

THE TURKISH SATIRIC COMEDIES IN THE 1980s

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ABSTRACT

THE TURKISH SATIRIC COMEDIES IN THE 1980s

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This thesis is an attempt to analyse the narrative structure of the Turkish satiric comedies that were produced in the 1980s. It focuses on the relation between the narrative structure of the satiric comedies and the socio-political atmosphere of the period. It argues that the satiric comedies aimed to criticize the new right policies and the social transformation in the 1980s through the opposition between the “honourable” hero on the one hand, and the “swindler” figure(s) or the “degenerated order” on the other. The narrative tools and stereotypes were used to represent the decline of such social values as solidarity, collectivism and philanthropy and rise of new ones like individualism, competitiveness and self-reliance. The study also analyzes the transformation of satiric comedies themselves throughout the decade, focusing on the change in the construction of oppositions and conflicts, and the emergence of nostalgia and romanticism as part of their critical discourse.

Keywords: satiric comedies, humour, new right, the honourable, the swindler, the degenerated order, nostalgia.

ÖZ

1980'LER TÜRK SİNEMASINDA HİCİV

Türker, Deniz

Yüksek Lisans, Medya ve Kültürel Çalışmalar

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Bu çalışma 1980'ler Türk sinemasında hiciv tarzında çekilen komedi filmlerinin anlatı yapısını incelemeye yöneliktir. Burada, hiciv tarzındaki komedilerin anlatı yapısıyla dönemin toplumsal ve siyasi atmosferi arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanılmıştır. Çalışmanın iddiası hiciv tarzındaki komedilerin 1980'lerdeki yeni sağ politikalarını ve toplumsal dönüşümü, bir yanda "namuslu" kahraman diğer yanda ise "namussuz" figür(ler) ya da "bozuk düzen" arasında kurduğu karşıtlıklar yoluyla eleştirmeyi amaçladığıdır. Anlatısal araçlar ve basmakalıp tipler dayanımcılık, kolektivizm ve yardımlaşma gibi toplumsal değerlerin yok oluşunu ve bireycilik, rekabetçilik gibi yeni değerlerin yükselişini temsil eder. Bu çalışma ayrıca, karşıtlıkların ve çelişkilerin kuruluşundaki değişime odaklanarak hiciv tarzındaki komedilerin 1980'ler boyunca kendi içlerinde yaşadığı dönüşümü ve eleştirel söylemlerinin bir parçası olarak ortaya çıkan nostalji ve romantizmi inceler.

Anahtar kelimeler: hiciv, komedi, yeni sağ, namuslu, namussuz, bozuk düzen, nostalji.

...to love of my life, Burak Özçetin

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis analyzes the narrative structure of the Turkish satiric comedies produced in the 1980s. It attempts to reveal their common ideological perspective and to delineate the ways in which comedy as a genre underwent changes in this period. The argument of this study is that the satiric comedies of the 1980s represent a critical perspective towards the transformation of the society in the social, political, economical and cultural spheres. It argues that the satiric films employ a set of common narrative tools to build their perspective. Most significant among them is a set of oppositions between the “honourable” hero on the one hand and the “swindler” figures and “degenerated order” on the other. I argue that these oppositions are new to Turkish comedy cinema and resulted in the production of new stereotypes, not unrelated to the conventional Yeşilçam binary oppositions. A third structure, namely the “parody of degeneration” emerges as another narrative set, in which the story does not include major oppositions among the chief characters. The thesis claims that these narrative tools are used to represent the decline of such social values as solidarity, collectivism and philanthropy and rise of new ones like individualism, competitiveness and self-reliance in the 1980s. These new stereotypes, namely the “honourable” and the “swindler” provide the basic tools for cinematic representation of the wronged segments of the society and a new type of individual adapted the rising values of the new right. The critical perspective adopted by the satiric comedies also enunciates a nostalgic and romantic discourse for a ‘lost’ world, with all its virtues and

values. I argue that such a position is also new for the Turkish cinema and interrelated with its critical position towards new right ideology and policies.

The 1980s was a period in which Turkish society experienced a great transformation in social, political, economic and cultural spheres. This period is also labelled by many cinema writers as the death of Yeşilçam. The film production decreased at a great deal accompanied with a decrease in the box office rates and audience interest. It was even hard for a Turkish film to be shown on movie theatres in the 1980s. There were some examples continuing the Yeşilçam tradition in the early years of the decade such as melodramatic arabesk and adventure-detective films and comedies. Some of the comedy films even represent a hybrid characteristic oscillating between popular Yeşilçam comedy and satire. However, what characterized the Turkish cinema of the 1980s is a new tendency. Film-makers came to deal with private, individual issues, featuring psychologically devastated or confused characters lost in the depths of self-criticism and judgment. This common position obviously affected Turkish comedy cinema and, in a sense, gave way to the emergence of a satiric comedy, with somewhat similar dark, complex characters, distressed by the existing social, political, economical and cultural atmosphere.

For the analysis of the transformation of Turkish comedy cinema in the 1980s in relation to the socio-political atmosphere of the 1980s, 22 films are selected, the list of which can be found in the Appendix. The movies selected for analysis are mainly of satirical type, and pose a critical perspective towards the existing social order of the 1980s. My analysis covers almost all the satiric comedies of the period and excludes the other comedies which can be considered as a continuum of Yeşilçam cinema like family comedies and Kemal Sunal comedies, featuring his famous stock character Şaban. Since there are few examples of satiric comedies throughout the decade, and they display many differences among each other, I tried not to exclude any one of them, even though some of them are

not examined as deep as the others. But I elaborate on the most outstanding examples which display the common characteristics in terms of basic oppositions and stereotypes and established relatively more direct links, references and criticism to the new right policies, since some comedies are in between popular Yeşilçam comedy and satire. The ambiguous character of the Turkish cinema in general in the 1980s is also valid for the satirical comedies; and thus it is hard to make clear-cut distinctions among them or neatly classify them under particular categories. Therefore, I mainly try to figure out the basic tendencies and common elements between them, by a textual reading and interpretation of the satiric comedies of the 1980s. Yet, it should be noted that my study does not cover such aspects of the comedies like visual regimes nor will it include their reception by the audience.

As I mentioned above, the satiric comedies of the 1980s display a new tendency for the Turkish cinema, different from popular Yeşilçam comedy. First of all, these films cannot be regarded as popular comedies, which mainly derive from their critical and satiric character. Yeşilçam comedy displayed grotesque characters as jokes on lower bodily stratum and sexuality, frequent usage of profanities and oaths, jokes on the clumsiness and awkwardness of the naive, simple-minded fool. However, satiric humour bases itself on a particular aim, which is criticism. Contrary to the explicit inversions and transgressions of grotesque laughter, satire criticizes in a more subtle and arrogant way. There are many forms satire can take, or different humour types satire can use.¹ Nevo (1963: 332) defines how mere comedy turns into satire:

¹ Irony, parody, wit, sarcasm, cynicism and sardonic could be mentioned among them. Even though irony is not satire in itself, it tends to be regarded as a central mechanism of satire; that is to say, irony can be employed for satirical purposes (Simpson, 2003: 52). Irony is in fact a kind of inversion, but a subtle, delicate, and polite one contrary to carnivalesque laughter. Yet, it is still subversive and disturbing for its target, especially when employed for satirical purposes. Melancholia and sadness is also another common characteristic between satire and irony. Parody is essentially mimicry, referring to another text by exaggeration and exploitation. Wit is a shocking, unexpected humour, which surprises the audience “with a neat (...) stroke” (Pollard, 1973: 66). Sarcasm could be defined as a “cruder” version of irony and mostly verbal. Pollard (1973: 69-70) further

(...) if the dynamite of human nature –the irrational, the libidinous, the egoistic, the “ugly”, which is comedy’s subject matter- is regarded with tolerance, even with the respect of accorded to a vital energy, a life force, the result is Aristophanic or Rabelaisian comedy, the comedy of licence from inhibition, and the restoration of balance or order. If, however, this original human stuff is regarded with anger or contempt, if it is called folly or vice, and so chastised, with greater or less severity, then the comedy has become satire, and a great proportion of the world’s comic drama is accounted for.

Satire presupposes an already-knowledgeable audience capable of understanding the criticism it makes. As Sanders (2001: 269) emphasizes, satiric texts have been mainly produced by intellectuals and for a cultivated audience who could grasp the wit. The expectation of a satiric text from its audience is primarily to convince them in the validity of his claim. In fact, comic texts in general differ from tragic and melodramatic texts in the sense that while the former “acknowledges the presence of the reader/viewer”, the latter “tends to hide their artifice in order to involve the audience emotionally” (Horton, 1991: 9). Behind criticism what a satiric text offers is that the criticized occasion is not identical with an ideal, desired one. Therefore, a satiric text has a claim to be cognizant of ‘what is ought to be’. In this process of conviction, one particular characteristic of satire is “its own obliquely critical angle and (...) distorting mirror” (Pollard, 1973: 7). That is to say, to reveal the hypocrisy of the criticized target, a satiric text exaggerates and deflates, even exploits the distance between ‘what is’ and ‘what ought to be’, from its perspective. In comic texts, “the stereotypical characters [are] positioned according to the needs of the punch line” (Horton, 1991: 10). Therefore, the characters of a satiric text, say a movie for our case, are specially designed characters to serve the satiric aim of the text. As Pollard (1973: 54) states:

defines cynicism and sardonic as, “The cynic’s criticisms are made against the background of hollow laughter; the sardonic comment is too pessimistic to accept even hollow laughter. The speaker may laugh, but his will be a lonely and embittered delight. (...) The sardonic would rather weep than laugh. (...) the sardonic is on the edge of weeping because it is on the edge of uncontrollable anger. That is why its laugh is so bitter”.

The satiric character can possess only a limited independence. More than most fictional characters he is the creature of his maker. No matter what he is in himself, he always remains the creature of his master's satiric intention. The satiric position is defined early in a work and the character serves to illustrate it. He does not become; he is.

The first and foremost challenge this thesis has encountered is the inadequacy of relevant Turkish cinema literature, especially on comedy. Even though comedy has been one of the two most popular genres alongside with melodrama in Turkish cinema, even still popular on TV, there are so few scholarly studies on Turkish comedies. Like melodrama, Yeşilçam comedy is usually perceived in pejorative terms for being popular and commercial and not found worthwhile to be studied on. As a matter of fact, Horton (1991: 2) argues that comedy as a genre has always been seen inferior to other genres in Western culture and escaped close scrutiny. For him, "one simple reason [is]: the comic is enjoyable. Why risk destroying pleasure?" The satirical comedies of the 1980s, even though they could not be defined as 'popular comedy cinema', shared this fate with Yeşilçam comedies and were not handled specifically by academic study. Esen's (2000) and Dorsay's (1995) studies on the Turkish cinema in the 1980s provide a general evaluation of the period. However, there are no specific analyses in terms of the transformation of the comedy in the 1980s, except Scognamillo's (2005) biographic work on Şener Şen, which partly elaborates the transformation of Turkish comedy cinema in terms of Şener Şen's films.

I ask three major questions in this thesis: Why did the Turkish cinema experience a transformation regarding its subjects and structure in the 1980s? What is the location of satiric comedies of the 1980s in the general history of the genre in Turkey? How did satiric comedies represent the traumas and conflicts created by the social transformation led by new right ideology and policies in the 1980s? Under these three basic questions there will be a number of minor questions such as: What are the relations

between satiric comedies of the 1980s and Yeşilçam comedy in terms of narrative tools, stereotypes, characters and subjects? What is the peculiarity of satiric comedies compared to the previous period of Yeşilçam comedy? What are the basic dynamics and elements of social, political, economical and ideological transformation that took place in the 1980s? How is the cultural arena restructured, based on which representations? What are the 'rising values' of the new right discourse? What are the specific narrative tools, such as stereotypes and binary oppositions, did satiric comedies of the 1980s use to represent the existing social relations and atmosphere of the 1980s? Is it possible to define the very characteristics of the stereotypes as satiric? Why did the satirical comedies of the 1980s used oppositions between the "honourable" and the "swindler" so often? How did the oppositions transformed during the decade and what are the basic dynamics of this transformation? Why did a sense of nostalgia emerged in the satiric comedies of the 1980s? How did this nostalgic gaze perceive and create the past? What is the relation between the nostalgic gaze in the satiric comedies and Turkey' cultural climate in the 1980s?

In order to answer these questions, this study begins with a presentation of the history of Turkish popular comedy cinema and its basic characteristics. In this part, my main aim is to analyse the historical background of the satiric comedies of the 1980s, namely Yeşilçam comedies to understand the peculiarities of the satiric comedies of the 1980s and specific relations in terms of regimes of signification and ideological representations between them and Yeşilçam comedies. After giving a brief history of Turkish cinema until 1960, I move on to the social and political history of the period between 1960 and 1980. In order to understand the regimes of signification and representation of Yeşilçam cinema in general it is crucial to give such a brief summary. Then, I try to delineate the basic characteristics of Yeşilçam cinema regarding genres, plots, characters and stereotypes. The last part comprises the location of

comedy within Yeşilçam and its relations with the conventional narrative tools of Yeşilçam, and the socio-political climate of the period.

In the third chapter, the social, political and cultural atmosphere in the 1980s is mentioned briefly to sketch the material and symbolic transformation of the society. The traumas and conflicts are delineated in order to analyse the transformation of Turkish cinema in general, in terms of its narrative structure, subjects and characters. In this chapter I argue that the transformation of Turkish cinema emanated from a change in the socio-ideological paradigm. Since such a paradigm shift in a way resulted in the emergence of satiric comedies, a detailed analysis of the 1980s is crucial to grasp the peculiarity of the satiric comedy.

In the last chapter, I try to develop an interpretation and analysis of the basic narrative tools of the satiric comedies of the 1980s. In this part, I focus on three different narrative structures of which constitute the basic framework of the satiric comedies in general. While analysing these oppositions, I also try to draw a line of transformation in the position of these oppositions through the construction of the narrative, parallel to the establishment of the new right policies and ideology in the society. Also nostalgia and romanticism are delineated as new tendencies in Turkish cinema, and analysed through their specific articulations with the social atmosphere and their maps of imagination. Finally I try to show the peculiarity of the satiric comedies of the 1980s as a new-sub-genre in Turkish comedy cinema by comparing and contrasting with Yeşilçam comedy in terms of the construction of the narrative, characters, plots, and social imagery.

CHAPTER II

YEŞİLÇAM COMEDY IN ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This chapter seeks to understand the historical background of the satiric comedies of the 1980s in Turkish cinema. It is obvious that the comedy of the 1980s is a new tendency for Turkish cinema in general. However, Turkish comedy cinema's golden years were the period of Yeşilçam, between 1960 and 1980. Therefore, it is mostly necessary to give a brief information and analysis of Yeşilçam comedy until the 1980s, to understand the peculiarities of the satiric comedies of the 1980s and the specific articulations and relations between them and Yeşilçam comedies.

To make the above analysis, I will try to say a few words on the Turkish cinema until the 1960s. Then, I will give a socio-political history of the period between 1960 and 1980. Such a historical background will provide a framework to understand the basic characteristics, tendencies and genres of Yeşilçam. In this part, my main aim will be to examine characteristics and tools of Yeşilçam cinema in general. Finally, I will move on to the Yeşilçam comedies, historicizing the genre, determining the basic sub-genres, sketching out ideological representations and regimes of signification considering the socio-political atmosphere of the period.

2. 1) A Brief History of the Yeşilçam Cinema

2. 1. 1) Turkish Cinema till the 1960s:

Scognamillo (1998: 15-17) claims that even though it is possible to specify a date for the first public film shows in other countries, this is not the case for Turkey. Cinema first entered the Ottoman Palace, most probably in the late 1896 or early 1887 and first established cinema salon was opened after the proclamation of the Second Constitution in 1908. From this time until 1922 Turkish cinema did not go further from a few films, most of which were made for the army (Özön, 1968: 13-16). The next seventeen years (1922-1939) were also not much of a progress for Turkish cinema, because it was totally dominated by Muhsin Ertuğrul and *Darülbedayi* (İstanbul City Theatre), which was the only subsidized theatre. In other words, theatre was dominant on cinema in that period. According to Özön (1968: 18), none of Ertuğrul's films were more than "filmed theatre plays". During the period, German and French vaudevilles were adapted to cinema by only changing the names.

The following period between 1939 and 1950 is defined by the cinema writers as "Transition Period" (Özön, 1968: 21). Scognamillo (1998: 107) defines this period as "the years when cinema was open to everyone, every enthusiasm". However, censorship mechanism started to be implemented in this period.² Despite censorship, wartime conditions and the impact of previous period of theatre, Turkish cinema managed to produce first examples of present cinema genres: village film, police film, War of Independence film, historical film, drama, melodrama, and comedy (Özön, 1968: 20).

² In 1939, a censorship law was enacted. This regulation, called "Regulation on the Control of Films and Film Scenarios", lasted for 38 years with some amendments until the enactment of a new censorship regulation in 1977.

The next decade (1950-1960), which is known as the “Period of Film-makers”, is characterized by an effort to form a cinematographic language apart from the impact of theatre (Özön, 1968: 23-24). Foremost directors of Turkish cinema produced their first films in the 1950s. In addition to the change in the form of cinema language, directors also started to deal with social issues and problems.³ Yet, Scognamillo (1998: 131) argues that even though the period between 1949 and 1959 is considered to be the beginning of ‘film-making’ and first genuine examples of Turkish cinema were produced in this period, the real transition to cinema in terms of essence, form and narration took place in the 1960s. These were the years in which film production doubled, even tripled compared to the previous years. The 1960s are known as the golden years of Yeşilçam, with highest numbers of film production and box office rates. To understand the success of Turkish cinema in the 1960s and early 1970s and its transformation through the 1980s, we need to have a look at the socio-political conditions of the period. Then, Turkish cinema between 1960 and 1980, concerning its relation with the socio-political atmosphere, will be analysed.

2. 1. 2. Socio-Political Atmosphere between 1960 and 1980

The social and political transformation in the 1960s started with the military intervention in 27 May 1960. After the military intervention, the new constitution was formed in 1961. It guaranteed many democratic rights such as the freedom of the press, right to strike and union rights, also envisaging a new institutional structure that would secure those rights. On the other hand, the newly established state institutions, like SPO (State Planning Organization) were designed to formulate and implement economic policies,

³ Lütfü Ö. Akad and Metin Erksan could be mentioned as the first social-realist directors of Turkish cinema. They are considered as great contributors to the formation of a Turkish cinema. For example, Özön (1968: 25) defines Akad in the following words: “Akad, who has been influenced by American gangster movies in terms techniques; and by French “poetic realism” and “film noir” in terms of theme, manner and impression, has re-expressed those influences in a total indigenous way”. Atif Yılmaz, Osman Seden, and Memduh Ün are other names who produced their first films in this period and became most important directors of Turkish cinema afterwards.

which would support industrialists and workers at the same time. Import substitution industrialization economic policy resulted in a high rate of economic growth and industrialization in the 1960s. As a matter of fact, there was a relative consensus among social classes. This relative consensus resulted in the consolidation of a quite stable state form, continuation of the parliamentary regime and regulation of the economy (Keyder, 1999: 198-199).

On the other hand, in the beginning of the 1960s, with mechanization of agriculture, migration from rural areas to cities hastened. Since this experience started in the 1950s, the new settlements called '*gecekondu* districts' in the outer layers of the city became even more established in the 1960s. *Gecekondu*s were built on public lands by the new comers of the city to provide accommodation; yet, during the time of elections in the 1960s, governments issued title deeds of *gecekondu*s to the inhabitants. Keyder (1999: 222-223) argues that issuing title deeds was a result of the inclusion policy which was an inseparable part of industrialization strategy. However, *gecekondu*s were always under the risk of demolition because it took time for a *gecekondu* district to become settled and effective as a pressure group.

As a matter of fact, *gecekondu* issue was an important part of the Turkish social panorama in the 1960s. In time, they become an important part of the urban and economic structure. Constituting cheap labor force, the *gecekondu* people started to be preferred by the capital and the factory owners. Some of the factory owners constructed and supported *gecekondu* districts around their factories (Acar, 1988: 1996). So, in line with the above argument, it can be argued that there was a relative consensus between the working class, including the migrants and capital owners and state on the basis of the relatively stable economic conditions and growth in the country. However, this relatively stable atmosphere did not last long. Through the end of the 1960s, economic growth slowed down, resulting in a decrease in the real incomes of the working classes. On the other hand, Güllalp (1993:

37) argues that the increasing domination of the industrial bourgeoisie made labour-capital conflict more apparent and intense. In 12 March 1971, another military intervention took place. Military sent a memorandum to the government, asking for a stronger government which would end the “anarchy” and implement Kemalist reforms. Otherwise, the military would take the power (Zürcher, 1998: 375).⁴

The immediate justification of the intervention was the chaotic atmosphere in the country due to the rising student and labour movements. As a matter of fact, martial law was declared just after the intervention. All these circumstances increased the unrest in the country, in addition to the unstable economic conditions. As much as the social conditions and relations became harder and tense, the government and army become more repressive (Gülalp, 1993: 38). To understand the rising labor and student movements and the general unrest in the country, we have to analyse the ideological crystallization in the 1960s and 1970s. Keyder (1999: 268) argues that since economic development and import substitution policy was in the central to the centre-right and centre-left parties’ discourses, such an ideological intersection resulted in a radicalization in both left and right sides of the political spectrum. Furthermore, country was experiencing a rapid industrialization and development. By this means, working classes expanded and became stronger. Rural migrants were also becoming a part of the working class, at the same time experiencing a kind of trauma because of the effort to get a grasp on the city. Traditional bonds were dissolving due to the norms of the city. So, another facet of the tension between the classes was the restlessness of the *gecekondü* districts, as a potential for radical political movements.

⁴ This intervention was not like 27 May intervention in the sense that army did not dissolve the parliament. However, the government resigned and a new one formed from a group of technocrats backed by the army.

In such an atmosphere, the centre-right and centre-left parties paid great effort to mobilize the masses, which were prone to radicalization, through their discourses. After 12 March intervention, Ecevit became the head of the Republican People's Party (RPP) and adapted a new understanding and discourse, based on the idea of the "centre of the left".⁵ It can be said that this new discourse became relatively successful since Ecevit's RPP managed to take the highest percentage of votes in the 1973 elections (Zürcher, 1998: 380). On the other hand, the Justice Party (JP), which claimed to be heir of the Democrat Party (DP), also had a populist discourse, but with a different tone than Ecevit. Just like the DP, they based their discourse on an anti-elitist and anti-bureaucratic stance (Keyder, 1999: 275). However, both of the major parties of the 1970s could not be able to be hegemonic. In addition to the emergence of radical left and right political movements, break-out of the economic crisis through the end of the 1970s resulted in an organic crisis in the country.

The narrative structure and meaning maps of Yeşilçam surely was formed on these socio-political dynamics in the 1960s and 1970s. Social and political tensions, class conflicts and traumatic process of modernization was reflected and represented in both Yeşilçam comedies and melodramas. The highly politicized atmosphere gave rise to a new political cinema in the late 1970s. This new tendency also affected the popular cinema and its genres. So the eve of the 12 September military intervention in Turkish cinema was a politicization, which would also be understood as the first traces of political satire in Turkish comedy in the 1980s.

⁵ His discourse was mainly constructed upon populism. He defined the whole society in terms of the "people" and "dominant forces". In this sense, he claimed to be leader of the "people" against the dominant forces and their repression. For a thorough analysis of Ecevit's populism in the 1970s, see Erdoğan (1998b).

2. 1. 3. Turkish Cinema between 1960 and 1980: The Period of Yeşilçam

The period between 1963 and 1980 is defined as “The Period of New Turkish cinema” (Onaran, 1999: 102). The influence of theatre was finally eliminated and a genuine cinematographic language emerged. Furthermore, the number of films increased to its highest point per annum in the beginning of the 1960s.⁶ The annual number of films produced exceeded two hundred, which was under a hundred before 1960. The decrease in the number of foreign movies that entered the country was another factor in the increase of Turkish films produced. Yet, technical possibilities did not improve in the same amount. Therefore, such an unbalanced production resulted in a depression in the sector. And because of the “star system”, nearly half of the film costs were paid to the actors and actresses most of the time. Increasing costs made the film producers to be more and more dominant in the film-making process and film-makers to be more and more dependent on the usurers (Özön, 1968: 34-35).

Despite of all these problems and inadequacies, the 1960s were also the ‘golden years’ of Yeşilçam and the period in which Turkish cinema started to build a kind of authentic language and form. That is to say, the mainstream subjects and genres appeared and the characteristics of popular cinema started to emerge. On the other hand, there was a group of intellectuals gathered around Turkish Cinémathèque and a cinema periodical called *Yeni Sinema* (New Cinema) who claimed that a national Turkish cinema could only be built through “a new cinema”, apart from Yeşilçam and its exploitative order since Yeşilçam could not be the source of a national Turkish cinema. According to them, Yeşilçam was nothing but a bad copy of Hollywood cinema. In order to evoke a discussion on the subject of national cinema and create a new cinema language, Turkish

⁶ Yet, according to Özön (1995: 35), this boom was nothing more than “a looting of foreign films, old Turkish films, classics, best sellers; religious and sexual exploitation; and Turkish versions of Hong Kong karate films and porns”.

Cinémathèque started to show important examples from European cinema and *Yeni Sinema* published researches on cinema, interviews with famous European directors and translations of theoretical essays on cinema. On the other hand, a group of Turkish directors led by Halit Refiğ, asserted that Turkish cinema originated from the Turkish people, so it has to be produced for them. Therefore, in their point of view, a national Turkish cinema could only be built on and by Yeşilçam. A national cinema should be born out of the beliefs, traditions and customs of the Turkish society, which could not be compatible with the Western forms promoted by Turkish Cinémathèque and *Yeni Sinema* (Erdoğan, 1995: 184). Therefore, Refiğ and the other directors focused on social problems, conflicts and folkloric elements in this period (Yaylagül, 2004: 235). Memduh Ün, Atif Yılmaz, Metin Erksan, Lütfi Akad, Duygu Sağıroğlu, Alp Zeki Heper, Ertem Eğilmez and Osman Seden were among these directors. I will try to deal with some of these directors separately because they continued to produce films (especially comedy) in the 1980s –even in the 1990s- and their positions and approaches to Turkish cinema and Yeşilçam is of great importance to understand their films that were produced in the 1980s.

Atif Yılmaz (Batıbeki) was among the most productive directors of Turkish cinema. He directed his first film in 1952, *Kanlı Feryat* (Özgüç, 2003: 232). He continued directing films until he died in 2006. He has a very rich filmography from melodramas, historical and folkloric films, village films, gangster films, adventure and costumed films, village and city comedies to women's films. In the period between 1960 and 1970, Yılmaz mostly produced historical and folkloric films and melodramas⁷, and from 1970 to 1980, he started to produce comedy films more⁸. In the 1980s, Atif Yılmaz

⁷ Some of them are (*Cengiz Han'ın Hazineleeri* (1962), *Muradın Türküüsü* (1965), *Ah Güzel İstanbul* (1966), *Harun Reşid'in Gözdesi* (1967), *Koroğlu* (1968), *Menekşe Gözler* (1969).

⁸ (*Darıldın mı Cicim Bana* (1970), *Güllü* (1971), *Gelinlik Kızlar* (1972), *Güllü Geliyor Güllü* (1973), *Salako* (1974), *Hasip ile Nasip* (1976), *İbo ile Gülüşah* (1977), *Kibar Feyzo*, *Köşeyi Dönen Adam* (1978), *Ne Olacak Şimdi* (1979). Among these comedies, *Salako* is of particular importance because it can be defined as one of the earlier examples of satire in

continued to direct comedy films in a satirical tone, focusing on the socio-economic problems of the society.

Memduh Ün is another director who directed mainly historical films and melodramas between 1960 and 1980. He also directed some melodramas with children heroes (*Ayşecik* (1960), *Sezercik Aslan Parçası* (1972)). In those films, the child hero is portrayed as a saviour who protects and saves his/her family from break-up, loved by the people of the neighbourhood, never gives up and goes beyond his/her capabilities. In general, all the chief characters of his films are common, lower class people; they become trapped in the rough mechanism of the system (Scognamillo, 1998: 282; 285). In the 1980s, Ün mainly directed comedy films, all of them with Kemal Sunal.

Another important director of the period between 1960 and 1980 was Ertem Eğilmez. Although he has started film making with a comedy⁹, he directed mostly melodramas until the 1970s. In 1972, he made *Sev Kardeşim* and “passed to the worlds of common people, like actual events, friendships, love and everyday struggles of life” (Özgüç, 2003: 63). From that time on, he produced many comedy films with a crowded crew of famous actors and actresses, which became very popular in the 1970s. His comedy films and style started to be called as *Arzu Film Ekolü* (Arzu Film School)¹⁰. As a part of the circle around Halit Refiğ and a defender of Yeşilçam cinema, Eğilmez always produced popular films and, as Özgüç (2003: 64) argues, had a negative stand against the Turkish cinema intellectuals who despised Yeşilçam. According to Eğilmez, since cinema is the art of the people, Turkish cinema should tell Turkish stories in an entertaining, educational manner (Kaya Mutlu, 2001b: 207). Furthermore,

Turkish comedy cinema. “Atif Yılmaz thoroughly satirizes the heroic bandit image by Salako” (Scognamillo, 1998: 244).

⁹ He directed his first film in 1964, a comedy in which Öztürk Serengil playing the chief character (*Fatoş'un Fendi Tayfur'u Yendi*).

¹⁰ I will analyze and try to locate Ertem Eğilmez and *Arzu Film Ekolü* within the history of Turkish comedy cinema in the following part.

he could be considered as the teacher of many famous scenario writers, directors, actors and actresses in Turkish cinema, like Kemal Sunal, Tarık Akan, Şener Şen, İlyas Salman, Yavuz Turgul and Kartal Tibet. Especially Kartal Tibet¹¹ and Yavuz Turgul are important figures because they became outstanding directors of Turkish comedy cinema in the 1980s. Since they were a part of the circle around Ertem Eğilmez, known as *Arzu Film Ekolü*, they were all educated in this circle, by Ertem Eğilmez and adapted his understanding of popular comedy. They even worked together in some films. For example, Yavuz Turgul wrote the scenarios of *Tosun Paşa* and *Sultan*, directed by Kartal Tibet respectively in 1976 and 1978. Especially Kartal Tibet became known with his comedies in the 1980s. His films featuring Kemal Sunal made him one of the most important directors of Turkish comedy cinema (Özgüç, 2003: 205-206).¹² Başar Sabuncu was a scenario writer and worked with Atıf Yılmaz, Ertem Eğilmez and Kartal Tibet in comedy films. Since he entered cinema in the late 1970s, he produced his scenarios and films in the 1980s.¹³

Most of these directors became famous with their melodramatic films. Even though melodrama and comedy were the prevailing genres in that period, it was melodrama which characterized the golden years of Yeşilçam, even sneaking into the comedy films and resulting in a permeable borderline between the genres. In both genres, the characters do not have a psychological dimension so they do not find themselves in inner conflicts. Everything seems to be happening in a transcendental order, personal initiatives can not change anything. What characterize melodramas are

¹¹ Kartal Tibet started Turkish cinema as an actor. He was a famous actor in the 1960s and 1970s. He performed as the male juvenile lead in many melodramas and also in historical adventure films. Through the end of the 1970s, he started to direct his own films.

¹² He also directed one of the *Hababam Sınıfı* series, *Hababam Sınıfı Dokuz Doğuruyor* in 1978.

¹³ He wrote the scenarios of social/satiric comedies like *Talihli Amele* (Atıf Yılmaz-1980), *Şalvar Davası* (Kartal Tibet-1983), *Namuslu* (Ertem Eğilmez-1984), and his own films *Çıplak Vatandaş* (1985) and *Zengin Mutfağı* (1988).

mainly the coincidences. The coincidences determine the fate of the characters and the order of things. Erdoğan (1995: 187) argues that because of this characteristic, they were more proper for Yeşilçam which prefers a traditional narration posited by folk tale-like stories instead of analyzing conflicts, transformations and psychologies of characters. In that sense, a major criticism against melodramas is their irrational line of thought and incompatibility with real life. In line with the above argument on Turkish national cinema, melodramas were despised and neglected since they were seen as nothing but a cheap and coarse imitation of the Hollywood cinema. However, such an approach is inadequate and shallow in the sense that it offers no analytical tool for us to understand their narrative structure, their relations with socio-political dynamics of the 1960s and 1970s and their own imagination. Popular cinema always builds an imagined world for the audience but it never loses its touch with reality; it mediates the reality and reproduces it (Abisel, 2005: 203). Since it is important for us to understand its relation with comedy and specific transformation after 1980 to sketch a panorama of the 1980s Turkish cinema, it would be useful to have a brief look at melodrama of the 1960s and 1970s.

Narrative simplicity is the basic characteristic of Yeşilçam melodramas. First of all, the audience is clarified about all the chief and secondary characters at the beginning of the film. "It is affirmed at the beginning of the film if a character is good or evil, rich or poor, cultivated or lowbrow. In addition, the goodness or the evilness of the character is fixed throughout the film, even though there may be some changes in his/her economic, social and cultural conditions. By this means, any confusion about the audience's judgment concerning the character is impeded." (Kaya Mutlu, 2001a: 111). The audience is also familiar with the narrative. Any surprise endings are unlikely in Yeşilçam melodramas. The plot is similar in general. The conflict is established upon a love affair between a man and a woman. They are meant to be with each other. The story is based upon this love affair; their break-up and reunification. In some cases, two lovers

cannot be together because one of them dies. This is an 'unhappy' ending and makes the other character to be "doomed to suffer an endless misery for the rest of his/her life" (Yeşil, 2004: 45).

In addition to the simplicity of the narrative, similar love stories and coincidental fates of the characters in melodramas, there is "the dominance of the vocal narrative" (Yeşil, 2004: 50). Any kind of emotional drive and sequence of events is expressed through dialogues. These dialogues clearly show the audience how the characters feel themselves and what they think in any particular situation. So the audience do not have to make any reasoning or inference (Kaya Mutlu, 2001b: 114). The characters sometimes talk to each other to explain the events or their state of mind; sometimes the audience hear their inner voice. However, this is different from a monologue of a character, which appears as self-criticism or reckoning in the sense that this inner voice is clearly addressing the audience and nothing more than an effort of explanation to prevent any conflict or problem in the audience's mind.

In terms of binary oppositions, melodramas use stereotypes to reinforce the narrative and the process of identification. Yeşil (2004: 56) defines stereotype as "a simplified and standardized conception or image invested with special meaning and held in common by members of a group". Leading male and female characters of the melodramas are always honourable, descent, honest and virtuous figures. In addition, while female character is always beautiful, pure and submissive, male character is always handsome and strong. If they are rich, they never care about money or material wealth in general. On the other hand, bad characters are always dishonest, evil, insincere and self-seeking. They may be good-looking or ugly. If they are good-looking, they use this to seduce the good characters. And if they are rich, they also use their money to manipulate the good characters and win them over. In such a world of clear-cut borders between

the good and the evil, backed up by physical beauty, identification process is very unproblematic and neat.

Narrative characteristics of Yeşilçam melodramas were based upon a set of meanings, a particular map of imagination. This imaginary world, mediated the social reality of the period through particular representations and significations. As I mentioned in the previous part, the period between 1960 and 1980 is characterized by the increasing class conflicts, migration to cities and social tensions caused by these processes. On the other hand, these were also the years of populist discourse in both left and right political parties. As a popular cultural product, cinema of course responded to that social dynamics and reflected and reproduced them in its own language in rather conflicting and complex manner. The maps of imagination and forms of representation of melodramas leaked into every genre in Turkish cinema, as well as comedy, and provided a reference point. Therefore, we have to analyze the particular language of Turkish melodramas to understand the popular imaginary of Turkish cinema in general.

Industrialization, class conflicts, migration, dissolution of traditional bonds and values were all articulated to the language of Turkish cinema. As a result of such a rapid economic development and modernization, Turkish society was experiencing a kind of trauma in locating and adapting themselves in this process. Since Turkish national identity was constructed upon a struggle and war against West and yet, still due to the Western codes of civilization, Yeşilçam also articulated this conflict with the phenomena of migration and social classes. Erdoğan (2001: 223) defines the reflection of this particular articulation in Yeşilçam in terms of the representation of upper and lower classes. In general, those 'rich' and 'poor' characters will become the symbol of Yeşilçam in its golden years and first emerged in cinema in the late 1950s when migration, industrialization processes took advance. While the upper classes represent Western values and norms, the urban lower classes and rural people established a

suspicious relation with them. In this sense, mainly in melodramas, the love affair between a rich man who adopted western values and a poor or a peasant girl became the typical subject in Yeşilçam. Modernity or western life style was presented as something to be achieved but in need of healing, even rescuing intervention of the values of the lower classes for preventing degeneration. In such a schema, non-Turkish, especially the non-Muslim identities were presented as the agents of modernization and westernization. They became 'educators' of the girl, who is a peasant or come from the lower class, and try to teach her dancing, walking, eating, in general, etiquette in order to make her fit to the bourgeois way of life. Yet, they were usually, snob, arrogant and caricaturized figures (Erdoğan, 2001: 223). Maktav (2001: 164) explains the figure of the 'poor girl' through Yeşilçam's targeting at the women audience in the 1960s. It was easier for women to identify themselves with the poor girl in the film. Furthermore, the image of the poor and subordinate girl is much more convenient with the dominant patriarchal ideology; if the poor girl could be able to keep her innocence and chastity, she would eventually be saved by the rich/powerful man.

Yet, the relations and conflicts between the 'Western' upper classes and 'Anatolian' lower classes do not lead to a class conflict in Yeşilçam films. In other words, the lives of rich and poor people were represented as personal experiences and were not related to a social or economical background. In the wider social picture behind those films, the desire to become rich was always instigated, class mobility was always possible, and the conflict between the rich and the poor would always lead to a peaceful consolidation. Maktav (2001: 164) argues that since the social atmosphere behind Yeşilçam was an industrializing and modernizing country, and in which cities were still promising for the lower or rural classes to achieve greater living standards and factories were the only symbols of wealth.

These binary oppositions and stereotypes representing the existing social relations and conflicts were characterizing golden years of Yeşilçam. In this period, Turkish cinema produced highest rate of films per annum with nearly highest box office rates. However, this period did not last long due to the crisis of the cinema sector in the late 1970s, as part of the general economic crisis in the country.¹⁴ Scognamillo (1998: 213) defines factors of crisis as, political conflicts, pressure of the new censorship regulation, shortage of foreign exchange and instability in film-making. In the late 1970s, a wave of sex comedies dominated Turkish cinema as the sector's response to the crisis. Not surprisingly, this wave accelerated the withdrawal of family audience from cinema and demise of Yeşilçam.

However, the ideological polarization and rising political movements, as well as the ongoing crisis in the country paved the way for a new, political cinema movement to begin. Especially in the second part of the 1970s, a new group of directors, influenced by Yılmaz Güney, started to produce social-realist films, claiming to be different from and outside of popular Yeşilçam cinema. Zeki Ökten, Şerif Gören, Yavuz Özkan, Erden Kıral and Ali Özgentürk were among these directors. They all worked with Yılmaz Güney and adopted Güney's understanding of cinema. Social and economic problems of the country were their subjects, from a political perspective. The conditions of the peasants and problems of rural areas, like the order of landlords, underdevelopment, land ownership and rigid traditions and customs were a part of their subjects. Furthermore, migration, problems of the working class constituted their stories taking place in the city. And another issue of this new group of directors was immigration and the problems of the immigrant Turkish workers in foreign countries.

¹⁴ Number of cinema salons, audience and film-making decreased rapidly. The rate of unemployment became high in the sector. With the entrance of television, cinema was not considered to be the 'cheapest entertainment' any more. The golden age of the Yeşilçam ended. For example, the number of films produced decrease to 124 in 1977, from 226 in 1975.

Certainly, Turkish Cinémathèque had a great influence on this new group. The idea to produce outside of, even against Yeşilçam cinema already points to the relation between mentality of Turkish Cinémathèque and this new group of directors. Rather than the cliché narrative tools, similar stories and plots, stereotypes and simple binary oppositions like rich-poor, good-evil, these directors aimed to produce realist, creative films with simple stories, taken from everyday life (Scognamillo, 1998: 375). However, Özön (1995: 38) claims that their films were sometimes schematic, presenting exaggerated personalities, with a didactic manner. Such deficiencies made the products of these political films a “slogan cinema”. In spite of such problems of the political-realist cinema of the late 1970s, we can argue that this new tendency in Turkish cinema had an influence on many Yeşilçam directors, and also paved the way for the satiric comedies of the 1980s.

Like every other cinema, the most popular two genres have always been comedy and melodrama in Turkish cinema (Kayalı, 1998: 75). It can be said that Turkish popular comedy cinema resembles melodramas in terms of the construction of binary oppositions, stereotypes and social imagery. In the next part, I will examine the basic narrative characteristics of Yeşilçam comedy, with the help of the basic characteristics of melodramas.

2. 2. The Place of Comedy in Yeşilçam: An Analysis of the Genre and Its Transformation till the 1980s

Comedy became an important and popular genre in Turkish cinema in the 1960s and 1970s. The transition between the genres resulted in the inclusion of humorous and comic elements into the melodramas and other genres. One reason of this inclusion was an aim to appeal to a wide spectrum of audience. The inclusion of comedy elements also guarantees a catharsis for the audience who has been affected and distressed by the melodramatic love story. These comic elements were usually displayed by

the secondary characters of the film, such as the servants of the houses, or the tradesmen of the neighbourhood. In addition to those secondary characters, Turkish comedy cinema started to produce stock characters in the late 1950s. In addition to the narrative tools of melodramas, Yeşilçam comedy was also affected by the elements of the traditional Turkish folk laughter. In this part, I will try to analyze the comedy cinema in the golden years of Yeşilçam, between 1960 and 1980, and its social, political and cultural dynamics.

Turkish cinema produced first examples of comedy films in the 1910s. Especially in the late years of the decade, a series of short films were produced with the same leading character, named *Bican Efendi*. In the period of Muhsin Ertuğrul, nearly all of the comedy films were adaptations of comic theatre plays. The following decade, however, produced some comedy characters and their film series¹⁵, and other comedy films inspired by traditional Turkish folk laughter and foreign adaptations.

In the late 1950s, Turkish comedy cinema produced first famous stock character *Cilalı İbo*, played by Feridun Karakaya. In the following years, two other stock characters followed it; *Adanalı Tayfur*, played by Öztürk Serengil, and *Turist Ömer*, played by Sadri Alışık. The character of *Cilalı İbo* (Polished İbo) first appears in one of the Zeki Müren films, namely 'Berduş' in 1957. Yet, when the figure became popular, 'it created its own audience' to make *Cilalı İbo* films (Scognamillo, 1998: 196).¹⁶ *Cilalı İbo* is a shoe dyer. He is naïve and a bighearted, sometimes childish man, become involved in several complex and funny events. Like many other examples in cinema history, Feridun Karakaya interpreted this character in his own way and added many new characteristics to it. For example, he wore a cap on

¹⁵ *Edi ile Būdū* (Şadan Kamil, 1952), *Edi ile Būdū Tiyatrocu* (Şadan Kamil, 1952), *Çeto Salak Milyoner* (Orhan Erçin, 1953), *Çeto Sihirbaz* (Orhan Erçin, 1955).

¹⁶ There are totally twelve *Cilalı İbo* films from 1959 to 1971. These are, *Cilalı İbo Yıldızlar Arasında* (1959), *Cilalı İbo Casuslar Arasında* (1959), *Cilalı İbo ve Tophane Gülü* (1960), *Cilalı İbo'nun Çilesi* (1960), *Cilalı İbo Zoraki Baba* (1961), *Cilalı İbo Rüyalar Aleminde* (1962 – adapted from 'The Secret Life of Walter Mitty', 1947), *Cilalı İbo Perili Köşkte* (1963), *Cilalı İbo Kızlar Pansiyonunda* (1963), *Cilalı İbo ve Kırk Haramiler* (1964), *Cilalı İbo Almanya'da* (1970), *Cilalı İbo Teksas Fatihisi* (1971), *Cilalı İbo Yetimler Meleşti* (1971).

which is written '*Cilalı İbo*', and put a patch at the back of his pants. He also lisped instead of stammering, which was planned in the beginning (Kirel, 2005: 242). At the end, *Cilalı İbo* appeared as an ordinary man, a part of the common, low-income people on the street. His characteristics would be seen in other popular stock characters of comedy cinema.

Similar to *Cilalı İbo*, *Turist Ömer* first appeared as a secondary character in a comedy film. *Turist Ömer* (Ömer the Tourist), played by Sadri Alışık, was first seen in cinema in one of the Hulki Saner films produced in 1963, *Helal Olsun Ali Abi*. After he is introduced with this film, character of *Turist Ömer* became popular and resulted in other '*Turist Ömer*' films.¹⁷ Onaran (1999: 184) defines *Turist Ömer* as a "good-hearted tramp". Just like *Cilalı İbo*, *Turist Ömer* has particular clothes and characteristics. He wears an old hat and bends it down, a shirt of which collar is always open, trousers and a pair of old shoes. He is a wanderer and, like *Cilalı İbo*, lives in slums, tries to get along with temporary jobs, but more tricky, cunning and even rakish than *Cilalı İbo*. In one of his films, he explains why he is called 'tourist'; because he has no family, wife or children (Kirel, 2005: 243). In *Turist Ömer* films, the narrative is mostly composed of sequent sketches revolving around a story. Sometimes, narration is not causal, even most of the time disorganized. The film focuses on the character rather than the story. *Turist Ömer* uses slang, makes jokes and clever wits; he is able to adapt himself to every atmosphere and condition, mainly thanks to his cleverness and ability to speak persuasively. He is poor but not impoverished. For Maktav (2001: 176), "Even if he is expelled from rich people's places, he never becomes miserable. He is a hero "beautified by being poor" and cuteness of minding his own business".

¹⁷ There are a total of seven *Turist Ömer* films, which are, *Turist Ömer* (1964), *Turist Ömer Dümenciler Kralı* (1965), *Turist Ömer Almanya'da* (1966), *Turist Ömer Arabistan'da* (1969), *Turist Ömer Boğa Güreşçisi* (1971), *Turist Ömer Yamyamlar Arasında* (1970), *Turist Ömer Uzay Yolunda* (1973).

The dominance of the vocal narrative, which I have mentioned above in terms of Yeşilçam melodramas, is also valid for Turkish comedies of the 1960s. Both *Cilalı İbo* and *Turist Ömer* creates humour by their words and dialogues instead of their actions. *Cilalı İbo* and *Turist Ömer* have their particular way of speaking; *Cilalı İbo* lisps and *Turist Ömer* uses slang, which is vulgar and common. *Turist Ömer* usually mocks with the extremely refined, convoluted language of the bourgeoisie and upper classes with many verbal jokes.

Adanalı Tayfur was introduced with the film, *Adanalı Tayfur*, in 1963.¹⁸ Even though this character did not result in the production of its own films and became as famous as *Cilalı İbo* and *Turist Ömer*, it was a part of many comedy films in the 1960s and 1970s. The characteristics of *Adanalı Tayfur* figure was identified with Öztürk Serengil and reflected in nearly all of the characters he played. This character was similar to *Cilalı İbo* and *Turist Ömer* in the sense that element of humour was again based on vocal narrative and the character itself. He also used slang, accent, and a peculiar way of speaking and pronunciation (temem, kelaj, vs). Like many other Turkish cinema writers and scholars, Onaran (1999: 184) tends to ignore those films and these figures as ““lumpens” (tramps) whose place and class in a society is ambiguous”.

Those characters could be defined as the first stock characters of Turkish comedy cinema. In most of their films, the story seems to be depending on the improvisation of the characters. Humour originated from the words, wits and actions of the character. In terms of traditional popular laughter, it is possible to relate those stock characters with Karagöz. Karagöz is one of the two major characters in Turkish shadow theatre.¹⁹ The distinctive characteristic of Karagöz plays is their transgressive attitude in

¹⁸ After that Öztürk Serengil played *Adanalı Tayfur* in *Adanalı Tayfur Kardeşler* (1964 – adapted from *Corsican Brothers*, 1941 and *Bandits of Corsica*, 1953), *Kimse Fatma Gibi Öpemez* (1964), *Bizim Kız* (1977), and *Gırgıriye’de Büyük Seçim* (1984)

¹⁹ Entrance of which to Turkey is widely accepted as the XVI. Century from Egypt, Karagöz has been an inseparable part of the Turkish folk literature (And, 2000: 21, 28).

terms of political authority and sexuality (And, 2000: 44). There are traces of these elements in *Cilalı İbo*, *Turist Ömer* and *Adanalı Tayfur* to changing extents. However, these elements are always limited and obscure compared to Karagöz plays. On the other hand, it is possible to determine many similarities between Karagöz and the above mentioned three stock characters in terms of narrative characteristics and tools. First of all, improvised structure of Karagöz plays is very much observable in those stock characters, and in Turkish comedy cinema in general. Usually, the humorous and comic elements depend on the creativity and style of the actor himself. Secondly, Karagöz plays emanated from traditional folk narratives. Those subjects were re-structured and tragic stories were even told in a humorous way. Likewise, Turkish comedy cinema, in general, adapted many traditional elements and narrations, and because of the permeability between the genres, sometimes a melodramatic subject becomes a part of the laughter with the help of these stock characters.

Stereotypical character plotting is another similarity between Karagöz plays and stock character comedies. Even though the story changes, characters remain the same. There are always the same characters in Karagöz, with their clothing, accent and even behaviour. This is also valid for the stock characters. As I mentioned above, *Cilalı İbo*, *Turist Ömer* and *Adanalı Tayfur* are known with their particular way of speaking and clothing. And lastly, in both stock character comedies and Karagöz plays, there are dialogues and sketches, which seem to be independent parts from the story. All the sketches are meaningful alone and constitute an important element of laughter.

It is also possible to determine some similarities and common points between the stock characters and *Karagöz* as a character. Just like Karagöz, all the stock characters are naive, childish and weak figures. Even though they are sometimes manipulated and forced by the evil characters, they somehow find a way to extricate themselves from that situation. They

always say what they think directly, which sometimes push them in difficulties. They are always cheerful; they usually do not have a regular job, but they manage to live on in some way. As a matter of course, they are always sort of money, but when they have some they never hesitate to act generously (Pertan, 2000: 130-132).

In addition to stock characters mentioned above, there were a group of actors and actresses who became famous and an indispensable part of Turkish comedy films for a long time, starting with the 1950s. These characters first became known in Belgin Doruk and Ayhan Işık comedies, namely *Küçük Hanımefendi* (The Little Lady) films. These are defined as “romantic bourgeois comedies” by Scognamillo (1998: 198). First *Küçük Hanımefendi* film was produced in 1961. Since it became popular, many others followed it: *Küçük Hanımın Şoförü* (1962, 1970), *Küçük Hanımın Kısmeti* (1962), *Küçük Hanım Avrupa’da* (1962). *Küçük Hanımefendi* series represent the reflection of the class relations, cultural hierarchies, and gender roles in the 1960s. Sağlık argues that *Küçük Hanımefendi* series represent the “one millionaire in every neighbourhood” discourse of the Democrat Party (1997: 64). Neriman (female juvenile lead) belongs to a rich family; her father is a factory owner, a private entrepreneur. She is young, beautiful, stylish and very refined. In all of the *Küçük Hanımefendi* films, there is a love story. Neriman falls in love with a common young man, and finally two lovers reunite at the end of the film after getting over many obstacles, especially with the help of the secondary characters who also constituted the element of humour and laughter in the film. The male character appeals to the audience’s hope for a rise in the class hierarchy; because he is able to win the rich girl’s heart and marry to her despite he belongs to a lower class. Furthermore, the secondary characters are always lower class people, most of the time servants of the house. They are portrayed as cheerful, humble and docile figures, unconditionally faithful to their masters and living in a harmonious relationship with them. Even it

seems as if their main aim is to provide their mistress' happiness and well-being.

Many other comedies were produced in the 1960s, similar to *Küçük Hanımefendi* series. Mainly defined as “romantic comedies” or “salon comedies” (Kirel, 2005: 266), these films were mostly produced in the 1960s. Their plot was similar to *Küçük Hanımefendi*; there is a young man and a woman who fall in love with each other, and finally reunite after getting over many obstacles. In this process, secondary characters help them to overcome the difficulties and reunite. Laughter and comedy is based on these secondary characters. They are usually the servants of the rich family, or fellows of the chief male character.²⁰ These comic figures are portrayed as “happy, sharing, cheerful, solidarist and members of “common people”” in the romantic comedies or sometimes in melodramas (Kirel, 2005: 238). They never question their class positions and relations of submission to their bosses. In fact, the social hierarchy between the masters and the servants are shown in a ‘natural’ way; all the servants are happy and their only aim seems to serve their masters in the best way.

In some romantic comedies of the 1960s and 1970s, only the everyday problems and issues of the lower class people were told in a humorous way. Unlike *Küçük Hanımefendi* series and similar ones, upper class figures mostly constitute the secondary characters, or even sometimes do not exist in these films. Especially in the 1970s, these films became known with the name of a single director: Ertem Eğilmez.

Onaran argues that Eğilmez successfully adapted Frank Capra’s “American Comedy”, which became a genre in American cinema, to Turkish

²⁰ Some of them are Suphi Kaner, Sami Hazinses, Nubar Terziyan, Necdet Tosun, Cevat Kurtuluş, Münir Özkul, Adile Naşit, Vahi Öz, Mualla Sürer and Aziz Basmacı.

comedy cinema.²¹ However, since Eđilmez produced popular cinema, he has been ignored by the cinema writers. Kayalı (2006: 46-47) criticizes this attitude and argues that Eđilmez's films deserve a deeper consideration and analysis since they are a part of the traditional populist tendency of the Turkish cinema. Furthermore, his style affected the formation of the popular Turkish cinema after him. In his films, there is usually a crowded group of actors and actresses, in which important roles were given to character players. In Eđilmez's comedy films, in which the characters are common people, mostly factory workers, market sellers, grocers, street peddlers or just tramps were always good-hearted, kind and sincere people loved in their neighbourhoods.²² Performing such roles, most famous comedians of Turkish cinema were all educated in *Arzu Film*, such as Metin Akpınar, Zeki Alasya, Kemal Sunal İlyas Salman and Şener Şen. As I mentioned before, many scenario writers and directors were also a part of *Arzu Film*, such as Zeki Ökten, Yavuz Turgul and Kartal Tibet. All of these figures are very important in the sense that they produced many of the 1980s Turkish comedy films, and in a broader sense, formed 1980s Turkish comedy cinema.

In *Arzu Film* comedies, everyday life and problems of the lower class, common people are told in a humorous way. According to Dikiciler (2002: 29-30), *Arzu Film* comedies are "(...) are extremely sincere films in which the feudal structure is abandoned (...) with a patriarchal structure to some extent, and have a sensitivity of the poor neighbourhoods". There are usually big families, or people of the neighbourhood as a family, as connected and faithful. They are all lower class people, hardly making a

²¹ Capra's American comedy is defined by Onaran as the story of common people beating others who suppose themselves as powerful, with an unexpected courage and bravery (1999: 185).

²² Some of these films are *Sev Kardeşim* (1972), *Yalancı Yarım* (1973), *Köyden İndim Şehire* (1974), *Mavi Boncuk* (1974), *Salak Milyoner* (1974), *Sütkardeşler* (1976), *Şabanođlu Şaban* (1977), *Erkek Güzeli Sefil Bilo* (1979), *Banker Bilo* (1980) and the series of *Hababam Sınıfı* (*Hababam Sınıfı* – 1974, *Hababam Sınıfı Sınıfta Kaldı* – 1975, *Hababam Sınıfı Uyanıyor* – 1976, *Hababam Sınıfı Tatilde* – 1977, *Hababam Sınıfı Dokuz Doğuruyor* – 1978, *Hababam Sınıfı Güle Güle* - 1981).

living, yet not complaining about their situation. As Maktav (2001: 165) claims, despite of all the hard living conditions and lack of any material wealth, their conditions are never portrayed as poverty. The only thing that matters for them is their honour, chastity and dignity. As Dikiciler pointed, there is a strong patriarchal discourse, which is interrelated with the sublime virtues of the family. Especially films like *Bizim Aile* (Ergin Orbey, 1976), *Aile Şerefi* (Orhan Aksoy, 1976), *Neşeli Günler* (Orhan Aksoy, 1978), emphasize the unity and holiness of the family focusing on the father figure. In line with Maktav's and Erdoğan's arguments concerning melodramas, in these comedies the lower class heroes are presented as an antidote to the degenerating effects of wealth, richness and sometimes westernization. Most of the time poor but honourable father scolds even humiliates and finally gives advice to the rich, showy but indecent, degenerated figure(s). So, it is possible to argue that the stereotypical plotting and conventional binary oppositions (rich-poor, good-evil) are valid for the Turkish comedies as well.

Besides the most outstanding comedy directors and scenarists, Arzu Film created another stock character for the Turkish cinema: *İnek Şaban* (Şaban the Cow). This character can be defined as the last stock character of Turkish cinema so far and performed by Kemal Sunal. First appeared in the mid-1970s, his character and films, known as "Şaban films", even constituted a sub-genre in the Turkish comedy cinema. İnek Şaban first appeared in the first film of *Hababam Sınıfı* series, *Hababam Sınıfı* (1975). This first appearance of İnek Şaban, in fact, sketched out character's main characteristics, providing the basic features of the Şaban films in the following years. It is possible to argue that the figure of Şaban and his adventures enunciate a grotesque imagery (Erdoğan, 1998: 299). In many points, Şaban coincides with the "clown" and the "fool" in the carnival laughter. That is to say, in all of his adventures – which also revolved around a conventionalised narrative structure- he represents everything that belongs to the "low", the "excluded". He is fool, vulgar, mundane, facile,

simpleminded and powerless. Furthermore, he uses slang, curses and swearwords, most of the time related with the lower bodily stratum. In all of Şaban films, he somewhat struggles with a powerful villain. This villain is portrayed as everything which Şaban is not: he is powerful, dominant, greedy, hypocritical and cunning. From his particular position, Şaban usually denies to understand the mechanism of power, oppression, exploitation and hierarchy. Such a naivety and simple-mindedness is also sometimes observable in other stock characters like *Cilalı İbo* and *Turist Ömer*, but not as much as Şaban. Bakhtin (1981: 163) defines this position in the following words:

[The fool and the clown] grant the right *not* to understand, the right to confuse, to tease, to hyperbolize life; the right to parody others while talking, the right to not be taken literally, not “to be oneself”; the right to live a life in the chronotope of the entr’acte, the chronotope of theatrical space, the right to act life as a comedy and to treat others as actors, the right to rip off masks, the right to rage at others with a primeval (almost cultic) rage –and finally, the right to betray to the public a personal life, down to its most private and prurient little secrets.

Simple-mindedness is in fact one of Şaban’s weapons against the unjust, powerful villains. Bakhtin (1981: 164) defines this ‘simple-mindedness’ as a ‘device of “not understanding”’ the irrationality of the hierarchical distinctions, mechanisms of oppression and exploitation. On other hand, the grotesque imagery enunciated in Şaban clearly points to the relation between him and the traditional folk laughter figures like Karagöz and Keloğlan. Erdoğan (1998: 302) defines Şaban as “a modern version of Keloğlan intermingled with Karagöz”. As a tricky and cunning figure, Keloğlan struggles with powerful villains and manages to beat them and extricate himself from difficult situations, which is also the plot in many Şaban films. He is also similar to Karagöz in the sense that he is as weak and childish as him. And lastly, some of Şaban figures are related with *Ortaoyunu* and *Tuluat* characters, like Şaban figure in *Tosun Paşa* (Kartal Tibet, 1976), which coincides with İbiş, the servant of the house in *Tuluat* theatre.

In the late 1970s, Turkish comedy cinema transformed due to the rise of new political cinema. Issues like social inequalities, class conflicts, problems of the working class, migration and gecekondu were the focus of new political cinema. Binary oppositions like rich and poor and good and evil were changing and gaining a more social-realistic character. Rather than the personification of virtues or evilness, these films aimed to reflect the real mechanisms of the capitalist system and the conditions of the exploited classes within it. Political films were portraying the lower classes' living conditions to reveal the poverty and material problems such as housing and hard-working conditions. Such a new tendency leaked into the comedy films as a new social-realist tone. *Kapıcılar Kralı* (Zeki Ökten-1976), *Çöpçüler Kralı* (Zeki Ökten-1977), *Kibar Feyzo* (Atıf Yılmaz-1978), *Sultan* (Kartal Tibet-1978), *Erkek Güzeli Sefil Bilo* (Ertem Eğilmez-1979) could be considered as the first examples a new social-realist comedy cinema. Even though the narrative structure and tools are not different from former examples of Yeşilçam comedies, their tone of humour is far more satirical, which could be expressed as the pioneers of the satirical comedies of the 1980s. In those films, there is a little, or sometimes no tone of grotesque imagery.

In *Kapıcılar Kralı*, which tells the story of a doorkeeper becoming the owner of the apartment in time by many acts of swindling, greed and exploitation his children and family by forcing them to work, the desire to climb in the social hierarchy by any means possible and the degeneration of the social order is satirized. After the leading character (performed by Kemal Sunal) announces the residents of the apartment that he is the new owner of the building, everyone of them start to fawn over and cosy up to him. However, all of them were just humiliating and denigrating him before when he was just a doorkeeper. So, the film also satirizes the hypocrisy upper classes. *Çöpçüler Kralı* resembles *Kapıcılar Kralı* in the sense that it also tells the story of a lower-class man, a scavenger, who becomes a famous singer for little period of time, but then becomes a common scavenger

again. His relations with his fellows and the girl he loves immediately changes after he becomes famous (and earns much more money) and turns to its former condition when he starts to do his old job. *Erkek Güzeli Sefil Bilo* and *Kibar Feyzo* are village comedies. However, a part of *Kibar Feyzo* passes in the city when Feyzo learns the 'irrationalities' of some rural norms, like bride-price (*başlık parası*) and gains a kind of consciousness. Of course, it can not be argued that Feyzo becomes fully conscious of his class position. He rather becomes aware of the differences between the city and the village and becomes more and more courageous to rebel against the agha. It is possible to claim that the narrative is hybrid, oscillating between grotesque realism and satire. For example, Feyzo usually swears even to his mother and son, mocks with religion and religious rituals, and thinking of sexual intercourse all the time. Yet, in the second part of the film, we observe some political references to the socio-political atmosphere in the country. When he returns to the village, he writes on a wall, "*Faşo ağa*" (Fascist agha). And when agha asks him the meaning of "*faşo*", Feyzo replies to him as, "something like a catamite, a fag". And finally he encourages the peasant to revolt against agha and to leave the village. And finally, *Sultan* tells the love story between a widow with four children and a minibus driver in a gecekondu neighbourhood. In fact, the real subject is the problems of gecekondu neighbourhoods. There are some documentary scenes taken in these neighbourhoods, of the residents; women taking water from a fountain, children playing in dirty waters, etc. all the residents are forced to leave their houses, because the area was bought by a group of businessmen. At the end, they all go to another place and start building their new homes.

In this chapter, I tried to give a broad picture of the Turkish cinema before the 1980s. It can be argued that Yeşilçam produced and settled its basic genres of melodrama and comedy in this period. Considering the permeability between the genres, we can claim that melodramatic scheme provided the basic frame for comedy, in terms of binary oppositions,

stereotypes and social imagery. Similar to the melodramas, the binary oppositions are constructed upon the dichotomy between the “good” and the “evil”, and the “rich” and the “poor” in Yeşilçam comedies, having the same cross-references. Not surprisingly, the most famous stock characters of Yeşilçam comedies are all lower class, poor characters, even most of the time unemployed, since it is more likely for the audience to identify themselves with the poor but good-hearted hero. This argument is also valid for the family comedies, in which there are large, happy families with philanthropic, solidarist members and neighbours. Contrary to the melodramas, especially with the ones having unhappy endings, Yeşilçam comedies end with a peaceful consolidation between the “poor and good” heroes and “rich” ones. If the “rich” is also portrayed as “evil” and “selfish”, the heroes are always able to beat them with an unexpected courage and bravery, to prove the superiority of virtues like honour, philanthropy, collectivism, and familial solidarity over wealth. There are also elements of grotesque laughter in Yeşilçam comedy, especially in Kemal Sunal’s stock character İnek Şaban’s films, which could be identified as a sub-genre of Turkish comedy cinema. The grotesque elements appear in the very character of İnek Şaban, which is all powerless, low, naive, and childish, contrary to powerful, cunning villain of the film. The humour based on Şaban’s usage of slang, profanities and direct references to the lower bodily stratum. As well as the other stock characters, Şaban figure is also related to the traditional folk laughter figures like Karagöz and Keloğlan.

However, in the late 1970s, a new group of directors started to produce social-realist films, rejecting Yeşilçam and its conventional stereotypical plotting. This new political cinema surely affected Yeşilçam cinema in general and comedies in particular. So, it can be argued that under such an influence, Yeşilçam comedy produced its earlier examples of social satire in the late 1970s, which would be considered as the pioneers of satirical comedies of the 1980s.

CHAPTER III

HISTORICIZING THE 1980s: A 'NEW' TURKISH CINEMA

This chapter tries to analyse the specific social, economic and political transformation Turkey has experienced in the 1980s to understand the particular cultural atmosphere in which Turkish cinema transformed. The transformation of Turkish cinema in terms of themes, stereotypes, plots, characters and stories emanated from a change in the socio-ideological paradigm. Even though we can observe some examples continuing the Yeşilçam tradition, it can be argued that very structure and understanding of cinema experienced a profound change. Since this change affected Turkish comedy cinema, and in a way resulted in the emergence of satiric comedies, a comprehensive analysis of the period is necessary to grasp and analyse the specificity of the satiric comedies of the 1980s.

The first part of this chapter will draw a general outline of the social, political and ideological changes starting with the 12 September military intervention. In the second part, the cultural dynamics of this period resulting in the structural and thematic changes in many aspects of the popular culture, from literature to music will be analyzed. And finally, the last part will try to cover the Turkish cinema of the 1980s, on the basis of the main tendencies and changes in the narrative structure, themes and genres. Sketching out the transformation of Turkish cinema in the 1980s within a socio-political context will help us to understand the context in which satiric comedies were produced.

3. 1) Socio-political Atmosphere of the 1980s

On 12 September 1980, Turkey experienced her third military intervention in the republican history. The immediate justification of the army was the dysfunction of the state machinery (Zürcher, 1998: 205). However, in the broader sense, it was the hegemonic crisis of the late 1970s, which led the country into a deadlock. In the eve of the 12 September, country was in a total political, social and economic turmoil. Due to the weakening of the parliamentary democracy, mechanism of democratic representation became ineffective. Extreme right wing and left wing organizations were involved in armed struggle, creating a chaotic atmosphere in the country. In such an ideological polarization, no political party was able to articulate the interests of the classes.

On the other hand, import substitution policies resulted in the lack of foreign currency, extreme budgetary deficits and high inflation. Increasing labour and students revolts, these economic difficulties also resulted in a sharp confrontation between the capital and labour (Tünay, 1993: 19). Furthermore, the dominant classes were not satisfied with the economic policies of the right wing political parties. Because of the economic crisis, the accumulation strategy (which is import substitution industrialization) of the dominant class became ineffective. The respective coalition governments were incapable of consolidating the order. That is to say, there was representation crisis between the dominant class and the right wing political parties (Gülalp, 1993: 44).

Just after the takeover, activities of all the political parties were ceased and their leaders were arrested by the military, because they were principally blamed for the polarization of the political system (Ergüder, 1988: 564). The abolishment of the unions (DİSK and MİSK), and the dismissal of all the local mayors and governments followed it. Army and the National Security Council (NSC), headed by Kenan Evren - the leader of the coup, captured all the political power under their control (Zürcher, 1998: 405-407).

The military regime started a wave of arrestment, with continuous torture and missing people.

In 1982, a new constitution was established. Within its framework, executive branch became stronger, and the power of the president and the army increased. All the union rights, freedom of press and individual rights and freedoms were restricted. One year later, in 1983, the elections were held, with an indisputable result: The Motherland Party (MP), led by Turgut Özal, who was the architect of 24 January decisions, came to power with a percentage of 45 of the votes (Zürcher, 1998: 410-411).

The MP was founded by some private sector businessmen and former members of the pre-1980 political parties (Ergüder, 1988: 567). Party's ideological stance and political strategies were greatly similar to Reaganism and Thatcherism; like the new right governments in USA and England, the new hegemonic project was based on authoritarian-populism in terms of the formation of national-popular will. In the beginning, new right appealed to the industrial capitalists, ready to integrate to the world system, and the conservative segments of the society disturbed by the radicalism of the 1970s. However, new right's social base expanded gradually to include the middle classes, which are resented with high taxes and bureaucracy. The discourse of the new right, namely nationalist-conservatism, was a mixture of neoliberal elements such as anti-statism, economic efficiency and individualism, and conservative tones of traditions, family, religion, law, and order, which were already a part of the traditional Turkish right's discourse. The peculiarity of new right is this specific way of articulation of these liberal and anti-liberal elements (Özkazanç, 1997: 31). By and through this discourse, Turkish new right attempted to establish a new hegemony through leaking into crucial hegemonic fields such as schools, religious institutions, and media. Among them, restoration of the exploitation relation between capital and labour was of greatest importance (Tünay, 1993: 11-12).

In addition to the liberal elements and conservative elements mentioned above, MP also claimed to integrate four different ideologies within its discourse. These were liberalism, pan-Turkist extreme right elements, Islamic fundamentalism and social democracy. Conservative-nationalism was the name of this inclusive and eclectic ideology. Tünay (1993: 21) argues that this was an attempt to form an organic ideology that had never existed in Turkish society before.

Another facet of this organic ideology was hindering any kind of class movements and mentality based on it. To realize this aim, MP created a new concept: *ortadirek* (main pillar). The concept included a wide range of social groups from farmers, civil-servants, workers, and craftsmen, who are supposed to make up the centre of the society. The idea was to assimilate a wide range of social classes and groups in a vague concept.

Yet, the new hegemonic project of Turkish new right under MP power could not be successful due to many reasons. In terms of economic policy, export promotion accumulation strategy failed; many supported exporters involved in paper exports. Because of a partial support of the industrial sector, only a small part of firms prospered. Unsurprisingly, the rate of unemployment continued to increase under such bad economic conditions. On the other hand, despite the claims of 'economic rationale', the efforts to transform economy into export-orientation turned into centred, political and personal decisions, favouring only one section of the capital (Özkazanç, 1998: 22).

On the other hand, the 'two nations' hegemonic project did not work in Turkey. This project was based on dividing the society into two camps, on the basis of an inclusion/exclusion practice. The first nation, portrayed as hard-working, responsible, with a moral sense would be the winners. The second nation was, however, blamed for being irresponsible, lazy, and rebellious as nothing but a burden for the state. These were the excluded

ones (Özkazanç, 1997: 34). The main reason for the failure of this project was the limited size of the first nation in Turkey, for which the new right was incapable of providing enough benefits. As I mentioned above, the export-oriented economic policy could not provide enough benefits for the first nation, let alone some part of the second nation. Unlike its counterparts in USA and England, Turkish New Right was unable to divide different sections of working classes, which inevitably enlarged the second nation. The second nation included the whole working classes, most of the agricultural producers, civil servants, the unemployed, etc. (Tünay, 1993: 25). Besides class divisions, new right also discriminated against ethnical and religious groups such as Kurds and Alavis (Özkazanç, 1998: 21). And lastly, the four tendencies, namely liberalism, pan-Turkist nationalism, Islamic fundamentalism and social democracy, Özal and MP claimed to integrate did not turn out to be so harmonious. In time there occurred conflicts between liberal and Islamic fundamentalist elements. Furthermore, social democracy would never totally be a part of new right discourse.

Such an economic and political failure resulted in the hegemonic failure of the new right MP government in Turkey in the late 1980s. Beginning from the 1987 elections, votes and popularity of the party decreased gradually. Since the government could not provide a sound social base, it involved in organic relations with particular class factions. Consequently, clientelist relations within the state machinery constituted another dimension of the legitimacy crisis of the new right MP government. Despite of the political failure of the new right, its basic ideological premises like individualism, competition and conservatism became embodied in the everyday lives of the people. The society was undergoing a profound transformation from everyday relations of the individuals to cultural fields like literature, music and cinema. Turkish satiric comedies developed a critical perspective towards these 'newly rising' values, as well as the degeneration of the state machinery in terms of clientelist relations and patronage. The sharpening class differences and decreasing life standards

of the impoverishing lower classes due to unequal income distribution was another point of criticism. Therefore, it can be said that Turkish satiric comedies of the 1980s targeted new right, from the results of the neoliberal economic policies to the ideological and cultural transformation in the society, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

3. 2) Cultural Climate of the 1980s:

If one dimension of the 1980s is the veiling of class conflicts and repression of any type of egalitarian, socialist discourse, the other side is the promotion of a new identity politics, based on the idea of integrating different sections of the society to the system by eliminating their radical potential. Gürbilek (2001: 9) defines this period as one of which denial, refusal and repression on the one hand, and opportunities and promises on the other. Emergence of new identities based on ethnic, gender, regional and religious differences became a part of the public sphere. The clear-cut ideological polarization between the right and the left was replaced by a very complex map of identities claiming to be a part of the social system.

Another result of the new right policies was the deepening rupture between the higher and lower classes, mainly due to the “two nations” hegemonic project of the MP, as discussed above. The end of welfarism, wage cuts, decreasing social services and increasing unemployment created a huge amount of impoverished masses. *Gecekondu* experience evolved to a new direction, but this time totally ripped of from any revolutionary political connotation. The rent economies and the informal sector²³ became a source of income for the gecekondu residents, which were promoted by the new right government. In this sense, a new tendency among the gecekondu residents emerged, which is defined by Pınarcıoğlu and Işık (2001: 35-36) as an ambition to climb up in the social hierarchy at

²³ After 1980s, gecekondu turned out to be marketable commodities and sources rent profits. The changing structure of gecekondu in terms of urban dynamics are discussed in Işık (1995) and Şengül (2000).

any cost. In fact, this tendency was not peculiar to the gecekondu residents, but comprised a huge amount of the lower, and middle classes. The bankers emerged just after the 24 January decisions are of particular importance to display this mentality. Especially in the early 1980s, the bankers became the symbols of attaining a higher socio-economical status in the easiest way. Many low-income citizens, like civil-servants, retirees, or workers rushed to the bankers to invest their money, life-savings. High interest rates were seductive and provoked the dreams of becoming rich immediately. However, the result turned out to be catastrophe, bankers bankrupting or running away with the all the invested money.²⁴ Kozanoğlu (2004: 19) relates the bankers issue with a specific concept, “making-it” (*yırtmak*). “Making-it” became a keyword to the dreams of the lower classes to attain a higher level of wealth and status in the world of new right. As Kozanoğlu (2004: 19) states:

The concept of “making-it” is really important. Because, even though the stories of people becoming billionaires from a simple portorage were talked about everywhere and dreams of “making good” were shared among wide segments of the society, this was not that easy for everyone. A certain web of relations and mentality was necessary. However, “making-it” was more realistic for many people, as a way through. So, they aimed that target first.

Thus, becoming rich appeared to be the ultimate goal in the society. The competitive, individualist, success-oriented discourse of the new right was providing the ideological framework of this desire. The aspirations of the lower classes were materialized in the advertisements, TV commercials, and luxurious imported consumption goods which started to enter the country with Özalist export oriented-policy. Even National Lottery (Milli

²⁴ Bankers issue was reflected in Turkish cinema in *Banker Bilo* (1980, Ertem Eğinmez), *Dolap Beygiri* (Atıf Yılmaz, 1982), and *Faize Hücum* (Zeki Ökten, 1982). As examples of the social/satiric comedies of the 1980s, *Banker Bilo* and *Dolap Beygiri* will be discussed in the next chapter.

Piyango) supported these aspirations by giving the biggest prize until then, in 1985 (Bali, 2004: 34).²⁵

The individualist discourse based on the concept of “making-it” affected many spheres of cultural production, as well as the relations of everyday life. Arabesk music was one of them, experiencing a particular transformation based on the mentality of new right, elements of which are stated above, in the 1980s. Özbek (2000: 114) defines *arabesk* music before 1980 as, “not ripped of from its social background and displaying a sense of ambivalent “subculture”, through which the silent majority responds to the modernization by reforms and prohibitions”. However, after the 1980, *arabesk* transformed both in terms of its maps of imagination, social connotations and consumer profile. First of all, before the 1983 elections, the MP used many *arabesk* songs and lyrics in its electoral campaign. This was a crucial turning point in the sense that there has always been a tension between *arabesk* and political authority until then. So, it is obvious that political inclinations of the *gecekondü* people have changed. Having been the centres of radical left movements before 1980, *gecekondus* constituted a great part of MP’s vote bank in the 1983 elections.

The consumer profile of *arabesk* music also changed. It started to appeal to a wider spectrum of social classes and groups to increase its marketability. Therefore, to guarantee its consumption, it turned out to be a more standardized, “domesticated” product (Özbek, 2000: 122-123). It even produced many sub-genres like tavern music, or protest music.²⁶ Increasing number of *arabesk* films was another cultural phenomenon of the 1980s, which formed an important genre in the post-1980 period in Turkish cinema.²⁷ The response of the ‘elites’ and intellectuals to *arabesk* music and

²⁵ *Milyarder* (Kartal Tibet, 1986), as one of the social/satirical comedies of the 1980s, tells the story of a train station chief of a small town, who wins the biggest prize from National Lottery. However, when the money reveals the hypocrisy and selfishness of the people around him, even his family, the hero ends up in depression and chooses to leave the town, with tearing up the lottery ticket.

²⁶ See, Özbek (1998).

²⁷ *Arabesk* films of the 1980s will be analysed in the following part.

lower classes related to it, was totally negative; *arabesk* turned out to be label of vulgar, rural masses who has migrated to city and damaged the 'refined, delicate' nature of urban life. It also became the symbol of 'new riches' in general and enriching first generation *gecekondü* owners due to rent economics in particular and their 'parvenu' culture. As Öncü (2000: 130) states, the word 'arabesk' started to denote the lack of aesthetic disposition, not only in the lower classes of the city, but a part of upper classes, especially the new riches. These segments of the society labelled under *arabesk* culture were also seen as a threat to the 'real' residents of Istanbul; especially the 'parvenu' new riches were imitating the 'refined' culture and set a price for them which resulted in a threat towards the cultural hierarchies. These were also the years in which such concepts like 'zonta', 'maganda' (lout, boor) were invented to denote the lower classes of city, mainly the migrants. If a migrant with lower class origin has become rich in time and attempted to enter the social domains of the upper classes, like cafes, restaurants, pubs, etc., these adjectives were used to denote their incompatibility with the necessities of an 'upper class' life. Yumul (2000: 43) emphasizes the function of these concepts with respect to the "grotesque body" in the Bakhtinian sense, which implies the priority of material, bodily needs and pleasures over the self-controlled body of the civilization project. What 'maganda' and 'zonta' denotes is the "absolute other" of a "mythical" metropolis culture, an aesthetic anomaly (Öncü, 2000: 117, 135). The reaction against *arabesk* music and culture in the 1980s was reflected unto the figure of İbrahim Tatlıses. It was far more different from the *arabesk* of Orhan Gencebay, which could also be a factor in terms of the increasing upper class prejudice against *arabesk*. Gürbilek (2001: 97) defines the contrast appeared between the arabesk of Orhan Gencebay and İbrahim Tatlıses pointing to a shift in the mentality:

In the 1970s, Orhan Gencebay was the voice of a conscience which could only be represented by a male figure in this society. He was the "Orhan ağabey", who defends the rights of the family against an unjust father. This is the point which has changed from that time: in the end of the 1980s, father has become unimportant, family has dissolved, and

mother and sister have already runaway from home. And the stepbrother was not just a part of the family. Big city of the 1980s gave him the freedom to become another person, to speak for himself instead of existing in some other's conscience, and speak without anybody's mediation. [Songs like] "Dom dom kurşunu", "Ben sana dolanayım", represented the relief of the province which could only be gained through facing with the possibilities provided by the city and money. Therefore, İbrahim Tatlıses was the star of the 1980s, not Orhan Gencebay.

In line with the elitist reaction against *arabesk* culture, a kind of nostalgia emerged, based on an image of 'old Istanbul'. Migration was ripped of from any socio-economic connotations like economic difficulties and rural poverty, and became a rootless phenomenon that resulted in *arabesk* culture which destroys the delicate fabric of Istanbul.²⁸

Another characteristic of the 1980s' "cultural climate" (Gürbilek, 2001: 21), was individualism. As a part of the new right's discourse and strategy, individualism and private lives started to be emphasized more and more, based on the personal desires. The collectivist paradigm of the 1960s and 1970s became point of criticism for hindering any kind of individual potential. However, the result was nothing more than publicized private lives, commodified and taking their place in the market. The issue of women's rights movement gained importance in the 1980s, but never was able to realize its radical potential. Women question became a discussion on women's sexuality and position in the business world. Many women's magazines begin to be published in this period.²⁹ Sexuality was an important issue and a dimension of the rising individualism discourse. The result was, however, a spectacular sexuality, ripped off from its political, emancipatory, and even emotional content. Gürbilek (2001: 41) defines this

²⁸ The theme of nostalgia and romanticism in the social/satiric comedies of the 1980s will be analysed in Chapter IV.

²⁹ Kadınca magazine outstands among its likes, with regards to its feminist stance, harsh criticism against the dominant patriarchal ideology. However, despite its relatively sharp position, Kadınca could not posit a totally alternative voice in the media, containing gender-stereotypical advertisements and prejudices in terms of some patriarchal mechanisms, like marriage.

as “the imprisonment of sexuality by word”. The problem of sexuality became publicized only as far as it conforms to the limits of the individualistic discourse of the new right.

The relation between individualism and private lives is also related to class differences. As I mentioned before, Turkey has experienced her deepest economic gaps between the classes. While lower classes were impoverishing continuously, upper classes were enriching hastily. Even though the issues of liberalism and individualism were presented as a nation-wide transformation, private lives and sexuality were mainly upper class problems. It seems as if there was an invisible wall between the worlds of upper and lower classes. Since literature and cinema moved towards dealing with such issues like sexuality and private lives in bourgeois world, the lower classes gradually disappeared from these areas. It should be noted that the first half of the 1980s were the years in which *arabesk* films and police-adventure films were popular. Their stories were mostly based on lower class heroes, yet this was still the time of the military regime partly. Furthermore, the psychological dramas of the 1980s could be considered as a new tendency for the Turkish cinema, dominating the second part of the 1980s. The lives of rich people were mainly the subjects of novels and psychological films of the period. As Gürbilek (2001: 106-107) states:

In a sense, the 1980s gave the high culture a freedom to give up its nobility, act for and represent only itself. MP not only demanded a freedom, for which Kemalism had excluded, ignored, but also the removal of the deprivation which high culture had to endure in order to remain high. This is the reason of the existence of the 1980s, a period of repression, with its opposite in cultural terms, with a promise of freedom not only for the lower culture but also for the elites, and to present itself as a period of appetite, confession and unburdening.

The unveiled presentation of riches' lives was also a result of the neoliberal economic policies of the new right in the 1980s. Buğra (2005: 14) points that in this period private property rights and entrepreneurship profits gained legitimacy through the project of an economic system led by private

sector. As a matter of fact businessmen gained their self-confidence and became more apparent than ever. Through the end of the 1980s, upper class life became more and more apparent, characterized by a “*flasher and arrogant*” style (Erdoğan & Bora, 2005: 10). One aspect of this tendency together with individualism and private life discourses can be observed in the Turkish literature after the 1980s. According to Türkeş (2001: 150, 2005: 51), a new group of writers emerged in the 1980s, which separated themselves from province, poverty and rebellion, and began to see what they were used to see. The problems of the lower, impoverished classes, opportunity inequalities and class conflicts were not among their considerations. The subjects of the novels in the 1980s were mostly rich or at least upper-middle class, well-educated people, distressed with his/her social environment and depressed. They continuously criticize themselves, dig up their psychologies, however, material needs are not among their problems. Besides ideological influence of the new right discourse on literature, Türkeş (2001: 157) also points to the changing economic structure of press and publication sector in the 1980s. He states that:

With the exertion of large press monopolies’ and capital groups’ power in art and literature in the 1980s, the location of authority in the literary field has changed. In a new world of literature in which old meeting places of literary discussions and moneyless but excited young magazine publishers and writers were replaced by modern plazas, and authorities directing literary products evolved to the upper classes who work as professionals in those showy places, inclination of contents of the novels to a life overlapping with their production style should not surprise anyone.

All of the above mentioned tendencies are also observable in Turkish cinema, especially in the second half of the 1980s. Individual problems, private lives, and psychological traumas constituted the basis of the maps of imagination of the 1980s’ film directors. There is in fact a complex picture in terms of Turkish cinema in the 1980s, in which the above mentioned issues were not the only subjects. *Arabesk* films, melodramatic adventure-detective films and Yeşilçam comedies continued to be produced especially in the first half of the decade. A general picture of Turkish cinema with differing

tendencies and transformations of the existing genres regarding the socio-political and ideological atmosphere in the country will be discussed in the following part.

3. 3. Turkish Cinema in the 1980s:

Since ignorance of the individuality and desires were presented as an important factor in the defeat of the left in the 1970s, the new psychological cinema appeared as a self-criticism of the intellectuals considering their past mistakes. Private lives, sexual and familial problems of bourgeois families, women's issue and a symbolic cinema emanating from auteur attempts were other characteristics of the 1980s' Turkish cinema. Even though it is crucial to point that such films were obviously a new tendency and a common cognitive position for the Turkish cinema, they generally characterize the second half of the 1980s. In the first half of the decade, Yeşilçam cinema was somewhat still effective since classical genres like melodramatic *arabesk* and detective-adventure films, and comedies continued to be produced.

Contrary to the late 1970s when a new social-realist cinema emerged and Turkish cinema produced its first political films, the early products of 1980s' Turkish cinema were far from any criticism or political stance. In other words, any type of political connotation that would disturb the military regime was avoided. The most popular genres continued to be melodrama (*arabesk* and detective-adventure films) and comedy. In a repressive political regime, to produce any type of critical, political film was unsurprisingly not very likely.³⁰ For example, Avcı (2004: 191) states that *arabesk* films of the 1980s differ from the ones produced in the 1970s in terms of the "link between the villain and his class identity". He argues that in most of the *arabesk* films of the 1970s, the villain(s) is/are specific

³⁰ The satiric comedies would be an exception in terms of criticism, which will be handled in the following chapter.

personalities suitable for the audience to direct their hatred. Furthermore, the conventional binary opposition between the rich and the poor and the good and the evil were clearly preserved. However, in the 1980s, the villain(s) display(s) a vaguer and decentralized character in the sense that most of the time a specific villain is not displayed at all. Even if there are specific villains, their class origins were not even implied, but rather they are portrayed as dark figures, related to mafia.

The detective-adventure films were mostly produced for the video sector. They are deeply conservative and compatible with the elements of new right discourse, such as law, order, family and authority. Main subjects are abuse of women (prostitution, rape, etc.), drug use and betrayal and adultery leading to the dissolution of the family. In nearly all of these films, women are portrayed as either submissive, passive, naïve and in need of a masculine shelter, or femme fatale characters exploiting other women and making them to get involved in immoral and degenerated relations like prostitution, adultery or drug use. The male characters, on the other hand represent law and order, usually high ranking policemen, or mafiotic but still honest and trustworthy figures if they are not villains. In both cases the male figures resemble the strong, masculine male juvenile leads of Yeşilçam. They either rescue 'fallen' women, or prevent more 'innocent' girls to fall into the rotten mechanisms of mafia. The villain male characters resemble their female counterparts in terms of their 'pure evil' plans and actions considering the innocent people outside. Most of the time the hero (representative of law and order) and the heroine (prostitute, drug addict, or a fallen woman) fell in love with each other. But, unfortunately this is an impossible love since the heroine has already been corrupted, lost her innocence in every sense. Despite of all their love and passion and efforts to forget about her past, she could not be happy since she is either killed by a villain, or decides to leave the hero with her own will because she thinks that she does not deserve such a good life. There was also a transformation in the stereotype of female juvenile leads in this period. Innocent, asexual, and

pure heroines were replaced by femme fatale, desirous figures, never hesitating to present their sexuality.³¹

The continuation of Yeşilçam comedies was another characteristic of the early 1980s Turkish cinema. In addition to the Şaban comedies of Kemal Sunal, similar examples of the family comedies of Yeşilçam³² were produced. Şaban comedies were not different from its earlier examples in the 1970s.³³ Erdoğan (1998a: 300) argues that “Made in the period between the mid 1970s and the mid 1980s, they are based on the parodic-travesty laughter of grotesque imagery and they pay little attention to the reality effect”. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the figure of Şaban coincides with the clown and the fool in carnivalesque laughter, who belong to the terrain of the “low” and the “excluded”. In this sense, Şaban is a naive, childish and simpleminded character. However, in the second half of the 1980s, Kemal Sunal comedies also experienced a transformation parallel to the general transformation of Turkish cinema. Following Erdoğan’s (1998a: 300) classification of Kemal Sunal films into two periods, his comedies produced in the second half of the 1980s could be labelled as

³¹ Some of these films are *Acı Gerçekler* (Remzi Jöntürk, 1981), *İntikam Yemini* (Aykut Dü, 1981), *O Kadın* (Halit Refiğ, 1982), *Bataklıkta bir Gül* (Orhan Aksoy, 1983), *Beyaz Ölüm* (Halit Refiğ, 1983), *Gecelerin Kadını* (Osman Seden, 1983), *Günahkar* (Yücel Uçanoğlu, 1983), *Metres* (Orhan Elmas, 1983), *Damga* (Osman Seden, 1984), *Kayıp Kızlar* (Orhan Elmas, 1984), *Yosma* (Orhan Elmas, 1984), *Bu İkiliye Dikkat* (Şahin Gök, 1985), *Eroin Hattı* (Remzi Jöntürk, 1985), *Kahreden Gençlik* (Orhan Elmas, 1985), *Kanun Adamı* (Cüneyt Arkin, 1985), *O Kadınlardan Biri* (Ülkü Erakalın, 1985), *Suçlu Gençlik* (Orhan Elmas, 1985).

³² Some of these films are *Akıllı Deliler* (Oksal Pekmezoğlu, 1980), *Beş Parasız Adam* (Osman Seden, 1980), *Bizim Sokak* (İhsan Yüce, 1981), *Gırgıriye* (Kartal Tibet, 1981), *Gırgıriyede Şenlik Var* (Kartal Tibet, 1981), *Adile Teyze* (Alev Akarar, 1982), *Bizim Mahalle* (Çetin İnanç, 1982), *Buyrun Cümbüşe* (Yavuz Yalınkılıç, 1982), *Görgüsüzler* (Osman Seden, 1982), *Dönme Dolap* (Zeki Alaysa, 1983), *Gırgıriyede Cümbüş Var* (Temel Gürsu, 1983), *Şaşkın Ördek* (Ümit Efehan, 1983), *Kızlar Sınıfı* (Ümit Efehan, 1984), *Deliyse Hergün Bayram* (Ümit Efehan, 1985), *Fakir Milyoner* (Orhan Elmas, 1985), *Kızlar Sınıfı Yarışıyor* (Orhan Elmas, 1985), *Patron Duymasın* (Zeki Alasya, 1985), *Para Babası* (Hulki Saner, 1985), *Ya Ya Ya Şa Şa Şa* (Ümit Efehan, 1985).

³³ Şaban comedies produced in the first half of the 1980s are *Gerçek Şaban* (Natuk Baytan, 1980), *Üçkağıtçı* (Natuk Baytan, 1981), *Yedi Bela Hüsnü* (Natuk Baytan, 1982), *Doktor Civanım* (Kartal Tibet, 1982), *En Büyük Şaban* (Kartal Tibet, 1983), *Tokatçı* (Natuk Baytan, 1983), *Atla Gel Şaban* (Natuk Baytan, 1984), *Orta Direk Şaban* (Kartal Tibet, 1984), *Şabaniye* (Kartal Tibet, 1984), *Gurbetçi Şaban* (Kartal Tibet, 1985), *Katma Değer Şaban* (Kartal Tibet, 1985), *Sosyete Şaban* (Kartal Tibet, 1985), *Şaban Pabucu Yarım* (Kartal Tibet, 1985), *Şen Dul Şaban* (Kartal Tibet, 1985), *Tarzan Rıfkı* (Natuk Baytan, 1986).

“satiric films, enunciating a “serious” social criticism with a comic import on the basis of a strictly realist regime of signification, grotesquerie being either minimised or totally absent”. These “satiric films” are critical of the existing social and political relations, especially new right policies, and surely a part of the satiric comedies of the 1980s, which are the subject of this study and will be discussed in the next chapter.

As it can be seen, the most popular two genres of the early 1980s resemble the conventional narrative structure and use the basic binary oppositions and stereotypes of Yeşilçam melodramas. However, especially in the second part of the 1980s, a new kind of psychological, partly political new cinema emerged and dominated most of the film production in the considered period. The peculiarity of this new genre is that it transformed the conventional binary oppositions, stereotypical plotting and narrative structure of the Yeşilçam cinema and replaced it with complex characters having continuous self-criticism in a depressive state of mind, trying to invent their subconscious motives through digging up their inner conflicts. Scognamillo (1998: 429) elaborates this ‘new cinema’ as follows:

In the 1980s, it is as if the old theories and practices became upside down; a series of problematic, depressed, conflicting, marginal, uncommunicative characters were presented to the audience which was said to be displeased with psychological analyses and straight stories. The basic audience of Turkish cinema who got used to a simple typology, the end of which is evident from the beginning thanks to the choice of classical actors, encountered people who act indecisively between opposite thoughts, search and interrogate their identities, experience the shock of 12 September and its afterwards, criticize the atmosphere, order and their own worlds, manhandle their own art, and who are not easily, even sometimes never analysed, sometimes extremely political, sometimes very much desiring to become a bourgeois, sometimes nostalgic.

One aspect of this new cinema is thematizing 12 September military takeover and its impacts on the former leftist militants and intellectuals. These characters are usually portrayed as desperate figures, which are unable to get over the trauma of 12 September. In some films, torture and imprisonment is the main subject. Both physical and mental collapse of the

hero/heroine is told, referring to the inability of the hero/heroine's adaptation to the post-12 September life.³⁴ However, these films do not refer to the socio-political dynamics of the post-12 September period because they only focused on individual experiences and depressions of the characters. The defeat of the leftist radicalism is only implied through the individual experiences of leftist militants and intellectuals, who are portrayed as losers, who are not able to cope with their traumas and the new social order. They are uncommunicative characters having deep psychological problems. Such anti-social characters have nothing to do but doomed to loose. In general, left ideology is portrayed as doomed to loose, beaten forever. It seems as if these films imply the famous motto of the new right "there is no alternative (TINA)", in a sense that no alternative world view or ideology is able survive in the existing order. Maktav (2000: 87-88) draws a general picture of the 1980s Turkish cinema in terms of handling 12 September and its effects on the society clearly in the following words:

[...] depolitization, intimidation of left, depression of the left ideology in the post-1980 period, individualism, rendering socialist ideas worthless also affected cinema, even leftist directors could not stay out of this atmosphere. Even though they criticized 12 September, they made their criticisms from a particular point of view under the influence of this atmosphere and turned towards the inner worlds of the heroes/heroines. However, this inclination carries the emotionality of the melodramas rather than the critical perspective of political cinema; and these films remained as films of incomprehensible pains, defeat and intimidation, which could do nothing other than giving nihilist messages. In the post-1980 Turkish cinema when even the films about 12 September could not directly target the state, regime, politicians (this is of course partly due to the censorship, yet at time same time, still is a matter of position), on the contrary identified themselves with the mentality 12 September aimed to create, intention to fight for a humanist, democratic, just social order which would be created with left values became meaningless, even there are some directors who turned to the past, to 12 March, the 1980s have already been experienced now.

In some other examples, depressed and conflicting psychologies of the characters intermingle with their sexual problems. As I mentioned in the

³⁴ *Bütün Kapılar Kapalıydı* (Memduh Ün, 1989), *Biri ve Diğerleri* (Tunç Başaran, 1987), *Bir Avuç Gökyüzü* (Ümit Elçi, 1987), *Av Zamanı* (Erden Kıral, 1987), *Çözümler* (Yusuf Kurçenli, 1994), *Kara Sevdalı Bulut* (Muammer Özer, 1987), *Ses* (Zeki Ökten, 1986), *Buluşma* (Artun Yeres, 1994).

above part, exposure of sexual matters was an important outcome of the “constitutive, provocative, inclusive” (Gürbilek, 2001:13) discourse of the new right, yet, ripped off from any radical, emancipatory connotation. Sexuality was treated with the women’s issue in these films. One aspect of the rising women’s rights movement is related with sexual freedom. However, since neither sexual freedom nor women’s rights gained a political, radical character in the 1980s, the films treated these issues in a rather abstract, individualist manner. The women usually involving in complex love and sexual affairs, through which they try to discover their identity and femininity, were portrayed as independent individuals with a degree of economic earning. As Erdoğan (2001: 225-226) states, however, in some films the process of women’s discovery of her own sexuality was presented as a kind of perversion and immorality, for which the women will be paying for. The women characters work in the business world, mostly in the high positions and have a kind of hierarchical authority over men in the office. Yet, in terms of sexuality and love affairs, the unequal relationship between men and women is reproduced and women become dependent on masculine power.³⁵ There are other examples which are sometimes defined as “women’s films”. Atıf Yılmaz has been known as the director of women’s films in the 1980s. Esen (2000: 43) argues that 13 out of 17 films Yılmaz directed from 1980 to 1989 could be defined “women’s films”.³⁶ There are other examples of women’s films which were produced by the social-realist new generation directors of the late 1970s, and other directors of the 1980s.³⁷ Most of these films are not limited with the upper class, bourgeois

³⁵ Erdoğan mentions *Sarı Tebessüm* (Seçkin Yaşar, 1992) and *Medcezir Manzaraları* (Mahinur Ergun, 1989) as examples of such kind of films. I think we can add *Bir Sonbahar Hikayesi* (Yavuz Özkan, 1994), *Yengeç Sepeti* (Yavuz Özkan, 1994) and *Bir Kadının Anatomisi* (Yavuz Özkan, 1995) as an extension of such an approach in the 1990s.

³⁶ *Delikan, Mine, Seni Seviyorum, Bir Yudum Sevgi, Dağınık Yatak, Adı Vasfiye, Dul Bir Kadın, Aahh Belinda, Asiye Nasıl Kurtulur, Kadının Adı Yok, Hayallerim, Aşkım ve Sen, Arkadaşım Şeytan, Ölü Bir Deniz.*

³⁷ *Derman* (1983, Şerif Gören), *Ayna* (Erden Kıral, 1984), *Fahiye Ablâ* (Yavuz Yurgul, 1984), *Firar* (Şerif Gören, 1984), *Gizli Duygular* (Şerif Gören, 1984), *Kurbağalar* (Şerif Gören, 1985), *Gramofon Avrat* (Yusuf Kurçenli, 1987), *Dünden Sonra Yarından Önce* (Nisan Akman, 1987), *Ada* (Süreyya Duru, 1988), *Asılacak Kadın* (Başar Sabuncu,1986), *Rumuz Goncagül* (İrfan Tözüm,1987).

women; problems of the women in the rural areas, lower class women, even prostitutes are told. In this sense, there are more realist examples which give an objective portrait of women from every segment of the society.

Representation of masculinity in Turkish cinema in the 1980s has changed regarding the particular emphasis on the position of women in the society. The strong paternal authority in the family, handsome and strong male juvenile leads, and fatherly bosses were replaced by obsessed, pervert and weak fathers (*Teyzem, İffet*), impotent (both physically and emotionally), hypocritical and coarse husband and lovers (*Sarı Tebessüm, Fahriye Ablâ*), and harassing, sexist bosses (*Medcezir Manzaraları, Kadının Adı Yok*). Ulusay (2004: 148) defines this new tendency as the “loss of masculine power” in the 1980s Turkish cinema. Loss of masculine authority also resulted in a transformation in the representation of family. As we have seen in the former chapters, family has always been an untouchable, even a ‘sacred’ entity in Yeşilçam cinema. The stories were built upon the unity of family and preservation of family values. In the 1980s, however, family was treated as a weak, problematic institution, unable to keep its members together, who wants to become independent individuals and pursue separate lives. Erdoğan (2001: 224) gives *Yengeç Sepeti* (Yavuz Özkan, 1994), *Körebe* (Ömer Kavur, 1985), and *Küçük Balıklar Üzerine Bir Masal* (Barış Pirhasan, 1989) as examples focusing on the dissolution of the family. The transformation in the representation of women was also a factor in the changing attitude towards family in the sense that virtuous, innocent, asexual, and domestic woman stereotype of Yeşilçam was replaced with a desirous, independent, and strong one in the 1980s.

The 1980s were also the years in which directors gained a relative independence from the pressure of the producers compared to the Yeşilçam period. Since the producers and salon owners provided financial resources for film-production, the directors had to act according to their demands. Sometimes, even the actors and actresses were chosen under the

directives of financiers. However, in the 1980s, the directors were able to finance their films through sponsorship mechanisms, personal relations and Eurimages³⁸ support. Gaining such an independence from the immediate pressures of the film market, directors inclined to produce more 'artistic', 'experimental' films. This new attitude is defined by Erdoğan (2001: 224) as "candidacy for an *auteur* position", since directors started to define themselves as artists. In line with the appearance of the director as the "new star", films focusing on the production process, director's pains of creating a new film became a new trend in Turkish cinema.³⁹ Another dimension of this process was a self-reflection of Turkish cinema. In the 1980s, Turkish cinema started to deal with its past, stars and genres. It is rather interesting that most of such films are comedies, which criticize or openly mock with Yeşilçam films.⁴⁰ The new tendency in Turkish cinema to produce 'art' films, without any concern about popularity and appealing to an intellectual, cultivated audience surely led to a despise of Yeşilçam cinema. However, the first traces of a kind of nostalgic gaze in Turkish cinema in the late 1980s towards old Yeşilçam is also observable, parallel with a nostalgia of old Istanbul, Beyoğlu.

This new cinema was a total failure in terms of the box office rates compared to Yeşilçam cinema of the previous period. This is not much surprising when we consider that popularity was not a concern of the directors of 'art' films. Instead of appealing to a wide range of audience, they surely addressed an intellectual, cultivated audience. On the other hand, there emerged a reaction among the audience to this new tendency in

³⁸ Eurimages (Fonds Euro-péen de Soutien a la Coproduction et a la diffusion des oeuvres de création cinématographique et audiovisuelle) is a shared fund supported by over 30 countries. The fund supports European cinema in order to form a common European culture as against the American cinema. (Scognamillo, 1998: 430-431).

³⁹ *Gece Yolculuğu* (Ömer Kavur, 1987), *Su da Yanar* (Ali Özgentürk, 1986), *Devlerin Ölümü* (İrfan Tözüm, 1990).

⁴⁰ Ertem Eğilmez's *Arabesk* is of particular importance here, since in one of his interviews he stated that he has been known as the director of love stories. Another example is Atıf Yılmaz's *Hayallerim, Aşkım ve Sen* which is a criticism of star system, and women stereotypes of Yeşilçam.

Turkish cinema and did not prefer to watch these films in movie theatres. As well as the influence of TV, people preferred other films which somewhat continued Yeşilçam tradition and mixed it with technical effects and narrative structure of Hollywood cinema.

In such an atmosphere, Turkish comedy cinema also experienced a transformation, staying in between the conventional Yeşilçam narration and new tendencies towards psychological, artistic cinema. The social traumas of the new right policies in terms of increasing class differences and restructuring of cultural hierarchies, affected Turkish comedy cinema's inclination to a new direction, adopting a satiric stance instead of the stock character and family comedies of the previous periods.

CHAPTER IV

READING THE TURKISH SATIRIC COMEDIES IN THE 1980s

This chapter aims to analyse the narrative characteristics of the 1980s' satiric comedy films. In the first part, the satiric comedies will be examined in terms of the outstanding conflicts and narrative structure of the story. Since the satiric comedies of the 1980s try to reflect the social atmosphere and transformation from a critical position, they formed a set of oppositions between the "honourable" hero on the one hand and the "swindler" figures and "degenerated order" on the other. In addition to these oppositions, there is a third type of narrative, which I name as the "parody of degeneration". It is different than the former two, in terms of the disappearance of any dichotomy considering the chief characters. Even though the position and characteristics of the "honourable" and the "swindler" may vary regarding the peculiar subject of the narrative and more importantly, the satiric comedies of the 1980s have a diverse spectrum which makes it uneasy to classify them clearly, I think it is still possible to claim that these above mentioned narrative structures provide the basic set of narrative tools of the satiric comedies of the 1980s.

In the second part of this chapter, I will try to analyse the nostalgia and romanticism in the satiric comedies of the 1980s. The sense of nostalgia is displayed through either an image of 'old Istanbul' or a 'provincial romanticism', which constitutes a yearning, mourning gaze to the lost past. In order to understand the specific ideological and social dynamics of this nostalgic gaze, I will try to discover the relation between the satiric comedies of the 1980s and their perception of the present time (a new world

order and mentality guided by new right ideals and principles) and their 'fictional' imagery of the past.

The third and the last part of this chapter seeks to comprehend the continuities and breaks between the Yeşilçam comedy before the 1980s and the satiric comedies of the 1980s. An analysis of the binary oppositions, stereotypes, characters and formation of humour based on the particular social and ideological articulations in their periods will be made concerning the two periods. I think such an analysis will provide us with a comparative perspective to locate the peculiarity of the satiric comedies of the 1980s.

4.1. Oppositions and Conflicts

As I mentioned before, the 1980s satiric comedies vary in terms of their subjects and plots. Contrary to the clear-cut binary oppositions of Yeşilçam, like good-evil or poor-rich, the picture became more complex and it became hard to see sharp, transparent characters. In the 1980s, characters of the comedy films became subtle, dark, complex and reticent, similar to the characters in the psychological, "artistic" films of the period. Turkish cinema was experiencing a transformation concerning their heroes. The spectator started to enter the heroes' inner world, their psychology. Instead of good/evil-from-birth heroes, the characters of the 1980s' satiric comedies seemed to get lost within a contradictory state of mind, having continuous self-criticisms and judgments. The "right" and the "wrong" lost their ground within the mind of the hero. Their insecurity about their acts and decisions reminds the spectator of the insecure, selfish and competitive world of new values and virtues outside.

Even though I argue that we come across with a multi-dimensional, complex bunch of characters, it is still possible to determine some common conflicts. These new dichotomies should be understood in relation with the particular socio-political dynamics of the period. The good and evil

characters of the previous period perished and replaced with the honourable and swindler ones. And there is another narrative category, namely, the “parody of degeneration”, in which there are no “honourables” among the chief characters to get into conflict with “swindlers”. Not surprisingly, the films of this last category have a considerably more pessimistic tone than the other ones. Noting that such characteristics, being honourable or swindler, are not fixed and immutable or in varying degrees, and may display nuances within a category, I will try to draw a general outline of the ‘new’ narrative structures and tools of the Turkish satiric comedies of the 1980s.

4.1.1. Dichotomy: The Honourable versus The Swindler

Especially in the first half of the 1980s’ Turkish comedy films, the basic story was about the conflict between “the honourable” and “the swindler”. In those films, the opposition between “the honourable” and “the swindler” somewhat resembles the relation between the good and evil characters of the 1960s and 1970s’ melodramas and comedies. That is to say, like the old binary oppositions, “the honourable” and “the swindler” characters are presented as ahistoric, natural ones. The socio-economic context behind these characters and the effects of that context on their transformation is not shown, or considered. The characters are presented as if they were born to be “honourable” or “swindler”. To put it more clearly, some characters are prone to degeneration from birth, and some are not.

For example, in *Banker Bilo* (Ertem Eğilmez, 1980) and *Dolap Beygiri* (Atif Yılmaz, 1982), the two leading characters (“the honourable” and “the swindler”) are villagers, or relatives. They were grown up under similar conditions. However, while one of them becomes a forger, the other remains totally pure and decent. “The honourable” one constantly falls into “the swindler”’s tricks. Yet, it is not proper to claim that “the swindler” character is evil. Contrary to the melodramas and comedies of the 1960s and the 1970s’ “evil” characters, “the swindler” characters of the 1980s’

comedies do not aim at the collapse of “the honourable” one. Even sometimes, they try to convince “the honourable” one to change his mentality and choose the “right” way. In many examples, they even offer help to “the honourable” one to join their tricks to gain profit, or joy. For example, in *Dolap Beygiri*, Ali (İlyas Salman) is a newly-appointed civil servant, who comes to live with his sister Hacer (Ayşen Gruda) and her husband Yakup (Şener Şen) to the city. He is a very decent and honourable man, who even offers to pay rent or join the household expenditures to live with them. However, Hacer and Yakup mock him. Yakup tells Ali that it is hard to live with such a mentality. He further says that he would help Ali to adapt to his new job:

Yakup: Your department is fruitful. If they are not bastards, they would give you share!
Ali: What share?
Yakup: Well, you cannot get the lion’s share for now. But if you keep your eyes open...I’ll talk to your chief. He is a good friend of mine.⁴¹

The above dialogue displays the difference between the mentalities of the two leading characters. While Ali offers money to stay in his sister’s house, Yakup advises him to be alert to adapt himself to the circle of bribery and tips in the office. They cannot understand each other. Yakup, however, is not hostile against Ali, he just wants Ali to be a part of the system.

On the other hand, “the honourable” one is also presented as “ignorant” in terms of the rules of the order. They are usually peasants, who migrated to the city to earn a living in an honest way. Therefore, the rules of the order, which I mentioned above, are usually the rules of the city. When “the honourable” is not offered help by “the swindler”, he takes advice from other people who have more experience of city life. For example, in *Banker Bilo*, Bilo (İlyas Salman) is a very naïve and honest peasant, who comes to

⁴¹ Yakup: Eh, sizin daire verimlidir. Hayvan değil ya bunlar, sana da bir pay düşecek elbet!

Ali: Ne payı?

Yakup: Valla aslan payı şimdilik sana düşmez kayınço. Ama gözünü açarsan... Ben müdüre söyledim, benim iyi ahbabımdır.

İstanbul as a result of his fellow-villager Maho's (Şener Şen) tricks and forgery. He has all his money snatched by Maho, so he has to do many jobs from construction-working to peddling. Once, when he is selling cucumbers as a peddler, the municipal policemen come and open their hand for bribery. Ali could not understand what to do. Then, other peddlers give him advice:

Peddler (1): Give him 50 Liras, then it's okay. He is from municipality. Municipality means money.

Peddler (2): Here is İstanbul. You cannot do anything without giving tips!

Peddler (3): It is municipality. Even if you hear its name, make your money ready!⁴²

The conflict between "the honourable" and "the swindler" is sometimes shown through state mechanism and hierarchy. Each of the characters could be a part of state, that is to say, civil-servant or policemen. When "the honourable" character is a part of the state machinery, he tries to struggle with "the swindler(s)" through legal means and power granted to him by his position. For example, in *Şekerpare*, which is a kind of historical comedy telling a story in the late Ottoman period, however implying and criticising the existing social and political atmosphere of the 1980s, Cumali (İlyas Salman) is a newly-appointed night-watchman to Galata police station. Cumali is a very naive, decent and honourable character, and also devoted to his job. In the very beginning of the film, he tells that he had been exiled to Galata police station, because he opposed to his former chief, who was taking bribe. In his first duty, he arrests many notables and rich people because they got drunk and shout in the streets. Those people threat Cumali:

The notable: Do you have any idea who we are?

Cumali: Being notable doesn't mean anything. You fawn over to upper ones and act disgraceful to the lower ones!⁴³

⁴² İşportacı (I): Sıkıştır eline 50 lira olsun bitsin. Belediyeci o, belediye demek para demek.
İşportacı (II): Burası İstanbul, avanta vermeden hiçbir iş yürümez.
İşportacı (III): Belediyedir o, adını bile duysan parayı hazır edicen!

⁴³ Beyzade: Sen bizim kim olduğumuzu biliyo musun?

On the other hand, if “the swindler” character is a state officer, he uses his power and position to seek and secure his own interests, mainly by exploiting his power and authority. Again in *Şekerpare*, the police station is headed by police officer Ziver (Şener Şen), who is a forger and swindler, collects protection money from the Galata tradesmen. Sometimes people attempt to revolt against Ziver and try to seek their rights; however Ziver threatens and manages to suppress them by using his authority and replies them as, “What would happen if the upper one hears about your rebellion against the order?”⁴⁴

In both of the situations, state is shown as a neutral entity, which only provides power and authority to its officers. In some cases, it is shown as a powerless entity, incapable of intervening into everyday life. Furthermore, there is usually a separation between “the state” as an entity and “its officers”. In the case of *Şekerpare*, it can be seen that while the people do not respect Ziver as an officer, they totally trust the central state authority, represented by the Sultan. For example, when Ziver feels himself insecure in an angry mob, which prepares to revolt against “his” order, he suddenly shouts, “Long live Sultan, long live Sultan!” to calm down the mob and remind them of the central authority.

The effect of the central authority/state on the people and its relation with “the honourable” and “the swindler” manifests itself in an ironic way in *Deli Deli K peli*. Even though *Deli Deli K peli* is an adaptation from theatre play, “Buzlar  z lmeden”, which was written by Cevat Fehmi Bařkut in 1964, many dialogues and characters remind us of the degeneration of the social relations and state machinery in the period of the new right, similar to *Şekerpare*. The leading characters (the “honourable” ones) are two runaway lunatics. They arrive at a town, which has no connection with the centre

Cumali: Beyzade oldunuz da nooldu? Yukarıya kuyruk sallar, ařađıya gelince rezillik edersiniz!

⁴⁴ Ziver: D zene bařkaldırdıđınız ya yukarının kulađına giderse, deđil mi ya?

because the snow has closed the ways. The townsmen think that they are the new kaimakam (official charged with governing the town) and judge. In time, these two figures appropriate their roles and start to struggle with “the swindler” and forger notables and bandit of the town, who have been oppressing and exploiting the townsmen. Since “the honourable” characters are “lunatics”, in some way being honourable is identified with naivety and childishness. Such naivety sometimes makes Kaymakam (Kemal Sunal) and Judge (Yavuzer Çetinkaya) to act above the laws to protect the people against the oppression and exploitation of “the swindler” ones. Kaymakam decides to close the shops of rich tradesmen who sell goods with high prices and do black-marketing. Then, their lawyer comes to Kaymakam and demands the shops to be opened:

Lawyer: There is the freedom of trade. Anyone is free to sell or not to sell their goods!

Kaymakam: Fu...k this freedom! Is there a freedom of swindling people?

Lawyer: There is law in this country!

Kaymakam: Law exists to protect honourable men. If that law protects the swindler, than I cancel it!

Lawyer: What about courts?

Kaymakam: I cancel it, too!

Lawyer: You can't!

Kaymakam: I can! There is nothing I wouldn't do to heal people's pain. If it is necessary, I would even die!⁴⁵

On the other hand, there are other examples which show continuity with the older comedies. For example, *Çiçek Abbas*, is in many ways like a typical family comedy of 1960s and 1970s. That is to say, the conflict between “the honourable” and “the swindler” resemble the old binary opposition between “the good” and “the evil”. The “swindler” character is

⁴⁵ Avukat: Ticaret özgürlüğü var. Malını isteyen satar isteyen satmaz!

Kaymakam: Ben öyle özgürlüğün anasını avradını ... Halkı kazıklamak diye özgürlük hangi kitapta var?

Avukat: Bu memlekette kanun var!

Kaymakam: Namuslu adamlar korunsun diye kanun var. Kanun namussuzu koruyacaksa o kanunu kaldırıyorum.

Avukat: Ee, mahkeme?

Kaymakam: Onu da kaldırdım!

Avukat:Yapamazsın!

Kaymakam: Yaparım! Halkın acısını dindirmek için yapamayacağım şey yoktur. Gerekirse canımı bile veririm.

somewhat different from the ones in the other satiric comedies, since he is not much into an ‘impersonal’ swindling act, considering only his profit; but rather like the ‘evil’ characters of the previous period who aims the total collapse of the ‘good’ hero. Therefore, *Çiçek Abbas* could be defined as a continuum of the 1970s Yeşilçam comedies, which was produced in the 1980s.

Even though it is possible to mention a conflict between “the good” and “the evil” in *Çiçek Abbas*, this conflict is not cross-referenced with another binary opposition, which is “the poor” versus “the rich”. The richest character we would ever see in the film is Şakir (Şener Şen), who also lives in the slum but owns his own minibus, contrary to the “rich” and “evil” characters of Yeşilçam, who were mostly factory owners and rich businessmen. However, even though the degree of wealth is minimized to a minibus ownership, it still makes “the evil” character more powerful than “the poor” one. So, it can be argued that minibus becomes the symbol of a climbing up in the social hierarchy, and inter-class conflicts. For example, the status of Abbas (İlyas Salman) immediately changes after he buys his own minibus. He considers himself equal to his former boss because he became a ‘boss’ himself. He gains his self-confidence just when they are at the same level of wealth. After Abbas owns a minibus by taking debt, he changes his appearance and starts to dress himself just the same as Şakir. Because of that Şakir gets angry. The following dialogue clearly summarizes my arguments:

Şakir: What did you say, did you call me Şakir! You will call me as Aga, master!

Abbas: Those days are over, now we both have minibuses.⁴⁶

Later on, Abbas turns back to his former way after losing his minibus. He leaves his new clothes which he had bought in order to prove his equality with Şakir. Becoming an assistant of a minibus driver makes

⁴⁶ Şakir: Ne dedin sen? Ağa, abi, dayı diyeceksin bana!

Abbas: O günler bitti artık. İkimizin de minibüsü var.

him to return his old clothes and way of walking. He becomes quiet and subordinate again. The only way to survive for him is to work harder, act firmly and resist the “kahpe felek” (bad fate) to beat him. “Bad fate” is personalized in the figure of a loan-shark, Necdet, who is another negative figure of the film. He is not “evil”, yet just because of his job, he is mean and greedy. The symbol of “bad fate” and Abbas’ fatalist stance reminds us of the arabesk films of the period. So, it can be claimed that *Çiçek Abbas* is in an inter-textual relation with the *arabesk* films and culture. The conversation between the two, when Abbas could not pay his debt, shows that clearly:

Necdet: Well, Abbas. I told you while loaning. You have no money, no rich father. Who loans one with no money?

Abbas: I’ll work and pay...

Necdet: No.

Abbas: You know I am desperate. I don’t know what to do. This is orphan’s right. Necdet: I do not exploit any orphan’s right. There are a lot of drivers who do not pay their debts. Should I bankrupt Abbas?

Abbas: Go on, hit me. Everyone hit me since I was born. Fate, I don’t know if you are bad or not, but you are not for me.⁴⁷

Dissolution of family and communal bonds is another characteristic of the satiric comedies of the 1980s. Contrary to the solidarist families of the 1960s and 1970s Yeşilçam comedies, in which every member continues to support and help each other even in the worst conditions, the families of the 1980s’ satirical comedies tend to act as a group of individuals who seeks their own interests and related to each other only by kinship. They have relatively weak familial trust for each other, compared to the families in Yeşilçam comedies. In addition to the family, Yeşilçam stressed strong communal bonds of the neighbourhoods or among fellows of the hero/heroine. A collectivist paradigm was the framework of Yeşilçam

⁴⁷ Necdet: Ee, Abbas can. Borcu verirken de söyledim. Kıyıda köşede paran yok. Zengin baban yok. Parası olmayana kim borç verir?

Abbas: Çalışır öderim.

Necdet: Olmaz.

Abbas: Necdet abi, çaresiz kalmışam. Ne yapacağımı şaşırılmışam. Bu yetim hakkıdır Necdet Abi.

Necdet: Ben yetim hakkı yemiyorum ki. Şurda bonosunu ödemeyen bir sürü şoför var. Ben mi batıyım Abbas?

Abbas: Vur abi, noolur. Bu kaçınıcı... Ben anamdan doğdum doğalı ensemden tokat eksik olmadı. Ulan felek, kahpe misin değil misin bilmem ama benden yana değilsin, körolasın.

families, based upon a strong patriarchal discourse. However, in the 1980s, the fellows or the neighbours of the “honourable” hero are portrayed as either indifferent or self-seeking figures, which criticize and mock the “honourable” hero’s all the virtues and moral values. The “honourable” hero usually remains helpless to struggle with the “swindler”, unable to get any support from his family members or fellows. However, *Çiçek Abbas* is different from the satiric comedies of the 1980s in the sense that representation of communal bonds and neighbourhood relations reminds us of the Yeşilçam comedies or melodramas. Contrary to the comedies in which the conflict is based upon the dichotomy between “the honourable” and “the swindler”, there is a sense of strong communal ties and solidarity in *Çiçek Abbas*. The hero (the “honourable”) manages to overcome the obstacles, mainly created by the villain (the “swindler”) with the help of his friends and neighbours. Everyone cooperate for Abbas to repair his minibus and reunite with his lover.

In relation with this point, it is also important to emphasize that the character of “the swindler” in *Çiçek Abbas* is particularly different with the ones in the characteristic satiric comedies of the 1980s. Swindling comprises seeking one’s own interests or joy at any cost, which is taking bribe, stealing and lying in the satiric comedies of the 1980s. Furthermore, as I mentioned before, “the swindler” characters of the 1980s’ comedies do not necessarily aim at the collapse of “the honourable” one. However, in *Çiçek Abbas*, the “swindler” (Şakir) reminds of “the evil” characters of the Yeşilçam melodramas. Şakir’s ultimate aim becomes the collapse of Abbas. He steals Abbas’s minibus’ wheels and motor. By this way, he both manages to separate Abbas from his lover and minibus. This double deprivation resulted in Abbas’s collapse. Yet, with the help of his fellows, Abbas manages to overcome all the obstacles and reunite with his lover and minibus. The community is cooperative and solidarist. One’s personal problem becomes the problem of everyone. Therefore, the problem is solved through cooperation among the members of the community.

4.1.2. Dichotomy: “The Honourable” versus “The Degenerated Order”

This dichotomy could be considered as a new one for the Turkish comedy cinema. Especially in the 1960s and the 1970s, the binary oppositions like “the rich” and “the poor”, and “the good” and “the evil” were the basic narrative tools both in melodrama and comedy. As I mentioned in Chapter II, the hero/heroine was impeded by bad people, who were even played by the same actors and actresses to reinforce the effect of verisimilitude. In the first half of the 1980s, a new binary opposition emerged between the “honourable” and the “swindler”. Even though it introduced a new dimension in terms of binary oppositions to the Turkish cinema, it still focused on two main characters, one is the “honourable” and the other is the “swindler”, somewhat personifying the conflict. However, especially in the second half of the 1980s, “the swindler” character was replaced by “the degenerated order”. Instead of ahistoric, taken-for-granted swindler characters, “the honourable” one has to struggle with “the degenerated” order to survive. Therefore, it can be argued that the personification of swindling somewhat disappeared from satirical comedies.⁴⁸

In those films, the people around the leading character, namely, his colleagues, friends, neighbours, and even his family seem to lack all the honourable and virtuous characteristics ascribed to the leading character.

⁴⁸ I think that *Davaro* would be classified under that category, despite of some peculiarities and differences. First of all, the main conflict is between the hero (Memo) and the rest of the people around him. Including his fiancée Cano, everyone in the village takes side against Memo, who refuses to kill a man due to a vendetta affair. No one takes him seriously and everyone despises him. However, there are no traces of swindling, in terms of bribery and moral corruption, or a sense of lack of communal bonds in the film. The story rather tells the irrationality of a premodern tradition, which is vendetta. Furthermore, the hero, played by Kemal Sunal seems to be continuation of his stock character İnek Şaban. As a result of many tricks, he pretends as if he killed the man and manages to marry his fiancée. But this time he gets caught by the gendarme before he enters the bridal chamber. Then, some coincidences help him to escape and become a bandit. After that everyone starts to treat him differently.

Yet, the lack of those characteristics are a result of the social relations and system rather than being personal and individual. That is to say, those films present a community without any communal bonds and solidarity. Everyone seeks their individual interests to survive and pursue a good living. When “the honourable” leading character faces with difficulties, he does not have his family, neighbours or friends to help him. Because everyone more or less faces the same difficulties and there is no concept like ‘solidarity’ which lives in the 1980s’ world. However, in this group of films such as *Namuslu*, *Milyarder*, *Çıplak Vatandaş*, *Koltuk Belası* all the degenerated people around the “honourable” hero are not evil, bad characters. They are not born-to-be negative, or “badness” is not embodied within them. Rather, they became the part of a social order, in which the strong ones survive. They managed to adapt to that system and live according to its rules. Even sometimes, those characters are shown as likable and funny. In those films, an important part of the humour is built upon them. Their conversations among each other or with “the honourable” hero, are an important part of the satirical and critical tone of the film. For example, in *Namuslu*, Ali Rıza (Şener Şen) is an honest, decent and honourable civil servant. He never attempts to take bribe or never complains to do excessive work tilted on him. Yet he is despised and scorned by his colleagues, neighbours and family, for being so timid and coward. When one of his colleagues sees him working hard, he mocks with Ali Rıza:

Colleague: Ooo, bravo! Go on working! A decree is to be released soon. They are going to put the statues of the fools who work for poverty for the sake of the country!⁴⁹

And, when Ali Rıza sees him taking bribe and looks at him critically, he says,

Colleague: Why did you look at so angrily? Everyone makes a living in some way. If we were to work for only a civil-servant’s

⁴⁹ İş arkadaşı: Ooo, aferin, çalış çalış. Bir kararname çıkarılıyormuş yakında. Vatan millet aşkına sefaletle talim eden enayilerin meydanlara heykelleri dikilecekmiş!

salary... (*He makes a rude gesture with his hand*). Life is short, isn't it? (*Then, Ali Rıza walks away*) Dumb!⁵⁰

The mocking and despising tone which can be seen in the above dialogue in fact present the condition of a decent and honourable man who tries to live without any concessions in a social order in which swindling, making good in the easiest and fastest but not necessarily the most correct and decent way and foxiness are worthy. Such a tone is also observable in *Çıplak Vatandaş*. In *Çıplak Vatandaş*, İbrahim is a low-income civil servant who tries to make living for his family. When his salary becomes insufficient, he starts to do extra jobs. Yet, in time he could not cope with such a tiring tempo and when despite of all his efforts, he couldn't provide for his family, he goes mad and runs naked in the streets. After that, a journalist starts to make interviews with his colleagues, friends and family. One of his colleagues describes İbrahim in a mocking manner:

Colleague: How do you say it, one of those who are "destined to payrolls"! Dutiful to his superiors. Respectful to his colleagues. Also pleasant and content with little! My dear, he is an ideal low-income citizen! Crucial for every family! (*He laughs*)⁵¹

Likewise, the political atmosphere and the politicians of the country – even sometimes politics itself- is criticized and presented as a part of the degenerated order. Politicians are generally portrayed as corrupt and self-seeking men. Therefore, it is also worth mentioning that when a politician is presented as "the honourable" character of the film, his fate becomes nothing but going mad unless he adapts himself to the order. *Koltuk Belası* is a proper example in this sense. The leading character, Zühtü (Kemal Sunal) is an honest, decent and honourable man, who becomes the mayor of a town and ends up in asylum because he 'fails' to cope with the corrupt

⁵⁰ İş arkadaşı: Niye öyle kötü baktın? Herkes bir türlü yolunu bulup geçinip gidiyor işte. Bi memur maaşına kalıcak olsak...Hayat kısa di mi abi? ... İnek!

⁵¹ İş arkadaşı: Nasıl diyorsunuz hani, şu "bordro mahkumlarından"! Amirlerine itaatkar. İş arkadaşlarına saygılı. Hem de güler yüzlü ve kanaatkar. Örnek bir dar gelirli vatandaş, canım! Her eve lazım!

and degenerated order. When the tradesmen and businessmen of the town are displeased with Zühtü's decisions and acts, a deputy of his party comes to warn him and give advice:

Deputy: You see everyone takes their advantage. You cannot change this tradition. You have no right to do that. How will you favour your friends, make good for your family with this way of thinking?

Zühtü: I don't intend to.

Deputy: (*hits the table angrily*) You have to! We did everything you asked for. (...) You shouldn't forget your word. You will do what I want regarding the demands of the party.

(...)

Zühtü: I have applied the law.

Deputy: (*in a derisive manner*) Forget the law (...) do the opposite of what you have done till today. (...) Play the three monkeys!⁵²

Furthermore, in some of the films in that category, "the honourable" character even lacks the support and intimacy supposed to be provided by his family. As I mentioned in the previous part, families with relatively weak bonds, relations and trust among its members is a characteristic of the satiric comedies of the 1980s, compared to the families in Yeşilçam comedies. In some films, family members of the "honourable" hero even despise and look down on him, and accuse him of being "incompetent". All the virtues and moral values of the leading character is criticized and mocked by his family and relatives. Examples of this tendency are namely, *Namuslu*, *Milyarder* and *Koltuk Belası*. In all those films, "the honourable" character has a problematic relation with his family. He is not respected, even loved by them. His relations with his family starts to improve only when he somewhat involves in swindling and forgery unwillingly.⁵³ Furthermore,

⁵² Milletvekili: Gelen yemiş giden yemiş. Bu geleneği sen bozamazsın. Hakkın yok buna. Bu kafayla hismına, dostuna nasıl kıyak yapacaksın? Ailene, damadına nasıl köşe döndüreceksin?

Zühtü: Hiç öyle bir niyetim yok.

Milletvekili: Olmalı! İstediyin her şey yapıldı. (...) Sözünü unutma. Partinin istekleri doğrultusunda benim isteklerimi uygulayacaksın. (...)

Zühtü: Kanunları uyguladım.

Milletvekili: Unut kanunları (...) ve bugüne kadar yaptıklarının tam tersini yap. (...) Gözlerini kapayacaksın vazifeni yapacaksın!

⁵³ Except for *Milyarder*, in which hero's family start to respect and acts as if they love him when he wins a lottery. However, it still fits the framework in terms of the representation of the family.

they behave hypocritical; continuously make plans after him. In *Milyarder*, the hero's family change their attitudes towards him after he wins the biggest prize from lottery, and accuse him for making plans of running away with the money. Similarly, in *Namuslu*, Ali Rıza's (Şener Şen) wife Naciye (Ayşen Gruda), son, mother-in-law and brother-in-law despise and mock him, until Ali Rıza was robbed by thieves while he was carrying a huge amount of his office's money. After that, they suddenly change their behaviour, but in a hypocritical way and start to shower attention on him. There is a sharp contrast in terms of their treatment before and after the robbery, because, like everyone else, they think that Ali Rıza keeps the money. Before, they even accuse him for being so honest and not accept bribe. But most of all, they despise his occupation: civil servant. A conversation with his wife clearly illustrates the despising tone towards being a civil-servant:

Naciye: Do you have to wash your shirt and socks everyday?

Ali Rıza: I am a respectable civil-servant. I deal with millions everyday. Of course my shirt and socks must be clean. A man should be honourable and trusted.

Naciye: Nobody gives consideration to you but you are not aware of that.

Ali Rıza: A man should be trusted, esteemed. Did we raise this boy to be a hardware dealer?

Naciye: No, to be a civil-servant like you! (*She laughs*)⁵⁴

Stealing, taking bribe or being greedy is seen as a matter of courage. The only way to be respected and admired by friends, neighbours and family members is to be rich, have lots of money. All the social relations are reduced to the degree of material wealth. In *Milyarder*, the leading character becomes an important man and gets respect from his family and friends just after he won the greatest prize from lottery. Similarly, in *Koltuk Belası*, Zühtü is forced to accept the offer to be nominated as Mayor by his family, despite

⁵⁴ Naciye: Allah'ın günü gömleğini çorabını yıkamasan olmaz mı?

Ali Rıza: Koca bir mutemedim ben Naciye. Niçin öyle söylüyorsun. Milyonlarla oynuyorum her gün. Gömleğim çorabım elbette tertemiz olmalı ki...İnsanın şerefi itibarı yerinde olsun Naciye.

Naciye: Kimsenin seni 40 paralık adamdan saydığı yok ama sen farkında değilsin.

Ali Rıza: İnsanın itibarı olsun. Biz bu oğlanı nalbur olsun diye mi büyüttük Naciye?

Naciye: Yok, senin gibi vekil vükela olsun diye!

all his doubts about the possible effects of politics on his morality. Zühtü tries to tell them his doubts, but instead of listening to him they start dreaming about the opportunities, wealth and esteem which will be provided if Zühtü becomes the mayor.

The films based on a conflict between the “honourable” and the “degenerated” order presents a totally corrupt world in terms of basic values and virtues, with one decent, honest figure standing at the centre of this atmosphere. It seems as if this man is the last relic of a lost world, the past. He has no chance to survive in such a world without giving up his honesty and honour. Therefore, he either adapts to this order (*Namuslu*), or chooses to keep his virtues at the expense of becoming a total ‘outsider’ of the system (*Koltuk Belası, Milyarder, Çıplak Vatandaş*). In this sense, we can argue that the pessimistic tone of the psychological film of the 1980s regarding the world of the new right is also valid for the satiric comedies of the 1980s.

4.1.3. The “Parody of Degeneration”:

In some of the comedies of the 1980s, no conflict is observed between the chief characters of the film. That is to say, the film satirizes the degenerated order by parodying it, with no emphasis on any specific “honourable” character. For there is no leading pure and naïve “honourable” characters in these films. The chief characters are portrayed as “swindlers”, in an exaggerated and caricaturized sense. So, the formation and the structure of the story do not let the audience to be sympathetic to or identify themselves with any of the leading characters. To elaborate this, it would be better to give examples of those films, tell their stories and describe the construction of the narrative.

Despite their differences in terms of stories and style of humour, I think that *Yoksul, Postacı, Değirmen, Zübük* and *Selamsız Badosu* can be

considered as “parodies of degeneration”. In all of these comedies, the leading characters (which were always expected to be ‘ideal’ for audience identification) try to make good of themselves, become rich and benefit from any situation. (Of course *Zübük* is a specific example here since the leading character, Zübük, is “the swindler” and the film tells his story of political “success” and getting wealthy). Sometimes the leading character has self-judgements ethically (*Değirmen*). But in general, he is aware of the fact that he has to seek his own interests no matter what, in order to survive. The films usually end with no repayment in terms of the leading characters. This is also important to show the pessimism of the films, since they imply no hope for the “honourable” common people to reach a better, equal and just order someday.

Zübük is an adaptation from one of Aziz Nesin’s novels, who has been known as one of the greatest satirists of Turkey. Similar to *Deli Deli Küpeli*, *Zübük* was written in an earlier period (1961), but could be easily read as a criticism and satire of Turkish social, political and economical atmosphere in the 1980s. It tells the moral degeneration of the politicians and the regime. The name of the leading character is Zübük. He is described as cunning, swindler and ambitious, who just seeks his own interest. He starts his career as a civil servant, but is fired because of bribery. Then he decides to be a politician and rises to be a minister at the end. The whole story is a criticism of the mechanism of politics and politicians in Turkey. There are some references to actual political parties and politicians. For example, while Destek Party (Support Party) –which is Zübük’s party-, refers to Democrat Party, the other party refers to Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi. While the members of Destek Party are shown as unreliable, crooked and opportunist figures, the only present member of the opposing party, Kadir is shown as a honest, brave, trustworthy, but a little naive figure. It can be said that the characteristics ascribed to the parties are materialized in Zübük’s and Kadir Ağa’s personalities. Degenerated politics of Destek Party becomes apparent in some of Zübük’s words which

he uses during his speech in front of the Destek Party town centre, like “Be aware, fill your pocket!” and “Do not pay your tax, but pay your tip!”⁵⁵

Politics is represented in such a way that no single honourable, honest active politician is shown during the film. Dorsay argues that, “In “Zübük”, Aziz Nesin tells the sick, deceased face of the Turkish democracy and the insincere, devious, self-seeking sort of a politician created by this deceased mechanism” (Dorsay, 1995: 114). This discourse is also present in such utterances like, “I couldn’t decide, should I be honourable like you or should I be a deputy?”⁵⁶, and “Once you touch your butt to the deputy chair, it itches continuously, always wants to sit on it!”⁵⁷

Criticism and parody of corrupt politics and degenerated state machinery is also the subject of *Değirmen*. *Değirmen* is one of the best examples of political satire in Turkish cinema and also an adaptation (Reşat Nuri Güntekin’s short story, *Sarıpınar* 1914). Though it tells the degeneration of the state mechanism and bureaucracy in the late Ottoman period, it has a more comprising stance in terms of politics and state machinery. The main question of the film is about the relations between the central authority and its subjects and irrationality and inefficiency of the hierarchical state machinery.

The story takes place in a small Anatolian village in 1914. Kaymakam (head of the official district) is a very fainthearted and coward man who just tries to keep the status quo and never lets anything to change in the town, in order to not to loose his position. One day, Kaymakam joins a drinking party with the notables of the town, in which Nadya – a Bulgarian belly-dancer – dances. When the old house could not bear the weight of all the dancing

⁵⁵ “Aç gözünü, doldur keseni!”, “Ne demişler, vergi verme rüşvetini ver!”

⁵⁶ “Bir türlü karar veremedim, senin gibi namuslu mu olayım mebus mu olayım?”

⁵⁷ “Mebus koltuğuna adamın kıcı değmeye görsün. Artık kaşınıtidan duramaz, hep koltuğa oturmak ister!”

men and Nadya, it starts to shake and nearly falls down. In order to conceal the party, everyone is told that an earthquake took place. However, this plan does not work and the worst thing ever for Kaymakam happens: The Ottoman state notices Sarıpınar and the status quo start to change very rapidly. Every official who comes to investigate the situation of the town realizes the real story but chooses to be a part of the lie about the earthquake considering their own interests.

The impotence and inefficiency of the state machinery is also the subject of *Selamsız Bandoşu*, in some sense similar to *Değirmen*. Yet, contrary to *Değirmen*, this time the mayor of a small and faraway Anatolian town tries to attract the attention of the central authority and “change the fate of the town”. Therefore, rather than presenting the irrational and inefficient state mechanism, the film focuses on the distance and rupture between the central authority and the local administrations, or the periphery. All of the characters are somewhat problematic. The mayor (Şener Şen) tries to form a band for the town to attract the attention of the president during his journey all around the country. Yet, his real aim seems to be elected as a deputy in the future. On the other hand, his main rival, Tahir Ağa continuously accuses the mayor to manipulate and exploit his position for his own profits. However, he is also an indecent figure and do not care the well-being of the town and the townsmen so much. He just desires to become mayor and gain power. And finally, another important character, which is the chief of the band, is an alcoholic and hides his problem from the mayor and the rest of the townsmen for a while.

The distance and rupture between the central authority and the peripheral town is so evident that one of the members of the municipal council, who is a very old ghazi of The War of Independence mentions that the latest visitor of the town as a state official was a deputy during the presidency of İsmet İnönü. What is more ironic is that he was compelled to visit the town, because the train was broken down near Selamsız. At first,

the idea of forming a band seems rational to the mayor and the members of the council. They are pretty sure that such a painstaking ceremony which will be prepared with great care and effort would attract the attention of the president. The mayor even tries to convince the townsmen for the formation of the band in the following words:

Mayor: If we prepare a ceremony worthy of the president, the train will stop and the president will come to Selamsız. Because that is the reason why the president goes on a journey all around the country; to speak to the people, learn their problems. Aren't we the children of this country?⁵⁸

Yet, in the final scene, the townspeople (and the audience) just see a waving hand from the train's window. The train goes on its way without stopping. Though, the band continues playing, everyone dancing around it. The mayor could not succeed to "change the fate of Selamsız". However, the final scene implies that this is an accepted and expected fate for the townspeople. It is as if any good will is not enough to eliminate the distance between the state and the people. According to Onaran (1994:21), the film has a pessimist stance by implying the inefficiency of such a democratic action (the cooperation of the townsmen in forming the band to attract the attention of central authority) and inaccessibility of public authority. In fact, the film tells the story of "bad fate" of the forgotten, neglected peripheral towns of Anatolia.

Yoksul and *Postacı* are different from *Zübük*, *Selamsız Bandosu* and *Değirmen* in the sense that their main subject is not politics. They rather narrate fragments from the everyday life of common people and criticize "the degenerated order" through departing from the practices of everyday life. *Yoksul* tells the story of a tea vendor, named Yoksul; working in a large commercial building (*iş hanı*). Having noted that the main subject of *Yoksul* is not politics, deep political connotations of this peculiar film must be emphasized. "Yoksul" is his nick name (meaning "poor, needy"). He is

⁵⁸ Belediye Başkanı: Eğer biz layıkıyla bir karşılama töreni hazırlarsak tren durur ve Cumhurbaşkanı Selamsız'a gelir arkadaşlar. Neden, çünkü bunun için yurt gezisine çıkıyor. Halkla konuşmak, dertlerini öğrenmek için. Biz bu vatanın evlatları değil miyiz?

despised and looked down on by the inhabitants of the building. Everyone shouts at him, treats him badly. Furthermore, those characters are all in some way corrupt and indecent figures. For example, there is a merchant and a wholesaler, who also deals with export swindling. In another store there is a leather workshop, in which children labourers work under poor conditions. There is also a broker, who earns money from foreign currency. One other figure is an Islamist merchant, with a long beard and a cap, continuously telling beads and criticizing the relations between men and women in the building. It can be claimed that the film gives us a general and over-critical picture of new class relations (by focusing on the relations between newly rising and depriving classes) of the 1980s. All characters, even the chief character *Yoksul*, are represented as immoral and swindler figures. The building represents the socio-economic atmosphere of the 1980s; it is like a micro cosmos of Turkey. The spatial configuration of the film (whole story takes place in a multi-storey commercial building) enhances this portrayal. The characters (particularly *Yoksul* and the workers staying for overtime) are trapped in this gloomy and depressing place and the cyclical nature of the narrative structure deepens this feeling of being trapped. *Yoksul's* fiancée is his only “real” and tangible connection with the outer world; as she tricks him, his sole hope fades away.

At first, *Yoksul* seems to be a powerless, miserable figure, for which the audience could feel sympathy. But in due course, he starts to do tricks to get rid of his boss, who is also a loan shark and the keeper of the building. And when he succeeds in that and becomes boss himself, he starts to treat the new tea vendor in the same way his former boss treated him: despise and scorn him. Furthermore, he also becomes as greedy and swindling as his former boss was. *Yoksul* wants to be called as ‘boss’ by him. And he gives the new tea vendor advices about earning money and becoming rich, just like his former boss did to him. Therefore, the film gives the idea that it is not likely to change the order of things (an order of swindling, forgery and selfishness); since this is the way it goes. The only

weakness of Yoksul is his fiancée. He loves her and does everything she asks him to; gives her a lot of money and tries to buy her whatever she wants. However, at the end she appears to be a swindler and runs away with another man, taking all the money and presents given to her by Yoksul. So, the film implies that even the love affairs are artificial and based on material interests in such a social order. Furthermore, as I mentioned before, since the audience would feel sympathy for the powerless and miserable Yoksul at the beginning, this changes and Yoksul becomes one of the swindler figures of the building in time. It can be argued that there are in fact no pure, naïve and honourable characters for which the audience could feel sympathy, except the new tea vendor, Yoksul's successor, who is exposed to the same treatment by Yoksul, as his former boss did to him. Yet, the audience feels that when this new vendor finds an opportunity to make good of his own in any way possible, there is no reason for him to be corrupted and spoiled as Yoksul did.

In some dialogues between Yoksul and his boss, there is a critical tone towards the new right policies and its mentality. For example, when Yoksul is about to deliver tea to the stores, his boss stops him. He takes one of the two sugar cubes from the tea glasses:

Boss: What are you doing?! Didn't I tell you to put only one, at most one and a half cubes? Will you bankrupt us? What does the prime minister say? He says "economize on your food!" It is time to make economy!⁵⁹

Or, when Yoksul complains his boss about how much tea the people of the building drink, he replies him as:

Boss: Of course they will drink, is it bad? Let them drink. Now there is free market, pal. Keep your eyes open!

Yoksul: (in a derisive manner,) I know, there is liberalism!

Boss: Well, they should drink to make us earn.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Patron: Napiyon lan sen? Lan ben sana bi dene koy demedim mi? Hadi bilemedin bi buçuk. Batıracan mı bizi? Bak ne diyo Başbakan. Biraz boğazını tutun diyo. Devir ekonomi devri.

And in another conversation, Yoksul attempts to object when his boss starts to blow and increase the debts of the customers. Then the boss replies as, “And you want to get married! If you want to earn money in Istanbul, you have to swindle anybody whatsoever! No pity!”⁶¹

In *Postacı*, the story resembles *Yoksul* in the sense that it also tells the story of a bunch of common people living in a neighbourhood. However, it is still different from the former four (*Zübük*, *Değirmen*, *Selamsız Bandosu* and *Yoksul*) films in the sense that there are no direct references to the political order of the day, or no open criticism of the current socio-economic order. The film is much more like a continuation of the comedies of the 1970s, in terms of its emphasis on the relations between neighbours and the humour based on the mimics and gestures of the characters. Yet, it is still possible to see a difference, which can be observed in the chief character, the postman Adem (Kemal Sunal).

The film tells the story of Adem, who tries to get married with Sevtap (Fatma Girik) and win the race between the postmen. Yet, Sevtap’s elder brother Latif does not approve this because Adem is poor, but their family is rich. In fact, his doubts do not seem to be totally imaginary, because Adem really aims to live more comfortably with Sevtap’s money and in her house by getting married with her. This is the difference of the film from the previous comedies of the 1970s. In those films, the poor hero would never care about his lover, the rich heroine’s money. The only thing that matters was love. However, in *Postacı*, Adem does not even hide his aim from Sevtap and tries to convince her about the importance of money and wealth. For example, when Sevtap goes to Adem’s house and stay there for three days, they planned that his brother would consent to their marriage because

⁶⁰ Patron: Tabi içecekler, fena mı? Bırak içsinler. Şimdi piyasa serbest aslanım. Gözünü aç. Yoksul: Biliyorum, liberalizm var.

Patron: (...) Ee, onlar içecek ki sen kazanasın.

⁶¹ Patron: Bi de evleneceğim diyon. Bu İstanbul’da para kazanmak istiyosan önüne geleni kazıklayacaksın aslanım. Acımak yok!

he would think that her virginity is lost, which is dishonourable for the family. Yet, Latif does not come to take her and consent to their marriage. So, Adem tries to convince Sevtap to return to her home, which makes Sevtap unhappy:

Sevtap: You don't love me. I didn't come to you for your money. You know, when two lovers unite...

Adem: A hayloft turns into a lovely landscape! Are we cows? We have nothing to do in a hayloft!

Sevtap: You don't love me anymore...

Adem: There can be no love in such a coop! I love you, but in your house. In your beautiful, 120 square meters flat, which is centrally heated and has hot water. You deserve palaces, my dear princess. This place would not suit you. Please, my dear, go...⁶²

In fact, Adem aims to become rich by marrying to Sevtap. He also loves her but, as it can be seen from the above dialogue, the time of pure, ideal love has ended. And the poor hero is aware of that. There is no way to be happy without wealth and money. This film is crucial to show the representation of the transformation of love, especially between a relatively rich girl and a poor boy. Once, the audience used to identify themselves with the poor, but still honourable hero, who does not care about money and wealth of the rich girl. But in *Postacı*, the audience is shown that this period has ended and replaced with one in which material needs become prior to virtues like love, or honour. Like Adem says to Sevtap, 'there can be no love in a coop'.

To sum up, there are specific patterns of the construction of the narrative in the satiric comedies of the 1980s. Especially in the early years of the decade, it is observed that the narrative is constructed upon a dichotomy between the "honourable" and the "swindler" characters, similar

⁶² Sevtap: Sen beni sevmiyosun. Ben senin paran için gelmedim. Hem iki gönül bir olunca...

Adem: Samanlık seyran olurmuş! Ulan biz inek miyiz, ne işimiz var samanlıkta?

Sevtap: Sen beni sevmiyosun artık.

Adem: Bu kümeste aşk mı olur? Seni seviyorum ama senin evinde. 120 metre karelik o gül gibi dairende. Sıcak sulu, kaloriferli...sen saraylara layıksın, prensesim benim. Sen buralarda yapamazsın. Hadi canım, hadi güzelim...

to the binary oppositions of Yeşilçam, like “good” and “evil”. In the following years, the conflicting elements transformed and single “swindler” characters were replaced by the “degenerated order”. In both of these dichotomies, we could still figure out an ‘ideal’ chief character, namely the “honourable” one, who gets into conflict with either a single figure, or the whole social order. However, a different type of narrative is also evident in terms of the satiric comedies, which I named as the “parody of degeneration”. In this type, specific “honourable” and “swindler” figures as the leading characters of the film disappear. Having a quite pessimistic tone, these films parody the existing social and political atmosphere in the country in the 1980s, with direct or indirect connotations. Consequently, even though the picture became more complex and it became hard to see sharp, transparent characters in the 1980s Turkish cinema, all of the three types of narratives constitute the basic framework and structure of the films and could be grouped around some common conflicts. What is common in all of the above mentioned films is a pessimistic, hopeless tone concerning the social and political atmosphere of the period. This position led to another ‘new’ tendency in the satiric comedies, which could be defined as ‘nostalgia and romanticism’. This new tendency and its specific articulations with the cultural and ideological climate of the period will be discussed in the next part.

4.2. Nostalgia and Romanticism

Romanticism and nostalgia are new elements introduced to the Turkish comedies in the 1980s. The sense of nostalgia is usually displayed by the memory of an image of ‘old Istanbul’ or a ‘provincial romanticism’, which implies a perishing spatial temporality with its virtues and values. In both cases, some of the satiric comedies of the 1980s thematize dreamed, imagined, yearned, idealized past or faraway present, mourned with a nostalgic gaze. Before an analysis of the films, however, it would be proper to have a brief look on the concept of nostalgia.

Stauth and Turner (1995: 60-63) define nostalgia through four components. Firstly, nostalgia perceives history as a collapse and loss, in which the human being becomes more and more distant from a golden age. Contrary to the modernist ideal of linear development and progress in history, nostalgia envisages a dark, inauspicious future. Secondly, nostalgia emphasizes the moral decay. This decay results in a spiritual insecurity of the individuals. Third component is related with the second one, comprising the dissolution of the society with its moral and solidarist norms leading the loss of individual autonomy. And lastly, nostalgia implies the loss of simplicity, spontaneity and authenticity. All of these components lead us to the basic idea of nostalgia: an irreparable loss. According to Bora and Onaran (2003: 236), just because this idea, nostalgia is always related with a sense of conservatism no matter which political ideology it is articulated to.

It is possible to trace the basic components of nostalgic gaze in the satiric comedies of the 1980s; however, it is different from the 'nostalgia cinema' defined by Jameson. Jameson (2003: 281) argues that a specific historical period is represented in cinema through representations of the past. He claims that nostalgia cinema obligates "us to (...) underscore the cultural sources of all the attributes with which we have endowed the period, many of which seem very precisely to derive from its own television programs; in other words, its own representation itself". Since nostalgia cinema, in Jameson's terms, claims to represent the past, theme of nostalgia in the satiric comedies of the 1980s tends to represent a present, which is in complete opposition with 'the imagined past'. In line with this argument, we can state that any representation of the past is destined to be filtered by our present ideas and prejudices about it. As Huyssen (1999: 13) emphasizes, although every remembrance is definitely related with a past event or experience, temporal status of any remembrance act is the present. Therefore, an analysis of the theme of nostalgia and romanticism in

cinema would enlighten the 'present' ideological stance behind a particular representation or remembrance of the past.

Even though it is not possible to explain the elements of nostalgia and romanticism in the satiric comedies of the 1980s through Jameson's concept of "nostalgia cinema", there is still a process of de-fragmenting the past and operating on its own representations. That is to say, the element of nostalgia in the satiric comedies of the 1980s is parallel to a romanticism of a "golden past". The present time represented in the films is like an anti-thesis of the past, also a negative one. The most important element which characterizes the "golden past" is communal solidarity. And, present society is shown as the sum of self-seeking individuals, with no sense of solidarity and cooperation. Therefore, all the 'lost virtues' mentioned and implied in those films derive from or somewhat related with the idea of a solidarist community.

Dignity, chastity, honour, honesty, benevolence, and philanthropy could be mentioned as the most important "lost virtues" in the present time. Those values and virtues are not valid or worthy any more. Ironically, they are replaced with swindling, egoism, opportunism and greed. Furthermore, "lost virtues" are not only invalid, but also funny and absurd in a world of swindling and opportunism. In most of the films, the honourable and honest hero is represented as the cause of laughter. He is a misfit in the society; he cannot adapt himself to the order and social relations. His inability to conform to the existing social relations and values provokes laughter. Yet, the films still imply a yearning for the good old days, in which the hero would be treated as an honourable member of the society. However, unfortunately, these days are lost forever and an honourable and decent man's fate is to be mocked with and nothing more in the present time.

In terms of nostalgia and romanticism in the satiric comedies of the 1980s, it is important to analyse the relation between the "lost virtues" and

the urban and the rural. Especially in Yavuz Turgul's satiric comedies, who could be defined as "a candidate for an auteur position" (Erdoğan, 2001: 224), those "lost virtues" are identified with a lost community of Istanbul. *Muhsin Bey* and *Aşk Filmlerinin Unutulmaz Yönetmeni* are two major examples of Turkish satiric comedy cinema in the 1980s, both having a nostalgic gaze for the past, from different perspectives. In both of these films, 'old Istanbul' is lost with its delicate fabric, traditions, customs and norms and 'new Istanbul' became a chaotic, degenerated, hybrid city (and culture) under the attack and invasion of 'low', 'peripheral' cultures of the migrant masses. Sometimes, the discourse on the invasion of low culture is interwoven with the rising values of the new right, such as individualism, competition, unconditional success and impudence. The importance of Istanbul here is that nearly all of the films were shot in Istanbul, and middle-class, 'old Istanbul gentlemen' are the chief characters, if there is a nostalgic gaze in the film. The image of 'old Istanbul' is constructed upon a small community, having elite and aesthetic tastes. The new comers of the city or newly riches of the 1980s are seen as lacking the necessary cultural and symbolic capital.⁶³ For example, in *Muhsin Bey*, the chief character, Muhsin Kanadırlık (Şener Şen) represents a dying, fading face of Istanbul. He is a music producer, yet he belongs to the past; he can not adapt himself to the new music genres, like *arabesk*. Therefore, he hardly makes a living, has difficulty to find jobs, to make deals with business owners in music industry. Yet, he never thinks or attempts to adapt himself to the new genres. He

⁶³ I use the terms 'symbolic capital' and 'cultural capital' in Bourdieuan sense. Bourdieu denotes legitimate knowledge in a specific field with the term 'cultural capital'. For Bourdieu, in all societies there is a struggle between the groups and classes to ensure their reproduction; they engage in these struggles in the fields, according to the specific logic of that field (Garnham & Williams, 1986:122). This logic of the field is a system of social positions structured in terms of power relations, either by individuals or institutions. The location within the power relations is determined by the distribution of the capital among the actors, which is specific to that field. The individuals struggle for the redistribution or the conservation of the existing composition of the capital. Jenkins (1994:85) defines four types of capital at stake in the fields: economic capital, social capital, cultural capital (legitimate knowledge), and symbolic capital (prestige and honour). Positions are taken in terms of domination, subordination or equivalence to each other in accessing to these resources or capital. However, the fields are hierarchically organized in a structure overdetermined by the field of class struggle.

strictly rejects the offers to change his style and work with *arabesk* singers. Furthermore, he does not seem to be interested in any image or icon that is popular. One of his neighbours works as an extra in the films. He prepares for the Turkish version of *Rambo*, which is a very popular American movie in the 1980s. However, Muhsin Bey has not even heard of such a film and can not understand his role. The popular images of the present do not make any sense for Muhsin Bey; his tastes belong to the past. For example, he listens to classical Turkish music LPs in the evenings, drives a very old car (even seems to be a piece of antique). He is also in love with his neighbour, a single mother working in night clubs as a singer. However, he cannot confess his feelings to her and platonically loves her. He even gave her name to one of his flowers and chats with it everyday. Such a love affair is represented as “out-of-date”, since even love affairs have changed (cf. *Postacı* in above part). In that sense, Scognamillo (2005: 78-79, 80) defines Muhsin Bey as a character in the following words:

Muhsin Bey is basically a film of nostalgia; it is a respectful stand for the past and irretrievable days and values – and of course places like Beyoğlu. At the same time, it is a bitter and sincere open bitter criticism for today’s artificial, worthless values...Muhsin Bey is not a caricature...the caricature is at the most the world he is compelled to live in and watch and try to stay outside and do not accept. This world is the world of artificiality, bad taste and parvenu. And the ones who are inclined to be caricatures are always “the others” . . . Muhsin Bey is a “loser”, too. He is another “Namuslu”; he follows the same path, preserves the same values and belongs to the same reality with him.

Muhsin Bey is one of the unique examples of Turkish comedy cinema in the sense that it deals with a special subject⁶⁴: *arabesk* music.⁶⁵ Even

⁶⁴ Peculiar and micro subjects are another characteristic of the 1980s Turkish comedy films. Contrary to the previous periods, Turkish cinema tended to focus on and narrate individual stories and subjects. Turkish comedy cinema, of course, joined this tendency. Instead of many versions of the same story –which was the case in the previous period, like the family or stock character comedies- stories of films started to be based on micro subjects like arabesk music (*Muhsin Bey*), Turkish cinema itself (*Aşk Filmlerinin Unutulmaz Yönetmeni*), women’s issue (*Şalvar Davası*), central authority-periphery relationship (*Deli Deli Küpeli, Selamsız Bandosu*), accommodation problem and the case of the tenants (*Kiracı*), or the problems of Turkish immigrants abroad (*Polize*).

though *arabesk* emerged in the late 1960s and became popular ever since, no such film was produced which has a particular point of view about the issue. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, *arabesk* has always been subject of debate, firstly as a musical genre, then a cultural label. Seen as the culture of “unhappy, lumpen” masses, which were excluded by the upper middle classes of the city for their inability to become ‘urbanites’ and pursuing a ‘village life’ in the city, *arabesk* became an object of disguise and agent of cultural degeneration in the society and urban way of life. On the contrary, in fact, *arabesk* was the culture of the city *par excellence*. As Özbek (2000: 26, 108) states, all the elements which caused its emergence are related with the dynamics of the city. “The problem was not the *gecekondu*s to be ‘villages in cities’, on the contrary, to become urbanites and try to perceive the chaotic structure of the city.”

In time, the lower classes of the city were added to the migrants, as a ‘threat’ to the dominant cultural patterns and codes of the city. As Gürbilek (2001: 69) argues, in the 1980s, *arabesk* turned out to be the name of an “uncultured” culture shared by the lower classes, migrants and a part of the already-extended middle class. Some images became the donators of this culture: big and heavy, golden necklaces and bracelets, silk shirts with nearly all the buttons are open which are worn by men, *lahmacun*,⁶⁶ whisky, and *çiğ köfte*⁶⁷ speaking and singing with Eastern accents and even having moustache.

These images became clichés always mentioned with this particular, so-called “lower culture”. At the same time, they became objects of disgust and contempt. In this point, it would be useful to mention Bourdieu’s approach on usage of ‘culture’ as a marker of distinction of the dominant

⁶⁵ There is another example of a Turkish comedy film which also deals with *arabesk* music and *arabesk* films, *Arabesk*. Yet, it has a different narrative structure. It can be defined as a parody of the Yeşilçam melodramas and *arabesk* films. I will analyze it in the following pages, comparing and contrasting with *Muhsin Bey*.

⁶⁶ An Eastern pizza made with mince, onion and tomatoes.

⁶⁷ An Eastern dish made of raw mince, pounded wheat and red pepper.

classes. According to him, just like other cultural practices, people 'learn' to consume legitimate works of art. That is to say, early socialization, education and class origin determines one's relation with the cultural goods. Bourdieu (1984: 23) argues that mentioning culture with a capital 'C' is nothing but an ideological illusion. Such an 'illusion' is clearly apparent in *Muhsin Bey and Aşk Filmlerinin Unutulmaz Yönetmeni*. As I mentioned before, Muhsin Bey represents the dying, fading face of Istanbul, and also a dying aesthetic taste. The film preaches that an (middle class) urbanite has a cultivated, distinguished taste, which is lacking in the migrants and lower classes of the city. Muhsin Bey's conflict with popular culture, especially the culture of the lower, 'uncultured' masses is represented in his relation with Ali Nazik (Uğur Yücel), a singer candidate, who has just migrated from the East, possibly Kurdish and wants to be famous and rich with Muhsin Bey's help. The two leading characters are shown as totally opposite figures, antithesis of each other. From the beginning till the end of the film, it is shown that no compromise is possible between the two characters, since they belong to "different worlds".

Not only the taste for music, but also any kind of everyday practice of Ali Nazik is unacceptable for Muhsin Bey. For example, he continuously criticizes Ali Nazik, his behaviours, his way of speaking and his tastes. For Muhsin Bey, Ali Nazik is a part of the coarse and vulgar mass which started to occupy Istanbul and destroy its delicate and pleasing nature. Therefore, he tries to 'educate' him and teach him manners. Of course, since basic subject of the film revolves around music, Muhsin Bey tries to teach Ali Nazik the musical notes and solfège, primarily.

Another part of Ali Nazik's education is his bodily gesture. Muhsin Bey insistently tells him to sing and use his body harmoniously because he thinks that Ali Nazik's natural posture and gestures are rude, uneducated and vulgar. Furthermore, Muhsin Bey also does not like Ali Nazik's eating habits, especially *çiğ köfte*, which is one of the most well-known symbols of

arabesk culture in the 1980s. In a scene, Ali Nazik kneads *çiğ köfte* in Muhsin Bey's home and gives him a piece of it to taste. Muhsin Bey finds it so hot and does not like it. The following conversation displays Muhsin Bey's disgust and hatred at everything, which he sees as a threat to distinguished, cultivable taste and his elitist stand against the lower class taste:

Muhsin Bey: What is that! You have already turned that beautiful Istanbul into a kebab store! Everywhere smells of kebab. Where are our beautiful dishes...

Ali Nazik: Why do you say so agham, do you think that these kebab stores would have opened unless Istanbul wanted them?⁶⁸

This dialogue clearly shows that for Muhsin Bey, even the cuisine of the 'outsiders' is unacceptable and spoils texture of İstanbul. However, what Ali Nazik says is the evidence of a deeper conflict. On the one hand, the elitist intellectual stance accuses the new comers of the city to ruin its culture and values. However, on the other hand, the system itself encourages this new popular culture and its elements. Gürbilek (2001: 103) defines the 1980s as the "return of a way of life which can mainly be defined as 'province (taşra)', way of lives which were able to survive by being repressed within and were subordinate modern cultural identities'. The 1980s promised freedom for this repressed, excluded province. However, the returnee is never the repressed itself. That is to say, it returns in a kind of transformed way. It is restructured with the needs of time and space it has returned, and becomes open to any kind of political manoeuvres and provocations (Gürbilek, 2001: 11). On the other hand, where there is a kind of repression, there also must be a kind of liberation. However, in the 1980s, such a return took place only within the limits of the market. The oppression has not disappeared and replaced with a kind of liberated atmosphere. Therefore, the returnee is now a part of the market and consumed its hope

⁶⁸ Muhsin Bey: Bu ne be! Güzelim İstanbul'u kebabçı dükkanına çevirdiniz. Her yer kebab kokuyor. Nerde o güzelim yemeklerimiz...

Ali Nazik: Niye öyle diysin agham. İstanbul istemese bu kebabçılar açılır mı?

for liberation. As Gürbilek (2001: 107) defines, “this time, it appears to us as a bare rage, impudence and hunger.”

In this sense, the repressed embodied in the figure of Ali Nazik returns in a way that he is not Ali Nazik any more. In the first part of the film, when Ali Nazik tries to win Muhsin Bey’s confidence, he is a naive, good-willed and sincere character. Only trickery he made is also sincere and likeable. One evening, it rains and Ali Nazik waits in the street for Muhsin Bey to let him in. When Muhsin Bey sees him from the window, he takes pity for Ali Nazik and decides to call him. However, it is revealed that in fact Ali Nazik has rented a hotel room, but acted to convince Muhsin Bey he had nowhere to go. But, when he realizes that the methods of honest and honourable Muhsin Bey would not be helpful for him to be famous and rich, he starts to work with Muhsin Bey’s rival – who is also pictured as the anti-thesis of Muhsin Bey -, sing Arabesk songs and work in night clubs. Ali Nazik at the end of the film is not the old Ali Nazik any more. He seems self confident and powerful now. He wears a white suit and a silk shirt, and drinks whisky. These are also seen as a part of the *arabesk* culture and singers, which turned into symbols of despise of the anti-*arabesk* movement in the 1980s.

That is to say, the position where Ali Nazik finds a chance to express, to place himself at the same time transforms him. He is no more subordinate or subaltern. Now, he has a chance to earn money, change himself, his clothes, hair, even his way of speaking, and access to anything which had been grudged from him before. He represents İbrahim Tatlıses’ *arabesk* of the 1980s, which is much more different from that of the 1970s and represented by Orhan Gencebay, which I have explained in Chapter IV. At the end of the film, Muhsin Bey gets out of jail and goes to see Ali Nazik in the nightclub he sings. He looks at Ali Nazik on the stage with despise and anger. After that they face each other. Even though Ali Nazik feels ashamed and crushed at the beginning, he suddenly regains his self-

confidence, provided him by money and power. He apologizes from Muhsin Bey, but in a brazen tone:

Ali Nazik: I'm sorry but I had land on my feet.

Muhsin Bey: Did you really?⁶⁹

Becoming an *arabesk* singer, earning money, wearing silk shirts and jewellery, just like Ibrahim Tatlıses did (Ali Nazik says when he tells his ideals to Muhsin Bey), is Ali Nazik's realized dream. However, this means nothing to Muhsin Bey, just like the rest of the popular culture of the time. The whole picture evokes nothing but just a kind of disgust in Muhsin Bey.

Another point to be emphasized for *Muhsin Bey*, is the transformation of Ali Nazik. Focusing on Ali Nazik's efforts to get a grasp in Istanbul, to meet his desires and to become rich and famous, the film totally neglects Ali Nazik's own past. In fact the disappearing past is not only Muhsin Bey's, but also Ali Nazik's. However, since Ali Nazik and what he represented are seen as the 'other' according to the discourse of the film, it is not analyzed or discussed. Such a point of view idealizes the character of Muhsin Bey and criticizes everything which seems to be opposite of him in every sense and does not take into account the dynamics of these elements. Similar to Scognamillo's point, Esen (2000: 194) argues that:

...Muhsin Bey (1986), is a successful comedy film, which tells old Istanbul gentleman and organizer Muhsin Bey's individual resistance to the degeneration of the society and music.

From this point of view, the specificity of the traumatic experience of province during the process of migration, urban conflict, adaptation to a new life and system, personalized in Ali Nazik's own experience is just seen as an element of 'degeneration'. As a matter of fact, the elitist position of the film reinforces its nostalgic gaze with identifying *arabesk* culture as the culture of lumpen, rural ignorant masses, systematically invading Istanbul.

⁶⁹ Ali Nazik: Abi kusura bakma. Kendimi kurtarmam lazımdı.
Muhsin Bey: Kurtardın mı bari?

In a similar sense to *Muhsin Bey*, the 'new' culture of the 1980s, but this time in terms of Turkish cinema itself is criticized and scorned in *Aşk Filmlerinin Unutulmaz Yönetmeni*. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Turkish cinema turned towards itself and started to think and reflect its own past, stories, stars and genres. This retrospective stance was a mixture of mocking and yearning. That is to say, the cinema of the 1980s had an ambiguous position in which criticism and nostalgia intermingled in terms of Yeşilçam. This tone is observable in *Aşk Filmlerinin Unutulmaz Yönetmeni* to some extent, however having a more nostalgic gaze rather than a criticism of Yeşilçam.

Compared to *Muhsin Bey*, *Aşk Filmlerinin Unutulmaz Yönetmeni* could be considered as more realistic in the sense that the chief character – Haşmet Asilkan- is aware of the changing social order and its inevitability. The comparison between the past and the present is constructed upon the case of Turkish cinema. Known with his melodramas, Haşmet (Şener Şen) desires to make a different film, which will change his reputation and make him a real 'artist'. All the efforts and endeavours of Haşmet turns out to be insufficient and naive, because he *still* is a part of Yeşilçam and could not manage to be accepted by the 'new' group of directors. His film turns out to be a failure. At the end of the film, while Haşmet is just about to attempt suicide, a producer calls and offers him to direct another melodrama. The film ends with showing Haşmet speaking on the phone, accepting the offer. That is to say, he finally accepts that he is a part of Yeşilçam and will be as forever. Even though the process of Haşmet's film-making is shown as a parody, the source of humour in the film, I think it is an important point that Haşmet is represented as a figure who is aware of the fact that the period of Yeşilçam is over for Turkish cinema. The film bitterly criticizes the loss of Yeşilçam and the producers of the 'new' cinema as artificial and arrogant. And this 'new' cinema refers to the political, psychological dramas which dominated Turkish cinema in the 1980s.

It is evident that such kind of a cinema is destined to be marginal and unpopular for the audience of Yeşilçam. Not very surprisingly, these years continued the tendency of Yeşilçam audience leaving cinema and turning towards television. Yet, this tendency is far more complex than a simple, deliberate shift from Yeşilçam cinema to psychological, political cinema, which I have discussed in Chapter IV. Therefore, the sense of nostalgia in *Aşk Filmlerinin Unutulmaz Yönetmeni* is similar to *Muhsin Bey* in the sense that it creates its own past as a foil to the present regardless of the social dynamics beneath this transformation. The character of Nihat represents Yeşilçam in the film. He is an old actor, once famous, but now a desperate and poor alcoholic living in solitude. His despair is in fact the despair of Yeşilçam. He is all ruined, lonely and hopeless; only becomes happy when he watches old Yeşilçam films. He somewhat continues to live in the past and refuses to adapt himself to the present. Despite of his problematic character and depression, his words in fact imply film's deeply romantic attitude towards Yeşilçam, the 'good old days'. On the other hand, Haşmet criticizes Nihat for living in the past and reject inevitability of change, even though he is a part of Yeşilçam, too. While Haşmet feels ashamed when he sees his older films, Nihat blames him for rejecting his past. For the past is the purest, most sincere and 'real' time. This conversation clearly presents the conflict between the two men:

Haşmet: Everything is changing. We have to change, too. Otherwise we will be left behind.

Nihat: I love the past. Neither today nor tomorrow. My pieces are there.⁷⁰

In another scene, Nihat shows Haşmet a sequence from an old Yeşilçam movie, in which Haşmet plays a role:

Haşmet: Would you please turn that off? I can't stand it...

Nihat: Don't you see the purity, good will in this film? Which of the present movies have them?

⁷⁰ Haşmet: Her şey değişiyor. Biz de değişmeliyiz, yoksa geride kalırız.

Nihat: Ben geçmişimi seviyorum. Ne bugünü ne yarını. Benim parçalarım orada.

Haşmet: Come on, Nihat. I am just ashamed...⁷¹

There is another dimension of nostalgia in *Aşk Filmlerinin Unutulmaz Yönetmeni*, which is similar to *Muhsin Bey*. Even though it is a minor part of the film, there is a certain elitist stand and disgust at the ‘other’, the one who is supposed to threaten the ‘pleasant’ and ‘distinguished’ fabric of Istanbul. A conversation between Haşmet and the owner of the mansion, which they have rented for the film set, is a good example of this state of mind. The woman – owner of the mansion – lives alone in the house. She is portrayed as a lonely figure, yet seems to be happy of being lonely rather than joining the amorphous, rude and vulgar crowd outside. Because of economic difficulties, she decided to sell the mansion. One day, Haşmet offers her his watch to pay the rent, because they did not have any money left. And the woman replies Haşmet in the following way:

Woman: Please wear that watch. Today a customer came to see the house; big and burly, covered with golden jewellery. Pardon me, but he was just like a beast. Then, I thought. This man is not buying my house but my memories, my beauties, everything I have. I changed my mind. I can bear this for some more time. We have to take care of some beauties. Otherwise, this world will be left to those insensitive beasts. So, I am saying that I have requested you to tell you not to worry about money. You don't have to evade me whenever we come across.⁷²

The woman, owner of the mansion, clearly draws a line between ‘us’ and ‘them’, which are the distinguished, refined, old ‘residents’ of Istanbul versus the vulgar, ignorant, parvenu ‘outsiders’. In her words, a consciousness of the irretrievability of the past is apparent. However, there is also a kind of resistance to the ‘present’ which, for her, belongs to the ‘outsiders’.

⁷¹ Haşmet: Kapar mısın şunu. Tahammül edemiyorum.

Nihat: Şu filmdeki saflığı, iyi niyeti görmüyor musun? Bugün çekilen hangi filmde bu var?

Haşmet: Yapma Nihat. Sadece utanıyorum...

⁷² Evsahibi kadın: Lütfen takın o saati. Bugün bu konağa bir alıcı geldi. İri yarı, altınlar içinde. Affedersiniz, hayvan gibi bir şey. Düşündüm, yahu bu adam evimi değil anılarımı, güzelliklerimi satın alıyor. Vazgeçtim. Bir süre daha dayanırım. Bizlerin bazı güzelliklere özen göstermesi lazım. Yoksa bu dünya bu duygusuz hayvanlara kalacak. Diyeceğim, sizi rica etmemin nedeni, para için lütfen kendinizi üzme. Her karşılaştığımızda gözlerinizi benden kaçırmanıza gerek yok.

As we have seen, both *Muhsin Bey* and *Aşk Filmlerinin Unutulmaz Yönetmeni* have a nostalgic gaze for the past, yet from different perspectives. The idea is the same: the present serves as a foil to the past, lost irreparably. Since the past is imagined in complete opposition to the present, it is not the 'real' past. It is filtered by the ideas and prejudices of the present day. It is re-constructed, designed and imagined from today's perspective. As a matter of fact, especially in case of *Muhsin Bey* and *Aşk Filmlerinin Unutulmaz Yönetmeni*, the representation of the past is articulated to an elitist discourse constructed against the migrants and lower classes, and a criticism of the rising values of the new right, such as opportunism and self-interestedness.

Another example of the self-reflective criticism of Turkish cinema is a parody of Yeşilçam. As it can be understood from the title, *Arabesk* is a criticism of the melodramatic genre and *arabesk* films, as its extension in the 1980s, in a parodying manner. Scognamillo (2005: 91) claims that *Arabesk* is Ertem Eğilmez's (director of the film) meeting face to face and settling accounts with Yeşilçam cinema in general and his own cinema in particular. By mocking with cliché formulas and stories of Yeşilçam, and his own cinema, Eğilmez confesses his sins. *Arabesk* was a great success in terms of box office rates. This point is of importance since a long period of time, namely the 'golden years' of Yeşilçam, which were also the peak point of the Turkish cinema in terms of audience interest, with its melodramas is mocked in *Arabesk*. Such a change in the attitude of the audience of Yeşilçam should also be analysed. However, since audience and reception analysis is not within the scope of this thesis, I will not dwell on this subject. My point is, rather, to display Turkish cinema's ambiguous attitude towards considering itself. Yavuz Turgul posited a nostalgic gaze to Yeşilçam in his *Aşk Filmlerinin Unutulmaz Yönetmeni*, very well expressed in the words of Nihat (one of the characters in the film, an old Yeşilçam actor, see above part) while he talks about an old Yeşilçam movie: "Don't you see the purity,

good will in this film? Which of the present movies have them?" However, Turgul also took part in the production of *Arabesk*, which is a total parody of Yeşilçam (Scognamillo, 2005: 91).

As I mentioned above, there is another sense of nostalgia in the satiric comedies of the 1980s, which is provincial romanticism. This is somewhat different than the nostalgia for the 'old Istanbul'. Instead of romanticism for the past, there is romanticism for the present time, but for another space. This time, conflict is built between the city and the province. While the city is shown as the place of conflicts, anomie, anxiety and greed, the province is implied to be a romantic place in which there are yearned virtues like solidarity, sincerity, good will, and philanthropy. We can refer to Suner's (2006) discussion on the nostalgia films of the 1990s in terms of provincial romanticism. Even though her analysis comprises the recent examples of Turkish cinema and not the period covered in this thesis, I think it is still possible to trace some links from her arguments to our discussion.

While talking about the nostalgia films in new Turkish cinema⁷³, Suner (2006: 73) claims that they focus on "childhood". The story of the film may either tell the past or the present time; but in both cases, the heroes are portrayed as childish. That is to say, the common point in all the nostalgia films is that the past, which is imagined as an "age of innocence" is contrasted to the present, which is identified with evil. Likewise, the 'honourable' heroes of the satiric comedies of the 1980s are portrayed as naive, childish and innocent figures. Most of the time, they are new comers to the city. The hero either migrates to the city to make a living (because unfortunately it became harder and harder to find a job and earn enough money in the village or town) or appointed as a civil servant from the province to the city. In all the cases, the hero ends up in despair because his good will and sincerity is exploited in the city. Even his villagers, who have migrated before, adapted themselves to the rules of the city. Familial

⁷³ Suner (2006: 42) defines post-1990 Turkish cinema as the "new cinema".

and communal bonds became worthless. Everyone seeks their own interests, even at the expense of the others' well-being. When the hero opposes this unjust order he is told that he has to adapt himself to the rules of the city, otherwise he could not be able to survive.

This picture is clearly related with Suner's discussion on the nostalgia cinema. Suner (2006: 60) argues that the past provincial life in nostalgia cinema is represented as a sincere and intimate "safe shell", which protects the individual from the shakes of the external world. Likewise, in the satiric comedies of the 1980s, the heroes totally get shocked, become bewildered after they leave their town/village and migrate to the city. *Banker Bilo*, *Dolap Beygiri*, *Züğürt Ağa* and *Talihli Amele* are specific examples of this type of comedies with their naive, sincere and good willed heroes; all of them are migrants to the city. They somehow try to get a grasp on the city, yet it would not be possible without giving up their virtues which are identified with their provincial origin. City is portrayed as a degenerated place which spoils all the new comers. For example, in *Banker Bilo*, Bilo is an honest, good-hearted and naïve figure, who has just left his village to go to the city. Throughout the film, he struggles with Maho, the villain, who is crook, swindler and cunning, and represents the order of the city. He is also a migrant, yet he came to city long before Bilo, so he somewhat adapted himself to the rules of the city. He has a wealthy and comfortable life compared to Bilo.

After Bilo comes to İstanbul, he is shown in wide angle shots of İstanbul. The emphasis is on Bilo's loneliness, helplessness and poverty. He tries many jobs, but he finds out that in each of them he is compelled to bribe someone. When he could not understand why he has to give money to the municipal policeman, the other peddlers explain the situation to him as, "Here is İstanbul!" The only way to salvation for Bilo is to become Maho, a part of the system and the city.⁷⁴ In another example, *Dolap Beygiri*, the

⁷⁴ See, Ch. 4.1.1. "The Honourable versus The Swindler".

chief character Ali is a newly-appointed civil-servant. In the beginning of the film, he is shown in his peasant clothes. Then he changes his clothes and wears a suit when he learns that he is appointed to a position in the city. His family and villagers comes to see him off. The cues of the peasants and Ali's parents clearly present a naive, sincere and honest portrayal of the peasants:

“This village is proud of you, Ali.”

“Protect the poor and needy when you start your duty.”

“Do not even attempt to take bribe because you become a civil servant!”⁷⁵

In the rest of the film, Ali continuously gets into conflict with the people around him, because he does not want give up his honour and virtues. Whenever he feels himself insecure and lonely, he starts to play his pipe; he used to play when he was a shepherd. He tells his memories as a shepherd with a strong sense of yearning and aspiration. His life in the village is implied as a peaceful, secure and innocent one. Then he desperately returns to village, when he is fired from the office and could not succeed in any other job because of his honesty. However, his father writes a letter to the city, to Ali's sister and his husband Yakup to find Ali a job in the city. In his letter, he says that he has done the greatest evil to Ali by teaching him not to steal.

There is a more explicit conflict between the village and the city in *Züğürt Ağa*. The conflictive structure of the narrative gives the spectator a feeling for the yearning of the good old days in the village. The city is portrayed as wicked and merciless. In fact, the peasants become free labourers after they have migrated to the city and get rid of their feudal bonds. However, they also become disrespectful, self-seeking and dishonest men. In this sense, the village life is somewhat represented as the place of communal relations and solidarity and a kind of peaceful space. Yet

⁷⁵ “Bu köy seninle gurur duyuyor Ali!”, “Makamında fakir fukarayı kolla!”, “Memur oldun diye rüşvet filan yemiyessin ha!”

the film also portrays the hard conditions under which the peasants lived and their master-slave-like relationship with their agha. So it can be claimed that there are conflicting discourses within the film, yet especially in the second part of the film, agha's despair and humiliation in front of his peasants inevitably makes the audience to feel sympathetic to agha, and be critical towards the merciless city compared to "a kind of sincere and intimate" village.

Contrary to many Turkish comedies of the 1970s and 1980s, the audience feels sympathy for agha. On the one hand, agha is portrayed as an unskilled person for any kind of work, who does not know any kind of job, but "being an agha". On the other hand, capitalist system and the urban way of life are wicked, merciless and unreliable. For example, he finds out that his peasants have turned into unreliable and selfish men after they have migrated to the city. They are not dishonest; they just become men who only think their own interests and adapt themselves to the order of the city. The dialog between the men in "Haraptar Coffeehouse" -which they have opened after coming to Istanbul- shows their new attitude and understanding of the city life in the world of neoliberalism and illustrates how they have adapted to it very well:

Peasant (1): You keep giving bribes, it never ends...

Peasant (2): How much is bribe in your place, pal?

Peasant (3): Haven't you understood yet? Put the good ones in the front, the rotten ones at the back...

Peasant (4): Okay, I'll put the rotten ones at the back.⁷⁶

Since agha is figured as a victim who could not succeed on any job because of his goodwill, the audience almost gets angry about the peasants' migration to city and becoming free labourers. For example,

⁷⁶ Köylü (1): Rüşvet ver ver bitmiyi.

Köylü (2): Sizin orda rüşvet ne kadar oldu kurban?

Köylü (3): Hala anlamadın mı? İyiler öne, çürükler arkaya.

Köylü (4): Anladım. Çürükleri alta koyacam.

agha's housekeeper gets angry with a peasant when he takes one of agha's cigarettes. Their conversation is as follows:

Housekeeper: How do you dare to take agha's cigarette?

Peasant: Such things are left in the city, housekeeper. Here is the city. Being an agha is different in here. You should learn it!⁷⁷

In the second part of the film, which tells the story of agha in Istanbul, there are establishing shots of agha in wide angles in different parts of Istanbul. He nearly disappears in the crowd, one who has no difference than the others. He loses his way; he cannot cross the streets and avenues. He tries to speak to people and find his way but he is mostly scolded. Nobody wants to listen, and help each other. Everyone is in a hurry and it seems like no one has any time to lose. These scenes serve as a foil to a more intimate, communal society,

In this part, we have seen that the satiric comedies of the 1980s have nostalgic gaze in two different aspects: an elitist yearning for the 'old Istanbul' and a 'provincial romanticism' against the destructivity of city life. Even though it seems that these two inclinations are contradictory, in fact they share a negative attitude towards the rising values of the new right, namely individualism, self-interestedness and getting advantage of anything to become wealthy and powerful, and they articulate this attitude to their discourses in different ways. In the following part, I will try to trace the continuities and breaks between Yeşilçam comedy and the satiric comedies of the 1980s, to figure out peculiarity of 1980s Turkish comedy.

4.3. Continuities and Breaks

The satiric comedies of the 1980s in Turkish cinema display many new narrative elements and tendencies, in relation with the socio-political

⁷⁷ Kahya: Sen ağanın uzattığı ciğarayı nasıl alırsın lan?

Köylü: Ağalık beylik köyde kaldı kahya. Burası şeerdir. Burada ağalık başka türlü olur. Örgenin artık ha!

atmosphere of the 1980s. Transformation in terms of rising social values, economic policies, ideological positions and cultural atmosphere created a trauma among different segments of the society. The increasing economic differences between classes due to the economic policies of the new right and changing cultural atmosphere related with a new identity politics and rearrangement of cultural hierarchies resulted in a social distress. This distress is clearly reflected in Turkish cinema, especially comedy, in a critical and satirizing manner. However, it is not right to claim that a totally new, different comedy has emerged in the 1980s. There are certain relations and connections between the 1980s' satiric comedy cinema and Yeşilçam comedy, regarding the binary oppositions, stereotypes, and even themes.

In Yeşilçam, basic characters, plots, elements of laughter, stories of Turkish comedy cinema constituted major patterns which guaranteed laughter for the audience when they go to the movie theatre to see a comedy film and the film-makers to guarantee their box-office by producing in a specific pattern. The transformation Turkish cinema underwent in the 1980s, changed this picture. First of all, as many cinema writers emphasize, the classical Yeşilçam genres like melodrama and comedy were transformed. Let alone the permeability between the genres, which has always been a characteristic of Turkish cinema, the major genres themselves nearly disappeared like Yeşilçam comedies and melodramas. As I mentioned above, the only genres which could be seen as a continuum of Yeşilçam are arabesk and adventure-detective films transposed and re-articulated the basic codes of melodrama, and some comedies of Şaban and some family comedies, lasted only until the mid-80s. Especially in the second part of the 1980s, a new cinema emerged mainly focusing on the characters' state of minds, psychology and inner worlds, rather than the story of the film. This was obviously a new dimension for the Turkish cinema since the character's own experience had rarely been a point of concern before.

This tendency surely affected comedy cinema. The audience of Yeşilçam comedy was used to laugh at the characters' naivety, childishness, tricks, clumsiness, awkwardness, and grotesque elements such as usage of profanities and oaths and jokes on sexual matters. But, in the 1980s, this somewhat carnivalesque laughter was replaced with a satiric, dark and 'intense' one, which had a relatively politic and ideological perspective and aimed to include the audience into this process of contemplation and criticism. The grotesque elements minimized, and even disappeared from comedy films in the 1980s. The element of laughter was not focusing on the tricky, yet naïve comic hero, or the funny fragments from everyday problems of common people's lives, but on the incompatibility of the hero to the 'new' social order, the world of the new right. Even though the hero's inability and incompetence provoke laughter, it also arouses feelings of despair, sadness and melancholy in the audience. The elements of nostalgia and romanticism reinforce this melancholic tone. In a sense, we can argue that the cheerful, joyful atmosphere of Yeşilçam comedy could not continue to live in a hopeless, chaotic and insecure atmosphere, rooting from the traumas of the military intervention and ideologically dislocating mentality of the new right.

However, the yearned, mourned past, 'innocence' of the province and village, perishing concepts like solidarity, communal relations and philanthropy eventually reminds us of the clear-cut, neat world of Yeşilçam. As I have mentioned in the part about nostalgia and romanticism, the very act of remembrance is filtered by our present ideas and prejudices. Furthermore, it presupposes a representation of the past through certain images and icons, which are articulated to a present ideological position or discourse. Remembering Jameson's remark in terms of nostalgia cinema, we can argue that the critical position of the satiric comedies of the 1980s, and related with that their nostalgic implications about the past are endowed with the representations of the past itself, namely Yeşilçam. Yeşilçam's

lenses through which it perceived and represented the social and ideological atmosphere of the country in the 1960s and 1970 also served as a foil to the present socio-ideological atmosphere of the country in the 1980s, for the film-makers of the period. Therefore, the implied 'golden age' which has been lost irreparably derives from Yeşilçam's particular representations to a great deal.

Moreover, the 'new' dichotomies of the satiric comedies of the 1980s based on the conflicts between the "honourable" and the "swindler" and the "honourable" and the "degenerated order", pose a new kind of binary opposition, despite remarkable differences from Yeşilçam stereotypes. As I have mentioned in the above parts, the "honourable" and the "swindler" characters are designed in complete opposition to each other, and most of the time regardless of a historical, ideological background of the heroes, just like the stereotypes of Yeşilçam. Yet, they do not totally overlap with the conventional binary oppositions of the Yeşilçam cinema. The "swindler" characters are not portrayed as evil, dark figures, which aim at the collapse of the "honourable" hero. They are even most of the time become the source of laughter, especially in the first half of the 1980s, in which the elements of humour and character stereotypes were much similar to that of Yeşilçam. Despite many differences with conventional binary opposition of Yeşilçam like the "good" and the "evil" and the "poor" and the "rich", Turkish comedy cinema could be claimed to produce new conventional figures. The caricaturized and over-exaggerated tone in the presentation of both characters eventually resulted in the production of new stereotypes. Pedantic, sometimes didactic words of the "honourable" hero and extremely selfish, sarcastic attitude of the "swindler" character decrease the degree of verisimilitude and believability of the films. Moreover, my emphasis on the ambiguous position of the Turkish cinema in general and satiric comedies in particular of the 1980s regarding Yeşilçam also reinforces the relation of post-1980 Turkish cinema with Yeşilçam in terms of stereotypes and

reference, since the 1980s satiric comedies constructed their narrative upon new stereotypes, sometimes as clear-cut and neat as Yeşilçam.

However, this relation with Yeşilçam and its narrative tools are especially valid for the early examples of satire in the 1980s. That is to say, in the first part of the decade, when there are still examples of Yeşilçam genres, the relation between satiric comedies and conventional Yeşilçam comedy was much more evident, in terms of stereotypes and binary oppositions. The following years, however, are characterized by the transformation of the personification of conflict. Firstly, the specific “swindler” figure disappeared from satiric films and replaced with a “degenerated order”. In these examples, the “honourable” hero is portrayed as a total outsider of the social order, with no validity of his virtues like dignity and honesty. The degree of pessimism is high compared to the earlier satiric comedies with specific “swindler” heroes, since the social order is portrayed as totally corrupt and the “honourable” hero having no chance to survive. And finally, especially in the late 1980s, satiric comedies turned out to be total parody of the existing social order. In this type, the previous conflicts are not valid; they do not constitute the tool set of the narrative. The chief characters are portrayed as “swindlers”, sometimes in an exaggerated and caricaturized sense, and sometimes having self-judgments and criticisms about their actions. But in either situation they are self-seeking figures. Thus, contrary to the previous oppositions between the “honourable” and the “swindler”, and the “honourable” and the “degenerated order” in which the audience could feel sympathetic and pity for the “honourable” hero, the formation and the structure of the story obstruct any possibility of identification with any of the leading characters in the “parodies of degeneration”.

The second part of the 1980s faced the emergence of another new tendency when Turkish comedy cinema tended to produce more realistic, psychological and even ‘artistic’ films. Rather than fitting into the scheme of

the polarization between the “honourable” and the “swindler”, these characters were presented as lost in the depths of their psychological world, trying to express the reality outside, which is hard for them to fit in, were located in a nostalgic gaze. Intensity of the nostalgic theme is not surprising for these films, of which melancholy is an inseparable part. However, this time the lower classes of the city became an element of menace, a threat to the ‘refined’, ‘delicate’ culture of the city (which is Istanbul), continuously undermining and degenerating its fabric. In the time of the new right when the cultural hierarchical distinctions between the classes are re-defined and transformed, the films of nostalgia display a conservative and hostile manner against the migrant, lower classes of the city.

There is also another facet of this nostalgic gaze, but in a totally different sense from a yearning to the perishing ‘distinctive’ culture of the city: a provincial romanticism. Especially in the satiric comedies in which the “honourable” hero is a new comer to the city, this tone is rather observable. These ‘honourable’ heroes are usually represented as naïve, honest and childish figures, implying the innocence of the province. After coming to the city, the hero becomes all alone and depressed because his innocence is continuously exploited by the mechanisms of the city. City life is wicked, merciless and degenerative especially rooting from the newly rising values of the new right such as individualism, competitiveness and selfishness. There is not much chance for the hero; he would either adapt himself to the order of the city, or he would get lost, become a member of the masses which new right has sacrificed.

In terms of realism, it would not be wrong to argue that leaving the clear-cut distinctions among two poles in the early examples of satiric comedies of the 1980s, namely the “honourable” and the “swindler” made the heroes more humane, mundane. Even though the nostalgic and romanticist elements adds a degree of elitism and a focus on very individual stories and experiences to some of the films, it is evident that political

stance is much more articulate and direct compared to the Yeşilçam comedies. Especially in some examples of satiric comedies of the 1980s, the narrative has a highly critical position in terms of the new right policies.

In fact, the realism effect and characteristics of the new stereotypes are highly related with the satiric character of the films. As I mentioned in the Introduction Chapter, satiric method includes exaggeration and deflation to reveal the hypocrisy and defects of the criticized target. Satire even exploits the distance between 'what is' and 'what ought to be' to convince the audience in the validity of its claim. Thus, both the "honourable" and the "swindler" characters in the satiric films are especially designed for the particular aim of the text. On the other hand, the elitist stand of the films is also particularly related to their satiric character, since the very subtle and arrogant method of narration presupposes a knowledgeable audience. This position obviously eliminates any consideration about popularity and also places the satirist, in our case the film director, to a higher level. The director locates himself as an aware person, granting himself the right and capacity to point the degeneration of the system and imply a 'desired', an 'ideal' one.

In addition to the very method and character of satire, film directors of the 1980s were also leaving popular cinema. The decade faced new tendencies among directors such as producing symbolic, artistic film; to problematize the very act of film-making itself. These films may be defined as 'experimental' attempts to create a kind of *auteur* cinema. Film-directors of the 1980s were digging up their professional experience and the terrain of cinema they were producing in. This new 'artistic' tendency in Turkish cinema surely had no claim or concern to be popular. Films were produced for a minor, intellectual audience, capable of understanding and witnessing the director's efforts and aims. Films on Turkish cinema, especially Yeşilçam were also a part of this position. Even some of the 'old' Yeşilçam directors, who were taking side against the claim of 'art cinema' in the 1980s

and defended Yeşilçam for being the cinema of the people, started to produce films criticizing the stereotypes, plots and simple narration of Yeşilçam. Some of these were totally parodying Yeşilçam, like Eğilmez's *Arabesk*, while others were involving in a more complex, interpretative relation with Yeşilçam films, like Yılmaz's *Hayallerim, Aşkım ve Sen*. This new tendency among Turkish film directors of course reflected in the comedy cinema, and became a part of their satiric discourse. Even though this tendency seems to be contradictory with the nostalgic gaze of the Turkish cinema, it can still be argued that the 1980s were the years in which Turkish cinema started to think about itself and be involved in a kind of self-judgment.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In this study I have tried to analyse the narrative characteristics of the satiric comedies of the 1980s. I have sketched out the common narrative tools and ideological perspective of these comedies on the basis of the transformation the genre underwent in the decade. Since I defined these comedies as satiric, their narrative structure, characters and humour are different from that of Yeşilçam, which mainly produced popular comedy. Therefore, I have tried to analyse the set of narrative tools employed by the films regarding their satiric character.

The satiric comedies vary in terms of their subjects and plots, as I mentioned before. Furthermore, their set of narrative tools is different from Yeşilçam's binary oppositions, such as good versus evil and poor versus rich. In relation to the transformation of the characters in 1980s' Turkish cinema, the leading characters of the satiric comedies became more complex figures, which are no more sharp or transparent. Especially in the second half of the decade, the psychological, inner worlds of the chief characters became a point of concern. Contrary to the totally good heroes or evil villains, the audience faced a bunch of depressed, problematic people in continuous self-judgment and criticism. The clear-cut concepts like good and evil lost their sound, solid grounds. In the same period, namely the second half of the decade the satiric comedies also underwent a transformation considering their chief characters. These characters were pictured as trapped in the mechanisms of a 'new' social order, acting

indecisively regarding the right and the wrong. This fragile, insecure position of the leading characters surely obstructed the mechanism of identification.

Yet it is crucial to emphasize that especially in the satiric comedies which were produced in the early years of the decade, the set of narrative tools employed by the films include some oppositions and conflicts similar to the binary oppositions of Yeşilçam. However, since satiric comedies targeted the 'new' social order established under the guidance of the new right policies, this set of oppositions was specially designed to criticize them. They employed stereotypes as the "honourable" and the "swindler" figures, they also criticized a 'new' type of individual created by the new right mentality. Another narrative type is the "parody of degeneration", which mostly appeared as new right policies established themselves and the effects of the new right hegemonic project become more apparent in the society. The pessimistic tone in these types of satiric comedies is high since, there is even no leading "honourable" character. These films simply aimed to reflect the degenerated, unjust mechanisms of the social order by representing every leading character as swindler, self-seeking figures.

I claimed that the narrative tools and stereotypes were used in the satiric comedies to represent the decline of such social values as solidarity, collectivism and philanthropy and rise of new ones like individualism, competitiveness and self-reliance in the 1980s. Since the films employ satirically-oriented humour, above mentioned stereotypes are exaggerated, caricatured figures designed for the particular aim of the films. The extreme deflation of the "swindler" character and the exaggerated honesty and purity of the "honourable" hero surely diminishes the reality effect. The huge distance between the represented "present" and implied "ideal" which is deliberately designed, aims to inform and convince the audience about the defects of the criticized target. In this sense, it can be claimed that the stereotypes and oppositions referred to the hegemonic project of new right. As it was argued in Chapter III, Özalist new right attempted to carry out a

“two nations” hegemonic project, by dividing the society into two to favour one segment while sacrificing the other. Thus, I argued that the “honourable” hero(es) could be defined as the representatives of this sacrificed social segment. On the other hand, the “swindler” figure(s) could be labelled as the reflections of the ‘new’ type of individual created by the ‘newly’ rising values of the new right such as individualism, competition and self-reliance.

The nostalgic and romantic discourse which is also observable in the satiric comedies of the 1980s is interrelated with their critical position toward the new right ideology and policies. This nostalgic and romantic discourse enunciates a yearning for a ‘lost’ world of virtues and values. I argued that the nostalgic gaze appears in two forms, first as nostalgia of ‘old’ Istanbul and second, a ‘provincial romanticism’ nurtured by the representation of city life as wicked and chaotic. I argued that such is a new tendency in the Turkish cinema and in some parts, related with the films’ critical position towards new right ideology and policies.

The self-reflective gaze of Turkish cinema is another aspect of nostalgia in Turkish cinema of the 1980s. As I have argued, the film-directors profile also transformed in the 1980s, a transition from ‘artisanship’ to ‘artistry’. In addition to some financial developments which provided the directors with a relative economic freedom, a new inclination towards producing experimental, artistic film emerged. These were the first traces of a “candidacy for an *auteur* position” (Erdoğan, 2001: 224) in Turkish cinema. Films were presented to the film market with name of the director at the top. Since the position of the director and cinematographic pleasure became new points of concern, Turkish cinema started to deal with its past. Even though not all directors claimed an *auteur* position, it can be argued that dealing with Yeşilçam was a common tendency in Turkish cinema of the 1980s. Approaches to Yeşilçam varied from insult and mockery to yearning and exaltation. Old genres, stars, stereotypes and subjects were

handled from different perspectives. In this sense, satiric comedies also affected by this new tendency and started to problematize Yeşilçam. The films considering Yeşilçam are either a total parody or include parodist references, or mourning to a lost world. But in either position, it can be argued that Turkish cinema is aware of the fact that Yeşilçam period is over.

As it was argued before, Yeşilçam comedies were based on similar stories with similar characters which guaranteed the reciprocal relation between the director and the audience. The audience's confidence on the familiarity of the film resulted in continuous interest and high-box office rates. The directors defined themselves as 'artisans' serving the interests of the people. However, the very satiric character of the 1980s' comedies presupposed a distinct audience. Satiric films were appealing to those who would be able to grasp the criticism. The humour is arrogant, subtle, and even aggressive. Since the films targeted a limited audience, the directors surely did not aim popularity. Insofar as the position of the satirist, which implies an awareness of the defects of the criticized target and a normative ideal, is considered, it can be claimed that the directors did not even intend to form Yeşilçam-like reciprocal relations with the audience.

The contrast between Yeşilçam comedy and the satiric comedies of the 1980s is surely related with the social and political dynamics of the respective periods. However, it is obvious that the satiric comedies remained a characteristic of the 1980s and were not continued to be produced in the next decade, namely the 1990s. It can be claimed that a new type of comedy emerged and became popular in television in the 1990s, from adaptations of foreign sit-coms to a kind of the comedy of the common men in the street that reminds us of the solidarist, collectivist climate of the traditional quarters in Yeşilçam family comedies. This shift in the comedy genre is worthy of consideration since the socio-political atmosphere, and new right policies in particular, which paved the way for the emergence of satiric comedies has not essentially changed since the

1980s. Apparently, one of the most significant reasons of the disappearance of satiric comedies is the relative success of the new right to hegemonize its economic policies. Furthermore, Turkish cinema has produced very little number of films compared to the previous periods in the 1990s, let alone comedy. As I have mentioned, comedy moved to television as serials and sit-coms which were far from taking a critical position towards the new right policies. Therefore, the satiric comedies of the 1980s can also be analysed in comparison with the current comedy forms in television and cinema. Turkish people, however, continue to prefer and watch old Yeşilçam comedies on TV, and the satiric comedies of the 1980s are somehow forgotten and remain as a peculiar product of the 1980s.

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APPENDICES

A. List of the Films

1. **BANKER BİLO** (1980)

Yönetmen: Ertem Eğilmez

Senaryo: Yavuz Turgul

Oyuncular: İlyas Salman, Meral Zeren, Ahu Tuğba, Şener Şen, Münir Özkul

2. **ZÜBÜK** (1980)

Yönetmen: Kartal Tibet

Senaryo: Atıf Yılmaz (Aziz Nesin'in aynı adlı romanından)

Oyuncular: Kemal Sunal, Nevra Serezli, Bülent Kayabaş, Kadir Savun, Osman Alyanak, Alpay İzer, Zeki Alpan, Nubar Terziyan, Şemsi İnkaya, Ali Şen, Metin Serezli, Memduh Ün, Hüseyin Kutman, Nevzat Okçugil

3. **DAVARO** (1981)

Yönetmen: Kartal Tibet

Senaryo: Yavuz Turgul

Oyuncular: Kemal Sunal, Pembe Mutlu, Şener Şen, Adile Naşit, Ayşen Gruda, İhsan Yüce, Sırrı Elitaş, Osman Çağlar

4. ÇİÇEK ABBAS (1982)

Yönetmen: Sinan Çetin

Senaryo: Yavuz Turgul

Oyuncular: İlyas Salman, Şener Şen, Pembe Mutlu, Ayşen Gruda, Orhan Çağman, Yaşar Güner, Fuat Onan, İhsan Yüce, Ahmet Mekin

5. DOLAP BEYGİRİ (1982)

Yönetmen: Atıf Yılmaz

Senaryo: Atıf Yılmaz – Suphi Tekniker

Oyuncular: İlyas Salman, Şener Şen, Ayşen Gruda, Yaprak Özdemiroğlu, Şevket Altuğ, İhsan Yüce

6. ŞEKERPARE (1983)

Yönetmen: Atıf Yılmaz

Senaryo: Yavuz Turgul

Oyuncular: İlyas Salman, Yaprak Özdemiroğlu, Şener Şen, Ayşen Gruda, Neriman Köksal, Şevket Altuğ, Hüseyin Kutman, Sera Turgul, Ali Tayfun, Ahmet Turgutlu

7. ŞALVAR DAVASI (1983)

Yönetmen: Kartal Tibet

Senaryo: Başar Sabuncu

Oyuncular: Müjde Ar, Şener Şen, Halil Ergün, Pembe Mutlu, Sevinç Pekin, Sevil Üstekin, İhsan Yüce, Duygu Ankara, Haşmet Zeybek, Ayten Erman

8. NAMUSLU (1984)

Yönetmen: Ertem Eğilmez

Senaryo: Başar Sabuncu

Oyuncular: Şener Şen, Ayşen Gruda, Adile Naşit, Erdal Özyağcılar, Ergün Uçucu, Tuncer Sevi, Zihni Küçümen, Bilge Zobu, Haşmet Zeybek

9. POSTACI (1984)

Yönetmen: Memduh Ün

Senaryo: Umut Bugay

Oyuncular: Kemal Sunal, Fatma Girik, Gülümser Gülhan, Ulvi Alacakaptan, Necdet Yakın, Erdal Özyağcılar, Harun Aşıcı, İhsan Yüce, Orkide Yenice

10. ZÜĞÜRT AĞA (1985)

Yönetmen: Nesli Çölgeçen

Senaryo: Yavuz Turgul

Oyuncular: Şener Şen, Erdal Özyağcılar, Nilgün Nazlı, Atilla Yiğit, Bahri Selin, Can Kolukısa, Füsun Demirel

11. ÇIPLAK VATANDAŞ (1985)

Yönetmen: Başar Sabuncu

Senaryo: Başar Sabuncu

Oyuncular: Şener Şen, Nilgün Akçaoğlu, Candan Sabuncu, Pekcan Koşar, Zihni Küçümen, Kamran Usluer, Bilge Zobu, Salih Kalyon, Ertuğrul Bilda, Renan Fosforoğlu, Erdiñç Bora, Erhan Dilligil

12. DEĞİRMEN (1986)

Yönetmen: Atıf Yılmaz

Senaryo: Barış Pirhasan (Reşat Nuri Güntekin'in öyküsünden)

Oyuncular: Şener Şen, Serap Aksoy, Levent Yılmaz, Orhan Çağman, Tarık Pabuççuoğlu, Niyazi Er, dursun Ali Sağıroğlu, Kemal İnci, Erol Durak, Necdet Yakın, Taner Barlas

13. MİLYARDER (1986)

Yönetmen: Kartal Tibet

Senaryo: Ümit Ünal - Ertem Eğilmez

Oyuncular: Şener Şen, Müge Akyamaç, Münir Özkul, Uğur Yücel, Kemal İnci, Tuluğ Çizgen, Adile Naşit

14. DELİ DELİ KÜPELİ (1986)

Yönetmen: Kartal Tibet

Senaryo: Osman Seden – Kartal Tibet (Cevat Fehmi Başkut'un Buzlar Çözülmeden adlı oyunundan)

Oyuncular: Kemal Sunal, Melike Zobu, Yaman Okay, İhsan Yüce, Yavuzer Çetinkaya

15. YOKSUL (1986)

Yönetmen: Zeki Ökten

Senaryo: Umur Bugay

Oyuncular: Kemal Sunal, Şehnaz Dilan, Yaman Okay, Kerem Yılmazer, Fatoş Sezer, Güzin Çorağan

16. DAVACI (1986)

Yönetmen: Zeki Ökten

Senaryo: Umur Bugay

Oyuncular: Kemal Sunal, Savaş Yurttaş, Güzin Özipek, Bahri Selin, Sera Yılmaz, Gülümser Gülhan, Yavuzer Çetinkaya, Necati Bilgiç, Demet Akbay

17. MUHSİN BEY (1986)

Yönetmen: Yavuz Turgul

Senaryo: Yavuz Turgul

Oyuncular: Şener Şen, Şermin Hürmeriç, Uğur Yücel, Osman Cavcı, Erdoğan Sıcak, Erdiñ Üstün, Doğu Erkan

18. KİRACI (1987)

Yönetmen: Orhan Aksoy

Senaryo: Orhan Aksoy

Oyuncular: Kemal Sunal, Özlem Onursal, Füsün Demirel, Uluer Sürer, Nevzat Okçugil, Nurettin Şen, Mustafa Suphi

19. SELAMSIZ BANDOSU (1987)

Yönetmen: Nesli Çölgeçen

Senaryo: Hakan Aytekin – Nesli Çölgeçen – İrfan Eroğlu

Oyuncular: Şener Şen, Ali Uyandıran, Üstün Asutay, Güzin Çorağan, Uğur Yücel, can Kolukısa, Cengiz Tünay, Celal Perk, Tayfun Çorağan, Ayla Aslanca

20. ARABESK (1988)

Yönetmen: Ertem Eğilmez

Senaryo: Gani Müjde

Oyuncular: Müjde Ar, Şener Şen, Uğur Yücel, Üstün Asutay, Necati Bilgiç, Kadir Savun, Münir Özkul

21. KOLTUK BELASI (1990)

Yönetmen: Kartal Tibet

Senaryo: Erdoğan Tünaş

Oyuncular: Kemal Sunal, Sema Çeyrekbaşı, Gökhan Mete, Berna Laçın, Erdoğan Aytekin, Hüseyin Köroğlu, Uluer Süer, Cem Meto, Sedat Demir

22. AŞK FİLMLERİNİN UNUTULMAZ YÖNETMENİ (1990)

Yönetmen: Yavuz Turgul

Senaryo: Yavuz Turgul

Oyuncular: Şener Şen, Pıtırık Akerman, Aytaç Yörükaslan, Yavuzer Çetinkaya, Gül Onat, Arif Akkaya, Serpil Temur