anything wrong (p. 23). Similarly, throughout the narrative, Rıfat repeats his innocence over and over to Lale, the chief inspector, and the hotel keeper. He wants to survive, and his ultimate motivation is to avoid the death penalty by revealing the true perpetrators to stay alive. To be able to do that, he is ready to defy law and continue his investigation as a fugitive at the expense of breaking the rules and running away from the police. The idea of assuming the role of the investigator is reinforced with the way he is dressed as well. From the beginning to the end, he wears the same trench coat and hat reminding of Humphrey Bogart’s detective characters, and although the hat is taken off from time to time, the coat remains on his body even when he lies on the bed. He succeeds in his investigation, and punishes the real perpetrators. The former fall guy becomes a traditional hero by serving justice that could not be delivered by the established system. However, the shift to a traditional hero causes the character formation to be entangled. On the whole, Rıfat’s noir qualities are somewhat hidden, yet they are there to differentiate him from a traditional hero who is in complete control of the events. The rise of the hero is narrated after a downfall, which usually ends a noir story. Therefore, the character formation is not in complete accordance with classic film noir protagonists, but not away from it either. In the presence of Rıfat, the transformation of a classic film noir character to fit a different culture can be traced by curtailing the background weakening the power of the protagonist, and highlighting the strengths and achievements despite all difficulties. However, none of his strengths alters the fact that Rıfat is a tarnished noir protagonist who has been victimized as a ‘fall guy’ once, and belittled through the devised role of the police almost in the form of *deus ex machina*.

Lale mainly displays qualities of the ‘nurturing woman’, but in a little bit different way, and escapes the textbook definition of ‘femme attrapée’ or ‘nurturing woman’. She does not belong to the world of crime, and her presence with the way she dresses, talks, and behaves reiterates the contrast between Zişan’s world and her world over and over again until the last sequence. One aspect in common with Rıfat is that she has had an ideal that she could not achieve. She has desired to become a doctor, but her father has opposed the

idea based on gender bias against the education of women, and wanted her to get married with his boss, who turns out to be Zeynel. According to Place, the nurturing woman nurtures emotionally by being supportive and giving, and she is usually passive and not fit for action (1998, pp. 53-63). Although Lale is caring, affectionate and emphatic towards Rıfat who is an outlaw, she also appears to be a law-abiding individual as well at the beginning of the narrative, which signals the transgressive side of her character formation. However, she undergoes a transformation and a moment of illumination upon understanding that the charges against Rıfat have been a setup as far as she has witnessed so far. Then, the ordinary upper middle-class young woman turns out to be a much resilient and powerful figure. Contrary to the fearful disposition she has displayed when Rıfat first appears with a gun, she finds the courage and skill to deceive the police officers checking the hotel to search for Rıfat. Similar to Rıfat, at one point, she loses her trust in the police, and sides with Rıfat whom she has acquainted with less than a day. Moreover, after she is taken hostage in the mansion, she is heavily beaten and insulted by the gunmen and Zişan, and is assaulted with rape threats, yet she resists torture and abuse by retaliating Zişan by slapping her, and picking up the pistol on the floor and shooting Zeynel. In trying to determine the role of women in noir films, Cowie (1993) argues the female investigators or female characters who try to restore order, and discusses the lack of attention to such characters by the critics (p. 133). Lale helps Rıfat restore the order, and moreover, she has a crucial role to play as she saves Rıfat from Zeynel who attempts to kill Rıfat, therefore, the order is restored also by means of Lale's effort. So, Lale is not a stereotypical noir character, and she shares some characteristics of the female protagonists that resist the stereotypical woman figure in some of the previous cases, such as Ayten in *Kanun Namına* (1952), Necla in *Kanlarıyla Ödediler* (1955), Zehra in *Ölüm Peşimizde* (1960), and Türkan in *Kanlı Firar* (1960).

Zişan is portrayed as a typical psychotic femme fatale. Although she is at the centre of the story, she is not a major character when it comes to screen time. Little is presented about her, and much of it relies on the account of the characters in the narrative. She first appears as a stage performer who is whipped by a man as part of a show. However, right after the show, she is seen as an authority figure as a member of the gang, and commands a large group of men upsetting the initial conditioning and misplacement in the eye of the viewer. To repeat Place's impression, femme fatale is associated with danger, death, and

sex appeal. and her existence is a threat to the male protagonists (1998, pp. 55-60). Zişan's existence in the narrative is excessively sexual, and when she first appears on the stage as part of a male fantasy, she is tamed and made submissive by the dominant male figure with a whip. Yet, after the show she displays her power and status symbolized by her own whip that she carries as the person occupying the second rank after the head of the organization that deals with drug production and smuggling. Her past is quite significant for the narrative as she has become the main target of Rıfat, and the enmity between these two characters drives the narrative. As a femme fatale, although she has had an affair with Rıfat, she does not hesitate to sacrifice him to cover a murder case and save the business. She debases Rıfat, and in a way emasculates him by rendering him a fall guy. When the narrative begins, she orders the gunmen to kill him. She tries to kill Rıfat in the last sequence as well, however, when she fails and becomes helpless, she confesses her love for Rıfat and saves him from the bullet by sacrificing herself, and restores his masculinity both by confessing her love (unreturned by Rıfat) and sacrificing herself to save him (redemption and punishment). That sudden change is rather surprising and ungrounded in itself when the sequence of events is considered, however, when Zişan's action is considered, rational behaviour is not her strong suit. She has sadistic tendencies, and she expresses herself in different ways including violence for pleasure. In addition, she enjoys dancing for herself while drinking, and loses control under pressure and bursts in a hysterical cry. Throughout the narrative, other than bodily means listed above, she expresses herself only when she confesses her love for Rıfat. Therefore, considering her poor psychological state, her action makes sense and is consistent with her previous state, not because it is credible but because it is plausible. From a theoretical perspective, however, the transformation can also be interpreted as the reinforcement and restoration of patriarchy through destruction of the resisting female character, and making her as submissive as she has been on the stage while being whipped by another man. Although Zeynel is the head of the organization, Rıfat's main target has always been Zişan. Personal reasons outweigh all other factors for Rıfat to begin his quest. The presence of Lale creates an opportunity for the viewer to compare and contrast the ideal partner for a man like Rıfat, and contrasting elements surpass similarities. However, the main element that has not been focused on is Rıfat's responsibility in his past affair with Zişan. The emphasis is mainly put on Zişan's betrayal once again due to the selection of the narrative,

which eventually creates a film noir femme fatale out of Zişan, but her counterpart remains avoided.

Zeynel, Zekai and Binali are rather two-dimensional characters with limited functions. Zeynel appears as the pure evil head of a criminal organization. His side of the story is not developed, and he remains in the dark. When he first appears, he expresses his intention to get married with Lale, however in the last sequence, he tries to rape her. Neither his motivation for any of his action nor his connection with the crime ridden world he built for himself is explained. Zekai is the opposite of Zeynel. He is a police inspector, virtuous, just and affectionate. He is addressed as 'Father Zekai' by the characters to refer to his trustworthy nature. His presence in the narrative is limited as he serves to be an appealing cover to represent Turkish security forces as part of public relations effort. He appears from time to time with the impression of a wise elderly who is in complete control of every single detail, however, he mainly arrives after everything is over, and hears the confession of the perpetrator forced by Rıfat. He reassures Rıfat that he has allowed him to run away so that he can collect evidence. However, Rıfat has no substantial evidence to provide but the confession at the end. Therefore, Zekai seems to be for the censorship board to go by the book to please the committee as well as the image of the fatherly state that presents the actually unhealthy relationship between the citizens and the state as that of a father and his children, which might include mistakes on the father's side, but to be overlooked. Finally, as for Binali, he stands for the migrant generation from the south eastern part of the country to the western parts. He appears to be affectionate, loyal and courageous as he sides with Rıfat. He is also of the opinion that Rıfat is right, and the problem is about the justice system. Binali is Rıfat's townsman, and his presence emphasizes the importance of social bonds in the form of 'townsmanship' rather than citizenship. Thus, he is also doubtful about the police as he finds Rıfat more trustworthy and convincing than the verdict of the court or the police. Other than providing shelter for Rıfat and Lale, and diverting the police officers' attention, he does not have a role to play. As an outsider similar to Rıfat, his distrust to the police force and the authority in general is the most significant element of his presence.

In conclusion, the characters possess film noir elements, however, in parallel with the represented part of the story, the characters are divided into two as victims and villains, or the good and the bad although almost all main characters are in the grey area. Rıfat and

Lale are the victims, and Zişan and Zeynel are the villains. Rifat is without doubt a noir character as a victim or a 'fall guy', and Lale is an ambiguous femme attrapée who turns out to side with an outlaw by definition, and later on saves his life. Zişan, on the other hand, is a pure psychotic femme fatale, however, she is modified in the end of the last sequence to become a melodramatic character in a rather artificial way. Similarly, Zeynel is the villain with pure evil intentions, and characterized as a dark monstrous gang leader. Because his motivation for crime and personality traits are not developed at all, he remains as a functional character to produce antagonism in the viewer through shocking behaviour as in the attempted rape scene.

10.1.3 Space and Time

10.1.3.1 Space

Rifat Diye Biri takes place in Istanbul, and the locations are mainly urban areas except the mansion, which is outside the city. The narrative includes the mansion, the hotel, Lale's house, the nightclub, the police station, Aleko's shoe repair shop, the Galata bridge, the boat (a lighter), the pharmacy, the junkyard, and streets of the city, urban and suburban areas, and automobiles, which are all film noir spaces as listed by Sobchack. The weight given to specific locations is approximately as follows:

The mansion: 21 minutes

The hotel: 10 minutes

The nightclub: 9 minutes

The Galata bridge: 7 minutes

Lale's house: 6.5 minutes

The dock and the boat: 3 minutes

Aleko's shoe repair shop: 2.5 minutes

The pharmacy: 1 minute

A variety of urban and suburban areas: 12 minutes

The urban and suburban places are streets, gardens to hide, suburban roads, a gas station, and automobiles in the streets. Overall, almost one third of the narrative takes place

outdoors. Considering the approximately 13-minute sequence in the last part of the narrative in the mansion, the majority of the narrative takes place in strictly urban areas, which concludes that the city dominates the narrative.

Among the places, the mansion is the base of the criminal organization, and it is infested with criminals. The place is isolated from the urban area, and associated with evil deeds, and represents the crime ridden world. It is significant as almost one third of the events takes place in the mansion and its vicinity. The members of the gang plan and execute their criminal activities such as abduction, murder, and torture here. On the other hand, they entertain themselves as well by playing music, dancing, and by physical and sexual assaults to the victims and by humiliating them as Zişan and Zeynel practice. Rıfat appears as a threat to what the mansion stands for. He first takes out the gunmen one by one, and then, he infiltrates the place to eliminate Zişan and Zeynel. Hence, Rıfat destroys a certain portion of the crime ridden world, and he helps the order to be restored by eliminating the criminals residing in it. In addition, the nightclub is also a film noir space in the way it is utilized as a front for a drug laboratory. The place is Rıfat's first destination after his escapes, and the information he received in the place leads him to the mansion. Together with the mansion, 30 minutes of the narrative take place in these places under the gang's control. Both places emit death, danger, and criminal activities for the society. Rıfat intrudes into these places to restore order. So, the relationship between Rıfat and the places he visits is that of a hero although the places are clearly noir space. In contrast, the hotel is the base of the victims, Rıfat and Lale. The place is raided by the police force, and surrounded by the gunmen of the gang, and the people in the hotel, Rıfat, Lale and the owner Binali have no faith in the police, and try to avoid the gunmen. It is also the only place where Rıfat temporarily feels secure and relaxed enough to fall asleep while Lale is around. However, hotels are transitory places where people stay temporarily, and they do not provide a permanent sense of security. Eventually, Rıfat is forced to run away from the hotel, and Lale is captured when she leaves the hotel. Hence, the hotel appears as a film noir place where an outlaw can hide, however, in this case, the outlaw is innocent and alone as a victim battling against both the police and the gang.

On the other hand, Lale's house creates a sharp contrast among spaces in the narrative highlighting the difference between the crime ridden world of Rıfat and the ironically 'normal' world of ordinary people, which turns out to be not so ordinary and 'normal' as

Zeynel appears to be the boss of Lale's father. The presence of Rıfat and Zeynel in or around Lale's house signals the fragility of the boundary between these two worlds. The house is a traditional dwelling with more or less standard inhabitants, and relatively regular lives. However, even without the intrusion of a criminal, the house does not offer Lale happiness, security and satisfaction. Her father wants her to marry his boss, Zeynel to save his career. Sobchack's analysis of 'the home' in film noir with lack of qualities a home is expected to provide (1998, pp. 157-159) is valid for Lale's house as well. Taking that into consideration, the ordinary house loses its middle-class traditional sense, and becomes a film noir space. The house does not lose the sense of security when Rıfat breaks in the place, it is already compromised due to the presence of Zeynel.

Other than these major places, some popular film noir spaces in the city are extensively used in *Rıfat Diye Biri*. While discussing the characteristics of film noir, Park (2011) makes a list of some of the recurrent locales in noir films that include nightclubs, streets, parks, piers, foggy environment, underground places etc. that are presented in noir style (p. 57). The narrative reflects that combination with a certain selection of urban locales fitting Park's list: the Galata bridge in misty morning hours, streets at night, buildings with narrow stairs, misty roads illuminated by headlights, poor urban areas where lower class people, addicts and runaways dwell. Most of the time, these places are presented at night, and even when it is day time, the dominant tone is grey, which adds a rather oppressive feeling. In all these places, Rıfat needs to hide or run away from danger. Except for the pharmacy where he entered to use the phone, the places he wanders are typical of film noir. Therefore, including Lale's house, almost all places in the narrative serve the same purpose of creating a world of crime and criminals for the narrative befitting classic film noir. However, these places are not presented as essentially dark and dangerous places. The selection of the narrative events which focuses on the revival of the tarnished protagonist presents these places under a new light that they belong to a better world and they are temporarily occupied by the 'bad guys' until Rıfat beats them.

Overall, the places where the events take place are in accordance with the spatial elements of film noir due to their urban quality and the way they are used. The places provide a temporary haven for the main protagonist who is essentially homeless as a fugitive, and wherever he steps on in the city, trouble welcomes him. In terms of screen time, the city

with its various locations help the narrative produce meaning to form the dark and dangerous atmosphere.

10.1.3.2 Time

The events of the plot cover less than two days, however the story covers a longer period of time that starts years ago when Rıfat was young. Although the narration of the events is linear, and events takes place at present, the references to the past constantly create connections between the past and the present as well as a never-ending suspense throughout the narrative. The viewer is constantly kept in doubt about the past, and the narrative demands the viewer to make sense of the events told by the characters from their subjective perspective. As a result, the absence of the representation of the past events becomes an important element of the narrative, as the viewer needs to make a decision to pick one argument against the other.

As for the popular devices to create a fragmented structure, the narrative is not fragmented in the usual way by means of flashbacks and voiceovers. Park comments on Žižek's emphasis on the importance of voiceovers and flashbacks to determine whether a film can be categorised as film noir or not in his discussion of Alfred Hitchcock's films, and concludes that these devices are not a must as many canonical noir films lack flashbacks and voiceovers (2011, pp. 58-59). Surely, the presence or absence of certain elements should not be the only indicator to judge categoric aspects, yet film noir usually includes a narrative which requires reconstruction eventually. Even when the flashback is not present visually, the effect of a flashback sequence can be created. In *Rıfat Diye Biri*, the narrative is indeed fragmented verbally by the accounts of the characters as diegetic narrators of the story, and the narrative is never fully reconstructed as the characters create too many gaps about the past and the present state of the affairs between Rıfat, Zişan and the rest of the gang. The only available knowledge about the connection between the past and the present is that Rıfat and Zişan had an affair, the gang committed a crime, and Zişan sacrificed Rıfat as the 'fall guy'. Neither Rıfat's role in the gang (if any) and the motivation for the murder nor Zişan's responsibility and motivation to slander Rıfat is explained. As for the present, Zişan orders the gunmen to kill Rıfat couple of times, and then, she confesses her love for Rıfat in their encounter in the final sequence. Moreover, when Rıfat is finally about to be shot by Zeynel, she sacrifices herself to save Rıfat whom she has just attempted to kill. Once again, the motivations are unclear, and her change of

heart is a mystery. As explained in the previous parts, Zişan's inconsistent behaviour can be explained by her character formation as an unstable person experiencing extreme emotions. But all the same, the lack of focus on the motivation of the characters and the historical background on which the whole story is built, creates a puzzle in itself, which does not unfold in the course of the narrative indeed.

On the other hand, the beginning of the narrative marks the lowest point in Rıfat's life, and in the rest of the narrative, the events work in favour of him. When Rıfat starts his investigation, he reaches certain turning points such as finding the only witness for the initial murder, finding Zişan's hiding place, and infiltrating the mansion. The end of the narrative eventually brings the best out of life although at a high cost for the duration of his lost time as a fugitive sentenced to death. Eventually, the story time moves towards somewhat a happy ending: happiness due to the restored order, victory, proven innocence, and true love achieved ultimately at the expense of lost time in prison, being a fugitive and the threat to be executed. So, although the timeline moves towards order and security in the narrative's world full of crime and deception, what Rıfat and the viewers get at the end of the line is irony when the inspector appears to reveal that Rıfat has been a tool to reach the criminals, and that renders the happy ending not so happy. Despite the lack of flashbacks, the timeline subtly involves verbal reference to the past, and the past is the maker of the present. However, unlike noir films, the present time works in favour of the protagonist, and moves away from a fatalistic plot. Yet, the irony at the end places Rıfat in the position of a tarnished victimized protagonist who is unable to control the flow of events ironically when he seems to be the overwhelmingly powerful and invincible hero. Therefore, time seems to possess a noir quality despite the happy ending.

In conclusion, space and time possess noir elements. Especially the locations in the city and the way they are presented display a classic film noir quality. The homeless protagonist wanders from one place to another, and in each place, he faces with another challenge, danger, and threat until he successfully overcomes them. As for time, there is a little ambiguity to make room for the noir quality due to complexity of chronology. The selection of the events is a portion of a longer story. The relationship between the past and the present events is set by the characters from their viewpoint. Although there is no visual flashback in the textbook sense, these intervals still create a story within a story verbally. Such intervals with gaps and subjective perspective function like a non-visual

flashback with a voiceover constructed by the characters. The way time is handled in the narrative bears noir spirit.

10.2 FORMAL ELEMENTS IN *RİFAT DİYE BİRİ*

Rıfat Diye Biri does not display a large variety of formal devices, however employs a larger repertory in parallel with the technical developments of the period. Furthermore, the mobility of the camera has a significant place. The most significant manifestation of style is seen in the ways in which the atmosphere is constructed through cinematography, editing and mise-en-scene, which largely reflect the classic film noir style.

The narrative concentrates on the events happening in less than 48 hours, and the narrative time is divided between night and day. Only one third of the events takes place in daytime, and the rest takes place at night, and therefore, darkness is the dominant ambiance. When it is day time, however, the dominant tone is grey, and hence, both day and night, the overall effect is a tense gloomy atmosphere. The style is employed to create that gloomy atmosphere that surrounds the characters in the narrative, and reiterates through events and action sequences. Reiterating the basics of Place and Peterson's description of noir style, low-key lighting serves to create contrasts, shadows, hides faces and the setting producing a sense of mystery. Shadows, night-for-night shots, unusual facial expressions created through lighting and angles are but some of the popular devices used in film noir (1996, pp. 66-67). That description can be traced almost word by word in *Rıfat Diye Biri* clearly manifesting the classic film noir influence in terms of style.

The opening sequence starts with a medium shot that shows the nightclub called *Kibar* where Zişan performs, and then a pan left shows an automobile approaching in a long shot with a long take at night (fig. 1-2)⁸². The mood music⁸³ immediately signals that what is to come is not ordinary, and action is on the way. The same piece of music links the shot to the performers on the stage as Zişan and a man perform their show including a sadomasochist choreography in the nightclub that represents a male fantasy as the man is positioned to be dominant over the woman exercising power which in return seem to be a source of pleasure for the woman as well. Zişan's performance is significant as in

⁸² See 'APPENDIX 7: Figures for *Rıfat Diye Biri*' for all the figures in this chapter.

⁸³ The theme music of a TV series called *Peter Gunn* (1958-1961) that is about the adventures of an American private detective.

the end of the narrative, she is going to change sides after admitting her love for Rıfat. The metaphorical 'whip' to tame her will be her love, and the man with a whip turns out to be Rıfat. Considering that relationship from the first scene on, the main conflict is set between Rıfat and Zişan, and therefore, the symmetrical structure observed between the opening and the ending sequences is worth noting.

The opening sequence not only introduces Zişan, the gang members, and finally, Rıfat whom others have been talking about to raise curiosity on the viewer's side, it also introduces the style that is going to be consistently applied. The night, the city, the fallen man, the femme fatale as the object of his hatred, and the theme of revenge are presented in recurrent devices. When Rıfat is seen for the first time, he is walking in his trench coat with a felt hat in a dark road: a combination that adds more mystery for the viewer as the main protagonist does not wear or possess any other clothing item throughout the film (fig. 3). Rıfat is presented from a distance in medium and long shots in rather long takes while he is walking in the streets. His face is illuminated with a beam of light whereas his body remains in darkness. He pops the collar of the coat, and hides himself in the shadows observing his environment displaying all sorts of suspicious acts for the viewer. The way Rıfat is presented in connection with the environment from a distance breeds curiosity on the viewer's side about him. On the other hand, the gunmen who follow Rıfat in a car are presented in medium close-ups unlike Rıfat so that the viewer can observe their stern and threatening facial expression, and their guns as the indicator of the coming action (fig. 4-7). The different shot distances for the presentation of different characters create a deliberate distinction between two sides: Rıfat and the others. Through 'parallel editing' and 'tracking shot', tension is built as the one of the men pick a pistol while Rıfat is unaware of the tail until he enters the pharmacy and picks up the phone (fig. 8). Until that point in the film, after more than four minutes, there is almost no dialogue except Zişan's brief lines, and Rıfat is finally heard speaking for the first time when he enters the pharmacy after two minutes of wandering in the dark streets. As soon as he utters his name, the gunman in the car start shooting, and the sequence ends when Rıfat escapes the crime scene (fig. 9). In the opening sequence, *chiaroscuro* lighting creates sharp contrasts and suspense; a variety of shot distance ranges from long shots to close-ups specifically to capture the icy attitude of the gunmen in contrast with Rıfat who is mainly presented in his relationship with the gunmen like an animal out in the open to be hunted; and the

tracking shot, a novelty in the way it is used extensively, enables the viewer to change the focal point either to assume the perspective of the gunmen as intradiegetic perspective, or an exterior narrator's perspective as in documentaries, to catch a glimpse of the approaching threat to the character, and to acquire more information than the character can possibly have. All these devices are repeated consistently in the coming sequences to present the narrative in rather untraditional ways, when compared with traditional narration, to make it more appealing and absorbing. The fact that the viewer has limited knowledge of the events all the more intensifies the effect created through the combination of the obscure narrative and film noir style. The viewer is only given the knowledge that a man has escaped from prison, and some people want him dead before he finds them. Although the leading actor Ayhan Işık is a famous star already, the narrative conceals the facts about his past throughout, leaving the ultimate decision about his disposition to the viewer, which forces him/her to reinterpret the events as they unfold.

The same set of devices is used when Rıfat runs away from the police and the gunmen at the same time, and hides in the gardens of the houses and in the shadows. This time, tracking shots adds dynamism and suspense, and Rıfat, as an injured fugitive, is presented in close-ups and medium shots unlike the opening sequence, and the audience has a better view of the protagonist's emotional expression on his face (fig. 10). On the other hand, in these shots, deep focus enables the viewer to see the danger for Rıfat and his response at the same time, and to have control of the frame while the police and Rıfat are unable to locate each other (fig. 11). When Rıfat breaks in Lale's house, his alignment is still in doubt for the viewer. He has not spoken a word after the two lines in the pharmacy although more than ten minutes have passed, and it is not usual for a star actor to remain silent for almost ten minutes in a 76-minute film, which adds to the protagonist's obscurity, making the viewer even more curious. When he takes hold of Lale in her room upon her entrance, while pressing on her mouth, he briefly relates the situation for both Lale and the viewer so that the viewer can judge the protagonist (fig. 12-13). The initial shots in Lale's house are more or less standard as long as the two characters have a conversation. In the scenes including Lale without the presence of criminals at the beginning of that sequence, a similar attitude in style is seen, and the world remains grey rather than dark, and that befits the traditional quality of a middle-class family house, which does not connote the dark criminal world that Rıfat has experienced. However,

when Rıfat feels threatened, the style changes. For instance, when Lale drops and breaks the glass in the bathroom, a choker close-up by a fast zoom-in on Rıfat's frightful face contrasts the well-lit portrait shot of Lale with a naïve look on her face (fig. 14-16). Rıfat with his hat, coat and pistol does not belong to the place as a fugitive, and Lale is seen in her natural dwelling, a part of the law-abiding ordinary side of the world. The style highlights the contrast between the two in almost all shots in the house. However, when Rıfat and Lale pair up after Rıfat takes her hostage, they are presented in a similar approach in terms of style.

The sequence at Aleko's shoe repair shop notes that the stylistic devices are not limited to scenes with Rıfat. The devices mentioned above are employed here as well. Aleko, the shoe repairer and the only witness in favour of Rıfat, is seen in his routine playing a lively music on the phonograph, taking care of his cat, and shoe repairing. Then, the gunmen arrive at the shop, kill Aleko, and escape while the lively music on the phonograph disturbingly contrasts the murder. Then, Rıfat and Lale arrive there to find the man lying dead on the ground, and they desert the place too. The simple events here are presented in a different way for the viewer that contrast the simplicity of the narrative, and film noir's trademark in terms of style is to achieve that effect in a fresh approach by presenting seemingly ordinary events. To that end, some stylistic elements familiar from the beginning of the narrative are seen in a similar setting: the street at night, the automobile approaching with the headlights on, the gunmen in the automobile in shadows in medium shot without any dialogues but with a gun, lively music in direct contrasts with the action (fig. 17-21). Overall, portrait shots focus on emotional expressions of the characters, lighting creates the dark atmosphere loaded with a sense of death and danger, the tracking shot at a close distance follows the characters creating a sense of real time action witnessed by the audience, and disorienting angles present the ordinary in an extraordinary way.

The scenes that follow take place mainly in the following order: the mansion, the Galata bridge, the hotel, Lale's house, the police station, the Galata bridge, and the hotel once again. In these scenes, the characters mainly talk to each other: By the Galata bridge, Rıfat relates his unfulfilled hopes and desires, and then, in the hotel room, Lale responds by summarizing her story, which turns out to be similar to Rıfat's in the way both characters are disappointed in life (fig. 22-25). Later, at the hotel, Binali talks to Rıfat to convince

him to surrender, or at least, to talk to the chief inspector to find a way out (fig. 26). At the police headquarters, the police inspectors talk about Rıfat and new murder cases of the previous night, and Zekai expresses his doubts about Rıfat being responsible for these cases (fig. 27). Following that, Rıfat calls him to deny all allegations, and they meet at the bridge where Rıfat asks three days to solve the case and runs away (fig. 28). In parallel with the quality of the events in the narrative, the style in these scenes is rather traditional by means of medium shots framing both people as they talk, however the overall mood does not change, and is still gloomy and grey. Perhaps the only exception is the way Rıfat is presented. His hat almost always covers his face with a shadow, and his coat is incongruous when he is indoors or blends in the crowds (fig. 29). Even in day time, Rıfat's face is partly obscure by a sharp contrast, and the way he is presented as such makes him an outcast who has nowhere to go, no one to trust until he meets Lale again, and has the worst disposition in the society as someone who deserves death penalty due to the three murders he is accused of. Therefore, he is not like others, and that is stated through mise-en-scene and style although the dominant style is to some extent classical and basic, or less elaborate in such scenes. It is important to distinguish the shift in the way formal elements are used in parallel with the changes in the narrative.

When criminal activities recur after the gunmen reappear to hunt Rıfat, noir style is restored once again using more or less the same repertory as before. The gunmen arrive at the hotel to capture Rıfat, but the police forces raid the place, and the gunmen have to wait. The silent gunmen are presented as intimidating dangerous cold-blooded robotic bodies, and once again, they have very few lines to utter in the script (fig. 30-31). From that part of the narrative until the last sequence in the mansion, Rıfat mainly deals with the gunmen who either try to capture or kill him, or try to prevent him from contact with people who might be of help to find Zişan. Similar to the ambush sequences in classical cowboy films, the men at their hiding spots are shown in medium shots, quick pans creating a zoom effect overlapping with a change in the mood music from a mild tone to a thrilling one. Although it is day time, the contrast between sunlight and shadow is used to create *chiaroscuro* effect. After Rıfat and Lale are split, the narrative divides into two paths, and the two stories are presented in parallel with each other until the end of the film.

The last 30 minutes of the film are mainly about Rıfat's quest for revenge, and action dominates after Rıfat is detached from Lale, which underlines the significance of Lale in providing the main dramatic content by establishing a humane relationship with Rıfat in the narrative. He tries to find a former gang member to learn about Zişan's whereabouts. Rıfat is seen in a sea of worn-out boats in an extreme long shot emphasising his loneliness and the difficulty of his quest. The combination of extreme long, long and medium shots place Rıfat in space, and when considered together with other locations, the geography of Rıfat's quest can be traced in that variety of shot distance (fig. 32-34). He is always seen in connection with his surroundings first (as in an establishing shot), and that reinforces his connection with the dark world that he tries to escape. Almost all of Rıfat's shots in social space are portrayed in a realistic attitude creating a distance between the observer (the viewer) and the character, which makes it difficult to evoke identification with the viewer. However, the dramatic scenes including intense emotions either in the form of conversations or non-verbal expressions in medium shots and medium close-ups compensate that and elaborate the virtues of the protagonist to enable the identification of the viewer with the protagonist.

The rest of the narrative takes place at night, and until the end, the narrative moves towards the final encounter. Just before the action takes over, Rıfat is seen in a dramatic scene. On his way back, Rıfat passes by the bench they have sat the other day. He remembers Lale, takes out her glove she has left previously in the hotel room, and smiles momentarily – a rare occasion for Rıfat that is seen only when Lale is present. He is seen in a medium shot and his POV is given for the viewer to see the bench (fig. 35-36). That shot is ironical as he does not know that Lale is abducted, and is kept in the mansion where he is trying to head to. Therefore, the scene is important to strengthen the bond between the viewer and the protagonist as once again the viewer knows more than Rıfat, and he is placed under a sympathetic light. So far, Rıfat has been in the grey area, displaying mainly film noir characteristics as the 'fall guy'. However, step by step, he transforms into a traditional hero, and that scene is the beginning of the transformation, and the significance is related to the way the viewer is conditioned to embrace Rıfat first as a victim, and then, as a hero capable of revenging on the 'bad guys', and restoring the order singlehandedly to some extent.

The following sequence in which Rıfat breaks in the nightclub can be examined to trace how film noir elements are used, but at the same time, how the tarnished protagonist evolves into a traditional capable hero. Rıfat enters, finds nothing useful, but notices a cigarette butt smoking as a clue. Soon, he sees that there is a secret door to the basement, which serves as a laboratory to produce heroin. When he enters the basement, and he takes the gang members hostage to learn where Zişan stays. He fights the men, extracts information, calls the police, and heads to the mansion (fig. 37-41). The entire sequence is based on action relying on suspense and physical confrontation that demonstrates Rıfat's strength and masculinity. While doing that, the film employs film noir elements: as before, Rıfat is in the shadows, and the setting is designed to produce sharp contrasts, vagueness, and uncertainty. Throughout the sequence, there is harmony between the narrative elements (the criminal activity, setting befitting the dark side of the world, tough and dangerous characters, and the investigator) and film noir style, which is observed in the form of lighting, close-ups, medium shots of the characters, deep space, tracking camera, and composition. All the elements help build suspense, and in combination with acting and editing, the viewer is given signals of an upcoming action that manifests itself in the form of a fist fight between Rıfat and the men. The fist fight lasts approximately one and a half minutes, and takes place in the basement and at the bar upstairs while Rıfat tackles four men, and eventually learns the information. The sequence is shot in film noir style, and reinforces Rıfat's image of a powerful hero as he is presented as a better and law-abiding person, especially when he calls the police to inform them of the headquarters of the gang.

The narrative switches to Lale's story in the mansion where she has been beaten and tortured off-screen. Lale resists Zişan, and Zişan tortures her by beating her with her whip (fig. 42-44). That sadistic scene ends when the boss appears in shadows (fig. 45). He is portrayed as an intimidating figure as his face is lit by a single source below (cameo lighting) instantly creating a contrast with the previous shot which portrays too many people in the background and foreground of the frame in a crowded environment (fig. 44). The two shots in succession create a hierarchy signalling the man at the top has arrived in a rather unusual way using lighting and camera distance to isolate him from the rest of the setting. Lale takes a deliberate look at Zeynel, who has previously proposed her, and then, she is brought upstairs to Zeynel's room through the staircase the reflection

of which forms shadows connoting prison cell bars (fig. 46), a popular film noir shot and an indication that she is entering in a new prison decreasing the dim hope that Zeynel might be more merciful and even caring considering that Lale is the woman he has planned to marry. The shot angles are significant: Lale as the victim and bearer of torture is portrayed from above whereas Zeynel as the source of evil is portrayed from below creating the hierarchy between the two, and setting Zeynel as the source of power. Meanwhile, Zişan's hysterical laughter demonstrates the pleasure she gets by the image of Lale probably being raped upstairs, and that creates curiosity about the coming scenes, intensifying the filmic experience. She considers Lale to be Rıfat's fiancée, and hurting Lale means hurting Rıfat, therefore she celebrates Lale's fate by dancing and drinking. The music connects the shots downstairs and upstairs. Zeynel is seen in a rather dim room drinking. He interrogates Lale, she resists him, and he threatens her with rape. These shots aim to intensify the danger awaiting Rıfat as he is on the way to the mansion, and Lale's life is in question.

The rest of the narrative takes place in and around the mansion, and the style is used basically to convey two elements of the narrative: action including shooting and fighting, and Zişan's psychological struggle, Zeynel and the gunmen against Rıfat. The sequence starts with the rape attempt, and the physical violence exercised by Zeynel on Lale. Lale is seen in a medium close-up in torn clothes and a beaten face while Zeynel tries to take hold of her (fig. 47). This shot is the continuation of the previous shot provided by parallel editing. A cut to downstairs shows Zişan dancing while the gunmen appear sitting around a table and enjoying her dance. A phone call ends the celebration and the rape attempt, and Rıfat's presence is given in the form of a telephone handset as he speaks on the phone announcing his upcoming assault. The call indirectly saves Lale already, and implies the actual salvation. The main focus, however, is on the psychological aspect rather than action, and the mental state of the gunmen are given more weight than Rıfat, as Rıfat has the upper hand in the ongoing psychological battle. Film noir style is used to construct the ten-minute-long battle. The medium shots portray the gunmen waiting nervously behind the window blinds that show mainly the eyes. Then, the shot turns into a POV shot for the viewer to assume the gunmen's position to watch a faraway man running down to the mansion (fig. 48-50). In addition to medium shots and POV shots, long take, mood music, deep space, *chiaroscuro* effect, variable shot distance from medium close-

ups to extreme long shots are used to portray the fear and agitation the gunmen are experiencing. Step by step, Rıfat transforms into a hunter, and the gang members become the hunted. As Rıfat continues to succeed, the shots focus on the reaction of the remaining gunmen, sweating, surprised and spooked. The bars outside the window resemble prison bars (fig. 51), but this time confining people inside forcing them either to await Rıfat's execution or to attack an enemy who is not even visible at night, especially after the light die out. Other than major devices, the lack of dialogues, acting in the form of body language to communicate, and auditory elements are combined with visual elements to produce the eerie atmosphere for the gang, and style continues to dominate the sequence. A close-up portrays a gunman's prayer beads and his pistol, and the sound of the beads that unnerves Zeynel creating unrest among themselves (fig. 52). Then, the car horn blows outside, and the headlights are turned on (fig. 53). The men inside the house start shooting but the horn continue to sound to the extent that it drives Zişan crazy (fig. 54). Until the final encounter between Rıfat and Zişan, and Lale and Zeynel, style maintains film noir quality focusing on the psychological depiction of the story rather than focusing on the action. Zişan takes Lale hostage as a human shield against Rıfat, and calls him to appear and surrender. She is seen behind the window blinds as if behind prison bars. Rıfat appears behind Zişan with his pistol partly in shadows, and presented in a medium shot (fig. 55-56). Rıfat shoots at Zişan's pistol without causing any serious harm to her. In return, Zişan changes her heart completely in an unexpected way by tearing her clothes apart to open up her chest where she wants the bullet to be aimed at by Rıfat (fig. 57). Finally, Zişan admits that she has had a grudge against Rıfat because he has left her, and confesses her love for Rıfat. In a medium shot, she sacrifices herself, and is killed by Zeynel, and her body on the ground is shot from a disorienting angle with a light creating shadows on her face changing the way she appears as she is no longer appealing (fig. 58-59). That sequence restores Rıfat's masculinity, changes his position in the narrative from the 'fall guy' to the 'hero', and the femme fatale is corrected and punished. She confesses her mistake in the past, she sacrifices herself for Rıfat, and even when she is about to die, she turns to Rıfat for forgiveness as seen in figure 58 in a medium shot gradually sinking whereas Rıfat stands firmly straight. Here, the style is used to glorify the protagonist before the very person responsible for his 'unjust' degradation and victimization. Then, another protagonist Lale revenges on Zeynel by shooting him before he pulls the trigger

to kill Rıfat (fig. 60). She is portrayed in a medium shot as a powerful figure, torn and beaten but victorious. After that, the rest of the narrative is to praise the police force, and shot in a classical way. Especially the last part of the sequence focuses on the protagonists to create a better image for them, and the style is consistently film noir. However, there is a difference between the motivation of using film noir style, and in the last part heroism and restoration of masculinity weighs more than any other motivation.

Overall, except the last part of the last sequence, in *Rıfat Diye Biri*, film noir style is used from the beginning to the end in a consistent way. The unity between the narrative and the style is observed throughout except the last part. In contrast to the simplicity of the events that pursue a linear course of action, the style elaborates on psychological aspects of the narrative, especially in the last sequence in the mansion, by focusing on the psychology of the gang members confined in the mansion whereas the protagonist remains in the shadows outside. The most noticeable difference in style is probably the way mobile framing is used through tracking shots in addition to popular stylistic devices such as *chiaroscuro* lighting, shot distance ranging from extreme long shot to close-ups, camera angles presenting bodies from unusual angles, frame composition, and parallel editing. Tracking shots situate the viewer in the action through highly mobile medium tracking shots that pan and closely follow the characters from changeable angles as if they are witnesses of the ongoing action in the setting in real time. About tracking shots, Hirsh (1981) notes that in film noir tracking shots are also employed to create tension as opposed to flowing images providing an easy experience for the viewer (p. 89). To that end, the tracking shots in *Rıfat Diye Biri* narrow the viewer's scope and even when the shot is exterior, space becomes restricting for the viewer even more than the character as the camera follows the character, but the character has a wider vision than the viewer. On the other hand, such mobility also indicates the presence of a medium between the action and the viewer, and potentially, might break the identification of the viewer with the narrative. Yet, the fast-paced visual narration prevents the latter, and keeps the attention on the action in an unusual way as none of the films analysed previously uses tracking shot in a similar and frequent manner. In classic film noir, as Place and Peterson indicate, style is usually used to disorient the viewer to present the action in a new unusual way through 'antitraditional mise-en-scene' (1996, p. 68). To a great extent, *Rıfat Diye Biri* achieves such novelty in style through abovementioned devices. The protagonist remains

silent for minutes, the gunmen whose screen time is longer than some main characters hardly utter words, and in the meanwhile, the visual language tells all the story. The way the protagonist is presented prevents the viewer from identifying with the protagonist for a long time until he expresses his innocence in a convincing way supported with material evidence.

10.3 CONCLUSION

Rıfat Diye Biri is a film noir, and presents an interesting case to observe that film noir influence is still very strong after a decade since the making of *Kanun Namına* in 1952 although classic film noir in the USA has already come to a decline. However, once again, the film employs film noir elements in a limited way in selected events. Rather than narrating the more film *noiresque* part of the story, which is about the fall of an innocent man as a result of being victimized by a femme fatale, the narrative concentrates on the rise of the protagonist by successfully revenging on the people responsible for his fall and falling in love with the nurturing woman compensating the past mistake with the femme fatale. Yet, the narrative does not instantly present the male protagonist as a hero, and leaves him in obscurity until the latter part of the story. The story portrays the dark world of crime and criminals in the city mostly at night, and there is an investigation carried out by the victim at times trying to explore the motivation for crime, the ending is rather fabricated, especially when the police forces take all the credit for what the main protagonist has achieved. Actually, the praise for the police undermines the protagonist ironically degrading his position as a hero to a puppet, which would indeed fit classic film noir codes to a large extent, however, it is quite obvious that the narrative aims to create a hero while at the same time reassures that order is ultimately the responsibility of the fatherly security forces. As for the character formation, all main characters fit film noir character formation with varying degrees, and even the so-called hero Rıfat is actually a tarnished film noir protagonist far from being the omnipotent invincible hero stereotype. Especially the last plot twist to praise the police definitely takes away a great chunk of heroism from him. Even Lale, the nurturing woman and a law-abiding citizen, is in the grey area as she does not trust the security forces, and deceives the officers siding with a fugitive who has been sentenced to death due to murder. Similarly, the locations, except the mansion, are urban spaces, and they belong to the crime ridden world threatening the security of all people stepping or falling accidentally in that world. The lack of a place

called 'home' for the male protagonist, and the dysfunctional 'home' for the female protagonist together with temporary locations for all characters portray a film noir world. On the other hand, when it comes to time, the chronology of the events forms a fragmented structure, however, the narrative does not exploit that structure, and the relationship between the past and the present is presented verbally rather than by means of flashbacks and voiceovers. The past determines the present, and the past events are the root cause of all the events the characters experience, which connotes a noir quality. However, the passing of time favours the male protagonist towards a happy ending, which implies a more classical approach. Nevertheless, overall the narrative possesses film noir qualities beyond doubt, and were the story handled slightly differently encompassing and underlining the past events, the film could be an example of classic film noir.

Film noir style is used to present the story, which could be rather straight and heroic with a different stylistic approach, in an untraditional way. In the first part of the narrative, the main function of noir style is to set the mood and tone, and postpone the action by depicting the events almost in real time from the perspective of both parties, which results in increasing suspense. Then, the style serves to relate the action in the crime ridden world, and finally, in the last phase, the psychological battle is constructed by emphasising the members of the gang rather than focusing on the protagonist's perspective. In order to create certain effects, some popular devices such as lighting, camera distance and angles, costumes, frame composition are used, but tracking shots are especially significant in creating an interaction between the viewer and the narrative. Tracking shots in close distance accompanying the characters create the illusion of real time action and the involvement of the viewer in the action due to the specific way they are used. Although the style in *Rıfat Diye Biri* is not particularly innovative or does not provide a completely fresh visual film language, it nevertheless applies the existing and popular stylistic devices associated with film noir tradition successfully creating a harmony between the form and the content.

11. DISCUSSION

The cases studied in the previous chapters already reveal without doubt that film noir has been a strong influence on Turkish cinema during the filmmakers period, specifically between 1952 and 1962 as per the production years of the films in this study. In determining the nature of this influence, it is imperative to go beyond individual films, and the findings should yield convincing and meaningful conclusions about the accumulation of similar narrative and/or formal elements in this period. Therefore, the findings in the seven cases should be examined with respect to one another leading to an interpretation about the significance of these films. In this discussion chapter, first, following an overview of the findings at the expense of being repetitive, the films will be compared with each other based on their narrative and stylistic qualities to explore the patterns and differences they pose. Then, in the light of these patterns and differences, the selected films will be discussed in terms of international noir to situate the films as examples of Turkish cinema. This needs a further step to discuss the differentiating aspects of film noir from the dominant genre of the period, which is melodrama. Finally, a new definition based on the findings will be attempted to encompass the totality of the films to give a separate identity to these films.

11.1 NARRATIVE ELEMENTS

11.1.1 Overview of the Findings

In terms of the narrative elements, as expected, the cases reveal ‘heterogeneous’ results due to the variety in the selection of films. However, it is still possible to categorise the films based on the similarities and contrasts. In *Kanun Namına* (1952), the narrative is characterized mainly by film noir elements, and although the story takes a melodramatic turn through the concepts of sexual desire, honour, revenge, and punishment, *Kanun Namına* should be regarded as a noir film. The second case, *Cingöz Recai* (1954), on the other hand, is not a film noir from a narrative perspective as the film retains the basic structure of the detective fiction as an adaptation of a detective novel inspired by *Arsene Lupin* by Maurice Leblanc, and the narrative elements are not altered to make it a noir film. However, traces of film noir can still be found in some events, characters, and locations. *Kanlarıyla Ödediler* (1955) displays more ambiguity as the narrative is a

combination of film noir woven around a femme fatale and family melodrama with a strong moral stance and didacticism. However, the film should be categorized as another example of film noir, and together with other borderline films, this proposition will be discussed in this chapter. The fourth case, *Ölüm Peşimizde* (1960), is also a combination of different narrative veins such as film noir, melodrama and realism, and the dominant aspect is film noir. *Kanlı Firar* (1960) is a mixture of poetic realism and film noir, and will be classified as film noir as well. The narrative elements in *Ölüm Film Çekiyor* (1961) is based on detective genre conventions, however the style is mainly film noir, and finally, *Rıfat Diye Biri* (1962) is a film noir with a transposed story and narrative elements appealing to the local audience and local concerns about the political authority.

So, the narrative structure of the films selected for the case study displays the variety and scope of narrative noir elements combined with melodrama, detective fiction and realism. Based on the narrative elements, these seven films can be divided into two groups for further analysis. Films with overt noir narrative elements are *Kanun Namına*, *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, *Ölüm Peşimizde*, *Kanlı Firar*, and *Rıfat Diye Biri*; and films with a detective fiction structure including covert noir narrative elements are *Cingöz Recai* and *Ölüm Film Çekiyor*. In the rest of the discussion on narrative elements, this division will be followed where necessary. The second group of films is not going to be discussed in terms of narrative elements as they are not noir films, however when necessary, some aspects of the films will be mentioned to elaborate the discussion. These films will be mentioned mainly in the part about film noir style.

11.1.2 The Story: The Theme of Crime and Motivation for Crime

The first group of films reveals both the diversity and uniformity of narrative elements in relation to film noir. The most prominent narrative elements of film noir are the subject matter (which roughly refers to the theme of crime presented in a particular way) presented through the events mainly in a contemporary urban setting, and the presence of morally ambiguous characters who remain in the grey area (Park 2011, pp. 25-26). The cases analysed in this study include crime, criminals and victims/scapegoats as the cornerstones of the classic film noir; however, the ways they are handled are different from the classic film noir. In film noir, the story includes personal or organized criminal activities for a specific purpose such as acquiring wealth illegally or deceiving/eliminating/murdering people for personal interest, which might also be

emotional due to excessive and obsessive love or hatred. The story usually includes an investigation to uncover the mystery over crime, and death or any other form of punishment for the deceitful characters. For instance, *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), screened in Turkey in 1946; *Scarlet Street* (1945), screened in Turkey in 1946; and *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950), screened in Turkey in 1952⁸⁴, are canonical noir films with different approaches to the theme of crime. The first one includes a detective investigation leading to larger complications to solve an enigma, the second one is an example of film noir with deception, excessive emotions, psychological depth, and crime of passion around a femme fatale, and the last one is about a heist that goes awry. In all these films, and needless to say in a large number of others, material gain is among the central elements of the narrative. In Turkish cases, there are a lot of similarities with the above-mentioned films in terms of an investigation, a heist, a femme fatale tearing her environment apart. However, personal interest in the form of material gain is not seen as the central motivation for the main protagonists except femmes fatales. Rather, the narratives focus on morality, honour, power conflicts, survival, depravity, depression and so on. Crime and narrative complications are developed around these moral or emotional themes in *Kanun Namına*, *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, and *Rıfat Diye Biri*. In *Ölüm Peşimizde* and *Kanlı Firar*, crime is in the form of robbery and murder for material gain. In these two films, the backbone of the events is based on or related to crime and motivation for crime.

In *Kanun Namına*, crime is a by-product of a morbid sense of love and conflict based on passion and ambition, and is mainly seen in the form of ‘murder’ for ‘honour’ and ‘revenge’. In *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, crime is also seen in the form of ‘murder’ to silence a witness by the femme fatale for personal gain, the attempt of the younger brother to kill the older brother for ‘honour’ and ‘revenge’, the murder of the younger brother by the older one, and the murder of the older brother by the father. In both films, power relations and troubles in the family lead to conflicts, a thirst for revenge and honour killing that reflects traditional values about the family structure and the hierarchy favouring men over women. In both films, the femmes fatales trigger the conflicts, and in *Kanun Namına*

⁸⁴ Screening dates are taken from the schedules published in newspapers of the period: *Cumhuriyet*, 6 May 1946, p. 4; 19 October 1946, p. 4; 7 October 1952, p. 4 (in that order respectively).

there is excessive love and obsession of the femme fatale whereas in *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, the femme fatale aims mainly for material gain. So, in both cases, deception is entailed by murder as the central criminal act, family relationships are at the focus, and the motivation for criminal activity is usually emotional unlike canonical film noir examples.

In *Ölüm Peşimizde* and *Kanlı Firar*, however, crime is in the form of a ‘planned robbery’, the criminals form a gang to execute their plans, and ‘murder’ is not part of the plan. The form of robbery in *Ölüm Peşimizde* reminds of the payroll robbery in a factory in *The Killers* (1946), screened in Turkey in 1949⁸⁵; and in *Kanlı Firar*, it reminds of *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950) as both films include a gang formation around a scheme to steal jewellery kept in a safe. The screening dates are significant to understand that all these films were available for the new generation of Turkish directors in their formative years. However, despite these similarities, in *Ölüm Peşimizde*, the story expands over different characters, family issues, and the dispute among the members of the gang and the femme fatale. The point of departure for crime is poverty, greed, migration to urban space, and the urge to climb the social ladder. Similarly, in *Kanlı Firar*, the robbery is connected to the relationship between the main protagonists Tahir and Türkan, and the plot deviates from crime to the couple’s relationship to portray their desire to quickly start a new life to run away from their existing conditions. The conflict is built on the disorientation of a rural character in the city, and the oppressive ‘traditional’ values of a ‘traditional’ family in the city, which entail crime and alienation. The first two films above have more resemblance to film noir in many ways, yet the unifying element of classic film noir (criminal scheme) is not at the centre. The latter two films are the opposite as they include a criminal scheme and robbery, however, they project the social and realistic perspective more than the first two films, and they are more blended with other genres. Hence, overall, the narrative structure of these two films is built on both crime and human affairs, and in the course of the narrative, crime becomes subordinate.

Finally, *Rıfat Diye Biri* is a combination of the abovementioned themes. Crime is seen both in the form of murder and organized crime by drug smugglers for personal and group interest, and crime is significant as the driving force of the narrative; however, such crime is mainly committed by the gang members, not the protagonists, which is a deviation from

⁸⁵ Screening date: *Cumhuriyet*, 16 March 1949, p. 4.

the classical structure. The main protagonist's motivation derives from honour, revenge and survival by proving his innocence. The sense of betrayal and deception caused by the femme fatale triggers the desire for revenge as Rıfat directly targets Zişan in person, not the gang in general. At the core of his anger lies the regret for the loss of ideals and a chance to have a better life and a better social standing, both of which are denied due to Zişan's betrayal, and therefore, the protagonist has personal reasons for his quest. Hence, the protagonist still remains in the grey area due to the minor crimes he commits (e.g. escaping prison, running away from the police, and taking a woman hostage), but these criminal acts are not socially unacceptable in the eye of the spectator as his innocence is proven in the end.

Another pattern is about the investigations, and the lack of both the 'private eye' and surprisingly the police investigations despite the constant presence of the police officers in these films. When there is an investigation to uncover the truth, the investigator is an ordinary person, and the main motivation arises from the relationships, and in particular, personal or family affairs. In *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, both Kenan and his father Turgut act as investigators independent from each other, and both focus on Nazmi, the elder brother and his affair. In *Ölüm Peşimizde*, Burhan becomes the investigator, and the main object is to save his victimized father in a struggle between the good and the bad. In *Rıfat Diye Biri*, Rıfat investigates to find his deceitful ex-lover. Hence, in all these instances, the investigator is a person from the community, and has emotional bonds with the people involved in the investigation or emotional reasons to undertake the task. Therefore, these investigations are far from resembling the classic film noir investigations that solve a case in a puzzle structure step by step. Nevertheless, the Turkish investigators also form a pattern that differentiates them from foreign examples.

The second group of films has the basic structure of classical detective fiction (*Cingöz Recai* and *Ölüm Film Çekiyor*), and they mainly focus on the 'final revelation' about the perpetrator of the crime and the acknowledgment of the detective/investigator's intelligence and excellency. These narratives lack the depth of character and the variety of events the first group offers. In terms of crime, in both films, a murder case leads to the organized crime, and expands exponentially as the investigator finds clues. Rather than the concept of crime or the social, psychological or philosophical aspects of crime and criminals, in general, the path of the investigators and their mission to uncover the

truth is at the centre of the narrative. The relationship between the investigators and the criminals are strictly moral⁸⁶, and is defined by the self-proclaimed investigators in the form of a battle between good and bad. The moral quest or restoring law and order (if necessary by breaking the rules) is more important than emotional bonds, therefore human affairs are not at the centre. Film noir has already been popular in the 1950s in Turkey as the screening dates of the noir films indicate, and the stories of these two films are quite suitable to be transformed into a noir film. However, the story of neither *Cingöz Recai* nor *Ölüm Film Çekiyor* is modified to be film noir. On the other hand, in terms of style, both films make use of noir elements beyond doubt. Therefore, keeping the detective stories relatively intact by not adapting the basic structure of the stories to film noir, but using film noir style rather than purely traditional narration indicates that the intention is not to produce a copy of the classic noir films, but produce authentic films. The two films create their own blend by forming stories from the local culture and society, and by creating their language combining different syntax, devices, and style. Placed side by side, the protagonists and investigators of these films prove the significance of form in creating different narratives. The presence of a character type in two films (i.e. the investigator) is not enough to pass judgements about them to put them in the same category, and therefore, while one investigator has a noir quality, the other one may have a melodramatic quality, and the categorisation of the films change in accordance with how these characters are constructed, developed and presented.

Hence, the subject matter of the narratives, the way subject matter is developed, and their scope indicate that the Turkish cases utilize film noir to benefit from the basics of film noir narratives, and localize these elements by using real life events and/or locally produced stories as a point of departure. In the US film noir, the themes of post-war veterans and traumas, paranoia, black community, problems in the social structure, the new status of women in the society are seen whereas in the Turkish cases, local issues such as problems about liberalisation of economy, criminal organizations, problems of urbanization and emigration, cultural clash, poverty, decaying family structure and

⁸⁶ The term *moral* refers to the struggle between the good and the bad from the characters' perspective. Although the efforts of the protagonists are ultimately for legal action against the criminals, the protagonists themselves are not legal entities.

morality are seen. For instance, in *Kanun Namına*, the story is taken from a local newspaper, and modified and adapted by Lütü Akad and Osman F. Seden. The screenplay of *Cingöz Recai* is an adaptation of Peyami Safa's detective novel by Metin Erksan. In *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, the screenplay is written by Osman F. Seden. In *Ölüm Peşimizde*, the starting point of the screenplay is inspired by the story of a real-life event⁸⁷ in the USA which includes a robbery and murder, and is developed by Halit Refiğ, Ertem Göreç, and Bülent Oran. In *Kanlı Firar*, the story is written by Metin Erksan, and developed by Orhan Elmas. *Ölüm Film Çekiyor* is written by Aydın Arakon. In *Rıfat Diye Biri*, the story is written by Attila İlhan, and is developed by Ertem Göreç. Except *Ölüm Peşimizde*, all the 'screenplays' are based on local sources, and the directors are either the writer/adaptor or one of the writers of the 'screenplay', or they modify the story. Rather than making adaptations of classic film noir examples, they have chosen to feed on contemporary stories related to local culture that includes life conditions, human relationships and social and personal problems of ordinary people as the basis of the narratives.

The difference between the US noir films and the Turkish cases constitutes the characteristics of the Turkish films. In terms of the story, narratives with a puzzle structure, a trademark of film noir, in which the details of a plan or a process determine the finale, are not found in Turkish noir. Instead, the conflicts between people arising from conditions, emotions, power relations, and criminal incidents are the main focus. Crime is at the heart of the events manifesting itself in the execution of criminal acts such as robbery and murder. However, the motivation of the individuals for crime is not explored in detail, and touched upon briefly, and therefore, the narrative deviates from the classic noir convention. Whatever the nature and the cause of the conflict is, in the end, the protagonists always confront with people whom they hold responsible for the conflict, and the type of the relationship with these people, who are the immediate circle of family, friends and acquaintances, is close personal relationships. For instance, in the Turkish cases, the stories do not include outsiders, and that constraint entails the lack of an outsider in the form of an investigator, lover, and/or accomplice, and outsiders do not

⁸⁷ Memduh Ün mentions that Halit Refiğ brought a novel about the story of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti (2009, p. 97). More about the incident can be found in the chapter on *Ölüm Peşimizde*.

become a factor in the flow of events as seen in film noir. Among the canonical noir films, *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), screened in Turkey in 1946; *Double Indemnity* (1944), screened in Turkey in 1945; *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1946), screened in Turkey in 1948; and *Strangers on a Train* (1951), screened in Turkey in 1954⁸⁸, are structured around the relationship between a stranger and the people he or she meets either in the form of an investigation, a victim's falling into crime, or becoming partners in crime as well as a romantic/passionate connection. In the cases in this study, *Kanlı Firar* and *Rıfat Diye Biri* include protagonists as strangers establishing contact with women, taking them hostage, and having an affair, but their relationships are not situated as in the canonical examples above. In both films, the characters are romantically involved, and only the male characters are connected explicitly to crime, the women are helpers at best, and are not criminals or schemers per se. In other Turkish cases, except the detective films, protagonists are seen among people who are either their family, friends, associates, and/or ex/lovers.

11.1.3 Character Formation

The protagonists and side characters in film noir are usually identifiable as femme fatale, femme attrapée, homme fatal, homme attrapé, scapegoat, victim, fall guy, hardboiled detective/investigator, etc., and presented in a certain manner: for male characters, masculinity and machismo are blended with emasculation, and for female characters, glamour and femininity are blended with deceitfulness. In the five cases in this study, the character formation follows film noir types, however the personality traits and cultural characteristics are local. The relationships between characters gain more significance than crime and investigation in the course of the narrative, and the emotional construction determines the alignment of the characters.

Dividing the characters into two by gender, the male and female characters present different cases. Firstly, female characters in Turkish cases are structured and presented in a different way from their counterparts in classic film noir. To begin with, the most conspicuous narrative element, the femme fatale, does not display all the qualities the

⁸⁸ Screening dates: *Cumhuriyet*, 6 May 1946, p. 4; 8 May 1946, p. 2; 18 February 1947, p. 4; 28 July 1954 (in that order respectively).

classic film noir presents. Turkish femmes fatales in four films⁸⁹ (*Kanun Namına*, *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, *Ölüm Peşimizde*, and *Rıfat Diye Biri*), are not part of the society, but they are isolated due to their intrinsic immorality. Although they are given a voice to state their reasons for their actions, they are not fully developed as three-dimensional characters, especially towards the 1960s. Femmes fatales are always countered by the ‘modern but traditional’ woman image: Nezahat and Perihan are countered by Ayten in *Kanun Namına*; Gönül by Necla in *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*; Ayten by Zehra in *Ölüm Peşimizde*; and Zişan by Lale in *Rıfat Diye Biri*. An important point to consider is that femme fatale types are not presented as sexually emancipated strong women who are not self-conscious about their femininity, and who seek independence in a world dominated by men. Taking classic film noir femmes fatales, for instance, none of the Turkish characters are constructed to present the complexity of noir characters, such as ‘Kitty’ in *The Killers* (1946), screened in Turkey in 1949, a partner in crime, a seducer, a schemer, and a wife embodying both the femme fatale and femme attrapée types; ‘Anna’ in *Criss Cross* (1949), screened in Turkey in 1951, portraying an ex-wife of an ordinary man now married to an underworld criminal and luring her ex-husband into crime; and ‘Annie’ in *Gun Crazy* (1950), screened in Turkey in 1951⁹⁰, a markswoman who marries to a marksman, and takes command of him to lure him into crime. On the contrary, almost all femmes fatales in the Turkish cases are stereotypical: except Nezahat in *Kanun Namına*, all the femmes fatales are dancers in nightclubs. Nezahat belongs to the old world, she is obsessed with Nazım, and her excessive emotions bring the worst out of her. Therefore, she is completely different from other femmes fatales. In the same film, the essentially weak drug addict Perihan of the underground culture fits the classical type better. Other femmes fatales are promiscuous, immoral, ruthless, scheming, materialist and opportunistic evil characters, rather a caricature sketch without a detailed look at their motivations or the conditions surrounding them. They are carefully detached from the ordinary woman in the society unlike the female characters in classic film noir. Moreover,

⁸⁹ Persia in *Cingöz Recai* can also be included here as she fits the type to a large extent. She is a tamed femme fatale, a dancer in the nightclub, and a member of the gang. That pattern can be seen in *Rıfat Diye Biri* as well.

⁹⁰ Screening dates: *Cumhuriyet*, 16 March 1949, p. 4; 12 February 1951, p. 4; and 30 August 1951, p. 4 (in that order respectively).

these women are also ready to bow down in case an ideal male character exercises his power over them as seen in the Turkish cases. However, rather than gratifying men, the taming of the sketchy femme fatale is to observe the governing traditional moral codes, and preserve the morally better female characters' integrity over the femmes fatales. Indeed, the female characters who are not femmes fatales and who display the elements of a nurturing woman do not also follow the traditional line of a passive, fragile and needy woman. On the contrary, they are strong, resisting, self-reliant, courageous and ready to violate social norms and traditions to solve the problems. Such characters, Ayten in *Kanun Namına*, Necla in *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, Zehra in *Ölüm Peşimizde*, Türkan in *Kanlı Firar*, and Lale in *Rıfat Diye Biri*, do not passively accept the conflicts and problems caused by men, or rely on men to find a way out. They physically and mentally take the initiative, react to the problem and fight their way out even if it takes to use a gun, an act that is usually attributed to male characters. Moreover, single female characters (Zehra, Türkan and Lale) are implicitly emancipated sexually and socially, and are not afraid or self-conscious of breaking the traditional rules imposed by a conservative society. They spend (or offer to spend) the night with the male protagonists they love, resist them when they are at odds, and share their ideas and emotions as well as desires. Hence, their femininity is not drawn as narrow as the femmes fatales, and they are presented as full-blown women who are not simply sexually charged and materialistic. As individuals, they enter into a mutual relationship with men based on the well-being of both sides. So, the above-mentioned counterparts of femmes fatales are unconventional examples of that type of strong female individuals in a conservative society, and obviously, they form a trademark of the Turkish films together with the underdeveloped character formation of the femme fatale type.

For the male characters, on the other hand, the variety of character formation is more, and in terms of the basic noir types, the homme fatale, the fallible middle-class man, the fall guy, the victim, the investigator, and the emasculated male character types are seen in the Turkish cases. Considering the *Yeşilçam* era with the overwhelming popularity of traditional male heroes characterized in their strength and perseverance to win the battles against the 'bad guys', character formation epitomized by the 'tarnished' male protagonists is very significant to distinguish these films from others. Except the male protagonists in the detective films, who are heroic by definition, the five cases include

one or more of these types⁹¹. Nazım falls prey to the trap Nezahat and Perihan set for him in *Kanun Namına*. Turgut appears as the ‘gullible’ noir protagonist who is used by the femme fatale to reach a better life, and Nazmi is seen as the psychopathic homme fatale in *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*. Hüsnü is a melodramatic villain type, and Namık is the ‘gullible middle-class man’ in *Ölüm Peşimizde*. Tahir is an exception among male characters with a distinct character formation that does not display major noir qualities except being a tarnished criminal in *Kanlı Firar*. Rıfat is a ‘tarnished noir protagonist’ and ‘the fall guy’ endowed with some traditional heroic qualities in *Rıfat Diye Biri*. Moreover, a significant point is the lack of the male equivalent of the ‘strong woman type’. Burhan in *Ölüm Peşimizde*, who is presented rather realistically with his strengths and weaknesses, comes closest to the equivalent of the strong character type, yet, for instance, he is not courageous enough to violate the established norms and traditions of the community he lives in. He is not a match in the ways in which Zehra is constructed as he is not capable of doing what Zehra has done by moving outside the sphere set for her social and personal affairs. Hence, the lack of a strong male character becomes a pattern in Turkish cases especially considering the upcoming tendency towards the star system to create ideal heroes rather than vulnerable male characters. Except Rıfat, vulnerability is not limited to past deeds, and continues until the end of the narrative at present. In all the cases, the weaknesses of the male characters, including the protagonists, are highlighted, and made visible for the audience, which indeed is risky for the distance it creates between the characters and the audience. Hence, the moral instability of the characters and the unusual representation of male and female characters upsetting the stereotypical gender roles in the traditional Turkish society of the period are worth noting to differentiate the characters from other productions including the melodramas of the period.

In addition, the moral decay is accompanied by physical transformation as mentioned earlier. Except Rıfat in *Rıfat Diye Biri*, all these characters are seen falling from their social positions or returning to the bottom line they have started due to their failure. As

⁹¹ Şevki in *Cingöz Recai* can also be included in the list as he follows a pattern that is seen in other films. Being a dreamer and a criminal wavering between the two worlds, Şevki is a film noir character, and he is also an archetypal character: he is an outsider in the city, an immigrant from the countryside, and falls into crime to make money quickly to return to his village to get married with the woman he loves. He experiences disappointment and frustration, and ends up dead without fulfilling his desire.

the narrative moves along, their appearance deteriorates in parallel with the deterioration of the characters, and the transformation is manifested in their torn clothes, weak posture, dirt and stain on their skin, physical weakness and so on. The male characters that are handsome and good looking are made ugly gradually in the course of the events. Moreover, the father figures, traditionally the representatives of authority in the society, are rather emasculated. When the male protagonist has a father as in *Kanlarıyla Ödediler* and *Ölüm Peşimizde*, they are not in a strong position, they are passive and too weak to interfere in the conflicts. In other films, the male protagonists do not have a father, and their non-existence is indicative of the lack of a higher authority to fix the problems about the lonely character, and of the detachment between the past and the present, the traditional and the modern, and the clashes between the countryside and the city. On the other hand, other father figures without an organic bond with the male protagonists are not strong characters as well. They are either paralyzed, belong to the old traditional world, presented as a money-grubbing opportunist drunkard, a man ready to sacrifice the daughter for personal interest. Hence, the profile of the father figures in these films create a pattern just like the story and character elements. They are weakened in the course of the story, they are not potent at handling and solving problems, they are not capable of exercising their authority (the police compensate that). They usually belong to a different era, geography, or are incompatible with the current state in a process of modernization and urbanization, and become obsolete in that transition period.

Unlike classic film noir, ‘family’ also plays a central role in the ways in which the story is constructed. Except *Rıfat Diye Biri*, four out of five films place family relationships as a major driving force of the narrative. Usually, the main source of conflict is related to the clash between modernity and traditional values, which eventually problematizes the role of women in private and public spaces. A study on Turkish modernity and gender examines a course book on ‘modern family’ that is used until the 1950s. After the foundation of the Turkish republic, the course books mainly assign the roles, and create a hierarchy among the spouses. Accordingly, women are given moral and domestic roles in upbringing children and domestic duties and household chores whereas men are given the role of the breadwinner, and the family member who is responsible for the character formation of the children due to his faculty of reason and intellect. In the periodicals issued in the 1930s onwards, there is a duality between the east and the west. In terms of

appearance and social disposition, women are given the ‘western’ examples whereas maternal vision is portrayed from an ‘eastern’ perspective. However, in the 1950s, ‘western’ popular cultures become more visible in Turkey, and in the post-war era, for example in Istanbul, the appearance of ‘woman’ comes afore among all else. An increased number of beauty pageants, magazines about world stars and high society including Hollywood stars, and the success stories of beautiful Turkish females, who are the winners of the pageants, gain more emphasis in the periodicals of the era (Sancar 2014). The problematic representation and conception of the image of ‘urban’ women create a duality in the perception of the modern women as a member of the traditionally conservative society. That confusion is seen in Turkish films as well. The female characters are presented mostly modern in appearance, but traditional in character. Only the ‘evil’ female characters escape this frame, and they are the femmes fatales of the narratives who are a threat to the wellbeing and sustainability of family as seen overtly in *Kanun Namına*, *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, and covertly in *Ölüm Peşimizde* and *Rıfat Diye Biri*. Hence, the concept of family including the role of women in the family is by far handled more than any other element in the film with a story based on family relationships. The most significant point in the way family is presented is that families in the five cases fall apart in the end, and none of them provide hope for the members. In terms of the nuclear family, married couples are separated, and interestingly, unmarried couples survive the hardships. Married couples belong to the first two films whereas the unmarried couples are in the films from the 1960s indicating a change in the way family loses its strength. The older generation in the films is portrayed as ineffective and weak, and the younger generation is daring, faulty and prone to committing crimes. The undercurrent family theme in these films point to the disintegration of the concept ‘family’ in the transforming society of the period.

Another aspect about character formation is the occupations of the protagonists that show a significant variety and change in the narratives from a chronological perspective.

- In *Kanun Namına*, Nazım owns an automobile repair shop, and he also works in the shop as a worker. The connotation of the repair shop is not high class, but he is able to support a family, which makes him at least a middle-class man who can afford a vivid and expensive social life lavishing money on his mistress. The female characters are not employed, and they are sit-at-home women.

- In *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, Nazmi is the owner of a gas station, his brother Turgut works there, and Nazmi's wife Necla is a housewife. The family enjoys a traditional conservative middle-class life in which house is the place to spend much of the time, and since Nazmi can afford to keep a mistress in an apartment at the core of the city, the business sufficiently pays back. Gönül is a dancer in a nightclub.

- In *Ölüm Peşimizde*, Hüsnü is a taxi driver; Burhan is a truck driver, Zehra is a worker, Namık is an accountant, and Zeynel is a worker all at the same factory. Ayten is a dancer in a nightclub. Almost all the characters are just above the subsistence level or worse, and aspire to be better off to fulfil their desires.

- In *Kanlı Firar*, Tahir is an ex-convict who starts to work as a worker at the shipyard for a very brief period in *Kanlı Firar*. Türkan is also a worker in a factory similar to the previous working class female characters. Both characters and Türkan's father suffer from poverty.

- In *Rıfat Diye Biri*, Rıfat is a fugitive, and does not have an occupation. Lale is similarly unemployed and does not have a specific profession. While Rıfat aspired to become a lawyer, Lale dreamed of being a doctor, and yet, both characters cannot fulfil their desire.

Hence, as the narratives move towards the 1960s, the occupations and the social status of the main characters change for the worse, and diversify in parallel with the social, economic and political changes of the period. The middle-class westernized urban generation in manners and appearance at the beginning gradually dissolve to become more vulgar in speech and manners in the course of the narrative as the protagonists' profiles change to working-class and lower-class people, immigrants and convicts in the city. As the stories move forward to the 1960s, the rural culture becomes more visible and blended in urban culture in parallel with the social mobility in Turkey. The trend also indicates the transition from relatively high-income occupations to low income occupations, and to unemployed characters whose only quick way out is illegal deals which is connected to the motivation of criminal activities. Elegant places and lifestyle are above their league to the extent that such deprivation may become a motivation for crime. The deterioration in clothes for men not only happens within the narrative, but continues over time in different narratives as they quit suits and ties, and are seen in casual outfit reflecting the changing profile of the society. The common ground for the

characters is the clash between financial problems and the lifestyle they would like to enjoy. The economic growth and increase in wealth following the Marshall Aid at the beginning of the 1950s, and the shift to the liberalization of the economy, turn out to become short-lived, and the second half of the 1950s are characterized in economic hardships and currency devaluations leading to an increase in impoverishment until the coup d'état in 1960 in Turkey. In the narratives that coincide with the economic problems, the characters continue to crave for better life standards that they cannot have in their existing conditions, and especially the characters in *Ölüm Peşimizde* and *Kanlı Firar* are structured on this basis. After 1960, modern westernized urban characters start to surface again side by side with the existing ones, but rather than the conditions and culture they live in, mainly their appearance is modern. On the whole, character formation is affected by the acceleration in migration, rapid urbanization, cultural clash, and the thirst for better conditions especially in Istanbul, and stories on crime with robberies, murders, fugitives, alienation and so on are made more credible as they reflect the upset social order, especially after the mid-1950s. Therefore, characters mirror the existing local conditions in Turkey, which is also the case in the US film noir.

11.1.4 Space and Time

Befitting the basic definition of film noir, all films mainly take place in the city (Istanbul), and the city is presented more than a background for the action. The city environment contributes to the narratives by creating contrasts, mood, and more importantly meaning in parallel with classic noir films. Private or public, the places emit a sense of danger, deception, and death with the estrangement it creates in public areas that are either desolate or populated by strangers. The major locations in Turkish cases range from modern and traditional houses, and apartments to cheap hotels, from high profile nightclubs and restaurants to cheap taverns and traditional cafés, from factories to prison, and the city (Istanbul) itself with a variety of public spaces such as streets, squares, railroads, and neighbourhoods. The action, such as chase sequences, takes place in working class areas such as the docks area, shipyards, and factories, and public places such as streets, prison, hotels, and nightclubs, which always emit a sense of threat and danger. The list of locations already reflects the classic film noir space which is the habitat of the crime ridden world. However, in Turkish cases, perhaps the most noticeable aspect is the domination of houses as the primary space. Except *Ölüm Film Çekiyor*, in which

the film sets are the main locations, houses are used the most in all the narratives. Although mainly on the post-war state in the USA, Sobchack's claim about the distinction between 'house' and 'home' is valid in the Turkish cases. Sobchack argues that 'the loss of home becomes a structuring absence in film noir'. She further explains that in terms of the way houses are decorated lacking warmth and cosiness or the way they emit a sense of artificiality or plasticity (1998, pp. 138-144). In the Turkish cases, the problem with the houses is not exactly the same, but leads to a similar conclusion. Either a small flat, a traditional house or a mansion, the houses do not bring happiness, security or comfort at all. They lose the sense of 'home' in the course of the narrative, and the films portray 'homeless' characters during and after 1960. Moreover, considering the relationship between the protagonists and the houses, there is a pattern to pay attention. In *Kanun Namına* and *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, the houses are more or less proper places enough to accommodate the whole family, and at the beginning of the narrative, the characters are content in the houses, and the order is disrupted during the course of the narrative. Gradually, the houses become unbearable places that the characters run away from. As for *Ölüm Peşimizde*, however, from the very beginning, houses do not provide any positive emotion, and they can turn into a trap at any time for characters as seen for Burhan, Ayten, and Zehra. In *Kanlı Firar*, the protagonist does not even have a house/home, he stays in a hotel room first, and then, intrudes into Türkan's house, which is also an already troubled place. In *Rıfat Diye Biri*, the same pattern is repeated as Rıfat does not have a house/home, breaks into Lale's house, and later stays at a hotel. Chronologically speaking, the narratives portray homes in a negative light, and houses even start to disappear connoting that they have become dysfunctional and hence unnecessary. Considering that houses, specifically the concept of home, are almost sacred places for a traditional family especially in Turkish society, the association of instability and discontent with houses is all the more significant in terms of the feeling it adds to the narrative for the audience. An alternative interpretation of the transformation, disappearance and invasion of 'home' by 'others', who are usually criminals, lower-class people and essentially people with rural origins, could be the reflection of the *zeitgeist* in Turkey of that period, where a shift in the controlling powers in terms of culture, capital, and values is initiated in the post-war era as a result of national and international political,

social, and economic processes drawing a new direction for the country, but at the same time, breeding anxiety in people before these uncontrollable changes.

As for the other locations, in parallel with the social status and traits of the characters, and the sense of decay in the representation of the houses, the classic noir spaces also undergo a transformation. In *Kanun Namına* and *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, the nightclubs and the customer profile befit the social status of the main characters. These places are stylish and relatively for well-of people with a taste for urban lifestyle. Dances, orchestra and music are western oriented including authentic performances rather than mere belly dancing. The characters do not have any difficulty blending in and affording the places. On the other hand, in *Ölüm Peşimizde* and *Kanlı Firar*, the characters frequent either cheap taverns running in the basement or pricey nightclubs that are beyond their reach, and cannot afford the service as they do not have the financial means. In *Rıfat Diye Biri*, the nightclub is a coverup for a drug laboratory, and its star dancer is the source of evil for Rıfat and the society. As a result, the main places and specifically noir places are used in a certain manner accompanying the darker mood of the narratives. Besides, the action takes place in relatively poor, underdeveloped, and messy public places such as cemeteries, old and poor neighbourhoods, underground tunnels, docks area, shipyard, prisons, basements, and city streets and various locations at night where criminals, runaways, tramps, addicts, bullies, dead people, and all sorts of subaltern people dwell. This is important as places where wealthy people dwell, as seen in melodramas, cannot be seen in these films. Even when there is a mansion, for instance in *Rıfat Diye Biri*, it turns out to be the headquarters of a gang rather than a melodramatic upper-class factory owner.

Finally, the major direction of movement in the narratives in a chronological order is mostly from the periphery to the centre, from traditionally inhabited places to the core of the city. Here, 'periphery' refers to both the outskirts of the city, and another city, town or village where they emigrate to Istanbul; and the core or centre refers to the locations in the city (Istanbul) where a lively social life and facilities are to be found. In these narratives, either the characters move towards the more central urban spaces, or they move to or start to reside in Istanbul, and then, dwell in urban spaces. Hence, the narratives mimic the pattern of social mobility from the countryside to the city, and then, within the city. Eventually, shabby districts of the city where upper class people do not

dwelling, and people in moderate to miserable conditions become visible. As a result, in all narratives, characters experience more hardship and face danger when they are closer to the city, and less hardship when they move back or remain in the periphery.

As for the patterns about time⁹², the narratives do not consistently exhibit the basic elements of film noir. Only *Kanun Namına* and *Kanlarıyla Ödediler* observe the fragmented structure in the form of flashbacks with a voiceover, and only the narrator in *Kanlarıyla Ödediler* moves back and forth in an episodic way to divide the narrative into multiple pieces. In other films, the chronology is maintained in a rather linear way with occasional and brief exceptions in the time line in the form of brief flashbacks, voices from the past. On the other hand, in *Kanun Namına*, *Kanlı Firar*, and *Rıfat Diye Biri*, the past determines the present events and the flow of the narrative in a similar way as in classic film noir. Except *Rıfat Diye Biri* and to some extent in *Ölüm Peşimizde*, the chronology in the narratives leads to a state of ‘deterioration’ rather than an improvement in the conditions of the characters and their world. Hence, in terms of the chronological structure, films display a diverse quality, yet the lack of puzzle structure and the alternation of the past and the present state of the events and the characters point that the Turkish cases do not employ complex film noir structures. Rather, an overall linear narration is seen with few references to the past, which provides an easier film experience for the spectator without much effort to reconstruct the story.

11.2 FORMAL ELEMENTS

Film noir style is evidently a very practical and effective form to produce highly stylized and noticeable visual film language even for low-budget films, which indeed refers to almost all productions of the filmmakers period in Turkey. All the Turkish cases at hand display film noir elements to varying degrees, and once again the way film noir elements are used creates patterns that provide a stylistic manner shared in all the films. Film noir style is the dominant element as it is central to narration and follows the content closely even in the detective films. Hence, film noir style has become a stylistic solution to be employed for more than a decade, and considering the number of directors and the five

⁹² *Cingöz Recai* and *Ölüm Film Çekiyor* are left out here as the narrative elements in these films are predominantly from detective fiction. Nevertheless, in *Ölüm Film Çekiyor*, for instance, flashback is used but to give background information, and not used in the way flashbacks are usually used in film noir.

production companies⁹³ that made the films, a systematic application of film noir style is seen. Film noir style is accompanied by traditional narration to varying degrees in *Kanun Namına*, *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, and *Rıfat Diye Biri*; and by a certain extent of realism in *Ölüm Peşimizde* and *Kanlı Firar*. In these films, the dominant style that determines the language is film noir. As for the detective films, the scenes with intense film noir style dominate the most central scenes involving murder, chase, gun fight, torture, psychological portrayal, agitation and death, and similarly, surpass other forms of narration. In this part, the discussion on style includes all the cases in this study.

The directors use the stylistic devices in a very similar way, which indicates a specific notion about the use of noir style in terms of cinematography, mise-en-scene and editing. Perhaps the most noticeable device is *chiaroscuro* lighting; and then, close-ups, extreme long and long shots with a combination of them in alternation, high/low and unusual camera angles, deep focus, frame composition in connection with camera angles and distance, acting and uneven editing rhythm are among the most frequently used stylistic devices. The range from extreme shots to close-ups, and high angles to low angles is the key to the rhythmic structure.

The directors' repertory in connection with the way events are handled signals that film noir style is associated with specific narrative instances. The emphasis on style is most noticeable, for instance, when there is a shift from a relatively a peaceful state to a criminal or emotionally arousing series of events including criminal activities, police chases, runaway characters, criminals, fight sequences, murder, nightmares, dreams, scenes in spaces such as prison, bar, restaurant, hotel, nightclub, cellar, work place that is transformed into a crime scene or shelter, cemetery, tavern, and streets in the city. In terms of mood, on the other hand, these devices mainly serve to create a dark mood with a sense of fatalism, pessimism, frustration and unhappiness, to portray danger, imply violence, and maintain suspense. They are usually used in sequences that are about crime and criminals including both their actions and the changing psychology and status of the characters. In the scenes prior to or different from such content, the style is more or less traditional narration; for instance, the portrayal of a peaceful period as seen in the

⁹³ Kemal Film (*Kanun Namına* and *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*), Atlas Film (*Cingöz Recai*), Uğur Film (*Ölüm Peşimizde* and *Rıfat Diye Biri*), Be-Ya Film (*Kanlı Firar*), and Acar Film (*Ölüm Film Çekiyor*).

countryside sequence in *Kanun Namına*, and domestic life in *Kanlarıyla Ödediler* until the conflict arises; scenes with positive emotions and events with a somewhat neutral presentation (as in realistic mood), for instance, the portrayal of the working class environment and the scenes between Burhan and Zehra in *Ölüm Peşimizde*, the scenes about Tahir and Türkan in *Kanlı Firar*, and the scenes including Rıfat and Lale until the couple split apart in *Rıfat Diye Biri*, and in such episodes, a lighter mood dominates the narratives. In detective films, the scenes without film noir style are also shot in the traditional narration as well. Thus, juxtaposing contrasting scenes with contrasting styles is the strategy that functions as punctuation and highlights the shift in the story.

However, the utilization of these devices varies from one director to another, which indicates a process of experimentation on style to project a specific desired effect or form a specific film language for themselves. In more than one instance, film noir style is especially noticeable in chase scenes and long sequences with little or no dialogue in which characters are on the run or in motion without interacting with other characters. Such sequences present the opportunity to display and experiment on a range of stylistic devices. For instance, in *Kanun Namına*, the chase sequence lasts 16 minutes, and a variety of noir devices are used, for instance, to establish the relationship between the tarnished individual and the city; in *Cingöz Recai*, when the police raid sequence and the chase sequence with Şevki combined, approximately for 11 minutes the action dominates with very little dialogues, and the sequence utilizes film noir style, for example, by focusing on the action and psychology to portray people trapped in their dark world such as Şevki as an animal trapped in a cage to be hunted by the police. In *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, the chase/escape sequences last approximately 14 minutes, and film noir style depicts the deterioration of the character visually after killing the femme fatale until he locates the apartment of his brother. In *Ölüm Peşimizde*, the action sequences last in total approximately 16 minutes, and depict the sequences in which Hüsnü chases and kills Ayten, Burhan escapes from the police, and Burhan and Zeynel trap Hüsnü in the foundry. In *Kanlı Firar*, the opening sequence until Tahir wakes up, the murder sequence, and the robbery sequence (more than 10 minutes in total) with no or very little dialogue again depict the action, provide the psychological state of the characters, reflect their reactions to unpleasant events and conditions, and the interaction of the individual with the narrative world in general. In *Ölüm Film Çekiyor*, the flashback sequence with a

voiceover lasts approximately nine minutes, and the fight scene in Nur's house and the scene at the roadside after Orhan is captured (in total approximately seven minutes) are also examples of sequences that rely mainly on visual language produced with noir style. Finally, in *Rıfat Diye Biri*, except the scenes with Lale and Rıfat together and the scenes with the police officers, dialogues take a very short part of the film. All the emotional effects, action sequences, and psychological descriptions are handled by means of film noir style. Hence, all films have a similar approach in constructing frames and sequences that rely on visual language rather than dialogues, scenes loaded with emotional expression, and action sequences in the form of a fight, chase, or escape. Therefore, even the films with multiple stylistic approaches (e.g. *Kanlı Firar* and *Ölüm Peşimizde*) are dominated by noir style as the core scenes are shot in that fashion. The films with relatively less significant noir style (e.g. *Cingöz Recai* and *Ölüm Film Çekiyor*) make use of similar devices in a similar way as well. Indeed, the consistent use of noir style in certain sequences has created a convention.

The way style is used can be illustrated by the function of the stylistic devices. For instance, in all the films, the variety of camera distance can be grouped into two: long shots and medium shots are used when the narration shifts to a rather traditional style; and a range of extreme long shots to medium shots, and medium close-ups and close-ups are used when the style is film noir. Whereas the former (long-medium shots) emphasizes the characters in the space and the interaction between the characters and the environment, the latter (extreme long shots-close-ups) enables a dynamic shift between facial expressions to the characters' relationship with the larger environment especially in the sequences that involve a character and the city. Similarly, the camera angles move to extremes, for instance, when the character is on the run, and in a public space. The high angle combined with an extreme long shot reduces the size of the character to a small spot in the crowd or the area, and makes him (as the character is always a male protagonist in such scenes) belittled with a twisted form from above. Similarly, the low angle (sometimes the camera is even at ground level) is also used in connection with low key lighting to deform the characters, and provide a view to create a hierarchy between two or more characters with different positions at different levels in the same frame. So, for example, the convention that low angle adds to the glory of the character is upset in many instances in these films. The close-ups, on the other hand, are far from highlighting the

appealing features of the characters. They are extensively used to portray the distress of the characters, and together with an unorthodox lighting setup, deform the faces of dead bodies, reflect powerful but destructive emotions as in hatred, ambition, or horror by creating shadows, dark spots on faces that would not be encountered very often in the daily routine of the audience. In all the films, in addition to action sequences, and most of the time in parallel with them, the directors focus on the characters' psychology by means of their reactions to other characters, objects and events; emotional expressions such as fear, hatred, distress, horror; mental states while committing a crime, exercising violence; being victimized and abused, and so on. The difference between action films, melodramas (that are very popular in the *Yeşilçam* era), and the cases of this study is the way action and characters are presented in a multidimensional way, except the male protagonists in the detective films. To be more precise, the most significant aspect of the application of noir style is about the portrayal of the psychological state and the distortion of the characters, which manipulates the spectator's perception of the events and the characters.

Since the Russian formalists, the necessity to disorient the audience to break the routine and find new ways to create and deliver the message has been emphasized, hence defamiliarization and even *verfremdungseffekt* to some extent through film language. The differentiating aspect of film noir style is the power to present scenes with a different approach by disorienting the spectator during its short-lived classic period (Borde and Chaumeton 1955, p. 12; Hirsh 1981, pp. 6, 13, 58; Belton 2012, pp. 229-230; Luhr 2012, p. 73). Surely, for a 21st century spectator, such stylistic novelties would not be as effective as they have been during the 1940s, the 1950s and even the 1960s in different parts of the world. Here, the disorientation or even alienation of the spectator is not similar to the effect produced by, for instance, the *Dadaists* with an attack on the established sign system starting a war on cultural banality, conventions and 'artistic' production. On the contrary, the cooperation of film noir style and noir narratives still helps to enable a relatively easy access to the films, but perhaps from a greater distance than the mainstream narratives by preventing identification with the characters to some extent. So, the style is not destructive of the film experience, but offers a new one that demands more from the spectator. In a period of novelties in film language, Turkish directors also try these new means that would still attract the attention of the audience, but at the same time,

provide a distinct film language that offers a different film experience from films with a traditional narration.

Film noir style in these films is not applied in a uniform fashion, and is blended with other elements such as traditional and realist narration in the Turkish cases. The filmmakers of the period are very flexible to integrate different stylistic means. Hybridity in style can be linked to two possible reasons: first, film noir has already been at its peak when *Kanun Namına* as the first example in Turkey is made, so noir films screened in Turkey have already been familiar for the directors; and second, almost a decade long Italian neorealism, which relatively coincides with the film noir period during the 1940s and the 1950s, has also provided equally convenient and affordable stylistic devices for filmmaking in the second half of the 1950s⁹⁴, which also coincides with discussions around using realism in cinema (Refiğ 2013, pp. 24-25). Hence, especially the films produced in the beginning of the 1960s include a combination of both influences in parallel with the rise of social realism in Turkey. Lütü Akad, Metin Erksan, Orhan Elmas, Ertem Göreç, and always with a tint of melodrama Memduh Ün all tried themselves in films with a realistic stance, if not social realism, after the discussions on social realism and national cinema towards the end of the 1950s and during the 1960s. The style offered by neorealism is simple yet effective with on-location shooting, inexperienced or unprofessional actors, natural light, and a larger camera distance between the camera and the object in focus producing a documentary quality (Shiel 2006, pp. 1-2). Therefore, the coexistence of film noir and neorealism in terms of style has its roots first of all in the distinguished stylistic options they offer although they are not readily compatible with each other, and then, in cost-effectiveness as the production costs have been the major concern of the companies. Hence, some directors who try to make a difference in terms of style, but do not have the means to demand proper production conditions made use of the two most convenient and popular yet distinguished styles of the period that offer a fresh perspective.

⁹⁴ *Ladri Di Biciclette* (Bicycle Thieves, 1948) by Vittorio De Sica is screened in Turkey in 1958 (*Milliyet* 14 November 1958, p. 2)

11.3 TURKISH NOIR AS PART OF INTERNATIONAL NOIR

The analysis of the cases reveals two premises of this study to be true: film noir has a significant influence on Turkish cinema in the filmmakers period, and the films have their own narrative structure and style making use of the basics of film noir. It is now possible to draw the conclusion that the films with film noir influence in the filmmakers period ‘cannot be classified’ using the existing major categories of melodrama or realist films under the umbrella category of drama. These films, specifically *Kanun Namına*, *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, *Ölüm Peşimizde*, *Kanlı Firar*, and *Rıfat Diye Biri* among the selection of films in this study and similar films of the period, some of which are going to be mentioned in the latter part of the chapter, do not fall into either of these categories because of their distinct narrative and stylistic characteristics. Thus, these films need to be assigned a new category to fully encompass their formal traits. Considering their affinity with classic film noir in a localized way to create authentic productions as stated and examined above, ‘Turkish film noir’ would be the most self-explanatory category to classify these films. The accent ‘Turkish’ does not specifically refer to a national level; on the contrary, the word is used to stress the differences in filmmaking practice on the basis of culture and film industry that are part of a larger community: international noir.

International noir mainly refers to the post-war emergence of noir films in different countries. Following the footsteps of the cultural expansion of the USA, many cinemas around the world from west to east witnessed film noir productions, for instance, in Britain, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Italy, Iran, Japan, Mexico, Spain, and South Korea. To have a better grasp of the Turkish noir phenomenon, a brief look at some of the post-war cinemas would be beneficial to understand how Turkish noir can be situated. To remember the major cinemas of Europe, post-war British film noir differs from the US noir mainly in the ways in which social realism is used to portray characters and events pertaining to the society putting ordinary people into focus (Spicer 2010, pp. 31-32). Despite being under heavy influence of Hollywood films, British noir mainly focuses on working class people, exhibits elements of melodrama, and displays elements of French realism as well (Broe 2014, pp. 86-96). Post-war French film noir⁹⁵ is seen in

⁹⁵ A distinction needs to be made here. Some French films that are made during the interwar and war periods in France are seen as the first examples of noir films by some critics in terms of their distinct

gangster films as *série noire* with an increasing American influence. They preserve ‘realism’, but not the ‘poeticness’ of style (Spicer 2010, pp. 97-99). German noir, on the other hand, is seen as a product of occupation although there were examples resembling Hollywood noir films in the Nazi period. The post-war films are mainly about the themes related to or arising from the war such as veterans, guilt, Nazis etc., and are made under stark conditions in terms of facilities and equipment, similar to the Turkish case, that forced the German filmmakers to go out on the streets during the second part of the 1940s (Nieland and Fay 2010, pp. 42-44). The German films are roughly described as a mixture of several genres and blending American noir and expressionist approaches with narrative elements that sometimes do not comply with some basics of film noir such as the lack of the femme fatale type (Spicer 2010, pp. 109-110). In Iran, the appearance of film noir dates back to the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, a rather late introduction. Yet, the films portray a similar case with the previous cinemas: local narratives involving Iranian modernization, anger, hatred, murder, revenge, corruption, etc., a blend of realism, melodrama, and the US noir (Sadr 2006, pp. 136-140). Finally, the Korean case is worth noting to shed light on Turkish cinema. Lee and Stringer argue that during the post-war era, and following the flow of the US and European films in Korea, domestic filmmakers started to make ‘thrillers’ that include crime, gangsters, and action as of 1957, and continued throughout the 1960s. Among the Korean noir examples, *112reul dollyeora* (Call 112, 1962) by Lee Man-hee, and then, *Geomeun meori* (Black Hair, 1964) again by the same director are underlined as products of a period called the ‘Golden Age of South Korean cinema’. Referred to the existential and fatalist outlook of the films, Lee’s works are categorised usually as a mixture of different genres and foreign influence including melodrama, action noir, psycho thriller, gangster movie, and popular imported films of the period, which is interpreted as a synthesis of diverse aesthetic stimuli (2013, pp. 481-484). The Korean case poses similarities with Turkish cinema in the initial reception of noir films mainly based on the basic outline of the story that connotes melodrama.

formal and narrative elements. A brief summary on that issue can be found in the ‘International Noir’ section of the ‘Film Noir’ chapter. In the current discussion part of the study, only the post-war state will be in focus.

Hence, film noir, which already is not pure by definition, resists rigid categories. Regardless of nationality, noir films display a certain level of hybridity, but at the same time, provide authenticity. The common ground of these cinemas is the hybridity in form and content, local narratives around crime, adaptations of literary works, the ‘stories’ arising from traumatic experiences or social conditions that determine the characters and the basic structure of the ‘story’. All conceptions of film noir, including the US noir, possess a certain extent of melodrama and realism, and international examples rescale and customize especially the narrative noir elements for their needs. During the filmmakers period, a similar case is seen in the way Turkish noir films are made as mentioned above in terms of hybridity as a fusion of realism, melodrama and film noir. Therefore, making sweeping generalizations in the evaluation of these films by pointing to a specific genre, which is usually melodrama, by focusing on only some of the narrative elements might be misleading. It is necessary to understand the differentiating fine lines between different film forms to distinguish one set of films from another. Thus, this corpus needs to be further discussed to understand how these films are different from other films of the period, and why they constitute a period of film noir in Turkish cinema.

11.4 MELODRAMA AND FILM NOIR

Differentiating films from each other based on genre elements demands tedious labour and the results are rather controversial as films might display elements of multiple genres at once. Given the fluidity of existing genres, the transgressive characteristics of modern films, and the eclectic structure of film noir as a conflux of multinational and multifaceted impacts, initiating a discussion about ‘genre’ and distinguishing Turkish noir films from others, especially from melodrama, is not easy. However, since the classic period of film noir is over, and a large collection of literature defines and describes the basics of film noir fairly concretely, and considering the weight of melodramatic modality in Turkish cinema, it is possible to highlight the main elements that separate noir films and melodramas despite the fact that melodrama is already considered to be inherent in classic film noir to varying degrees (Elsaesser 1991, p. 79; Durgnat 1991, pp. 141-143), sometimes even to the extent of opposing the existence of film noir as a separate genre (Naremore 2008, pp. 48). Thus, it is imperative first to understand melodrama as a cinematic mode of expression, and then, to evaluate the Turkish cases in this frame to explain the differences between melodrama and Turkish noir films. However, the very

definition of melodrama is problematic as a term. Melodrama is so all encompassing that in practice all modern mimetic narrative works can be labelled as melodramas. Therefore, starting with the basic definition can help clarify the relationship between melodrama and the cases in this study.

The 19th century melodrama is the struggle between the good and the bad including innocent heroes and heroines victimized by villains in a plot revolving around intrigues full of violent action and emotional expressiveness (Abrams and Harpham 2012, p. 211; Frye 2000, p. 47). This basic definition is later elaborated and developed granting melodrama a more intellectually respectable and acceptable position by reconceptualizing melodrama in modernity. Two major contributions to expand the discussions on melodrama come from Peter Brooks and Thomas Elsaesser. Brooks focuses on essentially the 19th century literature to trace melodramatic narratives and problematises melodrama not merely as a genre but as a means of expression in the age of modernity that evolves from the old forms to compensate their loss. Defining melodrama first as ‘the drama of morality, trying to prove the existence of a moral universe’, and then, as a ‘mode of high emotionalism and stark ethical conflict that is neither comic nor tragic in person, structure, intent, effect’, Brooks outlines melodramatic mode of production as a means to achieve ‘a fundamental drama of the moral life and the terms to express it’ (1991, p. 58). The melodrama described in these lines may indeed pertain to ‘all genres’ that include emotional conflicts with moral issues, and therefore, is a description of a mode of expression rather than a genre, and stretches beyond genre discussions. However, Brooks also delimits the essentially emotional and moral characteristics of melodrama in the same discussion, which provides a more concrete ground: ‘the indulgence of strong emotionalism; moral polarization and schematization; extreme states of being, situations, actions; overt villainy, persecution of the good, and final reward of virtue, inflated and extravagant expression; dark plottings, suspense, breathtaking peripety’ (ibid., pp. 11-12). The moral nature of melodrama finds its expression in the polarized forces of ‘good’ and ‘evil’. ‘Good’ confronts ‘evil’, fights and defeats it to restore the moral order of the society (ibid., p. 13). In relation to the traditional melodrama, Elsaesser also lists some characteristics of classical literary melodramatic plot in his discussion on family melodrama: family relationships, star-crossed lovers, forced marriages, powerful villains, attempted rape, heroines pushed towards suicide in a framework of ‘ethical principles’,

‘religious-metaphysical polarities’, and ‘idealist aspirations’ of ‘the bourgeoisie’ (1991, p. 70). Thus, melodramatic narrative form displays these basic ingredients: violent action, emotional expressiveness, and a moral struggle practiced by polarized forces as ‘good’ characters against villains. This rather simplified description is mainly made for the literary works, however, in terms of cinema, the outline of melodrama has little changed. Echoing the broad definitions, Schatz elaborates the scope of melodrama when he describes the basics of Hollywood melodramas in the 1950s: heroines of virtue suffer deeply, and are rewarded by romantic love and a suburban house (1991, pp. 148-151). Such women have been the focus of melodramas called ‘the woman’s film’ or ‘weepie’, and Ann Kaplan asserts that women are portrayed in such melodramas as passive characters who possess a sense of masochism whereas men are active and structured around sadism, a fact that defines a hierarchy among genders (1990, pp. 25-26). Also elaborating on the same subject is Linda Williams who summarizes some basic qualities of the female characters in such melodrama based on the excess of emotion. The practice of suffering is presented in tears (which could be the tears of the audience as well as the character) shed by girls and women who are passive (2000, p. 219). The stress on ‘excess emotion’ manifesting itself in suffering and tears is quite important in detecting melodramatic narratives as Durgnat claims that melodrama and drama may not even be separable placed side by side, and melodrama can be identified by means of tracing where the emphasis is placed: ‘on the emotion or the action’, and emotion leads to melodrama while action leads to drama (1991, pp. 137-138). That central element is further elaborated on the basis of melodramatic plot types. Taking a typical melodramatic visual narrative at focus, Keating states that the aim of melodrama is to evoke sympathy for the ‘innocent’ victim, and divides melodramas into two based on their plot structure. ‘Pathos-driven melodramas’ escalate emotional intensity to a point of tragic suffering whereas ‘action-driven melodramas’ portray the victimized protagonist fighting against the evil and defeating it (2012, p. 8). Both types of melodramas characteristically focus on morality and the individual’s experience in the restoration of the moral order. Based on that rather long summary of melodrama, there is a clear distinction between ‘melodrama as a mode of expression’ in the post-industrial and post-war modern societies for the portrayal of ‘dramatic events’, and ‘melodrama as a genre’ which manifests itself in a set of narrative characteristics. At the expense of reductionism, referring to family

melodrama, woman's film, and melodramas based on the plot, a further narrowing down of the narrative characteristics of melodrama would yield certain key aspects: excessive emotions, violent action, moral agenda, innocent and/or victimized active heroes and passive submissive heroines as the good, villains as the evil, a struggle between good and evil, and an 'affective' appeal of the narrative on the audience.

As well as narrative qualities, Elsaesser, in his discussion on family melodrama in the USA, focuses on melodrama from a stylistic perspective that makes use of dramatic mise-en-scene with 'a dynamic use of spatial and musical categories'. Here, musicality refers to both the use of musical melodies and dialogues designed and practiced in a melodic manner as part of the mise-en-scene reminding of and imitating the verbal style of melodramatic literature (1991, p. 75). Style basically sets the rhythm and conditions for the emotional experience of the audience. In all the cases, and a large number of Turkish films of the period, mood music is used to control the emotional attachment and reaction of the audience, and as punctuation to condition the audience to react to different parts of the narrative in a certain manner. Elsaesser further specifies the stylistic devices to create the melodramatic form that gives 'melos' of melodrama to 'drama', which are lighting, montage, visual rhythm, décor, style of acting, and music. These devices, which are of course not exclusive to melodrama, are used in a certain way to orient the audience by transforming the space for melodramatic effects (ibid., pp. 78-79). To that end, Elsaesser makes a distinction between family melodrama, drama and film noir (*série noire*). Drama solves the central conflicts by means of action, and 'the same is true of the melodrama in the *série noire* tradition' when, for instance, 'the hero' is manipulated into a course of action that corners the character inevitably in a dead end as a result of which the characters' strong existential revolt is seen in an expressive and liberating way. He claims that domestic melodrama does not progress in that way as strong action is limited, and emotional outbursts, such as hysteria, gestures and social gaffe, replace direct and liberating action. The inability of the protagonist to act to 'shape the events and influence the emotional environment' determines the plot structure, and style serves to express this 'inability' (ibid., p. 79). Hence, both Durgnat and Elsaesser underline 'action' as opposed to 'emotion' as the differentiating factor between drama and melodrama, and the Turkish cases at hand can be discussed in that light as well.

The Turkish cases do not fit melodramatic conventions for various reasons related to narrative elements and the ways in which style is used. To begin with narrative elements, the lack of an explicit moral struggle, character formation and action-driven plot structure would suffice to distinguish these films from melodramas. In addition, film noir style in these films are used in parallel with the action-driven plot, and not to augment melodramatic mode by focusing on excessive emotional outbursts.

To begin with, these films have very few innocent and/or victimized ‘good’ characters, or polarized character formation. The characters with melodramatic characteristics are mainly side characters, and almost none of the protagonists are ‘innocent’ or ‘good’. The very concept of ‘tarnished male and female protagonist’ creates a distinction between melodramatic and film noir protagonists. Being in the grey area, committing crimes, in particular murder, breaking the rules, and becoming a threat to the society, such protagonists are too realistically drawn with their vices and virtues. They are too stained to be good, and too three dimensional to be villain.

In *Kanun Namına*, ‘Ayten’ resembles a victimized innocent female character, however she is only a part of the story which is mainly about the male protagonist. Nightmares and excessive suffering due to her husband’s affair are melodramatic, however she does not fit the melodramatic submissive and passive type. Three times in the narrative without any stimulation from her husband, she interferes with the course of action, the last one of which convinces Nazım to surrender. Hence, her melodramatic qualities are not enough to dominate the narrative.

In *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, the father and the wife are both side characters, and they are closest to be the victims. However, only the wife can be a victim since the father kills his son, and it is not self-defence. The wife is not an average melodramatic character again. When she learns about her husband’s infidelity, she does not hesitate to desert him taking away her baby, and never returns or initiates any form of contact or negotiation to reunite. She appears in the end of the narrative as one of the survivors of the catastrophe, which shows that she is not processed as a melodramatic subject any further on melodramatic grounds. Despite the religious references to traditional moral values and divine justice by the father and the wife, the overall plot structure and the character formation are at odds

with the melodramatic structure. The excessive emotional language, excessive violence, and moral discourse make the narrative highly ‘melodramatic’, but not a melodrama.

In *Ölüm Peşimizde*, the presence of Hüsnü as the pure villain⁹⁶, and Burhan’s victimized father are melodramatic although the latter is a side character. Nevertheless, the story is multifaceted, is not limited to Hüsnü and others, and also includes a realistic perspective. The backbone of the story is the robbery with melodramatic, noir, and realistically drawn characters. The relationship between the characters, the lack of a melodramatic hero, and elements of realism make the narrative more than a melodrama. In addition to that, the presence of a strong female protagonist, Zehra is at odds with the melodramatic structure. She resists the norms of the traditional society, and being victimized by the villain when she physically and mentally fights and defeats Hüsnü.

Kanlı Firar also includes melodramatic clichés such as a drunk moneygrubbing father, an invalid mother, a psychologically unstable character, chance elements to lure the protagonist into more trouble, honour killing and so on. However, none of the characters bears the traces of a good active hero or victimized innocent heroine. The male protagonist is tarnished, soaked in crime, and an outcast of the society. The female protagonist is also far from being pure, victimized or passive. She not only resists the pressure exercised by the father, but also first refuses Tahir for being a criminal, and then, makes peace with him, and tries to run away until they are caught by the police. She also enjoys her femininity sexually in her relationships both with Tahir and her previous lover.

Rıfat Diye Biri, on the other hand, is more melodramatic than it seems. The male and female protagonists are innocent victims at the beginning. Rıfat is a scapegoat, and Lale is treated as a financial asset to be traded for money and business career by the father, and then, is taken hostage by Rıfat. However, Rıfat is far from being an ideal melodramatic hero. He turns into an armed outlaw and a fugitive who breaks into a house, takes an

⁹⁶ About the villain type, the lack of an upper-class rich and powerful agent, the owner of a company or factory, a landlord, a political leader etc., is also worth noting in the Turkish cases. Exercising power over lower-class people to achieve certain desires by the characters representative of power is a popular and archetypal melodramatic cliché, and is never seen as a central element in the Turkish cases. A fine example that employs this cliché can be found in a melodrama with film noir elements called *Kardeş Kurşunu* (A Brother’s Bullet, 1955), and is discussed in comparison with *Ölüm Peşimizde* below.

innocent person hostage, and threatens her with a gun⁹⁷, and his main quest and priority is to revenge on his ex-lover rather than serving justice. Lale, on the other hand, is very melodramatic both for her innocence and fight against the evil despite her breaking the laws to help Rıfat, which can be easily overlooked for a good cause. The effort to produce heroes and heroines is obvious in *Rıfat Diye Biri*, which adds to the melodramatic quality except the fact that Rıfat is reduced to a remotely controlled figure by the *deus ex machina* ending of the narrative to glorify the security forces, which steals away the heroic qualities from Rıfat. Also, Lale is not the melodramatic type to remain passive and submissive. She is also a strong character who makes her own decisions to initiate action when she deems Rıfat is innocent. She tricks the police officers, she is beaten, escapes a rape threat, and saves Rıfat by shooting the villain in the final sequence. The emotional excess and the violence, hysteria, torture, attempted rape, sadism, and apathy are acts of the evil characters, who are rather melodramatic.

The narratives position the protagonists in the world in which they struggle to survive, and some narratives distinguish the sides on a moral basis as good and bad. Since innocent characters are very limited, the narratives without ‘good’ and ‘bad’ characters cannot have an explicit moral struggle. Therefore, in *Kanun Namına*, *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, and *Kanlı Firar* the ultimate moral lesson is mainly left to the audience to discover. However, in *Ölüm Peşimizde*, the moral struggle is obvious but limited to the acts of the villain as he does not have an equally melodramatic counterpart. Similarly, *Rıfat Diye Biri* can be considered to present a battle between good and bad, the sides are better defined as the scapegoat against the members of a criminal organization.

In all the Turkish films in this study, direct and strong action dominates the narratives, even in the ones with an emphasis on family (*Kanun Namına*, *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, *Kanlı Firar*, and in *Ölüm Peşimizde* although a nuclear family does not exist). Through robbery, murder, escape, chase and similar actions with a fast-paced editing, the characters act directly in a strong way rather than suffering; and react to the external pressures and impacts rather than turning inwards with an inability to act. Then, the characters suffer the consequences of their actions or make others suffer them. Hence, the action driven

⁹⁷ It is also important that Rıfat’s true nature is not disclosed at the early stages of the narrative for the audience to be certain of his innocence.

plot structure is the most prominent element of these narratives. The melodramatic ending that rewards the virtuous protagonist is also rare in these films. In the five cases, only *Rıfat Diye Biri* and *Ölüm Peşimizde* have somewhat a happy ending in which the villains are delivered to the police, and the order is restored, which is not rewarding indeed after all the hardships the characters experience. In *Kanun Namına*, *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, and *Kanlı Firar*, the narratives end on a bleak note for the protagonists who either become worse than they have been or dead, or go back to where they have started (prison). The people they leave behind, or the society are not any better in terms of morality or divine justice. The narratives already portray the downfall of the characters, and the stories are abundant in action in the open world, and dramatic action becomes a means of expression and even resistance for the characters. As a result, all these narratives have melodramatic elements to varying degrees in the narrow sense, yet they are not enough to make them melodramas due to the action driven plot structure, the character formation with the lack of melodramatic heroes and heroines, and a moral struggle.

It is not always easy or possible to trace where noir narrative starts and where melodrama ends, and vice versa as they are usually intertwined. Noir films are sometimes categorised as melodramas, and especially the intensity of melodrama in narrative elements leads to diverse opinions. One example is *Mildred Pierce* (1945), which is studied both as a melodrama⁹⁸ and film noir. For instance, Hirsh claims that *Mildred Pierce* begins as a ‘seemingly conventional domestic melodrama’, and then, ‘descends by degrees into a dark pit of noir pathology’ (1981, p. 41). William Park, on the other hand, sees *Mildred Pierce* as an example of a noir film that transforms melodrama, and he draws attention to the plot structure, character formation, and hence, the outcome as a murder mystery. The murder as the starting point of the story, an investigation, flashbacks creating a puzzle structure, and the female character trying to frame her business partner transforms the character into ‘a fallible female protagonist’ with a troubled mother-daughter relationship (2011, p. 45). Hence, deciding about the dominant aspects, the dominant characteristic or the basic principles of the film is the key in determining the nature of the narrative, i.e.

⁹⁸ For a larger discussion on *Mildred Pierce* as an Oedipal narrative and hence melodrama with film noir episodes, see Campbell, J., 2005. *Film and Cinema Spectatorship: Melodrama and Mimesis*. Cambridge: Polity.

melodrama, film noir or a combination of both. The close relationship between these two makes the determination of the primary form difficult in some cases such as *Kanlarıyla Ödediler* and *Ölüm Peşimizde*, but the method offered by Elsaesser, that is, paying attention to both form and content, and how the two contribute to each other helps understanding the true nature of the Turkish cases. Does film noir style breed melodramatic excess or film noir elements in terms of story?

The importance of evaluating both narrative elements and style can be illustrated by a quick glimpse at films by the directors in this study. For instance, both *Ölüm Peşimizde* and *Üç Arkadaş* (Three Friends, 1958) are directed by Memduh Ün, and both films make use of film noir style to some extent. *Üç Arkadaş* is about three pals who live in a shabby deserted house with no regular income, and a poor blind girl they meet. Two friends out of three end up in prison for stealing the required sum the girl needs for an eye surgery. In the end, the girl becomes a famous singer, and accidentally notices the three pals who are ashamed of their poverty. She recognizes the voices, and discovers their identity to live happily ever after. In the film, deep focus, especially in interior scenes low key lighting with sharp contrasts, variable camera angles from high to low, tracking shots, medium close-ups, and more are used extensively. However, the style serves to augment the emotional quality of the scenes full of frustration, excessive and agitating sentimentalism, chance elements, and the miserable world of the three men. For instance, *chiaroscuro* lighting creates sentimental faces with dreamy or frustrated eyes of the blind girl and the male protagonist, angles reshape the space to evoke pity and sympathy in the audience for the characters, and overall, the emotional reactions, ranging from ultimate despair to a sudden hope, dominate through style rather than action. The narrative is discontinuous, and the female protagonist is presented as passive and innocent throughout the film with emotional bursts accompanying her misery. In the end, love and virtue conquer all, and the three men are rewarded as the girl is rich and famous, and able to provide for them all. Hence, the noir style alone is not able to transform the narrative in this instance, and is merely used to intensify the emotional content both for the characters and the audience. For *Ölüm Peşimizde*, the opposite is true, and the film is not transformed into melodrama because film noir style serves the noir elements in the narrative despite

similar devices used with *Üç Arkadaş*⁹⁹. As mentioned previously, film noir style dominates the scenes about action, and the events and characters are portrayed from a distance, and regardless of the alignment of the characters, only Hüsnü is utterly melodramatic, and the characters are portrayed without creating excessive emotionalism.

Another example to distinguish melodrama from film noir is the comparison of *Kanlarıyla Ödediler* by Osman F. Seden and *Kardeş Kurşunu* (A Brother's Bullet, 1955), which is written by Osman F. Seden, and directed by Lütfi Akad. The films resemble each other as both include a love triangle with a conflict between two brothers that leads to a catastrophe. In *Kardeş Kurşunu*, two brothers love the same woman, but the woman is in love with one of the brothers. In addition, her stepmother also falls in love with the same man, which forms two love triangles. The brother whose love is unreturned becomes obsessed with the object of his love, and breeds enmity towards his brother. Learning about the obsession of the man, the stepmother, resembling a femme fatale but actually a pure melodramatic villain, upsets the order to turn the tables on her stepdaughter by means of lies and slander. The mentally unstable son of the owner of the company also falls in love with the stepdaughter who works in the same company, and his parents use their power and money to defame her. The narrative includes a murder and a flashback with a voiceover of one of the male protagonists on and off as the narrator, which are also film noir elements. However, in terms of the narrative elements, clearly defined villains, an innocent female victim that suffers deeply, enemy brothers, a morbid sense of love, obsession, masochism, emotional excess, intrigues, the rich as the victimizer, violent sentiments, hysterical reactions, misunderstandings, violence, undisclosed knowledge, coincidences, rape, suicide, murder, and a deep moral conflict in a neighbourhood isolated from the rest of the city present a pure melodrama in *Kardeş Kurşunu*. In this film too,

⁹⁹ *Namus Uğruna* (1960) by Memduh Ün also draws a contrast between melodrama with noir elements and film noir with melodramatic elements. The film includes film noir style in the central scenes, voiceovers of multiple characters, multiple focalization, flashback, and psychological depth. However, the story is structured purely on moral grounds, and the style serves to highlight the moral decay of a greedy wife who cheats on her innocent husband, and a pure villain who is the boss of the husband in a taxi garage. The whole narrative is designed for the restoration of the order by the victimized protagonist who becomes wiser to acknowledge that he has made the wrong decision to marry his wife rather than the virtuous submissive and sacrificing woman in his neighbourhood.

noir style is used occasionally by means of exterior night shots, low key lighting, and close-ups in a very unusual way, however these shots elaborate the emotional excess and portray the characters in a closed world of intrigues, lies, villains and victims. The final sequence of the film is action-driven with multiple murders, gunfight, dead bodies, unhappy ending, and the mentally unstable son as the killer. However, the film is still a melodrama as the action is also presented as emotional bursts rather than planned action. Hence, film noir elements are not in harmony, and dissolve in melodrama. In *Kanlariyla Ödediler*, however, all parties are equally grey without moral superiority. They undergo a transformation in the flow of the story, and the plan of a femme fatale based on material gain triggers the conflict which is portrayed through action. The style portrays the action and the decay of the characters rather than emotional excess making film noir the dominant form over melodrama.

Finally, in terms of the position of the narrator, in his discussion on family melodrama, Elsaesser pinpoints that the victim's point of view is concentrated on in the narratives as a characteristic element of melodramas (1991, p. 86). In more than one instance in the Turkish cases, an internal narrator is seen. The narratives that employ flashbacks and voiceover explicitly use character-bound focalization¹⁰⁰. However, neither of them narrates the events from the victims' focalization for two reasons: first, simply there is no victim among the protagonists, and secondly, when there is a victim (a side character), the focalization shifts only for a brief period as in the scenes in *Kanlariyla Ödediler* in which Necla notices the affair, leaves the house, and witnesses Turgut killing Gönül. Focalization is distant to characters most of the time, and for example, in *Rıfat Diye Biri*, for a long time it remains detached from the main protagonist making it impossible for the spectator to come to a conclusion about him in the first part of the film.

Based on the narrower description of melodrama in terms of narrative elements, excluding the detective films, the Turkish cases include melodramatic elements, especially the themes of guilt, revenge, obsession, hysteria, violence, and greed, and some stock

¹⁰⁰ Mieke Bal refers to the point of view from which the narration is constructed, in literary terms, as focalization, the vision through which the elements are presented (1999, pp. 142, 146). So, the victim's point of view should be considered for all types of narrators (internal, external, first person, voiceover, etc.).

characters such as the villain and the victim. However, on the whole, melodramatic elements are subordinate to other aspects of the narratives due to the action driven plot structure, character formation, and the lack of an explicit moral agenda. The narratives are placed in the dark crime ridden ‘open’ world as opposed to the ‘closed’ world of melodrama. The style is not used to build on emotional excess and violence, and creating a distance between the characters and the audience leaves the final decision to the audience about the alignment of the characters, the flow of events, and the ending. Thus, films with melodramatic elements are not necessarily melodramas, and similarly, films with film noir elements are not necessarily noir films. This tautology is necessary to underline the serviceability of formal analysis in evaluating films. Hence, even the most melodramatic films in this study, *Ölüm Peşimizde* and *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, fit the film noir category more than melodrama when the formal elements are taken into consideration. Melodramatic noir would define these films more accurately than *noiresque* melodrama.

11.5 THE DEFINITION OF TURKISH NOIR

The abovementioned analysis of the seven cases, the evaluation of the findings, the characteristics of the international noir productions, and the genre discussion to determine the dominant form of a film lead to a differentiation of the Turkish cases from other films, and that requires a definition to cover the prominent characteristics of Turkish noir. Similar to film noir all over the world, Turkish noir is also characterized by hybridity which includes essentially a combination of local noir stories and noir style. There is an interplay of genres, specifically realist and melodramatic elements are blended in the story. In all these cases, narrative elements are largely localized, and the scripts are nourished by local events, characters and places. The subject matter is crime, which is mainly seen in the form of murder and robbery with diverse motivations. In more than half of the films, crime is usually linked to family relationships. Hence, family plays a central role in some Turkish noirs, which includes a certain level of melodrama. Conflicts arise among family members, and they are somehow connected to crime either as the agent committing it, or as the victim. Interpersonal relations, disappointment and frustration fuel the progress of the events. The characters range from urban people to immigrants and rural people reflecting the contemporary social structure although the main location is the city, in all the examples Istanbul. The films display the wide range

of character formation in film noir. As a differentiating aspect, the protagonists are tarnished people, and do not embody the qualities of a traditional hero. Femmes fatales are rather sketchy when they are not portrayed as ordinary people¹⁰¹. They are nocturnal women whose job is to perform at nightclubs, which clearly separates them from the rest of the society as if hinting a link between their profession and behaviour. Another distinguishing aspect is the presentation of 'strong woman', who are active and do not hesitate to take the initiative. The family structure is presented as weak and incapable of providing security, affection and comfort, and when immigrants or rural people are included, family does not even exist. Investigations are not the main element of the story, and they are not similar to the 'private eye' investigations in noir stories. They are less elaborate and simple, and investigators are one or more of the protagonists organically linked to the perpetrators, and they merely extract pieces of information from people around, and follow people to find clues. The simplicity of the plot structure is seen in the way chronology is used as well. Unlike the US noir films, fragmented plot structure is rare, and even when voiceovers and flashbacks are used, the narration is mostly linear, and flashbacks lead to ellipsis for episodic narration rather than a dynamic link between the past and the present, the former determining the latter in the light of the findings and discoveries.

The films are also distinguished by the long sequences without or with little dialogues, which enables the dominance of visual language accompanied by mood music. In such sequences, the protagonists are seen in vast urban spaces, usually in distress, and the audience observes the character in constant motion while undergoing a transformation from one state to another by killing people, escaping the police, getting arrested, and capturing the criminals. Finally, although style is usually mixed with traditional narration and realistic style, film noir style is the central aspect of the films, and the dominance of style can be traced in the most central scenes. Despite melodramatic effects and elements, on the whole, it is very significant that the way style is used distances the audience from

¹⁰¹ See, for instance, *Katil* (The Killer, 1953) and *İntikam Alevi* (Flame of Revenge, 1956) below. In the first film, the wife of a rich man assumes the role of the femme fatale. After she marries to her lover, she is portrayed as a melodramatic submissive passive woman, and no longer a femme fatale. In the second film, a nymphomaniac and obsessive ordinary woman is seen as femme fatale until she marries the homme fatale. After that, she turns into a melodramatic passive woman again.

the protagonists, and the disorienting stylistic devices are used selectively in the sequences that are linked to crime and criminals. Noir style in Turkish films do not try to present the characters in an appealing fashion. On the contrary, in parallel with how deep the character is soaked up in trouble for what he or she has done, the more revealing and deforming the style is due to the sharp contrasts, camera angles and distance, acting, frame composition and so on. As a result, stylistic devices complement the flow of the events, and differentiates them from other types of films. As for the detective films, film noir style is integrated in these films, and appear mainly in action sequences around the theme of crime and investigation, psychological portrayal of the characters, and the past deeds. For such films, film noir style becomes a functional element to create a certain mood, adjust rhythm, and increase suspense, and adds a fresh film language to the rather old tradition transforming the filmic experience for the audience by adding the film noir atmosphere and mood to create a stylized narrative world.

However, as seen in the cases, melodrama and realism are significant part of the narrative and the style. As part of the international noir tradition, the coexistence of different styles and narrative elements also create a pattern. The selected films of the period in Turkish cinema can be classified as melodramatic noir (e.g. *Kanun Namına*, *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*, *Ölüm Peşimizde*, *Rıfat Diye Biri*), and/or realistic noir (e.g. *Kanlı Firar*, *Ölüm Peşimizde*). As for the detective films, they are examples to trace how film noir style transforms other genres, i.e. the detective genre in Turkey although detective films are rare productions. Film noir style without a film noir narrative survives for at least, and not limited to, seven years between the production of *Cingöz Recai* (1954) and *Ölüm Film Çekiyor* (1961), which accounts for the integration of noir style in Turkish cinema. Similarly, the fact that noir style can be traced during the 1960s even after *Ölüm Film Çekiyor* points that as a relatively cheap and extremely effective film language, noir style has been associated with scenes with crime, criminals, and victims, and transforms the film language if not the narrative conventions. Other films of the selected directors of this study continue to include that style excluding the narrative elements, which indicates the influence of noir style to shape their repertory. From their filmography of the period, *Üç Tekerlekli Bisiklet* (Tricycle, 1962) by Lütfi Akad and Memduh Ün, *Suçlular Aramızda* (Criminals Are Among Us, 1964) by Metin Erksan, and *Sonsuz Geceler* (Endless Nights, 1965) by Aydın Arakon can be mentioned as films with noticeable film noir style.

A significant aspect of the Turkish noir films is the implicit political criticism, which is not detailed and central (otherwise these films would probably be social realism films), but can be inferred from the relationship between the social, economic, and cultural conditions of the society, and the events and the characters in the narrative. While political criticism is implicit, the security forces and the justice system are criticised in a more direct way. Typical of Turkish noir films, the weaknesses of the justice and security system are revealed through sloppy investigations, fanatical judges and attorneys, wrong accusations and convictions, inability to prevent crime and arrest criminals on the run before they exercise violence, and so on. Each plot structure that refers to such a weakness compensates the innate criticism by glorifying the legal authority in certain parts of the narrative in an ironic way to counterbalance criticism and even hide it. In many of these films, as well as other films, for instance *İntikam Alevi* (Flame of Revenge, 1956) (see other examples below), the police detectives rely on a fugitive, and rather than collecting evidence to find the perpetrators, they expect the convicted protagonist to extract a confession from the true criminal, and, in the end, take the credit for arresting the criminals. Considering the strict attitude of the censorship board about the role of the state authority, and the overwhelming impact of the government, these parts seem to be artificially added to prevent future problems about censorship. Hence, Turkish noir is also shaped by the political conditions of the period.

11.6 TOWARDS A TURKISH NOIR CANON

The number of noir films, and films with film noir elements, especially in terms of style, are not limited to the selection of films in this study. The list can be expanded, and new researches, discoveries, and recovered lost films may contribute to the noir phenomenon in Turkey. Below are some examples that are *noiresque* or melodramatic noir films that would constitute a minor film noir canon in Turkish cinema.

Katil (The Killer, 1953), written by Osman F. Seden, directed by Lütfi Akad, is a difficult example to categorise. The film starts with a murder mystery and a working-class scapegoat to be blamed and convicted. Many narrative elements such as flashbacks, voiceover, multiple interior narrators, a femme fatale and her sadistic lover, the murder of the rich husband, and another murder to silence a blackmailer makes it easy to call the film a noir film. However, the melodramatic structure is equally dominant with the victimized characters, a decent housewife turning into a prostitute after her husband is

convicted, the redemption of the prostitute, a suffering son, the emotional excess, violence by the sadistic villain, the strong moral implications, and the ironic turn of events reminding of *Rıfat Diye Biri* when the police officers reveal that the escape of the convicted innocent protagonist from prison has been their design and execution to extract a confession from the real murderer. The style includes film noir elements, but not as dominant as in *Kanun Namına*, and despite experimental distorting camera angles and composition, there is also a realistic approach in the 30-minute episode of the protagonist's escape from prison and his journey to Istanbul with extensive use of naturalistic depiction of villages and the landscape. The film cannot be readily categorised as film noir; however, it is important to underline how film noir elements transform melodrama, which makes the film eligible to be called *noiresque*.

Another example is *İntikam Alevi* (Flame of Revenge, 1956), written and directed by Osman F. Seden. The film starts with the escape of a convict from prison (a former truck driver in a logistics company), and the terror that awakens in his wife, the femme fatale, who has an affair with the man who sets a trap to frame the protagonist, who also works in the same logistics company. The femme fatale's trap is to force him to marry her, and then, the 'bad guys' use him as a scapegoat for a robbery and murder incidents. Flashbacks to shed light on the past events, the point of view of the fallen protagonist, the fragmented plot structure, a strong woman figure who is also somewhat melodramatic, a femme fatale, tarnished working-class characters, multiple schemes, chase sequences and gunfights are evidently narrative noir elements. The character formation includes both film noir and melodrama elements: innocent lover suffering from tuberculosis due to excessive sorrow, a melodramatic femme fatale with obsessive love, nymphomaniac manners, characters with both sadistic and masochistic tendencies. The city with its industrial areas, docks, the wharf, railroads, trains, a neighbourhood in the periphery with lowlife people, nightclubs presented as places for the consumption of dirty money are also noir spaces. As for the formal elements, the majority of the story takes place in the day, and night shots are rare, but nevertheless, abundant use of unusual portrait shots and close-ups with fast paced editing to create a parade of emotional reactions, *chiaroscuro* effect even in day time, unusual angles and combinations of extreme shots add to the film noir effect. The parts of the story that are related to the romantic and sexual relationship

between men and women, and the intrigues about them are highly melodramatic, but overall, the film is a melodramatic film noir.

Devlerin Öfkesi (Wrath of the Giants, 1960), written by Attila İlhan, and directed by Nevzat Pesen, is about two old friends who turn into enemies due to a femme fatale who is also a member of a gang dealing with arms trafficking. The film includes both melodramatic and film noir elements because of the complications arising from a love triangle based on chance elements, and the intrigues around crime and criminals. The presence of noir elements such as a ruthless femme fatale, tarnished characters, criminal scheme, action driven plot is counterbalanced with melodrama with an innocent and morally strong hero, twisted love episodes, drug addict fallen family members, misunderstandings and excessive emotional dialogues and acting around the love theme. A more or less balanced style that includes traditional narration as well as film noir style makes the film a melodramatic *noiresque* film somewhere in-between the two forms.

Kanun Karşısında (Against the Law, 1964), written by Safa Önal, and directed by Memduh Ün, is a melodramatic film noir, which includes a story built around crime, one of the most distinguished femmes fatales with a melodramatic touch at the end as seen in previous cases, a gullible male protagonist, a murder, blackmail, a gang, the past deeds and secrets determining the present, falling into criminal activity, episodic voiceover narration by the protagonist, and film noir style in the parts related to crime and intrigues. The story is woven with a parallel family melodrama including innocent family members, chance elements, accidents, secrets, and a deeply emotional structure in the parts related to family affairs, and in these parts traditional narration is used.

Aramıza Kan Girdi (There is Blood Between Us, 1962), written by Cengiz Tuncer, and directed by Taruk Dursun Kakıncı, is a peculiar film noir introducing a vibrant and humorous parody of Mike Hammer as the film is an adaptation of a canonical film noir, *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955). The film starts with the fake murder of a young woman, who is alive but hidden, and an investigation by the male protagonist, a tough masculine witty male protagonist who witnesses the incident. With scenes at night, the city, jazz music, nightclubs, neon lights, a gang, multiple murders and promiscuous women, *chiaroscuro*, frame compositions, and extreme shots, the film embodies film noir characteristics.

The examples of melodramatic or realistic noir films and films with film noir influence amount to a relatively meaningful number, and, in the filmmakers period, the films are seen to present the obvious patterns and consistent application of film noir elements. However, although film noir effect continues, the narratives evolve into melodramas and thrillers with traditional heroes rather than gullible, tarnished, and indeed, more realistic male and female protagonists. A growing reluctance to create true to life male and female characters who display both positive and negative personality traits can be observed within the period. Therefore, Turkish film noir exists, but is limited to the filmmakers period roughly until the mid-1960s: a period of multinational influences; of relative freedom for experimentation due to the lack of an established industry; of a young generation of technicians, actors, writers, directors, and producers; of a thirst to search for a stylistic yet cost-effective film language in rather dire circumstances economically; of the lack of a star system until the beginning of the 1960s, and the lack of a powerful regional management and distribution system that involves business people and merchants to decide the properties of a production. Turkish film noir, then, can be regarded as a product of existing conditions in the world and the country characterized by the lack of a stylistic legacy, relatively very poor production facilities, the need to form a film language, the economic and political conditions leading to new social problems, the censorship as a deterrent effect against creativity and critical stance, and mostly a generation of young directors synthesising national and international influences.

12. CONCLUSION

The study at hand focuses on the relationship between the classic film noir and the filmmakers period in Turkish cinema covering a decade between 1952-1962 as per the selection of films. It tries to answer certain questions to determine the presence, function and significance of film noir in Turkish cinema from a formalist perspective in terms of narrative elements and style, and eventually, to situate film noir phenomena in Turkish cinema. Having scanned the structure of the film industry, film technology and production facilities of the period, it is seen that film noir is perceived as a useful means to serve the industry. Firstly, it meets the needs of the production companies to produce effective film language in a cost-effective way. Secondly, by focusing on action driven stories about criminal activities and characters, it creates rather harmless content to avoid the censorship board, which makes the threatening presence of the political authority visible in Turkish cinema. As for the selected directors of the period, film noir serves to compensate for the lack of a rich cinematographic legacy of the previous periods of Turkish cinema. Hence, it provides the opportunity to experiment on different film forms as one of the stages of the directors' formation to establish a personal style. The industry demands from the directors to direct films from different genres making their filmography a patchwork of a heterogeneous collection of films. Nevertheless, film noir can be traced in diverse works of these directors even at a later phase of their careers. Therefore, film noir deserves a detailed look to understand its area of influence. The study of the selected cases enables the positioning of Turkish noir films based on their formal traits, and explores the significance of these films for Turkish cinema.

The directors make use of film noir mainly as a source for the configuration of certain narrative elements to create local stories about local concerns of local characters, and as a film language to narrate stories in a highly stylistic manner that is different from the traditional narration. While some of these films make use of both narrative elements and style, others only use film noir style. The first group of films indicates the existence of a collection of Turkish noir films, and the second group signifies that film noir survived as a film form independent of the content, and is integrated in a variety of films. The films that mainly make use of film noir style, e.g. the detective films studied in detail, and melodramas and social realism films mentioned in the discussion part, are evidence

enough to the presence and significance of film noir style beyond noir narratives. Hence, film noir style eventually builds a 'formal convention' in the industry in the filmmakers period: film noir style is especially associated with the portrayal of the scenes that include crime and criminals, and psychological depictions of the characters; and it is used to create the mood and atmosphere in such scenes. Thus, film noir style transforms and elaborates existing genres by offering a different film experience from traditional narration through the powerful visual language it provides.

Turkish noir films are hybrid both in terms of narrative elements and style, and it is even possible to trace transitions between different influences in certain sequences in the film. The films are rather different from the US examples as well, in the ways in which categorical narrative elements (e.g. plot structure and character formation) are localized. Therefore, depending on the quality of the film, films are categorised as melodramatic noir or realist noir, or any other combination to designate the diversity. Turkish noir can be highly amorphous due to the strong bond between film noir and melodrama in terms of the emotional excess and the melodramatic themes in the narrative, and therefore, requires the two forms to be distinguished based on the formal characteristics to determine the dominant form. Hence, the analysis of the films and the comparative study of films display that Turkish noir films, even though their subject matters are melodramatic to some extent, do not impose melodramatic heroes, heroines and villains on the audience; do not idealize the world from an ethical perspective by creating a black and white universe with evil deeds and virtuous behaviour; are not mainly limited to emotional expressiveness of the characters through victimization, tears, and suffering of the main characters; and are based on an action driven plot structure. The narratives guide the audience usually to an unhappy ending, or a happy ending without much compensation for the past damage or loss, or the effort is not worth the suffering. Moreover, the character formation is usually true to nature with a diversity in both male and female characters. The protagonists are prone to making mistakes and stumble as a result of their weaknesses. The distortion of masculinity is seen frequently, and strong female characters appear rather than traditional melodramatic passive and dependant types. On top of that, an essential characteristic is the role of style in the way these elements are narrated, and a differentiating aspect is that Turkish noir films have a comparatively unusual application of film noir style. Even when the protagonists are the focus, the style is

alienating and disorienting rather than creating easy identification with the characters, which is another major deviation from melodrama as the distancing style leaves the final interpretation and decision about the events and the characters to the audience rather than a highly manipulating melodramatic style. These basic characteristics, together with the significance of family in the narratives, implicit political criticism, the inclusion of social problems, changes and conditions of the period from the perspective of the ordinary people in the narratives assign an authentic identity to the films, and distinguish them from other films of the period in Turkey, and international examples of noir films. The films that are labelled as Turkish noir form part of the international noir, a worldwide current that has appeared in the post-war era displaying similar characteristics with other cinemas in terms of the variety in form and local subject matters. Hence, these films deserve a separate chapter that takes formal characteristics into consideration both to understand the rich content of the filmmakers period in Turkish cinema and in a larger international context to understand the transnational character of film language.

Turkish noir in terms of narrative elements is seen to undergo a transformation during the 1960s: unhappy endings yield to relatively ‘happy endings’, and a tendency to create masculine male ‘heroes’ is seen rather than tarnished, emasculated and deformed male protagonists. Narrative elements are transformed into a more traditional structure that might enable the audience to establish easier identification with the characters. So, from Lütfi Akad and Osman F. Seden, the two pioneers of Turkish film noir, to Memduh Ün and Ertem Göreç, the male noir protagonist that faces the consequence of his action is replaced by a ‘somewhat heroic’ protagonist who finds his way out of trouble. That transformation in the noir narrative form indicates that the Turkish interpretation of film noir dissolves in melodrama over the decade. Hence, Turkish film noir remains to be a product of the filmmakers period since noir films complying with narrative and stylistic characteristics are not carried over into the *Yeşilçam* era. However, film noir style continues to survive in the films with heavy action sequences full of physical confrontations and heroism bereft of noir quality.

This study is not exhaustively exploring all film noir examples in Turkey, and among the surviving copies of the films made during the 1950s and the 1960s, new Turkish noir films are still to be discovered to expand the number of films to form a larger canon. Further studies that would pursue the formalist line of research and analysis would

explore more about the characteristics of Turkish noir, and the traces and transformation of film noir in the *Yeşilçam* era. Finally, neo-formalist approaches to film studies has the potential to uncover the overlooked elements in multifaceted films. Hence, applying neo-formalism to other influences, films and genres of the filmmakers period would help film studies to form a better topology of Turkish cinema.



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APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1: Figures for *Kanun Namına*

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

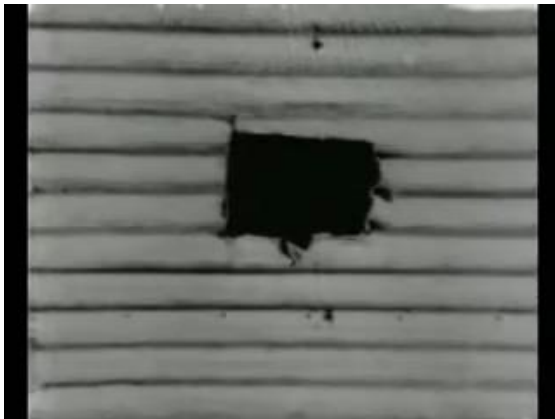


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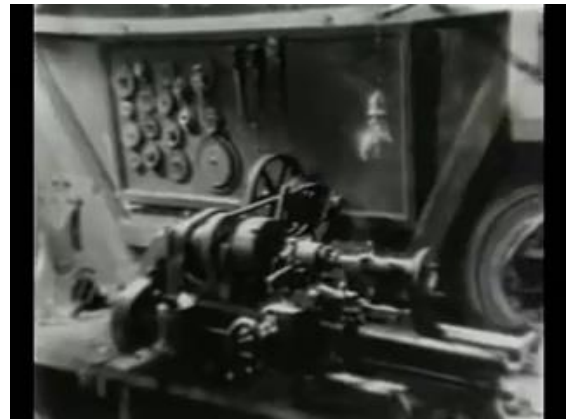


Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23



Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27



Figure 28



Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32



Figure 33



Figure 34



Figure 35



Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38



Figure 39



Figure 40



Figure 41



Figure 42



Figure 43



Figure 44



Figure 45



Figure 46



Figure 47



Figure 48



Figure 49



Figure 50



Figure 51



Figure 52



Figure 53



Figure 54



Figure 55



Figure 56



Figure 57



Figure 58



Figure 59



Figure 60



Figure 61



Figure 62



Figure 63



Figure 64



Figure 65



Figure 66



Figure 67



Figure 68



Figure 69



Figure 70



Figure 71



Figure 72



Figure 73



Figure 74



Figure 75



Figure 76



Figure 77



Figure 78



Figure 79



Figure 80



Figure 81



Figure 82



Figure 83



Figure 84



Figure 85



Figure 86



Figure 87



Figure 88



Figure 89



Figure 90



Figure 91



Figure 92



Figure 93



Figure 94



Figure 95



Figure 96



Figure 97



Figure 98



Figure 99



Figure 100



Figure 101



Figure 102



Figure 103



Figure 104



Figure 105



Figure 106



Figure 107



Figure 108



Figure 109



Figure 110



Figure 111



Figure 112



Figure 113



Figure 114



Figure 115



Figure 116



Figure 117



Figure 118



Figure 119



Figure 120



Figure 121



Figure 122



Figure 123



Figure 124



Figure 125



Figure 126



Figure 127



Figure 128



Figure 129



Figure 130



APPENDIX 2: Figures for *Cingöz Recai*

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23



Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27



Figure 28



Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32



Figure 33



Figure 34



Figure 35



Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38



Figure 39



Figure 40



Figure 41



Figure 42



Figure 43



Figure 44



Figure 45



Figure 46



APPENDIX 3: Figures for *Kanlarıyla Ödediler*

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23



Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27



Figure 28



Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32



Figure 33



Figure 34



Figure 35



Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38



Figure 39



Figure 40



Figure 41



Figure 42



Figure 43



Figure 44



Figure 45



Figure 46



Figure 47



Figure 48



Figure 49



Figure 50



Figure 51



Figure 52



Figure 53



Figure 54



Figure 55



Figure 56



Figure 57



Figure 58



Figure 59



Figure 60



Figure 61



Figure 62



Figure 63



Figure 64



Figure 65



Figure 66



Figure 67



Figure 68



Figure 69



Figure 70



Figure 71



Figure 72



Figure 73



Figure 74



Figure 75



Figure 76



Figure 77



Figure 78



Figure 79



Figure 80



Figure 81



Figure 82



Figure 83



Figure 84



Figure 85



Figure 86



Figure 87



Figure 88



Figure 89



Figure 90



Figure 91



Figure 92



Figure 93



Figure 94



Figure 95



Figure 96



Figure 97



Figure 98



Figure 99



Figure 100



Figure 101



Figure 102



Figure 103



Figure 104



Figure 105



Figure 106



Figure 107



Figure 108



APPENDIX 4: Figures for *Ölüm Peşimizde*

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13

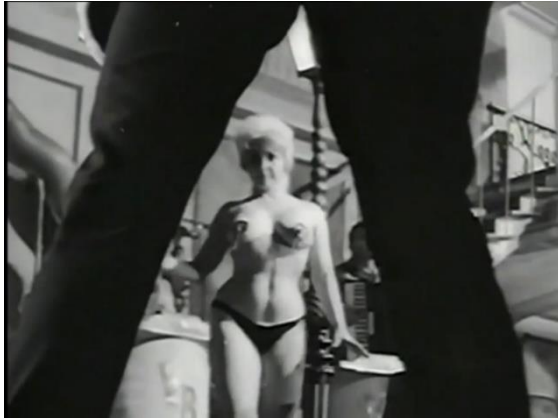


Figure 14



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Figure 22



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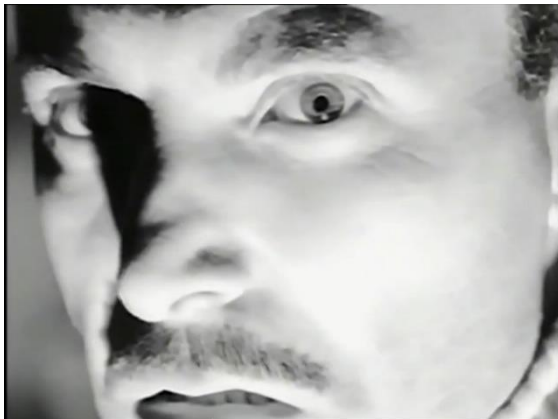


Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32



Figure 33



Figure 34



Figure 35



Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38

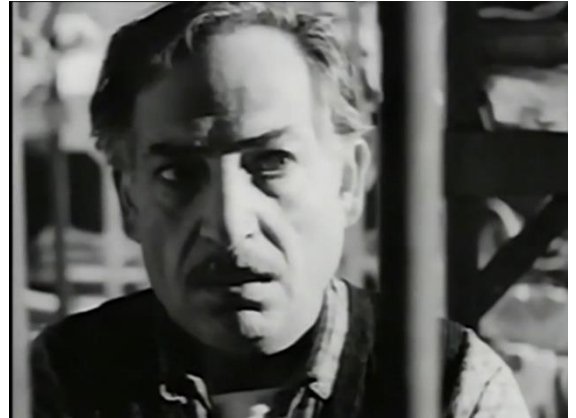


Figure 39



Figure 40



Figure 41



Figure 42



Figure 43



Figure 44



Figure 45



Figure 46



Figure 47



Figure 48



Figure 49



Figure 50



Figure 51



Figure 52



Figure 53



Figure 54



Figure 55



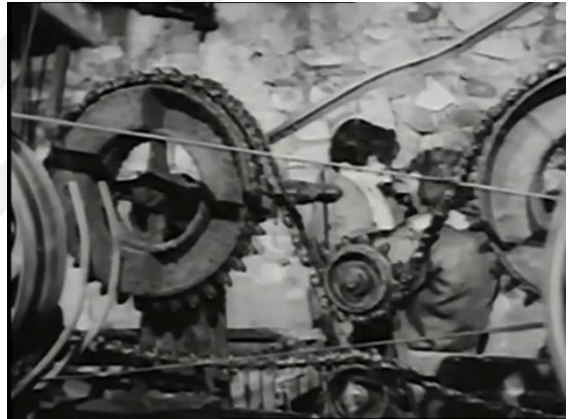
Figure 56



Figure 57



Figure 58



APPENDIX 5: Figures for *Kanlı Firar*

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



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Figure 14



Figure 15



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Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23



Figure 24

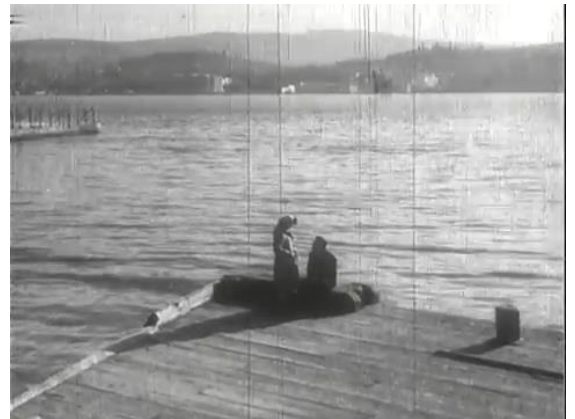


Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27



Figure 28



Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32



Figure 33



Figure 34



Figure 35

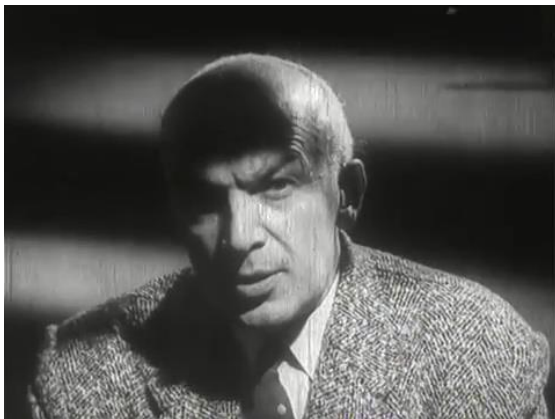


Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38



Figure 39



Figure 40



Figure 41



Figure 42



Figure 43



Figure 44



Figure 45



Figure 46



Figure 47



Figure 48



Figure 49



Figure 50



APPENDIX 6: Figures for *Ölüm Film Çekiyor*

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



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Figure 22



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Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27



Figure 28



Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32

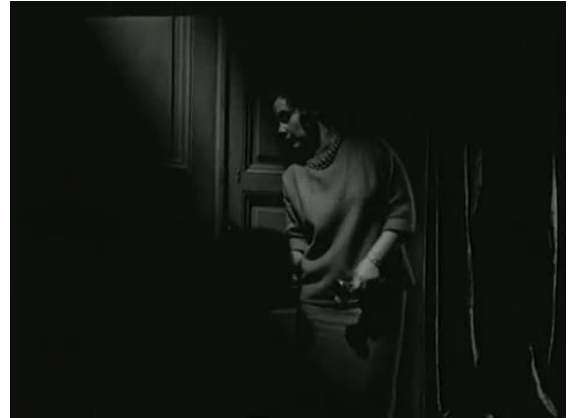


Figure 33



Figure 34



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Figure 38



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Figure 41



Figure 42



Figure 43



Figure 44



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Figure 48

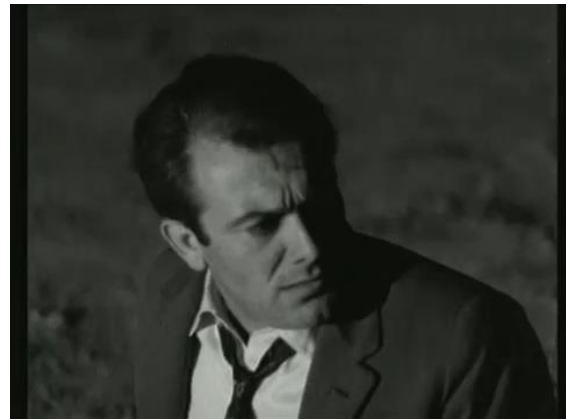


Figure 49



Figure 50



Figure 51



Figure 52



APPENDIX 7: Figures for *Rıfat Diye Biri*

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



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Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26



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Figure 28



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Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32



Figure 33



Figure 34



Figure 35



Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38



Figure 39



Figure 40



Figure 41



Figure 42



Figure 43



Figure 44



Figure 45



Figure 46



Figure 47



Figure 48



Figure 49



Figure 50



Figure 51



Figure 52



Figure 53



Figure 54



Figure 55



Figure 56



Figure 57



Figure 58



Figure 59



Figure 60



