City and Cinema

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Cinema has created a new vision as a popular entertainment among the art branches since 1910's. Walter Benjamin, like Kracauer, the pioneer in the field of city and cinema, observed from the beginning of the century that the city formed the largest cultural communication system. These new forms of urban life accompany the common history of newborn cinema.

With the birth of the modern city culture, the expressions of Kracauer and Walter Benjamin drew the sketch of such approach in the beginning of the century, during which the cinema reflected the modernity. According to Benjamin, only the art of film could provide a visual introduction to the essence of the city in a modern environment.

Questioning the modern city in a sociological perspective opens new horizons in theorizing the relationship between the cinema and modernity.

Since the 19th century, when Walter Benjamin observed that the city was dependent on a cultural, literal, photographic and mapped communication system making the media of the era and the dynamics of the city clash with each other, "the city has had homogeneity only in sight. Even the name of the city has been emphasized in a different way according to its region." (Passages, 1989)

Cinema and cities are special fields in which the different conversions of the modernity were handled at the turn of the 20th century. The cinematic forms, hereafter, do not have to keep up with the urban forms. Cinema recreates the city as a city phenomenon. During the whole twentieth century, cinema was dominant in the spread of the new cultural urban models. The fifth Element (Luc Besson - 1997) is an example for this. The creation of a lost city with a futurist perception was realized by the cinema and the nostalgic outlook of the city was historically renewed.

I. EMERGENCE OF MODERN CITY AND CINEMA

Modern city and cinema occurred as an urban discovery at the end of the 19th century. This discovery was not limited only with the cities which were associated with modernity such as Wien, Berlin, Paris. Cinema also told about the cities like Alexandria, Cairo, Istanbul, Bombay. Due to this important feature, the significant thinkers and artists did not disregard the cinema, which lives on the city stories and pictures.

To paraphrase Walter Benjamin, "Then came the film and burst this prison-world asunder by the dynamite of the tenth of a second, so that now, in the midst of its far-flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go traveling. Apollinaire is one of the first thinkers stating that there must be a relationship between cities as the mechanism of the modernity and the cinema. (Türkoğlu, Öztürk, Aymaz; 2004, p.7)

City and cinema are privileged areas where modernity comes into existence and is reflected. However, with the time-setting relation which is the main element of the cinema, the European city model gave its place to a more vigorous metropolitan model in 1920s. Especially after Kracauer and Benjamin, revaluation of this relationship between cinema and city offers an endless variety of modernity through which each one of these megapolises is perceived as a plural modernity group.

Cities which are examined and filmed like Berlin, Cairo, Los Angeles, Istanbul, Paris, Prague are, at the same time, natural tablelands and studio-settings as resources. The films taking the road from these settings also reflect the city sceneries which form the fiction basing on a new reality.

In this way, a promise of happiness for founding a livable and desirable citywhere the world cinema is raised, by crossing the framework of the mysterious relationship between city, memory and history. Apart from the perceptions of Kracauer and Benjamin, the other cinema artists adopt this promise and utopia. (Öztürk, 2008, p.5)

II. PRESENTATION OF THE CITY IN CINEMA

As from 1920's, theme of city became a separate field. Portraits of Paris were manifold and after documentaries, they were used in avangarde cinema and then in fiction. (Öztürk, 2008, p.284)

Cinema has documented the special and detailed moments of the cities from different points of view and will continue to do so. When reinterpreted by the cinema, cities gain different features. Because cinema feeds on the aesthetic concerns of the art.

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Films re-establish the non-existing places. Then how should we refer to the presentation of city in cinema? The presentation of the city is the functioning of the tumultuous urban conditions which often change. Urban memories and visions are re-interpreted by taking into consideration some key settings or moments. The active characters of the city come into prominence in the film art. Both cinema and city are the areas where the world of life can be reimagined. (Öztürk, 2008, p.3)

The cities of the cinema sometimes entertain and sometimes sadden the audience. The audience sometimes, in the mood of carnival, dream of themselves walking in a street lighted up with neon. They sometimes also get lost in the dark suburbs where they normally never want to be. The cities, which the cinema creates, revive the true-life loves, unforgettable deaths in the audience's mind.

Michel Marie: "From the first films until the films of 1990's, the eighty percent of the films had been shot in an urban setting throughout the history of cinema. Cinema is an urban discovery. Born in the Lyon's suburbs, the cinema took its first step in the big boulevards of Paris. As the pictures of Lumierre show many squares and center of the city, these pictures are the witnesses of the then cities." (Türkoğlu, Öztürk, Aymaz, 2004, p.59)

City, as a setting, is a place where the social inequalities are reorganized, in other words, new ones are created. City inholds the richest expressions of the civilizations and reproduces them with new forms. This production appears in a wide spectrum, from commercial relations to social transformation, from performing arts to daily living. In the Greek, Roman and Islamic understandings, city is always referred to as the opposite of barbarity and chaos. City, at the same time, is synonymous with civilization. Cinema, a modern cultural structure, also accompanies the urban civilization. However, if the modern urban setting inholds an elegant life, it also inholds the chaos and barbarity. (Öztürk, 2002, p.11)

According to Robert Park, city is a big picking mechanism infallibly choosing the individuals from the entire population who adapt to living in a special setting best. Cities are the settings turning people into lonely crowds. For this reason, the cities are important picking mechanisms in the modern world or the world which tries to be modern. (Elmacı, www.belgeler.com)

III. CINE-CITY

Deriving from the urban films, Kracauer who put forth a concept of 'cine-city' examined the modernity sights within a sociological framework. Discussing the characters of the modernity through the street and city scenes in a critical method, Kracauer comes up with psychological, sociological, philosophical ideas basing on the form of the film. Establishing his theory as "film as the redemption of the physical reality", Kracauer applied a method which was useful to analyze the social tendencies, ideological hegemonies and psychological characters of the masses through the "codes" in city scenes.

Kracauer's perception of cine-site can also be seen in Godard's films. Cinematographic materials in Godard's films are the aestheticized unity of liveliness of streets and roads and urban complexity.

Many good and bad film examples of the film art were carried out in "cine-sites." New cinematographic sites and metropolises are envisaged in the "cine-sites" established in Paris, New York, Los Angeles, Berlin, Rome and Hollywood.

From time to time, the realistic power of the films shot in studios can leave a more realistic and better impression than that of the ones shot in natural settings. An aesthetics proposition of Apollinaire, the poet of Modern City and Light Era, summarizes the situation: "The reality is moving towards the fiction. The one to create the reality is the fiction." Godard's proposition on this issue is: "As all significant documentary films are built with fiction, the all significant fictional films are built with documentary."

Other than modern "symphonic"urban films, it was also shown with its attractive, fascinating and off-putting features in the works of the artists like Balzac, Dostoyevsky, Dickens, Gogol, Baudelaire and Rimbaud. No matter in what way they are demonstrated, the cities are irreplaceable elements of the other arts. (Öztürk, 2002, p.13-14)

IV. VIEW OF CITY

Kevin Lynch was saying that in 1960's the cities would be challenging places for people and that the urbanites would be urged to prepare "cognitive maps" in the places, the geography, physics and experiences of which were in a process of change and these maps were the most important instruments to survive in the cities. (Süalp, 2004, p.76)

The concept of "cognitive mapping", introduced into the literature by Lynch, signifies that the relationship which the man on the street established with the city to survive and keep living in daily life in the cities changing after 1960's would be possible through a kind of abstract agreement, consensus and adaptability in mind. According to Lefebvre, the setting is produced by the society. (Lefebvre, 1991) The interclass conflicts in this social production determine the form of the production of the setting. The socially produced setting itself

is a dynamic and dialectic density in the activity areas from architecture to urban policies, from environmental problems to land speculations and from cultural production to ideology.

The cities are also the representation areas of this density. The representation of the city enables us to analyze its all segments at philosophical and artistic levels and creates a form of recognition. How we perceive the environment we live in is determined by a multifaceted, multi-related clew extending from economy to technology, from architecture to the music played on the streets, from infrastructure works to ecological balances. (Süalp, 2004, p.91)

In 1982, Ridley Scott's film of Blade Runner took the city out of being a setting and turned it into a composition of dilemmas and queries that we have in daily life and reflected that visually. This film is a prediction for today's world. Because it forms the initial elements of the city for the establishment of separate living environments in the context of social classes. The film begins with an image of a blue eye reflecting the overall view of the city. That the buildings, twinkling like a star in the darkness of the night, are dark and dull colored, factory chimneys leaving the sky in flames, a smoke screen and continuous rain draw a pessimistic future altogether.

While conveying this aspect of the city, Ridley Scott used architectural characters, applied light and shadow tricks and to some extent the computer effects. (Allmer, 2010, p.128) We see a post-industrial society in the city of Blade Runner. All kinds of industrial, manufacturing and city's notable strata were moved from the worn-out, ruined city to the settings where life is more sterile and programmed.

The geography of the city changed, the center of the city disappeared from the surface of the city, and the old city center was left to the lumpen proletarian coming from all over the world. This physical setting is the setting of the human trashes and they live together with the cultural trashes and all the left objects. The street children turning into the evil spirits, buildings, seats, cars, old cinema halls, ethnic music, ethnic restaurants are like the doorstep junks waiting for the junk dealer's passing. (Süalp, 2004, p.79)

In Blade Runner, there is the creation of a virtual and distopian city. Godard's film of Alphaville (1965) has some similarities with Blade Runner (1982). "Blade Runner borrows the style features of Godard's city with endless night, sometimes even the lighting methods, use of music and form of acting." (Türkoğlu, Öztürk, Aymaz, 2004, p.132)

In the film of Metropolis (F.Lang), one can notice the tyrannic and planned, orderly structuring accordingly. The years ahead were extraordinarily envisaged and imagined in the film. The Metropolis shot in 1927, displayed architecture of good life with the city's structure, transportation, traffic, entertainment venues, magnificent buildings, skyscrapers and big gardens. The Metropolis is a nested presentation of the old and the new. The big giant sculptures, overwhelmingly high buildings, embroideries, decorations and minimal living environments in contrast with all these hint the power of leadership. The building of the city was highly inspired by Renaissance, Baroque, Gothic periods.

The concept of the metropolis comes with the dilemmas. The city, where the different and various elements exist together, is actually a center of chaos. (Allmer, 2010, p.111) Kevin Robins, "The urban city is associated with the experience of aggression and violent behavior. Even when this is contained, there is fear and anxiety. Mumford refers to 'the deepened collective anxieties' that characterize urban culture, suggesting that urban life encourages a 'paranoid physical structure'. Urban life is about struggle, aggression, domination, conquest and servitude; the city is the container of 'disruptive internal forces, directed towards ceaseless destruction and extermination.' Urban culture may be seen (in Hobbesian terms) as a constant state of hostility and struggle. Feelings of anxiety and fear are, then, constitutive of urban life." (Robins, 1999, p.214)

V. CITY PORTRAITS: CITIES AS NATURAL DECORATIONS

The film set of Alphaville is the actual Paris of 1965. There is no studio filming. Lemmy Caution travels to Alphaville for a job that he is charged with. One can fully envisage the science fiction city of the future directed by a computer with a tedious sound and the city appears as a rationalism maintained with scientific precisions extending over feeding, traveling, working, sexual life, sheltering and architecture.

Generally, in the urban presentations of French and Italian cinemas, Paris and Rome, in particular, were presented in a glorified way, with their naturalness and in a way of "there and then". In such films as Blade Runner, Alphaville, Escape from New York, the city was presented in a distopian way.

The city portraits were reproduced in 1920's. 'Berlin: Symphony of a Metropolis' (1927) directed by Walter Ruttman, unifying Moscow and Odessa 'Man With a Movie Camera' (1929) directed by Dziga Vertov, 'À propos de Nice' (1930) directed by Jean Vigo are the extraordinary witnesses of the then perception of city.

According to Andre Bazin, the "Bicycle Thieves" (De Sica 1948), a story of a walk through Rome by a father and a son, "Rome, Open City" (Rossellini-1945), another film putting forth the criteria of New Realist Cinema and "The Sweet Life" (Fellini-1960) are the films approaching towards the city of Rome from different points of view. While Rome was a natural decoration of the ones who could not buy a bicycle and were defeated by the life, it was the decoration of unhappy nobles in La Dolce Vita.

The gangster films and musical comedy films in USA; Under the roofs of Paris (1930), July 14 (1933) directed by Rene Clair, Isn't Life a Bitch (1931) and The Crime of Monsieur Lange (1936) directed by Jean Renoir. In this period, the cinema, in fact, undertakes the responsibility of presenting the city.

Although it is traditionally considered that the studio won a victory and the shootings became rare in 1940's and 1950's, there are many opposite examples for this. For example, 'We, The Kids' (1943) directed by Louis Daquin, 'Devil in the Flesh' (1946) directed by Claude Autant-Lara, 'Quey of Goldsmiths' (1947) directed by Henri-Georges Clouzot.

At the end of 1950's, cinema accompanies 'urban revolution'. 'Breathless' (1960) directed by Jean-Luc Godard, 'The 400 Blows' (1959) directed by Francois Truffaut, 'Elevator to the Gallows' (1958) and 'Zazie dans le métro' directed by Louis Malle, 'A Woman Is a Woman' (1961), 'Vivre sa vie' (1962), 'Alphaville' (1965), 'Two or Three Things I Know About Her' (1967) directed by Godard, can be the examples. (Türkoğlu, Öztürk, Aymaz, 2004, p.62)

VI. ISTANBUL: THE CAPITAL OF POETIC FILMS

The films of A Love Tragedy in Istanbul (1923) and In The Streets of Istanbul (1931) directed by Muhsin Ertuğrul presented Istanbul thematically for the first time.

Such films as Tricycle (1962-Lütfi Ö. Akad), Those Awakening in the Dark (1964-Ertem Göreç), Birds of Exile (1964-Halit Refiğ), The Unending Road (1965-Duygu Sağıroğlu), Ah Beautiful Istanbul(1966-Atıf Yılmaz), My Prostitute Love (1968-Lütfi Ö. Akad), Little Ayşe (1959-1971), The Bride (1973-Lütfi Ö. Akad), The Horse (1981-Ali Özgentürk), Distant (2002-Nuri Bilge Ceylan), Tell Me Istanbul (2005-Ümit Ünal, Selim Demirdelen, Kudret Sabancı, Yücel Yolcu, Ömür Atay) depicted the different views of Istanbul and approved the variety of modern life forms in Istanbul.

In other words, cinema offered "cities" and life forms which are quite different from Istanbul. Taking into consideration the whole big modern city, the existence of variety can be understood after all.

Throughout the modernization of Istanbul, new forms of the city like industrialization, migration to the city, housing problem, shanty house, contradictions between center-suburb, cultural shocks, unionization, social/class conflicts, women's gradually becoming more active in both daily and labor lives, disappearance of sense of family, new cultural inclinations, changing awareness and emotions; and social/individual views like increasing alienation recently and people left behind to their "destinies" and "loneliness" were described in the films.

In most films, Istanbul was shown as a door of hope "paved with gold", but as the narration continued, it was ended with disappointments. The films like 'The Horse' of Ali Özgentürk, 'The Bride' of Lütfü Ömer Akad or 'The Birds of Exile' of Halit Refik are the classics representing the modernity/traditionality conflicts and the saddening results in Istanbul. (metropolistanbul.com)

The films, telling the stories of depression in metropolises occurring after 1990, tell us about the people left behind and trying to hold on to the city in any way rather than to cling to the migration from rural to urban itself, such as 'Whistle If You Come Back', 'The Night, Angel and Our Gang', 'The Bandit', 'The Mixed Pizza', 'A Madonna in Laleli', 'Somersault in a Coffin', 'Innocence', 'Cholera Street', 'Big Man, Little Love', 'Offside', 'Hemşo', 'Journey to the Sun, 'Block C'.

As An Example Film:

A MIDNIGHT IN PARIS

"Paris changes! but nothing in my melancholy,
Has moved! New palaces, scaffolding, blocks,
Old suburbs, all for me becomes allegory,
And my dear memories are heavier than rocks."

Baudelaire (Tableaux Parisiens)

The Surreal Table of Woody Allen

Winning the 2012 Golden Globe Awards for Best Screenplay and opening the 64th Cannes Film Festival, *Midnight In Paris* directed by Woody Allen is the story of a young man's deep love for Paris and literature...

Champs Elysees, Eiffel, Louvre, Notre Dame, The Arc de Triomphe... With a long scene of Paris begins the film. Its suburbs, dark streets are the images made with the backgrounds that we do not see. We can say that Midnight in Paris is one of the films in which Woody Allen tells the cities. With both its current state and its state in the 18th and 19th centuries, Paris establishes the decoration of the film.

Leading actors of the film are Owen Wilson, Rachel McAdams, Marion Cotillard, Kathy Bates, Carla Bruni, Adrien Brody. The scenario winning the Golden Globe Award was written by Woody Allen. After saying goodbye to America with his film Hollywood Ending of 2002, Allen shot a series of urban films and fell in love

with these cities. London (Match Point - 2005, Scoop - 2006, You Will Meet A Tall Dark Stranger - 2010), Barcelona (Vicky Cristina Barcelona - 2009) and Paris. His devotion to and love for these cities reveal in every frame. These films are the films that cannot be imagined without the cities where the stories are filmed.

Midnight in Paris is also a film of Paris of today and 1920's. As can be understood from the name of the film, Woody Allen shows Paris of 1920's after midnight. We witness the present time in the daylight.

The story of a family coming from America to Paris for a job is told in the film. The life of a young engaged couple that is changing continuously through the journey is told in Woody Allen style. Planning to get married in autumn, the American couple is passionately in love with Paris. They stress their admiration for this city by saying "this city is unique in the world." While aestheticizing the city, the film also displays a deep love for art and literature.

Gil (Owen Wilson) keeps working on his book in Paris, where he came due to the works of his fiancée Inez's (Rachel Mc Adams) dad. Gil (Owen Wilson), stating that Paris inspires him, is so fascinated by Paris that he plans to settle in this city. However, Inez and her family object to him and think that Gil is a daydreamer. In family meetings, dissensus shows its face. Addiction of Inez's family to luxury and their materialist approaches do not overlap with Gil's approaches and ideals.

When Paul (Micheal Sheen) and his wife join the couple in their Paris tours, Gil begins to feel lonely and he goes away from everybody and tours Paris on his own. Gil's personality characteristics of loving the past, almost living with the past and feeding on this love also in his writings, are pretty different from those of his fiancée's and their friends.

While Paul thinks that "nostalgia is the rejection of the time", Gil often states his admiration for the writers and painters in the past and Gil goes for a long walk by thinking that the streets of Paris would inspire him in the silence of the night, but he gets lost. Meanwhile, he stops in front of an old car and the people inside the car insistently invite him in. After getting into this car, Gil enters another period and takes the opportunity to meet all the artists that he admires.

Gil starts his time travel with listening to "Let's Do It" of Cole Porter in a party that Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald also participate in. He finds a chance to discuss literature with Gertrud Stein. He obtains a promise for an evaluation of his book which is still incomplete. Gil gets lost with Ernest Hemingway in the love adventures of Picasso. He meets Salvador Dali. While having a talk with Luis Bunuel, Man Ray and Dali, Gil tries to explain that he comes from 2000's by saying that "I know that you are surrealists, too. What I tell is ordinary for you, but this all is real..." When bringing his book to Gertrud Stein for his reading, Gil uses the concept of "science fiction" for his book which he wrote in 2000's, from the point of Stein's period and compliments by saying "it is a real science fiction", which is one of the striking dialogues.

This "surrealist" travel offers Gil the world that he wants to live in. To go back to today's modern Paris under the daylight and to spend time with his fiancée and her family is no longer bearable for him.

His fiancée's father hires a detective to follow Gil due to his suspicious behaviors. However, the detective also has to travel in time. When Inez's father goes to the detective's office, he finds out that nobody knows about the detective. He is not as lucky as Gil, though. Because it is not possible to stay wherever you want in time travel and he gets lost in Baroque era.

With a fast running, fluent fiction and a fabulous narration in A Midnight In Paris, Woody Allen enables all art-lover audience to experience the streets of Paris in an imaginably beautiful way. In addition, there occur the sophisticated texts making someone question the "Golden Era": Is the end of the 19th century "Golden Era" or is today's Paris?...

Gil gets stuck between two loves; the life brought by the world of arts and romanticism in 1920 and the realist, materialist life in 2010. He thinks and questions. Reflecting this dilemma, Woody Allen never tells a love story to the audience. Is the "Golden Era" that everybody dreams of in the past? After everything that he experiences in his own "Golden Era", Gil notices that this is an illusion. What Adriana, whom he met in 1920's, dreams of is 1890's, "Belle Époque" (*).

When they go back to Belle Époque, this dialogue between him and Adriana who wants to stay in that era reveals the reality that everybody's "Golden Era" is different from each other:
"Adriana: Let's never go back to 1920's.
Gil: What are you talking about?
A: I think we should stay here. This is the greatest, most beautiful era Paris has ever known.
G: What happened to 1920's? Then... ,Charlestone, Fitzgerald, and Hemingway, I like these people.
A: That's the present. It's dull.
G: Is it dull? It's not the present for me. I'm from 2010.
A: What do you mean?
G: I dropped in on you just the way we dropped in on the 1890's.
A: You did?
G: I wanted to escape my present just like you wanted to escape yours, to a "Golden Age".

A: Surely you don't think 1920's are a golden age?

G: To me it is.

A: But I'm from the twenties and I'm telling you the golden age is the "Belle Époque".

G: Yes but don't you see that to these guys the golden age is the Renaissance. They'd all trade the Belle Époque to paint alongside Michelangelo or Titian. And those two guys probably imagine life was better when Kubla Khan was around. I'm having an insight, a minor one. But that accounts for the anxiety of my dream.

A: What dream?

G: Last night I dreamed, actually had a nightmare that I ran out of antibiotics and then I went to the dentist and there was no novacaine. Do you understand? These people have no antibiotics."

Adriana wants to stay in this era. Gil comes to his senses at this point. He realizes that everybody wants to escape from their era and this is never-ending. Saying that "only if I get rid of my own illusions, I can be a good writer", he turns a brand new page on the concept of artist.

The film underlines the superficial changes in Paris of the related eras, shows us how the dresses of the people, the vehicles they use, the decorations of the places where they go in the nightlife change; displays, at the same time, that the city and the urbanites noodle over the same problems; despite the changes on the surface, the lives of city and urbanites are, in essence, the same.

(*) Belle Époque: It is the period in European history dated from the end of the 19th century to the outbreak of World War I; Beautiful Era.

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