

ITALIAN NEOREALISM AND TURKISH CINEMA

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Cinema contributes to construction of specific meaning and value systems by means of cultural representations. Those cultural representations also present frameworks within which we can have knowledge of expressions of a specific period of time, and they are formed within a relation to social history. Italian neorealism has been a movement which by taking up Italian society and human life after World War II shows how art proceeds as a form of information. On the other hand, movies in Turkish cinema, especially those which produced in 70s, are mostly influenced by Italian neo-realism. The main points that distinguish those movies from Italian movies occur in the context of cultural resources and social-historical basis by which they are supported. Within this scope, this study aims to present the relation between Turkish cinema and Italian neorealism through their similarities and differences. A comparative analysis of Vittorio De Sica's *Ladri Di Biciclette / Bicycle Thieves* (1948) and Yilmaz Guney's *Umut / Hope* (1970) has been made within this study.

Keywords: Italian neorealism, Turkish cinema, Film studies, Vittorio de sica, Yilmaz guney.

Introduction

This study aims to present the relation between Turkish cinema and Italian neorealism through similarities and differences between *Ladri Di Biciclette* movie of Vittorio De Sica and *Umut* of Yilmaz Guney. *Ladri Di Biciclette* which is considered as one of the most essential movies of neorealism movement has impressed many movie makers and has been subjected to many studies. In this study, first, the social conditions in which neorealism occurred shall be investigated along with its theoretical basis; then an analysis about *Ladri Di Biciclette* movie of Vittorio De Sica -who is one of the most important representatives of neo-realism- shall be presented. In the second part of the study, first, to create a framework about the conditions which helped preparing Yilmaz Guney's movie *Umut*, an emphasis shall be put on neorealism discussions in Turkish cinema, and after, *Ladri Di Biciclette* and *Umut* shall be compared according to those arguments.

Neorealist Movement of Thought

Neorealism is described as a movement of thought which occurred as a consequence of politic, social and economic structure that arose in Italy after World War II, and which has been engraved in cinema history. One of the most significant traits of neo-realist movies which are considered to be fed by French poetic realism, Soviet cinema and American narrative is presenting a different point of view to the problems of social life in both politic and aesthetic aspects with a critical attitude towards fascist ideology patterns. According to Kolker, neo-realist movie makers react to their own national cinema traditions and to

Hollywood tradition by carrying the camera out in the streets, using amateur actors and being interested mostly in the proletariat and the peasantry (2010: 25). Celikcan, who emphasizes that neo-realist Italian cinema is much more politic than the cinema of other European countries, also indicates that as a result of this feature, Italian cinema constitutes a bridge between European cinema and Soviet cinema (2005: 83).

As mentioned before, the theoretical basis of neorealism is based on the sense of a new realism which arose out of questioning of the fascist period. Occasionally referring to Marxist realism concept, this new realism is a realism which is formed by a desire for a social change and which embodies humanist values. At this point, it is going to be quite useful to refer to Zavattini -one of the most important theoreticians of neo-realism, in terms of having an idea about the theoretical basis of neo-realism.

According to Zavattini, reality is extremely rich. The important thing is to know how to look at this reality. The duty of the artist in that vein is not to scare or excite the audience by using some methods, but to make them think about their own lives, in other words, about the pure reality. Referring to a comparison between neorealism and American cinema, Zavattini dwells on the features that distinguish neorealism from American cinema. He propounds that American cinema settles for a smoothed information when trying to acknowledge reality deeply and directly. This is the reason why American cinema has difficulty in finding new stories. Neo-realism, on the other hand, does not have this kind of a difficulty since it can be about everyone, everywhere, every hour of a day. Addressing the problems of everyday life and poverty after the war, neo-realist movies intend to strengthen everyone and raise awareness of being human by focusing on ordinary people's lives (Zavattini, 1968: 383).

In line with Zavattini's thoughts, the main principles of neorealism can be summarized briefly as: displaying everything not as it looks but as it is; using not the fiction but the reality itself; embracing not the exceptional but the general one, instead of showing people's romantic fantasies and relations, mentioning people's relationships with the society they live in (Celikcan from Mast, 2005: 84). Celikcan indicates that those principles can be considered as a criticism of realist cinema, and points out that within neorealism movement cinema-reality relation is reconsidered with a new understanding. Therefore, the principle of "displaying things as they are", for instance, differs from "displaying things as they seem (reflecting)" principle of realist theoreticians; thus "comprehending the world in a non-ideological understanding" function of realist movement became "changing the world with an ideological understanding" function in neo-realism. This is about neo-realism's connection to politics, its criticisms directed to fascism, and its attempt to change political system (Celikcan, 2005: 84). According to Daldal, on the other hand, it is not easy to determine which point this movement corresponds to within realism arguments. However, bringing the humanity aspect forward has been the most important contribution of Italian neorealism to those arguments; and neorealism which is fed by anti-fascist movement has tried to reflect the pain of war period (Daldal, 1998: 47).

The principles concerning neorealism have occasionally received criticisms. Neorealism is considered by one of those criticisms to tell only about misery. Zavattini suggests that misery is the most distinct reality of the era, and he emphasizes that it is impossible not to see this reality. According to Zavattini, the theme of poverty is something one can dedicate one's life to. He claims that criticisms which declare that neorealism does not generate solution are pointless since it is not an artist's job to generate solutions and it is enough to express the need for a solution. Interpretations, suggesting that small events do not concern people and they cannot be theatrical, carry some risk for movie makers. Movie makers will have to succumb to orders of capitalist circles and also face the danger of "non-deepening" unless they deal with smaller events. The problem is "to get to the heart of beings, and to show the relations between events and the process which causes those events" (Zavattini, 1968: 382-383).

In accordance with those arguments and opinions, the most essential features of neo-realist movies can be specified as follows (Abrahams, Bell & Udris, 2001: 261-263):

- These movies differ from studio system in terms of space usage. Neo-realist movies concentrate largely on outdoor, select rural or urban fabric as baseline.

- In neo-realist movies, there is a tendency to use non-professional actors. Many actors, such as those who played father and son in *Ladri Di Biciclette* of Vittorio De Sica, have been qualified as a result of this tendency.
- Considering lightening and camera movements there are also several differences. In neo-realist movie, use of natural light is ideal. Close shots are quite rare. In addition, there is a tendency to avoid dramatic camera movements, but this does not mean that camera movements are not preplanned. For instance, six cameras have been used at the same time for just one exterior shooting in *Ladri Di Biciclette*.
- Editing is quite slow in neo-realist movies; it does not have a purpose of creating a dramatic thrill. Compared to a Hollywood movie, there are very few shots/reverse shots or point-of view shots.
- When examined regarding sound, as a result of the conditions of that period, movies appear to be dubbed in studios. In terms of music employment, we encounter a domination of emotional melodramatic music in most of neo-realist movies. The main reason of using melodramatic music is commercial concern. During an interview, De Sica, for example, responded the criticisms about how the usage of music creates emotional reactions on audience, saying that he was against using music except a few little moments, but the producers had been quite insisting about it (Curle & Snyder, 2000b: 40).

Hence, it is obvious that neo-realist movies have several characteristics in common regarding their forms and contexts. The main point which is common to all movies is their relevance to a specific criticism of fascism. Additionally, economic conditions of Italy after the war have been determinant for formal characteristics of movies; also the movie studios became unuseable, and that resulted in leading the neo-realist movies to focus on outdoor.

Ladri Di Biciclette / Bicycle Thieves

De Sica's movies contain themes such as construction of cultural identity, influence of language over culture, nature of cinema as a tool. According to Philip Cannistraro, when De Sica's works are evaluated all in all, it is possible to find optimism together with pessimism. Understanding De Sica who plays a part of a magician with his laughter and tears and who builds a bridge between social myth and humanistic reality can only be possible with the help of the terms of conflict between fascism which is a cultural desert and resistance which represents cultural reviving (Cannistraro, 2000: 92). De Sica who says that he has seen Italians in a social trauma after the war, points out how this trauma isolates people. He claims that the symptoms of this trauma occur as the collective destruction of human feelings (Curle & Snyder, 2000a: 4). Within this context, De Sica underlines the necessity of realising moral premises on which the society is based and improving personal relations that depend upon mutual understanding and compassion. De Sica thinks that happiness is possible only with an effort to reconstruct the social one against the cruelty of social existence and disappointment it causes (Cannistraro, 2000: 92). Real meaning of his movies lies under, with his own terms, searching for human cooperation and fighting against selfishness (De Sica, 1968: 456). Elements such as modesty, co-movement and mutual acceptance of helplessness appear to be the key to reconstruct a liveable world (Curle & Snyder, 2000a: 4).

Ladri Di Biciclette of De Sica is considered as a masterpiece within the director's filmography and qualified as the most successful example of De Sica-Zavattini cooperation.¹ Based on Luigi Bartoli's novel of the same name, the movie has attained a social theme and transformed into a different mood.

Analysis performed on *Ladri Di Biciclette* contains many different methods. Rocchio, for instance, in his analysis on *Ladri Di Biciclette* refers to psychoanalysis, especially to Lacan and his concept of symbolic identification. Using the concept of symbolic identification, Rocchio attempts to determine the fractions in the discourse and, thus, examine how textual process proceeds. Rocchio analyzes the classical chain of causality, and availing himself of David Bordwell, he mentions that a chain of storylines with

¹ De Sica collaborated with Zavattini on twenty three of his thirty movies (Morandini, 2003: 143).

weaker connections has taken the place of the chain of causality in classical Hollywood cinema (1999: 58). Narration is temporarily interrupted, and these fragments in narration enable displaying social conditions. Furthermore, interruptions and shiftings on narration restrain the audience from identifying themselves with the character, and thus draw the attention from the character to social conditions of that period (mass unemployment, competition for a job, demoralization caused by unemployment, bureaucratic implementations of the government etc.). According to Rocchio, occasional interruptions on narration progress on the purpose of displaying social conditions also provide a deflection of danger and desire. It gets the audience's attention away from self-alienation of the character or his loss of control against events, thus redirecting them to question the social conditions which prevent individual liberation.

While Rocchio claims that *Ladri Di Biciclette* makes a different analysis by interrupting classical narration, Tomasulo suggests that the movie is not an alternative interpretation practice to classical Hollywood narration. *Ladri Di Biciclette* leans on mimetic and perspectival presentation of visual space, and on dramatic narration structure which is based on a closed system and character development. There also are organized shots such as shots/reverse shots or point-of-view shots. Tomasulo criticizes the claim that *Ladri Di Biciclette* displays social conditions of the period by means of the interruptions in the narration. According to Tomasulo, the movie portrays Italy's social conditions after the war, however this portrait remains inadequate to display historical reality accurately and presents a crooked reality because of the deficiency it contains in itself. There is a difference between Italy in *Ladri Di Biciclette* and Italy in 1948. *Ladri Di Biciclette* presents an ideologic point of view by creating a conflict between individuals and social groups. Thus, what the movie presents is the product of a representative process which hardly displays post-war Italy (Tomasulo, 2000: 163).

David Overby states, in a similar way, that even though social problems provide a basis to many neo-realist movies, very few of these movies deal with these problems thoroughly. *Ladri Di Biciclette* addresses the problem of unemployment, yet instead of taking the whole reality of the problem, it becomes an emotional, affective story of loosing dignity (Rocchio from Overby, 1999: 58). Tomasulo claims that the movie distorts the real difficulties and the discourse arrives at the conclusion within the framework of these distortions, and that there is no solution for the displayed conflicts and the movie does not present a point of view for the struggle. There are only a few inadequate suggestions one of which is a social democrat solution saying that "the revelation of injustice will lead it to its destruction". The other suggestion expresses that love may prevent personal, familial or religious conflicts and alienation, because these are all originated from interpersonal problems, and not from class conflicts. This suggestion acquires a mythic dimension by propounding love as the solution. Though Bazin thinks it is the only valid communist movie of the decade, according to Tomasulo, the movie does not involve any class analysis, and instead of this kind of an analysis, there is a criticism of moral, idealist (and even Christian) social injustice. The movie is, with the most optimist interpretation, idealist; and with the most pessimist interpretation, it appears to legitimate the ideology of bourgeois liberalism (Tomasulo, 2000:163).

Some of the criticisms directed to the movie arise from Bazin's "the only valid communist film of the decade" appellation; and the criticisms in this direction underline the lack of class solidarity. A similar interpretation regarding the role of crowded masses within the movie comes from Bondanella. Crowded masses are generally presented to be negative with respect to Ricci, and so Bondanella thinks that this situation does not provide a proper iconographic image considering a proletarian solidarity or class consciousness. When Ricci is accepted for the job, other workers fall over themselves to strip Ricci of his job. He also encounters a crowded and noisy mass when he goes to speak with his friend about his stolen bicycle. During his attempt to catch the thief, the crowd again treats him unfriendly (Bondanella, 2001: 59).

Tomasulo also indicates that there is disorder where there are social groups; and in the movie, workers do not seem to be organized, and the groups even stand up against personal achievements (2000: 169). De Sica shows that bureaucrats, police officers and church do not understand Ricci, but those who are in the same class with him do not have a different attitude either (Bondanella, 2001: 59).

The discussion of whether the movie is communist or not is also about determining the political tendency of De Sica. In general, De Sica is known to be closer to social democrats, but even after

Christian Democrat government correlated neorealism with communism, he kept insisting on neo-realist aesthetic. Daldal suggests that even though De Sica underlines interpersonal solidarity in most of his movies, this solidarity does not necessarily have a political initiative (Daldal, 2003: 117). Besides, as Cannistraro states, this situation propounds the cinematic mentality of the director. Cannistraro says that De Sica movies do not aim to present social doctrines, make judgements or transform, they only try to explain social consciousness and they give the audience an opportunity to comprehend the social relations of the period on a humanistic level and to share them emotionally (Cannistraro, 2000: 91). As mentioned before, this approach also shows parallelism with Zavattini's thoughts about neo-realist cinema. Zavattini also emphasized that it is not the artist's job to generate solution.

When we get back to psychoanalytic method on movie analysis, we can see that the movie narration is constructed around a deficiency that is based on a missing object. Desire which continues throughout the narration, is the desire to repossess the missing object (the bicycle), and this object also represents the power which Ricci tries to gain. Facing the patriarchal pressure in his relations with the authority, Ricci keeps trying to get the control of his life but never succeeds. Every event that he asks the police for help and justice pushes him away from authority a little more.

Ricci's passivity and clumsiness are important factors for gaining sympathy of the audience (Sitney, 1995: 92). For instance, at the beginning of the movie, the idea of putting Maria's sheets in pledge makes it possible for Ricci to get the job. Antonio often sinks into despair against problems. Thus, as Bazin puts it (2000), while watching "how the man whose bicycle is stolen becomes the man who steals bicycles", it is almost impossible to have negative thoughts about Ricci.

Oedipal conflicts based on a patriarchal family structure between Bruno/Antonio and Antonio/government become more evident when Maria fulfils her function in the screenplay and disappears. For example, in the restaurant scene, when Maria's name is mentioned, she comes into the narration as a representative of censor (If you mother knew she wouldn't let you, but I let you drink...). Thus, when Antonio tries to deny his authoritative tendencies, Maria becomes superego (Tomasulo, 2000: 167).

Approaching the movie from the point of view of Bruno, we catch some oedipal warnings such as "taking the place of the father", "becoming like a father". Snyder, who claims that a connection can easily be made between Lacan's mirror stage theory and the movie, interprets the relation between Bruno and Antonio within this framework. Bruno, in many aspects, imitates his father. He puts his packed lunch into the pocket of his overall, and their body language is the same when they sit on the pavement. At the end of the movie, the mirror through which Bruno gives Ricci a meaning seems like broken because of Ricci's mistake. Bruno holds his father's hand; the identity they share is fragmentized, ruptured (Snyder, 2000: 230); and dependence relation between father and son in which the father is determinant, becomes the dependance of father to son (Bondanella, 2001: 61). In *Ladri Di Biciclette*, the dramatic solution of father and son's holding hands is interpreted by some critics as inadequacy of the movie. Though socially being a deadlock, this family unity and solidarity can be interpreted as a hope in spite of everything.

The main formal success of the movie is the use of physical space; and the physical space is used in a way to support meaning throughout the movie. Movie creates many spatial dialectics between subject and mass. The main flow which is based on the *mise en scene* structure that separates individuals from background creates a tension -instead of cinema- between individual and society by using foreground background tension. Depth of the field is occasionally used to describe Ricci's isolation. When Ricci, for example, arrives at the house of the thief, audience can see one of the neighbors closing the window on the background (Bondanella, 2001: 60).

The spatial narrowness of interior spaces (Ricci's home, workplace, police station, church, thief's house and bordello) establishes an interior-exterior structure to reinforce individual-society dichotomy. According to Tomasulo, closing doors and windows can be read in this way. Windows are constantly slammed in Ricci's face: when he tries to show his work place to his wife, when he searches for the thief's house or when he speaks to the police officer... In a similar way, when Ricci chases the old man into the church, the doors are also closed. That means all the exits are closed in his work life, human relations and

religion. None of these contains a solution to the problems. Thus, as Tomasulo states, the movie transforms the social conflict back into an intrinsic conflict (2000: 167).

The helplessness of Ricci's struggle is frequently shown us through visual codes with the camera which moves over the sheets that have been put in pledge or on the stack of files that waits for being solved at the police station. Ricci's promenade among bicycle parts at the market place and worried faces of father and son are also indications of this situation.

Finally, it is useful to underline some details about the movie. The first of these is that Ricci's bicycle has a label on it saying "Fides" which means "fate" in Italian. This caused the movie to encounter the accusations of fatalism. Also the movie's timeline is between Friday and Sunday which, with regards to Italian culture, symbolizes crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus (Bondanella, 2001: 61).

Realism - Social Realism Arguments in Turkish Cinema After 1960

Within the discussions of Turkish cinema, Yilmaz Guney's movie *Umut / Hope* (1970) is generally discussed in terms of its reality concept. On that sense, many critics consider the movie as a breaking point. A parallelism has been drawn between the movie and Italian neo-realism, and especially De Sica's *Ladri di Biciclette / Bicycle Thieves* (1948). However no extensive evaluation has been made on this subject. For example, Haluk Sahin and Dennis Gilles claim that the movie evokes sometimes the visualization concept of Italian neorealism (especially of De Sica's *Ladri di Biciclette*), but sometimes Huston's movie *The Treasure of Sierra Madre* (1947), yet, these are not enough to ascertain the real place of *Umut* (1979: 12). According to Ron Holloway, *Umut* is one of the best Turkish movies of its period. Even though it reminds of *Ladri di Biciclette* in its first half and *The Treasure of Sierra Madre* in its second, *Umut* still is a typical Turkish movie which is ultimately based on country's original problems. It must be evaluated as one little contemporary classic which is performed and directed strongly (cited by Dorsay, 1988:123). Giovanni Scognamiglio claims that *Umut* has been described in terms such as realist, neo-realist, continuation of neo-realism, poetic realist, but none of these determinations, none of the formulas has been enough to explain *Umut* by itself (1998: 369). In addition, Nijat Ozon interprets the movie as the final destination that Turkish cinema had ever reached until that day (1985: 1896).² According to Dorsay, the parallelism which is drawn by Western audience to Italian neorealism is not pointless; but still Guney's *Umut* must be considered as a start of neorealism in Turkish cinema rather than being a belated continuation of neorealism (1990: 15). Onat Kutlar, who claims that in a future research to be made on the reality in *Umut*, there is going to be traces of reality concept of Turkish novel and of realist writers such as Hemingway, Steinbeck, Gorky, Chekhov. Kutlar is also of the opinion that the autobiographic features of the movie reinforce its persuasiveness. Besides, its success on creating present time and giving the impression that the events are happening at that time and at that place is one of the most significant elements of the movie's general success (Kutlar, 1990: 11).

Starting off from the interpretations about the movie's reality concept, following Kutlar, focusing on the interaction between cinema and literature and arriving at the realism concept of Turkish novel, we will also need to take a look at the period of 1950s. Within this period, "social realist" tendencies and "realism" arguments which started in the field of literature centred especially upon the works of writers such as Fakir Baykurt, Orhan Kemal, Yasar Kemal. Those writers who carried the reality of village to their novels with a different point of view and different aspects, have seized a new and critical level in terms of both style and context, and they established an important break point in Turkish literature (Cakir, 2004: 56-57). Many directors of Turkish cinema have been influenced by this new occurrence. As well as other various literature adaptations, movies which also took place entirely or partly in a village and which had tendencies similar to those of village novels came up. Those movies, which, in terms of space usage

² *Umut*, also has similarities to Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali* (1955) movie. Being accepted as one of the most important representatives of realist cinema, Ray is one of the directors who has been impressed by neo-realism. *Pather Panchali* focuses on rural areas of India and expresses the life here from the point of view of a child.

and characters, differ from melodrama movies that dominated Turkish cinema was evaluated within a category which was qualified as "social realist".

Reality arguments in the field of literature reflected to cinema by 1960s. Yet, in many evaluations it is still considered that when it comes to social realism it is not possible to talk about integrity and extensity in cinema as it is possible in literature. Ozon, for instance, accepted the prominence of movies which discussed social problems of that period, and he regarded the period between 1960-1965 as a time when "half realism" attempts were seen; he stated that they laid hands on social problems within the bounds of possibility of superintending those movies (1985: 1988). Nazik, who emphasizes, in a similar way, that it is not possible to talk about a social realism movement in Turkish cinema, specifies the common aspects of realist schools of thoughts -though they have different concepts of reality- as "familiarizing the world around us and human being within their whole complicatedness, underlining the aspects that do not go right in the world around us, contributing to the establishment of a better world."; and gives Roman School of Thought as an example that set the ground for critical and theoretical basis of Italian neo-realism. While setting this ground Roman School of Thought supported an investigation on reality of society and man, and an art of cinema which could take a stand against commercial production. However, considering Turkish cinema, it is not possible to talk about a conceptual dimension which is agreed on or a school of thought which discusses and produces ideas on theoretical basis.

According to Nazik, the realist directors of Turkish cinema continued traditional Yesilcam patterns and westernism effect, and did not develop an attitude towards permanent cinema (1999: 41). Emrah Ozen explored whether it is possible to talk about a social realism movement in Turkish cinema who analyze the movies -which are originally evaluated within social realism movement- according to their narrative structures. Ozen claims that though these movies which carry various similarities in reflecting the prevalent cultural tendencies of the period do not constitute a classical movement, they still can be described as "socialistic movie attempts" which deserve to be referred together (Ozen, 2001).

Despite the opinion that social realism cannot be considered as a movement of thought in Turkish cinema, the opposing view is also quite common. Asli Daldal, for instance, claims that social realism was a movement which occurred in Turkish cinema after 1960 military coup and lost influence increasingly after 1965. Daldal draws a parallelism between Italian neorealism and social realism. According to Daldal, critical platform which emerged in Italy after World War II and libertarian platform which occurred in Turkey after 1965 have constituted a favorable ambience for these movements to improve. Daldal's thesis is built on the idea that "in the historical periods (especially within the periods of crisis such as post-war or post-coup periods, when objectives like reviving and reconstructing the society which is untidy but not fully fragmented become prominent) when class conflicts are balanced and ruling class approaches to different layers of the society with a reconciliatory and progressive attitude, a realistic tendency emerges in art." Daldal who also mentions that there has not been a complete agreement about the social realist movement in Turkish cinema like other modernist movements, bases this opinion on ideological conflicts between critics and directors and negative political conditions of the period. Since the movement has not had a clear and plain proclamation, criticisms happened to claim sometimes that it was a "small-scale movement" and sometimes that it was an "arbitrary naming". However, according to Daldal, cinema clubs, magazines and festivals which started to appear after 1960 coup brightened up the general mood; and the directors who set forth to "create a national cinema language" and seize the aesthetic norms of the west buckled down to describe the society. *Gecelerin Otesi / Beyond the Nights* (Metin Erksan, 1960) which occurred as a result of this, has become the very first example of social realist cinema. Erksan was followed by directors such as Halit Refig, Duygu Sagioglu, Ertem Gorec (Daldal, 2005).

In short, realist tendencies that occur in Turkish cinema and the discussions of social realist or revolutionary cinema are closely related to political-social conditions of that period of time. Until that time, cinema had been fed by Kemalist ideology and the background of the movies had been based on a society model which matched up with populist understanding. When Turkish Labor Party got into parliament with 1965 elections, socialist ideas came into forefront and a reviving occurred in leftist politics. This reviving reflected to cinema, bringing with it a search for a new national cinema language

which was based on a new cinema approach. New ideas were suggested such as archiving movies, creating discussion platforms, performing various shows and publishing cinema magazines. Despite the emergence of various arguments such as "social realist cinema", "national cinema", "revolutionary cinema", there has never been an agreement on these categories. Taking its place among cinema productions of that period, *Umut*, which was evaluated with different interpretations through those arguments, was welcomed enthusiastically and described as the precursor of a new cinema language.

Comparison of *Umut* and *Ladri Di Biciclette*

Before comparing *Umut* and *Ladri Di Biciclette*, it is necessary to speak briefly of Yilmaz Guney. Just like De Sica, Guney started his cinema career as an actor and in time he became a famous cinema star and he earned the moniker "Cirkin Kral / The Ugly King". Also being a screenwriter and assistant director in some of the movies he appeared in, Guney took his first step towards directing with the movie *Seyyit Han* (1968). *Umut* which is the subject of this study is considered as a breaking point in the director's cinema in terms of its realistic style and the innovation it carried with it. It also is taken as a reference point in periodizing Turkish cinema. Guney forms a different character than those in his previous movies, and coming out of his star status, he presents a more realistic character. Another important point about the movie is that it carries some traces from Guney's own life. Guney, who grew up in Adana under very hard circumstances within a poor environment, reflected his ability to observe on his movie with a realistic style, and this style provided a significant contribution to the success of the movie.

Umut begins with street images under the first morning lights: camera views municipality vehicle watering the roads, cleaning workers sweeping the streets, and street peddlers, then focuses on a man who is sleeping inside a horse carriage. In a while, man gets up, lights a cigarette and starts to watch around. We shall meet again with those documentarylike images which appeared at the beginning in the forthcoming parts of the movie.

The movie is based on Cabbar who makes a living by phaeton driving. He lives in a poor neighborhood with his wife, five children and mother. He becomes more and more impoverished when phaeton driving becomes less popular and he places all his hopes on a lottery ticket. One day, a car crashes into Cabbar's phaeton and one of his horses dies. Creditors who assume that Cabbar will not be able to run his phaeton anymore and pay his debts back, beat his door down and dispossess his horse. Getting poorer and poorer, and giving up his hopes on lottery, Cabbar decides to go after an imaginary treasure which his porter friend Hasan always talks about. The movie ends at a point where Cabbar who cannot find the treasure comes to the edge of insanity.

The story is based on an ordinary person just like it is in *Ladri Di Biciclette*. In *Umut*, Cabbar takes the place of Antonio whose bicycle is stolen in *Ladri Di Biciclette*. In the first half of the movie the social and economic conditions of that period and Cabbar's place within these conditions have been described. He is a poor protagonist who barely makes a living. However, he has a difference which distinguishes him from other poor protagonists that have existed up to that time: he draws a more realistic portrait that goes beyond the ordinary patterns. In fact, the number of movies which are based on rich-poor dichotomy increased following the period when Democrat Party came in power. This dichotomy appeared in many movies, from popular melodramas to realist movie attempts. Maktav, however, claims that poor protagonists of popular Turkish movies are actually protagonists of love who live a different life beyond poverty. "This situation of transcendence allowed audience to see poverty not as a problem but as a value,... moral norms were always identified with poor lives." Generally, poor protagonists that occur in melodramas in this period are characters whom the public may identify with. Poor protagonists eventually join the side of the wealthy, or rich-poor dilemma becomes meaningless within the frame of a reunion where love precedes everything. According to Maktav, what makes *Umut* different than the others is that there is no moving up to a higher class like in other Yesilcam melodramas, and there is a much more realistic representation of poverty in *Umut* (2001: 165). Within this scope, the movie enables us to have an opinion about its period of time by presenting the poor protagonist within social and economic

conditions. Looking at these conditions we can observe a changing society. Phaeton driving profession becomes less popular within modern life, leaves its place to taxi driving; so the phaeton drivers face the risk of being unemployed. Cinematographically speaking, it can be observed that phaeton drivers and taxi drivers often come together to create a meaning. According to Cos, Cabbar's unemployment in these circumstances, allows the difference between "those disappearing" and "those improving" to become more obvious (Cos et al., 1974). The contrast between taxis and phaetons is corroborated by the emphasis laid repeatedly on municipality's intent to call the phaetons off. Trying to practice his profession so hardly under these conditions, Cabbar, after his horse dies and his carriage is taken by the creditors, becomes unemployed just like Antonio whose bicycle is stolen.

Similarities between Antonio and Cabbar are not limited to these. Just like Antonio who stands separated from other workers in *Ladri Di Biciclette*, Cabbar also does not create close bonds with his friends. This situation is supported by his friends' statements like "Cabbar has been acting different lately". Besides, like his friends, Cabbar also faces the danger of unemployment, but he does not seem to be in coherence with them, he does not care about the preparations of demonstration which is considered to be held, and he looks for salvation on individual level. This caused *Umut* to come under criticisms similar to those which *Ladri Di Biciclette* encountered. Cabbar's unconsciousness is parallel to that of Antonio. According to Ayca, for example, the movie cannot answer clearly enough the question of which class Cabbar is a member of. Being a farm laborer before, Cabbar now has his own production asset, but still, he is unconscious about being in solidarity with his own class. As a result of capitalist relations of production, drivers face the risk of disappearance. However, the movie underlines the tragedy of one person, thus it remains too weak to give its political message.

Cabbar who is not displayed among other drivers seems to be detached intentionally by the director. Yet, Cabbar's reality is not detached or separated from the others'. Guney could not establish this synergy and integrity and has a deficiency at this point. Because Cabbar's relationships with other drivers are not presented, there is no mention of an organic, classwise integrity either (Cos et al., 1974: 8-13).

Another indicator which shows that Cabbar aims for an individual salvation is that he places his hopes first on lottery tickets, and then on the treasure. Besides, Cabbar shows his ticket to the man who reads the paper, but he does not believe in the man's words and rechecks the numbers on the paper himself. This underlines solitude and process of losing trust among poor people who live in urban areas. Cos claims that this situation is one of the important indicators which supports "isolation" theme of the movie. Guney leaves his protagonists all alone in the society pushing them to solve their problems themselves (Cos et al., 1974: 7-8).

As another common point of *Ladri Di Biciclette* and *Umut*, there is a police station scene in both movies, which undertakes similar functions. Both Cabbar whose horse is crashed by a car, and Antonio whose bicycle is stolen go to the police station and encounter the same insouciance. In addition to that, Cabbar is scolded and accused of improper parking. Criticism of social rules continues in *Umut* as in *Ladri Di Biciclette*. In this movie police station is not a place to solve problems either.

Antonio's wife Maria's function in *Ladri Di Biciclette* is majorly fulfilled by Cabbar's wife Fatma in *Umut*. When Antonio gets the job, Maria plays an important part in that; and she presses him to look for the bicycle when it is stolen. Fatma, on the other hand, suggests Cabbar to work as a laborer on the farm or to ask his old bosses for help. In *Ladri Di Biciclette*, Maria gets out of the narration after a while, but Fatma stays inside of the narration for a large portion of the movie. Thus, after a while, *Ladri Di Biciclette* and *Umut* differ within the scope of narrative flow. *Ladri Di Biciclette* focuses on public space and becomes a story of solitude and quest, however *Umut* focuses on domestic private space and exhibits helplessness and poverty within private space. Another reason of differentiation on narrative flow is that there is no substitute character in *Umut* for Bruno character who undertakes a function which is as important as at least that of Antonio in *Ladri Di Biciclette*. Thereby, the two movies which embody many common points in the scope of story start to shift through different lanes in terms of their discourse.

One of the differences between Antonio and Cabbar characters is that Cabbar is not a passive character like Antonio. Despite paying attention to his wife's advices occasionally, Cabbar has an absolute authority over his wife and children, and he reinforces his authority by using physical power. Another

example that shows Cabbar is not as passive as Antonio can be observed in robbery scene. Antonio leaves the thief who steals his bicycle behind because of the crowd surrounding him, but on the contrary, when Cabbar catches the thief who steals his money from his pocket, he takes his money back and punishes the thief by beating him as well. At this point, it is necessary to examine the robbery scenes closely in both *Umut* and *Ladri Di Biciclette*. Regarding narrative development, the robbery scene in *Umut* is not a constituent element. Nevertheless, both scenes have some similarities in terms of their function. Antonio, whose bicycle is stolen becomes a man who steal bicycles at the end of the movie; and Cabbar whose money is stolen attempts to steal to find the money which is necessary to go on treasure hunting. However, in *Ladri Di Biciclette*, the function of the scenes of robbery and their connection are presented quite prominently; yet, those scenes become just small unimportant details in *Umut*.

As mentioned before, *Umut* which focuses on poverty achieves this by giving domestic details in a documentarylike way. Hence, more close-ups have been used in *Umut* than *Ladri Di Biciclette*. Camera frequently shows the faces of Cabbar, his children and his mother in close-ups, views various objects that exist in where they live, and displays the poverty and helplessness of the family by means of these details. One of these details is the broken carriage which is put aside after Cabbar's horse dies; the carriage simply becomes a creature which is at its last gasp. The bicycle means a lot to Ricci family in *Ladri Di Biciclette*, and so does the phaeton to Cabbar and his family in *Umut*.

Another common point of bicycle and phaeton in terms of meaning is going to be revealed by a psychoanalytic interpretation of the movies. When analyzed psychoanalytically, *Ladri Di Biciclette* seems to be constructed around a deficiency that is based on a missing object (the bicycle) and a desire to fill that deficiency. Similarly, *Umut* also focuses on a missing object, the phaeton that Cabbar loses. The deficiency which occurs as a result of this loss will be attempted to be filled with the new prize and the treasure which is substituted for the phaeton shall become another object of desire in the forthcoming parts of the movie.

After the scenes starting with a treasure hunt, there is almost no common point between *Ladri Di Biciclette* and *Umut* in terms of narrative development. However, it is necessary to mention the similarities between the preacher (Hodja) who tells the place of the treasure in *Umut* and the fortuneteller character in *Ladri Di Biciclette*. Hasan, a friend of Cabbar, tells him that he has found a preacher (Hodja) who can tell them where the treasure is. Just like Antonio does not believe in the fortuneteller at the beginning, Cabbar does not believe that treasure can be found by the help of a preacher's faith healing sessions. Nevertheless, Cabbar, who lost his phaeton and his hopes, finally turns to the preacher, just like Antonio turns to the fortuneteller, and the process of treasure hunting shifts direction through madness. In contrast to the hope De Sica presents within the frame of father-son relation, there is a darker future in *Umut*.

Conclusion

Important similarities have been detected as a result of the comparison which has been made between *Ladri Di Biciclette* and *Umut*. Both movies: embrace ordinary protagonists, focus on the problems such as unemployment and isolation of an individual, present a plain and descriptive understanding on narration of social conditions of the time period, and show some parallelism in their narrative flow. While *Ladri Di Biciclette* bears a trace of the trauma which Italian society encountered after the war, *Umut* grounds on the diffractions in social structure created by the changes that Turkey faced through modernization process. Long shots have been preferred in both movies, which plays an important role to help movies create a realistic impression. On the contrary, there are many points on which the two movies different from each other. Those differences are largely about the reference points of the two directors. Guney's movie has autobiographic features and is fed by cultural and social codes of society. De Sica's *Ladri Di Biciclette* which is about post-war Italia is based on conditions of Italian society. One of the most significant differences between the movies is that there is not a character in *Umut* that matches up to Bruno of *Ladri Di Biciclette*. Neo-realism's common use of child characters has a function to express the helplessness

that can be encountered at times. Becoming a manifestation of pain, child characters also help movies to have a melodramatic style. *Ladri Di Biciclette*, orientation of the affection towards Bruno represents a yearning for social reconciliation. At this point *Umut* shifts to a different lane and the meaning of the movie changes almost completely. The movie revives social concerns and disengagement which are determinant in that period of time. After all, both movies bear a resemblance to each other in terms of their perception of reality, and they both demonstrate historical-social mood of a specific era.

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